



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Growth and Development
LEAD OFFICERS:	Strategic Director of Growth & Development
DATE:	Thursday, 9 February 2023

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Growth and Development
WARD/S AFFECTED:	Blackburn South East; West Pennine;
KEY DECISION:	N

SUBJECT: Junction 5 Strategic Employment Site Petition

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 A petition signed by 1,525 members of the public, who reside within and outside of the borough, has been submitted to the Council requesting the following:
- *“Summary: BwD Council want to release greenbelt in order to build industrial units as identified in their local plan.*
 - *Action: we want the green belt area of Belthorn and Guide removing from the plan”.*

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- 2.1 Notes the petition.
- 2.2 Requests that officers notify the lead petitioner that the draft Local Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on Friday 5th August 2022 and is currently undergoing examination. The matter of potential Green Belt release will be considered through the examination, with Public Inquiry commencing on 31st January.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council's emerging new Local Plan proposes to allocate 22 Hectares of land close to Junction 5 of the M65 as suitable for employment development, and a further 16 Hectares of

land adjacent is proposed to be safeguarded for longer-term future employment development. The total of 38 hectares is currently designated as Green Belt (2015 Local Plan).

- 3.2 As outlined in Policy CP10: The Economy (and Growth Site Allocation E179) of the emerging new [Local Plan](#), this strategic site is allocated for development to enable the Borough's identified employment requirements to be met in full over the plan period, and represents a key part of the employment strategy of the Plan. It also creates opportunity for inward investment and vital job creation.
- 3.3 The Council has consulted on draft proposals at several stages over the past 4 years, through a mixture of direct mailings, public events, advertising, social media and exhibitions; with the site in question highlighted as one of the 'big six' schemes within the new Local Plan. Furthermore, the emerging Local Plan is based on extensive evidence, with a clear focus on the significance of potential removal of Green Belt land and therefore sets out an equally significant rationale, having considered all reasonable alternatives.
- 3.4 At this stage of the Local Plan preparation process, the Planning Inspectors are not able to accept a petition. However, the lead petitioner is already registered as a participant for the forthcoming Public Inquiry and will have opportunity to put the case of residents forward at the relevant hearing session.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

4.1 The Council will continue to participate in the Local Plan Examination to ensure that an up-to-date plan can be adopted in due course, providing a positive vision and balanced growth strategy for the future of the area. Residents' concerns are acknowledged, and it should be noted that if the allocation is adopted following examination, there is also a suggested requirement within the policy for compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land. This should contribute to offsetting any impact of removal of the site from the Green Belt.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This is an ordinary petition as defined in the Council's constitution as being one signed by at least 50 people and submitted by people who live, work or study in the Borough. Part 7 of the Constitution outlines the possible mechanisms for petitions and this report is one such type of valid response.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

10. CONSULTATIONS

A range of consultation and engagement regarding the new Local Plan has taken place since 2018, which has helped to shape the emerging new Plan through its various stages up to submission. The consultation and engagement undertaken has been carried out in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and requirements set out within the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Details are set out within the Local Plan [Consultation Statement](#).

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION: 1

CONTACT OFFICER: Helen Holland

DATE:	February 2023
BACKGROUND PAPER:	