

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Bolton Local Plan 'Direction of Travel'**

## **1. What is a Local Plan?**

A Local Plan is a document produced by the Local Planning Authority for an area – in this case Bolton Council - in consultation with local people and the many other organisations whose activities influence or are affected by what happens in the borough. Local Plans are used to assess and decide on planning applications. They set out where and how development should take place, by means of a series of policies and maps. The policies guide decision-making on whether planning applications are acceptable or not. They aren't just about where new homes and jobs should go, although this is always an important part of a local plan, but also about identifying areas which need protecting or improving. It is an important document and has a major influence on how the local area will change, develop, look and feel in the future.

## **2. What is the 'Direction of Travel' document?**

It is the next step in preparing Bolton's new Local Plan. It sets the ambition for 2042, the plan objectives, presents different spatial options and some Local Areas of Change, and early thinking on key policies. A full draft of the Local Plan will be published for comment in Summer 2026 before it is submitted to the government for an Independent Examination.

## **3. Why are we producing a new Local Plan?**

The Council has a legal duty to produce a Local Plan. Preparing the plan also allows us to look at what's good about the borough and needs to be protected, what challenges the borough may face in the future, and what needs to be improved. The plan sets out a development framework which looks at the whole borough. It will help attract and co-ordinate investment and infrastructure, and it sets out where we will (and will not) grant planning permission for new development.

Without a new Local Plan, the Council would lose control over where development can and cannot happen. Bolton could be subject to speculative development proposals. These proposals could result in unsustainable, unplanned, piecemeal development across the Borough without the required supporting infrastructure.

## **4. Why are we producing a new Local Plan when '*Places for Everyone*' has been adopted very recently?**

'*Places for Everyone*' is the strategic spatial plan for nine Greater Manchester boroughs and sets out a planning policy framework. It has been adopted as a Joint Development Plan Document for Greater Manchester local planning authorities (excluding Stockport).

'*Places for Everyone*' does not cover all the issues that a district Local Plan should. A Local Plan is therefore needed to address these issues and other issues of local importance. The Local Plan needs to be consistent with '*Places for Everyone*', and may also add detail to '*Places for Everyone*' policies.

**5. What is the relationship between the Bolton Local Plan and Places for Everyone.**

Places for Everyone is the strategic spatial plan for nine Greater Manchester boroughs and sets out a planning policy framework. It has been adopted as a Joint Development Plan Document for Greater Manchester local planning authorities (excluding Stockport).

Places for Everyone does not cover all the issues that a district Local Plan should. A Local Plan is therefore needed to address these issues and other issues of local importance. The Local Plan may also add detail to Places for Everyone Policies. Local Plans need to be consistent with Places for Everyone.

**6. How many homes does Bolton need?**

Places for Everyone requires at least 13,379 homes over 15 years. The Local Plan must plan for this and keep a steady supply of land available.

**7. Can Bolton rely on brownfield land alone?**

No. Even if every brownfield site came forward, it would deliver around 8,600 homes. This is too few to meet identified needs, and many sites are complex or slow to develop.

**8. Have any sites been chosen yet?**

No. Site assessment is ongoing. The next stage of the Local Plan next Summer will set out proposed site allocations for comment. However, we have identified six places in the borough with significant potential for well-planned change: Central Bolton, the Renewal Areas, Health Innovation Bolton, Chequerbent and Hulton Park, Wingates and Middlebrook.

**9. If no sites have been chosen yet, why is land to the West of Wingates, Chequerbent North and Bewshill Farm already allocated for employment development?**

- **Bewshill Farm** was allocated for around 21,000sqm of Industrial and Warehousing development through Places for Everyone Policy JPA4.
- **Chequerbent North** was allocated for around 25,000 sqm of Industrial and Warehousing development through Places for Everyone Policy JPA5.
- **West of Wingates** was allocated for around 440,000 sqm of Industrial and Warehousing development through Places for Everyone Policy JPA6.

**10. Will development only happen in the six Local Areas of Change?**

No. Other sustainable locations will still play a role, including town and district centres and places close to public transport.

**11. Why are policy areas included in this consultation and haven't you missed out lots of topics?**

They are early themes where further work is planned. These are not draft policies. We are inviting views so that the next version of the plan reflects local priorities and practical experience.

**12. Why aren't more policy areas included in this consultation?**

We know that new national policies for development management are expected from central government in the coming months, so we wanted to see what they say as this will affect what we say in our Local Plan. That said, we highlight some considerations for some policy areas which we are know from our councillors are particular priorities for local people: affordable housing; open space; parking; density. These are not draft policies. We are inviting views so that the next version of the plan reflects local priorities and practical experience.

**13. What is happening with affordable housing?**

At this stage we think the plan is likely to place more emphasis on social-rented homes, as this reflects local need. The exact approach will be tested through viability and housing-need evidence which is currently in preparation.

**14. What is the Council doing about Housing in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs)?**

Some neighbourhoods have clusters of HMOs that affect parking, waste and local amenity. A clearer policy is being explored to manage concentration and ensure good living standards.

**15. How will the Local Plan address climate change?**

'Places for Everyone' was adopted by Bolton Council in March 2024. This includes strategic policies that address climate change including, but not limited to, JP-S1 Sustainable Development, JP-S2 Carbon and Energy and JP-S3 Heat and Energy Networks.

The Bolton Local Plan will be consistent with these policies and will, if necessary, add detail to these policies and introduce Bolton specific policies. The Bolton Local Plan will be supported by Sustainability Appraisals which will identify and evaluate impacts of the plan on social, environmental and economic objectives and suggest amendments to avoid or mitigate negative impacts if possible.

The Bolton Local Plan will also be informed by the [Bolton Climate Change Strategy](#).

**16. How will the Local Plan support the regeneration of Bolton town centre**

We are developing policies and strategies that facilitate the regeneration of Bolton town centre. Central Bolton has been identified as an area for well-planned change.

**17. Will development be higher density or much taller?**

Higher densities may be expected where accessibility and services support them, but we will have policies that also manage design and impacts

**18. What will happen with open space standards?**

The Local Plan will introduce clearer standards for parks, play areas and natural green space to support health, biodiversity and climate resilience.

**19. Will parking standards change?**

The plan is exploring a zoned approach to carparking based on accessibility. This could support low-car schemes in central locations and require electric vehicle and cycle parking. We have not set specific standards yet – we are still researching this and we are interested in your views.

**20. How will infrastructure keep pace with growth?**

Through early planning of transport, schools, health services, utilities and open space. Developer contributions and viability testing will help secure delivery. We are creating an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to guide this process.

**21. How can people take part in the consultation?**

You can complete the consultation form or attend one of the drop-in events, details are available on the council's [Active Consultation webpage](#).

**22. Can anyone send comments?**

Anyone can comment on the consultation. We would like to hear from residents, businesses and those living, working or studying in the borough.