

Simister Bowlee Development Framework

Initial Strategic Environmental Assessment Determination Statement

October 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Bury and Rochdale Councils are jointly preparing a Simister Bowlee Development Framework (SBDF) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- 1.2 This statement sets out the initial screening of the SPD in terms of the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with Regulation 9 (3) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and European Directive 2001/42/EC for the Draft SBDF SPD.
- 1.3 The SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) identifies the purpose of SEA is “to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development”. It requires the determination as to whether the plan or programme under assessment is likely to have significant environmental effects, taking account of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations. The Regulations require that the results of this process are set out in a Screening Determination Statement (this document) which must be publicly available.
- 1.4 Before making a formal determination in relation to SEA, there is a requirement to consult the three statutory consultation bodies designated in the Regulations (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) on whether environmental assessment is required.
- 1.5 The Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 11-008-20140306) states that “Supplementary Planning Documents do not require a Sustainability Appraisal but may in exceptional circumstances require a Strategic Environmental Assessment if they are likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been assessed during the preparation of the relevant strategic policies.
- 1.6 Bury and Rochdale Councils’ are the “responsible body” for the purposes of this SEA screening report.

2. Draft Simister Bowlee Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines SPDs as documents which add further detail to the policies in the Development Plan. As SPDs do not

have the same status as policies contained within the Development Plan, they are not subject to independent examination.

- 2.2 The Places for Everyone Plan (PfE) was adopted by Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan (the nine PfE authorities) and took effect on 21 March 2024. The draft SBDF SPD relates to the Simister/Bowlee (Northern Gateway) site that is allocated for residential development under Policy JPA1.2 of PfE. The draft SBDF SPD will establish the parameters against which future planning applications will be considered and identifies the necessary infrastructure required to support the development of the site.
- 2.3 The draft SBDF SPD will:
 - Set out the Council's vision and strategic objectives for the Simister Bowlee (JPA1.2) site shaped by public consultation and stakeholder collaboration;
 - Facilitate a coordinated and comprehensive masterplanning approach, to be implemented consistently across multiple planning applications;
 - Provide an overarching Development Framework to communicate development and design parameters, including land use, access, movement and green infrastructure;
 - Establish key development requirements that all planning applications within Simister Bowlee are expected to adhere to;
 - Provide design principles and guidance, to inform the more detailed design considerations and approaches needed to deliver the Simister Bowlee vision; and
 - Describe the proposed approach towards phasing and the delivery of physical infrastructure.
- 2.4 The PfE Plan is the “parent DPD” which has already been subject to Integrated Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment prior to being adopted and coming into effect on 21 March 2024.
- 2.5 The draft SBDF SPD will supplement PfE Policy JPA1.2 Simister Bowlee and will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the JPA1.2 PfE allocation when adopted.

3. Initial Screening Determination

- 3.1 The draft SBDF SPD is not setting new policy, it will supplement an existing policy in the plan (JPA1.2) in the PfE Plan (which came into effect on 21 March 2024). Policy JPA1.2 has already been subject to SA/SEA and HRA, through the PfE Plan making process.

3.2 Bury and Rochdale Councils' consider that after having regard to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 the SBDF SPD does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

3.3 Bury and Rochdale Councils' have come to this view as:

- The SPD sits beneath PfE which provides a policy framework for the location, nature and scale of growth.
- PfE has been through the SEA process. The SPD is not likely to have new or different effects than those already identified in the PfE SEA process.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The SBDF SPD does not propose any policies or allocations, instead it supplements PfE Policy JPA1.2 and establishes a clear framework for development within the allocation. In accordance with Policy JPA1.2 planning applications will be required to align with the Development Framework and supporting guidance set out in the SPD including delivery of necessary and related infrastructure in a coordinated and timely manner.

4.2 The PfE has been through the SEA process. The SPD is not likely to have new or different effects than those already identified in the PfE SEA process.

4.3 The Councils have therefore determined that a Strategic Environmental assessment is not necessary for the SBDF SPD.

4.4 Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency have confirmed that they agree with the Council's conclusion that the draft SBDF SPD would not require a full Strategic Environmental Assessment.