

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Local Plan](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Comments on local plan
Date: 13 June 2019 22:27:04

Please find below my objections to the local plan. In summary, my main reasons for objecting to the plan are; there is no justification, the plan is not deliverable and there are major logistical issues. Please find my objections detailed below:

1) The economic reasons for the plan need to be re-examined. Many economic forecasts have been amended as a result of uncertainty over Brexit. This plan needs to, at the minimum, be delayed until the economic effects of Brexit are known. If a recession is triggered then there is a possibility that this level of development may not actually be needed. Also, there could be a dramatic change to immigration and migration. We need to wait and see what the effects of Brexit are before proposing a significant plan such as this one.

Warrington is currently an extremely successful town with high levels of employment. Unlike in many other places, there is no need to generate a high level of new jobs that this development claims to bring. Apart from a few jobs the vast majority of the workers will not live in the area and will commute into south Warrington. This means that the economic benefits will not be felt locally. In fact, locally only negative effects will be felt due to the increased traffic from commuters and the increase in transport vehicles. Mainly though the economic growth in this plan appears to be driven by housing development, rather than the other way around.

2) This development does not provide the exceptional circumstances required to allow the use of green belt. The only circumstances are financial ones, none of which benefit the immediate area. There are others locations and areas that are also suitable. There is an overwhelming need to build on brownfield sites first and now that the fiddlers ferry power station site will be coming available this should be considered. Even if it is subsequently rejected it should now be considered as this is a major new development since this plan was proposed.

Furthermore, if the hospital moves to another site, this would also free up a brownfield site in the town centre. Whilst the density in the town centre has increased there is huge scope to increase it further. We only need to look at how other local cities are developing and its by increasing town centre density.

The land this development will use is very precious and once taken it will be gone forever. The loss of green belt in south Warrington is significant and it's all focussed in one small area. The green belt boundaries were only confirmed five years ago and are supposed to last for twenty years. The revised National Planning Policy Framework strengthened the protection of the Green Belt. Boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified and all other reasonable options for meeting identified

development needs have been examined. This is absolutely not the case with this plan. These houses are being proposed in a flawed and unachievable plan and this means the circumstances are not exceptional. This plan will be causing encroachment into the countryside, causing the loss of historic settlements, it will cause neighbouring towns to merge into one another and is not assisting in regeneration. This plan does not meet any of the criteria to allow the release of green belt.

3) The local transport infrastructure cannot cope with the proposed application. This plan will bring with it a huge increase in vehicle movements. Even with proposed improvements to the road network every time there is an accident on the motorway the entire area will be gridlocked. This is the case currently, so its patently obvious that a significant increase in traffic will significantly exacerbate the existing problem. Commute times will be increased significantly. This will affect the quality of life of many local residents. It may also impact on small business owners who will become less productive

Even without this plan south Warrington can be congested and its often difficult to travel into the centre of Warrington. This is because of the geography of south Warrington and the natural barrier of the ship canal. The A56 and A49 struggle to cope currently, so while new roads in south Warrington will help movement south of the ship canal the current pinch points can't be improved due to the requirement of bridges. Therefore, the proposed local plan will make this congestion significantly worse and the people who live in the new houses are likely to shop in other areas. Chester, Manchester, even Northwich and Stockton heath. This will then bring about a decline in the centre of Warrington.

4) Air pollution. This development will once again exacerbate an existing problem. In May 2016, Warrington was listed by the World Health Organisation as one of the forty places in Britain for breaching air pollution safety limits. Air quality is recognised as a major problem responsible for the deaths of 40,000 people a year. On 18 May, a global review found that 'air pollution may be damaging every organ and virtually every cell in the human body'. The effects are greater in children. South Warrington is an area full of families and children. This will then be compounded by removing nearly all the local green belt. The very thing we need to help produce oxygen and clean the air we breathe will be removed to allow a development that will damage the environment. Pollution is already a serious problem in Stockton Heath and on the A49 through to Lower Walton. With an increase in the number of cars it would only get worse. One reason for the Peel Hall planning application being rejected by the Inspector was air quality. The health impacts of this plan should not be underestimated. The health of local residents and children will be negatively affected.

5) Local services cannot support this plan. Warrington Hospital is not fit for purpose, parts of it are over one hundred years old and car parking is a major

problem. Many people struggle to access services as it is and extra homes will significantly exacerbate the problem. Grappenhall Heys still has no health facility and a lot of local GP practices already have long waiting times. How certain can we be that developers will pay for the facilities proposed in the plan? Where would the funding for the doctors, nurses and other health professionals come from? There is a current national shortage of medical staff and the NHS budget is under strain. My fear is if the developers actually do build the facilities then there won't be the staff to run them. The Health facilities need to be delivered at the same time as new houses are being built, not afterwards which is likely.

I have the same concerns for education facilities. Where will the funding for schools and teachers come from? What guarantees do we have that these would be provided in time for when they are needed? With the drive to create Multi Academy Trusts outside local authority control, there is less influence for the Council to make this happen. What about funding for social care, youth facilities, parks and libraries? Repeated attempts have been made to close the libraries in south Warrington. We are told this is because there is no funding. So how will an increasing population be catered for when there already is a budget deficit?

6) In the vision for Warrington's future, it says, 'The character of Warrington's places will be maintained and enhanced with a vibrant town centre and main urban area, surrounded by attractive countryside and distinct settlements. The unique elements of the historic, built and natural environment that Warrington possesses will be looked after, well managed, well used and enjoyed'. This completely contradicts what the Plan would do to the villages of Walton, Grappenhall, Appleton Thorn and Stretton. These villages will all merge into one and the character and historic value will be lost forever. Currently they are identifiable independent villages with separate identities and character. This plan will destroy that and they should be protected.

7) The plan is simply undeliverable. The requirement to build approx. 1600 house a year is far far in excess of anything ever achieved previously in Warrington. There have been large developments in the past and even then, only approximately 550 a houses a year were actually delivered at the peak. Based on 2016 figures, the Council's Housing Strategy estimates that the population will increase by 18,874 between 2016 and 2041. Using the normal factor of 2.2 people per household, this equates to a need for 343 homes a year. This figure is in line with recent build rates of 359 in 2018/19 and 402 in 2019/20. This current plan is massively overstated and unachievable.

8) The Government requirement is for a Local Plan to last 15 years. Given the uncertainty of forecasting this far ahead, I firmly believe there is no need for the Plan period to be 20 years. Using a realistic (and recommended) plan period would reduce the number of houses required and in particular the number required to then be built on the Green Belt. This means the plan is fundamentally not sound.

9) Finally, the Local Environment and where we live. The loss of green spaces, whether Green Belt or not, has a wider impact on the appearance of the landscape. When entering south Warrington, the views of the landscape are important and should not be under-estimated. We moved to the area [REDACTED] because it allowed us to live on the edge of the countryside. Many of our neighbours also moved here for the same reason. These decisions were made on the basis that the green land making up south Warrington was green belt and therefore protected. It's unjust to arbitrarily remove the green belt against our wishes and destroy the visual appeal for those who live in the area and treasure the countryside.

This plan is unjustified and unsound for all the reasons listed. To continue with this plan would be a travesty and it would blight the residents of south Warrington for the rest of their lives. There will be no local benefits, but many local consequences. I implore you to reject this plan to protect current and future generations.

In short, the plan is NOT sound and it is NOT deliverable.

Kind Regards

Simon Brookes

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