



Subject:

Local plan comments

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My husband and I have lived in Warrington all our lives

We unequivocally oppose these plans for a range of reasons because we believe it to be unjustifiable and undeliverable.

For instance, the plan fails to deal with how the current traffic congestion and pollution on the A49 from its junction with the M56 at Stretton, through Stockton Heath and into Warrington town centre will not be allowed to worsen as a result of the inevitably huge increase in traffic volume caused by the proposed overdevelopment.

The traffic problems are already considerable on this stretch of road and nothing has been done to address them despite previous housing and industrial development in the surrounding area over many years. The new roads which are proposed as a wish list, rather than as a definitive and fully funded certainty, to feed this building spree as detailed in the new plan would be nothing more than extensions of existing feeder routes and will do nothing to address the substantive issue of A49 congestion and pollution.

Furthermore, as WBC must know, the town is already characterised nationally as one of the worst air polluted areas in the north west as a direct consequence of traffic emissions. This proposed development will only make the situation worse but yet this does not seem to have featured in the planners thinking nor that of their political masters in any way. It beggars belief that these planners and politicians who are supposed to represent residents interests have not addressed as a priority either issue in formulating their proposals. Indeed it should have been a prerequisite that they did so before any planning of houses and industrial units took place in this area. Such a monumental failure borders on incompetence at best or at worst wilful negligence.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that these failures are because Warrington Borough Council is not interested in the well being and health of its residents especially on this side of the town. Its only interest, as usual, is in developing land in the south east and south west of the town, even if this means destroying for ever the existing Green Belt, because these are the most valuable remaining to it and can therefore generate the most income from council tax for its coffers. No doubt this largesse will either be spent elsewhere in the Borough or on silly and futile bids for things like City of Culture status (when Warrington isn't even a city) rather than on the pressing needs of the area which generates it.

What is clear to me from the plan and from the responses of council officers I spoke to at a consultation event I attended is that these plans have been formulated in large part on guesswork and spurious assumptions about the number of jobs likely to be generated over the next twenty years (an inordinately speculative length of time) and this too when we are told nationally that Brexit will destroy our economy.

We believe as well that there are some disingenuous assertions being made by WBC officers and politicians about what is driving the plan. On the one hand we hear that the council is simply responding to government imperatives when it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that it is actually more to do with the individual hubris of senior leaders and politicians within WBC using the national housing crisis for their own, some might say political, ends.

If the Borough Council wants to ensure that its plan is genuinely fit for purpose then it now needs to instruct its officers to do the essential groundwork to produce a holistic plan which deals with all the issues including securing funding and agreement for the necessary major road infrastructure and how it proposes to limit congestion and pollution in the affected areas. In order to avoid a breach of trust between the Council, its most senior officers and the local residents who elect the former and pay the salaries of the latter this must be done before the plan is approved for implementation.

In the light of the foregoing it will not surprise you to learn that I wish to register my profound disagreement with the plan both in principle and formulation and that my comments are included in the submission to the inspector appointed to consider it.

Jean Hayes