

Warrington – Draft Local Plan, 2019

Objections – R J Rumbold, [REDACTED]

1. Policy MD2 – Garden Suburb

Why does Warrington need a Garden Suburb? I object to it in its entirety.

At best, this will be a dormitory township serving the M.56 corridor and with no real affinity to Warrington.

- 1.1 The geographic and social connections between the southern side of the Borough and greater Warrington are tenuous at best. The Garden Suburb would be situated well to the south of the Mersey and the Ship Canal – the historic boundary between “old” Lancashire and rural Cheshire.

This apparent separation would be reinforced, and will be perpetuated for much of the Plan Period, by the logical expectation that development of the proposed Garden Suburb would progress from south to north. It may be many years, if ever, before it becomes effectively joined to Warrington.

It seems likely, given the proximity of motorway access to Manchester, Liverpool and to the north and south, that it would remain an independent township and that many residents may choose to work and shop outside the Warrington area.

- 1.2 I question whether the designated employment area, which is approximated by the Six56Warrington planning proposal, is needed by Warrington and particularly in this location. The existing employment areas at Appleton Thorn and Barleycastle Lane would appear to provide employment for the wider north-west, not just the Warrington area, and there is no reason to suppose that expanding the volume of logistics jobs will particularly favour workers from Warrington.

This proposal for industrial development seems to have been spawned by the intense lobbying of national/international logistics companies and developers who are constantly on the look-out for expansion sites convenient for the motorway corridors, without regard to the long-established Green Belt.

In the face of strong local opposition, the proposition appears to be “endorsed” in the draft Local Plan and Planners in turn have seen this as a

convenient hook to justify new housing areas remote from the heart of Warrington.

However, in direct employment terms the benefit to Warrington residents may well be limited.

- 1.3 Warrington should not be expected to sacrifice huge swathes of existing Green Belt, and in doing so destroy the essential character of the south part of the Borough, for a development idea that has so little merit. Included in the MD2 area is provision for large volumes of notional future housing well outside the Plan Period, for which there is no current justification or requirement.

In addition, I understand that the site of Fiddlers Ferry power station has so far not been taken into account in the overall availability of brownfield sites for future development even though its closure has been mooted for several years. In view of the most recent announcement that its closure is imminent this should be re-examined, together with the statistical basis on which the long-term housing needs of the Borough are evaluated.

In my view, the strategic justification for the Garden Suburb has not been made. Rather, it appears to be no more than a grab of large swathes of Green Belt to prop up inflated assessments of development needs during the Plan Period and to service unproven development requirements well after the Plan Period.

2. Strategic Infrastructure Provision

There is a clear need for a new high-level crossing of the Ship Canal to the east of Warrington, in addition to the Western Link, to alleviate the problems caused by the operation of the Latchford Swing Bridge but this is not identified in the draft Local Plan.

RJR/-

17th June 2017