

GM1.2 – Simister/Bowlee

Topic Paper

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Section A – Background

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Northern Gateway is an extensive area located around Junction 18 of the M60 motorway extending east to Junction 19 of the M62 and north to Junction 3 of the M66. It comprises two interrelated allocations at:
 - Heywood / Pilsworth (Bury and Rochdale)
 - Simister and Bowlee (Bury and Rochdale)
- 1.2 Development of the area will deliver a large, nationally significant employment led opportunity to attract high quality business and investment which is supported by new housing that is well integrated with, and brings positive benefits to, the surrounding communities.
- 1.3 This Topic Paper brings together a wide range of information and evidence in connection with the proposed strategic site allocation at Simister/Bowlee (GM1.2). However, it should be read in conjunction with the separate Topic Paper relating to the Heywood/Pilsworth (GM1.1). The paper may be subject to further technical amendments in advance of the formal commencement of consultation.
- 1.4 The extent of the Simister/Bowlee allocation has been reduced significantly in the Publication GMSF 2020 compared to what was proposed in the 2019 draft. Some of the evidence gathered for the allocation relates to the extent of the allocation proposed in 2019. Nevertheless, given that the allocation has subsequently been reduced, it is considered reasonable to conclude that the changes made between then and the current Publication version of the plan will not have caused any additional issues.

2 Site Details

- 2.1 The proposed site allocation at Simister/Bowlee (GM1.2) is located between the settlements of Prestwich and Middleton and covers a total area of 74 hectares. The majority of its western boundary borders on the M60, the southern boundary abuts the edge of the village of Rhodes and the allocation's eastern boundary wraps around the western and northern edges of Middleton.
- 2.2 The allocation currently comprises agricultural land and a number of residential, employment and agricultural properties.

3 Proposed Development

- 3.1 Approximately 1,550 homes are proposed within the Simister/Bowlee allocation. Around 1,350 homes will be in Bury and a further 200 will be located in Rochdale.
- 3.2 This will include the provision of affordable housing to address local housing need, accommodation for older persons, plots for custom and self-build. It will also include a mix of housing densities with higher density development in areas with good accessibility and with potential for improved public transport connectivity and lower densities adjacent to existing villages where development will require sensitive design to respond to its context.
- 3.3 The proposed development will be required to provide infrastructure to support the new community. This includes an upgrade of the local highway network, traffic restrictions on Simister Lane to prevent this route from being a form of access/egress to and from the allocation, improved public transport provision through the allocation and close to the

allocation, more routes for walking and cycling, a new local centre with an appropriate range of convenience shopping facilities and a primary school. There will be high quality, publicly accessible, multifunctional green and blue infrastructure throughout the allocation which can be used for sport, leisure and recreation.

- 3.4 The proposed site allocation at Simister/Bowlee has now been reduced in size since the 2019 Draft GMSF with the total site allocation reducing from 206 ha to 74 ha. Land to the north of Blueball Lane, together with a small area on the south western edge, are to be excluded from the Allocation and retained in the Green Belt. The area around Simister Village, will also now be excluded from the Allocation and retained as Green Belt. These reductions were in response to calls from local residents to preserve the character of Simister Village. In addition, there is significantly less certainty over the development of a new motorway junction at Birch which would have been a major access point into the allocation.
- 3.5 Appendix 1 sets out the GM1.2 Simister/Bowlee policy wording.

4 Site Selection

- 4.1 The GMSF Site Selection work had the purpose of identifying the most sustainable locations for residential and employment development that can achieve the GMSF Vision, Objectives and Spatial Strategy.
- 4.2 This allocation forms part of the wider Northern Gateway allocation and straddles the districts of Bury and Rochdale. The Northern Gateway, in its entirety, provides the opportunity to deliver a large nationally significant employment opportunity which can attract high quality business and investment and provide complementary residential development.
- 4.3 The allocation is positioned at a strategically important intersection around the M60, M62 and M66 motorways. As such, it represents a highly accessible opportunity for growth in Greater Manchester, with wider benefits on a regional and national level.
- 4.4 Currently, much of the area proposed for development is served by an inadequate transport network. Key to the delivery of the allocation will be the provision of significant improvements to highway infrastructure, delivery of improved public transport infrastructure through the allocation (including Bus Rapid Transport corridor) and close to the allocation and the provision of high quality walking and cycling routes.
- 4.5 The scale of the development will help to deliver a significant jobs boost to the northern and eastern parts of Greater Manchester, increasing the economic output from this area. It will also enable new residential and community facilities to come forward in what is currently an area with significant pockets of deprivation, low skills and worklessness.
- 4.6 The GMSF site selection process considered the entire Northern Gateway allocation when considering sites for inclusion in the GMSF. On this basis the allocation was selected for inclusion based on:
- Criteria 1 (land which has been previously developed and/or land which is served by public transport);
 - Criteria 3 (land that can maximise existing opportunities which have significant capacity to deliver transformational change and/or boost the competitiveness and connectivity of Greater Manchester and genuinely deliver inclusive growth);
 - Criteria 5 (land which would have a direct significant impact on delivering urban regeneration);

- Criteria 6 (land where transport investment (by the developer) and the creation of significant new demand (through appropriate development densities), would support the delivery of long term viable sustainable travel options and delivers significant wider community benefits);
 - Criteria 7 – Land that would deliver significant local benefits by addressing a major local problem/issue.
- 4.7 Further detail is provided within in the GMSF Site Selection Paper available at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing/gmsf2020/supporting-documents/>
- 4.8 Specifically, the Simister/Bowlee allocation forms part of the GMSF North East Corridor Policy (GM-Strat 7) and offers an opportunity to deliver a significant mixed use, housing and employment development which is of a transformative scale and significantly change the economic growth potential of the wider area. Development could capitalise on the existing successful employment locations at Heywood and Pilsworth and further exploit the important connection to the M62 corridor. The location of this allocation will make it particularly attractive to the logistics and advanced manufacturing sectors.
- 4.9 Development could also contribute towards regeneration of adjacent areas of deprivation and this would help deliver one the GMSF’s key aims of boosting the competitiveness of the northern Greater Manchester Boroughs and supporting long-term economic growth in Greater Manchester.
- 4.10 Given the above, the allocation is relevant to the GMSF objectives of:
- Objective 1 – Meet our housing need;
 - Objective 3 – Ensure a thriving and productive economy in all parts of Greater Manchester;
 - Objective 4 – Maximise the potential arising from our national and international assets;
 - Objective 5 – Reduce inequalities and improve prosperity;
 - Objective 6 – Promote the sustainable movement of people, good and information.

5 Planning History

- 5.1 Planning permission has not been granted for any significant uses within the allocation.

6 GMSF 2019 Consultation Responses

- 6.1 The consultation responses and consultation summary report is available at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing/gmsf2020/supporting-documents/>
- 6.2 399 comments were received in relation to the GM1.2 Simister/Bowlee during the consultation on the Revised Draft GMSF in 2019. A summary of the key issues are as follows:

Principle / scale of development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unreasonable and disproportionate scale of development in one location. ▪ Will cause considerable harm to character of small village, result in a loss of amenity and depress property values. Compulsory purchase will be required. ▪ Some landowners wish to see the site extended.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support, provided that villages sympathetically merged and appropriate separation distances implemented.
<p>Housing (inc affordable housing)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Layout not sympathetic to village which will be overwhelmed. ▪ Scale of growth proposed not achievable and will take a number of years to come forward. Phasing will be critical to avoid flooding the market. ▪ Does not cater for affordable/specialist housing needs. Needs to be environmentally friendly and delivered at appropriate densities. ▪ Housing growth should be distributed more evenly across Bury. ▪ There is support that the development will provide much needed housing in this location, there is a willingness from landowners in Simister to bring the site forward and more housing to south of village should be considered.
<p>Employment and Economy</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No need for employment proposal at Heywood/Pilsworth as low unemployment and deprivation in Simister and Bowlee. Likely to be low paid, need quality manufacturing, no indication of interest. ▪ Residents will have poor access and will need to commute out. ▪ Support – Must invest in the Northern Powerhouse.
<p>Green Belt</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simister will lose all of its Green Belt, this was misrepresented in the consultation letter. Wide disparities between Bury townships. ▪ Area is semi-rural and remote, designation attracts people to area. ▪ No justification, will result in sprawl and merge distinct towns. ▪ Details on proposed protections for removals not made clear. ▪ It was highlighted that Clarkes Cross (west of M60) has been omitted but could still make a contribution in the form of safeguarded land for long-term needs

7 GMSF 2019 Integrated Assessment

- 7.1 The 2019 GMSF Integrated Assessment (IA) is available at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing/gmsf2020/supporting-documents/>
- 7.2 The IA reviewed how the draft GMSF policies could impact upon the environment, the economy, local communities, equality and public health. The IA also recommended ways in which the GMSF can be improved to ensure that the policies are as sustainable as possible.
- 7.3 The three Northern Gateway draft allocations were considered together against the 2019 Integrated Assessment objectives. The allocations performed well however a number of recommendations were made:
- Ensure that all three allocations refer to a mix of housing types;
 - Make specific reference to energy efficiency of the housing stock;
 - The policy should also highlight the importance of local employment during construction;
 - Consider feasibility study into requirements and ability of local network to support development;
 - Benefits such as creation of construction and operational employment, or improved transport links or increases in the range of community facilities, should consider deprived areas. Where possible such benefits should be maximised to help bring about long term benefits for deprived areas.

- The allocation needs to encourage integration with existing communities and provision of a range of housing tenures.
- Ensure any new health provision is accessible to all and that local capacity is considered throughout future masterplanning stages;
- Ensure any new community facilities provision is accessible to all and that local capacity is considered throughout future masterplanning stages.
- Ensure any new recreation provision is accessible to all and that local capacity is considered throughout future masterplanning stages.
- Seek to minimise the number of trips made by private car to/from the site. Consider the use of mitigation solutions including green infrastructure, incentivising electric vehicles and/or masterplan layout which reduces emissions near sensitive receptors. This is especially relevant to buffer around the AQMA adjacent to the site.
- A suitable flood risk assessment may be required and associated mitigation in order to prevent the flood zone expanding.
- Appropriate flood risk mitigation should be implemented (in line with best practice) for all developments that are within or near to areas of flood risk. This is especially relevant around the areas of flood zone 2 and 3.
- Make reference to energy efficiency directly and ways that it can be increased, such as highlighting the benefits of sustainable modes of transport.
- Consider the listed structures throughout detailed design to reduce the risk throughout construction and operational phases.
- Consider how development of PDL sites could be encouraged as a result of greenfield development (e.g. by incentives or inclusion of adjacent PDL).
- Promote sustainable construction methods.
- Consider waste and recycling facilities in design e.g. consider location of waste/recycling facilities in design/layout of masterplans, and how waste facilities can be located to encourage recycling.

7.4 It is important to note that the IA was focusing on each policy in isolation from other policies and that many of the recommended changes for the Northern Gateway allocation policies are already covered in other GMSF policies. However, some wording changes have been made as a result of the IA in relation to housing types, electric vehicles, heritage and archaeology.

Section B – Physical

8 Transport

- 8.1 The allocation is divided into two parts; a larger part to the west of the A6045 and a smaller part to the east. The allocation is located to the south-east of the Simister Island interchange, north-west of Middleton, and is bound by the M60 to the west, the M62 to the north and the A576/A6045 to the east and south. The delivery of this allocation will require significant investment in infrastructure. In particular the allocation will need to deliver a wide range of public transport improvements in order to promote sustainable travel and improve linkages to new employment opportunities at the Heywood/Pilsworth allocation (GM1.1).
- 8.2 The Locality Assessment 2020 available at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing/gmsf2020/supporting-documents/> concludes that that this development, both in isolation and in consideration of the cumulative impacts with other nearby GMSF allocations, is expected to materially impact both the strategic and local road networks. The Strategic Road Network (SRN) impacts are expected to be concentrated at M60 Junction 19 and M62 Junction 19, whilst the Local Road Network (LRN) impacts mostly impact the junctions on the A6045 Heywood Old Road.
- 8.3 As part of the Locality Assessment process, a number of mitigation schemes were developed and tested to address identified network congestion points over both the strategic and local road networks. These schemes have been developed in outline detail to inform viability and allocations policy. Further detailed work will be necessary to identify the specific interventions required to ensure the network works effectively based on transport network conditions at the time of the planning application/s and to take into account the effects of material future changes to the network such as M60 J18 Simister Island improvements and the proposed Middleton Metrolink extension which could significantly impact on travel trends in the immediate locality.
- 8.4 During the Locality Assessment process, the M60 Junction 19 / A576 Middleton Road junction proved particularly problematic in terms of providing a realistic representation in the local junction modelling. Further more detailed modelling of the roundabout and adjoining parts of the network – potentially using traffic simulation tools – is recommended at this location. Further more detailed work is also recommended at the M62 Junction 19 roundabout to better define the required mitigation.
- 8.5 The following mitigation measures have been identified:

Mitigation	Description
Allocation Access	
Two new 3-arm signalised junctions with A6045.	Allocation access for the land parcel west of A6045.
Two new 3-arm priority junctions with A6045.	Allocation access for the land parcel east of A6045.
Supporting Strategic Interventions	
New Metrolink Stop on the proposed line between Crumpsall and Middleton.	New stop on the proposed Crumpsall to Middleton line near Rhodes.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor to Manchester city centre.	Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor to Manchester city centre and Heywood via Heywood Old Road/ Manchester Road.
Necessary Local Mitigations	
Permeable network for pedestrian and cyclist priority to/from/ within the development.	Assumed new or upgraded cycle and pedestrian access, linked to PROWs and the Bee Network, providing connectivity to adjacent local areas and employment/educational opportunities, supported by high quality design for active travel within the allocation area.
Introduction of local bus services to/from/within the allocation.	Assumed local bus services to link the allocation with Metrolink and Rail interchanges and key local centres such as Prestwich and Middleton, supported by permeable design of future development to support bus services within the allocation area.
Improvement of A6045 Heywood Old Road / A576 traffic signal junction.	Required improvements not yet known; subject to further study.
A6045 Heywood Old Road/Langley Lane.	Signalisation of the junction. This scheme is already identified by Rochdale Council in support of other local committed development.
SRN Interventions	
M60 Junction 19/A576 Middleton Road.	Signalisation of the Northern and Eastern Arms (A576 N and the M60 West Bound off Slip).
M62 J19/A6046 Heywood Interchange.	Consideration of alternative pedestrian/cycle configurations and re-optimization of the signal timings.
Possible corridor improvements on A576 Middleton Road / Manchester Old Road in vicinity of M60 J19.	Required improvements not yet known; subject to further study.

8.6 The proposed policy wording for the GM 1.2 Allocation has been informed by the Locality Assessment and requires the above mitigation measures to be implemented to enable the proposed level of development to be accommodated.

8.7 The allocation is therefore considered to be deliverable. However, significant further work is recommended to verify and refine the findings of the Locality Assessment, particularly in relation to connections to the SRN, as the allocation moves through the planning process. The allocation would also need to be supported by continuing wider transport investment across GM.

9 Flood Risk and Drainage

Flood Risk Summary

9.1 The majority of the allocation is located within Flood Zone 1 (i.e. land assessed as having a lower than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river flooding) and development should be directed into these areas, if possible. There are no main rivers within the boundary of the allocation.

9.2 There is localised risk of groundwater flooding at and below ground level across the northern part of the allocation and adjacent to an unmarked watercourse which flows southerly through the allocation to the south of Simister Lane. Detailed future designs for the development will be able to take into account the overland flow routes and any groundwater flood risk and potential areas of ponding to ensure there is no increase to flood risk within the allocation or elsewhere as a result of the development.

9.3 The allocation is at low risk of sewer flooding.

GMSF Greater Manchester Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

9.4 The Greater Manchester Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (GM Level 1 SFRA) was completed in March 2019 available at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing/gmsf2020/supporting-documents/> as part of the evidence base to inform the preparation of the GMSF. This SFRA initiated the sequential risk-based approach to the allocation of land for development and identified whether application of the Exception Test was likely to be necessary using the most up-to-date information and guidance.

9.5 The Level 1 SFRA assessed the 2019 draft allocation boundary for GM1.2 and concluded that as 98% of the allocation is located within Flood Zone 1, the flood risk within the GM1.2 allocation could be avoided through site layout and design as part of a detailed flood risk assessment. All of the smaller GMSF 2020 boundary is located within Flood Zone 1.

9.6 Building on the conclusions of the Level 1 SFRA, the site promoters for GM1.2 Simister/Bowlee have prepared a GM1.2 Flood Risk and Drainage High Level Constraints Review to assess the risk of flooding in more detail and consider what mitigation measures may be required.

9.7 To ensure that flood risk is not increased at the allocation or elsewhere as a result of the development, surface water runoff from the development will be restricted to the existing greenfield runoff rate (7.5 l/s/ha).

9.8 The GM1.2 Flood Risk and Drainage High Level Constraints Review states that the proposed drainage system will include a variety of SuDS features providing green/blue spaces (such as detention basins and swales). These shall address both flooding and water quality issues and be designed to mimic natural drainage features within the allocation and provide recreational areas for the public. Alternate SuDS options such as wetlands, provide an opportunity to maximise biodiversity and maximise public open space and will be considered. Infiltration may be possible across some of the allocation subject to detailed ground investigations on a localised basis. Parts of the allocation have been identified as historic landfill sites. It is considered unlikely that infiltration of surface water is likely only to be an environmentally safe option if remediation has been carried out in advance to a standard specifically to suit infiltration.

9.9 No public surface water sewers have been identified within the allocation. Surface water runoff will be discharge into the ground through multiple infiltration structures or to the watercourses within the allocation at the limiting discharge rates. This will require discussion and agreement with the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority.

9.10 The GM1.2 Flood Risk and Drainage High Level Constraints Review states that the masterplan for the allocation is being developed with due consideration for the existing topography, watercourses and rivers and development plots are likely to be located with substantial offsets from these features. This provides the opportunity to create green/blue corridors adjacent to the existing watercourses and will not require the diversion of any watercourses and culverted works will be kept to a minimum.

- 9.11 The proposed policy wording for the GM 1.2 seeks to ensure that any development within the allocation is safe from and mitigates for potential flood risk from all sources. Policy GM1.2 requires development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water and control the rate of surface water run-off, discharging in accordance with the hierarchy of drainage options. Proposals to discharge to public sewer will need to submit clear evidence demonstrating why alternative options are not available. As a green and blue infrastructure network will provide more sustainable options discharge surface water, only foul flows should communicate with the public sewer.
- 9.12 The allocation is therefore considered to be deliverable although further work will be needed as the allocation moves through the planning process.

10 Ground Conditions

Site Geology and Hydrogeology

- 10.1 The Desk Top Assessment has identified:
- Made ground – expected to be present where landfilling has occurred, where quarries, sand & gravel pits have been backfilled, around man-made features and around buildings where ground has been disturbed by construction activities;
 - Superficial deposits – Predominantly glacial morainic deposits are present overlain by head deposits along water courses and by glacial fluvial deposits locally in the south;
 - Bedrock - Coal Measures in the north western three quarters of the allocation. The Chester Formation (sandstone) is present in south western quarter of the allocation. These geological formations are separated by the Bradley Fold Fault trending north west to south east. The allocation is not located in a high risk development area in relation to Coal Mining activities.

Ground Contamination

- 10.2 The allocation predominantly comprises agricultural land which is not expected to be significantly contaminated.
- 10.3 The potential risks from and mitigation for contamination in these areas are given in the table below.
- 10.4 Intrusive ground investigation will be undertaken to establish if any contamination is present and, if it is, to establish its nature and extent. An initial characterisation investigation will enable an outline remediation strategy for the allocation to be developed. More detailed investigation, assessment and detailed remediation design can then be undertaken on a phase by phase basis as each area of the allocation comes forward for development.

Table 1 Geo-environmental Aspects and Mitigation

Area of Potential Contamination	Contamination Risk	Potential Mitigation
Backfilled quarries/pits and landfills	Backfill material unknown. May contain contamination especially asbestos.	Assessment of material and remediation and, where possible, re-use of material
Ground gas	Migration from landfilling activities and generation from the peat.	Ground gas protection measures may be required in new build properties.

Shallow groundwater	Potential for contamination of shallow groundwater.	Consideration of contamination if shallow groundwater present in any contaminated parts of the site.
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Geotechnical Summary

- 10.5 Geotechnical aspects to consider within the allocation include compressible peat deposits, backfilled quarries and pits and groundwater presence. The ground will also need to be characterised for cut and fill works and for foundation design. The geotechnical aspects are given in the table below along with potential mitigation measures. Intrusive investigation will be undertaken to assess these aspects further.

Table 2 Geotechnical Aspects and Mitigation

Geotechnical Aspect	Geotechnical risk	Potential mitigation
Backfilled quarries / pits	Backfill material unknown. Risk of unacceptable settlements / collapse especially if loaded	Identification and intrusive investigation of backfill. Geotechnical assessment and re-engineering of material as required.
Slopes	Existing slopes and new slopes – risk of instability / slope failures	Investigation and assessment of existing slopes. Reprofiling or remediation if required. Geotechnical design of new slopes / appropriate retaining structures
Shallow groundwater	Groundwater in excavations. Risks of instability from groundwater ingress.	Temporary support / pumping during works if required.

- 10.6 The Assessment has been reviewed by Bury Council Environmental Health department. They have recommended the following prior to any planning applications being submitted within the allocation:
- Ground investigation to determine the potential for ground gas, contaminated soil and leachate associated with the infilling of former quarries / pits and historical and registered landfills (both on and off site); and,
 - Ground investigation to assess the likelihood of ground contamination associated with the pollution incidents (specifically chemically driven incidents).
- 10.7 The documents are available at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing/gmsf2020/supporting-documents/>
- 10.8 The allocation is therefore considered to be deliverable although further work will be needed as the allocation moves through the planning process.

11 Utilities

- 11.1 It is not considered that there are any utilities constraints, either current infrastructure or identified need, which will prevent the Northern Gateway allocations from being allocated for development.

United Utilities

- 11.2 United Utilities have provided guidance to pre-development enquires and advised that the anticipated point of connection for the development will be the nearest practical point on the network to the development boundary. This is identified as 315mm PE main is located on the southern side of the M62 and it is the nearest suitable main.
- 11.3 No public foul sewers were identified within the development boundary, therefore foul water is likely to need to be pumped to a new or existing point of discharge specified by United Utilities, outside of the development boundary. Consultations must be made with United Utilities to develop a cost-effective strategy for managing the discharge of foul flows from the development.

Electricity North West

- 11.4 Electricity North West in their response to the latest GMSF consultation advised that they were confident in being able to meet the network capacity requirements for the investment and growth in proposed in Greater Manchester. Where necessary they have secured the appropriate regulatory allowances within their 'Well Justified Business Plan.'
- 11.5 Electricity North West have carried out assessments on the proposed areas, which fed into the 'Spatial Energy Plan' document. This is a high level assessment of the expected impact of the proposed developments on the electricity network, the information was presented as a Red/Amber /Green (RAG) indicator.
- 11.6 The Simister/Bowlee allocation presented as green which indicates no primary substation capacity issue envisaged due to forecast additional load resulting from proposed development.
- 11.7 Discussions with ENW have identified a requirement for 2 new primary 33KV/substations and a Point of Connection at Agecroft BSP. From the new 33KV Primary Substations a further network of 11KV substations will be provided that distribute demand across the allocation.
- 11.8 Overhead electricity cable pylons are also present on the southern section of the allocation. These and their appropriate easements will need to be accommodated in the masterplan, albeit given the location in the southern-most edge of the allocation ENW has advised this does not present a major constraint.

Gas - National Grid Infrastructure

- 11.9 Cadent Gas have confirmed that the current mains have sufficient capacity to support the load required for the development without any reinforcement works. The development can be connected to the existing Medium Pressure main located approximately 800 metres from the development boundary. Appropriate gas governors located along the route through the allocation along within the proposed road network will also be required.

12 Telecommunications

Existing BT Infrastructure

- 12.1 The scheme already tabled and being implemented through the South Heywood Development scheme to provide BT Openreach communication network coverage is being developed to facilitate the Northern Gateway Proposals to both the Northern and Southern areas of the allocation. BT Openreach are presently developing their network layout and will be installing high speed data & fibre networks throughout the development.

Existing Virgin Media Infrastructure

- 12.2 The scheme already tabled and being implemented through the South Heywood Development scheme to provide Virgin Media communication network coverage will be developed to facilitate the Northern Gateway Proposals to both the Northern and Southern areas of the allocation. Virgin Media are presently developing their network layout for this area and will be a suitable alternative network provider.

Section C – Environmental

13 Green Belt Assessment

- 13.1 The proposed removal of the Simister/Bowlee allocation from the Green Belt has been informed by several studies undertaken by LUC available at available at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing/gmsf2020/supporting-documents/>
- The Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment 2016
 - Green Belt Harm Assessment, 2020;
 - Greater Manchester Green Belt Study – Identification of Opportunities, 2020
- 13.2 The proposed allocation would involve the release of 74 hectares of land from the Green Belt.
- 13.3 In 2016 GMCA commissioned LUC to undertake an assessment of the Green Belt within GM. The Study assessed the extent to which the land within the GM Green Belt performs against the purposes of Green Belts, as set out in paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The aim of this Green Belt Assessment is to provide the GM Authorities with an objective, evidence-based and independent assessment of how GM's Green Belt contributes to the five purposes of Green Belt, as set out in national policy. It also examines the case for including within the Green Belt potential additional areas of land that currently lie outside it.
- 13.4 In The Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment 2016 Simister/Bowlee was included within Strategic Green Belt Area 15 in the Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment 2016. There were 4 different purposes of Green Belt that each Area was assessed against and the Area performs as follows:
- Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas: **Strong**
 - Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another: **Strong**
 - Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment: **Weak-Moderate**
 - Purpose 4: Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns: **Weak-Moderate**
- 13.5 The summary of findings for Bury in this report stated that most parcels close to Heywood/Pilsworth, east of M66 make a moderate - strong contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas. Parcels between Bury and Middleton play a moderate role in relation to assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- 13.6 In 2019 LUC carried out an assessment identifying the potential opportunities to enhance the beneficial use of remaining Green Belt within 2 km of the allocation site. The study considered the opportunities to offset the loss of Green Belt through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land.
- 13.7 Land lying within 2 km of GM 1.1, Heywood / Pilsworth formed the focus of Green Infrastructure (GI) recommendations / mitigation to enhance the 'beneficial use' of the Green Belt for the Northern Gateway as a whole. There are two proposed additions to the Green Belt west of this GM sub-Allocation at Hollins Brook and Hollins Brow.

- 13.8 The potential GI opportunities in the Green Belt relevant to the Northern Gateway Allocations identified in the assessment include:
- Upgrade the public footpath along Brightly Brook to a multi user route.
 - Create a new pedestrian footpath in the Green Belt north east of Heywood/Pilsworth to create a local level walk at the settlement edge.
 - Upgrade surfacing treatments and access points along the Rochdale Way.
 - Upgrade surface treatments to create all weather routes.
 - Enhance pedestrian and vehicle links to football pitches in Heaton Park to increase usability.
 - Introduce enhancements to local sporting facilities within the retained Green Belt.
 - Enhance sport and recreational provision at Heaton Park.
 - Introduce interventions which complement the proposals included within the planning application for development off J19 of the M62 (Planning application 16/01399/HYBR).
 - Restore ditches and field boundaries within the landscape.
 - Review the conservation and management of areas which form part of SBIs and LNRs to ensure improvement of the key aspects of their designation. Connect the SBIs of Hollins Vale, Hollins Plantation and Pilsworth across the M66.
 - Enhance waterways to ensure the management of invasive species and surrounding vegetation.
 - Support woodland management practices to maintain longevity of broadleaved woodland stock.
 - Improve the biodiversity value of agricultural land around Birch Service Area, providing additional habitat creation. Landscape and visual.
 - Create new green wedges and green buffers to prevent settlement coalescence.
 - Establish planting buffers for increased landscape integration at Heywood Distribution Park.
 - Provide additional woodland planting and the reinstatement of field boundaries parallel the corridor of the M62.
- 13.9 Some of these opportunities have been either included within the policy requirements for the allocation. Others will be more appropriately dealt with as part of a more detailed masterplan or planning application(s).
- 13.10 In conjunction with the assessment of GI opportunities within the Green Belt, LUC carried out an assessment to identify potential harm to the Green Belt through a Green Belt Harm Assessment, 2020.
- 13.11 The smaller release of land proposed within the GM1.2 Simister/Bowlee allocation will maintain Green Belt linkage to the south west, but as that land is mostly constrained (Heaton Park Registered Park and Garden) its containment or otherwise will not affect harm to the Green Belt purposes. The retention of Green Belt will leave some separation between Whitefield and Rhodes/Middleton, but that is largely occupied by Simister, which has an urbanising influence on the Green Belt. Remaining open land around Simister, contained between the new inset edge of Rhodes/Middleton, the M60 and the M62, will make a relatively weak contribution to the Green Belt purposes. The reduced release means that there will be less impact on retained Green Belt to the north east, but the impact on east-

west settlement separation between Whitefield and Rhodes/ Middleton will still mean the impact on adjacent Green Belt is moderate, and the harm of releasing the reduced allocation remains high.

- 13.12 Evidence on Green Belt is only one part of the evidence base that influence any decision on green belt release. Consequently where studies have found that high harm is to be caused by release of the Green Belt, this finding should be balanced against other important factors that could make up exceptional circumstances such as sustainability, viability and deliverability.
- 13.13 The Simister/Bowlee allocation is deemed necessary to deliver a key strategic housing opportunity with supporting transport infrastructure. The allocation is critical in responding to the spatial strategy in the GMSF and its key themes of 'Inclusive Growth', 'Making the Most of Key Locations and Assets' and 'Addressing Disparities' It also directly addresses the aspirations set by Policy GM – P 1 'Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth', Policy GM –E 1 'Sustainable Places', Policy GM – H1 'Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development' and Policy GM – N1 'Our Integrated Network'.
- 13.14 The potential GI opportunities in the Green Belt study discussed earlier are not exhaustive and will require consultation with key stakeholders and may require further surveys and viability testing to establish costings. However the enhancement opportunities nonetheless demonstrate that opportunities exist to help offset the loss of Green Belt which will have a potential positive effect on the beneficial use of the Greater Manchester Green Belt moving forward.
- 13.15 The final masterplan for the allocation will be required to use the findings from all the assessments on Green Belt in the area to inform the layout and form development across the allocation.

14 Green Infrastructure

- 14.1 The Masterplan for GM1.2 will include a substantial green/blue infrastructure network providing a range of opportunities for movement, recreation and biodiversity as well as sustainable drainage. It is intended that the development will ultimately achieve net gains in biodiversity.
- 14.2 Central to the development will be substantial north-south and east-west green corridors that incorporate existing allocation features such as trees, hedgerows and water features. These corridors will provide recreational and biodiversity value and will also be key to defining a unique identity and strong sense of place for the development.
- 14.3 The green infrastructure network will incorporate high quality active travel routes including cycling and walking and has been designed to ensure good connectivity between the new development and existing surrounding areas.

15 Recreation

- 15.1 New play areas and sports facilities will be required to support the delivery of housing at Simister/Bowlee in line with Bury and Rochdale's Local Plan requirements.
- 15.2 GM1.2 will include a range of recreational facilities to support residential led mixed-use development. These will include formal and informal play spaces dispersed within the new residential areas and also opportunities for a range of recreational activities along green corridors that connect across the allocation.

- 15.3 The potential inclusion of a primary school within the development also provides the opportunity for school recreation facilities to become available for community use outside of school hours.

16 Landscape

- 16.1 The landscape character types within the allocation are as follows:

National Character Area (NCA):

- 54 Manchester Pennine Fringe.

Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Report (2018):

- 27: Simister, Slattocks and Healds Green.

Bury Council Landscape Character Assessment (2009):

- Fringe Settled Valley Pasture 54/2, Castle, Whittle & Brightley

Rochdale Landscape Character Assessment (2009):

- Settled Farmlands

- 16.2 The key characteristics of the landscape include:

- The undulating pastoral and rough grassland landform of the site;
- The existing mature vegetation comprising stand-alone trees, hedgerows and small woodland blocks;
- The tranquillity of the central parts of the allocation;
- The scattered farmsteads, and small settlements, often in elevated locations in the landscape;
- A network of public footpaths surrounding the sites and occasionally crossing into the sites provides good connectivity with the wider landscape and the GMA1.1 allocation, however often underused and ill defined;
- The long views providing connectivity to the wider landscape; and
- The dominating presence of the M62 corridor.

Visual Summary

- 16.3 The surrounding views are an important aspect of the visual amenity of the allocation, with long distance views from elevated locations. These panoramic views are available to the north (across the M62) towards the distant hills and Scout Moor Wind Farm, evident on a clear day. Views to the urban conurbation of Greater Manchester are available to the south.
- 16.4 Local receptors within the allocation and outside the boundaries consist of small settlements and scattered farms and associated residences, generally in elevated locations, which afford typical countryside views, despite the close proximity of the M62 and M60 and the urban conurbations. The same applies to users of the public footpath network, where open views are generally of a rural nature, over undulating countryside.
- 16.5 The M62 corridor forms a dominant feature in the view to the north along with its associated infrastructure and lighting. The vertical elements of pylons, telegraph poles and lighting columns are a continuing theme throughout the allocation

Landscape Opportunities

- 16.6 It is recommended that the following landscape opportunities and constraints are considered in the evolving masterplan:
- Long distance views are available to the north and south and retention of longer distance views should be considered to maintain the connection of the allocation to the wider landscape. There is an opportunity to orientate residential properties in the direction of these views in order to benefit visual amenity for the occupants. Orientation of properties in relation to the M62 should be carefully considered;
 - The characteristic undulating landform of the allocation and the character and setting of the existing villages should be carefully considered and used to inform the layout, density and built form of the new development;
 - There is scope to enhance tree planting along the motorway corridors. This would serve a double purpose of enhancing landscape and visual amenity, as well enhancing wildlife corridors. Mitigation through tree planting could be undertaken in conjunction with proposals for the Northern Forest;
 - The arrangement of the houses should take landform into account, where feasible, so that views are maintained throughout and to the wider landscape wherever possible. The possibility to retain open space in certain locations within the allocation should be explored to prevent coalescence. This is a valuable and important feature of the new development and green infrastructure should be given careful consideration as the designs evolve to ensure sensitive treatment of the existing villages and the retention of their identity. The theoretical zone of visibility of any proposed development will be considered and assessed, considering its impact on the landscape character and features, and visual receptors;
 - A number of existing properties are situated within the allocation and the surrounding area. It is understood that the majority of these residential properties will be retained as part of the scheme. For those properties that are retained, their setting within the landscape and views available to the residents of these properties should be considered within any design evolution;
 - A number of mature trees, hedgerows and woodland blocks are present. Where possible, these should be retained and enhanced where the vegetation is healthy and in good condition, to create a mature green landscape framework for the development;
 - Public Right of Way (PRoW) links should be considered. Although current PRoWs appear to be infrequent and underused in places, retaining established links and creating appropriate new high quality walking and cycling links should be considered to create a connective landscape linking to the wider area;
 - It is recommended that the opportunity to create a new local centre and retain existing or design in recreational facilities within a pleasant landscape setting is investigated as part of the design evolution; and
 - Develop a satisfactory management plan for areas of green infrastructure, biodiversity features and other areas of open space.

17 Ecological/Biodiversity Assessment

- 17.1 There are no designated Natura 2000 (European designated) sites on site or within 2km of the allocation boundary.
- 17.2 There are no nationally designated sites on site or within 2km of the allocation boundary.

- 17.3 There are two Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) within a 2km radius of the allocation boundary. Blackley Forest LNR, 0.5km south and Alkington LNR, approximately 1km east of the allocation boundary.
- 17.4 The Site of Biological Importance (SBI) Streams and Flushes near Bradley Hall Farm is located in the eastern part of the allocation.

Habitats

- 17.5 Key habitats include:
- Watercourses and ponds.
 - Woodland and trees.
 - Wildlife links and corridors e.g. hedgerows and watercourses.
- 17.6 The desk study identified Habitats of Principle Importance (HPI) within the allocation and within 2km:
- Deciduous woodland HPI: recorded in a small area on the eastern site boundary and as a linear feature along the M60 in the south of the allocation;
 - Watercourses and ponds which are present within the allocation.
- 17.7 More detailed site-specific surveys, including a full extended Phase 1 Habitat survey for each area, will be undertaken as plans progress and this will enable detailed characterisation of habitats represented throughout the allocation.

Protected and Notable Species

- 17.8 Protected and notable species which are or may be present at the allocation include:
- Great crested newt
 - Reptiles
 - Bats
 - Badger
 - Otter
 - Water vole
 - Birds
 - Invertebrates
 - And other notable species including common toad, brown hare and hedgehog.
 - Invasive plant species
- 17.9 The potential presence of these species has been considered through information derived from the desk study, data search and walkover survey. Species-specific surveys will be carried out as plans progress.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 17.10 Biodiversity Net Gain is considered as an opportunity at this site and net gain will be sought as set out in the policy wording

- 17.11 At Northern Gateway, opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain will focus upon using the lowest ecological /poorest quality land for the development and avoiding the higher ecological value/good quality habitat.
- 17.12 The good quality habitat within the allocation comprises the watercourse corridors, broadleaved woodland and species-rich grassland. Habitats could be enhanced to improve value where suitable and appropriate so that a lower value habitat could become a higher value habitat. It is anticipated that it will be possible to achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain across the allocation through retention of high value habitat and developing a network of connected green corridors and ponds throughout the allocation.
- 17.13 Key site-specific opportunities have been identified which could promote and enhance biodiversity, maintain wildlife corridors within the allocation and enhance connectivity with the wider landscape. They involve:
- A wetland habitat could be created in the north west corner of the main section of the allocation. To include areas of marshy grassland and additional waterbodies.
 - Enhancing the existing watercourse and riparian habitat across the allocation. Linear areas of rough grassland to be created along both sides of riparian corridor. The woodland area on the eastern border to be enhanced to create connectivity to the riparian corridor.

Habitat Regulation Assessment

- 17.14 A Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) is required for the GMSF because it is considered to have the potential to cause harm to the special nature conservation interest of European Protected Sites. The HRA made an appropriate assessment of the implications of the GMSF in view of conservation objectives available at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing/gmsf2020/supporting-documents/>.
- 17.15 The Northern Gateway allocations were considered together within the HRA. The assessment concluded that although more than 10km from the South Pennine Moors and separated from it by the significant built development the allocation had the potential to cause increases in diffuse air pollution because of traffic generation along the M62 and recreational impacts from population uplift.
- 17.16 The Assessment recommended that each phase of development must be individually assessed once detailed plans are available particularly in relation to air pollution impacts, with cumulative (in combination) effects taken into account.

18 Heritage Impact Assessment

Designated Sites

- 18.1 There are no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields or Protected Wrecks within the allocation or within the 1km study area.
- 18.2 There are no listed buildings within the allocation boundary. There are two designated heritage assets outside the allocation boundary with the potential to be affected by development within their setting, both are Grade II Listed – Church of St. George and Heaton Park (Registered Park and Garden).
- 18.3 Three listed buildings (Church of All Saints War Memorial, 31-37 Broad Street and Rhodes Schools, east) are located within Rhodes, to the south of the allocation. Whilst proximate to the allocation, these assets are located within an urban context and due to their location, and the intervening development and topography they have no visual connection to the allocation.

- 18.4 The potential impact of any development upon the designated sites outside the allocation and surrounding landscape will be considered as a masterplan is developed.

Rhodes Green Cropmark Site

- 18.5 In the south-western part of the allocation, desk study information has indicated there is a possible Romano-British settlement site which may include a number of roundhouses, enclosures and associated field systems and trackways. However, physical evidence is limited and a number of circles in the fields at this location evident from aerial photography (Google Maps) may have been made by a circular sheep feeder.
- 18.6 The GM 1.2 Archaeology and Heritage Report indicated that if the asset at Rhodes Green was found to represent a possible Romano-British settlement, it could represent a significant archaeological site. However, the evidence and sources currently available do not provide any definitive evidence relating to the nature of the cropmarks.
- 18.7 Since the GM 1.2 Archaeology and Heritage Report was written, a geophysical survey of the Rhodes Green Cropmark Site has been undertaken. Detailed results are awaited but initial results do not indicate any evidence of significant archaeological potential. Further assessment of the area will be included in the archaeology strategy for the allocation.

Melodieu's (now Mellowdew Farm)

- 18.8 Whilst this farmstead has been present since the 19th century, it is thought that the historic farm buildings are no longer extant, although this will need to be confirmed prior to any development within the eastern half of the allocation. If any is present, it may be possible to incorporate the farmstead into future development plans to preserve the heritage of the area.

Historic Hedgerows

- 18.9 Consultation with the Greater Manchester Archaeology Advisory Service, alongside the review of historic mapping and the site walkover, indicates a potential requirement for a Historic Hedgerow survey, as the information indicates the historic use of the hedgerows as land and boundary management within the allocation.

Summary

- 18.10 The Promoters have been engaging closely with GMAAS regarding the proposed development of the allocation. A programme of further works to inform next steps and future masterplans has been agreed with GMAAS in the form of a Written Scheme of Investigation to govern an Archaeological Strategy for the allocation. The purpose of the Archaeological Strategy will be to summarise the works to be undertaken to identify and characterise areas of heritage potential across GM1.1 and GM1.2 and to ensure the appropriate study, recording and protection of these assets. It will support the developing masterplan for the Northern Gateway allocation such that it responds appropriately to the potential effects of the development on the historic environment.
- 18.11 The proposed policy wording for the GM 1.2 Allocation has been informed by the archaeological work undertaken and ensures appropriate evaluation of the heritage assets at the allocation will be undertaken to ensure the protection of these assets in the development proposals.
- 18.12 The allocation is therefore considered to be deliverable although further work will be needed as the allocation moves through the planning process.

19 Air Quality

- 19.1 The M60 and M62 near to the allocation are identified as Air Quality Management Areas. A Detailed Air Quality Assessment will be required to inform the detailed masterplanning and planning application stage.
- 19.2 The Air Quality Assessment undertaken (available at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing/gmsf2020/supporting-documents/>) identifies that any stand-off from the motorways required due to the noise constraints for residential elements of the scheme is likely to be sufficient as a form of mitigation to prevent any future receptors experiencing levels of pollution greater than the Air Quality Objective limits.

20 Noise

- 20.1 A noise survey was undertaken at the allocation in November 2019 (available at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing/gmsf2020/supporting-documents/>) which has informed noise modelling to establish the level of noise across the allocation. The noise survey has identified that road traffic noise is the dominant noise source across the allocation.
- 20.2 Following the guidance provided within the ProPg, a good acoustic design process will need to be followed to mitigate noise from the M62 and M60.
- 20.3 Recommendations are as follows:
- Screening of the motorways will be required by building orientation and / or barriers such as close boarded fences or earth bunds.
 - For the 1st tier of properties facing the motorways, gardens will need to be positioned to the rear of dwellings with the buildings providing a screen. Closer to the motorway, it is likely further screening in the form of acoustic fences or earth bunds will be required.
 - At this stage a minimum stand-off of 50m from any motorway carriageway should be included within the design. This would allow for the attenuation of noise with distance and an allow space for any barriers such as close boarded acoustic fences or earth bunds to be constructed. If greater stand-off's can be incorporated this would be beneficial in terms of noise mitigation.
 - Generally standard double glazing should be acceptable within the allocation but for habitable rooms located close to the adjacent motorways, enhanced glazing may be required. Alternative ventilation will need to be considered within the parts of the allocation most exposed to road traffic noise. Such design measures are typical of development in similar areas close to motorways or main roads and are not considered to be prohibitive.
 - In addition to road traffic noise, isolated farmsteads are located within or adjacent to the allocation boundary in the eastern parcel of the allocation. No noise from these premises was observed during the survey but a good design measure would be to avoid positioning dwellings or gardens immediately adjacent to the curtilage of such premises.
- 20.4 Through the adoption of a good acoustic design as the masterplanning of the allocation evolves, significant adverse effects can be avoided.

Opportunities

- 20.5 Opportunities to improve the environment with respect to noise and air quality include:

- The large area of the Allocation enables scope to incorporate a range of mitigation measures within the scheme to ensure significant adverse noise and air quality impacts are avoided.
- Provision of green and blue infrastructure networks to provide health benefits to future residents as well as creating a visually attractive environment which provides opportunity for amenity space in a more tranquil environment.
- Provision of Electric Vehicle (EV) “fast charge” points across the development.
- Measures to encourage sustainable means of transport, including cycling and walking, through the delivery of improved public transport infrastructure, layouts to improve accessibility and encourage walking and cycling and a comprehensive Travel Plan to educate residents and encourage use of these measures.

20.6 The allocation is therefore considered to be deliverable although further work will be needed as the allocation moves through the planning process.

Section D – Social

21 Education

- 21.1 The proposed development of up to 1,550 homes (1,350 in Bury and 200 in Rochdale) would generate a total yield of around 326 primary age pupils and 217 secondary age pupils. Current forecasts show both primary and secondary schools in the area full to capacity and, as such, all additional demand created would require additional school places.
- 21.2 For primary age pupils this would equate to the equivalent of 2fe, best served through the establishment of either two new schools (each 1fe), or one 2fe school within the allocation.
- 21.3 The demand for secondary school places needs to be considered alongside the demand created by other developments in South Bury.

22 Health Impact Assessment

- 22.1 Further work will be required to determine whether there is additional capacity within any local healthcare facilities to meet the increased demands arising from the prospective occupants of the new development. If additional provision is necessary, the most appropriate means and location for such provision can be identified through future iterations of the masterplan. Alternatively, there may be a requirement to make a financial contribution toward off site health provision through a planning obligation or condition at the planning application stage.
- 22.2 The allocation is therefore considered to be deliverable although further work will be needed as the allocation moves through the planning process.

Section E – Deliverability

23 Viability

23.1 A Viability Appraisal of the allocation has been run using the Three Dragons Viability Appraisal base model. The site allocation is of 1,550 of which 1,350 are within Bury and the remaining 200 within Rochdale. Those within Bury have been tested using policy requirements relevant to Bury, including a requirement for 25% affordable housing. Those in Rochdale have been tested using Rochdale’s policies, which includes a contribution to affordable housing equal to 7.5% of GDV.

Test Type	Total BMLV, SDLT & Land acq fees	Scheme RV (incl BLV & return)	Viability measure as a % of BLV	Headroom (blended return)	Test result category
Whether the test is the 'Base' test or a sensitivity test	The total figure used in the testing for land value, includes tax and fees. BLV = benchmark land value SDLT = Stamp duty land tax	Scheme value (could also be described as headroom) once all costs have been accounted for including land and developer return RV = Residual value BLV = benchmark land value	Description of whether the scheme provides sufficient residual value in terms of how it compares with the benchmark land value i.e. if it is 10% or more above the benchmark land value it is shown as green, if it is within 10% of the benchmark land value it is shown as amber and where it is less than 90% of the benchmark land value it is shown as red.	The headroom expressed as blended rate of return. The percentages shown are the headroom available after all costs, except developer return divided by the total gross development value for the scheme. If schemes were to go ahead as described, then this is the total return available to the developer.	Category 1 - The residual value is positive and the residual value is 10% or more above the benchmark land value. Schemes in this group are viable and should be able to proceed.
Base model	£25,870,000	£31,710,000	More than 10% BLV	23%	Cat 1

23.2 The testing indicates a positive return after all policy costs (including affordable housing) and transport and other infrastructure. The scheme is considered viable based on the high level Three Dragons appraisal. The allocation is classed as Category 1 – the residual value is 10% or more above the benchmark land value, it is viable and should be able to proceed.

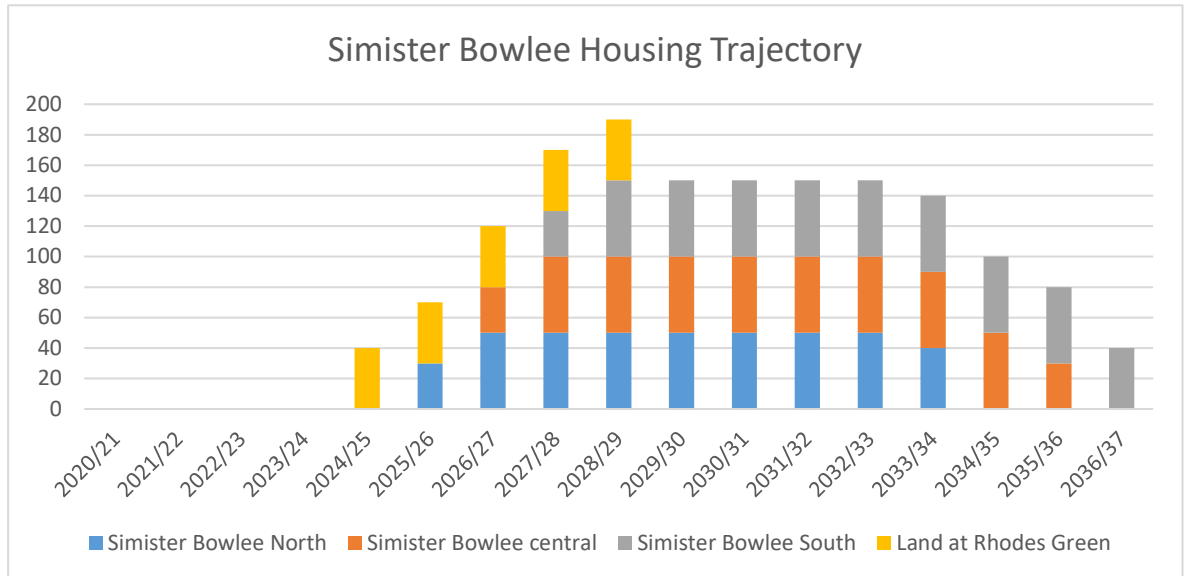
24 Phasing

24.1 The policy wording for GM1.2 requires a comprehensive masterplan to be approved by the LPA for the allocation, which any proposals must then be in accordance with. The policy states that this shall include a clear phasing strategy as part of an integrated approach to the delivery of infrastructure to support the scale of the whole development. This should include the delivery of highways, infrastructure, surface water drainage, grey infrastructure, green and blue infrastructure, broadband and electric vehicle charging points, recreation provision and social infrastructure and ensure coordination between phases of development.

24.2 A phasing strategy is being developed through on-going discussions with key stakeholders in relation to highways and utilities infrastructure. The estimated phasing and delivery trajectory for the allocation will evolve as the plans for the allocation are developed further.

24.3 The allocation is split into four separate outlets – one within Rochdale and three within Bury. First completions are anticipated to take place in 2024/25, with a delivery rate of up to 50

dwellings per output per year, with all 1,550 dwellings expected to be delivered within the plan period.



25 Indicative Masterplanning

- 25.1 The Site Promoters for the Simister/Bowlee Allocation have produced an Illustrative Development Framework Plan to show how proposed development could come forward within the allocation (see following plan). This provides an indicative layout of the development, including the location of the residential parcels, green infrastructure, local centre and key pedestrian and vehicular access. The illustrative plan also shows an area of land proposed as safeguarded land for a potential park and ride site to serve future public transport links.
- 25.2 Policy GM1.2 requires a comprehensive masterplan to be submitted prior to any planning applications within the allocation. The masterplan must include a clear phasing strategy as part of an integrated approach to the delivery of infrastructure to support the scale of the whole development in line with Policy GM-D1 Infrastructure Delivery. This should include the delivery of highways infrastructure, surface water drainage, grey infrastructure including utilities provision, green and blue infrastructure, broadband and electric vehicle charging points, recreation provision and social infrastructure and ensure coordination between phases of development.



Section F – Conclusion

26 GMSF 2020 Integrated Assessment

- 26.1 An Integrated Appraisal (IA) was undertaken on the 2020 draft GMSF in order to understand how the policy had changed since the 2019 IA and to identify if any further enhancement/mitigation was required.
- 26.2 The majority of the 2019 recommendations for the GM1.2 Simister/Bowlee were positively addressed by the policy itself or other thematic policies. A small number of residual recommendations remained from the 2020 IA, in order to further strengthen the policies.
- 26.3 In particular this included:
- Climate Change – since the 2019 IA was undertaken there has been greater emphasis on the climate change agenda and this is reflective of the declaration of a climate emergency by the ten GM authorities;
 - Accessible design standards – whilst this is broadly covered in Policy GM-E1 and within GM-H3 relating to housing, it was suggested that policies are strengthened with more specific reference to accessible design of buildings and spaces to meet the needs of users. This could be achieved through strengthening Policy GM-E1.
 - Deprivation – whilst this is also broadly covered within the supporting text and broadly within Policy GM-E1, particularly referencing social inclusivity, it is considered that the policy could be more explicitly in terms of inclusive growth and making jobs available to existing local communities or to those suffering deprivation.
- 26.4 The residual IA recommendations for GM1.2 could therefore be met through the strengthening of thematic Policy GM-E1 rather than any specific amendments to Policy GM1.2. This demonstrates the overall improvement of the 2020 draft GMSF in relation to the IA Framework.

27 The main changes to the Proposed Allocation

- 27.1 The proposed site allocation at Simister/Bowlee has been significantly reduced in size since publication of the 2019 Draft GMSF. Land to the north of Bluebell Lane, together with a small area on the south western edge, are to be excluded from the Allocation and retained in the Green Belt. The area around Simister Village, will also now be excluded from the Allocation and retained as Green Belt. These reductions were in response to calls from local residents to preserve the character of Simister Village. In addition, there is significantly less certainty over the development of a new motorway junction at Birch which would have been a major access point into the allocation.
- 27.2 The total site allocation has reduced from 206 ha (2019 draft GMSF) to 74 ha in the Publication GMSF 2020 with the proposed number of dwellings reducing from 2,000 to 1,550.
- 27.3 The structure of the Northern Gateway GMSF policies has altered in the 2020 GMSF. There is no longer an overarching policy for the Northern Gateway (GM1) but instead the requirements are included within the GM1.1 and GM1.2 policies.
- 27.4 The 2020 GMSF has additional criteria within the policy requiring:
- A comprehensive masterplan and phasing strategy for the allocation.
 - A financial contribution towards off-site secondary school provision to meet the needs generated by the development; The 2019 allocation policy required provision for a new 1,000 place secondary school to serve prospective residents. Given the reduction in the

number of homes proposed within the allocation, the requirement is now for a financial contribution.

- The provision for other necessary infrastructure such as utilities, broadband and electric vehicle charging points in accordance with relevant GMSF or local planning policies;
- The provision for the long-term management and maintenance of areas of green infrastructure, biodiversity features, other areas of open space and sustainable drainage features;
- A project specific Habitats Regulation Assessment for planning applications of 1,000 sq.m./50 dwellings or more to be carried out;
- Protect and enhance the heritage and archaeological assets within the vicinity of the allocation and their setting in accordance with the findings of a Heritage Impact Assessment.

27.5 A significant amount of evidence base work has been produced to support the allocation since 2019 and this has allowed the criteria within the policy to be expanded upon and be more specific to the allocation.

28 Conclusion

28.1 GM1.2 Simister/Bowlee is considered to meet the site selection criteria and make a positive contribution to the overall vision, objectives and strategy of the GMSF. The allocation is considered to be deliverable and available for development. Further work has been identified to take forward the allocation through the planning process.

28.2 The allocation provides the opportunity to deliver an urban extension which has transformational potential in enabling new housing development of 1,550 units, community facilities and new transport infrastructure to come forward in what is currently an area that contains significant pockets of high deprivation.

28.3 The delivery of such a major opportunity will require significant investment in infrastructure if it is to be successful and sustainable. In particular, the allocation will need to benefit from a wide range of public transport improvements in order to promote sustainable travel and improve linkages to new employment opportunities at GM1.1 Heywood/Pilsworth. This could potentially include Bus Rapid Transit linking Manchester City Centre to the Northern Gateway allocation. The allocation may also benefit from a potential Bus Rapid Transit or Metrolink extension to Middleton. Higher density development close to these corridors will help support the viability of new services. These public transport improvements, will also need to be supported by safe and attractive walking and cycling routes to promote healthier and more sustainable shorter journeys to work.

28.4 The development of a large-scale community such as this will require new facilities for residents such as shops, health facilities, community facilities and recreational areas. These will be provided in accessible locations within walking distance of homes. In addition, demand on school places will also increase and therefore investment in new facilities for primary and secondary education will be required.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – GM1.2 Simister/Bowlee

Northern Gateway

The Northern Gateway is an extensive area located around Junction 18 of the M60 motorway extending east to Junction 19 of the M62 and north to Junction 3 of the M66. It comprises two key allocations within the wider North-East Growth Corridor:

- Heywood / Pilsworth (Bury and Rochdale) (see Policy GM Allocation 1.1 'Heywood/ Pilsworth (Northern Gateway)'); and
- Simister and Bowlee (Bury and Rochdale) (see Policy GM Allocation 1.2 'Simister/Bowlee (Northern Gateway)')

The Northern Gateway straddles the districts of Bury and Rochdale and is positioned at a strategically important intersection around the M60, M62 and M66 motorways. As such, it represents a highly accessible opportunity for growth in Greater Manchester with wider benefits on a regional and national level. The central theme of the spatial strategy for Greater Manchester is to deliver inclusive growth across the city region complemented by a key aim to boost the competitiveness of the northern parts of Greater Manchester. The Northern Gateway is one of the key locations that will help to deliver these fundamental objectives.

This strategic allocation will enable the delivery of a large, nationally-significant employment opportunity to attract high quality business and investment, with a complementary housing offer on the M62 corridor, where there is strong evidence of market demand.

The allocation at Heywood/Pilsworth provides an opportunity for a substantial and high quality employment-led development. The scale and location of this allocation will help to rebalance the Greater Manchester economy, ensure the GMSF plays its part in driving growth within the north of England and enable Greater Manchester to be competitive both nationally and internationally.

This will be supported by new communities as part of the Heywood/Pilsworth allocation as well as at Simister/Bowlee which have transformational potential in enabling new housing, community facilities and new transport infrastructure to come forward in what is currently an area with significant pockets of high deprivation, low skills and worklessness.

To be successful and sustainable, the employment and housing opportunities need to be accessible by a range of transport modes and be linked directly to existing and new communities in the surrounding area via new recreational routes and corridors of green infrastructure which in turn provide an attractive setting for development. Outside of the motorway network, much of the area proposed for development is currently served by an inadequate transport network and this will require substantial investment to improve connectivity, potentially including investment in rapid transit. The prospective residents will require new community facilities and these will be provided in accessible locations within walking distance of homes.

The opportunities at Heywood/Pilsworth and Simister/Bowlee will need to incorporate extensive supporting infrastructure. The full delivery of the allocation at Heywood/Pilsworth is likely to extend beyond the plan period.

Policy GM Allocation 1.2 - Simister and Bowlee (Northern Gateway)

Any proposals for this allocation must be in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan that has been previously approved by the LPA(s). It shall include a clear phasing strategy as part of an integrated approach to the delivery of infrastructure to support the scale of the whole development in line with Policy GM-D1 Infrastructure Implementation. This should include the delivery of highways infrastructure, surface water drainage, grey infrastructure including utilities provision, green and blue infrastructure, broadband and electric vehicle charging points recreation provision and social infrastructure and ensure coordination between phases of development.

Development at this allocation will be required to:

1. Deliver a broad mix of around 1,550 houses to diversify the type of accommodation across the Simister, Bowlee and Birch and Langley areas. This includes an appropriate mix of house types and sizes, accommodation for older persons, plots for custom and self-build and a mix of housing densities with higher densities in areas of good accessibility and potential for improved public transport connectivity and lower densities adjacent to existing villages where development will require sensitive design to respond to its context;
2. Facilitate the required supporting transport services and infrastructure including:
 - i. An upgrade of the local highways network;
 - ii. Traffic restrictions on Simister Lane to prevent this route from being a form of access/egress to and from the allocation;
 - iii. Improved public transport provision through the allocation (including Bus Rapid Transit corridors) and close to the allocation (including potential Bus Rapid Transit or Metrolink extension to Middleton) in order to serve the development; and
 - iv. Other off-site highway works where these are necessary to ensure acceptable traffic movement.
3. Deliver a network of safe and convenient cycling and walking routes through the allocation designed in accordance with national and GM standards of design and construction and local planning policy requirements.
4. Make provision for affordable housing in accordance with local planning policy requirements;
5. Make provision for a new two-form entry primary school;
6. Make a financial contribution towards off-site secondary school provision to meet the needs generated by the development;
7. Make provision for a new local centre in an accessible location which includes a range of appropriate retail, health and community facilities and ensure that it is integrated with existing communities;
8. Make provision for other necessary infrastructure such as utilities, broadband and electric charging points in accordance with relevant GMSF or local planning policies;
9. Ensure the design and layout allows for effective integration with surrounding communities, including active travel links and connections to local services and the new area of employment at Heywood/Pilsworth (GM1.1);
10. Retain, enhance and replace existing recreation facilities where required and make provision for new recreation facilities to meet the needs of the prospective residents in accordance with local planning policy requirements;
11. Make provision for new, high quality, publicly accessible, multifunctional green and blue infrastructure within the allocation to provide health benefits to residents as well as creating a visually attractive environment and providing linkages to the sites wider drainage strategy in accordance with Policy GM-G2 Green Infrastructure Network and Policy GM-G9 Standards to a

Greener Greater Manchester. This should include enhancement of existing watercourses throughout the allocation.

12. Minimise impacts on, and provide net gains for, biodiversity assets within the allocation, including the Bradley Hall Farm SBI, in accordance with Policy GM-G10 – A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
13. Ensure the allocation is safe from and mitigates for, potential flood risk from all sources including surface water, sewer flooding and groundwater. The delivery of the allocation should be guided by an appropriate flood risk and drainage strategy which ensures co-ordination between phases of development;
14. Ensure that sustainable drainage systems are fully incorporated into the development to manage surface water and control the rate of surface water run-off, discharging in accordance with the hierarchy of drainage options. Where possible, natural SuDS techniques should be utilised, prioritising the use of ponds, swales and other infrastructure which mimic natural drainage and be designed as multi-functional green infrastructure connecting to the wider green and blue infrastructure network in accordance with Policy GM-S5 - Flood Risk and the Water Environment and nationally recognised SuDS design standards. Proposals to discharge to the public sewer will need to submit clear evidence demonstrating why alternative options are not available.
15. Make appropriate provision for the long term management and maintenance of areas of green infrastructure, biodiversity features, other areas of open space and sustainable drainage features;
16. Carry out a project specific Habitats Regulation Assessment for planning applications of 1,000 sq.m./50 dwellings or more;
17. Incorporate appropriate noise and air quality mitigation measures and high quality landscaping along the M60 motorway corridors and local road network if required within the allocation.
18. Incorporate necessary remediation measures in areas affected by contamination and previously worked for landfill purposes
19. Protect and enhance the heritage and archaeological assets within the vicinity of the allocation and their setting in accordance with the findings of a Heritage Impact Assessment;

Justification

The delivery of this urban extension has transformational potential in enabling new housing development of 1,550 units, community facilities and new transport infrastructure to come forward in what is currently an area that contains significant pockets of high deprivation. Any housing development within the allocation will be required to make provision for recreation and affordable housing to meet the needs of the prospective residents in line with Local Plan policy requirements, across a range of housing types, sizes and tenures.

The delivery of such a major opportunity will require significant investment in infrastructure if it is to be successful and sustainable. In particular, the allocation will need to benefit from a wide range of public transport improvements in order to promote sustainable travel and improve linkages to new employment opportunities at GM1.1 Heywood/Pilsworth. This could potentially include Bus Rapid Transit linking Manchester City Centre to the Northern Gateway allocation. The allocation may also benefit from a potential Bus Rapid Transit or Metrolink extension to Middleton. Higher density development close to these corridors will help support the viability of new services. These public transport improvements, will also need to be supported by safe and attractive walking and cycling routes to promote healthier and more sustainable shorter journeys to work.

The development of a large-scale community such as this will require new facilities for residents such as shops, health facilities, community facilities and recreational areas. These will be provided in accessible locations within walking distance of homes. In addition, demand on school places will

also increase and therefore investment in new facilities for primary and secondary education will be required.

The semi-rural nature of this part of Greater Manchester and the character and setting of small villages such as Simister and Bowlee will be respected and will inform the layout, density and built form of development in these locations. Areas of open land and green infrastructure will be incorporated to maintain the identities of these places, including the retention of historic field boundaries, route ways and woodlands where practical. The allocation also includes existing areas of biodiversity value, notably the streams and flushes at Bradley Hall Farm which form a Site of Biological Importance in the eastern part of the allocation. This SBI and other areas of identified biodiversity value should be taken fully into account in the masterplanning of the site.

Delivery of the allocation should be guided by an appropriate flood risk and drainage strategy which ensures co-ordination between phases of development. Measures such as rainwater recycling, green roofs, water butts and permeable driveway surfaces should be considered to mitigate the impact of potential flood risk both within and beyond the site boundaries. As a green and blue infrastructure network will provide more sustainable options discharge surface water, only foul flows should connect with the public sewer.

Traffic to and from the site is likely to include travel on the M62 which passes close to designated European sites and, as such, a project specific Habitats Regulation Assessment will be required for planning applications involving 1,000 or more sq.m. or 50 or more residential units.

Given that the allocation is located adjacent to the M62 motorway, there may be a need to incorporate a buffer between the allocation and the motorway to serve multiple functions including air and noise mitigation and high quality landscaping. Mitigation through tree planting could be undertaken in conjunction with proposals for the Northern Forest.

There are a number of assets of historical significance in proximity to the allocation, and whilst outside the allocation boundary, any development would need to consider the impact on their setting through the completion of a Heritage Impact Assessment.