

Stockport Green Party - Response to Greater Manchester Combined Authorities Draft Spatial Framework of October 2016

We support need to plan for future housing needs and job creation

We challenge the basis of the projections made for future jobs and housing. The “Accelerated Growth Scenario” forecasts 199,700 extra jobs and 294,800 extra residents in Greater Manchester by 2035.

- Requirement for growth is not established.
- Greens recommend a different approach to growth, i.e. sustainable economic development.

We share the view with many participants in this process so far that a projected economic growth of 2.5% year on year until 2035 is over ambitious, unrealistic and ultimately, environmentally “unsound”.

- Economic growth of 2.5% is higher than any relevant professional body would be willing to predict, especially in the current post-Brexit climate.
- There should be a clear strategy for the phased release of land for development to meet the ‘actual’ requirements as opposed to forecast, particularly the proposed release of green belt land.

It is preferable to regenerate existing under-used land in urban areas to make them thriving places to live and work, rather than allowing existing communities to remain run-down, and focussing on developing green space.

- Priority should be to develop within the existing urban areas first (as stated in the frameworks aims) and only to move on to developing green belt land when the supply of this is exhausted.
- Stockport Green Party oppose the use of green belt land and the Stockport area is disproportionately affected
- Private developers prefer to build on green space because it is cheaper, less risky and more profitable for them. The risk is that the green belt development occurs before urban renewal.

Overall the GMSF contains a fundamental mismatch between the vision and the proposals in terms of the impact on the environment. Doing nothing to deliver environmental improvements and combat climate change, and to

direct new development towards locations that support urban regeneration, and reduce the need to travel

- The top priorities for a sustainable future for Greater Manchester must be to combat Global Warming and Climate Change, to promote renewable energy and energy conservation, and to protect biodiversity and wild habitats.
- The loss of Green Belt will result in increased air pollution, poor health outcomes, and increased carbon emissions, affecting all of Stockport.
- Green Belt land has been categorised in terms of varying quality, this does not alter the fact that the development can only take place on Green Belt land in “very exceptional circumstances”.

Whilst great efforts have been taken by GMCA to carry out a review of Green Belt land, no such systematic approach has been undertaken regarding Brownfield land.

- A review of Brownfield land ought to be produced as a matter of some urgency. Stockport Council has a list of all Brownfield sites available but none of these have been included in the sites earmarked for development.
- There is no mention of smaller in-fill sites which could accommodate much needed smaller high density housing developments, including social housing, or how empty properties, office blocks or disused Mills could be brought back into use.
- When Brownfield sites are re-developed we need to ensure that infrastructure is improved to cope including recreational open space.

Any new housing developments should be created as sustainable and diverse new neighbourhoods with a range of housing types. including a substantial proportion of social housing at genuinely affordable rents and secure tenancies

- There should be more provision of affordable housing for purchase by local first time buyers, at a level set by the needs of local people not by the profit margins of developers.
- Proposed housing should be sustainable, created to passive housing standards at a minimum and reducing the impact of development.

- The GMSF contains many references to 'a high level of green infrastructure'. It is not clarified how this would be implemented.
- New neighbourhoods need good community facilities. These facilities need to be delivered early on in the development of an area so new residents see them as an integral part of the area.
- Any new public buildings within housing developments (schools, medical centres) should generate their own electricity, and should be used as cycling hubs and community hubs.
- The Stanley Green development needs to consider what is happening in East Cheshire with the proposed North Cheshire Garden Village.
- Sustainable transport links are essential at the outset including cycling infrastructure, if the new green belt estates are not to be car dominated and act as a major contributor to congestion and air.
- It is essential to provide good public transport early so a sustainable pattern of travel develops.
- In the High Lane proposal, GMSF rightly states that developers should contribute to the cost of a fixed rail link extending from Rose Hill to the proposed development and potentially to Hazel Grove.
- Woodford needs to have a comprehensive public transport plan.

Public transport in the Stockport area needs to be improved in general, including the extension of the metro-link to Stockport, and extend as far as possible. The East / West radial links from Stockport Town Centre are currently inadequate. The aim must be to eliminate all short car journeys.

- Stockport has received no major public transport improvement as a result of SEMMMS, with cost of road building dwarfing the amount spent.
- South East Stockport is planned to have an additional 9,400 homes, with further proposals in North East Cheshire, this will require a significant public transport investment.
- The provision of social and transport infrastructure takes time to plan and implement, creating a further argument for deferring green belt development until it is truly needed.

- There is a lack of any master plan which would explain where the considerable investments in infrastructure required to develop these sites in Stockport would come from.

Many of the areas allocated for industrial and warehouse development, appear to have been selected primarily based on their proximity to motorway junctions, instead of providing good opportunities for establishing more sustainable patterns of freight movement to and from these sites. These include the Eastern Gateway of which Bredbury is part.

- The extension of the tram network from Stockport to Ashton would provide public transport to the site at the same time as providing a radial link from Stockport, which should also include improved links to Reddish and Brinnington.
- The focus on road-based distribution is compounded by support for major investment in strategic highways, including the proposed TransPennine Road Tunnel. This will lock Greater Manchester into an environmentally unsustainable land allocation strategy.
- Accordingly, the allocation of industrial and warehousing employment land should be revisited with more priority given to locations capable of being served by rail.
- Any industrial and warehousing development should include the reduction of energy consumption, increased use of renewables, and the provision of cycling infrastructure as part of the design.