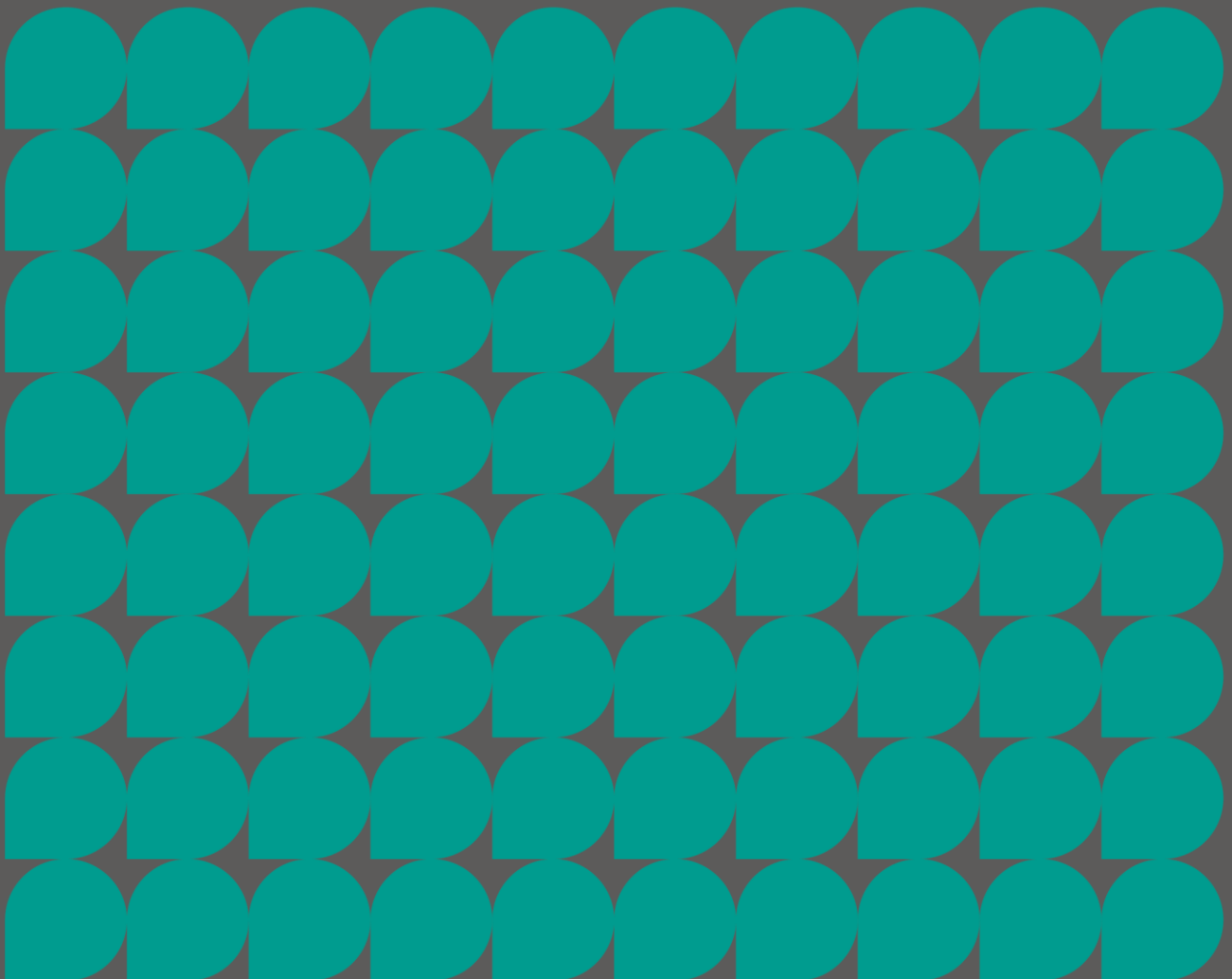


Places for Everyone

JPA22 Land North of Smithy Bridge Allocation Topic

Paper

July 2021



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Section A – Background

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In November 2014, the AGMA Executive Board recommended to the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities that they agree to prepare a joint Development Plan Document (“Joint DPD”), called the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (“GMSF”) and that AGMA be appointed by the 10 authorities to prepare the GMSF on their behalf.
- 1.2 The first draft of the GMSF DPD was published for consultation on 31st October 2016, ending on 16th January 2017. Following substantial re-drafting, a further consultation on the Revised Draft GMSF took place between January and March 2019.
- 1.3 On the 30 October 2020 the AGMA Executive Board unanimously agreed to recommend GMSF 2020 to the 10 Greater Manchester Councils for approval for consultation at their Executives/Cabinets, and approval for submission to the Secretary of State following the period for representations at their Council meetings.
- 1.4 At its Council meeting on 3 December Stockport Council resolved not to submit the GMSF 2020 following the consultation period and at its Cabinet meeting on 4 December, it resolved not to publish the GMSF 2020 for consultation.
- 1.5 As a joint DPD of the 10 Greater Manchester authorities, the GMSF 2020 required the approval of all 10 local authorities to proceed. The decisions of Stockport Council/Cabinet therefore signalled the end of the GMSF as a joint plan of the 10.
- 1.6 Notwithstanding the decision of Stockport Council, the nine remaining districts considered that the rationale for the preparation of a Joint DPD remained. Consequently, at its meeting on the 11th December 2020, Members of the AGMA Executive Committee agreed in principle to producing a joint DPD of the nine remaining Greater Manchester (GM) districts. Subsequent to this meeting, each district formally approved the establishment of a Joint Committee for the preparation of a joint Development Plan Document of the nine districts.

- 1.7 Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulation 32 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 enable a joint plan to continue to progress in the event of one of the local authorities withdrawing, provided that the plan has ‘substantially the same effect’ on the remaining authorities as the original joint plan. The joint plan of the nine GM districts has been prepared on this basis.
- 1.8 In view of this, it follows that PfE should be considered as, in effect, the same Plan as the GMSF, albeit without one of the districts (Stockport). Therefore “the plan” and its proposals are in effect one and the same. Its content has changed over time through the iterative process of plan making, but its purpose has not. Consequently, the Plan is proceeding directly to Publication stage under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.
- 1.9 Four consultations took place in relation to the GMSF. The first, in November 2014 was on the scope of the plan and the initial evidence base, the second in November 2015, was on the vision, strategy and strategic growth options, and the third, on a Draft Plan in October 2016.
- 1.10 The fourth and most recent consultation on The Greater Manchester Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment: the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Revised Draft 2019 (GMSF 2019) took place in 2019. It received over 17,000 responses. The responses received informed the production of GMSF 2020. The withdrawal of Stockport Council in December 2020 prevented GMSF 2020 proceeding to Regulation 19 Publication stage and instead work was undertaken to prepare PfE 2021.
- 1.11 Where a local planning authority withdraws from a joint plan and that plan continues to have substantially the same effect as the original joint plan on the remaining authorities, s28(7) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that any step taken in relation to the plan must be treated as a step taken by the remaining authorities for the purposes of the joint plan. On this basis, it is proposed to proceed directly to Publication stage under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

1.12 A comprehensive evidence base was assembled to support the policies and proposals in the GMSF 2020. Given the basis on which the Plan has been prepared, this evidence base remains the fundamental basis for the PfE 2021 and has remained available on the GMCA's website since October 2020. That said, this evidence base has been reviewed and updated in the light of the change from GMSF 2020 to the PfE2021 and, where appropriate, addendum reports have been produced and should be read in conjunction with evidence base made available in October 2020. The evidence documents which have informed the plan are available via the GMCA's website.

2.0 Allocation Land North of Smithy Bridge Overview

2.1 This site provides an excellent opportunity to deliver a high quality housing scheme and associated facilities which maximises the potential of this sustainable location. Located in an attractive setting, adjacent to Hollingworth Lake and the Rochdale Canal, the site provides an opportunity to deliver a landscape-led development which maximises its Pennine fringe setting and takes account of views from and into the site.

3.0 Site Details

3.1 The site is 20.4ha in size and is bounded by Lake Bank to the south, Hollingworth road to the east, Rochdale Canal to the north and Smithy Bridge to the west.

3.2 This is a greenfield site that falls within the Green Belt adjacent to Hollingworth Lake and the Rochdale Canal which both provide high landscape value and provides some attractive recreational routes.

3.3 The site is within walking distance of both Littleborough and Smithy Bridge rail stations and adjacent to the residential area of Smithy Bridge. The site is also close to Littleborough town centre which contains a range of local services and facilities.

4.0 Proposed Development

- 4.1 The site will deliver around 300 new homes to meet to needs within the local area, including larger, higher value properties to attract and retain higher income households within the plan area.
- 4.2 Access between the site, Hollingworth Lake, Rochdale Canal, the two railway stations and Littleborough town centre will be significantly improved through the creation of high quality, safe and convenient walking and cycling routes though the site.
- 4.3 Development will facilitate the delivery of a new primary school and associated outdoor playing space at the southern end of the site and contribute to additional primary and secondary school places to meet demand arising from the new development as well as existing demand within the local area.
- 4.4 The southern end of the site is currently occupied by a car park which accommodates visitors to the lake. Any proposal will need to ensure the provision of a replacement visitor car park to replace the existing spaces lost on this car park.

5.0 Site Selection

- 5.1 To identify potential development sites for allocation a Site Selection methodology has been developed. The purpose of the Site Selection methodology is to identify the most sustainable locations for residential and employment development that can achieve the Places for Everyone (PfE), referred to as ‘the Plan’, Vision, Objective and Spatial Strategy and meet the housing and employment land supply shortfall across the plan area.
- 5.2 The methodology includes seven Site Selection criteria. Based on the Plan Spatial Strategy, plan objectives and guidance in the NPPF on Green Belt release these seven Site Selection Criteria have been developed to identify the most sustainable sites in the Green Belt. This site satisfies criteria 1 *‘Land which has been previously developed and/or land which is well served by public transport’* and criteria 7 *‘Deliver significant local benefits by addressing a major local problem/issue’*.

- 5.3 Criterion 1 relates to sites located in sustainable and accessible locations which are already well served by public transport. The site is within walking distance of both Littleborough and Smithy Bridge rail stations. The site is also close to Littleborough town centre which contains a range of local services and facilities, including access to a high frequency bus service.
- 5.4 Criterion 7 relates to sites which can demonstrate direct links to addressing a specific local need. There is a strong market demand for housing within the area of Littleborough. It is one of the most significant areas of larger, higher value housing within the borough and is considered to be a desirable and aspirational place to live. This is a deliverable housing site that provides the opportunity to capitalise on an existing high end market housing area to deliver a type of housing which is in short supply across the borough and the conurbation as a whole. The provision of such housing is important to ensure that a good range of housing is available across the plan area to support economic growth. This site will also deliver a primary school which will meet the needs of the development as well as addressing needs for school places in the wider area.
- 5.5 Central to the Spatial Strategy is to deliver inclusive growth across the city-region. To assist in the delivery of this the Plan identifies a number of broad areas and opportunities which will mean that the plan area can achieve the levels of new growth required to meet its needs whilst securing genuinely inclusive growth and prosperity. One of these opportunities is to boost significantly the competitiveness of northern parts of the plan area. This site fits with the Spatial Strategy by providing the opportunity for deliverable large scale residential development in the north of the plan area.
- 5.6 For further detail please see the Site Selection Topic Paper.

6.0 Planning History

- 6.1 A screening opinion in relation to a residential development of 350 dwellings, a primary school and associated works (19/00910/SO) was submitted in August 2019. The decision in January 2020 was that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was required. .

7.0 GMSF 2019 Consultation Responses

- 7.1 Many of the comments were objecting to any development at Smithy Bridge with many respondents concerned that the types of housing proposed was not appropriate for the area. However there was also some support from respondents who felt that this is a good, sustainable site to redevelop. There was support for increasing the housing offering within this area, particularly to include executive housing which is lacking and in demand. Some respondents stated they have had to move out of the area as there was a lack of high quality homes available.
- 7.2 There was a lot of objection to the loss of Green Belt land with more focus needing to be given to developing brownfield land as a priority. There is also concern that the number of houses being allocated for the size of the village is too high and disproportionate and more focus should be on addressing the local housing need, such as affordable and older persons housing, rather than high value housing.
- 7.3 Several respondents objected to the impact on Hollingworth Lake and the bearing it would have on it as a tourist attraction and area of natural beauty. Many respondents felt that the development would negatively impact wildlife, the overall perception of the area as a rural setting and that the enhancement of green and blue infrastructure of the area needs further consideration. Some respondents felt that Hollingworth Lake should be enhanced for tourism purposes and this site could be better utilised to contribute to this, by providing better leisure facilities or further off road parking.
- 7.4 The increased traffic which will result from the development is a key area of concern for many respondents. Many felt the existing road network is inadequate, heavily congested and will not be able to cope with increased demand. The perceived heavy congestion is considered to be further exacerbated by the level crossing closing several times each hour. Concerns were raised regarding the emergency vehicle response times for this area already being above the national average and the negative impact further traffic will have on this. Parking for the Lake was also highlighted as problematic, particularly during nice weather, bank holidays and weekends.

7.5 There is an existing issue with school places for this area. Many respondents stated that schools were oversubscribed with many children having to travel long distances to attend school. The proposed primary school is welcomed, however there is a particular issue with secondary school places and many respondents felt that this also needs addressing.

7.6 For further detail please see the Places for Everyone Consultation Summary Report.

8.0 GMSF 2019 Integrated Assessment

8.1 The GMCA commissioned ARUP to complete an Integrated Assessment (IA) of the first and second draft of the GMSF and the 2021 PfE.

8.2 The IA is a key component of the evidence base, ensuring that sustainability, environmental, quality and health issues are addressed during its preparation. The IA combines the requirements and processes of the Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment and the Health Impact Assessment into one document. The IA carries out an assessment of the draft policies by testing the potential impacts and consideration of alternatives against the plans objectives and policies. This ensures that any potential impacts on the aim of achieving sustainable development considered and that adequate mitigation and monitoring mechanisms are implemented.

8.3 The 2020 IA contributes to the development of the Plan policies. It does this through an iterative assessment, which reviews the draft policies and the discrete site allocations against the IA framework. Stakeholder consultation is a significant part of the IA, and opinions and inputs from stakeholders have been sought on previous iterations and will be sought on this 2020 IA, as part of the consultation on the 2021 PfE.

8.4 The draft GMSF and the accompanying IA were published for consultation in January 2019. The comments received that are specific to the 2020 IA, as identified by the GMCA, informed the 2020 update of the IA Scoping Report and the 2020 IA.

- 8.5 The 2019 draft GMSF included a number of revised and new thematic policies and a number of different allocations from the 2016 draft GMSF. It took on board the consultation responses received on the allocations. This was reflected within the IA of the allocations. The SFRA has been completed and the exceptions test was taken into account as mitigation in the 2019 IA.
- 8.6 Spatial Options and Reasonable Alternatives were assessed for the 2019 draft GMSF by GM Districts and GMCA officers and made available in a separate report. It is noted that the 2020 Growth and Spatial Options Report has also been assessed as part of this IA process, and again, is made available as a separate report.
- 8.7 Comments received during the 2019 consultation included: proposing alternative scoring for thematic and site allocation policies, reviewing the IA objectives and the GMSF strategic objectives and the connection with the Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- 8.8 The 2020 IA process has taken into consideration the comments received in the light of the emerging evidence in the main IA report and Appendices. A summary of the 2019 consultation feedback relevant to the 2020 IA and response to those comments is included in Appendix A of the 2020 IA report. They will form part of the Post Adoption Statement.
- 8.9 The key outcomes of the 2019 IA assessment on the Land North of Smithy Bridge allocation policy in the 2019 Draft GMSF have been considered to inform the production of the revised JP Allocation 22. This has been reassessed in the 2020 IA. Appendix D of the 2020 IA provides the assessment tables for each allocation policy. It includes the assessment from 2019 including mitigation proposed, commentary on changes since 2019 and how this responds to the recommendations. Finally, it details any residual recommendations.
- 8.10 It is important to note that the IA was focusing on each policy in isolation from other policies in the Plan and that many of the recommended changes for the Land North of Smithy Bridge allocation policy are already covered in other policies in the Plan. However some changes have been made to the Land North of Smithy Bridge

allocation policy as a result of the 2019 IA and the policy has been reassessed in the 2020 IA.

- 8.11 Further details can be found in the PfE Integrated Appraisal Report and PfE Integrated Appraisal Addendum Report.

9.0 **GMSF 2020 Integrated Assessment**

- 9.1 As mentioned above the key outcomes of the 2019 IA assessment on the Land North of Smithy Bridge allocation policy in the 2019 Draft GMSF have been considered to inform the production of the revised JP Allocation 22. This has been reassessed in the 2020 IA. Appendix D of the 2020 IA provides the assessment tables for each allocation policy. It includes the assessment from 2019 including mitigation proposed, commentary on changes since 2019 and how this responds to the recommendations. Finally, it details any residual recommendations. A summary of the assessment for JP Allocation 22 can be found below.
- 9.2 Each site allocation policy has been appraised using the IA framework. The allocation policies primarily focus on the site-specific topics and therefore some of the IA objectives which are less relevant for most allocations or more appropriate to assess in the thematic policies have been picked up in the IA of the thematic policies.
- 9.3 The policy performed negatively against provision of healthcare facilities. The recommendations made against this IA objective are addressed within policies JP-P 5, JP-P 6 and JP-P 7 and therefore no changes were made to JP allocation policy 22.
- 9.4 The policy performed negatively against ensuring that land resources are used in an efficient way because the site is greenfield and so therefore it does not support criteria relating to the development of previously developed land, protecting best/most versatile agricultural land or encouraging development of derelict/contaminated land. The recommendations made against this IA objective are addressed within policies JP-G8 and JP-G9 and therefore no changes were made to JP allocation policy 22. The Plan acknowledges that given the overall scale of

development that needs to be accommodated, development on some greenfield land is necessary as it is critical to the delivery of wider development proposals.

9.5 The policy performed positively or neutral against all the other IA objectives.

9.6 Further details can be found in the PfE Integrated Appraisal Report and PfE Integrated Appraisal Addendum Report.

Section B – Physical

10.0 Transport

- 10.1 The Locality Assessment for this allocation assessed the impact of the trips in 2025 and 2040 that could be generated on the network, both without and with mitigation measures. The outcomes concluded that the allocations did not have a severe impact on either strategic or local networks but mitigation works were required on the local network to ensure this.
- 10.2 The analysis of this allocation was combined with that for the GM25 Roch Valley allocation, with mitigation measures being shared between the two allocations according to their level of impact on the transport network. Where both allocations had an effect, the mitigation costs were apportioned according to their modelled level of impact.
- 10.3 The mitigation measures identified were:-
- Provide a 3-arm roundabout on Hollingworth Road to access the allocation;
 - Contribute to a proposed A58 Residential Relief Road (Smithy Bridge Road to Riverside Drive);
 - A58 Local improvements to junctions with Smithy Bridge Road, Birch Road and Albert Royds Street;
 - A58 Halifax Road / B6225 Hollingworth Road signal co-ordination with A58 Halifax Road / A6033 Todmorden Road;
 - Signalise A58 Wardle Road junction and in-bound free flow;
 - Provide 300 space Hollingworth Lake visitor car park to replace existing facility lost to the land allocation;
 - Traffic Calming and Parking Management measures on Hollingworth Road;
 - Provide secure cycle parking at Littleborough Railway Station;
 - Upgrade 3 bus stops (2 on Hollingworth Road and 1 on Lake Bank).
- 10.4 It is proposed to access this allocation from B6225 Hollingworth Road via a 3-arm roundabout subject to capacity requirements and detailed design. This also provides a degree of traffic calming, with further traffic management and parking management works (the latter already implemented) on Hollingworth Road. A secondary

emergency access via Lake Bank (using Heald Lane) and other adjacent residential routes will provide a link to Smithy Bridge Railway Station. These routes will also provide a walking and cycling route with Lake Bank (via Heald Lane).

- 10.5 Through the planning application process, further work will take place to create convenient high quality pedestrian and cycle links through the allocation between the residential and Primary School elements of the allocation, and provide links to Littleborough Town Centre, Hollingworth Lake and Littleborough as well as Smithy Bridge Railway Stations. These should also link to the existing walking and cycling network, and utilise and enhance the existing Public Rights of Way Network.
- 10.6 The allocation will finance a replacement visitor car park of around 300 spaces, replacing those currently on the allocation and on-street spaces lost on Hollingworth Road following the implementation of parking restrictions. A contribution will also be sought to provide additional cycle parking spaces at Littleborough Railway Station.
- 10.7 The allocation is equidistant (around 600 metres) from both Smithy Bridge and Littleborough Stations on the Calder Valley Line, both served by half hourly services westbound to Rochdale and Manchester and east towards Leeds. Some additional services operate in both directions during peak times. The nearest bus stops are located on B6225 Hollingworth Road served by an hourly service to Rochdale and Littleborough. These stops together with a stop on Lake Bank will be upgraded to Quality Bus Corridor or equivalent standards. Consideration will be given to provide or divert another service. Bus services run more frequently along the A58 with 5 or 6 services an hour to Rochdale and 7 services an hour to Littleborough, one of which continues east to serve Burnley and Halifax.
- 10.8 The Locality Assessment indicates that the limited choice of routes serving this part of the Borough and the combined impact of the trips generated from this allocation and GM25, will affect the operation of junctions across the wider network. Junctions along the A58 with Smithy Bridge Road, Birch Road and Albert Royds Street have been identified along with potential signalisation of the junction with Wardle Road. Mitigation costs to address the traffic impact at these junctions will be apportioned between this and GM25 proposed GMSF allocations.

- 10.9 A significant number of commuter journeys are generated in this part of the Borough. This is illustrated by the number of passengers using Littleborough and Smithy Bridge Railway stations at peak times, and the volume of traffic using routes to access the M62 junction 21. The A58 Residential Relief Road proposal primarily seeks to address delays on A58 Halifax Road, but initial modelling shows that it delivers noticeable reductions in junction delays in Milnrow for these trips and those generated by proposed allocations to get to and from the M62.
- 10.10 The A58 Residential Relief Road will provide an alternative local route that will also access the GM25 Roch Valley allocation. It will also form part of the Bee Network and incorporate “Streets for All” principles incorporating speed restrictions and traffic management measures. It will provide a release valve and an additional choice of route for peak time traffic. The eastern section of the route will be delivered as part of GM25 allocation access arrangements with a contribution from this allocation towards the route construction. These third party contributions will provide matched funding to secure other sources of finance to deliver the remainder of the Residential Relief Road.
- 10.11 This allocation will have a significant impact on the signalised junctions in the centre of Littleborough. The A58 Halifax Road / B6225 Hollingworth Road and A58 Halifax Road / A6033 Todmorden Road are located close together and, particularly at peak times, their operation could be improved with better co-ordination of the signals. This will offer only an interim solution and so wider proposals are being explored to reduce peak time delays in the long term at these junctions.
- 10.12 The Locality Assessment and proposed mitigation measures for this allocation were reviewed between May and July 2021. The outcome was that the Locality Assessment for the Land North of Smithy Bridge allocation remained robust with the traffic impacts remaining less than severe. The proposed mitigation measures remain deliverable and no re-phasing of the mitigation interventions are necessary.

11.0 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 11.1 The GMCA has applied the flood risk Sequential Test in the preparation of the Plan as required by the National Planning Policy Framework. Further details of the process undertaken by the GMCA can be found in the document 'Greater Manchester Spatial Framework 2020 – Flood Risk Sequential Test and Exception Test Evidence Paper' (October 2020).
- 11.2 The Greater Manchester Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (GM SFRA) was completed in March 2019. It updates and brings together the evidence base on flood risk in Greater Manchester including the impact of climate change on flood risk.
- 11.3 All allocations have been screened against Environment Agency mapping and datasets and recommendations were produced for each site based on the screening assessment and its review of the extent and severity of flood risk and the vulnerability of the proposed site use.
- 11.4 It was concluded that any flood risk affecting this allocation can be appropriately addressed through consideration of site layout and design as part of a detailed Flood Risk Assessment or Drainage Strategy at the planning application stage. Therefore no further assessment is required at this time through the GM SFRA.

12.0 Ground Conditions

- 12.1 A desk based review of the site has been undertaken by the Council's Public Protection Service. The findings of this are summarised as follows:
- Site currently comprises open land which has been subject to groundworks
 - Possible contaminating features, infilled water features on site including reservoir in the centre, former quarry near NW border, former chemical, colliery and other industrial facilities immediately north of the site (Akzo)
 - A number of known landfills to the east, north and west of the site
 - The department has records of ground investigations which have been undertaken in the north east and immediately north of the site
 - Minor aquifer, area to the NW and SE of site identified as a flood zone
 - Drift geology comprises Glacial Till, solid the Milnrow Sandstone and Coal Measures

- Class 1 radon area which would not have any impact on development.

12.2 The main issue from the above relates to the previous use of the land around the site which means that an intrusive investigation is likely to be required to establish if and what remedial techniques are necessary to ensure the site is suitable for its intended end use. This would be a condition relating to any future planning approval and is common in respect of sites which have or are adjacent to sites that have had an industrial use.

12.3 A Screening Opinion has been previously submitted for this site by the site promoter and some work has already been undertaken in respect of ground conditions. The schedule submitted alongside the screening application identified a number of issues that would be addressed appropriately through further studies and assessments at the planning application stage.

13.0 Utilities

13.1 There are no known constraints in respect to utilities on the site. The site is immediately adjacent to a long-standing developed area where a range of services are available. This will include water, gas and electricity mains, alongside telecommunications infrastructure. The development can therefore be easily connected to key utilities. Any upgrades required to accommodate new homes can be made alongside the delivery of the development.

Section C – Environmental

14.0 Green Belt Assessment

- 14.1 Development of the site will result in the loss of 18.4ha of Green Belt land.
- 14.2 GMCA commissioned LUC to undertake an assessment of the Green Belt within GM. The Study assessed the extent to which the land within the GM Green Belt performs against the purposes of Green Belts, as set out in paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The aim of this Green Belt Assessment is to provide the GM Authorities with an objective, evidence-based and independent assessment of how GM's Green Belt contributes to the five purposes of Green Belt, as set out in national policy. It also examines the case for including within the Green Belt potential additional areas of land that currently lie outside it.
- 14.3 The table below presents the assessment ratings for the parcel of land that Land North of Smithy Bridge falls within:

Parcel Reference	RD20
Purpose 1a Rating	Moderate
Purpose 1b Rating	Moderate
Purpose 2 Rating	Strong
Purpose 3 Rating	Moderate
Purpose 4 Rating	Strong
Strategic Green Belt Area	16

- 14.4 Further details can be found in the Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment.
- 14.5 The GM GB Harm Assessment identifies that the allocation makes a moderate contribution to checking the sprawl of Greater Manchester (purpose 1) and preventing encroachment of the countryside (purpose 3), as well as a relatively limited contribution to maintaining separation between Smithy Bridge and Littleborough (purpose 2). The Allocation also makes a relatively limited contribution to preserving the settlement of Littleborough (purpose 4).

- 14.6 The assessment adds that the release of the allocation would constitute moderate harm to Green Belt purposes, would increase the containment by inset development of retained Green Belt land to the north but would only have a minor impact on adjacent Green Belt.
- 14.7 In terms of cumulative harm, the release of this land would only have no/limited impact on the contribution that SGBA 16 makes to checking unrestricted sprawl (purpose 1) and separation of towns (purpose 2) due to its containment and the existence of physical boundaries. The allocation itself would encroach into the countryside but would have little impact on the contribution the SGBA makes to the purposes of the Green Belt. Release of allocation GM23 could detract from the setting of Littleborough to a limited extent.
- 14.8 Release of the allocation would not increase the containment of retained Green Belt land and would not weaken the strength of the Green Belt boundary. The allocation has strong defensible boundaries to the Green Belt to the south and east in the form of Lake Bank and Hollingworth Road.
- 14.9 Whilst the assessment concludes that its release would result in some harm to the Green Belt the Council considers that the benefits of the proposed allocation significantly outweigh its overall harm, including its Green Belt harm, representing exceptional circumstances in accordance with national planning policy. The exceptional circumstances are set out in the Green Belt Topic Paper. These relate to the Site Selection criteria along with other relevant issues and are as follows:
- The site meets Criterion 1 of the Site Selection criteria, as the site is located between Smithy Bridge and Littleborough railway stations, is within walking distance of Littleborough town centre and is adjacent to the Rochdale Canal which provide active travel opportunities
 - The site meets Criterion 7 of the Site Selection criteria, as it provides an opportunity to deliver a high quality development providing a type of housing which is in short supply across the borough and the conurbation as a whole and therefore make a positive contribution to boosting the competitiveness of the north of the plan area.

- The development will facilitate the delivery of a new primary school which will provide much needed places locally to serve the needs of the wider area as well as those arising from the new development.

14.10 The GM Green Belt Study - Identification of Opportunities to Enhance the Beneficial Use of the Green Belt report also identifies a range of opportunities to enhance the beneficial use of remaining Green Belt. These will be considered in relation to the Council's own Local Plan and priorities for green infrastructure improvements in the wider area.

15.0 Green Infrastructure

- 15.1 The setting and topography of this site lends itself to the delivery of a high quality green and blue infrastructure network as part of a comprehensive scheme. Green infrastructure within the site can also utilise existing natural features and field boundaries to deliver a development which has regard to the existing site.
- 15.2 The site is adjacent to Hollingworth Lake Country Park and therefore landscaping and boundary treatments will be important to create a high quality environment for both the existing and new development.
- 15.3 The need for good quality green and blue infrastructure is set out in the policy and will guide masterplanning on the site. The policy also references the important role this site plays helping to create attractive and safe pedestrian and cycle connections between Littleborough town centre and Hollingworth Lake Country park.
- 15.4 The approach to green infrastructure and the creation of routes should have regard to both the proposed development to the north (former Akzo site) and the adjacent canal.

16.0 Recreation

- 16.1 Local policies and the associated Supplementary Planning Document set out the requirements for both formal sports provision and children's play / local open space. The proposed development will be required to meet these requirements.

- 16.2 In terms of the children's play / local open space this will be expected to be provided within the site as part of the requirement set out in the policy to deliver an integrated green and blue infrastructure network within the scheme. As noted above, green infrastructure would be expected to provide good quality pedestrian and cycle routes and seek opportunities to deliver improvements to local biodiversity.
- 16.3 In terms of formal sports provision, given the size of the site, this would likely be dealt with through off-site provision/contributions.

17.0 Landscape

- 17.1 The Vision Document submitted by the site promoter notes that the site is situated on an area of land which is highly variable in topography, with land falling away from a central ridge through the site to the east, and dropping steeply towards the Rochdale Canal to the north and rising to the west to a plateau. This variable topography is characteristic of the surrounding landscape. The site is also characterised by scattered tree and woodland cover, improved grassland, varied styles of enclosure including dry stone walls and hedgerows, and scattered farmsteads. It is traversed by several public rights of way and has urban edge characteristics to the west.
- 17.2 Criterion 3 of the policy for this allocation states that the development of the site should deliver a landscape-led development which maximises its Pennine fringe setting and takes account of views from and into the site.
- 17.3 This requirement is acknowledged in the Vision Documents which set out possible measures to preserve landscape value including enhancements to boundary planting, the retention of the exposed ridge through the site as a green corridor and recreational route and the opportunities to integrate internal field boundaries and patterns of enclosure into the development

18.0 Ecological/Biodiversity Assessment

- 18.1 The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) have undertaken preliminary ecological appraisals / screening for all of the Rochdale allocations proposed in the Plan. An update of initial site appraisals was completed in September 2020 and are

included in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisals - Screening - Rochdale Strategic Allocations Sept 2020 report.

- 18.2 The aim of preliminary surveys is not to provide a fully comprehensive suite of ecology surveys for sites, but rather to identify sites where ecological constraints to future development are likely to prove significant. The findings of the appraisal for this site are as follows:
- The site is within 100m of the Rochdale Canal which is a Special Area for Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and therefore would require a Habitats Regulation Assessment HRA;
 - The canal is also a Local Wildlife Site;
 - Ponds on the site could support great crested newts and water voles;
 - In terms of specially protected species the site provides reasonable foraging habitat for bats and barn owls and the buildings could support roosting bats. Reasonable Badger habitat; and
 - The site supports, or has the potential to support, priority habitat types including ponds and hedgerows and priority species including farmland birds such as linnet, reed bunting and barn owl as well as common toads.
- 18.3 The appraisal finds that the site itself is not designated at any level for its nature conservation value but it does have potential to support priority habitats and species and it is very close to the Rochdale Canal SAC. As a result of this proximity and the overarching HRA undertaken in relation to the GMSF, a criterion has been added to the policy which requires a project specific Habitats Regulation Assessment for planning applications of 50 dwellings or more to be carried out. However, currently there are no known ecological constraints which are so important as to preclude the allocation of the site, but ecological mitigation and compensation will likely be needed to avoid harm to important habitats and species.
- 18.4 The site promoters have undertaken their own ecological appraisal which is summarised within their Vision Document. This appraisal identifies broadly similar ecological constraints in terms of habitats and species. It anticipates that any required mitigation can be accommodated within the extensive green infrastructure (GI) proposals within the site. It adds that the scheme can be designed in a way that

retains and enhances those features of highest ecological value, including the pond, dry stone walls and hedgerows. Anticipated losses of any trees would be mitigated through the planting of native trees and shrubs within the site, with the aim of providing a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with the principles of the Framework.

19.0 Habitat Regulation Assessment

- 19.1 Since the 2019 consultation the GMCA have engaged with Natural England in the preparation of the Plan, including in the preparation of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The HRA must be undertaken in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) to determine if a plan or project may affect the protected features of a European protected site.
- 19.2 The GMCA held one informal meeting in 2019 and two formal meetings with Natural England through its Development Advisory Service in 2020 to consider the HRA. GMCA has shared a draft version of the HRA (updated since 2019) with Natural England for review and comment.
- 19.3 The GMCA and TfGM are responding to Natural England's comments on the draft HRA by commissioning additional air quality modelling to more accurately assess the implications of changes in air quality on European sites that could potentially be affected by changes to nitrogen levels arising from changes in vehicle movements in Greater Manchester or within close proximity of the Greater Manchester boundary. The GMCA are also responding to Natural England's comments on functionally linked land, recreation disturbances, water pollution and in-combination effects. Details of this is included in the HRA and Assessment of Air Quality Impacts on Designated Sites report.

20.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

- 20.1 The University of Salford completed a Heritage Impact Assessment which highlighted the need for further evaluation. In alignment with the recommendations made in the initial Heritage Impact Assessment a more comprehensive Smithy Bridge Historic Environment Assessment has now been completed which has

explored in detail the potential impact development could have upon any archaeological interests of the site, heritage assets in or around the site and the historic landscape within which the site is located.

20.2 The assessment has provided recommendations to ensure the significance of the historic built and natural environment can be preserved or enhanced. These are summarised below and can be found in full within the Smithy Bridge Historic Environment Assessment.

20.3 Archaeology recommendation summary:

- To explore areas identified as potential locations for pre-historic activity, workers' cottages and some small areas of disturbance. A programme of archaeological evaluation to be devised and implemented across the site.

20.4 In response to the above recommendations the policy has been amended to include more specific criteria and supplementary information has been included within the reasoned justification.

20.5 Built Heritage recommendations summary:

- Historic buildings at Lower Cleggswood Farm should be retained to preserve the character of the local area. The development should include a buffer zone around the farm and avoid being overly dominant development; plan and design should respect the rural setting.

20.6 In response to the above recommendations, supplementary information has been included within the reasoned justification.

20.7 Historic Landscape recommendations summary:

- To preserve the character of the area historic field boundaries and public paths should be retained and incorporated into the development plan.
- Identification of the opportunity to create community wildlife pond at the former reservoir.

20.8 In response to the above recommendations, supplementary information has been included within the reasoned justification.

21.0 Air Quality

21.1 A future planning application for the proposed allocation will be supported by an Air Quality Statement / Assessment (AQS / AQA). This will be based on the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) Guidance, and consistent with the Draft Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan. The AQS / AQA will assess the impacts of NO₂, and PM₁₀, PM_{2.5} particulate emissions from both the demolition / construction and operational phases of the proposal. It will also assess the impact on human health, sites of ecological importance and sensitive receptors as well as the GM Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an action plan of measures to mitigate any adverse impacts of the proposed allocation.

22.0 Noise

22.1 Given the location of the site in close proximity to the railway line it is likely that an assessment relating to noise will be required at planning application stage. It is not anticipated that this would present a major constraint on development.

22.2 The Vision Document provided by the site promoters summarises some initial work that has been undertaken in terms of noise. This concludes that it is unlikely that there would be a significant impact from railway associated noise within the development site. Furthermore, based on the concept masterplan for the site at this stage, it is likely that there will be a large stand-off area (public open space) between the residential dwellings and the railway line; the topography of this area would also provide a natural screen from the railway and further reduce the potential for noise and vibration impacts.

Section D – Social

23.0 Education

- 23.1 There is a local issue in terms of primary school places and this can only be resolved through the provision of a new school. This area provides an excellent location for a new facility given that it lies between Littleborough and Smithy Bridge and therefore can serve both areas sustainably. It also provides an attractive location for a school which can provide access to open areas and activities, thus promoting healthier lifestyles.
- 23.2 The site will provide a new primary school and associated outdoor playing space at the southern end of the site and contribute to additional secondary school places to meet demand arising from the new development as well as existing demand within the local area.
- 23.3 Secondary School provision within the borough is being enhanced through the delivery of two new secondary schools which have recently been awarded Government funding. One of these schools is proposed in Littleborough and is due to open within the next three years. This will assist significantly in meeting the need for secondary school places in this area and across the borough as a whole.

24.0 Health

- 24.1 Policy JP-P 6 of the plan sets out the requirements for new development in respect of health provision including, where appropriate, the need for Health Impact Assessments. The Council's Core Strategy requires contributions to health and well-being where appropriate. Rochdale Council will work with site promoters / developers to establish the actual need for additional practitioners taking into account the existing supply and surplus capacity within existing GP and dental practices and, if additional provision is necessary, the most appropriate means and location for such provision to meet the additional demand.

Section E – Deliverability

25.0 Viability

- 25.1 The Strategic Viability Report – Stage 2 Allocated Sites Viability Report (October 2020) assesses the viability of the proposed allocations within the Plan.
- 25.2 The report notes that this site provides opportunity to deliver a high quality housing scheme and associated facilities which maximises the potential of this sustainable location. Any proposal can take advantage of its setting close to Hollingworth Lake and build on the existing and proposed residential offer within the area.
- 25.3 The main test demonstrates a negative residual value of -£1.6m, which worsens to -£4.2m once strategic transport costs are included. Increasing sales values by 10%, provides a positive scheme residual value, which can meet the anticipated strategic transport costs.
- 25.4 The increase in market values of 10% applied as a sensitivity test is based on the fact that the site is located adjacent to Hollingworth Lake and the country park, with excellent rail access to the regional centre and a range of local services and facilities including proposed new primary and secondary schools. The Council consider that this location is therefore expected to realise values beyond the ward average.

26.0 Phasing

- 26.1 Given the size of the site and the fact that it is generally well supported by existing and proposed infrastructure it is anticipated that the site would be brought forward via one outlet delivering around 50 dwellings per annum. The site would therefore be built out in around 6 years from commencement.

27.0 Indicative Masterplanning

- 27.1 An indicative masterplan has been prepared by the site promoters and is included in Appendix 3. It provides an indicative layout of the development, including the proposed location of housing, vehicular access, open space, key routes and the proposed primary school.

Section F – Conclusion

28.0 The Sustainability Appraisal

28.1 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been incorporated into the Integrated Assessment (IA) of the Plan and has informed plan preparation. The IA identified many positive impacts in terms of the Land North of Smithy Bridge allocation policy, but also made recommendations in terms of enhancements and mitigation measures. These recommendations have been addressed through revisions to the Land North of Smithy Bridge allocation policy, as set out in section 7.0 of this Topic Paper, or are addressed when the policy is read in conjunction with the thematic policies, because the Plan should be read as a whole. Taking account of the IA findings, the Land North of Smithy Bridge allocation policy is considered to accord with the relevant economic, social and environmental objectives.

28.2 The conclusion of 2021 addendum to the IA confirmed that the minor changes to the policy made no difference to scorings.

29.0 The main changes to the Proposed Allocation

29.1 The site allocation policy in the 2019 GMSF is set out in Appendix 5. Changes have been made to the policy to reflect the recommendations of the Integrated Assessment and the evidence undertaken in relation to the proposed allocation. These changes are summarised as follows:

- The need to carry out a site specific HRA for applications of 50 dwellings or more;
- The need for the development to have regard to the Historic Environment Assessment that has been produced for the site;
- A requirement for electric vehicle charging points and cycle storage to address IA recommendations: and
- A general reference to the need to provide financial contributions to mitigate impacts on the highway network identified through a transport assessment.

- 29.2 A number of comments in response to this proposed allocation highlighted issues in respect of increased traffic. The section on Transport notes that traffic impacts in respect of this allocation have been considered alongside those of JPA 24 Roch Valley in order to properly consider the impacts these proposals have on the wider local network. As a result of this it is proposed to deliver a residential relief road, part of which will be included in Roch Valley allocation and is included in the policy for that allocation. Initial modelling shows that this road delivers noticeable reductions in junction delays in Milnrow thus mitigating some of the traffic from this allocation.
- 29.3 These changes are shown in the amended policy wording for the 2020 GMSF at Appendix 4.
- 29.4 There were some minor amendments to the policy from the 2020 version to the one included in the 2021 PfE plan. In terms of this policy this related to updating references and typos. Consequently, it is concluded that the effect of the plan is substantially the same on the districts as the 2020 version of the policy. The 2021 PfE plan policy wording is shown at Appendix 2.
- 29.5 It is considered that these policy changes, along with the other requirements set out in the policy, will deliver a high quality, sustainable development.

30.0 Conclusion

- 30.1 The proposed site allocation in the Plan is for around 300 homes. As a site within the Green Belt, exceptional circumstances need to be demonstrated for it to be brought forward as an allocation. The exceptional circumstances case takes the form of a strategic high level case and a local level case and is detailed in the Green Belt Topic Paper and section 14 of this Topic Paper. This allocation is considered to satisfy Criterion 1 of the site selection criteria for justifying release from the Green Belt in that it is in a sustainable location. It also satisfies Criterion 7 in that it addresses other local priorities. These exceptional circumstances are considered to significantly outweigh any harm to the Green Belt identified from the site's release.
- 30.2 This allocation accords with the spatial strategy and exceptional circumstances exist to outweigh any harm to the Green Belt from its release. The site is being actively

promoted for residential development and can therefore deliver homes early in the plan period.

- 30.3 The evidence that has been produced to date and the IA has identified a number of issues which have been reflected in the revised policy wording. The ongoing masterplanning will ensure that the development will be of a high quality and include the provision of a new primary school, open spaces and attractive walking and cycling routes. The development will also need to ensure that the existing public parking spaces within the site are adequately replaced.
- 30.4 The site is considered to be free of significant constraints and its allocation is considered to accord with relevant economic, social and environmental objectives. In summary, the site will deliver a quality development that contributes to the choice and quality of housing in a sustainable location.

Section G – Appendices

Appendix 1: Site allocation boundary

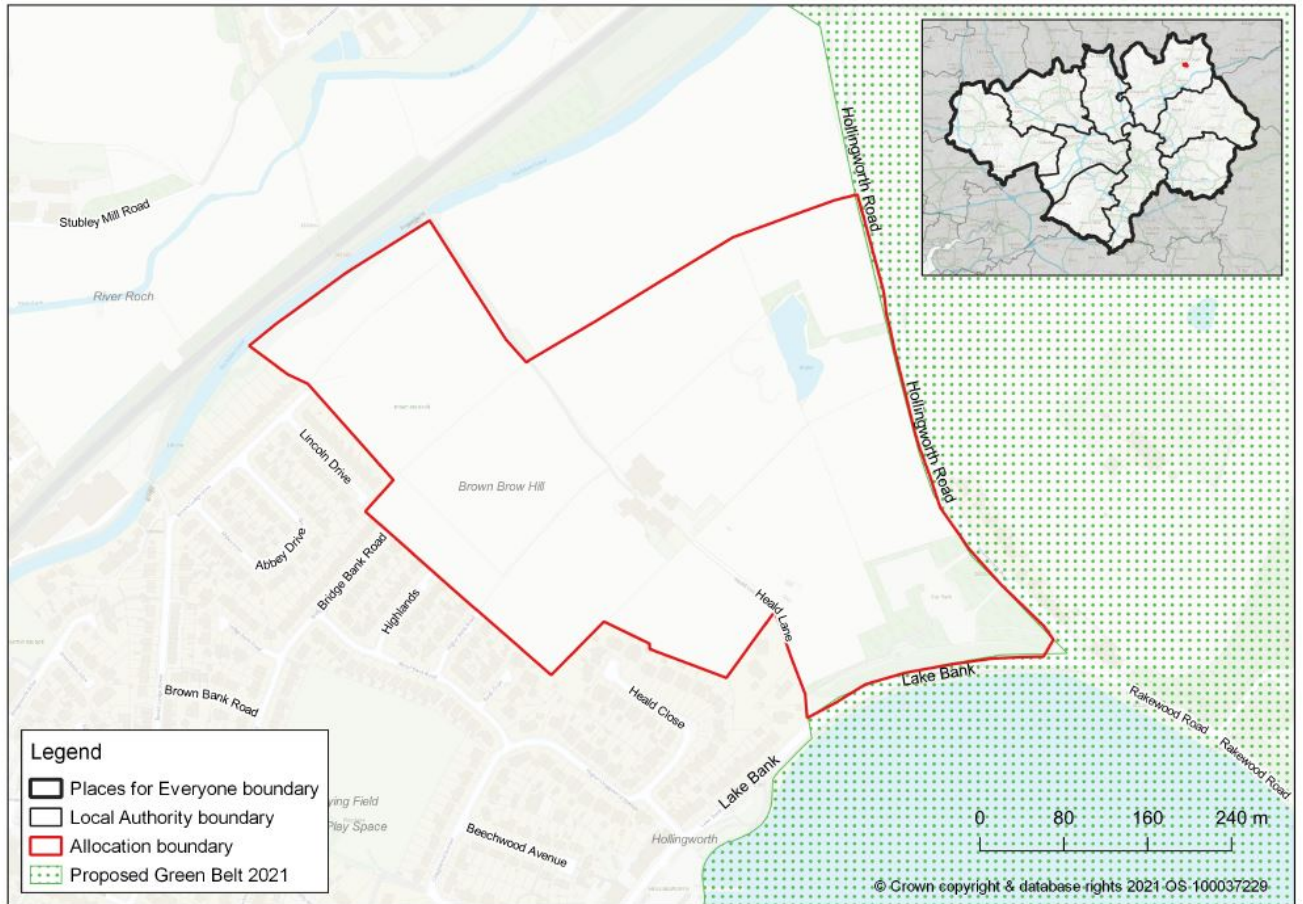
Appendix 2: Proposed policy, PfE Publication Version 2021

Appendix 3: Indicative Masterplan

Appendix 4: Previous draft policy, as proposed in GMSF Publication Version 2020

Appendix 5: Previous draft policy, as proposed in 2019 Draft GMSF

Appendix 1: Site allocation boundary



Appendix 2: Proposed policy, PfE Publication Version 2021

Policy JP Allocation 22: Land North of Smithy Bridge

Development at this site will be required to:

1. Deliver around 300 new homes, including higher value family housing, to meet needs within the local area and to attract and retain higher income households, taking advantage of its attractive setting next to Hollingworth Lake and the Rochdale Canal;
2. Achieve excellent design and sustainability through masterplanning and the use of design codes for the whole site to ensure comprehensive development;
3. Deliver a landscape-led development which maximises its Pennine fringe setting and takes account of views from and into the site, including the incorporation of high quality green and blue infrastructure;
4. Incorporate a design and layout which complements the existing housing to the west of the site and the proposed new housing on the former Akzo Nobel site to the north;
5. Create high quality, safe and convenient walking and cycling routes through the site providing improved linkages to key local destinations including Littleborough Town Centre, Hollingworth Lake, Rochdale Canal and the two railway stations – Smithy Bridge and Littleborough;
6. Define the archaeological potential of the development site through the completion of archaeological evaluation in the form of geophysics, field walking and trial trenching for areas specified in the Land North of Smithy Bridge Historic Environment Assessment 2020. The masterplan must detail where significant archaeology must be preserved in situ and demonstrate how the development has responded sympathetically to this;
7. Provide appropriate access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure and cycle storage;
8. Provide financial contributions to mitigate impacts on the highway network identified through a transport assessment;
9. Carry out a project specific Habitats Regulation Assessment for planning applications of 50 dwellings or more;

10. Facilitate the delivery of a new primary school and associated outdoor playing space at the southern end of the site and contribute to additional primary and secondary places to meet demand arising from the new development; and
11. Deliver the provision of replacement visitor car parking to replace the existing spaces lost on the car park at the southern end of the site.

This site provides an excellent opportunity to deliver a high quality housing scheme and associated facilities which maximises the potential of this sustainable location. Any proposal should take advantage of its setting close to Hollingworth Lake and build on the existing and proposed residential offer within the area.

The site is within walking distance of both Littleborough and Smithy Bridge rail stations and adjacent to Smithy Bridge which is an attractive and popular residential area which also includes Hollingworth Lake Country Park. The site is also relatively close to Littleborough town centre which contains a range of local services and facilities. Access between these destinations can be significantly improved through the creation of new routes within this development and the adjoining housing site to the north.

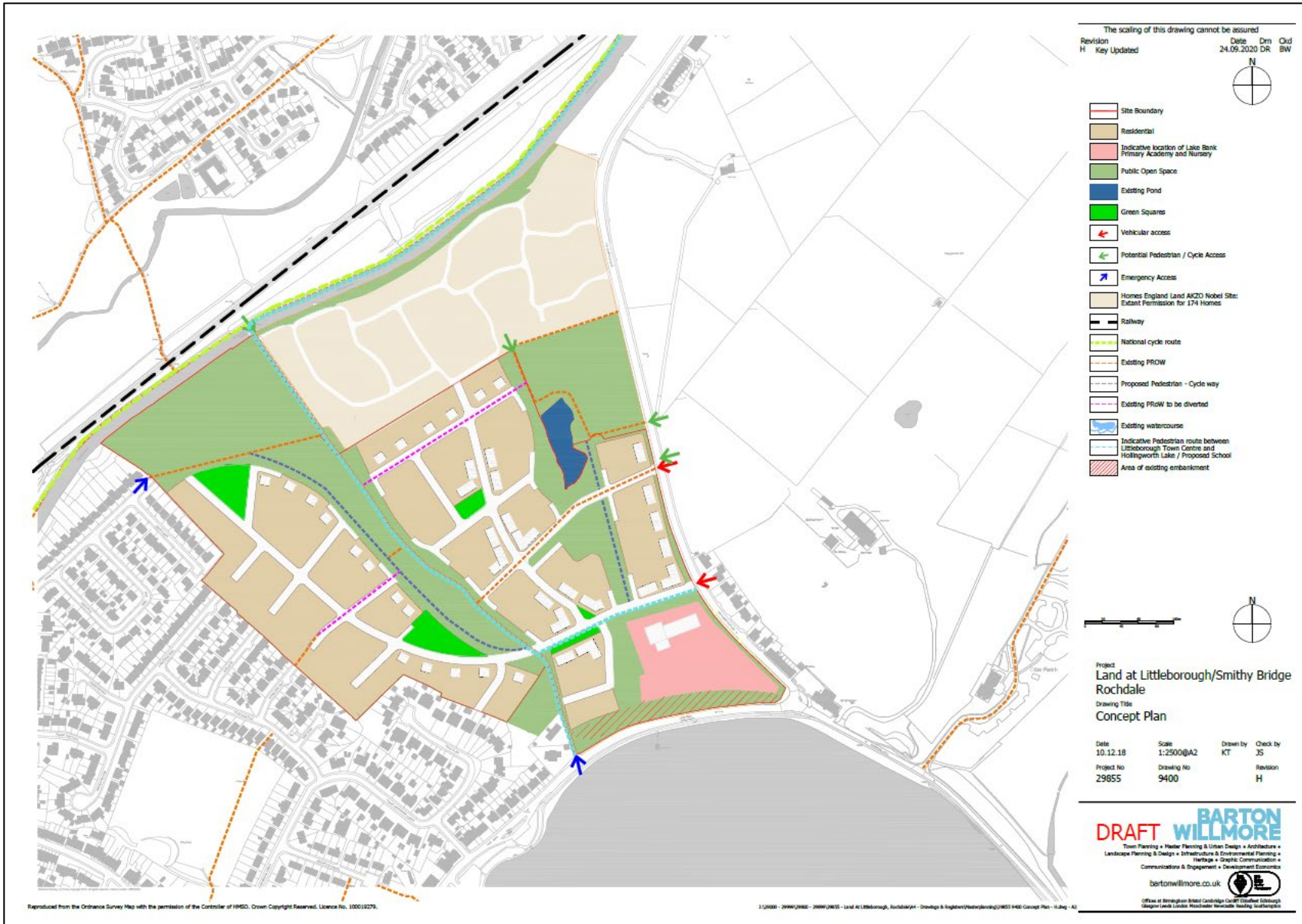
Designated National and European sites are located immediately adjacent to the site and in the wider landscape area. Therefore any impact from the new development and any associated traffic generated will need to be taken into account. As such, a project specific Habitats Regulation Assessment will be required for planning applications involving 50 or more residential units.

The Land North of Smithy Bridge Historic Environment Assessment 2020 identifies heritage assets which may be impacted upon through the development of this site. The masterplan must seek to protect and enhance such assets where possible, otherwise their harm must be robustly justified and mitigated.

There is a local issue in terms of primary school places and this can only be resolved through the provision of a new school. This area provides an excellent location for a new facility given that it lies between Littleborough and Smithy Bridge and therefore can serve both areas sustainably. It also provides an attractive location for a school which can provide access to open areas and activities, thus promoting healthy lifestyles.

The southern end of the site is currently occupied by a car park which accommodates visitors to the lake. This will need to be replaced by an equivalent facility in order that the parking needs of visitors to the lake are met and to avoid displacing car parking on to nearby roads and streets. The delivery of appropriate parking will need to be linked to the overall delivery of the wider proposal.

Appendix 3: Indicative Masterplan



Appendix 4: Previous draft policy, as proposed in GMSF Publication Version 2020

Policy GM Allocation 23: Land North of Smithy Bridge

Development at this site will be required to:

1. Deliver around 300 new homes, including higher value family housing, to meet needs within the local area and to attract and retain higher income households within Greater Manchester, taking advantage of its attractive setting next to Hollingworth Lake and the Rochdale Canal;
2. Achieve excellent design and sustainability through masterplanning and the use of design codes for the whole site to ensure comprehensive development;
3. Deliver a landscape-led development which maximises its Pennine fringe setting and takes account of views from and into the site, including the incorporation of high quality green and blue infrastructure;
4. Incorporates a design and layout which complements the existing housing to the west of the site and the proposed new housing on the former Akzo Nobel site to the north;
5. Create high quality, safe and convenient walking and cycling routes through the site providing improved linkages to key local destinations including Littleborough Town Centre, Hollingworth Lake, Rochdale Canal and the two railway stations – Smithy Bridge and Littleborough;
6. Define the archaeological potential of the development site through the completion of archaeological evaluation in the form of geophysics, field walking and trial trenching for areas specified in the Land North of Smithy Bridge Historic Environment Assessment 2020. The masterplan must detail where significant archaeology must be preserved in situ and demonstrate how the development has responded sympathetically to this;
7. Provide appropriate access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure and cycle storage;
8. Provide financial contributions to mitigate impacts on the highway network identified through a transport assessment;

9. Carry out a project specific Habitats Regulation Assessment for planning applications of 50 dwellings or more;
10. Facilitate the delivery of a new primary school and associated outdoor playing space at the southern end of the site and contribute to additional primary and secondary places to meet demand arising from the new development; and
11. Deliver the provision of replacement visitor car parking to replace the existing spaces lost on the car park at the southern end of the site.

This site provides an excellent opportunity to deliver a high quality housing scheme and associated facilities which maximises the potential of this sustainable location. Any proposal should take advantage of its setting close to Hollingworth Lake and build on the existing and proposed residential offer within the area.

The site is within walking distance of both Littleborough and Smithy Bridge rail stations and adjacent to Smithy Bridge which is an attractive and popular residential area which also includes Hollingworth Lake Country Park. The site is also relatively close to Littleborough town centre which contains a range of local services and facilities. Access between these destinations can be significantly improved through the creation of new routes within this development and the adjoining housing site to the north.

Designated National and European sites are located immediately adjacent to the site and in the wider landscape area. Therefore any impact from the new development and any associated traffic generated will need to be taken into account. As such, a project specific Habitats Regulation Assessment will be required for planning applications involving 50 or more residential units.

The Land North of Smithy Bridge Historic Environment Assessment 2020 identifies heritage assets which may be impacted upon through the development of this site. The masterplan must seek to protect and enhance such assets where possible, otherwise their harm must be robustly justified and mitigated.

There is a local issue in terms of primary school places and this can only be resolved through the provision of a new school. This area provides an excellent location for a new facility given that it lies between Littleborough and Smithy Bridge and therefore can serve

both areas sustainably. It also provides an attractive location for a school which can provide access to open areas and activities, thus promoting healthy lifestyles.

The southern end of the site is currently occupied by a car park which accommodates visitors to the lake. This will need to be replaced by an equivalent facility in order that the parking needs of visitors to the lake are met and to avoid displacing car parking on to nearby roads and streets. The delivery of appropriate parking will need to be linked to the overall delivery of the wider proposal.

Appendix 5: Previous draft policy, as proposed in 2019 Draft GMSF

Policy GM Allocation 26: Land North of Smithy Bridge

Development at this site will be required to:

1. Deliver around 300 new homes to meet needs within the local area and to attract and retain higher income households within Greater Manchester, taking advantage of its attractive setting next to Hollingworth Lake and the Rochdale Canal;
2. Achieve excellent design and sustainability through masterplanning and the use of design codes for the whole site to ensure comprehensive development;
3. Deliver a landscape-led development which maximises its Pennine fringe setting and takes account of views from and into the site;
4. Incorporates a design and layout which complements the existing housing to the west of the site and the proposed new housing on the former Akzo Nobel site to the north;
5. Create high quality, safe and convenient walking and cycling routes through the site providing improved linkages to key local destinations including Littleborough Town Centre, Hollingworth Lake, Rochdale Canal and the two railway stations – Smithy Bridge and Littleborough;
6. Support the delivery of improvements to the local highway network and public transport serving the area;
7. Provide a new primary school and associated outdoor playing space at the southern end of the site and contribute to additional secondary places to meet demand arising from the new development as well as existing demand within the local area; and
8. Ensure that any development is linked to the provision of replacement visitor car parking to replace the existing spaces lost on the car park at the southern end of the site.

This site provides an excellent opportunity to deliver a high quality housing scheme and associated facilities which maximises the potential of this sustainable location. Any proposal should take advantage of its setting close to Hollingworth Lake and build on the existing and proposed residential offer within the area.

The site is within walking distance of both Littleborough and Smithy Bridge rail stations and adjacent to Smithy Bridge which is an attractive and popular residential area which also includes Hollingworth Lake Country Park. The site is also relatively close to Littleborough town centre which contains a range of local services and facilities. Access between these destinations can be significantly improved through the creation of new routes within this development and the adjoining housing site to the north.

There is a local issue in terms of primary school places and this can only be resolved through the provision of a new school. This area provides an excellent location for a new facility given that it lies between Littleborough and Smithy Bridge and therefore can serve both areas sustainably. It also provides an attractive location for a school which can provide access to open areas and activities, thus promoting healthy lifestyles.

The southern end of the site is currently occupied by a car park which accommodates visitors to the lake. This will need to be replaced by an equivalent facility in order that the parking needs of visitors to the lake are met and to avoid displacing car parking on to nearby roads and streets. The delivery of appropriate parking will need to be linked to the overall delivery of the wider proposal

Section H – Bibliography

Documents referred to throughout the topic paper can be found below. Please note this is not an exhaustive list of all the evidence base documents relating to the Land North of Smithy Bridge allocation policy. The evidence documents which have informed the plan are available via the GMCA's website at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/placesforeveryone>

- Places for Everyone Written Statement
- Places for Everyone Consultation Summary Report
- 2016 GMSF
- 2019 GMSF
- Site Selection Topic Paper
- Green Belt Topic Paper
- Transport Locality Assessments – Introductory Note and Assessments – Rochdale Allocations
- Addendum: Transport Locality Assessments Review - Rochdale Allocations
- PfE Integrated Appraisal Report
- PfE Integrated Appraisal Addendum Report
- Integrated Assessment of GMSF Growth and Spatial Options Paper
- Integrated Assessment of PfE Growth and Spatial Options Paper
- Habitat Regulations Assessment of PfE
- Habitat Regulations Assessment of PfE - Air Quality Assessment
- PfE Strategic Viability Assessment Stage 2 Allocated Sites
- GM Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 Report
- GM SFRA Level 1 Appendix A Rochdale Interactive Maps
- GM SFRA Level 1 Appendix B Sites Assessment Part 1
- GM SFRA Level 1 Appendix B Sites Assessment Part 2
- GM SFRA Level 1 Appendix C - Development Sites Assessments Summary Reports
- GM SFRA Level 1 Appendix D - Functional Floodplain Methodology
- GM SFRA Level 1 Appendix E - GMCA Climate Change Models
- GM SFRA Level 1 Appendix F - SUDS Techniques and Suitability
- GM Flood Risk Management Framework
- GM Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 - Report

- GM Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 - Appendices
- Flood Risk Sequential Test and Exception Test Evidence Paper
- Stage 1 Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment (2016)
- Stage 1 Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment - Appendices (2016)
- Stage 2 GM Green Belt Study - Cumulative Assessment of Proposed 2020 GMSF Allocations and Additions
- Stage 2 GM Green Belt Study - Cumulative Assessment of Proposed 2021 PfE Allocations and Additions (Addendum 2021)
- Stage 2 Greater Manchester Green Belt Study - Assessment of Proposed 2019 Allocations (2020)
- 21F. Stage 2 Greater Manchester Green Belt Study – Assessment of Proposed 2019 Allocations – Appendix B (2020)
- Stage 2 GM Green Belt Study – Addendum: Assessment of Proposed GMSF Allocations (2020)
- Stage 2 GM Green Belt Study – Assessment of Proposed PfE Allocations (Addendum 2021)
- Stage 2 GM Green Belt Study – Contribution Assessment of Proposed 2020 GMSF Green Belt Additions (2020)
- Stage 2 GM Green Belt Study – Contribution Assessment of Proposed 2021 PfE Green Belt Additions (Addendum 2021)
- Stage 2 GM Green Belt Study – Identification of Opportunities to Enhance the Beneficial use of the GM Green Belt (2020)
- GMSF Landscape Character Assessment (2018)
- Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Study
- 1.1 North of Smithy Bridge Vision Document
- 1.2 North of Smithy Bridge Ecology Technical Note
- 1.5 North of Smithy Bridge Ground Investigation Report
- 1.6 North of Smithy Bridge EIA Screening
- 1.7 North of Smithy Bridge Updated Concept Plan
- 1.8 North of Smithy Bridge Historic Environment Assessment
- 1.9 Preliminary Ecological Appraisals - Screening - Rochdale GMSF Strategic Allocations Sept 2020
- Rochdale Core Strategy