

Family Name	Creswell
Given Name	Yvonne
Person ID	1287422
Title	Stakeholder Submission
Type	Web
Family Name	Creswell
Given Name	Yvonne
Person ID	1287422
Title	JPA 1.2: Simister and Bowlee (Northern Gateway)
Type	Web
Soundness - Positively prepared?	Unsound
Soundness - Justified?	Unsound
Soundness - Consistent with national policy?	Unsound
Soundness - Effective?	Unsound
Compliance - Legally compliant?	No
Compliance - In accordance with the Duty to Cooperate?	No
Redacted reasons - Please give us details of why you consider the consultation point not to be legally compliant, is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.	<p>Policy JP Allocation 1.2, Simister and Bowlee</p> <p>Legality</p> <p>Failure to comply with Statement of Community Involvement</p> <p>Bury Council have failed to comply with their Statement of Community Involvement at all stages of the creation of the plan. There was no notification to residents of the initial call for sites and the amount spent on making residents aware of the plan is disproportionately small (£100 as per the response to a Freedom of Information request) in comparison to the effect it will have upon them. There has been a deliberate campaign of misinformation and misleading statements to promote and "sell" the Plan to residents, rather than a presentation of the facts e.g., residents only being told of the plans for their specific ward, and not being informed of the bigger picture across the borough, thus giving the impression that the impact is less than it is. There has been an over reliance on residents finding things out for themselves on social media and websites and thus a failure to engage with various groups due to over reliance on the use of social media and technology. There has been no access to public internet, e.g., in libraries, during Covid. This has adversely and disproportionately affected older people and those from deprived backgrounds. This is against the SCI 2.4 & 4.17. Countrywide, Covid restrictions are now lifted but restrictions still remain in place in Bury's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI para 1.7). Consultations have been inaccessible in terms of language and terminology used and have been a deterrent to becoming involved in the planning process as they have been wordy, long winded, and intrusive, thus producing an irrelevant response rate.</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework greenbelt protection clauses</p>

The purpose of the NPPF greenbelt protection is to prevent urban sprawl. Developing on this green belt site will create an urban sprawl contrary to NPPF para 137 and para 138 a,b,c, and e.

This proposed allocation will result in the loss of approximately 74 hectares of Green Belt. This area of Green Belt currently performs strongly in relation to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas and in preventing neighbouring towns from merging. The loss of this land from the Green Belt will therefore clearly result in harm which has not been justified. The case for exceptional circumstances to release this site for development has simply not been made given the lack of suitable assessment of reasonable alternatives.

To prove that exceptional circumstances to justify alteration to greenbelt boundaries exist, the NPPF requires evidence that all other reasonable options to meet identified need have been considered (NPPF para 141). This must include maximising use of brownfield and underutilised sites and maximising density.

Assessments

There has been a failure to conduct thorough and independent ecological assessments. Assessments carried out have been done on behalf of developers and are therefore not independent. Site wildlife, flood risk and other surveys have been carried out by consultancies on behalf of and paid for by developers rather than entirely independent wildlife organisations or the Department of the Environment so must be considered potentially biased.

The Housing Need Assessment was carried out by Arc4, who were supposed to carry out a non-biased survey of housing need. However, they have a partnership with Greater Manchester Housing Partnership, an organisation of housing associations, including Six Town Housing in Bury. The assessment was therefore not impartial.

Climate change policy and carbon neutral policy

Simister and Bowlee currently have illegal air quality readings due to the motorways (M60, M62 and M66) surrounding the site. Bury Council have confirmed by email that they are not responsible for the Strategic Road Networks (motorways) and this is Highways England. However, the local authority as a duty of care for all residents and should consider all intelligence particularly when it could jeopardise the health and wellbeing of local residents.

Highways England provided the readings through a freedom of information request and the readings on the Strategic Road Networks around Simister and Bowlee in 2015/2016 were:

- 75% at illegal limit
- 15% at legal limit
- 10% not full year readings

With the introduction of a 1.2 million square metres of industrial and 1550 homes this will undoubtedly increase already illegal levels of carbon emissions even further.

Point 17 Page 233 of the PfE states we will "incorporate appropriate noise and air quality mitigation measures and high-quality landscaping along the M60 motorway corridors and local road network if required within the allocation."

Highways England have already tried this through the Barrier erecting study and it failed. The before and after results were provided and it was confirmed there was no reduction in pollution.

Up to date information

The PfE indicates in Para 1.63 point 2 that the most up to date information be used in plan making, so being the most recent Bury's Housing Development Needs Assessment 2020 must be taken into consideration: <https://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=15866>

Soundness

Site Selection

The site selection process for Bury has been especially opaque. Little information has been given about why other more apparently suitable sites were rejected, or what alternatives were considered. Bury Council admitted in a Freedom of Information response that site selection was decided at a series of informal meetings with no list of attendees or minutes available. This site choice cannot be justified as the most appropriate when no reasonable alternatives appear to have been examined. Alternative options were ruled out too early or were not considered despite other areas having similar if not more appropriate criteria.

The Simister and Bowlee allocation only meets 4 out of 10 of the broad objectives within Section 3 of the PfE plan:

- Objective 1 - Meet our housing need.
- Objective 3 Playing our part in ensuring a thriving and productive economy in all parts of Greater Manchester.
- Objective 5 - Reduce inequalities and improve prosperity.
- Objective 6 - Promote the sustainable movement of people, goods, and information.

These and other objectives could be satisfied by any number of sites in the area.

According to the Greater Manchester Green Belt assessment the Simister and Bowlee site makes a strong or weak to moderate contribution to the purpose of the greenbelt in each of the areas:

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas - Strong

To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another - Strong

To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment - Weak to moderate

Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns - Weak to moderate

However, it is believed the Simister and Bowlee site has been assessed incorrectly as all these contributions should be strong or strong to moderate. The definitions below have been taken from the GM Green Belt Assessment document:

-To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

oStrong - The land parcel contains the characteristics of countryside, has no or very little urbanising development, and is open.

oModerate - The land parcel contains the characteristics of countryside, has limited urbanising development, and is relatively open.

-Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns

oStrong - The parcel plays a major role in the setting and or special character of historic towns in terms of its physical extent and degree of visibility and/or its significant contribution to special character.

oModerate - The parcel plays a moderate role in the setting of historic towns in terms of its physical extent and degree of visibility and/or its contribution to special character.

Several character areas are included in this allocation, such as National Character Area (54), Manchester Pennine Fringe, Simister, Slattocks and

Heald Green, as well as Fringe Settled Valley Pasture and Settled Farmlands. At paragraph 18.3, the Topic Paper describes the character of the area, including undulating pasture and rough grassland, mature trees, hedgerows, woodland blocks, and scattered farmsteads etc. These would all be destroyed if the development of this allocation were to proceed.

The site can be seen from a number of longer vantage points, as well as in the immediate neighbourhood. However, due to the scale, form, and nature of the proposed development, visual amenity will be adversely affected. The landscape mitigation proposals will not address these fundamental concerns.

There are numerous key habitats on the site, including wetlands, woodland, grassland, etc., which will all be damaged and could be lost as a result of this scheme. Additionally, the scheme will negatively impact protected species, including great crested newts, as well as wider ecological networks, which have not been adequately considered in the plan. There is no consensus that biodiversity net gain can be achieved at this site, given the extent of loss of existing vegetation and green space.

According to the Topic Paper at paragraph 191.0, there will be an attempt to achieve a net gain, but there is no guarantee that it will be delivered. This is contrary to current national planning policy, which could jeopardise the allocation. In addition to the impact of the development itself, the proximity of the site area to major highways also raises concerns about air and noise pollution.

The lack of selection criteria met and the harm that will be caused by the release of the Simister and Bowlee greenbelt are evidence of the lack of justification for the selection of this site. In fact, an ex-Bury Council leader, David Jones, admitted in writing that sites had been selected due to their sheer size and the ease of implementation of infrastructure, saying,

"The proposed strategy within the GMSF is to release a small number of large strategic sites from the Green Belt as these will provide the scale and massing of development that is needed to enable the viable delivery of the essential major infrastructure to support the development."

The majority of the site is located within flood zone 1 with existing watercourses within the allocation boundary and ponds which could pose a risk. Furthermore, given the anticipated scale of development and the large increase in hard surfacing, there is a serious risk that the site could result in flooding on adjacent sites as well as localised floods due to increased surface water runoff.

Paragraph 12.2 of the Topic Paper supports these concerns and draws attention to potential issues on groundwater flooding. Given the importance of ensuring that developments are proposed in the most appropriate and safe areas, greater consideration of flood risk should be given at this stage of the Plan process, prior to adoption, to ensure that the allocations are appropriate and deliverable. Leaving these issues to the design stage is simply inappropriate as they fall to the principle of development.

The viability of this site is noted to have been calculated with a 25% contribution towards affordable housing in Bury and at 7.5% of GDV in Rochdale. However, because the PfE Plan does not specify the conditions for delivering affordable housing throughout the Plan, it is uncertain whether these figures are based on correct and reasonable assumptions. The GMCA has determined that the site is viable, but there are a number of issues that must be addressed before the site can be considered deliverable.

Infrastructure

The Topic Paper supporting this allocation states in paragraph 11.1 that extensive infrastructure investment, including a wide range of public transportation enhancements, is required to ensure its implementation. This aims to prove that the site is unsustainable in its current state and is not

properly connected to an existing urban area or community. As a result, the site is deemed unsuitable for allocation.

In paragraph 11.2, it is confirmed that this development will have a major influence on both the strategic and local road networks, both in isolation and in combination with other neighbouring allocations. The impact on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) is expected to be focused at M60 Junction 19 and M62 Junction 19, while the impact on the Local Road Network (LRN) is projected to be concentrated at the intersections on the A6045 Heywood Old Road. To facilitate and deliver this site, it is evident that major investment and improvements to the highway network will be required.

These works are of such a scale as to potentially render the scheme unviable. Furthermore, the construction will have a major negative impact on current inhabitants, not just due to traffic and roadworks during construction, but also due to traffic, increased idle vehicles, and longer travel times once the development is completed.

Investment in public transport is unlikely to be adequate to alleviate these legitimate concerns, especially when considering the cumulative consequences of all the anticipated growth in the surrounding area.

Any development within the proposed allocation site would need to assess the requirement for additional social infrastructure (education, healthcare etc). the impact of these contributions on the viability of the site also needs careful consideration to ensure that the allocation is in fact deliverable

To deliver this allocation there are requirements for investment in the transport network, public transport provision, school places, health, historic assets etc. All of which could well have a detrimental impact on the viability and delivery of the site

Housing delivery targets

Bury Council have consistently failed to meet housing delivery targets and are now in presumption. To be effective a plan must actually be deliverable. The plan relies heavily on the cooperation of property developers. There is no indication of how they will be made to keep up with targets and what sanctions will apply if they don't. At a Council meeting held on 9/9/21 the Leader of Bury Council Eammon O'Brien confirmed that it was "unlikely" that the proposed building rates for all developments in Bury would be met as they were "unrealistic". So, the plan cannot be considered to be effective and fails the effectiveness test for Soundness.

Housing requirements

Government guidance is clear that standard housing methodology is just a starting point and can be changed in exceptional circumstances □ this has not been thoroughly explored. A lack of brownfield land in the area and in particular the economic shock caused by Brexit and Covid 19 have not been considered.

There is insufficient confidence in the accuracy of the predictions in the current uncertain economic climate to justify Green Belt loss at the start of the plan. Greenbelt loss should only occur once all brownfield has been exhausted. A review mechanism should be built in to only include greenbelt at a later stage if proven necessary. PfE para1.42 states: "The majority of development between 2021 and 2037 (the "plan period") will be on land within the urban area, most of which is brownfield land" PfE favours a brownfield first policy wherever possible as does National Policy. Bury Council have informed the public in Bury that they will implement a brownfield first policy. When questioned at a council meeting on 9/9/21 the Leader of the Council Eammon O'Brien clarified this statement by saying that for anything the council themselves build they would adopt a brownfield first policy but claimed that the council have no control over the actions of private

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	<p>developers. In reality they do, as they could limit the release of green belt sites in accordance with National Policy NPPF 134 part e.</p> <p>Changes to greenbelt boundaries</p> <p>As part of the overall plan Bury have modified green belt boundaries and allocations in such a way to make it appear that less Greenbelt is being sacrificed. The loss of the Simister and Bowlee site greenbelt has been partially offset by creating extensive but unusable greenbelt in other areas without justifying exceptional circumstances. This is not in accordance with National Policy.</p>
<p>Redacted modification - Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make this section of the plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified above.</p>	<p>Remove this allocation from Places for Everyone and look at brownfield sites for warehousing.</p>
<p>Family Name</p>	<p>Creswell</p>
<p>Given Name</p>	<p>Yvonne</p>
<p>Person ID</p>	<p>1287422</p>
<p>Title</p>	<p>JPA 7: Elton Reservoir Area</p>
<p>Type</p>	<p>Web</p>
<p>Soundness - Positively prepared?</p>	<p>Unsound</p>
<p>Soundness - Justified?</p>	<p>Unsound</p>
<p>Soundness - Consistent with national policy?</p>	<p>Unsound</p>
<p>Soundness - Effective?</p>	<p>Unsound</p>
<p>Compliance - Legally compliant?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Compliance - In accordance with the Duty to Cooperate?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Redacted reasons - Please give us details of why you consider the consultation point not to be legally compliant, is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.</p>	<p>Elton Reservoir Allocation JPA-7 - Legality and Soundness</p> <p>-Places for Everyone indicates in Para 1.63 point 2 that the most up to date information be used in plan making, so being the most recent Bury Council's Housing Development Needs Assessment 2020 must be taken into consideration: https://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=15866</p> <p>-The site selection process for Bury has been not been transparent. Little information has been given about why other more apparently suitable sites were rejected, or what alternatives were considered. Bury Council admitted in a Freedom of Information response that site selection was decided at a series of informal meetings with no list of attendees or minutes available. This site choice cannot be justified as the most appropriate when no reasonable alternatives appear to have been examined. The Elton Reservoir site does not meet the selection criteria laid down in the NPPF or the GMCA guidelines: https://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=16330. Radcliffe, the location of Elton Reservoir has the least expensive housing in Bury but</p>

was selected in preference to sites in other areas where affordable housing is required.

-Para 11.105 p 264 states: " The allocation [Elton Reservoir] is almost entirely surrounded by the existing urban area". Filling this green belt site in will contribute to creating urban sprawl contrary to compliance with National Policy NPPF para 134 parts a, c and e.

-Para 11.105 p 264 states: "Although the allocation has the capacity to deliver a total of around 3,500 new homes, it is anticipated that around 1,900 of these will be delivered within the plan period. Nevertheless, it is considered necessary to release the site in full at this stage, given that the scale of the proposed development means that it will need to be supported by significant strategic infrastructure and this level of investment needs the certainty that the remaining development will still be able to come forward beyond the plan period". Such gross over release of greenbelt is entirely contrary to National Guidelines, which regards greenbelt as a precious resource not to be squandered. JPA7 fails to identify the source of infrastructure funding, indeed shortfalls are expected (see para 12.16 of Places for Everyone). Site owners Peel are not specifically mentioned as being a contributor to the infrastructure funding. Questions should be asked regarding the reasons for Bury Council offering up a huge amount of greenbelt at Elton Reservoir that is not required during the plan period (and may never be required) instead of retaining it in accordance with National Policy.

-The Elton site apparently cost Peel £27M (as detailed in the site allocation topic paper) for approx. 260 hectares (£104K per hectare) as greenbelt. Allowing a conservative price uplift of around 60 times for green belt conversion to development land, the land for the initial 1900 site becomes worth around £875M. Adding in the land for the totally unjustified additional housing beyond the plan period adds approx. another £750 M. The implication being that unless Peel gets the whole £1.325 Billion up front they can't offer any upfront funding for the infrastructure. Infrastructure that would not be needed if the development does not go ahead. Peel have indicated that they will possibly build some homes but will definitely split the site into lots to be developed by other developers so they (Peel) would avoid contributions this way. It would be left to Bury to extract the funding from other, as yet unknown, developers. Bury have a very poor reputation for obtaining developer contributions for infrastructure and developers always try to wriggle out of any obligations. It seems Peel have duped Bury Council into ignoring National Policy and granting them a huge financial bonus with no commitment to do anything.

-Site wildlife, flood risk and other surveys have been carried out by consultancies on behalf of and paid for by developers rather than entirely independent wildlife organisations or the Department of the Environment so must be considered potentially biased. This is particularly important at Elton Reservoir as there are currently problems with the reservoir wall which are being addressed by the Canal and Rivers trust. These measures may be suitable for providing some protection to open fields but are they suitable to protect homes from flooding if there is a breach? Such surveys should be entirely independent of benefiter influence.

-As part of the infrastructure a new secondary school for Radcliffe is mentioned. A new secondary free school for Radcliffe is already planned funded by the Government. The proposed new school will not even cater for existing Radcliffe pupil numbers. Since the proposed school is indicated on the site already reserved for the free school we must assume Places for Everyone document refers to the school already planned. Regeneration for Radcliffe, the location of the Elton Reservoir development is also mentioned as part of the infrastructure funding. A regeneration plan for Radcliffe is already in place. Bury Council have applied for Government levelling up funding and have stated that even if the application does not succeed the

regeneration will go ahead using existing Council money. Bury Council have stated that regeneration and the new school for Radcliffe are not dependent on Places for Everyone going ahead. Any mention/implication that Places for Everyone will contribute to providing a new secondary school (unless it is a second school) and regeneration for Radcliffe must be removed from JPA-7.

-Bury Council has consistently failed to meet housing delivery targets and is now in presumption. To be effective a plan must actually be deliverable. The plan relies heavily on the cooperation of property developers. There is no indication of how they will be made to keep up with targets and what sanctions will apply if they don't. At a Council meeting held on 9/9/21 the Leader of Bury Council Eammon O'Brien confirmed that it was "unlikely" that the proposed building rates for all developments in Bury (as laid out in JPA7 Elton Reservoir Topic Paper Places for Everyone 2021, section 27.8, page 52) would be met as they were "unrealistic". So the plan cannot be considered to be effective. So the plan fails the effectiveness test for Soundness.

-As part of the overall plan Bury Council has modified green belt boundaries and allocations in such a way to make it appear that less Greenbelt is being sacrificed. So the loss of the Elton Reservoir site greenbelt has been partially offset by creating extensive greenbelt in other areas without justifying exceptional circumstances. This is not in accordance with National Policy.

-Places for Everyone puts the majority of housing in the West of Bury (Elton Reservoir site) while locating the jobs on the East side of Bury on the M66 Northern Gateway corridor, completely the other side of an already congested Bury. The proposed new link road will not help this problem as it links one congested area to another.

-Places for Everyone para 1.42 states: "The majority of development between 2021 and 2037 (the "plan period") will be on land within the urban area, most of which is brownfield land". Places for Everyone favours a brownfield first policy wherever possible as does National Policy. Bury Council has informed the public in Bury that it will implement a brownfield first policy; however, the Council is going for immediate green belt release (see JPA7 Elton Reservoir Topic Paper Places for Everyone 2021, section 27.9 page 52). When questioned at a council meeting on 9/9/21 the Leader of the Council, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien clarified this statement by saying that for anything the council builds it would adopt a brownfield first policy but claimed that the council has no control over the actions of private developers, in reality it does, as it could limit the release of green belt sites in accordance with National Policy NPPF 134 part e.

Redacted modification - Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make this section of the plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified above.

Remove this allocation from Places for Everyone and go back to look at more suitable and viable alternatives that do not require the release of a large swathe of Green Belt.

Family Name

Creswell

Given Name

Yvonne

Person ID

1287422

Title

JPA 9: Walshaw

Places for Everyone Representation 2021

Type	Web
Soundness - Positively prepared?	Unsound
Soundness - Justified?	Unsound
Soundness - Consistent with national policy?	Unsound
Soundness - Effective?	Unsound
Compliance - Legally compliant?	No
Compliance - In accordance with the Duty to Cooperate?	No
Redacted reasons - Please give us details of why you consider the consultation point not to be legally compliant, is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.	<p>Policy JP Allocation 9, Walshaw</p> <p>Legality</p> <p>Failure to comply with Statement of Community Involvement</p> <p>Bury Council have failed to comply with their Statement of Community Involvement at all stages of the creation of the plan. There was no notification to residents of the initial call for sites and the amount spent on making residents aware of the plan is disproportionately small (£100 as per the response to a Freedom of Information request) in comparison to the effect it will have upon them. There has been a deliberate campaign of misinformation and misleading statements to promote and "sell" the Plan to residents, rather than a presentation of the facts eg residents only being told of the plans for their specific ward, and not being informed of the bigger picture across the borough, thus giving the impression that the impact is less than it is. There has been an over reliance on residents finding things out for themselves on social media and websites and thus a failure to engage with various groups due to over reliance on the use of social media and technology. There has been no access to public internet, eg in libraries, during Covid. This has adversely and disproportionately affected older people and those from deprived backgrounds. This is against the SCI 2.4 & 4.17. Countrywide, Covid restrictions are now lifted but restrictions still remain in place in Bury's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI para 1.7). Consultations have been inaccessible in terms of language and terminology used and have been a deterrent to becoming involved in the planning process as they have been wordy, long winded and intrusive, thus producing an irrelevant response rate.</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework greenbelt protection clauses</p> <p>The purpose of the NPPF greenbelt protection is to prevent urban sprawl. Para 11.119, page 271 of PfE states of the Walshaw allocation,</p> <p>"This is an extensive area of land □□ set entirely within the existing urban area. The land is loosely bounded by the urban areas of Tottington to the north, Woolfold and Elton to the east Lowercroft to the south and Walshaw to the west."</p> <p>Filling in this green belt site will create an urban sprawl contrary to NPPF para 137 and para 138 a,b,c and e.</p> <p>There has been no evidence of the existence of exceptional circumstances to justify the alteration of the greenbelt boundaries to allow building on the Walshaw allocation as is required by the NPPF, para 140. Housing need is not an exceptional circumstance to justify the release of greenbelt. Government guidance states that housing need is not a target but merely a starting point and figures can be mitigated upwards or downwards according to local circumstances, eg lack of brownfield, economic shock (Brexit, Covid-19).</p>

To prove that exceptional circumstances to justify alteration to greenbelt boundaries exist, the NPPF requires evidence that all other reasonable options to meet identified need have been considered (NPPF para 141). This must include maximising use of brownfield and under-utilised sites and maximising density.

Assessments

There has been a failure to conduct thorough and independent ecological assessments. Assessments carried out have been done on behalf of developers and are therefore not independent. Site wildlife, flood risk and other surveys have been carried out by consultancies on behalf of and paid for by developers rather than entirely independent wildlife organisations or the Department of the Environment so must be considered potentially biased.

The Housing Need Assessment was carried out by Arc4, who were supposed to carry out a non-biased survey of housing need. However, they have a partnership with Greater Manchester Housing Partnership, an organisation of housing associations, including Six Town Housing in Bury. The assessment was therefore not impartial.

Climate change policy and carbon neutral policy

Places for Everyone proposes employment sites on the other side of the borough from Walshaw on the M66 Northern Gateway Corridor, necessitating travel by car as no direct public transport route exists or is proposed, thus increasing carbon emissions. Local transport hubs in Bury are only accessible from Walshaw by a car journey or an expensive, unreliable and infrequent bus service, again increasing carbon emissions. The proposed new link road at Walshaw will do nothing to alleviate congestion on the roads, simply transferring the problem from one place to another.

Up to date information

The PfE indicates in Para 1.63 point 2 that the most up to date information be used in plan making, so being the most recent Bury's Housing Development Needs Assessment 2020 must be taken into consideration: <https://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=15866>

Soundness

Site Selection

The site selection process for Bury has not been transparent. Little information has been given about why other more apparently suitable sites were rejected, or what alternatives were considered. Bury Council admitted in a Freedom of Information response that site selection was decided at a series of informal meetings with no list of attendees or minutes available. This site choice cannot be justified as the most appropriate when no reasonable alternatives appear to have been examined. Alternative options were ruled out too early or were not considered despite other areas having direct motorway access or being situated nearer to employment sites.

In addition, the Walshaw site performs poorly against site selection criteria and strongly against greenbelt assessment criteria. Therefore the inclusion of the Walshaw site cannot be justified:

-The Walshaw site only met one of the criteria for site selection, namely the most general and vague criteria, Criteria 7, land that would deliver significant local benefits by addressing a major local problem (Site Allocation Topic Paper JPA 9 Walshaw pg 8, para 5.4). The only major local problem identified in Walshaw is the extra traffic that will be created by the proposed 1250 new houses. Without the houses, there is not a major problem and the infrastructure proposed would not be needed. This is essentially a cyclical argument and not a specific justification for the inclusion of the site.

NB In the Site Selection Background Paper, Criteria 7 is missing from the table of site selection criteria at pg 18.

-The Walshaw allocation only meets 3 out of 10 of the broad objectives within Section 3 of the PFE plan (Site Allocation Topic Paper JPA 9 Walshaw pg 8, para 5.7):

- Objective 1 - Meet our housing need;
- Objective 5 - Reduce inequalities and improve prosperity;
- Objective 6 - Promote the sustainable movement of people, goods and information.

Again, these objectives could be satisfied by any number of sites in the area.

-The Walshaw site makes a strong or moderate to strong contribution to the purpose of the greenbelt in each of the areas of the Greater Manchester Greenbelt Assessment 2016 (Site Allocation Topic Paper JPA 9 Walshaw, pages 27 - 28, para 15.3):

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas Moderate-Strong

To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another Strong

To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
Moderate-Strong

Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns
Moderate-Strong

-Site Allocation Topic Paper JPA 9 Walshaw at page 29 para 15.8 refers to The Green Belt Harm Assessment, 2020 which concluded that the Walshaw allocation makes a moderate contribution to checking the sprawl of Greater Manchester and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The allocation also makes a relatively limited contribution to maintaining the separation of Bury and Tottington which are already merged to a significant degree. Release of the allocation would therefore cause moderate harm to Green Belt purposes.

The lack of selection criteria met and the harm that will be caused by the release of the Walshaw greenbelt are evidence of the lack of justification for the selection of this site. In fact, an ex Bury Council leader, David Jones, admitted in writing that sites had been selected due to their sheer size and the ease of implementation of infrastructure, saying,

"the proposed strategy within the GMSF is to release a small number of large strategic sites from the Green Belt as these will provide the scale and massing of development that is needed to enable the viable delivery of the essential major infrastructure to support the development."

The needs of the Walshaw community have been overlooked in favour of mass urbanisation by using this particular site rather than sites on the outskirts nearer motorway access, transport hubs and employment sites. There is too much emphasis on economic growth at the expense of mental and physical health of residents with the benefits of the greenbelt being underestimated.

Infrastructure

The only way in which the funding levels required for infrastructure could be achieved would be through a 5% increase in the price of the properties on the site: Site Allocation Topic Paper- JPA 9 Walshaw pg 44, 45 and 46. Realistically, this makes the infrastructure for the site undeliverable.

"The Three Dragons Viability Appraisal of the allocation has been run using the base model, which showed the allocation would likely require public support to proceed.

The Three Dragons report shows that without a contribution to strategic transport costs, the scheme produces a positive residual value both for the main and the sensitivity test. However, a small increase in house prices of less than 5% would be required to accommodate the full strategic transport costs identified.

26.3 With a small increase in values compared to the base model, the sensitivity test demonstrates that the allocation would be able to support all policy costs including 25% affordable housing and the infrastructure required to support the development, including the strategic transport costs. A 5% increase is considered appropriate for this location as it is in a popular residential area and is closely linked with Walshaw and the areas to the west of Bury where house prices are typically higher than other parts of the town."

There is no guarantee that higher house prices would be achieved. This also suggests that provision of some infrastructure will not be contemporaneous with the building of houses and will only be forthcoming once funds have been raised. This is supported at Site Allocation Topic Paper- JPA 9 Walshaw pg 46 para 27.2 which states that,

"The phasing strategy will be developed through on-going discussions with key stakeholders in relation to infrastructure delivery. The estimated phasing and delivery trajectory will evolve as the plans for the allocation are developed further."

The plan for infrastructure is therefore unsound as it is undeliverable and thus the site unviable.

Insufficient and vague infrastructure for Walshaw has been proposed, with no sources of funding specified. Bury have a very poor reputation for obtaining developer contributions for infrastructure and developers always try to wriggle out of any obligations. We are told by the Council that s106 payments are no longer ringfenced so there is no guarantee that promised infrastructure will be forthcoming.

-Healthcare

There is no specific proposal for additional healthcare facilities. Site Allocation Topic Paper PA 9 Walshaw at page 43, para 25.1 states that,

"Further work will be required to determine whether there is additional capacity within any local healthcare facilities to meet the increased demands arising from the prospective occupants of the new development."

-Education

Whilst there is a plan for an extra primary school in Walshaw, there is no feasible plan in place to deal with the increased number of secondary school age pupils. Site Allocation Topic Paper PA 9 Walshaw at page 43, para 24.1 states that,

"The Walshaw allocation is expected to yield approximately 263 primary age pupils and 175 secondary age pupils. Current forecasts show both primary and secondary schools in the area full to capacity, therefore all additional demand created would require additional school places."

"Cumulative secondary age demand pressures will need to be considered more strategically" (para 24.2)

It is proposed that secondary places will merely be funded from "financial contributions towards off-site secondary school provision" to meet the needs generated by the development (PfE, pg 270). This is not acceptable and will only provide a short term solution. The Elton High School in Walshaw was oversubscribed by 175 places in 2021 and the furthest distance offered from the school was just over 1/3 of a mile. Distribution of places in Bury secondary schools for September 2021. If it is proposed that the Walshaw site will yield an additional 175 secondary age pupils, a more permanent solution (ie an additional secondary school in the locality as well as the proposed secondary school in Radcliffe) needs to be found for them in the immediate area and for the additional primary age children in the area as they move through the education system.

-Transport

"The most significant role which PfE will play in this respect is to locate development in the most sustainable locations which reduce the need for car travel, for example by maximising residential densities around transport hubs."

Walshaw is not situated near to motorway junctions or to transport or employment hubs, requiring residents to travel across Bury to access them. The only improvement to public transport that is proposed is "a potential upgrade of existing bus services or a new bus service" (PfE pg 270). No new public transport route to employment hubs is proposed.

The proposed new road link will not ease traffic and will potentially create further congestion. As per the Transport Locality Assessments GMSF 2020, the map at page B9, figure 3 shows that the road will start from a mini roundabout on a narrow residential road, cross a busy main road, enter onto Lowercroft Road at Dow Lane where the road is steep and very narrow (barely wide enough for two cars to pass safely). The road will be sending traffic to all of the same pinch points this side of the Irwell. It will exacerbate congestion on local roads, which are already highly congested. No account has been taken of the additional traffic which will be produced at the Andrews housing development site just down the road from the Walshaw allocation.

Housing delivery targets

Bury Council have consistently failed to meet housing delivery targets and are now in presumption. To be effective a plan must actually be deliverable. The plan relies heavily on the cooperation of property developers. There is no indication of how they will be made to keep up with targets and what sanctions will apply if they don't. At a Council meeting held on 9/9/21 the Leader of Bury Council Eammon O'Brien confirmed that it was "unlikely" that the proposed building rates for all developments in Bury (as laid out in JPA9 Walshaw Topic Paper PfE 2021, section 27.4 page 46) would be met as they were "unrealistic". So the plan cannot be considered to be effective and fails the effectiveness test for Soundness.

Housing requirements

Government guidance is clear that standard housing methodology is just a starting point and can be changed in exceptional circumstances - this has not been thoroughly explored. A lack of brownfield land in the area and in particular the economic shock caused by Brexit and Covid 19 have not been taken into account.

There is insufficient confidence in the accuracy of the predictions in the current uncertain economic climate to justify Green Belt loss at the start of the plan. Greenbelt loss should only occur once all brownfield has been exhausted. A review mechanism should be built in to only include greenbelt at a later stage if proven necessary. PfE para 1.42 states: "The majority of development between 2021 and 2037 (the "plan period") will be on land within the urban area, most of which is brownfield land" PfE favours a brownfield first policy wherever possible as does National Policy. Bury Council have informed the public in Bury that they will implement a brownfield first policy. When questioned at a council meeting on 9/9/21 the Leader of the Council Eammon O'Brien clarified this statement by saying that for anything the council themselves build they would adopt a brownfield first policy but claimed that the council have no control over the actions of private developers. In reality they do, as they could limit the release of green belt sites in accordance with National Policy NPPF 134 part e.

Changes to greenbelt boundaries

As part of the overall plan Bury have modified green belt boundaries and allocations in such a way to make it appear that less Greenbelt is being sacrificed. The loss of the Walshaw site greenbelt has been partially offset by creating extensive but unusable greenbelt in other areas without justifying exceptional circumstances. This is not in accordance with National Policy.

Places for Everyone Representation 2021

	<p>A stretch of Walshaw Road floods quite regularly during periods of heavy rainfall. Additional building in the area will reduce the amount of land available to soak up rainfall.</p>
<p>Redacted modification - Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make this section of the plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified above.</p>	<p>Remove this allocation from Places for Everyone and look for sites in more suitable locations.</p>