



8 November 2021

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

Dear Sir

Warrington Local Plan

I wish to comment on the latest version of the Warrington Local Plan. I am pleased that the original idea of a "Garden Suburb" has been dropped but I am now opposed to the South East Urban Extension which has taken its place. The new proposals remain very unfair to the residents of South Warrington who will see the character of their area totally transformed. I believe there are no exceptional reasons for the release of so much Greenbelt and that insufficient detail is provided for the new infrastructure which would surely be required to service the proposed developments. In particular, there are no proposals for any new crossings of the ship canal or for improvements to motorway and other local traffic bottlenecks.

Warrington South already has major traffic problems. There can be long queues at Stockton Heath and Latchford to cross the ship canal at any time of the day. There are long queues, particularly at peak times, to access the motorways at Junction 20 on the M6 and Junction 10 on the M56, at Lumb Brook and the A49 at Stretton. The Local Plan for South Warrington is proposing an additional 4200 houses and a number of transport based businesses, both of which will generate a huge increase in traffic and pollution and make all the above locations worse. The Local Plan does not directly address any of these issues. I believe this is wrong; all the above congestion issues and the associated reduction in air quality need addressing now as part of the plan. New infrastructure, particularly modifications to Junction 20 on the M6, is likely to be very expensive so its funding should clearly be considered.

Warrington South is physically isolated from the Town Centre by the ship canal. This barrier already presents major problems to the population who need to travel to the

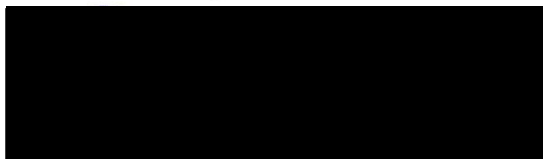
hospital, major shops and railway stations. At present, access into Warrington is by means of three swing bridges and a single high level cantilever. All the bridges are in very poor repair and will become increasingly unreliable. A large increase in the number of residents south of the ship canal will make the situation impossible. Yet again, the plan, whilst mentioning these issues, provides no detail as to how they will be addressed. This is wrong. The problem with traffic at the swing bridges needs to be addressed now, in detail, as part of the Local Plan, together with how any new infrastructure will be funded.

Previous local plans (proposing fewer houses) were dependent on a new high level crossing of the ship canal and were largely abandoned when funding could not be found for a new bridge. In my opinion, if South Warrington is to be integrated into the main town, a new high level crossing would be a priority. Without it, the new residents of South Warrington will simply access the motorway to work and shop elsewhere.

The Local Plan proposes the release of large areas of greenbelt in South Warrington for housing and business development. Greenbelt is a precious thing and should only be considered for development in "exceptional circumstances". There appear to be no such circumstances so its release is not justified. Building on greenbelt is always the easy option. Although I accept there are additional problems associated with brown field sites, I believe such sites should be prioritised for development and more effort made to identify, and factor in, all those that may come available during the next 25 years. If greenbelt land then has to be released because of "exceptional circumstances" then it should be done more equitably. It is unfair on the local population to have its release concentrated in the south.

In conclusion I believe the plan to be wrong, unfair and lacking in detail. It does not address the need for any new transport infrastructure in South Warrington and may be undeliverable if developers are reluctant to fund it. We risk losing precious greenbelt land without the infrastructure in place to service all the proposed housing and business developments. Whilst I fully support the need for Warrington to have an approved local plan to prevent speculative development I cannot support your current proposals. Please consider my comments.

Yours faithfully

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of David A Hughes.

David A Hughes