

# Stretton Parish Council

**Kerry Trueman, Programme Officer**



3 August 2022

Dear Kerry

## **WARRINGTON LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION**

**Respondent reference number 2385 – Stretton Parish Council**

**Statement - Matters 11 Transport and Infrastructure**

The proposed Local Plan fails to address the high level of additional traffic that will obviously be generated from both the SEWUE and the SEW Employment area and result in further transport problems for South Warrington and in particular Stretton. Warrington Borough Council's approach is at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is unsustainable.

The SEWUE is largely reliant on Warrington New Town Development Corporation land (now Homes England) that was never implemented due mainly to the proposed transportation infrastructure not being delivered. (i.e. The North/South Expressway and new High Level Bridge crossing of the Manchester Ship Canal). There is clear evidential evidence that supports this statement and during the late 1970's and 1980's the Council actively objected to development south of the Manchester Ship Canal until the transportation infrastructure was put in place!! As we know these works were never undertaken and the Council have only carried out minor improvements and maintenance works to the existing highways in South Warrington. On this basis how can the Council now justify (40 years later) urban development of this magnitude without providing the necessary transportation infrastructure? Or are the incumbent Council Officers now simply saying that Cheshire County Council Highways Department, the Councils Borough Surveyor, the Councils Planners, the Councils Highways Department and the Chief Executive in the 1970's and 1980's wrong in their vociferous objections?

Gillian Lett – Clerk to the Council



The Local Plan highlights the proposed Western Link as a priority infrastructure initiative and despite being granted conditional partial Government funding approval there are real concerns that the budgeted £212m will not be sufficient to deliver such a complex and high-risk civil engineering project. The final business case is now questionable and unsound with both Port Warrington's expansion and the accompanying residential allocation of 1,600 homes having been removed from the Local Plan.

The Council needs to clarify its position on the Western Link and confirm whether or not the scheme will proceed as this has serious ramifications for the Local Plan.

The Local Plan also takes little or no consequence of the fact that the existing South Warrington highway infrastructure is already at saturation point at peak periods and massive investment is needed to improve the existing roads and bridge crossings of all three waterways (Bridgewater canal, Manchester Ship Canal and River Mersey). The Local Plan does not provide the necessary deliverability across the Plan period i.e. the conceptual Mass Transit is acknowledged as being after 2038 but assumes the construction of new housing developments beforehand.

The impact of the significant increase in road traffic that will accompany the very large scale of both the SEWUE and the South East Warrington Industrial Area developments would inevitably take the form of:

- Disruption to travel on emergency services and key workers.
- Unpredictable delays to bus services and knock-on effect on patronage.
- Increased air and noise pollution.
- Increased difficulty in crossing roadways for school children, people with disabilities and the less agile.
- An overall sense of reduced quality of life.

There is no evidence to support the assumption by the Council that the proposed three new strategic link roads will reduce traffic travelling from Stockton Heath via the A49 (through Stretton village) to the M56. It is illogical to think traffic would divert from the A49 onto the SEWUE strategic highway and then be confronted with the new A49 signalled junction beyond the Cat and Lion junction and before Junction 10 of the M56.

The Council have alluded to within their background documentation that the SEWUE will incorporate an enhanced vehicular movement network. The objective will be to use this network to improve linkages to the Town Centre, particularly through enhanced public transport networks. The primary loop being a transport corridor linking Warrington town Centre via the A49 and A50. However much of the SEWUE will not be directly serviced by such a bus route, unless it performs a protracted service of zig-zags. Then in trying to reach the Town Centre it will have to contend with London Road and Stockton Heath High Street traffic congestion (no possibility of a bus lane unless substantial demolition is undertaken) or the A50 Knutsford Road and Latchford Village traffic congestion (ditto ref demolition).

To be blunt Warrington Borough Council are quite simply 'putting the cart before the horse'. There are no significant plans to improve the transportation infrastructure in South Warrington, which was, as stated earlier, identified as necessary over 40 years ago by the Council themselves. The Council's adopted Local Transport Plan 4 is at best an aspirational wish list with no firm timescales, little or no apparent detailed design work carried out to date, and offers no substantial evidence that supports their conceptual vision that relies on public behavioural change in how residents travel (i.e. walking/cycling).

Yours sincerely



 For and On Behalf Of  
Stretton Parish Council



