

Examination of Places for Everyone

Joint Development Plan Document

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IN11: Matters, Issues and Questions relating to Green Belt additions

This note sets out some of the Matters, Issues and Questions that will help us decide if the Plan is sound and legally compliant and, if not, how it could be modified to ensure that it is (**Annex 2**). Matters, Issues and Questions relating to other parts of the Plan are set out in separate Inspector Notes.

The GMCA should submit written statements that respond to all of our Matters, Issues and Questions on behalf of the nine local planning authorities¹.

Any representor may submit a written statement or statements. However, these should only be in response to questions that relate to their original representations made under regulation 20 in response to the consultation held between August and October 2021. Representors' statements should set out the key points from their original representation against the relevant questions, and not introduce new arguments or evidence.

Written statements must be prepared in accordance with the advice in **Annex 1**.

Written statements in response to the questions in this note must be emailed to the Programme Officers in PDF format by **midday on Thursday 6 October 2022**.

No written material will be accepted after the relevant deadline for statements (unless it has been specifically requested by us).

Written statements will be published on the examination website as soon as possible after the deadline so that they are available to all participants and anyone else who

¹ All references to "the GMCA" in this document, and by us throughout the examination, should be taken to refer to the nine local planning authorities where relevant in accordance with the provisions of section 28(1) and other parts the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

wishes to read them. Because they will be available in this way, they will not be circulated directly to participants. Anyone who is unable to access them on the website should contact the Programme Officers.

Where relevant, our Matters, Issues and Questions refer to the GMCA's proposed main modifications and other responses to our Preliminary Questions. We will take account of the GMCA's proposed main modifications, along with all of the published evidence, representations made in accordance with regulation 20, and written statements in coming to our conclusions at the end of the examination. However, we can only recommend main modifications if we decide that they are essential to make the Plan sound or legally compliant. We cannot recommend a modification because it would "improve" the Plan, irrespective of the wishes of the GMCA or anyone else.

Any queries about this note should be taken up with the Programme Officers.

William Fieldhouse Louise Gibbons Steven Lee

21 July 2022

Written statements

All written statements must be prepared in accordance with this advice.

Any representor may submit a written statement or statements. However, these should only be in response to questions that relate to the representations that you made under regulation 20 (ie during the consultation held from 9 August to 3 October 2021). Statements should set out the key points from your representation against the relevant questions, and not introduce new arguments.

Statements should be concise and focussed, and in any event must contain no more than **1,000 words for each individual site added to the Green Belt**.

A separate statement must be submitted for each Matter that contains a question or questions that you wish to respond to. Each statement must:

- Include your name and Matter number in the top right corner of each page.
- Answer each question that you wish to respond to separately with clear reference to the relevant question number.
- Include a word count at the bottom of the final page.
- Have no appendices attached.

Where appropriate, reference should be made to relevant parts of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (“NPPF”) (paragraph numbers) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (“PPG”) (eg ID:61-002-20190315) with an explanation of why you think the policy in question is consistent or inconsistent with it. Reference should also be made to specific parts of evidence in the examination library, including the GMCA submission and supporting documents and any documents submitted by representors with their regulation 20 representations. The document reference, title, page and paragraph number should be stated.

There is no need to quote extensive parts of the NPPF, PPG or evidence documents, although a brief extract or summary of key factual information from evidence in the examination library may be included if it is directly relevant to one of our questions.

Written statements are not the opportunity to introduce new evidence. If the GMCA or any representor considers that there is evidence that it is essential to refer to in order to answer one of our questions, but which is not in the examination library, please check with the Programme Officers before submitting it. If, exceptionally, we agree to accept additional evidence, for example because it has only become available since the Plan was submitted and it is essential for us to consider, it would be added to the examination library.

If your response to any of our questions concludes that the relevant part of the Plan is not sound, your statement should set out how you think it should be modified to ensure that it is. Where relevant, refer to any proposed modifications or changes to the Policies Map that have been proposed by the GMCA.

Matters, Issues and Questions relating to Green Belt additions

Introduction

The Greater Manchester Green Belt was originally designated in full in 1984 and was subsequently subject to a series of minor changes through individual districts' local plans².

The Plan proposes that a total of 49 sites be added to the existing Green Belt (total 675 hectares). These are listed in Table B.1, indicated on Picture B.2, and designated on the Policies Map. A map of each site, showing the change to the Green Belt, is included in Appendix B to the Plan.

National policy advises that, once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified through the preparation or updating of plans.

The GMCA response to PQ33 advises that the exceptional circumstances are that each of the sites proposed to be added to the Green Belt serves at least one of the five purposes of Green Belt set out in NPPF 138 and meets all five criteria to establish new Green Belt in NPPF 139. We are particularly interested, for each site, in what the major changes in circumstances are that have made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary, and why normal planning and development management policies would not continue to be adequate.

Matter 25: Green Belt additions – Bolton

Issue 25.1. GBA01 Ditchers Farm, Westhoughton

The parcel comprises 41.3 ha at the northern edge of Westhoughton. Land within the parcel comprises a relatively large area of flat open farmland with some farm and other buildings. The M61 forms the northern parcel boundary, and the railway line forms the south easterly boundary.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs moderate roles in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, preventing Westhoughton, Horwich and Bolton from merging and in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. Although it has a sense of urban containment, it would contribute to the strategic role of the Green Belt by checking urban sprawl north of Westhoughton and preserving the gap.

Q25.1. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 41.3 hectares of land at Ditchers Farm to the Green Belt? In particular:

² Plan paragraph 8.54.

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) The extent to which it fulfils the purpose of preventing Westhoughton, Horwich and Bolton from merging bearing in mind the M61 forms the northern parcel boundary.
- c) The extent to which buildings on the site affect openness?
- d) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to heritage assets, and countryside not be adequate?

Issue 25.2. GBA02 Horwich Golf Club/Knowles Farm

The parcel of 24.1 ha is in the east of Horwich. Land within the parcel comprises Horwich Golf Club golf course, a block of woodland, and arable fields. Horwich Golf Club buildings and part of the associated car park are in the south of the parcel and a farmstead in the north. Enclosed to the northwest, west, south and southeast by residential developments, a church and educational facilities.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs moderate roles in preventing sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, preventing Horwich and Bottom' Th' Moor from merging. The evidence also indicates it has a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns (Horwich). It makes no significant contribution to the strategic role of the Green Belt, having a local role only.

Q25.2. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 24.1 hectares of land at Horwich Golf Club/Knowles Farm to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Is Horwich an "historic town" as referred to in NPPF 138?
- c) The extent to which it fulfils the purpose of preventing encroachment having regard to whether the site forms part of the wider countryside.
- d) Would including the site in the Green Belt prevent the effective use of the land for recreational activities?
- e) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to heritage assets, open space and countryside not be adequate?

Matter 26: Green Belt additions – Bury

Issue 26.1. GBA03 Pigs Lea Brook 1

The site comprises 5.6 ha of land at the northern edge of Bury comprising mostly wooded river banks. The A56 runs through the southwest forming part of the boundary. Walmersley Old Road forms much of the north western boundary of the parcel and much of the southern boundary is formed by Mather Road.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs moderate roles in preventing sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, but it lacks a strong rural

character. It would contribute to the strategic Green Belt in that is open and would assist in restricting sprawl from Bury but it is relatively self-contained which limits the contribution. Currently designated as a River Valley site.

Q26.1. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 5.6 hectares of land at Pigs Lea Brook to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to green infrastructure, open space and countryside not be adequate?

Issue 26.2 GBA04 North of Nuttall Park

3.0 ha of woodland to the east of Ramsbottom. The edges of the parcel with the adjoining inset edge are defined by the River Irwell, Nutthall Road and woodland, whilst a footpath marks the edge of the parcel with the wider Green Belt within Nutthall Park to the south.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs a strong role safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns (Ramsbottom), and a moderate role in preventing sprawl. Its small size would not have any impact on the strategic Green Belt.

Q26.2. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 3.0 hectares of land north of Nuttall Park to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Is Ramsbottom an "historic town" as referred to in NPPF 138?
- c) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to heritage assets, green infrastructure, open space and countryside not be adequate?

Issue 26.3 GBA05 Pigs Lea Brook 2

0.6 ha comprising land at the northern edge of Bury. Grassland field sloping up to the south. A lane defines the northern edge and contains no development.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs moderate roles in preventing sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, but it lacks a strong rural character. It would not contribute to the strategic Green Belt as it is too small. Currently designated as a River Valley site.

Q26.3. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 0.6ha hectares of land at Pigs Lea Brook 2 to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?

- b) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- c) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to green infrastructure, open space and countryside not be adequate, including having regard to the topography of the site?

Issue 26.4 GBA06 Hollins Brook

3.1 ha located on the south eastern edge of Hollins, part of Bury. Relatively flat, comprising grassland and scrub. Bound to the south by Hollins Brook, to the east by the M66, to the north by a reservoir and to the northwest by industrial development. The parcel is wholly undeveloped.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs a strong role in preventing encroachment as the site is rural in character and a moderate role in preventing merging of Bury and Whitfield. It is separated from the built area. It would make a very minor contribution to the strategic Green Belt in checking urban sprawl. Currently designated as a River Valley site and as a Site of Biological Importance. The evidence also refers to the site being undevelopable due to flood risk and poor accessibility.

Q26.4. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 3.1ha hectares of land at Hollins Brook to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to ecology, green infrastructure, open space and countryside not be adequate, including having regard to flood risk and access constraints?

Issue 26.5 GBA07 off New Road, Radcliffe

Site comprises 3.3 ha of land at the south eastern edge of Radcliffe. Comprises sloping unmanaged grassland with pockets of tree cover present across the parcel and a pond towards its north western corner. Parts of both the north west and north east of the parcel have been cleared for industrial or storage purposes and now serve as hardstanding.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs moderate roles in preventing sprawl and encroachment into the countryside. Elevated site which reduces sense of containment. It would make a very limited contribution to the strategic Green Belt in checking urban sprawl and preventing coalescence. Currently designated as a River Valley site. The evidence also refers to the site being undevelopable due to topography.

Q26.5. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 3.3ha hectares of land at New Road, Radcliffe to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) The extent to which it fulfils the purposes of the Green Belt having regard to the site containing brownfield land.
- c) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to green infrastructure, open space and countryside not be adequate, including having regard to the topography of the site?

Issue 26.6. GBA08 Hollins Brow

2.3 ha of land on the southern edge of Bury. Land steeply slopes down from Hollins Brow road, bounding the east of the parcel, towards the River Roch, bounding the west of the parcel. Predominantly woodland in the south and east and some grassland scrub in the north with a dwelling, with associated out buildings and a paddock, is also located in the north of the parcel. Existing Green Belt land lies to the east beyond Hollins Brow Road. Enclosed to the northeast by residential development, and to the west beyond the River Roch by residential development, as well as some woodland with commercial development beyond.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs a strong role in preventing merging (between Bury and Whitfield) and moderate roles in preventing sprawl and encroachment into the countryside, it lacks a strong rural character. Elevated site which reduces sense of containment. It would make a very limited contribution to the strategic Green Belt in checking urban sprawl but has a stronger role in preventing coalescence. Currently designated as a River Valley site. The evidence also refers to the site being undevelopable due to ecological and access constraints.

Q26.6. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 2.3ha hectares of land at Hollins Brow to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to ecology, green infrastructure, open space and countryside not be adequate, including having regard to access constraints?

Issue 26.7. GBA09 Hollybank Street, Radcliffe

1.2 ha of land at the western edge of Radcliffe. Comprises areas of grassland with trees. A paved footpath passes through the parcel by its eastern boundary which is the Manchester Bolton and Bury Canal.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs moderate roles in preventing sprawl and encroachment into the countryside, it lacks a strong rural character. It would have little impact on the strategic Green Belt. Currently designated as Other Protected Open Land and protected recreation. The evidence also refers to the site providing a more defensible boundary to the Green Belt due to the canal to the east and car park to the north.

Q26.7. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 1.2 ha hectares of land at Hollybank Street, Radcliffe to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Would including the site in the Green Belt prevent the effective use of the land for recreational activities?
- c) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to open space and countryside not be adequate?

Issue 26.8. GBA10 Crow Lumb Wood

13.7 ha of land to the east of Ramsbottom. Much of the site is steeply sloping and covered with woodland, although areas of amenity grassland and playing fields (St Andrews Fields) are located along the southern boundary.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns (Ramsbottom), and a moderate role in preventing sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, the site is woodland but does not have a strong rural character. In respect of the strategic Green Belt, the evidence refers to a limited effect on preventing sprawl, and that it is well contained and influenced by the urban area. Currently designated as River Valley and is in recreation use and with steep topography and flood risk on the site.

Q26.8. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 13.7 ha of land north of Crow Lumb Wood to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Is Ramsbottom an "historic town" as referred to in NPPF 138?
- c) Would including the site in the Green Belt prevent the effective use of the land for recreational activities?
- d) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to heritage assets, green infrastructure, open space and countryside not be adequate including having regard to topography and flood risk constraints?

Issue 26.9. GBA11 Nuttall West, Ramsbottom

Comprises 0.4 ha land to the south of Ramsbottom. Relatively small in size and consists of scrub land to the south west of the existing residential development at Marlborough Close. The eastern boundary of the parcel is formed by residential gardens and the outer boundaries are defined by woodland, including ancient woodland to the north and west.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs a strong role in preventing sprawl and a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Small in size with a limited effect on the strategic Green Belt. Currently designated as River Valley.

Q26.9. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 0.4 ha of land north of Nuttall West, Ramsbottom to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to green infrastructure, open space and countryside not be adequate?

Issue 26.10. GBA12 Woolfold, Bury

12.5 ha comprising land to the north west of Bury. Consists of mostly river valley with areas of tree cover. A number of public rights of way run across the parcel and in places the Kirkless Trail acts as the northern boundary of the parcel. Woodhill Brook also passes through the parcel. The parcel also contains a number of ponds.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs a moderate role in preventing sprawl and in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, site is also not part of the wider countryside. Small in size with a limited effect on the strategic Green Belt and coalescence has already taken place. Currently designated as River Valley. The evidence also refers to the site being undevelopable due to the terrain and green infrastructure, and that its inclusion would lead to a more defensible boundary.

Q26.10. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 12.5 ha of land at Woolfold, Bury to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to green infrastructure, open space and countryside not be adequate?

Issue 26.11. GBA13 Nuttall East, Ramsbottom

1.0 ha site comprising land to the southeast of Ramsbottom. Much of the parcel is covered with trees with some areas of scrub land interspersed with no development. The parcel is adjacent to residential gardens to the west and its eastern boundary is formed by a public right of way.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs a strong role in preventing sprawl and a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Small in size with a limited effect on the strategic Green Belt. Currently designated as River Valley and protected recreation.

Q26.11. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 1.0 ha of land at Nuttall East, Ramsbottom to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) The extent to which it fulfils the purposes of the Green Belt having regard to the strength of the existing green belt boundary.

- c) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to green infrastructure, open space and countryside not be adequate?

Issue 26.12. GBA14 Chesham, Bury

The site comprises 1.08 ha of land at the north-eastern edge of Bury. Includes areas of amenity grass land with footpaths, pastoral land and pockets of woodland.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs a strong role in preventing sprawl and in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The site contributes to preventing encroachment in relation to the strategic Green Belt. Currently designated as Other Open Protected Land, and a Site of Biological Importance partly covers the site. The evidence also refers to the site being currently in recreational use and with large amounts of tree cover.

Q26.12. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 1.08ha of land at Chesham, Bury to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to ecology, green infrastructure, open space and countryside not be adequate?

Issue 26.13. GBA15 Broad Hey Wood North

9.1 ha comprising land to the south of Ramsbottom. Much of the parcel is wooded, predominantly comprising of ancient woodland in addition to amenity grassland.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns (Ramsbottom), and moderate roles in preventing sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. In relation to the strategic Green Belt, the site is open but is well contained and influenced by urban area. The evidence also refers to the site being indistinguishable from the Green Belt to the south.

Q26.13. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 9.1ha at Broad Hey Wood North to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Is Ramsbottom an "historic town" as referred to in NPPF 138?
- c) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to heritage assets, ancient woodland, green infrastructure, open space and countryside not be adequate?

Issue 26.14. GBA16 Lower Hinds

14.5 ha of land located in the valley of the River Irwell immediately south of Bury Town Centre and in-between the settlement areas of Elton and Fishpool. It is to the

north of Elton Reservoir and includes river terraces covered with trees and shrubs and woodland surrounding the Cygnet Hospital site. The tree cover and scrub, as well as some hedgerow, define the edges of much of the parcel, with the River Irwell defining the eastern edge of the parcel.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs moderate roles in preventing sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and it does not have a strong rural character. In relation to the strategic Green Belt, it has a limited role in restricting sprawl and preventing coalescence. Currently designated as River Valley and Site of Biological Importance. The evidence also refers to the site being currently undevelopable due to poor access and its ecological interests.

Q26.14. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 14.5 ha of land at Lower Hinds to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to ecology, green infrastructure, open space and countryside not be adequate including having regard to topography?

Matter 27: Green Belt additions – Oldham

Issue 27.1. GBA17 Land behind Denshaw Village Hall, Oldham

The site comprises 0.6 ha of amenity grassland to the rear of Denshaw Village Hall. GMCA's evidence indicates that, whilst it makes no contribution to the strategic role of the Green Belt, it performs a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and a strong role in preserving the setting of the historic village of Denshaw. The site is designated as open space in the Oldham local plan³.

Q27.1. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 0.6 hectares of land behind Denshaw Village Hall to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Is Denham village an "historic town" as referred to in NPPF 138?
- c) Why would national policy and Oldham local plan policies relating to heritage assets, open space and countryside not be adequate?

Matter 28: Green Belt additions – Rochdale

Issue 28.1. GBA18 Land within Roch Valley, Smallbridge, Rochdale

³ 07.01.07, 07.01.11, 07.01.22 and 07.01.25.

This site comprises 62 hectares of mainly large pasture fields with isolated farmsteads. It includes Cleggghall Fisheries, and the River Beal which crosses the southern part of the site to meet the River Roch to the north. Housing allocation JPA24 is located immediately to the north.

GMCA's evidence indicates that the site plays a moderate/strong role in preventing the sprawl of Rochdale urban area; a strong role in preventing the merging of Rochdale and Smithy Bridge; a moderate role in protecting the countryside from encroachment; and a weak role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. Due to its scale, it contributes to the strategic role of the Green Belt with regard to sprawl, merging and protecting the countryside. The site is designated as Protected Open Land and Greenspace Corridor in the adopted Rochdale local plan.

Q28.1. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 62 hectares of land in the Roch Valley on the edge of Smallbridge to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national policy and Rochdale local plan policies relating to green infrastructure, countryside, and flood management not be adequate?

Issue 28.2. GBA19 Land west of Stakehill Business Park, Rochdale

This site lies between Middleton and Stakehill Business Park and comprises around 47 hectares of open pasture fields, woodland, allotments and school sports pitches. It is crossed by Rochdale Canal and Rochdale Way.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it plays a moderate/strong role in preventing the sprawl of Middleton urban area, and a moderate role in protecting the countryside from encroachment. Due to its scale, it would contribute to those strategic roles as part of the larger area of Green Belt between Middleton, Bury, Rochdale, Royton and Chadderton. The site is designated as Protected Open Land and Greenspace Corridor in the adopted Rochdale local plan.

Q28.2. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 47 hectares of land west of Stakehill Business Park to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national policy and Rochdale local plan policies relating to green infrastructure, open space, sport, recreation and countryside not be adequate?

Issue 28.3. GBA20 Land at Firgrove Playing Fields, Rochdale

This site of around 18 hectares comprises playing fields on the eastern edge of the Rochdale urban area. GMCA's evidence indicates it plays moderate roles in preventing urban sprawl and protecting the countryside from encroachment, and weak roles in preventing the merging of Milnrow with Smithy Bridge and protecting

the setting of the historic town of Milnrow. It is designated as recreational open space and Greenspace Corridor in the Rochdale Local Plan.

The Council's latest Playing Pitch Strategy identifies the site as a major hub. Sport England's representation suggests that including the site in the Green Belt could restrict the provision of ancillary facilities on the site, for example upgraded changing rooms and a fenced and floodlit artificial grass pitch.

Q28.3. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding around 18 hectares of land at Firgrove playing fields to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Is Milnrow an "historic town" as referred to in NPPF 138?
- c) Why would national policy and Rochdale local plan policies relating to heritage assets, green infrastructure, open space, sport and recreation not be adequate?
- d) Would including the site in the Green Belt prevent the effective use of the land for recreational activities?

Issue 28.4. GBA21 Land between railway and Rochdale Canal, Littleborough, Rochdale

This site, on the north east edge of Littleborough, comprises around 10 hectares of flat pasture land between the Rochdale Canal and a railway line. The GMCA's evidence indicates it makes some contribution to the strategic roles of the Green Belt to the north and north east of Rochdale in preventing urban sprawl and protecting the historic setting of Littleborough. The site's modest size and location mean it makes a limited contribution to the strategic roles of preventing encroachment into countryside and merging towns. It is designated as Protected Open Land and Greenspace Corridor in the Rochdale Local Plan. The northern part of the site is in a conservation area.

Q28.4. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding around 10 hectares of land between the canal and railway on the edge of Littleborough to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Is Littleborough an "historic town" as referred to in NPPF 138?
- c) Why would national policy and Rochdale local plan policies relating to heritage assets, green infrastructure and countryside not be adequate?

Issue 28.5. GBA22 Land north of St Andrew's Church, Dearnley, Rochdale

This 8 hectare site in Dearnley comprises a cemetery, car park, amenity grassland, playing fields and scrubland. It is crossed by a number of public rights of way and small roads, and is contained by residential development to the south, east and west.

GMCA's evidence indicates the site plays moderate roles in preventing the sprawl of the Rochdale urban area and protecting the countryside from encroachment, and a weak role in protecting the setting of the historic town of Littleborough. It is designated as recreational open space and Greenspace Corridor in the Rochdale local plan.

Q28.5. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding around 8 hectares of land north of St Andrew's Church to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) The extent to which it prevents urban sprawl and encroachment into the countryside given the presence of existing development to the east, west and south.
- b) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- c) Why would national policy and Rochdale local plan policies relating to green infrastructure, open space, sport and recreation not be adequate?

Issue 28.6. GBA23 Land at Townhouse Brook, Littleborough, Rochdale

This 4.7 hectare site in Littleborough comprises pasture land with a few trees and small agricultural buildings and is crossed by Townhouse Brook. There is existing development to the west, east and south. GMCA's evidence indicates it plays a moderate/strong role in preventing urban sprawl, and moderate roles in protecting the countryside and the setting of the historic town of Littleborough. It is designated as Protected Open Land in the Rochdale local plan.

Q28.6. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding around 4.7 hectares of land at Townhouse Brook, Littleborough to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) The extent to which it prevents urban sprawl and encroachment into the countryside given the presence of existing housing to the east, west and south.
- b) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- c) Is Littleborough an "historic town" as referred to in NPPF 138?
- d) Why would national policy and Rochdale local plan policies relating to heritage assets and countryside not be adequate?

Issue 28.7. GBA24 Land north of Shore, Littleborough, Rochdale

This 2.8 hectare site on the northern edge of Littleborough comprises open pasture with a few scattered trees. There is existing housing to the east, west and south, some of which is on the site of a former mill that was redeveloped around 20 years ago. GMCA's evidence indicates the site plays strong roles in preventing urban sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and a weak role in protecting the setting of the historic town of Littleborough. It is designated as Protected Open Land in the Rochdale local plan.

Q28.7. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding around 2.8 hectares of land on the northern edge of Littleborough to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) The extent to which it prevents urban sprawl and encroachment into the countryside given the presence of existing housing to the east, west and south.
- b) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- c) Why would national policy and Rochdale local plan policies relating to the countryside not be adequate?

Issue 28.8. GBA25 Land at Summit, Heywood, Rochdale

This 1.4 hectare site is part of a larger area of rolling pastoral fields on the north west edge of Heywood. It is adjoined by existing Green Belt to the north, south and west, and housing to the east. GMCA's evidence indicates that it plays strong roles in preventing urban sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and a moderate role in preventing the merging of Heywood and Bury (the edge of which is around 480 metres to the west). It is designated as Protected Open Land in the Rochdale local plan

Q28.8. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding around 1.4 hectares of land on the north west edge of Heywood to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national policy and Rochdale local plan policies relating to countryside not be adequate?

Matter 29: Green Belt additions – Salford

Issue 29.1. GBA26 Land South East of Slack Brook Open Space

This site comprises 4.1 hectares of land between Pendlebury and Rainsclough. It comprises woodland and areas of amenity grassland. GMCA's evidence advises that it plays a moderate role in checking urban sprawl and weak roles in preventing the merging of Salford and Prestwich, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and preserving the setting and special character of historic settlements. The site is subject to protective designations and policies reflecting its recreational and ecological value through saved policies of the Salford Unitary Development Plan and through the emerging Salford local plan.

Q29.1. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 4.1 ha of land at Land South East of Slack Brook Open Space to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) The extent to which it prevents urban sprawl, encroachment into the countryside and merging of neighbouring towns given the presence of existing built development to the south and east?
- b) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?

c) Why would national and local plan policies relating to biodiversity and recreation not be adequate?

Issue 29.2. GBA27 West Salford Greenway

This area comprises 184.5 hectares of land that is surrounded by built-up areas of Worsley. The area comprises of fields, blocks of mature woodland, school playing fields, amenity grassland, a small cemetery, a lake and Worsley Golf Course.

GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a moderate role in checking urban sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, a weak role in preventing the merging of Worsley with Monton, Eccles or Boothstown. However, the evidence advises that it would play a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of the historic settlement of Worsley and plays a limited role in the setting of Monton Green. The parcel sits partly within the St Marks, Roe Green/Beesley Green and Worsley Village Conservation Areas. The area is within the Worsley Greenway designation in the saved policies of the Salford Unitary Development Plan and similar protections are proposed in the emerging Salford local plan (as the West Salford Greenway). The evidence suggests the area has been subject to significant pressure for housing development.

The Green Belt Topic Paper and Case for Exceptional Circumstances to amend the Green Belt Boundary⁴ suggests that designation of this area as Green Belt was referred to by Inspectors examining the 1984 Green Belt Local Plan, the 1995 Salford Unitary Development Plan and 2006 Salford Unitary Development Plan.

Q29.2. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 184.5ha of land at West Salford Greenway to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) The extent to which it prevents urban sprawl, encroachment into the countryside and merging of neighbouring towns given the presence of existing built development within and around the area? Have there been any changes in how the area serves the five purposes of Green Belt since it was considered for designation in 1984, 1995 and 2006?
- b) Are Worsley and Morton Green “historic towns” as referred to in NPPF 138?
- c) What are the major changes in circumstance since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary? In particular, what major changes in circumstance have there been since the designation of this area for Green Belt was considered in 1984, 1995 and 2006?
- d) Would including the site in the Green Belt prevent the effective use of any land in the area that is currently in recreational use, such as Worsley Golf Course?
- e) Why would local policies relating to the Worsley Greenway / West Salford Greenway and/or national and local policies relating to countryside, green infrastructure, biodiversity, heritage and recreation not be adequate?

Issue 29.3. GBA28 Part of Logistics North Country Park

⁴ 07.01.25

The parcel comprises 15.3 hectares of land on the western edge of Little Hutton. It contains areas of rough grassland and disturbed ground. GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a strong/moderate role in checking urban sprawl from Little Hutton and other development to the north, a moderate role in preventing the merging of Little Hutton, Tyldesley and Astley and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The parcel makes no contribution to preserving the setting or special character of historic towns.

The site forms part of a country park resulting from development of a logistics development in Bolton to the north. The area forms part of a wildlife corridor area of search and, as a country park, would be subject to general policies relating to the protection of public open space. Part of the site also falls within a Site of Biological Importance.

Q29.3. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 15.3ha of land at Part of Logistics North Country Park to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Would including the site in the Green Belt prevent the effective use of the land for recreational activities?
- c) Why would national and local policies on open space and biodiversity not be adequate?

Issue 29.4. GBA29 Land West of Burgess Farm

The site comprises 25.2 hectares of land on the southern edge of Walkden. It consists of agricultural fields and woodland. GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a strong/moderate role in checking urban sprawl from Walkden, a moderate role in preventing the merging of Walkden with Tyldesley and Astley and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. It makes no contribution to the role of preserving the setting or special character of historic towns. Much of the site is protected as a Site of Biological Importance.

GMCA evidence⁵ also advises that the addition of this parcel would specifically mitigate Green Belt lost through the allocation of land allocated for development in the Plan.

Q29.4. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 25.2ha of land at Land West of Burgess Farm to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) The extent to which it prevents urban sprawl, encroachment into the countryside and merging of neighbouring towns given the presence of existing built development to the north?
- b) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- c) The effect on openness from the built development within the parcel, including the sewage treatment works?

⁵ GMCA 07.01.25

- d) To what extent does compensating for loss caused by JPA35 - Land North of Mosely Common in Wigan constitute an exceptional circumstance for designation? Is this consistent with NPPF 139?
- e) Why would national and local policies on countryside or biodiversity not be adequate?

Issue 29.5. GBA30 Blackleach Country Park

The site comprises 34.1 hectares of land. It comprises Blackleach Reservoir, woodland and allotments. The GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a strong/moderate role in checking urban sprawl from Walkden, a strong role in preventing the merging of Walkden and Kearsley and preventing further coalescence of Farnworth and Walkden, a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and no contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. The site is subject to existing protective designations reflecting its recreational and ecological value.

- Q29.5. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 34.1ha of land at Blackleach Country Park to the Green Belt? In particular:
- a) The extent to which it prevents urban sprawl and encroachment into the countryside given the presence of existing built development within the area?
 - b) The extent to which it fulfils the purpose of preventing Walkden merging with Kearsley bearing in mind the M60 forms the northern parcel boundary?
 - c) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
 - d) Would including the site in the Green Belt prevent the effective use of the land for recreational activities?
 - e) Why would national and local policies on biodiversity and recreation not be adequate?

Matter 30: Green Belt additions – Tameside

Issue 30.1. GBA31 Fox Platt, Mossley

The site constitutes 7.9 hectares of land on the edge of Mossley. The land comprises allotments, rough grassland and shrub and woodland vegetation to the west. GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a strong role in checking sprawl from Mossley and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, a weak role in preventing the merging of Mossley and Ashton-under-Lyne and a weak role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. The site is designated as protected green space in the Tameside UDP.

- Q30.1. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 7.9ha of land at Fox Platt, Mossley to the Green Belt? In particular:
- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
 - b) Why would national and local policies on open space not be adequate?

Issue 30.2. GBA32 Manor Farm Close, Waterloo, Ashton-under-Lyne

The site constitutes 0.8 hectares of land north of the urban edge of Taunton. It includes an area of broadleaf woodland, grassland and a small building. GMCA evidence advises that it has a strong role in checking sprawl from Ashton-under-Lyne and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and a weak role in prevent the merging of Ashton-under-Lyne and Woodhouses and preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. The site is designated as protected green space in the Tameside UDP.

Q30.2. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 0.8ha of land at Manor Farm Close, Waterloo, Ashton-under-Lyne to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national and local policies on open space not be adequate?

Issue 30.3. GBA33 Ridge Hill Lane, Ridge Hill. Stalybridge

The site constitutes 6.8 hectares of land on the eastern edge of Ridge Hill. It comprises a mix of tree and shrub vegetation and open amenity grassland. GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a strong/moderate role in checking sprawl from Ridge Hill, a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and a weak role in preventing the merging of Stalybridge and Heyrod. The evidence advises that the parcel plays a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of Stalybridge. The site is designated as protected green space in the Tameside UDP and is adjacent to the Stalybridge Conservation Area.

Q30.3. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 6.8ha of land at Ridge Hill Lane, Stalybridge to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) Is Stalybridge an “historic town” as referred to in NPPF 138?
- b) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- c) Why would national and local policies on open space not be adequate?

Issue 30.4. GBA34 Cowbury Green, Long Row, Carrbrook, Stalybridge

The site constitutes 1.8 hectares of land located to the north-east of Carrbrook. It consists of open grassland and includes one building. GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a strong role in checking unrestricted sprawl of Carrbrook, a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and a weak role in preventing the merging of Stalybridge and Greenfield. However, the evidence states that it has a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of Carrbrook. The area is designated as protected green space in the Tameside UDP, is part of the Stalybridge country park and is within the Carrbrook Conservation Area.

Q30.4. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 1.8ha of land at Cowbury Green, Long Row, Carrbrook, Stalybridge to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) The extent to which it prevents urban sprawl, encroachment into the countryside and merging of neighbouring towns given the presence of existing built development to the south and west?
- b) Is Carrbrook an “historic town” as referred to in NPPF 138?
- c) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- d) Why would national and local policies on open space and heritage not be adequate?

Issue 30.5. GBA35 Woodview, South View, Carrbrook, Stalybridge

The site constitutes 2.1 hectares of land to the north-east of Carrbrook. It comprises an area of open grassland and recreation ground. GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a strong role in checking unrestricted sprawl of Carrbrook, a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, no contribution to prevent the merging of neighbouring towns and a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of Carrbrook. The parcel is designated as protected open space and part of the Carrbrook Conservation Area. The site also forms part of the Castle Clough and Cowbury Dale Local Nature Reserve.

Q30.5. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 2.1ha of land at Woodview, South View, Carrbrook, Stalybridge to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) The extent to which it prevents urban sprawl and encroachment into the countryside given the presence of existing built development on three sides of the parcel?
- b) Is Carrbrook an “historic town” as referred to in NPPF 138?
- c) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- d) Why would national and local policies on open space, biodiversity or heritage not be adequate?

Issue 30.6. GBA36 Yew Tree Lane, Dukinfield

The site constitutes 22.3ha of land adjacent to Dukinfield. It predominantly comprises Dukinfield golf club. GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a strong/moderate role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of Dukinfield, a moderate role in preventing the merging of Dukinfield with Stalybridge and Hyde and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and no contribution to preserving the setting or special character of historic towns. The site is designated as protected open space in the Tameside UDP.

Q30.6. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 22.3ha of land at Yew Tree Lane, Dukinfield to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) The extent to which it prevents urban sprawl, encroachment into the countryside and merging of neighbouring towns given the presence of existing built development to the north and south of the parcel?
- b) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- c) Would including the site in the Green Belt prevent the effective use of the land as a golf club?
- d) Why would national and local policies on open space and recreation not be adequate?

Issue 30.7. GBA37 Broadbottom Road, Broadbottom

This site constitutes 18.9 hectares of land between Hattersley and Mottram in Longdendale. The area is predominantly woodland with areas of open rough grassland. It contains a small number of buildings. GMCA evidence advises that the parcel plays a strong role in checking unrestricted sprawl of Mottram in Longdendale and Hattersley, a strong role in preventing the merging of Mottram and Hattersley, a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and a weak role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. The site is designated as protected open space in the Tameside UDP and a large portion is within the Clough Site of Biological Importance and Local Nature Reserve.

- Q30.7. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 18.9ha of land at Broadbottom Road, Broadbottom to the Green Belt? In particular:
- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
 - b) Why would national and local policies on open space and biodiversity not be adequate?

Issue 30.8. GBA38 Ardenfield, Haughton Green, Denton

This site constitutes 0.9 hectares of land south of Denton. GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a strong/moderate role in checking unrestricted sprawl of Haughton Green, Denton, a strong role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, a weak role in preventing the merging of Denton and Woodley and no contribution to preserving the setting or special character of historic towns. The site is designated as protected green space in the Tameside UDP and is subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

- Q30.8. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 0.9ha of land at Ardenfield, Haughton Green, Denton to the Green Belt? In particular:
- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
 - b) Why would national and local policies on open space not be adequate?

Issue 30.9. GBA39 Cemetery Road, Denton

This site constitutes 0.8 hectares of woodland off Cemetery Road, Denton. GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a strong/moderate role in checking unrestricted sprawl of Denton, a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, a weak role in preventing the merging of Haughton Green and Bredbury and no contribution to preserving the setting or special character of historic towns. The site is designated as protected green space in the Tameside UDP.

Q30.9. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 0.8ha of land at Cemetery Road, Denton to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national and local policies on open space and woodland not be adequate?

Issue 30.10. GBA40 Hyde Road, Mottram

This site constitutes 4.9 hectares of land which lies between Mottram in Longdendale in the east and Hattersely, Hyde to the west. It consists primarily of tree and shrub vegetation.

GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a strong/moderate role in checking unrestricted sprawl between Mottram in Longdendale and Hattersley, a strong role in preventing the merging of Hattersley and Mottram in Longdendale, a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and a weak role in preserving the setting or special character of historic towns. The site is designated as protected green space in the Tameside UDP.

Q30.10. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 4.9ha of land at Hyde Road, Mottram to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national and local policies on open space not be adequate?

Issue 30.11. GBA41 Ashworth Lane, Mottram

This site constitutes 1.1 hectares of land. It lies between Mottram in Longdendale in the east and Hyde to the west. It consists predominantly of open amenity grassland and mature trees to the south.

GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a strong role in checking unrestricted sprawl between Mottram in Longdendale and Hattersley, a strong role in preventing the merging of Hattersley and Mottram in Longdendale, a strong role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and a weak role in preserving the setting or special character of historic towns. The site is designated as protected green space in the Tameside UDP.

Q30.11. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 1.1ha of land at Ashworth Lane, Mottram to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national and local policies on open space not be adequate?

Issue 30.12. GBA42 Horses Field, Dane Bank, Denton

This site constitutes 6.9 hectares of land located west of Denton. It comprises amenity grassland fields and woodland and is enclosed by residential development within Denton to the north and west and railway line to the east.

GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a strong/moderate role in checking unrestricted sprawl of Denton, a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, no contribution to preventing the merging of neighbouring towns or preserving the setting or special character of historic towns. The site is designated as protected green space in the Tameside UDP.

Q30.12. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 6.9ha of land at Horses Field, Dane Bank, Denton to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) The extent to which it prevents urban sprawl, encroachment into the countryside and merging of neighbouring towns given the presence of existing built development to the north and west and railway line to the east of the parcel?
- b) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- c) Why would national and local policies on open space not be adequate?

Matter 31: Green Belt additions – Trafford

Issue 31.1. GBA43 Midlands Farm, Moss Lane

This site constitutes 2.7 hectares of land located close to the urban edge of Partington. GMCA evidence advises that the parcel has a strong role in checking unrestricted sprawl of Partington, a strong role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, a weak role in preventing the merging of Partington and Altrincham and no contribution to preserving the setting or special character of historic towns. The parcel is designated as safeguarded land by the Trafford Core Strategy.

Q31.1. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 2.7 ha of land at Midlands Farm, Moss Lane to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national and local policies on open space not be adequate?

Matter 32: Green Belt additions – Wigan

Issue 32.1. GBA 44 Land off Fir Tree Street, Ince (formerly GBA51)

0.8 ha located on the southern edge of Wigan and comprises of part of Widows Fishery. Land within the parcel is relatively flat, comprising of a fishing pond with a wooded island in the centre, and surrounded by woodland. The parcel is bound by woodland to the north, south and west and adjoins the remainder of the Widows Fishery site and woodland to the east.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs a strong role in preventing encroachment into the countryside and moderate roles in preventing sprawl and in preventing merging of Wigan and Platt. It would have no impact on the strategic Green Belt. The evidence also refers to it being a more appropriate boundary than the existing boundary, and that the site is not designated in the Local Plan.

Q32.1. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 0.8ha of land at Land off Fir Tree Street, Ince to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Would including the site in the Green Belt prevent the effective use of the land for recreational activities?
- c) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to the countryside not be adequate?

Issue 32.2. GBA 45 Pennington FC Pitches, Howe Bridge, Atherton (formerly GBA52)

3.1 ha located at southern edge of Atherton and comprises mostly Pennington Football Club playing fields at Jubilee Park as well as smaller areas of sparse tree cover at the edges. The A579 runs along the western border of the parcel with an electricity substation present beyond the eastern boundary.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs a strong role in preventing sprawl and in preventing merging of Atherton and Leigh which are in close proximity, and a moderate role in preventing encroachment. The impact on the strategic Green Belt would be a small addition but would contribute to preventing merging of Leigh and Atherton and assist in checking urban sprawl. The site is not designated in the Local Plan.

Q32.2. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 3.1ha of land at Pennington FC Pitches, Howe Bridge, Atherton to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to recreation not be adequate?
- c) Would including the site in the Green Belt prevent the effective use of the land for recreational activities?

Issue 32.3. GBA 46 Hope Carr Nature Reserve, Leigh (formerly GBA53)

26.1 ha site near the southern edge of Leigh and comprises the land at the Hope Carr Nature Reserve. It is bounded by the Pennington Brook to the south and west, by sludge beds of a former sewage works to the north and by industrial land to the east. The parcel consists of ponds and sludge beds of a former sewage works set within a mix of regenerating woodland, scrub, and reed beds. There are a number of raised paths running across the parcel and no public roads.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs moderate roles in preventing sprawl and encroachment. The impact on the strategic Green Belt is that it would assist in checking urban sprawl at Leigh. The site is within a Site of Biological Importance.

Q32.3. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 26.1ha of land at Hope Carr Nature Reserve, Leigh to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to the countryside and ecology not be adequate?

Issue 32.4. GBA 47 Crow Orchard Road, Standish (formerly GBA54)

The parcel comprises 1.8 ha of a narrow strip of land on the southern side of the A5209 to the east of the M6 at the southern edge of Shevington Moor. To the east of the M6 where the A5209 splits into two separate routes, the boundaries of the parcel include all of the land between these roads. Much of the parcel consists of grass verge with some limited tree cover to the east where the land is sloped towards the B5206.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs only weak roles and would have no impact on the strategic Green Belt. The site is undesignated in the Local Plan.

Q32.4. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 1.8ha of land at Crow Orchard Road, Standish to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to the countryside not be adequate?

Issue 32.5. GBA48 North Bradley Lane, Standish (formerly GBA55)

1.2 ha comprises a relatively narrow strip of land to the rear of industrial units at the north eastern edge of Standish. Much of the parcel is covered by trees. The northern and western borders of the parcel are formed by field boundaries and metal security

fencing and the eastern border is formed by the railway line. The area to the north of the parcel comprises open countryside in the form of pastoral and arable fields.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs a strong role in preventing encroachment and is part of the wider countryside with a moderate role in preventing sprawl. It has little impact on the strategic Green Belt. The site is undesignated. The evidence also refers to it being a more appropriate boundary than the existing boundary and the Green Belt would then adjoin an existing employment area.

Q32.5. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 1.2ha of land north of Bradley Lane, Standish to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- b) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to the countryside not be adequate?

Issue 32.6. GBA49 Coppull Lane, Wigan (formerly GBA56)

3.7 ha at the northern edge of Wigan. It consists of the sloped land around the valley of the River Douglas. Much of the land has tree cover around the river itself which sits lower than the surrounding residential uses to the east and commercial uses and A49 to the west. A series of public rights of way pass through the parcel from south to north where it rises slightly towards Coppull Lane, and the flood storage area formed by a dam.

GMCA's evidence indicates that it performs a moderate role in preventing sprawl but has no rural character, and a moderate role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns (Wigan). It has little impact on the strategic Green Belt. The site is undesignated, and the evidence also refers to it being a wildlife area.

Q32.6. Are there exceptional circumstances to justify adding 3.7 hectares of land at Coppull Lane, Wigan to the Green Belt? In particular:

- a) Is Wigan an "historic town" as referred to in NPPF 138?
- b) What are the major changes in circumstances since the existing Green Belt boundary was defined in this location that make the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary?
- c) Why would national policy and local plan policies relating to heritage assets, ecology and countryside not be adequate?

End of IN11 Annex 2