

[REDACTED]

From: John Franks [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 November 2021 22:01
To: Local Plan
Subject: Response to Local Plan (aka South East Extension)

To whom it may concern

Whilst acknowledging the need for a Local Plan and the need for WBC to retain control of local development decisions rather than having them imposed by the Government I regret to say I am underwhelmed and hugely disappointed by the revised plan.

Whilst this new plan does contain some changes from the 2019 plan including the use of the Fiddlers Ferry site, a reduced housing number and a reduction of Green Belt release which is to be welcomed, there are some surprising and unwelcome new inclusions; more surprisingly many aspects of the plan do not differ from the 2019 plan which received such a hostile reaction.

I therefore would like to raise my objections to the proposed new local plan on the following grounds:

- The existing Green Belt boundary was only confirmed 7 years ago in a plan that was supposed to be good for 20 years. What is the justification for tearing this up and renegeing on previous promises? It does nothing to provide trust between the council and its populace when past agreement are revoked on a whim.
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- There is no environmental and ecological impact on the loss of the green belt which contradicts national government environmental policies and is the 'easy' option to take rather than the most pragmatic and sensible use of town centre brownfield sites with the accompanying economic benefits to that area. The use of the Green Belt is a short-sighted and flawed approach to take
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- There appear to be no controls on the rate of housebuilding once the Green Belt has gone. Also, the fact that Geen belt has been prioritised over brownfield sites means that the developers will be allowed to focus exclusively on Green Belt until the area is exhausted, and only then will be brownfield sites be developed.
- Additional homes in the South of the town are miles away from any of the town's railway stations, therefore increasing car use at a time when the Government is actively promoting sustainable greener transport solutions
- The vast majority of the houses will be built on green belt without the support of the required infrastructure - where is this detail in the plan?
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- It has a complete disregard to the historical nature and character of South Warrington - there is a reason why South Warrington is an aspirational area to live and it currently promotes social mobility even just from within the town itself, never mind from outside the area. The proposed plan essentially concretes over large areas of the Green Belt contrary to national guidelines in regard to green space, health and wellbeing.
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- A continued and increased reliance on road transport. Where are the bus links? Where are the improvements to local road infrastructure? Where are the guarantees that the infrastructure that has been planned will be in place before the housing development?
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- Despite the pandemic and changes to all aspects of life, the plan does nothing for the development opportunities in and around the town centre. The plan promotes a 'Green Belt first' approach rather than a more eco-conscious 'No Green belt first' method.
- There is no definition of how the residents of South Warrington will travel into town. There are no details on how the increased traffic could be accommodated on the ageing and overloaded crossings on the two canals.
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- A distinct lack of evidence as to how the plan will regenerate the Town Centre, which is a Borough Council objective
- There is no plan concerning the A49 as it proceeds North from the M56, other than very vague references to a new junction near the Spire hospital which indicates a lack of conviction
- The plans for new roads are so vague as to be meaningless and those that are mentioned are indicative and not part of the full plan. There needs to be a clear commitment to associated funding and a clear plan for timely and effective delivery of infrastructure improvements.
- The Council's forecasts are based on historical data and assumes a level of development activity that has never been achieved before. Driving growth based on new housing creating economic development is wrong, it should be the other way around.
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- Inclusions of Thelwall Hayes despite an inquiry in 2004 decreeing that the land should not be used for development purposes

In summary the plan is being objected to because:

- 1.) There is no justification for the predicted growth
- 2.) There is no need for the volume of housing and mass of employment land proposed
- 3.) There is no justification for the scale of Green Belt release
- 4.) There is no mitigation for the Air Quality issues that would arise as a result of an increased in sustained vehicle journey's across the town
- 5.) There are no detail on how the infrastructure to support the proposed housing density will be provided

I would like to respectfully suggest that WBC consults with other councils across the country to analyse how they have addressed their infrastructure, environmental and housing development priorities without resorting to such an extensive raid on Green Belt land and to see how they have tackled their own local priorities and issues.

Is it too much to ask to be given a Local Plan I can endorse, rather than continually objecting on significant issues that do not align with either Government or WBC's own policy frameworks? As it stands, it seems it is.

This plan will turn Warrington into the disfigured relative of Milton Keynes, and everyone knows how much Milton Keynes is derided, mocked and ridiculed both nationally and locally for it's lack of character, soul, beautiful green open spaces and woodland and high quality of living index. Do you want

Warrington be proud, be different, be innovative and forward thinking? Or do you just want City Status and to hell with the consequences? This plan gives me your answer, and I fear for the future of the town both socially and economically if the plan proceeds as it stands.

Please give us something we can support and work towards and allow our children to work and stay in the area.

Regards

John

John Franks

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the contact information, including a phone number and an email address.