

# STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD

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**Date of Meeting: 14 December 2016**

**Report of: Head of Planning Strategy**

**Subject/Title: Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF)**

**Portfolio Holder: Cllr Ainsley Arnold**

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## **1. Report Summary**

- 1.1. The Draft GMSF is currently subject to consultation and the formal response of the Council needs to be submitted by 23 December 2016. This report highlights the main implications for Cheshire East and the headline points to make in response.

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1. That the Director of Planning & Sustainable Development be recommended to respond to the Combined Authority with the comments set out in Appendix 1.

## **3. Other Options Considered**

- 3.1. The Council has a duty to cooperate with neighbouring Planning Authorities and so has little option but to engage with the consultation.

## **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

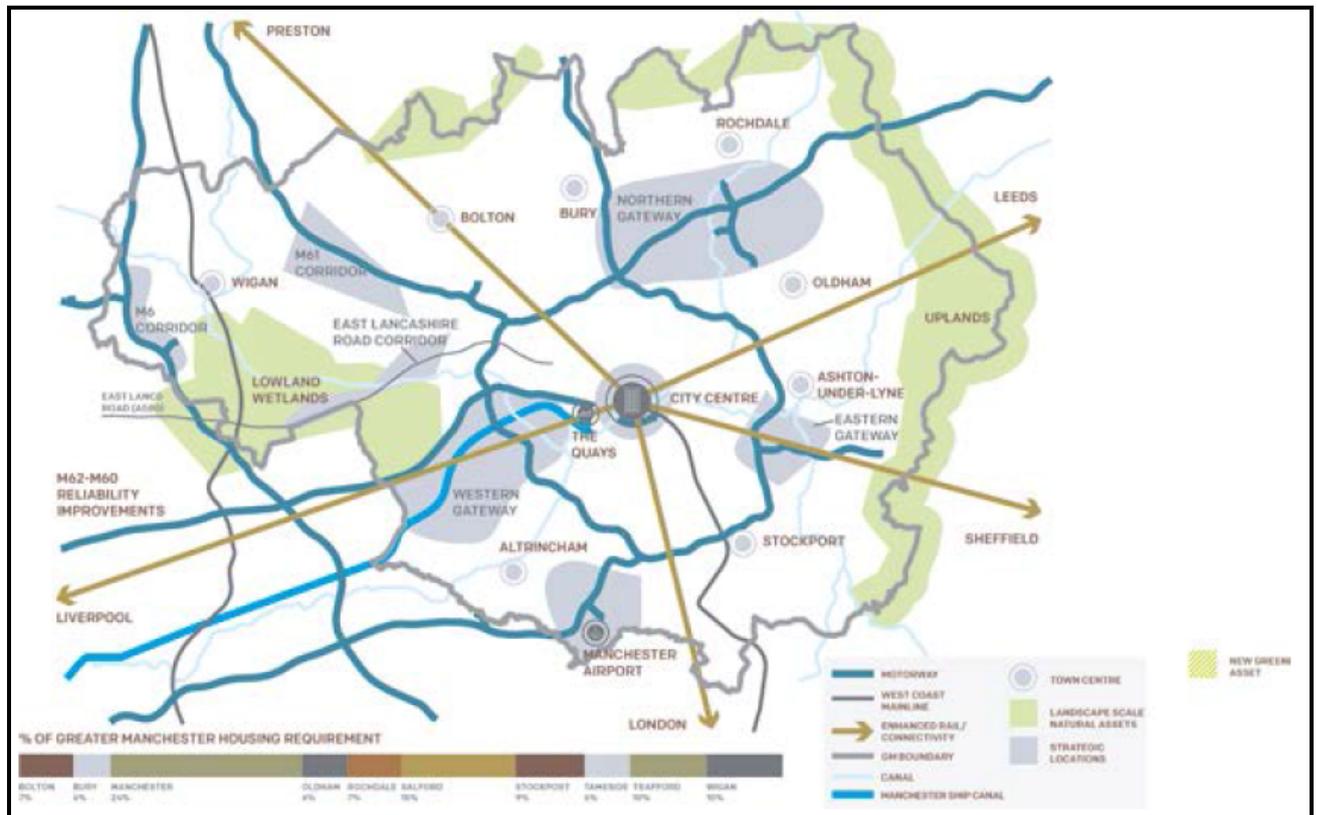
### **Introduction**

- 4.1 The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has commenced consultation on a new statutory development plan for the conurbation – the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. The Plan covers the period 2015-2035. Consultation on the document will run from 31 October until 23 December 2016. Responding to such consultations comes within the powers to deal with planning and related matters delegated to the Director Planning & Sustainable Development.

### **Overall Concept**

4.2 The Framework is an ambitious strategy to deliver economic growth and environmental improvements across Greater Manchester. Growth is focussed on a series of 'gateways' mainly around the M60, alongside new garden suburbs and areas of green infrastructure.

**Key Diagram:**



**Growth Assumptions**

4.3 The draft GMSF is based on delivering the rate economic growth projected by Oxford Economics' Accelerated Growth Scenario (AGS) 2015. The AGS 2015 points to a jobs growth rate averaging 0.7% per annum over the 2015-35 period. This could be challenging to achieve, given the current economic uncertainties but the fact that the GMSF does not plan for a higher jobs growth rate is to be welcomed, as that could place unreasonable demands on private sector jobs growth and could require a significant (and unsustainable) increase in net in-commuting from Greater Manchester's neighbours.

**Industry & Logistics**

4.4 Around 4,000,000 sqm of industrial and warehousing floor space will be delivered across the Plan Period. However around twice as much land is allocated within the GMSF in order to meet this requirement.

**Offices**

- 4.4 Around 2,450,000 sqm of new offices will be required within the conurbation by 2035. These will be focussed in more selective locations, linked to existing business centres.

## Housing

- 4.6 Greater Manchester has a housing requirement of 227,200 homes between 2015 and 2035 – an average of 11,360 homes pa. Almost a quarter of these are proposed for Manchester City, with the remainder distributed across the other 9 Boroughs. Our near neighbours Stockport and Trafford account for some 42,400 homes between them. The full distribution is set out below:

District	Total Requirement	Average Annual Requirement	Houses (%)	Apartments (%)
Bolton	16,800	840	85	15
Bury	12,500	625	85	15
Manchester	55,300	2,765	15	85
Oldham	13,700	685	85	15
Rochdale	15,500	775	90	10
Salford	34,900	1,745	30	70
Stockport	19,300	965	75	25
Tameside	13,600	680	80	20
Trafford	23,100	1,155	60	40
Wigan	22,500	1,125	90	10
<b>Total for GM</b>	<b>227,200</b>	<b>11,360</b>	<b>55-60</b>	<b>40-45</b>

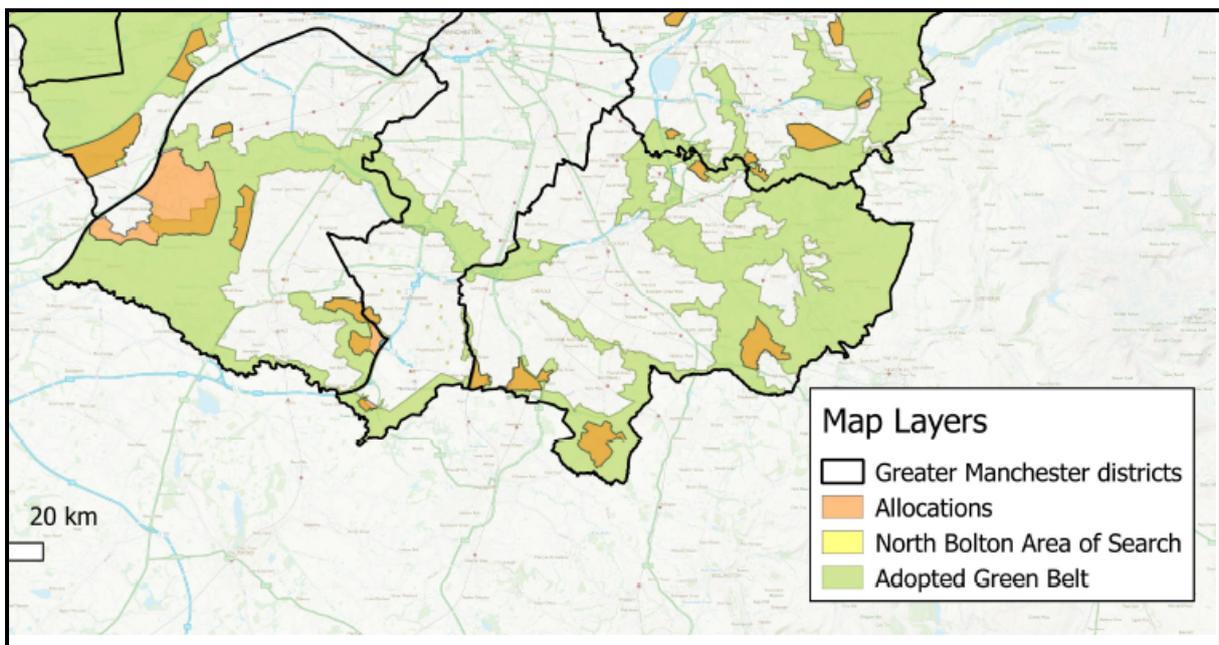
- 4.7 Some 28 per cent of the new homes proposed for the city-region would be built on Greater Manchester's green belt.

## Green Belt & Allocations

- 4.8 The GMSF proposes to make significant alterations to the Green belt – overall the Framework plans to remove 4,900 hectares of land from the conurbation's green belt. These will provide either new employment zones or 'Garden Suburbs'.
- 4.9 The employment zones are situated within a series of 'Gateways' mainly located along the main motorway corridors. The only area which is close to Cheshire East is a proposed extension to 'Airport City' – to be located to the south of the existing new development. The significant scale of land for business within the conurbation clearly presents competition for investment

and so may pose a threat in terms of our own economic aspirations – but in other respects it is also welcome in that reinforces the Council’s decision not to allocate significant new logistics provision in the north of the Borough

- 4.10 The Garden Suburbs take a similar approach to the North Cheshire Garden Village – in that they seek to maximise sustainable development opportunities by creating large scale growth in a single point. No smaller scale housing sites on the edge of settlements are proposed to compliment this, but many of the brownfield opportunities within the conurbation will be smaller scale in character.
- 4.11 The extract from the Framework below shows a number of significant green belt alterations located just across the Cheshire East Border with Greater Manchester



- 4.12 The Following allocations are close to the Cheshire East boundary. (These are also illustrated on the attached plan)
- High Lane: 4,000 homes
  - Woodford: 238Ha / 2,400 homes
  - A34 Cheadle: 3,700 homes
  - Heald Green 2,000 homes
  - Business Expansion at the Airport

## 5. Background/Chronology

- 5.1. The GMSF was last subject to consultation in December 2015 and January 2016 and the Council’s formal response was considered at a Portfolio Holder meeting on 11 January 2016

## **6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members**

6.1. All – but most especially those closes to Greater Manchester

## **7. Risk Management & Implications of Recommendation**

7.1. Poorly designed, located or accessed development within Greater Manchester could have an adverse impact on the prosperity or environment of Cheshire East. It is therefore in the Council's interest to seek to influence the final strategy adopted by our neighbours

## **8. Access to Information**

8.1. Full details of the GMSF are in the [draft document](#), (168Mb) whilst supporting documents are [here](#)

## **9. Contact Information**

Contact details for this report are as follows:-

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## APPENDIX 1 – PROPOSED RESPONSES

### General

The GMSF is a large and complex development plan and the GMCA should be applauded for seeking to prepare a comprehensive plan and adopting a strategic approach to growth in the conurbation. Appropriately located growth within Greater Manchester will be beneficial to the prosperity of the whole North West region in the long term. Cheshire East therefore welcomes the GMSF and the opportunity to comment on it.

It is recognised that the Framework is at a draft stage and not a fully formed or completed document. Thus there is time for policies and proposals to be further refined and developed.

### Duty to Cooperate

Communication between the GMCA and the Council has generally been good, but becomes especially important as proposals progress.

- *Cheshire East welcomes the involvement in the GMSF to date, but emphasises that this positive cross boundary engagement will need to continue for the duty to cooperate to be met, especially as the Framework heads towards submission.*

### Growth Assumptions

Cheshire East Council does not object to a jobs growth rate averaging 0.7% per annum over the 2015-35 period but would not want that figure to rise. The NPPF advises that plans should be aspirational but realistic and so the Combined Authority is encouraged to take a rigorous approach to striking that balance. Overly optimistic aspirations could have adverse consequences in terms of cross boundary travel or the balance of jobs and homes.

- *In terms of the alignment of housing provision, jobs growth and floorspace provision it is not clear how the GMSF proposed (AGS 2015) levels of jobs growth and employment floorspace feed into estimates of the GMSF housing requirement. However, there ought to be a calculation linking and aligning jobs growth and floorspace provision with housing provision (otherwise the supply of workers will not match demand) and this calculation should be clearly explained in the consultation documents.*
- *In terms of floorspace/ employment land estimates the consultation documents do not seem to include any information on the amount of employment land that the proposed level of floorspace provision translates into. The GMSF should make it clear what assumptions are made about development ratios/ plot ratios and use these assumed value to convert floorspace into an employment land requirement.*

- *It would also be helpful if the document or evidence base stated what employment densities were assumed*
- *The Council has some further detailed points to make concerning commuting and migration which we would be pleased to discuss at future duty to cooperate meetings*

## **Development Distribution, Green Belt & Site Allocation**

Further work appears to be necessary to justify the scale of Green Belt release, the distribution of development and the selection of sites for development. In particular it is unclear how the very large brownfield potential of Greater Manchester has fully been taken account of.

- *Cheshire East Council considers that the relationship between the objectively assessed need, housing requirement and distribution of development needs to be more explicitly set out. Given that the conurbation is one housing market area the approach to how housing is assigned to each borough requires better explanation*
- *The Council is concerned at the scale of Green Belt release around the conurbation and encourages the GMCA to undertake additional work to further explain and justify its approach.*
- *The Green Belt Assessment should preferably reach an overall conclusion on each green belt parcel – and this should be employed, alongside other factors, to clearly inform site selection.*
- *Evidence on Urban capacity should be more explicit and adopt a standard methodology to make it clear that all brownfield opportunities have been fully considered*
- *Given the varying levels of urban land availability across Greater Manchester, the spatial distribution of development should consider the need to promote sustainable patterns of development alongside consideration of the brownfield opportunities and constraints in setting out the exceptional circumstances to justify alterations to the Green Belt.*
- *Sites need to be fully justified against clear criteria drawing on a wide range of factors, ideally as part of a structured, consistent and objective methodology*

*Further consideration of the resulting Green Belt boundaries is required, as well as an assessment of the impact of release on the surrounding Green Belt areas*

## **Transport**

Transport for Greater Manchester have recently consulted on a separate transport strategy – and so there is a need for both this and the GMSF to fully align. Cheshire East shares several key cross-boundary routes with Greater Manchester, including the A34 and the A537. Several (congested) junctions are located either on or just within the CEC administrative area.

The scale of growth close to the Cheshire East boundary renders the refresh of the South East Manchester Multi Modal Study (SEMMMS) more important than ever. Cheshire East Council believes that good cross boundary travel is mutually beneficial – in that it supports the role and function of Manchester city centre and other centres within the conurbation, whilst also allowing southward travel to employment and leisure opportunities within Cheshire.

- *Cheshire East Council encourages the GMCA to fully align the GMSF and GM transport strategy*
- *Both strategies should properly recognise the cross boundary implications of travel in and around the conurbation.*
- *Cheshire East Council is concerned at the limited information on transportation and its role in site selection*
- *Sites should be selected so as to favour access to heavy Rail or Metrolink corridors wherever possible.*
- *There are significant two-way commuting flows between the North of Cheshire East and South Manchester. Much of this commuting is focussed on an increasingly congested highway network. Without improvements, the level of congestion on cross boundary routes would be severe, impacting key junctions on both sides of the boundary. There is no information on the level of impact the plan proposals have on key junctions within Cheshire East.*
- *The SEMMMS refresh will report what future transport schemes are possible to provide future capacity in our cross boundary networks. The conclusions of this report are not yet available and without this information of what future interventions are required (and possible) it is difficult to comment on the suitability of the proposed development locations.*
- *Equally, It is not clear that the site selection process has adequately considered the relative spatial impacts of development with regard to environmental factors such as air quality.*
- *References to sub-regional and local accessibility in policy GM6 should recognise the importance of accessibility in the wider travel to work area outside of the administrative boundary.*
- *Measures should be included in the supporting plan policy's to encourage more sustainable modes of cross boundary commuting into / out of Cheshire East along.*

## **SITE SPECIFIC RESPONSES**

It is recommended that comments be made on those allocations closest to the Borough:

### **Woodford**

- *Cheshire East Council is very concerned at the scale of this proposal, and its impact on the integrity of the green belt between nearby settlements.*

- *The Proposal is very likely to have significant impacts on transport and accessibility in an already congested corridor – and further work is necessary to show how these would be mitigated. This should be integrated with the current SEMMMS refresh. CEC are of the view that the Poynton Relief Road is a prerequisite for the delivery of this site; and as such this scheme should form part of the TfGM Transport Strategy*
- *Cheshire East Council is concerned that this site is located some distance from any railway station or railway line and a policy to improve linkages to Poynton Railway Station should be included.*
- *Consideration should be given to linkage to the North Cheshire Garden Village – this could provide a different and preferable means of securing growth.*

### **High Lane**

- *Development is likely to have a significant impact on the A6 through Disley and therefore additional work would be beneficial to assess and mitigate this. The A6 through Disley is subject to a declared Air Quality Management area; traffic predictions for the new A6-MARR link road suggest additional traffic will be attracted through this corridor. Analysis of the AQ impacts is requested in this area.*
- *Cheshire East supports the concept of a new station to serve this area, though existing service patterns need to be protected – and the potential to link through to Middlewood station. The provision of a railway station is considered to be essential for this scale of development in this location. The Middlewood way should be retained as part of any extension of heavy rail*

### **A34 Cheadle**

- *The proposed allocation is likely to impact onto the A34 in an already busy transport corridor. Cheshire East Council encourages the potential for a new railway station to be explored within the site, alongside other measures from the SEMMMS refresh including measures to address the cross border impacts on CEC highway network.*

### **Heald Green**

- *Cheshire East Council notes the allocation, but prefers that it secures good linkages to the nearby Heald Green Railway station*

### **Airport**

- *Cheshire East Council notes the allocation but prefers that the exceptional circumstances for release from the Green Belt are demonstrated and that appropriate landscape mitigation is included. However, an assessment of the impact of additional traffic through Wilmslow is requested and if required measures provided to secure transport improvements in Wilmslow to mitigate the impact of this proposal.*