

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:	Walshaw Development Framework	
Report of	Leader of the Council	

Summary

1. This report sets out the results of the consultation on the draft Walshaw 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

Position: Service Manager: Strategic Planning and Infrastructure

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 Walshaw (PfE Policy JPA9). The site is one of Bury's residential allocations and offers the opportunity to delivery high quality new homes in North Bury.
8. The Walshaw site is a housing-led development opportunity that will deliver:
 - 1,250 new homes
 - Affordable housing in line with policy (currently 25% equating to around 300 affordable homes)
 - Specialist and older persons accommodation
 - A new two-form entry primary school
 - New local community and retail facilities to serve the needs of the new residents (and existing residents)
 - A new through road within the site to provide access throughout the site and enable 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

Walshaw 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 JPA9 is that any proposals within the Walshaw 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 Walshaw Development Framework (WDF) has been prepared by Bury Council with technical input from the Walshaw Consortium 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 WDF will be a mechanism to help identify, shape and guide the comprehensive development of the site. Its purpose is to establish strategic overarching 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 WDF 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 than what is set out under P/E Policy JPA9 it is important to recognise that the WDF 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 WDF. The strategic direction, indicative layouts and policy position in the WDF would 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 WDF

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 WDF 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. In Bury, all relevant documentation was available for inspection on the Council's website, 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 176 responses specific to the WDF. 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 to this report. 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.
 - Transport and Highways – Comments relating to the capacity of the road network and the transport impacts are severe and insufficiently mitigated. Concern about air quality impacts associated with increased traffic.
 - Green Belt, Environment & Ecology – comments relating to the loss of Green Belt, open countryside and ecology with insufficient mitigation

- Flood Risk and Drainage – comment relating to existing flooding issues, concerns that development will increase surface water runoff and overload already stretched drainage and sewer systems.
- Services (Schools and Healthcare) – Comments suggesting that existing provision is already at/near capacity and there is a lack of firm, funded delivery plans or timelines for new infrastructure.
- Open Space and Wellbeing - Comments stating that existing residents would lose access to valued open space.
- Housing Scale, Density, Design and Impact on Existing Residents – Comments stating that the development is out of character with surrounding areas and the development framework does not adequately comply with PfE Policy JPA9 requirement to protect existing amenity.
- Impact on Existing Businesses – Concern regarding the impact the new road and a potential change to the Booth Street/Church Street/Scobell Street junction will have on existing businesses.
- Affordable Housing – Concern that development will not deliver genuinely affordable housing.
- Christ Church - Comments regarding the linkages to Christ Church.
- Failure to Prioritise Brownfield Land – comments relating to why brownfield sites are not being built on.
- Policy and Evidence Concerns – comments regarding compliance with the NPPF and PFE

22. A significant number of comments objected to development in the Green Belt whereas the Walshaw 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 Walshaw 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 WDF. At this stage of the planning process the evidence is proportionate to the fact that the WDF 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. The Councils have 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 the Statement of Community Involvement.
25. The amendments made to the WDF 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 WDF or the consultation process. Likewise, updated evidence will be available to review when planning applications are submitted.
26. The consideration of these comments led to the conclusion that the WDF would benefit from a number of changes prior to it being formally adopted. In particular:
 - 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 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 (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 7 (Health) refers to the provision of land for a healthcare facility or the improvement of off-site primary care facilities to cope with the needs generated by the development.

- Chapter 8 (Phasing and Delivery 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 7 (Design) - additional text which requires new development to ensure there will be no unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of the surrounding area.
- 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 (Masterplan) – a new pedestrian link from Christ Church into the new development has been added to the masterplan.
- The introduction to the WDF, introduction to Chapter 7 and sections relating to Access, Highways and Transport, Ecology, Open Space, Sport and Recreation and Flood Risk and Drainage, 7.3, 7.4, 7.6 and 7.10 to strengthen the requirement for site-wide evidence to accompany planning applications.
- More clarity in the introduction on the scope and purpose of the WDF 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 WDF which makes it easier to understand.
- Other specific changes relating to wording in the text and on plans to improve clarity and accuracy.

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

Procurement Implications:

31. Any future sourcing of developers or contractors must be compliant with the Procurement Act.

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 Council is satisfied that the consultation exercise undertaken on the SPD was comprehensive and in excess of the minimum requirements of the regulations in terms of the time during which consultation was undertaken and the means via which it was undertaken. The amendments made to the SPD arising from consultee comments received confirms the robustness of the consultation

exercise undertaken and when considered in conjunction with the Appendix to this report and the recommendations contained herein.

Financial Implications:

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

Appendix 1 – WDF Consultation Statement

Appendix 2 – Revised Walshaw 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