

Classification: Open	Decision Type: Key
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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny (29 th June 2026) and Cabinet (30 th June 2026)	Date: 30 June 2026
Subject:	Elton Reservoir Development Framework	
Report of	Leader of the Council	

Summary

1. This report sets out the results of the consultation on the draft Elton Reservoir Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (“SPD”) and seeks approval for the final SPD to be adopted.

Recommendation(s)

2. It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny:
 - i. Note the responses to the public consultation and proposed post consultation revisions set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to this report.
3. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - i. Note the responses to the public consultation and proposed post consultation revisions set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to this report;
 - ii. Approve the revised SPD as the final version to be adopted and published;
 - iii. Delegate authority to the Executive Director (Place) to make any minor, non-material editorial amendments to the SPD ahead of its final publication.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

4. The adoption of the document will establish a framework against which future planning applications on the site will be considered, sets out high level design and development principles for the site and an approach to the delivery and phasing of infrastructure on and off site.

Alternative options considered and rejected

5. No other options were considered/were applicable.

Report Author and Contact Details:

Name: David Wiggins

Background

6. 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.
7. 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 Elton Reservoir (PfE Policy JPA7). The site is Bury's largest residential allocation and offers the opportunity to create a vibrant, sustainable new community that delivers much-needed homes in the Borough.
8. The Elton Reservoir site is a housing-led development opportunity that will deliver:
 - 3,500 new homes
 - Affordable housing in line with policy (currently 25% equating to around 875 affordable homes)
 - Specialist and older persons accommodation
 - A new two-form entry primary school with potential for it to grow to a three-form entry should it be required.
 - Three local centres containing new community, retail and health facilities to serve the needs of the new and existing residents)
 - A new Metrolink stop and public transport hub
 - A new link road through the site to provide access, enable active travel movement and provide resilience on the existing highway network
 - Off-site highway works to mitigate for the development
 - An active travel network including cycleways and pedestrian links
 - Green infrastructure including nature park, heritage park, public open spaces, sports facilities and playgrounds
 - Ecological mitigation and biodiversity net gain
 - Surface water attenuation, SuDS and measures to protect hydrology and water quality

Elton Reservoir Development Framework

9. 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.
10. A key requirement of PfE Policy JPA7 is that any proposals within the Elton Reservoir allocation must be in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan

that has been approved by the Local Planning Authority and it shall include a clear phasing strategy as part of an integrated approach to the delivery of infrastructure to support the scale of the whole development in line with P/E Policy JP-D1 'Infrastructure Implementation'.

11. The Elton Reservoir Development Framework (ERDF) has been prepared by Bury Council with technical input from Peel Land and Property as the main site promoter and input from other landowners/stakeholders.
12. The document is being prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted development plan. SPDs can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues.
13. 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 particular planning applications.
14. The intention is that the ERDF will be a mechanism to help identify, shape and guide the comprehensive development of the site. Its purpose is to establish strategic overarching development principles, define spatial priorities and provide some additional high-level clarity around matters such as land use, connectivity, design quality, infrastructure requirements, sustainability and placemaking objectives.
15. The ERDF is therefore intended to guide future development in a coordinated way and ensure that proposals come forward in accordance with the wider strategic vision and adopted policy objectives.
16. Whilst it provides more detail that way is set out under P/E Policy JPA7, it is important to recognise that the ERDF is a strategic level document.
17. Planning applications will be required to provide more detailed evidence and clarity on a range of issues, including those that are set out in the ERDF. The strategic direction, indicative layouts and policy position in the ERDF would then be fully tested at the planning application stage. This includes providing detailed design information, technical assessments, environmental considerations, access arrangements, landscaping, infrastructure delivery, viability considerations and other supporting evidence necessary to demonstrate that development can be delivered appropriately and in accordance with planning policy.
18. In this way, the process moves from high-level strategic policy and site-wide principles through to the detailed assessment and determination of individual development proposals. The indicative nature of certain elements of the

ERDF at this current strategic stage reflects established planning process and does not preclude the need for detailed technical assessments at the planning application stage.

Summary of Consultation and Responses

19. On the 11th February, members approved a draft ERDF for consultation purposes. In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, consultation was subsequently undertaken over a six-week period running from 13th February 2026 to 27th March 2026 to establish stakeholder views on its content.
20. All relevant documentation was available for inspection on the Council's web site, copies of the document were made available for inspection in the reception area of the Town Hall; and at local libraries and the Tottington Centre. Letters/emails were also sent to all contacts on the Strategic Planning consultation database, posters were placed in key locations and the consultation was also advertised via social media platforms. A number of drop in events were also held in February.
21. The consultation generated a total of 172 responses specific to ERDF. A further 42 joint responses were submitted which were a combined response to the Elton Reservoir, Walshaw and Simister Bowlee Development Frameworks. A summary of these comments and the Council's response to them are set out in the Consultation Statement at Appendix 1. In summary the main issues raised were as follows:
 - Development in the Green Belt – comments relating to the principle of residential development on the site.
 - Outdated evidence base – comments seeking updated evidence relating to flood risk assessments and ecological assessments.
 - Consultation Process – comments stating that the consultation process is perceived as inadequate and lacking transparency
 - Ecology – comments relating to loss of privacy, open views, destruction of wildlife habitats and biodiversity, harm to SBIs and priority habitats, loss of rare species (waxcap, birds, newts, deer), loss of hedgerows, ponds and ecological corridors.
 - Transport and Highways – comments relating to the capacity of the road network and public transport, cumulative impacts from other developments.

- Metrolink and Car Park Concerns - concern about the location of the new Metrolink stop and car park and the lack of clarity regarding the plans.
- Flood Risk and Drainage – comments stating that the development will increase surface water run-off and reduce natural drainage capacity.
- Heritage – comments relating to the inclusion of two additional Grade II listed canal milestones
- Health – comments relating to identifying health as a standalone infrastructure item in Chapter 8
- Infrastructure Pressure – concern that schools, healthcare and utilities have insufficient capacity.
- Housing Type and Affordable Housing – concern that the development will not deliver affordable housing or homes suited to local needs
- Unclear Housing Numbers – concern that the Council is unable to provide clear figures for the number of new homes in each Character Area
- Impact of Residents Amenity and Quality of Life – concern about the increased noise, light and air pollution, risk of anti-social behaviour around new infrastructure, fear of ‘concrete jungle’ replacing valued landscapes.
- No Meaningful Changes to Original Plans – Comments suggesting the Council has ignored previous objections.
- Failure to Prioritise Brownfield Land – concern that brownfield sites are not being developed
- Developer Influence Over Planning – concern that the Council is not acting independently.

22. A significant number of comments objected to development in the Green Belt whereas the Elton Reservoir site was removed from the Green Belt and allocated for housing following the adoption of PfE in March 2024. PfE was subject to a comprehensive two-year Examination in Public, where independent Planning Inspectors considered all the evidence and representations made around the plan (including extensive objections on the site allocations). A key part of the examination was for the Inspectors to assess whether PfE was prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and whether it was sound i.e. that it was positively prepared,

justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The legal outcome of that process removed the site from the Green Belt and the principle of residential development on the site at Elton Reservoir is therefore not a debate that can be re-opened.

23. In addition, a significant number of comments related to the lack of evidence supporting the ERDF. At this stage of the planning process the evidence is proportionate to the fact that the ERDF is still a strategic plan that provides an indicative layout. Planning applications within the site will need to provide detailed and up-to-date evidence. This will include Transport Assessments to assess the impact of development on the highways network, ecology surveys to identify existing wildlife habitats, including protected species, and to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are put in place and flood and drainage strategies to ensure that any flood risk issues are addressed and mitigated for.
24. Comments received also criticised the consultation process. The Council has sought to provide a proportionate and accessible programme of engagement on the Development Framework within a defined statutory timeframe. Consultation has been undertaken in a structured and professional format and in accordance with relevant Regulations and its Statement of Community Involvement.
25. The amendments made to the ERDF have focussed on dealing with specific responses relevant to the document itself as the principle of residential development on the site has already been established and is not a matter for the ERDF or the consultation process. Likewise, updated evidence will be available to review when planning applications are submitted.
26. The consideration of these comments has led to the conclusion that the ERDF would benefit from a number of changes prior to it being formally adopted. In particular:
 - Chapter 3 – (Ecology) - this section has been updated in terms of the existing ecology on the site. This includes updating the species and habitats present on the site and noting the key attributes of each SBI. The Priority habitats mapping layer has been shown.
 - Linked to this, further text has been added to the ecology section in Chapter 3 to confirm that the ecological baseline will continue to be updated and refined through further survey work prior to and alongside future planning applications, ensuring that detailed proposals are informed by the most up to date and site specific ecological evidence available at the time of determination.
 - Chapter 7 (Ecology) – This section has been amended to state that an overarching ecological framework strategy for the site will be prepared

to establish the approach to habitat retention, creation, enhancement, ecological connectivity, Biodiversity Net Gain, recreational management and long-term stewardship across the site. This will ensure that individual phases of development will contribute towards a co-ordinated ecological strategy.

- Chapter 7 (Access, Highways and Movement) has been amended to strengthen the wording in terms of how Transport Assessments should consider the access, highways and active travel strategy and include detailed technical assessment and feasibility work and that the Local Highways Authority must fully agree the transport measures, interventions and mitigation required.
- Chapter 6 – Redvales Works – plans have been amended to make it clear where the parking is currently proposed, where the active travel hub is to be located and where the mixed-use development areas are proposed.
- Chapter 7 (Flood Risk and Drainage) – additional wording has been added to ensure a site wide flood and drainage strategy for the site is prepared in accordance with PfE Policy JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment and the North West River Basin Management Plan and with engagement from United Utilities and Bury Lead Local Flood Authorities.
- Chapter 3 (Built Heritage and Archaeology) – reference to the two additional Grade II listed canal milestones have been added.
- Chapter 8 (Phasing Strategy) - Chapter 8 (Elton Phasing Strategy) - Healthcare has been identified as a separate standalone infrastructure category and the requirement for financial contributions if on-site provision is not feasible has been added to the table. The trigger for this requirement is to be determined through up-to-date needs assessments and capacity assessments.
- Chapter 6 (Site Wide Density) - additional wording has been added to ensure that the design and density of development proposed is appropriate having regard to the character and design considerations including the interface with existing homes; the Green Belt; the need to make space for all; and incorporate, multi-functional SuDS; and the canal, the reservoirs and their settings.
- In order to provide clarity, a glossary has been added to the document. This includes a definition of affordable housing which is consistent with the definition in national planning policy.
- Chapter 6 (Site Wide Density) - additional wording has been added to ensure that the design and density of development proposed is

appropriate having regard to the character and design considerations including the interface with existing homes; the Green Belt; the need to make space for all; and incorporate, multi-functional SuDS; and the canal, the reservoirs and their settings.

- Chapter 6 (Character Areas) – the approximate number of homes has been included in this character area. These figures are approximate and will be subject to further refinement as planning applications come forward on the site.
- Chapter 7 (Design) - additional text which requires new development to ensure there will be no unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of the surrounding area
- More clarity in the introduction on the scope and purpose of the ERDF SPD and specifying matters that are more appropriate for the planning application e.g. submission of more detailed evidence to the support any planning application.
- A glossary has been added in to help to explain a number of terms and references within the ERDF which makes it easier to understand.
- Road names and features have been added to the plans to assist in readers orientating themselves.
- Other specific changes relating to wording in the text and on plans to improve clarity and accuracy.

27. The updated version of the ERDF SPD is attached at Appendix 2.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

28. 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 'Let's 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:

29. The analysis has considered the impacts of this activity across all characteristics, the analysis has identified that the impacts are neutral with

planned mitigations and there are no equalities concerns at this stage. EQIA will be kept under review for the duration of this activity.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

30. Environmental impacts and concerns will be assessed and monitored as project delivery commences and will be in-line with existing Council policies. The Elton Reservoir Development Framework will seek to meet policy requirements, including physical, social and environmental impacts including biodiversity net gain
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Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
The post consultation amendments are not accepted.	The amendments are a result of public consultation and having considered the responses received.
The final ERDF is not approved.	A previous Cabinet report approved the draft ERDF. The final ERDF has been amended in responses to comments received and updated information which has become available.

Procurement Implications:

31. Any future sourcing of a developer or contractor must be compliant with the Procurement Act.
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Legal Implications:

32. The preparation, consultation and adoption of an SPD must be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Regulations) 2012 (as amended). The consultation process undertaken by the Council in relation to the Elton Reservoir Development Framework was for a 6 week period which was in excess of the minimum period of 4 weeks prescribed in the Regulations. In addition to the longer period of consultation undertaken by the Council the means of such consultation exceeded the minimum detailed in the Regulations and was considered appropriate and proportionate by the Council. Whilst comments were received criticising the consultation process undertaken by the Council on the SPD it is satisfied that it has consulted properly on the SPD and this is evidenced by the amendments made to the draft SPD subsequent to consultee comments and the recommendations contained in this report fully adhere to and exceed the requirements of those regulations.

Financial Implications:

33. There are no direct financial implications resulting from the adoption of the SPD.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – ERDF Consultation Statement

Appendix 2 – Revised Elton Reservoir Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document.

Background papers:

None.

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

Term	Meaning
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
PfE	Places for Everyone