



Local Plan  
Planning Policy and Programmes  
Growth Directorate  
Warrington Borough Council  
East Annexe  
Town Hall  
Sankey Street  
Warrington  
WA1 1HU

Email  
Direct



10<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Warrington Proposed Submission Version Local Plan**

Cushman & Wakefield has been instructed by the University of Chester to submit representations in relation to the current consultation on the Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (UPSVLV).

### **Background**

Our client has interests in two buildings within the UPSVLV area:

- Leasehold interest at Units 2 and 8, Time Square
- Freehold interest at Sarah Parker Remond House (formerly called Mersey Bank House), Barbauld Street

The two buildings represent the University's move into the town centre from their current presence at the Padgate Campus on Crab Lane, future proofing the University's Warrington provision by enabling greater engagement opportunities with the local community and a positive economic impact for the town centre, increasing the accessibility of the University and creating greater learning opportunities in Warrington.

It is likely that the Time Square site will provide a flexible space for learning, outreach and events, including a digital library/ information hub. Sarah Parker Remond House (formerly called Mersey Bank House) will provide core teaching and specialist facilities.

The University would welcome dialogue with the Council regarding improving the appearance of areas at and adjacent to the north and eastern boundaries of the Remond House site.

### **Representations**

#### Support for Higher Education Establishments

We have reviewed the UPSVLV and note that the UPSVLV contains no references to the University. There is only one high level reference to 'higher education' within Policy DC1 (Warrington's Places), where it states that such uses will be supported within the Town Centre.

Whilst part 1 of Policy INF4 (Community Facilities) references education, it is clear that this is in relation to health and well-being, rather than economic and education. This inference is reiterated in the Delivery Partners listed after 7.4.10 which exclude education establishments. All other references within the Local Plan to education clearly relate to schools rather than university level establishments.

Policy PV3 (Strengthening the Borough's Workforce) of the adopted Core Strategy states that the Council will, through joint working, support the operational needs of and expansion of the borough's higher education establishments. The Core Strategy will be replaced in its entirety on adoption of the Local Plan, and so this explicit support to higher education will be lost.

The University has a strategically important role in supporting the Council with achieving the vision and objectives set out in the UPSVLP. The University of Chester is the only university in Warrington, and is therefore a key partner in providing access to the training and education opportunities essential to creating a highly skilled workforce, and a strong and sustainable local economy.

The UPSVLP will provide the planning framework for the Borough until 2038. It is considered a significant omission to not explicitly reference the University as a key partner, or for any policies to explicitly support the needs of and growth of the University or higher education establishments in general.

We therefore request that a suitable policy is amended to provide this explicit support for the University over the Local Plan period. It is suggested that Policy DEV4 (Economic Growth and Development) could be added to, or a new policy inserted under Objective W1 or W4.

#### Padgate Campus

The Padgate campus at Crab Lane is proposed to be allocated within the Suburban Areas (DC1) of Warrington, with some areas of the site allocated as Green Infrastructure / Open Space (DC3 / DC5). Policy DC1 confirms that the Suburban Area will be the focus for infill development on brownfield and greenfield sites, ensuring that new development is in keeping with its established surroundings.

The areas of the site allocated under policies DC3 and DC5 align with areas identified within the 2015 Open Space Audit. This includes areas for 'natural / semi-natural green space' and 'private outdoor sports'.

As referenced at the start of this letter, the University are in the process of creating a presence in Warrington town centre, to increase their accessibility, and improve their engagement with and opportunities for the local community.

The future of the Padgate campus is accordingly under consideration and as such, it is considered appropriate for the site to remain unallocated for any specific land use to ensure maximum flexibility.

#### **Conclusions**

In summary, our representations set out the University's concerns about the UPSVLP. These concerns are primarily focused on the lack of explicit support in the Local Plan for the University and higher education more generally, with this omission jeopardising the ability for the Council to achieve the vision and objectives set out.

We therefore request that either a relevant existing policy is suitably amended or a new policy inserted to provide explicit support for higher education establishments and their needs and expansion as required over the period to 2038.

I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this letter. We request that you keep us informed of the progress of the Examination in Public.

I trust the above is clear, however should you have any queries that you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Yours faithfully,



**Claire Pegg MRTPI MRICS**  
Associate, Town Planning, Cushman & Wakefield