



Dear sir

It is with utter dismay I read about the “Local plan 2017” and the truly shocking proposal to develop land within the Grappenhall Heys / Appleton Thorn area of South East Warrington which will result in over 7,000 new houses being built on green belt land.

I appreciate the need to develop new property however the scale of this proposed development truly beggars belief and makes me wonder if the local council truly have a grasp and understanding of the pressure these extra properties will place on the local amenities, road infrastructure and more importantly the desecration of valuable land within the area. Particular points of concern worthy of note include:

Traffic Issues

As you are no doubt aware Warrington is in a unique position of being surrounded by three major motorway routes, M56, M6 and M62. It does not take a lot for one of these motorways to have an issue resulting in the exodus of traffic off the motorway network and onto the local roads in and around Stockton Heath, Appleton, Warrington.

Giving the green light to the development of the Garden City Suburb as you propose will merely exacerbate what is already a road infrastructure at breaking point. To put it bluntly gridlock will ensue on a daily basis making the daily commute all the more intolerable, adding time onto peoples journeys, increasing pollution in the area as well as putting even more pressure on local amenities within Stockton Heath for car parking. Can someone point out to me where additional parking is going to be made available for the extra volume of cars over 7,000 new properties will bring to the area – there is no space left in Stockton Heath to cater for more car parks.

All the above does not even take into account the delays the ship canal generates when a boat is coming through – queues for the bridges will become even longer than what they are currently with this extra influx of vehicles

However most fundamental in all of this is no obvious traffic survey has been included in the plan, roads pencilled in will not remotely address the increased transport needs

Scale of proposal / Green belt impact

The scale of the proposal is truly mind-blowing. Over 7,000 houses located on valuable green belt land, the whole character of the area will be destroyed with this wanton development. AppletonThorn, Stretton, Grappenhall will all merge in one big suburb of Warrington, fields will go, wildlife will go and more importantly access to the countryside, seen as a vital amenity for all to enjoy will disappear forever.

The destruction of the green belt land within this area is deemed an exceptional circumstance by WBC and something they feel is acceptable – why is this considered such?

Desire for City Status

Why the desire? I have no wish to see Warrington become a city, I'm not aware of any of my friends and colleagues expressing a similar view so why is WBC so focused on targeting city Status? The council has admitted they have gone for a higher number of new homes to improve their chance of securing city status – Have they considered going for a lower figure which will protect valuable green belt land and may be more acceptable to local residents?

Infrastructure and services

Over 7,000 houses, average occupancy of 2.4 people per house equals 16,800 extra people coming into an area which already stretched – roads can't cope. Warrington is regularly gridlocked, Stockton Heath regularly congested. The Hospital in Warrington is or must be near full capacity, where are these extra people going to be treated? The surgery in Stockton Heath is regularly full and struggles with patient numbers – where are the doctors, nurses going to practice when the surgery is at full capacity. Schools, more pupils, more teachers, more school buildings all needs financing, how is that going to be paid for when local council education budgets are supposedly being squeezed? Crime and policing, whilst hoping crime will not increase, its naturally expected, that needs more police resource. Again local council funding suggests there is less money for policing – how is the Garden City suburb going to be adequately policed?

Affordable housing / brown field sites

It is constantly raised through the media, more affordable housing is needed. I do not believe for one minute that the houses on this development will be affordable for our children and grandchildren to benefit from. Premium greenfield land is being developed which in turn will carry a premium on property prices thus preventing new couples, young families making the jump into these properties. I also question why focus is not made on brown field sites. Why desecrate green belt land while large brown field sites are likely to be released with the next 20 year period, these areas could make a significant contribution to the towns housing needs.

In summary, I see many more negatives to this proposed development than positives. It is folly to suggest this area can cope with the influx of over 7,000 new properties without strain being put on existing services, infrastructure, local amenities and valuable countryside. I am truly astounded the council cannot see that and seems determined to push through this truly unpopular proposal. I am not a "nimbie" and appreciate the need for new development, I just do not appreciate wanton destruction and pushing ideas onto the public without fair and due consideration to the social, economic and environmental impact such a development will bring.

A council not taking the views of its residents into consideration is a council risking revolt from its local resident be that through the ballot box at local, general elections or worse still through direct action and protest , something I am sure the council would wish to avoid.

I do hope you give consideration to residents views and a decision which is right for the area is made rather than a decision based on a utopian aspiration of the few.

Yours Faithfully

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