



9 June 2019

Director of Planning
Planning Policy and Programmes
Warrington Borough Council
New Town House
Buttermarket Street
Warrington
WA4 2NH

Dear Sir

Warrington Borough Council Local Plan Consultation

I have reviewed the above plan and would like to submit a number of questions/points for reconsideration.

1. Forecast Demand for Housing and employment Space.

The Local Housing Needs Assessment and Employment Land Forecasts do not seem to take into account the effect of Manchester and Liverpool's recent growth. I feel this needs detailing, since the demand for housing and employment on Warrington, with the resurgence of these two cities, will be less.

We may be building a lot of superfluous houses.

2. Release of Green Belt Land.

This, for me is the biggest issue against the plan. The 2012 Local Plan Core Strategy, prepared by Warrington Borough Council, sets out the aims of protecting the green belt, developing sites and services in locations accessible by public transport, accommodating 80% of development on brownfield land and reducing the impact of traffic on air quality. The proposed Garden City Suburb is largely located on green belt land, is not brownfield, is not accessible by public transport and will

contribute to deterioration in air quality. It does **not** therefore meet **any** of the 2012 criteria.

The National Planning Policy Framework provides that, once established, green belt boundaries should only be altered in *exceptional circumstances* (my italics). What are these exceptional circumstances? They are not detailed at all.

The 2012 plan envisages maintaining the green belt until at least 2032. This appears to have been completely ignored.

3. Protection against air pollution provided by the Green Belt.

Maintaining the green belt is not simply a question of aesthetics, although this is a point – I mean, who wants to live in a thoroughly overbuilt up area? The green belt, however, is I feel even more important than it was in 2012 in the light of the recognition of the effect that poor air quality has on public health. The green belt provides an important protection against the pollution coming from the motorways surrounding Warrington. The preferred development option would effectively remove this “green lung” protecting the town from the M56 and M6 pollution. What is the point of everyone looking to improve the quality of the environment if our own local council fail to do so?

4. Provision of New transport infrastructure and Public Services.

It is hard to see how the proposed development of a huge new suburb, which is separated from its town centre by the ship canal and provides no access to public transport infrastructure can be a sustainable plan. Development of this scale should at the very least provide a viable alternative to the use of the car such as access to the rail network and a new crossing of the ship canal.

The plan recognises that strategic road infrastructure may be required but does not actually give any details. To my mind, we need a new strategic road infrastructure and public services **BEFORE** any housing development, as the former will be a huge cost to the public sector. On the other hand there will be a huge financial incentive for owners whose land has been removed from the green belt to sell it quickly. Traffic through Warrington is already overburdening the roads, particularly whenever there are any issues with the motorways, turning the whole of central Warrington into a traffic jam.

5. Cycle Infrastructure

Surely encouraging travelling by bike would reduce congestion and pollution and improve the health of the local community? In my view the draft plan does not place sufficient emphasis on encouraging cycling in South Warrington, which is currently quite poor, apart from the pennine trail. At the very least the plan needs to provide for a strategic cycling infrastructure with dedicated cycle lanes, within the 30 mph limit, along the A49 and A50 and ways across the ship canal to link South Warrington to the Town Centre. I work on the other side of Warrington – to cycle there requires a much longer trip than necessary and some deviance in order to try and remain safely off road, as the roads through Warrington are, frankly, unsafe at present for cyclists.

6. The Effect of the Preferred Development Option on Local Communities

I have lived in this area all my life, and I do not want to see the local communities lost in a welter of urbanisation. I do not want to move away but this plan would make me reconsider.

7. Employment land Allocation in the Garden Suburb.

The recently announced schemes promoted by Langtree and Stobarts suggest that the entire allocation will be taken up by large scale warehouses. Figures suggesting that this is a large provider of new jobs in this new scheme look frankly over-inflated.

Why do you not reconsider the area if you feel you can justify the release of green belt land to one the other side of the ship canal, thus obviating the need for more road infrastructure and alternative transport networks? The land between Birchwood station and the ship canal for example, would not have to cross the canal, and is by a rail network.

Please seriously reconsider these proposals, and please keep me informed of the Council's response to the consultations.

Yours faithfully



Anna Dorman (Mrs)