

Matter 6f South East Warrington Employment Area

Statement.

Councillor Ken Critchley. (Appleton)

The proposed site lies within designated Greenbelt Land. No “very special circumstances” or “exceptional circumstances” have been demonstrated in relation to this proposed development to warrant the sacrifice of Warrington’s precious greenbelt. **Openness will be permanently lost. The Green Belt here serves the purpose of preventing urban sprawl and encroachment into the countryside and runs counter to Green Belt objectives relating to regeneration. The purpose and function of the Green Belt in this location is accepted as strong.**

**The Council affords great weight to the protection of heritage assets. Why not here?**

**Massive buildings on 3 sides of a scheduled ancient monument. Historic England do highlight harm, but place responsibility on balancing harm against public benefit with the Council. The balance is wrongly applied and that benefit does not outweigh harm.**

**The proposed development results in the removal of all kilometres of hedgerow, 70 trees an area of woodland and ponds. Open fields with ecological value are lost to built development with no clear biodiversity gain.**

**The development is not environmentally sustainability. The NPPF says that the planning system should be used to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, minimising and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy – Question? Is this objective met with more than 3 million square feet of development on best and most versatile agricultural land, on a hugely prominent site in the Green Belt?**

The proposed development will sacrifice a huge area of South Warrington for low density job creation. The scale of the development is in the region of 140 football pitches. Serious questions must be asked as to whether the numbers of jobs claimed to be created by this development would be delivered, given the drive in warehousing for increased automation.

It is highly unlikely that if this development were to go ahead that the jobs created would in fact be filled by people living in the Borough of Warrington. What possible “very special circumstances” or “exceptional circumstances” justify the loss of a huge area of Warringtons greenbelt to provide

employment to persons living outside of the Borough. It is imperative that brownfield sites more central to the Borough of Warrington offering high density employment opportunities and providing a mixture of skill levels for employment are explored before any consideration is given to this low-density, maximum loss of greenbelt employment option.

The proposed location is in an elevated position, the sheer scale of the warehousing proposed would create significant harm to visual amenity. It is simply not credible that the visual impact of this development could be mitigated by general landscaping and earth mounding.

The proposed development flies in the face of the increased national and local focus on Climate Change. The proposed development is at the cost of loss of greenbelt land, it will cause congestion to the road network, environmental harm and have a negative impact on the climate change agenda. The proposed release of greenbelt, is contrary to the sentiments of the Council's own climate emergency declared in 2019. Greenbelt has a beneficial climate change effect, it is completely inconsistent with supporting climate change for the council to be considering supporting the concreting over approximately 140 football pitches of greenbelt.

The proposed development is not multimodal, it is completely road dependent, there is no access to the site by alternative forms of transport such as rail or canal. For these reasons the site lacks the sustainability required for it to be credible in an era when the impact on climate change is so important.

The road infrastructure of South Warrington, it's already chronically overloaded, The area bounded by the Bridgewater Canal the M6 the M56 and London Road already has significant infrastructure challenges. The emerging local plan does virtually nothing to address the already chronically overloaded road network. The concept that 140 football pitch size warehousing facility can be built within the boundaries of the area described above with only minor amendments to the access to the M6 junction simply lacks any understanding of the issues faced by the residents of this area. How will the traffic movements for the supposed 4200 employees be accommodated by the current road network, how will the vehicle movements of the HGV's operating from the proposed development be accommodated without the most significant harm to residential amenity. The idea that the current Road network with its current limitations and weight restrictions could accommodate yet more vehicle movements lacks any credibility.

**Apparently it is ok to add traffic to the network as long as vehicle movements do not increase by more than 30%. Really given the known issues of congestion**

**Roads and junctions within the vicinity of the site are already very busy. The solution - some altered road markings and a new large traffic light control roundabout at the junction of Grappenhall Lane and Cliff Lane on the A50. Urban highway infrastructure on undeveloped farmland in the middle of Green Belt. The approach appears to be based on**

**the ability to enable vehicles to queue safely and not to block slip roads to an extent that queues extend onto the motorway.**

The impact on the already poor air quality experience by residents of Stockton Heath and Latchford from additional vehicle movements raises further serious concerns about the impact of this proposed development. This development is inconsistent with moves to improve a quality, in fact the thousands of additional vehicle movements on the A50 and A49 will further exacerbate the air pollution issues in Stockton Heath, Grappenhall and Latchford village. If the application were to be successful it would raises serious concerns regarding the safeguarding by the Council of the health and well-being of its residents in South Warrington.

**Ends.**