**Warburton Neighbourhood Plan**

**Drop in meeting of 11th January 2020**

* Green Belt.

It was felt that Trafford’s Green Belt Policy is possibly rather too strictly applied and that a degree of a slightly more flexible approach is required, recognising that while the Green Belt is extremely valuable, the landscape within it is dynamic and that people live and work within the Green Belt. (Landscape Institute Landscape Briefing April 2018 ‘Green Belt Policy’) Recreational value of Green Belt is under-exploited and there is a lack of connectivity between footpaths (a lack of ‘Green Infrastructure’).

* Existing housing stock.

There was some concern expressed that some of the older houses, possibly built originally for agricultural workers, are not large enough for modern families. This possibly relates to the provision of internal toilets and bathrooms (external at the time many of these properties were built) and lack of storage spaces. As these properties are within the Green Belt it was felt that there may be problems with obtaining Planning Permission.

It was accepted that any possible extension should be very much in character with the existing property.

Applications to refurbish or alter existing housing stock should insist on the retention of existing characteristic features. For instance, the substantial chimneys of many of the John Douglas designed houses should be retained wherever possible. New extensions should respect the existing structures, especially where new, more modern materials are used.

* Future development in Warburton.

The very specific character of the Warburton area should, it was felt, be reflected in any new housing permitted within the area. While not being too prescriptive or wishing to see a pastiche of Arts and Crafts buildings, any new development should reference elements of the existing design features. The proposed Redrow Homes site houses are seen as totally alien to the character of the area.

* Community facilities.

Existing community facilities were seen as barely adequate for the existing population and that the present Parish Rooms were in need of urgent upgrading. Future development should include for provision of additional or new community facilities.

* Bus services.

There were several people expressing concern over the reduction of bus services and possible further reduction. School children use some of the local bus stops and there are worries about access to and from the bus stops relating to road speeds and visibility.

* Highways.

There was considerable concern over several issues relating to highways, these were as follows,

1. Traffic Speed. It was felt that traffic speeds are in reality far higher than either the current speed limits or the ‘safe’ speed for the roads. A number of accidents in recent times related to excessive speed.
2. Road quality. Potholes are a constant problem throughout the area and it was noted that some vehicles have been damaged, the damage not limited to tyres.
3. Relating to traffic speed, a great deal of worry was expressed on the condition and quality of local footways. In several areas along Warburton Lane, Paddock Lane and Bent Lane the footways are far too narrow (certainly not in compliance with modern highway standards). This results in HGV and wide vehicles’ wing mirrors sweeping over the footway and there have been cases of near misses with the heads of pedestrians. On almost all of these footpaths it is impossible to walk two abreast and if another pedestrian is met coming in the opposite direction, one or other must step out into the road. This is not safe where traffic is exceeding 40mph on the adjacent highway.

Several people commented on the condition of the Dunham Road footway, which in parts has almost ceased to exist. On a de-restricted road such as this it is incredibly dangerous to walk along the highway and no locals would risk walking along this road at night. Given that this footway links to the Trans-Pennine Way and several footpaths its condition gives a great deal of concern.

A number of properties have mirrors looking at the highway adjacent to assist entering or leaving private houses. Some of these have been destroyed by HGV wing mirrors.

Mention was made on the lack of intermediate traffic speed limit signs along Paddock Lane. While these were not seen as attractive features, the failure to reduce traffic speeds needs to be addressed urgently.

1. Street Lighting. It was noted that several lighting columns around Moss Brow /Warburton Lane junction were not working (as a result of a recent accident?) and that several individual columns had not been working for some time.
2. Highway junctions. It was felt that a number of highway junctions are quite hazardous, more so to pedestrians than to vehicles. The Moss Lane / Warburton Lane junction, the Warburton Lane / Dunham Road junction, the Warburton Lane / Paddock Lane junction and the Wigsey Lane / Paddock Lane junction were all mentioned. In the case of the junction along Warburton Lane some of the hazard relates to speeding vehicles.
3. Traffic Volumes. This was a major concern about the numbers of vehicles already using Warburton Lane and Dunham Road and the frequent congestion because of peak flows through the Toll Bridge. Additional development such as that already approved in Carrington and Partington (1,000 + houses?) can only surcharge roads already struggling at well beyond their design capacity.
4. HGV traffic. Concern was expressed at the apparently increasing numbers of HGVs using Warburton Lane. (This aligns with increasing concerns expressed in Lymm over HGVs using Rush Green Road and traveling through the village centre.) There are weight limits on the bridges and some of these vehicles are considerably in excess of the maximum permitted weights.
5. ‘Cheshire Railings’. Several people mentioned that the continuous metal bar fences (usually painted black and white) which are characteristic feature of many rural road junctions and sharp corners are not being replaced or maintained. These rails were originally placed to improve visibility. It was mentioned that it would be interesting to see where there were originally these railings and they have subsequently disappeared.

* Drainage and Flooding.

There was concern over flooding levels and drainage issues throughout the area, with at least one cases of land fill having disturbed the previously existing drainage with negative results. Flooding on the Trans-Pennine Trail was mentioned. Flooding on several roads was mentioned.

* Tree Planting.