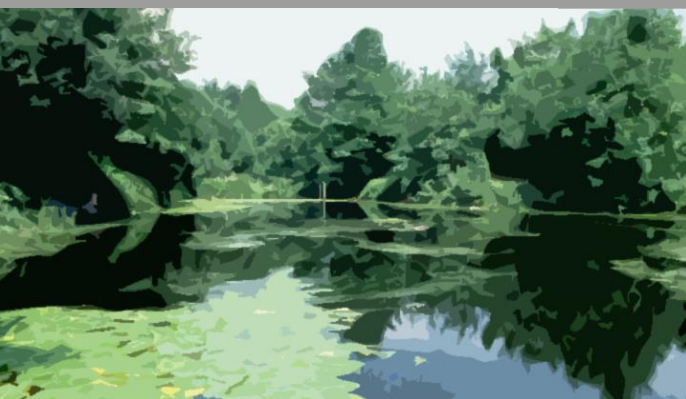




Bury Local Plan

Topic Paper 5: Tourism and culture

March 2025



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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
 - Communities
 - Transport
 - Built environment and design
 - Green infrastructure
 - 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 forms 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. Tourism and culture are closely linked, as cultural heritage, traditions, and creative industries attract visitors while boosting local economies and social cohesion.
- 2.2. Tourism and culture bring significant economic benefits through job creation, visitor spend, business growth and infrastructure investment.
- 2.3. They also generate cultural benefits in terms of the preservation of heritage assets, cultural exchange, revitalisation of traditions and the development of pride and identity
- 2.4. From a social perspective, tourism and culture can generate benefits such as investment in cultural spaces and tourist-friendly infrastructure, promoting learning and community empowerment.

3. Context

- 3.1. One of the key early stages in the process is to review other policies, plans and strategies which are of relevance to this particular topic area and which help to inform and influence the direction of the Local Plan. There is a need for the Local Plan to be consistent with planning policy at different levels.
- 3.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out Government policy in respect of planning matters and this is supported by Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). This sets out the broad planning framework within which development plans are produced.
- 3.3. Sub-regionally, the Places for Everyone Plan joint plan (PfE) establishes strategic policies and site allocations across nine of the ten Greater Manchester districts. Following its adoption in March 2024, PfE is now a key part of Bury's development plan that sits alongside the Local Plan.
- 3.4. There are also a range of other plans and strategies that, whilst not being policy, are of relevance to the Borough from a tourism and culture perspective.

National Planning Policy

- 3.5. 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.
- 3.6. The NPPF is supported by separate policy documents related to waste² and traveller sites³ as well as more detailed information in Planning Practice Guidance⁴.
- 3.7. 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,

¹ [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

² [National Planning Policy for Waste](#)

³ [Planning policy for traveller sites](#)

⁴ [Planning Practice Guidance](#)

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.

- 3.8. Tourism and culture play an important role in economic success and the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 3.9. In recognition of the value of tourism and culture to the wider economy, the NPPF identifies these uses as main town centre uses. In addition, the NPPF also recognises the positive impact that tourism can have on the rural economy, specifying that local plans should support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres.

Greater Manchester Strategy 2021-2031

- 3.10. The Strategy⁵ is Greater Manchester's plan for all communities, neighbourhoods, towns and cities which make up the city-region. It is a plan for recovery and renewal following the pandemic.
- 3.11. The Strategy aims to achieve the shared vision of 'Good Lives for All: that Greater Manchester is a great place to grow up, get on and grow old; a great place to invest, do business, visit and study' and how this will be achieved.
- 3.12. The Strategy builds on the work undertaken by the Greater Manchester Strategy - Our People, Our Place (2017), by ensuring that all the people in

⁵ <https://aboutgreatermanchester.com/the-greater-manchester-strategy-2021-2031/>

Greater Manchester have access to safe, decent and affordable transport, accelerate plans towards carbon neutrality, creation of greener homes and communities and better jobs and skills.

- 3.13. The Strategy focuses on three key themes of:
- A greener Greater Manchester – focusing on tackling climate change and working toward our carbon neutral aim;
 - A fairer Greater Manchester – addressing inequality and levelling-up, from access to good jobs, to transport, health and housing.
 - A more prosperous Greater Manchester – delivering economic growth which is more equitable and socially responsible, bringing opportunities and prosperity to all.

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. Places for Everyone recognises that the main town centres are amongst the most accessible locations by public transport, walking and cycling. Each centre benefits from relatively large catchment populations, which makes them suitable locations for a range of office, retail, leisure and tourism development.
- 3.18. PfE Policy JP-Strat12: Main Town Centres states that the role of the main town centres as local economic drivers will continue to be developed, providing the primary focus for office, retail, leisure and cultural activity for their surrounding areas.
- 3.19. In addition, PfE Policy JP-P3: Cultural Facilities states that:

We will proactively develop and support cultural businesses and attractions in our cities and towns through a range of measures, where appropriate, including:

1. Protecting existing heritage, cultural and community venues, facilities and uses;
2. Supporting the development of new cultural venues in town centres and places with good public transport connectivity;
3. Promoting new, or enhancing existing, locally-distinct clusters of cultural facilities, especially where they can provide an anchor for local regeneration and town centre renewal;
4. Identifying, protecting and enhancing strategic clusters of cultural attractions;
5. Considering the use of vacant properties and land for pop-ups or meanwhile uses for cultural and creative activities during the day and at night-time to stimulate vibrancy and viability and promote diversity in town centres;
6. Maximising opportunities for redundant heritage assets and the role they can play in economic and social well-being;
7. Considering the identification of 'Creative Improvement Districts' where there is evidence that the identification will enhance the local economy and provide facilities and workspace for the creative industries; and
8. Supporting a mix of uses which derive mutual benefits from, and do not compromise, the creative industries and cultural facilities in the Creative Improvement District in line with the Agent of Change principle. If development would potentially result in conflict between a cultural activity and another use, especially in terms of noise, then the development responsible for the change must secure the implementation of appropriate mitigation before it is completed.

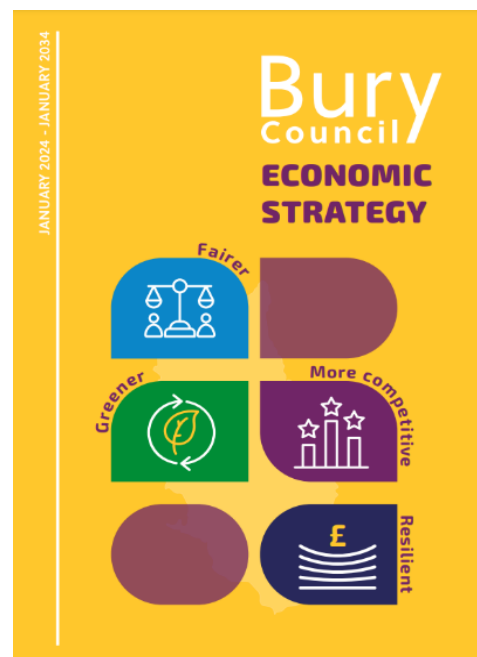
Bury's 'Let's Do It!' Strategy

- 3.20. Bury's Let's Do It Strategy is a ten-year vision and strategy for the Borough. It seeks to build upon a shared sense of local pride and act as a call to arms for progressing the local vision of achieving 'faster economic growth than the national average, with lower than national average levels of deprivation'.
- 3.21. It is a single strategy for the council, police, health, other public services, the voluntary, community and faith sector and business communities and some of its key aims are to:

- Develop every township in the borough to be better and stronger than before the Covid-19 pandemic;
 - Tackle the causes of inequality and ensure that our children have a better start in life, with access to improved education and broader horizons;
 - Help every adult to have the opportunity to be their very best through access to high quality, local work and to help our older residents stay connected and independent;
 - Support local businesses as they seek to recover and thrive; and
 - Deliver net zero emissions and a cleaner environment for all.
- 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 Economic Strategy 2024-2034

- 3.23. The Bury Economic Strategy sets out a clear framework and priorities to guide a collaborative 'Team Bury' approach to delivering a more sustainable, competitive, inclusive, and resilient local economy.
- 3.24. It recognises that the leisure, culture, and tourism sectors contribute to local economies through visitor spend, create a vibrant and interesting place to live and help create a positive image of Bury as a culturally vibrant place.
- 3.25. The Economic Strategy states that supporting the leisure, cultural and tourism economy will contribute to the revitalisation of the borough and provide much needed economic diversification in the borough's town centres and beyond.
- 3.26. The Strategy's ambition for Bury as a place is to create an inclusive, sustainable and prosperous place where people choose to live, work, invest and visit and one of the key priorities in achieving this is to create successful, attractive and vibrant town centres which have diverse uses and create the right conditions for investment, including supporting the growth and development of Bury's wider leisure, culture, tourism and evening and night-time economy offer.



- 3.27. One of the key priority actions in achieving the ambitions and priorities is to prepare a new borough-wide Culture Strategy that includes a key role for our town centres to contribute towards maximising opportunities for the borough's visitor economy/cultural assets, alongside its rural offer.

Bury Cultural Strategy: Different Cultures Same Horizons

- 3.28. The Bury Cultural Strategy provides a framework to secure and maximise the outcomes of investment in culture. It is a sister document to the Economic Strategy and complements Bury's Inclusion Strategy, which describes how we will celebrate all our diverse communities of place and identity.

- 3.29. The Strategy's Strategic Vision is to enable every community in Bury to tell their story and for these stories to be shared across our Borough and beyond.



- 3.30. The Strategy is based around a five adaptable and agile Strategic Pillars (Stories, Skills, Strength, Space and Support) and aims to give everyone the opportunity to experience and define our unique borough, a borough synonymous with some of the best-loved storytellers of the late 20th Century.

Greater Manchester Strategy for the Visitor Economy 2025-2030

- 3.31. The Greater Manchester Visitor Economy Strategy 2025-2030 provides the strategic framework for the tourism and visitor economy sector across Greater Manchester - Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan.



- 3.32. By 2030 our visitor economy will be proudly recognised for its rich contribution to social and cultural life across Greater Manchester and its positive impact on our city region's diverse communities. It will continue to provide inspiration and a sense of belonging for residents, visitors, and businesses, whilst fuelling sustainable economic growth for all.
- 3.33. The Strategy includes a number of Strategic Aims:
- Creating a sense of place – by raising its profile and awareness of all that our city-region has to offer - and by encouraging growth in a sustainable and inclusive way - our visitor economy will inspire and reinforce a deep sense of place and civic pride.
 - Attracting and delivering major events - Greater Manchester is a place that truly flourishes when hosting spectators and audiences; when our distinctive welcome, passion, and expertise – combined with a casual sense of fun – results in an atmosphere unlike any other. Our visitor economy thrives on this success and will support the city-region to do more of what it does best: put on spectacular events year-round.
 - Enhancing the visitor offer and experience - Greater Manchester is home to an abundance of world-class experiences that inspire passion and fascination within our visitors. As the city-region continues to grow, our visitor economy will continue to enhance its offer by developing innovative new products and experiences; adapting along the way to reflect changing audiences, emerging trends, and sustainable practices.
 - Providing greater connectivity - Connection enables our visitor economy, assisting visitors on their journey to Greater Manchester – from research to arrival – as well as shaping their overall experience on the ground. Improvements will ensure that our visitor economy can be effortlessly explored and enjoyed by all.

4. Local Profile

- 4.1. At present, Bury's key tourism and cultural assets are the East Lancashire Railway; the West Pennine Moors; Bury Market; the Irwell Valley; Bury Transport Museum; the Fusiliers Museum, Lancashire; Bury Art Museum and Sculpture Centre; Bury Libraries; the Met; and the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal.
- 4.2. The East Lancashire Railway, in particular, is the Borough's most popular tourism asset drawing in excess of 170,500⁶ visitors per year. In 2019, it was

⁶ Marketing Manchester

the 14th most visited attraction in Greater Manchester and the 4th most visited paid entry attraction.

- 4.3. In terms of tourism support facilities, Bury is currently home to six hotels at the Old Mill, Ramsbottom; the Red Hall, Walmersley; the Bolholt; the Premier Inn, Bury town centre; Travelodge, Pilsworth; and Premier Inn, Prestwich. However, there may be scope to further enhance the tourism support offer in Bury through the introduction of new, good quality hotel accommodation.
- 4.4. In December 2019 Bury was named the inaugural Greater Manchester Town of Culture, an initiative to promote the distinctive culture of towns across the region.
- 4.5. The offer entitled 'Happy', drew inspiration from the life of Victoria Wood with a special festival dedicated to her life and work. It also meant we could highlight the borough's wider arts offer as well as promoting our community culture.
- 4.6. However, planned cultural activity was severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting national lockdowns causing major events to be postponed into 2021 but this included hosting a large number of events based on music, arts, heritage and culture.
- 4.7. Tourism and cultural assets and a vibrant living environment are important in attracting more talented people to reside in the Borough and consequently, in supporting the delivery of a modernised and knowledge-based economy. While Bury's areas of natural beauty are an asset, there is still scope for improvement in the number and range of tourism, cultural and 'lifestyle' amenities in the Borough which hinders the attraction of this talent to some degree.

5. Summary of Key Issues

- 5.1. This Tourism and Culture 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 safeguard the Borough's existing tourism and cultural assets as significant contributors towards the competitiveness and diversity of the local economy and in improving the attractiveness and quality of life within the Borough.
- The need to encourage improvements to the range and quality of tourism and cultural assets.

- The need to encourage and support an extension to the range of visitor accommodation, in appropriate locations.
- There is an opportunity to incorporate cultural activities or features capable of hosting cultural events into major developments, where practical and appropriate.
- There is an opportunity for cultural activities and events through the temporary use of sites and premises.
- The need to attract and retain a talented workforce by developing and supporting the evening economy and 'lifestyle amenities' in the Borough's town centres and protecting and enhancing tourism and cultural assets that make a valuable contribution to the evening economy of town centres.

Bury
Council