

Bury Local Plan Policy Directions



October 2018

Bury
COUNCIL

Foreword

The new Bury Local Plan will set out a long-term framework to guide and control future growth and development and help shape what the Borough will look like in the future. The Plan will comprise a series of planning policies against which future development proposals will be considered and it will also allocate sites for various types of development as well as identifying areas where development will be restricted. Taking account of comments made following consultation on the key issues and the proposed policy framework for the Plan in August 2017, we have now moved on to the preparation of this document which sets out the proposed scope and direction of Local Plan policies.

These are exciting times for Bury. As one of the ten districts of Greater Manchester, Bury has a key role to play in supporting the conurbation's role as the key driver in the delivery of the Northern Powerhouse and in securing the economic growth that is central to the recent Devolution Agreement for Greater Manchester.

The ten Greater Manchester districts have agreed to prepare the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework which, once adopted, will set out a strategic planning framework for Greater Manchester, including identifying the amount of new employment floorspace and housing that is required and the strategic locations to accommodate these development needs.

However, in addition to the strategic policies of the GMSF, there is a need for a Local Plan to provide more Local, non-strategic policies to address non-strategic issues. Both documents will be statutory plans and will need to be consistent with one another.

Despite its recent success stories, Bury still faces some difficult challenges. At the forefront of these is the need for continued regeneration in the areas where we have pockets of deprivation, primarily in East Bury and Inner Radcliffe. We are also striving to attract good quality jobs, ensure sufficient provision of good quality affordable homes and introduce measures which will enable us to address climate change in a positive manner. Central to this will be our emphasis on prioritising the redevelopment of previously-developed brownfield sites.



Together we will seek to build on the existing qualities and strengths of each community to truly realise our ambitions to make Bury a great place and I look forward to your comments on this document which sets out the intended direction of our Local Plan policies.

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien
Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing

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1 Introduction

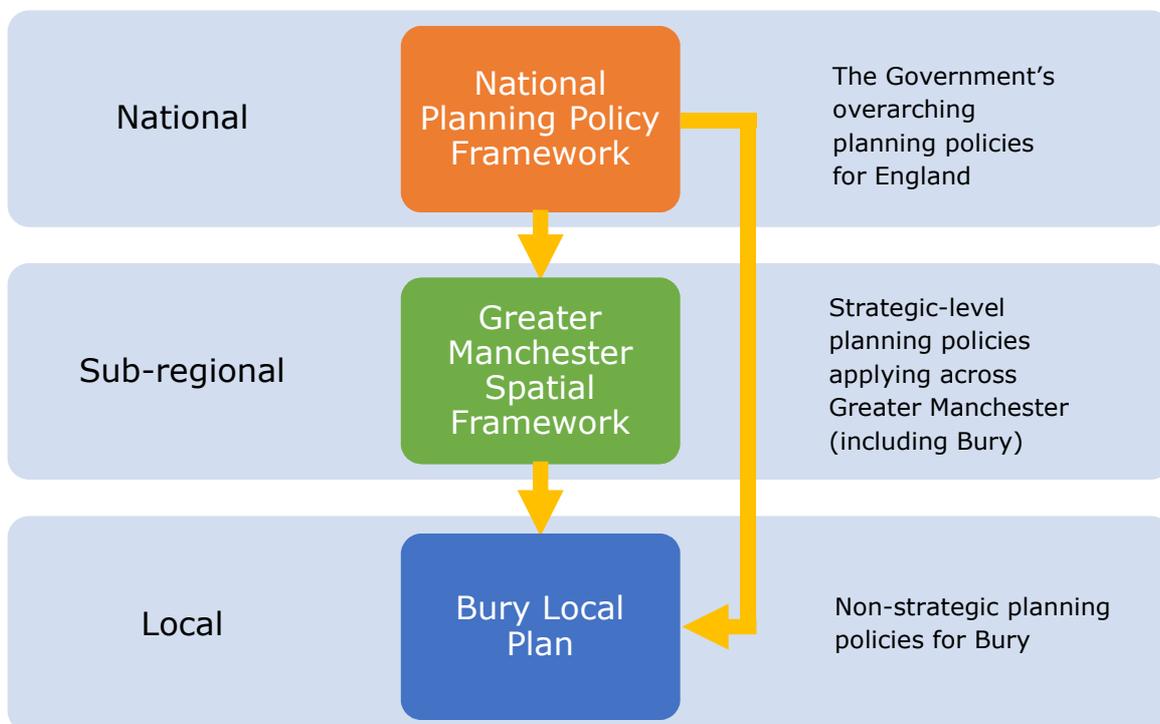
The context for Bury's Local Plan

- 1.1 The planning system in England is plan-led which means that development plans are used to guide and manage future development and as the basis for determining planning applications.
- 1.2 In Bury, the Local Plan will form part of the Borough's overall development plan alongside other strategic Greater Manchester plans, namely the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) and the Greater Manchester Minerals and Waste plans.
- 1.3 The Government's planning policies for England are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and this provides the overarching framework within which development plans are produced. The NPPF specifies that the development plan for an area comprises a combination of:
 - **Strategic policies** - setting out the overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development necessary to address the strategic priorities of the area; and
 - **Non-strategic policies** covering more Local, non-strategic matters and setting out more detailed policies for specific areas or types of development.
- 1.4 The NPPF specifies that strategic policies can be produced in different ways, such as through joint plans produced by authorities working together or through individual district local plans.
- 1.5 Alongside the other nine districts in Greater Manchester, Bury is contributing to the preparation of the emerging GMSF. Strategic policies, such as those dealing with future needs for housing and employment floorspace and revised Green Belt boundaries, are currently being developed through the GMSF with the non-strategic policies being developed through the Bury Local Plan. Appendix 1 gives an overview of the scope of strategic policies that are to be dealt with through the GMSF and the non-strategic policies to be covered by the Bury Local Plan. **It should noted, however, the Government's requirement for development plans to cover strategic policies means that if these were not being developed through the GMSF, the strategic matters applying to Bury would need to form part of Bury's Local Plan.**
- 1.6 The GMSF and the Bury Local Plan will contain the strategic and non-strategic planning policies that will manage the growth and development of the Borough up to 2037. **Given that both of these documents will form key**

component parts of Bury’s development plan, there will clearly be a need for consistency between the two.

1.7 Figure 1 sets out the hierarchy of planning policies that are applicable to Bury.

Figure 1 – Planning policy hierarchy



Current Progress on the Local Plan and the next steps

1.8 In order to ensure that the Local Plan is developed in a way that is relevant to Bury and to ensure that all interested parties are fully engaged, there are a number of stages in the process where we will be seeking the views of key stakeholders such as local residents, businesses, landowners, developers and conservation bodies.

1.9 In March 2017, we commenced early engagement with key stakeholders and local communities by issuing a notice of our intention to commence work on a new Local Plan for Bury and seeking comments on what the Plan ought to contain.

1.10 This was followed by consultation on a Key Issues and Policy Framework Report which commenced in August 2017 which identified what were considered to be the key issues in Bury that the Local Plan should be seeking to address and a potential broad policy framework that could be pursued in order to address these issues. In parallel, we also issued a ‘Call for Sites’ asking landowners, developers or other stakeholders with a land interest to

put forward sites that they thought should be considered for development or protected through the Local Plan process.

- 1.11 This report sets out the proposed scope and direction of the Local Plan and takes into account comments raised in response to consultation during the previous stages of the plan-making process. It sets out the broad options that have been considered at this stage in developing proposed Policy Directions for the Bury Local Plan. We recognise, however, that there will be further options to consider as the policies are refined further.
- 1.12 During consultation on this Policy Directions report, **we would particularly welcome comments relating to the scope and intended directions of Local Plan policies as well as whether you feel that there are other reasonable alternative options that we should have considered at this stage.**
- 1.13 Whilst this document sets out the broad direction that the Council would wish to take at the current time, it is likely that the Plan will change in light of emerging evidence, to take account of consultation responses or following independent examination. At this stage, therefore, this Policy Directions report carries no weight in determining planning applications.
- 1.14 Moving forward, we will take into account comments raised on this Policy Directions report to inform the development of a draft Local Plan. The draft Local Plan will be subject to further consultation before we produce a Publication Local Plan that will effectively be a version of the Plan that the Council would wish to see adopted. There will be further consultation on the Publication Local Plan before it is formally submitted to the Secretary of State together with any comments made in response to consultation at the Publication stage. An independent Inspector will then be appointed by the Government to examine the 'soundness' of the Plan. If the Plan is found to be sound or if it would be sound subject to amendment, we would then seek to formally adopt the Local Plan.
- 1.15 Figure 2 sets out the preparation process for the Local Plan as well as the intended future timescales. Please note, however, that in order to ensure consistency between the Local Plan and the GMSF, progress on Bury's Local Plan through the various stages will need to reflect the GMSF timetable.

Figure 2 – Local Plan progress and future timetable



Evidence Base

- 1.16 In support of the Local Plan we have developed, and will continue to develop, a comprehensive evidence base to support the approach being taken. This evidence base includes work undertaken to support the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, Topic Papers and other strategies, plans and studies.

Integrated Appraisal

- 1.17 The Policy Directions for the Local Plan take into account the findings of an Integrated Appraisal (IA) that considers the requirements and scope of:
- Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA);
 - Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA);
 - Health Impact Assessment (HIA).
- 1.18 In addition to meeting the requirements of the above assessments in one IA, a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be prepared separately by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU).

2 Vision and Objectives

- 2.1 This chapter sets out a broad framework for the Local Plan in order to give an overview of the Local Plan's approach. This includes a Vision, a series of Objectives which will establish a broad direction for the Plan's policies and site allocations.

Vision

By 2037 the Borough will have embraced sustainable growth in a managed way and become a well-connected place with:

- a strong and competitive local economy;
- strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and
- a high quality natural and built environment that is resilient to the effects of climate change.

Objectives

The Vision will be delivered through the pursuit of a number of broad Objectives, namely to:

- Deliver sustainable development;
- Promote health and wellbeing within the Borough's communities;
- Reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality and ensure that the Borough is resilient and adaptive to the effects of climate change;
- Manage flood risk from all sources;
- Make efficient use of land including prioritising the redevelopment of brownfield land;
- Ensuring that all new development incorporates high standards of design and layout;
- Safeguard amenity;
- Deliver an appropriate supply of well-designed housing to meet needs;
- Deliver a competitive and diverse local economy and high quality jobs;
- Support a hierarchy of vital and viable town, district, local and neighbourhood centres;

- Safeguard existing and promoting new tourism and cultural development in appropriate locations;
- Ensure that the Borough's residents have access to a sufficient amount of good quality open space, sport and recreation facilities;
- Ensure that the Borough's residents have adequate access to community facilities;
- Encourage sustainable transport choices and reduce the number and length of journeys, particularly by private motor vehicles;
- Protect and enhance the Borough's natural environment;
- Protect and manage Green Belt;
- Protect and enhance the Borough's built heritage; and
- Ensure and that new and existing development is supported by appropriate infrastructure.

3 Overarching Principles

- 3.1 There are a number of overarching principles that it is proposed should be applicable to the decision-making process for all forms of development and these are set out within this chapter.
- 3.2 Fundamentally, the need to strive towards achieving sustainable development should underpin the whole Plan but other matters such as the potential impact of a development on health and wellbeing and the need for development to mitigate and adapt to the challenges of climate change and flood risk are also central to the Local Plan's approach.
- 3.3 Similarly, the need to ensure that development makes full use of Bury's finite land resource, that the design and layout of all new development makes a positive contribution to the Borough's built environment and that development is made acceptable through the use of planning conditions and obligations are also considered to be key principles that should apply to all forms of development.
- 3.4 The Council believes that the Local Plan should complement and reinforce other plans, strategies and initiatives by ensuring that cross-cutting matters are fully considered by including policies relating to the following:
- Sustainable Development;
 - Health and Wellbeing;
 - Climate Change;
 - Air Quality and Pollution Control;
 - Flood Risk Management;
 - Efficient Use of Land;
 - Design and Layout of New Development;
 - Amenity; and
 - Planning Conditions and Obligations.

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that, in dealing with planning matters, the Council will contribute towards achieving sustainable development by considering growth and development in terms of its economic, social and environmental implications.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations (including policies in the NPPF) indicate otherwise.

Justification

- 3.5 Sustainable development has economic, social and environmental dimensions and is about positive growth and making economic, social and environmental progress for this and for future generations.
- 3.6 From an economic perspective, the Plan should contribute towards building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that the plan meets development needs and supports growth and innovation through the provision of an appropriate supply of land for economic development.
- 3.7 Socially, the Plan should include policies and proposals that are designed to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities meeting housing needs and create a high quality and accessible built environment.
- 3.8 Environmentally, the Plan should contribute to the protection and enhancement of natural, built and historic assets, the improvement of air quality, reduced carbon emissions and adapt to the cause and effects of climate change.
- 3.9 Policy Direction OP1 reflects the Council's commitment to the delivery of sustainable development by contributing to a strong, competitive and responsive economy; supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and contributing to the protection and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment. It reflects the fact that the Council will operate a presumption in favour of sustainable development unless there are adequate reasons to justify why this should not be the case.

Alternative Options

- 3.10 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the broad approach towards achieving sustainable development. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and that this objective should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans. It also states that planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions.
- 3.11 It is considered that the omission of the policy would mean that the Local Plan may not clearly reflect the Council's commitment to pursuing sustainable development.

Health and Wellbeing

Policy
Direction
OP2

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that development makes a positive contribution towards the health and wellbeing of the Borough's communities.

The policy would include measures that seek to alleviate some of the Borough's key health and wellbeing issues, such as requiring Health Impact Assessments to accompany certain planning applications, promoting active travel, seeking to control hot food take-aways in sensitive locations and making provision for local green spaces.

Justification

- 3.12 It is widely recognised that planning can have a significant impact on health and wellbeing and planning should take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, including through the reduction of pollution and improved air quality. National guidance requires local planning authorities to ensure that health and wellbeing, and health infrastructure are considered in local plans and in planning decision making.
- 3.13 Some of Bury's key issues regarding health and wellbeing are associated with inequalities in life expectancy and health and significant levels of obesity and physical inactivity amongst the Borough's residents.

Alternative Options

- 3.14 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the broad approach towards health and wellbeing. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF specifies that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and wellbeing needs.
- 3.15 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to examples of unmanaged development that could have adverse impact on the health and wellbeing of the Borough's communities.

Climate Change

Policy
Direction
OP3

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to take a proactive approach towards mitigating against and adapting to the cause and effects of climate change.

Justification

- 3.16 Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles which the NPPF expects to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking and this includes a requirement for local authorities to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change in line with the provisions and objectives of the 2008 Climate Change Act. It specifies that planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.
- 3.17 Greater Manchester has ambitious targets to be zero carbon by 2050 and at the last Green Summit there were proposals to bring this forward to 2040. Planning can make a major contribution towards achieving this and towards tackling climate change in general by shaping new and existing developments in ways that reduce carbon emissions, reduce the need for energy consumption and positively build community resilience to problems such as extreme heat or flood risk.

Alternative Options

- 3.18 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the broad approach towards mitigating against and adapting to the cause and effects of climate change. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF specifies that plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change and that policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts.
- 3.19 It is considered that the omission of the policy would mean that the Local Plan may not clearly reflect the Council's commitment to mitigating against and adapting to the cause and effects of climate change.

Air Quality and Pollution Control

Policy
Direction
OP4

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to prevent both new and existing development from contributing to, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of pollution either individually or cumulatively with other existing or proposed developments.

It is considered that the policy should also set out the issues that the Council will have regard to when considering the potential impact of development on pollution and what should be required from applicants, including mitigation measures, in the event that a proposal is considered to have the potential to give rise to any impacts on air quality or other forms of pollution.

Justification

- 3.20 If pollution is not adequately controlled, it can have negative consequences socially, environmentally and economically. Consequently, controlling potential sources of pollution is an important aspect of sustainable development. Pollution can have significant consequences for human health and amenity as well as natural resources and uses that are sensitive to the effects of pollution.
- 3.21 As a result, it is important that pollution is given thorough consideration through the planning process both in terms of the potential impacts that may

arise from the development as well as assessing whether new development would be subject to unacceptable levels of pollution from other sources.

Alternative Options

- 3.22 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to air quality and pollution control. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution.

It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to development causing or being exposed to unacceptable levels of pollution.

Flood Risk Management

Policy
Direction
OP5

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to manage flood risk from all sources by ensuring that new development complies with the flood risk management hierarchy and is not subject to unacceptable levels of risk, does not result in increased flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, achieves reductions in flood risk overall.

In addition, it should seek to ensure that all new development proposals minimise the impact of development on surface water run-off, and where possible, seek to reduce it.

Justification

- 3.23 Climate change has the potential to increase the risk of flooding through increased winter rainfall and the occurrence of more extreme rainfall events as was demonstrated in the 2015 Boxing Day floods. As a result, the Local Plan is sensitive to this risk, avoiding it where possible and managing it elsewhere.
- 3.24 In response to these issues, it is considered that the Local Plan should seek to manage flood risk from all sources by ensuring that new development complies with the flood risk management hierarchy and is not subject to unacceptable levels of risk, does not result in increased flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, achieves reductions in flood risk overall. In addition, it

should seek to ensure that all new development proposals minimise the impact of development on surface water run-off, and where possible, seek to reduce it.

Alternative Options

- 3.25 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the broad approach towards managing flood risk. However this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF requires development to be directed away from areas at highest flood risk and to avoid surface water run-off through the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems.
- 3.26 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to examples of unmanaged development that could have adverse impact on flood risk.

Efficient Use of Land

Policy
Direction
OP6

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that all new development makes efficient use of land.

Justification

- 3.27 One of the core planning principles of the NPPF is to encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously-developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.
- 3.28 Land is a finite resource and whilst it is acknowledged that some greenfield land is required to meet Bury's development requirements, there remains a need for the prudent re-use of previously-developed (brownfield) land within the Borough. Encouraging development on previously-developed land as well as the reuse of existing buildings allows maximum use to be made of sites within the Borough, reducing pressures for development on greenfield sites, maximising the use of existing infrastructure and assisting in the process of urban regeneration.
- 3.29 Efficiency in the use of land can be achieved through requirements for higher densities although this should support efforts to reduce the need to travel and encourage more sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. Higher densities should therefore be achieved in the most accessible locations which are well served by public transport and which

have good access to shops, services and other facilities, such as at in town centre locations.

- 3.30 However, the efficient use of land is not just confined to the buildings themselves. It is also important that supporting infrastructure, such as roads, car parking and areas of public realm, are designed and laid out efficiently within the wider development in order to maximise the use of available space.

Alternative Options

- 3.31 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach towards making an efficient use of land. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF specifies that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land.
- 3.32 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to examples of development that does not make the most efficient use of land.

Design and Layout of New Development

Policy
Direction
OP7

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that all new development (including advertisements, conversions, changes of use and extensions to existing buildings) displays high standards of design and layout and that development proposals that are considered to be of a poor standard of design and layout should be refused.

Justification

- 3.33 The design and layout of new development is recognised as being integral to achieving sustainable development and the planning process has an important role to play in achieving this. Good design incorporates an interrelation of features and if implemented effectively can contribute towards the creation of thriving and vibrant places that are well built, inclusive, safe, well-connected and environmentally sensitive. As a consequence, the design of new development can have a significant impact on people's quality of life.

Alternative Options

- 3.34 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach towards the design and layout of new development. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF specifies that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this and plans should set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable.
- 3.35 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to examples of poorly designed development.

Amenity

Policy
Direction
OP8

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that all new development does not have an adverse impact on the amenity of new and existing residents in the surrounding area.

Justification

- 3.36 The design of new development can impact on access to daylight and sunlight, both of which are important for general amenity, health and well-being, for bringing warmth into a property and to save energy from reducing the need for artificial lighting and heating. The design of development can also impact on the privacy of both new and existing dwellings and pollution and general disturbance arising from noise, vibration, smell, litter, artificial light and opening hours can also have a significant impact on amenity and people's quality of life. Similarly, inadequate parking and servicing arrangements associated with a development can have an adverse impact on amenity.

Alternative Options

- 3.37 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out how the Council intends to ensure that development does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on amenity. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF specifies that planning policies

and decisions should ensure that development have a high standard of amenity for current and future users.

- 3.38 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to examples of unmanaged development that could have adverse impact on the amenity of the users of a development and surrounding areas.

Planning Conditions and Obligations

Policy
Direction
OP9

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that where a development would have an adverse impact on interests of acknowledged importance or would result in an increase in needs and demands for new or improved infrastructure, services or facilities, the Council would only grant planning subject to planning conditions and/or planning obligations that would ensure that any adverse impacts are mitigated against and that the increased needs and demands are addressed through the development.

The intention would be for the policy to specify that typical priorities would be affordable housing provision; open space, sport and recreation provision; education provision; and other site-specific contributions that may be appropriate to a particular development.

Justification

- 3.39 When used properly, planning conditions and obligations can enhance the quality of development and enable development proposals to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects of the development.
- 3.40 Planning conditions can be used to ensure that the development that might otherwise be refused, is acceptable in planning terms. This may, for example, involve the imposition of conditions to restrict what activities can take place within a building, restrict hours of operation or require that an applicant obtain specific consent for certain aspects of the development, such as a landscaping scheme.
- 3.41 Planning obligations (or Section 106 agreements as they are also known) are formal legal agreements between the local planning authority and developers and, in a similar way to planning conditions, these can be used to ensure that

a development is acceptable in planning terms. Planning obligations are attached to the site itself rather than the developer so that it remains applicable if the ownership of the land should change. Planning Obligations are generally used for three key purposes:

- To prescribe the nature of development (for example, requiring a specified portion of housing to be affordable or to require the delivery part of a mixed-use scheme at a specific stage in the wider development)
- To compensate for loss or damage created by a development (e.g. requiring replacement provision for the loss of open space); or
- To mitigate against the impact of a development (e.g. to make provision for recreation space or educational facilities to meet increased demands arising from the prospective residents of new housing development).

3.42 In either case, the use of conditions and obligations will be consistent with the tests set out in national guidance.

3.43 It is considered that the inclusion of a policy setting out the Council's approach to the use of planning conditions and obligations will provide a degree of certainty to developers.

Alternative Options

3.44 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach towards the use of planning conditions obligations. However, this was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations.

3.45 Although it is not a requirement of the NPPF for plans to include a specific policy on planning conditions and obligations, it is considered that, on balance, the proposed inclusion of the policy would provide greater certainty as to what will be required in conjunction with development proposals.

4 Housing

Introduction

- 4.1 One of the core planning principles of the NPPF is that that planning should proactively drive and support the delivery of the homes that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet housing needs. Development plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential communities.
- 4.2 In terms of housing, the GMSF will set the housing target which Bury needs to meet in order to fulfil its housing requirements. The GMSF will also seek to specify the mix of house type required along with the minimum density standards that are to be applied around Greater Manchester.
- 4.3 Some of the key local issues for housing include the need to plan to meet the needs of a growing and ageing population by ensuring the provision of an adequate supply of appropriate and affordable housing in the right locations and ensuring that development makes an efficient use of land.
- 4.4 In response to these issues, the Local Plan seeks to deliver an appropriate supply of well-designed housing to meet the Borough's needs. In doing so, it is proposed that the Local Plan should seek to complement and reinforce other plans, strategies and initiatives by including policies relating to the following:
- Housing Land Provision;
 - Windfall Housing Development;
 - Housing Needs;
 - Affordable Housing Provision;
 - Special Needs Housing;
 - Self-build and Custom Housebuilding;
 - Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople;
 - The Form and Layout of New Housing Development;
 - Alterations and Extensions to Residential Properties; and
 - Residential Conversions.

Housing Land Provision

Policy
Direction
H1

It is proposed that, in conjunction with the GMSF, the Local Plan should include a policy, accompanied by site allocations, that seeks to encourage new housing development through the identification of good quality and deliverable housing sites, including previously-developed sites, to help meet Bury's needs.

Justification

- 4.5 The GMSF will identify future housing targets across Greater Manchester and within each constituent district. Whilst the GMSF will identify strategic allocations for housing, the Local Plan has a role to play in identifying non-strategic and more Local, non-strategic sites for housing that will contribute towards meeting Bury's housing needs. The Local Plan can help to ensure the delivery of housing in sustainable locations that is of the right size, type and tenure to help meet local needs.

Alternative Options

- 4.6 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach towards housing land provision. However, the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should significantly boost the supply of home and policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites.
- 4.7 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the Local Plan failing to provide the certainty that the development industry requires in terms of new housing development in Bury.

Windfall Housing Development

Policy
Direction
H2

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that planning applications for housing development on sites that are not allocated for residential use will generally be allowed providing the proposal meets specific criteria.

Justification

- 4.8 The GMSF and the Local Plan will identify strategic and non-strategic allocations for future housing development in Bury. However, planning applications will come forward on sites that haven't been specifically identified in the development plan. These sites are known as 'windfall' sites and they can make an important contribution to meeting Bury's housing needs over the plan period.
- 4.9 It is considered important that an appropriate policy is in place that will set out criteria against which planning applications for housing on 'windfall' sites will be considered.

Alternative Options

- 4.10 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the Council's approach to housing proposals on windfall sites. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF recognises that windfall sites can be an important source of housing supply and that local planning authorities should support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions.
- 4.11 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the Local Plan failing to provide the certainty that the development industry requires in terms of new housing development on windfall sites.

Housing Needs

Policy
Direction
H3

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that housing development should provide an appropriate mix of dwellings to address the housing needs of the local community, including special needs housing in appropriate locations which will help households whose general housing needs are not being met by mainstream housing.

It is considered that the policy should require applicants to set out how their proposal will help to address local housing needs and identify the key considerations that the Council will take into account when determining whether a proposal includes an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes.

Justification

- 4.12 Local Plans should set out the likely profile of household types that will require new housing over the plan period, as evidenced in local and strategic studies. This should include the types and sizes of housing that will be required to reflect local demographics and trends.
- 4.13 As housing needs are dynamic, those looking to submit a planning application for large residential developments should take account of the most-up-date evidence of housing needs.
- 4.14 Demand for a range of house types, sizes and tenures across all sections of the community has been identified as a key issue for Bury and Policy Direction H3 sets out the Council's intended approach towards meeting housing needs through new development.

Alternative Options

- 4.15 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the Council's approach to meeting housing needs. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that the sizes, types and tenures of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies.
- 4.16 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the Local Plan being unable to manage new housing in a way that meets housing needs of the community.

Affordable Housing Provision

Policy
Direction
H4

In accordance with the NPPF, it is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that at least 10% of dwellings in new housing development of 10 or more houses should be affordable as well as specifying the type and nature of affordable housing that should be provided.

Justification

- 4.17 Like most other parts of the country, Bury has experienced considerable increases in house prices in recent years, which now means that many households are unable to access quality affordable housing that meets their

housing requirements. Many households are, therefore, living in overcrowded conditions or in sub-standard accommodation.

- 4.18 The delivery of affordable homes has been enshrined in the planning system for some years now and national policy along with the GMSF state that local authorities should set a target for the amount of affordable housing to be provided on large housing developments. Accordingly, Policy Direction H4 sets out the local targets for the types of affordable housing that is needed across the Borough and the circumstances when it will be required.
- 4.19 The Council's current policy requires provision of 25% of developments involving 25 or more dwellings to be affordable. However, the eventual requirement to be set out in the Local Plan will be developed taking into account viability issues and the requirements of the NPPF.

Alternative Options

- 4.20 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the Council's approach to the provision of affordable housing. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF specifies that plans should set out the contributions expected from development including setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required. It specifies that planning policies should require at least 10% of housing developments of 10 or more houses to be affordable.
- 4.21 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the provision of less affordable homes and an increase in people's inability to get onto the property ladder.

Special Needs Housing

Policy
Direction
H5

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that in order to meet the needs of a growing elderly population, development that meets these needs will be supported as long as they satisfy certain criteria. Other groups with specialist housing needs should also be considered in this policy.

Justification

- 4.22 One of the key issues to be addressed through the Bury Local Plan is the demand for a range of house types, sizes and tenures across all sections of the community.
- 4.23 With Greater Manchester seeking to become an age-friendly city region, policies that meet the needs of the elderly, especially in terms of housing can help meet these aims.
- 4.24 Recent population projections indicate that there is likely to be a significant increase in the number of people aged over-65. These groups will have specific housing and care requirements and sufficient accommodation will have to be delivered in order to meet these needs.

Alternative Options

- 4.25 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the Council's approach to the provision of special needs housing. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF specifies that one of the key aspects of supporting the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, is the need to ensure that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed. With an ageing population, it is anticipated that there will be an increased need to cater for specialist housing needs.
- 4.26 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to these housing needs going unmet and people having to live in inappropriate housing.

Self-build and custom housebuilding

Policy
Direction
H6

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy setting out the criteria that will be used to determine proposals for self-build and custom housebuilding.

Justification

- 4.27 Self-build and custom-build housing is defined as housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing.

- 4.28 The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act of 2015 requires local planning authorities to prepare and maintain a register of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land for their own self-build and custom housebuilding.
- 4.29 The NPPF states the housing needs for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. This should include the needs of people who wish to commission or build their own homes.

Alternative Options

- 4.30 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the Council’s approach to self-build and custom housebuilding. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF specifies that one of the key aspects of supporting the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, is the need to ensure that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed.
- 4.31 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the Local Plan failing to the needs of those wishing to undertake a self-build or custom housing development.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Policy
Direction
H7

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy, accompanied by site allocations, that seeks to ensure that the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople are addressed. The policy would include criteria against which proposals for sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople would be assessed.

Justification

- 4.32 The NPPF specifies that the housing needs of all sections of the community need to be addressed through the Local Plan, including the accommodation requirements of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.
- 4.33 Research is being undertaken to identify the level and type of accommodation needs for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. This research will be used to determine the pitch requirements, which will then need to be delivered at the local level through the Local Plan.

- 4.34 The Policy should also set out the key locational criteria that will be used to help identify appropriate sites across the Borough and will be used to assess planning applications on sites that are not specifically allocated for that purpose.

Alternative Options

- 4.35 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the Council's approach to provision for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF specifies that one of the key aspects of supporting the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, is the need to ensure that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed.
- 4.36 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the Local Plan being unable to manage new housing in a way that meets housing needs of the community and could lead to the unplanned development of sites in unsuitable and unsustainable locations.

The Form and Layout of New Housing Development

Policy
Direction
H8

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that residential development should be well-designed, contributes to GM zero carbon targets and makes a positive contribution to the surrounding area. It is also considered that this policy should specify the criteria that will be used to assess all proposals for new housing.

Justification

- 4.37 The NPPF specifies that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. In addition, GM Targets for zero carbon are ambitious and demanding and it is vital that new build leads the way in future proofing our communities.
- 4.38 It is intended to include a policy on the form and layout of new housing in order to establish the basis for assessing the potential impact of proposals for new residential development on the surrounding environment, including its

relationship to its setting and its contribution towards opportunities for walking, cycling and safe play.

- 4.39 In addition, it is essential that the layout of a proposal enables reasonable standards of privacy and residential amenity in order to balance the continued demand for housing with the need to improve the quality of life for the Borough's residents.

Alternative Options

- 4.40 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the Council's approach to the form and layout of new housing development. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF specifies that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve and that plans should set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable.
- 4.41 The Council has also considered the alternative option of assessing the form and layout of new housing against a generic design policy (Policy Direction OP6). However, this option was also discounted on the basis that housing development can give rise to specific issues and impacts that are not necessarily generic to all forms of development.
- 4.42 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the Local Plan being unable to adequately manage the design and layout of new housing development.

Alterations and Extensions to Residential Properties

**Policy
Direction
H9**

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy setting out the criteria that will be considered when determining applications for the alteration of and extensions to residential properties.

Justification

- 4.43 Whilst changes to the General Permitted Development Order now allow some forms of residential extension to go ahead without a need for planning permission, some alterations still require planning permission.
- 4.44 Extensions and alterations to dwellings, including garden extensions and garages, can be visually intrusive; restrict daylight, privacy and outlook to

neighbouring properties and unacceptably reduce the available garden area. A policy on alterations and extensions to residential properties would ensure that such development is of a high standard of design and would not cause unacceptable adverse impacts.

- 4.45 As such, it is considered necessary to include a policy that seeks to manage the design, form and size of proposed extensions and alterations to ensure that they are sympathetic in nature with the original building and surrounding area.

Alternative Options

- 4.46 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out what should be taken into account in assessing proposals for alterations and extensions to residential properties. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF specifies that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve and that plans should set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable.
- 4.47 The Council has also considered the alternative option of assessing proposals for alterations and extensions to residential properties against a generic design policy (Policy Direction OP6). However, this option was also discounted on the basis that alterations and extensions to existing housing can give rise to specific issues and impacts that are not necessarily generic to all forms of development.
- 4.48 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the Local Plan being unable to adequately manage proposals for the alteration of and extension to existing residential property.

Residential Conversions

Policy
Direction
H10

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy setting out the criteria that will be considered when determining applications to convert a building into two or more self-contained units or a House of Multiple Occupation.

Justification

- 4.49 Given the trend towards smaller households, the conversion of buildings into self-contained units and houses in multiple occupation can be an effective way of providing small, relatively low cost accommodation.
- 4.50 However, it is necessary to ensure that dwelling standards are maintained and to ensure that, generally, an over-provision of such property does not adversely affect the need to maintain a good mix of housing types or the character and amenity of residential areas.

Alternative Options

- 4.51 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out what should be taken into account in assessing proposals for residential conversions. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF specifies that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve and that plans should set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable.
- 4.52 The Council has also considered the alternative option of assessing proposals for alterations and extensions to residential properties against a generic design policy (Policy Direction OP6). However, this option was also discounted on the basis that residential conversions can give rise to specific issues and impacts that are not necessarily generic to all forms of development.
- 4.53 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the Local Plan being unable to adequately manage proposals for residential conversions.

5 Economy and Employment

Introduction

- 5.1 The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.
- 5.2 In terms of economic development and employment, the GMSF will establish the quantitative floorspace requirements for office, industrial and warehousing development across Greater Manchester and will seek to ensure a distribution of development that helps to achieve the strategic economic priorities for Greater Manchester.
- 5.3 Some of the key local issues associated with the Borough's existing local economy and employment¹ are connected to a traditionally inadequate land supply, low quality and low paid employment opportunities and the need to create greater economic diversity in order to minimise the impact of declining employment in the manufacturing sector and anticipated public sector cuts.
- 5.4 In response to these issues, it is proposed that the Local Plan should seek to deliver a competitive and diverse local economy and high quality jobs. In doing so, it is proposed that the Local Plan should seek to complement and reinforce other plans, strategies and initiatives by including policies relating to the following:
- Employment Land Provision;
 - New Business, Industrial and Warehousing Development;
 - Employment Generating Areas; and
 - Employment Sites Outside Employment Generating Areas.

¹ References to 'employment' within the Local Plan relate to offices (B1a), research and development (B1b), light industrial (B1c), general industrial (B2) and warehousing (B8) uses.

Employment Land Provision

Policy
Direction
EC1

It is proposed that, in conjunction with the GMSF, the Local Plan should include a policy, accompanied by site allocations, that seeks to encourage new office, industrial and warehousing development through the identification of good quality and deliverable employment sites to meet the needs identified in the GMSF.

Justification

- 5.5 The Local Plan can play a significant role in supporting the economy in terms of encouraging inward investment through the identification of a comprehensive range of good quality and suitably-located employment sites.
- 5.6 It is proposed that a policy on employment land provision would reflect Bury's requirements for office, industrial and warehousing floorspace as identified in the GMSF and would identify non-strategic allocations in support of the strategic allocations identified through the GMSF.

Alternative Options

- 5.7 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the Council's approach to the provision of employment land and associated site allocations. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. It states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 5.8 It is considered that the omission of the policy and associated site allocations would not provide the certainty that the development industry requires in terms of where new employment-related development will be focused.

New Business, Industrial and Warehousing Development

Policy
Direction
EC2

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that sets out the key factors that will be taken into account in considering proposals for new office, industrial and warehousing development.

Justification

- 5.9 This policy would be used as a basis for assessing the overall design and environmental impact of new proposals for business, industrial and warehousing development. Ensuring good design in terms of scale, size, density, layout, height and materials is important in maintaining and improving the image of the Borough.
- 5.10 At the same time, it is important that the surrounding environment is protected by: seeking adequate access and parking arrangements; landscape and boundary treatments to separate or minimise any effect on neighbouring uses, where appropriate; and by ensuring the effects of noise, dust, smell, vibration, air and water pollution do not have an unacceptable effect on neighbouring properties and the health of our communities. It is also considered important that such developments promote the use of Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles and active travel and that the safety of employees, visitors and adjacent occupiers is also be taken into account.

Alternative Options

- 5.11 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out what should be taken into account in assessing proposals for new business, industrial and warehousing development. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF specifies that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve and that plans should set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable.
- 5.12 The Council has also considered the alternative option of assessing proposals for new business, industrial and warehousing development against a generic design policy (Policy Direction OP6). However, this option was also discounted on the basis that this type of development can give rise to specific issues and impacts that are not necessarily generic to all forms of development.

- 5.13 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the Local Plan being unable to adequately manage proposals for new business, industrial and warehousing development.

Employment Generating Areas

Policy
Direction
EC3

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that the Borough's established Employment Generating Areas (EGAs) should be consolidated, retained and, where necessary, regenerated in order to help to create a sustainable, diverse and competitive local economy, to provide certainty to businesses operating from within them and to maintain existing and future employment opportunities for the Borough's local population.

It is considered that the policy should highlight that, within the EGAs, development will generally only be allowed for Business (B1), General Industrial (B2) and Warehousing (B8) uses.

The policy should also set out the circumstances where development for non-employment uses within EGAs may be considered acceptable.

Justification

- 5.14 If existing firms and jobs are to be protected in the Borough it is important that investment for employment generating purposes is encouraged. Protecting EGAs for employment uses will help to achieve this by providing businesses with a degree of certainty as to the future use of these areas, avoiding the introduction of conflicting land uses and having an important part to play in retaining local employment opportunities.

Alternative Options

- 5.15 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to development proposals within designated Employment Generating Areas. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. It states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support

economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

- 5.16 It is considered that the omission of a policy seeking to retain existing concentrations of employment uses would not provide the certainty that businesses need in terms of the future use of the area within which they are operating and could undermine the Borough's local economy through the loss of sites to non-employment uses.

Employment Sites Outside Employment Generating Areas

Policy
Direction
EC4

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that, outside designated Employment Generating Areas, the Council would seek to retain existing employment sites in Business (B1), General Industrial (B2) or Warehousing (B8) uses in order to help to create a sustainable and competitive local economy, to ensure a diverse supply of employment sites and to maintain accessible employment opportunities for the Borough's local population.

The policy should also set out the circumstances where development on existing employment sites for non-employment uses may be considered acceptable.

Justification

- 5.17 Outside the main concentrations of employment (i.e. the Employment Generating Areas), the Borough contains a significant amount of either individual or small clusters of employment uses which, given Bury's industrial heritage, often comprise older premises in what can sometimes be described as secondary locations and often close to residential areas. Such sites do, however, provide more affordable accommodation and offer the opportunity for people to work close to where they live, thus potentially reducing travel distances and reliance on the private car as a way of travelling to work. Consequently, the policy would broadly support the retention of appropriate sites as important local opportunities for employment.

Alternative Options

- 5.18 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to development proposals involving other employment sites outside Employment Generating Areas. However, this

option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. It states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

- 5.19 It is considered that the omission of a policy seeking to retain existing and appropriate employment sites outside of Employment Generating Areas could increase pressures to redevelop suitable employment sites that provide a valuable source of accessible local employment and which contribute towards the Borough's varied supply of employment premises.

6 Town Centres and Main Town Centre Uses

Introduction

- 6.1 Town centres are locations that sit at the heart of our communities. The vitality of town centres is largely underpinned by retail activity but recent years have seen significant challenges to this sector, particularly with the impacts of the recession and rapidly changing shopping patterns. In turn, this has presented a significant challenge to the Borough's hierarchy of centres.
- 6.2 The NPPF specifies that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.
- 6.3 Some of the key local issues associated with the Borough's town centres are varying levels of vitality in the Borough's key centres and that the Local Plan should ensure that it meets needs for main town centre uses. The Council's key aim is to support and enhance the vitality of the Borough's hierarchy of centres. This will include adopting the 'town centres first' approach to proposals for main town centre uses.
- 6.4 In response to these issues, the Local Plan it is considered that the Local Plan should seeks to support a hierarchy of vital and viable town, district, local and neighbourhood centres. In doing so, it is proposed that the Local Plan should seek to complement and reinforce other plans, strategies and initiatives by including policies relating to the following:
- Hierarchy and Role Of Centres;
 - Town Centre Development Opportunities;
 - Managing the Location and Scale of Main Town Centre Uses;
 - Primary Shopping Areas;
 - Local and Neighbourhood Centres;
 - Local Shops and Services; and
 - Upper Floors in Centres.

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to maintain and enhance the vitality of the Borough's hierarchy of town, district and local centres by making them the key focus for new development involving main town centre uses.

It is considered that the hierarchy of centres should comprise:

- Sub-regional town centre – Bury.
- Other town centres – Ramsbottom, Radcliffe, Prestwich.
- District centres – Tottington, Whitefield, Sedgley Park.
- Local centres.
- Neighbourhood Centres.

It is considered that the policy should specify that additions to the retail hierarchy may be appropriate to serve major population increases arising through significant new residential development where prospective residents would otherwise have limited access to such facilities and where they are in locations that are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.

Justification

- 6.5 The Borough is host to a diverse hierarchy of centres ranging from the sub-regionally significant town centre of Bury which acts as the Borough's key focal point, to smaller local and neighbourhood centres which serve the local and day-to-day needs of the area. The identification of a hierarchy of centres reflects the Council's recognition that these centres are accessible and play a valuable role at the heart of communities and the aim to ensure that the vitality and viability of these centres is maintained and, where possible, enhanced. The policy would also highlight the potential for additional local/neighbourhood centres to be added to this hierarchy where these are considered necessary to serve new residential development that might otherwise be poorly served by such facilities.

Alternative Options

- 6.6 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy identifying a hierarchy of centres and their respective roles. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation and that policies should define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters.
- 6.7 In addition, the inclusion of a policy setting out a hierarchy of centres and identifying these as the principle focus for main town centre uses is a specific requirement of the NPPF.

Town Centre Development Opportunities

Policy Direction
TC2

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy, accompanied by site allocations, that seeks to support the vitality and resilience of the Borough's town centres by encouraging the development and regeneration of key town centre sites.

Justification

- 6.8 One of the key aims of the Local Plan is to support the Borough's town centres and to capitalise on opportunities to strengthen their vitality and resilience.
- 6.9 Town centres have developed over many years and, inevitably, circumstances change over time with new opportunities for regeneration arising on a fairly consistent basis. In order to support the vitality and resilience of these town centres and to ensure that they adapt and evolve, it is important that the redevelopment of town centre regeneration opportunities is heavily promoted.
- 6.10 It is proposed that the policy would be accompanied by site allocations that specifically identify the main regeneration opportunities within the Borough's key centres.

Alternative Options

- 6.11 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to town centre development opportunities and associated site allocations. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation and that policies should define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters.
- 6.12 The NPPF also states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. It states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. It states that local policies can be used to set out more detail for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development and that this can include allocating sites.
- 6.13 It is considered that the omission of the policy and its associated site allocations would not provide the certainty that the development industry requires in terms of where key town centre development opportunities are and the types of uses that would be considered acceptable.

Managing the Location and Scale of Main Town Centre Uses

Policy
Direction
TC3

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to maintain and enhance the vitality of the Borough's hierarchy of centres by ensuring that proposals for town centre uses are in an appropriate location and that proposals for retail, leisure and office development are not of a scale that would have significant adverse impacts.

In managing the location of town centre uses, the policy would require a sequential assessment in conjunction with planning

applications involving sites that are not in an existing centre² and not in accordance with the Local Plan.

In order to ensure that full consideration is given to the scale of development and whether this would have any significant adverse impacts, the policy would ensure that proposals involving additional retail, leisure or office floorspace in locations that are not in an existing centre, not in accordance with the Local Plan and in excess of locally-derived floorspace thresholds³ should be accompanied by an Impact Assessment in line with the requirements of the NPPF.

Justification

- 6.14 In accordance with national policy, the Council is keen to support the vitality and viability of the Borough's hierarchy of existing centres by ensuring that they remain the focus for main town centre uses and, in the case of retail, leisure and office uses, that any such development does not have a significant adverse impact on a centre by virtue of its scale.

Alternative Options

- 6.15 The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. It also states that local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan and that when assessing applications for retail and leisure development outside town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold.

² For retail purposes, the 'centre' extends to the defined primary shopping areas of town centres and the boundaries of district and local shopping centres. For the other main town centre uses (as defined in the NPPF), the 'centre' will extend to the wider town centre boundary and the boundaries of district and local centres.

³ The policy would be supported by evidence to justify locally-derived floorspace thresholds that should be applied to out-of-centre proposals and edge-of-centre proposals involving town, district and local centres.

- 6.16 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to managing the location and scale of main town centre uses. Whilst the requirement for a sequential assessment is established in the NPPF, the proposed identification of floorspace thresholds for the application of impact assessments will be locally-derived. It is considered that a policy within the Local Plan covering the sequential and impact assessment will add certainty in terms of what applicants will be expected to undertake in conjunction with proposals for main town centre uses.
- 6.17 The Council has also considered the alternative option of not defining locally-derived floorspace thresholds to trigger the requirement for an impact assessment and to use the NPPF’s default threshold of 2,500 sq.m. However, this was discounted as development of this size is considered to have the potential to cause significant adverse impacts on existing centres – particularly lower order centres.

Primary Shopping Areas	Policy Direction TC4
<p>It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to maintain retailing (Class A1) as the predominant use at ground floor level within the Primary Shopping Areas of town and district centres and that any opportunities for regeneration or redevelopment in these areas should be retail-led.</p> <p>The policy should also identify the factors that will be considered in dealing with proposals for a change of use or redevelopment within these areas.</p>	

Justification

- 6.18 At the heart of the Borough’s town and district centres is the area where retail uses are concentrated. Whilst it is recognised that changing retail patterns and the growth of on-line retailing is likely to lead to a reduction in retailers operating from within shop units, retailing is, and will continue to be, an important use in driving footfall and maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of centres. Consequently, the general aim is to ensure that retailing remains the predominant use within Primary Shopping Areas.
- 6.19 In assessing proposals for a change of use from retail to a non-retail use, the Council will take into account a number of considerations including the nature and character of the use proposed, the vitality and viability of the centre and

the prominence of its location within the street scene. In this respect, the Council is keen to encourage attractive uses which maintain activity and encourage footfall throughout the day. This is seen as particularly relevant to centres that have experienced a prolonged period of decline where there may be scope for consolidating and strengthening the centre by allowing for a wider range of services and promoting a greater diversification of uses.

Alternative Options

- 6.20 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach that will be taken to proposed development within the Primary Shopping Areas of key centres. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. It also states that planning policies should define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas and make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations.
- 6.21 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the Local Plan being unable to adequately manage development proposals within Primary Shopping Areas and this may, in turn, undermine the vitality and viability of those centres.

Local and Neighbourhood Centres

Policy
Direction
TC5

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that recognises the importance of local retail facilities within the Borough's Local and Neighbourhood Centres and identifies the factors that will be considered in determining proposals for the change of use of retail (Class A1) to a non-retail use.

Justification

- 6.22 In addition to town and district centres, the Borough contains smaller local or neighbourhood centres and other local shops that provide for the day-to-day needs of their surrounding communities.
- 6.23 This policy would recognise the valuable contribution made by these facilities and seek to manage proposals to change the use of these existing retail uses in order to maintain a convenient and accessible community resource.

Alternative Options

- 6.24 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to retail provision within local and neighbourhood centres. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation and that policies should define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters.
- 6.25 It also states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles – for example through the provision local shops and should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs. Policies should also ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community.
- 6.26 It is considered that the omission of the policy may undermine the role and function of local and neighbourhood centres which are important in serving the day-to-day shopping needs of local communities and reducing the need to travel.

Local Shops and Services

Policy
Direction
TC6

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to retain local shops and services outside recognised centres, particularly where these serve the day-to-day needs of local communities that would otherwise have limited access to such facilities.

- 6.27 Although not of a sufficient scale to be recognised as a local or neighbourhood centre, local shops and services can play an important role in meeting the day-to-day needs of local communities (especially those that are less mobile) and this is particularly the case in more isolated and less accessible locations, such as in rural village settlements.

- 6.28 The policy would seek to resist proposals that would involve the loss of local shops and services outside recognised centres and, in doing so, would consider the availability and accessibility of other opportunities for the local community to meet their day-to-day shopping and service needs.
- 6.29 Where the proposal involves former shops and services that are vacant, the Council will expect the applicant to provide robust evidence to demonstrate that the premises have been comprehensively marketed and that there has been no interest in maintaining the premises as a local shop or service.

Alternative Options

- 6.30 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to local shops and services. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation and that policies should define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters.
- 6.31 It also states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles – for example through the provision local shops and should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs. Policies should also ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community
- 6.32 It is considered that the omission of the policy may undermine the role and function of local and neighbourhood centres which are important in serving the day-to-day shopping needs of local communities and reducing the need to travel.

<p>Upper Floors in Centres</p>	<p>Policy Direction TC7</p>
	<p>It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to support proposals which bring underused and vacant space on upper floors of premises within centres back into beneficial use.</p>

Justification

- 6.33 It is often the case that the upper floors of premises within centres are vacant or underused and this is considered to represent a waste of a valuable resource and the under-utilisation of space. Many floors above shops and other commercial properties are used for storage or left partially or completely empty, which generally leads to poor standards of maintenance and visual appearance. Other premises have vacant and obsolete office space which is difficult to let because of poor accommodation.
- 6.34 The policy would reflect the Council's aim to encourage a range of uses, such as offices and living accommodation, within upper floors which will contribute to the overall vitality of centres and help to retain and improve their liveliness and attractiveness.

Alternative Options

- 6.35 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to upper floors in centres. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation and that policies should define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters.
- 6.36 It is considered that the omission of the policy would overlook a key element of the Council's approach to maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the Borough's centres through increased resident populations.

7 Tourism and Culture

Introduction

- 7.1 In recognition of the value of tourism and culture to the wider economy, the NPPF identifies these uses as main town centre uses specifying that needs for these uses should be met in full. In addition, the NPPF also recognises the positive impact that tourism can have on the rural economy, specifying that local plans should support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres.
- 7.2 The Borough's tourism and cultural assets play an important role in the wider local economy both in terms of visitor spend and in creating a vibrant living environment that will be attractive to a highly skilled workforce. At present, Bury's key tourism and cultural assets are the East Lancashire Railway, the West Pennine Moors, Bury's Market, the Irwell Valley, Transport Museum, the Fusiliers Museum, Sculpture Centre and the recently refurbished MET. These assets are supplemented by a programme of town centre events that attract additional footfall and together they help to attract and retain a talented workforce which is of further benefit to the Borough's economy.
- 7.3 Therefore, it is considered that one of the Local Plan's key aims should be to safeguard existing and promoting new tourism and cultural development in appropriate locations. In doing so, it is proposed that the Local Plan should seek to complement and reinforce other plans, strategies and initiatives by including policies relating to the following:
- Tourism and Cultural Assets.

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that recognises the significant contribution that tourism and culture makes towards the competitiveness and diversity of the local economy and in improving the attractiveness and quality of life within the Borough and set out the key means by which the Local Plan will endeavour to support and develop the Borough's tourism and cultural offer.

Justification

- 7.4 Tourism and culture are increasingly seen as important and inter-related components of economic development that provide both direct and indirect support to a wide array of service industries from restaurants to music venues.
- 7.5 Not only does the tourism and culture sector make a direct contribution towards the Borough's economy in its own right but it also has indirect benefits in terms of making the Borough a more attractive place to live for a high-skilled and knowledge-intensive workforce.

Alternative Options

- 7.6 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to tourism and cultural assets. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that, in building a strong and competitive economy, planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 7.7 It is considered that the omission of the policy would overlook the role that tourism and culture plays as a key contributor to the strength and competitiveness of Bury's wider local economy.

8 Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Introduction

- 8.1 The NPPF recognises that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities.
- 8.2 Open space, sport and recreational facilities can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to areas of incidental open space within a development, linear corridors and country parks. In addition to health and wellbeing, it can have ecological value and form an important part of the Borough's green infrastructure network. It can also play an important role in the landscape and setting of built development and is an integral aspect of sustainable development.
- 8.3 Some of the key local issues associated with the provision of open space and opportunities to get involved in sport and recreational activity are that there are significant and rising levels of obesity in children and adults, that levels of physical inactivity are sizeable and that there is a need to increase opportunities to travel by walking and cycling. Coupled with this, there are identified deficiencies in the quantity, quality and accessibility of all types of open space across the Borough.
- 8.4 In response to these issues, it is considered that the Local Plan should seek to ensure that the Borough's residents have access to a sufficient amount of good quality open space, sport and recreation facilities. In doing so, it is proposed that the Local Plan should seek to complement and reinforce other plans, strategies and initiatives by including policies in relation to the following:
- Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision;
 - New Housing Development and the Provision of Open Space, Sport and Recreation; and
 - Recreation Routes.

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision

Policy
Direction
OS1

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to retain an adequate supply of good quality and accessible open space, sport and recreational assets and set out the circumstances where development of such sites may be acceptable in principle.

The policy would also support proposals for the enhancement of existing open space, sport and recreation facilities.

Justification

- 8.5 Easy access to good quality open space, sport and recreational facilities can make an important contribution towards the health and well-being of the Borough's communities and can provide opportunities for people to pursue a more active lifestyle.
- 8.6 As a result, it is important to ensure that such sites are protected from development where they currently fulfil, or have the potential to fulfil, the needs and aspirations of the local community. This includes recognising the contribution that education recreation facilities and playing fields can make towards the provision of facilities for the wider community.
- 8.7 In addition to quantity, it is important that the quality of open space, sport and recreational facilities is of a high standard in order to enable effective and regular use.

Alternative Options

- 8.8 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to protecting and enhancing open space, sport and recreation provision. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure and sports facilities and allotments.
- 8.9 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the loss of and provision of poor quality open space, sport and recreational facilities to the detriment of the health and wellbeing of Bury's communities.

New Housing Development and the Provision of Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Policy
Direction
OS2

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that developers of all new housing would be expected to make provision for new or enhanced open space, sport and recreation to meet the needs of the prospective residents and set out the requirements for this provision.

Justification

- 8.10 New housing development within the Borough brings with it an increase in population and a subsequent increase in demands for open space, sport and recreational facilities.
- 8.11 If the increase in demand for recreation is not met through the new development, then this is likely to place excessive demands on existing facilities which, in turn, may have an adverse impact on quality.

Alternative Options

- 8.12 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to the provision of open space, sport and recreation in new housing development. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure and sports facilities and allotments.
- 8.13 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to a decline in the levels of open space, sport and recreational facilities relative to population and increased demands on existing facilities would have a detrimental impact on the quality of provision.

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that, in promoting access to the countryside, the Council would seek to establish a network of designated recreational routes to provide access, where appropriate, for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. These routes would be safeguarded and, where necessary, enhanced and any development which would prejudice their establishment or use would not be permitted.

Justification

- 8.14 The Council's intention is to improve opportunities for all users to gain access to the countryside and that recreational routes are central to achieving this by creating accessible links between the Borough's communities and the wider countryside.
- 8.15 The identification, retention and improvement of these routes will provide opportunities for more active lifestyle choices and potential to improve health and wellbeing.

Alternative Options

- 8.16 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to recreational routes. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs. It also states that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.
- 8.17 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the loss of opportunities for access into the countryside to the detriment of the health and wellbeing of the Borough's communities.

9 Community Facilities

Introduction

- 9.1 The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs.
- 9.2 It also states that it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.
- 9.3 Some of the key local issues associated with the Borough's community facilities are that a growing and ageing population will put increased pressures on community facilities and that some existing facilities are in poor condition and in need of investment.
- 9.4 In response to these issues, it is considered that the Local Plan should seek to ensure that the Borough's residents have adequate access to community facilities. In doing so, it is proposed that the Local Plan should seek to complement and reinforce other plans, strategies and initiatives by including policies relating to the following:
- Community Facilities; and
 - New Housing Development and the Education Provision.

Community Facilities

Policy
Direction
CF1

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that proposals that would result in the loss of sites and premises currently or last used for the provision of community facilities or services will normally be resisted and will set out the circumstances where the loss of such facilities may be considered acceptable.

It is also considered that the policy should identify the key considerations against which proposals for new and improved community facilities will be assessed.

If necessary, the policy would be accompanied by relevant site allocations for new and improved community facilities.

Justification

- 9.5 Community facilities make an important contribution to the quality of life offered by the Borough. Therefore, safeguarding and improving community facilities will help to maintain and improve the quality of life enjoyed by the Borough's residents.

Alternative Options

- 9.6 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy seeking to safeguard and improve community facilities. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other. This can include planning positively for the provision and use of community facilities and guarding against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities.
- 9.7 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the unguarded loss of opportunities for social interaction to the detriment of the health and wellbeing of the Borough's communities.

New Housing Development and Education Provision

Policy
Direction
CF2

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that developers of new housing will be expected to make provision for new or enhanced education facilities to meet the needs of the prospective school-aged residents.

Justification

- 9.8 Increases in the number of school-aged children arising from the introduction of new housing leads to increased demand for educational facilities and, as such, it is considered appropriate for developers of new housing to make provision to meet this increased demand.

Alternative Options

- 9.9 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy relating to education provision in conjunction with new housing development. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities and that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement.
- 9.10 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to increased demands on existing schools without having a formal mechanism in place for these demands to be met in conjunction with new housing development.

10 Accessibility

Introduction

- 10.1 The promotion of sustainable transport is one of the key themes of the NPPF and that planning should seek to encourage a reduction in the need to travel and make provision for genuine and realistic alternatives to travelling by car. It states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals.
- 10.2 Some of the key local issues associated with accessibility in the Borough are connected to traffic congestion at peak periods, air quality issues arising from transport and inadequacies in the capacity and quality of public transport and its supporting infrastructure.
- 10.3 In response to these issues, it is considered that the Local Plan should deliver sustainable transport choices in new developments and reduce the number and length of journeys, particularly by private car. In doing so, it is proposed that the Local Plan should seek to complement and reinforce other plans, strategies and initiatives by including policies relating to the following:
- Connectivity and Accessibility; and
 - Transport Requirements in New Development.

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy seeking to direct significant new development into locations which encourage sustainable transport choices and reduce the number and length of journeys, particularly by motor vehicles, setting out key areas that the Council will focus on in seeking to achieve this.

If necessary, the policy should also be accompanied by relevant site allocations for proposals to improve connectivity and accessibility.

Justification

- 10.4 Accessibility to jobs, services and attractions by sustainable transport is key to delivering Bury's long term growth, reducing carbon emissions, and improving the local environment and quality of life for all the Borough's residents.
- 10.5 The Local Plan has a central role in delivering the Government's objectives for an integrated approach to land use and transport planning. It can actively manage the pattern of growth and development to encourage more sustainable transport choices such as the use of public transport, walking and cycling as realistic alternatives to the motor vehicles.

Alternative Options

- 10.6 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy relating to connectivity and accessibility. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth and that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health.
- 10.7 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to development occurring in unsustainable locations which is inadequately served by opportunities to travel by means other than motor vehicles.

Transport Requirements in New Development

Policy
Direction
AC2

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that development and transport planning are co-ordinated to improve accessibility, and prioritise the use of public transport, cycling and walking over motor vehicles.

The policy should also set out the specific requirements for all proposals for development which will generate demand for travel.

Justification

- 10.8 Reducing the need to travel and encouraging the use of more sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling by locating development in accessible locations is central to the Local Plan.
- 10.9 The proposed policy would introduce a series of measures designed to ensure that new development takes full account of the potential transport impacts and provides opportunities to promote more sustainable alternatives to travelling by private motor vehicle.

Alternative Options

- 10.10 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy relating to connectivity and accessibility. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth and that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health.
- 10.11 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to development being inadequately served by opportunities to travel by means other than motor vehicles.

11 Natural Environment

Introduction

- 11.1 One of the key aims of the NPPF is that Local Plans should include policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including policies to conserve areas of special landscape value, biodiversity and ecological assets and green infrastructure.
- 11.2 Some of the key local issues associated with the Borough's natural environment are connected to a varied range of landscape characters and geological and ecological assets and a requirement to protect, enhance and restore water bodies.
- 11.3 In response to these issues, it is considered that the Local Plan should seek to protect and enhance the Borough's natural environment. In doing so, it is proposed that the Local Plan should seek to complement and reinforce other plans, strategies and initiatives by including policies relating to the following:
- Green Infrastructure;
 - Biodiversity;
 - Geology and Geodiversity;
 - Water Resources;
 - Soils;
 - Landscape Character;
 - Contaminated and Unstable Land;
 - Minerals Development; and
 - Waste Development.

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to protect and enhance multi-functional green infrastructure and support proposals to improve the connectivity and quality of the network where these accord with other Local Plan policies and proposals.

It is considered that the policy should seek to maintain the positive role and function of the green infrastructure network and ensure that proposals for new built-development and the change of use of land and existing buildings that could result in negative impacts are resisted unless it satisfies stated criteria.

Justification

- 11.4 Green infrastructure is a term that is used to describe a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- 11.5 Bury's Green Infrastructure ranges from large scale components such as the uplands of the West Pennines Moorland and the Irwell Valley, which operate at the strategic level, to small local scale components such as neighbourhood open spaces (parks, woodlands, nature reserves, water bodies), residential gardens and grass verges.
- 11.6 The Council recognise the importance of green infrastructure in supporting growth both at the local and the City Region level and in improving connectivity between Bury and the neighbouring Greater Manchester districts of Rochdale and Bolton and the regional centre and inner areas of Manchester, Salford and Trafford as well as the Lancashire districts of Rossendale and Blackburn with Darwen.

Alternative Options

- 11.7 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to green infrastructure. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that the planning system should make provision for safe and accessible green infrastructure in order to benefit health and wellbeing, climate change mitigation and adaptation and to help conserve and enhance the natural environment.

- 11.8 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the unmanaged loss of valuable green infrastructure.

Biodiversity

Policy
Direction
NE2

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that proposals for new development minimise impacts on the Borough's biodiversity assets and provide net gains where possible.

It is considered that the policy should specify that where there is potential for new development to have an impact on any of the Borough's biodiversity assets, applicants should be expected to apply the sequential approach as outlined in national planning policy on biodiversity and geological conservation and provide evidence that any potential impact has been fully assessed and that, where potential impacts have been identified, measures have been taken to avoid, mitigate or compensate. The policy should also set out the factors that will be considered when assessing proposals that would have a potential impact on biodiversity assets.

Justification

- 11.9 In terms of the sub-region of Greater Manchester, the Borough has an above average concentration of Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) which makes a significant contribution towards the landscape character and perception of the Borough as an attractive location to live. SBIs also provide the main refuges for priority habitats and species as well as providing key nodes within the green infrastructure and wildlife network of the Borough.
- 11.10 From a biodiversity perspective, Bury has one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) covering part of the West Pennine Moors. This is designated in recognition of the quality of its mosaic of upland and upland fringe habitats.
- 11.11 There are two key areas of ancient woodland associated with the Irwell Valley and its tributaries which are at opposite ends of the Borough, in the north around Holcombe Brook and Summerseat, and in the south around Prestwich and Stand. Ancient woodlands are irreplaceable and are valuable biodiversity, cultural and heritage assets. Consequently, their loss should be avoided.

Alternative Options

- 11.12 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to biodiversity. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that improving biodiversity is one of the key components of achieving sustainable development and that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity or geological value.
- 11.13 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the unmanaged loss of biodiversity assets.

Geology and Geomorphology

Policy
Direction
NE3

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that proposals for new development minimise impacts on the Borough's geological and geomorphological assets and provide net gains where possible.

It is considered that the policy should specify that where there is potential for new development to have an impact on any of the Borough's geological and geomorphological assets, applicants should be expected to apply the sequential approach as outlined in national planning policy on biodiversity and geological conservation and provide evidence that any potential impact has been fully assessed and that, where potential impacts have been identified, measures have been taken to avoid, mitigate or compensate. The policy should also set out the factors that will be considered when assessing proposals that would have a potential impact on geological and geomorphological assets.

Justification

- 11.14 Geological and geomorphological features provide insights into the environment during the carboniferous and post glacial era. It is important that these sites are protected as once they are lost, they are lost for ever.
- 11.15 In Bury, Ash Clough is a designated SSSI on the basis of it being an important river cliff showing exposed geology and this will be a key geological feature that the policy would be seeking to retain.

Alternative Options

- 11.16 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to geology and geomorphology. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that improving biodiversity is one of the key components of achieving sustainable development and that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity or geological value.
- 11.17 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the unmanaged loss of geological assets.

Water Resources

Policy
Direction
NE4

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that sets out the criteria that should be taken into account when considering proposals that may have a potential impact on water resources.

It is proposed that the policy would also allow consideration of whether there are opportunities for a development to contribute towards restoring and improving the Borough's water resources.

Justification

- 11.18 The River Irwell, River Roch and tributaries are key elements of the Borough's Green Infrastructure, wildlife network and landscape character and have contributed significantly to the geomorphology of the Borough.
- 11.19 The Environment Agency (EA) produced River Basin Management Plans for England and Wales to ensure that these countries can meet the duties set out under the European Water Framework Directive. The plans identify a number of actions to improve water quality and fisheries and reduce flood risk but also note the need to restore, where feasible, natural bank form and flood plain through the removal of culverts, canalisation and weirs. At a local level, the EA commissioned a study identifies specific recommendations for the physical restoration of the Irwell and Kirklees Brook. Recommendations included removal of weirs, reconnection of the Irwell to its natural flood plain and the need to install fish ladders on weirs that need to be retained for flood defence.

- 11.20 A similar study has been produced for the River Roch⁴ which identified opportunities for river restoration in order to comply with the Water Framework Directive (WFD) mitigation measures. To this effect, weirs, revetment works and potential flood storage areas have been identified and possible options for improving channel morphology, habitat creation and diversity and increasing fish passage.

Alternative Options

- 11.21 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to water resources. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution. It also states that development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.
- 11.22 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to development having a detrimental impact on water resources and a failure to capitalise on opportunities to contribute towards improvements to water resources, where opportunities arise.

Soils

Policy
Direction
NE5

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that sets out the criteria that should be taken into account when considering proposals that may have a potential impact on soil assets.

Justification

- 11.23 Nationally, there has been a long-standing presumption against the loss of the most versatile agricultural soils i.e. those capable of producing regular

⁴ River Roch and Tributaries: Assessment of Options for River Restoration, February 2011

arable crops. Historically, the best and most versatile agricultural land was safeguarded because of its strategic importance in terms of food self-sufficiency for the country. However, the protection of such land is equally applicable today in terms of producing food locally and reducing 'food miles'.

- 11.24 Although the Borough has very little agricultural land that can be considered to be the best and most versatile, the Council will ensure that the small pockets that do exist are not adversely affected or lost to development.
- 11.25 The Borough also includes areas of degraded Blanket Bog and former mossland. The latter (primarily associated with Unsworth Moss) is now unlikely to be restored, however the peat associated with Holcombe Moor, though currently not actively growing, still represents an important area of locked carbon and potential source of paleo-ecological records.
- 11.26 Conservation, enhancement and restoration would combat climate change as actively growing peat will both lock additional carbon and retain more water.

Alternative Options

- 11.27 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to soil resources. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, protecting and enhancing soils.
- 11.28 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the unmanaged loss of or detrimental impact on the Borough's most important soil assets.

Landscape Character

Policy
Direction
NE6

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to protect, conserve and improve the landscape quality of the Borough, and encourage the enhancement of landscapes, where appropriate.

Justification

- 11.29 The distinctive character of landscapes is dependent upon a combination of many different elements; including topography, the type and location of trees, woodlands and other vegetation, the character of settlements, the

nature of river valleys and local farming techniques. These various landscapes serve a valuable open land function. Encouraging and developing the quality of landscapes can give rise to areas of ecological interest.

Alternative Options

- 11.30 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to landscape character. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.
- 11.31 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to unmanaged and detrimental impacts on the Borough's most valued landscape assets.

Contaminated and Unstable Land

Policy
Direction
NE7

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that new development will not result in the contamination of land or land stability concerns and, where appropriate, will require a developer to take steps to remediate existing contaminated land and/or land stability issues.

Justification

- 11.32 Land which is to be developed may have been contaminated by past land uses or waste disposal activity at or in the vicinity of the site. For sites where land contamination is known or likely to be present, or where the proposed development would be particularly vulnerable or sensitive to contamination, the local planning authority will require a desk study assessment and site reconnaissance, and possibly investigation, to be carried out prior to the application being determined. Any unacceptable risks should be identified and proposals made to deal with them to an appropriate standard taking into account the intended use, as part of the development process. Consideration should be given to both industrial and naturally-occurring contaminants.
- 11.33 The effects of ground instability vary in their nature, scale and extent. At their most extreme, they may threaten life and health or cause damage to buildings and structures. Difficulties have been experienced in developing land in areas of past and present mining and in other areas where land is unstable or potentially unstable. However, given proper safeguards, land

which has been damaged by mining or other industrial activities or which is naturally unstable can often be put to appropriate use.

Alternative Options

- 11.34 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to contaminated and unstable land. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination.
- 11.35 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to development being exposed to unacceptable levels of risk associated with contamination and land instability.

Minerals Development

Policy
Direction
NE8

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that proposals for development associated with minerals extraction will be considered against the policy framework established through the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan Document which sets out the sub-regional aggregate apportionment, designates areas of search and minerals safeguarding and includes policies for determining planning applications.

Justification

- 11.36 The Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan Document forms an integral part of Bury's wider development plan and this will be used as the basis for determining planning applications for development associated with minerals.

Alternative Options

- 11.37 The Council has considered the alternative option of not including a specific policy relating to minerals. However, in doing so, it was considered that the policy would provide a useful signpost to the policies and proposals of the Joint Minerals Plan.

Waste Development

Policy
Direction
NE9

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that proposals for development associated with waste disposal will be considered against the policy framework established through the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document which sets out the future waste management requirements for Greater Manchester together with site allocations, area designations, and policies for determining planning applications.

Justification

- 11.38 The Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document forms an integral part of Bury's wider development plan and this will be used as the basis for determining planning applications for development associated with waste.

Alternative Options

- 11.39 The Council has considered the alternative option of not including a specific policy relating to waste development. However, in doing so, it was considered that the policy would provide a useful signpost to the policies and proposals of the Joint Waste Plan.

12 Green Belt

Introduction

- 12.1 The NPPF specifies that the underlying aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It specifies that once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.
- 12.2 In order to meet identified development needs across Greater Manchester, the draft GMSF is proposing an amended Green Belt for the sub-region, including changes to the boundary of the Green Belt in Bury. It is considered that the Local Plan should seek to protect and manage the extent of Bury's Green Belt (as it emerges through the GMSF). In doing so, it is proposed that the Local Plan should seek to complement and reinforce other plans, strategies and initiatives by including policies relating to the following:
- Development in the Green Belt;
 - Beneficial Use of the Green Belt;
 - Conversion and Re-Use of Buildings in the Green Belt;
 - Village Settlements in the Green Belt;
 - Agricultural, Forestry and Other Occupational Dwellings in the Green Belt;
 - Agricultural Diversification in the Green Belt; and
 - Equestrian Development in the Green Belt.

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that the development of new buildings within the Green Belt will be regarded as inappropriate unless very special circumstances can be clearly demonstrated.

It is considered that the policy should also set out the types of development that would be treated as an exception or which would not be regarded as inappropriate provided that they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt.

Justification

- 12.3 The NPPF attaches considerable importance to Green Belts, as their characteristics of openness and permanence are particularly highly valued. It states that strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period. The strategic policies within the GMSF will be considering the need to amend Green Belt boundaries across Greater Manchester.
- 12.4 It is proposed that the Local Plan will include a policy that seeks to maintain the Green Belt in Bury as identified through the GMSF and, in accordance with national planning policy, there will be a presumption against inappropriate development within it. Inappropriate development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances and these will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 12.5 It is proposed that the policy would also promote the positive opportunities provided by Green Belts such as for countryside access, outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and Green Infrastructure, although it is also critical to set out the types of development which will not be suitable and may cause harm to the objectives of Green Belt policy.

Alternative Options

- 12.6 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to development in the Green Belt. However,

this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. It also sets out exceptions to this approach in terms of the types of development that would not be considered to be inappropriate.

- 12.7 It is considered that the inclusion of the policy would provide a degree of certainty as to the Council's approach to new development in Green Belt.

Beneficial Use of the Green Belt

Policy
Direction
GB2

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that supports proposals for the beneficial use of the Green Belt, including those that seek to improve access; opportunities for active travel, outdoor sport and recreation; the retention and enhancement of landscape character, visual amenity and biodiversity; or improve derelict land provided that they do not adversely impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Justification

- 12.8 Green Belts are characterised by their openness and permanence but this does not mean that positive steps cannot be taken to promote this land in a beneficial way such as enabling the increased use of land, improve visual amenity and its benefit to the natural environment.
- 12.9 However, the proposed policy would be keen to ensure that in promoting the beneficial use of Green Belt land, thorough consideration is given to whether this would cause any harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Alternative Options

- 12.10 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to the beneficial use of Green Belt land. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use.
- 12.11 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the Local Plan being unable to provide the necessary means to ensure that securing the beneficial use of the Green Belt is not achieved at the expense of its openness.

Conversion and Re-use of Buildings in the Green Belt

Policy
Direction
GB3

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that the conversion and re-use of buildings in the Green Belt is not inappropriate development and will be permitted providing that it satisfies specified criteria.

Justification

- 12.12 When suitable safeguards are taken, the re-use or conversion of buildings should not prejudice the openness of the Green Belt since the buildings are already there. Re-use or conversion can help to secure the continued stewardship of land, especially by assisting farm diversification and can contribute to the objectives for the use of land in the Green Belt.
- 12.13 Buildings which have become so derelict that they could be brought into use only by complete or substantial reconstruction would not fall within the scope of this policy.

Alternative Options

- 12.14 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to the conversion and reuse of buildings in the Green Belt. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that certain forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. This includes the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.
- 12.15 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to the Local Plan being unable to provide a degree of certainty as to the Council's approach to the conversion and re-use of buildings in Green Belt.

Village Settlements in the Green Belt

Policy
Direction
GB4

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that Green Belt designations (as identified through

the GMSF) should be maintained across the Borough's village settlements. It is proposed that the policy should specifically identify the Borough's village settlements within the Green Belt and restrict development within them to limited infilling that is in scale with the village and that which would not adversely affect its character and surroundings.

Justification

- 12.16 The Borough contains a number of village settlements that, because of their location outside the main urban area, are relatively isolated and self-contained settlements set within wider areas of open land and 'washed over' by Green Belt. It is proposed to maintain the Green Belt designations for these settlements and any development will be restricted to limited infilling that is in scale with the village and would not adversely affect its character and surroundings.

Alternative Options

- 12.17 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to village settlements in the Green Belt. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that if it is necessary to restrict development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt. It also states that limited infilling within villages is an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 12.18 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to a lack of clarity in terms of which village settlements the policy would apply to.

Agriculture, Forestry and Other Occupational Dwellings in the Green Belt

Policy
Direction
GB5

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that proposals for new dwellings to support agricultural, forestry and other occupational dwellings associated with activities acceptable in the Green Belt will only be permitted in very special circumstances, such as where they can demonstrate an essential need for rural workers to be housed at or in the immediate vicinity of their place of work.

Justification

- 12.19 Dwellings associated with agriculture, forestry or other activities that are acceptable within the Green Belt will not be permitted in the Green Belt except in very special circumstances.
- 12.20 However, one exception may be where the Council can be satisfied there is an essential need for an agricultural worker to live in the vicinity of their workplace. In the interest of ensuring the openness of the Green Belt is not compromised unnecessarily by potentially intrusive development, the policy would seek to ensure that the applicant provides evidence that the dwelling is genuinely required to support the proper functioning of the enterprise, and that there are no realistic housing alternatives available elsewhere in the local area. The dwelling would also be expected to not be larger than is appropriate to meet the requirements of the enterprise. Proposals would need to demonstrate that the agricultural use connected to the dwelling is financially viable and secure but a temporary dwelling may be justified where there is uncertainty over the financial basis of the enterprise.

Alternative Options

- 12.21 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to agriculture, forestry and other occupational dwellings in the Green Belt. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside except under certain circumstances. Once such circumstance is where there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.
- 12.22 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially hinder the Council in robustly establishing whether the proposed dwelling was genuinely essential.

Agricultural Diversification in the Green Belt

Policy
Direction
GB6

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that supports proposals for agricultural diversification within the Green Belt provided that it satisfies specific criteria.

Justification

- 12.23 The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses and agricultural diversification into non-agricultural activities can help to maintain the commercial viability of farm enterprises, supporting the wider rural economy and helping to ensure that profitable agricultural uses are retained.
- 12.24 However, it is considered that the policy should require proposals for agricultural diversification to be accompanied by a comprehensive farm diversification plan which indicates how new uses will assist in retaining the viability of the farm and the agricultural enterprise, and how it complements other short or long term business plans for the farm.
- 12.25 Furthermore, in supporting agricultural diversification, the policy would seek to ensure that the countryside is not damaged by unrestrained and inappropriate development. As such, it is proposed that the policy should require diversification proposals to be of a scale and nature appropriate to the location and be capable of satisfactory integration into the rural landscape and should seek to reuse existing buildings wherever possible and have regard to the amenity and impacts on neighbouring uses.

Alternative Options

- 12.26 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to agricultural diversification in the Green Belt. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.
- 12.27 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to examples of unmanaged attempts to diversify agricultural businesses which may not be viable over the longer-term.

Equestrian Development in the Green Belt

Policy
Direction
GB7

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that recognises equestrian uses as being appropriate in the Green Belt providing the size, scale and materials used preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

Justification

- 12.28 The keeping of horses for recreational purposes or as part of commercially-based equestrian activities is a growing activity within the Borough, particularly within the Green Belt. It is proposed that the policy would consider proposals to be acceptable where they would not have an adverse effect on the appearance of the area.

Alternative Options

- 12.29 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to equestrian development in the Green Belt. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.
- 12.30 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially mean that the Local Plan would not provide the necessary certainty for development proposals related to popular, commercially-based equestrian activity in Bury.

13 Built Heritage

Introduction

- 13.1 The NPPF highlights the need to conserve heritage assets and that this should be considered in developing Local Plans and in decision-taking.
- 13.2 One of the key local issues associated with the Borough's built heritage is connected to the Borough's varied range of assets.
- 13.3 In response, it is considered that the Local Plan should seek to protect and enhance the Borough's built heritage. In doing so, it is proposed that the Local Plan should seek to complement and reinforce other plans, strategies and initiatives by including policies relating to the following:
- Conservation Areas;
 - Listed Buildings;
 - Scheduled Monuments;
 - Historic Parks;
 - Archaeological Features; and
 - Local Non-Designated Heritage Assets.

Conservation Areas

Policy
Direction
BH1

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy highlighting a variety of actions that the Council could take in seeking to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Borough's Conservation Areas.

It is considered that the policy should also set out criteria that the Council will have regard to when considering proposals for development in Conservation Areas.

Justification

- 13.4 Within any town or city there are areas which have a special character. This is usually derived from a sense of history, the existence of traditional buildings, and the spaces between buildings including the street pattern, trees, parks and gardens. Planning legislation recognises the value of these areas. It requires Local Planning Authorities to determine which parts of their area have a special architectural or historic interest which it is desirable to protect or enhance, and to designate these as Conservation Areas.
- 13.5 There are currently nine Conservation Areas in the Borough although the identification of further areas worthy of conservation is constantly under review. The aim of the policy would be to ensure that the special character inherent in the Borough's Conservation Areas should not only be preserved but enhanced as far as possible.

Alternative Options

- 13.6 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to Conservation Areas. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
- 13.7 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to examples of unmanaged development proposals and adverse impacts on the Borough's designated Conservation Areas.

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that the character and setting of Listed Buildings will be safeguarded by not permitting works, alterations or changes of use which would have a detrimental effect on their historical or architectural character and features and that proposals for demolition will be opposed and will only be considered where it is demonstrated conclusively that the building(s) cannot be retained.

It is considered that the policy should also set out the factors that will be taken into account when dealing with applications for Listed Building Consent.

Justification

- 13.8 Buildings of special architectural or historic interest are "listed" by the Secretary of State for the Environment. The listing of a building provides statutory protection against its alteration or demolition and it is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy to reinforce this protection and to ensure that their character and surroundings are maintained.
- 13.9 The list of buildings in Bury covers more than 320 buildings and structures. The type and character of these listed buildings is varied and reflects the historical development of the Borough. They include stone and timber framed buildings originating from the 15th, 16th and 17th century, mills, churches, telephone boxes and war memorials. However, not all of the items on the list are what we might think of as 'beautiful' buildings or structures. Buildings may be included for their special historical associations as well as their architectural merit.

Alternative Options

- 13.10 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to Listed Buildings. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The NPPF goes on to state that

any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification and that substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional and wholly exceptional in the case of grade I and grade II* listed buildings.

- 13.11 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to examples of unmanaged development proposals and adverse impacts on the Borough's Listed Buildings.

Scheduled Monuments

Policy
Direction
BH3

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that development proposals will not be permitted where they would adversely affect current and future scheduled monuments and their settings.

Justification

- 13.12 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, provides for the designation and statutory protection of monuments of national importance (Scheduled Ancient Monuments) by the Secretary of State. Such monuments may consist of buried or standing archaeological remains, ruins and buildings.
- 13.13 At present, there are 4 ancient monuments in Bury. Although works affecting scheduled monuments require the written consent of the Secretary of State, a procedure separate from the planning process, the effect of a proposal on an ancient monument and its setting is a material planning consideration. Given the special importance of scheduled monuments, both nationally and in terms of the Borough's local heritage, it is proposed that the policy would not permit development which would adversely affect an ancient monument, either directly or indirectly, and would seek to promote and enhance them, where possible.

Alternative Options

- 13.14 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to Scheduled Monuments. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The NPPF goes on to state that

any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification and that substantial harm to or loss of a scheduled monument should be wholly exceptional.

- 13.15 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to examples of unmanaged development proposals and adverse impacts on the Borough's Scheduled Monuments.

Historic Parks

Policy
Direction
BH4

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that Philips Park, together with any other parks and gardens which may be identified in the future as being of special historic interest, will be protected as a Registered Historic Park of Special Historic Interest.

It is considered that the policy should also set out the factors that will be taken into account in dealing with proposals for development that may affect the site or setting of an Historic Park.

Justification

- 13.16 Philips Park, Whitefield, is included as a Grade II Historic Park on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.
- 13.17 The National Planning Policy Framework specifies that registered parks and gardens are designated heritage assets of the highest significance and the registration of a park means that, although there is no separate consent system for them, their significance is a material consideration for the local planning authority when considering any proposed development affecting these sites or their settings.
- 13.18 The conservation of Philips Park, and any other historic parks and gardens that may be registered in the future, will be encouraged through the development management process.

Alternative Options

- 13.19 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to Historic Parks. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic

environment and that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The NPPF goes on to state that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification and that substantial harm to or loss of a grade II registered parks or gardens should be exceptional and wholly exceptional in the case of grade I and II* registered parks and gardens.

- 13.20 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to examples of unmanaged development proposals and adverse impacts on the Philips Park.

Archaeological Features

Policy
Direction
BH5

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that recognises the importance of archaeological remains as part of the Borough's heritage and which seeks the protection of sites of archaeological importance as and where they are found.

It is considered that the policy should also specify that, where a development proposal is submitted which will affect an archaeological site, the developer should submit sufficient information on the potential impact of the development to allow the Council to make a full and proper investigation into its archaeological consequences as well as setting out the criteria that the Council will consider in dealing with such proposals.

Justification

- 13.21 Archaeological remains are irreplaceable, representing a finite and non-renewable resource of past human activity. They are important 'for their own sake' as well as their obvious roles in education, leisure and tourism.
- 13.22 The inclusion of the policy would aim to ensure that the effects of development proposals on archaeological sites are properly assessed and evaluated before planning applications are determined.

Alternative Options

- 13.23 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to archaeological features. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The NPPF goes on to state that where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
- 13.24 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to examples of unmanaged development proposals and adverse impacts on the Borough's archaeological assets.

Local Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Policy
Direction
BH6

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that, in considering proposals that have the potential to affect non-designated heritage assets contained on the 'Local List', the Council should make a balanced judgment taking account of the potential harm and benefits arising from the proposal.

Justification

- 13.25 In addition to formally designated Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Schedules Ancient Monuments, the NPPF also includes a level of protection for non-designated heritage assets. These can be any type of historic structure, fabric or artefact located above or below ground. These structures would generally not meet the criteria for protection as designated heritage assets but are seen to contribute to the background character, significance and distinctiveness of an area where it is important to protect the best of these assets.
- 13.26 Non-designated heritage assets can be identified either at the time of an application or in advance by the LPA through survey and consultation, and then by producing a local list of such heritage assets. The Council has prepared a list of non-designated heritage assets within Bury and this currently includes around 500 entries, some of which include multiple

properties. The approach to producing the list is to ensure that each part of the Borough and its character is represented. It is also important to cover all relevant periods of the Borough's development and to ensure that all building and structure types are covered.

Alternative Options

- 13.27 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to local non-designated heritage assets. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. The NPPF goes on to state that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining an application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 13.28 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to examples of unmanaged development proposals and adverse impacts on the Borough's local non-designated heritage assets.

14 Infrastructure

Introduction

- 14.1 The NPPF recognises that there is a need to support growth and development with the provision of necessary infrastructure.
- 14.2 One of the key local issues for the Local Plan to consider is the need to ensure that development is supported by necessary energy, communications and utilities infrastructure.
- 14.3 In response to this issues, it is considered that the Local Plan should seek to ensure that new and existing development is supported by appropriate infrastructure. In doing so, it is considered that the Local Plan should seek to complement and reinforce other plans, strategies and initiatives by including policies in relation to the following:
- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Infrastructure;
 - Hydraulic Fracturing (Fracking);
 - Digital and Communications Infrastructure; and
 - Public Utilities Infrastructure.

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Infrastructure

Policy
Direction
IN1

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that contributes towards the achievement of Greater Manchester's zero carbon targets by supporting the development of renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure, subject to schemes and proposals being in accordance with national policy and other Local Plan policies.

It is considered that the policy should also identify the factors that will be taken into account in dealing with such proposals.

Justification

- 14.4 Renewable and low carbon energy includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).
- 14.5 Some forms of renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure may not be appropriate in all locations as it may give rise to site specific issues such as amenity, noise, impacts on biodiversity, the landscape or heritage assets and traffic generation.
- 14.6 In conjunction with national policy, it is proposed that the policy would seek to ensure that such issues are satisfactorily addressed before permission for renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure is granted. In cases where proposals will result in unacceptable impacts, appropriate and effective mitigation measures are required otherwise permission will not be granted.

Alternative Options

- 14.7 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. The NPPF goes on to state that to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should consider

identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development.

- 14.8 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to examples of unacceptable impacts arising from the development of renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure.

Hydraulic Fracturing (Fracking)

Policy
Direction
IN2

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy specifying that development involving the exploration, appraisal or production of shale gas via hydraulic fracturing will be not be permitted.

Justification

- 14.9 Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking as it is commonly known, is a term used to describe the process of extracting oil and natural gas by the fracturing of underground shale deposits.
- 14.10 The Government believes that shale gas has the potential to provide the UK with greater energy security, growth and jobs and encourage safe and environmentally sound exploration to determine this potential.
- 14.11 However, public concern over the potential impacts arising from fracking means that it has become a highly controversial and divisive issue particularly in terms of the potential environmental impacts and the principle of investing in fossil fuels rather than renewal sources of energy.
- 14.12 In addition, the extraction of fossil fuels would work directly against Greater Manchester's zero carbon targets, offsetting the benefits of the various measures aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Alternative Options

- 14.13 The Council has considered the alternative option of not including the policy or including a policy that favoured hydraulic fracturing. However, in doing so, it was considered that this could potentially lead to examples of unacceptable and unmanaged impacts arising from shale gas extraction and that any such development would work against Greater Manchester's zero carbon targets.

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy supporting the provision of enhanced electronic communications infrastructure and setting out the factors that will be taken into account in dealing with proposals for communications infrastructure.

Justification

- 14.14 High quality electronic communications infrastructure, including high speed broadband access, is essential for developing a sustainable local economy and is important for education and enhances the provision of local community facilities and services. It is also vital for home working and helps to reduce the need to travel and to create more resilient rural communities as it enables more efficient working practices and provision of online facilities and services.
- 14.15 In terms of telecommunications infrastructure, it is proposed that the policy should specify that developers should aim to minimise the number of masts and explore the potential for utilising existing structures before considering the erection of a new mast. Where this is not possible and new equipment is required, the Council will expect this to be sympathetically designed and, where possible, camouflaged in order to minimise its visual impact.

Alternative Options

- 14.16 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to digital and communications infrastructure. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF states that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments.
- 14.17 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially prevent the necessary expansion of communications networks and lead to examples of unacceptable impacts arising from the unnecessary installation of new or poorly designed telecommunications infrastructure.

It is proposed that the Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to ensure that the development of operational facilities for public utility provision will be permitted where this is necessary to implement the development objectives of the Local Plan or to meet relevant statutory obligations and environmental standards, and is consistent with other policies and proposals of the Local Plan.

Justification

- 14.18 The implementation of the Plan is dependent upon effective public utilities infrastructure (i.e. gas, water and electricity). It is recognised that this can only be achieved by a continuing programme of investment involving the rationalisation and improvement of existing operational sites and/or the development of new facilities.

Alternative Options

- 14.19 The Council has considered the alternative option to not include a specific policy setting out the approach to public utilities infrastructure. However, this option was discounted on the basis that the NPPF recognises the importance of supporting new growth and development with necessary infrastructure.
- 14.20 It is considered that the omission of the policy could potentially lead to uncertainty in terms of the Council's position on proposals involving the provision of necessary public utilities infrastructure and the potential effect that this may have on future development opportunities.

Appendix 1

The following provides more guidance on the key areas of strategic policy that will be covered by the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and the non-strategic policies of the Local Plan.

Key areas of strategic policy/allocations (GMSF)	Key areas of non-strategic policy (Local Plan)
Housing	
Establish the statutory housing target.	
Allocate any Green Belt land required to meet housing target (strategic sites).	Allocate non-Green Belt sites to help meet target, including suitable brownfield sites.
Identify broad level of needs.	Local, non-strategic policies to meet local housing needs.
	Local, non-strategic policies setting out requirements for the form and layout of new housing and criteria for assessing alterations and extensions and residential conversions.
Economy and Employment	
Establish floorspace requirements for offices and for industry and warehousing.	
Allocate any Green Belt land required to help meet floorspace requirements and to strengthen and rebalance the sub-regional economy (strategic sites).	Allocate non-Green Belt sites to help to meet the floorspace requirements, including office sites in and around Bury town centre.
Strategic approach to existing industrial and warehousing sites.	Local, non-strategic policies and designations setting out the approach to existing employment land and premises in the Borough.

Town Centres and Main Town Centre Uses	
Strategic approach setting out the role and function of main town centres.	Local, non-strategic policy setting out the Borough's hierarchy of centres.
	Site allocations for main town centre uses.
	Local, non-strategic policies to manage the location and scale of main town centre uses and to set out the approach to proposals within the hierarchy of centres and involving upper floors within centres.
Tourism and Culture	
	Local, non-strategic policy relating to new tourism and cultural development in appropriate locations and allocate sites, if necessary.
Open Space, Sport and Recreation	
Strategic approach to the protection and enhancement of sport and recreation provision.	Local, non-strategic policies on the protection and enhancement of open space, sport and recreation facilities, the provision of open space, sport and recreation in new housing development and recreation routes.
Community Facilities	
Strategic approach to the provision of community facilities and services.	Local, non-strategic policies relating to proposals involving existing, new and improved community facilities and on requirements for education provision in conjunction with proposals for new housing.
Accessibility	
Strategic approach to transport across Greater Manchester.	Local, non-strategic policies setting out the general approach towards improving connectivity and

	accessibility and on transport requirements in new development.
Natural Environment	
Strategic approach to nature conservation and the natural environment.	Local, non-strategic policies setting out the approach to proposals affecting Green Infrastructure; biodiversity; geology and geomorphology; water resources; soils; landscape character; contaminated and unstable land; and minerals and waste development.
Green Belt	
Identification of a Green Belt boundary for Greater Manchester.	Local, non-strategic policies setting out the approach to various forms of new development in the Green Belt (as defined in the GMSF).
Built Heritage	
Strategic approach to heritage.	Local, non-strategic policies setting out how applications affecting the Borough's various heritage assets will be considered.
Infrastructure	
Strategic approach to infrastructure provision.	Local, non-strategic policies setting out how applications involving various forms of infrastructure will be considered, including renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure and hydraulic fracturing (fracking).