

# Warrington Local Plan EiP

## Matter 5: Economic Growth and Development

On behalf of Taylor Wimpey, Bloor Homes, Lone Star Land and Mulbury (Grappenhall) Limited.

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## Document Management.

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# 1. Matter 5 – Economic Growth and Development

1.1. Each of the Inspector's questions are listed below. We comment on those questions where we raise matters in the representations to the second Regulation 19 Warrington Local Plan (WLP) in relation:

- 'Policy DEV4 – Economic Growth and Development' (para 7.40 to 7.45).

1.2. As part of the representations, we also provided our own note on Economic Growth and Housing Needs (Appendix 6).

1.3. Below we comment on pertinent matters in direct response to the questions. Where comments are not provided, we reserve the right to respond to the Council's comments during examination.

## Relevant Policy DEV4

### **Q1. Is the Economic Development Needs Assessment 2021 justified in basing the need for employment land on historic take up rates rather than jobs growth forecasts?**

1.4. We note that BE Group does not recommend that the economic forecasts be the basis for defining employment land provision up to 2038 because it represents the absolute minimum amount of land required to accommodate the activities of different industry sectors<sup>1</sup>. BE Group recommend that the Council use the roll forward of historic take-up as the main measure of Warrington's future land needs up to 2038, and that the Strategic / Local Take Up Model best accounts for the full range of needs<sup>2</sup>. We consider this to be a positive approach in terms of economic growth.

1.5. The issue we have is that the employment land requirement has not been translated into a housing requirement figure, with the reason being given that employment land need is an unreliable basis on which to provide jobs growth forecast<sup>3</sup>. Pegasus Group has therefore done this analysis, which suggests that 316.26ha of employment land could support more than 40,000 additional jobs<sup>4</sup> over the period 2021–38.

1.6. GL Hearn have calculated that the local housing need figure of 816dpa would support an estimated 18,300 additional jobs over the period 2021–38. While our analysis provides a high-level estimate, what is clear is that 40,000 additional jobs would not be supported by the local housing need figure of 816dpa.

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<sup>1</sup> Para 9.5, Warrington Economic Development Needs Assessment (August 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Para 9.6, Warrington Economic Development Needs Assessment (August 2021)

<sup>3</sup> Para 2.6, Warrington Local Housing Needs Assessment – Addendum (February 2022)

<sup>4</sup> Table 22 of the Warrington Economic Development Needs Assessment (August 2021) provides a use class split of the 316.26 ha of employment floorspace. Standard plot ratios and employment densities have been applied to the figures to arrive at a high-level estimate of how many jobs could be supported by each use class.



**Q2. What effect has the development of the Omega site had on past take up rates and is it justified to assume such take up rates will continue over the plan period?**

1.7. No comment until we see Council's response to this.

**Q3. Will the supply of employment land from site allocations and planning permissions in neighbouring authorities and the wider area affect demand for employment land in Warrington?**

1.8. We are aware that the planning consent for employment land at Omega West covers an area of 75ha<sup>5</sup>. We are also aware that no agreement has been reached on which Borough's need the additional land (over and above the 31.2ha allocation area) will contribute to. We understand that the Council are intending to continue to liaise with St Helens over the apportionment above and beyond the 31.2ha proposed to be allocated in the St Helens Borough Local Plan<sup>6</sup>.

1.9. If it is agreed that the Council would take an apportionment above and beyond the 31.2ha proposed to be allocated in the St Helens Borough Local Plan, consideration would need to be given to how this effects the demand for employment land elsewhere in Warrington.

**Q4. What is the basis for including a three year buffer and is this justified?**

1.10. No comment until we see Council's response to this.

**Q5. What is the basis for including the allowance for business displacement and is this justified?**

1.11. No comment until we see Council's response to this.

**Q6. Is it reasonable to rely on two substantial allocations to meet most employment needs?**

1.12. We consider both employment locations are highly viable employment locations that will meet a high demand for logistics in the North West. However, we re-iterate our position that for the South east Employment Area to be deemed sustainable and in accordance with the adopted LTP4, then it should be re-considered as part of the wider Garden Suburb proposals as highlighted in earlier Hearing Statements.

**Q7. What evidence is there to suggest that the Town Centre can viably act as the main location for new Class E Office development, noting that the Economic Development Needs Assessment 2021 identifies that demand is mostly focused on Birchwood rather than the Town Centre, as well as the competition from the adjacent cities of Liverpool and Manchester/Salford?**

1.13. No comment until we see Council's response to this.

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<sup>5</sup> Para 4.35, Warrington Borough Council – Statement of Common Ground (April 2022)

<sup>6</sup> Para 4.35 and 4.36, Warrington Borough Council – Statement of Common Ground (April 2022)

**Q8. Will the lack of explicit support in the Local Plan for the University and higher education more generally, impact on the ability of the Council to achieve the Local Plan's vision and objectives?**

1.14. No comment until we see Council's response to this.

**Q9. Is the approach to existing employment areas and development within them effective and justified?**

1.15. No comment until we see Council's response to this.

**Q10. In other respects, is Policy DEV4 justified, effective and consistent with national policy?**

1.16. We consider that for 'Policy DEV4 – Economic Growth and Development' to be justified, effective and consistent with national policy it must be demonstrated that it would not result in unsustainable patterns of in-commuting and congestion on the highways network. To do this, it must be demonstrated that the employment land requirement of 316.26ha aligns with the housing requirement.

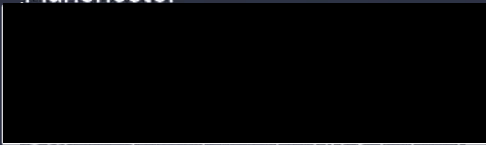
1.17. We consider that for 'Policy DEV4 – Economic Growth and Development' to be justified, effective and consistent with national policy, the South East Warrington Employment Area allocations should be removed.

**Q11. Are any main modifications to Policy DEV4 necessary for soundness?**

1.18. For the policy to be found sound it should remove reference to the South East Warrington Urban Extension and replace it with reference to the Garden Suburb (at Part 4).

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)  
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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