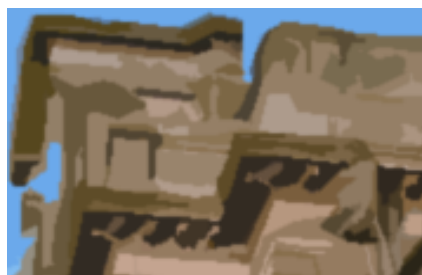
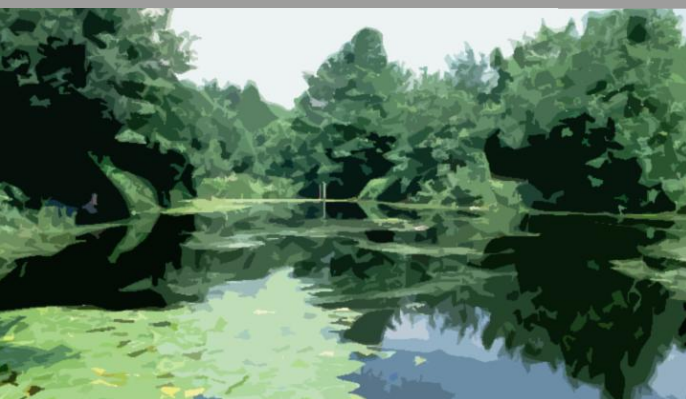




Bury Local Plan

Topic Paper 14: Other infrastructure

June 2026



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Topic Paper is one of a series that has been prepared as part of the process of evidence gathering to support Bury's emerging Local Plan. It sits alongside a range of other Topic Papers covering the following:
- Climate change and carbon reduction
 - Housing
 - Economy
 - Centres
 - Tourism and culture
 - Communities
 - Transport
 - Built Environment and Design
 - Green infrastructure
 - Open space, sport and recreation
 - Green Belt
 - Water and flood risk
 - Air quality, pollution and hazards
- 1.2. The principal aim of the Topic Paper is to set out current key policies, plans and strategies relating to this topic area that form the framework for the development of the Local Plan and to present a profile of the Borough that will highlight key issues, problems and challenges that the Local Plan should seek to address and which have helped to shape and influence the direction and focus of the Local Plan's policies and designations.

2. Background

- 2.1. Infrastructure is essential to supporting the day-to-day lives of residents, businesses and visitors. Alongside transport, education, healthcare and green infrastructure, other forms of infrastructure such as digital connectivity networks, electricity, gas, water supply, wastewater treatment and telecommunications are critical components of sustainable communities.
- 2.2. High quality infrastructure supports economic growth by improving productivity, facilitating business investment and enabling innovation.

Reliable digital connectivity is increasingly fundamental to modern economic activity, remote working, education and access to services.

- 2.3. Infrastructure also delivers significant social benefits by helping communities access services, support networks and opportunities. Modern digital infrastructure can help reduce inequalities, improve access to information and support community resilience.
- 2.4. From an environmental perspective, resilient and future-proofed infrastructure will play a key role in supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy, improving resource efficiency and helping the Borough adapt to climate change.

3. Context

- 3.1. One of the key early stages in the process is to review other policies, plans and strategies that are relevant to this topic area and which help to inform and influence the direction of the Local Plan.
- 3.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out Government policy in respect of planning matters and is supported by Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Sub-regionally, the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Plan establishes strategic policies across nine Greater Manchester districts and forms a key part of Bury's development plan.
- 3.3. There are also a range of other plans and strategies that are relevant to infrastructure provision and delivery within the Borough.

National Planning Policy

- 3.4. All development plans must be prepared within the context of the Government's planning policies. These are primarily set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The NPPF provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

¹ [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

- 3.5. The NPPF is supported by separate policy documents related to waste² and traveller sites³ as well as more detailed information in Planning Practice Guidance⁴.
- 3.6. The NPPF 2024 transitional arrangements set out in paragraph 234c apply to the Bury Local Plan, because it is a plan which includes policies to deliver the level of housing and other development set out in a preceding local plan (such as a joint local plan containing strategic policies) adopted since 12 March 2020. As a result, the Bury Local Plan will be examined under the relevant previous version of the Framework (i.e. the NPPF December 2023).
- 3.7. Central to the NPPF is the Government's objective of achieving sustainable development and it highlights that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:
- **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy. The NPPF recognises that planning should support sustainable economic growth and highlights the importance of identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure. The planning system should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology and full fibre broadband connections.

² [National Planning Policy for Waste](#)

³ [Planning policy for traveller sites](#)

⁴ [Planning Practice Guidance](#)

- 3.8. The NPPF also stresses the importance of ensuring that development is supported by appropriate infrastructure and that local plans should plan positively for the infrastructure required to support sustainable growth.
- 3.9. Digital infrastructure is recognised as an essential component of modern economic and social activity and the Government places significant weight on facilitating the development of advanced communications networks.

Greater Manchester Strategy 2025-2035

- 3.10. The Greater Manchester Strategy 2025–2035⁵, titled “Together We Are Greater Manchester”, sets out a shared vision for the next decade: to create a thriving city region where everyone can live a good life. It is built on the principle that economic success and social progress must go hand in hand, so growth should benefit all people and communities across Greater Manchester.
- 3.11. The strategy focuses on two interconnected priorities:
- Growing the economy by attracting investment, supporting businesses, creating high-quality jobs, driving innovation, and building on Greater Manchester’s strengths in sectors such as technology, advanced manufacturing, research, culture, and the visitor economy; and
 - Ensuring people can live well by improving the foundations of everyday life, including housing, safety, transport, education, health, and support services. The strategy aims to tackle inequalities, strengthen communities, and improve wellbeing across the city region.
- 3.12. To create a thriving city region where everyone can have a good life, the Strategy focuses on seven key workstreams:
- Healthy homes for all
 - Safe and strong communities
 - A transport system for a global city region
 - A clear line of sight to high quality jobs
 - Everyday support in every neighbourhood
 - A great place to do business
 - Digitally connected places and people

⁵ [Greater Manchester Strategy 2025-2035](#)

Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework

- 3.13. The published Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework⁶ looks at the key issues and priorities for infrastructure within Greater Manchester and is a precursor to a Greater Manchester Infrastructure Strategy. Priorities set and decisions taken through this process will have a key influence on infrastructure networks within the Borough and a key reference for future updates of this Infrastructure Plan.

Places for Everyone

- 3.14. Places for Everyone (PfE) was prepared as a Joint Development Plan Document of nine of the ten Greater Manchester local planning authorities (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan). The plan was formally adopted in March 2024.
- 3.15. PfE is the strategic spatial plan that sets out a collective planning policy framework for the nine constituent boroughs. All policies within the plan are ‘strategic policies’ and it forms a key part of Bury’s wider development plan and is used to determine individual planning applications. As such, Bury’s Local Plan will need to be consistent with PfE.
- 3.16. As a strategic plan, Places for Everyone does not cover everything that Bury’s Local Plan would. Therefore, Bury’s Local Plan will set out more detailed policies reflecting local circumstances.
- 3.17. PfE supports investment in digital infrastructure and the utility networks necessary to accommodate growth whilst supporting ambitions for a carbon neutral Greater Manchester. It also establishes the strategic growth framework that will generate additional demands for digital connectivity and utility infrastructure across the Borough.



Places for Everyone

Joint Development Plan Document for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan
2022 - 2039

Adopted 21 March 2024

⁶ <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/strategic-planning/strategic-infrastructure/>

Bury's 'Let's Do It!' Strategy

- 3.18. The Let's Do It! Strategy is Bury's long-term vision for the borough up to 2030, developed with residents, businesses, community groups and public services. Its aim is to make Bury a place with strong economic growth, lower levels of deprivation, and better life chances for everyone, while putting communities at the heart of decision-making.



- 3.19. At its core, the strategy is based on the belief that everyone has a role to play in improving the borough. Rather than focusing solely on council services, it promotes community power, partnership working and shared responsibility, encouraging residents, organisations and public services to work together to tackle inequality and improve outcomes.
- 3.20. The strategy is built around four key themes:
- Locally – strengthening neighbourhoods and townships, supporting prevention and early intervention, and helping communities become more resilient.
 - Enterprising – creating jobs, supporting businesses, investing in regeneration, improving skills, and growing a sustainable local economy.
 - Together – integrating services and strengthening partnerships between the council, NHS, voluntary sector, businesses and residents.
 - Strengths-Based – building on the strengths, assets and capabilities of people, communities and organisations rather than focusing on problems alone.
- 3.21. Overall, the Let's Do It! Strategy aims to create a healthier, greener, more prosperous and more inclusive Bury, where residents have greater opportunities, stronger communities, and improved quality of life.
- 3.22. Bury's Local Plan will play a key role in delivering the vision and aims of the Let's Do It Strategy and, as such, it is important that there is alignment between these two key local strategies.

Bury Town Centre Digital Place Plan

- 3.23. The Bury Town Centre Digital Place Plan is intended to support the town centre's wider regeneration by using digital technology, data and connectivity

to improve the experience for residents, visitors and businesses. It sits alongside the broader vision for Bury town centre, which aims to create a vibrant, attractive and economically resilient centre through investment in retail, culture, transport, public spaces and new town-centre living.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- 3.24. The Local Plan is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which will identify the infrastructure required to support future growth and development across the Borough. This includes digital communications infrastructure, utilities, education, healthcare, transport and green infrastructure.
- 3.25. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will provide a framework for coordinating infrastructure investment and ensuring that development is supported by necessary infrastructure over the period to 2043.

4. Local Profile

- 4.1. Bury is expected to accommodate significant levels of housing and employment growth over the Local Plan period. This growth will increase demand for a wide range of infrastructure, particularly digital connectivity and public utilities infrastructure.
- 4.2. The Borough benefits from existing telecommunications networks, including mobile communications infrastructure and fixed-line broadband networks. However, increasing reliance on digital technologies, home working, cloud computing and online services means that continued investment in full fibre connectivity and next-generation mobile networks will be required.
- 4.3. Nationally, mobile network operators are progressing the switch-off of older 2G and 3G networks and upgrading infrastructure to meet future demands. This will require ongoing enhancements to communications infrastructure throughout the Borough.
- 4.4. NPPF states that advanced high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being and that planning policies should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments 5G) and full fibre broadband connections.

- 4.5. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has worked with infrastructure providers to produce the Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework 2040. This Framework considers strategic infrastructure needs at the Greater Manchester level and looks various elements of physical infrastructure, including digital connectivity.
- 4.6. The Framework identifies 11 key infrastructure challenges, including implementation of the GM Digital Strategy⁷ to provide pervasive, affordable, resilient digital connectivity. With the ambition that approaching 2040, GM will need to be a smart and digitally ready City Region, and to achieve this, and support on-going digitalisation, the region will require resilient fixed connectivity (through full fibre) supported by 5G (and subsequent technologies).
- 4.7. Bury Council's 'Bury Works Digital for All Action Plan' is a comprehensive initiative aimed at promoting digital inclusion across the community. Central to the plan was the establishment of a Digital Inclusion Network Group to coordinate and drive efforts between council staff and partners. The strategy emphasises aligning local activities with broader regional and national programs to enhance effectiveness. It prioritises support for vulnerable adults and priority groups, ensuring they receive targeted digital assistance.
- 4.8. The plan also addresses the provision of digital equipment and connectivity for both residents and businesses, helping bridge the digital divide. To raise awareness, marketing campaigns have been launched to highlight available digital skills support, while encouraging both residents and businesses to build their digital capabilities.
- 4.9. Bury is also served by extensive utility infrastructure networks providing water supply, wastewater treatment, gas and electricity. Future housing and employment growth, including development associated with Places for Everyone allocations, will require continued investment in utility infrastructure capacity and resilience.
- 4.10. The delivery of new homes, businesses and community facilities will therefore depend on ensuring that utility providers are able to plan for and implement network improvements in a timely manner.
- 4.11. A further challenge is the need to protect and safeguard existing digital infrastructure from the impacts of development. Digital connectivity is increasingly regarded as critical infrastructure and its loss, disruption or

⁷ The Greater Manchester Digital Strategy can be found at www.greatermanchester.ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/digital/digital-strategy.

degradation can have significant consequences for businesses, residents and service providers.

5. Summary of Key Issues

5.1. This Other Infrastructure Topic Paper has highlighted a number of Key Issues that need to be considered in taking the Local Plan forward. These Key Issues are considered to be as follows:

- The need to ensure that all new development is served by high-quality digital connectivity infrastructure, including full fibre networks.
- The need to support the expansion and enhancement of mobile communications infrastructure to meet growing demand for digital connectivity.
- The need to protect existing digital infrastructure and ensure that development does not compromise network resilience or performance.
- The need to coordinate the delivery of digital infrastructure with wider growth proposals across the Borough.
- The need to ensure that new housing and employment development is supported by adequate water, wastewater, electricity and gas infrastructure.
- The need to future-proof development through the incorporation of infrastructure capable of adapting to technological change.
- The need to ensure that infrastructure is delivered in a timely manner to support major development and regeneration projects.

Bury
Council