

[REDACTED]

I have submitted the responses below on the online f01m, but I accidentally submitted before I had finished. I want to ensure this is definitely received, so am also emailing it.

My details are:

[REDACTED]

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?

Yes

I understand that you have based this figure on data from 2012, and then made adjustments which serve to increase the figure, whereas there is more recent data available that would have resulted in a lower starting point. Also, the Brexit vote is likely to have changed the housing needs of the UK and should have been taken into account. I am a mathematician by background and given the number of assumptions that needed to be made, I find it hard to understand using such a specific figure for the number of houses needed p.a., when surely a range would best represent the results of the projections. It seems as though you have taken the number at the top of the range and multiplied it by the number of years to result in the highest possible figure. Also, this all appears to be based on the assumption that Warrington can become a city. I do not believe that the residents want this or have been consulted on it. I would have thought that a city could grow from a thriving, successful town with good infrastructure, which does not describe Warrington - life is already intolerable for many residents, especially in South Warrington, with traffic problems, lack of healthcare, and with a nighttime economy that has moved from Warrington to Stockton Heath, bringing with it all the associated problems like noise, broken glass, anti-social behaviour and traffic/parking problems. Stockton Heath already cannot cope with this and is not a good place to try to bring up a family. These proposals will only make life worse in Stockton Heath. If you take away the aspiration to become a city, then what is the housing need for Warrington?

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?

Yes

I read the Urban Capacity Assessment Update but it does not seem to explain how the 15,429 figure has been reached - what kind of properties and how much space these take up. As a resident of a large city (London) for years, I am very used to living in flats rather than houses in central and even suburban areas, and obviously more of these can be built in a smaller area than houses. Do your figures assume that existing properties are used as houses, or that you build higher and fit in more living space in the central locations?

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

No

Because I do not believe you have justified the need for so many houses, and therefore you have not justified releasing the green belt on which to build them. Also I have not been

convinced that you are making the most efficient use of existing brown field sites. To release this much green belt land you must need unassailable, wholly convincing arguments, but this all seems to be based on aspirations and aggressive assumptions.

Do you agree with the new Local Plan Objectives?

No

I agree with W3, W4, W5, and W6, but not with W1 and W2, which seem to contradict the later objectives. I think W3 needs to be tackled first before even considering destroying the green belt areas which make living in a busy industrial town tolerable. Air quality in Warrington is already amongst the worst areas in the country and the proposals will only make this worse, with the addition of so many cars and new options for avoiding the motorways by cutting through Warrington. I think you need an additional objective, to ensure that district centres are places that people want to live (as well as the town centre).

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

Yes

Overriding objective seems to be to deliver the New City, but this seems the wrong way to go about it. Surely deal with the current problems preventing Warrington from being a successful town, and Stockton Heath from being a successful village, first. Releasing so much green belt land is only going to reduce the attractiveness of the area further, and building "adjacent" to the town centre (but actually not very near) will make traffic problems much worse. Stockton Heath has already had its character changed to a huge extent as a result of decisions made by WBC and is already no longer the "delightful village" it is sometimes described as, and used to be about 15 years ago.

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

Yes

Seem to have selectively ignored some factors like impact on highways/traffic - I agree that incremental expansion in Stockton Heath should be avoided due to traffic problems, and lack of schools and GPs. But I fail to see how a garden city suburb around Grappenhall Heys/Appleton Thorn won't have the exact same impact on Stockton Heath - it is the route to Warrington and also still likely to be a destination for residents of the new garden suburb. This garden city suburb would also need improvements at the motorway junctions, which do not appear to be factored into the plan. Currently those south eastern areas are not well served by bus routes, and new bus routes and extra buses would be needed which would be likely to go through Stockton Heath, also increasing traffic.

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

No

I question whether these are "needs", as they appear more aspirational.

South Warrington already puts up with a lot of problems - huge amounts of traffic (exacerbated when there is the slightest problem on any motorway, or swing bridge opening), parking problems (by your own home), associated air quality issues, and nighttime economy issues like noise and broken glass. This Preferred Development Option puts all the new development in South Warrington, which will surely make things worse. The proposed Western link won't help. House prices are currently higher in south Warrington - people choose to live here because of the easier access to green spaces and attractive housing stock. Removing the green spaces and adding a lot of new houses is likely to reduce the attractiveness of the area to a lot of people, including current residents,

many of whom already feel the area is on the decline, which can only lead to a decrease in house prices across the board. Still, though, the houses are unlikely to be cheap enough to assist first time buyers.

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

Yes

There is not much detail. I think it will come down to good design and much improved transport links. I would hope that, to maximise residential development, you have incorporated flats/apartments, as these are a feature of any large town or city and would relieve pressure on developing the green belt. Overall, Warrington needs to be made far more attractive to higher end retailers and restaurants if it is to be viewed as a desirable place to live, and so I would hope that you would look to successful inner city developments, such as those in Birmingham or Manchester, for inspiration.

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

Yes

Again, the document seems short on details - the only figure in this section shows the Western Link options, not any diagram showing where the Waterfront development would be. In high level, this seems like a good option as traffic would not need to pass through South Warrington, and the area seems underused currently. Also, is one new primary school enough? There is already increased demand from that general area with developments near the Walton swing bridge, the development opposite Morrisons, and increasing numbers of families choosing to live in the Gainsborough Rd/Chester Rd area and using Stockton Heath as their district centre.

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for the Warrington Garden City Suburb? (select one option only)

Yes

I like the cycle routes and potential country parks, but other than that I am extremely worried about the effect of so many new houses on the roads and air quality of South Warrington, at the same time that so much green space is built on. It looks like traffic will be using the A49 and A56, which already have long queues at key times of the day, and this will only make this worse. Is it envisaged that the residents of the new garden city suburb have everything that they need and do not need to travel? If so then this would be a standalone town. If not, it will only increase pressure on Stockton Heath, whose nighttime economy has already outgrown its location and is an unattractive place at nighttime for a lot of residents. Where would these additional visitors to Stockton Heath park? There also appears to be a lot of uncertainty around density of dwellings and therefore how much green belt land is needed - it comes across as though you are optimistically understating the amount of land required, and that either you will decide further down the line to release more green belt land than shown in your figures, or you will increase the density of the houses. Why can't you include more realistic and certain figures, when discussing an issue of such importance?

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

Yes

Without the Western Link, this would seem to put the existing Ship Canal crossings under even more pressure and traffic through Stockton Heath will be even worse. I am concerned that this option ruins one of the few true unspoilt villages around Warrington. And which high school is it proposed will serve this area? There is not one in close proximity so this will increase traffic through Stockton Heath to either Bridgewater or the new Garden City suburb.

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for development in the Outlying Settlements? (select one option only)

Yes

500 new homes sounds a lot for a village the size of Lymm; again, similar to south Warrington, people currently pay a premium for green spaces and attractive houses, and utilising the green belt to build such a large number of new homes is likely to decrease the attractiveness of Lymm. Hard to comment in detail when you have not provided any detail in the plan, or consulted with parish councils. Overall, the Preferred Development Option seems to single out the more pleasant areas of South Warrington for excessive development - surely this can't have a positive outcome?

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

No

Again I am concerned about the impact on Stockton Heath of traffic to the proposed employment land at J9 M56. Residents of the proposed Waterfront development could work at J9 M56, while residents of the garden city suburb could work in Warrington town centre or in the Waterfront development - my point is that more non-central employment locations and more non-central residential developments will increase traffic across Warrington (and in the South on the A49 and A56) and the plan does not appear to propose any solutions to that.

Do you agree with our suggested approach for dealing with Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sites? (select one option only)

Again, appears that South Warrington loses green belt land and bears the brunt of the proposals.

Minerals and Waste - no comment

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

Consideration of whether Stockton Heath, which is mentioned several times in the document as a district centre, and which will suffer under any of the proposals from increased traffic, is currently serving its residents well. I don't believe it is - I think during the daytime it is not very busy as its high street is mostly made up of charity shops, estate agents and cheap clothes shops, and at night it caters to people travelling in by minibus (who used to go out in Warrington). Many families are disillusioned with Stockton Heath and many move out as several aspects of it mean it is not a pleasant place to bring up a family. I think your Preferred Development Option Document recognises that Warrington Town Centre needs investment, and makes that a priority, but assumes that Stockton Heath is working well as it is and will continue to serve an increased number of residents. I think if something isn't done soon to consider the long term future of Stockton Heath (regardless of the Local Development Plan), then its reputation and

amenity will deteriorate further until it is in the same state that Warrington town centre has been in for the last 10 or more years.

