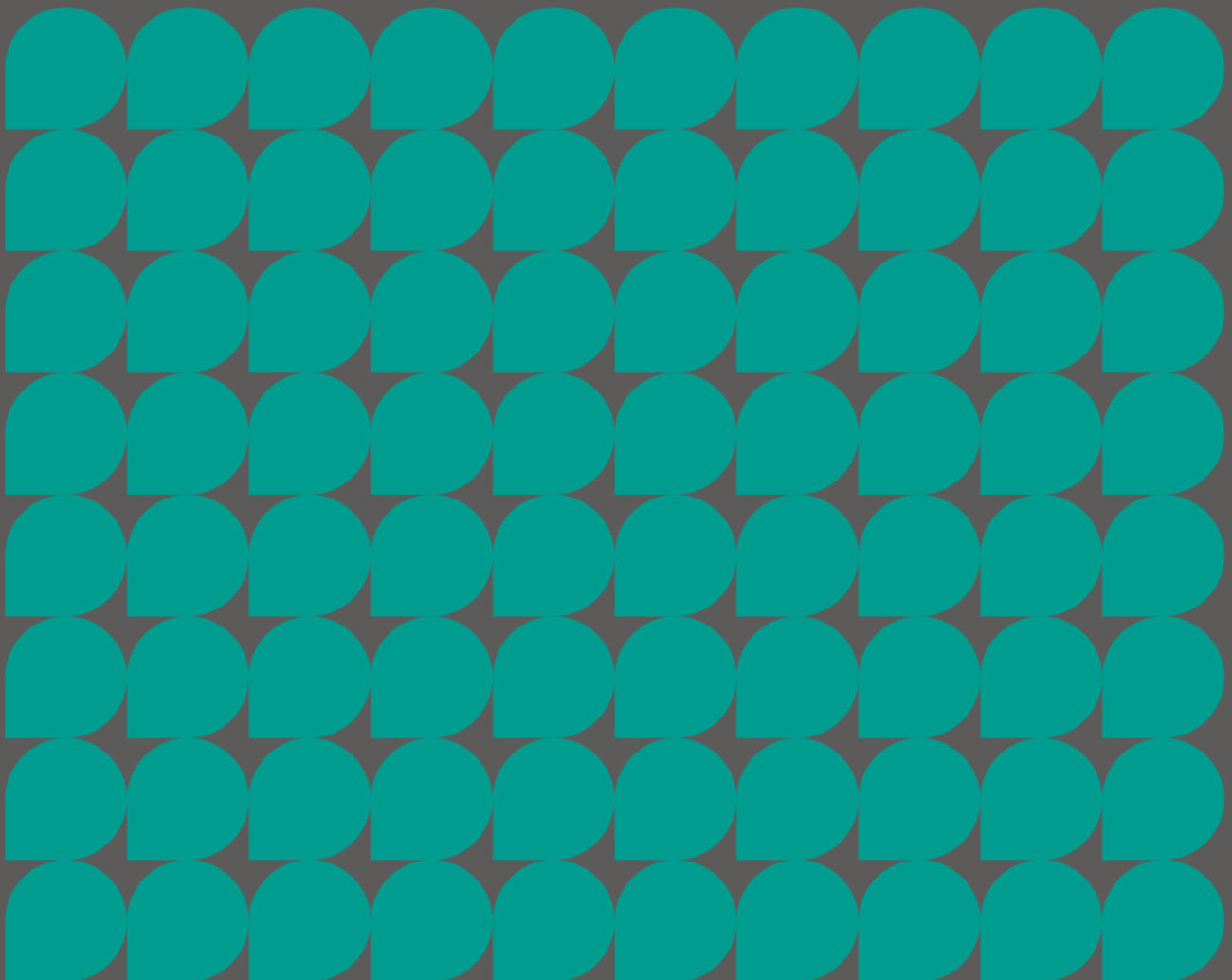


Places for Everyone

JPA24 Roch Valley 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 Roch Valley Overview

2.1 The site is located in an attractive setting within the wider Roch Valley between Rochdale and Littleborough. This site provides an excellent opportunity to deliver a high quality housing scheme and associated facilities which maximises the potential of this attractive and sustainable location.

3.0 Site Details

3.1 The site measures 14ha in size and is bounded by existing housing off Halifax Road to the north and west, Smithy Bridge Road to the east and the River Roch to the south. The site falls outside the current defined urban area but is not within the Green Belt and is currently designated as Protected Open Land.

3.2 The site has good access to the A58 bus corridor and there are local services and facilities along this route.

4.0 Proposed Development

4.1 The site will deliver around 200 homes, including higher value family housing, on the northern half of the site adjacent to the existing residential areas. There was a very small change in the capacity from the 2019 GMSF to reflect the capacity in the submitted planning application. In terms of access, this will be primarily from Smithy Bridge Road to the east.

- 4.2 Although none of the land proposed for development would be at risk of flooding, the land to the north of the River Roch has been identified by the Environment Agency and the Council as a location where flood water storage capacity should be safeguarded to enhance measures that deliver flood alleviation benefits for the River Roch catchment between Littleborough and Rochdale Town Centre. Any development should take account of this proposal and, where possible, include measures that will contribute to the ability of this location to mitigate against flood risk in the wider Roch Valley. This should be accompanied by appropriate water management in the site itself, including sustainable drainage infrastructure (SuDS).

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, Objectives and Spatial Strategy and meet the housing and employment land supply shortfall across the plan area.
- 5.2 Stage 1 of the site selection methodology relates to land which is outside of the existing urban area but which is not in the Green Belt. This includes land which has been identified in district Local Plans as safeguarded land and/or Protected Open Land (POL). This land is considered to be sequentially preferable to Green Belt. Roch Valley is POL and its allocation contributes to keeping the total amount of Green Belt loss in Rochdale to a minimum.
- 5.3 For further detail please see the Site Selection Topic Paper.

6.0 Planning History

- 6.1 Planning application submitted for the construction of 200 dwellings with associated public open space and landscaping (19/00881/FUL).

7.0 GMSF 2019 Consultation Responses

- 7.1 Many respondents felt the scale of development was too large for this area and the site could not be justified for use as housing. Further to this, there was disagreement with the type of housing proposed, as this does not meet local housing needs for this area. There is no affordable or older persons housing proposed and too much focus on high quality, expensive homes which local people cannot afford.
- 7.2 Another key concerns is the impact on the local traffic, in particular on the A58 and Smithy Bridge Road. These roads are already heavily congested, especially at peak times, and any additional traffic will make this much worse and unbearable. The level crossing is frequently down which disrupts traffic and if local trains were increased on this route then this will mean even greater delays on these roads. There is a lot of concern that the local road infrastructure will not be able to support the additional traffic resulting from this development.
- 7.3 Many respondents felt that public transport links are overcrowded and inadequate. Public transport facilities are a concern at Smithy Bridge station and Milnrow Metrolink stop where services are very overcrowded during rush hour. These services will not be able to cope with increased demand resulting from the proposed houses.
- 7.4 There are numerous comments regarding flood risk issues in the area. Existing flooding has been highlighted as a particular concern and any new development will only increase flood risk. The site is too close to the River Roch which is prone to flooding and previous flood prevention measures in this area didn't work.
- 7.5 Concerns were raised regarding the detrimental impact development will have on the wildlife and how it will decrease the levels of biodiversity. The site is an attractive river valley, the proposed development will detrimentally change the landscape at Smithy Bridge forever and destroy the natural beauty of the area.
- 7.6 Some respondents questioned why the land is protected but still being considered for development. It is felt that open green spaces are an important part of the area and

are used for walking, cycling and other recreation activities that benefit people's health and wellbeing.

7.7 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 Integrated Assessment 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 Roch Valley allocation policy in the 2019 Draft GMSF have been considered to inform the production of the revised JP Allocation 24. 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 Roch Valley allocation policy are already covered in other policies in the Plan. However some changes have been made to the Roch Valley 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 Roch Valley allocation policy in the 2019 Draft GMSF have been considered to inform the production of the revised JP Allocation 24. 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 24 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 ensuring that land resources are used in an efficient way because the site is greenfield. 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 24. The Plan acknowledges that given the overall scale of development that needs to be accommodated a limited amount of development on high grade agricultural land is necessary as it is critical to the delivery of wider development proposals.

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

9.5 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 allocation would not have a severe impact on the local network but mitigation works were required to ensure this.
- 10.2 Assessment of the transport impact of this allocation was carried out in combination with that for the GM23 Land North of Smithy Bridge allocation. The identified mitigation measures have been apportioned between the two allocations according to their relative level of impact. Where both allocations had an effect on specific parts of the network, the mitigation costs were apportioned according to their modelled level of impact.
- 10.3 The mitigation measures identified were:-
- Priority junction with Smithy Bridge Road to access the site;
 - The allocation layout will be designed to deliver the eastern section of a proposed A58 Residential Relief Road between Smithy Bridge Road and Albert Royds Street with high quality pedestrian / cycle routes and links to Smithy Bridge Road;
 - Improved segregated cycle links south to Smithy Bridge Railway Station using Public Rights of Way Network and to link with Regional Cycle Route 80.
 - 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 secure cycle parking at Smithy Bridge Railway Station;
 - Provide Toucan (pedestrian / cycle) crossings of Smithy Bridge Road to railway station and close to the allocation linking it to Stubble Mill Road (Regional Cycle Route 80);
 - Bus Stop upgrades to Quality Bus Corridor specifications (2 on Smithy Bridge Road and a stop on Halifax Road).

- 10.4 Access to the proposed allocation will be via a priority junction from Smithy Bridge Road and include a toucan crossing to link with the existing strategic cycling network. The layout of the allocation will be designed to enable the delivery of the eastern section of a proposed A58 Residential Relief Road between Smithy Bridge Road and Albert Royds Street to the west. This route will incorporate “Streets for All” and “Bee Network” design principles and will incorporate 2 metre wide footways and a 4 metre cycleway. The Locality Assessment suggests that the new route will ease congestion on a section of A58 Halifax Road and potentially negate the need for the A58 Halifax Road / Wardle Road junction improvements. The new route could also deliver wider benefits to the operation of highway network, including for reducing junction delay for trips to and from Milnrow and the M62 motorway.
- 10.5 The A58 Residential Relief Road is not yet fully funded, but in addition to works to mitigate the impacts of this allocation it is expected that a financial contribution will be secured from the GM23 allocation and Bee Network and “Streets for All” funding will also be sought. The Council will work with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and other stakeholders to secure the funding required to deliver the scheme.
- 10.6 The allocation is about 600 metres from both Smithy Bridge and Littleborough Railway Stations with both served by half hourly services westbound to Rochdale and Manchester and east towards Leeds. A planning application has been submitted for this allocation but has still to be determined. It includes measures to enhance the local walking and cycle network in addition to the proposals for the access road. Pedestrian / Cycle routes will be provided from the allocation to Smithy Bridge Road, Holland Street and Brooklyn Avenue to access the nearest bus stops, Smithy Bridge Railway Station and nearby amenities and key facilities on A58 Halifax Road.
- 10.7 Local cycling and walking routes will be enhanced through the Greater Manchester Bee Network programme including along the Roch Valley from Littleborough to Albert Royds Street and the Rochdale Canal towpath. Diversion of a Public Right of Way (PROW) from the north east to the south west corner of the allocation realigning the footpath north-south through the allocation to meet a proposed east west footway / cycleway to the south of the allocation. This will enable further connections to

Wuerdel Farm Way and west to link with recently constructed development providing a more direct access to a northbound bus stop on Smithy Bridge Road and the railway station. The allocation access will be subject to speed restrictions to provide a suitable environment for pedestrian and cyclists.

- 10.8 Cycle parking facilities will be provided at Smithy Bridge Railway Station and a toucan crossing to improve sustainable access to the station platforms. Network Rail also have a proposal to enhance safety at the level crossing.
- 10.9 The nearest bus stops are located on A58 near Braddocks Close about 300 metres from the allocation. These are served by five or six services an hour to Rochdale and seven services an hour to Littleborough with hourly services continuing to / from Burnley and Halifax. In addition to these, an hourly service operates along Smithy Bridge Road the frequency of which will be reviewed. These stops will be enhanced to Quality Bus corridor or equivalent specifications.
- 10.10 Due to the limited choice of route for journeys to / from this part of the Borough, the combined impacts on the highway network of this allocation and GM25 affects the operation of junctions across the wider local network area. A58 junction improvements with Smithy Bridge Road, Birch Road and Albert Royds Street have been identified, along with signalisation of the selected movements at the junction with Wardle Road. Mitigation costs to address the traffic impact on all these junctions will be apportioned between the two proposed allocations.
- 10.11 There is a large existing commuter demand in this part of the borough. Peak time rail services stopping at Littleborough and Smithy Bridge Stations are heavily used and congestion levels on local routes periodically illustrate this. The A58 Residential Relief Road is primarily aimed at reducing delays and increasing resilience on A58 Halifax Road, but the Locality Assessment indicates that it may deliver noticeable reductions in peak time delays at junctions in Milnrow used by commuters travelling to and from the M62.
- 10.12 This allocation will impact on the signalised junctions in 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 offers a short-term solution and but wider proposals to reduce peak time levels of traffic using the junctions are being explored to tackle peak time delays at these junctions.

- 10.13 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 Roch Valley 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 Greater Manchester Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment completed in March 2019 applies the Sequential Test to all allocations, identifying where the Exception Test needs to be passed. It concludes that this site would be required to pass the Exception Test and a more detailed strategic assessment was carried out in the GM Level 2 SFRA completed in October 2020.
- 11.2 Flood Zone 3 3 (high probability of flooding) is confined to the southern periphery of the site. The main development proposals are within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) to the north of the site. Land along the River Roch at the southern boundary forms part of a proposed flood storage area within a flood alleviation scheme being prepared by the Environment Agency. A proposed access road route may result in a small loss of flood storage capacity that would in such an event need to be mitigated by design and routing or compensatory storage onsite. An unnamed Ordinary Watercourse in the North East of the site which includes a culverted stretch has an unquantified risk requires further modelled evidence to understand any risks and opportunities for culvert removal as part of a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) supporting a planning application. The SFRA report recommended that this site based detailed FRA should include confirmation of existing surface water flow routes and ensuring that they are considered in the layout design with appropriate reference to the SuDS hierarchy. Emergency planning procedures should also be included which addresses safe access and egress routes in times of flood and safety around the onsite culvert.

11.3 This assessment considered that the site would be likely to pass the Exception Test if recommendations from the SFRA are carried out including the additional modelling identified above. It is also understood that engagement with the Environment Agency has taken place concerning flood risk issues on site and also in respect of the Agency's flood risk management proposals which would impact the southern periphery of the site. The allocation is now subject to a planning application for residential development and an accompanying FRA and outline drainage strategy has been provided that seeks to address flood risk and its mitigation. A surface water management scheme has been proposed for the site designed to reduce run off from development and provide onsite water quality and amenity benefits.

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:

- Currently comprises open fields;
- River Roch immediately to the south of the site and the Rochdale Canal further to the SE;
- The department has records of ground investigations which have been undertaken at this site;
- Infilled water bodies, former pumping station in eastern corner;
- Minor aquifer, area south of the site identified as a flood zone;
- Drift geology comprises Glacial Till and Alluvium, the solid the Milnrow Sandstone and Coal Measures;
- Class 1 radon area.

12.2 Given that this site is the subject of a full planning application a Final Phase 2 Geo-environmental Investigation, Risk Assessment and Remediation Strategy has been submitted in support of the application. This report has been considered by the Council and any subsequent permission will be conditioned accordingly.

13.0 Utilities

- 13.1 A Utility Statement was submitted alongside the full planning application for this site. This report concludes that from the formal responses received from the host asset owners of the gas, water and electricity infrastructure that all the main utilities are all available within the Smithy Bridge Road and local road network in the existing residential area to serve the proposed development. Extensive United Utilities Sewer Assets are within the site boundary.

No major reinforcement is required with points of connection being available from adjoining the site or in close vicinity. Diversion works are likely to be needed for Water, Gas, Electric, and BT Openreach to form the new main site entrance from Smithy Bridge Road.

Section C – Environmental

14.0 Green Belt Assessment

- 14.1 The proposed site is not located within the Green Belt and therefore does not result the loss of any Green Belt land.

15.0 Green Infrastructure

- 15.1 The site allocation and planning application boundaries are much larger than the proposed area for development within the site. The area immediately to the north of the river will be kept open and therefore offers an opportunity as enhanced green infrastructure as part of a high quality layout. This area will be complemented by other open spaces within the site as part of a comprehensive green network.
- 15.2 The location of the site and the potential delivery of a residential relief road through the site means that there are opportunities to deliver high quality, safe and attractive walking and cycling routes which will add to the functionality of the green infrastructure within the site.

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 there is also the opportunity to deliver attractive, high quality, recreational routes within the site that can link to other areas promoting active travel and healthy lifestyles.
- 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 This area is identified as Pennine Foothills (West/South Pennines) of medium sensitivity for residential development within the Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Study.
- 17.2 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been produced in support of the planning application. The summary of this assessment considers that the effects on landscape features and landscape character as a result of the proposed development are not significant. The findings of this study will be taken into account in determining the planning application. The may result in some required mitigations in relation to the design and layout of the scheme, landscaping and boundary treatments. The focus of such enhancements will be on preserving the wider river valley landscape.

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 development of the site may potentially have an indirect recreational disturbance effect on the South Pennines SAC/SPA;
 - The development of the site would not affect any Local Wildlife sites;
 - The development of the site would require a Habitats Regulation assessment HRA;
 - The site has potential to support specially protected species including bats, badgers and water voles; and
 - The site supports, or have the potential to support, priority habitat types or priority species including hedgerows.

- 18.3 The appraisal finds that overall ecological constraints are limited, recommends that further surveys would be required to inform planning applications and that mitigation and/or compensation may be required for some species. The River Roch which forms the southern boundary of the site should be protected and enhanced. It concludes there are no identified ecological constraints that would impose a significant constraint to the allocation of the area however a HRA may be needed. Recommendations would be taken into account as part of the masterplanning in order to achieve the requirement for biodiversity net gain as set out in policy JP-G 9 'A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity' of the Plan.
- 18.4 A detailed Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken in support of the planning application. The findings of this study reflect the key issues identified by GMEU in terms of the ecology on the site. The Ecological Appraisal includes a number of recommendations to enhance the biodiversity and minimise the impact of any development on the nature conservation value of the area.

19.0 Habitat Regulation Assessment

- 19.1 Since the 2019 consultation the GMCA have engaged with Natural England in the preparation of the GMSF, 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.

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 Roch Valley 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 This 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 Roch Valley Historic Environment Assessment.
- 20.3 Archaeology recommendation summary:
- To safeguard the potential interests connected to the potential prehistoric remains, possible early 19th century cottage and late 19th century coal pit Geophysical surveys and archaeological evaluation across the site to be undertaken which can be secured by planning conditions and referenced in the development brief.
- 20.4 In response to the above recommendations, supplementary information has been included within the reasoned justification.
- 20.5 Built Heritage recommendations summary:
- To preserve the significance and character of Green Farmhouse, cottage and attached farm buildings any development should not be overly dominant and plan and design should respect the rural character.

- To preserve the significance and character of Dobwheel Mill development within lower part of the site and the immediate vicinity of the river must be avoided. The development must not be overly dominant development; plan and design should respect the rural setting.
- Views to and from the Clegg Village Conservation Area and the listed buildings within should be included in the development plan. The development should also avoid being overly dominant and the 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:

- Historic field boundaries and Public Rights of Way to be retained to protect the rural character of the area.

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

20.9 Following the publishing of the 2020 GMSF, Historic England suggested some slightly amended wording to tie in the assessment, ensure that the text is in line with the requirements of the NPPF and improve clarity. These very minor amendments are included in the 2021 PfE policy wording shown in Appendix 2.

21.0 Air Quality

21.1 Any future planning application for the proposed allocation will be supported by an Air Quality Statement / Assessment (AQS / AQA) using 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 (if required) 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 A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted with the planning application. This concludes that the levels of noise affecting the development are at levels that do not require any specific mitigation.

Section D – Social

23.0 Education

- 23.1 The needs for school places in relation to all the proposed allocations within Rochdale has been informed by ongoing discussions with the Council's Education Department
- 23.2 Current evidence suggest that there is likely to be local issue in terms of primary school places and this can only be resolved through the provision of a new school. The proposed allocation JPA 22 Land north of Smithy Bridge includes the provision of a new primary school to address this issue.
- 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.
- 23.4 It is acknowledged that new development places increased demand on school provision and therefore the policy does include a requirement to provide contributions to ensure that there are sufficient school places to accommodate the new housing either through an expansion of existing schools or the provision of new school facilities.

24.0 Health

- 24.1 The HIA was requested as a validation document by Rochdale Borough Council so as to inform the position with regards to developer contributions for health infrastructure. The assessment indicates that there is sufficient existing capacity within the local area to accommodate growth from both the proposed development and potential wider development which might come forward over the longer term. There is therefore no evidence at this stage to indicate that developer contributions for health infrastructure would be necessary.

Section E – Deliverability

25.0 Viability

25.1 The site is the subject of a full planning application and viability evidence has been provided alongside this submission. As a result of this, the Roch Valley allocation was not considered as part of the Strategic Viability Report – Stage 2 Allocated Sites Viability Report (October 2020).

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 up to 40 dwellings per annum. The site would therefore be built out in around 6 years from the start of dwellings being delivered on the site.

27.0 Indicative Masterplanning

27.1 The planning application includes a detailed layout for the site. This application is still being considered and it is likely that the layout will be amended to reflect the latest evidence and ongoing discussion with the local planning authority and any resulting recommendations.

Section F – Conclusion

28.0 The Sustainability Appraisal

28.1 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been incorporated into the Integrated Assessment (IA) of the GMSF and has informed plan preparation. The IA identified many positive impacts in terms of the Roch Valley allocation policy, but also made recommendations in terms of enhancements and mitigation measures. These recommendations have been addressed through revisions to the Roch Valley allocation policy, as set out in the IA section of this Topic Paper, or are addressed when the policy is read in conjunction with the plan's thematic policies, because the plan should be read as a whole. Taking account of the IA findings, the Roch Valley 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. The most notable amendment to this policy is the inclusion of the need for the allocation to be designed in a way to deliver the eastern section of a proposed residential relief road between Smithy Bridge Road and Albert Royds Street. There has also been a very slight change to the capacity in order to reflect that set out within the submitted planning application.

29.2 Further changes have also 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 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.

29.3 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 minor wording changes in relation to the historic environment elements of the policy (see section 20), 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 site is included within the plan as a housing allocation that can deliver around 200 homes. The site allocation is not in the Green Belt and is therefore sequentially preferable in principle to the release of Green Belt land.

30.2 The site is the subject of a submitted planning application and is therefore capable of delivery early in the plan period. 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 open spaces and attractive routes linking in into the existing urban area, notably the nearby Smithy Bridge train station. The potential of the scheme to deliver a section of a proposed residential relief road will assist with addressing issues on the local route network as well as the delivery of high quality walking and cycling routes. The site will contribute to the choice and quality of housing in this sustainable location.

30.3 Reflecting both the outcomes of the Integrated Assessment, updated evidence and consultation responses to GMSF 2019, the revised policy wording is set out in Appendix 2.

Section G – Appendices

Appendix 1: Site allocation boundary

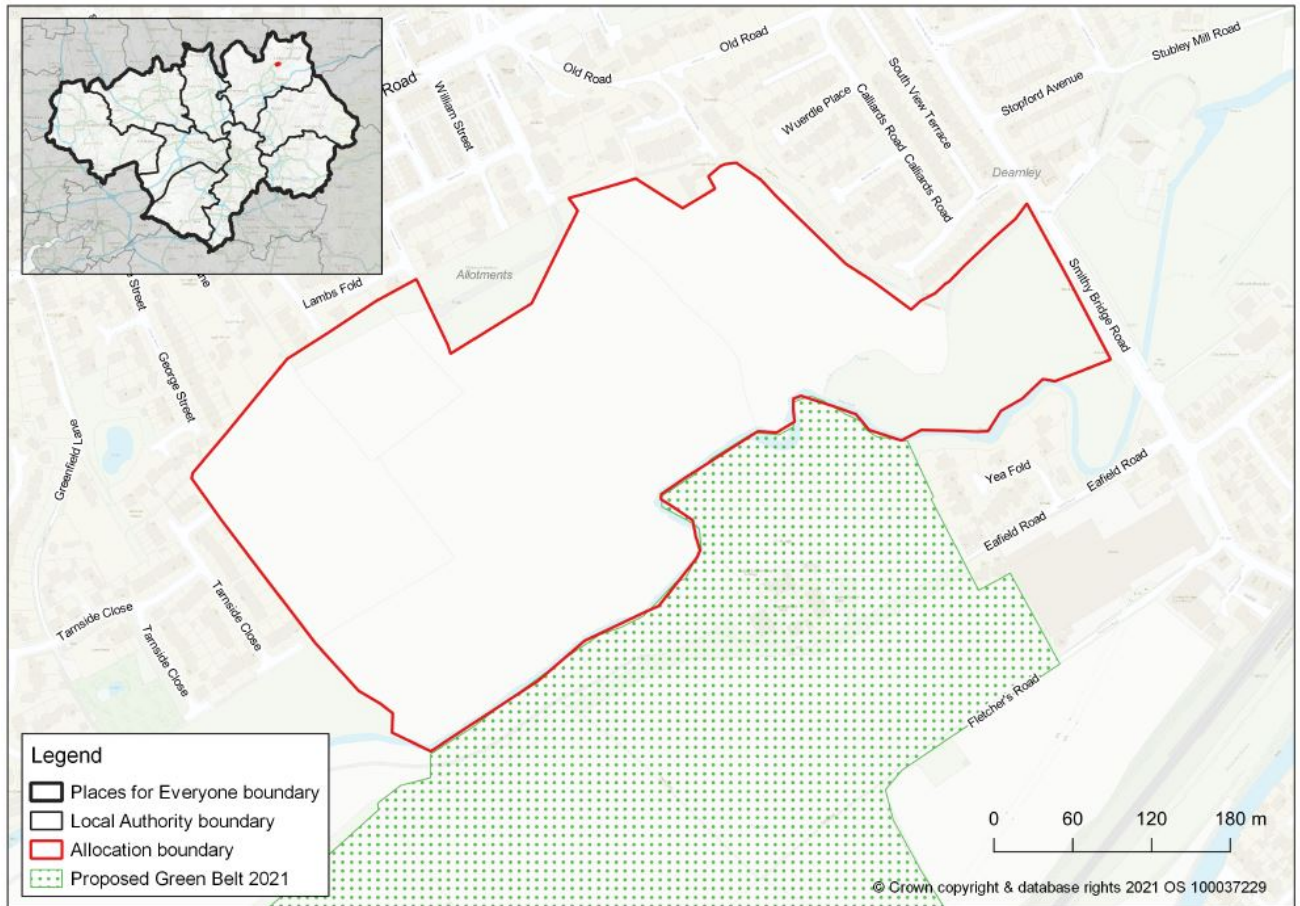
Appendix 2: Proposed policy, PfE Publication Version 2021

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 24: Roch Valley

Development at this site will be required to:

1. Deliver around 200 homes, including higher value family homes, on the northern half of the site adjacent to existing residential areas to be accessed primarily from Smithy Bridge Road to the east;
2. Achieve excellent design and sustainability through masterplanning and the use of design codes for the whole site to ensure comprehensive development;
3. Safeguard the land between the developed part of the site and the River Roch to contribute to measures that deliver flood alleviation benefits for the River Roch catchment between Littleborough and Rochdale town centre. This should be accompanied by appropriate water management in the site itself, including sustainable drainage infrastructure (SuDS);
4. Have regard to the river valley setting in terms of the design and layout, particularly in relation to the materials uses, the incorporation of green and blue infrastructure and the landscaping along the boundary of the site;
5. Protect and enhance archaeological features and where appropriate carry out archaeological evaluation for areas specified in the Roch Valley Historic Environment Assessment 2020 to understand where especially significant archaeology must be preserved in situ. Proposals should be informed by the findings and recommendations of the Historic Environment Assessment (2020) in the Plan's evidence base and any updated assessment submitted as part of the planning application;
6. Maintain and enhance pedestrian and cycle routes through the valley both to promote active lifestyles and provide sustainable routes to local centres, services and public transport, notably Smithy Bridge railway station to the south and the bus corridor on the A58 to the north;
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. The layout of the scheme should be designed in a way to deliver the eastern section of a proposed residential relief road between Smithy Bridge Road and Albert Royds Street. This proposed new road will need to incorporate attractive, high quality pedestrian and cycle routes; and
10. Provide contributions to ensure that there are sufficient school places to accommodate the new housing either through an expansion of existing schools or the provision of new school facilities.

The site is located within the wider Roch Valley between Rochdale and Littleborough which is outside the current defined urban area but is not within the Green Belt, being currently designated as Protected Open Land. This land is adjacent to well established areas of housing and is within an attractive setting. Some development has recently gained planning permission and the opportunity exists for more, relatively small scale, proposals which respect the river valley location and setting.

The Roch Valley Historic Environment Assessment identified the sensitivities that need to be taken in to account in relation to the masterplan and any subsequent planning applications for this site.

The area has good access to the A58 bus corridor and there are local services and facilities along this route. The development will need to provide good walking and cycling routes to the Calder Valley Railway line station at Smithy Bridge which offers good access to the city centre and other areas.

Although none of the land proposed for development would be at risk from flooding the land to the north of the River Roch has been identified by the Environment Agency and the Council as a location where flood water storage capacity should be safeguarded to enhance measures that deliver flood alleviation benefits for the River Roch catchment between Littleborough and Rochdale town centre. Any development should take account of this proposal and, where possible, include measures that will contribute to the ability of this location to mitigate against flood risk in the wider Roch Valley.

The river valley setting of the site means that the impact of any development must be taken into account in terms of any design and layout. There are some long distance views into the

site from across the valley and therefore it is important that the impact of any scheme is minimised as much as possible through the use of appropriate materials and high quality landscaping.

There are proposals to deliver a residential relief road linking Smithy Bridge Road and Albert Royds Street. This route would improve traffic flow on the local route network and reduce congestion at a number of junctions in the area. This site provides an opportunity to deliver the eastern section of this road as part of a high quality residential layout. Any new road will include attractive, high quality pedestrian and cycle routes to promote sustainable modes of transport from, to and through the site.

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

Policy GM Allocation 25: Roch Valley

Development at this site will be required to:

1. Deliver around 200 homes, including higher value family homes, on the northern half of the site adjacent to existing residential areas to be accessed primarily from Smithy Bridge Road to the east;
2. Achieve excellent design and sustainability through masterplanning and the use of design codes for the whole site to ensure comprehensive development;
3. Safeguard the land between the developed part of the site and the River Roch to contribute to measures that deliver flood alleviation benefits for the River Roch catchment between Littleborough and Rochdale town centre. This should be accompanied by appropriate water management in the site itself, including sustainable drainage infrastructure (SuDS);
4. Have regard to the river valley setting in terms of the design and layout, particularly in relation to the materials uses, the incorporation of green and blue infrastructure and the landscaping along the boundary of the site;
5. Protect and enhance archaeological features and where appropriate carry out archaeological evaluation for areas specified in the Roch Valley Historic Environment Assessment 2020 to understand where especially significant archaeology must be preserved in situ. Protect field boundaries and the identified key views to and from adjacent heritage assets;
6. Maintain and enhance pedestrian and cycle routes through the valley both to promote active lifestyles and provide sustainable routes to local centres, services and public transport, notably Smithy Bridge railway station to the south and the bus corridor on the A58 to the north;
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. The layout of the scheme should be designed in a way to deliver the eastern section of a proposed residential relief road between Smithy Bridge Road and Albert Royds

Street. This proposed new road will need to incorporate attractive, high quality pedestrian and cycle routes; and

10. Provide contributions to ensure that there are sufficient school places to accommodate the new housing either through an expansion of existing schools or the provision of new school facilities.

The site is located within the wider Roch Valley between Rochdale and Littleborough which is outside the current defined urban area but is not within the Green Belt being currently designated as Protected Open Land. This land is adjacent to well established areas of housing and is within an attractive setting. Some development has recently gained planning permission and the opportunity exists for more, relatively small scale, proposals which respect the river valley location and setting.

The Roch Valley Historic Environment Assessment identified the sensitivities that need to be taken in to account in relation to the masterplan and any subsequent planning applications for this site.

The area has good access to the A58 bus corridor and there are local services and facilities along this route. The development will need to provide good walking and cycling routes to the Calder Valley Railway line station at Smithy Bridge which offers good access to the city centre and other areas of GM.

Although none of the land proposed for development would be at risk from flooding the land to the north of the River Roch has been identified by the Environment Agency and the Council as a location where flood water storage capacity should be safeguarded to enhance measures that deliver flood alleviation benefits for the River Roch catchment between Littleborough and Rochdale town centre. Any development should take account of this proposal and, where possible, include measures that will contribute to the ability of this location to mitigate against flood risk in the wider Roch Valley.

The river valley setting of the site means that the impact of any development must be taken into account in terms of any design and layout. There are some long distance views into the site from across the valley and therefore it is important that the impact of any scheme is

minimised as much as possible through the use of appropriate material and high quality landscaping.

There are proposals to deliver a residential relief road linking Smithy Bridge Road and Albert Royds Street. This route would improve traffic flow on the local route network and reduce congestion at a number of junctions in the area. This site provides an opportunity to deliver the eastern section of this road as part of a high quality residential layout. Any new road will include attractive, high quality pedestrian and cycle routes to promote sustainable modes of transport from, to and through the site.

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

Policy GM Allocation 28: Roch Valley

Development at this site will be required to:

1. Deliver around 210 homes on the northern half of the site adjacent to existing residential areas to be accessed primarily from Smithy Bridge Road to the east;
2. Achieve excellent design and sustainability through masterplanning and the use of design codes for the whole site to ensure comprehensive development;
3. Safeguard the land between the developed part of the site and the River Roch to enhance measures that deliver flood alleviation benefits for the River Roch catchment between Littleborough and Rochdale town centre. This should be accompanied by appropriate water management in the site itself, including sustainable drainage infrastructure (SuDS);
4. Have regard to the river valley setting in terms of the design and layout, particularly in relation to the materials uses and the landscaping along the boundary of the site;
5. Maintain and enhance pedestrian and cycle routes through the valley both to promote active lifestyles and provide sustainable routes to local centres, services and public transport, notably Smithy Bridge railway station to the south and the bus corridor on the A58 to the north; and
6. Ensure that there are sufficient school places to accommodate the new housing either through an expansion of existing schools or the provision of new school facilities.

The site is located within the wider Roch Valley between Rochdale and Littleborough which is outside the current defined urban area but is not within the Green Belt being currently designated as Protected Open Land. This land is adjacent to well established areas of housing and is within an attractive setting. Some development has recently gained planning permission and the opportunity exists for more, relatively small scale, proposals which respect the river valley location and setting.

The area has good access to the A58 bus corridor and there are local services and facilities along this route. The development will need to provide good walking and cycling routes to

the Calder Valley Railway line station at Smithy Bridge which offers good access to the regional centre and other areas of GM.

Although none of the land proposed for development would be at risk from flooding the land to the north of the River Roch has been identified by the Environment Agency and the Council as a location where flood water storage capacity should be safeguarded to enhance measures that deliver flood alleviation benefits for the River Roch catchment between Littleborough and Rochdale town centre. Any development should take account of this proposal and, where possible, include measures that will contribute to the ability of this location to mitigate against flood risk in the wider Roch Valley.

The river valley setting of the site means that the impact of any development must be taken into account in terms of any design and layout. There are some long distance views into the site from across the valley and therefore it is important that the impact of any scheme is minimised as much as possible through the use of appropriate material and high quality landscaping.

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 Trows Farm 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
- GMSF Landscape Character Assessment (2018)
- 1.2 Roch Valley Historic Environment Assessment
- 1.3 Preliminary Ecological Appraisals - Screening - Rochdale GMSF Strategic Allocations Sept 2020
- Rochdale Core Strategy