

[REDACTED]

From: Helen Speed [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 November 2021 16:23
To: Local Plan
Subject: Re: Response to Warrington's Local Development Plan

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find our response to the current consultation on Warrington's Draft Local Development Plan below:

While we welcome some of the changes in the new version of the Plan and recognise that we need an agreed plan in place to stop unrestricted development by individual developers, we believe there are a number of areas where it requires modification and improvement. In making our response we recognise and acknowledge the difficulties faced by local government in the face of decisions made by national government, as for example the recent decision on Peel Hall. This makes the need for our Local Development Plan to be as robust as it possibly can be and we make our comments on that premise.

1. We are concerned that there will be satellite developments all over Warrington without the social and physical infrastructure in place beforehand or at least concurrently with developments, not afterwards.
2. Infrastructure development and access to high quality occupations will be key to enabling the people of our deprived areas being able to access and benefit from any new workplace developments and to ensuring that the air quality in Warrington improves rather than deteriorates.
3. The Council should lobby the Government to change legislation to make the development of brown field sites a requirement prior to the development of greenfield sites and discourage green field site development locally, as far as it is able to do so within current legislation and do its utmost to steer developers down that route wherever possible within the law.
4. We need to maximise green regeneration in the town centre, to ensure that first time buyers, who will in many instances have young families and be unable to afford to move to the suburbs, have green spaces and a clean and healthy environment in which to live and hopefully flourish.
5. Climate change must be a higher priority as 10% from renewables is wholly inadequate over an almost 20 year plan. The ENV7 standard should be urgently updated to carbon neutrality and the Council should be signed up to the CEE Bill.
6. Community energy initiatives should be facilitated and encouraged in the plan and in local planning to reduce energy consumption and all efforts to utilise any and all legislation to make developers build homes which are realistically energy efficient.
7. As homeowners are currently left without support when installers liquidate to avoid their obligations, local initiatives to install solar panels, such as has happened with our housing associations, should continue to be encouraged and supported. Training for Parish Councils in supporting local energy efficiency initiatives such as these should form part of the plan.
8. Car travel dominates the plan and there is nothing to offer alternatives in the planned new developments or to address the current very difficult situations, particularly when accidents occur on local motorways, which we are bounded by on all sides. Building 4,000 plus homes on the South East Urban Extension will lead to many, many more cars on the roads too causing congestion and pollution to the detriment of physical and mental health in Warrington.
9. Thelwall Heys is seen as an early win 'without material impact on the [functioning] of the green belt and that there are good transport links. This is just not the case. Just because a developer has put this forward, doesn't mean that it won't affect the green belt. It is an area that is rich in plant and insect life and is loved by many people in the area. The transport links are very poor with the buses on Stockport Road being diverted some years ago to go through Thelwall village and none of the buses now go onwards through Latchford. They go through Stockton Heath, making it a long walk to get

to a bus stop and then quite a long journey to get into town. No buses go from the Springbrook up towards the motorway as far as I am aware, so the only other way to get a bus is to walk to Chester Road or into Thelwall and go again via Stockton Heath.

10. People living on Thelwall Heys would come under the auspices of All Saints Church Thelwall and may wish to access faith and community activities and/or send their children to the schools there, if the development were to go ahead. The plans currently show no access to Thelwall at all and Stockport Road is a very busy fast road to cross. An access route across the Pennine Trail via a new bridge at least for walkers should be a requirement placed upon the developer if this part of the plan remains, alongwith a Toucan crossing for walkers and bikes.
11. The schools in Thelwall are already turning children away due to the popularity of the schools by families in Latchford, who are geographically closer across the Manchester Ship Canal than those living in All Saints Drive, some of whom have already to go to primary schools in Lymm. Any further developments would require further investment in the local schools and access as above and should be a requirement of any planning permission. St Wilfred's in Grappenhall is already a very popular school too and will be subject to more pressure from developments by Homes England so capacity will be an issue there too.
12. On the Thelwall Heys site all affordable housing is planned for the back of the site adjacent to the Transpennine Trail. This will make is difficult for families to exit the site at peak times, making the case for a vehicle exit onto Stockport Road too.
13. There appear to be no firm proposals for transport across the borough and this will be vital to the success of the plan and improvement in air quality. This should be further addressed.
14. There should be consideration of the time it will take to clean up contaminated land at Fiddlers Ferry and who will pay for the clean up. Developers will want to take the easy options of green belt land, therefore it will be vital for the Council to lobby the Government as noted in point 2.
15. The developments at Statham in Lymm will be in areas that are known to flood. Consideration should be given to flood defences prior to any development being allowed if developers cannot be diverted away to brownfield sites.
16. The numbers of houses being planned for in the town exceeds any that have been achieved in the past and there appears to be no good basis for these assumptions.
17. Homes England appears to be working hand in glove with developers to sell off green belt in the area to the detriment of the people of Warrington.
18. Demand for developments appears to be based on a desire to locate to strategically well located sites close to the motorway network on easily developed sites. Our Planning Services should be directing development away from green field sites such as these towards locations where jobs created by these schemes are accessible via public transport and on brown field sites.
19. The pandemic has changed the way many people live and work and the online shopping revolution is just playing out making it very difficult to know how employment needs will change. Local green transport, including safe cycle lanes in all parts of the town, will be absolutely key to achieving any reduction in travel and should have a much higher priority and there must be comprehensive consideration of the existing levels of congestion and the impact of further developments on congestion.
20. Employment growth appears to be almost entirely based on logistics and transport, which will only provide lowly paid repetitive jobs and our communities deserve better opportunities than this.
21. The culture in our Planning Department will be vital in all this and the team should be led and developed to make climate consciousness its highest priority and Planning Officers should be supported by officials to ensure this agenda can be developed throughout the timescale of the plan.

We hope that you find these comments helpful.

Kind Regards

David and Helen Speed