

<b>Family Name</b>	Woodhams
<b>Given Name</b>	Caroline
<b>Person ID</b>	1287099
<b>Title</b>	Stakeholder Submission
<b>Type</b>	Web
<b>Family Name</b>	Woodhams
<b>Given Name</b>	Caroline
<b>Person ID</b>	1287099
<b>Title</b>	JPA 9: Walshaw
<b>Type</b>	Web
<b>Soundness - Positively prepared?</b>	Unsound
<b>Soundness - Justified?</b>	Unsound
<b>Soundness - Consistent with national policy?</b>	Unsound
<b>Soundness - Effective?</b>	Unsound
<b>Compliance - Legally compliant?</b>	No
<b>Compliance - In accordance with the Duty to Cooperate?</b>	No
<b>Redacted reasons - Please give us details of why you consider the consultation point not to be legally compliant, is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.</b>	<p>Failure to comply with Statement of Community Involvement</p> <p>Bury Council have failed to comply with their Statement of Community Involvement</p> <p>Statement of Community Involvement (bury.gov.uk) at all stages of the creation of the plan.</p> <p>There was no notification to residents of the initial call for sites and the amount spent on making residents aware of the plan is disproportionately small ( £100 as per the</p> <p>response to a Freedom of Information request) in comparison to the effect it will have upon them. There has been a deliberate campaign of misinformation and misleading statements to promote and "sell" the Plan to residents, rather than a presentation of the facts eg residents only being told of the plans for their specific ward, and not being informed of the bigger picture across the borough, thus giving the impression that the impact is less than it is. There has been an over reliance on residents finding things out for themselves on social media and websites and thus a failure to engage with various groups due to over reliance on the use of social media and technology. There has been no access to public internet, eg in libraries, during Covid. This has adversely and disproportionately affected older people and those from deprived backgrounds. This is against the SCI 2.4 &amp; 4.17. Countrywide, Covid restrictions are now lifted</p> <p>but restrictions still remain in place in Bury's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI para 1.7). Consultations have been inaccessible in terms of language and terminology used and have been a deterrent to becoming involved in the planning process as they have been wordy, long winded and intrusive, thus producing an irrelevant response rate. National Planning Policy Framework greenbelt protection clauses The purpose of the NPPF</p>

greenbelt protection is to prevent urban sprawl. Para 11.119, page 271 of PfE states of the Walshaw allocation,

"This is an extensive area of land □□ set entirely within the existing urban area. The land is loosely bounded by the urban areas of Tottington to the north, Woolfold and Elton to the east Lowercroft to the south and Walshaw to the west."

Filling in this green belt site will create an urban sprawl contrary to NPPF para 137 and para 138 a,b,c and e. There has been no evidence of the existence of exceptional circumstances to justify the alteration of the greenbelt boundaries to allow building on the Walshaw allocation as is required by the NPPF, para 140. Housing need is not an exceptional circumstance to justify the release of greenbelt. Government guidance states that housing need is not a target but merely a starting point and figures can be mitigated upwards or downwards according to local circumstances, eg lack of brownfield, economic shock (Brexit, Covid-19).

To prove that exceptional circumstances to justify alteration to greenbelt boundaries exist, the NPPF requires evidence that all other reasonable options to meet identified need have been considered (NPPF para 141). This must include maximising use of brownfield and underutilised sites and maximising density.

#### Assessments

There has been a failure to conduct thorough and independent ecological assessments. Assessments carried out have been done on behalf of developers and are therefore not independent. Site wildlife, flood risk and other surveys have been carried out by consultancies on behalf of and paid for by developers rather than entirely independent wildlife organisations or the Department of the Environment so must be considered potentially biased.

The Housing Need Assessment was carried out by Arc4, who were supposed to carry out a non-biased survey of housing need. However, they have a partnership with Greater Manchester Housing Partnership, an organisation of housing associations, including Six Town Housing in Bury. The assessment was therefore not impartial.

#### Climate change policy and carbon neutral policy

Places for Everyone proposes employment sites on the other side of the borough from

Walshaw on the M66 Northern Gateway Corridor, necessitating travel by car as no direct public transport route exists or is proposed, thus increasing carbon emissions. Local transport hubs in Bury are only accessible from Walshaw by a car journey or an expensive, unreliable and infrequent bus service, again increasing carbon emissions. The proposed new link road at Walshaw will do nothing to alleviate congestion on the roads, simply transferring the problem from one place to another.

#### Up to date information

The PfE indicates in Para 1.63 point 2 that the most up to date information be used in plan making, so being the most recent Bury's Housing Development Needs Assessment 2020 must be taken into consideration: <https://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=15866>

#### Soundness

#### Site Selection

The site selection process for Bury has been especially opaque. Little information has been given about why other more apparently suitable sites were rejected, or what alternatives were considered. Bury Council admitted in a Freedom of Information response that site selection was decided at a series of informal meetings with no list of attendees or minutes available. This site choice cannot be justified as the most appropriate when no

reasonable alternatives appear to have been examined. Alternative options were ruled out too early or were not considered despite other areas having direct motorway access or being situated nearer to employment sites.

In addition, the Walshaw site performs poorly against site selection criteria and strongly against greenbelt assessment criteria. Therefore the inclusion of the Walshaw site cannot be justified:

- The Walshaw site only met one of the criteria for site selection, namely the most general and vague criteria, Criteria 7, land that would deliver significant local benefits by addressing a major local problem (Site Allocation Topic Paper JPA 9 Walshaw pg 8, para 5.4). The only major local problem identified in Walshaw is the extra traffic that will be created by the proposed 1250 new houses. Without the houses, there is not a major problem and the infrastructure proposed would not be needed. This is essentially a cyclical argument and not a specific justification for the inclusion of the site. NB In the Site Selection Background Paper, Criteria 7 is missing from the table of site selection criteria at pg 18.

- The Walshaw allocation only meets 3 out of 10 of the broad objectives within Section 3 of

the PfE plan (Site Allocation Topic Paper JPA 9 Walshaw pg 8, para 5.7):

- Objective 1 - Meet our housing need;
- Objective 5 - Reduce inequalities and improve prosperity;
- Objective 6 - Promote the sustainable movement of people, goods and information.

Again, these objectives could be satisfied by any number of sites in the area.

Changes to greenbelt boundaries

As part of the overall plan Bury have modified green belt boundaries and allocations in such a way to make it appear that less Greenbelt is being sacrificed. The loss of the Walshaw site greenbelt has been partially offset by creating extensive but unusable greenbelt in other areas without justifying exceptional circumstances. This is not in accordance with National Policy.

**Redacted modification - Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make this section of the plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified above.**

The Walshaw site should be removed from the plan and remain as greenbelt.

The Walshaw site makes a strong or moderate to strong contribution to the purpose of the greenbelt in each of the areas of the Greater Manchester Greenbelt Assessment 2016

(Site Allocation Topic Paper JPA 9 Walshaw, pages 27 - 28, para 15.3):

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas Moderate-Strong

To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another Strong

To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

Moderate-Strong

Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns

Moderate-Strong

- Site Allocation Topic Paper JPA 9 Walshaw at page 29 para 15.8 refers to The Green Belt Harm Assessment, 2020 which concluded that the Walshaw allocation makes a moderate contribution to checking the sprawl of Greater Manchester and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The allocation also makes a relatively limited contribution to maintaining the separation of Bury and Tottington which are already merged to a significant degree. Release of the allocation would therefore cause moderate harm to Green Belt purposes.

The lack of selection criteria met and the harm that will be caused by the release of the Walshaw greenbelt are evidence of the lack of justification for the selection of this site. In fact, an ex Bury Council leader, David Jones,

admitted in writing that sites had been selected due to their sheer size and the ease of implementation of infrastructure, saying,

'the proposed strategy within the GMSF is to release a small number of large strategic sites from the Green Belt as these will provide the scale and massing of development that is needed to enable the viable delivery of the essential major infrastructure to support the development.'

The needs of the Walshaw community have been overlooked in favour of mass urbanisation by using this particular site rather than sites on the outskirts nearer motorway access, transport hubs and employment sites. There is too much emphasis on economic growth at the expense of mental and physical health of residents with the benefits of the greenbelt being underestimated.