

# **Bury Housing Strategy**

## **April 2021**

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**Section 1: Housing for Bury 2030: Let's do it!**

The Council, partners and residents have worked together to develop a 10-year vision for the borough. Through a true collaborative transformation process, the *Bury 2030 Vision; Let's do it!* is bringing together and integrating our public services with new neighbourhood-based hubs and team working. Our public and voluntary services, businesses and local partners are starting to coalesce energetically around a common vision and set of objectives that will continue to guide reform and service transformation across the borough.

This housing strategy and supporting action plan sets out how we intend to work and what we intend to do to create the right conditions so that housing – across all tenures – supports our Bury 2030 Vision.



**1.1 Housing for Bury 2030 Let's do it! and our Industrial Strategy**

Housing, in its widest sense, affects many parts of our lives. The COVID-19 lockdown period brought home to us all just how important it is to have a healthy, suitable and secure home. It has made us more conscious of our local neighbourhoods and of the spaces between our homes, places where we can meet and enjoy each other's company. There is a new impetus on helping people of all ages to live well within our communities; neighbours stepped up to offer support to people who were shielding; homeless people were given en-suite hotel accommodation with on-site support as the appetite for residential care decreased rapidly the realisation that we must create the conditions for older people to live well within their communities for as long as possible has grown. We are now acutely aware of the huge role

housing construction could play in shoring up a positive future for our local and national economy, not least as we gear up to address the climate change challenge.

Here's how housing will support the five themes of our industrial strategy.

### **1.1.1 Healthy People**

People are healthy when they are living well in their homes and neighbourhoods. The ability to secure a warm, safe home that is the right size and that meets our particular needs at each stage of life in a neighbourhood we feel we 'fit' and with the support we need to live independently, is core to our happiness. It is the basis for good mental and physical health and a springboard to a good life at any age.

There is currently an imbalance between the housing available in the borough and what people need and aspire to, so not everyone is able to find a home that is affordable for them and that meets their needs. This is also limiting the borough's potential as a place of choice for people considering moving to the area. This strategy aims to plot a course towards filling that gap through more proactive engagement with developers and registered providers to enable more of the right sort of homes to be built.

It also sets out the steps we will take towards more healthy housing, communities and places to take the pressure off our health systems including through our One Commissioning Organisation and, by proactively addressing people's housing problems through our neighbourhood-based teams and homeless programmes.

### **1.1.2 Thriving Green Places**

Thriving green places are alive, calming and distinctive. People love to live and work in them and visit them because they offer safe, pleasant and interesting spaces and reasons to interact with others – through digital means as well as face-to-face. They offer the potential for money to be spent and earned through the sale of attractive goods and experiences as well as free, inexpensive and pleasant community spaces to just 'be'. They provide safe ways to cycle and walk and air quality is high. Homes are powered by renewable energy sources and are well insulated.

Regeneration is taking place in our town centres: Bury, Prestwich, Radcliffe, Ramsbottom, Tottington and Whitefield. By aligning new housing development, improvements to existing homes, consideration of people's local workspace requirements and the need for parks, trees and green spaces to enhance the strong identities of each of our towns, we aim to create urban villages with appropriate infrastructure where people can live, work, relax and have fun.

### **1.1.3 Co-designed Ideas**

Bury needs more affordable housing. However, people want more than 'affordable housing'; they want a home to enjoy that meets their needs and aspirations in a place they like at a price that enables them to enjoy their lives.

We want to hear more from our residents at different stages of their lives about what makes a 'good home' and a 'good neighbourhood' and to provide ways for them to influence what happens in their neighbourhood including through our approach to planning and delivery on the ground. We want to influence more diverse and imaginative types of housing to support people to live good lives – whether they are live-work schemes, dementia-friendly homes, self-build or other types of housing – in line with their aspirations and affordability levels. We are open to new ideas and we want to inspire others and be inspired by seeing how other places are innovating, for example, in financing new homes, low carbon technology and modern methods of construction.

#### **1.1.4 Future-proofed Infrastructure**

We see our housing – of all types – as part of the infrastructure of the borough, alongside our transport, roads and digital communications. The housing that is already there, and that will be built over the period to 2030, will outlive most of us so we have a duty to look after it for future generations.

We want to drive up the number and quality of homes in the borough and to make sure that new homes are right for the location, offering people choice and helping our towns and neighbourhoods to thrive. We will seek to influence the type, quality, density, energy efficiency and carbon emissions of new homes that are built. We will also drive-up standards in private rented housing and empty homes that we bring back into use. We will enable people at all stages of life to access a home that suits them and their families at a price they can afford – giving special attention to meeting the aspirations of our older people and specialist groups, and our younger households who might otherwise move away. Our long-term aim is for all of the borough's homes to become net carbon neutral, starting with new homes.

#### **1.1.5 Inclusive Business Growth**

Bury has ambitions to move beyond its post-industrial phase to forge a new economic future characterised by inclusive growth and respected and engaged communities.

Housing can help boost the local economy in several ways. Increasing the supply of homes that are both affordable and attractive for young professionals starting out helps to retain more of our young people and attract others to live in the borough to power our local economy. A better range of housing options for households across the life-course and quality places will help to attract people who can fill skills gaps to live and spend their money in the borough and will encourage new businesses to locate themselves in the borough. Supporting development partners and procuring from building companies who offer local apprentice, training and employment opportunities will help to increase the number of construction jobs available to Bury residents. Through new self-build and renovation options, our younger residents will have opportunities to build their construction skills-set. Supporting local businesses to rise to the challenge of climate change, we can help to upskill a workforce for component manufacture and housing retrofit; and the more people save on fuel bills, the more they have to spend in the local economy.

## 1.2 Housing that enhances our towns

All six of our town centres are different. Residents are actively engaged in creating their town's future, based on its strong identity, ambition and the contribution it aspires to make to people's lives and prosperity of the north west. Each town is on a different trajectory and the process and timescales for developing the town centres will vary considerably.

Housing presents an opportunity to breathe new life into our town centres and help to achieve each of our town centre ambitions. The changes in our retail habits that have been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic will force a repurposing of many of our town centres. Changing the use of some retail sites to create an aspirational housing offer that includes affordable homes with good access to leisure facilities, parks, culture, art and a wide range of community facilities, could be one route to realising our ambition for '15-minute neighbourhoods'.

Building new homes as part of a regeneration plan, such as through a Bury Town Centre Masterplan, could enhance the town centre as a place to live, shop and work. A holistic plan for the place and properly supported delivery would help to raise developer confidence and attract investment. Apartment-style accommodation close to tram stops and other transport hubs can be popular with younger commuters. Offering some Build to Rent apartments could be a way of providing a blend of rent levels.

Other places, such as Radcliffe, could be enhanced through a broader mix of good quality housing designs that appeal both to young families and elderly people. The Radcliffe Strategic Regeneration Framework sets out some detailed proposals around key housing sites and their importance in meeting the housing needs of local residents as well as delivering increased footfall to aid town centre vitality. The former East Lancashire Paper Mill, for example, has the potential to deliver around 400 homes with a range of house types, sizes and tenures.

In Ramsbottom and Tottington, some sites may be suitable for additional 2-bed bungalows or flats that could be attractive to older people looking to downsize. While in Prestwich, the desire for larger homes to buy in areas with significant Jewish populations could be enabled in partnership with a trusted housing association while also accommodating some higher density apartment-style homes alongside products suitable for young people.

Whitefield may have potential for a village hub around an extra care scheme and this could inspire similar intergenerational 'village hubs' through remodelled sheltered schemes.

In every place there is scope to remodel the public spaces between the homes to provide more congenial spaces for people to meet and enjoy together.

### **1.3 Working with residents to shape housing in each township**

Much of this strategy applies equally across the whole borough. However, it will be possible to vary how we apply some elements in different locations depending on the emerging vision for each town.

We will hold a series of conversations with residents through our Towns Initiative, our new community hubs and other forums to shape our approach to housing for each township. We will explore existing homes, new homes and how housing can support successful neighbourhoods and will allow for local variations in timescale in how some elements of this housing strategy are implemented. The vehicle for holding these conversations will vary – in some towns it may take place as part of a master planning process or as part of the development of the strategic regeneration framework. In other places, a standalone housing blueprint might provide a useful mechanism for discussion and negotiation. There will be an expectation that each township will support borough-wide ambitions, such as for all new homes to be low carbon by 2030, and that they will contribute to meeting the overall housing needs of the borough. A central decision-making committee will ensure that each township does its part to deliver the vision of the whole of Bury within Greater Manchester.

The current profile of homes, including both rent levels and purchase prices, vary significantly between the six townships. It makes sense to build homes that will help to ‘balance up’ the range of homes available across the borough at the same time building to achieve the vision for each town. Our Housing Needs Assessment 2020 provides information on the nature and affordability of existing housing in each township as well as the aspirations and expectations of residents living there. We will draw on the information provided within the Housing Needs Assessment to develop individual ‘housing propositions’ that will inform our discussions and help us to determine what sort of new homes we want built in each town (see Section 2.3.1 for more information). They will be informed by the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and local planning documents and will also help inform the development of future planning documents. We will also draw on the range of ideas presented within this strategy to ensure our action on existing homes supports the broader vision for each town.

Developing our township coproduction mechanisms will enable us to get ahead of the Planning White Paper that is expected to establish a new system of ‘zonal planning’ in which resident engagement is weighted towards the plan development stage. We will seek resources from Homes England, MHCLG, BEIS and other sources to support and deliver our arrangements for township housing planning.

**Outcomes sought from this housing strategy**

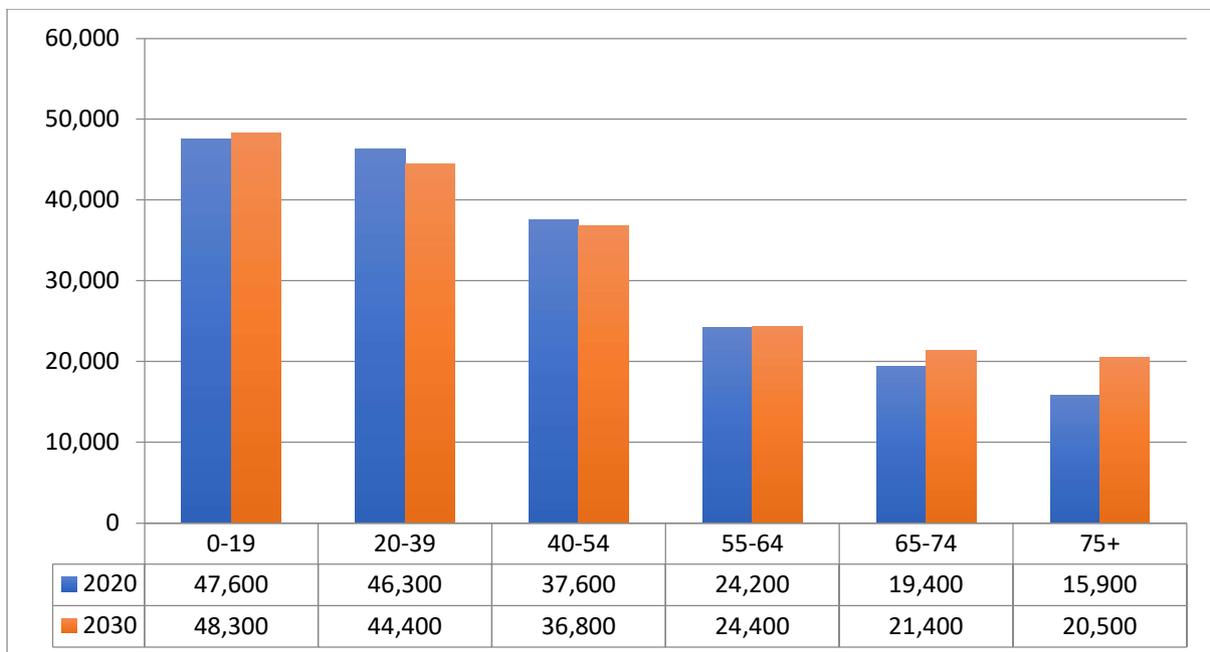
- More homes in the borough.
- Increased affordable housing supply – through new build, leasing and acquisition.
- A more dynamic housing market – a broader range of housing types and tenures and more tailored support for people to access a suitable home they want in any tenure.
- Good quality, healthy homes and places.
- Support that enables people to live well in the community.
- Intelligent, evidence-driven, targeted investment to improve health through housing.
- Township housing strategies to support the future of each town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- To eliminate rough sleeping by 2025 – through an evidenced approach to preventing homelessness, increasing the supply of affordable new homes, supporting accessibility and ‘enabling support’ towards independence.
- Rapid movement towards low carbon housing.

**Section 2: New homes for Bury**

**2.1 Who lives in Bury now? Who will live in Bury in the future?**

In 2020, there were 191,841 people living in over 81,000 homes in Bury MBC. The borough’s population is projected to increase to 198,241 by 2030 and to 202,568 by 2037, an overall increase of 5.6% residents. The population aged 65 years and over is expected to increase disproportionately quickly, from 35,225 to 43,635 a rise of 8,410 or almost 24% over the same period.

This population increase equates to 5,109 new households over the period from 2020-2030<sup>1</sup> with many more households expected in the older age groups. The projections also show a decline in the number of people between the ages of 20 and 54 living in the borough.



This analysis is telling us that, at the same time our population is ageing we are not retaining or attracting working age residents. We need to act now to change the direction of travel and drive a better balance between our younger and older populations.

A recent economic analysis<sup>2</sup> revealed that Bury has a diverse and high skilled population. However, Bury did not bounce back well during the years following the last recession in 2008-10 and this suggests that economic recovery following the Coronavirus pandemic could also prove difficult. The demand for housing is high from people who work outside the borough, and whose incomes are generally higher than those who work and live within the borough, many of whom also see Bury as good place to live. This has the effect of pushing house prices up to levels that are a stretch for many people living on Bury-level incomes.

<sup>1</sup> Bury Housing Market Assessment 2020, using 2014-based MHCLG household projections

<sup>2</sup> Bury Economic Performance, Resilience and Brexit, Cambridge Econometrics 2020

Our Housing Needs Assessment shows that people who earn lower quartile, and even median level incomes in Bury can struggle to buy a suitable home<sup>3</sup>.

The actual costs of housing varies significantly across the borough; Prestwich is both more expensive than other townships and popular with commuters while Radcliffe is less expensive and has the potential to offer good quality affordable housing options in a high-quality environment, through our regeneration plans.

We need to work harder to provide the right homes both to retain those who commute out for work and to meet the needs of residents working locally; both will help to stabilise spending and support recovery of our local economy. We also need to make sure we can attract the right skills to drive and fill gaps in our local economy that cannot easily be filled by people already living in the borough. People are persuaded to live in a place when both the housing and place offer is attractive to them. Getting the housing right within our broader plans for regeneration of our town centres is going to be critical to Bury's economic future.

We have an opportunity through the new homes that will be built over the next ten years, and through attention to existing homes and places, to develop a strong 'housing offer' that will both provide for our older population and help to shore up our working age population who will be critical for our economic future.

## 2.2 How many and what sort of homes will we aim to have built?

Bury is one of the less affordable areas of Greater Manchester with slightly higher than average house prices than the North West generally<sup>4</sup>. The most common size is a 3-bed home and almost 45% of existing homes have three bedrooms. Owner occupation is high at almost 70% while private renting is low at 15.1%. Bury has a notably small proportion of households living in affordable homes with just 15.3% of households renting from the Council or from a housing association. This is almost 20% below the England average and 16% below the North West average.

In 2019 the Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) proposed a target of an average of 498 new homes in Bury MBC each year to meet needs to 2037. This was on the basis of stepped targets requiring 270 new homes each year from 2018-23 and 580 new homes each year from 2023-27. The quantity of development required is based on the Government's standard methodology for calculating housing needs. These figures and housing targets are potentially subject to change through the next iteration of Greater Manchester's joint development plan (Places for Everyone). Over the past five years, 383 new homes have been built annually, 25% of which were affordable dwellings.

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<sup>3</sup> Figure 4.8 of Housing Needs Assessment 2020

<sup>4</sup> Median house prices in Bury MBC were £165,000 in 2019 compared with £158,000 across the North West and £235,000 across England. Housing Needs Assessment, 2020

Our latest Housing Needs Assessment tells us that we have a net shortfall of affordable housing for 448 households each year<sup>5</sup>. It recommends that 75% of all new homes should be for sale or rent at market levels and 25% should be affordable homes; 15% rented and 10% affordable home ownership.

The Housing Needs Assessment 2020 identifies six 'stages of life' for which people typically want different things from their housing. This points to the need to deliver a greater range in the type of homes built in line with the Greater Manchester Housing Strategy Priority B3: Increasing choices in the housing market is a priority across Greater Manchester.

We will draw on this data and, in addition, we will actively collect more detailed and nuanced information about the features that people within the age groups we want to attract and retain are looking for – those between the ages of 20 and 54. We will work with our new Community Hubs, residents and partners who are in touch with residents, such as local employers, to enhance our knowledge of residents' aspirations and will use this to inform and influence what is built and how we will help people to access a home they want.

#### What might Bury residents want from their housing?

Working with our Community Hubs we will develop a more detailed understanding of what people want.

- ***Bury's young residents seeking independence (16-25)*** might be interested in purpose built shared 'co-living' accommodation, a modern super energy efficient micro-home, supported lodgings with an established household or foyer-style accommodation for 16-21 year olds.
- ***Bury's young professionals (26-39)*** might be interested in LiveWork schemes, in purchasing or renting a town-centre apartment or Council owned Build-to-Rent.
- ***People looking to settle in Bury (26-45)*** could be interested in purchasing a new keyworker house or apartment, or in a self-build option through which they learn a range of project management and building skills
- ***Bury's maturing families (35-59)*** may prioritise a garage or off-road parking and may want to have a say in the design of their new home. Some could be interested in being part of an 'intentional community' such as intergenerational cohousing.
- ***Bury's active older people (60-74)*** may be looking to downsize to a smaller home that is more manageable, they may be looking to be within reach of a 'sheltered village' or even to be interested in moving with friends into a cohousing scheme they have helped to design.
- ***Bury's more frail older people (75 and over)*** may also be looking to downsize and may be more inclined towards a model of extra care within a 'natural community'. They would benefit from Lifetime Homes Standards and may want a safe space to park a buggy.

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<sup>5</sup> Housing Needs Assessment 2020

### 2.2.1 New specialist homes and neighbourhoods to meet particular needs

There are increasing sources of evidence about what makes a good home, and a good neighbourhood, for people with particular housing needs<sup>6</sup>.

In addition to nationally available information, in Bury we are moving towards a system of 'Coproduction Networks' where we explore with different groups what would help them to live a good life. Issues relating to housing and neighbourhoods typically come up frequently and we will endeavour to understand the characteristics of new homes and neighbourhood that would help to meet particular needs well.

#### *Homes suitable and attractive for older people*

Our Housing Needs Assessment is telling us that most people over the age of 65 want to continue to live in their current home, with support when needed. However, up to 40% between the ages of 65 and 74 may be interested in moving to a more suitable, more manageable and often smaller home – many thousands of people over the period to 2030. The appetite to consider a move halves to around 20% by the time people reach 75 years of age, but the desire to move into a sheltered or extra care schemes is in fact highest for the 75-84 age group, at around 20% or more.

This is telling us that, so long as we get the model and publicity right, new extra care housing and remodelled sheltered housing has a significant part to play in housing our older population going forward. Two-bedroom apartments with the right features and in the right locations, are also very popular with older people, as are bungalows. Some of our communities choose to live and be supported within extended family structures; the Council is keen to provide a suitable response to their needs, which might include advice on home extensions or extensions to Council properties.

Building significant quantities of the right new homes attractive to our aging population will help to free up larger homes in all tenures. This will make for a more dynamic housing market as more people find a suitable home in a location they want at different stages of their lives.

#### *Homes for people with a learning disability*

Our housing and support options for people with a learning disability are out-dated. We intend to address this by gaining a better understanding of what matters most to people in terms of their housing and location of their homes as well as adopting more enabling, community-based forms of support that enable and maximise peer-support and make it possible for more people to live in a non-specialist house with off-site support (see Section 5).

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<sup>6</sup> Housing LIN has a wealth of information on this: <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/>

Where the housing needs of people with a learning disability can be best met through new housing with particular features, we will build this into our housing development and influencing activity.

*“All people with a learning disability should have the opportunity to live in an ordinary street in an ordinary house, just like everybody else”.* **Draft Learning Disability Needs Assessment 2020**

#### *Homes for people with a serious mental health problem*

Housing is a central part of an effective recovery pathway for people with a serious mental health problem as well as a key element in preventing ill health.

We will seek out and examine best practice from other Council-NHS partnerships to identify the best forms of accommodation and tenancies to provide stability and support and aid recovery. We will work across the Council and CCG, including through the One Public Estates programme, to identify sites and bring forward funding to provide appropriate accommodation.

#### *New homes for people with a physical disability*

The Bury 2020 household survey has indicated that residents in 2,141 households (2.6%) require wheelchair adapted dwellings either now or within the next five years. Over the plan period, this number is expected increase by a further 132 resulting in an overall need for 2,274 wheelchair adapted dwellings. This will be achieved through the adaptation of existing properties and through newbuild.

Building regulations mandate that all properties are built to ‘visitable dwelling’ or M4(1) standard. Higher standards are optional, and these include:

- Accessible and adaptable dwellings, M4(2)
- Wheelchair user dwellings, M4(3)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that: *‘where an identified need exists, plans are expected to make use of the optional technical housing standards to help bring forward an adequate supply of accessible housing’.*

It is proposed that the Council will aim initially for 10-25% of new dwellings at the optional M4(2) standard, which is equivalent to the Lifetime Homes standard, with a larger percentage expected on larger sites. The 2019 Draft GMSF proposed a requirement for all new dwellings to be built to the ‘accessible and adaptable’ standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations. Over time, this would enable better accessibility to more of Bury’s housing stock which will be important for our ageing population and people with disabilities. It would also reduce the costs and upheaval when these homes are adapted in the future. These requirements are potentially subject to change through the next iteration of Greater Manchester’s joint development plan (Places for Everyone)

### *A new refuge for people fleeing domestic violence*

Cases of domestic violence increased significantly through the COVID-19 lockdown. Bury had too little emergency accommodation suitable for families fleeing domestic violence before the pandemic; now we want to develop a safe place for families to be accommodated temporarily. We will do this through a collaborative partnership including the CCG, housing, social care and probation services so that we can provide holistic support for victims while also getting involved in perpetrator intervention.

## **2.3 How will we influence what sort of homes are built where?**

The Council has the most influence over what is built on sites it owns. It is important for the Council to make good use of this opportunity and ensure the homes developed achieve its future aims. This will then set the benchmark for other developers to do the same.

We are exploring how we can work with our residents and partners to develop a common understanding about what sort of new homes will work best in different places to achieve the vision in this housing strategy. Having a clear idea about that will help us to influence and support delivery of the right homes in the right places.

### **Vehicles for influencing what homes are built in locations across the borough**

The Council can exert some influence over what homes are built where:

- By having a strong, persuasive vision for each of the Town Centres and major development sites and for housing to support those visions.
- Being clear to housing providers about what we want built in which locations.
- Through the planning process, good evidence and aligning planning consents to its strategic vision.
- Through negotiations with developers and registered housing providers.
- By providing incentives and 'gap funding' to make sites viable or to pay for enhancements to the public realm in new build areas.

The Council has more influence when it enters into delivery partnerships with developers or registered providers. The increased influence comes with increased risk that can be partly mitigated through choice of the right partners and well negotiated contractual agreements.

The Council has more control over what is built on land it owns and other public land through One Public Estate. It would have direct control over any homes it builds itself or through a joint commission partnership with registered housing providers.

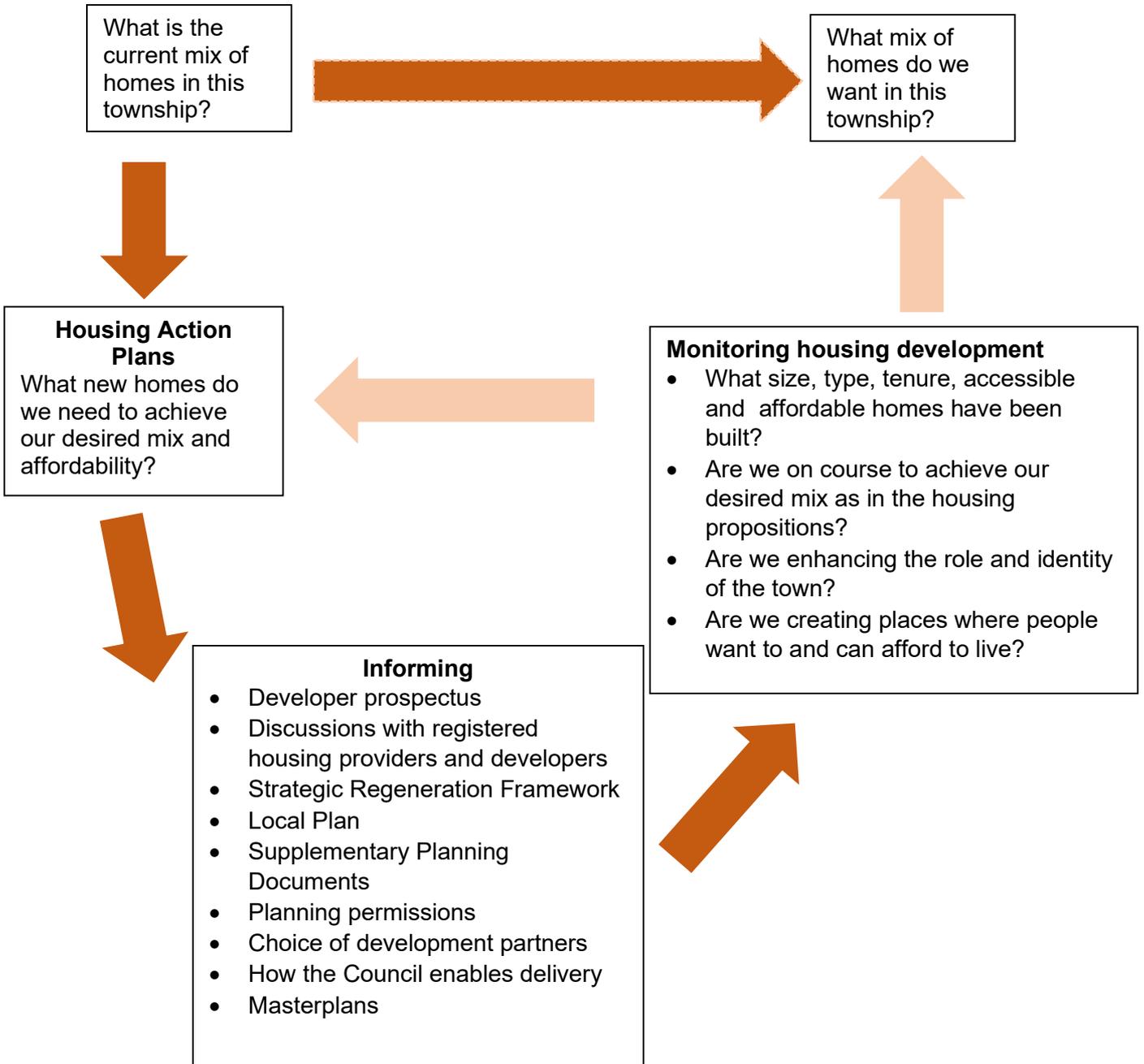
### **2.3.1 'Housing Propositions' to guide and influence what is built where**

To increase our influence over what is built in different places across the borough, we will develop housing action plans for each of the six townships that will be a part of the broader vision for each township.

These propositions will identify the size, type, affordability, and tenure of new homes – and how many of each – that are required to balance up and provide the right mix of homes overall to support the vision for each place, informed by the 2020 Housing Needs Assessment. They will also potentially include details of the numbers of new homes needed to be built to specific and accessible housing standards to make more homes suitable for particular groups.

These plans will aid discussions with housing developers and relevant stakeholders and, will help to contribute to the evidence base of our future planning policy documents including Strategic Regeneration Frameworks and the suite of Local Plan documents for the borough that will be subject to consultation.

The housing action plans will inform how the Council and partners may be able to support delivery.



## The Draft GMSF housing development sites

The 2019 Draft GMSF identified the following sites for strategic housing development. These sites are potentially subject to change through the next iteration of Greater Manchester's joint development plan (Places for Everyone).

**Elton Reservoir, Radcliffe and Bury:** Plans for 3,500 homes of a range of types, size, tenure and affordability (including affordable housing) at higher densities where there is good accessibility. This development will diversify the type of homes available and will be accompanied by new and improved road infrastructure, a new metro link stop and other public transport investment, cycle and walkways, three new schools including a secondary school for Radcliffe, retail and community facilities and significant areas of public accessible open space / parkland.

**Seedfield:** Plans for a broad mix of around 140 new houses to diversify the type of accommodation, including affordable homes. While relatively small in number provision will be made to meet the wider needs of new households including enhancements to highways and public transport infrastructure and cycle routes and design that allows for effective integration with surrounding communities. Please note that this site has secured funding through the Brownfield Land Fund and is being brought forward outside of the joint plan.

**Walshaw:** accommodating a mix of around 1,250 homes with accompanying new roads, provision for recreation, accessibility by walking and cycling, new primary school capacity and a new local centre including a range of appropriate retail, community facilities and other services. This site will include green infrastructure corridors focusing on the wildlife corridors.

**Northern Gateway:** New homes are planned for a large cross-boundary allocation spanning Bury and Rochdale and comprising employment-led sites to attract high quality business and investment to boost the competitiveness of the northern parts of Greater Manchester - 200 new homes planned for the Bury side of the Heywood/Pilsworth site and 1,500 in Simister/Bowlee. Development will be supported by significant infrastructure comprising new and upgraded highway networks, routes for walking/cycling connecting to adjoining towns and neighbourhoods, new schools, new and upgraded publicly accessible green spaces. The whole area is expected to be planned through a comprehensive masterplan.

**Bury's Town Centres including Bury, Prestwich, Radcliffe and Ramsbottom** are also changing through the Town Centre Initiatives. There are opportunities for new housing on several sites to match the distinctive character of each town.

*(This Housing Strategy does not have the authority to allocate land for development, make changes to the greenbelt or re-set planning policy. The number of homes required is based on the Government's standard methodology for calculating housing needs).*

## **2.4 Supporting delivery of new homes**

### **2.4.1 Partners**

We know there is an appetite among developers and registered providers to build new homes in Bury and we want to work in partnership with them to engender support for the ambitions set out in this strategy and Bury 2030; Let's do it! We see small SME developers as a valuable asset as they can help us to build out smaller sites and plug gaps in local provision.

We are also aware that there are several common challenges developers and RPs experience including access to the limited land available, difficulties developing out larger sites in multiple ownership and viability of development in some locations especially when demands, such as zero-carbon standards, are placed on developers.

We intend to up our game in terms of the dialogue we have with RPs and developers of all sizes who have a detailed and nuanced understanding of the different housing markets and land ownership across the borough. We will do this by establishing a new joint commissioning partnership with RPs to help increase the supply of supported and specialist accommodation in the borough and genuine affordable housing such as shared ownership and social and affordable rent to meet housing need. We will create a forum for developers and providers to come together with council officers to share information and solve problems together. It might also be able to help inform what is possible in terms of development in each of the townships, through their in-depth knowledge of land ownership and site make up.

We will test out some of our ideas for reducing barriers and supporting delivery and learn from them about what has worked elsewhere and what might work for Bury. In other places, similar forums have led to reduced competition (and reduced prices paid) for sites and have helped the Council to understand how they can best act to reduce barriers.

### **2.4.2 Development prospectus**

Our regeneration plans for Radcliffe and Prestwich will each inform a prospectus through which we will set out the type and mix of new homes we expect to be built within the town centre, across the sites earmarked in Greater Manchester's joint development plan and other development sites. This will help to provide a clear steer and guide development activity.

We will also develop a small sites prospectus for sites across the whole borough that the Council intends to dispose of to provide SME developers and RPs with the information they require to make decisions about their development interest and activity.

### **2.4.3 New homes on Council-owned and other public land**

The Council also has ambitions to drive forward delivery of new homes on land it owns to help fill gaps in provision across the borough – either directly or in partnership. It is also

working through the One Public Estate programme to identify sites owned by other public bodies, such as the health estate, and work out how best to employ these sites to achieve Bury 2030: Let's do it!

### **Homes built through our direct delivery programme**

The Council has Homes England Partnership status and has previously received grant funding from Homes England for a small development program. Since 2017, the Council has directly developed a small program of new build homes including Mayfair Gardens and the former Radcliffe Times Building.

We support a 'brownfield first' approach and have identified a number of Council-owned sites and buildings that are suitable for housing development including affordable housing. We intend to re-assess our brownfield land capacity including town centres across the borough to help facilitate housing development on brownfield land. The Council has more influence over what is built on these sites than on many other sites owned by others across the borough, so we are exploring options for building homes that make the biggest contribution to achieving the outcomes identified within this housing strategy. Our choice of partners will depend partly on their willingness to get behind this strategy and build the homes Bury needs.

We are currently exploring the following options for building around 500 new homes over the next 5 years:

- Direct development – this would draw us towards specialised housing to avoid sales through the Right to Buy and could work against meeting the boroughs actual needs.
- Partnership with an RP or private developer – that would enable sharing of expertise, risks and rewards.
- Preparation of sites for sale – undertaking remediation/infrastructure works and selling the sites with conditions over the development characteristics

We are also considering options around management arrangements for those homes that will be rented or leased once they have been built.

One of the outcomes we are seeking from this housing strategy and action plan is to increase the number of affordable homes. Another is a broader range of housing tenures and financial products to enable more people to access a suitable home they want at a range of price-points. With this in mind, we are exploring a range of options including:

- Shared Ownership – a tenure we already provide in small quantities.
- Rent to Buy – providing an active route for households to move into home ownership.
- Market Sale – which would enable cross-subsidy for new affordable housing.

**2.4.4 Supporting RPs and private developers to deliver Bury’s vision**

We are considering a range of ways to support RPs and developers to accelerate delivery in priority areas. Our aim is to support developers to deliver the right sort of housing, with the right features in the right places in line with our emerging township visions and the forthcoming local plan. We are also exploring how we can actively encourage growth in a professionalised private rented sector, including through Build to Rent.

<b>Some approaches we will explore with developers</b>	
<p><b>Potential support for land assembly</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Provide clarity on land value:</i> use NPPF ‘benchmark land value’ to help avoid developers over-paying for land</li> <li>• <i>Packaging sites:</i> challenging sites brought forward with viable sites enabling cross-subsidy by a single developer</li> <li>• <i>Invest in site remediation:</i> in partnership with GM Local Enterprise Partnership</li> <li>• <i>Best use of public land:</i> work with One Public Estate to secure buy-in to a more collaborative approach to use of public sector land from statutory bodies such as health trusts, education authority as well as LA operational building at end of life</li> <li>• <i>Identify sites for Council acquisition:</i> where this would facilitate rapid or more innovative development than might otherwise be the case – including potentially COP where required</li> </ul>	<p><b>Potential support through strategic financing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Create a Bury Housing Fund:</i> drawn from a range of sources including s106 commuted sums, new homes bonus, prudential borrowing, sale of assets could be used flexibly to address site-specific viability issues e.g., equity stakes, loans or gap funding (compliant with State Aid regulations) and bringing empty properties back into use for affordable housing.</li> <li>• Support developers to access funds from the GMCA Housing Investment Loan Fund</li> <li>• <i>Identify sources and bid for infrastructure funding where this is holding back development</i></li> <li>• <i>Maximise niche funding opportunities:</i> for example, for self-build or community-led housing to support a small but potentially growing appetite among Bury residents</li> </ul>
<p><b>Potential for increasing developer certainty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Up-front investment:</i> on sites to create a development platform for the market</li> <li>• <i>Cash-flow support:</i> support home sales and defer payment for council land until housing sales complete.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Revising approach to planning obligations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Revise Supplementary Planning Guidance for s106 sites:</i> to embrace the ambitions set out in this strategy</li> <li>• <i>Negotiate broader range of ‘affordable’ homes:</i> including a blend of social rents,</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Streamlining</i>: facilitate dialog between private developers/registered providers to enable affordable housing delivery</li> <li>• <i>Pre-application discussions</i>: Proactive work with developers to speed up complex planning application processes</li> </ul>	<p>affordable rent, discounted market sale, shared equity products, rent to buy, shared ownership, deposit products – in line with the Housing Proposition for the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Undertake viability appraisals on all large sites</i>; to clarify negotiating position.</li> <li>• Monitoring of outcomes from s106 sites including how many and what types of affordable home are delivered through s106 and how the commuted sums are spent to increase affordable housing delivery</li> <li>• <i>Committed sums</i>: to support viability on other sites</li> </ul>
<p><b>Being ready for future national and Greater Manchester opportunities</b></p> <p>Homes England periodically updates the types of funding and support it makes available to councils and registered providers and the conditions of that support. Specific funds usually last for a finite period. We want to be always looking ahead and prepared, with schemes ready to be developed, so that we and our partners can bid for gap funding from these funds as well as other sources such as at Greater Manchester level to enable development to go ahead.</p> <p>We will also explore and look to make use of any new government-led initiatives to maintain house building and infrastructure projects through and following the pandemic.</p>	

**2.4.5 Management and monitoring of site development**

We will put in place systems for actively managing site development and monitoring what is built across all sites in Bury.

### Section 3: Action on Bury's existing homes

Most of the homes Bury residents will be living in, in 2030, already exist. Many people are living in a decent home that suits their needs but too many are living in poor quality homes and circumstances.

A 2018 a report by the Smith Institute for the Northern Housing Consortium called *The Hidden Cost of Poor-Quality Housing in the North*<sup>7</sup> showed Bury to be around the average for northern boroughs on a range of criteria relating to housing stock condition. Despite being slightly above average for fuel poverty, this still means that around 5,000 Bury households were found to be living in fuel poverty. It cites Office of National Statistics figures that show Bury has a significantly higher percentage of Excess Winter Mortality (EWM) than both the regional and national average.

This section explains how we will work with landlords and tenants as well as homeowners to take action on Bury's existing housing. The theme is continued in Section 4 which focuses on providing better access to a suitable permanent home and in Section 6 that considers how to address unhealthy homes as part of a broader focus on health and wellbeing.

#### 3.1 Improving condition of Council homes

In 2018, Six Town Housing undertook a stock condition survey of Council homes and developed an Asset Management Strategy for investment in our homes over the three years to 2021 within a 30-year investment plan as part of our overall HRA business plan.

The Council has since declared a Climate Change Emergency and set a target to achieve carbon neutral homes by 2038. In light of this, and of the need for ongoing investment in our homes to maintain the asset and provide decent homes for tenants, a further 'Stock Condition and Eco-analysis' is being undertaken across GM to ascertain both the condition of our stock and the 'carbon status' of homes. We will use this information to generate a plan of action and develop a new 'Bury Eco-Standard'.

#### 3.2 Action on leasehold properties on Council-owned estates

There are around 4,000 privately owned, former Right to Buy properties mixed with council properties managed by Six Town Housing. A much smaller proportion of council stock (approximately 290 homes) is managed by Springs Tenant Management Organisation.

There may be opportunities for joint investment, for example, for installing zero carbon measures such as solar PV, energy advice, ECO-grants. There might also be opportunities for

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<sup>7</sup> Northern Housing Consortium constituency profile for Bury: <https://www.northern-consortium.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/constituency-profiles/2018/north-west/2/bury-south.pdf>

general works to the public realm that would help sustain the wider community and neighbourhood, making it a better place to live.

### **3.3 Health and safety and improved powers of redress**

Both Six Town Housing and Springs TMO have fire safety policies and management plans which are regularly reviewed and monitored by their respective Boards. We will continue to review these and install relevant fire safety and other measures where appropriate in response to recommendations from the Grenfell Inquiry. Both organisations will also set out further measures to provide greater redress and improve the quality of social housing, including a review of tenant scrutiny arrangements in line with the proposals in the new Social Housing White Paper.

### **3.4 Improving and expanding the role of the private rented sector**

Almost 15% of Bury's residents live in private rented accommodation, ranging from less than 10% of Tottington's residents to almost 18% of Prestwich's residents. Private tenants include 'active choice' renters and 'frustrated would-be' homeowners and the sector also meets some of the long-term affordable housing need of the borough. Bury's relatively high private rents – which have increased by over 20% over the last ten years – mean that even lower quartile properties (the 25% of cheapest properties) are often not affordable to some households.

Bury Council's overall approach is to improve the private renting experience for all tenants and landlords and increase move-on accommodation for homeless people. Making a positive difference to the lives of private tenants is also a priority across Greater Manchester (Strategic Priority A2 in the GM Housing Strategy).

We will work proactively with landlords to drive positive relationships and high property and management standards. We will coordinate this with our 'ethical lettings' scheme providing financial and legal reassurances regarding letting to benefit claimants and a vehicle for meeting high standards through a leasing option. We will combine these positive approaches with proactive enforcement to address sub-standard practices and properties where necessary.

It is important that we provide appropriate 'tenancy sustainment' support for social and private tenants; this is addressed in Section 5 of this strategy.

#### **3.4.1 Encouraging high standards: accreditation through the GM Good Landlord Scheme**

We will work collaboratively with our partners across Greater Manchester to deliver a 'good landlord scheme' and look for ways of encouraging our landlords to become part of national information networks, such as the National Residential Landlords Association which has the latest up to date legal information and guidance landlords require to have the necessary knowledge to manage their properties effectively.

### **3.4.2 Ethical and sustainable private sector lettings**

The Council has entered into a partnership with the Greater Manchester Lettings Agency 'Let Us' to help improve access to the private rented sector for those currently excluded. This partnership has secured funding to acquire properties in the private sector and make them available to people in housing need.

The core values are centred around the following:

- to provide a high-quality lettings service for private landlords that supports both tenants and landlords well.
- to provide a means of bringing private rental properties up to a decent and low carbon standard.
- to increase the number of affordable properties in the private rented sector and ensure that people who claim benefits can access them.
- to increase the supply of long-term tenancies in healthy, suitable homes for people in housing need, particularly homeless people, and rough sleepers.

### **3.4.2 HMO Licensing**

The scope of mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) broadened in 2018 so many properties that did not meet the criteria for licensing now do. Building on the improvements to standards that have been achieved through our current HMO Licensing Scheme, we will proactively seek out and enforce against landlords and agents who have not yet obtained a license.

### **3.4.4 Enforcement action against poor management and property conditions**

We will continue to enforce against poor management practices and poor property conditions across the borough, where private rented homes do not meet legal standards. We will draw on a range of legal powers including those in the Housing Act 2004 and the Housing and Planning Act 2016 that provides the powers to impose civil penalties of up to £30,000 as an alternative to prosecution for certain housing offences. We will deliver increasingly proactive enforcement approaches, driving improvement in partnership with landlords. We may consider Selective Licensing if there are indications that a place-based approach would work better, although this is not our first option for driving improvement.

## **3.5 Bringing empty homes back into use**

At present, there are approximately 2,600 empty properties (3%) in the borough, which is a little above the national vacancy rate. However, around 60% have been unoccupied for at least 6 months and approximately 35% of those have been empty for at least 2 years and this is where the Council should target resources. If a proportion of these could be brought back into use, it would help to increase the supply of homes for occupation across the

borough. Long-term vacant dwellings also affect the image of an area and can lead to other problems in the neighbourhood such as crime and antisocial behaviour.

### **Action on empty properties**

To date, the Council have acquired and refurbished 48 empty homes, and these are now managed and let by Six Town Housing.

While short term empty properties are unavoidable, we discourage homes being left empty for long periods. The Council charges an 'Empty Property Premium' of 200% Council Tax on properties that have been empty and unfurnished for more than 2 years, rising to 300% on properties that have been empty for over 5 years.

We are currently reviewing our strategy for identifying and bringing long-term empty homes back into use. We intend to publish an updated Empty Homes Strategy that will detail a mix of methods including the potential to let through the Ethical Lettings Agency. This will include consideration of:

- The use of Council Tax records to map the location of dwellings that have been empty for more than 2 years.
- Inviting Bury residents to bring long-term empty homes to our attention.
- Identifying clusters in each township.
- The effectiveness of the current financial disincentives to keep properties empty.
- What further assistance, incentives or sanctions might be offered.
- Use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders and other powers in the Housing Act 2004 to intervene.
- The extent to which any future Ethical Lettings Scheme might support the lease or purchase and refurbishment of homes for letting.
- The potential for the increase in supply to add to our affordable housing supply.

We will look at best practice from other places to inform this strategy. We will also aim to use the latest low carbon technology on any refurbishments the Council undertakes.

### **3.6 Adapting homes for people to live well in the community**

Over 60% of people over the age of 65 want to live in their current homes for as long as possible, with support when needed, and this rises to over 85% of people over the age of 85. This represents a growing group of people, giving that our population is ageing.

Bury's aim is for everyone to live well within their homes and communities for as long as possible and to reduce the need for the more institutional settings such as care homes and specialist housing schemes. Living in a home that is free from hazards, supports mobility and enables older people and others with disabilities to live well, is key to achieving this. We are intending to upgrade how we work to adapt homes across all sectors to make them fit for the occupants to live well and reduce hospital use.

The Council will update its Financial Assistance Policy that sets out how Disabled Facilities Grant (within the Better Care Fund) will be spent. This will improve flexibility enabling the Council to assist more residents and provide more timely solutions to enable residents to live in their homes for longer.

We will also review provision of existing adapted properties across Bury to enable better matching with occupants who need an adapted home.

Some of the RPs operating in Bury have particular specialisms, for example in paid-for handyperson services, falls prevention, facilitating hospital discharge. We will explore how we might work with them to make these more widely available to Bury residents.

### **3.7 Redeveloping our traveller site**

The Council and Six Town Housing is progressing the redevelopment of Fernhill Traveller site to meet modern standards.

## Section 4: Enabling access to a suitable permanent home

The main way we currently help people to access a suitable home is through Bury Home Options, our Choice Based Lettings scheme. We also help a small number of people to access home ownership through our Affordable Housing Scheme. Care leavers are guaranteed access to a home up to age 25 and we help a significant number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation or who are at risk of homelessness back into a permanent home through direct lets and our Choice Based Lettings scheme.

We intend to expand the routes through which we support people to access a suitable permanent home.

### 4.1 Supporting home ownership

A significant number of residents would like to buy a home and have sufficient income to sustain the costs of home ownership, but they require support to make the purchase in the first place. We want to help more of those households to access their first home.

We will undertake a review of options for expanding routes into home ownership and take forward those that are viable and that help to increase movement in the housing market. This might include, for example:

- **Shared ownership** – increasing the volume of homes let through traditional SO.
- **Do It Yourself Shared Ownership (DIYSO)** where a household chooses a home and approaches the Council or Six Town Housing to support them into shared ownership.
- **Tenants Incentive Scheme (TIS)** where an existing Six Town Housing tenant is provided with a grant as a deposit towards home purchase on the open market – an option that also frees up an affordable, secure, stable home for social rent.
- **Equity loans**, where the Council supports purchase by providing up to a 25% share in a home, repayable on sale.
- **Self-build** where households are in charge of the process of designing and building their homes on a plot of land they buy, getting involved in project management and sometimes in aspects of the housebuilding themselves.
- **Homes built for sale on land owned by Bury Council** - through a lease arrangement that reduces the purchase cost of the dwelling.

We will also collaborate with our RP partners and developers to make some of these options available, through the Bury Housing Partnership.

## **4.2 Efficient relets of Council homes**

We are upgrading our approach to re-letting Council properties when a tenant moves out. A recent review has highlighted the need to ensure the lettings process is streamlined so that it offers a seamless, straightforward experience for new tenants and minimises rental loss.

## **4.3 Supporting access to a private sector tenancy**

The Council has a Bond Scheme that provides landlords with a non-cash guarantee to cover the costs of any damage incurred that would otherwise be covered through taking a tenant deposit. This is to enable eligible households to access private tenancies without requirement to pay a deposit. We are also looking at a range of other ways to help people in housing need, including homeless people, to access tenancies in the private rented sector.

Actions we are considering taking to support access to the private rented sector include:

- Active liaison with private landlords and people struggling to access a home in the private rented sector to explore ways in which we can support access as well as successful, long-term tenancies in decent homes.
- Providing incentives and guarantees, such as low interest loans for improvement works, for private landlords who offer long term tenancies (3, 5 or 10 years) at rents that can be met by Local Housing Allowance.
- Topping up rents where the Local Housing Allowance falls short of the full rent for a limited period through a dedicated fund, until another option for sustainable rent payment can be found.
- Offering private landlords a long-term (5 or 10 year) lease arrangement with management being offered through the Ethical Lettings Agency.

## **4.4 Purchase to increase supply to reduce homelessness**

We are considering buying a number of homes to provide a supply of rented move on accommodation for homeless people. These would be managed by an RP or support provider that has skills in providing support to former homeless people.

## **4.5 Supporting people to choose a suitable home for their old age**

Older people often need help with the decision-making process. Contemplating a move often comes at a time when people are less able to manage in their existing home and can feel like a loss of independence. They need support through the emotional aspects of decision-making, so that it feels that whatever they decide to do – to stay living in their existing home with support or to move to a more suitable home – they are making a positive decision. They also need access to good information about the options available. Those that decide to move may also need help to work out the practical details of moving and with the move itself.

We are planning to increase our support for people to be able to find a home that is suitable for their changing circumstances whether they are tenants or homeowners. We want our older people to be happy, comfortable, safe and connected where they live.

#### **4.6 Enabling better access for disabled people to an adapted property**

We want to improve our system for matching disabled people to suitably adapted homes so that more people can benefit from homes that help them to live their lives well in the community. This requires systems for recording where our adapted properties are as well as an allocations policy that prioritises matching of people with a disability to a property that has already been adapted and is suitable for their needs.

#### **4.7 Supported sharing and community-led options**

Enabled by digital technologies more people are becoming inclined to share their living spaces and sometimes aspects of their lives too. The Council wants to support people to do this where it is right for them.

The Cabinet has recently agreed to support an existing tenant management organisation to move to a full self-financing TMO, only the second in the country.

In addition, we will consider how we might support access to a range of options for sharing. These might include:

- Shared lives plus.
- Homeshare and supported lodgings.
- Cohousing or Co-living schemes.
- Co-operative living.
- Tenant Management Organisations.
- Community Land Trust.

#### **4.8 Review of Housing Options; balancing aspirations, needs, sustainability**

We intend to expand the information and advice we offer, transforming our current allocations process into a service that enables people to access social housing from other providers as well as the Council. This includes financial advice, tenancy sustainment services, advice about private rental deposits and support to move home.

This will help to facilitate more moves and create a more dynamic housing market where people are better able to access a home that suits them in a location they like, at a price they can afford. It will also help more households who cannot afford to purchase an affordable home and enable timelier lets to people to whom the Council has a legal duty to prevent from becoming homeless.

Through a review of our allocations processes we will aim to achieve three ambitions:

- Enabling people to gain access to a home they want and that suits them.
- Meet needs for permanent settled accommodation.
- Support sustainable communities.

## Section 5: Supporting people to live well in the community

Some of our residents require additional support to live well in the community or to turn their lives around.

Specialised supported accommodation has its place; Section 2 of this strategy sets out our approach to new schemes to fill gaps in provision. However, supported housing schemes are not our default. We want to support people independently from their accommodation wherever possible and part of the support we offer is to help people to move into their own home when they are ready to do so.

Finding new ways to support our expanding older population within their natural communities is a key focus for Bury. Adopting types of support that enable our learning-disabled residents 'to live in an ordinary house in an ordinary street', which we know is a strong ambition, is another and, we will shift to 'enabling' forms of support that help people who are homeless or have mental health problem to regain confidence and control over their lives.

Support can come in many forms. Having a community to connect with and practice the 5 *Ways to Wellbeing: Connect, Notice, be active, Learn, Give*<sup>8</sup> helps to promote mental wellness and protect against mental ill health. More specialised support needs can range from just a few months to life-long support. We are committed to enable all residents to live valued lives in their own homes and communities.

"The key to an effective housing strategy is to facilitate the right level of support at the right time with access to appropriate options for people when their needs increase or reduce, to maximise their capacity for independent living".

**GM Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust Housing and Mental Health Strategy 2019-22**

### 5.1 Easy access to informal support and early help through community hubs

Our new neighbourhood model is intended to make it easy for residents to connect with others, to both offer and receive a range of informal support and to come together to design new services to access relevant support through one of our Community Hubs based in Bury East Radcliffe, Whitefield, Ramsbottom and Prestwich.

It will also soon be possible for residents of any age and all housing tenures to access higher level support and to address more complex matters through multi-disciplinary public service teams offering access to 'Early Help' through the community hubs. This will include, for

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<sup>8</sup> The Five Ways to Wellbeing are an evidence interrelated set of activities brought together in 2007 by the New Economics Foundation and widely promoted by the NHS, especially Mental Health Trusts. Here is a link to an updated version of the five ways to wellbeing at a time of social distancing:  
<https://neweconomics.org/2020/03/five-ways-to-wellbeing-at-a-time-of-social-distancing>

example, helping people to register with a doctor, access to domestic abuse support, connecting to sources of support with money and debt problems.

## 5.2 Developing natural communities of support and peer support

Community spirit across the borough's six towns is high and growing and 'natural communities' have provided important informal support through the COVID-19 pandemic. We want to encourage natural communities to become the main type of support for most people. We are already providing some community-based 'floating support' but want to go further both to enable informal support networks to flourish and to enable more people to live shared lives where appropriate.

This includes, for example:

- intergenerational, age-friendly 'village hubs' built around sheltered and extra care housing.
- peer-led, networked communities of support wherever possible for people with a wide range of needs such as learning disabilities, mental health issues, experience of homelessness or addiction<sup>9</sup>.
- 'shared lives' and supported lodgings for those who want to share more of their lives with others.<sup>10</sup>

We will also develop peer mentorship programmes to train people who have had particular life experiences and who would like to support others going through similar challenges. We will look into peer mentors to support homeless people, people with substance misuse issues, people with mental health issues and survivors of domestic violence.

## 5.3 Commissioned support to meet particular support needs

We have recently commissioned four lots of support dedicated to meet particular support needs. These are:

- **A complex needs service:** a 30-bed unit for single homeless people with complex mental health, substance misuse or offending behaviour issues, providing a hub for residents to access a range of services onsite.
- **Floating support:** principally for people living in their own home or private rented accommodation who have low to moderate needs and may benefit from support, for example to pay their mortgage or to manage a tenancy. This includes 115 supported dispersed tenancies per annum secured from registered providers and through leases with private landlords throughout the borough. The housing management and a minimum of 6 months of support is provided by specialist support provider, Calico Group.

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<sup>9</sup> See Keyring networks of support: <https://www.keyring.org/>

<sup>10</sup> See Shared Lives Plus <https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/> and HomeShare <https://homeshareuk.org/>

- **Domestic abuse outreach service:** to facilitate safe planned moves for male and female survivors of domestic abuse.
- **Young people's supported accommodation:** co-produced with young people aged 16 to 25, including care leavers, this offers support to help break negative cycles of behaviour as well as providing opportunities to try a range of activities not normally available to them (such as art, music etc) and including resettlement packages to help people move on into their own tenancy.

## 5.4 Dedicated 'enabling' support for particular groups

Many people require support to live well in their homes and communities. While we tend to think of them in distinct 'groups', such as people with a learning disability or someone with a mental health issues, the reality is that they are all individuals with different existing family and support networks and there are many overlaps between what different people in the different groups actually need.

Most people want to live in a normal house in a normal street just like anyone else. We are therefore intending to modernise the way we support people to live independently within the community.

### 5.4.1 Networked support for people with a learning disability

We know that the types of 'live-in' support we are currently offering are not what most people with a learning disability want.

We have recently established a Coproduction Network to enable us to learn more about how the borough's 500-600 people with a learning disability want to live. We will listen to them and use this information to inform our plans for increasing the supply of the right sort of accommodation – both through new build and through acquiring existing properties through purchase and lease.

Working with one or more specialist RP partners, we will develop new forms of support so that people with a learning disability can enjoy greater levels of independence while having access to a range of housing options and 'enabling support' from a range of sources, including from their peers, to live their whole lives well.

*In recent years there has been a movement away from the use of residential care and institutional accommodation for people with learning disabilities towards supported housing services that allow individuals to live more independent lives".* **Bury Council Learning Disabilities Needs Assessment 2020**

### 5.4.2 Support for care leavers

The Council has 'corporate parenting' duties towards children leaving care up until the age of 25 affirmed in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. To make this fail-safe, we have recently passed a rule that no care leaver will be made intentionally homeless. In addition,

we are working with looked after children aged 16/17 through our Children's Housing, Employment and New Opportunities scheme to help them develop life skills and become ready to manage their own tenancy. We have secured 20 bedspaces through an SLA with Adult Care Services and are working towards a 'trainer flat' to support skills development.

#### **5.4.3 Support to promote recovery for people with a mental health problem**

Mental ill health is frequently cited as a reason for tenancy breakdown. Recognising housing and support is central to an effective recovery pathway, as well as a key element in preventing ill health, the Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust published a Housing and Mental Health Strategy in 2019.

Six Town Housing and a range of other RPs partners are involved in delivery of a strategy that aims to:

- Eliminate out of area placements of people with mental health problems on discharge from hospital.
- Improve pathway flow and reduced length of stay in hospital by integrating housing into the Acute Care Pathway.
- Improve health and social care outcomes, promoting recovery for service users.
- Identify new development opportunities for new models of service delivery and potential funding streams.
- Extend services further into the community by reconfiguring the Rehabilitation Pathway to include support and supported housing.
- Address the mental health needs of people who experience homelessness.

### **5.5 Preventing and relieving homelessness**

#### **5.5.1 Bury's Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan**

Bury saw an increase in homeless cases through the pandemic and is also anticipating a rapid increase in homelessness over the coming months as unemployment increases.

Bury Homelessness Partnership has recently developed a Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan. There are six priorities, and they are:

- Place: connecting homeless people to their community to support wellbeing.
- Property: increasing the supply of suitable accommodation.
- Partnership: effective partnerships with those who have a role to play.
- Person: relationships to enable the things that matter to homeless people.
- Prevention: acting earlier and faster to prevent people losing their home.
- Promote: raise awareness of homelessness, the causes and solutions.

As we deliver the Homelessness Action Plan, we will actively collect and monitor a range of data about the causes of homelessness, demand for different types of housing and support,

placements made, reasons repeat homelessness, ongoing unmet need and other important information. This information will inform the detail of our programmes to prevent and relieve homelessness.

### **5.5.2 Tenancy sustainment support for all tenants**

Ending of a private sector tenancy is one of the leading causes of homelessness in Bury. The temporary ban on evictions has ended and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is putting more tenancies at risk in both private and social rented sectors. We intend to increase our support for all tenants at risk of eviction.

The first port of call for Council and RP tenants will be their landlord. Support is already in place for Springs and Six Town Housing tenants to access money, debt, and welfare advice as well as support to help people address non-financial difficulties and assistance to access employment and training. Six Town Housing and Springs will consider what further steps they might take to avoid evicting tenants for non-payment of rent where the tenant is cooperating with them and will seek out good practice in tenancy sustainment.

Private tenants already have recourse to floating support provided through the Calico Group. However, we do not yet know what impact this will have on people becoming homeless due to loss of a private tenancy and whether this will be sufficient to avert a rise in evictions. We will continue to closely monitor the reasons for people becoming homeless with a view to taking further action to expand the tenancy sustainment and landlord liaison support we offer.

### **5.5.3 Support for homeowners facing repossession**

Inability to pay the mortgage could become a bigger cause of homelessness over the coming months and years. While there are no plans for government funding to support this, we are nevertheless considering whether a Mortgage Rescue scheme, through which the Council purchases a property and rents it back to the former owner, might provide a good solution for a small number of households, enabling them to stay living in their home.

### **5.5.4 Next Steps to eradicating rough sleeping**

COVID-19 has changed the way rough sleepers are supported. At the same time Government is making some new tools and funding available to address longstanding problems in the way we address homelessness, particularly for rough sleepers.

**Everyone In – arrangements for Bury’s rough sleepers through the COVID-19 pandemic**

The Government’s ‘Everyone In’ programme prompted rapid action to accommodate all those living in shared accommodation, rough sleepers and people who have become homeless through the lockdown period in self-contained hotel accommodation. Support, coordinated across a number of agencies, was also transferred to the hotel environment.

The experience for some homeless people and support workers has been a positive one partly due to having private space and separate sleeping arrangements, due to social distance requirements.

The Council is working with MHCLG through the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) to close some of the gaps in homeless provision that meant too many people have had to resort to sleeping rough. Our ambition is to eliminate rough sleeping and support both rough sleepers and other homeless households to find a sustainable housing solution going forward.

During (20/21) NSAP made £105m revenue funding available for short-term/interim accommodation and £130m to deliver 3,300 units of longer-term, move-on accommodation and £31m revenue funding. This is in addition to £23m for drug and alcohol treatment services.

The Council is looking at a range of options both to prevent people from becoming homeless and to support ‘non-priority’ homeless people – who do not qualify for assistance within the current homelessness legislation – through this programme.

We will also continue our partnership with other GM local authorities to support delivery on programmes like *A Bed Every Night* and *Housing First* for rough sleepers as well as continued engagement with the GM Homeless Action Network. The Network is currently reviewing its approach to ‘Build Back Better’ to address homelessness following the pandemic.

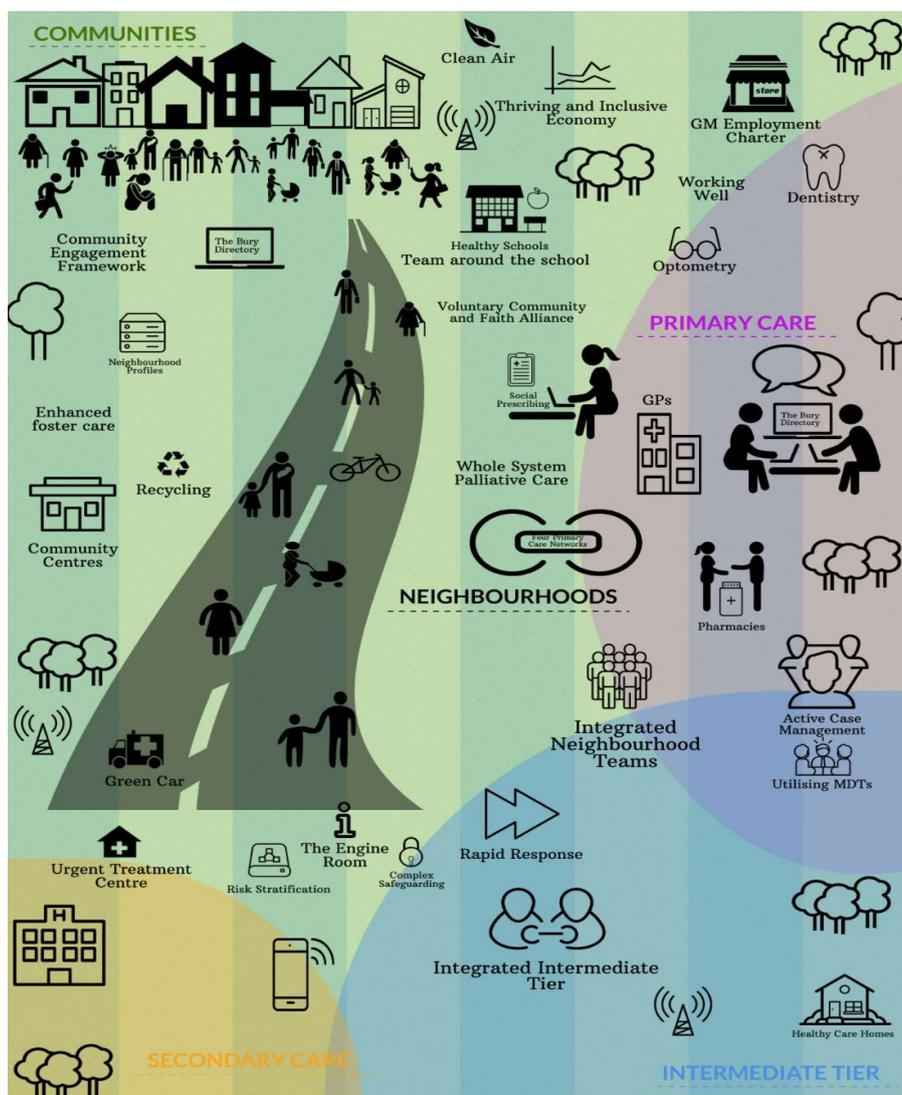
**5.5.5 Potential for a Homeless Hub**

We are examining whether there is a need for a Homeless Hub combining self-contained accommodation for single homeless people with a range of on-site support, offering the potential for people to make connections and to be supported into independent living by a peer mentor (see Section 5.2). Alongside this, we are also looking into options for delivering the hub.

**Section 6: Healthy people, homes and places**

We set out our vision for transforming Bury’s approach to health and care in our 2019 Locality Plan Refresh. Influenced further by GM level shifts in how we deliver public services and support our economy<sup>11</sup> as well as our own Bury 2030; **Let’s do it!** place-based vision and strategy to drive significant improvement in our population’s health.

In this strategy, and particularly in this section, we set out how we will bring housing into these plans so that we are equipped to address health issues that are caused or exacerbated by unhealthy, unsuitable and unstable housing and unhealthy places.



<sup>11</sup> GM White Paper: A Unified Model of Public Services and the GM Industrial Strategy and Transport Strategy

**Our vision** is to improve health and well-being through working with communities and residents to ensure that all people have a good start and enjoy a healthy, safe and fulfilling life. [This means that] people have good standards of living, a decent place to live and meaningful relationships with others as active members of society.

**Our intent** is for integrated care supporting the creation of a population health system which embraces housing, education, environment, and policing, with citizens in communities taking control and identifying local priorities which are going to make the biggest difference for them.

### Locality Plan Refresh 2019

## 6.1 Healthy homes and households

### Improving health through the home: guidance from Public Health England

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-health-through-the-home/improving-health-through-the-home>

The right home environment is essential to health and wellbeing, throughout life. It is a wider determinant of health. There are risks to an individual's physical and mental health associated with living in

- **An unhealthy home:** one that is cold, damp, or otherwise hazardous home.
- **An unsuitable home:** one that does not meet the household's needs due to risks such as being overcrowded or inaccessible to a disabled or older person.
- **An unstable home:** one that does not provide a sense of safety and security including precarious living circumstances and/or homelessness.

The right home environment protects and improves health and wellbeing and prevents physical and mental ill health. It also enables people to:

- manage their own health and care needs, including long term conditions.
- live independently, safely and well in their own home for as long as they choose.
- complete treatment and recover from substance misuse, tuberculosis or other ill-health.
- move on successfully from homelessness or other traumatic life events.
- access and sustain education, training and employment.
- participate and contribute to society.

It can:

- delay and reduce the need for primary care and social care.
- prevent hospital admissions.
- enable timely discharge from hospital and prevent re-admissions.
- enable rapid recovery from periods of ill health or planned admissions.

It is also essential to ambitions for the economy.

### 6.1.1 Addressing fuel poverty, helping people to keep their homes warm

In 2017 there were 9,563 households in Bury that were considered to be living in fuel poverty. This represents nearly 12% of our households<sup>12</sup>. The most significant problems are in private housing.

Bury Council has taken action to reduce fuel poverty and help Bury residents to keep their homes warm over many years. We have facilitated the installation of energy efficiency measures in over 16,000 private sector homes attracting investment of over £12m, this has resulted in significant carbon savings and energy bill reductions.

We are now exploring how ECO-funds available can help our residents to stay warm. We are also engaged in a short Government-funded pilot programme to enforce the new minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) in the private rented sector.

Bury One Commissioning Organisations wants to upgrade how we work with people who are living in cold homes and unable to afford to keep them warm.

In March 2015, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) published guidance on Excess Winter Deaths and the health risks associated with cold homes<sup>13</sup>. It includes recommendations for health and wellbeing boards, primary care, local authorities and others to take action to reduce the health risks associated with living in cold home. Also, the Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations set a minimum energy efficiency level for domestic private rented properties.

Drawing on the NICE guidance, the MEES Regulations, the GM Private Housing Condition analysis and on best practice from other councils, we will review and upgrade our existing Fuel Poverty Action Plan.

We will also increase the revenue funding available from health partners to support this programme. We will fund an expert team to help private residents to access external ECO-funding, capital grants available to improve the warmth of their homes.

### 6.1.2 Integrating housing into the Bury Neighbourhood Model

There are many instances in which patients' or households' health problems are significantly exacerbated by their housing circumstances and where a change to their housing is needed to improve their health.

Our new neighbourhood arrangements are the place where we are bringing together statutory services to respond to residents' health and social care issues through case management. Two programmes are relevant here: our new All-age Early Help teams and our Integrated Health and Care teams, both of which will sit behind the Community Hubs.

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<sup>12</sup> Find reference

<sup>13</sup> NICE Guidance NG6: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6>

We will formalise key housing roles within these teams providing direct access to housing experts who can broker a range of housing solutions for residents – whether they are private renters, owner occupiers, housing association or Council tenants – on a case-by-case basis. The household’s caseworker would help to broker the right solution for the household including by referring the case to the team with the relevant expertise and powers to solve the problem while remaining the household’s caseworker.

We will monitor the sort of housing-related problems people present as well as solutions. This will feed into our data warehouse and engine room (see 6.1.3) and will inform future service design.

### **6.1.3 Targeting improvement of poor condition homes through neighbourhood profiles**

Our resources are finite, and we want to target them better, directing the right resources to the right places in a timely way to prevent people’s health and wellbeing from worsening.

We are establishing a ‘data warehouse and engine room’ that will bring together and interpret data from a range of sources that shows where the biggest problems lie and the nature of those problems as well as capturing trends. By disaggregating the data at a neighbourhood level and supplementing it with local intelligence, we will be able to determine who are those at most risk of accessing expensive care services, with a view to targeting our resources at a sufficiently early stage so that demand on statutory services is reduced. Active case management through multi-disciplinary teams will continue to expand to enable those most at risk to be identified and supported by health and care working together with other public sector services.

Data on Bury’s house conditions – including owner occupied and private rented housing – will be brought into this data warehouse so that we can identify where unhealthy, unsuitable and unstable housing may be contributing to poor health and wellbeing.

GMCA is undertaking an analysis of the condition of private housing across Greater Manchester. This will supply data on the condition of Bury’s private housing stock. Both this and data on the condition of council stock managed by Six Town Housing (see Section 3.1) will inform the neighbourhood profiles enabling us to see where inadequate housing across all sectors may be a factor in poor health. This will enable us to respond to existing housing issues and to predict where the biggest problems may lie going forward.

We will supplement this data by routinely collecting details of people’s living circumstances and home condition whenever a health, care or housing staff member makes a visit to someone’s home (through Making Every Contact Count). We will also bring information from casework detailing the nature and frequency of the problems people present, how they were addressed and any gaps in provision. This will help us to build a database of where the problems might lie, how well we are doing and what else we need to do enable people to find the right solutions.

#### 6.1.4 Minimising hospital stays, safe and secure discharge

Much of this strategy is aimed at providing 'enabling support' that actively promotes wellbeing and prevents worsening of people's mental and physical health and enables them to live well within their own homes. We are also intending to take some specific actions at the interface with hospitals, both to avoid unnecessary and unplanned hospital admissions and to facilitate safe discharge.

Working with one or more expert RPs with specialisms in this area and building on our existing Hospital Discharge Protocol for people with no fixed abode, we will develop hospital discharge arrangements with Bury's main NHS Foundation/Hospital Trusts. This will include hospital-based casework to ascertain patients' housing circumstances and to work with those whose housing is prohibiting safe discharge to make their home safe. It will also include provision of 'Step-down' accommodation.

The GM Housing and Mental Health Strategy<sup>14</sup> contains some specific case studies of where RPs are doing hospital discharge work and supporting people with mental health problems to leave hospital and live well in the community. This interactive map shows a range of other case studies<sup>15</sup>

## 6.2 Healthy communities and places we can be proud of

### 6.2.1 Solving community problems through multi-agency working with Community Hubs

One of the ways we can improve our places is to understand where the complex, compound problems lie and to address them in a proactive way through coordinated multi-agency working.

We have a multi-agency Organised Crime Group comprising fire service, police and supported by the Council's Environmental Health Team. This team has local knowledge on where some of the criminal activity lies and takes co-ordinated action on crime.

We want to develop this further and to work in partnership with our Community Hubs to identify problems, understand the nature of them and to provide lasting solutions. A range of actions might help, such as:

- Our database of private landlords in particular localities.
- Visits to all households in defined streets/areas to identify problems.
- Proactive use our legal enforcement powers to compel landlords to act to improve poor condition private rented homes.
- Bespoke, asset-based support for households where needed and appropriate.

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<sup>14</sup> GM Housing and Mental Health Strategy 2019-22:  
<https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjjm4n5026>

<sup>15</sup> Housing LIN and Foundations Interactive Map of hospital to home schemes  
<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/home-from-hospital/>

- Purchase specific homes for refurbishment and sale to help to change the dynamics of the neighbourhood.
- Improvements to the public realm such as clearing fly-tipping, graffiti.

### 6.1.2 A Checklist for healthy place-shaping

We will invite our residents, through our Community Hubs, to develop a 'Bury checklist' that we will use throughout our planning and place-shaping activity to make sure we consider all the important elements in developing good quality places and endeavour to make it happen. We will draw on existing resources such as NHS England's and Public Health England's Ten Healthy Place-shaping Principles<sup>16</sup> and MHCG's guidance for Lifetime Neighbourhoods<sup>17</sup>

#### A Bury checklist for great places

Such a checklist might include:

- **Infrastructure** – including GPs, schools, road traffic: How are the infrastructure requirements of a new development being considered? How is the local community being engaged in discussions? What will be done as a result?
- **Parks and green spaces:** How will the development minimise the impact on our green spaces and/or create new parks and green spaces?
- **Transport, active travel, air pollution:** How does the new development enable people to get around in a way that limits air pollution?
- **Connected, healthy people:** How will the development produce spaces where people like to meet and congregate? How will it support and enable community-led activity?
- **Asset-based approach:** Are we building on local community assets and creating resilient communities based on their strengths and local assets?
- **Healthy living:** How might the new environment enable free food growing opportunities? How might it support people to become more active?
- **Access to healthcare and schools:** How will the people living there access healthcare in their community? How will their children be enrolled in schools and educated in the event they are excluded? How will they get help with any non-medical issues they may face?

### 6.2.3 Village Hubs: where people can connect and live well

We have an ambition to create '15-minute neighbourhoods' where the main facilities can be reached within a 15-minute walk.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/putting-health-into-place-executive-summary/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lifetime-neighbourhoods--2>

As we consider how to best remodel our sheltered schemes, and plan for new extra care schemes, over the coming years we will consider with our Community Hubs how these schemes might develop closer connections to a range of local facilities including health centres, shops, schools, leisure, community and faith centres. This will make it easier for older people living in the schemes and in the surrounding areas to connect with other local residents and access informal support, facilities and activities. We will also consider how these neighbourhoods might support intergenerational connections and recreational activity. We will learn from the COVID-19 experience to make sure these hubs can enable high levels of support.

## Section 7: Towards carbon neutral homes

In 2019 Bury Council declared a climate emergency and set an ambitious target to be carbon neutral by 2038. The scientific evidence on climate change is unequivocal and we need to act now and decisively to slow down and limit the impact of climate change.

Bury is in the process of developing a Climate Action Strategy that will set out where we need to get to, the direction we must travel and the wide range of actions we need from national Government to help us to meet our targets. It is designed to be consistent with the GMCA 5 Year Environment Plan for Greater Manchester which lays out how the city region will progress to carbon neutrality by 2038.

This is an extremely challenging target. Achieving it probably requires full decarbonisation of the national electricity grid and, while significant progress is being made, this is not projected to happen until sometime after 2030. However, one of the silver linings of the Coronavirus lockdown period has been a glimpse of what a low carbon future might do to improve our environment. In Bury, we are determined to do all we can to 'build back better'; to build a more sustainable economic future that works for Bury as we deliver the low carbon, climate resilient environment our planet so desperately needs.

We are encouraging people to use greener travel by improving connectivity and travel options across the borough. Proximity of new homes to our town centres, places of work and public transport hubs will help to reduce reliance on cars when planning the location for new homes. Active travel measures, to improve residents' ability to walk and cycle around the borough, will be included in our plans including for town centres. We are intending to plant thousands of new trees to support carbon capture as well as creating pleasant healthy green outdoor spaces within our urban areas for people to enjoy.

We are intending for Bury to become an exemplar, showing the way and creating a sense of urgency to influence the Government and reduce the current UK target which is for net zero by 2050.

### 7.1 The challenge for housing

Around 34% of Bury's emissions come from domestic gas and electricity uses<sup>18</sup>. Significant progress has been made over the last few years, but the focus has been on measures that are relatively straightforward. An analysis of the energy performance data of council stock shows that to improve beyond a Band C rating cannot be achieved without investment in renewable energy measures such as solar panels, air source heat pumps or solar thermal which represents a step up in investment. This is the case for private housing too.

The housing sector is at a crucial stage; the steps we now need to take towards low carbon are bigger and come with greater risk. There is a sector skills challenge to overcome to

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<sup>18</sup> Bury Council Carbon Action Strategy (draft)

retrofit at scale: a lack of capacity and capability for making and installing components successfully. This comes with significant upfront costs that either need to be passed on to the consumer or subsidised in some way.

Our housing targets are:

- 100% net zero-carbon new homes by 2028.
- 100% carbon neutral homes by 2038.

Bury Council will do everything it can to achieve these targets. However, it requires some steps to be taken that are not within the Council's control. This means:

- Making sure electricity is sourced from certified renewable or zero carbon sources.
- Ceasing fitting new gas-powered appliances such as boilers as a matter of urgency.
- Identifying, sourcing/producing and installing modern renewable energy technologies and making provision for retrofitting homes with new sources and technologies that may emerge in future years.
- Increasing energy efficiency of all homes across all sectors.
- Offsetting any outstanding emissions through carbon capture.
- An earlier national target date for a decarbonised electricity grid (from 2050 to 2038).

This housing strategy provides more detail on what we will do to endeavour to achieve this target for all Bury's housing, both new and existing dwellings. How we do this will vary depending on who owns the homes. 90% of properties in Bury are privately owned and are outside the direct control of the Council. This means we need to take a different approach to homes owned by the Council, a registered provider, private landlord or an owner occupier.

## **7.2 Health and economic benefits of low carbon homes**

Low carbon homes will deliver health and social benefits too. Respiratory problems are a significant factor in admissions to hospital<sup>19</sup> (apart from COVID-19 cases) and we are keen to eliminate the impact of poor housing as soon as possible.

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<sup>19</sup> Find reference



Properly insulated, energy efficient homes will be warmer with lower fuel bills; they are cheaper to run and healthier to live in. Innovative green businesses that can contribute to emergence of an effective ‘climate change industry’ could help to create community wealth for Bury as well as to enable the shift to carbon neutral.

### 7.3 Our approach to delivering low carbon homes

The industry in low carbon and renewable technology is not yet operating at scale; the technology is developing all the time and it is not yet available at realistic prices while the maintenance supply chain for the new technologies is immature. A Government consultation in May 2020 demonstrated that the Government is not yet clear on how the UK will meet climate change targets for housing, nor how local authorities will be supported. However, it is pushing forward on several important strands and a route map to energy efficient, low carbon homes for the UK is expected to emerge ahead of the 26<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) that will take place in Glasgow in November 2021.

Achieving our carbon neutral targets across the borough’s 84,000 existing homes by 2038 as well as all new homes built by 2028 will require a dynamic and future-facing approach that assesses, supports production of and embeds new technologies as they emerge.

Our overall approach will be to fast-track our activity on existing council homes managed by Six Town Housing and any new homes that the Council and it’s partners may build. We will use our learning to develop our expectations of and support for private developers, landlords and homeowners to take action. We will also explore options for a housing provider to become a local energy network supplier in Bury.

#### 7.3.1 How are we doing so far?

Between 2008/9 and 2020 the council itself has reduced its carbon emissions by 44%, mostly from reducing electricity and gas use in our buildings. Our total footprint is just under 16,700 tonnes of CO2 which represents only 2% of borough wide emissions total.

We also commissioned Catapult Energy Systems to undertake a piece of work to identify how Bury might progress to carbon neutrality by 2040 and 2050. It highlighted the level of change required, what the change might look like and what the implications would be for stakeholders. This will be used to inform our journey to carbon neutrality.

**Our progress towards carbon neutral homes**

- The Council stock has an average energy performance SAP rating of 70. This represents an average SAP/EPC rating of Band C. The Council and Six Town Housing are committed to achieving a minimum C SAP rating for all by 2025.
- We have replaced traditional lighting with LED units within around 900 Council homes each year, outside security lights and in around 25 newly refurbished communal areas.
- PV solar panels have been installed to 13 blocks of flats in Whitefield: tenants benefit from free electricity during daylight hours and the Council receives income in the form of a feed in tariff.
- Forty-eight homeowners have signed up to the recent Solar Together collective PV purchasing scheme and installations are currently taking place.
- Through a collaboration with Japanese Government, air source heating pumps and monitoring equipment have been installed in 92 Council dwellings with reported savings to tenants' energy bills.
- All Six Town Housing staff have received carbon awareness training and frontline staff have been trained to spot signs of fuel poverty and to provide energy efficiency advice in the home. Tenant energy champions have been trained to understand fuel bills and fuel switching to find cheaper deals.
- 9782 (12%) of Bury's households installed insulation measures under ECO between 2013 and March 2019 so that 70% of EPC rated homes have a rating of D or below.
- Opportunities to secure external funding to offset the cost of installation of insulation and low carbon technologies within the Council's stock through a range of national energy efficiency and carbon reduction initiatives such as CESP, CERT, FIT and RHI have now been taken and maximised.
- The Council has helped to facilitate the installation of energy efficiency measures via various local and national grants in over 16,000 private sector homes attracting investment of over £12m. This has resulted in significant carbon savings and energy bill reductions.
- Further potential for renewable energy including free solar PV and associated battery storage of the solar energy are being explored.
- The average SAP rating for Council homes has shown some improvement over the last 10 years. In 2019, an increasing majority of the Council's own homes achieved a SAP rating of 'C'.
- Around 400 A-rated gas boilers per year are installed as part of the investment programme in addition to cavity wall and loft insulation

Many of these improvements to the environmental performance of the Council's housing stock have been made through accessing initiative-based funding. The ad-hoc nature of these initiatives has left a legacy of ad hoc maintenance arrangements and this is inefficient. We will continue with these programmes in the short term and going forward, we will take greater account of the potential to standardise ongoing maintenance to increase efficiency across all 8,000 homes.

### **7.3.2 Enabling our townships to support the shift to zero carbon homes**

If we are to achieve our ambitious targets, we need our 70% of residents who are homeowners to be persuaded to upgrade their homes – both the insulation and to convert to a renewable energy system – by 2038. They must also be helped to change their behaviours around energy use/heat loss, ranging from learning how to maintain the temperature of a newly retrofitted home, to undertaking more journeys by bicycle or on foot.

We will need to engage Bury's residents, local businesses and community groups in this task. Collectively our residents hold significant knowledge about routes to zero carbon homes. They are also networked and well placed to organise to make a case to national government as well as to share information about new technologies, for example, and to develop trusted financial mechanisms to pay for them.

The Council is committed to engaging residents through stakeholder forums that will be established and supported in each of our Townships. These groups will be encouraged to consider the private housing challenge; how best to go about motivating and enabling homeowners to retrofit their homes. We will share our knowledge and invite these panels and forums to feed directly into the development, delivery and monitoring of progress on our action plans at the same time as developing their own local approach to the climate change emergency. We will support and assist them to identify and make a case for the necessary resources to achieve this task.

### **7.3.3 Accelerating capacity and capability through partnership**

Identifying pathways to volume domestic retrofit and reducing fuel poverty is also a priority across Greater Manchester (Strategic Priority A5 in the GM Housing Strategy). Action is being taken at Greater Manchester level to bring together a 'Retrofit Partnership Accelerator' of existing activity to focus collectively on issues of demand, supply, skills and access to finance to develop delivery and business models for whole house retrofit.

We will work closely with other local authorities through the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and with the GM Housing Providers group and GM Local Energy Market to develop an approach that enables Greater Manchester to achieve net zero-carbon new homes and carbon neutral existing homes. We will also work with a wide variety of other partners – public, private, education, utilities, voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors – to increase our learning and capacity to achieve this huge challenge.

Through partnership working, we will be better placed to:

- Exploit renewable energy potential in relation to solar, hydro and wind on our land and buildings.
- Work with our utility providers to plan the necessary upgrades to the electricity supply infrastructure and lower gas demand and its impacts on our community.
- Establish local energy networks to supply renewable energy to Bury residents.

- Build the green energy sector to ensure we have sufficient service providers that can deliver new retrofit components and renewable heating systems.
- Equip and upskill our local workforce and construction industry with the necessary skills to deliver renewable heat and energy systems in the domestic and commercial sector – coordinated with training colleges.
- Develop local supply networks for installation and maintenance of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy.
- Source innovative business models, finance and delivery mechanisms to retrofit homes and commercial buildings.
- Observe progress in relation to other options for use of non-fossil fuels in the gas grid e.g., hydrogen carbon heat.
- Make energy efficiency and renewable energy options more accessible and attractive to our residents.
- Maximise community wealth-building by identifying local business opportunities that will arise from the move towards a low carbon future.

Working in partnership will also enhance our likelihood of success in lobbying national government to make the necessary changes to national policy and in bidding for national resources to advance our work towards carbon neutral homes.

**Our approach to low carbon homes**

**Undertake analyses of ‘carbon status’ of Bury’s housing stock  
Develop a new ‘Bury Eco-Standard’**

**NEW HOMES  
Net zero carbon by 2028**

**New Social Housing**

- All new homes built to zero carbon standards ahead of 2028
- Provide exemplar projects for renewable heating systems and modular construction in developments where we have sufficient influence.

**New HA homes**

- Commitment to all new homes built to zero carbon standards ahead of 2028.

**New private homes**

- GMCA and LAs consulting on additions to building regulations to require all new homes built in GM to meet zero-carbon standards by 2028.
- Support and incentivise developers that are prepared to build to zero-carbon standards.

**General – new homes**

- Shift to MMC – levers.

**EXISTING HOMES  
Carbon neutral by 2038**

**Existing Council Stock**

- Stock condition survey including eco-elements, to establish baseline position.
- Local exemplar projects for deep retrofit and renewable heating systems in Council owned homes and learn from other exemplars from across the UK.
- Develop plans to bring all homes to low carbon standard by 2038 and SAP C rating by 2025 (drawing on Bury Local Area Energy Strategy 2018).
- Increase volume of deep retrofit over time as new tech emerges and the market develops.

**Existing HA homes**

- Share knowledge, experience and information with HA’s.

**Existing private homes**

- Private stock condition survey including eco-elements to establish baseline position.
- Enforcement to EPC Band E.
- Private landlord incentives conditional on eco standards.
- Apply new technologies to empty home refurbishment

**Market-shaping and industry development**

New build homes: MMC | Existing homes: Retrofit components  
Renewable energy sources | Local Energy Network Provider

**Learning and collaborating with GM, Together Energy Services, others (e.g. how to do Deep Retrofit)**

## **7.4 New build homes – towards net zero carbon by 2028**

Greater Manchester Combined Authority and LAs are consulting on higher standards for all new builds to be net carbon-zero by 2028, or even sooner on the advice of experts. This is likely to lead to additional building regulations for all new buildings across the region to meet the agreed target.

### **7.4.1 New Council housing schemes**

Any direct building of new council homes will trial new low carbon technologies such as ground source heat pump technology and PV solar panels. Schemes will also be ‘future proofed’ so that they can be retrofitted with new zero carbon technology that is anticipated to improve in future years – including battery storage and smart energy solutions. From now on, all new build homes over which we have control will be either net zero carbon at completion or can be easily adapted before the 2028 deadline.

There may be opportunities around modular construction to re-define ‘good design’ that can contribute to the carbon reduction agenda. The Council is considering small site delivery through Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), potentially using a local supplier to support emergence of a local economy for modular construction.

We will explore opportunities offered by these schemes to ‘upskill’ our workforce to be able to undertake future maintenance and repair of these systems.

### **7.4.2 New housing association homes**

We are working with Greater Manchester Housing Providers to support solutions for housing association homes, including homes built within the borough of Bury. All GM providers have committed to building all new homes to net zero carbon standards ahead of the 2028 date.

### **7.4.3 New private homes**

Requiring private developers to build to higher standards will increase the cost of development. We are therefore intending to work through the township residents’ groups to create strong buyer demand for low carbon homes, and a willingness to pay the additional price. For example, we will actively promote the financial benefits of occupying a net zero-carbon home – the low or zero fuel bills – and quantify the ‘purchase premium’ they might expect to pay in return for having very low fuel bills.

We are taking a GM-wide approach to planning policies to develop a new standard that will be a common requirement across all ten authorities; all councils will agree to employ whatever influence they can bring to bear on new housing development. We will also work with authorities beyond the GM boundary to persuade them to also adopt the new standard. Taking a common approach will help to bring consistency in the development market and to drive up standards.

In addition to this, the Council will orient its support and incentives towards those developers that are prepared to build to the new standards. This includes the support we provide to improve viability of new homes, set out in Section 2, as well as our support for first time buyers.

## **7.5 Existing homes – towards carbon neutral by 2038**

### **7.5.1 Establishing the baseline position in our existing housing stock**

Knowing the ‘carbon status’ of our existing housing, across all tenures, and the size and nature of the gap that needs to be bridged, is key to devising a strategy, prioritising action and measuring impact. In order to establish our baseline position, we will review our existing knowledge (such as EPC and SAP ratings) and undertake ‘stock condition’ analyses focusing on energy efficiency and carbon status, to fill gaps in our knowledge.

### **7.5.2 Existing Council homes**

We have made some good progress over the last few years through securing funds from national and international programmes. However, this has depended on the appetite of successive governments to drive this agenda forward and has, consequently, resulted in a piecemeal approach. Going forward, we want to be much more proactive, creating and implementing our own route map and finding ways to deliver it, being ready to secure funding as and when it emerges but relying solely on incentivised programmes. Our approach to decarbonising existing council homes will have several strands that we will take forward concurrently, and that will inform each other.

#### ***Strand 1: Deep retrofit pilots to push boundaries and upskill the workforce***

In 2021/22, Six Town Housing will embark on a small ‘deep retrofit’ pilot to bring between 5 and 15 council owned homes to carbon neutral standard. Deep retrofit requires extensive work to existing homes to apply a whole range of measures, including a renewable energy source, all at once.

Through the pilot, we will upskill our workforce in retrofitting homes aiming to develop an efficient standardised retrofit process that incorporates the best and most appropriate technology available at the time for that particular property and that both minimises the cost, time taken and disruption to tenants. We will learn from other councils that are ahead in retrofitting their housing stock and with other GM local authorities will explore different models of retrofit. Initially we will prioritise properties that are empty between relets.

We will also identify one or more of our sheltered housing schemes that require more extensive remodelling or repurposing and undertake these works at the same time as deep retrofit. This will allow us to better understand scheme-based renewable ‘district’ heating and energy systems that may not be suitable for single dwellings.

As tenants move into the retrofitted homes, we will train them and make sure they have access to information on how to minimise/optimize energy use while keeping the home at ambient temperature.

Further phases of the deep retrofit programme will be informed by our learning from the earlier phases and from the experience of colleagues across Greater Manchester.

***Strand 2: Identify steps to bring all 8,000 Council homes up to the Bury Eco-Standard***

We will develop a 'Bury Eco-Standard' which will reflect a fully retrofitted home with a renewable energy source in addition to the measures in the existing standard (see also Section 3.1).

We will set out a route map to achieve the Bury Eco-Standard across all our homes with challenging but realistic targets. Since we will not be able to clearly see all the steps at the outset, we will review and update the route map on an annual basis, bringing new information to bear on the next steps we will take.

Initial steps may include, for example:

- Insulation, draught-proofing and other 'fabric' upgrades.
- installation of PV panels to some properties assessed as being suitable for them.
- phasing in of air and ground source heat pumps (and phasing out of new gas boiler installations).
- installation of district heating systems in selected schemes.
- 'future-proofing' properties to make them ready for installation of future technologies, such as hydrogen boilers or batteries, at a later date.
- making it easy for tenants to procure their electricity from certifiable renewable sources.

We will develop a monitoring framework that enables us to keep abreast of the changes we're making to our homes. It will also provide a means for us to regularly review our learning – from the retrofit pilots and through our connections across Greater Manchester and other local authorities – about how best to achieve net zero carbon homes in the shortest possible timescale. We will use this to inform and regularly update our stepped approach to achieve the 'Bury Eco-Standard' in all our homes.

How we phase works in later stages will depend on what we learn in the earlier stages. It will also depend to some extent on how new technology emerges and on the Government's strategy and programmes. We are likely to increase the number of homes we deep retrofit as we learn how to streamline the process while matching solutions to the dwelling, and as component costs reduce. The annual customer satisfaction survey will be revised to include questions about energy efficiency and retrofitted homes to learn more about how we can improve the customer experience.

### 7.5.3 Existing housing association homes

Greater Manchester Housing Providers have committed to achieving a minimum C SAP rating for all existing homes by 2025.

We will engage with the other RPs in the Borough to generate a plan of action for bringing their homes up to the Bury Eco-Standard by 2038.

### 7.5.4 Towards carbon-neutral private homes

Section 7.3.2 sets out how we will support Bury's residents to play their role in driving forward carbon neutral homes in the private sector through local energy groups in each of the six townships. This represents a significant strand of our efforts for all private homes to become carbon neutral by 2038.

In addition, we will consider how we might *develop levers and incentives to influence private landlords to adopt low carbon technologies*. Private rented properties are now required to comply with the 2018 Minimum Level of Energy Efficiency Standard, which is currently at EPC band E. Bury Council is currently engaged in a pilot funded by BEIS, to test out a mix of methods to improve privately rented homes that fall below this level – including providing information and advice to landlords, signposting to sources of ECO funding for cavity wall insulation and incentives such as grants to undertake works and serving notices.

We will also consider how to ensure that any investment the Council makes in private housing for example, refurbishment to private homes on a lease-and-repair basis through the Ethical Lettings Scheme, helps to achieve Bury's low carbon goals.

## Section 8: How we will implement this strategy

This housing strategy has come at a time of great change and of great energy for change, in Bury.

### 8.1 Let's do it!

Even before the Coronavirus disrupted our normal way of doing things, Bury residents, stakeholders and the workforce had been working towards a decade of reform to tackle deprivation and improve growth under the Bury 2030 banner. Now we have a clear way forward and this will mean a big change to the way the Council operates.

Key to these reforms is working through relationships, because it is relationships, not services, which truly make the difference to people's lives. We are in the process of making a radical shift from providing services to a relationship-based system, through empowered local communities. It is by working with residents, and valuing the skills, strengths and successes of individuals and communities – and not just delivering services to people – that we can tackle some of the great causes of inequality within the borough and make sure everyone has the best possible life chances.

Guided by the late Victoria Wood born in Prestwich and brought up in Bury, *'Let's do it!'* encapsulates our strategy. It reflects the need for all of 'us' to be involved in creating change. It shows that there is important work we all need to 'Do' and that we cannot be passive. It is a call to action, to develop a collective vision 'It' of what the future can look like.

### 8.2 Let's – our collective responsibility

To work, this housing strategy needs to be a joint endeavour involving Bury's residents, stakeholders, local partners and our workforce. Doing this will require many new relationships to be forged and conversations to be had.

There is a big emphasis on conversations. We need to talk to residents, to deepen the insight about their needs and aspirations that we have gained through the Housing Needs Assessment. We need to talk to community groups about their ambitions for the neighbourhoods and towns they live in.

There is also a big emphasis on codesign and coproduction. Residents, including people we traditionally see as 'service users' can help us to deliver this strategy if we will involve them at an early stage. Listening and learning from Co-production Networks to understand their particular needs and ambitions offers rich information; they can help us to design and deliver services that work for them and people like them. We want our residents to help each other to live well and to be empowered to get on with their lives and to need services as little as possible.

We have many external partners who have a responsibility to help. We need to talk to developers and registered providers to find out what they need in order to support this vision. We need to talk to our private landlords to work out how they might support our ambitions. We need to talk to other GM local authorities and beyond, to learn together.

### 8.3 Do – through inspiration, aspiration, participation, collaboration

‘Do’ is about doing our bit to make our Borough a great place. It is about:

- **Inspiration** – being proactive and creative, building on our collective strengths to make a difference, really listening to understand each other, growing relationships and new connections across boundaries, being open to doing things differently, valuing skills and strengths of people and communities.
- **Aspiration** – having and realising hopes and dreams by giving people an equal voice and opportunity for participation, championing innovation and improved quality of life, stepping out of our comfort zone to make things happen, opening doors at every opportunity, being proud of our people and places.
- **Participation** – taking responsibility for making a difference by committing to making a positive, practical difference asking ‘what really matters to you?’, being flexible and putting energy where we can make the most positive difference, demonstrating dignity, kindness and respect.
- **Collaboration** – bringing people together from all corners of life, listening deeply and responding authentically, learning from others, trusting each other, making the most of our collective talent’s energies and power, holding each other to account, sharing data, removing barriers to collaboration, supporting development and growth.

### 8.4 It – the change Bury residents want to see

‘It’ is about having a shared focus on what we want our towns to be like in ten years’ time and achieving our vision of tackling deprivation and inequality whilst securing economic recovery and ultimately securing ambitious growth. It means developing ourselves, our communities and our neighbourhood model.

When it comes to housing, ‘it’ is articulated within this housing strategy and action plan which provide room for Bury’s residents and stakeholders to shape further into township programmes. It is ambitious but it is also doable, especially with the right mind set, attitudes and action.

**Evidence and documents upon which this strategy is based:**

- Bury 2030: Let's do it!
- Housing Needs Assessment 2020
- Bury Economic Performance, Resilience and Brexit, Cambridge Econometrics 2020
- Housing LIN: <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/>
- Bury Draft Learning Disability Needs Assessment 2020
- Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, Housing and Mental Health Strategy 2019-22
- MHCLG Guidance on Selective Licensing
- A 2018 report by the Smith Institute for the Northern Housing Consortium called *The Hidden Cost of Poor-Quality Housing in the North*
- Six Town Housing's Asset Management Strategy
- Improving health through the home, Public Health England:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-health-through-the-home/improving-health-through-the-home>
- Bury Council Carbon Action Strategy (draft)
- MHCLG Guidance on Selective Licensing:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/418551/150327\\_Guidance\\_on\\_selective\\_licensing\\_applications\\_FINAL\\_updated\\_isbn.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/418551/150327_Guidance_on_selective_licensing_applications_FINAL_updated_isbn.pdf)
- The Five Ways to Wellbeing are an evidence interrelated set of activities brought together in 2007 by the New Economics Foundation
- Keyring networks of support: <https://www.keyring.org/>
- Shared Lives Plus <https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/> and HomeShare <https://homeshareuk.org/>
- GM White Paper: A Unified Model of Public Services
- GM Industrial Strategy and Transport Strategy
- NICE Guidance NG6: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6>
- NHS England and Public Health England Health New Towns Initiative:  
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/putting-health-into-place-executive-summary/>
- Lifetime Neighbourhoods, MHCLG: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lifetime-neighbourhoods--2>
- GM Housing and Mental Health Strategy 2019-22:  
<https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjm4n5026>
- Housing LIN and Foundations Interactive Map of hospital to home schemes  
<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/home-from-hospital/>
- MHCLG Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP)
- GM Spatial Framework (2019 draft)