



Manchester Local Plan: Ramblers Submission

Introduction

We recognise that the current Covid-19 pandemic is the overwhelming priority for the whole community, we also recognise that the medium and longer-term impacts are almost impossible to assess at this stage.

Within that context, the Manchester and Salford Ramblers wish to make a short submission to the current consultation on the issues that a new Manchester Local Plan should seek to address.

The Ramblers are the national charity that helps people enjoy walking and protect the places we all love to walk. Our roots are in groups of walkers who wanted access for the public to the countryside, but we are increasingly concerned about the places where we live. We want neighbourhoods that put people walking first and allow everyone easy access to quality green spaces within their towns and cities.

Climate Emergency

Our starting point is that we face a climate emergency, catastrophic nature loss, rising obesity levels, a mental health crisis, widening health and economic inequalities and we strongly endorse the identification of action on climate change as a key issue.

Objectives of the Plan

We firmly believe that to meet our carbon reduction, air quality and health targets the promotion of walking and cycling is critical. It is therefore essential that each of the five objectives listed explicitly recognise the importance of promoting walking and cycling.

Neighbourhood issues

It is clear that there are differences between Manchester's various neighbourhoods, but here is a common need for active travel and developments in all the areas to be required to promote walking and cycling.

Strategic issues

We strongly endorse the commitment to a zero carbon Manchester and that well-connected walking and cycling routes, public-transport connections and electric-vehicle charging points need to be key components of all new development

The commitment to sustainable transport and the clear hierarchy that puts the needs of people first is also strongly endorsed. However, we would suggest that in paragraph 5.8 the current wording is insufficient. The draft suggests that "wherever possible", new developments include amongst other things, provisions for walking and cycling.

We believe that to meet the carbon reduction and air quality targets the Local Plan has to set a more robust framework, and require all new development to include significant improvements in provision for walking and cycling in all but the most exceptional circumstances.

Moreover, the Plan should require the highest street design standards and incorporate high quality walking infrastructure. The Plan should also establish a new Manchester Greenspace standard, and require all new developments to contribute towards the aim of everyone in Manchester living no more than a 5-minute walk or 300m from a quality green space.