

# Oldham

# Local Plan

**Draft Local Plan: Infrastructure and  
Delivery Topic Paper**

**December 2023**



**Oldham**  
Council

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## 1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1. This is the Infrastructure and Delivery Topic Paper and is one of ten topic papers produced to inform the consultation on the Oldham Local Plan: Draft Plan.
- 1.2. All of the papers can be found on the [Oldham Council website](#)<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.3. The topic papers set out how the preferred option for each policy under the relevant Draft Local Plan 'Chapter' has been developed. As such, the topic papers support and complement the Draft Plan consultation document as they provide a detailed explanation of the basis for each preferred policy approach. The policies are presented in a consistent format in each paper with information to provide a comprehensive appreciation of the background to, and development of, the preferred option.
- 1.4. The topic papers set out the national, regional and local planning context and then for each policy, or group of policies where relevant, the topic paper details how comments received to the Issues and Options consultation and relevant evidence have helped to shape the proposed policy approach. Including how this has been informed by the findings of the Integrated Assessment. There are also details of further work that may be required to inform the next stage of the plan-making process – the Regulation 19 Publication Plan.
- 1.5. The preparation of a Local Plan must be informed by consultation and engagement as well as statutory processes, such as Integrated assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment, and address the requirements of national planning policy. These important elements of plan-making have, therefore, informed development of the Draft Local Plan and helped to shape the proposed policy approach. These supporting documents are available to view on the [Oldham Council website](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local\\_plan\\_review/3095/draft\\_local\\_plan](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review/3095/draft_local_plan)

## 2. National Context

- 2.1. This section sets out the key national planning policies that relate to infrastructure and delivery and which have informed the policy approach taken. It also looks at the regional context – in the main this is the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, however there may be other policies and programme of relevance, and local policies and programmes in particular how the policy or policies will help to Create a Better Place.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

- 2.2. Paragraph 7 sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development, and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.
- 2.3. Paragraph 8 sets out the three overarching objectives for achieving sustainable development. These include:
- a) An economic objective - to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - b) A social objective - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - c) An environmental objective - to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 2.4. Paragraphs 9 states that planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.
- 2.5. Paragraph 11 sets out that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development that for plan-making seeks to:
- a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;
  - b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas.
- 2.6. Paragraph 28 states that policies should be used by local planning authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of

infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out other development management policies.

- 2.7. Paragraph 34 sets out that plans should identify contributions expected from development. This should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure (such as that needed for education, health, transport, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure). Such policies should not undermine the deliverability of the plan.
- 2.8. Paragraphs 64 to 66 set out the requirements in relation to affordable housing. In particular it states that where major housing development is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership.
- 2.9. Paragraph 74 sets out that in planning for large scale development, new homes should be supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities.
- 2.10. Paragraph 96 sets out that planning policies should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings, in particular they should address local health and well-being needs for example through the provision of green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- 2.11. Paragraph 99 sets out that a sufficient choice of school places should be available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.
- 2.12. Paragraph 100 requires that local planning authorities work proactively and positively with promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to plan for required facilities and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.
- 2.13. Paragraph 102 to 103 set out that plans should ensure that open space, sport and recreation needs are accommodated.
- 2.14. Paragraph 104 sets out that planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users.
- 2.15. Paragraphs 108 to 113 set out the requirements in terms of providing supporting transport infrastructure as part of development.
- 2.16. In addition to the above, other relevant sections of NPPF include:
  - Chapter 12 sets out policy for achieving well designed places and is clear at paragraph 135(f) that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

## **National Planning Policy Guidance**

### ***Planning Obligations***

- 2.17. The guidance sets out that planning obligations (also commonly referred to as 'section 106' and 'developer contributions') are a legal obligation entered into, usually by a person with an interest in the land and the local planning authority or via a unilateral undertaking, to mitigate the impacts of otherwise unacceptable

development to make it acceptable in planning terms.

- 2.18. The guidance states that planning obligations must meet several tests to be considered acceptable, including, they must be:
- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
  - directly related to the development; and
  - fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 2.19. The guidance goes on to note that policies for planning obligations should be set out in plans and examined in public. Policy requirements should be clear so that they can be accurately accounted for in the price paid for land. Such policies should be informed by evidence of infrastructure and affordable housing need, and a proportionate assessment of viability. Plans should be informed by evidence of infrastructure and affordable housing need, and a proportionate assessment of viability that takes into account all relevant policies.
- 2.20. In terms of viability, the guidance notes that where planning obligations are negotiated on the grounds of viability it is up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for viability assessment at the application stage. The weight to be given to a viability assessment is a matter for the decision maker.
- 2.21. The guidance lists several definitions of infrastructure, in the context of planning obligations, including affordable housing, education, health, highways, transport and travel, open space and leisure, community facilities, digital infrastructure, green infrastructure, flood and water management, economic development and land.
- 2.22. Developer contributions should be monitored and reported upon within an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement.
- 2.23. Further relevant planning policy guidance on developer contributions can be found in the associated contributions' topic paper i.e. Affordable housing contributions policy guidance within the Housing Topic Paper.

### 3. Regional Context

#### **Greater Manchester Strategy 2021-2031, GMCA**

- 3.1. The Strategy<sup>2</sup> is Greater Manchester's plan for all communities, neighbourhoods, towns and cities which make up the city-region. It is a plan for recovery and renewal following the pandemic.
- 3.2. The Strategy aims to achieve the shared vision of 'Good Lives for All: that Greater Manchester is a great place to grow up, get on and grow old; a great place to invest, do business, visit and study' and how this will be achieved.

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<sup>2</sup> Available at: <https://aboutgreatermanchester.com/the-greater-manchester-strategy-2021-2031/>

- 3.3. The Strategy builds on the work undertaken by the Greater Manchester Strategy - Our People, Our Place (2017), by ensuring that all the people in Greater Manchester have access to safe, decent and affordable transport, accelerate plans towards carbon neutrality, creation of greener homes and communities and better jobs and skills.
- 3.4. The Strategy focuses on three key themes of:
- A greener Greater Manchester – focusing on tackling climate change and working toward our carbon neutral aim;
  - A fairer Greater Manchester – addressing inequality and levelling-up, from access to good jobs, to transport, health and housing.
  - A more prosperous Greater Manchester – delivering economic growth which is more equitable and socially responsible, bringing opportunities and prosperity to all.
- 3.5. Infrastructure is a key component of the Strategy in terms of delivering growth and reducing inequality.

### **Places for Everyone (PfE)**

- 3.6. The Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan Document (DPD)<sup>3</sup>, 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.
- 3.7. The most relevant PfE policies relating to infrastructure and delivery are:
- JP-H2 Affordability of New Housing;
  - JP-H3 Type, Size and Design of New Housing;
  - JP-P1 Sustainable Places;
  - JP-P3 Cultural Facilities;
  - JP-P5 Education, Skills and Knowledge;
  - JP-P6 Health;
  - JP-P7 Sport and Recreation;
  - JP-C2 Digital Connectivity;
  - JP-C4 Streets for All;
  - JP-C5 Walking and Cycling;
  - JP-C7 Transport Requirements of New Development; and
  - Chapter 11 – Oldham Strategic Allocations (allocation policies for housing and employment development containing infrastructure requirements).

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<sup>3</sup> Available at: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/places-for-everyone/>

## 4. Local Context

### The Oldham Plan

- 4.1. The Oldham Plan 'Our Future Oldham - A shared vision for 2030'<sup>4</sup> prepared by the Oldham Partnership, sets the direction for the borough.
- 4.2. The main aim of the Oldham Partnership, through the Plan, is to 'uplift every resident'.

### Oldham Council Corporate Plan

- 4.3. The Oldham Council [Corporate Plan 2022-27](#)<sup>5</sup> sets out the council's priorities, with specific actions for 2022-25. It works in parallel with the Oldham Plan and sets out what its priorities mean for Oldham:
  - Healthy, safe and well supported residents
  - A better start and skills for life
  - Better jobs and dynamic businesses
  - Quality homes for everyone
  - A clean and green future
- 4.4. Delivering against these priorities means that the council can help residents and make Oldham the best place it can be.
- 4.5. The Local Plan represents the spatial expression of The Oldham Plan and the council's Corporate Plan. Their aspirations and priorities are the golden thread that runs through the Plan, along with supporting and facilitating the delivery of the council's ambitious Creating a Better Place agenda.

### Creating a Better Place

- 4.6. Through delivering Oldham Council's bold vision for Oldham Town Centre and the wider borough and the ambitions of Creating a Better Place<sup>6</sup> by 2030 Oldham we be a place where business and enterprise can thrive and where people will want to live, visit, relax and work.
- 4.7. Underneath the overarching theme of Creating a Better Place there sits several key issues that policies within the Local Plan seek to address such as, in relation to infrastructure, building quality homes, facilitating the delivery of new and improved education facilities, ensuring that all development mitigates the impact of climate change, creating a connected and accessible green infrastructure network and maximising the health gains from development and ensuring any negative impacts are mitigated.

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<sup>4</sup> Available at:

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200146/strategies\\_plans\\_and\\_policies/2960/the\\_oldham\\_plan\\_-\\_our\\_future\\_oldham](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200146/strategies_plans_and_policies/2960/the_oldham_plan_-_our_future_oldham)

<sup>5</sup> Available at:

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200146/strategies\\_plans\\_and\\_policies/2888/corporate\\_plan](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200146/strategies_plans_and_policies/2888/corporate_plan)

<sup>6</sup> 'Creating a Better Place', more information is available at:

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201248/creating\\_a\\_better\\_place](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201248/creating_a_better_place)



## 5. Consultation Feedback

### Regulation 18 Notification Consultation

- 5.1. To begin preparation of the Local Plan the council carried out a 'Regulation 18' notification between July and August 2017 through which we asked what the local community and stakeholders thought:
  - a) the Local Plan should contain and what the key planning issues are for Oldham; and
  - b) what, in broad terms, should be the main aims of the Local Plan.
- 5.2. In addition, we published our Integrated Assessment Scoping Report and invited the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England to comment on the scope of the Local Plan. This was also available for the local community and stakeholders to view and comment on if they wished.
- 5.3. The main messages that came out of the Regulation 18 Notification consultation regarding infrastructure and delivery were:
  - Improvements in cycling and walking infrastructure are needed;
  - There is a need to maintain and enhance green infrastructure and provide safe open space, including recreation facilities;
  - Impacts from development on biodiversity needs to be considered;
  - There were concerns around social infrastructure e.g. school places, healthcare, leisure, centres etc.
  - There is a need for other infrastructure such as utilities and broadband (a need to improve broadband speeds)
  - There is a need for affordable housing that meets local needs;
  - There is a need for homes for older people and disabled people; and
  - There is a need for high quality amenities.

### Regulation 18 Issues and Options Consultation

- 5.4. The Oldham Local Plan: Issues and Options consultation in 2021 identified infrastructure as one of the key themes for the new Local Plan to address.
- 5.5. As part of the consultation we asked the following questions with regards to infrastructure:
  - Does Oldham require a specific policy that seeks the development of supporting necessary infrastructure, or is it considered that the existing planning policy in the NPPF and Local Plan is sufficient in this regard?
  - Do you think Oldham should continue to have a policy regarding Telecommunications?
  - Does Oldham require a specific policy that seeks to deliver the necessary infrastructure required to support new development?; or Should it be dealt with under the various areas, such as Education, Transport, Open Space

etc? Please list areas where you think the council should outline specific Infrastructure requirements.

- Following adoption of the Local Plan, should the council produce a Planning Obligations SPD, or should the policies clearly explain the methodology?
- 5.6. There was also a specific question on Social Value which asked should the replacement Local Plan include a specific policy in relation to ensuring that new developments provide social value by securing training and local employment provision (including apprenticeships and services for example)?
- 5.7. Several questions were also asked relating to specific development requirements, such as biodiversity net gain, green infrastructure, affordable housing, open space and education. These are set out within the relevant topic papers.
- 5.8. We have reviewed the responses and the main issues raised in relation to infrastructure and delivery are summarised throughout the remainder of this paper.

## 6. Infrastructure and Delivery and the Draft Local Plan

- 6.1. Key policy areas have been identified that are addressed in this topic paper. For each of these, further detail is provided on how comments received to the Issues and Options consultation and relevant evidence have helped to shape the proposed policy approach and how this has also been informed by the findings of the Integrated Assessment. There are also details of further work that may be required to inform the next stage of the plan-making process – the Regulation 19 Publication Plan.

## 7. Policy IN1 Digital Infrastructure and Telecommunications

### Feedback from Issues and Options Consultation

- 7.1. Although a specific question wasn't asked in relation to digital infrastructure and telecommunications, there was broad support for policies which ensure that development is provided with the supporting infrastructure in order to support them. It is considered that the provision of high-speed broadband and 5G would come under this requirement.

### Issues to be addressed

- 7.2. The growth of connectivity over the last decade has resulted in digital technologies increasingly touching on almost every aspect of modern living, meaning that demand for ever faster global connectivity is only expected to increase.
- 7.3. The importance of good connectivity across the economy has been amplified by the behavioural changes from COVID that has seen a significant rise in the number of people working from home.
- 7.4. Access to digital technology in the home and community is also a vital component of social inclusion. Its absence can impact on the educational, employment, financial

and health outcomes of individuals and families. It can lead to social isolation and an inability to participate in local communities.

- 7.5. There is a need to ensure that connectivity in Oldham supports existing and future demand; to not only support good Internet and mobile phone access for residents and businesses, but also to provide a platform for “smart” technologies, including environmental monitoring and management, energy efficiency and future transport solutions.

## Evidence Base

- 7.6. Current superfast broadband (speeds of 30 Mbps or more) coverage in Oldham is strong. In January 2024 it was 99.3% in Oldham and 98.3% in Greater Manchester as a whole and 96.7% in the UK ([Think Broadband](#)<sup>7</sup>).
- 7.7. Historically, superfast broadband has been delivered via Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC). This utilises fibre cable to the local street cabinet with the existing copper cable between the cabinet and the property.
- 7.8. The next step up in terms of speeds is ultrafast broadband. Think Broadband defines ultrafast broadband as over 100 Mbps although it is listed as over 300 Mbps elsewhere. Think Broadband data shows that Oldham in January 2024 did well in terms of >100 Mbps ultrafast broadband with coverage at 93.9% compared to 90.44% in Greater Manchester and 81.3% in the UK.
- 7.9. The push is now on for gigabit capable connectivity which delivers download speeds of up to 1Gbps, the equivalent of 1,000Mbps. These kinds of speeds are typically available in locations full fibre connectivity where fibre optic cables run directly to homes (fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP)).
- 7.10. Gigabit connectivity can also be delivered through the higher tiers of Virgin Media’s cable-based broadband and 5G broadband. However, the roll out of Virgin’s Gig1 Fibre Broadband is still at a relatively early stage and the product is not yet available in Oldham.
- 7.11. Think Broadband data shows that in February 2021 full fibre broadband coverage was 70.44% in Oldham and 65.2% in Greater Manchester compared to 60.61% in the UK.

## 5G and small cells

- 7.12. The House of Commons Library paper, [Gigabit-broadband in the UK: Government targets and policy \(30 April 2021\)](#), provides a useful summary of 5G and broadband connectivity:
- 7.13. “5G is the next generation of wireless communications technology, after 4G mobile broadband. 5G is expected to support very fast download speeds and near instant response times, allowing many devices to access large amounts of data at once. 5G

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<sup>7</sup> This data can be accessed here: <https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/E08000004>

is expected to deliver applications beyond mobile phone services, for example in health care, automated manufacturing, transport and traffic management.”

- 7.14. More information on smart technologies and their potential future role in areas such as health and transport is provided below.
- 7.15. 5G is likely to require a combination of existing mobile 'macro-cell' mast sites, new 'macro-cell' mast sites as well as small cell technology in order to provide the required coverage and capacity. This is due to the large numbers of users and devices that it is expected to support and for the significant levels of data required for the future application of smart technologies. There are also additional operational restraints on the radio frequencies utilised by 5G.
- 7.16. 5G operates on multiple radio frequency spectrums. The longer wavelength spectrum on which 5G will operate can utilise standard macro-cell sites and aerials to be deployed however it has a shorter range and less ability to pass through objects than preceding technologies and therefore additional macro-cell sites and aerials are required to deploy the 5G network.
- 7.17. The shorter wavelength spectrum on which 5G will also operate (which will also have the highest speeds and capacity) can travel even less distance and largely cannot pass through or reflect off objects such as buildings and trees etc. Therefore, in order to deploy 5G on this spectrum a denser network of small cells will be required. Small cells are typically embedded in street furniture such as lampposts, advertisement panels, bus shelters or street signs. Fibre connectivity is required to connect these small cells to the core internet network.
- 7.18. The Government has committed to being a world leader in 5G, the next generation of wireless communications technology, with the majority of the population covered by 2027.

### **Emerging technology**

- 7.19. The rapid acceleration in technological applications taking advantage of improved digital connectivity presents an opportunity for sustainable development. It has been dubbed by some as the fourth industrial revolution given the potential importance of these emerging technologies to the economy and a sustainable transition. Some villages, towns and cities using data and emerging technology to address common local challenges in areas such as transport, connectivity and air quality are being described as Smart Places by Connecting Cambridgeshire. The aim of these technologies is to influence behaviours, improve local economic conditions, sustainability responses, and quality of life for the residents. Some of the potential applications are listed below.

### **Integrated data**

- 7.20. Integrated public transport systems, on-demand mobility and intelligent traffic management will be crucial for improving air quality and connectivity in gridlocked emerging cities. Data can improve current traffic flow and management.

## **Internet of things (IoT)**

- 7.21. IoT and AI, coupled with big data and low-tech solutions including mobile phones and GPS navigation systems, can automate traffic monitoring and communicate congestion to vehicles on the road. This can help to optimise route planning, cut travel time and reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions.

## **Blockchain**

- 7.22. Blockchain technology, combined with real-time pattern recognition data, can help cities price and trigger incentives for transport network companies to provide services during off-peak times and to complement public transport. Technological advances can also help reduce traffic volumes.

## **Autonomous Vehicles (AVs)**

- 7.23. Autonomous vehicles (cars, buses and trucks), especially when low or zero-emission and deployed for shared transport and logistics services, can reduce energy use, emissions and the number of vehicles on the road.

## **Drones**

- 7.24. Drones can be used for maintenance, to ensure that buildings and installations are operational more of the time, or for high-resolution real-time aerial data solutions and equipped with sensors linked to IoT platforms in a way that can offer real-time traffic and logistics information for optimised routing.
- 7.25. Drones can also be used for delivery, airborne drones would reduce trips on the road. This would require accessible rooftops.

## **Virtual reality**

- 7.26. Virtual, augmented and mixed reality meeting services in shared spaces could also reduce the need to travel for meetings, boosting broader connectivity and the competitiveness of smaller companies in emerging cities.

## **Proposed Policy Approach and Reasons**

- 7.27. The policy supports the extension and improvement of digital connectivity across the borough, particularly emphasising access to cutting-edge technologies like 5G and gigabit-capable full fibre technology. This reflects a forward-looking approach, acknowledging the importance of digital infrastructure in modern urban planning.
- 7.28. New telecommunication sites, including those for prior approval, are subject to consideration in accordance with relevant government guidance, ensuring that the approval process aligns with national strategies and best practices. This approach aims to maintain consistency and adhere to informed decision-making processes.
- 7.29. Moreover, the policy establishes conditions for permitting new masts or telecommunications equipment. These conditions include demonstrating the unavailability of reasonable opportunities for site sharing, minimising visual impact, avoiding interference, ensuring highway safety, and providing for the removal of structures when no longer required for telecommunication purposes. The set

conditions balance the need for expanding digital infrastructure with considerations for environmental impact, safety, and responsible site management.

- 7.30. In addition, the policy mandates that all new residential and employment developments enable Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) broadband infrastructure. This requirement reflects an awareness of the essential role of high-speed broadband in contemporary living and working. Furthermore, it ensures that new developments are equipped with advanced digital infrastructure, promoting seamless connectivity for residents and businesses.
- 7.31. Developers are also required to consult with broadband providers when proposing no broadband provision, ensuring a collaborative approach to verify the viability of broadband connections. This requirement prevents the exclusion of necessary digital infrastructure and supports the policy's goal of promoting comprehensive digital connectivity.
- 7.32. In summary, Policy IN1 outlines a proactive approach to digital infrastructure, supporting advanced technologies, aligning with national guidance, setting balanced conditions for site approval, mandating high-speed broadband in new developments, and fostering collaboration with broadband providers.

### **Integrated Assessment**

- 7.33. Policy IN1 scored a mixture of neutral, positives and significantly positive scores. There were 22 neutral scored and 4 positive or significantly positive. There was no enhancement or mitigation measures identified. The policy was not screened in by the HRA.

## **8. Policy IN2 Planning Obligations**

- 8.1. This is an overarching policy which sets out the policy approach to securing planning obligations as part of the relevant policies within the Draft Local Plan. It also sets out the approach to viability for the Plan.
- 8.2. The Draft Local Plan contains several policies which set out development requirements, which may be secured through planning obligations. These are listed in the policy reasoned justification (table IN1) and set out below for information. This is not an exhaustive list.

Table 1: Policies in the Draft Local Plan that may require the use of planning obligations

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Planning Obligation</b>
H4, H5, H7	Specialist housing provision and affordable housing
N2, N3	Biodiversity Net Gain and Green Infrastructure
N4	Tree Replacement
CO1, CO2, CO3	Open Space, Sport and Recreation
IN3	Social Value
CO4	Cultural, Community and Health Facilities

Policy Number	Planning Obligation
CO6	Education Provision/ School Places
T1, OTC3	Highways
CC2, CC4, T1, IN1	Infrastructure

### Feedback from Issues and Options consultation

- 8.3. The consultation responses at Issues and Options in relation to planning obligations (policy IN2) are summarised below.
- 8.4. Several respondents commented that the council should have a policy that seeks to ensure the delivery of necessary infrastructure to support new development. In terms of the policy respondents commented that the policy should provide a formula for contributions (where appropriate) and ensure clarity over what obligations are sought. It was noted that the contributions required should be deliverable and the policy be flexible to allow for changes where necessary, and for the consideration of site-specific circumstances, such as viability.
- 8.5. It was commented on that financial contributions should be channelled into the infrastructure and services that serve the community in which the development is located.
- 8.6. Many respondents supported the introduction of a Planning Obligations SPD which explicitly outlines requirements.
- 8.7. In terms of viability, it was commented that the policy should allow for development to come forward where viability demonstrates that it would not be viable to provide a fully compliant scheme.

### Issues to be addressed

- 8.8. In terms of policy IN2, the issues that need to be addressed through the Local Plan are set out below.
- 8.9. There is a need to ensure that development is supported by the necessary infrastructure, including transport and highways infrastructure, social infrastructure, green infrastructure and utilities. Development should make a positive impact and achieve sustainable development. It should not place unnecessary pressure on existing services, facilities, infrastructure and open spaces.
- 8.10. There is also a need to ensure local needs are met through development. The policies within the Draft Local Plan seek to ensure that local needs can be met through development, including that of affordable housing needs, improving access to open space and green infrastructure, improving access to transport and active travel and providing for/ supporting the provision of education and healthcare.
- 8.11. There are other specific issues to be addressed by the Local Plan, including those in regard to the policy areas identified within table 1 above. The issues in relation to a particular policy area are set out within the relevant topic paper<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> All topic papers are available at:  
[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local\\_plan\\_review/3095/draft\\_local\\_plan](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review/3095/draft_local_plan)

## Evidence Base

- 8.12. The policy provides further clarification on planning obligations sought within the Draft Local Plan policies, in line with NPPF and planning guidance, it is not addressed by any of the standalone evidence documents.
- 8.13. However, there is a suite of evidence which supports policy IN2 as relevant to the specific planning obligation and the policy it is within (including those set out within table 1 above). These are set out within the relevant topic papers and include:
- Oldham Local Housing Needs Assessment (2019);
  - Oldham Green Infrastructure Strategy (2022);
  - Oldham Open Space Study (2022);
  - CAVAT (Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees);
  - Oldham Transport Strategy and Town Centre Car Parking Strategy (2022); and
  - Department for Education Scorecard (as of October 2023)
- 8.14. Some planning obligations may also be statutory requirements, such as Biodiversity Net Gain, Highways and other types of infrastructure.
- 8.15. In terms of viability, a whole plan Viability Assessment will be carried out as part of the Local Plan and findings will inform preparation of the next stage Publication Plan. The assessment will test all Local Plan policy requirements alongside anticipated development costs, to ensure that the local and national planning policy requirements are realistic, both individually and cumulatively, and accordingly do not undermine the delivery of the Local Plan.

## Proposed Policy Approach and Reasons

- 8.16. Policy IN2 sets out that where developments would increase the need or demand for infrastructure, services and facilities, beyond the capacity of existing provision, new provision and/or contributions towards enhancing existing provision will be required. Planning obligations will also be sought to secure the ongoing maintenance and management of provision where necessary.
- 8.17. It clarifies that where a site is in multiple ownership it will be ensured that all developers make a proportionate contribution to any planning obligations required to enable the delivery of the whole site, as well as those obligations specific to their individual development parcel.
- 8.18. Recognising that some sites may be constrained in terms of size or site characteristics, the policy sets out that in some circumstances, it may be more appropriate for planning obligations to go towards new or enhanced provision off-site. For large-scale development or strategic sites subject to phasing it may also be appropriate to pool S106 monies raised from planning obligations, to contribute towards a piece of infrastructure or project that will support delivery of the whole site and its comprehensive development. The council will work with developers to facilitate the delivery of provision as appropriate.
- 8.19. As set out at paragraph 6.8, the policy sets out that further information and detailed guidance in respect of planning obligations and requirements can be found in the



policies listed in Table IN1 (within the reasoned justification of policy IN2). However, it notes that this is not an exhaustive list and other site-specific requirements may be necessary depending on the scale, nature and location of the proposed development.

- 8.20. In relation to viability, policy IN3 sets out that in some cases, a site-specific viability assessment (which will be independently verified by the council at the applicant's expense) may be submitted where the need for such is evidenced by a change in circumstance which could not have been evident in the whole plan Viability Assessment (that is to be prepared). It goes on to note that where the site-specific viability assessment provides evidence to demonstrate that it is not financially viable to provide the level of planning obligations proposed, reduced planning obligations will only be permitted where:
- The value of the planning obligations has been maximised having regard to likely viability;
  - A clawback mechanism has been incorporated into a legal agreement, where appropriate, to ensure that additional mitigation is provided if final development viability is better than anticipated in the initial viability assessment; and
  - The benefits of the development outweigh the lack of full mitigation for its impacts, having regard to other material considerations.
- 8.21. The policy reasoned justification notes that the weight to be given to any such site-specific viability assessment is a matter for the council as the decision maker on a case-by-case basis, having regard to all the circumstances in the case, including whether the plan and the underpinning evidence remains up to date and any change in circumstances since the adoption of the plan. Following the outcomes of the individual site-specific viability assessment, if the council is satisfied that there are overriding viability issues which prevent full compliance with policy requirements, it may be necessary to forgo a particular policy requirement to deliver another. Decisions in this respect will be made based the identified local needs and priorities, including but not limited to:
- a) the existing levels of affordable housing in a defined area;
  - b) the need for a particular type of open space to address a deficiency; and
  - c) and the delivery of a local scheme/ project.
- 8.22. The policy has been prepared in response to consultation feedback, in that it provides further clarification in regard to how the Plan will seek planning obligations and how viability will be considered. It seeks to be flexible to allow for particular site characteristics and the impact these may have on viability, however the mechanisms within the policy, ensure that where possible the fullest compliance with the Local Plan is secured.

### Integrated Assessment

- 8.23. Policy IN2 scored either positive or neutral. No mitigation or enhancement was required to the policies as a result of the IA. The policy has not been screened in by the HRA.

## 9. Policy IN3 Delivering Social Value and Inclusion

- 9.1. This section sets out that approach to social value and inclusion within the Draft Local Plan.

### Feedback from Issues and Options consultation

- 9.2. Feedback from the Issues and Options consultation demonstrated support for the inclusion of a social value policy with regards to new development.

### Issues to be Addressed

- 9.3. In terms of policy IN3 the issues that need to be addressed through the Local Plan are set out below.

### Evidence Base

- 8.1 'Social value' is defined in Public Services Act 2012 as the additional social, environmental and economic benefits that an organisation and its supply chain can make to society, by contributing to the well-being and resilience of individuals, communities and society in general.
- 8.2 Securing social value through development is considered to reflect the principles of sustainable development, which is at heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in relation to all three sustainability objectives – economic, environmental and, of course, social.
- 8.3 The [Social Value Portal](#) is an organisation which specialises in measuring and reporting social value for organisations in the public and private sectors. The portal, alongside other partners, has recently established a Planning Taskforce to consider how social value can be embedded into the planning process. The portal collaborated with its partners to submit a response to the government's Planning for the Future White Paper which 'demonstrated the importance of social value as the golden thread running through the reformed planning system'<sup>9</sup>. One of their recommendations was that social value should be embedded at policy level with Local Plans including a Social Value Policy linked to new development, where overarching social value priorities for the planning authority are identified. They also advised that local authorities should utilise the 'Sustainability Assessment' proposed in the White Paper to secure adherence to their local Social Value Policy by requiring a 'Social Value Statement' for all major applications.'
- 8.4 A [Local Needs Analysis](#)<sup>10</sup> was carried out by the Social Value Portal on behalf of the council in 2020 with the aim to provide guidance for stakeholder, suppliers, developers, contractors and others working in Oldham to develop robust social value strategies. The recommendations coming out of the 2022 local needs analysis as shown below at Figure 1 below illustrate the importance of social value and the role that planning can play in achieving it.

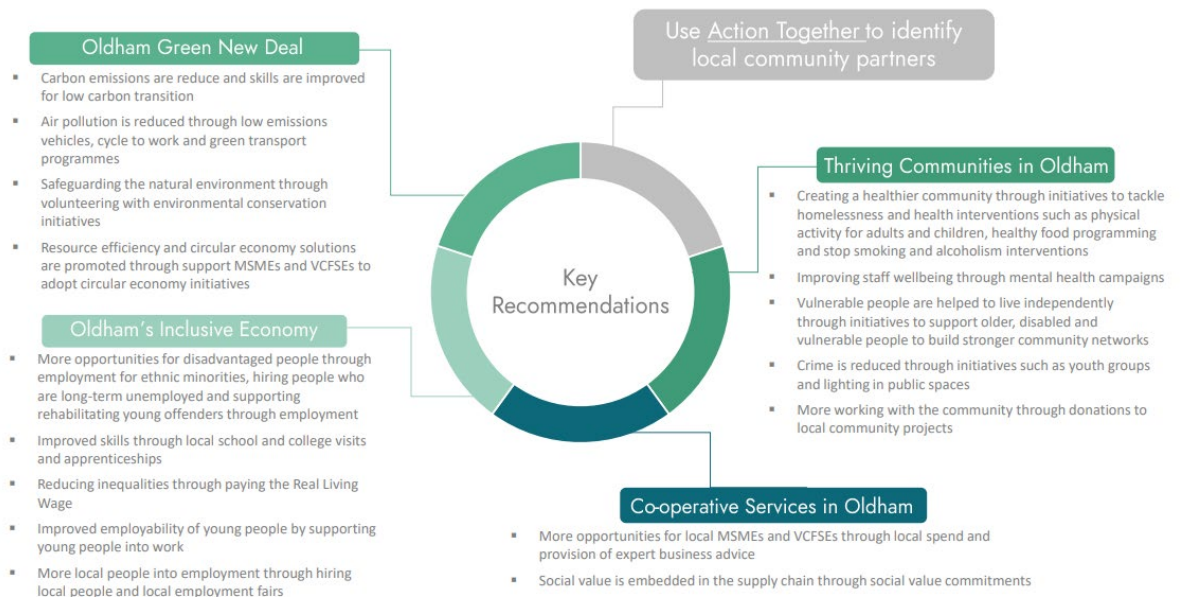
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<sup>9</sup> Further information on the social value portal and its submission to the Planning for the Future White Paper can be found online at <https://socialvalueportal.com/resources/insight/social-value-movement/social-value-approach-planning-future/#:~:text=In%20order%20to%20ensure%20that%20social%20value%20is,value%20priorities%20for%20the%20planning%20authority%20are%20identified.>

<sup>10</sup> This document can be found at:

<https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200195/business/1901/procurement>

**Figure 1: Recommendations from the Local Needs Analysis**



8.5 As part of developing a council-wide Social Value Policy an updated local needs analysis is being prepared. The updated analysis and findings will help to inform our approach to delivering social value through the Local Plan and the planning system. In the meantime,

### Proposed Policy Approach and Reasons

- 9.4. The policy approach seeks to maximise the social value that can be generated by new development. Reflecting the Oldham Partnership's ambition of 'Uplifting Every Resident'.
- 9.5. Policy IN3 sets out that all planning applications for major development shall be supported by a Social Value Strategy, with its implementation secured through a planning condition.
- 9.6. As set out in policy IN3 the Social Value Strategy will be required to identify how the development will support and deliver social value and inclusion. Through doing so the applicant will be required to demonstrate how the development will maximise its positive contribution to, for example:
- Reducing inequalities in Oldham and their adverse impacts on residents;
  - The ability of local residents and vulnerable groups to fully participate in society;
  - Create inclusive places through design, in accordance with Policy D1 and Policy D2;
  - Economic inclusion, with positive consideration given to:
    - Ensuring that access arrangements cater for all needs, including maximising opportunities for walking and cycling;
    - Promoting on-site employment opportunities to Oldham residents;
    - Providing training opportunities for Oldham residents;
    - Utilising local supply chains; and
    - Signing up to Greater Manchester's Good Employment Charter; and

f. Good mental and physical health.

- 9.7. It is considered that the proposed approach provides an appropriate mechanism for embedding social value into our planning framework and ensuring that it is given due consideration within the development process.

### Integrated Assessment

- 9.8. Policy IN3 scored a mixture of neutral, positives and significantly positive scores. There were 19 neutral scored and 7 positive or significantly positive. There were no mitigation or enhancement measures identified. The policy was not screened in by the HRA.

## 10. Further Work and Next Steps

- 10.1. Between the Draft Plan stage and Publication Plan stage further evidence will be provided which will inform the policies within this topic paper as appropriate, including:
- A Whole Plan Viability Assessment which will test all Local Plan policy requirements alongside anticipated development costs.
  - Further work in relation to social value and what would be required with regards to the preparation of a social value strategy as required by policy IN3.