



## **Bury Folk's Local Plan Response**

### **Bury's Housing Need.**

As a planning department you must throw into question the numbers put forward by the DCLG Population and Household Projections as the starting point for the GMSF and then increased by the GMSF as follows:-

The DCLG figures start from predicted population growth for Bury between 1992 - 2013 (20yr period) 7,642 people. This has increased for the period 2014 - 2035 (20yr period) to 16,935, an increase of 221.6%. As a planning department you must question how this prediction can be justified. It does not make any sense to have such a large population increase in Bury over the next 20 years as the area simply is not large enough to cope with it. If you compare the same period for the following areas surrounding Bury you gain the following percentage increases in population:-

Bolton population increase = 114.49%

Central Manchester population increase = 120.25%

Rochdale population increase = 121.77%

Wigan population increase = 154.22%

It begs the question as to why Bury's population growth has been so over-inflated.

The DCLG figure for predicted household growth for Bury between 1992 - 2013 (20yr period) is 7,601 households. This has increased between 2014 - 2035 (20yr period) to 10,778, an increase of 141.80%. This would mean even with the massive population increase of 16,935 we would only see 1.57 persons per household.

The GMSF predicted household requirement of 12,700 would create an increase of 167.08% on the 1992 - 2013 (20yr Period) figures. This would mean even with the massive population increase of 16,935 we would only see 1.33 persons per household.

If the figures of the DCLG (1.57 persons per household) and GMSF (1.33 persons per household) are to be used, our local plan surely will not require such a high



percentage of 3-4 bedroom houses to fulfill the predicted need? Smaller “starter” type homes would clearly be required if the figures are to be believed.

It is the duty of the planning department to not simply accept the figures within the GMSF /DCLG but to question and challenge the figures on behalf of the residents of Bury. As set out above, our investigations have proved that Bury’s allocation has been increased out of all proportion in comparison with other local areas.

### **Density**

In the GMSF, you say we will need 12,700 homes, 85% houses 15% apartments. If these hugely exaggerated figures are to be implemented, then we would insist on Bury MBC implementing a minimum density cap on any building from this point on.

I use Tudor Grange as my example. This development is running at 19 houses per hectare. At this rate we would require 668.4 hectares to supply the 12,700 units you say we need. This simply isn’t sustainable across our green borough. We simply would not be recognizable as the town we are now.

If a higher density was chosen as a minimum, EG 70 houses per hectares, you, our planning department would have the privilege of saying you saved 487 hectares of our countryside from the hands of the developers, who let’s face it, are purely profit driven. This would be a fine achievement.

If architecture of all future developments was properly creative and fully sustainable, the density could be far higher without loss of quality of life. Areas for economic development can share space with good quality apartments e.g. utilising the same space for car parking at different times of the day.

The local plan must include an absolute minimum density for all development to avoid developers being able to challenge planning refusal on the grounds of property numbers. We don’t have a choice in this matter. Land is a finite resource and we must preserve it at all costs for our health and that of future generations.

### **Air Pollution**

This really needs to be high up in ANY Local Plan. Bury is the largest commuting borough in the GMCA with residents having to endure a slow and arduous journey



to and from work, sitting in endless queues of traffic, attempting to cross the numerous pinch points in the Borough. The poor air quality in Bury requires a solution which will improve the health of all residents not make it far worse.

Adding more homes while taking away countryside will only increase the pollution we are breathing in. In turn, this will increase the pressure placed on our hospital and GP services and cost more in treatment and economic inactivity due to sickness.

Allowing developers to designate an area of green space is not enough to protect our health from additional pollution caused by an increased number of vehicles.

Decreasing the amount of green space available for recreation, while increasing the number of people trying to access it, results in overuse and conflict. Those who are able to, will choose to avoid local areas in favour of driving to more open countryside in other areas. Bury will suffer from reduced economic activity but will have to deal with the additional air pollution caused by unnecessary traffic.

### **Empty Homes**

The local plan needs a strong solution to the issue of 1500 empty homes in the Borough. It isn't acceptable. Residents cannot be expected to accept that 61% of all new builds in our Borough over the next 20 years have to be on our greenbelt when we have so many homes standing empty. Power to compel landlords to bring their property into proper use or sell it should be included in the local plan. If those empty homes are in an area or condition that makes them less desirable, work should be undertaken to make them appealing.

### **Brownfield Sites**

This is crucial and you as a council need to take control of this very worrying situation. We have vast swathes of brownfield land waiting for redevelopment. This land should be used first and foremost. In most cases it's an eyesore and in many cases, the area would really benefit from redevelopment.

The local plan should include a compulsory requirement that new development must take place wholly on brownfield sites before any green space is used. Grants could be made available to support this. Developers who refuse to do this should not be allowed to build in Bury.



The availability of brownfield needs to be reviewed regularly and up to date records kept. Before any plans are passed for building on greenbelt the brownfield availability should be reassessed as a matter of course. Whenever additional brownfield sites become available, these should be prioritised over any greenbelt development, and allocations for greenbelt reduced pro rata. The release of any greenbelt must be phased in over time to allow for regular brownfield reassessment.

### **Hospitals, Doctors, Dentists**

We would hope sufficient space is given in our local plan to ensure something is done about our need for a fully functioning hospital backed up by comprehensive GP and walk-in centre services. If we lived in an inner city, these facilities would be expected. Well, if you are going to force this number of additional houses on us, we will be an inner city and we do expect a fully operational hospital, walk in centres, dentists etc. The local plan must include the physical space and financial contribution from developers for health services to be developed. More homes come with more people. Less green space causes more health problems.

### **Libraries and community services**

You are currently looking at closing down several of our libraries. Why? Given your ambitious plans for us in the GMSF, why close things to have to open them again to meet legal requirements under the Libraries Act. This is short sighted to say the least. A larger town with no green space needs more than ever, space to meet as a community. Youth and Community facilities, along with libraries must be part of the local plan.

### **Roads**

Here probably is one of your biggest challenges. If you want to grow, by your 'figures', how will you move people around the town? We are aware you've just completed a full survey on this issue. If you would be so kind as to make it public as quickly as possible, we could all see the magnitude of your problem.

The local plan should include the need by large developers to contribute to highway maintenance and a sustainable transport system, whether that be reduced fares on public transport, highway maintenance or building double or triple height car parks on new developments to reduce their overall footprint.



## **Schools**

This can't be making comfortable reading right now.

Radcliffe has no high school. Tottington is in dire need of redevelopment or extensive refurbishment. Elton is over-subscribed and the old building is so full of harmful products, no-one wants to pay the bill to sort it out. We know you've a full report done on our schools so if you would be kind enough to make that public asap, that again would be a great help.

The local plan needs to contain a requirement that physical space be made available for new schools to be built, to include space for future growth, in addition to a contribution to the cost of building those schools.

## **History and Heritage**

Consideration should be given in the local plan to creating new Conservation Areas in the Borough, for example the area around Elton Reservoir due to its links with our industrial heritage, areas of Walshaw such as the grade II listed Church and the cottages surrounding it, including the Walshaw Cross monument and the area surrounding the Roman Road at Dow Lane.

## **Greenbelt**

Would you mind if we call it countryside? Many of the areas that you and your officers have chosen to put into this madness you name the GMSF are areas we affectionately use and enjoy. Some of our members rent parts of it and make a living from the land. Others actually own some of it and never wanted their land to be put forward.

You as a council drawing up a local plan have a responsibility to us, your existing residents which will go on well past your retirement. What legacy do you as an officer of our council want to leave? Once it's gone, it's gone.

The local plan must form the basis for the future of Bury as a beautiful place to live. We are lucky to have a diverse array of wildlife around us. It too needs protection from development. The local plan must actively do all it can to preserve every scrap of green space we have, in particular our greenbelt.