



Planning and Policy Programme  
Warrington Borough Council  
New Town House  
Buttermarket Street  
Warrington  
WA1 2NH

LDF@warrington.gov.uk

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to you to formally submit my concerns and objections to the current Preferred Development Option (PDO) for the South Warrington Urban Extension area (SWUE). My concerns and objections are centered around two primary points:

- The lack of exceptional circumstances for reclassifying the Green Belt and the many consequences of using this protected land.
- The failure to consider/address the already congested road and transport network and inadequacy of the proposed new roads.

### **Green Belt Land**

The vast majority of the land mentioned in the PDO is designated as Green Belt. If you research the definition of Green Belt land, you will find there are actually 5 main purposes as follows (according to the government's own policy):

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

Your current PDO includes using a large area of Green Belt land for purposes that directly oppose the reasons for their existence. First of all, WBC's plan involves the expansion of Warrington into nearby villages and countryside, especially in the south of Warrington. This breaches two main purposes of Green Belt land, as the expansion will extend the built-up area of Warrington into more rural areas and join together the small historic villages in neighbouring areas.

Furthermore, reclassifying Green Belt land for urban development purposes will have a large negative impact on the local countryside and wildlife. The Green Belt land is home to a wide variety of wildlife and vegetation, including mature native trees. The land is also home to many public rights of way, canal paths and other areas for recreational use. Green Belt land is a great opportunity for Warrington residents to explore the countryside on their doorstep. The PDO includes expansion up to the M6 and M56 motorways. Therefore if this land was to be developed for urban use, access to the countryside would be much more difficult due to the motorway boundaries. Again, the PDO goes against the government's advice for local planning advice, as quoted from the government's website for Green Belt protection:

"Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity"

The PDO does not provide any details of exceptional circumstances that warrant the use of Green Belt land for urban development. Additionally, the PDO includes an area of land around Weaste lane in Thelwall which is described as "safeguarded", however according to the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)'s website, this land is listed as Green Belt also. This is not the only confusion, as I along with many other residents have found it very difficult to follow and understand the hundreds of pages of planning documents. Moreover, the Cheshire council's website describes safeguarded land as that which is intended for uses appropriate in the open countryside. This does not include urban development.

The majority of the World's population now knows the serious implications of climate change. Deforestation - a major contributor of greenhouse gas emissions- has already reduced our forest cover in Great Britain to around 12%. Surely now is the time to lead by example and protect our green spaces. Furthermore, the recent call for sites review of greenbelt land found that many of the small parcels of land made a strong contribution to the overall greenbelt area.

Another impact of reclassifying Green Belt land for urban use would be the detrimental effect on local air quality. The World Health Organisation recently named Warrington as "the second worst place in the North West for breaching safety levels for air pollution". The development of current Green Belt land would only add to the current high levels of pollution.

For these reasons I object to the reclassification of Green Belt land for the purpose of urban development without exceptional circumstances.

### **Transport network**

The PDO will also add a very large quantity of vehicles onto both the local road network and the regional motorways. Any person who uses this transport network even moderately frequently will know how over-congested these roads are on a daily basis. This will only further increase local pollution and impact air quality. The suggested new roads do not seem to be enough to reduce congestion at bottleneck regions of the transport network, and appears to provide no solution to motorway congestion. Furthermore, these

new roads are only part of the long term plan - coming into place in approximately 15 years. Surely this is far too late to ease road congestion. The public transport network in Warrington is also currently inadequate and often disregarded. Maybe there would be less congestion on the roads if public transport were to be significantly improved.

Another concern regarding some of the new roads is the route that they will take. Particularly with the planned road that cuts across Weaste lane and will join the trans-Pennine trail before using the old railway bridge to cross the Manchester ship canal and join Latchford. I fail to see how this road will also ease congestion as it is planned to join Latchford very close to the swing bridge.

This road also cuts through key areas of Green Belt land. I hope you consider the advice from the government's website regarding the use of Green Belt land, and plan to redevelop more central urban areas of Warrington.

Yours Faithfully,

██████████