

Minutes of: **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 29 June 2026

Present: Councillor C Birchmore
Councillors J Southworth, M Rahimov, T Pilkington, L Ryder,
A Chaudhry, N Bayley, S Haroon, J Sheppard and J Rydeheard

Also in attendance: Councillor E O'Brien Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth
Crispian Logue Assistant Director of Strategy, Planning & Development
David Wiggins Service Manager - Strategic Planning & Infrastructure
Frances Smith Planning Officer
Jacqui Dennis Monitoring Officer
Josh Ashworth Democratic Services

Public Attendance: There were four members of the public present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor J Roith

OSC.97 APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR

The monitoring officer briefed the committee around the situation of the chair standing down therefore the committee would have to vote for the chair of the committee for this meeting only.

Councillor Rydeheard was put forward to chair the meeting and a vote commenced, all members present voted for Councillor Rydeheard to be the chair for the meeting, these being Cllr Bayley, Cllr Birchmore, Cllr Rahimov, Cllr Pilkington, Cllr Ryder, Cllr Chaudhry, Cllr Sheppard and Cllr Southworth

Cllr Roith sent his apologies for the meeting and Cllr Haroon was absent for the vote.

OSC.98 APOLOGIES

Apologies are noted above

OSC.99 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declaration(s) of interest were made...

Councillor Birchmore declared an interest as being on the committee for Bury Folk Keep it Green in relation to the Local Plan, Elton Reservoir Development Framework and the Walshaw Development Framework.

Councillor Sheppard declared an interest as being a member of Bury Folk Keep it Green

OSC.100 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following questions were received by three members of the public attending

Danielle Davis asked Before adopting the Simister Bowlee Development Framework, can officers confirm whether any strategic assessment has been undertaken demonstrating that the proposed development can be accommodated within existing highway and drainage networks during the first five years of delivery? If such an assessment exists, where is it published within the evidence base; if not, why is the Council satisfied that the SPD provides a robust framework for development?

Councillor O'Brien responded In terms of evidence to date, the frameworks are largely reliant on the evidence documents that were produced at the Public Examination stage, which sought to assess the cumulative impact of all of the site allocations over the nine Greater Manchester districts. This included strategic evidence relating to highways and other infrastructure, with the Inspectors concluding that existing or new infrastructure could accommodate the level of growth proposed

This conclusion did not just relate to the first five years of the plan, but the full proposed development within the plan period.

The evidence produced for that plan was strategic and the Inspectors concluded that all of the proposed development in the employment and housing supply could be accommodated within the geographical area. This included highways and other infrastructure. The strategic evidence supporting the PfE can be found on the Combined Authority's web pages.

The Council is satisfied that this evidence is proportionate to where the sites are in the planning process, given the fact the frameworks are largely providing clarity on policy requirements and setting out the future evidence that will be needed to address detailed issues. It is a robust document because adopting it will give the local planning authorities greater control to shape and influence development across the sites.

For example, future planning applications will need to be accompanied by site wide Transport Assessments that will assess the impact of the development on the highway network and to identify appropriate mitigation measures are put in place. Likewise, appropriate measures will need to be put in place to deal with flood or drainage issues.

James Tierney asked The councils own consultation report acknowledges there is no public foul sewer capacity serving the area. Can the cabinet confirm whether united utilities has identified costed and funded a foul drainage solution capable of serving All 1550 proposed homes

Councillor O'Brien replied Wastewater network reinforcement for large development sites is assessed in stages, with clear responsibilities for funding.

Broadly, on-site foul drainage infrastructure (such as pipes within the development and connections to the network) is the responsibility of the developer. Off-site reinforcement to the public sewer network, where required to accommodate additional flows, may be delivered by United Utilities and is funded through the infrastructure charging regime paid by developers when connecting to the water and wastewater network.

For allocations such as Simister and Bowlee, a fully costed and defined foul drainage solution is not established at this stage; instead, this is progressed once a foul drainage strategy is prepared.

It is understood that engagement between the site promoter and United Utilities is underway, in preparation for future planning applications – and in accordance with the requirements set out in the Development Framework.

This engagement will enable United Utilities to assess the impact on the existing network and determine whether any off-site reinforcement is necessary, alongside consideration of how any such requirements would be prioritised and aligned with the timing of development.

Lindsay Bothwell asked for the record, the Council is currently including approximately 90 dwellings from the Simister Bowlee allocation (JPA1.2) within its five-year housing land supply.

Can officers identify the specific strategic evidence or assessments that were relied upon to conclude that this level of delivery is deliverable within five years in infrastructure terms, particularly in relation to highways and drainage constraints, and confirm where this assessment is recorded within the evidence base supporting the Development Framework/SPD?

In addition, can officers confirm how the material considerations arising from known infrastructure constraints, and the revision of the assumed capacity from approximately 170 dwellings to approximately 90 dwellings, were assessed through the plan-making process, and where that assessment is documented?

For clarity, this question relates to the strategic evidence base for deliverability assumptions at plan-making stage, not detailed design or planning application matters.

Councillor O'Brien responded the reference to 90 homes has been taken from the Council's Five Year Supply Statement 2025 which provides an assessment of the amount of housing that is expected to be delivered on identified sites across the Borough over the next five years. This figure represents an indicative snapshot in time based on the information available at the point the assessment was undertaken. The figure is subject to change and does not form part of the Simister Bowlee Development Framework.

The 2025 five year supply position was based on indications from the site promoters that the first housing completions will be within 5 years, and is therefore in accordance with the NPPF definition of "deliverable". To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within 5 years.

There is no requirement for the five year supply to be backed up by the full level of evidence on highways and drainage constraints that may be expected to accompany a planning application, and as a result there is no such evidence sitting behind the 90 dwelling figure.

For this site, the assumption is based on progress being made towards the submission of a planning application, the developers' delivery intentions and anticipated start and build-out rates. The figure of 90 units is simply an indicative scenario and is subject to change.

The infrastructure on the site will be developed before or alongside housing on this site. The type and nature of that infrastructure will relate to a phasing strategy that will reflect update evidence on the site.

The 2025 five year supply has been updated from previous versions to reflect the updated position at the time it was published. The amount of development from the site within the five year supply has been reduced down as more information has come forward to indicate that less development would be delivered from previous assessments.

The assessment now reflects the fact that the site does not have an adopted SPD as yet, nor a planning application submitted and also builds in sufficient time for such an application to be developed, submitted and determined by the planning authorities. There would then be a period of time (assuming permission was granted) before units would actually be completed once the site commences development on infrastructure and ground works.

The next five year supply update will be the 2026 version, and this will take account of the most recent information on the site and the trajectory for that five year period may change again. Assuming the frameworks get approved, a new housing trajectory may be appropriate within that five year period.

Five year supply considerations did not form part of the PfE examination, but it was the wider supply that was considered in terms of ensuring that sufficient land for housing was identified to meet the Government's housing targets.

OSC.101 MEMBER QUESTION TIME

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by **Councillor D Vernon**

Given that the adopted Places for Everyone Plan and the emerging Bury Local Plan are intended to provide a comprehensive and plan-led approach to meeting the borough's housing needs, what is the Council's position on speculative development proposals and pre-application discussions on Green Belt land outside the sites allocated through PfE, particularly concerning land off Starling Road, bordering my ward.

Response from Councillor O'Brien The Places for Everyone Plan does provide a plan led approach that has released land to meet the Borough's long term housing needs.

By working with the other 8 districts in PfE, we were able to minimise the amount of land that was needed and, as a result, have a lower housing target than would otherwise have been the case if we were not part of the plan. Nearly 25% of our housing targets are now being met elsewhere in the conurbation.

Nevertheless, we still need to demonstrate that sufficient land and development is coming forward in the Borough and if we are unable to bring sites forward as envisaged in trajectories, then this does put other land at threat of development.

That is why it is critical to get these strategic sites moving, with the Development Frameworks paving the way forward for future planning applications and delivery of housing.

Councillor Vernon asked furthermore, can the Cabinet Member confirm whether the Council will robustly resist any attempts to secure additional Green Belt releases through speculative applications, where those sites are not allocated within the adopted development plan and where no evidence has been presented demonstrating an unmet housing requirement beyond that already provided for through PfE?"

We cannot stop planning applications being submitted on land that is not identified as development land. This includes applications that may come forward as Green Belt land.

Each planning application will be considered on its merits, against national, regional and local policy.

Unfortunately, we cannot comment on speculative applications, which will need to go through the statutory planning process.

However, it can be said that the Council stands a much greater chance of resisting such proposals if it can demonstrate that housing sites are coming forward and meeting the short term and longer-term housing needs of the Borough.

This is why we want to get these Development Frameworks in place, to allow these sites to come forward but to come forward in a manner that we want.

OSC.102 MINUTES

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

To note it was raised around a request from the previous meeting that there should have been an additional meeting to scrutinize the development frameworks which was missed from the minutes, this was noted and explained this did not happen due to pre-election periods. The minutes will not be altered but it was noted that this was missed off the actions.

OSC.103 APPOINTMENT OF CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPION

Councillor Pilkington agreed to be the corporate parenting champion for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

OSC.104 BURY WEST TRANSPORT FRAMEWORK

The item was included for information following the request from the previous chair, the report was taken as read and wasn't presented.

Cllr Southworth asked about the timescales for the Travel Plan and whether a phased approach would be adopted, recognising that some elements may be easier to deliver in the early stages whilst others, particularly those relating to schools, may need to come forward later. He suggested that flexibility would be required as the proposals develop.

Cllr Bayley welcomed the additional transport capacity proposed and sought clarification on how many tram services could ultimately operate between Bury and Manchester. He noted that limitations in the electricity supply and overhead line infrastructure had previously been identified as barriers to increasing service frequencies and asked how these issues would be addressed. He also queried whether frequencies could be increased to four-minute intervals and asked about TfGM's investigation of underground options and how the growing communities along the route were being considered. Cllr Birchmore commented that infrastructure improvements had already been undertaken in some locations to accommodate double-tram operation.

In response, the Leader stated that both the necessary infrastructure and electricity supply would need to be considered as part of future capacity improvements. He added that the Council should be proud of the work being undertaken in relation to renewable energy, which would support future transport ambitions.

Cllr Pilkington, as Corporate Parenting Champion, asked what opportunities the proposals would create for looked-after children and care leavers. The Leader responded that TfGM would be exploring funding opportunities and increasing the number of placements and

employment opportunities associated with major projects. He stressed the importance of ensuring that looked-after children benefit from these opportunities and suggested this could form a stronger part of the Council's Social Value Strategy.

Cllr Rydeheard highlighted the importance of ensuring that policies were aligned with the build-out of developments and argued that overarching policy commitments should be agreed before, or at least concurrently with, development taking place. He expressed concern that commitments should not be allowed to fall away once development had progressed.

Referring to page 49 of the report, Cllr Rydeheard asked for further detail on the proposed fully accessible walking and cycling route and specifically where it would connect in relation to Darlington Street. The Leader responded that further details would emerge through the preparation of draft plans and future public consultation exercises. He emphasised the need to maintain a balance between the requirements of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, and committed to considering the detail in an open and transparent way. Cris Logue added that work was taking place between the Council's Highways Team, TfGM and wider city-region transport partners.

Cllr Rahimov asked whether the proposed Metrolink stop at Elton Reservoir would operate as a park-and-ride facility and whether that position could change. The Leader advised that a park-and-ride facility reflected TfGM's current intentions for the site and had therefore been included within the plan.

However, he emphasised that the proposal remained indicative and was not fixed. While views differed, with some residents concerned that it could encourage additional car journeys, there was also recognised demand for such a facility, and it remained part of the current proposals.

Returning to cycling provision, Cllr Bayley expressed disappointment with the projected cycling mode share figures and suggested that measures such as 20mph speed limits could help encourage greater uptake. He asked whether new development areas would provide wider roads and sufficient infrastructure for cyclists. It was explained that the proposals would enable the development of cycling infrastructure, with cycling provision forming an integral part of future transport schemes. The importance of creating a connected network and providing safe, segregated cycling routes wherever possible was emphasised.

It Was Agreed:

- The report be noted

OSC.105 BURY LOCAL PLAN

The Chair invited Councillor E. O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth, to present a brief overview of the report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Councillor O'Brien outlined the next steps in progressing the Local Plan site allocations and the associated Development Frameworks, emphasising their role in bringing forward strategic housing sites and supporting the delivery of the borough's housing requirements.

Councillor Southworth raised concerns regarding a number of outline planning applications in Bury North on land currently designated as Green Belt, where applicants were seeking to classify sites as "grey belt". He asked whether one of the aims of the PfE strategy was to reduce infilling within existing communities and ease pressure on local infrastructure, and what incentives existed for developers to prioritise allocated PfE sites.

In response, Councillor O'Brien stated that every planning application must be determined on its own merits against national, regional and local planning policy. He explained that the Council must demonstrate delivery of housing sites to meet both short-term housing supply requirements and longer-term housing needs. Progressing the Development Frameworks would help bring forward strategic housing sites and strengthen the Council's ability to resist development on unallocated sites.

Councillor Birchmore queried the Council's approach to "grey belt" land and whether there were any adopted criteria for identifying such sites. It was explained that the National Planning Policy Framework defines grey belt land as Green Belt land that is either previously developed or does not strongly contribute to the purposes of preventing unrestricted urban sprawl, preventing neighbouring towns from merging, or preserving the setting of historic towns. The Council had not conducted a specific assessment to identify potential grey belt sites, but this could be considered in the future.

Discussion then moved to monitoring arrangements within the Local Plan. Members heard that a comprehensive suite of key performance indicators would be used throughout the life of the Plan, covering a wide range of measures including housing delivery, climate change and biodiversity. Officers advised that the monitoring framework would provide early indications where policies or approaches may require adjustment, although significant changes were not anticipated.

Councillor Sheppard asked several questions relating to housing delivery targets within the Local Plan. Officers confirmed that the housing requirement of 452 dwellings per year between 2025 and 2030 was not linked to any specific dwelling type, although both PfE Policy JP-H3 and emerging Local Plan Policy LP-H3 promote a suitable mix of housing sizes and types.

Members were advised that there had been 836 housing completions between 2022 and 2025, exceeding the PfE requirement of 738 dwellings over the same period, meaning there was no housing shortfall. It was further confirmed that the housing land supply includes sites identified within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), including major brownfield opportunities such as East Lancs Paper Mill.

In response to a question regarding the make-up of the 836 housing completions, officers highlighted that the largest contributors included developments at Mountheath in Prestwich, the former Andrews Textiles site in Bury, Bevis Green, York Street in Radcliffe, the former Cussons site at Kersal Vale Road, Bury Magistrates Court and a range of additional schemes across Radcliffe, Whitefield and Bury.

Questions were also raised regarding windfall housing development. Officers confirmed that the SHLAA is reviewed annually to identify potential residential opportunities and that windfall developments can contribute towards meeting both short-term and long-term housing requirements. Windfall sites may either supplement existing supply or replace allocated sites that fail to come forward. It was also noted that some sites with planning permission may not ultimately be delivered and annual reviews help maintain an accurate assessment of housing land availability.

Further discussion took place regarding housing for older people. Officers explained that leasehold sheltered or retirement housing generally relates to owner-occupied accommodation provided by the private sector, whereas conventional sheltered housing is typically rented accommodation provided by local authorities or housing associations. Suitable locations are assessed through planning judgement, with key considerations including access to public transport, services, health facilities and town centres. Whilst the Local Plan does not allocate specific sites for older persons' accommodation, provision is expected within the PfE allocations at Elton, Walshaw and Simister Bowlee. Members also noted current and proposed

schemes including the former Millwood School site at Fletcher Fold and opportunities at The Elms in Whitefield.

Councillor Birchmore sought clarification on affordable housing requirements, noting that developments within Bury, Radcliffe and Prestwich town centres are required to provide 15% affordable housing compared with 25% elsewhere. Officers explained that independent viability evidence demonstrated greater delivery challenges within town centres, leading to the lower requirement. Councillor Pilkington questioned the definition of affordable housing. The Leader advised that planning policy definitions are applied, including housing delivered at a percentage below market value, although the Council continually seeks opportunities to exceed minimum requirements wherever possible.

The Committee also discussed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Councillor Birchmore asked how the Local Plan would assess whether a proposal would have an unacceptable impact on residential character. Officers advised that guidance contained within SPD13: Houses in Multiple Occupation provides detailed criteria and that assessments would consider planning submissions, consultation responses and other material planning considerations, including impacts relating to noise, parking and waste management.

In relation to renewable energy, Councillor Birchmore asked whether all new homes could be required to incorporate solar panels. Officers explained that changes to Building Regulations through the Future Homes Standard, expected from March 2027, will introduce requirements for renewable electricity generation within most new homes. Given the national regulatory framework, it was not considered necessary to duplicate these requirements within Local Plan policy.

Members also discussed biodiversity net gain requirements and ecological mitigation. Officers advised that biodiversity enhancement would continue to be delivered through appropriate mitigation measures and receptor sites where required. During discussion, the potential role of habitat creation and species reintroduction was raised, although no commitment was made regarding specific initiatives.

Questions were raised regarding the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HDNA). Officers confirmed that the 2024/25 HDNA forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. Members discussed historic proposals for a commuter rail service on the East Lancashire Railway (ELR) corridor. It was noted that the Council would not support any proposal that could undermine the operation or heritage value of the ELR and that previous proposals had not progressed following assessment.

Discussion also considered housing affordability across the borough, particularly in more northern communities. Members acknowledged ongoing challenges in providing affordable housing and noted the importance of working with housing associations and registered providers to expand affordable housing supply.

Councillor Sheppard raised several questions regarding climate change and the Council's commitment to supporting Greater Manchester's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2038. Officers explained that progress is monitored through Greater Manchester environmental reporting, Places for Everyone monitoring arrangements and Authority Monitoring Reports. Strategic Policy JP-S2 within PfE already requires development to minimise carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency and maximise renewable energy generation. Viability implications had been considered through the PfE evidence base and whole-plan viability assessments.

Questions were also asked regarding air quality, noise pollution and contaminated land. Officers reported that Bury currently has no designated air quality management areas exceeding statutory pollution limits, reflecting improvements in vehicle technology and the

transition towards low-emission public transport. Nevertheless, major developments are required to consider air quality impacts and planning conditions may be imposed where necessary. Policies also exist to address risks associated with noise, contamination and other environmental hazards.

Councillor Rydeheard asked about the examination process and potential consequences if the Local Plan were found unsound. Officers explained that the examination process would identify any necessary modifications and expressed confidence that the submitted plan represented a sound and robust framework.

Finally, Members discussed the proportion of development taking place on brownfield land, with officers indicating that almost 90% of recent housing delivery had been on brownfield sites. A request was made for the exact figure to be provided following the meeting. Further discussion took place regarding viability challenges affecting affordable housing delivery and the importance of securing the right mix of housing, including specialist accommodation for older people, through future development frameworks and site allocations.

It Was Agreed:

- Support the local plan submission going to cabinet
- The update be noted
- Receive further updates at a future meeting after consultation

OSC.106 THE ADOPTION OF THE ELTON DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SPD

The Chair advised that the Committee would consider the Simister and Bowlee, Elton Reservoir and Walshaw Development Frameworks as a continuation of the same item, given the common themes arising from the consultation responses, including transport, infrastructure, ecology, public engagement and planning policy considerations.

A report from Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth, had been circulated in advance of the meeting and Councillor O'Brien was invited to provide an overview of the report and the proposed amendments following consultation.

Councillor O'Brien outlined the purpose of the Development Frameworks and explained that the proposed amendments sought to strengthen existing positions, respond to consultation feedback and provide greater clarity for future planning applications. He advised that many of the changes reflected concerns raised by residents and stakeholders, whilst remaining consistent with the Places for Everyone strategy and wider planning policy requirements.

The Committee considered issues relating to access arrangements at Simister. Members heard that access through Simister village would be carefully managed and that Simister Lane was not considered suitable for significant construction traffic or as a primary access route. Councillor O'Brien explained that access arrangements would be developed in greater detail through subsequent planning stages but that the intention was to protect the village from inappropriate through traffic. Improvements would be required elsewhere, including around Bluebell Lane, and the Framework made clear that Simister Lane would not operate as a principal route into and out of the development.

Councillor Bayley questioned what measures would prevent motorists from using any future bus gate and suggested that enforcement measures and fines should be referenced. Councillor O'Brien acknowledged that while bus gates could be considered, a range of options

remained available, including physical measures such as bollards. It was noted that detailed access arrangements would be further explored through subsequent design work, with an emphasis on balancing accessibility and protection of local communities.

Discussion took place regarding the differences in affordable housing percentages across the strategic allocations. Councillor O'Brien explained that these differences reflected existing and emerging planning policies together with viability considerations and did not represent different approaches to affordable housing provision.

Councillor Rydeheard raised concerns regarding the protection of Grade II listed assets and heritage features located within or close to development sites. In response, Councillor O'Brien advised that heritage considerations had been reflected throughout the revised documents and that the consultation process had strengthened several policy areas. He noted that the Development Frameworks reinforced the planning principles already established through Places for Everyone and would assist in ensuring that future planning applications appropriately considered heritage impacts.

Members discussed consultation responses relating to biodiversity and ecology. Councillor O'Brien acknowledged that development proposals could impact biodiversity and that the Council's role was to ensure impacts were avoided where possible and otherwise mitigated or compensated in accordance with planning policy. It was noted that several consultation responses had sought stronger protection for ecological assets and that revisions had been made where appropriate. Officers explained that ecological considerations would continue to be assessed through detailed planning applications supported by up-to-date survey information.

Questions were raised regarding infrastructure delivery and how future developer contributions would be managed. Councillor O'Brien advised that Development Frameworks provided a strategic mechanism for coordinating infrastructure requirements where multiple developers may be involved. This was intended to ensure fairness and proportionality, avoiding circumstances whereby one development carried an unreasonable burden or where infrastructure requirements were not adequately delivered. Members were advised that infrastructure contributions would ultimately be secured through planning obligations and legal agreements.

Councillor Rydeheard sought clarification regarding transport assessments and how the transport impacts of development would be monitored and enforced. Councillor O'Brien advised that planning applications would be required to assess both existing infrastructure capacity and the impact of development throughout its lifespan. Chris Logue added that the revised transport framework strengthened requirements around strategic transport planning and provided greater clarity regarding future expectations at the planning application stage.

The Committee then considered the consultation responses received in relation to Elton Reservoir. Members noted that 172 responses had been submitted and that the principal concerns raised related to Green Belt development, the evidence base supporting the proposals, consultation arrangements, ecology, transport and highways, Metrolink proposals, flood risk and drainage, heritage, healthcare provision, infrastructure pressures and the prioritisation of brownfield land.

In response to questions from Councillor Sheppard regarding consultation arrangements, officers advised that posters and leaflets had been distributed across a range of public locations throughout the borough, including libraries, leisure facilities, public parks, Tottington Centre and Bury Town Hall.

Consultation materials had also been available at drop-in sessions. Officers stated that the Council believed the consultation programme had been proportionate, accessible and

compliant with the Statement of Community Involvement and relevant legislative requirements, whilst recognising that opportunities always exist to enhance engagement processes. Members considered comments relating to ecology and the protection of important habitats and species. Officers advised that consultation feedback had resulted in updates to ecological information contained within the Framework, including strengthened references to priority habitats and ecological assets. Future planning applications would be required to be supported by detailed ecological assessments and demonstrate compliance with Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. Where impacts on habitats could not be avoided, appropriate mitigation or compensation measures would be required. Protected species, including great crested newts, bats, barn owls and other priority species, would be subject to detailed consideration during the planning process.

The Committee discussed consultation responses concerning the proposed Metrolink stop and associated park and ride facilities. Members referred to suggestions that alternative locations should be explored and concerns regarding impacts on nearby residents. Officers advised that the currently identified location was the most appropriate based on available information due to its relationship with the proposed site access arrangements. However, it was emphasised that the location remained indicative and would continue to be reviewed as proposals developed in conjunction with Transport for Greater Manchester.

Officers further explained that the wider transport hub was intended to encourage modal shift and integrate tram, bus, walking and cycling infrastructure. The park and ride element was intended to support reduced longer-distance car journeys and reflected existing provision elsewhere across the Metrolink network. Should the proposed location proceed, appropriate mitigation measures would be incorporated into the design to address concerns raised by residents.

Members also discussed brownfield land delivery and housing supply. Officers outlined the Council's commitment to a brownfield preference approach and highlighted the extensive work undertaken with developers, registered providers, Homes England and Greater Manchester partners to bring forward difficult brownfield sites. Members were informed that approximately 88% of housing development delivered within the borough over the previous five years had been completed on brownfield land.

Questions were asked regarding progress at the East Lancashire Paper Mill site. Officers advised that the Council had worked closely with Homes England and the appointed developer, Morris Homes, to facilitate delivery of the site. Recent planning applications seeking amendments to existing permissions had been submitted and the Council understood that development was expected to commence shortly. The site formed part of the Council's housing land supply and was expected to contribute approximately 125 dwellings during the period 2025 to 2030.

During discussion, Members raised concerns regarding surface water flooding, climate change and drainage impacts, particularly in parts of Radcliffe. Officers advised that such matters would require detailed assessment through future planning applications and would be considered alongside technical evidence provided by applicants and statutory consultees.

The Committee subsequently considered the Walshaw Development Framework consultation responses. Members noted that 176 responses had been received and that many of the issues raised mirrored those identified in relation to the other strategic allocations. Principal concerns included Green Belt development, the evidence base, consultation processes, transport and highways, ecology, flood risk and drainage, schools, healthcare facilities, open space provision, wellbeing, impacts on existing residents and businesses, and compliance with national and strategic planning policy.

Questions were raised regarding consultation activity specific to Walshaw and whether information had been distributed directly to affected residents. Officers confirmed that while posters and leaflets had been distributed through public locations and consultation events, no house-to-house leaflet distribution had taken place. It was noted that neighbouring residents would be formally consulted as part of any future planning application process.

Members discussed the overall effectiveness of the consultation exercises. Councillor O'Brien acknowledged that consultation processes can always be improved and highlighted the importance of maintaining constructive engagement with local communities. In response, members suggested that the Committee establish a task and finish group to review public consultation, communication and community involvement arrangements for future planning matters. There was broad support for exploring opportunities to improve engagement methods and ensure residents felt fully involved in decision-making processes.

Councillor Sheppard also sought clarification regarding how consultation responses had been assessed and whether any independent organisations had influenced amendments to the Frameworks. Officers advised that all representations had been reviewed and that some respondents had objected to the principle of development itself while others had proposed specific amendments. The revisions before the Committee reflected consideration of the issues raised and engagement with relevant stakeholders and consultees.

During consideration of responses relating to infrastructure and utilities, members referred to comments from United Utilities and concerns recorded within the consultation documentation. Chris Logue advised that United Utilities remained a key stakeholder in the process and that ongoing engagement had informed the updating of evidence and the refinement of infrastructure requirements within the Frameworks.

In concluding the item, members recognised the challenge of balancing housing delivery, infrastructure provision, environmental protection and community expectations. The Committee expressed support for further work to strengthen public engagement and communication in planning matters and requested that officers explore proposals for a task and finish group focused on consultation and community involvement.

Action

- The Committee agreed to explore the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to review and improve the Council's consultation and community engagement processes in relation to strategic planning matters.

Recommendations

The Committee resolved to recommend to Cabinet that:

1. The post-consultation revisions to the Development Frameworks be endorsed.
2. Overview and Scrutiny:
 - Notes the responses to the public consultation and the proposed post-consultation revisions set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the report.
 - Notes the recommendations contained within the reports presented in the agenda pack.

OSC.107 THE ADOPTION OF THE SIMISTER BOWLEE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SPD

This item was covered during discussions on the previous item and it was agreed to;

Recommendations

The Committee resolved to recommend to Cabinet that:

1. The post-consultation revisions to the Development Frameworks be endorsed.
2. Overview and Scrutiny:
 - Notes the responses to the public consultation and the proposed post-consultation revisions set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the report.
 - Notes the recommendations contained within the reports presented in the agenda pack.

OSC.108 THE ADOPTION OF THE WALSHAW DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SPD

This item was covered during discussions on the previous item and it was agreed to;

Recommendations

The Committee resolved to recommend to Cabinet that:

1. The post-consultation revisions to the Development Frameworks be endorsed.
2. Overview and Scrutiny:
 - Notes the responses to the public consultation and the proposed post-consultation revisions set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the report.
 - Notes the recommendations contained within the reports presented in the agenda pack.

OSC.109 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR C BIRCHMORE
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 11.10 pm)