

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

**Ref: Response to the Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan 2021 (UPSVP21)
Transport and Accessibility**

Dear Sir / Madam

In response to the local plan public consultation, I wish to submit my response and objection to the local plan specifically addressed to policy:

- **MD2.3 Clause 27 – South East Warrington Urban Extension – Transport and accessibility.**

The response and objection below is specific to the effect of the Local Plan proposals upon the village of Stretton and in particular the flawed and unsound proposals to relieve congestion at the Cat and Lion traffic lights and the proposed route of the strategic distributor road (SIR).

Cat and Lion Congestion proposal

The current proposal, as shown in Figure 4 above, to connect the SEWUE enabling infrastructure of the SIR to the A49 is **flawed and unsound**. The proposals are defined in Section 5.34 on page 42 of the Transport Model Testing July 2021 is stated as below:

' The SEWUE enabling infrastructure considers the following:

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Existing junction upgrades to A49 / Lyons Lane and A49 / Longwood Road junctions

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A new link between the B5356 Stretton Road and the A49 London Road, south of the existing connection, including a new signal junction on the A49 and the stopping up of Stretton Road at its existing junction with the A49

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A new link between Witherin Avenue and Dipping Brook Avenue – The "D"

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A new link between the "D" and Grappenhall Lane, with junction improvements at Barleycastle Lane.

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Traffic enforcement within Appleton Thorn Village to deter 'rat-running' through the local village and encourage traffic to remain on the supporting infrastructure.'

This enabling infrastructure proposal is flawed, unworkable and presents an increased potential for traffic congestion on the A49 from the Cat and Lion signal junction to Junction

10 of the M56. It also severely restricts local traffic accessing the immediate Stretton village facilities. Furthermore, it introduces health and safety issues for the emergency services accessing local residents.

The reasons are explained below, however the issue of traffic light timing at the Cat and Lion junction shall be excluded from these comments as they have supposedly already been previously optimised by WBC highways department.

- a) It is unclear as to why the A49 round about junction at Longwood Road needs upgrading at an indicative cost of £1.06M (IDP) (developer financed). This roundabout functions well and does not present any traffic congestion.
- b) It is unclear as to why the traffic signal junction at Lyons Lane needs upgrading at an indicative cost of £2.83M (IDP) (developer financed). This signal junction functions well and does not present any traffic congestion

The main problem with the Cat and Lion signal junction, other than traffic density, is introduced by A49 southbound traffic turning right into Hatton Lane. The carriageway is not quite wide enough for two lanes and hence traffic turning right presents a blockage to traffic wanting to continue south hence creating congestion. Alleviation of this problem by introducing a right turn lane will significantly reduce congestion at this point and allow southbound traffic to flow freely. On close scrutiny this is entirely possible and the refusal of WBC to consider this is linked to the connection point and funding of the SIR.

It must be noted that there is already enough space for two defined lanes available for northbound traffic at the C & L traffic lights. Traffic currently forms two lanes naturally at this point, therefore a dedicated more suitable right turn lane for traffic turning into Stretton Road needs to be provided. The stretch of A49 south of the Post Office should have permanent or peak-time parking restrictions imposed, with the existing car park extended to compensate. This a cheap and quick improvement which can be accomplished by simply re-painting some lines.

The WBC new proposed signal junction for the proposed SIR, possibly located at Fir Tree Close / Spire Hospital entrance will most probably introduce further delays, congestion and increased traffic flows. This new signal junction will be approximately 300M from the C&L signal junction, and as close coupled signals will undoubtedly provide timing issues, as which is exemplified in Stockton Heath village. It will result in additional congestion, slowing northbound traffic leaving the M56 J10 roundabout causing stationary traffic to back up onto the M56, which is dangerous.

The particular part of the proposed plan is dangerously counterproductive to the stated aim of reducing traffic congestion.

The 'Stopping up' of Stretton Road with the existing junction with the A49 or at some other point is a flawed and **an unsound proposal** for the following reasons It may be that WBC relocate this barrier: -

- A) It will prohibit local village traffic easily accessing the school and extend journey distance.
- B) It will prohibit local village traffic accessing the Church and extend journey distance.
- C) It will prohibit traffic accessing the Park Royal Hotel and extend journey distance.
- D) It will prohibit local residents accessing their residencies and extend journey distances.
- E) Traffic wishing to cross the A49 from Stretton Road into Hatton Lane will be prohibited and will extend journey distance.

This all means that even more traffic will be using the A49 travelling south between the C&L junction and the proposed new signal junction for the SIR.

It must be noted that this proposal is in contravention to the adopted Local Transport Plan (LTP4 Dec 2019) by increasing journey distance, increased air pollution, increased noise and totally to the detriment of the local community.

The stopping up of Stretton Road will also result in an increase reaction time to the emergency services. This is a blatant health and safety issue for local residents.

This new SIR, also referred to as the Cat and Lion Bypass or relief, is planned to meet up with the proposed new link roads between Witherwin Ave and Dipping Brook Ave, and Grappenhall Lane to Barleycastle Lane. This is defined in the Transport Model Testing document July 2021.

This has very serious implications for Stretton village and the rest of the proposed SEWUE as it opens up direct HGV access rat run between the M56 junction 10 and the propose 6/56 development and the whole of the Barley castle trading estate, thus bypassing the M6 J20 and therefore the current 7.5tonne vehicle weight restriction at Appleton Thorn. It is clearly against the guidelines and principles of LTP4 to allow HGV access through residential areas. This SIR needs to be weight restricted or suitably signed to prohibit HGV access to Barleycastle trading estate and 6/56.

The route highlighted in red in Figure 5 above and as indicated by the two options shown in yellow as see in Figure 6 are flawed in concept. They will undoubtedly result in additional congestion along the A49. Furthermore, to block off Stretton Road is completely detrimental to all users of the village facilities.

It is understood that in recent conversations with WBC highways staff the question of phasing of the SIR delivery was raised. It was suggested that the first part of the SIR would be delivered by 2026 over the western R18/088 land parcel and that it would terminate at Spark Hall close. The second part of the road would be delivered at some future time to suit residential development phasing. The intention would be to open up and rework Spark Hall Close as a relief bypass for the Cat and Lion junction. As the new housing developments are finished, this would increase traffic past St Matthews church and school, increasing the danger from crossing Stretton Rd and increased air pollution from vehicles braking, turning and accelerating into or away from the junction near the school. The stretch of Spark Hall close from Stretton Rd to the Park Royal hotel entrance is frequently used as parking for the church and school, so is essentially a single vehicle width road for most of the day therefore unsuitable for increased traffic volumes. Making this stretch restricted parking would require parking provision elsewhere or would simply displace parked vehicles to an even busier area. This is completely unacceptable to the residents of Stretton and particularly Spark Hall Close, which is currently a sleepy no through road and enjoyed by many local walkers between

the two halves of the village. It will destroy the popular thoroughfare. Planning is supposed to enhance the environment, not totally destroy it. **This is outrageous. It is a completely flawed concept and a totally unsound solution.**

CONCLUSION

It is clear that the Cat & Lion junction is problematic. However, to employ an ill-conceived work around that will severely impact on local residents by actually increasing traffic congestion, especially down Spark Hall Close and forcing local traffic to take a longer route is absolutely outrageous and does not take into consideration local residents. It is against many important ecological and environmental principles and guidance.

The simple and most effective solution is to use M56 J10 exit south of the Stretton Fox pub suggested previously. As part of this, additional parking area should be provided to the pub which can overflow on to the access road during busy periods. Monies have been identified in the Infrastructure Development Plan for various A49 and local road upgrades and many of these unnecessary roadworks should be abandoned and the monies diverted to this simpler and more effective solution.

The current proposals are unsound and counterproductive to the stated aim.

Yours Faithfully

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Email

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