

Littleborough Civic Trust

Response to Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Consultation – 18th December 2016

Whilst we recognise the need for additional housing in the Greater Manchester area and accept that, if this is the case, all parts of the area will have to carry some of this, we have some major concerns arising from the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. First is the significant increase in the amount of housing involved. When the 300 proposed houses are added to existing proposals (most of which already have agreed planning permission) for sites such as the former Akzo Nobel site, Durn, Proofings and other planned developments in the same area, it is highly likely that Littleborough's population would increase by more than 12% in the next few years. In turn, this would put unsustainable pressure on the existing infrastructure. Schools and GP surgeries are already functioning close to capacity and both the A58 and the B6225 are beyond capacity during the rush hour periods. Mention is made in the Framework of improving access to both Smithy Bridge and Littleborough stations but, as commuters well know, the rush hour trains are already running at or beyond their capacity. We would want any development to properly address the capacity of the local infrastructure.

The Framework also talks about wanting to "attract and retain higher income households within Greater Manchester" and we accept that Littleborough may be an excellent place to achieve this, but as a consequence, it will further increase house prices in the area. Littleborough urgently needs affordable and social rented housing so that our younger population doesn't have to move away when they reach adulthood as is currently the case.

We also have concerns about the likelihood of increasing flood risk both to Littleborough and Rochdale as some of the planned development is in a sink area for the river Roch and there is a possibility that there could be an increase in the volume of flood water carrying on downstream to the centre of Rochdale. Any development needs to take account of both the flood issues that may be caused by additional housing and better flood management higher up on both sides of the valley.

Part of the Framework is also about increasing tourism in the local area and, as much as we would welcome this, there will be increasing pressure on parking in what has already been identified as an area with a significant and increasing parking problem.

Finally, much of the land identified is classed as "protected open land" and we would want to see a careful examination of any potential danger to the rich variety of wildlife in the local area.