

OLDHAM'S REPLACEMENT UNITARY

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

TOPIC PAPER

OPEN ENVIRONMENT

NOVEMBER 2004

**CONTACT NEALL BOWER – STRATEGIC
PLANNING AND INFORMATION**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Chapter 11 of Oldham Revised Deposit Draft Replacement Unitary Development Plan (RUDP) contains policies which seek to protect and enhance the open environment of the Borough.
- 1.2 Over half of the land in the Borough is open, in other words land that is predominantly free of buildings and urban uses. Such areas are found within the built up areas as well as in the rural parts of the Borough. They are a positive asset to the Borough providing an attractive setting to urban settlements and an important agricultural resource. They can help attract investment into the Borough, provide wildlife habitats and a recreational resource for residents and visitors alike. Such open areas have, however, historically been subject to pressure for development. This pressure continues today, mainly for small-scale developments such as the conversion of agricultural buildings to residential use, and the development of greenfield sites for single dwellings.
- 1.3 A significant area of open land in the southeast quadrant of the Borough falls within the Peak District National Park. The National Park Authority is the planning authority for this area, therefore it is not included in the Draft RUDP.
- 1.4 This paper describes the background and approach to open land policy development within the national and regional context, and how policies on these issues in Oldham have evolved up to the Revised Deposit Draft RUDP. In particular it describes the process and development of policies on Green Belt, Local Green Gaps and Land Reserved for Future Development.

2. NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

National Context

- 2.1 Current national planning policy guidance on Green Belts and safeguarded land is contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 “Green Belts”. This was issued in 1995, replacing the 1988 version. While this re-states the general intentions of Green Belt policy and the specific purposes of including land within it, it specifically highlights the contribution of the Green Belt to sustainable development objectives. Paragraph 1.5 lists the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt and specifies the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts. It stresses, however, that the purposes of including land in Green Belts should take precedence over the land use objectives (paragraph 1.7)
- 2.2 The guidance confirms that Green Belts should be protected as far as can be seen ahead, and stresses that once the extent of a Green Belt has been approved it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances (paragraph 2.6). The guidance goes on to state that “Where existing local plans are being revised and updated, existing Green Belt boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the structure plan have been approved, or other exceptional circumstance exist, which necessitate such revision”. This also adds to the permanence of the boundaries, which is also a theme of PPG2.
- 2.3 The guidance re-iterates the presumption against inappropriate development within Green Belts and refines the categories of appropriate development. It also provides for the future of major existing developed sites located within the Green Belt (contained in Annex C of the guidance). It also contains revised guidance on the re-use of buildings, in Annex D, this advice having been amended by PPG7 – “The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and

Social Development” in 1997. In addition to this PPS7 was published in August 2004, entitled Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.

- 2.4 PPG2 has also been revised since its publication by the inclusion of Annex E on Park and Ride in the Green Belt, which emerged from revised PPG13 on Transport in 2001. This sets out criteria against which proposals for Park and Ride schemes in the Green Belt should be judged.
- 2.5 In relation to safeguarded land, PPG2 advises that, when reviewing plans, any proposals affecting the Green Belt should be related to a time scale which is longer than that normally adopted for other aspects of the plan. Local planning authorities are advised to ensure, therefore, that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period. It goes on to advise that, to ensure the Green Belt is protected within this longer time scale, there may be a need to safeguard land which lies between the urban area and the Green Belt which may be required to meet longer-term development needs (paragraph 2.12). The guidance stresses that regional guidance should provide a strategic framework for considering this issue.

Regional Context

- 2.6 Regional planning guidance for the North West is provided in Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West published in March 2003 (formerly RPG13). The Spatial Development Framework of this document states the importance of maintaining urban form, and discouraging urban sprawl, assisted by having extensive areas of Green Belt in and around highly urbanised areas in the Region. Policy SD1 sets out the areas within the Region where development and regeneration should be focussed. It states that such regeneration should be accommodated without encroaching on Green Belt areas or other open land protected for its agricultural, amenity, recreational, ecological or wildlife value.

- 2.7 Policy SD5 deals specifically with Green Belts and states that the need for exceptional substantial change to any Green Belt in the Region should be investigated by a strategic study, and outlines what such a study should involve. It goes on to state that in the case of Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Lancashire, there is no need to undertake a strategic study before 2011. The reasoned justification to this policy states that Urban Potential Studies and information on land availability suggest that long-term development needs in these parts of the Region can be accommodated up to at least 2016 without the need to significantly encroach upon Green Belt. Although strategic reviews of Green Belt in these areas need not be undertaken before 2011, the North West Regional Assembly will still review the situation as part of its monitoring process.
- 2.8 The Council's approach in the Draft RUDP, to resist changes to the Green Belt boundary is, therefore, in line with national and regional guidance.
- 2.9 At a sub-regional level, The Greater Manchester Strategic Planning Framework published in 1997, and reviewed in 1999, provides a strategic planning framework for Greater Manchester based on regional and national planning guidance. One of the aims of this document is to inform the review of Unitary Development Plans.
- 2.10 The main linked themes underlying the Strategic Planning Framework for Greater Manchester, as set out in the Review document, are sustainable economic development; environmental improvement; and providing for sustainable transport. These themes are set within the national policy context of achieving urban renaissance.
- 2.11 Within this framework, open land, for example river valleys and urban fringe land, are seen as important resources for providing recreational and amenity opportunities, green corridors, historic landscapes, tourism opportunities, and wildlife habitats. Such areas, together with

urban open spaces, are seen to make an important amenity and recreational contribution in their own right to the regeneration of the conurbation (SPF8).

2.12 The Greater Manchester Strategy, produced by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) in 2003, provides a 10 to 15 year vision for the future of the sub region.

2.13 The document is structured around eight themes and each chapter sets out key issues, outcome measures. The strategy is guided and informed by the Regional Economic Strategy.

2.14 Two of the Strategy's themed priorities that are consistent with the policies in this topic are to:

- Promote sustainable urban regeneration and;
- Enhance biodiversity, forestry initiatives and recreational facilities.

Local Context

2.15 The Oldham Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), of which the Council is a member, has produced Oldham's Community Strategy 2002-2022. This sets out a long term vision, strategic objectives and targets for the Borough. The Strategy is underpinned by action plans and strategies of which the Unitary Development Plan is one.

2.16 One of the priority themes for action set out in the Community Strategy is Environment and Transportation which is of particular relevance to the UDP. The priorities set out under this theme include: raising environmental awareness, making Oldham a cleaner and greener place and protecting wildlife. By seeking to protect and enhance the Borough's open land, UDP policies can make a valuable contribution towards achieving these priorities.

2.17 Another priority theme of the Strategy is housing, the aim being to provide a thriving housing market which provides a diverse choice of housing to all who wish to reside in the Borough. The Council, in partnership with Rochdale, is one of the Pathfinders which, under the Government's Housing Market Renewal Fund, will deliver significant improvements to the Borough's housing stock. This initiative, together with the housing allocations in the Draft RUDP, re-affirms the Council's commitment to re-using previously developed sites for housing and ensuring that it is located in the most sustainable locations. Although the issue of housing is dealt with in a separate topic paper, the continued policy approach of protecting open land within the Borough serves to support the aim of locating housing in the most sustainable locations by directing development to existing urban areas.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND – THE DEVELOPMENT OF OPEN LAND POLICY IN GREATER MANCHESTER

3.1 The conflict between development pressure and land resource conservation has long been recognised and a range of policy approaches have been developed to control it, both at the national and local level.

3.2 In this area, The Greater Manchester Structure Plan of 1981 included a proposal to operate a Green Belt policy over parts of Greater Manchester, including large areas of Oldham Borough. It also included policies to restrict the kinds of development which can take place on all open land not in the Green Belt and sought to protect agricultural land. It also proposed special development control policies over areas of high landscape value and/or special interest.

3.3 The Greater Manchester Green Belt Local Plan (GMGBLP), adopted in 1984, defined the Green Belt, in light of the Structure Plan, and identified areas of strategic Green Belt importance at the County level.

It effectively established a “strategic minimum” Green Belt to be refined by subsequent local plans, mainly by the addition of further areas of land.

4. EVOLUTION OF GREEN BELT POLICIES IN OLDHAM

Borough Plan

- 4.1 The Oldham Borough Plan, adopted in 1986, largely incorporated the Green Belt boundary established in the GMGBLP and added other areas that functioned as Green Belt. For clarity, the GMGBLP was replaced in 1988 by the Council adopting the Borough Plan as the statutory document which defined the Green Belt boundary for the Borough.
- 4.2 As well as defining the Green Belt boundary, the Borough Plan included a policy to prevent development within it, other than certain categories of development, which were either of an open nature, traditional countryside uses or limited development of economic value.
- 4.3 Although the Greater Manchester Structure Plan and Green Belt Local Plan contained policies allowing limited infilling, in certain circumstances, within settlements in the Green Belt, it was not considered that these were applicable to Oldham. The Saddleworth villages were considered to be sufficiently substantial to exclude them from the Green Belt.

Adopted Oldham Unitary Development Plan

- 4.4 The Oldham Unitary Development Plan, adopted in 1996, re-affirmed the importance of the Green Belt as a land resource requiring strong protection, in line with national Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 on Green Belts. In this guidance the Government recommended that Green Belts should be permanent and, once established, should only

be altered in exceptional circumstances. Strategic Guidance for Greater Manchester (RPG4) also advised that Councils should seek to incorporate the adopted Green Belts into their UDP's.

- 4.5 The Council, in the course of preparing the adopted UDP, examined the Green Belt boundary in detail. In so doing it concluded that there was one instance where the established Green Belt boundary should be changed. This was at Acre Lane in Derker a site which, when included in the Green belt, had an unimplemented residential planning permission attached to it. The intention was to not renew the permission if it remained unimplemented after its expiry. The permission was, however, implemented and the site was excluded from the Green Belt because it no longer performed a Green Belt function.
- 4.6 During the course of the public inquiry into the adopted UDP the Inspector considered several representations relating to the Green Belt boundary from objectors wanting land released to permit development. There was also a more general objection regarding the need to amend the Green Belt boundary to meet housing needs beyond 2001. In response to these representations the Inspector recommended that no modifications be made, other than in the case of a minor boundary amendment in the vicinity of the then proposed Manchester Outer Ring Road. As well as considering the merits of the individual objections the Inspector concluded generally that the supply of land was sufficient to meet the Council's anticipated housing requirement within the Plan period and beyond. This, in addition to other considerations, led him to conclude that changes to the Green Boundary were not justified.
- 4.7 The Adopted UDP contained policies which re-affirmed the Green Belt boundary in Oldham and sought to protect it from inappropriate and harmful development.

5. APPROACH TO GREEN BELT POLICY IN THE DRAFT REPLACEMENT UDP

- 5.1 The Draft Replacement Plan continues to recognise the importance of protecting the Green Belt, both in its role of keeping land open and its importance in directing development to existing urban areas.
- 5.2 The Draft RUDP reaffirms the established Green Belt boundary, but proposes two minor amendments. The first amendment is the removal of an area of land at Lower Fullwood, Shaw. This is because an extension to an existing mill was approved in February 1997, the extension being on Green Belt land. This was approved, although contrary to Green Belt policy, on the grounds that the safeguarding of existing jobs and the creation of new jobs amounted to very special circumstances. As the site clearly no longer performs a Green Belt function it has been removed from the Green Belt as part of the review.
- 5.3 In the second case it is proposed that a small strip of land be added to the Green Belt at Waterside Mill, Greenfield. Here, a new housing development on land adjacent to the Green Belt boundary has resulted in a strip of unallocated land between the development boundary and the Green Belt boundary. It is felt that this amendment will create a more defensible boundary to the Green Belt in line with advice contained in PPG2 paragraph 2.9 which advises that boundaries should be clearly defined.
- 5.4 Policies seeking to control development in the Green Belt are considered to have been successful, in terms of protecting the Green Belt from harm, and most of the policies seeking to control development in the Adopted UDP have been carried forward into the Draft Replacement UDP. Pressures to develop in the Green Belt are likely to continue during the life of the Plan, particularly given the changes in the agricultural sector which will, inevitably, lead to some farmers seeking alternative uses for their land. Some of these

pressures are low farming incomes, the nature of the market place and changing agricultural policy.

- 5.5 The Plan contains eight policies aimed at controlling development in the Green Belt. Some have been amended for the purpose of clarification, in response to objections or in light of new guidance. Three new policies have been developed in the Draft Replacement Plan. The first (OE1.4) relates to the subdivision of houses in the Green Belt. This issue was, in the Adopted UDP, dealt with under the policy on extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt. Subdivision can have a significant impact on the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt, for example through intensified use of the curtilage or the provision of additional access. In light of this, it was felt that it should be dealt with in a separate policy, as the issue of subdivision could as easily arise in relation to conversions or replacement dwellings, as extensions.
- 5.6 The second new policy (OE1.5) relates to the control of garden extensions within the Green Belts. In the Adopted UDP this was mentioned in the reasoned justification of the policy on replacement dwellings in the Green Belt. A number of enquiries and applications are received for garden extensions in the Green Belt, not solely in relation to replacement dwellings. Such extensions, in creating enclosed areas over which there are few planning controls, can encroach into the Green Belt thereby affecting its openness and visual amenity, in terms of creating a domesticated urban 'feel', hence the need for a separate policy to address this issue.
- 5.7 The third new policy (OE1.8) relates to the designation of a major developed site in the Green Belt. This is at Robert Fletcher (Greenfield) Ltd which lies to the south east of Greenfield, adjacent to the boundary with the Peak District National Park. This former mill is considered appropriate for designation in the Plan for three main reasons. Firstly, it is a large developed site within the Green Belt. The

main building footprint covers approximately 5.4 hectares but the wider site is more extensive and stands at 76 hectares. Secondly, it has ceased production, therefore greater flexibility in terms of replacing buildings may be needed during the Plan period to ensure a viable new employment-generating use at the site, prevent dereliction and resist pressure for non-employment uses. Thirdly, its location next to Dove Stone Reservoir, adjacent to the National Park boundary, offers an opportunity for environmental improvements at the site to reduce the impact of the existing buildings on the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt, particularly given the site's prominence when viewed from the dam of the reservoir.

- 5.8 The Council has allocated the site for comprehensive redevelopment by means of a mix of uses, in particular employment generating uses and tourism or leisure uses which both respect and capitalise on the sensitive and strategic location of the site. The policy is intended to give clear guidance to potential developers as to the type of development the Council considers to be appropriate whilst respecting the guidance given in Annex C of PPG2. This recognises the existence of major developed sites located in the Green Belt, such as factories, hospitals and education establishments. These frequently pre-date the town and country planning system and they may or may not remain in use. Normally the strict controls of Green Belt policy apply to such sites. However, it is possible to identify them formally in a development plan and thereby enable infilling or redevelopment, which accords with the criteria set out in Annex C.

6. EVOLUTION OF LAND RESERVED FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN OLDHAM

- 6.1 In addition to Green Belt, the 1986 Borough Plan also established areas of open land which the Plan sought to reserve (protect from development) in order to meet possible future development needs. These areas were mainly located between the urban area and the

Green Belt although significant open areas located within the built up area, such as Oldham Edge, were also included. This designation as “Other Protected Open Land” (OPOL) was intended to protect two types of land not included within the Green Belt. Firstly, areas of open land that did not serve a Green Belt function but which were valuable as open spaces. Secondly, areas of land that did perform some Green Belt function but which could be required for development purposes in the future. The plans did not, however, distinguish between the two different types of OPOL.

6.2 These areas of land, also known as “safeguarded land” or “white land” were carried forward to the Adopted UDP. The public inquiry Inspector, in considering objections to Protected Open Land, confirmed that PPG2 advises that land between the urban area and the Green Belt will have to be safeguarded to strengthen the permanence of the Green Belt and to meet long term development needs. He, therefore, agreed with the Council’s approach to accord a similar level of protection against inappropriate development as the Green Belt, and recommended that no modifications be made to the Plan in response to these objections. Thirty sites were therefore allocated as OPOL in the Adopted UDP.

7. RATIONALISATION OF PROTECTED LAND

7.1 In the First Deposit Draft Replacement Plan a decision was made to rationalise the approach taken in the Borough Plan and Adopted UDP given that they made no distinction between the two types of Other Protected Open Land. This entailed a re-assessment of each of the Other Protected Open Land sites against similar criteria to those used in the Borough Plan to assess their open land value. This included: wildlife importance, agricultural quality, existing and potential recreational use, role as a buffer, visibility and views, Green Belt function, size and shape, accessibility, contribution to green corridors or linking open sites, community value and development suitability.

Those sites considered potentially suitable for possible future development needs were designated as “Land Reserved for Future Development”. Those deemed to perform primarily recreational roles were designated as Recreational Open Space, and those with agricultural or informal recreational roles which provided important breaks between or on the edge of built up areas were designated as Local Green Gaps (see section 8 below).

- 7.2 In future reviews of the Plan, land that is reserved for possible future development will be the first to be considered for development if allocated sites and stocks of brownfield land are not sufficient to meet development needs. In the Replacement Plan they are, therefore, protected for its lifetime from development which would prejudice the later development of such land. Those sites which have been retained since the Adopted UDP as Land Reserved for Future Development are listed in Appendix 2.

8. LOCAL GREEN GAPS

- 8.1 As outlined in paragraph 7.1 above, former Other Protected Open Land sites were re-assessed to determine their prime function. Those areas which it was considered provided significant open space either between, or on the edge of, built up areas of the Borough were designated as “Local Green Gaps”. These areas, while not necessarily serving all the functions of the Green Belt, are considered to have local importance by helping to preserve the distinctiveness of an area.
- 8.2 Local Green Gaps (or LGGs) are allocated under policy OE1.10 of the Revised Deposit Draft Replacement UDP. There can be several factors that allow a LGG to be allocated, and these include:

- *Provision of attractive settings for communities and/or are visually prominent*

- *Separation of built up areas*
- *Provision of links between urban areas, countryside and other green corridors*
- *Opportunities for informal recreation*
- *Provision of wildlife habitats*
- *Contribute to diversity of plant and animal species*
- *Educational resource*
- *Unsuitable for development.*

8.3 Sites which were formerly OPOL in the 1996 UDP and which have been redefined as Local Green Gaps in the Revised Deposit Replacement UDP are listed in Appendix 3.

9. ISSUES ARISING FROM OBJECTIONS TO FIRST DEPOSIT RUDP

9.1 During the First Deposit of the Draft Replacement UDP, between October and December 2001, approximately 1,700 representations were received. Of these around 690 were objections to the Open Environment chapter. Officers' initial suggested responses to each of these representations were presented to the Council's Executive in February 2003 as a basis for negotiating changes where appropriate, prior to further revisions being made to the draft plan. In the case of policies or specific site allocations which attracted particularly large numbers of objections, the issues were set out for the consideration of the Executive. The Open Environment Section attracted more objections than any other and consequently the issue of safeguarded land and the optional approaches to it were set out for Executive Members to consider. The majority of these were objections to policy OE1.9 (OE1.7 at First Deposit stage) on Land Reserved for Future Development, and related to specific sites identified as such. As stated above, the Revised Deposit Draft Replacement Plan attempted to clarify the approach taken to safeguarded land in the Adopted UDP, and the preceding Borough Plan. These made no distinction between

the two types of Other Protected Open Land, i.e. whether they were needed as open spaces or for possible future development. It was clear from many of the objections received that the term Other Protected Open Land had previously been interpreted as meaning total protection of the land. Many objectors, for example, referred to such sites as being Green Belt.

- 9.2 After assessing objections, it was considered that, in the case of Ryefields Drive in Uppermill and Summershades Lane, Grasscroft, the sites were less suitable for development because of topography, drainage, tree cover and their size. They were, therefore, re-designated in the Revised Deposit Draft UDP as Local Green Gaps. Land at Shawside, east of Sumner Street in Shaw, was similarly re-assessed. Although fewer objections had been received in respect of this site, it was felt, after further assessment, that it was more appropriate to re-designate it as Local Green Gap given the relatively poor access to the site, and the fact that it adjoins and “reads” as part of adjacent Local Green Gap, LGG10.
- 9.3 In response to objections to Land Reserved for Future Development, including over 300 objections to the allocation at Cowlshaw, the issue of safeguarded land was reconsidered. The merits of having safeguarded land as advised in PPG2, and the need for all the sites so identified were considered alongside their role in protecting the Green Belt and providing a reserve of potential development land. It was concluded that a supply of safeguarded land should be retained, but that a lesser supply of Land Reserved for Future Development would be sufficient to meet any development needs which could arise in the medium to long term. This was in the light of the emphasis in local and national land use strategy on re-using previously developed land, the Council’s record on achieving targets for such development, and the phased approach to land release for housing set out in the Draft Replacement UDP.

- 9.4 The Land Reserved for Future Development at Cowlshaw was, therefore, re-designated as Local Green Gap, as the land fulfilled the necessary criteria, leaving a reduced amount of land to be allocated as Land Reserved for Future Development. In so doing, it was recognised that in the event of a strategic review of the Greater Manchester Green Belt boundary being undertaken at or after 2011, then there may be a need at the same time to also review Local Green Gaps and Land Reserved for Future Development, as any changes to Green Belt could alter the shape of the urban area.
- 9.5 Land at Haven Lane, at two separate sites, also received around 30 objections and a petition of 79 signatures. The prime concern in relation to these sites was the traffic which would be generated if they were to be developed. The Council's Highways Engineer confirmed that, in his view, traffic was not a sufficient issue to merit de-allocation of the sites as possible future development sites and therefore their allocation as land reserved for future development remains.
- 9.6 Land at Foxdenton, allocated as Land Reserved for Future Development (LRFD) at First Deposit stage, also received thirteen objections. Given the re-designation of Cowlshaw from LRFD to LGG, the loss of Foxdenton would leave a very limited supply of potential future development land. Also, the loss of Foxdenton LRFD would remove the possibility of using this area for the expansion of the Broadway Business Park. It was agreed, therefore that this area be retained as Land Reserved for Future Development. At this stage it is not known what future development needs may be, therefore the Plan does not set out any detail about what the land may be used for, nor the way in which the land should be developed. Instead the policy indicates that it would be for a future plan review to determine these matters.
- 9.7 Government Office for the North West (GONW) objected to the Local Green Gap policy at First Deposit stage stating that it was too

restrictive and should set out circumstances in which development might be permitted. This reflected the fact that in the First Deposit Plan, the policy afforded Local Green Gaps the equivalent degree of protection from development as that afforded to Green Belt land. In light of the objection from GONW, the policy was changed in the Revised Deposit Plan to allow limited development. Thus, for instance, small scale development ancillary to existing buildings within Green Gaps, or development which enhances the use of the area such as visitor facilities would be permitted where they would not significantly affect the openness, character or visual amenity of the Green Gap. This was done to introduce flexibility in light of GONW's objection, while protecting the integrity of such sites. Nonetheless, GONW have maintained an objection to the amended policy as it is felt to be inappropriate to refer to the Green Belt within a policy which seeks to protect non-Green Belt land. GONW also felt that this gives the wrong messages to users of the Draft RUDP about the protected status of that land.

- 9.8 As with the Adopted Plan, many objectors used the review as an attempt to get pieces of land removed from the Green Belt to enable them to be developed. Other than the two sites described in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 the Council has resisted any other incremental changes to the Green Belt boundary, in line with national and regional advice.

10. ISSUES ARISING FROM OBJECTIONS TO REVISED DEPOSIT RUDP

- 10.1 The Replacement Unitary Development Plan Revised Deposit Draft was put out for consultation between October and December 2003. The Open Environment Chapter received around 894 objections at this stage, although a large number of these were in response to changes to policies OE2.1 and OE2.3 which objectors considered would allow wind turbines to adversely affect the landscape and areas of nature

conservation. The other issues were again mainly the strength of the individual designations borne out predominantly by objections to individual sites.

- 10.2 Policy OE1.9 received ninety objections, of which eighty-eight are site specific to the land previously allocated for Business and industry at Hebron Street, which has now been reallocated as Land Reserved for Future Development. Objectors were generally happy that the land was no longer allocated for business and industry, but objected to the fact that it was allocated as Land Reserved for Future Development rather than being allocated as Local Green Gap or Green Belt.
- 10.3 Policy OE1.10 Local Green Gaps received 136 representations, of which 74 were supportive representations to the reallocation of Cowlshaw and Summershades Lane as Local Green Gaps. However there are also a number of objectors who consider that the Local Green Gap designation does not give enough protection and that all building in these areas should be refused, or others suggesting that the land should be allocated as Green Belt.
- 10.4 Changing the Local Green Gap policy at Revised Deposit stage, as outlined in the above section, resulted in several new objections from people who feel that the protection afforded by the policy has been weakened by the amendment.
- 10.5 At the Revised Deposit stage a change was promoted to policy OE2.1 Landscape in response to an objection received from GONW. GONW considered that the way the policy was worded could restrict all types of development as all development will, in some way, affect the landscape. The addition of the sentence regarding the demonstration of benefits of the development outweighing the benefits of conserving the landscape is intended to reflect this acknowledgement. However there were a large number of objections to this change in that any effects to the landscape are unacceptable.

10.6 Another policy that received a high number of objections was OE2.3 as many of the objectors considered that the policy would allow wind turbines or other major developments to be sited within or on the margins of internationally, nationally or regionally designated sites. The Council's response to this is included in the individual OE2.3 response.

11. PRE-INQUIRY CHANGES

11.1 In response to objections and subject to full Council approval on the 24th November 2004, the Council has proposed four pre-inquiry changes to the Open Environment section. These are:

1. Policy OE1.8

Delete 'unique' from paragraph 11.45 and replace with 'strategically important'.

In response to objection 1780/2/001/O requesting replacing 'unique' with 'special site of sub-regional importance.'

2. Policy OE2

Delete 'AND' from the end of criterion C

Add 'AND' at the end of criterion D

Criterion E to read "HAVE REGARD TO THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT THE PURPOSES, APPEARANCE AND VALUED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NATIONAL PARK ARE NOT ADVERSELY AFFECTED"

In response from Objection from Peak National Park Authority on the responsibility of the Council towards the Park.

3. Paragraph 11.70

At the end of the paragraph add “ Where the Council considers necessary in the consideration of applications affect the Peak National Park, it will consult the National Park Authority. In doing so it will ensure that the purposes, appearance and valued characteristics of the National Park are not adversely affected

In response to an objection from Peak National Park Authority on the responsibility of the Council towards the Park.

4. Open environment related change to the Glossary of Terms.

Peak District National Park as a designation was founded in 1951. The planning function of the park is overseen by the Peak District National Park Authority.

The statutory purposes of the Authority (as defined by the Environment Act 1995) are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Parks by the public.

The National Park also has valued characteristics which include quiet enjoyment; wilderness and remoteness; landscape, wildlife and plants; clean earth, air and water; its cultural heritage or history, archaeology, customs and literary associations; and other features which make up its special quality

In response to an objection from Peak National Park Authority on the responsibility of the Council towards the Park.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The Draft Replacement UDP continues to recognise the important role that open land plays in the Borough. It seeks to retain, and in some cases strengthen, policies which control development in the Green Belt, in line with national and regional guidance. It also seeks to protect smaller areas of open land which are of local significance, as Local Green Gaps.
- 12.2 In retaining sites as Land Reserved for Future Development the Council seeks to ensure that the Plan also protects a 'bank' of land which could be considered for development if this were to be needed beyond the life of the Plan, in accordance with national and regional guidance.

APPENDIX 1 LIST OF CORE DOCUMENTS

Note: These will be available to view with the rest of the core document library at the Civic Centre.

Document Title
Greater Manchester Structure Plan – Approved Written Statement 1986
Oldham Borough Local Plan – Written Statement Adopted 29 th January 1986
Oldham UDP – Adopted April 1996
Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 – Green Belts January 1995
Planning Policy Statement 7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas August 2004
Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RPG13) March 2003
The Greater Manchester Strategic Planning Framework, and review of the Greater Manchester Strategic Planning Framework 1999
Greater Manchester Strategy 2003
Oldham Community Strategy 2002-2022
Oldham Beyond ‘The Oldham Net’ 2004

APPENDIX 2**LAND RESERVED FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

1996 UDP Reference	Location	Allocation in Replacement UDP
OLO1	Land at Foxdenton Lane, Chadderton	Part LGG, part LRFD
OL12	Haven Lane North, Moorside	LRFD
OL13	Haven Lane South, Moorside	LRFD
OL16	Bullcote Lane, Royton	Part LGG, part ROS, part PEZ and part LRFD
OL24	Moston Brook, Failsworth	Part LGG, part LRFD
OL28	Land off Warren Lane	Part LRFD, part ROS

APPENDIX 3 LOCAL GREEN GAPS

1996 UDP Reference	Location	Allocation in Replacement UDP
OLO1	Land at Foxdenton Lane, Chadderton	Part LGG, part LRFD
OLO3	Ryefields Drive, Uppermill	LGG
OLO4	Dacres, Greenfield	LGG
OLO5	Roundthorn/Holts (Nether Lees)	LGG (including area west of Lees Brook Mill previously unallocated)
OLO6	Stoneswood, Delph	LGG
OLO7	Stonebreaks, Springhead	LGG
OLO9	Wall Hill, Dobcross	LGG (including former housing allocation H52 and part of area previously allocated as H22)
OL11	Ainley Wood, Delph	LGG (including area north of Ammons Way, previously unallocated)
OL14	Oldham Edge, Oldham	LGG (including area south of Salmon Fields previously unallocated)
OL15	Cowlishaw, Shaw	LGG
OL16	Bullcote Lane, Royton	Part LGG, part ROS, part allocated for PEZ and part LRFD
OL17	Land at Greenacres, Lees	LGG (including area east of Lynwood Drive previously unallocated, but excluding the area

		adjacent to the disused railway line, now occupied by an industrial building)
OL18	Shawside, Shaw (Moss Hey)	LGG
OL20	Simkin Way (formerly Selbourne Street), Bardsley	LGG
OL22	Royley Clough, Royton	Part ROS, part LGG
OL23	Cowhill, Chadderton	LGG
OL24	Moston Brook, Failsworth	Part LGG, part LRFD
OL25	Hole Bottom Clough, Failsworth	Part LGG, rest unallocated but with part identified as green corridor
OL26	Thornley Brook East, Lees	LGG
OL29	Land South of Oaklands Road, Grasscroft	LGG
OL30 (not previously numbered)	Land at Summershades Lane, Grasscroft	LGG