

GM PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION

Date: 9 October 2024

Subject: Strategic Planning Update

Report of: Anne Morgan, GMCA

Purpose of Report

This paper provides an update to the commission on strategic planning matters.

Recommendations:

Members are requested to:

1. Note the contents of the report.

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1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on key strategic planning matters affecting Greater Manchester. The report will cover:

- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document
- Supplementary Planning Documents in relation to Holcroft Moss and the South Pennine Moors
- Recent consultation on proposed Government reforms to planning policy.

2. Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document

2.1 The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (PfE) was adopted by all 9 local authorities and took effect on 21 March 2024. Following adoption of any local plan there is a 6-week period for interested parties to bring a statutory challenge and Save the Greater Manchester Green Belt Ltd lodged a claim against the plan in May 2024.

2.2 The claim was that the Inspectors had erred in law on 5 grounds:

- Ground 1: failure to consult on the main modifications proposed following the cancellation of the West Midlands to Manchester leg of HS2.
- Ground 2: error of law in interpretation of policy justifying Green Belt release in JPA3.2 Timperley Wedge
- Ground 3: the Inspectors' assessment of whether exceptional circumstances existed to justify the release of Green Belt land to meet the housing land requirements is unlawful.
- Ground 4: the Inspectors committed an error of law in their approach to the withdrawal of Stockport from the Plan.
- Ground 5: Green Belt Additions (GBA) – unlawful restriction on the scope of exceptional circumstances (ultimately reducing the number of GBA sites from 49 to 19)

2.3 A judgement was made on 5 August 2024 which refused permission on Grounds 1-4, Ground 5 was given leave to proceed to a hearing.

2.4 The claimants have applied to 'renew permission' i.e. have the judge re-consider their case on Grounds 1-4. This renewal hearing will take place on 23 October 2024. No date has been set for the hearing on Ground 5 yet.

2.5 The Places for Everyone Plan is still a validly adopted plan and should be afforded full weight in decision making unless the High Court decides otherwise.

3. Supplementary Planning Documents

- 3.1 Now that PfE is adopted the 9 authorities are implementing the policies. This includes bringing forward supplementary planning documents (SPD) to support policies in the plan.
- 3.2 Two draft SPDs have been prepared and will be out for public consultation in November 2024:
- Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations SPD. Holcroft Moss lies within Warrington and within the Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The SPD provides guidance on implementation of Criterion 17 of Policy JP-C8 of the PfE Plan which seeks to avoid adverse impacts on the protected habitats and species of Holcroft Moss. The SPD will assist the nine PfE Plan authorities will secure contributions from developers to mitigate impacts of schemes on Holcroft Moss.
 - South Pennine Moors SPD. This SPD provides guidance on the implementation of criterion 7 (parts a and b) of Policy JP-G5 Uplands of PfE. Unlike the Holcroft Moss SPD, this SPD relates only to Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. The aims of the SPD are to provide advice as to what development within 400m of the South Pennine Moors boundaries may be considered acceptable and provide advice as to the type and scope of assessment required to determine if development sites within 2.5km of the South Pennine Moors SPAs provide foraging habitats for qualifying bird species, and set out the types of applications that would require an assessment.
- 3.3 The GMCA will host the consultation on behalf of the nine PfE authorities. The consultation responses will inform the final iteration of the SPDs It is hoped the SPDs will be adopted by the nine authorities in spring 2025.

4. Proposed changes to national planning policy

- 4.1 As set out in their manifesto, the new Government is committed to the reform of the planning system. A consultation on revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 30 July and closed on 24 September. GMCA co-ordinated a response on behalf of the 9 PfE authorities which can be found here: [Shaping National Policy - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/shaping-national-policy). All 10 Greater Manchester local authorities also submitted individual responses.
- 4.2 The consultation proposes a change to the methodology for calculating Local Housing Need (based on housing stock/affordability) to support the manifesto commitment to build 1.5m homes over the Parliamentary term. The LHN for Greater Manchester would increase by more than 30% - an additional 3,500 pa.
- 4.3 The Places for Everyone plan would continue to provide the housing requirement for the 9 participating authorities, provided that subsequent local plans are prepared as 'Part 2' plans and do not set a 'new' housing requirement.
- 4.4 The consultation clarifies that all local authorities should seek to meet their housing need in full, and that unmet housing need constitutes 'exceptional circumstances' to release Green Belt.
- 4.5 Changes are proposed to the definition of Green Belt, introducing the concept of 'Grey Belt' which is land which is either previously developed or which makes a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes. Where development is to be permitted in the Green Belt/Grey Belt, 'Golden Rules' would apply, including an expectation that 50% of the housing will be affordable. A new approach to determining viability and to Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) in the Green Belt is proposed.
- 4.6 Changes are proposed to the approach to affordable housing, transport modelling, renewable energy and planning fees.
- 4.7 The Government has indicated that it wants to introduce the revised NPPF by the end of the year, subject to the consultation responses received.