

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 June 2019 23:00
To: Local Plan
Subject: Consultation on Warrington Local Plan

Having attended one of Warrington Councils information sessions about the Local Plan, and studied the Proposed Submission Document available on the Council website, I do not believe that the plan is sound, as it is neither justified nor deliverable.

The plan for additional housing in the local plan is not justified, as it is actually higher than the Government requires and assumes that the Government target of building 300000 homes per year has to continue throughout the plan period to 2037. Actually, population growth alone (forecast of 3.6m extra people over 10 years) only requires about 150000 homes per year (assuming current 2.4 people per household). This suggests it would be prudent to plan for a higher rate in early years, reducing as time goes by, but in any case there is no argument for planning for a higher total than required by the Government. A more realistic total for housing reduces the need for green belt land to be released and the pressure on new infrastructure. Current experience suggests that such a high rate of house building is not deliverable in any case.

The Local Plan is also disappointing in the way that warehousing and logistics is the basis for so much of the new employment, especially south of the ship canal. While the plan document points out that Warrington has a fine tradition of engineering and science, this does not seem to be borne out by the plan itself. The word "science" only appears once in the entire document, and "engineering" only 5 times. While Warrington has to take advantage of its position on the junction of N-S and E-W transport links, it should be looking to aggressively expanding in green industries, looking to science based start ups and companies supporting development of green technologies (the Government has just announced a plan for zero emissions by 2050 - which will certainly impact this plan which takes to 2037). The building of so many new homes without any insistence on market leading standards of insulation and self power generation is short sighted. This brings into question whether the Local Plan is deliverable, since it seems unambitious and represents "more of the same". It must also be true that large warehousing and logistics produce low employment densities compared to office and light industrial - more land for fewer jobs. The recent announcement of the closure of Fiddlers Ferry power station in 2020, which releases a very large area of land, must now be considered as part of this plan.

The Plan does not seem to have thought through the mix of employment and housing, especially in the proposed Garden Suburb. Cynically, one might expect that the result will be swathes of "executive housing", whose occupants typically commute to Manchester and Liverpool while local employment opportunities will be low skilled and low paid taken by people commuting some distance to work from north of the ship canal or outside Warrington.

Worryingly, there seems no way that Warrington can manage the sequencing of development - for example, based on recent experience in how long it took to provide a school in Grappenhall Heys, there is a risk that Green Belt land will be sacrificed early on and many houses built before the necessary infrastructure is available. Similarly, it is not clear that brown field developments will be prioritised over easy new build in the Green Belt. The fear is that we will sacrifice Green Belt land and then discover - as pointed out above - that population growth is lower than expected and the in-fill developments - less attractive and more expensive - are never completed. The plan should make this phasing impossible.

Another aspect which makes me question the soundness of the overall plan is the lack of clear commitments to additional ship canal crossings. If the laudable ambitions to encourage walking and cycling are to be realised, a safe dedicated foot / cycle crossing must be part of the proposal, with off road links to all parts of South Warrington. Trying to shoe horn safe cycle paths alongside the A49 heading into Warrington is

impossible. Failure to achieve targets for cycling to work means more cars on the roads and consequent pollution.

David Myall



Warrington

