

## Local Plan Objection by Stephen Jackson



I wish to object to the local plan on a number of points. The proposal will see South Warrington becoming a giant conurbation based on some assumptions regarding the demand for housing in the area. The basis for this growth seems to be fueled by the self interests of a couple of large companies in the area and based on no significant fact. There is no large employer moving to the area or any large capital programme planned that would see Warrington having a huge influx of population. The only growth apparently planned are logistics centres that recruit very few people.

Of course if houses are built people will buy them but not to work in Warrington but to commute to Manchester, Liverpool and basically anywhere but the local area. The proposals to mitigate traffic congestion and associated pollution are naive and completely unsound. The existing bridges over the Manchester Ship Canal are already poorly maintained and Peel Holdings seem so use this as a negotiating point for their own goals. The proposed roads also seem more geared to supporting the commercial traffic to Warrington Port and Appleton Thorn Trading estate than for the betterment of travel for residents. There is no reference to the impact on key motorway junctions which already dangerously back up at key times and are gridlocked if there are problems on the Thelwall viaduct. The idea that trams and cycle lanes will be installed is not substantiated by any funding or existing planning we have seen. The cycle provision in Warrington is abysmal with Warrington centre encircled by a ring of traffic and cycle lanes only installed where it is convenient to draw a white line.

The local plan completely misses how the world now needs to focus on the environment more than profit. The centre of Warrington is dying and needs regeneration. Brown field sites should be the absolute priority and showing a real intention to move to green transport should be demonstrated rather than being a hollow promise.

Warrington Council is proposing to turn an area of green belt into a giant housing estate. The plans will destroy the character of the small villages that make South Warrington a mecca not only for locals but for all residents of Warrington who come here to enjoy fresh air and open spaces. The impact on the environment will be substantial and the increase in air pollution considerable. We already know air pollution is a problem for this area, we seem intent to make it worse.

I believe there are 5 criteria for releasing greenbelt and the local plan does not seem to meet any of them

- It is proposing unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas, in fact it's going to create it!
- It is not protecting our countryside (the lungs we so desperately need as global warming continues)

- It is going to damage the special character of the settlements in the South Warrington area
- It isn't focussing on urban regeneration, it is working to old planning ideals which we know we have to rethink in light of climate change and the changing of habits that see town centres falling into decay.
- At best it does at least keep a barrier to neighbouring towns but I would question whether the line between Warrington and Runcorn will be maintained for long

As a resident of South Warrington I have always known building would happen. What I wasn't expecting was the complete lack of strategic planning. The new high level bridge is now impossible to build as land and properties purchased to access this bridge now seem to be protected. The South Warrington area is dominated by car ownership for 2 reasons. People who can afford 4 and 5 bedroom homes can afford and want cars and second is that we have no culture of using public transport. As a cycle commuter I know just how unsafe cycling on Warringtons roads are, and when I do get to the train station the trains are overfull and bike provision on board extremely poor

If Warrington want to make a great town they need to start making the investment in infrastructure NOW! Not make glib promises of 'jam tomorrow'. Doctors surgeries and dentists need building and STAFFING. People need to be able to walk to nearby shops. As for the idea of Trams then these projects take decades to build up and of course are based on people wanting to come to Warrington town centre - which they don't.

This plan is unsound, it reflects a bygone ideal that no longer exists if we are to take Global Warming and changing habits seriously. At a time when we should be doing EVERYTHING to protect green belt, Warrington still proposes to give developers the easy option of green belt building with all the infrastructure promises being nothing but lip service. There is no evidence of sound plans or proof that funding is forthcoming.

I am hugely disappointed with this proposal. I want a Town that my children can grow up in and I can retire in. Where are these in the plans, creating retirement communities with the necessary services they need. Where are the family areas with the schools and safe cycle routes that educate our future generations that they can live without cars! Where are the real plans to protect wildlife and build sustainable housing that minimise our carbon footprint on the world.

I do see a plan heavily weighted towards the car, truck and expensive housing that will only make South Warrington a giant, grid-locked conurbation and no matter what trendy "garden suburb" name you try and call it it will destroy the character of a vital area which all Warrington residents currently enjoy.

This plan is UNSOUND in both its misguided ambition and its dated approach.