



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

GM Integrated Support Team  
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11 January 2017

To whom it may concern,

Firstly, I support the general aims of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. Development should be driven by a clear structured plan and to do this across the whole of Greater Manchester is the best way to ensure the future needs of our communities are met.

However, it is essential that the detail of any such plan is right and I fear that this draft fails in this regard and must be reconsidered.

Any development plan must be built on public engagement and work towards clear consent from the affected communities. This process has failed on these terms. I find that huge numbers of my constituents have never heard of GMSF, they do not know about the plans for their area, and they have not been aware of how to engage with the process. The decision to extend the consultation deadline was a positive one, but I feel the process has still fallen short when it comes to public engagement.

A failing specifically relating to the plans in Bolton is that while everywhere else has clearly defined sites for development interest, we have the vague and uncertain "North Bolton Strategic Development Opportunity Area". This has caused tremendous confusion about what is and isn't likely to happen across a large portion of the borough. The plan says there should be no presumption that housing would be appropriate anywhere within this area but, with no site boundaries, how is any one resident in that area supposed to know how or whether their community would be impacted? This lack of detail is a huge barrier to meaningful engagement with this process.

My biggest concern about the draft framework is the huge impact on our green belt land. The spatial framework documents try to downplay this impact, but a loss of 8% of the green belt would be massive and a detriment to the areas most affected.

The "North Bolton Strategic Development Opportunity Area" puts at risk several large areas of green belt land. In places it will push the green belt border right to the edge of the borough and sub-regional boundary. Also at risk are several areas of "urban" green spaces. To lose these would be a serious blow to the neighbouring local communities. As well as being sites of natural beauty they are well used by local residents for recreation purposes. Although the draft framework talks of encouraging walking and cycling it could potentially result in the disappearance of some the areas people most enjoy these activities. The Horrocks Fold site in particular is home to a wide range of wildlife and should be preserved as part of wildlife conservation efforts.

Our green belt land is protected and should remain that way. I see no justification within the plans for the removal of these protections.

Bolton Council's Allocations Plan December 2014 has already identified brownfield sites with the potential for 4000 dwellings. There is evidence too of 4,771 empty properties across the Borough that could be brought back into use. Questions have also been raised about the projections for growth in an uncertain economic climate. It would be wrong to rush towards any decision to remove green belt protection for developments that may not even be needed.

Brownfield sites absolutely need to be the focus of this plan. The development of these sites is key to the regeneration of urban areas across Greater Manchester. There are legitimate fears that the current proposals will open up green belt land and developers will rush to build there right away, whilst those areas most in need of regeneration will be left waiting for years or may never even see applications come forward. This cannot be allowed to happen and a clear plan must be developed to ensure that brownfield sites are the top priority for any new build.

The Combined Authority should ensure that funding is made available to local communities from central government for remediation work on contaminated sites. The whole country benefitted from our industrial past and the Government should make a commitment to help these communities bring former industrial areas back into use.

I am very concerned about the nature of the developments that are planned for North Bolton. The plan clearly states the intention to put "emphasis on lower density, high value development". Never have my constituents come to me saying that there is a desperate shortage of large, expensive homes. We need genuinely affordable houses for low and middle income families.

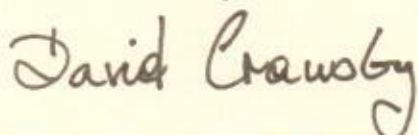
The draft plan identifies that the biggest growth will be among over 65s and single person households. How do expensive 4 and 5 bedroom houses address this need? When looking across Greater Manchester it is clear there is a drive to build these large expensive homes not only in North Bolton but across the sub-region. Local Authorities will be in competition with each other to fill these properties with high income families. This ignores the existing needs of our communities.

Infrastructure is key to any development, but there is a shocking lack of detail on how infrastructure improvements will be delivered. Bromley Cross residents already face terrible traffic during rush hours and would likely be brought to a standstill by any major new developments. Blackburn Road and Belmont Road are extremely busy too and provide the main routes from the North of Bolton in to the Town Centre and beyond. Extra cars would also have an impact on routes into Manchester. We must surely be developing plans to greatly improve our public transportation. Our railways are overcrowded to the point that passengers are often left on the platform, and this is even worse on services that use the line down from Bromley Cross. Bus services to the North of Bolton have been reduced over the last few years, leaving residents more isolated. Where is the forward thinking to properly link our towns and cities together as well as providing vital local services? The framework does nothing to identify the infrastructure requirements of any further development and, with the exception of some vague suggestions of contribution from developers, there is little talk of funding.

Public services are likely to be put under extreme pressure. Schools, the NHS and the emergency services would all face higher demand but there is no talk of additional provision in areas of development. The framework as a whole aims to build enough homes to create two new towns the size of Bolton and yet there seems to be no strategy to ensure key services grow at the same pace.

I hope that my views, and those of my constituents, will be taken on board as part of this consultation process. This should be an important opportunity for our communities to shape their future and decide on their priorities, but I fear that what we have at the moment is shaped around the wishes of the developers. I hope that the plan will be significantly revised with much more detail included – allowing the public to take part fully in the next stage of public consultation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Crausby". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

**Sir David Crausby MP**