

Proposed Submission  
Version Local Plan:  
Responding to  
Representations Report

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2019

WARRINGTON   
Borough Council

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4.6 The remainder of this report firstly summarises the headline issues from the PDO consultation and then sets out all of the issues raised by theme and the Council's response to them.

## 5. Headline Issues

5.1 A summary of the headline issues raised during the Regulation 18 consultation is provided below.

5.2 How we consulted:

- Widespread belief from the public that we should have publicised the consultation more effectively.
- Criticism of the timing of the consultation over summer holiday period.
- Criticism we didn't consult more widely on the scale of growth before progressing to a preferred option.

5.3 Scale of growth proposed:

- Widespread public concern about level of growth proposed:
  - Objection to concept of Warrington becoming a 'city'.
  - Planning for more homes than the minimum the Council is required to.
  - Questioning the robustness of jobs forecasts in context of Brexit.
  - 20 year plan period considered too long given economic uncertainties.
  - Objection to proposal to safeguard land beyond the Plan period
- Developers generally supportive of the housing target and amount of employment land as a minimum requirement but a number considered level of safeguarding provision to be insufficient.

5.4 Assessment of the existing urban area to accommodate new development:

- Developers objecting to some of the additional urban capacity identified in city centre / waterfront masterplans on the basis that the Council cannot demonstrate they will be developed in the Plan Period.
- A large number of public representations considered that the redevelopment of Fiddlers Ferry should be included in the Local Plan in order to reduce amount of required Green Belt release.
- A large number of public representations considered that residential densities should be increased to reduce the amount of required Green Belt release.
- A large number of public representations objected to Peel Hall being included as part of the identified urban capacity.

5.5 Impacts of scale of growth proposed:

- Widespread public concern about increase in traffic and impact on air quality.
- Concern over the environmental impacts of loss of countryside.

- Concern about impact on social infrastructure, in particular schools, GPs and Warrington Hospital.
- Public and some developers expressed concern about the ability to deliver the scale of infrastructure required to support growth.
- Halton and St Helens Councils concerned that Warrington's proposed growth could impact on their own growth ambitions.

5.6 Proposed distribution of new development:

- A number of developers pushing for more growth in the settlements arguing the Plan is too reliant on major urban extensions in the south.
- Concern over distribution of Green Belt release from residents and Parish Councils in the south.
- Criticism from public and qualified concern from Highways England that we have undertaken options assessment prior to detailed transport modelling.

5.7 Proposal for a Garden City Suburb:

- Widespread public and Parish Council concerns over scale of development in this location, loss of Green Belt / countryside and impact on character of the area.
- Public and Highways England concerns over impact of traffic congestion
- Major public concerns over proposal to re-use disused railway line to provide a crossing over the ship canal.
- Public sceptical that new homes will be affordable for local residents.
- Developers promoting land within the area questioning phasing of development with concern that it may unnecessarily hold development back.
- Developers promoting sites elsewhere questioning deliverability of infrastructure and stating that the assumed build rates are not achievable.

5.8 Proposals for South West Extension / and Warrington Waterfront (including Port Warrington):

- Widespread public and Parish Council concerns over scale of growth in this location, loss of Green Belt / countryside and impact on character.
- Public, Parish Councils and Halton Council concerned with loss of Green Belt separating Warrington from Halton.
- Public, Parish Councils, local nature groups and Halton Council concerned about impact of expanded Port Warrington on function of Green Belt, impact on Moore nature reserve and potential highways impacts.

**6. Detailed Issues and Responses**

6.1 This sections provides a detailed breakdown of the issues raised during the Scope and Contents and PDO consultations by 'theme'. For each 'theme' the following is provided:

- a summary of the number of responses received at each stage of consultation;

- an overview of the issues raised in the responses;
  - a summary of each of the individual issues for that theme; and
  - the Council’s response to each of the individual issues.
- 6.2 Some themes have been combined where the issues raised are very similar. For ease of reference back to the response log spreadsheet, those themes which have been combined are summarised in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1 – Grouping of Themes

| Report Themes   | Themes (as in the Council’s response log)   |
|---|---|
| 1. Warrington’s need for new homes                                    | Housing requirement, methodology/SHMA, affordable housing need, tenure and mix of housing.                          |
| 2. Implications of Brexit   | Brexit  |
| 3. Local Plan Jobs Growth   | Uplift in jobs  |
| 4. Warrington’s need for employment land                              | Types of jobs being promoted, land requirements for employment, employment sites, Imbalance of land and job numbers |
| 5. Other Development Needs  | Other Development Needs.  |
| 6. Plan Period  | Plan Period.  |
| 7. Capacity of the existing urban area to accommodate new development | Urban Capacity General.   |
| 8. Land Supply to meet Warrington’s development needs                 | Land Supply, flexibility factor, backlog.   |
| 9. Use of Masterplans   | Use of Masterplans.   |
| 10. Build rates and delivery assumptions                              | Build rate and delivery assumptions.  |
| 11. Future of Fiddlers Ferry Power Station                            | Fiddlers Ferry.   |
| 12. Safeguarded Land  | Safeguarding.   |
| 13. Vision and Objectives   | Vision and Objectives, need for growth.   |
| 14. Green Belt Assessment   | Green Belt, methodology, application in options assessment, link with GB assessment.                                |
| 15. Exceptional Circumstances for Green Belt release                  | Exceptional Circumstances.  |
| 16. Spatial Options Process and Outcome                               | Spatial Options Process, General Technical Spatial Options Paper, Site Selection Process.                           |
| 17. Main Area Profiles and Settlement Profiles                        | Main Area Profiles, Settlement Profiles.  |
| 18. Social Infrastructure/Health                                      | Social Infrastructure/Health  |
| 19. Warrington’s Hospital   | Hospital  |
| 20. Accessibility, Transport and Infrastructure                       | Accessibility/Transport/Infrastructure  |
| 21. Ship Canal Crossing   | Ship Canal Crossing   |
| 22. Western Link  | Western Link  |
| 23. Scale of Development in South Warrington                          | Sustainability South Warrington   |
| 24. Air Quality   | Air Quality   |
| 25. Flood Risk  | Flooding  |
| 26. Education and Skills  | Education and Skills  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 27. Neighbourhood Plans   | Neighbourhood Plans                                 |
| 28. Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment               | SA/SEA  |
| 29. Views from residents on specific sites submitted under the 'Call for Sites' | Views on sites from residents                       |
| 30. Warrington Town Centre development proposals                                | City Centre, Main Development Areas                 |
| 31. Waterfront development proposals  | Waterfront, Main Development Areas                  |
| 32. Wider Urban Area development proposals                                      | Wider Urban Area                                    |
| 33. Garden Suburb development proposals   | Garden Suburb, Main Development Areas               |
| 34. Port Warrington development proposals                                       | Port Warrington, Main Development Areas             |
| 35. South West Extension development proposals                                  | South West Extension, Main Development Areas        |
| 36. Outlying Settlements development proposals                                  | Outlying Settlements, Main Development Areas        |
| 37. Meeting the Needs of Gypsy & Travellers                                     | Gypsy and Traveller                                 |
| 38. Minerals and Waste  | Minerals and Waste                                  |
| 39. Any Other Issues  | Anything Else should be included in the Local Plan? |

6.2 It should be noted that the themes below are not considered in order of importance but in the order they appeared in the Council's PDO document, and the subsequent spreadsheet of representations.

6.3 Respondent types have been grouped into the following categories:

- Residents;
- Elected representatives;
- Developers/agents;
- Neighbouring Councils; and
- Other stakeholders.

### Theme 32: Wider Urban Area development proposals

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| No of responses Part 1 | 3          |
| No of responses Part 2 | 106        |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>109</b> |

#### Overview

Respondents comments on development within the ‘Wider Urban Area’ were mixed with responses ranging from support for development in the existing urban area to objecting to development on the grounds that the character of the existing area would be changed. Respondents ranged from residents to stakeholder, councillors and landowners/agents.

#### Key Issues

Key issues raised related to the ability of the existing urban area to accommodate further development. Some respondents advocated that the urban area should be prioritised for development before more peripheral areas and others suggesting the opposite approach – bringing forward more development in peripheral locations subject to them being in close proximity to existing infrastructure. A number of comments highlighted issues with existing infrastructure and services in the urban area and emphasised a need for further investment in this regard. There were also a notable number of objections to proposals at Peel Hall.

#### Conclusion

The Spatial Strategy which underpins the Proposed Submission Version Local Plan is based upon maximising development within the existing urban area as a priority before allowing Green Belt release. The urban area includes the Peel Hall site which has been allocated for residential use within the draft plan, subject to ensuring that the required supporting transport infrastructure can be delivered. A full assessment has been made of existing levels of infrastructure in the urban area with any gaps in provision highlighted and reflected in the Council’s Infrastructure Development Plan. Contributions will be sought from developers to ensure that services and infrastructure are sufficient to meet the needs arising from any development.

The Council has produced a development trajectory which confirms the anticipated delivery rates on individual sites over the plan period. This identifies that most sites within the urban area will come forward within the first 10 years of the plan period.

A summary of all issues under this theme and the Council’s response to them are set out below in Table 32.

Table 32: Wider Urban Area –Issues and Responses

| Issue  | Respondent Type                      | Council Response  |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| The Local Plan’s proposed approach to the Wider Urban Area is supported and both Westbrook and Birchwood should retain | Other stakeholder, developers/agents | Noted. Existing district centres are being retained within the Proposed Submission Version Local Plan as set out in Policy DEV5 Retail and Leisure Needs. |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>their position as District Centres in the Local Plan, with both anchor ASDA stores remaining within those District Centres.</p> |   |   |
| <p>Object to Peel Hall application proposals.</p>  | <p>Residents</p>                          | <p>Objections noted. Proposals for this site have recently been through the planning application and appeals procedure. Both the Council and the Secretary of State accept the principle of residential development on the site, subject to highways and access issues being resolved. In accordance with the appeal decision issued by the Secretary of State in December 2018, the Council has allocated the site for residential development in the Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (See Policy MD4). In terms of delivery and timescales, the site is not anticipated to come forward within the first 5 years of the plan allowing a realistic time period for the outstanding issues, as highlighted by the SoS, to be resolved.</p> |
| <p>Key centres should be developed in the wider urban area.</p>  | <p>Residents</p>                          | <p>A full assessment of existing infrastructure and services has been made in order to identify the need for further investment over the plan period. New centres have been identified in the main development areas to meet new demand. New services and facilities have been identified in the existing urban area at the Waterfront (See Policy MD1) and Peel Hall (See Policy MD4). In addition Section 106 contributions.</p>  |
| <p>Concern about lack of infrastructure to support development proposed within the urban area.</p>                                 | <p>Residents, elected representatives</p> | <p>A full assessment of existing infrastructure and services has been made in order to identify the need for further investment over the plan period. Development within the existing urban area will be required to contribute to improving services and infrastructure where this is</p>  |