



BOLTON LOCAL PLAN 2022 TO 2042

Integrated Topic Paper

Published alongside the Regulation 19
Publication Plan

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1. Purpose and Approach

- 1.1 This paper is published alongside the Regulation 19 Publication Plan. It explains the rationale for the plan as a whole and for its policies, extending the reasoned justification in the plan itself.
- 1.2 It covers:
- the national policy basis of the plan, including the plan period and housing numbers (section 2);
 - consistency with Places for Everyone (section 3);
 - engagement with neighbouring authorities on unmet need and cross-boundary matters (section 4);
 - the case for the plan's approach to housing (section 5), employment (section 6) and the Green Belt (section 7);
 - a summary of the other plan matters, policy by policy, giving the national policy and Places for Everyone basis, the evidence and the reasons for each (section 8);
 - conclusion (section 9).
- 1.3 Evidence base documents are cited in full, with the reference used in the Local Plan Supporting Documents index on the Council's website given in brackets where relevant at the end of this paper.

2. National Policy Basis

- 2.1 A plan must be prepared having regard to national policy, and is examined against the soundness tests, including whether it is consistent with national policy. This plan is prepared and falls to be examined against the NPPF 2021¹: the version against which Places for Everyone (PfE)², the adopted strategic plan this Local Plan delivers, was examined and found sound. Under the transitional arrangements for plans prepared under an adopted strategic plan, no district plan prepared under PfE is subject to the NPPF 2024³, or any later revision. Within those arrangements there is ambiguity between the NPPF 2021 and NPPF 2023⁴ versions; it has no practical effect, as the two are materially the same for the matters this plan addresses.
- 2.2 Notwithstanding, in our view the relevant previous version of the NPPF for the purposes of paragraph 235 in this case is the NPPF 2021. We consider this to be because PfE was examined against the NPPF 2021 and thus the NPPF 2021 is the relevant previous version of the NPPF because it is relevant to the PfE. This is consistent with the underlying purpose of these transitional provisions, namely that the same version of the NPPF is used to assess a later plan which seeks to meet the objectives of an earlier plan.

Figure 1: National policy versions and the plan timetable



- 2.3 The Council has also had regard initially to the NPPF 2024 and then to the NPPF 2026⁵ in preparing the Plan. Sections 5 to 8 record the plan's position against the August 2026 Framework: the plan aligns with the 2021 NPPF except where local evidence justifies a departure and is consistent in substance with the 2026 NPPF; where a policy expresses what is now national decision-making policy it does so consistently with it and adds the Bolton-specific thresholds, definitions and locations.
- 2.4 This does not alter the version against which the plan is examined, but seeks to keep the plan aligned with latest national policy where appropriate for consistency with development management and where consistent with local evidence.

- 2.5 The housing requirement is that set by PfE Policy JP-H1: 787 dwellings per year for 2022 to 2039, rolled forward to 2042. The requirement is taken from JP-H1 in place of the standard method, whether in the form published in December 2024 or as now set out in Annex D of the 2026 NPPF.
- 2.6 The roll-forward is what the adopted plan itself directs: paragraph 1.56 and footnote 2 of PfE state that where a local plan looks beyond 2039, the annual average in Policy JP-H1 is to be treated as a minimum requirement for each year after 2039. The approach is also the one the NPPF 2026 takes: policy HO2(1) provides that where a strategic plan has established a housing requirement for each authority, that figure should not be retested through local plan preparation unless there has been a significant change in circumstances affecting the overall requirement and its distribution, and no such change has occurred.
- 2.7 Any need identified by the standard method will be established and distributed across Greater Manchester through the Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy, which is the plan that will set district requirements for the period after PfE: until it is adopted there is no district figure to plan to other than JP-H1.
- 2.8 The five-year housing land supply regime that applies to the examination of this plan is that of the NPPF 2021; the changes made by later Frameworks apply to decision taking (see paragraph 5.13 below). Supply is demonstrated against the plan requirement, through the trajectory in the Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper⁶.

3. Consistency with Places for Everyone

- 3.1 PfE², establishes the strategic framework for the sub-region to 2039: the spatial strategy, a minimum housing requirement for each district, Greater Manchester-wide employment floorspace requirements, strategic allocations and Green Belt boundary changes. The Local Plan is prepared under PfE and delivers it, leaving PfE's strategic policies as adopted.
- 3.2 Consistency with PfE is a requirement. PfE is part of the statutory development plan for Bolton, and this plan is the detailed tier beneath it. PfE itself states that local plans will need to be consistent with it (paragraph 1.56), national policy expects detailed policies to be consistent with the strategic policies for the area, and under section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004⁷, as amended, any conflict between policies in the development plan is resolved in favour of the policy in the last document to become part of it: an inconsistent Local Plan, adopted after PfE, would therefore displace the parts of PfE with which it conflicted, so the Plan is drafted to avoid any such conflict.
- 3.3 The plan is consistent with the spatial strategy, and with the housing requirement and other targets, established in PfE. In particular:
- the spatial strategy at Policy SP1 directs growth to the locations that deliver PfE's strategy within Bolton, including Central Bolton, Health Innovation Bolton, the NorthFold strategic employment locations, Middlebrook and Hulton Park;
 - Policy SP3 provides for the PfE housing requirement of 787 dwellings per year for 2022 to 2039, with the annual figure rolled forward for 2039 to 2042, consistent with the agreed Greater Manchester position;
 - Policy SP2 provides for employment land consistent with the Greater Manchester-wide floorspace requirements, which are met across the sub-region as a minimum and in locations consistent with the spatial strategy;
 - Policy SP7 addresses the Green Belt within the framework established by PfE, with any further boundary changes made where exceptional circumstances are demonstrated in accordance with national policy and justified by local evidence.
- 3.4 Table 1 shows how the strategic policies correspond to PfE. The Places for Everyone basis of each other policy is given in sections 5 to 8.

Table 1: Strategic policies and the Places for Everyone policies they deliver

Local Plan strategic policy	Places for Everyone
SP1 Invest in Bolton: Our Growth Anchors	Delivers the PfE spatial strategy within Bolton, including the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor (JP-Strat6 and JP-Strat8)
SP2 Land for Employment (2042)	Contributes to the GM-wide floorspace requirements (JP-J3, JP-J4)
SP3 Land for Housing (2042)	Provides for the JP-H1 requirement (787 dwellings per year to 2039, rolled forward to 2042)
SP4 Centres for Shopping and Services	Local centre hierarchy beneath JP-Strat12 (Main Town Centres) and JP-P4 (New Retail and Leisure Uses in Town Centres)
SP5 Historic Built Environment and Landscape	Local strategy beneath JP-P2 (Heritage) and JP-G1 (Landscape Character)
SP6 Natural Environment	Local strategy beneath JP-G1 to JP-G8 (Greener Places)
SP7 Green Belt (2042)	Operates within the Green Belt established by JP-G9 (The Green Belt); further change only under the exceptional circumstances route

- 3.5 PfE is Part 1 of the development plan for Bolton. The distribution of housing need across the nine authorities (JP-H1), the Greater Manchester-wide employment floorspace requirements (JP-J3 and JP-J4), the strategic allocations (JPA4 to JPA6 in Bolton) and the Green Belt boundary (JP-G9) were settled through PfE and its examination. Cross-boundary matters are addressed in large part through PfE on that basis; the Council's engagement with neighbouring authorities on the residual matters is in section 4.

4. Engagement with Neighbouring Authorities

Basis

- 4.1 The statutory duty to cooperate was revoked with effect from 25 March 2026 and does not apply to the plan. PfE² is Part 1 of the development plan for Bolton and distributed housing need across the nine authorities (JP-H1), set the Greater Manchester-wide employment floorspace requirements (JP-J3 and JP-J4) and established the strategic allocations and the Green Belt boundary (JP-G9), so cross-boundary matters are addressed in large part through PfE and its examination. The Council has engaged with the neighbouring authorities on an ongoing basis since publication of Issues and Options⁸ in summer 2025 and continues to do so through the Greater Manchester arrangements and on each authority's own plan.

The request

- 4.2 The engagement covers the nine other Greater Manchester authorities (Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) and Blackburn with Darwen and Chorley. In August 2026 the Council asked each to confirm its position on whether it could make provision towards Bolton's residual unmet need over the plan period on three matters: industrial and warehousing floorspace, housing, and Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation. Each was also notified of the strategic site allocations and the associated strategic infrastructure, including the link road from Junction 5 of the M61, and invited to comment on cross-boundary effects.

Responses

- 4.3 All eleven authorities have confirmed that no provision is available on any of the three matters.
- 4.4 Each authority's supply is needed to meet its own requirement (for the PfE authorities, the JP-H1 housing requirement and their contribution to the PfE employment requirement); Bury and Wigan would need further Green Belt release to do otherwise; Bury, Manchester, Rochdale, Salford and Stockport have unmet need of their own for pitches or plots; and Chorley's position rests on the Statement of Common Ground on the Central Lancashire Local Plan, signed by Bolton Council on 23 June 2025, which confirms that there is no unmet need to be met in either direction between the Central Lancashire and Greater Manchester authorities.

Conclusion

- 4.5 The Plan meets Bolton's housing, employment and travelling Showpeople accommodation need within Bolton, and provides for gypsy and traveller pitches as section 5 describes. Engagement with neighbouring authorities on the cross-boundary effects of the allocations and the strategic infrastructure continues on an ongoing basis, informed by the transport evidence and the Infrastructure Delivery Strategy⁹ (section 8).

5. Housing

Policies covered

- 5.1 This section covers Policy SP3 Land for Housing, Policies HS1 to HS7 (plan chapter 8), the housing allocations BSA01 to BSA06 and the Travelling Showpeople site BSA09 (Local Plan chapter 10).

Summary of Core Evidence

The following documents can be found here:

<https://www.bolton.gov.uk/planning-policy-strategy/local-plan>

Bolton Green Belt Assessment: Assessment of Proposed Allocations Addendum, LUC, 2026 (EVS04)

Bolton Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVI01)

Bolton Local Housing Need Assessment (LHNA), Arc4, 2026 (EVH01)

Bolton Local Plan Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS01)

Bolton Local Plan Whole Plan Viability Assessment, Porter Economics, 2026 (EVD01)

Bolton Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) and Annexes A to D, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS02.1 to EVS02.5)

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Needs Assessment 2026, Arc4, 2026 (EVH02)

National Planning Policy Framework (2021 NPPF) Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (NAT01)

National Planning Policy Framework Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (2026 NPPF) NAT04

Places for Everyone (PfE), Joint Development Plan Document for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan 2022-2039, March 2024 (DP01)

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, MHCLG, December 2024 (NAT03)

Plan period and requirement

- 5.2 The plan period is 2022 to 2042: the base date aligns with PfE² and its evidence, and the end date provides at least fifteen years from anticipated adoption, as the NPPF 2021¹ requires for a plan containing locally specific strategic policies (paragraph 22). SP2, SP3 and SP7 all run to 2042 on this basis.
- 5.3 For 2039 to 2042, beyond the PfE horizon, the housing figure rolls the PfE annual requirement forward, as PfE paragraph 1.56 and footnote 2 direct for plans looking beyond 2039 (see paragraph 2.5 above).

Figure 2: The plan period and the housing requirement



Policy SP3 Land for Housing

- 5.4 The reasons and justification for the Local Plan housing requirement are detailed at paragraphs 2.5, 5.2 and 5.3 above. Strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, other than where there are strong reasons for restrictions or where benefits would be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by adverse impacts (NPPF 2021, paragraph 11).
- 5.5 The NPPF 2021 requires planning policies to identify sufficient supply and mix of sites, informed by a clear understanding of land availability, suitability and likely economic viability. Planning policies should identify a supply of specific, deliverable sites for five years (with an appropriate buffer), developable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for years 11 to 15 of the plan. Land to accommodate at least 10% of the housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare should be identified (paragraph 68).
- 5.6 Policy SP3 provides a breakdown of identified housing land supply to meet the minimum housing requirement of 787 net additional homes a year (2022 to 2042). During the first three years of the Plan period 2,023 net additional homes have been delivered, which leaves the residual requirement of 13,717 over the Plan period from 2025.
- 5.7 The Bolton Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)¹⁰ was prepared closely following each stage of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment PPG¹¹. Chapter 7 of the SHELAA provides detailed evidence of current housing land availability.
- 5.8 Having thoroughly examined all sources of land supply it was concluded that there is currently a shortfall of land to deliver up to 4,638 net additional homes. To meet this shortfall, it is proposed that the current protected open land policy designation is not saved and that the Green Belt is altered and land allocated for housing adjacent to the Royal Bolton Hospital (see section 7). These two proposals increase the total Plan period housing land supply to 14,052 net additional dwellings (SHELAA, Chapter 12). The neighbouring authorities have confirmed that no provision is available towards Bolton's housing need (see section 4). Table 2 shows the sources of supply in Policy SP3.

Table 2: Housing land supply 2025 to 2042 by source (Policy SP3(1))

Source of supply	Net additional homes
Sites with planning permission	4,976
Neighbourhood Plan allocations	20
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment sites	1,741
Windfall sites	1,600
Strategic and key housing allocations	5,715
Total	14,052

- 5.9 Throughout, the SHELAA takes a cautious approach to land supply. Only sites and land for which there is a high degree of certainty of delivery within the Plan period have been included. All plan period deliverable site capacity estimates err on the side of caution, while compliance with PfE and Local Plan density policy is still expected. This approach provides a capacity headroom of up to 1,726 net additional dwellings (15%) with the potential to make up for any shortfall should any of the identified sites not come forward or be delivered as expected. An additional potential site is Hulton Park, this was granted planning permission in exceptional circumstances and cannot be considered deliverable or developable within the plan period (SHELAA paragraph 7.4).
- 5.10 The six largest sites each have a site-specific plan allocation policy (BSA01 to BSA06, and BSA08 for employment) which sets out Bolton's requirements and provides guidance for planning applications (Table 3).

Table 3: Strategic and key housing allocations (Policy SP3(6))

Allocation	Minimum plan period deliverable capacity (homes)
BSA01 Crompton Place	340
BSA02 Health Innovation Bolton	1,895
BSA03 Anchor Lane, Farnworth	460
BSA04 Lee Hall	1,450
BSA05 Ditchers Farm, Westhoughton	570
BSA06 Burnden Way, Middlebrook	1,000
Total	5,715

- 5.11 Each of the sites included in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Sites supply is listed at Table 2 of the SHELAA. The policy is supportive of proposals on these sites and on windfall sites within the built-up areas where there is

access to essential services and facilities, infrastructure capacity and the development contributes towards meeting Bolton's housing needs. Appendix A of the SHELAA provides an index of all sites assessed, a summary of the outcome of the assessment and references to the site assessments in the SHELAA Annexes.

- 5.12 Local Plan Appendix 2 illustrates the expected rate of housing delivery and how the Local Plan meets the 2021 NPPF requirements to identify a five-year supply of deliverable sites and to accommodate at least 10% of the housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare (paragraphs 68 and 69).

Five-year supply and buffer

- 5.13 For the purposes of decision taking, the 2026 NPPF⁵ applies. A lack of a five-year supply of deliverable sites, including the relevant buffer, is considered as evidence of unmet need and the requirements of Policy S5(j) and GB7(g) are engaged, tipping the balance in favour of development outside of settlements and on grey belt land in sustainable locations (provided other criteria are met).
- 5.14 The required buffer for Bolton is currently 5%, the latest Housing Delivery Test¹² result being 87% and the PfE annual average housing requirement (divided by the number of years in the plan period and applied in aggregate across the joint plan area) being 82.6% of the standard method annual local housing need figure for the PfE authorities (NPPF 2026, Annex D, paragraph 9). As both of these test results are running close to the 20% buffer requirement threshold, the Local Plan takes a cautious approach in planning to maintain a 20% buffer.

Policy HS1 Affordable Homes

- 5.15 The Local Housing Needs Assessment¹³ (LHNA) aligns with the 2021 NPPF and associated Housing Needs of Different Groups PPG¹⁴. The LHNA identifies a need for 501 new affordable homes per year for the next ten years to meet the current backlog of unmet need and the needs of newly forming households and evidences the need for a robust affordable housing policy (LHNA, paragraph 5.3).
- 5.16 The LHNA identified need for affordable housing is not a delivery target for the Local Plan, needs are met in many different ways, but the level of need identified by the LHNA provides compelling evidence for a Local Plan policy that can make a significant contribution towards meeting needs.
- 5.17 The policy requires the provision of affordable housing on major developments in line with 2021 NPPF paragraph 64 (defined as 10 or more homes or 0.5ha or more, 2021 NPPF Annex 2 Glossary).
- 5.18 The recommended overall tenure split is 65% market, 26% social and affordable rent and 9% home ownership (LHNA, Table 6.1a). Of the affordable housing to be provided the recommended tenure split is 53% social rented, 21% affordable rented and 26% affordable home ownership (LHNA, paragraph 6.6).

- 5.19 The emphasis on social rented homes aligns with current national and regional objectives. The policy requires affordable home ownership at the 9% of all new dwellings the LHNA identifies, below the 10% in 2021 NPPF paragraph 65, with social rent the priority tenure, which engages both exceptions in that paragraph; a 10% requirement would prejudice Bolton's ability to meet the priority need for social rented homes.
- 5.20 The policy proposes a range of affordable housing requirements as a percentage of all homes in different value zones across the borough. The zones and values have been informed by the Whole Plan Viability Assessment¹⁵, which has tested a range of typologies typical of the housing developments expected in different areas of the borough alongside testing the sites proposed for allocation. Honing the level of affordable housing required in each zone has been an iterative process, balancing the need for affordable housing with other policy objectives. Land within or released from the Green Belt is expected to deliver higher affordable housing contributions (25%, 35% and 50% against 10%, 20% and 35% in Value Zones 1 to 3) because the public benefit test for developing restricted land is a higher test set out in national policy.
- 5.21 Notably, there is no affordable housing requirement within Bolton Town Centre where viability is particularly weak and the priority is regeneration. Nonetheless, new affordable homes are still anticipated in the Town Centre through different delivery models.
- 5.22 The policy includes mechanisms which aim to ensure the Council's expectations are clear and policy requirements are not evaded. It includes flexibility for when on-site affordable housing provision is not practical or viable and includes a provision for claw-back when viability improves for sites that exceed the 2026 NPPF definition of medium development (NPPF 2026, Annex B).
- 5.23 Part 4 of the policy expects developers to work with Bolton Housing Partnership. Detailed guidance to assist the planning application process is provided in the Bolton Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy; used in tandem with the emerging Local Plan, the strategy will replace the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, 2013¹⁶.
- 5.24 The LHNA (paragraph 2.44) recognises the contribution Build to Rent can make towards meeting Bolton's housing needs. The policy adopts the Build to rent PPG¹⁷ advised rate of 20% discount (Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 60-003-20180913).
- 5.25 First Homes are omitted from the policy because the 2024 NPPF withdrew the paragraph 72 requirement and First Homes are not an identified priority tenure.

Policy HS2 Housing Mix

- 5.26 The LHNA recommends on housing sizes needed by tenure (Table 5.2c); these are reflected in the policy housing mix requirements for major developments to help address identified needs. To avoid over-prescription the policy provides

for flexibility in locations that already have a proliferation of a particular house type, or where the site does not lend itself to the required mix.

- 5.27 A cap for the proportion of one-bedroom market homes and a threshold for the proportion of three-bedroom affordable homes is set to reflect priority local needs, particularly the need for family affordable homes.
- 5.28 There is limited evidence of demand for self-build in Bolton (LHNA paragraphs 4.65 to 4.67). The Council maintains a register and the policy supports those wishing to commission or build their own homes (2021 NPPF paragraph 63). The expectation is for developments to come forward on windfall sites. The SHELAA and the Brownfield Register¹⁸ provide evidence of land availability.
- 5.29 There is little evidence of need for student accommodation, so no local policy framework is justified (LHNA paragraphs 4.68 to 4.70).

Policy HS3 Inclusive Homes

- 5.30 Older people and people with disabilities are specifically identified as groups whose needs should be assessed (2021 NPPF, paragraph 62, NAT01). The Housing for Older and Disabled People PPG¹⁹ addresses the important role of planning in offering a better choice of housing.
- 5.31 Chapter 4 of the LHNA provides evidence for the needs of different groups in Bolton.
- 5.32 Bolton has an ageing population, the majority wanting to stay in their own home. The need for specialist homes for older people is around 3,542 homes, with a particular need for leasehold sheltered housing. There is also a demand for some specialist and supported accommodation for older people (paragraphs 4.4 to 4.17).
- 5.33 There is an increasing need for homes suitable for people with physical disability, learning disability, autism and mental health. The LHNA estimates around 28.6% of Bolton residents have an illness or disability, with physical and mobility impairment (10%), mental health (6.8%) and neurodiversity (6.4%) being the most frequently referenced (paragraphs 4.39 to 4.46).
- 5.34 While many homes will be delivered by private developers, registered providers and landowners, the Council has an important role in ensuring that specialist and supported housing can be delivered quickly. The Council is commissioning schemes through its Housing with Care and Support Prospectus²⁰ across its three themes of Start Well for children, young people and care leavers, Live Well for working-age adults with supported needs and Age Well for older people and is actively working to strengthen its enabling role to streamline delivery.
- 5.35 The Local Plan can contribute by requiring the provision of specialist and supported homes in suitable locations that enable independent living and for new homes to be built to accessible and adaptable standards, including a share of all new housing to be built to wheelchair adaptable standards.

- 5.36 Local Plans are expected to make use of optional technical standards for accessible and adaptable housing²¹, where this would address an identified need (2021 NPPF paragraph 130(f), footnote 49). The policy supports PfE in requiring all new homes to be built to Building Regulation Part M²², M4(2), unless impracticable. Reflecting the ageing demographics of Bolton, this ensures that new dwellings can be occupied and visited by people needing level access and adaptations.
- 5.37 The LHNA recommends a requirement for 4.7% of all new homes to be built to Building Regulations Part M, M4(3) wheelchair accessible standards; this advice considers the requirements of the Optional Technical Standards PPG (LHNA, paragraph 4.55).
- 5.38 There is a distinction between the Building Regulations M4(3) adaptable and accessible standards, the policy requires the 4.7% to be provided to the M4(3) wheelchair adaptable standard, which allows for future adaptations to accommodate the needs of residents and is the most that can be required of market homes; wheelchair accessible homes, suitable for immediate occupancy, are secured through the affordable share by nomination.
- 5.39 The Whole Plan Viability Assessment accounts for the cost of the optional requirements included in the Local Plan.
- 5.40 The policy requires inclusive design for specialist housing for older and vulnerable people, allowing people to live safely and independently and to feel more connected to their communities. It advises on how developments can promote access and inclusion by all through consideration of factors such as mobility and proximity to public transport and local amenities, reflecting the aims of the Housing for Older and Disabled People PPG.
- 5.41 Part 4 of the policy aligns with the provisions of Policy HS1 in respect of affordable housing through the provision of alternative contributions when on-site provision of affordable housing is not practical or viable.
- 5.42 The final part of the policy sets the Council's expectations for management plans and other supporting evidence required by decision-making policy HO9 of the current 2026 NPPF.

Policy HS4 High-Quality Residential Standards

- 5.43 The policy supports 2021 NPPF objectives for achieving a good standard of amenity (paragraph 130), the 2026 NPPF decision-making policy DP3 and the National Design Guide PPG²³ in providing local context to the standards of living amenity Bolton expects. It also supports PfE Policy JP-H3 in requiring compliance with the nationally described space standards and supporting innovation.
- 5.44 The policy sets the Council's expectations for the area of amenity space expected, set in the context of location and house type. This has been developed from the Council's House Extensions SPD²⁴.

Policy HS5 Houses in Multiple Occupation

- 5.45 In assessing the needs of different groups (2021 NPPF, paragraph 62), Bolton has considered the need for HMOs and has balanced meeting this need with the 2021 NPPF paragraph 130 expectations for well-designed places.
- 5.46 Many HMOs in the borough are licensed, well managed and provide good homes, but concentrations and poor standards lead to problems. In response to the issues that have arisen in recent years, the Council implemented a borough-wide Article 4 Direction²⁵ in November 2025, the effect of which brings all HMO proposals under planning control for determination under this policy. The policy sets criteria for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) to ensure they provide a good standard of amenity for occupiers and neighbours.
- 5.47 Relatively low house prices and above average rents make Bolton an attractive place for buy to let landlords to invest. In 2025 the Council estimated that there were 720 HMOs in Bolton, representing 0.56% of the borough's total dwelling stock, which is eight times higher than the national percentage estimated by the ONS.
- 5.48 HMOs can play a valuable role in the housing market for those unable to access mainstream housing. But there is evidence of particularly high concentrations of HMOs within, but not limited to, The Haulgh, Farnworth Town Centre and the streets to the north and east of Bolton School near Queens Park. In these areas, the Council receives a high number of complaints relating to over-crowding, safety and anti-social behaviour and around a third of all crimes in Bolton occur within 100m of HMOs (Article 4 Direction, Background Document²⁶).
- 5.49 The LHNA consultation Theme 6 addressed HMOs, many respondents having negative views of HMOs associated with adverse impacts on neighbourhood character, anti-social behaviour, high rents and poor standards.
- Policy HS5 sets the planning requirements for all new HMOs. It restricts the provision of HMOs in the areas of the borough where concentrations are already acute and considers whether developments will result in concentrations elsewhere and whether other homes will become sandwiched between HMOs. It also seeks to ensure that HMOs provide a good standard of living for occupiers.

Policy HS6 Children's Homes

- 5.50 Providing safe and secure homes for looked after children is a Government priority; planning can make a meaningful contribution by ensuring availability of high-quality homes in the right place and by improving provision for those requiring residential and specialist supported housing.
- 5.51 The 2021 NPPF expects the needs of different groups to be assessed, and the 2026 NPPF is more specific in stating that development plans should take into account the housing needs of looked after children, based on evidence of need from the local authority Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy.

- 5.52 The Planning for accommodation for looked after children Ministerial Statement²⁷ highlights the importance of providing homes for looked after children close to their own communities with access to good schools and community support. It states that local authorities should be supportive of applications that reflect local needs and that all parties in the development process should work together closely to facilitate the delivery of this form of accommodation.
- 5.53 Bolton's Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy²⁸ identifies a rising demand for placements for children and care leavers. Bolton has a large number of Ofsted good or outstanding rated homes, but only 28% of all private placements are made within the borough, the rest being used by other local authorities. Ensuring good outcomes and keeping children connected with families, friends and education is paramount. The Council is committed to working with established residential providers to prioritise Bolton children in Bolton homes and to ensuring care aligns with needs, and is continuously working to bring children placed outside of the borough back in, unless necessary to keep them safe.
- 5.54 Policy HS6 supports the provision of homes to meet the needs of looked after children and care leavers, with an emphasis on well-run homes in suitable locations. It requires that developers engage with the Council before submitting a planning application to ensure there is an identified local need and that priority is given to Bolton's looked after children. It will ensure that good quality, well-managed accommodation is provided in appropriate premises, with good standards of amenity, in suitable locations. The policy also seeks to ensure that there are no undue concentrations of children's homes, to protect local character and to ensure that local services are not put under pressure and does not support new homes within 400m (approximately a five-minute walk) of existing homes.

Policy HS7 Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation

- 5.55 The 2021 NPPF requires the housing needs of travellers to be assessed and planned for in accordance with the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites policy paper²⁹. This paper carries no transitional protection, so the up-to-date version applies, including the amended definition of travellers; the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA)³⁰ applies that definition (paragraphs 1.4 to 1.7).
- 5.56 The policy paper requires local planning authorities to set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers and plot targets for travelling showpeople which address their identified need. They should also identify a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against targets and identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations, for years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for years 11 to 15. Criteria to guide land supply allocations and planning applications should be set where there is identified need (paragraphs 4 to 11).

- 5.57 Exceptional, limited alterations to the Green Belt boundaries to meet a specific, identified need for a traveller site should be made through the plan-making process and the site should be allocated specifically as a traveller site only (paragraph 17).
- 5.58 Bolton's GTAA identified a need over the Local Plan period and Policy HS7 sets the pitch and plot targets to meet the identified need of 13 Gypsy and Traveller pitches, 11 of which are required in the short term, and 30 Travelling Showperson plots, 15 of which are required in the short term.
- 5.59 The policy also sets criteria to guide land supply allocations and planning applications.
- 5.60 A travelling showpersons site is proposed at The Alders, Tonge (BSA09). This site has been appraised through the SHELAA and no absolute constraints were identified (SHELAA Annex D, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS02.5)).
- 5.61 The site has been appraised further through the Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper³¹, which assessed the sustainability of the location, the contribution the site makes to the Green Belt and the potential for Green Belt harm. The site is in a sustainable location, suitable for development, and all identified constraints can be mitigated (see Site 532).
- 5.62 A detailed assessment of Green Belt sites proposed for allocation includes an appraisal of potential Green Belt harm and makes recommendations on mitigation measures. This has informed the Local Plan allocation, which sets policy and requirements for the development of the site (Bolton Green Belt Assessment: Assessment of Proposed Allocations Addendum)³².
- 5.63 The proposed site could accommodate 45 to 50 plots. Around 40 of these would be for relocated families, so the overall contribution will be 5 to 10 net additional plots. Taking into account likely household dissolution within the travelling showpersons community, the allocation of this site has the potential to meet the five-year land supply requirement. However a further 15 plots would need to be found to meet needs from 2030 to 2042.
- 5.64 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 and Green Belt Topic 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 Policy HS7, which apply to windfall proposals, through the Council's programme supporting small-scale pitch provision and through monitoring, with allocation revisited through the Greater Manchester Spatial Development Strategy. The neighbouring authorities have confirmed that no provision is available for Bolton's need (section 4).

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- 5.65 Against the 2026 NPPF the proposed housing policies are consistent in substance with HO1 to HO9, with the requirement set by the strategic plan as HO2(1) provides. Blackrod's housing figure is provided as an indicative figure

on request under paragraph 67 of the 2021 NPPF, the Blackrod Neighbourhood Development Plan³³, Blackrod Town Council, made 2021 (DP02) being the only made neighbourhood plan.

6. Employment

Policies covered

- 6.1 This section covers Policy SP1 Invest in Bolton: Our Growth Anchors, Policy SP2 Land for Employment, Policies EC1, EC2, EC3 and EC5 (plan chapter 7), the employment allocations BSA07 and BSA08, the employment element of BSA02, and the allocations BSA11 to BSA14 carried forward from the Allocations Plan 2014 (plan chapter 10).

Summary of Core Evidence

The following documents can be found here:

<https://www.bolton.gov.uk/planning-policy-strategy/local-plan>

Bolton Employment Needs Study and Appendix 1 Employment Site Assessment, Icenl Projects, 2026 (EVE01.1, EVE01.2)

Bolton Local Plan Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS01)

Bolton Retail and Leisure Capacity and Centres Study, Nexus, 2026 (EVE02)

Health Innovation Bolton: Topic Paper, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS05)

Places for Everyone (PfE), Joint Development Plan Document for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan 2022-2039, March 2024 (DP01)

Employment floorspace requirements

- 6.2 PfE² states that at least 3,513,000 sqm of new industrial and warehousing floorspace, and 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.
- 6.3 The Bolton Local Plan requirements are established through the Bolton Employment Needs Study³⁴, which identifies a requirement of 811,727 sqm of new industrial and warehousing floorspace, including a 20% margin, and a requirement of 16,700 sqm of new office floorspace over the period 2025 to 2042.
- 6.4 An alternative method of determining district specific requirements for employment floorspace was put forward to the Planning Inspectors during the PfE examination. This is set out in full in the document Proposed PfE employment land requirement calculation (GMCA15³⁵), which was submitted to the Inspectors on 29 November 2022.
- 6.5 In summary the proposed method involved finding the district percentage of the total PfE supply then finding what percentage the district supply figure is of the policy requirement figure. This is the district minimum requirement in sqm.

- 6.6 This method gave Bolton specific requirements of 49,588 sqm of new office floorspace and 609,022 sqm of new industrial and warehousing floorspace over the PfE plan period 2022 to 2039.
- 6.7 Paragraph 71 of the PfE Inspector's Report³⁶ concluded that:
- "in the context of a joint plan, there is no specific requirement in national policy to establish district level requirement figures; it is acceptable to have an overall plan-wide figure. The Plan therefore does not need to be modified to ensure consistency with national policy".
- Importantly the Inspectors did not conclude that the proposed modification was sound or unsound, rather that it was unnecessary.
- 6.8 Bolton Council had concerns that the methodology proposed during the PfE examination was supply based, where the Employment Needs Study assesses demand.
- 6.9 Deliverable office supply in Bolton has fallen significantly from 70,739 sqm when PfE was prepared. This is mainly due to council aspirations for the Bolton town centre intervention zones moving away from office, reflecting a lack of demand and deliverable sites, planning permissions for office development not being delivered and also planning permissions for mixed use development being amended to remove office floorspace. This supports the conclusion in the Employment Needs Study that the office market has been performing poorly since the pandemic, with home and hybrid working impacting office leasing activity, ongoing negative absorption and consistently rising vacancy rates. This also supports the Employment Needs Study conclusion that Bolton has an office requirement of 16,700 sqm over the period 2025 to 2042, which is much lower than the requirement proposed through the PfE modification, which was 49,588 sqm over the period 2022 to 2039.
- 6.10 The Bolton Employment Needs Study recommends that Bolton plan for 811,727 sqm of new industrial and warehousing floorspace over the period 2025 to 2042, compared to the 609,022 sqm requirement for the period 2022 to 2039 identified using the supply-based method proposed at the PfE examination. Paragraphs 7.42 and 7.43 of the Study state that supply-based models are ill suited to considering future needs for manufacturing. In Bolton the industrial market has seen low levels of vacancy, with sub-5% vacancy rates since 2018, indicating strong market demand. This is reinforced by consistently increasing rental levels (above inflation) and recently delivered space being fully absorbed by the market. Icení conclude that while there is a range of potential outcomes which could reasonably be planned for, the strength of recent market demand suggests that Bolton should plan for the upper end of the range of 811,700 sqm derived from the gross completions model.

Policy SP2 Land for Employment

- 6.11 Justification for site selection is set out in the Bolton Employment Needs Study, its Appendix 1 Employment Site Assessment and the Bolton Local Plan Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper³¹.
- 6.12 In order to determine how much floorspace a site will deliver the preferred method is to take this information from a planning application, call for sites submission or masterplan. If the floorspace is not available from this source plot ratios have been used. In line with PfE a plot ratio of 35% has been used for industry and warehousing and 60% for offices.
- 6.13 Policy SP2(2) sets out the sources of industrial and warehousing supply (Table 4).

Table 4: Industrial and warehousing floorspace supply (Policy SP2(2))

Source of supply	Floorspace (sqm)
Sites with planning permission	166,085
Places for Everyone allocations (JPA4 Bewshill Farm 21,000; JPA5 Chequerbent North 25,000; JPA6 West of Wingates 440,000)	486,000
Intensification within Protected Employment Land (five plots)	12,145
Local Plan allocations (BSA02, BSA07, BSA08, BSA11 to BSA14)	135,099 to 185,099
Total	799,329 to 849,329

- 6.14 Planning permissions, the PfE allocations and intensification within protected employment land total 664,230 sqm, leaving 147,497 sqm to be met through new allocations (SP2 reasoned justification, paragraph 23). Four allocations within the urban area carried forward from the Allocations Plan 2014³⁷ (BSA11 Express Industrial Estate B, BSA12 Barrs Fold Close, BSA13 Watermead and BSA14 Mill Street) provide 19,460 sqm. The neighbouring authorities have confirmed that no provision is available towards Bolton's industrial and warehousing need (section 4).
- 6.15 The balance is met by three allocations on land released from the Green Belt within the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor: Health Innovation Bolton (BSA02, 40,839 sqm), Blackrod Employment Cluster (BSA07, 44,800 sqm) and Logistics North Extension (BSA08, 30,000 to 80,000 sqm). The supply position against the 811,727 sqm requirement ranges from a shortfall of 12,398 sqm, if BSA08 delivers 30,000 sqm, to a surplus of 37,602 sqm if it delivers 80,000 sqm. Further Green Belt release to cover the 12,398 sqm is unnecessary given the lack of other sustainable and deliverable sites and the need to minimise change to the Green Belt, and Policies EC1 and EC2 support intensification and

new industrial and warehousing development on protected employment land and elsewhere.

- 6.16 Office floorspace is directed to Central Bolton (SP2(6)). The requirement of 16,700 sqm is met from permissions of 8,026 sqm, 10,500 sqm at Crompton Place (BSA01) and 2,500 sqm at Burnden Way, Middlebrook (BSA06), a total of 21,026 sqm.

Policy SP1 Invest in Bolton: Our Growth Anchors

- 6.17 The growth anchors will be key to the Bolton Local Plan delivering the aims of PfE Policy JP-Strat6 (Northern Areas) and Policy JP-Strat8 (Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor), including boosting the competitiveness of the northern areas of Greater Manchester. Health Innovation Bolton is justified in the Health Innovation Bolton: Topic Paper³⁸ and the Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper. The justification for the policy approach to Middlebrook is set out in the Bolton Retail and Leisure Capacity and Centres Study³⁹, including paragraphs 9.44 to 9.60.
- 6.18 This is even more important and justified given the August 2026 decision of Wigan Council to remove four Green Belt sites for employment development from their Local Plan. These sites are Land north of M6 Junction 26, Moss Industrial Estate Extension, Bridgewater West and Land West of Winwick Lane. These sites together were capable of accommodating around 460,000 sqm of floorspace.
- 6.19 The Wigan Council Cabinet Report⁴⁰ states that Wigan's land supply is sufficient to address the borough's expected contribution of 482,326 sqm towards the employment requirement across nine Greater Manchester districts as set in the PfE Plan. However, it also recognises that the evidence base that informed the Initial Draft Plan consultation in 2025 identified a qualitative gap in the borough's employment land provision in terms of the range of types of sites available, which its Local Plan leaves open.

Policies EC1, EC2 and EC5

- 6.20 The policies follow chapter 6 of the 2021 NPPF¹ (paragraphs 81 to 85) and PfE Policies JP-J1 and JP-J2. The reasons for EC1 Employment Land Protection and EC2 Business Retention, Growth and New Employment are set out in the Plan. The justification for the EC5 policy approach to ancillary uses within industrial and warehousing allocations and development is set out in the Bolton Retail and Leisure Capacity, including paragraphs 9.61 to 9.97.

Policy EC3 Employment Access and Skills

- 6.21 There are documented skills shortages in construction and technical trades across Greater Manchester. Persistent skills shortages in construction and engineering are highlighted repeatedly in national workforce reviews and local skills plans, for example the Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan.

- 6.22 National policy, regional policy and local growth plans emphasise the importance of local workforce development in economic growth, including matching skills to opportunities, upskilling the workforce and tackling economic inactivity, inequalities and youth unemployment.
- 6.23 Moving to Bolton specifically, claimant count is an important measure of the labour force. The latest available data shows that Bolton has a claimant count⁴¹ of 5.4%, above the 4% rate for Great Britain as a whole and above other wider comparators .
- 6.24 The workforce in Bolton shows key differences compared to regional and national averages, including a lower proportion of professional occupations, a higher proportion of administrative and secretarial and skilled trade occupations, and a higher proportion of the workforce in the bottom three occupational groups (sales and customer service, process plant and machine operatives, and elementary occupations). These discrepancies in the occupational landscape have implications in terms of earnings, productivity and job security, all linked to higher unemployment rates and a lagging economic performance.
- 6.25 These disparities are closely tied to educational level. In Bolton, a higher proportion of the population has no qualifications (23%) compared to both the regional (18%) and national rate (19%). The proportion of residents with Level 4 qualifications or above is significantly lower in Bolton (27%) than in the North West (34%) and England (31%) (Census 2021, Office for National Statistics). This emphasises the importance of skills investment to transforming economic performance.
- 6.26 As of 2025, Bolton was ranked the 43rd most deprived local authority in the country (out of 317). Further, it is estimated that 28% of the Bolton population live in an area that is among the 10% most deprived nationally, while 48% of the population live in an area that is among the 20% most deprived nationally (English Indices of Deprivation, MHCLG).
- 6.27 Deprivation remains at its greatest in the wards of Halliwell, Crompton, Brightmet, Great Lever, Smithills, Harper Green, Tonge with the Haulgh, Rumworth and Farnworth.
- 6.28 It is clear that Bolton needs to address the above. These issues, including deprivation, are best addressed by an approach that invests in businesses, employment land and infrastructure but also enables residents to access the employment opportunities through addressing skills and aspirations. This is what Policy EC3 addresses. It is critical to maximising the number of local people, including those from deprived areas, that can access the jobs created by the plan. National policy documents and regional economic strategies, such as the Greater Manchester Strategy, emphasise that raising skill levels and reducing low pay are essential to improving productivity and economic outcomes.
- 6.29 The thresholds that have been set seek to strike the right balance between maximising the economic benefits that EC3 delivers and avoiding unnecessary

administrative cost and burden on employers. The thresholds recognise that employment and skills plans are effective even for smaller-scale developments and that workforce planning improves local economic outcomes even for smaller 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.

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- 6.30 Against the 2026 NPPF⁵ the employment policies are consistent with E1 to E3; rural business (E4) is decision-making policy and EC2 applies across the borough.

7. Green Belt

Policies covered

- 7.1 This section covers Policy SP7 Green Belt and the four allocations on land released from the Green Belt: BSA02 Health Innovation Bolton, BSA07 Blackrod Employment Cluster, BSA08 Logistics North Extension and BSA09 The Alders, Tonge.

Summary of Core Evidence

The following documents can be found here:

<https://www.bolton.gov.uk/planning-policy-strategy/local-plan>

Bolton Green Belt Assessment: Assessment of Proposed Allocations Addendum, LUC, 2026 (EVS04)

Bolton Local Plan Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS01)

Bolton Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Report, Bolton Council, 2026 (BCD04.1)

Bolton Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS02.1)

Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment, LUC, 2016 (EVS03)

Health Innovation Bolton: Topic Paper, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS05)

Places for Everyone (PfE), Joint Development Plan Document for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan 2022-2039, March 2024 (DP01)

National policy and Places for Everyone

- 7.2 Green Belt boundaries are altered only where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified through the preparation or updating of plans (2021 NPPF¹, paragraph 140). Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist, the authority must demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need, including whether the strategy makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield and underutilised land, optimises density, and has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the need (paragraph 141). Boundaries, once defined, should endure beyond the plan period (paragraph 143).
- 7.3 The Green Belt boundary was established by PfE² Policy JP-G9, which released Bewshill Farm (JPA4), Chequerbent North (JPA5) and West of Wingates (JPA6) in Bolton and added land at Horwich Golf Course. PfE did not anticipate the need for further Green Belt review. The Inspector's Examination Report³⁶ (paragraph 19) recognised that meeting objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses is a matter for local plans, which may contain strategic and non-strategic policies provided they are consistent with national policy and PfE. SP7 works

from the JP-G9 boundary, and the four alterations follow the exceptional circumstances route JP-G9 anticipates.

The exceptional circumstances

- 7.4 The need is set out in sections 5 and 6. Having examined all sources of land supply, the SHELAA¹⁰ (Chapter 11) identifies a shortfall of land to deliver up to 4,638 net additional homes against the requirement of at least 13,717 homes over 2025 to 2042; a shortfall 128,037 sqm of new industrial and warehousing floorspace; 13 gypsy and traveller pitches and 30 travelling showperson pitches.
- 7.5 The reasonable alternatives have been examined in the Bolton Local Plan Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper⁶, which sets out how the shortfalls in land for housing, industry and warehousing and traveller accommodation could be addressed. The Council ran a call for sites to identify new or underused land within the urban area, reassessed the brownfield sites previously identified, applied the PfE minimum densities through Policy PQ3 and asked neighbouring authorities for help (see section 4). The protected open land designation is not saved, which brings that land into supply but shortfalls remained.
- 7.6 The Core Strategy 2011⁴² and Allocations Plan 2014³⁷ looked to brownfield first, completions fell short year after year, and increased costs have stalled brownfield sites expected to deliver. The Bolton Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Report⁴³, appraises the dispersed and brownfield-only growth options alongside the Plan strategy.
- 7.7 The Green Belt site assessments apply the PfE site selection methodology⁴⁴, adapted for local circumstances, with the Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment⁴⁵ and the Bolton Green Belt Assessment: Assessment of Proposed Allocations Addendum³², which assesses the contribution of each site to the Green Belt purposes, the harm of its release and the mitigation required. Having considered all reasonable alternatives, four sites are selected for release and allocation as those strongest placed to deliver the PfE and Local Plan strategy (Table 5). The release is the smallest consistent with meeting the identified need: the industrial and warehousing supply ranges from a shortfall of 12,398 sqm to a surplus of 37,602 sqm depending on the floorspace BSA08 delivers (6.15), and no further site is released to close the lower figure.

Table 5: Green Belt alterations made by the Plan (Policy SP7(3))

Location	Policy	Purpose of the change	Need met
Health Innovation Bolton, Farnworth	BSA02	Strategic housing and health innovation employment allocation	1,895 homes; 40,839 sqm industrial and warehousing; co-location of innovation floorspace with the Royal Bolton Hospital and the Bolton Institute of Medical Science

Blackrod Employment Cluster	BSA07	Industrial and warehousing allocation	44,800 sqm industrial and warehousing
Logistics North Extension	BSA08	Employment-led mixed-use allocation	30,000 to 80,000 sqm industrial and warehousing
Land off The Alders, Tonge Moor	BSA09	Site for Travelling Showpeople	45 to 50 plots, 5 to 10 net additional

- 7.8 BSA02, BSA07 and BSA08 are within the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor (PfE Policy JP-Strat8). Health Innovation Bolton is the largest alteration, justified by the need to co-locate innovation floorspace with the Royal Bolton Hospital and the Bolton Institute of Medical Science and by its contribution to the five-year supply of deliverable housing sites (Health Innovation Bolton Topic Paper³⁸). BSA07 and BSA08 provide industrial and warehousing floorspace that cannot be found within the urban area. BSA09 responds to the need identified in HS7 (5.57).

Boundary, compensatory improvements and the longer term

- 7.9 The Policies Map defines the Green Belt boundary as altered. Development on land released from the Green Belt must secure compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt in the vicinity, proportionate to the scale of the release and including the measures in the allocation policies (SP7(4)), and proposals that enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt are supported (SP7(5)), as paragraphs 142 and 145 of the July 2021 Framework and JP-G9 expect. HS1 requires 25%, 35% and 50% affordable housing on land within or released from the Green Belt against 10%, 20% and 35% elsewhere, because the public benefit test for developing restricted land is higher.
- 7.10 The Plan identifies no safeguarded land, and longer-term needs beyond the plan period will be addressed through the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater Manchester, which will set district requirements for the period after PfE (2.7). The case that the boundaries as altered will endure beyond the plan period (paragraph 143(c) to (e)) is in the Bolton Local Plan Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper³¹.
- 7.11 Against the 2026 NPPF⁵ the approach is consistent with GB1 to GB8. The Golden Rules in GB8 apply to decisions on land released from the Green Belt from the publication of the 2026 NPPF, and the Council has had regard to them; HS1 sets the higher affordable housing requirement on released land and the allocation policies set out the infrastructure and green space requirements.

8. Other plan matters

- 8.1 Table 6 summarises the remaining policies of the Plan. For each policy it gives the evidence that supports it and the reasons where there is a departure, a choice against alternatives or an evidence link beyond the Plan's own reasoned justification. Where the reasons are set out in the Plan the table says so.
- 8.2 The policies follow the 2021 NPPF¹: INF1 and INF2 chapter 9 (paragraphs 104 to 113); INF3 to INF7, PQ2 and EC7 chapter 8 (paragraphs 92 to 103); INF8 chapter 10 (paragraphs 114 to 116); PQ1, PQ3 and CB01 to CB04 chapters 11 and 12 (paragraphs 117 to 132); PQ4 and SP5 chapter 16 (paragraphs 189 to 208); SP4, EC4 and EC6 chapter 7 (paragraphs 86 to 91); ENV1, ENV2 and ENV7 chapter 14 (paragraphs 152 to 169); SP6, ENV3, ENV4, ENV5 and ENV6 chapter 15 (paragraphs 174 to 188); DEL1 paragraphs 34, 57 and 58; and each allocation gives a clear indication of the development expected (paragraph 23), with the Green Belt releases addressed in section 7.
- 8.3 Each policy applies, or adds local detail beneath, the PfE² policy for its subject: INF1 and INF2 the Connected Places policies (JP-C1 to JP-C8); INF3 to INF8 JP-D1, JP-P3, JP-P5 to JP-P7, JP-G6 and JP-C2; PQ1 to PQ4 JP-P1, JP-P2, JP-P6 and JP-H4; SP5 and SP6 JP-P2 and JP-G1 to JP-G8; ENV1 to ENV7 JP-S1 to JP-S5, JP-G2, JP-G3 and JP-G8; SP4, EC4, EC6 and EC7 JP-Strat12, JP-P4 and JP-P6; DEL1 JP-D2; CB01 to CB04 JP-P1 and JP-Strat12; and each allocation delivers SP1 and through it the PfE spatial strategy. No policy sets a test or figure in conflict with PfE.
- 8.4 The policies are consistent in substance with the 2026 NPPF⁵. Where a policy expresses what is now national decision-making policy it does so consistently with it and adds the Bolton-specific thresholds, definitions and locations that national policy leaves to the plan. Minerals are provided for through the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan, which remains part of the development plan.

Summary of Core Evidence

- 8.5 Core evidence references are included in brackets and can be found here:
<https://www.bolton.gov.uk/planning-policy-strategy/local-plan>

Table 6: Other plan matters, policy by policy

Policy	Position
INF1 Transport and Active Travel	
Evidence	Bolton Local Plan Transport Model, Model Development Report, AECOM, 2026 (EVT01) Bolton Local Plan Transport Model, Traffic Forecasting Report, AECOM, 2026 (EVT02) Bolton Local Plan Sites, Sustainable Transport Study, WSP, 2026 (EVT03)

	Bolton Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVI01)
Reasons and justification	The Bolton Local Plan Transport Model assesses the effect of the Plan's distribution of development on traffic flows, journey times and delay; the assessment is reported in the Infrastructure Delivery Strategy with the model reports in the evidence base. The policy supports the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan and the Bolton Transport Strategy. Other reasons are set out in the Plan.
INF2 Parking Standards	
Evidence	Bolton Parking Note, WSP, 2026 (EVT04)
Reasons and justification	In the outer areas, where access to jobs and services by public transport is limited, a minimum level is set on the paragraph 107 criteria; in the inner areas and the town centre standards are more restrictive, with maximums confined to central locations well served by public transport. Evidence is the Bolton Parking Note, WSP, 2026 (EVT04), Regulation 18 consultation responses and member input.
INF3 Social and Community Infrastructure	
Evidence	Bolton Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVI01)
Reasons and justification	Reasons are set out in the Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Strategy, which sets the schedule of requirements.
INF4 Protection of Existing Community Facilities	
Evidence	Bolton Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVI01)
Reasons and justification	Reasons are set out in the Plan.
INF5 Open Space Standards and Green Infrastructure	
Evidence	Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study Volume 1: The State of the Network, LUC, 2026 (EVI02.1) Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study Volume 1: The State of the Network, Appendices, LUC, 2026 (EVI02.2)

Reasons and justification	Standards are drawn from the Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study. Other reasons are set out in the Plan.
INF6 Play Provision in New Development	
Evidence	Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study Volume 1: The State of the Network, LUC, 2026 (EVI02.1) Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study Volume 1: The State of the Network, Appendices, LUC, 2026 (EVI02.2)
Reasons and justification	Reasons are set out in the Plan.
INF7 Playing Pitches and Sports Facilities	
Evidence	Bolton Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVI01)
Reasons and justification	The Playing Pitch Strategy, reported through the Infrastructure Delivery Strategy, provides the local standard, which policy HC3(2) of the August 2026 Framework otherwise defaults from. Other reasons are set out in the Plan.
INF8 Digital and Utilities Infrastructure	
Evidence	Bolton Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVI01) Bolton Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment, GMEU, 2026 (EVB01)
Reasons and justification	The Bolton Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment, GMEU, 2026 (EVB01, paragraph 9.50) relies on wastewater treatment capacity keeping ahead of development to avoid effects on the Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar site; INF8 requires each development to show that capacity, and the Infrastructure Delivery Strategy records the Council's work with United Utilities on capacity for the Plan's growth, including the investment of around £110 million at Bolton Wastewater Treatment Works (Bolton Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVI01), section 8). Other reasons are set out in the Plan.
PQ1 Place Quality	
Evidence	Building Bolton, Bolton Council, 2006 (EVB05)

Reasons and justification	Building Bolton, Bolton Council, 2006 (EVB05) and the Council's character research inform the context requirements. Other reasons are set out in the Plan.
PQ2 Health Assessment	
Evidence	Bolton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
Reasons and justification	The assessment mechanism is a local addition to deliver JP-P6, justified by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Other reasons are set out in the Plan.
PQ3 Density and Tall Buildings	
Evidence	Bolton Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS02.1)
Reasons and justification	Zone minima are the JP-H4 figures, which exceed the station-based standards in policy L3 of the August 2026 Framework, and support the brownfield-led strategy; the zones are drawn on 400 and 800 metre walkbands from district centres, Bolton Interchange and Horwich Parkway station, supported by density research prepared by the Council. The tall buildings provisions are local: a tall building is defined as at least 18 metres or seven storeys, the height at which section 65 of the Building Safety Act 2022 ⁴⁶ defines a higher-risk building and the approximate parapet height of the Grade II* listed Town Hall, whose clocktower at around 60 metres is the tallest landmark in Bolton; the definition gives a benchmark that is both national and specific to the town centre roofscape. Other reasons are set out in the Plan.
PQ4 Historic Environment, Heritage Assets and Archaeology	
Evidence	Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment, LUC, 2018 (EVB04) Building Bolton, Bolton Council, 2006 (EVB05) Conservation area appraisals and heritage records
Reasons and justification	Applies the national heritage tests beneath JP-P2. Reasons are set out in the Plan.
SP5 Historic Built Environment and Landscape	
Evidence	Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment, LUC, 2018 (EVB04)

	Building Bolton, Bolton Council, 2006 (EVB05)
Reasons and justification	Reasons are set out in the Plan. The Local List in preparation will meet policy HE1(1)(e) of the August 2026 Framework on adoption.
SP6 Natural Environment	
Evidence	Bolton Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment, GMEU, 2026 (EVB01) Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment, LUC, 2018 (EVB04) Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study Volume 1: The State of the Network, LUC, 2026 (EVI02.1)
Reasons and justification	Identifies the Bolton components of the JP-G2 network and the sites JP-G8(4) protects. Reasons are set out in the Plan.
ENV1 Meeting Energy and Water Standards	
Evidence	Bolton Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVI01) Final Water Resources Management Plan 2024 (WRMP24), United Utilities, December 2024
Reasons and justification	ENV1 implements the adopted PfE Policies JP-S2 and JP-S3, which set the carbon and energy standards, so the December 2023 Written Ministerial Statement on locally set energy efficiency standards applies at the level of PfE. Overheating is addressed through the cooling hierarchy because the policy applies to every building type. The water standard is the optional requirement in the Building Regulations, which the Planning Practice Guidance allows where there is a clear local need: Bolton is in United Utilities' Strategic Resource Zone, whose baseline supply-demand balance is in deficit throughout the planning period before the measures in the Water Resources Management Plan 2024 are applied; the plan relies on demand management, including reducing average consumption to 110 litres per person per day by 2050, to move the zone to surplus (Final Water Resources Management Plan 2024, United Utilities, December 2024; EVI01, section 8). The standard is consistent with the approach across Greater Manchester and with PfE JP-S4. The Plan identifies no areas for wind energy: the positive strategy for renewable and low carbon energy is provided by PfE JP-S2 and JP-S3, and Bolton's

	wind resource lies within the West Pennine Moors SSSI and the Green Belt.
ENV2 Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage	
Evidence	Bolton Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Final Report, JBA Consulting, 2026 to Bolton Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Appendix F Local Plan sites assessment summary, JBA Consulting, 2026 (EVB02.1 to EVB02.7) Bolton Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Main Report, JBA Consulting, 2026 to Bolton Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Site Summaries 421-653, JBA Consulting, 2026 (EVB03.1 to EVB03.6)
Reasons and justification	The Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessments provide the evidence; the plan-stage sequential test is carried in the SHELAA. Other reasons are set out in the Plan.
ENV3 Green and Blue Infrastructure	
Evidence	Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study Volume 1: The State of the Network, LUC, 2026 (EVI02.1) Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study Volume 1: The State of the Network, Appendices, LUC, 2026 (EVI02.2)
Reasons and justification	The Urban Greening Factor is a local addition beneath JP-G2. Other reasons are set out in the Plan.
ENV4 Biodiversity and the Natural Environment	
Evidence	Bolton Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment, GMEU, 2026 (EVB01)
Reasons and justification	Applies the JP-G8 mitigation hierarchy and site protection; the approach to the Habitats Regulations is set out in the Bolton Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment, GMEU, 2026 (EVB01). Other reasons are set out in the Plan.
ENV5 Pollution: Air Quality, Noise, Odour and Light	
Evidence	Environmental services records
Reasons and justification	The reasons for the air quality, noise and odour section are set out in the Plan. The lighting section addresses concerns raised by the Council's environmental services about light from advertisement and signage displays on recently erected

	buildings; the advertisements provisions are framed on amenity and highway safety grounds.
ENV6 Contaminated Land and Ground Conditions	
Evidence	Bolton Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS02.1)
Reasons and justification	Reasons are set out in the Plan.
ENV7 Watercourses and the Water Environment	
Evidence	Bolton Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Final Report, JBA Consulting, 2026 (EVB02.1) Bolton Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Main Report, JBA Consulting, 2026 (EVB03.1)
Reasons and justification	The buffer distances and the Water Framework Directive assessment requirement are the Environment Agency's. Other reasons are set out in the Plan.
SP4 Centres for Shopping and Services, with EC4 Retail and Town Centre Uses and EC6 Evening Economy	
Evidence	Bolton Retail and Leisure Capacity and Centres Study, Nexus, 2026 (EVE02)
Reasons and justification	Centre boundaries are justified in the Bolton Retail and Leisure Capacity and Centres Study, Nexus, 2026 (EVE02, paragraphs 9.105 to 9.116 and Table 9.9), the impact assessment thresholds at paragraphs 9.117 to 9.142, and the decision to define Middlebrook as other than a town centre at paragraph 9.46. The primary shopping areas are evidenced in the same study.
EC7 Hot Food Takeaways	
Evidence	Bolton Retail and Leisure Capacity and Centres Study, Nexus, 2026 (EVE02) Bolton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
Reasons and justification	Justified by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Bolton Retail and Leisure Capacity and Centres Study, Nexus, 2026 (EVE02, paragraphs 9.143 to 9.150).
DEL1 Developer Contributions	

Evidence	Bolton Local Plan Whole Plan Viability Assessment, Porter Economics, 2026 (EVD01) Bolton Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVI01)
Reasons and justification	Contributions are informed by the Whole Plan Viability Assessment, which tests that development remains deliverable with them. The Council is exploring a Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule, sequenced with the viability evidence. Other reasons are set out in the Plan.
CB01 to CB04 Character-based policies	
Evidence	Building Bolton, Bolton Council, 2006 (EVB05) Bolton Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS02.1)
Reasons and justification	Supported by character research prepared by the Council. Other reasons are set out in the Plan.
BSA01 to BSA09 Site allocations	
Evidence	Bolton Local Plan Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS01) Bolton Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS02.1) Health Innovation Bolton: Topic Paper, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS05) Bolton Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Report, Bolton Council, 2026 (BCD04.1) Bolton Local Plan Whole Plan Viability Assessment, Porter Economics, 2026 (EVD01) Bolton Local Plan Transport Model, Model Development Report, AECOM, 2026 (EVT01) Bolton Local Plan Transport Model, Traffic Forecasting Report, AECOM, 2026 (EVT02) Bolton Local Plan Sites, Sustainable Transport Study, WSP, 2026 (EVT03) Bolton Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVI01)
Reasons and justification	For each allocation the need it meets is in sections 5 to 7, why it was selected against the reasonable alternatives assessed

	through the Bolton Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Report, Bolton Council, 2026 (BCD04.1) is recorded in the Bolton Local Plan Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVS01), and its deliverability is tested in the Bolton Local Plan Whole Plan Viability Assessment, Porter Economics, 2026 (EVD01). Minerals are provided for through the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan, which remains part of the development plan. Neighbouring authorities were notified of the allocations and the strategic infrastructure in August 2026 (section 4), and the Council engages with them on an ongoing basis on cross-boundary effects, including transport, school places and community infrastructure, informed by the Bolton Local Plan Transport Model, Model Development Report and Traffic Forecasting Report, AECOM, 2026 (EVT01, EVT02), the Bolton Local Plan Sites, Sustainable Transport Study, WSP, 2026 (EVT03) and the Bolton Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy, Bolton Council, 2026 (EVI01).
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9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The plan is consistent with PfE² throughout. It delivers the spatial strategy, the housing requirement and the employment floorspace requirements within Bolton, and it is consistent with PfE in every policy.
- 9.2 The plan is aligned with the 2021 NPPF¹, the version against which it falls to be examined. It departs from national policy only where local evidence justifies it, and each departure is identified and evidenced in this paper, which also shows the plan to be consistent in substance with the 2026 NPPF⁵.
- 9.3 The plan period of 2022 to 2042 provides the fifteen-year horizon national policy requires, on the basis agreed across Greater Manchester. The evidence base is proportionate to the decisions the plan makes. On this basis the Council considers the plan sound.
- 9.4 Section 4 records the Council's engagement with neighbouring authorities at publication. This paper will be updated, or supplemented with statements of collaboration, where required.

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