

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny (10 th February) and Cabinet (11 th February)	Date: 11 February 2026
Subject:	Draft Simister Bowlee Development Framework	
Report of	Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth	

Summary

1. The draft Simister Bowlee Development Framework (SBDF) sets out the masterplan and phasing strategy for the Simister Bowlee site. This is one of Bury's residential sites allocated through the Places for Everyone Joint Plan (PfE), which was adopted in March 2024.
2. A key requirement of PfE Policy JPA1.2 is that any proposals within the Simister Bowlee allocation must be in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan that has been agreed by Bury and Rochdale local planning authorities and that it shall include a design code and an infrastructure phasing and delivery strategy.
3. The draft SBDF establishes the key principles for the development of the site and establishes a framework against which future planning applications on the site will be considered. It sets out high level design principles and an approach to the delivery and phasing of the necessary supporting infrastructure. To give the SBDF appropriate planning weight in the decision-making process, it is proposed that it is formally adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
4. Overview and Scrutiny Members are asked to note the content of the Simister Bowlee Development Framework and provide feedback.
5. Cabinet members are asked to approve the draft SBDF for a 6-week period of consultation to establish stakeholder views on its content. Following consultation, all representations received will be fully considered and changes made where appropriate before the SBDF is brought back to Cabinet for approval to formally adopt it as an SPD.

Recommendation(s)

6. It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny:
 - i. Note the content of the Simister Bowlee Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix 1);

- ii. Provide feedback on the content of the Simister Bowlee Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix 1)
7. It is recommended that Cabinet:
- i. Approves the draft Simister Bowlee Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix 1) as the basis for public consultation for a six-week period commencing on 13 February 2026.
 - ii. Delegates power to the Executive Director of Place to make minor non-material editorial amendments to the draft Simister Bowlee Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document before consultation commences.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

8. To enable stakeholders to have the opportunity to submit comments on the draft Simister Bowlee Development Framework and to comply with the statutory requirements for consultation.

Alternative options considered and rejected

9. To not approve the SBDF for consultation. This would prevent stakeholders from commenting on the SBDF and would prevent the Council from being able to proceed to adopt the SBDF as a Supplementary Planning Document because it is a statutory requirement that such documents must be consulted on before adoption.

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Background

10. The Places for Everyone Plan ('PfE') is a joint development plan document of nine of the ten Greater Manchester authorities (excluding Stockport MBC) which was adopted on 21st March 2024.
11. It is a long-term plan for jobs, new homes and sustainable growth which allocates large strategic sites for employment and housing. This includes the residential allocation at Simister Bowlee (PfE Policy JPA1.2).

12. The Simister Bowlee site forms part of the wider 'Northern Gateway' development location that includes the nationally significant employment-led development opportunity to the north of the M62, allocated under PfE Policy Allocation 1.1: Heywood / Pilsworth (Northern Gateway) ("JPA1.1"), and subject to a separate SPD that was adopted in March 2025.
11. Simister Bowlee will deliver:
- 1,550 new homes
 - 1,350 of these in Bury
 - Affordable housing in line with policy (currently 25% - around 335 affordable homes in Bury)
 - Specialist and older persons' accommodation
 - New two-form entry primary school – located within the Bury part of the site
 - New community and retail facilities to serve the needs of the new residents (and existing residents)
 - New spine road through the site to provide access throughout the site and enabling active travel movement
 - Off-site highway works to mitigate for the development
 - Active Travel network including cycleways and pedestrian links
 - Green infrastructure including public open space, sports facilities and playgrounds
 - Ecological mitigation and biodiversity net gain
 - Surface water attenuation, SuDS and measures to protect hydrology and water quality
13. The Simister Bowlee site provides the opportunity to deliver a comprehensive new neighbourhood that will support the sustainable growth of Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone and the transformational employment-led opportunity within the wider Northern Gateway at JPA1.1

Simister Bowlee Development Framework (SBDF)

14. Following its adoption on 21 March 2024, the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) became a key part of Bury's statutory development plan alongside the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals and Waste Plans.
15. A key requirement of PfE Policy JPA1.2 is that any proposals within the Simister Bowlee allocation must be in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan that has been agreed by Bury and Rochdale local planning authorities and that it shall include a design code and an infrastructure phasing and delivery strategy.
16. The masterplan requirement is a critical stage in providing a bridge between the allocation of the site in PfE and any subsequent planning consent.

17. Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues.
18. As they do not form part of the development plan, SPDs cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan. However, they are a material consideration in the decision-making process when determining planning applications.
19. The SBDF has been prepared jointly by Bury and Rochdale Councils with technical input from the Northern Gateway Development Vehicle LLP (NGDV) as the main site promoter and input from other landowners / stakeholders.

SBDF Role and Objectives

20. Once adopted, the SBDF will establish the key principles for the development of the site and establish a policy/spatial framework against which future specific planning applications on the site will be considered. It will also help Bury and Rochdale Councils to ensure that the ambitions for the site are realised and the benefits to the communities of Bury and Rochdale are maximised.
21. The draft SBDF sets out:
 - the proposed vision and strategic objectives for the site as shaped by public consultation, stakeholder collaboration and the Councils' ambitions;
 - the high-level design and development parameters that all future planning applications within the site will follow;
 - a comprehensive and co-ordinated masterplanning approach across the entire JPA1.2 site allocation;
- 1.1 an overarching Development Framework that sets out the key development parameters including matters such as land use, transport, access, movement and green infrastructure; and
 - a high-level approach towards the delivery and phasing of on-site and off-site infrastructure improvements.

Scope and Content of the draft SBDF

- 21 Chapters 1 and 2 set out the background of the site, the role and purpose of the SBDF and the strategic planning context. These chapters include a brief description of the site as well as setting out the key local and national

planning policies which any development needs to take into account. The strategic planning context also sets out how this site aligns with other corporate strategies and the pivotal role of this site within the wider Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ) and emerging Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC).

22. Chapter 3 provides a detailed analysis of the site, setting out some of the key characteristics, opportunities and constraints. This section includes matters such as transport, ecology, landscape, heritage and social and community infrastructure. It identifies what is currently there as well as opportunities for dealing with any constraints and potential improvements that the development could deliver.
23. Chapter 4 set out the vision and objectives for the site. The over-arching aim is to create a thriving new neighbourhood where people, planet, and place come together. The people, planet and place theme continues as the theme for the more detailed objectives. Using these means that the overall objectives strongly align with Bury and Rochdale Council plans and the corporate priorities of the boroughs.
24. The issue of design is covered in chapter 5 of the draft SBDF. This section illustrates how the site constraints and opportunities, the site context, overarching vision and the policy framework have informed a set of design principles for the site. Particularly notable given the location and nature of the site is how the design responds to the surrounding countryside and the changing topography across the allocation. These principles will underpin the design and delivery of future planning applications that come forward on the site.
25. Chapter 6 brings together the key aspects of the preceding chapters to produce a masterplan framework for the site. In doing this it sets out how the masterplan proposals apply the vision, objectives and design principles to create the essential elements of a high quality and sustainable new place. Key elements of the masterplan include main vehicle and active travel access points and routes, areas of open space, the location of the local centre and community infrastructure, landscaping and housing density.
26. Chapter 7 sets out a number of development principles for the site. These will inform the parameters for the development of the Simister / Bowlee site and should be considered as part of any future planning applications within the site. The principles are wide ranging and include matters such as design, highways and access, public transport, active travel, the type of housing (including affordable housing), open space, education provision, green and blue infrastructure, flood risk and drainage.
27. Chapter 8 deals with phasing, infrastructure and delivery. This chapter sets out the key issues in terms of phasing and infrastructure and how they should

be considered in the delivery of the site. An Infrastructure, Phasing and Delivery Strategy will be produced alongside the SBDF. However, as this strategy is likely to be updated regularly to reflect new information and available funding, it is proposed that is not included within the SBDF but is instead a separate 'living' document produced through collaboration between Rochdale and Bury councils and key stakeholders. The Councils will work with all partners to bring forward the strategic infrastructure and this may include the Council (or other public sector bodies) potentially using its statutory land assembly powers to enable or facilitate the delivery of this major opportunity.

28. Chapter 9 addresses the importance of embedding an approach to sustainable development in delivering this site. This is necessary to meet Greater Manchester's ambition to become a carbon neutral city region by 2038, supported by the declaration of a climate emergency.
29. Chapters 10 and 11 set out the key benefits that are expected to be realised from the development. Chapter 10 deals with the general economic, social and environmental benefits, whilst Chapter 11 has a specific focus on social value.
30. Chapter 12 commits to a review of the SBDF should there be a change in circumstances which would have implications for the guidance provided in the document.

Consultation and Adoption

31. In preparing this draft SBDF, there has been early engagement with a range of stakeholders. This has been crucial in gaining valuable information about the long-term aspirations for the site and the infrastructure required to deliver the full potential of the site. Dialogue will continue through the consultation process to help shape any revisions to the SBDF before it is brought back to Cabinet for formal approval/adoption, once the consultation process has concluded.
32. As an SPD the SBDF is being prepared in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 which are reflected in our Statement of Community Involvement. The Regulations set out that a draft SPD must be:
 - Screened to determine whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment or Habitat Regulation Assessment is required. The outcomes of the screening opinion will be published alongside the draft SBDF.
 - Made available for public consultation for a 4-week minimum period (note that the consultation would be for six weeks).

- Made available for inspection, at a Council's principal office and at other places within its area as the Local Planning Authority consider appropriate, during normal business hours.
 - Made available as an online copy.
33. The SBDF will be prepared in accordance with the statutory framework and the regulations cited above. For Bury, the Council's website will be used as the main point of contact for the formal consultation. The SBDF online consultation will be promoted via social media (Facebook and X) to raise awareness of the proposals and to issue reminders of the consultation closing date. These should direct residents to the formal consultation website.
34. Printed copies of the SBDF will also be placed in key public buildings (Town Hall and libraries) to allow members of the public to participate in the consultation process.
35. Publicity materials including posters will be located at key locations to signpost residents to the on-line information or to view proposals in person.
36. Direct contact via letters or email will be made with consultees registered on the Consultation Database (around 2,500 contacts).
37. Residents and businesses will also be able to view and discuss the proposals with Council officers at drop-in sessions being held on:
- Tuesday 24th February – Radcliffe Market – 4-8pm
 - Wednesday 25th February – Elton High School – 4-8pm
 - Thursday 26th February – Parrenthorn High School – 4-8pm
 - Thursday 5th March – Edgar Wood Academy – 4-8pm (Simister Bowlee Development Framework only)

Next Steps

- 5.1 It is proposed that consultation on the draft SBDF will start on 13 February and run until 27 March 2026 (6 weeks in total).
- 5.2 This would allow for consideration of comments received and for any amendments to the SBDF to be made before the final version is taken back to Cabinet for formal approval/adoption of the SBDF in summer 2026.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

Please summarise how this links to the Let's Do It Strategy.

38. Places for Everyone forms part of Bury's statutory development plan. It sets out statutory policies and strategic site allocations that will guide future growth

and development in the Borough. A key part of the Plan is to rebalance the Greater Manchester economy by significantly boosting the economic output from the north through the delivery of new housing and employment that will benefit both Bury and its residents. The 'Lets Do It' strategy specifically refers to Places for Everyone as having a key role to play in the delivery of its objectives and priorities.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

39. An EqlA analysis has identified potential impacts across some characteristics which will require consideration of mitigations as the development progresses. The EqlA will require update and revision as this development progresses

There are no outstanding equalities concerns at this stage

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

*Please provide an explanation of the Environmental impact of this decision. Please include the impact on both **Carbon emissions** (contact climate@bury.gov.uk for advice) and **Biodiversity** (contact c.m.wilkinson@bury.gov.uk for advice)*

40. Environmental impacts and concerns will be assessed and monitored as project delivery commences and will be in-line with existing Council policies. The Simister Bowlee Development Framework will seek to meet policy requirements, including physical, social and environmental impacts including biodiversity net gain.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Stakeholders to not engage in the consultation on the draft Supplementary Planning Document.	The draft SPD is being prepared in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 which are reflected in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. However, the consultation process will be kept under review and will be adjusted if additional stakeholder engagement is required.

Legal Implications:

To be completed by the Council's Monitoring Officer.

41. The draft SPD has been prepared in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
34. The recommendations within the report to publish the draft SPD for consultation prior to consideration of responses and potential future adoption by the Cabinet is within the legal powers of the Council.

Financial Implications:

22. There are no financial implications arising directly from the drafting and adoption of the Simister Bowlee Development Framework. The Framework has been developed by Planning Services staff funded from existing approved budget allocations. Any costs relating to the consultation process will also be covered within existing approved budget allocations.
- 42.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Simister Bowlee Development Framework Consultation Draft Supplementary Planning Document

Background papers:

Please list any background documents to this report and include a hyperlink where possible.

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

Term	Meaning
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
PfE	Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan
SBDF	Simister Bowlee Development Framework