

Louise Harding



This is my representation to the council regarding the revised Warrington Local Plan

I am happy to embrace change and welcome growth to Warrington, but I **strongly object** to the new Warrington Local Plan (2021) as it is NOT sound.

It is fundamentally flawed....the plan is a new document, but it is the same approach as the previous plans by building on greenbelt rather than utilising other options.. Once again, it needs re-thinking as it is poorly thought out, and despite the large number of objections received to the previous plan in 2019, I am very concerned that very little has changed. We are to become an urban extension, a saturation of housing and warehouse “sheds” that will take away our greenbelt, removing the individual nature of our historic villages, increasing congestion and increasing air pollution. This plan does nothing to help regenerate our town centre, which could be such a great town for shopping and entertainment.

My concerns and questions regarding this plan are:

Our community [REDACTED] will be affected considerably. This development is not just about roads and buildings...it’s about communities. Our social and welfare facilities have not been considered. Our opinions do not appear to count? I am questioning the drivers underpinning this plan? My concern is that developers and businesses such as Langtree, Stobbarts and Peel (via LEP) are influencing the nature and extent of this plan and its development. This is wrong, as it doesn’t reflect the needs and aspirations of the real people who actually live and work in the area (Warrington). These companies DO NOT reflect the views of our local community. Again, we have not been listened to and therefore this plan is out of sync with our community welfare and opinions. Because of the influence of these businesses, the level of growth is overly ambitious and goes well beyond the historical development and growth of our local area. It places our beautiful and essential greenbelt at unnecessary risk of being lost to an unrealistically high number of new houses and massive warehouses (sheds). These companies have an invested interest in how Warrington is being developed...surely this is wrong that they are allowed to be so influential? How has this been allowed to happen? Why is so much greenbelt still being released? What is the basis for this?

Greenbelt is also under threat with the development of the Six56 and the previous application for the massive Stobbart plans to build a new Warehouse. Neither of these developments will create sustainable employment locally. They will unfortunately destroy Greenbelt, provide low paid jobs for people from out of town who can’t afford to live in the area, adding to the already congested road networks and motorways in the region. We need to grow – but not to this extent. We need to develop our Brownsites first (of which there are enough to accommodate a more realistic plan for growth and development) without destroying the last remaining Greenbelt close to Warrington. What is the basis of this overly ambitious and excessive development? Why is so much greenbelt being released and where are the extra ordinary exceptions for this? Where is the historical evidence for this level of growth?

The number of houses being built upon green belt land around Appleton Thorn continues to really concern me, as I feel our village will be suffocated and our individual identity lost. Who is going to live here?...commuters!! Again, adding to the congestion and reducing air quality....why do we need such huge numbers in south Warrington on green belt rather than utilising brownfield sites nearer town centre which would encourage regeneration of our town? I question...is this plan sound?

I am very concerned about the loss of Greenbelt. Where are the exceptional circumstances for us losing this? I thought Greenbelt should only be released as a LAST resort? Where is the justification for the mass destruction of our precious Greenbelt? I can't find any justification or evidence provided in the local plan that demonstrates exceptional circumstances? I recognise that the purpose of Greenbelt is to prevent sprawl and to ensure that settlements/villages do not merge with each other. The impact of releasing this Greenbelt opposes the function of Greenbelt...we become a sprawling suburb, losing our unique identities and characters, merging as one large urban characterless region. Once our Greenbelt is gone....its gone!

Our Greenbelt is of great value to the community and to Warrington as a whole. It is our green lung, attracting people from all over Warrington and the local area. It is a space to breath, to escape, to distress, to walk the dog, to enjoy the trees and nature...a release from the everyday stresses of life. It is vital for our wellbeing and physical and mental health. The sheer scale and sprawl of the plan will destroy this. No amount of small pockets or swaths of green spaces will replace the green lung that we currently have. It is a precious space for our town and region to enjoy. Our Greenbelt provides a setting for the cultural and historical history of our town. It is our roots. This will be lost with the mass building on our Greenbelt. It will be wiped out! We need to protect these Greenbelt areas with great care and fortitude. Why are they even considering building on Greenbelt? Where is the justification for this? What is the true underlying driver for this?

Ecology: I am worried about our beautiful buzzards who we see daily around Appleton Thorn. What will become of them? Will they leave? What about the small ponds and natural beauty of the area. How will the local fauna and flora be sustained? Has the environmental and ecological impact of the loss of greenbelt been properly assessed in the revised plan?

I am concerned about the insufficient provision and evidence of sound planning relating to the infrastructure on this plan eg schools, GP practices, community centres, waste disposal site, health centres etc. Who will staff them....eg GP provision...how will we attract GPs into the area when there is a huge shortage of GPs nationally? Our bridges and roads are already overstretched, which will only get worse if these houses are built. Can these infrastructure requirements BE provided? When will they BE provided? How will this be funded? The cost and timing relating to putting this infrastructure in place is also concerning. How will WBC ensure that there is timely delivery of important infrastructure? Will the infrastructure be put in place as houses are built? If not...what are the contingency plans as insufficient resources for infrastructure will have huge knock on effects elsewhere. There are a lot of questions relating to the provision and delivery of a sound and robust infrastructure?

There is already a huge problem with our road infrastructure around Warrington. Every morning and evening on my commute to and from work [REDACTED] I struggle in traffic....it's not easy and can be very stressful and frustrating. My concern is that with these extra houses, what are the plans for tackling congestion at our very local pinch points? Crossing the

Bridgewater canal and Manchester ship canal requires traffic converging on our bridges or tunnels. This is already a problem which will only be exacerbated with the increased number of cars and lorries this plan will bring. Looking at the proposed infrastructure, it appears that the new roads just feed into existing roads...or car parks, as this is what they will become. There is no evidence of how all these extra cars will cross the Bridgewater canal (single lanes) which will result in further delays and traffic jams. The swing bridges are currently poorly maintained...why is this? If we are having more ships using the Manchester Ship Canal, there will be even more delays and frustration crossing from South to north and vice versa. Is there a new Cantilever bridge being built? Will this be alongside or replace the existing bridge? How will this help as the roads just run back into each other anyway? How much will it cost? These areas will become even more congested, a polluted car park! Is there to be a dual carriage way or rat run through the "urban extension"? I thought this was supposed to be a residential area – not a shortcut for lorries as that's the conclusion from the plans provided? Looking at the plans for new road networks shows the internal roads will just feed in to our existing road network. How can this be effective? How will this help reduce pollution in residential areas? Will we have even more HGVs ploughing through or close to our village? How safe is this? Add all the new cars generated by the new housing, will end up on our already congested roads within our existing highways. Is this do-able? Can we cope with this increase in traffic? Who will this benefit?

Where will the new waste disposal site be located? There are a considerable number of uncertainties and I am genuinely concerned that this infrastructure has not been thought through, is not robust and is therefore not sound.

The plan suggests that people will move around the area on their bikes – eg to commute to work. Is this realistic? Where will these people live? How far will they have to cycle? My concern is that the only people who will be able to afford to live in the urban extension will most likely travel to work via car, and this will be outside Warrington (ie Manchester or Liverpool). This will further increase traffic on our highways and motorways, therefore increasing congestion and further reducing air quality. They will not work in the huge sheds that are being proposed by Stobart and Six56 as these will not be skilled well paid jobs. These warehouses will also move to automation, further reducing local employment opportunities.

Air pollution is a major concern for this area, and one which concerns me deeply. Warrington is one of the most polluted towns in the North West...indeed, in the country. I would like to challenge the plan as if we build the number of houses suggested, and the huge Warehouses proposed, we will have even poorer air quality. Has this been fully assessed? Is there a legal requirement that must be met regarding pollution and a duty of care for our local residents and population? Has the impact on air pollution been predicted following increased congestion on the M6, M56 and M62 corridors. I am really worried about air pollution and the impact on our health. Where is the sound evidence that this plan "reduces" the already unacceptable high levels of air pollution, or helps "improve" our air quality? I do not believe this plan will achieve either!

Warrington is a great place to live...I was born and brought up in this area and am proud of my town and community. But, I don't believe the character of our town will be maintained with this plan. Where are the ideas to draw employment and people in to the town? We are becoming a warehouse city, with all the green spaces destroyed and filled in by houses and sheds. Where is the

incentive to visit? Where is the culture and personality? The town is becoming deserted. Look at Altrincham. Let's look at what good looks like...not how much money can be made from rates and business "friends"!!!?? I don't believe WBC are respecting the nature and character of our town...they are destroying it! Our landscape will be altered for ever. Our villages will be lost in sprawl. Our lovely canals will be encapsulated, and our beautiful countryside will be built on. The huge development of Six56 will destroy huge areas of greenbelt....our green lungs will be lost forever if these plans are passed and proceed. Remember how important these open spaces were when we were in lockdown!

How can we afford this? How do the developers afford this? What concessions will have to be made? It's obvious that they will drive luxury high end executive homes in preference to affordable. How much is going to be affordable housing for our young new starters? The figures do not stack up?

This plan is not sound. It is not achievable, is over ambitious and not justified (particularly the unnecessary loss of Greenbelt).

This plan needs to be reconsidered again! WBC should step back and rethink, actually listen to the people and work together. Raiding the greenbelt is not a first resort to solving problems. The new plan as it stands remains fundamentally flawed, is not justified, will not work, is not logical and is not strategic. There is no need for that level of housing and for development that reduces air quality and builds on Greenbelt. I have no confidence that this plan is deliverable, but have every confidence that it will destroy the character of the region.

I question Warrington Borough Councils figures and calculations. Where is the evidence? The level of growth that is expected does NOT match the level of development proposed (housing and sheds). Growth appears to be driven by new housing generating economic benefit at rates that have never been achieved before.

Developers will always choose Greenbelt/green sites over Brown fields...this should not influence the plan. Has it?

Kind regards

Louise Harding