

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Local Plan](#)
Subject: Warrington Local Plan 2017-2037 objection
Date: 16 June 2019 18:50:25

Stephen Holdsworth

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15th June 2019

Local Plan

Warrington Borough Council

New town House

WA1 2NH

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing with regards to the Warrington Borough Council's Local Plan to redevelop South Warrington and bring thousands of new homes to the area and my objections to the proposal. Please could you send me confirmation that my letter has been received.

I believe that the proposal is not only significantly detrimental to the area, not required on the scale intended and fundamentally unsound **and** acting upon it would not only would it destroy Warrington's Greenbelt land, it would have severe traffic and infrastructure implications for new and existing residents with additional potential health implications. Not to mention ruining the character and therefore appeal of its village areas.

This plan does nothing for the future of South Warrington, arguably making taking away or damaging the vast majority of the plus points associated with the area. This would be unforgivable given that each component of the proposal seems unsupported and us as residents can only assume that this is an attempt to generate further tax paying households without first considering those resident in the area.

My substantiated objections are;

Number of Houses

The plan indicates that the number of house to be built (between 945 and 1600 per year) far outstripping the official populations predications for the area (528 per year).

These growth predictions are based on unrealistic levels of development which to this point have not been seen in the Warrington area and in this time of political and economic uncertainty are unlikely to surge to the levels required to support this rate of homebuilding.

The plan intends to build 945 properties per year, peaking at as many as 1,600 per annum. However, official population predictions for the area are just 528per year. Even the government's suggested figures of 909 per year are too steep, and the council has gone beyond this without any reasoning behind this. It should be noted that with on-going Brexit uncertainty that figures for population growth are actually being revised down due to the decrease in immigration already being seen.

The proposed housing is also unlikely to serve the existing Warrington population with the developers being required to build 30% as affordable homes. Whilst I do not doubt the need for affordable homes, placing them in a area such as South Warrington, where house prices are high, reduces the likelihood of them being for the people who actually need access to affordable homes.

It should also be noted that building the houses without the supporting infrastructure in place is an impractical thing to do, at the rate proposed the strain on already struggling services and local transport links will be unbearable. Especially as the employment opportunities in the area do not match the proposed number of homes. Even with the proposal for new warehousing jobs, which are unlikely to have salaries in line with those required to support South Warrington house prices. This will require a huge increase in commuter activity.

Finally Warrington has never managed to deliver homebuilding on the scale proposed (peak 550 homes per year) throwing into doubt the ability to actually deliver on what is promised.

Infrastructure

There is insufficient infrastructure to deliver for the proposed thousands of new residents.

Local schools and medical facilities are already under an enormous strain but the proposed rate of development in the area will completely overwhelm them. There is suggestion these issues are considered in LPT4 however, there is no real substance to these plans. With a clear lack of detail as to how and when new healthcare centres, schools, roads, hospitals, GPs and so on will be built and financed. This makes it appear as though there is no underpinning to the promises and therefore making the overall local plan undeliverable.

Significant finance would be required to fund these not inconsiderable projects and the lack of this detail in tandem with missing information plans to preserve the identity and character of the villages and no detail on the town centre redevelopment raises considerable doubt as to the ability to deliver on the plan.

Local primary schools are already at capacity, while there is only one secondary school (Bridgewater High) that already serves Grappenhall, Appleton, Stretton, Stockton Heath, Hatton and beyond. It currently holds 1,500 pupils, and its sixth-form years (Appleton College) is actually closing in August 2019, meaning there will be no local education facilities for those who want to further their studies beyond GCSEs.

Traffic problems

As I have alluded to above there will have to be a large increase in commuter travel to support the proposed number of homes. This will have a huge impact on traffic, with thousands more commuters trying to access South Warrington via its motorway routes.

There is already a significant traffic problem in South Warrington especially during commuter hours, the ambiguity of the council's transport plans to deal with the addition of thousands of more residents and construction employees, as well as

large vehicles involved in the building works on the roads. Is another unsustainable branch of the proposal.

A sound transport plan is required to specify how the additional congestion will be managed given the huge influx of new vehicles in addition to the construction traffic required, there is no proposal to improve the A49, no improvements to existing bottlenecks which the proposals are aiming to funnel the traffic towards. There is also no clear reference to the impact on Walton and Chester road.

The only firm proposal is for a new wide dual carriageway to run parallel to the M56 linking the Barley Castle industrial estate to Junction 10. However, this suggests this is mainly to be used for HGVs for the housing developments and not for the benefit of residents. There is also no demonstration where the finance is coming from for this road.

South Warrington already has a severe traffic problem, and instead of finding ways to improve congestion, the council is merely exacerbating it.

The continued reliance on Victorian bridges to cross the Manchester Ship Canal (MSC) is an embarrassment that is showing no sign of being addressed, with the local area taking 40-50 minutes to recover from shipping passing through the area. Waterways require bridges and the limited number between North and South Warrington are bottlenecks at any time of the day, especially in commuter hours.

Without any sort of rail link in the South of the town then roads are the only means of travel and therefore a severe increase in congestion is the only outcome of the plan. Again showing the impact on both new and existing residents has not been sufficiently considered.

The proposal for £50 million high-level Cantilever Bridge over the ship canal is completely unrealistic on the grounds of the required funding and difficulties in delivering such a project whilst the canal remains in operational use.

Congestion in other areas of the town are much less severe than South of the canal it is therefore unclear as to why less busy areas are not being considered for redevelopment.

Greenbelt land

Warrington Borough Council is proposing the destruction of 600 acres of Greenbelt land, up to 11% of the area total. All of this is targeted at South Warrington.

This blatant targeting of Greenbelt is unforgivable given the number of Brownfield sites available for consideration throughout the borough to spread the development out more evenly. The focus on South Warrington will completely alter the character of the area and not for the better.

The special criteria for development on Greenbelt are as follows.

- 1) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- 2) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- 3) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- 4) To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging recycling of derelict and other urban land;

5) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.

The council has failed to meet these criteria, and therefore is unjustified in its intentions to build properties and warehousing facilities on Greenbelt land.

The scale of the plan does not match the demand, as covered above, and the duration of the plan does not take into account the likelihood that further brownfield sites could become available in the next 20 years.

The plan is in direct contradiction with the current governments National planning policy which states properties will be built in Britain “while maintaining strong protection for the Greenbelt”.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government stated: “Ensuring developments result in a net gain to the environment where possible and increases the protection given to ancient woodland so they are not lost for future generations.”

Environmental impact

It goes without saying that such an attack on the Greenbelt land will do untold damage to the ecology of the area, with the loss of habitats leading to the death / displacement of large numbers of animals and damage to the character of the area itself. This is barely considered in the existing proposal despite the huge impact on the area.

The additional traffic in the area will also have a significant and long lasting effect on air pollution for the local population. Despite this the plan does not address the issue or even really consider / analyse it properly. The only air quality monitoring is unfit for purpose when it comes to making an assessment of the area.

It is known however that Warrington already suffers greatly from air pollution with the South Warrington area already sandwiched between two major motorways.

The council now appears to have backtracked on its previous commitment to reducing air pollution in the town however consideration should be given to the national goals as recently set out, to reduce greenhouse gases to a net zero by 2050. This plan in no way supports that aim and actively reduces the quality of the area from an environmental standpoint, both through the destruction of green belt and the additional pollution in the area.

Undeliverable

In summary the Local Plan completely lacks details in all of the important areas. It is incorrectly targeting greenbelt, has no concrete solutions to the existing traffic issues and has no plan as to how this planned increase in population can be delivered with sufficient local services. Especially given that the local services on the Southern side of the canal are already stretched.

On top of this the housing numbers proposed are unrealistic and far outstrip any level of development achieved within the town calling into question the very deliverability of the plan.

The sheer scale of the plan is poorly underpinned and worse still the lack of details as to how it can be delivered makes it nothing more than irresponsible.

It will have a detrimental effect on one of the most appealing aspects of the town through the destruction of the Greenbelt and will have a detrimental impact on the residents both new and old.

This plan is neither sound nor deliverable and other options more diverse options must be considered.

Regards Stephen Holdsworth