



Bolton Local Plan
Sustainability Appraisal Report
Incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment and Equality Impact
Assessment
Publication Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19)
October 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1.1 Bolton Council (the Council) has prepared a new Local Plan (the Plan) setting out the spatial strategy for the borough to 2042. The Plan contains a vision and objectives, strategic policies, development management policies and site allocations, together with provisions to support infrastructure delivery.
- 1.1.2 This report is the Sustainability Appraisal of the Plan. It records the appraisal of the Plan and of the reasonable alternatives to it, the significant effects identified, the mitigation proposed, and the influence the appraisal has had on the Plan. It also discharges the environmental report requirement of the SEA Regulations and incorporates Equality Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment.

Health Impact Assessment

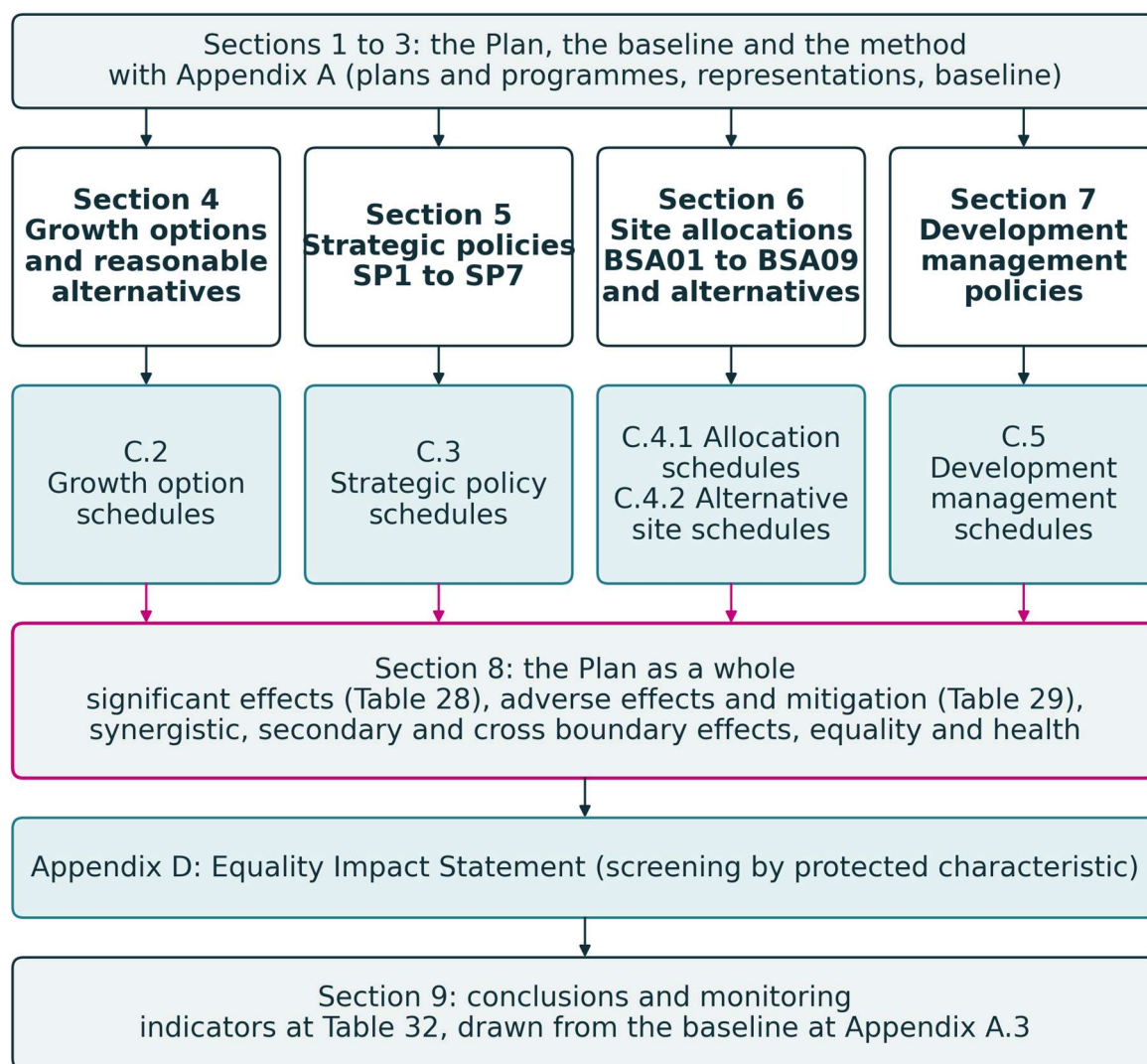
- 1.1.3 Health Impact Assessment is included so that health effects are assessed alongside the environmental, sustainability and equality effects. Health Impact Assessment has one overarching aim: to ensure that plans and policies minimise negative and maximise positive health impacts. Consideration of the determinants of health and the broad requirements of the Department of Health screening questions has been integrated into the sustainability appraisal framework. The appraisal therefore covers the scope of a Health Impact Assessment.

1.2 Who carried out the appraisal

- 1.2.1 The Council prepared this Sustainability Appraisal and is responsible for the judgements in it. Ove Arup & Partners Limited (Arup) acted as a critical friend, contributed to the growth options, reasonable alternatives and the strategic policies assessments. Arup also independently prepared the Equality Impact Statement as presented in Appendix D.

1.3 How this report is organised

- 1.3.1 The appraisal generates a large volume of assessment material. Reproducing that material in the main body would obscure the findings. The report is therefore arranged so that the appendices contain the assessment and the main body sets out the findings, the judgements drawn from them, and the consequences for the Plan. Figure 1 shows the structure of the report. Table 1 shows where each requirement of the SEA Regulations is addressed.



Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (November 2025) is included as Appendix B.

Figure 1: The structure of this report

Table 1: Where to find each element of the appraisal

SEA Regulations, Schedule 2 requirement	Where it is addressed
Outline of the contents and main objectives of the Plan, and its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	Sections 2.2 and 2.3; Appendix A.1
Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and its likely evolution without the Plan	Sections 2.4 and 2.7; Appendix A.3
Environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	Section 2.5
Existing environmental problems, in particular those relating to areas of particular environmental importance	Section 2.6

SEA Regulations, Schedule 2 requirement	Where it is addressed
Environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or national level, and how they have been taken into account	Section 2.3; Appendix A.1
Likely significant effects on the environment, including secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects	Sections 4 to 8; Appendix C
Measures to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset significant adverse effects	Sections 5, 6, 7 and 8.2; Appendix C
Outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties encountered	Sections 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.4 and 4.5, and 6.5 for the sites, and 7.1 for the development management policies
Measures envisaged concerning monitoring	Section 9.2; Appendix A.3
Non-technical summary	Published as a separate volume: Non-Technical Summary
Social and economic information (sustainability appraisal requirement beyond SEA)	Sections 2.4 and 4 to 8; Appendices A.3 and D

- 1.3.2 Cross references in this report point to the relevant appendix. Where an assessment table is the source of a statement in the main body, the table is identified so the reader can go to it directly.

1.4 Consultation

- 1.4.1 The appraisal has been consulted on twice. The scope was consulted on with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency between July and September 2025 and shared with neighbouring authorities. Responses were received from Historic England and Natural England and led to changes to the sustainability appraisal framework, which are recorded in the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report at Appendix B, as Appendix A.2 identifies.
- 1.4.2 The Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report was published for consultation in November 2025 alongside the Draft Local Plan Direction of Travel. It appraised the Local Plan objectives and the five spatial options. Responses to that consultation have been considered and have informed this report. The report is at Appendix B. The interim report was published so that the appraisal was integrated with plan making from the earliest stages, and so that its findings were shared early to inform the full assessment in this report.
- 1.4.3 Appendix A.2 identifies where the representations received on the appraisal at each stage, and how each has been addressed, are recorded.

2. The Plan and context

2.1 The plan area

- 2.1.1 Bolton is a metropolitan borough in the north west of England, about ten miles north west of Manchester city centre and one of the ten authorities within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. It covers 139 square kilometres and lies between the Southern Pennine uplands to the north and the Greater Manchester lowlands to the south. The Council is a unitary authority and the borough is divided into 20 wards. It is bordered by Bury to the east, Salford to the south, Wigan to the south west, and Chorley and Blackburn with Darwen to the north. Figure 2 shows Bolton in its Greater Manchester context.

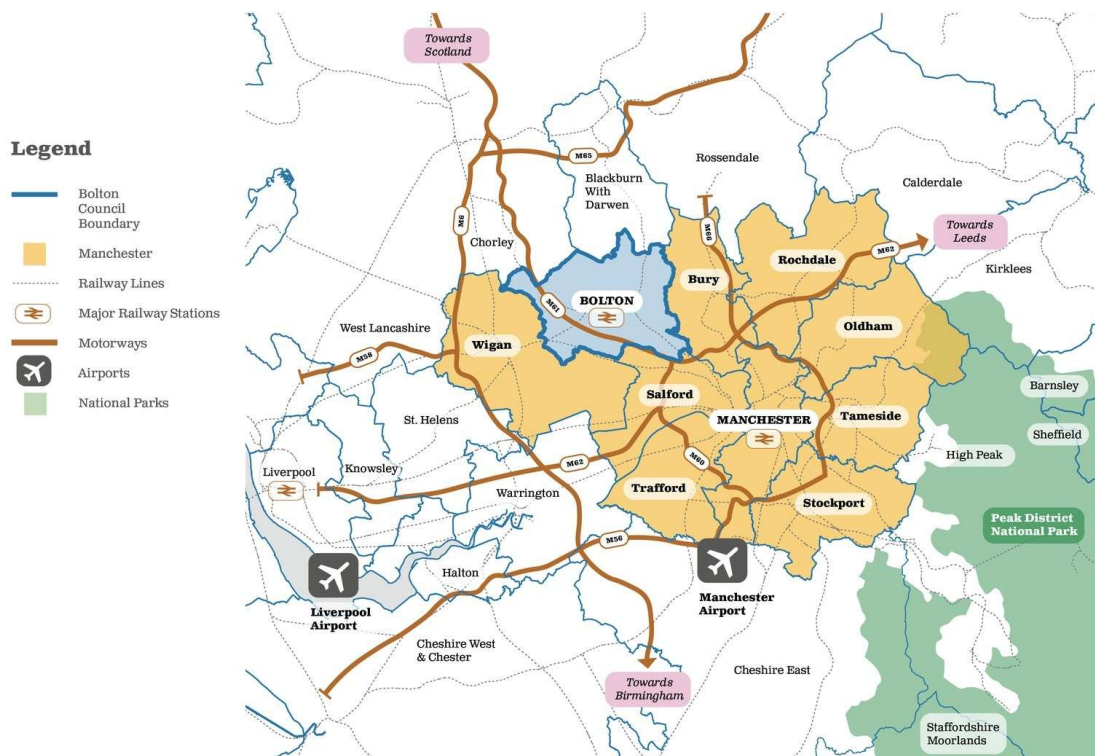


Figure 2: Bolton in its Greater Manchester context

- 2.1.2 The Plan gives the population as around 310,085 in 2024, making Bolton the third largest local authority in Greater Manchester by population. Around 69 per cent of residents identify as White British and around 20 per cent as Asian, the largest single groups being of Pakistani and Indian heritage. Population is projected to grow by around 14,700 people, or 4.8 per cent, between 2025 and 2043, and that growth is concentrated in the 65 plus age group, which is expected to increase by around 9,050.
- 2.1.3 The borough comprises the principal town of Bolton and a number of surrounding towns and villages, each with its own identity, form and services. Table 2 summarises that geography, because the differences between these areas are the basis of the spatial strategy and of the appraisal of the alternatives.

Table 2: The character of the plan area

Area	Character
Bolton town centre	The civic and administrative core, containing the Town Hall, courts, Central Library, Albert Halls, Bolton Market and the University of Greater Manchester, together with the main transport interchange and the principal shopping centres. Dense and linear in form, with a concentration of listed buildings and conservation areas. Surrounded by the residential neighbourhoods of Halliwell, Tonge Moor, Great Lever and Rumworth, which include some of the borough's most deprived areas.
Horwich and Blackrod	Set against the West Pennine Moors, with stone built housing and former industrial buildings including the locomotive works site. Served by Horwich Parkway and Blackrod stations and adjoined by the Middlebrook retail and leisure park, a large out of town commercial destination.
Farnworth and Kearsley	More urban in form, to the south east, with the Royal Bolton Hospital at Farnworth and a district centre under regeneration. Lower lying and closer to the Croal and Irwell corridor.
Westhoughton and Little Lever	Mixed townscapes of suburban housing with farmland edges. Westhoughton lies close to the M61 corridor and the Wingates and Chequerbent employment areas; Little Lever retains the disused Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal corridor and its industrial remnants.
Northern and western uplands	Around Egerton, Smithills and northern Horwich: rough grassland, moorland, stone walls, upland farms and reservoirs, rising to Winter Hill at around 450 metres, which forms the skyline and gives long views across the Lancashire Plain and the conurbation. Assessed as of high landscape sensitivity.
Wooded valleys	Bradshaw, Eagley and Tonge contain fast flowing brooks, mature woodland and steep wooded cloughs supporting wildlife and public access. The River Croal runs through the town centre and joins the Irwell at Nob End.
South and east	A mixture of terrain and post industrial land, with urban green spaces including Moses Gate Country Park, Leverhulme Park and Queen's Park. Logistics North, on the former Cutacre site, is the borough's largest distribution and warehousing location.

- 2.1.4 The borough spans three National Character Areas: the Southern Pennines of upland gritstone and moorland; the Manchester Pennine Fringe of valleys, wooded cloughs and post industrial land; and the Lancashire Coal Measures of lowland pasture, urban fringe and historic mining areas. The local landscape character areas within them are shown at Figure 3.

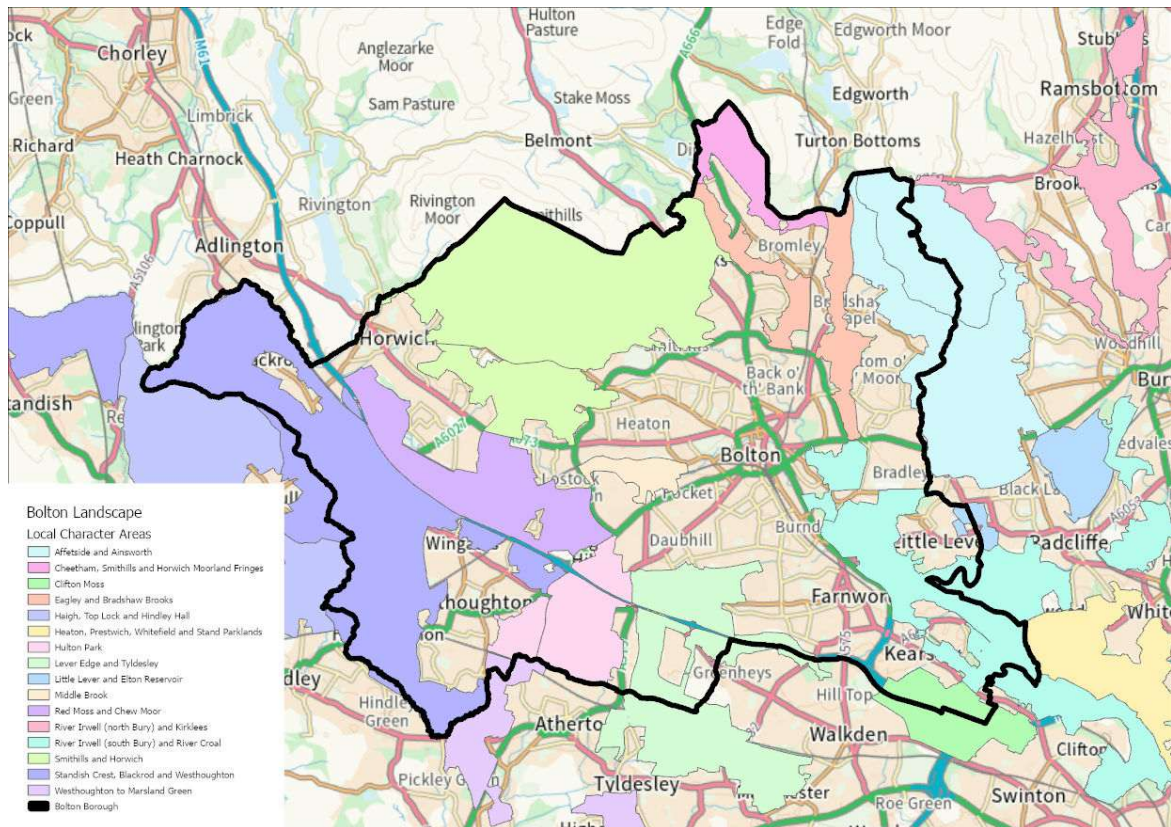


Figure 3: Landscape character areas

2.1.5 Designated ecological sites include the West Pennine Moors, Red Moss, Nob End, Tonge River Section, and Gale Clough and Shooterslee Wood Sites of Special Scientific Interest, shown with the local nature reserves at Figure 4.

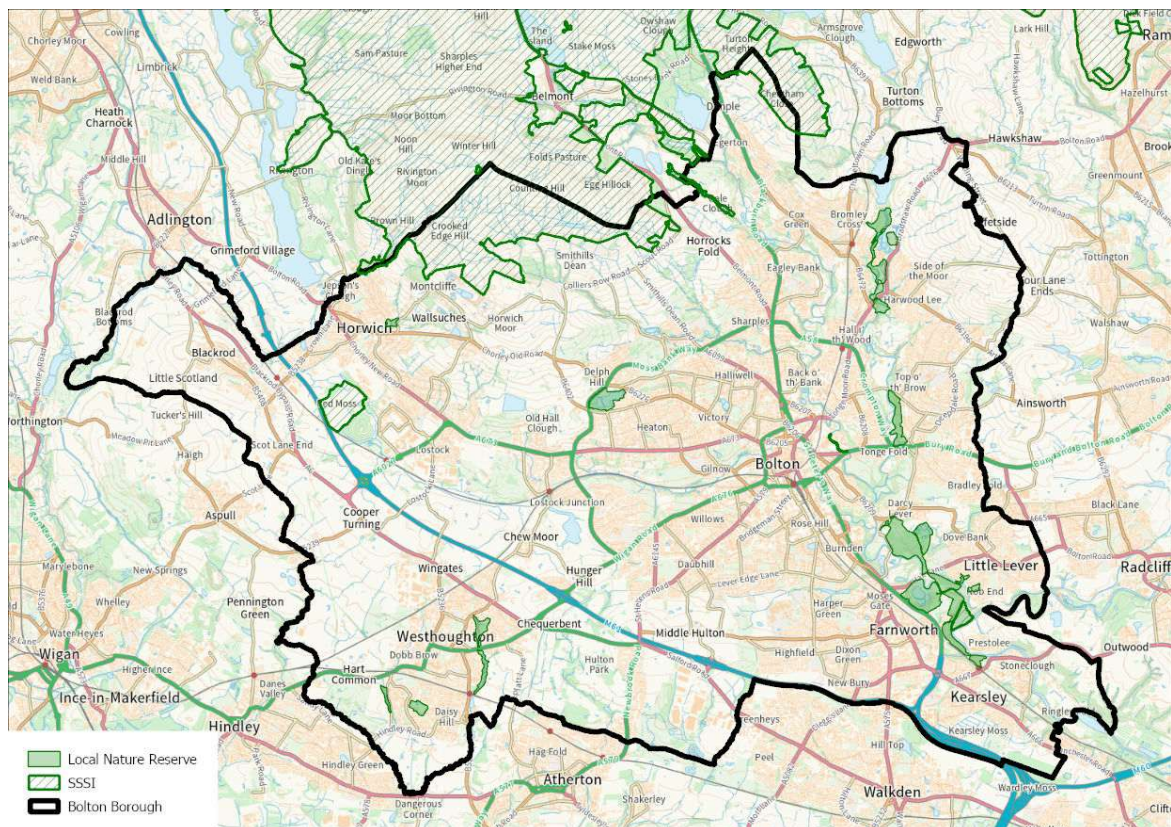


Figure 4: The natural environment

2.1.6 The built environment ranges from Victorian terraces through interwar housing and post war estates to recent development, with mills, railway viaducts, stone chapels, public halls and market structures giving the borough much of its distinctiveness. The Plan identifies more than 1,100 heritage assets, including 26 conservation areas, 361 listed buildings, six registered parks and gardens and five scheduled monuments, shown at Figure 5. Eleven designated assets are on the Heritage at Risk register, and the 2007 Bolton Mills Action Framework identified 108 historic mills.

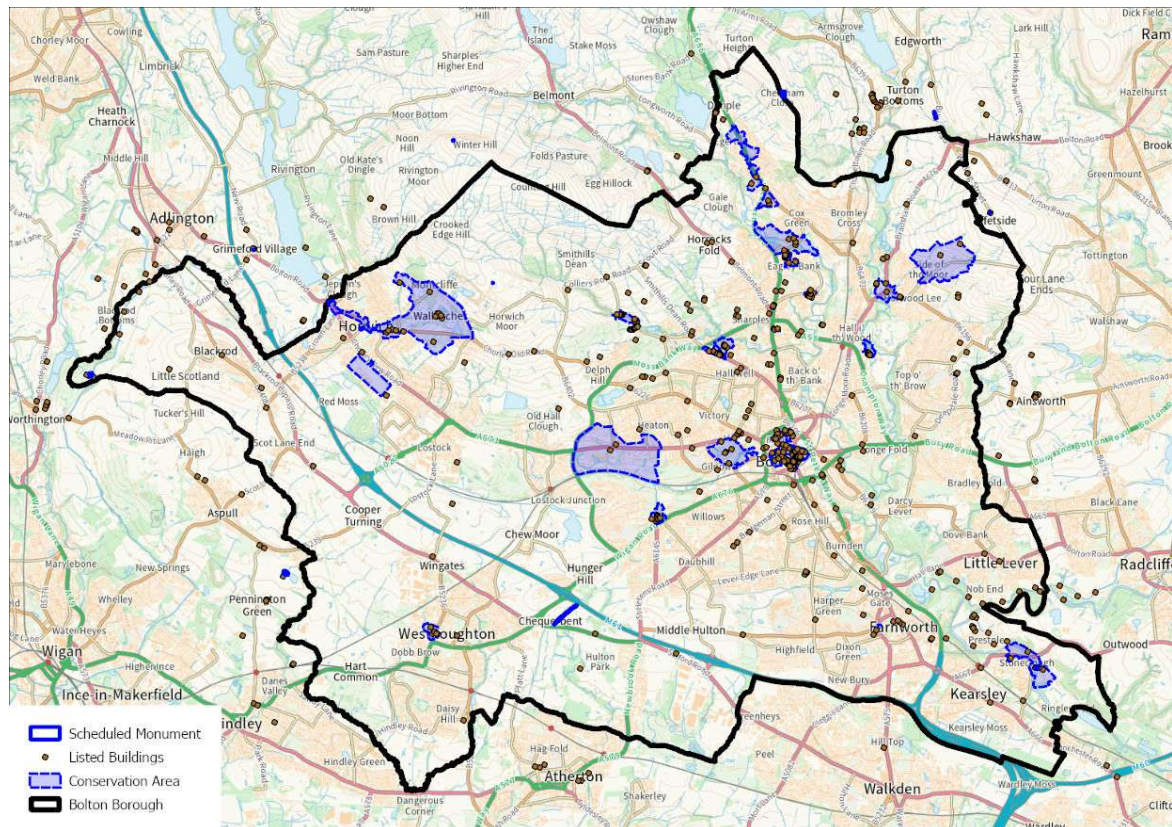


Figure 5: Conservation areas, listed buildings and scheduled monuments

2.1.7 Eleven railway stations serve the borough, with five more close to its boundary, connecting to Manchester, Wigan, Preston and beyond. The M61 crosses the borough west of the town with access at junctions 4, 5 and 6, and radial A roads including the A666 and A6 carry the majority of movement. A quarter of households have no car. Public transport accessibility across the borough is shown at Figure 6, where level 1 is the most accessible.

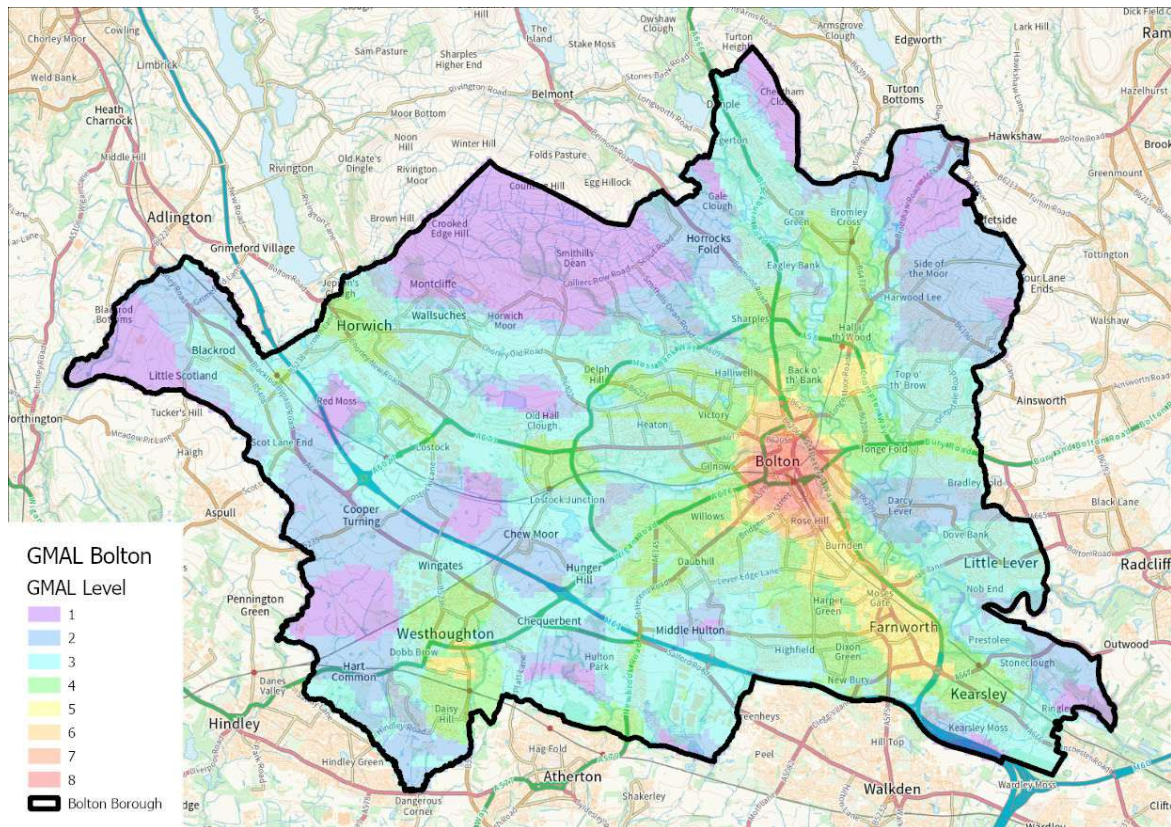


Figure 6: Public transport accessibility (GMAL levels)

2.1.8 Flood risk follows the Croal and Irwell valleys and their tributaries. Flood Zone 2 and the functional floodplain, current and future, are shown at Figure 7.

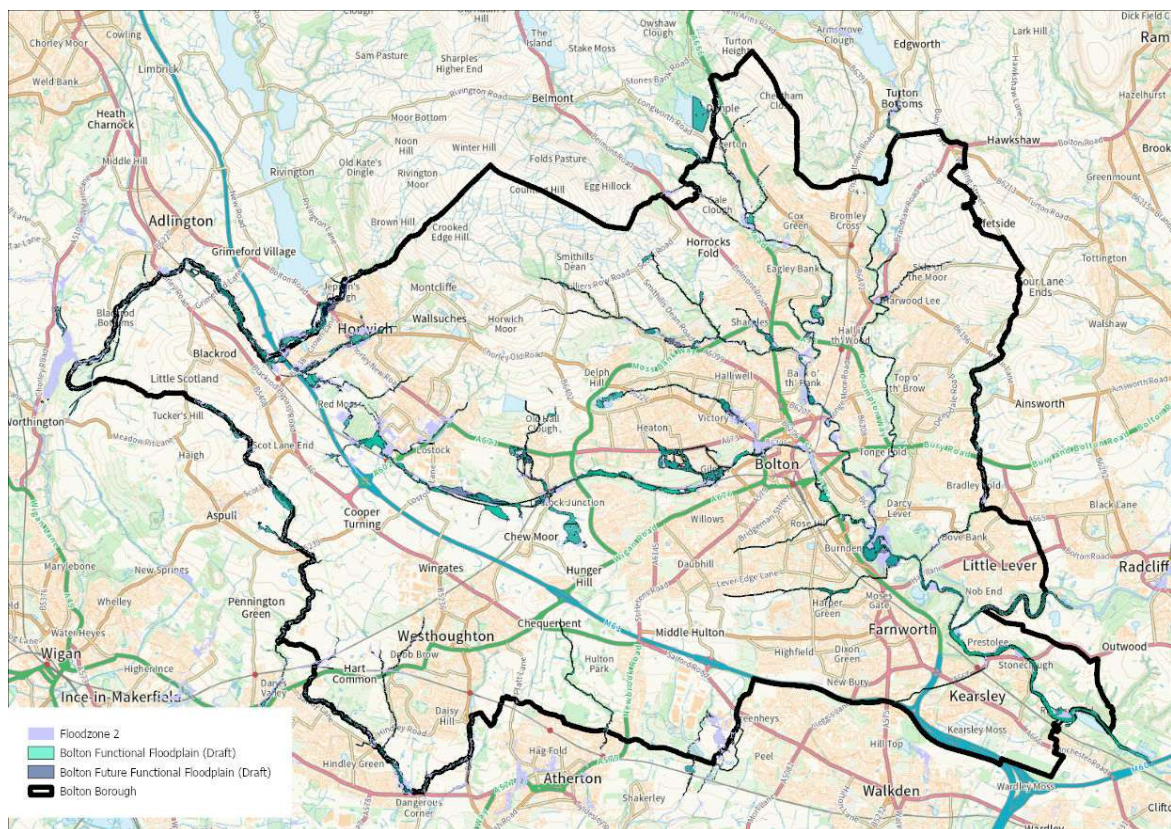


Figure 7: Flood risk

- 2.1.9 Viability varies across the borough. The whole plan viability assessment (Porter PE, September 2026, EVD01) divides the borough into three value areas, shown at Figure 8, with the highest values in Value Area 3, the outer areas of the borough including the more rural west and north, and the lowest in Value Area 1, Bolton town centre, its regeneration areas and the adjoining neighbourhoods; Value Area 2 covers the suburban locations in the south east of the borough. Brownfield sites are more challenging to deliver in the lower value areas, especially flatted schemes in Central Bolton: while the Brownfield Land Register identifies 104 sites with capacity for around 4,985 homes, brownfield sites allocated in the Site Allocations Plan (2014) remain undeveloped, and the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply (Bolton Five Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement, 1 April 2026).

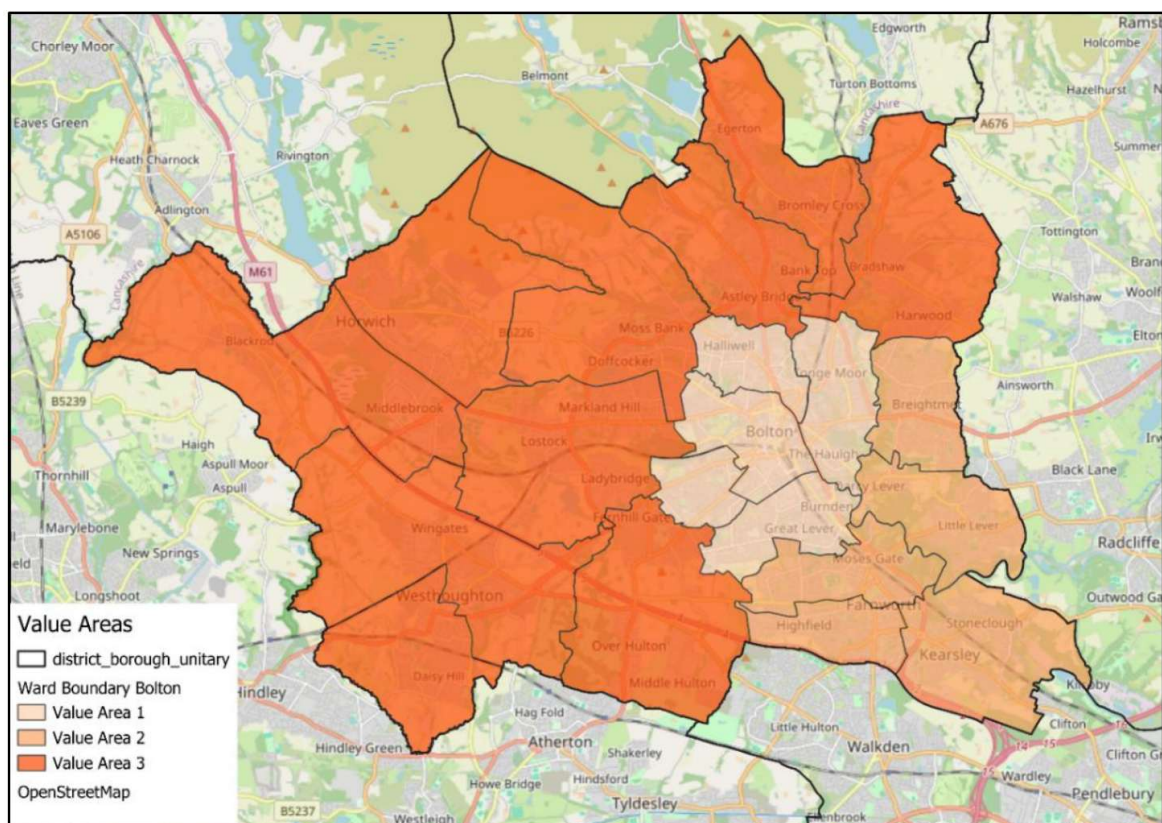


Figure 8: Value areas. Source: Bolton Local Plan Viability Assessment, Figure 5.1, Porter PE, September 2026

2.2 What the Plan must deliver, and its objectives

- 2.2.1 The Plan is the statutory development plan for Bolton and, once adopted, will be the primary basis for planning decisions in the borough. It is prepared under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and covers the period 2022 to 2042.
- 2.2.2 The Plan applies alongside the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, adopted in 2024, and alongside the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan and Joint Minerals Plan. That relationship defines the Plan's central purpose. Places for Everyone establishes the scale of development Bolton must accommodate and the strategic framework within which it must be accommodated. It leaves the identification of sites in Bolton and local policy to the Plan. The purpose of the Plan

is therefore to meet the development needs defined for Bolton in Places for Everyone, in the right places, with the infrastructure and design quality those places require.

2.2.3 Table 3 sets out those needs.

Table 3: What Places for Everyone requires the Plan to deliver

Need	Requirement in Places for Everyone
Housing	At least 787 homes a year, at least 15,740 homes over the Plan period 2022 to 2042. With 2,023 homes delivered from 2022 to 2025, at least 13,717 remain to be delivered to 2042.
Employment land	Bolton must contribute its share of the need for industrial and warehousing floorspace across the Places for Everyone area, which identifies 3,513,000 square metres for Bolton and the other eight authorities.

2.2.4 Beyond the quantum of development, the Plan contains a vision and objectives, strategic policies SP1 to SP7, development management policies covering infrastructure, placemaking, environment, economy, homes and delivery, site allocations, a policies map and infrastructure delivery provisions.

2.2.5 The Plan is organised around six objectives, published in the Issues and Options Document in August 2025 and revised in the Direction of Travel in November 2025 in response to this appraisal.

2.2.6 The objectives were appraised against the sustainability framework at Direction of Travel stage. They were found to align strongly with it, particularly on health, housing, climate resilience and employment, with weaker or uncertain alignment on the more technical environmental objectives, which depend on site specific implementation. The appraisal recommended a change to each of the five, and each was accepted:

- the jobs and business objective was reworded to give greater certainty on environmental outcomes;
- the homes and neighbourhoods objective was expanded to emphasise safe and secure neighbourhoods and the reuse of existing buildings and land;
- the transport objective was expanded so that improvements are inclusive, safe and attractive for all users, including for walking and wheeling;
- the local services and infrastructure objective was expanded to cover the needs of both new and existing communities across the borough; and
- the combined climate, green infrastructure and heritage objective was split and reworded to clarify the policy direction.

2.2.7 The Local Plan objectives are read as a whole against the sustainability objectives. The appraisal of the objectives is at Appendix B.

2.3 Relationship with other plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives

2.3.1 The Plan operates within a hierarchy of international commitments, national policy, the Greater Manchester development plan and the Council's own strategies. A full

review of the plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives relevant to the Plan is at Appendix A.1. That review was first prepared at scoping stage and has been updated for this report.

- 2.3.2 The environmental protection objectives established at international and national level have been taken into account in two ways. First, they were used to derive the sustainability appraisal framework, so that every objective in the framework is traceable to an obligation or an identified local issue. Appendix A.1 shows that derivation. Second, they are reflected in the assessment criteria used to score the Plan, so that the Plan is tested against them directly. Table 4 gives the principal plans and programmes and their implications for the Plan.

Table 4: Principal plans and programmes and their implications for the Plan

Level	Key instruments	What they require of the Plan
International	Paris Agreement and UNFCCC; Water Framework Directive; Habitats and Birds Directives; European Landscape Convention; Waste Framework Directive; Floods Directive; UN Sustainable Development Goals; SEA Directive (as given effect by the SEA Regulations 2004)	Reduce carbon emissions and increase renewable generation; protect ecological and chemical status of the Croal and Irwell; protect designated sites and species; maintain landscape character and key views; reduce waste and improve resource efficiency; reduce flood risk; address inequality; test alternatives openly.
National	National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance; Environment Act 2021; Climate Change Act 2008; Equality Act 2010	Meet housing and employment need; apply the sustainable development tests of soundness; deliver biodiversity net gain and support the Local Nature Recovery Strategy; plan for climate mitigation and adaptation; have due regard to the public sector equality duty.
Greater Manchester	Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024); Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan; Joint Minerals Plan; Local Nature Recovery Strategy; Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040	Deliver Bolton's share of housing and employment growth; conform with the strategic framework and the 2038 net zero commitment; safeguard waste and minerals capacity; contribute to nature recovery priorities including Red Moss.
Bolton	Bolton Council Plan 2025 to 2028; Bolton Transport Strategy (2024); Economic Growth and Resilience Plan (2024); Climate Change Strategy and delivery plans; Housing and Homelessness Strategies; Greenspace Strategy 2026 to 2041	Act as the delivery mechanism for wider Council strategy through land use and infrastructure decisions, including inclusive growth, town centre renewal, decarbonisation and access to green space.

- 2.3.3 The Plan is within a wider development plan. Places for Everyone (2024) sets the strategic policies for housing, employment, transport and net zero carbon across nine Greater Manchester authorities, and the Plan applies that framework to Bolton. The development plan also includes the Greater Manchester Waste and Minerals Plans and any made neighbourhood plans, and on adoption the Plan replaces the Core Strategy (2011) and the Site Allocations Plan (2014). The Plan has been prepared and will be examined against the 2021 Framework under the transitional arrangements in national policy, having regard to the August 2026 Framework. Cross boundary effects were identified at scoping stage on transport, shared services, river catchments, ecological networks and unmet housing need, and two of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest extend beyond the boundary. These are addressed through the Duty to Cooperate and are considered in the appraisal of the Plan as a whole at Section 8.

2.4 The sustainability baseline and key issues

- 2.4.1 The baseline describes the current state of the borough against each of the fifteen sustainability objectives, and is the reference point against which effects are predicted and monitored. The full baseline, with every indicator, its spatial context and the evidence base document it derives from, is at Appendix A.3. It is presented in the same table as the sustainability appraisal framework itself, so that each objective, its assessment criteria and its supporting indicators can be read together.
- 2.4.2 The issues that the baseline identifies for the Plan to respond to are:
- the gap in health outcomes between neighbourhoods, and access to healthcare, open space and opportunities for physical activity in the most deprived areas;
 - a supply of housing land sufficient to meet and sustain the requirement, with the affordability, mix and accessibility that local need indicates;
 - growth coordinated with social infrastructure, education and skills, so that access improves for existing communities as well as new ones;
 - a more diverse economic base, employment sites in accessible locations, and town and district centres that continue to function;
 - growth located so that short journeys can be made without a car, with investment in walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, and reduced transport emissions and exposure to poor air quality;
 - higher energy performance in new development, renewable and low carbon energy, and resilience to flooding, heat and storm events without increasing risk elsewhere;
 - protection for designated sites, irreplaceable habitat and the most sensitive landscapes, measurable biodiversity net gain, and a better connected green and blue network;
 - conservation of the historic environment, in particular the mill stock, and fewer assets at risk;
 - efficient use of previously developed land, less loss of better quality agricultural land, protection of peat, and contaminated land brought back into use; and
 - growth matched to water supply and wastewater capacity, and waste designed out of new development.

2.5 Environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected

2.5.1 The areas most likely to experience significant effects are those where the Plan directs change. Their broader character is described at Section 2.1. The features that matter for the appraisal are:

- the locations where most new development is directed, at Central Bolton, Northfold, Middlebrook, Hulton Park and the land around the Royal Bolton Hospital. These combine dense urban fabric with concentrated heritage assets and poor air quality, and larger greenfield and Green Belt parcels at the urban edge;
- the M61 corridor and its junctions, characterised by reclaimed land and wetlands, historic parks and wooded estate farmland, mosslands and lowland farmland, and urban fringe farmland, and by road noise above 75 decibels on parts of the M61 and A666;
- the town, district and local centres, where change is largely redevelopment and reuse within conservation areas and among listed and non designated heritage assets;
- the Green Belt and protected open land at the urban edge, parcels of which are assessed as having medium to high landscape sensitivity and which contain priority habitat and green infrastructure links;
- the Croal and Irwell valleys and their tributaries, with flood risk, poor waterbody status and remnant industrial heritage; and
- land adjoining the West Pennine Moors SSSI and Red Moss SSSI on the northern and western fringes of Horwich, Smithills and Egerton.

2.6 Existing environmental problems

2.6.1 The baseline identifies the following existing environmental problems relevant to the Plan:

- units of the West Pennine Moors SSSI remain in unfavourable condition, and peat within the SSSI and the wider catchment is degraded and in places emitting rather than storing carbon;
- the Croal and the Irwell fail chemical status and are of moderate ecological status, with substantial storm overflow discharge recorded in the catchment;
- the borough lies within the Greater Manchester Air Quality Management Area, declared for nitrogen dioxide; one Bolton monitoring site exceeded the annual mean objective in 2023 and none did in 2025, and road transport is the source the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan addresses;
- flood risk is significant and increasing, with nearly 3,320 ground floor properties at a one in thirty year risk of surface water flooding (Environment Agency, 2025);
- eleven heritage assets are on the national at risk register, with further listed buildings considered vulnerable locally;
- tree canopy cover is below target and green space provision and access are uneven across the borough; and
- over 100 historic landfill sites are recorded and the Contaminated Land Strategy dates from 2015.

- 2.6.2 There are no European sites in Bolton. The nearest is the Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation, about 5.5 kilometres south of the boundary. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Plan (September 2026), published separately, screened in the Manchester Mosses SAC for air quality effects from traffic and the Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area and Ramsar site for water quality effects in combination with other plans. Its appropriate assessment concluded that, with the Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations SPD applied to the relevant allocations and the Council working with the utility provider so that wastewater treatment capacity keeps ahead of development, the Plan would have no effect on the integrity of either site. The wastewater commitment is carried in the Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy, to which Policy INF8 refers.

2.7 Likely evolution of the baseline without the Plan

- 2.7.1 The SEA Regulations require the likely evolution of the environment without the Plan to be described. Places for Everyone would remain in force and would continue to set Bolton's minimum housing and employment requirements, but it does not identify sites in Bolton or set local policy. The Council's current adopted policies would age, and decisions would increasingly be taken against national policy with limited local expression.
- 2.7.2 On the evidence of the baseline at Appendix A.3, the position without the Plan is expected to evolve as Table 5 shows.

Table 5: Likely evolution of the baseline without the Plan

Objective	Likely evolution without the Plan
1, 3 and 4. Health, communities and education	The gap in life expectancy between neighbourhoods, currently 11.8 years for men and 10.8 for women, would be unlikely to narrow. Without allocations tied to infrastructure, new development would not reliably be coordinated with health, education and open space provision, and the households without a car, a quarter of the total, would see least benefit. Health inequality would be expected to persist or widen.
2. Housing	Under delivery against the 787 dwelling requirement, a longstanding issue, would be likely to continue. Without allocations or local policy on tenure, type and location, a greater share of supply would come forward through speculative applications, with reduced ability to secure affordable housing, accessible homes or the mix indicated by need. Affordability pressure, with prices rising 8.1 per cent in the year to March 2025, would be expected to continue.
5. Economy	Employment land supply would rely on existing Places for Everyone allocations and a fragmented brownfield supply. The appraisal of employment growth options found that this is insufficient in scale and form for industrial and warehousing need. The economy would remain narrowly based, with manufacturing at 12.2 per cent against 7.5 per cent nationally, and the employment rate would be unlikely to close its eight point gap with the national average.

Objective	Likely evolution without the Plan
6 and 12. Transport and air quality	Development in less accessible locations would increase car dependency. Traffic, at 1.3 billion vehicle miles in 2025, would be likely to grow, sustaining transport's 41 per cent share of greenhouse gas emissions. The progress under the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan that brought every Bolton monitoring site within the nitrogen dioxide objective in 2025 would be less likely to be sustained.
7 and 8. Energy, carbon and climate resilience	Without local policy on energy performance, low carbon energy and climate resilient design, new development would meet national minimum standards only. Progress towards the Greater Manchester target of 375 MW of additional renewable generation by 2030 would be slower. Retrofit of the existing housing stock, in which 14.9 per cent of households were in fuel poverty in 2022, would remain uncoordinated, and resilience would not keep pace with the surface water flood risk to which nearly 3,320 ground floor properties are already exposed.
9. Biodiversity	Biodiversity net gain would continue to apply as a statutory requirement, but without local spatial targeting it would be less likely to deliver connected habitat where the ecological network needs it. Delivery of Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities, including restoration at Red Moss, would depend on funding and landowner action rather than on plan led opportunity. Tree cover would be likely to remain below the 17 per cent target.
10 and 11. Landscape and heritage	Green field and potentially Green Belt development would be more likely to occur through appeal decisions than through a plan led review, with less control over which parcels are released and what mitigation is secured. Without up to date local policy, the character of the West Pennine Moors fringe, the valley landscapes and the mill stock would be more exposed to incremental harm, and the eleven assets on the at risk register would be less likely to find viable new uses.
13. Land and soil	The land identified Brownfield Land Register would be harder to bring forward without the certainty and infrastructure coordination a plan provides, and a previously developed land first sequence would be weaker in practice. Loss of greenfield land would be less well directed away from better quality agricultural land and peat resources.
14. Water	Growth would be less well matched to water supply and wastewater capacity, adding to pressure in a catchment already recording 2,140 hours of storm overflow spills in 2023, and making the improvement in Croal and Irwell status less likely.
15. Waste	Design for waste minimisation and the circular economy would not be secured through policy, and progress towards the 55 per cent recycling target from the current 46.43 per cent would depend on collection and behaviour change alone.

- 2.7.3 The no plan position is a continuation of the adverse trends recorded in the baseline, with a reduced ability to influence them. That is the position against which the effects of the Plan and its alternatives should be read.

3. How the appraisal was carried out

3.1 The stages of the appraisal

- 3.1.1 Sustainability appraisal proceeds in the same way whatever the plan: establishing the baseline, identifying where the plan affects the topics the assessment covers, judging the effects, and recommending mitigation where it is needed. The framework includes the determinants of health and the effects on people sharing protected characteristics alongside the environmental and economic objectives. Through that integration the framework covers all four assessment types in one exercise: sustainability appraisal, strategic environmental assessment, equality impact assessment and health impact assessment. Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a sustainability appraisal of the Plan.
- 3.1.2 The structure of the appraisal follows the process in the ODPM practice guidance on strategic environmental assessment (2005) and Planning Practice Guidance on strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal, updated in 2020. The process runs in five stages, alongside and feeding into the preparation of the Plan, as shown at Figure 9.

Figure 9: The sustainability appraisal process and its relationship to plan making

Stage	What the appraisal did	Document produced	When
A	Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding the scope	Scoping Report	July 2025, consultation closed 25 September 2025
B	Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects	Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (Appendix B); Growth Options Assessment (July 2026)	November 2025; developing and refining continued January to July 2026
B	Appraising the strategic policies, site allocations and development management policies	Assessment tables (Appendix C)	June to August 2026
C	Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report	This report	August to September 2026
D	Consultation on the Plan and on this report	Publication Draft Plan, Regulation 19	October to November 2026
E	Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Plan	Authority Monitoring Report, annual	From adoption

- 3.1.3 Stages A to C are complete. This report is Stage C. Stage D is consultation on the Plan and on this report under Regulation 19, and Stage E, post adoption reporting and monitoring, is addressed at Section 9.2.

3.2 The sustainability appraisal framework

- 3.2.1 The framework comprises fifteen sustainability objectives, set out in Table 6. The objective is the full statement in the right-hand column. The theme in the left-hand column summarises it and is the label used in the tables in this report and its appendices. Each objective has assessment criteria, expressed as key questions, and baseline indicators.
- 3.2.2 The objectives were derived from the review of plans and programmes at Appendix A.1 and the baseline at Appendix A.3. They were informed by engagement with the statutory consultation bodies (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) at scoping stage, and revised in response to the comments of Historic England and Natural England, as recorded in the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report at Appendix B.

Table 6: Sustainability appraisal objectives

SA Objective Theme	SA Objective
1. Health and Wellbeing	Improve the long-term physical and mental health and wellbeing for everyone in Bolton by reducing health inequalities, improving quality and quantity and access to healthcare and green open spaces as well as promoting healthy and active lifestyles.
2. Housing	Provide everybody in the Borough with the opportunity to live in a decent, warm and affordable home that meets local needs and aspirations in terms of house types and tenures whilst also reducing homelessness
3. Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	Promote the safety, inclusivity and connectivity of neighbourhoods so that everyone feels they belong, has equal opportunities to access local services and facilities, contribute to local life and thrive in Bolton regardless of their background or abilities.
4. Education and Lifelong Learning	Improve education, training and lifelong learning by increasing the quantity and quality of and access to such opportunities and facilities which will also help to raise aspirations and maintain a healthy labour market.
5. Local Economy and Employment	Develop a sustainable and diverse economy with higher levels of employment by creating more and better jobs that are easily accessible, supporting business expansion and promoting growth in key economic sectors.
6. Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	Enable a low-carbon transport system that boosts walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport use, improves safety, lowers emissions and cuts car use whilst promoting sustainable patterns of growth to reduce the need to travel.
7. Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	Encourage the acceleration to a zero-carbon energy system by enabling the development and wider use of renewable energy as

SA Objective Theme	SA Objective
	well as seeking to minimise carbon emissions and increasing energy efficiency.
8. Adapting to our Changing Climate	Reduce the risk of and from flooding and ensure new development and the existing built environment is resilient to climate extremes.
9. Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	Protect and enhance Bolton's biodiversity as well as strengthening its green and blue infrastructure to create well-connected and climate-resilient networks.
10. Landscape and Townscape	Conserve and enhance the quality and local character of Bolton's distinctive landscapes and townscapes, protect key views, as well as regenerate degraded urban and natural environments.
11. Heritage	Conserve and enhance Bolton's historic environment in a manner that is appropriate to its cultural significance.
12. Air Quality	Reduce air pollution to provide a healthy environment for people and wildlife.
13. Land and Soil Quality	Ensure efficient use of land and minimising the loss of better-quality agricultural land, safeguard and improve soils, and conserve land resources.
14. Water Resources	Protect and maintain the quality of Bolton's water resources by raising water quality and keeping water consumption and abstraction within local supply limits
15. Waste Minimisation	Move towards a circular economy by generating less waste, designing out waste in new development, boosting reuse and recycling and aiming for near-zero residual waste

3.3 Scoring and the types of effect assessed

- 3.3.1 Each policy, allocation and alternative is scored against every objective using the key at Table 7. Combined symbols are used where there is a strong likelihood of an effect but insufficient information to be certain, or where positive and negative effects occur together depending on delivery.
- 3.3.2 Each policy, allocation and alternative is tested against the assessment criteria for each objective, the key questions at Appendix A.3. The schedule at Appendix C records, for each objective, the evidence and reasoning in the commentary, the score in the short, medium and long term with its characteristics, the mitigation proposed where the effect is negative or uncertain, and the Council's response. The score follows from the commentary.

Table 7: Assessment key

Score	Meaning
++	Very positive effect
+	Positive effect
O	Neutral or no effect
?	Uncertain effect
+/-	Mixed effect

Score	Meaning
+/?	Positive but uncertain effect
-/?	Negative but uncertain effect
-	Negative effect
--	Very negative effect

- 3.3.3 Effects are recorded as short term (0 to 4 years), medium term (5 to 9 years) or long term (10 years and over), and are characterised as direct or indirect, primary or secondary, temporary or permanent, and cumulative or synergistic, as the SEA Regulations require. Likely receptors and affected groups are identified where relevant.
- 3.3.4 Secondary effects are those that are not a direct result of the Plan but follow from a primary effect, for example improved active travel infrastructure changing travel behaviour and so affecting air quality. Cumulative effects are those that arise where proposals are not significant individually but are in combination, and may add to or cancel one another. Synergistic effects are those where two or more effects act together to produce an effect greater than the sum of the parts, for example successive developments each fragmenting a green infrastructure network until it can no longer support a species.

3.4 Equality and health

- 3.4.1 Equality Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment are integrated into the appraisal, for the reasons given at Section 3.1. The framework includes assessment criteria that test effects on people sharing protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and on the four additional groups the Council includes in its equality work: the Armed Forces and veterans, care leavers, those with caring responsibilities, and people affected by socioeconomic disadvantage. The framework also incorporates the determinants of health and the Department of Health screening questions, so that the scope of a Health Impact Assessment is covered.
- 3.4.2 The Equality Impact Statement at Appendix D sets out the screening assessment in full, including the results by protected characteristic. Equality findings that are significant for the Plan are reported in the main body at Sections 5 to 7, and for the Plan as a whole at Section 8.5.

3.5 Assumptions, difficulties and limitations

- 3.5.1 The SEA Regulations require a description of how the assessment was undertaken and of any difficulties encountered. Table 8 sets out the assumptions and limitations that apply.

Table 8: Assumptions, difficulties and how they were handled

Matter	How it was handled
Proportionality at strategic level	The appraisal of spatial and growth options was high level, proportionate to the stage of the Plan. Assumptions were that accessibility to services and jobs is better in the town centre and other centres; that poorer accessibility leads to adverse effects on

Matter	How it was handled
	health, carbon and air quality; and that loss of greenfield land has the potential for adverse environmental effects without mitigation.
Heritage effects at option stage	A precautionary approach was taken to potential harm to heritage assets at option and policy stage, because the effect depends on implementation and design. This is why heritage scores negatively across most options.
Persistent uncertainty on four objectives	Effects on climate resilience (objective 8), water resources (objective 14) and waste minimisation (objective 15), and to a lesser extent zero carbon energy (objective 7), were recorded as uncertain at option stage because they depend on site level information not available at that stage. These were revisited at policy and allocation stage.
Evidence base	Some baseline sources predate 2020, including the Landscape Character Appraisal 2001, the Contaminated Land Strategy 2015 and the 2019 Water Framework Directive classification, and the travel to work data collected in April 2021 was affected by Covid-19 restrictions. The dated sources were checked with the Council's environmental officers, and the Council's own Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was undertaken for the Plan. Where an indicator is dated it is identified in Appendix A.3.
Predicting effects of policy wording	Policies were assessed as drafted. Where a policy is silent on a matter, the effect is recorded as uncertain rather than neutral, and a mitigation recommendation is made. This is the principal route by which the appraisal has influenced policy wording.
Interaction with other plans	Bolton's development plan also comprises Places for Everyone and the Greater Manchester Joint Waste and Minerals Plans. Not every sustainability objective can or should be addressed by every policy in this Plan, and the assessment records a neutral score where a matter is dealt with elsewhere in the development plan.

3.6 Consistency of method between the Plan and the alternatives

- 3.7.1 The alternatives were appraised using the same framework, scoring key, timescales and effect types as the Plan. Growth options were assessed at borough level, policies against their wording and sites against their characteristics. Each alternative was assessed in the same way as the part of the Plan it is an alternative to. Where the Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper 2026 (EVS01) assesses smaller sites only as part of a larger one, the larger site is assessed alone and jointly with them, and the site the Council reduced before allocating it is assessed as promoted.

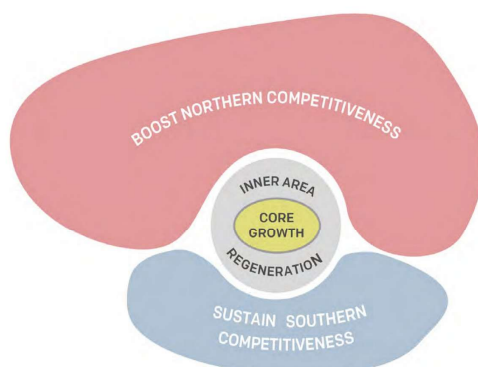
4. Growth options and reasonable alternatives

4.1 The alternatives tested

- 4.1.1 The SEA Regulations require the appraisal to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan and of reasonable alternatives taking account of the objectives and geographical scope of the Plan, and to give an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with. The Council identified reasonable alternatives at each stage of the Plan's preparation, on the matters where a different choice would produce a materially different sustainability outcome.
- 4.1.2 Alternatives relating to the spatial strategy were tested at Direction of Travel stage. Five options were appraised in November 2025: brownfield only, dispersed, public transport led, M61 corridor led, and anchored. The appraisal found that options concentrating growth at existing centres, stations and the growth anchors performed most strongly against health, housing, education, employment, transport and air quality, and that dispersed and corridor led options performed poorly against those objectives with no strategic mitigation available. The anchored option offered the most balanced performance. The appraisal recommended that the sustainable transport priorities of the public transport led option be integrated with the anchored growth pattern, and the Council adopted that recommendation. This assessment is published in the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (November 2025) at Appendix B. That assessment was high level and proportionate to the stage reached. The spatial options are reappraised in more detail in this report.
- 4.1.3 The options were tested against the spatial frame set by Places for Everyone. Figure 10 illustrates this: on the left the city region strategy, and on the right its application to Bolton. Bolton lies wholly within the Boost Northern Competitiveness area. Two elements of that strategy apply in the borough: the band through Bolton Town Centre, and the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor (Policy JP-Strat 8) with its committed allocations at West of Wingates, Chequerbent North and Logistics North. The anchored option develops this spatial strategy established in Places for Everyone; each of the other options departs from it in the level of growth, in its distribution, or in both.

The city region strategy

Figure 4.1 Spatial Strategy



How it lands on Bolton

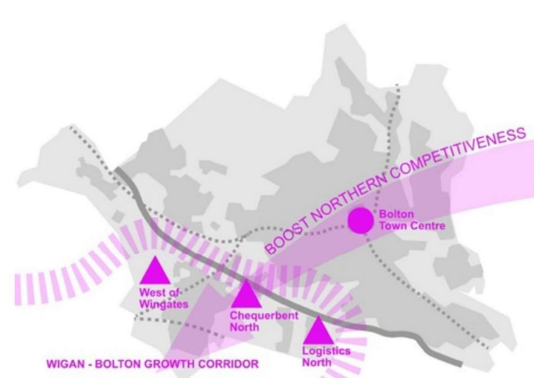


Figure 10: The frame the options were tested against. Source: Places for Everyone, Figures 4.1 and 3.1 (Bolton extract), adopted March 2024

- 4.1.4 This report tests the following, each appraised in the schedules at Appendix C.1:
- three housing growth options, at Section 4.2, with the selected option also tested on the shorter Places for Everyone period to 2039;
 - three employment growth options, at Section 4.3, with the selected option also tested to 2039, and of which the third, no growth, cannot meet the requirement and is shown for completeness;
 - the dispersed and brownfield only options rejected at the interim stage, reappraised at Section 4.4 to confirm that rejection.
- 4.1.5 All options were appraised at the same level, against the fifteen objectives at Table 6 and for the same three timescales, so that the comparison between them depends on the level and distribution of growth alone. The schedules give each option the title used in the Growth Options Assessment (July 2026) alongside the title used here. Green Belt release was not tested as a separate alternative. It follows from the housing and employment options, and Policy SP7 implements the release implied by the selected options; the effects of that policy are assessed against its wording at Section 5.
- 4.1.6 The options correspond to the land supply examined in the Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper 2026. Option 1 is the supply outside the Green Belt plus the sites the paper selects. Option 2 adds the sites the paper assessed and did not select. Option 3 draws on the wider promoted Green Belt supply. The rationale for changes to the Green Belt is set out in ENVG01, Bolton Local Plan Integrated Topic Paper, September 2026.
- 4.1.7 Mitigation is applied through the policies and allocations. The appraisal of each option focuses on the broad direction of growth. Where a schedule identifies mitigation, it is addressed to the Plan rather than to the option, and the response records that the matter is carried in the policies of the Publication Plan and applies at application stage. The significance of an option's effects therefore depends in part on how it is implemented through the site allocations and the development management policies, which are appraised at Sections 6 and 7.
- 4.1.8 Each of the following sections opens with a conceptual diagram of the pattern of growth under each option. The diagrams are derived from the distribution of the sites under assessment, but they are not maps: they indicate the broad distribution of growth relative to the urban area, the Green Belt, the M61 and the West Pennine Moors, and show no locations, sites or boundaries. Growth shown in the pale green zone is Green Belt release. Each section then gives a summary table of the long-term score against each objective taken from the schedule, then a table recording the assumption tested and the outcome of the appraisal, and closes with a conclusion. Where the short-term score differs from the long-term score, the outcome says so. The key to the scores is at Table 7.

4.2 Housing growth options

- 4.2.1 Three levels and distributions of housing growth were tested as reasonable alternatives, and the selected option was also tested on the shorter Places for Everyone period to 2039. The assessment schedules are at Appendix C.1.
- 4.2.2 Figure 11 is a conceptual diagram of the pattern of growth under each option. Option 1 clusters it at Bolton Town Centre and the anchors on the corridor. Option

2 keeps that cluster and extends it with further sites in the Green Belt to the west and south. Option 3 places the growth along the M61, at the junctions, almost all of it in the Green Belt. The 2039 variant of Option 1 has the same pattern as Option 1 over a shorter period.

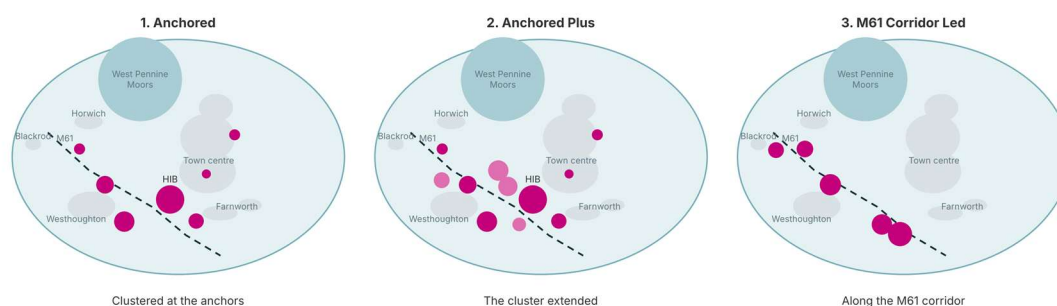


Figure 11: Conceptual diagram of the pattern of growth under each housing growth option, derived from the distribution of the sites under assessment (diagram, not to scale; grey is the urban area including the smaller towns, pale blue the Green Belt, darker blue the West Pennine Moors, and the dashed line the M61)

- 4.2.3 Table 9 summarises the appraisal of the four against the fifteen objectives, using the long-term score from each schedule. The table shows that all three levels of growth score very positive for housing, and that the differences lie in the social and accessibility objectives, where Option 1 scores highest, and in landscape and townscape and land and soil quality, where the effects worsen from negative under Option 1 to very negative under Options 2 and 3. Option 3 is the only option to score very negative on the health, community, transport, biodiversity and air quality objectives. The columns for Option 1 and its 2039 variant are the same on every objective except waste minimisation, where the variant has the negative medium and long-term score applied to the policy versions.

Table 9: Summary of the appraisal of the housing growth options

Objective	1. Anchored	1 (to 2039). Anchored	2. Anchored Plus	3. M61 Corridor Led
1. Health and Wellbeing	++	++	?	--
2. Housing	++	++	++	++
3. Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	+	+	+	--
4. Education and Lifelong Learning	?	?	?	-
5. Local Economy and Employment	?	?	?	-
6. Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	++	++	+	--
7. Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	?	?	?	?
8. Adapting to our Changing Climate	?	?	?	?
9. Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	?	?	?	--
10. Landscape and Townscape	-	-	--	--
11. Heritage	?	?	?	?
12. Air Quality	+	+	+	--
13. Land and Soil Quality	-	-	--	--
14. Water Resources	?	?	?	?
15. Waste Minimisation	?	-	?	?

Each cell reports the long-term score from the schedule at Appendix C.1; the key is at Table 7.

4.2.4 Table 10 records, for each option, the assumption tested and the outcome of the appraisal, drawn from the overall summary and outcome recorded at the end of each schedule at Appendix C.1.

Table 10: Housing growth options and their appraisal outcome

Option	Assumption tested	Outcome of the appraisal
1. Anchored	Around 13,700 homes plus headroom, meeting the Places for Everyone requirement of 787 a year. Growth clustered at the key local areas of change, stations and centres, with limited Green Belt release in locations made accessible by the transport and active travel investment the scale of development makes possible.	Very positive for health and wellbeing and for sustainable transport, because growth clustered at centres and stations supports active travel and access to services, with consequent benefit to air quality. Very positive for housing. Negative for landscape and townscape and for land resources, because even limited Green Belt release affects character, key views

Option	Assumption tested	Outcome of the appraisal
		and land supply. Uncertain against eight objectives that depend on site specific factors. Selected, and given effect through Policy SP3. Provision to 2039 or to 2042 was tested through the two drafted versions of the policy: the 2039 version provides around 11,360 homes at the same annual rate over a shorter period and is not a different growth option. Provision to 2042 is taken forward.
1 (to 2039). Anchored	The same strategy on the Places for Everyone horizon: around 11,360 homes at 787 a year to 2039, through the version of Policy SP3 drafted for the shorter period.	Scored on the same convention as Option 1 so that the two periods can be compared like for like. Shares the profile of Option 1 on every objective, except that waste minimisation is negative in the medium and long term. The appraisal does not separate the two periods. The choice between them turned on the resilience of supply and on market choice, the longer period giving headroom for sites to slip without the strategy failing. Not selected; the Anchored strategy is carried forward on the 2042 horizon as Option 1.
2. Anchored Plus	Around 17,300 homes plus headroom, about 1,018 a year. The anchored core extended with further sustainable sites and accessible Green Belt release. With deliverable brownfield largely used at the anchored level, the uplift relies on Places for Everyone competitiveness, regeneration and additional Green Belt land.	Positive for housing, for inclusive and connected neighbourhoods and, through the combined pattern of development, for low carbon transport and air quality. Negative to very negative for landscape and townscape and for efficient use of land, because the additional release affects openness, established views and land resources. Uncertain against nine objectives.
3. M61 Corridor Led	Around 21,650 homes plus headroom, 1,274 a year, the standard method level, through the greatest greenfield and Green Belt release near the motorway junctions.	Delivers the highest housing number, but very negative against health and wellbeing, inclusive communities, low carbon transport, biodiversity, landscape, air quality and land resources. Reinforces car dependent patterns, increases air and noise pollution and reduces active travel opportunity. Negative for education and employment, because growth

Option	Assumption tested	Outcome of the appraisal
		concentrated on the corridor would place pressure on schools there while diverting resources from other communities, with the potential for decline in Bolton town centre. Green Belt release along the corridor would erode several landscape character types including reclaimed land and wetlands, historic parks and wooded estate farmland, mosslands and lowland farmland, and urban fringe farmland.
Conclusion on housing growth Option 1, Anchored, presented the strongest overall performance. It delivers substantial housing growth while supporting healthy lifestyles, low carbon transport and improved access to services. Its adverse effects on landscape character and land resources are smaller than those of the higher growth alternatives, which increase those effects without a proportionate gain against the social and economic objectives. The two periods tested for Option 1 do not differ in their effects: the 2039 version scores the same on every objective but waste, and the choice between them turned on the resilience of supply and on market choice. Provision to 2042 is taken forward.		

4.3 Employment growth options

- 4.3.1 Three levels and distributions of employment growth were tested, and the selected option was also tested on the shorter Places for Everyone period to 2039. The requirement is 811,727 square metres of industrial and warehousing floorspace and 16,700 square metres of office floorspace to 2042, and the shortfall against existing supply is 147,497 square metres of industrial and warehousing floorspace and 8,674 square metres of office floorspace. Places for Everyone set the starting point, with no further Green Belt release assumed, so any release an option proposes has to be justified as exceptional. Option 3, no growth, is not a reasonable alternative. It would provide no new employment opportunities and would reinforce the existing pattern, leaving Bolton behind the other Greater Manchester districts; it would offer no choice or churn in the employment land supply; and it would not meet the need identified in Places for Everyone or contribute to its strategy of boosting northern competitiveness, with which the Plan must be consistent. It is shown with the other two for completeness and transparency. The assessment schedules are at Appendix C.1.
- 4.3.2 Figure 12 is a conceptual diagram of the pattern of employment growth under each option. The grey circles stand for the existing allocations and brownfield supply, common to all three; the magenta circles stand for the new provision under the option. Option 1 meets the shortfall at three anchors, Health Innovation Bolton, Blackrod and Logistics North. Option 2 places all new provision at Health Innovation Bolton. Option 3 adds nothing to the existing supply, and the

requirement goes unmet. The 2039 variant of Option 1 has the Option 2 pattern, release at Health Innovation Bolton only, but at the lower 2039 quantum.

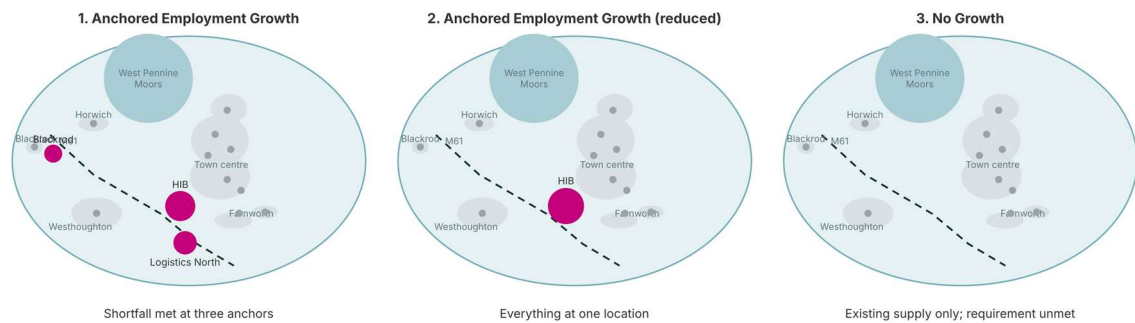


Figure 12: Conceptual diagram of the pattern of employment growth under each option, derived from the distribution of the sites under assessment (diagram, not to scale; pale grey is the urban area including the smaller towns, pale blue the Green Belt, darker blue the West Pennine Moors, the dashed line the M61, grey dots the existing allocations and brownfield supply, and magenta the new provision under the option)

4.3.3 Table 11 summarises the appraisal of the four against the fifteen objectives, using the long-term score from each schedule. The table shows that Option 1 is the only option to score very positive on the health, education and economy objectives, where Option 2 is mixed and Option 3 negative or uncertain, and that Option 2 scores better than Option 1 only on landscape and townscape and heritage, at the cost of a negative score on inclusive communities and water resources. Option 3 has no positive long-term score against any objective. The columns for Option 1 and its 2039 variant are the same on every objective except waste minimisation, as for housing.

Table 11: Summary of the appraisal of the employment growth options

Objective	1. Anchored Employment Growth	1 (to 2039). Anchored Minus	2. Anchored Employment Growth (reduced)	3. No Growth
1. Health and Wellbeing	++	++	+/-	-
2. Housing	O	O	O	O
3. Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	+	+	-	-
4. Education and Lifelong Learning	++	++	+/-	?
5. Local Economy and Employment	++	++	+/-	-
6. Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	+/-	+/-	+/-	-
7. Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	?	?	?	?
8. Adapting to our Changing Climate	?	?	O	?
9. Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	+/-	+/-	+/-	?
10. Landscape and Townscape	+/-	+/-	+	?
11. Heritage	?	?	+	?
12. Air Quality	+/-	+/-	+/-	-
13. Land and Soil Quality	-	-	-	-
14. Water Resources	?	?	-	?
15. Waste Minimisation	?	-	+/-	?

Options 1 and 2 and the 2039 variant of Option 1 are the reasonable alternatives. Option 3 is not a reasonable alternative, for the reasons given at paragraph 4.3.1, and is shown for completeness and transparency. Each cell reports the long-term score from the schedule at Appendix C.1; the key is at Table 7.

4.3.4 Table 12 records, for each option, the assumption tested and the outcome of the appraisal, drawn from the overall summary and outcome recorded at the end of each schedule at Appendix C.1.

Table 12: Employment growth options and their appraisal outcome

Option	Assumption tested	Outcome of the appraisal
1. Anchored Employment Growth	Meets the full requirement of 811,727 square metres of industrial and warehousing floorspace and 16,700 square metres of office floorspace, with the 147,497 square metre shortfall in industrial and warehousing floorspace delivered	Very positive for education and for the local economy, through job creation, links with education providers and a strengthened labour market, and very positive for health and wellbeing through health related research and innovation. Mixed for transport and air quality, because innovation led

Option	Assumption tested	Outcome of the appraisal
	through Health Innovation Bolton, Blackrod and a Logistics North extension, with limited Green Belt release. Aligned with the anchored approach.	development offers scope to embed sustainable travel but growth across several locations risks increasing traffic. Mixed for biodiversity and landscape, with limited designations across the three sites but cumulative pressure on habitat, particularly during construction. Negative for land resources through loss of farmland, brick clay and sandstone. Selected, and given effect through Policy SP2, which identifies a supply of between 799,329 and 849,329 square metres of industrial and warehousing floorspace against a need of 811,727 square metres, and 21,026 square metres of office floorspace against a need of 16,700 square metres; the 2039 version provides 716,230 and 18,384 square metres respectively, with provision to 2042 taken forward. Green Belt release is determined by the employment options rather than tested separately: Policy SP7 implements the release implied, with the 2042 version altering the Green Belt boundary at Health Innovation Bolton (BSA02), the Blackrod Employment Cluster (BSA07) and the Logistics North Extension (BSA08) and the 2039 version at Health Innovation Bolton only.
1 (to 2039). Anchored Minus	The same strategy on the Places for Everyone horizon: 716,230 square metres of industrial and warehousing and 18,384 square metres of office floorspace to 2039, with Green Belt release at Health Innovation Bolton only, through the version of Policy SP2 drafted for the shorter period.	Scored on the same convention as Option 1 so that the two periods can be compared like for like. Shares the profile of Option 1 on every objective, except that waste minimisation is negative in the medium and long term. The appraisal does not separate the two periods. The choice between them turned on supply flexibility and market choice, which a single release location does not provide: even at the reduced scale, supply needs flexibility across the wider area of search. Not selected; the Anchored employment strategy is carried forward on the 2042 horizon as Option 1.

Option	Assumption tested	Outcome of the appraisal
2. Anchored Employment Growth (reduced)	Concentrates all new floorspace at Health Innovation Bolton and nowhere else, covering health, research and office floorspace and industrial and warehousing.	Positive for landscape and heritage, because masterplanned design, new green space and proposed restoration offer scope to improve the immediate townscape. Negative for inclusive communities, because concentrating growth in one location risks excluding communities elsewhere and reinforcing spatial inequality. Mixed for health, education, economy, transport and air quality for the same reason: the opportunities created are highly localised. Negative for land and for water resources, because demand is concentrated in a single location. Creates reliance on a single site, which is why it was not preferred.
3. No Growth	Relies on existing Places for Everyone allocations and Bolton's brownfield supply, which is small and fragmented and cannot accommodate industrial and warehousing at the scale or form required.	Positive in the short term for health, inclusivity and efficient use of land, because greenfield loss is avoided and derelict sites are improved. Negative in the medium to long term, as constrained land supply restricts accessible jobs and facilities, widening inequality. Negative for the economy, sustainable transport and air quality, because a fragmented supply limits growth and efficient movement patterns. Not aligned with the Council's economic strategy. Cannot meet the requirement. Not a reasonable alternative; assessed for completeness and transparency.

Conclusion on employment growth

Option 1 presented the strongest overall performance. It performs well on health, education and employment by supporting health innovation, advanced manufacturing, skills and job creation, and it offers a more diverse portfolio of employment locations than Option 2, reducing reliance on a single site and improving accessibility across the borough. Its loss of land resources and potential environmental effects are capable of being managed through mitigation and supporting policy. The two periods tested for Option 1 do not differ in their effects: the 2039 version scores the same on every objective but waste. The difference between them is in the release, at Health Innovation Bolton only to 2039 and at three locations to 2042, and it is that difference, in supply flexibility and market choice, on which the choice turned. Provision to 2042 is taken forward.

4.4 Options rejected at the interim stage and confirmed at this stage

- 4.4.1 The Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (November 2025, Appendix B) appraised five spatial options and found that the dispersed and brownfield only options performed poorly against the health, housing, education, employment, transport and air quality objectives with no strategic mitigation available. The Council rejected both before the growth options were refined. The sites promoted to the Council, and the sift that reduced them to the four strategic locations, are in Chapter 3 of the Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper 2026. The brownfield only option takes all the land outside the Green Belt, including the other protected open land sites; that supply falls short of the requirement, and much of the brownfield within it has not delivered because it is not viable. The SEA Regulations and Planning Practice Guidance require reasonable alternatives to be appraised and the reasons for selecting those dealt with to be outlined. Both options have been reappraised at this stage, at the Anchored quantum of around 13,700 homes plus headroom, holding the quantum constant and changing only the distribution, so that the comparison with Option 1 is direct and the rejection can be tested against the same fifteen objectives. In each case the appraisal confirms the rejection. The assessment schedules are at Appendix C.1.
- 4.4.2 Figure 13 is a conceptual diagram of the pattern of growth under each of the two options. Dispersed spreads the same number of homes across every settlement, on the sites promoted to the Council, which lie on the northern, western and southern edges of the urban area, most of them beyond reach of the stations and centres. Brownfield only confines it to urban land, in Bolton and the smaller towns, which places it within the existing built-up areas but on a scattered supply that cannot deliver the number.

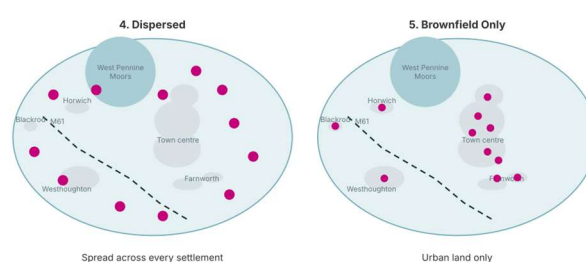


Figure 13: Conceptual diagram of the pattern of growth under the dispersed and brownfield only options, derived from the distribution of the sites under assessment (diagram, not to scale; grey is the urban area including the smaller towns, pale blue the Green Belt, darker blue the West Pennine Moors, and the dashed line the M61)

- 4.4.3 Table 13 summarises the appraisal of the two against the fifteen objectives, with Option 1 alongside for comparison, using the long-term score from each schedule. Read against Option 1, the dispersed option is worse on every social and accessibility objective and no better on any environmental objective, at the same number of homes. The brownfield only option scores positive or very positive on the environmental objectives and on sustainable transport, and negative on housing, the local economy, health and communities; the table shows both what the option protects and what it fails to deliver.

Table 13: Summary of the appraisal of the options rejected at the interim stage

Objective	4. Dispersed	5. Brownfield Only	1. Anchored (for comparison)
1. Health and Wellbeing	-	-	++
2. Housing	+	--	++
3. Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	-	-	+
4. Education and Lifelong Learning	-	?	?
5. Local Economy and Employment	-	-	?
6. Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	-	+	++
7. Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	?	?	?
8. Adapting to our Changing Climate	?	?	?
9. Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	-	+	?
10. Landscape and Townscape	-	+/?	-
11. Heritage	?	+/-	?
12. Air Quality	-	+/-	+
13. Land and Soil Quality	-	++	-
14. Water Resources	?	?	?
15. Waste Minimisation	?	?	?

Each cell reports the long-term score from the schedule at Appendix C.1; the key is at Table 7. Option 1 is repeated from Table 9.

4.4.4 Table 14 records, for each option, the assumption tested and the outcome of the appraisal, drawn from the overall summary and outcome recorded at the end of each schedule at Appendix C.1.

Table 14: Options rejected at the interim stage and their appraisal outcome

Option	Assumption tested	Outcome of the appraisal
4. Dispersed	Around 13,700 homes plus headroom to 2042, 787 a year: the Anchored quantum, delivered from the sites promoted to the Council at the capacities their promoters state. Growth spread across the promoted sites, on the northern, western and southern edges of the urban area, rather than clustered at the Local Areas of Change, stations and centres.	Rejected at the interim stage because most of the promoted sites lie beyond reach of the stations and centres and cannot support growth without reliance on the car: the transport package carried by the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor, with its committed allocations, potential stations on the Atherton line, the link road and the sustainable transport corridor to Junction 6, is the accessibility the anchored pattern relies on, and the

Option	Assumption tested	Outcome of the appraisal
		dispersed sites do not have it. Holding the quantum at the Anchored level, positive for housing only. Negative for health and wellbeing, inclusive communities, education, the local economy, sustainable transport and air quality, because most of the same homes are delivered as smaller developments in locations that rely on the car, with only some within reach of stations and centres, and because contributions spread thinly across many sites cannot fund the infrastructure that clustered growth would. Negative for biodiversity, landscape and townscape and land and soil quality, because greenfield and Green Belt land is taken at many separate locations rather than at the limited number of accessible sites the Anchored pattern releases. Uncertain against five objectives. The comparison with Option 1 is direct: the same number of homes, with worse effects on every accessibility objective and no compensating environmental benefit. Rejection confirmed.
5. Brownfield Only	Around 13,700 homes plus headroom to 2042, 787 a year: the Anchored quantum, tested against urban land only with no Green Belt release, which is the current plan position.	Rejected at the interim stage because urban land alone cannot meet the Places for Everyone requirement or maintain a five-year supply of deliverable sites, and because the urban supply is itself scattered across the borough rather than clustered. Tested against the Anchored quantum, very positive for land and soil quality and positive for biodiversity, because it takes no greenfield land; positive for sustainable transport, because much of the brownfield supply lies in and around Central Bolton where public transport access is highest; and positive in the short term for health and wellbeing and inclusive communities, because those sites are accessible and their redevelopment removes derelict land from

Option	Assumption tested	Outcome of the appraisal
		neighbourhoods. Those benefits arise because the option does not deliver the homes. Very negative in the long term for housing, as the shortfall grows through the Plan period and the viability of the remaining brownfield supply slows delivery, and negative for the local economy and, in the medium and long term, for health and wellbeing and inclusive communities, as unmet need falls on the most deprived urban neighbourhoods. Mixed for heritage and air quality and uncertain against five objectives. Rejection confirmed.
Conclusion on the rejected options The reappraisal confirms the interim finding. At the same number of homes, the dispersed pattern is worse than the anchored pattern on every accessibility objective and no better on any environmental objective. The brownfield only pattern protects land and habitat only by failing to deliver the homes, and its social benefits reverse in the medium and long term as unmet need falls on the most deprived neighbourhoods. Neither is a reasonable alternative to Option 1.		

4.5 Conclusion on the reasonable alternatives

- 4.5.1 No option performs positively against all fifteen objectives. The anchored strategy, at the Places for Everyone requirement and over the Plan period to 2042, with the sustainable transport priorities of the public transport led option integrated into it, performs best against the social and accessibility objectives and has fewer environmental risks than the higher growth alternatives. Its adverse effects, on landscape and townscape and on land resources, arise from the limited Green Belt release; they are assessed against Policy SP7 at Section 5 and at site level at Section 6. The requirement met at the anchored pattern performs better than a higher number, and better than every other distribution of the same number. It is an appropriate strategy in the light of the alternatives tested.
- 4.5.2 The reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with are recorded at Section 4.1 and, for the options rejected at the interim stage, at Section 4.4. The schedules at Appendix C.1 records, for each option, the effect against each objective and its characteristics, the mitigation proposed, the response, and the overall outcome.

5. Appraisal of the strategic policies

5.1 The policies appraised

- 5.1.1 Policies SP1 to SP7 are the strategic policies of the Plan: SP1 Invest in Bolton: Economic Growth Anchors, SP2 Land for Employment, SP3 Land for Housing, SP4 Centres for Shopping and Services, SP5 Historic Built Environment and Landscape, SP6 Natural Environment and SP7 Green Belt. They give effect to the strategy selected at Section 4: SP1 sets the spatial framework, SP2 and SP3 identify the land that meets the employment and housing requirements, SP4 sets the hierarchy of centres, SP5 and SP6 set the strategy for the historic and natural environment, and SP7 alters the Green Belt boundary to the extent the selected growth options imply.
- 5.1.2 Each policy was appraised as drafted for the Publication Plan against the fifteen objectives at Table 6, for the short, medium and long term, using the key at Table 7. The schedules at Appendix C.2 record the score for every timescale, the characteristics of the effect, the commentary, the mitigation proposed and the response. Effects are reported here for the long term, because the strategic policies act through development completing over the Plan period. Two conventions from Table 8 apply: where a policy is silent on a matter development could affect, the effect is uncertain rather than neutral and a recommendation is made; where the matter is dealt with elsewhere in the development plan, the effect is neutral. The alternatives to these policies are the alternatives to the strategy they implement, tested at Section 4.

5.2 Summary of effects

- 5.2.1 Table 15 gives the long-term score of each policy against each objective. The very positive scores are on the local economy, on health and education under SP1, on health and housing under SP3, on landscape under SP5 and SP6, on heritage under SP5 and on biodiversity under SP6. The negative scores are on waste minimisation under the five policies that enable growth and on landscape and land under SP7, and no policy scores very negative against any objective. The uncertain scores are mainly on the environmental objectives, where the effect depends on delivery.

Table 15: Summary of the appraisal of the strategic policies

Objective	SP1	SP2	SP3	SP4	SP5	SP6	SP7
1. Health and Wellbeing	++	+	++	+/?	O	+	+
2. Housing	+	O	++	O	+	O	+
3. Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	+/?	O	+	+/?	+	O	?
4. Education and Lifelong Learning	++	?	+	?	+	O	?
5. Local Economy and Employment	++	++	+	++	++	O	++
6. Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	O	?	+	?	O	+	+/-
7. Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	O	?	+	O	+/?	O	?
8. Adapting to our Changing Climate	O	?	?	O	?	?	?
9. Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	O	O	O	O	?	++	+/?
10. Landscape and Townscape	+/?	+/?	+/?	+/?	++	++	-
11. Heritage	+/?	+/-	+/-	?	++	+	+
12. Air Quality	O	?	+	O	O	+	+/-
13. Land and Soil Quality	O	+/-	?	?	+	?	-
14. Water Resources	O	O	O	O	O	?	O
15. Waste Minimisation	-	-	-	-	?	O	-

Each cell reports the long-term score from the schedule at Appendix C.2; the key is at Table 7.

5.3 Main findings

- 5.3.1 The very positive effects fall on the local economy, scored by SP1, SP2, SP4, SP5 and SP7: together they direct growth to the anchors, the key sectors and the centres, identify the land that meets the employment requirement, and support heritage led regeneration and the reuse of historic buildings. SP1 is also very positive for education and for health, through the University of Greater Manchester and Health Innovation Bolton. SP3 is very positive for housing, identifying land for 14,052 homes against a remaining requirement of at least 13,717 to 2042, with headroom above it, and for health, because it supports housing on unallocated sites where there is access to employment, education and training, primary health care and groceries without car dependency and via safe, walkable routes. SP5 and SP6 are very positive for landscape and townscape, SP5 for heritage and SP6 for biodiversity, because each sets a strategy of protection and enhancement.
- 5.3.2 There are two negative effects. Waste minimisation is negative in the medium and long term under SP1, SP2, SP3, SP4 and SP7, because completed development permanently increases waste arisings, which Policy ENV1 and the Greater

Manchester Joint Waste and Minerals Plan moderate. SP7 is negative for landscape and townscape and for land and soil quality: its distinctive change is the permanent loss of openness and of undeveloped land at four locations, the largest at Health Innovation Bolton, which the compensatory improvements in clause 4 mitigate. Neither effect is assessed as significant. The baseline does not rate the sensitivity of the released parcels, which is a site matter, and the land lost is mainly Grade 3b or Grade 4, with containment continuing to direct demand to the brownfield supply.

- 5.3.3 The mixed scores record benefits and costs that arise together. SP7 is mixed for sustainable transport and air quality: containment directs development into the urban area where everyday journeys can be made without a car, while the peripheral employment releases will generate freight movement and commuting that public transport is unlikely to serve well in the early years. SP2 and SP3 are mixed for heritage, and SP2 for land and soil quality, because the reuse of vacant and derelict land brings benefits without a requirement to conserve historic character or land resources. The uncertain and positive but uncertain scores arise almost entirely where a policy is silent on a matter that depends on delivery: climate adaptation under SP2, SP3, SP5, SP6 and SP7, where flood risk is site specific; landscape and townscape under SP1 to SP4, which support regeneration without saying how development conserves character; the transport, energy, air quality and land objectives under SP2 and SP4, where the outcome depends on the occupiers and on how the sites are reached; and inclusive communities, education and training and energy under SP7, where the outcome on the released land depends on the allocation policies and the occupiers. In each case the response at Appendix C.2 names the development management policy that imposes the requirement on proposals. Neutral scores record matters dealt with elsewhere in the Plan.
- 5.3.4 Three groups are affected in particular. People affected by socioeconomic disadvantage benefit from the health, education and employment effects of SP1 and SP3 and from the access test in SP3 for unallocated sites. Disabled people and people with mobility impairments are the group for whom the appraisal of SP5 found a gap between public access and inclusive access to the historic environment, addressed at Section 5.4. Travelling Showpeople are the group whose need the urban area has not met and for whom SP7 releases land at The Alders, Tonge Moor. The Equality Impact Statement at Appendix D sets out the screening assessment by protected characteristic.

5.4 Changes made to the Plan

- 5.4.1 Table 16 lists the recommendations taken up and the change made in response to each. The recommendation as made and the revised wording are in the schedule at Appendix C.2, in the Mitigation and Response columns. Some changes are to the wording of the strategic policy appraised; others were made elsewhere in the Plan, because the matter belongs to the strategy as a whole or to a development management policy.

Table 16: Recommendations taken up and the changes made

Policy	Objective	Change made
SP1	11 Heritage	Clause 11 requires the restoration of the Hulton Park Registered Park and Garden to conserve and enhance its significance.
SP4	1 Health and Wellbeing	Clause 5 scales the new Local Centre at Health Innovation Bolton to serve the campus and its occupants, consistent with the allocation in Chapter 10.
SP4	4 Education and Lifelong Learning	Clause 1 adds community and training uses to those for which Bolton Town Centre is the principal location.
SP5	3 Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	Point G promotes inclusive as well as public access, including sensitive adaptation of historic buildings and spaces to remove barriers for disabled people and people with mobility impairments.
SP2 and SP3	8 Adapting to our Changing Climate	The opening of Chapter 3 explains that flood risk was assessed strategically in directing growth, through the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the sequential test. Policy ENV2 applies the tests to each proposal.
SP2 and SP3	13 Land and Soil Quality	The opening of Chapter 3 explains that agricultural land and soil quality were considered in deciding where growth should go. Policy ENV6 applies to soils and Policy PQ3 secures the efficient use of allocated land.
SP7	13 Land and Soil Quality	Policy ENV6 requires a soil resource survey and soil management plan on best and most versatile land and on major development, so that soils are stripped, stored and reused. It applies to the released sites.
SP2	5 Local Economy and Employment	Appendix 4 monitors completions and remaining deliverable supply against need, and whether each allocation is progressing to permission, with a trigger for action where the pipeline stalls. Dates were not written into the policy because they would bind the Council to delivery it does not control.

5.4.2 The recommendations not taken up almost all ask a strategic policy to state a requirement that already attaches to proposals through a development management policy; adding it would duplicate a requirement in force or add a statement that carries no weight when an application is determined. A few ask for what the policy already says. The policies that impose the requirements are:

- PQ1 to PQ4: design, density, character and heritage;
- INF1 to INF5: movement, parking, education, community infrastructure and green space;
- HS1 to HS4: affordable housing, mix, inclusivity and quality;
- EC1 to EC6: employment land, skills and the centres;
- ENV1 to ENV5 and ENV7: energy, flood risk, green infrastructure, biodiversity, air quality and water;
- DEL1 for contributions, the character based policy areas CB01 to CB04, and the allocation policies in Chapter 10.

- 5.4.3 The appraisal of SP5 asked point B to refer to the sympathetic reuse of all historic buildings rather than the historic mills and industrial heritage alone, against the landscape and townscape and the land and soil quality objectives. The response records that point B names the mills because the Bolton Mills Action Framework identifies them as the borough's principal reuse opportunity, that the opening of the policy commits the Council to conserving and enhancing the historic environment as a whole, and that the reuse of other historic buildings is enabled at decision stage by Policy PQ4. Point B is unchanged.

5.5 Conclusion on the strategic policies

Conclusion on the strategic policies

The strategic policies perform positively or very positively against the social and economic objectives and against landscape, heritage and biodiversity, and none scores very negative against any objective. The negative effects are the permanent loss of openness and of undeveloped land at the four Green Belt releases under SP7, neither assessed as significant, and the increase in waste arisings that follows from growth. The changes made are to the wording of SP1, SP4 and SP5, the opening of Chapter 3, Policy ENV6 and Appendix 4. The effects of the policies together with the allocations and the development management policies are considered at Section 8.

6. Appraisal of the site allocations

6.1 The sites appraised

- 6.1.1 Policies BSA01 to BSA09 allocate the sites through which the strategy selected at Section 4 is delivered: BSA01 Crompton Place, BSA02 Health Innovation Bolton, BSA03 Anchor Lane, Farnworth, BSA04 Lee Hall, BSA05 Ditchers Farm, Wingates, BSA06 Burnden Way, Middlebrook, BSA07 Blackrod Employment Cluster, BSA08 Logistics North Extension and BSA09 The Alders, Tonge Moor. Six are housing led, two employment led, and BSA09 provides plots for Travelling Showpeople under Policy HS7. BSA01 and BSA06 are previously developed land; the other seven are greenfield, four of them (BSA02, BSA07, BSA08 and BSA09) released from the Green Belt by Policy SP7.
- 6.1.2 Each policy was appraised as drafted for the Publication Plan against the fifteen objectives at Table 6, for the short, medium and long term, using the key at Table 7, with each site assessed against its characteristics as well as the policy wording. The schedules at Appendix C.3.1 record the scores, the commentary, the mitigation proposed and the response. Effects are reported here for the long term, as at Section 5. Where a recommendation led to a change, the schedule keeps the score of the policy as appraised and records the change in the response. The reasonable alternatives at site level are reported at Section 6.5.

6.2 Summary of effects

- 6.2.1 Table 17 gives the long-term score of each allocation against each objective. The very positive scores are on housing, health and the local economy. The negative scores are on waste minimisation under all nine and on land and soil quality under the seven greenfield allocations, and no allocation scores very negative in the long term. BSA01 and BSA06, on previously developed land, have no negative score other than waste, while the greenfield allocations on the M61 corridor carry mixed scores on landscape and air quality.

Table 17: Summary of the appraisal of the site allocations

Objective	BSA01	BSA02	BSA03	BSA04	BSA05	BSA06	BSA07	BSA08	BSA09
1. Health and Wellbeing	+	++	+/-	++	+/-	+	+	++	++
2. Housing	++	++	++	++	++	++	O	++	+
3. Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	++
4. Education and Lifelong Learning	O	++	O	+	O	O	?	+	+
5. Local Economy and Employment	++	++	O	+	O	+	++	++	O
6. Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	+	+/?	+/?	+/-	+/?	+	+	+	+
7. Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	+/?	+/?	O	O	O	O	?	?	?
8. Adapting to our Changing Climate	?	+/?	+/?	+/?	+/?	?	+/?	+/?	+/-
9. Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	+/?	+/-	+/?	+/-	+/?	+/?	+/?	+/?	+/-
10. Landscape and Townscape	++	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/?	+/-	+/-	+/-
11. Heritage	+/?	?	+/?	+/?	+/?	O	+/?	+/?	+/?
12. Air Quality	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/?	+	+
13. Land and Soil Quality	++	-	-	-	-	++	-	-	-
14. Water Resources	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
15. Waste Minimisation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Each cell reports the long-term score from the schedule at Appendix C.3.1; the key is at Table 7. The scores are those of the policies as appraised, before the changes at Table 18.

6.3 Main findings

- 6.3.1 The very positive effects fall on housing at seven allocations, from a minimum of 340 homes at BSA01 to 2,200 at BSA02, and on the local economy at BSA02, whose 80,000 square metres of floorspace are restricted to health innovation, research and advanced manufacturing occupiers, at the industrial and warehousing allocations BSA07 and BSA08, and at BSA01 as a commercial and leisure anchor for the town centre. Health and wellbeing is very positive at BSA02, which is health led and delivers accessible green space in an area of deficit, at BSA04, which provides health facilities, a care facility and a neighbourhood park in an area poorly served at every scale, and at BSA08 and BSA09 through active travel, open space and healthcare contributions. BSA02 is very positive for education, through university space, a primary school and its innovation occupiers, and BSA08 and

BSA09 for inclusive communities. BSA01 is very positive for landscape and townscape, repairing a vacant and severing former shopping centre, and BSA01 and BSA06 for land and soil quality, as previously developed land at a minimum of 120 dwellings per hectare.

- 6.3.2 The negative effects are the permanent loss of open land and soils at the seven greenfield allocations, scored negative for land and soil quality, and the increase in waste arisings at every allocation, for the reason given at Section 5. The land effect is not assessed as significant: best and most versatile agricultural land is scarce in the borough and most farmland is Grade 3b or 4, and at BSA02 about a third is Grade 3a, much of it already developed. Each policy requires prior extraction of viable minerals and, on the coalfield, a coal mining risk assessment. BSA07 and BSA09 score very negative for landscape and townscape in the short term, because the loss of openness is permanent, moving to mixed as planting matures.
- 6.3.3 The mixed effects are concentrated on the greenfield allocations. Landscape and townscape is mixed at all seven: the change is permanent, and the structural landscaping, retained woodland and open space each policy requires moderate it over time. Air quality is mixed at BSA02 to BSA06, which introduce homes beside or near the M61 within the Greater Manchester Air Quality Management Area, with landscaping, bunding or design led mitigation, sustainable transport measures and an air quality assessment under Policy ENV5. Health is mixed at BSA03 and BSA05, where new open space is set against road noise from the M61 above 70 dB and 65 dB Lden across much of each site. Biodiversity is mixed at BSA02, where habitat loss is set against a strategic corridor from Doe Hey Brook to Cutacre Country Park, at BSA04, where occupation will increase use of the Hall Lee Bank Park Local Nature Reserve, and at BSA09, which adjoins the Castle Croft and Bradshaw Brook Site of Biological Importance. Sustainable transport is mixed at BSA04, where a substantial share of car based travel is likely. Adapting to climate change is mixed at BSA09; the response records that the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment places the site in Flood Zone 1 with the surface water risk areas outside the developable area.
- 6.3.4 The uncertain scores arise where the outcome depends on delivery or on a matter the policy as appraised was silent on. Flood risk and drainage are positive but uncertain at the six greenfield allocations that require a site-wide drainage strategy, and uncertain at BSA01, which made no reference to sustainable drainage, and at BSA06, where the policy did not say that built development must be in Flood Zone 1. Heritage is positive but uncertain at seven allocations, depending on the design response, and uncertain at BSA02, which had no heritage requirement although the Historic Environment Record identifies farmsteads within it. Renewable energy is uncertain at BSA07, BSA08 and BSA09 and positive but uncertain at BSA01 and BSA02, where a heat network is an opportunity the policies did not require to be tested. Sustainable transport is positive but uncertain at BSA02, BSA03 and BSA05, where modal shift depends on the timing of the bus, walking and cycling measures. Water resources is uncertain in the short and medium term at the five allocations that need statutory reinforcement. In each case the response at Appendix C.3.1 names the development management policy that imposes the requirement, or records the change made.

- 6.3.5 Travelling Showpeople are the group whose need the urban area has not met, and BSA09 is very positive for their health and inclusion. Older people and people who need supported living benefit from BSA02 and the care facility at BSA04. People affected by socioeconomic disadvantage benefit from the health, employment and skills effects of BSA02 and from BSA01 in the town centre. New residents beside the M61 are exposed to road noise and poor air quality, mitigated by structural landscaping and bunding. The Equality Impact Statement at Appendix D sets out the screening assessment by protected characteristic.

6.4 Changes made to the Plan

- 6.4.1 Table 18 lists the recommendations taken up and the change made in response to each. The recommendation as made and the revised wording are in the schedule at Appendix C.3.1, in the Mitigation and Response columns.

Table 18: Recommendations taken up and the changes made

Policy	Objective	Change made
BSA02	6 Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	Parking capacity, including hospital and disabled parking, to be delivered alongside development sufficient to meet operational needs, in accordance with Policy INF2. Policy INF1 requires the Travel Plan and the modal share outcomes.
BSA02	7 Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	The feasibility of a district heating and cooling network to be demonstrated through the masterplan or supporting documents, in accordance with Policy ENV1.
BSA02	11 Heritage	A heritage impact assessment required, with the heritage features within the site set out in the supporting text.
BSA02, BSA03, BSA04 and BSA05	13 Land and Soil Quality	Policy ENV6 permits development of best and most versatile agricultural land only where poorer land is not reasonably available, informed by an agricultural land classification survey where the provisional grading is 3, and requires soils to be stripped, stored and reused. It applies to each site at application stage; this is the change recorded at Table 16.
BSA04	6 Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel, and 9 Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	Safe and direct walking and cycling routes to local services, including to Daisy Hill Station, phased to be in place to serve the occupants of the development.
BSA05	6 Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	Active travel facilities linking the site to Westhoughton Station and the town centre.
BSA05	9 Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	Existing woodland and mature trees to be retained wherever possible, matching paragraph 131 of the NPPF (2021).

Policy	Objective	Change made
BSA06	8 Adapting to our Changing Climate	Built development to be located in Flood Zone 1, with the flood risk area, including an allowance for climate change, retained in car parking or other less vulnerable uses.
BSA08	10 Landscape and Townscape	Development to maintain the continuity of the Green Belt, make compensatory improvements in accordance with Policy SP7, and strengthen the new boundaries with structural tree planting.
BSA09	10 Landscape and Townscape	The southern boundary and The Alders frontage to be strengthened with substantial tree planting to form a permanent Green Belt boundary.
BSA09	9 Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	A 15 metre landscaped buffer to the Castle Croft and Bradshaw Brook Site of Biological Importance, with existing woodland and mature trees retained. The appraisal recommended a landscaped buffer to the Site of Biological Importance.

6.4.2 The recommendations not taken up ask an allocation to restate a requirement that already attaches to proposals through a development management policy: ENV1 for energy and heat networks, ENV2 and ENV3 for drainage and green infrastructure, ENV4 for biodiversity net gain, ENV5 for air quality assessment, ENV6 for agricultural land and soils, EC3 for employment and skills plans, INF3 and DEL1 for education contributions, HS1 and HS2 for affordable housing and mix, and the Greater Manchester Joint Waste and Minerals Plan for demolition waste. A few ask for something that could not be applied when an application is determined, such as delivery timescales or a requirement to attract renewable energy businesses, or for what the policy already says.

6.5 Reasonable alternatives at site level

6.5.1 The Council chose the sites using the Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper 2026 (EVS01). The paper tests each site on six criteria: location (previously developed land, connectivity by walking, cycling and public transport, public transport accessibility, and distance to a centre); contribution to the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor and the spatial strategy; links to regeneration; support for transport investment; local benefits; and contribution to Green Belt purposes, including whether the land is grey belt. It also assesses the harm of release and whether the remaining Green Belt would still function. Site 377 performs best and is largely grey belt. Sites 378 and 379 perform well but make a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes with little or no grey belt land. Sites 374, 404 and 449 came into a later search for employment land, in less accessible locations; Site 404 performed best of the three and was selected. Site 377 was reduced so that the remaining Green Belt continues to function. The reasons in full are in the Topic Paper. The eight assessments at Appendix C.3.2 cover five housing proposals, two employment proposals and one mixed use site as promoted: Site 379 West Pennine Village Site C, alone and jointly with Sites 402 and 403 at Lock Lane, which the Topic Paper assesses only as part of it; Site 378 Hermon Bank Farm, alone and jointly with Sites 385 Rear of Tavern Fayre and 427 West Pennine Villages Site D, likewise;

Site 374 Brinsop Hall Farm West of Dicconson Lane, which was promoted for housing and for employment and is assessed for each; Site 449 Land southwest of Junction 4 of the M61, Farnworth, for employment; and Site 377 Health Innovation Bolton as promoted, before the Council excluded the land south of Plodder Lane and west of Watergate Lane so that the remaining Green Belt continues to function as intended. Each was assessed against its characteristics using the same framework as the allocations, as Section 3.6 requires. Figure 14 shows the sites and site combinations assessed on the schematic geography of Figures 11 to 13; it is indicative and not to scale.

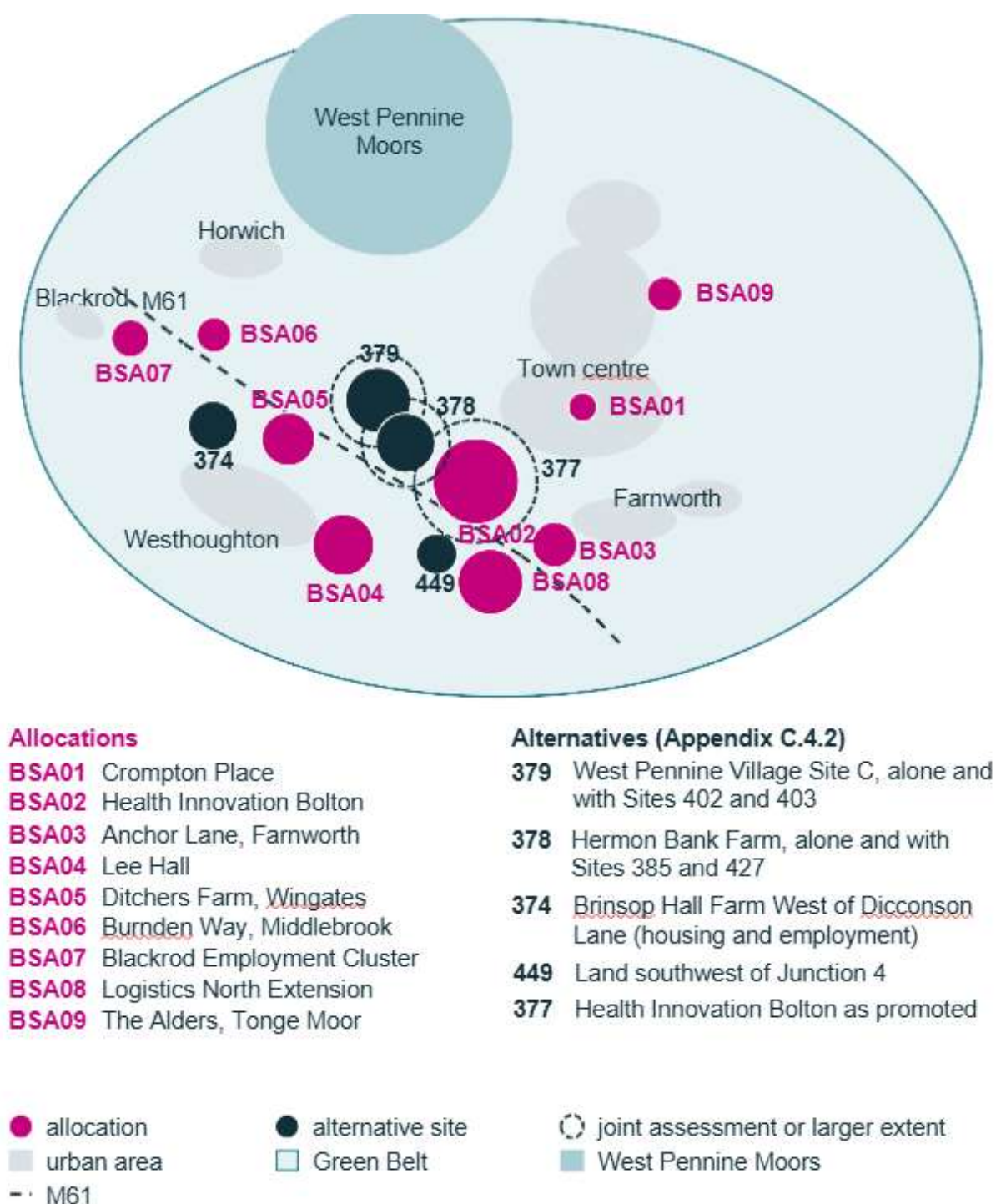


Figure 14: Sites and site combinations assessed (indicative, not to scale)

- 6.5.2 Policy BSA08 sets a range of 30,000 to 80,000 square metres of industrial and warehousing floorspace with a subsidiary residential element where the lower end of the range is pursued. The appraisal of BSA08 at Appendix C.3.1 covers the whole range and records that the housing element does not change any score.
- 6.5.3 Table 19 gives the long-term scores. Every alternative scores negative for land and soil quality, as greenfield land. Every alternative other than Site 377 scores negative for sustainable transport, because each lies beyond walking distance of a centre or station or is severed from them by the M61 and the A6 or A58; Site 374 scores very negative in either use. Biodiversity is negative or negative but uncertain at every site and very negative at Site 379, which includes Rumworth Lodge Reservoir, a Site of Biological Importance. Landscape is negative at Site 378, in the Hulton Park character area, and negative but uncertain elsewhere, and air quality, health and heritage are negative but uncertain at most sites. The joint assessments have the long-term scores of the lead sites; the added land adds homes and noise exposure without changing the direction of any effect. Site 377 as promoted has the same scores as BSA02.

Table 19: Summary of the appraisal of the reasonable alternatives at site level

	Housing					Employment		Mixed use
Objective	Site 379	379 with 402 and 403	Site 378	378 with 385 and 427	Site 374	Site 374	Site 449	377 as promoted
1. Health and Wellbeing	-	-	-/?	-/?	-/?	-/?	-/?	++
2. Housing	++	++	+	+	++	O	O	++
3. Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	+/-	+/-	+/?	+/?	+/?	+/?	+/?	+
4. Education and Lifelong Learning	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	++
5. Local Economy and Employment	O	O	O	O	O	++	+	++
6. Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	-	-	-	-	--	--	-	+/?
7. Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	+/?	+/?	?	?	+/?	+/?	?	+/?
8. Adapting to our Changing Climate	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	+/?
9. Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	--	--	-	-	-/?	-/?	-/?	+/-
10. Landscape and Townscape	-/?	-/?	-	-	-/?	-/?	-/?	+/-
11. Heritage	-/?	-/?	-/?	-/?	O	O	O	?
12. Air Quality	-/?	-/?	-	-	-/?	-/?	-/?	+/-
13. Land and Soil Quality	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14. Water Resources	+/?	+/?	?	?	+/?	+/?	?	O
15. Waste Minimisation	+/?	+/?	?	?	+/?	+/?	?	-

Each cell reports the long-term score from the schedule at Appendix C.3.2; the key is at Table 7.

- 6.5.4 The appraisal supports the sites the Plan allocates. The alternatives would take the same amount of greenfield land as the greenfield allocations and would provide a similar number of homes. On every other count they score worse. They are further from town centres and stations, so people living there would depend more on cars.

They would do more harm to wildlife, landscape and heritage, and more to air quality. Site 379 contains a Site of Biological Importance and Site 378 lies in the Hulton Park landscape. It is acknowledged that part of the difference arises because the allocated sites come with policies that require walking routes, green space and landscaping; an alternative would be subject to the same requirements if it were chosen. The distance from centres and stations, and the wildlife and landscape assets, would remain. The homes and jobs the alternatives would provide are already met by the allocated sites. The larger version of Site 377 has the same scores as BSA02; it would have provided more employment floorspace and taken more open land, and the Council reduced the boundary as part of its exceptional circumstances case for Green Belt release. The reasons the Council chose the sites it did, including the Green Belt reasons, are in the Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper 2026.

6.6 Conclusion on the site allocations

Conclusion on the site allocations

The allocations perform positively or very positively against housing, health, inclusive communities and the local economy, and none scores very negative against any objective in the long term. The negative effects are the permanent loss of greenfield land and soils at the seven greenfield allocations, not assessed as significant, and the increase in waste arisings that follows from growth. Landscape and air quality are mixed on the M61 corridor, moderated by the landscaping, open space and mitigation each policy requires. The changes made are to the wording of BSA02, BSA04, BSA05, BSA06, BSA08 and BSA09, and to Policy ENV6. The alternative sites also greenfield land as the greenfield allocations and score worse on transport, health, biodiversity, landscape, heritage and air quality. The Green Belt and Site Selection Topic Paper addresses the selection of these sites.

7. Appraisal of the development management policies

- 7.0.1 Policies INF1 to INF8, PQ1 to PQ4, ENV1 to ENV7, EC1 to EC7, HS1 to HS7, DEL1 and CB01 to CB04 are the 38 development management policies of the Plan, in Chapters 4 to 9 and Chapter 10 Part 1. They set the requirements against which proposals are determined: Infrastructure First for movement, parking, social infrastructure, open space, play, pitches and utilities; Placemaking for design, health, density and heritage; Environment for energy, flood risk, green infrastructure, biodiversity, pollution, ground conditions and watercourses; Economy for employment land, skills, the centres, the evening economy and takeaways; Homes for affordable housing, mix, inclusive and quality standards and specialist accommodation; Developer Contributions; and the character based policies for Central Bolton and the areas outside it.
- 7.0.2 Each policy was appraised as drafted for the Publication Plan against the fifteen objectives at Table 6, for the short, medium and long term, using the key at Table 7. The schedules at Appendix C.4 record the scores, the commentary, the mitigation proposed and the response. Effects are reported here for the long term, as at Sections 5 and 6. Where a recommendation led to a change, the schedule keeps the score of the policy as appraised and records the change in the response. Most of these policies condition development permitted under other policies, so where a policy is silent on a matter that another policy controls the effect is scored uncertain and the response names the controlling policy, and waste minimisation is scored negative only under the policies that admit development or secure facilities.

7.1 Why alternatives were not tested for these policies

- 7.1.1 Development management and topic based policies have not been subject to options appraisal. These policies implement national policy, respond to identified local issues, and give clarity on how proposals will be determined. The only realistic alternative to each is its absence, leaving the existing adopted policy in place until replaced. The alternatives that produce a materially different strategic outcome relate to the strategic direction of the Plan and are tested at Section 4. What is appraised here is each policy as drafted, and the outcome is a schedule of changes to the drafting.

7.2 Summary of effects

- 7.2.1 Tables 20 to 26 give the long-term score of each policy against each objective, one table for each chapter. Across the seven tables, no policy scores very negative against any objective, and the negative scores are on waste minimisation under the policies that admit development or secure facilities and, as negative but uncertain, on biodiversity under INF2. The very positive scores fall where the objective is the purpose of the policy. The uncertain and positive but uncertain scores are concentrated in the Infrastructure First and Economy chapters, where the infrastructure and floorspace a policy requires or permits is governed on the environmental objectives by the Placemaking and Environment chapters.

7.2.2 Table 20 gives the scores for Chapter 4 Infrastructure First. Health and wellbeing is very positive under the four provision policies, INF3, INF5, INF6 and INF7, and every policy is positive or very positive for inclusive communities. The uncertain scores are on the climate, biodiversity, landscape, heritage and water objectives, where the routes, parking areas and facilities the policies require are governed by Chapters 5 and 6.

Table 20: Summary of the appraisal of the development management policies, Chapter 4 Infrastructure First

Objective	INF1	INF2	INF3	INF4	INF5	INF6	INF7	INF8
1. Health and Wellbeing	+	+/?	++	+	++	++	++	+/?
2. Housing	O	?	O	?	?	?	?	+/?
3. Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	+	+	++	+	+	+	+	+
4. Education and Lifelong Learning	+/?	?	++	+/?	O	O	+/?	+
5. Local Economy and Employment	+	?	+	+/?	+/?	O	O	++
6. Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	++	+/?	+/?	+/?	+/?	+/?	+/?	+/?
7. Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	+/?	+/?	?	O	O	O	O	+/-
8. Adapting to our Changing Climate	?	?	?	?	?	+/?	?	?
9. Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	?	-/?	?	?	+/?	+/?	?	?
10. Landscape and Townscape	+/?	+/?	?	+/?	+	+/?	?	?
11. Heritage	?	?	?	+/?	?	?	?	?
12. Air Quality	+	+/-	+/-	?	+/?	?	?	?
13. Land and Soil Quality	O	?	O	+/?	+/-	+/-	+/-	?
14. Water Resources	?	?	?	O	+/?	+/?	?	+
15. Waste Minimisation	O	O	-	O	-	-	-	-

Each cell reports the long-term score from the schedule at Appendix C.4; the key is at Table 7. The scores are those of the policies as appraised, before the changes at Table 27, except INF2, which is shown as revised.

7.2.3 Table 21 gives the scores for Chapter 5 Placemaking. PQ1 has no negative or mixed score and is positive or very positive on nine objectives. PQ3, which sets minimum densities, has the chapter's only negative score, on waste, and its mixed scores on health and air quality.

Table 21: Summary of the appraisal of the development management policies, Chapter 5 Placemaking

Objective	PQ1	PQ2	PQ3	PQ4
1. Health and Wellbeing	+	++	+/-	+/?
2. Housing	+/?	O	++	+/?
3. Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	++	+	+/?	+/?
4. Education and Lifelong Learning	+/?	?	?	O
5. Local Economy and Employment	+	O	+	+
6. Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	+	+	++	+/?
7. Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	?	O	+/?	?
8. Adapting to our Changing Climate	+	?	?	?
9. Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	+	+/?	?	+/?
10. Landscape and Townscape	++	O	+	++
11. Heritage	+	O	+	++
12. Air Quality	+/?	+	+/-	O
13. Land and Soil Quality	+	O	++	+
14. Water Resources	?	O	?	O
15. Waste Minimisation	O	O	-	+

Each cell reports the long-term score from the schedule at Appendix C.4; the key is at Table 7. The scores are those of the policies as appraised, before the changes at Table 27.

7.2.4 Table 22 gives the scores for Chapter 6 Environment. Each policy is very positive on the objective it exists for, no policy in the chapter scores negative on any objective, and the uncertain scores are mainly on heritage, under six of the seven policies.

Table 22: Summary of the appraisal of the development management policies, Chapter 6 Environment

Objective	ENV1	ENV2	ENV3	ENV4	ENV5	ENV6	ENV7
1. Health and Wellbeing	+/?	+/?	+	+/?	++	+	+/?
2. Housing	+	+	?	O	+	+	?
3. Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	O	+/?	+/?	+/?	?	O	+/?
4. Education and Lifelong Learning	O	O	O	O	O	+/?	O
5. Local Economy and Employment	O	+/?	+/?	O	+	+/?	?
6. Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	O	O	+	O	+	O	+/?
7. Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	++	O	?	O	?	O	O
8. Adapting to our Changing Climate	+/?	++	++	+	O	+/?	+
9. Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	O	+	++	++	?	+	++
10. Landscape and Townscape	?	+	+	+	+	?	+
11. Heritage	+	?	?	?	?	?	?
12. Air Quality	+/?	O	+/?	+/?	++	?	O
13. Land and Soil Quality	?	O	+/-	+	O	++	+/-
14. Water Resources	++	++	+	+	O	+	++
15. Waste Minimisation	+	O	O	O	O	O	O

Each cell reports the long-term score from the schedule at Appendix C.4; the key is at Table 7. The scores are those of the policies as appraised, before the changes at Table 27.

7.2.5 Table 23 gives the scores for Chapter 7 Economy. The local economy is very positive under EC1 to EC4, and EC3 is very positive for inclusive communities and education as well. Close to half of the cells are neutral, and EC2 has the most uncertain scores, on the environmental objectives where floorspace outside allocated land is governed by Chapters 5 and 6.

Table 23: Summary of the appraisal of the development management policies, Chapter 7 Economy

Objective	EC1	EC2	EC3	EC4	EC5	EC6	EC7
1. Health and Wellbeing	?	?	+/?	+/?	+/?	+/-	++
2. Housing	?	?	O	?	O	O	O
3. Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	+/?	+/?	++	O	+/?	+/-	+
4. Education and Lifelong Learning	O	O	++	O	+/?	O	+/?
5. Local Economy and Employment	++	++	++	++	+	+	+/-
6. Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	+/?	O	+/?	+	+/?	+/?	+/?
7. Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	O	?	O	O	O	O	O
8. Adapting to our Changing Climate	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
9. Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	O	?	O	O	O	O	O
10. Landscape and Townscape	O	?	O	+/?	O	+/?	+/?
11. Heritage	?	?	O	+/?	O	?	?
12. Air Quality	?	?	O	+/?	+/?	O	+/?
13. Land and Soil Quality	+	+	O	+	+/-	+/?	+/?
14. Water Resources	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
15. Waste Minimisation	O	-	O	O	-	O	+

Each cell reports the long-term score from the schedule at Appendix C.4; the key is at Table 7. The scores are those of the policies as appraised, before the changes at Table 27.

7.2.6 Table 24 gives the scores for Chapter 8 Homes. Housing is very positive under HS1 to HS4 and HS7, no score is mixed, and the chapter is largely neutral on the environmental objectives except under HS4 and HS7, whose standards and criteria apply to them.

Table 24: Summary of the appraisal of the development management policies, Chapter 8 Homes

Objective	HS1	HS2	HS3	HS4	HS5	HS6	HS7
1. Health and Wellbeing	+	+/?	++	++	+	++	++
2. Housing	++	++	++	++	+	+	++
3. Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	++	+	++	+	+	++	++
4. Education and Lifelong Learning	O	O	O	O	O	+	+
5. Local Economy and Employment	O	O	O	O	O	O	+
6. Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	+/?	O	+	+	O	+	+
7. Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	O	O	O	?	O	O	O
8. Adapting to our Changing Climate	O	O	?	?	O	O	+
9. Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	O	O	O	?	O	O	+/?
10. Landscape and Townscape	+/?	O	O	+	+/?	+/?	+/?
11. Heritage	O	O	O	?	O	O	+/?
12. Air Quality	O	O	O	+/?	O	O	O
13. Land and Soil Quality	O	O	O	O	+/?	+/?	+/?
14. Water Resources	O	O	O	O	O	O	+/?
15. Waste Minimisation	O	O	O	+	-	-	-

Each cell reports the long-term score from the schedule at Appendix C.4; the key is at Table 7. The scores are those of the policies as appraised, before the changes at Table 27.

7.2.7 Table 25 gives the scores for Chapter 9 Developer Contributions. Policy DEL1 is positive on the six objectives whose provision it secures and has no negative or mixed score.

Table 25: Summary of the appraisal of the development management policies, Chapter 9 Developer Contributions

Objective	DEL1
1. Health and Wellbeing	+
2. Housing	+
3. Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	+
4. Education and Lifelong Learning	+
5. Local Economy and Employment	+
6. Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	+
7. Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	O
8. Adapting to our Changing Climate	O
9. Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	+/?
10. Landscape and Townscape	+/?
11. Heritage	O
12. Air Quality	O
13. Land and Soil Quality	O
14. Water Resources	O
15. Waste Minimisation	O

Each cell reports the long-term score from the schedule at Appendix C.4; the key is at Table 7. The scores are those of the policies as appraised, before the changes at Table 27.

7.2.8 Table 26 gives the scores for Chapter 10 Part 1, the character based policies. Landscape and townscape is very positive under all four, land and soil quality under the three Central Bolton policies, which direct renewal and infill onto previously developed land, and no score is mixed.

Table 26: Summary of the appraisal of the development management policies, Chapter 10 Part 1 Development Framework for Places and Sites

Objective	CB01	CB02	CB03	CB04
1. Health and Wellbeing	+	+	+	+/?
2. Housing	+	+	+	+/?
3. Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	+	+	+	+/?
4. Education and Lifelong Learning	+/?	O	++	O
5. Local Economy and Employment	++	+	++	+
6. Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	+	+	++	+/?
7. Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	O	O	O	O
8. Adapting to our Changing Climate	+/?	+	+/?	O
9. Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	+/?	+	+/?	+/?
10. Landscape and Townscape	++	++	++	++
11. Heritage	++	++	+	++
12. Air Quality	+/?	+/?	+/?	O
13. Land and Soil Quality	++	++	++	+
14. Water Resources	O	+	O	O
15. Waste Minimisation	-	-	-	-

Each cell reports the long-term score from the schedule at Appendix C.4; the key is at Table 7. The scores are those of the policies as appraised, before the changes at Table 27.

7.3 Main findings

- 7.3.1 The very positive scores fall where the objective is the purpose of the policy. Health and wellbeing is very positive under the provision policies for health and community infrastructure, open space, play and pitches, under PQ2, which requires the health effects of every proposal other than householder development to be identified, under ENV5 and EC7, and under HS3, HS4, HS6 and HS7. Housing is very positive under HS1 to HS4 and HS7 and under PQ3, whose minimum densities of 120, 70, 50 and 35 dwellings per hectare raise the yield of the same land. The local economy is very positive under EC1 to EC4, INF8, CB01 and CB03, and EC3 is very positive for education and inclusive communities through the Employment and Skills Plans it secures by planning obligation. Landscape and townscape is very

positive under PQ1, PQ4 and the four character based policies, and heritage under PQ4, CB01, CB02 and CB04. The environmental policies are very positive on the objectives they exist for: ENV1 on energy and water, ENV2 and ENV3 on adapting to climate change, ENV3, ENV4 and ENV7 on biodiversity, ENV2 and ENV7 on water resources, ENV5 on air quality and ENV6 on land. Land and soil quality is also very positive under PQ3 and the three Central Bolton policies, which direct infill and renewal onto previously developed land, and sustainable transport under INF1, PQ3 and CB03, which put homes within walking distance of the network.

- 7.3.2 Waste minimisation is the only objective scored negative, in the medium and long term, and only under the policies that admit development or secure facilities: INF3 and INF5 to INF8, PQ3, EC2 and EC5, HS5 to HS7 and CB01 to CB04. The arisings belong to the growth the Plan allocates and are reported at Sections 5 and 6. The policies that condition development permitted elsewhere are neutral on the objective, and ENV1, PQ4, EC7 and HS4 are positive, because they act on resource use, the reuse of buildings and the storage of waste. Biodiversity is negative but uncertain under INF2, which sets a minimum area of parking in Zones 3 and 4 with no maximum; the treatment of parking areas as landscape is addressed through ENV3 and ENV4. No policy scores very negative against any objective in any timescale.
- 7.3.3 The mixed scores fall on land under the policies that hold land in open use or occupy part of a site (INF5, INF6 and INF7 for open space, play and pitches, ENV3 for the Urban Greening Factor, ENV7 for the watercourse buffer and EC5 for ancillary floorspace), each moderated by a payment in lieu route, a weighted score, a buffer measured from the top of bank or a cap on floorspace. Air quality is mixed under INF3 and PQ3, which shorten journeys while placing schools, health facilities and the highest densities on or beside the busiest corridors within the Greater Manchester Air Quality Management Area, and under INF2, where the lower standards in the accessible zones, cycle parking, car club spaces and reachable charging points act on vehicle use, while the area given over to parking grows as development comes forward. Health is mixed under PQ3, where density at 120 dwellings per hectare in apartment form reduces private outdoor space and the policy as appraised set no amenity test above the minimum, and under EC6, where an evening offer supports social contact while alcohol availability and late night noise affect health and the sleep of nearby residents; EC6 is mixed for inclusive communities for the same reason. The local economy is mixed under EC7, whose concentration limits protect the diversity of use in the centres while removing a source of occupancy in the smaller ones, and energy under INF8, which admits data centres and attaches to them the most specific efficiency, renewable generation and heat reuse requirements in the Plan.
- 7.3.4 The uncertain and positive but uncertain scores are the most common in the set after neutral. Almost all record a policy that is silent on a matter the type of development it governs could affect, where the requirement is addressed in another policy: flood risk, drainage and urban heat under ENV2 and ENV3 for the routes, parking areas, facilities and buildings the Infrastructure First and Placemaking policies require; overheating, raised against INF3, PQ1, PQ2, PQ3, HS3 and HS4 and now addressed in ENV1; habitats and green infrastructure under ENV3 and ENV4; landscape and heritage under PQ1 and PQ4; air quality under ENV5; and housing delivery and viability under SP3 and DEL1 for the policies

whose standards consume developable area, INF2, INF5, INF6 and ENV3. Positive but uncertain scores record an effect that follows from a policy without being its purpose, such as health under the policies that secure open space, employment or the reuse of heritage assets. Sustainable transport is positive but uncertain under INF2, where provision in Zones 1 and 2 is settled on site specific evidence, while the cycle parking and car club requirements support lower car ownership. In each case the response at Appendix C.4 names the policy that imposes the requirement, or records the change made. Neutral scores record matters dealt with elsewhere in the Plan.

- 7.3.5 Disabled people and people with mobility impairments benefit from HS3, which applies the accessible and adaptable standard to every new home and the wheelchair adaptable standard to 4.7% of dwellings on qualifying sites, and from PQ1, which requires a public realm usable by people of all ages and mobilities, in a borough where 19.3% of the population is limited a lot by a long term condition or disability. Children and young people benefit from INF3, INF6 and EC7, whose tests outside the centres are drawn by measured childhood obesity, and looked after children and care leavers from HS6. Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are the communities HS7 provides for. People affected by socioeconomic disadvantage benefit from EC3, which directs recruitment to areas of high economic inactivity and deprivation, from PQ2, which applies its lower Health Impact Assessment threshold in Inner Bolton and Brightmet, and from the minimum of 53% social rent in HS1. The Equality Impact Statement at Appendix D sets out the screening assessment by protected characteristic.

7.4 Changes made to the Plan

- 7.4.1 Table 27 lists the recommendations taken up and the change made in response to each. The recommendation as made and the revised wording are in the schedule at Appendix C.4, in the Mitigation and Response columns. Where a revision answers a recommendation in part, the table says so.

Table 27: Recommendations taken up and the changes made

Policy	Objective	Change made
INF2	2 Housing and 5 Local Economy and Employment	Expected levels of parking set by four accessibility zones. The standard is a benchmark in Zone 1, the centre of Bolton, the starting point for assessment in Zone 2, the area within 400 metres of it and the centres of Horwich, Westhoughton, Farnworth, Little Lever and Blackrod, and the minimum normally required in Zones 3 and 4, with any departure justified by evidence proportionate to the scale of the development and of the departure.
INF2	3 Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	Disabled parking standards treated as minima in all zones, with parking laid out so that charging points can be reached by drivers with disabilities; the supporting text sets the location and size of bays.
INF2	7 Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	Parking areas laid out so that the electric vehicle charging points required by the Building Regulations can be reached safely and conveniently, including by occupiers without an allocated space.

Policy	Objective	Change made
INF5	8 Adapting to our Changing Climate, 9 Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue) and 14 Water Resources	New or enhanced open space to deliver multifunctional benefits including biodiversity, climate resilience, sustainable drainage and nature recovery, in accordance with Policies SP6 and ENV3, and to be supported by a management plan with identified stewardship.
PQ3	1 Health and Wellbeing	Density above the zone minimum supported only where the site, the design and local infrastructure can accommodate it without harm to heritage, character or amenity. The revision answers the recommendation in part; daylight, outlook and amenity space at the standard density remain matters for Policy HS4.
PQ3	11 Heritage	A lower density accepted where the required density and building heights would harm the significance of heritage assets and their setting, and a higher density required to demonstrate no harm.
PQ4	11 Heritage	Proposals that secure the repair, reuse and long-term future of heritage assets on the Heritage at Risk Register, or otherwise at risk, supported.
ENV1 and HS4	1 Health and Wellbeing and 8 Adapting to our Changing Climate	Policy ENV1 requires overheating risk to be assessed and managed through passive cooling before mechanical cooling is relied on. The requirement is alongside the energy hierarchy so that it applies to every building type, including the homes Policy HS4 governs; placing it in HS4 was considered. The responses on INF3, PQ1, PQ2, PQ3 and HS3 record the same revision.
ENV4	8 Adapting to our Changing Climate	Replacement planting at a ratio of at least two to one where tree removal is justified, with species selected for long-term canopy value and climate resilience and space to grow.
ENV4	9 Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	A lighting design strategy for biodiversity required, identifying sensitive habitats and ecological connectivity corridors on and adjoining the site and showing how lighting avoids disturbing them.
ENV5	3 Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	Lighting to be no more than the minimum needed for security, safety and operation, so that routes, entrances and public spaces are safe after dark, with a lighting assessment where external lighting is introduced and a lighting strategy for larger developments.
ENV5	9 Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	Lighting designed to avoid glare and protect dark skies, permanent illuminated advertisements restricted outside the urban area, and a lighting assessment required near watercourses, open water and designated sites, incorporating the Policy ENV4 strategy for biodiversity.

Policy	Objective	Change made
ENV6	13 Land and Soil Quality	Soils on best and most versatile land and on major sites to be stripped, stored and reused under a soil resource survey and management plan; peat soils protected from drainage and disturbance; and Grades 1, 2 and 3a land developed only where poorer land is not reasonably available. This is the change recorded at Tables 16 and 18.
EC3	1 Health and Wellbeing	The Operational Employment and Skills Plan to set out recruitment arrangements that reach Bolton residents, with particular attention to areas of high economic inactivity and deprivation.
EC7	1 Health and Wellbeing	Concentration limits applied within designated centres and street frontages, tighter in the most deprived areas, and all proposals, including those in the centres, to address health effects in the Health Statement required by Policy PQ2.

7.4.2 The recommendations not taken up ask a policy to restate a requirement that already attaches to the same proposals through another policy: PQ1 for inclusive design, surveillance and the response to character, PQ2 for health effects, PQ4 for heritage, ENV1 for energy and the reuse of buildings, ENV2 and ENV3 for drainage, greening and urban heat, ENV4 for habitats and lighting for biodiversity, ENV5 for air quality and lighting, ENV6 for soils and contamination, ENV7 for watercourses, INF1 for routes and accessibility, INF2 for cycle parking, INF3 for places and facilities, INF5 for open space, EC3 for recruitment and skills, EC4 for the centres, HS4 for internal standards and DEL1 for contributions and viability. Others ask for what the policy already says, or for something a development management policy cannot secure when an application is determined: existing lighting and premises outside the planning system, a statutory undertaker's programme, the allocation of affordable homes to households, terms and conditions of employment, or the currency of a named evidence document.

7.5 Conclusion on the development management policies

Conclusion on the development management policies

The development management policies perform positively or very positively against the objectives each exists to serve, and no policy scores very negative against any objective in any timescale.

The recurrent negative effect is the increase in waste arisings under the policies that admit development or secure facilities, which are a consequence of the growth the Plan allocates. Land is mixed where a policy holds land in open use, and health and air quality are mixed where density and facilities are placed beside the busiest corridors.

The uncertain scores are typically addressed by other plan policies. Additionally, changes made are to the wording of INF2, INF5, PQ3, PQ4, ENV1, ENV4, ENV5, ENV6, EC3 and EC7 to improve sustainability.

8. The Plan as a whole

- 8.0.1 This section reports the effects of the Plan as a whole, including effects that arise when policies and allocations act together and effects that combine with other plans: Places for Everyone, the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan and Joint Minerals Plan, and the development plans of the neighbouring authorities.
- 8.0.2 An effect is significant where it is probable, permanent or long lasting, cumulative across the growth the Plan provides for, and large enough to change the baseline indicators at Appendix A.3. These are the Schedule 1 criteria of the SEA Regulations. Other effects are reported as positive, adverse or uncertain, and uncertain effects are tracked through the same indicators as the Plan is implemented.

8.1 The significant effects of the Plan

- 8.1.1 Table 28 lists the significant effects of the Plan, positive and adverse, with the reason each is significant and the indicator by which it is tracked. Each is a cumulative effect: it arises from policies and allocations acting together across the Plan, and none would be significant from any one policy or allocation on its own. The characteristics of each effect, direct or indirect, temporary or permanent, and its timescale and extent, are recorded objective by objective in the schedules at Appendix C. Harm to the purposes of the Green Belt is not scored in the appraisal; it is assessed in the Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper 2026, as Section 4.1 explains.

Table 28: The significant effects of the Plan

Effect	Objective	Why it is significant	Appendix A.3 indicator
Health and wellbeing	1	Very positive under SP1, SP3, BSA02, BSA04, BSA08, BSA09 and eleven development management policies; networks of health capacity, open space, play and pitches grow with the population; concentrated on the neighbourhoods with the worst baseline.	Life expectancy and the gap between neighbourhoods; adults physically inactive; adults and Year 6 children overweight; green space per 1,000 residents.
Housing supply, affordability and standards	2	SP3 identifies land for 14,052 homes against a remaining requirement of at least 13,717; seven allocations are very positive; HS1 to HS4, HS7 and PQ3 act on every home. Direct, permanent and of high probability, and the homes add up across the borough.	Net additional dwellings against 787 a year; affordable completions and bids per advertised social home; households on the Adapted Housing Register; Travelling Showperson plots against the shortfall of 35.
Strong, safe and inclusive communities	3	Very positive under BSA08, BSA09, INF3, PQ1, EC3, HS1, HS3, HS6 and HS7 and positive under every other allocation; each scheme connects outwards and adds to the network of facilities.	Residents reporting a strong sense of belonging and that neighbours look out for each other; residents feeling lonely; households without a car; recorded crime.

Effect	Objective	Why it is significant	Appendix A.3 indicator
Education and skills	4	Few policies or allocations score very positive on their own (SP1, BSA02, INF3, EC3 and CB03). The significance lies in the Employment and Skills Plans EC3 secures accumulating across every qualifying employer over the Plan period, with the school capacity at BSA02 and BSA04 and under INF3 and DEL1 providing school capacity as the population grows.	Residents with a level 4 qualification and with none; 16 to 17 year olds not in education, employment or training; apprenticeships.
Local economy and employment	5	Very positive under SP1, SP2, SP4, SP5 and SP7, BSA01, BSA02, BSA07 and BSA08, EC1 to EC4, INF8, CB01 and CB03; regional extent at three allocations; the employment land supply acts as one supply because occupier choice depends on the total.	Employment rate; unemployment and claimant count; median weekly pay; business counts; industrial and warehousing completions against the SP2 need.
Sustainable transport	6	No allocation scores very positive on its own, and SP7 and BSA04 are mixed. The significance lies in the strategy itself, which places growth where it can be served without a car and was chosen for that reason at Section 4.5, with INF1, INF2 and PQ3 applied to all of it; INF1, PQ3 and CB03 are very positive.	Mode of travel to work; traffic volume on Bolton roads; share of journeys under five kilometres on foot or by cycle; transport share of territorial emissions.
Townscape of Central Bolton	10, 11	BSA01, CB01 to CB03, PQ1 and PQ4 act on the same streets; the effect builds along a street because frontage continuity depends on the sequence of interventions along a street, and it repairs a degraded environment.	Assets on the Heritage at Risk Register; Conservation Area appraisals for the Town Centre areas.
Loss of undeveloped land at the seven greenfield allocations	13	In combination: SP7 is negative at the four locations it releases and BSA02 to BSA05 and BSA07 to BSA09 are negative, so the effect is the whole of the greenfield land the Plan allocates; direct, permanent and irreversible, at high probability, on the same resource, and large in relation to a brownfield capacity of around 4,985 homes. The efficient use of land under PQ3 reduces the land taken. Further environmental impacts are addressed in ENV policies.	Brownfield Land Register sites, area and capacity, and completions on them; Agricultural Land Classification of land developed, against the map showing best and most versatile land to be scarce.

8.2 Adverse effects and their mitigation

8.2.1 The SEA Regulations require the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effect to be described. Table 29 lists the adverse effects of the Plan as a whole, significant or not, with the mitigation the Plan secures and the residual effect. The mitigation of each is recorded policy by policy in the Mitigation and Response columns at Appendix C and reported at Sections 5.4, 6.4 and 7.4.

Table 29: Adverse effects of the Plan and their mitigation

Effect	Mitigation
Loss of undeveloped land at the seven greenfield allocations (objective 13). Significant. Negative at SP7 and at BSA02 to BSA05 and BSA07 to BSA09.	Previously developed land first: SP3 draws its supply of 14,052 homes first from the urban area, BSA01 and BSA06 are allocated at a minimum of 120 dwellings per hectare, PQ3 sets minimum densities that raise the yield of every site, and EC1 and EC2 meet employment demand by retention and intensification, so that release is limited to the four SP7 locations. SP7 requires compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt. ENV6 requires a soil resource survey and soil management plan and permits development of Grades 1, 2 and 3a only where poorer land is not reasonably available. Residual effect: adverse and permanent; the land taken is reduced and the residual loss remains.
Waste arisings (objective 15). Not significant. Negative under SP1 to SP4, SP7, every allocation and fifteen development management policies.	Resource minimisation and the reuse of buildings under ENV1, waste and recycling storage under HS4 and EC7, the reuse of heritage assets and existing buildings under PQ4 and CB01 to CB04, and prior extraction of viable minerals at each allocation. Treatment, recycling and residual capacity rely on the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan. Residual effect: adverse and permanent, managed through the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan. Monitored.
Air quality, noise and freight on the M61 corridor (objectives 1 and 12). Not significant. Mixed at BSA02 to BSA06; freight from BSA07 and BSA08 and the Places for Everyone allocations.	ENV5 requires an air quality assessment and the air quality, noise, odour and lighting requirements to be met in the same siting and layout decisions. Each of BSA02 to BSA06 requires landscaping, bunding or design led mitigation and sustainable transport measures; BSA02 requires a Travel Plan with modal share outcomes under INF1; BSA04 and BSA05 require the active travel links to Daisy Hill and Westhoughton Stations; INF2 applies the parking standard as a benchmark in Zone 1 and a starting point in Zone 2; PQ1 applies the agent of change principle. The timing of the bus, walking and cycling measures and the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan rely on others. Residual effect: adverse and not significant. Monitored.
Landscape change at each greenfield allocation (objective 10). Not significant. Negative or very negative in the short term and mixed in the long term at each of the seven sites. BSA02, BSA03 and BSA08 lie close together around Junction 4 of the M61 and their landscape change combines locally; the other four sites are separate.	At each site the structural landscaping, retained woodland and mature trees, open space and permanent defensible boundary its policy requires: the retained gap, country park and green edge at BSA02; structural landscaping to the M61 and the open space hierarchy at BSA03; retained woodland and the neighbourhood park at BSA04; landscaping and bunding to the M61 at BSA05; a permanent defensible landscaped boundary screening development from the surrounding Green Belt and Landscape Character Area at BSA07; the retained outer tree cover and boundary planting at BSA08; the southern boundary and The Alders frontage planting at BSA09. SP5 for the landscape strategy and SP7 for compensatory improvements. Residual effect: mixed in the long term as the landscape frameworks mature.
Loss of openness at the four Green Belt releases (SP7). Negative. Not assessed for significance, because harm to the purposes of the Green Belt is assessed in the Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper 2026.	SP7 requires compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt, and BSA07, BSA08 and BSA09 require a permanent defensible boundary to the retained Green Belt.

Effect	Mitigation
Biodiversity at three allocations (objective 9). Not significant. Mixed at BSA02, BSA04 and BSA09, where habitat loss and pressure on adjacent designated sites are set against the green infrastructure each policy requires.	ENV4 requires biodiversity net gain, the retention of the connectivity of the strategic ecological network, tree replacement and a lighting design strategy for biodiversity; ENV3 protects the green and blue infrastructure network. BSA02 requires a multifunctional corridor from Doe Hey Brook to Cutacre Country Park aligned with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy; BSA04 requires the routes to Daisy Hill Station to be phased with occupation to relieve pressure on the Hall Lee Bank Park Local Nature Reserve; BSA09 requires a 15 metre landscaped buffer to the Castle Croft and Bradshaw Brook Site of Biological Importance.
Heritage under the growth policies (objective 11). Not significant. Mixed at SP2 and SP3, where the effect on any asset depends on the site.	SP5 sets the positive strategy for the historic environment; PQ4 requires a heritage statement for any development affecting a designated or non-designated asset or its setting; BSA02 requires a heritage impact assessment; SP1 secures the restoration of the Hulton Park Registered Park and Garden.

8.3 Synergistic effects

- 8.3.1 Schedule 2 to the SEA Regulations requires the interrelationship between the factors assessed to be addressed. Four interrelationships account for most of the entries in the Synergistic Effects column at Appendices C. Table 30 presents each with its effect and mitigation to address it.

Table 30: Synergistic effects of the Plan

Effect	Mitigation
Density, accessibility and parking restraint. PQ3 places the highest densities where public transport accessibility is greatest, INF2 applies the parking standard as a benchmark or starting point in the same zones, INF1 requires the routes and Travel Plans, and BSA01 and BSA06 apply low or zero car development; each makes the others practical, and the combined effect covers transport, air quality, energy and land. The same policies place residents and facilities on the busiest corridors and accumulate hard surface in the densest locations, raising exposure and heat.	The cooling hierarchy in ENV1, the drainage requirements of ENV2 and the Urban Greening Factor in ENV3.
Co-location of homes, facilities and green space. Healthcare, teaching, homes, green space and active travel at BSA02; health facilities, the neighbourhood park, play and walkable routes at BSA04; health capacity, education places and community facilities under INF3; the open space standards of INF5; PQ2 acting on every qualifying proposal and EC3 and EC7 directing the benefit to the areas of highest economic inactivity and obesity. No adverse effect.	None required.
Green and blue infrastructure. ENV2, ENV3, ENV4 and ENV7 secure drainage, cooling, habitat, amenity and movement from the same land and corridors, with the corridors and buffers the allocation policies require from Doe Hey Brook to Cutacre Country Park at BSA02 and to the Castle Croft and Bradshaw Brook Site of Biological Importance at BSA09. Habitat loss at successive greenfield sites could fragment the network.	ENV4 requires the connectivity of the strategic ecological network to be retained, with the net gain, buffer, tree replacement and lighting requirements acting alongside.
Receptors beside the M61. The location that shortens journeys for the future residents of BSA02 to BSA06 exposes them to road noise above 65 dB Lden and to the Air Quality Management Area, and the open space that supports active lifestyles is the land closest to the motorway; together these are the reason health is mixed at BSA03 and BSA05.	ENV5 requires air quality, noise, odour and lighting to be addressed in the same siting and layout decisions, with the site mitigation at BSA02 to BSA06.

8.4 Secondary and cross boundary effects

- 8.4.1 Three secondary effects follow from the growth the Plan provides for. Population and employment growth raise foul flows to the combined sewer network, to the Croal and the Irwell, both failing chemical status, and downstream to the Mersey Estuary; ENV1, ENV7 and INF8 control this, with the wastewater commitment recorded at Section 8.6. Homes delivered under SP3 and the allocations raise demand for school places, primary care and open space; BSA02 and BSA04 provide capacity and INF3, INF5 and DEL1 secure it elsewhere. Prior extraction of minerals and coal mining risk assessment at BSA07 to BSA09 bring a period of working and landscape change before development starts, governed by the Joint Minerals Plan.
- 8.4.2 The cross boundary effects identified at scoping are at Section 2.3 and the Habitats Regulations Assessment at Section 2.6. None changes a judgement at Table 28 or Table 29. Two are relevant to it. Traffic and freight from the M61 allocations combine on the strategic road network with growth in Wigan and Salford within the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor; that is part of the M61 effect at paragraph 8.1.2 and a matter for the Duty to Cooperate with Transport for Greater Manchester, National Highways and the neighbouring authorities. Water quality in the Croal and Irwell

reaches the Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area and Ramsar site, where the appropriate assessment concluded no effect on integrity provided wastewater treatment capacity keeps ahead of development. The Plan meets Bolton's housing requirement within the borough and takes no unmet need from any neighbouring authority.

- 8.4.3 The Plan's allocations combine with the Places for Everyone allocations in Bolton at West of Wingates, Chequerbent North and Logistics North, which the growth options treated as committed supply (Section 4.1). Their floorspace is part of the employment land supply against which the economy effect at Table 28 is assessed, and their traffic joins that from BSA02 to BSA08 on the M61 corridor, which is why the M61 effect at Table 29 includes freight from the Places for Everyone allocations. The Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan and Joint Minerals Plan provide the treatment capacity and the prior extraction requirements on which the waste and minerals mitigation at Table 29 relies.

8.5 Equality and health

- 8.5.1 The Equality Impact Statement at Appendix D, prepared for the Council by Arup, screened every policy and allocation against the nine protected characteristics and the four further groups at Section 3.4. It concludes that the Plan is unlikely to result in significant negative effects on any of them; that positive effects fall particularly on age, disability, care leavers and socio-economic conditions, through the policies and allocations on affordable and inclusive housing, community infrastructure, healthcare, education, employment and skills, open space and play; and that the Plan supports the objectives of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 8.5.2 The significant positive effects at Table 28 fall in greater measure on the five groups at Table 31. The one adverse distributional effect is the exposure of the future residents of BSA02 to BSA06 to road noise and poorer air quality beside the M61. It is not confined to any group sharing a protected characteristic, it is mitigated at each site, and it is monitored. The health determinants the framework tests, physical activity, access to healthcare and green space, housing quality and warmth, and exposure to pollutants, are positive across the Plan with that one exception, and the benefit is concentrated on the neighbourhoods where the gap in life expectancy is widest.

Table 31: Groups on which the significant positive effects fall in greater measure

Group	Where the benefit arises
People affected by socioeconomic disadvantage	SP1 and SP3; BSA01 and BSA02; the recruitment areas EC3 directs to; the lower Health Impact Assessment threshold PQ2 applies in Inner Bolton and Breightmet; the minimum of 53 per cent social rent in HS1; the tighter limits EC7 applies in the most deprived areas.
Disabled people and people with mobility impairments	The accessible and adaptable standard HS3 applies to every new home and the wheelchair adaptable standard it applies to 4.7 per cent of dwellings on qualifying sites; PQ1; point G of SP5; the disabled parking minima in INF2.
Older people and people who need supported living	BSA02; the care facility at BSA04; HS3.

Group	Where the benefit arises
Children and young people, including looked after children and care leavers	INF3, INF6 and EC7; HS6 for looked after children and care leavers.
Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	HS7 and BSA09, which meets a need for plots that the urban area has not met.

8.6 Mitigation relying on other plans or on delivery

- 8.6.1 The mitigation at Table 29 that relies on other plans or on delivery is the capacity the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan provides, the timing of the bus, walking and cycling measures, which the Council does not control, and the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan, under which the nitrogen dioxide limit is to be met by the end of 2026 and 48 zero emission buses now run from Bolton (Appendix A.3, objective 12). The residual effect is adverse and not significant, and both effects are monitored at Table 32.
- 8.6.2 The two commitments on which the Habitats Regulations Assessment conclusion rests are also mitigation relying on delivery. The Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations SPD is applied to the relevant allocations, which the Council controls at application stage. Wastewater treatment capacity keeping ahead of development is carried in the Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy, to which INF8 refers, and depends on the utility provider.
- 8.6.3 The residual effect on the integrity of the Manchester Mosses SAC and the Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar site is none, as Section 2.6 records.

Conclusion on the Plan as a whole

Taken together, the strategic policies, the site allocations and the development management policies have significant positive effects on housing, the local economy, health, inclusive communities, education and sustainable transport, and on the townscape of Central Bolton. One adverse effect that is not significant at any one site is significant in combination: the permanent loss of undeveloped land at the seven greenfield allocations. The mitigation the Plan secures reduces it; the residual effect is at Table 29. Waste arisings and air quality and noise on the M61 corridor are adverse and not significant, and monitored.

No cross boundary effect changes these findings, the Habitats Regulations Assessment concludes no effect on the integrity of the two European sites it assessed, and no significant adverse effect falls on any group sharing a protected characteristic.

9. Conclusions, monitoring and next steps

9.1 Conclusions

- 9.1.1 The appraisal has been applied at four points in the preparation of the Plan: to the draft objectives, to the spatial and growth options, to the site allocations and their alternatives, and to the draft policies. At each point it identified effects, recommended change, and recorded the response. Those recommendations and responses are reported where the appraisal itself is reported, at Sections 2.2 and 4 to 8, so that each finding is reported with its consequence.
- 9.1.2 On the strategy, the appraisal found that no option performs positively against all fifteen objectives and that the anchored approach, with the sustainable transport priorities of the public transport led option integrated into it, is an appropriate strategy in the light of the alternatives tested. The reasons are at Section 4.5.
- 9.1.3 On the sites, the appraisal found that no alternative performs better than the allocations. The alternatives take the same greenfield land and would provide a similar number of homes, and score worse on transport, health, biodiversity, landscape, heritage and air quality, in part because of their distance from centres and stations. The reasons are at Section 6.5; the Council's site selection reasons are in the Site Selection and Green Belt Topic Paper 2026.
- 9.1.4 On the Plan itself, the significant effects are as follows.
- Significant positive effects, arising from the Plan as a whole, on health and wellbeing, housing, strong, safe and inclusive communities, education, the local economy and sustainable transport, and on the townscape of Central Bolton. The reasons are at Table 28.
 - One significant adverse effect that arises in combination rather than from any one policy or allocation: the permanent loss of undeveloped land at the seven greenfield allocations. The mitigation and the residual effect are at Table 29.
 - No significant effect on the two Sites of Special Scientific Interest that extend beyond the boundary; no effect on the integrity of the Manchester Mosses SAC or the Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, the two European sites on which the Habitats Regulations Assessment identified likely significant effects, subject to the two commitments recorded at Section 8.6; no significant effect on the river catchments downstream or on the housing need of any neighbouring authority; and no significant adverse effect on any group sharing a protected characteristic.
 - Two adverse effects that are not significant but are monitored at Table 32: the increase in waste arisings across the growth the Plan provides for, and the exposure of future residents and the freight movement on the M61 corridor, which is the least certain judgement in the appraisal.

9.2 Monitoring

- 9.2.1 Regulation 17 of the SEA Regulations requires the Council to monitor the significant environmental effects of the Plan with a view to identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action. This section sets out the measures envisaged.

- 9.2.2 Monitoring uses the same indicators that establish the baseline at Appendix A.3. Using one set of indicators for both purposes means that change is measured against the recorded starting position, and that the framework is already populated with data at the point of adoption. Monitoring is reported annually through the Authority Monitoring Report.
- 9.2.3 Monitoring is proportionate to the significance of the effect. The indicators at Table 32 are those that track the significant effects identified at Section 9.1 and Table 28, together with two adverse effects that are not significant but are monitored, the increase in waste arisings and the exposure of future residents and the freight movement on the M61 corridor, and are the ones on which remedial action would be considered. The full indicator set is at Appendix A.3.

Table 32: Monitoring measures for the significant effects of the Plan

Effect monitored	Indicator	Source and frequency
Housing supply, affordability and standards (positive)	Net additional dwellings against 787 a year; affordable completions by tenure; bids per advertised social home; households on the Adapted Housing Register; Travelling Showperson plots delivered	Authority Monitoring Report, annual; housing register and GTAA data, annual
Local economy and employment (positive)	Employment rate; claimant count; median weekly pay; industrial and warehousing completions against the SP2 need and the progress of each allocation to permission	Authority Monitoring Report and Plan Appendix 4, annual; ONS labour market data, annual
Education and skills (positive)	Residents with a level 4 qualification and with none; 16 to 17 year olds not in education, employment or training; Employment and Skills Plans secured	ONS Annual Population Survey, annual; Authority Monitoring Report, annual
Health and wellbeing (positive)	Life expectancy and the gap between neighbourhoods; adults physically inactive; adults and Year 6 children overweight; green space per 1,000 residents and open space delivered at the allocations	Bolton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, annual; Authority Monitoring Report, annual
Strong, safe and inclusive communities (positive)	Residents reporting a strong sense of belonging and that neighbours look out for each other; residents feeling lonely; households without a car; recorded crime	Greater Manchester Residents Survey, annual; Authority Monitoring Report, annual
Sustainable transport (positive)	Mode of travel to work; traffic volume on Bolton roads; share of journeys under five kilometres on foot or by cycle; Travel Plan outcomes at BSA02	Census and Transport for Greater Manchester data, annual where available; Authority Monitoring Report, annual
Townscape of Central Bolton (positive)	Assets on the Heritage at Risk Register in the Town Centre Conservation Areas; completion of the Crompton Place and Central Bolton renewal schemes	Historic England register, annual; Authority Monitoring Report, annual
Loss of undeveloped land (adverse)	Completions on Brownfield Land Register sites and on other previously developed land as a share of all completions; hectares of greenfield land permitted outside the allocations; Agricultural Land Classification of land developed	Authority Monitoring Report and Brownfield Land Register, annual

Effect monitored	Indicator	Source and frequency
Waste arisings (not significant, monitored)	Household waste collected per person; share reused, recycled or composted; residual waste per household; share sent to landfill	Defra local authority collected waste statistics, annual
Air quality and noise on the M61 corridor (not significant, uncertain)	Nitrogen dioxide at Clean Air Plan and local monitoring sites on the M61, A6 and A666 corridors; air quality assessments and mitigation secured at BSA02 to BSA06; bus, walking and cycling measures delivered with the phasing in each policy	Clean Air Greater Manchester data hub and Bolton air quality monitoring, annual; Authority Monitoring Report, annual

- 9.2.4 Where monitoring shows an indicator moving against the direction or objectives the Plan seeks, the Council will consider whether remedial action is needed through supplementary planning guidance, through the application of existing policy, or through review of the Plan. The Plan will be reviewed at least every five years in accordance with national policy, and the monitoring evidence will inform that review.

9.3 Next steps

- 9.3.1 This report is published for representations alongside the Publication Draft Local Plan under Regulation 19. Representations on the appraisal will be considered alongside representations on the Plan and submitted to the Secretary of State.
- 9.3.2 Following examination and adoption, a post adoption statement will be published in accordance with regulation 16 of the SEA Regulations, setting out how environmental considerations and the findings of this appraisal have been integrated into the Plan, how representations have been taken into account, the reasons for choosing the Plan as adopted in the light of the alternatives, and the measures decided on concerning monitoring.

Appendices

Reference	Content	Where
A.1	Plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives relevant to the Plan	Bound with this report
A.2	Where the representations on the appraisal, and the resulting changes to the appraisal framework, are recorded	Bound with this report
A.3	Sustainability baseline: the Bolton Sustainability Appraisal Summary Sheet	Bound with this report
B	Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (November 2025)	Appendix B, separate volume
C	Assessment Tables	Appendix C, separate volume
C.1	Growth options and reasonable alternatives	Appendix C, separate volume
C.2	Strategic policies	Appendix C, separate volume
C.3	Site allocations and reasonable alternatives	Appendix C, separate volume
C.4	Development management policies	Appendix C, separate volume
D	Equality Impact Assessment Statement	Appendix D, separate volume



**Bolton Local Plan
Sustainability Appraisal Report**

Appendix A

A.1 Plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives relevant to the Plan

A.2 Where the representations on the appraisal, and the resulting changes to the appraisal framework, are recorded

A.3 Sustainability baseline: the Bolton Sustainability Appraisal Summary Sheet

October 2026

A.1 Plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives

Table A1: Plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives by sustainability appraisal objective

SA objective	International and national	Greater Manchester	Bolton
1. Health and wellbeing	UN Sustainable Development Goal 3, cutting premature mortality from non-communicable disease by a third and promoting mental wellbeing by 2030. 10 Year Health Plan for England: Fit for the Future (July 2025), shifting care from hospital to community, from analogue to digital and from sickness to prevention. Core20PLUS5, the NHS England approach to reducing healthcare inequalities. Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006, giving effect to Directive 2002/49/EC, requiring noise mapping and action plans. WHO Night Noise Guidelines for Europe.	Fairer Health for All, raising healthy life expectancy faster than the England trend.	Bolton Locality Plan 2024 to 2029, applying Core20PLUS5 and integrating physical and mental health support. Active Lives Strategy for Bolton 2023 to 2028, a five per cent rise in residents classed as active by 2028. Bolton Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2026 to 2029, approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board, emphasising prevention and including reducing social isolation among its priorities.
2. Housing	UN Sustainable Development Goal 11, adequate, safe and affordable housing for all by 2030. National Planning Policy Framework, meeting local housing need, maintaining a five year land supply, and reflecting the size, type and tenure the community needs.	Places for Everyone (2024), setting Bolton's requirement of 787 net additional dwellings a year and applying national space and accessibility standards. Greater Manchester Strategy	Independent Living, Bolton's Housing Strategy for Older People (2020). Bolton Age Friendly Strategy 2025 to 2028. Homelessness Strategy 2020 to

SA objective	International and national	Greater Manchester	Bolton
		2025 to 2035 , launched in July 2025, committing to build more council and social homes than are lost, to raise standards for renters through the Good Landlord Charter, and to prevent homelessness and end the need for rough sleeping.	2025. Tackling Poverty Strategy 2024 to 2027 . Article 4 Direction on houses in multiple occupation, June 2025. Bolton Housing Strategy 2025 to 2027 .
3. Strong, safe and inclusive communities	UN Sustainable Development Goals 11 and 16, universal access to basic services and inclusive societies by 2030. National Planning Policy Framework , healthy, inclusive and safe places with accessible community facilities. A Connected Society, the national loneliness strategy (2018). Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty.	Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and Streets for All, 15 to 20 minute neighbourhoods reachable on foot, by cycle or by public transport. Places for Everyone , increasing the range and accessibility of cultural, leisure and sporting opportunities. Greater Manchester Hate Crime Plan 2024 to 2028 . Race Equality Strategy 2023. Greater Manchester Strategy 2025 to 2035 , under which at least 95 per cent of residents are to report feeling safe by 2030 and gender based violence and knife crime are to be halved.	Bolton 2040 Vision (The Borough Plan) , launched March 2026, setting six missions guided by three pillars of prevention, investment and growth, including inclusive access to culture and leisure and people feeling a sense of belonging. Community Safety Delivery Plan 2023 to 2026 . Bolton Equalities Strategy 2021 to 2025 . Age Friendly Strategy 2025 to 2028 . Bolton's Cultural Strategy , widening access to creative and cultural experiences

SA objective	International and national	Greater Manchester	Bolton
			across the borough.
4. Education and lifelong learning	UN Sustainable Development Goal 8 , full and productive employment and decent work for all by 2030.	Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan (2023), faster upskilling in digital, engineering, retrofit, health and green jobs. Good Employment Charter.	Bolton's Economic Growth and Resilience Plan (November 2024), linking skills to future demand.
5. Local economy and employment	UN Sustainable Development Goal 8 . National Planning Policy Framework , meeting employment need and supporting a prosperous economy.	Greater Manchester Local Growth Plan (January 2026), bringing the city region's economic strategies into a single ten year framework aligned with the Greater Manchester Strategy and the national Industrial Strategy, and setting out the sector priorities and commitments intended to drive productivity, innovation and good jobs. Places for Everyone , setting Bolton's employment land requirement. Good Employment Charter, real living wage and secure work.	Economic Growth and Resilience Plan (November 2024), raising wages, linking skills to demand and supporting green job growth. West of Wingates Supplementary Planning Document (draft consulted November 2025 to January 2026), an emerging masterplan for the employment allocation.
6. Sustainable transport	National Planning Policy Framework , incorporating sustainable transport in all development. Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2, half of urban journeys walked or cycled by 2030. Bus Back Better (2021). Inclusive Transport	Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 , half of all trips by sustainable modes by 2040, underpinning the Bee Network. Vision Zero Strategy	Bolton Transport Strategy 2024 , a zero carbon, inclusive and resilient transport network aligned to the Greater

SA objective	International and national	Greater Manchester	Bolton
	Strategy (2018). UK Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021). Better Connected: A Strategy for Integrated Transport (April 2026), with priorities including aligning transport and development and creating healthier communities. UN Sustainable Development Goal 11.2 .	(2024), eliminating road deaths and life-changing injuries by 2040.	Manchester 2040 goals.
7. Renewable energy and decarbonisation	Paris Agreement (2015). Climate Change Act 2008 as amended, net zero by 2050. Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan (October 2025), setting out how the UK will meet Carbon Budgets 4 to 6 to 2037 and superseding the Net Zero Strategy 2021 and the Carbon Budget Delivery Plan 2023. Seventh Carbon Budget, set in 2026, committing to an 87 per cent reduction from 1990 levels by 2042. Environment Act 2021 , carbon budget duties and the Clean Heat Market Mechanism. National Planning Policy Framework , supporting renewable and low carbon energy.	Greater Manchester Five Year Environment Plan 2025 to 2030 , launched December 2024, carbon neutrality by 2038. Local Area Energy Plan 2024, a net zero power and heat system by 2038. Heat network zoning, which identifies a strategic zone covering Bolton and Farnworth town centres and the Royal Bolton Hospital.	Bolton Climate Change Strategy 2021 to 2030 and its delivery plan, with 32 indicators, retrofit of 2,000 low income homes a year and support for 30 MW of new renewables.
8. Adapting to a changing climate	Directive 2007/60/EC on flood risk management, as given effect in England. National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (2020). Flood and Water Management Act 2010, under which the Council is Lead Local Flood Authority; Schedule 3 of the Act, which would establish a statutory sustainable drainage approval regime, has not been commenced in England. National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (June 2025), non-statutory guidance on the	Greater Manchester Resilience Strategy 2020 to 2030 , integrated catchment management and surface water resilience.	Bolton Flood Risk Management Strategy 2020 . Bolton SuDS Guidance Note 2025 .

SA objective	International and national	Greater Manchester	Bolton
	design of sustainable drainage for new development.		
9. Biodiversity and green and blue infrastructure	Habitats and Birds Directives, as given effect by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 . Convention on Biological Diversity, Bonn, Berne and Ramsar Conventions. UN Sustainable Development Goal 15 . Environment Act 2021 , mandatory 10 per cent biodiversity net gain, with an exemption for sites of 0.2 hectares or less and other changes applying to applications made from 6 August 2026. Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 (December 2025), the statutory plan for meeting the Environment Act targets including species abundance. Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, section 40, the duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 (Royal Assent 18 December 2025), Part 3 establishing the Nature Restoration Fund and Environmental Delivery Plans. Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework 2023.	Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025), which identifies the West Pennine Moors, Red Moss and the Croal and Irwell wetland corridor as priority recovery areas. All Our Trees, Greater Manchester's Urban Forest Plan (2025), succeeding the 2020 tree and woodland strategy and targeting an increase in tree canopy cover from 15 to 17 per cent over ten years.	Bolton Greenspace Strategy 2026 to 2041 . Climate Change Strategy Delivery Plan , no net loss of biodiversity, large scale tree planting and exploration of an urban greening factor. Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations Joint Supplementary Planning Document , adopted 8 May 2025, securing contributions where a transport assessment identifies air quality effects on Holcroft Moss within the Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation.
10. Landscape and townscape	European Landscape Convention, ratified 2007, requiring all landscapes to be protected, managed and planned, not only designated ones. National Planning Policy Framework , enhancing the natural and local environment and protecting valued landscapes.	Places for Everyone Policy JP-G9, safeguarding peat and high quality landscapes including the West Pennine Moors and enhancing green infrastructure corridors.	West Pennine Moors Statement of Intent (Natural England, 2016), guiding recreation, habitat restoration and landscape management within the SSSI. Building Bolton

SA objective	International and national	Greater Manchester	Bolton
			(November 2006), the supplementary planning document guiding the design of new development in central Bolton, prepared to supplement the former Unitary Development Plan.
11. Heritage	Granada Convention (1985) on architectural heritage. Valletta Convention (1992) on archaeological heritage and its integration into planning. National Planning Policy Framework , conserving and enhancing the historic environment.	Places for Everyone Policy JP-P4, conserving and enhancing heritage assets and their settings.	
12. Air quality	Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and Directive (EU) 2016/2284 on national emissions ceilings, as given effect in domestic law. Directive 2010/75/EU on industrial emissions. Environment Act 2021 , PM2.5 targets of 10 micrograms per cubic metre and a 35 per cent reduction in population exposure by 2040. UK Air Quality Strategy 2023.	Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan , the investment-led, non-charging plan approved by government in 2025 to meet legal nitrogen dioxide limits on local roads in the shortest possible time and by 2026, funded through a £51.1 million Clean Bus Fund and an £8 million Hackney Support Fund, with 48 of its 78 zero emission buses running from Bolton and an upgrade to the Bolton bus depot. Transport Strategy 2040 .	Bolton Climate Change Strategy Delivery Plan , linking carbon reduction to air quality and supporting anti-idling zones outside schools.

SA objective	International and national	Greater Manchester	Bolton
		Greater Manchester Air Quality Management Area, declared in 2016 under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 for the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective within which Bolton's air quality management area sits. Greater Manchester Low Emission Strategy and Air Quality Action Plan 2016 to 2021, including measures on development planning guidance and construction management.	
13. Land and soil	Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 (December 2025), the successor to the 25 Year Environment Plan, including commitments on sustainable soil management. Environment Act 2021, soil health targets and monitoring. Directive 2010/75/EU on industrial emissions. National Planning Policy Framework, previously developed land first and protection of best and most versatile land.	Places for Everyone Policy JP-G8, protecting peat and best and most versatile agricultural land. Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025), peat restoration at Red Moss and soil friendly farming in the Croal and Irwell corridor. Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan (adopted 2013), part of the development plan, designating mineral safeguarding areas and areas of search	Contaminated Land Strategy 2015, currently under review.

SA objective	International and national	Greater Manchester	Bolton
		and including a policy on peat.	
14. Water resources	Water Framework Directive, as given effect by the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017, requiring good ecological and chemical status. Drinking Water and Nitrates Directives. UK River Basin Management Plan update 2022, good status or good potential for all water bodies by 2027. A New Vision for Water (January 2026), the government white paper responding to the Independent Water Commission and proposing a single water regulator and a Water Reform Bill.	Greater Manchester Integrated Water Management Plan (2023), a joint plan of the Combined Authority, the Environment Agency and United Utilities approved in June 2023, accelerating sustainable drainage and reducing the operation of storm overflows.	United Utilities Water Resources Management Plan 2024 , cutting leakage by 40 per cent by 2030 and phosphorus reduction at Bolton wastewater treatment works. Bolton SuDS Guidance Note 2025 , limiting runoff to greenfield rates.
15. Waste minimisation	Waste Framework, Packaging Waste and Landfill Directives, as given effect in domestic law, establishing the waste hierarchy. UK Resources and Waste Strategy 2018, 65 per cent municipal recycling by 2035 and no more than 10 per cent to landfill. Environment Act 2021 , extended producer responsibility, a deposit return scheme and consistent collections from 2026. National Planning Policy for Waste (October 2014), to be read alongside the National Planning Policy Framework.	Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan (adopted 2012), which forms part of the development plan for the borough and identifies waste management locations including sites in Bolton. GMCA Sustainable Consumption and Production Plan. GMCA Interim Recycling and Waste Plan 2026 to 2030 .	

A.2 Representations on the appraisal and changes to the framework

The scope of the appraisal was consulted on with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency, and with the neighbouring local planning authorities, between July and September 2025. Responses were received from Historic England and Natural England. The responses, how each was addressed and the resulting changes to the appraisal framework are recorded at Appendix 1 of the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (November 2025), Appendix B to this report. The representations received on the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report, consulted on with the Draft Local Plan Direction of Travel in November 2025, and the Council's response to each are recorded at Section 3.18 of the Consultation Report (September 2026).

Table A2 lists the representations received on the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report at the Direction of Travel stage, as recorded at Section 3.18 of the Consultation Report (September 2026), and where each is addressed in this report.

Table A2: Representations on the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report and where each is addressed

Reference	Representation	Where it is addressed in this report
3.18.1	Historic England: at scoping, clearer recognition of the historic environment, local character, townscape and setting, covering designated and non-designated assets, conservation areas, heritage at risk, archaeology and historic landscape character, and a fuller baseline with clearer signposting to sources; at the Direction of Travel, reference to its Advice Note 8 on the historic environment in Strategic Environmental Assessment.	Objectives 10 and 11 at Table 6. The key questions and indicators for objective 11 at Appendix A.3, which cover designated and non-designated assets, conservation areas, the Heritage at Risk Register, the Historic Environment Record and historic landscape character, each with its source. Section 2.1 and Figure 5.
3.18.2	Natural England: at scoping, stronger treatment of biodiversity, ecological networks, peat, soils, designated sites, nature recovery and climate resilience, expanded baseline evidence, mapping of green and blue infrastructure and links to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy; at the Direction of Travel, closer alignment between the appraisal and the Plan on designated sites, irreplaceable and priority habitats, species and peat, and the interrelation between	Objectives 8, 9, 12 and 13 at Table 6. The key questions and indicators for objectives 9 and 13 at Appendix A.3, covering designated sites, irreplaceable habitats and peat, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and soils. Figure 4 and Sections 2.5 and 2.6. The synergistic effects at Section 8.3 and Table 30 for the interrelation between biodiversity, climate and air quality. Policies SP6, ENV3, ENV4, ENV6 and ENV7 at Sections 5 and 7.

Reference	Representation	Where it is addressed in this report
	biodiversity, climate change and air quality.	
3.18.3	Environment Agency: the flood risk evidence informing the interim appraisal was unclear, the Places for Everyone Strategic Flood Risk Assessment predates the 2025 national flood risk data, and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment should be updated with newer site modelling.	Bolton's Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment inform the appraisal: Table 8, Figure 7, the objective 8 indicators at Appendix A.3, Section 6.3(4) and Table 18 (BSA06).
3.18.4	Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Sport England and the Woodland Trust: nature recovery as an objective; peat as an irreplaceable habitat; protected and priority species; the Local Nature Recovery Strategy under biodiversity and water; nature-based solutions under climate and water; the Environment Act 2021, the Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 in the legislation review; urban trees and existing natural spaces in the framework; the Active Lives Survey as the source on inactivity; health economic analysis and an employment plan alongside the housing strategy.	Objective 9 at Table 6 and its key questions at Appendix A.3, which cover the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, irreplaceable habitats and peat, and protected and priority species; the Local Nature Recovery Strategy under objective 14; nature-based solutions in the objective 8 key questions; the Environment Act 2021, the Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 at Table A1; tree canopy cover as an objective 9 indicator and Policy ENV4 at Table 27; the Active Lives Survey under objective 1 at Table A1; health as objective 1 and the Health Impact Assessment at Sections 1.1 and 3.4 and Policy PQ2 at Section 7.3; employment provision alongside housing at Sections 4.2 and 4.3 and Policies SP2 and SP3 at Section 5.
3.18.5	Anwyl Homes and Bradford Estates, Caddick, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Resident 1013, and Seddon Homes and Global Land: the scoring of the options and the method behind it, including the natural environment scores of the anchored option, the assumptions on accessibility and greenfield land, the basis for significance, the range of options and a hybrid strategy of anchor-led growth with smaller sites in	The method at Sections 3.3, 3.5 (Table 8 states the assumptions) and 3.6, and the significance test at Section 8. The options reappraised at Section 4 from the sites under assessment, with public transport accessibility mapped at Figure 6, and the reasons for selection at Section 4.5. Smaller sites in settlements under the access test in Policy SP3 at Section 5.3. The West Pennine Villages sites at Section 6.5 and

Reference	Representation	Where it is addressed in this report
	settlements, the West Pennine Villages proposal, how the appraisal influenced the preferred option, the cumulative effects of growth along the M61, distributional effects on the Renewal Areas and deprived neighbourhoods, the shift to walking, cycling and public transport, and monitoring indicators for mode share, homes and jobs within walking distance of public transport, housing delivery by tenure, access to green space in deprived neighbourhoods, and air quality and carbon on the corridors.	Appendix C.3.2.1 to C.3.2.4. The influence of the appraisal at Sections 2.2, 5.4, 6.4, 7.4 and 9.1. The M61 corridor at Section 8.1(2) and Tables 29 and 30. Distributional effects at Section 8.5 and Table 31. The shift to walking, cycling and public transport at Table 28. Monitoring at Table 32: mode of travel to work, share of journeys under five kilometres on foot or by cycle, affordable completions by tenure, green space per 1,000 residents, nitrogen dioxide on the M61, A6 and A666 corridors and the transport share of emissions. Homes and jobs within reach of public transport are shown at Figure 6.
3.18.6	Anwyl Homes and Bradford Estates, Bellway Homes, Bloor Homes, Seddon Homes and Global Land, and United Utilities Property Services: query or challenge reliance on the interim findings, smaller deliverable sites in established settlements, and planning for the standard method figure.	The housing requirement at Table 3. The standard method level tested as Housing Option 3 at Section 4.2. Smaller sites under the access test in Policy SP3 at Section 5.3.
3.18.7	Residents 1001, 1010 and 1015: greater weight to the long-term loss of green space, biodiversity and air quality.	Objectives 1, 9, 12 and 13 at Table 6. Effects assessed for the long term at Section 3.3. The loss of undeveloped land at Table 28, its mitigation at Table 29 and its monitoring at Table 32.

A.3 Baseline

SA Objective 1: Health and Wellbeing	
SEA Directive Topic(s) ¹	Population, Human Health
SA Objective	Improve the long-term physical and mental health and wellbeing for everyone in Bolton by reducing health inequalities, improving quality and quantity and access to healthcare and green open spaces as well as promoting healthy and active lifestyles.
Key Questions	
What is the likely significant effect on health inequalities between most and least deprived areas? What is the likely significant effect on residents' opportunity to be physically active, including through sport, play, informal recreation and use of public space? What is the likely significant effect on access to open space and the natural environment? What is the likely significant effect on access to healthcare facilities and services? What is the likely significant effect on the exposure of vulnerable groups to environmental determinants of poor health, including poor air quality, overheating, damp and cold homes, and fuel poverty?	
Indicators	
- On IMD 2025 Bolton is the 30th most deprived of 296 local authority areas in England, just outside the most deprived 10% at 10.1%. On IMD 2019 it was 34th of 317. The two releases are not directly comparable because data sources changed (Bolton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), Indices of Deprivation 2025 briefing, November 2025). - For males, the highest life expectancy is in Dunscar and Egerton (MSOA Bolton 001) at 85.2 years, while the lowest is in Central Bolton (MSOA Bolton 016) at 70.3 years (Bolton JSNA, Life and death, July 2025). - For females, the highest is again Dunscar and Egerton at 87.0 years and the lowest is Brightmet North (MSOA Bolton 013) at 77.1 years (Bolton JSNA, Life and death, July 2025). - Life expectancy variance is 11.8 years for males and 10.8 years for females between MSOAs (2019-2023). Life expectancy as a whole for males is 76.9, 2.6 years less than England, and for females 81.4, 1.9 years less than England (JSNA). - Bolton has a significant experience of deprivation and poverty. 28% of residents live in an area among the most deprived 10% nationally and 46% among the most deprived 20%, while 13% live in an area among the least deprived 20%. 46 of Bolton's 177 LSOAs fall in the most deprived decile. The most deprived small areas are Bolton 016F and 016C in Central Bolton, ranked 225th and 228th of 33,755 in England. 38% of Bolton children (24,600	

¹ [A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#) (Topics can be found in Appendix 5, Page 65 onwards). Page 35 states: "Information to be provided in the Environmental Report includes: "the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors..."

SA Objective 1: Health and Wellbeing	
SEA Directive Topic(s) ¹	Population, Human Health
SA Objective	Improve the long-term physical and mental health and wellbeing for everyone in Bolton by reducing health inequalities, improving quality and quantity and access to healthcare and green open spaces as well as promoting healthy and active lifestyles.
people) live in relatively low-income households, among the highest 20 authorities in the country (Bolton JSNA, Bolton in Brief, February 2026). • 65% of adults are overweight or obese in 2022/2023, slightly higher than the England average (OHID Public Health Profiles, 2022/23). • 26.7% of adults were physically inactive in 2022/2023, higher than the England average (OHID Public Health Profiles, 2022/23). • 37.4% of Year 6 children were overweight or obese in 2022/2023, similar to the national figure (OHID Public Health Profiles, 2022/23). • 28.5% of Bolton adults were classed as physically inactive in the JSNA (2023/24), doing less than the equivalent of half an hour's brisk walk a week. This is worse than the English average. • In year 6 (age 10-11) 36.7% of children are classified as above a healthy weight (2024/25) similar to national levels. Child excess weight worsened during the Covid pandemic but has subsequently returned to baseline trend levels, which are generally increasing (JSNA). • Nationally, 93% of children surveyed in the Children's People and Nature survey reported a positive relationship between being in nature and happiness (Natural England, Children's People and Nature Survey, 2025 update). • Overall, the status of health in Bolton is worse than the national picture, and significant inequalities and wellbeing challenges are faced across parts of the Borough (Bolton JSNA, Bolton in Brief, February 2026) • Data for 2022/23 published by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (Public Health Profiles) on adult wellbeing indicate that while adults in Bolton generally self-rate as being happier than England on average, more people than the national average (over 25%) report experiencing high levels of anxiety. • Physical Health: • 4% of respondents do not agree that they are able to look after their own health, the same as the GM average (4%) while 11% do not agree that they know enough about their own health, significantly higher than the GM average (7%). (Greater Manchester Residents Survey) • 72% agree they can get the right help if they need it, in line with the GM average (73%) and 91% say that they are involved in decisions about their own health – in line with the GM average (90%) (Greater Manchester Residents Survey). • Mental Health: • 13% of Bolton respondents are dissatisfied with their life, compared to the GM average (14%); 13% do not feel that things in their life are worthwhile, the same as the GM average (13%) and 15% report feeling 'not at all happy', compared to the GM average (16%). (Greater Manchester Residents Survey) • 40% of Bolton respondents say that they felt highly anxious, the same as the GM average (40%). (Greater Manchester Residents Survey) • Road noise assessment in 2021 modelled Lden and Lnight for every 10-metre grid in Bolton, and flagged M61 and A666 sections with levels above 75 dB (Defra, Strategic noise mapping 2022). • Rail noise assessment shows the Manchester to Preston line through Bolton with Lden 55 to 69 dB within 30 metres of the track (Defra, Strategic noise mapping 2022).	

SA Objective 1: Health and Wellbeing	
SEA Directive Topic(s) ¹	Population, Human Health
SA Objective	Improve the long-term physical and mental health and wellbeing for everyone in Bolton by reducing health inequalities, improving quality and quantity and access to healthcare and green open spaces as well as promoting healthy and active lifestyles.
In terms of health 85.2% of Gypsies and Travellers said their health was very good/good and 3.7% stated it was bad/very bad. The overall net health satisfaction score (% saying very good/good minus bad/very bad) was therefore 81.5% compared with 74.6% of the overall population (GTAA).	

SA Objective 2: Housing	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Population
SA Objective	Provide everybody in the Borough with the opportunity to live in a decent, warm and affordable home that meets local needs and aspirations in terms of house types and tenures whilst also reducing homelessness
Key Questions	
What is the likely significant effect on the supply of housing land, having regard to Bolton's housing requirement established in PfE? What is the likely significant effect on the supply of affordable housing? What is the likely significant effect on housing mix and choice, including specialist housing for older and/or disabled people? What is the likely significant effect on the energy efficiency, decency and climate resilience of Bolton's housing stock? What is the likely significant effect on the supply of pitches and plots for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople? What is the likely significant effect on homelessness?	
Indicators	
- Brownfield sites allocated in the Site Allocations Plan (2014) remain undeveloped, and the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply (Bolton Five Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement, 1 April 2026). - The Bolton Brownfield Land Register 2023 identifies 104 sites totalling 130 hectares capable of accommodating around 4,985 new homes. Brownfield capacity can meet only part of the housing need. - The average house price was £204,000 in July 2026, up 5.9% in a year (ONS, Housing prices in Bolton, 2026).	

SA Objective 2: Housing	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Population
SA Objective	Provide everybody in the Borough with the opportunity to live in a decent, warm and affordable home that meets local needs and aspirations in terms of house types and tenures whilst also reducing homelessness
- The average private rent was £894 a month in August 2026, up 11.1% in a year (ONS, Private rental prices in Bolton, 2026). - Advertised social homes attracted 326,584 bids for 995 properties in the first half of 2023/24, an average of 328 bids each, showing acute demand especially for family sized homes (Local Housing Needs Assessment 2026). - Census 2021 shows home ownership is still the majority tenure and private renting has risen to 18.0% of households, up 4.3 points since 2011. - Bolton Council introduced an Article 4 Direction in June 2025 to control further growth of Houses in Multiple Occupation after a “significant increase” and neighbourhood concerns (Bolton Council, Article 4 Direction for houses in multiple occupation, 13 June 2025). 51,935 residents are aged 65 plus, equal to 17% of the population (as of mid 2023), which is projected to grow by 10,126 people by 2041, a rise of 19.5% (Local Housing Needs Assessment 2026). - Bolton has ten extra care housing schemes, all but one in converted buildings, and an oversupply of about 3,500 sheltered units that need modernisation (Local Housing Needs Assessment 2026). - There are over 400 households on the Adapted Housing Register, and of these only 1 in 4 are currently rehoused annually (Local Housing Needs Assessment 2026). - There are initial indications of a growing demand for family housing (Local Housing Needs Assessment 2026). 15.4% of households in Bolton were in fuel poverty in 2021 on the low income low energy efficiency measure, against 14.7% in Greater Manchester and 13.1% in England; in 2024 the figures were 10.3% for Bolton and 9.9% for England (DESNZ sub-regional fuel poverty statistics, via OHID Public Health Profiles). - Homes in England had a median Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) score of 68 (band D). Bolton’s is 69 (band C) (ONS, Energy efficiency of housing in England and Wales, 2023). - The 2021 Census reported a population of 469 people who identified as ‘White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller’ or ‘Gypsy/Romany’ and 9 people identifying as ‘Roma’ living in Bolton. The total number of households was estimated to be 135 based on the number of Household Reference People identified in the census (GTAA). - Across Bolton there is one site that was previously used as a Gypsy and Traveller Site at Crompton Lodge. This is no longer occupied except for three households who occasionally use their caravans on the site. The 7-pitch site at Buckley Lane is fully occupied by an extended family of Romany Gypsies (GTAA). - There are total of 8 Travelling Showperson yards with 85 plots. Of these, 69 are occupied by households, 12 are vacant and used for storage and 4 are vacant and available for occupancy (GTAA). - In January and July each year, councils carry out a Traveller caravan count to inform MHCLG statistics. The latest 2025 January count reports 3 caravans on Gypsy and Traveller sites and none on Travelling Showperson yards (which is not correct as there are 69 occupied plots) (GTAA). - For the period 2025/26 to 2042/43, there is a minimum need for 13 Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Bolton (GTAA). - There is a shortfall of 35 plots over the period 2025/26 to 2042/43 but a potential supply of 5 plots through anticipated household dissolution (GTAA).	

SA Objective 2: Housing	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Population
SA Objective	Provide everybody in the Borough with the opportunity to live in a decent, warm and affordable home that meets local needs and aspirations in terms of house types and tenures whilst also reducing homelessness
• 66.4% Gypsy and Traveller residences were overcrowded compared with 12.6% of the general population (GTAA). • The Local Housing Needs Assessment 2026 identifies 1,674 homeless households as at 2024/25 (latest available). • The Local Housing Needs Assessment 2026 identifies 1,317 households identified as being threatened with homelessness in 2024/25 plus households living in temporary accommodation (based on quarterly average) in 2024/25. • Demand is further intensified by Bolton's high level of asylum dispersal, with a 57% increase in homelessness presentations over the last year following exit from NASS accommodation. This has resulted in over 350 household presentations, including a significant number of families requiring larger homes as well as high numbers of single adults (Local Housing Needs Assessment 2026).	

SA Objective 3: Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Population, Human health
SA Objective	Promote the safety, inclusivity and connectivity of neighbourhoods so that everyone feels they belong, has equal opportunities to access local services and facilities, contribute to local life and thrive in Bolton regardless of their background or abilities.
Key Questions	
What is the likely significant effect on community safety, including through design that discourages crime? What is the likely significant effect on access to community and social infrastructure? What is the likely significant effect on equity of access to community and social infrastructure, with particular regard to groups sharing protected characteristics and the most deprived areas? What is the likely significant effect on groups sharing protected characteristics, as identified in the Equality Impact Assessment? What is the likely significant effect on social cohesion and neighbourhood belonging?	
Indicators	
• Total recorded crime in Bolton as measured by the ONS at the year ending December 2022 was 36,010 a 27.4% rise from the previous year's figure of 28,250. Bolton is just below the Greater Manchester average at 121.6 per 1,000 population. (ONS, Recorded crime data by Community Safety Partnership area, year ending December 2022)	

SA Objective 3: Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Population, Human health
SA Objective	Promote the safety, inclusivity and connectivity of neighbourhoods so that everyone feels they belong, has equal opportunities to access local services and facilities, contribute to local life and thrive in Bolton regardless of their background or abilities.
• Primary health care: Nine Primary Care Networks serve a large number of GP practices. (Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy) • Central Library plus nine branch libraries remain in operation. (Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy) • Age, Gender, Gender Identity & Sexual Orientation • People aged 65 plus are 17% of the population (51,768) while children 0-14 are 20% (61,274) (Bolton Council, Equality Profile, Spring 2025). • There were 3,396 births in 2023. 105,867 residents are married and 680 ceremonies took place in 2022, including 22 same sex marriages (Bolton Council, Equality Profile, Spring 2025). • Women make up 51% (152,801) and men 49% (149,582) of residents (2023) (Bolton Council, Equality Profile, Spring 2025). • 1,469 residents report a gender different from sex registered at birth. • About 5,695 residents identify as LGBT+. 90.7% of people aged 16+ living in Bolton were heterosexual or straight, 1.2% were gay or lesbian, and 1.0% bisexual (Bolton Council, Equality Profile, Spring 2025). • Ethnicity, Faith & Inequalities • The population is 72% White, 20% Asian, 4% Black, 2% Mixed and 2% Other groups (Bolton Council, Equality Profile, Spring 2025). • 47% Christian, 20% Muslim, 26% state no religion 2% Hindu and 1% other faiths (Bolton Council, Equality Profile, Spring 2025). • Bolton's Director of Public Health Annual Report 2019-20 notes marked differences in long-term conditions and life-expectancy across Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, with Muslim and Hindu populations concentrated in higher-deprivation wards. • Bolton is diverse. 69% of the population is from a White British background. 20% from Asian backgrounds. 4% from Black backgrounds (JSNA). 97% of residents speak English as their main language or proficiently (JSNA) • Ill-health & Disability • 19% report a long-term condition or disability that limits daily activity (Bolton Council, Equality Profile, Spring 2025). • 19.3% of the Bolton population have a long term health condition or disability that limits their day to day activities (disabled under the Equality Act); 9.3% are limited a lot (JSNA, Census 2021). • 9.8% of the Bolton population provide some form of unpaid care, while 3.3% provide 50+ hours of unpaid care a week. • Active Travel gap • Veterans: • According to the 2021 census, 2.4% of the Bolton population previously served in the regular armed forces, and 0.7% in the reserve armed forces, while 0.1% had served in both. • The Greater Manchester Residents Survey shows that 78% of respondents agree that local people from different backgrounds get on well together (Greater Manchester Residents Survey, wave 11, February 2024; Greater Manchester figure). • 62% of Bolton residents aged 65plus feel a strong sense of belonging to their local area, and 63% say neighbours look out for each other (Greater Manchester Residents Survey, as reported in Bolton's Age Friendly Strategy 2025 to 2028).	

SA Objective 3: Promoting Strong, Safe and Inclusive Communities	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Population, Human health
SA Objective	Promote the safety, inclusivity and connectivity of neighbourhoods so that everyone feels they belong, has equal opportunities to access local services and facilities, contribute to local life and thrive in Bolton regardless of their background or abilities.
• 25% of households have no car, so many residents depend on nearby services and public transport (Census 2021). • 28% of residents live in a neighbourhood ranked among the 10% most deprived in England (IMD 2025) (Bolton JSNA, Indices of Deprivation 2025 briefing, November 2025). • 7% of Bolton residents report feeling lonely often or always, similar to England (OHID 2025, as reported in Bolton JSNA, Bolton in Brief, February 2026).	

SA Objective 4: Education and Lifelong Learning	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Population, Human Health
SA Objective	Improve education, training and lifelong learning by increasing the quantity and quality of and access to such opportunities and facilities which will also help to raise aspirations and maintain a healthy labour market.
Key Questions	
What is the likely significant effect on education levels of children in the area? What is the likely significant effect on education, skills and lifelong learning opportunities for working-age adults? What is the likely significant effect on access to educational facilities, with particular regard to the most deprived areas?	
Indicators	
• Bolton's average Attainment 8 score was 45.7 in 2023/24, slightly lower than the England average of 45.9 (Department for Education, Key stage 4 performance 2023/24, via OHID Public Health Profiles). • Bolton pupil absence is 6.7% compared to England which is 7.1% (Department for Education, Pupil absence in schools in England, 2023/24). • School readiness – NW 65%, England 68.3% (Department for Education, Early years foundation stage profile results, 2024/25). • Only 39.3% of working age residents hold a qualification at RQF level 4 or higher, and 11.5% have no qualifications, Jan Dec 2024 (ONS Annual Population Survey, January to December 2024, via Nomis). • 38% of Bolton children (24,600 people) live in relatively low-income households, among the highest 20 authorities in the country (Bolton JSNA, Bolton in Brief, February 2026). • On the Education, Skills and Training domain of IMD 2025, Bolton ranks 69th most deprived of 296 local authority areas in England and 5th of the ten Greater Manchester authorities.	

SA Objective 4: Education and Lifelong Learning	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Population, Human Health
SA Objective	Improve education, training and lifelong learning by increasing the quantity and quality of and access to such opportunities and facilities which will also help to raise aspirations and maintain a healthy labour market.
This is a less deprived position than Bolton holds on income (30th), employment (31st) or crime (15th) (Bolton JSNA, Indices of Deprivation 2025 briefing, November 2025). Bolton's most deprived neighbourhoods on IMD 2025 overall are Bolton 016F and 016C in Central Bolton (ranked 225th and 228th of 33,755), Bolton 012B in Doffcocker and Moss Bank (236th), Bolton 013A in Breightmet North (295th) and Bolton 019E in Breightmet South and Darcy Lever (362nd). The most deprived wards are Queen's Park and Central, Rumworth and Halliwell; the least deprived are Bromley Cross and Heaton, Lostock and Chew Moor.	

SA Objective 5: Local Economy and Employment	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Population
SA Objective	Develop a sustainable and diverse economy with higher levels of employment by creating more and better jobs that are easily accessible, supporting business expansion and promoting growth in key economic sectors.
Key Questions	
What is the likely significant effect on the diversification of Bolton's local economy? What is the likely significant effect on the supply of employment land? What is the likely significant effect on the vitality and viability of Bolton town centre and the district centres (Farnworth, Horwich, Westhoughton) and local centres?	
Indicators	
- The employment rate for residents aged 16 to 64 is 65.6%, below the national average (Bolton Local Plan Publication Version, paragraph 2.11). - Unemployment is 5.3%, versus 3.8% in the North West and 3.7% in Great Britain, year ending December 2023 (ONS, Employment, unemployment and economic inactivity in Bolton). - Economic inactivity is 30.2% (Bolton Local Plan Publication Version, paragraph 2.11). - Median gross weekly pay for full time residents was £667 in 2024, £63 below the national figure (ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2024, via Nomis). - Claimant count in May 2025 was 10,640 people, equal to 6.0% of the population aged 16 to 64 (ONS Claimant Count, May 2025, via Nomis). - Manufacturing employs 12.2% of Bolton's workforce, compared with 7.5% nationally, reflecting a strong but narrowly focused sector base (2023 employee jobs) (ONS Business Register and Employment Survey 2023, via Nomis). - Of employed residents of Bolton, 23.6% work mainly from home (Census 2021)	

SA Objective 5: Local Economy and Employment	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Population
SA Objective	Develop a sustainable and diverse economy with higher levels of employment by creating more and better jobs that are easily accessible, supporting business expansion and promoting growth in key economic sectors.
- Bolton has around 11,700 active businesses (ONS 2024, as stated in the Bolton Local Plan Publication Version, paragraph 2.11). - Time to travel to employment centre by bike, car, walking and public transport is lower than the England average (Department for Transport, Journey time statistics, England 2019) - Bolton's 2011 Core Strategy has a hierarchy of one sub-regional centre (Bolton), four town centres (Farnworth, Little Lever, Horwich and Westhoughton), four district centres (Chorley Old Road, Astley Bridge, Brightmet and Harwood) and nine local centres (Deane Road, Derby Centre, Tonge Fold, Daubhill and St Helens Road, Halliwell Road, Tonge Moor Road, Blackrod, Bromley Cross and Kearsley) (Bolton Core Strategy, March 2011, Figure 4.2).	

SA Objective 6: Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Population, Human health, Air
SA Objective	Enable a low-carbon transport system that boosts walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport use, improves safety, lowers emissions and cuts car use whilst promoting sustainable patterns of growth to reduce the need to travel.
Key Questions	
What is the likely significant effect on the number of people travelling by private car? What is the likely significant effect on public transport; for example, including bus and rail? What is the likely significant effect on walking? What is the likely significant effect on cycling? What is the likely significant effect on wheeling?	
Indicators	
24.8% of households have no car or van (Census 2021; Bolton Local Plan Publication Version, paragraph 2.16). - Traffic volumes reached 1.3 billion vehicle miles on Bolton roads in 2025 (1,327 million), up from 1,299 million in 2023 (Department for Transport, Road traffic statistics, local authority estimates). - Transport is the largest single source of the borough's greenhouse gas emissions: 41% in 2023 (Bolton Climate Change Strategy Annual Report 2024/25, as stated in the Bolton Local Plan Publication Version, paragraph 2.15) and 39% in 2024 (DESNZ data, Bolton JSNA). Within transport, minor roads account for 41% of emissions, motorways 30% and A roads 27% (Bolton JSNA, Climate emergency page, citing DESNZ UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics).	

SA Objective 6: Sustainable Transport and Reducing the Need to Travel	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Population, Human health, Air
SA Objective	Enable a low-carbon transport system that boosts walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport use, improves safety, lowers emissions and cuts car use whilst promoting sustainable patterns of growth to reduce the need to travel.
• In 2023, 45 people died in road traffic collisions in Greater Manchester, and 799 were killed or seriously injured road (a 6% drop) (Transport for Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester reported road casualties 2023). • 74% of all journeys made by Bolton residents are no more than five kilometres (Transport for Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey 2022, as reported in the draft Bolton Transport Strategy, March 2024). • 57.8% of respondents to Bolton's Big Climate Conversation 2021 survey strongly agreed that Bolton Council should invest in green public transport. • Greater Manchester has 53.8 public electric vehicle charging devices per 100,000 population, below the England average of 115.4 per 100,000 (Department for Transport, Electric vehicle public charging infrastructure statistics, April 2025). • Of employed residents of Bolton, 3.8% use the bus, 1.3% the train, and 54.1% drive (as of April 2021 when some Covid restrictions remained in place; data is being collated, but recent indications show a recovery and increase in bus patronage) (Census 2021; Bolton Local Plan Publication Version, paragraph 2.16). • Travel time to the nearest employment centre by public transport or walking is 10.1 minutes compared to the England average of 11.5 minutes (Department for Transport, Journey time statistics, England 2019). • Of employed residents of Bolton, 0.8% cycle to work (Census 2021). • 43.7% of respondents to Bolton's Big Climate Conversation 2021 survey strongly agreed that cycle paths would bring positive change. • Time to travel to employment centre by cycling is 9 minutes compared to the England average of 9.9 minutes (Department for Transport, Journey time statistics, England 2019). • GM observed a 20% increase in walking and wheeling and a 21% increase in cycling between 2022 and 2023 (Active Travel in Greater Manchester Annual Report 2024). • Satisfaction among walkers and wheelers in Greater Manchester with the time spent waiting to cross roads rose from 67% in 2018 to 79% in 2024 and fell to 69% in 2025 (Active Travel in Greater Manchester Annual Report 2025, data compendium). • Similar proportions of both females and males (60% compared with 59%) thought that their local area is either very good or good for safety when walking or wheeling (Sustrans Walking and Cycling Index, 2023)	

SA Objective 7: Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Climatic Factors
SA Objective	Encourage the acceleration to a zero-carbon energy system by enabling the development and wider use of renewable energy as well as seeking to minimise carbon emissions and increasing energy efficiency.
Key Questions	

SA Objective 7: Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Climatic Factors
SA Objective	Encourage the acceleration to a zero-carbon energy system by enabling the development and wider use of renewable energy as well as seeking to minimise carbon emissions and increasing energy efficiency.
What is the likely significant effect on energy demand and energy efficiency in new development? What is the likely significant effect on greenhouse gas emissions in Bolton? What is the likely significant effect on the generation and use of renewable and low-carbon energy?	
Indicators	
- Domestic electricity consumption was 394.2 GWh in 2023, down 13.2% since 2015 (DESNZ, Subnational electricity consumption statistics). - Domestic gas consumption was 1,398.2 GWh in 2023, a fall from 1,517.5 GWh in 2015 (DESNZ, Subnational gas consumption statistics). - In 2022, 14.9% of households were in fuel poverty on the low income low energy efficiency measure, slightly above the England rate of 13.1% (DESNZ, Sub-regional fuel poverty in England, 2022 data). - Bolton's territorial greenhouse gas emissions fell by 24% between 2015 and 2024 (Bolton JSNA, Climate emergency page, citing DESNZ UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics). - Bolton produced about 1.1 million tonnes of CO₂e in 2024. Transport made up 39%, domestic energy 29%, waste 10%, industry 9%, commercial 8%, public sector 4% and agriculture 2%. Land use, land use change and forestry absorbed 3 ktCO₂e (Bolton JSNA, Climate emergency page, citing DESNZ UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics). - Bolton hosts 25,248 kW of installed renewable capacity including solar photovoltaics, onshore wind and landfill gas (DESNZ, Regional renewable statistics). - Bolton Town Centre is identified as an opportunity area for a heat network (Heat Network Zoning Opportunity Report for Greater Manchester Combined Authority, June 2025).	

SA Objective 8: Adapting to our Changing Climate	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Climatic Factors
SA Objective	Reduce the risk of and from flooding and ensure new development and the existing built environment is resilient to climate extremes.
Key Questions	
What is the likely significant effect on the resilience of communities, buildings and infrastructure to climate change, including overheating, drought, storm events, and disruption to services and utilities?	

SA Objective 8: Adapting to our Changing Climate	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Climatic Factors
SA Objective	Reduce the risk of and from flooding and ensure new development and the existing built environment is resilient to climate extremes.
What is the likely significant effect on the contribution of renewable and low-carbon energy to climate resilience, including through resilient local energy systems? What is the likely significant effect on the delivery of nature-based solutions to climate change, including sustainable drainage, urban cooling and green and blue infrastructure? What is the likely significant effect on flood risk, including whether new development is kept safe from flooding?	
Indicators	
- Environment Agency climate change allowances (May 2022) require development in the Douglas, Irwell and Lower Mersey management catchments, which cover the borough, to add 30% (central allowance) or 40% to 45% (upper end) to peak rainfall estimates for the 2070s when designing drainage and flood infrastructure (Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, EVB02.1, Tables 5-4 to 5-6). - Nearly 3,320 ground floor properties face a 1 in 30 year risk of surface water flooding, a risk that grows as the climate changes (Environment Agency 2025, as stated in the Bolton Local Plan Publication Version, paragraph 2.23). The Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (EVB02.1) and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment have since been completed.	

SA Objective 9: Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna, Human Health, Water
SA Objective	Protect and enhance Bolton's biodiversity as well as strengthening its green and blue infrastructure to create well-connected and climate-resilient networks.
Key Questions	
What is the likely significant effect on habitats, species and geological features? What is the likely significant effect on delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and wider ecological networks? What is the likely significant effect on Biodiversity Net Gain, and on the extent and condition of habitats, having regard to the objective of delivering measurable gain? What is the likely significant effect on irreplaceable habitats and assets, such as ancient woodland, veteran trees, and peat? What is the likely significant effect on the ability of nature and ecosystems to adapt to climate change?	

SA Objective 9: Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna, Human Health, Water
SA Objective	Protect and enhance Bolton's biodiversity as well as strengthening its green and blue infrastructure to create well-connected and climate-resilient networks.
What is the likely significant effect on the connectivity, climate-resilience and nature-recovery function of the green and blue infrastructure network?	
Indicators	
- The West Pennine Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) covers about 7,660 hectares in total, and its southern slopes abut Horwich and Smithills. It supports blanket bog, heath, grassland and clough woodland. (Natural England, West Pennine Moors SSSI notification, November 2016). - Red Moss south of Horwich is a peat-forming raised bog SSSI. It contains sphagnum moss, cotton grass and breeding wetland birds (Natural England, Red Moss SSSI citation; Bolton Greenspace Strategy 2026 to 2041, paragraph 3.4). - Other nationally designated sites include: Tonge River Section Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Gale Clough and Shooterslee Wood SSSI and Nob End SSSI (Natural England; Bolton Greenspace Strategy 2026 to 2041, paragraph 3.4). - Bolton's declared Local Nature Reserves include Eatock Lodge, Seven Acres, Upper Bradshaw Valley and Moses Gate Country Park (Bolton Council). - Bolton is home to the Horwich Habitat Bank (Bolton Council, Biodiversity Duty Report). - Offsite BNG demand in Greater Manchester could amount to £132.8 million or £8.8 million annually over 15 years, therefore revealing the substantial demand for off-site BNG units in Greater Manchester (Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Biodiversity Net Gain in Greater Manchester, citing the GMEU 2024 supply and demand study). - The Woodland Trust is restoring 685 hectares at Smithills Estate, part of the West Pennine Moors SSSI, to improve moorland, clough woodland and species rich grassland for priority birds and plants (Woodland Trust). - Tree canopy covers 15% of Greater Manchester; the Local Nature Recovery Strategy target is 17% by 2035 (Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2025, Target 6) - Accessible Greenspace provision across the borough exceeds the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework benchmark of 3 hectares per 1,000 population, while the Central and Inner Bolton Sub-Area provides around 1.4 hectares per 1,000 (Bolton Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study 2026, as stated in the Bolton Local Plan Publication Version, paragraphs 4.37 and 4.41). 11.6% of Greater Manchester's land is designated for nature (Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2025, Appendix 7). - GM – 80% of waterbodies have been heavily modified by human activity (Greater Manchester State of Nature Report, March 2024). - GM – Peatlands have been degraded by human activity and now emit carbon rather than locking it away (Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2025). - GM – individual bird species population has declined up to 40% over the last 40 years and populations of common mammals have dropped by between 20-40% since 1995 (Greater Manchester State of Nature Report, March 2024). - Climate change has already impacted biodiversity in Greater Manchester as species shift northwards. As temperatures increase, climate zones will move northwards at 5km per year by 2050 – equivalent to moving from the south to north of Greater Manchester in 8 years, a process which took 800 years at the end of the last ice age (Greater Manchester State of Nature Report, March 2024).	

SA Objective 9: Biodiversity Infrastructure (Green and Blue)	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna, Human Health, Water
SA Objective	Protect and enhance Bolton's biodiversity as well as strengthening its green and blue infrastructure to create well-connected and climate-resilient networks.
- Nearly half of the borough is urban land yet it still holds large areas of priority habitat, including the greatest share of scrub and the second largest share of semi improved neutral grassland in Greater Manchester (Bolton Greenspace Strategy 2026 to 2041, paragraph 3.4). - An estimated one third of residents in the city region live more than fifteen minutes from a green space; only forty % live within 200 metres of a space of at least 0.5 hectare and thirty % within 300 metres of a two-hectare site (Bolton Greenspace Strategy 2026 to 2041, paragraph 3.2; Greater Manchester figures). - Bolton Council and City of Trees planted more than 13,500 trees in 2021, creating 7.58 hectares of new woodland (Bolton Council news releases, July and November 2021).	

SA Objective 10: Landscape and Townscape	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Landscape
SA Objective	Conserve and enhance the quality and local character of Bolton's distinctive landscapes and townscapes, protect key views, as well as regenerate degraded urban and natural environments.
Key Questions	
What is the likely significant effect on the quality and character of Bolton's landscapes, including rural, semi-rural and moorland character? What is the likely significant effect on the quality and character of Bolton's townscapes, including open spaces and the public realm? What is the likely significant effect on key views and visual amenity?	
Indicators	
- The Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment 2018 rates Bolton's Open Moorlands and Enclosed Upland Fringes (West/South Pennines) as moderate-high sensitivity to residential development and high sensitivity to commercial/industrial development, and the Incised Urban Fringe Valleys as moderate to moderate-high and moderate-high to high respectively. - Landscape Character Appraisal 2001 identifies seven landscape character types: Agricultural Floodplains, Agricultural Coal Measures, Rural Fringes, Settled Valleys, Urban Valleys, Wooded/Rural Valleys and the Upland Moorland Hills of the West Pennine Moors. Valley floors of the Rivers Croal and Irwell contain remnants of industrial canals, lodges and mill sites that contribute to local distinctiveness and provide opportunities for landscape restoration. Note: the appraisal is more than five years old.	

SA Objective 10: Landscape and Townscape	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Landscape
SA Objective	Conserve and enhance the quality and local character of Bolton's distinctive landscapes and townscapes, protect key views, as well as regenerate degraded urban and natural environments.
• The LUC Review of Protected Open Land 2018 found that a number of Protected Open Land parcels around the urban edge have medium to high landscape sensitivity, helping to safeguard settlement settings. • The West Pennine Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest covering 76 square km and extending into Bolton. It was notified in 2016 for its mosaic of upland habitats and breeding birds (Natural England, West Pennine Moors SSSI notification, November 2016). • Conservation Area Appraisals (various dates) – describe local townscape, architectural form and materials that define distinctive areas • The Upland Moorland Hills around Winter Hill (around 450 metres) form Bolton's skyline and provide long views across the Lancashire Plain and Greater Manchester conurbation. Key features include open blanket bog, acid grassland and historic landmarks (Landscape Character Appraisal 2001).	

SA Objective 11: Heritage	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Cultural Heritage
SA Objective	Conserve and enhance Bolton's historic environment in a manner that is appropriate to its cultural significance.
Key Questions	
What is the likely significant effect on the historic environment, heritage assets and their setting, including both designated and non-designated assets? What is the likely significant effect on local character and distinctiveness, including historic urban grain, vernacular building styles, and the accumulated identity of places?	
Indicators	
• Bolton has 361 Listed Buildings and six Registered Parks and Gardens (Bolton Local Plan Publication Version, paragraph 3.61). • Bolton has five Scheduled Monuments (Bolton Local Plan Publication Version, paragraph 3.61). • Bolton Council has 26 designated conservation areas, ranging from the town centre to rural villages near the West Pennine Moors (Bolton Local Plan Publication Version, paragraph 3.61). • Conservation Area Appraisals (various dates) – describe local character including townscape, architectural form and materials that define these areas • The Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record identifies known historic buildings in Bolton. • As of 2026 the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register lists two conservation areas and nine listed buildings (one Grade I, one Grade II* and seven Grade II) in Bolton (Bolton Local	

SA Objective 11: Heritage	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Cultural Heritage
SA Objective	Conserve and enhance Bolton's historic environment in a manner that is appropriate to its cultural significance.
Plan Publication Version, paragraph 3.61). The Council also considers additional listed buildings to be vulnerable. - Bolton also includes a wide range of non-designated heritage assets such as historic mills, chapels and workers' housing that contribute to local character. Loss of mills to demolition, fire and neglect has been cited as a particular issue for the region in research on this topic. The council is preparing a Local List to record and manage these assets (Bolton Council; Historic England, Engines of Prosperity: new uses for old mills, 2017). - Landscape Character Appraisal 2001 identifies seven landscape character types and identifies where such landscapes are important to the historic identity/ character of an area	

SA Objective 12: Air Quality	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Air, Human Health
SA Objective	Reduce air pollution to provide a healthy environment for people and wildlife.
Key Questions	
What is the likely significant effect on air quality, particularly in Air Quality Management Areas and at sensitive locations such as sites designated for their importance for nature conservation? What is the likely significant effect on emissions of pollutants and particulates from new development? What is the likely significant effect on the exposure of new development and its occupants to existing poor air quality?	
Indicators	
- Bolton lies within the Greater Manchester Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) (Greater Manchester 2023 Air Quality Annual Status Report, June 2024). - Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan monitoring in 2025 covered 273 diffusion tube locations plus three continuous monitoring sites. 11 sites exceeded the 40 µg/m³ annual mean, down from 38 in 2024 and 129 in 2019, with 39 further sites at risk of exceedance, down from 73 (Clean Air GM data hub, 2025). - No Local Air Quality Management exceedance of the NO₂ annual mean objective was recorded anywhere in Greater Manchester in 2025, the first year this has occurred (GMCA Air Quality Administration Committee, June 2026). LAQM and Clean Air Plan monitoring use different siting criteria and different exceedance thresholds, so the two datasets are not directly comparable. - Government approved Greater Manchester's investment-led, non-charging Clean Air Plan in 2025 in place of a charging Clean Air Zone. Clean Air Zone signage has been removed and Greater Manchester remains under direction to meet legal NO₂ limits by the end of 2026. 48 of the 78 Clean Air Plan-funded zero emission buses now run from Bolton, including on the	

SA Objective 12: Air Quality	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Air, Human Health
SA Objective	Reduce air pollution to provide a healthy environment for people and wildlife.
8, 10, V1 and V2 services, and the Bolton depot is among those being upgraded for electric operation (Clean Air GM, 2026).	

SA Objective 13: Land and Soil Quality	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Soil, Material Assets
SA Objective	Ensure efficient use of land and minimising the loss of better-quality agricultural land, safeguard and improve soils, and conserve land resources.
Key Questions	
What is the likely significant effect on the use of previously developed land (PDL), having regard to the objective of PDL-first development? What is the likely significant effect on the best and most versatile agricultural land/ soil resources? What is the likely significant effect on the redevelopment/ reuse of derelict land, buildings and infrastructure? What is the likely significant effect on contaminated land, having regard to the objective of remediation and reuse? What is the likely significant effect on the objective of protecting peat?	
Indicators	
• The Bolton Brownfield Land Register 2023 identifies 104 previously developed sites totalling 130 hectares that could deliver about 4985 new homes. • The Green Belt boundary is established by Places for Everyone Policy JP-G9 and protected by national policy. • Natural England's Agricultural Land Classification map shows that best-and-most-versatile land (Grades 1, 2, 3a) is scarce in Bolton. Small pockets with a moderate likelihood of Grade 3a occur in the southwest of the borough. Most farmland is Grade 3b or Grade 4. • The Contaminated Land Strategy dates from 2015 (Bolton Council). • The Historic Landfill Site register identifies over 100 sites in Bolton (Environment Agency, Historic Landfill Sites dataset) • The West Pennine Moors SSSI contains extensive blanket peat and upland vegetation. Restoration by the Woodland Trust at Smithills Estate is rewetting peat and restoring moorland (Woodland Trust). • There is a large presence of peat within the catchment area as illustrated within the England Peat Status GHG and C Storage dataset (Defra, 2021) which should be recognised as a key issue and opportunity. The importance of peat should be recognised	

SA Objective 13: Land and Soil Quality	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Soil, Material Assets
SA Objective	Ensure efficient use of land and minimising the loss of better-quality agricultural land, safeguard and improve soils, and conserve land resources.
as both a key issue and opportunity as a nature-based solution for climate change adaption and resilience. • GM – Peatlands have been degraded by human activity and now emit carbon rather than locking it away (Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2025).	

SA Objective 14: Water Resources	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Water, Climatic Factors
SA Objective	Protect and maintain the quality of Bolton's water resources by raising water quality and keeping water consumption and abstraction within local supply limits
Key Questions	
What is the likely significant effect on water quality in Bolton's rivers, lakes and groundwater, having regard to the Water Framework Directive waterbody status? What is the likely significant effect on water resources, having regard to the objective of reducing consumption? What is the likely significant effect on the capacity of water and wastewater infrastructure to serve development? What is the likely significant effect on water efficiency and water reuse in new development?	
Indicators	
• River Croal (waterbody GB112069064550). Classified Moderate ecological status and Fail chemical status in the 2019 Water Framework Directive (WFD). The 2022 classification gives moderate ecological status (Environment Agency, Catchment Data Explorer). • River Irwell at Bolton (GB112069060840). Ecological status moderate and chemical status Fail in 2019 owing to fish failures, phosphates and priority substances. Update awaited 2026 (Environment Agency, Catchment Data Explorer, 2019 classification). • Tributary network. Eagley Brook and Middle Brook also recorded Moderate ecological status in 2019 (Environment Agency, Catchment Data Explorer, 2019 classification). • The Upper Douglas catchment recorded moderate ecological status in 2019 and good ecological status in 2022 (Environment Agency, Catchment Data Explorer, 2019 classification). • Storm overflow spills. United Utilities event duration monitoring recorded 2,140 hours of spills from 49 permitted overflows in Bolton catchments during 2023, with the single worst CSO at Blackshaw Brook spilling 79 times for 405 hours. • Average daily water use per person, known as per capita consumption (PCC) in England, was 136.5 litres in 2024 to 2025. This is a slight decrease from the previous year but is still	

SA Objective 14: Water Resources	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Water, Climatic Factors
SA Objective	Protect and maintain the quality of Bolton's water resources by raising water quality and keeping water consumption and abstraction within local supply limits
more than water companies would have expected and puts avoidable pressure on the environment (Environment Agency, Water resources 2024 to 2025: analysis of the water industry's annual water resources performance, November 2025). - Water companies supplied more water in 2024 to 2025 than would typically be expected under the average weather conditions experienced (Environment Agency, Water resources 2024 to 2025: analysis of the water industry's annual water resources performance, November 2025). - There were 291,492 recorded spill events in England, representing a 35% drop from 2024, though this reduction was heavily influenced by drier-than-average weather (Environment Agency, event duration monitoring annual return 2025, published March 2026). - In 2024–2025, over 62% of households in England are billed based on how much water they use. In total around 12% of homes have smart water meters, which allow customers to understand their real time usage and helps water companies to pinpoint leaks in the system. There are substantial differences in rollout rates across the country (Environment Agency, Water resources 2024 to 2025: analysis of the water industry's annual water resources performance, November 2025).	

SA Objective 15: Waste Minimisation	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Material Assets
SA Objective	Move towards a circular economy by generating less waste, designing out waste in new development, boosting reuse and recycling and aiming for near-zero residual waste
Key Questions	
What is the likely significant effect on the sustainable use of physical resources, having regard to the objective of the circular economy? What is the likely significant effect on the safeguarding of mineral resources? What is the likely significant effect on the safeguarding of existing waste management capacity? What is the likely significant effect on waste generation, reuse and recycling, having regard to the objective of near-zero residual waste?	
Indicators	
- The annual requirement for land-won sand and gravel production in the North West is 3.25 million tonnes per year. The annual requirement for land-won crushed rock in the North West is 9.63 million tonnes per year (Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan, April 2013). - In Greater Manchester there are sufficient peat workings with planning permission to meet existing and future demand and no new planning permissions need be granted for new peat	

SA Objective 15: Waste Minimisation	
SEA Directive Topic(s)	Material Assets
SA Objective	Move towards a circular economy by generating less waste, designing out waste in new development, boosting reuse and recycling and aiming for near-zero residual waste
workings, however, a history of peat working has left some sites in need of restoration (Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan, April 2013). • Bolton collected 287 kg of household waste per person in 2024/25 (Defra local authority collected waste statistics, published March 2026). • Between 2012 and 2027, a total of 7.8 million tonnes of waste disposal capacity will be required, this will be accommodated at two landfill facilities (Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan, 2012). • The evidence indicates that there is sufficient recycling, composting and treatment capacity for all other waste streams throughout the Plan period. Therefore no additional facilities have been allocated for this purpose (Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan, 2012). • Municipal solid waste. Bolton households generated 354.27 kg of residual waste per household in 2024/25 (Bolton Climate Change Strategy Annual Report 2024/25). • Recycling rate. Bolton sent 48.1% of household waste for reuse, recycling or composting in 2024/25 (Bolton Climate Change Strategy Annual Report 2024/25).	