

Bolton Local Plan Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Local Plan is required to identify development land to meet its identified needs for housing, travellers and employment. Having examined all current and potential land availability within the Borough and beyond, a shortfall in land supply for housing, industry & warehousing floorspace, gypsy and traveller pitches and plots for travelling showpeople was identified by the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (Bolton Council, 2026) (SHELAA, EVS02).

1.2. The SHELAA (EVS02) identified sites with the potential for development within the Plan period which could not be included within the land supply without policy review through the emerging Local Plan. This includes other protected open land and land within the Green Belt.

1.3. The purpose of this study is to assess potential sites with policy constraints to determine which are the most suitable for meeting the land supply shortfalls and the most appropriate for allocation in the Local Plan.

2. Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1. Bolton's emerging Local Plan is being prepared in accordance with the 2021 NPPF (see Bolton Local Plan Integrated Topic Paper, EVG01). All references in this document are to the 2021 NPPF, unless otherwise specified.
- 2.2. Local Plans should promote sustainable patterns of development and, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses as well as needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas (¶11(a & b)).
- 2.3. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes (¶105).
- 2.4. Strategic policies should make as much use as possible of previously-developed land (¶119) and support the efficient use of land (¶124), where there is an existing, or anticipated shortage of land, low densities should be avoided (¶125).

Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.5. Guidance on Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments provides a staged approach to the assessment of land availability. If insufficient land is identified to meet objectively assessed needs, it is necessary to investigate how the shortfall can best be planned for. (¶025 Ref ID:3-025-20190722)

Housing

- 2.6. A clear understanding of housing land availability, considering suitability, availability and viability of land is required. From this, local plans should identify a mix of sites to provide sufficient deliverable and developable sites to meet housing needs, including a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, with an appropriate buffer (to be maintained) and 5-10, and where possible 10-15 years supply of developable housing sites. (¶68).
- 2.7. The NPPF states that large numbers of new homes are often best achieved via large-scale developments, such as new settlements or significant extensions to villages or towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes) (¶73). Isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided (¶80).

Traveller Sites

- 2.8. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites is relevant (MHCLG).
- 2.9. Pitch targets for gypsies and travellers and plot targets for travelling showpeople should be set to address identified needs, working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities. (¶9).
- 2.10. Local policy should be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, with specific reference to community integration, access to education and health services, environmental quality and reflecting traditional lifestyles (¶13).

2.11. Traveller sites within the Green Belt are inappropriate development, unless the exceptions test is triggered including the to meet identified unmet need. If a limited Green Belt alteration is made to meet needs, it should be specifically allocated as a traveller site only in the development plan (¶16-17).

Employment

2.12. The Local Plan should set criteria for, or identify strategic sites to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period, be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances (¶82).

2.13. The Local Plan should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors including making provision for clusters of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitable accessible locations (¶83).

2.14. NPPF (¶ 86d) states that Local Plans should allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the anticipated need for, looking at least ten years ahead.

Green Belt

2.15. The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The key characteristics of Green Belt are their openness and permanence. (¶137-138).

2.16. Established Green Belt boundaries can be altered through development plans, but only where there are exceptional circumstances requiring the alteration and all other reasonable options should be considered first. This includes making as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land, optimising site density and discussions with neighbouring authorities. (¶140-141).

2.17. Green Belt boundary alterations should take the need to promote sustainable patterns of development into account, with first consideration given to previously developed land and/or land well-served by public transport. Land removed from the Green Belt should be compensated (¶142).

2.18. Green Belt Planning Practice Guidance (2019) provides the relevant guidance for considering the impact of development on the openness of the Green Belt and compensatory improvements in the context of a plan produced under transitional arrangements.

2.19. Updated guidance on how to consider the potential impact of development on the openness of the Green Belt is provided in later guidance (February 2025) and this now applies for the purposes of decision making. This updated guidance, including identification of grey belt, provides a useful tool in the site selection process.

Places for Everyone (2024)

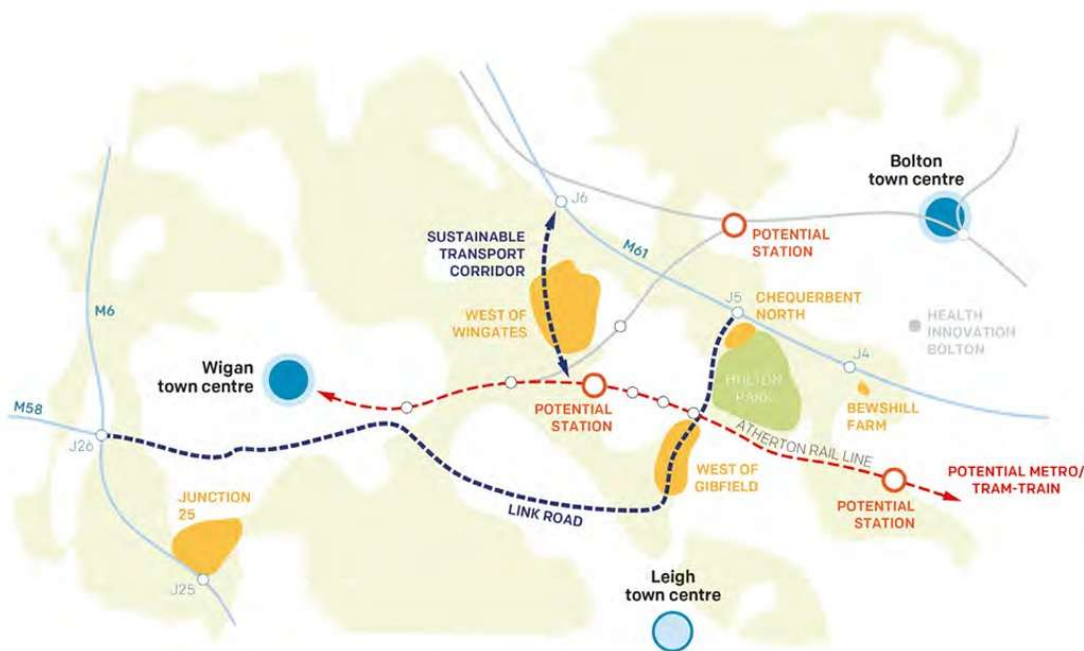
2.20. This study has been prepared to inform the emerging Bolton Local Plan 2025-2042 (The Local Plan). The Local Plan includes policies to deliver the level of housing and other development set out in the Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan Document for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan 2022-2039 (adopted March 2024, DP01).

2.21. Places for Everyone is a joint local plan prepared by Bolton Council in collaboration with the Greater Manchester authorities and adopted in 2024. It sets the strategic framework for Bolton's Local Plan.

Spatial Strategy

2.22. Boosting northern competitiveness is central to the PfE Spatial Strategy, where the focus is on urban regeneration, enhancing town centres, diversifying the residential offer. Improving transport connections and accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking is a priority to ensure access to key employment opportunities. (Policy JP-Strat6).

Figure 1. Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor



2.23. The Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor is a PfE key strategic area for investment, planned to help boost northern competitiveness and support inclusive growth. The growth corridor is focussed around a proposed new link road connecting Junction 26 of the M6 and Junction 5 of the M61; a sustainable transport corridor and the intensification of the Wigan-Atherton-Manchester rail line, with its potential conversion to tram/train or use an extension to the Metrolink tram network. In addition to the allocation of three key strategic employment sites in Bolton, PfE supports the development of a health innovation cluster, including a health village on land at Royal Bolton Hospital. Development is proposed to support the evolution of the hospital and to provide additional opportunities, including new health technology related activities and housing development. The identification of land to support development is deferred by PfE as a matter for the Local Plan (Policy JP-Strat8 & ¶4.59).

Housing

2.24. The distribution of the PfE housing requirement supports the overall strategy which enables people to reduce the need to travel to key regional assets. Bolton is required to deliver 787 new homes a year (2022-2039) to contribute towards the PfE minimum housing requirement (Policy JP-H1).

Industry & Warehousing

2.25. PfE states that at least 3,513,000 sqm of new industrial and warehousing floorspace will be developed across its Plan area over 2022 to 2039 but does not set a Bolton-specific requirement.

Office

2.26. PfE states that at least 2,019,000 sqm of new office floorspace will be developed across its Plan area over 2022 to 2039 but does not set a Bolton-specific requirement.

Green Belt

2.27. The Greater Manchester Green Belt was designated in full in 1984. Except for changes made subsequently through individual local plans, Green Belt boundaries were not then strategically reviewed again until PfE when there were both quantitative and qualitative justifications for Green Belt review.

2.28. A Green Belt Assessment formed part of the PfE strategic evidence base (LUC, Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment, 2016). A stage 2 Green Belt Review assessed the proposed Green Belt allocations, additions and the potential for harm, enhancement and beneficial uses. (LUC, Stage 2 GM Green Belt Study, 2020).

2.29. The PfE Site Selection Background Paper (2021) sets out the seven site selection criteria applied to identify the most sustainable Green Belt sites (¶6.15-6.35).

2.30. PfE did not anticipate the need for any further Green Belt review following adoption, having “defined a new Green Belt boundary which will endure for years to come” (PfE, 2024, Forward). However, the Inspectors’ Report recognised that it was not the role of PfE alone to identify sufficient land to meet objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses as these would be addressed through the individual districts local plans which can contain strategic and non-strategic policies. (¶15).

Emerging Local Plan

2.31. The role of the emerging Local Plan is to set more detailed planning policy for Bolton within the context of the NPPF and PfE, but in a way that reflects local circumstances. Development of the local plan has been informed by consultation and a comprehensive evidence base to ensure Bolton can deliver the growth Bolton needs in a sustainable way.

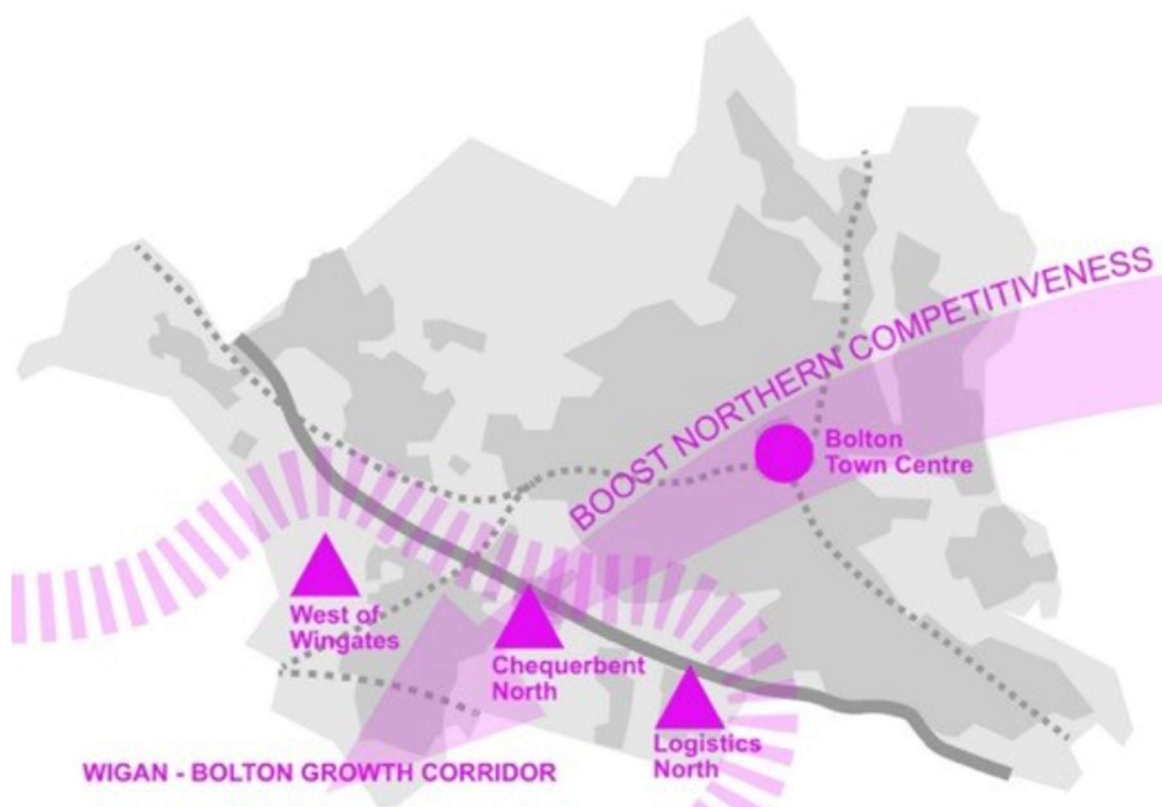
2.32. The emerging local plan identifies sufficient land supply to meet the PfE housing requirement. The identified needs for travellers have been assessed through the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Needs Assessment (arc4, 2026, EVH02) and Bolton’s requirements for new industry and warehousing floorspace and office floorspace have been established through the Employment Needs Study (EVE01.1).

The objectively assessed needs for each land use (2025-2942) are as follows:

Land Use	Requirement
Housing (no. homes)	13,717
Gypsy & traveller pitches	13
Travelling Showperson Plots	30
Industrial & Warehousing Floorspace (sqm)	811,727
Office Floorspace	16,700

2.33. The Local Plan Spatial Strategy aims to support the PfE growth strategy within the Wigan to Bolton Growth corridor by supporting anchored growth in three key strategic locations: Central Bolton, the civic and commercial heart and a growing place to live; Health Innovation Bolton, a centre for medicine, research, education and care at the Royal Bolton Hospital and Middlebrook, where there is the potential to diversify its employment and sporting role through the provision of homes and office space.

Figure 2. Bolton Spatial Strategy



2.34. A key component of the Local Plan evidence base is a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA, 2026, EVS02) which has been prepared in accordance with planning practice guidance to identify the supply of sites that are available and able to deliver our identified needs for housing, travellers and employment.

2.35. Following a comprehensive review of land supply, the SHELAA (EVS02) identified a shortfall of suitable, available and achievable sites for all three land uses. This paper examines the options that are available to us to make up the identified shortfall.

3. Land Supply and the Case for Green Belt Alterations

3.1. Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify alterations to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This is set out in paragraph 141 of the 2021 NPPF which states this will be “...assessed through the examination of its strategic policies, which will take into account the preceding paragraph, and whether the strategy:

- a) makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;
- b) optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of this Framework, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and
- c) has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.”

PfE Development Land Supply

3.2. Deliverable land supply has fallen since the PfE evidence base was prepared.

3.3. In respect of housing, the reason centres on viability. Bolton’s housing land supply relied heavily on the delivery of previously developed land. House prices in Bolton are relatively low in comparison to the UK and the Greater Manchester Area (Bolton Local Housing Needs Assessment, Arc4, 2026, ¶3.3, EVH01). Building costs have increased significantly in recent years, a trend that is expected to continue with the anticipated introduction of the Building Safety Levy. Many brownfield sites identified as deliverable within the PfE evidence base have not delivered as expected (Places for Everyone Housing Topic Paper, Table 6.1), some sites have found alternative uses, planning permissions have expired with little evidence that they will be resurrected, at least not within the first phase of the Local Plan (SHELAA, Appendix 1, EVS02).

3.4. Although the demand for industry & Warehousing land has remained high, several of the Allocations Plan (2014) employment and mixed-use site allocations did not deliver as expected and others were delivered for alternative uses. Some planning permissions remain extant and contribute to pipeline supply but have not yet been delivered. The sites that have been removed and the reasons for their removal can be found in the SHELAA, Appendix B (EVS02).

Examination of Other Reasonable Options

Brownfield and Underutilised Land

3.5. The SHELAA (EVS02) and the Bolton Employment Need and Land Study (EVE01) reviewed all sites in Bolton’s existing land supply including housing sites on the brownfield register. Many of these were found to be unsuitable, unavailable or unachievable and therefore could not remain in the supply. Where sites were found to be suitable, available and achievable they remained in the supply, see SHELAA

Appendix A. Tables 2, 4 & 5 of the Executive Summary provide a shortlist of all sites included in the emerging local plan land supply (EVS02).

3.6. The emerging local plan identifies two significant brownfield site allocations, Burnden Way Middlebrook (BSA06) is allocated for a minimum of 1,000 homes and Crompton Place (BSA01) is allocated for a minimum of 340 homes. A further 500 homes are expected to be delivered in the Town Centre by 2042 and these are included within the Strategic Housing land Availability Assessment Deliverable capacity of Policy SP3.

Optimising Density

3.7. The emerging local plan optimises opportunities for increasing density of development in appropriate locations such as town centres and near to train stations, and for the intensification of development within protected employment sites and town centres. The Crompton Place allocation (BSA01) in Bolton Town Centre is expected to achieve a minimum net residential development density of 120 dwellings per hectare, The Burnden Way Middlebrook allocation (BSA06), which is near to a train station and existing retail services, is also expected to achieve a minimum net residential density of 100 dwellings per hectare.

3.8. The deliverable housing capacity included in the emerging local plan was informed by the proposals that were submitted. The SHELAA reviewed the capacity of each site to assess the potential additional capacity that could be achieved through the application of density policy. Potential for an additional 426 homes was identified (75 on suitable, available and achievable sites and 351 from Other Protected Open Land sites). In addition, the SHELAA identifies potential capacity for a further 1,300 homes on windfall and town centre sites. Bolton relies on this additional capacity as headroom in the event of any of the identified deliverable or developable sites not coming forward for development as expected, (See SHELAA Stage 4 Land Supply Capacity Review and Tables 6 & 12, EVS02).

3.9. The Council is focussed on improving housing delivery. Bolton has an ambitious town centre regeneration programme which is delivering new homes already; it is developing its Housing Delivery Plan to accelerate and optimise the supply of affordable housing; and evidence of site viability has informed the Local Plan policies, including a review of affordable housing requirements. These interventions have been accounted for in assessing deliverable land availability, however a shortfall in housing land supply remains (see SHELAA Stage 4 Land Supply Assessment Review, EVS02).

Other Reasonable Options - Protected Open Land (OPOL)

3.10. OPOL was land excluded from the Green Belt when the boundaries were established over 30 years ago and comprises a mix of land protected for long-term development needs, the release of which was to be considered through future development plans, and land protected for other reasons.

3.11. OPOL land such as that at Bowlands Hey, Bromley Cross and Lever Park Avenue has already made a significant contribution to meeting Bolton's housing needs, having been granted planning permission in the absence of a five-year housing land supply.

3.12. Some of the OPOL sites are not suitable for development such as SSSIs and a country park, but there are other planning policies that apply to these sites.

3.13. PfE proposed the addition of 49 sites to the Green Belt, including land at Wingates (Ditchers Farm). Based on a Court of Appeal judgment, the Inspectors report concluded that most of the additions were not justified or consistent with national policy and only those that would found to be justified were added. Ditchers Farm was not included in the additions. (PfE Inspector's report ¶868-873).

3.14. The release of OPOL is sequentially preferable to Green Belt alterations and this approach mirrors the PfE Site Selection methodology (Places for Everyone Site Selection Background Paper ¶6.1-6.14). There is no longer a requirement or justification for OPOL as a land designation within the Local Plan, so it is not proposed to save OPOL policies and designations in the emerging Local Plan.

3.15. The SHELAA (EVS02) has assessed each of the remaining OPOL sites and identified a deliverable capacity of 2,758 net additional dwellings from this source at Heaton Grange, Lee Hall, Plodder Lane, Ditchers Farm, Anchor Lane, Bowlands Hey and Europa Way (Stage 5, SHELAA, 2026, EVS02).

3.16. OPOL at Plodder Lane has been promoted for mixed-use development as part of a larger site, the majority of which is within the Green Belt. Approximately a quarter of the OPOL land on this site has an undetermined planning application for 250 homes, referred to above, the capacity of which has been accounted for above. Approximately 30ha of OPOL land remains within the larger site, which has the potential to deliver a range of uses including health innovation and community floorspace.

3.17. The release of OPOL land has the potential to make a significant contribution towards the shortfall in housing but does not close the gap to meet objectively assessed needs for housing and other land (See SHELAA Stage 4 land supply assessment conclusions, 2026, EVS02).

Discussion with Neighbouring Authorities

3.18. As outlined in the statement of collaboration (CS01) all councils in Greater Manchester and Bolton's two neighbouring Lancashire districts were contacted to ask if they were able to meet any of Bolton's unmet housing, employment or gypsy traveller and travelling showpeople need. All councils responded to say that they were unable to take any of Bolton's housing need.

Conclusion

3.19. Having fully examined all reasonable options for meeting development needs beyond the Green Belt boundary; the SHELAA (EVS02) has not identified sufficient land to meet Bolton's objectively assessed needs for housing, traveller sites or industry & warehousing. This has including making best and most efficient use of brownfield and underutilised land, optimising density, examination of other reasonable options and requesting assistance from neighbours to meet some of Bolton's objectively assessed need as required by the NPPF (2021, ¶141).

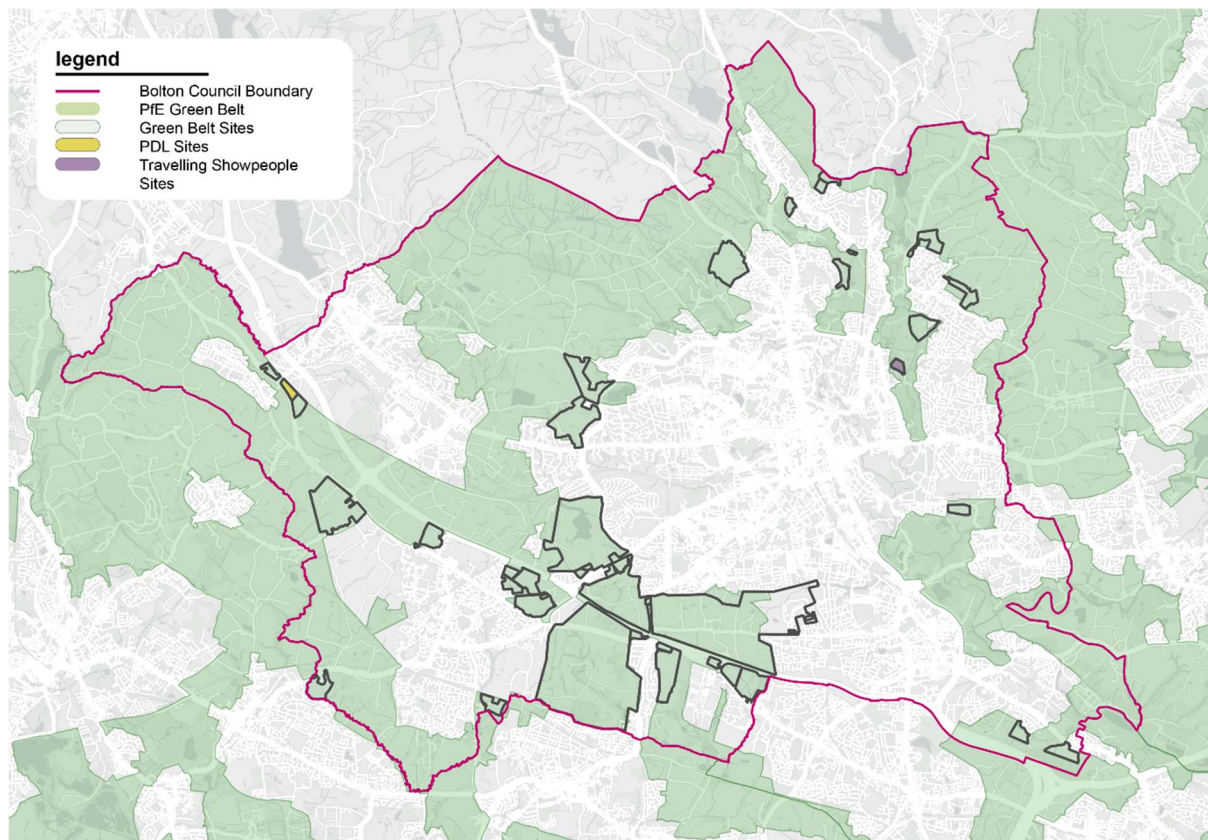
3.20. This triggers the exceptional circumstances requiring Green Belt boundary alterations in accordance with ¶140 of the NPPF (2021).

3.21. Identifying Green Belt Sites for Assessment

3.22. The SHELAA (EVS02) and the Employment Needs Study Sites Assessment (EVE01.2) assessed all potential Green Belt sites, a number were found to be unsuitable, unavailable or unachievable for development and were not carried forward for further consideration (see SHELAA Appendices A and B and Annex C).

3.23. Mapped below are the sites that were assessed as suitable for further consideration.

Figure 3. Potential Green Belt Site Options



3.24. The NPPF, PfE and the Local Plan Strategy all have a role in determining the area of search.

3.25. The NPPF supports housing growth in locations that promote sustainable patterns of development, focussed on locations which limit, or have the potential to limit, the need to travel and offer a genuine choice of transport modes; with consideration given to land which has been previously developed and/or is well served by public transport. The locational requirements for employment should be recognised, including making provision for employment clusters and providing for different scales of storage and distribution in suitable accessible locations.

3.26. PfE directs us to a strategy of growth along the Wigan to Bolton corridor and specifically supports growth around a proposed new link road connecting M6, J26 and M61, J5, at the Royal Bolton Hospital; intensification of the Wigan-Atherton-Manchester rail line with a potential sustainable transport corridor linking the line to M61, J6.

3.27. The Local Plan Spatial Strategy aims to support the PfE growth strategy with a focus on three key strategic locations: Central Bolton, the civic and commercial heart and a growing place to live; Health Innovation Bolton, a centre for medicine, research, education and care at the Royal Bolton Hospital and Middlebrook, where there is the potential to diversify its employment and sporting role through the provision of homes and office space.

3.28. To refine the sites to be appraised, in accordance with the NPPF (2021), first consideration was given to previously developed sites and sites well connected to public transport. The Department for Transport Connectivity Tool, supported by Greater Manchester Accessibility Levels (GMAL) was used to select sites within the most sustainable strategic locations for growth.

3.29. The connectivity tool combines transport and land-use data to indicate relative levels of connectivity to jobs, shops, schools, healthcare and other services and facilities by walking, cycling and public transport.

3.30. GMAL are a detailed and accurate measure of the accessibility of a point to both the conventional public transport network (i.e. bus, metrolink and rail) and Greater Manchester's Local Link (flexible transport service), taking into account walk access time and service availability. The method is essentially a way of measuring the density of the public transport provision at any location within the Greater Manchester region.

3.31. The following maps show the respective connectivity and accessibility levels of the Green Belt sites identified above.

Figure 4. DfT Connectivity Tool Map with Green Belt Site Options Overlay

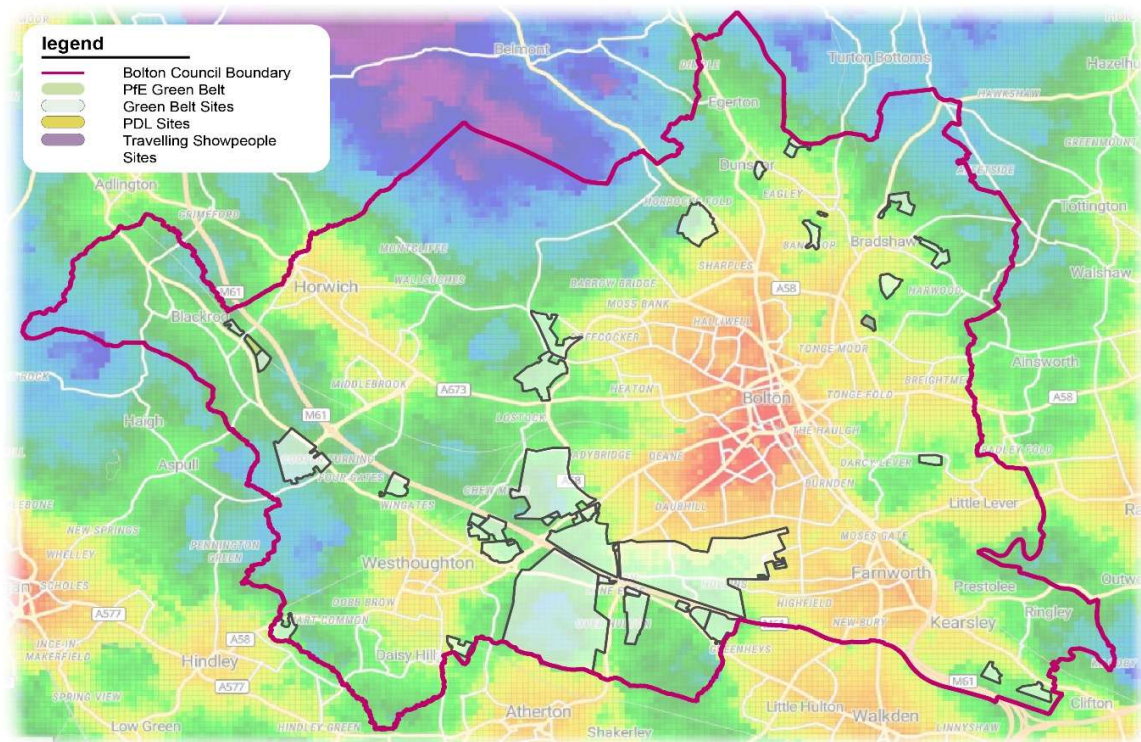
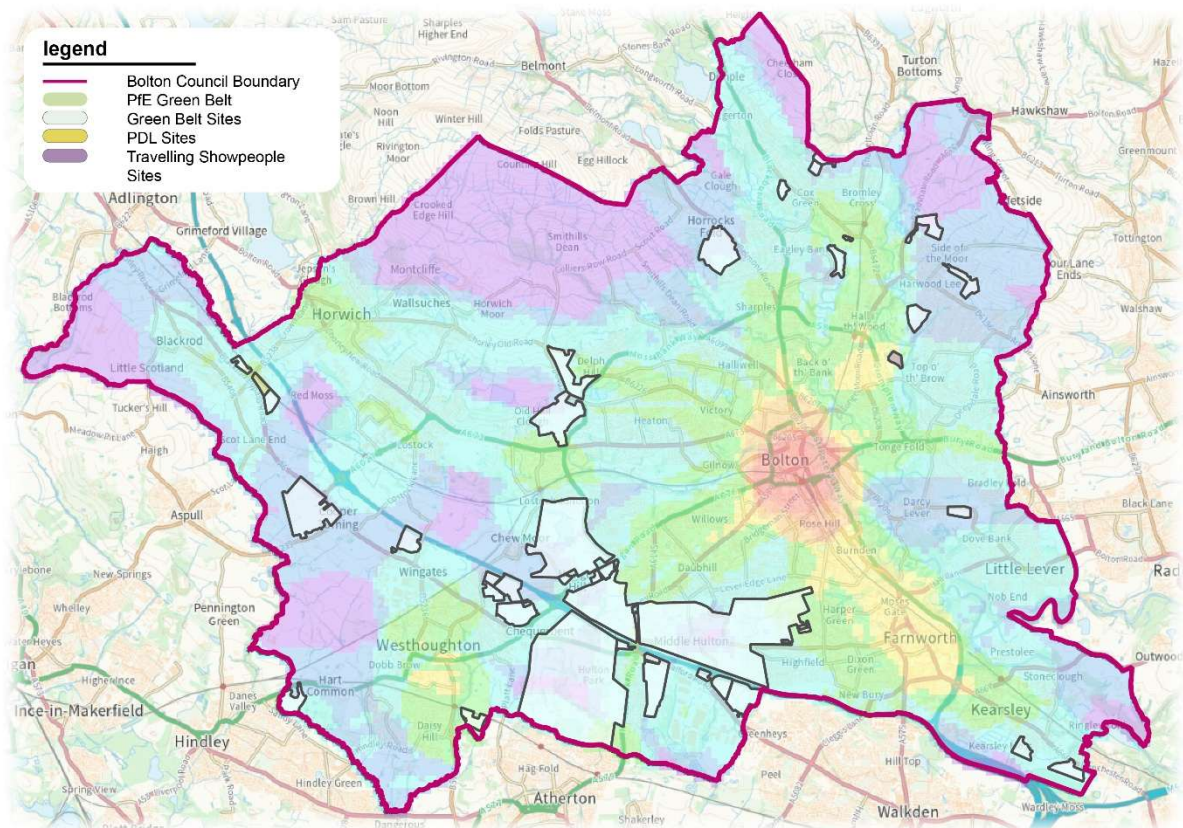


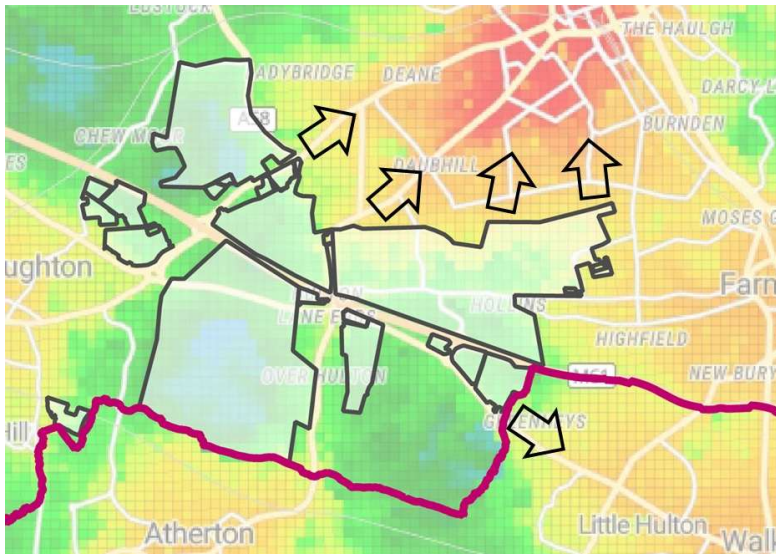
Figure 5. GMAL Map with Green Belt Site Options Overlay



3.32. Within the PfE and Local Plan growth strategy areas, the above maps indicate the most sustainable locations for growth, considering the availability and deliverability of sites, are along the southwest edge of Central Bolton where connectivity to vital services and facilities is greatest and there are good bus services and a number of rail stations. By placing development in the most accessible and best-connected locations the Plan can support the Bolton Transport Strategy and TfGM Local Transport Plan by:

- Ensuring residents (or employees on employment sites) can reach work, healthcare, shopping, education and other services without needing to own a car;
- Managing congestion and car dependency because as many trips as possible can take place on active modes and/ or public transport instead of by car. This ensures the roads are less congested for those who do need to use a car or van.

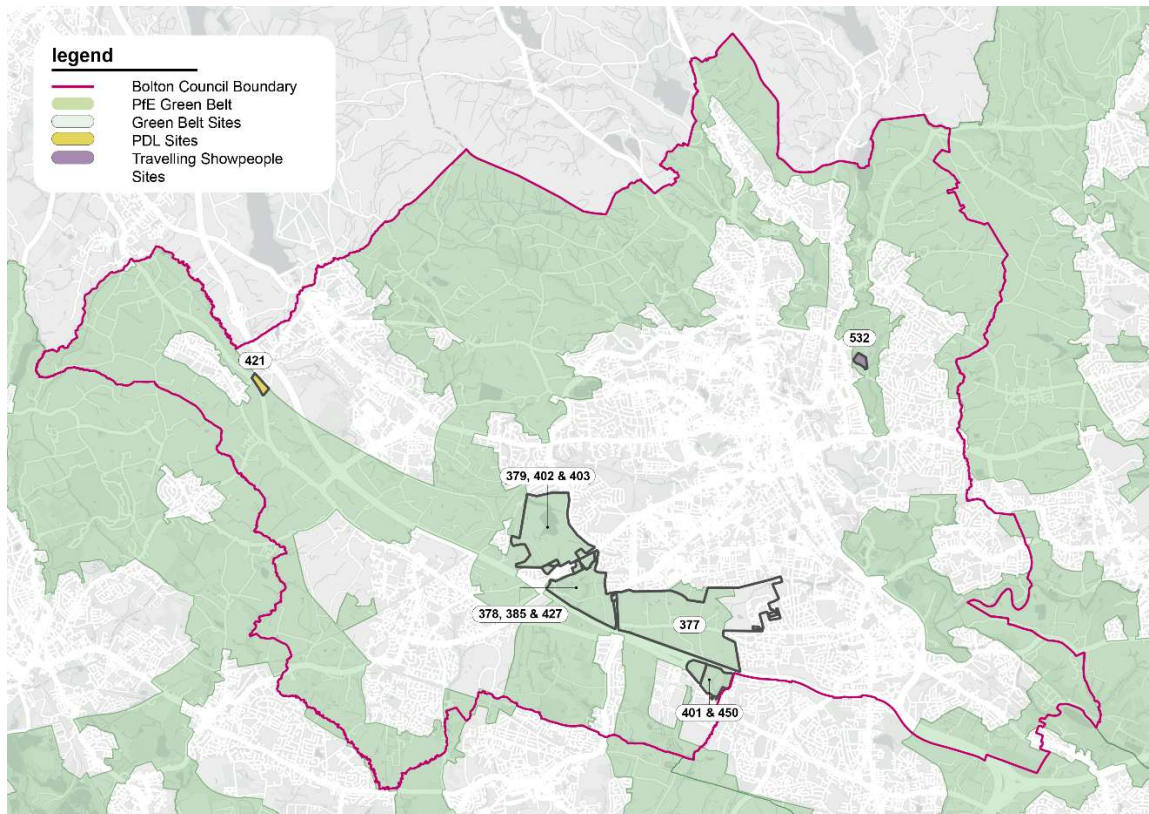
Figure 6. Green Belt Locations with Strongest connectivity to Essential Services and Facilities



3.33. The search for sites began in these four strategic locations.

3.34. In accordance with the NPPF (2021), further consideration was also given to previously developed sites within the growth strategy area, only one previously developed site had been identified by the SHELAA (EVS02), a proposed employment site at Leigh Tenement Farm.

Figure 7. Sites Selected for Assessment



3.35. This map shows the sites that were assessed applying the methodology detailed in the following Chapter.

4. Green Belt Site Assessment Methodology

4.1. To ensure consistency with the PfE Green Belt Stage 2 Site Assessments, the methodology applied to these assessments is the starting point from which Bolton specific criterion have been developed.

4.2. PfE assessment Criterion 2 is excluded as it relates to sites around Manchester's key assets, none of which are within Bolton.

Criterion 1 – Sustainable Locations (PfE Criteria 1, 2 & 4)

Previously Developed Land

Whether the development would utilise previously developed or underused land.

Connectivity and Accessibility

Whether the site is well served by public transport and opportunities for active travel would be available:

(a) Connectivity

Potential Housing Sites – how well-connected sites are, relative to other sites in the borough, via walking, cycling or public transport to key destinations including education, leisure, health, shopping, residential and workplaces, demonstrated by a Connectivity Tool score greater than 60 across the majority of the site.

Potential Employment Sites – how well-connected sites are, relative to other sites in the borough, via walking, cycling or public transport to residential and workplaces, demonstrated by a DfT Connectivity Tool score greater than 60 across the majority of the site.

(b) Accessibility

How well served by public transport sites are, relative to other sites in the Borough, demonstrated by whether the site is located within 800m of a public transport corridor with a GMAL Score of 4 or more, or is within 800m of a rail station.

(c) Local Services

Potential housing sites – whether the site is within 800m of a local, district or town centre.

In each case, if the criteria was not met, the potential for the proposal to meet the requirement was assessed.

Criterion 2 – Land that can contribute to the delivery of the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor, (PfE Policy JP-Strat8) and the Local Plan Spatial Strategy (PfE Criterion 3)

Whether the development of the site will contribute to the delivery of sustainable, inclusive growth by focusing significant growth in jobs and housing within the Wigan-Bolton corridor; boosting northern competitiveness through provision of significant new employment and housing opportunities and provision of infrastructure.

Criterion 3 – Land that can Impact on Delivering Urban Regeneration (PfE Criterion 5)

Whether the site has a direct link to areas of high deprivation and contribution to regeneration initiatives, determined against whether the site is within one of the most deprived lower super output areas in England.

Criterion 4 – Private Sector transport investment and the creation of new demand to support long term sustainable travel options and deliver wider community benefits (PfE Criterion 6)

Whether the site can contribute towards or directly benefit from schemes included in the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and the emerging Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2050.

Whether the site would provide long-term support for the above schemes through increased densities and the creation of additional demand.

Criterion 5 – Whether the site can deliver significant local benefits (PfE Criterion 7)

Whether the site can address a specific, and exceptional local need or benefit.

Criterion 6 – Impact on the Openness of the Green Belt

The Greater Manchester-wide Stage 1 Green Belt Assessment (LUC, 2016) provides an assessment of Green Belt parcels and provides consistency in definitions of the large-built up areas, towns and historic towns that underpin that study. This provides consistency in the assessment of each site. The settlements within Bolton that are not included within Manchester's 'large built-up area' are Hunger Hill, Chew Moor, Bottom o'th Moor and Blackrod (¶3.25).

4.3. The assessment considers the contribution each site makes to Green Belt purposes and whether the function of the remaining Green Belt would be undermined if the site is released from the Green Belt.

4.4. For the purposes of decision making, development is no longer considered inappropriate in the Green Belt when a number of criteria are satisfied, including where grey belt land would be utilised and the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt land would not be undermined. Whilst it is not necessary for a Local Plan being prepared under the 2021 NPPF (in accordance with the NPPF 2026 transitional arrangements) to prioritise grey belt land over land that would not be considered grey belt: the assessment identifies the sites, or portions of sites, that are likely to be considered grey belt as an indicator of potential harm to the Green Belt.

Conclusion

4.5. The above factors were assessed and reviewed with an overall RAG rating attributed to each site reflecting the sites current and potential alignment with the above criteria.

- **Red:** The site does not meet the criteria.
- **Amber:** The majority of the site has potential to meet the criteria.
- **Green:** The site does not meet, and does not have the potential to meet, the criteria

4.6. The site assessments were used to identify the most suitable sites for allocation.

5. Assessment Review

5.1. The detailed assessment for each of the sites identified at Chapter 4 can be found in Appendix A. The following table provides a summary and comparative overview of the assessment results for each of the sites. The proposed traveller's site is excluded from this table as different policy background and considerations apply.

Figure 8. Summary of Assessment Results

See Appendix A		See Appendix B						
379 (inc. 402 & 403)	378 (inc. 385 & 427)	377	401/450	421	532	404	374	449
Criteria 1 – Sustainable Locations								
Previously Developed Land								
NA	NA				NA			
Connectivity (Applies to Employment Proposals Only)								
Connectivity (Applies to Residential Proposals Only)								
				NA		NA	NA	NA
Public Transport								
Local Services (Applies to Residential Proposals Only)								
				NA		NA	NA	NA
Criteria 2 – Contribution to PfE & Local Plan Strategy								
					NA			
Criteria 3 – Urban Regeneration								
					NA			
Criteria 4 – Transport Investment								
					NA			
Criteria 5 – Exceptional Local Need or Benefit								
					NA			
Overall Contribution to Green Belt								
Grey Belt								

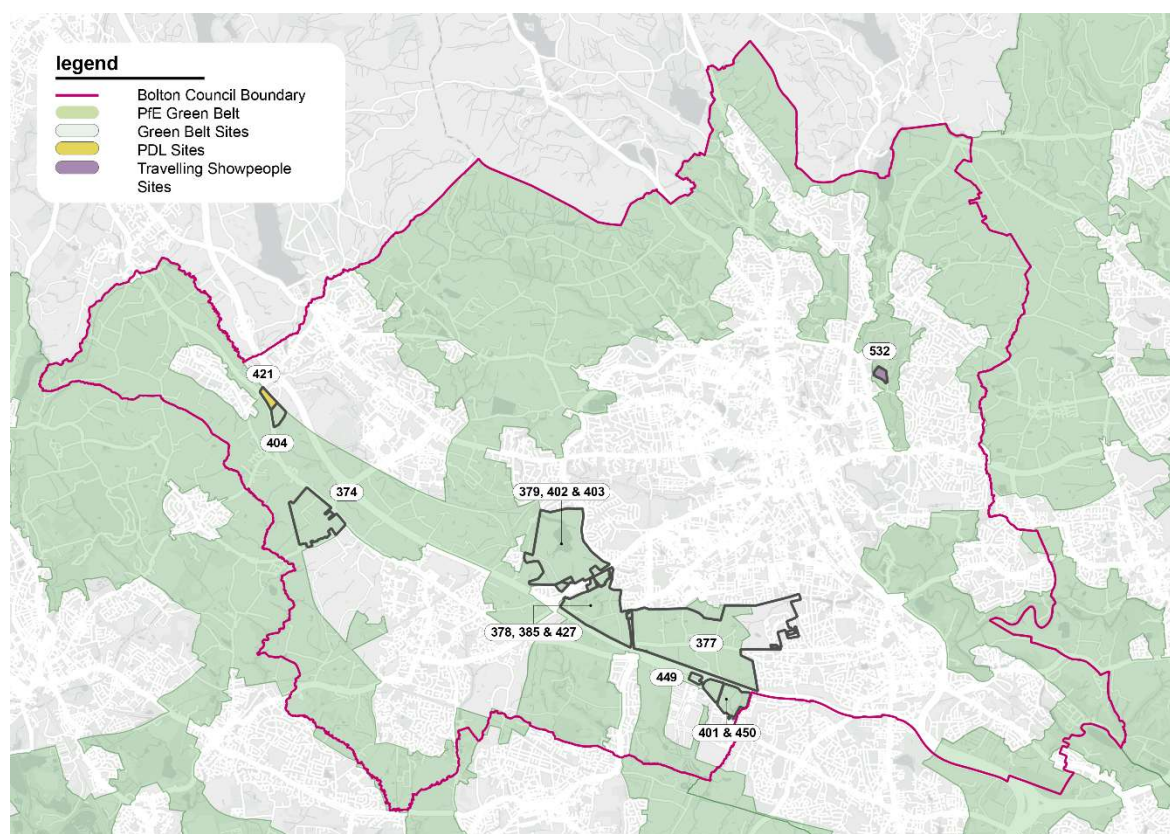
The sites that were initially considered for allocation in the emerging Local Plan

Site Ref	Site Name	Proposal
379 (402 & 403)	West Pennine Villages Site C (incorporating Land at Lock Lane)	Residential
378 (385 & 427)	Hermon Bank Farm (incorporating Rear of Tavern Fayre & West Pennine Villages Site D)	Residential & Leisure
377	Green Belt Extension to Health Innovation Bolton	Mixed Use
401/450	Salford Road, east of M61 Junction 4	Mixed Use
421	Leigh Tenement Farm	Employment
532	The Alders	Travellers

Secondary Site Assessments – Sites added to the assessment in the search for sufficient employment land supply

404	South of Leigh Tenement Farm #1	Employment
374	West of Dicconson Lane	Employment
449	Land southwest of Junction 4, M61	Employment

Figure 9. Map of the Sites Assessed and included in Appendix B



Site Assessment Summary – Potential Housing Sites

5.2. Overall, the strongest performing site assessed against Criteria 1-5 is Site 377, which is a proposed extension into the Green Belt adjacent to the Royal Bolton hospital. Here the potential for a Health Innovation Cluster is supported by PfE Policy JP-Strat8. The site as proposed makes a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes and the allocation of the whole site as proposed would undermine Green Belt purposes, leading to the merging of settlements and undermining the function of the remaining Green Belt. A significant portion of the site falls within the definition of grey belt land and due to the size of the site, Green Belt harm could be limited through an amended site boundary.

5.3. Sites 379, West Pennine Villages Site C (incorporating Sites 402 & 403) and 401/450 Salford Road, east of M61 Junction 4 also perform strongly against Criteria 1-5. Site 401/450 makes only a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes and has been assessed as grey belt land; whereas Site 379 makes a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes, with only a relatively small portion of the site falling within the grey belt definition.

5.4. Site 378 Hermon Bank Farm (incorporating Sites 385 & 427) also performs strongly against the criteria. However, this site performs strongly against Green Belt purposes, with no potential grey belt land identified so will not be considered further.

Site Assessments Summary – Potential Industrial & Warehousing Sites

5.5. All three employment/mixed use sites initially assessed perform strongly against the criteria, with site 377 performing the strongest overall. Site 401/450 makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes and the contribution of Site 421 is weak. All three sites were selected for allocation in the emerging Local Plan.

5.6. The potential new industrial and warehouse floorspace from these sites was however found to be insufficient to meet the identified requirements. This initiated a wider search, with three additional proposed employment sites (404, 374 and 409) from relatively less well connected and accessible locations being assessed in the same way.

5.7. Of these, Site 404 was found to be the most suitable, performing strongest overall against the Criteria. The site makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes and meets the grey belt definition.

Site Assessment Summary – Travelling Showperson Sites

5.8. Bolton has recently completed its Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and it's actively working with communities. To date, only one suitable site has been identified. This site is a priority to accommodate the relation of families currently living on an unsuitable site.

5.9. Site 532, The Alders aligns well with national guidance for sustainable development. The site makes a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes and this issue will need to be addressed to ensure strong defensible Green Belt boundaries that prevent sprawl.

6. Final Site Selections

BSA02 Health Innovation Bolton

6.1. Site 377, Green Belt Extension to Health Innovation Bolton, is proposed for allocation in the emerging Local Plan with a boundary change to ensure the remaining Green Belt land would retain the ability to contribute to Green Belt purposes and to function as intended. In total this site has an indicative potential capacity for 1,977 homes in addition to the 250 homes proposed on OPOL land within the site. In total, it is estimated that 1,895 of these are deliverable within the plan period. In addition to the indicative housing capacity above, Site 377 has the potential to deliver 40,839 sqm of new industry and warehouse floorspace, along with other uses.

6.2. HIB is one of six catalyst projects underpinning the Northfold Growth Corridor/Wigan Bolton Growth Corridor. Located with direct access to Junction 4 of the M61, HIB will play a critical role in delivering PfE Policy JP-Strat 6 which seeks a significant increase in the competitiveness of the northern areas of Greater Manchester. Likewise, it will be fundamental to the delivery of PfE Policy JP-Strat 8, which supports the development of a health innovation cluster on land at the Royal Bolton Hospital, and states that the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor will deliver a regionally-significant area of economic and residential development.

6.3. HIB is a strategic response to deep-rooted challenges including health inequality, institutional growth requirements, deprivation, poor and insufficient housing and infrastructure challenges.

6.4. Delivery of HIB will bring transformational changes. It will support wellbeing and positive health outcomes across the borough and region, support the services provided by Royal Bolton Hospital, capitalise on the new Bolton Institute of Medical Sciences, support future skills and educational growth, improve infrastructure, connectivity and access to nature, create a health innovation industrial and employment cluster and build a healthy and sustainable residential community.

6.5. Both Bolton NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Greater Manchester have identified a lack of suitable space for applied research, collaboration, incubation and SME engagement. HIB will provide a dedicated research and innovation platform, including incubator, R&D, meeting, training, conference, office, laboratory and grow-on space.

6.6. Bolton NHS Foundation Trust has also identified ongoing pressure on the Royal Bolton Hospital site, including access, parking, ageing buildings, backlog maintenance and heat and power resilience. The site could support the existing Royal Bolton Hospital operation through relocation of services away from the main hospital, accommodate wider growth in hospital services, expand research and innovation capacity; and strengthen integration with the University of Greater Manchester.

6.7. The co-location of clinical services, education, research, industry, housing and community infrastructure is fundamental to delivering the outcomes sought. Disaggregating these uses across separate sites would weaken functional relationships, limit market take up, reduce the ability to attract investment and undermine the

potential to deliver transformation at pace. The site's direct relationship with the Royal Bolton Hospital and the University Medical School is therefore central to the concept.

6.8. HIB will also support and help deliver the £1bn+ regeneration plans for Bolton and Farnworth town centres which are already underway. HIB adjoins neighbourhoods to the north and east, some of which are within the 10 per cent most deprived in England. It will provide around 4,500 direct jobs once fully operational, of which 2,300 are expected to be filled by Bolton residents.

6.9. HIB is a unique opportunity to expand existing public research institutions, alongside generating a wider innovation platform and catalyst for private sector investment including in health innovation, research and development and advanced manufacturing industries (see EVS05).

BSA08 Logistics North Extension

6.10. Sites 401/450, Salford Road, east of M61 Junction 4, was selected as it performs strongly against the assessment criteria and does not perform a strong Green Belt purpose. In conjunction with the development of site 377 development would be enclosed by and round off the main urban area between Bolton and Salford. The site is already somewhat enclosed by urban features, in isolation the site would be completely contained by urban development, forming a weakly performing and illogical area of Green Belt land.

6.11. This is an employment led mixed use allocation. It has an indicative capacity of between 30,000 and 80,000 sqm of industrial and warehousing floorspace. Opportunities for industrial and warehousing should be maximised, however if the lower end of this range is pursued up to 300 homes could be provided as part of an integrated approach between the existing Logistics North development and housing to the east.

6.12. The Logistics North development at Junction 4 of the M61 (Local Plan Ref BOLPEL25) will provide almost 400,000 sqm of industrial and warehousing floorspace when fully built out. The only uncomplete plots are G1 and G2 which are currently under construction as a Regional Distribution Centre for Lidl. Logistics North has been hugely successful and has attracted several national and international occupiers including Aldi, Amazon, MDDA and Komatsu. It employs 5,500 people on site. Land North of Salford Road is adjacent to the successful Logistics North Development and offers the opportunity to build on and further its success through a modest expansion.

6.13. Development of this land support the delivery of PfE Policy JP-Strat 6 which seeks a significant increase in the competitiveness of the northern areas of Greater Manchester and PfE Policy JP-Strat 8 which states that the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor will deliver a regionally significant area of economic and residential development.

6.14. The adjacent Logistics North development has a wide range of existing services which serve the existing industrial uses including water, gas, electricity, telecommunications, retail and food and drink.

6.15. Accessibility by vehicle is high with direct access to Junction 4 of the M61 and direct frontage to Salford Road A579. Public transport serves the existing Logistics North development.

6.16. This site is also within a 5-minute walk of at least one of the 10 per cent most deprived Super Output Areas in England. There is therefore clear evidence of potential or need for regeneration within the vicinity of these sites.

BSA07 Blackrod Cluster

6.17. Site 421, Leigh Tenement Farm is an opportunity to provide new employment opportunities within the west of the borough, on a part brownfield site that is in very close proximity to Blackrod Train Station. Accessibility by vehicle is also high with direct frontage onto the A6 and a 3 min drive to M61 Junction 6.

6.18. Development of this land supports the delivery of PfE Policy JP-Strat 6 which seeks a significant increase in the competitiveness of the northern areas of Greater Manchester and PfE Policy JP-Strat 8 which states that the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor will deliver a regionally significant area of economic and residential development.

6.19. Following a wider search for employment sites to ensure industry and warehouse requirements can be met, neighbouring site 404 was also selected. The expansion of the brownfield site at Leigh Tenement Farm to also incorporate this site offers the opportunity for employment clusters to develop. In addition, it offers the benefits of co-location including economies of scale and share infrastructure costs.

BSA09 The Alders, Tonge

6.20. Site 532 has capacity for up to 50 plots for travelling showpeople. The site is an opportunity to meet relocation needs and a number of new pitches for travelling showpeople in a location which has good connectivity and accessibility to local services, can provide a quality living environment and minimise noise and disturbance to neighbouring residents from heavy goods vehicles.

6.21. Strengthened Green Belt boundaries will be expected to the southern boundary of the site, together with structural landscaping and bunding.

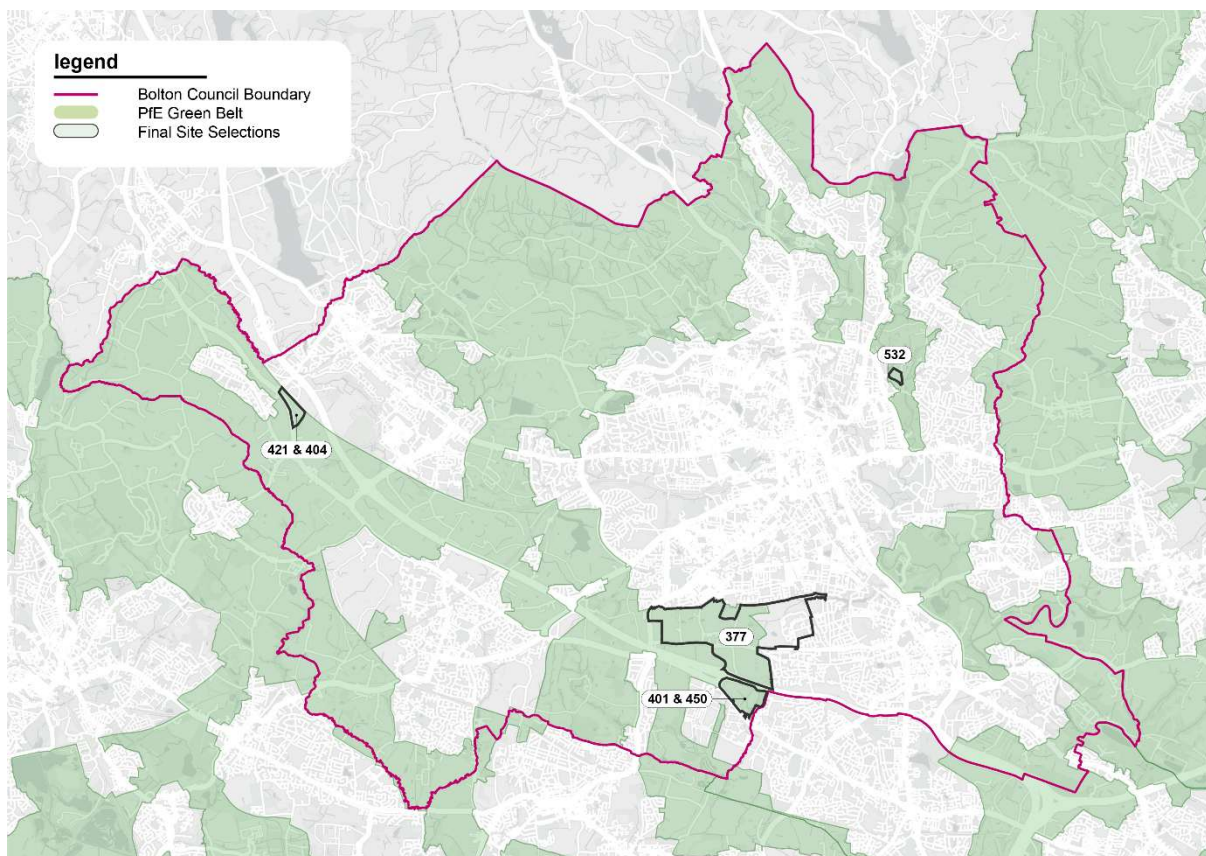
7. Cumulative Impact Assessment

7.1. The combined effect of the release of the sites proposed for designation in the emerging Local Plan was assessed in line with the Stage 2 Greater Manchester Green Belt Study September 2020. This study assessed whether the cumulative release of selected sites will affect the overall ability of the remaining Green Belt to function as intended (as defined by the Green Belt purposes in the National Planning Policy Framework).

7.2. This considered issues such as whether any key strategic gaps between settlements will be lost, whether there is a sufficient band of remaining Green Belt to prevent future urban sprawl or to be perceived as countryside, and whether the loss of sites will significantly affect the setting and special character of historic settlements.

7.3. The following map shows all proposed site allocations:

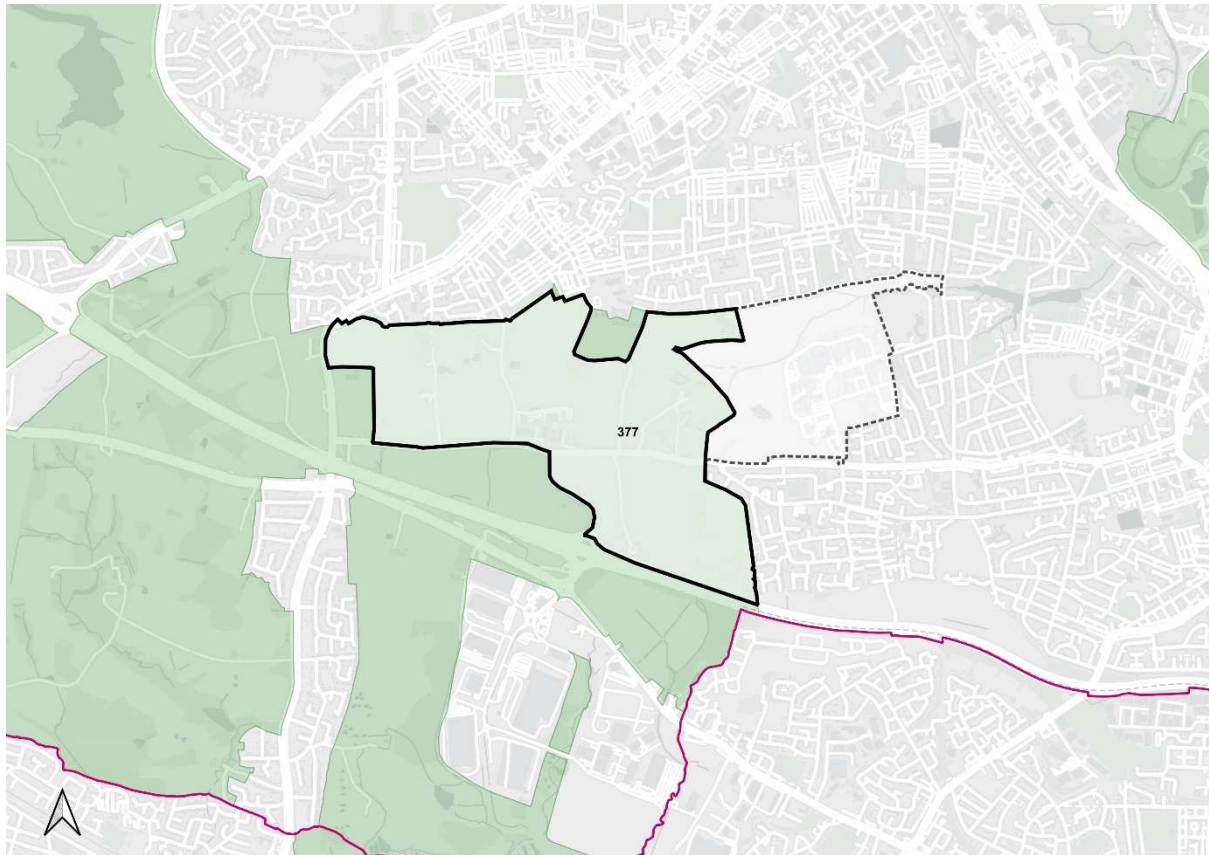
Figure 10. Emerging Local Plan Proposed Site Allocations within the Green Belt



BSA02 Health Innovation Bolton & BSA08 Logistics North Extension

7.4. The sites lie within Strategic Green Belt Area 8 which lies between Atherton, Over Hulton, Tyldesley & Little Hulton and Walkden & Worsley to the southeast and is contiguous with Area 4.

Figure 11. Site 377 – Health Innovation Bolton Green Belt Extension showing the proposed site boundary as amended



7.5. The proposed boundary of Site 377 has been reduced. It is proposed to exclude the portion of the site south of Plodder Lane and west of Watergate Lane from the proposed allocation to ensure that the remaining Green Belt continues to function as intended. The following map shows the amended site boundary as proposed for allocation in the emerging Local Plan.

7.6. Purpose A – The main urban area to the south of Bolton has already substantially merged with the main urban area of Salford to the south. The proposed allocations are enclosed by existing development on three sides, development within this area would round off the urban edge. A strong, defensible Green Belt boundary will prevent sprawl along the majority of the proposed allocation boundary, however strengthening of the western boundary will be required.

7.7. Purpose B – The proposed Green Belt boundary retains a substantial gap between Bolton and the main built-up area of Over Hulton & Atherton, the revised boundary of Site 377 ensures the Green Belt continues to make a strong contribution to the Green Belt in this area.

7.8. Purpose C – The proposed boundary amendment will not result in the containment of any part of the open countryside to the south in the strategic Green Belt gap between Walkden, Atherton and Tyldesley.

7.9. Purpose D – Strategic Green Belt Area 8 plays a weak to moderate role in preserving the setting and character of historic towns, including the historic parts of

Tyldesley and Atherton. The amended Green Belt boundary will not change the function of the Green Belt in respect of Purpose D.

BSA07 Blackrod Cluster

7.10. The sites lie within Strategic Green Belt Area 1 between Wigan and Bolton, extending north beyond the Greater Manchester Boundary. The villages of Blackrod and Aspull are inset in the Green Belt.

7.11. Purpose A – A small area of Green Belt will be lost from the boundary with Horwich, a substantial portion of which is previously developed land. The Green Belt will retain a strong defensible boundary along the revised Green Belt edge with Horwich. A strong wooded boundary to the southeast of the proposed allocation will help prevent sprawl to the south, but the Green Belt boundary will be weakened at this edge.

7.12. Purpose B – The proposed allocation forms a very small part of the Green Belt between Bolton and Wigan. The Green Belt separation between Horwich and the inset village of Blackrod will be reduced, but at its narrowest point the proposed allocation is already developed and the overall function of the Green Belt in respect of purpose B will not be reduced.

7.13. Purpose C - The proposed boundary amendment will not result in the containment of any part of the open countryside within the Green Belt strategy area.

7.14. Purpose D – The proposed Green Belt amendment will not impact on the setting of Horwich.

BSA09 The Alders, Tonge

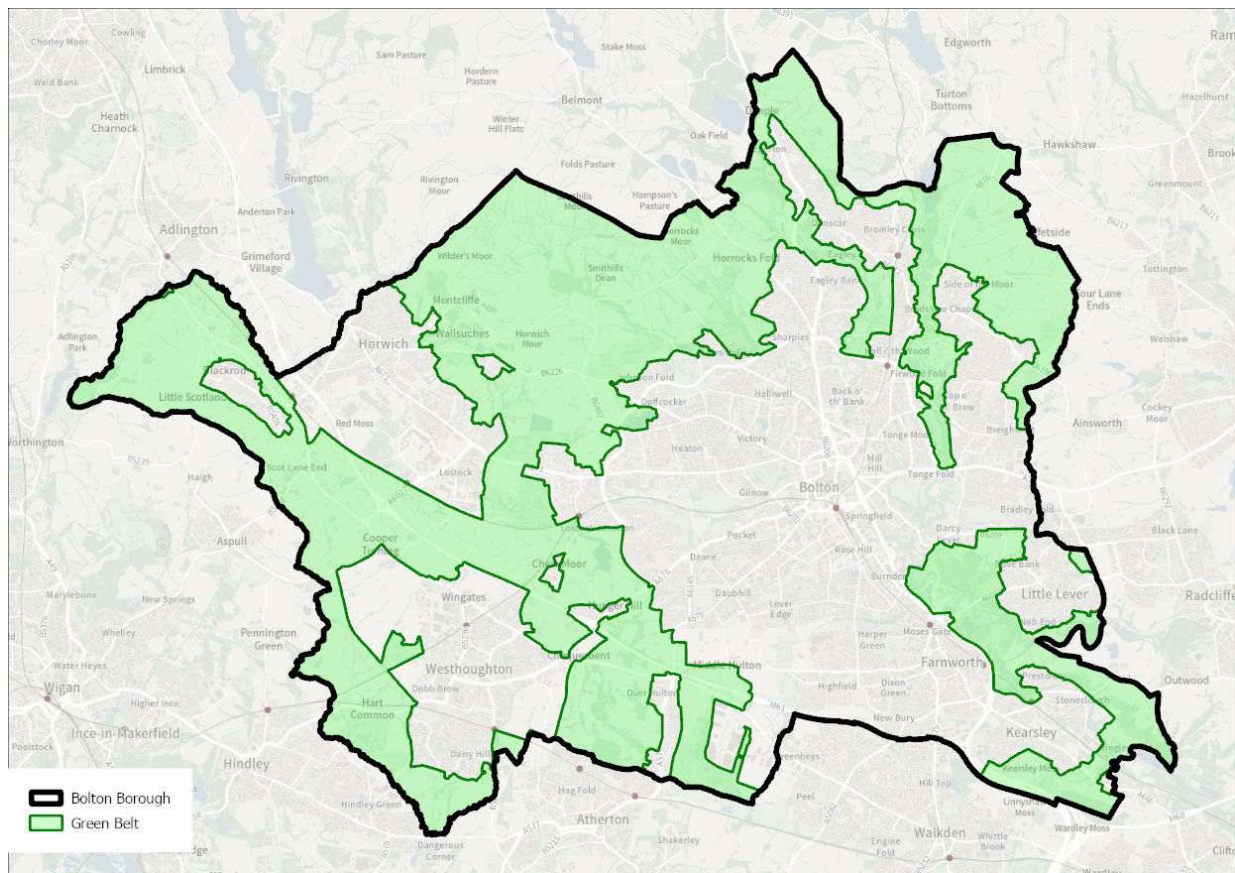
7.15. The site lies within in Strategic Green Belt Area 10 in a long corridor extending from the northern edge of Bolton's urban area towards the centre of Bolton.

7.16. Purpose A – A small area of Green Belt will be lost from within the Green Belt Corridor. The proposal increases the risk of sprawl to the south and a strengthened Green Belt boundary is required.

7.17. Purpose B – The Green Belt wedge does not contribute to the visual separation of the settlement and release of this site does not worsen the situation. The remaining Green Belt land maintains the narrow wedge between Breightmet and Tonge.

7.18. Purpose C – This part of the Green Belt wedge makes a limited contribution to the setting of Bolton and this will not be adversely affected.

Figure 12. Map Shows the amended Green Belt boundary as proposed in the emerging Local Plan



Green Belt Harm Assessment

7.19. LUC have carried out a detailed Assessment of Green Belt harm for each of the proposed Green Belt amendments and allocations (Bolton Green Belt Assessment, Assessment of Proposed Allocations Addendum, LUC, 2026). This appraises the impact on Green Belt purposes, impact on adjacent Green Belt, overall harm to Green Belt purposes arising from the release of the land and the potential measures to mitigate Green Belt harm.

7.20. This assessment has been used to develop the site allocation policies in the emerging Local Plan and sets policy and requirements for the development of the site.

8. Conclusion

8.1. Land supply in Bolton has fallen significantly in recent years, principally due to issues of viability and sites that were anticipated for housing or employment use finding alternative uses.

8.2. The SHELAA Stage 5 Conclusions (EVS02, Chapter 11) identified a shortfall in the availability of suitable and achievable housing, traveller and industrial & warehousing sites to meet identified needs and it was necessary to investigate further how need could be met. This followed an extensive search which considered all options, including making as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land and optimising development density.

8.3. The SHELAA identified potential sites that were subject to planning policy constraints, including other protected open land and Green Belt sites. The release of other protected open land (OPOL) is sequentially favourable to Green Belt alterations. Several areas of OPOL have already been granted planning permission in the absence of a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The remaining suitable OPOL sites have the potential to make a significant contribution to meeting development needs and the emerging Local Plan proposes the policy designation is not saved.

8.4. Having considered all reasonable alternatives, including approaches to neighbouring authorities for help meeting the shortfall, Chapter 3 establishes the exceptional circumstances that justify Green Belt alterations.

8.5. The SHELAA assessed all potential Green Belt sites, as number were ruled out at this stage. Those that were considered suitable, available and achievable have been considered further through this assessment. Sites in the most accessible and well-connected locations were initially selected for detailed appraisal, applying a methodology consistent with the PfE Green Belt Stage 2 Site Assessments, adapted to local circumstances.

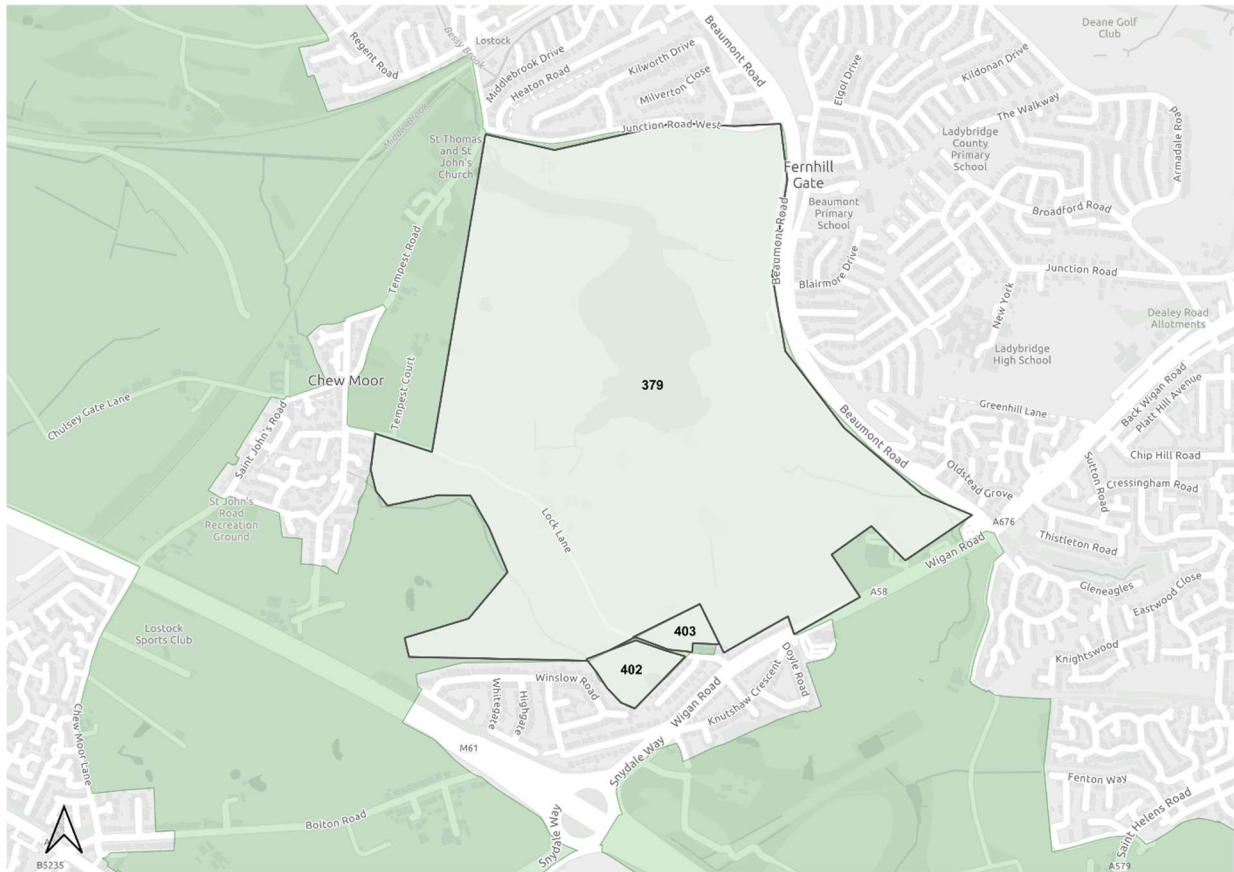
8.6. Site 377 Health Innovation Bolton Green Belt Extension performed strongest overall and was selected for a mixed-use allocation, along with sites 401/450 at Salford Road, Site 421 Leigh Tenement Farm for industry and warehousing and site 532 The Alders for travelling showpeople. A shortfall in the supply of industrial and warehouse floorspace remained. Three further sites from a wider area were assessed and site 404, an extension to the Leigh Tenement Farm site was selected.

8.7. A shortfall in land supply to meet the needs of gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople remains which the Local Plan addresses through criteria-based policy.

Appendix A

Site Assessment Proformas

Site 379 - West Pennine Villages C (incorporating Land at Lock Lane, 402 & 403)



Summary

Proposal	Site 379 Residential - 1,850 homes, potential education centre, village centre, play area, public open space and wetland country park. Sites 402 & 403 NB. These sites would not be shortlisted and considered in isolation. They are included in this assessment only because exclusion would leave a small island of Green Belt land which would make no contribution to Green Belt purposes. Residential - approx. 180 homes with green and recreation space.
Site Description	The sites are within the Green Belt situated to the south-west of Bolton, within Heaton, Lostock and Chew Moor ward. The sites are gently sloping, and the current use is primarily agricultural, and at the centre of the site is Rumworth Lodge, a small reservoir. A small number of public rights of way exist across the site. The site is nearby to the A58 (Beaumont Road) and the southern edge of the site is about 500m from Junction 5 of the M61. The primary public transport links are Lostock train station, situated 400m north

	of the site, and the 607-bus route which runs along the southern boundary of the site. The sites are surrounded primarily by residential areas, with Ladybridge to the east, Hunger Hill to the South, Chew Moor to the West and Lostock to the North.
Planning History	Historic applications for golf course and residential development on part of the site between 1979 and 1998, all refused with the residential application later allowed on appeal.
Summary SHELAA (EVS02) Findings	No absolute constraints identified. Issues that require further investigation and potential mitigation include ground conditions, minerals safeguarding, an area of flood risk and SBI, impact of landscape, townscape and heritage assets. Existing traffic congestion issues would need to be addressed and opportunities to improve connectivity and accessibility should be maximised.

Criteria Assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1 Sustainable Locations	Previously Developed Land The site is largely a greenfield site.	No
	Connectivity The majority of the site has an overall DfT Connectivity Tool score of below 60 by all included modes except driving to all key destinations including education, leisure, health, shopping, residential and workplaces. Potential to Improve Connectivity Development of this scale is likely to improve connectivity into the site. The site lies at an urban edge of Bolton which has relatively high connectivity to key destinations, evidenced by a DfT Connectivity tool rating in the range of low-mid 60s close to the north-west boundary of the site.	No Yes
	Public Transport The majority of the site is not within 800m of a public transport corridor with a GMAL Score of 4 or more. Only a small area of land at the north-east corner of the site is within 800m of a rail station. Potential to Improve Public Transport The site has the potential to reach a GMAL score of 4 or more. Public transport provision at the northern and south-west boundaries of the site is relatively good where there is a GMAL score of 4 around	No Yes

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
	Lostock Station and frequent bus services along Wigan Road. Lostock station has a 30-minute frequency service to Bolton, Salford and Manchester and is a parkway station with a substantial car park. There are frequent bus services along Wigan Road to the east and there is also potential for a development of this scale to support and strengthen existing the provision of new local services and facilities.	
	Local services The site is more than 800m from a local centre. Potential to Provide Local Services A development of this scale has potential to support the provision of a new local centre.	No Yes
Criterion 2 Contribution to PfE and Local Plan Spatial Strategy	The sites has the potential to support growth in the Wigan-Bolton growth corridor and the Local Plan growth anchors. Housing growth of this scale, in this location, could help: • Support and improve accessibility along the public transport corridor • Provision of private and affordable housing to meet local housing needs and support the growth of the strategic employment opportunities which lie nearby to the south.	Yes
Criterion 3 Urban Regeneration	Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation - The majority of the site lies within lower super output areas Bolton 020E & 028G which are less deprived than 80 & 89% of neighbourhood in England (English Indices of Deprivation 2025). The site is not in close vicinity of Bolton town centre, or any centre with a distance of 5.6km from Bolton town centre and 3.4 km from St. Helens Road Local Centre. There is therefore limited evidence of potential or need for regeneration within the vicinity of these sites.	No
Criterion 4 Transport Investment	The sites are located within the Bolton to Wigan growth corridor and, as such, there are a number of schemes in development to improve active travel and public transport on this corridor. Further densification of this corridor by developing these	Yes

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
	sites would support the proposed transport investments in the corridor. By developing in this location there is also a strategic fit between the location of the new development and proposed new/ additional transport infrastructure which would mitigate congestion and ensure a high proportion of trips to/ from the site will be carried on sustainable modes. Although public sector investment is not committed to the schemes in the Wigan to Bolton Growth Corridor, feasibility studies and funding bids are being prepared and it is reasonable to assume that some degree of public sector transport investment in the corridor will come forwards within the Plan period. Potential site allocations at Lee Hall and Health Innovation Bolton, both of which have well developed transport and access strategies, will further enhance active travel and public transport provision as well as providing additional highways capacity and junction improvements.	
Criterion 5 Addressing an exceptional local need or delivering an exceptional local benefit	No exceptional local needs or potential benefits identified.	No

Assessment of Green Belt Purpose and Harm

This location forms part of a Green Belt gap between Bolton and Westhoughton. This location abuts the boundary to the large built-up area of Bolton to the north-east and the small inset settlements of Chew Moor and Hunger Hill to the east and south. The remainder of this location is bounded by open Green Belt land forming a gap between Bolton, Westhoughton, Horwich and settlement in Wigan beyond.

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
a. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The site makes a strong contribution towards checking the unrestricted sprawl of the large built-up area of Bolton. Beaumont Road (A58) forms a strong defensible Green Belt boundary beyond which there is a strong sense of openness with limited	Strong

	encroachment, the parcel generally being free of or urban sprawl with countryside characteristics. Beyond the boundary there would be a high risk of sprawl within the site.	
b. to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The site makes a strong contribution towards preventing the neighbouring towns of Bolton and Westhoughton from merging. Bolton and Westhoughton are approximately 2km apart and there is pressure for development from both sides of this gap. Within the gap the settlements of Hunger Hill and Chew Moor are in very close proximity to Bolton and the gap between the two smaller settlements is particularly narrow. The Green Belt forms part of a critical gap between each of the towns and settlements. There is strong intervisibility between the settlements of Hunger Hill and Bolton due to the open field pattern and relatively flat topography of the land between these settlements. The parcel prevents the physical coalescence and a clearly recognisable perception of merging that would erode the distinct separate identity and character of Chew Moor and Hunger Hill in particular.	Strong
c. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The site makes a strong contribution to this purpose. There is limited/no sense of encroachment with the parcel being generally free of urbanised built development. The landscape within this parcel remains largely unspoilt by urbanising influences located outside its boundaries. It is intact and rural in character and displays characteristics of the countryside.	Strong
d. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The site makes a limited contribution towards this purpose due to the distance to any of Bolton's historic settlements. The site performs a moderate role in preserving the setting of the historic settlement of Bolton (Markland Hill), but to a limited degree.	Weak

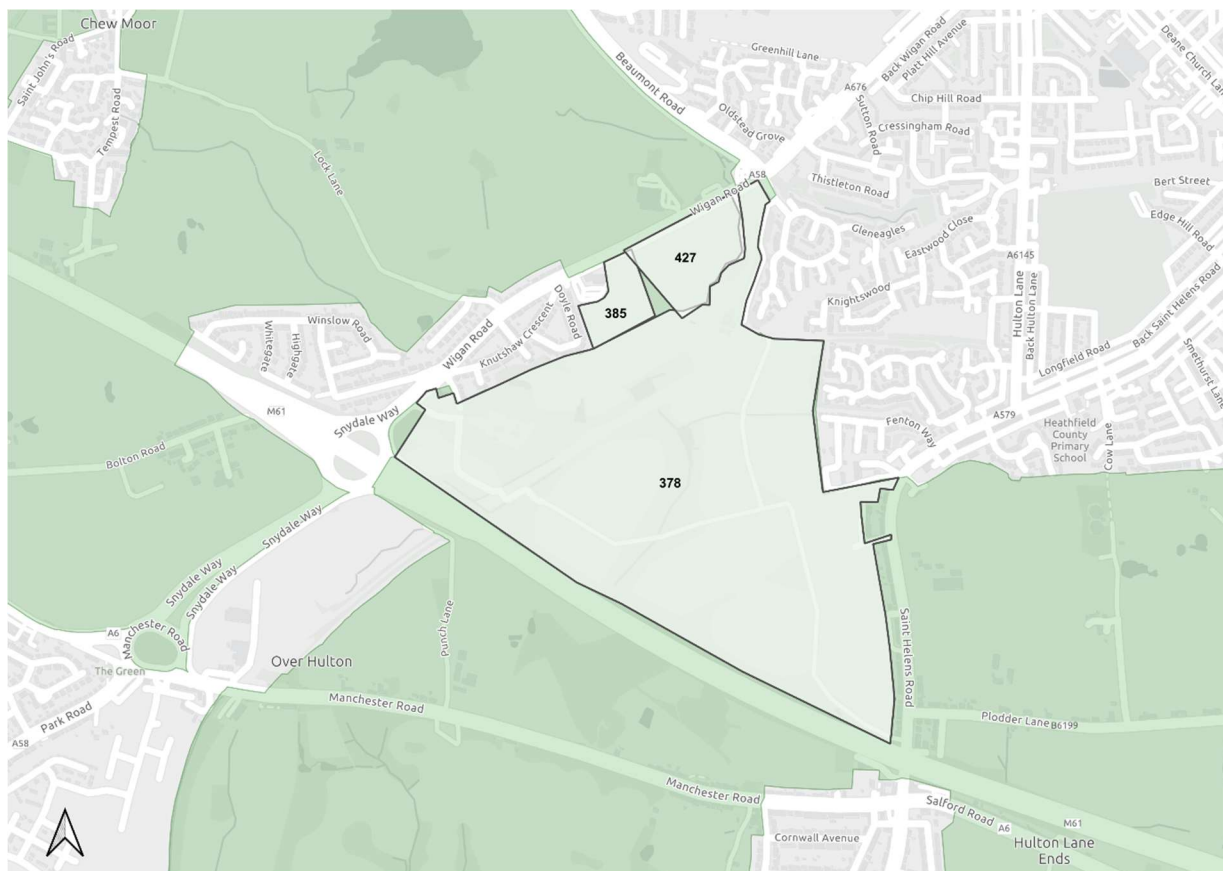
e. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	By restricting inappropriate development all parcels make a strategic contribution towards encouraging the recycling of previously developed land within the urban area. There are exceptional circumstances necessitating Green Belt amendments in Bolton which are addressed fully in Chapter 2.	NA
Overall Assessment of Green Belt Harm	The site makes a strong contribution to fundamental Green Belt purposes a, b and c. Development would result in unrestricted sprawl and in incongruous pattern of development from the south-east edge of Bolton. There would be a significant encroachment into the countryside, closing the Green Belt gap between Bolton and Westhoughton to the south. An area of Green Belt to the southeast of the site would be disconnected from the wider Green Belt and enclosed by development, decreasing overall contribution to Green Belt purposes.	High

Grey Belt Potential

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
Purpose A	The site is substantially free of existing development. The development of the whole site would result in unchecked urban sprawl merging Bolton and Westhoughton. Development would form an incongruous pattern of development projecting from the south-west edge of Bolton. There is land within the site that would contribute less strongly to purpose A, particularly the north-east area of the site where the reservoir and brook could restrict and contain development and be partially enclosed by existing development	Part Strong Part Moderate
Purpose B	Development of the whole site forms a substantial part of the gap between Bolton and Westhoughton and would result in a loss of visual separation between Bolton and Westhoughton. There is land within the site that would contribute less strongly to purpose B, particularly the north-east area of the site which are partially enclosed by existing development.	Part Strong Part Moderate

Purpose D	The site contributes to the setting of Bolton but is separated from historic aspects and does not have an important visual, physical, or experiential relationship with Bolton.	Moderate
Conclusion	The site does not fall within the definition of grey belt, although, due to the size of the site, there is potential for parts of the site to meet the definition.	

Site 378 – Hermon Bank Farm (incorporating Rear of Tavern Fayre & West Pennine Villages Site D, 385 & 427)



Summary

Proposal	Site 378 Residential – approx. 392 homes with leisure and sports uses. Sites 385 and 427 NB. These sites would not be shortlisted and considered in isolation. They are included in this assessment only because exclusion would leave a small pocket of potentially grey belt land. Residential - approx. 220 homes green and recreation space.
Site Description	The sites are within the Green Belt situated to the south-west of Bolton, within the Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill and Hulton wards. The sites are gently sloping and have a number of public rights of way running across them. The existing use of the sites is primarily agricultural. The western edge of the site is directly adjacent to junction 5 of the M61. The eastern edge of the site is on the A579 St Helens Road and the northern edge of the site is on the A58 Wigan Road. Public transport is primarily buses, with the 582 running along St Helens Road and the 607 running along Wigan Road. There is no train station nearby.

	The site is surrounded by the residential areas of Hunger Hill to the north, Daubhill to the east and the M61 to the south.
Planning History	Hermon Bank Farm is a former open cast mine. It was infilled during the early 1990s with 80% household waste. The site has therefore been identified as a site of potential contamination which would need to be assessed and mitigated. Planning consent was granted on appeal for development of land at Hulton Park, predicated on hosting the Ryder Cup. The appeal scheme secures, by legal agreement the delivery of 2.5ha of new native species woodland planting on Herman Bank Form. (Appeal Ref. App/N4205/W/22/329964).
Summary SHELAA (EVS02) Findings	Site 378 No absolute constraints identified. Issues that require further investigation and potential mitigation include contamination (former landfill site), traffic noise, potential mineshafts, minerals safeguarding, flood risk, impact on landscape character and historic assets. Existing traffic congestion issues would need to be addressed and opportunities to improve connectivity and accessibility should be maximised. Sites 385 and 427 No absolute constraints identified. Issues that require further investigation and potential mitigation include ground conditions, minerals safeguarding, potential flood risk on part of the site, impact on landscape. Existing traffic congestion issues would need to be addressed and opportunities to improve connectivity and accessibility should be maximised.

Criteria Assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1 Sustainable Locations	Previously Developed Land The site has been used for mining and landfill but has since been restored. The site is substantially greenfield land, other than a small amount of previously developed land within its boundary.	No
	Connectivity The majority of the site has an overall DfT Connectivity Tool score of below 60 by all included modes except driving to all key destinations including education, leisure, health, shopping, residential and workplaces.	No
	Potential to Improve Connectivity Development of this scale is likely to improve connectivity into the site.	Yes

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
	The site lies at an urban edge of Bolton which has relatively high connectivity to key destinations, evidenced by a DfT Connectivity tool rating in the range of low-mid 60s close to the north-west boundary of the site.	
	Public Transport The majority of the site is within 800m of a public transport corridor with a GMAL Score of 4 or more. The sites lie at the urban edge of Bolton where there are frequent bus services Wigan Road and St Helens Road, reflected in a DfT Connectivity Tool score in the mid-high 60s and a GMAL rating of 4.	Yes
	Local services The site is more than 800m from a local centre. Potential to Provide Local Services A development of this scale does not have the potential to support the provision of a new local centre.	No
Criterion 2 Contribution to PfE and Local Plan Spatial Strategy	The sites have the potential to support growth in the Wigan-Bolton growth corridor and the Local Plan growth anchors. Housing growth of this scale, in this location, could help: • Support and improve accessibility along the public transport corridor • Provision of private and affordable housing to meet local housing needs and support the growth of the strategic employment opportunities which lie nearby to the south.	Yes
Criterion 3 Urban Regeneration	Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation - The site lies predominantly within lower super output area Bolton 030C which is more deprived than 61% of the neighbourhoods in England (English Indices of Deprivation 2025). There is therefore clear evidence of potential or need for regeneration within the vicinity of these sites. The site is not in close vicinity of Bolton town centre at a distance of 5.6km but is fewer than 2km from St. Helens Road Local Centre, thus offering significant regeneration potential.	Yes
Criterion 4	The sites are located within the Bolton to Wigan growth corridor and, as such, there are a number of	Yes

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Transport Investment	schemes in development to improve active travel and public transport on this corridor. Further densification of this corridor by developing these sites would support the proposed transport investments in the corridor. By developing in this location there is also a strategic fit between the location of the new development and proposed new/ additional transport infrastructure which would mitigate congestion and ensure a high proportion of trips to/ from the site will be carried on sustainable modes. Although public sector investment is not committed to the schemes in the Wigan to Bolton Growth Corridor, feasibility studies and funding bids are being prepared and it is reasonable to assume that some degree of public sector investment in transport will be made in this area during the Plan period. Potential site allocations at Lee Hall and Health Innovation Bolton, both of which have well developed transport and access strategies, will further enhance active travel and public transport provision as well as providing additional highways capacity and junction improvements. The distance of the site from a rail station and its large size means that any development here would need to be accompanied by substantial investment in bus services were the site to come forwards if it is to support the Bolton and TfGM transport plans/ strategy.	
Criterion 5 Addressing an exceptional local need or delivering an exceptional local benefit	No exceptional local needs or potential benefits identified.	No

Assessment of Green Belt Purpose and Harm

This site sits in the green belt gap between Bolton and Hunger Hill/ Westhoughton and Atherton/ Westhoughton. The settlement of Bolton sits to the east; Hunger Hill sits to the northwest and additionally Over Hulton/ Atherton sit to the south.

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
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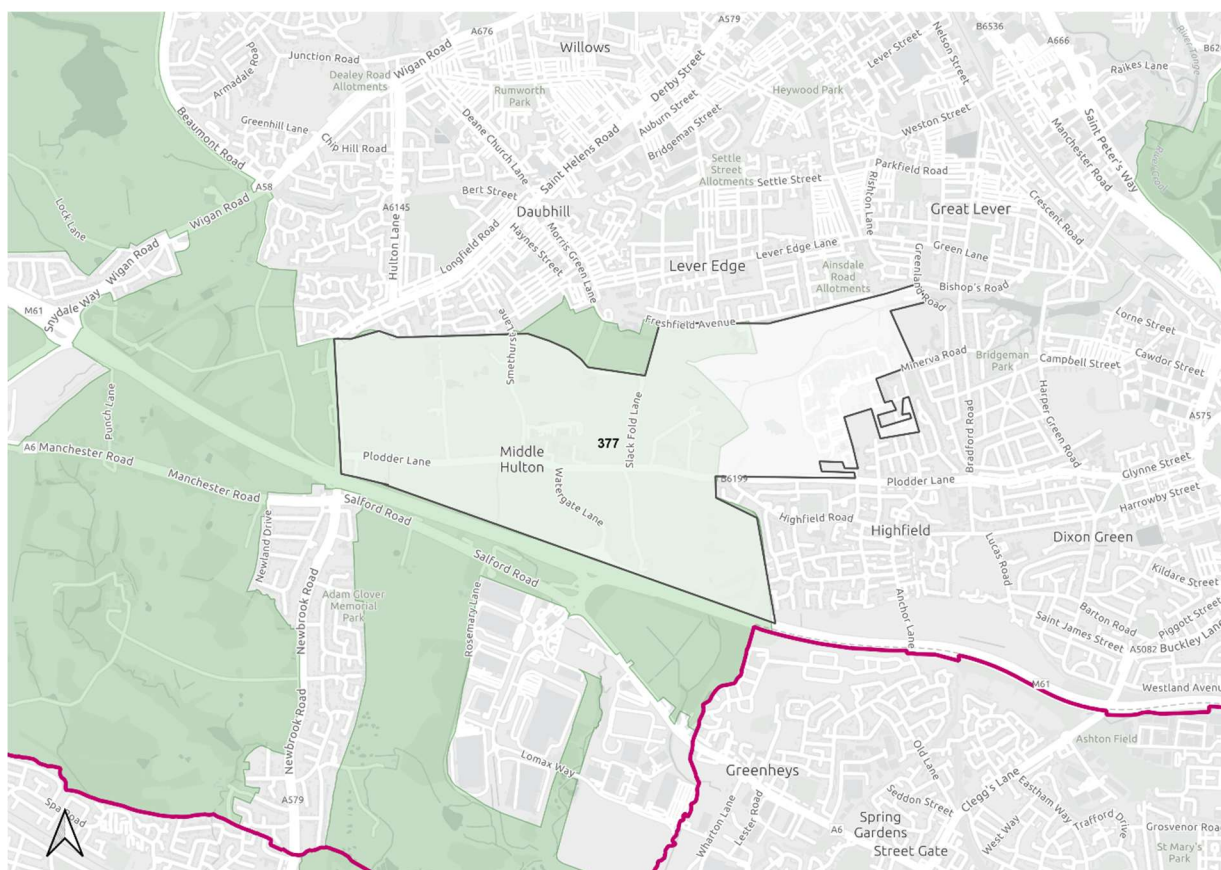
a. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The site performs strongly in preventing the sprawl of large built-up areas. There are only limited built features within the parcel which include a small-scale industrial aggregate works to the south-west, and the influence of these features is limited. Within the parcel there is a strong sense of openness because of existing undulating farmland and woodland, and the parcel plays a strong role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of Dean. The parcel has a significant and durable barrier feature on the southern boundary; the M61 motor way which prevents urban sprawl to south of the parcel. However, this does not prevent urban sprawl from taking place within the parcel. The parcel plays some role in inhibiting ribbon development south-east of Wigan Road (A58 road) and along minor access roads within the parcel.	Strong
b. to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The site forms part of a critical gap between the settlements of Bolton to the north and Hunger Hill to the south-west as well as between Bolton and Atherton (Over Hulton) to the south (although it is recognised that there is a limited amount of ribbon development between the two). Bolton and Hunger Hill are in very close proximity, and the parcel prevents the physical coalescence or a clearly recognisable perception of merging that would erode the distinct character of Hunger Hill. The parcel also prevents the further physical coalescence and perception of merging of Bolton and Over Hulton.	Strong
c. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The site performs strongly in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. There is limited/no sense of encroachment with the parcel being generally free of urbanised built development. The landscape within this parcel remains largely unspoilt by urbanising influences located outside its boundaries.	Strong
d. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The site does not contribute to preserving the setting and character of historic towns. Whilst the parcel is visible from conservation areas it has very little impact in reality.	Weak
e. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging	By restricting inappropriate development all parcels make a strategic contribution towards encouraging the recycling of previously developed land within the urban area.	NA

the recycling of derelict and other urban land	There are exceptional circumstances necessitating Green Belt amendments in Bolton which are addressed fully in Chapter 2.	
Overall Assessment	The site makes a strong contribution to fundamental Green Belt purposes a, b and c. Development would result in unrestricted sprawl and in incongruous pattern of development from the south-east edge of Bolton. There would be a significant encroachment into the countryside, closing the Green Belt gap between Bolton and Westhoughton and Bolton and Over Hulton/Atherton to the south. Two separate areas of Green Belt to the southeast and southwest of the site would be disconnected and fragmented from the wider Green Belt and enclosed by development, decreasing overall contribution to Green Belt purposes.	High

Grey Belt Potential

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
Purpose A	The site is substantially free of existing development. The development of the whole site would result in unchecked urban sprawl merging Bolton and Over Hulton Atherton. Within the site there is a lack of physical features that could restrict or contain development.	Strong
Purpose B	The site is substantially free of existing development and forms a substantial part of the gap between Bolton, Westhoughton and Atherton. Development would result in a loss of visual separation between towns.	Strong
Purpose D	The site contributes to the setting of Bolton but is separated from historic aspects and does not have an important visual, physical, or experiential relationship with Bolton.	Moderate
Conclusion	The site does not fall within the definition of grey belt	

Site 377 – Health Innovation Bolton Green Belt Extension



Summary

Proposal	Mixed-use, approx. 39,000 sqm of health innovation office or research and development floorspace; approx. 41,000 sqm of health innovation industrial and warehousing floorspace and approx. 120,000 sqm of other health innovation and health and community floorspace. Teaching, research and ancillary space, local centre, public open space. Residential – approx. 2,230 homes NB – Approximately 1/4 of the site falls outside of the Green Belt boundary, development here is a priority for the PfE Spatial Strategy and the emerging Local Plan Growth Strategy. The deliverable development potential of the site area outside of the Green Belt has been included in the SHELAA (EVS02) land supply capacity and the potential deliverable capacity of OPOL land. This assessment deals only with the proposed Green Belt extension to this site.
Site Description	The site is within the Green Belt situated to the south of Bolton and the west of Farnworth, straddling the Farnworth North, Hulton and Great Lever wards.

	The site gently slopes in a number of directions and has public rights of way running across it. The existing use of the site is primarily agricultural though a part of the site is a former golf course. Public transport connections to the site are only by bus, with the 501 providing a high frequency service between Plodder Lane and Bolton Town Centre. There are no train stations near to the site. The site is surrounded by Farnworth to the East, Bolton to the North, St Helens Road to the West and the M61 motorway to the south. Plodder Lane intersects the site.
Planning History	Various planning history relating to active uses on the site.
Summary SHELAA (EVS02) Findings	No absolute constraints identified. Issues that require further investigation and potential mitigation include potential contamination, noise levels, potential mineshafts, mineral safeguarding, flood risk and traffic congestion.

Criteria Assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1 Sustainable Locations	Previously Developed Land The site is predominantly greenfield but is scattered with previously developed land and urbanising features. This includes an industrial estate, an academy, sewage treatment works and housing which cover up to 10% of the site.	Parts of the site are previously developed land
	Connectivity Connectivity along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site are relatively strong with scores in the low 70s. Applies to Employment Proposal Only: Connectivity to residential and workplaces The majority of the site has an overall DfT Connectivity Tool score above 60 by all included modes except driving to residential and workplaces. Applies to Residential Proposal Only: Overall Connectivity to education, leisure, health, shopping, residential and workplaces. The majority of the site has an overall DfT Connectivity Tool score above 60 by all included modes except driving.	Yes
	Public Transport Approximately 2/3rds of the site is within 800m of a public transport corridor with a GMAL score of 4 or more. The north-east corner of the site is within 800m	No

	of a public transport corridor with a higher GMAL score of 5. Potential to Improve Public Transport Currently, the site is in a reasonably sustainable location. Its distance from the nearest rail station is mitigated to some extent by the high frequency bus services (which could be extended into the site should it come forward) on its edge/ to the Hospital. The development is also at a scale which could potentially fund significant transport infrastructure yet remain viable.	Yes
	Local Services The site is more than 800m from a local, district or town centre. Potential to Provide Local Services The site lies at the urban edge of Bolton, giving it good access to services and facilities, particularly healthcare. A development of this scale has potential to support the provision of a new local centre.	No Yes
Criterion 2 Contribution to PfE and Local Plan Spatial Strategy	The sites has the potential to support growth in the Wigan-Bolton growth corridor and the Local Plan growth anchors. Provision of private and affordable housing to meet local housing needs and support the growth of the strategic employment opportunities which lie within the site and nearby to the south.	Yes
Criterion 3 Urban Regeneration	Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation - the site lies predominantly within lower super output area Bolton O26C which is more deprived than 50% of the neighbourhood in England (English Indices of Deprivation 2025). A significant proportion is also within: Bolton lower super output area Bolton O25D which is more deprived than 96% of neighbourhoods in England. Bolton lower super output area O29D which is more deprived than 65% of neighbourhoods in England and Bolton O29E Bolton lower super output area which is more deprived than 58% of neighbourhoods in England. This site is within a 5 minute walk of significant areas within the 10 per cent most deprived Super Output Areas in England.	Yes

	It is clear that there is significant need for regeneration within the vicinity. The site is located 3.9km from Bolton town centre, 3.7km from Farnworth town centre and 1.6km from St. Helens Road Local Centre. Given this, the scale of this site, its attractiveness as a location for investment and the potential for high-quality development it would support the regeneration of these centres, benefiting the wider Bolton area.	
Criterion 4 Transport Investment	The developers of this site have presented detailed transport proposals with an aggregate cost of around £100m. The proposals include a new Primary Movement Corridor through the site, an upgrade to M61 J4, bus services through the site, active travel links and a programme of junction upgrades on the local highway network outside the development itself. The proposals will enable the development to come forward in a way which enables sustainable transport use, manages congestion caused by trip making to/ from the development and ensures all parts of the site are accessible to non-car modes of travel. The site is located within the Bolton to Wigan growth corridor and, as such, there are a number of schemes in development to improve active travel and public transport on this corridor. Further densification of this corridor by developing these sites would support the proposed transport investments in the corridor. By developing in this location there is also a strategic fit between the location of the new development and proposed new/ additional transport infrastructure which would mitigate congestion and ensure a high proportion of trips to/ from the site will be carried on sustainable modes. Although public sector investment is not committed to the schemes in the Wigan to Bolton Growth Corridor, feasibility studies and funding bids are being prepared and it is reasonable to assume that some degree of public sector investment in transport will be made in this area during the Plan period. The potential site allocation at Lee Hall also has a well developed transport and access strategy. Both sites taken forward will further enhance active travel and public transport provision as well as providing	Yes

	additional highways capacity and junction improvements.	
Criterion 5 Addressing an exceptional local need or delivering an exceptional local benefit	The site is uniquely located to support the development of a health innovation cluster, including a health village on land at Royal Bolton Hospital. Development is proposed to support the evolution of the hospital and to provide additional opportunities, including new health technology related activities and housing development. Development of this scale, in this location could also support and improve accessibility along the public transport corridor.	Yes

Assessment of Green Belt Purpose and Harm

This site sits in the green belt between Bolton/ Farnworth and Over Hulton. The site contains gently undulating land comprising predominantly large arable and pastoral fields separated by weak hedgerows and post and wire fencing. Part of the eastern edge of the parcel hosts the Great Lever and Farnworth Golf Course. Built development within the parcel includes Edgefold Industrial Estate, the Essa Academy high school, a set of water towers and communication masts, a scattering of large farms, and a number of residential properties located along Plodder Lane (B6199). Two local roads run through the parcel, Smethurst Lane and Slack Fold Lane.

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
a. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The site is predominantly a farmed landscape which plays a strong role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of Great Lever, Farnworth and Over Hulton.	Strong
b. to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The site forms part of a critical gap between the settlements of Farnworth to the east and Over Hulton (Atherton) to west. The settlements are in relatively close proximity (approximately within 2.1km) of each other and the site fills the gap between these two settlements.	Strong
c. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	There is some sense of urban encroachment on the site as a result of the development on the site, Edgefold Industrial Estate, the Essa Academy high school, water towers, communications masts, Great Lever & Farnworth golf course, but there are still some displays of characteristic countryside.	Moderate
d. to preserve the setting and special	The site has a limited role in the setting of Westhoughton and Howe Bridge & Atherton. This is largely due to visual screening provided by buildings, roads, and trees etc.; the parcel's	Moderate

character of historic towns	flat/gently undulating topography; and the relatively large distance between the parcel and nearest historic settlements.	
e. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	By restricting inappropriate development all parcels make a strategic contribution towards encouraging the recycling of previously developed land within the urban area. There are exceptional circumstances necessitating Green Belt amendments in Bolton which are addressed fully in Chapter 2.	NA
Overall Assessment of Green Belt Harm	The site makes a strong contribution to fundamental Green Belt purposes a and b. Development would result in unrestricted sprawl and in incongruous pattern of development from the southwest edge of Bolton. There would be a significant encroachment into the countryside, closing the Green Belt gap between Bolton and Over Hulton/Atherton to the south. An area of Green Belt to the southeast of the site would be disconnected from the wider Green Belt and enclosed by development, decreasing overall contribution to Green Belt purposes.	High

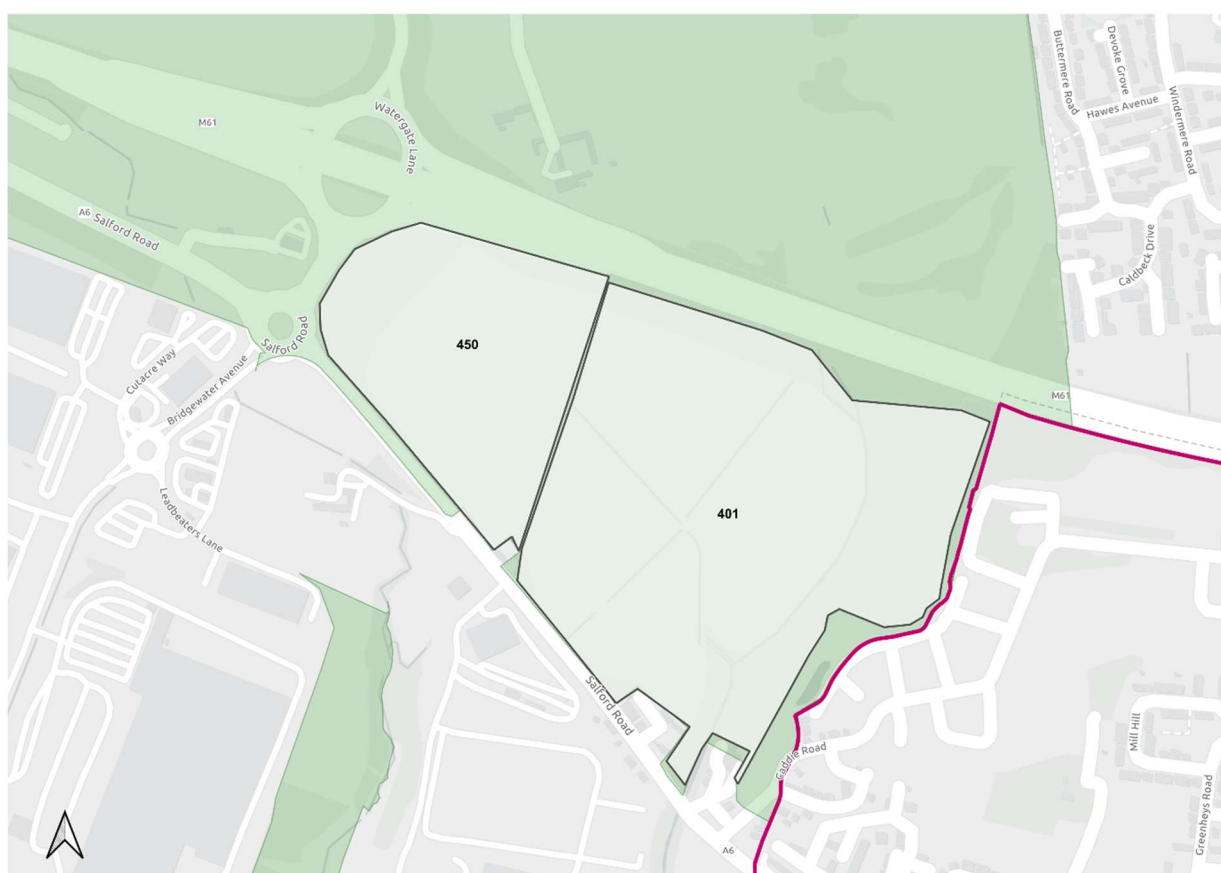
Grey Belt Potential

Due to the size of the site, the contribution it makes to Green Belt purposes is mixed

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
Purpose A	The west and south-west areas of the site (the area west of the water towers and north of Plodder Lane, together with the area south of Plodder Land and west of Watergate Lane) are relatively free of existing development, here development would form an incongruous pattern of development projecting from the south-west edge of Bolton, linking up corner-to-corner with Over Hulton/Atherton. Moving east across the site, the contribution the site makes to Green Belt purpose A weakens as the development would be enclosed by existing development, where there are urbanising influences.	Part Strong Part Moderate

Purpose B	The site forms part of a substantial gap between Bolton and Over Hulton/Atherton. The west and south-west area of the site (the area west of the water towers and north of Plodder Lane, together with the area south of Plodder Land and west of Watergate Lane) is substantially free of development and forms part of Moving east across the site, the contribution the site makes to Green Belt purpose b weakens and could be developed.	Part Strong Part Moderate
Purpose D	The site contributes to the setting of Westhoughton and Howe Bridge & Atherton but is separated from historic aspects and does not have an important relationship with these settlements	Moderate
Conclusion	With the exception of the west and south-west parts of the site, the majority of the site falls within the definition of grey belt.	

Sites 401/450 – Salford Road, East of M61 Junction 4



Summary

Proposal	401 - Mixed use, housing or employment land 450 - 30,000 sqm high-quality employment floorspace
Site Description	The sites are within the Green Belt situated in the south of Bolton borough and directly to the west of Little Hulton, within the Hulton ward. The sites have a slight incline but are relatively flat. A public right of way runs between the sites and along the northern boundary of site 401. The existing use of the site is agricultural. Public transport access to site is by bus, primarily the high frequency 38 bus route from Logistics North- Manchester. There is no train station near to the site. Motorway access is available very nearby at J4 of the M61. The sites are surrounded by the M61 to the north, housing in Little Hulton to the West and the A6 to the south. Logistics North is a short distance away.
Planning History	Historic planning permissions to extend Brackley Golf Course. Site 450 has an outline planning application under consideration for employment floorspace (B2/B8/E(G)).
Summary SHELA	No absolute constraints identified. Issues that require further investigation and potential mitigation include potential

(EVS02) Findings	contamination, noise levels, potential mineshafts, mineral safeguarding, flood risk and traffic congestion.
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Criteria Assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1 Sustainable Locations	Previously Developed Land The site is largely a greenfield site.	No
	Applies to Employment Proposal Only: Connectivity to residential and workplaces - the majority of the site has an overall DfT Connectivity Tool score above 60 by all included modes except driving.	Yes
	Applies to Residential Proposal Only: Overall Connectivity to education, leisure, health, shopping, residential and workplaces. The majority of the site has an overall DfT Connectivity Tool score of below 60 by all included modes except driving to all key destinations including education, leisure, health, shopping and workplaces.	No
	Potential to Improve Connectivity Development of this scale is likely to improve connectivity into the site. The site lies at an urban edge of Little Hulton which has relatively high connectivity to key destinations, evidenced by a DfT Connectivity tool rating in the range of low-mid 60s close to the north-west boundary of the site.	Yes
	Public Transport There is a high frequency bus service with a GMAL Score of 4, travelling from outside the Borough boundary up to the boundary of the site.	Yes
	Local Services The site is not within 800m of a district centre	No
	Potential to Improve A development of this scale does not have potential to support the provision of a new local centre.	No
Criterion 2 Contribution to PfE and Local Plan Spatial Strategy	The sites has the potential to support growth in the Wigan-Bolton growth corridor and the Local Plan growth anchors. Development of this scale, in this location could also:	Yes

	• support and improve accessibility along the public transport corridor • provide new employment opportunities within the vicinity of key strategic employment sites, contributing to the PfE objective to boost northern competitiveness. • provide private and affordable housing to meet local housing needs and support the growth of the strategic employment opportunities which lie nearby to the south.	
Criterion 3 Urban Regeneration	Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation - the site lies entirely within lower super output area Bolton 026C which is more deprived than 50% of the neighbourhoods in England (English Indices of Deprivation 2025). This site is also within a 5 minute walk of at least one of the 10 per cent most deprived Super Output Areas in England. There is therefore clear evidence of potential or need for regeneration within the vicinity of these sites. The site is located 6.3km from Bolton town centre and 3.7km from St. Helens Road Local Centre. It is also located only 1.4km from Little Hulton Local Centre in Salford. Development of this site for employment use would support the regeneration of these centres, benefiting the wider Bolton area and beyond. Development of this site for employment would continue the economic success of Logistics North.	Yes
Criterion 4 Transport Investment	At this stage there are no transport interventions associated specifically with this development – although substantial investments in the transport network will be made as the Health Innovation Bolton development moves forward. The scale of this site is unlikely to be able to support highways/ transport interventions beyond localised highway improvements and possibly some enhancements to bus services. The site is, however, located within the Bolton to Wigan growth corridor and, as such, there are a number of schemes in development to improve active travel and public transport on this corridor. Further densification of this corridor by developing these sites would support the proposed transport investments in the corridor. By developing in this	Yes

	location there is also a strategic fit between the location of the new development and proposed new/ additional transport infrastructure which would mitigate congestion and ensure a high proportion of trips to/ from the site will be carried on sustainable modes. Although public sector investment is not committed to the schemes in the Wigan to Bolton Growth Corridor, feasibility studies and funding bids are being prepared and it is reasonable to assume that some degree of public sector investment in transport will be made in this area during the Plan period. Potential site allocations at Lee Hall and Health Innovation Bolton, both of which have well developed transport and access strategies, will further enhance active travel and public transport provision as well as providing additional highways capacity and junction improvements-	
Criterion 5 Addressing Issues	No exceptional local needs or potential benefits identified.	No

Assessment of Green Belt Purpose and Harm

This is set between the settlement areas of Little Hulton and Farnworth to the east, and Over Hulton to the west at the southern edge of the Borough. The parcel is bound to the south by the Logistics North development.

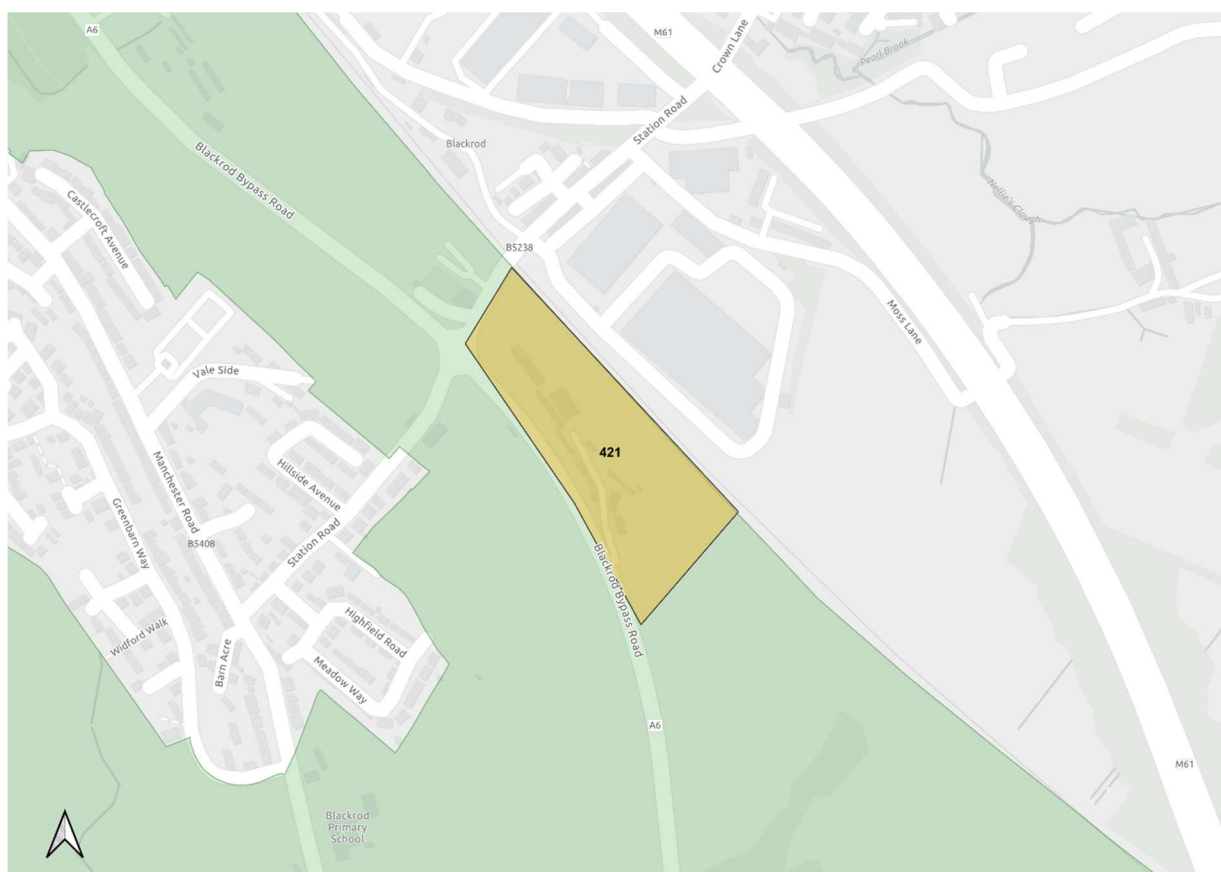
Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
a. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The barrier feature of the M61 motorway on the northern border plays some role in preventing urban sprawl from the north. This does not prevent urban sprawl from taking place within the parcel from the south, east and west. The parcel plays some role in inhibiting ribbon development north and east of the A6.	Moderate
b. to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The parcel forms part of a gap between the settlements of Farnworth and Little Hulton to the east and Over Hulton (Atherton) to the west but it is not of critical importance to the separation of these two settlements.	Moderate
c. to assist in safeguarding the countryside	Contributes moderately to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The parcel has some sense of urban encroachment due to nearby	Moderate

from encroachment	sewage treatment works but still maintains a rural character.	
d. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The site does not contribute to preserving the setting and character of historic towns. Whilst the parcel is visible from conservation areas it has very little impact in reality.	Weak
e. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	By restricting inappropriate development all parcels make a strategic contribution towards encouraging the recycling of previously developed land within the urban area. There are exceptional circumstances necessitating Green Belt amendments in Bolton which are addressed fully in Chapter 2.	NA
Overall Assessment of Green Belt Harm	The site makes a moderate contribution to the Green Belt overall, with no strong contribution to any purpose. The adjoining Green Belt land to the west would continue to perform the same Green Belt function.	Moderate

Grey Belt Potential

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
Purpose A	The site is contained and largely enclosed by development.	Weak
Purpose B	The site forms a small part of the gap between Bolton and Little Hulton and could be developed without the loss of visual separation between Bolton and Little Hulton.	Moderate
Purpose D	The site does not contribute to preserving the setting and character of historic towns.	Weak
Conclusion	The falls within the definition of grey belt	

Site 421 – Leigh Tenement Farm



Summary

Proposal	Commercial and residential.
Site Description	The site is in the green belt situated between Blackrod and Horwich, in the Horwich South and Blackrod ward. The current use of the site is a mixture of farming and industrial buildings. The site is on a gentle slope down to the railway. The site is almost adjacent to Blackrod train station and has the 576-bus route in close proximity. Road access is by the A6. The site is surrounded by the railway to the northeast and the A6 to the southwest with Station Road to the northwest and agricultural land to the southeast.
Planning History	Extensive planning histories in connection with the existing commercial uses on site.
Summary SHELAA (EVS02) Findings	No absolute constraints identified. Issues that require further investigation and potential mitigation include noise, minerals safeguarding, flood risk, impact on landscape character and traffic congestion.

Criteria Assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1 Sustainable Locations	Previously Developed Land Approximately 2/3rds of the site is previously developed land.	Part
	Connectivity The majority of the site has an overall DfT Connectivity Tool score above 60 by all included modes except driving to the key destinations of residential and workplaces.	Yes
	Public Transport The site is within 800m of a public transport corridor with a GMAL Score of 4 or more. The site's proximity to Blackrod station is a significant benefit. Blackrod has 2 trains per hour in each direction during the peaks, but only one train an hour in each direction in the off-peak hour (although the train passes through the station, it does not stop there). The removal of the second stopping train per hour is relatively recent, and the council is in dialogue with the rail industry about reinstating the stop. The site is also near the 576-bus route.	Yes
Criterion 2 Contribution to PfE and Local Plan Spatial Strategy	The site has the potential to support growth in the Wigan-Bolton growth corridor and the Local Plan growth anchors especially given its location supporting the use of the station and rail line.	Yes
Criterion 3 Urban Regeneration	Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation - The site lies entirely within lower super output area Bolton 09B which is less deprived than 72% of the neighbourhoods in England (English Indices of Deprivation 2025). This site is also located more than a 15-minute walk from any of the 10 per cent most deprived Super Output Areas in England. There is therefore limited evidence of potential or need for regeneration within the vicinity of these sites. The site is located 10.8km from Bolton town centre but is only 1.7km from Blackrod Local Centre and 2.4km Aspull Local Centre in Wigan. Development of this site for employment use would support the regeneration of these centres, benefiting the wider Bolton area and beyond.	Yes

Criterion 4 Transport Investment	No transport investment has been identified specifically associated with this site. The site is, however, located within the Bolton to Wigan growth corridor and, as such, there are a number of schemes in development to improve active travel and public transport on this corridor. Further densification of this corridor by developing these sites would support the proposed transport investments in the corridor. By developing in this location there is also a strategic fit between the location of the new development and proposed new/ additional transport infrastructure which would mitigate congestion and ensure a high proportion of trips to/ from the site will be carried on sustainable modes. Although public sector investment is not committed to the schemes in the Wigan to Bolton Growth Corridor, feasibility studies and funding bids are being prepared and it is reasonable to assume that some degree of public sector investment in transport will be made in this area during the Plan period. Potential site allocations at Lee Hall and Health Innovation Bolton, both of which have well developed transport and access strategies, will further enhance active travel and public transport provision as well as providing additional highways capacity and junction improvements.	Yes
Criterion 5 Addressing Issues	No exceptional local needs or potential benefits identified.	No

Assessment of Green Belt Purpose and Harm

The site sits in the green belt between Horwich and Wigan with the villages of Blackrod nearby and Aspull in between.

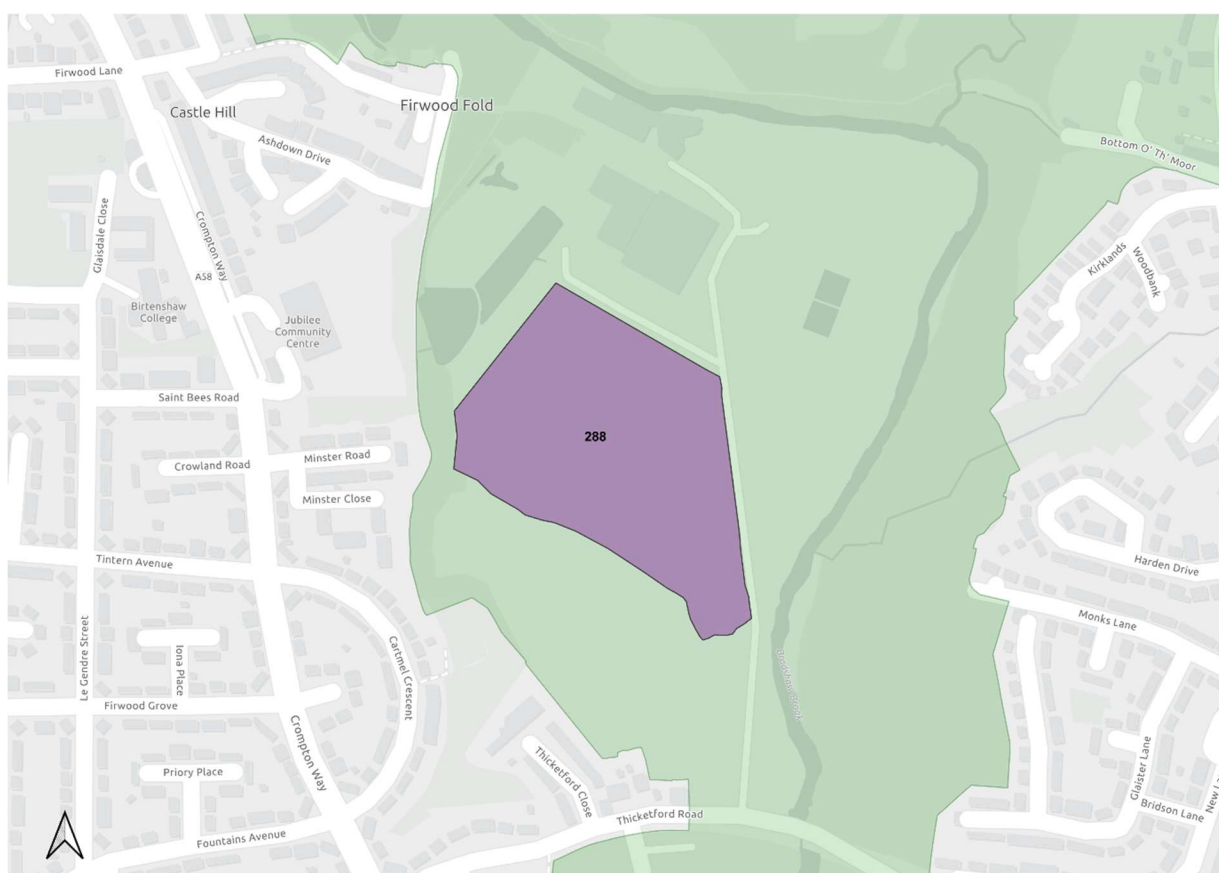
Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
a. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The site is already partially urban in character and therefore does not play a strong role in checking sprawl. The A6 to the south of the site forms a strong defensible Green Belt boundary to the south, and the presence of a hedge and tree line to the east could help contain sprawl.	Weak
b. to prevent neighbouring	The site forms only a small part of the Green Belt gap and is previously developed land. It does not	Weak

towns from merging into one another	contribute to the openness of the Green Belt between Horwich and Wigan.	
c. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Due to the built-up nature of the site the site has limited characteristics of the countryside and therefore does not play a strong role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	Weak
d. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The site has limited impact on preserving the setting of the historic town of Horwich, due to the distance from the conservation area, topography and urban features.	Weak
e. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	By restricting inappropriate development all parcels make a strategic contribution towards encouraging the recycling of previously developed land within the urban area. There are exceptional circumstances necessitating Green Belt amendments in Bolton which are addressed fully in Chapter 2.	NA
Overall Assessment of Green Belt Harm	The site makes a weak overall contribution to Green Belt purposes. The surrounding Green Belt land would continue to perform the same Green Belt function.	Low

Grey Belt Potential

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
Purpose A	The site is close to the edge of Horwich but is not free of existing development and is contained between the rail and road network on three boundaries.	Weak
Purpose B	The site forms only a small part of the Green Belt gap and does not contribute to the visual separation of the towns.	Weak
Purpose D	The site does not contribute to preserving the setting and character of historic towns.	Weak
Conclusion	The site falls within the definition of grey belt	

Site 532 – The Alders, Tonge



Summary

Proposal	Travelling Showperson site for 10 yards comprising 60 residential chalets and 36 touring caravans, recreation and storage space.
Site Description	The site is in north Bolton within a Green Belt wedge between Tonge and Harwood. The site is bounded by Firwood Lodges, hedges, trees and field boundaries and land to the north is industrial use. Nearby is residential development, Jubilee Pool and Community Centre, schools and a health centre.
Planning History	The site has an extensive planning history for a range of proposed uses including football pitches, pet crematorium and industrial use. A previous application to accommodate travelling showpeople was refused in 2007 due to lack of very special circumstances, floodplain and site access issues.
Summary SHELAA (EVS02) Findings	No absolute constraints identified. Issues that require further investigation and potential mitigation include access constraints, noise, minerals safeguarding, flood risk, SBI impact, landscape and townscape character.

Criteria Assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1 Sustainable Locations	Previously Developed Land The site is largely a greenfield site.	No
	Connectivity The site has an overall DfT Connectivity Tool score above 60 by all included modes except driving to all key destinations including education, leisure, health, shopping, residential and workplaces.	Yes
	Public Transport The site is within 800m of a public transport corridor with a GMAL Score of 4 or more and within 800m of a rail station.	Yes
	Local services The site is more than 800m from a local centre. Potential to Provide Local Services A development of this scale does not have the potential to support the provision of a new local centre but there is a good range of services nearby along Tonge Moor Road.	No Yes

Assessment of Green Belt Purpose and Harm

The site is adjacent to Brightmet, Harwood and Bolton, within a strategic Green Belt Green finger between the settlements.

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
a. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The site is part of liner Green Belt between settlements, in a relatively open area, although there are some urbanising features nearby. There are no strong barrier features to prevent sprawl to the south or east.	Moderate
b. to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Brightmet and Bolton are in close proximity in a sensitive Green Belt gap. The settlements have already merged to the south and there intervisibility between them.	Weak
c. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The site is surrounded by urban uses but is free of development and links into the countryside.	Moderate

d. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The site is within a Green Belt valley which contributes to the setting of Bolton but does not contribute to the setting of the historic core or the nearby conservation areas.	Moderate
e. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	By restricting inappropriate development all parcels make a strategic contribution towards encouraging the recycling of previously developed land within the urban area. There are exceptional circumstances necessitating Green Belt amendments in Bolton which are addressed fully in Chapter 2.	NA
Overall Assessment of Green Belt Harm	Development would result in urban sprawl into the narrow Green Belt corridor but would not have a significant impact due to existing physical and visual connections. The extent of incursion into the countryside and impact on historic towns would be minimal. Overall, the impact of development would be moderate.	Moderate

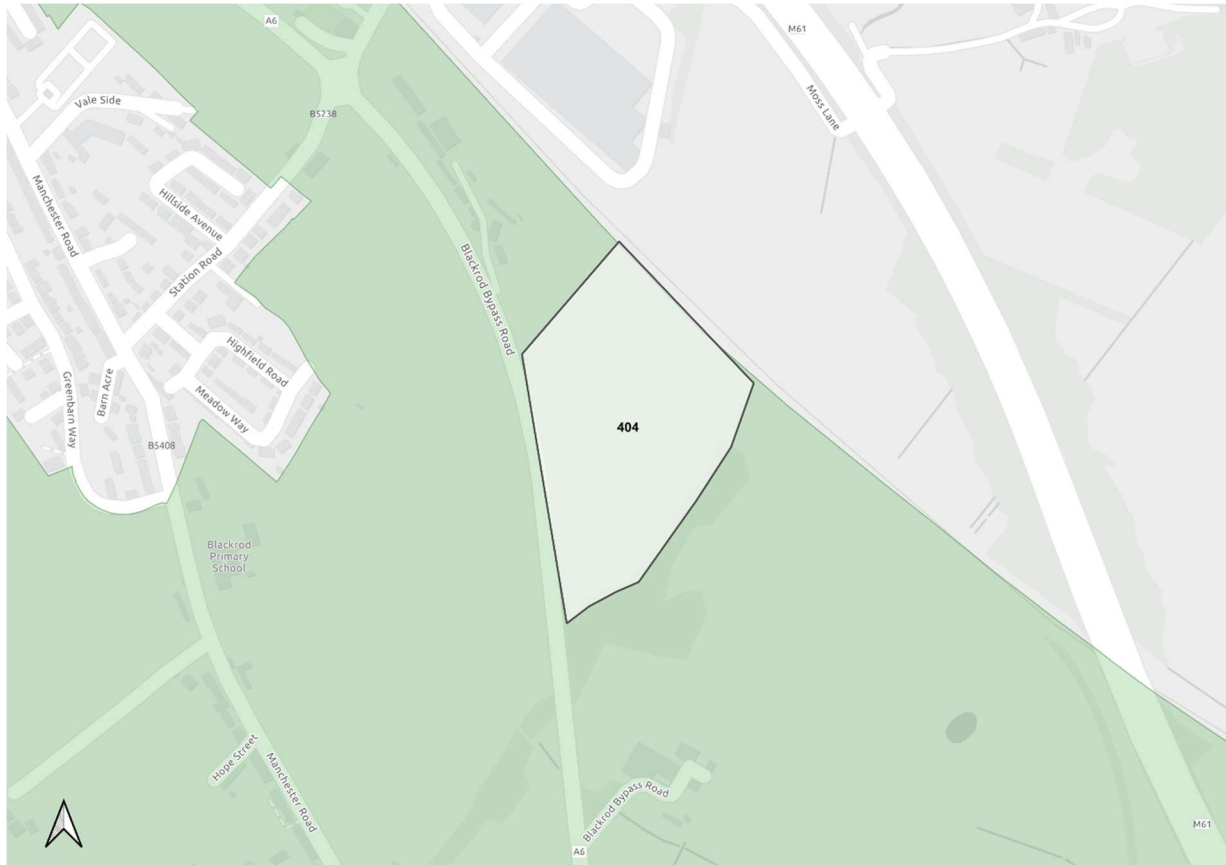
Grey Belt Potential

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
Purpose A	The site is near to the large built-up area of Bolton and lacks physical feature to restrain development to the southeast.	Strong
Purpose B	The site forms a small part of the green wedge and there is already intervisibility between the settlements it separates.	Moderate
Purpose D	The site forms part of the setting of Bolton, but does not have an important visual, physical or experiential relationship to historic aspects.	Weak
Conclusion	The site does not meet the definition of grey belt	

Appendix B

Site Assessment Proformas - Widening the Search for Industrial & Warehousing sites

Site 404 – Leigh Tenement Farm #1



Summary

Proposal	Commercial, industrial and warehousing.
Site Description	The site is in the green belt situated between Blackrod and Horwich, in the Horwich South and Blackrod ward. The current use of the site is agricultural. The site is on a gentle slope down to the railway. The site is approximately 600m away from Blackrod train station and has the 576-bus 600m away. Road access is by the A6. The site is surrounded by the railway to the northeast and the A6 to the southwest, farming land to the Northwest and agricultural land to the southeast.
Planning History	None on record.
Summary SHELAA (EVS02) Findings	No absolute constraints identified. Issues that require further investigation and potential mitigation include – easement of underground cables.

Criteria Assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1 Sustainable Locations	Previously Developed Land Undeveloped land.	No
	Connectivity The majority of the site has an overall DfT Connectivity Tool score above 60 by all included modes except driving to residential and just under 60 to workplaces. Potential to Improve Connectivity Development at this location has the potential to support improvements in rail services which, in turn, would improve connectivity to workplaces.	Part Yes
	Public Transport The site is within 800m of a public transport corridor with a GMAL Score of 4 or more. The site's proximity to Blackrod station is a significant benefit. Blackrod has 2 trains per hour in each direction during the peaks, but only one train an hour in each direction in the off-peak hour (although the train passes through the station, it does not stop there). The removal of the second stopping train per hour is relatively recent, and the council is in dialogue with the rail industry about reinstating the stop. The site is also near the 576-bus route.	Yes
Criterion 2 Contribution to PfE and Local Plan Spatial Strategy	The site has the potential to support growth in the Wigan-Bolton growth corridor and the Local Plan growth anchors as its location supports the use of the station and rail line.	Yes
Criterion 3 Urban Regeneration	The site lies entirely within lower super output area Bolton 09B which is less deprived than 72% of the neighbourhoods in England (English Indices of Deprivation 2025). The site is also located more than a 15-minute walk from any of the 10 per cent most deprived Super Output Areas in England. There is therefore limited evidence of potential or need for regeneration within the vicinity of these sites. The attractiveness of this location for investment and the potential for high-quality development could contribute to regeneration within the wider Bolton area through supporting the town centre	Yes

	regeneration programme and in attracting a higher quality employment offer to the PfE and Local Plan strategic employment growth areas. The site is located 10.5km from Bolton town centre, 2.4km from Blackrod Local Centre and Farnworth town centre and 2.4km Aspull Local Centre in Wigan. Development of this site for employment use would support the regeneration of these centres, benefiting the wider Bolton area and beyond.	
Criterion 4 Transport Investment	No transport investment has been identified specifically associated with this site. The site is, however, located within the Bolton to Wigan growth corridor and, as such, there are a number of schemes in development to improve active travel and public transport on this corridor. Further densification of this corridor by developing these sites would support the proposed transport investments in the corridor. By developing in this location there is also a strategic fit between the location of the new development and proposed new/ additional transport infrastructure which would mitigate congestion and ensure a high proportion of trips to/ from the site will be carried on sustainable modes. Although public sector investment is not committed to the schemes in the Wigan to Bolton Growth Corridor, feasibility studies and funding bids are being prepared and it is reasonable to assume that some degree of public sector investment in transport will be made in this area during the Plan period. Potential site allocations at Lee Hall and Health Innovation Bolton, both of which have well developed transport and access strategies, will further enhance active travel and public transport provision as well as providing additional highways capacity and junction improvements.	Yes
Criterion 5 Addressing Issues	No exceptional local needs or potential benefits identified.	No

Assessment of Green Belt Purpose and Harm

The site sits in the green belt between Horwich and Wigan with the villages of Blackrod nearby and Aspull in between.

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
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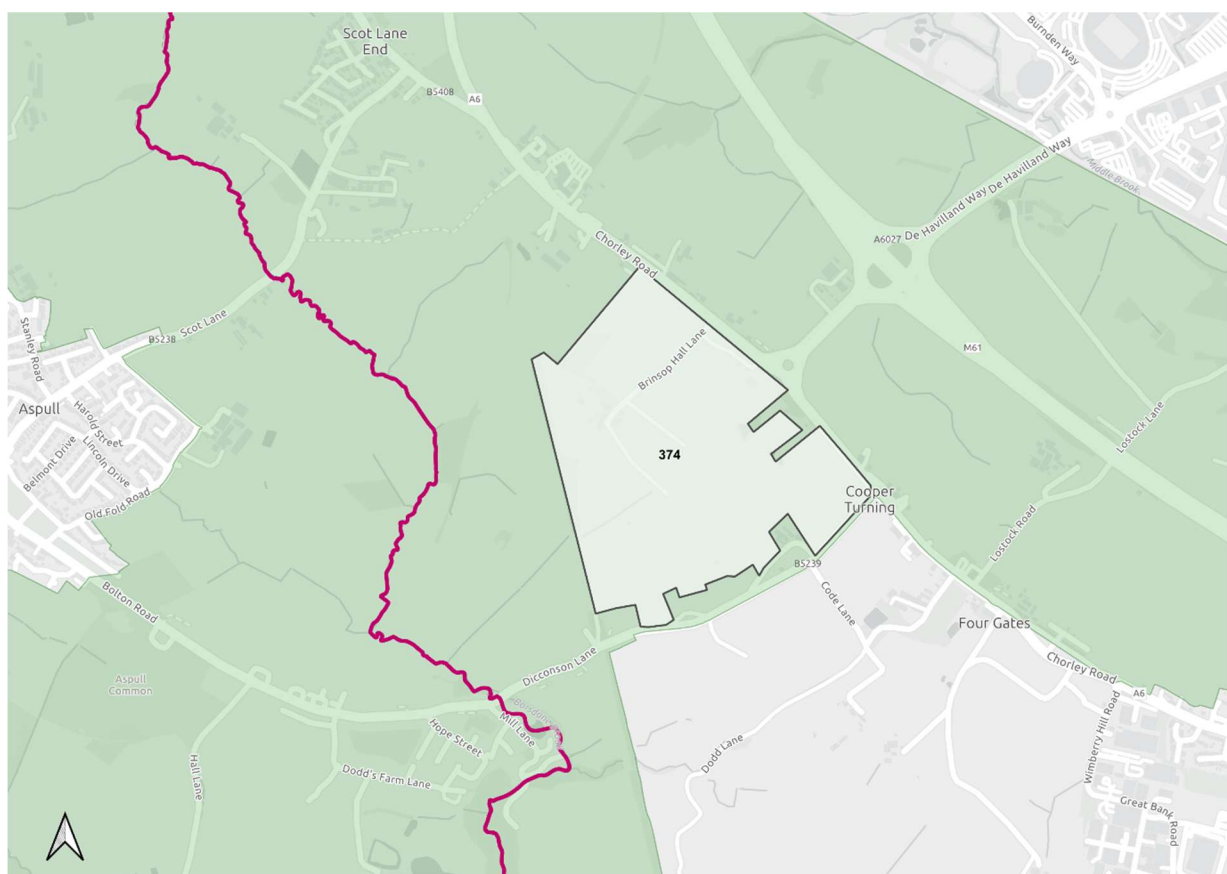
a. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The site is free of existing development. The A6 to the south of the site forms a strong defensible Green Belt boundary, and the presence of a road, hedge and tree line to the east could help contain sprawl.	Moderate
b. to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The site forms only a small part of the Green Belt gap contained between the railway, A6, existing development and dense tree planting. It does not contribute to the openness of the Green Belt between Horwich and Wigan. Due to the topography of the site sloping down towards the rail line, the loss of visual separation to Blackrod would be limited.	Moderate
c. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	There is limited/no sense of encroachment with the parcel being generally free of urbanised built development. The landscape within this parcel remains largely unspoilt by urbanising influences located outside its boundaries. The site performs a strong contribution to purpose C.	Strong
d. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The site has limited impact on preserving the setting of the historic town of Horwich, due to the distance from the conservation area, topography.	Weak
e. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	By restricting inappropriate development all parcels make a strategic contribution towards encouraging the recycling of previously developed land within the urban area. There are exceptional circumstances necessitating Green Belt amendments in Bolton which are addressed fully in Chapter 2.	NA
Overall Assessment of Green Belt Harm	The site makes a moderate overall contribution to Green Belt purposes, with a strong contribution to purpose C, although the extent of encroachment would be limited and contained by existing physical features. The surrounding Green Belt land would continue to perform the same Green Belt function	Moderate

Grey Belt Potential

Grey Belt Potential	Grey Belt Potential	Grey Belt Potential
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Purpose A	The site is close to the edge of Horwich but is not free of existing development and is contained between the rail and road network on three boundaries.	Weak
Purpose B	The site forms only a small part of the Green Belt gap and does not contribute to the visual separation of the towns.	Weak
Purpose D	The site does not contribute to preserving the setting and character of historic towns.	Weak
Conclusion	The site falls within the definition of grey belt	

Site 374 - West of Dicconson Lane



Summary

Proposal	The preferred proposal is for residential – approx. 1,300. Alternatively, the site is proposed for employment floorspace delivering approx. 175,000 sqm or a mix of residential and employment. The employment proposal only is assessed here as sufficient land for residential use has already been identified on more suitable sites and in more sustainable locations. There is no justification for any further Green Belt alterations for residential purposes.
Site Description	The site is within the Green Belt situated to the north-west of Westhoughton, within Hulton ward. The site is directly northwest of the employment allocation at West of Wingates in Places for Everyone. The site is currently in agricultural use. It is sloping and contains a network of public rights of way. Road access to the site is from the A6 and the site is nearby the J6 of the M61. The site is surrounded by the A6 to the north-east, Dicconson Lane to the south-east and by agricultural land to the west.
Planning History	Various applications connected to the use of Brinsop House Farm

Summary SHELAA (EVS02) Findings	No absolute constraints identified. Issues that require further investigation and potential mitigation include potential for contamination and mine shafts and flood risk.
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Criteria Assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1 Sustainable Locations	Previously Developed Land Predominantly green field site.	No
	Connectivity The majority of the site has an overall DfT Connectivity Tool score below 60 by all included modes except driving to the key destinations of residential and workplaces.	No
	Potential to Improve Connectivity Proposed developments nearby at Middlebrook and West of Wingates are likely to improve connectivity to residential and workplaces.	Yes
	Public Transport The majority of the site is not within 800m of a public transport corridor with a GMAL Score of 4 or more. Potential to Improve Public Transport There limited bus service provision. Given the site's location close to M61 J6 it is likely that travel to and from the site will be car dependent.	No No
Criterion 2 Contribution to PfE and Local Plan Spatial Strategy	Local Facilities This site is more than 800m from a local centre. New ancillary retail provision is planned on the adjoining West of Wingates industrial and warehousing allocation but would not support a local centre with a range of services and facilities.	No No
	The site has the potential to support growth in the Wigan-Bolton growth corridor and the Local Plan growth anchors. Development of this scale, in this location could also: support and improve accessibility along the public transport corridor provide new employment opportunities within the vicinity of key strategic employment sites, contributing to the PfE objective to boost northern competitiveness.	Yes

Criterion 3 Urban Regeneration	The site lies within lower super output area Bolton 031A which is more deprived than 62% of the neighbourhoods in England, and super output area 014A which is less deprived than 84% of neighbourhoods in England (English Indices of Deprivation 2025). This site is also located more than a 15-minute walk from any of the 10 per cent most deprived Super Output Areas in England. There is therefore limited evidence of potential or need for regeneration within the vicinity of these sites. The site is located 9.4km from Bolton town centre, with Westhoughton town centre the nearest centre in the borough at a distance of 2.6km. Aspull Local Centre in Wigan is located a distance of 2.3km away.	No
Criterion 4 Transport Investment	There are no transport investment proposals specifically associated with this site at present. The site is, however, located within the Bolton to Wigan growth corridor and, as such, there are a number of schemes in development to improve active travel and public transport on this corridor. Further densification of this corridor by developing these sites would support the proposed transport investments in the corridor. By developing in this location there is also a strategic fit between the location of the new development and proposed new/ additional transport infrastructure which would mitigate congestion and ensure a high proportion of trips to/ from the site will be carried on sustainable modes Although public sector investment is not committed to the schemes in the Wigan to Bolton Growth Corridor, feasibility studies and funding bids are being prepared and it is reasonable to assume that some degree of public sector investment in transport will be made in this area during the Plan period. Potential site allocations at Lee Hall and Health Innovation Bolton, both of which have well developed transport and access strategies, will further enhance active travel and public transport provision as well as providing additional highways capacity and junction improvements.	Yes
Criterion 5 Addressing Issues	No exceptional local needs or potential benefits identified.	No

Assessment of Green Belt Purpose and Harm

The site sits in the green belt to the northwest of Westhoughton. The site sits immediately adjacent to and would form an extension to the West of Wingates site, where a total area 183.7ha of land was removed from the Green Belt by PfE and allocated for approximately 440,000 sqm of industrial and warehousing floorspace (Policy JPA 6).

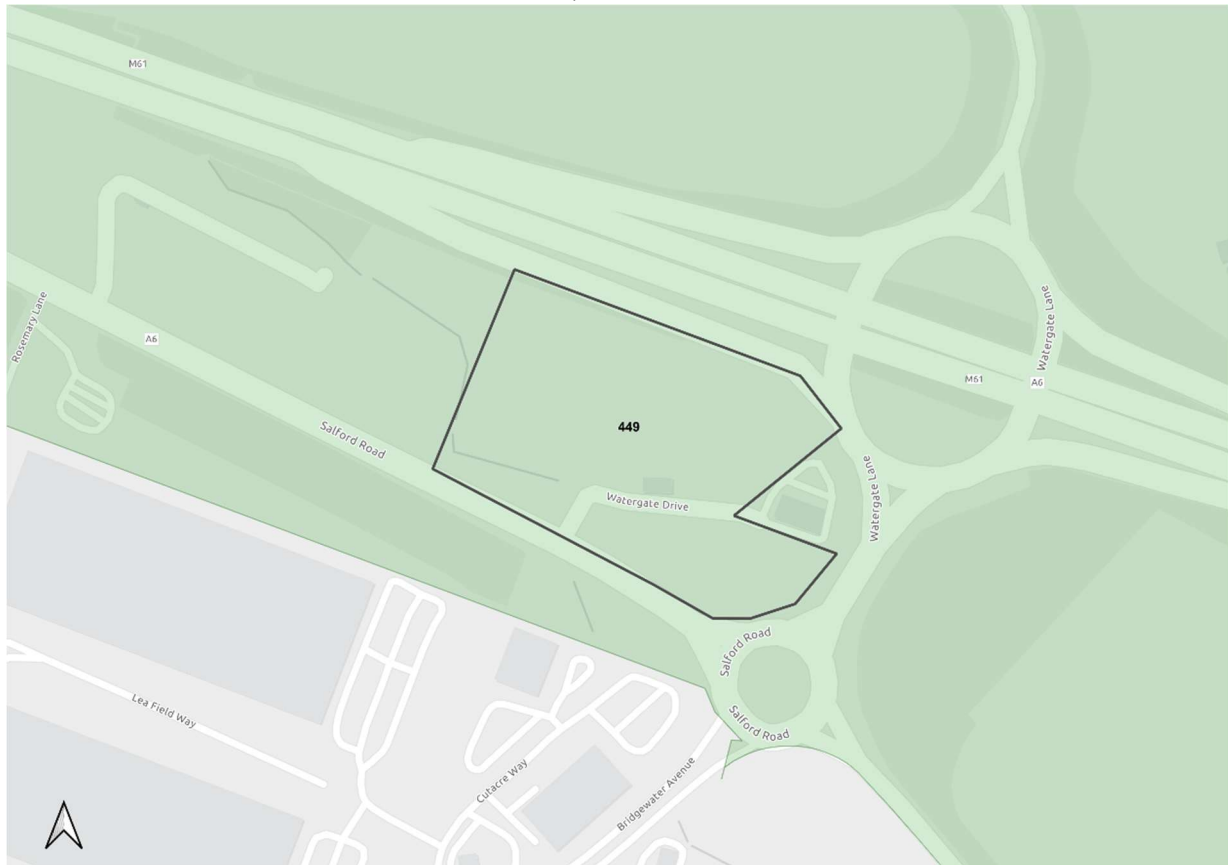
Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
a. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Westhoughton is part of the large built-up area of Greater Manchester. The site makes a strong contribution towards restricting the unrestricted sprawl of Westhoughton. There is no sense of containment and no strong defensible Green Belt boundary to prevent urban sprawl.	Strong
b. to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The site is located within the gap between Bolton, Westhoughton, Horwich, Adlington, Standish, Hindley and Wigan. The development of the site, together with the development of the West of Wingates site allocation will reduce the visual, physical and perceived separation between the towns.	Strong
c. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The site is predominantly open fields with a small number of residential properties. The site has a strong relationship with the countryside to the south and west and plays a strong role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	Strong
d. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The site has a limited connection to the conservation area in the historic town of Westhoughton.	Moderate
e. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	By restricting inappropriate development all parcels make a strategic contribution towards encouraging the recycling of previously developed land within the urban area. There are exceptional circumstances necessitating Green Belt amendments in Bolton which are addressed fully in Chapter 2.	NA
Overall Assessment of	The site makes a strong contribution to fundamental Green Belt purposes a, b and c.	High

Green Belt Harm	Development would result in unrestricted sprawl and an incongruous pattern of development to the west of Westhoughton. If removed from the Green Belt surrounding land would continue to perform the same Green Belt function.	
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Grey Belt Potential

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
Purpose A	The site is substantially free of existing development with a lack of physical features in reasonable proximity that could restrict or contain development. The development of the site would result in unchecked urban sprawl to the west of Weshoughton. Development would form an incongruous pattern of development projecting from the south-west edge of Bolton.	Strong
Purpose B	Development of the whole site forms a substantial part of the gap between Westhoughton and Horwich. Development would result in a loss of visual separation between the two towns.	Strong
Purpose D	The site makes a small contribution to Westhoughton but with no visual, physical or experiential relationship to the historic aspects of the town	Moderate
Conclusion	The site does not fall within the definition of grey belt	

Site 449 – Land Southwest of Junction 4, M61



Summary

Proposal	Employment
Site Description	The site is within the green belt situated in the south of Bolton borough and directly north of Logistics North. The site is in Hulton ward. The site is currently in agricultural use and is flat. Public transport access to site is by bus, primarily the high frequency 38 bus route from Logistics North- Manchester. There is no train station near to the site. Motorway access is available very nearby at J4 of the M61. The site is surrounded by the M61 to the North, the A6 to the South, Watergate Lane to the east and agricultural land to the west.
Planning History	None recorded.
Summary SHELAA (EVS02) Findings	No absolute constraints identified. Issues that require further investigation and potential mitigation include underground electricity cables on the east and west boundaries.

Criteria Assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1 Sustainable Locations	<i>Previously Developed Land</i> The site is largely a greenfield site.	No
	<i>Connectivity</i> The majority of the site has an overall DfT Connectivity Tool score above 60 by all included modes except driving to the key destinations of residential and workplaces.	Yes
	<i>Public Transport</i> The site is not within 800m of a public transport corridor with a GMAL Score of 4 or more. There are relatively few facilities available in the immediate local area but the site has some degree of access to bus services. However, the location of the development near to M61 J4 means that it is likely to have a relatively high degree of car dependence.	No No
Criterion 2 Contribution to PfE and Local Plan Spatial Strategy	The sites has the potential to support growth in the Wigan-Bolton growth corridor and the Local Plan growth anchors. Development would provide new employment opportunities within the vicinity of key strategic employment sites, contributing to the PfE objective to boost northern competitiveness.	Yes
Criterion 3 Urban Regeneration	The site lies predominantly within lower super output area Bolton 026A which is more deprived than 50% of the neighbourhoods in England (English Indices of Deprivation 2025). The site is also within a 15 minute walk of at least one of the 10 per cent most deprived Super Output Areas in England evidencing the need for regeneration within the vicinity. There is therefore evidence of potential or need for regeneration within the vicinity of these sites. The site is located 10.5km from Bolton town centre with St. Helen Road Local Centre the nearest centre in Bolton at a distance of 2.7km. Little Hulton Local Centre in Salford is located at a distance of 2.2km. Development of this site for employment use would support the regeneration of these centres, benefiting the wider Bolton area and beyond. Development of this site for employment would continue the economic success of Logistics North.	Yes

Criterion 4 Transport Investment	There are no transport investments associated directly with this site, but it is, however, located within the Bolton to Wigan growth corridor and, as such, there are a number of schemes in development to improve active travel and public transport on this corridor. Further densification of this corridor by developing these sites would support the proposed transport investments in the corridor. By developing in this location there is also a strategic fit between the location of the new development and proposed new/ additional transport infrastructure which would mitigate congestion and ensure a high proportion of trips to/ from the site will be carried on sustainable modes. Although public sector investment is not committed to the schemes in the Wigan to Bolton Growth Corridor, feasibility studies and funding bids are being prepared and it is reasonable to assume that some degree of public sector investment in transport will be made in this area during the Plan period. Potential site allocations at Lee Hall and Health Innovation Bolton, both of which have well developed transport and access strategies, will further enhance active travel and public transport provision as well as providing additional highways capacity and junction improvements.	Yes
Criterion 5 Addressing Issues	No exceptional local needs or potential benefits identified.	No

Assessment of Green Belt Purpose and Harm

This is set between the settlement areas of Little Hulton and Farnworth to the east, and Over Hulton to the west at the southern edge of the Borough. The parcel is bound to the south by the Logistics North development.

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
a. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The site is located near to the large built-up area of Bolton and is free of existing development. The boundaries between the site and the large built-up area are predominantly defensible consisting of the A6 and the M61. The remainder of the boundary to the west of the site is a less defensible field boundary which results in a risk of sprawl to the west in the narrow gap between Little Hulton and Over Hulton & Atherton	Strong

b. to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The site forms a small part of the Green Belt gap north of the Logistics North site. In isolation the site makes no contribution to this purpose.	Weak
c. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Contributes moderately to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The parcel has some sense of urban encroachment due to nearby sewage treatment works but still maintains a rural character.	Moderate
d. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The site does not contribute to preserving the setting and character of historic towns.	Weak
e. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	By restricting inappropriate development all parcels make a strategic contribution towards encouraging the recycling of previously developed land within the urban area. There are exceptional circumstances necessitating Green Belt amendments in Bolton which are addressed fully in Chapter 2.	NA
Overall Assessment of Green Belt Harm	The site makes a strong contribution to purpose a. Development would result in unrestricted sprawl north of the Logistics North site, closing the gap between Over Hulton with Atherton and Little Hulton. An area to the southeast of the site would be disconnected from the wider Green Belt and enclosed by development, decreasing overall contribution to Green Belt purposes.	High

Grey Belt Potential

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Green Belt Contribution
Purpose A	The site is substantially free of existing development. The development of the whole site would result in unchecked urban sprawl which could lead to the merging of Over Hulton & Atherton with Little Hulton. Within the site there is a lack of physical features that could restrict or contain development.	Strong

Purpose B	The site is free of existing development and forms a substantial part of the gap between Little Hulton and Over Hulton & Atherton to the north of the A6. Due to urbanising development features on the remaining Green Belt land to the west, development would result in a loss of visual separation between the two towns between the A6 and the M61.	Strong
Purpose D	The site does not have a connection to the conservation of any historic towns.	Weak
Conclusion	The site does not fall within the definition of grey belt	

Appendix C Other Protected Open Land Potential for Development

Protected Open Land Site	Summary
Hill Lane, Blackrod	Residential development won at appeal in 2016 is now complete. The remainder of the land contains a primary school, cricket club and recreation ground. This is unavailable or suitable for development.
Hospital Road Bromley Cross	This land has been developed for housing.
Land in the Croal Irwell Valley at Little Lever (Off Redcar Road)	This is a council owned site with informal recreational use on the edge of the wider Croal Irwell Valley adjacent to Manchester Bolton and Bury Canal. It falls within Moses Gate Country Park LNR and Manchester, Bolton and Bury West part water based SBI. There are no proposals for the development of this land. The site does not have suitable access for industrial or warehousing uses and is surrounded on three sides by residential use.
Bowlands Hey	The majority of this land is being developed for housing. Phase 1 of housing development was allowed on appeal during 2017 and is now complete. A further phase (9.2 ha) was allowed on appeal in 2020 and is currently being built out and three further phases (3-5) were allowed on appeal in 2022 and are also underway.
Darcy Lever	This is a large area within the Croal Irwell valley. It is largely open including sizeable Leverhulme Park and Tonge Cemetery. There are 2 SBIs and flood risk in some parts along Bradshaw Brook and the River Tonge. It is unsuitable for industrial or warehousing development and there would be amenity issues with existing residential access use.
Scholes Bank, Horwich	There is a well treed SBI on eastern part and largely in formal recreational playing field use by Horwich St. Marys Football Club.
Lever Park Avenue, Horwich	This has been developed for housing with the exception of the allotments.
Knowles Farm, Horwich	A significant part of this site is under construction for housing. The north eastern part of this land was added to the Green Belt through Places for everyone. Access is unsuitable for industrial or warehousing development and there would be amenity issues with existing residential use.
Bottom O'th' Moor (aka Nevy Fold Farm)	Remnant farmland on the edge of the settlement which contributes to its openness.

	Access is unsuitable for industrial or warehousing development and there would be amenity issues with existing residential development.
Middle Brook Valley	This is a large wedge of open land extending into the built up area. It is in a mixture of uses, including Heaton Cemetery, Deane Golf Course, playing fields, agricultural and horticultural uses, woodland and a very small number of houses. Part is within a Conservation Area and there is high flood risk along Middlebrook. Development of this land for industrial or warehousing use would not be in accordance with the Local Plan Spatial Strategy.
South of Lostock	A significant proportion of the site consists of Middlebrook Sidings and Marsh SBI. Similarly, a large proportion of the site is within Flood Zone 2.
Cox Green Quarry	This is a wooded former quarry, which is mostly a site of biological importance. It is unsuitable for development. Development of this land for industrial or warehousing use would not be in accordance with the Local Plan Spatial Strategy. Access is unsuitable for industrial or warehousing development and there would be amenity issues with existing residential development.
Catteral Crescent, Harwood	This land is within a Conservation Area. Development of this land for industrial or warehousing use would not be in accordance with the Local Plan Spatial Strategy. Access is unsuitable for industrial or warehousing development and there would be amenity issues with existing residential development.
Land In the Eagley Valley at Astley Bridge	The area consists of a wooded clough adjoining council owned allotments. Bank Top SBI covers a significant proportion of the site. Development of this land for industrial or warehousing use would not be in accordance with the Local Plan Spatial Strategy. Access is unsuitable for industrial or warehousing development and there would be amenity issues with existing residential development.
Land In the Croal Irwell Valley At Harwood (east of Longsight Lane)	The area consists of grassland and woodland and forms part of the wider Croal Irwell Valley. A sizeable portion is in informal recreational use having been established as a millennium forest. Immediately adjacent to Castle Croft and Bradshaw Brook SBI. Development of this land for industrial or warehousing use would not be in accordance with the Local Plan Spatial Strategy. Access is unsuitable for industrial or warehousing development and there would be amenity issues with existing residential development.

Land in the Croal Irwell Valley at Little Lever (Linden Avenue)	Informal recreational use on the edge of the wider Croal Irwell Valley. The land consists of valley area with woods and open grassland. There is high flood risk on areas adjoining Blackshaw Brook. Development of this land for industrial or warehousing use would not be in accordance with the Local Plan Spatial Strategy. Access is unsuitable for industrial or warehousing development and there would be amenity issues with existing residential development.
Land to the East of Little Lever (Stopes Road)	This land is used for informal recreation. It also contains woodland. 6.07 hectares of this land are King George playing fields and therefore protected from development. Development of this land for industrial or warehousing use would not be in accordance with the Local Plan Spatial Strategy. There would also be amenity issues with existing residential development.
Wingates (aka Ditchers Farm)	The Local Plan allocates this site for residential development through allocation BSA05 (Ditchers Farm, Westhoughton).
The Hollins	The Local Plan allocates this site for residential development through allocation BSA03 (Anchor Lane, Farnworth).
Ringley	Part of the area is already occupied by housing, a school and mill. The rest of the site falls within flood zone 2 or 3. The site adjoins the Bolton Waste Water Treatment Works at Red Rock Lane WTW. Most of the area is also a Conservation Area. Development of this land for industrial or warehousing use would not be in accordance with the Local Plan Spatial Strategy.
Land rear of Vale Cottages	Very small undevelopable wooded strip of land directly adjoining M61.
Land in the Croal Irwell Valley at Little Lever (south of Aintree Road)	Informal recreational use on the edge of the wider Croal Irwell Valley adjacent to Manchester Bolton and Bury Canal. Virtually the entire site is within Moses Gate LNR. A significant proportion of the site is made up of Moses Gate Local Nature Reserve. Development of this land for industrial or warehousing use would not be in accordance with the Local Plan Spatial Strategy. Access is unsuitable for industrial or warehousing development and there would be amenity issues with existing residential development.
Lee Hall	This land has been allocated for residential development though Local Plan Allocation BSA04 (Lee Hall).
Ridgeway Bridge, Blackrod	A planning application (ref 19724/25) was recently submitted for commercial, industrial and storage units. However, the planning

	application was withdrawn due to HGV access issues that couldn't be resolved. Various solutions were put forward to highway colleagues to address these issues, when considering its potential as a site allocation. Accessing the site from the A6 and through the Blackrod Employment Cluster (BSA07) was considered to have too many constraints to overcome and to be financially unviable. Allocating the site for industrial and warehousing use that doesn't require HGV access, for example, light industrial, was considered to be unenforceable as there would be no means to enforce the servicing regime legitimately on site. Additionally Moss Lane serves residential properties and there were concerns from a road safety perspective.
Red Moss	Largely consists of Red Moss SSSI and Red Moss SBI and is a former waste disposal site. The site is unsuitable for development. It also adjoins Horwich Locoworks (Rivington Chase), part providing buffer and open space.
Kearsley	Large area of land either side of the Bolton to Manchester railway, mainly open fields, but with some scattered housing. Its fragmented ownership and topography would make it difficult to develop comprehensively. Owners of some individual sites have considered housing development and land supply contains one small permission for one unit. The site is immediately adjacent to Unity Brook SBI and there would also be amenity issues with existing residential development.