



16th June 2019

Local Plan

Warrington Borough Council

New Town House,

WA1 2NH

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in response to the consultation for the Warrington Borough Council Local Plan and also the current planning applications for 6/56 and Eddie Stobart's.

I would like to register my strongest objection to the plans and to raise deep concerns about the soundness of the plan and the process to arrive at the plan itself. Further, I would like to raise the lack of proper consultation from Warrington Borough Council who despite considerable objections to the *draft* local plan have not demonstrated their consideration of these objections in formulating the final plan which is now before us. The residents of Warrington have not been heard or considered and the Borough Council is guilty of attempting to push through a plan which does not have the support of the people living in their borough.

Based on all the below current challenges that living in this area has:

- Underfunded schools resulting in parents being asked to fund simple resources like books
- An inadequate bus and public transport network that doesn't offer a viable alternative to car ownership
- A road infrastructure that can't cope with the current volume of traffic both on the motorways but also in and around Warrington a

I am staggered at this ill-conceived proposal which doesn't provide an integrated approach to the towns development as it only seems focussed on hitting a specific housing target without considering the overall impact of achieving such a target would have on the town and all of its residents

With this in mind it is staggering to understand why the council perceive that they need to destroy the major positive which is the beautiful green spaces, public footpaths, ponds and wooded areas. There is much discussion about the proposed destruction of Warrington's greenbelt land and the plan does not meet 4 out of the 5 criteria for release from green belt.

## Questionable growth forecasts

The volume of houses being proposed is totally unjustified and hugely excessive for the demand that is expected over the next 10 years. According to official population predictions, the local Council would need to build 528 houses per year to meet demand. However, this is across the entire borough however these predictions do not take into account that Brexit could impact population growth in the UK by as much as -8 million people by 2060 – with so much uncertainty not only in our own borough but across the whole of the UK it would be irresponsible and unsound to approve a 20 year plan when we don't even know when we are exiting Europe nor do we fully understand the full impact of us doing so.

South Warrington has been singled out to meet the vast majority of demand, there is plenty of land available throughout the Borough to allow the development to be spread more evenly. Even if the need for 528 houses per year is validated, why are the current plans to produce 945 per year?

Notwithstanding the questionable figure of 528 houses per year, it cannot be disputed that the proposed 945 houses is totally excessive and that building thousands of new houses in such a small area is simply not required.

## Use of Green Belt vs optimisation of Brownfield sites

The plan sets out almost all the new housing on green belt land. This appears to be totally irresponsible from an environmental and conservational point of view, especially when there is ample brownfield land available in the area that could easily be repurposed to provide housing – a good example of this is Fiddlers Ferry. It appears that the easy option is being taken as conversion of brownfield will be more complex, however, to destroy green belt would be highly unsound when there is so much real capacity of brownfield sites. There are clear rules and criteria around the release of green belt land and this plan does not meet 4 out of the 5 criteria.

## Traffic and pollution

Congestion across the whole of Warrington is well documented with no clear solution in mind. The council may refer to an extra bridge here or there but fundamentally, the traffic is still coming off the bridges onto the same roads and infrastructure as before. When there is a crash on the M6, M56 or M62 which happens regularly, Warrington is used as a by-pass and the entire town comes to a standstill. Our proximity to 3 of the busiest motorways in the UK is supposed to be a selling point for the area as being attractive to commuters however our infrastructure is not fit for purpose, this is before any growth.

Air pollution is one of the greatest challenges facing our planet, and Warrington is already failing to help reduce air pollution and limit climate change. In 2018, Warrington had the worst rate of small particulate pollution (for PM2.5) in the entire country!

This is even before we consider any growth at all – these levels of pollution are fatal and far from taking action to improve air quality, the council plan to worsen the issue by agreeing to build HGV transport hubs, build more houses putting around 40,000 more cars on the road in the next 20 years.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Not only is this plan going to significantly increase pollution, if it is to be built on greenbelt, removing green areas that are, to some extent, neutralising some of our pollution we are compounding the problem.

#### **Holding Warrington Borough Council to account**

WBC are not adequately representing their residents, this is evidenced by their lack of real consultation on this process and their inaction on real issues concerning residents such as infrastructure and pollution. The council appear to be single-minded in achieving their own objectives without any real action being taken on the concerns of residents

For all above reasons, I would reiterate that the plan is not sound, the council do not have the capability to deliver a realistic plan and that we object on the strongest possible grounds.

Regards

Rob Beer