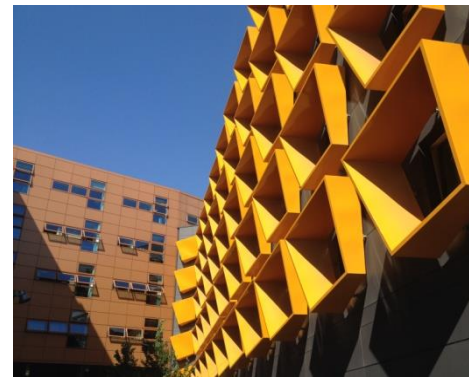


Housing Delivery Test Action Plan



August 2019

Copies of this document can be viewed or downloaded from the Council's website at www.bury.gov.uk

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Government wants to achieve a significant boost in the supply and delivery of housing and sets out its aspirations in the National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 59 of the NPPF states that it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
- 1.2 The Housing Delivery Test (HDT) has been introduced by the Government as a monitoring tool to demonstrate whether local areas are building enough homes to meet their housing need. The HDT was introduced in November 2018 and it involves a comparison of the number of new homes delivered over the previous three years against the authority's housing requirement.
- 1.3 This Action Plan is required in response to the results of Bury's Housing Delivery Test for November 2018 which shows that over the previous 3 years, housing delivery has been below 95% of the requirement. It sets out an analysis of the key issues involved in the historic under-performance in housing delivery and identifies the measures the Council intend to undertake to increase/maintain the delivery of new housing in the Borough.
- 1.4 It is recognised, however, that delivering housing growth is complex issue and, whilst a number of the actions identified in the Action Plan are exclusively within the remit of the Council to resolve, to successfully respond to the challenge of increasing and then maintaining housing delivery, the Council will also need the support and co-operation of key stakeholders involved in delivering new homes, such as landowners and house builders.
- 1.5 This Action Plan will be updated annually following the publication of the Government's Housing Delivery Test data each year.

2 Local Context

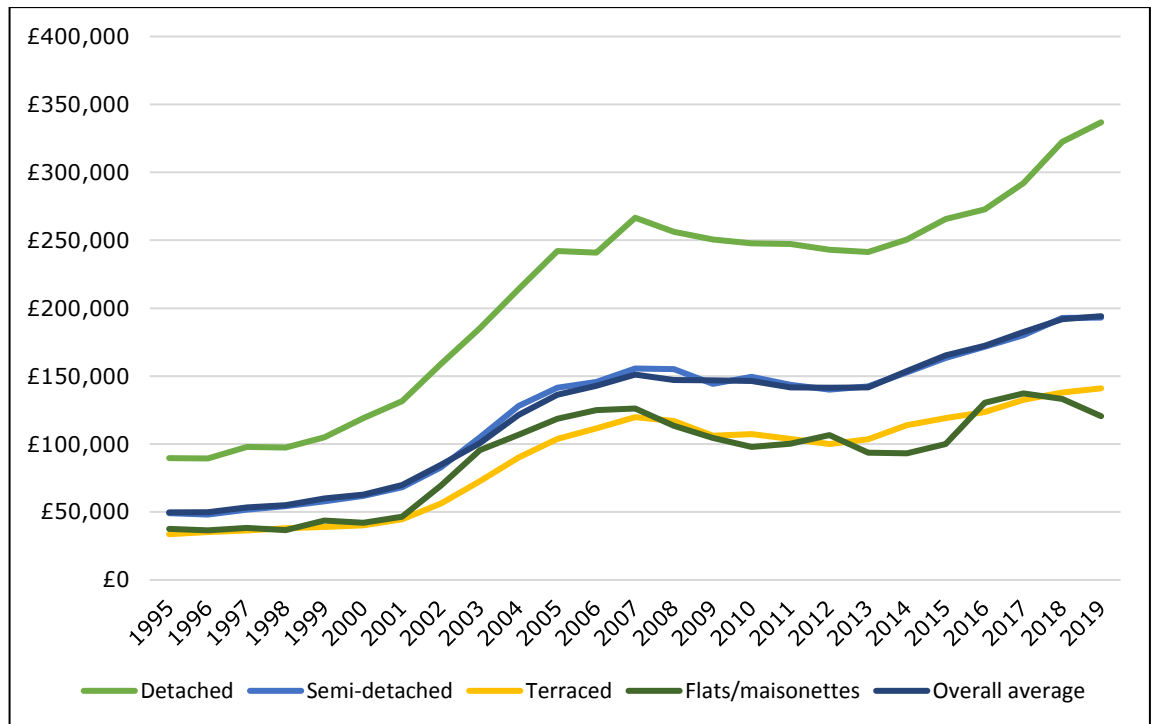
Housing Land Supply

- 2.1 The NPPF requires local authorities to provide a robust evidence base that identifies suitable housing land in the form of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The SHLAA forms a key component of the Local Plan evidence base to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing to meet housing targets.
- 2.2 Bury's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2018 (SHLAA) provides the most up-to-date information on housing supply across the Borough. It was carried out in full accordance with the NPPF and NPPG and forms a robust and credible assessment of housing land supply within the Borough. The SHLAA presents a snapshot of the housing supply at 1 April 2018 and will be updated on an annual basis.
- 2.3 More detailed information on Bury's housing supply is set out in the SHLAA which is available on the Council's web site at <https://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=11050>

Housing Demand

- 2.4 The Borough forms a gateway between the thriving city centre of Manchester to the south and the more industrial and rural landscapes of Lancashire to the north and, as a result, contains many features that are characteristic of both areas. Its attractive environment and other characteristics such as good levels of education, vibrant town centres and tourism assets make Bury one of the most attractive places to live in Greater Manchester.
- 2.5 **Error! Reference source not found.** shows how average house prices have changed annually between 1995 and 2019.

Figure 1 - Yearly change in average house prices

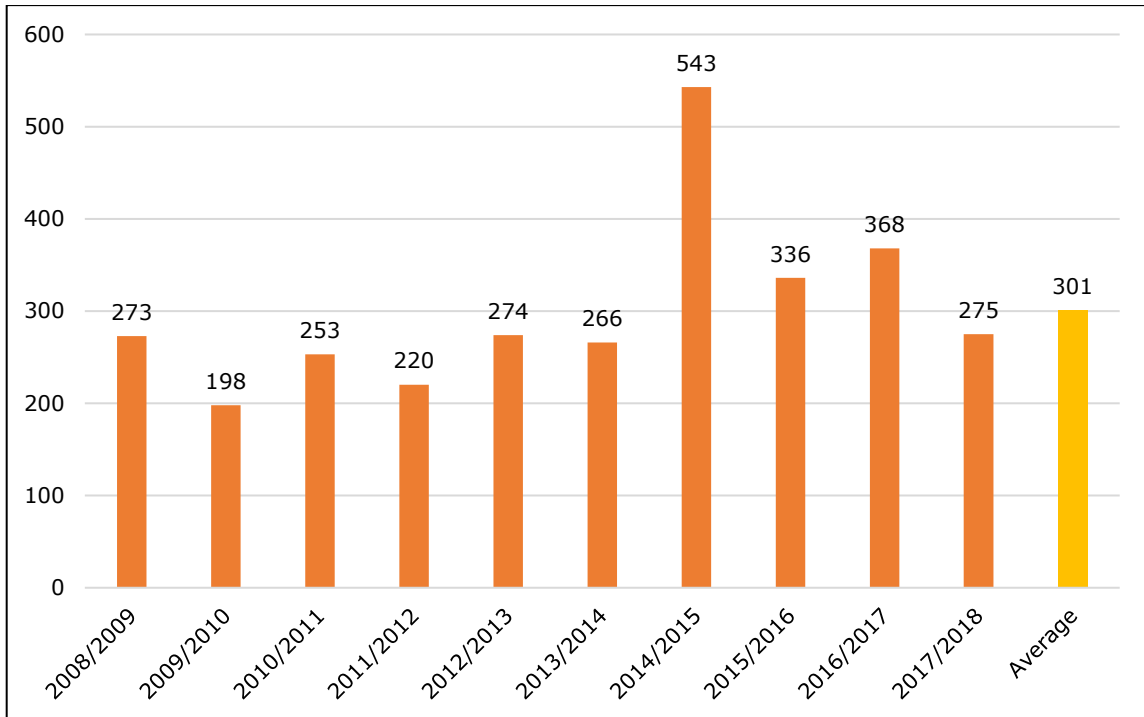


- 2.6 The graph shows that since 1995 there has been a general increase in house prices in the Borough across all house types suggests that demand for housing in Bury is rising. The trends would also suggest that since the late-2000s recession, house prices have exceeded the pre-recession peaks.
- 2.7 Average house prices in Bury are slightly higher than those for Greater Manchester and the North West. However, it is important to note that whilst this would indicate a strong housing market, this does disguise the fact that the Borough contains pockets of deprivation and areas with lower value housing.

Housing Delivery

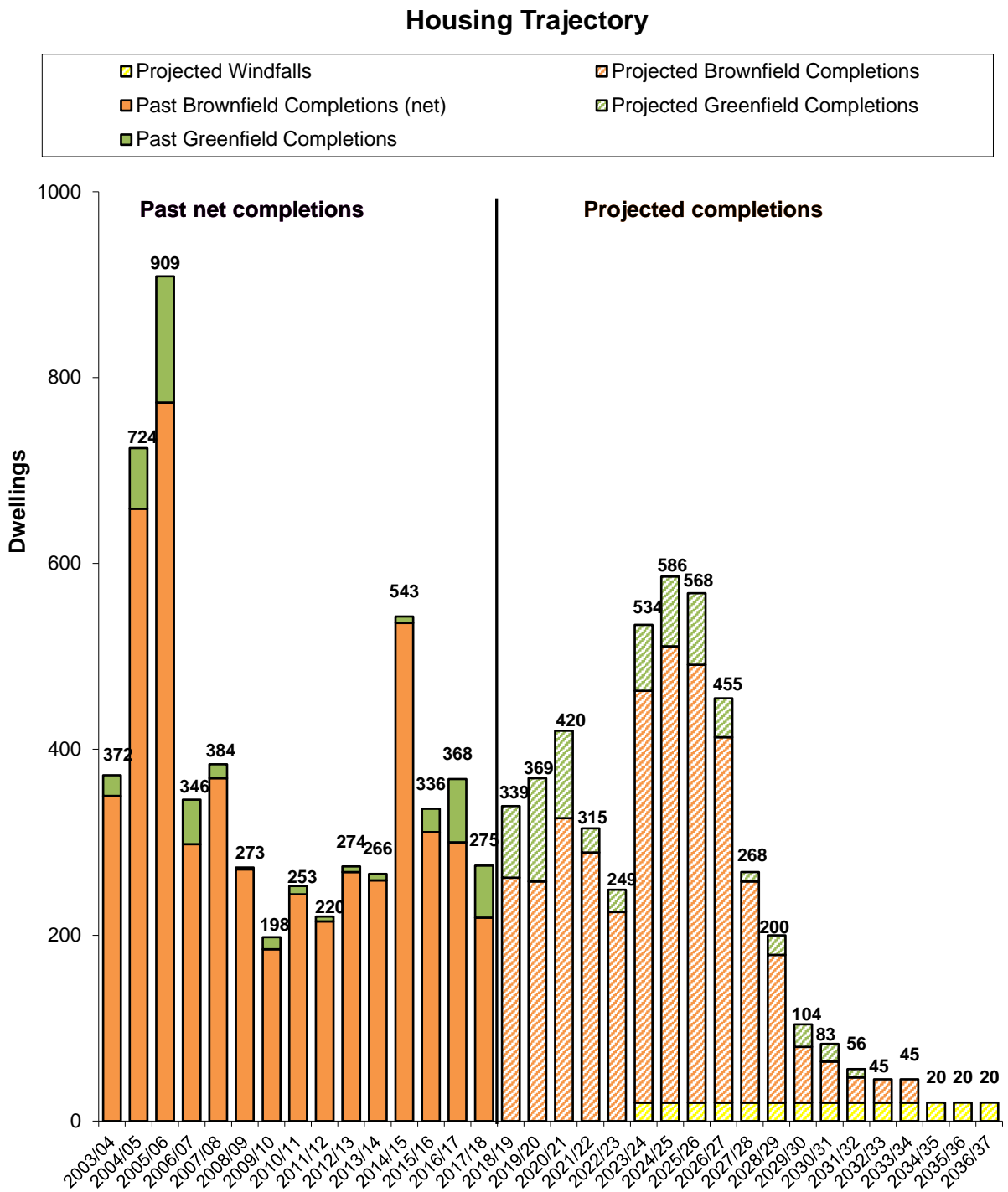
- 2.8 In accordance with national planning guidance, Bury annually monitors the delivery of new housing across the Borough and produces its findings in the SHLAA. **Error! Reference source not found.** below shows net housing completions in Bury from 2008 to 2018.

Figure 2 - Net housing completions in Bury 2008 - 2018



- 2.9 This shows that there has been a net gain of 3,006 units over the last 10 years, equating to an average of 301 dwellings per annum.
- 2.10 Looking forward, the SHLAA provides a detailed assessment of the amount of housing that each site is expected to deliver on an annual basis up to March 2037. This is quite a difficult exercise considering the timeframes involved and the uncertainty around the availability/deliverability of many of the sites, together with the dynamics of the development industry. Sites that are either currently under construction or have an extant planning permission are much easier to make yearly completion assumptions on compared to sites that may be identified as being suitable and available but with no planning consent.

Figure 3 - Housing Trajectory in Bury



Note: the above trajectory does not include the proposed GMSF allocations.

2.11 The trajectory illustrates that there is expected to be an increase in the annual average completion rate over the next five years (2018/19 to 2022/23), with 1,692 completions over this period. This equates to an annual average of 338 over this period and reflects the NPPF definition of 'deliverable'.

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- 2.12 The trajectory indicates that a further 3,004 units are expected to be delivered beyond the next five years, including 280 windfalls. These units are expected to be delivered on a mixture of sites that have planning permission together with those sites that are identified as being suitable for residential development

Brownfield Land

- 2.13 The decline of heavy industry across the north of the country has left its mark. Many towns in northern England still have huge swathes of derelict brownfield land that have remained untouched and undeveloped for years. This includes many areas within the Greater Manchester conurbation.
- 2.14 However, Bury Council has always had a strong commitment to developing brownfield land to meet its development needs. Consequently, whilst there remain pockets of vacant land across the Borough, Bury has largely been successful in re-using and redeveloping its former industrial sites and premises that have become vacant or un-used over the past 30 years or so.
- 2.15 Many of these of these sites have been remediated and are now used for residential development. As such, the Borough does not suffer from the extensive blight that some towns across the country do from having huge swathes of derelict land that show no signs of coming forward.

3 Housing Delivery Analysis

- 3.1 One of the Government’s main objectives in the National Planning Policy Framework is to ensure a sufficient supply of deliverable housing sites to meet local housing target. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old.
- 3.2 The Government’s ‘Housing Delivery Test Rule Book’ and Planning Practice Guidance set out the full details of the methodology for calculating the HDT. The total net housing completions in a local planning authority area are gathered from local authorities and published by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government on annual basis and this is then considered over a rolling three-year period to calculate each authority’s performance against the HDT.
- 3.3 The Secretary of State publishes the Housing Delivery Test results for each local authority in England every November. This Housing Delivery Test is based on the November 2018 publication and covers the previous three financial years for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- 3.4 In broad terms the Housing Delivery Test compares the net homes delivered over three years to the homes that should have built over the same period (their housing requirement).

Housing Delivery Test (%) =	Total net homes delivered over three year period
	Total number of homes required over three year period

- 3.5 Where delivery of housing has fallen below the housing requirement, certain policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework will apply. Depending on the level of delivery, these are:
 - Where housing delivery over the previous three years has been less than 95% of the housing requirement, LPAs should prepare an action plan within 6 months setting out the causes of under delivery and the intended actions to increase delivery;
 - Where delivery has been less than 85% of the housing requirement, a 20% buffer should be applied to the five-year supply of sites for the purposes of housing delivery assessment; and

- Where delivery has been less than 75% of the housing requirement, the NPPFs presumption in favour of sustainable development will apply.

3.6 However, the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development is subject to the transitional arrangements set out in paragraph 215 of the NPPF. These arrangements state that housing delivery would be considered to be substantially below the housing requirement where the Housing Delivery Test results:

- Indicate that delivery was below 25% of housing required over the previous 3 years (November 2018);
- Indicate that delivery was below 45% of housing required over the previous 3 years (November 2019); and
- Indicate that delivery was below 75% of housing required over the previous 3 years (November 2020 and in subsequent years).

3.7 Given that Bury does not have an up-to-date housing requirement set out in its development plan, the HDT has to be assessed against the minimum local housing need figure based on previous Government household projections.

Bury's performance against the HDT

Housing Delivered

3.8 For the purposes of the Housing Delivery Test, it is the rate of delivery over the past three years that is relevant and this is shown in Table 1:

Table 1 – Three year housing delivery rates

Year	Homes Delivered
2015/2016	336
2016/2017	368
2017/2018	275
Total	979

Housing Requirement

3.9 Bury's current adopted development plan comprises the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (adopted in 1997). The Council is currently in the process of replacing this with a two-tiered development plan that will comprise the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and the Bury Local Plan. Once adopted, the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework will establish a housing target for Greater Manchester and for each of its constituent districts.

- 3.10 The Housing Delivery Test: 2018 Measurement Technical Note (MHCLG, 2019) defines an up-to-date development plan for the purposes of the Housing Delivery Test as one that is less than five years old. As such, for the purposes of the HDT, Bury is not considered to have an up-to-date plan in place at the current time.
- 3.11 The Housing Delivery Test: 2018 Measurement Technical Note describes how the housing requirements are calculated and, in Bury’s case, the November 2018 assessment the Note specifies that this will be based on previous household projections, as set out in Table 2.

Table 2 – Household projections

Year	Version of Household Projections	Number of homes required
2015/16	2012	556
2016/17	2012	550
2017/18	2014	529
Total		1,635

Housing Delivery Test Assessment

- 3.12 Table 3 below sets out Bury’s performance against the 2018 Housing Delivery Test in terms of comparing the net homes delivered over three years to the homes that should have built over the same period taken from previous household projections.

Table 3 - Housing Delivery Test Assessment 2018

Year	Number of homes delivered	Number of homes required
2015/16	336	556
2016/17	368	550
2017/18	275	529
Total	979	1,635
Housing Delivery Test Assessment	60%	

- 3.13 Table 3 shows that Bury delivered **60%** of its housing requirement over the past 3 years.

-
- 3.14 On the basis of this outcome, Bury is therefore required to prepare an Action Plan and to apply a 20% buffer to the 5 year land supply figure.
- 3.15 Despite falling below 75% of the required delivery rate, **Bury will not, at this stage, be subject to the presumption in favour of sustainable development** given the transitional arrangements for this to apply to delivery falling below 25% for the November 2018 assessment.

4 Key Delivery Issues

- 4.1 This chapter will set out some of the current issues that are potentially acting as constraints on housing delivery in Bury. It should be noted that bringing forward housing sites can be a complex and time consuming process. No two sites will ever be the same and some sites can have a multitude of constraints that need to be removed before they can come forward.
- 4.2 However, there are a number of common barriers that may act as a constraint to delivering housing development. It is unlikely that one specific constraint would prevent a site from coming forward but it is likely that difficult sites would face a number of the common constraints, namely:

The Development Plan

- 4.3 Despite two previous attempts to update it, Bury's statutory plan consists of the saved policies of the Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP). However, this was adopted in 1997 and there are inevitably some inconsistencies between local and national policy. In addition, there are a very limited number of remaining housing allocations.
- 4.4 Consequently, this is affecting the Council's ability to deliver a plan-led system, and this may be having negative impacts on the delivery of new dwellings.

Physical Constraints

- 4.5 Physical constraints can take many forms and can be unique to certain sites but the more common types that can impede the delivery of the site include:
- Ground instability which has been brought about through the legacy of historic activities such as mining;
 - Major underground obstructions such as old foundations and machinery bases;
 - The lack of adequate services infrastructure (e.g. water, drainage, power and communications) and the costs of putting such services in;
 - Topography and levelling issues;
 - Poor access and local road networks (including the capacity of the road network);
 - The cost of remediating heavily contaminated land can often prevent sites from coming forward; and
 - The cost of demolition (including asbestos removal) can often restrict sites from coming forward.

Regulatory Constraints

4.6 Regulatory constraints can also impact on the delivery of housing sites and these can include:

- Planning applications can be time consuming e.g. in appeals processes or in promoting a site allocation through a Development Plan.
- Planning designations such as Sites of Biological Interest, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, conservation areas and listed buildings can all act as constraints and there often needs to be practical solutions to overcome restrictive designations;
- Requirement to provide suitable infrastructure beyond delivery of Section 106 agreements, can inhibit planning permission for particular types of uses;
- Lack of certainty in respect of policy strategic, legislative and regulatory frameworks (particularly as these can all be subject to change at short notice);
- Timescales and associated costs for obtaining relevant consents can significantly delay sites from coming forward (planning consents/licences etc.);
- Rigidity of conditions for public sector funding schemes can reduce viability by removing the flexibility of the project scope or timescales;
- Public opposition in respect of land use/proposals for sites can sometimes thwart sites from coming forward; and
- Satisfying European legislative requirements such as the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Integrated Pollution Prevention Control (IPPC), Waste Framework Directive and Landfill Directive.

Market/financial constraints

4.7 As with any business, developers will only pursue a development if they are able to adequately fund the works and sell the product on, achieving reasonable profit margins in the process. However, there are a number of issues that can affect their ability to achieve this:

- Land assembly can often be a problem for proposals that extend beyond more than one ownership;
- The cost of buying land can often act as a major show stopper e.g. if a landowner does not wish to sell in the short term or places an unrealistic 'hope value' on the site;
- Some sites can simply not be viable to develop as the cost of bringing the site forward is not covered by the proposed development value;

- General lack of market demand e.g. if the area is not seen as an attractive area for development;
 - Bank and institutional funding can be difficult to obtain and can therefore attach more risk to the project. Developers may struggle to secure affordable finance if they cannot convince lenders that there is a low risk – the cost of lending is often prohibitive on high risk proposals.
- 4.8 The above constraints are often intrinsically linked and often combine to prevent or delay the development of housing sites. The same issues may also prevent the recycling of land or property already occupied but where there may be some potential for redevelopment or re-configuration. It is clear that in the current economic climate 'market constraints' have had a significant influence on the development of all land but particularly brownfield land, which is deemed to be more difficult to develop and more risky.
- 4.9 On some sites, the combined economic and environmental costs of redevelopment are such that it is simply not viable to bring them forward. In such circumstances, there may need to be public intervention to help bring the land forward if there is good reason to do so.

Green Belt

- 4.10 In Bury, 59.5% of the district area is designated as Green Belt which is the second highest percentage of any district in the whole of Greater Manchester and is higher than the overall percentage for Greater Manchester.
- 4.11 Whilst this has helped Bury to have a strong track record in the regeneration of brownfield land, many of Bury's brownfield sites have already been brought back into use for residential development. On the positive side, this means that the Borough does not suffer from the extensive blight that other towns do from having huge swathes of derelict land that show no signs of coming forward. However, the success in delivering on brownfield land means that current housing land supply within the existing urban area is limited and this is exacerbated by the fact that the Green Belt is drawn very tightly around the existing urban area.

5 Key Actions

- 5.1 This section of the Action Plan picks up on the key issues identified in the previous section and sets out actions that are already or need to be undertaken or progressed in order to support the increased delivery of housing in Bury. This includes potential actions associated with the following:
- Updating the development plan;
 - Monitoring and reviewing supporting information;
 - Proactively pursuing housing delivery;
 - Town centre regeneration; and
 - Developer contributions.

Updating the Development Plan

- 5.2 Bury is in the process of preparing a new development plan which will set out the policies to guide future planning applications in the Borough and allocate sites for future developments e.g. housing and employment. Work is currently on-going to replace the UDP with two key documents:
- **The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF)** - a jointly-prepared Greater Manchester Plan that will principally seek to address strategic issues around housing and employment.
 - **The Bury Local Plan** – which will cover locally-specific planning policies and site allocations to manage future growth and development in Bury; and
- 5.3 In terms of Bury’s wider development plan, the GMSF and the Local Plan will be key to the identification and promotion of housing development.
- 5.4 The GMSF will be particularly important in terms of identifying Bury’s housing target and the strategic sites to meet this. The 2019 [draft¹](#) of the GMSF proposed a number of key strategic amendments to the Green Belt in order to allocate sites for housing development at:
- Seedfield (140 units);
 - Walshaw (1,250 units);

¹ Please note that these proposals have just been consulted on and are subject to change as the GMSF progresses.

- Elton Reservoir (3,500 units);
- Northern Gateway (Castle Road) (200 units); and
- Northern Gateway (Simister/Bowlee) (2,000 units)

Monitoring and reviewing supporting information

Housing Strategy

- 5.5 In 2014, Bury Council issued a Housing Strategy aimed at resolving the Borough's housing crisis. It sought to resolve housing issues through encouraging a sustainable mix of quality housing in the Borough that is suitable and sufficient to meet the needs of the Borough's residents
- 5.6 This would be achieved through a range of means including stimulating house building in Bury, promoting affordable housing and reducing the number of empty homes in Bury.
- 5.7 The Council is working on a more up-to-date version of this strategy which will complement the Greater Manchester Housing Strategy issued by the Mayor of Greater Manchester in early 2019.

Development Briefs

- 5.8 These are an effective tool for bringing forward sites. They are more detailed than masterplans and can provide greater detail on a site's characteristics, constraints, policy context, ownership details and design needs.
- 5.9 They can be used to offer more detailed guidance on sites in a masterplan or they can be produced in response to a specific development opportunity. These can promote sites and inform prospective developers of what is expected from the site's redevelopment and give certainty to potential developers. In the past, these have been used for surplus Council-owned sites which have been sold.

Brownfield Land Statement

- 5.10 In Summer 2018, the Council published a Brownfield Land Statement. This underlines the importance that the Council gives to the regeneration of brownfield land and sets out the Council's commitment to using its powers and influence to bringing back vacant brownfield sites into a viable use.
- 5.11 The Statement recognises that each brownfield site will have its own specific constraints and issues which may be preventing them from coming forward in a timely manner. Some of these constraints will be physical, such as flood risk or contamination, whilst others will have ownership problems or lack of

developer interest. Understanding and addressing these issues can be the catalyst to help regenerate underperforming urban areas and provide the infrastructure and amenities integral to the creation of sustainable communities.

- 5.12 The Brownfield Land Statement sets out the Council's continued commitment to getting a better understanding of the constraints that are acting as a barrier to the redevelopment of the Borough's key brownfield sites and to exploring the various mechanisms that can help to bring these sites back into beneficial use.

Brownfield Land Register

- 5.13 The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 require each local planning authority in England to prepare, maintain and publish a register of previously developed (brownfield) land suitable for residential development. The government considers that the purpose of the registers is to provide up-to-date and consistent information on sites that local authorities consider appropriate for residential development. Bury's Brownfield Land Register is available here: www.bury.gov.uk/11050.
- 5.14 The Register must include all parcels of brownfield land at least 0.25 hectares in size, or capable of supporting at least 5 dwellings, which the Council considers to be suitable and available for residential development and for development to be achievable.

Employment Land Monitoring

- 5.15 The Council will continue to monitor employment sites on brownfield land. This process will identify the sites that are suitable for continued employment use and should remain protected along with those which are no longer suitable.
- 5.16 Where sites are unsuitable, the SHLAA will determine whether these sites are suitable for future housing development and whether they can be brought forward for housing.

Proactively pursuing housing delivery

Promoting the delivery of Council-owned sites

- 5.17 As established in an earlier section, Bury Council owns several sites which are available for housing development, including those sites identified in Table 4:

Table 4 - Council-owned sites with potential for housing development

Site	Number of dwellings (as identified in the SHLAA)
Radcliffe High School, Abden Street, Radcliffe	90
Seedfield	140
Millwood School, Fletcher Fold Road, Bury	25
William Kemp Heaton Day Centre (Site B), St.Peters Road, Bury	30
Wheatfield Centre, Victoria Avenue, Whitefield	30
Total	315

- 5.18 In the 2019/20 budget, it was stated that Bury Council will work on options for taking these sites forward for development and reports will be sent to Cabinet once appraisals have been developed.

Government Funding Opportunities

- 5.19 In recent years, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government have provided funding opportunities to help boost housing delivery such as the Housing Infrastructure Fund and the Large Sites Capacity Fund. Whilst Bury has submitted bids for appropriate sites in the Borough, it has unfortunately been unsuccessful in securing these opportunities.
- 5.20 In the event that appropriate funding opportunities come forward from the central government, the Council will seek to submit bids in order to boost the viability of sites and bring them forward for future development.
- 5.21 These funding opportunities could be used to improve the viability of brownfield sites and bring them forward for housing development.
- 5.22 Successful bids for funding could also be used to bring forward the supporting infrastructure for GMSF sites. Through this, lead-in times for infrastructure improvements can be reduced and the delivery of new homes can be accelerated.

- 5.23 Funding has also come available from the Greater Manchester Housing Investment Fund which has been used to unlock housing schemes in Bury including Brook Street in Radcliffe and Lowes Road in Bury.

Prudent Borrowing

- 5.24 In the absence of other forms of funding, a number of local authorities have sought to secure prudential borrowing facilities to support new development within their area. Such facilities may be utilised to provide equity investment, loan finance or gap funding to bring forward projects which would otherwise not be delivered within current market conditions however would require to comply with the appropriate state aid legislation.
- 5.25 The use of prudent borrowing within the current funding market is considered to reduce developer risk for commercial development projects as down side risks are shared with a third party and also note that many developers take confidence from acting in a joint capacity with the relevant Local Authority.
- 5.26 It is important that should prudential borrowing be secured then this should be targeted carefully at specific areas which will have the maximum impact upon the development of brownfield sites and on the local economy. Funding could be utilised to support a programme of site remediation to ensure that sites were immediately available to developer requirements in areas where there is anticipated to be existing levels of demand.
- 5.27 Where appropriate, the Council may consider the use of prudent borrowing to support the delivery of new housing in Bury.

Development Partnerships

- 5.28 As opposed to disposing of sites for development, public sector bodies can enter into joint ventures with private sector developers such that land could be vested into development schemes with the returns received upon completion of the scheme and ultimate disposal.
- 5.29 Such an approach enables the public sector to have an element of control over the development process and improves cash flow for the private sector development partner to improve viability and project profitability. This would normally relate to either the private sector undertaking development on public sector land or the public sector joining with an adjoining development scheme to provide a more comprehensive development.
- 5.30 The Council has previously entered into joint venture arrangements in order to secure the delivery of new development as part of the first phase of the Townside development in Bury town centre and will continue to explore further opportunities as they arise.

Town Centre Regeneration

- 5.31 Town centres have been and continue to be a valuable source of housing supply and the Council is keen to further explore the potential of the Borough's main centres. Work is on-going to help bring forward vacant brownfield and underused sites in and around the Borough's key town centres.

Bury

- 5.32 In 2009, the Council adopted the Bury but Better Town Centre Vision and Development Strategy and this has been integral to the delivery of town centre regeneration including the flagship £350 million Rock development comprising around 600,000 sq. ft. of retail floorspace, 100,000 sq. ft. of leisure facilities and over 400 apartments.
- 5.33 Despite the considerable success achieved through the Bury but Better masterplan, there remains significant development opportunities within Bury town centre on brownfield sites.
- 5.34 As such, the Council is working towards a new masterplan for the town centre. The masterplan will refresh the current vision for Bury town centre and help to bring forward a number of key regeneration sites for development, including housing.

Radcliffe

- 5.35 Bury Council is currently looking at boosting housing delivery in Radcliffe as a key catalyst in the regeneration of the town centre. A number of housing sites in and around the town centre have already been brought forward for residential development, including the former Radcliffe Paper Mill, Allen's Green Works and the former Civic Centre. This has helped to bring an increased population and footfall into the town.
- 5.36 The Council will continue to promote the delivery of new housing in and around Radcliffe town centre and capitalise on specific opportunities including the redevelopment of the former East Lancashire Paper Mill site which has the potential to deliver around 400 homes. In 2018, Bury Council and Homes England secured outline permission for housing development and will be working on bringing the site forward over the coming months.
- 5.37 The Council has now set up a Radcliffe Regeneration Task Group made up of Ward Councillors, Council Officers, local business leaders and key public stakeholders. The intention is to produce an updated vision and Strategic Regeneration Framework Radcliffe. This will help to identify development opportunities for vacant and derelict sites in Radcliffe which could deliver new homes in Radcliffe or help to increase demand for housing in Radcliffe and enhance the viability of stalled sites.

Prestwich

- 5.38 Prestwich was nominated by the Council to be part of the Greater Manchester Mayor's "Town Centre Challenge" initiative in December 2017. The initiative aims to support town centre regeneration focusing on opportunities for the redevelopment of the Longfield Centre and surrounding areas in the heart of the town centre, including boosting the delivery of town centre housing.
- 5.39 Since the nomination of the town, the Council has been working closely with a development partner and uses under consideration for the scheme currently include a significant amount of new residential development as part of a wider mix of uses.
- 5.40 The Council has already taken a step towards achieving this aim by purchasing a key site that would enable creation of a public space to support the town centre's regeneration.
- 5.41 Further detail on the proposals could potentially be unveiled in Autumn 2019 with the scheme making a start in late 2021, subject to funding coming forward for the site.

Ramsbottom

- 5.42 Development opportunities in and around Ramsbottom centre are limited as there is not a lot of vacant or underused land.
- 5.43 However, the former Mondi site at Peel Bridge is a large brownfield site immediately adjacent to the town centre that has potential to be brought forward for a range of uses, possibly including residential use. The site does have some flood risk constraints and work will continue on how these can be mitigated.

Developer contributions

- 5.44 Developer contribution, or planning obligations as they are also known, are negotiated legal agreements between developers and local authorities. They are used to make development acceptable through delivery of affordable housing or infrastructure, or requiring development to be used in a particular way.
- 5.45 The National Planning Policy Framework specifies that pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision-taking. Plans should be deliverable and the sites and the scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened.

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- 5.46 To ensure viability, the costs of any requirements likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable.