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18th August 2023

Dear Ms Mageean and Mr Ward

Examination of the Warrington Local Plan

Further to your letter of 2nd August 2023, the Council looks forward to receipt of your report.

Having reviewed the responses to the Main Modifications Consultation, the Council noted that some respondents argued that there is the need for further testing of alternative options through the SA/SEA process.

The Council disagrees with this given the wide range of alternative options that have been tested through SA/SEA throughout the various stages of Plan preparation.

In particular, the Council considers that the range of housing and employment requirements that have been assessed means that alternative options based on maintaining the employment requirement as in the submitted Plan and increasing the housing requirement to achieve alignment, or reducing the employment land allocations to a lesser extent than proposed and increasing housing allocations to achieve alignment, have either been assessed or would result in a housing requirement of such a level that they would be clearly unreasonable.

The Council assessed housing requirements ranging from 735 dpa (at the 2019 Regulation 19 stage) up to 1,332 dpa (at the 2017 Regulation 18 stage). In terms of employment, the Council has previously assessed a level of 224ha (at the 2019 Regulation 19 stage) – a level of employment land between the 168 ha being proposed through the Main Modifications and the 316ha proposed in the Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan 2021.

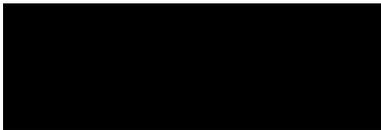


It has also been suggested that the Council should test alternative employment distributions based on the lower employment requirement of 168ha.

The Council does not consider there are any reasonable alternatives to the employment land distribution of the Plan (as proposed to be modified) at this lower level of requirement. This is because the employment land supply comprises sites which already have planning consent (including land in St Helens) together with the brownfield Fiddlers Ferry site. Any alternatives would therefore involve Green Belt sites displacing either the entirety or part of the brownfield Fiddlers Ferry site which in the Council's view would clearly be unreasonable. It should also be noted that the Council has assessed a wide range of employment sites that have been promoted through the Local Plan process and a wide range of alternative distributions of employment land through SA/SEA.

This letter will be appended to the SA/SEA.

Yours sincerely



Michael Bell
Planning Policy & Programmes Manager