



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Greater Manchester Integrated Support Team
PO Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

20 December 2016

Submission to consultation on Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

I welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft spatial framework, and support the ambitions it contains for jobs, homes and growth. I note with approval the specific emphasis given to addressing socio economic inequalities within the strategy. This must be an explicit and fundamental goal of every aspect of the plans as they are carried through.

My comments are focused on the plans for development in my parliamentary constituency of Stretford and Urmston, and I comment on the specific sites proposed for development below. First, however, I take the opportunity to make some general remarks.

Housing

There is already a pressing need for more affordable, family, and lifetime housing for older and disabled people in my constituency, both to buy and for rent, and I am supportive overall of the plans for additional housing units in Trafford, with caveats on specific sites which I amplify below. As is noted in the draft strategy, the mix, density and quality of the housing developed will be critical. I welcome the emphasis on energy efficient homes.

Employment and economic development

I am proud of the contribution that my constituency makes to the Greater Manchester economy and indeed that of the North West. We have a long history of manufacturing, trade and innovation in Trafford, and are also home to many excellent service and distribution businesses, as well as iconic sport and leisure destinations. I welcome the focus on expanding employment in the draft spatial strategy. It will be essential to ensure that those suffering the greatest economic disadvantage gain the most from the plans.

Air quality

Air quality is already an issue in the area. Parts of my constituency already fall short of legal air quality standards, and it will be essential that development plans mitigate, rather than worsen, the situation. This is particularly a concern where the M60 runs through my constituency, especially in the vicinity of junctions 9 and 10. The proposals in the recently published air quality strategy to ensure spatial developments take account of air quality impact must be given full effect.

Transport and other infrastructure

I welcome recognition in the draft strategy that transport and other infrastructure must be integral and 'designed in' to the strategy from the outset. The timing of the investment in new transport infrastructure, be it rail or road, to support the expansion of housing and employment sites is crucial. Leaving the infrastructure to be developed piecemeal after developments are completed will lead to inevitable congestion on our already overcrowded networks.

Greenbelt and local amenity

Plans for removal of land from the greenbelt have caused consternation in parts of my constituency. Wishy washy assurances of alternative 'green space' have no formal or legal status, and there are fears for the character of local communities if the 'green lung' which protects them is reduced or lost. I comment on specific concerns on this below.

Specific locations

New Carrington

I support the ambitious plans for this area. Use of this largely brownfield site offers a real opportunity for economic development that can and must benefit the geographically isolated and economically disadvantaged communities of Partington and Carrington. The plans should specifically address the employment and service needs of local people.

However, the principal concern with proposals for development in this area are in relation to the transport infrastructure. While recent announcements about further investment in the M60/62 are welcome and helpful, and the plans for extension to the Carrington Spur, and potential links across the Ship Canal to Port Salford, including the possibility of a Metrolink connection, would also benefit the connectivity of the area, there is already considerable pressure on the local road network which must be addressed as a priority, and as a prerequisite of any further development. This should include significant improvement in public transport, as well as addressing existing levels of traffic congestion on the A6144 through Carrington and Partington, for example by recommissioning the so-called 'A1' road through the former Shell site.

Trafford City

I support this proposal. However, there are heavy pressures both on the motorway network and on local roads in the area, which it is hoped the Trafford Park Metrolink extension will help address. There are also significant concerns in relation to air quality in the area, and these must be mitigated as an integral part of the plans.

Flixton

I do not support the proposals for Flixton. Over 1600 residents have responded to a survey which I have been conducting on the proposals over the past 6 weeks, and over 98% strongly oppose the plans. In addition, four public meetings have been held in the area in the past four weeks, and all have been characterised by the outright hostility of residents to what's proposed. There are a number of reasons for this opposition, which I detail below:

- (1) Flixton has retained its village character, and the addition of 750 housing units in the area threatens to 'overwhelm' the amenity of the village, something which the draft strategy specifically states should be avoided. Neither local schools nor health services could cope with this level of additional housing – both already struggle to meet demand.

- (2) Transport links in the area are poor. There is already significant road congestion in the area (which could be worsened if developments at Carrington are not coordinated with the transport needs of Flixton residents). The current rail service from Flixton station is woefully inadequate, and I am surprised that the draft strategy contains no mention of the potential to extend the Liverpool-Manchester railway through Flixton and Urmston to Manchester airport, and to Scotland and the north, which I understood was under consideration by Rail North.
- (3) Removal of a substantial portion of land from the greenbelt, including well-used playing fields, will significantly compromise the quality of life for residents. This aspect of the plans has met with exceptionally strong local opposition.

Given the small scale of the development compared to the overall ambition for new housing in Trafford, I urge that plans for Flixton are abandoned. There is plenty of opportunity to increase density at sites elsewhere in the borough to compensate for the units which will be foregone.

Conclusion

While I welcome overall the ambitions for housing and employment growth in Stretford and Urmston, careful planning and sequencing of developments will be essential to secure the full socio economic benefit envisaged for local communities. Where the disbenefit outweighs any potential benefit (specifically in Flixton), the plans should not proceed.

Yours sincerely,



Kate Green MP
Labour Member of Parliament for Stretford and Urmston