

Name Marion Price

Email [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED]

Advice on the Representation Process is Unclear

The council's Statement of Representations Procedure and Availability of Documents recommends that representations (comments) are made by completing the Council's Representation Form with the aid of the guidance notes. This advice is repeated in its Statement of Community Involvement. Due to a lack of hard copies available in Burtonwood Library, a local resident collected 150 copies of each document from the town centre for distribution at a public meeting.

The guidance note states that the consultation process presents the opportunity to comment on the draft local plan with specifically-focused questions. This will ensure more effective representations and meet the requirements of the Planning Inspectorate. What follows is an impossibly complex set of tasks which variously require knowledge of the Local Development Scheme, the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, the relevant Sustainability Appraisal Report, sections of the Town and Country Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Proposed Submission Version Local Plan itself (all available, of course, on-line). There is further guidance on completing the on-line representation form. On-line and hard copy forms invite responses in terms of sections, policies, paragraphs and policy sub-numbers.

The guidance on how to respond and the Representation Form is confusing. It is not user-friendly. It does not encourage greater community participation; in fact, it is having the opposite effect. A number of people say they have failed to complete the on-line form. Above all, there has been a lack of clarity over the validity of using a 'letter format'. None of the material specifically mentions this. The Council now say that, if asked, people have been advised that letters are acceptable as a representation if they do not want to use the standard form.

Name Marion Price

Email [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED]

Representation: I do not consider the Draft Local Plan to be Legally Compliant (1)

The Council's Statement of Community Involvement (2016) intends to promote effective participation in the planning system. Yet many residents are unaware of the publication of the Draft Local Plan, its full content and how it affects them .

Recent discussions with residents in Burtonwood and Collins Green show that high numbers were unaware of proposals to build at least 160 houses on Green Belt land in Burtonwood. This was the case until at least the middle of May when a group of local residents began to distribute information throughout the community. A show of hands at a hastily arranged public meeting of more than 200 people on 23rd May indicated that at least 75% had no knowledge of WBC's letter of 26th March.

While this lack of awareness might be attributed, in some cases, to non-delivery, it may also reflect the manner of delivery: by hand, to an address with an un-named occupier (Dear *blank*) and without a heading.

Failure of the Council to take all reasonable steps to notify residents contravenes Regulation 19 of the 2012 Local Planning Regulations and its own SCI: (para 2.11) "Once a Local Plan Document has been prepared, the Council will publish the document and conduct a period of consultation. This will last for 6 weeks..."

Furthermore, in line with the Local Planning Framework , the Council's SCI acknowledges (para 1.23) that Local Plan Documents can be concerned with several different levels of planning, ranging from issues that relate to the whole of the Borough, through to proposals that apply to smaller areas, or site specific allocations of land. It goes on to talk of Targeted Community Involvement: where "in relation to specific topics, involvement is targeted at groups involved in/affected by their delivery or implementation". The Council has failed to involve the community directly affected by the proposed removal of Green Belt Land on Phipps Lane/Green Lane.

Name Marion Price

Email [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED]

Representation: I do not consider the Draft Local Plan to be Legally Compliant (2)

As part of WBC's Statement of Representations Procedure and Availability of Documents and in accordance with Regulation 19 of the 2012 Local Planning Regulations, a number of documents should have been available for public inspection over the consultation period. These include the Proposed Submission Version Local Plan and evidence base reports and other supporting documents. While these were available as on-line resources, the complete range of supporting documents was not available in the local library.

There was almost total reliance on on-line sources. The consultation events did not provide hard copy of key documents and in-depth queries were handled by reference back to the Council's website. Only so much can be gleaned from websites and a gallery of posters.

The Council's Statement of Community Involvement (para 1.8) lists the benefits of involving a wider range of people throughout the planning process. These include more focus on local needs and priorities, planning decisions informed by local knowledge, and improved understanding of the process. The decision to host all of the events at the Halliwell Jones Stadium discriminates against residents from such 'outlying settlements' as Burtonwood and Collins Green, including hard to reach groups and those without transport. According to the Leader of the Council, the decision to use one venue was taken in order to address expected demand adding that, while this might not be convenient for all residents, it was judged to be the best overall approach.

An assurance that the local parish council has engaged in debate and might be willing to engage and share information with residents about the implications for Burtonwood is misleading. Four residents attended a recent parish assembly to ask for support and help with resources only to be told "there is not a single point of view". At the time of writing, (3rd June), we have been unable to obtain minutes of the meeting or of the parish council's response to the Local Plan.

Name Marion Price

Email [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED]

Representation to the draft Local Plan

Vision: too much emphasis on growth

The Responding to Representations Report Regulation 18 (2019): the overwhelming majority of responses from residents, community groups and Parish Councils expressed objection to the Plan's vision promoting Warrington's transformation from a New Town to a 'New City'. In reply, the Council maintains that this was never a bid to formally change the town's status but a concept to help explain how it was seeking to promote Warrington's future growth. While specific references to Warrington New City have been removed from the draft Local Plan, the overwhelming emphasis remains on growth. After the consultation, in November 2017, an executive director (in an address to the TPA) continued to outline a "leap in growth" towards a "city of the future".

A large number of representations pointed to lack of community involvement in defining the vision and objectives. There was significant objection to the scale of the PDO's development aspirations and the resulting need to release Green Belt land. The Council states that it has taken these into account in preparing the new Local Plan. Nevertheless, large-scale economic growth remains the basic, untested underlying assumption. The objectives have been updated to reflect "the higher level of development", given ongoing development pressure. Hence, the headline figures: 18,900 homes by 2037, 362 hectares of employment land, removal of 11% of Green Belt land.

The emphasis on growth cannot be taken as given in the current climate. It is not a vision that has been developed with the support of the local community. An over ambitious vision imposed from above undermines the NPPF aim of including people and communities at all stages of the planning process.

Developers versus residents

There was also a clear division between Regulation 18 Representations from a large number of developers and landowners arguing for more growth, and actively promoting sites, compared to residents and some local representatives arguing for a more cautious, communitarian and environmentalist approach. This leads to gross inequalities in expertise and resources when it comes to relatively technical issues, to the disadvantage of the lay person. Few people have the expertise or the resources to challenge the outcome of the Council's "comprehensive review of its housing and employment needs evidence base, using updated forecast and projection data". Nevertheless there is a widespread belief that the need for new homes and employment land is exaggerated and rests on unsound evidence. In this unequal struggle, some communities are unable to secure the help and support of their local councillors which would go some way towards redressing the balance; others have suggested crowd-funding as a way of making representations that count.

The Green Belt

As recently as 2014 it was agreed that there was no need to release Green Belt land. This was in line with one of the 5 purposes of Green Belt policy: to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the

recycling of derelict and other urban land. WBC now claims that it needs to release around 11% of its total area of Green Belt. It claims that, in line with NPPF (2019), it has considered other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development (para 5.1.9).

There are no 'exceptional circumstances' to justify a review of the present Green Belt. If the case for housing and employment growth falls, and if there is evidence to show that full use is not being made of previously developed land, the case for the release of Green Belt falls.

Nevertheless, WBC embarked on a review of its Green Belt, based on assessments made by consultants in 2016. The ARUP report's methodological approach has been the subject of widespread criticism: it is subjective, pseudoscientific and flawed. It claims to apply 'professional judgement in line with the methodology' to assess parcels of land that make a strong, moderate or weak contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. In other words, it aims to show that some parts of the Green Belt are more important than others. While the findings do not in themselves result in changes to Green Belt boundaries, they do feed into the overall assessment of development options as part of the Local Plan.

Burtonwood and surrounding Green Belt

The Council's site assessment conclusions are based on unsound evidence and a mistaken attempt to classify Green Belt land.

ARUP's final report surveyed 9 parcels of land forming a collar around the village. It concluded that 8 made a strong contribution to the Green Belt; one (BW3 bounded by Green Lane, Phipps Lane and Lumber Lane, and put forward in part for development in the Local Plan) made only a moderate contribution. While this parcel is judged to make a strong contribution in assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, it is argued that any development would be contained by durable boundaries (Green Lane and Lumber Lane). In other words, development could take place from Phipps Lane to Lumber Lane because this parcel is not a fundamentally important part of the Green Belt.

As the developer, Northern Trust, puts it: "As the only 'moderate' parcel surrounding Burtonwood the evidence base clearly identifies Parcel BW3...as appropriate for consideration for development and release from Green Belt to meet identified housing needs". Or, as the draft Local Plan states. "the site only makes a moderate contribution to the objectives of the Green Belt" (10.5.3).

ARUP's Addendum (2017), following Regulation 18 Consultation, has since downgraded another parcel of land (BW2, land to the west of Phipps Lane) from making a strong contribution to the Green Belt to a moderate one (Appendix C). While developers will certainly be aware of this change, local residents may not be.

The Case for 160 houses in Burtonwood

The rationale for 160 dwellings is unclear and imprecise. It has been suggested that an upper limit of 10% of existing housing should be used in 7 'outlying settlements', although this has not been applied across the board. The figure is an arbitrary, mathematical limit with no foundation in planning practice. It is no substitute for the proper examination of a settlement's character or analysis of its infrastructure.

The Site Assessment Technical Report (2019) notes that developers have put forward proposals for 260 dwellings. It adds, "this would be too large. It is therefore recommended that half the site is taken forward".

According to the developer, the proposal for 130/150/160 dwellings is not viable. They argue that a viable scale of expansion will be in the region of 250-300 homes. This contradicts the Council's claim that the development is achievable.

Residents are right to be sceptical of the claim that the proposal for (a minimum of) 160 dwellings on part of site ref: 1654 is the end of the matter. A number of adjacent sites now sit on land which has been judged as making only a moderate contribution to the Green belt. The settlement proformas also show that, while each site cannot be developed on its own, they can be brought forward in conjunction with site ref:1654. At the moment, the draft plan acknowledges that such developments would be beyond the housing requirement for Burtonwood. Given all the other unknowns in the Plan, it is not impossible that the situation will change when the plan is reviewed at 5 yearly intervals.

Duty to Cooperate

There is little evidence of positive outcomes arising from the duty to cooperate with neighbouring local authorities. St Helens and its immediate neighbours have recently undertaken or are in the process of undertaking their own Green Belt reviews to meet *their* development needs (St Helens Local Plan draft 2020-2035). This means large housing developments next to the outlying settlements of Burtonwood and Collins Green, along Gorsey Lane and in the Key Settlement of Earlestown. There is no evidence of cooperation in terms of housing market needs across authority boundaries or infrastructure provision in terms of roads, traffic management, school places, health facilities etc.

In line with an alleged sub- regional need for large scale logistic and warehousing development, St Helens expects a strong shift to B8 uses, *providing the potential to increase its economic competitiveness (2.4.1)*. Both Warrington and St Helens cite proximity to major road and motorway networks as a reason for pressing ahead with B8 land uses, even though this will prove counterproductive as roads reach their capacity.

Cooperation with St Helens Borough Council for the development of a 31 hectare extension to Omega to meet Warrington's employment needs is still in a pre-planning stage. The proposal is constrained by the need to ensure that the site can be satisfactorily accessed. This fails to meet the NPPF (para.173) requirement that plans should be deliverable and up to date.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Local Plan](#)
Subject: Re: Representation - misinformation NTLs
Date: 17 June 2019 12:17:48

Yes - I have looked at all these documents. In fact, I gave them to my local borough councillor. Look at Fig 21 in 10.5.3. of the Local Plan. This clearly shows one half of the site due to be developed. One half of THE SITE. The northern boundary of the divided site coincides with a well-established hedge which divides the site into TWO FIELDS. That is, ONE FIELD is up for development and NOT HALF A FIELD which is what my councillor is consistently arguing. My advice would be that someone looks at the area. They will clearly see that one site = 2 fields. Hence half a site is approx.= one field.

-----Original Message-----

From: Local Plan [REDACTED]
To: marion price [REDACTED]
Sent: Mon, 17 Jun 2019 11:33
Subject: RE: Representation - misinformation NTLs

Dear Marion

Policy OS1 of the draft Local Plan shows the site to be allocated in red and confirms that the allocation is for a minimum of 160 homes.

Here is a link to the Local Plan. The Burtonwood Allocation is Policy OS1 (page 208 to 211).

<https://www.warrington.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/19339/proposed-submission-version-local-plan-v4.pdf>

The original 'call for site' submission by the developer proposed a larger site, extending up to Lumber Lane, which the developer considered could accommodate 260 homes.

I have provided a link below to the original call for site submission

<https://www.warrington.gov.uk/downloads/file/13589/r18-083>

The assessment work undertaken by the Council concluded that the site as submitted was too large and we took the decision to allocate approximately half the site for 160 homes.

I have attached the relevant site assessment pro-forma which sets out this conclusion.

Regards

Planning Policy & Programmes Team

From: marion price [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 June 2019 11:14
To: Local Plan [REDACTED]
Subject: Representation - misinformation

Please acknowledge of receipt of the following representation which is based on

MISINFORMATION given out by the council on the Local Plan.

Some of the key information provided by WBC about the proposed development of 160 houses in Burtonwood is wrong. The mistake is due to confusion over the difference between a site and a field. Residents have been told on numerous occasions that, "one site is being suggested by the council, that is the field at the junction of Green Land and Phipps Lane. The council say that the field is **too big** for 160 homes and so **only half of it** would be needed (emphasis in the original). The other half would stay in the green belt." (Letter from Councillors Mitchell and O'Neill to residents, 11th June 2019).

Site 1654 is comprised of two fields, as can clearly be seen in the Settlement Proformas/Site Selection, 27th November 2018. The site runs from Phipps Lane to Lumber Lane. The site was considered to be too large. It was therefore recommended that half of the site is taken forward. In other words, **one whole field**.

This misinformation has been repeated over and over again by council representatives in spite of residents' attempts to have it corrected. The confusion between a site and a field is repeated in the information posters on policy OS1 Burtonwood as displayed at the consultation events at Halliwell Jones Stadium.

I have raised this issue a number of times with council representatives and at the time of writing (11am on 17th June 2019) have received no reply.

Marion Price

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Local Plan](#)
Subject: Re: Representation - misinformation NTLs
Date: 17 June 2019 12:26:43

To put it another way. Look at Settlement Proforma Ref 1654. Can you see a fine line dividing the site into 2?

That line is a hedge dividing the site into 2 fields. One site = 2 fields. Ergo: half a site = one field.

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From: Local Plan [REDACTED]
To: marion price [REDACTED]
Sent: Mon, 17 Jun 2019 11:33
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The assessment work undertaken by the Council concluded that the site as submitted was too large and we took the decision to allocate approximately half the site for 160 homes.

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Regards

Planning Policy & Programmes Team

From: marion price [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 June 2019 11:14
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difference between a site and a field. Residents have been told on numerous occasions that, "one site is being suggested by the council, that is the field at the junction of Green Land and Phipps Lane. The council say that the field is **too big** for 160 homes and so **only half of it** would be needed (emphasis in the original). The other half would stay in the green belt." (Letter from Councillors Mitchell and O'Neill to residents, 11th June 2019).

Site 1654 is comprised of two fields, as can clearly be seen in the Settlement Proformas/Site Selection, 27th November 2018. The site runs from Phipps Lane to Lumber Lane. The site was considered to be too large. It was therefore recommended that half of the site is taken forward. In other words, **one whole field**.

This misinformation has been repeated over and over again by council representatives in spite of residents' attempts to have it corrected. The confusion between a site and a field is repeated in the information posters on policy OS1 Burtonwood as displayed at the consultation events at Halliwell Jones Stadium.

I have raised this issue a number of times with council representatives and at the time of writing (11am on 17th June 2019) have received no reply.

Marion Price

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Local Plan](#)
Subject: Re: Representation - misinformation NTLS
Date: 17 June 2019 14:25:10

Please look carefully. Yes - the boundary is fine. It is accurate. In the real world it is a hedge. When you walk down the road you cannot but be aware of the fact that it is a field boundary. From that line to Phipps Lane is a field. It is therefore correct to say that the "council suggest taking the field opposite the school in Burtonwood out of the Green Belt. The Council want to keep the adjacent field in green belt". It is not correct to say that, "the Council suggest taking half of the field in Burtonwood opposite the school out of the Green Belt. The Council want to keep the other half of the field in green belt" (Burtonwood and Winwick Ward Rose).

This misinformation is repeated in a letter to local residents form our borough councillors. It is incorrect to say "The council say that the **field** is too big for 160 homes and so only half of it would be needed". It is correct to say, "the council say that **the site** is too big for 160 homes and so only half of it would be needed"

The council is spreading misinformation. If I am walking down Green Lane, I am being told mistakenly, "only half this field is under consideration for development". The reality is that the whole field is under consideration (though not the other field from the hedge to Lumber Lane). Perhaps someone would like to come to tea and I will show you what I mean. Otherwise I need to make an appointment to come in to your offices.

PS Are you sure that Councillors Mitchell and O'Neill understand what is in the draft Local Plan? I am absolutely convinced that they do not. I understand what is in OS1, 10.5.3 and in the settlement proformas. While I am opposed to the plan, I am clear about what is being suggested i.e. proposal to build 160 houses on a field which forms part of the larger site ref:1654)

-----Original Message-----

From: Local Plan [REDACTED]
To: marion price [REDACTED]
Sent: Mon, 17 Jun 2019 13:18
Subject: RE: Representation - misinformation NTLS

Dear Marion

The Council is proposing the site as shown in Policy OS1. If you do not consider this is an appropriate boundary then you need to address this in your consultation response.

Regards

Planning Policy & Programmes Team

From: marion price [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 June 2019 12:26
To: Local Plan [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Representation - misinformation NTLS

To put it another way. Look at Settlement Proforma Ref 1654. Can you see a fine line dividing the site into 2? That line is a hedge dividing the site into 2 fields. One site = 2 fields. Ergo: half a site = one field.

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The assessment work undertaken by the Council concluded that the site as submitted was too large and we took the decision to allocate approximately half the site for 160 homes.

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Regards

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Local Plan](#)
Subject: for the last time from Burtonwood
Date: 17 June 2019 21:57:59
Attachments: photo.docx
thumbnail.jpg

Please find attached an aerial photo taken from the Northern Trust's website. It clearly shows site ref:1654 divides into two fields. This agrees with Figure 21, para 10.5.3 in the draft local plan. The difficulty is that **councillors are telling residents that only one half of the field to the south is being put forward for 160 houses.**

The Councillors are wrong and are giving out highly misleading information.

This is extremely important. Please consider it carefully.

Marion Price



From: [REDACTED]
To: [Local Plan](#)
Subject: please respond
Date: 20 June 2019 22:31:33

Thank you for confirmation that you have received my query. Can you confirm that I am correct in my reading of the situation?

I first raised this issue by letter with a councillor on 14th June asking her to clarify the situation in the public domain. She passed it on to you, since when I have received no reply. A number of residents are confused by statements and a letter in which she says that "only half of (the field) would be needed. The other half would stay in the green belt".

This is of enormous local concern. I hoped that my email of 17th June would put the record straight. Although the deadline for submitting Representations has now passed, this is still very much a live issue which needs to be addressed urgently. I am happy to visit your offices if it would expedite a reply.

Regards

Marion Price

-----Original Message-----

From: Local Plan
To: marion price
Sent: Thu, 20 Jun 2019 15:52
Subject: RE: for the last time from Burtonwood

Dear Marion

I can confirm that we have recorded all of the issues that you have raised.

Regards

Planning Policy & Programmes Team

From: marion price [REDACTED]

Sent: 17 June 2019 21:57

To: Local Plan

Subject: for the last time from Burtonwood

Please find attached an aerial photo taken from the Northern Trust's website. It clearly shows site ref:1654 divides into two fields. This agrees with Figure 21, para 10.5.3 in the draft local plan.

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