

# **Local Development Framework**

Bolton's Core Strategy  
Background Document – BD6A  
Cleaner Greener Bolton  
December 2009

**Shaping the future of Bolton**



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Background Document is one of sixteen produced by Bolton Council to support the autumn 2009 publication version of the Bolton Core Strategy.
- 1.2 In total, there are four Background Documents that cover different aspects of the **Cleaner Greener** Theme, BD6A – BD6D.
- 1.3 This Background Document covers the strategic Cleaner Greener theme policies and also policies from the spatial areas which relate to that theme, from the Core Strategy:
- 1.4 Cleaner Greener Theme Policies:
  - **Policy CG1 – Cleaner Greener**
- 1.5 The following are spatial area policies that relate to CG1:
  - TC 8.3 Church Wharf - River Croal green corridor and flood risk
  - TC10.3 Urban Village - improve quality of Queens Park
  - TC10.4 Urban Village - reduce flood risk along R.Croal
  - RA1.8 Inner Bolton - Open recreation area at Queens Park
  - RA1.9 Inner Bolton – protect Green Belt boundaries
  - RA1.10 Inner Bolton – protect canal area
  - RA2.11 Farnworth - recreational area at Farnworth Park
  - RA2.12 Farnworth – Protected Open Land
  - RA3.3 Brightmet – Protect Green Belt boundaries
  - M2.6 Horwich – protect Red Moss SSSI
  - OA1.5 Horwich and Blackrod – protect Green Belt boundaries
  - OA1.6 Horwich and Blackrod – protected Open Land
  - OA1.8 Horwich and Blackrod – recreational areas and canal
  - OA3.5 Westhoughton – protect Green Belt boundaries
  - OA3.6 Westhoughton – protected Open Land
  - OA4.3 West Bolton – protect Green Belt boundaries (excluding Cutacre area)
  - OA5.5 North Bolton – protect Green Belt boundaries
  - OA5.6 North Bolton – recreational and tourism areas
  - OA6.6 Little Lever and Kearsley – protect Green Belt boundaries
  - OA6.7 Little Lever and Kearsley – Protected Open Land
  - OA6.8 Little Lever and Kearsley – recreational and canal areas
  - LO1.4 Links to surrounding areas - sub-regional green-infrastructure
  - LO1.5 Links to surrounding areas – Flood risk.

- 1.6 Each Background Document is structured to provide information, which demonstrates the soundness of the Core Strategy as a whole:
- Conformity with national and regional guidance,
  - Specific evidence on which the policy approach is based.
  - How the policy approach was developed at each stage of the plan making process and a summary of representations at each of those stages
  - Information and guidance provided by the Sustainability Appraisal;
  - A statement that shows how the policies contribute to the effectiveness of the Core Strategy as a whole considering deliverability, flexibility and ability to be monitored
  - Information and guidance provided by the sustainability appraisal
  - Conclusions on soundness
- 1.7 All documents referenced are held within the Public Examination Core Document Library.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Policies in the **Cleaner Greener** theme aim to promote a cleaner, greener Bolton including the consideration of climate change, green infrastructure and biodiversity issues.
- 2.2 Policy CG1 deals with the following issues:
  - CG 1.1 Rural Areas-protection and enhancement of environmental qualities.
  - CG 1.2 Urban biodiversity-protection and enhancement.
  - CG 1.3 Urban open space-protection and enhancement.
  - CG 1.4 Development on Urban green space.
  - CG 1.5 Protection against flood risk.
  - CG 1.6 Climate change-minimising fossil fuel dependence.
  - CG 1.7 Climate change-maximise renewable energy development
- 2.3 Policy CG1 is intended to achieve the strategic vision set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. The overall vision is that in 2026 Bolton will be a sustainable community.

### Links to the Sustainable Community Strategy

- 2.4 Under the Cleaner Greener theme the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) commits the Council and its partners to improving parks and open spaces and living within environmental limits. CG1 supports this theme by seeking to protect the most valuable open space plus other things as well. The area based policies delivers the Cleaner, Greener strategic policy at local level.

### Links to the Strategic Objectives

- 2.5 The basis of the council's strategic approach and vision is explained in Background Document BD1. Sixteen Strategic Objectives flow from the Spatial Vision and they are also explained in BD1. The following objectives are relevant to CG1:
- 2.6 Strategic Objective 10 - To minimise climate change and its adverse effects by minimising greenhouse gas emissions from new buildings, minimising energy consumption, maximising the use of renewable energy, locating development where it can make the best use of existing infrastructure, and adapting to the adverse effects of climate change.
- 2.7 Strategic Objective 11 - To conserve and enhance the best of Bolton's built heritage and landscapes, and improve the quality of open spaces and the design of new buildings.
- 2.8 Strategic Objective 12 - To protect and enhance Bolton's biodiversity.
- 2.9 Strategic Objective 13 - To reduce the likelihood and manage the impacts of flooding in Bolton, and to minimise potential flooding to areas downstream.
- 2.10 The Cleaner Greener policies have been framed to deliver the achievement of the vision and the Strategic Objectives 10, 11, 12 and 13.

Bolton's Core Strategy Background Document BD6A

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## 3 Context

- 3.1 This section identifies the context against which the Policy CG1 has been prepared and the issues and evidence which have informed it. The following paragraphs identify the key elements of guidance, which were used to inform the development of, or are considered relevant to support, Policy CG1 under the Cleaner Greener theme of the Core Strategy.
- 3.2 The Cleaner Greener CG1 policy conforms to the requirements of the relevant National Planning Policy Statements (PPS), Guidance Notes (PPG) and Regional Policy (RSS) listed below.
- 3.3 Policy CG1 and the area based policies fulfil these requirements at the strategic and spatial level respectively. Some detailed elements of these requirements are also delivered specifically through the policies for managing development which are explained in the other 3 Cleaner Greener Background Documents.

### National planning policy statements and guidance documents

#### **PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development**

- 3.4 Policy CG1 and the area based policies comply with this PPS for the delivery of sustainable, urban and rural development by: the protection and enhancement of the character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas including townscapes, landscapes, natural habitats, biodiversity and natural resources; maintenance and improvement of the local environment and mitigation against the effects of declining environmental quality including climate change and flood risk.

#### **PPS 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas**

- 3.5 Policy CG1 and the area based policies comply with this PPS to keep the countryside open, allow improvements in rural facilities, services for local people and support a wide range of economic activity in rural areas, particularly: sustainable farming techniques, sensitive exploitation of renewable energy resources and diversification of agricultural opportunities.
- 3.6 However, the quality and character of the area and the wider countryside is paramount and should be protected and enhanced at all costs with particular regard for landscape, wildlife, historic or architectural character with greater protection against potentially damaging development. Limited, well designed development will be allowed in rural towns and villages.

#### **PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation**

- 3.7 Policy CG1 and the area based policies comply with this PPS by providing for the protection of biodiversity and geological conservation. This policy takes a strategic approach to the maintenance, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geological character, recognising the contribution that sites, areas and features make to the area.

### **PPG 17 Planning for open space, sport and recreation**

- 3.8 In the urban and rural setting networks of high quality and well managed green spaces perform vital functions as areas for nature conservation and biodiversity and assist better air quality thus combating climate change. Policy CG1 and the area based policies comply with PPS 17 by safeguarding open space with recreational value and resisting pressures for development of existing provision. The Council has also produced an Open Space Assessment detailed below to comply with the requirements of PPS 17.

### **PPS 22 Renewable Energy**

- 3.9 Policy CG1 and the area based policies comply with this PPS by positive planning for renewable energy developments, promoting and encouraging development of renewable resources and avoiding constraining policies.

### **PPS 25 Development and Flood Risk**

- 3.10 Policy CG1 and the area based policies comply with this PPS on the management of flood risk, land at risk of flooding, development upon this land and reducing the chances and impacts of flooding. Flood risk has been considered alongside other spatial planning issues and policies, out to avoid exposure of people and property to flood risk and managed in other areas. With climate change is an expected increase in flood risk and this has been accounted for the in policy formulation process.

## **Regional policy and evidence**

### **North West Regional Spatial Strategy**

- 3.11 The North West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets out the regional development policy for environmental management which commits to using the North West's natural and man-made resources actively, prudently and efficiently, as well as protecting the and enhancing the region's historic, built and natural environmental assets, and unique culture and heritage. The following summarised RSS policies are of particular relevance to the Cleaner Greener theme and associated Strategic Objectives: DP7; DP9; EM1; EM3; EM5; EM16 and EM17.
- 3.12 Policy CG1 and the area based policies comply with the requirements of policy DP7 ("Promote Environmental Quality") for the protection and enhancement of Environmental quality (including air, coastal and inland waters), by: respecting the character and distinctiveness of places and landscapes; promoting policies relating to green infrastructure and the greening of towns and cities; maintaining and enhancing the tranquillity of open countryside and rural areas and maintaining and enhancing the quantity and quality of biodiversity and habitat.
- 3.13 Policy CG1 and the area based policies comply with policy DP 9 ("Reduce Emissions and Adapt to Climate Change") by contributing to reductions in the Region's carbon dioxide

emissions from all sources and ensuring effective adaptation to likely environmental, social and economic impacts of climate change.

- 3.14 CG1 and the area based policies have been developed to contribute to policy EM1 (“Integrated Enhancement and Protection of the Region’s Environmental Assets”) and its sub-policies EM1 (A) (B) and (D) by the identification, conservation, protection, enhancement and management of the landscape, natural environment, and woodlands and other environmental assets of the region including the impacts of climate change and adaptation measures.
- 3.15 Policy CG1 and the area based policies support with policy EM3 (“Green Infrastructure”) by promoting the creation, protection, enhancement, conservation and management of green infrastructure its functionality, quality, connectivity and accessibility.
- 3.16 Policy CG1 and the area based policies comply with policy EM5 (“Integrated Water Management”) by protecting the quantity and quality of surface, ground waters, and managing flood risk by complying with the requirements of PPS25.
- 3.17 Policy CG1 and the area based policies comply with policy EM16 (“Energy Conservation & Efficiency”) by supporting the reduction of emissions from domestic and non-domestic buildings. This is expanded further in Policy CG2 which deals with managing development in a sustainable manner.
- 3.18 Policy CG1 and the area based policies support with policy EM17 (“Renewable Energy”) by seeking to promote and encourage, rather than restrict, the use of renewable energy resources. Weight is also given to the wider environmental, community and economic benefits of proposals for renewable energy schemes to mitigate the causes of climate change and minimise the need to consume finite natural resources.

## Other plans, strategies and evidence

### **AGMA Greater Manchester Green-infrastructure framework**

- 3.19 The study addresses strategic definitions of green infrastructure for the city region and how the sub-region actively plans and supports its growth, in a cross boundary, multi-agency approach.
- 3.20 The study looks at priority areas for green infrastructure creation, conservation and enhancement and relevant case studies in mature urban areas. Crucially the study addresses how the LDF and Core Strategies can integrate green infrastructure at the local level. Policy CG1 embraces the spirit of the framework and provides a strategic context for green-infrastructure across the borough.

### **AGMA Ecological framework for Greater Manchester**

- 3.21 This study sets out to create an inclusive Framework implementable through the land-use planning system. Analysis of the distribution of habitats and land uses in Greater Manchester shows that the sub-region is biologically diverse but habitats generally occur in small fragmented patches. The study identifies broad areas sharing similar ecological

characteristics rather than concentrating on recreating and connecting selected habitat types. Following this approach five broad 'Biodiversity Opportunity Areas' are identified with policy mechanisms for habitat enhancement. Policy CG1 embraces the spirit of the framework and provides a strategic context for ecological management and biodiversity across the borough.

### **AGMA Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Assessment**

- 3.22 AGMA authorities collaborated on the Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Greater Manchester. The SFRA demonstrates that Bolton is at relatively low risk from flooding of all types and highlighted the need for a Town Centre Level 2 SFRA and further borough wide assessment for other level 2 work which will inform the policy process.

### **Greater Manchester Decentralised Energy and Zero Carbon Buildings Spatial Planning Study**

- 3.23 AGMA commissioned a study to provide an evidenced based understanding of local feasibility and potential for renewable and low carbon energy technologies within the Greater Manchester City Region. The focus of the study is on providing sufficient strategic evidence to enable Core Strategies to set minimum targets for heat and power and identify opportunities for linking new development and supporting energy infrastructure with existing communities.
- 3.24 Representative locations and types of development are used in real case studies to illustrate mixes of energy supply technologies, and the enabling mechanisms and planning policy requirements. Although each area has its own distinctive features, the lessons are applicable across similar development locations in Greater Manchester. The case studies for the different character areas in Greater Manchester are used as the basis for a bottoms-up analysis across the City Region. The case studies show that there is real potential for generating renewable energy across the districts.

### **Bolton Biodiversity Action Plan 2001**

- 3.25 National BAP targets and Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GMBAP) direct the Bolton BAP which was produced the Bolton Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) in 2001 and adopted as SPG. The objectives of the plan are to protect, enhance and encourage best practice in habitats to prevent the loss of biodiversity, as well as developing a strong working relationship between the voluntary sector, the local authority, statutory agencies, the business sector and land-owners/land managers. Policy CG1 embraces the objectives of the Bolton Biodiversity Action Plan 2001 and provides a strategic context for biodiversity across the borough.

### **Bolton Landscape Character Assessment 2001**

- 3.26 The purpose of the Landscape Character Assessment is to assess the character, distinctiveness and qualities of the Borough's open countryside to enable protection and enhancement of the whole countryside quality and not just designated areas. Policy CG1

embraces the objectives of the Bolton Landscape Assessment and provides a strategic context for its implementation across the borough.

#### **Bolton Council Our Future: Environment Strategy 2006-2011**

- 3.27 The aim of the Environment Strategy is to facilitate the Council's responses to changing priorities and to strengthen its ability to react to serious environmental issues. The Strategy sets out the Council's objectives and targets on climate change, energy, environment management and protection, water, countryside and biodiversity. Policy CG1 embraces the objectives of the Environment Strategy and provides a planning context for its implementation across the borough.

#### **Bolton Council Open Space Assessment 2007**

- 3.28 In compliance with PPG 17 this study was produced using a specified methodology to inform planning policy. This study generated detailed information, which has provided a solid foundation for prioritising improvements to parks and open spaces within the constraints of available resources. Policy CG1 embraces the findings of the assessment and provides a strategic context for the safeguarding and enhancement of open space across the borough.

#### **Strategic Flood Risk Level1/Level 2 Hybrid Study 2009**

- 3.29 Flood risk and gaps in data have already been defined in the Sub-Regional SFRA and Bolton Town centre was identified for a Level 2 flood risk assessment. This study is a hybrid approach to provide additional information and completeness to the existing flood risk datasets. The borough-wide level one study covered most forms of flood risk sources including: fluvial, pluvial (overland flow), sewer and drainage, artificial source risk such as reservoirs, groundwater and critical drainage areas and recommended that no further SFRA 2 level work was necessary. The Town Centre Level 2 assessment focused mainly on fluvial flood risk and recommended that a strategic approach to flood risk management should be adopted to reduce the impact of Town Centre developments upstream and downstream. Policy CG1 aims to reduce the risk of flooding by minimising water run-off from new development and ensuring the sequential approach is applied.

## 4 Council approach

- 4.1 This section charts the policy and strategy formulation process through the stages in order to demonstrate how the current Cleaner Greener policy has been developed.
- 4.2 Background Document BD1 describes the Key Issues, Issues and Options and Preferred Options process.

### Core Strategy Key Issues

- 4.3 The Key Issues Report 2006 identified a set of issues relevant to the Cleaner Greener theme that the Core Strategy needed to address.
- G4 Climate Change
  - G5 Improving the physical environment
  - S4 Providing facilities for sport and recreation
  - EN1 Protecting and promoting Bolton's biodiversity
  - EN4 Minimising the risk of flooding
  - EN5 Maximising the use of renewable energy
  - EN10 Promoting & Safeguarding Green Infrastructure
- 4.4 With the publication of the Key Issues Report, Bolton Council provided a series of consultation opportunities for local people. The consultation exercise highlighted the following issues relevant to the CG1 policy theme.
- Importance of Green Infrastructure/biodiversity
  - Protection of green areas/wildlife habitats-continued allocation of green corridors.
  - Improve Parks
  - Protection of urban open space provision and allocation of new recreational sites
  - Role of the Bolton/Bury Canal
  - Improvement of watercourses for environmental improvement and mitigation of floodrisk
  - Renewable energy
  - Protection of ground and surface waters
  - Promotion of Croal-Irwell valley as a Regional Park
  - Conservation and enhancement of wider countryside and access to woodland
- 4.5 These views together with factual evidence and the consideration of policy documentation then informed the identification of the Issues and Options.

## Core Strategy Issues and Options

- 4.6 The Issues and Options Report 2007 identified four development options and the 'Options compared' table (page 55-71) sets out their implications relevant to Policy CG1.
- 4.7 A public consultation exercise was carried out on the Issues and Options report where views were given by the community and Council partners. The issues raised were generally similar to those listed above or relate more directly to the development management issues and therefore will be cited in those sections. These views, together with the results of the sustainability appraisal, factual evidence and the consideration of policy documentation informed the choice of the preferred spatial option.

## Core Strategy Preferred Options

- 4.8 Following the Issues and Options public consultation exercise and sustainability appraisal the Council chose its preferred overall spatial option as a combination of Options 2 and 4: for concentrated urban development with an element of peripheral development consisting of Green Belt land at Cutacre. This is considered the optimum approach to achieve the objectives of the Core Strategy and the Sustainable Community Strategy. As a combined option, the Preferred Option was not specifically the subject of public consultation at the Issues and Options stage, but represents a combination of options that are implied to have support from consultees.
- 4.9 The issues raised from the Key Issues stage through to the Preferred Options stage together with the results of the sustainability appraisal, factual evidence and the consideration of policy documentation informed the choice of the preferred options Strategic Policies and Spatial Policies. The Preferred Options Spatial Policy 9 addressed the issues relating to the Cleaner Greener theme and Strategic Objectives 8, 9 and 10.
- 4.10 A public consultation exercise was carried out on the Preferred Options report where views were given by the community and Council partners. The issues raised were generally similar to those in the Key Issues and Issues and Options consultation process.
- 4.11 Specific issues raised about Strategic Policy 9 together with the results of the sustainability appraisal, factual evidence and the consideration of policy documentation informed the further development of the Publication document policy CG1.

## Sustainability Appraisal

- 4.12 Following a sustainability appraisal of the Preferred Spatial Option, the following comments were made in relation to CG1:
- The Preferred Option is considered to perform the best of all the options in relation to the sustainability appraisal. In context to the Cleaner Greener theme the Cutacre development will result in substantial tree planting, the creation of new nature

conservation habitats and other landscaping. In the borough's outer areas, there will continue to be smaller scale developments in urban locations for a range of uses where the character of the area and the existing infrastructure allows it. In the rural areas of the borough there will be constraint on most forms of development.

- There is a risk that concentrating development in the urban area will reduce the amount of urban green spaces and the loss of Green Belt from developing and extending the Cutacre site would result in a reduction of green spaces and trees. This would have a knock-on effect of reducing the capacity of the borough to sequester carbon dioxide and possibly adding to the 'urban heat island' effect. This net loss of Green Belt land may also result in a loss wildlife habitats and therefore biodiversity.



## 5 Conclusions

### Summary of policy formulation

- 5.1 Policy CG1 was generated through the requirement to protect and enhance environmental qualities of both rural and urban areas. There is also the need to protect against potential flooding and minimise the contribution towards, and adapt to, the effects of climate change.

### Soundness

- 5.2 The council considers the policies and their contribution to the overall Core Strategy sound because they are:

#### **Consistent with National Policy**

- 5.3 This Background document shows that the Cleaner Greener policy and the area based policies are in accordance with national policy

#### **Justified**

- **Founded on robust and credible evidence base**

- 5.4 This Background Document shows that the Cleaner Greener strategic policy are based on a robust and credible evidence base including factual information, studies, strategies and consultation.

- **Most appropriate alternatives**

- 5.5 This Background Document shows that the Council has chosen policies that best reflects the available evidence. It also shows that the Council has developed this policy through a process of public consultation and then make adjustments to reflect consultation responses.

#### **Effective**

- **Deliverable**

- 5.6 The delivery of the Core Strategy spatial vision and objectives is through the Core Strategy policies, and is considered in greater detail in the Background Documents supporting the policies. In principle the Core Strategy will be delivered by funding from Bolton Council and its partners in the private, public and voluntary sectors, through the Allocations Development Plan Document and supplementary planning documents.

- **Flexible**

- 5.7 The Core Strategy spatial vision is flexible in that it identifies a range of different locations for development. There is no over reliance on specific locations and changing circumstances will allow investment to come forward in different locations and with flexible phasing.

- **Capable of being monitored**

5.8 Monitoring will be through the use of outcome indicators as stated in the following table.

<b>Measuring Delivering – Cleaner Greener (CG1)</b>
<b>Strategic Objectives met:</b> SO10, SO11, SO12, SO13
<b>Indicators (and targets)</b>
Net gain or loss in sites of biological importance (no net loss) Satisfaction with parks & open spaces (2010/11: 75%, 2012/13: 78%)
<b>Flexibility and phasing</b>
The Council will apply this policy flexibly by considering it as part of an assessment of the costs and benefits of a development.