

November 12 2021



To
Mr. M Bell
Planning Policy and Programmes
Warrington Borough Council

Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan Consultation 2021

Response from Judith Walker. Warrington resident

Having studied the maps and documentation, I consider the proposed Local Plan version is not 'sound'. It is not achievable and would not fulfill the future housing and other needs of Warrington. Furthermore this plan is not in line with current Government thinking on Green Belt release and reducing carbon emissions.

1. **Not achievable:** so many houses have never built annually before; and the proposal to site 4,200 houses in the SE Urban Extension is unsustainable because of the poor road capacity and canal bridge pinch points.
2. **Does not meet the assessed needs of the town:** it will bring wrong houses in the wrong places and warehouses instead of high paid jobs; it is also counter to Council's ambition to reduce car use and protect the environment.
3. **Not in line with Government policy:** it does not prioritise brownfield sites over Green Belt sites for development and it will worsen rather than improve carbon release into the atmosphere.

1. THE PLAN IS NOT ACHIEVABLE

Putting so many of the planned houses in the SE Urban Extension is not achievable for reasons set out below and will destroy valuable farmland and natural open space.

- a. The roads here are narrow and already at capacity and the proposed improved junctions with the A49 will make no discernable difference. More house building is already ongoing on Homes England land.
- b. The pinch points at the Bridgewater and Ship Canals with their antique bridges will cause gridlock for traffic going north at peak times. There are already traffic queues daily.
- c. Facilities such as the hospital, supermarkets, stations, public transport and employment are all north of the Ship Canal making journeys into Warrington Town Centre inevitable.
- d. People living in this area will be car dependent. The hoped-for 'mass urban transport system' is not going to be provided any time soon.
- e. The increase in traffic will cause worsening air pollution from traffic and road wear. The greenfield buffer zones which currently absorb pollution from the Motorways will be lost and some of the homes planned are alongside the Motorway. Air pollution on the A49 in Stockton Heath already approaches WHO limits

2. THE PLAN DOES NOT MEET THE ASSESSED NEEDS OF THE TOWN.

Housing in the South East Urban development.

The homes most needed in Warrington are low cost starter homes in areas near public transport and employment. This Plan puts most of the new dwellings in high cost areas of the town which will not fulfill this need and will even hinder building in better placed locations. There are parts of Warrington that need redevelopment and improvement.

- a. Houses on green field sites in South Warrington will be expensive and even the so-called 'affordable' ones will be unaffordable for most people. This will not help people starting out in life, or take people off the Council's waiting lists.
- b. The Council is trying to cut car use and encourage people to use public transport and cycle or walk to work. This means homes need to be built where this is possible. If the Government set housing figure has to be adhered to, and some Green Belt built on, there are parts of town where homes would be better placed near to public transport, good road systems and employment. Land now available land at Fiddlers Ferry could accommodate more housing
- c. Building expensive housing in Green Belt will be the chosen option for developers and the landowner Homes England. This will mean areas that are in need of redevelopment will be neglected,

Employment in South East Employment area

The jobs needed are high skill, high wage, so that residents do not need to travel to reach acceptable work and to add to the status of the town. The South East employment area for warehousing and logistics will not fulfill this need.

- a. There are no exceptional circumstances why this Green Belt should be released for warehousing low skill job creation.
- b. The planned industrial development will bring increased traffic on local roads as people come in to work and wagons enter and leave the site.
- c. Valuable farmland and an existing buffer zone which absorbs pollution will be lost.
- d. Industrial development here will add to the congestion at the motorway junction which is already problematic.

3. THE PLAN IS NOT IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT POLICY

Premature loss of Green Belt sites for development is built into the Plan as it is written, as there is no obligation to develop brownfield sites first. Development on greenfield sites will be the chosen option for developers.

- a. The use of Green Belt countryside sites for development is against stated current Government thinking.
- b. Protection of green space and wildlife sites which reduce carbon emissions is now considered essential to counter global warming.

END