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27.04.2019

Dear Sirs

Warrington Local Plan

[REDACTED] benefitting from the easy access to the motorway network, whilst enjoying a village atmosphere and life in a semi-rural environment.

Whilst I appreciate that there has to be some development to meet Government targets, I believe the scale and cumulative effect of the proposals goes way beyond what's reasonable and necessary, and amounts to an attack on our whole way of life. Villages will lose their identity, the road congestion and pollution will get worse, the needless loss of greenbelt will affect our health and well-being and all the lovely countryside will be gone...for ever, absorbed into Warrington's sprawl.

To quote the WBC Local Plan "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 objective, whilst laudible, is completely at odds with the Local Plan which results in 5,100 new houses built in my area and a loss of 80% of its greenbelt. In fundamental terms the plan is not, therefore, sound.

In Appleton Thorn, we are being inundated with planning applications brought forward in advance of this plan. Eddie Stobart's proposed new head office will see in excess of 600 lorries a day accessing the already congested M6 and Six 56 will see 288,000 sq mtr and 4,100 people using the same access road. These applications must not be determined in isolation, but in addition to the Local Plan to build 5,100 houses – as the cumulative effect will, in my opinion, be horrendous for local residents.

I am appealing against the proposed plan for the following reasons:

1. Number of houses

The Plan envisages 18,900 houses being built in the next 20 years, a run rate of 945 per annum. At its peak, the run rate is 1,656, in excess of three times the highest EVER build rate in Warrington of 545. The requirements are based on a computer model, I would suggest a sanity check is required, these numbers are not credible or sound.

2. Loss of greenbelt

The Plan may state that 11% of Warrington's greenbelt will be lost, but 80% of this is in South Warrington, how on earth can that be equitable or justified? The greenbelt is the main reason we live here, the country lanes, fields, little villages whilst being good for the environment are vital for our good health and well-being.

At the recent Green Summit in Manchester, which Andy Burnham hosted, HRH Prince of Wales stated that we are 70% less likely to develop mental health issues if we live near green spaces. As he said it, my thought was I wish he would say that to WBC who are going in completely the opposite direction. There are also numerous brownfield sites that should be considered first and I see no 'exceptional' justification for this scale of greenbelt loss. The plan, in my opinion, is not, therefore, sound.

3. Loss of character and identity

The sheer scale of the Plan for South Warrington will result in the picturesque little villages, mostly comprising a pub and a church and a community centre with green fields in between, each with its own character, being merged into Warrington's sprawl. The loss of green spaces means the nice strolls we enjoy currently will be through housing estates! This is not in line with the goals outlined for the plan, so is not sound in my opinion.

4. Infrastructure

I am sure that junction 20 of the M6 must be one of the worst congested and polluted junctions in the country. Drive over the motorway bridge at rush hour or Friday afternoons and it is bumper to bumper traffic – it's a national disgrace and I feel so sorry for commuters. The road from Appleton Thorn frequently backs right up the mile to the Grappenhall Lane roundabout; so the concept of adding 600 trucks, two roundabouts, 5 units with 4,100 employees and 5,100 houses is just lunacy. The congestion, noise and pollution will be horrific, even with the proposed link roads cutting through the greenbelt. The road network can't cope now, so why make it worse – in this respect the Plan is not sound, in my opinion.

5. Delivery

The Plan will inevitably be dependent on private sector businesses funding, not only the housing or commercial developments, but some of the infrastructure too. As noted above, I am extremely sceptical of the number of houses being built and, if I am right ([REDACTED]), I am concerned as to the viability of building on this scale given the returns required by investors. There is also the immense disruption that will be caused during the building phases on what are effectively minor roads to the motorway network. I therefore believe in this respect also, the Plan is not sound.

In my view, the villages can grow organically, whilst keeping their identity and character in a green environment. The infrastructure needs improving at national and local level already as it can't cope now. The Plan presented reflects a complete step change which I don't believe is realistic and it will permanently damage the quality of life that we, and our future generations, could enjoy.

Please think again and scale this plan down so it is realistic and in keeping with the area.

Yours Faithfully

J.A. Fairbotham F.C.A