



Dear Sir

Objecting to the Preferred Development Option

I am writing with my response to your consultation on the PDO which I do not believe is a justified, robust or sustainable plan.

My principal reasons for objecting to the PDO are:

1. The flawed vision for making Warrington a city;
2. The evidence behind and poor quality of the Consultation process;
3. The complete miscalculation of the Housing needs and lack of supporting data or reconciliation;
4. The lack of exceptional circumstances for reclassifying the Green Belt and also the absence of any environmental analysis to support the PDO.

Like the majority of Warrington residents, I do not want to live in a city – I intentionally moved out of a city for the benefit of my children. I do want a vibrant, accessible and usable town centre and a fit-for-purpose transport infrastructure. Warrington will never be Manchester or Liverpool or Chester; and should not want to be. It lacks the culture and historical significance of the wonderful cities it is surrounded by. Warrington can never compete with these cities. The only purpose I believe for becoming a city is to attract business... so Warrington will become an industrialised place and a city in the worse sense of the word.

This process offered the Council the opportunity to be recognised as innovative for its regeneration of brownfield sites to meet its actually required housing needs and not concrete over fields to provide the wrong sort of homes for people who don't live here!

Even allowing for a flawed concept, I believe the consultation process itself has failed in a number of ways:

- a. The PDO was based on demographic data that the Council knew was wrong, having received a May update the strategic housing assessment prior to release of the consultation document. Even this report was largely based on pre-Brexit referendum and General Election data and so is probably over optimistic regarding economic growth and delivery of Government policies. The Options presented all overstate the new Government calculation – there is no need to overdevelop as this position is unsustainable nationally, hence the need to explicitly cooperate with neighbouring housing areas.
- b. I accept that the previous housing assessment was challenged as being too low, but there is no reconciliation between that number and the latest proposals to clarify what is different now. I believe the previous legal challenge also focused on the proportion of affordable homes – the PDO makes no attempt to analyse what sort of homes are actually needed for an ageing existing population but also an influx of younger and multi-generation co-habiting family units.
- c. The approach adopted ignores the human factor, character of the areas, proportionality in consideration of current homes in those areas, health, wellbeing and benefits to existing residents. Different options are presented within the spatial assessments, various negative impacts are highlighted and yet no justification or comparative

analysis is provided to explain why these negative points are ignored and the particular options chosen. The Green Belt satisfied long term durability tests when it was first designated – what has changed?

- d. No studies have been undertaken of the potential environmental impacts such as flooding, loss of habitat, wildlife, agricultural space, noise and air pollution and waste disposal. Even if the PDO is just a concept, the only “constraint” seems to be the minimum number of homes, not whether land is just not viable for development.
- e. The proposal to use the Trans Pennine Trail is misguided, premised on a misunderstanding of its importance and function to the community. The PDO equates to a loss of recreation and a safe place to walk/cycle coupled with the proposed displacement of families, due to lack of affordability to stay in the area.
- f. The design of the new route is questionable since all it will do is add even more traffic into the existing congestion at Bridgefoot rather than improve the transport network. The only justification seems to be to provide access to a new housing estate.
- g. Employment sites - no analysis of strategy or type and what is needed on top of the existing business park and enterprise zones and science corridor. Who are these new employers and what sorts of jobs will be created over the next ten to twenty years? Moreover there seems to be no appreciation that employment will be needed just for the natural increase in population so all these claimed new jobs are not themselves justification for yet more homes. What is the current capacity of empty office units and warehouses? The town seems full of empty units.

I also have concerns over financial deliverability. The town’s existing infrastructure is inadequate for the current population. The history of getting new facilities premised on the back of previous developments is poor. The financial models in the supporting documents imply margins so thin it will be very easy for developers to retrospectively claim that the contribution to affordable homes or infrastructure is no longer viable and escape with only a token gesture.

I can honestly say I have never lived anywhere where the council have been under so much criticism and allegations of corruption. These latest plans do smack of being money-driven rather than needs-driven. I believe they will further decrease your credibility. On that note I see Warrington has been downgraded by Moodys, so it is not just me who is uneasy at recent decisions made at the Council.

I look forward to seeing your response and confirmation that my legitimate objections have been properly considered and addressed in any subsequent plan.

Yours faithfully

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