

Dear Sirs

I write in objection to the Warrington Borough Council's Local Plan.

My family and I have lived in Warrington for over 20 years. My wife and I have served the local communities as consultants in the NHS.

Over that period of time I have seen a number of significant changes. When I first came there was a branch of M&S in the town as well as at Gemini. When the shopping mall was developed there was a Debenhams and many other stores. Long before Covid, the M&S shut which meant that when buying M&S food weekly for my in-laws there was no point in doing that shop in Warrington. Now that Debenhams and other stores have gone a lot of work needs to be done to improve access and facilities to attract shoppers.

In a previous plan to develop land already designated (having previously been 'safeguarded') in the Appleton area I proposed a tram system. This would have linked a large residential area via already existing rail lines (used and unused and a Mersey rail bridge crossing) to the old site of Mr Smiths at Bridgefoot, Bank Quay and Fiddlers Ferry. It would be really great and very green.

Building affordable housing near the town centre means more shoppers likely to be shopping in Warrington because they are so close. Revitalising brown field sites in the town centre is to be encouraged. I see so many new dwellings in development. The people who can afford to live here are the people of Warrington. They will be the future of the town and will contribute to the re-vitalisation of the town centre; a town centre within walking distance of where they live.

Building houses in the north Cheshire villages (South Warrington) will not have this effect because the bottle necks caused by the limited crossings of the river and canals and the congestion resulting whenever the M6 is congested or closed means that people in Appleton, Walton, Stockton Heath, Grappenhall, Thelwall and Lymm find it quicker and easier to drive to Altrincham than Warrington to spend their money and support Trafford's economy. And who do you think will live in these luxury, gated communities? People who work in Manchester and have no interest in the town of Warrington. Certainly not the typical person from Warrington! How much will these properties go for sale – many tens of thousands of pounds, perhaps a million. How much will the developers make from this one time grab for irreplaceable green belt – millions of pounds. Who will be living there? Not the people of Warrington but the wealthy who work elsewhere and want access to the motorway network. Yes, they might venture into Warrington town centre but having tried it a few times and experienced the congestion, pollution, inconvenience and lack of quality retail outlets they will spend their money elsewhere.

The congestion and bottlenecks are another reason why we don't need any more traffic on the roads. People living in affordable housing in the centre of Warrington are not likely to have two or three cars per household. Such properties, within walking distance of the town centre mean people, who revitalise the town centre can and will manage without a car. Living in the town centre also brings them close to the two railway stations and the bus station. By building on the brown field site of the old Fiddlers Ferry power station and repurposing the rail mineral line as a tram way will link Fiddlers Ferry to the town centre (perhaps even up Bridge Street to the bus station and Warrington Central) and beyond to the Appleton area.

However, allowing the building of new homes in South Warrington will generate expensive properties the affluent owners of which will no doubt each have a car or two, perhaps more for their adult children.

The Knutsford Road has problems with speeding traffic between the bridge over the Bridgewater Canal and the former Springbrook pub traffic lights. I cross this road near the Bellhouse Lane turn off twice with my wife to visit my elderly father-in-law accompanied by our

disabled son on his tricycle. The island is not really big enough for all of us but without it we wouldn't dare cross at that point at busy times but would have to go to the Springbrook junction and back. Even this junction has its problems. There are no pelican crossings here. Crossing has to be coordinated with anticipated traffic light changes. Traffic heading north and turning left towards Stockton Heath tends to come round the corner at speed and I wonder how safe my elderly father-in-law will be in crossing here. Another 310 houses on Thelwall Hayes site would add 600+ more cars on these busy roads and at least 1,200+ car journeys every day. This is dangerous. If the road is not properly re-engineered there will be fatalities. In terms of green issues more traffic and less green belt in this area moves in the opposite direction to the one we are supposed to be moving in order to combat climate change.

Warrington has surely suffered from a rise in mental health issues since Covid and is no doubt struggling like the rest of the UK to provide suitable mental health services. The charity MIND supplies information and references regarding important links between nature and mental health. By building on greenbelt you are destroying the green lungs and pleasant countryside of South Warrington. What you are proposing flies in the face of the government's National Planning Policy Framework. You are encouraging urban sprawl, ignoring your responsibilities to regenerate the centre of Warrington and turning a blind eye to the fact that this development merges villages by plugging the gaps between them with characterless developments; developments driven by the force of massive financial gain by developers for new residents with little interest in Warrington and with little if nothing for the people of Warrington who will have their inheritance taken from them for ever.

Finally, we are poorly provided for in terms of gyms, swimming pools, social & nursing services and of course medical services – GP's & hospitals. I have alluded to the lack of infrastructure *v.u.* with the proposed developments and massive increase in population. If the developers are allowed by you to go ahead what plans do they propose to service the needs of the massive increase in influx of population and their motor vehicles; new roads, more social facilities – school, nurseries, youth clubs, local shops etc., more GP practices & health centres, and all of that before improved hospital facilities at Warrington General – if it survives.

By all means I, and my friends, will support WBC in regenerating this tired town. Build on brown field sites, improve infrastructure, provide accommodation facilities and places of enjoyment for the people of Warrington; the people who currently vote for and pay taxes to Warrington. Do not deprive them of their green belt, their enjoyments and what they love about living here for the sake of the profits of green belt grabbing profiteering developers. Please, continue improving the town centre, please build for local needs not profiteers and most of all please safeguard our inheritance.

Dr ER Jago RD PhD FRCS

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