



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2020/0064, 17 March 2020

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and the green belt

This pack has been prepared ahead of the debate to be held in Westminster Hall at 2.30pm on Wednesday 18 March 2020 on the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and the green belt. The debate will be opened by James Daly MP.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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1. Introduction

This debate pack has been produced to support the debate in Westminster Hall on 18 March 2020 on the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) and the Green Belt.

The debate will be opened by James Daly MP. In a Westminster Hall [debate on housing and planning](#) on 3 March 2020, James Daly offered his view of the GMSF and its perceived shortcomings in calculating housing need, affordable housing and infrastructure and said it could not be right to build on the Green Belt:

The planning system has created a scenario predicated on the building of three, four and five-bedroom houses on the green belt. That cannot be right. (...)¹

The Commons Library also produced a debate pack for the Westminster Hall [debate on the GMSF on 21 February 2019](#).²

2. Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

2.1 The Greater Manchester Combined Authority

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), established in 2011, is made up of the ten Greater Manchester councils.³ These are: Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan.

The [Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(Functions and Amendment\) Order 2016](#) and the accompanying [explanatory memorandum](#) conferred on the GMCA, to be exercisable by the Mayor, a duty to prepare a spatial development strategy.⁴ Andy Burnham was elected Mayor in May 2017.⁵

For further information see Commons Library briefings [Combined Authorities](#)⁶ and [Devolution to Local Government in England](#).⁷

¹ [HC Deb 3 March 2020 c239WH](#)

² CDP 2019-0044, 19 February 2019. The debate is at [HC Deb 21 February 2019 c627WH](#) onwards.

³ As established by the [Greater Manchester Combined Authority Order 2011](#), SI 2011/908

⁴ SI 2016/1267

⁵ The [Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(Election of Mayor with Police and Crime Commissioner Functions\) Order 2016](#) (SI 2016/448) established the position of elected Mayor of the Combined Authority, with the first election on 4 May 2017 and the elected Mayor taking office, including taking over the functions of the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner, on 8 May 2017.

⁶ SN 06649, 4 July 2017

⁷ SN 07029, 15 May 2019

2.2 Draft GMSF in October 2016

The GMCA is in the process of producing “Greater Manchester's Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment (spatial framework)” - in its earlier stages called the “Greater Manchester Spatial Framework” (GMSF) - which will be a joint plan to manage the supply of land for jobs and new homes across Greater Manchester, up to the year 2037. The idea is that the GMSF will be the overarching development plan within which Greater Manchester’s ten local planning authorities (LPAs) will be able to identify more detailed sites for jobs and homes in their own area. As such, the GMSF will not cover everything that a local plan would cover, and individual districts will continue to produce their own local plans.⁸

The consultation on the initial evidence base was launched in November 2014. Since then, key stages in the process have been:

- Consultation on an initial GMSF evidence base - November 2014
- [Consultation on vision and draft strategic options - November 2015 to January 2016](#)
- [Call for Sites](#)
- [Draft GMSF](#) in October 2016

2.3 Revised draft GMSF in 2019

It was at first expected that the GMSF would be published in 2017 and submitted, examined and adopted in 2018. That has not, though, happened. Instead, a [revised draft plan](#) was published in January 2019. In the foreword to the revised draft plan, Andy Burnham outlined the changes made in response to the earlier consultation:

Planning will always be a difficult question of striking a balance between creating new homes and jobs and protecting the environment.

But the first consultation revealed a strong feeling, shared by many, that the right balance had not been found.

Amongst many views expressed, people said:

1. the burden of development was excessively weighted towards green sites;
2. this site selection would not result in the building of new homes people could afford;
3. it could add pressure on our congested transport system, worsening air quality, with development linked to roads rather than public transport;
4. and it was not aligned with other Greater Manchester plans, particularly for transport, housing and other crucial infrastructure.

As a result, I committed to re-writing the first GMSF and I have done so, working with our 10 councils, according to three clear principles:

⁸ GMCA, [Greater Manchester Spatial Framework website](#) (accessed 12 March 2020)

1. a brownfield-first approach to the release of sites for development
2. a new priority on town centres for more residential development
3. a new drive to protect the existing Green Belt as far as possible

This radically-revised GMSF is as much a vision for the environment and quality of life of Greater Manchester as it is for new development.⁹

The consultation closed on 18 March 2019. The [consultation summary report](#) was published in October 2019.¹⁰ The [consultation responses](#) are also available online.

2.4 Next stages

An [article in the specialist publication *Planning*](#) in September 2019 quoted the GMCA’s lead on housing as saying there would be another redraft:

"We received 27,000 responses to the first draft and fewer than 18,000 [to the second draft] but it remains important that we consider all feedback properly and factor it into the next redraft.

"When the revised proposals are presented for a further round of consultation next summer they will better represent what we all want – a comprehensive proposal for the homes, jobs and supporting environment we all need now and in the future."¹¹

The [GMCA meeting on 27 September 2019 resolved](#) to approve the proposed timetable for consultation on a further revised draft of the GMSF.¹² That timetable, set out in an [update paper](#), would lead to publication/adoption of the GMSF in December 2021:¹³

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Programme of engagement around evidence (for example transport, affordable housing, viability) | October 2019 – March 2020 |
| Town Centre/Urban Living/Affordable Housing campaigns | October 2019 – January 2020 |
| District approvals | June/July 2020 |
| GMCA approval | July 2020 |
| Public Participation (12 weeks) | July 2020 |
| Submission | Dec 2020/Jan 2021 |
| Examination | May – October 2021 |
| Publication (adoption) | December 2021 |

A GMCA spokesperson has confirmed the intended adoption date:

⁹ GMCA, [Greater Manchester’s Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment: Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, Revised Draft – January 2019](#)

¹⁰ GMCA, [Greater Manchester’s Plan For Homes, Jobs And The Environment \(Greater Manchester Spatial Framework - GMSF\) Consultation: Summary Report](#), October 2019

¹¹ ["Fresh delay to Greater Manchester Spatial Framework announced"](#), *Planning*, 24 September 2019 (subscription required: Members and their staff can obtain copies of the article by ringing the Library on 020 7219 3666)

¹² GMCA, [Notice of decisions agreed at the GMCA meeting held on 27 September 2019](#)

¹³ GMCA, [Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Update](#), 27 September 2019

We expect to develop the evidence base over the coming months before undergoing a 12-week public consultation exercise in Summer 2020. The Examination in Public would follow next year (2021) leading to eventual adoption in December 2021.¹⁴

An [article earlier this month](#) in the *Manchester Evening News* argued that the GMSF had “mysteriously disappeared from view” and referred to “stasis”:

Over a year later, the rewritten plan has been out to consultation and come back in again, but nothing has materialised in public since.

(...)

From the perspective of the mayor’s office, ministers have further trapped Greater Manchester in its current stasis. While the latest population projections released in 2018 suggested the region didn’t need to plan for as many homes as originally expected, government - which is wedded to a target of 300,000 new homes a year - **ordered local leaders to stick with the original, higher numbers**.

This is the crux of Andy Burnham’s argument: you’re telling us to build too much.

“Government says go higher still with our housing targets, even though we already think we’re above what we need,” says a source close to the mayor, who points out that any government funding for the cleaning-up of brownfield sites is contingent on aiming for those higher numbers.

“But government is also telling us to consult properly on the green belt. So it’s a vicious circle. We want to develop brownfield - so give us the money and then we don’t have to do as much on the green belt. We can’t just stick an extra couple of storeys on the Beetham Tower.”¹⁵

In answering [questions on housing supply in February 2020](#), the Housing Secretary, Robert Jenrick, said that he could not comment on the draft GMSF but was aware of some Members’ concerns.¹⁶ The housing minister, Christopher Pincher, observed that there must be meaningful consultation.¹⁷

3. Housing and Green Belt land within the GMSF

For information on housing and Green Belt policy, see the Commons Library briefings [Green Belt](#),¹⁸ [Planning for Housing](#)¹⁹ and [Local authority housing data: housing supply](#).²⁰

¹⁴ Personal communication, 13 March 2020

¹⁵ “[Why Greater Manchester’s masterplan has gone missing - and what that could mean for the green belt](#)”, *Manchester Evening News*, 8 March 2020

¹⁶ [HC Deb 24 February 2020 c4](#)

¹⁷ [HC Deb 24 February 2020 c21](#)

¹⁸ SN 00934, 4 January 2019

¹⁹ SN 03741, 14 June 2017

²⁰ 15 November 2019

One aspect of the draft GMSF in 2016 that attracted controversy was the proposal to release land from the Green Belt for development.

3.1 Draft GMSF in 2016

The [draft GMSF in 2016](#) proposed that 227,200 net additional dwellings would be needed in the period up to 2035, some of which it suggested should be built on 4,900 hectares of Greater Manchester's Green Belt.

The Green Belt in Greater Manchester is currently 47 per cent of the total land area of Greater Manchester. The proposals in the draft GMSF 2016 would have reduced this coverage of Green Belt land to 43 per cent.²¹ The “reasoned justification” provided for this in the draft GMSF 2016 was as follows:

The scale of development that needs to be accommodated within Greater Manchester over the next two decades means that some changes to the Green Belt boundaries within Greater Manchester are necessary, but these have been minimised as far as possible, having regard in particular to the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. This will result in a net reduction in the total area of designated green belt of 4,900 hectares (8.2%), ensuring that nearly 43% of Greater Manchester will be green belt.

16.0.2 As such, the Green Belt makes up a considerable proportion of Greater Manchester, and it is therefore vital that its various parts play a beneficial role that supports the environmental, social and economic well being of the sub-region's residents. The Greater Manchester Mayor and local authorities will plan, in particular, for the enhancement of its green infrastructure functions, such as improved public access and habitat restoration, helping to deliver environmental and social benefits for the residents of Greater Manchester and providing the high quality green spaces that will support economic growth.²²

Conflicting views

Planning reported in November 2016 that Andy Burnham (then MP for Leigh and Labour Mayoral candidate) had expressed concerns about the amount of Green Belt land that the draft GMSF 2016 earmarked for release. The article noted that while the new Mayor would need to agree to the plan for it to be adopted, he/she would need to secure the agreement of the GMCA councils if they wanted to amend it.²³

Another article in the *Manchester Evening News* in October 2016 reported the views of each MP in the Greater Manchester region on the proposals.²⁴ Links to [more recent stories about the GMSF](#) are available from the *Manchester Evening News* website.

²¹ GMCA, [Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework: draft for consultation](#), October 2016: page 76

²² GMCA, [Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework: draft for consultation](#), October 2016: page 76

²³ [“What obstacles does the city-regional plan for Manchester face?”](#) *Planning*, 4 November 2016

²⁴ reports the views of each MP in the Greater Manchester region on the proposals, [“From 'crucial' to 'ridiculous' - what MPs think of Greater Manchester's radical expansion plans”](#), *Manchester Evening News*, 31 October 2016.

An [article from law firm Pinsent Masons](#) in October 2016 highlighted the view of their planning expert that the draft GMSF was “not ambitious enough” in terms of identifying enough land for new jobs and homes, suggesting that the numbers were lower than those that had been achieved by Greater Manchester in “recent years”.²⁵

3.2 Revised draft GMSF in 2019

The [revised draft GMSF](#) published in January 2019 offered updated figures for the phasing of new housing in Greater Manchester, proposing a new, lower total of 200,980 dwellings. Information about the anticipated speed of development was also provided:

7.13 Taking all of these factors into account, it is anticipated that there will be around 9,200 housing completions on average up until 2023, accelerating to an average of around 11,000 net additional dwellings per annum up to 2037.

The table below shows the number of proposed dwellings in each district in the 2019 draft compared with the 2016 draft. Oldham is the only district to have had its proposed housing requirement increased.

| 2019 draft GMSF: proposed distribution of housing by district | | | | |
|--|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Numbers of dwellings | | | | |
| District | 2019 draft | | Total requirement in 2016 draft | % change between drafts |
| | Total requirement | Annual average requirement | | |
| Bolton | 13,800 | 726 | 16,800 | -18% |
| Bury | 9,470 | 498 | 12,500 | -24% |
| Manchester | 54,530 | 2,870 | 55,300 | -1% |
| Oldham | 14,290 | 752 | 13,700 | +4% |
| Rochdale | 12,160 | 640 | 15,500 | -22% |
| Salford | 32,680 | 1,720 | 34,900 | -6% |
| Stockport | 14,520 | 764 | 19,300 | -25% |
| Tameside | 8,850 | 466 | 13,600 | -35% |
| Trafford | 19,280 | 1,015 | 23,100 | -17% |
| Wigan | 21,400 | 1,126 | 22,500 | -5% |
| Total | 200,980 | 10,578 | 227,200 | -12% |

Source: GMCA, [Greater Manchester's Plan For Homes, Jobs And The Environment: Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Revised Draft](#), January 2019: Table 7.2; [Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework: Draft for consultation](#), Table 8.1

Another [table on page 123](#) shows the sources of land supply to 2037.

²⁵ ["Greater Manchester to consider draft 'Spatial Framework' planning strategy this week"](#), Out-law.com , 26 October 2016

The revised draft results in a reduced loss of Green Belt land compared with the 2016 draft. The 2019 draft proposes releasing 2,419 hectares (24.19 km²) of Green Belt for development, resulting in a net 4.1% reduction in the size of Greater Manchester's Green Belt compared with an 8.2% reduction in the 2016 draft. Overall, the reduction would result in Greater Manchester's Green Belt covering 45% of its total area (compared with 47% currently).

The draft says that the reduction in net loss between the 2016 and 2019 drafts is achieved by:

1. reducing the number of proposed sites
2. reducing the loss of Green Belt within sites
3. proposing 'new' Green Belt additions

The table below shows the current extent of the Green Belt within each district in Greater Manchester.

| Extent of Green Belt in Greater Manchester districts | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| As at 31 March 2019 | | | | |
| District | Green Belt (km ²) | Total area (km ²) | % of land that is Green Belt | % of total Green Belt that is in this district |
| Bolton | 72.3 | 139.8 | 52% | 12% |
| Bury | 59.2 | 99.5 | 60% | 10% |
| Manchester | 12.8 | 115.6 | 11% | 2% |
| Oldham | 62.5 | 142.3 | 44% | 10% |
| Rochdale | 99.3 | 158.1 | 63% | 17% |
| Salford | 33.7 | 97.2 | 35% | 6% |
| Stockport | 58.7 | 126.0 | 47% | 10% |
| Tameside | 50.7 | 103.2 | 49% | 9% |
| Trafford | 39.9 | 106.0 | 38% | 7% |
| Wigan | 106.5 | 188.2 | 57% | 18% |
| Total | 595.6 | 1276.0 | 47% | 100% |

Source: MHCLG, [Local authority Green Belt statistics for England: 2018 to 2019](#), Accompanying tables

The revised draft GMSF 2019 speaks of "selectively releasing Green Belt land". Although these releases will be kept as low as possible, removing some Green Belt land in strategic locations is (the draft says) the only realistic option:

7.21 A key aim of the GMSF is to boost the supply of new homes, in some areas this will help to diversify local housing markets that are often dominated by low-cost housing, bring more money into local economies, and deliver more mixed and inclusive communities. It will also help to increase the options for skilled workers looking to move into or within Greater Manchester. Focusing a significant proportion of housing growth in the northern areas will assist in this, supported by selectively releasing Green Belt sites to deliver a diverse mix of values and tenures that

includes affordable homes as well as some higher value housing, (relative to prevailing values in the local area), within a high quality environment. This will help to achieve a better spread of higher value housing and prosperity across Greater Manchester, whilst also delivering greater diversity within individual areas.

(...)

7.23 A key part of the overall strategy is to maximise the amount of development on brownfield sites in the most accessible locations, and minimise the loss of greenfield and Green Belt land as far as possible. In order to deliver the necessary densities, an increasing proportion of new dwellings will be in the form of apartments and town houses, continuing recent trends.

(...)

7.32 The existing supply of potential housing sites identified in the districts' strategic housing land availability assessments, small sites and empty properties is insufficient to meet the overall identified need. Consequently, if Greater Manchester is to meet its future housing requirements, there is a need to identify additional sites across the city-region. The only realistic option for doing so is to remove some land from the Green Belt in strategic locations.²⁶

Mapping the 2019 proposals

Local-level maps with detail of the 2019 proposals are available.

Proposed allocations are outlined in detail in chapter 11 of the [2019 draft](#) (pages 195-374). Appendix A has details on proposed additions to the Green Belt (pages 375-440).

An interactive map is also available for viewing selected aspects of the proposals. The [version linked to here](#) shows the 2019 proposals for Green Belt release and additions, as well as parliamentary constituency boundaries. The 'layers' box in the top right of the screen lets the user select other features and boundaries.

4. Calculating housing demand: the standard method

In brief

- Guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) requires LPAs to use a standard method - based on the 2014 household projections, rather than the lower, 2016-based projections - when calculating their housing need, except where there are "exceptional circumstances" to justify an alternative approach.
- Section 5 of the Library briefing [What next for planning in England? The National Planning Policy Framework](#) discusses the standard method for calculating housing need.²⁷

²⁶ GMCA, [Greater Manchester's Plan For Homes, Jobs And The Environment: Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Revised Draft](#), January 2019: pages 119 -125

²⁷ CBP 8260, 10 June 2019

One plank of the Government's approach to the development of Local Plans has been the introduction of a standard method for calculating housing need. Housing need must therefore be calculated using the standard method.

As the Commons Library briefing [What next for planning in England? The National Planning Policy Framework](#) discusses at more length, [the National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) 2019](#) speaks of delivering a sufficient supply of homes. At paragraph 60, it also speaks of using the standard method unless there are "exceptional circumstances" to justify an alternative approach.²⁸

The [technical consultation on updates to national planning policy and guidance](#) was published in October 2018. In it, the Government argued that lower household projections did not mean fewer homes were needed and there should be changes to the standard method "to ensure consistency with the objective of building more homes".²⁹ The [Government response to the technical consultation](#) in February 2019 observed that more than half the respondents to the consultation had disagreed with the proposal that the demographic baseline for the standard method should be the 2014-based household projections, but the Government considered this to be "the most appropriate approach for providing stability and certainty to the planning system in the short-term". The formula would (it said) be reviewed.³⁰ The more recent projections should not (the Government went on) be used as a justification for lower housing need.³¹

The updated [PPG on housing and economic needs assessment](#) provides more guidance on the standard method and sets out why the baseline for the standard method is the 2014-based household projections. It also confirms that plans not based on the standard method will be scrutinised more closely at examination and any method relying on the 2016 household projections will not be considered to be consistent with paragraph 60 of the NPPF.³²

The then Housing Secretary, James Brokenshire, summed up the Government's position in a [PQ reply in February last year](#).³³ More recently, [in May last year](#), the then housing and planning minister, Kit Malthouse, summarised how emerging plans might be protected.³⁴

In a [statement on planning for the future](#) on 12 March 2020, Robert Jenrick said that the standard formula would be reviewed and this fresh approach would encourage more building in urban areas and on brownfield sites:

²⁸ MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), CP 48, February 2019: page 17

²⁹ MHCLG, [Technical consultation on updates to national planning policy and guidance](#), October 2018: page 6. For more background, see "[Interview: Kit Malthouse, housing and planning minister](#)", *Planning*, 4 October 2018

³⁰ MHCLG, [Government response to the technical consultation on updates to national planning policy and guidance](#), February 2019: page 6

³¹ As above: pages 7-8

³² MHCLG, [Guidance: Housing and economic needs assessment](#), 20 March 2015, updated 22 July 2019

³³ [PQ 222597, 26 February 2019](#)

³⁴ [PQ 249857, 13 May 2019](#)

To that end, I am announcing that we will review the formula for calculating local housing need, taking a fresh approach that means building more homes, but also encouraging greater building in urban areas. We will make the most of our transport hubs, and I am announcing a call for proposals to invite innovative solutions for building housing above and around stations. We will be backing brownfield sites for development, and we will work with ambitious mayors and councils of all political persuasions in all parts of the country. We will be beginning by investing £400 million to regenerate brownfield sites across the country, and we are launching a new national brownfield sites map so that anyone — member of the public, entrepreneur or local authority — can understand where those sites are.³⁵

Questioned by Joy Morrissey on “needless urban sprawl” on the Green Belt, Robert Jenrick reiterated that the policy would be “brownfield first”:

We absolutely we want to have a brownfield-first policy—that is at the heart of everything that we are trying to do in this policy area. (...) We do not want to see the needless ruination of the countryside — we all want to see it preserved for future generations — but we have to balance that with ensuring that homes are available for the next generation in those parts of the country where people really want to live.³⁶

5. Affordable housing obligations

As the Commons Library briefing [Planning Obligations \(Section 106 Agreements\)](#) explains in more detail, planning obligations - sometimes known as section 106 agreements or “affordable housing levies” - are legally enforceable obligations entered into under section 106 of the [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) (as amended) to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.³⁷

Planning obligations are agreements made between a developer and the LPA designed to meet the concerns an LPA may have about meeting the cost of providing new infrastructure for an area. These agreements can require (for example) that the developer must provide, or pay for, a certain number of affordable homes in order to be given planning permission to build a development of market value homes. The obligations may be provided by the developers “in kind” – such as by building a number of affordable homes for an area – or in the form of financial payments. (In some cases, it can be a combination of both).

The Commons Library briefing [What next for planning in England? The National Planning Policy Framework](#) covers some of the changes to various aspects of planning policy made when the NPPF was revised and updated in July 2018 (with further minor amendment in February 2019). Section 13 covers developer contributions.³⁸ A [briefing from the Local](#)

For more background briefing on affordable housing, see the Commons Library briefing [What is affordable housing?](#) (CBP 7747, 23 December 2019)

³⁵ [HC Deb 12 March 2020 c445](#)

³⁶ [HC Deb 12 March 2020 c460](#)

³⁷ CBP 07200, 6 September 2019

³⁸ CBP 08260, 10 June 2019

[Government Association's Planning Advisory Service](#) provide more information.³⁹

Under *planning conditions and obligations*, the [NPPF 2019](#) now says that planning applications which comply with policies setting out the contributions expected from development should be assumed to be viable. The [PPG on planning obligations](#)⁴⁰ offers more detailed guidance on planning obligations for affordable housing and the [PPG on viability](#) covers (amongst other things) viability and decision taking.⁴¹

In reply to a [topical question on 13 January 2020](#), Robert Jenrick, said that the Government intended to invest more in affordable housing.⁴²

6. Funding for infrastructure

There are two routes through which an LPA can seek money for associated infrastructure from the developer: section 106 contributions (discussed above in the context of affordable housing) or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

In brief

Originally, LPAs could require funds from developers to pay for infrastructure under section 106 of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990*. Under this Act, LPAs could also require developers to provide this infrastructure themselves. Any agreement was a matter of negotiation between the LPA and the developer. In an attempt to provide more certainty to developers upfront about these additional costs of development, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced to fund particular types of infrastructure, with the cost related to the size of the new development. CIL does not entirely replace the system of section 106 contributions and the two systems currently sit alongside each other.

For a more detailed discussion of section 106 contributions and the CIL, see the Commons Library briefings [Planning Obligations \(Section 106 Agreements\)](#)⁴³ and [Community infrastructure levy](#).⁴⁴ The Commons Library [debate pack on challenges facing new towns](#) also explains how they operate.⁴⁵

7. Neighbourhood planning

The *Localism Act 2011* allows parish councils and neighbourhood forums to formulate Neighbourhood Development Plans and Orders, to guide and shape development in a particular area. The [Commons Library briefing on neighbourhood planning](#) examines relevant policy and practice in more depth.⁴⁶

³⁹ Planning Advisory Service, [s106 obligations overview](#) (undated, accessed today)

⁴⁰ MHCLG, [Guidance: Planning obligations](#), 19 May 2016, updated 1 September 2019

⁴¹ MHCLG, [Guidance: Viability](#), 6 March 2014, updated 1 September 2019

⁴² [HC Deb 13 January 2020 c747](#)

⁴³ CBP 07200, 6 September 2019

⁴⁴ SN 03890, 19 December 2019

⁴⁵ CDP 2017/0135, 4 July 2017

⁴⁶ SN 05838, 12 October 2018

One issue which sometimes attracts controversy is the relationship between Neighbourhood Plans and Local Plans; local residents may fear that the Neighbourhood Plan will be overridden in favour of the Local Plan.

As the Commons Library briefing [What next for planning in England? The National Planning Policy Framework](#) explains, MHCLG's [Planning Practice Guidance on neighbourhood planning](#) says that there is no need to review or update Neighbourhood Plans but, if they conflict with more recent policies in a Local Plan, it is those more recent plans which take precedence.^{47,48} This, then, means that a Neighbourhood Plan may be overridden when considering local housing need or planning applications against the backdrop of a more recent Local Plan (or, conversely, an absent Local Plan), often to the frustration of the local community.

The NPPF was revised and updated in July 2018, following a consultation, with some further amendment in February 2019. In revising the NPPF, the intention was to bring into the text policy changes already announced through written Ministerial Statements, in this instance the former housing minister [Gavin Barwell's written statement in December 2016](#), which was intended to give some clarity and some degree of weight to the Neighbourhood Plan, by saying that (with certain conditions, as listed in the statement) the Neighbourhood Plan's policies for supply of housing should not be considered out-of-date if that plan was less than two years old.⁴⁹

The [NPPF 2019](#) now stipulates that, for the adverse impact of development conflicting with the Neighbourhood Plan to significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits, one of the conditions is that the Neighbourhood Plan should have become part of the development plan within the last two years.⁵⁰ NPPF 2019 also set out [transitional arrangements](#).⁵¹

⁴⁷ SN 08260, 12 October 2018

⁴⁸ MHCLG, [Guidance: Neighbourhood planning](#), 6 March 2014, updated 9 May 2019: paragraph 84

⁴⁹ [HCWS346, 12 December 2016](#)

⁵⁰ MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), CP 48, February 2019: paragraph 14

⁵¹ MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), CP 48, February 2019: paragraph 216

8. News items

Manchester Evening News

How to have your say on what will happen in Manchester over next 15 years

The council has launched a consultation

12 February 2020

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/how-your-say-what-happen-17738640>

Place North West

Comment: Making the North West's Green Belt work harder

11 February 2020

<https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/news/comment-making-the-north-wests-green-belt-work-harder/>

Place North West

GMSF delay confirmed

20 September 2019

<https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/news/gmsf-delay-confirmed/>

Manchester Evening News

Protesters create mile-long human chain to send green belt housing message

28 August 2019

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/hollingworth-lake-human-chain-rochdale-16828138>

Architects' Journal

22 January 2019

Manchester sets out plans for 50,000 affordable homes

<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/manchester-sets-out-plans-for-50000-affordable-homes/10039096.article>

Centre for Cities blog

Greater Manchester Spatial Plan: What it means for housing supply and the future of the greenbelt

19 January 2019

<https://www.centreforcities.org/blog/greater-manchester-spatial-plan-what-it-means-for-housing-supply-and-the-future-of-the-greenbelt/>

9. Press release

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Detailed public responses prompt Leaders to agree to further engagement on Spatial Framework

20 September 2019

GREATER Manchester's Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment remains the best proposal for implementing future housing and infrastructure needs fairly across the city-region, say authorities. Leaders have also announced a timetable for a period of public engagement into the New Year with formal consultation scheduled for later in 2020.

The timescales allow for a period of deeper engagement with local communities and other stakeholders in light of the number of detailed and considered public responses received during consultation earlier this year.

The Plan, otherwise known as the Spatial Framework (GMSF), lays the foundations for proposals to deliver housing in Greater Manchester, growing the local economy and creating jobs, protecting the environment and delivering integrated transport to ensure the city-region continues to develop and thrive.

Development also features heavily as part of Greater Manchester's ambitious environmental plans, with the recently-published [Housing Strategy](#) and the [5 Year Environment Plan](#) committing every new build in the city-region to being zero carbon by 2028 and the entire city-region to be carbon neutral by 2038, 12 years ahead of the national target.

Initially published in 2016, a redrafted second GMSF proposal was followed by a [period of public consultation](#) which closed in March of this year. The total number of public responses – roughly 17,500 respondents submitting in excess of 60,000 separate comments – is a significantly lower figure than those supplied during the 2017 consultation period which followed the initial draft's publication.

Nonetheless, the renewed public engagement with the redrafted Plan has demonstrated to authorities the real concerns that still exist in many Greater Manchester communities. To properly engage with residents' issues and suggestions, Leaders intend to take time to carefully examine the feedback and work to implement any proposed changes in a revised third draft of the proposals.

A timetable has been developed for another period of public engagement into the New Year with publication of a new draft and subsequent further formal public consultation scheduled for summer 2020.

Paul Dennett, GMCA Lead on Housing, Homelessness and Infrastructure, said:

The people of Greater Manchester have provided invaluable insight and feedback and I want to thank them for engaging in this important process on our Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment. Having a clear plan is vital if we are to avoid a future where developers get the pick of the prime sites across Greater Manchester with no joined-up strategy to combat the possibility.

I am confident the second, redrafted Spatial Framework was a significant improvement on the first, with proposals for building on Green Belt reduced by more than 50 per cent. However, from the large number of responses we've received there obviously remain real concerns in many communities. We received 27,000 responses to the first draft and fewer than 18,000 this time but it remains important that we consider all feedback properly and factor it into the next redraft.

When the revised proposals are presented for a further round of consultation next summer they will better represent what we all want – a comprehensive proposal for the homes, jobs and supporting environment we all need now and in the future.

The planned engagement work will include ongoing and productive discussions with local communities and a wide variety of voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, Green Belt campaign groups and developers, with more work being undertaken to develop transport proposals, including site investigations and viability assessments.

Commitment has already been made to engage with community groups, the voluntary and community sector and the development industry on the development of the evidence base and workshop sessions will be held over the autumn and early in the New Year to shape the studies and share the methodologies.

Tens of thousands of public comments submitted to the most recent round of consultation will be published at the start of October – the public's comments published on [GMconsult.org](https://gmconsult.org) will ensure transparency and inform the drafting of the next version of the plan.

Greater Manchester's ambition is to build more homes and prioritise brownfield sites for development, often within our town centres – support is now needed to make this approach more viable.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester's existing [Town Centre Challenge](#) aims to deliver higher density mixed and affordable housing in specific town centres across the city-region.

Now the GMCA intends to call on Government to back its proposals to boost our proud towns. The Prime Minister recently announced his government's approach to renewing towns: liveability, connectivity, culture and powers. A number of Greater Manchester's urban areas have benefited from the newly-announced Future High Streets Fund and the Towns Fund – the hope is that these and future commitments can support the drive to have our town centres form a central part of any future GMSF proposal.

In June the new Greater Manchester Housing Strategy committed to 50,000 additional truly affordable homes by 2037, 30,000 of which will be social rent, by working in partnership with housing providers, local

authorities, Homes England and government to maximise investment in new social housing.

10. Parliamentary material

Debates

Debate contribution: [Housing and Planning](#)

James Daly: I am a Greater Manchester MP, so the proposed strategic housing plan for my area for the next 20 years is the Greater Manchester

spatial framework. The planning system has created a scenario predicated on the building of three, four and five-bedroom houses on the green belt. That cannot be right. There is no requirement within the Greater Manchester spatial framework to provide affordable housing—certainly not truly affordable housing. The present definition of affordable housing means that most of the people in my constituency cannot afford an affordable house. We need to amend that and prioritise development. We need to incentivise development on brownfield sites within boroughs, and within plans.

We must look at how the population projections in particular are calculated. The GMSF is built on population projections from 2014 figures from the Office for National Statistics. If the housing numbers were based on the most recent figures, which are the 2018 figures, that would mean that in a seat such as mine, and in the Metropolitan Borough of Bury, no green belt would have to be built on. The planning system must be fair. It must produce plans based on the most accurate and recent information. I urge the Minister to consider insisting that local authorities use the most recent figures rather than 2014 figures, and prioritise truly affordable housing. We cannot have a situation where developers get to take the easy way out, building houses at £400,000 and £500,000, which cater to only a small number of people in my constituency.

My last point echoes what some of my hon. Friends have said. Within the Greater Manchester spatial framework, new schools, roads and doctors' surgeries are required. At the moment they are merely words on a piece of paper. There is no requirement within the document. Planning officers tell me that they will be built. There is no guarantee that they will be built, but I believe there is an absolute guarantee that the green belt will be built over by three, four and five-bedroom houses. We must find a way to get cast-iron guarantees, before planning permission is granted, that infrastructure will be put in place to support the thousands of extra houses that are proposed—certainly in my area.

HC Deb 03 March 2020 | Vol 672 cc238-9WH

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

HC Deb 21 February 2019 | Vol 654 cc663-650WH

<http://bit.ly/2SWavc7>

Housing, Planning and the Green Belt

HC Deb 6 February 2018 | Vol 635 c1416-

<http://bit.ly/2BiePd9>

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

HC Deb 14 December 2016 | Volume 618 c385-

<http://bit.ly/2DRcGDm>

PQs

[Topical Questions](#)

Asked by: Chris Clarkson

People across Greater Manchester are rightly concerned about Andy Burnham's Greater Manchester spatial framework and its plan to concrete over precious green spaces. Does the Minister agree with me, and with local groups in Heywood and Middleton such as Save Our Slattocks and Save Bamford Green Belt, that the Mayor should have released a revised plan with up-to-date housing figures before the election, so that people had a chance to judge his plan for their communities before he asked for their vote?

Answered by: The Minister for Housing (Christopher Pincher) | Department: Housing, Communities and Local Government

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State answered a similar question earlier. Ministers have a quasi-judicial role in the planning system, so it would not be right for me to comment on the merits of this particular plan. However, the Mayor must meaningfully consult local residents in developing his plan, to ensure that he carries their trust. I understand that Mr Burnham will be in London again tomorrow, so my hon. Friend might have an opportunity to discuss it with him personally.

HC Deb 24 February 2020 | Vol 672 cc21-158

[Housing Supply](#)

Asked by: James Grundy

Does my right hon. Friend share my concerns regarding Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham's Greater Manchester spatial framework, which seems to threaten a number of green belt sites in my constituency of Leigh, while simultaneously not making these sites available for delivery since the landowners have made it clear they are not available for development?

Answered by: Robert Jenrick | Department: Housing, Communities and Local Government

Due to my quasi-judicial role in the planning system, I cannot comment on the merits of the plan itself. I can say, however, that a number of hon. Members, including my hon. Friend, have made me aware of their concerns; even, I think, the shadow Secretary of State is campaigning against the plan. These matters will be looked at by a planning inspector should the plan reach submission.

HC Deb 24 February 2020 | Vol 672 c4

[Topical Questions](#)

Asked by: Mary Robinson

The expansion of the Metrolink network is a key part of Greater Manchester's transport strategy. In the light of proposals to increase the amount of housing stock in Gatley, Cheadle Hulme and Heald Green as part of the Greater Manchester spatial framework, improvements in our local transport capacity are a priority for my constituents. What steps has the Department taken to support tram-train technology, with a view to expanding the tram-train Metrolink to my constituency?

Answered by: Chris Grayling | Department: Transport

As my hon. Friend will know, the Mayor of Manchester and I recently agreed to work together on the potential expansion of the Metrolink network with the use of tram-train technology. The Government have already funded a tram-train system in Sheffield, which is making a difference there, and I am keen to see how we can extend that to Greater Manchester.

HC Deb 14 February 2019 | Vol 654 c1033

[Business of the House](#)

The Greater Manchester spatial framework is causing a great deal of anxiety in my constituency. The plan, with a Government-imposed housing target, will mean the net loss of green-belt land. At the same time, insufficient funding is in place to redevelop brownfield sites that the community is desperate to see redeveloped. How can it be right that landowners, through no positive action on their part, can be made millionaires overnight through a simple change in land use policy, when brownfield sites, which are desperate for funding from Government, are being left to rot? How can that be a fair settlement for the community?

HC Deb 17 January 2019 | Vol 652 c1339

[Business of the House](#)

The original version of the Greater Manchester spatial framework that the Labour leadership in my region drew up was so bad that it was criticised by 27,000 residents, as well as Conservative colleagues across Greater Manchester—it was rightly torn up and started again. The new version of the GMSF is better, especially as it has more of a focus on the

redevelopment of Bolton town centre. Can we have a debate on the importance of listening to local residents, who emphasise the importance of redeveloping our town centres and brownfield sites, rather than Labour's focus on using the green belt first?

HC Deb 10 January 2019 | Vol 652 c555

[Topical Questions](#)

Asked by: Mr William Wragg

Following the Office for National Statistics household projection figures being revised downwards by nearly a quarter, will my hon. Friend the Minister ensure that regional housing targets reflect the easing of pressure to build on the green belt, with particular reference to the Greater Manchester spatial framework?

Answered by: Kit Malthouse | Department: Housing, Communities and Local Government

My hon. Friend may know that we have already issued a technical consultation on the latest household projection numbers and the impact on projected housing need in local authority areas. We really do not want local authorities to take their foot off the accelerator, however, not least because we believe that there is pent-up demand for housing in this country. We are working with authorities across the country to get the formula right in the longer term, while we seek a short-term fix to keep numbers up, but I would be more than happy to meet him and his colleagues to discuss the Manchester spatial framework further.

HC Deb 05 Nov 2018 | Vol 648 c1231

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