

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Local Plan](#)
Subject: Consultation on Revised Local Plan
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To Whom It May Concern

I respond to the recently issued Local Plan for public consultation, which updates the previous 2019 version and gives the town a basis for planning decisions until 2038.

This version of the Plan would destroy the character of Warrington and increase the town's reliance on road transport. It still has no clear plan to improve local roads and no guarantee that infrastructure would be in place before houses are built. It does absolutely nothing for the town centre.

My main concerns are the lack of common sense in removing large areas of land from the Green Belt, when it is clear that previously developed land will be available for development within the Plan period, and the lack of clarity on how all the new infrastructure - schools, health facilities, etc - can be funded and delivered alongside the proposed development.

Green Belt

- Some 1400 acres of Green Belt would be lost across Warrington as a whole - unjustified - with a devastating environmental and ecological impact.
- The Council should look more carefully at brownfield sites in the town for regeneration and redevelopment, rather than take the irreversible step of using Green Belt.
- Development must be focused on more difficult to develop, brown field sites and should provide for sustainable connections between places where residents of the Borough live, work and play, i.e. Fiddlers Ferry (the sites of other coal fired power stations are in the process of being redeveloped).
- Housing must be reduced to the minimum Government requirement.
- 'No use of Green Belt' should have been the starting-point for the Local Plan - that's what Green Belt status means. There is no justification for Green Belt release - stop building on Green Belt and green spaces.
- Spending time in green spaces and the countryside has been proven to have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing.
- The town's ecology must be protected.

Congestion and Air Quality

- The development proposed does nothing to ease existing problems of traffic congestion and air quality.
- Increasing reliance on road traffic is wholly inconsistent with the UK's Climate Change aspirations.
- Limited consideration afforded to issues of air quality and associated health issues.
- Congested traffic, industry and a lack of trees mean that pollution is especially concentrated in urban areas. These pollutants damage the lungs while also

increasing the risk of serious illness.

- Development must be refocused on the town centre and central areas of Warrington where there would be a far greater opportunity to use sustainable modes of transport.
- There is no explanation on how the overloaded transport infrastructure would cope with increased levels of traffic.

Housing

- Most of the new housing will not be affordable for local people. Developers are only required to build a maximum of 30% affordable homes which is not enough.
- Affordable homes need to be located near to appropriate facilities.
- New homes in the south would be too far from both railway stations, necessitating more car use across the town as a whole.
- Employees at the distribution centres/warehouses will more than likely still have to commute from outside the area.
- There is no need for the volume of housing nor expanse of employment land allocated in the Local Plan.

Economic Growth

- Unrealistic forecasts have been used with growth predictions based on levels of activity and development at rates which have never been achieved previously.
- Growth should be driven by economic benefit before new housing.
- As it stands, this Local Plan is based on an economic assessment which is not based on any understanding of how changes arising from Brexit might impact on business in Warrington.
- There is no justification for the predicted growth; it is too ambitious with unrealistic growth.
- The Council must be absolutely sure that the uses within the town centre shift to meet changes in the economy.

Infrastructure

- The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is dependent on roads and bridges that are already overused.
- The Plan still relies on three Victorian swing bridges over the Ship Canal and inadequate crossings of the Bridgewater Canal.
- As part of a 'Mass Transit Corridor', the Plan hints at the use of the Cantilever Bridge - which has a 3 ton weight limit!
- What research has the Council done on the age and disrepair of the Cantilever and swing bridges over the Manchester Ship Canal? Who will pay for the essential upgrading, ongoing maintenance and basic caretaking of these bridges?
- Not only short on detail about road infrastructure, but also about all the other necessary facilities - schools, hospitals, doctors and dentists.
- There should be more emphasis on the Town Centre and taking strategic advantage of Warrington's rail links.

Fit for Purpose

- The housing numbers which drive the whole Local Plan are unrealistic.
- No details are provided on how increased traffic would be accommodated on the ageing, poorly maintained and overloaded crossings of the Ship Canal and the Bridgewater Canal
- Details of the plans for roads are very vague. There should be a clear plan for timely and effective delivery of infrastructure improvements together with a clear commitment to associated funding.
- Green Belt is being sacrificed for the sake of an extremely over-ambitious Local Plan. It does not show convincingly what the 'exceptional circumstances' are for developing the Green Belt.
- There is a national shortage of general practitioners, community carers, mental health practitioners, etc. Additional housing would add further burden on NHS current facilities already stretched to capacity.
- Too much emphasis on logistics.
- There is no clarity on delivery.

Covid

- Within the last year, external circumstances have changed dramatically. Covid-19 has changed everything- a prompt for pause and review.
- The pandemic may soon be a thing of the past but it will definitely have a major impact on the way we live, work and travel. It has clearly impacted on economic issues and changed many of the growth ambitions which underpinned the early work on the plan in 2016/17.
- Travel to work patterns have already changed and will continue to adjust. Users of office accommodation are reviewing their requirements and re considering where and how their staff work. This change in working practice may reduce demand for office space across the Borough.
- Trends in shopping practices had already altered but the way people now has permanently changed.
- The ongoing pandemic and all the ramifications for ensuring health and wellbeing, working, travelling, going to school, leisure time and shopping should be reviewed in the context of how development must alter to meet the "new normal".

At the present time it is obvious that a number of significant factors are impacting on the way the residents of Warrington choose to live and work in comparison with circumstances which existed in 2019, let alone 2014 household projections - Covid-19, the economic recession, Climate Change and availability of previously developed sites in Warrington.

I accept some development will have to take place but believe there are better and less harmful ways of delivering it. In summary, given all the above, this Local Plan is undeliverable and not sound - I say 'No' to the new proposed Local Plan.

Stop the destruction of our town and keep Warrington green.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Savage

