

Manchester Local Plan (Publication Draft) Regulation 19

Economy Topic Paper

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Places for Everyone Joint Local Plan was adopted in March 2024. It set out an employment requirement for the nine Greater Manchester districts but did not break that figure down by district. The Manchester Local Plan (Publication Draft), henceforth called the Local Plan, has determined what proportion of the total figure for offices and industrial and warehousing should be in Manchester. This has become Manchester's requirement in the Local Plan.
- 1.2 The following sets out how the Manchester Local Plan has arrived at those figures and its employment requirement.

2. NPPF 2021

- 2.1 The suite of topic papers accompanying the Local Plan includes "Topic Paper Local Plan – Relationship to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); Places for Everyone; and Saved Policies from existing MCC Local Plans" which states in paragraph 3.3:

“PfE was examined alongside the 2021 version of the published NPPF that was current at the time. It was previously noted that the Manchester Local Plan is consistent with PfE, and this is the specific legal test that must be met with respect to the Manchester Local Plan. The consistency with PfE has been highlighted at appropriate places within the draft plan. As a result, the Manchester Local Plan has been developed on a basis of consistency with the 2021 version of the NPPF as a first point of principle. Notwithstanding that approach, regard has been paid to the latest current version of the NPPF (2024) to ensure “future proofing” of the plan where significant material changes were evident that needed to be taken account of within the plan.”
- 2.2 Paragraph 8 states achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives – economic, social and environmental. The economic objective is to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure

- 2.3 Paragraph 81 states significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. It should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. It points out that this is particularly important in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.
- 2.4 Paragraph 82 states planning policies should set out a clear economic vision and strategy having regard to Local Industrial Strategies etc.; identify sites for local and inward investment to match the strategy and meet needs over the plan period; address potential barriers to investment; and be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.
- 2.5 The NPPF 2024 made no significant change in relation to building a strong and competitive economy that is relevant to this paper.

3. National Planning Practice Guidance

- 3.1 In addition to the PfE, regard must be had to land availability for economic development uses over the plan period. The assessment of supply is an important source of evidence to inform plan-making and decision-taking.
- 3.2 The assessment does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. It is the role of the assessment to provide information on the range of sites which are available to meet the local authority's requirements and any that come forward will be assessed against the development plan and any other material considerations.
- 3.3 Plan-making authorities may carry out land availability assessments for housing and economic development as part of the same exercise, in order that sites may be identified for the use(s) which is most appropriate. Details of Manchester Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and Employment Land Supply can be found here [MappingGM - Home](#).

4. Places for Everyone (PfE)

- 4.1 The PfE does not provide a breakdown of employment targets by district in the same way it does for housing.
- 4.2 Policy JP-J3 :Office Development identifies 2,019,000sqm of office floorspace across the PfE area between 2022 and 2039. It also states the City Centre will account for more than half of all new office floorspace in the sub-region, further enhancing its position as the premier office location outside London. It also focuses on Manchester Airport and its environs, taking advantage of the extensive international connections, public transport accessibility, and proposed Northern Powerhouse Rail links.

- 4.3 Policy JP-J4 : Industry and Warehousing Requirement identifies at least 3,513,000 sqm of industrial and warehousing floorspace will be provided in the Plan area over the period 2022-2039.
- 4.4 The Site Selection: Spatial Strategy Topic Paper sets out how the Manchester Local Plan Growth Locations are in line with PfE, Our Manchester Strategy and Local Industrial Strategy etc. PfE gives clear policy direction both in the Spatial Strategy and in the thematic policies for where the quantum and distribution of offices and industrial warehousing should be located.
- 4.5 Key PfE policies informing the Manchester Local Plan approach to office, industrial and warehousing quantum and distribution are set out below:
- JP-Strat1: Core Growth Area covers central Manchester and seeks to protect and enhance its economic role supporting major growth in the number of jobs. Within Manchester the area is centred on Manchester City Centre extending in the east to Etihad Stadium and Central Park.
 - JP-Strat2: City Centre – continues to provide the primary focus for business, retail, leisure, culture and tourism activity in Greater Manchester. The majority of the City Centre falls within Manchester and plays a key role in Greater Manchester's economy, and that of the North of England more generally, providing around 10% of all jobs in the sub-region.
 - JP-Strat5: Inner Areas – encompassing the whole of north and east Manchester beyond the Core Growth Area and adjacent areas to the south of the City Centre. This area will benefit from a position adjacent to an enormous concentration of economic activity.
 - JP-Strat9: Southern Areas - The policy seeks to take advantage of the economic competitiveness of the area and this will be protected and enhanced, with the economic potential of Manchester Airport and associated infrastructure maximised.
 - JP-Strat10: Manchester Airport - The policy seeks to maximise the benefits of the continued operation and sustainable growth of Manchester Airport and its surrounding locality. It sets out the improvements to the accessibility and connectivity of the area proposed over the lifetime of the PfE, plus the scale of development.
- 4.6 Further detail is provided in the Site Selection: Spatial Strategy Topic Paper.

5. Manchester Approach to PfE Employment Land Requirement

- 5.1 During the PfE Examination in Public (EiP) the Inspectors requested a proposed approach to employment distribution across the nine PfE districts. EiP document [GMCA15](#) was prepared and agreed by the nine authorities, whilst this was subsequently not recommended for inclusion in the PfE in the Inspectors Report, it has been used as the basis for the requirement for office and industrial and warehousing within Manchester's Local Plan (Publication Draft).

Offices

Table 1 : An extract from GMCA15 Office Distribution

District	Total Supply 2022-39	District Supply as % of total supply	District "requirement"
Bolton	70,739	3%	49,588
Bury	1,177	0.04%	825
Manchester	2,069,735	72%	1,450,895
Oldham	81,998	3%	57,481
Rochdale	101,002	4%	70,803
Salford	309,102	11%	216,682
Tameside	20,680	1%	14,497
Trafford	223,661	8%	156,788
Wigan	2,055	0.1%	1,441
Places for Everyone	2,880,150	100%	2,019,000

- 5.2 Based on the above the office requirement in Manchester is approximately 1.4 million sqm of office space. This has been used as the requirement in Manchester Local Plan Policy EC1 Employment Provision.

Industrial and Warehousing

Table 2: An extract from GMCA15 Industrial and Warehousing Distribution

District	Total Supply 2022-39	District Supply as % of total supply	District "requirement"
Bolton	705,861	17%	609,022
Bury	608,584	15%	525,090
Manchester	75,693	2%	65,308
Oldham	75,693	7%	240,656
Rochdale	278,922	14%	504,641
Salford	584,316	3%	473,091
Tameside	274,072	7%	236,471
Trafford	543,919	13%	469,297

Wigan	480,321	12%	414,424
Places for Everyone	4,100,571	100%	3,538,000

- 5.3 Based on the above the industrial and warehouse requirement in Manchester is approximately 65,000 sqm. This has been referenced in the Manchester Local Plan paragraph 9.10 supporting Policy EC1 Employment Provision.

Employment Land Supply

- 5.4 The PfE requirement spans the period 2022 to 2039. The Manchester Local Plan is in line with the PfE and covers the same period to 2039. To ensure the City has an adequate supply of both offices and industrial and warehousing to meet its requirements consideration needs to be given to the current land supply, taking account of completions since 2022.

- 5.5 Using the 2025 Employment Land Supply the position is as follow:

Table 3: Completions Offices and Industrial and Warehousing

Time Period	Office Completions Floorspace sqm	Industrial/ Warehouse Completions Floorspace sqm
2022-23	49,614	16,179
2023-24	64,277	3,584
2024-25	55,200	7,525
Total	169,091	27,288

Table 4: Manchester Remaining Land Supply Requirement to meet PfE

	Office Floorspace sqm	Industrial/ Warehouse Floorspace sqm
PfE Requirement	1,450,895	65,308
Completions 2022-25	169,091	27,288
Remaining PfE Requirement	1,281,804	38,020

- 5.6 Using Manchester's 2025 Employment Land Supply and taking account of planning permissions and known capacity sites to 2039, the City has 1,829,859sqm of office land supply available which is more than required to meet the need identified. In terms of industrial and warehousing supply, the City has 115,229 sqm, over 50% more supply

than required. This shows there is a significant flexibility and buffer in both offices and industrial and warehousing supply to meet market requirements.

Table 5: Details of the land supply to 2039

	2025/26- 2029/30 Floorspace sqm	2030/31- 2034/35 Floorspace sqm	2035/36 to 2038/39 Floorspace sqm	2025 to 2039 Floorspace sqm
Offices	1,011,430	502,821	315,608	1,829,859
Industrial and Warehousing	115,229	-	-	115,229

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Manchester Local Plan has used the GMCA15 paper to the PfE EiP to inform the quantum of office and industrial and warehousing space. These figures have been set against the land supply for offices and industrial and warehousing and the City has sufficient employment supply to meet its requirements.