

19. Green Trafford

GT1 – Green Infrastructure

As viability and evidence base work on the Local Plan progresses further detail will be added to this policy, including site specific information where appropriate.

GT1.1 The Council will seek to protect, enhance and manage Trafford’s Green Infrastructure as a network of connected multi-functional green and blue spaces to provide a wide range of services and benefits for people, places, the economy and the local environment. These include supporting nature recovery networks and the movement of wildlife species; providing sustainable and active travel routes; climate change adaptation and mitigation; water management and quality; increasing physical activity; health and wellbeing; quality of place and economic growth.

GT1.2 This Green Infrastructure network includes sites as defined on the policies map under related policies such as open space, outdoor sport and natural environment. The Green Infrastructure network also includes smaller sites or features such as amenity greenspace, street trees, green roofs, swales and rain gardens which are not shown on the policies map.

Green Infrastructure Opportunity Areas

GT1.3 The Green Infrastructure Opportunity Areas as defined on the policies map (together with the river valleys and catchments, canals and water bodies that form part of the wider network within Trafford) are priority sites for Green Infrastructure enhancement and management

GT1.4 Enhancement of other Green Infrastructure Opportunity Areas will be encouraged as part of development. These include development in locations with the following characteristics:

- a) Areas with high levels of hard surface area which are more likely to be affected by increases in temperature;
- b) Areas with low canopy cover;
- c) Areas with poor air quality;
- d) Areas in flood zones 2 and 3, and/or areas projected to be affected by surface water flooding, as identified by Environment Agency maps;
- e) Areas that form part of and promote the active travel network for walking, cycling and horse riding;
- f) Existing designated and nature conservation sites;
- g) Large parks and open spaces (Neighbourhood, Town, Borough and Country Parks); and
- h) River Valleys and catchments as part of The Catchment Based Approach Areas of Focus in order to mitigate the adverse impacts of development.

Green Infrastructure provision in New Developments

GT1.5 Development should protect and enhance the quality and/or the multi functionality of Trafford’s green infrastructure. All proposals for major development (as defined in national planning policy) should be supported by a dedicated green infrastructure plan, which may be included within a wider landscape plan or strategy.

Site-Specific Green Infrastructure

GT1.6 All new development will be expected to make green infrastructure provision, which can take the form of on site features such as tree and hedgerow planting, green roofs, green walls, porous surfaces and Sustainable Urban Drainage System schemes. Provided the proposed improvements meet the statutory tests set out in national planning guidance, provision may also take the form of new or improved green infrastructure links from the development to the wider green infrastructure network.

GT1.7 In the majority of cases, new green infrastructure will be required as on-site specific mitigation and enhancements and could also contribute to achieving requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain (Policy NE1). Where specific circumstances justify off-site provision, a financial contribution will be sought as part of a S106 agreement in line with the details provided within any supplementary planning document.

Trees and Woodland

GT1.8 Trees, hedgerows and woodlands will be protected and enhanced as part of Trafford's urban forest in the context of the GM Tree and Woodland Strategy.

GT1.9 New development shall make provision for tree protection and additional tree planting within or close to the application site in line with Local Plan Policy on Site-Specific Green Infrastructure.

Justification

Trafford's green infrastructure resource is a mixture of urban, semi-urban and rural green and blue assets with a wide variety of primary uses such as recreation, flood mitigation and wildlife habitat.

National planning guidance states that Local Plans should identify the strategic location of existing and proposed green infrastructure networks, whilst supplementary planning documents can include the detail in respect of planning, design and management. Strategic policies should make sufficient provision for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including green infrastructure, to address climate change mitigation and adaptation and therefore this policy should be read in conjunction with the Climate Change and Natural Environment policies of this Local Plan.



National planning guidance emphasises the importance of green infrastructure provision in the achievement of sustainable development because of the multiple benefits and ecosystem services provided at a range of scales. A strategic approach to Green Infrastructure in Local Plan preparation is therefore advocated.

The GM 5 Year Environment Plan has the vision for a clean, carbon-neutral, climate-resilient city region where land and water are managed sustainably, with increased investment in and public engagement with our natural environment and an emphasis on nature-based solutions to the challenges posed by climate change.

The Greater Manchester Ecological Unit (GMEU) identified and mapped a strategic priority green infrastructure network for Greater Manchester as part of their Priority Green and Blue Infrastructure Study. Strategic priority green infrastructure is green infrastructure that delivers the most important ecosystem services such as:

- a) surface water and fluvial flood management;
- b) carbon storage and sequestration;
- c) water quality management;
- d) habitat and wildlife conservation and
- e) public recreation and sustainable travel.

The term green infrastructure is used also includes blue infrastructure including rivers, canals, lakes and other waterbodies, as illustrated on the policies map for Trafford.

Trafford has an extensive network of watercourses, including main rivers such as The Mersey, Baguley Brook, Timperley Brook, Sinderland Brook and The Bollin together with smaller tributaries. Development can have adverse consequences for these watercourses, in terms of impacting on their role as green infrastructure, existing or proposed public access or access for maintenance purposes.

The Priority Green and Blue Infrastructure Study identified Strategic Opportunity Areas and sites with the potential to deliver improvements for ecosystem services across GM. Carrington (part of the GM Wetlands Nature Improvement Area), Stretford Meadows and The Mersey Valley are identified within Trafford.

Components of Trafford's green infrastructure network range from large country parks, linear open spaces, active travel routes, wildlife corridors, waterways, water bodies, river valleys, woodlands and countryside areas to smaller parks and open spaces, amenity green spaces, street trees and green roofs. This green infrastructure network includes and is made accessible by walking and cycle routes, public rights of way, bridleways, countryside access route and trails, all of which facilitate sustainable movement and access for people. However due to this varied scale of green infrastructure components, it is not possible to allocate them all on the policies map. However, it is important to recognise the cumulative role that small pieces of green infrastructure have in contributing to the wider network.

One of the most important Green Infrastructure and Natural Capital assets in Trafford is Sale Water Park, which features prominently in related Local Plan policies such as Water; Culture and Tourism; Natural Environment; Climate Change and Open Space. The site is well-used for both formal and informal recreation and the council recognises its potential to provide a high quality visitor experience within a multi-functioning, well-connected, natural setting.

The council will support the development of a masterplan for the water park, to be delivered in conjunction with partner organisations and groups in the context of GM level initiatives such as The GM 5 Year Environment Plan, The GM Natural Capital Investment Plan and The Bee Network.

Priority Green Infrastructure Assets and Green Infrastructure Opportunities

Due to its dispersed and evolving nature at the macro and micro scale from major countryside sites down to private gardens and street trees, Trafford's entire Green Infrastructure network is not mapped for the purposes of the Local Plan.

Trafford's Green Infrastructure Plan evidence base, developed in conjunction with City of Trees, provides thematic mapping of key Green Infrastructure assets and associated ecosystem services, identifying sites and opportunities for intervention at the Trafford scale.



The GM Tree and Woodland Strategy 'All Our Trees' also provides similar supporting evidence to be incorporated into decision making as part of the planning process.

GT2 – Green Belt

The draft Trafford Local Plan does not include a review of the Green Belt boundary in Trafford. The GMSF 2020 proposed amendments to the Green Belt boundary around the proposed strategic allocations at New Carrington and Timperley Wedge and any future potential review of the Green Belt boundary will be carried out through a strategic sub-regional plan. Trafford Local Plan policy GT2 relates to areas of land that are currently designated as Green Belt in Trafford.

- GT2.1 As defined on the policies map, the Council will continue to protect the Green Belt in accordance with national policy in the following four broad areas:**
- a) To the south of Hale and Bowdon to the Bollin Valley and Trafford's southern boundary;**
 - b) Between Bowdon, Broadheath, Sale, Carrington, Partington, the Ship Canal and Trafford's southern boundary incorporating the villages of Dunham Town, Dunham Woodhouses and Warburton;**
 - c) Along the Mersey Valley from its junction with the Ship Canal to the Manchester boundary;**
 - d) Along the Timperley Brook between Timperley, Hale and Davenport Green.**
- GT2.2 New development, including buildings, sports and equestrian facilities that meet one of the appropriate purposes specified in national policy, or uses for a temporary period, will only be permitted in Green Belt where it is of a high quality design and respects the openness and character of the landscape.**
- GT2.3 Proposals for new development should not prejudice the primary purposes of the Green Belt set out in national guidance by reason of its scale, siting, materials or design. Any other development will only be permitted where very special circumstances can be demonstrated.**
- GT2.4 As regards the exceptions to inappropriate development listed in national policy the following will apply:**

Extensions or alterations

- GT2.5 A large single extension or the cumulative impact of previous extensions will be taken into account. Extensions should not be disproportionate to original buildings. Proposals to extend buildings which have already been extended should have regard to the scale, height, footprint and architectural style/character of the original part of the building.**

Replacement buildings

- GT2.6 A new building will only constitute a "replacement" if it is sited on or in a position that substantially overlaps and is not materially larger than that of the original building (discounting any extensions made to the building), unless it can be clearly demonstrated that an alternative position including consideration of hard standings, curtilages and enclosures and means of access, would not increase the overall impact on the openness of the Green Belt.**

Redevelopment

- GT2.7 Any development on previously developed land must be of a high quality, in keeping with the surrounding character and not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.**

Limited infilling

GT2.8 As defined in national policy “limited infilling in villages” in Trafford is only considered to apply to those villages listed below that are washed over in the Green Belt:

- a) Dunham Massey Town
- b) Dunham Woodhouses
- c) Warburton

Enhancement

GT2.9 Proposals that will enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt and/or will provide opportunities to mitigate or provide compensation enhancements against losses to Green Belt, where exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated, will be supported, provided the proposals preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of Green Belt. Particular proposals include those that encourage healthy lifestyles as set out in Policy IP3, improve access as part of Trafford’s Green Infrastructure Network and that create and improve habitats, including opportunities through biodiversity net gain.

GT2.10 Renewable energy projects will be supported in line with NPPF where clear wider environmental benefits can be demonstrated and where openness and the purposes of Green Belt are not affected.

Justification

Approximately two fifths of Trafford is Green Belt land, which serves to control development pressures to preserve the open character of the countryside and to assist in urban regeneration.

The primary objective of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open with its essential characteristics being openness and their permanence. Green Belt designation of the land shown on the Policies Map will protect important countryside areas of Trafford from unnecessary and unwanted development.

The review of the Green Belt is being undertaken through a sub-regional plan and not the Local Plan.

New buildings and flood lighting to improve sport and recreation facilities have been developed in the Green Belt particularly in the Mersey Valley. The increasing demands to provide more high quality facilities to promote healthy lifestyles and retain Trafford’s sporting profile are likely to result in more pressure on the Green Belt. Careful consideration will be needed to ensure there are no adverse effects on the landscape and character of the surrounding area.

There is an increasing desire to extend existing dwellings in the Green Belt in Trafford. This can affect the openness and character of an area and is a particular issue in Dunham, Warburton and parts of Timperley. This can often be an issue when an extension is proposed to a building which has already been extended. For building extensions to be acceptable in the Green Belt it is essential that they should neither prejudice the open character of the Green Belt, nor be disproportionate in relation



to the original building. Original building means the building and outbuildings/structures as it was originally built, or as it existed on 01 July 1948 if constructed before this date. This will avoid negatively affecting the character of the area. A relatively modest extension to a previous extension may therefore be unacceptable. Any harmful and intrusive extensions that could potentially be constructed under permitted development rights would not be seen as justified against the policy in terms of a fall-back position for approval if they are deemed to be inappropriate/disproportionate.

When considering the redevelopment of previously developed land the definition in NPPF will be strictly applied. Previously developed land does not include buildings that were last occupied by agriculture, horticulture or forestry, car parks, recreation grounds and allotments or where the remains of a fixed surface structure has blended into the landscape such as a former landfill site.

When assessing the adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt this should involve both visual and spatial elements. The character, massing, views through and dispersal of, any proposed redevelopment will need to be considered as well as its footprint. Careful consideration will also need to be given to the infrastructure requirements of any new development particularly traffic generation as this could affect an areas character and openness.

Opportunities for infilling in Trafford's washed over villages or any location in the Green Belt is considered to be limited as considerable parts of these villages are within Conservation Areas. When considering proposals for infilling a preference for affordable housing may be appropriate only where it addresses a particular need.

Enhancement

The Green Belt provides multi-functional green infrastructure opportunities for informal recreation, sport, cycle, footpath and bridleway access, landscape enhancement, biodiversity net gain, flood water management and nature conservation. Providing more recreational opportunities and improved accessibility to these for both locals and visitors can encourage healthier lifestyles. Where exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to release land from the Green Belt remaining Green Belt areas provide opportunities to mitigate and provide compensation enhancements against these losses. Trafford's Green Belt has seen a number of changes to sports facilities and equestrian facilities to enhance their quality and/or accessibility securing long term sustainability. Whilst these uses are appropriate it is important they are sensitively integrated into the rural landscape.

The Carrington Green Infrastructure Opportunity Area (GMSF 2020) and Trafford's Green Infrastructure network provide particular opportunities for these enhancements alongside opportunities in the Mersey Valley, and land east of Hale Barns adjacent to Davenport Green. The proposed allocation areas in the GMSF 2020 at New Carrington and Timperley Wedge contain areas for development and removal from Green Belt. However, compensatory measures to create more accessible woodland, wetland and meadow areas with new and improved cycle routes would be created in areas that will remain in Green Belt.

Policy CC2 on Low Carbon and Renewable Energy sets out the opportunities for major strategic renewable heat and energy projects

GT3 – Agricultural land

GT3.1 In order to support Trafford's agricultural community, the Council will consider appropriate farm buildings to support agricultural use as well as diversification proposals where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would not:

- a) Replace the existing agricultural use;**
 - b) Have a detrimental impact on the existing ecology and landscape of the area;**
- and,**

c) Be contrary to Government Guidance or other policies within this Plan.

GT3.2 Access to public transport in rural areas should be improved as part of proposals for new farm buildings or diversification.

GT3.3 In line with national policy and other policies in the development plan, any development within Flood Zone 2 or 3 should be accompanied by a flood risk assessment.

Justification

National guidance sets out the general guiding principles for sustainable development within rural areas and recognises that the presence of a successful agricultural economy can be essential to the sustainability of these communities. In order to ensure the long term economic viability of agriculture in Trafford, the Council also recognises the role that appropriate agricultural diversification can play within this Policy.

Applications for agricultural dwellings or buildings and for the removal of agricultural occupancy conditions will be determined in accordance with national guidance and SPDs, where relevant.

Q18. Do you agree with the draft Green Trafford policies GT1 – GT3? If not, please explain why (providing supporting evidence where appropriate).