

Objection to draft Local Plan

Local Plans are required to meet the tests of soundness. This means they should be: positively prepared; justified; effective; and consistent with national policy. **This plan is not sound.**

The plan is not positively prepared. The plan is not effective. The plan is not justified. The plan is not consistent with national policy for all the reasons I set out below:

Whilst it purports to seek to meet the local needs for housing, land for businesses, community facilities, infrastructure (e.g. for transport, water, energy), education, shops, facilities for sport and leisure etc., it appears that the need has been overemphasized and certainly in relation to the amount of housing required in south Warrington, the need for housing in this area is simply not there. Official population predictions need 528 houses per year, the government says 909, Warrington Council says 945. This is simply not justified. It may be an ambition for growth, but the demand is not there and nor is it predicted to be. Of the homes the local plan says will be built there are a disproportionate amount to be built in the "garden suburb" – 6470 when the remainder of Warrington is to provide a further 2716. There is no local need for this type of over development.

The plan requires release of huge swathes of greenbelt in the "garden suburb." There have to be exceptional circumstances for this. The council's "growth ambition" is not a valid reason to release land from greenbelt. There will be devastating effects on biodiversity and insufficient wildlife corridors if greenbelt is released. The whole nature of the area will be changed for ever.

It is far from clear how the plan is to be delivered during its lifetime, and there are bold statements that the plan will allow growth past the date of the current plan. Why release greenbelt when it is not needed for use in the current plan? The infrastructure plan is unclear. There is no mention that other delivery partners (highway authorities, the Environment Agency, water companies) are signed up to the plan. The plan is not consistent with national policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Aside from the fact that the plan should not release land from greenbelt there is no evidence that landowners will agree to release their land for development. The council has not dealt with this issue in the plan.

Returning to infrastructure there is no clear plan on how this is to be delivered. As a resident [REDACTED] I am only too aware of the constant gridlock into Stockton Heath down the A49, the opposite way towards the motorway and also out towards the Lymm interchange. The traffic is horrendous. There are 2 motorway junctions in the area, the A49 to the M56 and the Lymm interchange. Traffic to both these routes is at a standstill during rush hour (and other times) as it is. There is often a problem on the M6 over the Thelwall viaduct and traffic tries to divert through Warrington which brings the town to a standstill. Any amount of new roads will not ease this, will be an eyesore and, still with only 2 nearby motorway junctions those routes will always be congested. The only thing achieved will be more traffic.

And what about the swingbridges? When a ship passes along the ship canal nothing can move through Stockton Heath, or Grappenhall. This happens 2 or 3 times each day. There is no plan as to how local residents are to deal with this in the event you decide to build thousands of new houses, each bringing at least 1 car (probably more) to the area. That is at least 5000 more commutes per day.

And with all the new cars comes more pollution. The World Health Organisation has already named and shamed Warrington for its high levels of pollution. The council's plan will only make this situation worse.

The lack of detail in relation to the provision of schools and health centres is a concern. How is this to be funded. Where will the doctors come from? [REDACTED]. When I phone for an appointment, unless it is an absolute emergency I cannot be seen for weeks. Who is going to service the new community? And who is going to fund the building of the new schools? How long will this take? There are already hundreds of houses (family houses) being built in the Stretton area, but no new schools at present to accommodate the families who will inevitably move in very soon.

There are lots of brown field sites throughout Warrington which can be used but the council chooses to build on green belt land. The council's plan is not sound and needs to be rethought.

Please note my objection to the draft local plan.

Sarah Elderton

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