



10 November 2021

Local Plan, Planning Policy and Programmes
Warrington Borough Council
New Town House
Buttermarket Street
Warrington
WA1 2NH

Objection to Warrington's Local Plan – concerning South Warrington

As a local resident of Appleton in South Warrington these plans will greatly affect me, from the development of land through which I walk at least weekly, to traffic jams and congestion with all the delays, pollution and noise that this entails.

The Local Plan does not address the need to reduce our carbon footprint. Instead the Plan will increase our carbon footprint as so many facilities remain outside our local area when the Plan could have made some facilities walkable.

I think that the facilities mentioned in the plan are vague and not well thought out. I fear they will be late or will never happen.

I was not pleased that my husband and I had to travel so far in mid October for the Consultation Event at the Halliwell Jones Stadium. Such an important plan for South Warrington and the consultation was held in North Warrington. Most of my elderly neighbours were not able to attend.

I give more details about my concerns below.

Loss of Green Belt and amenity access

There is much spare retail capacity in Warrington Centre that could be converted into prime residential accommodation (eg. Bridge Street) close to the railway station, Warrington's night life and the new cinema. There is also old property ripe for demolition. It seems criminal to build on Green Belt in South Warrington.

With 3 local housing developments in Stretton and Appleton currently underway, existing footpaths through the fields are disappearing. This is putting great pressure on the existing amenity land. So new housing in the Plan will greatly exacerbate this ongoing problem.

For example the plan encircles the Dingle and Ford's Rough, a well know beauty spot. It has been so trampled on during Covid that it desperately needs attention. The bluebells are vastly reduced, one hill-side is bare from BMX bikes. I lose hope for the Dingle. The plan is not preserving enough green space. The green space shown in the plan seems doomed to a slow decline.

Inadequate Transport Infrastructure

I make no apology for repeating what I wrote in a previous objection in 2019. I would just add that I nearly missed a hospital appointment on 13 October when traffic was completely stationary for over 20 minutes in Stockton Heath preventing crossing of the Manchester Ship Canal and I had to divert and find another bridge. I was very upset.

I am very unhappy about the transport plans. The plan does NOT address our access to the centre of Warrington, the hospital, the cinema, any of the large supermarkets or any of the large shops like B&Q, Dunelm, Wickes, M&S etc. What is currently required by local people, whether or not this plan is passed, is more North-South access across:

- (i) the Bridgewater Canal
- (ii) the Manchester Ship Canal
- (iii) the River Mersey to alleviate current congestion.

Not a single extra crossing of the Bridgewater Canal or the Manchester Ship Canal is proposed. Nor is there any proposal to widen the busy single lane under the Bridgewater Canal at Lumb Brook where traffic flow is in one direction at a time, controlled by traffic lights.

Nothing addresses the bottleneck in Stockton Heath across the Manchester Ship Canal. At rush hour and lunch times the queues and traffic pollution build up. When the swing bridge opens the queues are horrendous. Nobody likes to think what will happen when the swing bridge, tremendously dilapidated and neglected, has to be renovated and repainted by Peel Holdings.

So extra traffic from new housing in the plan would bring traffic to a complete stand-still.

The new Western link that has just been given the go-ahead may alleviate some of the current congestion across the River Mersey for east-west commuters to Chester or Manchester, but does not address the north-south needs of Appleton and Stretton residents even before this massive housing development takes place.

Buses are not an obvious alternative. Even if the hourly bus service along the London Road (A49) were increased to every ten minutes (fifteen minutes at most to be usable), there is the complication that journeys would require changing buses in the centre of Warrington to reach most destinations (out of town shopping, the hospital, the indoor rock climbing centre, Covid vaccination centres, etc.) all in North Warrington.

In summary, transport links across Warrington for the substantial number of new houses in this South Warrington Plan are completely uncatered for.

Carbon Footprint not addressed

Sustainable living means being able to walk or make shorter car journeys. If the local plan was serious, it would include:

1) A large supermarket

The local plan has vague references to supermarket(s) which could simply be one or more small Co-ops. Small supermarkets are useful but do not substitute for the large weekly shop. A large supermarket locally would mean a shorter car journey. Importantly it would mean current and future residents not adding to traffic congestion to cross the Bridgewater Canal, the Manchester Ship Canal and the River Mersey.

2) A sixth form college or school with a sixth form

Currently students travel either to Priestley College on the other side of the Bridgewater canal and the Manchester Ship Canal or to Sir John Deane's Sixth Form College in Northwich.

3) Office space

Some rental office space alongside housing could reduce urban commuting

4) Zero Carbon housing

Sustainable living means all new houses having solar panels, heat pumps, and tanks to collect grey water from the roof. Twenty years ago my Belgian cousin was showing me the tanks in his cellar collecting rain water for the toilets, mandatory in all new housing. The Plan makes no mention of these. Please don't argue that it is outside the Plan's remit. The Government AND the Local Authority AND the developers need to address sustainable living urgently and this should be visible in the Plans.

Without the above (and more), extra houses and extra people in the area will simply increase the carbon footprint.

Facilities (for Health Centres, Schools, etc) described in the Plan are vague

The Local Plan does not state WHEN new GP surgeries, schools and supermarket(s) are to be built. The Local Plan is vague about dates and I worry that facilities will be late or forgotten about.

With the increasing population, I worry about access to a GP. There are only a handful of small GP practices in Appleton, Stretton and Grappenhall, and the pressure on services is already over-stretched. My neighbours and I have atrocious face-to-face and telephone access at present. The GP centre in Dudlow Green is too cramped, unable to expand, barely able to provide a service during Covid. Similarly there is space for only one or two people in the pharmacy, so people queue outside whatever the weather.

I worry about dental access. I have just had my first check-up after 23 months with no date for a future check up. Without purpose built premises, no new dentists will be encouraged into the area. We cannot wait until all the new houses are built. I cannot wait five or ten years for my next dental appointment.

Though a new secondary school is mentioned, the Plan makes no mention of the existing old and run down Bridgewater High School. Our grandson is due to start at this school in 2022 so it is an issue close to my heart. When our daughter went to the open evening recently she was shocked at how old and run down Bridgewater High School was compared with the school she attended in Preston thirty years previously. The first time that I visited the school, five years ago for a Christmas Fayre, I was taken aback by the shabbiness of the school, with corridors and classrooms small, dingy and dark, less appealing than the school I attended in Salford sixty years ago.

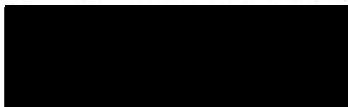
In essence, Bridgewater needs rebuilding. Bridgewater is a split site school which is far from ideal and though some upgrades to it are being undertaken, a new secondary school in South Warrington would seriously challenge Bridgewater. By ignoring Bridgewater in the Plan, it could end up as a failing school in years to come.

It was only five years ago that Bridgewater closed its sixth form because numbers were borderline. With the Plan's increasing population, there is no mention of a new Sixth Form College. The Plan seems flawed and to lack any joined up thinking with regard to schools.

I am not keen on development in this beautiful area but if it must go ahead then it needs to be well thought through for the benefit of generations to come.

I submit that the present Local Plan is unsound.

Yours sincerely,



Olive Lewenz

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