



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Stockport Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation Statement

July 2026

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Consultation Statement provides a summary of the consultation undertaken on the Regulation 18 Draft Stockport Local Plan and explains how the representations received have informed the preparation of the Publication (Regulation 19) Stockport Local Plan. The Statement accompanies the Publication Local Plan and has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 22(c) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 1.2 The Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan consultation ran from 6th November 2025 to 21st December 2025, following approval by Cabinet at an extraordinary meeting on Monday, 27th October 2025¹.
- 1.3 The Statement sets out:
- Which bodies and persons were invited to make representations under Regulation 18;
 - How those bodies and persons were invited to make representations under Regulation 18;
 - A summary of the main issues raised through Regulation 18 representations; and
 - How those representations have been taken into account in preparing the Publication Local Plan.
- 1.4 Following consultation on the Publication Local Plan (Regulation 19), this Consultation Statement will be updated to include details of the representations received. The updated statement will be submitted to the Secretary of State alongside the Local Plan and supporting documents in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

¹ <https://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1015&MId=30431>

2. Draft Local Plan Consultation Process

- 2.1 Stockport council undertook consultation on the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan between 6 November and 21 December 2025, following approval by Cabinet at an extraordinary meeting on 27 October 2025. The consultation provided an opportunity for residents, businesses, statutory consultees, neighbouring authorities and other interested parties to comment on the draft vision, objectives, spatial strategy, site allocations, planning policies and policies map before preparation of the Publication Local Plan.
- 2.2 The consultation was carried out in accordance with the council's Statement of Community Involvement and the requirements of Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Consultation materials were made publicly available and representations could be submitted by a range of digital and non-digital methods.
- 2.3 The purpose of this section is to provide a clear record of the consultation process, including which bodies and persons were invited to make representations and how those bodies and persons were invited to participate.

Bodies and Persons Invited to Make Representations

- 2.4 In accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the council's Statement of Community Involvement, Stockport council invited a wide range of bodies, organisations and individuals to make representations on the Draft Local Plan. The consultation sought views from specific consultation bodies prescribed by legislation, general consultation bodies and other persons and organisations with an interest in the future development of the borough.
- 2.5 The following groups were invited to participate in the consultation:
 - **Specific consultation bodies:** Specific consultation bodies prescribed by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, including organisations with statutory responsibilities relevant to plan making.
 - **Neighbouring authorities and Duty to Cooperate bodies:** Neighbouring local planning authorities, public bodies and organisations with cross-boundary interests relevant to the Local Plan. Further information on this engagement, including the matters discussed, issues raised and how they have been addressed, is set out in the council's Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground.

- **Infrastructure and service providers:** Infrastructure providers, transport organisations, utility providers and other bodies responsible for services or infrastructure affected by growth and development.
- **Residents and local communities:** Residents across Stockport, including people accessing consultation information online, through events, libraries and other community awareness activity.
- **Community and voluntary organisations:** Community, voluntary, faith, neighbourhood and local interest groups, including organisations able to share information through local networks.
- **Businesses and business representatives:** Businesses, business representative organisations and other economic stakeholders with an interest in local planning and development.
- **Landowners, developers and planning professionals:** Landowners, developers, planning agents, consultants and other parties with an interest in sites, policies and development opportunities.
- **Environmental, heritage and equality groups:** Groups and organisations representing environmental, heritage, equality and community interests relevant to the Local Plan.
- **Elected representatives and public sector partners:** Councillors, Members of Parliament, internal council teams and public sector partners who could help raise awareness and support engagement.
- **Consultation database contacts:** All individuals and organisations registered on the council's Local Plan consultation database, including those who had asked to be kept informed about planning policy matters.

Consultation process

- 2.6 The consultation adopted a multi-channel approach, combining direct stakeholder notification, website publication, an online consultation platform, social media and communications activity, printed materials, public events, briefing sessions and officer attendance at meetings across the borough.
- 2.7 All individuals and organisations registered on the Local Plan consultation database were contacted and provided with information on the consultation period, how to view consultation documents, opportunities to attend engagement events and the methods available for submitting representations.
- 2.8 Representations could be submitted through:
- i) Via the online consultation platform,
 - ii) via email to local.plan@stockport.gov.uk,

iii) or via post to the Planning Policy Team, Stockport Metropolitan Borough council, 4th Floor Stopford House, Piccadilly, Stockport, SK1 3XE.

- 2.9 Printed copies of the Draft Local Plan and supporting policy maps were made available in libraries across the borough for residents who preferred not to use the online consultation platform. Library staff were also available to help residents access and use the consultation platform.
- 2.10 A broad digital and media campaign was delivered, including social media activity reaching approximately 54,000 people, targeted email bulletins to around 10,000 subscribers, dedicated web content viewed approximately 4,000 times, and coverage across more than 15 media outlets, including the BBC News app and the Manchester Evening News.

Website and Online consultation

- 2.11 The council's website acted as the main hub for the Regulation 18 consultation. Dedicated Local Plan webpages hosted the Draft Local Plan, evidence base information, consultation guidance, event details and links to the online consultation platform.
- 2.12 A bespoke online consultation platform, developed by the council and part-funded through the DLUHC PropTech Fund, was used to gather feedback on the Draft Local Plan. The platform presented written policies alongside narrative summaries and interactive mapping, enabling users to review the plan and submit comments directly.
- 2.13 The online consultation platform went live on 6 November 2025 at the start of the consultation period and was the council's preferred method for receiving representations. Digital support was available through libraries to assist residents who needed help accessing online materials or submitting comments.

Social media and communications

- 2.14 A comprehensive communications campaign supported borough-wide awareness of the consultation and encouraged participation. This included website updates, homepage promotion, news articles, press notices, social media posts, printed promotional material, use of digital screens and updates to councillors, MPs, internal staff and relevant stakeholder networks.
- 2.15 The campaign included social media activity across council channels, targeted email bulletins to people and organisations on relevant mailing lists, dedicated web content and engagement with local and regional media outlets.
- 2.16 The consultation activity generated significant awareness, including social media activity reaching approximately 54,000 people, targeted email bulletins to around 10,000 subscribers, dedicated web content viewed approximately 4,000 times

and media coverage across more than 15 outlets, including the BBC News app and the Manchester Evening News.

Consultation events

- 2.17 A programme of more than 20 public engagement events was delivered during November and December 2025 to raise awareness of the Draft Local Plan and support participation in the consultation. Events took place in libraries, town centre locations and alongside area committee meetings.
- 2.18 Planning Policy officers and consultation support staff attended events to explain the purpose of the consultation, outline the content of the Draft Local Plan, answer questions and signpost residents and stakeholders to the available methods for submitting representations.
- 2.19 The programme included library drop-in sessions, town centre engagement events, pre- area committee events, stakeholder briefing sessions, a councillor briefing, neighbourhood forum engagement and targeted briefings with the VCSFE sector.

Meetings attended

- 2.20 In addition to public engagement events, officers attended and supported a range of meetings and briefings during the consultation period. These provided further opportunities for stakeholders to understand the Draft Local Plan, discuss emerging issues with officers and receive information on how to submit formal representations.
- 2.21 Meetings and briefings included the Business Summit, area committee sessions, neighbourhood forum briefing sessions, key stakeholder and community briefings, VCSFE sector briefings, a councillor briefing session and neighbourhood engagement activity in Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme.

Indicative schedule of events and meetings referenced

- 2.22 The following list summarises events and meetings referenced above, together with the type of engagement, date and location.
 - **Business Summit**
 - Type: Agenda item and discussion
 - Date: 14 November 2025
 - Location: Stockroom

- **Bredbury Library**
 - Type: Library drop-in
 - Date: 17 November 2025
 - Location: Bredbury Library
- **Adlington Walkway pop-up**
 - Type: Pop-up event
 - Date: 18 November 2025
 - Location: Adlington Walk, Merseyway (Town Centre)
- **Heatons Library**
 - Type: Library drop-in
 - Date: 20 November 2025
 - Location: Heatons Library
- **Key stakeholders and communities briefing**
 - Type: Online briefing
 - Date: 21 November 2025
 - Location: MS Teams
- **Heald Green Library**
 - Type: Library drop-in
 - Date: 24 November 2025
 - Location: Heald Green Library
- **Adlington Walk drop-in**
 - Type: Pop-up event
 - Date: 25 November 2025
 - Location: Adlington Walk, Merseyway (Town Centre)

- **Bramhall Library**
 - Type: Library drop-in
 - Date: 27 November 2025
 - Location: Bramhall Library
- **High Lane Library**
 - Type: Library drop-in
 - Date: 28 November 2025
 - Location: High Lane Library
- **Werneth Area Committee**
 - Type: Pre-committee event
 - Date: 1 December 2025
 - Location: Woodley Civic Centre
- **Heatons and Reddish Area Committee**
 - Type: Pre-committee event
 - Date: 1 December 2025
 - Location: Stockport Town Hall
- **Stepping Hill Area Committee**
 - Type: Pre-committee event
 - Date: 2 December 2025
 - Location: Stockport Town Hall
- **Cheadle Area Committee**
 - Type: Pre-committee event
 - Date: 2 December 2025
 - Location: Heald Green Methodist Church

- **Marple Area Committee**
 - Type: Pre-committee event
 - Date: 3 December 2025
 - Location: Marple Scout HQ
- **Central Stockport Area Committee**
 - Type: Pre-committee event
 - Date: 4 December 2025
 - Location: Fred Perry Conference Room
- **Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme South Area Committee**
 - Type: Pre-committee event
 - Date: 4 December 2025
 - Location: Not recorded
- **Edgeley Library**
 - Type: Library drop-in
 - Date: 8 December 2025
 - Location: Edgeley Library
- **Hazel Grove Library**
 - Type: Library drop-in
 - Date: 9 December 2025
 - Location: Hazel Grove Library
- **Bramhall/Cheadle Hulme South Neighbourhood Network**
 - Type: Agenda item and discussion
 - Date: 10 December 2025
 - Location: Bramhall Village Club

- **Stockroom**
 - Type: Town centre drop-in event
 - Date: 10 December 2025
 - Location: Stockroom
- **Key stakeholders and communities briefing**
 - Type: Online briefing
 - Date: 11 December 2025
 - Location: MS Teams
- **Brinnington Library**
 - Type: Library drop-in
 - Date: 12 December 2025
 - Location: Brinnington Library

Responses received

- 2.23 The council accepted all valid representations submitted during the Regulation 18 consultation period, regardless of whether they were received through the online consultation platform, by email or by letter.
- 2.24 A total of 5,758 comments were submitted by 2,132 respondents through the online consultation platform. 1,352 responses were received by email and 348 by letter. Many of the letter and email responses combined multiple comments relating to a variety of different parts of the draft Local Plan. The overall number of comments was therefore in excess of 7,458, received from a total of 3,832 people and organisations.

3. Consultation Outcomes

- 3.1 The following section provides a summary of the responses received to the Stockport Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation Draft.
- 3.2 Responses have been organised using the same chapter structure and policy numbering as the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan. The summaries provide a high-level overview of the principal issues and themes raised through the consultation.
- 3.3 The level of detail provided for each policy reflects the range and complexity of issues raised and should not be taken as an indication of the number of comments received on a particular policy or issue.

Chapter 1: Introduction

- 3.4 Responses were generally supportive of the introductory section of the Local Plan, including the emphasis placed on climate change, sustainable development, local communities and neighbourhoods. Some respondents highlighted the importance of maintaining progress against the Local Plan timetable and noted that any delay could have implications for the overall plan period and associated development requirements.

Chapter 2: Our Vision

- 3.5 Responses were generally supportive of the vision, particularly its focus on sustainable growth, thriving communities, climate resilience and creating places that meet the needs of current and future generations. Respondents welcomed the emphasis on local distinctiveness and the recognition that different communities face different opportunities and challenges. Support was also expressed for the brownfield-first approach, investment in centres, transport improvements and a strong local economy. Some respondents considered that the vision should place greater emphasis on biodiversity, the natural environment, countryside and green spaces, while others highlighted the importance of protecting local identity, supporting tourism and culture, and recognising the role of businesses and infrastructure. Comments also sought greater clarity on how housing growth, transport investment and brownfield development would be delivered alongside appropriate infrastructure and environmental safeguards.

Chapter 3: Our Strategy

Objectives

- 3.6 Responses were generally supportive of the Local Plan objectives and their alignment with the borough's wider priorities relating to housing, economic growth, health, equality, climate change and sustainable development. Particular support was expressed for objectives relating to climate resilience, biodiversity, high-quality design, infrastructure delivery, affordable housing, education, transport and economic prosperity. Respondents highlighted the importance of ensuring that growth is supported by appropriate infrastructure, including transport, education, healthcare, utilities, green infrastructure and community facilities. Comments also emphasised the need to tackle inequalities, improve health and wellbeing, provide a range of housing types, and protect the natural environment, heritage assets and local character. Some respondents raised concerns regarding the deliverability of the objectives, the balance between growth and environmental protection, and the need for clear evidence, monitoring and implementation measures. Suggestions were also made to strengthen references to lifelong learning, sport and recreation, local economic opportunities, sustainable transport and climate resilience.

Strategic Policies

- 3.7 **Strategic Policy 1: Spatial strategy** - Responses expressed a mixture of support and concern regarding the overall spatial strategy. Respondents generally supported the focus on directing growth to sustainable locations, prioritising previously developed land, supporting town centre regeneration and improving opportunities for active travel. Support was also expressed for the policy's objectives relating to climate resilience, infrastructure delivery, affordable housing, biodiversity enhancement, economic growth and healthy communities. A key area of debate was the balance between brownfield and greenfield development. Some respondents considered that the proposed Green Belt releases conflict with the strategy's brownfield-first approach, whilst others argued that additional Green Belt and grey belt land would be required to meet housing and employment needs in full. Housing provision was also a significant issue, with concerns raised that the Plan would either fail to meet identified housing need or deliver an unacceptable level of growth with associated impacts on infrastructure, traffic, flooding, biodiversity and local character. Many respondents emphasised the need for development to be supported by appropriate infrastructure, alongside clear arrangements for its delivery. Other comments sought greater clarity on affordable housing, employment land requirements, environmental protection measures and implementation of the strategy over the plan period.
- 3.8 **Strategic Policy 2: A strategy for our centres** - Responses were generally supportive of directing growth towards Stockport Town Centre and the borough's district and local centres to support regeneration, make efficient use of land and maximise access to existing services, facilities and public transport. Many respondents supported locating new housing within centres, particularly the town

centre. However, concerns were raised regarding the scale of growth proposed, including whether centres have sufficient infrastructure capacity to accommodate additional population growth. Respondents emphasised the need for supporting infrastructure, including healthcare, education, green space, community facilities, public transport and active travel connections, to be delivered alongside development. Comments also highlighted the importance of protecting the distinct character, vitality and function of individual centres, whilst ensuring investment opportunities are distributed across the borough. Other concerns related to traffic, parking, accessibility, public realm, retail provision and the relationship between housing growth and employment opportunities. Some respondents sought greater clarity regarding the role of centres within the wider spatial strategy and how housing, retail, community and employment uses would be balanced to support thriving and sustainable centres.

3.9 Strategic Policy 3: Sustainable development in Stockport - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of promoting sustainable development and balancing environmental, social and economic considerations. Support was expressed for the emphasis on healthy communities, climate action, biodiversity enhancement, efficient use of land and sustainable travel. Many respondents highlighted the importance of protecting and enhancing green infrastructure, biodiversity, water environments and other natural assets whilst supporting climate resilience. A significant area of debate was the proposed requirement for a minimum 20% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), with some respondents supporting the ambition to exceed national standards and others raising concerns regarding viability, deliverability and the supporting evidence base. Comments also sought stronger requirements relating to flood risk, sustainable drainage, water quality and biodiversity delivery, including clearer monitoring and implementation arrangements. Some respondents considered parts of the policy to be overly prescriptive, lacking flexibility or duplicative of national policy. Other comments emphasised the need for sustainable development to be supported by appropriate infrastructure, accessibility, environmental protection and robust assessment processes.

3.10 Strategic Policy 4: Equality, impact, and opportunity - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's aim of creating inclusive communities and promoting equality of opportunity. Many respondents highlighted the importance of accessible development, particularly for older people, disabled people and those with reduced mobility, along with safe and convenient access to services, facilities and public spaces. Comments also emphasised the need to tackle inequalities, improve health and wellbeing, and ensure development contributes positively to local communities. Several respondents highlighted the role of community facilities, active travel, public transport and accessible environments in reducing exclusion and widening opportunities. Suggestions were made to strengthen recognition of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector and its role in supporting community wellbeing. Some respondents sought greater clarity on the policy's scope and application, raising concerns that certain requirements are overly broad, difficult to implement consistently or lack a clear planning purpose. Other comments highlighted the

need for suitable housing and environments that do not create barriers for disabled people or those with mobility needs.

Chapter 4: Development management policies

Providing for our communities

- 3.11 **COM 1: Healthy and active across all ages** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of promoting healthy, active and inclusive communities through the planning process. Respondents emphasised the importance of ensuring that development provides access to green spaces, open spaces, sports and leisure facilities, community infrastructure and active travel opportunities in order to support physical and mental health and wellbeing. Several comments highlighted the need for the Local Plan to address health inequalities across the borough, better reflect age-friendly principles and recognise the role of the VCSE sector in supporting healthy communities. Suggestions were also made to strengthen the integration of public health considerations within planning decisions, including closer collaboration between planning and healthcare professionals, greater recognition of biodiverse green spaces, healthier food environments and active travel infrastructure. Concerns were raised regarding the potential loss of green spaces, recreational facilities and community assets, alongside the accessibility of services and facilities and the ability of development to support healthy lifestyles. Other respondents sought greater clarity regarding the application of the policy and suggested that healthy place-making principles should be more clearly embedded within wider design and development standards.
- 3.12 **COM 2: Community and social infrastructure** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of protecting and enhancing community and social infrastructure and ensuring that growth is supported by appropriate facilities. Support was expressed for the protection of valued community assets and the ability to secure new infrastructure through on-site provision or developer contributions. A key theme was the approach to developer contributions, with respondents seeking greater clarity on how infrastructure needs, thresholds and contributions would be identified and calculated, and how requirements would be balanced against development viability. Several comments also sought clarification on the scope of the policy, including the facilities covered, the definition of major development and the relationship with other policies relating to open space, sport and healthcare provision. Other respondents highlighted the importance of retaining valued community facilities, strengthening protection for assets such as pubs and community venues, recognising the role of the voluntary and community sector, and ensuring replacement facilities continue to meet local needs.
- 3.13 **COM 3: Educational facilities** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of protecting, enhancing and expanding educational facilities to meet needs arising from growth. Support was expressed for the inclusion of adult education, lifelong learning, SEND provision and wider community access to educational facilities. Respondents highlighted the need for sufficient school

places to be delivered alongside new development, noting existing and anticipated capacity pressures in some areas. A key theme was the approach to developer contributions, with comments seeking greater clarity on how requirements would be identified, evidenced and applied, and how they would be balanced against development viability. Suggestions were also made to strengthen engagement with education providers, respond to cumulative impacts from multiple developments and provide greater flexibility within the policy. Other comments emphasised the importance of investing in existing educational facilities and ensuring development contributes positively to educational infrastructure.

- 3.14 **COM 4: Protection of open space and recreation facilities** - Responses were generally supportive of protecting open space, recreation facilities, allotments and community growing spaces from inappropriate loss. Respondents highlighted the contribution these spaces make to recreation, biodiversity, green infrastructure, climate resilience, visual amenity and heritage settings. Several comments sought greater clarity on the scope and application of the policy, including the definition of open space, consistency with other Local Plan policies and the evidence supporting decision-making. Some respondents considered parts of the policy to be more restrictive than national policy, particularly in relation to replacement provision, and sought greater flexibility where high-quality alternatives or wider benefits can be demonstrated. Other comments emphasised the importance of protecting locally valued open spaces whilst ensuring designations reflect sites that perform a genuine open space function. Suggestions were also made to strengthen references to accessibility, ecological enhancement and the role of open space in supporting healthy communities.
- 3.15 **COM 5: Local Green Space** - Responses were generally supportive of the designation and protection of Local Green Spaces, recognising their contribution to recreation, biodiversity, local character, heritage and community wellbeing. Respondents highlighted the value of smaller and informal green spaces, with several suggesting additional sites for designation or amendments to existing boundaries. Comments also sought greater clarity on the relationship between Policies COM 5 and COM 4, the definition of key terms, and the circumstances in which development may be considered acceptable. While strong protection was widely supported, some respondents sought greater flexibility where development could deliver wider community or environmental benefits without undermining the qualities that justify designation. Other comments emphasised the importance of ensuring designated sites continue to reflect local needs, community value and environmental significance.
- 3.16 **COM 6: Sporting facilities** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of protecting and enhancing sporting facilities across the borough, including support for the protection of existing sports provision and the cross-reference to Policy COM 4 where the loss of facilities is proposed. Some respondents suggested amendments to the list of strategic and protected facilities, including requests to recognise additional sites such as Marple Memorial Park and Stockport Sports Village, and highlighted the importance of both formal and informal recreational opportunities in supporting health and

wellbeing. Comments also raised concerns regarding the potential loss of existing sporting and recreational facilities through development, including the loss of golf course land and other sports provision. Several comments sought greater clarity and flexibility in relation to replacement provision and the demonstration of strategic need, whilst others highlighted the need to ensure future demand arising from population growth is reflected in assessments of sports and recreation capacity. Other comments related to the enhancement of existing facilities, the environmental impacts of artificial sports surfaces and the role of major sporting venues within the borough.

- 3.17 **COM 7: Health care facilities** - Responses were generally supportive of the principle that new development should help meet increased demand for healthcare provision and support accessible, modern and flexible healthcare facilities. Respondents emphasised the need for healthcare infrastructure to be planned and delivered alongside development, including requests for healthcare impact assessments, secured funding mechanisms and appropriate developer contributions to address additional demand generated by new development. A key theme was the calculation, justification and viability of contributions, with comments seeking greater clarity on how requirements would be assessed, evidenced and applied, whilst ensuring they remain proportionate to development impacts. Suggestions were also made to strengthen engagement with NHS organisations and Integrated Care Board partners, support a wider range of healthcare facilities and neighbourhood-based provision, and consider cumulative impacts arising from multiple developments. Other comments highlighted the importance of investing in and modernising existing healthcare facilities, particularly Stepping Hill Hospital, to ensure healthcare needs continue to be met across Stockport and neighbouring areas.
- 3.18 **COM 8: Cemeteries and crematoria** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's approach to managing proposals for cemeteries and crematoria whilst protecting environmental quality and local amenity. Some comments raised concerns regarding the long-term provision of burial space within the borough and suggested that the Local Plan should take a more proactive approach to identifying future needs and ensuring sufficient capacity. Suggestions were also made to consider specific land allocations or a clearer strategy for meeting future burial demand.

Our environment

Part 1: Natural Environment

- 3.19 **ENV 1: Protection of the natural environment** - Responses were generally supportive of the objective of protecting and enhancing the natural environment, biodiversity, ecological networks and designated nature conservation sites. Many comments highlighted concerns about the potential impacts of development on habitats, biodiversity, ecological corridors, protected species, local nature reserves, sites of biological importance, trees, green spaces and wider landscape character. A significant number of representations focused on the ecological network designations, with respondents seeking greater clarity regarding its extent, evidence base, operation and implications for allocated

sites. Whilst some considered the designation could place undue constraints on development, others sought stronger protection and enhancement measures. Comments also called for closer alignment with the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), clearer application of the mitigation hierarchy, and greater recognition of nature recovery objectives, water quality and nature-based flood management. Other comments requested clearer definitions of key terms, greater flexibility in the application of policy requirements, clarification of exceptional circumstances and ecological assessment expectations, and a more transparent approach to balancing environmental protection with development delivery.

- 3.20 **ENV 2: Enhancing nature** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of enhancing biodiversity, strengthening ecological connectivity and increasing green and blue infrastructure across the borough. Support was expressed for measures including biodiversity net gain, native species planting, wildlife-friendly development, long-term habitat management and the provision of bird and bat nesting features. A significant area of debate was the proposed requirement for 20% biodiversity net gain, with some respondents supporting the ambition to exceed national standards and others questioning its evidence base, deliverability and potential impacts on viability and housing delivery. Similar concerns were raised in relation to the Urban Greening Factor, on-site delivery requirements, compensation ratios, native species targets and biodiversity features within buildings, with requests for greater flexibility to reflect site-specific circumstances. Respondents also sought additional clarity on the operation of biodiversity net gain, off-site compensation arrangements, long-term management and monitoring, and the relationship between biodiversity net gain, ecological networks and the Greater Manchester LNRS. Other comments suggested strengthening the policy through enhanced ecological connectivity, sensitive lighting, green infrastructure and locally targeted nature recovery initiatives.
- 3.21 **ENV 3: Nature Recovery** - Responses were generally supportive of the principle of nature recovery and the policy's alignment with the Greater Manchester LNRS, recognising the importance of protecting habitats, improving ecological connectivity and supporting biodiversity enhancement across the borough. Several respondents sought a stronger and more prescriptive approach, including clearer requirements for developments to contribute to LNRS priorities, provide measurable targets for habitat creation and restoration, strengthen ecological connectivity, stronger links to biodiversity net gain, sustainable drainage and green infrastructure, and arrangements for long-term management and monitoring. A significant area of discussion related to the proposed nature network, with comments seeking clarity on the extent, evidence base and mapping. Whilst some respondents considered that the identified core areas, corridors and opportunity areas were insufficiently justified, lacked site-specific ecological evidence and could place undue constraints on development, others sought stronger protection and enhancement measures. Additional comments requested clearer guidance on the role of opportunity areas, identified further priority areas for nature recovery, and emphasised the importance of

incorporating wildlife permeability and ecological connectivity into the design of new development.

- 3.22 **ENV 4: Trees, woodland and hedgerows** – Responses were generally supportive of protecting and enhancing trees, woodland and hedgerows, recognising their importance for biodiversity, landscape character and climate resilience. Many respondents sought stronger protection measures, including larger buffers around ancient woodland, enhanced safeguards during construction, stronger requirements for tree retention and replacement, and greater protection for ecological corridors and Sites of Biological Importance. Some comments called for more ambitious tree planting targets supported by clear canopy cover objectives and monitoring arrangements. Concerns were also raised about the loss of trees through development, the effectiveness of compensatory planting, and reported removals of Tree Preservation Orders associated with some sites. Other respondents queried the practicality of some requirements, seeking greater flexibility around replacement standards, valuation methods and stronger consideration of viability and site-specific circumstances. Suggestions were also made to align the policy more closely with national guidance and industry best practice, including Natural England standing advice and Woodland Trust guidance.
- 3.23 **ENV 5: Landscape** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of protecting and enhancing landscape character, scenic quality and local distinctiveness. Many respondents raised concerns about the potential effects of development on landscape character areas, key views, visual amenity, tranquillity, settlement separation and the open character of the borough's rural and semi-rural areas. Comments highlighted the contribution of river valleys, woodland, hedgerows and green spaces to landscape quality, biodiversity and wellbeing, and supported stronger requirements relating to landscape assessment, sensitivity, tranquillity and enhancement measures, alongside measures to reduce light pollution and protect dark skies. Some respondents, however, considered the policy to be overly restrictive, lacking flexibility and not fully aligned with national policy, particularly in relation to landscape character areas, key views and development in greenfield locations. Suggestions were also made to provide greater clarity regarding the identification of key views, the treatment of the Peak District National Park setting, the role of Landscape Character Areas, and how landscape evidence and assessments should be applied in decision-making.
- 3.24 **ENV 6: Soils** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of protecting and enhancing soil resources, recognising their role in supporting biodiversity, food production, carbon storage, climate resilience and wider ecosystem services. Particular support was expressed for the protection of peat-based soils and their environmental value. A number of respondents suggested strengthening the policy through clearer requirements relating to soil management, minimising soil disturbance during construction, soil reuse, ecological connectivity and the assessment and protection of peat soils, including the use of specialist surveys and supporting evidence. Comments also highlighted the importance of protecting best and most versatile agricultural land, with requests for stronger safeguards and robust justification where its loss is

proposed. Conversely, some respondents considered parts of the policy to be overly restrictive or insufficiently flexible, particularly in relation to agricultural land and development constraints. Other comments sought greater clarity regarding policy wording, assessment requirements and the circumstances in which the loss of agricultural land may be considered acceptable.

Part 2: Environmental protection

- 3.25 **ENV 7: Environmental protection** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of protecting communities and the environment from the adverse effects of pollution and environmental hazards. Respondents raised concerns about the potential impacts of development on air and water quality, noise, vibration, light pollution and residential amenity, particularly where development may increase traffic or affect sensitive environmental assets. Several comments sought stronger protection for watercourses, habitats and biodiversity from pollution and construction-related impacts, alongside stronger references to water quality legislation, catchment-based approaches and the management of emerging pollutants. Support was also expressed for measures to minimise light pollution and its effects on biodiversity and protected species. Other comments suggested strengthening requirements for environmental assessments, risk assessments and monitoring, whilst ensuring that environmental protection measures are proportionate and clearly defined. Some respondents considered the policy overly restrictive or insufficiently flexible, requesting clearer wording, greater consistency with national policy and stronger recognition of established principles such as the 'agent of change' approach. Suggestions were also made to strengthen links between environmental protection, air quality, climate resilience and public health objectives.
- 3.26 **ENV 8: Clean air** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of improving air quality and reducing pollution arising from development. Respondents raised concerns about existing air quality issues and the potential for further development to increase traffic-related emissions, particularly in areas already experiencing congestion or poor air quality. Several comments sought stronger requirements for air quality assessment, mitigation and monitoring, including consideration of cumulative impacts, fine particulate matter (PM2.5), construction impacts and development-related emissions. Comments also highlighted the links between air quality, public health, active travel and climate objectives, with suggestions for stronger integration with transport planning, green infrastructure and wider clean air initiatives. Other respondents emphasised the impact of air pollution on the natural environment, including sensitive habitats and designated sites, alongside the need for stronger protection of sensitive receptors, clearer mitigation requirements, greater cross-boundary cooperation and targeted interventions in the areas most affected by poor air quality.
- 3.27 **ENV 9: Groundwater protection** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of protecting groundwater resources and Groundwater Source Protection Zones from harmful development impacts. Respondents raised concerns about the potential effects of development on groundwater quality,

water supplies, drainage and the wider water environment, particularly in areas at risk of flooding or contamination. Several comments sought clearer requirements for protecting groundwater, including site-specific assessments and stronger safeguards during both construction and operation. Suggestions were also made to strengthen monitoring, enforcement and verification arrangements, whilst ensuring that potential impacts on groundwater, watercourses and related environmental assets are fully considered as part of the development process. Other respondents highlighted the importance of robust evidence to demonstrate that proposals within or near Groundwater Source Protection Zones will not adversely affect groundwater quality or quantity.

- 3.28 **ENV 10: Land stability, contamination and storage of hazardous substances** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of ensuring that land affected by contamination, instability or hazardous substances is appropriately assessed and managed before development takes place. Several respondents raised concerns about potential contamination, land stability, groundwater impacts and flooding risks, particularly on previously developed land and sites with known constraints. Support was expressed for the policy's role in facilitating the safe redevelopment of brownfield land, provided risks are identified and addressed at an early stage. Comments also sought clearer requirements for contamination assessment, remediation, protection of the water environment and the management of hazardous substances, including clearer references to relevant regulatory frameworks. Additionally, clarity was sought on the circumstances in which remediation and mitigation measures would be expected. Some respondents considered parts of the policy to be overly burdensome, insufficiently flexible or duplicative of existing regulatory controls, particularly where requirements could affect the viability of brownfield development.
- 3.29 **ENV 11: Safeguarding of Manchester Airport and air navigation facilities** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of safeguarding the operational integrity and safety of Manchester Airport and associated air navigation infrastructure. Some respondents raised concerns about the impacts of airport operations on existing and future residents, particularly in relation to aircraft noise, air pollution and residential amenity. Comments highlighted the need for development proposals to fully consider the implications of being located beneath flight paths and within airport safeguarding zones. Other respondents suggested stronger measures to address environmental and amenity impacts, including continued partnership working and approaches to minimise noise impacts on local communities.
- 3.30 **ENV 12: Aircraft noise** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's approach to managing aircraft noise impacts associated with Manchester Airport and protecting existing and future residents from unacceptable levels of noise exposure. Respondents raised concerns about the effects of aircraft noise on residential amenity, health and wellbeing, particularly in areas beneath flight paths. Comments also highlighted wider environmental impacts associated with airport operations, including air pollution and the implications of future airport growth. Some respondents suggested stronger measures to reduce noise impacts, including continued partnership working with Manchester Airport and

greater consideration of the effects on surrounding communities. Other comments emphasised the importance of ensuring aircraft noise remains a key consideration in decisions relating to new development and future changes in airport activity.

Part 3: Built environment

- 3.31 **ENV 13: Delivering design quality** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of securing high-quality development that responds to local character and creates healthy, inclusive and sustainable places. Respondents supported the use of design frameworks, masterplans and design codes to guide development, whilst highlighting the importance of local distinctiveness, heritage, landscape character, biodiversity and wellbeing. Several comments sought stronger requirements in relation to community engagement, design review, active design principles and the delivery of healthy, resilient and attractive places. Significant discussion focused on the proposed requirement for site-wide urban design frameworks, masterplans and design codes, with differing views regarding the thresholds at which these should apply to different types of development. While some respondents supported a stronger design-led approach, others considered parts of the policy overly prescriptive or insufficiently flexible, particularly in relation to design codes, compliance with guidance documents and additional documentation requirements. Comments also sought greater clarity on the status of design guidance, the relationship between different design tools, the information expected at application stage and how requirements would be applied proportionately. Other respondents suggested strengthening references to climate resilience, accessibility, heritage and landscape character to ensure design quality is maintained throughout the development process.
- 3.32 **ENV 14: Making effective use of land for residential development** - Responses were generally supportive of the principle of making efficient use of land and directing higher-density development towards sustainable and accessible locations. Many respondents supported a brownfield-first approach and recognised the role of higher densities in helping to meet housing needs, particularly in areas with good access to public transport, services and infrastructure. However, a proportion of comments raised concerns regarding the proposed minimum density requirements, suggesting that they may be overly prescriptive and could adversely affect local character, design quality, heritage assets, landscape sensitivity, amenity provision, green infrastructure, parking provision and development viability in some locations. Several respondents sought greater flexibility to allow lower densities where justified by site-specific constraints, infrastructure capacity or place-making considerations. Comments also highlighted the need to balance density expectations with the delivery of housing mix, affordable housing, biodiversity, open space and high-quality design. Other comments emphasised the importance of ensuring density targets reflect local circumstances and support the successful delivery of residential sites.

- 3.33 **ENV 15: Residential design** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of delivering high-quality, inclusive and sustainable residential development. Support was expressed for measures to improve accessibility, adaptability, residential amenity and housing quality, including compliance with Nationally Described Space Standards and the provision of accessible and wheelchair adaptable housing. A significant area of discussion was the proposed accessibility requirements, particularly the expectation that all new homes meet M4(2) standards and that 10% of dwellings on larger sites meet M4(3) standards. Respondents sought greater clarity on the evidence base supporting these requirements, their relationship to identified housing needs, and their implications for viability and deliverability. Some comments considered aspects of the policy overly prescriptive and sought greater flexibility to reflect site-specific circumstances. Other comments suggested strengthening requirements relating to sustainability, green infrastructure, energy efficiency, electric vehicle charging, drainage, housing mix and design quality, whilst ensuring that development contributes positively to local character and residential amenity.
- 3.34 **ENV 16: Taller buildings** - Responses were generally supportive of the role taller buildings can play in making efficient use of land, supporting regeneration and accommodating growth in sustainable locations, particularly within the town centre. Respondents emphasised the importance of ensuring taller buildings are of high design quality and respond sensitively to local character, landscape, townscape, heritage assets and surrounding development. Concerns were raised about the suitability of taller buildings in some locations, particularly where they may impact views, the skyline or residential amenity. Comments also sought greater clarity regarding the definition of taller buildings, the evidence underpinning the policy, and the application of the criteria. Other comments supported strong design expectations and suggested strengthening references to urban greening, heritage guidance, infrastructure provision and the relationship between taller buildings and their wider setting.
- 3.35 **ENV 17: Public realm** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of delivering high-quality, inclusive and attractive public realm. Respondents highlighted the importance of creating distinctive places that reflect local character, heritage and landscape setting, whilst providing accessible spaces for people of all ages. Comments also recognised the role of public realm in supporting health and wellbeing, active lifestyles, social interaction, biodiversity and environmental quality, with particular support for green and blue infrastructure and urban greening. Several respondents suggested stronger references to active design, sustainable drainage, climate resilience and multifunctional green infrastructure. Concerns were raised regarding the impact of development on local character, open spaces, heritage assets and the quality of the public realm in some locations. Other comments sought greater clarity on how the policy would be applied, with some respondents considering certain requirements overly subjective or prescriptive and emphasising the need for a proportionate approach that reflects local context.
- 3.36 **ENV 18: Shop frontages** - Responses were supportive of the policy's objective of securing high-quality shop frontages that contribute positively to the character, appearance and vitality of centres and local shopping areas. Support was

expressed for the protection and enhancement of traditional shop frontages, the promotion of good design, and the preservation of local distinctiveness.

- 3.37 **ENV 19: Development and the historic environment** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of protecting, conserving and enhancing heritage assets and the wider historic environment. Respondents emphasised the importance of heritage assets, historic landscapes and local character in contributing to the borough's identity and sense of place and raised concerns about the potential impacts of development on heritage assets, their settings, important views and historic areas. Support was expressed for heritage-led regeneration and the continued viable use of historic buildings. Some respondents, however, considered that the policy places insufficient emphasis on balancing heritage protection with wider public benefits and may not fully align with national policy or statutory heritage duties. Several comments sought greater flexibility where development may result in limited harm but deliver other benefits. Comments also requested clearer policy wording and guidance on when conservation, enhancement or mitigation measures would be expected, alongside consideration of issues such as contamination and remediation when redeveloping historic sites.

Our climate resilient Stockport

- 3.38 **CR 1: Climate resilience, mitigation and adaptation** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of improving climate resilience, reducing carbon emissions and supporting the transition to a low-carbon future. Respondents recognised the importance of addressing climate change through the planning process and highlighted links with biodiversity, water management, green infrastructure, sustainable transport, and health. Support was expressed for measures relating to flood risk management, sustainable drainage, active travel, renewable energy generation and the incorporation of climate adaptation measures within new development. A significant area of discussion was the proposed sustainability standards and requirements, including Passivhaus, BREEAM, NABERS and Climate Action Statements. While some respondents supported these measures, others questioned their evidence base, consistency with national policy and building regulations, and potential implications for viability and housing delivery. Comments sought greater flexibility, stronger justification where local requirements exceed national standards, and clearer guidance on implementation. Other respondents emphasised the importance of monitoring and ensuring climate objectives are delivered in a practical and proportionate manner.
- 3.39 **CR 2: Energy efficiency, resources and carbon** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency and supporting the transition towards net zero carbon development. Support was expressed for measures that minimise energy demand, improve energy efficiency, promote renewable and low-carbon energy technologies, reduce embodied carbon and encourage the retention and adaptation of existing buildings. Several comments also welcomed the policy's emphasis on water efficiency, resource conservation and the circular economy.

A significant area of discussion was the proposed energy performance standards, net zero carbon requirements, embodied carbon targets, carbon offsetting measures and water efficiency standards. Whilst some respondents supported the ambition of these measures, others questioned their evidence base, consistency with national policy and building regulations, and potential impacts on viability and deliverability. Comments sought greater flexibility where site-specific circumstances or viability constraints may affect implementation, whilst others requested clearer guidance on how requirements would be applied, measured and monitored in practice.

- 3.40 **CR 3: Renewable and low carbon energy development** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of increasing renewable and low-carbon energy infrastructure to support the transition towards carbon neutrality. Many respondents supported renewable energy generation, particularly solar energy, low-carbon technologies and community-scale energy schemes. Several comments suggested prioritising solar photovoltaics on existing and new buildings, including roofs and car parks, before considering development on open land. Support was also expressed for integrating renewable energy generation with biodiversity enhancements and wider environmental objectives. A significant area of discussion was the proposed requirement for the equivalent of 40% of roof space to be covered by solar photovoltaics, with respondents questioning the supporting evidence, viability implications and consistency with national standards. Comments also highlighted the need to ensure renewable energy developments do not adversely affect wildlife, protected sites, valued landscapes, heritage assets, the setting of the Peak District National Park or residential amenity. Whilst some respondents considered the policy should go further by requiring renewable energy technologies in new development as standard, others raised concerns about the practicality and deliverability of certain requirements and sought greater clarity regarding implementation and environmental safeguards.
- 3.41 **CR 4: Heat networks and cooling** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of supporting heat decarbonisation through low-carbon heat networks and cooling measures. Support was expressed for planning for heat networks, particularly where they can serve larger developments, town centre locations and future surrounding communities. Several respondents recognised the importance of reducing reliance on higher-carbon heating systems and ensuring new development is designed to respond to future heat network opportunities. A significant area of discussion was the feasibility and viability of requiring development to install or connect to heat networks, with respondents questioning whether such requirements are justified and deliverable in all locations. Several comments sought greater flexibility, clearer justification for development thresholds, guidance on what applicants would be expected to provide and stronger recognition of site-specific circumstances. Suggestions were also made to strengthen references to passive cooling, green infrastructure and urban greening as part of wider climate resilience and overheating mitigation measures. Other respondents sought clearer guidance on alternative approaches where heat network connections are not technically feasible or financially viable.

- 3.42 CR 5: Retrofit and re-use of buildings** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of encouraging the retrofit, renovation and re-use of existing buildings to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and minimise embodied carbon. Respondents welcomed the emphasis on retaining and adapting existing buildings rather than demolition and rebuild, recognising the environmental and regeneration benefits of re-use. Several comments highlighted the need for retrofit measures to be sensitive to heritage assets and traditional building forms, with suggestions for additional guidance to support schemes in heritage and conservation areas. Support was also expressed for the policy's approach to discouraging the installation of wood-burning stoves due to concerns regarding air quality and public health. A number of respondents suggested strengthening links between the policy and wider clean air, public health and climate objectives. Other comments recognised that re-use and retrofit may not always be practical or appropriate, particularly for specialist or ageing buildings, and sought greater flexibility where refurbishment would not be feasible, viable or capable of meeting operational requirements. Other responses questioned the evidence base underpinning some aspects of the climate change agenda more broadly, whilst seeking clearer guidance on implementation and delivery.

Our homes

- 3.43 HOM 1: Delivering new homes** - Responses expressed a mixture of support and concern regarding the approach to delivering new homes and creating sustainable communities. Respondents generally supported the provision of new housing, particularly affordable housing, family housing and a wider range of housing types to meet different needs across the borough. Support was also expressed for locating housing in sustainable locations with good access to services, employment opportunities, public transport and active travel infrastructure. A significant area of debate was the scale and distribution of housing growth, including the use of Green Belt and greenfield land, infrastructure capacity and the ability of existing communities to accommodate development. Respondents frequently highlighted concerns relating to infrastructure capacity, transport networks, traffic congestion, flood risk, environmental impacts, biodiversity, landscape character, open space provision and community facilities. Many comments emphasised the importance of ensuring that supporting infrastructure, including healthcare, education, utilities, transport, leisure facilities and green spaces, is delivered alongside development. Respondents also expressed differing views on whether the proposed housing requirement is sufficient to meet identified housing need, with some arguing that the plan should allocate additional land and provide greater flexibility, whilst others considered that the proposed level of development is excessive. Other comments highlighted the need for high-quality design, affordable housing, sustainable transport, environmental protection and stronger evidence to justify site selection and housing delivery assumptions.
- 3.44 HOM 2a: New residential communities** - Responses expressed a mixture of support and objection to the proposed housing allocations. Some respondents

supported the overall approach to identifying a range of residential sites across the borough and welcomed allocations that were considered sustainable, previously developed or necessary to meet housing needs. However, a significant proportion of comments focused on the release of Green Belt, grey belt and greenfield land, with respondents questioning the justification for release, the assessment of Green Belt contribution and whether brownfield opportunities had been fully exhausted. Infrastructure capacity was a major concern, with comments highlighting potential impacts on transport, schools, healthcare, utilities, drainage and other community facilities. Respondents also raised concerns regarding traffic, flood risk, biodiversity, landscape character, agricultural land loss, heritage assets, open space and the cumulative impacts of development across multiple sites. Several comments questioned the deliverability of particular allocations, the evidence underpinning site selection, the transparency of the assessment process and whether sufficient information had been provided regarding site constraints and development assumptions. Other responses argued that additional sites should be allocated to meet housing need in full, whilst some suggested alternative sites or objected to the exclusion of sites promoted through the assessment process.

- 3.45 **HOM 2b: Site specific requirements** - Responses expressed a mixture of support and concern regarding the requirements attached to allocated housing sites. Many respondents supported the principle that development should be accompanied by appropriate infrastructure, affordable housing, green space, community engagement and site-specific mitigation measures. Support was also expressed for masterplanning, phased delivery and mechanisms intended to ensure that infrastructure and community benefits are delivered alongside development. However, a significant area of discussion was whether some requirements are sufficiently flexible, proportionate and supported by viability evidence. Concerns were raised regarding the proposed 50% affordable housing requirement on List 2 allocations, the requirement for site-wide design codes, masterplans and phasing strategies, and the cumulative burden of policy requirements on development delivery. Respondents sought greater flexibility to account for site-specific circumstances, viability considerations and changing market conditions. Infrastructure delivery was a key theme, with many comments emphasising the need for transport, education, healthcare, green space, recreation, utilities and community facilities to be provided in a timely manner and supported by robust delivery mechanisms. Several comments also highlighted concerns relating to environmental impacts, flood risk, biodiversity, access, landscape character and the cumulative effects of growth, whilst others requested greater clarity regarding implementation, monitoring and long-term management arrangements for infrastructure and open spaces. Site-specific comments were also submitted in relation to a number of allocations, covering matters such as affordable housing, healthcare provision, sports facilities, green infrastructure, rail station delivery, active travel connections and environmental mitigation.
- 3.46 **HOM 3: Protecting the future supply of housing** - Responses were generally supportive of prioritising residential development on previously developed land and encouraging the reuse of brownfield sites and existing buildings for housing. Respondents supported the regeneration of underused sites in sustainable

locations and the concentration of housing in areas with good access to services, facilities and public transport. However, some respondents questioned whether the policy is sufficiently justified or consistent with national policy, particularly where it seeks to prioritise residential development on brownfield land. Some respondents argued that brownfield sites should continue to support a range of uses, particularly within town and district centres, and that requiring residential development could limit flexibility and regeneration opportunities. Other comments emphasised the need to address barriers to brownfield development, including viability, site constraints and infrastructure requirements. Concerns were also raised regarding the continued allocation of Green Belt and greenfield sites, with some respondents arguing that brownfield opportunities have not yet been fully utilised, whilst others considered that brownfield development alone would be insufficient to meet housing needs. Additional comments highlighted the importance of environmental protection, design quality, infrastructure provision, affordable housing and ensuring that redevelopment contributes positively to local communities.

- 3.47 **HOM 4: Housing mix** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of delivering a broad range of housing types, sizes and tenures to meet the needs of current and future residents. Many respondents supported the emphasis on affordable housing, family housing and housing suitable for older people, recognising the need to address affordability challenges and demographic change across the borough. Comments also highlighted the importance of delivering smaller, more affordable homes, increasing the supply of accessible housing and ensuring housing mix is informed by identified local needs. Several respondents emphasised the need for age-friendly and accessible homes that enable older people to remain within their communities. Concerns were raised regarding affordability in higher-value areas, the long-term retention of affordable housing and whether affordable housing products would be accessible to those most in need. Some respondents argued that the policy should allow greater flexibility in determining housing mix to reflect site-specific circumstances, changing market conditions, viability considerations and the characteristics of specialist forms of housing. Other comments emphasised the importance of ensuring that housing mix requirements are informed by up-to-date evidence and remain responsive to changing needs over time.
- 3.48 **HOM 5: Affordable housing** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of increasing the supply of affordable housing and addressing identified housing needs across the borough. Many respondents recognised the need for additional affordable housing and supported securing affordable homes through new development, particularly in sustainable locations. Support was also expressed for delivering a range of affordable housing products and ensuring affordable housing is integrated within developments rather than concentrated in separate areas. Several comments highlighted the importance of delivering genuinely affordable homes, including accommodation suitable for key workers, families, older people and lower-income households. A significant area of discussion was the viability and deliverability of the proposed affordable housing requirements, particularly the percentage targets, tenure split requirements and application to specialist housing schemes. Respondents questioned whether the

policy is supported by sufficient viability evidence and sought greater flexibility where site-specific constraints, abnormal costs or changing market conditions may affect delivery. Other comments highlighted the role of overall housing supply in improving affordability, alongside concerns regarding the long-term retention, management and accessibility of affordable housing.

- 3.49 **HOM 6: Build to rent** - Responses were generally supportive of the principle of build to rent development and the policy's objective of securing well-managed rented housing alongside affordable housing provision. Respondents emphasised the importance of ensuring that affordable homes delivered through build to rent schemes are genuinely affordable, meet local housing needs and remain affordable over the long term. Some comments questioned whether aspects of the policy are sufficiently flexible, particularly in relation to affordable housing provision and wider viability considerations. Other responses highlighted the importance of effective long-term management and ensuring housing policies continue to support delivery whilst meeting identified housing needs.
- 3.50 **HOM 7: Housing for older people and specialist accommodation** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of increasing the supply of housing and specialist accommodation for older people, recognising the growing need arising from demographic change across the borough. Respondents supported a wider range of housing options, including accessible and adaptable housing, specialist housing, extra care accommodation and opportunities for older residents to downsize whilst remaining within their local communities. Comments emphasised the importance of integrating specialist accommodation into existing neighbourhoods and in accessible locations with good access to services, facilities, public transport and active travel opportunities. Some respondents highlighted the need for more bungalows, age-friendly homes and smaller dwellings, whilst others recognised the role of higher-density specialist accommodation, including apartments and extra care schemes, in meeting identified needs and releasing existing family housing back into the market. Several comments sought greater flexibility within the policy, particularly regarding viability, accessibility standards, tenure requirements and the requirement to demonstrate demand. Respondents argued that the evidence base already demonstrates a substantial need for specialist accommodation and that additional requirements to justify proposals may be unnecessary. Other comments highlighted the importance of affordability, accessibility, design quality, health considerations and ensuring that specialist accommodation meets a range of needs and income groups.
- 3.51 **HOM 8: Provision and enhancement of outdoor recreational space in new residential development** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of ensuring that new residential development contributes towards the provision and enhancement of open space, sports facilities and play opportunities for new and existing communities. Respondents recognised the importance of green spaces and recreation facilities in supporting health, wellbeing, biodiversity and quality of life, and supported securing new or improved provision alongside housing growth. A significant area of discussion was the proposed standards and contribution requirements, with some respondents questioning the methodology, evidence base and potential impacts

on viability and deliverability. Concerns were also raised regarding on-site provision requirements, particularly on smaller or constrained sites, and whether greater account should be taken of existing facilities and local deficiencies. Several comments questioned the proposed approach to play provision, including the requirement for play facilities within specified walking distances of homes, arguing that this could result in fragmented or inefficient use of land. Other responses focused on the long-term maintenance and management of open spaces, with concerns that maintenance responsibilities and costs could fall disproportionately on future residents. Respondents also emphasised the need for flexibility, site-specific assessment and alignment with up-to-date evidence relating to open space and sports provision.

3.52 HOM 9: Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople - Responses expressed a mixture of support and concern regarding the policy's approach to accommodating gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. Some respondents supported the criteria-based approach, particularly the requirement to ensure that proposals are appropriately located, accessible to services and infrastructure, and do not conflict with wider environmental and land-use policies. Support was also expressed for protecting Green Belt and other sensitive land from inappropriate development. However, concerns were raised that the policy does not allocate specific sites to meet the identified need for travelling showpeople accommodation, with some respondents arguing that reliance on a criteria-based approach alone may not provide sufficient certainty that needs will be met. Comments suggested that the absence of allocated sites could increase the likelihood of unauthorised occupation or make delivery of identified need more difficult. Several responses called for stronger site management arrangements, monitoring mechanisms and enforcement provisions to ensure that authorised sites are properly managed. Other comments promoted specific sites for allocation, arguing that there is identified and evidenced need for travelling showpeople plots within the borough. Additional comments emphasised the importance of good access to the strategic highway network, services, facilities and sustainable transport options.

3.53 HOM 10: Children's residential care and semi-independent supported living for young people - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of supporting the delivery of children's residential care homes and semi-independent accommodation for young people, whilst ensuring provision is appropriately located and integrated into local communities. Respondents recognised the importance of meeting local needs and supporting vulnerable children and young people. Several comments sought clarification on how certain policy requirements would operate in practice, particularly the expectation that placements should prioritise children from Stockport and how this could be monitored or enforced through the planning system. Some respondents noted that Statements of Purpose are already required through other regulatory processes and questioned whether additional planning requirements are necessary, although others supported their use as part of the planning process. Further comments highlighted potential difficulties in applying the policy to specialist providers operating campus-style models with multiple accommodation units located within a single site.

- 3.54 **HOM 11: Houses in multiple occupation** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of managing the concentration and location of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) to protect residential amenity and community cohesion. Many respondents supported the proposed controls on HMO concentrations, considering them necessary to maintain the character of established residential areas, avoid overconcentrations of similar uses and support community stability. Comments highlighted concerns that high concentrations of HMOs can affect neighbourhood character, increase population turnover and place additional pressure on local infrastructure and services. Support was also expressed for the use of Article 4 Directions where evidence demonstrates a need for additional controls. However, some respondents questioned specific elements of the policy, particularly the restriction on HMOs within terraced properties, and sought further justification for this approach. Other comments recognised the role of HMOs in providing affordable housing and highlighted the need to balance housing choice with the protection of residential amenity.
- 3.55 **HOM 12: Self-build and custom build homes** - Responses expressed a mixture of support and concern regarding the policy's approach to increasing the provision of self-build and custom-build housing. Several respondents supported the inclusion of self-build and custom-build homes as part of a diverse housing offer, recognising their potential to increase housing choice and help meet specific housing needs. Some comments suggested that the proposed requirement should be strengthened to increase opportunities for self-build and custom-build housing. However, a significant area of discussion was the proposed requirement for 5% of plots on larger sites to be provided as serviced self-build or custom-build plots. Respondents questioned whether the level of demand identified through the self-build register and supporting evidence justifies the requirement and suggested that it should be more closely linked to evidenced need and reviewed over time. Concerns were also raised regarding the potential impact on viability and delivery, particularly when combined with other policy requirements. Several comments sought greater flexibility in the operation of the policy, including the threshold for application, the percentage requirement, design code requirements and the mechanisms for bringing plots forward where demand does not materialise. Other respondents highlighted the importance of ensuring self-build development is supported by appropriate infrastructure and integrated successfully into wider developments.
- 3.56 **HOM 13: Protection of existing housing** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of protecting existing housing stock and safeguarding residential properties from alternative uses that would reduce the supply of homes available to local residents. Respondents recognised the importance of retaining existing housing in the context of affordability pressures and the borough's constrained housing supply, with some noting that this could reduce pressure for additional land releases elsewhere. Some comments highlighted the need to ensure any loss of housing is carefully justified and balanced against wider community benefits where alternative uses are proposed. Responses also emphasised the importance of maintaining an adequate supply of affordable housing and ensuring that existing residential accommodation remains available to meet local needs.

- 3.57 HOM 14: Homes for agricultural workers in the Green Belt** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's approach to controlling new agricultural and forestry worker dwellings in the Green Belt and requiring robust evidence of need before development is permitted. Respondents supported the principle that any new homes should be limited to circumstances where a genuine functional and financial need can be demonstrated and where alternative accommodation options have been fully explored. Support was expressed for the policy's role in protecting the openness of the Green Belt and preventing unnecessary residential development in the countryside. Some comments suggested strengthening the policy further to ensure agricultural worker dwellings remain proportionate to the demonstrated need and do not become excessively large in ways that would harm the character of the rural landscape. Other responses questioned the need for a separate policy approach for agricultural worker housing, whilst others raised concerns regarding the long-term security and rights of occupants living in dwellings subject to agricultural occupancy restrictions.
- 3.58 HOM 15: Residential infill development in the Green Belt** - Responses expressed a mixture of support and concern regarding the policy's approach to limited residential infill development within Green Belt villages. Some respondents supported the policy as a means of providing clarity regarding where limited infill development may be acceptable, whilst ensuring development remains closely related to existing settlements and respects village character. Support was also expressed for retaining and adapting existing historic buildings and for directing development towards locations with access to services and facilities. However, many responses reflected wider concerns about development in the Green Belt, including potential impacts on openness, landscape character, countryside, biodiversity and local identity. Respondents emphasised the importance of ensuring that infill development remains genuinely limited, respects the established form and character of villages, and does not lead to incremental erosion of Green Belt land or coalescence between settlements. Concerns were also raised regarding traffic, infrastructure capacity, flooding, access, environmental impacts and the cumulative effects of development. Several comments highlighted the need to prioritise brownfield opportunities before development on greenfield or Green Belt land, whilst others sought reassurance that infill schemes would not create pressure for further expansion beyond village boundaries. Some respondents also suggested that neighbourhood planning could help identify appropriate infill opportunities.

Our town centre

- 3.59 STC 1: Stockport Town Centre principles** - Responses were generally supportive of the vision for Stockport Town Centre as a focus for regeneration, housing delivery, employment growth, cultural activity and sustainable transport investment. Many respondents welcomed the continued regeneration of the town centre and supported directing housing, jobs, services and investment to this highly accessible location. Support was also expressed for bringing vacant and underused buildings back into use, increasing the provision of town centre

housing, strengthening the town centre's role as a sustainable transport hub and enhancing the cultural, community, leisure and healthcare offer. Respondents also recognised the importance of protecting and enhancing the town centre's historic environment through heritage-led regeneration. Several comments sought amendments to broaden the policy, including greater recognition of the VCSE sector, support for a wider range of commercial and employment-generating uses, enhanced green and blue infrastructure, and stronger references to climate resilience and strategic infrastructure planning. Respondents also highlighted the importance of providing a range of housing types and tenures rather than relying solely on high-density living, whilst others emphasised the need for improved public transport, active travel links and accessibility both within the town centre and between other centres in the borough. Other comments emphasised the role of healthcare provision, community facilities, heritage assets and key town centre buildings in supporting the town centre's future success.

3.60 STC 2: Town centre policy areas - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's approach to defining distinct character areas within Stockport Town Centre and providing area-specific guidance to direct future regeneration and investment. Respondents welcomed the vision for both Town Centre West and Town Centre East, including the proposed mix of housing, employment, leisure, cultural and community uses. Support was expressed for the continued regeneration of key areas including Weirside, Station Quarter, Exchange Quarter, the Historic Heart and Great Portwood, alongside ambitions to improve public realm, active travel connectivity and the reuse of historic buildings. Respondents also welcomed the emphasis on sustainable transport, high-density development in accessible locations and the creation of new residential neighbourhoods supported by services and infrastructure. Several comments highlighted the importance of protecting and enhancing heritage assets across a wider range of policy areas, rather than focusing solely on the Historic Heart, and emphasised the need for heritage-led regeneration. Others sought stronger references to green and blue infrastructure, climate resilience, strategic infrastructure planning and coordinated delivery across the town centre. Some respondents suggested amendments to specific policy areas, including active travel improvements, public realm design, noise mitigation, retail provision and development capacity. Concerns were also raised regarding the complexity and length of the policy, with suggestions that it should be simplified and made more flexible in places. Additional responses emphasised the importance of ensuring that growth does not adversely affect transport infrastructure and that investment is coordinated with improvements to accessibility and movement throughout the town centre.

3.61 STC 3: A hub for culture and lifestyle - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of enhancing Stockport Town Centre's role as a cultural, leisure and lifestyle destination. Respondents supported improving cultural and recreational opportunities, enhancing visitor experiences and creating a vibrant town centre that appeals to a wide range of users. Several comments highlighted the contribution of active travel routes to improving access to cultural destinations and supporting local businesses. Some respondents suggested placing greater emphasis on health and wellbeing outcomes through the design

of leisure and public spaces. Others highlighted the importance of recognising the role of VCSE organisations in delivering cultural activity, community engagement and social value within the town centre. Additionally, several comments emphasised the need to retain and support valued community facilities as part of the town centre's evolving cultural and lifestyle offer.

- 3.62 **STC 4: Town centre living** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of establishing Stockport Town Centre as a major residential location. Many respondents supported higher-density housing in this highly accessible location, recognising the benefits of proximity to services, employment, public transport and existing infrastructure. Support was also expressed for providing a mix of housing types and tenures to help meet a range of housing needs and contribute to a vibrant and balanced town centre community. Several comments highlighted the importance of ensuring that residential growth is accompanied by sufficient community facilities, healthcare provision, leisure opportunities, open space and other supporting infrastructure. Concerns were raised regarding the potential impact of increased residential density on existing services and the character of the town centre, with some respondents questioning whether infrastructure provision will keep pace with growth. Other comments emphasised the importance of high-quality design, accessibility, active travel opportunities and health and wellbeing considerations in shaping successful town centre neighbourhoods. Additional responses highlighted the need to balance residential development with the continued vitality and viability of the town centre's commercial, cultural and community functions.
- 3.63 **STC 5: Public realm and design in the town centre** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's ambition to improve the quality, accessibility and attractiveness of Stockport Town Centre's public realm. Respondents welcomed measures to enhance walking and cycling, improve connectivity across the town centre and strengthen links to the town's rivers and green infrastructure network. Support was expressed for creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment, reducing vehicle dominance and delivering public realm improvements that promote health and wellbeing. Several comments highlighted the role of green and blue infrastructure, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable drainage and nature-based solutions in improving environmental quality and climate resilience. Respondents also emphasised the importance of accessible design, seating, public facilities and opportunities for recreation. A number of comments highlighted the role that public realm improvements can play in supporting active travel, improving the visitor experience and strengthening the town centre's distinct character. Additional suggestions included greater recognition of building reuse and the incorporation of recognised design guidance that promotes physical activity and healthy placemaking.
- 3.64 **STC 6: Movement to and through the town centre** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's ambition to prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport within Stockport Town Centre. Many respondents welcomed the focus on reducing reliance on private cars and creating a more accessible, sustainable and people-focused town centre environment. Support

was expressed for improving active travel infrastructure, strengthening connections between key destinations and enhancing accessibility across the town centre. Several comments highlighted the importance of improving public transport provision to support planned housing and employment growth, noting concerns that insufficient transport capacity could increase reliance on private vehicles. Respondents also emphasised the need to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety, particularly in locations where traffic currently creates barriers to movement. Some comments highlighted the importance of robust transport assessments and modelling to ensure that development is supported by appropriate transport infrastructure and does not create unacceptable impacts on the wider network. Suggestions were made to strengthen references to health and wellbeing through active design principles, while others sought greater flexibility in the wording of the policy and clarification regarding the application of certain requirements. Additional comments supported continued investment in transport infrastructure, gateway improvements and measures that would enhance accessibility and connectivity across the town centre.

- 3.65 **STC 7: Main town centre uses and retail development** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's approach to directing retail, leisure, office, cultural and tourism uses towards Stockport Town Centre in order to strengthen its vitality and viability. Respondents recognised the importance of maintaining a strong town centre offer and supported the principle of concentrating main town centre uses in accessible locations that can support footfall and linked trips. Support was expressed for the broader diversification of town centre uses, reflecting the changing role of town centres and the need to balance retail provision with leisure, entertainment, employment and cultural activities. Some comments sought greater clarity regarding the role of retail development outside the Primary Shopping Area and Main Town Centre Use Area, whilst others highlighted concerns about retail decline and the need to attract and retain key retailers and anchor uses. Suggestions were also made to provide greater recognition of established retail destinations, including Great Portwood and the Peel Centre, and to simplify aspects of the policy relating to sequential and impact testing. Other comments emphasised the importance of ensuring future retail and commercial development continues to support the vitality and viability of the wider town centre.

Supporting our businesses and centres

- 3.66 **BUS 1: Economy and employment principles** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of supporting economic growth, safeguarding employment land and maintaining a diverse range of employment opportunities across the borough. Respondents welcomed the focus on retaining and improving employment areas, modernising existing premises and supporting new and emerging economic sectors. Support was expressed for protecting established industrial and employment sites, bringing underused and derelict employment land back into productive use and supporting employment-generating development. Several comments highlighted the importance of ensuring that the policy recognises a broad range of employment uses, including Class E uses, and supports the continued adaptation of existing employment locations to changing economic conditions. Respondents also emphasised the

importance of retaining and reusing historic mill buildings, with some suggesting that a more comprehensive strategy for mill regeneration should be developed. Several comments highlighted the role of the VCSE sector in supporting economic and social outcomes and suggested that this should be more clearly recognised within the policy. Concerns were raised regarding the evidence underpinning future employment land requirements, particularly for logistics uses, and the potential impacts of employment growth on the Green Belt, environment, transport network and infrastructure. Other comments highlighted the need to support sustainable transport, environmental sustainability and the continued operation of existing employment sites.

3.67 BUS 2: Key employment locations - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of directing office development towards centres, particularly Stockport Town Centre, and protecting key employment locations that support the borough's economy. Respondents recognised the importance of maintaining a supply of high-quality employment land and premises, supporting business growth and locating employment in accessible and sustainable locations. Support was expressed for the policy's emphasis on the town centre as the primary focus for office development and for protecting established employment areas from inappropriate redevelopment. Several comments highlighted the importance of ensuring that employment locations are well connected to residential areas through both public transport and active travel infrastructure, enabling access to employment opportunities without overreliance on private vehicles. Some respondents suggested that the policy should provide greater recognition of office and employment-generating uses ancillary to industrial and employment premises. Others argued that the policy should explicitly recognise the role of long-established employment locations not currently identified as Employment Areas, including employment sites within the Green Belt that continue to make a significant contribution to the local economy. Concerns were also raised that the policy's approach to warehousing and logistics development could encourage additional road-based freight movements and associated transport impacts.

3.68 BUS 3a: Employment Areas - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of safeguarding Employment Areas and ensuring that sufficient land and premises remain available to support economic growth, industrial activity and employment generation. Respondents supported the protection of employment land from inappropriate redevelopment and supported the principle of retaining sufficient employment capacity to meet future business needs. Support was also expressed for allowing a degree of flexibility where employment land is no longer viable or suitable for continued employment use, including opportunities for housing-led redevelopment where justified. However, several respondents argued that the policy takes an overly restrictive approach towards office development within Employment Areas, questioning the requirement for offices to satisfy the sequential test and suggesting that office uses should be treated as employment-generating uses in their own right. Some respondents also argued that the policy should provide greater flexibility for a wider range of Class E uses and ancillary office accommodation associated with employment activities. Concerns were raised regarding the requirement for a 12-

month marketing exercise, with suggestions that a shorter period may be sufficient to demonstrate lack of demand. Other comments highlighted the need to balance the protection of employment land with wider development objectives, including housing delivery, regeneration and flexibility to respond to changing economic circumstances. Site-specific responses also raised concerns relating to traffic, environmental impacts, logistics development and the effects of employment allocations on surrounding communities and environmental assets.

3.69 BUS 3b: New employment development locations - Responses expressed a mixture of support and concern regarding the proposed allocation of new employment sites to meet identified warehousing and logistics needs. Some respondents supported the allocation of additional employment land to accommodate economic growth and provide modern industrial and logistics floorspace. Support was also expressed for site-specific infrastructure requirements, design expectations and measures to secure local employment and training opportunities. However, a significant proportion of comments objected to the release of Green Belt and greenfield land, questioning whether exceptional circumstances had been demonstrated and whether sufficient brownfield opportunities had been explored. Particular concern was raised about the Bredbury Gateway allocation and its potential impact on landscape character, biodiversity, ecological networks, openness and settlement separation. Respondents also raised concerns regarding traffic generation, HGV movements, highway capacity, air quality, noise, flooding, infrastructure provision and impacts on surrounding communities. Several comments emphasised the need for robust transport infrastructure, public transport accessibility and active travel connections alongside employment development. Other respondents questioned the proposed floorspace requirements, phasing arrangements and design expectations, whilst some promoted alternative sites to meet the borough's employment land needs.

3.70 BUS 4: Employment uses outside of designated employment areas - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's approach to safeguarding viable employment uses outside designated Employment Areas, whilst recognising that some sites may be more appropriately redeveloped for alternative uses where continued employment use is no longer justified. Respondents supported the principle of protecting employment land and premises that continue to contribute to the local economy, particularly those providing opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses and local employment. Some comments highlighted the importance of retaining and promoting employment uses at existing sites, including former mill buildings and established commercial locations. Several respondents argued that greater flexibility should be afforded where employment sites are no longer well suited to employment uses, particularly where sites are located within predominantly residential areas and redevelopment could contribute towards housing delivery. Concerns were raised regarding the requirement for a 12-month marketing exercise, with suggestions that a shorter period may be sufficient in some circumstances. Other respondents sought clarification regarding the application of the policy to allocated housing sites currently in employment use and whether principles such as agent of change should be recognised. Additional comments

suggested that supporting text could provide further detail regarding marketing requirements and viability considerations.

- 3.71 **BUS 5: Flexible workspace** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of supporting flexible workspace, start-ups, small businesses and changing patterns of work. Respondents recognised the importance of providing a range of workspace types and sizes to support entrepreneurship, business growth and economic diversification. Support was expressed for the provision of flexible and managed workspaces and hubs that can accommodate small and growing businesses. Some respondents questioned whether the policy places too much emphasis on Stockport Town Centre and suggested that flexible workspace should also be encouraged in other suitable locations across the borough. Concerns were also raised that the policy could be overly prescriptive by requiring all new employment developments to provide a range of unit sizes and flexible workspace regardless of market demand, sector requirements or site-specific circumstances. Several comments sought greater flexibility and clarity regarding how workspace requirements and long-term management arrangements would operate in practice. Despite these concerns, there was broad support for the overall objective of supporting a more diverse and adaptable business environment.
- 3.72 **BUS 6: Local employment and training** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of improving access to employment, training and skills opportunities arising from new development. Respondents recognised the importance of ensuring that economic growth delivers benefits for local communities, including apprenticeships, work placements, and pathways into employment. Support was also expressed for collaboration between developers, employers and training providers to secure local employment and skills outcomes. Some comments highlighted the role of the VCSE sector in supporting people who face barriers to employment and suggested that this role should be more clearly reflected within the policy. Other respondents questioned the proposed £1 million design and build cost threshold, suggesting that thresholds should instead reflect development scale, job creation potential or other measurable criteria. Concerns were also raised regarding the clarity of the policy, including the need for clearer definitions, implementation mechanisms, monitoring arrangements and expectations relating to employment and skills outcomes. Other comments suggested that planning conditions may be a more proportionate and efficient delivery mechanism than planning obligations in some circumstances.
- 3.73 **CEN 1: Development principles for vibrant centres** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of strengthening the borough's centres as vibrant, attractive and sustainable destinations that serve local communities. Respondents welcomed the emphasis on diversification, supporting a wider range of uses within centres and encouraging the reuse of vacant and underused buildings. Support was expressed for bringing upper floors back into active use, including for residential, employment and community purposes, provided that developments remain accessible and contribute positively to centre vitality. Several comments highlighted the importance of

improving accessibility, sustainable transport connections and links between residential areas and centres, recognising the role that public transport, walking and cycling play in supporting local businesses and reducing reliance on private vehicles. Some respondents specifically supported the encouragement of residential development within centres as a means of increasing footfall and supporting local services. However, concerns were raised that parts of the policy largely repeat national planning policy and could provide greater local distinctiveness, including clearer identification and definition of centres and their intended roles. Additional comments highlighted the need to ensure that transport impacts are properly considered and that sufficient parking and accessibility arrangements are maintained where appropriate.

- 3.74 **CEN 2: Network and hierarchy of designated centres** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of maintaining a network of centres that provide a range of retail, service, employment and community functions across the borough. Respondents recognised the importance of establishing a clear hierarchy of centres and directing development in a way that supports their vitality and viability. Support was expressed for Stockport Town Centre's role as the principal centre within the borough and for encouraging a diverse mix of uses that support local communities and businesses. Several comments highlighted the importance of ensuring smaller centres continue to receive appropriate support and investment to adapt to changing economic circumstances. A number of responses focused on the role of Great Portwood and the Peel Centre within the retail hierarchy, with suggestions that the policy should provide greater clarity regarding the treatment of retail warehousing and the application of sequential testing. Some respondents also queried the classification of individual centres within the hierarchy and sought clarification regarding the inclusion of certain locations. Other comments emphasised the importance of accessibility, sustainable transport connections and ensuring centres remain attractive and functional destinations for residents and visitors.
- 3.75 **CEN 3: District Centres** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of strengthening the borough's district centres through a tailored approach that reflects their individual characteristics and functions. Respondents welcomed support for a diverse mix of retail, service, leisure and community uses, recognising district centres as focal points for local communities. Support was also expressed for public realm improvements, enhanced walking and cycling connections, and residential development that contributes to vitality and footfall. Several comments highlighted the importance of accessibility, including public transport improvements and active travel infrastructure. Some responses, however, questioned aspects of the proposed visions for individual centres. In Hazel Grove, comments suggested that greater emphasis should be placed on strengthening the daytime economy and diversifying the retail offer rather than focusing predominantly on evening uses. In Bramhall, concerns were raised regarding proposals to increase short-stay parking, with some respondents arguing this could encourage unnecessary car trips and conflict with wider sustainable transport objectives. Other comments questioned whether the description of Cheadle as a financial and business services hub accurately reflected current circumstances. Additional comments emphasised the need to

recognise local distinctiveness more clearly, support local businesses and ensure centres remain attractive, accessible and viable destinations.

- 3.76 **CEN 4: Development involving main town centre uses** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's role in directing retail, leisure and other main town centre uses towards the most sustainable and accessible locations within the borough's network of centres. Respondents recognised the importance of the sequential approach in concentrating investment and footfall within established centres. Several comments focused on the treatment of Great Portwood and the Peel Centre, with comments seeking greater clarity on their status within the retail hierarchy and the circumstances in which retail development would be supported. Some respondents argued that Great Portwood's established retail function should be recognised more explicitly. Other comments questioned aspects of the proposed impact assessment requirements, including local floorspace thresholds, with suggestions that national thresholds should be used instead. Some responses highlighted the need for the policy to remain responsive to potential future changes in national planning policy relating to the sequential test and retail planning. Overall, respondents broadly supported the objective of protecting the vitality and viability of centres through the careful management of retail and leisure development.
- 3.77 **CEN 5: Hot food takeaways** - Responses were supportive of the policy's objective of restricting new hot food takeaway development in locations where it could contribute to poorer health outcomes, particularly amongst children and young people. Respondents welcomed the evidence-led approach and supported the proposed restrictions relating to proximity to schools and other locations regularly used by children and young people, areas with higher levels of childhood obesity, and the prevention of over-concentrations of takeaway uses. Support was expressed for the policy's role in promoting healthier communities and helping to address health inequalities. Some comments highlighted the importance of monitoring the effectiveness of the policy over time and suggested that restrictions on hot food takeaway uses should be complemented by measures to improve access to healthier food options.
- 3.78 **CEN 6: Evening economy** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of encouraging a safe, welcoming and inclusive evening economy within the borough's centres. Respondents recognised the positive role that restaurants, cafés, bars, cultural venues and other evening economy uses can play in increasing footfall, supporting vitality and enhancing the attractiveness of centres beyond traditional shopping hours. Support was expressed for balancing evening economy growth with the protection of residential amenity, including the management of noise, disturbance, anti-social behaviour, odour and highway safety impacts. Respondents also supported the application of the agent of change principle to ensure that established businesses are not unduly constrained by new development. Some comments highlighted concerns relating to parking and traffic associated with food and drink uses, emphasising the need to minimise impacts on nearby residents and local communities.

- 3.79 **CEN 7: Out of centre locations for retail** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of managing out-of-centre retail development and ensuring it remains complementary to the borough's network of designated centres. Respondents recognised the importance of protecting the vitality and viability of town, district and local centres by directing retail development towards the most sustainable locations and carefully controlling retail warehousing and other out-of-centre proposals. Support was expressed for retaining controls on the scale and nature of retail activity in out-of-centre locations to prevent harm to established centres and local services. Several comments highlighted the need for a balanced approach that allows a mix of uses whilst continuing to support the role and function of centres. Some comments raised concerns regarding parking pressures and the management of parking associated with retail uses, whilst others commented on the relationship between out-of-centre retail provision and the wider health of centres. Other comments focused on the operation of related policies governing sequential testing and town centre vitality rather than challenging the principle of the policy itself.

Our infrastructure

- 3.80 **INF 1: Infrastructure provision and developer contributions** - Responses were generally supportive of the principle that new development should contribute towards the infrastructure, facilities and services required to support growth. Respondents emphasised the importance of ensuring that infrastructure is delivered alongside development and that contributions are secured towards areas such as education, healthcare, transport, community facilities, open space, sports provision and affordable housing. A significant area of discussion concerned the calculation, delivery and monitoring of developer contributions. Some respondents raised concerns about the council's ability to secure and enforce infrastructure delivery, whilst others called for greater transparency regarding how contributions are calculated, spent and monitored. Several comments questioned whether the policy is supported by sufficient viability evidence and highlighted the need for obligations to comply with the statutory tests in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations. Other respondents emphasised that contributions should be proportionate, directly related to development impacts and balanced against development viability and deliverability.
- 3.81 **INF 2: Digital and telecommunications infrastructure** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of improving digital connectivity and ensuring that new development is served by high-quality broadband and telecommunications infrastructure. Respondents recognised the importance of digital connectivity in supporting residents, businesses, flexible working and economic growth. Some comments highlighted existing connectivity issues and suggested that reliable digital services should be maintained and enhanced in areas experiencing signal disruption. However, several respondents questioned whether certain requirements are necessary or proportionate, arguing that elements relating to full fibre provision are already addressed through building regulations and telecommunications legislation. Concerns were also raised regarding deliverability, with suggestions that developers may not always have direct control over the provision of telecommunications infrastructure. Other

comments supported ensuring developments can accommodate future technological upgrades whilst minimising visual and environmental impacts.

- 3.82 **INF 3: Flood risk** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of managing flood risk and promoting an integrated, nature-based approach to water management. Respondents welcomed the emphasis on sustainable drainage, natural flood management, watercourse restoration and climate resilience. Many comments highlighted existing concerns about flooding across the borough, including surface water flooding, drainage capacity, flood risk to roads and properties, and the role of greenfield and Green Belt land in water storage. Several respondents questioned whether flood risk had been assessed in sufficient detail for some proposed allocations, with respondents seeking greater consideration of cumulative impacts, catchment-wide modelling and site-specific evidence. Several comments supported stronger requirements relating to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), climate change allowances, flood storage compensation, buffer zones alongside rivers, long-term maintenance, monitoring and consultation with relevant flood risk and water infrastructure bodies. Some respondents also questioned parts of the policy wording, including the extent to which developers should be responsible for addressing existing flood risk issues, and sought greater flexibility where mitigation is not required for all phases of development. Other comments highlighted the need to consider reservoir, sewer and groundwater flood risks, as well as water quality, watercourse contamination and structural stability where development is close to canals, rivers or drainage infrastructure.
- 3.83 **INF 4: Drainage** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of improving drainage management and reducing flood risk through SuDS and nature-based solutions. Respondents welcomed measures to manage water close to its source, reduce surface water runoff, restore natural watercourses and integrate drainage into the design of new development. Many comments highlighted existing concerns about flooding and drainage capacity, particularly in areas affected by recent flooding, and emphasised the need to ensure that development does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Others suggested that the policy should be strengthened through clearer requirements relating to sustainable drainage design standards, water quality, holistic site-wide drainage strategies and the integration of multifunctional SuDS features. Concerns were raised regarding the management and adoption of drainage infrastructure, including the long-term responsibility for maintenance and the potential implications for future residents. Several comments supported the principle of the drainage hierarchy but questioned whether the proposed approach is overly prescriptive and sufficiently aligned with national standards and accepted industry practice. Some respondents argued that greater flexibility is required to reflect site-specific constraints, viability considerations and practical deliverability concerns.
- 3.84 **INF 5: Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of promoting SuDS to manage surface water, reduce flood risk and deliver wider environmental benefits. Respondents recognised the role SuDS can play in managing runoff, improving water quality,

supporting biodiversity and helping developments adapt to the impacts of climate change. Many comments highlighted concerns about existing flooding, drainage capacity and the cumulative effects of development across the borough, reinforcing the need for effective drainage measures. Several respondents emphasised the importance of ensuring that SuDS are properly designed, delivered, monitored and maintained over the long term. Some comments called for a more strategic approach to SuDS delivery, including opportunities for larger-scale or neighbourhood-wide drainage solutions and greater use of external funding mechanisms. Others suggested strengthening requirements relating to maintenance, monitoring, enforceability and alignment with national standards and best practice. Some comments queried the relationship between this policy and Policy INF 4, suggesting that there may be scope to simplify or consolidate overlapping requirements.

- 3.85 **INF 6: Fresh water and wastewater infrastructure** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of ensuring that sufficient water supply and wastewater infrastructure is available to support new development. Respondents recognised the importance of coordinating growth with infrastructure provision and ensuring that existing networks are not placed under unacceptable pressure. Several comments highlighted concerns about the cumulative impact of development on water, drainage and sewerage infrastructure, particularly where multiple developments are proposed within the same catchment. Respondents emphasised the need for adequate infrastructure to be delivered alongside development and for capacity constraints to be fully understood before sites are allocated or brought forward. Some comments noted that wastewater and sewerage issues are not given sufficient prominence elsewhere in the Local Plan and suggested that all development, not just larger schemes, should demonstrate adequate capacity. Other comments sought clearer requirements and measurable outcomes to demonstrate compliance, whilst some suggested greater flexibility where alternative solutions can be shown to be sustainable and deliverable.
- 3.86 **INF 7: Integrated transport network** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's aim of promoting a more sustainable and integrated transport network and reducing reliance on private car travel. Respondents welcomed the emphasis on walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, together with the recognition of emerging transport technologies and mobility hubs. Many comments highlighted the importance of improving active travel infrastructure and public transport connections between homes, employment areas, centres and community facilities. However, a significant number of respondents raised concerns regarding existing traffic congestion, highway capacity and the cumulative transport impacts of development across the borough. Concerns were also expressed regarding the adequacy of public transport services in some locations, the safety and attractiveness of walking and cycling routes, and whether active travel measures would be sufficiently connected to wider networks to provide realistic alternatives to the private car. Several comments questioned whether some proposed development locations are genuinely accessible by sustainable modes. Other comments highlighted the need for transport investment to be phased appropriately, for transport assessments to

properly consider cumulative impacts, and for transport infrastructure to provide wider environmental, health and community benefits.

- 3.87 **INF 8: Sustainable streets** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of creating safer, greener, healthier and more attractive streets that encourage walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport use. Respondents welcomed the emphasis on active travel, green infrastructure and improving the quality of the public realm, recognising the benefits for health, wellbeing, biodiversity and climate resilience. Several responses highlighted the importance of improving active travel infrastructure, including better walking and cycling routes, safer crossings, improved accessibility and stronger connections to wider networks. However, a number of respondents raised concerns regarding existing traffic congestion, highway capacity and whether sustainable transport measures alone would be sufficient to address travel demand associated with future development. Concerns were also expressed regarding the effectiveness of some active travel interventions, the impact of traffic on air quality and noise, and the need to ensure streets remain safe, accessible and practical for all users. Some comments suggested that the policy could place greater emphasis on design features that support comfort and safety, such as lighting, seating, green infrastructure and street furniture, whilst others called for stronger mechanisms to ensure sustainable street design is delivered and maintained over the long term.
- 3.88 **INF 9: Walking, wheeling and cycling** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of prioritising walking, wheeling and cycling within new development and improving active travel connectivity across the borough. Respondents recognised the health, environmental and accessibility benefits of active travel and supported the provision of safe, convenient and well-connected routes. Particular support was expressed for improving walking and cycling infrastructure, enhancing accessibility for disabled people and those using mobility aids, and designing developments around active travel from the outset. Several comments also highlighted the importance of secure cycle parking and facilities for a range of users, including adapted cycles. However, concerns were raised regarding the practicality and deliverability of certain requirements, particularly where sites are physically constrained or where strict adherence to national design guidance may not be appropriate. Some respondents questioned the effectiveness of some active travel measures, citing concerns about existing traffic conditions, safety and connectivity. Additional comments highlighted the importance of linking new infrastructure to established strategic routes and wider networks, including public rights of way and regional walking and cycling corridors.
- 3.89 **INF 10: Public transport** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of improving public transport accessibility and encouraging more sustainable travel choices. Respondents recognised the role of public transport in reducing carbon emissions, improving access to employment, education and services, and supporting growth across the borough. Support was expressed for improving integration between public transport and active travel networks, enhancing accessibility, and improving the quality of services, infrastructure and

interchanges. However, many comments raised concerns about the adequacy of existing public transport provision, particularly in locations where services are already limited or where significant growth is proposed. Respondents highlighted the risk that insufficient capacity could increase car dependency, congestion and pressure on local highways. Several comments stressed the importance of delivering public transport improvements alongside development and ensuring cumulative impacts are considered through robust transport assessments. Some respondents also questioned the practicality of certain requirements where delivery depends on third parties, external funding or land outside an applicant's control. Other respondents sought greater flexibility within the policy and emphasised the need to balance transport aspirations with development viability and deliverability.

- 3.90 **INF 11: Freight and logistics** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of improving the efficiency and sustainability of freight and logistics operations. Respondents recognised the importance of freight movement to the borough's economy and supported measures to reduce the environmental impacts of logistics through low and zero-emission vehicles, consolidation centres, rail freight opportunities and more efficient delivery arrangements. Several comments highlighted the need to minimise the effects of freight traffic on congestion, air quality, road safety and residential amenity, particularly where logistics activity could generate significant additional vehicle movements. Concerns were also raised regarding the cumulative transport impacts of freight-generating development and the potential effects of new logistics development on local communities, strategic transport networks, the environment and the Green Belt. Some respondents considered that the policy should place even greater emphasis on rail freight and reducing reliance on road-based freight movements where practicable.
- 3.91 **INF 12: Public rights of way and strategic recreation routes** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of protecting, improving and extending the borough's public rights of way network and strategic recreation routes. Respondents recognised the important role these routes play in supporting recreation, health and wellbeing, active travel and access to the countryside. Support was expressed for maintaining existing routes, improving connectivity and ensuring development provides safe, attractive and convenient walking, cycling and equestrian access where appropriate. Many comments highlighted concerns about the loss, obstruction or severance of public rights of way as a result of development and emphasised the need to retain and enhance route networks. Several respondents highlighted the value of strategic routes such as the Trans Pennine Trail and other cross-boundary recreational corridors. Some comments sought greater flexibility in the application of the policy, particularly where route diversions, off-site improvements or land outside an applicant's control are involved.
- 3.92 **INF 13: The highway network** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of ensuring that development is safely integrated into the highway network and that transport impacts are appropriately assessed and mitigated. Respondents recognised the importance of maintaining highway safety, protecting vulnerable road users and ensuring that development does not

create unacceptable impacts on congestion and network operation. Many comments raised concerns about existing traffic pressures and the cumulative effects of development across the borough, particularly where growth is proposed in areas already experiencing transport pressures. There was strong support for robust transport assessments, effective mitigation measures and consideration of cross-boundary impacts. Respondents also highlighted the importance of safe access arrangements, protecting and improving conditions for walking, wheeling and cycling, and managing construction impacts. Some comments called for greater emphasis on highway capacity improvements and strategic road interventions, whilst others argued that investment should focus more heavily on sustainable transport infrastructure. Additional comments raised concerns regarding the impacts of development on air quality, noise, road safety and local communities, and sought greater clarity regarding how the policy would be applied in practice.

- 3.93 **INF 14: Access and servicing** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of ensuring that development provides safe, efficient and well-designed access arrangements for all users. Respondents recognised the importance of ensuring that developments can be safely accessed by pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, service vehicles and emergency services, whilst also accommodating modern servicing and delivery requirements. Several comments highlighted the need for walking and cycling routes to connect effectively with surrounding networks and support safe movement within and around development sites. Concerns were raised regarding existing traffic conditions, highway capacity and site-specific access constraints, together with the need to ensure that access arrangements do not create additional safety or congestion issues. Respondents also emphasised the importance of ensuring that servicing, deliveries and emergency vehicle access are considered from the outset. Whilst there was broad support for the overall approach, some comments sought greater flexibility where site-specific constraints or practical delivery considerations may limit what can be achieved.
- 3.94 **INF 15: Vehicle parking and infrastructure** - Responses generally supported the need for appropriate parking provision within new development and recognised the importance of ensuring that parking does not adversely affect highway safety, residential amenity or the wider transport network. Many comments highlighted existing concerns regarding parking pressures, illegal parking, congestion and access issues in parts of the borough, and emphasised the need for new development to address these impacts rather than exacerbate them. Respondents also recognised the growing importance of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and the need to accommodate future technological change. However, views differed on the amount and type of parking that should be provided. Some respondents argued that parking standards should be flexible and responsive to local circumstances, public transport accessibility and changing travel patterns, whilst others considered that parking provision should be restricted to encourage greater use of sustainable modes of transport and more efficient use of land. Concerns were also raised regarding on-street parking impacts, the loss of existing parking facilities and whether developers can

adequately assess and mitigate parking pressures arising from new development.

- 3.95 **INF 16: Safeguarding future transport infrastructure and routes** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of protecting land required for future transport infrastructure and safeguarding existing sustainable transport routes from development that could prejudice their future use. Respondents recognised the importance of protecting transport corridors to enable future improvements to public transport, active travel networks and strategic transport infrastructure as the borough grows. Support was expressed for safeguarding disused rail alignments, towpaths and other transport corridors that could support future walking, cycling and public transport schemes. A significant area of discussion was the continued safeguarding of the A6–M60 link road corridor, with views divided on its future role. Some respondents supported the continued protection of the route as a means of addressing traffic congestion and supporting future transport capacity, whilst others questioned its justification and raised concerns about potential impacts on the Green Belt, landscape and environment. Other comments sought greater clarity regarding which future schemes are being safeguarded, the evidence supporting those schemes and how safeguarding requirements may affect development opportunities. Some respondents also highlighted the need to balance future transport improvements with environmental protection and sustainable transport objectives.
- 3.96 **INF 17: Metrolink** - Responses were generally supportive of the policy's objective of enabling the future extension of the Metrolink network to Stockport and safeguarding the land and infrastructure required to deliver it. Respondents recognised the potential benefits of improved rapid transit connectivity, including reducing reliance on private car travel, improving access to employment and services, and strengthening connections across Greater Manchester. Several comments welcomed the policy's emphasis on securing high-quality design, environmental assessment and restoration of land affected during construction. Several comments highlighted the importance of ensuring that any future Metrolink network serves all parts of the borough and is well integrated with walking, cycling and wider public transport networks. Some respondents questioned whether additional Metrolink infrastructure is necessary given existing rail and bus services, whilst others raised concerns regarding the potential environmental, transport and community impacts associated with its construction and operation.

Chapter 5: Monitoring framework

- 3.97 Respondents noted that the monitoring framework had not yet been completed and that monitoring indicators would need to be included before submission of the Local Plan. Several comments emphasised the importance of establishing clear, measurable indicators to demonstrate whether the Plan's objectives are being achieved over time. Suggestions were made for monitoring biodiversity net gain delivery, implementation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, air quality outcomes, flood risk mitigation measures and wider environmental objectives. Some respondents also highlighted the need for transparent reporting, effective

enforcement and independent verification where appropriate. Overall, there was broad support for the Plan's objectives, but respondents stressed that the monitoring framework would be important in demonstrating delivery and measuring success.

4. Consideration of Comments

- 4.1 The comments received during the Regulation 18 consultation have informed the preparation of the Publication Local Plan. All representations were reviewed by Planning Policy officers and considered alongside updated evidence, National Planning Policy and ongoing engagement with stakeholders.
- 4.2 Not every comment has resulted in a change to the Local Plan. This may be because:
- The issue is outside the scope of planning;
 - The issue is addressed elsewhere within the Local Plan;
 - The matter is covered by national planning policy or legislation; and/or
 - Further assessment of existing and updated evidence indicated no amendment was required.
- 4.3 Consultation feedback has informed a range of changes to policies, supporting text and site allocations within the Publication Local Plan. In some instances, comments led directly to amendments to the Plan. In others, they helped refine supporting evidence, monitoring approaches or implementation measures.

5. Policy Responses to Issues Raised

- 5.1 This section explains how the issues raised through the Regulation 18 consultation have been considered in preparing the Publication Local Plan.
- 5.2 For each policy, a summary is provided of the principal changes made between the Regulation 18 Consultation Draft and the Publication Local Plan.
- 5.3 Changes to the Publication Local Plan have not been made solely in response to consultation comments and may also reflect updated evidence, changes to national policy, further technical work and ongoing engagement with stakeholders.
- 5.4 Changes may also have been made to the Policies Map to reflect the assessment and response of the council to both Regulation 18 representations and the relevant evidence, for example, the removal, addition or amended boundaries of housing allocations. The most up-to-date Policies Map should be referred to for the correct boundaries of all relevant allocations and designations.

Chapter 1: Introduction

- 5.5 The Introduction has undergone only limited changes between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19. Most amendments reflect the Plan's progression from a consultation draft towards a submission document, including the removal of consultation references and draft wording. The only notable substantive addition is a clearer explanation of the role of Neighbourhood Plans in supporting the Local Plan's strategic policies and shaping development at a local level.

Chapter 2: Our Vision

- 5.6 The Vision section remains largely unchanged between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19. The overarching "One Heart, One Home, One Future" vision and place-based strategy are retained. The principal changes reflect a greater emphasis on local identity, opportunities and heritage across several communities, and updated references to the wider evidence base supporting the Plan. Most amendments are descriptive rather than strategic and do not materially alter the direction of the Local Plan.

Chapter 3: Our Strategy

Objectives

- 5.7 The Objectives section has undergone only limited change. All ten objectives are retained and remain fundamentally unchanged. The most notable amendments are the replacement of 'zero carbon development' with 'carbon neutrality by 2038', stronger references to green and blue infrastructure within Objective 4, and a greater emphasis on conserving as well as enhancing the historic environment within Objective 5. Most other changes relate to presentation and supporting explanatory text rather than policy direction.

Strategic Policies

- 5.8 **Strategic Policy 1: Spatial strategy** - Strategic Policy 1 remains centred on directing growth to sustainable locations, prioritising brownfield land and supporting centres, but the Regulation 19 version makes several plan-wide changes to how growth will be delivered. It reduces the overall housing requirement from at least 25,371 to at least 24,253 homes to 2042, changes affordable housing from a single strategic 50% target to a viability-led approach, adds explicit employment land requirements, and strengthens references to climate, biodiversity, pollution, green and blue infrastructure, air quality, Green Belt, the Peak District National Park setting and flood risk.
- 5.9 **Strategic Policy 2: A strategy for our centres**- Strategic Policy 2 remains largely unchanged. The main amendments strengthen the role of townscape, landscape, historic character and local distinctiveness in shaping higher-density residential growth within centres. Regulation 19 also places greater emphasis on ensuring development responds to the needs of existing and future users, while retaining the overall strategy of concentrating housing, services, jobs and investment within Stockport Town Centre, district centres and local centres.
- 5.10 **Strategic Policy 3: Sustainable development in Stockport** - Strategic Policy 3 has been updated to replace the minimum 20% Biodiversity Net Gain requirement with a mandatory 10% gain, together with clearer requirements relating to sustainable construction, water quality, river restoration, natural flood management and sustainable transport. The policy also places greater emphasis on sustainable locations, efficient land use, well-designed places and affordable housing when applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.11 **Strategic Policy 4: Equality, impact, and opportunity** - No material changes have been made to Strategic Policy 4.

Chapter 4: Development management policies

Providing for our communities

- 5.12 **COM 1: Healthy and active across all ages** - COM 1 has been strengthened through greater emphasis on biodiverse green and blue infrastructure, the creation of safer active environments, and stronger expectations for the planning and delivery of health facilities. Regulation 19 introduces requirements for healthcare facilities to conform to NHS standards, strengthens engagement with healthcare commissioners, recognises the role of the historic environment in supporting wellbeing, and places greater emphasis on ensuring co-located community facilities are suitable and adequately designed. The overall objective of creating healthier, more active communities remains unchanged.
- 5.13 **COM 2: Community and social infrastructure** - COM 2 has been strengthened through additional requirements relating to design quality, highway impacts, amenity considerations and environmental effects. Regulation 19 also clarifies that replacement community facilities must continue to meet similar local needs and confirms that the policy applies to both new and existing community infrastructure. The overall approach to supporting community facilities, safeguarding existing provision and requiring mitigation where development creates new demand remains unchanged.
- 5.14 **COM 3: Educational facilities** - COM 3 has undergone limited change. Regulation 19 retains the existing approach to supporting educational facilities, securing developer contributions towards education infrastructure and encouraging community use of school facilities. The principal amendment is the stronger encouragement of biodiverse natural spaces on educational land, alongside updated references to evidence and guidance. The policy confirms that education contributions will not be required from older age-restricted accommodation, student housing, care homes or nursing homes. The overall policy approach remains unchanged.
- 5.15 **COM 4: Protection of open space and recreation facilities** - COM 4 has been strengthened through a greater emphasis on accessibility, green infrastructure, ecological enhancement and heritage considerations. Regulation 19 introduces an 'agent of change' approach requiring new development to mitigate impacts arising from nearby recreation facilities, broadens recognition of the relationship between open space and heritage assets, and strengthens links with green infrastructure networks. The overall approach to resisting the loss of open space and recreation facilities remains unchanged.
- 5.16 **COM 5: Local Green Space** - COM 5 remains largely unchanged. Regulation 19 retains strong protection for designated Local Green Spaces but introduces a new emphasis on enhancing these spaces and improving public access where appropriate. The policy wording has also been updated to align more closely with national Green Belt policy, although the overall level of protection remains the same.

- 5.17 **COM 6: Sporting facilities** - COM 6 has undergone very limited change. The principal amendment is the addition of Woods Lane Sports Ground to the list of strategically important multi-pitch sites whose enhancement will be supported. Regulation 19 also introduces a clearer link between investment decisions and identified sporting needs. Otherwise, the policy approach to protecting and enhancing indoor and outdoor sports facilities remains unchanged.
- 5.18 **COM 7: Health care facilities** - COM 7 has been strengthened through clearer requirements for healthcare mitigation associated with major residential development, earlier engagement with NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board, and a more detailed framework for assessing healthcare capacity and developer contributions. Regulation 19 also introduces specific recognition of care homes, supports integrated and co-located healthcare provision, strengthens protection of existing healthcare facilities, and expands supporting text relating to the future modernisation of Stepping Hill Hospital and potential hospital redevelopment opportunities.
- 5.19 **COM 8: Cemeteries and crematoria** - No material changes have been made to COM 8. Changes are limited to minor amendments in the supporting text.

Our environment

Part 1: Natural Environment

- 5.20 **ENV 1: Protection of the natural environment** - ENV 1 has been amended to provide greater clarity regarding the hierarchy of designated sites, and the mitigation hierarchy. It also provides a greater emphasis on natural-based solutions for flood management, requires development to enhance ecological connectivity and details the use of planning obligations to ensure delivery of measures.
- 5.21 **ENV 2: Enhancing nature** - ENV 2 has been updated to align more closely with national Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements. The most significant change is the reduction of BNG from 20% down to the statutory requirement of 10%. The policy additionally strengthens links with the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy and narrows the application of Urban Greening Factor requirements to apply to larger, new build development proposals. The overall approach of enhancing biodiversity, strengthening ecological networks, and delivering green infrastructure remains unchanged.
- 5.22 **ENV 3: Nature Recovery** - ENV 3 has been strengthened to provide a clearer link between Biodiversity Net Gain delivery and the priorities of the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy. It requires nature recovery measures to be managed and monitored for a minimum of 30 years. The overall objective of delivering a more connected Nature Network across the borough, and linking across the rest of Greater Manchester, remains unchanged.
- 5.23 **ENV 4: Trees, woodland and hedgerows** - ENV 4 has been strengthened to better align with the NPPF for protected trees and hedgerows. The policy sets out a stronger integration of tree planting with climate resilience objectives. The

policy clarifies new tree planting requirements and also introduces a minimum 30-year management period for new planting.

- 5.24 **ENV 5: Landscape** - ENV 5 has been amended to introduce more detailed requirements for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments. The policy now explicitly recognises canals as valued landscape features and requires development to consider the Peak District National Park Management Plan. The policy also creates stronger links between landscape protection, green infrastructure and climate adaptation measures such as natural flood management and urban cooling.
- 5.25 **ENV 6: Soils** - ENV 6 has been strengthened with greater protection of soils, specifically peat, with more specific requirements relating to soil management and reuse during construction, and a more rigorous policy approach to the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

Part 2: Environmental protection

- 5.26 **ENV 7: Environmental protection** - ENV 7 has been strengthened through a broader environmental protection framework that requires consideration of impacts on public health, residential amenity, biodiversity, heritage assets and the wider natural and built environment. The updated policy introduces a more comprehensive pollution assessment framework, stronger protections for water quality through compliance with the Water Framework Directive and catchment-based management principles, additional controls relating to lighting impacts on aviation safety and bats, and more detailed requirements for addressing noise-sensitive development in areas of high background noise.
- 5.27 **ENV 8: Clean air** - ENV 8 has been strengthened through the introduction of new requirements relating to cumulative air quality impacts, protection of new sensitive receptors near major roads or industrial facilities, and mitigation of impacts on European sites and SSSIs. The overall approach to clean air, construction dust mitigation and compliance with Greater Manchester air quality strategies remains unchanged.
- 5.28 **ENV 9: Groundwater protection** - ENV 9 has been strengthened through the introduction of a more precautionary approach to groundwater protection. The updated policy introduces explicit compliance with Environment Agency Groundwater Protection Position Statements, requires monitoring and contingency measures where development is permitted near Source Protection Zones (SPZ), and restricts dewatering or other activities that may affect groundwater unless supported by detailed hydrogeological assessment.
- 5.29 **ENV 10: Land stability, contamination and storage of hazardous substances** - ENV 10 has been strengthened substantially in relation to contaminated land and environmental risk management. Regulation 19 introduces a presumption that contamination may be present on brownfield sites, requires site-specific risk assessments and Phase 1/Phase 2 investigations in accordance with Environment Agency guidance, and establishes clearer remediation and validation requirements. Additional protections have been

introduced to prevent contaminants entering drainage systems, to ensure compliance with COMAH regulations, and to safeguard waterways and associated infrastructure. The wider approach to land stability, hazardous installations and protecting human health remains unchanged.

- 5.30 **ENV 11: Safeguarding of Manchester Airport and air navigation facilities** - ENV 11 has been significantly expanded to reflect modern aviation safeguarding requirements. Whilst continuing to protect the operational safety of Manchester Airport, Regulation 19 broadens the policy to include Manchester Radar and introduces new consultation requirements relating to aviation equipment, lighting, glint and glare, renewable energy infrastructure, thermal plumes, wind shear and emerging aviation technologies such as drones and EVTOL aircraft. The previous safeguarding height thresholds have been replaced by a safeguarding map-based approach, providing greater flexibility while maintaining aviation safety protections.
- 5.31 **ENV 12: Aircraft noise** - ENV 12 has been comprehensively simplified. Regulation 19 replaces the previous detailed aircraft noise contour approach with a framework based on the nationally recognised LOAEL and SOAEL thresholds. Development above the SOAEL threshold will not be permitted, whilst development between LOAEL and SOAEL may be acceptable where robust mitigation and acoustic design measures are demonstrated. The policy now explicitly requires Noise Impact Assessments for affected sites and adopts a more flexible, performance-based approach to aircraft noise management.

Part 3: Built environment

- 5.32 **ENV 13: Delivering design quality** - ENV 13 has been comprehensively restructured and expanded. Regulation 19 replaces the single design quality policy with three linked policies covering local context and character, inclusive places and delivering design quality. New requirements have been introduced relating to inclusive design, health and wellbeing, accessibility, community engagement, crime prevention and safety. The policy framework also strengthens expectations around masterplans and design codes and requires development to respond more comprehensively to local character, heritage, landscape, movement networks and community identity. Regulation 19 further seeks to ensure that approved design quality is maintained throughout the delivery process.
- 5.33 **ENV 14: Making effective use of land for residential development** - ENV 14 remains largely unchanged and continues to promote higher-density residential development in the most accessible locations across the borough. The minimum density targets are unchanged. Regulation 19 expands the accessibility-based approach to include Metrolink and tram-train stops, introduces flexibility for future accessibility measures such as the Department for Transport Connectivity Tool, and provides greater emphasis on landscape and townscape character when considering exceptions to density requirements. The heritage-related exception has also been updated to align more closely with national heritage policy.
- 5.34 **ENV 15: Residential design** - ENV 15 has been amended to revise the accessibility requirements for new housing. Regulation 19 changes the

requirement for M4(2) dwellings from a mandatory requirement to an expectation and significantly increases the threshold for M4(3) wheelchair adaptable housing from sites of 20 dwellings to sites of 100 dwellings or more. The policy also introduces a new requirement to assess impacts on heritage assets and their settings when considering residential extensions and garden development. The wider approach to space standards, amenity provision and residential design quality remains unchanged.

- 5.35 **ENV 16: Taller buildings** - ENV 16 has been refined to strengthen heritage and environmental considerations in relation to tall buildings. Regulation 19 removes the previous presumption in favour of tall buildings within the Town Centre Living Area and instead identifies it as the location where such development is most likely to be appropriate. The policy now requires developments to conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings, introduces aviation safety as a consideration, and provides a clearer definition of what constitutes a taller building. Supporting text also introduces explicit reference to heritage setting assessments where appropriate.
- 5.36 **ENV 17: Public realm** - ENV 17 has been refined to place greater emphasis on the historic environment, waterways and the enhancement of both existing and new public realm. The Regulation 19 version introduces explicit reference to multifunctional sustainable drainage systems within public realm design, strengthens accessibility requirements through clearer entrance and exit points, and broadens expectations for development to improve existing public spaces. The overall objective of creating inclusive, attractive, climate-resilient and well-maintained public realm remains unchanged.
- 5.37 **ENV 18: Shop frontages** - ENV 18 remains largely unchanged. The only notable amendment is the removal of the qualification 'where appropriate' from the requirement to retain traditional or original shopfronts when units change use, thereby strengthening support for the retention of historic shopfront features.
- 5.38 **ENV 19: Development and the historic environment** - ENV 19 has been strengthened through the introduction of new requirements for heritage assessments associated with allocated development sites and the explicit consideration of cumulative heritage impacts. The Regulation 19 version now requires heritage assessments for certain housing and employment allocations, with reference to Historic England guidance and National Planning Policy Framework requirements. A new requirement also addresses contamination and remediation on historic sites. Supporting text has been expanded to highlight the importance of retaining and reusing mills and other industrial heritage assets. The overarching approach to conserving and enhancing the borough's designated and non-designated heritage assets remains unchanged.

Our climate resilient Stockport

- 5.39 **CR 1: Climate resilience, mitigation and adaptation** - CR 1 has been amended to clarify the council's approach to climate resilience and sustainable

design. The amended policy removes reference to a variety of sustainable development standards and includes them within the supporting text instead.

- 5.40 **CR 2: Energy efficiency, resources and carbon** - CR 2 has been substantially revised between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19. The policy retains the overall aim of reducing energy consumption, carbon emissions and resource use, but introduces a more detailed and staged framework for achieving operational net zero carbon. Regulation 19 adds requirements for predictive energy modelling, improved energy use and space heating demand standards over time, and solar PV provision equivalent to at least 40% of the building footprint. The amended policy introduces specific upfront embodied carbon targets for major development and a new overheating assessment requirement for major residential schemes. The requirement for a carbon offset fund mechanism has been removed. Water efficiency requirements are retained and made more specific. Overall, the approach has shifted towards a more detailed, measurable and viability-aware policy for managing operational carbon, embodied carbon and resource use.
- 5.41 **CR 3: Renewable and low carbon energy development** - CR 3 has been revised to place greater emphasis on designated sites, designated landscapes, heritage asset settings and the special qualities of the National Park. The policy now requires the assessment of environmental risks, particularly for Battery Energy Storage Systems. Whilst support for renewable and low-carbon energy development remains, the previous requirement for new development to provide solar photovoltaics across at least 40% of roof space has been moved from this policy into policy CR 1.
- 5.42 **CR 4: Heat networks and cooling** - CR 4 has been significantly amended for the Regulation 19 plan. The previous borough-wide size-based connection thresholds have been replaced by a location-based approach linked to designated heat network zones. It establishes a maximum carbon intensity standard for heat networks and requires compliance with the Heat Network Technical Assurance Scheme. Additional provisions support urban cooling through green infrastructure and require stronger consideration of waste heat recovery.
- 5.43 **CR 5: Retrofit and re-use of buildings** - CR 5 retains the overall approach of supporting retrofit and energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings, with a greater focus on conserving and enhancing heritage assets where relevant, and by placing greater emphasis on the retention and re-use of existing buildings, particularly those that contribute positively to local character.

Our homes

- 5.44 **HOM 1: Delivering new homes** - HOM 1 has been amended to reflect a revised housing requirement of 24,253 dwellings, replacing the previous target of 25,371 homes. Regulation 19 also introduces a housing delivery trajectory setting out anticipated annual delivery rates across the plan period, providing greater clarity regarding the expected phasing of housing growth. The wider housing strategy

remains largely unchanged, including the Brownfield First approach, delivery through allocated sites and the objective of creating sustainable communities.

- 5.45 HOM 2a: New residential communities** - HOM 2a has been substantially revised through changes to the housing allocation schedule. Several allocated sites have been removed, three new allocations have been added, and minimum dwelling yields have been reviewed across many sites. These revisions reduce the overall expected housing delivery from allocated sites from 10,628 to 10,121 dwellings. Regulation 19 also reclassifies certain sites, including Romiley Board Mill, and introduces stronger recognition of environmental constraints such as impacts on nearby SSSIs. The overall strategy of directing housing growth to identified allocations remains unchanged.

Sites removed from the allocations list:

- HOM 2.2 Brookfield Business Park (145 homes);
- HOM 2.4 Land at Chadwick Street, Marple (174 homes);
- HOM 2.5 Land at Houldsworth Golf Club (122 homes).

Sites added to the allocations list:

- HOM 2.39 Land off Buxton Road, Hazel Grove (75 homes)
- HOM 2.40 Land off Occupiers Lane (120 homes)
- HOM 2.41 Daisy Bank, Heald Green (132 homes)

- 5.46 HOM 2b: Site specific requirements** - HOM 2b has been substantially expanded in Regulation 19. The policy now requires site-specific masterplans alongside design codes, strengthens community engagement expectations, and introduces a comprehensive heritage assessment requirement for many housing allocations. The previous blanket requirement for 50% affordable housing on List 2 Green Belt release sites has been replaced by the revised affordability framework in HOM 5, with some allocations now subject to bespoke affordable housing requirements. Regulation 19 also introduces a wide range of detailed site-specific requirements covering heritage, ecology, flood risk, active travel, infrastructure, landscape protection and recreation provision, providing much greater certainty regarding how allocated sites should be brought forward.

- 5.47 HOM 3: Protecting the future supply of housing** - HOM 3 has been strengthened through the introduction of a new requirement to consider incorporating residential development within Employment Areas when brownfield sites or buildings are redeveloped, provided there would be no demonstrable harm to living conditions or employment operations. Regulation 19 also adopts a slightly stronger brownfield-first approach by removing caveats around prioritising residential development on brownfield land. The wider approach to protecting future housing supply and requiring residential development on suitable brownfield sites remains unchanged.

- 5.48 **HOM 4: Housing mix** - HOM 4 is largely unchanged. The principal amendment is that residential developments are now expected to 'should' rather than 'must' provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes, providing a degree of additional flexibility. The policy continues to prioritise family housing, affordable homes and age-friendly accommodation, with housing mix informed by the latest Housing Needs Assessment.
- 5.49 **HOM 5: Affordable housing** - HOM 5 has undergone substantial revision. Regulation 19 replaces the previous area-based affordable housing requirements with a viability-led framework that varies according to site type, viability area and scheme size. The strategic 50% affordable housing target has been removed and replaced by a detailed affordability and viability assessment approach, including review and clawback mechanisms. New provisions address Green Belt sites, whilst affordable housing tenure requirements have been made more flexible and references to First Homes have been removed. Overall, the policy shifts from a fixed percentage approach towards one more closely aligned with whole-plan viability evidence.
- 5.50 **HOM 6: Build to rent** - No material changes have been made to HOM 6.
- 5.51 **HOM 7: Housing for older people and specialist accommodation** - HOM 7 has been amended to provide greater clarity regarding accessibility requirements, with specialist accommodation now expected to meet the Part M4(3)(a) wheelchair adaptable dwelling standard. Regulation 19 also removes the requirement to provide a range of tenures and replaces the requirement for affordable housing provision with a more supportive policy approach. Supporting text has been strengthened through the introduction of infection prevention and control design principles for specialist accommodation, including reference to NHS guidance on ventilation, hygiene and outbreak resilience.
- 5.52 **HOM 8: Provision and enhancement of outdoor recreational space in new residential development** - The overall approach to outdoor recreation provision is retained, however Regulation 19 introduces a more evidence-led framework. New provision or contributions will now only be required where recreational needs arising from development cannot be met through existing provision, as evidenced by the Open Space Assessment, Playing Pitch Strategy or other up-to-date evidence. The policy also introduces greater flexibility through the use of Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator and allows contributions to be linked to specific identified schemes. Despite these changes, the overall FIT standards, on-site provision requirements and sequential approach remain largely unchanged.
- 5.53 **HOM 9: Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople** - No material changes have been made to HOM 9.
- 5.54 **HOM 10: Children's residential care and semi-independent supported living for young people** - No material changes have been made to HOM 10.
- 5.55 **HOM 11: Houses in multiple occupation** - No material changes have been made to HOM 11.

- 5.56 **HOM 12: Self-build and custom build homes** - No significant policy changes have been made to HOM 12. The Regulation 19 policy retains the requirement for 5% serviced self/custom-build plots on larger housing schemes, exemptions for apartment-only developments, and support for self/custom-build homes on smaller sites. The main changes are limited to additional supporting text clarifying that self and custom-build development should continue to comply with local and national design requirements, despite often involving bespoke designs.
- 5.57 **HOM 13: Protection of existing housing** - No material changes have been made to HOM 13. Changes are limited to drafting and formatting.
- 5.58 **HOM 14: Homes for agricultural workers in the Green Belt** - The overall approach to agricultural workers' dwellings in the Green Belt is unchanged. The main amendment is the strengthening of the dwelling size criterion, with Regulation 19 requiring that any new home is not unusually large in relation to the needs of the agricultural or forestry unit.
- 5.59 **HOM 15: Residential infill development in the Green Belt** - No material changes have been made to HOM 15. Changes are limited to drafting, formatting and updated policy references.

Our town centre

- 5.60 **STC 1: Stockport Town Centre principles** - STC 1 retains the overall vision for Stockport Town Centre as a location for regeneration, housing growth, employment, culture and investment. Regulation 19 introduces stronger support for employment-generating development, explicitly incorporates green and blue infrastructure into the town centre connectivity objectives, and places greater emphasis on the sustainable re-use of heritage assets identified as being At Risk. Supporting text has also been updated to reflect the expansion of the Mayoral Development Corporation across the whole town centre and its increased role in delivering future growth.
- 5.61 **STC 2: Town centre policy areas** - The overall vision and structure of the Town Centre Policy Areas is largely retained, although the original policy has been reorganised into three separate policies covering development within Town Centre Policy Areas, Town Centre West Policy Areas and Town Centre East Policy Areas. Regulation 19 places greater emphasis on heritage considerations, including references to Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register and additional requirements to respect the setting of heritage assets in policy STC 2c within the St. Petersgate policy areas. Amendments have also been made to the Great Portwood policy area, recognising its role in accommodating both food and non-food retail uses and introducing a more qualified approach to future residential redevelopment. The wider town centre regeneration strategy remains largely unchanged.
- 5.62 **STC 3: A hub for culture and lifestyle** - No material changes have been made to STC 3.

- 5.63 **STC 4: Town centre living** - STC 4 has been strengthened through the introduction of specific requirements relating to heritage and flood risk. Regulation 19 now requires Heritage Impact Assessments where redevelopment or conversion could affect designated heritage assets and introduces a town centre-specific approach to development within Flood Zone 2, removing the need for site-specific sequential testing where developments can demonstrate they will be safe for their lifetime and will not increase flood risk elsewhere. The wider strategy of promoting higher-density town centre living alongside supporting community infrastructure remains unchanged.
- 5.64 **STC 5: Public realm and design in the town centre** - STC 5 has been strengthened in Regulation 19. The policy now requires public realm measures to be fully considered rather than merely encouraged and introduces a new requirement for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to be integrated into the design of the public realm to deliver multifunctional benefits. The policy also places greater emphasis on the positive redevelopment of underused sites and the supporting text reflects wider ambitions for river corridor improvements and green infrastructure within the town centre.
- 5.65 **STC 6: Movement to and through the town centre** - The overall approach to movement and accessibility within Stockport Town Centre is retained. Regulation 19 introduces a stronger emphasis on wayfinding at gateway locations and provides clearer support for shared mobility measures such as car clubs and cycle hire schemes. Supporting text has also been updated to reflect emerging transport strategies and town centre transport projects, but the core policy objective of prioritising sustainable and accessible movement remains unchanged.
- 5.66 **STC 7: Main town centre uses and retail development** - No material changes have been made to Policy STC 7. The main addition is new supporting text indicating that major retail and retail-led mixed-use developments should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment addressing impacts on the Strategic Route Network.

Supporting our businesses and centres

- 5.67 **BUS 1: Economy and employment principles** - BUS 1 has been strengthened through the introduction of explicit support for new, expanded and upgraded data centres, recognising their role in supporting economic growth and digital infrastructure. Regulation 19 also broadens support for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector and provides updates to the supporting text with information from the latest Employment Land Review. The overall approach of safeguarding employment land, supporting business growth, promoting skills and encouraging sustainable forms of development is retained.
- 5.68 **BUS 2: Key employment locations** - BUS 2 is largely retained, but Regulation 19 introduces explicit support for small-scale office development that is ancillary to employment uses outside the town centre. The policy also strengthens protection for Employment Areas located within the Green Belt by recognising their ongoing economic role and continuing need for protection. The overall

strategy of directing office development to centres and safeguarding key employment locations remains unchanged.

- 5.69 **BUS 3a: Employment Areas** - BUS 3a has been strengthened through the introduction of a new policy framework for data centres within Employment Areas. Regulation 19 supports data centre development where it contributes to economic growth and digital infrastructure needs, while requiring applicants to address energy demand, carbon emissions, cooling requirements, water use and electricity network capacity. The supporting text also strengthens the evidence required before employment land can be released to alternative uses by requiring market appraisals to be agreed with the council and supported by more detailed marketing evidence. The overall approach to protecting Employment Areas for business and industrial uses is otherwise retained.
- 5.70 **BUS 3b: New employment development locations** - BUS 3b has been amended through a reduction in the minimum employment floorspace requirement for Bredbury Gateway from 75,000 sqm to 50,000 sqm. Regulation 19 also introduces several additional site-specific requirements, including a junction realignment at Ashton Road/Bredbury Parkway, heritage assessments for both allocations, measures to protect the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets, retention of mature landscaping and tree cover, and investigations into former mine workings at Bredbury Gateway. The overall strategy of allocating the two sites for logistics and warehousing development is retained.
- 5.71 **BUS 4: Employment uses outside of designated employment areas** - BUS 4 is largely retained between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19. The main changes relate to the evidence required to justify the loss of employment uses, with market appraisals now expected to be agreed with the council before commencement and to include a record of all offers received and reasons why enquiries did not proceed. These changes strengthen the evidential requirements for demonstrating that an employment site is no longer needed.
- 5.72 **BUS 5: Flexible workspace** - BUS 5 is largely retained but has been expanded to apply to mixed-use development within Large Local Centres, in addition to the Town Centre and District Centres. The policy also moves away from specifically referring to flexible workspaces and working hubs. Updated supporting text reflects the growth of flexible workspace provision in the borough and continued demand from small to medium enterprises, start-ups and growing businesses.
- 5.73 **BUS 6: Local employment and training** - BUS 6 has been strengthened in Regulation 19 through the introduction of a new employment threshold. In addition to developments exceeding the £1 million design and build cost threshold, proposals generating 20 or more full-time equivalent end-user jobs will now also be required to enter into Employment and Skills Agreements. Supporting text has also been updated to place greater emphasis on addressing barriers faced by protected groups and on partnership working with Stockport's VCSE sector. A reference has also been added to local skills and training

infrastructure and the link from this policy to policy INF 1 in respect of securing developer contributions towards this.

- 5.74 **CEN 1: Development principles for vibrant centres** - No material changes have been made to CEN 1. Changes are limited to formatting, drafting and updated presentation of supporting references.
- 5.75 **CEN 2: Network and hierarchy of designated centres** - The overall hierarchy and network of designated centres is unchanged between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19. The principal amendment is the removal of the statement that Great Portwood Street is the preferred location for retail warehousing within Stockport Town Centre. The area continues to be recognised as an edge-of-centre retail location, but its specific preferred role for retail warehousing is no longer identified in policy.
- 5.76 **CEN 3: District Centres** - The overall approach to managing and enhancing the borough's District Centres is retained. However, a number of centre-specific priorities have been refined. The Regulation 19 policy removes support for increasing short-stay car parking in Bramhall, removes reference to Cheadle's role as a financial and business services hub, and no longer identifies evening food and drink uses as a specific priority for Hazel Grove. The most notable change relates to Reddish, where references to additional Metrolink and tram-train services have been softened from a defined improvement to a potential future opportunity.
- 5.77 **CEN 4: Development involving main town centre uses** - No material changes have been made to Policy CEN 4. Changes are limited to explanatory text and drafting updates.
- 5.78 **CEN 5: Hot food takeaways** - The hot food takeaway elements of Policy CEN 5 have been largely retained within new Policy CEN 5a. The principal change is the extension of the 400m exclusion zone to include further education colleges alongside primary and secondary schools. Regulation 19 also introduces a new Policy CEN 5b relating to gambling premises. This new policy restricts the location and number of new gambling premises within the borough, linking decisions to the centres hierarchy in policy CEN 2 and seeking to address potential health, wellbeing and cumulative impact concerns associated with gambling-related harm.
- 5.79 **CEN 6: Evening economy** - The overall approach to supporting evening economy uses is unchanged. The main change is a strengthening of the supporting text, which now states that planning conditions or legal agreements will be used to manage matters such as hours of operation, noise, fumes and refuse, rather than only where appropriate.
- 5.80 **CEN 7: Out of centre locations for retail** - No material changes have been made to CEN 7. Changes are limited to formatting, references and minor drafting updates.

Our infrastructure

- 5.81 **INF 1: Infrastructure provision and developer contributions** - The overall requirement for development to provide or contribute to necessary infrastructure is retained, but the Regulation 19 policy places greater emphasis on mitigating the impacts of development, taking account of existing provision. The list of potential financial and in-kind contributions has been expanded to include matters such as sustainable transport, highway improvements, trees, multifunctional green infrastructure, works to enhance the historic environment and required long-term maintenance. The policy also adds a requirement for sites to be developed in line with a site-wide infrastructure strategy and strengthens the approach to clawback by referring to a clawback and review mechanism where contributions are reduced on viability grounds. Supporting text has also been updated to reflect completed viability appraisal work, the national tests for planning obligations, the use of section 106 clauses to avoid ransom strips, and the need for site-wide foul water, surface water and clean water strategies.
- 5.82 **INF 2: Digital and telecommunications infrastructure** - No material changes have been made to INF 2. Changes are limited to formatting and updated presentation of supporting references.
- 5.83 **INF 3: Flood risk** - The overall approach of requiring major development to take an integrated, nature-based approach to flood risk is retained, but the Regulation 19 policy introduces more detailed requirements for flood risk assessment, climate change allowances, flood resilience and long-term management. The policy now requires SuDS to prioritise nature-based and above-ground green solutions, requires FRAs to be proportionate to the scale and vulnerability of development and prepared in accordance with Environment Agency standing advice, and adds specific requirements for climate change allowances. It also introduces new requirements relating to safe access and egress, consultation with the water and sewerage undertaker, undeveloped buffer zones next to Main Rivers, floodplain storage compensation and potential flood risk monitoring. Overall, the changes strengthen the policy by making the evidence, design and mitigation requirements for development in areas of flood risk more explicit.
- 5.84 **INF 4: Drainage** - INF 4 has been substantially amended between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 through the incorporation of the former INF 5 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) policy into INF 4. While the overall requirement for an integrated approach to drainage and flood risk management is retained, the amended policy provides more detail relating to the drainage hierarchy, replaces the former runoff reduction targets with an approach based on the National Standards for SuDS 2025 and introduces requirements relating to maintenance. Overall, the changes create a more comprehensive framework for drainage and sustainable water management.
- 5.85 **INF 5: Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)** - The separate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) policy (INF 5) has been removed and its requirements incorporated into an expanded INF 4 (Drainage).

- 5.86 **INF 6: Fresh water and wastewater infrastructure** - No material changes have been made to INF 6. Changes are limited to formatting.
- 5.87 **INF 7: Integrated transport network** - INF 7 has been significantly strengthened between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19. While the overall objective of delivering an integrated and sustainable transport network is retained, the Regulation 19 policy introduces a revised transport hierarchy, new requirements for Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and infrastructure phasing, and a stronger focus on mitigation of transport impacts. The policy also expands its environmental scope through new requirements relating to green transport corridors, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), green infrastructure, tree planting, biodiversity enhancement and Construction Environmental Management Plans. Overall, the changes provide a more comprehensive framework for integrating transport, environmental and climate resilience objectives.
- 5.88 **INF 8: Sustainable streets** - INF 8 has been strengthened between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19. The overall approach to creating sustainable, people-focused streets is retained, but several qualifications such as “where appropriate” and “where possible” have been removed, giving greater weight to requirements relating to street cafés, native tree planting, lower speed environments and transport infrastructure. A new criterion has also been introduced requiring development to mitigate unacceptable severance of ecological and nature networks through measures such as wildlife crossings, modified culverts and species-rich verges.
- 5.89 **INF 9: Walking, wheeling and cycling** - INF 9 has been strengthened between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19. The policy places greater emphasis on providing direct, safe and legible connections to existing and proposed walking, wheeling and cycling networks, including integration with surrounding neighbourhoods, public transport services and off-road routes such as canals, river valleys, former railway lines and green spaces. The cycle parking requirements have also been updated to include specific provision for non-standard cycles and to align with current and future design guidance. Overall, the changes strengthen expectations around connectivity, accessibility and integration of active travel infrastructure.
- 5.90 **INF 10: Public transport** - INF 10 is largely carried forward from Regulation 18 to Regulation 19. The overall approach to securing public transport improvements through development remains unchanged. The main policy change is the removal of “where appropriate” from the requirement to provide and/or improve bus routes and stops, strengthening this expectation. Supporting text has also been updated to provide greater clarity on delivery mechanisms, including the role of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and developer contributions secured through section 106 and section 278 agreements.
- 5.91 **INF 11: Freight and logistics** - INF 11 is largely retained between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19. The overall approach to supporting sustainable freight and logistics, including consolidated distribution centres, low-emission freight, rail freight infrastructure and freight servicing provision, remains unchanged. The

main changes are the removal of qualifying wording from requirements relating to sustainable logistics plans, sustainable transport modes and improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure, strengthening expectations for freight and logistics development to mitigate impacts and support sustainable transport. The Regulation 19 policy also restructures mitigation requirements into separate criteria, giving greater emphasis to protecting active travel users, residential amenity and accommodating smaller-scale deliveries.

- 5.92 **INF 12: Public rights of way and strategic recreation routes** - INF 12 has been amended in relation to integrating public rights of way into new development. The Regulation 19 policy removes the separate requirement for development to maintain and improve on-site or adjacent Public Rights of Way but strengthens expectations that new rights of way connect directly to the existing network and are provided through landscaped corridors and areas of open space. Supporting text has also been updated to place greater emphasis on the role of public rights of way in supporting green infrastructure, biodiversity net gain and habitat connectivity.
- 5.93 **INF 13: The highway network** - INF 13 is largely carried forward from Regulation 18 to Regulation 19. The overall approach to safeguarding the efficient operation of the highway network, ensuring safe access and requiring mitigation of transport impacts is retained. The main changes are the strengthening of requirements relating to transport mitigation, which must now be “adequately mitigated”, and the removal of discretionary wording around Demolition and Construction Management Plans, giving greater weight to the requirement for construction logistics and environmental impacts to be properly managed.
- 5.94 **INF 14: Access and servicing** - INF 14 is largely unchanged between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19. The overall approach to providing safe and suitable access, servicing arrangements and facilities for pedestrians, wheelers, cyclists, emergency services and deliveries is retained. The main change is the removal of “where appropriate” qualifiers from requirements relating to taxi/demand-responsive transport pick-up and drop-off facilities and vehicle turning/manoeuvring provision, giving these requirements slightly greater weight.
- 5.95 **INF 15: Vehicle parking and infrastructure** - INF 15 is largely retained, but Regulation 19 strengthens some of the parking requirements by removing “where appropriate” from criteria relating to parking for different user groups, variable message signs and access to car club vehicles or pool cars/cycles. This makes these expectations more directly applicable to relevant developments. The wording on preventing parking on footways and cycle tracks is also slightly clarified, and the supporting text now places clearer emphasis on meeting critical parking needs, such as disabled badge holder provision, where developments have no on-site parking. The overall approach to parking standards, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and zero emissions vehicle facilities is otherwise carried forward.

- 5.96 **INF 16: Safeguarding future transport infrastructure and routes** - INF 16 is largely retained, but the Regulation 19 version strengthens the safeguarding approach. The policy continues to protect land required for future transport routes and schemes, including potential Metrolink, tram-train and bus rapid transit infrastructure, and continues to resist development that would result in the loss of existing sustainable transport infrastructure. The main changes are that the protection of active travel corridors is broadened from canal and river towpaths to existing and new canal and riverside paths, and development adjacent to transport infrastructure must now be designed to maintain existing and future transport operations as well as allowing future upgrades. Supporting text also clarifies that development should not compromise the continuity, functionality or efficiency of safeguarded routes.
- 5.97 **INF 17: Metrolink** - No material changes have been made to INF 17. Changes are limited to formatting.

Chapter 5: Monitoring framework

- 5.98 Regulation 19 confirms that monitoring will be undertaken through the Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR), which will assess policy performance and fulfil statutory monitoring requirements.

6. Next Steps

6.1 The next steps in the local plan process are set out below. The dates of these are subject to change and should be read alongside the latest Local Development Scheme published on the council's website.

- A final plan (the 'Publication' Plan) will be published for a formal statutory consultation (Regulation 19): September - November 2026.
- Submission to Secretary of State: December 2026
- Examination of the plan by an independent inspector: Spring 2027
- Adoption of the Stockport Local Plan: Winter 2027/2028

6.2 As stated in paragraph 1.4 of this document, this Consultation Statement will be updated to include details of the representations received during the Regulation 19 consultation for submission to the Secretary of State alongside the Local Plan and supporting documents in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.