

[REDACTED]

From: Liz Jarvis [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 November 2021 14:17
To: Local Plan
Subject: Local Plan

I write to oppose the draft Warrington Borough Council Local Plan currently out for consultation. I have been a resident of Appleton for over 30 years.

The plan is not sound for many reasons set out below in no particular order. It should be radically reviewed before a further public consultation period.

The Plan would result in the vandalism and permanent destruction of the very special and distinctive character of the south east of Warrington including Appleton and the surrounding areas. Vast areas of Green Belt would be lost for ever. Under no circumstances can the proposals be considered as sustainable development.

Whilst the logistics industry and other industries lead the Council to conclude there is a need for the proposed south east employment area simply because of the proximity to the M6/M56, the use of Green Belt in the Cheshire countryside is wholly unjustified for such a purpose. Unemployment in Warrington is low and therefore the Council should have worked with nearby authorities to identify non-Green Belt options if there is a need for further warehousing. There are absolutely no special circumstances to justify the location of the south east employment area on Green Belt land.

This flawed thinking and the over optimistic economic forecasts used, including the LEP figures, together with the inappropriate use of 2014 ONS population growth data has lead to unrealistic (too high) forecasts of housing demand. The Council could and should have argued that 2018 ONS data is a better basis for Local Plan forecasting notwithstanding the guidelines in the NPPF.

Furthermore, there is no justification to use the valuable Green Belt in Appleton and neighbouring parishes for new housing provision. Other non Green-Belt options are possible which would protect this Green Belt and would be better situated for younger people looking to get on the housing ladder. More housing could be considered in other areas around the Borough including more homes rather than employment at Fiddlers Ferry given that the site benefits from a rail link to wider transport infrastructure in Warrington. A light train or tram could be introduced unlike in south east Warrington which has no rail link.

People in south east Warrington have to rely heavily on cars to travel to employment across the north west. New homes would create similar travel behaviours with the consequent adverse noise and air quality implications for all residents in Warrington.

Similarly the south east employment area would be built around use of diesel powered HGVs which is not environmentally sustainable and creates further noise and air quality issues for Warrington. New logistics industry should be located near rail links to provide cleaner multi modal transport options. The south east employment area is wholly inconsistent with the Council's climate change aspirations.

The Plan is also woefully unsound in terms of the proposals for infrastructure and the special situation faced for transport from south Warrington. There are three principal water crossings (Mersey, Ship Canal and Bridgewater Canal). The proposals for new roads and crossing points are ill defined, not properly funded and far too late. Ship canal crossing is dependent on already overloaded and inadequate and ancient swing bridges and one very high level bridge for light vehicles only. Stockton Heath centre is already overloaded and the Bridgewater Canal crossings are wholly unsuitable with single lane crossings at Lumb Brook Road and on an ancient hump back bridge on Red Lane. That leaves the A49 which is already at full capacity particularly at the Victoria Square junction in Stockton Heath. Therefore, plans and drawings in the Plan which show a link road around new housing in Appleton discharging 1000s more cars on the A49 at various points between Lyons Lane and the M56 are absolutely non-

sensical and can only have been drawn up by planners who do not use the existing and inadequate road infrastructure in the south of Warrington. For all the above reasons the Plan is unsound and needs to be radically changed.

Junction 10 on the M56 and Junction 20 M6 are both already overloaded at peak times and often at other times. The Plan proposals are not sustainable with regards to the increased use of these junctions that the Plan would generate.

The Council needs to be much more imaginative in its proposals for the Town Centre beyond the excellent Time Square regeneration and the Cultural Quarter. Retail and leisure demands are changing but the Council has not reflected this sufficiently in the Plan. The Town Centre cannot sustain the current quantity of retail space. More housing in the Town Centre focussed on younger people should have been considered. Again the Plan is not sound in its Town Centre proposals.

In conclusion, the Plan is not sound. It is very very widely opposed by most residents in the south of Warrington because it would destroy the distinctive and very special character of the area for ever with developments that are not sustainable from an economic, social and, very importantly, from an environmental viewpoint. Therefore the Plan should be abandoned and completely rewritten to create a Plan that is sustainable for many generations to come including the protection of the existing Green Belt in south east Warrington.

The Plan should be based on emerging policy guidance from Government hopefully in the next 12 months or so given that the Prime Minister and the Communities Secretary, Mr Gove, have recently made speeches emphasising the need to protect Green Belt wherever possible in future Planning Policy and in Planning Strategy.

Your sincerely

LIZ JERVIS

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