

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 25th September 2023
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration

Report Title

Places for Everyone Joint Local Plan 2021: Proposed Modifications Consultation

Summary

To update members on the progress of Places for Everyone Plan: A Joint Development Plan Document for 9 Greater Manchester Local Authorities (Places for Everyone Plan) and to seek approval for the proposed modifications to the plan and consultation.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (i) Note progress made in respect of the Places for Everyone Plan (PfE);
- (ii) Approve that the PfE modifications (Main, Additional and those relating to the policies map), and associated supporting background documents be subject to a period of representations for a period of 8 weeks commencing no earlier than 9th October 2023; and
- (iii) Note the next steps for the production of the PfE Plan (section 11).

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – [Schedule of Main Modifications](#)

Appendix 2 – [Schedule of Policies Map Changes](#)

Appendix 3 – [Composite Places for Everyone Plan](#) (showing all proposed modifications)

Appendix 4 – [Updated Sustainability Appraisal Report](#) (part of the Integrated Assessment – formed of several documents)

Appendix 5 – [Updated Habitat Regulations Assessment Report](#)

Appendix 6 - [Schedule of Additional Modifications](#)

Background Papers: None

Implications:

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	The Places for everyone Joint Local Plan (PfE) will provide the overall strategic planning context for Development Management and the Trafford Local Plan, which will contribute to all of the Council's Corporate Priorities, in particular addressing our climate crisis.
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	PfE is being produced in partnership with the GMCA and nine GM LA's (excluding Stockport) and will be one the key strategic policy documents produced at the GM level.
Financial	The cost of preparing PfE is being shared by GMCA and the nine districts within the plan area. For Trafford, the estimated costs of the modifications consultation is expected to be covered from Reserves that have been specifically earmarked.
Legal Implications	<p>A Development Plan Document (DPD) requires a high level of community involvement, consultation procedures and independent assessment.</p> <p>They are officially adopted after a binding report is produced by an independent planning inspector following an independent examination of the DPD and any representations made in respect of it. The key legislative and constitutional requirements for the preparation of a joint Development Plan Document are set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ("2004 Act") and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 ("2012 Regulations"). These requirements have been complied with.</p> <p>The joint plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination (s20 of the</p>

	<p>2004 Act) along with the documents prescribed by Regulation 22 of the 2012 Regulations. Prior to its submission to the Secretary of State, the joint DPD was published and representations were invited, pursuant to Regulation 19 and Regulation 20 of the 2012 Regulations. The Joint DPD is currently at the independent examination stage, as prescribed by section 20 of the Act; the modifications consultation stage falls within that stage of the plan preparation process.</p> <p>The Council has had to ensure that the joint DPD was prepared in accordance with the 2004 Act and the 2012 Regulations. Otherwise, any subsequent attempt to adopt the plan would have been susceptible to legal challenge.</p> <p>Once the joint DPD has been adopted, development management decisions must be made in accordance with them unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p>
Equality/Diversity Implications	<p>The Places for Everyone Publication Plan is a statutory plan which seeks to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, delivering economic, social and environmental benefits together in a mutually reinforcing way. It is informed by an Integrated Appraisal which includes an Equalities assessment.</p>
Sustainability Implications	<p>The PfE is supported by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which assessed the plan against a number of economic, social and environmental indicators to ensure that future development will be sustainable.</p>
Carbon Reduction	<p>The Places for Everyone Publication Plan will provide the strategic planning policy framework to support the nine districts in meeting Greater Manchester's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2038. The Trafford allocations could also provide opportunities for decentralised, low carbon heat and energy networks. The PfE policies link to the Trafford Carbon Neutral Action Plan.</p>
Resource Implications e.g., Staffing / ICT / Assets	<p>The PfE is in part being produced by staff from within the Council's Growth, Communities & Housing Service. The documents will be available to view electronically via the web. A small part of</p>

	the allocations are on land or property owned by the Council.
Risk Management Implications	The PfE is a key strategic planning document that will provide the context for the Trafford Local Plan. If it is not progressed it will impact on the scope and delivery of the Trafford Local Plan.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	The PfE will include a number of policies which will encourage more people to make healthier choices in life, including promoting cycling and walking. It will therefore contribute towards improving the health and wellbeing of Trafford's residents.
Health and Safety Implications	Not applicable

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Up until December 2020 a joint development plan document of the ten Greater Manchester local authorities was being prepared, Greater Manchester's Plan for Jobs, Homes & the Environment (known as the "GMSF"). The GMSF 2020 had reached the Regulation 19 (Publication) stage of the process, however, decisions taken by Stockport Council in December 2020 signalled the end of the joint plan of the 10. Following that decision, the remaining nine GM authorities (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) decided to progress a joint plan of the nine and this became known as "Places for Everyone" (PfE).
- 1.2 At its meeting on the 20th July 2021, members of the Places for Everyone Joint Committee recommended the PfE plan (and its supporting background documents) to the nine authorities for "Publication", pursuant to Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for an 8 week period for representations.
- 1.3 The "Publication" stage is a formal consultation on the draft joint DPD pursuant to Reg. 19 of the Local Planning Regulations. It is a statutory stage that provides an opportunity for organisations and individuals to submit their views on the content of the plan.

- 1.4 The “Publication” stage consultation ran from August 9, 2021, for 8 weeks, ending on October 3, 2021. Over 15,000 representations were duly made, by over 3,800 individuals and organisations during that consultation stage.
- 1.5 All duly made representations, together with the Regulation 19 PfE plan, supporting background documents and a number of reports (including details of the consultation that took place, summaries of the main issues raised and the nine authorities’ responses to those issues) were submitted to the Secretary of State on February 14, 2022, pursuant to Reg. 22 of the Local Planning Regulations. This is called the “Submission” stage and marked the beginning of the independent examination into the plan.

2 Examination Stage

- 2.1 The examination is the final stage in the plan making process. The legislative requirements for the examination are contained in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) [PCPA] and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) [the Regulations]. Some guidance on procedure is also provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) chapter on Plan-making. However, many of the detailed procedural aspects of the examination are not prescribed in legislation, allowing the Inspector a degree of flexibility in conducting the examination. This enables the Inspector to adapt the procedures to deal with situations as they arise, so as to achieve positive outcomes in a range of different circumstances.
- 2.2 Following submission of a plan, the Inspector(s) take control of the examination process from start to finish. The Inspectors’ role is to examine whether the submitted plan meets the tests of soundness defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ and meets all the relevant legislative requirements, including the duty to co-operate². The PfE examination therefore concentrated on the issues that affect the plan’s soundness and legal compliance and did not delve into other matters.

¹ The tests of soundness in paragraph 35 of the NPPF require that the plan is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

² Paragraph 24 of the NPPF requires that local planning authorities cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.

- 2.3 Three inspectors were appointed by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) to hold an independent examination into PfE: William Fieldhouse, Louise Gibbons and Steven Lee. All three are very experienced planning inspectors and conducted the examination in a very thorough and professional way throughout.
- 2.4 The Examination officially began at the point of “Submission” (February 2022), however the hearing sessions did not start until the beginning of November 2022. In the early stages of the Examination, the Inspectors raised a number of Preliminary Questions (PQs) and Matters, Issues, and Questions (MIQs) that were prompted by their review of the plan. These probed issues of soundness and specific issues raised through consultation on the plan. The PfE authorities responded to the PQs and (together with other stakeholders) to the MIQs. In response to some of the MIQs, the PfE Team, proposed modifications to the PfE authorities to address issues raised.
- 2.5 The examination hearings sat for 12 weeks in total, including a final session at the beginning of July 2023. The sessions before Christmas considered the Spatial Strategy and thematic policies and the sessions in 2023 focused on the strategic allocations, Green Belt Additions and Monitoring. The additional session in July related to five specific proposed allocations (JPA1.1 Heywood/Pilsworth; JPA28 North of Irlam Station; JPA29 Port Salford Extension; JPA30 Ashton Moss; and JPA33 New Carrington) which include land that has been identified on the Natural England map of deep peaty soils.
- 2.6 The PfE authorities were represented by Christopher Katkowski KC throughout, with staff from the GMCA, all nine authorities and TfGM providing expert witnesses.
- 2.7 The Examination hearing sessions took place at the former Manchester Fire and Rescue Training and Development Centre in Manchester City centre. It ran very smoothly, with the Inspectors and participants alike commenting on how well organised it was. The livestreaming worked well and all the sessions remain available to view via the CA website.
- 2.8 In addition to the PQs and MIQs, the Inspectors issued ‘Action Points’ (APs) regularly throughout the duration of the sitting weeks. In these they asked the PfE authorities to prepare modifications to policies, which related to the detailed wording of the policies, and in respect of the allocations, involved clarification of how the allocation policies link to the thematic (sustainable, housing, greener

etc) policies in the plan. With the exception of two sites, one in Salford (JPA28 – North of Irlam Station) and one in Manchester, close to the Airport (JPA10 – Global Logistics), the Inspectors did not recommend the removal of any allocations although, in a small number of cases, they did recommend the amendment of allocation boundaries. For Trafford this included a minor modification to the Timperley Wedge Green Belt boundary to retain a Site of Biological Importance (SBI) within the Green Belt. The overall allocation boundary and development area for the allocation were unchanged. No boundary changes were required for the New Carrington allocation.

2.9 Within their APs, the inspectors made it clear that they considered the modifications to be necessary at that stage of the examination to inform their consideration of whether the Plan is sound and/or how it could be made sound and/or legally compliant by main modifications. They also made it clear when they published their action points that they may decide that other or different main modifications are required.

2.10 The PfE authorities submitted Responses to the Inspectors' APs with modifications proposed to the policies where these were considered necessary to make the plan sound. The responses to the individual PQs, MIQs and APs are available on the Examination website. As requested by the Inspectors, all the proposed main modifications were compiled into a main modifications schedule which was first published in July 2022 with subsequent editions being published in October and November 2022 and January, May, June and August 2023. Since November 2022 iterations of a composite plan have also been published on the Examination website, alongside the proposed main modifications' schedules, to aid the reader by identifying the proposed modifications in-situ within the plan.

3 Modifications to the Plan

3.1 It is usual for the outcome of a local plan examination to be that the Inspectors(s) recommend main modifications [MMs] to the plan, where necessary to make the plan sound and legally compliant.

3.2 As a matter of law a "main modification" can only be made if it is necessary in order to make the Plan "sound". The tests which are applied to determine

whether a Plan is “sound” are those set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Therefore, legislation enables the Inspector to recommend a MM only if the plan would otherwise be unsound or legally non-compliant. The Inspector has no power to recommend other changes, even if they would improve the plan.

- 3.3 The Inspector agrees the text of the proposed MMs with the LPA, based in most cases on discussion at the hearing sessions. This was done through the process of Action Points outlined above and it was the responses to these, the various iterations of the proposed MMs’ schedules and composite plan which informed the Inspectors’ consideration of whether the PfE 2021 Plan was sound and/or how it could be made sound and/or legally compliant by MMs.
- 3.4 The Inspectors’ post hearing letter was published on the examination website on 11th August 2023. The Inspectors’ post hearings’ letter is based on a consideration of all the evidence and on the application of professional expertise and judgment. In that letter, the Inspectors state that they are now satisfied, at this stage of the examination, that all of the proposed main modifications are necessary to make the Plan sound and would be effective in that regard. This conclusion is, however, without prejudice to their final conclusions that they will reach following consideration of responses to the public consultation to be carried out on the main modifications and which are the subject of this report.
- 3.5 Additional modifications (sometimes also referred to as “minor modifications”) are changes which do not materially affect the policies in the Plan. They may be made to the PfE Plan, but do not fall within the scope of the examination. A separate schedule of additional modifications has been prepared which will sit alongside the Main Modifications’ schedule during the consultation period. It should be noted that these have been prepared at this point in time to make the modified plan more readable, but the Inspectors will not consider responses made in respect of these additional modifications, as they do not fall within the scope of the Examination.
- 3.6 Whilst the consultation is only about the proposed main modifications and the policy map changes associated with these main modifications, a schedule of additional modifications and a composite plan illustrating all the proposed modifications in situ have been prepared and are available alongside this

report. All documents will be made available at the time of the consultation, to assist the reader, but only representations on the main modifications are considered by the inspectors.

- 3.7 The following sections of this report set out what they mean in terms of the overall aims of the plan and also for Trafford Council specifically.
- 3.8 Whilst there are a large number of proposed modifications, including amending the plan period from 2020 to 2037 to 2022 to 2039, they do not change the overall Vision, Objectives and Spatial Strategy of the plan. The Inspectors consider that the proposed modification to the Plan period is necessary to make the plan sound to ensure that, in line with Government Policy, the PfE Strategic policies look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption and thus provide sufficient policy framework for the individual local plans which will follow on from the PfE's adoption.

4 Spatial Strategy

- 4.1 The spatial strategy remains to deliver sustainable, inclusive growth with the following spatial elements;
- Significant growth in jobs and housing at the core – continuing development in the 'core growth area' encompassing the city centre and beyond to the Etihad in the east, through to the Quays, Trafford Park and Port Salford in the west. The majority of commercial employment growth is proposed in this area and around 50% of overall housing supply is found here and, in the wards, immediately surrounding it (inner areas).
 - Boosting northern competitiveness – provision of significant new employment opportunities and supporting infrastructure and a commitment that collectively the northern districts meet their own local housing need
 - Sustaining southern competitiveness – supporting key economic drivers, for example around Wythenshawe hospital and the Airport, realising the opportunities offered by national infrastructure investment, e.g. HS2, whilst recognising the important green infrastructure assets in the area.

Jobs

- 4.2 Economic prosperity remains central to the overall strategy. It is essential to raising incomes, improving health and quality of life, and providing the finances

to deliver better infrastructure, services and facilities. PfE continues to attract investment in our city and town centres alongside recognising the importance of investing in strengthening existing and creating new employment locations, so that all communities are able to contribute to, and benefit from, growth.

- 4.3 In order to achieve the economic growth, the plan sets a global target for the nine authorities of just over 2 million sq.m of new office floorspace and just over 3,500,000 sq.m of industrial and warehousing floorspace over the plan period. Consequently, Trafford's total office floorspace target has been updated to 223,661 sq.m and the total industrial and warehousing floorspace target has been updated to 543,919 sq.m. These target figures have been informed by the sites identified in the existing land supply, as well as the allocations at Timperley Wedge and New Carrington, and will inform the preparation of Trafford's Local Plan.

Homes

- 4.4 Greater Manchester is facing a housing crisis. Although the Greater Manchester authorities have built more houses in recent years, wages have not been keeping pace with property price increases and affordability issues have intensified. To address the supply side, Government policy sets out a standard methodology for calculating local housing needs to provide local authorities with a clear and consistent understanding of the number of new homes needed in an area. This standard methodology remains Government policy and the Inspectors did not consider there were exceptional circumstances to deviate from using it, in the case of the PfE Plan. Therefore, the PfE still identifies that around 10,300 (10,305) homes are required per annum. However, as a result of the change to the Plan period, the number of homes to be delivered over the lifetime of the Plan has increased from just under 165,000 to just over 175,000 (175,185) new homes in total. Consequently, the Trafford housing target has increased from 17,954 homes to 19,077 homes over the revised plan period; which can be met from the existing supply of sites already identified. The Plan also continues to support Greater Manchester's commitment to deliver more affordable housing including homes for social or affordable rent. Local plans will set targets for the provision of affordable housing based on evidence relating to need and viability. PfE also sets specific affordable housing requirements for

the Trafford allocations at New Carrington and Timperley Wedge. A minimum 15% affordable housing contribution is required at New Carrington and a 45% affordable housing contribution is required at Timperley Wedge.

Environment

4.5 The Plan is not solely concerned with accommodating development. It also includes a range of policies designed to protect and enhance our many and varied green spaces and features which are used in many different ways and afforded many different values by the people who live, work or visit the city-region.

4.6 The Plan supports the important role of our natural assets by:

- Taking a landscape scale approach to nature restoration;
- Seeking to protect and enhance our network of green and blue infrastructure;
- Seeking a significant overall enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity; and
- Seeking to maintain a new and defensible Green Belt which will endure beyond the plan period.

4.7 Furthermore, the plan supports wider strategies around clean air, walking and cycling and underpins Greater Manchester's ambition to be a carbon neutral city-region by 2038. A key element of this remains that there is an expectation that all new development to be net zero carbon by 2028.

Brownfield land preference

4.8 There remains a strong focus in the plan on directing new development towards sites within the existing urban area, which are often in sustainable locations, close to facilities and served by existing infrastructure. Maximising the use of land in the urban area enables us to minimise the release of greenfield and Green Belt land for development.

4.9 The land supply identified for development in the plan is largely within the urban area:

- Offices - 98%
- Industry and Warehousing- 51%
- Housing - 90%

4.10 There are significant viability issues in parts of the conurbation and there is a need to continue to press Government for support to remediate contaminated land, to provide funding for infrastructure and to support alternative models of housing delivery. The Brownfield Housing Fund is targeted at Combined Authorities and begins to help to address viability issues, but it is not enough to enable the full potential of our brownfield land supply to be realised.

Green Belt

4.11 The PfE Plan includes a limited release of Green Belt for both housing and employment. The net loss of Green Belt proposed is 2,213 hectares. This compares to a net loss of 1,754 hectares in the PfE 2021 Plan. Although the net loss is higher than that in the PfE 2021 Plan, this is not as a result of more land being proposed for release by the introduction of further development allocations. Instead, it is due to the fact that the Inspectors concluded that exceptional circumstances existed to justify only 18 of the 49 proposed Green Belt Additions and therefore only those 18 Green Belt Additions could remain in the plan and thereby contribute to the area covered by Green Belt. One Green Belt addition was proposed in Trafford (GBA43: Midlands Farm, Moss Lane), which adjoins the New Carrington allocation in Warburton. This addition is approximately 2.5 ha and has been retained in the Plan. In concluding that exceptional circumstances had not been fully evidenced and justified for each of the other 31 proposed Green Belt Additions, including one which is almost 200 hectares in size, the overall net loss of Green Belt, taking account of the Green Belt releases and additions, compared against the previously adopted Green Belt boundary is greater than it would have been had the inspectors concluded that all 49 Green Belt Additions were fully evidenced and justified. The reduction in the Green Belt Additions as proposed by the Inspectors does not, however, impact on the delivery of the overall Vision, Spatial Strategy and Strategic Objectives of the Plan.

4.12 The Policies in the Plan would result in the overall extent of the nine authorities' Green Belt reducing by 4.1%. The previously adopted Green Belt covers almost 47% of the land covered by the nine authorities. The Policies in the PfE Plan would reduce this to just under 45% of the PfE authorities remaining as designated Green Belt.

4.13 In Trafford the previously adopted Green Belt covers 37.6% of the borough, the allocations at New Carrington and Timperley Wedge will reduce this to 35.1%.

5 Modifications to Trafford Allocations

5.1 A number of modifications are proposed to the Trafford allocation policies for Timperley Wedge and New Carrington. The majority of these are to remove duplication with other thematic policies in PfE. The policy requirements have therefore not been deleted, but they are covered by other policies in the plan, for example transport interventions and requirements and green infrastructure. The overall development quantum for each allocation also remain unchanged and any amendments to the figures are as a consequence of the plan period change.

5.2 At New Carrington additional policy requirements have been added in relation to peat, following the specific hearing session on 5 July 2023. This relates to a need for hydrological and ground investigation studies to inform the masterplan, as well as suitable compensation strategies (where appropriate).

6 Relationship with the Trafford Local Plan and Development Plan

6.1 The Places for Everyone Plan is the strategic spatial plan for the nine constituent boroughs and as such sets out a collective planning policy framework. All policies within the plan are "strategic policies". It is being prepared as a Joint Development Plan Document of the nine local planning authorities. Once the Places for Everyone Plan is adopted it will form part of Trafford Council's development plan. As such Trafford Council's local plan will need to be consistent with it and neighbourhood plans will need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies.

6.2 The evidence that underpins the Places for Everyone Plan will also inform Trafford Council's local plan but, as a strategic plan, it does not cover everything that Trafford Council's local plan would. Therefore, Trafford Council's Local Plan will set out more detailed policies including both strategic and non-strategic policies, as appropriate, reflecting local circumstances. Appendix A of the PfE Plan sets out the policies in the relevant adopted GM district local plans which will be replaced by the Places for Everyone Plan.

6.3 Trafford Council's local plan will be expected to look ahead a minimum period from its adoption, in line with national policy. In amending the plan period from 2020 to 2037 to 2022 to 2039 the PfE Plan should provide an appropriate strategic policy framework for Trafford Council's local plan which will be produced, following its adoption. However, in the event that Trafford Council's local plan looks beyond 2039, the minimum requirement figures set out in Policies JP-J3, JP-J4 and JP-H1 should be used to inform local plan target(s).

7 Sustainability, Environmental and Equality Assessments of PfE and its Evidence Base

7.1 As part of the development of the PfE, an Integrated Assessment (IA) was undertaken incorporating the requirements of:

- Sustainability Appraisal (SA): mandatory under section 19 (5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): mandatory under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (which transpose the European Directive 2001/42/EC into English law).
- Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA): required to be undertaken for plans, policies and strategies by the Equality Act 2010.
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA): there is no statutory requirement to undertake HIA, however it has been included to add value and depth to the assessment process.

7.2 The IA contributed to the development of the PfE through an iterative assessment, which reviews the draft policies and the discrete site allocations against the IA framework.

7.3 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) refers to several distinct stages of Assessment which must be undertaken in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) to determine if a plan or project may affect the protected features of a habitats site before deciding whether to undertake, permit or authorise it.

7.4 All plans and projects (including planning applications) which are not directly connected with, or necessary for, the conservation management of a habitat site, require consideration of whether the plan or project is likely to have

significant effects on that site. If a proposed plan or project is considered likely to have a significant effect on a protected habitats site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) then an Appropriate Assessment of the implications for the site is required.

- 7.5 The PfE2021 was assessed as a Plan which was considered likely to have significant effect on one or more European protected site and was therefore informed (and accompanied) by an HRA with mitigation measures identified as appropriate.
- 7.6 The Inspectors have made it clear that the modifications they have decided should be made to the Plan should be subject to sustainability appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment as appropriate. Furthermore, the Inspectors have made it clear that the sustainability appraisal and Habitat Regulation Assessment reports will be subject to public consultation, alongside the modifications, before the end of the examination. Accordingly addendums have been produced for both the IA (incorporating the sustainability appraisal) and the HRA, assessing the impact of the modifications.
- 7.7 With respect to the sustainability appraisal, where individual policy scores have moved from positive to uncertain or neutral, the SA acknowledges that when the plan is read as a whole, the topic is covered in other relevant policies and therefore no residual impacts have been recommended.
- 7.8 The outcome of the HRA screening assessment is that there are no “Likely Significant Effects” on European sites, other than those identified in the Submission version HRA. Therefore, it has not been necessary to amend the PfE Appropriate Assessment as a result of the proposed main modifications.
- 7.9 The IA and HRA addendum reports are available alongside this report and will be published alongside the main modifications schedule.
- 7.10 A comprehensive evidence base was assembled to support the policies and proposals in the PfE Plan which was made available for consultation in 2021. This evidence was submitted alongside the PfE Plan in February 2022 and has remained available on the GMCA’s website since then and throughout the examination. As one of the tests of soundness is whether a plan is “justified – ...based on proportionate evidence”, the Inspectors considered this evidence as part of their Examination into whether, or not, the PfE Plan is “sound”.

7.11 As detailed above, this evidence base will also be used to inform Trafford Council's local plan.

8 National Planning Policy

- 8.1 In December 2022 the Government consulted upon a number of potential changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The consultation ran from 22 December 2022 to 02 March 2023. The consultation sought views on a proposed approach to updating NPPF whilst at the same time seeking views on proposals to prepare National Development Management Policies, how policy could be developed to support levelling up, and how national planning policy is currently accessed by users.
- 8.2 The Inspectors made a statement that in light of the transitional arrangements (contained within the draft NPPF changes), they would carry on with the examination as programmed in the context of the tests of soundness set out in current NPPF, published in 2021.
- 8.3 The Government is still analysing the feedback, therefore the draft, as proposed to be changed, version of the NPPF cannot be used to determine whether a Plan is "sound"; accordingly it would be unlawful to propose any "main modification" to PfE and/or withdraw from PfE, on the basis of the draft proposed changes to the NPPF. This is especially the case given that PfE is at such an advanced stage of preparation.
- 8.4 As the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities is currently analysing the feedback to the consultation and no changes to the NPPF have yet been published, the examination progressed through its scheduled programme of sessions. The Inspectors duly issued their post hearings' letter with the schedule of proposed main modifications that they consider are necessary to make the plan sound and/or legally compliant and which should therefore be made available for a period of public consultation.
- 8.5 The schedule of main modifications, which is available alongside this report, represents those changes to the plan that the inspectors consider are necessary. They do not include any modifications on the basis of the draft proposed changes to the NPPF. To make further changes to the schedule, e.g., amending overall development targets, removing additional sites which

PfE proposes to take out of the Green Belt and/or amending the Green Belt Addition sites, on the basis of the consultation draft NPPF would not be lawful.

9 Consultation

- 9.1 Five consultations have taken place in relation to the plan, the first four in relation to the GMSF and the fifth one being in relation to the PfE plan. The first, in November 2014 was on the scope of the plan and the initial evidence base, the second in November 2015, was on the vision, strategy and strategic growth options, and the third, on a Draft Plan in October 2016. The fourth consultation was on The Greater Manchester Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment: the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Revised Draft 2019 (GMSF 2019) and took place in 2019. It received over 17,000 responses. The responses received informed the production of GMSF 2020. The withdrawal of Stockport Council in December 2020 prevented GMSF 2020 proceeding to Regulation 19 Publication stage and instead work was undertaken to prepare PfE 2021. Therefore, the responses to GMSF 2019 were used to inform the production of the PfE plan instead.

10 Mandatory Main Modifications Consultation Stage

- 10.1 At this Main Modifications' consultation stage, whilst anyone can make a representation, the PINS Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations makes it clear (at section 6) that the consultation is only about the proposed main modifications and any policies map changes and no other aspect of the plan.
- 10.2 Whilst it is only necessary to consult on the Main Modifications, changes to the policies map, updated sustainability appraisal and habitat regulations assessment reports, it is proposed to provide all proposed modifications (main and additionally) so that the overall proposed changes to the plan are clear. The Inspectors will, however, only consider comments received to the Main Modifications; the nine PfE authorities will consider those comments relating to the additional modifications.
- 10.3 As with the Regulation 19 consultation, the consultation will be hosted by the GMCA, with the consultation being carried out in line with the requirements of the relevant authority's Statements of Community Involvement and the guidance contained in the above mentioned PINS guidance note. The guidance

note states that “the nature and duration of the consultation should reflect that of the consultation held at Regulation 19 stage, where appropriate. This means it should last at least six weeks.” However, as the Regulation 19 consultation ran for eight weeks, it is considered appropriate to reflect that in the duration of the modifications’ consultation. Therefore, it is proposed that the consultation would run for a period of eight weeks.

- 10.4 As required by the Trafford Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) the consultation documents will be made available on the Council’s website and the individuals/organisations registered on the Local Plan database, including statutory bodies, will be notified of the consultation. The GMCA will be notifying all individuals/organisations who responded at the previous Regulation 19 stage. Information about the consultation will be shared on the Council’s social media channels and a press release will be issued to publicise the consultation. Although not a requirement of the SCI, hard copies of the consultation documents will be made available at Trafford Town Hall and Sale Waterside, as well as libraries located close to the Timperley Wedge and New Carrington allocations. Officers from the Strategic Planning team will also be available to respond to queries via email/telephone/letter throughout the consultation period.
- 10.5 At the Regulation 19 stage Trafford Council put up site notices at multiple locations across the proposed allocations, alerting the public to the consultation and where to access further information. The Council also displayed posters publicising the consultation in various libraries and community hubs. Whilst not a requirement of Trafford’s’ SCI, these methods will be employed once again to reflect the nature of the Regulation 19 consultation. However, to avoid confusion about the nature of the consultation, it will be made as clear as possible that this mandatory consultation is about the proposed main modifications, changes to the policies map, updated sustainability appraisal and habitat regulations assessment reports only. In this regard, it will also be made clear that comments about the principle and/or appropriateness of the plan, its policies or the proposed allocations, are not relevant at this stage and will therefore not be considered by the Inspectors.
- 10.6 All consultation documents are available at [Modifications – Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/modifications)

11 Post Main Modifications Consultation

- 11.1 Following the conclusion of the consultation, the representations received will be forwarded to the Programme Officers along with a report listing all of the representations; a summary of the main issues raised; and a brief response, on behalf of the nine districts, to those main issues.
- 11.2 The Inspectors will consider all the representations made on the proposed Main Modifications (MMs) before finalising the examination report and the schedule of recommended MMs. Further hearing sessions will not usually be held, unless the Inspectors consider them essential to deal with substantial issues raised in the representations, or to ensure fairness.
- 11.3 When deciding whether or not to recommend that the local planning authorities should make the MMs, the Inspectors will normally consider them in the form in which they were published for consultation. However, in some limited circumstances, the responses to consultation may lead the Inspector to consider that a new MM, or an amendment to one that has already been consulted on, is also necessary to make the plan sound or legally compliant; or that a proposed MM is not in fact necessary for soundness and should not be recommended. The Inspectors may only recommend such changes to the MMs without further consultation if they are satisfied that no party would be prejudiced as a result. For example, the consultation already undertaken on the MMs might have adequately addressed the point, or the amendment might be a very minor one. Should further consultation be necessary a further report will be presented to the nine authorities for approval.
- 11.4 Alternatively, if the Inspectors consider that no further consultation is necessary following the modifications' consultation (which is the subject of this report), the ultimate decision to adopt must be taken by each of the Full Councils of the nine participating local authorities. This will be the subject of a further report at the appropriate time.

Other options

There are no realistic alternative options available that would be in the best interests of Traffords' residents, businesses, communities, or environments. The PfE Plan ensures that development in the Plan area and Trafford can come forward in a

sustainable manner giving developers, investors, communities, and the Council certainty in decisions on planning matters. The Planning Inspectors have stated that they are satisfied, at this stage of the examination, that all of the proposed main modifications are necessary to make the Plan sound and would be effective in that regard. While this is without prejudice to their final conclusions, it is a significant milestone in progressing PfE.

Withdrawing from the PfE Plan would likely jeopardise the entire PfE Plan for all the LA's involved. It would further require Trafford to consider strategic issues such as housing numbers and Green Belt in the Trafford Local Plan and would result in significant delays in Trafford having an up-to-date development plan. It would also likely require Trafford to deliver a higher housing number, requiring the release of more Green Belt land in Trafford. This approach would also incur substantial additional costs which cannot be recovered from the time and resources expended to date on PfE.

Reasons for Recommendations

The PfE Plan enables a strategic approach to delivering growth and housing needs in the Plan area and in Trafford, and it sets the strategic framework for the Local Plan. The proposed modifications need to be approved by each of the nine LA's to ensure that the Plan can progress through the Examination process to Adoption.

Key Decision (as defined in the Constitution): Yes

If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? Yes

Finance Officer Clearance PC

Legal Officer Clearance IA

[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.