

October 2026

Bolton Local Plan

Publication Version (Regulation 19)



This is the Regulation 19 publication version of the Bolton Local Plan.
It has been published for representations before submission for independent examination.
It is not yet adopted policy.

Details of how to make representations are set out at the [Council's emerging Local Plan current consultations webpage](#).

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Chapter 1

Introduction to this Plan

- 1.1. This is the Local Plan for Bolton (published under Regulation 19 of the Local Plan Regulations for your views) for the period from 2022 to 2042. This is our local rule book for making sure the planning decisions we take as a Council contribute to making Bolton a better and more attractive place to live, do business and invest in.
- 1.2. Bolton is in the north-west of Greater Manchester, around 10 miles from Manchester city centre, where the built-up area of the conurbation gives way to the West Pennine Moors (see Figure 1). It is bordered by Bury to the east, Salford to the south, Wigan to the south-west, and the Lancashire authorities of Chorley and Blackburn with Darwen to the north. The borough brings together a substantial urban core around Bolton Town Centre with several smaller towns and villages and a significant area of open countryside and upland. It is served by eleven train stations within the borough and a further five near its boundary and is dissected by the M61.

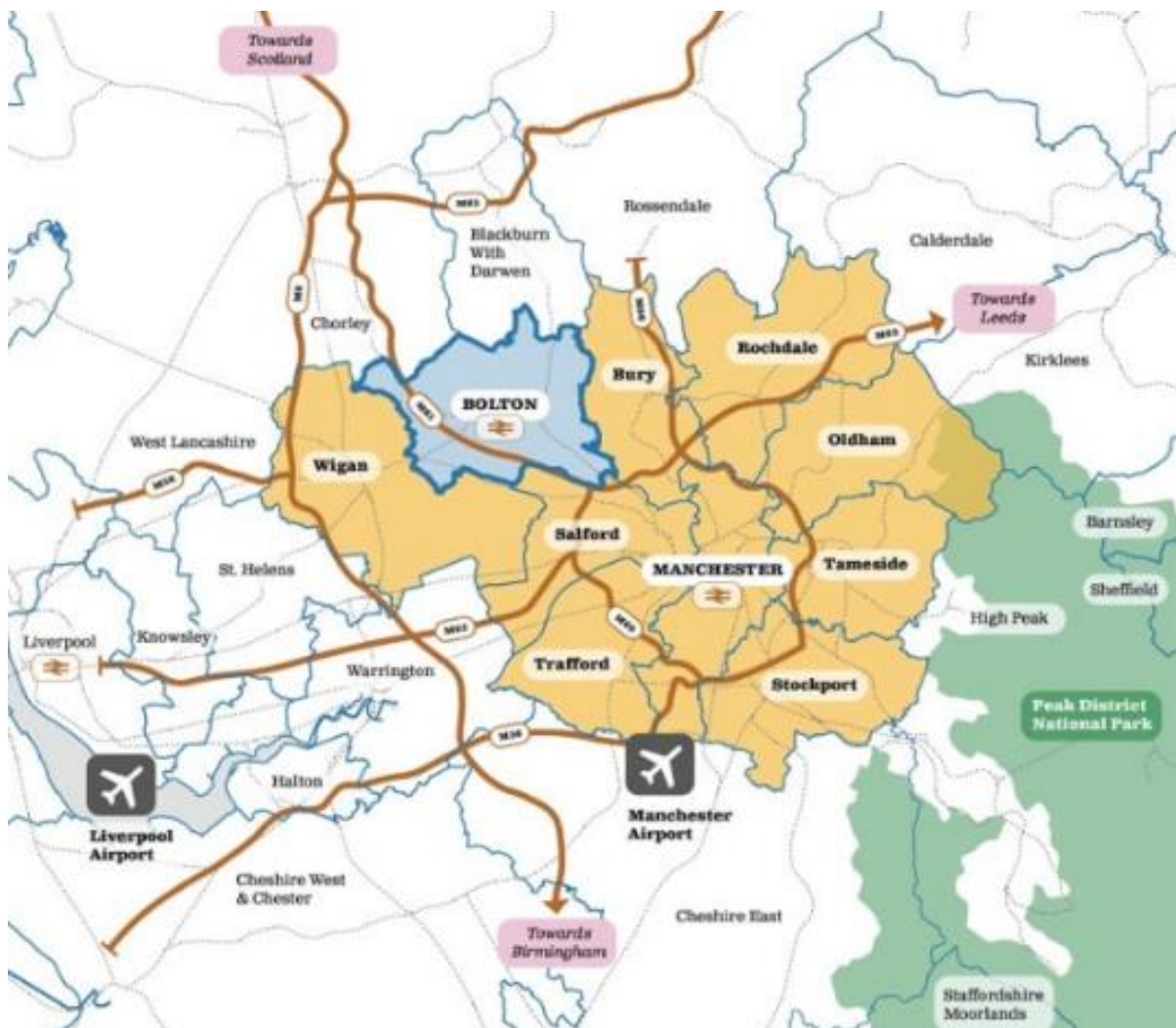


Figure 1. Map of Bolton in its regional context.

- 1.3. Our borough is at a point of genuine opportunity: the University of Greater Manchester is growing its ambitions, the prospect of a health innovation cluster around the Royal Bolton Hospital and its new medical school, a town centre beginning to turn a corner, and a generation who will stay and build their futures here if the homes and jobs are there for them. But Bolton needs more. More homes that people can afford – particularly for our older residents – more jobs that pay fairly, better infrastructure and greener, healthier places.
- 1.4. This Local Plan is intended for use alongside Places for Everyone (2024) which sets the strategic regional planning framework for this Local Plan. Places for Everyone (2024) includes requirements for Bolton to:
 - Deliver at least 787 homes a year in Bolton, equivalent to at least 13,717 homes over this plan period, when under-delivery is taken into account; and
 - Contribute to meeting the need for new industrial and warehousing floorspace across the Places for Everyone Plan areas, which Places for Everyone identifies as 3,513,000 sqm across the plan area for Bolton and the other eight authorities.

The national ask

- 1.5. This Local Plan is set firmly within the framework provided by Places for Everyone (2024) but has also been shaped by conversations with local residents, businesses and developers operating in Bolton, including local infrastructure providers. But our Local Plan must respond to national direction too. In fact, national planning policy is necessarily a major driver of what is in this Local Plan. The Government has an ambition to deliver 1.5 million homes across the country and national planning policy explains that the purpose of a Local Plan is to plan positively to meet an area's development needs. We cannot adopt a Local Plan inconsistent with national policy, which is why this Local Plan necessarily responds to the national planning policy framework.

The local concern

- 1.6. The concerns that Bolton residents raise about development are specific and legitimate. We wanted to acknowledge this upfront. More houses mean more cars on roads that many people feel are already congested. It means more children in schools, and many are concerned about longer waits at a GP surgery that is already overstretched. A Local Plan means change to a place that people have chosen to live in, feel proud of and want to protect. It can also be hard to understand why development is happening in a specific neighbourhood and the processes that have led to it.
- 1.7. The Local Plan takes those concerns seriously. But it is also important to be upfront about the alternative to not having a Plan. Decisions about where development goes in Bolton will be made regardless of whether this Plan exists. National policy requires local authorities to plan for housing and employment. Where a plan is absent, out of date, or unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, decision-making on planning applications can become more challenging. Development still happens, but on terms the Council has not set, in places the Council has not chosen, and without the commitments to infrastructure and quality that this Plan attaches to every significant proposal.
- 1.8. Bolton has direct experience of this. The Core Strategy (2011) and Site Allocations Plan (2014) intended to be replaced by this plan looked to brownfield land first before considering other options. But relying on the supply of suitable brownfield land was

not enough to meet Bolton's housing need, and completions fell short year after year. The housing need grew. Affordability worsened. And as the land supply ran down, the Council's ability to resist unsuitable development on appeal weakened. A sequential approach to site allocations by looking at brownfield land first is right, but relying on brownfield land alone to deliver the homes Bolton needs is not. As much as this would be preferred, there is compelling evidence that it would not deliver the homes required.

- 1.9. Development in Bolton's neighbourhoods will happen. This Local Plan is how the Council makes sure it happens on Bolton's terms: within the framework set by national planning policy and Places for Everyone (2024) and contributing to the infrastructure those communities need.

The Local Plan Commitment

- 1.10. This Local Plan is a commitment to the communities of Bolton. Every policy asks not just whether a proposal is acceptable in principle, but whether it works for the communities around it. Policies identify the infrastructure which must be in place, or credibly secured, before development creates demand for it. Affordable homes must be truly affordable in practice. Open spaces must be protected and improved.
- 1.11. This Plan responds to residents' concerns about infrastructure directly. It requires development to fund the infrastructure it creates demand for before that demand arises. It directs development to locations with the capacity to absorb it. And the Council will report publicly through its monitoring reports on whether the Plan is delivering what it promises in respect of securing infrastructure.
- 1.12. This plan is also for a borough that is investment-ready and welcomes high-quality development that meets our borough's needs and looks to facilitate it. The policies are positively phrased and designed to give confidence to those who want to invest in Bolton's future. Developers, landowners and investors can read the policies in this Plan and understand, as clearly as we can make it, what will be supported by our decision makers and on what terms.

The Legal Status of the Plan

- 1.13. The whole planning system in England is plan-led, which means applications are decided in line with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. A Local Plan must be consistent with national planning policy for it to be adopted.
- 1.14. This Local Plan (once adopted) is part of the statutory development plan for Bolton. On adoption, this Plan replaces the policies in the previous Local Plan, the Bolton Core Strategy (2011) and the Site Allocations Plan (2014). These are set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.15. Once adopted, this Local Plan becomes part of a wider suite of documents that form the statutory development plan for Bolton. Foremost among these is Places for Everyone (2024), which sets the strategic policies for housing, employment, transport and net zero carbon across nine Greater Manchester authorities. This Local Plan applies that framework to Bolton's specific geography, communities and opportunities. The development plan also includes the current Greater Manchester Waste and Minerals Plan, and any made Neighbourhood Plans.
- 1.16. The Plan has been prepared and will be examined against the 2021 Framework in accordance with the transitional arrangements set out in national policy. The Plan

has also had regard to the August 2026 Framework, as the version of national policy current at the time of publication.

Navigating the Document

- 1.17. The Local Plan is in two parts. Part 1 comprises two chapters which set the direction for the Plan. Chapter 2 covers Bolton today, the vision for what the Plan will deliver, and the six objectives for how it will deliver it. Chapter 3 is comprised of strategic policies (SP1 to SP7) which set the spatial strategy for Bolton, namely: where development goes, what is protected, and the needs basis for site allocations.
- 1.18. Part 2, Development Management Policies, sets the policies that apply to individual proposals: infrastructure, placemaking, environment, economy, homes and delivery. Chapter 10 contains strategic policies for key sites (Site Allocations Policies BSA01 – 09).
- 1.19. A [Policies Map](#) is published alongside the Plan and shows where policies apply. A glossary is provided at the end of the Plan.
- 1.20. This Plan operates as a whole. A proposal should be assessed against the policies relevant to it. Not all policies apply to every proposal: a small house extension, for example, does not engage the affordable housing policy. The nature and scale of the proposal determine what is relevant. Every proposal is assessed against a range of factors, and this Plan is shaped around seven main questions planning applications must address and which we will assess. These questions are set out in the flowchart illustrated overleaf (see Table 1).
- 1.21. Better planning applications make for faster decisions. When a proposal sets out clearly what it delivers against each of these questions, officers can assess it efficiently, committee reports are clearer, and councillors can make well-informed decisions with confidence. You can find more guidance on how to make an application on the Council's website.



Table 1. Flowchart showing the seven Local Plan Questions that every development proposal must address.

PART 1

OUR VISION, OBJECTIVES & SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 2

Bolton today and by 2042

- 2.1 Bolton is a borough with a story worth telling. A place that has absorbed wave after wave of economic change and kept its identity, its communities and its civic pride intact and enhanced. Understanding that story, and Bolton's specific opportunities and challenges, has been the starting point for this plan.
- 2.2 Many of the borough's settlements have their origins as market towns, with Bolton gaining its charter as early as 1251. The surrounding countryside of lowlands, river valleys and uplands was shaped by mixed farming, sheep grazing and wool weaving, and punctuated by medieval hamlets and manor houses. This early economic activity laid the foundation for rapid urban development during the Industrial Revolution, led by innovations in technology as well as movements for reform and social justice. With abundant sources of water and coal, the expansion of the canal system and later the rail network, Bolton emerged as one of the world's leading centres for cotton spinning and textile manufacturing. Its urban character remains strongly shaped by the many distinctive mill buildings and associated industrial settlements across the borough alongside traces of the earlier agricultural heritage, as well as by the many striking municipal buildings, public spaces, churches and landscaped estates through which the borough expressed its prosperity and ambition.

Bolton Today

- 2.3 Today Bolton sits within the UK's fastest growing city region, well-placed to gain from continued investment whilst offering an alternative to city living with a lower cost of living and an attractive living environment.

People

- 2.4 Bolton's population of around 310,085 (2024) is set to grow by approximately 14,700 (4.8%) between 2025 and 2043. That growth is concentrated in the 65-plus age group, which will increase by around 9,050. It is also a diverse borough. The majority of Bolton's residents are White British and alongside them communities with roots across South Asia, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and beyond have added to Bolton's culture, its food, its faith life and its neighbourhoods for generations. That heritage and experience is not a footnote to Bolton's story. It is central to what Bolton is and what it can become.
- 2.5 Bolton's communities are among its greatest strengths: friendly, rooted, engaged and with a strong sense of place. Active faith communities, vibrant cultural life and a tradition of civic engagement run through the borough from Farnworth to Horwich, from Westhoughton to Bromley Cross. These are communities that invest in their places and expect their places to invest back in them.
- 2.6 For investors and employers, Bolton's population represents something valuable: a large, diverse workforce within a tight geography, strong community networks and a genuine loyalty to place. A growing university population could begin to add graduate talent to that offer. Across all its communities, Bolton brings cultural knowledge and entrepreneurial energy that employers increasingly recognise as competitive assets.
- 2.7 The health picture is the one that drives the most urgent decisions in this Plan. Life expectancy varies by around a decade between Bolton's neighbourhoods. Some

29% of residents are physically inactive (2024/25) and around 38% of Year 6 children are overweight or obese (2024/25). These are not figures that planning alone can change. But they are figures that a Plan with health at its heart can begin to shift. The policies set out in this plan on design quality, open space, active travel, food environment and infrastructure accessibility are part of that response.

- 2.8 Bolton had around 128,016 homes in 2021. Lower-quartile house prices of approximately £135,000 (2025) represent an affordability ratio of around six times median income. The gross annual affordable housing shortfall is 2,259 dwellings. The proportion of residents with a long-term health condition that affects their housing needs is growing alongside the ageing population.
- 2.9 For residential developers and housing investors, Bolton's market has real strengths. Land costs and values support viable development across a range of tenures. The affordability position means demand for both market and affordable homes is genuine and sustained. Build-to-rent, shared ownership and affordable housing investment all have a credible market here.
- 2.10 Behind the headline figures are people with real concerns, whether that is a young person who grew up in Bolton and cannot afford to stay, a disabled young adult looking to move out of their parents' home, or an older resident whose home no longer meets their needs and who cannot find somewhere suitable within their community.

Economy

- 2.11 Bolton has around 11,700 active businesses (ONS, 2024). The employment rate of 65.6% is below national averages, and economic inactivity stands at 30.2%. The percentage of the population aged 16 to 64 with Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) level 3+ qualifications stands at 61.3% (Jan-Dec 2025), compared with a national average of 67.1%.
- 2.12 For investors, the gap between current performance and potential is where the opportunity lies. An available, trainable workforce, together with land and premises costs that are competitive by Greater Manchester standards, makes Bolton a borough ready to absorb investment in a way that more constrained markets cannot. Bolton Town Centre, with its transport interchange and university campus, is positioned to attract professional services and creative and digital businesses. A sustained regeneration programme is already reshaping the centre and is gaining momentum to build long-term investment confidence.
- 2.13 The industrial and warehousing market tells its own success story: Bolton's industrial vacancy rate (2025) is 1.7%, below the Manchester City Region rate of 5.1%, reflecting strong and sustained demand for this type of employment space. Beyond the centre, Middlebrook at Horwich, one of the largest retail and leisure parks in the UK, is also a significant office and employment location and an established part of the borough's economic offer.
- 2.14 Two of the borough's largest institutions sit at the heart of that potential. The University of Greater Manchester brings teaching, research and a growing graduate population, and the Royal Bolton Hospital is a major employer and a centre for health and care expertise. Places for Everyone (2024) supports a health innovation cluster on hospital land, and the Greater Manchester Economic Strategy identifies a new Health Innovation Campus there as a key project within a designated growth location.

Transport

- 2.15 Bolton is well connected. The M61 runs along the western edge of the town with access at junctions 4, 5 and 6, linking the borough north towards the M6 and south to the M60 and the wider motorway network. Eleven railway stations serve the borough, at Bolton, Horwich Parkway, Blackrod, Lostock, Westhoughton, Daisy Hill, Farnworth, Moses Gate, Kearsley, Bromley Cross and Hall i' th' Wood, with Bolton Interchange bringing rail and bus together at the centre of the town. Transport is the largest single source of the borough's greenhouse gas emissions, at 41% (Bolton Climate Change Strategy Annual Report, 2024/25).
- 2.16 Travel remains car led. Of employed residents, 54.1% drive to work, 3.8% take the bus and 1.3% the train (Census, 2021), although the timing of the Census during the Covid pandemic means data from this period tends to under-represent public transport use. Bus use is growing again since franchising under the Bee Network brought services under local control, with journeys up 14% year on year in the first franchised areas, which included Bolton (TfGM, 2025). But for many journeys in Bolton, particularly across the borough's outer areas where the public transport network is less well integrated, the car remains a preferred travel choice. At the same time, some 24.8% of households have no car or van (Census, 2021) and depend on the bus, the train and walking to reach work, school and services.
- 2.17 Road congestion can be found in many locations in Bolton, particularly in the AM and PM peak hours. The worst locations for congestion are around Farnworth and Westhoughton and in the centre of Bolton. There is substantial congestion at the junction of the M60, M61 and A666 at Kearsley Interchange.
- 2.18 The borough's walking and cycling network is growing from a strong foundation. Around 300 kilometres of public footpaths, restricted byways and bridleways cross the borough, and established routes such as the Middlebrook Valley Trail, a purpose-built footpath and cycleway linking Red Moss with the town centre, connect communities as well as countryside. New cycle routes between Bolton and Farnworth town centres and within the town centre itself are extending that network. It is on short, local journeys, to school, to the shops, to the station, that safe, direct and attractive routes can make the difference.

Nature

- 2.19 Bolton sits at the edge of the uplands. The West Pennine Moors, designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and one of the most significant areas of open upland in Greater Manchester, rise above the western and northern fringes of the borough. The Croal and the Irwell run through the urban fabric, connecting green spaces and providing wildlife corridors. Red Moss, Nob End and Gale Clough are nationally important ecological sites.
- 2.20 Bolton's rich architectural heritage is reflected in the landmark town centre buildings. The Town Hall and Le Mans Crescent provide the historic setting that enables Bolton to tap into the region's success as a premier UK hub for high-end film and TV production, attracting creative talent and major blockbuster projects.
- 2.21 As of August 2026, there are 372 current entries in the National Heritage List for England (NHLE), indicating the extent and depth of Bolton's heritage, including early archaeological sites, historic farms, industrial, canal and rail heritage, religious buildings, municipal buildings and private estates. A small number of these are also on the Heritage at Risk Register, a reminder that protection alone does not secure their future. Active reuse, investment and design quality can translate listed status into a living asset for the borough's people and places. This is demonstrated across

the borough, including the conservation of the medieval and Tudor Smithills Hall as a museum and event venue, the active congregation at the Victorian St Peter's Church in Bolton, and the residential conversion of the Edwardian-era Holden Mill in Astley Bridge.

- 2.22 That natural environment is not just an ecological asset. It is a quality-of-life offer that helps attract and retain the professional workforce that knowledge economy employers need. Access to open countryside within minutes of the town centre is a locational advantage that few Greater Manchester boroughs can match. Green infrastructure investment in this Plan is also investment in Bolton's economic competitiveness.
- 2.23 There are also wider environmental challenges. Nearly 3,320 ground floor properties (Environment Agency, 2025) face a 1-in-30-year risk of surface water flooding, a risk that grows as the climate changes. The borough's green infrastructure network is both a major asset and a system under pressure from development, climate change and underinvestment. This Plan creates opportunities to turn that pressure into sustained investment in the natural environment that Bolton's communities and economy both depend upon. Green infrastructure also carries potential for conflict where it is used for recreation, and the Plan will manage this carefully so that recreation does not cause adverse effects on biodiversity.

Bolton Vision 2040

- 2.24 The Bolton 2040 Vision, the Borough Plan agreed by the Bolton Vision Partnership, sets the shared ambition for the borough: a place where everyone can thrive, delivered through six missions and guided by the pillars of prevention, investment and growth (see Figure 2). The Local Plan is one of the main tools for delivering that ambition. It cannot do everything the 2040 Vision asks, but it controls the things only a development plan can: where growth goes, what land is protected, what new development must provide, and the standard it must meet. The ambition statement set out overleaf translates the Bolton 2040 Vision into those spatial terms. It describes the borough the Local Plan is working towards.



Figure 2. The Bolton 2040 Vision wheel, pillars and missions. Source: [Bolton Vision 2040](#).

Our Local Ambition

- 2.25 Reflecting on where we are in 2025/6, this is our ambition for what the Local Plan by the end of the Plan period in 2042 will look like and how it will contribute to meeting the Bolton Vision 2040.

By 2042, Bolton will be a healthier, fairer, greener and more prosperous borough.

Our goal is to improve health and well-being for people across the borough. We aim to reduce inequalities by ensuring better access to jobs, homes, education and local services, as well as better access to clean air, restorative green spaces, and well-designed places. Together, these measures can support lifelong well-being for Bolton's settled and new communities alike. Bolton will be a borough that has attracted the right investment and put it to work in the right places: growing where it can, protecting what matters, and enabling each to strengthen the other.

Investment will be anchored in places with the capacity to deliver good growth: Central Bolton, the civic and commercial heart and a growing place to live; Health Innovation Bolton, a centre for medicine, research and care at the Royal Bolton Hospital and the new medical school in its grounds, with a reach beyond the borough; and Middlebrook, keeping its retail, leisure and sporting role while evolving to include homes and a wider mix of uses. Central Bolton and Health Innovation Bolton also sit within NorthFold, the growth corridor running from the town centre towards Wigan that carries the borough's main manufacturing, industry and logistics growth, and the jobs that come with it.

Just as important as where Bolton grows is what it keeps. The network of centres, from Bolton Town Centre to local high streets, will keep doing the daily work of the borough as new homes come forward around them. Bolton's heritage will be cared for and put back to work: the civic ensemble around Victoria Square reinforced, and the great mills that built the town given new life as homes and workspaces. Its natural environment, the West Pennine Moors and Winter Hill above them, the river valleys of the Croal, Irwell and Tonge, and the parks and green spaces between them, will be protected, better connected and more accessible to the towns and villages around them. The Green Belt will keep the borough's towns

distinct. Horwich, Westhoughton, Blackrod and Farnworth will remain distinct places, with green land between them.

There will be new homes across the borough, of different kinds and for different needs, in the places best able to take them. Above all, Bolton will be a place people can afford to live, and a place where older people can stay in the neighbourhoods they know. Where the housing has tipped too far towards shared rented rooms, the balance will be restored with family homes and settled streets.

New neighbourhoods will mean more than housing. The schools, GP surgeries, shops, parks, green spaces and transport connections that make daily life work, including for children and for older people, will be there from the start, not years behind. The whole borough will be easier to move around. The car will remain important, but as the Bee Network grows with buses, trains and safe routes for walking, wheeling and cycling coming together as one, the alternatives will become the easier choice for more journeys: to work, to school and to each other. The Council will work hand in hand with developers and with the NHS, Transport for Greater Manchester and other infrastructure providers to make the most of what growth brings so that it leaves Bolton better, not just bigger, and will push to get the right infrastructure at the right time.

Bolton's motto, *Supera Moras*, carries a double meaning: it echoes the town's old name, Bolton-on-the-moors, and it means 'to overcome delays'. This Plan's ambition statement holds both: a borough sure of where it comes from – its moors and its towns – and a commitment to proactively shaping and building its future rather than putting it off and becoming more vulnerable to unplanned development. Achieving our ambition, guided by these objectives, will take residents, developers, infrastructure providers and decision-makers working together to implement the plan.

Local Plan Objectives

- 2.26 To realise this ambition, the Plan sets six objectives, with health and well-being at their heart (see Figure 3). The Plan's overarching goal, working alongside the Health and Well-being Strategy and other plans and programmes, is to improve health and well-being for people across the borough. Good jobs and secure incomes, warm and affordable homes in safe neighbourhoods, everyday journeys made on foot or by bike, accessible local services, green spaces close to home, and places people feel proud of: these are the things that help people live longer, healthier lives, and they are what the Plan is set up to deliver. The six objectives below carry that aim, and no single one holds it alone: they are meant to be read as a whole.

1	Jobs & Businesses	Grow and diversify the economy to improve the borough's economic performance by creating more and better jobs, improving local people's access to training, raising aspirations, supporting the vitality of Bolton Town Centre and other centres, reducing unemployment, and increasing household incomes and demand for local goods and services.
2	Homes & Neighbourhoods	Enable delivery of at least 787 new high-quality, energy-efficient homes a year that meet people's needs in terms both of cost and type, in sustainable locations, prioritising brownfield land, while making the best use of, and improving the quality of, the existing housing stock to create safe and inclusive neighbourhoods.
3	Transport Choices	Support inclusive and accessible travel, making walking, cycling, and wheeling the easy choice and improving public transport where possible to provide safe, reliable and low-carbon travel and an integrated transport offer that connects within, across and beyond the borough.
4	Local Services & Infrastructure	Enable the delivery of local services and infrastructure needed to support existing and new communities and keep pace with growth across the borough: including local transport, health, education, youth, and cultural services alongside green, digital and low-carbon energy infrastructure.
5	Natural Environment	Conserve and enhance the borough's landscapes, habitats and species, expand green and blue corridors, make effective use of land and resources, minimise carbon emissions, manage flood risk, and increase resilience to weather extremes.
6	Heritage & Design	Protect and enhance the borough's historic environment, conserving heritage assets and their settings, and using high-quality design to sustain and strengthen local distinctiveness and sense of place.

Figure 3. Bolton Local Plan Objectives.

Delivering the Local Plan

- 2.27 The Local Plan sets the framework, but delivery depends on a range of partners.
- 2.28 Developers and landowners are the Plan's principal delivery partners. They will bring sites forward, build the homes and workspaces the Plan allocates, and contribute the infrastructure their development creates the need for. The Council will work with them from the earliest stage so that schemes are viable, well designed and served by infrastructure from the start.
- 2.29 Our residents and local business owners are important partners in how the Plan is delivered. They opportunities and challenges associated with the development, and they are the most affected by what is built. Town councils, community alliances and residents' groups can bring important intelligence and insights on how to manage development impacts and local priorities. In some cases, this will be formalised in neighbourhood plans prepared by the community and which set local vision and aspirations for the area, at a more detailed level than this Plan. Developers and site promoters are encouraged to engage with these groups as well as with individual residents and business owners impacted, and to take account of their views in the schemes they bring forward.
- 2.30 Infrastructure providers are critical to delivery of the Local Plan Transport for Greater Manchester that will grow the Bee Network. The NHS will shape Health Innovation Bolton and the primary care that new communities need. Utility providers, such as United Utilities and Electricity Northwest, will make sure water, power and other networks keep pace with growth. The Council itself, in its education role, will plan school places alongside housing growth. Engagement through the life of the Plan will be necessary to understand current infrastructure impacts arising from development and ensure these are addressed.
- 2.31 Beyond the borough, Bolton will continue to work with other agencies such as the GMCA and Wigan Council on NorthFold, with neighbouring districts on matters that cross boundaries, and with Homes England, National Highways and the Environment Agency to unlock sites, fund infrastructure and manage environmental risk.

Chapter 3

Spatial Strategy

The policies in this chapter answer Local Plan Question A: Is this the right development in the right place?

- 3.1 This chapter sets out Bolton's spatial strategy: where development should go and what is protected.

Spatial Strategy and Key Diagram

- 3.2 Places for Everyone (2024) sets the strategic spatial framework to 2039: concentrating significant growth in jobs and homes at the core of the conurbation, boosting the competitiveness of the northern districts through significant new employment opportunities and supporting infrastructure, and sustaining the competitiveness of the south. Places for Everyone Policy JP-Strat6 (Northern Areas) seeks a significant increase in the competitiveness of the northern areas of Greater Manchester, and Policy JP-Strat8 identifies Bolton as one pole of the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor, and allocates three strategic employment sites, in a regionally significant zone of economic development now being implemented as the NorthFold growth location (see Figure 4).

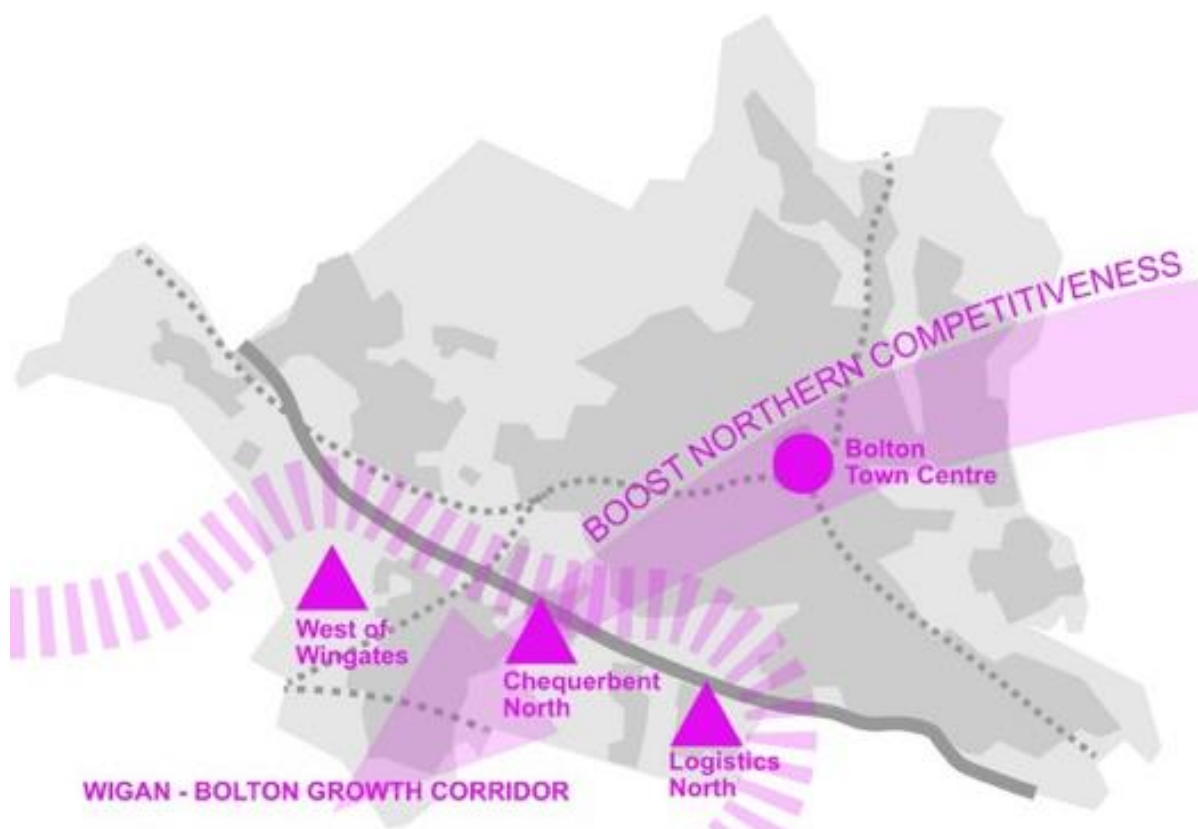


Figure 4. Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor. Source: 'Places for Everyone' (diagram redrawn).

- 3.3 Policies SP1 to SP7 give that strategy local, Bolton-specific expression: where growth goes, what is protected, and how the two hold together. The Key Diagram (Figure 5) illustrates this, including the investment locations, the network of centres, the strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure, and the Green Belt and settlement boundaries that frame the borough. Where a site or place shown on the Key Diagram is critical to the strategy, or needs a policy of its own, that policy is found in Chapter 10. The Policies Map defines the detailed boundaries.
- 3.4 This strategy was not the only approach considered. The alternatives were tested through the Sustainability Appraisal and the growth locations chosen bring challenges we have sought to mitigate as well as opportunities we have sought to exploit. On the evidence assembled and what communities told us through consultation, this is the strategy most likely to deliver the homes, jobs and infrastructure the borough needs while protecting what the people who already live here value and rely on.
- 3.5 To inform the strategy set out in this chapter, we have undertaken a range of assessments. This has included a strategic assessment flood risk, so that growth is directed away from the areas at greatest risk. We have assessed the Green Belt for the contribution it makes to the purposes it serves, so that where release is needed it falls where harm is least. We have considered the quality of agricultural land and soils, the historic environment and the natural environment in deciding where growth should and should not go, and we have tested viability against what the market can realistically deliver.

Bolton Local Plan Key Diagram

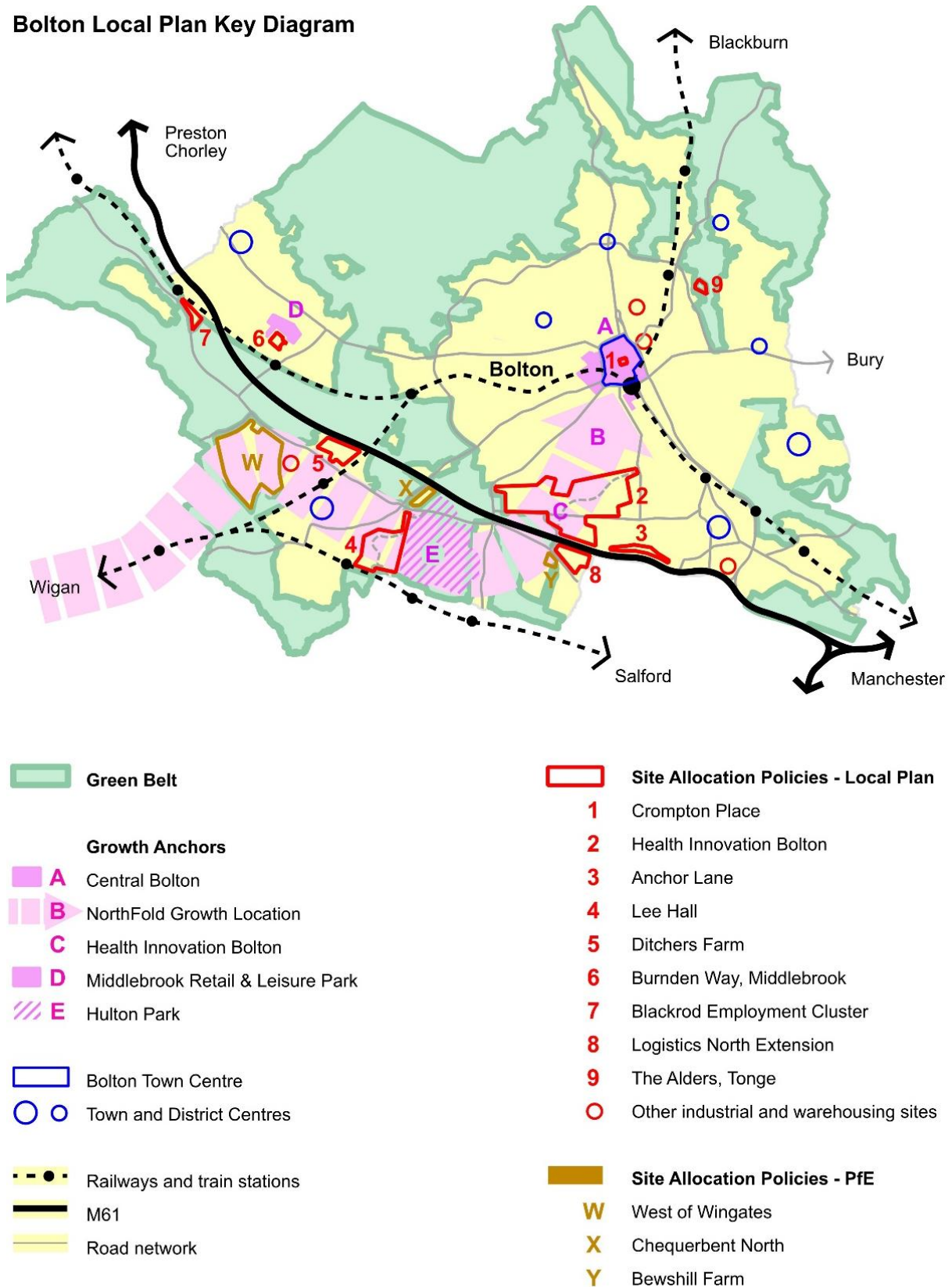


Figure 5. The spatial strategy for Bolton.

Policy SP1 Invest in Bolton: Economic Growth Anchors

SP1: INVEST IN BOLTON: ECONOMIC GROWTH ANCHORS

The Local Plan directs growth and investment to the borough's growth anchors, within the NorthFold Corridor, identified on the Key Diagram

CENTRAL BOLTON

1. Central Bolton will grow as a residential neighbourhood, and a diversity of market and affordable housing will be supported.
2. Central Bolton is the focus for University of Greater Manchester uses, including teaching space and student accommodation, and is the primary location for new office development.
3. Within Central Bolton, civic, retail, leisure, food and drink and cultural uses will be focused on the Town Centre.

STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT LOCATIONS

4. The strategic employment locations at Bewshill Farm (JPA4), Chequerbent North (JPA5) and West of Wingates (JPA6), are already allocated by Places for Everyone (2024) and shown on the Policies Map, are the borough's largest locations for industrial and warehousing development in terms of floorspace. Their contribution to employment land supply, along with other new employment allocations, is set out in SP2.

HEALTH INNOVATION BOLTON

5. Health Innovation Bolton is a strategic location of regional and potentially national significance, anchored by the Royal Bolton Hospital and the Bolton Institute of Medical Science, where health, research, employment and residential functions come together.
6. Development will be supported where it strengthens the health and research cluster, delivers high-value employment in health innovation, life sciences, digital, advanced manufacturing and related sectors, and is compatible with a high-quality residential neighbourhood. The scale, phasing and use mix, including restrictions on unrelated uses, are set out in the site allocation in Chapter 10 (Policy BSA02).

MIDDLEBROOK

7. Middlebrook is the borough's principal out-of-centre retail, leisure and sporting destination. Its transition over the Local Plan period to a mixed-use offer incorporating a residential component will be supported.
8. Commercial development at Middlebrook must complement regeneration in Central Bolton and must not have a significant adverse impact on any centre defined in SP4.
9. Residential development will be supported where it is compatible with the retail, employment and leisure functions of the area and provides good residential amenity.

HULTON PARK

10. Hulton Park is a potential growth location. The estate lies within the Green Belt and benefits from planning permission, granted in very special circumstances predicated on hosting the Ryder Cup, for a major sporting and leisure destination of national significance, together with employment and new homes. The Local Plan does not rely on this permission to meet development needs.
11. Any development at Hulton Park must secure the restoration of the Grade II Registered Park and Garden (ref: Historic England list entry 1001581) to conserve and enhance its

significance. If the permission is not implemented, proposals will be assessed against other policies in this plan and national Green Belt policy.

Reasons for Policy SP1

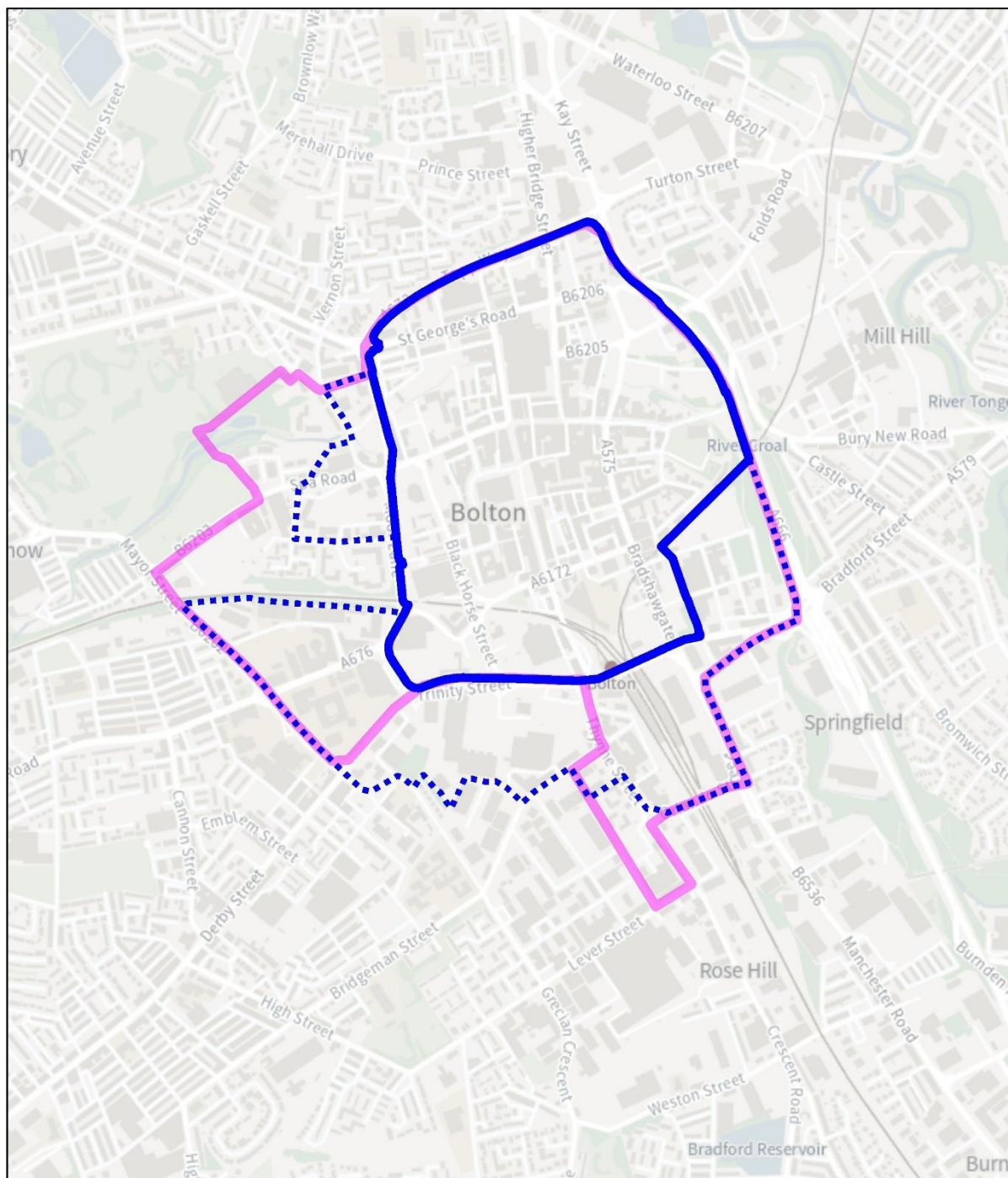
- 3.6 Bolton is open for investment. SP1 sets the spatial framework for the Plan, directing growth to the locations that will do most to deliver its vision: four economic development growth anchors plus a potential fifth growth location at Hulton Park. In each, the Council will work positively with investors and developers to bring forward high-quality, well-designed development that lasts and benefits both existing and new communities.

Central Bolton

- 3.7 Central Bolton is the primary destination for office development, and the Town Centre within it is the focus for retail, leisure, civic, food and drink and cultural investment. This is because the regeneration imperative here is strongest, and the infrastructure most developed. The Council's regeneration programme will accelerate transformation and secure coordinated investment. It is also home to the University of Greater Manchester, whose campus and students support the town centre's role as a place to live, learn and work. The policy areas into which Central Bolton is divided reflect their different functions, character and mix of uses (see Chapter 10 Figure 9).
- 3.8 Within Central Bolton, the boundaries of the designated Town Centre are informed by an assessment of retail provision and by major road and rail infrastructure, which creates a degree of severance that impedes linked trips (See Figure 6).
- 3.9 Central Bolton has always been a residential neighbourhood in its own right, and its Georgian and Victorian terraces continue to provide a high quality of amenity. Recent and ongoing regeneration at Cheadle Square, Central Street, Bark Street and Church Wharf demonstrates the market for high-quality, high-density urban housing, from townhouses and duplex apartments to flatted development. We want to see more of it, with a diversity of market and affordable homes. Housing needs evidence, and wider analysis of the university sector suggests demand for purpose-built student accommodation is declining (ref: Local Housing Needs Assessment); where demand does arise over the life of the Plan, it is expected to be accommodated in the Town Centre, adding to its diversity of uses.

NorthFold Strategic Employment Locations

- 3.10 The Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor identified in Places for Everyone (2024), Policy JP-Strat8 is being implemented as the NorthFold growth location, which extends east to include Central Bolton; the growth anchors are the borough's growth strategy within and alongside it.
- 3.11 It is one of six Growth Locations in Greater Manchester's growth framework (GMCA integrated pipeline of Growth Locations) and is a partnership between Bolton and Wigan councils, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and private sector partners. NorthFold extends along the M6 to M61 corridor, with Bolton and Wigan town centres as its anchors, and is underpinned by a pipeline of catalyst projects, three of which are in Bolton: Bolton Town Centre, Health Innovation Bolton and Hulton Park. It is a delivery and investment programme rather than a statutory designation; the policies of this Plan and of Places for Everyone provide its planning framework within the borough.



- Bolton Town Centre (EC4)
- Edge of Bolton Town Centre (EC4)
- Central Bolton (SP1)

Figure 6. Central Bolton, Bolton Town Centre and Edge of Centre

- 3.12 The strategic employment allocations at Bewshill Farm (JPA4), Chequerbent North (JPA5) and West of Wingates (JPA6) were made through Places for Everyone (Places for Everyone (2024), Policies JPA4, JPA5 and JPA6) and deliver the majority of Bolton's industrial and warehousing supply. West of Wingates is by far the largest, at 440,000 sqm (Places for Everyone (2024), Policy JPA6) and is supplemented by further guidance in West of Wingates Strategic Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). SP1 recognises these locations within the growth strategy but does not restate their site-specific requirements, which are set out in Places for Everyone; their contribution to the borough's employment land supply is quantified in SP2.

Health Innovation Bolton

- 3.13 Health Innovation Bolton is the area centred on the Royal Bolton Hospital campus, the Bolton Institute of Medical Science and the surrounding neighbourhood in Farnworth. It is identified as a growth anchor because it is the one location in the borough where a health innovation cluster can be built on existing institutional assets: the hospital's clinical activity, the Institute's research and teaching, and the health and medical education of the University of Greater Manchester. That adjacency cannot be recreated elsewhere, and it is what gives the location its regional and potentially national significance. The Greater Manchester Strategy (2025-2035) identifies a new Health Innovation Campus linked to the Royal Bolton Hospital as a nationally significant Growth Location. Health Innovation Bolton is an important NorthFold catalyst project that reflects a significance that extends beyond Bolton's boundary.
- 3.14 The economic case is well evidenced. There is an under-provision of incubator and start-up space and growing demand for mid-tech floorspace serving advanced manufacturing and technology sectors (Bolton Employment Needs Study, Iceni, 2026). Further, Bolton's Economic Growth and Resilience Plan (2024) identifies the productivity gap that higher-value employment is needed to close. Health Innovation Bolton is the Plan's response to both issues, providing modern, flexible employment floorspace in sectors that raise productivity and help retain the graduates and skilled professionals the borough too often loses.

Middlebrook

- 3.15 Middlebrook is the borough's principal out-of-centre retail, leisure and sporting destination. It is home to the Bolton Wanderers and Bolton Arena and is of regional significance, with good access by road and rail. It functions as a strategic location within the spatial strategy, providing a concentration of retail, leisure, sport, employment and, increasingly, residential uses at a scale that needs active management rather than unconstrained growth. Its offer is qualitatively different from that of the borough's defined centres (Bolton Retail and Leisure Capacity and Centres Study, Nexus 2026), which is why commercial development here must remain complementary.
- 3.16 Residential development is a natural part of the long-term evolution of successful out-of-centre destinations, from discrete uses operating independently, towards mixed-use places where uses are integrated. This is already underway at Middlebrook, evidenced by developer interest in mixed leisure, commercial and residential schemes. Homes here can draw on the uses already present and in turn support their vitality by adding activity and footfall, including into the evening. Upper-floor homes in particular help to create a street-based setting for pedestrian movement, providing enclosure, continuity of frontage and natural surveillance.

Hulton Park

- 3.17 Hulton Park is a **potential** growth location, and the distinction matters. The permission, granted in very special circumstances, is predicated on hosting the Ryder Cup (12218/21), and would deliver a sporting and leisure destination of national significance with the potential to leverage substantial investment into the borough. Further, it is the vehicle for the restoration of the Grade II Registered Park and Garden at the heart of the estate (ref: Historic England 1001581). It would also deliver 500 additional new homes. If the permission is not implemented, the estate remains in the Green Belt, and proposals will be assessed against Policy SP7 and national policy.
- 3.18 Given the contingent nature of this permission, the Plan does not rely on this to meet need; none of its potential homes or floorspace is counted in the land supply. Notwithstanding, its scale and potential to leverage further economic benefits is indicative of the enormous investment potential in Bolton. In addition, given the scale of the development potential, implementation has been considered in the Plan's assessments so that the demands it would place on transport, utilities and social infrastructure are understood alongside the housing and other uses this Plan seeks to accommodate.

Beyond 2042

- 3.19 National policy invites Local Plans to look beyond their own horizon for urban extensions and locations where growth will take longer than a plan period to deliver. Bolton's growth anchors are that kind of growth. The Plan runs to 2042, and its policies, land supply and trajectory all work to that date, but Central Bolton and Health Innovation Bolton will still be building out afterwards. In Central Bolton, capacity for up to 2,000 more homes beyond the Plan period marks where regeneration is heading: a town centre that keeps adding residents, with the University of Greater Manchester growing at its heart, and its civic, retail and cultural life busy into the evening. At Health Innovation Bolton, the years beyond 2042 are when the district comes into its own, with the innovation floorspace occupied and trading, the hospital and Medical School established at its centre, and the last of its homes, around 330, completing neighbourhoods that have grown alongside them. Lee Hall completes within the Plan period but will take longer to mature as a place, as will the wider NorthFold growth location. Longterm growth on this scale depends on the Council, the University, the NHS, Wigan Council, the Combined Authority, developers and investors continuing to work to ensure effective implementation through and beyond 2042.

Policy SP2 Land for Employment

SP2: LAND FOR EMPLOYMENT

The Local Plan identifies a sufficient supply of sites to meet Bolton's need for industrial, warehousing and office floorspace over the Plan period 2022 to 2042.

EMPLOYMENT LAND: INDUSTRY AND WAREHOUSING

1. Bolton has a need for 811,727 sqm of industrial and warehousing floorspace over the Plan period.

2. This need will be met from the following sources:

Industrial / Warehousing Floorspace Source	Floorspace (sqm)
Sites with planning permission	166,085
Places for Everyone allocations	486,000
Intensification within Protected Employment Land	12,145
Local Plan Allocations	135,099 – 185,099
Total	799,329 – 849,329

Note: Where a site both has planning permission and is allocated, its floorspace is counted within the allocation total and excluded from the planning permission total.

3. Applications for industrial and warehousing development on the above sites will be supported. The Places for Everyone Allocations are defined on the Policies Map.

4. The following sites are allocated for industrial and warehousing development:

Allocations	Floorspace (SQM)
Blackrod Employment Cluster (BSA07)	44,800
Logistics North Extension (BSA08)	30,000 – 80,000
Health Innovation Bolton (BSA02)	40,839
Express Industrial Estate B (BSA11)	2,695
Barrs Fold Close (BSA012)	1,645
Watermead (BSA013)	13,265
Mill Street (BSA014)	1,855
Total	135,099 – 185,099

5. Together, these sources will provide a mix of sites in a range of sizes and locations, ensuring a continuous supply of new industrial and warehousing floorspace throughout the Plan period.

EMPLOYMENT LAND: OFFICE

6. Bolton has a minimum need for 16,700 sqm of office floorspace over the Plan period. New office floorspace will be directed to Central Bolton and need will be met from the following sources:

Office Floorspace Source	Floorspace (sqm)
Sites with planning permission	8,026
Crompton Place Allocation (BSA01)	10,500
Burnden Way, Middlebrook Allocation (BSA06)	2,500

Total

21,026

Note: Where a site both has planning permission and is allocated, its floorspace is counted within the allocation total and excluded from the planning permission total.

7. Applications for office development on the above sites will be supported. Allocations BSA01 Crompton Place and BSA06 Burnden Way, Middlebrook are detailed in Chapter 10 and defined on the Policies Map.

Reasons for Policy SP2

- 3.20 Economic Growth is central to the overall strategy for Greater Manchester and Bolton. It will be essential to raising incomes, increasing productivity and improving health and quality of life. The borough's economic future depends not just on the quantity of employment floorspace but also on creating the conditions for higher-value, knowledge-based growth alongside Bolton's continuing strengths in industry and logistics. In line with Bolton's Economic Growth and Resilience Plan 2024 we want sufficient and suitable land to be available so that new businesses invest in Bolton and existing businesses that wish to expand stay in the borough. This will help create better jobs in a more productive Bolton.

Industry and warehousing

- 3.21 Industrial and warehousing development is essential to a wide range of businesses across many economic sectors. In Bolton, vacancies within industrial and warehousing units are low and demand for these uses is high.
- 3.22 Industrial vacancy in Bolton has remained below 5% since 2018, standing at just 1.7% in 2025 (Iceni Employment Study, 2026). Demand spans a range of unit sizes and typologies: large logistics on the M61 corridor; general small and mid-sized industrial space; and space suited to higher-tech and innovation uses. The supply of premises has not kept pace. Nearly half of available stock predates 1980; there is a particular shortage of mid-box units of 5,000 to 9,000 sqm; and the market is underprovided with incubator and start-up space at a time of growing demand for modern, flexible, well-serviced mid-tech floorspace from advanced manufacturing and technology occupiers (Iceni Employment Study, 2026).
- 3.23 Places for Everyone 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. This is established instead by the borough's own evidence, set out in the Iceni Employment Study (2026), which identifies a requirement of 811,727 sqm of industrial and warehousing floorspace over the Bolton Local Plan period. This includes a 20% margin to provide flexibility and choice in the market. Existing supply totals 664,230 sqm, leaving a shortfall of 147,497 sqm to be met through new allocations.
- 3.24 Bolton's Green Belt remains one of the borough's most valued assets. It plays a vital role in directing investment towards the reuse of brownfield land, supporting Town Centre regeneration and preventing the merging of our towns and villages. The Local Plan continues to give it strong protection in the context of some dilution of those protections in national policy.
- 3.25 In preparing the Local Plan, all available sources of industrial and warehousing supply have been explored, assessed and tested. However, the evidence is clear that the floorspace Bolton needs over the Plan period cannot be delivered on brownfield and other non-Green Belt sites alone.
- 3.26 The industrial and warehousing need is met from the five sources as outlined below:

- Sites which already have planning permissions for new industrial and warehousing development, including schemes that are under construction, total 166,085 sqm.
 - Places for Everyone site allocations make up the largest share of the industrial and warehousing supply, totalling 486,000 sqm. This consists of 21,000 sqm at JPA4 Bewshill Farm, 25,000 sqm at JPA5 Chequerbent North, and 440,000 sqm at JPA6 West of Wingates.
 - Undeveloped land within protected employment designations which is suitable for new industrial and warehousing development – five plots have been identified, contributing 12,145 sqm of floorspace to supply.
 - Four Local Plan Allocations, totalling 19,460 sqm, brought forward from the Allocations Plan (2014): Express Industrial Estate B (BSA11), Barrs Fold Close Wingates (BSA12), Watermead BSA13 and Mill Street BSA14. These allocations are within the existing urban area and are defined on the Policies Map.
 - Three new Local Plan Allocations on Green Belt land: Logistics North Extension Employment Led Mixed Use Allocation (BSA08), Health Innovation Bolton (BSA02) and Blackrod Employment Cluster (BSA07). These are all located within the Bolton–Wigan Growth Corridor and total between 115,639 sqm and 165,639 sqm of floorspace.
- 3.27 The above five sources of supply totals 799,329 sqm of industrial and warehousing floorspace if Logistics North Employment Led Mixed Use allocation (BSA08) contributes 30,000 sqm, increasing to 849,329 sqm if it contributes 80,000 sqm. This results in a demand supply position ranging from a shortfall of 12,398 sqm to surplus of 37,602 sqm, respectively.
- 3.28 Industrial/warehousing development is the primary purpose of the Logistics North Employment Extension Employment Led Mixed Use Allocation (BSA08). However, if this site contributes the lower end of 30,000 sqm of industrial and warehousing development there is a shortfall of 12,398 sqm. Further Green Belt release on this basis is unnecessary and unsustainable given the lack of other sustainable and deliverable sites, and the need to minimise change to the Green Belt. In addition, policy EC1 supports intensification and new employment development within protected employment areas; policy EC2 supports further intensification of industrial and warehousing uses and sets a positive basis for determining planning applications for industrial and warehousing use on land that isn't allocated for that purpose.
- 3.29 This varied industrial and warehousing supply will help Bolton maximise its ability to attract and retain businesses and hence support its long-term economic growth ambitions and the availability of local jobs. It will be important in enabling the relocation and expansion of existing businesses as well as attracting new investment into the borough. It will also play an important role in delivering a significant increase in the competitiveness of the northern areas of Greater Manchester in line with Places for Everyone (2024) Policy JP-Strat6 (Northern Areas) and in delivering a regionally significant area of economic development in line with Policy JP-Strat8 (Wigan–Bolton Growth Corridor).

Office

- 3.30 As outlined in Places for Everyone, securing office growth in the northern areas of Greater Manchester, including Bolton, will be an important part of delivering inclusive

growth and reducing deprivation. Office workers are part of what makes a centre work: their daytime spending supports the shops, cafés and services that the wider regeneration of Central Bolton depends upon.

- 3.31 Places for Everyone 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. This is established instead by the borough's own evidence, set out in the Iceni Employment Study (2026), which identifies a requirement of 16,700 sqm of office floorspace over the Bolton Local Plan period. Extant planning permissions total 8,026 sqm, leaving a shortfall of 8,674 sqm.
- 3.32 The office market has undergone significant recent structural change: the growth of home, remote and hybrid working has reduced demand for traditional space and increased demand for smaller, flexible premises. Vacancy in Bolton stood at 11.5% in 2025, up from 3.9% in 2022 and above the Greater Manchester average of 10.5% (Iceni Employment Study, 2026). Performance is spatially split: weaker in the town centre and stronger in peripheral locations.
- 3.33 This is due to newer, modern and flexible floorspace being developed in peripheral locations, while the town centre has suffered from outdated stock that is no longer fit for purpose. Mixed use office development in Bolton Town Centre provides an opportunity to address this issue, by providing modern office development that meets current and future demand.
- 3.34 General office development (as distinct from the health and innovation related uses at Health Innovation Bolton) is directed to Central Bolton as it is one of the most accessible locations to surrounding residential areas and increasing office-based activity will be key to delivering more vibrant and economically prosperous town centre.
- 3.35 The office need is met from three sources:
- Sites that already have planning permission for new office development, including schemes under construction, total 8,026 sqm
 - Floorspace within Central Bolton which will be delivered as part of mixed-use developments as regeneration gathers pace. The most significant office floorspace will come forward through 10,500 sqm at the Crompton Place (Allocation BSA01).
 - Mixed Use Allocation BSA06 (Burnden Way, Middlebrook) includes land for 2,500 sqm of office floorspace in line with planning permission 89159/12.

Policy SP3 Land for Housing

SP3: LAND FOR HOUSING

This Local Plan identifies sufficient supply of sites to deliver a minimum of 787 homes a year over the Plan period.

NEW HOMES

1. Places for Everyone (2024) Policy JP-H1, establishes Bolton's minimum housing requirement of 787 net additional homes per year (2022-2042). 2,023 homes were provided 2022-2025, leaving a requirement for at least 13,717 dwellings over the 2025 to 2042 period. The housing requirement will be met from the following sources of housing land supply:

Housing Land Supply Source	No. Homes
Sites with planning permission	4,976
Neighbourhood Plan Allocations	20
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Sites	1,741
Windfall Sites	1,600
Strategic/Key Housing Allocations	5,715
Total	14,052

2. Together, the identified land supply sources are expected to provide a mix of sites in a range of sizes that will ensure a continuous supply of new homes throughout the Plan period. Appendix 2 provides the detailed housing trajectory.

3. Bolton will enable a diverse range of high quality, energy efficient new housing in suitable locations for Bolton's differing local housing needs in accordance with Policies HS1 to HS7.

DISTRIBUTION OF NEW HOMES & GROWTH ANCHORS

4. The majority of new homes are expected to be distributed across the borough as follows. This includes sites which already have planning permission, new housing allocations and other suitable and deliverable housing sites that have been identified.

- A. 2,154 new homes in Central & Inner Bolton
- B. 3,149 new homes in Farnworth, Great Lever & Hulton, with new allocations at Health Innovation Bolton and Anchor Lane
- C. 2,843 new homes in Westhoughton, with new allocations at Ditcher's Farm
- D. 2,953 new homes in Horwich & Blackrod with a new allocation at Middlebrook
- E. 166 new homes in West Bolton
- F. 210 new homes in North Bolton
- G. 977 new homes in East Bolton

STRATEGIC HOUSING ALLOCATIONS

5. The following strategic/key sites are allocated for residential development. Applications for the provision of new homes will be supported on the sites listed below, defined on the Policies Map and detailed in Chapter 10.

STRATEGIC HOUSING ALLOCATIONS

6. The site capacities are the minimum expected to be delivered within the Plan period. Proposals will be expected to meet the minimum density requirements of Policy PQ3.

Strategic / Key Housing Allocations	Minimum Plan Period Deliverable Capacity
BSA01 Crompton Place	340
BSA02 Health Innovation Bolton	1,895
BSA03 Anchor Lane	460
BSA04 Lee Hall	1,450
BSA05 Ditchers Farm, Westhoughton	570
BSA06 Burnden Way Middlebrook	1,000
Total	5,715

DEVELOPMENT OF UNALLOCATED SITES

7. Housing development will be supported on suitable housing sites identified by the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (2026) and on windfall sites within the existing built-up areas of the settlements where:

- A. There is access to employment, education and training, primary health care and groceries without car dependency and via safe, walkable routes;
- B. Where it falls within the infrastructure capacity of the settlement in accordance with Policies INF1-8; and
- C. The proposal contributes towards meeting Bolton's housing need in accordance with Policies HS1 to HS7.

Reasons for Policy SP3

- 3.36 Access to a decent, secure and affordable home is fundamental to the well-being of Bolton's residents and to the borough's economic success. Good housing supports better physical and mental health, gives children stability to do well at school, and enables older residents and those with disabilities to live independently for longer. Housing also underpins economic growth: it allows employers to attract and retain the workforce that Bolton's priority sectors rely on, supports construction jobs and local supply chains, and brings residents and spending into our town and district centres.
- 3.37 Bolton needs more homes – and a wider choice of them – over the Plan period. Household growth fuelled by an ageing population and smaller average household sizes are driving sustained demand, while house prices and rents have risen faster than local incomes. This puts ownership out of reach for many younger households and increases pressure on the affordable housing register. Planning positively for the right homes, in the right places and at the right tenures is essential: it gives residents a fair chance to find a home that suits them, supports the borough's economic ambitions, and gives developers and investors the confidence to deliver quality schemes that Bolton can be proud of.

New homes and sources of supply

- 3.38 Places for Everyone (2024) establishes Bolton's housing requirement and the broad spatial strategy to 2039. The requirement is to deliver a minimum of 787 homes per year (15,740 additional homes between 2022 and 2042). During the first three years, 2,023 new homes were delivered (2022-2025). This leaves a minimum requirement of 13,717 additional new homes.
- 3.39 Bolton's Green Belt remains one of the borough's most valued assets. It plays a vital role in directing investment towards the reuse of brownfield land, supporting Town Centre regeneration and preventing the merging of our towns and villages. The Local Plan continues to give it strong protection in the context of some dilution of those protections in national policy.
- 3.40 In preparing the Local Plan, all available sources of housing land supply have been explored, assessed and tested. However, the evidence is clear that the homes Bolton needs over the Plan period cannot be delivered on brownfield and other non-Green Belt sites alone. Brownfield regeneration is still a priority for Bolton, but our assessment revealed many of these sites carry significant remediation, viability and assembly challenges. We are working hard to unlock these sites as a Council, but our expectation is that these sites will start to deliver later in the Plan period once regeneration pump-priming, public investment and market confidence are in place. Earlier phases therefore lean on more readily deliverable sites, while brownfield and Town Centre regeneration build momentum behind them. Ensuring we can meet needs and maintain a robust supply of housing land has necessitated Green Belt alterations and the release of carefully chosen Green Belt sites to accommodate development and maintain a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.
- 3.41 The housing requirement is met from five sources:
- Planning Permissions: sites that already have planning permission for new homes that are likely to be built within the Plan period. The majority will be built in the early years of the Plan.
 - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA): the assessment identified and examined as many potential housing sites as possible, including reviewing sites that were already known to the Council and inviting new submissions. All suitable and deliverable sites are included in the housing land supply.
 - Neighbourhood Plan: Blackrod Neighbourhood Plan is currently the only adopted neighbourhood plan that includes a housing allocation. National Planning Policy encourages local communities to plan for their own housing needs.
 - Windfalls: Bolton has a long and consistent history of delivering new housing on windfall sites. These are sites that cannot be identified now but are likely to come forward for development within existing settlements throughout the Plan period, such as a redundant commercial property being converted to homes or a cleared plot in an existing neighbourhood. Any future housing sites adopted through neighbourhood plans will form part of the Plan's windfall allowance and the Council will work with Neighbourhood Plan Forums to provide an indicative figure if requested, drawing on the latest housing needs evidence and monitoring.
 - New Local Plan Allocations: a number of these are within the Town Centre where regeneration and the provision of new housing is gaining momentum. However, the Plan cannot rely on Town Centre sites alone to make up the housing requirement. All available and suitable greenfield sites outside of the Green Belt are allocated but it has been necessary to alter the Green Belt boundary and

allocate further land to ensure housing needs are met and the Green Belt boundary endures. The deliverable housing capacity is the total capacity expected to be delivered within the Plan period, not the total anticipated site capacity.

- 3.42 The housing trajectory in Appendix 2 sets out, in five-year tranches, how these five land supply sources combine to meet the requirement, and demonstrates how Bolton will maintain a five-year housing supply of deliverable housing sites from the date of adoption.
- 3.43 Separately from the overall requirement, the Plan is about delivering the right mix of housing sites at the right time by providing sites of different sizes and in different locations. A genuine mix of tenures, sizes and types, including sites suitable for family housing, smaller homes, accessible and adaptable homes, affordable and specialist accommodation, and self and custom build, is essential to meet Bolton's varied needs and to create balanced, resilient neighbourhoods.
- 3.44 Small sites can deliver within a short timeframe, but smaller, dispersed sites rarely generate the contributions or land needed for infrastructure of this kind. Larger strategic locations are what make new schools, healthcare facilities, transport improvements and accessible green space achievable. Together, this approach maintains a deliverable five-year housing land supply throughout the Plan period, giving the Council a robust position against speculative development, giving communities certainty about what is coming forward and when, and giving developers and investors a clear pipeline to plan against.



Figure 7. The spatial distribution of housing growth across the borough. 1,600 additional homes ('windfall') are expected on predominantly small sites within existing settlement boundaries.

Where new homes will go

The distribution of housing growth reflects where Bolton can sustainably absorb strategic-scale growth. Growth is distributed across the borough (

- 3.45 Figure 7), with a particular focus on strategic sites in central and inner Bolton, Health Innovation Bolton, Westhoughton and Middlebrook. This policy provides for Bolton's incremental growth at the neighbourhood scale. Housing beyond the strategic growth locations is directed to the existing settlements, favouring sites near train stations and local centres. The policy favours sites near stations and centres because that is where new homes sit alongside the services that make them liveable without car dependency: a shop, a service, a train. To be clear, we are not planning on the basis that people will not have cars. Rather we want to provide choice and enable people who cannot drive or do not have access to cars to be able to travel to services and facilities.

Central and Inner Bolton

- 3.46 Bolton Town Centre is a focus for residential growth. It is the location where regeneration, new homes and civic investment reinforce each other, where NorthFold's investment pipeline is concentrated, and the Council's Regeneration Programme will accelerate delivery. The Town Centre offers what a spatial strategy looks for: brownfield land, excellent transport access and a regeneration narrative which is actively supported by national policy. For reasons of viability, only a modest share of Bolton's housing growth is directed here in the Plan period up to 2042. Town Centre transformation is front-loaded on complex mixed-use regeneration that builds out over longer cycles, and the Plan period housing number reflects the realistic trajectory of schemes that are genuinely deliverable. The potential for up to 2,000 homes beyond the Plan period is a signal of long-term capacity, not a commitment to deliver this number within the Plan period. But it shows where Town Centre regeneration is heading; the NorthFold pipeline and strategic allocations in this Plan such as Crompton Place are changing perceptions and are expected to improve the market and attract development and investment.

Farnworth, Great Lever and Hulton

- 3.47 Health Innovation Bolton (HIB) in Farnworth carries the largest share of growth in this Plan period. The scale of development provides the opportunity to fund the infrastructure demands arising from the development: schools, health facilities, energy, active travel, open space and utility capacity is delivered onsite as part of the scheme, rather than existing networks that cannot expand to meet them. The combination of evidence-led capacity and self-contained delivery is why HIB is the transformation location delivering at volume in this Plan period, and why it is a NorthFold catalyst project backed by cross-borough investment.

Westhoughton

- 3.48 Significant housing developments are already planned for Westhoughton, and these will deliver during the early years of the Plan period. For this reason, the Plan directs more modest additional growth at Westhoughton than would otherwise be the case. The Plan reflects the delivery landscape as it stands, not the landscape as if the housing pipeline and adjacent allocations were not there.

Middlebrook

- 3.49 Middlebrook can accommodate residential growth as part of its wider management as a mixed-use location, addressed in Policy SP1 and Chapter 10.

Meeting needs for different types of homes

- 3.50 Distinct housing needs are not components of the overall requirement; they exist alongside it. The Local Plan addresses the need for affordable housing, for homes

suitable for older people, vulnerable people, people with disabilities, and for accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities. Each is addressed by a specific policy in Chapter 8.

Policy SP4 Centres for Shopping and Services

SP4: CENTRES FOR SHOPPING AND SERVICES

This Local Plan identifies the hierarchy of centres across the borough.

TOWN CENTRES

1. Bolton Town Centre, within Central Bolton is the principal location for civic, retail, leisure, food and drink, community and training, and cultural uses.
2. Farnworth, Horwich, Westhoughton and Little Lever town centres are predominantly occupied by main town centres uses and are the civic, retail and community heart of their areas. Investment and development that sustains or enhances their role will be encouraged.

DISTRICT CENTRES

3. The District Centres of Chorley Old Road, Astley Bridge, Brightmet and Harwood form key everyday infrastructure for Bolton's neighbourhoods: the shops, services and small businesses that residents rely on. Investment that sustains or enhances that role will be supported.

LOCAL CENTRES

4. The Local Centres of Deane Road, Derby Centre, Tonge Fold, Daubhill and St. Helens Road, Halliwell Road, Tonge Moor Road, Blackrod, Bromley Cross, Kearsley and Health Innovation Bolton serve the same functions as the District Centres but at a smaller scale. Investment that sustains or enhances that role will be supported.
5. A new Local Centre has been defined to serve Health Innovation Bolton. This new local centre should be scaled to serve the Health Innovation campus and occupants.

HIERARCHY OF CENTRES

6. The hierarchy of centres is set out below:

Category	Location
Sub-regional town centre	Bolton
Town centre	Farnworth, Horwich, Little Lever, Westhoughton
District centre	Chorley Old Road, Astley Bridge, Brightmet, Harwood
Local centre	Deane Road, Derby Centre, Tonge Fold, Daubhill and St Helen's Road, Halliwell Road, Tonge Moor Road, Blackrod, Bromley Cross, Kearsley, Health Innovation Bolton

These centres are all defined on the Policies Map and detailed in Chapter 7.

MIDDLEBROOK

7. Middlebrook is the borough's principal out-of-centre retail and leisure park and is identified on the Policies Map and detailed in Chapter 7 as a strategic retail and leisure destination. While some development and diversification are acceptable at Middlebrook, as set out in SP1, it is not a defined centre. Development proposals for town centre use at Middlebrook will need to

SP4: CENTRES FOR SHOPPING AND SERVICES

comply with national planning policy, and Policy EC4, including in relation to the sequential test and impact assessment.

Reasons for Policy SP4

- 3.51 Bolton is a borough of towns and neighbourhoods, and its centres are the everyday infrastructure that serves them: the places where people shop, meet, access services and spend time close to home. A defined hierarchy protects that network. It directs main town centre investment to the centres, at a scale each can sustain, so that growth in one place strengthens the network rather than drawing trade away from another. It also follows national policy, which asks plans to say which centres serve which role and to direct new shops, leisure and other town centre uses to those centres first. Letting that investment scatter outside the network would weaken every centre, and the smallest ones first.

Bolton Town Centre

- 3.52 At the top of that network, Bolton Town Centre leads the hierarchy. It remains a significant sub-regional centre within Greater Manchester, the primary destination for major retail, leisure, hospitality and cultural investment as set out in Policy. New retail and leisure proposals are directed here first through the sequential test in Policy EC4.
- 3.53 Like town centres across the country, Bolton's has declined from its role a generation ago, and residents feel that loss keenly: the centre they want restored is one they remember. Its foundations, though, remain strong. The civic and heritage assets, including Bolton Town Hall, Victoria Square and Bolton Parish Church, give it a quality of place most centres cannot match: its cultural offer, from Bolton One to the Octagon Theatre and the Albert Halls, continues to draw people in, and serves a catchment extending well beyond the borough. Recovery is underway, not merely promised: Moor Lane, Deansgate Gardens and the Wellsprings are complete, Bolton Market Food Hall and the public realm have been renewed, and Church Wharf and Crompton Place are in the pipeline, with Crompton Place in particular an opportunity to restore Victoria Square as the heart of an attractive and active centre. Directing investment here first is how the Plan turns that momentum into restoration.

Other town centres

- 3.54 Farnworth, Horwich, Little Lever and Westhoughton are significant destinations in their own right, predominantly occupied by a diverse range of main town centre uses, including supermarkets, and are the civic and community heart of their areas. They are designated at this level because they have the size, mix of uses and community role that places them in the tier below the sub-regional centre.

District and local centres

- 3.55 The District Centres each comprise a group of shops, often including at least one supermarket, and a range of non-retail services such as banks, restaurants and community facilities that meet the day-to-day needs of the communities they serve. The Local Centres provide a smaller range of shops and services of a local nature, serving a smaller catchment. A new Local Centre is defined at Health Innovation Bolton. Given the scale of new development being delivered there, defining a centre from the outset ensures the neighbourhood grows around suitable facilities and services rather than waiting for them.

Middlebrook

- 3.56 Middlebrook has an important role serving the borough's residents, and a wider draw from an extensive catchment. But its offer is not that of a traditional town centre: it does not provide the range of uses required to meet the definition of a defined centre, and its larger units mainly serve national multiple retailers and leisure operators. This is in contrast to the smaller units in the defined centres that suit a wide range of operators, including independents. Retaining that difference matters to the vitality and viability of the defined centres. Middlebrook's role is recognised and supported through its identification as a Strategic Retail and Leisure Destination and through Policies SP1 and EC4, but main town centre use development there must pass sequential and impact tests, ensuring it complements the borough's centres rather than harming them.

Centres and growth from new development

- 3.57 The centres at every level will matter more, not less, as new homes come forward in the locations identified in Policy SP3. New homes without functioning local services do not make good places, and the Plan supports investment that keeps every centre able to serve its catchment as new residents move in.

Policy SP5 Historic Built Environment and Landscape

SP5: HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

This Local Plan sets out a positive strategy for the protection and promotion of the heritage environment, including the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets.

PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE HERITAGE ENVIRONMENT

1. The Council will conserve and, where appropriate, enhance Bolton's historic environment, heritage assets and their settings, by:
 - A. Supporting and promoting heritage-led regeneration in Central Bolton, including in the Civic and Retail Core centred on Victoria Square;
 - B. Encouraging the reuse of the borough's historic mills and other industrial heritage assets, building on the 2007 Bolton Mills Action Framework;
 - C. Reviewing and updating conservation area appraisals over the Plan period, and designating new conservation areas or amending the boundaries of existing conservation areas where justified, subject to public consultation;
 - D. Identifying and recording non-designated heritage assets, including through the Greater Manchester Local Heritage Listing project and drawing on the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record;
 - E. Conserving and enhancing the borough's historic landscape character, including the river-valley mill landscapes identified in the Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment;
 - F. Monitoring the Heritage at Risk register and working with owners and partners to reduce the number of assets at risk through repair and beneficial reuse that secure their future; and
 - G. Promoting public and inclusive access to, and understanding and interpretation of, the historic environment through development proposals and sensitive adaptation of historic

SP5: HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

buildings and spaces to remove barriers for disabled people and those with mobility impairments.

Reasons for Policy SP5

- 3.58 Heritage in Bolton is not a constraint on growth. It is part of what makes Bolton's growth worth striving for, and a central element of the investment case that this Local Plan asks developers, landowners and partners to engage with. Development that responds to these categories of heritage assets, both designated and undesignated, positively reinforces that distinctiveness. Development that ignores these categories diminishes it. National policy consistently backs heritage-led renewal because the market does: regenerated historic centres command higher value than bland replacement. The case for heritage-led regeneration in the town centre in particular is indisputable. The ensemble of public buildings in Central Bolton and around Victoria Square, and the many listed buildings along the main thoroughfares, are worth investing in.
- 3.59 There are over 1,100 individual entries for Bolton in the Historic Environment Record, comprising designated and non-designated heritage assets and settings in the following principal categories: sites of archaeological heritage; historic farms, farmhouses, manor houses, field patterns, hedgerows and associated structures of agricultural heritage; cotton mills, bleachworks, lodges, workers' settlements, and associated structures of industrial heritage; canals, railways, and associated structures of infrastructure heritage; and civic and institutional buildings, places of worship, cultural venues, public spaces, works of public art, shops, hostelrys, and associated structures of municipal, cultural and commercial heritage. It also includes the varied landscape character of the borough's uplands, valleys and lowlands, its formal landscaped parklands and parks, as well as the urban fabric of the borough's historic towns and settlements, encompassing streets, squares and parks, and the built form, both public and private, that shapes and encloses them.
- 3.60 Archaeological, agricultural and landscape heritage assets can be found across the borough, ranging from the pre-historic to the pre-industrial, from stone barns to manor houses, and from agricultural lands to landscape gardens. Industrial and infrastructural heritage assets – cotton mills, bleachworks, lodges and industrial settlements – have been shaped by the availability of water or coal, and the strategic corridors of canal and rail infrastructure. Civic, religious and commercial heritage assets are clustered in settlements, and particularly in town centres, where they collectively create distinctive townscapes and public spaces. In some locations, these different categories of heritage assets are overlaid in a rich and complex layering of natural and built environment that is special to the borough. For example, the 2018 Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment identifies cotton mills and their associated infrastructure as a key attribute of the Incised Urban Fringe Valleys landscape character type, with surviving complexes forming distinctive skyline features across the borough's river valleys.
- 3.61 Bolton's designated heritage assets include 26 conservation areas, 361 listed buildings, six registered parks and gardens and five scheduled monuments. As of 2026, Historic England's Heritage at Risk register listed two conservation areas and one Grade I, one Grade II* and seven Grade II Listed Buildings within Bolton. Bolton Council is also working to identify and recognise non-designated heritage assets that make a significant contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the borough, as part of a Greater Manchester Local Heritage Listing project coordinated

by Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS). This builds on earlier work in Bolton Council's 2007 Bolton Mills Action Framework, which identified the borough's 108 historic mills and set out guidance and recommendations for their conservation and renewal as a key feature of Bolton's industrial heritage.

Policy SP6 Natural Environment

SP6: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Local Plan sets a strategy to protect and enhance Bolton's natural environment.

NATURE CONSERVATION

1. The following nature conservation designations form part of the Bolton's Strategic Ecological Network and will be protected and enhanced:
 - A. Sites of Special Scientific Interest: West Pennine Moors, Red Moss, Nob End, Gale Clough and Shooterslee Wood, and Tonge River Section (as shown on the Policies Map).
 - B. Local nature reserves as shown on the Policies Map.
 - C. Sites of Biological Importance identified in GMEU mapping of Sites of Biological and periodically reviewed by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit.

GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE (GBI)

2. The Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Network in Bolton includes:
 - A. Green infrastructure (GI) refers to the network of natural and semi-natural spaces that connect landscapes, people and places. It includes parks, woodlands, rivers, wetlands, street trees, green roofs and even smaller features like ponds, hedgerows and sustainable drainage systems.
 - B. Blue infrastructure (BI) refers to all water-based elements in an environment, such as rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands, canals, and sustainable drainage systems.
3. The Council will protect and enhance the GBI network reflecting the priorities identified in the latest Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study, Bolton Green Space Strategy and the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Reasons for Policy SP6

- 3.62 Bolton's natural environment is part of why the borough is worth investing in. The West Pennine Moors frame the town to the north, the river valleys of Irwell, Tonge, Bradshaw Brook and Eagley Brook structure the urban fabric, and Bolton's parks and green corridors give residents day-to-day access to nature. These assets are part of the ecological and recreational infrastructure that makes Bolton liveable, and SP6 places them at the centre of the spatial strategy. Retaining and enhancing these assets is important not just for the environment but also for social and economic reasons.

Nature conservation: Bolton's Strategic Ecological Network

- 3.63 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are designated nationally by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and the five sites wholly or partly within Bolton represent the finest examples of the borough's habitats and

geological features: the upland moorland of the West Pennine Moors, the lowland raised bog at Red Moss, the alkaline grassland flora at Nob End, the ancient woodland of Gale Clough and Shooterslee Wood, and the geological river section at Tonge. The West Pennine Moors SSSI and the Gale Clough and Shooterslee Wood SSSI both extend beyond the borough boundary, and the Plan's approach to their management is aligned with neighbouring authorities through Places for Everyone (2024).

- 3.64 Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Biological Importance add the locally significant tier, designated respectively under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and through the Greater Manchester non-statutory framework. Identifying these designations as part of Bolton's Strategic Ecological Network ensures that nature conservation in Bolton is mapped, material and legible before any proposal is brought forward. The tests that development proposals must meet are set by Policy ENV.

Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI)

- 3.65 Bolton's GBI Network is enormously diverse. Around a third of the borough comprises open or green space. Key components of the network include the borough's river valley corridors and watercourses, the West Pennine Moors, Sites of Biological Importance, parks and greenspaces, and the green and blue corridors that connect these assets with new and existing communities. Their ecological and recreational value depends on the connections between them and on their accessibility to the communities the Plan is planning for.
- 3.66 Greater Manchester Combined Authority published 'Nature for All: A Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Greater Manchester' in August 2025, the first LNRS to be published in the north of England. The LNRS is prepared under the Environment Act 2021 and sets out the priority habitats, species and locations for nature recovery across the city region SP6 (and ENV3 in Chapter 6). The Plan aligns with the LNRS Nature Network by identifying the borough's designated sites, mapping the strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure network, and setting the framework for biodiversity net gain and habitat connectivity. These natural assets in Bolton and the wider Greater Manchester area are identified in the [Greater Manchester Network Map](#) created as part of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Policy SP7 Green Belt

SP7: GREEN BELT

Green Belt land will be protected in line with national policy.

GREEN BELT

1. Bolton's Green Belt is defined on the Policies Map.
2. Development within the Green Belt will be assessed against national policy.
3. The Green Belt boundary was established by Places for Everyone (2024) Policy JP-G9. This Plan alters the Green Belt boundary only in exceptional circumstances to meet identified development needs that cannot be met elsewhere. Land is removed from the Green Belt at the following locations, and only to the extent shown on the Policies Map.

Location	Policy ref.	Change	Purpose of the change
Health Innovation Bolton, Farnworth	BSA02	Removed from the Green Belt	Strategic housing and health innovation employment allocation
Blackrod Employment Cluster	BSA07	Removed from the Green Belt	Industrial and warehousing allocation
Logistics North Extension	BSA08	Removed from the Green Belt	Employment-led mixed-use allocation
Land off The Alders, Tonge Moor	BSA09	Removed from the Green Belt	Site for Travelling Showpeople

4. Where land is released from the Green Belt by this Plan, development must secure compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt in the vicinity of the site, proportionate to the scale of the release including any specific measures identified in Site Allocation policies in Chapter 10.

5. Proposals which enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt will be supported, including proposals which improve public access, provide for outdoor sport and recreation, retain and enhance landscape, visual amenity and biodiversity, contribute to the priorities of the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy, or improve damaged and derelict land.

Reasons for Policy SP7

- 3.67** The Green Belt checks the outward growth of the towns and directs development back into them. The Green Belt in Bolton is a containment policy, not an environmental designation. Its job is to shape the form of development around the borough: to prevent sprawl, keep neighbouring towns from merging, safeguard the countryside from encroachment, preserve the setting of historic towns, and support urban regeneration.

Bolton's Green Belt

- 3.68** Bolton's Green Belt is part of the wider Greater Manchester Green Belt, formally established in 1984, and its boundaries align with those of Wigan, Salford, Bury, Chorley and Blackburn with Darwen. It covers around half the borough, wrapping the settlements to the north towards the West Pennine Moors and separating the towns to the south and west.
- 3.69** These are the five purposes set in national policy, and they are about where the borough grows, not about the ecological, landscape or recreational value of any parcel of land. Those values are protected by other policies in this Plan. A field can be in the Green Belt and be doing its Green Belt job whether or not it is ecologically rich. The Plan sets no local test for development in the Green Belt because national policy already provides this.

What this Plan changes

- 3.70** The Places for Everyone alterations of 2024 released Bewshill Farm (JPA4), Chequerbent North (JPA5) and West of Wingates (JPA6) from the Green Belt and

added land at Horwich Golf Course. Those changes are carried forward on the Policies Map and are not changed by this Local Plan.

- 3.71 Assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land is one of the five fundamental purposes of the Green Belt. Places for Everyone anticipated that Bolton's brownfield land supply, coupled with the important role the Green Belt plays in encouraging the recycling of vacant and underused land, would enable Bolton to meet its identified needs without further Green Belt release. However, increased costs have weakened viability, stalling the development of some sites that were expected to deliver and preventing the delivery of others. This has put pressure on green field and Green Belt sites to deliver growth on sites to meet Bolton's need which have come forward speculatively outside of the planned delivery framework.
- 3.72 To enable a return to planned growth that delivers the infrastructure it needs, Bolton must demonstrate that sufficient land is available to meet its identified needs for housing and economic growth on sites that can be delivered within planned timescales and that a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites can be maintained. Having explored all options, including a call for sites to identify any new or underutilised land within the urban area, reassessing the brownfield sites that had previously been identified, maximising densities and requesting help from neighbouring local authorities, Bolton has been unable to identify sufficient land. This triggers the exceptional circumstances that necessitate the alteration of Green Belt boundaries and the release of a limited number of Green Belt sites for development.
- 3.73 This Local Plan, therefore, makes limited Green Belt alterations. The largest is at Health Innovation Bolton, where there is a need to co-locate innovation floorspace with the Royal Bolton Hospital and the Bolton Institute of Medical Science. This proposed mixed-use site is also required to help Bolton maintain its five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.
- 3.74 The Blackrod Cluster and the Logistics North Extension provide industrial and warehousing floorspace that cannot be found within the urban area. The role of each site in meeting the borough's needs is set out in Policies SP2 and SP3 and in the relevant allocation policy in Chapter 10. The Alders (BSA09) site allocation in Chapter 10 responds to the need for accommodation for Travelling Showpeople as identified in HS7.

Compensatory improvements and beneficial use

- 3.75 Where Green Belt is released, the remaining Green Belt around it should be better for it. Places for Everyone Policy JP-G9 requires compensatory improvements where land is released, and this Plan applies the same requirement to its own releases so that the approach across the borough is consistent. The requirements attach to each allocation policy so that the obligation is specific and enforceable. Separately, the Plan responds to the national expectation that authorities plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, which in Bolton matters most on the moorland fringe and in the river valleys.

Safeguarded land

- 3.76 National policy asks the Plan to demonstrate that the Green Belt boundaries it defines will not need to be altered at the end of the Plan period, and to identify safeguarded land where necessary to meet longer-term needs stretching well beyond it. Safeguarded land is land safeguarded for (and not from) future development. This Plan identifies no safeguarded land. Longer-term needs in the Plan period will be addressed through the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater Manchester.

PART 2

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

POLICIES

Chapter 4

Infrastructure First

The policies in this chapter answer Local Plan Question B: Can the infrastructure need(s) of the proposed development be met?

- 4.1 The single most consistent message from Bolton's communities during the preparation of this Plan was this: Development must provide the infrastructure needed to service it – not promises that arrive years after the houses are occupied or facilities that serve new residents while existing communities wait. The policies in this chapter are Bolton's response to that message.
- 4.2 A good neighbourhood is not just houses. Infrastructure is needed to serve new residents and ensure existing residents are catered for, whether that be schools with available places, GP surgeries that can register new patients, walking routes that feel safe to use, and open spaces or playing pitches that are accessible. Local buses should run frequently enough to offer a genuine alternative to the car. Broadband should support business development and enable people to work from home. These factors are what makes the difference between a place where people choose to live and stay and a place which people feel they have to put up with.
- 4.3 Bolton has real strengths, for example in its parks and green spaces, Middlebrook leisure and retail, the town centre civic and cultural offer, the university campus, the hospital and health innovation cluster, an improving cycling network, and recent school investment. But the evidence is also clear about where provision falls short. Many of our residents lack good access to open space. The gap in life expectancy between the least and most deprived neighbourhoods is significant. GP capacity is under pressure from population growth, particularly in the west of our borough, as well as from the needs of an ageing population. Water and wastewater networks in parts of the borough are operating close to capacity. These gaps did not appear overnight. They reflect years of development that added homes without consistently adding the infrastructure those homes needed. Congestion is the concern residents raise most often when they talk about new development. Parts of the borough's road network are busier than they were ten years ago and feel congested at peak times, particularly on the approaches to the town centre, parts of the A58 and A666 corridors and the M61.
- 4.4 It is important to be candid about the limits of what planning policy alone can achieve. The Council itself does not run the bus or rail networks, commission healthcare, operate schools or manage utility networks. Transport improvements usually depend on TfGM, National Highways, the Department for Transport and the rail industry. Health facilities are planned and commissioned by the relevant NHS body. Schools require capital funding from central government alongside local authority planning. Utility networks are operated by utility providers. Infrastructure first means planning it in from the outset, though not necessarily in every case delivering it first. Timing has to be realistic. A new primary school cannot open its doors and wait for the children from a new development to be born and grow up.

- 4.5 Policies in this chapter support and encourage the provision of new infrastructure and the retention of existing infrastructure. Along with Policy DEL 1 in Chapter 9, these policies also require development to fund its share of what it creates demand for, engage with the organisations responsible for delivery, and be designed so that infrastructure can be delivered alongside it.

Policy INF1 Transport and Active Travel

INF1: TRANSPORT AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

Development should support safe and convenient access by sustainable travel and manage transport impacts without unacceptable residual harm.

ACTIVE TRAVEL

Applies to all development.

1. Development in Bolton will be designed in accordance with the Local Plan's transport objective to give priority first to pedestrian, cycle and wheeling movements, and second to public transport. Development must provide safe, direct and convenient walking, cycling and wheeling routes within the site and from the site to local facilities, nearby settlements, bus stops, train stations, and the wider walking and cycling network. Where existing routes are affected by the proposed development, equivalent or improved provision must be made. Where existing routes are poor, they will be upgraded. Where there are no existing routes to a development new active travel routes will be provided.
2. Where the completion of a route is dependent on third-party land, development should not prevent its later delivery. Strategic-scale development must also include internal cycle provision on main routes through the site, designed to reflect the street typology based on the latest Greater Manchester Streets for All design guide, and to deliver the modal share outcomes set out in the development's Travel Plan. Strategic-scale developments will be required to monitor outcomes against travel plan targets, providing more support for active travel if targets are not achieved.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Applies to: strategic-scale development

3. Development must be designed to provide and support public transport access, including layouts that enable viable bus routes into and around the site and bus stop infrastructure, bus priority measures and pump priming of new services where necessary, all agreed with Transport for Greater Manchester.
4. Active travel routes to the nearest bus stops and rail stations outside developments must be considered through accessibility analysis in the Transport Assessment.

TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT

Applies to development above 50 dwellings or 200 sqm and development with high trip-generating characteristics including schools, healthcare facilities, drive-through uses, and larger retail, leisure and employment use.

5. Development above 50 dwellings or 200 sqm must be accompanied by a Transport Statement; development above 80 dwellings or 500 sqm, and development with high trip-generating characteristics including schools, healthcare facilities, drive-through uses, and larger retail, leisure and employment uses must be accompanied by a Transport Assessment. The assessment must:

- A. Set out the transport outcomes the development is designed to achieve, consistent with the vision for the area set out in this Plan, the Local Plan transport objective, the Bolton Transport Strategy and the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy.
- B. Consider the accessibility of the development using accessibility tools such as GMAL and the DfT Connectivity Tool to assess what active travel and public transport provision is required.
- C. Test the development against reasonable future scenarios agreed with the Council and Transport for Greater Manchester, with scenarios reflecting the vision rather than the unmitigated continuation of current travel patterns.
- D. Identify the measures required to deliver those outcomes, including connections to active travel routes, public transport access and infrastructure, and demand management measures, and the means by which those measures will be secured.
- E. Assess effects on surrounding residential streets where movement and/or parking displacement is likely, and the measures required to address them.
- F. Identify and address residual highway safety and network impacts, where these cannot be resolved through the measures at D above.

FREIGHT AND SERVICING

Applies to employment, retail and leisure development above 500 sqm, and any development where freight or servicing movements are expected to be significant.

- 6. Development must provide appropriate freight and servicing provision on site, including waiting, loading and turning areas sized for the vehicles expected to use them.
- 7. Strategic-scale employment development must demonstrate that access to the strategic road network is suitable for freight movements and that routing avoids residential streets where alternatives exist.

TRAVEL PLAN

Applies to development above 80 dwellings or 500 sqm.

- 8. Development must submit a Travel Plan setting out the modal share outcomes the development will achieve, how sustainable travel will be funded and supported to deliver them, how modal shift will be monitored after occupation, and the remedial measures that will be taken if monitoring shows targets are not being met.

Reasons for Policy INF1

- 4.6 Bolton's transport network is used day-in day-out by Bolton's residents and businesses. Whether this is a trip by car, rail or bus, a walk to work or cycle to school, or heavy goods vehicles travelling to a logistics hub, the impact of new development on the transport network must be planned for and managed.

Vision-led transport

- 4.7 Bolton's 2024 Transport Strategy sets out a vision to: "work towards a zero-carbon transport network that is inclusive, safe, resilient, accessible and sustainable; taking a balanced approach, ensuring that all modes of travel are considered and connected, and responsive to technological change and innovation". From this the transport objective of the Local Plan as set out in Chapter 2 is "to support inclusive and accessible travel, making walking, cycling, and wheeling the easy choice and improving public transport where possible to provide safe, reliable and low-carbon

travel and an integrated transport offer that connects within, across and beyond the borough”.

- 4.8 The Transport Strategy vision and Local Plan transport objective shape Policy INF1. The rationale is that a borough where residents truly have choices about how they get around is a borough that functions better for the people who live in it and costs less: where walking to the shop feels as safe as driving, where the school run is on foot because the route works, where cycling to work or to shop is pleasant and easy, where catching a bus into town is practical as well as possible, and where using the car is a matter of choice not obligation. It supports cleaner air, safer streets and better health, and – where it is well managed – less congestion. None of this happens if development is designed around the car and everything else is added on afterwards. It happens through a vision-led process where active travel comes first at the point a scheme is laid out, public transport access is built into the layout of larger sites, and the consequences for the road network are tested against what has already been decided above. Thresholds for undertaking vision-led Transport Assessments, Transport Statements, and Travel Plans have been set to focus on developments generating or attracting a significant number of vehicle movements.

Active travel

- 4.9 Places for Everyone (2024) Policies JP-C 1 and JP-C 8 require development to be located and designed to encourage the most efficient and sustainable use of limited road space through a movement hierarchy prioritising walking, wheeling and cycling. The Bolton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, which is in development as the Local Plan is being prepared, will identify the walking and cycling routes the Council is working to extend across the borough, in partnership with Transport for Greater Manchester as part of the Bee Network. On strategic-scale sites the internal street network is itself cycle infrastructure: getting the layout right at permission is the only chance to get it right, because retrofitting cycle provision into a completed development is rarely feasible and usually compromised when attempted. This should be informed by the Greater Manchester Streets for All Design Guide 2024, which sets out how streets should be designed to reflect movement, place, safety and accessibility. Policy INF1 also recognises that links to, from and between sites and local centres facilities, bus stops and rail stations are vital to enabling movement by active modes and public transport, as implied by the Transport Vision.

Public transport

- 4.10 The policy recognises that Bolton is not Central Manchester. Large parts of the borough are suburban or semi-rural, and for many residents the car is how they get to work, how children get to school and how daily life happens – although analysis shows that 70% of journeys in Bolton now are under 3 miles in length, with a third of these journeys currently walked or cycled (and nearly half of all journeys under a mile are walked or cycled). Public transport in some parts of the borough can be a choice in principle rather than a practical alternative at every time of the day, and improving that takes investment and time. The policy is pitched accordingly. It does not ask development to deliver a modal shift that the wider network is not yet set up to support; it asks development to design in the routes, the access and the infrastructure to enable use of non-car modes of transport, and to monitor what happens after occupation, adjusting provision if targets are not being met.
- 4.11 The public transport provisions ensure that good bus access is possible and commercially and operationally viable. The Council cannot guarantee service frequencies, which depend on Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and on cross-boundary routes, commercial operators, but it can secure the layout, residential density, infrastructure and priority measures that enable the network to serve the site

and support patronage. Smaller development is not required to deliver public transport infrastructure because at that scale the design of the site rarely determines whether the network can reach it. However, there is a preference for all development, of whatever size, to be located near existing public transport routes, including train stations. This can be supported by use of the various published accessibility indicators, such as the Greater Manchester Accessibility Level (GMAL) and the Department for Transport's Connectivity Tool.

Managing impacts on the road network

- 4.12 The Plan has three levers on congestion: directing growth to the places best placed to absorb it, which is done through the spatial strategy in Chapter 3; requiring development to test its transport impact before permission, which is done through this policy; and securing contributions to the improvements identified through the evidence base, which is done through Policy DEL1. They cannot resolve congestion that already exists.
- 4.13 Places for Everyone recognises freight within the movement hierarchy. In Bolton, this is particularly relevant where employment, retail and servicing traffic could affect residential streets or unsuitable local routes.
- 4.14 Transport impact is a function of both scale and use. A large housing scheme and a medium-sized school can generate similar numbers of trips at similar times of day, and the consequences for the surrounding network are similar. The Transport Assessment requirement captures both routes so that neither escapes testing. The assessment is expected to address not only the wider road network but also displacement onto surrounding residential streets, where congestion elsewhere pushes traffic into places it does not belong.
- 4.15 A development that is designed to support sustainable travel is not the same as a development where sustainable travel actually happens. The gap between the two is where Travel Plans work. They set measurable targets for modal shift after occupation, require monitoring against those targets, and commit the applicant to act if the targets are missed. Without that, the active travel routes and public transport access built in at permission can be quietly underused for years with nothing done about it.

Policy INF2 Parking Standards

INF2: PARKING STANDARDS

Development must ensure parking provision reflects the accessibility and connectivity of the location, supports the travel hierarchy set in Policy INF1, contributes to reducing carbon emissions from transport, and does not cause harm to highway safety.

CAR PARKING PROVISION

Applies to all development that provides car parking or generates a demand for it, including changes of use

1. Car parking must be provided in accordance with the standards in Appendix 3. The zones are the Parking Zones shown on the Policies Map

A. Zone 1 includes the centre of Bolton.

- B. Zone 2 includes the area within 400m of Zone 1 and the centres of Horwich, Westhoughton, Farnworth, Little Lever and Blackrod.
 - C. Zone 3 includes the area between 400m and 800m of Zone 1, the area within 400m of the centres of Horwich, Westhoughton, Farnworth, Little Lever and Blackrod, and railway stations and the area within 400m of them.
 - D. Zone 4 is the remainder of the borough.
 - E. Where a site straddles a zone boundary, the zone in which the greater part of the site lies applies to the whole site.
2. Provision at the standard is acceptable in every zone. A departure from the standard must be justified as follows, with the evidence proportionate to the scale of the development and of the departure:
- A. In Zone 1, the standard is a benchmark and neither a minimum nor a maximum. The appropriate level of provision is determined through site-specific evidence having regard to parking demand, local parking capacity, accessibility to public transport, walking and cycling opportunities, local car ownership patterns and the potential impact on surrounding communities, residential amenity and highway safety. Provision below the standard must be supported by a Parking Demand and Capacity Assessment incorporating evidence of local parking occupancy, available parking capacity, local car ownership levels, accessibility and travel behaviour, and demonstrating that the proposed level of provision is appropriate to the location and would not result in unacceptable parking impacts.
 - B. In Zone 2, the standard is the starting point for assessment. A departure from it must be supported by evidence demonstrating that the proposed level of provision is appropriate having regard to accessibility, parking demand, parking capacity and local travel behaviour.
 - C. In Zones 3 and 4, the standard is the minimum normally required. Provision below it will only be supported where robust and compelling site-specific evidence demonstrates that the reduction would not result in overspill parking, displacement of parking demand onto surrounding streets, harm to residential amenity, unacceptable pressure on existing parking infrastructure, obstruction of active travel routes or adverse impacts on highway safety. A higher level of provision will be acceptable where it is justified by the nature and operation of the development.
 - D. In applying this policy the Council will have regard to local car ownership levels, existing parking stress, employment-related travel requirements, public transport accessibility, highway safety, residential amenity, sustainable transport objectives and the efficient use of land.
3. Development for which Appendix 3 sets no standard, including hospitals, special educational needs schools, law courts, car related uses, petrol filling stations, rail stations, park and ride sites and stadia, will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Applicants must demonstrate that provision meets the parking need generated by the development and that the effects on on-street parking, highway safety and residential amenity are acceptable.
4. Parking for people with disabilities must be provided in accordance with the standards in Appendix 3. These are minimum standards and apply in all zones.

CYCLE PARKING

Applies to all development other than householder development

5. Secure, covered cycle parking must be provided in all development in accordance with the cycle parking standards in Appendix 3. These are minimum standards, apply in all zones, and include provision for the storage of e-bikes and e-cargo bikes.

DESIGN OF PARKING

Applies to all development providing parking

6. Parking areas must be laid out so that electric vehicle charging points required by the Building Regulations can be reached safely and conveniently, including by drivers with disabilities and without cables crossing footways. Car club spaces must be provided where the scale and location of the development make this practical, and in low car development.

Reasons for Policy INF2

- 4.16 Parking shapes how development is used and the impact it has. How much parking a development has affects how the people living in it or using it travel, and that in turn affects congestion, air quality and carbon emissions from transport. In Bolton Town Centre and the other centres, buses are frequent, rail is close and most everyday journeys can be made on foot or by bike. In the outer parts of the borough there is less choice, and for many households a car is a necessity rather than a preference. Too little parking there pushes cars onto residential streets and causes problems for people who already live nearby.

Parking zones

- 4.17 The zones reflect the availability of public transport and local facilities (Bolton Local Plan Sites, WSP 2026). Bolton Town Centre has the best public transport access, the least room for parking and the greatest impacts from car use. As one moves beyond the edge of the town centre and into the surrounding neighbourhoods, public transport accessibility falls and the room to accommodate parking rises; this pattern is repeated in the borough's other town and district centres.
- 4.18 Figure 8 shows the zones across the borough that are set out in detail on the Policies Map, which should be used to establish the zone for a particular site.

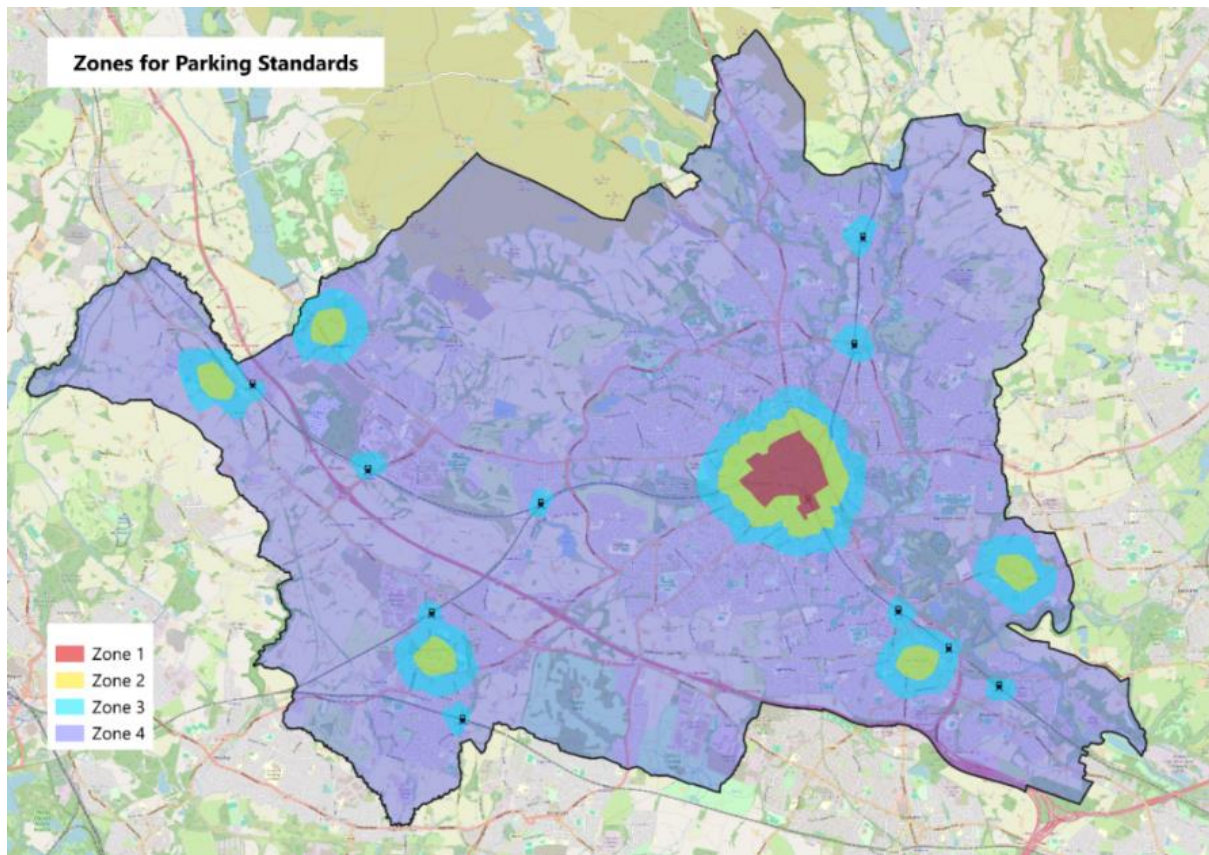


Figure 8. Parking zones in Bolton (illustrative).

Standards and departures

- 4.19 The standards give applicants and decision-makers a common starting point for the level of car parking that development should accommodate. Appendix 3 shows the standards that apply in every zone and those that vary by zone.
- 4.20 In Zone 1 the standard is a benchmark: the centre has the best public transport access and the least room for parking, so a lower level of provision may be permitted where the Parking Demand and Capacity Assessment justifies it, and a higher level where site-specific evidence justifies it. The Assessment draws on parking surveys at the times of peak demand on the streets affected, published car ownership figures and the accessibility of the site.
- 4.21 In Zone 2 a departure from the standard is assessed on evidence of accessibility, parking demand, parking capacity and local travel behaviour. In Zones 3 and 4 alternatives to the car are limited and reducing provision displaces cars onto residential streets, so the case for a departure must be robust and compelling.
- 4.22 The evidence is proportionate to the scale of the development and of the departure. For minor development it may draw on existing survey data, published car ownership figures and a description of on-street conditions on the streets affected. New parking surveys are expected for major development and where existing data does not describe those streets.

Houses in multiple occupation and purpose-built student accommodation

- 4.23 Demand from houses in multiple occupation varies with the number of bedrooms, the location and the profile of occupiers, so the standard is set per bedroom and applies in every zone. Rounding down is not permitted, so a proposal is assessed on the number of bedrooms it provides. Purpose-built student accommodation is treated in the same way, at a lower level per bedroom.

Parking for people with disabilities

- 4.24 Parking for people with disabilities is treated differently from general parking because the need for it does not depend on the accessibility of the location. Need arises from the requirements of the individual, so it is as likely to occur in Bolton Town Centre as anywhere else in the borough, and the availability of public transport and active travel does not reduce it.
- 4.25 The standards for people with disabilities are a minimum in every zone because the provision only works if it is in the right place. A designated bay needs to be close to the entrance and of a size that allows transfer, so unmet need cannot be accommodated on nearby streets in the way that general parking demand can. Reducing this provision alongside a reduction in general parking would restrict access to the development, and the Council must have regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Cycle parking

- 4.26 Secure, covered cycle parking supports the travel hierarchy in Policy INF1. Provision for e-bikes and e-cargo bikes is included because they extend the range of journeys that can be made without a car, which matters most where alternatives are limited.

Design of parking

- 4.27 General design and layout are dealt with by Policy PQ1, and freight and servicing provision by Policy INF1. Requirements for electric vehicle charging are set by the Building Regulations, and this policy does not repeat them. However, Electric Vehicle charging points need to be planned with the parking layout so that it can be reached safely, including by drivers with disabilities, without cables crossing footways, and so that occupiers without an allocated space can charge.

Policy INF3 Social and Community Infrastructure

INF3: SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Development in Bolton must mitigate the additional demand it generates for education, health and community infrastructure, so that the access to services for new residents is provided and access existing residents is not reduced by it.

EDUCATION

Applies to residential development comprising 10 or more dwellings or sites of 0.5ha or more.

1. Development must mitigate the additional demand it generates for early years, primary, secondary and special educational needs places, in consultation with the Council as local education authority. Contributions will be secured in accordance with Policy DEL1.

Applies to residential development of 500 or more dwellings.

2. For strategic scale development, onsite education provision, or land safeguarded for it, will be required where the Council as local education authority identifies that the demand generated cannot be met through the expansion of existing schools. The form and scale of that provision will be set out in the relevant site allocation policy in Chapter 10 or, where no allocation policy applies, determined at pre-application stage in consultation with the Council.

3. The expansion of existing schools and the development of new schools, including special educational needs provision, will be supported.

HEALTHCARE

Applies to residential development of 50 or more dwellings, and all specialist housing for older, vulnerable and disabled people.

4. Development must mitigate the additional demand it generates for primary care and community health services by contributing to primary care and community health capacity, in accordance with Policy DEL1.

Applies to residential development of 500 or more dwellings.

5. For strategic scale development, onsite primary care or community health provision will be required. The form and scale of that provision will be set out in the relevant site allocation policy in Chapter 10 or, where no allocation policy applies, determined at pre-application stage in consultation with the Council and the relevant NHS body.

6. The development, expansion and reconfiguration of health facilities will be supported. The co-location of primary care with other community services is encouraged.

OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Applies to residential development of 50 or more dwellings.

7. Development must identify its impact on local community infrastructure, including community meeting space, cultural or civic space, and youth facilities. The need for contributions towards new or improved community facilities will be assessed in accordance with Policy DEL1.

Applies to residential development of 500 or more dwellings and strategic scale commercial development.

8. For strategic scale development, onsite provision may be sought. The form and scale of that provision will be set out in the relevant site allocation policy in Chapter 10 or, where no allocation policy applies, determined at pre-application stage in consultation with the Council. Where onsite provision cannot be achieved, developers will be expected to contribute towards the delivery, enhancement, expansion or improvement of community facilities within the local area.

9. The development of new and improved community facilities will be supported, particularly in or adjacent to town, district and local centres. Applicants should engage with the local community on the need for provision and the form it takes.

Reasons for Policy INF3

- 4.28 The social infrastructure that holds communities together matters as much as the physical connections between them. In a borough where the gap in healthy life expectancy between neighbourhoods can be a decade, a GP surgery within reach, a school place available when a family arrives, and a community space where neighbours meet are not amenities: they are part of what makes a new development work for the families who move there and for the existing community around them. INF3 is how the Plan ensures they arrive alongside the people occupying new homes.

Education

- 4.29 For education, the Council is the local education authority. The Council holds the school places data, knows where rolls are rising and where capacity is available, and signs the planning obligation that secures what development contributes. Consultation at application stage is how that position is captured for each scheme: demand across Bolton is not uniform and does not stand still. Engagement at the point permission is granted ensures what development is asked to mitigate reflects the current position rather than the position when the Plan was adopted. Onsite provision is reserved for development at a scale that can sustain it; pupil yield evidence will determine whether a site of 500 or more dwellings generates demand best met on site or through the expansion of existing schools nearby. Demand for school places is also demographically complicated. Births in England have fallen since 2012 and primary rolls are falling nationally as smaller cohorts move through. Within Bolton, the question a large development raises will be pressure on capacity in some pupil planning areas and the relationship between new demand and surplus places in others. A development of this scale also builds out over several years, so its pupils arrive gradually rather than as an opening cohort. This is why onsite provision is conditional on the local education authority's assessment rather than automatic at the threshold: a fixed requirement for a school would over-provide where rolls are falling and do nothing extra where schools are full and cannot expand.

Healthcare

- 4.30 For healthcare, the policy does two things. Needs must be met: the Implementation Framework identifies the primary care and community health capacity required to support the Plan, informed by Joint Strategic Needs Assessment evidence and by ongoing engagement between the Council and the NHS. At the same time, the form that provision takes must remain flexible: the NHS 10 Year Health Plan (2025) is moving care out of hospitals and into neighbourhood settings, and the shape of primary and community health provision will change over the Plan period. The policy

therefore fixes the requirement that development mitigates the demand it generates, without fixing the form of what is provided. For strategic scale development, the form and scale of onsite provision is settled with the NHS at the time, through the site allocation policy or at pre-application stage, so that what is delivered reflects how the NHS is organising services then rather than when the Plan was adopted.

Other community facilities

- 4.31 For community infrastructure, the policy works in two tiers. Development of 50 or more dwellings adds demand to facilities that serve whole neighbourhoods and contributes on the basis set out in the Implementation Framework. At strategic scale, mitigation can be delivered directly: a development of several hundred homes generates demand at a scale where onsite or nearby provision is a meaningful response. Below these thresholds, development relies on the existing network of facilities, which Policy INF4 protects. Community facilities work when they are shaped by the people who will use them, which is why the policy expects applicants to engage with the local community early: on whether provision is needed, and on what form it should take.

Policy INF4 Protection of Existing Community Facilities

INF4: PROTECTION OF EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Development should protect against the loss of community facilities and improve quality and access.

PROTECTION

Applies to all development proposals involving the loss or change of use of a community facility, except those to which section 3 applies.

1. Development that would result in the loss of a community facility will only be permitted where one of the exceptions in national policy applies. For the purpose of the exception based on there being no reasonable prospect of the use continuing, the facility must have been marketed for its existing use and for alternative community uses, at a price or rent reflecting its established community use value and through channels appropriate to that use, for a continuous period of at least 12 months without a viable occupier being identified, supported by evidence of the marketing undertaken and the responses received.
2. During periods of vacancy, the potential for community 'meanwhile use' should be explored and accommodated.

HEALTH FACILITIES

Applies to all development proposals involving the loss or change of use of a facility in current NHS or NHS-commissioned use.

3. Development will be permitted where the applicant demonstrates, in consultation with the relevant NHS body or successor organisation, that the healthcare needs the facility meets or met will continue to be met through equivalent provision, or that the proposal supports better healthcare provision in the locality.

LOSS AS PART OF NET IMPROVEMENT

Applies to all development proposals involving the loss or relocation of a community facility as part of a scheme delivering replacement or improved community provision.

4. Where the loss or relocation of a community facility is proposed as part of a development, permission may be granted where:
- A. The needs the facility meets will continue to be met;
 - B. The development delivers better community provision for the locality than the facility it replaces; and
 - C. That provision is secured by planning condition or planning obligation at the grant of permission.

Reasons for Policy INF4

- 4.32 Community facilities (defined in the Glossary) can be the glue of a neighbourhood – they are the places for people to meet who would otherwise never do so. Regular contact with other people is a determinant of mental and physical health at every age, and social isolation is a risk factor for both. When a facility closes, this can negatively impact on this scope for interaction and benefits to well-being.

The protection tests

- 4.33 The three tests in Section 1 are cumulative, and each is there for a reason. A need test is included because protection is not preservation: where a facility genuinely no longer serves a purpose, artificially keeping the building in a type of use nobody wants helps no one. But the marketing requirement ensures that community organisations that could take on the facility are made aware that it is available. The price at which a property is marketed is important because a building marketed at redevelopment value will never find a community occupier, which would make the test meaningless. Meanwhile, use is included because a building that stands empty while its future is resolved deteriorates and loses its users, and an interim use keeps both.

Health facilities

- 4.34 Health facilities are treated differently because a commercial marketing test is the wrong measure for the NHS. Healthcare is planned and commissioned by bodies the Council does not control, and the NHS estate will change over the Plan period as the NHS 10 Year Health Plan (2025) moves care out of hospitals and into neighbourhood settings. The policy allows for that change; the requirement it keeps is that the healthcare need a facility meets, or recently met, continues to be met. Two routes are provided because NHS estate decisions come in both forms: consolidation that continues meeting the same need from different buildings, and reprovision that improves it. Consultation with the relevant NHS body is required in such cases because it is the only way the Council can test whether either is genuinely the case.

Loss as part of net improvement

- 4.35 Some schemes lose a facility but improve provision overall: a hall demolished and rebuilt as part of a larger community centre, a youth facility relocated into a mixed-use scheme, a place of worship rehoused with better accommodation. The Section 1 tests are wrong for these schemes, because what needs testing is not whether the facility is retained but whether the locality ends up better served. The needs test is retained alongside that because being deemed better overall can hide the loss of something specific: a larger centre that no longer has room for the group the old hall existed to house is not better for them. Securing the provision at the grant of permission is required because a benefit that is promised but not secured cannot be enforced once permission exists.

Policy INF5 Open Space Standards & Green Infrastructure

INF5: OPEN SPACE STANDARDS & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Development will be expected to contribute towards a network of high quality or enhanced green space and protect designated Accessible Greenspace and other informal open space.

PROVISION OF OPEN SPACE

Applies to residential development comprising 10 or more dwellings.

1. Development proposals will be required to contribute towards the provision of accessible, high-quality open space (also deemed Accessible Greenspace) on the basis of 3 hectares of Accessible Greenspace per 1,000 estimated population, including a minimum of 0.8 hectares of Parks and Gardens per 1,000 estimated population.
2. Development proposals must ensure that new Accessible Greenspace is located so that all dwellings are within at least one of the following Accessible Greenspace catchments:
 - A. 100 metres of an incidental Accessible Greenspace (0.2-0.5 hectares).
 - B. 200 metres of a doorstep Accessible Greenspace (greater than 0.5 hectares).
 - C. 300 metres of a local Accessible Greenspace (greater than 2 hectares).
 - D. 1 kilometre of a neighbourhood Accessible Greenspace (> 10 ha). Where existing Accessible Greenspace already meets one accessibility standard, new provision should, wherever practicable, provide a different size or typology of space to improve the overall distribution and accessibility of the borough's open space network.
3. Residential developments of 50 or more dwellings, counted cumulatively where a site comes forward in phases or through successive applications, will be expected to provide the required open space onsite; this requirement will be applied flexibly allowing for a payment in lieu of provision in the case of:
 - A. Town centre locations; and / or
 - B. Where the development is adjacent to or within 800m of a designated open space.
4. For residential developments of between 10 and 49 dwellings, on site provision is encouraged where it meets the standards set out in section 8. Applicants should maximise opportunities to provide accessible, multifunctional open space onsite through thoughtful site design. Off-site provision or financial contributions should only be considered where it has been demonstrated that all reasonable opportunities to deliver meaningful, policy-compliant open space onsite have been fully explored. Where this cannot be achieved developers will be expected to contribute towards the delivery, enhancement, expansion or improvement of open space provision within the local area.
5. Any off-site provision or financial contribution must address identified deficiencies in the quantity, quality, accessibility and value of open space serving the development and contribute towards the achievement of the standards set out in this policy.

PROTECTED OPEN SPACE

Applies to: Accessible Greenspace and Recreation Space as shown on the Policies Map, and undesignated open space including allotments, green corridors and other open space of recreational or amenity value

6. Accessible Greenspace will be protected. Development resulting in the loss of open space will only be permitted where one of the exceptions in national policy applies. For the purpose of the surplus exception, open space is surplus only where:

- A. An assessment demonstrates that the current land is surplus and the resulting level of open space provision following development would remain above the relevant standards identified in the Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study, having regard to existing and future needs, planned growth, accessibility and the cumulative impact of previous development. Where replacement provision is relied on:
- B. Equivalent or enhanced replacement provision must be secured in a suitable and accessible location that serves the same community and provides at least the same level of accessibility, quantity, quality and multifunctional value as the open space it replaces.

7. Site allocation policies (chapter 10) may provide additional or more specific requirements in relation to open space but should be read alongside the requirements of this policy.

QUALITY OF OPEN SPACE

8. Developers providing new or enhanced open space must:

- A. Provide open space of an appropriate size, scale, configuration and typology to support regular use, accessibility and long-term functionality.
- B. Contribute positively to the wider Green and Blue Infrastructure network, in accordance with Policies SP6 and ENV3.
- C. Deliver multifunctional benefits, including opportunities for recreation, biodiversity enhancement, climate resilience, sustainable drainage and nature recovery.

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF OPEN SPACE

9. All new open space should be supported by appropriate arrangements for long-term management and maintenance. This includes submitting a management Plan for the space as well as setting out who will take on stewardship of the site and how this will be resourced.

10. Management arrangements should ensure that open spaces remain safe, accessible, attractive and functional, while continuing to deliver their recreational, environmental and community benefits.

11. Where management of the open space is being taken over by Bolton Council, Section 106 contributions should be secured to cover the cost of managing the open spaces for the lifetime of the development.

ALLOTMENTS & FOOD GROWING

12. Proposals for new allotments and community food growing space will be supported, and residential development of 50 or more dwellings must consider the provision of food growing space as part of its open space.

Reasons for Policy INF5

- 4.36 Access to good quality open space and access to green infrastructure is widely recognised as a key determinant of health and well-being. It supports physical activity, mental well-being, biodiversity, climate resilience and contributes to the wider green infrastructure network. Play space is dealt with in Policy INF6 and playing pitches and sports facilities in Policy INF7.

- 4.37 Although Bolton performs well overall in terms of open space provision, this masks significant inequalities in its distribution. Much of the borough's Accessible Green Space is concentrated within the West Pennine Moors in the north, while more densely populated urban areas experience considerably lower levels of provision. For example, the Central and Inner Bolton Sub-Area provides only around 1.4 hectares of Accessible Green Space per 1,000 population – significantly below standards proposed by Natural England.
- 4.38 These deficiencies broadly correspond with areas experiencing poorer health outcomes and higher levels of deprivation. Improving access to high-quality open space therefore plays an important role in reducing health inequalities and creating healthier communities.

Protection of Existing Open Space

- 4.39 Open space is a finite resource that plays an essential role in supporting healthy communities, biodiversity, climate resilience, sustainable drainage, and the overall quality of the built environment. Once lost to development, it is often difficult or impossible to replace, particularly within established urban areas where opportunities for new provision are limited.
- 4.40 The Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study provides the Council's primary evidence base for understanding the quantity, quality, accessibility and function of open space across the borough.
- 4.41 The study identifies that, at a borough-wide level, Accessible Greenspace provision exceeds the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework (NEGIF) benchmark of 3 hectares per 1,000 population. However, provision is not evenly distributed across the borough, with some neighbourhoods already experiencing deficiencies in the quantity or accessibility of open space.
- 4.42 National policy recognises that green spaces can be of great value to local communities because of their recreational value, including their use as playing fields. Such spaces can provide important opportunities for sport, recreation, play and community activity, contributing to the health and well-being of local communities. Policy INF5 therefore seeks to protect recreation sites where they perform an important local function, ensuring that their recreational and community value is appropriately considered where development is proposed.
- 4.43 National policy also allows the loss of open space only where it is surplus, where equivalent or better replacement is provided, where the development is public service infrastructure with replacement, or where it is alternative sports or recreation provision whose benefits outweigh the loss. Policy INF5 applies those exceptions and defines what surplus means in Bolton: development only results in the loss of open space where there is clear evidence that the resulting level of provision would remain above the relevant standards identified in the Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study, having regard to existing and future needs, planned growth, accessibility and the cumulative impact of previous development. This ensures that development does not gradually erode provision to the point where existing or future communities experience a deficiency in open space.
- 4.44 Where these standards are not maintained, development will only be supported where equivalent or enhanced replacement provision is secured in a suitable and accessible location serving the same community. Replacement provision must provide at least the same level of accessibility, quantity, quality and multifunctional value as the space it replaces. In many cases, replacement provision can deliver a better overall planning outcome by creating larger, more accessible or higher quality open spaces, strengthening green infrastructure networks and providing enhanced

recreational, biodiversity, climate resilience and sustainable drainage benefits. This approach ensures that Bolton's network of open spaces is protected while allowing appropriate flexibility where development can demonstrate that there will be no overall loss in the value or function of open space for existing and future communities.

Standards for Open Space Provision

- 4.45 New residential development is expected to contribute towards meeting the open space needs arising from growth. The policy establishes complementary standards for quantity, accessibility and quality to ensure that sufficient open space is provided in appropriate locations. The policy approach requires:
- Development of 50 or more dwellings, counted cumulatively where a site comes forward in phases, provides provision on site.
 - Quantity standards establish the amount of open space required to serve the population generated by development, expressed as hectares per 1,000 population. They ensure sufficient provision to meet the needs of existing and future communities.
 - Accessibility standards establish the distance people should reasonably be expected to travel to different types of open space. They are based on recognised size-proximity principles, with larger spaces serving wider catchments and smaller neighbourhood and doorstep spaces provided closer to where people live.
 - Quality standards ensure that open spaces are safe, attractive, functional and inclusive, supporting recreation, biodiversity, health, well-being and wider community use.
- 4.46 The quantity and accessibility standards are informed by the Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study and the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework.
- 4.47 Development proposals should prioritise addressing identified deficiencies in Accessible Greenspace catchments rather than duplicating existing provision.

Quality of Open Space

- 4.48 The quality of open space is as important as its quantity. High-quality and accessible open spaces provide opportunities for physical activity, play, recreation, relaxation and social interaction, helping people to lead healthier and more active lifestyles. Regular access to attractive and welcoming green spaces can also support mental well-being, reduce social isolation and provide opportunities for people to connect with nature and their local community.
- 4.49 To deliver these benefits, open spaces need to be accessible, attractive, safe, inclusive and functional, enabling regular use by people of different ages, abilities and backgrounds. This is particularly important in areas where opportunities to access good-quality green space are more limited and where improving the quality and accessibility of existing provision can help address inequalities in health and well-being. Well-designed open space can also perform multiple functions beyond recreation.
- 4.50 It can support biodiversity and habitat connectivity, provide sustainable drainage and urban cooling, contribute to climate resilience, support walking and cycling, and strengthen the character and quality of places. Designing these functions together allows open space to provide greater environmental, social and health benefits.

Maintenance

- 4.51 The long-term benefits of open space depend on effective management and maintenance. Development proposals should therefore demonstrate how new open spaces will be managed, maintained and funded throughout their lifetime.
- 4.52 A management plan should identify the organisation responsible for the long-term stewardship of the open space, the maintenance standards to be achieved and how these arrangements will be funded. This will help ensure that open spaces remain safe, accessible, attractive and functional, while continuing to deliver for the local community.
- 4.53 Where open space is to be adopted by the Council, developers will be expected to make appropriate financial contributions through planning obligations towards the long-term costs of management and maintenance.

Allotments & Food Growing

- 4.54 Analysis of existing allotment provision indicates that Bolton currently has around 0.1 hectares per 1,000 population, with evidence of demand for additional provision. The Council therefore seeks to protect existing allotments and support new provision, alongside the expansion and improvement of existing allotments and community food-growing spaces.

Policy INF6 Play provision in new development

INF6: PLAY PROVISION IN NEW DEVELOPMENT

Development will be expected to contribute to open play space as it is an essential component of healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities.

PROTECTION

Applies to: All play Space provision.

1. Development resulting in the loss of play space will only be permitted where equivalent or enhanced replacement provision is secured in a suitable and accessible location that serves the same community and age group while also providing at least the same level of accessibility, quantity, quality and multifunctional value.

PROVISION OF NEW PLAY SPACE

Applies to residential development comprising 10 or more dwellings or sites of 0.5ha or more.

2. Development must contribute to the provision of outdoor play space at a minimum rate of: 0.55 hectares of children's Play Areas per 1,000 estimated population within the development (to include 0.25 hectares of equipped play area and 0.3 hectares of informal play or youth space) in accordance with the Council's standards and informed by Fields in Trust guidance on minimum size, accessibility and age-appropriate provision.
3. Residential developments of between 10 and 49 dwellings, should provide onsite play provision where it can meet the Fields in Trust guidance and deliver a meaningful and functional play space. Where this cannot be achieved developers will be expected to contribute towards the delivery, enhancement, expansion or improvement of play space within the local area.

4. Residential developments of 50 dwellings cumulatively or more will be expected to provide the required play provision onsite. This requirement will be applied flexibly allowing for a payment in lieu of provision in the case of:

- A. Town centre locations; and / or
- B. Where the development is adjacent to or all dwellings are within 700m of an existing play space.

QUALITY OF PLAY PROVISION

5. New play provision must:

- A. Address Follow Fields in Trust guidance on play space design, be accessible, inclusive and welcoming to children and young people of all ages and abilities;
- B. Be of an appropriate size, scale and configuration to provide meaningful play opportunities and support long-term functionality;
- C. Provide high-quality play value through a range of formal and informal play opportunities appropriate to the scale of the development;
- D. Complement and strengthen the existing network of play spaces serving the development and address identified deficiencies in local provision;
- E. Where appropriate, incorporate natural features, landscaping, biodiversity enhancement and sustainable drainage to provide multifunctional benefits; and
- F. Be designed to achieve high standards of safety, natural surveillance, accessibility and durability.

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PLAY PROVISION

6. All new play space should be supported by appropriate arrangements for long-term management and maintenance. This includes submitting a management plan for the space as well as setting out who will take on stewardship of the site and how this will be resourced.

7. Management arrangements should ensure that play spaces remain safe, accessible, attractive and functional, while continuing to deliver their recreational, environmental and community benefits.

8. Where management of the open space is being taken over by Bolton Council, Section 106 contributions will be secured to cover the cost of managing the open spaces for the lifetime of the development.

9. Where it can be clearly demonstrated that formal equipped play cannot be maintained to a safe and appropriate standard in the long term, additional informal play provision may be accepted as an alternative, provided it delivers inclusive, high-quality play value.

Reasons for Policy INF6

- 4.55 Access to outdoor play is fundamental to children's physical health, mental well-being, learning and social development. High-quality play spaces encourage active lifestyles, support social interaction, promote independent mobility and increase opportunities for contact with nature. They are therefore an essential component of healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities.
- 4.56 The Bolton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2024/25) identifies significant health inequalities across Bolton. Around 38% of Year 6 children are classified as overweight or obese, while levels of physical inactivity exceed the national average. These challenges are often greatest within the Council's more deprived communities, where opportunities for outdoor recreation and access to private gardens may be

more limited. Accessible play provision therefore forms an important part of improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities.

- 4.57 The Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study (2026) identifies a significant shortfall in children's play provision across the borough. It estimates that Bolton currently provides approximately 0.02 hectares of children's play space per 1,000 population, substantially below the Fields in Trust benchmark of 0.55 hectares per 1,000 population. The Study also identified examples where existing play provision appears to have been lost since previous assessments, reinforcing the importance of protecting existing facilities while securing new provision as development comes forward.

Protection of Play Provision

- 4.58 Existing play provision is a valuable community asset that can be difficult to replace, particularly within established urban areas. The loss of local play opportunities can reduce opportunities for children and young people to be physically active and place additional pressure on nearby facilities.
- 4.59 Policy INF6 therefore seeks to protect existing play provision unless replacement facilities continue to serve the same community and age groups while providing at least equivalent levels of accessibility, quantity, quality and play value. Replacement provision should be located within the relevant accessibility catchment to ensure that children and families continue to benefit from facilities within reasonable walking distance of their homes.

Provision of New Play Space

- 4.60 New residential development is expected to contribute towards meeting the play needs arising from future growth. The policy establishes a minimum quantity standard for children's play provision, informed by the Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study and the Fields in Trust guidance on benchmark standards, accessibility and age-appropriate provision.
- 4.61 Fields in Trust identifies different accessibility catchments for Local Areas for Play (LAPs), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs), Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs), and informal youth facilities. However, these typologies are not consistently reflected across Bolton's existing network of play spaces. The Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study therefore recommends a single accessibility standard requiring all new residential development to be located within 700 metres of a children's play area.
- 4.62 This approach reflects the importance of ensuring that children can safely walk to play opportunities close to home while encouraging the delivery of larger, multifunctional play spaces capable of serving a wider range of ages and abilities. Development proposals should prioritise improving accessibility to play provision and addressing identified deficiencies rather than duplicating existing provision. Applicants should maximise opportunities to provide meaningful, policy-compliant play provision onsite before relying on off-site provision or financial contributions.

Quality of Play Provision

- 4.63 The quality of play provision is as important as its quantity. Well-designed play spaces should be accessible, inclusive, safe and capable of supporting a wide range of formal and informal play opportunities for children and young people of different ages and abilities.

- 4.64 Play provision should complement and strengthen the existing network of facilities while contributing positively to the wider Green and Blue Infrastructure network. Opportunities should be taken to incorporate natural play features, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable drainage and landscaping to create multifunctional spaces that provide lasting community value.

Management and Maintenance of Play Provision

- 4.65 The long-term benefits of play provision depend upon effective management and maintenance. Development proposals should demonstrate how new play spaces will be managed, maintained and funded throughout their lifetime.
- 4.66 A management plan should identify the organisation responsible for long-term stewardship, the maintenance standards to be achieved and how these arrangements will be funded. This will help ensure that play spaces remain safe, attractive and functional while continuing to deliver recreational, environmental and community benefits.
- 4.67 Where play provision is to be adopted by the Council, developers will be expected to make appropriate financial contributions through planning obligations towards the long-term costs of management and maintenance.

Policy INF7 Playing Pitches and Sports Facilities

INF7: PLAYING PITCHES AND SPORTS FACILITIES

Development is expected to protect, improve or expand provision of playing pitches and sports facilities

PROTECTION

Applies to all development proposals affecting playing pitches or sports facilities.

1. Development that would result in the loss of a playing pitch or sports facility will only be permitted where the tests set out in national policy are satisfied.
2. Where replacement or alternative playing pitches or sport facility provision is proposed, it must preserve or improve public community access to facilities of the type lost.

NEW AND IMPROVED FACILITIES

Applies to all development proposals for new or improved playing pitches or sports facilities.

3. New or improved playing pitches and sports facilities will be supported where they meet an identified current or future need, whether set out in the Playing Pitch Strategy or demonstrated through other equivalent evidence where it has been informed by consultation with Sport England and relevant sport governance bodies.
4. Where the facility is intended to serve community use, public access must be secured through a Community Use Agreement or equivalent legal mechanism.

Applies to all strategic scale development

5. New developments should provide onsite playing pitches or sports facilities in line with the latest Playing Pitch Strategy. Where onsite provision cannot be achieved, developers

will be expected to contribute towards the delivery, enhancement, expansion or improvement of playing pitches or sports facilities within the local area.

Reasons for Policy INF7

- 4.68 Physical activity is one of the strongest determinants of health and well-being. Playing pitches and sports facilities enable people of all ages to participate in organised sport, recreation and regular physical activity, contributing to improved physical health, mental well-being and stronger communities. This is particularly important in Bolton, where the Bolton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2024/25) identifies significant health inequalities, including above-average levels of physical inactivity and obesity. Protecting and improving access to playing pitches and sports facilities is therefore an important part of supporting healthier lifestyles and reducing health inequalities.
- 4.69 Policy INF7 is underpinned by the Bolton Playing Pitch Strategy (2026), which forms the evidence base for the protection, enhancement and provision of playing pitches and sports facilities across the Council. Prepared in consultation with Sport England and the relevant national governing bodies of sport, the Strategy assesses current and future need, participation, demand, facility quality and capacity, and identifies priorities for investment and protection. It should be read alongside this policy and will continue to inform decision-making as it is reviewed throughout the plan period.

Protection

- 4.70 National policy establishes the tests that must be satisfied before the loss of a playing pitch or sports facility can be supported. Policy INF7 applies those tests locally and requires that replacement or alternative provision maintains or improves public community access to facilities of the type being lost.
- 4.71 Community access is fundamental to ensuring that replacement provision continues to deliver the health, well-being and participation benefits of the facility it replaces. A replacement facility may be equivalent in terms of quantity and quality but still fail to meet local needs if public access is reduced or lost. The policy therefore seeks to ensure that opportunities to participate in sport are maintained for the communities that rely upon those facilities.

New and Improved Facilities

- 4.72 The Council supports the provision of new and improved playing pitches and sports facilities where they meet an identified current or future need. The Bolton Playing Pitch Strategy is the principal evidence base for assessing need and has identified gaps in several areas across the Council.
- 4.73 Where facilities are intended for community use, long-term public access should be secured through a Community Use Agreement or other appropriate legal mechanism. This ensures that facilities intended to deliver community benefit remain accessible throughout their lifetime and continue to support participation in sport and physical activity across the borough.

Policy INF8 Digital and Utilities Infrastructure

INF8: DIGITAL AND UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE

Development in Bolton will be permitted where it provides the digital and utilities infrastructure it needs and does not place unacceptable demand on existing networks.

1. UTILITIES CAPACITY

Applies to residential development of 10 or more dwellings or sites of 0.5ha or more, or non-residential development of 1,000 sqm or more, and development that is likely to place significant additional demand on utility infrastructure, including data centres and other energy-intensive uses.

1. Development must be accompanied by an assessment demonstrating that adequate capacity exists in the water supply, wastewater, electricity, gas, high speed fibre and telecommunications networks needed to serve the development, or setting out the reinforcement required and how it will be secured in agreement with the relevant statutory undertaker.
2. Development proposals for data centres and other significant energy-intensive uses must demonstrate that:
 - A. Sufficient electricity capacity is available or will be provided to serve the development;
 - B. Opportunity to minimise energy demand, maximise energy efficiency and incorporate on site renewable generation and heat reuse have been incorporated;
 - C. The proposal will not prejudice the delivery of planned strategic utility infrastructure or development.
3. As well as meeting the demands of parts 1 and 2 of this policy, development proposals for hyperscale data centres that have significant strategic implications for the whole of the region, must demonstrate;
 - A. Local economic and strategic value through the provision of enhanced services for local businesses and increased capacity to support innovation;
 - B. Community benefits, including commitments to local procurement, workforce development and skills, and dedicated community investment funds.

Reasons for Policy INF8

- 4.74 Development depends on reliable water, wastewater, electricity, gas and digital infrastructure. New development should be planned alongside the infrastructure need it supports so that growth does not place unacceptable pressure on the existing networks or delay the delivery of the development. This policy supports the delivery of sustainable growth by ensuring that utility infrastructure is considered at an early stage of the development process and that any necessary reinforcement is identified before development is permitted.

Utilities Network Efficiency

- 4.75 Early engagement with statutory undertakers at the earliest opportunity is essential to establish whether sufficient capacity exists within the utility networks required to serve the development. There are a number of different facilities competing for the energy and resources that statutory undertakers supply. Where reinforcement is required, applications should demonstrate how this will be delivered and secured alongside the development.
- 4.76 The Council cannot require statutory undertakers to deliver infrastructure outside their own investment programmes. However, planning applications should demonstrate that appropriate engagement has taken place and that utility capacity constraints have been identified and addressed before development proceeds. The

Council will continue to engage at a strategic level (Infrastructure Delivery Strategy, 2026).

Energy Infrastructure and Data Centres

- 4.77 The transition to a net zero energy system will increase demand for electricity infrastructure across the borough. In particular, data centres and other energy-intensive developments can require substantial electricity capacity and may require reinforcement of the local distribution network.
- 4.78 Applicants for proposals that are likely to place significant additional demand on electricity infrastructure should engage with the relevant network operator at an early stage and demonstrate that adequate capacity exists, or identify the reinforcement required to support the development.
- 4.79 Where appropriate, proposals should also demonstrate that opportunities have been considered to connect to existing or planned heat networks and, for developments capable of producing recoverable waste heat, how this resource could contribute to wider heat network opportunities.
- 4.80 Hyperscale data centres can have impacts extending beyond individual development sites, with implications for regional electricity infrastructure, economic growth and investment. In addition to meeting the general utility requirements of this policy, such developments are expected to demonstrate their wider strategic value by supporting local businesses, innovation and digital infrastructure, together with delivering tangible community benefits through local employment, skills, supply chain opportunities and appropriate community investment.

Digital Infrastructure

- 4.81 High-quality digital connectivity is increasingly essential to the way people live, work and access services. Reliable, high-speed connections support home and flexible working, education and skills, access to healthcare and public services, business productivity and the growing use of connected technologies.
- 4.82 Ensuring that new development has access to high-quality digital infrastructure will help support economic growth, social inclusion and resilient communities, while reducing the risk of new homes and businesses experiencing poor connectivity. Digital infrastructure should therefore be considered from the outset of development and designed to be ready for the future, enabling new development to benefit from improvements in fixed and mobile connectivity as networks and technologies continue to evolve.

Chapter 5

Placemaking

The policies in this chapter answer Local Plan Question C: Does the proposed development meet Bolton's design and placemaking standards?

- 5.1 Bolton's places are the product of centuries of investment and change. The civic ambition of Bolton's Victorian and Edwardian town centre, the mill-town 'grain' of the inner neighbourhoods, the municipal character of Horwich, Westhoughton and Farnworth, the suburban settlements each with its own identity, the many rural farms and connecting paths, the moorland and river valley edges that frame the borough – these layers of history give Bolton its character. That character is both an asset and a responsibility.
- 5.2 Bolton Town Centre has good bones: its robust historic infrastructure is worth conservation and provides the framework for urban renewal. The civic core around Victoria Square, the market hall, the transport interchange, and the street grid that connects and extends into the surrounding areas gives a structure and scale that newer centres cannot replicate.
- 5.3 And the good bones are not just in Central Bolton: they are also manifest in the strategic and local rail infrastructure that traverses the borough and links its different towns and neighbourhoods and connects them across the wider metropolitan region and beyond. To the south, Health Innovation Bolton will bring new investment to Farnworth, complementing the regeneration in its town centre and integrating with its established residential neighbourhoods. The planned grids of streets in Horwich give it a coherence and legibility which contemporary development aspires to recreate in the major new neighbourhood taking shape on the former Locomotive Works site. Westhoughton's market town heritage has built up over centuries. The inner neighbourhoods of Farnworth, Great Lever and Halliwell have the compact, walkable, human scale and grain that sustainable urban design holds up as a model. Open farmland and the valley and moorland topographies give the borough's settlements a dramatic natural setting, and a prospect across Greater Manchester that few boroughs can match.
- 5.4 Every part of the borough has a quality of place worth conserving, extending and enhancing. The standards in this chapter are also, in practical terms, health standards: streets that are well-overlooked and safe to walk, homes that are naturally lit and ventilated, neighbourhoods that have genuine access to open space and active travel routes: all these characteristics have direct effects on physical and mental well-being.
- 5.5 Bolton's heritage is an integral part of its investment case. Over 1,100 identified heritage assets, including 26 conservation areas, 361 listed buildings, six registered parks and gardens and five scheduled monuments, give the different parts of the borough its local character and so can inform and shape the configuration and design of newer development. For health and life sciences, creative industries, professional services and hospitality, historic places offer a competitive advantage. Eleven of Bolton's designated heritage assets are currently on Historic England's Heritage at

Risk register: that is not a failure, it is an opportunity for development that can unlock their potential, secure their future and add to Bolton's offer.

- 5.6 The 2021 National Design Guide sets out ten characteristics of well-designed places, which together create its physical character, nurture and sustain a sense of community, and positively address environmental issues. Well-designed places enhance the surrounding context; they establish an attractive and distinctive identity for the place; their built form produces a coherent pattern of development; they are accessible and easy to move around; they enhance and optimise natural elements; they provide safe, social and inclusive public spaces; they combine and integrate different land uses; the homes and buildings they provide are functional, healthy and sustainable; they are efficient and resilient in their use of resources; and they are built to last.
- 5.7 The standards include design requirements in response to local character in accordance with Policy PQ1, health assessment requirements proportionate to the scale of development in accordance with Policy PQ2, density expectations proportionate to transport accessibility in accordance with Policy PQ3, and heritage requirements in accordance with Policy PQ4. Bolton expects development to add something of lasting value to the places in which it is set.
- 5.8 What gets built in Bolton over the life of this Plan will be here long after the Plan has been superseded; the policies in this chapter have been framed to make sure that development is worth keeping.

Policy PQ1 Place Quality

PQ1: PLACE QUALITY

Development in Bolton should be of a high standard that responds to the type and character of its location, creates safe and inclusive places, and makes a lasting positive contribution to the built environment.

WELL-DESIGNED PLACES

Applies to all development.

1. Development must respond to the type of location in which it is set:
 - A. In town, district and local centres, development must consolidate or extend the townscape setting, maintain the continuity of ground floor frontages, and avoid fragmenting public realm treatments.
 - B. On previously developed land, including industrial areas, retail parks, surface car parks and other non-residential clusters, residential and mixed-use redevelopment must establish a clear and legible layout that integrates with the surrounding street network and provides active frontage and continuity of enclosure to the streets and public spaces created.
 - C. In existing residential areas and settlements, residential and mixed-use development including housing renewal, infill development and historic mill redevelopment, must reflect the layout, townscape, massing and materials characteristic of the area.
 - D. On greenfield sites, development must respect the setting of farm complexes, folds, vernacular cottages and the wider open landscape, and must retain or reprovide existing public rights of way and enhance their quality, setting and natural surveillance.

- E. At the edge of the Green Belt, development must protect and reinforce Green Belt boundaries.
2. Development must respond to the character of the location, in accordance with the character-based policies set out in Chapter 10.
 3. Development must be designed to be safe, accessible and inclusive, providing natural surveillance of streets, public spaces and routes, legible movement patterns, and a public realm that is usable by people of all ages and mobilities. Where development affects a right-of-way, retention on its existing alignment is preferred; where diversion is unavoidable, the replacement route must be at least equivalent in terms of quality, directness, visibility and overlooking.
 4. Development within the setting of open spaces of borough-wide or sub-regional importance, including Queen's Park, Farnworth Park, the line of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal, the West Pennine Moors and the Croal and Irwell Valleys, must conserve their character, views, access and recreational function.
 5. Development must address identified gaps in access to open space and green infrastructure, and contribute to the recreational, biodiversity and climate resilience functions of the borough's green infrastructure network.
 6. New streets must be tree-lined, with species and positioning agreed with the highway authority, unless there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this is not possible in a specific street. Appropriate arrangements must also be made for long-term management and maintenance of the street trees.
 7. Where a non-residential building is converted to residential use, the development must be of a scale consistent with the architectural and functional character of the original building and must meet the standards in Policy HS4. The reuse of historic mills is dealt with in Policy PQ4.

HOUSEHOLDER DEVELOPMENT

Applies to extensions and alterations to existing dwellings.

8. Development must:
 - A. Be subordinate to the character of the original building and its setting;
 - B. Respond to the configuration, design and materials of the original building;
 - C. Respect the original building line, the street, and the wider locality; and
 - D. Not cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions experienced at neighbouring properties.

AGENT OF CHANGE

Applies to all development proposing a use sensitive to an existing neighbouring use.

9. Development that introduces a new use which is sensitive to the impacts of an existing use in a neighbouring or nearby location must demonstrate how those impacts will be successfully managed. The responsibility for managing the identified impacts rests with the developer introducing the new, sensitive use. Detailed requirements for noise, air quality and odour are set out in Policy ENV5.

SHOPFRONTS, SIGNAGE AND SHUTTERS

Applies to all ground floor uses.

10. Shopfronts and signage that contribute to townscape character must be retained and restored where the premises are converted to another use, including residential use.
11. New and replacement shopfronts and signage must be of a size and design appropriate to the character, scale and proportions of the building, and illuminated signage must not harm residential amenity or highway safety.

12. Solid external roller shutters will not be permitted unless the need for them is demonstrated; internal grilles or open lattice shutters are to be used.

Reasons for Policy PQ1

- 5.9 This policy is about making sure that new development in Bolton is well-designed and fits the place it is in. What that means in practice depends on where the site is. A scheme in the Town Centre, a mill conversion in an inner township, a housing estate on a former industrial site, a small development at the rural edge: all these cases need different design responses. The policy sets one consistent expectation of quality and then explains what a good response looks like in each of the main types of location found in the borough. It also protects the borough's most important parks and green spaces and requires development to help close gaps in access to them.

Context

- 5.10 Bolton's built environment is highly varied. It ranges from the commercial core and Victorian and Edwardian townscapes of the town centre, through the historic mills and terraced streets of the inner urban area, across the suburban and post-war housing of the outer townships, and out to the mill settlements, historic farms and open moorland of the rural west and north. A single prescriptive design standard would be inappropriate across this range, so the policy requires the design response to be calibrated to the context of the location.
- 5.11 The contextual categories identified in part 1 of the policy are the principal location types found in the borough. This is not an exhaustive classification, and where a site displays characteristics of more than one category, the relevant requirements will be applied together. Applicants are expected to demonstrate, through a design and access statement and a character appraisal in accordance with the character-based policies set out in Chapter 10, how the proposal responds to the specific context of the site and its surroundings.

Urban centres, previously developed land and existing settlements

- 5.12 In urban centres, the continuity of the ground floor frontage and the coherence of the public realm are central to commercial viability, urban legibility and perceptions of safety. Gaps in frontage, blank elevations and fragmented surface treatments undermine the investment already made in the borough's centres. The redevelopment of previously developed land raises a different issue. It is a significant source of new housing in the borough and will remain so over the plan period, but many such sites have no inherited street pattern, or have layouts derived from single-occupier industrial or retail use. Because of this, the policy requires the creation of a new and legible structure of streets and spaces rather than an internalised layout turned away from its surroundings.

Rural areas, greenfield sites and the edge of settlements

- 5.13 In the outer and rural parts of the borough, development will continue to come forward at a smaller scale within the urban area, where local character and existing infrastructure allow, while beyond the urban area most forms of development are constrained by Green Belt designation. Where development does come forward at the settlement edge, the policy ensures that it reinforces rather than erodes the defensibility of the Green Belt boundary, with the full approach to the Green Belt set out in Policy SP7. In these locations at the urban fringe, public rights-of-way are of particular importance as a recreational and active travel resource.

Impacts on open spaces

- 5.14 Certain open spaces carry significance beyond their immediate neighbourhood. Queen's Park and Farnworth Park are of borough-wide importance, and the corridor of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal has combined heritage, recreational and green infrastructure value. The West Pennine Moors, shared with Bury, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire, and the Croal and Irwell Valleys, shared with Bury and Salford, are of sub-regional importance for recreation, wildlife habitat and climate mitigation and adaptation. Connecting to and contributing to this Green and Blue Infrastructure is an important design consideration.

Historic mills and conversions

- 5.15 Historic mills and older industrial premises are a defining element of Bolton's townscape and a significant reuse opportunity, primarily for employment uses with supporting residential and mixed uses. The detailed approach is set out in Policy PQ4, and the associated justification is not repeated here.
- 5.16 Policy PQ1 gives local expression to Policy JP-P1 (Sustainable Places) of the Places for Everyone Joint Plan Document, which requires development to create healthy, inclusive and well-designed places. It should be read alongside the National Design Guide, the National Model Design Code and relevant local guidance published on our website.

Householder Development

- 5.17 Bolton's residential neighbourhoods are varied in their housing type, architectural features and street design. Features that are key to the character of a particular location include: the building line along the length of the street; the spacing between buildings; the form of the roof, including gables and hipped roofs, the particular design of the eaves, as well as dormers, chimneys and the overall roofline; significant landscape features such as hedges and trees; and specific materials such as stone or brick, design elements such as bay windows or porches, and architectural details such as front door treatments. Appreciation and understanding of the characteristics of the host building, the street and the surrounding area are essential to ensure that an extension will be appropriate in its setting.

Agent of Change

- 5.18 The agent of change principle sits in PQ1 because the plan's growth strategy is one of intensification of new uses alongside support for existing uses. In the town centre policy areas, this means new residential development will come forward next to the retained employment uses that EC1 and EC2 support, and above and next to the evening economy that EC6 supports. New residential development will also come forward through site allocations in existing mixed-use neighbourhoods, and in the borough's mixed-use historic mills that PQ4 safeguards. Where a sensitive new use encounters an established business or community, the responsibility for managing the impact sits with the developers, and the detailed tests for noise, air quality and odour are set out in Policy ENV5. Development proposals should minimise and mitigate impacts through good design, including the use of distance, screening, internal layout, insulation and other design measures.

Shopfronts, Signage and Shutters

- 5.19 Shopfronts and the associated fascia and projecting signs are the direct interface between many non-residential buildings and the public realm, and play a vital role in shaping the character, experience and first impressions of urban centres in general and shopping streets in particular. Their design requires careful consideration to provide visual interest, human scale, lighting and security at ground level. At the

same time, the shopfront is an integral part of the building in which it is housed, so its design should be informed by the architectural style, design features, and scale and proportions of the wider building. A range of features can detract from the quality of shopfronts, primary among which is the use of roller shutters, which create a deadening effect on frontage and can add to the perception of crime and antisocial behaviour. Good shopfront design can cumulatively contribute to the vitality and viability of local, district and town centres.

- 5.20 The requirement for places to be well-designed applies across the borough, regardless of viability. Where viability is challenging, Policy DEL1 provides the framework for a transparent conversation about what can be achieved. What it does not provide is a route to poor design or poor-quality materials.

Policy PQ2 Health Assessment

PQ2: HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Development should demonstrate that the health and well-being impact of the proposal is addressed and acted on.

HEALTH STATEMENT

Applies to all development except for householder development

1. The planning statement or design and access statement accompanying the application must identify the likely health effects of the proposal and, where relevant, the population groups affected.

HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Applies to residential development of 50 or more dwellings in Inner Bolton (as defined in the glossary) Breightmet, Farnworth North & Farnworth South and 100 or more dwellings elsewhere, and to non-residential development of 5000 square metres or more gross internal floorspace

2. Development proposals should include a Health Impact Assessment which must address, at a minimum:
 - A. Access to open space and opportunities for physical activity;
 - B. Active travel and public transport access;
 - C. Noise, air quality and light;
 - D. Access to healthy food;
 - E. Access to health services;
 - F. Social infrastructure;
 - G. Active design principles; and
 - H. The impact on health inequalities in the affected community.
3. The assessment should have regard to Bolton Health and Well-being Strategy and data from the Bolton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

HEALTH OUTCOMES

4. The findings of the Health Statement or Health Impact Assessment must be reflected in the design and delivery of the scheme, including the measures proposed to mitigate adverse effects and enhance positive ones. Where adverse health effects cannot reasonably be avoided

or mitigated, permission will only be granted where the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm.

Reasons for Policy PQ2

- 5.21 Health is at the heart of this Plan. It shapes where development goes (Policies SP2 and SP3), what gets built (Policies PQ1 and PQ3), and what infrastructure development is asked to support (Policies INF1, INF3, INF5). Policy PQ2 is how that Plan-wide commitment is tested in relation to individual developments. This is particularly important in Bolton, where life expectancy and health outcomes are below the national average and significant health inequalities exist between different parts of the borough.
- 5.22 Significant health issues exist within Bolton borough. Bolton's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) found that life expectancy for males (76.8 years) and females (81.3 years) is lower than the England average (79.1 years and 83.0 years respectively). Mortality from all causes (including stroke, cancer, cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease, respiratory diseases and mortality from causes considered preventable) is higher than England's average. It is therefore important that the health effects of proposals are considered and that a health impact assessment is prepared which addresses access to a healthy lifestyle. Significant inequalities also exist within Bolton. Male life expectancy stands at 82.1 years in Bromley Cross & Bradshaw and 82.0 in Harwood, compared with 70.3 in Central Bolton and 72.1 years in Breightmet North. Female life expectancy shows similar levels of inequality: in Dunscur & Egerton it is 87.7 years and in Lostock and Ladybridge it is 86.2 years. Similar patterns exist for mortality rates.
- 5.23 Policy PQ2 ensures that, for larger developments health impacts are assessed through a more detailed Health Impact Assessment. The health statement should identify the likely health effects, the groups affected and the mitigation proposed and to consider. A full Health Impact Assessment is a structured examination of factors influencing health which produces evidence that can be weighed in a decision on the planning application. A full Health Impact Assessment applies to larger scale development but also in Inner Bolton (as defined in the Glossary) Breightmet, Farnworth North & Farnworth South wards where health disparities are most pronounced with the aim to reduce these disparities.
- 5.24 Neither tool should be a 'tick-box exercise'. The findings from the assessment must be reflected in design and delivery, and where harm cannot be avoided or mitigated; opportunities to enhance positive health impacts should also be incorporated. Applicants are encouraged to seek pre-application advice and support on methods from the Council's Public Health Team.

Policy PQ3 Density and Tall Buildings

PQ3: DENSITY AND TALL BUILDINGS

Development in Bolton will be supported at densities that reflect the accessibility and context of the location, consistent with the approach set out in Places for Everyone (2024) to achieve the efficient use of land and high-quality design, and respond positively to the landscape, heritage and built environment setting. Proposals will be assessed according to the definition provided for tall buildings in Bolton, and will be supported where they meet the locational, environmental, technical, heritage and design requirements set out to support regeneration and placemaking.

RESIDENTIAL DENSITY ZONES

Applies to: all residential development and mixed-use development with a residential component.

1. The minimum density expected of residential and mixed-use development is set by four zones, as shown on the Policies Map, assigned according to the following locational principles and allowing for significant severance imposed by major road and rail infrastructure, topography, and other relevant factors:

- A. **Density Zone A** applies in Bolton Town Centre, near Bolton Interchange, and at Middlebrook, as defined on the Policies Map.
- B. **Density Zone B** applies in other locations with excellent access to public transport and/or local services, as defined on the Policies Map.
- C. **Density Zone C** applies in other locations with good access to public transport and/or local services, as defined on the Policies Map.
- D. **Density Zone D** applies in all other locations.

Numerical density standards for each zone are set out in section 2.

RESIDENTIAL DENSITY MATRIX

Applies to all residential development and mixed-use development with a residential component.

2. Minimum net residential density standards in terms of dwellings per hectare (dph) are set out for each Density Zone according to the principles set out in the following matrix:

Density & Housing Type	Location
Density Zone A 120 dph minimum Primarily apartments, with ground floor duplexes and townhouses where practicable	within Bolton Town Centre and at Middlebrook and/or within 400m of Bolton Interchange
Density Zone B 70 dph minimum Mix of houses and apartments	within 400m of Bolton Town Centre and within designated town and district centres and/or within 800m of Bolton Interchange within 400m of other rail stations

Density Zone C	within 800m of Bolton Town Centre
50 dph minimum	within 400m of designated town and district centres and/or
Primarily houses	within 800m of other rail stations
	with a Greater Manchester Accessibility Level (GMAL) score of 6 or more
Density Zone D	all other locations
35 dph minimum	
Primarily houses	

The following conditions apply:

- A. The net residential density applies to the net developable area of a proposed housing development. Planning applications should set out clearly the basis on which the net developable area has been calculated from the gross site area.
- B. Where a site spans two or more density zones, the higher or highest density requirement applies to the whole site.
- C. All distances are to be measured in a straight line from the nearest site access point and, where relevant, to include centres and stations beyond the borough boundary.
- D. Where significant severance is imposed by major road and rail infrastructure, topography, or other relevant factors, the Density Zone is adjusted accordingly as shown on the Policies Map.
- E. Designated town and district centres within the borough are as defined in Policy SP4 Centres for Shopping and Services, and those beyond the borough boundary are the equivalents in the centre hierarchy as determined by the relevant Local Planning authority. In both cases, distances are to be measured from the nearest boundary of the relevant centre.

EFFICIENT USE OF LAND

Applies to: all residential development and mixed-use development with a residential component.

3. Proposals for residential and mixed-use development must demonstrate that the proposed density makes efficient use of the site having regard to the Density Zone applying under section 1 and the density set out in section 2. A lower residential density will only be accepted where there is clear justification in relation to one or more of the following:

- A. Heritage, where the impact of the required density and associated building heights on the historic environment, heritage assets and their setting would cause harm to their significance.
- B. Townscape setting, where the existing townscape context is of low density, the gross site area is less than 1ha and therefore insufficient to establish its own townscape context, and the required density could not be achieved without harm to the character of the area.
- C. Landscape setting, where the site is located in landscape character area(s) assessed by the 2018 Greater Manchester Landscape Character & Sensitivity Assessment as moderate-high sensitivity to 2-3 storey residential developments.
- D. Local access constraints, such as infrastructure or topography.

- E. Local services and infrastructure, where the capacity is insufficient to absorb additional demand without disproportionate investment.

EXCEEDING THE MINIMUM DENSITY

Applies to all residential development and mixed-use development with a residential component.

4. A proposed density higher than the minimum density expected by the Density Zone applying under section 1 and the density set out in section 2 will be supported where the applicant demonstrates that the site, the scheme design, and the capacity of local services and infrastructure can accommodate the higher density without harm to heritage assets and their setting, the character of the surrounding landscape or townscape setting, or the amenity of existing and future residents.

TALL BUILDINGS

Applies to: all residential development and mixed-use development with a residential component, and all employment development.

5. In Bolton, tall buildings are those of at least seven storeys above ground level or over 18m in height to the top storey upper floor level, as defined in the glossary. Within the Places for Everyone (2024) employment allocation JPA6 at West of Wingates, height is measured from, and must take account of, the maximum height of the development plateau at the relevant location.

6. Tall buildings for residential use or for mixed-use with a residential component will only be permitted in Density Zone A in Bolton Town Centre, around Bolton Interchange and at Middlebrook, and only where they are demonstrated to achieve the following tests:

- A. Align with the borough's regeneration strategy.
- B. Enhance the character and legibility of the urban and landscape setting in general, and of the skyline of the area as a whole and its landscape horizon. In the Bolton Town Centre, this includes consideration of views from the fifteen viewpoints identified in the 2006 Building Bolton SPD.
- C. Relate to the scale and character of surrounding streets, street frontages and open spaces.
- D. Manage effectively the associated servicing and operational requirements.
- E. Avoid causing harm to heritage assets and their setting, the landscape setting, views, environmental quality or residential amenity.

7. Tall buildings for employment use will only be permitted within the Places for Everyone (2024) employment allocation JPA6 at West of Wingates, and only where they are demonstrated to:

- A. Align with the borough's economic and employment strategies.
- B. Relate to the scale and character of surrounding streets, street frontages and open spaces.
- C. Manage effectively the associated servicing and operational requirements.
- D. Avoid causing harm to heritage assets and their setting, the landscape setting, views, environmental quality or residential amenity.

Reasons for Policy PQ3

- 5.25 Bolton does not have unlimited land, and housing need over the Plan period is high. Every site that delivers fewer homes than it could is a site that forces homes to be found elsewhere. PQ3 exists to make sure Bolton's sites deliver what they can. For a

developer, that means the Plan is clear and upfront about the density expected in each part of the borough. For residents, it means new development in their neighbourhood will be at a density the location can take. Policy PQ3 also defines the threshold for tall buildings, and the terms on which proposals for tall buildings will be considered. Where proposals do not surpass this threshold, the form that development takes in terms of building height is determined in accordance with Policies PQ1, PQ2 and PQ4.

Residential Density

- 5.26 Places for Everyone (2024) sets the Greater Manchester approach: places with better access to public transport and/or local services can take more homes per hectare than places with less of either. Bolton applies that approach through four Density Zones, each shown on the Policies Map. Zone A covers parts of Central Bolton and Middlebrook and expects the highest densities in the borough. Zones B and C cover the rest of the urban area, with Zone B in places with excellent access to public transport and/or local services and Zone C in places with good access. Zone D covers the remainder of the borough. The extent of each zone shown on the Policies Map allows for significant severance imposed in a number of locations by major road and rail infrastructure and for a range of other relevant factors. For example, the extent of Zone A around Bolton Town Centre is limited by the highway infrastructure of St Peter's Way to the east and Topp Way to the north. Similarly, Zone A at Middlebrook is focused on the existing stadium built to the south of Burnden Way by an extended area of flood risk, to the north by Middlebrook Retail Park, and to the east by the severance imposed by the highway infrastructure of De Havilland Way.
- 5.27 Within each Density Zone, the minimum net housing density corresponds to that set out in Places for Everyone (2024) Policy JP-H4. Lower densities may be acceptable on a case-by-case basis where they can be clearly justified. Where the required development density and associated building heights could impose harm on heritage assets and their setting, as set out in policy PQ4, a lower density may be required to enable building height to be reduced. The 2006 Building Bolton Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) also remains a valuable point of reference for building heights appropriate in Central Bolton and its associated conservation areas. Where the townscape setting is sensitive, for example in low-density suburban settings where some of the borough's train stations are located, the context and scale of development is important: on smaller sites the required development density may not be appropriate, whereas on larger sites greater than 1ha in gross area the required density can be achieved by distributing development to mitigate its impact. Similarly, where the landscape setting is sensitive to 2-3 storey residential developments, as set out in the 2018 Greater Manchester Landscape Character & Sensitivity Assessment, a lower density may provide the flexibility for a more appropriate configuration of development.
- 5.28 The four-zone structure is designed to be clear for anyone reading the Plan. A developer can look at the Policies Map, find the Density Zone that applies to their site, and know what net development density the Plan expects before they submit an application. A resident can look at the same map and know what density to expect in their part of the borough. The Council has done the work to identify where each zone applies, so that conversations at pre-application stage are about the density proposed, not about which zone applies.

Efficient Use of Land and Exceeding the Minimum Density

- 5.29 Good site-specific planning sometimes justifies a density higher than the matrix expects and sometimes justifies a lower density. A site with exceptional transport

access, or one that can anchor regeneration of the wider area, may support more homes than the zone minimum. A site in a particularly sensitive setting may warrant fewer homes. Sections 3 and 4 set the tests for variance in either direction. A higher density can present greater challenges for the proposal to work with the site, to resolve the design, to contribute to local services, and to enhance the character of the surroundings. A lower density has to be justified by the context of the location, the character of the area, or the capacity of local services. These tests are not barriers to good schemes: they produce the evidence the Plan expects applicants to provide so that decisions are properly grounded.

- 5.30 Development density is not the same as building height: the same density can be achieved by different configurations of height according to the size, type, mix and layout of buildings and dwellings. Once the appropriate residential density for a site is determined, the range and configuration of building heights should be guided by the sensitivity of the heritage, landscape and townscape setting, and determined in accordance with the full range of placemaking policies in PQ1, PQ2 and PQ4.

Tall Buildings

- 5.31 PQ3 sets out a Plan-led approach to tall building development. In Bolton, tall buildings are defined in policy as buildings which are at least 18m to the floor level of the top storey, or at least seven storeys in height, as set out in the glossary. PQ3 identifies specific locations potentially suitable for tall buildings as defined by the policy. Tall buildings in residential and mixed use are restricted to the extents of Density Zone A in Bolton Town Centre, around Bolton Interchange, and at Middlebrook, as defined in the Policies Map. These are the only parts of the borough where the scale of buildings, the pattern of streets, the transport network, the intensity of mixed uses, and the focus of civic ambition can together provide an appropriate setting for tall buildings and accommodate their landmark quality. At Middlebrook, the presence of the stadium establishes a precedent; however, proposals for tall buildings here must also be considered against the wider landscape and visual impact, including on the elevated horizon of the West Pennine Moors, which is clearly visible from the open landscape to the south of Middlebrook. Tall buildings in employment use are restricted to the Places for Everyone JPA6 West of Wingates allocation. This is the only part of the borough where the strategic city-regional role of the location can justify the scale and intensity of use associated with tall buildings, and where the size of the site provides the scope for some impacts to be mitigated.
- 5.32 The Tall Building definition equates to a building height of around 21m to 22m at roof level, subject to the specific roof form. In Bolton Town Centre and around Bolton Interchange, only a small number of buildings currently surpass this threshold. The designated heritage assets of the clocktower of Bolton Town Hall and the steeples of St Peter's Church, Moor Lane Unitarian Chapel and St George's Church all rise significantly above the roofscape of the town centre and, together with the brick chimney at Salop Street, collectively comprise the landmarks that give the skyline its identity.
- 5.33 A small number of contemporary developments also surpass the threshold, but to a lesser extent. Residential buildings planned before the 2022 Building Safety Act include Marsden House, The Cube student accommodation, and 93 Bradshawgate. Office, retail and mixed-use buildings include 120 Bark Street, The Wellsprings, and the former Marks & Spencer. At Middlebrook, the sole existing tall building is the stadium. In the historic cotton mills of its urban areas, Bolton also has a legacy of multistorey employment buildings with large floorplates which also approximate this threshold, including Falcon Mill, Croal Mill and Globe Works, not including clock towers and roof plant. Elsewhere across the borough, the suburban character of the

residential neighbourhoods, the moderate scale of employment areas, the heritage-led setting of smaller settlements and the sensitivity of open landscapes make them unsuitable for tall buildings.

- 5.34 In Central Bolton, proposals for tall buildings must be considered in the context of the Town Centre's skyline of historic spires and clock towers rising above a general building height of 4 to 5 storeys and set against the distant moorland horizon. Proposals for tall buildings must therefore be tested from the twelve middle distance viewpoints identified in the 2006 Building Bolton SPD, and from three long-distance viewpoints from cardinal points on the West Pennine uplands. At Middlebrook, proposals for tall buildings must be considered in the context of the skyline of the Stadium rising above the general building height of 3 to 4 storeys and set against the elevated moorland horizon to the north. At West of Wingates, tall building proposals must be considered in the context of the construction of the development plateau on which it is placed and which forms an integral component of its height, in the context of the 2026 West of Wingates Masterplan SPD, and in the context of the landscape setting and sensitivity of surrounding open lands.
- 5.35 Places for Everyone (2024) Policy sets the Greater Manchester density framework. The Policies Map transposes this into Density Zones that relate to the specific conditions in Bolton, allowing for localised severance and other relevant factors. Section 2 sets the minimum densities for each zone. Sections 1, 3 and 4 are the tests applied to any proposal. Section 5 sets out the definition of tall buildings, and Sections 6 and 7 the locations where tall buildings are appropriate in principle, and the terms on which proposals for tall buildings will be considered. The site-specific requirements for tall buildings in Bolton Town Centre, around Bolton Interchange, and at Middlebrook are set out in Chapter 10.

Policy PQ4 Historic Environment, Heritage Assets and Archaeology

PQ4: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE ASSETS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Development in Bolton will be permitted where it conserves or enhances the significance of historic environment, heritage assets, archaeology, and their settings.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Applies to: all development affecting a designated or non-designated heritage asset or its setting, and all development in areas of known or potential archaeological interest.

All applications engaging this policy must be accompanied by a heritage statement proportionate to the significance of the asset affected and informed by the Historic Environment Record as a minimum source.

1. The Council will, through planning decisions and in fulfilling its wider functions, proactively manage and work with developers, the local community and others to support proposals which conserve or, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment of Bolton. Development affecting heritage assets will be assessed against the tests in national policy; this policy identifies the assets and issues to which those tests apply in Bolton.
2. Particular consideration will be given to ensure that those elements of the historic environment, including both designated and non-designated heritage assets, which contribute

most to the borough's distinctive identity and sense of place are conserved or, where appropriate, enhanced, such as those of:

- A. Archaeological heritage, including prehistoric earthworks and burial mounds.
 - B. Agricultural heritage, including country houses, farmhouses and associated outbuildings in the countryside.
 - C. Industrial heritage, including mill buildings, bleachworks, canals, railways, and associated infrastructure and buildings.
 - D. Civic and market town heritage, including municipal buildings, libraries, public art and market buildings as well as shops, shopfronts and public houses.
 - E. Social and cultural heritage, including places of worship, cultural venues, schools, colleges and other social institutions, parklands, woodlands and wider landscapes, as well as housing of different types associated with the borough's social and class history.
3. Proposals that secure the repair, reuse and long-term future of heritage assets on the Heritage at Risk Register, or otherwise at risk, will be supported.

LISTED BUILDINGS

Applies to: development affecting a listed building or its setting.

4. Development affecting a listed building or its setting must demonstrate regard for its special architectural or historic interest. The following tests apply:

- A. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade I or Grade II* listed building will only be permitted in wholly exceptional circumstances in accordance with national policy; and
- B. Substantial harm to a Grade II listed building will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where it is demonstrated that the public benefits outweigh the harm in accordance with national policy.

5. Proposals for the change of use of a listed building will be supported where the proposed use represents the optimum viable use consistent with the conservation of the building's significance, fabric and setting. Where this would result in a use not normally permitted in that location, this will not in itself be a reason for refusal where the applicant demonstrates that:

- A. the proposed use is the only means of securing the building's long-term future; and
- B. the change of use can be carried out without harm to the fabric, setting or architectural and historic interest of the building.

REGISTERED PARKS AND GARDENS

Applies to: development affecting a registered park or garden or its setting.

6. Development affecting a registered park or garden, or its settings, will be assessed against national policy.

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

Applies to: development affecting a scheduled monument or its setting.

7. Development affecting a scheduled monument, or its settings, will be assessed against national policy.

CONSERVATION AREAS

Applies to: development affecting a conservation area or its setting.

8. Development affecting a conservation area (as shown on the Policies Map) or its setting must demonstrate how it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area, having regard to the relevant conservation area appraisal published by the Council.

- A. Demolition in a conservation area will only be permitted where the building or structure makes no positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area, or where its demolition is the only means of securing the long-term future of the asset;
- B. New development and extensions in a conservation area must respond positively to the scale, grain, materials, detailing, public realm treatments, and other factors as identified in the relevant conservation area appraisal; and
- C. Substantial harm to a conservation area will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where it is demonstrated that the public benefits outweigh the harm in accordance with national policy.

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Applies to: development affecting a non-designated heritage asset or its setting.

9. A non-designated heritage asset is a building, monument, site or landscape feature, including those in the Local List of Heritage Assets and identified as part of the planning process, that has a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. The retention and reuse of non-designated heritage assets within proposals will be supported. Development affecting a non-designated heritage asset or its setting must demonstrate how it responds to the significance of the asset. The weight given to the significance of the asset will be proportionate to its importance.

10. Development involving the reuse and conversion of non-designated historic mill buildings must retain the principal elements that define the mill's character and significance and demonstrate that the proposed use is compatible with the building's form and structure, avoiding alterations that would harm its significance, evolution and understanding as a mill complex.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Applies to development in areas of known or potential archaeological interest.

11. Development in areas of known or potential archaeological interest, as identified in the Historic Environment Record, must be accompanied by a desk-based assessment prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service. Where field evaluation is required, this must be completed before determination. Where preservation in situ is not achievable, preservation by record through a watching brief or other agreed programme of archaeological work will be required.

Reasons for Policy PQ4

- 5.36 Bolton's listed buildings, conservation areas and non-designated heritage assets carry much of the character that SP5 identifies as a strategic asset and that PQ1 requires development to respond to. There are 361 listed buildings, 26 conservation areas, six registered parks and gardens, and five scheduled monuments distributed across the borough, with eleven of these designated heritage assets on the Heritage at Risk Register as of 2026. PQ4 is how heritage protection is applied at application stage. It is set within the Greater Manchester framework for heritage and identity provided by Places for Everyone (2024) Policy JP-P 2.

Designated heritage assets

- 5.37 Designated heritage assets comprise listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, scheduled monuments, and conservation areas.
- 5.38 For listed buildings, statutory protection in national policy applies universally, but the planning balance differs with the significance of the asset. Grade I and Grade II*

listed buildings are the most significant assets in the borough of national importance. Grade II listed buildings are of national importance but do not carry the same irreplaceable quality as Grade I. Non-designated heritage assets carry local significance. The graduated tests in sections 4, 8 and 9 reflect that hierarchy of weight: harm to Grade I is permitted only in wholly exceptional circumstances because there is no equivalent; harm to Grade II is permitted in exceptional circumstances where public benefit outweighs harm; the weight given to a non-designated asset is proportionate to its importance. That is not a weakening of protection at the lower end; it is a legally accurate reflection of the weight that national policy attaches to each level of significance.

- 5.39 For conservation areas, the character and appearance of its defined area and the setting in which it sits is important. The character of a conservation area derives, for example, from the scale, grain, materials and public realm that together make it legible as a distinct place. Section 8 ties new development, extensions and demolition to the conservation area appraisal published by the Council for each designated area. The demolition test in Section 8A addresses the single most contested question in conservation area management: whether a building that makes no positive contribution must be protected because it sits within a designation. The test allows demolition in that case, while positively contributing buildings remain protected from the same test.

Non-designated heritage assets

- 5.40 Bolton's Local List of Heritage Assets is in preparation. Once adopted, it will be the principal reference for non-designated heritage assets, and applicants should always refer to the most recently adopted version published on the Council's website. The Local List may be updated over the Plan period as additional assets are identified.
- 5.41 Bolton's historic mills are a legacy of the borough's industrial heritage of textile production, bleachworks and related industrial uses. The 2007 Bolton Mills Action Framework identified 108 mills complexes across the borough, only 17 of which are designated heritage assets. Altogether, they comprise over 1.4m sqm of floorspace, much of which is on large floorplates and accommodates a wide variety of uses, including dwellings. While there are successful examples of reuse and conversion, the market has often struggled to find viable uses for these distinctive buildings.
- 5.42 The Historic Environment Record (HER) serves a separate purpose from the Local List. It records archaeological sites, finds and historic environment data, and is maintained by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service. The HER is the minimum source for heritage statements under this policy and is also the basis on which areas of known or potential archaeological interest are identified.

Chapter 6

Environment

The policies in this chapter answer Local Plan Question D: Does the proposed development meet Bolton's environmental requirements?

- 6.1 Bolton's environmental inheritance is a mixed one. The moorland and river valleys that frame the borough sit alongside a river network where much of the water runs in culverts, a housing stock mostly built before modern energy standards, and brownfield land that carries the contamination of the borough's industrial, mill, mining and chemical past. The policies in this chapter are the tests new development must meet.
- 6.2 Bolton's environmental story is not the same as its neighbours. The borough sits at the head of the Croal-Tonge catchment, with rainfall arriving off the West Pennine Moors and running through a town centre much of whose river network has been culverted. Around a third of the borough is open or green space, but its distribution is uneven: the strongest assets sit in the north and west, with the heaviest deficits in the inner neighbourhoods where most residents live. Most of Bolton's housing stock predates 1945 and is heated by gas. Brownfield land carries contamination and ground-instability legacy from the borough's industrial past, and that land is also where the Plan expects most growth to go. Air quality fails national objectives along the strategic road network. Climate change is making rainfall more intense, summers hotter, and existing systems less reliable. These are the conditions every application must be tested against.
- 6.3 The policies in this chapter do two different jobs. ENV1 is mitigation: the test through which new development contributes to reducing the emissions that cause climate change, applying the Greater Manchester framework set by Places for Everyone. ENV2 to ENV7 are adaptation and protection: the tests through which development is assessed against flood risk, the Green and Blue Infrastructure network, biodiversity and natural environment, air quality and noise, and contaminated land and ground conditions. The chapter expects more of major development than of householder development, and it expects more of development on a sensitive site than of development on a straightforward one. Evidence is scaled to risk. A householder extension is not asked to carry the evidence burden of a 500-unit major scheme.
- 6.4 This Plan will leave a legacy of improvement in the environmental conditions it has inherited. Over the life of this Plan, the Council will consent to thousands of new developments, the regeneration of substantial brownfield land, and development across most of the borough. The policies in this chapter are concerned with ensuring cumulative development reduces emissions that pollute rather than adding to them; restoring and enhancing ecological and hydrological networks rather than further fragmenting them; and preserving soil quality to bring contaminated land back into safe use.

Policy ENV1 Meeting Energy and Water Standards

ENV1: MEETING ENERGY AND WATER STANDARDS

Development in Bolton must utilise innovative design solutions to help meet Net Zero operational carbon targets.

ENERGY STANDARDS

Applies to major development proposals. These requirements should be applied proportionately to minor development, having regard to the scale, nature and complexity of the proposal.

1. Developments will be permitted where they:
 - A. Demonstrate how the proposal has applied the energy hierarchy to minimise energy demand, maximise energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.
 - B. Maximise the incorporation of renewable energy generation and low carbon heating appropriate to the scale, nature and location of the development, including but not limited to, the installation of solar panels and the connection to existing or planned heat networks where practicable.
 - C. Demonstrate that the risk of overheating has been assessed and managed by minimising internal heat gain and maximising passive cooling through orientation, layout, shading, thermal mass and natural ventilation, before mechanical cooling is relied on. Where mechanical cooling is proposed, the applicant must demonstrate that passive measures have been maximised first.
 - D. Demonstrate that the energy infrastructure required to support the development has been appropriately considered, including electricity network capacity and opportunities to connect to existing or planned low carbon energy infrastructure.
 - E. Submit an Energy Statement, GMCA Proforma (or its superseding document) and supporting information to demonstrate compliance with Places for Everyone Policies JP-S2 and JP-S3.
 - F. Where development involves the conversion, reuse or change of use of an existing building, maximise opportunities to improve the environmental performance of the building, having regard to its age, construction, heritage significance and structural characteristics.
 - G. Incorporate measures to minimise the consumption of natural resources.
 - H. For minor development, sections A to F apply proportionately to the scale, nature and complexity of the proposal, with supporting information proportionate to the development.
2. A financial contribution to offset residual carbon emissions may be sought.

WATER STANDARDS

Applies to all new dwellings.

3. Developments will be permitted where they:
 - A. Incorporate measures to minimise the consumption of natural resources, including achieving a maximum water consumption of 110 litres per person per day for all new dwellings, the optional requirement in the Building Regulations.

Reasons for Policy ENV1

- 6.5 Policy ENV1 requires development to minimise carbon emissions and maximise renewable energy and low carbon heating including by submitting an Energy Statement. It also requires development to minimise the consumption of other natural resources including water.
- 6.6 Places for Everyone Policies JP-S2 (Energy and Carbon) and JP-S3 (Low Carbon Heat) establish the strategic framework for delivering net-zero carbon development across Greater Manchester. This policy provides locally specific requirements to support the consistent implementation of those strategic policies within Bolton.
- 6.7 This policy is intended ensure that applicants demonstrate how development proposals have responded to the energy hierarchy, incorporated renewable and low carbon energy technologies, and considered the energy infrastructure required to power the development, including opportunities to connect to existing or planned heat networks where appropriate. (Planning applications should be supported by the necessary information demonstrating compliance with this policy and with Places for Everyone Policies JP-S2 and JP-S3. The Council's validation requirements set out the information expected to accompany planning applications, including Energy Statements and other supporting technical information where required).

Greater Manchester Net Zero Guidance

- 6.8 Applicants should refer to the Greater Manchester Net Zero Design Guidance, the Greater Manchester Low Carbon Heat Guidance, and the associated Energy and Carbon Proforma (or any future documents) when preparing planning applications. These documents provide detailed guidance on demonstrating compliance with Places for Everyone Policies JP-S2 and JP-S3 and should be used from the earliest stages of the design process.

Conversion, Reuse and Change of Use

- 6.9 Development involving the change of use of existing buildings and minor developments should maximise opportunities to improve the environmental performance of the building, recognising that the approach will need to be proportionate to the building's age, construction, heritage significance and structural constraints. Applicants should demonstrate that reasonable opportunities to improve energy performance have been incorporated as part of the proposal.

Water Capacity and Efficiency

- 6.10 Reducing water demand is one of the most effective ways of reducing pressure on the wider water supply network. All new dwellings are therefore expected to achieve the optional Building Regulations Part G standard of 110 litres per person per day. This approach is consistent with the standards adopted across Greater Manchester and supports the efficient use of water resources while reducing household water consumption and future infrastructure demand.

Policy ENV2 Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage

ENV2: FLOOD RISK AND SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE

Development in Bolton must be safe from flooding and incorporate sustainable drainage that reduces pressure on the combined sewer network.

FLOOD RISK

Applies to all development, excluding householder extensions unless the extension involves a change to a more vulnerable use or adds more than 250 sqm of floorspace, proportionate to scale and to the flood risk and drainage context.

1. Development must apply the sequential and exception tests as required by national policy, and must:
 - A. Be safe for its lifetime, accounting for the Environment Agency's current climate change allowances.
 - B. Not increase flood risk elsewhere.
 - C. Be supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment covering all relevant sources of flooding where required by national policy, and also where the site is over or adjacent to a culverted watercourse or a change of use would introduce a more vulnerable use.

SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE

Applies to all development, excluding householder extensions unless the extension involves a change to a more vulnerable use or adds more than 250 sqm of floorspace, proportionate to scale and to the flood risk and drainage context.

2. Surface water management must be integrated into the design of development through the use of multifunctional, nature-based solutions, designed in accordance with the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (or successor). All development proposals will be required to:
 - A. Manage surface water run-off in a way that reduces flood risk at site and catchment scale.
 - B. Prioritise naturalised Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as the default approach, designed to deliver biodiversity, amenity and landscape benefits alongside water management.
 - C. Demonstrate that engineered or underground solutions are only proposed where nature-based options are demonstrably unfeasible.
3. SuDS that provide only limited water management functions without wider environmental or placemaking benefits will not be supported except where wider benefits are not practical or viable.

Reasons for Policy ENV2

- 6.11 Policy ENV2 requires most development to manage its impact on the water environment and flood risk by protecting watercourses, improving water quality, supporting biodiversity and helping achieve environmental objectives. Development must be safe from flooding throughout its lifetime, consider all sources of flood risk, account for climate change and avoid increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- 6.12 This policy provides a clear local framework for implementing national flood risk policy by ensuring that development: follows the Sequential and Exception Tests; is

designed to remain safe over its lifetime, taking account of the latest Environment Agency climate change allowances; does not increase flood risk elsewhere; and is supported by robust site-specific flood risk assessments. Requiring consideration of all relevant sources of flooding – including fluvial, surface water, groundwater, sewer and reservoir flooding – ensures that planning decisions are based on a comprehensive understanding of current and future flood risks, helping to protect people, property and infrastructure while supporting sustainable and climate-resilient development.

- 6.13 The policy promotes Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), prioritising natural, above-ground drainage solutions where feasible, while recognising Bolton's geological constraints. It also expects redevelopment of brownfield sites to improve existing drainage arrangements and reduce pressure on combined sewers. Where opportunities arise, culverted watercourses should be opened up and restored to provide benefits for flood management, ecology, environmental quality and the character of local areas. All development can affect water runoff and therefore all development, with the exception of minor extensions, is required to comply with policy ENV2.
- 6.14 Sustainable drainage works when it is designed in, both early and properly. Much of Bolton sits on glacial till and clay, where infiltration is often not feasible. Discharge to sewers, particularly combined sewers, sends surface water into a network that was not designed for it and contributes to overflows. SuDs provide a mechanism for addressing this problem. SuDS in Bolton is also asked to do more than drainage: biodiversity, amenity, and shading of public space are also achievable from the same intervention, if the design is right.
- 6.15 The borough's brownfield stock is largely hard-surfaced and drained directly to combined sewers. The expectation that surface water management on brownfield land improves on the existing condition, rather than replicating it, will have an important role in reducing pressure on the combined network reduces over the Plan period.

Policy ENV3 Green and Blue Infrastructure

ENV3: GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

As development comes forward in Bolton protection, enhancement and expansion of Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) should be integral.

GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

Applies to: All development

1. Where within or adjacent to green or blue infrastructure, development will be expected to connect to and enhance the Green and Blue Infrastructure network identified in Policy SP6.
2. Development must not result in the loss, fragmentation or degradation of the GBI and will only be permitted where enhanced provision, connectivity and functionality is secured.

INTEGRATING GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Applies to: All development

3. All proposals for major development must demonstrate that GBI has been integrated into the design of development from the earliest stages - forming a core component of site

layout, landscape structure and placemaking, rather than being treated merely as mitigation or a late "add-on".

Applies to: Major development

4. Major development proposals will be required to:

- A. Retain and enhance existing GBI assets, including informal green spaces, habitat corridors, watercourses and floodplains, wherever possible. Where this is not possible, equivalent provision, connectivity and functionality must be secured;
- B. Strengthen connections within and beyond the site boundary to the wider GBI network, including links for wildlife, people and active travel;
- C. Deliver multifunctional benefits, using nature-based solutions including multifunctional sustainable drainage as the default response to flood risk and urban heat, in accordance with Policy ENV2; and
- D. Be supported by a GBI Plan, proportionate to the scale of the development, agreed by the Local Planning Authority, which demonstrates how the proposal addresses local deficits, opportunities and strategic network priorities.

5. Major development must achieve an Urban Greening Factor score, calculated using the latest Natural England Urban Greening Factor for England calculator (or successor), of at least 0.4 for predominantly residential development and 0.3 for predominantly commercial development, or set out in the GBI Plan the site, design or viability reasons for a lower score, how greening has been maximised within those constraints, and how equivalent benefits are delivered by other means. In the centres identified in Policy SP4 in particular, major development must increase the quality and quantity of Green and Blue Infrastructure within the site and its adjoining public realm, including through street trees, green roofs, living walls, pocket parks and sustainable drainage.

MAINTAINING GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Applies to all development where Green and Blue Infrastructure is provided

6. All GBI provided as part of development must be accompanied by appropriate long-term management and maintenance arrangements, with delivery and stewardship secured through planning conditions or obligations where necessary.

Reasons for Policy ENV3

- 6.16 Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) provides multiple benefits to Bolton at a range of scales including flood resilience, climate adaptation, nature recovery, biodiversity, habitat connectivity, active travel, health and well-being, outdoor recreation opportunities and high-quality places. The overarching aim of policy SP6 is to establish a comprehensive, high quality, well-linked network of GBI throughout Bolton and extending into surrounding districts. It is important that all areas of Bolton benefit from this, including the inner neighbourhoods.
- 6.17 Each GBI asset is important individually, but the combination of assets, connections and interrelationships between them are also critical. The protection of existing (and the provision of new) GBI matters – each individual loss may be small, but the cumulative effect of permitting incremental loss across a Plan period will result in a network that no longer functions. GBI in new development matters because of the multifunctional benefits it delivers. Given the vital importance of GBI to Bolton it is important that new developments protect, enhance and expand this network wherever possible.
- 6.18 When development is being planned, the Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study (LUC, 2026) should be used to understand the local context

around sites and inform site design and layout. The Green Space Strategy and the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy should also be considered at an early stage of design development. The expectation is that GBI is integrated into design from the outset; GBI added at the end of the design produces predictable failures: corridors terminating at site boundaries, sustainable drainage in fenced-off corners, habitat areas without ecological connection, and active travel routes running alongside roads rather than through green space. Integrating GBI from the start produces schemes that deliver better at lower lifetime cost. The Plan applies Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards for England as national policy encourages and the Bolton Green Space Strategy commits the Council to do. The Accessible Greenspace Standard is applied through Policy INF5; the Urban Greening Factor complements it by measuring the greening of the whole site, including street trees, green roofs, living walls, planted drainage and permeable surfaces that open space standards do not capture and which matters most on brownfield and town centre sites where biodiversity net gain alone can be met with little onsite greening. The policy applies the Natural England headline scores for residential and commercial development as the expected level for major development and allows a lower score where site, design or viability reasons are evidenced. Open space provided under Policy INF5 counts towards the score, so a residential scheme providing its open space on site will earn most of its score from it; the Urban Greening Factor does its most important work on commercial and town centre schemes and on smaller residential schemes contributing to open space off site, where no other greening test applies. The Council will monitor the scores reported and review the targets through the Green Space Strategy or a review of the Plan.

- 6.19 Nature-based solutions are the optimal design approach that delivers most efficiently against multiple objectives at once. A single intervention can deliver multiple benefits including managing surface water, supporting biodiversity, cooling a public space and providing amenity together. On constrained urban sites, that multifunctionality is what makes nature-based solutions efficient.
- 6.20 Without good management, GBI will slip into decline; for example, new planting that is not watered through its first summers is likely to fail. This is why the policy includes a requirement for GBI provided as part of development to be accompanied by appropriate long-term management and maintenance arrangements, with delivery and stewardship secured through planning conditions or obligations where necessary. This will ensure a clear framework to manage GBI assets in the long term beyond immediate delivery.

Policy ENV4 Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

ENV4: BIODIVERSITY AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Development in Bolton must enhance and improve connections between designated sites, priority habitats and protected species. It must retain and enhance trees and hedgerows and contribute to the ecological network across the borough.

HABITATS AND SPECIES

Applies to all development.

1. Development must:

- A. Avoid harm to Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves (as identified on the Policies Map) and Sites of Biological Importance (identified in

GMEU mapping of Sites of Biological Importance), and where harm is unavoidable, provide appropriate mitigation and compensation. For the purposes of national policy on sites of local importance for biodiversity, Bolton's local wildlife sites are the Sites of Biological Importance and Local Nature Reserves identified in Policy SP6 and shown on the Policies Map.

- B. Protect and, where possible, enhance protected habitats, with particular attention to upland moorland, ancient woodland and species-rich grassland, lowland heath, wet woodland, and peat soils.
- C. Avoid harm to European and UK protected species, supported by ecological survey proportionate to the site and the species present.
- D. Avoid harming the connectivity of Bolton's strategic ecological network, including within and between its assets.
- E. Be supported, where habitats or species of ecological value are present, by an ecological assessment appropriate to the scale of the development and the sensitivity of the site.

ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS

Applies to major development, and minor development within or adjacent to an ecological corridor or the Greater Manchester Nature Network. Householder development is excluded. Section 2D applies to new buildings and conversions creating new dwellings.

2. Development must contribute to the ecological network across Bolton by:

- A. Retaining and where possible enhancing existing ecological corridors, including watercourse corridors, hedgerow networks, and vegetated railway and roadside verges.
- B. Designing Green and Blue Infrastructure on the site so that it connects to features off the site, avoiding ecological islands.
- C. Incorporating stepping-stone habitats
- D. Including species-appropriate planting and invertebrate habitat and incorporating integrated swift bricks and features for bats and hedgehogs in accordance with national policy and the advice of the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit.
- E. Avoiding hard boundaries and severance features that prevent the movement of wildlife through or beyond the site.
- F. Being supported by a lighting design strategy for biodiversity which identifies features on and adjoining the site that are sensitive for existing habitats, including any ecological connectivity corridors, and shows how lighting will be installed so that it does not disturb them.

TREES AND HEDGEROWS

Applies to all development where existing trees or hedgerows are present on or adjacent to the site, and all major development.

3. Development must:

- A. Retain existing trees and hedgerows, with removal permitted only where retention is demonstrably incompatible with acceptable development of the site.
- B. Where trees are retained, provide sufficient root protection areas, appropriate construction management, and long-term space for canopy growth appropriate to the species.
- C. Where tree removal is justified, provide replacement planting at a ratio of at least 2:1 by number, with replacement trees of equivalent or greater ecological value, and tree species selected for long-term canopy value and climate resilience. This

applies where a tree is removed up to 4 years prior to a planning application being submitted.

- D. Contribute to increasing tree canopy cover across Bolton through new planting proportionate to the scale and nature of the development including street trees in line with PQ1.
- E. Be supported by an arboriculture assessment in accordance with BS 5837.

NATURE RECOVERY

Applies to major development, and minor development within or adjacent to the Greater Manchester Nature Network

4. Development within or adjacent to the Greater Manchester Nature Network shown on the Nature Network Map published with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy must protect the integrity of core local nature sites and, within opportunity areas, restore or create habitat that improves connectivity within and beyond the site. Opportunity areas identified in the Strategy are formally identified in local strategy for the purpose of strategic significance in the statutory biodiversity metric.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Applies to development subject to statutory biodiversity net gain

5. Where biodiversity net gain cannot be delivered wholly on site, off-site delivery should be located, in order of preference: on land adjacent to the site where ecologically feasible; elsewhere within Bolton; elsewhere within Greater Manchester in accordance with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy; and only then elsewhere in England. Statutory credits will be supported only where it is demonstrated that no delivery within this hierarchy is possible

Reasons for Policy ENV4

- 6.21 Biodiversity is an integral component of the natural environment and is key to its ability to provide a wide range of important benefits, including supporting human health and quality of life. Improved and enhanced biodiversity across the borough is a key priority for Bolton Council and the Local Plan.

Habitats and Ecological Network

- 6.22 The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan recognises the need to restore and create wildlife habitats, looking beyond existing designated sites to the wider environment. Reflecting this and to be effective policy, ENV4 addresses the protection and enhancement not only of designated sites but also of existing non-designated biodiversity assets and the provision of new biodiversity assets. All development must play its part. Greater Manchester's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) was prepared under the Environment Act 2021. It is a material consideration in decision-making and identifies the habitats and locations where recovery effort is most valuable. ENV4 will work with the LNRS, with priority habitat protection and ecological network contribution, providing the local mechanism through which LNRS priorities reach individual applications. Close-boarded fencing, lit routes across dark corridors and unbroken hard surfacing are the barriers that most often stop wildlife moving through a site, and the policy expects them to be avoided where permeable alternatives exist. National policy now requires new buildings to incorporate integrated swift bricks and features for bats and hedgehogs; these are installed in accordance with BS 42021 and in the numbers and positions advised by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. Nature for All, the Local Nature

Recovery Strategy for Greater Manchester (August 2025), identifies the Greater Manchester Nature Network: the core local nature sites that already matter for nature and the opportunity areas where habitat creation would do most to connect them. The policy makes it the framework for development affecting the network, and identifying the opportunity areas as formally identified in local strategy allows habitat created there to score high strategic significance in the statutory biodiversity metric.

- 6.23 Bolton's designated sites – Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Biological Importance – encompass upland moorland across the northern fringe, ancient and species-rich grassland on unimproved land, lowland heath, wet woodland in stream valleys, and peat soils across the higher ground. These habitats are difficult to recreate once lost. There is also significant existing biodiversity outside of these areas which must be protected in Bolton's northern and western uplands, working farmland, and pockets in more urban areas.
- 6.24 Irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland, veteran trees, and ancient or species-rich hedgerows, receive the strongest protection available in planning policy. ENV4 mirrors national policy: loss or deterioration requires wholly exceptional circumstances supported by a compensation strategy. Bolton's ancient woodland coverage is modest but includes ecologically significant fragments associated with historic estates and the northern cloughs.
- 6.25 Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10% is a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021 and applies to most development regardless of local Plan policy. ENV4 therefore does not set a BNG percentage. What it sets is the framework for assessing ecological value before BNG is applied, for protecting sites and species that BNG calculations alone do not capture, and for connecting new habitat to the ecological network across the borough. The Plan does not set a higher percentage, which national policy does not permit other than for specific allocations. What the policy adds is the framework around the statutory requirement: that gain is designed with the site's Green and Blue Infrastructure under Policy ENV3 rather than provided as a separate parcel, that opportunity areas in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy count as strategically significant in the metric, and that off-site gain stays as close to the development and as far within Bolton as it can, supported by the Council's intention in the Green Space Strategy to develop its own habitat bank sites.

Trees

- 6.26 Trees do more for Bolton than look good: they cool public space in heatwaves, intercept rainfall that would otherwise overwhelm drains, support pollinators and birds, improve health, reduce damage to road and pavement wear, and reduce air pollution at street level. ENV4 requires that existing trees and hedgerows are kept where development allows, that replacement follows removal at a minimum of two trees for each one lost, including trees felled in the four years before an application so that clearance ahead of a proposal does not escape it, and that new planting contributes to increasing canopy cover across the borough.
- 6.27 ENV4 is applied alongside SP6, which designates Bolton's strategic nature conservation sites and the borough-scale ecological network on the Policies Map and ENV3, which addresses Green and Blue Infrastructure.

Policy ENV5 Pollution Air Quality, Noise, Odour and Light

ENV5: POLLUTION, AIR QUALITY, NOISE, ODOUR AND LIGHT

Development in Bolton will be permitted where it does not cause unacceptable harm to air quality, noise levels or odour.

AIR QUALITY

Applies to all development, proportionate to scale and to the air quality context of the site.

1. Development must:

- A. Not cause unacceptable harm to local air quality;
- B. Be supported by an air quality assessment, proportionate to the scale of the development and the sensitivity of the receptors affected, where the development could affect or be affected by air quality, and in any case where it is within or close to an Air Quality Management Area, would introduce sensitive uses into an area of poor air quality, is of a scale that generates significant traffic, or involves industrial processes or combustion; and
- C. Mitigate emissions from construction, onsite plant and associated vehicle movements, and contribute where appropriate to borough-wide air quality improvement through modal shift, electric vehicle provision and low-emission servicing.

NOISE

Applies to all development, proportionate to scale and to the noise context of the site.

2. Development must:

- A. Not cause unacceptable noise impact on existing noise-sensitive uses;
- B. Where introducing new noise-sensitive uses, provide an acceptable acoustic environment for occupants through siting, layout, orientation and design;
- C. Apply the agent of change principle in accordance with Policy PQ1; and
- D. Where significant noise generation or exposure is likely, be supported by a noise impact assessment proportionate to the scale of the development and the sensitivity of the receptors affected.

ODOUR

Applies to all development, proportionate to scale and to the odour context of the site.

3. Development must:

- A. Not cause unacceptable odour impact on existing receptors;
- B. Where introducing new uses sensitive to odour into areas where existing odour sources are present, provide an acceptable environment for occupants through siting, layout and mitigation; and
- C. Where the development is a known source of odour, or where odour exposure is likely, be supported by an odour impact assessment proportionate to the scale of the development and the sensitivity of the receptors affected.

LIGHT

Applies to: all development, proportionate to scale and to the light context of the site.

4. Lighting, including lighting on non-residential buildings, should be no more than the minimum required for security, safety and/or operational purposes, and designed,

positioned and directed so that it does not spill into homes or gardens or cause glare on roads, footpaths and cycle routes, in order to protect the quality of dark skies and the amenity of the surrounding area.

5. Advertisement signage, including branding signage on buildings and digital LED displays, should have no adverse impact on residential amenity, highway safety or sites of nature conservation value. Permanent illuminated advertisements will not be permitted outside the urban built-up area, or where they would harm the setting of a settlement or a site of nature conservation value.

6. Lighting must ensure that routes, entrances and public spaces are safe to use after dark without glare or tunnel effects.

7. Development that would introduce external lighting must be supported by a lighting assessment proportionate to its scale showing how sections 4 and 6 are met, and in any case for floodlighting, outdoor sport, and lighting close to watercourses, open water or designated sites. Where Policy ENV4 applies, the assessment must include the lighting design strategy for biodiversity required by that policy. Residential development of 50 or more dwellings and non-residential development of 5,000 sqm or more must be supported by a lighting strategy.

Reasons for Policy ENV5

- 6.28 Bolton's air quality, noise environment, odour and light exposure vary considerably across the borough. Parts of the Town Centre and the main road corridors carry measurably worse air quality than the northern and western fringes. Residential areas next to the motorway network, railways and industrial estates experience higher background noise. Odour issues are concentrated around specific sources, including waste and industrial operations and commercial food premises. Significant areas of the borough fall into the most light-polluted areas in England. ENV5 sets out how new development is assessed against these conditions and how it contributes, where scale allows, to improving them.

Air Quality

- 6.29 The land bordering the strategic road network across Greater Manchester, including the sections running through Bolton, is within a Greater Manchester-wide Air Quality Management Area, declared where national air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide have been exceeded. The AQMA is reviewed collectively by the ten Greater Manchester authorities and published on the national register. Current AQMA extent should be checked at the time of application.
- 6.30 The Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan is the non-charging investment plan directed by government to bring nitrogen dioxide within legal limits in the shortest possible time. It operates largely outside the planning system, through vehicle renewal and active travel investment, but is a material consideration in decision-making. Development contributes to the same improvement pathway through modal shift, electric vehicle charging, and reduced reliance on combustion-based servicing and heating.
- 6.31 The policy asks two questions of any application. What does the development do to air quality around it? And what does the air quality around the development do to the people who will live or work in it? Both questions matter, which is why the policy addresses these dimensions.
- 6.32 The agent of change principle set out in Policy PQ1 applies to noise specifically. The principle allocates responsibility for mitigation between a new use and an established use where the two meet: the party making the change bears the responsibility. ENV5

adds the noise-specific tests against which that principle is applied and the assessment expectations. Bolton's most sensitive noise locations are where homes meet existing uses that were there first. The policy protects established industrial, cultural and evening economy uses from being displaced by later-arriving residential development. It also protects new residents from unacceptable acoustic conditions by requiring design to address the sound environment they will actually experience.

Odour

- 6.33 Odour is harder to measure than air quality or noise. The policy therefore relies on assessment proportionate to the source and the receptors. The typical Bolton cases are waste and food-related: commercial kitchens, takeaway extract, waste transfer, and some industrial processes. The spatial concentration of hot food takeaways, where odour is one consideration among several, is handled through Policy EC4.

Light

- 6.34 The policy applies the principle that lighting on new development should be proportionate, provide safety and function without negatively impacting on the existing surrounding area. It does this by requiring lighting strategies for major developments that incorporate a lighting strategy for biodiversity which will safeguard potential breeding sites, resting places and routes for nocturnal mammals.

Policy ENV6 Contaminated Land and Ground Conditions

ENV6: CONTAMINATED LAND AND GROUND CONDITIONS

Development in Bolton will be permitted where land contamination, ground stability and mining legacy risks are properly investigated, remediated where necessary, and verified before occupation.

CONTAMINATED LAND

Applies to: All Major Development, All Minor Development involving newbuild residential, schools or hospitals, Changes of use to residential, school or hospitals where the land has previously been used for industrial purposes, Extensions to schools or hospitals

1. Development on land that is, or is suspected of being, contaminated must:
 - A. Be supported by a preliminary risk assessment and, where that assessment identifies potential pollutant linkages, a site investigation proportionate to the scale of development and the sensitivity of the proposed end use;
 - B. Where contamination is confirmed, be supported by a remediation strategy that will make the site suitable for its proposed use, verified on completion before occupation;
 - C. Not create a new pollutant linkage, including through disturbance of existing contamination or through introducing a new receptor to an existing source; and
 - D. Protect controlled waters from pollution during ground works and in the completed development, and not transfer contaminated run-off to surface water drainage, public sewers or adjoining land.

GROUND STABILITY AND MINING LEGACY

Applies to: all development, proportionate to ground conditions and mining legacy risk.

2. Development must:

- A. Demonstrate that ground conditions are suitable for the proposed use, with investigation proportionate to the scale of development and the risks identified;
- B. Within areas affected by historic mining, including the Coal Authority's Development High Risk Areas, be supported by a coal mining risk assessment and undertake any remedial works required before construction;
- C. Address risks from made ground, shallow workings, backfilled quarries and former landfill sites, including risks of subsidence, ground gas and settlement; and
- D. Where ground conditions constrain the development, including by limiting infiltration-based sustainable drainage or affecting foundation design, address the consequences through design rather than through exemption from other policy requirements.

SOILS AND PEAT

Applies to development on best and most versatile agricultural land; major development requiring a construction environmental management plan; and all development on land where peat is present or suspected

- 3. On best and most versatile agricultural land, and on major development sites for which a construction environmental management plan is required, topsoil and subsoil must be stripped, stored, protected and reused so that the soil resource is not lost, and temporary development must reinstate the land to its former quality. A soil resource survey and soil management plan will be required to show how this will be done.
- 4. Development must not drain, excavate or otherwise disturb peat soils, whether or not they currently support habitat, other than where the peat is demonstrated by survey to be incapable of restoration and no alternative layout is available. Peat that supports or could support priority habitat is protected by Policy ENV4.
- 5. Development of best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that land of poorer quality is not reasonably available for the development and must be informed by an agricultural land classification survey where the provisional grading is 3.

Reasons for Policy ENV6

- 6.35 Bolton still carries the contamination and ground-stability legacy of the borough's industrial past. Cotton mills, bleaching and dyeing works, gas works, tanneries, foundries, coal workings and their spoil tips, backfilled clay pits and tipped waste all left ground conditions that must be understood before development can safely proceed. The Plan's housing and employment strategy relies on bringing brownfield land back into use, which makes a clear policy test on contamination and ground conditions a precondition of Plan delivery, not an additional hurdle on top of it.
- 6.36 The policy is proportionate because under-specifying investigation on high-risk sites produces unsafe development, and over-specifying on low-risk sites deters the brownfield delivery the Plan needs. The investigation and assessment must be sized to the actual risk and the proposed end use. Verification before occupation is required because unverified remediation has, in the past, delivered sites where problems emerged only once residents were in place. The verification step avoids this eventuality.
- 6.37 Soil is a finite resource that takes centuries to form and is easily destroyed by the way it is handled on a building site. National policy requires the quality of agricultural land to be taken into account in decisions and the Plan's site selection to steer

development away from the best land where poorer land is available; the policy states the decision-making test so that it is applied consistently in Bolton, requires a survey where the provisional grading is 3 because the national maps do not distinguish 3a from 3b, and requires soil on the best agricultural land, and on the major sites where a construction management plan is already needed to be surveyed, stripped and stored so that it can be reused. Peat is identified separately because of its value as a carbon store: Bolton's upland and mossland peat releases carbon when drained or cut. Policy ENV4 protects peat that is or could become habitat.

Policy ENV7 Watercourses and The Water Environment

ENV7: WATERCOURSES AND THE WATER ENVIRONMENT

Development in Bolton must protect and, where possible, restore the ecological, hydrological and landscape function of the borough's rivers, brooks and canal, and must not cause deterioration in the condition of any water body.

DEVELOPMENT NEAR WATERCOURSES

Applies to: all development on or within 25 metres of a watercourse or the canal, and any development whose surface water drainage discharges directly to a watercourse.

Householder development is excluded from sections 1 to 5 and is subject to section 6.

1. Development proposals must protect, enhance and respond positively to the water environment, taking a catchment-based approach that recognises the cumulative impacts of development on water bodies, having regard to the Northwest River Basin Management Plan.
2. Development affecting, or in close proximity to, a watercourse must:
 - A. Safeguard and, where possible, enhance the ecological, hydrological and landscape function of blue corridors.
 - B. Maintain an undeveloped and unobstructed buffer, natural in character and planted with native species, of at least 10 metres from the top of bank of any Main River (at least 8 metres where 10 metres is demonstrated to be impractical) and at least 5 metres from the top of bank of any ordinary watercourse or the canal.
 - C. Be supported by a Water Framework Directive assessment proportionate to the proposal, demonstrating no deterioration in the status of the water body and identifying measures that contribute to its objectives.
 - D. Include a management plan for all riparian areas of the site, securing long-term stewardship and access for maintenance.
3. Development that would result in deterioration of water quality, ecological status or health of a water body will not be permitted.
4. Development must contribute, where practicable, to the objectives for the water body in the Northwest River Basin Management Plan.
5. Proposals to enclose a watercourse will not be permitted other than where compelling reasons are demonstrated. Opportunities to restore, naturalise or open up watercourses, improve river corridors, and enhance public access and engagement with the water environment will be strongly supported, where compatible with flood risk management and ecological objectives.

HOUSEHOLDER DEVELOPMENT NEAR WATERCOURSES

Applies to: extensions, outbuildings and alterations to existing dwellings on or within 25 metres of a watercourse or the canal.

6. Householder development must:

- A. Not encroach on the buffer set out in section 2(B), measured from the top of bank;
- B. Safeguard the ecological, hydrological and landscape function of the blue corridor; and
- C. Not result in deterioration of water quality, ecological status or health of the water body.

Reasons for Policy ENV7

- 6.38 Policy ENV7 protects Bolton's rivers, brooks and canal from development that would harm them, keeps a strip of natural land alongside each watercourse, and supports proposals that open up culverted rivers and restore natural channels. The borough spans three river catchments, the Irwell, the Douglas and the Lower Mersey, and its watercourses are the spine of the Green and Blue Infrastructure network, the main corridors for wildlife and the places where natural flood management can do most.
- 6.39 Requiring development to take account of the local water environment aligns with national planning policy requiring development to improve environmental quality, protect ecological networks and take account of river basin management objectives. The policy safeguards the ecological, hydrological and landscape functions of watercourses, promotes the use of undeveloped buffer zones to support habitat connectivity, climate resilience and public amenity, and ensures development contributes positively to the health of blue corridors. By preventing development that would cause deterioration in water quality, ecological status or the overall condition of water bodies, the policy helps deliver statutory water environment objectives while supporting biodiversity recovery, flood management and long-term environmental resilience.
- 6.40 Environment Agency guidance supports the provision of development-free buffers alongside watercourses, with an 8-metre buffer commonly applied to Main Rivers. Environment Agency advice on individual development proposals has also recommended a minimum 10-metre ecological buffer where this is necessary to maintain a natural river corridor, protect watercourses from the effects of development, allow vegetation to establish, and maintain habitat connectivity. The policy therefore establishes 10 metres as the preferred buffer for Main Rivers, with provision for a reduction to no less than 8 metres where site circumstances demonstrate that the wider buffer cannot reasonably be achieved and the functions of the watercourse would not be compromised. Notwithstanding this, Riparian land needs managing, and the policy secures responsibility for the bank, the buffer and any in-channel features before permission is granted. Wastewater treatment capacity will be addressed through the Infrastructure Delivery Strategy.
- 6.41 Some of Bolton's rivers were culverted to make way for mills, streets, and the development that followed. These rivers are out of sight, and the resulting flooding pattern is harder to understand because the rivers causing it are not visible. Where redevelopment offers the opportunity to restore, naturalise or open up sections of culverted watercourse, the borough recovers something it gave up a century and a half ago, with benefits for flood management, ecology and the character of place. National policy allows new culverting only with compelling justification. Where redevelopment offers the opportunity to restore, naturalise or open up sections of

culverted watercourse, the borough recovers something of value, with benefits for flood management, ecology and the character of place.

- 6.42 Bolton still carries the contamination and ground-stability legacy of the borough's industrial past. Cotton mills, bleaching and dyeing works, gas works, tanneries, foundries, coal workings and their spoil tips, backfilled clay pits and tipped waste all left ground conditions that must be understood before development can safely proceed. The Plan's housing and employment strategy relies on bringing brownfield land back into use, which makes a clear policy test on contamination and ground conditions a precondition of Plan delivery, not an additional hurdle on top of it.

Chapter 7

Economy

The policies in this chapter answer Local Plan Question E: Does the proposed development meet Bolton's requirements for its employment and commercial uses?

- 7.1 Bolton's economy is worth investing in and worth protecting. Protecting, improving and diversifying the employment land supply, enabling businesses to grow, and securing pathways to participation in the labour market are all important goals. Economic inactivity in Bolton is high, and long-term sickness is the most common reason given for it. The purpose of this Local Plan is to enable economic investment in Bolton to help guide Bolton's residents into the jobs new development will create. Investing in and improving Bolton's town, district and local centres and employment locations will directly improve opportunities for Bolton's communities.
- 7.2 The seven policies serve three different purposes:
- EC1 protects the employment land against loss to other uses.
 - EC2 and EC3 enable existing businesses to grow and new **employment** to come forward – and for residents to access skills training associated with this.
 - EC4, EC5, EC6 and EC7 manage Bolton's centres and town centres uses: the centre hierarchy itself, ancillary uses within industrial and warehousing developments, the evening economy, and the hot food takeaway concentration that the public health evidence identifies as compounding deprivation in the wards where it falls hardest.
- 7.3 Together these policies protect important employment locations and centres and enable new sustainable economic development and investment.

Policy EC1 Protected Employment Land

EC1: PROTECTED EMPLOYMENT LAND

Bolton's employment land will be protected from loss to other uses.

Applies to all proposals for development on Protected Employment Land

PROTECTED EMPLOYMENT LAND: LOSS TO OTHER USES

1. Protected Employment Land is protected for employment uses including:
 - A. Industrial and Warehousing development; and
 - B. Office development

2. The Industrial and warehousing development uses within these locations are protected and there is a strong presumption against the loss of this land to other uses including office use.
3. The loss of Protected Employment Land to uses other than its designated use would only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where it is demonstrated that:
 - A. A viability assessment satisfactorily demonstrates that retention of the site in its designated employment use is no longer viable;
 - B. Marketing evidence satisfactorily demonstrates that there is no longer demand for employment use;
 - C. The site has been marketed for employment uses for a continuous period of 12 months at a realistic asking price and without a viable occupier being identified. A realistic asking price must be evidenced by an independent valuation or by reference to comparable transactions in the local market; *and*
 - D. The proposed alternative use delivers significant benefits consistent with the spatial strategy that could not reasonably be delivered elsewhere and does not prejudice the employment use of the site.

EMPLOYMENT USE OUTSIDE PROTECTED EMPLOYMENT LAND

4. Development that would result in the loss of 1,000sqm or more office, industrial or warehousing floorspace located outside of Protected Employment Land, must demonstrate that the site has been marketed for employment uses for a continuous period of 12 months at a realistic asking price and without a viable occupier being identified. A realistic asking price must be evidenced by an independent valuation or by reference to comparable transactions in the local market.
5. The marketing test in EC1(4) above does not apply where:
 - A. The site is allocated for an alternative use in this Local Plan; or
 - B. Retention in its current employment use is demonstrably incompatible with environmental or amenity objectives that cannot be mitigated.

Reasons for Policy EC1

- 7.4 It is important that the plan maintains a flexible supply of office, industrial and warehousing sites and premises across Bolton. This will enable Bolton to attract and retain jobs and investment, deliver increased levels of economic growth, and tackle deprivation and inequalities.
- 7.5 Demand for industrial and warehousing floorspace in Bolton is high, and the current industrial locations in Bolton contribute significantly to the economic success of the borough. Bolton's industrial vacancy rate (2025) is 1.7%, below the Manchester City Region rate of 5.1%. This has a direct impact on Bolton's existing businesses who are finding it harder to secure the space they need to grow. As well as planning strategic growth needs over the Plan period, the Plan also needs to protect its existing employment locations to ensure there is no further loss of supply. Office demand is weaker in Bolton by comparison to industrial and warehousing demand.
- 7.6 Policy EC1 strengthens and adds detail and clarity to Places for Everyone (2024) Policy JP-J2 (Employment Sites and Premises) which protects key growth locations and existing local employment areas from development to other uses. This is important to maintain a strong and diverse supply of sites and premises in Bolton.
- 7.7 Policy SP2 allocates sites in Bolton employment use. It is important that these sites deliver their allocated use in order to ensure the office and industrial/warehousing

floorspace requirements set out in policy SP2 are met. These are in addition to the 28 sites in Bolton that are already in employment use and are protected for that use. A list is provided in Table 2.

Site Ref.	Site Name
BOLPEL01	Middlebrook Business Zone
BOLPEL02	Lostock Industrial Estate (Mansell Way)
BOLPEL03	Lostock Industrial Estate (Lynstock Way)
BOLPEL04	Lostock Industrial Estate (Lostock Lane)
BOLPEL05	Wingates Industrial Estate
BOLPEL06	The Valley
BOLPEL07	Express Industrial Estate
BOLPEL08	Europa Industrial Estate
BOLPEL09	Lyon Industrial Estate
BOLPEL10	Great Lever Employment Area
BOLPEL11	Crescent Road and Manchester Road
BOLPEL12	Bury Road/Brightmet Fold Lane
BOLPEL13	Raikes Lane
BOLPEL14	Tonge Bridge
BOLPEL15	Thornback Industrial Estate
BOLPEL16	Edge Fold
BOLPEL17	Station Road, Blackrod
BOLPEL18	Crown Lane/Lodge Bank, Horwich
BOLPEL19	Mill Hill
BOLPEL20	Pearl Brook
BOLPEL21	Bella Street/St. Helens Road
BOLPEL22	Ox Hey Lane Industrial Estate
BOLPEL23	Mayfield Avenue Employment Area
BOLPEL24	Land bound by Manchester Road and St. Peter's Way
BOLPEL25	Logistics North and Salford Road
BOLPEL26	Lever Bridge Mills
BSA02	Health Innovation Bolton
BSA06	Burnden Way, Middlebrook
BSA07	Blackrod Employment Cluster
BSA08	Logistics North Extension
BSA11	Express Industrial Estate B
BSA12	Barrs Fold Close
BSA13	Watermead
BSA14	Mill Street

Table 2. Employment Areas.

- 7.8 These sites are varied and include a diverse range of existing employment units and sites for new development. They will provide businesses wishing to invest in these areas with a degree of certainty regarding the future use of these areas, avoid the introduction of competing land uses, and will offer opportunities for both business looking to relocate/expand within Bolton and for businesses new to Bolton.
- 7.9 It is important that Protected Employment Land is held to the stricter tests in the policy because such designations are a crucial part of the strategy for meeting employment need over the Plan period and enabling business retention and growth. Marketing evidence alone is not sufficient to justify loss of employment use due to fluctuating conditions in the market. Criteria 3 therefore requires robust evidence for exceptional circumstances where there is a viability failure that demonstrates long term market failure. Alternative uses will only be considered where they deliver significant benefits that could not reasonably be met on land elsewhere.
- 7.10 Non-designated employment land is treated differently in criteria 4 because it does not carry the same strategic designation. A market-evidence route is proportionate evidence to justify loss of employment use on those sites: 12 months of genuine marketing at a realistic asking price, with the asking price evidenced by an independent valuation or by reference to comparable transactions in the local market.
- 7.11 The valuation requirement matters because marketing evidence without a valuation basis does not withstand appeal scrutiny and should not be relied upon to justify the loss of office, industrial or warehousing floorspace in Bolton. The 1,000 sqm thresholds in criteria 4 ensures the marketing test is applied where the decision and the evidence cost are proportionate to the site, and not to small units where the test would be a disproportionate burden on a minor conversion.
- 7.12 Criteria 5 provides two exceptions to the marketing test. This applies to sites which are already allocated for another use in this Plan or where retention in employment use is demonstrably incompatible with environmental or amenity objectives. These exceptions are tightly drawn due to the demonstrated demand for retention and growth of employment space in Bolton, which means further loss needs to be prevented in all but exceptional circumstances.

Policy EC2 New Employment Development

EC2: NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

Bolton's existing office, industry and warehousing businesses will be supported to intensify, grow and expand. New development for these uses should be located on land allocated for that use, consistent with the spatial strategy. New office, industrial and warehousing development outside land allocated for these uses will also be permitted where it is consistent with the spatial strategy, and other plan policies.

Applies to: (i) proposals for extensions to or intensification of existing office, industrial and warehousing businesses, (ii) proposals for new office, industrial and warehousing development on protected employment land; and (iii) proposals for new office, industrial and warehousing development outside land protected for that use.

PROTECTED EMPLOYMENT LAND: INTENSIFICATION AND NEW DEVELOPMENT

1. Opportunities for the intensification of existing employment businesses including through extensions, mezzanine floors and subdivision will be supported.
2. New industrial and warehousing development on employment land protected for that purpose will be supported.
3. New office development on employment land protected for that purpose will be supported. New office development on employment land protected for industrial and warehousing or employment use must comply with the sequential assessment in policy EC4.
4. There will be no unacceptable environmental, amenity, highway, road safety or other adverse impact having regard to other policies in this Plan.

OUTSIDE PROTECTED EMPLOYMENT LAND – INDUSTRIAL AND WAREHOUSING DEVELOPMENT

5. Proposals for new industrial/warehousing development below 1,000 sqm outside of sites protected for this use will be permitted where:
 - A. The proposal is consistent with the strategic framework in Policies SP1 and SP2;
 - B. There will be no unacceptable environmental, amenity, highway, road safety or other adverse impact having regard to other policies in this Plan.
6. Proposals for new industrial/warehousing development of 1,000 sqm or more outside sites protected for this use will be permitted where the applicant demonstrates that:
 - A. The proposal is consistent with the strategic framework in Policies SP1 and SP2;
 - B. The scale is appropriate to the location;
 - C. The proposal does not cause unacceptable harm to the function of allocated or protected employment areas; and
 - D. No suitable allocated employment site is reasonably available to accommodate the proposal
 - E. There is no unacceptable environmental, amenity, highway, road safety or other adverse impact.

OUTSIDE DESIGNATED EMPLOYMENT LAND – OFFICE

7. Proposals for new office development outside of sites protected for that use will be permitted where the proposal complies with the sequential test set out in national policy and EC4 and is of an appropriate scale for its location.

Reasons for Policy EC2

- 7.13 Existing supply and allocations set out in this plan identify sufficient deliverable office, industrial and warehousing sites to meet identified need over the plan period. New proposals for office, industrial and warehousing development will also come forward in other locations during the plan period. Policy EC2 sets an appropriate policy framework for both situations.
- 7.14 For reasons including the need to reduce deprivation and increase economic performance, the Local Plan sets out a permissive approach to new employment development. However, a permissive position cannot be unconditional. If EC2 said simply that business growth is supported anywhere and at any scale, it would become the policy through which speculative employment proposals find their way into the wrong locations: a nominal Warehousing use on the Green Belt edge, a new factory outside the allocations that should have caught it, a proposal that would have gone to an allocated site if the route of least resistance were not open somewhere

else. The job of EC2 is to carry the permissive position forward in the cases where it is genuine and suitable and to filter it out in the cases where it is not.

- 7.15 The policy covers the cases where the current use is office, industry or warehousing, including extensions, mezzanine floors and other intensification. This is supported where there is no unacceptable environmental, amenity, highway, road safety or other adverse impact because it ensures the effective use of land.
- 7.16 The policy also covers land protected for office, industrial or warehousing use. In these cases where the principle of the employment use is accepted, the job of the Local Plan is to ensure impact on adjacent uses are acceptable.
- 7.17 Finally, cases where new office, industrial or warehousing development is proposed on land not protected for that use is also addressed. These are the cases where the risk of permissive policy being stretched is real. For office development the test is simple, it is whether the sequential assessment in national policy and policy EC4 is met and whether the scale is appropriate for the location. For industrial and warehousing development four tests apply: the proposal must sit within the spatial strategy in SP1 and SP2; must be at a scale appropriate to its location; must not undermine a nearby designated employment area; and must not be something that could reasonably have landed on an allocated site. Where the Local Plan identifies allocated supply that could have accommodated the proposal, the applicant must explain why it did not. The 1,000 sqm threshold directs the four-test framework at proposals of a scale where the evidence burden is proportionate; smaller proposals are tested against fit with the spatial strategy alone, which is enough to keep the line between genuine small-scale employment and speculative sheds, avoiding disproportionate cost to the straightforward cases.
- 7.18 EC1 and EC2 complete each other and together will help ensure that Bolton maximises its economic potential.

Policy EC3 Employment Access and Skills

EC3: EMPLOYMENT ACCESS AND SKILLS

Significant employment development in Bolton will secure, through an Employment and Skills Plan, the pathways for Bolton residents into the jobs development creates.

Applies to:

For Construction Employment and Skills Plan: applications for 1,000 sqm or more of new non-residential floorspace.

For Operational Employment and Skills Plan: applications for 500 sqm or more of new office and research and development floorspace, and applications for 2,000 sqm or more of new industrial and warehousing floorspace.

CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLAN

1. Development for non-residential floorspace between 1,000 and 2,000 sqm must be accompanied by a Construction Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) which satisfactorily demonstrates (1) apprenticeship and training placements on the construction site, proportionate to the scale of construction and (2) arrangements for engaging with Bolton schools, further and higher education establishments, the University of Greater Manchester and employment support services during construction.
2. Development for non-residential floorspace over 2,000 sqm must be accompanied by a more comprehensive Construction Employment and Skills Plan (ESP). This must be secured by planning obligation, approved before construction commences and set out (1) apprenticeship and training placements on the construction site, proportionate to the scale of construction; (2) local labour commitments, measured by workforce residence, setting out percentage targets for local labour; (3) sub-contractor engagement and local supply chain commitments; and (4) arrangements for engaging with Bolton schools, further and higher education establishments, the University of Greater Manchester and employment support services during construction.

OPERATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLAN

3. An Operational Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) must be submitted with planning applications for 500 sqm or more of office and research and development floorspace and 2,000 sqm or more of industrial/warehousing floorspace. This must be secured by planning obligation and approved before the development is first occupied. It must set out:
 - A. Arrangements for advertising and recruitment that reach Bolton residents, with particular attention to residents in areas of high economic inactivity and deprivation;
 - B. Local labour commitments, measured by workforce residence, setting out percentage targets for local labour;
 - C. Skills progression pathways accessible to employees, including apprenticeships, accredited training and professional development;
 - D. Engagement with Bolton schools, further and higher education establishments, the University of Greater Manchester and employment support services to connect residents to the jobs created; and
 - E. Monitoring and reporting arrangements, including reporting on workforce residence. Where the end occupier is not identified at the time of planning consent, the Operational Employment and Skills Plan must be approved prior to first occupation by each identified occupier.

Reasons for Policy EC3

- 7.19 Bolton's employment rate is below national averages and economic inactivity is high, with long-term sickness the most commonly cited reason. Some Bolton neighbourhoods carry employment challenges far above the borough average, and those are the neighbourhoods where access to good jobs would make the most difference to household incomes and to residents' health. The purpose of Policy EC3 is to ensure that, when it lands, Bolton residents including those in areas with high economic inactivity and deprivation are in a position to take up the work.
- 7.20 There are documented skills shortages in construction and technical trades across Greater Manchester. For example, the Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan identifies persistent skills shortages in construction and engineering. National, regional and local growth plans emphasise the importance of local workforce development in economic growth including matching skills to opportunities, upskilling workforce, tackling economic inactivity, inequalities and youth unemployment.

- 7.21 Criteria 1 and 2 relate to the construction phase of development. A two-tiered approach is set out. A 2,000 sqm scheme is a substantial construction project, generating apprenticeship openings, sub-contractor demand and local supply chain work across the build period, thus comprehensive supporting information is required when submitting planning applications. The requirement is reduced for schemes between 1,000 sqm and 2,000 sqm to avoid unnecessary burden at smaller scale, and to reflect the reality that smaller construction schemes will naturally have more local supply chains. It is important, however, that a proportionate requirement is maintained, recognising that employment and skills plans are effective even for smaller-scale developments. Construction phases generate significant local employment impacts, including indirect and induced jobs, regardless of project size, and smaller developments still create measurable labour market impacts. Construction Employment and Skills Plans help capture local benefits.
- 7.22 Criteria 3 relates to the operational phase of development. The end-user is where the longer-term employment opportunity sits, and the Operational Employment and Skills Plan is how the plan ensures those opportunities are accessible to Bolton residents, including those in areas of high deprivation and economic inactivity. The Operational Employment and Skills Plan does not set wages or dictate employment terms: those are matters for employment law and for the employer, not for planning policy. The purpose of policy EC3 is to secure the pathways for how the jobs are advertised, who knows about them, what training and progression is available, and how outcomes are monitored. Where a scheme is consented to before an end occupier is identified, the Operational ESP is approved at pre-occupation stage, secured with the occupier who will actually create the jobs, so that the plan is set by someone who can deliver it.
- 7.23 Criteria 3 applies at 500 sqm for new office and research and development floorspace, and above 2,000 sqm for new industrial and warehousing floorspace because that is the scale at which an Employment and Skills Plan is proportionate to the development and useful in practice. Below that threshold, the administrative cost of an ESP outweighs what it can achieve: at that scale and above, a development generates enough jobs to make an ESP a meaningful mechanism for connecting local residents to the opportunity. In setting these thresholds, it has been recognised that even relatively modest developments contribute to demand for scarce skills, making Employment and Skills Plans worthwhile. Alongside effective workforce planning these thresholds improve local economic outcomes.
- 7.24 The relationship between EC3 and the plan's wider ambitions on work quality is worth stating clearly. Bolton wants good jobs for its residents. That ambition is real and is shared in the Bolton Economic Growth and Resilience Plan. Planning policy ensures that access to the jobs that new employment development creates is secured through obligations that are necessary, proportionate and related to the development. The conditions on which those jobs are offered, the wages paid and the terms of employment all sit with employment law, with the employer's own practice. Policy EC3 supplements the Council's wider economic strategy.

Policy EC4 Retail and Town Centre Uses

EC4: RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRE USES

Retail and town centre uses will be directed to designated centres (as shown on the Policies Map) in accordance with the hierarchy set out in Policy SP4.

Applies to all proposals for retail, leisure, food and drink and other main town centre use.

SEQUENTIAL TEST

1. Proposals for retail, leisure, food and drink, health and fitness, arts culture, and tourism development that are neither in designated centres (as shown on the Policies Map), nor in accordance with the Plan must demonstrate that no suitable and available sites exist in a more central location in accordance with the following sequential order:

- A. Bolton Town Centre;
- B. The town centres of Farnworth, Horwich, Westthroughton and Little Lever;
- C. The district centres of Chorley Old Road, Astley Bridge, Breightmet and Harwood;
- D. The local centres of Deane Road, Derby Centre, Tonge Fold, Daubhill and St. Helens Road, Halliwell Road, Tonge Moor Road, Blackrod, Bromley Cross, Health Innovation Bolton, and Kearsley;
- E. The edge of a designated centre; and
- F. Out-of-centre locations that are accessible and well-connected.

2. Proposals for bulky goods retail, offices, drive-through restaurants, hotels and conference centres that are neither in designated centres (as shown on the Policies Map), nor in accordance with the Plan must demonstrate that no suitable, available and viable sites exist in a more central location in accordance with the sequential order of Central Bolton first, followed by the order and hierarchy set out in criterion 1.

3. The sequential assessment applies to all applications for main town centre uses including extensions, mezzanine floors, change of use, variation of condition and sub-division of units.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4. An Impact Assessment will accompany proposals for retail and leisure uses which are neither in a designated centre (as shown on the Policies Map) nor located within a defined centre where:

- A. The proposal provides a gross floorspace in excess of 500 sqm gross; or
- B. The proposal is located within 800 metres of the boundary of Bolton Town Centre and is in excess of 500 sqm gross; or
- C. The proposal is located within 800 metres of Farnworth, Horwich, Westthroughton or Little Lever town centres and is in excess of 300 sqm gross; or
- D. The proposal is located within 800 metres of a district centre and is in excess of 300 sqm gross or
- E. The proposal is located within 800 metres of the boundary of a local centre and is in excess of 200 sqm gross.

5. The Impact Assessment must demonstrate that there will be no significant adverse impact on any of the centres listed in the hierarchy of centres in policy SP4 criteria 6.

6. Impact Assessments will be reviewed by Bolton Council approved independent, third-party retail experts. Developers are required to pay this review fee in full.

7. This applies to all applications retail, and leisure uses including extensions, mezzanine floors, change of use, variation of condition and sub-division of units.

MIDDLEBROOK RETAIL AND LEISURE PARK

8. Proposals for town centre uses at Middlebrook Retail and Leisure Park, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported where the applicant demonstrates that the sequential test is satisfied in line with criteria 1 and 2.

9. Proposals for retail and leisure uses over 300 sqm at Middlebrook Retail and Leisure Park, as shown on the policies map, will require the applicant to complete an impact assessment. This must demonstrate that there will be no significant adverse impact on any of the centres listed in the hierarchy of centres in policy SP4 criteria 6.

10. The following uses are considered appropriate in principle where they support the wider retail and leisure function:

- A. Click-and-collect facilities;
- B. Parcel collection and return facilities;
- C. Children's play areas associated with shopping trips;
- D. Seasonal or temporary promotional space;
- E. Customer information facilities; and
- F. Electric vehicle charging hubs with associated waiting facilities.

11. Applications for alternative uses at Middlebrook Retail and Leisure Park must demonstrate that:

- A. The attractiveness and commercial resilience of Middlebrook Retail and Leisure Park is enhanced;
- B. There will be no significant adverse impacts on the vitality and viability of Bolton Town Centre, Horwich town centre or any other designated centre;
- C. There are no unacceptable highway, parking or servicing impacts;
- D. Pedestrian movement and accessibility are enhanced; and
- E. They do not adversely affect neighbouring occupiers or environmental quality.

Reasons for Policy EC4

7.25 Bolton Town Centre is at a turning point. A decade of planned investment is beginning to be delivered, and a retail and leisure market that has been challenged for years is showing the first signs of genuine recovery. That recovery is not guaranteed. The pattern of retail investment moving out of town centres and into out-of-centre locations has hollowed out town centres across the North, and Bolton is not exempt from this trend. Policy EC4 is the set of tests that directs retail and leisure investment to town centres and that manages what happens at Middlebrook and across the hierarchy of centres.

Sequential Test

7.26 The sequential test focuses key town centre uses into Bolton Town Centre while allowing more flexibility for other town centre uses by allowing them to be located within the wider Central Bolton area. This approach strikes the right balance in terms of delivering a vibrant Bolton Town Centre core while enabling the regeneration aspirations of Central Bolton to be achieved. It is appropriate for some uses to be more dispersed across Central Bolton, as set out below:

1. Where there are opportunities for linked trips, for example, office workers will visit shops and food and drink establishments in the town centre core on their lunch break, and hotel guests likewise will visit retail and food and drink establishments.
2. Bulky goods retailers have special requirements in terms of retail space and parking provision that may make them inappropriate in the most central areas.
3. Drive-through restaurants may have transportation requirements that make them inappropriate in the most central locations.

Impact Assessment

- 7.27 The Bolton Town Centre Masterplan, including public realm improvements, leisure, entertainment, food and drink and new housing developments, is providing increased interest and investment in the centre and is starting to be delivered. Delivery of the proposals will inject significant investments and draw to the existing businesses in Bolton Town Centre alongside new footfall associated with the residential development. Any out-of-centre development could jeopardise planned investment. Bolton Town Centre is still vulnerable to trade diversion at this point in its recovery. It is therefore appropriate to set an impact assessment threshold of 500 sqm for retail and leisure proposals within 800 metres of Bolton Town Centre.
- 7.28 Due to the smaller scale of the other town and district centres, and the relatively modest size of most of their commercial units, it is appropriate for a lower impact threshold of 300 sqm to apply to potential development proximate to these centres. This is in keeping with their more localised role and function but demonstrates the potential implications out-of-centre developments could have on these centres.
- 7.29 The district centres are generally anchored by a national multiple convenience store (typically operated by Co-op, Sainsbury's or Tesco). These operators underpin the function of such smaller centres, drawing in custom and encouraging linked trips to the other parts of the centre. Should the viability of such stores be impacted, there is a real risk of the role of the wider centre being undermined. There are relatively few units substantially larger than 300 sqm in any of the town and district centres; as such, to lose an occupier of this magnitude could have a significant adverse impact on the centre as a whole.
- 7.30 The lower threshold of 200 sqm for local centres is appropriate due to the potential for convenience stores of even a relatively small nature to substantially impact upon the performance of existing operators. It is appropriate for the higher threshold of 500 sqm to apply authority-wide across Bolton (i.e. beyond 800 metres of these centres), due to the lesser likelihood of significant adverse impacts being concentrated on one centre when the development is more distant. The distance of 800 metres is broadly commensurate with the potential walk-in catchments of smaller centres and is identified by Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot (The Institution of Highways & Transportation, 2000) as being the 'preferred maximum' acceptable walking distance to a centre.
- 7.31 Retail and leisure development of a greater scale than the thresholds set out in policy EC4 could lead to a 'significant adverse' impact on the centres set out in policy SP4 justifying the thresholds set.

Middlebrook

- 7.32 Middlebrook Retail and Leisure Park is the principal out-of-centre retail and leisure location in the borough and serves a catchment well beyond it. The Plan's position is honest: Middlebrook managed well is an asset, but Middlebrook allowed to grow

without regard to Central Bolton and other centres is a threat to the aims of the plan and to investment in those centres.

- 7.33 Middlebrook represents a fundamentally different commercial proposition from Bolton Town Centre. Middlebrook has over 646,500 square feet of retail floorspace, more than 60 retailers, substantial free parking and a significant leisure and food-and-drink offer. Its location adjacent to Junction 6 of the M61 and Horwich Parkway railway station gives it a very strong regional catchment.
- 7.34 The commercial strength of Middlebrook therefore represents both an opportunity and a challenge for Bolton's centres. It provides a strong retail and leisure destination for the borough and wider sub-region, but its accessibility, scale and parking offer make it difficult for traditional high street locations to compete directly.
- 7.35 Middlebrook Retail and Leisure Park, Bolton Town Centre, Horwich Town Centre and other defined centres currently provide different offers for their catchments and continue to function alongside each other. Given this, controlling the diversification and growth of Middlebrook is key to ensuring that the health of the defined centres is maintained or improved over the Plan period.
- 7.36 Unrestricted development and diversification have the potential to alter the established retail and leisure function of Middlebrook and create unnecessary competition with Bolton, Horwich and other designated centres. National planning policy places significant emphasis on maintaining the vitality and viability of town centres and ensuring that out-of-centre locations do not undermine the planned hierarchy of centres.
- 7.37 Ancillary uses should remain as the secondary offer to retail and leisure activity and should enhance, rather than replace, the primary function of Middlebrook. EC4 resists unrestricted changes of use that would fundamentally alter the character or function of Middlebrook but supports ancillary uses that improve customer experience, increase dwell time and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the location. This will ensure sustainable economic growth without compromising the wider retail hierarchy in Bolton.
- 7.38 The qualitative benefits of the existing defined centres include their provision of smaller units meeting the needs of a wide range of operators, including independents across a range of commercial sectors. Middlebrook does not, in the most part, provide space comparable to that which is provided for within the defined centres. Ensuring that this difference in the offer is retained is imperative to securing the future vitality and viability of centres.
- 7.39 The policy framework provides a balanced and proportionate approach to managing development at Middlebrook Retail and Leisure Park. It strikes a balance that allows commercial flexibility, ensures that Middlebrook continues to fulfil its strategic role, but also protects the borough's centres. It resists unrestricted changes of use that would fundamentally alter the character or function of Middlebrook, but supports ancillary uses, development and diversification that improve customer experience, increase dwell time and contribute to the long-term sustainability of existing businesses.

Policy EC5 Ancillary Uses within Industrial and Warehousing Allocations and Development

EC5: Ancillary Uses in Industrial and Warehousing Allocations and Development

Sustainable ancillary uses of an appropriate type and scale will be allowed within industrial and warehousing development

Applies to industrial and warehousing allocations; other industrial and warehousing development

ANCILLARY USES WITHIN INDUSTRIAL AND WAREHOUSING DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING ALLOCATIONS

1. The following ancillary uses are acceptable in principle within industrial and warehousing allocations and development:
 - A. Showrooms associated with goods manufactured, assembled, stored, or distributed from the site;
 - B. Training facilities primarily serving employees;
 - C. Research and development, office, and business support functions directly related to occupiers within the industrial/warehousing use; and
 - D. Other services that demonstrate the day-to-day operation and attractiveness of the employment area.
2. To be considered ancillary, proposals must demonstrate that:
 - A. The use is subordinate in scale, floorspace, and function to the principal industrial/warehousing use of the site;
 - B. The primary purpose of the ancillary use is to serve employees, occupiers, and visitors within the industrial/warehousing area rather than the wider catchment.
 - C. The use will contribute to the attractiveness, functionality, and sustainability of the industrial/warehousing development as a strategic employment location;
 - D. The use will not prejudice the delivery, occupation, or long-term availability of the land and/or premises for industrial/warehousing use;
 - E. The use will not result in significant additional vehicle trips, traffic impacts, or operational conflicts that would undermine the functioning of the industrial/warehousing area; and
 - F. The use will not develop into a scale or form that functions as a stand-alone defined centre, or a retail, leisure, or mixed-use commercial destination.
3. The cumulative provision of ancillary floorspace should remain proportionate to the overall scale of industrial/warehousing use and should not become the dominant land use.

ANCILLARY USES AT JPA6 WEST OF WINGATES

4. Places for Everyone Policy JPA6 allocates land to the West of Wingates for around 440,000 sqm of industrial and warehousing development. Given this scale, the below ancillary uses are also acceptable in principle at JPA6 West of Wingates:
 - A. Small-scale cafés, and food and drink facilities;
 - B. Convenience retail; and
 - C. Fitness, health, well-being and childcare facilities.

5. Total ancillary floorspace at West of Wingates should not exceed 2,000 sqm and no individual ancillary unit shall exceed 500 sqm. Ancillary uses should be clustered to create optimal commercial opportunities.

ANCILLARY USES AT JPA4 BEWSHILL FARM, JPA5 CHEQUERBENT NORTH and LOGISTICS NORTH EXTENSION (BSA08)

6. No ancillary floorspace in addition to those set out in Criteria 1(A) of this policy will be permitted at JPA4 Bewshill Farm, JPA5 Chequerbent North or Logistics North Extension (BSA08).

ANCILLARY USES AT BLACKROD EMPLOYMENT CLUSTER (BSA07)

7. The following ancillary uses will be supported at Blackrod Employment Cluster (BSA07), as detailed in Chapter 10 and shown on the Policies Map, where they are of an appropriate scale to the level of development proposed:

- A. Small-scale cafés, and food and drink facilities;
- B. Convenience retail; and
- C. Fitness, health, well-being and childcare facilities.

SEQUENTIAL TEST AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8. Applications for ancillary uses that comply with policy EC5 do not need to pass the sequential test or impact assessment set out in EC4; they are in accordance with this Local Plan.

Reasons for Policy EC5

- 7.40 Workers on an industrial/warehousing site need everyday provision within walking distance. Limited ancillary uses can play an important role in supporting workforce needs, improving the attractiveness of the sites to employers and investors, and reducing the need for employees to travel elsewhere for day-to-day services. However, such uses should remain clearly subordinate to the primary industrial/warehouse function of the site and should not undermine their role in delivering industrial and warehousing development. Any ancillary uses must be complementary to and not compete with existing centres.
- 7.41 JPA6 West of Wingates is by far the largest industrial and warehousing allocation in the borough, being allocated 440,000 sqm of industrial and warehousing development. Policy JPA6 makes no reference to ancillary uses which would be considered appropriate at part of the development. A site-specific approach and thresholds are required.
- 7.42 The West of Wingates Strategic Masterplan SPD sets out that development at West of Wingates (JPA6) must incorporate a carefully balanced range of ancillary uses within the strategic employment function of the site to provide amenity and support the sustainability of the development. The SPD establishes that these uses should be scaled and located to support the needs of workers and visitors at the site and be accessible to the local community while avoiding competition with established town centres.
- 7.43 The maximum ancillary floorspace quantities at West of Wingates (JPA6), set out in criteria 5 above, have been established based on the scale of industrial and warehousing development proposed, including the expected land-use composition. The method is set out in the Nexus (2026) Bolton Retail and Leisure Capacity and Centres Study and includes analysis of the number of workers, average spend per

worker, total available expenditure, a leakage allowance and sales density. The maximum ancillary floorspace quantities at West of Wingates (JPA6) are sufficient to serve the day-to-day needs of a workforce of 6,000 employees while remaining ancillary to the site's primary industrial and warehousing function. It would also be consistent with the objective of providing ancillary facilities that support employee well-being without creating a competing town-centre destination. As such, planning for a maximum of 2,000 sqm of ancillary floorspace would appropriately meet the needs of West of Wingates.

- 7.44 JPA4 Bewshill Farm and Logistics North Extension (BSA08) are well served by the existing ancillary facilities at Logistics North, and JPA5 Chequerbent North will be well served by the Lee Hall (BSA04) development. For these reasons ancillary uses are limited to those set out in the policy at these locations.
- 7.45 Given the absence of other existing ancillary uses within the immediate vicinity of the Blackrod Employment Cluster (BSA07), small-scale ancillary uses that primarily serve the workers of the allocation or other nearby employment use will be acceptable.

Policy EC6 Evening Economy

EC6: EVENING ECONOMY

Evening economy uses focused on designated centres to contribute to their vitality while ensuring any adverse impacts are mitigated and managed

EVENING ECONOMY

1. Proposals for evening economy uses including pubs, bars, restaurants, late night refreshments and casinos must demonstrate compliance with the sequential test set out in part 1 of Policy EC4, and the Impact Assessment set out in part 4 of Policy EC4.
2. Evening economy uses are actively supported in Bolton Town Centre, particularly in the Trinity Gateway and Civic and Retail Core character areas defined in Policy SP1 and Chapter 10.
3. In all centres set out in part 1 of Policy EC4:
 - A. Proposals for evening economy uses that do not result in an unacceptable concentration of late-night drinking establishments that would dominate the character of the centre will be supported; and
 - B. Amenity impacts on residential and other sensitive uses will be managed in accordance with Policies PQ1 and ENV5.
4. Where a sequential assessment and impact assessment demonstrate that an out-of-centre location is an acceptable location for an evening economy use, proposals must not result in clusters of evening economy uses in residential areas and impacts on residential and other sensitive uses will be managed in accordance with Policies PQ1 and ENV5.

Reasons for Policy EC6

- 7.46 The evening economy is part of how a town centre works. A centre that empties at six o'clock has lost half of its potential to attract investment, support residential conversion and sustain the daytime offer that depends on footfall through the evening. Bolton Town Centre's regeneration ambitions, including the residential

growth in Trinity Gateway and the Civic and Retail Core, depend on an evening offer that serves visitors, workers and residents alike.

- 7.47 EC6 is permissive in principle. Pubs, bars, restaurants, cafés and late-night refreshment uses are actively supported in Bolton Town Centre, particularly in Trinity Gateway and the Civic and Retail Core where the policy direction in SP1 and CB01 is to build a mixed evening offer alongside the residential and cultural investment. Other centres across the borough will in principle support evening uses at a scale appropriate to their role.
- 7.48 The concentration test refuses proposals that would tip a centre, or part of a centre, into a late-night drinking monoculture, which is harmful to the mixed evening economy the Council supports. The amenity test through PQ1 and ENV5 addresses the impact on residents and other uses, wherever the evening economy use is located.

Policy EC7 Hot Food Takeaways

EC7: HOT FOOD TAKEAWAYS

Bolton will support healthy lifestyle choices by keeping new hot food takeaways away from schools and the places where children and young people gather, and by preventing concentrations that harm health, amenity or the function of its centres.

LOCATION

Applies to all proposals for hot food takeaways (sui generis), including changes of use and extensions that increase floorspace.

1. Hot food takeaways will be permitted in principle within the town, district and local centres identified in Policy SP4, subject to the concentration and operation requirements below.
2. Outside those centres, hot food takeaways will be refused where the site is within 400 metres walking distance of a primary or secondary school (any school attended by pupils aged 4 to 16) or a youth facility.
3. Outside those centres, hot food takeaways will also be refused where the site is within a ward in which the most recent National Child Measurement Programme data classifies 10 % or more of Reception pupils or 15 % or more of Year 6 pupils as obese, including severely obese, and the proposal would add to the number of hot food takeaways serving that ward.

CONCENTRATION

Applies to all proposals for hot food takeaways (sui generis), including changes of use and extensions that increase floorspace.

4. A hot food takeaway will be refused where it would result in:
 - A. more than 10% of the ground floor commercial units within a designated centre being hot food takeaways; or
 - B. more than 33% of the ground floor commercial units within the street frontage concerned being hot food takeaways; or
 - C. outside a designated centre, more than two hot food takeaways, existing or approved, within 100 metres walking distance of the site, or more than one where

the site is within a Lower Super Output Area in the 30% most deprived in England.

OPERATION

Applies to all proposals for hot food takeaways (sui generis), including changes of use and extensions that increase floorspace.

5. All proposals must:

- A. demonstrate no unacceptable effect on residential amenity from noise, odour, extraction, deliveries or late opening;
- B. provide extraction and noise insulation designed and sited to protect neighbouring occupiers;
- C. provide for the storage and collection of trade waste and for litter within the curtilage of the premises; and
- D. address the health effects of the proposal in the Health Statement required by Policy PQ2. Hours of operation will be controlled by condition where necessary to protect amenity or to address the health considerations in this policy.

Reasons for Policy EC7

- 7.49 Hot food takeaway density is higher in more deprived areas across England, and the relationship is consistent across the public health literature. The wards already carrying the worst health outcomes carry the highest exposure to the food environment most associated with those outcomes. Around 38% of Year 6 children are classified as overweight or obese, while levels of physical inactivity exceed the national average. The same pattern carries through to adult obesity, type 2 diabetes and the long-term sickness that drives Bolton's economic inactivity. The food environment is one of the determinants of those outcomes, and planning is one of the levers through which it can be managed.
- 7.50 EC7 is not intended to stop any new hot food takeaways in Bolton. Hot food takeaways are a legitimate use: they meet a demand, and a borough of Bolton's size will continue to host them. Rather the policy seeks to positively influence health outcomes. The policy also manages the impact of hot food takeaway on the character of residential areas and mitigates the appearance of hot food takeaways.
- 7.51 National policy requires hot food takeaways to be refused within reasonable walking distance (around 400 metres) of schools and other places where children and young people congregate unless the site is in a designated centre, and where evidence shows that a concentration of takeaways is harming local health, pollution or anti-social behaviour. The focus is primarily on younger people, which is why primary and secondary schools and youth facilities such as youth centres are specifically identified.

Chapter 8

Homes

The policies in this chapter answer Local Plan Question E: Does the proposed development meet Bolton's requirements for its residential uses?

- 8.1 A family on the housing register waiting years for a home, a young person who grew up in Bolton and cannot afford to stay, an older resident whose house no longer suits them and who has nowhere suitable to move to in the community they know – these are not outliers. They describe the daily reality of thousands of Bolton residents.
- 8.2 The high frequency of such individual portraits is backed up by the statistics, with 21,479 households currently on the housing register; a gross annual affordable housing shortfall of 2,259 dwellings; lower-quartile prices around £135,000, an affordability ratio of roughly 5.6 times median residents' income, with prices rising faster than the national average; a population ageing faster than the national average. Cold, crowded, insecure housing is a leading modifiable cause of ill health, and Bolton's life expectancy gap between its best and worst neighbourhoods will not close while its housing fails. The market will deliver homes in Bolton. It will not, on its own, deliver the homes Bolton needs.
- 8.3 Bolton's housing market has real strengths. Lower-quartile prices are competitive by Greater Manchester standards. A viability position exists across most of the borough that can support genuine affordable delivery. The availability of brownfield sites and the carefully considered Green Belt release in this Plan together offer a range of sites capable of meeting mix and tenure need. Variation in value across the borough, captured in the Whole-plan Viability Assessment, means the Plan can ask more of sites that can deliver more, without asking the impossible of sites that cannot. That is what the policies in this chapter do.
- 8.4 The chapter covers how much affordable housing is expected and at what tenure, the mix and standard of what is built, and the specific needs that the mainstream market is least equipped to meet. A Plan cannot, by itself, house everyone in Bolton who needs a home. What it can do is set the terms on which development proceeds, so that each decade of housebuilding narrows the gap between the homes Bolton has and the homes Bolton needs, rather than widening it.

Policy HS1 Affordable Homes

HS1: AFFORDABLE HOMES

Affordable, secure, quality homes should be provided for those who cannot afford homes available on the open market as part of new development

Applies to residential development comprising 10 or more dwellings or sites of 0.5ha or more in Use Class C3.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIREMENT

1. Tenure blind affordable housing must be provided onsite at the rate determined by the value zone in which the site is located as set out below:

Affordable Housing Requirement	All Sites (Excluding land within or released from the Green Belt)	Development on land within or released from the Green Belt
Sites within the Central Bolton Policy Area (as defined by the Policies Map)	No Requirement	
Value Zone 1 (Comprises Bolton Wards – Great Lever, Halliwell, Tonge with the Haulgh, Rumworth, and those parts of Queens Park & Central outside the Central Bolton Policy Area. Excludes sites within the Central Bolton Policy Area)	10%	25%
Value Zone 2 (Comprises Bolton wards – Brightmet, Farnworth North, Farnworth South, Kearsley, Little Lever & Darcy Lever)	20%	35%
Value Zone 3 Comprises Bolton Wards – Astley Bridge, Bradshaw, Bromley Cross, Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor, Horwich North, Horwich South & Blackrod, Hulton, Smithills, Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill, Westhoughton South)	35%	50%

2. The affordable homes provided must be fully integrated into the overall design and must not be differentiated from the rest of the development in any way.

3. Where a site has been sub-divided to a level falling below the affordable housing threshold or the site is partially within the Green Belt, the affordable housing requirement will apply proportionately to each of the smaller sites.

4. Developers are expected to work with Bolton Housing Partnership to secure the delivery of affordable housing. Applicants will be expected to liaise with Bolton Community Homes at the earliest opportunity.

5. In exceptional circumstances the Council will accept off-site provision or equivalent payment in lieu of affordable housing or a variance to the tenure split. The applicant will be required to demonstrate why the affordable housing requirement cannot be delivered on site and the approach agreed between all parties.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TENURE

6. The affordable housing provided is required to meet the following tenure split:

- A. Affordable Home Ownership or other intermediate tenures (as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework) – maximum of 26% of all affordable homes (rounded down to the nearest whole number)

- B. Affordable rent – maximum of 21% of all affordable homes (rounded down to the nearest whole number)
- C. Social rent – minimum of 53% of all affordable homes provided.

BUILD-TO-RENT

- 7. Build-to-rent development must provide affordable private rent units at a discount of no less than 20% below market rent.
- 8. Affordable private rent units must be designed to facilitate transfer to a Registered Social Landlord or equivalent affordable housing provider and secured in perpetuity by planning obligation. Developers will be expected to work with Bolton Housing Partnership and to liaise with Bolton Community Homes at the earliest opportunity.

VIABILITY

- 9. Viability appraisals will only be accepted if there are exceptional development costs that were unforeseen on the date the Local Plan was adopted, or when there has been a significant adverse change in the economy.
- 10. Where HS1(9) applies and affordable housing cannot be viably provided in full accordance with this policy, a whole-site open book viability assessment must be provided at the earliest opportunity at the applicant's expense. The assessment must demonstrate that land values account for known development costs and the maximum level of affordable housing and tenure split that can be delivered, prioritising the provision of social rent. Where viability allows only partial delivery, social rent units must be provided first, ahead of other affordable tenures.
- 11. An independent third-party appraisal of the Viability Assessment will be required with the costs met by the applicant.

REVIEW MECHANISM

Applies to proposals comprising 50 or more homes.

- 12. Where planning permission is granted and the share of affordable housing provided does not meet the requirements of this policy, a review mechanism will be secured by planning obligation. If viability improves prior to or during implementation, a financial contribution equivalent to the affordable housing amount and tenure split will be secured.

DELIVERY

- 13. The affordable housing provision requirements and delivery mechanisms, transfer values and the onsite provision and commuted sum calculations are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Strategy (2026) in accordance with Policy DEL1.

Reasons for Policy HS1

- 8.5 Bolton has two affordable housing problems which affect different parts of the borough. In the Central Bolton lower value zones, rents are within reach of median earners, but rents and house prices are rising faster than in any other part of the borough. The supply of genuinely affordable tenure is thin relative to a housing register of 21,479 households. In the higher value zones of north and west Bolton, market prices put ownership out of reach for most Bolton households. Assuming a 10% deposit was available, a two-person household would need to borrow over four times household income to purchase at median prices. Neither problem is solved by leaving housing delivery to the market which by itself does not serve this range of need.

- 8.6 The solution to the first problem is a wider range of tenure options: social rent is what moves a household off the register and into a stable home, and affordable rent or intermediate tenures on their own do not. The second needs a share of delivery that is not priced at market values. If every new home in parts of the north or west of the borough sold at open market value, a generation of people who grew up in Bolton will not be able to stay in their neighbourhood.

Meeting the need for affordable housing

- 8.7 Bolton has a persistent and worsening shortfall of affordable housing, over 2,200 resident households per year are living in unsuitable housing or cannot afford a home of their own. While some of this need is met by existing housing stock it still leaves a backlog of households whose needs have not been met and sees newly forming households falling into need. We project that we need to provide 501 new affordable homes each year for the next ten years if we are to provide homes for those already in affordable housing need and meet the affordable housing needs of newly forming households (Bolton Local Housing Need Assessment, paragraph C.26, Arc4, 2026).
- 8.8 Bolton Housing Partnership is the Council's well established enabling partner. The Council will draw on the particular expertise of the partnership to deliver truly affordable homes and support neighbourhood regeneration. At the earliest opportunity, developers are expected to engage with Bolton Community Homes who will nominate a Registered Provider partner. Affordable housing requirements, including the number, phasing, plot numbers, unit types, discounts, tenure and the agreement of the relevant Registered Provider will be negotiated, agreed and secured by planning obligation in a Section 106 agreement.

Maximising the amount of affordable housing delivered

- 8.9 Policy HS1 seeks an affordable housing contribution from new development. The policy requirement takes costs and sales values of different parts of Bolton into account to set deliverable affordable housing requirements. A single borough-wide percentage would fail either half of Bolton: too high to be achievable in the lower value zones, too low to capture the full contribution the higher value zones can support. This is why we have identified three value zones to set affordable housing requirements that match the ground (Bolton Local Plan Viability Assessment, 2026). Social rent is the priority tenure for social housing because the Local Housing Needs Assessment shows the households Bolton most needs to house cannot afford affordable rent at 80% of market levels (Bolton Local Housing Need Assessment, Arc4, 2026). They need rents set in relation to local income, not to local markets, and that is what social rent is.
- 8.10 Green Belt land is expected to deliver higher affordable housing contributions because the public benefit test for developing restricted land is a higher test set out in national policy. This stems from evidence-led recognition that land which has been kept from development for strategic reasons, when released, is expected to deliver greater public benefit to the communities including a larger share of homes at tenures those communities can afford.
- 8.11 Build-to-rent is a distinct, exceptional tenure model and HS1 treats it distinctly. A build-to-rent scheme does not sell individual units into owner-occupation, so the standard tenure mix of social rent and shared ownership is not the right instrument. Build-to-rent delivers long-term affordable privately rented homes at a material discount to market homes and secured in perpetuity into the affordable housing offer.

Recognising affordable housing viability challenges

- 8.12 Land within the Central Bolton Policy Area has been excluded from the affordable housing requirement. Here, viability is poor. Relaxing policy in the short term will support mechanisms to attract private investment and accelerate transformation. This strategy will be carefully monitored and kept under review: when land values improve, the provision of affordable housing within the Central Bolton Policy Area will be required again. This does not mean that there will be no affordable housing delivered within the Town Centre. The Council will be taking every opportunity to tap into the public funding for housing opportunities the Good Growth Fund presents.
- 8.13 Outside of the Central Bolton Policy area, our expectation is that affordable housing will be delivered in line with the policy. Arguments for lower affordable housing or variance to the tenure split will only be considered where demonstrated by evidenced; it is not a default negotiating position. A proposal that cannot meet the policy requirements is expected to robustly prove that case on open-book evidence which will be independently assessed. Where such an assessment leads to that case being accepted, the Plan sets a clear order of preference: the affordable homes that are delivered should be the ones Bolton most needs.
- 8.14 Where lower affordable housing is accepted and permission granted as part of larger schemes a review mechanism will be included in the Section 106 agreement. This is in place because the viability case made at planning stage is a snapshot reflecting the viability context of the time. Where build out periods are longer, the viability position caught in this snapshot can prove optimistic or pessimistic. When it proves pessimistic, the review captures the uplift and converts it into the affordable housing amount the original scheme was reduced by. The review mechanism only applies above a threshold of 50 dwellings because at smaller scales the build out period is likely to be shorter and the costs involved in the review need to be proportionate.

Cumulative affordable housing delivery

- 8.15 The overall amount of affordable housing delivery is the sum of all delivery across the borough, with some schemes delivering above the required level up to 100%, and others, where justified by viability evidence, below this level. We want to see these minimum requirements being met on every scheme. Every affordable home helps!

Policy HS2 Housing Mix

HS2: HOUSING MIX

Housing development should provide an appropriate mix of new homes to meet our identified needs.

Applies to residential development. Specialist older persons accommodation is addressed in Policy HS3.

HOUSING MIX

1. Developments of 10 or more homes or sites of 0.5ha or more must provide a mix of dwelling sizes broadly in accordance with the table below. Policy HS1 is to be applied first, followed by Policy HS2 to provide the recommended mix breakdown by house size for each tenure.

Recommended housing mix by size and tenure	1-2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4+ bedrooms
Market Homes Mix	30-40%	45-50%	20-25%
Affordable/Social Rented Homes Mix	50-60%	30-35%	10-15%
Affordable Home Ownership Mix	40-45%	40-45%	20-25%

2. A different mix will be permitted where, within the current Local Housing Needs Assessment neighbourhood area there is evidence that:

- A. The local housing need materially differs from the borough-wide profile; and
- B. There is a need to vary existing housing mix, for example, where the proportion of homes of a particular size and type is already greater than the recommended mix or a particular size of housing is not suited to the location.

3. The proposed housing mix should be agreed with the Council at the earliest opportunity.

4. Market Homes: no more than 40% should be 1-bedroom homes.

5. Affordable/social rented homes: no fewer than 30% should be less than 3-bedroom homes.

6. The Council will support the delivery of self-build and custom homes on windfall sites in accordance with Policy SP3 and on suitable housing sites identified in the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment.

Reasons for Policy HS2

- 8.16 The mix of homes a market delivers, left to itself, is not necessarily the mix Bolton needs to meet the needs of its residents. Developers are more likely to build what sells fastest to the widest pool of buyers. This may serve a slice of the borough's need, but can leave needs unmet; for example, smaller households entering the housing market who do not wish to live in the Town Centre; or growing families on the housing waiting list needing more bedrooms; or older couples trying to downsize from a house that no longer suits them without leaving the neighbourhood they know; or wheelchair users wanting to find a suitable home of their own. Policy HS2 sets a mix requirement that corrects for the market default position. This is to make sure new housing meets the range of housing need.

- 8.17 The percentages for different sizes of units identified in the policy is drawn from the Bolton Local Housing Needs Assessment (Arc4, 2026) and provide a good indication of the type of housing need indicative at borough level that should be applied to most sites. They are not binding on every site. Variations may be sought or proposed in a neighbourhood where the Bolton Local Housing Needs Assessment (Arc4, 2026), or its successor, identifies a different profile of need, or an existing over-supply of a particular house size. Flexibility is allowed where this evidence bar is met and variance still meets identified local need or supply shortfalls.

Policy HS3 Inclusive Homes

HS3: INCLUSIVE HOMES

Development of homes must be inclusive to meet the diverse and lifelong needs of Bolton's residents.

ACCESSIBLE AND ADAPTABLE HOMES

Applies to all residential development comprising new homes.

1. All new homes must meet the nationally described accessible and adaptable homes standard (Building Regulations Part M4(2)) as a minimum, consistent with Places for Everyone (2024) Policy JP-H3.

WHEELCHAIR ADAPTABLE HOMES

Applies to residential developments of 10 or more dwellings or sites of 0.5ha or more.

2. 4.7% of all new dwellings must meet wheelchair adaptable standard M4(3)

SPECIALIST HOUSING FOR OLDER, VULNERABLE AND DISABLED PEOPLE

Applies to all purpose-built specialist accommodation

3. Specialist housing developments for independent living will be supported within 800m walking distance of essential local services and facilities, including primary healthcare, a convenience shop and greenspace, or within 800m of public transport providing convenient access to these essential services and facilities.
4. In the case of homes for older and disabled people living independently, the terrain between the development and essential services and facilities should be walkable.
5. Communal spaces must be designed to support social interaction and must be accessible to all residents. Outdoor space must be directly accessible from communal areas and designed to be usable by residents with limited mobility.

AFFORDABLE PROVISION IN SPECIALIST SCHEMES

6. The starting point provision of affordable housing in specialist scheme and the tenure mix is as Policy HS1(1), and on the tenure priorities set by Policy HS1 (6). However:
 - A. Where a viability appraisal demonstrates that this cannot be achieved, the Council will apply flexibility to the amount or tenure of affordable housing, and a payment in lieu of provision will be accepted where the appraisal demonstrates that onsite provision cannot be supported.
 - B. Where onsite provision is not practicable given the nature of the scheme, a payment in lieu will be accepted.

MANAGEMENT AND OCCUPATION

7. A management plan, secured by planning obligation, must accompany the proposal. The plan must set out: the care and support offer; the minimum age of occupation; arrangements for communal facilities; and a mechanism to secure an affordable housing contribution if the development ceases to be used as specialist accommodation.

8. Where the care element of a development will be commissioned by the Council. Applicants will be expected to liaise with the Council's Adult Services at the earliest opportunity and before a planning application is submitted.

Reasons for Policy HS3

- 8.1 Bolton has an increasing need to diversify housing options available to older, vulnerable and disabled people that the housing delivery is not keeping pace with. Residential care, Extra Care and specialist housing such as sheltered and retirement homes are being provided in smaller numbers than needed (Bolton Council Housing with Care and Support Prospectus 2023-2033 and Local Housing Needs Assessment, arc4, 2026). Policy HS3 helps to address and correct for this shortfall.
- 8.2 This policy response has two parts. Parts 1-2 provide accessible and adaptable homes for older and disabled people. Parts 3-5 will ensure new homes for those with specialist housing needs – including households who cannot afford to buy or rent in the market – are suitably located, designed and managed.
- 8.3 Part 1 applies the nationally described accessible and adaptable standard to every new home because the alternative – adapting homes case by case as occupants come to need them – is demonstrably more expensive and more disruptive than building to M4(2) in the first place. A dwelling meeting M4(2) accommodates a wheelchair user on a short-term basis, an older person with reduced mobility as they age in place, and the everyday needs of families moving pushchairs through doorways and upstairs. The build cost is a small share of the cost of a home. The cost of not building accessibly is paid over and over by occupants, families and public services across the lifetime of the dwelling. Bolton's demographic trajectory, with the fastest growth in the 65-plus cohort, underlines the need to prioritise this.
- 8.4 This policy, along with Policy HS2, requires housebuilders to include the dwelling types of older household's need in order to downsize within their community – this could be bungalows in Farnworth, ground-floor flats in Horwich, or level-access apartments at the edge of Astley Bridge. Most older and disabled people in Bolton do not need specialist accommodation; they need an alternative within walking distance of the neighbourhood they live in. Section 1 addresses that need, and importantly, in combination with Policy HS1, it requires an element of this provision to be an affordable tenure because the housing register in Bolton includes older and disabled households whose income will not reach a market priced bungalow or similar accommodation.
- 8.5 The Plan's viability evidence shows that there may be delivery challenges with achieving the level of affordable housing specified in HS1 for specialist older people's accommodation. Section 6(A) therefore allows the amount or tenure of affordable housing to be varied, or a payment in lieu to be made, on the evidence of a viability appraisal, without the applicant needing to show that circumstances have changed since the Plan was adopted. The HS1 rates remain the starting point so that the contribution is secured wherever a scheme can support it.
- 8.6 Part 2 sets specific provision for wheelchair accessible and adaptable homes. The distinction between these and accessible and adaptable homes is important. A home

built to M4(3) wheelchair adaptable standard is designed so it can be readily adapted for a wheelchair user to live in, whereas a home built to M4(2) is designed to meet the needs of most people and to be adapted as their needs change over time, but is not designed for a wheelchair user to live in. M4(3) is a house type Bolton has too few of and the type that is needed to meet the needs of current wheelchair-user, including those on the housing register and Registered Provider nomination. The need requirement reflects the needs of Bolton's ageing population and identified levels of disability (see Local Housing Needs Assessment, Arc4, 2026) but also our younger residents keen to move out of home and live independently. Homes that meet the standards in this policy can be lived in for longer, by more people, across more stages of life.

- 8.7 It is not just the size of the dwelling that matters. Location, design and management requirements for specialist schemes are also specified to ensure that what type is built where works for the residents it is intended to serve.
- 8.8 We want development in the borough to deliver the dwelling types and tenures Bolton's older and disabled residents need and, in some cases, have been waiting for. A family in Farnworth looking for an adapted home for a child with disabilities close to their school should be able to find one, at market or affordable tenure as their means allow. A household moving to supported living housing in Horwich should find a home that is well designed but also allows them to easily access health and essential services and facilities that enable them to live independently. A person whose care needs exceed what domiciliary care can support should find residential care without needing to leave Bolton. Every home delivered under HS3, mainstream or specialist, is a home someone in Bolton needs. Every one of them helps to meet this important need.

Policy HS4 High-Quality Residential Standards

HS4: HIGH-QUALITY RESIDENTIAL STANDARDS

Development of homes must provide a high standard of residential accommodation

Applies to all residential development.

HIGH-QUALITY RESIDENTIAL STANDARDS

1. Well-designed homes and household extensions providing a good standard of living for occupiers and protecting the amenities of neighbours will be supported where the following criteria are met:

- A. Nationally described space standards are achieved as a minimum, consistent with Places for Everyone (2024) Policy JP-H3;
- B. Adequate levels of natural light to all habitable rooms as defined within the Glossary;
- C. Privacy, including appropriate separation distances between dwellings and between dwellings and neighbouring properties as set out in latest published guidance;
- D. Internal layout that supports good living, including dual aspect to dwellings of 2 bedrooms or more where reasonably achievable and adequate circulation space
- E. Built-in storage adequate for the size of the dwelling as set out in the NDSS plus additional secure cycle storage and waste and recycling storage appropriately sized and located;

- F. Outlook from habitable rooms, as defined within the Glossary, that is not dominated by other buildings or structures; and
- G. Private or shared amenity space is provided, including:
 - i. For houses outside the Central Bolton Policy Area, as defined on the Policies Map, garden space of at least 50sqm; and
 - ii. For houses inside of the Central Bolton Policy Area, and for apartments in all areas provide a minimum of one 5m² step-free private outside space for homes with one or two bedspaces, with a minimum depth and width of 1.5m. An extra 1m² should be provided for every additional bedspace. Alternatively, development can provide 18 square metres of shared amenity space per dwelling.

Reasons for Policy HS4

- 8.9 A new home must provide a good internal environment for the people living in it. This means space to move around and store belongings, light to live by, privacy from neighbours, sound that does not carry, and access to outdoor spaces. These standards are drawn from evidence in the National Design Guide and in Places for Everyone (2024) on what a good home requires.
- 8.10 A dwelling that fails the nationally described space standards will not provide storage, dual aspect, circulation, or the separation between sleeping and living that a household needs to function. Places for Everyone (2024) Policy JP-H3 sets those standards for Greater Manchester; the alternative is schemes that technically comply with Building Regulations but produce dwellings below the size a household can actually live in. The costs of meeting these standards have been tested through the Whole-plan Viability Assessment. They are achievable, and they are the minimum the Plan expects.
- 8.11 Light, privacy, layout, storage, outlook and sound separation are important to ensure a high-standard living environment. They are the tests that distinguish a home that works from a home that passes. A flat of the right floor area can still be unusable if the only windows face a wall, if the kitchen is shared with the living space and the noise carries, if there is nowhere to put a pram or a bike, if the neighbours can hear a television through the partition wall. Homes need to meet the standards that support everyday life and activities.
- 8.12 Amenity space is outside of a home, but an important part of how a home is experienced. A lack of private or shared outdoor space is a determinant of physical and mental health, particularly for households with children and for older residents, and particularly in parts of Bolton where parks and green space are least accessible on foot. There is no national default for outdoor amenity space, which means that without HS4 setting a minimum, new flats and apartments in Bolton could be consented to with no outdoor provision at all.

Policy HS5 Houses in Multiple Occupation

HS5: HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

HMOs in appropriate locations can meet needs of people at different life stages where they are of a high quality.

Applies to all proposals for HMO use, including Use Class C4 and sui generis HMOs. Bolton's Article 4 Direction brings all HMO proposals through planning for determination under this policy.

CONCENTRATION

1. HMOs will be supported where they will provide a good standard of living for the occupier and protect the amenities of neighbours. They will be permitted where the following criteria are met:
 - A. The property is not located within any of the following areas, as defined by the Policies Map: The Haulgh, Farnworth Town Centre, and North and east of Bolton School near Queens Park;
 - B. The HMO would not result in 10% or more of residential properties within 100 metres of the application site being in HMO use;
 - C. The development would not cause a house (C3 use) to have an HMO on either side of it.
2. In assessing concentration, the Council will have regard to the number and proximity of existing HMOs and those with extant permission.

QUALITY

3. All HMO proposals must meet the minimum gross internal floor area requirements for new dwellings set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards, scaling up where the number of bedrooms exceeds that set out in these Standards.
4. All HMO proposals must provide reasonable outlook, sufficient access to daylight and privacy for prospective residents. Access to external amenity space will also be taken into account in assessing quality.

Reasons for Policy HS5

- 8.13 Bolton's preference is for purpose-built conventional homes providing safe and stable accommodation for all households. However, it is recognised that houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are an important part of Bolton's overall housing offer. A room in a shared house is for many people often the form of housing that matches income, household size and life stage. But just because HMOs work well and meet a need at the scale of an individual household, large concentrations of HMOs can cause harm in some streets and neighbourhoods and this policy seeks to avoid and mitigate against this type of harm.
- 8.14 A street in which most homes are HMOs can become a very different kind of street from one with a mix of tenures and households. HMOs can have a higher turnover rate of occupants which has implications for forming relationships with neighbours. Higher waste and noise pressures can arise from this form of development, and increased parking and street-use patterns can have significant impacts on availability of parking and levels of congestion.

- 8.15 The Council introduced an Article 4 Direction to remove the permitted development right to convert private dwellings into small HMOs in Bolton in June 2025. As part of the evidence that underpinned this, a number of areas were identified as having particularly high concentrations of HMOs (see Bolton Integrated Topic Paper, 2026). This included The Haulgh, Farnworth Town Centre, Tonge, and the streets to the north and east of Bolton School near Queens Park. Queens Park & Central ward has the highest number of HMOs; Tonge with the Haulgh and Farnworth also have high numbers. Other smaller clusters of HMOs were found in Kearsley, Little Lever, Horwich (specifically the town centre area of Horwich North) and Westhoughton, and it is likely that some proposals in these areas would also be unacceptable as the concentration threshold would be exceeded.
- 8.16 A 10% threshold is used to prevent an over-concentration of HMOs having an adverse amenity impact. This is applied at the time of determination of the planning application to the current density of HMOs around the site, so that a proposal's prospects can be read off the geography around it rather than negotiated case by case. The requirement that a new HMO development does not 'sandwich' a private dwelling aims to better manage impact on individual homes.
- 8.17 Where HMOs are permitted, as well as ensuring the homes are well located, we want to ensure that the quality of accommodation provides a high standard of living for occupants. INF2 deals with parking requirements.

Policy HS6 Children's Homes

HS6: CHILDREN'S HOMES

Enabling homes that provide settled, well-run accommodation for looked after children and care leavers in locations and at densities that allow Bolton to host them well.

Applies to: This policy applies to proposals requiring planning permission for children's homes and other specialist accommodation for looked-after children within use Class C2, including changes of use, new build, and supported and semi-independent living.

WELL-LOCATED SUITABLE HOMES

1. Applications for homes for looked after children and care leavers will be supported for development that meets Bolton's identified need, with priority given to children looked after by Bolton Council.
2. New children's homes should be in a sustainable location with access to primary health care, education or training and groceries, without car dependency, via safe and walkable routes.
3. To avoid a clustering and overconcentration of children's homes in any particular area of the borough, new provision should not be within 400m of existing homes meeting similar needs. The characteristics of the location and site-specific circumstances will be taken into account.
4. The proposal should comply with the housing design standards of Policy HS4.
5. The proposal would not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers by reason of noise, disturbance, vehicle movements, visitor activity, or parking demand.

IMPACT AND MANAGEMENT

6. Applicants will be expected to liaise with the Council's Children's Services at the earliest opportunity and before a planning application is submitted.

7. Applications must be supported by:

- A. An operational statement setting out the number, age range, and care needs of the children to be accommodated, the staffing model, and the proposed registration position with the relevant regulator;
- B. A management plan which shows how the development will provide a safe and secure environment for residents;
- C. Floorplans showing internal floor space, communal areas and garden space;
- D. The current use and planning history of the property;
- E. The pattern of vehicle movements, staff arrivals and departures, and visitor activity associated with the proposed use, compared to the current use;
- F. The character of activity at the premises, including whether features associated with institutional use will be present;
- G. The character of the surrounding area and how the proposed use would sit within it; and
- H. Parking arrangements and any implications for the surrounding highway.

Reasons for Policy HS6

- 8.18 Bolton is committed to being a place where children who cannot live with their families can grow up well. The Council, as corporate parent, is responsible for making sure there is enough of the right kind of accommodation for the children it looks after, and the planning system has a role in making that happen. This policy is designed to give providers, residents and officers a clear framework, to signal that Bolton is open for well-planned investment in children's accommodation to meet the borough's needs, and to make sure proposals are well-integrated into the communities that host them.
- 8.19 Children's homes operate in different ways, and the planning position depends on how the home is run. The policy applies to proposals that need planning permission and that change how a property is used. It does not apply to homes that operate as a family household, or to applications for a Lawful Development Certificate. Where care is provided by staff who do not live at the premises, the position is different.
- 8.20 The test asks whether the use will feel materially different from a family dwelling in the day-to-day life of the street. A small home, quietly run, may not generate impacts that go beyond family-scale use. A home with frequent shift changes, multiple staff vehicles, or a clearly institutional operating pattern, will. To reach a judgement on an individual case, the Council weighs these factors against how the property currently functions in its street.
- 8.21 Providers unsure as to whether they need planning permission are encouraged to seek advice. Where certainty is needed before operating, a Lawful Development Certificate is the appropriate route.
- 8.22 The policy addresses four matters: need, location, balance, and standards, as explained below.

Meeting an identified need

- 8.23 Keeping children connected to their home community matters for their well-being, their education, training and their relationships with family and friends. Therefore, planning applications will only be supported where they meet evidence of need as identified by the Looked After Children's Sufficiency Strategy (2025-2028), or

successor document, with priority for placements being given to children from Bolton in the first instance.

A suitable location

- 8.24 Having established where there is need, policy then asks whether the site is right for the home. Children placed in care often have additional needs around education, healthcare and support. A children's home is not the only kind of non-family residential use in a neighbourhood. Houses in multiple occupation, supported accommodation, and residential institutions and similar uses all sit alongside family housing, and neighbourhoods work best when there is a mix.

Balance

- 8.25 Where too high a proportion of homes in an area are used as non-family residential accommodation, the character of the area can change and pressure on local services, parking and amenity can build up. The policy applies the same balance-of-uses approach the Council uses for houses in multiple occupation. This is to consider the cumulative picture and ensure that children's homes do not cluster and result in a cumulative adverse impact on residential areas.

Standards

- 8.26 Finally, the policy applies standards. Children in care deserve homes that are safe, comfortable and well-provided for. The Council's residential space standards apply to children's homes for the same reason they apply to other residential accommodation: every child should have enough space both inside and outside the home to live well.
- 8.27 Neighbours should not be adversely impacted by the development. Parking provision needs to reflect how the home will actually operate, including staff shift changes and visitor activity, so that operational activity does not cause issues of noise and disturbance to immediate neighbours or spill onto surrounding streets.
- 8.28 Taken together, the criteria on need, location, balance and standards establish what a good proposal looks like. The policy is supportive of well-planned investment in children's accommodation, clear about what is expected, and consistent with how the Council treats other non-family residential uses across the borough.

Policy HS7 Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling

Showpeople Accommodation

HS7: GYPSY AND TRAVELLER AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE ACCOMMODATION

Bolton will work collaboratively with communities to provide for the identified accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Applies to: Gypsy and Traveller pitches on sites and Travelling Showpeople plots within yards.

PROVISION

1. The Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Needs Assessment identifies the minimum need for pitches and plots set out below:

Community	Total Requirement	
	To 2030	2030–2042
Gypsy and Traveller Pitches	11	2
Travelling Showpeople Plots	15	15

2. New sites and pitches will be supported to meet Bolton's identified needs on allocated sites and where they meet the criteria set out in this policy.

ALLOCATED SITES

3. The following site is allocated to contribute towards meeting the identified needs of Travelling Showpeople. Development to meet identified needs will be supported on the site below, detailed in Chapter 10 and defined on the Policies Map.

Ref	Name	Expected Provision
BSA09	Land off The Alders, Tonge Moor	45-50 Plots*

*5 -10 net additional Plots, 40 Plots are expected to meet relocation needs from existing unsuitable plots.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS

4. Applications meeting an identified unmet need will be supported in locations within, or well-connected to, an existing settlement with access to primary health care, groceries, education, training and employment opportunities.

5. The site should have safe and convenient access to the highway network for pedestrians and proposed vehicles.

6. The site should not be in an area prone to flooding.

7. The size and scale of the proposal should be appropriate in the context of the settled community, with regard to the number, size and density of stationed vehicles, infrastructure capacity, and the availability of services and facilities within the settlement.

8. The visual impact of the proposal should be minimised and there should be no unacceptable adverse impact on landscape, nature conservation or historic environment designations, ecology, biodiversity, water quality or the historic environment.

SITE STANDARDS

9. The proposal should provide a safe and healthy living environment including privacy, a permanent day room or equivalent facility and space of outdoor recreation appropriate to the size of the site; safe and reliable connections to water, drainage, electricity, waste collection and internet access. There should be no unacceptable adverse impact for neighbouring residents.

10. All sites should provide adequate space for each pitch or plot, including parking, turning and outdoor amenity space. Additionally, plots for Travelling Showpeople should provide space for the storage, maintenance and testing of equipment appropriate to the operation of the business.

11. Applicants will be expected to provide an operational statement setting out the proposed level of occupancy by residents, vehicles and equipment.

12. Applicants will be expected to provide a maintenance plan detailing proposals to maintain shared facilities, communal areas and utilities; the arrangements for the collection and disposal of waste and the hours of operation for the maintenance and testing of any vehicles and equipment parked or stored in connection with any business use.

Reasons for Policy HS7

- 8.29 Gypsies and Travellers are a legally defined ethnic group with protected characteristics. Their customary form of accommodation is a pitch within a site. Travelling Showpeople are recognised as a distinct cultural community, traditionally members of an organised group holding fairs, circuses or shows, travelling for work and returning to live on mixed-use plots within yards. Bolton has well-established travelling communities and a duty to plan for the accommodation needs of both of these groups in the same way it plans for any other housing need. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment identifies what the need is; Policy HS7 makes provision for it.
- 8.30 Provision across Greater Manchester has historically fallen short of identified need. Places for Everyone (2024) did not resolve this at joint-plan scale, and individual authorities including Bolton arrive at plan-making with a small, authorised pitch base and limited delivery against previous cycles. The consequence is households end up on unauthorised sites, in bricks-and-mortar accommodation that does not suit the way they live, or moving on from one temporary arrangement to the next.
- 8.31 Within the Plan period, there is an identified need for a minimum of 13 Gypsy and Traveller pitches, of which 11 are required in the short term and 2 in the longer term. The identified need for Travelling Showpeople accommodation is a minimum of 30 plots; 15 plots are required within the short term with need arising from emerging households currently living on established plots within the borough (Bolton Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Needs Assessment, Arc4, 2026).
- 8.32 Bolton continues to work closely with the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities to identify suitable sites to meet identified needs. Opportunities to address this need at the strategic scale will be explored through the Greater Manchester Spatial Development Strategy.
- 8.33 The policy sets out how pitch or plot planning applications are assessed on allocated and windfall sites. Site standards establish what every site must deliver. Like all forms of home in the plan, it is important to avoid an undue focus on a numeric requirement that leads to delivering sites that fail the people they are meant to house.
- 8.34 The policy responds to a statutory duty, but it is not only a statutory duty. Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households are part of Bolton's community. They have the same claim on a comfortable home as any other household which is why this plan includes Policy HS7.
- 8.35 The Plan allocates a site for Travelling Showpeople at The Alders (Policy BSA09), which meets the identified plot need. Plots for Travelling Showpeople and pitches for Gypsies and Travellers are different forms of accommodation with different locational requirements, and the site search set out in the Site Selection Paper did not identify a deliverable site for pitches sufficient to meet need. The Plan therefore makes provision for pitches through the positive criteria in this policy, which apply to windfall proposals, through the Council's programme supporting small-scale pitch provision, and through monitoring against the need identified for 2030 in Appendix 4. The

allocation of pitch sites will be revisited through the Greater Manchester Spatial Development Strategy, which is the appropriate level for a cross-boundary approach.

- 8.36 Looking beyond the implemented plan, and plan making, the Council will continue to work with communities to promote mutual respect, understanding and positive relationships between Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities and the wider community. The Council will seek to support inclusive neighbourhoods in which different ways of life are understood and respected, and all residents are able to participate in and contribute to community life.

Chapter 9

Developer Contributions

The policies in this chapter answer Local Plan Question F: What developer contributions apply to the proposed development?

- 9.1 The policies in this Plan set clear requirements. Affordable housing must be delivered at the rates the evidence shows are viable. Infrastructure must be funded by the development that generates demand for it. Design and place quality must meet the standards set out in Part 2. Among those infrastructure requirements are the GP capacity, health facilities and active travel routes that determine whether new development improves or worsens the health of the communities around it. Those requirements are only meaningful if they are consistently secured, and this chapter sets out how this will be done.
- 9.2 Policy DEL1 establishes the framework for developer contributions. It sets out how the Council will use Section 106 agreements. It is explicit about what happens when viability is raised as a reason for not meeting policy: the burden of proof lies with the applicant, the assessment must be open-book, and any reduction in policy compliance must be the minimum necessary and subject to review.
- 9.3 Policy DEL1 brings the requirements of policies across this Plan into a single reference point for users of the plan.

Policy DEL1 Developer Contributions

DEL1: DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

Developer contributions are used to mitigate and support new development in line with relevant law to ensure policy requirements identified in the rest of the plan are secured and delivered.

DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will be used to secure the infrastructure contributions, affordable housing and other mitigation measures required by policies in this Plan.
2. The indicative schedule of planning obligations, detailed S106 rates, formulae and calculation methodology that sit behind the obligations in this policy are maintained in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Strategy (2026), which is published alongside this Plan and updated annually.

Obligation	Applies to	Threshold	How it is secured
Affordable housing	Residential development and specialist residential where Policy HS3 apply	Set by HS1 and HS3 which establishes the rates by value zone, the tenure split and the off-site route.	On site affordable housing or payment in lieu of provision
Education	Residential development	Set by Policy INF3	S106 contribution sized to the additional pupil yield where additional capacity is required.
Health	Residential development	Set by Policy INF3	S106 contribution sized to the health care demand the scheme generate where additional capacity is required
Open space	Residential development	Set by Policy INF5 & INF6	Open space and play space provision onsite provision or financial contribution including maintenance costs
Trees	Development with new streets	Set by PQ1	Maintenance costs
Other community facilities	Residential development and Commercial Development	Set by Policy INF3 and INF7	Onsite provision or improvements to community facilities and sports facilities

Transport and public realm	All development	Set by Policy INF1	S106 contribution sized to the impact of the scheme or mitigation under s.278 of the Highways Act 1980
Employment and Skills Plan	Commercial	Set by EC3	Plan secured by S106 in line with Policy EC3.
Holcroft Moss	Development proposals that increase traffic flows on the M62 past Holcroft Moss by more than 100 vehicles per day or 20 Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) per day	Established in Places for Everyone and set out in Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations Joint Supplementary Planning Document	S106 contribution sized to the impact of the scheme.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	All liable development if a CIL Charging Schedule is in place	Set by the Charging Schedule if adopted	If a CIL is in place at the time the application is determined, the charge is set by the adopted Charging Schedule and applied in accordance with the CIL Regulations. Where CIL is not in place, the obligations above are secured by S106 only.

3. If a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is in place at the time an application is determined, CIL contributions may apply in addition to planning obligations in line with the rates published in the relevant CIL Charging Schedule.

4. In addition to the planning obligations above, the Employment Area Mitigation Fund is a geographically ring-fenced S106 contribution for transport and public realm improvements to West of Wingates, reflecting the site's 440,000 sqm scale and cross-site infrastructure demand. Further information is set out in the West of Wingates Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (2026).

STRATEGIC SCALE DEVELOPMENT

5. Strategic-scale development will deliver the obligations above, with onsite provision expected wherever necessary scheme supports it.

6. The site-specific policy in site allocations Chapter 10 sets the additional obligations and onsite requirements that apply and any associated phasing measures.

VIABILITY

7. Where an applicant relies on viability to justify reduced compliance with any policy in this Plan, a whole-site viability assessment must be submitted on an open-book basis with the cost of this, and an independent assessor met by the applicant (as reflected in Policy HS1). The assessment should the methodology and input assumptions of the

Council's plan-making viability evidence and must demonstrate the maximum reasonable provision across all policy requirements.

8. Where a proposal is consented on the basis of a viability assessment at less than full policy compliance, a review mechanism will be secured in respect of affordable housing in line with Policy HS1.

Reasons for Policy DEL1

- 9.4 Bolton's housing, infrastructure and place quality ambitions will only be delivered if each development makes its fair contribution, and this policy sets out how those contributions are secured, how viability is evidenced, and what applicants, the Council and the community can expect.
- 9.5 The policies in this Plan make concrete commitments. Affordable homes will be delivered at the rates set out in Policy HS1. Infrastructure will be funded by the development that creates demand for it. Design and place quality will meet the standards set out in Part 2. The health infrastructure, active travel routes, open spaces and community facilities that the Plan commits to are the shape those commitments take on the ground. None of them is automatic. Policy DEL1 is how each of them is secured from the development that makes them necessary, on terms that are consistent across the borough.
- 9.6 The schedule sets out the type of obligation Bolton will ask of new development: affordable housing, education and health, open space and community infrastructure, transport and public realm, and the employment and skills plan that come with major commercial schemes. This is to support when the developer is calculating what a piece of land is worth, so the cost of compliance is visible at the start, not at the application stage. It is important that applicants and officers work from the same reference point. And it matters for clarity when a resident asks what a new development is contributing to the street they live on, because the answer can be found in one place.
- 9.7 The viability question is where developer contributions are most often contested. The policy requirements in this Plan, including the affordable housing thresholds in HS1 and the infrastructure obligations in Chapter 4, have been set at levels the Council's evidence shows are achievable across Bolton's three value zones. Where an individual scheme argues that those requirements cannot be met, the standard this Plan applies to that argument is the same standard the evidence was built on: open-book, independent.

Chapter 10

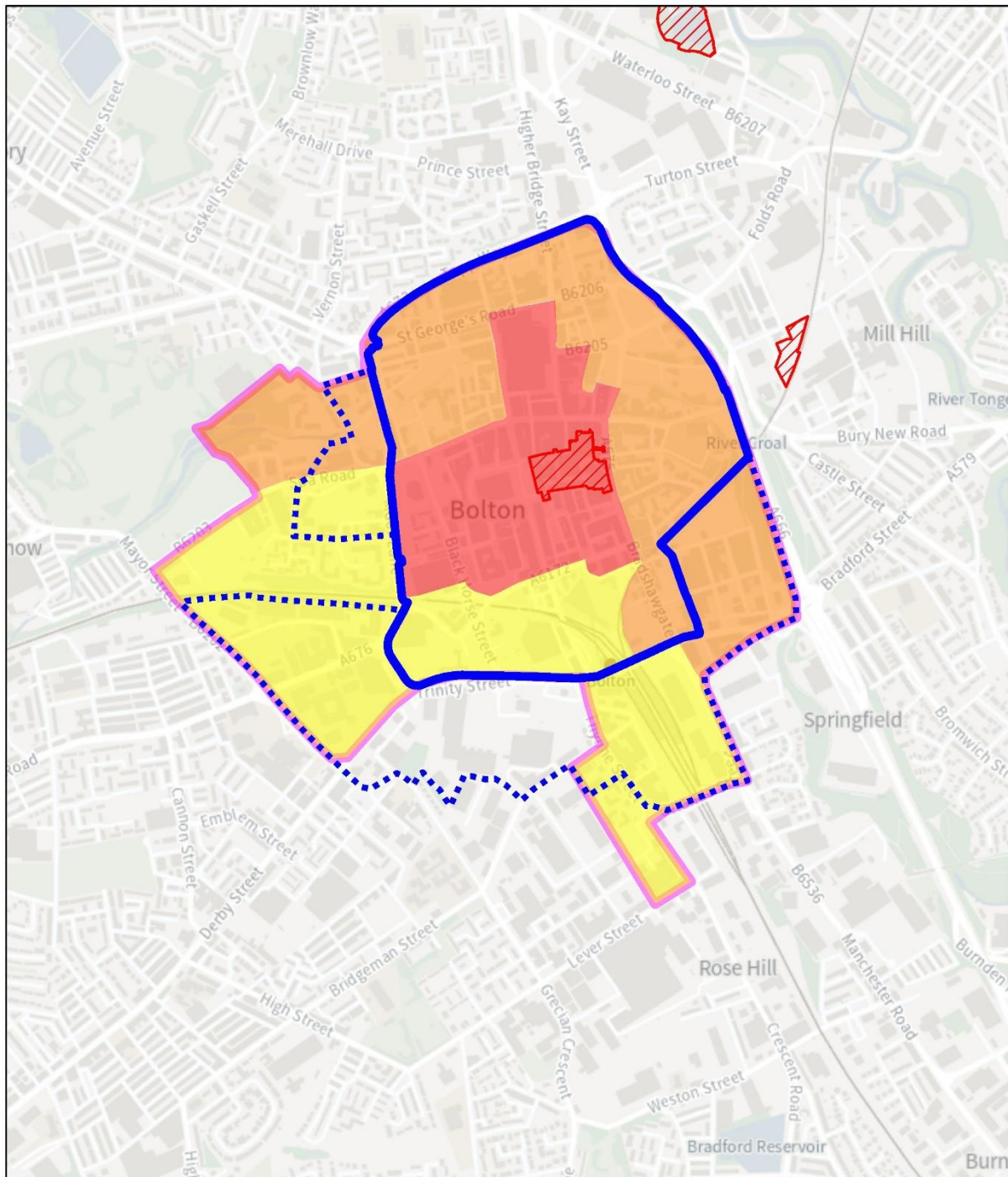
Development Framework for Places and Sites

The policies in this chapter answer Local Plan Question G: Does the proposed development meet Bolton's place and site-specific requirements?

- 10.1 This chapter contains the plan's place-specific policies, including for character areas in the borough, with a particular focus on Central Bolton and the key sites essential to the Plan's Strategy.

CHARACTER-BASED POLICY AREAS

- 10.2 The Character-based Policy Areas (CB01 to CB04) are tailored to the character of each part of the borough. These provide a more detailed framework for development, particularly in Central Bolton (see Figure) where regeneration involves many sites, owners and phases and where significant development potential is anticipated to exist. Across the rest of the borough, they provide area-specific policy as a supplement to Policy PQ1.
- 10.3 The Strategic Site Allocations (BSA01 to BSA09) allocate individual parcels for defined uses at strategic scale and set the requirements for each. The policies in this chapter apply alongside the borough-wide policies of this plan; where they are more specific, they take precedence.



-  SITE ALLOCATION POLICIES (BSA 01-14)
-  Bolton Town Centre (EC4)
-  Edge of Bolton Town Centre (EC4)
-  Central Bolton Civic and Retail Core (CB01)
-  Central Bolton North and East (CB02)
-  Central Bolton South and West (CB03)
-  Central Bolton (SP1)

Figure 9. Central Bolton Policy Areas.

Policy CB01: Central Bolton: Civic & Retail Core

CB01: CENTRAL BOLTON: CIVIC & RETAIL CORE

The Civic and Retail Core is Bolton's primary retail, civic and cultural destination, and is a key part of the growing town centre residential neighbourhood. Development must strengthen the vitality and viability of the town centre and reinforce its civic and market town character.

Applies to all development within the Civic and Retail Core policy area as defined on the Policies Map.

USES

1. Retail, food and drink, leisure, civic, cultural and community uses are the priority on ground floors. Residential and office uses above ground floor will be permitted where they do not compromise active ground-floor frontages. Uses that undermine the vitality of the town centre, including ground floor residential uses and blank or inactive frontages, will not be permitted.

URBAN DESIGN QUALITY

2. Development must contribute to the urban design quality of the Civic & Retail Core and Central Bolton as a whole. Proposals must:

- A. Reinforce the area's historic street pattern, fine urban grain and continuity of frontage.
- B. Reinforce active frontage and avoid the provision of at-grade car parking and car park entrances along principal frontages.
- C. Improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity between the area and key destinations including Queen's Park.
- D. Strengthen gateways into the town centre including at Great Moor Street and Bridge Street.
- E. Provide high-quality public realm and integrate urban greening and tree planting along key movement corridors, including active travel routes linking to the wider GI network.

HERITAGE ASSETS

3. Development must conserve or enhance heritage assets across the town centre, including their setting. It must contribute to the distinctiveness of the Civic & Retail Core and, where relevant, to the exceptional nature of the municipal ensemble of Victoria Square, the Cenotaph, Bolton Town Hall and Le Mans Crescent.

CROMPTON PLACE

4. Crompton Place, as shown on the Policies Map, is identified as a priority for transformation and is allocated as a strategic site in Policy BSA01. Development proposals affecting the Crompton Place site must demonstrate how they achieve the following objectives:

- A. Contribute to the comprehensive regeneration of this part of the Civic & Retail Core.
- B. Improve the connectivity and legibility of the town centre east-west between Victoria Square and Bradshawgate, and north-south between Great Moor Street and the Market Place shopping centre.

- C. Maintain the integrity and identity of Victoria Square and the adjoining conservation areas and associated designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- D. Deliver active, mixed-use frontage to surrounding streets and public spaces including Victoria Square.

The detailed requirements for Crompton Place are set out in Sites Allocation Policy BSA01.

URBAN RENEWAL AND INFILL

5. Urban renewal and infill development will be supported where it continues, completes and extends long term development projects across the Civic & Retail Core, including:

- A. North of Victoria Square, mixed retail, leisure, commercial and residential uses will be supported, including a new north-east gateway development at the corner of St George's Road and Bridge Street.
- B. West of Le Mans Crescent, mixed leisure, commercial, civic, cultural and residential uses will be supported, including in refurbished and new development at Queen Street and Oxford Street.
- C. South of Victoria Square, mixed residential, leisure and commercial uses will be supported where it respects and renews heritage assets including at Mawdsley Street and Nelson Square, and repairs and infills the frontages of Great Moor Street and its junctions with Newport Street and Bradshawgate.

Reasons for Policy CB01

- 10.4 Central Bolton's Civic & Retail Core is the social and cultural focus of the borough and the heart of the designated Bolton Town Centre. It is highly accessible by road and by public transport services at Bolton Interchange and hosts a diverse mix of residential, retail, commercial, leisure and employment use. It is home to some of Bolton's foremost public buildings and institutions including Bolton Council, Bolton Central Library, Bolton Museum, Bolton History Centre, the Octagon Theatre and Bolton Combined Court Centre. It is the borough's primary retail centre, anchored by the Market Place shopping centre and Bolton Market, and has the greatest concentration of heritage assets in the borough, centred on the civic ensemble of Victoria Square, Cenotaph and the Town Hall.
- 10.5 Bolton Council's 2017 Bolton Town Centre Framework identified two major regeneration projects for the Civic & Retail Core: Cheadle Square and Crompton Place. Cheadle Square extends from Le Mans Crescent to Moor Lane and formerly accommodated the Town Centre bus station. This area has already been substantially transformed into a mixed-use residential neighbourhood. High-quality new townhouses and mid-rise apartment buildings have created a new urban street network fronting the refurbished Bolton Market, the new Elizabeth Park, and the first section of an east-west pedestrian route linking Victoria Square via Le Mans Crescent to Queen's Park. Remaining phases of development, including at Queen Street, are in preparation.
- 10.6 Crompton Place is Bolton's most prominent development site and the flagship project of the Council's regeneration strategy. Strategically located fronting Victoria Square and the Town Hall on one side and Bradshawgate on the other, development in this location has the potential to undo the severance imposed by the former shopping centre and drive the regeneration of the eastern half of the Town Centre. The Council acquired the then shopping centre in 2018 and the last occupiers vacated it in 2025. Planning permission for the demolition of the shopping centre and the creation of 'meanwhile use' projects was secured in August 2025, for completion in 2027. In

parallel and with support from the MHCLG Local Regeneration Fund, the Council and its development partners are preparing plans for comprehensive redevelopment of the site as a new mixed-use district that celebrates Bolton's heritage while anchoring its future as a premier city-regional destination.

- 10.7 Bolton Council is also a significant landowner in this area. As of 2026, its Invest in Bolton regeneration arm is actively marketing a range of sites for development in the area including the east side of Mawdsley Street and associated surface car park, the St Andrews Court complex off Nelson Square, and the Elizabeth House office building and associated surface car park at Back Spring Gardens.
- 10.8 The 2006 Building Bolton Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out useful contextual analysis and detailed design guidance for the Civic Core and Cultural, University & Transport Quarter character areas, and remains an invaluable resource for the development management process today. It also identifies important middle- and long-distance viewpoints across Central Bolton from which the landscape and townscape impact of major projects should be tested.
- 10.9 The character of the Civic & Retail Core is strongly shaped by its historic environment and wealth of heritage assets. At its heart lies the Town Hall conservation area with its exceptional municipal ensemble of Victoria Square with the Grade II* listed Bolton Town Hall and Cenotaph and the Grade II listed statuary, former Exchange, and Le Mans Crescent civic centre. To the south lies the Mawdsley Street/Nelson Square conservation area, with a further collection of municipal, educational and ecclesiastical buildings, public spaces and statuary. And to the north lies part of the Deansgate conservation area, with its collection of commercial and mercantile buildings and landmarks. Regeneration provides opportunities for conservation and enhancement of this rich and complex heritage environment as an integral part of the placemaking approach.
- 10.10 The Civic & Retail Core provides a network of formal parks and squares within a strong heritage setting. These range from the historic Victoria Square and Nelson Square to the contemporary Elizabeth Square and Cheadle Square, delivered as part of recent Town Centre regeneration projects. Queen's Park serves the area as neighbourhood-scale green space, however the active travel routes between the park and the Civic & Retail Core are fragmented, and the Town Centre ring road imposes considerable severance. Within the area there is currently limited tree canopy and high levels of impermeable surfaces. Together these factors limit the scope for urban cooling, surface water management, biodiversity and opportunities for everyday contact with nature. Road traffic noise exceeds 55 dB (Lden) in some locations, and there is high social vulnerability to climate-related risks including elevated heat exposure. The improvement of urban greening across the Civic & Retail Core is key to supporting Central Bolton as a retail and leisure destination, as a centre for employment, and as a residential neighbourhood.

Policy CB02: Central Bolton: North & East

CB02: CENTRAL BOLTON: NORTH & EAST

The North & East of Central Bolton is a mixed-use area with commercial, leisure, community and residential uses in a historic setting characterised by fine urban grain and continuity of certain street frontages. Development must strengthen the area's town centre and edge-of-centre roles, secure the comprehensive regeneration of its principal opportunity sites, and enhance its cohesive heritage environment.

Applies to all development within the North and East policy area as defined on the Policies Map.

USES

1. Development will be supported where it delivers an appropriate mix of commercial, leisure, community, employment and residential uses which strengthen the town centre and edge-of-centre functions of the area.
2. Ground floor uses fronting principal streets, including Bradshawgate, Churchgate, Deansgate and Newport Street, should maintain active frontages appropriate to their location. Residential development will be supported where it contributes to creating a vibrant mixed-use neighbourhood and does not undermine the vitality of the town centre.

URBAN DESIGN QUALITY

3. Development must contribute positively to the urban design quality of the North & East area and Central Bolton as a whole. Proposals must:
 - A. Reinforce the area's historic street pattern, fine urban grain and continuity of frontage.
 - B. Promote the re-naturalisation and enhancement of the River Croal by improving its setting, accessibility, biodiversity and contribution to the public realm and flood management.
 - C. Improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity between the area and key destinations including Queen's Park and the neighbourhoods north of Topp Way and east of St. Peter's Way.
 - D. Strengthen gateways into the town centre from the north and east, including at Church Wharf, crossings of St Peter's Way, and Trinity Gateway.
 - E. Deliver accessible green space and play space as part of new development, addressing existing deficits in accordance with Policies INF5 and INF6, particularly in those areas of greatest need.
 - F. Provide high-quality public realm and integrate urban greening and tree planting along key movement corridors, including active travel routes linking to the wider GI network.

HERITAGE ASSETS

4. Development must conserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, including the St George's, Churchgate and Silverwell Street/Wood Street Conservation Areas, together with the historic character of Churchgate, Deansgate and associated designated and non-designated heritage assets.
5. Development should seek to incorporate heritage assets within their designs, showcasing their textures, themes and typologies.

6. Development should respond positively to the area's industrial, commercial and ecclesiastical heritage and reinforce its distinctive townscape character.

TRINITY QUARTER & TRINITY GATEWAY

7. Trinity Quarter and Trinity Gateway are identified as priorities for comprehensive mixed-use regeneration. Development proposals affecting these areas must demonstrate how they achieve the following objectives:

- A. Deliver a comprehensive and coordinated form of development which makes efficient use of underused and previously developed land around Bolton Interchange, Trinity Street, Bridgeman Place and Bradshawgate.
- B. Establish a distinctive mixed-use development at Trinity Gateway incorporating residential, commercial, employment, leisure and other complementary town centre uses.
- C. Create active and continuous frontages to Bradshawgate and Trinity Street as the principal pedestrian routes between Trinity Quarter, Bolton Interchange and the Civic & Retail Core.
- D. Improve pedestrian and cycle connections between Trinity Quarter, Bradshawgate, the Civic & Retail Core, Bolton Interchange, the University, and adjoining neighbourhoods.
- E. Respond positively to the area's historic street pattern, industrial and commercial heritage, and surviving heritage assets, including the established grid of streets within Trinity Quarter.
- F. Deliver a scale, form and density of development which reflects the site's highly accessible gateway location. Taller buildings may be appropriate where they contribute positively to the town-centre skyline, provide a strong sense of arrival and demonstrate exceptional architectural and urban design quality, in accordance with Policy PQ3.
- G. Ensure that servicing, access and car parking are integrated into the development and do not dominate principal streets, pedestrian routes or the public realm.
- H. Provide accessible green space and high-quality public realm within the historic framework of streets and spaces, creating safe, legible and attractive connections between Trinity Quarter, Bolton Interchange and the Civic & Retail Core.
- I. Mitigate the impacts of noise and air quality associated with the St Peter's Way (A666) highway.

URBAN RENEWAL AND INFILL

8. Urban renewal and infill development will be supported where it continues, completes and extends long-term regeneration projects across the North & East of Central Bolton, including:

- A. In St Peter's, mixed-use development that conserves and enhances the historic character of the Churchgate and Silverwell Street/Wood Street Conservation Areas will be supported, including reuse of historic buildings, reinforcement of active frontages along Bradshawgate and Churchgate, and strengthening the area's role as a distinctive heritage quarter with a mix of well-designed commercial, leisure, community and residential uses.
- B. At Church Wharf, comprehensive mixed-use regeneration will be supported centring on a residential-led neighbourhood incorporating leisure, hotel, commercial, community and workspace uses, including enhancement of the riverside setting and key vistas, promoting biodiversity and strengthening this key gateway for east-west movement into the town centre.

- C. In Little Bolton, residential-led regeneration will be supported that conserves and enhances heritage assets including in St George's Conservation Area, providing a broad range of housing types alongside complementary commercial, leisure and employment uses.
- D. Along the Croal Valley, residential focused regeneration will be supported where it enhances the riverside setting. delivers a varied mix of housing, improves connections with Queen's Park and surrounding neighbourhoods, and provides high-quality green infrastructure enhancing biodiversity and reducing flood risk.

Reasons for Policy CB02

- 10.11 The North & East area forms a transition between Bolton's Civic & Retail Core and the surrounding neighbourhoods. It contains a diverse mix of residential, commercial, leisure, community and employment use, together with major transport infrastructure and several of the Town Centre's principal regeneration opportunities. The area includes established streets that retain their scale and continuity, such as Bradshawgate, Churchgate, Deansgate and Newport Street, as well as larger areas of underused land where the historic urban structure became fragmented over time and presents opportunities for consolidation and development. Bolton Council's 2017 Bolton Town Centre Framework recognises Trinity Gateway, Trinity Quarter, Church Wharf and Croal Valley as major intervention areas capable of creating new destinations in addition to the Town Centre core.
- 10.12 Trinity Gateway is a prime brownfield site located adjacent to Bolton Interchange at the junction of Trinity Street and Bradshawgate and is identified as one of the most significant intervention areas in the Town Centre masterplan. Following the withdrawal of previous development partners in early 2025, the site is currently being held by Bolton Council as a strategic asset for future high-density regeneration and is a key priority for the Council's regeneration programme. The vision for the site is to capitalise on its immediate proximity to the transport interchange, with future proposals expected to focus on high-quality residential and commercial space that creates a sense of arrival into the Town Centre.
- 10.13 Trinity Quarter extends from Bradshawgate eastwards to St Peter's Way in a network of streets characterised by their industrial heritage. There are a mix of continuing employment uses and residential and mixed-use conversions across the quarter, and several large vacant brownfield sites. As a highly accessible location with a strong heritage character convenient to the Town Centre, the area lends itself to a variety of potential land uses including residential, business and leisure. Bolton Council's 2009 Merchants Quarter Masterplan SPD established principles for the transformation of the area into a lively and cohesive new district, and the 2022 Bolton Town Centre Framework Trinity Update set out a delivery approach. Both remain useful resources informing the development management process. In particular, Trinity Quarter's frontage to Bradshawgate lies within the designated Town Centre and the continuity of active frontage and enclosure along this important approach to the Civic and Retail Core is critical.
- 10.14 At Church Wharf, a major residential-led mixed use development received planning permission in October 2025, guided by the 2018 Church Wharf SPD, and its phased delivery is expected during the first phase of the Local Plan. Ongoing projects at Central Street and Bark Street are guided by the 2020 Croal Valley SPD and demonstrate the Council's commitment to support and delivery of Town Centre regeneration through high-quality residential-led development.

- 10.15 Bolton Council is a significant landowner in this area. As of 2026, its Invest in Bolton regeneration arm is promoting a range of sites for development in the area including extensive areas of Trinity Gateway and Trinity Quarter, St Helena surface car park, the former ICON site at the junction of Higher Bridge Street and St. George's Road, and the former Bow Street multistorey car park.
- 10.16 Policy CB02 seeks to bring these all these areas together within a single character-based framework so that individual proposals contribute to the wider personality, regeneration, connectivity and identity of the North & East area. A broad mix of uses is necessary to sustain high levels of activity throughout the day and evening and to support the continuing growth of Central Bolton as a place to live, work, visit and enjoy time. The 2017 Bolton Town Centre Framework and 2022 Trinity Update identify opportunities for residential, commercial, leisure, education and employment growth and recognises that additional Town Centre housing is important to long-term vitality and viability; this sentiment is carried throughout this policy. The 2006 Building Bolton Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) also sets out useful contextual analysis and detailed design guidance for North & East of Central Bolton in the St Helena, Little Bolton, Church Wharf, St. Peter's, and Shifnall Street/Bridgeman Place character areas. This document remains an invaluable resource for the development management process today and identifies important middle- and long-distance viewpoints across Central Bolton from which the landscape and townscape impacts of major projects should be tested.
- 10.17 The appropriate mix will vary across the policy area, given the varying typologies and character of each location. Commercial, leisure, food and drink and community uses will be particularly important along principal streets in the designated Town Centre and around transport and regeneration hubs. Residential development can help bring underused land and buildings back into productive use, increase activity and support local businesses. It must, however, be designed and centred around a genuine mixed-use neighbourhood and should not result in empty inactive ground floors or interrupt the continuity of important commercial and pedestrian routes.
- 10.18 There are significant gaps in provision of accessible green space across the North and East of Central Bolton, particularly in terms of incidental, doorstep and local green spaces in the areas east of Bradshawgate. Queen's Park serves the area as neighbourhood-scale green space, however, the active travel routes between the park and the Town Centre are fragmented, and the Town Centre ring road imposes considerable severance. Across the North and East area, there is little soft landscaping, limited tree canopy and high levels of impermeable surfaces. Together these factors limit the scope for urban cooling, surface water management, biodiversity and opportunities for everyday contact with nature. Furthermore, road traffic noise exceeds 55 dB (Lden) in some locations and 65 dB (Lden) around the junction of Moor Lane and Trinity Street. There is also high social vulnerability to climate-related risks including elevated heat exposure; and there are areas of fluvial flood risk along the River Croal as well as areas of surface water flood risk. The improvement of urban greening across this area and the provision of accessible green space within new development are key to supporting Central Bolton as a retail and leisure destination, as a centre for employment, and as a residential neighbourhood.

Policy CB03: Central Bolton: South & West

CB03: CENTRAL BOLTON: SOUTH & WEST

The South & West of Central Bolton is a mixed-use area with uses for knowledge economy, education and commercial uses anchored by the University of Greater Manchester, Queen's Park, Bolton Interchange and the town centre. Development must strengthen its town centre and edge-of-centre roles, intensify economic and education activity, consolidate its fragmented character, and improve connections between the town centre and the surrounding Inner Bolton neighbourhoods.

Applies to all development within the South and West policy area as defined on the Policies Map.

USES

1. Development will be supported where it delivers an appropriate mix of uses which strengthen the town centre and edge-of-centre functions of the area. Ground floor uses fronting principal streets including Newport Street, Great Moor Street and Trinity Street should maintain active frontages appropriate to their location. Residential development will be supported where it contributes to creating a vibrant mixed-use neighbourhood and does not undermine the vitality of the town centre.

URBAN DESIGN QUALITY

2. Development must contribute positively to the urban design quality of the South & West area and Central Bolton as a whole. Proposals must:
- A. Repair the urban fabric to provide continuity of enclosure and frontage to streets.
 - B. Enhance the arrival experience in and around the south entrance to Bolton Station.
 - C. Improve the quality and safety of pedestrian and cycle connectivity between key destinations including the town centre, Queen's Park and the residential and mixed-use neighbourhoods surrounding Central Bolton to the south and west.
 - D. Strengthen gateways into the town centre from the south and west, including at the junction of Trinity Street and Moor Lane and approaches along Newport Street, Deane Road and Spa Road.
 - E. Deliver accessible green space and play space as part of new development, addressing existing deficits in accordance with Policies INF5 and INF6, particularly in those areas of greatest need.
 - F. Provide high-quality public realm and integrate urban greening and tree planting along key movement corridors, including active travel routes linking to the wider GI network.

URBAN RENEWAL AND INFILL

3. Mixed-use urban renewal and infill development will be supported where it continues, completes and extends long term development projects across the South & West of Central Bolton, including:
- A. Between Queen's Park and Moor Lane, residential-led development will be supported where it provides mid-rise frontage to Spa Road and Moor Lane, enhances active travel routes from the town centre to Queen's Park, respects heritage assets and integrates with existing residential development.

- B. Across the University Quarter centred on Deane Road, education and innovation-led uses will be supported where they reinforce and extend existing uses, contribute to the town centre gateway role of this location, and enhance active travel routes between the town centre, Queen's Park and neighbourhoods to the east and south.
- C. Across the Station Quarter centred on the entrance to Bolton Station, mixed uses will be supported where they contribute to the town centre gateway role of this location, extend and enhance Bolton's established student village, and improve active travel routes between the town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods to the south.

Reasons for Policy CB03

- 10.19 Central Bolton's South & West area is anchored by the university, Queen's Park, Town Centre and train station. It is a long-term opportunity area for regeneration, with many vacant or under-used sites. Queen's Park is a registered park and garden, and its associated conservation area extends into the north of area, however it is fronted by vacant brownfield sites, and walking routes to the Town Centre and university quarter are indirect and fragmented. Similarly, while the education campus is growing, it is separated from the Town Centre and train station by an extended area of road and rail infrastructure, retail and leisure big box development and large areas of surface car parking, which combine to create an environment that is hostile to walking and cycling. By consolidating development across this area to intensify its land uses, repair its fragmented character, improve its setting and active travel routes, Central Bolton can connect and realise the synergies between its different assets.
- 10.20 Bolton Council's 2017 Bolton Town Centre Framework did not specifically identify this area for intervention; however, the 2006 Building Bolton Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) includes a character appraisal of the Cultural, University and Transport Quarter which overlaps part of the area and sets out useful contextual analysis and detailed design guidance. This document remains an invaluable resource for the development management process today and identifies important middle- and long-distance viewpoints across Central Bolton from which the landscape and townscape impacts of major projects should be tested.
- 10.21 As of 2026, the Invest in Bolton regeneration arm is promoting a range of sites for development in the area, including the Westpoint and Spa Road Gas Works sites, land at Trinity Way encompassing Morrisons, the Grosvenor Casino and associated surface car parks, and land at Bridgeman Street/Thynne Street.
- 10.22 There are significant gaps in provision of accessible green space across the South and West of Central Bolton, particularly in terms of incidental, doorstep and local green spaces. Queen's Park serves the area as neighbourhood-scale green space, however the active travel routes to the park are highly fragmented, and the railway and Town Centre ring road impose considerable severance on the movement network in this area. Across the whole area, there is little soft landscaping, limited tree canopy and very high levels of impermeable surfaces. Together these factors limit the scope for urban cooling, surface water management, biodiversity and opportunities for everyday contact with nature. Furthermore, road traffic noise exceeds 55 dB (Lden) in some locations and 65 dB (Lden) around the junction of Moor Lane and Trinity Street. The improvement of urban greening across this area and the provision of accessible green space within new development are key to supporting Central Bolton as a retail and leisure destination, as a centre for employment, and as a residential neighbourhood.

Policy CB04: Character-Based Policies outside Central Bolton

CB04: CHARACTER-BASED POLICIES OUTSIDE CENTRAL BOLTON

Outside Central Bolton, the borough's urban areas, settlements and open lands vary significantly in the character of their built environment and landscape setting. Development must respect and respond to the character of its surroundings.

INNER BOLTON AND FARNWORTH

Applies to all development in Inner Bolton and Farnworth as defined on the Policies Map.

1. Development in Inner Bolton and Farnworth must:

- A. Conserve and enhance the character of the area's historic townscape, landscape setting, conservation areas, and heritage assets and their settings.
- B. Reinforce and extend the established grid-iron layout of residential streets, which are characterised by a strong sense of enclosure, and continuous terrace frontages alternating with end-of-terrace gables.
- C. Have regard to the characteristic massing and materials in these areas, with a predominance of two-storey, red brick, slate-roofed terraced housing interspersed with historic mill buildings up to seven storeys with large floorplates, and articulated brick facades with repetitive patterns of fenestration and straight parapets.

BRIGHTMET, LITTLE LEVER, DARCY LEVER AND KEARSLEY

Applies to all development in Brightmet, Little Lever, Darcy Lever and Kearsley as defined on the Policies Map.

2. Development in Brightmet, Little Lever, Darcy Lever and Kearsley must:

- A. Conserve and enhance the character of the area's historic townscape, landscape setting, conservation areas, and heritage assets and their settings.
- B. Respect the pattern and hierarchy of open space integrated in the 'Garden City' type housing layouts characteristic of some of these areas and extend and enhance it in new development in accordance with Policy INF5.

HULTON AND WESTHOUGHTON

Applies to all development in Hulton and Westhoughton as defined on the Policies Map.

3. Development in Hulton & Westhoughton must:

- A. Conserve and enhance the character of the area's historic townscape, landscape setting, conservation areas, and heritage assets and their settings.

HORWICH AND BLACKROD

Applies to all development in Horwich and Blackrod as defined on the Policies Map.

4. Development in Horwich & Blackrod must:

- A. Conserve and enhance the character of the area's historic townscape, landscape setting, conservation areas, and heritage assets and their settings.

- B. Respect historic street patterns, grain, form and predominant architectural styles and make use of locally distinctive stone and other materials.
- C. Ensure regard is had to the character of farm complexes, folds, vernacular cottages and the elevated aspect across open landscape in North and West of the borough.
- D. Continue to support the regeneration of the former Horwich Loco Works as the residential and mixed-use Rivington Chase development, as a key anchor in the NorthFold growth location.
- E. Support Middlebrook's transition from a cluster of retail, leisure and employment uses to an integrated mixed-use place with its own distinctive character, and home to a residential community supported by an appropriate range of local facilities and amenities.
- F. Accord with the provisions of the Blackrod Neighbourhood Plan.

HEATON, LOSTOCK AND SMITHILLS

Applies to all development in Heaton, Lostock and Smithills as defined on the Policies Map.

5. Development in Heaton, Lostock & Smithills must:
- A. Conserve and enhance the character of the area's historic townscape, landscape setting, conservation areas, and heritage assets and their settings.
 - B. Ensure particular regard to the overall density, plot sizes, massing and materials of the residential surroundings.
 - C. Reinforce the landscape separation between Heaton and Ladybridge along the Middle Brook incised urban fringe valley.
 - D. Ensure regard is had to the character of farm complexes, folds, vernacular cottages and the elevated aspect across the open landscape in the north of the borough.

ASTLEY BRIDGE, BROMLEY CROSS AND BRADSHAW

Applies to all development in Astley Bridge, Bromley Cross and Bradshaw as defined on the Policies Map.

6. Development in Astley Bridge, Bromley Cross & Bradshaw must:
- A. Conserve and enhance the character of the area's historic townscape, landscape setting, conservation areas, and heritage assets and their settings.
 - B. Ensure regard is had to the character of farm complexes, folds, vernacular cottages and the elevated aspect across the open landscape in the north of the borough.

Reasons for Policy CB04

- 10.23 Farnworth is contiguous with Inner Bolton and is comparable in setting, infrastructure, land uses and heritage. It has the second-largest town centre in the borough and has a strong municipal identity in its own right, centred on Farnworth Park, a registered park and garden. Together with the neighbourhoods of Inner Bolton – Great Lever, Deane, Queen's Park, Halliwell, and Tonge – it forms an extended urban area of largely pre-1919 development. Residential streets are set out in grid-iron layouts and characterised by a strong sense of enclosure, with continuous two-storey terrace frontages alternating with end-of-terrace gables. Construction is predominantly in red brick and with slate roofs. Interspersed with the residential streets are taller historic

mill buildings, often up to six and seven storeys with large floorplates and adjoining clusters of outbuildings. Their design is characterised by articulated facades with repetitive patterns of fenestration and straight parapets. This consistency of materials and layout combined with sudden changes in scale is characteristic of many Inner Bolton and Farnworth areas. The open landscapes to the east are characterised as incised urban fringe valleys along Eagley and Bradshaw Brooks and the Rivers Irwell and Croal, and to the south, from east to west, as urban fringe farmland, reclaimed land and wetlands, and historic parks and wooded estate farmland.

- 10.24 Brightmet, Little Lever, Darcy Lever and Kearsley are predominantly residential neighbourhoods in the east and south of the borough. The Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal and the Firwood Fold and Ringley Fold conservation areas are a focus for heritage assets. Elsewhere development is largely from the early and mid-twentieth century, much of the housing is set out in extensive 'Garden City' type layouts. With short terraces and semi-detached houses set out in curved avenues and cul-de-sacs, these layouts integrate a hierarchy of local and incidental open space and include parts of the incised river valleys that characterise the landform of the area, some of which are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserves. The open landscapes to the east are characterised as Pennine foothills and urban fringe farmland; to the south, as Clifton Moss mosslands and lowland farmland; and to the west as incised urban fringe river valleys along Eagley and Bradshaw Brooks and the Rivers Irwell and Croal.
- 10.25 Hulton and Westhoughton comprise a core pre-1919 settlement surrounded by suburban residential development largely from the mid-twentieth century onwards. Westhoughton Town Centre and its conservation area, together with the Chequerbent embankment scheduled monument and Hulton Park registered park and garden, are a focus for heritage assets in the area. The open landscapes to the east are characterised as reclaimed land and wetlands; to the south and west as urban fringe farmland; and to the north as Red Moss and Chew Moor mosslands and lowland farmland.
- 10.26 Horwich and Blackrod are separate settlements in the western part of the borough. Horwich's municipal, mercantile and industrial heritage is focused around Horwich Town Centre and the associated conservation area, the Wallsuches Conservation Area, and the Horwich Locomotive Works Conservation Area. There are also extensive clusters of mineworking heritage assets in the upland areas. There are extensive housing areas dating from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries laid out on either side of the incised river valleys of River Douglas and Pearl Brook. Regeneration of the former Horwich Locomotive Works is underway and guided by the 2012 Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Middlebrook is the largest out-of-centre retail and leisure location in the borough and is expected to evolve over the course of the plan period to become a more integrated mixed-use place. Blackrod's agricultural and industrial heritage includes the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and overlays earlier traces of settlement, including the moated site at Arley Hall, which is a scheduled monument. Development here is guided by the Blackrod Neighbourhood Plan. The open landscapes around Blackrod are characterised as urban fringe farmland; between the M61 and Horwich as the Red Moss and Chew Moor mosslands and lowland farmland; and to the north the Pennine foothills and open moorlands and enclosed upland fringes.
- 10.27 Heaton, Lostock and Smithills are predominantly residential neighbourhoods extending from Inner Bolton to the open lands of the West Pennine Moors. Their manorial, industrial and residential heritage is focused around the conservation areas of Chorley New Road and Barrow Bridge, and Smithills Hall registered park and garden. There are also extensive clusters of mineworking and agricultural heritage

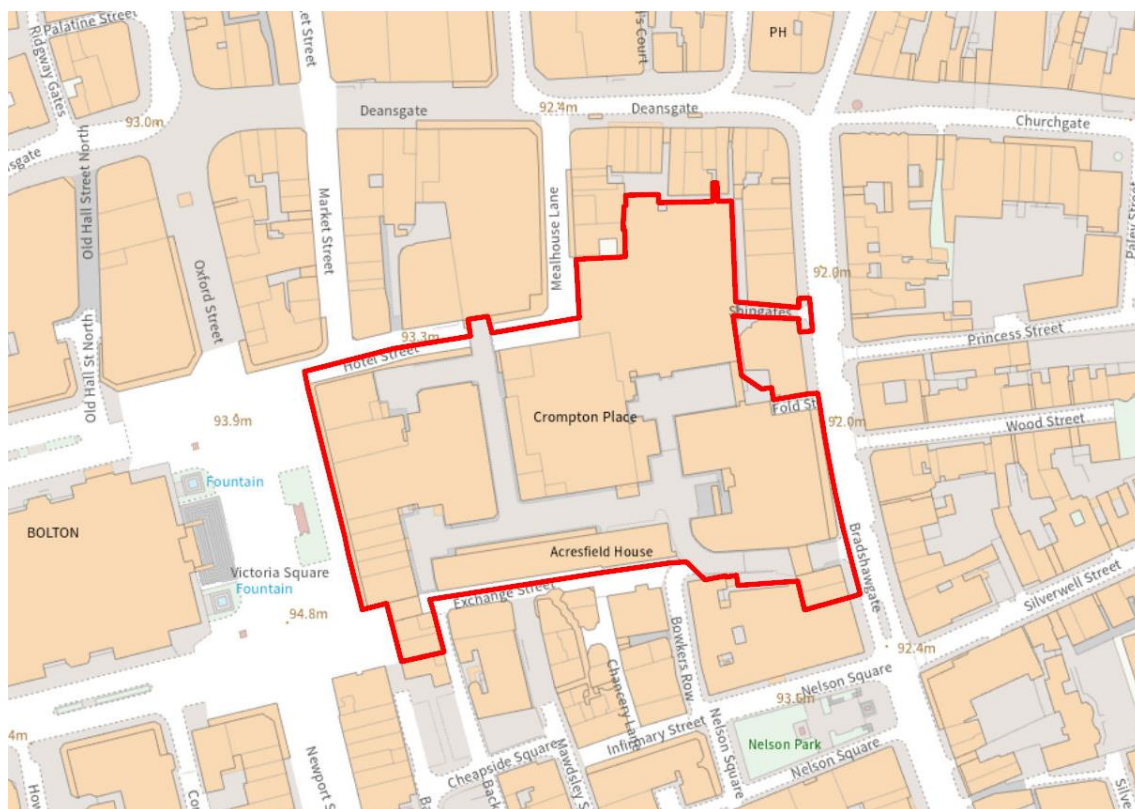
assets in the upland areas. These neighbourhoods are of low development density and strong landscape character. The open landscapes to the east are characterised as Pennine foothills; to the north as open moorlands and enclosed upland fringes; and to the south as the Middle Brook incised urban fringe valley.

- 10.28 Astley Bridge, Bromley Cross and Bradshaw are distinct upland neighbourhoods, each with a core pre-1919 settlement surrounded by suburban residential development largely from the mid-twentieth century onwards. Its village and industrial heritage are focused on the Egerton, Dunscar Fold and Eagley Bank conservation areas, with a cluster of industrial heritage assets in the Eagley Brook valley at Deakins Mill and historic farmsteads in the upland areas. The open landscapes to the north-west and north-east are characterised as open moorlands and enclosed upland fringes and are traversed by the Eagley and Bradshaw Brook incised urban fringe valleys, with Pennine foothills to the east.
- 10.29 Further detail on landscape character and sensitivity is set out in the 2018 Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment produced for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).

SITE ALLOCATION POLICIES

Policy BSA01: Crompton Place

BSA01 CROMPTON PLACE



1. Acceptable uses and amount of development

The site is allocated as a strategic mixed-use town centre development, comprising a mix of:

- A. Residential development of minimum 340 units with a housing mix in accordance with Policy HS2, and of inclusive and high-quality design standards in accordance with Policies HS3 and HS4, respectively. Policy will be applied flexibly in recognition that this location is not well suited to 4-bedroom homes. There is no set affordable housing requirement in Central Bolton.
- B. Around 10,500 sqm of office development.
- C. Other commercial, business and service use compatible with this prominent town centre location and with the residential development proposed, and continuing meanwhile uses and temporary activation of open spaces during the phased process of development.

2. Design and placemaking response to site	A. Achieve a minimum net residential development density of 120 dwellings per hectare, in accordance with Policy PQ3. B. Accord with parameters of scale, quantum, massing, servicing and phasing that have been approved by the Local Planning authority, in delivering development in a co-ordinated approach across the site. C. Maintain the integrity and identity of Victoria Square as the town's principal public space and setting for heritage assets in the Town Hall Conservation Area, including as part of any temporary use of the site. D. Relate the scale and design of the development to the context and character of each of the surrounding streets and respective conservation areas and avoid harm to heritage assets. E. Create a new street-based layout with active frontage and high-quality public realm, crossing the site east-west from Bradshawgate to Victoria Square and north-south from Exchange Street to Hotel Street. F. Enhance the character and legibility of the urban setting in general, including from key views across Central Bolton, and of the skyline of the town centre as a whole, in accordance with Policy PQ3. G. Support active travel for residents and visitors, providing secure cycle storage, shared vehicle use, and low-car or zero-car development in compliance with the parking standard set out in Policy INF2. H. Integrate the entry/exit of structured car parking and/or service yard to minimise adverse impacts on pedestrian and cycle movement, the continuity of active frontage, and the street scene in general. I. Conduct a heritage impact assessment of the development and demonstrate where their conservation and enhancement can be integrated in the development, including through improved access and understanding.
3. Site-specific requirements and infrastructure	A. Open Space • Create a new network of streets with high-quality public realm. B. Transport • Provide secure cycle storage and shared vehicle use and achieve low- or zero-car development.
4. Delivery and coordination	A. Evidence will be provided that adequate capacity exists in the water supply, wastewater, electricity, gas, high speed fibre and telecommunications networks needed to serve the development, or setting out the reinforcement required and how it will be secured in agreement with the relevant statutory undertaker.

Reasons for Policy BSA01

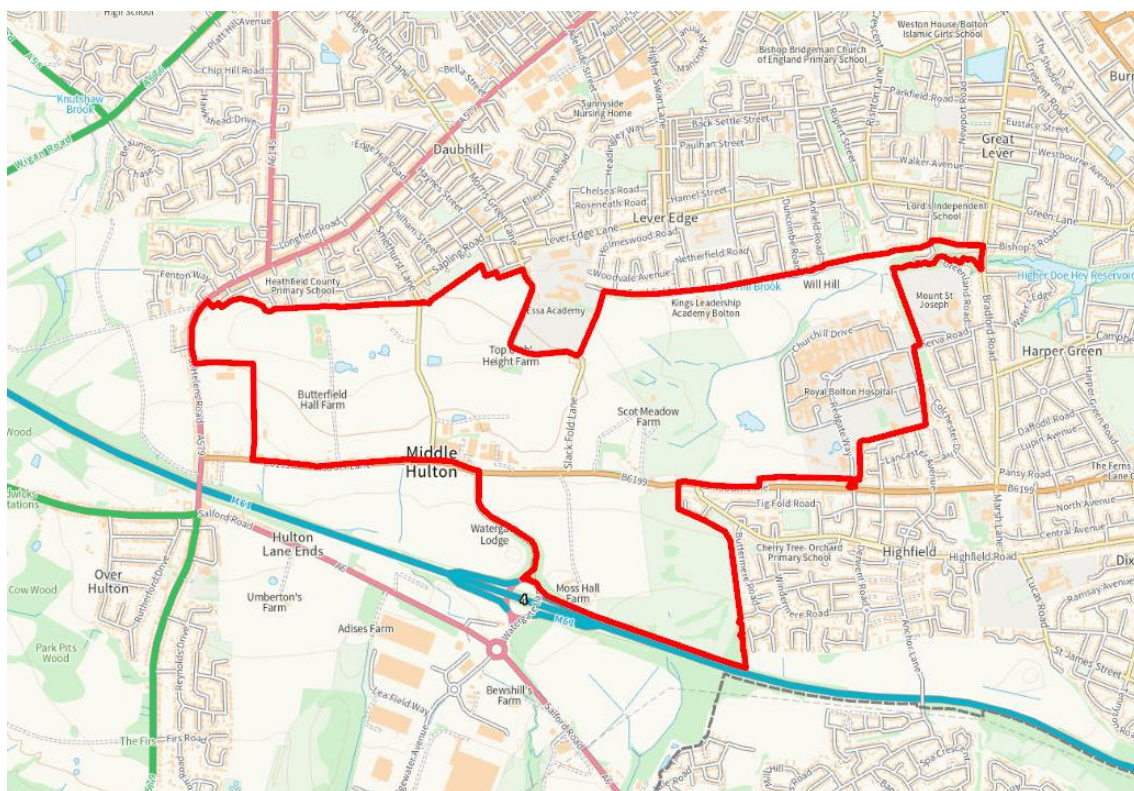
- 10.30 Crompton Place is Bolton's most prominent development site and the flagship project of the Council's regeneration strategy. Town centres across the country are working hard to attract footfall and patronage in response to changing patterns of consumer behaviour driven by social media, online shopping and out-of-town retail parks. Councils are responding to this challenge by supporting a wider range of leisure and community uses, improving the setting of streets and public spaces and the public events hosted there, and making the town centre a more attractive place to live.
- 10.31 The redevelopment of Crompton Place offers a pivotal opportunity to progress these measures in an integrated way. The Council acquired the site in 2018, and the last occupiers vacated it in 2025. Strategically located fronting Victoria Square and the Town Hall on one side and Bradshawgate on the other, development in this location can undo the severance imposed by the former shopping centre and help drive the regeneration of the eastern half of the town centre. It can replace the internalised layout of the former shopping centre with a network of streets with active frontage, reconnecting the town's principal thoroughfares of Bradshawgate and Oxford Street-Newport Street, and knitting back together the urban fabric between Exchange Street and Hotel Street. Its scale can provide a new commercial and leisure anchor as a counterpoint to the civic anchor of the Town Hall and Civic Centre and the retail anchors of Market Place Shopping Centre and Bolton Market. This mix, together with high density residential uses, can bring life and activity to the heart of the town centre, animating its streets and spaces from east to west, from daytime to the evening, and from weekdays to the weekend. Affordable housing is encouraged but there is no set affordable housing requirement in the Central Bolton Policy Area. The reason for this is set out in Policy HS1 and is intended to support mechanisms to attract private investment and accelerate transformation.
- 10.32 The design quality of redevelopment at Crompton Place must also rise to the strategic importance of this location. To the west, the historic municipal ensemble of Victoria Square, the Cenotaph and the Town Hall signals a level of civic ambition which has yet to be matched by commercial development in the town centre. Redevelopment offers the opportunity to complement the grandeur of these exceptional heritage assets without competing with them, while reinforcing the setting and supporting the renewal of the surrounding town centre conservation areas and their respective designated and non-designated heritage assets. To the north, though Deansgate Conservation Area is centred on the commercial frontage of Deansgate itself, the entrance to the former Bolton Evening News office on Hotel Street is an important link to the town's municipal heritage, and the Grade II listed former Yates Wine Lodge is a legacy of the grandeur of the town's social and mercantile heritage. To the east, the opposite side of Bradshawgate lies within the Churchgate and Silverwell Street/Wood Street Conservation Areas and is characterised by mercantile buildings of narrower frontage of more modest height. And to the south, the Mawdsley Street/Nelson Square Conservation Area is fronted by the municipal scale of the Grade II listed Mawdsley Hall. Each side of the Crompton Place site presents a distinct heritage context, to which development must respond with its own character and without pastiche or harm to heritage assets.
- 10.33 The 2005 Building Bolton Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out useful contextual analysis and detailed design guidance for the town centre's different

character areas and remains an invaluable resource for the development management process today. It also identifies important middle- and long-distance viewpoints across Central Bolton from which the landscape and townscape impacts of major projects should be tested.

- 10.34 In advance of the redevelopment process proper, a direct and secure pedestrian route is planned to link Victoria Square and Bradshawgate, and a new space for public performances, events, pop-up markets will be created on the frontage to the square. Planning permission for the demolition of the former shopping centre and the creation of these interim projects was secured in August 2025, for completion in 2027. In parallel and with support from the MHCLG Local Regeneration Fund, the Council and its development partners are preparing plans for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site as a new mixed-use district that celebrates Bolton's heritage while anchoring its future as a premier city-regional destination.

Policy BSA02: Health Innovation Bolton

BSA02 HEALTH INNOVATION BOLTON



1. Acceptable uses and amount of development

- A. The site is allocated as a strategic mixed-use health innovation district. Health innovation relates to land uses, buildings, and activities involved in researching, developing, testing, manufacturing and commercialising new healthcare technologies, medicines, medical devices, diagnostics, digital health solutions and healthcare services.
- B. The site will comprise the following mix of uses:
 - i. Around 200,000 sqm of mixed-use space for employment-led, health innovation and health and community uses. This will include around 39,000 sqm of health innovation office or research and development floorspace, around 41,000 sqm of health innovation industrial and warehousing floorspace and around 120,000 sqm of other health innovation and health and community floorspace.
 - ii. Expanded health uses allied to the Royal Bolton Hospital, where funding allows. This will be aimed to support improvements to the Hospital estate to make it more efficient and more user friendly and to enable the hospital to better support education, research and commercial related investments.
 - iii. University teaching, research and ancillary space, which is related to healthcare and supports the health innovation

	cluster. University development unrelated to Health Innovation will not be permitted. iv. 2,225 homes of which 1,895 are expected to be delivered over the life of the Plan. v. The housing mix will include at least 35% affordable housing and specialist housing needs in accordance with Policy HS2 and HS3, respectively. Student accommodation is excluded as the spatial strategy directs it to Bolton Town Centre. vi. A mixed-use local centre, scaled to serve the Health Innovation Bolton development and its residents only, and ancillary to it, in a suitable, sustainable and accessible location within the site. The location and extent of the local centre will be defined in the masterplan and development framework. C. Community facilities providing essential services for local people, comprising a new primary school and health facilities. D. Planning applications for commercial uses must be accompanied by a Compliance Statement which demonstrates how the proposed occupier operates within the health and innovation sector and how the occupier will collaborate with, support and enhance the wider health innovation ecosystem of Health Innovation Bolton. E. Development of offices will not be permitted unless they directly support a health innovation operator. F. Development of industrial uses unrelated to health innovation will not be permitted. G. Development of warehousing use will not be permitted unless entirely ancillary to a health innovation manufacturer located within the site.
2. Design and placemaking response to site	A. Accord with a comprehensive masterplan and phasing strategy, that has been approved by Bolton Council before planning applications are submitted. The masterplan will set out how development will be delivered in a co-ordinated and phased way across the allocation area including measures to ensure innovation and employment uses are built out in tandem with the housing and will include a monitoring framework setting out indicators and milestones including triggers necessitating a review and update of the masterplan. B. Maintain and reinforce the continuity of the Green Belt and the physical separation between settlements and make provision for compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the retained Green Belt in the vicinity of the site in accordance with Policy SP7. C. Achieve a minimum net residential development density of 35 dwellings per hectare, in accordance with Policy PQ3, with potential to achieve higher development densities at the local centre, hospital and in other mixed-use areas. D. Deliver a new road forming a Primary Movement Corridor, which provides access across the site, is designed to an

adoptable standard, is capable of carrying bus services and has good provision for active travel, paratransit and/or new modes of transport as they become available.

- E. Ensure parking capacity, including hospital and disabled parking, is delivered alongside new development sufficient to meet operational needs, while making efficient use of land in accordance with Policy INF2. Where appropriate, multi-storey parking should be provided to maximise parking capacity, and provision for disabled motorists must be made in accordance with Policy INF2.
- F. Create safe and direct walking and cycling routes to the local centre, local services and amenities across the site and beyond, and provide multi-modal mobility hubs within the development.
- G. Strengthen and extend the Public Right-of-Way network, improving off-road and leisure walking and cycling connections within the site and to surrounding areas, including routes across the M61 and links to the wider green infrastructure network.
- H. Where possible retain and enhance existing woodland and mature trees and maximise connectivity with the green infrastructure network within and beyond the site and otherwise accord with Policy ENV4.
- I. Create a blue-green infrastructure network aligning with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and including a multifunctional green infrastructure corridor from Doe Hey Brook to Cutacre Country Park.
- J. Provide an integrated hierarchy of open space and food-growing space onsite in accordance with policy INF5, and new outdoor play space onsite in accordance with policies INF6.
- K. Use structural landscaping and bunding as the primary means of mitigating noise, air quality and visual impacts associated with the M61 motorway, supplemented by noise attenuation fencing only where necessary.
- L. Integrate sustainable drainage (SuDS) into the landscape design strategy, creating multifunctional green spaces and reinforcing the connectivity of blue and green infrastructure in accordance with the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment.
- M. Secure the boundaries of neighbouring residential development and locate new green spaces convenient to access points from neighbouring residential development.
- N. Provide natural surveillance and, where achievable, active frontage to all open spaces, streets, paths and other routes through the site, including Public Rights-of-Way, in accordance with Policy PQ1.
- O. Conduct and implement a heritage impact assessment and demonstrate where the conservation of heritage assets can be integrated in the development, including through improved access and understanding.

	P. Conduct a coal mining risk assessment of the site and the development proposals. Q. Consider the extraction of any viable mineral resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas, in accordance with policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan (or relevant policies in subsequent minerals plans). R. All non-residential development over 1,000 sqm at Health Innovation Bolton must comply with Policy EC3(1), and all development over 2,000 sqm must comply with Policy EC3(2), in relation to Construction Employment and Skills Plans. S. Comply with the requirements in Policy EC3 Criteria 3 in relation to Operational Employment and Skills Plans. The thresholds set out in EC3 apply for office, research and development, industrial and warehousing uses. For other health innovation floorspace a threshold of 500 sqm or more applies, and for health and community use a threshold of 2,000 sqm or more applies. T. Maximise opportunities for local residents to acquire the technical, digital, scientific, professional and other skills required by businesses operating within HIB. U. The masterplan and development framework should set out standards and principles outlining how criteria R and S will be met.
3. Site-specific requirements and infrastructure	A. Masterplan - Secure the approval of Bolton Council for a comprehensive masterplan and phasing strategy, in advance of the submission of a planning application for the site. B. Open Space - Provide an integrated hierarchy of open space, outdoor play space and food-growing space. C. Community Facilities - Deliver a Local Centre and community facility, open by the completion of 1000 units or as specified in the masterplan. - Delivery of health facilities onsite and where necessary financial contributions to facilities that support the development - Deliver a two-form entry primary school, with the timing to be agreed formally by decision of the Council through the masterplan. D. Transport - Create safe and direct walking and cycling routes to local services and amenities. - Extend and improve the Public Rights-of-Way and cycle networks.

	• Make a contribution towards 15-minute frequency bus service to Central Bolton, including by extending the existing service 501 into the new development. • Deliver a Primary Movement Corridor providing access across the site, capable of carrying bus services, and with provision for active travel. E. Utilities • Deliver statutory reinforcements and/or upgrades to water, water waste, electricity and digital infrastructure. • Fully explore the deliverability and practicality of providing a district heating/cooling network and demonstrate feasibility has been assessed through the masterplan or supporting documents, in accordance with Policy ENV1. F. Flood Risk • Develop and implement a site-wide drainage strategy with nature-based solutions.
4. Delivery and coordination	A. Evidence will be provided that adequate capacity exists in the water supply, wastewater, electricity, gas, high speed fibre and telecommunications networks needed to serve the development or set out the reinforcement required and how it will be secured in agreement with the relevant statutory undertaker. B. Flood risk associated with this site must be addressed as follows: • A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment must be carried out in line with the latest versions of the NPPF, FRCC-PPG, EA online guidance, national and local SuDS policy and guidelines, and this Local Plan. • The Flood Risk Assessment should undertake a capacity and condition assessment of the culvert beneath Greenland Road to the east of the site. • The Flood Risk Assessment should investigate groundwater levels through percolation testing in both wet and dry weather conditions across the site. • Throughout the Flood Risk Assessment process, consultation must be carried out with the Local Planning authority, the lead local flood authority, emergency planning officers, Environment Agency, United Utilities, highways authorities, and emergency services. C. The site will be brought forward comprehensively, in line with the masterplan and development framework, with coordination demonstrated across any ownership boundaries.
5. Housing Trajectory Plan phase	Years 1 to 5 : 295 homes Years 6 to 10 : 950 homes Years 11 to 15: 650 homes

Reasons for Policy BSA02

- 10.35 Health Innovation Bolton (HIB) is Bolton's largest single development site and a catalyst project within the NorthFold growth location, the strategic growth corridor that spans Bolton and Wigan HIB responds to a clearly evidenced need for additional health innovation, research and employment space in the city-region, providing the scale and flexibility necessary to respond to these demands over the plan period and beyond.
- 10.36 Health Innovation Bolton is a commitment to make health, opportunity, innovation and place the organising principles for growth in Bolton and the wider NorthFold growth location. It responds to deep-seated challenges of health inequality, deprivation, infrastructure constraint and economic underperformance by proposing a long-term, partner-led programme of investment around Royal Bolton Hospital, the University of Greater Manchester Medical School, new homes, health-led employment, green infrastructure and sustainable travel.
- 10.37 HIB will be a place where healthcare, research, education, employment, housing, mobility, green infrastructure and community well-being reinforce one another. It is not simply a development planned around a hospital and medical school; it will be a health innovation district that can help Bolton retain value, attract investment, grow skills, improve outcomes and give neighbouring communities better access to opportunity.
- 10.38 The allocation supports the operation and modernisation of the Royal Bolton Hospital and its co-location with existing and further future healthcare facilities, teaching and research functions, and innovation space and community healthcare services, as well as improving access through the proposed transport infrastructure. By integrating healthcare services, research, education, housing, active travel infrastructure, public transport and green infrastructure, HIB will support a preventative approach to health and well-being through healthier lifestyles and improved quality of life for residents and surrounding communities.
- 10.39 The allocation also supports the University of Greater Manchester, which is pursuing a long term, strategically significant expansion focused on medicine, health and research. Central to this is the establishment and growth of the University Medical School, located at the Royal Bolton Hospital, which incorporates undergraduate medical education, postgraduate programmes and a research institute. The University of Greater Manchester is pursuing a long-term expansion of its Medical School with a clear focus on medical education, postgraduate provision and research activity.
- 10.40 The development will create a significant number of high-quality jobs across healthcare, education, research, innovation, manufacturing and supporting sectors, increasing productivity, supporting the development of a highly skilled workforce, and contributing to the diversification of the local economy. Employment is limited to health innovation activity in order to deliver high value research and clinical functions rather than general industrial or distribution uses. Given the breadth of Class E, this can only be made effective through conditions and obligations which remove the flexibility for drift to other uses.
- 10.41 Given the deprivation and skills gap outlined in the reasons for Policy EC3 it is important that opportunities at HIB to improve the skills base of the local population

and maximise local employment is maximised as far as possible. Construction Employment and Skills Plans and Operational Employment and Skills Plans will be crucial to achieving this ambition.

- 10.42 Local centre uses are limited to the scale needed to serve the health innovation district residents for their convenience and community needs, as the purpose of the local centre is to complement rather than compete with Farnworth and Bolton Town Centres. Residential development is an integral component of healthy placemaking, and in the health innovation district this will help to attract and retain skilled workers and support hospital expansion, while addressing identified local housing needs. Student accommodation is directed to Bolton Town Centre in accordance with the spatial strategy. By co-locating the hospital and university facilities with homes, green spaces and new infrastructure, HIB will deliver significant social, economic and environmental benefits and support new models of healthcare delivery, medical research, education, discovery and commercial innovation.
- 10.43 The HIB site adjoins the Green Belt separating Bolton and Over Hulton (Atherton). The retained Green Belt gap, country park and structural landscaping together protect that separation and provide a permanent, defensible green edge while mitigating the noise, visual and air quality impacts of the M61. The 2018 Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment identified the HIB site as part of the Lever Edge and Tyldesley Reclaimed Land/Wetland character area, which is of moderate sensitivity to commercial development and low-moderate sensitivity to residential development.
- 10.44 Given its position at Junction 4 of the M61 Motorway, the HIB site is highly accessible by road. However, as a greenfield site at the periphery of Bolton settlement, its current accessibility by public transport is low, ranging from 1 to 4 on the Greater Manchester Accessibility Level (GMAL) scale, and no part of the site is within 1km of a train station, nor of a town or district centre. In accordance with Policy PQ3, therefore, a net residential development density of minimum 35 dwellings per hectare is expected. Subject to the improvement of public transport accessibility, there is scope for increased residential density in accessible parts of the site. Higher density development can also support placemaking quality in and near the proposed local centre, the hospital, and other mixed-use areas of the development in accordance with Policy PQ1, and thereby promote interaction and synergy between health, education and employment uses.
- 10.45 Vehicular access to the site should be provided by a Primary Movement Corridor (Road) linking to the M61 and to Bolton Hospital, accommodating public transport services and active travel modes. Car parking is an ongoing issue at the Hospital with the area around the Hospital currently experiencing displacement of parking activity onto residential roads. Hospital users often complain that it is not possible to find a parking space within the Hospital grounds. In some cases, this can lead to missed medical appointments which carry significant costs and impose an artificial constraint on the treatment capacity of the Hospital. This should be managed by ensuring that sufficient parking capacity is delivered alongside new development to meet operational needs, including temporary parking and the provision for parking for disabled patients and visitors, while making efficient use of the land.
- 10.46 Application of Policy INF1 to this site implies that there should be effective provision for active modes and public transport to reach and travel through the site. Accordingly, active travel provision should be LTN1/20 (or successor standard) compliant, and the site should be linked with Central Bolton (and Bolton Interchange) by high frequency bus services which should also penetrate the site, providing internal connections between the homes and businesses on the site. Because the Hospital attracts and generates large numbers of trips there should be consideration

of innovative transport modes to serve it – and the wider site – should they come forward.

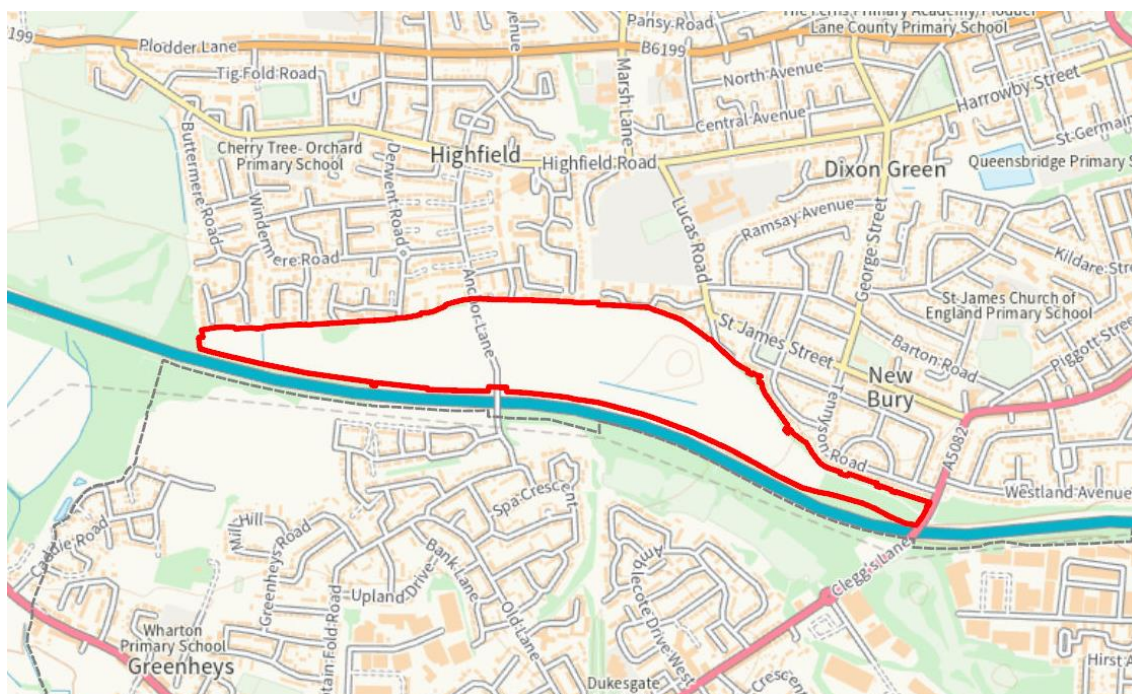
- 10.47 Within and around the HIB site there are currently significant gaps in the provision of Accessible Green Space (AGS), including a deficit of neighbourhood-scale green space in the east of the site. The site is also poorly served by existing children's play facilities. While there are few existing green infrastructure assets within the site, the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) identifies two areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity, the first at the east end of the HIB site along Doe Hey Brook, and the second connecting wooded areas to the west of the site. The comprehensive masterplan for the development of the site should create green infrastructure corridors in these locations, with the potential to incorporate a nature-rich sensitively designed link to the National Cycle Network Route 55 to the east. It should also provide an integrated hierarchy of accessible green space, food growing space and children's play space onsite in accordance with Policies INF5 and INF6 and facilitate access to these amenities from neighbouring areas to mitigate their existing deficits in open space provision.
- 10.48 The M61 forms part of the southern boundary of the site, and limits vehicular and active travel routes southwards, including to Cutacre Country Park and Hulton Park. It is also the source of high levels of road noise, exceeding 55 dB (Lden) across much of the area and requiring mitigation through layout, design and green infrastructure interventions. Noise attenuation fencing should be avoided or minimised due to the associated visual impacts and compartmentalisation effect on landscapes.
- 10.49 A Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment commissioned by the Council has found that the majority of the site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore at low risk of fluvial flooding; there is a small area in the north-east of the site within Flood Zone 3a and therefore at high risk of fluvial flooding, however this is constrained within the onsite channel. Present day surface water risk is largely confined to areas of scattered ponding across the site, with some flow paths coincident with the ordinary watercourses; this increases in extent across the site when considering the impact of climate change, with larger areas of ponding, particularly within the south of the site. The majority of the site is within an area where there is no risk of groundwater emergence, therefore infiltration SuDS may be suitable within these areas. There is a residual risk of flooding associated with the potential blockage or structural failure of the culvert beneath Greenland Road, located to the east of the site.
- 10.50 The Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment therefore recommended that a detailed drainage strategy will be required for this site, to include the ordinary watercourses, flow paths, and areas of surface water ponding present onsite: ideally, all flow paths will remain unobstructed and construction of access routes over the watercourses will be avoided. Mitigation should ensure that development will be safe throughout its lifetime in relation to urban form, risk management and where flood mitigation measures are likely to have wider sustainable design implications. There should be no development within 8 metres of the bank tops of Will Hill Brook and Doe Hey Brook, and the area along the channels should be converted to a blue-green corridor offering multifunctional benefits alongside flood risk mitigation, including BNG contributions and social and amenity benefits.
- 10.51 The Historic Environment Record managed by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) identifies several individual features within the HIB site, including farmsteads at Top o' th' Height and Holme Fold Farms. The conservation of these heritage assets – and their integration into the development as part of the agricultural and industrial heritage of the borough – has the potential to contribute to the site's distinctive identity and sense of place. The site also borders on

the curtilage of a terrace of Grade II listed houses and associated garden walls at Nos 31-40 Hollins fronting Plodder Lane, whose setting should be appropriately conserved or enhanced by proposed development in accordance with Policy PQ4.

- 10.52 Parts of the Health Innovation Bolton site lie within the Development High Risk Area designated by the Coal Authority, which corresponds to those parts of the coal mining reporting area which contain one or more recorded coal mining related features at surface or shallow depth. These features pose a potential risk to surface stability and public safety. Development proposals must therefore be supported by a Coal Mining Risk Assessment in order to demonstrate that the development will be safe and stable, taking full account of former coal mining activities.
- 10.53 The Health Innovation Bolton site also lies within Minerals Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) identified by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The 2013 Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan states that all non-mineral development proposals within Mineral Safeguarding Areas should extract any viable mineral resources present in advance of construction and in accordance with specified planning and environmental criteria.
- 10.54 The evidence identifies a deliverable proposition at Health Innovation Bolton: a strategic mixed-use health innovation cluster; a transport-led infrastructure framework; a green and active travel network; a phased approach to homes, employment and health innovation uses; and a governance pathway that can mature from partnership working into delivery structures. The project will evolve through planning applications, funding decisions, land assembly, governance development and delivery procurement. This is where a comprehensive masterplan and phasing strategy are key.
- 10.55 The comprehensive masterplan, phasing strategy, and monitoring and review of Health Innovation Bolton will be a key component to the success of the allocation. The allocation is based on a number of projections, forecasts and information available. While these provide a sound basis for the allocation, it is important to understand that circumstances can change and ensure that the masterplan is able to adapt appropriately. It is therefore important that the masterplan establishes appropriate monitoring indicators and review triggers that enable the successful delivery of Health Innovation Bolton over the plan period.

Policy BSA03: Anchor Lane, Farnworth

BSA03 ANCHOR LANE, FARNWORTH



1. Acceptable uses and amount of development

- A. The site is allocated for residential development of a minimum of 460 units, with affordable housing in accordance with Policy HS1, a housing mix in accordance with Policy HS2, and of inclusive and high-quality design standards in accordance with Policies HS3 and HS4 respectively.

2. Design and placemaking response to site

- A. Achieve a minimum net residential development density of 35 dwellings per hectare, in accordance with Policy PQ3.
- B. Provide a new vehicular site access junction on Anchor Lane incorporating pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities.
- C. Support safe, direct and convenient access to and through the site by active travel facilities, linking to local services and amenities including bus stops, shopping parades, schools and other community facilities.
- D. Strengthen and extend the Public Right-of-Way network, improving off-road and leisure walking and cycling connections within the site and to surrounding areas, including across the M61.
- E. Retain existing woodland and mature trees and maximise connectivity with the green infrastructure network within and beyond the site.
- F. Use structural landscaping and bunding as the primary means of mitigating noise, air quality and visual impacts

	associated with the M61 motorway, supplemented by noise attenuation fencing only where necessary. G. Integrate sustainable drainage (SuDS) into the landscape design strategy, creating multifunctional green spaces and reinforcing the connectivity of Green and Blue Infrastructure. H. Provide an integrated hierarchy of open space and food-growing space onsite in accordance with policy INF5, new outdoor play space onsite in accordance with policy INF6, enhancement or onsite reprovision of the existing playing pitch in accordance with policy INF7. I. Secure the boundaries of neighbouring residential development and locate new open spaces convenient to access points from neighbouring residential development. J. Provide natural surveillance and, where achievable, active frontage to all open spaces, streets, paths and other routes through the site, including Public Rights-of-Way, in accordance with Policy PQ1. K. Conduct a heritage impact assessment and demonstrate where the conservation of heritage assets can be integrated in the development, including through improved access and understanding. L. Integrate sustainable drainage (SuDS) into the landscape design strategy, creating multifunctional green spaces and reinforcing the connectivity of blue and green infrastructure in accordance with the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment. M. Conduct a coal mining risk assessment of the site and the development proposals. N. Consider the extraction of any viable mineral resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas, in accordance with policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan (or relevant policies in subsequent minerals plans). O. Achieve high standards of design, sustainability and environmental performance in new development in accordance with Policy ENV1.
3. Site-specific requirements and infrastructure	A. Open Space • Provide onsite an integrated hierarchy of open space, food-growing space, outdoor play space and playing fields. • Integrate into the landscape design the landscape-led mitigation of M61 motorway impacts. B. Community Facilities • Make a contribution to education services. • Make a contribution to healthcare services. C. Transport • Create safe and direct walking and cycling routes to local services and amenities.

	• Extend and improve the Public Rights-of-Way and cycle networks. • Make a contribution towards enhanced bus services. • Provide a vehicular site access junction from Anchor Lane and an emergency vehicle access from Lucas Road. D. Utilities • Deliver statutory reinforcements and/or upgrades to water, water waste, electricity and digital infrastructure. E. Flood Risk • Develop and implement a site-wide drainage strategy with nature-based solutions.
4. Delivery and coordination	A. Evidence must be provided that adequate capacity exists in the water supply, wastewater, electricity, gas, high speed fibre and telecommunications networks needed to serve the development, or that sets out the reinforcement required and how it will be secured in agreement with the relevant statutory undertaker. B. Flood risk associated with this site must be addressed as follows: • A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment must be carried out in line with the latest versions of the NPPF, FRCC-PPG, EA online guidance, national and local SuDS policy and guidelines, and this Local Plan. • Throughout the Flood Risk Assessment process, consultation must be carried out with the Local Planning authority, the lead local flood authority, emergency planning officers, Environment Agency, United Utilities, highways authorities, and emergency services.
5. Housing Trajectory Plan phase	Years 1 to 5 : 120 homes Years 6 to 10 : 200 homes Years 11 to 15: 140 homes

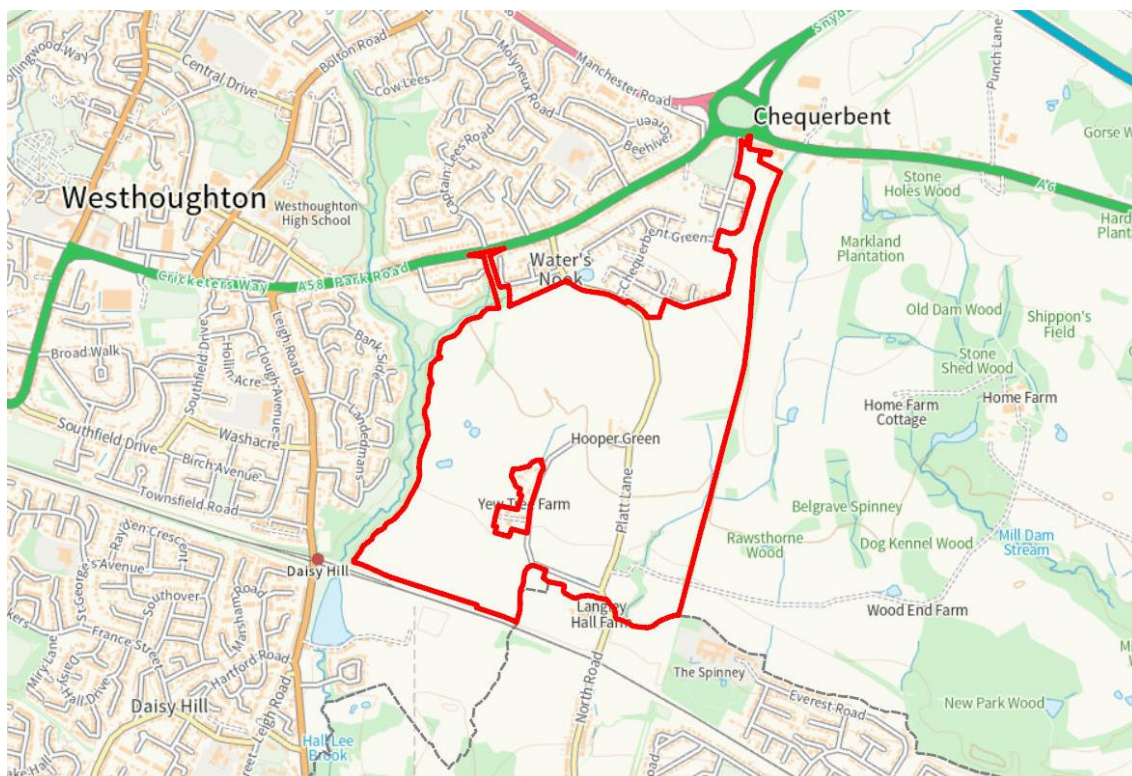
Reasons for Policy BSA03

- 10.56 Anchor Lane provides the opportunity for a high-quality residential urban extension which can be integrated into the existing residential neighbourhoods of Highfield and New Bury, benefitting from existing local centre uses and education facilities nearby while helping to address current deficits in access to open space and play facilities.
- 10.57 The site is within walking distance of local shopping parades at Highfield Road and St. James Street, as well as primary schools, nurseries and places of worship. In addition to these direct active travel routes, the existing Public Rights-of-Way network also provides the context for a more informal network of off-road pedestrian and cycle routes for leisure, movement within the site, and connecting to surrounding areas, including routes southwards of the M61 and links to the wider green infrastructure network. There is also scope for enhancements to public transport services and facilities

- 10.58 This area is not currently served by Accessible Green Space (AGS) on the neighbourhood scale. It is also poorly served by provision for children's play and allotments and has few existing biodiversity assets. Co-ordinated development of this open land offers the opportunity to address these deficits to the benefit of existing and new communities.
- 10.59 The M61 forms the southern boundary of the site and limits vehicular and active travel routes southwards. It is also the source of high levels of road noise, exceeding 70 dB (Lden) across much of the area and requiring mitigation through layout, design and green infrastructure interventions. Noise attenuation fencing should be avoided or minimised due to the associated visual impacts and compartmentalisation effect on landscapes.
- 10.60 The Historic Environment Record managed by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) identifies a farmstead within the Anchor Lane site. The conservation of this heritage asset, and its integration into the development as part of the agricultural heritage of the borough, has the potential to contribute to the site's distinctive identity and sense of place.
- 10.61 A Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment commissioned by the Council has found that the entire site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore at low risk of fluvial flooding. Present day surface water risk in all events is largely confined to two significant areas of ponding within the site, which it is recommended are included within site design. The entire site is within an area where there is no risk of groundwater emergence, therefore infiltration SuDS may be suitable. There does not appear to be any residual risk to the site from asset blockage or defence breach. The assessment recommends that a detailed drainage strategy be required to ensure there is no increase in surface water flood risk elsewhere as a result of new development. All topographic low spots and surface water flow paths through the site should be considered within site design, left free of development and allowed to flood naturally when required, and greenfield runoff rates should apply.
- 10.62 Parts of the Anchor Lane site lie within the Development High Risk Area designated by the Coal Authority, which corresponds to those parts of the coal mining reporting area that contain one or more recorded coal mining related features at surface or shallow depth. These features pose a potential risk to surface stability and public safety. Development proposals must therefore be supported by a Coal Mining Risk Assessment in order to demonstrate that the development will be safe and stable, taking full account of former coal mining activities.
- 10.63 The Anchor Lane site also lies within Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) identified by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The 2013 Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan states that all non-mineral development proposals within Mineral Safeguarding Areas should extract any viable mineral resources present in advance of construction and in accordance with specified planning and environmental criteria.

Policy BSA04: Lee Hall

BSA04 LEE HALL



1. Acceptable uses and amount of development

The site is allocated as a strategic residential-led mixed-use neighbourhood, comprising the following mix of uses:

- A. Residential development of minimum 1,450 units with affordable housing in accordance with Policy HS1, a housing mix in accordance with Policy HS2, and of inclusive and high-quality design standards in accordance with Policies HS3 and HS4, respectively.
- B. A care facility for older people, with a capacity up to 75 bedspaces, in accordance with Policy HS3.
- C. Community facilities providing essential services for local people, comprising a new primary school, contribution to health facilities, local retail opportunities and a community centre.

2. Design and placemaking response to site

- A. Achieve a minimum net residential development density of 35 dwellings per hectare, in accordance with Policy PQ3.
- B. Provide a new link road giving access to the site from Manchester Road, incorporating active travel facilities, connecting to Junction 5 of the M61 motorway via the A58, and forming part of a wider planned link to the M6 motorway.

- C. Cluster the community facilities, local retailing and higher density residential development around a new neighbourhood centre as a social and spatial focus for the area.
- D. Support safe, direct and convenient access to and through the site by active travel facilities, linking to local services and amenities including bus stops, shopping parades, schools and other community facilities.
- E. Strengthen and extend the Public Right-of-Way network, improving off-road and leisure walking and cycling connections within the site and to surrounding areas and amenities.
- F. Improve the quality of the rail-side walking route eastwards from Daisy Hill Station on Leigh Road, extending it into the Lee Hall site and integrating it into the active travel network of the site.
- G. Retain existing woodland and mature trees and maximise connectivity with the green infrastructure network within and beyond the site.
- H. Integrate sustainable drainage (SuDS) into the landscape design strategy, creating multifunctional green spaces and reinforcing the connectivity of Green and Blue Infrastructure.
- I. Provide an integrated hierarchy of open space and food-growing space onsite in accordance with policy INF5, including a new neighbourhood scale public park, and new outdoor play space onsite in accordance with policy INF6.
- J. Secure the boundaries of neighbouring residential development and locate new open spaces and community facilities convenient to access points from neighbouring residential development.
- K. Provision of natural surveillance and, where achievable, active frontage to all open spaces, streets, paths and other routes through the site, including Public Rights-of-Way, in accordance with Policy PQ1.
- L. Conduct a heritage impact assessment and demonstrate where the conservation of heritage assets can be integrated in the development, including through improved access and understanding.
- M. Conduct a coal mining risk assessment of the site and the development proposals.
- N. Consider the extraction of any viable mineral resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas, in accordance with policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan (or relevant policies in subsequent minerals plans).
- O. Achieve high standards of design, sustainability and environmental performance in new development in accordance with Policy ENV1.

3. Site-specific requirements and infrastructure

- A. Open Space
 - Provide onsite an integrated hierarchy of open space, outdoor play space and food-growing space, including a new neighbourhood scale public park.
- B. Community Facilities
 - Deliver community facilities including a new primary school, contribution to health facilities, local retail opportunities and a community centre, open by the completion of 1000 units or as specified in the masterplan.
- C. Transport
 - Create safe and direct walking and cycling routes to local services and amenities, including to Daisy Hill Station phased to be in place to serve occupants of the development.
 - Extend and improve the Public Rights-of-Way and cycle networks.
 - Make a contribution towards enhanced bus services.
 - Deliver a new Link Road, as part of a wider vehicular route connecting the M61 and the M6.
- D. Utilities
 - Deliver statutory reinforcements and/or upgrades to water, water waste, electricity and digital infrastructure.
- E. Flood Risk
 - Develop and implement a site-wide drainage strategy with nature-based solutions.

4. Delivery and coordination

- A. Evidence must be provided that adequate capacity exists in the water supply, wastewater, electricity, gas, high speed fibre and telecommunications networks needed to serve the development, or that sets out the reinforcement required and how it will be secured in agreement with the relevant statutory undertaker.
- B. Flood risk associated with this site must be addressed as follows:
 - A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment must be carried out in line with the latest versions of the NPPF, FRCC-PPG, EA online guidance, national and local SuDS policy and guidelines, and this Local Plan.
 - The Flood Risk Assessment should investigate groundwater levels through percolation testing in both wet and dry weather conditions across the site.
 - Throughout the Flood Risk Assessment process, consultation must be carried out with the Local Planning authority, the lead local flood authority, emergency planning officers, Environment Agency, United Utilities, highways authorities, and emergency services.

BSA04 LEE HALL

5. Housing Trajectory Plan phase

Years 1 to 5 : 370 homes

Years 6 to 10 : 610 homes

Years 11 to 15: 470 homes

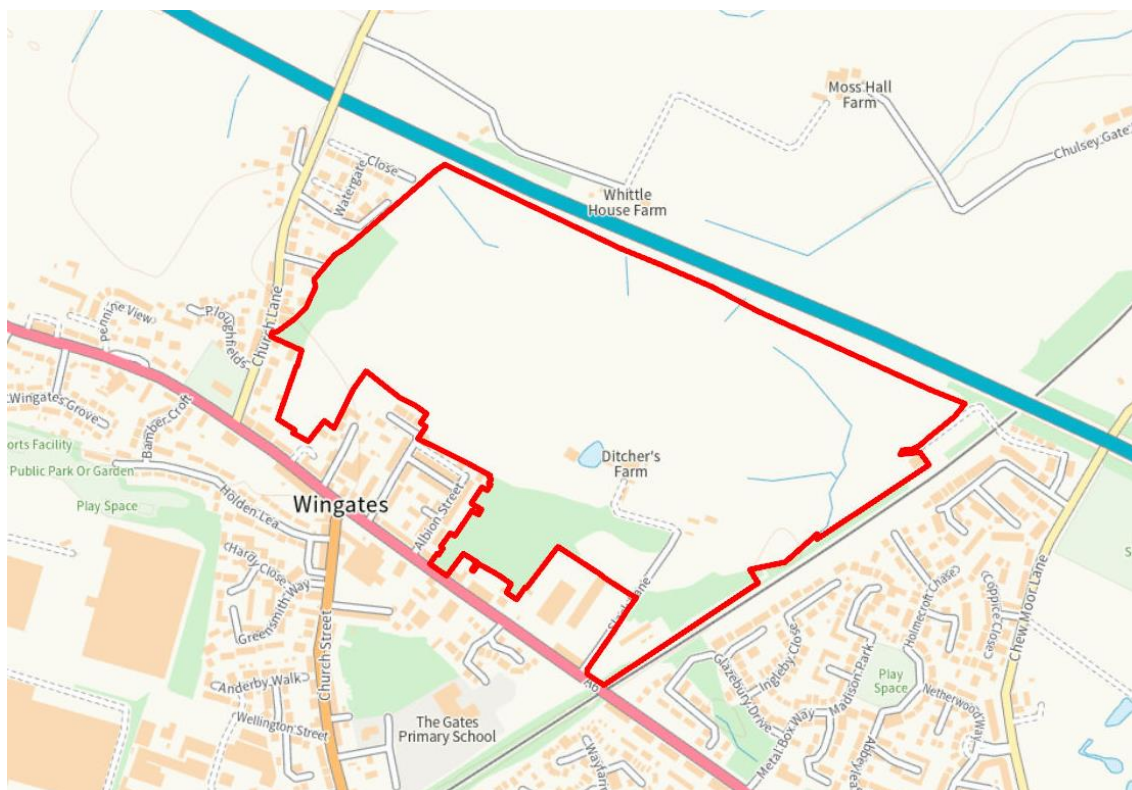
Reasons for Policy BSA04

- 10.64 Lee Hall provides the opportunity for a high-quality residential urban extension that can be integrated with the existing residential neighbourhoods of Westhoughton. Development of this site can benefit from its large scale to provide a range of community and convenience uses, education facilities and public transport services, and can contribute to addressing the area's current deficits in access to open space and play facilities.
- 10.65 A large part of the site already benefits from planning permission granted in October 2022 for the restoration of the adjacent Hulton Park RPG through the creation of a championship-grade golf resort alongside the delivery of new homes, including c.500 homes on Lee Hall South, community facilities, and a new link road. A hybrid planning application for the site was submitted incorporating a residential component (south of Manchester Road), an employment component corresponding to the Chequerbent North employment allocation JPA5, and a link road from the M61, via the A58 with potential for further connection to the M6 in the future.
- 10.66 This is the largest greenfield site allocated for residential development in this plan that is within walking distance of a train station. It therefore has the scope to make more efficient use of land than less accessible greenfield sites. Currently, however, active travel routes to Daisy Hill Station are of poor quality, cross through the Hall Lee Bank Park Local Nature Reserve and Site of Biological Interest (SBI), and traverse level changes of approximately 7 metres. In order to fully realise the expectations of the development density – principles set out in Policy PQ3 – considerable investment would be required to improve this connection, for which none of the available options is deliverable, and accordingly the presence of Daisy Hill Station is, for the purposes of Policy PQ3, discounted and the Lee Hall site lies entirely within Density Zone D.
- 10.67 The density levels set out in PQ3 are minimum expectations, hence there is scope to increase development density in the vicinity of the neighbourhood centre where local centre uses are provided, and public transport services are accessible. Nevertheless, development of the site will inevitably entail significantly increased levels of active travel to Daisy Hill Station, which presents considerable risks to the integrity of the Local Nature Reserve and Site of Biological Importance. To minimise these risks, improvement to the existing path eastwards from Leigh Road along the boundary of Network Rail land will be required, even if this cannot be achieved to the standard set out in the 2020 Department for Transport Local Transport Note LTN 1/20.
- 10.68 Safe, direct and convenient active travel routes will also be required linking to facilities and amenities across the site as well as onward routes including to the town centre. In addition, the existing Public Rights-of-Way network also provides the context for a more informal network of off-road pedestrian and cycle routes for leisure, movement within the site, and connecting to surrounding areas, including links to the wider green infrastructure network. There is also scope for enhancements to public transport services and facilities.

- 10.69 The Lee Hall site is of sufficient scale to sustain a range of community facilities, including a new primary school, health facilities, local retail opportunities and a community centre, providing essential services to meet local needs. These must be clustered together to provide a social and spatial focus for the new neighbourhood. Higher density residential development in this location can support placemaking by enabling development of greater scale and continuity, providing enclosure and natural surveillance, and bringing greater levels of footfall and activity to public spaces
- 10.70 As a large greenfield site, this location is currently poorly served by Accessible Green Space on the incidental, doorstep, local and neighbourhood scales, and by provisions for children's play. New development will require a hierarchy of new public spaces, including a neighbourhood-scale public park that is also accessible to surrounding areas.
- 10.71 There are several heritage assets within and adjacent to the site. The Chequerbent embankment of Bolton and Leigh Railway, located north of Manchester Road, is a Scheduled Monument. Hulton Park, located approximately 200 metres to the east of the site boundary, is a Registered Park and Garden. The Historic Environment Record managed by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) also includes several individual features within the site, including the Hooper farmstead and outbuildings. The conservation of these heritage assets, and their integration into the development as part of the agricultural and industrial heritage of the borough, has the potential to contribute to the site's distinctive identity and sense of place.
- 10.72 The majority of the allocation site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and therefore at low risk of fluvial flooding, however a small area at the southern boundary of the site is located in Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 and accordingly at significant risk of flooding, which means areas at the highest risk will need to be avoided. Mitigation should ensure that development will be safe throughout its lifetime in relation to urban form, risk management and where flood mitigation measures are likely to have wider sustainable design implications. Risk of groundwater emergence also indicates that careful design of SuDS systems and below-ground elements will be required.
- 10.73 Parts of the Lee Hall site lie within the Development High Risk Area designated by the Coal Authority, which corresponds to those parts of the coal mining reporting area that contain one or more recorded coal mining related features at surface or shallow depth. These features pose a potential risk to surface stability and public safety. Development proposals must therefore be supported by a Coal Mining Risk Assessment in order to demonstrate that the development will be safe and stable, taking full account of former coal mining activities.
- 10.74 The Lee Hall site also lies within Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) identified by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The 2013 Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan states that all non-mineral development proposals within Mineral Safeguarding Areas should extract any viable mineral resources present in advance of construction and in accordance with specified planning and environmental criteria.

Policy BSA05: Ditchers Farm, Westhoughton

BSA05 DITCHERS FARM, WESTHOUGHTON



1. Acceptable uses and amount of development

- A. The site is allocated for residential development of a minimum of 570 units, with affordable housing in accordance with Policy HS1, a housing mix in accordance with Policy HS2, and of inclusive and high-quality design standards in accordance with Policies HS3 and HS4 respectively.

2. Design and placemaking response to site

- A. Achieve a minimum net residential development density of 50 dwellings per hectare, in accordance with Policy PQ3.
- B. Provide new vehicular site access, and pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities at Chorley Road / Manchester Road (A6).
- C. Support safe, direct and convenient access to and through the site by active travel facilities, linking to the train station and town centre to enable access to local services and amenities including bus stops, shopping parades, schools and other community facilities.
- D. Strengthen and extend the Public Right-of-Way network, improving off-road and leisure walking and cycling connections within the site and to surrounding areas and amenities.

- E. Retain wherever possible existing woodland and mature trees and maximise connectivity with the green infrastructure network within and beyond the site.
- F. Use structural landscaping and bunding as the primary means of mitigating noise, air quality and visual impacts associated with the M61 motorway, supplemented by noise attenuation fencing only where necessary.
- G. Integrate sustainable drainage (SuDS) into the landscape design strategy, creating multifunctional green spaces and reinforcing the connectivity of Green and Blue Infrastructure.
- H. Provide an integrated hierarchy of open space and food-growing space onsite in accordance with policy INF5, and new outdoor play space onsite in accordance with policy INF6.
- I. Secure the boundaries of neighbouring residential development and locate a new focal green space convenient to access points from neighbouring residential development.
- J. Provide natural surveillance and, where achievable, active frontage to all open spaces, streets, paths and other routes through the site, including Public Rights-of-Way, in accordance with Policy PQ1.
- K. Conduct a heritage impact assessment and demonstrate where the conservation of heritage assets can be integrated in the development, including through improved access and understanding.
- L. Include Cow Lee Brook within the site design as a blue green corridor and integrate sustainable drainage (SuDS) into the landscape design strategy, creating multifunctional green spaces and reinforcing the connectivity of blue and green infrastructure in accordance with the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment.
- M. Conduct a coal mining risk assessment of the site and the development proposals.
- N. Consider the extraction of any viable mineral resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas, in accordance with policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan (or relevant policies in subsequent minerals plans).
- O. Achieve high standards of design, sustainability and environmental performance in new development in accordance with Policy ENV1.

3. Site-specific requirements and infrastructure

- A. Open Space
 - Provide onsite an integrated hierarchy of open space, food-growing space and outdoor play space, including a new focal green space.
 - Integrate into the landscape design the landscape-led mitigation of M61 motorway impacts.

BSA05 DITCHERS FARM, WESTHOUGHTON

	B. Community Facilities • Make a contribution to education services. • Make a contribution to healthcare services. C. Transport • Create safe and direct walking and cycling routes to local services and amenities. • Extend and improve the Public Rights-of-Way and cycle networks. • Make a contribution towards enhanced bus services. • Provide a vehicular site access junction and A6 crossing facilities. D. Utilities • Deliver statutory reinforcements and/or upgrades to water, water waste, electricity and digital infrastructure. E. Flood Risk • Develop and implement a site-wide drainage strategy with nature-based solutions.
4. Delivery and coordination	A. Evidence must be provided that adequate capacity exists in the water supply, wastewater, electricity, gas, high speed fibre and telecommunications networks needed to serve the development, or that sets out the reinforcement required and how it will be secured in agreement with the relevant statutory undertaker.
5. Housing Trajectory Plan phase	Years 1 to 5 : 110 homes Years 6 to 10 : 330 homes Years 11 to 15: 130 homes

Reasons for Policy BSA05

- 10.75 Ditchers Farm provides the opportunity for a high-quality residential urban extension that can be integrated into the existing residential neighbourhood of Wingates in Westhoughton. Development of this site can benefit from its proximity to existing local centre uses, education facilities and public transport services, and can contribute to addressing the area's current deficits in access to open space and play facilities.
- 10.76 This site is one of the largest greenfield sites allocated in this plan which is within walking distance of a train station. It therefore has the scope to make more efficient use of land than less accessible greenfield sites, and this is reflected in the development density expectations for the site. Currently, however, active travel routes along the A6 corridor, to Westhoughton Station and to Westhoughton Town Centre, are fragmented, unsegregated and/or have poor natural surveillance, and both the M61 and the Bolton-Wigan railway impose significant severance. Delivering higher density development on this site must therefore go hand-in-hand with investment in improving the active travel routes and public transport services that justify it. Primary among these are pedestrian and cycle routes to the station and

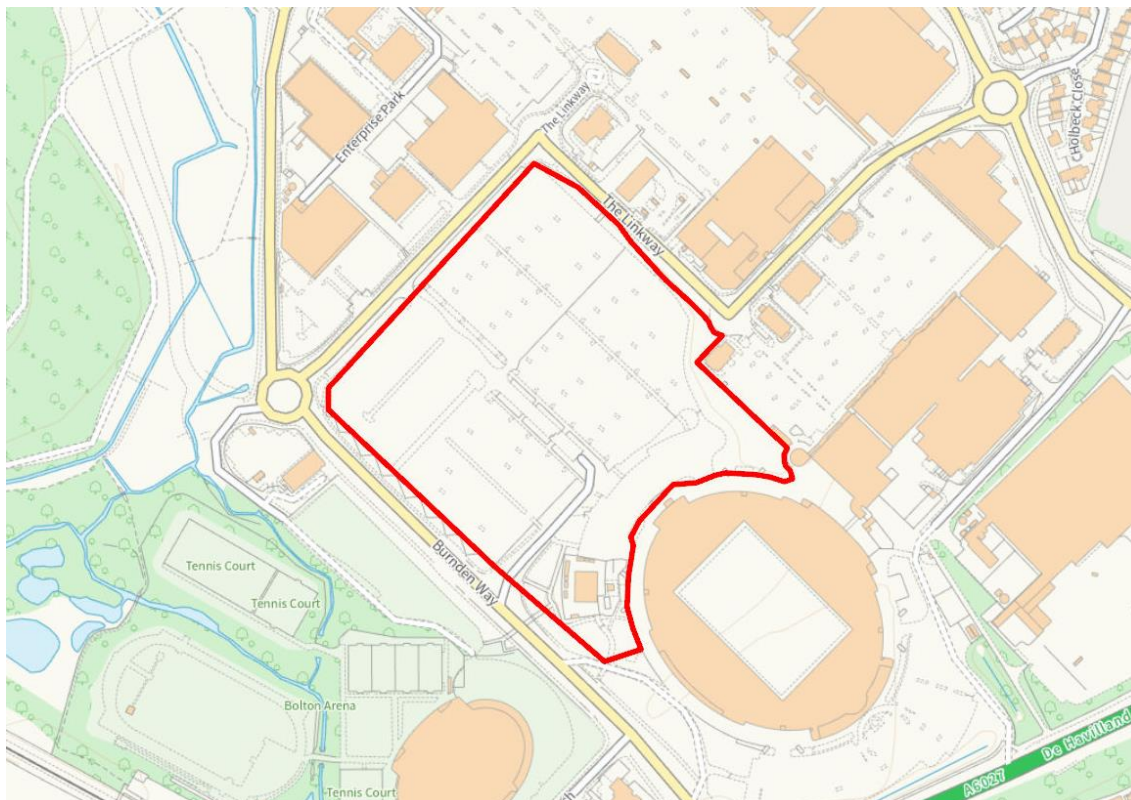
Town Centre via the new site entrance and Church Street, and via Slack Lane and the existing rail-side Public Right-of-Way. In addition to these direct active travel routes, the existing Public Rights-of-Way network also provides the context for a more informal network of off-road pedestrian and cycle routes for leisure, movement within the site, and connecting to surrounding areas, including routes northwards of the M61 and links to the wider green infrastructure network. There is also scope for enhancements to public transport services and facilities.

- 10.77 This location is currently poorly served by Accessible Green Space (AGS) on the incidental, doorstep, local and neighbourhood scales, and by provisions for children's play and allotments, in part a result of severance imposed by the A6, which restricts movement across the neighbourhood. Ditchers Farm is of sufficient size to address these gaps in provision onsite. It also offers an important opportunity to provide an amenity for that part of the neighbourhood that lies north of the A6. Configuring part of the open space provided on Ditchers Farm as a new village green can provide a social and spatial focus both for development on the site and for the wider neighbourhood. Locating the village green at or near the site boundaries can provide a shared sense of ownership with the existing residential community of Wingates in Westhoughton.
- 10.78 The M61 forms the northern boundary of the site and limits vehicular and active travel routes northwards. It is also the source of high levels of road noise, exceeding 65 dB (Lden) across much of its area. These impacts will require mitigation through layout, design and green infrastructure interventions including bunding. Noise attenuation fencing should be avoided or minimised due to the associated visual impacts and compartmentalisation effect on landscapes.
- 10.79 The Historic Environment Record managed by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) includes several individual features within the Ditchers Farm site, including the farmstead, farmhouse, barns and outbuildings both of the eponymous farm and, to the east, of Collier's Farm, as well as a possible bell pit and the site of a coal mine. The conservation of these heritage assets, and their integration into the development as part of the agricultural and industrial heritage of the borough, has the potential to contribute to the site's distinctive identity and sense of place.
- 10.80 A Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment commissioned by the Council has found that the entire site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore at low risk of fluvial flooding. Present day surface water risk in all events is largely confined to several areas of significant surface water ponding, and there are a number of surface water flow paths through the site. The entire site is within an area where there is no risk of groundwater emergence, therefore infiltration SuDS may be suitable. The site is at potential residual risk from a blockage of the culvert beneath the railway embankment to the southeast of the site. The assessment therefore recommends that a detailed drainage strategy be required to ensure there is no increase in surface water flood risk elsewhere as a result of new development. The flow paths and areas of ponding should be considered within site design, left free of development and allowed to flood naturally when required, and Cow Lee Brook should be included within site design as a blue-green corridor. Greenfield runoff rates should apply.
- 10.81 Parts of the Ditchers Farm site lie within the Development High Risk Area designated by the Coal Authority, which corresponds to those parts of the coal mining reporting area that contain one or more recorded coal mining related features at surface or shallow depth. These features pose a potential risk to surface stability and public safety. Development proposals must therefore be supported by a Coal Mining Risk Assessment in order to demonstrate that the development will be safe and stable, taking full account of former coal mining activities.

- 10.82 Most of the Ditchers Farm site also lies within Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) identified by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The 2013 Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan states that all non-mineral development proposals within Mineral Safeguarding Areas should extract any viable mineral resources present in advance of construction and in accordance with specified planning and environmental criteria.

Policy BSA06: Burnden Way, Middlebrook

BSA06 BURNDEN WAY, MIDDLEBROOK



1. Acceptable uses and amount of development

The site is allocated as mixed-use residential development, comprising:

- A. Residential development of minimum 1,000 units with affordable housing in accordance with Policy HS1, a housing mix in accordance with Policy HS2, and of inclusive and high-quality design standards in accordance with Policies HS3 and HS4, respectively. Policy will be applied flexibly in recognition that this location is not well suited to 4-bedroom homes.
- B. Around 2,500 sqm of office development
- C. Other commercial uses including retail and leisure need to comply with the sequential test and impact assessment set out in policy EC4.
- D. Local community uses to serve the residential community at Middlebrook.

2. Design and placemaking response to site

- A. Achieve a minimum net residential development density of 120 dwellings per hectare, in accordance with Policy PQ3.
- B. Support safe, direct and convenient access to and through the site by active travel facilities and public transport services, linking the train station, retail park, stadium, and the Rivington

	Chase development (the former Horwich Loco works) in accordance with Policy INF1. C. Retain in car park use those parts of the site lying in Flood Zone 3a and include them within any mitigation solutions for fluvial risk. D. Re-provide car parking to meet stadium needs without adverse impact on the streetscape and on pedestrian and cycle movement. E. Support low car ownership lifestyles in the new development. F. Create a street-based layout with mixed-use development providing active frontages and high-quality public realm to the surrounding public spaces, in accordance with Policy PQ1. G. Enhance the character and legibility of the urban setting in general, and of the skyline of Middlebrook as a whole, including through the use of tall buildings, in accordance with Policy PQ3. H. Mitigate the impacts of noise from the adjacent stadium and the M61 motorway on residential development through design-led nature-led solutions. I. Provide a multifunctional community space and deliver local-scale accessible green space in accordance with Policy INF5. J. Align green infrastructure delivery with the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), respond to the sensitivity of nearby Red Moss SSSI, and support connectivity with the wider green infrastructure network. K. Develop a coordinated, strategic site-wide drainage strategy, using nature-based solutions where possible to deliver flood storage, biodiversity and amenity value. L. Achieve high standards of design, sustainability and environmental performance in new development in accordance with Policy ENV1.
3. Site-specific requirements and infrastructure	A. Open Space • Create a new network of streets with high-quality public realm. B. Community Facilities • Deliver an onsite multifunctional community space. • Make a contribution to education services. • Make a contribution to healthcare services. C. Transport • Provide secure cycle storage and shared vehicle use. • Create safe and direct walking and cycling routes to local services and amenities. • Make a contribution towards enhanced bus services.

BSA06 BURNDEN WAY, MIDDLEBROOK

	• Re-provide surface car parking. D. Utilities • Deliver statutory reinforcements and/or upgrades to water, water waste, electricity and digital infrastructure. E. Flood Risk • Conduct a Flood Risk Assessment in order to manage the development in ways which minimise the risk of flooding to people and property, and develop a coordinated, strategic site-wide drainage strategy. • No residential development will be acceptable in Flood Zone 3a. Any development in Flood Zone 2 should use flood resilient construction. • A flood risk management plan will be required to ensure the safety of people and property.
4. Delivery and coordination	A. Evidence must be provided that adequate capacity exists in the water supply, wastewater, electricity, gas, high speed fibre and telecommunications networks needed to serve the development, or that sets out the reinforcement required and how it will be secured in agreement with the relevant statutory undertaker. B. Flood risk associated with this site must be addressed as follows: • Consultation must be undertaken with relevant reservoir stakeholders to understand whether the proposed development could affect reservoir risk designation. • A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment must be carried out in line with the latest versions of the NPPF, FRCC-PPG, EA online guidance, national and local SuDS policy and guidelines, and this Local Plan. • Throughout the Flood Risk Assessment process, consultation must be carried out with the Local Planning authority, the lead local flood authority, emergency planning officers, Environment Agency, United Utilities, highways authorities, and emergency services.
5. Housing Trajectory Plan phase	Years 1 to 5 : 0 homes Years 6 to 10 : 950 homes Years 11 to 15: 50 homes

Reasons for Policy BSA06

10.83 Burnden Way is a strategically located sited that has a significant role to play in shaping the future of Middlebrook. Middlebrook is an important destination for shopping and leisure and draws people from across the borough, city-region and beyond. While these uses have developed and intensified over the past 20 years, patterns of consumer behaviour have also been changing, driven by social media,

online shopping and the regeneration of town centres. Against this background, retail and leisure parks across the country are working hard to maintain footfall and patronage by supporting a wider range of leisure uses, improving their setting, and staging events. However, providing a more varied and stimulating visitor experience can be particularly challenging in these contexts as they are primarily structured around vehicular movement, car parking, and land uses that are separated onto different sites. With little green infrastructure, limited tree canopy cover and extensive areas of surface car parking, they provide little open space amenity or quality of public realm and present an elevated heat risk.

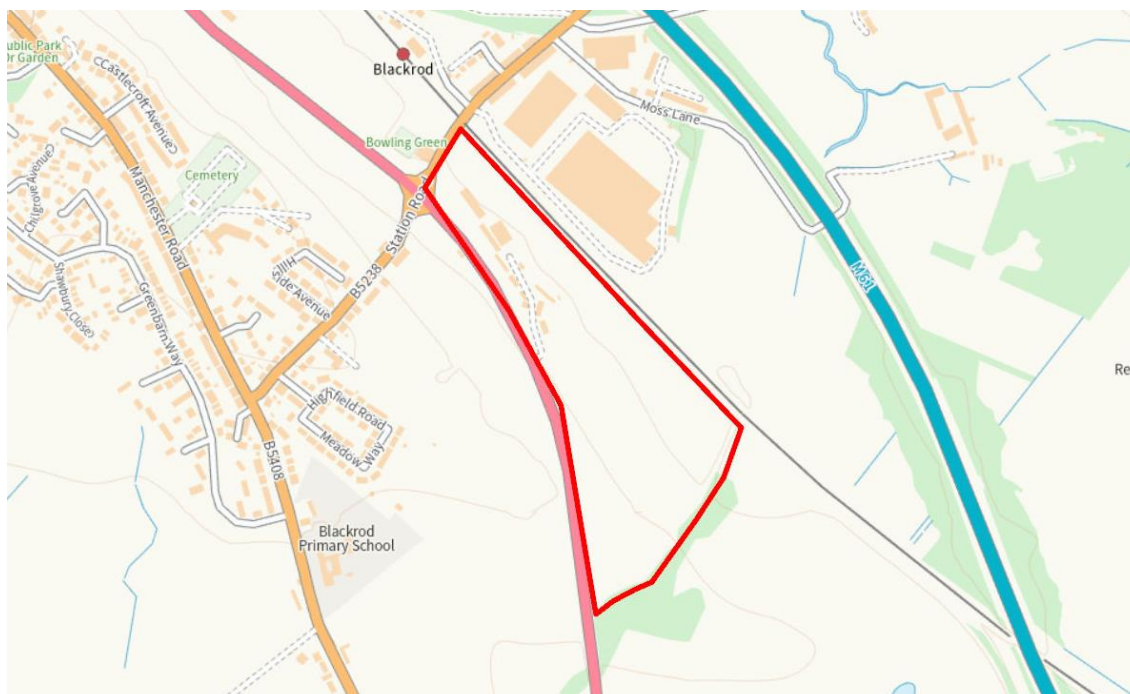
- 10.84 In some retail and leisure parks, a different approach is being taken. Residential and compatible employment uses are being introduced in new street-based layouts, providing a sense of enclosure and continuity of active frontage. This approach can help create truly mixed-use places, ones that are not solely dependent on visitors but are also populated and enlivened by local residents and activity throughout the day, week and year. This is the opportunity offered by the Burnden Way site, which can make a major contribution to the placemaking work needed at Middlebrook to support its long-term vitality and viability. The site already benefits from a wide range of retail and leisure uses on its doorstep, and it enjoys good access and connectivity provided by major transport infrastructure and public transport services, although there is scope to enhance the current bus service to and from Middlebrook.
- 10.85 This is effectively brownfield land, and the character of surrounding development is not sensitive to change. Accordingly, this site is the sole allocation outside of Central Bolton where the highest density of development is supported, and where tall buildings may be suitable, in accordance with Policy PQ3. Tall buildings have the potential for adverse impacts on the landscape setting, views, environmental quality and residential amenity, but with careful design these can be avoided or mitigated and, in this location, can contribute to the evolving character and identity of Middlebrook.
- 10.86 For development to be sustainable in this location, it must also address a number of challenges specific to this site. The existing surface car parking must be re-provided in a structured format onsite to meet the needs of the stadium, without adverse impact on the continuity of enclosure or active frontage to surrounding streets, and without adverse impact on pedestrian and cycle movement at its entrance and exit. Development must contribute to the improvement of the quality and connectivity of active travel routes in the area, which are currently fragmented and interrupted by vehicular movement, and both the M61 and the Bolton-Preston railway impose significant severance from the wider Public Rights-of-Way network.
- 10.87 There is significant fluvial flood risk and areas of surface water flood risk across southern and western parts of the site. A Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment commissioned by the Council has found that development on the site is unlikely to pass the exception test unless all development can be directed to Flood Zone 1 and surface water risk appropriately mitigated. It is recommended that the risk area of the site, including for the impacts of climate change, should be retained as a car park. The areas at surface water flood risk are largely within the fluvial risk areas and should therefore be included within any mitigation solutions for fluvial risk. A Flood Risk Assessment will be required to inform the extent and configuration of development within a coordinated, strategic site-wide drainage strategy, using nature-based solutions where possible to deliver flood storage, biodiversity and amenity value.
- 10.88 There are also high levels of road noise from the M61, exceeding 55 dB (Lden) across much of the site, and occasional high levels of noise from the stadium during

events, the combined impacts of which will require mitigation through design-led solutions.

- 10.89 As there is no residential community established in this location, it is poorly served by basic community facilities. There are no community centres convenient to this location; there are significant gaps in the provision of Accessible Green Space (AGS) at incidental, doorstep, local and neighbourhood scales; and it is only partially served by provisions for children's play. Development must deliver an onsite multifunctional community space and local-scale accessible greenspace in accordance with Policy INF5, however flexible approaches to providing children's play and food growing spaces will be supported in this constrained urban environment.

Policy BSA07: Blackrod Employment Cluster

BSA07 BLACKROD EMPLOYMENT CLUSTER



1. Acceptable uses and amount of development

- A. A. The site is allocated as an employment cluster with around 44,800 sqm industrial and warehousing floorspace.

2. Design and placemaking response to site

- A. Maintain and reinforce the continuity of the Green Belt and the physical separation between settlements and make provision for compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the retained Green Belt in the vicinity of the site in accordance with Policy SP7.
- B. Retain and integrate the site's existing trees and woodland fringe areas into the landscape-led screening of employment uses from the surrounding Green Belt and open lands and maximise connectivity with the green infrastructure network within and beyond the site.
- C. Provide new vehicular site access from Blackrod Bypass Road incorporating pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities.
- D. Conduct a heritage impact assessment and demonstrate where the conservation of heritage assets can be integrated in the development, including through improved access and understanding.
- E. Integrate sustainable drainage (SuDS) into the landscape design strategy, creating multifunctional green spaces and reinforcing the connectivity of blue and green infrastructure in accordance with the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment.

BSA07 BLACKROD EMPLOYMENT CLUSTER

	F. Conduct a coal mining risk assessment of the site and the development proposals. G. Consider the extraction of any viable mineral resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas, in accordance with policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan (or relevant policies in subsequent minerals plans). H. Achieve high standards of design, sustainability and environmental performance in new development in accordance with Policy ENV1.
3. Site-specific requirements and infrastructure	A. Landscape • Provide a permanent defensible, landscaped boundary to the site which screens development from the surrounding Green Belt and Landscape Character Area. B. Transport • Create safe and direct walking and cycling route between Blackrod Station, the site, and Public Right-of-Way BLA020. • Make a contribution towards enhanced bus services. • Provide a new vehicular site access with pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities on Blackrod Bypass Road. C. Utilities • Deliver statutory reinforcements and/or upgrades to water, water waste, electricity and digital infrastructure. D. Flood Risk • Develop and implement a site-wide drainage strategy with nature-based solutions.
4. Delivery and coordination	A. Evidence must be provided that adequate capacity exists in the water supply, wastewater, electricity, gas, high speed fibre and telecommunications networks needed to serve the development, or that sets out the reinforcement required and how it will be secured in agreement with the relevant statutory undertaker. B. Flood risk associated with this site must be addressed as follows: • A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment must be carried out in line with the latest versions of the NPPF, FRCC-PPG, EA online guidance, national and local SuDS policy and guidelines, and this Local Plan. • A detailed drainage strategy be required to ensure there is no increase in surface water flood risk elsewhere as a result of new development. All topographic low spots and surface water flow paths through the site should be considered within site design, left free of development and allowed to flood naturally when required.

BSA07 BLACKROD EMPLOYMENT CLUSTER

- Throughout the Flood Risk Assessment process, consultation must be carried out with the Local Planning authority, the lead local flood authority, emergency planning officers, Environment Agency, United Utilities, highways authorities, and emergency services.

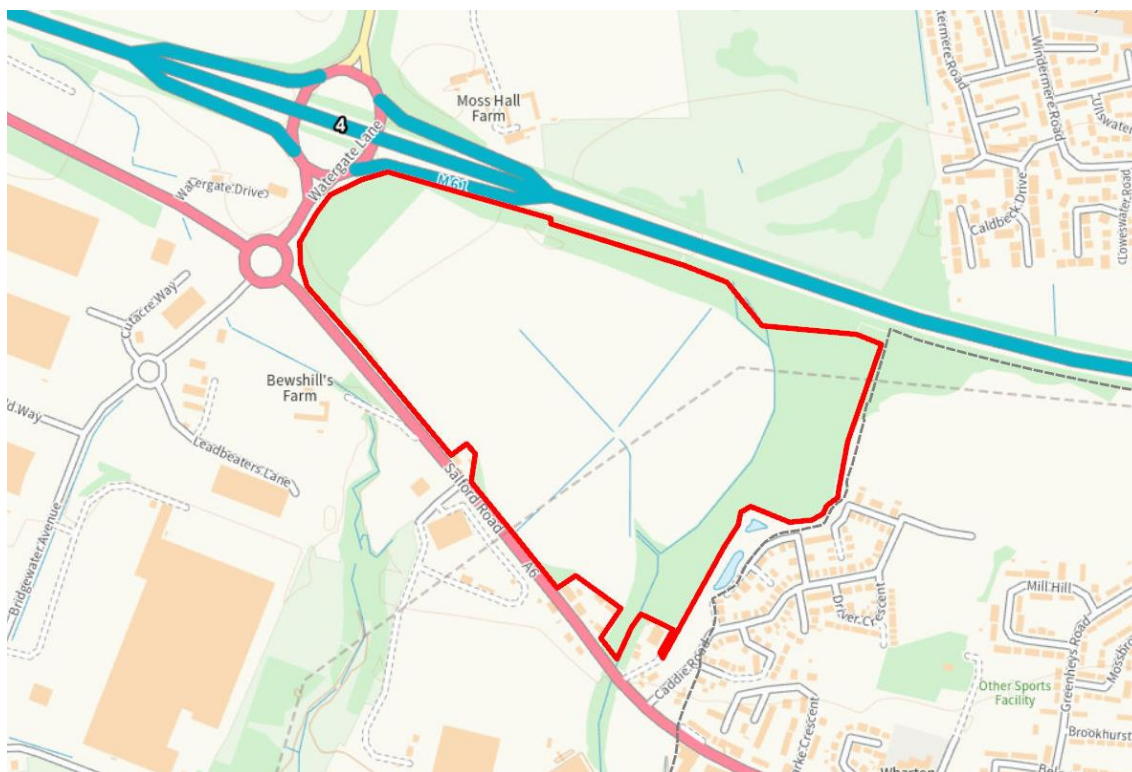
Reasons for Policy BSA07

- 10.90 The Blackrod Employment Cluster contributes to meeting the borough's identified industrial and warehousing floorspace need in a location that is within the Bolton Wigan Growth Corridor (NorthFold), convenient to a train station, and situated in part of the borough that has not been a focus for recent employment development. This site therefore offers an important opportunity to provide jobs that are accessible both locally to residents of Horwich and Blackrod, and generally to residents of other parts of the borough for whom train travel is a practical option.
- 10.91 The site is contained by the strategic highway network on two sides and by the Bolton to Preston railway on a third. It comprises open agricultural fields, with hedgerows and mature trees lining the Blackrod Bypass Road frontage, and an extensive woodland fringe to the southeast boundary. There is a cluster of agricultural, employment and residential buildings in the eastern part of the site. Along the eastern boundary of the site there is a Public Right of Way (BLA020) which links northwards to a rail overbridge. The land falls to the north, and along much of the frontage to Blackrod Bypass Road there is a significant level difference between road and site.
- 10.92 The site borders the Green Belt. In addition, the 2018 Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment identified this site as part of the Standish Crest, Blackrod and Westhoughton Urban Fringe Farmland, which is of moderate to high sensitivity to commercial development. The site boundary should therefore provide a permanent defensible, landscaped boundary to the site which screens development from the surrounding Green Belt and from the Landscape Character Area.
- 10.93 The site is located within approximately 100 metres of Blackrod Train Station, located on the opposite side of Station Road. However, there are currently no pedestrian crossing facilities provided, which will be required to support access to employment opportunities in the Blackrod employment cluster
- 10.94 Vehicular access is currently provided to existing employment uses in the western part of the site by means of a site entrance at Station Road, with a narrower secondary access provided on Blackrod Bypass Road. However, additional vehicular access will be required directly from Blackrod Bypass Road. Due to level differences between the road and the site, the location of such access is constrained and will require careful consideration in conjunction with pedestrian and cycle movement, visibility, and other design factors. Currently there are no cycle facilities along this road, and pedestrian facilities are provided on its south side only. Blackrod Bypass Road will therefore require pedestrian crossing facilities at any new site entrance. Pedestrian facilities should also be provided within the site linking the new site entrance and the existing Public Right-of-Way BLA020 located along the eastern boundary of the site, to enable users of this footpath to cross the road and continue their journey on foot southwest via the same Public Right-of-Way and northwest to Blackrod Station.

- 10.95 The Historic Environment Record managed by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) identifies features within and adjoining the site, including those associated with Leigh Tenement Farm and Tanners' Fold, a possible bell pit, and the Bolton and Preston Railway. The conservation of these heritage assets, and their integration into the development as part of the agricultural and industrial heritage of the borough, has the potential to contribute to the site's sense of place.
- 10.96 The Bolton Strategic Flood Risk Assessments Level 2 (2026) found that the entire site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore at low risk of fluvial flooding. There are areas of surface water ponding within the site, and potential flow paths in the context of climate change, which it is recommended are included within site design as open greenspace for flood mitigation. Most of the site is within an area where there is no risk of groundwater emergence, therefore infiltration SuDS may be suitable. Part of the east of the site is at potential residual risk from a breach of Rivington Lower reservoir. Consultation with United Utilities is advised to understand whether the proposed development would impact the risk designation of Rivington Lower reservoir.
- 10.97 Parts of the site lie within the Development High Risk Area designated by the Coal Authority, which corresponds to those parts of the coal mining reporting area which contain one or more recorded coal mining related features at surface or shallow depth. These features pose a potential risk to surface stability and public safety. Development proposals must therefore be supported by a Coal Mining Risk Assessment in order to demonstrate that the development will be safe and stable, taking full account of former coal mining activities.
- 10.98 Parts of the site also lie within Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) identified by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The 2013 Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan states that all non-mineral development proposals within Mineral Safeguarding Areas should extract any viable mineral resources present in advance of construction and in accordance with specified planning and environmental criteria.

Policy BSA08: Logistics North Extension

BSA08 LOGISTICS NORTH EXTENSION



1. Acceptable uses and amount of development

- A. The site is allocated as a strategic employment-led mixed-use extension to the Logistics North cluster.
- B. The site will comprise the following mix of uses:
 - i. Between 30,000 and 80,000 sqm of industrial and warehousing development.
 - ii. A subsidiary element of residential development. The primary purpose of the allocation is to deliver industrial and warehousing development. Opportunities for industrial and warehousing development should be maximised.
 - iii. The housing mix of any residential uses provided will be in accordance with Policy HS2 and include affordable housing in accordance with Policy HS1 and housing to support those with specialist housing needs in accordance with Policy HS3. Inclusive and high-quality design standards are expected in accordance with Policies HS3 and HS4, respectively. Student accommodation is not acceptable in this location; the spatial strategy directs it to Bolton Town Centre.

2. Design and placemaking response to site

- A. Provide new vehicular site access on Salford Road incorporating pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities.
- B. Retain and integrate the site's existing trees and woodland fringe areas into the landscape-led screening of employment uses from neighbouring residential uses and maximise connectivity with the green infrastructure network within and beyond the site.
- C. Structure the site design to incorporate the existing pylons and overhead power lines, mitigate their visual impact and make efficient use of land in accordance with National Grid design guidance.
- D. Support safe, direct and convenient access to and through the site by active travel facilities, linking to local services and amenities including bus stops, shopping parades, schools and other community facilities.
- E. Integrate sustainable drainage (SuDS) into the landscape design strategy, creating multifunctional green spaces and reinforcing the connectivity of Green and Blue Infrastructure in accordance with the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment.
- F. Secure the boundaries of the neighbouring residential development, and mitigate the visual, noise and air quality impacts of employment uses, and provide high-quality landscaping along the A6 Salford Road frontage.
- G. Conduct a coal mining risk assessment of the site and the development proposals.
- H. Consider the extraction of any viable mineral resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas, in accordance with policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan and relevant policies in subsequent minerals plans.
- I. Achieve high standards of design, sustainability and environmental performance in new development in accordance with Policy ENV1.
- J. Conduct a heritage impact assessment and demonstrate where the conservation of heritage assets can be integrated in the development, including through improved access and understanding.
- K. Maintain and reinforce the continuity of the Green Belt and make provision for compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the retained Green Belt in the vicinity of the site in accordance with Policy SP7. Strengthen the boundaries with the retained Green Belt with structural tree planting to form a permanent boundary.

Where housing uses are included, the following additional requirements also apply:

- L. Achieve a minimum net residential development density of 35 dwellings per hectare, in accordance with Policy PQ3.
- M. Retain and integrate the site's existing woodland fringe areas into structural landscaping and bunding as the primary means

	of mitigating noise, air quality and visual impacts associated with the M61 motorway, supplemented by noise attenuation fencing only where necessary. N. Provide an integrated hierarchy of open space and food-growing space onsite in accordance with Policy INF5 and new outdoor play space onsite in accordance with Policy INF6. O. Strengthen and extend the Public Right-of-Way network, improving off-road and leisure walking and cycling connections within the site and to surrounding areas, including across the M61. P. Provide natural surveillance and, where achievable, active frontage to all open spaces, streets, paths and other routes through the site, including Public Rights-of-Way, in accordance with Policy PQ1.
3. Site-specific requirements and infrastructure	A. Open Space - Retain and integrate the site's existing trees and woodland fringe areas into the landscape-led screening of employment uses from neighbouring residential uses. B. Transport - Create safe and direct walking and cycling routes to local services and amenities. - Extend and improve the Public Rights-of-Way and cycle networks. - Make a contribution towards enhanced bus services. C. Landscape - Provide structural tree planting along the boundaries with the retained Green Belt. D. Utilities - Deliver statutory reinforcements and/or upgrades to water, water waste, electricity and digital infrastructure. E. Flood Risk - Develop and implement a site-wide drainage strategy with nature-based solutions. Where housing uses are included, the following additional requirements also apply: F. Transport - Extend and improve the Public Rights-of-Way and cycle networks. - Make a contribution towards enhanced bus services. G. Open Space - Provide onsite an integrated hierarchy of open space, food-growing space, and outdoor play space.

BSA08 LOGISTICS NORTH EXTENSION

	- Retain existing woodland areas and integrate into the landscape-led mitigation of M61 motorway visual, noise and air quality impacts. H. Community Facilities - Make a contribution to education services. - Make a contribution to healthcare services.
4. Delivery and coordination	A. Evidence must be provided that adequate capacity exists in the water supply, wastewater, electricity, gas, high speed fibre and telecommunications networks needed to serve the development, or that sets out the reinforcement required and how it will be secured in agreement with the relevant statutory undertaker. B. Flood risk associated with this site must be addressed as follows: - A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment must be carried out in line with the latest versions of the NPPF, FRCC-PPG, EA online guidance, national and local SuDS policy and guidelines, and this Local Plan. - Throughout the Flood Risk Assessment process, consultation must be carried out with the Local Planning authority, the lead local flood authority, emergency planning officers, Environment Agency, United Utilities, highways authorities, and emergency services.

Reasons for Policy BSA08

10.99 The site is located at Junction 4 of the M61 between and adjacent to Logistics North, the North West's largest commercial development, the Places for Everyone (2024) JPA4 Bewshill Farm strategic employment allocation, and the Health Innovation Bolton (HIB), Bolton's largest single development site. Logistics North is a highly successful logistics and manufacturing location. It is a key node in NorthFold, previously known as the Wigan-Bolton Growth Location, which is an identified zone of transformational change between Bolton and Wigan aiming to deliver a regionally significant area of economic and residential development. Similarly, HIB is a catalyst project supported by NorthFold and anchored by existing health and training institutions on the site to create a health innovation cluster. The site is well related to the existing urban area and nearby infrastructure, forming a logical extension to Logistics North and to the neighbouring settlement of Little Hulton in the borough of Salford, resulting in a sustainable pattern of development.

10.100 The site is contained on three sides by the strategic highway network and comprises open agricultural fields with mature trees and an extensive woodland fringe to the west, north and east around the site perimeter. Along the southern boundary of the site are two groupings of terraced dwellings fronting Salford Road, with rear gardens backing onto the site. A Public Right of Way (BOL383) runs along the eastern boundary of the site. To the east, Bellway is completing a major residential development, The Putting Green at Brackley Village. To the south, the neighbouring Logistics North site provides a range of local facilities including a food store and convenience food and beverage outlets. Cutacre Country Park is located

approximately 500m west of the site. Little Hulton district centre is located approximately 1.5km east of the site, providing an extensive range of services and amenities, and can be reached directly from the site by existing bus services along Salford Road/Manchester Road West. The site is therefore in close proximity to a wide range of existing services and amenities that can be used by businesses, employees and potentially by residents based on the site. The site forms a natural extension of the opportunities provided at the Logistics North development and offers a flexible approach to the transition between employment and residential uses.

- 10.101 The east of the site is traversed by the Kearsley to Atherton 132kV overhead power lines, with two pylons located within the site. The National Grid publication 'A sense of place' provides detailed guidance on the design, planning and construction of developments near high-voltage overhead power lines and pylons. This framework enables the impacts of transmission infrastructure to be mitigated while making efficient use of land and supporting high-quality placemaking.
- 10.102 The Historic Environment Record managed by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) identifies agricultural and industrial heritage assets within the site. The conservation of these heritage assets and their integration in the development have the potential to contribute to the site's sense of place.
- 10.103 A Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment commissioned by the Council has found that the entire site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore at minimal risk of fluvial flooding. However, there are areas of significant surface water ponding along the northern site boundary and flow paths are modelled within the channels of the ordinary watercourses within the site. It is recommended that these areas remain as open greenspace for flood mitigation. The entire site is within an area where there is no risk of groundwater emergence, therefore infiltration SuDS may be suitable. There is a residual risk of flooding on the site from the potential blockage or structural failure of the culvert beneath Waterside Gardens to the southwest of the site; a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should consider modelling a blockage scenario to understand whether there would be any additional risk to the site. The assessment recommends that a detailed drainage strategy be required to ensure there is no increase in surface water flood risk elsewhere as a result of new development. All topographic low spots and surface water flow paths through the site should be considered within site design, left free of development and allowed to flood naturally when required, and greenfield runoff rates should apply. Ordinary watercourses should be included as green/blue corridors in site design offering multifunctional benefits alongside flood risk mitigation including Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) contributions and social and amenity benefits.
- 10.104 Parts of the site lie within the Development High Risk Area designated by the Coal Authority, which corresponds to those parts of the coal mining reporting area which contain one or more recorded coal mining related features at surface or shallow depth. These features pose a potential risk to surface stability and public safety. Development proposals must therefore be supported by a Coal Mining Risk Assessment in order to demonstrate that the development will be safe and stable, taking full account of former coal mining activities.
- 10.105 Parts of the site also lie within Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) identified by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The 2013 Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan states that all non-mineral development proposals within Mineral Safeguarding Areas should extract any viable mineral resources present in advance of construction and in accordance with specified planning and environmental criteria.
- 10.106 The site is also suitable for residential uses as part of an integrated approach to the transition from the employment uses centred on Logistics North located to the west,

to the residential uses located eastwards along Salford Road. This corridor offers the potential for residential development to be integrated into existing residential neighbourhoods, benefitting from existing education facilities and community amenities nearby, while improving access to open space, food-growing and play facilities. In addition to the convenience facilities at Logistics North, the site is within 1.5km of Little Hulton district centre, and there is scope for enhancements to public transport services and facilities.

- 10.107 The M61 forms the northern boundary of the site and limits vehicular and active travel routes northwards. It is also the source of high levels of road noise, exceeding 70 dB (Lden) across much of the area and requiring mitigation through layout, design and green infrastructure interventions. The existing woodland areas along the site boundary should be retained and enhanced, including through landscaping and bunding. Noise attenuation fencing should be avoided or minimised due to the associated visual impacts and compartmentalisation effect on landscapes.

Policy BSA09: The Alders, Tonge

BSA09 THE ALDERS, TONGE



1. Acceptable uses and amount of development

- A. The site is allocated for accommodation for Travelling Showpeople, with up to 50 plots in accordance with Policy HS7.

2. Design and placemaking response to site

- A. Maintain and reinforce the continuity of the Green Belt and the physical separation between settlements and make provision for compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the retained Green Belt in the vicinity of the site in accordance with Policy SP7. Strengthen the southern boundary and The Alders frontage with substantial tree planting to form a permanent Green Belt boundary, designed with the highway upgrades to The Alders.
- B. Use structural landscaping and bunding as the primary means of mitigating noise, air quality and visual impacts on neighbouring development, supplemented by noise attenuation fencing only where necessary.
- C. Support safe, direct and convenient access to and through the site by active travel facilities, linking to local services and amenities including bus stops, shopping parades, schools and other community facilities.

- D. Strengthen and extend the Public Right-of-Way network, improving off-road and leisure walking and cycling connections within the site and to surrounding areas.
- E. Retain existing woodland and mature trees, provide a 15m landscaped buffer to Castle Croft & Bradshaw Brook Site of Biological Importance, and maximise connectivity with the green infrastructure network within and beyond the site.
- F. Integrate sustainable drainage (SuDS) into the landscape design strategy, creating multifunctional green spaces and reinforcing the connectivity of Green and Blue Infrastructure.
- G. Provide outdoor play space onsite in accordance with Policy INF6, and contribute to the creation of an integrated hierarchy of open space and food-growing space in accordance with Policy INF5,
- H. Retain open greenspace in those parts of the site identified at surface water flood risk in accordance with the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment and integrate their design into the site-wide landscape design strategy.
- I. Consider the extraction of any viable mineral resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas, in accordance with policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan and relevant policies in subsequent minerals plans.
- J. Achieve high standards of design, sustainability and environmental performance in new development in accordance with Policy ENV1.
- K. Noise and Lighting Assessments will be required to determine the need for any mitigation of impacts associated with the movement, operation and maintenance of vehicles and equipment.

3. Site-specific requirements and infrastructure

- A. Open Space
 - Provide outdoor play space onsite.
 - Integrate into the landscape design the landscape-led mitigation of noise and visual impacts and tree planting along the southern boundary and The Alders.
- B. Community Facilities
 - Make a contribution to the provision of open space.
 - Make a contribution to education services.
 - Make a contribution to healthcare services.
- C. Transport
 - Create safe and direct walking and cycling routes to local services and amenities.
 - Extend and improve the Public Rights-of-Way and cycle networks.
 - Provide highway upgrades to The Alders in accordance with the Transport Statement.

	D. Utilities • Deliver statutory reinforcements and/or upgrades to water, water waste, electricity and digital infrastructure. E. Flood Risk • Develop and implement a site-wide drainage strategy with nature-based solutions.
4. Delivery and coordination	A. Evidence must be provided that adequate capacity exists in the water supply, wastewater, electricity, gas, high speed fibre and telecommunications networks needed to serve the development, or that sets out the reinforcement required and how it will be secured in agreement with the relevant statutory undertaker. B. A Transport Statement will be required to support proposals for development, which must: • Illustrate how conflicts between pedestrians and Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) will be minimised both onsite and on The Alders. • Include tracking analysis demonstrating how two HGVs can manoeuvre and pass on the site and on The Alders. • Assess traffic impact and what mitigation would be required to support additional traffic on The Alders. C. Flood risk associated with this site must be addressed as follows: • A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment must be carried out in line with the latest versions of the NPPF, FRCC-PPG, EA online guidance, national and local SuDS policy and guidelines, and this Local Plan. • Throughout the Flood Risk Assessment process, consultation must be carried out with the Local Planning authority, the lead local flood authority, emergency planning officers, Environment Agency, United Utilities, highways authorities, and emergency services.

Reasons for Policy BSA09

10.108 The site at the Alders provides the opportunity to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople in a location that can provide an appropriate setting for their accommodation. The site is positioned in a sheltered location between the settlements of Tonge and Brightmet, and within walking distance of key community facilities including schools and Accessible Green Space, including the Seven Acres Local Nature Reserve south of Thicketford Road. The existing Public Rights-of-Way network also provides informal off-road routes connecting the site to Tonge Moor Road Local Centre and Hall i' th' Wood Station, both within approximately 800m. The site directly adjoins Firwood Works employment site and is close to residential development off Crompton Way and Thicketford Road.

- 10.109 The sole vehicular access to the site is via The Alders, an unadopted road off Thicketford Road. This route currently provides access to Firwood Industrial Estate and already serves Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) movements. The Alders is also a designated Bridleway (BOL124), however there is no pedestrian footpath, and its width is narrow and potentially insufficient to support additional traffic. Development must avoid creating conflict between bridleway users, pedestrians and HGVs moving along The Alders. It should ensure that adequate sightlines are provided to ensure safe access to and from the site and avoid adverse impact on the bridleway in terms of drainage. In addition, the internal layout of the site will require careful design to avoid creating conflict between pedestrian and HGV movements. A Transport Statement will therefore be required to support proposals for development.
- 10.110 Accommodation for Travelling Showpeople necessarily includes spaces for vehicles, rides and equipment, the maintenance of which may have the potential to generate significant noise, and light impacts additional to that already associated with the adjoining industrial facilities at Firwood Works. The site is located near to residential properties at Ashdown Drive (northwest), Minster Road and Minster Close (west), Cartmel Crescent (southwest) and Thicketford Close (south). While these dwellings are not located sufficiently close for issues of overlooking or privacy to arise, the proximity may nevertheless present the potential for adverse noise and light impacts on the established residential uses, which is why noise and lighting assessments are sought.
- 10.111 The site is surrounded by Green Belt and by the Eagley and Bradshaw Brooks Incised Urban Fringe Valleys landscape character area, which is of high sensitivity to commercial development and moderate to high sensitivity to housing development. Accommodation for Travelling Showpeople necessarily includes spaces for the storage and maintenance of vehicles, rides and equipment, all requiring significant areas of hardstanding within the site. PPTS specifically advises against hard boundary treatments such as high walls and fences which can isolate Travelling Showpeople from the neighbouring community. A high-quality landscaping scheme will therefore be required with landscape-led treatments of the site boundaries to soften the appearance of the development and screen stored items, integrated with the landscape design across the site providing amenity areas, children's play, and privacy for individual plots. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will therefore be required to support proposals for development. In addition, the site adjoins Castle Croft & Bradshaw Brook Site of Biological Importance (SBI) to the west, part of which is identified as likely ancient woodland; a landscaped buffer of 15m will therefore be required to this site.
- 10.112 A Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment commissioned by the Council has found that the entire site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore at low risk of fluvial flooding, and the site is not shown to be at additional risk from climate change. However, there are several areas of ponding within across the site, as well as two flow paths that begin on-site and flow off-site via the southwestern boundary. Surface water risk is shown to increase in both extent and depth in all events when considering the impact of climate change. Caravans and temporary accommodation on-site must be sited away from these risk areas. The entirety of the site is within an area where groundwater levels are at or very near the ground surface in the 100-year return period flood event. There is a potential residual risk of flooding on the site from a breach of the Entwistle, Wayoh and Jumbles reservoirs. The assessment recommends that a detailed drainage strategy be required to ensure homes can be located in areas safe from flood risk and to ensure there is no increase in surface water flood risk elsewhere as a result. Existing runoff rates or betterment should apply.

10.113 Parts of the site also lie within Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) identified by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The 2013 Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan states that all non-mineral development proposals within Mineral Safeguarding Areas should extract any viable mineral resources present in advance of construction and in accordance with specified planning and environmental criteria.

Glossary

Active design: Principles that integrate physical activity and movement into the built environment, including walkable streets, accessible stairs, cycle storage, links to active travel routes, and accessible open space. (See: Sport England, Active Design (2023))

Active travel: Walking, wheeling and cycling for transport. National policy expects active travel to be prioritised in the design of new development and the management of the highway network. (NPPF (December 2024); Department for Transport, Gear Change (2020))

Affordable housing: Housing for sale or rent for those whose housing needs are not met by the market. The NPPF identifies four categories: affordable housing for rent (including Social Rent), starter homes, discounted market sales housing, and other affordable routes to home ownership. The percentage and tenure split that applies in Bolton is set by Policy HS1. (NPPF (December 2024, Annex 2))

Agent of Change: The principle that responsibility for managing the impact of changes in land use rests with the new development. Where a noise- or amenity-impact-generating use pre-dates new sensitive development (or vice versa), it falls to the new development to provide mitigation. Applied through Policies PQ1 and ENV5. (NPPF (December 2024), paragraph 198)

Air Quality Management Area (AQMA): An area declared by a local authority under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 where national air quality objectives are not being met or are at risk of not being met.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG): A statutory requirement for most planning permissions to deliver a measurable improvement of at least 10% in biodiversity, calculated using the statutory metric... (Environment Act 2021, Schedule 7A)

Brownfield land: See Previously developed land.

Build to Rent: Purpose built housing that is typically 100% rented out. It can form part of a wider multi-tenure development comprising either flats or houses but should be on the same site and/or contiguous with the main development. Schemes will usually offer longer tenancy agreements of three years or more and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.

Community Facility: Buildings and land providing for the social, cultural, educational, recreational, religious or health needs of a community, including community halls, places of worship, schools, libraries, GP surgeries, sports facilities, youth centres and public houses.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): A charge that local authorities can set on new development to help fund the infrastructure needed to support development.

Community Use Agreement: A legal agreement, usually secured through a planning obligation, that opens privately-owned facilities (typically school sports facilities or playing fields) to wider community use at specified times and on agreed terms.

Conservation Area: An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, designated under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Conservation area boundaries in Bolton are shown on the Policies Map and are supported by published conservation area appraisals.

Contextual Building Height: Contextual building height is the building height or range of building heights that can be observed as generally characteristic of a particular area, notwithstanding the presence of occasional landmarks of greater height such as church spires or industrial chimneys.

Deliverable: A site is deliverable for housing if it is available now, offers a suitable location for development now, and is achievable, with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. Applied to Bolton's five-year housing land supply. (NPPF (December 2024), Annex 2)

Department for Transport (DfT) Connectivity Tool: A national tool published by the Department for Transport for assessing connectivity by walking, cycling, public transport and car.

Designated heritage asset: A World Heritage Site, scheduled monument, listed building, protected wreck site, registered park and garden, registered battlefield, or conservation area, designated under the relevant legislation. Identified through the National Heritage List for England (Historic England) and, for conservation areas, on Bolton's Policies Map. (NPPF (December 2024), Annex 2)

Developable: A site is developable for housing if it is in a suitable location for development and there is a reasonable prospect that it will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged. Applied to years 6 to 15 of Bolton's housing land supply. (NPPF (December 2024), Annex 2)

Five-year housing land supply: A supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against the housing requirement, as required by national policy.

Greater Manchester Accessibility Level (GMAL): A measure developed by Transport for Greater Manchester of how accessible a location is by public transport, taking account of the proximity, frequency and number of services within walking distance. Scores range from 1 (poor) to 8 (excellent). (Transport for Greater Manchester, GMAL methodology)

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA): The combined authority of the ten Greater Manchester boroughs, led by the Mayor of Greater Manchester. The GMCA holds devolved powers over transport, housing, planning, economic development and other functions. (Greater Manchester Combined Authority Order 2011)

Green Belt: Land designated as Green Belt under national policy to keep land permanently open. Bolton's Green Belt is shown on the Policies Map and forms part of the wider Greater Manchester Green Belt.

Gypsy and Traveller / Travelling Showpeople: Persons of a nomadic habit of life as defined in national planning policy. See: Planning policy for traveller sites (2024); Planning policy for Travelling Showpeople sites)

Habitable Room: Any room used or intended to be used for sleeping, cooking, living or eating purposes.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA): A structured examination of a development's effects on health, covering access to open space and physical activity; active travel and public transport; noise, air quality and light; access to healthy food and health services; social infrastructure; active design; and impacts on health inequalities.

Health Statement: A short screening assessment of the likely health effects of a development, the population groups affected, and the mitigation proposed, prepared in accordance with a methodology agreed by Bolton Council's Public Health team. Required by

Heritage asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. Includes designated and non-designated heritage assets. (NPPF (December 2024), Annex 2)

Historic Environment Record (HER): A publicly accessible record of the known archaeological sites, historic buildings, designed landscapes and other heritage assets in Greater Manchester, maintained by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS).

Historic Mill: A textile mill or associated structure (engine house, chimney, weaving shed, warehouse) of the kind that defined Bolton's nineteenth-century industrial landscape. Includes both designated heritage assets (listed mills) and non-designated heritage assets (mills on the Local List or in the Historic Environment Record).

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO): A house or flat shared by three or more people from more than one household, with shared kitchen, bathroom or toilet facilities.

Inner Bolton: Inner Bolton comprises the wards of Queens Park & Central, Tonge with the Haulgh, Great Lever, Rumworth and Halliwell.

Joint Plan Allocation: A strategic site allocation established by Places for Everyone (2024). The Bolton Joint Plan Allocations are JPA4 Bewshill Farm, JPA5 Chequerbent North and JPA6 West of Wingates. They form part of the development plan and are not re-allocated by this Local Plan. (Places for Everyone (2024))

Listed building: A building included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, graded I, II* or II, identified through the National Heritage List for England maintained by Historic England.

Local Nature Reserve: A site of nature conservation interest declared by a local authority under section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Local Validation List: A list, published by Bolton Council, of the documents that must accompany a planning application for it to be validated. An application that does not include the required documents will not be validated and will not progress.

Local Wildlife Site: The national umbrella term for non-statutory sites of substantive nature conservation value identified by local authorities. In Greater Manchester, the equivalent and operative designation is the Site of Biological Importance (see SBI), maintained by GMEU. References to LWS in this plan should be read as references to the SBI register for Bolton.

Main town centre uses: Retail development; leisure, entertainment and the more intensive sport and recreation uses; offices; and arts, culture and tourism development.

Meanwhile Use: A temporary use of land or a building, intended to bring vacant or under-used sites into productive interim use pending longer-term development.

Net zero: A state in which the greenhouse gases emitted by a development or activity are matched by greenhouse gases removed from the atmosphere over the same period. The UK has a statutory target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Non-designated heritage asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified by the Local Planning authority as having heritage significance but not designated under national heritage legislation. In Bolton, includes locally listed buildings and structures on the Local List, and assets identified through the Historic Environment Record. (NPPF (December 2024), Annex 2)

Out-of-centre: A location that is not within or on the edge of a designated centre.

Placemaking: The combined process of planning, designing, managing and animating places so that they meet the needs of the people who live, work, visit and invest in them.

Places for Everyone (2024): The adopted joint Development Plan Document for nine of the ten Greater Manchester boroughs (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan), adopted March 2024. Forms part of the development plan for Bolton and sets the strategic spatial framework for Greater Manchester to 2039. (Places for Everyone Joint Plan, March 2024)

Planning obligation: A legally binding agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, used to secure measures to mitigate the impact of development or to deliver affordable housing or other contributions. Often referred to as a Section 106 agreement or S106. (Town and Country Planning Act 1990, s.106)

Policies Map: The map published alongside this Local Plan showing the spatial expression of the plan: every designation, boundary and allocation that the policies of this plan apply to. Forms part of the development plan and must be read with the written policies.

Previously developed land: Land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed). It also includes land comprising large areas of fixed surface infrastructure such as large areas of hardstanding which have been lawfully developed. Previously developed land excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

Sequential test: A test for retail, leisure and other main town centre uses (offices, hotels, cinemas, restaurants, etc.) proposed outside designated centres, requiring the applicant to demonstrate that no suitable, available and viable sites exist in a more central location.

Site of Biological Importance: A non-statutory designation used in Greater Manchester to identify sites of substantive nature conservation value at borough or sub-regional level. Maintained by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU). The Greater Manchester equivalent of what is called a Local Wildlife Site in many other parts of England.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): A statutory designation under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 protecting the best examples of the country's flora, fauna, geology and landforms. Bolton's SSSIs are West Pennine Moors, Red Moss, Nob End, Gale Clough and Shooterslee Wood, and Tonge River Section. Shown on the Policies Map. (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, sections 28–28R)

Strategic-Scale Development: 500+ dwelling or 5000sqm commercial development of a scale or significance that generates wider infrastructure, service or place-making requirements and requires coordinated planning and delivery beyond the individual development site.

Sui generis: A use of land or buildings that does not fall within any of the categories of the Use Classes Order.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): A surface water drainage approach that mimics natural drainage processes, using features such as permeable surfaces, swales, basins and ponds to manage runoff close to source. (See: NPPG: Flood risk and coastal change)

Tall Building: In Bolton, tall buildings are defined as buildings which are at least seven storeys above ground level or over 18m in height measured from the ground level on the lowest side of a building to the top storey upper floor surface, ignoring any storey which is a roof-top machinery or plant area or consists exclusively of machinery or plant rooms. This corresponds to the height-related criteria in the definition of 'higher-risk buildings' set out in section 65 of the 2022 Building Safety Act.

Transport Assessment (TA): A comprehensive assessment of the transport implications of a development, including its effects on the transport network, the suitability of access arrangements, and the mitigation required. Required by Policy INF1 above the relevant threshold. (NPPG: Travel plans, transport assessments and statements)

Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM): The functional body of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority responsible for delivering the mayor's transport strategy and operating Greater Manchester's transport network. A statutory consultee on planning applications with significant transport implications.

Transport Statement (TS): A simplified version of a Transport Assessment used for development with smaller transport implications. Required by Policy INF1 above the relevant threshold. (NPPG: Travel plans, transport assessments and statements)

Travel Plan (TP): A long-term management strategy for an organisation or development that delivers sustainable transport objectives through action and is articulated in a regularly reviewed document. Required by Policy INF1 for development above the relevant threshold. (NPPG: Travel plans, transport assessments and statements)

Use Class: A category of use of land or buildings defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). Changes of use within the same Use Class do not require planning permission; changes between Use Classes generally do, subject to permitted development rights. (Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987)

Windfall Sites: Sites not specifically identified in this Local Plan.

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Appendix 1

Superseded Policies

On adoption, this plan supersedes the following Bolton Core Strategy (2011) and the Site Allocations Plan (2014) in their entirety. Where a superseded policy is already replaced by a Greater Manchester-level policy through Places for Everyone (2024), that is noted in the 'Replaced by' column.

Core Strategy/ Allocations Plan Policy	Policy reference	Replaced By
Healthy	H1	JP-P6
Achieving	A1	JP-P5
Employment	P1	JP-J2, JP-J3 and JP-J4
Retail and Leisure	P2	
Waste	P3.1	JP-S6
Waste	P3.2	
Minerals	P4	
Accessibility	P5.1	JP-C1
Accessibility	P5.2	JP-C3
Accessibility	P5.3	JP-C7
Accessibility	P5.4	JP-C8
Accessibility	P5.5	
Accessibility	P5.6	JP-C5
Accessibility	P5.7	JP-C8
Safe	S1	JP-C8 and JP-P1
Cleaner and greener	CG1.1	JP-G1, JP-G2, JP-G3, JP-G4, JP G5 and JP-G7
Cleaner and greener	CG1.2	JP-G2
Cleaner and greener	CG1.3	JP-G6
Cleaner and greener	CG1.5	JP-S4
Cleaner and greener	CG1.6	JP-S2
Cleaner and greener	CG1.7	JP-S2
Sustainable design and construction	CG2 except CG2.2 (c) Sustainable Development	JP-S2
Sustainable design and construction	CG2.2 (c) Sustainable Development	
The built environment	CG3	JP-G1, JP-P1 and JP-P2
Compatible Uses	CG4	
Housing	SC1.1	JP-H1
Housing	SC1.2	
Housing	SC1.3	
Housing	SC1.4	
Housing	SC1.5	JP-H4
Housing	SC1.6	
Cultural and Community Provision	SC2	

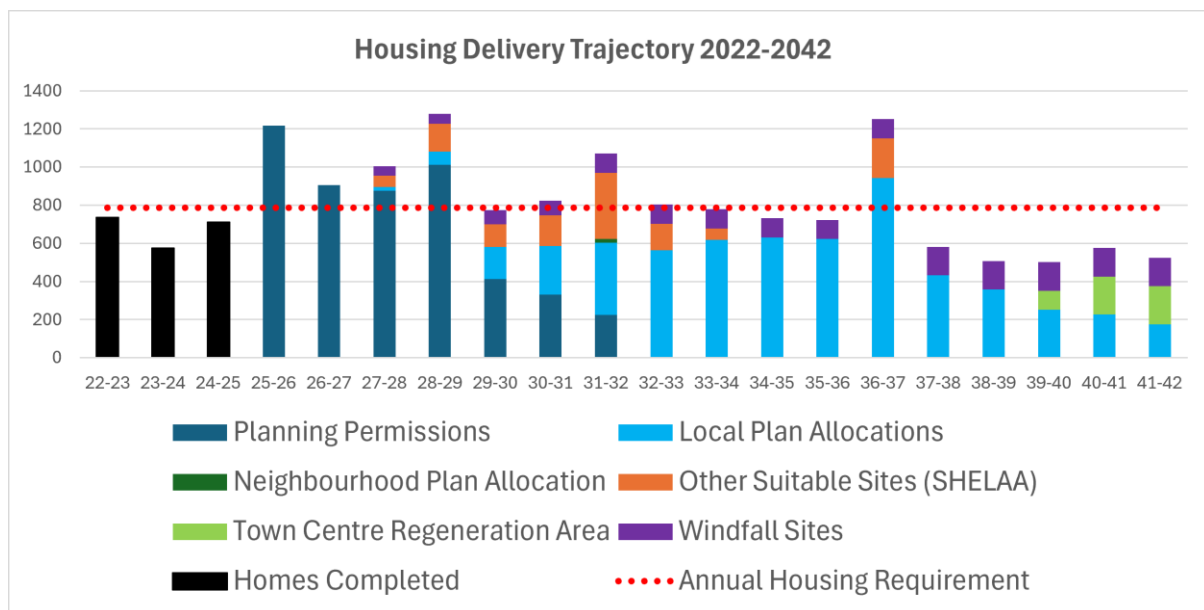
Core Strategy/ Allocations Plan Policy	Policy reference	Replaced By
Civic and retail core	TC1	
St Helena	TC2	
St Peter's	TC3	
Trinity Gateway	TC4	
Cultural Quarter	TC5	
Knowledge Campus	TC6	
Merchant's Quarter	TC7	
Church Wharf	TC8	
Little Bolton	TC9	
Urban Village	TC10	
Design in the town centre	TC11	
Inner Bolton	RA1	
Farnworth	RA2	
Brightmet	RA3	
Horwich Loco Works	M1	
Horwich Loco Works	M2	
Broad location for employment development	M3	
Middlebrook	M4	
Parklands and Lostock Industrial Area	M5	
Wingates Industrial Estate	M6	
The M61 Corridor Built Environment	M7	
Horwich and Blackrod	OA1	
Retail and Leisure Uses at Middlebrook	OA2	
Westhoughton	OA3	
West Bolton	OA4	
North Bolton	OA5	
Little Lever and Kearsley	OA6	
Links to other areas	LO1	
Infrastructure and planning contributions	IPC1	
Mixed Use Development	P6AP	
Strategic Route Network	P7AP	
Public Rights of Way	P8AP	
School playing fields	CG5AP	
Other Protected Open Land	CG6AP	
Green Belt	CG7AP	
Decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy development locations	CG8AP	

Appendix 2

Housing Trajectory, Five-Year Housing Land Supply and Small Sites

Housing trajectory

The following chart shows the expected rate of housing delivery by land supply source set out in Policy SP3. Detailed site-by-site analysis can be found in the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment and the Green Belt and Site Selections Paper.

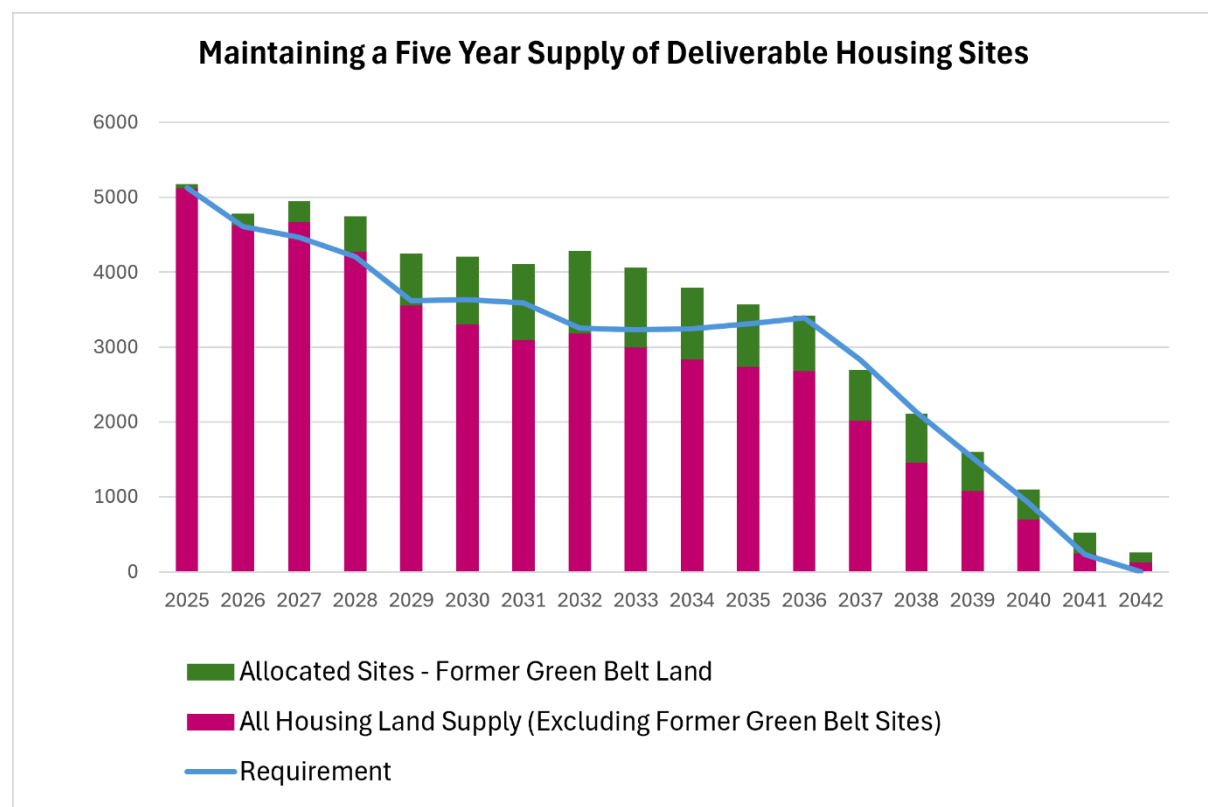


Five-year housing land supply

The Local Plan is required to identify and maintain a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites with an appropriate buffer. Without the Local Plan, Bolton does not meet this requirement, and without the contribution from former Green Belt sites the five-year housing land supply requirement cannot be maintained.

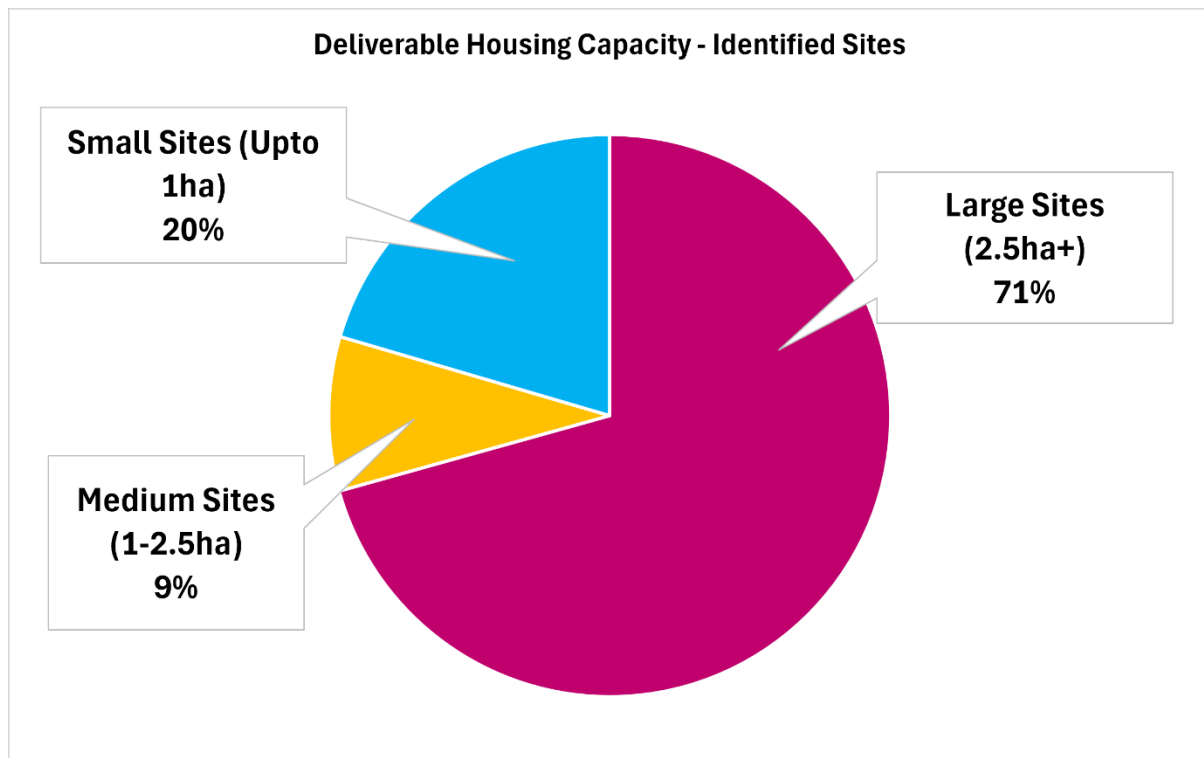
The following chart shows how the five-year requirement can be met once the Local Plan is adopted and the contribution the former Green Belt sites make towards maintaining the required supply.

The appropriate buffer is currently 5% but is likely to increase to 20% next year due to revised Planning Practice Guidance 'Housing Supply and Delivery' introduced in July 2026. For this reason, Bolton has planned for a land supply that can maintain a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites plus a 20% buffer for a minimum of five years from adoption.



Small sites supply

Small- and medium-sized sites make an important contribution towards the provision of a mix of housing sites that can be delivered quickly. The expectation for the Local Plan is for a minimum of 10% of the housing requirement to be met on small sites no larger than one hectare. The chart below shows the contribution the Local Plan expects to make towards the provision of small and medium-sized sites: 20% of the supply is on small sites and a further 9% is on medium-sized sites.



Appendix 3

Parking Standards

This appendix sets out the parking standards referred to in Policy INF2 and forms part of that policy.

Parking standards for people with disabilities: all development

Development	Parking for people with disabilities (minimum, all zones)
All development, unless stated below	6% of capacity or 3 spaces, whichever is greater Over 200 bays: 4% of total car parking capacity or 12 spaces, whichever is greater
Dwelling flats and apartments	6% of the total number of units or 3 spaces, whichever is greater
Dwelling houses	N/A if parking is in curtilage of dwelling Where parking is non-curtilage: 6% of total units or 3 spaces, whichever is greater
Retirement living or sheltered housing	6% of capacity or 3 spaces, whichever is greater
Houses in multiple occupation	To be provided based on likely need and requirement identified by developer, in collaboration with Local Planning authority

Car parking standards: residential development

Description	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
General Residential (C3)				
Dwelling houses, flats and apartments	1 space per 1 bed dwelling 2 spaces per 2 & 3 bed dwellings 3 spaces per four bed dwelling plus 0.5 spaces per additional bedroom	1 space per 1 bed dwelling 2 spaces per 2 & 3 bed dwellings 3 spaces per four bed dwelling plus 0.5 spaces per additional bedroom	1 space per 1 bed dwelling 2 spaces per 2 & 3 bed dwellings 3 spaces per four bed dwelling plus 0.5 spaces per additional bedroom	
Retirement living or sheltered housing	1 space per 3 dwellings & 0.25 unallocated visitor spaces per 3 dwellings			
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (C4) and Sui Generis HMOs				
Houses in Multiple Occupation	0.5 spaces per bedroom. Rounding down is not permitted.			
Residential Institutions (C2)				
Convalescent, Residential Care and Nursing Homes	1 space per 3 staff & 1 space per 10 beds	1 space per 2 staff & 1 space per 5 beds	1 space per 2 staff & 1 space per 4 beds	
Residential School / College or Training Centre	1 space per 2 staff & 1 space per 5 beds		1 space per 2 staff & 1 space per 4 beds	

Description	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Purpose-built student accommodation	0.33 spaces per bedroom		0.33 spaces per bedroom	

Car parking standards: non-residential development

Description	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Hotels (C1)				
Hotels	Parking for people with disabilities only	1 space per 3 bedrooms	1 space per bedroom	
Commercial Business and Service (E)				
Shops (a) Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food, & F2(a) non-food retail	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 50sqm	1 space per 25sqm	1 space per 20sqm
Shops (a) – Food Retail	Parking for people with disabilities only	1 space per 20sqm	1 space per 15sqm	1 space per 10sqm
Cafes and Restaurants (b)	1 space per 100sqm public floor area	1 space per 50sqm public floor area	1 space per 15sqm public floor area	1 space per 5sqm public floor area
Financial / Professional Services (c) (i) (ii) (iii)	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 50sqm	1 space per 35sqm	
Indoor Sport and Fitness (d)	Parking for people with disabilities only	1 space per 25sqm	1 space per 20sqm	
Medical and Health Services (e)	Parking for people with disabilities only	1 space per 2 staff and 3 spaces per consulting room	1 space per 2 staff and 4 spaces per consulting room	
Nursery, Creche and Day Centres (f)	1 space per 2 staff	1 space per 1.5 staff	1 space per staff	
Offices (g) (i)	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 70sqm	1 space per 50sqm	1 space per 40sqm
Research and Development (g) (ii)	1 space per 35sqm	1 space per 35sqm	1 space per 25sqm	
Light Industrial (g) (iii)	1 space per 500sqm	1 space per 250sqm	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 50sqm
Learning and Non-Residential Institutions (F1)				
Primary and Secondary Schools (a)	0.5 space per classroom	1 space per classroom	2 spaces per classroom	
Higher / Further Education (a)	1 space per 4 staff	1 space per 2 staff	1 space per 2 staff plus 1 per 15 students	
Art Gallery, Museums, Exhibition Halls (BCE)	Parking for people with disabilities only, or 1 space per 100sqm public floor area (to	1 space per 50sqm public floor area	1 space per 30sqm public floor area	

Description	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
	be agreed with the Development Management team)			
Library (d)	Parking for people with disabilities only	1 space per 50sqm of public floor area	1 space per 30sqm of public floor area	
Public Worship (f)	Parking for people with disabilities only	1 space per 20sqm of public floor area	1 space per 10sqm public floor area	
Local Community (F2)				
Halls or Meetings Places (b)	Parking for people with disabilities only	1 space per 20sqm	1 space per 10 seats	
Outdoor Sport / Recreation (c)	Parking for people with disabilities only	1 space per 5 people expected to use the facility at any one time (typical peak occupancy)	1 space per 2 people expected to use the facility at any one time (typical peak occupancy)	
Swimming Pools / Ice Skating Rinks (d)	Parking for people with disabilities only	1 space per 30sqm of public floor area	1 space per 25sqm of public floor area	
General Industry (B2) *				
Carrying on of an industrial process other than one falling within the uses described in Class E	Parking for people with disabilities only	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 60sqm	
Storage or Distribution (B8)				
Storage / Distribution Centre	1 space per 500sqm	1 space per 250sqm	1 space per 100sqm	
Sui Generis (no class specified)				
Cinemas, Theatres, Bingo Halls and Casinos, Conference Centres and Concert Halls	Parking for people with disabilities only	1 space per 10 seats	1 space per 5 seats	
Public Houses, Wine Bars, Other Drinking Establishments	Parking for people with disabilities only	1 space per 20sqm of public floor area	1 space per 10sqm of public floor area	
Hot Food Takeaways (Including Drive Throughs)	Parking for people with disabilities only	1 space per 35sqm of gross floor area	1 space per 20sqm of public floor area	

**Specific and/or niche development types such as chemical and hazardous waste facilities will require additional bespoke considerations to be agreed with the Development Management team.*

No car parking standard is set for hospitals, special educational needs schools, law courts, car related uses, petrol filling stations, rail stations, park and ride sites, or stadia. Car parking for these uses, and for any use not listed above, will be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with section 3 of Policy INF2. Cycle parking standards for these uses are set out below. Houses in multiple occupation are dealt with in the residential table above.

Cycle parking standards: all development

Description	Staff / resident (long stay)	Visitor (short stay)
General Residential (C3)		
Dwelling flats and apartments	1 secure, covered cycle storage space per unit	1 visitor space per 10 units
Dwelling Houses	1 secure, covered cycle storage space per bedroom (if no garage or secure area is provided within curtilage of dwelling)	
Retirement living or sheltered housing	1 space per 6 residents & 1 space per 4 staff	
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (C4) and Sui Generis HMOs		
Houses in Multiple Occupation	1 secure, covered cycle storage space per bedroom (if no garage or secure area is provided within curtilage of dwelling)	
Residential Institutions (C2)		
Convalescent, Residential Care and Nursing Homes	1 space per 5 staff	1 visitor cycle stand per 20 residents
Residential School / College or Training Centre	1 space per 5 staff plus 1 space per 2 students	1 visitor cycle stand per 20 residents
Student Accommodation	1 space per 4 staff	1 space per 20 bed spaces
Hospitals	1 space per 4 staff	1 space per 10 beds (short stay)
Hotels (C1)		
Hotels	1 space per 4 staff	1 space per 10 bedrooms
Commercial Business and Service (E)		
Shops (a) Display or Retail Sale of Goods, other than Hot Food & F2(a) Non-Food Retail	1 secured covered space per 150sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 secured covered space per 150sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)
Shops (a) Food Retail	1 secured covered space per 150sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 secured covered space per 150sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)
Shops (a) Comparison / Non-Food Retail	1 secured covered space per 150sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 secured covered space per 150sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)
Cafes and Restaurants (b)	1 secure covered space and locker per 100sqm	1 space per 100sqm
Financial / Professional Services (c) (i) (ii) (iii)	1 secure staff space and locker per 50sqm	1 secure staff space and locker per 500sqm
Indoor Sport and Fitness (d)	10 spaces plus 10% of vehicle spaces	
Medical and Health Services (e)	1 secure covered space & locker per 4 staff	1 space per 50sqm
Nursery, Creche and Day Centres (f)	1 secure covered space & locker per 4 members of staff	1 space per 10 children with a minimum of 2 spaces

Description	Staff / resident (long stay)	Visitor (short stay)
Offices (g) (i)	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 500sqm with a minimum of 2 spaces
Research and Development (g) (ii)	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 500sqm with a minimum of 2 spaces
Light Industrial (g) (iii)	1 space per 100sqm	1 space per 500sqm with a minimum of 2 spaces
Learning and Non-Residential Institutions (F1)		
Primary and Secondary Schools (a)	1 space per 4 staff & 1 space per 5 pupils	1 space per 500sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)
Higher / Further Education (a)	1 space per 20 staff & 1 space per 5 students	1 space per 500sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)
Art Gallery, Museums, Exhibition Halls (BCE)	1 space per 4 staff	1 space per 100sqm with a minimum of 2 spaces
Library (d)	1 space per 4 staff	1 space per 100sqm with a minimum of 2 spaces
Public Worship (f)	1 space per 200sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	
Law Courts (g)	1 space per 200sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	
Local Community (F2)		
Halls or Meetings Places (b)	1 space per 4 staff	Additional cycle stands at 1 space per 40sqm open to the public or 1 space per 60 seats (minimum of 5)
Outdoor Sport / Recreation (c)	10 spaces plus 10% of vehicle spaces	
Swimming Pools / Ice Skating Rinks (d)	1 space per 4 staff	Additional cycle stands at 1 space per 40sqm open to the public or 1 space per 60 seats (minimum of 5)
General Industry (B2) and Storage or Distribution (B8)		
Carrying on of an industrial process other than one falling within the uses described in Class E	1 space per 300sqm	1 space per 500sqm
Storage / Distribution Centre	1 space per 300sqm	1 space per 500sqm
Sui Generis (no class specified)		
Cinemas, Theatres, Bingo Halls and Casinos, Conference Centres and Concert Halls	1 space per 10 staff	Greatest of 1 per 40sqm or 1 per 60 seats / capacity
Public Houses, Wine Bars, Other Drinking Establishments	1 space per 400sqm (short stay) with a minimum of 2 spaces	
Car Related Uses	1 space per 10 staff	Assessed on a case-by-case basis
Petrol Filling Stations	1 space per 10 staff	Assessed on a case-by-case basis
Hot Food Takeaways (Including Drive Throughs)	1 space per 100sqm with a minimum of 2 spaces	
Rail stations / park and ride	Assessed on a case-by-case basis	
Stadia	1 space per 10 staff	Greatest of 1 per 40sqm or 1 per 60 seats / capacity

Appendix 4

Monitoring and Review

Table A4.1 sets out the key indicators for monitoring the Plan. The Council will publish an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) each year, which will report on these indicators and on wider contextual indicators, including the monitoring measures in the Sustainability Appraisal, to ensure the Plan is delivered effectively.

Places for Everyone is monitored jointly by the nine authorities that prepared it. The AMR will use those results for Bolton. Where a trigger in Table A4.1 is reached, the AMR will explain why and say whether any action is needed.

Table A4.1: Key monitoring indicators

Indicator	Target	Trigger	Policies
Net additional homes completed.	At least 787 a year, and at least 13,717 between 2025 and 2042.	Cumulative completions fall below the cumulative requirement for three consecutive years.	SP3
Affordable homes completed, by tenure.	The rates in Policy HS1, with social rent at least 53% of affordable homes.	Social rent is below 53% of affordable completions over three consecutive years.	HS1
Employment floorspace completed, remaining deliverable supply, and progress of each SP2 allocation towards planning permission.	811,727 sqm of industrial and warehousing floorspace, and at least 16,700 sqm of office floorspace, over the Plan period.	Completions plus remaining deliverable supply fall below the remaining need.	SP2
Infrastructure required by site allocation policies.	Delivered at the stage set in the allocation policy or approved masterplan.	Delay puts delivery of an allocation at risk.	INF3, DEL1
Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots.	11 pitches and 15 plots by 2030; a further 2 pitches and 15 plots by 2042.	Provision is not on course to meet the 2030 need.	HS7, BSA09

Review

1. The Council must begin **preparing** a new Local Plan within five years of adopting this Plan.
2. The Council may start sooner if monitoring or new evidence shows the Plan needs updating, or if a Greater Manchester Spatial Development Strategy or a replacement for Places for Everyone changes the strategic context for the Plan.
3. The Council will also work with providers to ensure the Bolton Infrastructure Delivery Strategy (2026) is periodically reviewed and updated to ensure it effectively supports implementation of plan policies.

The document contains images that include mapping and data derived from the Office for National Statistics, Ordnance Survey and the Environment Agency:

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