

14.11.21



Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2021 Warrington draft Local Plan.

Wild About Stockton Heath WASH is a relatively new community group set up to support and improve biodiversity and wildlife in the parish.

Please see our website <http://wildaboutstocktonheath.org.uk/> for more details.

As our Facebook shows we already have nearly 300 followers.

We have support from Stockton Heath Parish Council in our objectives. We have carried out detailed audits of Stockton Heath brownfield development sites, as well as assessing street tree depletion and proposing new planting. Other projects include hedgehog protection, wildflower sowing, partnerships with the borough on establishing pollinator friendly perennial plant beds.

We are NOT a political organisation, nor a Warrington wide one. While we would object to loss of greenbelt, the plan does not include any greenbelt in Stockton Heath. We note the plan proposes an overall reduction in building on greenbelt.

However, the Plan proposes to prioritise building on Brownfield sites of which there are some in our parish. Many, many objectors argue for an absolute prioritisation. WASH opposes unfettered development of brownfield sites.

Our contention is that the Local Plan as currently drafted , needs to be amended to build in more protection in general and to be applied to specific sites before development is granted.

With regard to Policy Doc 3, points 5 and 6 on page 119, and the relevant reference to Green Infrastructure (GI):-

WASH RECOMMENDS that the definition of the GI in the Glossary (page 263) be added to as follows :- 'including mature trees and hedges on the borders of, and screening, smaller brownfield sites'.

We make this recommendation on the basis of our experience. Stockton Heath has very little green public space but the brownfield sites need planning protection to support the 2 corridors of biodiversity that run through the parish, namely Manchester Ship Canal and Bridgewater Canal.

Our 6 small SHLAA sites have c 500 mature trees and ancient hedges worthy of consideration for protection . WASH is recommending to Warrington Borough that, while NOT opposing development 'per se' , protection orders should be placed in advance on most of the mature trees round the borders of the sites in order to preserve biodiversity habitats and

to act as pollution screens. Our parish council has supported this approach and the relevant Assistant Director has agreed to discuss reports we have compiled, with his team.

While objections can be raised as any individual planning application is considered, we consider that is often too late to save biodiversity. Therefore we make the recommended clarification of the definition of Brownfield, mentioned above. The distinction between brown and green is currently too simplistic.

If you would like to discuss further, please contact by email.

Chairperson Milton Wimpenny

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Secretary Tara Shaikh

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Best Regards

Tara Shaikh