



Independent Examination of Warrington Local Plan

Hearing Statement submitted on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire and Cheshire Constabulary (Respondent ref: 0428)

Matter 10 – Retail, leisure and the Town Centre

August 2022

Cheshire Constabulary HQ



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MATTER 10 – Retail, leisure and the Town Centre

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This hearing statement is to be read in conjunction with the previous representation made by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire (PCC) and Chief Constable for Cheshire Constabulary (CCCC) dated 15 November 2021 (WBC ref: UPSVLP 0428). This representation was made by letter to Warrington Borough Council (WBC) in relation to the Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (UPSVLP).
- 1.2 The PCC and CCCC is grateful for the opportunity to comment further on the Warrington Local Plan. These further representations and comments are made in respect of the Inspector's 'Matters, Issues and Questions' (MIQs) set out in the document issued by the Examination Programme Officer in June 2022. This document covers responses to the Inspector's questions relating to Matter 10 – Retail, leisure and the Town Centre.
- 1.3 Any additional matters that have arisen since the submission of the UPSLVP PCC and CCCC representations are addressed in this statement.
- 1.4 The PCC has a statutory duty to secure and maintain an efficient and effective police force for Cheshire and Warrington Borough Council is required by statute to consider crime and disorder and community safety in the exercise of its planning functions.
- 1.5 The letter of representation dated 15 November 2021 sets out in detail, CCCC's comments on the UPSVLP in relation to exercising this duty and the issues raised remain relevant to the Warrington Local Plan Examination. This statement should be read in conjunction with the submissions made on behalf of PCC and CCCC. For the avoidance of doubt, the previous comments made on behalf of PCC and CCCC remain valid and in the interest of brevity, are not repeated in detail herein.

- 2 Issue – Whether the Local Plan is justified, effective and consistent with national policy in relation to the approach to retail, leisure and the Town Centre.

Questions

Role of the Town Centre (TC1)

Question 18 – In seeking to improve the Town Centre’s environment, does Policy TC1 give sufficient support to safety/security matters?

- 2.1 Policy TC1 does not include any reference to measures to promote civil resilience, reduce incidents of crime in the town centre and increase the general public’s feeling of safety to accord with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 92 b).
- 2.2 Measures to design out crime, including counter terrorism measures should be integral to development proposals particularly in public areas that experience high levels of footfall and those which generate large numbers of people, such as the Town Centre.
- 2.3 This will ensure they provide adequate protection, do not compromise good design or shift the vulnerabilities elsewhere, are achievable and cost-effective. Development proposals should incorporate measures that are proportionate to the threat by way of the risk of an attack and the likely consequences of one. New development should incorporate elements that deter terrorists, maximise the probability of detecting intrusion, and delay any attempts at disruption until a response can be activated.
- 2.4 When considering public health and safety, local authorities and developers have a duty to ensure a balanced consideration for security implications, particularly the risk to groups of people from interaction with hostile vehicles, and the creation of large crowds in new public spaces (NPPF paragraph 20 and PPG Paragraph: 010 Reference ID:53-010-20190722, Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 53-010- 20190722 and PPG Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 53-011-20190722). Policy TC1 fails to do so and is therefore neither justified, effective nor consistent with national policy.

Main modifications

Question 19 – Are any main modifications to the above policies necessary for soundness?

- 2.5 To make the plan sound, along with the incorporation of recognised Secured by Design Principles, consideration should also be given to physical and electronic security (including layout, design and choice of material, vehicular stand off and access, air intakes and telecommunications infrastructure).
- 2.6 As such, the PCC and CCCC requests that the following be added to the list in Improving the Town Centre's Environment part 7:
- “f. incorporate measures for crime reduction including Secured by Design Principles along with physical and electronic solutions to mitigate the risk of potential terrorist attacks.”*
- 2.7 PCC and CCCC also requests that the supporting text to Policy TC1 be amended to include reference to the need for Cheshire Constabulary Designing Out Crime Advisors together with Counter Terrorism Security Advisors to be consulted at the pre-planning stage to ensure major Town Centre projects contain appropriate design solutions, which respond to the potential level of risk whilst ensuring the quality of places is maximised.