

**AGENDA FOR
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**



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To: All Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillors : R Bernstein, C Birchmore, A Arif, N Bayley,
N Boroda, D Green, T Pilkington, D Vernon (Chair),
G Marsden, E Moss and M Rubinstein

Dear Member/Colleague

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will be held as follows:-

Date:	Wednesday, 4 October 2023
Place:	Council Chamber, Bury Town Hall
Time:	7.30 pm
Briefing Facilities:	If Opposition Members and Co-opted Members require briefing on any particular item on the Agenda, the appropriate Director/Senior Officer originating the related report should be contacted.
Notes:	

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider whether they have an interest in any matters on the agenda and, if so, to formally declare that interest.

3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (*Pages 3 - 10*)

A period of 30 minutes has been set aside for members of the public to ask questions on matters considered at the last meeting and set out in the minutes or on the agenda for tonight's meeting.

4 MEMBER QUESTION TIME (*Pages 11 - 16*)

Questions are invited from Elected Members about items on the agenda. 15 minutes will be set aside for Member Question Time, if required.

5 MINUTES (*Pages 17 - 22*)

Minutes from the meeting held on 05th September 2023 are attached.

6 PLACES FOR EVERYONE MODIFICATIONS (*Pages 23 - 48*)

Report attached from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth.

7 URGENT BUSINESS

Any other business which by reason of special circumstances the Chair agrees may be considered as a matter of urgency.

Public Questions – Overview and Scrutiny 04/10/23	
<i>Question</i>	<i>Answer</i>
<p>As an asthma sufferer I am concerned about air quality and global warming, what is the council proposing to ensure that we protect the air quality in the development areas? Bury Road, Radcliffe already has high congestion from cars. How is the council proposing to ensure that such congestion is not added to by the proposed development.</p> <p>Annette Corrigan Radcliffe</p>	<p>Air quality is a complex issue with many challenges. However, it is clear that a wide range of actions will be required to improve air quality to appropriate levels, and support objectives relating to health and quality places.</p> <p>Many of these actions are beyond the scope of PfE, but by developing the Plan, we are able to set out specific policy requirements for our strategic sites. These include requirements for the developments to deliver significant improvements to public transport and active travel, such as walking and cycling, as part of their developments. We would not be in a position to require these improvements on smaller sites.</p> <p>PfE also seeks to locate new developments in the most sustainable locations and to maximise residential densities around transport hubs. As an example, the PfE proposed to create a new transport hub around a new tram stop as part of the Elton proposals.</p> <p>The aims and objectives of PfE are aligned to our emerging Transport Strategy and wider Greater Manchester-wide ambitions to improve the public transport network and promote cleaner ways to travel (such as the Bee Network and cleaning up taxi fleets) in order to help to encourage more people to use more sustainable and cleaner modes of transport.</p>
<p>The controlling party of this council championed a campaign to remove the Walshaw site from the Places for Everyone plan. They submitted a main</p>	<p>Whilst the Inspectors conclusion regarding the Walshaw site and the Green Belt additions are disappointing, it is considered that, on balance,</p>

<p>modification to the plan after formal submission to government which was dismissed by the inspectors at the beginning of the examination in public. Also, the council requested 14 new greenbelt additions in Bury to reduce the net loss but only 3 of these now remain after the examination. So, the question is, why would this council now seek to approve a list of modifications that doesn't include some of the key elements you originally asked for?</p> <p>Stephen Cluer Tottington</p>	<p>this is outweighed by the wider advantages that come with continued participation in the Plan.</p> <p>Not participating in the PfE process is likely to have a number of negative consequences, particularly in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Having no up-to-date plan in the short-term - leaving the Borough open to speculative and unplanned development with inadequate supporting infrastructure. ▪ The PfE sites (including Walshaw) being targeted as these have the evidence in place for planning applications and the Inspectors have found the sites sound. ▪ Additional Green Belt sites would be under threat if they were not afforded the up to date protection that PfE would give them. ▪ The potential loss of job and investment and investment opportunities, as the Northern Gateway site could be compromised. ▪ And, our Local Plan would need to default to the Governments Local Housing Needs without the ability to redistribute in a joint plan. Therefore, we could potentially require more Green Belt land than identified in the PfE.
<p>I oppose building on Green Belt and would like to know why, when the council advocate a 'brownfield first' policy, they want to allow the destruction of Green Belt areas. PfE is not 'brownfield first' and is inappropriate, without any exceptional circumstances:</p>	<p>The Council remains committed to prioritising the development of brownfield land but does not have the large swathes of brownfield land that exists in other districts across Greater Manchester.</p> <p>As a Borough, we simply do not have enough land within the urban area or on brownfield sites to meet either our full Local Housing Need target or even the reduced PfE target over the plan period.</p>

<p>Making effective use of land</p> <p>Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.</p> <p>Proposals affecting the Green Belt</p> <p>Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.</p> <p>Richard Lucas Tottington</p>	<p>In identifying Bury's housing land supply, we have sought to maximise brownfield land sites but, like other districts, it has also been necessary to identify some land within the Green Belt to meet our targets. It should be noted that without the PfE allowing us to offset some of our Local Housing Need target, the impact on Green Belt would have been greater.</p> <p>In terms of exceptional circumstances, the Inspectors have considered the arguments around these and have effectively concluded that exceptional circumstances exist to justify all of the sites proposed within Bury.</p>
<p>"If the places for everyone plan is approved, how will the Council ensure that the biodiversity habitats which will be lost on the sites allocated for the Places for Everyone plan be replaced 'like for like' within the borough of Bury."</p>	<p>Once adopted, Places for Everyone would become a key part of Bury's statutory development plan and its policies will be used for planning applications that will need to be submitted on the proposed allocated sites.</p>

<p>Phil Smith-Lawrence Prestwich</p>	<p>PfE Policy JP-G9 relates to a net enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity and sets out several measures by which a net enhancement will be sought.</p> <p>The purpose of the Policy seeks to initial avoid significant harm to biodiversity in the first instance and to mitigate/compensate where necessary.</p> <p>And instead of a 'like for like' approach the policy actually seeks to achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity of no less than 10%.</p>
<p>Two of my Councillors in the Elton Ward namely Charlotte Morris and Martin Hayes campaigned to have the Walshaw Site taken out of Places for Everyone in the run up to local elections in 2022 and 2023. Why did they choose Walshaw and not the Elton site? Also the two Councillors actually voted for PfE to be approved which also included Walshaw. Is this not a blatant case of electioneering?</p> <p>Supplementary question (if applicable):: I will ask on the evening</p> <p>Alan Bayfield Bury</p>	<p>The decision to submit Places for Everyone was made by Full Council in July 2021.</p> <p>On 7 September 2022, Cabinet authorised officers to request a main modification to PfE involving the removal of the proposed housing allocation at Walshaw due to the identification of additional housing supply in Bury and Radcliffe town centres that was not confirmed when the Plan was submitted in February 2022.</p> <p>The Cabinet report set out a site options appraisal by Officers which took a balanced approach to considering the planning merits of each of Bury's proposed PfE housing allocations.</p> <p>This appraisal concluded that whilst the site at Walshaw would deliver some local benefits, unlike the other comparable sites (including Elton), these are not considered to be of a scale and nature that would offer strategic benefits to the wider Borough.</p>

	<p>It was for these Planning reasons that Officers recommended the Walshaw site.</p>
<p>I have been following the PFE inspection process via the web link and it was apparent to me that it was conducted in a completely biased way showing favour towards the Council Officials and the developers. From what I witnessed the ultimate aim of the inspection was entirely to assist its final approval. The Council even employed an independent top barrister to 'defend' the plan and the inspectors have also had to recommended numerous modifications to make it 'sound'</p> <p>This is certainly not what I would define as an 'independent' review (as it is sold to the public) but a completely corrupt and coercive way to review the important issue of preserving Bury's precious greenbelt .</p> <p>A massive amount. of public money has been wasted on this farcical tick box exercise.all which will be to the detriment of our wildlife and greenbelt if it is allowed to go ahead.</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) specifies that plans are 'sound' if they are:</p>	<p>Any assertions that the PFE examination process has been corrupt, coercive or biased in any way is strongly refuted.</p> <p>Following the submission of the Plan in February last year, the Planning Inspectorate appointed three Inspectors to hold an independent examination of the Plan.</p> <p>All three are very experienced planning inspectors and have conducted the examination in a very thorough and professional way throughout.</p> <p>It is normal practice at examinations for Inspectors to recommend main modifications to a plan where these are considered necessary to make the plan sound and/or legally compliant.</p> <p>As a joint plan of the nine districts, Places for Everyone is a substantial and complex document that has required the Inspectors to undertake an extensive examination that has already taken 20 months to get to the current stage. It is inevitable, therefore, that an examination of this scale and nature has given rise to a significant number of modifications.</p> <p>Nevertheless, these modifications do not change the overall Vision, Objectives and Spatial Strategy of the Plan.</p>

Justified – that means ‘an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence’

There are good alternatives to destroying greenbelt which have been highlighted and brushed aside!

So - I believe that the inspection process did not uphold this and that representatives who were present at the inspection to speak out on behalf of a massive group of supporters against the destruction of greenbelt were not listened to.

So it begs the question:

If this plan requires so many modifications (479 pages to be exact) which was following a blatantly biased inspection process and which dismisses massive opposition for building on ‘protected greenbelt’ from the people of Bury in order to make it legally sound - Is this plan really fit for approval or should it be scrapped even at this late stage?

Supplementary Question:

Response to supplementary:

Do you really want to waste even more money on a legal battle against your own electorate? And do you really want to destroy greenbelt areas with natural beauty and ecological importance when it is totally 'unjustified'?

Marie Holder Bury

It is unclear what legal battle is being referred to but our position has always been that we do not want to build on Green Belt.

However, we have to work within the confines of national planning policy and this requires us to plan for the longer term employment and housing needs of the Borough. Unfortunately, this requires the release of some Green Belt land.

The role of the Planning Inspectorate is to test whether the plan is legally compliant, and they have indicated that they feel it would be with the proposed modifications.

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Members Questions

Name	Question	Answer
Councillor McBriar	'Following the publication of the Planning Inspectorates report which has upheld Bury Labour's decision to include Walshaw in Places for Everyone, is it now time to remove Bury Metropolitan Council from Places for Everyone and publish our own bespoke housing plans?'	<p>The Inspectors have considered the submitted evidence and discussions at the hearing sessions and have concluded that the requested modification to remove the Walshaw site is not necessary to make the plan sound and that the site should remain in the Plan.</p> <p>Whilst this conclusion is disappointing, it is considered that, on balance, Places for Everyone can still be supported as it gives us an up to date plan and provides us with opportunities for investment in new employment and infrastructure. The plan is much wider than simply identifying new housing sites.</p> <p>As we have heard, if we were to withdraw from the plan (assuming we could), the implications of not having an up to date plan would create a policy vacuum that is likely to lead to an influx of speculative planning applications – not just on the PfE sites – but also multiple other sites that would be protected by the PfE progressing.</p> <p>And if we were to withdraw from the PfE, we lose our ability to redistribute some of Bury’s housing targets to other parts of Greater Manchester – therefore the impact being that we need to find more Green Belt land than in the modified PfE.</p>

<p>Councillor Harris</p>	<p>Please confirm that the public consultation concerning the Places for Everyone modifications, fully complies with the Gunning Principles on Consultations to ensure the plan is still in the formative stage therefore no decisions have been made. The decision makers must provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account. And, if the majority of respondents are against the proposed modifications the plan will be reconsidered.</p>	<p>Yes, the proposed consultation on the modifications to the plan will be consistent with the Gunning principles.</p> <p>The role of the Inspector is to consider PfE against the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF and will consider representations to the modifications on this basis.</p>
<p>Councillor Gartside</p>	<p>"I refer to the paper for Cabinet dated 7th September 2022 "Places for Everyone – updated evidence on housing supply and request for a main modification to the plan". It received Cabinet approval in order to send a request to the Planning Inspectors to remove Walshaw Brook from the Places for Everyone plan. Following this Cabinet approval can you let me know:</p> <p>When did the Council submit the request to the Planning Inspectors and was there a meeting with the Planning Inspectors to discuss the modifications and whether Walshaw could be removed at that stage?"</p>	<p>The request to remove the site at Walshaw was submitted to the Inspectors in a written statement in response to Matter 17 (see document ref M17.1 on the Examination Documents List on the Examination web site). This was submitted to the Inspectors on 6 October 2022.</p> <p>The proposed modification to remove Walshaw was also included in an early iteration of the Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications (see document ref PMM2 on the Examination Documents List on the Examination web site) which was published on 30 October 2022.</p> <p>In addition, further representation was made during the hearings to make the Council's position with regard to the Walshaw site clear.</p> <p>However, having now considered the matter, the Inspectors have concluded that the plan is sound with the site remaining and have not recommended that it should be removed from the Plan.</p>

<p>Councillor Rydeheard</p>	<p><i>"Following Bury Labour's attempt to change the Places for Everyone Plan, despite their acknowledgement on 21st July 2021 at Cabinet that they couldn't make changes to the plan after submitting it, are the "around 1,000" homes that they claim to have "found" in Bury town centre coming out of any of the other greenbelt allocations or is the Council's plan still to build excessively on all available greenbelt, particularly around Walshaw?"</i></p>	<p>On 21 July 2021, Cabinet approved the Publication Places for Everyone for consultation. At that meeting, it was noted that the Council were unable to make changes to the plan once it was submitted <u>but the Planning Inspectors can make alterations.</u></p> <p>After the Plan was submitted, new opportunities for housing in Bury and Radcliffe town centres were identified that were not confirmed at the time the Plan was submitted. These new opportunities were identified following extensive work on town centre masterplanning and the acquisition of the Mill Gate estate.</p> <p>In light of this evidence, Cabinet considered the options and authorised officers to request a main modification to Places for Everyone to remove the proposed housing allocation at Walshaw.</p> <p>The request for a main modification to remove the site at Walshaw was submitted to the Inspectors and further representation was made at the hearing sessions.</p> <p>However, the Inspectors have considered the submitted evidence and discussions at the hearing sessions and have concluded that the requested modification to remove the Walshaw site is not necessary to make the plan sound and that the site should remain in the Plan.</p> <p>Whilst this conclusion is disappointing, it is considered that, on balance, this is outweighed by the benefits that come with continuing to participate in the joint plan,</p>
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		<p>including having a housing target that is around 2,300 less than would otherwise be required.</p> <p>Throughout the PfE process, the Council has continually sought to minimise the impact on Bury’s Green Belt and this has led to the removal and reduction in the size of several sites.</p>
<p>Councillor Booth</p>	<p>The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit produced reports for the original Spatial Framework, that suggested there wasn’t much of any interest around the Elton site.</p> <p>A professional ecologist with decades of local knowledge spent the time, surveying the area properly and produced accurate reports, which were submitted to the planning Inspectorate-many included in the 479 pages of modifications suggested by the Planning Inspectors in an attempt to make this plan sound.</p> <p>The entire area in and around Elton Reservoir is home to a huge variety of animals and plants protected by law. Brown hare, Otters, Great Crested Newts, Lapwings, Badgers and deer to name a few.</p> <p>When raising the issue of wildlife with Peel representatives asking how their development would protect all the species of animals, I was told that some animals would move on because of the disruption, while others, would naturally be killed by machinery, as the development progressed and therefore wouldn’t be an issue. Clearly Peel have no intention of protecting anything that gets in the way of their profits.</p>	<p>All of the key features of ecological interest within the Elton Reservoir site, including the Sites of Biological Importance, will continue to be protected or appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented.</p> <p>Indeed, one of the modifications to the Elton Reservoir policy specifies that development within the allocation will be required to make provision for biodiversity, including taking appropriate account SBIs at Elton Reservoir; Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal (East); Elton Goyt; Withins Reservoir; Black Lane Marl Pits; and Radcliffe Wetlands in accordance with Policy JP-G9.</p> <p>Furthermore, the vast majority of the SBIs sit within the proposed area of retained Green Belt within the site which offers an additional layer of protection. A modification is also proposed to the area of retained Green Belt to include the southern part of the Elton Goyt SBI.</p> <p>PfE Policy JP-G9 also seeks to secure a net enhancement of biodiversity resources, including achieving a measurable net gain in biodiversity of no less than 10%.</p>

	<p>What confidence can we have, that you, as individuals, here to represent your residents and not your political party, have read all of the information available to you and are basing your vote on your own research into this issue, with the Nolan Principal's forefront in your mind?</p> <p>What confidence can we have that you have weighed this proposal against the fact that we have enough brownfield land to meet housing targets without loss of greenbelt and that you will vote with integrity and honesty?</p>	<p>As a Borough, we simply do not have enough land within the urban area or on brownfield sites to meet either our full Local Housing Need target or even the reduced PfE target over the plan period. The Inspectors have considered this issue as part of their examination of the Plan and have concluded that the inclusion of all of Bury's site allocations, including Elton Reservoir, are appropriate in the context of the tests of soundness that are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.</p>
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Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 5 September 2023

Present: Councillor D Vernon (in the Chair)
Councillors R Bernstein, C Birchmore, N Bayley, N Boroda,
D Green, G Marsden, E Moss, M Rubinstein and S Haroon

Also in attendance: Councillor R Gold (Cabinet Member for Finance and Communities) and Councillor E O'Brien (Leader and Cabinet Member Strategic Growth), Chris Hill, GMP, Kate Waterhouse, Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation, Chris Woodhouse, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Robert Summerfield, Assistant Director of Regeneration Delivery

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor A Arif and Councillor T Pilkington

OSC.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Pilkington and Cllr Arif.

Councillor Haroon attended as a substitute for Cllr Arif.

OSC.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

OSC.3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

OSC.4 MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

OSC.5 MINUTES

That the minutes of the meeting held on 04th July 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OSC.6 COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE

Councillor Gold Cabinet Member for Communities and Finance provided a brief overview of the report including recent work of Operation 'revoke' which tackles organised crime in Moorside.

Chief Superintendent Chris Hill updated the Committee on the following key priorities for Greater Manchester Police in Bury:

- Road safety

- Domestic abuse
- Drug dealing
- Serious crime of robbery and vehicle crime

Members were informed that If people are able to tell the police where and when people are offending the Police will target them. Since May, Greater Manchester Police have worked with local communities and Councillors to make seventy seven arrests, one hundred and twenty two stop and searches, execute thirty two warrants and seize thirty eight vehicles. Drugs within communities are a real issue and drugs worth a street value of over one million pounds and over a hundred thousand pound in cash has been taken off the streets. Operation revoke is a good example of working together. Other areas of good practice is Operation AVRO where the Police get all units across the force to come into a specific area; the recent operation resulted in fifty people being arrested and a number of cars seized.

Other area of good practice outlined were:

- Best bar none, where a team come in to the area and look at safety and compliance including measures in place to support safety as well as the purple flag certificate.
- Road safety, the police are increasing the road policing unit with the whole unit being based at Whitefield policing station so will start and finish shifts in bury.
- Problem solving policing – A targeted approach has taken place in Kay Gardens

Chief Superintendent Chris Hill also stated he will be going on a walk for one hour every Monday night for the next three months with Councillors so if you would like to participate to contact him.

Members were then invited to ask questions, Councillor Bernstein asked how can we push partnership further to deliver more and what aspirations do we have. In response Councillor Gold advised a 'Safer Streets' bid has been submitted and will be a future aspiration for the Borough. The is also a new serious violence scheme and will be discussed. In addition the centralisation of STH back into the Council will align anti-social behaviour issues. Chief Superintendent Chris Hill advised that quality and standards of behaviour are continually monitored and there is a GMP scrutiny and governance.

Councillor Birchmore asked what is being done to help the elderly population feel safer in the evenings. In response members were informed that work is being done to improve public perception of the police through quick response times, quality assurance checks and connecting people with community assets to support them and maintaining safe spaces.

Councillor Moss questioned what support is available for children under the age of five who are recognised as victims of domestic violence. Members were informed that the family safeguarding model and early years are also present in the family's life and it is picked up.

Councillor Vernon sought assurance of the involvement of senior officers in the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and the reason of a general review of the process. Members were informed that the group is Chaired by GMP Detective Sargent of Inspector and the review is to align to a Greater Manchester process with a GMCA review to be completed in November 2023.

Discussions took place regarding anti-social behaviour incidents and the partnership working between the Council, Sixtown Housing and Greater Manchester Police. Members were informed that a Council Officer is based at the police station to encourage collaborative working along with CCTV being utilised jointly.

In conclusion the Chair summarised that this update has now been received by the Committee three times and its reassuring to see the plan and development of work

It was agreed:

1. To thank Kate Waterhouse, Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation, Chris Woodhouse, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Chief Superintendent Chris Hill and Councillor Gold, Cabinet Member for Communities and Finance for their hard work and the update.

OSC.7 PRESTWICH REGENERATION

Councillor Birchmore left the meeting at 20:25.

Councillor O'Brien, Leader of the Council provided an update on Prestwich Regeneration programme.

Cllr Moss asked several questions regarding the car parking proposed within the Prestwich regeneration plan. In response members were informed that pre-planning advice is being sourced from the team and the level of parking will be subject to discussions with stakeholders. The suggestion of allocation of EV Charging points will be demand led. In addition it members were informed around 30% of the parking will be earmarked for residents.

Members had further discussions regarding the proposed car parking, its location and height. In conclusion members were informed the proposed parking is the most appropriate and efficient place to hold the parking required for the area when considering proximity to residential land, height and total spaces. Members also discussed the opportunity to provide residents with permits for the car park to avoid under utilisation in evenings and none-busy times.

Further discussions took place regarding funding and the communication plan for the stages of each development phase. Members requested that when the BGI Business Plan with all strategies is produced it should be circulated to the Committee.

It was agreed:

1. Councillor Vernon thanked the leader and Robert Summerfield for the report and update.

OSC.8 WHITEFIELD REGENERATION

Councillor O'Brien, Leader provided the Committee with a brief update on Whitefield Regeneration. In summary the Committee were informed that Whitefield has been put forward for the taskforce and will be followed up with the place making programme, the aim of this is to provide practical solutions to support the high street.

Discussions took place regarding land on the former Whitefield Town Hall site. In conclusion members were informed that land is difficult to influence as it is not Council owned.

Members discussed the issue on Whitefield not having much land that is Council owned and therefore how the Council can maximise the park land.

It was agreed:

1. The Leader be thanked for his update.
2. A further update to be brought to the committee as things progress.

OSC.9 MILLGATE CENTRE AND ESTATE JOINT VENTURE

Councillor O'Brien, Leader gave the Committee an overview of the current position of the Mill Gate Centre in Bury. The Leader advised there is a big push to acquire the Mill Gate in partnership with Bruntwood. Members were informed of the assets positives and the risks involved.

Key dates highlighted to the Committee are:

- public consultation October 2023 Public / Stakeholder Consultation period (6 weeks) – statutory timescale. November / December 2023
- Request for endorsement of final SRF- following stakeholder feedback/review and amendments including further design development. March 2024

Members were informed that footfall within the Mill Gate continues to outperform regional and national comparatives and the year to date is within 0.5% of pre-covid levels. This compares to a national average of minus 15%.

It was acknowledged there is more work to take place and a further update should be brought back in the next municipal year.

OSC.10 GREATER MANCHESTER DEVOLUTION AND TRAILBLAZER DECISION

Councillor O'Brien, Leader provided an overview of the proposals for a further tranche of devolution to Greater Manchester which was published by Government on March 15th 2023.

The Leader advised that a lot has been negotiated and a key issue will be negotiating with Government departments and getting officials to release control over programmes in exchange for delivering local innovation and flexibility which can be proven to deliver better value for money for the taxpayer.

Key areas of the current decision are:

- 1 Single settlement
- 2 Skills devolution
- 3 Devo around brownfield housing

Councillor Bernstein stated the work is an exciting opportunity but questioned if the Council will be able to shape and see key issues for the people of bury. In response the Leader advised we can put in place processes for how work is developed and managed.

Councillor Boroda stated that Devolution has had a positive impact as people are living around a year longer however the pandemic has had a negative impact.

Councillor Vernon advised the report states funding for large scale economic development provided by DLUCH has at times remained unspent or returned. Can examples of this be given and how would this have been better dealt with if devolved. In response the Leader advised we have secured retention of extra funding for bus rates and further funding can be made available last minute under specific restraints.

OSC.11 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR D VERNON
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.07 pm and ended at 10.15 pm)

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Classification:	Decision Type:
Open	Key

Report to:	Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date: 05 October 2023 and 04 th October 2023
Subject:	Places for Everyone: A Joint Development Plan Document for 9 Greater Manchester Local Authorities (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) - Proposed Modifications Consultation.	
Report of	Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth	

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the progress of Places for Everyone Plan: A Joint Development Plan Document for nine Greater Manchester Local Authorities (PfE) and seeks approval to consult on proposed modifications to the Plan.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Members:
- i. Note progress made in respect of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan;
 - ii. Agree that the modifications to Places for Everyone (Main, Additional and those relating to the policies map), and associated supporting background documents be subject to a period of representations for a period of 8 weeks commencing no earlier than 9 October 2023; and
 - iii. Agree the next steps for the production of Places for Everyone (section 15).

3. Reasons for recommendation(s)

- 3.1 To ensure continued progress towards the adoption of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan as a key part of Bury's statutory development plan.

4. Alternative options considered and rejected

- 4.1 To not approve the proposed modifications and to withdraw from Places for Everyone.

- 4.2 However, this option is rejected on the basis that the Council would be unable to benefit from this opportunity to meet its statutory requirement to have an up-to-date development plan in place in the short-term. This would leave the Borough open to speculative and unplanned development with insufficient supporting infrastructure.
- 4.3 Furthermore, as a joint plan of nine Greater Manchester districts, Places for Everyone has allowed for the redistribution of housing needs across the Plan area. As a result, Bury's housing target in the Plan is over 2,300 (24%) less than what would be required outside of the joint plan process using the Government's standard methodology. Therefore, withdrawing from Places for Everyone to pursue an alternative plan could result in Bury requiring a higher housing target and lead to the need for more Green Belt release.

Report Author and Contact Details:

Name: David Wiggins

Position: Service Manager: Strategic Planning and Infrastructure

Department: Business, Growth and Infrastructure

E-mail: d.i.wiggins@bury.gov.uk

5. Background

- 5.1 Members will be aware that there is a statutory requirement for local authorities to have an up-to-date development plan in place that identifies sufficient land to accommodate new homes and jobs for a growing population.
- 5.2 Places for Everyone is a joint development plan for sustainable growth in the nine participating Greater Manchester districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) and will, once adopted, form a key part of Bury's wider statutory development plan.
- 5.3 Up until December 2020 a joint development plan of the ten Greater Manchester local authorities was being prepared – referred to as the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF). The GMSF had reached the Regulation 19 (Publication) stage of the process. However, decisions taken by Stockport Council in December 2020 signalled the end of the joint plan of the ten but the remaining nine GM authorities made the decision to progress with a joint plan and this became known as 'Places for Everyone' (PfE).
- 5.4 At its meeting on the 20 July 2021, members of the Places for Everyone Joint Committee recommended the Plan (and its supporting background

documents) to the nine authorities for 'Publication', pursuant to Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for an 8-week period of consultation. The 'Publication' stage is a statutory stage where formal consultation on the draft plan provides an opportunity for organisations and individuals to submit their views on its content.

- 5.5 On 21 July 2021, the 'Publication' Places for Everyone was subsequently approved by Bury's Cabinet and consultation on this plan ran over an 8-week period from 9 August 2021 to 3 October 2021. In response to this consultation, over 15,000 representations were received by over 3,800 individuals and organisations.
- 5.6 All duly made representations, together with the Regulation 19 Places for Everyone plan, supporting background documents and a number of reports (including details of the consultation that took place, summaries of the main issues raised and the nine authorities' responses to those issues) were submitted to the Secretary of State on 14 February 2022, pursuant to Regulation 22 of the Local Planning Regulations. This is called the 'Submission' stage and marked the beginning of the independent examination of the Plan.

6. The examination of the Plan

- 6.1 The examination is the final stage in the plan-making process before potential adoption. The legislative requirements for the examination are contained in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Some guidance on procedure is also provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance chapter on plan-making. However, many of the detailed procedural aspects of the examination are not prescribed in legislation, allowing Inspectors a degree of flexibility in conducting an examination. This enables Inspectors to adapt the procedures to deal with situations as they arise and to achieve positive outcomes in a range of different circumstances.
- 6.2 Following submission of a plan, the Inspector takes control of the examination process from start to finish. The Inspector's role is to examine whether the submitted plan meets the tests of soundness defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ and meets all the relevant legislative requirements, including the duty to co-operate². The examination of Places for

¹ The tests of soundness in paragraph 35 of the NPPF require that the plan is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

² Paragraph 24 of the NPPF requires that local planning authorities cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.

Everyone therefore concentrated on the issues that affect the Plan's soundness and legal compliance.

- 6.3 Given the scale of the examination, three Inspectors were appointed by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) to hold an independent examination of the Plan: William Fieldhouse, Louise Gibbons and Steven Lee. All three are very experienced planning inspectors and conducted the examination in a very thorough and professional way throughout.
- 6.4 The examination of Places for Everyone officially commenced at the point of 'submission' in February 2022 and will remain on-going until the Inspectors issue their final report (i.e. it includes the period before and after the hearing sessions).

Initial assessment of the Plan

- 6.5 In the early stages of the examination, the Inspectors undertook an initial assessment of the Plan which gave rise to a series of Preliminary Questions for the Places for Everyone authorities to respond to. The Preliminary Questions were intended to provide the Inspectors with clarity on various issues and to narrow down the focus of the examination.
- 6.6 The Preliminary Questions were followed by a series of Matters, Issues, and Questions that were intended to help the Inspectors decide if the Plan is sound and, if not, how it could be modified to ensure that it is. The Places for Everyone authorities were required to submit written statements in response to all of the Matters, Issues and Questions and, in doing so, a number of modifications were proposed to address issues raised by the Inspectors. Other stakeholders that had responded to consultation at the Regulation 19 stage were also invited to submit written statements in response to the Matters, Issues and Questions.
- 6.7 The responses to the Inspectors' Preliminary Questions and Matters, Issues and Questions are available on the Examination website.

Hearing sessions

- 6.8 The Inspectors' initial assessment of the Plan was followed by a series of hearing sessions. The main purpose of the hearing sessions was for the Inspectors to probe the evidence further, by asking questions of the participants and hearing their oral contributions on the issues and questions that are critical to the soundness and legal compliance of the Plan. The Inspectors also used these sessions to encourage discussion on how any soundness or legal compliance issues with the Plan could be resolved.
- 6.9 The hearing sessions for the Plan commenced on 1 November 2022. They were held at the former Manchester Fire and Rescue Training and Development Centre in Manchester city centre and sat for a total of 12 weeks,

including a final session at the beginning of July 2023. All hearing sessions were livestreamed and remain available to view via the GMCA website.

- 6.10 In the lead up to Christmas 2022, the hearing sessions considered the Plan's Spatial Strategy and thematic policies and the sessions in 2023 focused on the strategic site allocations, Green Belt additions and monitoring of the Plan.
- 6.11 The additional session in July related to five specific proposed allocations (JPA1.1 Heywood/Pilsworth; JPA28 North of Irlam Station; JPA29 Port Salford Extension; JPA30 Ashton Moss; and JPA33 New Carrington) and had been arranged by the Inspectors to discuss issues around land that has been identified by Natural England as containing deep peaty soils.
- 6.12 The Places for Everyone authorities were represented by Christopher Katkowski KC throughout the hearings, with staff from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the nine local authorities, Transport for Greater Manchester and the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit providing expert witnesses.

7. Proposed modifications to the Plan

Main modifications

- 7.1 It is normal practice at examinations for Inspectors to recommend main modifications to a plan where these are considered necessary to make the plan sound and/or legally compliant.
- 7.2 As a matter of law, a 'main modification' can only be made if it is necessary to make the plan 'sound' (as defined by the tests in the NPPF). Therefore, legislation enables the Inspector to recommend a main modification only if the plan would otherwise be unsound or legally non-compliant. The Inspector has no power to recommend other changes, even if they would improve the plan.
- 7.3 Throughout the duration of the hearings, the Inspectors issued a series of 'Action Points' for the Places for Everyone authorities to respond to and these included modifications to policies on the basis that these were considered necessary at that stage of the examination to inform the Inspectors' consideration of whether the Plan is sound and/or how it could be made sound and/or legally compliant as a result of these modifications. The Inspectors made it clear when they published their Action Points that they may decide that other or different main modifications may be required. The responses to the Inspectors' Action Points are available on the Examination website.
- 7.4 As requested by the Inspectors, all the proposed main modifications were compiled into a schedule and this was updated at various times to add further modifications as the hearings progressed. The schedule was first published in July 2022 with subsequent editions being published in October and November

2022 and January, May and June and August 2023. Similarly, a number of composite versions of Places for Everyone were also published to show how the Plan was intended to be modified in a more user-friendly way.

- 7.5 The Inspectors agreed the text of the proposed main modifications with the Places for Everyone authorities based, in most cases, on discussion at the hearing sessions. This was done through the Action Points outlined above and it was the responses to these, the various iterations of the proposed main modifications schedules and composite plan which informed the Inspectors' consideration of whether the Plan is sound and/or how it could be made sound and/or legally compliant by main modifications.
- 7.6 The Inspectors' published their post-hearing letter on the examination web site on 11 August 2023 setting out the next steps in the examination. This stated that, having considered all proposed main modifications in the context of all of the written material in the examination library and everything that was heard at the hearing sessions, they are satisfied at this stage of the examination that all of the proposed main modifications are necessary to make the Plan sound and would be effective in that regard. This conclusion is, however, without prejudice to their final conclusions that they will reach following consideration of responses to the consultation on the main modifications.

Additional modifications

- 7.7 In addition to the main modifications, a separate schedule of additional modifications has been prepared. Additional modifications (sometimes referred to as 'minor modifications') fall outside of the scope of the examination. They are modifications that do not materially affect a plan's policies and are not required to make the plan sound but they may, for example, relate to factual updating, clarification and corrections to grammar and presentation.

Viewing the modifications

- 7.8 The proposed main and additional modifications are set out in respective schedules and these have also been highlighted within a composite version of Places for Everyone so that the modifications can be viewed within the context of the Plan itself. The schedules of main and additional modifications³ and the Composite Plan can be viewed at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/places-for-everyone/modifications/>

³ It should be noted that following publication of the Schedule of Main Modifications, a formatting error has been identified in MM7.2 (replacement Table 7.1) which omits the text from the final column of the table. However, the complete Table 7.1 is available to view in the Composite Plan.

8. What do the modifications mean for the overall aims of the Plan and for Bury?

- 8.1 Whilst there are a significant number of proposed modifications, they do not change the overall Vision, Objectives and Spatial Strategy of the Plan.

Plan period

- 8.2 The submitted Places for Everyone covered a plan period from 2021 to 2037. However, the Inspectors consider that a modification is required to extend this to cover the period 2022 to 2039. This will ensure that, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework⁴, the Places for Everyone's strategic policies look ahead over a minimum 15-year period from adoption and, as a result, provide an adequate policy framework for the more detailed district local plans, which will follow on from the adoption of Places for Everyone.

Spatial strategy

- 8.3 The spatial strategy remains to deliver sustainable, inclusive growth with the following spatial elements:
- **Significant growth in jobs and housing at the core** – continuing development in the 'core growth area' encompassing the city centre and beyond to the Etihad in the east, through to the Quays, Trafford Park and Port Salford in the west. The majority of commercial employment growth is proposed in this area and around 50% of overall housing supply is found here and in the wards immediately surrounding it (inner areas).
 - **Boosting northern competitiveness** – provision of significant new employment opportunities and supporting infrastructure, including JPA1.1 Northern Gateway (Heywood/Pilsworth), and a commitment that, collectively, the northern districts meet their own local housing need, including through JPA1.2 Simister/Bowlee; JPA7 Elton Reservoir, JPA8 Seedfield and JPA9 Walshaw.
 - **Sustaining southern competitiveness** – supporting key economic drivers, for example around Wythenshawe hospital and the Airport, realising the opportunities offered by national infrastructure investment, e.g. HS2, whilst recognising the important green infrastructure assets in the area.

Jobs

- 8.4 Economic prosperity remains central to the overall strategy. It is essential to raising incomes, improving health and quality of life, and providing the finances to deliver better infrastructure, services and facilities. Places for

⁴ Paragraph 22.

Everyone continues the approach of attracting investment in our city and town centres alongside recognising the importance of investing in strengthening existing and creating new employment locations, so that all communities are able to contribute to, and benefit from, growth.

- 8.5 To play a major role in contributing towards achieving GM's economic growth potential, Places for Everyone sets a global target for the nine authorities of just over 2 million sq.m. of new office floorspace and just over 3.5 million sq.m. of industrial and warehousing floorspace over the Plan period. These figures have been modified to reflect the revised Plan period and will inform the preparation of district local plans.
- 8.6 JPA1.1 Northern Gateway (Heywood Pilsworth) continues to be identified as a large, nationally significant location for new employment-led development within both Bury and Rochdale. The scale of the opportunity is genuinely transformational and will help to deliver a significant jobs boost to wider northern and eastern parts of the conurbation, increasing the economic output from this area and helping to rebalance the Greater Manchester economy. It will also address Bury's long-standing shortage of high-quality employment land which has undoubtedly held back the Borough's local economy and led to several growing Bury-based businesses relocating outside of the Borough due to a lack of opportunity for expansion.

Modifications to the Northern Gateway (Heywood/Pilsworth) allocation policy JPA1.1

- 8.7 Following discussions at the hearing session regarding the Northern Gateway (Heywood/Pilsworth) site, the Inspectors required several modifications to Policy JPA1.1. These include additional criteria relating to:
- A requirement to make provision for compensatory improvements to remaining Green Belt;
 - Strengthening the boundary of the Green Belt to the north of the site around Pilsworth Cottages, Brightly Brook and Pilsworth Fisheries;
 - Consideration of the extraction of any viable mineral resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas; and
 - The need to undertake investigations into the extent and quality of peat in the south-west of the site.
- 8.8 A modification is also proposed to include a criterion that signposts the reader to a new Appendix D (which sets out the indicative highways and transport interventions for the site) and refers to Policy JP-C7 which sets out transport requirements of new development. This is to replace specific references to the indicative interventions within the policy itself.

- 8.9 A number of other modifications are required to Policy JPA1.1 to ensure consistency in wording across all of the site allocation policies and to remove generic policy criteria that repeat requirements that are covered elsewhere in the Plan.
- 8.10 The proposed modifications are not considered to substantively change Policy JPA1.1 for the Northern Gateway (Heywood/Pilsworth) site.

Homes

- 8.11 Greater Manchester is facing a housing crisis. Although recent years have seen an increase in house building in Greater Manchester, wages have not been keeping pace with property price increases and affordability issues have intensified.
- 8.12 To ensure that there is an adequate supply of opportunities for housebuilding, the Government's Planning Practice Guidance sets out a standard methodology for calculating local housing needs to provide local authorities with a clear and consistent understanding of the number of new homes needed in an area.
- 8.13 This standard methodology remains Government policy and the Inspectors do not consider there are exceptional circumstances to justify deviating away from using this methodology for Places for Everyone. As such, the Plan still identifies that 10,305 homes are required across the Plan area per annum. However, as a result of the proposed modification to the Plan period, the number of homes to be delivered over the lifetime of the Plan would increase from just under 165,000 to 175,185 new homes.
- 8.14 The Plan also continues to support Greater Manchester's commitment to deliver more affordable housing, including homes for social or affordable rent. Local plans will set targets for the provision of affordable housing based on local evidence of need and viability.
- 8.15 For Bury, Places for Everyone will still identify the same annual average requirement of 452 homes per year. However, because of the modification to increase to the Plan period by one year, the number of homes to be delivered over the lifetime of the Plan in Bury will increase from 7,228 to 7,678.
- 8.16 The Government's standard methodology gives Bury a Local Housing Need (LHN) for 10,047 homes over the Plan period (591 homes per year). However, the strategy that is proposed in Places for Everyone gives Bury a lower requirement of 7,678 homes, which equates to 76% of Bury's LHN.
- 8.17 To help to deliver the Plan's housing requirement for Bury, the following strategic allocations remain in the Plan with the overall quantum of development unchanged from that identified in the submitted version of Places for Everyone:

Table 1 – Places for Everyone housing allocations

Site	No. of homes
JPA1.1 Northern Gateway (Heywood/Pilsworth - Castle Road)	200
JPA1.2 Simister/Bowlee	1,350
JPA7 Elton Reservoir	3,500
JPA8 Seedfield	140
JPA9 Walshaw	1,250

Modifications to Bury's housing allocation policies

- 8.18 In a similar way to the situation with Policy JPA1.1 Northern Gateway (Heywood/Pilsworth) referred to earlier in this report, the Inspectors have required several modifications to Bury's housing allocation policies to ensure consistency in wording across all the site allocation policies and to remove generic policy criteria that repeat requirements that are covered elsewhere in the Plan.
- 8.19 Again, modifications are also proposed for each of the housing allocation policies to include a criterion that signposts the reader to a new Appendix D (which sets out the indicative highways and transport interventions for the site) and refers to Policy JP-C7 which sets out transport requirements of new development. This is to replace specific references to the indicative interventions within the policies themselves.
- 8.20 The Inspectors have also required several other modifications to Bury's housing allocation policies, including the following:
- JPA1.2 – Simister/Bowlee
- 8.21 The previous boundary of the Simister/Bowlee site excluded Heywood Old Road which meant that the land to the east and west were shown as two distinct parcels. It is now proposed to amend this to include the stretch of Heywood Old Road between the two to make it clear that this is a single site and that the policy requirements set out under JPA1.2 apply across its entirety.

8.22 Furthermore, in terms of the policy for the Simister/Bowlee allocation, additional criteria are proposed in relation to:

- A requirement for compensatory improvements to remaining Green Belt;
- The definition and strengthening of remaining Green Belt boundaries, where necessary; and
- Consideration of the extraction of any viable mineral resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas.

JPA7 - Elton Reservoir

8.23 Whilst the overall quantum of development at the Elton Reservoir site remains unchanged, the modification to extend the Plan period to 2039 means that the extent of development on this site within the Plan period is anticipated to increase from 1,900 to 2,100.

8.24 In addition, it is proposed to modify the area of retained Green Belt within the Elton Reservoir site to ensure that its boundary is strengthened by following that of the Elton Goyt Site of Biological Importance (SBI). This will also have the added benefit of helping to address concerns raised in respect of the potential impact of development on the southern part of this SBI.

8.25 In terms of modifications to the Elton Reservoir policy, additional/amended criteria are also proposed in relation to:

- Specific reference to the replacement of existing recreation space at Warth Fold;
- A requirement for compensatory improvements to remaining Green Belt within the site;
- The definition and strengthening of remaining Green Belt boundaries, where necessary;
- The need to take account of specific Sites of Biological Importance; and
- Consideration of the extraction of any viable mineral resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas.

Seedfield

8.26 In terms of modifications to the policy for the Seedfield allocation, additional criteria are proposed in relation to:

- A requirement for compensatory improvements to remaining Green Belt within the site; and
- Consideration of the extraction of any viable mineral resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas.

Walshaw

- 8.27 Members will recall that on 7 September 2022, Cabinet authorised officers to request a main modification to Places for Everyone involving the removal of the proposed housing allocation at Walshaw (JPA9) in light of updated evidence on housing supply and, specifically, the identification of new opportunities for housing in Bury and Radcliffe town centres that were not confirmed at the time that the Plan was submitted.
- 8.28 The report to Cabinet in September 2022 highlighted that during the examination of the Plan, it was likely that there would be extensive debate regarding the Plan's approach and there were inevitably inherent risks that the Inspectors overseeing the examination may not agree with the Plan's general approach to housing or to Bury's proposed main modification to remove the Walshaw site.
- 8.29 The report also highlighted that the Plan's approach to housing was already facing significant challenge from a wide range of stakeholders, developers, groups and organisations and that these challenges would be considered in depth during the examination of the Plan. It also highlighted that it was highly likely that any request for main modifications will be subject to challenge during the examination in terms of whether the proposed modification is necessary to make the Plan sound and/or legally compliant.
- 8.30 The request for a main modification to remove the site at Walshaw was subsequently set out in both the Council's written statement for the site allocations and in an early version of the schedule of proposed main modifications that was prepared for the opening of the hearing sessions in November 2022.
- 8.31 However, during the opening hearing session, the Inspectors requested that this proposed modification be removed from the schedule on the basis that they would only come to a view on whether the inclusion of Walshaw would render the Plan unsound once they had considered a range of other matters including:
- the spatial strategy;
 - what the housing requirement should be for each district;
 - the available evidence about the existing housing supply, and what it told them about whether exceptional circumstances exist to release Green Belt for site allocations; and
 - whether each of the site allocations is suitable and justified.
- 8.32 As referred to previously, the Inspectors have stated that they are satisfied at this stage of the examination that all of the proposed main modifications are necessary to make the Plan sound and would be effective in that regard.

- 8.33 The Inspectors have recommended modifications to the wording of the Walshaw policy but have made no reference to the proposed modification to remove the Walshaw site. This effectively means that the Inspectors are satisfied that the Walshaw allocation is sound (subject to modifications to the policy wording) and that they will not be recommending that the site be removed from the Plan.
- 8.34 In terms of modifications to the policy for the Walshaw allocation, additional criteria are proposed in relation to:
- A requirement for compensatory improvements to remaining Green Belt;
 - The definition and strengthening of remaining Green Belt boundaries, where necessary; and
 - Consideration of the extraction of any viable mineral resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas.
- 8.35 The proposed modifications are not considered to substantively change any of Bury's housing allocation policies.

Environment

- 8.36 The Plan is not solely concerned with accommodating development. It also includes a range of policies designed to protect and enhance our many and varied green spaces and features which are used in many different ways and afforded many different values by the people who live, work or visit the city-region.
- 8.37 The Plan supports the important role of our natural assets by:
- Taking a landscape scale approach to nature restoration;
 - Seeking to protect and enhance our network of green and blue infrastructure;
 - Seeking a significant overall enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity; and
 - Seeking to maintain a new and defensible Green Belt which will endure beyond the Plan period.
- 8.38 Furthermore, the Plan supports wider strategies around clean air, walking and cycling and underpins Greater Manchester's ambition to be a carbon neutral city-region by 2038. A key element of this remains that there is an expectation that all new development to be net zero carbon by 2028.

Brownfield land preference

- 8.39 There remains a strong focus in the Plan on directing new development towards sites within the existing urban area, which are often in sustainable locations, close to facilities and served by existing infrastructure. Maximising the use of land in the urban area enables us to minimise the release of greenfield and Green Belt land for development.
- 8.40 The land supply identified for development in the Plan is largely within the existing urban area, as set out in Table 2.

Table 2 – Percentage of land supply within the existing urban area

Land supply	% in urban area
Offices	98%
Industrial and warehousing	51%
Housing	90%

- 8.41 There are significant viability issues in parts of the conurbation and there is a need to continue to press Government for support to remediate contaminated land, to provide funding for infrastructure and to support alternative models of housing delivery. The Brownfield Housing Fund is targeted at Combined Authorities and begins to help to address viability issues, but it is not enough to enable the full potential of our brownfield land supply to be realised.

Green Belt

- 8.42 Places for Everyone includes a limited release of Green Belt for both housing and employment. Taking into account the proposed modifications to the Plan, the net loss of Green Belt proposed is 2,213 hectares. This compares to a net loss of 1,754 hectares in the submitted Places for Everyone.
- 8.43 The policies in the Plan would result in the overall extent of the nine authorities' Green Belt reducing by 4.1%. The previously adopted Green Belt covers almost 47% of the land covered by the nine authorities. The policies in Places for Everyone Plan would reduce this to just under 45% of the Places for Everyone authorities remaining as designated Green Belt.
- 8.44 Although the net loss of Green Belt is now higher than what was proposed in the submitted Places for Everyone Plan, this is not because of more land being proposed for release by the introduction of additional development allocations or the expansion of proposed allocations. Instead, it is because the Inspectors have concluded that exceptional circumstances⁵ exist to justify

⁵ The test for adding new land to the Green Belt in paragraph 139 of the NPPF.

only 18 of the 49 proposed Green Belt additions and that only these 18 proposed additions should remain in the Plan as new areas of Green Belt.

8.45 The other 31 proposed Green Belt additions are therefore proposed to be removed from the Plan – including one proposed addition that is almost 200 hectares in size.

8.46 14 of the original 49 proposed Green Belt additions were in Bury as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 – Green Belt additions proposed for Bury in the submitted Plan

Green Belt Addition Ref	Proposed Green Belt Addition
GBA03	Pigs Lea Brook 1, Walmersley
GBA04	North of Nuttall Park, Ramsbottom
GBA05	Pigs Lea Brook 2, Walmersley
GBA06	Hollins Brook, Bury
GBA07	New Road, Radcliffe
GBA08	Hollins Brow, Bury
GBA09	Hollybank Street, Radcliffe
GBA10	Crow Lumb Wood, Ramsbottom
GBA11	Nuttall West, Ramsbottom
GBA12	Woolfold
GBA13	Nuttall East, Ramsbottom
GBA14	Chesham, Bury
GBA15	Broad Hey Wood North, Ramsbottom
GBA16	Lower Hinds, Bury

8.47 The Inspectors concluded that there are exceptional circumstances to justify 3 of these proposed additions – Pigs Lea Brook 2, Woolfold and Chesham on the basis that the boundary of the existing Green Belt adjacent to these sites are anomalous as they do not currently follow physical features that are readily recognisable on the ground.

- 8.48 Whilst the remainder will not be designated as Green Belt, it is important to note that these are largely covered by existing policy designations in the Unitary Development Plan and their status will be reviewed in conjunction with Bury's Local Plan.
- 8.49 The reduction in the Green Belt additions as proposed by the Inspectors does not, however, impact on the delivery of the overall Vision, Spatial Strategy and Strategic Objectives of the Plan.

9. Relationship with Bury's Local Plan

- 9.1 Places for Everyone is the strategic spatial plan that sets out a collective planning policy framework for the nine constituent boroughs. All policies within the Plan are 'strategic policies'. It is being prepared as a Joint Development Plan Document of the nine local planning authorities. Once Places for Everyone is adopted, it will form part of Bury's wider development plan. As such, Bury's Local Plan will need to be consistent with it and any neighbourhood plans would need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies within it.
- 9.2 The evidence that underpins Places for Everyone will also inform Bury's Local Plan but, as a strategic plan, it does not cover everything that the Local Plan will need to. The Local Plan will set out more detailed, locally-specific policies including both strategic and non-strategic policies. Appendix A of Places for Everyone sets out the policies in the relevant adopted district local plans (in Bury's case, the Unitary Development Plan) that will be replaced by policies in Places for Everyone.
- 9.3 In line with national policy, Bury's Local Plan will be expected to look ahead a minimum 15-year period from its adoption. In amending the Plan period from 2021 to 2037 to 2022 to 2039, Places for Everyone should provide an appropriate strategic policy framework for the Local Plan which will be produced following its adoption.
- 9.4 However, if the Plan period for Bury's Local Plan extends beyond 2039, the minimum requirement figures for employment floorspace and housing set out in Policies JP-J3, JP-J4 and JP-H1 should be used to inform Local Plan target(s).

10. Integrated Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 10.1 As part of the development of Places for Everyone, an Integrated Assessment was undertaken incorporating the requirements of:
- Sustainability Appraisal: mandatory under section 19 (5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- Strategic Environmental Assessment: mandatory under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (which transpose the European Directive 2001/42/EC into English law).
- Equality Impact Assessment: required to be undertaken for plans, policies and strategies by the Equality Act 2010.
- Health Impact Assessment: there is no statutory requirement to undertake HIA, however it has been included to add value and depth to the assessment process.

- 10.2 The Integrated Assessment contributed to the development of Places for Everyone through an iterative assessment, which reviews the draft policies and the discrete site allocations against the Integrated Assessment framework.
- 10.3 A Habitats Regulations Assessment refers to several distinct stages of assessment which must be undertaken in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) to determine if a plan or project may affect the protected features of a habitats site before deciding whether to undertake, permit or authorise it.
- 10.4 All plans and projects (including planning applications) which are not directly connected with, or necessary for, the conservation management of a habitat site, require consideration of whether the plan or project is likely to have significant effects on that site. If a proposed plan or project is considered likely to have a significant effect on a protected habitats site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) then an Appropriate Assessment of the implications for the site is required.
- 10.5 The submitted Places for Everyone was assessed as a Plan that was considered likely to have significant effect on one or more European protected site and was therefore informed (and accompanied) by a Habitats Regulations Assessment with mitigation measures identified as appropriate.
- 10.6 The Inspectors have made it clear that the modifications they have decided should be made to the Plan should be subject to Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment as appropriate. Furthermore, the Inspectors have made it clear that the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment reports will be subject to public consultation, alongside the modifications, before the end of the examination. Accordingly, addendums have been produced for both the Integrated Appraisal (incorporating the Sustainability Appraisal) and the Habitats Regulations Assessment, assessing the impact of the main modifications.
- 10.7 With regard to the Sustainability Appraisal, where individual policy scores have moved from positive to uncertain or neutral, the Appraisal acknowledges that when the Plan is read as a whole, the topic is covered in other relevant policies and therefore no residual impacts have been identified.

- 10.8 The outcome of the Habitat Regulation Assessment screening assessment is that there are no 'likely significant effects' on European sites, other than those identified in the submission version of the HRA. Therefore, it has not been necessary to amend the Places for Everyone Appropriate Assessment as a result of the proposed main modifications.
- 10.9 The Integrated Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment addendum reports are available alongside this report and will be published alongside the main modifications schedule.

11. Evidence base

- 11.1 A comprehensive evidence base was assembled to support the policies and proposals within Places for Everyone which was made available for consultation in 2021. This evidence was submitted alongside the Plan in February 2022 and has remained available on the GMCA's website since then and throughout the examination. As one of the tests of soundness is whether a plan is justified by proportionate evidence, the Inspectors considered this evidence as part of their Examination into whether or not Places for Everyone is 'sound'.
- 11.2 As detailed above, this evidence base will also be used to inform Bury's Local Plan as this is developed, alongside other supporting evidence prepared as necessary.

12. Proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework

- 12.1 In December 2022, the Government consulted on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The consultation ran from 22 December 2022 to 2 March 2023. The consultation sought views on a proposed approach to updating the NPPF whilst, at the same time, seeking views on proposals to prepare national Development Management policies, how policy could be developed to support levelling up, and how national planning policy is currently accessed by users.
- 12.2 The Inspectors made a statement that, in light of the transitional arrangements (contained within the draft NPPF changes), they would carry on with the examination as programmed in the context of the tests of soundness set out in current National Planning Policy Framework, published in 2021.
- 12.3 The Government is still analysing the consultation responses and, as such, the draft (as proposed to be changed) version of the NPPF cannot be used to determine whether a Plan is sound. Accordingly, it would be unlawful to propose any main modification to Places for Everyone and/or withdraw from the Plan on the basis of the draft proposed changes to the NPPF. This is

especially the case given that Places for Everyone is at such an advanced stage of preparation.

- 12.4 As the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities is currently analysing the feedback to the consultation and no changes to the National Planning Policy Framework have yet been published, the examination progressed through its scheduled programme of sessions on the basis of the current National Planning Policy Framework. The Inspectors duly issued their post hearing letter with the schedule of proposed main modifications that they consider are necessary to make the Plan sound and/or legally compliant and which should therefore be made available for a period of public consultation.
- 12.5 The schedule of main modifications (which is available alongside this report) represents those changes to the Plan that the Inspectors consider are necessary. They do not include any modifications on the basis of the draft proposed changes to the NPPF. To make further changes to the schedule, e.g. amending overall development targets, removing additional sites which Places for Everyone proposes to take out of the Green Belt and/or amending the Green Belt addition sites, on the basis of the consultation draft National Planning Policy Framework would not be lawful.

13. Previous consultations

- 13.1 Five consultations have taken place in relation to the Plan (as set out in Table 4 below), the first four in relation to the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and the fifth in relation to Places for Everyone.

Table 4 – Previous consultation on the Plan

Date	Stage
November 2014	Scope and initial evidence base
November 2015	Vision, strategy and strategic growth options
October 2016	Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework
January 2019	Revised Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework
August 2021	Publication Places for Everyone

- 13.2 Consultation on the revised draft of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework in 2019 generated over 17,000 responses and these informed the production of what was intended to be the Publication version of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. However, the withdrawal of Stockport Council in December 2020 prevented this version of the Plan proceeding to Regulation 19 Publication stage and instead work was undertaken to prepare

Places for Everyone taking account of the consultation responses received in 2019.

14. Consultation on the modifications to Places for Everyone

- 14.1 Whilst anyone can make a representation in response to consultation on the main modifications, the Planning Inspectorate's Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations⁶ makes it clear (at section 6) that this consultation **only relates to the proposed main modifications and any consequential changes to the policies map and no other aspect of the Plan.**
- 14.2 Whilst it is only necessary to consult on the main modifications and any related policy map changes, it is also proposed to consult on the additional modifications so that the full extent of proposed changes to the Plan are clear. However, it should be noted that **the Inspectors will only consider comments received in relation to the main modifications. Any responses to consultation on the additional modifications will not be considered by the Inspectors as these do not affect the soundness of the Plan and do not fall within the scope of the examination.** Responses to the additional modifications will be considered by the Places for Everyone authorities.
- 14.3 The consultation will be carried out in line with the requirements of the relevant authority's Statement of Community Involvement and the guidance contained in the abovementioned Planning Inspectorate procedure guide. Paragraph 6.9 of the procedure guide states that *'the nature and duration of the consultation should reflect that of the consultation held at Regulation 19 stage, where appropriate'*.
- 14.4 Whilst there is a statutory requirement to consult for at least six weeks, consultation on Places for Everyone at the Regulation 19 stage ran for eight weeks and it is considered appropriate to replicate this duration for consultation on the modifications.
- 14.5 As part of the consultation on Places for Everyone at the Regulation 19 stage, Bury Council sent out letters to every household in the Borough (around 86,000) to inform them of the Plan and to highlight proposals that were particularly relevant to their Ward. These letters included a paragraph that encouraged people to register their interest with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority if they wished to be kept informed of the Plan.
- 14.6 However, given that paragraph 6.9 of the procedures guide states that consultation on the main modifications should 'reflect' that undertaken at the Regulation 19 stage 'where appropriate', this allows discretion and judgment-

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examining-local-plans-procedural-practice/procedure-guide-for-local-plan-examinations>

calls about what is appropriate in the very different circumstances of the Plan's main modifications and publication stages.

- 14.7 Because recipients of the previous household letters were given the opportunity to register their interest with the Combined Authority if they wished to be kept informed of the Plan, it is not considered necessary or appropriate to repeat this as part of consultation on the modifications.
- 14.8 It should be noted that the distribution of household letters is not a requirement of Bury's Statement of Community Involvement.
- 14.9 Consultation will be undertaken by the GMCA as well as each of the nine districts. In terms of consultation undertaken by the Council, consultation will be undertaken in accordance with Bury's Statement of Community Involvement (July 2023) and will involve:
- Making copies of the Places for Everyone modifications available for inspection at Bury Town Hall, Ramsbottom, Bury, Radcliffe and Prestwich Libraries and the Tottington Centre;
 - Distributing letters/emails to contacts on our consultation database to inform recipients of the consultation;
 - Making all relevant information available on the Council's web site;
 - Erection of site notices around the proposed site allocations and Green Belt additions;
 - Promoting the consultation through the Council's various social media accounts;
 - Preparing FAQs in relation to the consultation on the modifications;
 - Advertising the consultation on posters and on reception area TVs; and
 - Issuing a press release in relation to the consultation.

15. Next steps

- 15.1 Following the conclusion of consultation on the modifications, the representations received will be forwarded to the Programme Officers along with a report listing all of the representations; a summary of the main issues raised; and a brief response, on behalf of the nine districts, to those main issues.
- 15.2 The Inspectors will consider all the representations made on the proposed main modifications before finalising the examination report and the schedule of recommended main modifications. Further hearing sessions will not usually be held, unless the Inspectors consider them essential to deal with substantial issues raised in the representations, or to ensure fairness.

- 15.3 When deciding whether or not to recommend that the local planning authorities should make the main modifications, the Inspectors will normally consider them in the form in which they were published for consultation. However, in some limited circumstances, the responses to consultation may lead the Inspector to consider that a new main modification, or an amendment to one that has already been consulted on, is also necessary to make the Plan sound or legally compliant; or that a proposed main modification is not in fact necessary for soundness and should not be recommended.
- 15.4 The Inspectors may only recommend such changes to the main modifications without further consultation if they are satisfied that no party would be prejudiced as a result. For example, the consultation already undertaken on the main modifications might have adequately addressed the point, or the amendment might be a very minor one. Should further consultation be necessary a further report will be presented to the nine authorities for approval.
- 15.5 The Inspectors' report will be sent to the GMCA in electronic format for fact-check. The fact-check report will be sent to the Government (Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities) on a for-information basis at least 48 hours before it is sent to the GMCA.
- 15.6 Once the fact-check has been completed and the Inspector has dealt with any points raised, the final report will be sent to the GMCA. This marks the completion of the examination.
- 15.7 The ultimate decision to adopt Places for Everyone must be taken by each of the Full Councils of the nine participating local authorities. This will be the subject of a further report at the appropriate time.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

Places for Everyone will form part of Bury's statutory development plan. It will set out statutory policies and strategic site allocations that will guide future growth and development in the Borough. A key part of the Plan is to rebalance the Greater Manchester economy by significantly boosting the economic output from the north through the delivery of new housing and employment that will benefit both Bury and its residents. The 'Let's Do It' strategy specifically refers to Places for Everyone as having a key role to play in the delivery of its objectives and priorities.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

The Places for Everyone Publication Plan is a statutory plan which seeks to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, delivering economic,

social and environmental benefits together in a mutually reinforcing way. It is informed by an Integrated Appraisal which includes an Equalities assessment.

The attached EqIA also concludes that there are no negative impacts on equality and a positive impact recorded.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

The Places for Everyone Publication Plan will provide the strategic planning policy framework to support the nine districts in meeting Greater Manchester’s ambition to be carbon neutral by 2038.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
<p>There are risks that the adoption of the Plan may be susceptible to challenge if it is not prepared in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).</p> <p>Not approving the proposed modifications and to withdrawing from Places for Everyone would also present significant risk of the Borough being open to speculative and unplanned development with insufficient supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>Withdrawing from Places for Everyone to pursue an alternative plan could also result in Bury requiring a higher housing target and lead to the need for more Green Belt release.</p>	<p>Ensure that the Plan is prepared in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements and regulations.</p> <p>Places for Everyone forms part of the Borough’s statutory development plan and continuing to progress the examination through consultation on the proposed modifications ensures the Council continues to make progress against the need to have an up-to-date plan in place.</p>

Legal Implications:

The legislative and constitutional requirements for the preparation of a joint Development Plan Document (DPD) in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act

2004 (“2004 Act”) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (“2012 Regulations”) have been complied with.

The joint plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination (s20 of the 2004 Act) along with the documents prescribed by Regulation 22 of the 2012 Regulations. Prior to its submission to the Secretary of State, the joint DPD was published and representations were invited, pursuant to Regulation 19 and Regulation 20 of the 2012 Regulations. The Joint DPD is currently at the independent examination stage, as prescribed by section 20 of the 2004 Act; the modifications consultation stage falls within that stage of the plan preparation process.

If the joint DPD is not prepared in accordance with the 2004 Act and the 2012 Regulations, any subsequent attempt to adopt the Plan would be susceptible to challenge.

Financial Implications:

The original plan has already been subject to a rigorous consultation process. However, the Council must now consult on the modifications to the plan. The methods of consultation are detailed at 14.9 within this report. The bulk of the costs will be covered by GMCA who are producing all of the documentation, there will be a small costs to the Council in terms of communicating with via distributing letters/emails to contacts on our consultation database.

Once the plan is adopted there will be capital receipts generated for the Council and it will be the private sector or registered providers who will deliver the developments.

Appendices:

None.

Background papers:

[Report to AGMA Executive Board \(December 2020\):](#) Greater Manchester’s Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment: Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Publication Plan 2020 – Next Steps.

[Report to AGMA Executive Board \(February 2021\):](#) Places for Everyone: A Proposed Joint Development Plan Document of Nine GM Districts.

[Report to Places for Everyone Joint Committee \(July, 2021\):](#) Places for Everyone Publication Plan 2021: A Joint Development Plan Document for 9 Greater

Manchester Local Authorities (Bolton, Bury Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan).

[Report to Bury Cabinet \(July 2021\):](#) Publication of the Places for Everyone Joint Plan.

[Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications.](#)

[Schedule of Proposed Additional Modifications.](#)

[Schedule of Policies Map/Diagrams/Pictures Modifications.](#)

[Composite Plan 2023:](#) Places for Everyone with all modifications highlighted (Main and Additional).

[Integrated Assessment 2023 Addendum.](#)

[Habitats Regulations Assessment Addendum 2023.](#)

[Bury Statement of Community Involvement \(July 2023\)](#)

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning

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