

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Local Plan](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Submission Version Local Plan Consultation 2019  
**Date:** 17 June 2019 15:18:56

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[REDACTED]

Local Plan  
Planning Policy & Programmes  
Warrington Borough Council  
New Town House  
Buttermarket Street  
Warrington  
WA1 2NH

17<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Warrington Proposed Submission Version Local Plan 2019**

I am writing in response to the local PDO.

[REDACTED]

Having attended the plan viewings at Halliwell Jones stadium and talked with various council members, I find several elements of the plan and importantly to me personally, the removal of Green belt, disturbing and unsound in execution. It worries me greatly that the source of the plan comes from developers rather than the council - I believe they are largely motivated by money and self-interest and do not have the people of Warrington who pay council taxes at heart.

Several aspects appear troublesome and unsound. The massive increase of population with little infrastructure for care and medical services provided in the plan for one. Local friends and people I have spoken to working in these fields in Warrington have described the period of austerity to me over the last ten years as nightmarish, with threadbare, depleted facilities, yet we are seeking to increase and concentrate the population to a relatively small area - more than doubling current local housing figures with no information in the plan as to how to tackle the issue. I would argue that those services are undeliverable under the current plan.

A major aspect I consider unsound is the transport issues that the plan will create. Along with proposed industrial developments in the area - of which there are several (I am writing my fourth letter regarding local planning in the space of six months - up until eighteen months ago I hadn't written a single one - such is the frequency of applications and proposals which sadly, does feel like a tactic to beleaguer residents with a weight of proposals that they can barely keep up with) The transport infrastructure in the plan all points to quicker and more direct access towards the M6 and the M56 whilst failing to account for already existing traffic problems on both motorways. Indeed, the Thelwall viaduct at junction 20 of the M6 is notorious on national travel news bulletins.

I am self-employed and drive to various clients most mornings in the region using the M6, the M56 and

the M62. I queue on Knutsford Road every morning no matter what time I leave the house - it is always a long wait and likely to worsen with more housing added to the area. The prospect of adding more time to my journeys and wasting more of our lives stationary in a car is a depressing one and a large concern for residents already struggling in the mornings and evenings just to earn a living.

An increase in traffic and journey time fills me with dread just typing this.

Unfortunately when I have raised this with councillors at meetings they have insisted traffic will have 'minimal impact' I would contest that - a figure of 7000 homes in the area with a likely figure of two cars per household amounts to an extra 14,000 cars navigating the roads and motorways in Warrington South everyday. An explanation of 'minimal impact' doesn't really cut it or allay any of my fears. I would say the failure to accept this as a large problem makes the plan an unsound one.

There are also many areas proposed in the plan that have NOT been offered up for development by land owners (e.g. area C3 on plan) I live in the C3 area and my house is not included in the plans. The vague term 'illustrative plan' has been thrown at us many times by councillors when we have mentioned the many current houses and landmarks not included in the plan and any other aspects they cannot sufficiently explain, the term is deliberately vague and obstructive, a way of blunting objection and obfuscating genuine errors or flaws and unsound and undeliverable parts of the plan.

Disturbingly one of the developer's documents, R18/P2/059 suggests to the council that they should keep the plan 'vague' in order to make it 'deliverable' and to avoid 'delay'. To me that suggests intentional vagueness hence the term 'illustrative'.

At this stage of planning we need certainties rather than vaguely phrased get-outs for councillors - this is our next twenty years plus as residents of South Warrington. The people that pay and fund the council should be able to uphold parts of the plan they flag up as troublesome or wrong without being told they are simply 'illustrative plans'. These 'illustrative plans' have been voted on and approved by the council. The idea that plans with errors, unsound planning and undeliverable targets and in their own words 'illustrative' have been approved is unacceptable.

I should point out that the councillors I spoke to at Halliwell Jones stadium were polite and answered questions as best they could.

When I talked to one member on why the concentration of housing in South Warrington in particular, rather than a distribution around Warrington, he told me that originally there were plans to distribute the required housing equally 'pepper pot style' around Warrington but this was eventually dismissed in favour of high concentration on green belt areas in Warrington South due to 'it's accessibility to Warrington town centre.'

I would strongly suggest they look again. I find this aspect simply wrong and unsound in thought and planning. We have four single lane roads that cross three swing bridges and the cantilever bridge around Ackers Lane. As any Warrington South resident will attest, the swing bridges are frequent travel and traffic hotspots to and from the town centre due to the ship canal and traffic volume at most parts of the day and it has to be said, they are poorly served by local bus services to the town centre.

As a lifelong Warrington resident I have major concerns that, rather than bringing the town together and increasing the flow to a depressed town centre, the proposed PDO will create a new town in Warrington South that will leave the town centre depleted and depressed further, as has happened in neighbouring towns in the region, such as neighbouring Runcorn Old Town/Runcorn New Town, (which effectively resulted in the abandonment of the Old Town, an area that has never recovered in the intervening years).

There are similar horror stories of divided communities and new town developments up and down the North-West - errors of short-sighted and much criticised, community-destroying, 1960s and 70s planning that appears to be being completely ignored in the current drive to provide housing numbers at whatever cost to the local residents, towns and surrounding environment.

My understanding of green belt is to stop the merging of settlements, stop encroachment in to the countryside, preserve historic settlements and to check sprawl. Unfortunately the proposal dismantles all of the above and destroys the character and distinctiveness of the local area.

In the PDO the areas merge and there would be absolutely no distance or gaps between the areas of Appleton, Grappenhall, Appleton Thorn and Stockton Heath as currently exists. We are also home to rare endangered species of wildlife in South Warrington - bats, great crested newts and water voles amongst many others. The provisions provided in the plan to offset the natural habitat do not satisfy me that this wouldn't be catastrophically altered. Again, I consider both to be unsound aspects of the plan.

South Warrington's Green belt provides green lungs to an area that has a significant amount of urban sprawl already and performs poorly in national quality of air studies.

When I have raised this with councillors I have again been met with the phrase 'minimal impact' I think that is dismissive and goes against what we know about independent quality of air studies and destruction of wildlife.

The habitat will simply not exist for wildlife to live in and the proposed garden areas are insufficient and unfortunately not rural enough for rarer species.

The size of the development and near total removal of local green belt to such a comparatively small area is I think, what disturbs me most of all. The area and Grappenhall in particular, has a rich historical heritage and has been a settlement since Domesday times. To destroy it forever for subsequent generations feels like a travesty and not something we should be leaving our children and our children's children.

I would also point out that it's a major concern to me that the so-called revised PDO contains very few changes to concerns originally raised in 4500 letters to the council first time around. In fact the development has increased further.

Are we not being listened to at all? Are the developers, rather than the council, whose job and remit is to represent and speak for us but more importantly, act for the people of Warrington in charge or are the unelected developers?

Another aspect I find worrying is the amount of neighbours, residents and local people I speak to at this very late stage who know very little as to the extent of the development if at all. Leaflets inviting residents to the Halliwell Jones stadium plan viewings have clearly not been effective enough to inform and reach the public and bring them into the conversation that directly affects them. Hard not to conclude this is to some extent a deliberate tactic to minimise objection, indeed the plans are several hundred pages long, confused and off-putting to most.

Any parts that are wrong are defended with the 'illustrative plan' response -It smacks of deliberate evasion.

I also note that Warrington North council members voted overwhelmingly in favour of the plan and Warrington South the opposite. The councillors representing South Warrington (Lib Dem) where the mass use of Green belt has been allocated voted 'no' and all of the councillors representing North Warrington (Labour) voted 'yes'. The North Warrington councillors have the majority of votes at the council and have made a decision for the South - where they do not represent the very people that this will affect. These are NOT officials elected by Warrington South constituents. The political divide of the councillors has had a significant effect on this plan's approval.

I would also suggest the plan period is many years longer than government requirements. The council have chosen to go with 2014 population projections rather than using the 2016 forecasts that deliver significantly lower housing requirements. Despite a high density of housing in the region we are being averagely ranked along with areas such as the South East of England, inflating the requirements rather than using more accurate recent studies which offer more realistic assessments e.g. Neal Hudson -

housing market analyst and director of residential analysts study that ranks Warrington at 237 out of 390 for lack of supply.

On 8th April 2019 Rt Hon. MP James Brokenshire stated "Green belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified." I don't believe this plan satisfies those guidelines and is unsound in many aspects.

I would appeal to council members and plan inspectors to consider how their legacy would be viewed by residents in twenty years as the people that ok'd the destruction of green belt, wildlife, created traffic chaos in the region and the knock on effect to other regions and divided a once connected town.

We do not get second chances. Once the green belt is gone, it is gone forever.

Neil Osborne