

## WHAT IS SWP?

**SWP is the South Warrington Parish Councils' Local Plan Working Group. It is a collaboration between Parish Councils in the south of the town. It was formed in response to the huge public reaction to the first stage Local Plan review conducted by Warrington Borough Council in the summer of 2017.**

We formed the Group because the parishes of South Warrington are all affected by the Local Plan and because a united response carries the most weight. In short, we're all in this together.

We led the opposition to the 2019 version of the Local Plan and successfully opposed the Stobart's application which tried to take Green Belt in advance of a Local Plan.

We published our alternative strategy in 2020.

You can view a summary of the Local Plan or the full document on Warrington Borough Council's website: [www.warrington.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.warrington.gov.uk/localplan) or in person at the Halliwell Jones stadium.

A hard copy of the Local Plan can be viewed at WBC Libraries and Parish Council offices.

SWP are working with member Parish Councils to provide displays and drop-in events which you can visit to discuss the Plan. Details for all these can be found at: [www.lymmparishcouncil.gov.uk/local-plan](http://www.lymmparishcouncil.gov.uk/local-plan)

## WARRINGTON COUNCIL'S SIX WEEK CONSULTATION

STARTS ON 4 OCTOBER  
ENDS AT 5PM ON 15 NOVEMBER

### There are several ways of submitting your comments to the Council:

- Via the Council's website: [www.warrington.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.warrington.gov.uk/localplan)
- Email to: [localplan@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@warrington.gov.uk)
- Post to: Local Plan, Planning Policy and Programmes, Warrington Borough Council, East Annexe, Town Hall, Sankey Street WA1 1HU
- Hand delivery to: Council Office, 1 Time Square (9am to 5pm, Mon to Fri)

# WARRINGTON LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

OCTOBER 2021

## THIS PLAN WILL CHANGE THE FACE OF OUR AREA FOREVER

### HAVE YOUR SAY!

**YOU HAVE UNTIL 15 NOVEMBER 2021  
TO MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD**

### GUIDANCE FROM THE SOUTH WARRINGTON PARISH COUNCILS' LOCAL PLAN WORKING GROUP (SWP)

Warrington Borough Council has recently issued for public consultation a revised Local Plan which gives the town a basis for planning decisions until 2038. It updates the previous version of 2019, which sparked over 3000 objections.

This version of the Plan would destroy the character and distinctive nature of South Warrington. It proposes a minimum of 4200 new homes in Grappenhall, Appleton, Appleton Thorn and Stretton, leading to the loss of large parts of the Green Belt. This number is in addition to housing already approved. There would be 310 houses on

the small but tranquil Thelwall Heys site. It involves a huge 'Urban Extension' and even more and bigger logistics sites, served by already overloaded motorway junctions.

The Plan increases the town's reliance on road transport. There is still no clear plan to improve local roads and no guarantee that infrastructure will be in place before houses are built.

It does nothing for the Town Centre.

It's a new document - but not a new approach. The Borough Council still seems to think that it can raid its own Green Belt as a first resort to solve its problems.

In contrast, SWP thinks that 'no use of Green Belt' should have been the starting-point for building the Local Plan - that's what Green Belt status means.

In the 708 pages of the Local Plan there is no evidence that the Borough Council has tried to work through things that way. We accept that some development will have to take place but we believe there are better and less harmful ways of delivering it. We set these ideas out publicly and clearly last year.

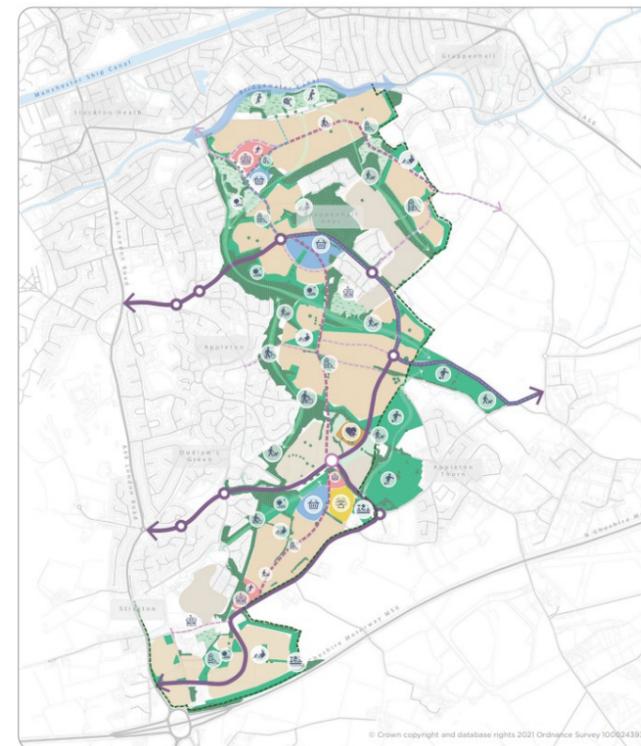
Whilst we welcome some changes in this revised Plan, such as the use of the Fiddler's Ferry site and the removal of housing proposals for Walton, it's not the new approach SWP was looking for. Last year we called for a significant change of thinking, with more emphasis on the Town Centre and taking strategic advantage of Warrington's rail links.

Sadly, that hasn't happened.

### So we say 'no' to this new Local Plan.

SWP will respond to the new proposals and use professional advisors to ensure that our arguments are effectively expressed and give us the best chance of influencing the Council's proposals.

**But individual responses are also very important - which is why you are receiving this leaflet. Let the Council know what you think. This leaflet aims to help you understand the issues and to make representations to the Council which are clear and effective.**



## GREEN BELT

- The new Plan reduces Warrington's Green Belt overall by 5% and almost all the land targeted is in the 'Urban Extension' in South Warrington, particularly Appleton, Appleton Thorn, Grappenhall and Stretton
- Some 1400 acres of Green Belt in Warrington would be lost across Warrington, as a whole, with nearly 1000 acres of that coming from our area
- The Urban Extension would accommodate a minimum of 4200 houses - and Thelwall Heys will get 310 houses at an early date. There will also be a further significant expansion of warehousing facilities - using a lot of land but not creating many high-quality jobs because of modern automation
- None of this loss of Green Belt is properly justified
- The existing Green Belt boundary was confirmed only 7 years ago in a plan that was supposed to be good for 20 years
- The plan for the Green Belt release hits our area very hard. The Council should look more carefully at brownfield sites in the town rather than take the easy but irreversible step of using Green Belt
- It is wholly unclear how the Council will be able to control the rate of housebuilding once the Green Belt has gone, or to insist on using existing brownfield sites before using the Green Belt released. The likely result will be that our area will be cherrypicked by developers until the 4200 houses - or more - are built
- The environmental and ecological impact of the loss of Green Belt has not been properly assessed in the revised Plan.



## HOUSING

- Around 2400 new homes would be built up to 2038 in the Urban Extension to the south east of the Borough with the potential for 1800 more beyond that date - but these could be brought forward anyway
- Most of the new housing will not be affordable for local people. Developers would only be required to build a maximum of 30% affordable homes which is not enough - and affordable homes need to be located near to appropriate facilities
- Workers at the warehouses and distribution centres will probably have to commute from outside the area
- New homes in the south would be too far from both of the town's railway stations, meaning more car use in our area and across the town as a whole.

## FIT FOR PURPOSE?

- We doubt the Plan is deliverable
- The housing numbers which drive the whole Plan are unrealistic relative to what Warrington has achieved in the past. Instead of pressing ahead with these numbers, there needs to be some recognition from Warrington Borough Council of what is practically achievable
- Details of the plans for roads are very vague. Some indicative plans are provided but these do not form part of the Local Plan proper. These details should not be left to be settled later, when the principle of development will have already been established. The true effects of the development cannot be judged properly without these details. There needs to be a clear commitment to associated funding and a clear plan for timely and effective delivery of infrastructure improvements
- Specifically, there is nothing planned to improve the A49 as it goes north from the M56. There are vague references to a new junction on the A49 opposite the Spire hospital but there is no indication of how this can be achieved
- There is no definitive proposal for how the residents of South Warrington will travel into town. No details are provided on how increased traffic could be accommodated on the ageing and overloaded crossings of the Ship Canal and the Bridgewater Canal
- There is no detail of how the Plan will actually result in regeneration in the Town Centre or preserve the identity and distinctive character of our area, both of which are Warrington Council policy objectives
- There needs to be meaningful liaison with neighbouring Local Authorities
- The Plan does not show convincingly what the 'exceptional circumstances' are for development in the Green Belt
- The most likely outcome is that many houses will be built on Green Belt but the necessary supporting infrastructure will not be delivered
- We risk our Green Belt being sacrificed for the sake of an over-ambitious Plan
- The integrity of all our villages would be threatened.

## TOWN CENTRE

- The proposals would not trigger regeneration in the Town Centre. They would just leave us with the same pattern of commuting into Manchester and Liverpool for work, shopping and leisure
- Funding the new proposals will draw Council money away from the Town Centre, achieving the opposite of what was intended.

## ECONOMIC GROWTH

- The Council is being unrealistic with its forecasts. Growth predictions are based on levels of activity and development at rates which have never been achieved before
- There seems to be no understanding of how development in Warrington should take account of what is happening in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire
- Growth seems to be driven by new housing creating economic benefit, instead of the other way round.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

- There is no new route into town from the South East of the town and the Plan still relies on three Victorian swing bridges over the Ship Canal and inadequate single-track crossings of the Bridgewater Canal
- The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is dependent on roads and bridges that are already overstretched
- The revised Plan gives no confidence that the infrastructure needed can or will be delivered either in the main settlements or the smaller outlying ones like Lymm
- The Plan hints at the use of the Cantilever Bridge as part of a 'Mass Transit Corridor', but with no timing and no detail
- The future of the 'Western Link' would appear to be questionable on grounds of cost and given the removal of Port Warrington and the South West Urban Extension in Walton from the 2019 Plan. But it still appears in the new Plan.

## CONGESTION & AIR QUALITY

- The development proposed does nothing to ease existing problems of traffic congestion and air quality and can only make things worse, especially in Stockton Heath and Lower Walton, at Junction 20 of the M6 and Junction 10 of the M56
- Increasing reliance on road traffic is wholly inconsistent with the UK's Climate Change aspirations.

## IN SUMMARY

## THE PLAN IS NOT SOUND

- **NO** JUSTIFICATION FOR PREDICTED GROWTH
- **NO** NEED FOR THE VOLUME OF HOUSING AND MASS OF EMPLOYMENT LAND
- **NO** JUSTIFICATION FOR SCALE OF GREEN BELT RELEASE
- **NO** NEED FOR THE HARM TO AIR QUALITY AND LOCAL ECOLOGY
- **NO** NEED TO DESTROY THE LANDSCAPE AND CHARACTER OF OUR VILLAGES
- **NO** CLARITY ON THE MEANS OF DELIVERY
- **NO** EXPLANATION OF HOW THE ALREADY POOR TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE OF SOUTH WARRINGTON CAN COPE WITH INCREASED LEVELS OF TRAFFIC