

9th June 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

Comments - Warrington Local Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Local Plan which, having been a resident [REDACTED] for almost [REDACTED] years I feel I have a vested interest in an outcome which regenerates the town, minimises congestion and pollution, ensures affordable housing exists for my children is created.

I completely agree that there is a need for a Local Plan however I have concerns regarding the current plan and the proposed Green Belt release.

My understanding is that there are 5 key criteria which must be met before Green Belt is released all 5 **WILL NOT BE MET** by this plan which I believe to be unsound;

1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas
2. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
3. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
4. Assist in urban regeneration, be encouraging the recycling to derelict and other urban land
5. Prevent neighbouring area merging into one another.

More specifically;

There appears to be no justification for the planned numbers of homes which are well beyond the government's own targets. The 20-year plan is not necessary and what appears to be a personal desire of certain individuals. A 15-year plan is. If a 15-year time scale had been used and the assumptions used more valid then the need to remove swathes of Green Belt would have been obviated.

The villages of Appleton, Grappenhall and Stretton are some of the historic and characterful in this part of Cheshire and their special character will be lost for ever.

The economic assumptions of increased employment are unsound and flawed. The logistics centres planned are becoming more and more Technology driven with very few people working in them. I am a senior level head-hunter, specialising in the Recruitment of HR Directors for firms like Eddie Stobart, Boohoo, Shop Direct, Co-op, Manchester Airport etc. I know that all these companies are looking to create low paid logistics jobs in places like the proposed Garden Suburb. The higher paid jobs that the developers would have you believe they will create just don't exist on these sites. The assumptions used around employment coming to South Warrington are fundamentally flawed. It will be commuters who will buy the houses and much fewer than suggested hourly paid pickers and drivers, living in less affluent areas who will be driving from other parts of the town for their minimum wage jobs. The majority of people who would buy expensive commuter houses in the proposed Garden Suburb will be commuters to Manchester and already are more likely to drive to Manchester or the Trafford Centre or Cheshire Oaks than face traffic congestion trying to get into Warrington so in fact, the point that this development will bring regeneration to the town centre is flawed.

The town needs redevelopment and there are plenty of brown field sites that could be built on. Young people and young couples need to be able to start their home owning journey in towns, not expensive commuter housing estates. We need developers to BE REQUIRED to redevelop the town centre. If these plans go ahead they will cherry pick the easy large-scale fields on which to build exacerbating, not solving the underlying issue.

Being employed I use the motorway network, train network frequently for work and please. Warrington is unique being bordered by 3 motorways and having 3 waterways running through it. The specific characteristics of our town means it should be treated differently and thus there is a special case for reduced housing targets which WBC has not considered. If they were to go ahead, then the fact that their plans to address the MSC crossing is vague is unacceptable.

I am seriously concerned that there has been no serious analysis of air quality impact and that removing greenbelt will remove the pollution buffer between my village of Grappenhall and the planned logistics centres.

We all know that successful growth must be based on a sound Transport Plan, however the Draft Transport Plan has no substance and no serious costings associated...again how can WBC recommend releasing, for ever, great swathes of Greenbelt, when the Transport plans are vague and unposted. Similarly, the plans for the infrastructure of roads, schools, GP surgeries are very vague.

I am very concerned about the lack of detail over huge multi-million-pound infrastructure projects. There is no realistic plan to replace the current poorly maintained Victorian bridges over the MSC and on the plan, there is just a box in a map/suggestion of a bridge- there has been no serious analysis or plan...the thought of the addition of all that traffic (particularly when there is an accident on any of the 3 motorways that surround us meaning the town comes to a standstill, or when the poorly maintained bridges get stuck , or when high winds mean that lorries are prohibited from using the Thelwall viaduct and cut through town) already impacts on me , my family and my business. I dread the thought of things getting worse.

Never mind the unsoundness of the plans themselves, when it comes to deliverability, the plans are flimsy and show a shocking lack of detail. There are no costings to explain community infrastructure such as High School, GP surgeries, supermarket etc. There is no demonstration of where the money is coming from to fund the dual carriageway.

£50mn seems an unrealistic estimate to fund a new high level bridge when the MSC is still in operation.

I also don't feel that it is sound to build houses before infrastructure, surely infrastructure comes first.

So, in summary, whilst I support the need for growth, improvements to infrastructure, urban regeneration and economic growth, I believe there are key aspects of the plan which gives significant cause for concern, are unjustified and unsound.

Many thanks for taking the time and please listen to arguments and change your single minded course of action away from this unsound plan.

Yours faithfully

Simon Barwell