

Shevington Parish Council
Policy and General Purposes Committee

1st September 2021

Places for Everyone, GM Joint Development Document August 2021

1	Introduction
1.1	This is a very comprehensive consultation document that covers the future development of 9 of the Boroughs within Greater Manchester up until 2037. Stockport pulled out of the framework earlier this year due to their opposition to some of the elements within the Plan.
1.2	The consultation period runs for 8 weeks starting in August 2021.
1.3	The report is 467 pages long but the key strategic elements are covered within the 10 main sections covering around half of the report. Individual authority considerations are within the remainder of the report.
1.4	As a Parish Council we are able to submit our views on these strategic proposals as they impact directly upon our specific area and also within the wider context of the Borough.
1.5	Overall, the report contains a substantial number of positive ideas and strategic proposals that will benefit the County and its individual Boroughs and we should welcome this.
1.6	Having read the report, I have identified a number of issues that would warrant us submitting a response to the consultation.
2	Direct Impact upon the Shevington Parish Area
2.1	Given our location on the NW fringe of Greater Manchester, there is very little in the report that has a specific identifiable impact upon us.
2.2	The Green Belt in our area remains unchanged apart from the addition of the land between the M6 Motorway at Junction 27 and the Almond Brook Road bridge. This corridor was planted with trees many years ago and wildflowers more recently. Its inclusion in the Green Belt is to be welcomed. Also welcome is the retention of all the existing Green Belt in our area such that inappropriate housing developments that would “join together” our individual communities are prevented.
2.3	There is no provision within the Plan for additional housing land for development. We have previously commented that suitable housing for older people is in short supply in our area. Apart from the redevelopment of the Miles Lane School site for older people with higher level needs, this position will continue. There are no Brownfield sites currently available for such provision and when sites such as Orica did become available, developers chose to build large detached houses.

2.4	Transport links are covered within the report and for our area it is important that the rail network provides cost effective links to areas across Greater Manchester (GM) and beyond. Specifically, we should request that the direct rail link between Appley Bridge, Gathurst and Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport is reinstated, as this provided essential employment and cultural links for residents.
2.5	For the bus network, we previously had issues with Diamond Buses providing the service from Wrightington Hospital to Wigan via Appley Bridge and Shevington but these now seem to have been resolved, particularly regarding reliability. Other services run through Shevington that link with Standish and Pemberton and on to Wigan. Do we feel that all these services are adequate or should additional services be provided?
2.6	There is a proposal that all the bus and rail services should be integrated with a fare system that is equitable. This should be welcomed.
2.7	Are there any other issues in our area that warrant inclusion in our response to the consultation?
3	Wider impact for all Residents in Wigan
3.1	Although this section considers the wider proposals in the Plan that will have an impact upon residents across the Borough, it will also have some impact upon residents in the Parish. There are some proposals in the Plan that may not be welcomed by residents in some other parts of the Borough and therefore I have not included any references that comment upon these. No doubt Wigan Council will be responding to the Consultation following consideration of the Report by District Councillors and it is appropriate to separate our response from theirs.
3.2	In commenting upon specific points in the Plan, for ease, I have included the relevant Section numbers. The Plan has 11 sections that cover: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Context • Vision • Strategy • Sustainable and Resilient Places • Places for Jobs • Places for Homes • Greener Places • Places for People • Connected Places • Delivering the Plan There are other sections that cover individual Boroughs that don't need to be referenced here.
3.3	Section 1, the Introduction and Section 2, the Context of the Plan, set out the broad proposals within it and give the outline of the Strategic development of the area. Overall, the content is welcome.

3.4	<p>Within Section 3, the Vision, there are 10 strategic objectives: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet our housing need • Create neighbourhoods of choice • Playing our part in ensuring a thriving and productive economy in all parts of Greater Manchester • Maximise the potential arising from our national and international assets • Reduce inequalities and improve prosperity • Promote the sustainable movement of people, goods and information • Playing our part in ensuring that Greater Manchester is a more resilient and carbon neutral city-region • Improve the quality of our natural environment and access to green spaces • Ensure access to physical and social infrastructure • Promote the health and wellbeing of communities
3.5	<p>Section 4 contains the overall strategy for GM and its future development focusing upon the City of Manchester, the Airport, the southern area and the northern area that includes Wigan, Bolton, Oldham and Rochdale. These northern areas are seen as less economically developed compared to the south of the County.</p>
3.6	<p>Section 5, Sustainable and Resilient Places covers: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development • Climate Change • Carbon and Energy • Heat and Energy Networks • Resilience • Flooding and the Water Environment • Clean Air • Minerals and Waste • Efficient Use of Resources
3.7	<p>Within Section 5, there are numerous proposals to deliver good outcomes covered in these priorities above and it isn't necessary to go through all these in detail. Suffice to say that the proposals will deliver positive benefits if implemented. If Parish Councillors have read the report and wish to include any specific points in relation to this, these can be included.</p>
3.8	<p>Section 6, Places for Jobs, puts a lot of focus upon growth in the City Centre and Salford, the Airport, the Wigan/Bolton corridor and the Northern Corridor as Strategic locations. The Wigan area is highlighted for Logistics and Warehousing given the transport links to other parts of the country. Other northern boroughs are similarly identified with the specialist and office jobs focused upon the central parts of the County.</p>
3.9	<p>Section 7, Places for Homes, sets out the challenges we face in meeting appropriate housing need when considered against the availability of land. Land supply in Wigan is identified across the Borough but with larger sites in Standish, South Wigan, Hindley and Leigh with smaller sites distributed in-between. There are no new sites identified within the Parish boundaries something that we are aware of in relation to new housing supply. Brownfield land is identified as the predominant source of new land for housebuilding and the phasing of build works is an important consideration for each Council.</p>

3.10	Affordability is a key consideration for the Strategy and we are aware that affordability issues have become worse particularly in areas such as Shevington and Standish. Increasing the availability is a key priority both in rented accommodation and home ownership but balancing the need with land supply and developer choices will always be difficult.
3.11	Well designed, adaptable new homes that are energy efficient and affordable, in mixed and inclusive communities, is a key delivery challenge within the Strategy. This is further compounded by the projected 145% growth in the Over 60s population in Wigan, over the duration of the Plan.
3.12	Section 8 covers Greener Places and their protection and sustainable development. There are many varied landscapes across the County including moorland, peat bog, arable farmland, forests and woodlands plus wetlands and sites of Special Scientific and Biological Interest. These landscapes are extremely important and the Strategy identifies how these areas can be protected and enhanced.
3.13	Within Wigan, we have many examples of important habitats and landscapes, all of which are recognised for their natural benefit and wellbeing of residents. In Shevington, we have varied landscapes that are of great benefit to both wildlife and residents alike.
3.14	All these areas are retained within the Plan and the Green Belt that covers large parts of the Parish will remain fully protected.
3.15	Section 9, Places for People, focuses upon sustainability, inclusivity, resilience, culture and heritage in reference to places.
3.16	For individuals, the focus is upon education and training, knowledge, health and wellbeing plus sport, exercise and recreation.
3.17	All these combined are recognised as the ways to deliver good outcomes for individuals in the long term.
3.18	Section 10 focuses upon the need for places to be connected effectively. The Plan proposal is that all areas within the County and beyond, have effective transport links that are affordable, reliable, not subject to overcrowding and delays plus deliver clean air priorities.
3.19	Connectivity also refers to good quality broadband availability particularly as homeworking has been increasing substantially due to the pandemic. There is also the likelihood that the desire for homeworking continues after the pandemic ends given its attractiveness. Transport journeys reduced substantially during the pandemic and are not expected to return to their previous levels.
3.20	Good quality, reliable and affordable Public Transport plus cycle and walking options are all seen as the most effective way to reduce air pollution and improve health.
3.21	Connectivity between the bus and rail networks is also essential in delivering the outcomes proposed in the Plan. The Strategic Road Network will still require investment to ensure that it provides effective travel but the focus will transfer to public transport networks if they can prove to be reliable.

3.22	Walking and cycling will be promoted positively along with the intention to remove heavy freight from the road network to rail and water.
3.23	Section 12 focuses upon Delivering the Plan with the key message being effective partnerships across all involved parties whether public or private. The Delivery Plan is very detailed and I am not proposing to cover all the elements within this report. Everyone has a copy of the Plan and individually can read the proposals in detail.
4	Specific comments to include in our response
4.1	The following points should be included within the response from the Parish Council.
4.2	<p>Housing and Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise use of brownfield sites for redevelopment and protect green belt • Provide good quality affordable homes in the right areas to meet housing need across all age groups • Commitment to Carbon Reduction is welcomed • Provision of financial support for households to switch from gas boilers is required. Retro fitting grants for all energy conservation works are essential • Removal of microplastics from the environment must be a priority • All new build properties including industrial units should have solar panels and heat pumps integrated within construction • Significant increase in tree planting
4.3	<p>Transport and Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise the opportunities for good quality employment • Wigan should not just be a low wage warehousing hub. Skilled jobs should be distributed across the County • If quality employment is focused upon city centre areas, transport links must be effective and affordable • Transport links between Southport, Wigan and Manchester should be improved including the reinstatement of the Manchester Piccadilly/Manchester Airport direct link • The Metrolink Tram system should be extended to Wigan • The development of an Integrated Transport Network should be prioritised • The M58/M61 Link Road should be developed to reduce congestion between Wigan and Leigh and beyond • An equal fare pricing structure across bus and rail services should be developed with the use of an Oyster Card type payment facility • There should be an improved network of electric car charging points
5	Conclusion
5.1	This comprehensive strategy will set the framework for the future development of GM for the next 15 years. The consultation gives us the opportunity to shape its contents and I recommend that we submit our views as reported in Section 4.
	Mike Grimes