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10/11/2021

Dear Sir/Madam

WARRINGTON LOCAL PLAN 2021

We object to this plan for the following reasons.

We feel this version of the Plan would destroy the character and distinctive nature of South Warrington. It proposes a minimum of 4200 new homes in Grappenhall, Appleton, Appleton Thorn and Stretton, leading to the loss of large parts of the Green Belt. This number is in addition to housing already approved. There would be 310 houses on the small but tranquil Thelwall Heys site. It involves a huge 'Urban Extension' and even more and bigger logistics sites, served by already overloaded motorway junctions. The Plan increases the town's reliance on road transport. There is still no clear plan to improve local roads and no guarantee that infrastructure will be in place before houses are built. It does nothing for the Town Centre. It's a new document - but not a new approach. The Borough Council still seems to think that it can raid its own Green Belt as a first resort to solve its problems. In contrast, we think that 'no use of Green Belt' should have been the starting-point for building the Local Plan - that's what Green Belt status means. In the 708 pages of the Local Plan there is no evidence that the Borough Council has tried to work through things that way. We accept that some development will have to take place but we believe there are better and less harmful ways of delivering it. South Warrington Parish Councils' set these ideas out publicly and clearly last year. Whilst we welcome some changes in this revised Plan, such as the use of the Fiddler's Ferry site and the removal of housing proposals for Walton, it's not the new approach we hoped for. Last year South Warrington Parish councils called for a significant change of thinking, with more emphasis on the Town Centre and taking strategic advantage of Warrington's rail links. Sadly, that hasn't happened. So, we say 'no' to this new Local Plan.

ECONOMIC GROWTH The Council is being unrealistic with its forecasts. Growth predictions are based on levels of activity and development at rates which have never been achieved before. There seems to be no understanding of how development in Warrington should take account of what is happening in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire. Growth seems to be driven by new housing creating economic benefit, instead of the other way round.

CONGESTION & AIR QUALITY The development proposed does nothing to ease existing problems of traffic congestion and air quality and can only make things worse, especially in Stockton Heath and Lower Walton, at Junction 20 of the M6 and Junction 10 of the M56. Increasing reliance on road traffic is wholly inconsistent with the UK's Climate Change aspirations. The most likely outcome is that many houses will be built on Green Belt but the necessary supporting infrastructure will not be delivered. We risk our Green Belt being sacrificed for the sake of an over-ambitious Plan. The integrity of all our villages would be threatened.

INFRASTRUCTURE There is no new route into town from the South East of the town and the Plan still relies on three Victorian swing bridges over the Ship Canal and inadequate singletrack crossings of the Bridgewater Canal. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is dependent on roads and bridges that are already overstretched and totally inadequate for present traffic. The revised Plan gives no confidence that the infrastructure needed can or will be delivered either in the main settlements or the smaller outlying ones like Lymm. The Plan hints at the use of the Cantilever Bridge as part of a 'Mass Transit Corridor', but with no timing and no detail. The future of the 'Western Link' would appear to be questionable on grounds of cost and given the removal of Port Warrington and the South West Urban Extension in Walton from the 2019 Plan. But it still appears in the new Plan. We live [REDACTED], a small country road that feels like a trunk road most days. We feel this is the case in the whole of Warrington and further development without proper thought and planning for access to areas in Warrington will only result in greater chaos which is already a very real problem. Details of the plans for roads are very vague. Some indicative plans are provided but these do not form part of the Local Plan proper. These details should not be left to be settled later, when the principle of development will have already been established. The true effects of the development cannot be judged properly without these details. Specifically, there is nothing planned to improve the A49 as it goes north from the M56. There are vague references to a new junction on the A49 opposite the Spire hospital but there is no indication of how this can be achieved. There is no definitive proposal for how the residents of South Warrington will travel into town. No details are provided on how increased traffic could be accommodated on the ageing and overloaded crossings of the Ship Canal and the Bridgewater Canal There needs to be a clear commitment to associated funding and a clear plan for timely and effective delivery of infrastructure improvements.

HOUSING The most likely outcome is that many houses will be built on Green Belt but the necessary supporting infrastructure will not be delivered. We risk our Green Belt being sacrificed for the sake of an over-ambitious Plan. The integrity of all our villages would be threatened. It is wholly unclear how the Council will be able to control the rate of housebuilding once the Green Belt has gone, or to insist on using existing brownfield sites before using the Green Belt released. The likely result will be that our area will be cherrypicked by developers until the 4200 houses - or more - are built

Most of the new housing will not be affordable for local people. Developers would only be required to build a maximum of 30% affordable homes which is not enough - and affordable homes need to be located near to appropriate facilities.

We insist that the Council looks at their proposals again and can create a plan that is workable for all.

Thank you.

Esther Zuger

Thomas Zuger