

[REDACTED]

From: Fiona McDougall [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 November 2021 15:29
To: Local Plan
Subject: Warrington Local Plan - objection

From Fiona McDougall
[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

While I accept that some development is necessary in order to meet the country's housing needs, I would like to register my strong objections to certain aspects of the Warrington Local plan pertaining to the so called South East Urban Extension, which I believe show it to be unsound and unjustifiable:

1) building 4200 new homes (2200 within the plan period then 1800 outside the plan period, whatever that means) will totally alter the character and identity of the villages impacted, merging Appleton, Appleton Thorn, Stretton, Grappenhall, Wrights Green into one large sprawl.

2) the number of homes earmarked for this area is disproportionately high versus other areas on Warrington's outskirts further to the north. Why?

3) land earmarked for development (housing and employment areas) is largely Greenbelt and Greenfield land - greenbelt land is only supposed to be released in exceptional circumstances, and only once brown field sites have been explored for development. As I understand it Warrington Borough Council, while planning to build on some brown field sites, have not investigated the options on many other brown field areas, for either new homes or an employment area.

4) the pandemic and lockdown has highlighted the importance of green, open and natural space to people's mental and physical well-being. The Council itself speaks of this - and yet is planning to destroy huge amounts of green open space which countless residents have relied upon for their health, well being and for somewhere safe and unpolluted to walk and cycle with their children.

Any green spaces left will be greatly overused by the current and new residents, leading to further destruction from erosion and inevitable littering.

Teaching our children to ride their bikes, for example, will now be limited to cycling around housing estates with all the obstacles and dangers from cars, pedestrians and reversing vehicles that will involve, or to going up and down the path to the GH Walled Garden which will involve having to dodge the increased number of pedestrians (and dogs) who have nowhere else to walk.

5) road infrastructure is inadequate and not enough provision has been made within the local plan to address this in the South East Urban Extension area. The main access to and from Warrington direction to these new housing developments is via only two single way traffic-light bridges, Stanny Lunt Bridge and under the canal at Lumbrook Road, both off the A56. The latter in particular is already a traffic blocker especially at peak times causing build-up if traffic all along Chester Road. Adding another c8000 cars from the homes in the planned development areas into the mix (in addition to those from the homes already

signed off or under construction around Grappenhall Heys) will create turmoil and pollution from the queuing cars.

5b) this will be exacerbated by the fact that in order to find open spaces in which to walk or cycle, residents will be forced to rely on cars to take them out of the area - thus reluctantly contributing to further congestion and pollution levels.

6) details pertaining other crucial elements of social infrastructure are vague and non-committal. There will be huge pressure on dentist, doctors and other health care centres, as well as on schools, which have already been oversubscribed. There is mention of building a primary school, perhaps a secondary school - but nothing concrete is visible in the details released to the public, at least, as to when and where. For example, there are already huge developments of new houses being built in Stretton, Appleton Cross and Grappenhall Heys, which will put pressure on Bridgewater High School in the next few years, so if there is to be even more development, and on the scale proposed, there need to be guaranteed plans in place to start building now and not wait until most of the houses are finished and occupied.

This along with other key infrastructure improvements, should be a far more important priority for the council rather than pandering to the developers' wishes. The Local Plan suggests this otherwise, and this also renders it unsound.

7) there is no need for Warrington to gain City Status. What purpose would it serve for the existing residents and workers?

And building an unnecessarily high number of homes will not turn Warrington into a city that people will want to live and work in. The roads are dysfunctional at the best of times, partly because the town has constraints that other towns/cities don't have to deal with - aging canal crossings that can cause mayhem at any time a ship goes by, roads which get snarled up everywhere whenever there's an accident in the surrounding motorways as drivers try to find alternative routes.

It's not just an inconvenience when this happens: parents can't get to their little ones in nursery, patients miss doctor's or hospital appointments, carers can't get to their vulnerable clients, emergency cases can't get through to A&E. Unless the Council plans in specific solutions to these road infrastructure issues now, the Plan will remain unsound, and it should not be imposing more grief on its residents in the form of even more congestion.

8) the 6/56 Employment area is planned on greenbelt land while there are acres and acres of empty employment buildings across the Warrington area and brownfield sites that could better serve this purpose.

Moreover, estimates of the number of jobs created in the 6/56 have not taken into account increased automation and future use of artificial intelligence. The development will be a blot on Warrington's landscape, without bringing the promised jobs.

What it will bring, according to its own representatives, is 2000 additional lorries a day. There is no way that widening a roundabout a little is going to resolve the traffic congestion that 2000 additional lorries trying to get on and off the M56 and M6 will bring. There are already traffic tailbacks at peak times on normal days, and this along with the thousands of additional cars trying to get in and out of the new developments, will clog the system up even more. Far from enticing more people and companies to live in and set up in the town, Warrington will become known as a black spot to be avoided if possible.

9) pollution levels, already irresponsibly high in Warrington, will go through the roof with the combination of large numbers of additional lorries going to and from the 6/56 development and the thousands of additional cars on the road from the new housing developments, especially when engines are idling while sitting in all the congestion mentioned in points 5, 7 and 8 above (not to mention and the reduced natural/green space for soaking up/ dispersing the carbon emissions).

There are cycle lanes planned in some places. But very few people would want to cycle where they will be

breathing in so many fumes and with lorries thundering past, even if they lived anywhere close to where they could cycle to work.

More worryingly, with increased levels of pollution, you are putting our children's health at risk.

To sum up: we are heading towards climate catastrophe - yet the Plan involves concreting over greenbelt and greenfield land, decimating woodland and destroying natural environment for endangered species like those to be found in and around Thelwall Heys.

The pandemic we are in has shown how important open, green space and trees are to mental and physical health - yet the Plan will direct a vast reduction of such spaces accessible on foot to our residents and more importantly to our children.

Recently it was proven that a child in London died as a result of air pollution where she lived - yet this Plan will generate increased levels of pollution through the thousands of extra lorries arriving at and departing from at the Employment Area (known as 6/56) as well as from the thousands of extra cars on the roads every day from the new housing developments which are too far out of town to access trains to sites of major employers in Warrington, Manchester and Liverpool, or health, shopping and leisure facilities.

Quality of life should be prioritised, both for existing and incoming residents, over quantity of houses.

Kind regards,
Fiona McDougall