

Alison Duckworth

15 November 2021

Planning Department
Warrington Borough Council
Warrington

Dear Sirs

Local Plan Objection

I am writing to formally submit my objection to the local plan proposed by Warrington Borough Council for three main reasons –

1. Density of development proposed and irreversible destruction to the greenbelt.
2. The lack of consideration for local infrastructure and quality of life for its residents
3. Contravention of National Planning Policy Framework

Taking my first point first, the irreversible destruction to the greenbelt. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 137-139 states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

It goes on to state that Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The local plan proposes an estimated 1400 acres of greenbelt be passed over to development for housing and employment. The employment sites proposed (warehousing in the main) are of little economic value to the town, creating low paid, unskilled work on zero-hour contracts destined for automation.

The volume of housing proposed outweighs that of the predicted growth for the town at 816 houses per annum until 2038. This is also significantly higher than any that have ever been built before which ignores calculations suggesting a smaller population in the future.

The additional number of vehicles associated with the new homes proposed will create further congestion and poor air quality in an already congested and highly polluted town.

Developments proposed are outside of the town centre, meaning more reliance on the road networks and bridges which are already at capacity. The town's infrastructure fails to meet the national standards and public transport is lacking. Greater emphasis would be on private transport creating even more pollution in an already heavily polluted town and continued decline of the town centre's retail and leisure offer.

The plan neglects its duty to education, health services or reliable public transport and how this will be developed or funded. The result being a development completed without thought, concern or interest to the needs of the town's residents. Key services are lacking -v- the volume of residential development proposed and the metric for population growth -v- quality of life is severely lacking.

According to the National Planning Policy Framework, the local plan should be 'succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings.'

Plans should:

- a) be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.
- b) be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable
- c) be shaped by early, proportionate, and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees
- d) contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals
- e) be accessible using digital tools to assist public involvement and policy presentation; and
- f) serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant).

The proposal to remove large areas of Greenbelt is to be argued that this is not sustainable. The irreversible development of greenbelt for the logistics sector will only bring pollution and low paid jobs (at best). Access, transport improvements, green infrastructure and utilities are yet unquantified and left to developers to propose in the form of a development framework. Detail about the types of employment opportunity is lacking, but likely to be low paid, low skilled and ultimately given over to robots within the next 5-10 years.

Throughout the plan there are significant infrastructure uncertainties and reliance on developers or other external funding to facilitate essential work. The Waterfront will need a masterplan for infrastructure and is reliant upon development of the Western Link, Peel Hall will need extensive highways and transport improvements that are currently unquantified, Fiddlers Ferry will also need a plan to be prepared by

landowners to overcome existing issues with transport and community infrastructure. This falls outside of the NPPF for a succinct positive vision for the town.

The plan's lack of focus on the brownfield sites, the town centre as a centre and infrastructure is worrying. The ambition regardless of its residents is frightening and the perception that developers can control the council's ambitions with master planning financial support and post-development infill does not bode well.

I will leave you with one thought, which should be considered seriously as the UK reaches its equilibrium and WBC fails to meet its obligations for this plan.

“When the last tree has been cut down, the last fish caught, the last river poisoned, only then will we realise that one cannot eat money”

This is more relevant now, than it has ever been.

Yours



Alison Duckworth