

[REDACTED]

From: Rory Adam [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 November 2021 22:04
To: Local Plan
Subject: Draft Local Plan 2021 public consultation comments

Dear Planners

Please consider my comments when reviewing feedback from the public consultation on the latest draft Local Plan 2021.

These comments relate primarily to the South East Warrington Urban Extension.

1. Designated green belt is meant to be permanent, and should only be released in 'exceptional circumstances'. Warrington's growth is hardly 'exceptional'. The document talks of the remaining green belt being preserved for the next 20 years, but that claim is hollow – the green belt boundary was agreed 7 years ago, and now WBC plans to release 580 hectares of it, and mostly in south Warrington.
2. WBC states that the plan has been developed considering all potential brownfield sites – but that does not appear to incorporate sites which are not available at present but are likely to become available within the planning horizon.
3. The South East Warrington Urban Extension plan sees 4200 houses being built on green belt land - 2400 are expected to be built during the planning period up to 2038 with a potential 1800 earmarked for later . This would radically alter the look and feel of the existing communities there – especially Stretton which is currently a relatively small village centred round the Cat and Lion junction with ribbon development on the A49, Hatton Lane and Stretton Road.
4. The proposed Local Plan would see Stretton extended greatly. Why is Stretton to be expanded out of recognition while other areas such as Appleton Thorn appear to be protected from further development by surrounding green areas? Stretton's individual character should be retained as much as possible – not subsumed into urban sprawl.
5. The Local Plan targets building houses, rather than creating jobs (or creating the conditions to encourage new jobs). Building houses should be related to the needs of the community and the jobs created, not the other way round.
6. The proposed distributor road from the A49 towards Stretton Road and the new South East Warrington Urban Extension areas should connect to the roundabout at Junction 10 of the M56, not onto the A49. Most of the traffic using the new distributor road will be travelling onto the M56 or going further south. Connecting the new road onto the A49 will create a huge bottleneck. This new connection to the A49 / M56 should be built ahead of further house building, but the Local Plan display boards featured a map with indicative phasing of the local road network showing that this road would be complete in 2038 at the very end of the plan period. This is not sound – it needs to be at the start.
7. The A49 in Stretton is very busy during rush hours, and from about 4pm on weekdays traffic heading north from the M56 towards Warrington is often stationary, queuing from the traffic lights at the Cat and Lion back towards, and sometimes reaching, the M56 junction 10 roundabout. This congestion has been getting worse recently due to increased traffic from the 3 developments already approved for 600 homes by Barratt in Stretton, Bloor Homes in Appleton Thorn and Barratt / David Wilson at Dipping Brook / Blackcap Road. When these developments are completed, there will be hundreds more cars on the local roads. The A49 cannot cope with 2400 further homes being proposed unless it is upgraded or other new roads can take some of the traffic.

8. The Local Plan states that there should be improved connections to the A49 at Lyons Lane and Longwood Road, but that will not help traffic congestion on the A49. The A49 will require some upgrading, or an alternative route.
9. Planners have told me that the traffic movements have been modelled and the new developments will make very little difference to the traffic movements currently. This is obviously wrong and the logic is not sound. Some of the basic inputs or model assumptions must be wrong, as hundreds of cars will be added to the local roads, many during rush hour and school run periods. Many of the new residents will not be working in Warrington – they are far more likely to be commuting towards Manchester, Chester or Liverpool on the motorways - so it is essential that the roads infrastructure is improved before the proposed new houses are built.
10. Air pollution and air quality will become a major issue in Stretton. Air quality targets are being breached already in Stockton Heath and elsewhere in Warrington, and the Local Plan does not appear to propose a sound, well thought through solution.
11. No new roads or bridges are being proposed to alleviate the traffic jams on key routes from south and south east Warrington into the town centre. The existing swing bridges over the Manchester Ship Canal will continue as bottlenecks, probably getting worse with extra traffic and more frequent bridge opening to facilitate Peel’s planned increase in shipping. There may be a possibility of upgrading or replacing the high level bridge from Ackers Road to Station Road, but there does not appear to be enough strategic thought about the road connections on either side.
12. The proposed employment area near M6 junction 20 / M56 junction 9 appears to be mainly for logistics operations. It is unlikely that the jobs will be filled by people buying the houses in the South East Warrington Urban Extension. Many of the new employees will commute to work from outside the area, mostly in private cars. Many people buying the in the South East Warrington Urban Extension will commute to jobs elsewhere, away from Warrington.
13. The local plan does not do enough to regenerate the town centre, and creating large employment areas on the south east periphery will not help.

Thank you

Rory Adam

