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25th September 2017

Warrington Borough Council
Planning Policy & Programmes
New Town House
Buttermarket Street
Warrington
Cheshire
WA1 2NH

Dear Sir

Warrington Borough Council Local Plan. Preferred Development Option Regulation 18 Consultation

I wish to object to the current Preferred Development Option for the following reasons:

- Building 9,000 homes on green belt land will be detrimental to the Warrington area.
- Green belt land isn't unused land. It is vitally important as agricultural land, a habitat for wildlife, a place for outdoor leisure activities and it improves air quality. It is particularly important for the residents of Warrington, an urban area, to have access to open space and all the benefits that that brings.
- Building on green belt land will completely change the character of many villages around Warrington. The Garden City Suburb will mean villages such as Grappenhall, Appleton and Stretton will be lost in one large urban area.
- Similarly, building on green belt land around Lymm will mean Lymm, Thelwall and Oughtrington will become one large urban area. One of the purposes of green belt is to prevent neighbouring settlements from merging into each other
- The PDO states the green belt release in outlying settlements can be accommodated by the existing infrastructure. The schools in Lymm are full, as are doctors surgeries. There are traffic issues in Lymm already and cars from 500 more houses will add to this. Have other outlying settlements been considered and if so where are the findings? If green belt land has to be used, if this was spread across more settlements then the impact on the character of individual villages would be lessened.

- Paragraph 83 of The National Planning Policy Framework indicates that established green belt boundaries should only be altered in “exceptional circumstances”. What are the exceptional circumstances around Warrington?

To avoid building on green belt sites:

- Re-examine the requirement for 24,000 homes over the next 20 years. This figure was calculated some time ago and perhaps should be lower in the current economic climate. It needs to be recalculated with updated assumptions used.
- Exhaust all brownfield sites before any building is allowed on green belt land
- Achieve a higher housing density in the town centre (such as apartments) meaning that a lower density could be achieved elsewhere in the PDO. This would have the advantage of requiring less greenbelt land or enabling a different type of housing mix to be built (such as bungalows for elderly residents). A higher density in the town centre would match the desire of many new potential home buyers for housing without gardens, close to the town centre for social life and close to public transport hubs to avoid needing cars.

Finally, I think the consultation process has been inadequate and poorly communicated. The consultation period of 6 weeks was short and held over a period of time when many people were likely to be on holiday. This resulted in residents missing consultation meetings and having less time to formulate a response. I attended a meeting at the Park Royal Hotel, Stretton and found it hard to find the information I was looking for. There was no information displayed regarding Lymm and it was only when I asked a representative from the Council that a plan was brought out.

Yours faithfully

