

Oldham

Local Plan

**Local Plan Review: Draft Local Plan
Statement of Common Ground**

December 2023



Oldham
Council

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Introduction

- 1.1 This document is a Statement of Common Ground and is required to support the review of Oldham's Local Plan.
- 1.2 As part of the review and the preparation of Oldham's updated Local Plan, there is a requirement to co-operate effectively on strategic priorities that cross boundaries.
- 1.3 This document is the Statement of Common Ground for the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18 stage) and provides the evidence of such co-operation to date.
- 1.4 The Statement will be updated at each stage of the Local Plan review process, providing updates on cross-boundary matters, as we continue to work collaboratively with our neighbouring authorities and the relevant public bodies.

Oldham's Local Plan and Places for Everyone

- 2.1 The Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan Document (DPD), is a strategic plan that will, upon adoption, cover nine of the ten Greater Manchester districts - Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan.
- 2.2 The Plan:
 - Provides the strategic framework for the Oldham Local Plan;
 - Sets out specific requirements to be taken forward through the Oldham Local Plan in relation to housing, offices, and industry and warehousing, and identifies the main areas where this will be focused;
 - Identifies the important environmental assets which will be protected and enhanced;
 - Allocates sites for employment and housing outside of the urban area – in Oldham this is JPA2 Stakehill, JPA12 Beal Valley, JPA13 Bottom Field Farm, JPA14 Broadbent Moss, JPA15 Chew Brook Vale, JPA16 Cowlshaw, JPA17 Land south of Coal Pit Lane' and JPA18 South of Rosary Road;
 - Supports the delivery of key infrastructure, such as transport and utilities; and
 - Defines a new Green Belt boundary the borough.
- 2.3 Upon adoption Places for Everyone will form part of the development plan for Oldham. It will set the strategic policies and direction for the borough.

- 2.4 Oldham’s Local Plan interprets the strategic policies set out in Places for Everyone at a more detailed local level to reflect our priorities and support delivery of the council’s regeneration ambitions and Creating a Better Place.
- 2.5 The Places for Everyone Publication Plan 2021 was submitted for independent examination in February 2022. Since this time the Plan has been under examination. Consultation on modifications proposed to the Plan is being held from 11 October to 6 December 2023, after which all responses on main modifications will be considered by the appointed inspectors. Details of Places for Everyone¹ can be found on the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) website.
- 2.6 The Statement of Common Ground for the Publication Plan 2021² and Submission Statement of Common Ground³ can be found on the GMCA website.
- 2.7 This Draft Local Plan Statement of Common Ground is therefore prepared in the context of Place for Everyone and the strategic matters that the joint development plan addresses. It is, however, recognised that there may be locally specific ‘strategic’ matters that will need to be considered as part of the Oldham Local Plan and these will be addressed through the Oldham Local Plan Statement of Common Ground, as preparation of the plan progresses.

Preparation of the Oldham Local Plan Statement of Common Ground

- 3.1 Paragraph 24 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local planning authorities are under a ‘duty to co-operate’ with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.
- 3.2 NPPF goes on to state (at paragraph 27) that to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, strategic policy-making authorities should prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters that need to be addressed and what progress has been made to address them.

¹ This document can be found at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/places-for-everyone/>

² This document can be found at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/places-for-everyone/previous-stages/places-for-everyone-2021-regulation-19/supporting-documents-2021/?folder=\01%20Duty%20to%20Co-operate#fList>

³ This document can be found at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/places-for-everyone/previous-stages/places-for-everyone-submission-documents-2022/>

- 3.3 National planning guidance on plan-making sets out further guidance in relation to what statements of common ground should include and when they should be produced:
- They need to be prepared and maintained on an on-going basis throughout the plan-making process. As a minimum, a statement needs to be published when the area it covers and the governance arrangements for the cooperation process have been defined, and the substantive matters to be addressed have been determined.
 - If all the information required is not available authorities can use the statements to identify the outstanding matters that need to be addressed, the process for reaching agreements on these and indicate, where possible, when the statement is likely to be updated. It should demonstrate effective co-operation from early plan making stages with concrete actions and outcomes as the plan progresses.
 - They should be made available by the time an authority publishes their draft plan, to provide communities and other stakeholders with a transparent picture of how they have collaborated.
 - Once published the statement should be updated as appropriate to reflect the current position in the preparation of the Plan.
- 3.4 Strategic issues are those which require effective co-operation and may have cross boundary implications and are identified as:
- The homes and jobs needed in the area
 - Retail, leisure and other commercial developments
 - Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, water supply, wastewater, flood risk, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat)
 - Community facilities
 - Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation
- 3.5 The strategic matters that will need to be considered as part of the preparation of the Oldham Local Plan will have regard to those addressed as part of Places for Everyone.

Geographical Area of the Oldham Local Plan and Neighbouring Authorities

- 4.1 The Local Plan covers the whole borough except that part which falls within the Peak District National Park.

Who needs to co-operate?

- 5.1 Co-operation should take place with public bodies and neighbouring authorities where there is an identified relevant strategic matter.

Duty to Cooperate Bodies

- 5.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act has identified those bodies who are covered by the "Duty to Cooperate" requirement. Those relevant to Oldham's Local Plan are:
- The Environment Agency
 - Historic England
 - Natural England
 - The Civil Aviation Authority
 - Homes England
 - Clinical Commissioning Groups established under section 14D of the National Health Service Act (2006)
 - National Health Service Commissioning Board
 - The Office of Rail Regulation
 - Transport for Greater Manchester
 - Highway authorities (Highways England and the local highway authority)
- 5.3 Oldham Council is required to co-operate with these authorities, where relevant, and in return they are required to work with us.
- 5.4 The council must also co-operate with the GM Local Enterprise Partnership and GM Local Nature Partnership (Natural Capital Group) and have regard to their activities, however they are not subject to the requirements of duty to cooperate.

Neighbouring authorities

- 5.5 Effective co-operation on cross-boundary strategic issues covers those areas outside Oldham but which share a border with the borough. Co-operation takes place with the relevant level / service area of local government depending on the issue at hand.
- 5.6 Oldham's neighbouring authorities are:
- Calderdale
 - Kirklees
 - Manchester City Council
 - Peak District National Park Authority

- High Peak Borough Council
 - Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
 - Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
- 5.7 Whilst not neighbouring authorities Oldham Council will also co-operate with the other Places of Everyone authorities (Bolton, Bury, Salford, Trafford and Wigan) and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) as well as Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.

Signatories

- 5.8 The Statement of Common Ground is a document that will be updated at each iteration of the review of Oldham's Local Plan. It will accompany the updated Oldham Local Plan at each key stage, setting out a record of collaboration from the earliest stages through to submission.
- 5.9 At the submission stage, the Statement of Common Ground will be required to demonstrate to the Inspectorate that neighbouring authorities and public bodies (as outlined above) and infrastructure providers are satisfied that the proposals in the updated Oldham Local Plan, do not cause any significant concern and those organisations are satisfied with the plan.
- 5.10 Paragraph 35 of NPPF sets out that Local Plans will be examined to assess whether they have been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements and whether they are sound. It sets out that plans will be found 'sound' if they have been positively prepared, are justified and effective and consistent with national policy.
- 5.11 In relation to being 'effective' plans should be deliverable over the plan period and based on effective working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground.
- 5.12 As such, by demonstrating effective co-operation and collaboration using the Statement of Common Ground the Inspector, at the Examination, will be able to determine whether the plan is 'effective'.
- 5.13 The Statement of Common ground should be accompanied with signatures to demonstrate agreement with the Plan on key matters. Oldham Council intends to collect signatures at the submission stage, to enable the fullest collaboration to take place between the key parties.
- 5.14 Potential signatories, depending on the strategic matters identified and to be address, may include:
- Neighbouring authorities, other PfE authorities, GMCA and Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The public bodies listed at paragraph 5.2.

- Infrastructure providers – United Utilities, Electricity North-West, National Grid and Cadent.

Strategic Issues

- 6.1 As stated above at paragraphs 2.1 to 2.7 upon adoption Places for Everyone will set the strategic policies and direction for the borough.
- 6.2 Oldham’s Local Plan will interpret these strategic policies at a more detailed local level to reflect our priorities and support delivery of the council’s regeneration ambitions and Creating a Better Place.
- 6.3 During the time of the Issues and Options consultation (summer 2021) meetings were held with each of Oldham’s neighbouring authorities (Calderdale, High Peak, Kirklees, Manchester, Peak District National Park Authority, Rochdale and Tameside) to discuss the scope of the Local Plan review and identify potential strategic matters for consideration. Through this process the following strategic matters were identified:
- Homes and employment (including delivery of Places for Everyone JPA2 Stakehill)
 - Transport (including Bee Network and Dove Stones parking)
 - Habitat Regulations Assessment (and the South Pennine Moors Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC))
 - Biodiversity Net Gain
 - Landscape, Green Infrastructure and recreation linkages (including Northern Roots)
 - Education
 - Purpose of the Peak District National Park
- 6.4 Members of the Strategic Planning and Information also attend the South Pennines Group which meets quarterly and includes many of our neighbouring authorities. This provides a further opportunity to discuss strategic and cross-boundary matters.

Oldham’s Local Plan and the Strategic Issues

- 7.1 This section sets how the Draft Local Plan has considered and / or addressed the strategic issues listed above. How these matters are dealt with through the Local Plan will evolve as it’s progressed and as we continue to collaborate with neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies.

Housing and employment

- 7.2 Oldham’s housing requirement and employment land supply is established through Places for Everyone - Policy JP-H1 Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development, Policy JP-J3 Office Development, and Policy JP-J4 Industry and Warehousing Development. Places for Everyone also identifies strategic housing and/or employment allocations for Oldham – JPA2 Stakehill (cross-boundary with Rochdale), JPA12 Beal Valley, JPA13 Bottom Field Farm, JPA14 Broadbent Moss, JPA15 Chew Brook Vale (Robert Fletchers), JPA16 Cowlshaw, JPA17 Land south of Coal Pit Lane, and JPA18 South of Rosary Road.
- 7.3 The ability for neighbouring authorities to accept any of GM's housing or employment provision was established through the Places for Everyone process. It is therefore not considered necessary to consider this strategic matter further through the Oldham Local Plan Statement of Common Ground.
- 7.4 However, to supplement the strategic allocations listed at paragraph 7.2 and contribute to the delivery of our housing requirement and employment supply the Oldham Local Plan is proposing to allocate sites within the urban area which depending on their scale and location may have cross-boundary implications that will need to be considered through duty to cooperate discussions. Our approach to the delivery of housing and employment is set out in Draft Local Plan policies H1 Delivering a Diverse Housing Office, H13 Housing and Mixed-Use Allocations, E1 Business and Employment Areas and E4 Office, Industry and Warehousing Allocations.
- 7.5 The delivery of Places for Everyone JPA2 Stakehill has been raised as a strategic matter by Rochdale. Stakehill forms part of the wider Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ), a significant investment and economic opportunity that includes Northern Gateway and Kingsway. Delivery is overseen by the Atom Valley Board made up of public and private sector representatives, including from Bury, Oldham and Rochdale Council’s. As we progress the Local Plan we will continue to work closely with colleagues at Rochdale Council to consider how we can help facilitate delivery of Stakehill as part of the wider Atom Valley MDZ.

Transport

- 7.6 The Draft Local Plan seeks to support delivery of Oldham’s Transport Strategy through several policies relating to transport and improving connectivity. Policy T1 Delivering Oldham’s Transport Priorities seeks to, amongst others:
- facilitate and encourage walking and cycling supporting delivery of the Bee Network; and
 - ensure that new development safeguards land for the provision or improvement of highway and public transport schemes, such as the trans-Pennine route through Standedge Tunnels and via Diggle Station.

- 7.7 Discussions have also taken between the Peak District National Park Authority and officers at Oldham Council regarding car parking at Dove Stones outside of the local planning framework.

Habitat Regulations Assessment and the South Pennine Moors

- 7.8 The Draft Local Plan Policy N1 Protecting Nature seeks to protect sites designated for nature conservation and geodiversity from harm in accordance with an identified hierarchy. The hierarchy affords the highest level of weight to international nature designations, including the South Pennine Moors SPAs and SAC. Through Policy N1 development will not be permitted if it would have an adverse impact on the protected species and habitats of the South Pennine Moors SAC, the Peak District Moors SPA and the South Pennine Moors Phase 2 SPA.
- 7.9 The completion of a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) has helped to inform preparation of the Draft Local Plan and this will be reviewed and updated as we progress through the next stages of the Local Plan.
- 7.10 Places for Everyone Policy JP-G5 Uplands, also seeks to ensure that new development does not have an adverse impact on protected habitats of the South Pennine Moors SAC, the Peak District Moors SPA and the South Pennine Moors Phase 2 SPA from urban edge effects, loss of and/or disturbance to functionally linked habitats and recreation disturbances. The policy sets out requirements in relation to new development within certain distances of the SPAs and SAC. Oldham Council is working with officers at Rochdale and Tameside, in collaboration with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document that will provide further guidance on the implementation of JP-G5.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 7.11 The Draft Local Plan Policy N2 Restoring Nature sets out that a net increase in biodiversity will be achieved across the borough and development will be expected to contribute towards this, as well as opportunities to implement the Local Nature Recovery Network. In accordance with Policy N2, development (except where exempt) will only be permitted where a measurable Biodiversity Net Gain of a minimum of 10% is demonstrated and secured for at least 30 years. Biodiversity net gain can be achieved on-site, off-site or through a combination of on-site and off-site measures.
- 7.12 The council is proactively working to ensure that there are options for off-site net gain to be delivered within Oldham close to where developments may be taking place, and which may contribute towards the implementation of the Local Nature Recovery Network and enhancement of the Green Belt.

Landscape, Green Infrastructure and recreation linkages

- 7.13 The council has recently completed a Green Infrastructure Strategy⁴, which has helped to shape policies within the Draft Local Plan. The Green Infrastructure Strategy proposes place-based opportunities including Nature Recovery Networks and these are shown on the Green Infrastructure Network and Opportunity Map⁵ and will be delivered through Draft Local Plan Policy N3 Enhancing Green Infrastructure through development.
- 7.14 A strategic approach towards the protection, management and enhancement of our Green Infrastructure is also set out Places for Everyone in Policy JP-G2 Green Infrastructure Network, to protect and enhance the ecosystem services which the Green Infrastructure Network provides, including flood management, climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Education

- 7.15 Draft Local Plan policies CO5 Education and Skills and CO6 Securing Educational Places through New Residential Development, seek to ensure that development proposals coming forward support early years, schools and post-16 facilities and meet the demand generated from the needs of residential development.

Purpose of the Peak District National Park

- 7.16 National planning policy applies great weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks and priority is given to the purpose of conservation.
- 7.17 As stated at paragraph 4.1 above the determination of planning applications within the part of Oldham falling within the Peak District National Park is undertaken by the Peak District National Park Authority. However, parts of Saddleworth may be considered to fall within its setting, although this is not defined within the Local Plan, and will be considered to contribute to the Peak District National Park's natural beauty.
- 7.18 As such, the council has a duty to ensure care for the Peak District National Park. Draft Local Plan Policy OL1 Consideration for the Peak District National Park, seeks to ensure that development within the planning boundary of

⁴ This document can be found online at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2183/oldham_green_infrastructure_strategy

⁵ This map can be found at: https://maps.oldham.gov.uk/webmap/?initialDialog=layersDialog&mapName=Green_Infrastructure

Oldham Borough does not conflict with the purposes of the Peak District National Park, taking into account views into and out of the park and sensitive design into the wider landscape. Development that is viewed as conflicting with the purposes of the national park will not be permitted.

Further evidence

- 7.19 As part of preparing the Draft Local Plan various pieces of evidence have been prepared and shared with neighbouring authorities and key bodies as appropriate, including the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Mills Strategy. Further evidence prepared will continue to be shared as relevant as preparation of the plan progresses.