

**Oldham**

**Local**

**Development**

**Framework**

**Background Paper -  
Green Infrastructure and  
Historic Environment**

Part of Core Strategy and Development Management Policies  
Development Plan Document

**September 2010**



**Oldham**  
Council

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1	INTRODUCTION	2
2	GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE	6
3	OPEN SPACES AND SPORTS	46
4	HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT	55

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS THE JOINT CORE STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT??

**1.1** The purpose of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) is to set out the long-term vision and objectives for the borough. It will also contain a planning and development strategy, policies and a monitoring and implementation framework. The Development Management Policies DPD will set out policies that will manage development in the borough. Here in Oldham, the Core Strategy DPD and the Development Management Policies DPD will be prepared as a single document called the 'Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document'. From this point on, it will be referred to simply as 'the joint DPD'.

## THE LDF SO FAR ...

**1.2** As part of the preparation of the joint DPD, the council undertook, during March/April 2007, an 'Issues Survey' as a first step in engaging with people in preparing the LDF. The survey asked 14 questions grouped around a range of broad themes (of safer and stronger communities; housing; economy and enterprise; children and young people; healthier communities; and environment) and two general questions.

**1.3** During autumn/winter 2007-08, the council consulted on the 'Issues and Options' joint DPD. This document set out:

- a. A spatial portrait – this set out key statistics and a description of key features that are distinctive to the borough
- b. Key issues and challenges facing the borough
- c. A vision for the future
- d. A set of strategic objectives setting the future direction for the LDF
- e. Three alternative options, or strategies, for directing future development
- f. Topics that could be covered by core policies
- g. Topics that could be covered by development management policies

**1.4** During spring 2009 we consulted on 'Preferred Options' of the joint DPD. This stage built upon work undertaken during 'Issues and Options' stage, the comments received during that consultation and emerging evidence base.

**1.5** The 'Preferred Options' report set out:

- a. A spatial portrait
- b. A vision
- c. A set of objectives setting the future direction for the LDF
- d. The council's preferred way forward for directing future development
- e. Policy directions for a range of topics
- f. A monitoring and implementation framework

**1.6** During May and June 2010 the council consulted on the 'Refining Options' stage of the joint DPD. The Refining Options stage summarised the main issues and key challenges facing the borough and revised the vision to make it more descriptive of the different places within the borough. The report sets out the final suite of policies including the supporting text. The policies in the Refining Options have been separated

into two parts: part one forms the Core Strategy which sets out the way forward for the LDF, and part two contains the development management policies on how the key elements of the LDF will be implemented. The council also set out details of how the LDF will be delivered and monitored. The report was effectively the final plan to be published and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination.

## **ABOUT THE BACKGROUND PAPER**

- 1.7** This background paper forms part of the evidence base of the joint DPD in relation to Green Infrastructure and the historic environment.
- 1.8** The Green Infrastructure and Historic Environment background paper looks at national and local guidance and the evidence base for green infrastructure, open spaces and the historic environment. It describes the formation of the following policies.
- a. Policy 1 Climate Change and Sustainable Development
  - b. Policy 6 Green Infrastructure
  - c. Policy 21 Protecting Natural Environmental Assets
  - d. Policy 22 Protecting Open Land
  - e. Policy 23 Open Spaces and Sports
  - f. Policy 24 Historic Environment
- 1.9** The background paper provides a summary of the impact of these policies from each supporting assessment - Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA). We have also set out how our approach towards green infrastructure, open spaces and sports and the historic environment will be delivered and monitored.
- 1.10** The background paper includes a section on Policy 25 'Developer Contributions' including how it is effective and justified in line with Planning Policy Statement 12 'Local Spatial Planning' (PPS12).

## **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE - MAIN ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

- 1.11** The main issues and challenges in relation to green infrastructure are:
- a. Working with the Peak District to reflect its particular characteristics and the benefits that come from proximity to the National Park.
  - b. Adapting and mitigating to climate change and promoting sustainable development.
  - c. Protecting people and property from flooding, and improving the quality of rivers and water.
  - d. Ensuring high quality design and sustainable construction of developments.
  - e. Maintaining Green Belt, protecting open land from inappropriate development and ensuring a portfolio of safeguarded land for future development.
  - f. How to best maximise the benefits of the local natural, historic and built environments, green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes.
  - g. Improving the quality of people's lives.
  - h. Making sure that Oldham plays to its strengths and pulls its weight in Greater Manchester and develops its links with Leeds.
  - i. Promoting community cohesion.
  - j. Make Oldham an address of choice.

- k. Promoting economic prosperity, addressing worklessness, tackling economic deprivation and promoting economic well-being.
- l. Maximise the potential of creative industries and the benefits that tourism and culture bring to the borough.
- m. Promote accessibility and sustainable transport choices such as public transport, cycling and walking.
- n. Encouraging healthy lifestyles, more play and physical exercise.
- o. Protecting our valued open spaces, and providing new quality open spaces, sports and recreation facilities.

**1.12** This background paper explains how we have addressed these issues through our joint DPD.

### **OPEN SPACES AND SPORTS - MAIN ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

**1.13** The main issues and challenges in relation to open spaces and sports are:

- a. Improving the quality of people's lives.
- b. Making sure that Oldham plays to its strengths and pulls its weight in Greater Manchester and develops its links with Leeds.
- c. Working with the Peak District to reflect its particular characteristics and the benefits that come from proximity to the National Park.
- d. Adapting and mitigating to climate change and promoting sustainable development.
- e. Protecting people and property from flooding, and improving the quality of rivers and water.
- f. Ensuring high quality design and sustainable construction of developments.
- g. Promoting community cohesion.
- h. Make Oldham an address of choice.
- i. Promoting economic prosperity, addressing worklessness, tackling economic deprivation and promoting economic well-being.
- j. Maximise the potential of creative industries and the benefits that tourism and culture bring to the borough.
- k. Promote accessibility and sustainable transport choices such as public transport, cycling and walking.
- l. Encouraging healthy lifestyles, more play and physical exercise.
- m. Protecting our valued open spaces, and providing new quality open spaces, sports and recreation facilities.
- n. How to best maximise the benefits of the local natural, historic and built environments, green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes.

**1.14** This background paper explains how we have addressed these issues through our joint DPD.

### **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT - MAIN ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

**1.15** The main issue and key challenge in relation the historic environment is:

- a. Improving the quality of people's lives.
- b. Making sure that Oldham plays to its strengths and pulls its weight in Greater Manchester and develops its links with Leeds.

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- c. Working with the Peak District to reflect its particular characteristics and the benefits that come from proximity to the National Park.
  - d. Adapting and mitigating to climate change and promoting sustainable development.
  - e. Securing energy conservation and efficiency and use of renewable energy, and low carbon developments.
  - f. Protecting people and property from flooding, and improving the quality of rivers and water.
  - g. Ensuring high quality design and sustainable construction of developments.
  - h. Promoting community cohesion.
  - i. Make Oldham an address of choice.
  - j. Promoting economic prosperity, addressing worklessness, tackling economic deprivation and promoting economic well-being.
  - k. Maximise the potential of creative industries and the benefits that tourism and culture bring to the borough.
  - l. How to best maximise the benefits of the local natural, historic and built environments, green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes.

**1.16** This background paper explains how we have addressed these issues through our joint DPD.

## 2 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

### CONTEXT

#### NATIONAL

##### **A Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests, Defra, 2007**

- 2.1** Key aims of the strategy include providing trees, woods and forests where they can contribute most in terms of environmental, economic and social benefits now and for future generations; and to protect and enhance the environmental resources of water, soil, air, biodiversity and landscapes, and the cultural and amenity value of trees and woodland. <sup>(1)</sup>

##### **Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, OPSI, 2006**

- 2.2** The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act came into force in 2006. This sets out the duty to conserve biodiversity stating "Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity". <sup>(2)</sup>

#### Planning Policy Statements

##### **Draft Planning Policy Statement 'Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment', DCLG, 2010**

- 2.3** The objectives of the draft Planning Policy Statement 'Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment' are to:
- a. Conserve and enhance the natural environment, including the quality, character and value of the landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and soil within rural and urban areas.
  - b. Minimise vulnerability of places, people and wildlife to the impacts of climate change and contribute to effective climate change adaptation measures by maintaining, creating and improving networks of green infrastructure within both urban and rural areas.
  - c. Deliver safe and attractive places to live, which respect the character of the area, promote health and wellbeing, and reduce social inequalities by ensuring that people have access to high quality open spaces, green infrastructure and sports, recreational and play spaces and facilities which are safely and easily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport;
  - d. Provide access and appropriate recreational opportunities in rural and coastal areas to enable urban and rural dwellers to enjoy the wider countryside. <sup>(3)</sup>

##### **Planning Policy Statement 1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (PPS1), DCLG, 2005**

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1 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Update I, page 37, Oldham Council, 2007.

2 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, page 14, part 3, section 40 (1), OPSI, 2006.

3 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Update III, pages 22-24, Oldham Council, 2010.

- 2.4** Planning Policy Statement 1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (PPS1) states that planning should facilitate and promote sustainable patterns of urban and rural development by protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities.<sup>(4)</sup>

**Planning Policy Statement Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1, DCLG, 2007**

- 2.5** The Supplement to PPS1 states that planning authorities should take into account "the contribution to be made from existing and new opportunities for open space and green infrastructure to urban cooling, sustainable drainage systems, and conserving and enhancing biodiversity".<sup>(5)</sup>
- 2.6** Planning authorities should expect new development to "provide public and private open space as appropriate so that it offers accessible choice of shade and shelter, recognising the opportunities for flood storage, wildlife and people provided by multifunctional greenspaces".<sup>(6)</sup>

**Planning Policy Statement 7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' (PPS7), DCLG, 2004**

- 2.7** The objectives of Planning Policy Statement 7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' (PPS7) include to raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas through the promotion of good quality, sustainable development that respects and, where possible, enhances local distinctiveness and the intrinsic qualities of the countryside; and continued protection of the open countryside for the benefit of all, with the highest level of protection for our most valued landscapes and environmental resources.<sup>(7)</sup>

**Planning Policy Statement 9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' (PPS9), DCLG, 2005**

- 2.8** The objectives of Planning Policy Statement 9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' (PPS9) are:<sup>(8)</sup>
- a. To promote sustainable development by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development, so that policies and decisions about the development and use of land integrate biodiversity and geological diversity with other considerations;
  - b. To conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England's wildlife and geology by sustaining, and where possible improving, the quality and extent of natural habitat and geological and geomorphological sites; the natural physical processes on which they depend; and the populations of naturally occurring species which they support;
  - c. To contribute to rural renewal and urban renaissance by:

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4 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, pages 41-42, Oldham Council, 2007.

5 Planning Policy Statement Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1, page 15, paragraph 24, DCLG, 2007.

6 Planning Policy Statement Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1, page 20, paragraph 42, Oldham Council, DCLG, 2007.

7 Planning Policy Statement 7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' (PPS7), page 6, DCLG, 2004.

8 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, pages 140-141, Oldham Council, 2007.

- i. enhancing biodiversity in green spaces and among developments so that they are used by wildlife and valued by people, recognising that healthy functional ecosystems can contribute to a better quality of life and to people's sense of wellbeing;
- ii. ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high quality environment.

## **Planning Policy Guidance 2 'Green Belts' (PPG2), DoE, 1995**

**2.9** The fundamental aim of Planning Policy Guidance 2 'Green Belts' (PPG2) is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The five purposes of including land in Green Belts are:

- a. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b. to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- c. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

**2.10** Once Green Belts have been defined, the use of land in them has a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives:

- a. provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- b. provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation near urban areas;
- c. retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
- d. improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
- e. secure nature conservation interest;
- f. retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses. <sup>(9)</sup>

## **NORTH WEST ENGLAND**

### **North West Regional Forestry Framework, North West Forestry Framework Partnership, 2005 <sup>(10)</sup>**

**2.11** The North West Regional Forestry Framework and its Action Plan (2008) contain the following actions: <sup>(11)</sup>

- a. Developing and supporting our woodland and forestry businesses
- b. Using woodlands and forestry to promote and improve the image of the region
- c. Maximising the benefits that trees and woodland bring to our region's biodiversity and landscape
- d. Using woodlands to improve our health, well-being and quality of life
- e. The role of trees and woodlands in adapting to the impacts of climate change

## **GREATER MANCHESTER**

9 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, Pages, 137-138, Oldham Council 2007.

10 The partnership includes the Forestry Commission, The Mersey Forest, The National School of Forestry (UCLAN), The National Trust, Health Development Agency, Forestry and Timber Association, National England, Sustainability Northwest, The Woodland Trust and Defra).

11 Northwest Regional Forestry Framework Progress Update, pages 5-26, North West Regional Forestry Framework, 2008.

## **Greater Manchester Strategy, AGMA, 2009**

- 2.12** Prosperity for all: The Greater Manchester Strategy sets out strategic priorities to achieve the vision:
- 2.13** "By 2020, the Manchester city region will have pioneered a new model for sustainable economic growth based around a more connected, talented and greener city region where the prosperity secured is enjoyed by the many and not the few." <sup>(12)</sup>
- 2.14** One of the priorities is 'A Sense of Place', which includes the objective: "An across-the-board improvement in the development and management of the city region's public realm, including design quality, its contribution to the visitor experience, cultural and heritage interpretation, signage and wayfaring and sustainability, particularly in the face of climate change and the urban heat island effect. This should be accompanied by a programme to increase green infrastructure and urban tree cover". <sup>(13)</sup>

## **Pennine Edge Forest Business Action Plan, 2004-13, Pennine Edge Forest, 2004**

- 2.15** The vision of Pennine Edge Forest is "The Pennine Edge Forest will be an investment in the landscape to benefit all who live, work, learn and play in our Forest. We will create a high quality sustainable landscape, providing a green gateway to the region, rich in recreational opportunity, visual attraction and biodiversity. We will create a positive environmental image to promote and encourage economic growth through investment at all levels in the Forest and Greater Manchester as a whole. We will support local communities, their quality of life and opportunity and their aspirations for their environment. We will connect communities with the natural world on their doorstep". <sup>(14)</sup>
- 2.16** Actions include to: <sup>(15)</sup>
- a. re-invent derelict, underused and neglected land;
  - b. revitalise river valleys;
  - c. enhance canal corridors;
  - d. revive rural landscapes;
  - e. manage landscape change;
  - f. add quality to new development; and
  - g. protect and enhance biodiversity.

## **Greater Manchester Studies/Research**

### **Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester, AGMA, 2008**

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12 Greater Manchester Strategy, page 5, AGMA, 2009.  
13 Greater Manchester Strategy, page 56, AGMA, 2009.  
14 Pennine Edge Forest Business Action Plan 2004-13 Executive Summary, page 2, Pennine Edge Forest, 2004.  
15 Pennine Edge Forest Business Action Plan 2004-13 Executive Summary, page 3, Pennine Edge Forest, 2004.

- 2.17** The Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework defines Green Infrastructure as “*part of Greater Manchester’s life support system. It is a planned and managed network of natural environmental components and green spaces that intersperse and connect our city centres, our towns and our rural fringe. In simple terms, it is our natural outdoor environment*”.<sup>(16)</sup>
- 2.18** Objectives are to shape the diverse outdoor environments of Greater Manchester so they fulfil the following “Growth-support” functions:<sup>(17)</sup>
- a. Flood risk management and climate change adaptation,
  - b. An ecological framework,
  - c. A sustainable movement network,
  - d. A sense of place,
  - e. River and Canal Corridor Management,
  - f. Positive image and a setting for growth,
  - g. Supporting urban regeneration,
  - h. Community, health and enjoyment.
- 2.19** The framework identifies that planning for Green Infrastructure is two fold:<sup>(18)</sup>
- a. Planning for assets
  - b. Planning for functions
- 2.20** Four key diagrams were prepared which illustrate where Green Infrastructure delivers (or could deliver) the growth support functions of a city region. The maps can be viewed via [http://www.agma.gov.uk/planning\\_housing\\_commission/index.html](http://www.agma.gov.uk/planning_housing_commission/index.html). These are:
- a. **Distinctive places** – this map identifies areas that have the greatest quality, character and/or visibility, for example the South Pennines, Alexandra Park, Huddersfield Narrow Canal and the Rochdale Canal Corridor. It also identifies Green Infrastructure investment is needed in town centres and along major transport corridors to raise the quality of public realm and mitigate adverse environmental quality.<sup>(19)</sup>
  - b. **Urban Renaissance** – this map shows areas of greatest need and areas, which are likely to undergo significant transformation in the next two decades, for example Oldham, including Housing Market Renewal. Green Infrastructure can help address the social and health needs of regeneration priority areas. Employment centres and strategic sites are also recognised as benefiting from top quality public realm and destination parks, such as Alexandra Park, can act as economic drivers. Derelict and Under Used Land (DUN) is identified as a priority for greening.<sup>(20)</sup>

16 Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester, page 8, paragraph 3.1, AGMA, 2008.

17 Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester, page 13, paragraph 4.5, AGMA, 2008.

18 Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester, page 26, paragraph 7.1, TEP, 2008.

19 Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester Summary Report, page 7, paragraph 6.8, AGMA, 2008.

20 Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester Summary Report, page 8, paragraph 6.9, AGMA, 2008.

- c. **Sustainable Movement** - this map shows areas with below average health, which the study states tend to be the areas poorly provided in terms of recreational sites and routes. In these areas there is a need to review and enhance routes such as recreational routes and appraise the quality and quantity of recreational space.<sup>(21)</sup>
- d. **Climate Change** – this map identifies carbon stores (moorlands and mosslands and woodlands) which should be conserved and managed; low carbon soils (Derelict and Underused land) which could be restored; communities vulnerable to heat stress; open land in or near flood zones which could reduce downstream risk and areas (residential and business) where Green Infrastructure could slow storm run-off.<sup>(22)</sup>

**2.21** The Greater Manchester Ecological Framework will also become a key diagram for Green Infrastructure investment.<sup>(23)</sup>

### Key diagram

**2.22** A key diagram was prepared which identifies the key Greater Manchester priorities for Green Infrastructure investment, which should be read in conjunction with the maps above. This shows:<sup>(24)</sup>

- a. Green Infrastructure Network consisting of river valleys, canal corridors, uplands, mosslands, civic spaces and major countryside resources. This can deliver the growth support functions such as flood management, recreation, sport, biodiversity and community activity.
- b. Major Road and Rail Corridors which are important for improving image.
- c. Canals (where not included in the Green Infrastructure Network) offer opportunities for access and environmental improvements to sustain growth.
- d. Economic centres, Growth Points and Regeneration Zones where the priority is to ensure access to, and management of the Green Infrastructure network and to ensure that new developments attain high environmental quality.
- e. Destination parks – the major multi-functional parks.

**2.23** Work on the Green Infrastructure Framework is still underway. This has recently included looking at case studies for delivering the key diagram. The next phase will look at detailed steps for taking the work forward and will incorporate Strategic Flood Risk Assessments.

### Greater Manchester Ecological Framework, AGMA, 2008

**2.24** The Greater Manchester Ecological Framework provides a spatial understanding of where habitat creation and repair is needed. The Framework explains that biodiversity across Greater Manchester is diverse but fragmented and establishing connections

21 Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester Summary Report, page 9, paragraph 6.10, AGMA, 2008.

22 Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester Summary Report, page 10, paragraph 6.11, AGMA, 2008.

23 Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester Summary Report, page 11, paragraph 6.14, AGMA, 2008.

24 Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester Summary Report, page 11, paragraph 6.13, AGMA, 2008.

between habitat patches could be difficult. The framework therefore identifies broad areas called 'Biodiversity Opportunity Areas' sharing similar ecological and land use characteristics where habitat creation and repair can be achieved.<sup>(25)</sup> These are:<sup>(26)</sup>

- a. **Most Natural Areas** – greenspaces where the largest blocks of natural and semi natural habitat remain
- b. **Private Gardens** - areas where gardens are the predominant biodiversity resource
- c. **Habitat Mosaic** – areas of high habitat diversity across relatively small areas
- d. **Locally Specific** – areas where there is currently a deficiency of biodiversity resource and/or a high degree of fragmentation
- e. **Nominated sites of high potential**; individual sites considered to have the most potential for large scale and visionary habitat creation and repair because of prevailing ecological value, geomorphological features and/or socio-economic opportunities.
- f. **Species Hotspots** – smaller areas/sites important for the creation of small scale habitat networks for particular species

**2.25** The framework explains that the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas have been mapped, although they should not be treated as fixed boundaries or areas of constraint. They each have different policy initiatives and nature conservation measures. This approach identifies actions for habitat creation and repair and where these actions should be applied but does not specify which specific habitat to recreate where.<sup>(27)</sup> Under district nominated sites the following two priority sites within the borough were identified for large-scale habitat creation and repair:<sup>(28)</sup>

- a. **South Pennine Moors** –Extensive opportunities for upland habitat restoration within and adjacent to the Special Area for Conservation. This area has been identified in other plans and strategies as of international importance and forms part of a habitat network.
- b. **Moston Brook Corridor** – A strategically important area of green space between Oldham and Manchester districts. A range of habitat types occurs across four distinct sites connected by the Moston Brook watercourse, including lowland broadleaved woodland, wet grassland and unimproved neutral grassland.

### **Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan, GMEU, 2009**

**2.26** The Greater Manchester Biodiversity Actions Plans (BAPs) were reviewed and published in 2009. They cover farmland (hares, hedgerows, grasslands, native woodland), water and wetlands (ponds and lodges, lowland mossland, water vole, great crested newt, willow tit, reedbeds and bittern), urban (black redstart and native black poplar) and uplands (twite).<sup>(29)</sup>

**2.27** The following BAPs (2003-2008) are still under review: bats, canals, floating water plantain and urban managed greenspace.<sup>(30)</sup>

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25 An Ecological Framework for Greater Manchester, page 2, AGMA, 2008.

26 An Ecological Framework for Greater Manchester, page 18, section 7, AGMA, 2008.

27 An Ecological Framework for Greater Manchester, page 19, section 8, AGMA, 2008.

28 An Ecological Framework for Greater Manchester, page 34, Table 1, AGMA, 2008.

29 Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plans, GMEU, 2009.

30 Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plans, GMEU, 2009.

## **Greater Manchester Local Geodiversity Action Plan, Greater Manchester Regionally Important Geological/ Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) Group, 2009**

**2.28** The Greater Manchester Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP) aims to conserve, preserve and enhance the geological and geomorphological heritage of Greater Manchester. <sup>(31)</sup> Geodiversity is recognised as having a strong relationship with biodiversity as it is the geology and geomorphology, which underpins the biodiversity and supports the habitat. <sup>(32)</sup> The Action Plan sets out a number of objectives, targets and actions which include the need to carry out an audit of geodiversity, raise awareness and monitor the LGAP. <sup>(33)</sup>

## **Peak District National Park Landscape Character Assessment, Peak District National Park Authority, 2008**

**2.29** Part of the borough falls within the Peak District National Park and therefore planning matters for this part of the borough are dealt with by the Peak District National Park Authority. As the borough borders with the Peak District it is important to ensure that the purpose, appearance and valued characteristics of the Peak Park, and views into and out of it, are not adversely affected.

**2.30** A Landscape Character Assessment for the Peak District National Park was completed in 2008. The character areas relevant to the borough include Dark Peak and Dark Peak Western Fringe. <sup>(34)</sup>

## **OLDHAM**

### **Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement, Oldham Partnership, 2008**

**2.31** Oldham's Sustainable Community Strategy (2008-2020) and Local Area Agreement (2008-2011) is prepared as a single document. The Sustainable Community Strategy has a section on Health and Well Being which has a vision "of a borough in which people enjoy long, healthy, active and fulfilling lives". <sup>(35)</sup> It recognises the importance of creating the environmental conditions which promote good health, such as a network of high quality greenspace, whilst also recognising that greenspace can contribute to making the borough a place of choice in terms of housing, economic investment, and tourism. It identifies the sustainability benefits of green space – helping to mitigate some of the effects of climate change such as increasing heat and flood risks. <sup>(36)</sup>

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31 A draft Local Geodiversity Action Plan for Greater Manchester, page 4, paragraph 1.2, Greater Manchester RIGS Group, 2009.

32 A draft Local Geodiversity Action Plan for Greater Manchester, page 4, paragraph 1.3, Greater Manchester RIGS Group, 2009.

33 A Local Geodiversity Action Plan for Greater Manchester, pages 14-16, Greater Manchester RIGS Group, 2009.

34 Peak District Landscape Character Assessment, Peak District National Park Authority, 2008.

35 Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement, page 20, section 3.2.3, Oldham Partnership, 2008

36 Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement, page 22, section 3.2.3, Oldham Partnership, 2008

**2.32** The Local Area Agreement has a number of indicators relating to green infrastructure and its functions. This includes National Indicator 8 Adult participation in sport; National Indicator 57 Children and young people's participation in high quality PE and sport; National Indicator 137 Healthy life expectancy at age 65; National Indicator 197 Improved local biodiversity - active management of local sites.<sup>(37)</sup>

**Corporate Plan, Oldham Council, 2009**

**2.33** The council's Corporate Plan (2009-2013) is based around four corporate objectives. Corporate Objective One is 'A confident place with safe neighbourhoods and clean, green spaces for all to enjoy'.<sup>(38)</sup> One of the indicators to deliver this objective is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions equivalent by 15% per Oldham resident (NI 186).<sup>(39)</sup>

**Oldham Beyond, Oldham Partnership, 2004**

**2.34** Oldham Beyond seeks to improve the borough's public realm and proposes a series of corridors through Oldham Town Centre including a Green Walk running from Oldham Edge to Alexandra Park linking the countryside to the town.<sup>(40)</sup>

**Oldham Landscape Character Assessment, Oldham Council, 2009**

**2.35** The Oldham Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) was published in August 2009. The Landscape Character Assessment is a method of describing an area in a systematic way. It describes elements that make a place distinctive. It does not assign values to landscapes.<sup>(41)</sup>

**2.36** The LCA report identifies that the borough has a unique and distinctive landscape character resulting from an interaction of natural and man-made influences.<sup>(42)</sup> Seven landscape areas were identified representing the character variations and these were further sub-divided into separate landscape types each having a principal landscape objective.<sup>(43)</sup>

**2.37** Table 1 below gives a summary of the landscape character areas and types and their objectives, along with sensitivity to change.<sup>(44)</sup>

**Table 1 Landscape Character**

<b>Landscape Character and type</b>	<b>Principal Landscape Objective</b>	<b>Sensitivity to change</b>
<b>1. South Pennine Moors</b>		
1.a Unenclosed	To conserve the open moorland character and its special sense	- Extremely vulnerable to human activity/ settlement.

37 Oldham's refreshed Local Area Agreement, Health and Well Being, pages 2-3, and Economic Prosperity, page 7, Oldham Partnership, March 2009.

38 Corporate Plan, page 8, Oldham Council, 2009.

39 Corporate Plan, page 12, Oldham Council, 2009.

40 Oldham Beyond, page 7, paragraph 8, Oldham Partnership and NWDA, 2004.

41 Oldham Landscape Character Assessment, page 3, paragraph 1.2, Oldham Council, 2009.

42 Oldham Landscape Character Assessment, page 14, paragraph 5.1, Oldham Council, 2009.

43 Oldham Landscape Character Assessment, page 15, paragraph 5.2, Oldham Council, 2009.

44 Oldham Landscape Character Assessment, pages 17-58, paragraph 5.2, Oldham Council, 2009.

<b>Landscape Character and type</b>	<b>Principal Landscape Objective</b>	<b>Sensitivity to change</b>
Moorland Plateau	of remoteness, isolation and wildness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Particularly sensitive to vertical structures such as masts, pylons, wind turbines etc.</li> <li>- Field enclosure would have a significant effect</li> </ul>
1.b Valley Headlands	To conserve the upland moorland character, with its remote, wild character and ensure current, or future, recreational use of the reservoirs does not have a negative impact on the landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extremely vulnerable to human activity/ settlement.</li> <li>- Reservoirs provide a available habitat which could be lowered by increased recreation.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Moorland Fringe</b>		
2.a Remote Moorland Fringe	To retain and strengthen the transitional 'upland' landscape character of the Moorland fringe, which acts as an important backdrop to the settlements of Oldham borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vulnerable to any form of physical change</li> </ul>
2.b Settled Moorland Fringe	To maintain the distinction between the Settled Moorland Fringes and the more sheltered valleys that cut into the moors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vulnerable to any form of physical change</li> <li>- Development pressure has potential to erode appearance of field enclosures and loss of sunken lanes.</li> <li>- Buildings styles that do not reflect the upland landscape character.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Chadderton Rolling Hills</b>		
3.a Rolling Pasture Land	To retain and strengthen the distinctive rolling landscape character surrounding the northern edge of the borough. The area acts as an important separation zone between the urban boundaries of Oldham and Rochdale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Under development pressure, particularly along the edges of existing settlement.</li> <li>- Further quarrying or landfill would have a dramatic landscape impact.</li> <li>- SBI's within the area that are at risk from development pressure</li> </ul>

Landscape Character and type	Principal Landscape Objective	Sensitivity to change
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider visual impact new development would have in terms of blocking views. Linear features such as windbreaks or forest planting may obscure views.</li> </ul>
3.b Rural Settlement	To conserve the distinct character associated with Chadderton Fold, Healds Green and Chadderton Heights through sensitive planning control and environmental improvements that conserve and enhance the visual amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Settlements at Chadderton Fold and Healds Green are sensitive to development pressure for new homes with modern styling.</li> <li>- River Irk and surrounding corridor require effective management</li> <li>- Increase road traffic would potentially affect the villages character</li> </ul>
3.c Recreation Land	To promote the amenity value of Tandle Hill Country Park, to conserve and manage its SBI status and to provide environmental improvements that benefit the quality and facilities of the park for visitors. To promote effective screening and new planting for Crompton and Royton Golf Club whilst retaining it's rolling landscape character.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of Crompton and Royton Gold Club would have a negative impact on visual amenity</li> <li>- Tandle Hill Country Park SBI which ahs potential to be susceptible to development or recreational pressure.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Tame Settled Valley</b>		
4.a Rural Valley Sides	Conserve the characteristic landscape of woodlands and in-bye pastures on the steep hillsides in order to preserve the enclosed character of the valley.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Built development on the valley sides will potentially have a negative impact when viewed from the valley bottom or opposite valley side.</li> <li>- Extension of the settlement boundaries up the valley sides would compromise the settlement pattern.</li> <li>- Control and guide farming to ensure field enclosures are preserved</li> <li>- Sunken lanes are vulnerable to change</li> </ul>

<b>Landscape Character and type</b>	<b>Principal Landscape Objective</b>	<b>Sensitivity to change</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Topographical changes to the valley sides to improve infrastructure would affect the visual quality of the valley</li> </ul>
4.b Urban Settlement	To preserve the characteristic linear settlement pattern within the narrow valley bottom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development should be compatible with the existing vernacular architecture</li> <li>- Spaces between settlements must, where possible, remain free of development.</li> <li>- Roofing materials are important due to views looking down into settlement.</li> </ul>
4.c Industrial Valley Bottom	To preserve the characteristic linear settlement pattern with its industrial heritage, along the narrow valley bottom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Industrial development should be small scale and sympathetic to the vernacular architecture</li> <li>- Change in use of existing industrial sites should be carefully controlled so that industrial heritage is preserved</li> </ul>
4.d Open Valley Bottom	To provide areas for informal recreation whilst maintaining open space between the Tame Valley settlements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development on open space must be considered against the need for informal recreation and the preservation of the gap between settlements.</li> </ul>
4.e Farmed Valley	Conserve the characteristic landscape of in-by-pastures on the hillsides leading to the upland pastures and moorland fringe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development should be in keeping with the settlement pattern and vernacular architecture.</li> <li>- Large-scale development would have a significant negative impact, therefore small-scale development dispersed to reflect the existing housing pattern is more appropriate.</li> <li>- Other development such as roads, road signage and street lighting should reflect rural character.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Beal Defined Valleys</b>		
5.a Farmed Valley Side	To retain the open landscape character of the valley sides and reduce the visual presence of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Further estate scale housing development will reduce the amount of valley side.</li> </ul>

Landscape Character and type	Principal Landscape Objective	Sensitivity to change
	industrial and warehouse buildings within this reasonably attractive scene.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small scale single dwellings or associated with farmstead need to be carefully designed.</li> <li>- Industrial land use or further landfill development along the edge of the valley sides will reduce the rural character</li> <li>- Conversion of farm buildings to alternative enterprises could change the rural character.</li> <li>- A prominent road cutting across the valley would alter its appearance.</li> </ul>
5.b Flat Valley Bottom	To retain the flat topography and wet ground conditions of this landscape character type so that its distinctive marshy conditions, ecological interest and visual difference are not lost.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drainage of the wet fields and mass planting of trees should be avoided.</li> <li>- Topographical changes by dumping material or creating building platforms would reduce the flat character.</li> </ul>
5.c Landscape in Transition	To plan for and deliver an attractive remediated landscape that compliments the surrounding landscape and that acts as a recreational resource for nearby communities that overlook the landfill site.	- Can be argued the area is a landfill site and has no sensitivity to change. However, future remediation work should ensure that the final topography should be as close to that of the proposed remediation measures.
5.d Recreational Land:	To maintain and where possible enhance the attractive amenity landscape and surrounding setting of this developing park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commercial activities such as landfill, mining or intrusive industrial activities would reduce the visual amenity.</li> <li>- Changes in surrounding agriculture and further tree planting would enclose the valley and reduce its open character.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Medlock Mixed Valley</b>		
6.a Recreational Land	To promote the amenity value of the existing recreational resource whilst seeking to provide environmental improvements to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of Golf Courses would have a negative impact on visual amenity.</li> <li>- Screen planting and footpath network around Crime Lake must be maintained.</li> </ul>

<b>Landscape Character and type</b>	<b>Principal Landscape Objective</b>	<b>Sensitivity to change</b>
	the visual quality for visitors and the local community.	- Wood Park would benefit from improvement whilst protecting existing habitats.
6.b Broad Valley Bottom	Conserve the characteristic open landscape of flat topography, pasture land with small, irregular field patterns, dispersed settlement pattern, and narrow winding lanes.	- Open space at Broad Rolling Valley should be considered against need for informal recreation and visual impact.  - Guide farming practices to ensure network of small irregular fields is maintained and encourage hedgerow planting.  - Manage farm diversification to prevent loss of agricultural character.
6.c Clough Valley	To conserve the wooded, steep sided character of the cloughs and promote the informal recreational opportunities they offer. To protect and enhance the heritage features of the landscape.	- Sensitively manage woodland to preserve sense of enclosure.  - Cloughs are sensitive to woodland felling or topographical changes to the banks.
6.d Suburban Settlement	To ensure the settlement at Woodhouses is restricted in development terms to prevent further urban sprawl within the open space of the Medlock Valley. Control the development of any new buildings so they benefit the appearance of Woodhouses.	- Development of housing outside the settlement's boundary would reduce the green belt's character.
6.e M60 Corridor	To ensure that the visual and noise impact of the M60 corridor is reduced through the use of effective screen planting.	- Earth banks and broadleaved tree planting should effectively screen the M60 from the Medlock Vale. Ensure sensitive management of the structure planting to safeguard effectiveness of this screen.
<b>7. Wharmton Undulating Uplands</b>		
7.a Urban Fringe Farmland	Conserve the characteristic open landscape of out-bye pastures,	- Any development will be visible and have a impact on the open character

Landscape Character and type	Principal Landscape Objective	Sensitivity to change
	dispersed settlement and narrow winding lanes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any development should be small scale and in keeping with the dispersed settlement pattern and vernacular architecture</li> <li>- Infrastructure improvements such as roads will reduce the areas' rural and remote feel.</li> </ul>
7.b Recreational Land	To promote effective screening and new planting for existing recreational land in order to retain the characteristic open out-bye pasture landscape of the Wharmton Undulating Uplands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Broadleaved planting to screen golf courses from surrounding out-bye pastures would reduce visual contrast.</li> </ul>
7.c Landscape in Transition	The screening of the quarries during their working life and the eventual restoration within the surrounding open upland landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development on the periphery of the quarry will be visible and impact on the open character.</li> <li>- Further expansion plans for the quarry site may impinge further on the landscape quality.</li> <li>- Developments must be considered carefully so it does not affect the long-term aim of restoring the site to an attractive upland scene.</li> </ul>

**2.38** The LCA report concludes that the Pennine Moorland dominates the rural landscape and that the 'close relationship and contrast between the wild uplands and urban areas is a special feature'.<sup>(45)</sup> "The Pennines and its urban centres are showing positive signs of regenerating the economy and environment of the region. The unique character is, however, vulnerable to land use changes and inappropriate development. It is important that the protection, enhancement and interpretation of the landscape are considered alongside measures that re-invigorate the economy".<sup>(46)</sup>

**Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit (GMAU), 2010**

**2.39** The Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Study has been undertaken by Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit (GMAU) as part of the Greater Manchester Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study. The study provides a characterisation of the visible historic environment of Oldham, identifying landscape

45 Oldham Landscape Character Assessment, page 64, paragraph 7.3, Oldham Council, 2009.

46 Oldham Landscape Character Assessment, page 65, paragraphs 7.6-7.8, Oldham Council, 2009.

character types and historic character areas across the borough and investigating the relationship between present and historic character. The study also highlights the importance and current condition of character areas and suggests how the findings can be addressed through the LDF.<sup>(47)</sup>

### **Oldham Biodiversity Action Plan, Oldham Council, 2007**

**2.40** Oldham Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was last updated in 2007. It covers bats, badger, tree sparrow, bullfinch, linnets, lapwing, song thrush, reed bunting, water vole, otter, spotted flycatcher, brown hare, skylark, great crested newt, floating water plantain, ponds, hedgerows, twite and fresh water crayfish.<sup>(48)</sup>

### **Oldham Sites of Biological Importance**

**2.41** Oldham has a total of 36 Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) totalling 1025.8 hectares. There is also a SBI which falls within the borough but also falls within the Peak Park and planning for that part of the borough is the responsibility of the Peak District National Park Authority.

**2.42** The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) periodically reviews the SBI's in Greater Manchester and notifies the Authority when there are changes, such as boundary changes, new SBIs or deleted SBIs. This is in line with the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit 'Selection Guidelines'.<sup>(49)</sup>

**2.43** Sites of Biological Importance have different grades which are set out below.<sup>(50)</sup>

- a. Grade A: of Regional or County Importance
- b. Grade B: of District Importance
- c. Grade C: of importance within the identical geographical locality

**2.44** The council adopts changes to SBI's each year to ensure that they are given protection by plan policy.

### **Oldham's Green Infrastructure Network**

**2.45** The joint DPD sets out details of Oldham's green infrastructure network. This consists of:

- a. Special Protection Area for Birds (SPA)
- b. Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- c. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- d. Sites of Biological Importance (SBI)
- e. Local Nature Reserves
- f. Other non-designated sites containing substantive nature conservation value of local significance
- g. Strategic recreational routes
- h. Green corridors and links
- i. Canal corridors

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47 Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit, 2010.

48 Oldham Biodiversity Action Plan, Oldham Council, 2007.

49 Greater Manchester Sites of Biological Importance Selection Guidelines, GMEU, 2008.

50 Greater Manchester Sites of Biological Importance Selection Guidelines, page 10, section 4, GMEU, 2008.

- j. River corridors
- k. Open spaces

### **Other Protected Open Land and Land Reserved for Future Development**

- 2.46** The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in 2006 explains that the 1986 Borough Plan established areas of land that were reserved to meet possible future development needs and this was incorporated into the 1996 UDP and then the 2006 UDP. The former designation of “Other Protected Open Land” was intended to protect two types of land not included within the Green Belt.<sup>(51)</sup>
- a. areas of open land that did not serve a Green Belt function but which were valuable as open spaces; and
  - b. areas of land that did perform a Green Belt function but which were earmarked for development, if needed, at a future date beyond the period covered by the UDP. These areas are also known as “safeguarded land”.
- 2.47** The UDP (2006) explains that this approach led to some confusion, as the 1996 UDP made no distinction between the two types of “Other Protected Open Land”. The 2006 UDP clarified this situation by specifically identifying land that is safeguarded for possible future development needs, designating it as “Land Reserved for Future Development”, and, in so doing, allowed for some degree of permanence in Green Belt boundaries. The remaining category of “Other Open Protected Land” was identified as recreational open space, or, in the case of farmland or informal recreational land that provides important breaks between built up areas, as newly defined Other Protected Open Land. The UDP (2006) made it clear that in future reviews of the UDP, 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 insufficient to meet needs.<sup>(52)</sup>
- 2.48** As part of the LDF preparation the council undertook a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The SHLAA:
- a. Identified land suitable for housing and informed the establishment of a 15 year housing land supply;
  - b. Provided a robust evidence base to guide preparation of the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations Development Plan Document;
  - c. Provided more certainty to house builders by identifying a range of sites with potential for housing; and
  - d. Informed decisions in terms of policy development, investment and further work in order to deliver the amount and range of housing required to support the regeneration of the borough.
- 2.49** The SHLAA assessed the possibility of urban extensions through including land designated as Other Protected Open Land (OPOL) and Land Reserved for Future Development (LRFD) within the assessment.<sup>(53)</sup>

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51 Oldham Unitary Development Plan, page 144, paragraph 11.49, Oldham Council, 2006.

52 Oldham Unitary Development Plan, page 145, paragraphs 11.50-11.51, Oldham Council, 2006.

53 Oldham's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, page 40, paragraph 12.14, Oldham Council, 2009.

**2.50** Following a site assessment OPOL was discounted from the SHLAA. The reason for sites being discounted was that "Due to its OPOL attributes it is not considered appropriate to identify land for potential residential development". In addition at OPOL 6 Moston Brook and Hole Bottom Clough it was noted 'Site also forms part of the Moston Brook Masterplan'.<sup>(54)</sup>

**2.51** The following LRFD sites were discounted for potential housing development for the following reasons;

- a. Lancaster Sports Club (LR5): "Site put forward as part of 'Call for Sites' exercise however preference is for retention and enhancement of open space use."<sup>(55)</sup>  
The Lancaster Sports Club also formed part of the Moston Brook Study, which recognised it was an important sports facility.<sup>(56)</sup>
- b. Bullcote Lane (LR10): Greenfield site designated LRFD that falls within PEZ 16.<sup>(57)</sup>

**2.52** The following LRFD were identified as being potential development sites:

- a. Haven Lane (North) (LR 7): Residential development may be achievable in the long term.<sup>(58)</sup>
- b. Haven Lane (South) (LR 8): Residential development may be achievable in the long-term.<sup>(59)</sup>
- c. Warren Lane (LR 6) Residential development may be achievable in the long-term.<sup>(60)</sup>
- d. Foxdenton (LR 3 and 4). Residential development on up to 25% of the site may be achievable as part of an employment led mixed-use scheme<sup>(61)</sup>

**2.53** An Employment Land Review was completed in March 2010, providing the justification for the release of OPOL 3 and LRFD (LR 3 and LR 4) at Foxdenton. The report explained that in order to address a shortfall of employment land, it is essential for Foxdenton, as the largest site, to be allocated for employment through the LDF and the Site Allocations DPD. It went on to conclude that if Foxdenton is not taken forward for employment development, Oldham will have a potential deficit of employment land up to 2026, and will have to rely on Manchester City Centre and our neighbouring district's key sites to provide opportunities for the workforce in the future, and/or rely on small sites which will not help with the borough's economic transformation.<sup>(62)</sup>

**2.54** Table 2 below summarises the changes to OPOL and LRFD from the UDP to the LDF:

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54 Oldham's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, pages 142-166, tables 72, 76, 78, 80 -86 and 88, Oldham Council, 2009.

55 Oldham's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, page 149, table 78, Oldham Council, 2009.

56 Moston Brook Feasibility Study, page 14, paragraph 3.1.4, Groundwork Oldham and Rochdale, 2008.

57 Oldham's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, page 156, table 82, Oldham Council, 2009.

58 Oldham's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, page 109, table 67, Oldham Council, 2009.

59 Oldham's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, page 118, table 69, Oldham Council, 2009.

60 Oldham's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, page 93, table 52, Oldham Council, 2009.

61 Oldham's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, page 95, table 55, Oldham Council, 2009.

62 Oldham Employment Land Review, page 8, paragraph 1.19, Oldham Council, 2009.

**Table 2 Summary of changes to OPOL and LRFD**

<b>Site</b>	<b>OPOL/LRFD</b>	<b>LDF approach</b>
Foxdenton	LR3	Release for employment needs with a small amount of housing
Foxdenton	LR4	Release for employment needs with a small amount of housing
Foxdenton	OPOL 3	Release for employment needs with a small amount of housing
Lancaster Sports Club	LR5	Release for sports development
Warren Lane	LR6	Release for housing development
Haven Lane (North)	LR7	Release for housing development
Haven Lane (South)	LR8	Release for housing development

**2.55** LRFD will remain at Bullcote Lane (LR10) and the remaining OPOL will remain.

## **OLDHAM'S APPROACH**

### **MAIN ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

**2.56** The joint DPD spatial portrait draws out the borough's characteristics and from this we have been able to establish the main issues and challenges facing the borough. This includes:

- a. Working with the Peak District to reflect its particular characteristics and the benefits that come from proximity to the National Park.
- b. Adapting and mitigating to climate change and promoting sustainable development.
- c. Protecting people and property from flooding, and improving the quality of rivers and water.
- d. Ensuring high quality design and sustainable construction of developments.
- e. Maintaining Green Belt, protecting open land from inappropriate development and ensuring a portfolio of safeguarded land for future development.
- f. How to best maximise the benefits of the local natural, historic and built environments, green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes.
- g. Improving the quality of people's lives.
- h. Making sure that Oldham plays to its strengths and pulls its weight in Greater Manchester and develops its links with Leeds.
- i. Promoting community cohesion.
- j. Make Oldham an address of choice.
- k. Promoting economic prosperity, addressing worklessness, tackling economic deprivation and promoting economic well-being.
- l. Maximise the potential of creative industries and the benefits that tourism and culture bring to the borough.
- m. Promote accessibility and sustainable transport choices such as public transport, cycling and walking.

- n. Encouraging healthy lifestyles, more play and physical exercise.
- o. Protecting our valued open spaces, and providing new quality open spaces, sports and recreation facilities.

## ISSUES SURVEY

**2.57** The 'Issues Survey' recognised that the borough is one of physical contrasts, including the eastern part of the borough containing significant areas of open countryside with a settlement pattern of densely settled river valleys, typical of the South Pennines. The paper also set out the issue that land within the borough is not an unlimited resource, and competing demands have to be balanced in terms of environmental, social and economic effects. It set out that future development needs, including housing; employment and open space need to be addressed.<sup>(63)</sup>

**2.58** In relation to green infrastructure the 'Issues Survey' at this stage asked some key questions, as follows:<sup>(64)</sup>

- a. Whether some existing protected open land - Green Belt, safeguarded land, public open space – should be released for future housing development needs if these cannot be located on other sites.
- b. Whether some existing protected open land - Green Belt, safeguarded land, public open space – should be released for future employment development needs to meet the demand for inward investment and the creation of new jobs if these cannot be located on other sites
- c. Whether it is important that existing greenspace / play space should be protected and enhanced as a way of helping to improve the health of the borough's children and young people
- d. Whether there are sufficient good quality open spaces that are accessible for everyone to exercise and relax.

**2.59** In response to the above:<sup>(65)</sup>

- a. The majority of respondents believed that existing protected open land should not be released for housing development or employment development needs.
- b. The majority of respondents were of the opinion that existing greenspace and play space should be protected and enhanced.
- c. A slight majority of all respondents were of the opinion that there are sufficient good quality open spaces within their local neighbourhood.

**2.60** Other key issues that respondents suggested the joint DPD should address were:<sup>(66)</sup>

- a. The need to protect, enhance and conserve the natural environment, including biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape;
- b. The need to address nature conservation designations;
- c. The desire for the Peak District National Park boundary to be amended
- d. The need to address large ex-industrial sites in high amenity areas.

63 Issues Survey: Analysis of Responses, Appendix 1, page 24, Oldham Council, 2007.

64 Issues Survey: Analysis of Responses, Appendix 1, pages 26-28, questions 4, 7, 9 and 11, Oldham Council, 2007.

65 Issues Survey: Analysis of Responses, Appendix 1, pages 11, 14, 16 and 18, Oldham Council, 2007.

66 Issues Survey: Analysis of Responses, Appendix 1, page 22, question15, Oldham Council, 2007.

## ISSUES AND OPTIONS

### Evidence Base

**2.61** At this stage the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plans (many of which have since been updated) and Oldham Biodiversity Action Plans were available. A Landscape Character Assessment had also been completed for Oldham (the key findings of this were published in 2009).

### Spatial Portrait

**2.62** The spatial portrait at 'Issues and Options' stage described the borough's environment as "an area of physical contrasts". It described the landscape, woodland cover, waterways and nature conservation.<sup>(67)</sup> Comments on the spatial portrait included a wish to have more detail on the borough's landscape character<sup>(68)</sup>

### Issues and Challenges

**2.63** Within the 'Issues and Challenges' section a number of issues relating to Green Infrastructure were identified. One of these issues was regarding land designated in the UDP as 'Land Reserved for Future Development' (LRFD), equating to 40 hectares. That is land safeguarded to meet future development needs in order to maintain the protection of the Green Belt. The issue was whether the joint DPD needed to release all, or some of, this safeguarded land to meet the borough's development needs or whether the LRFD should continue to be safeguarded beyond the period of this joint DPD to meet the borough's longer-term development needs. The joint DPD also had to consider whether alternative or additional areas should be identified as safeguarded land.<sup>(69)</sup>

**2.64** The UDP also designated land called 'Other Protected Open Land' (OPOL) which is open land that whilst not serving the purposes of Green Belt, provides locally important open areas. This stage considered whether OPOL land should be retained or whether some should be released to meet the borough's development needs. The joint DPD also had to consider whether alternative or additional areas should be identified as protected open land.<sup>(70)</sup>

**2.65** The Issues and Challenges section highlighted the need for the joint DPD to support a healthy and sustainable rural economy whilst protecting against development, which adversely affects the character of rural areas.<sup>(71)</sup> It also addressed biodiversity and nature designations present within the borough of local, national and international importance. It described the European designations that fall partly within the Borough, these being the Rochdale Canal which is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the South Pennine Moors which is a SAC and a Special Protection Area (SPA). The challenge set out was the need to ensure that the nature conservation value of these sites is protected but also wherever possible enhanced.<sup>(72)</sup>

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67 Issues and Options, pages 21-22, paragraph 5.6-5.8, Oldham Council, 2007.

68 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 11, National Trust, Oldham Council, 2008.

69 Issues and Options, page 38, paragraph 6.55, Oldham Council, 2007.

70 Issues and Options, page 38, paragraph 6.56, Oldham Council, 2007.

71 Issues and Options, page 39, paragraph 6.57, Oldham Council, 2007.

72 Issues and Options, page 39, paragraph 6.58, Oldham Council, 2007.

- 2.66** Landscape was also addressed at this stage and the issue of local landscape quality being affected by inappropriately designed development and by insensitively located development.<sup>(73)</sup>
- 2.67** We also sought to address woodland cover in the borough which is below the national and regional averages, at 3% coverage compared to 9% for England as a whole, although recognising that opportunities for tree planting are restricted. The paper set out the council's Woodland Strategy and work the council is involved in to increase and improve the management of woodland. The council is also a partner in the Pennine Edge Forest initiative, a community forest initiative aiming to improve the environmental image and quality of life of the area.<sup>(74)</sup>
- 2.68** Finally, we sought to address how we plan for and manage green corridors in the borough consisting of linear landscape features such as river valleys and canals which provide recreational opportunities, and habitats and corridors for wildlife.<sup>(75)</sup>
- 2.69** In response to the 'Issues and Challenges' section comments included:
- a. Mixture of views between respondents favouring release of Land Reserved for Future Development and Other Protected Open Land and some Green Belt for residential and employment needs and respondents of the view that all LRFD and OPOL should be safeguarded.<sup>(76)</sup>
  - b. Need to protect and enhance green corridors and spaces, biodiversity, nature designations and geodiversity.<sup>(77)</sup>
  - c. Need for a Landscape Character Assessment and for new developments to respect landscape character.<sup>(78)</sup>
  - d. Need to support canal corridor enhancement and tourism and recreation facilities.<sup>(79)</sup>

## Vision

- 2.70** The vision at 'Issues and Options' stage referred to 'A borough transformed to achieve greater community cohesion, economic growth and prosperity, and sustainable development...'where 'its natural, built and historic environments are valued'.<sup>(80)</sup>
- 2.71** Comments on the Vision included:
- a. Wish to see natural environments not only valued but also conserved, enhanced and promoted.<sup>(81)</sup>

73 Issues and Options, page 41, paragraph 6.64, Oldham Council, 2007.

74 Issues and Options, page 41, paragraph 6.65, Oldham Council, 2007.

75 Issues and Options, pages 41-42, paragraph 6.66, Oldham Council, 2007.

76 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, pages 18-37, Oldham Council, 2008

77 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, pages 19-20, Environment Agency and Natural England, Oldham Council, 2008

78 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, pages 21, 24-26 and 29, National trust, Saddleworth Parish Council, Greenfield and Grasscroft Residnets Association, Saddleworth White Rose Society, Saddleworth and Lees Community Council, Oldham Council, 2008

79 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, pages 30-31, British Waterways, Oldham Council, 2008

80 Issues and Options, page 58, paragraph 7.1, Oldham Council, 2007.

81 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 38, Environment Agency, Oldham Council, 2008.

- b. Need to refer to biodiversity, geodiversity, conservation and enhancement of landscape character, and access to the countryside and green spaces for recreation.<sup>(82)</sup>
- c. Need to retain all green spaces to help residents lead healthy and longer lives.<sup>(83)</sup>
- d. The importance and future role of the borough's environmental assets needs greater emphasis.<sup>(84)</sup>
- e. The need to refer to Pennine landscapes.<sup>(85)</sup>

## Strategic Objectives

**2.72** The joint DPD identified a number of strategic objectives to set the future direction for the LDF. Strategic Objective 4 (SO4) aimed "To improve and value the borough's environment by: i. conserving and enhancing the borough's landscapes and townscapes, and its natural and built assets and heritage; and ii. protecting the diverse and environmentally sensitive open parts of the borough, including Green Belt and nature conservation areas, such as the Rochdale Canal and the South Pennine Moors, from inappropriate development, whilst encouraging healthy, sustainable rural communities, including those in the Saddleworth villages and surrounding areas."<sup>(86)</sup>

**2.73** Comments on strategic objective 4 and in relation to green infrastructure included:

- a. Wish to see the diverse and environmentally sensitive open parts of the borough enhanced as well as protected. This would conform with PPS9 and Oldham' BAP.<sup>(87)</sup>
- b. Suggested amendments to SO4 to read: (i) "conserving and enhancing the character and quality of the borough's landscape...". (ii) "protecting, conserving and enhancing the diverse and environmentally sensitive parts of the borough...". Additional objective suggested: "Conserving and enhancing the borough's biodiversity and geodiversity". Suggested SO5 include green spaces.<sup>(88)</sup>
- c. SO4 should be worded: "To protect, enhance and value the borough's environment...". It is considered that the first bullet point needs supplementing in order to pick up the importance of 'characterisation' and the wider settings of these assets.<sup>(89)</sup>

## Core Policies

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- 82 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 38, Natural England, Oldham Council, 2008.
  - 83 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 39, Malcolm Walker, Oldham Council, 2008.
  - 84 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 39, National Trust, Oldham Council, 2008.
  - 85 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 41, Martin Arthur, Oldham Council, 2008.
  - 86 Issues and Options, page 60, paragraph 8.1, Oldham Council, 2007.
  - 87 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 46, Environment Agency, Oldham Council, 2008.
  - 88 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 47, Natural England, Oldham Council, 2008.
  - 89 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 47, National Trust, Oldham Council, 2008.

**2.74** 'Sustainability/Sustainable Development and Locations' (CP1) was put forward as a topic area for future policy. As part of this topic area it sought 'to provide spatial framework for Green Belt, nature conservation and other protected land designations'.<sup>(90)</sup> There were no specific comments on CP1 relating to protected open land.

**2.75** The topic area 'Natural and Built Environments' (CP9) was proposed as a core policy. The 'Issues and Options' stated the policy may 'provide a framework for the borough's natural and built environments including conservation, landscape character, townscapes, and historical, archaeological and cultural assets and heritage, and green infrastructure.'<sup>(91)</sup> Comments on this topic area included:

- a. Need for the policy to be separated into natural environment and the built environment. Would welcome inclusion of a policy topic area for protected and priority species.<sup>(92)</sup>
- b. Need to include the wider settings of designated environmental assets, including Peak Park.<sup>(93)</sup>
- c. Need to address preserving and enhancing the historic environment, understanding and respecting local context, reinforcing local distinctiveness, promoting good design, and heritage led regeneration.<sup>(94)</sup>

**2.76** 'Habitats Regulations/Appropriate Assessment' (CP10) was also proposed as a topic area for a core policy.<sup>(95)</sup> This generated no comments.

### **Development Control Policy**

**2.77** 'Protecting Landscape and Natural Resources' (DC12) was proposed as a development management policy intended to protect landscape character and ensure the prudent use and sustainable management of natural resources.<sup>(96)</sup> The following comments were received on this proposed policy:

- a. Need to include conservation and enhancement of landscape character.<sup>(97)</sup>
- b. Need to consider the setting of the Peak Park.<sup>(98)</sup>

**2.78** 'Protecting Nature Conservation' (DC13) was also proposed as a development management policy intended to protect habitats, species and geological sites.<sup>(99)</sup> Comments we received on this were:

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90 Issues and Options, page 71, Oldham Council, 2007.  
91 Issues and Options, page 73, Oldham Council, 2007.  
92 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 65, Natural England, Oldham Council, 2008.  
93 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 65, National Trust, Oldham Council, 2008.  
94 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 66, English Heritage, Oldham Council, 2008.  
95 Issues and Options, page 74, Oldham Council, 2007.  
96 Issues and Options, page 77, Oldham Council, 2007.  
97 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 69, Natural England, Oldham Council, 2008.  
98 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 70, National Trust, Oldham Council, 2008.  
99 Issues and Options, page 78, Oldham Council, 2007.

- a. Need to enhance habitats and species rather than solely protect.<sup>(100)</sup>
- b. Would expect the policy to secure gains for the natural environment.<sup>(101)</sup>
- c. Need to include the approach to the settings of assets and should consider how wildlife corridors can be enhanced and extended.<sup>(102)</sup>

## PREFERRED OPTIONS

### Evidence Base

**2.79** By 'Preferred Options' stage the Green Infrastructure Guide for the North West; Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester; An Ecological Framework for Greater Manchester; and the Peak District National Park Landscape Character Assessment had been published. A draft Oldham Landscape Character Assessment was also available.

### Spatial Portrait

**2.80** The spatial portrait at 'Preferred Options' stage described the borough's environment including landscape, protected land, strategic recreational routes and nature conservation sites.<sup>(103)</sup> Comments on the spatial portrait included:

- a. Welcome reference to the Rochdale and Huddersfield Narrow Canal<sup>(104)</sup>
- b. Would be appropriate to refer to the seven landscape character types identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) with some flavour of the 'Forces for Change' section and the concluding remarks<sup>(105)</sup>
- c. Recommend making reference to the specific catchments of the Irk, Medlock and Beal.<sup>(106)</sup>

### Vision

**2.81** The vision was amended to take on board comments received at 'Issues and Options' stage to read "Oldham will be a borough transformed by ...sustainable development...where ...it's natural, build and historic environments, green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes and valued, protected, conserved and enhanced and the positive features and characteristics of its places maintained".<sup>(107)</sup> Comments on the vision included:

- a. Suggest either adding separate social and environmental aspirations, or amending the introductory sentence to embrace all the elements of sustainable development

100 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 69, Environment Agency, Oldham Council, 2008

101 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 69, Natural England, Oldham Council, 2008

102 Issues and Options Public Schedule of Representations and Responses, page 70, National Trust, Oldham Council, 2008

103 Preferred Options, pages 31-32, Oldham Council, 2007.

104 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 24, British Waterways, Oldham Council, 2009.

105 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 24, National Trust, Oldham Council, 2009.

106 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 25, Environment Agency, Oldham Council, 2009.

107 Preferred Options, page 36, paragraph 6.1, Oldham Council, 2007.

- by including the wording previously recommended: " the safeguarding and enhancement of its landscapes, heritage and nature conservation assets ".<sup>(108)</sup>
- b. Welcome the revisions to the vision. Would value mention of the value of access to good quality countryside and green spaces for recreation purposes for the borough population.<sup>(109)</sup>

## Strategic Objectives

**2.82** At 'Preferred Options' Strategic Objective 1 (SO1) was amended to take on board the comments received at Issues and Options 'To mitigate and adapt to climate change, and to promote sustainable development and inclusive communities in the borough by: iii maintaining the positive features and characteristics that add to the borough's local identity. SO4 was amended 'To improve and value the borough's environment by ii protecting, conserving and enhancing the character and quality of the borough's landscapes and townscapes, its natural assets and heritage, green infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity, and its built heritage and historic environment'<sup>(110)</sup>  
Comments received on the strategic objectives includes:

- a. SO1 - the change to the introductory sentence to refer to climate change mitigation and adaptation is welcomed and adequately addresses the Trust's earlier submission<sup>(111)</sup>
- b. SO4 - a number of changes made are supported. Would like reference to protecting the Green Belt, characterisation work, and the protection of the wider settings of heritage assets.<sup>(112)</sup>

## Policy Directions:

**2.83** At 'Preferred Options' stage the policies were re-packaged and were as follows:

- a. Policy Direction 19: Green Infrastructure
- b. Policy Direction 20: Protecting Natural Environmental Assets
- c. Policy Direction 21: Protecting Open Land

## Policy Direction 19: Green Infrastructure

**2.84** The 'Green Infrastructure' policy direction sought to identify, protect and enhance a multi-functional green infrastructure network. The policy set out that this network would consist of nature designations of European and National significance, Sites of Biological Importance and non designated sites containing substantial nature conservation value as well as recreational routes, canal corridors and open spaces.<sup>(113)</sup>

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108 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 30, National Trust, Oldham Council, 2009.

109 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 33, Natural England, Oldham Council, 2009.

110 Preferred Options, pages 59-60, paragraph 8.1, Oldham Council, 2007.

111 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 43, National Trust, Oldham Council, 2009.

112 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 43, National Trust, Oldham Council, 2009.

113 Preferred Options, pages 93-94, policy 19, Oldham Council, 2007.

**2.85** The policy direction made reference to a large number of plans and strategies that the policy would have regard to including the Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework; Greater Manchester Ecological Framework; Greater Manchester Local Geodiversity Action Plan and Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan. Also the Oldham Biodiversity Action Plan; Pennine Edge Forest initiative; Oldham's Landscape Character Assessment and the Peak District National Park Landscape Character Assessment. It also set out that the policy would provide a framework for the implementation of projects, which significantly contribute, to the borough's Green Infrastructure.<sup>(114)</sup>

**2.86** Responses on the Green Infrastructure policy at 'Preferred Options' stage included:

- a. General support for the Green Infrastructure policy
- b. Cross reference to the Open Space, Sport and Recreation SPD would be helpful (the joint DPD now refers to the Open Space Study)<sup>(115)</sup>
- c. The policy direction would be enhanced by encapsulating the multi-functional benefits of greenspaces. (The joint DPD Green Infrastructure supporting text outlines these benefits)<sup>(116)</sup>
- d. It is important that the outcomes from the landscape character work are fully utilised and opportunities to enhance and reinforce the distinctive elements of the landscapes of the borough and its surroundings are sought (The Green Infrastructure and Protecting Natural Environmental Assets policies addresses this).<sup>(117)</sup>
- e. The character assessment should assign values to different landscape types.<sup>(118)</sup>
- f. The need to map key habitat corridors and identify key areas for habitat creation or restoration (The Green Infrastructure and Protecting Natural Environmental Assets policies address this).<sup>(119)</sup>
- g. The need to use the findings of the SFRA to inform the issue of flood risk and GI (The Green Infrastructure and Protecting Natural Environmental Assets policies address this).<sup>(120)</sup>
- h. The need to protect and enhance the canal corridors and support canal side regeneration (This is addressed in the Protecting Natural Environmental Assets policy).<sup>(121)</sup>

## **Policy Direction 20: Protecting Natural Environmental Assets**

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114 Preferred Options, pages 93-94, policy 19, Oldham Council, 2007.

115 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 217, Sport England, Oldham Council, 2009.

116 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 217, National Trust, Oldham Council, 2009.

117 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 217, National Trust, Oldham Council, 2009.

118 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 218, Saddleworth Parish Council, Oldham Council, 2009.

119 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, pages 218-219, Environment Agency, Oldham Council, 2009.

120 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, pages 218-219, Environment Agency, Oldham Council, 2009.

121 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 219, British Waterways, Oldham Council, 2009.

**2.87** Protecting Natural Environment Assets policy direction sought to protect existing natural environmental assets and interests and, where appropriate, make provision for new and enhanced habitats. At this stage work on green infrastructure had evolved and the policy direction looked at ensuring that new developments maximise opportunities to maintain or enhance green infrastructure, including its functions. It also set out to protect and enhance features of nature conservation value and species protected by law or other species identified in the Biodiversity Action Plans; and ensure that development has regard to local landscape character. It also addressed canal corridors.<sup>(122)</sup>

**2.88** Responses on the Protecting Natural Environmental Assets policy at 'Preferred Options' stage included:

- a. General support for the policy
- b. The need to ensure that policies do not prejudice the potential for canal side regeneration. (The Protecting Natural Environmental Assets policy addresses this).<sup>(123)</sup>
- c. The need to ensure that the policy encompass all key wildlife habitats, and seeks to actively protect and preferably enhance these.<sup>(124)</sup>
- d. There may be significant opportunity to open up and enhance existing culverted or channelised watercourse as part of any regeneration proposal. We would seek where the opportunity arises the removal of existing buildings that currently encroach right up to bank top of watercourses, which detract from the river corridor, prevent access and degrade habitat value (The water and flooding policy addresses this).<sup>(125)</sup>
- e. Wish to see local character conserved and enhanced (The Green Infrastructure and Protecting Natural Environmental Assets Policies address this).<sup>(126)</sup>
- f. Wish to see canal corridors protected for their value as a biodiversity resource (The Protecting Natural Environmental Asset policy makes reference to biodiversity value).<sup>(127)</sup>

## **Policy Direction 21: Protecting Open Land**

**2.89** 'Protecting Open Land' was proposed as a policy direction to protect open land, including Green Belt, Other Protected Open Land (OPOL) and Land Reserved for Future Development (LRFD). This was previously under 'Sustainability/ Sustainable Development and Locations' (CP1).

**2.90** At this stage the council was able to clarify the proposed position on protected land. The supporting text to the Protecting Open Land Policy Direction explained that the preferred way forward proposed that some of the land currently identified as LRFD and OPOL be released to allow the borough to meet its development needs. It stated

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122 Preferred Options, page 95, policy 20, Oldham Council, 2007.

123 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 220, British Waterways, Oldham Council, 2009.

124 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 220, Environment Agency, Oldham Council, 2009.

125 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, pages 220-221, Environment Agency, Oldham Council, 2009.

126 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 221, Natural England, Oldham Council, 2009.

127 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 221, Natural England, Oldham Council, 2009.

that LRFD and OPOL at Foxdenton could potentially be released for employment development and a small amount of housing. LRFD at Haven Lane and Warren Lane could potentially be released for housing development. LRFD at Lancaster Sports Club could potentially be released for sports development.<sup>(128)</sup> The policy direction itself therefore dealt with the remaining safeguarded land.

- 2.91** The policy direction set out that Green Belt developments would only be permitted where they are in line with national policy but that the council may set out a locally important criteria to protect the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt, particularly in relation to the sub-division of existing dwellings, garden extensions, replacement dwellings and re-use of existing buildings in the Green Belt.<sup>(129)</sup>
- 2.92** The policy proposed that development on OPOL would only be permitted where it would not have a detrimental impact on the local distinctiveness of the land and that a criteria to assess developments may be developed. The policy direction proposed that the remaining LRFD (Bullcote Lane) would be retained for future development needs beyond the life of the LDF.<sup>(130)</sup>
- 2.93** Responses on the Protecting Open Land policy direction at 'Preferred Options' stage included:
- a. General support for the policy
  - b. Request for the policy to safeguard and enhance the additional qualities of the Green Belt, particularly landscape character the wider setting of the Peak District National Park (The Green Infrastructure policy and Protecting Natural Environmental Asset policy addresses landscape quality and makes reference to the Peak Park).<sup>(131)</sup>
  - c. New OPOL sites should be created to protect existing greenfield sites and open space (The Protecting Open Land policy addresses this).<sup>(132)</sup>
  - d. Support for the release of some LRFD and OPOL (The joint DPD sets out the council's approach).<sup>(133)</sup>
  - e. Request that OPOL and Green Belt criteria are not too restrictive and have a fair degree of flexibility built in. Request to allow additional dwellings within and to existing small hamlets and settlements in the Green Belt and OPOL where infrastructure is in place and where there is no detriment to the openness of the landscape (The Protecting Open Land policy relies on national guidance for development in the Green Belt).<sup>(134)</sup>
  - f. Request for development to have regard to the restoration strategy in place for the Moston Brook Corridor (The Green Infrastructure policy states that the council will support the implementation of the Moston Brook project. This would include the restoration strategy).<sup>(135)</sup>

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128 Preferred Options, page 96, paragraph 9.179, Oldham Council, 2007.

129 Preferred Options, page 96, policy 21, Oldham Council, 2007.

130 Preferred Options, page 96, policy 21, Oldham Council, 2007.

131 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 221, National Trust, Oldham Council, 2009.

132 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 221, Saddleworth Parish Council, Oldham Council, 2009.

133 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 222, Oldham Council, 2009.

134 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, pages 222-239, Oldham Council, 2009.

135 Preferred Options: Public Schedule of comments and responses, page 239, Environment Agency, Oldham Council, 2009.

## REFINING OPTIONS

### Evidence Base

**2.94** By 'Refining Options' stage, updated Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plans, a Greater Manchester Geodiversity Action Plan and the final Oldham Landscape Character Assessment were available. A Greater Manchester and Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study was also available.

### Spatial Portrait

**2.95** Within the Refining Options introduction it was recognised that "Our local natural, built and historic environments play a crucial part in so many aspects of life in the borough".<sup>(136)</sup> The spatial portrait was included within the Appendices and was much more descriptive of the borough's environment including details such as the seven landscape character areas and their sub areas within the borough.<sup>(137)</sup>

### Vision

**2.96** The Vision at 'Refining Options' was much more descriptive and included the vision for protected open land and the natural environment, including green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes and their settings both boroughwide and within different parts of the borough.<sup>(138)</sup>

### Strategic Objectives

**2.97** The strategic objectives at 'Refining Options' stage were amended in light of the comments received at 'Preferred Options' stage and as a result of the evidence base being at a more advanced stage. Changes included amending Strategic Objective 4 to include protecting the Green Belt and ensuring appropriate land management, and identifying Other Protected Open Land and Land Reserved for Future Development. SO4 also made more reference to landscapes.<sup>(139)</sup>

### Policies

#### Policy 6 Green Infrastructure

**2.98** At 'Refining Options' stage it was made clear that the 'Green Infrastructure' policy was a core policy. This policy built on the earlier Green Infrastructure policy at the 'Preferred Options', adding detail. It expanded upon the network of green infrastructure to include the borough's green corridors and links and river corridors. It continued to make reference to the strategies listed at Preferred Options including the Open Space Study<sup>(140)</sup>

**2.99** The Green Infrastructure Framework findings fed into the policy seeking developments to make a positive contribution to Green Infrastructure assets and its functions in priority areas identified and elsewhere where there are deficiencies in quantity, quality, accessibility and functionality. The supporting text expands on this and notes the key

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136 Refining Options, page 4, paragraph 2.5, Oldham Council, 2010.

137 Refining Options, page 112, Appendix 2, paragraph A.26 - A2.9, Oldham Council, 2010.

138 Refining Options, pages 6-10, Oldham Council, 2010.

139 Refining Options, pages 12-13, Oldham Council, 2010.

140 Refining Options, page 38, policy 6, Oldham Council, 2010.

green infrastructure diagram which identifies priority areas for conservation, enhancement and creation, including areas which need to be conserved and managed or restored to address climate change. Continuing work on the Green Infrastructure Framework will feed in the findings of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) across Greater Manchester.<sup>(141)</sup> This addresses comments received at 'Preferred Options'.

- 2.100** The Greater Manchester Ecological Framework fed into the policy. This evidence stated that analysis of the extent and distribution of habitats and land uses in Greater Manchester has shown that although the sub-region is biologically diverse, habitats generally occur in small patches and can be fragmented. Linking and buffering these habitat patches to form a properly interconnected habitat network may be difficult. An alternative approach was proposed that identifies broad areas sharing similar ecological and land-use characteristics, rather than concentrating on the recreation and connection of selected habitat types. Following this approach 'Biodiversity Opportunity Areas' have been identified.<sup>(142)</sup> The policy encourages developments to support opportunities to contribute towards the habitat creation and repair of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. South Pennine Moors and Moston Brook were identified as the two priority biodiversity areas.<sup>(143)</sup> This addressed a comment made by the Environment Agency at 'Preferred Options' stage.
- 2.101** The policy seeks to protect and enhance habitats and species identified in the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan and Oldham Biodiversity Action Plan; and the geological and geomorphological heritage identified in the Greater Manchester Local Geodiversity Action Plan.<sup>(144)</sup>
- 2.102** The policy also built on the landscape character work, having regard to the Greater Manchester and Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study. It requires developments to enhance and reinforce distinctive elements of the borough's landscapes having regard to the Oldham Landscape Character Assessment and ensure that the purpose, appearance and valued characteristics of the Peak Park, and views into and out of it, are not adversely affected.<sup>(145)</sup> Comments received at Preferred Options stage helped shape the wording of this policy.
- 2.103** On the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2010 the council received a frontloading visit from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) to consider the work that had been done in the preparation of the joint DPD and to identify issues and questions which, at that stage, appeared potentially problematic in terms of soundness. The Inspectorate was given a copy of the draft 'Refining Options' at that stage. The Planning Inspectorate did not make any comments on this policy.
- 2.104** Please see Refining Options Public Schedule of Comments and Responses and joint DPD for amended text and other minor amendments made to the 'Refining Options' as a result of comments received at consultation.

## **Policy 21 Protecting Natural Environmental Assets**

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141 Refining Options, pages 38-41, policy 6 and paragraphs 5.64-5.65, Oldham Council, 2010.

142 An Ecological Framework for Greater Manchester, page 2, AGMA, 2008.

143 Refining Options, page 38, policy 6, Oldham Council, 2010.

144 Refining Options, pages 38-39, policy 6, Oldham Council, 2010.

145 joint DPD Refining Options, pages 38-39, policy 6, Oldham Council, 2010.

- 2.105** At 'Refining Options' the Protecting Natural Environmental Assets policy was fully drafted and had progressed on from the 'Preferred Options', taking into consideration the comments received. It was made clear that this was a development management policy. The policy states that development proposals must protect and maximise opportunities for Green Infrastructure at or near to the site and identifies the need to maintain, extend or link existing green corridors and links, including strategic recreational routes, where appropriate. It seeks to protect and enhance species protected by law, those in Biodiversity Actions Plans and other sites containing features of substantial nature conservation, addressing comments made at Preferred Options.<sup>(146)</sup>
- 2.106** The policy expands on landscape character to ensure developments conserve and enhance the distinctive elements of landscape character, addressing comments made. It also states development must enhance, as well as protect the canal corridor and states that the council will support appropriate canal side regeneration, in response to a representation received.<sup>(147)</sup>
- 2.107** The Planning Inspectorate did not make any specific comments on this policy at the advisory visit. Changes made to the policy since 'Refining Options' mainly relate to Natural England comments and include a partial re-write for greater clarity and references to the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).
- 2.108** No major changes were made to Policy 21 'Protecting Natural Environmental Assets' as a result of the 'Refining Options' consultation. Please see Refining Options Public Schedule of Comments and Responses and joint DPD for amended text and minor amendments.

## Policy 22 Protecting Open Land

- 2.109** At 'Refining Options' stage the Protecting Open Land policy continued to address Green Belt, Other Protected Open Land and Land Reserved for Future Development. However, following the Planning Inspectors advisory visit the additional Green Belt criteria that was proposed to help assess applications for the sub-division of existing dwellings, garden extensions, replacement dwellings and the re-use of existing buildings in the Green Belt was removed. Instead the policy relies on national guidance, currently Planning Policy Guidance 'Green Belts' (PPG2), following the Inspector's advice.<sup>(148)</sup>
- 2.110** The policy expanded on development on OPOL or LRFD and stated that the council would assess OPOL and LRFD in the Site Allocations DPD. On OPOL, the policy stated it would allow development where it is appropriate, small scale or ancillary development located close to existing buildings, which does not affect openness, local distinctiveness or visual amenity. On LRFD, the policy stated development would be granted where it would be acceptable in the Green Belt and would not prejudice the later development of LRFD.<sup>(149)</sup> The supporting text to the Protecting Open Land policy also clarified the role of OPOL and LRFD<sup>(150)</sup> following the Planning Inspectorate's comments about it not being clear what the designations are designed to achieve.<sup>(151)</sup>

146 Refining Options, pages 83-84, policy 21, Oldham Council, 2010.

147 Refining Options, pages 83-84, policy 21, Oldham Council, 2010.

148 Oldham MBC Frontloading Visit, page 11, The Planning Inspectorate, 2010.

149 Refining Options, page 88, policy 22, Oldham Council, 2010.

150 Refining Options, page 89, paragraphs 6.115-6.116, Oldham Council, 2010.

151 Oldham MBC Frontloading Visit, page 11, The Planning Inspectorate, 2010.

**2.111** No major changes were made to Policy 22 'Protecting Open Land' as a result of the 'Refining Options' consultation. Please see Refining Options Public Schedule of Comments and Responses and the joint DPD for amended text and minor amendments.

## POLICIES

### POLICY 1 CLIMATE CHANGE

**2.112** Policy 1 on Climate Change and Sustainable Development sets the overall context for the joint DPD and states that the council will k) "maintain the borough's Green Belt, and protect locally designated Other Protected Open Land and Land Reserved for Future Development"; and l) ensure development respects Oldham's natural, built and historic environments, Green Infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes, and their settings.

**2.113** Policy 1 is in line with Planning Policy Statement 'Local Spatial Planning' (PPS12). It is justified and effective as set out in table 3.

**Table 3**

<b>Consistent with National Policy</b>	The policy is consistent with PPS9 (DCLG, 2005); PPS7 (DCLG, 2004); Planning Policy Statement Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1 (DCLG, 2007); PPS1 (DCLG, 2005); Draft Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment (DCLG, 2010); and PPG2 (DoE, 1995).
<b>Justified - founded on robust evidence</b>	The policy is justified as it is based on credible and robust evidence including the Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework, Greater Manchester Ecological Framework, Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan, Greater Manchester Local Geodiversity Action Plan, Greater Manchester and Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, Peak District National Park Landscape Character Assessment, Oldham Landscape Character Assessment, Oldham Biodiversity Action Plan and the Oldham Open Space Study, the Strategic Housing Land Review, Employment Land Review and Moston Brook Feasibility Study.
<b>Justified - the most appropriate strategy</b>	The policy has been informed by the above pieces of evidence and through representations made at the 'Issues Survey', 'Issues and Options', 'Preferred Options' and 'Refining Options' stages of the joint DPD preparation. The policy is the most appropriate way forward as it seeks to protect the borough's natural assets and open land as appropriate and ensure that development respects the borough's Green Infrastructure.
<b>Effective - deliverable</b>	Policy 1 will maintain the borough's Green Belt and protect locally designated OPOL and LRFD. It will ensure that development respects the borough's Green Infrastructure.
<b>Effective - flexible</b>	Policy 1 provides a sound planning framework to protect the borough's natural assets and open land as appropriate and ensure that development respects the borough's Green Infrastructure over the plan period.

<b>Effective - able to be monitored</b>	The Indicators include 27, 37 and 38.
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## **POLICY 6 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

**2.114** The above evidence and consultation stages in preparing the joint DPD have led to the formation of Policy 6 on Green Infrastructure. This policy aims to value our local natural, built and historic environments, green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes and their wider settings. It requires development proposals to promote and enhance the Green Infrastructure network; and make a positive contribution to Green Infrastructure assets and its functions in priority areas and where there are deficiencies in quantity, quality, accessibility and functionality. It seeks to support opportunities to contribute towards habitat creation and repair; protect and enhance species identifies in Biodiversity Action Plans; and conserve, protect and enhance the geological and geomorphological heritage. It requires development proposals to have regard to historic landscape; enhance and reinforce distinctive elements of the borough's landscape; and ensure that the purpose, appearance and valued characteristics of the Peak Park, and views into and out of it, are not adversely affected. It also supports the implementation of plans and projects that will contribute to the borough's Green Infrastructure.

**2.115** Policy 6 is in line with Planning Policy Statement 'Local Spatial Planning' (PPS12). It is justified and effective as set out in table 4.

**Table 4**

<b>Consistent with National Policy</b>	The policy is consistent with PPS9 (DCLG, 2005); PPS7 (DCLG, 2004); Planning Policy Statement Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1 (DCLG, 2007); PPS1 (DCLG, 2005); and Draft Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment (DCLG, 2010)
<b>Justified - founded on robust evidence</b>	The policy is justified as it is based on credible and robust evidence including the Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework, Greater Manchester Ecological Framework, Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan, Greater Manchester Local Geodiversity Action Plan, Greater Manchester and Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, Peak District National Park Landscape Character Assessment, Oldham Landscape Character Assessment, Oldham Biodiversity Action Plan and the Oldham Open Space Study.
<b>Justified - the most appropriate strategy</b>	The policy has been informed by the above pieces of evidence and through representations made at the 'Issues Survey', 'Issues and Options', 'Preferred Options' and 'Refining Options' stages of the joint DPD preparation. The policy is the most appropriate way forward as it seeks to protect and enhance green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape.
<b>Effective - deliverable</b>	The policy aims are deliverable. The Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework looked at a number of case studies, including Oldham Metrolink (which includes Moston Brook). The

	framework also sets out how we will deliver green infrastructure, which includes through new development, through initiatives such as Pennine Edge Forests, greenspace and countryside management. (152) Delivery of open space is dealt with in the Open Spaces and Sports section of this background paper.
<b>Effective - flexible</b>	The policy is flexible as it supports the implementation of green infrastructure plans and projects over the plan period. The policy is not prescriptive and therefore is flexible in the nature of green infrastructure delivery and the way in which developments respond to the surrounding landscape.
<b>Effective - able to be monitored</b>	The Indicators include 27, 36, 37, 38 and 39.

## POLICY 21 PROTECTING NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

**2.116** The above evidence and consultation stages in preparing the joint DPD have led to the formation of Policy 21 Protecting Natural Environmental Assets. This policy aims to value, protect and conserve the local natural environment and its functions and provide new and enhanced Green Infrastructure. It requires development proposals to protect and maximise opportunities for Green Infrastructure at or near to the site. It requires developments to not harm species and habitats protected by law or covered by a Greater Manchester or Oldham Biodiversity Action Plan or a Local Nature Reserve or other non designated sites containing features likely to be of substantial nature conservation value. It requires development proposals to maintain, extend or link existing green corridors and links, including strategic recreational routes, where appropriate.

**2.117** Policy 21 is in line with Planning Policy Statement 'Local Spatial Planning' (PPS12). It is justified and effective as set out in table 5.

**Table 5**

<b>Consistent with National Policy</b>	The policy is consistent with PPS9 (DCLG, 2005); PPS7 (DCLG, 2004); Planning Policy Statement Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1 (DCLG, 2007); PPS1 (DCLG, 2005); and Draft Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment (DCLG, 2010).
<b>Justified - founded on robust evidence</b>	The policy is justified as it is based on credible and robust evidence including the Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework, Greater Manchester Ecological Framework, Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan, Greater Manchester Local Geodiversity Action Plan, Greater Manchester and Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, Peak District National Park Landscape Character Assessment, Oldham Landscape Character Assessment, Oldham Biodiversity Action Plan and the Oldham Open Space Study.

152 Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester, page 8, AGMA, 2008.

<b>Justified - the most appropriate strategy</b>	The policy has been informed by the above pieces of evidence and through representations made at the 'Issues Survey', 'Issues and Options', 'Preferred Options' and 'Refining Options' stages of the joint DPD preparation. The policy is the most appropriate way forward as it seeks to protect and enhance green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape.
<b>Effective - deliverable</b>	The policy aims are deliverable. The Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework has looked at a number of case studies, including Oldham Metrolink (which includes Moston Brook). The framework also sets out how we will deliver green infrastructure, which includes through new development, through initiatives such as Pennine Edge Forests, greenspace and countryside management. <sup>(153)</sup> Delivery of open space is dealt with in the Open Spaces and Sports section of this background paper.
<b>Effective - flexible</b>	The policy is flexible as it is not prescriptive in the way in which developments maximise opportunities for Green Infrastructure and the way in which developments respond to the surrounding landscape.
<b>Effective - able to be monitored</b>	The Indicators include 27, 37 and 38.

## POLICY 22 PROTECTING OPEN LAND

**2.118** The above evidence and consultation stages in preparing the joint DPD have led to the formation of Policy 22 Protecting Open Land. The policy maintains the borough's Green Belt boundary and allows development that does not conflict with national Green Belt policy. The policy states that Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policy OE1.8 'Major Developed Site on the Green Belt' will be saved and assessed in the Site Allocations DPD. The policy allows development on OPOL where it is appropriate, small scale or ancillary development located close to existing buildings, which does not affect openness, local distinctiveness or visual amenity. On LRFD the policy states development will be granted where it would be acceptable in the Green Belt and would not prejudice the later development of LRFD.

**2.119** Policy 22 is in line with Planning Policy Statement 'Local Spatial Planning' (PPS12). It is justified and effective as set out in table 6.

Table 6

<b>Consistent with National Policy</b>	The policy is consistent with PPG2 (DoE, 1995).
<b>Justified - founded on robust evidence</b>	The policy is justified as it is based on robust and credible evidence including national guidance, the Strategic Housing Land Review, Employment Land Review and Moston Brook Feasibility Study.

153 Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester, page 8, AGMA, 2008

<b>Justified - the most appropriate strategy</b>	The policy has been informed by the above pieces of credible and robust evidence and through representations made at the 'Issues Survey', 'Issues and Options', 'Preferred Options' and 'Refining Options' stages of the joint DPD preparation. The policy is the most appropriate way forward as it seeks to protect the borough's Green Belt and the remaining safeguarded land from inappropriate development (Other Protected Open Land and Land Reserved for Future Development).
<b>Effective - deliverable</b>	The policy aims are deliverable. The council does not have a need to release Green Belt land and therefore will permit development that is in accordance with PPG2. The policy will also allow a limited amount of development on Other Protected Open Land and Land Reserved for Future Development in order to ensure the purposes of this safeguarded land is maintained.
<b>Effective - flexible</b>	The policy permits development in the Green Belt in accordance with PPG2. The policy intention is to safeguard Other Protected Open Land and Land Reserved for Future Development, however the policy allows some limited development.
<b>Effective - able to be monitored</b>	The Indicators include 36 and 39.

## **POLICY 25 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS**

**2.120** The developer contributions policy sets out the councils approach to developer contributions for the provision of additional, improved or extended green. Infrastructure.

**2.121** Policy 25 is in line with Planning Policy Statement 'Local Spatial Planning' (PPS12). It is justified and effective as set out in the table 7 below.

**Table 7**

<b>Consistent with National Policy</b>	Policy 25 puts in place the framework for new developments, where appropriate, to contribute to securing the borough's additional, improved or extended green, social or physical infrastructure consistent with national policy on developer contributions.
<b>Justified - founded on robust evidence</b>	Policy 25 is supported by a wide range of robust and credible evidence. This includes, amongst other things, Circular 05/05 and representations made at the 'Issues Survey', 'Issues and Options', 'Preferred Options' and 'Refining Options' stages of the joint DPD preparation.
<b>Justified - the most appropriate strategy</b>	Policy 25 puts in place the framework for new developments, where appropriate, to contribute to securing additional, improved or extended green, social or physical infrastructure consistent with national policy on developer contributions. It supports the Sustainable Community Strategy aspirations and plans. The policy is the most appropriate way forward.

<b>Effective - deliverable</b>	Policy 25 will contribute towards meeting the borough's additional, improved or extended green, social or physical infrastructure needs, where appropriate.
<b>Effective - flexible</b>	Policy 25 provides a sound planning framework to meet the borough's additional, improved or extended green, social and physical infrastructure needs, where viable and appropriate.
<b>Effective - able to be monitored</b>	Policy 25 will be monitored by all LDF indicators, where appropriate.

## SUPPORTING ASSESSMENTS

### SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

**2.122**A Sustainability Appraisal was carried out for the Joint DPD.

**2.123**The Green Infrastructure policy scored positively in relation to the sustainability objectives. Key points in relation to the economic, environmental and social sustainability objectives are:

- a. **Economic:** The policy will safeguard and enhance green infrastructure assets. These assets have economic benefits, which can improve the borough's image, contribute towards sustainable regeneration and towards attracting inward investment from people living, working and visiting the borough.
- b. **Environmental:** The policy will protect and enhance the green infrastructure network which will contribute amongst other things towards high quality design, reducing the need to travel, improving air quality, reducing the effects of climate change and mitigating flood risk.
- c. **Social:** The policy will protect and enhance green infrastructure, including in regeneration areas and where there are deficiencies, which will promote community cohesion and mixed, balanced and sustainable communities. It will also in areas reduce crime and the fear of crime through environmental improvements and contribute towards improved health and education through the study of fauna and flora.

**2.124**The Protecting Natural Environmental Assets policy scored positively in relation to the sustainability objectives. Key points in relation to the economic, environmental and social sustainability objectives are:

- a. **Economic:** As with the Green Infrastructure policy it was considered that the policy will protect, conserve and enhance the borough's green infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity. This can have economic benefits, improve the borough's image, and contribute towards sustainable regeneration and towards attracting inward investment from people living, working and visiting the borough.
- b. **Environmental:** As with the Green Infrastructure policy it was considered that the policy will protect, conserve and enhance the borough's green infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity which will contribute amongst other things towards high quality design and the conservation and enhancement of the borough's landscape character.
- c. **Social:** As with the Green Infrastructure policy it was considered that the policy would protect, conserve and enhance the borough's green infrastructure,

biodiversity and geodiversity. This will promote community cohesion and mixed, balanced and sustainable communities and contribute towards education through the study of fauna and flora.

**2.125** The Protecting Open Land policy scored positively in relation to the sustainability objectives. Key points in relation to the economic, environmental and social sustainability objectives are:

- a. **Economic:** The policy will maintain green belt boundaries and protect Other Protected Open Land and Land Reserved for Future Development and allow appropriate development only. This will therefore focus development elsewhere promoting sustainable regeneration and the borough's image, making the borough a more attractive place to invest. It will also support appropriate developments, such as farm diversification helping to promote sustainable rural communities and tourism. The policy safeguards a small amount of land for future development needs beyond the life of the LDF.
- b. **Environmental:** The policy will maintain green belt boundaries and protect Other Protected Open Land and Land Reserved for Future Development. This will focus development in the urban, more sustainable locations, the open land will act as 'green lungs' helping to improve air quality and provide habitats, including geodiversity for biodiversity. The landscape character will be protected and the open land can help mitigate flood risk.
- c. **Social:** The policy will maintain green belt boundaries and protect Other Protected Open Land and Land Reserved for Future Development. This will provide areas for recreation and exercise helping to promote balanced sustainable communities, community cohesion and health and make the borough a more attractive place to live.

## HABITAT REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

**2.126** A Habitats Regulation Assessment of the impact on European Protected Sites of the joint DPD was undertaken by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit.

**2.127** This Screening Opinion included an assessment of the possible effects of the plan on the South Pennine Moors (SPA/SAC) and the Rochdale Canal (SAC).

**2.128** The HRA concluded:

- a. **Green Infrastructure:** No significant negative impacts on the Rochdale Canal or South Pennine Moors anticipated from the operation of this policy. In addition in relation to South Pennine Moors there are 'Probable positive impacts arising from the enhancement of green infrastructure'.
- b. **Protecting Natural Environmental Assets:** No significant negative impacts on the Rochdale Canal or South Pennine Moors anticipated from the operation of this policy. Probable positive impacts from reduced road traffic.
- c. **Protecting Open Land:** No significant negative impacts on the Rochdale Canal or South Pennine Moors anticipated from the operation of this policy.

**2.129** The above three policies have been 'screened out' from further assessment within the joint DPD HRA.

## EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

**2.130** An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) of the joint DPD has been undertaken. The purpose of the EqIA was to assess the potential impact of the joint DPD on the different groups of people in the borough.

**2.131** The initial EqIA concluded that the joint DPD is not considered to have any adverse impacts on the different groups of people and that a full EqIA is not needed<sup>(154)</sup>.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### Infrastructure

**2.132** The Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework sets out how green infrastructure can be delivered. Green Infrastructure can be protected, newly created and enhanced through a variety of methods including as part of the design of a development proposal, through developer contributions, through initiatives such as Pennine Edge Forest and other local projects.<sup>(155)</sup>

**2.133** Delivery of open space is dealt with in the Open Spaces and Sports section of this background paper.

**2.134** The Protecting Open Land policy intends to maintain the borough's Green Belt and safeguard the borough's remaining Other Protected Open Land and Land Reserved for Future Development.

### Monitoring

**2.135** The joint DPD sets out a framework to monitor the effectiveness of the DPD. This sets out indicators, the relevant strategic objectives, targets and commentary and arrangements for reviewing.

**2.136** The indicators that will monitor the effectiveness of the green infrastructure policy and the Protecting Natural Environmental Assets policy are:

- a. 27. Number of planning applications refused on landscape character grounds;
- b. 37. Open space: i) Extent of protected and ii) Percentage of quality and accessible open spaces meeting local standards;
- c. 38. i) Change in areas of biodiversity importance and ii) Improved Local Biodiversity.

**2.137** The indicators that will monitor the effectiveness of the Protecting Open Land policy are:

- a. 36. Number and type of developments in the Green Belt;
- b. 39. Number and type of developments in: i) Other Protected Open Land and ii) Land Reserved for Future Development

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154 joint DPD Equalities Impact Assessment, page 4, Oldham Council, 2010.

155 Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester, page 8, AGMA, 2008.

## 3 OPEN SPACES AND SPORTS

### CONTEXT

#### NATIONAL

##### **Planning Policy Guidance 17 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation' (PPG17), ODPM, 2002**

- 3.1** Planning Policy Guidance 17 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation' (PPG17) states that the provision of open spaces underpins people's quality of life and highlights their role in delivering broader Government objectives such as: supporting an urban renaissance; supporting a rural renewal; promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion; health and well being; and promoting more sustainable development.<sup>(1)</sup> PPG17 highlights the need for local authorities to undertake a local needs assessment and audit of open space, sports and recreation facilities in order to identify specific local needs and quantitative and qualitative elements of open space.<sup>(2)</sup>

##### **Assessing Needs and Opportunities 'A Companion Guide to Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17)', ODPM, 2002**

- 3.2** The Guide sets out "how local authorities can use the planning system to help deliver accessible, high quality and sustainable open spaces and sport and recreation facilities which meet local needs and are valued by local communities".<sup>(3)</sup> The Guide highlights a five-step process which can be followed to produce an open space study.

#### GREATER MANCHESTER

- 3.3** Details of 'Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester' (AGMA, 2008) are highlighted in the 'Green Infrastructure' section of this background paper.

#### OLDHAM

- 3.4** Details of Oldham's Sustainable Community Strategy (2008-2020) and Local Area Agreement (2008-2011) and the Oldham Corporate Plan (Oldham Council, 2009) are highlighted in the 'Green Infrastructure' section of this background paper.

##### **Open Space Study (PMP Consultants and Oldham Council, 2006-2010)**

- 3.5** The Study provides a local needs assessment and audit of open space, sport and recreation provision in the borough. It identifies the current provision of nine types of open space and determines required standards of quality, quantity and accessibility that should be met. Using the determined standards, surplus and deficiencies of quality, quantity and accessibility of the nine types of open space are identified spatially.

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1 Planning Policy Guidance 17 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation' (PPS17), Foreword, ODPM, 2002.

2 Planning Policy Guidance 17 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation' (PPG17), paragraph 3, ODPM, 2002.

3 Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to Planning Policy Guidance 17, page 6, paragraph 1.5, ODPM, 2002.

## OLDHAM'S APPROACH

### MAIN ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- 3.6** The main issues and challenges in relation to open spaces and sports are:
- a. Improving the quality of people's lives.
  - b. Making sure that Oldham plays to its strengths and pulls its weight in Greater Manchester and develops its links with Leeds.
  - c. Working with the Peak District to reflect its particular characteristics and the benefits that come from proximity to the National Park.
  - d. Adapting and mitigating to climate change and promoting sustainable development.
  - e. Protecting people and property from flooding, and improving the quality of rivers and water.
  - f. Ensuring high quality design and sustainable construction of developments.
  - g. Promoting community cohesion.
  - h. Make Oldham an address of choice.
  - i. Promoting economic prosperity, addressing worklessness, tackling economic deprivation and promoting economic well-being.
  - j. Maximise the potential of creative industries and the benefits that tourism and culture bring to the borough.
  - k. Promote accessibility and sustainable transport choices such as public transport, cycling and walking.
  - l. Encouraging healthy lifestyles, more play and physical exercise.
  - m. Protecting our valued open spaces, and providing new quality open spaces, sports and recreation facilities.
  - n. How to best maximise the benefits of the local natural, historic and built environments, green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes.

### ISSUES SURVEY

- 3.7** The 'Issues Survey' asked questions regarding open space in the borough. Responses to the survey showed that the majority (92.3%) of respondents value the importance of existing green space and play space in helping to improve the health of children and young people<sup>(4)</sup> and three quarters of respondents did not want to see existing protected open land, Green Belt, safeguarded land or public open space developed for future residential needs.<sup>(5)</sup> Three quarters of respondents did not want to see existing protected open land, Green Belt, safeguarded land or public open space developed for future employment needs.<sup>(6)</sup>

### ISSUES AND OPTIONS

- 3.8** During autumn/winter 2007-08, the council consulted on the first stage in preparing the joint DPD, 'Issues and Options'. This document set out:
- a. A spatial portrait – this set out key statistics and a description of key features that are distinctive to the borough
  - b. Key issues and challenges facing the borough

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4 Core Strategy Issues Survey: Analysis of Responses, page 6, August, 2007

5 Core Strategy Issues Survey: Analysis of Responses, page 5, August, 2007

6 Core Strategy Issues Survey: Analysis of Responses, page 6, August, 2007

- c. A vision for the future
- d. A set of strategic objectives setting the future direction for the LDF
- e. Three alternative options, or strategies, for directing future development
- f. Topics that could be covered by core policies
- g. Topics that could be covered by development management policies

## Evidence Base

**3.9** The relevant evidence base available at the time of 'Issues and Options' was:

- a. National – Planning Policy Guidance 17 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation' (PPG17)
- b. Local – UDP, LDF Scoping Report, Open Space Study (2006-2010)

**3.10** The **spatial portrait** identified the seven Green Flag parks of the borough.<sup>(7)</sup>

**3.11** The **issues and challenges** included a section entitled 'Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation' which included reference to the need to address the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space, sport and recreation provision within the LDF.<sup>(8)</sup>

**3.12** The **draft vision** highlighted the need to value the natural environment generally and the need to ensure residents led healthy, active and longer lives.<sup>(9)</sup>

**3.13** Proposed **draft strategic objectives** also highlighted the need to: promote local environmental quality, community safety and crime prevention with attractive, clean, safe and accessible public spaces (SO5ii); and improve health through the provision of quality and accessible open spaces and sports (SO6i).<sup>(10)</sup>

**3.14** All three of the propose **alternative spatial strategies** stated that all policy areas would be reviewed as the LDF progressed.<sup>(11)</sup>

**3.15** Possible **core policy CP16** set out that the policy would provide a framework for the spatial implications of improving health in the borough, including new open space standards.<sup>(12)</sup> At this stage the Oldham Open Space Study was yet to provide open space standards. It was also felt that options A and B may put pressure on open space.

**3.16** At this stage, the comments submitted generally referred to the importance of protecting and improving green space and recreation provision.<sup>(13)</sup>

## PREFERRED OPTIONS

### Evidence Base

**3.17** The relevant evidence base available at the time of 'Preferred Options' was:

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7 Issues and Options, page 22, paragraph 5.8, Oldham Council, 2007.  
 8 Issues and Options, page 51, paragraph 6.102, Oldham Council, 2007.  
 9 Issues and Options, page 58, Oldham Council, 2007.  
 10 Issues and Options, page 60, Oldham Council, 2007.  
 11 Issues and Options, pages 62-70, Oldham Council, 2007.  
 12 Issues and Options, page 75, Oldham Council, 2007  
 13 Issues and Options – public schedule of comments and responses, Oldham Council, 2007.

- a. National – Planning Policy Guidance 17 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation' (PPG17)
- b. Local – UDP, LDF Scoping Reports, Open Space Study (2006-2010)

**3.18** The **draft vision** highlighted the need for green infrastructure that is valued, protected, conserved and enhanced and for residents who live healthy, active and longer lives.<sup>(14)</sup>

**3.19** Proposed **draft strategic objectives** highlighted the need: to ensure green infrastructure is protected, conserved and enhanced (SO4ii); to ensure that public open spaces, including open and green spaces and civic spaces and public realm, are well designed, safe and accessible (SO5ii) and to improve the health of the borough through the provision of quality and accessible open space, sport and recreation facilities.<sup>(15)</sup>

**3.20** It is highlighted that the **preferred way forward** will protect and enhance existing green infrastructure, and where appropriate provide new quality and accessible open spaces, to promote health and well-being.<sup>(16)</sup>

**3.21 Policy Direction 19 `Green Infrastructure`** stated that the policy may protect and enhance a multi-functional green infrastructure network in the borough which would include the nine typologies of open space identified in the Open Space Study.<sup>(17)</sup> For further details of this policy see the 'Green Infrastructure' section of this background paper.

**3.22 Policy Direction 22 'Open Spaces and Sports'** set out the approach towards open spaces and sports. The policy stated that it may, have regard to the findings of the Open Space Study, have regard to reviews of facility use and provision, set out local standards of provision, set out details of planning obligations/developer requirements through new developments and set out how we deal with developments on open space. Open space standards that the policy may use were identified and the policy identified exceptions to the policy that may apply.<sup>(18)</sup>

**3.23** No major objections were raised on the issue of open space and sports at this stage. It was suggested that the use of developer contributions towards open space and sports would be complicated and that a flat rate per residential unit should be applied.<sup>(19)</sup> In response to this the council noted that regard would be had to the findings of the Open Space Study.

**3.24** The calculation of local provision of public open space was queried as it excluded strategic sites (parks and gardens over 15 hectares and natural and semi-natural open spaces over 20 hectares) from quantity figures. The council response highlighted that strategic sites provide a boroughwide function.<sup>(20)</sup>

**3.25** Comments submitted regarding Policy Direction 22 'Open Spaces and Sports' can be seen in the Preferred Options Public Schedule of Comments and Responses (pages 240-247).

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14 Preferred Options, page 36, Oldham Council, 2008.

15 Preferred Options, page 38, Oldham Council, 2008.

16 Preferred Options, page 40, Oldham Council, 2008.

17 Preferred Options, pages 93-94, Oldham Council, 2008.

18 Preferred Options, pages 97-99, Oldham Council, 2008.

19 Preferred Options - public schedule of comments and responses, page 241, Oldham Council, 2009.

20 Preferred Options - public schedule of comments and responses, page 240, Oldham Council, 2009.

## REFINING OPTIONS

### Evidence Base

- 3.26** The relevant evidence base available at the time of 'Refining Options' was:
- National – Planning Policy Guidance 17 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation' (PPG17)
  - Local – UDP, LDF Scoping Reports, Open Space Study (2006-2010)
- 3.27** The **spatial portrait** included appropriate references to open spaces and sports.<sup>(21)</sup>
- 3.28** The **vision** highlighted that Oldham would be a "confident place with safe neighbourhoods and clean, green spaces".<sup>(22)</sup> It is stated that Oldham will value, protect, conserve and enhance green infrastructure.<sup>(23)</sup>
- 3.29** The **strategic objectives** highlighted the need to: protect, conserve and enhance green infrastructure (SO4b); ensure that public open spaces, including open and green space and civic spaces and public realm, are well-designed, safe and accessible and improve health and well-being through the provision of quality and accessible open spaces, sport and recreation facilities.<sup>(24)</sup>
- 3.30** The **preferred way forward** highlighted issues connected to open spaces and sports.
- 3.31** In relation to open spaces and sports the document contained the following policies:
- Policy 6 'Green Infrastructure'
  - Policy 23 'Open Spaces and Sports'
- 3.32** **Policy 6 'Green Infrastructure'** is detailed in the 'Green Infrastructure' section of this background paper.
- 3.33** **Policy 23 'Open Spaces and Sports'** set out the council's approach to the protection, promotion and enhancement of existing open spaces, the provision of new or enhanced open spaces or financial contributions through residential development and instances where the loss of open space may be permitted. The policy set out current open space and sports standards of provision. The policy takes account of the PINS front loading consultation meeting in January 2010.
- 3.34** No major changes were made to Policy 23 'Open Spaces and Sports' as a result of the 'Refining Options' consultation. Please see 'Refining Options Public Schedule of Comments and Responses' and the joint DPD for amended text and minor amendments.

## POLICIES

### POLICY 1 CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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21 Refining Options, Appendix 2, paragraph A2.21, Oldham Council, 2010.

22 Refining Options, page 6, Oldham Council, 2010.

23 Refining Options, page 7, criteria i, Oldham Council, 2010.

24 Refining Options, pages 12-13, Oldham Council, 2010.

**3.35** Policy 1 on Climate Change and Sustainable Development sets the overall context for the joint DPD. The policy details that development should improve quality of life for residents and visitors and enhance the borough's image and states that it will l) "ensure development respects Oldham's natural, built and historic environments, Green Infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes, and their settings.

**3.36** Policy 1 is in line with Planning Policy Statement 'Local Spatial Planning' (PPS12). It is justified and effective as set out in the table 8 below.

**Table 8**

<b>Consistent with National Policy</b>	Policy 1 is consistent with the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance 17 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation' (PPG17).
<b>Justified - founded on robust evidence</b>	The requirements of PPG17 and the Oldham Open Space Study have informed the policy providing robust and credible evidence. The 'Issues Survey', 'Issues and Options', 'Preferred Options' and 'Refining Options' stages of the LDF process have also informed the policy.
<b>Justified - the most appropriate strategy</b>	Policy 1 sets out how we will protect and enhance our open spaces, how we will ensure residential development does not place pressure on existing open spaces and sports and highlights instances where the loss of open space will be permitted. It supports the Sustainable Community Strategy aspirations. The policy is the most appropriate way forward.
<b>Effective - deliverable</b>	Policy 23 is in line with national policy and the Oldham Open Space Study. It sets out how we will protect and enhance our open spaces, how we will ensure residential development does not place pressure on existing open spaces and sports and highlights instances where the loss of open space will be permitted.
<b>Effective - flexible</b>	Policy 1 with Policy 23 offers flexibility by providing exceptions to the policy where appropriate criteria are met.
<b>Effective - able to be monitored</b>	Policy 1 with Policy 23 will be monitored by LDF indicators 37 and 41.

## **POLICY 6 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

**3.37** Policy 6 Green Infrastructure and its supporting documents are detailed in the 'Green Infrastructure' section of this background paper.

## **POLICY 23 OPEN SPACES AND SPORTS**

**3.38** Policy 23 'Open Spaces and Sports' sets out the council's approach to the protection and enhancement of existing open spaces, the provision of new or enhanced open spaces or financial contributions through residential development and instances where the loss of open space may be permitted.

**3.39** Policy 23 is in line with Planning Policy Statement 'Local Spatial Planning' (PPS12). It is justified and effective as set out in the table 9 below.

**Table 9**

<b>Consistent with National Policy</b>	Policy 23 is consistent with the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance 17 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation' (PPG17).
<b>Justified - founded on robust evidence</b>	The requirements of PPG17 and the Oldham Open Space Study have informed the policy providing a robust and credible evidence base. The 'Issues Survey', 'Issues and Options', 'Preferred Options' and 'Refining Options' stages of the LDF process have informed the policy.
<b>Justified - the most appropriate strategy</b>	Policy 23 sets out how we will protect and enhance our open spaces, how we will ensure residential development does not place pressure on existing open spaces and sports and highlights instances where the loss of open space will be permitted. It supports the Sustainable Community Strategy aspirations. The policy is the most appropriate way forward.
<b>Effective - deliverable</b>	Policy 23 is in line with national policy and the Oldham Open Space Study. It sets out how we will protect and enhance our open spaces, how we will ensure residential development does not place pressure on existing open spaces and sports and highlights instances where the loss of open space will be permitted.
<b>Effective - flexible</b>	Policy 23 offers flexibility by providing exceptions to the policy where appropriate criteria are met.
<b>Effective - able to be monitored</b>	Policy 23 will be monitored by LDF indicators 37 and 41.

## **POLICY 25 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS**

The developer contributions policy sets out the councils approach to developer contributions for the provision of additional, improved or extended green, social or physical infrastructure.

Policy 25 is in line with Planning Policy Statement 'Local Spatial Planning' (PPS12). It is justified and effective as set out in the table 10 below.

**Table 10**

<b>Consistent with National Policy</b>	Policy 25 puts in place the framework for new developments, where appropriate, to contribute to securing the borough's additional, improved or extended green, social or physical infrastructure consistent with national policy on developer contributions.
<b>Justified - founded on robust evidence</b>	Policy 25 is supported by a wide range of robust and credible evidence. This includes, amongst other things, Circular 05/05

	and representations made at the 'Issues Survey', 'Issues and Options', 'Preferred Options' and 'Refining Options' stages of the joint DPD preparation.
<b>Justified - the most appropriate strategy</b>	Policy 25 puts in place the framework for new developments, where appropriate, to contribute to securing additional, improved or extended green, social or physical infrastructure consistent with national policy on developer contributions. It supports the Sustainable Community Strategy aspirations and plans. The policy is the most appropriate way forward.
<b>Effective - deliverable</b>	Policy 25 will contribute towards meeting the borough's additional, improved or extended green, social or physical infrastructure needs, where appropriate.
<b>Effective - flexible</b>	Policy 25 provides a sound planning framework to meet the borough's additional, improved or extended green, social and physical infrastructure needs, where viable and appropriate.
<b>Effective - able to be monitored</b>	Policy 25 will be monitored by all LDF indicators, where appropriate.

## SUPPORTING ASSESSMENTS

### SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

**3.40** A Sustainability Appraisal was carried out for the joint DPD.

**3.41** The 'Open Spaces and Sports' policy scored positively in relation to the sustainability objectives. Key points in relation to the economic, environmental and social sustainability objectives are:

- a. **Economic:** The policy will promote sustainable regeneration by protecting, promoting and enhancing the existing open space which can enhance the image of the borough for potential visitors, investors and businesses.
- b. **Environmental:** The policy will protect existing open spaces, which can help direct new development to brownfield sites. By providing accessible open spaces this reduces the need to travel and promotes sustainable transport choices. The policy requires new development to protect and where appropriate contribute to the provision of new or enhanced open space. Enhancing open space will have a positive impact on the borough's green infrastructure and biodiversity. The provision of open space can also help mitigate against flooding and improve water quality.
- c. **Social:** The policy will promote community cohesion by providing quality open space, contributing towards social inclusion and improving local environmental quality. This can also deter crime and the fear of crime and improve the health of the borough's population.

## HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

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- 3.42** A Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) of the joint DPD was undertaken by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit on the impact on European Protected Sites.
- 3.43** This Screening Opinion included an assessment of the possible effects of the plan on the South Pennine Moors (SPA/SAC) and the Rochdale Canal (SAC).
- 3.44** The HRA assessed each policy. In relation to centres policy the HRA concluded:
- a. No significant negative impacts on the South Pennine Moors (SPA.SAC) anticipated from the operation of this policy. The above policy has been ‘screened out’ from further assessment within the joint DPD HRA in this respect.
  - b. No significant negative impacts on the Rochdale Canal (SAC) anticipated from the operation of this policy. The above policy has been ‘screened out’ from further assessment within the joint DPD HRA in this respect.

### **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 3.45** An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) of the joint DPD has been undertaken. The purpose of the EqIA was to assess the potential impact of the joint DPD on the different groups of people in the borough.
- 3.46** The initial EqIA concluded that the joint DPD is not considered to have any adverse impacts on the different groups of people and that a full EqIA is not needed.

### **MONITORING**

- 3.47** The joint DPD sets out a monitoring framework to monitor the effectiveness of the DPD. This sets out indicators, the relevant strategic objectives, targets and commentary and arrangements for reviewing. The indicators that will monitor the open spaces and sports policy are 37 and 41.

## 4 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

### CONTEXT

#### NATIONAL

##### **The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, March 2010**

**4.1** The Statement sets out the Government's vision for the historic environment and highlights the importance of understanding, conserving and where appropriate, enhancing heritage assets. The Statement recognises the importance of intelligently managing the historic environment and identifies it as an asset of cultural, social and environmental value. The role of the historic environment in helping to achieve wider Government objectives such as: economic growth; tourism; regeneration; creating successful places and bringing communities together is recognised by the Statement. In particular the Statement identifies that promoting the sustainability of historic buildings and their environment can help make progress towards mitigating and adapting to climate change. The Statement highlights the need to prioritise, understanding that whilst the historic environment should be protected, appropriate change may in some occasions be necessary for the long term benefit of a heritage asset.

##### **Planning Policy Statement 5 'Planning for Historic Environment' (PPS5), DCLG, March 2010**

**4.2** PPS5 recognises the role of planning in conserving heritage assets and using the historic environment to create sustainable places. The main objectives of PPS5 are:

- i. To deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions concerning the historic environment recognise the non-renewable status of heritage assets; take account of the wider benefits of heritage conservation; and recognise that appropriate changes may in some cases be necessary to ensure heritage assets are maintained for the long term.
- ii. To conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to significance by ensuring that: decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of that significance, investigated to a degree proportionate to the importance of the heritage assets; wherever possible, heritage assets are put to an appropriate and viable use that is consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution of such heritage assets to local character and sense of place is recognised and valued; and consideration of the historic environment is integrated into planning policies, promoting place-shaping.
- iii. To contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past by ensuring that opportunities are taken to capture evidence from the historic environment and to make this publicly available, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

##### **Planning Policy Guidance 15 'Planning for the Historic Environment' (PPG15), DCLG, 1994 – Superseded by PPS5, March 2010**

**4.3** PPG15 recognised that the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment could contribute to creating quality places with distinctive local identity. The main objectives of PPG15 were: to apply the principles of sustainable development to proposals involving the historic environment; to conserve and, where appropriate,

enhance heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of the past by improving evidence bases of the historic environment.

#### **Planning Policy Statement 4 'Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth' (PPS4), DCLG, 2009**

- 4.4** To help achieve sustainable economic growth, one of the Government's objectives for planning is to "promote the vitality and viability of town and other centres as important places for communities".<sup>(1)</sup> In order to promote vitality and viability the Government wants "the historic, archaeological and architectural heritage of centres to be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced to provide a sense of place and a focus for the community and for civic activity".<sup>(2)</sup>

#### **GREATER MANCHESTER**

##### **Greater Manchester Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Project, Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit (GMAU), 2007 to present**

- 4.5** A Greater Manchester Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Project is being undertaken by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit (GMAU). This Project is funded in the most part by English Heritage but also from the ten Greater Manchester local authorities. Regional Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) projects, such as the Greater Manchester project are part of a national programme supported and developed by English Heritage. The Project involves a desk-based programme of GIS mapping and analysis to help give a understanding of the historical and cultural origins and development of the current urban and rural landscapes. The GMAU are preparing a HLC project for each of the ten local authority areas of Greater Manchester.

#### **OLDHAM**

##### **Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit (GMAU), 2010**

- 4.6** The Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Study has been undertaken by GMAU as part of the Greater Manchester Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Project. The report provides a characterisation of the visible historic environment of Oldham, identifying landscape character types and historic character areas across the borough and investigating the relationship between present and historic character. The study also highlights the importance and current condition of character areas and suggests how the findings can be addressed through the LDF.

##### **Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessment, Oldham and Rochdale Partners in Actions (Oldham Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder), 2006**

- 4.7** The Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder commissioned a series of heritage assessments of the pathfinder area. The Heritage Assessment assesses the heritage value and significance of the areas within the pathfinder area to inform spatial planning and development decisions at a variety of levels from neighbourhoods to individual buildings.

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1 Planning Policy Statement 4 'Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth' (PPS4), page 8, DCLG, 2009.

2 Planning Policy Statement 4 'Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth' (PPS4), page 8, DCLG, 2009.

## OLDHAM'S APPROACH

### MAIN ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- 4.8** The main issues and challenges in relation to the historic environment are:
- a. Improving the quality of people's lives.
  - b. Making sure that Oldham plays to its strengths and pulls its weight in Greater Manchester and develops its links with Leeds.
  - c. Working with the Peak District to reflect its particular characteristics and the benefits that come from proximity to the National Park.
  - d. Adapting and mitigating to climate change and promoting sustainable development.
  - e. Securing energy conservation and efficiency and use of renewable energy, and low carbon developments.
  - f. Protecting people and property from flooding, and improving the quality of rivers and water.
  - g. Ensuring high quality design and sustainable construction of developments.
  - h. Promoting community cohesion.
  - i. Make Oldham an address of choice.
  - j. Promoting economic prosperity, addressing worklessness, tackling economic deprivation and promoting economic well-being.
  - k. Maximise the potential of creative industries and the benefits that tourism and culture bring to the borough.
  - l. How to best maximise the benefits of the local natural, historic and built environments, green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes.

### ISSUES SURVEY

- 4.9** In order to assess the level of concern for the borough's historic environment, the following question was asked as part of the survey:
- i. "There are currently 36 Conservation Areas, 3 Historic Parks or Gardens, numerous Listed Buildings and 2 Scheduled Ancient Monuments designated in the Borough. Do you agree or disagree that conservation of the borough's historic and archaeological heritage and assets should be an important element of the LDF?"<sup>(3)</sup>
- 4.10** The findings of the survey showed that the vast respondents (91.6%) considered the borough's historic environment to be an important element of the LDF. The findings of the survey were broken down to a Community Council level which showed that in eight Community Council areas 100% of respondents considered the historic environment to be an important element of the LDF. Such findings highlighted the need for the historic environment to be considered through the LDF process.

### ISSUES AND OPTIONS

- 4.11** Within the Issues and Challenges section, the Report highlighted the borough's 'rich and varied built environment reflecting its historical and cultural heritage'<sup>(4)</sup> and identified the importance of the borough's varied range of landscapes.<sup>(5)</sup> The Report identified

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3 Issues Survey: Analysis of Responses, PAGE 28 Oldham Council, 2007.

4 Issues and Options, page 37, Oldham Council, 2007.

5 Issues and Options, page 41, Oldham Council, 2007.

the historic townscapes and landscapes and the historic assets of the borough and highlighted the role they can play in regeneration.<sup>(6)</sup> The Report questioned: how the historic environment could be conserved and enhanced through the Core Strategy; whether the Core Strategy should identify specific parts of the historic environment and which factors of the historic environment should be included in a policy.

### **Spatial Portrait**

**4.12** Having identified through the Issues Survey that the historic environment was of great importance to the public, the Issues and Options report highlighted issues regarding the borough's historic environment. The Spatial Portrait of the Report identified the borough's designated heritage assets and the influence of the borough's industrial.

### **Vision**

**4.13** The report provided a suggested Vision for the LDF which took account of the visions for Oldham Beyond, the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement. With regards to the historic environment the vision stated that the borough would be a place where 'it's natural, built and historic environments are valued, from, amongst others, the Rochdale Canal; to the Castleshaw Roman Fort'.<sup>(7)</sup>

### **Strategic Objectives**

**4.14** The following strategic objective considered the Historic Environment:

- a. SO4i To improve and value the borough's environment by conserving and enhancing the borough's landscapes and townscape, and it's natural and built assets and heritage.

### **Draft core policies**

**4.15** The Report suggested that the joint DPD may include a core policy on 'Natural and Built Environments' to provide a framework for the borough's natural and built environments including conservation, landscape character, townscapes, and historical, archaeological and cultural heritage.

### **Draft development management policies**

**4.16** The report also suggested that the joint DPD may include a development management policy on the 'Conservation of the Historic Environment' to provide more details about conserving and enhancing the borough's historic environment, including conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and parks and gardens of historic interest.

**4.17** Comments received on the 'Issues and Options' report from statutory and non-statutory consultees on the historic environment include the following:

- a. The importance of the setting of heritage and archaeological features was highlighted.
- b. The Issues and Options report characterised heritage assets solely by statutory designations. It was suggested that the term 'historic environment' should be

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6 Issues and Options, page 42, paragraph 6.67, Oldham Council.

7 Issues and Options, page 58, paragraph 7.1, Oldham Council, 2007.

- more broadly defined to include non-designated features that have local or architectural interest and value and that contribute to local identity.
- c. Comments on the spatial portrait suggested a character based approach to the historic environment that protected the local identities of local centres. It was also suggested that there should be a separate policy relating to the borough's mills.
  - d. It was suggested that the vision required more relevance to the natural, built and historic environments of Saddleworth.
  - e. It was suggested that the vision should include reference to the need for Saddleworth to retain their identity, ensuring the new buildings in the area retain the character of the area.
  - f. Comments of the sustainability appraisal highlighted financial implications for ensuring that all plans approved improve the quality of the environment and townscapes.

## PREFERRED OPTIONS

### Spatial Potrait

**4.18** The spatial portrait of the 'Preferred Options' report identified the designated heritage assets of the borough. Following comments made at the 'Issues and Options' stage the vision was revised to identify the need to protect, conserve and enhance the 'positive features and characteristics of places...'.<sup>(8)</sup> By the use of the term 'positive features and characteristics' this revision did not limit the need to protect only designated heritage assets but non-designated features also. The revision also recognised the need to protect and enhance the character of places.

### Strategic Objectives

**4.19** The Strategic Objectives in the 'Preferred Options' were revised to reflect comments made at the earlier 'Issues and Option' stage. The following Strategic Objectives relate to the historic environment:

**4.20** SO1 To mitigate and adapt to climate change, and to promote sustainable development and inclusive communities in the borough by:

- i. maintaining the positive features and characteristics that add to the borough's local identity.

**4.21** SO4 To improve and value the borough's environment by:

- i. protecting, conserving and enhancing the character and quality of the borough's landscapes and townscapes, its natural assets and heritage, green infrastructure, biodiversity and geordiversity, and its built heritage and historic environment.

**4.22** SO1iii was revised to include reference to the need to maintain local identity through development. SO4ii was revised to greater reflect character and quality. The term 'heritage' was expanded to cover landscapes, townscapes, heritage, built heritage and historic environment.

### Policy Directions

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8 Preferred Options, page 36, paragraph 6.1, Oldham Council, 2009.

- 4.23** At the 'Preferred Options' stage policy directions were identified but no formal policy wording was included. The historic environment policy direction was 'Policy Direction 23 Heritage'.<sup>(9)</sup>
- 4.24** The policy direction expanded upon the issues and challenges raised in the 'Issues and Options' paper. Taking account of comments made through the 'Issues and Options' consultation the policy direction identified the protection of designated and non-designated features of local significance (mentioning in particular the development of local lists) and the highlighted importance of reflecting local character and distinctiveness. The policy direction gave reference to the specific character and features of local areas of the borough.<sup>(10)</sup> Detail was given on conservation areas and listed buildings and on the treatment of archaeological remains and it was highlighted that a heritage policy may have regard to the findings of the HMR Heritage Assessments and the then emerging Greater Manchester and Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation study.
- 4.25** 'Policy Direction 1 Climate Change and Sustainable Development'<sup>(11)</sup> identified the direction for a policy on mitigating and adapting to climate change and promoting sustainable development. With relation to the historic environment the policy direction suggested that the policy could ensure the efficient and effective use of land through a number of methods including the conservation of buildings and the reuse of the borough's mills.
- 4.26** Comments on the 'Preferred Options' which had regard to the Historic Environment included the following:
- i. The report did not identify how it would tackle issues and challenges on the borough's cultural heritage, bio-diversity resources or landscapes. In particular it was highlighted that there was no reference to the, management of heritage assets.<sup>(12)</sup>
  - ii. The high level of support for the protection and enhancement of heritage assets in the borough was noted. However it was suggested that the joint DPD should set out the council's strategic approach to the planning of a sustainable future for mills in more detail. It was also noted that the spatial portrait describes five sub areas of the borough but does not include any information on the distinctive character or heritage assets of these areas.<sup>(13)</sup>
  - iii. Revisions to the vision to include key elements of the natural environment in particular valuing, protecting, conserving and enhancing green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity, and landscapes were welcomed. However mention of the value of access to good quality countryside and green spaces for recreation purposes for the borough population would still be valued.<sup>(14)</sup>
  - iv. Comments on Policy direction 1 Climate Change and Sustainable Development gave support to the conservation of buildings in particular the reuse of the borough's old mills.<sup>(15)</sup>

9 Preferred Options, page 101, Oldham Council, 2009.

10 Preferred Options, page 99, paragraphs 9.187 – 9.190, Oldham Council, 2009.

11 Preferred Options, page 48, Oldham Council, 2009

12 Preferred Options: Public schedule of comments and responses, page 9, Oldham Council, 2009.

13 Preferred Options: Public schedule of comments and responses, page 12, Oldham Council, 2009.

14 Preferred Options: Public schedule of comments and responses, page 33, Oldham Council, 2009.

15 Preferred Options: Public schedule of comments and responses, page 68, Oldham Council, 2009.

- v. With regard to the Heritage policy direction (policy direction 23) concern was expressed over the 'over preservation' of Victorian buildings. It was suggested that poor quality buildings should not be preserved simply due to their age.<sup>(16)</sup>
- vi. It was suggested that the Heritage policy direction should highlight the need to respect Scheduled Ancient Monuments and their settings, Registered Historic Parks and Gardens and other heritage resources. It was also considered that amendments should be made to the wording of the policy direction in order to highlight that it is the features, not the designations, that need to be 'protected conserved and enhanced'. The following wording is suggested: "protect, conserve and enhance the borough's existing designated heritage designations assets including their wider settings, and have regard to changes that arise from future reviews".<sup>(17)</sup>
- vii. It was suggested that it would be useful if the policy direction were to address how the appropriate redevelopment of heritage assets would be dealt with.<sup>(18)</sup>

## REFINING OPTIONS

**4.27** On the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2010 the council received a frontloading visit from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) to consider the work that had been undertaken in preparing the joint DPD. With regards to the Historic Environment it was recommended by the Inspector that the policy should not repeat any details that are included in national planning policy. This advice was given with particular regard to details on designated heritage assets.

### Evidence Base

**4.28** The Oldham Urban Historic Landscape Character study was completed and was therefore available to inform the historic environment elements of the 'Refining Options' stage.

### Vision

**4.29** The vision was revised at to take into account the comments made at the 'Preferred Options' stage. As comments received welcomed the emphasis placed upon the historic environment, the need to respect the historic environment was identified in the first sentence of the vision.<sup>(19)</sup> Comments received suggested that the need for greater detail on the council's strategic approach towards the borough's 'legacy of old mills'. The reuse of industrial sites was considered through the Employment Land Review,<sup>(20)</sup> the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment<sup>(21)</sup> and through policies four 'Promoting Sustainable Regeneration and Prosperity', 13 'Employment Areas' and 14 'Supporting Oldham's Economy' of the joint DPD. The point 'a' of vision of the 'Refining Options' highlighted the need to make the best use of our industrial heritage and legacy of old mills.<sup>(22)</sup>

16 Preferred Options: Public schedule of comments and responses, page 247, Oldham Council, 2009.

17 Preferred Options: public schedule of comments and responses, page 247, Oldham Council, 2009.

18 Preferred Options: Public schedule of comments and responses, page 248, Oldham Council, 2009.

19 Refining Options, page 6, Oldham Council, 2010.

20 Oldham Council, March 2010.

21 Oldham Council, December 2009.

22 Refining Options, page 6, Oldham Council, 2010

**4.30** Taking into account comments received at all stages of consultation the vision identifies the need to respect the positive features and characteristics of the borough that add to local identity and sense of place. The need for development to reflect local character is also highlighted. The vision identifies designated heritage assets that will be protected as well as non-designated features. The need to respect the setting of heritage assets is also identified. Following advice received through consultation the vision uses suggested wording to state that it will protect local natural, built and historic environments, green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape and their settings.

**Policies**

**4.31** At 'Refining Options' the 'Historic Environment' policy was fully drafted. The policy took into consideration the comments received at 'Preferred Options'. The policy aims to "protect, conserve and enhance architectural features, structures, settings, historic character and significance of the borough's heritage assets and designations".<sup>(23)</sup>

**4.32** Comments at 'Refining Options' included English Heritage who wanted the policy to show greater reflection of the recently adopted Planning Policy Statement 5 'Planning for Historic Environment' (PPS5) in the protection of heritage assets. The policy was amended to reflect the required change. English Heritage also identified the need for Conservation Areas to be shown on the proposals map. The required changes were made.

**4.33** Please see 'Refining Options Public Schedule of Comments and Responses' and joint DPD for amended text and any other minor amendments.

**POLICIES**

**POLICY 1 CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**4.34** The policy sets the overall context for the joint DPD and with relation to the historic environment, states that the council will (a) promote the reuse and conversion of existing buildings including Oldham's mills, (h) respect Oldham's local character, distinctiveness and sense of place and (l) respect Oldham's natural, built and historic environments, landscapes and their settings.

**4.35** Policy 1 is in line with Planning Policy Statement 'Local Spatial Planning' (PPS12). It is justified and effective as set out in table 11.

**Table 11**

<b>Consistent with National Policy</b>	Policy 1 is consistent with national policy. It puts in place the framework for protecting, conserving and enhancing the borough's historic environment in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5 'Planning for Historic Environment' (PPS5).
<b>Justified - founded on robust evidence</b>	The policy is supported by robust and credible evidence including the Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study and the Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessments. It also

23 Refining Options, page 6, policy 24, Oldham Council, 2010

	includes representations made at the 'Issues Survey', 'Issues and Options', 'Preferred Options' and 'Refining Options' stages of the joint DPD preparation.
<b>Justified – the most appropriate strategy</b>	The policy has been informed by the Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study 2010, the Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessments and representations made on the Issues Survey and at the Issues and Options, Preferred Options and Refining Options stages of the Joint DPD preparation. The policy is the most appropriate way forward.
<b>Effective – deliverable</b>	Policy 1 will protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment in line with national policy. The heritage-led regeneration and the re-use of historic buildings to achieve regeneration objectives will be supported where appropriate.
<b>Effective – flexible</b>	Policy 1 provides a sound planning framework to protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment.
<b>Effective – able to be monitored</b>	Policy 1 with Policy 24 will be monitored by LDF indicator 22.

## POLICY 24 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

- 4.36** Evidence in the form of the Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation study and Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessment has helped to inform the Historic Environment Policy. The Policy has also been informed by comments received through consultation as it has developed through the stages of the LDF.
- 4.37** The policy sets out the council's approach to the protection, enhancement and conservation of the historic environment and identifies the evidence and national planning policy that development proposals should have regard to.
- 4.38** The policy identifies the types of features, structures, settings, heritage assets and designations the council will seek to protect, conserve and enhance. Further guidance and details are provided on development proposals to, or within the vicinity of heritage assets.
- 4.39** The policy supports heritage-led regeneration to achieve regeneration objectives. This includes the reuse of historic buildings such as mills where appropriate.
- 4.40** Policy 24 is in line with Planning Policy Statement 'Local Spatial Planning' (PPS12). It is justified and effective as set out in table 12.

Table 12

<b>Consistent with National Policy</b>	The policy is consistent with Planning Policy Statement 5 'Planning for Historic Environment' (PPS5).
<b>Justified - founded on robust evidence</b>	The policy has been informed by the Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study 2010 and the Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessments providing robust and credible evidence.

<b>Justified – the most appropriate strategy</b>	The policy has been informed by the Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study 2010, the Oldham Rochdale HMR Pathfinder Heritage Assessments and representations made on the 'Issues Survey' and at the 'Issues and Options', 'Preferred Options' and 'Refining Options' stages of the joint DPD preparation. The policy is the most appropriate way forward.
<b>Effective – deliverable</b>	Policy 24 will protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment in line with national policy. The heritage-led regeneration and the re-use of historic buildings to achieve regeneration objectives will be supported, where appropriate.
<b>Effective – flexible</b>	The policy is flexible, providing some detail but identifying the need for regard to be had to national planning policy for greater levels of detail. Policy 24 provides a sound planning framework to protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment.
<b>Effective – able to be monitored</b>	Policy 24 will be monitored by LDF indicator 22.

## **POLICY 25 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS**

**4.41** The developer contributions policy sets out the councils approach to developer contributions for the provision of additional, improved or extended green, social or physical infrastructure.

**4.42** Policy 25 is in line with Planning Policy Statement 'Local Spatial Planning' (PPS12). It is justified and effective as set out in table 13.

**Table 13**

<b>Consistent with National Policy</b>	Policy 25 puts in place the framework for new developments, where appropriate, to contribute to securing the borough's additional, improved or extended green, social or physical infrastructure consistent with national policy on developer contributions.
<b>Justified - founded on robust evidence</b>	Policy 25 is supported by a wide range of robust and credible evidence. This includes, amongst other things, Circular 05/05 and representations made at the 'Issues Survey', 'Issues and Options', 'Preferred Options' and 'Refining Options' stages of the joint DPD preparation.
<b>Justified - the most appropriate strategy</b>	Policy 25 puts in place the framework for new developments, where appropriate, to contribute to securing additional, improved or extended green, social or physical infrastructure consistent with national policy on developer contributions. It supports the Sustainable Community Strategy. The policy is the most appropriate way forward.

<b>Effective - deliverable</b>	Policy 25 will contribute towards meeting the borough's additional, improved or extended green, social or physical infrastructure needs, where appropriate.
<b>Effective - flexible</b>	Policy 25 provides a sound planning framework to meet the borough's additional, improved or extended green, social and physical infrastructure needs, where viable and appropriate.
<b>Effective - able to be monitored</b>	Policy 25 will be monitored by all LDF indicators, where appropriate.

## SUPPORTING ASSESSMENTS

### SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

**4.43** A Sustainability Appraisal was carried out for the joint DPD. The Historic Environment policy scored positively in relation to the sustainability objectives. Key points in relation to the economic, environmental and social sustainability objectives are:

- **Economic:** The policy will promote the sustainable regeneration of the borough by ensuring developments protect, conserve and enhance the borough's heritage assets and their settings, which form an important part of image. This will help attract visitors, investors and residents to the borough, and may help to create jobs, having a positive economic impact.
- **Environmental:** The policy will support heritage led regeneration, including the re-use of historic mills as part of high quality design and sustainable construction. Protecting and enhancing historic assets such as historic parks and gardens, which act as 'green lungs', can help mitigate atmospheric pollution and enhance green infrastructure and associated biodiversity.
- **Social:** The policy will promote community cohesion by protecting, conserving and enhancing the borough's heritage assets and their settings, which adds to the borough's sense of place and identity and protects and improves local environmental quality. The policy will protect historic parks and gardens which form part of the borough's open space and can help improve the health of the borough's population. Protecting, conserving and enhancing the borough's heritage assets also provides a valuable education resource.

### HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

**4.44** A Habitats Regulation Assessment of the joint DPD was undertaken by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit on the impact on European Protected Sites.

**4.45** This Screening Opinion included an assessment of the possible effects of the plan on the South Pennine Moors (SPA/SAC) and the Rochdale Canal (SAC).

**4.46** The HRA assessed each policy. In relation to the Historic Environment policy the HRA concluded that there were no significant negative impacts on the Rochdale Canal or South Pennine Moors anticipated from the operation of the policy. In addition in relation to the Rochdale Canal there are possible positive impacts from reduced road traffic.

**4.47** The above policy has been 'screened out' from further assessment within the joint DPD HRA.

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## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 4.48** An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) of the joint DPD has been undertaken. The purpose of the EqIA was to assess the potential impact of the joint DPD on the different groups of people in the borough.
- 4.49** The initial EqIA concluded that the joint DPD is not considered to have any adverse impacts on the different groups of people and that a full EqIA is not needed.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### **MONITORING**

- 4.50** The joint DPD sets out a monitoring framework to monitor the effectiveness of the DPD. This identifies indicators, the relevant strategic objectives, targets and commentary and arrangements for reviewing. The indicators that will monitor the effectiveness of the energy policy are:
- 22. i) Number and percentage of listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments on the English Heritage 'Heritage at Risk Register' (AMR Local);
  - 22. ii) Number and extent of Conservation Areas (AMR Local);
  - 22. iii) Number of listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas lost through new development proposals (AMR Local)