

Bolton Council

Report to: Executive Member for Environment,
Regulatory Services, and Skills

Date: 7th May 2013

Report of: Director of Development and
Regeneration

Report No: ECME/75/13

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Report Title: **Publication of Bolton's Allocations Plan**

Confidential

This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

Purpose:

To agree that Bolton's Allocations Plan should be considered for publication by a meeting of the Council, together with other proposed submission documents

Recommendations:

It is recommended

- (1) That the Published Allocations Plan and other proposed submission documents be forwarded to a meeting of the Council for approval and publication
- (2) That the Published Allocations Plan be open to representations
- (3) That officers are delegated to make minor or non-material changes to the Allocations Plan prior to submission to the Secretary of State, and to bring other proposed submission documents up to date
- (4) Subject to the changes in (3), the Allocations Plan is subsequently submitted to the Secretary of State for examination
- (5) That the Published Allocations Plan is a material consideration for development management purposes

Decision:

Background Doc(s):

1. Bolton's Draft Allocations Plan
2. Other proposed submission documents
 - Sustainability appraisal
 - Habitat Regulations Assessment
 - Statement of consultation
 - Explanatory Statement
 - Development site information sheets

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In March 2011, Bolton Council adopted the Core Strategy, which is the key document in the Local Plan, describing what we want Bolton to look like in 2026 and the planning policies that will be used to make it a reality. The Allocations Plan will help to implement it by expressing the Core Strategy policies on a Proposals Map and through the addition of a small number of additional policies. The council consulted on its Draft Allocations Plan between November 2011 and January 2012. It received 553 responses to this consultation, and these were reported to the Executive Member in September 2012.
- 1.2 In March 2012, the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). On a smaller number of policy issues, the NPPF took a different approach from the Draft Allocations Plan, for example on Green Belt and public rights of way. In the light of this, and the responses to the consultation on the Draft Plan, the council consulted on proposed changes to the Plan between September and December 2012. It received 114 comments to this second phase of consultation. A full list of these consultation replies and the council's suggested response to them can be found in the members' rooms. They form part of the Statement of Consultation.
- 1.3 In the light of the consultation responses on the Proposed Changes, it is recommended that a number of additional changes are made to the Plan. These are listed in Section 2 of this report.

2. Comments on the proposed changes to Allocations Plan and suggested further changes

- 2.1 Most of the comments on the proposed changes to the Allocations Plan were on possible housing sites. The following housing sites are recommended for change as a result of consultation. Full reasons for these changes are set out in the Statement of Consultation;
 - Blackrod Community Centre (delete as a possible housing site)
 - Cedar Avenue, Horwich (delete most of the site as a possible housing site and combine the remainder with the adjacent Swallowfield/Brazley site)
 - Amend the boundary of the possible housing site at Bent Street, Kearsley, to include part of the adjacent open space to the west
 - Amend the boundary of the possible housing site at Temple Road, Smithills, to include the drained mill lodge in line with the current planning application (88397/12)
 - The identification of an industrial site on Romer Street, Tonge Fold, as a possible housing site, combined with the adjacent health centre that already has planning permission for housing
 - The identification of Beehive Mills, Crescent Road, Great Lever, as a possible housing site. Beehive Mills are being vacated by the current occupiers, and the owners have requested a housing allocation for the site. The Mills were shown as protected employment land on the Draft Allocations Plan, taking into account the proposed changes. They are unallocated on the Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map, which is in force as part of the development plan in this area. Beehive Mills are Grade 2 listed buildings. Discussions are currently taking place

with the owners on how residential development could take place if it were acceptable in principle

- 2.2 Consultation responses have been received on other identified housing sites, but in those cases it is recommended that no change is made to the allocation. These include
- Manchester Road, Blackrod
 - Green Lane, Horwich
 - Horwich College
 - Hollycroft, Avenue, Breightmet
 - Devonshire Road, Smithills
 - Various sites in Darcy Lever
- These sites are appropriate for housing and can provide a valuable contribution to the requirement for new housing.
- 2.3 Further consultation responses have been received requesting additional allocations of land for housing on Protected Open Land sites at Bowlands Hey, Westhoughton, and The Hollins, Farnworth. Allocating these sites for housing would be contrary to the Core Strategy.
- 2.4 There are two possible mixed use sites that have been the subject of comments and it is recommended that changes are made to these two sites.
- Deletion of the Crompton Way mixed use site, and identifying it as protected employment land. This is in response to the requirements of the existing industrial occupier to remain at the site
 - Addition of a mixed use site at The Greenwood, Chorley New Road, Horwich, to reflect the recent planning permission
- 2.5 Two comments have been received about the former British Aerospace site at Lostock. Both have requested the allocation of land for housing (a) on land at the south-eastern corner that was intended to be used for the Bolton Wanderers Academy, but is no longer required for it; (b) on the remaining employment buildings on the site. In the case of the comment on the remaining employment buildings, the allocation of the land for mixed uses is seen as a possible alternative. Much of this land could be developed for housing under the existing outline permission for mixed use development across the whole of the former British Aerospace site. In these circumstances it is considered that the best approach would be to
- Allocate the 'Academy' site for housing
 - Allocate the remaining buildings as a mixed use site for housing and employment. This would result in the loss of part of the stock of land for future employment purposes.
- 2.6 The only other site where it is considered necessary to alter the Draft Allocations Plan in response to a comment is at Cutacre. The comment requests the identification of two additional areas of land for development) totalling 4.4 hectares. These changes would allow for a significantly improved development site and enhance the likelihood of attracting inward investment. As a result, proposed Green Belt boundaries would also need to be changed.

- 2.7 Other comments on non-residential sites have been received, for example, requesting Bolton town centre boundaries to include Sainsburys on Trinity Street, to allocate a further site at Middlebrook for retailing, and to allocate office development at the Reebok Stadium. It is recommended that none of these comments necessitates further changes to the Plan's Proposals Map.
- 2.8 A small number of comments addressed the Allocation Plan's written statement, for example, on the school playing fields policy and on target areas for renewable energy. None of these comments necessitate any changes to the wording of the Plan.

3 Overall content of Published Allocations Plan

- 3.1 The Plan consists of a written statement and a Proposals Map. The written statement contains an introduction, and a chapter on each of the six themes of the adopted Core Strategy.

1. Introduction

- Link to Core Strategy and to other elements of the development plan for Bolton
- Explanation of process
- The Proposals Map shows boundaries of the different areas identified in the Core Strategy; Bolton town centre and its constituent parts; the renewal areas of Inner Bolton, Farnworth and Brightmet; the outer areas of Horwich and Blackrod, Westhoughton, West Bolton, North Bolton, and Little Lever and Kearsley

2. Healthy Bolton

- The Proposals Map shows a site for new health centre at Farnworth, and Royal Bolton Hospital

3. Achieving Bolton

- The Proposals Map shows a site for Clarendon School

4. Prosperous Bolton

- The Proposals Map shows sites for new office, industrial and distribution development, including a boundary for Cutacre. It also shows protected employment areas eg Wingates, Express Industrial Estate, some mill sites
- The Map shows areas suitable for mixed uses, and there is an associated written policy
- The Map defines town, district and local centre boundaries
- The Map shows retail warehouse parks and there is an associated written policy
- The Map shows the strategic route network, and there is an associated policy
- The Map shows the Bolton to Bury cycle route and other off-road cycle routes
- The Map shows a station improvement at Horwich Parkway, and there is an associated written policy
- There is a written policy about rights of way

Minerals and waste issues, which are covered in the equivalent Core Strategy chapter, are covered by the Greater Manchester Minerals and Waste Plans.

5. Safe Bolton

- Nothing in addition to what is already in the Core Strategy

6. Cleaner, Greener Bolton

- The Proposals Map show sites protected for their biodiversity (sites of special scientific interest, sites of biological importance, local nature reserves)
- It shows sites protected as recreational open space
- It shows the extent of the West Pennine Moors
- It shows the extent of landscape character areas
- The Map indicates the location of green corridors
- The Map shows the extent of conservation areas
- There is a written policy on school playing fields
- The Map shows the extent of protected open land and there is a written policy stating what development is and is not acceptable
- The Map shows the extent of the Green Belt and settlements for infilling development within it, and there are written policies stating what development is and is not acceptable
- There is a written policy on renewable energy areas
- The Map shows areas of high flood risk

7. Strong and confident Bolton

- The Map shows sites for new housing development

4 **Other proposed submission documents**

4.1 In addition to the Allocations Plan itself, legislation states that the Council must prepare other 'submission documents';

- The sustainability appraisal report
- Appropriate assessment of the Allocations Plan under the Habitat Regulations
- The Statement of Consultation that sets out who has been consulted at earlier stages of the Allocations Plan, how they were consulted, a summary of the main issues raised and how they have been taken into account.
- Any supporting documents that are relevant. An Explanatory Statement has been prepared, containing information to support and justify the Allocations Plan. Information sheets have been prepared for each of the sites proposed for housing, employment or mixed use development. Information sheets have also been prepared for each informal recreational site identified for possible housing development, explaining how the loss of open space can be mitigated. As new information emerges, these documents may require updating as the Allocations Plan proceeds from publication to submission and then examination, and the recommendation includes allowing officers to bring them up to date.

4.2 These additional documents are available for inspection in the Members' rooms and the recommendations for this report include the approval of these documents. They will be available as supporting information when the Published Allocations Plan is open to representations. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and no adverse effects have been identified.

5 **Next steps**

5.1 The published version of the Allocations Plan must be approved by a meeting of the whole council. Once the council has approved the Published Plan, it is then subject to a period of consultation in line with the requirements of regulation 19 of the Town and

Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This will be for a period of not less than six weeks.

- 5.2 Once the consultation period has finished, the council can submit the Plan to the Secretary of State. A Planning Inspector will be appointed to examine whether the Plan is sound, namely that it is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The Inspector will prepare a report for the council, and if it is sound then the council can adopt the Plan. At that stage, the Allocations Plan will become part of the Development Plan for Bolton and will be taken into account fully in planning decisions.

6 Recommendation

6.1 It is recommended

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