

Members Questions

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

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

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

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