

Public Consultation Submission Greater  
Manchester Combined Authority

**Revised 2019 Draft Greater Manchester  
Spatial Framework**

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18th March 2019

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The strength of local opinion is clear to see. The voices from not only my own, but neighbouring constituencies, are clear: the green belt should be safeguarded, and previously developed land (brownfield sites) should instead be prioritised for housing.**
- **We need to provide new homes in order to fill the housing shortage, but this should be done in a way which is sensitive to both the local environment and the wishes of local communities.**
- **I and the thousands who signed local petitions are not against house building; but we believe brownfield sites which have had development on them previously, should be prioritised for the building of houses, and not green belt. This not only protects the countryside, but focuses development where regeneration is needed and where the necessary infrastructure already exists.**
- **The redevelopment and reuse of land in urban areas, brownfield sites, should take priority over green belt sites. If we make sites in the green belt available now, then the opportunity for real regeneration in Stockport, and other Greater Manchester towns, will be lost for a generation.**

- **Greater Manchester has at least 1,000 hectares of brownfield land spread across 439 sites which have not yet been fully developed for housing, enough to build at least 55,000 homes, and it is likely more such land can be found.**
- **The GMSF proposals for Stockport were and remain a controversial topic for local residents. The original plans for 4,000 houses on green belt land surrounding High Lane, which would have almost doubled the size of the village, and completely changed its character were both deeply unwelcome and undeliverable.**
- **Following several years of campaigning, the combined efforts of local councillors and cross party groups of Greater Manchester MPs, supported by the voices of many thousands of local residents, brought enough pressure to bear on the Combined Authority to force a drastic rethink of the plans following the first stage consultation.**
- **Following a long delay a very different Draft GMSF has emerged. Thanks to the introduction of a national brownfield register, many brownfield sites have been found to build 5,180 homes in Stockport, with a further 5,100 homes to be planned on a mix of brownfield land and greenfield land. This has meant that the new draft GMSF envisaged 3,700 properties to be built on existing green belt, down from 12,000 as originally proposed in 2016 - a huge reduction.**
- **In my own constituency of Hazel Grove, the figure has been reduced from 4,000 to 1,250. Critical plans to more than double the size of High Lane Village with an extra 4,000 houses has been reduced to 500.**
- **I have consistently urged that the overall number of houses needed to be reduced, and that where houses are to be built we should follow a robust brown-field-first policy. I therefore welcome the fact that the revised GMSF plans do both of those things.**
- **Based on my correspondence from constituents, the overwhelming local consensus was opposed to the current proposals of the GMSF, both in general and to specific sites.**
- **For both individual sites and, the GMSF as a whole, similar issues were raised repeatedly, namely:**
  - **Permanent loss of green belt land;**
  - **Loss of access to countryside, green space, recreation land, and wildlife habitat;**
  - **Need for further Brownfield alternatives;**
  - **Long term road traffic access to and within sites;**
  - **Wider implications on traffic and congestion across the local A-road network which is already stretched over capacity;**
  - **The air quality consequences of traffic and congestion both locally and regionally;**
  - **Increased local population and the pressure placed on local amenities;**
  - **Provision of school places for new families;**
  - **Provision of health services for new families;**
  - **The affordable housing mix of sites;**
  - **Change in character of local communities.**
- **A deep concern was common to many, if not most, of the responses that I received, was that the GMSF had been drawn up with apparently very little knowledge or sensitivity of local communities and the practical 'on-the-ground' impact that these proposals will have. Criticisms of the GMSF planning process as out of touch with the views and need local people was striking. More over the fact that the current plans are relatively vague and lacking in detail means the nature and extent of these issues is very difficult to assess.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

**Based on the feedback I have received from residents, I make the following recommendations to improve the current Draft GMSF:**

- **Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council should consider using the 2016-Base ONS population and household projections to determine its overall housing need**
- **Any housing need that cannot be delivered using land in Stockport, these needs should be considered for re-distribution to other Local Authority Areas within Greater Manchester where either housing need or land availability is greater**
- **Identify and develop further brownfield sites**
- **No building on the green belt should be permitted until all local brownfield sites have been fully developed or explored**
- **Dispersal of plans to smaller sites (fewer than 250)**
- **New school places and healthcare facilities will undoubtedly be needed**
- **A comprehensive traffic management plan for not only individual sites but the wider road network including a link road from the A6 end of the A555 to the M60 junction at Bredbury**
- **Protection for wildlife corridors and woodland**
- **Houses should be genuinely affordable, and suit the needs of local families**
- **Further stages of GMSF consultation must engage fully with local communities and neighbourhood plans and forums**

**The Combined Authority must give much more regard to the availability and capacity of current amenities in areas where developments are proposed by the Framework, and ensure that these services and infrastructure will not be overloaded, or that new such amenities are fully included in development proposals.**

**There is a long way to go before any of GMSF sites proposed in my local area will receive widespread support, and further local public consultations, in conjunction with neighbourhood forums, must remain top priorities with regards to the GMSF.**

## SUBMISSION CONTEXT

I am responding to this consultation in my capacity as Member of Parliament for the Hazel Grove constituency.

The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) represents the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA) plans for the management of land for housing, commercial and industrial use over the next 20 years. It will have a permanent effect on not only the location, but the shape and character of local communities and will impact the lives of many thousands of families for generations to come.

I want to make clear from the outset that I am not against building and housing developments per se. Nor am I against the concept of the Framework itself – on the contrary. I think a cross-regional approach to sharing housing allocation from the Combined Authority (CA) strategically across Greater Manchester is to be welcomed. We of course need to provide new developments in order to fill the housing shortage and provide jobs for now and generations to come. However, this should be done in a way which is sensitive to both the local environment and the wishes of local communities. It should also be only where there is genuine need, and where the infrastructure exists to support such developments.

Due to the significant and lasting impact the GMSF will have on the area I represent, it has been a key focus of my activities as the MP for the Hazel Grove constituency since being elected in 2015. I and other MPs in the area, both Conservative and Labour, and supported by thousands of residents, have campaigned to protect the Greenbelt from massive scale development. I have attended local public meetings and rallies, led multiple debates in Parliament, submitted three separate petitions related to various aspects of the GMSF with combined signatures from over 5,000 constituents to the House of Commons, and lobbied different Housing Ministers about the matter.

## THE VOICE OF COMMUNITIES

I have been determined throughout this process that whatever the content of the GMSF, it should be progressed in close consultation with local communities and local residents. All too often in the English planning process there is a sense that planning is something 'done to' rather than 'done with' communities and I believe this is wrong. I therefore believe I have a key role, as the MP for Hazel Grove constituency, to listen to local views on the proposals and to amplify those voices to the Combined Authority.

To that end I have conducted a widespread listening exercise across the constituency with regard to the revised GMSF proposals. I have encouraged residents to email me their views on the revised GMSF proposals and attended local meetings of residents' groups and neighbourhood forums, and via social media.

The views expressed to me by residents have been fundamental in informing my response to the current consultation, and it in parts draws directly from some of the formal submissions I have received from residents and many other sources of feedback. I have always said the voices of local people must be listened to by the Combined Authority and so have chosen in places to quote directly from residents in relation to both individual sites and the overall GMSF. Where this is the case, individual identities have been protected. I am grateful to everyone who has contacted me with their feedback on the new proposals. This is invaluable to me in formulating my own submission to the GMSF consultation.

In addition, I have been encouraging as many as possible to make their own submissions directly to the official GMCA consultation portal.

## WHY PROTECT GREENBELT

Green Belt - the best loved and most easily understood British planning policy, which is hugely valued by local people. It has been a longstanding commitment of all colours of Government that redevelopment and reuse of land in urban areas, (so called 'brownfield sites'), should take priority over green belt sites. This is rightly so for many reasons:

**Regeneration** – Firstly, we need to get people living in town centres again. Our cities are thriving but medium and large towns are being neglected. This depopulation leads to further decline and creates a vicious cycle, as has been witnessed in Stockport. Manchester, to its credit, has made great strides in this respect. The green belt encourages regeneration of our towns and makes best use of our land.

**Transport** – Secondly, safeguarding our green belt encourages us to build upwards not out; to live nearer to our work places and not to commute and congest. Our local roads, infrastructure, and transport capacity already struggle with existing demands. These proposals for massive developments in rural areas will only make matters worse.

**Countryside** – Thirdly, the green belt is a vital barrier to urban sprawl and is hugely valued by local people. It protects our countryside and all the benefits that brings.

In contrast, developing vacant brownfield sites that have previously been used for commercial or industrial purposes, is more suitable for house building. They are closer to the urban centres, retain the countryside, boost regeneration, and ease transport pressure.

Yet, before these many brownfield sites have been properly utilised, the Framework seeks to release green belt land, which once gone can never be restored. While building on green belt sites is sometimes necessary, the release of green belt land now, and on the scale proposed, is a huge disincentive to proper use and regeneration of brownfield sites.

Most of our housing is now provided by volume housebuilders. They are essential to housing provision, but their business models favour large new green field developments. If we make sites in the green belt available, the volume house builders will develop these first, and make the spurious case that sites in our towns are unsuitable or unprofitable. Once they have developed on the green belt releases, they will come back for more before they even look at urban land. Therefore, the opportunity for real regeneration in Stockport, and other Greater Manchester towns, will be lost for a generation.

### **BROWNFIELD FIRST**

Everyone accepts we need new homes building, but that does not mean sacrificing huge swathes of countryside without proper consideration. Over recent years I have consistently sought to protect green belt land and have favoured a brownfield-first strategy, where previously developed land, or derelict or redundant sites are priorities to meet the pressing need for house building. I have sought to persuade both Government and the Combined Authority of the benefits of such a strategy and supported the work of groups like the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

There are several steps the Combined Authority should take to ensure that brownfield developments are prioritised, and to ensure that this is reflected in the final version of the Framework. This will ensure our towns are regenerated first, and that green belt is only released when it really is the last option.

We need an accurate estimate of the amount of urban land actually available. According to the Combined Authority's own figures,<sup>1</sup> Greater Manchester has at least 1,000 hectares of brownfield land across 439 sites which have not yet been developed for housing or even have planning permission applied for. Stockport has many of these sites which have not yet been developed for housing. Taken together, these sites have enough space to build at least 55,000 homes (assuming a density of 55 homes per hectare), which represents almost a quarter of the entire Greater Manchester target.

The Combined Authority should also review what can be done to reduce the amount of 'land banking' across all its constituent boroughs so that brownfield sites can be developed as a priority, and to incorporate such measures into the GMSF.

## GMSF REVISION 2016 TO 2019

Since the highly controversial First Draft in 2016 much has changed with the GMSF. The original 2016 plan originally sought to build on more than 8% of Greater Manchester's Greenbelt. However, after attracting criticism from across the political spectrum, and its first consultation received evidence from thousands of concerned residents, the Authority was forced back to the drawing board for a re-think.

After months of delay, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority published its updated draft of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework in 2019.

One major improvement is that overall housing targets under the Framework will now be assessed at a county wide level rather than at a purely local authority level. This means that some of the house building targets from the first draft, can be redistributed across local authority boundaries, to where local housing need is higher or land availability is greater. I believe this is a sensible approach, and was a change that I, and others, called for in response to the original GMSF.

After a great deal of public pressure, and thanks to the introduction of a national brownfield register, many brownfield sites have been found to build 5,180 homes in Stockport, with a further 5,100 homes to be planned on a mix of brownfield land and greenfield land. This has meant that the new draft GMSF envisaged 3,700 properties to be built on existing green belt, down from 12,000 as originally proposed in 2016 - a huge reduction. In my own constituency of Hazel Grove the figure has been reduced from 4,000 to 1,250, and critically plans to more than double the size of High Lane Village with an extra 4,000 houses, has been reduced to 500. However, in order to fit in some of the new homes needed, new sites at the former Offerton High School, Gravel Bank Road and Unity Mill in Woodley, and Hyde Bank Meadows, Romiley have been suggested under the revised plans. These sites will be smaller than the original High Lane proposals, at about 250 homes each, and will, in parts, use brownfield land.

These revised plans, with a greatly reduced area of Greenbelt to be sacrificed, show that when local people come together and when politicians work on a cross party basis, we can make our voices heard. I have consistently urged that the overall number of houses needed to be reduced, and that where houses are to be built, we should follow a robust brown-field-first policy. I therefore welcome the fact that the revised GMSF plans do both of those things. The result of these changes is a step in the right direction in many regards to the more controversial elements of the Framework. Despite my opposition to parts of the Framework, I do thank the Combined Authority for listening to the people and for taking note of their concerns and revising the plan.

However, there are some significant changes to the proposed sites, which have rightly prompted many further questions and comments from local people. While the details of the GMSF may have changed, controversy surrounding it has remained. Contentious points have principally centred on four areas: the

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [Greater Manchester Open Data Infrastructure Map](#)

overall housing numbers; proposals to build in many places on what is currently green belt land; environmental considerations of air quality and wildlife impact, and on whether the accompanying infrastructure has been given due consideration, particularly in relation to transport and traffic, and local amenities to serve the increased population including schools and health services.

While I welcome the reduction to the amount of Green belt land to be released, the policy of brownfield first, inclusion of appropriate infrastructure and further local public consultation, remain top priorities with regards to the GMSF. We must ensure the efficient use of brownfield land, and that any new housing developments are properly supported with additional transport infrastructure and local services.

It is in that spirit which I wish to raise some specific concerns about the current 2019 version of the Framework, and propose measures which the Combined Authority should consider to address these issues.

## OVERALL HOUSING NUMBERS

Another significant development since the last debate came in September 2018, when the ONS released its most up-to-date population figures and household forecasts. The publication of new household projections by the Office for National Statistics led to a significant reduction in the overall numbers generated by the standard method for assessing local housing need. These proved to be almost 25% lower than previously thought, and consequently gives rise to a revised national housing needs target of some 213,000 new homes per year.

In October 2018, the Government published the Technical Consultation on updates to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and guidance. That consultation paper set out proposals to update planning practice guidance on housing need assessment to be consistent with the Government's ambitions for increasing housing supply. The Government proposed that planning practice guidance should be amended to specify that 2014-based ONS projections provide the demographic baseline for local housing need assessment, instead of the lower 2016-based figures.

There were 498 responses to this question. Out of the organisations that responded, more than half (55%) disagreed with the change and only a third (36%) agreed with the proposal. Over two thirds of local authorities opposed the plans, and individual respondents overwhelmingly opposed it by 86%.

In the Government response to the consultation, despite clear opposition to the proposals, from both organisation and individuals, the Government has signalled an intention to ignore the latest ONS evidence and used the out-dated, but higher 2014 based projections. This means it will overlook the latest ONS figures and instead, stick to its previous target of 300,000 new homes per year, which leads to increased pressure to build on green belt land.

To re-iterate the point I made when I wrote to the Secretary of State in December, in response to the Department's consultation, I strongly disagreed with these proposals, and still do. Rather, I believe the 2016-based projections must be used to provide the demographic baseline for the standard method. Failure to use the most up-to-date evidence in creating policies, is directly contradictory to the rules in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

I have serious concerns over the Government's response to the ONS figures, and the message it sends to people, as to selectively consider evidence which justifies its pre-ordained housing needs figures, suggest that the direction of travel is only one way.



More over, this view is shared amongst constituents who have contacted me. As two constituents put it:

*“The use of ONS 2014 based demographic projections to determine the housing need. The 2014 projection suggests a population increase between 2014 and 2034 of 298,061. The more recent ONS 2016 projections suggest a population increase of 240,106 between 2016 and 2036. This is a decrease of 57,955 or 19% and the use of these more relevant projections would reduce further, perhaps even eliminate, the need to develop Green Belt land.”*

- High Lane resident

*“I find it remarkable that the GMSF plan is based on earlier population statistical figures from the ONS which are now known to be overstated.”*

- High Lane resident

However, following a House of Commons debate on the GMSF on the 21<sup>st</sup> February, the Minister of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, confirmed that despite the Government’s intention to maintain the 2014 ONS based projections at a national level, the targets remain a guide for local authorities, who are free to vary from them if desirable and justified by local factors.

*“I should clarify what the local housing need target is. It is exactly that—a target. It is a baseline from which a local authority can work to effectively establish the number of homes that it needs in its area. In the examination of any plan, a local inspector will look at the plan and accept properly evidenced and assessed variations from that target. If, for example, there are constraints such as an area of outstanding natural beauty, green belt or whatever it might be, and people can justify a lower number, an inspector should accept that.... That, combined with the duty that now exists in the planning system to co-operate with neighbouring local authorities, means, we hope, that each area can arrive at a figure for provable, established local housing need.”<sup>2</sup>*

- Kit Malthouse MP, Minister of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

**In light of this, I would urge that the GMCA consider using the more recent and more accurate ONS 2016-based projections to provide the demographic baseline for calculating their local housing need targets, even if the Government refuses to do so nationally. I call on the Combined Authority to defend the robustness of this population growth forecasting, and subsequent overall housing target, as it moves towards finalising the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.**

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<sup>2</sup> Hansard: HC Deb, 21 February 2019, c646WH

## SUMMARY OF RESIDENTS VIEWS

As I have said, I am determined to listen to local views on the proposals and to amplify the voices of residents in the Hazel Grove Constituency. I encouraged residents to email me their views on the revised GMSF proposals, and the views expressed to me by residents have been fundamental in informing my response to the current consultation.

From the residents' responses, I received 92 written submissions of views, **and the overwhelming local consensus was opposed to the current proposals of the GMSF, both in general and to specific sites.** Only three of the 92 responses expressed broad support for the GMSF proposals, and even then it was qualified support, subject to various improvements.

For both individual sites and, the GMSF as a whole, similar issues were raised repeatedly, namely:

- Permanent loss of Green belt land;
- Loss of access to countryside, green space, recreation land, and wildlife habitat;
- Need for further Brownfield alternatives;
- Road traffic access both into and within sites;
- Wider implications on traffic and congestion across the local A-road networks which are already stretched over capacity;
- The air quality consequences of traffic and congestion both locally and regionally;
- Increased local population and the pressure placed on local amenities;
- Provision of school places for new families;
- Provision of health services for new families;
- The affordable housing mix of sites;
- Change in character of local communities.

Of additional deep concern was a sense which was common to many of the responses that the GMSF had been drawn up with apparently very little knowledge or sensitivity of local communities and the practical 'on-the-ground' impact that these proposals will have. Criticisms of the GMSF planning process as out of touch with the views and need of local people was striking. That residents feel this was both saddening and unacceptable, and is something both Stockport Council and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority must address urgently. It is clear there is a long way to go before any of GMSF sites proposed in my local area will receive widespread support, and further local public consultations, in conjunction with neighbourhood forums, must remain top priorities with regards to the GMSF.

**It is important to note though that while the vast majority of opinion of respondents was to object to the proposals, at least on some level, or to highlight problems and corners, it would be wrong to generalise them as broad or unconstructive criticism. Many of the respondents have put extensive thought into how the proposals might be improved or the negative aspects of the proposals could be improved. Most of these residents have an intimate and detailed knowledge and attachment to their communities. Many have lived in the area for years if not decades. As a result, they have insight far more detailed than an average local planning officer could ever hope to have. Therefore, the Combined Authority would be well advised to give very careful consideration to not just the objections, but the suggestions for changes and improvements.**

**I want to allow local residents to have their views heard directly, and so have cited as many responses as possible in their own words.** The following is a selection of comments received regarding either the GMSF 2019 draft proposals in general or related to specific sites. They have had only minor editing for sense, context, or continuity. While not every respondent has been cited, I am grateful to everyone who has contacted me with their feedback on the new proposals. The following are an accurate and represented reflection of consensus view of the general tone of the comments I have received between 19<sup>th</sup> January 2019 and 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019. I have chosen to make the quotes anonymous, but for context have given an indication of the nearest main community centre (or where especially the relevant road). This also demonstrates that the responses are representative.

## General Points

### **Greenbelt loss and Wildlife protection**

*Stockport is in great need of a nearby green belt area to regenerate breathable air. Wildlife and its habitat cannot be replaced once it has been destroyed. I trust that this council will vote for the rejection of this proposal and not be remembered for the destruction of rural England.*

High Lane Resident

*As a community we enjoy on a daily basis the picturesque and surrounding rural area and it is most enjoyable for our children as well, if these plans go forward this will disappear and our children will have a big profound impact.*

Woodley Resident

*The proposal is going to have major negative effects on both my local community, the infrastructure and the surrounding picturesque rural areas.*

Woodley Resident

*Please work hard to preserve our green belt. It is a hugely precious resource that I feel adds to the health and mental health of the population as well as being essential in the preservation of the biodiversity of the wildlife of the area. Wildlife and biodiversity seems to be under pressure everywhere and once it is gone, it is very difficult, if not impossible to 'claw' its way back.*

Marple Resident

*Our wildlife is disappearing rapidly and suffering terribly and we need our green areas for everyone to enjoy and encourage exercise and wellbeing.*

Woodley Resident

### **Brownfield First**

*I am still concerned about the use of green belt land but do welcome the robust use of brownfield land first.*

Marple Resident

*I fully support your brownfield first policy.*

High Lane Resident

*Using important Green Belt areas for housing development should be an action of last resort. The GMSF reports show little evidence that brownfield sites have been sufficiently and extensively explored and suggest that the Green Belt plans have been taken as an easy option.*

Marple Resident

*Manchester and Stockport have many brownfield sites and all this land should be used before we destroy our green spaces.*

High Lane Resident

*Whilst I realise that there is a shortage of housing, there are plenty of brown field sites in the Greater Manchester area before desecrating the first green belt area that one comes to after leaving Stockport.*

High Lane Resident

## **Traffic**

*The existing road infrastructure will not support the extra proposed houses. The A6 is already saturated as is the A523. Traffic on the A6 from High Lane to Stockport and Manchester in the rush hours (and increasingly at other times of day) is intolerable. Road links to and from Marple and surrounding areas are increasingly crowded. Traffic jams through Offerton, Compstall and Bredbury are a daily occurrence and traffic on the M60/ M56 from Sharston to Stockport is nose to tail.*

High Lane Resident

*The volume of traffic has become overwhelming and pollution at a high point. It appears that whilst planners give consideration to promoting the development of new homes, little regard is given to the capacity of the roads which service them or the pollution that comes with miles of standing congested traffic. With further plans to build new homes and factories close to these congested corridors, such as High Lane, the plan is untenable.*

Marple Resident

*I know that the Spatial Plan proposes improved road junctions etc. for almost all the new housing developments but I think that misses the point. The harsh reality is that the roads are simply too narrow in many places to cope with increased volumes of traffic.*

Romiley Resident

*My greatest worry about the proposals is the pressure on transport that will result from the new homes. As an illustration consider the A560 which runs through Bredbury and Woodley and on to Hyde. Allocation 36 proposes 250 new dwellings which will use the road, but just over the border in Tameside allocation 44 proposes an additional 440. So that's almost 700 new dwellings within (I guess) a mile. If each dwelling has two cars (which seems to be the norm around here) that's an additional 1400 vehicles which will use that road as their main artery.*

Romiley Resident

## **Air Quality**

*Will there be, an independent study on the air quality currently in the proposed building area? The level could be dangerously high and pushed further into unacceptable levels without proper research.*

Woodley Resident

*The GMSF must be made to undertake air quality surveys and publish the results before any development takes place in High Lane or elsewhere. If the current air quality is illegal then how can it possibly be allowed to deteriorate even further by additional vehicle journeys and housing developments?*

High Lane Resident

*The planners have again failed to grasp the fact that traffic and pollution levels are already unacceptable and air quality is outside legal limits.*

High Lane Resident

*It requires detailed analysis and modelling of air quality conditions in order to be dutifully confident that air quality will remain at safe levels. I can see no evidence that this serious matter has been considered to the extent that is warranted.*

Marple Resident

## **School Places**

*Our local schools are already being stretched to the limit with overcrowding and this increase of more houses will bring more people which will increase our schools to stretching point.*

Woodley Resident

### **Health Services**

*Stepping Hill hospital is already struggling to cope with the existing population. It cannot possibly cope with the residents of 19,000 extra homes in the Stockport area, particularly the 4,000 planned for High Lane which is within a few miles of the hospital. There will be an intolerable level of pressure on health and social services.*

High Lane Resident

*Our local hospital, Stepping Hill, cannot cope with the number of patients they have already.*

Marple Bridge Resident

*Existing hospitals have difficulty with the population as it is.*

Romiley Resident

### **Affordable Housing**

*I still have concerns about the proportion of affordable housing that will be included in the schemes.*

Marple Bridge Resident

*The subject of 30% affordable housing is laughable. My daughter, a teacher on an excellent salary has recently bought her own house but could not afford an 'affordable' one. Affordable houses for whom? The starting prices are ridiculous and the buyer gets little space for the money. It would appear that the builders' and the planners' ideas of affordable are two very different things although I suspect greed has a lot to do with the situation.*

High Lane Resident

*The GMSF 2019 proposals makes absolutely no reference to the inclusion of social within High Lane. It does include 'Affordable' housing but quite what this means if not defined. I would suggest and prefer that Affordable Homes are 'Starter Homes'.*

High Lane Resident

## SPECIFIC SITE CONCIRNS

### High Lane - Allocation 38

**Proposal:** *To build around 500 new homes – revised from 4,000 originally. To make provision of a minimum of 30% affordable housing on site and across a range of housing types, including provision for older persons' affordable accommodation and self-build. Provide access points north and south from the A6. Incorporate pedestrian and cycle routes in the area and to public transport, including new routes to/from the Middlewood Way, bus stops on the A6 and to possible development of a new railway station at High Lane. New cycle and footpaths to connect with the existing local network. Other utilities will include superfast broadband, and electric vehicle charging points.*

**Of all the proposed sites in the revised draft, High Lane attracted the highest number of responses. This is perhaps due to it being the largest single site of the proposals, and also the fact that it was the only site in the original 2016 Draft GMSF. High Lane residents are therefore much more aware of the GMSF and the problems with the proposals. There was widespread and sincere relief that the original proposals for 4,000 homes has been reduced to 500, but nevertheless significant opposition remains.**

**The principle issue of concern was the impact on local traffic that 500 homes, and potentially around 1,000 cars, is likely to bring. High Lane is already in a difficult situation in terms of its proximity to the heavily congested A6. Matters have recently gotten worse as the newly opened Manchester Relief Road (A555) which was intended to relieve congestion, has only served to draw more traffic though the area, creating congestion which backs up onto the local roads. The likely impact of these new homes, and consequently additional cars on the road (and fairly assuming an extra two cars per household)<sup>3</sup>, is believed by residents to be extremely negative in terms of traffic, congestion and as a result impacts on air quality too.**

**The scale of the proposed development, spatially in relation to the existing village, is also felt to be a threat to the existing character of the village, and will place an unbearable strain on local infrastructure, amenities, schools, and health services.**

### **General**

*I appreciate that the original proposal for the building of 4,000 homes was quite absurd but the reduction down to 500 should still be resisted and rejected at all costs.*

High Lane Resident

*The reduction at High Lane is good news, although any loss of our countryside is lamentable.*

Hazel Grove Resident

*The planners have again failed to grasp the fact that traffic and pollution levels are already unacceptable and air quality is outside legal limits. They have also failed to specify essential developments to local infrastructure to support the proposed housing development. Under the circumstances we cannot support the development and we want you to press the authorities to offer solutions to existing problems before any housing development can be considered.*

High Lane Resident

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<sup>3</sup> According to latest Department for Transport Statistics (2018) - The average cars per household rate across the North West Region in is 1.18. However, this includes the inner cities of Manchester and Liverpool Rural Village, semi-rural areas which my constituency comprises this rate is 1.76. Source: NTS9902: [Household car ownership by region and rural urban classification: England](#) (ODS, 24.2KB). 60% of households also have 2 vehicles or more -

[DfT Transport Statistics Great Britain 2017: report summaries](#)

*The proposed 4,000 homes seemed like an idea from a visitor from another planet. The revised 500 home proposal is still too high. If accepted and implemented it will be one of the largest development of houses in the GMSF.*

Hazel Grove Resident

*This whole scheme has been wrong from its inception and this watered down plan is still so wrong as to be unacceptable, There must be no extra building of any real scale in the village; the road and transport system cannot cope at the moment and we must not allow the situation to get worse. I beg you to reconsider.*

High Lane Resident

*I am not against small scale building, even in the green belt, because it seems to be necessary and I appreciate that the revised number is welcome and significantly less than the original plan for 4,000 homes. My overall view is that the development should be limited to a smaller, more manageable, and proportional number of homes of between 100 and 150 and that they should be built on the north side of the A6 which means that the estate could also be served by a new road joining Windlehurst Road.*

High Lane Resident

#### **A555 / MARR**

*The opening of the new road to the airport, while amazingly beneficial, has already increased the traffic, which can now in the mornings be backed up as far as Disley and caused queues along Windlehurst road. Imagine these queues with an extra 1000 cars entering the A6 every morning and evening.*

High Lane Resident

*The opening of the A555 Airport link road has been disastrous to A6 Buxton Road in High Lane. Its opening has seen much increased levels of traffic movements especially at peak traffic times. What used to take a short time (perhaps 5 - 10 minutes) to drive to and back from Hazel Grove, even in rush hour, is now a nightmare!*

High Lane Resident

*Now that the A555 has opened the increase in traffic on the A6 has to be seen to be believed as besides just feeding the airport it brings in traffic from much further afield that wants to get onto the M56 for the industrial area in north Wales.*

High Lane Resident

*The current transport infrastructure around the High Lane and Marple area is already stretched beyond limits.*

Marple Resident

*The new road to the airport has created even more traffic and the additional traffic lights have meant more queues up to High Lane and beyond. It has created a permanent "rush hour" and more houses would make this much worse.*

High Lane Resident

*The new road A555 has increased the levels of vehicles which come through [High Lane] village and during rush hour it can be backed up to Whalley Bridge.*

Marple Resident

*Before new homes are built in the area approval should be given to building an extension of the A555 from hazel grove to the M60 at Bredbury AND an A6 bypass linking the A555 at hazel grove to the Chapel en le Frith by-pass at Whaley Bridge.*

High Lane Resident

*Transport links are certainly of concern, especially with the new road actually increasing journey times to Poynton and High Lane due to the poor junction design, and lack of underpass. Concern over the A523 crossing was mentioned in the consultancy report but completely ignored.*

Hazel Grove Resident

## **Traffic**

*The A6 from Hazel Grove to High Lane has been much busier since the new by-pass opened. New houses would only make the traffic worse.*

High Lane Resident

*The addition of a new development of 500 homes creating possibly 1000 extra cars into the system would be a nightmare. All the traffic from this development would end up on our already congested roads mainly High Lane or Marple Road. Noting also that the new houses in Marple built on the Old Marple college site will be adding to the congestion locally. We do not need any more congestion in this area.*

High Lane Resident

*The proposed building of 500 homes in High Lane would place further demand on an already well over burdened A6. Please be very reassured that NONE of the traffic calming measures (which were introduced as A6 SEMMMS mitigation measures) work! Traffic flow on what was once a quiet residential road, is now none stop at peak traffic flow times and no doubt will only get worse.*

High Lane Resident

*Welcome to High lane, the biggest car park in Stockport, if not Manchester.*

High Lane Resident

*I feel that the High lane development would add to the pressure and development of 'rat run' mentality, possibly causing a rise in accidents. Hibbert Lane and Church Lane are NOT suitable for high volumes of traffic as they are basically residential roads with many householders having to park on the road as the properties are of an older type with no provision for private parking.*

Marple Resident

## **Air Quality**

*The new bypass was constructed together with our re-routed A6 without any recent Pollution Tests being taken. We now have illegal limits of highly toxic fumes all-round the area, particularly affecting residents living in properties on the A6 through the Village. They have to live with the awful smell of diesel fumes etc. inside their own homes. What this effect will have in the next few years is a terrible thought. Since we now have so many funeral directors in our village, maybe they know the future!*

High Lane Resident

*Air quality studies along the A6 at High Lane have already indicated potentially dangerous levels of traffic related air pollution. Again the MARR will only exacerbate this situation. It will be irresponsible and negligent of the authorities to ignore this issue. It requires detailed analysis and modelling of air quality conditions in order to be dutifully confident that air quality will remain at safe levels. I can see no evidence that this serious matter has been considered to the extent that is warranted*

Marple Resident

*The introduction of a further 500 homes and the no doubt increased numbers of vehicles associated with the development can only have a further detrimental effect to air quality in High Lane. The GMSF MUST be made to undertake air quality surveys and publish the results BEFORE any development takes place in High Lane or elsewhere.*

High Lane Resident



## **Rail**

*Before any housing development is allowed, the supporting infrastructure of a very much improved A6, a new rail station and rail line within High Lane must be in place.*

Hazel Grove Resident

*I welcome the proposal to improve rail links and provide High Lane with a decent railway station that could reduce traffic congestion but it's always difficult to get people to leave their cars and the sad state of local rail service doesn't help.*

High Lane Resident

*Why not get Northern Rail to subsidise train fares from High Lane and then a new station could make sense if built with a large P+R provision to make it attractive to a wider range of passengers. Add especially new rolling stock and a frequent service and it could be successful and take some traffic off the A6.*

Hazel Grove Resident

## **Woodland / Wildlife**

*There are a multiplicity of other issues that will need serious consideration including the impact on important local wildlife corridors, the loss of the Middlewood Way as a well-used area of natural community space, the presumed relocation of the high voltage electricity cables that intersect the area.*

Marple Resident

## **Character of Area**

*The development will essentially swallow up the village of High Lane - thus not only destroying the Green Belt land but additionally completely enveloping a long-standing community.*

Marple Resident

*I am very disappointed that the village I bought into will become part of the Greater Manchester sprawl and lose its individual identity. The fields and woodland between Hazel Grove and High Lane and Marple and Offerton aid a community feeling and those communities are being lost.*

High Lane Resident

*We need to explore all other alternative options e.g. brownfield sites before we destroy our village.*

High Lane Resident

## **Schools and Health Services**

*There are no firm plans for any supporting infrastructure, resulting in the current schools, dental, and medical facilities being completely overloaded by having to cope with the additional 1500 or so people - a percentage increase of over 25%. This would inevitably stretch them to breaking point.*

High Lane Resident

*Medical practices, local schools and local roads are all under heavy pressure. A further extension of our local population will also place a greater strain on our community services*

High Lane Resident

*Apparently provision will be made for services such as doctors and schools but what of hospitals? Stepping Hill is always at breaking point.*

High Lane Resident

*The two local schools are filled to capacity and have no land for expansion. Three primary schools have been closed in nearby Marple so there is nowhere for more children to receive education.*

High Lane Resident

*The local primary schools in High Lane are both full to capacity. Both are located a good distance from the proposed High Lane development site. Currently neither is accessible by public transport. The walk to either school would be well over a mile each way. The building of a new school within the proposed development site MUST be considered. Again local secondary schools are at capacity and consideration must also be given to the increase of pupil numbers.*

High Lane Resident

*High Lane Medical Practice currently provides an excellent service but it is questionable whether it could accommodate a further 1000 patients (and possibly more) under GMSF 2019 proposals.*

High Lane Resident

*High Lane is presently incapable of absorbing any more properties with the existing infrastructure of medical/dental care, primary education and lack of public transport.*

High Lane Resident

*We accept the need for housing development but the local infrastructure needs to be capable of supporting such a development This includes local roads, car parking, schools, doctors surgeries/medical centre, library, leisure facilities, shopping outlets and local business sites.*

High Lane Resident

Gravel Bank Road and Unity Mill, Woodley - Allocation 36

**Proposal:** *Deliver around 250 homes with a broad mix of housing types including apartments within Unity Mill and a minimum of 30% affordable housing. A split site using both brownfield and greenfield. Road/bridge link for vehicle and pedestrian access between Unity Mill site and Gravel Bank Road sites. Improvements are made to the junction of Gravel Bank Road and Hyde Road. New cycle and footpaths to connect with the existing local network, including links to Woodley Station and across the adjacent canal to the existing towpath and on to Haughton Dale Nature Reserve, and enhancements to public transport.*

**The Gravel Bank Road site attracted the second highest number of responses (after High Lane). The responses were overwhelmingly opposed to the proposals. The common issues of concern were site road access, parking and road safety. The new homes, and the cars added to the road, were felt to greatly impact on traffic both in the immediate and surrounding areas, adding to an already bad road congestion situation and, as a result, poor air quality. The impact of an increased population on local amenities including schools and health services was also highlighted by many. However, it is important to note that most of the comments referred to the Gravel Bank Road portion of the site. Unity Mill, by contrast, was rarely singled out, and where it was, the proposals were supported by some residents.**

**General**

*Woodley is already the most densely populated area in East Stockport and this ludicrous plan to build so many extra homes, in such a small area, will push local services and traffic to breaking point.*

Woodley Resident

*This is an ill thought out proposal with no wider investment in local infrastructure that will be unable to cope.*

Woodley Resident

*Please have a rethink.*

Woodley Resident

*I will be delighted to see the redevelopment of Unity Mill into apartments...It breaks my heart to see what was once a busy, successful local industry reduced to a derelict vandalised shell. The building will be returned to its former glory and provide much needed housing.*

Woodley Resident

**Site Access**

*As I live on Gravel Bank estate, I wonder how the proposed housing here will deal with only ONE access/exit road. It seems that the proposed Unity Mill development is being proposed to have access via Gravel Bank Road. How! Have any of the people proposing this development ever been on the estate? Trying to exit onto Stockport is a nightmare, which will be exacerbated by the extra traffic. There are cars parked on both side of Gravel Bank Road (including commuters from Woodley Station).*

Woodley Resident, Gravel Bank Estate

*Extra 300 – 400 cars a day trying to access and leave Gravel Bank Road. This road is very wide at the entrance and the proposed pedestrian island was never put in the middle to assist crossing the road as this would prevent the lorries turning in and out of the transport depot. These lorries will also now have difficulty exiting and accessing the road due to the amount of traffic that would be created.*

Woodley Resident, Gravel Bank Road

*At present in rush hour the traffic is often backed up to the Pennine Road junction and beyond sometimes halfway to Hyde and this is at a snail's pace all the way to Stockport. It can already take you a few minutes to turn right at the end of Gravel Bank road when you are the first car in the queue. How will we be able to turn either way at the end of the road with these increased cars?*

Woodley Resident

*Gravel Bank Rd was built 46 years ago for access to the current housing estate. It was not build as a thoroughfare for an additional 250 homes. It would not be possible to widen it. It will become a dangerous through road for residents particularly children.*

Woodley Resident, Legh Drive

*A new road is planned to access the Unity mill site, this will cut across the protected woodland.*

Woodley Resident, Legh Drive

*The road at the canal end of Gravel Bank Road is very narrow, and the road cannot be made any wider due to the location of the houses – even with no parking allowed it is barley wide enough for 2 cars to pass each other.*

Woodley Resident, Gravel Bank Road

### **Parking**

*There is little or no parking a Woodley Station now so what would happen to the extra cars at the station each day? Will residents of Gravel Bank Road be prevented from parking on the road as the increased traffic will be a hazard and it is only wide enough for one car to pass if there are parked cars? If this didn't happen it would make the queue even worse of people trying to drive up and down whilst negotiation legally parked cars or would we be prevented from parking outside our own homes and if so where an earth do we and our visitors park?*

Woodley Resident, Gravel Bank Road

*The entrance to Gravel Bank Rd from the A560 is used as a car park for people using Woodley station as there is no car park there. There can be as many as ten cars parked on this road in a morning and currently creates a problem for residents leaving the estate.*

Woodley Resident, Legh Drive

### **Road Safety**

*If you have ever tried to cross this widest part of the road in rush hour you literally have to run for your life – parents with small children and prams often must wait or rely on a kind motorist stopping and letting them cross safely whilst holding up the traffic – this is before all the extra cars. I have regularly stopped to let parents, children and elderly cross the road in safety.*

Woodley Resident, Gravel Bank Road

*The road passes two junior schools Woodley Juniors and Saint Marks and another junior school is passed by the rat run on the Yew Tree Estate. Any families from these new estates planned along this road will have to walk their children along it to school, their future health will suffer adversely.*

Woodley Resident

### **Traffic**

*On already overburdened roads I would think 250 homes would generate at least 400 extra vehicles. What is the proposal for the extra traffic?*

Woodley Resident

*With the Gee Cross proposal there would be no chance of getting to Stockport in the rush hour as there could be potentially an extra 1000 cars a day trying to use this road – the only public transport would be a bus which would be stuck in the traffic anyway.*

Woodley Resident, Gravel Bank Road

*There will be a huge increase in traffic exiting the estate onto the main A560. This road cannot cope at present and it is common for traffic in a morning to be queued past the end of the estate all the way to Stockport Centre.*

Woodley Resident

*The amount of traffic already travelling down Stockport Road towards Stockport and the M60 already causes long tailbacks, especially at rush hour and school times. This leads to people trying to find alternative routes off the main road and using the other streets. There are 3 Primary schools and a nursery on Stockport Road and Osborne Street (which is used as a short cut).*

Woodley Resident, Gravel Bank Estate

*There has been absolutely no consideration for the knock on effect this will have on our roads in terms of traffic and pollution. Has anybody who has proposed this development actually stood and witnessed traffic at the junction of Gravel Bank Road and the A560? Or undertaken an impartial, measured survey on the amount of cars already on this section, trying to make it to the M60 and towards Stockport during morning and evening peak times? It's possibly up to 400+ cars extra on this small section of road! Traffic is nose to tail on the A560 at the best of times and this will make it pretty much gridlock. There are too many developments in close proximity in this current plan when you take into account the one proposed at nearby Bredbury.*

Woodley Resident

*On the plans it says 'traffic calming measures' that is vague, and offers no explanation of how traffic will be 'calmed'. It won't be, it will be made 100% worse by increasing the amount of cars on the A560, and this is the main artery people travel down to get to the M60/M6 and other main motorways.*

Woodley Resident

## **Air Quality**

*The road is highly polluted and in the orange zone for air quality further traffic will push it into the ILLEGAL zone. Additional traffic along this road is sheer madness and will break air pollution laws.*

Woodley Resident, Legh Drive

*Pollution along this route is already marked on your map as amber, his will help tip it into the red.*

Woodley Resident, Davenport Drive

*I understand that this road shows as amber on the pollution control monitor, any more traffic will take it to red. Surely this contradicts one of the main issues which the proposals are trying to address, that of traffic pollution.*

Woodley Resident

*The proposal will increase the pollution on the A560, which I understand is already rated as Amber in some places, which could raise the health risks to existing residents living in and around the Hyde / Stockport Road.*

Woodley Resident

*The Government's directive is to reduce pollution, the extra cars will do the exact opposite, and more cars on the roads around already densely populated Woodley mean more pollution.*

Woodley Resident

### **School Places**

*The local schools, which are overcrowded, would also be further stretched - no doubt with no extra funding from the government to accommodate extra pupils.*

Woodley Resident

*Our local schools are already being stretched to the limit with overcrowding and this increase of more houses will bring more people which will increase our schools to stretching point.*

Woodley Resident

### **Health Services**

*The proposals will reduce my chances even further of getting a GP appointment at the health centre due to an additional 750 people using the service.*

Woodley Resident

*The planned development would also have a huge impact on our already, stretched to breaking point public services. Up to 750 people (say 3 per home) trying to join local doctors (where it's near impossible to get appointments as it is).*

Woodley Resident

*It is already extremely difficult to get a Doctor's appointment without the possibility of a further 750 people also trying to get an appointment.*

Woodley Resident

### **Wildlife Areas**

*With this current proposal I fear the last remaining fields at each side of Unity mill will be gone making the area one huge housing estate, what will happen to the wooded area between the current gravel bank estate and Unity mill. This area is home to mixture of wildlife foxes, badgers, and owls and at the end nearest the canal kingfishers to mention but a few.*

Woodley Resident

### **Canal**

*Currently the land in question provides a green corridor either side of the canal and provides a recreation area for many people who use the canal particularly walkers. The plan states "Establishing a network of strategic green infrastructure, identifies key elements (e.g. river valleys and waterways) which will have enhanced protection within the city region." This is an area alongside a waterway which surely fits the criteria for continued protection.*

Woodley Resident

*The proposed development will have a devastating impact on the last of our green spaces in the area. Woodley has little to none left, it will wreck wildlife habitats along the canal, and bring more traffic and pollution into the area.*

Woodley Resident

### **Flooding/Drainage**

*The area is prone to flooding as the water table is very high due to the location of the canal – this development would make this problem much worse.*

Woodley Resident, Gravel Bank Road

*Most of the land to the South and East is at a higher level than the field and so the water table which is at a shallow level is forced to drain into this area. The under soil is mostly clay with areas of clayey acidic loam which is not free draining and so the field is frequently water logged. The canal which has its towpath and retaining wall on the North and West far side provides a barrier to good water drainage into the Tame Valley. The use of "Puddling Clay" to line the canal also acts as a barrier to surface and subsoil drainage, sub soil pooling is a major problem.*

Woodley Resident, Legh Drive

### **Trees**

*The tree population as already been decimated by the railway company cutting down all the trees along the Poleacre lane area, if the wooded area mentioned was to be cut down then the whole area would be almost devoid of trees.*

Woodley Resident

*A new road is planned to access the Unity mill site, this will cut across the protected woodland.*

Woodley Resident, Legh Drive

### **Following Due Process**

*I would also like you to consider the underhand behaviour of the planners who have already undermined the local planning department with alleged criminal activity (Court case on 17th January 2019) Where they chopped down a number of trees in a protected area, in preparation of a through road to Gravelbank road This is total disrespect for the planners and local residents.*

Woodley Resident

*I understand that the owners of Gravel Bank Stud have had an agreement in force with a developer for 13 years to purchase the land which makes up GMA 36. The current owner of the land has been paid a retainer for the last eleven years by a developer to have first choice in buying the land. Someone has already jumped the gun by illegally felling 38 trees in the protected woodland to enable them to build a through road. They have been in court for this and are required to re-instate these trees. However the point to be made is that it feels that some decisions have already been pre-empted.*

Woodley Resident

[Hyde Bank Meadows / Tangshutt Fields, Romiley - Allocation 39](#)

**Proposal:** *Deliver around 250 homes including a minimum of 30% affordable housing. Vehicle access from Gotherage Lane and comprehensive traffic calming on the Cherry Tree estate, plus improvement to the Cherry Tree Lane and Compstall Road junction, and with access to public transport on Compstall Road. Other utilities will include superfast broadband, and electric vehicle charging points, cycle ways and pedestrian routes. Inclusion of green spaces and wildlife habitats.*

**This presents a highly contentious site. It is 100% on green belt land and attracted a large number of responses covering a range of issues. The particularly controversial aspect is very difficult access to the site for vehicle traffic, and the destruction of the Tangshutt Fields Recreation Space. A recent petition to stop development on the recreation ground including, playing fields, three football pitches, a children's play area, and outdoor gym, attracted almost 700 signatures from local residents.**

**Tangshutt Fields Recreation Space**

*There should be no agreement made to allow any part of the playing fields to be commandeered for this development.*

Romiley Resident

*The fields are used for football, dog walks and for playing - the new playground has just been built and gets used!*

Romiley Resident

*There should be no agreement made to allow any part of the playing fields to be commandeered for this development.*

Romiley Resident

*What enrages me is the loss of civic amenities, the 3 football pitches, the children's play area and the closure of 2 rights of way.*

Romiley Resident

*A great deal of importance is attached in the GM plan for open spaces where people are able to exercise and for children to play yet this proposal is the exact opposite.*

Romiley Resident

*The Green Belt that is Tangshutt Fields needs to be preserved for the community of Romiley. Those fields and woodland are used and loved, and should be kept for the health and wellbeing of the local people. This is not only entirely Green Belt, but it is used as community space for exercise, sports, dog walking, and local schools make use of the fields and woodland as well. Building on Green Belt farmland I can understand but in Romiley, I cannot understand why land in constant use by the people of Romiley will be taken from them.*

Marple Bridge Resident

**Access (Cherry Tree Lane)**

*If the access is to be via Cherry Tree estate this is totally unsuitable.*

Romiley Resident

*I read with total dismay that 250 new homes are to be built in Romiley. If access and egress to these homes is from Cherry Tree Lane, then that is another 400 or so vehicles to be driving through the village and jamming the road to Stockport. Whilst I fully understand the need for new housing, the roads in the borough have been at bursting point ever since the catastrophic decision to scrap the proposed Blue Route in the 1970's.*



Romiley Resident

*A roundabout or traffic lights would be needed at the junction of Cherry Tree Lane and Compstall Road for the increased traffic – when leaving Cherry Tree the Compstall Road traffic approaching from the east can be problematic and adding another 500+ residents would not help.*

Marple Bridge Resident

### **Traffic**

*Any additional commuter traffic on the roads would result in grid lock especially in view of additional housing recently built in Woodley.*

Romiley Resident

### **Safe Routes to School**

*The lit and safer walk to school route would be affected*

Romiley Resident

*Children's safe walk to school over Tangshutt's would not be safe anymore.*

Romiley Resident

### **School Places and Health Services**

*There is not enough room in the local primary schools especially after the school closures that happened a few years ago that led to Romiley Primary expansion.*

Romiley Resident

*If each house had 1 child where would these 250 children go to school?*

Romiley Resident

*The local doctors are over run now and more patients would see a stretched service break even more.*

Romiley Resident

*NHS provision for say an extra 500 adults and 300 children must be addressed.*

Romiley Resident

*The lack of information on wrap around services such as schools and GPS is clearly leading to the general population of Romiley and surrounding areas thinking negatively about the proposal.*

Romiley Resident

### **Local Petition**

The proposed Hyde Bank Meadows site in Romiley, contains well-used community facilities of Tangshutt Fields including, playing fields, three football pitches, a children's play area, and outdoor gym. The proposed site is adjacent to Tangshutt Meadow, popular green space, a nature reserve, community orchards and allotments, which are all hugely valued by local people. Such a loss of this green space would be damaging to the local environment, the community, and health and wellbeing of local people.

I have been working closely with the Friends of Tangshutt group over recent weeks, in collecting signatures to petition, which has been signed by 692 local residents, and which I presented to the House of Commons on 12th March 2019. The petitioners oppose plans for a new residential development on Hyde Bank Meadows and the petition declares that the revised Greater Manchester Spatial Framework should avoid the residential development of 250 units on the green belt at the site of Hyde Bank Meadows in Romiley.

[Former Offerton High School, Offerton - Allocation 35](#)

**Proposal:** *To build around 250 new homes. A mix of brownfield and greenfield land. Will have a minimum of 40% affordable housing on site and across a range of housing types. Access points from The Fairway and from Curzon Road, including road junction improvements, traffic calming on estate roads between the site and Marple Road. Other utilities will include superfast broadband, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure and cycle storage.*

**Of all the proposed sites, the former Offerton High School, attracted the fewest responses, and concerns were limited to the impact on local traffic. In the context of all the sites in the constituency and the limited number of responses I have received it can be fairly said to be the least contentious. However, due regard should be given to individual responses to the formal consultation.**

**Traffic**

*For over a year we have struggled to travel anywhere in the neighbourhood without wondering why on earth we didn't just stay at home, because the traffic conditions have, on many occasions, been gridlocked in every direction. The route through Offerton towards Stockport town is often one long tailback, mainly because Hall Street is always busy (and needs to be to support the shops sited there). The proposal for 250 new houses on the High School site (which could mean 500 more people and cars) could be the last straw for the area. The only other route to Stockport from Offerton is down Hempshaw Lane, and that route is also a nightmare, for the same reasons. If there's a viable way to change the infrastructure to improve the situation, I can't imagine what it is."*

Offerton Resident

*Regarding Offerton High school site, I suggest integration of a car park/visitor centre for the nearby Goyt Valley walks should be mandated in any plans.*

Hazel Grove Resident

[Bredbury Parkway, Bredbury – Allocation 34](#)

**Proposal:** *Deliver around 90,000sqm of industrial and warehouse space. Transport links to the M60 Junction 25 via Ashton Road. Transport links to Stockport Sports Village and improved cycling and walking links to adjacent local communities in Stockport and Tameside. Native buffer planting alongside major roads and the railway to create screening with a new generation of mature native hedgerows and trees. Ensure views to the Peak District National Park and countryside of Cheshire East are preserved.*

**Those who responded about the Bredbury Parkway site were universally opposed to the expansion, which was generally felt to be unnecessary, unwanted, and damaging to the local area. Despite few responses to my recent call for views it is worth noting that in the autumn of 2018 a local petition objecting to the proposals gained over 1,500 signatures.**

**Underused Units**

*It's disgraceful that you are even considering all these new developments in our area - 440 more houses behind the new ones by the Joshua Bradley, more by Pole Acre road and the extension of the already half empty industrial estate in Bredbury. It's crazy! Use the empty units on this estate instead of extending it!*

Woodley Resident

*The expansion of the Bredbury Industrial estate should take place within its confines, and not remove the green belt, until there is no more room to expand. Use of already build, but now empty building, should be the first priority. The roundabouts for leaving and joining the M60 would require traffic lights, I believe, as this is a nightmare at rush-hour. Adding more lorries, cars etc. will cause even more congestion (more Pollution).*

Woodley Resident, Gravel Bank Estate

**Green Space**

*I am also extremely upset about the use of green belt land for this purpose, with a new industrial estate proposed in Bredbury we will soon have no green areas left."*

Woodley Resident

**Traffic Access**

*I note that the only major industrial development planned for Stockport is at Bredbury, to which the existing bus network is totally inadequate, and there is no realistic train service to it. The roads round the Bredbury interchange are already at gridlock during rush hour. Bredbury to Denton road, are already at semi gridlock at rush hours and cannot cope with any more traffic, and could only be widened with the loss of housing along those roads.*

Romiley Resident

**Local Petition**

In addition to these views, in October 2018, I joined up with Denton and Reddish MP, Andrew Gwynne, to present a petition to the House of Commons today outlining both constituencies' opposition to the massive extension of Bredbury Parkway industrial estate.

**The joint online and written petitions attracted a great deal of public support with over 1,500 members of the public pledging their opposition to the plans.**

Both areas share a mutual concern over HGV traffic in the area and the impact that the proposals would have on an already congested Stockport Road (Denton) and Ashton Road (Bredbury). The petition presented to Parliament not only opposes the massive extension of Bredbury Parkway industrial estate but also called on all sides involved, including Stockport Council and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, to abandon their support of the extension.

## RESIDENTS' SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO PROPOSALS

**Some residents who contacted me, in addition to making comments on specific sites, made suggestions and recommendations to the plans in general or suggested ways to potentially mitigate the effects of some of the concerns outlined above.**

### **Transport Plan**

*However, regardless of where the houses are built there must first be major investment in public transport infrastructure to accommodate the additional population. Existing roads can't cope with current traffic volume to say nothing of any future increase. New roads, even if space was available to build them, would only exacerbate the gridlock in our towns and cities.*

Marple Resident

*The only way that I personally can support such a plan is to see an integrated traffic management policy that sets out how the traffic from the new homes can be accommodated. In the case of Marple, it is possible to build a rail link to Stockport, but what are the chances of this ever being built. Never? But the plan for new homes forges ahead.*

Marple Resident

*Until there is significant upgrading of infrastructure around Marple / High Lane / Offerton / Woodley / Bradbury / Romiley there should be no additional housing, under any circumstances - no matter what 'colour' the land is. At any one time roads in and around the areas are completely gridlocked. It's frankly ludicrous to even think about developing any of the suggested sites, the surrounding areas all need a proper transport system developing/improving first.*

Marple Resident

### **Road Capacity – A555 - M60 Extension**

*The need for a relief road to help traffic moving from Macclesfield/Hazel Grove to the motorway at Bredbury, (or along the A6 to Stockport) has never been greater.*

Romiley Resident

*The by-pass needs to be continued to the M60 as soon as possible – before new houses are built.*

High Lane Resident

*Before new homes are built in the area approval should be given to building an extension of the A555 from Hazel Grove to the M60 at Bredbury AND an A6 bypass linking the A555 at Hazel Grove to the Chapel en le Frith by pass at Whaley Bridge.*

High Lane Resident

*In my view it is now crucial to provide the link from the A6 end of the A555 to the M60 junction at Bredbury. Also to commence the section from the A6 at the north end of Hazel Grove to that network.*

Hazel Grove Resident

### **Wildlife**

*What any 'new builds' should set out to do is to also be a new home for wildlife. A proportion of the houses ought to have integral holes which might allow bats to roost, or built in nest boxes for swifts or starlings. The areas surrounding the homes should have open grassy areas with wildflowers sown in them, and the odd pond dotted about the site. If these things are not provided (and the RSPB have shown that they can be to great advantage), then I am against any loss of the green belt.*

Romiley Resident

### **Planning Process Engagement – Neighbourhood Plans**

*I have studied the plan and the questionnaire and I would make the point that this is not an easy process for many people to participate, particularly if you are not computer savvy. Even if you are it is still not straight forward and I feel the process will disenfranchise many people.*

Woodley Resident

*Whoever has devised this proposal clearly has thought it through thoroughly and taken into consideration the impact on our community.*

Woodley Resident

*It's alright for the 'Powers at be' to say build on the green belt with little thought to the residents.*

High Lane Resident

*We would like some more information if possible and wonder if we will get to have our say on the proposed buildings.*

Offerton Resident

### **Dispersal to Smaller Sites**

*I would NOT support the current GMSF 2019 proposals but would consider a very much smaller and limited developments*

High Lane Resident

*I am not against small scale building, even in the green belt, because it seems to be necessary ... My overall view is that the development should be limited to a smaller, more manageable, and proportional number of homes of between 100 and 150.*

High Lane Resident

*There are some very nice living quarters in the [Stockport] area, and we need more of those areas to be built, nearer to the town centre - smaller units tucked in where possible - to draw some life back there; some social housing so that people can live and work without long commutes.*

Offerton Resident

### **Housing Mix and Affordability**

*If High Lane is to have 500 homes I would suggest that they be of a similar type as to those on the Higher Hillgate - Christie Hat Work site as those types of homes are both social and affordable. There is no need of further 4 or 5 bedroomed executive style homes in High Lane but there is strong public opinion and requirement for affordable housing or 'Starter Homes' which our children from High Lane might afford to rent/buy. Housing developers should be made to only build affordable social housing - Stockport MBC planners must have the provisions NOT to allow 'executive style' housing to be built and insist on social housing development.*

High Lane Resident

*I am not saying we do not need new housing, but the "affordable housing" that has been bandied out never seems to be "affordable" for the people who need it most. £200/£300 is not really affordable for a lot of people. I will leave it at that, but I suggest, again, that the people who are deciding this listen to peoples' concerns. Obviously building want to get the most they can, but use some sense and try and provide homes the 'man in the street' can afford.*

Woodley Resident

*Only a small proportion of the proposal is for affordable housing and there simply isn't a case for increasing more luxury housing.*

High Lane Resident

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Based on the collective weight of the evidence submitted to me by residents, and my own views having campaigned on this issue for many years, I would like to make several recommendations to the Combined Authority, as it makes further revisions to the GMSF proposals in light of the consultation.**

**Identify and develop further brownfield sites** – The Combined Authority should work proactively and positively with both Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, both of whom have worked hard over recent years to develop a comprehensive local brownfield register. Thanks to the register, brownfield sites have been found to build 5,180 homes in Stockport, with a further 5,100 homes to be planned on a mix of brownfield land and green field land. This has allowed a significant reduction in the amount of green belt land to be released under the GMSF. However, not all brownfield sites on the register are due for development under the GMSF.

**I would urge the Combined Authority to consider how to make further best use of these sites, so it can reduce the amount of greenbelt consumption still further.**

**Dispersal to smaller sites (less than 250)** – Some of the most frequent concerns raised by residents was the impact large developments of homes (250 or 500) in a single site. It was generally feared that the increases to population (averaging 4 people per household) and car ownership (two cars per household) in relatively small areas would impact on the local environment, and character of existing communities. There was also deep concern about added pressure on road traffic, and amenities such as schools and health services.

**A way to address all these concerns together, would be for the GMSF to seek to disperse these sites into yet smaller developments of 100 to 150 homes. This would also make it possible to make effective use of smaller pockets of brownfield land.**

**New school places and healthcare facilities will undoubtedly be needed** – even with dispersed sites to cope with the increases in population these homes will bring to the area.

**A comprehensive traffic management plan for not only individual sites but the wider road network** – The current proposals each make reference to local transport upgrades, but are lacking in any sufficient detail for local people to understand what form this will take. It is abundantly clear that 1,250 new homes, wherever they are situated, will mean an increase in vehicles on the road in the region of 2,500. It is well known that the A6 corridor contains some of the most congested roads, and slowest average traffic speeds in the country. Many residents raised concerns about traffic flow not just around the sites' vicinities but on the wider local road network, the majority of which is single carriageway with limited or no scope for widening expansion.

**This plan must include how the local road network, the A6 corridor, and the residential roads which feed onto the A6 will all cope with this increase in vehicle numbers. It must also ensure that public transport alternatives to private vehicle use, including both bus and rail, are fit for purpose, and are both efficient and reliable enough to attract passengers. Urgent consideration should also be given to the long promised and greatly overdue link road from the A6 end of the A555 to the M60 junction at Bredbury by both the Combined Authority and the Department for Transport.**

**Protection for wildlife corridors and Woodland** – It is inevitable that any building on green belt will result in some habitat loss for wildlife. Yet the damaging impact of this should be mitigated as far as possible. Care must be taken to ensure that 'wildlife corridors' are preserved both around and throughout any permitted sites to allow wildlife to move around, and between long established habitat areas. Areas of ancient woodland must be protected, and I was deeply concerned to learn from

residents of the illegal pre-emptive tree clearing activity which has already taken place around the Gravel Bank site in Woodley. The community woodlands and orchards in Tanghsutt, Hyde Bank Meadows should also receive special consideration.

**I would urge the Combined Authority to work closely with wildlife and environmental organisations – including RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts, Woodland Trust, Canal and River Trust, CPRE, and others - to ensure that any permitted development is done with sensitivity to the local environment and provides maximum protection for local wildlife and habitats.**

**Houses should be genuinely affordable, and suit the needs of local families** – Many of the sites only include a target of 30% ‘affordable housing’, and the legal definition of affordable is often found to be unaffordable for many local people. There also appears to be insufficient regard given to any social housing components of the proposals.

**Further stages of GMSF consultation must engage fully with local communities and neighbourhood plans and forums** – There was a clear and worrying sense amongst local residents that they were still not being properly listened to by the Combined Authority, and that these plans were being imposed from above. This is an unwelcome state of affairs as it means that local communities remain unlikely to ‘buy-into’ the plans. When development sites are drawn up into full proposals, local residents must be given a further chance to express their views and that these views should be able to have a meaningful bearing on the planning outcome.

In addition, there are currently three local Neighbourhood Forums in existence representing the planning views of local communities – namely Marple; Mellor, Marple Bridge, Mill Brow & Compstall; and High Lane. Each are in the process of developing full Neighbourhood Development Plans, as empowered by the Localism Act 2011. It is vital that, as the GMSF continues to develop, these forums and plans are properly consulted to ensure they are complementary and not contradictory to the wishes of these local groups. They should be viewed as an asset by the combined authority, as well informed and constructive critics, and not as an opponent to be overcome.

## CONCLUSIONS

The GMSF proposals for Stockport were and remain a controversial topic for local residents. The original plans for 4,000 houses on green belt land surrounding High Lane, which would have more than doubled the size of the village, and completely changed its character, were both deeply unwelcome and undeliverable.

Following several years of campaigning, the combined efforts of local councillors and cross party groups of Greater Manchester MPs, supported by the voices of many thousands of local residents, brought enough pressure to bear on the Combined Authority to force a drastic rethink of the plans following the first stage consultation.

Following a long delay, a very different Draft GMSF has emerged. Thanks to the introduction of a national brownfield register, many brownfield sites have been found to build 5,180 homes in Stockport, with a further 5,100 homes to be planned on a mix of brownfield land and greenfield land. This has meant that the new draft GMSF envisaged 3,700 properties to be built on existing green belt, down from 12,000 as originally proposed in 2016 - a huge reduction.

In my own constituency of Hazel Grove, the figure has been reduced from 4,000 to 1,250, and critically plans to more than double the size of High Lane Village with an extra 4,000 houses have been reduced to 500.

I have consistently urged that the overall number of houses needed to be reduced, and that where houses are to be built we should follow a robust brown-field-first policy. I therefore welcome the fact that the revised GMSF plans do both of those things.

However, it is clear that residents still have a number of serious concerns about the revised proposals.

- Permanent loss of green belt land;
- Loss of access to countryside, green space, recreation land, and wildlife habitat;
- Need for further Brownfield alternatives;
- Road traffic access both into and within sites;
- Wider implications on traffic and congestion across the local A-road networks which are already stretched over capacity;
- The air quality consequences of traffic and congestion both locally and regionally;
- Increased local population and the pressure placed on local amenities;
- Provision of school places for new families;
- Provision of health services for new families;
- The affordable housing mix of sites;
- Change in character of local communities.

Moreover, the fact that the current plans are relatively vague and lacking in detail means the nature and extent of these issues is very difficult to assess.

Based on the feedback I have received from residents I make the following recommendations to improve the current Draft GMSF:

- Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council should consider using the 2016-Base ONS population and household projections to determine its overall housing need
- Any housing need that cannot be delivered using land in Stockport, these needs should be considered for re-distribution to other Local Authority Areas within Greater Manchester where either housing need or land availability is greater
- Identify and develop further brownfield sites



- **No building on the green belt should be permitted until all local brownfield sites have been fully developed or explored**
- **Dispersal of plans to smaller sites (fewer than 250)**
- **New school places and healthcare facilities will undoubtedly be needed**
- **A comprehensive traffic management plan for not only individual sites but the wider road network including a link road from the A6 end of the A555 to the M60 junction at Bredbury**
- **Protection for wildlife corridors and woodland**
- **Houses should be genuinely affordable, and suit the needs of local families**
- **Further stages of GMSF consultation must engage fully with local communities and neighbourhood plans and forums**

**The Combined Authority must give much more regard to the availability and capacity of current amenities in areas where developments are proposed by the Framework, and ensure that these services and infrastructure will not be overloaded, or that new such amenities are fully included in development proposals.**

**There is a long way to go before any of GMSF sites proposed in my local area will receive widespread support, and further local public consultations, in conjunction with neighbourhood forums, must remain top priorities with regards to the GMSF.**

**William Wragg MP**

Member of Parliament for Hazel Grove Constituency