

# Oldham

# Local Plan

**Publication Plan: Natural Environment and  
Open Land Topic Paper**

**January 2026**



**Oldham**  
Council

## Contents

1. Introduction and Purpose.....	2
2. Relevant policies, plans and strategies .....	3
National Context .....	3
Greater Manchester Context.....	6
Local Context .....	7
3. Issues, challenges and opportunities relating to the Natural Environment and Open Land .....	9
4. The Natural Environment and Open Land and the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan 14	
Policy OL1: Consideration for the Peak District National Park.....	14
Policy OL2: Oldham's Green Belt .....	17
Policy OL3: Extensions and Alternations to Existing Buildings within the Green Belt.....	21
Policy OL4: Local Green Spaces .....	24
Policy OL5: Protecting Dark Skies and Tranquillity .....	29
5. Conclusion .....	31
Appendix 1: Detailed Green Belt boundary change and reason .....	34
Appendix 2: Summary of Local Green Space Assessment .....	38

## 1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1. This is the Natural Environment and Open Land Topic Paper and is one of 13 topic papers produced to inform the consultation on the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan.
- 1.2. All Topic Papers can be found online on [Oldham Council's website](#).<sup>1</sup>
- 1.3. Please note that biodiversity and green infrastructure is dealt with under 'Addressing the Biodiversity Emergency' Topic Paper.
- 1.4. The main purpose of the Topic Paper is to set out:
  - the current key policies, plans and strategies relating to the Natural Environment and Open Land that have informed the Local Plan;
  - the main issues, challenges and opportunities relating to the Natural Environment and Open Land that we face in Oldham, underpinned by proportionate and relevant evidence;
  - how policies within the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan have been shaped, having regard to:
    - the key issues, challenges and opportunities facing the borough in relation to the Natural Environment and Open Land;
    - responses received as part of the Oldham Local Plan: Draft Plan consultation and Duty to Co-operate discussions;
    - the outcomes of the Integrated Assessment, including any requirements of the Habitat Regulations Assessment; and
  - how, with these policies, the Plan sets out an appropriate strategy that is based on proportionate evidence.
- 1.5. The Setting the Scene Topic Paper sets out the context for the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan, its purpose and how it relates to the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document.
- 1.6. The Topic Papers therefore support and complement the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan, demonstrating how policy choices have been informed, providing transparency around decision-making, and assisting those viewing the plan and the examining Inspector in understanding the rationale behind the Plan's content.

---

<sup>1</sup> Oldham Council's website for Local Plan Review is available at [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local\\_plan\\_review](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review)

## 2. Relevant Policies, Plans and Strategies

- 2.1. This section sets out the main policies, plans and strategies that relate to the Natural Environment and Open Land and which have informed the policy approach taken.

### National Context

#### National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2. [National Planning Policy Framework](#)<sup>2</sup> (NPPF, December 2024, as amended February 2025) section 15 on conserving and enhancing the natural environment states great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks...which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks.
- 2.3. Section 13 addresses protecting Green Belt land. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
- 2.4. Green Belt serves five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - b) to prevent neighbouring towns 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
- 2.5. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified through the preparation or updating of plans. Where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies.
- 2.6. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness (Other than in the case of development on previously developed land or grey belt land, where development is not inappropriate).
- 2.7. NPPF sets out the types of development within the Green Belt that is not inappropriate, such as extensions or alternations to a building, replacement buildings, limited infilling and redevelopment of previously developed land.

---

<sup>2</sup> National Planning Policy Framework is available at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF\\_December\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf)

- 2.8. The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where the development would utilize grey belt land and would not undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan; there is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed, the development would be in a sustainable location and where applicable the development meets the 'Golden Rules', which are explained in paragraphs 156-157 of NPPF.
- 2.9. Section 8 on promoting healthy and safe communities, states the designation of land as Local Green Space through local plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.
- 2.10. The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  - b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
  - c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 2.11. Policies and decisions for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belt set out in chapter 13 of this Framework<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.12. Section 15 on conserving and enhancing the natural environment states that planning policies should ensure development is appropriate for its location taking into account effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment. In doing so they should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

## National Planning Policy Guidance

- 2.13. National Planning Policy Guidance on [Natural Environment](#)<sup>4</sup> (2025) explains that local planning authorities 'must seek to further' the purposes for which National Parks are designated.
- 2.14. This duty is particularly important to the delivery of the statutory purposes of protected landscapes. It applies to all local planning authorities, not just National Park authorities, and is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside National Park or National Landscape boundaries, but which might have an impact on their setting or protection.

---

<sup>3</sup> Excluding provisions relating to grey belt and previously developed land set out in chapter 13 of NPPF.

<sup>4</sup> Planning Practice Guidance on Natural Environment is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment#landscape>

- 2.15. National Planning Practice on [Green Belt](#)<sup>5</sup> (2025) provides detailed guidance on grey belt land and the Golden Rules.
- 2.16. It also provides guidance on openness stating that factors such as spatial and visual aspects (visual impact); the duration of the development and its remediability and the degree of activity likely to be generated.
- 2.17. National Planning Guidance on [Local Green Space](#)<sup>6</sup> (2014) outlines that Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.
- 2.18. Designating any Local Green Space will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. Plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs and the Local Green Space designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making.
- 2.19. Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the development would be compatible with the reasons for designation or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented.
- 2.20. Whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion. For example, green areas could include land where sports pavilions, boating lakes or structures such as war memorials are located, allotments, or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis.
- 2.21. The proximity of a Local Green Space to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances, including why the green area is seen as special, but it must be reasonably close.
- 2.22. There are no hard and fast rules about how big a Local Green Space can be because places are different and a degree of judgment will inevitably be needed. There is no lower size limit for a Local Green Space.
- 2.23. Some areas that may be considered for designation as Local Green Space may already have largely unrestricted public access, though even in places like parks there may be some restrictions. However, other land could be considered for designation even if there is no public access (e.g. green areas which are valued because of their wildlife, historic significance and/or beauty).
- 2.24. A Local Green Space does not need to be in public ownership.
- 2.25. NPPF, section 15, states that planning policies should ensure development is appropriate for its location taking into account effects (including cumulative effects)

---

<sup>5</sup> National Planning Practice on Green Belt is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/green-belt>

<sup>6</sup> Planning practice guidance on Local Green Spaces is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space#Local-Green-Space-designation>

of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment. In doing so they should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

## Greater Manchester Context

### Greater Manchester Strategy (2025-2035)

- 2.26. The Greater Manchester Strategy<sup>7</sup> sets the vision for a thriving city region where everyone can live a good life.
- 2.27. The strategy seeks healthy homes for all and notes that Places for Everyone will deliver homes to meet needs, maximising the use of brownfield land while protecting the Green Belt from unplanned development.

### Places for Everyone (PfE)

- 2.28. The Places for Everyone<sup>8</sup> (PfE) Joint Development Plan Document (DPD), is a strategic plan that covers nine of the ten Greater Manchester districts - Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan. The Plan took effect and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the nine PfE authorities on 21 March 2024.
- 2.29. The relationship between PfE and the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan is explained in the Setting the Scene Topic Paper.
- 2.30. The following PfE policies are relevant to this Natural Environment and Open Land Topic Paper.
- 2.31. **Policy JP-G1: Landscape Character** requires that development within a listed Landscape Type reflect and respond to the special qualities and sensitivities of the key landscape characteristics of its location. The interface of new development with the surrounding countryside/landscape is of particular importance. These transitional areas require well-considered and sensitive treatment.
- 2.32. **Policy JP-G2 The Green Infrastructure Network** states that development which involves the removal of land from the Green Belt (including allocations proposed in this plan) will be required to offset the impact of removing land from the Green Belt through identifying and delivering compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt in the vicinity of the site. Details of specific sites and projects will be established in discussion with the relevant Local Authority.
- 2.33. **Policy JP-G9: The Green Belt** defines the Green Belt. The Policy states the beneficial use of the Green Belt will be enhanced where this can be achieved without harm to its openness, permanence or ability to serve its five purposes. In

---

<sup>7</sup> The Greater Manchester Strategy is available at <https://togetherwearegm.co.uk/our-vision/greater-manchester-strategy/>

<sup>8</sup> Places for Everyone is available at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/strategic-planning/places-for-everyone/pfe-adoption/>

particular, the enhancement of its green infrastructure functions will be encouraged, such as improved public access and habitat restoration, helping to deliver environmental and social benefits for our residents and providing the high-quality green spaces that will support economic growth.

- 2.34. **Policy JP-P1: Sustainable Places** requires development to be distinctive, with a clear identity that conserves and enhances the natural environment and landscape features. It also requires that development offers a high level of amenity, that minimises exposure to pollution.

## Local Context

- 2.35. A summary of the Oldham Partnership's Oldham Plan and the Council's Corporate Plan and how the Local Plan will help to deliver their missions and priorities is provided in the Setting the Scene Topic Paper. The sections below mainly focus on those parts of the plans relevant to Natural Environment and Open Land.

### The Oldham Plan

- 2.36. The Oldham Plan 2024-2030 Pride, Progress and Partnership<sup>9</sup> sets out three clear missions to achieve by 2030 to deliver real improvements to the lives of Oldham people - Great Place to Live, Healthier Happier Lives and Green and Growing.
- 2.37. The mission most relevant to the Natural Environment and Open Land is Great Place to Live where residents will feel proud of where they live and more connected to their community.

### Oldham Council Corporate Plan

- 2.38. Oldham Council's Corporate Plan 'Ready for the Future'<sup>10</sup> (2024-2027) builds on the Oldham Plan and is focused on the same three goals.
- 2.39. Relevant to the natural environment and open land is a Great Place to Live, which aims to create neighbourhoods where residents are proud to live, and work with the Council to keep them clean and green. A Great Place to Live also seeks to improve parks and green spaces and vibrant outdoor environments for everyone to enjoy.

### Building a Better Oldham

- 2.40. Building a Better Oldham<sup>11</sup> is the Council's ambitious transformation programme for the borough. As with the Partnership's missions, the Local Plan support's delivery of this ambitious programme. Further information can be found in the Setting the Scene Topic Paper.

---

<sup>9</sup> The Oldham Plan is available at [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201261/oldham\\_plan/3207/oldham\\_plan](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201261/oldham_plan/3207/oldham_plan)

<sup>10</sup> The Corporate Plan is available at [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/8094/oldham\\_corporate\\_plan\\_ready\\_for\\_the\\_future](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/8094/oldham_corporate_plan_ready_for_the_future)

<sup>11</sup> Building a Better Oldham is available at [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201248/building\\_a\\_better\\_oldham#:~:text=Building%20a%20Better%20Oldham%20is,jobs%20and%20100%20apprenticeship%20opportunities.](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201248/building_a_better_oldham#:~:text=Building%20a%20Better%20Oldham%20is,jobs%20and%20100%20apprenticeship%20opportunities.)



- 2.41. In relation to Natural Environment and Open Land the programme aims to ensure Oldham is the greenest borough.

### 3. Issues, challenges and opportunities relating to the Natural Environment and Open Land

- 3.1. This section summarises the main issues, challenges and opportunities relating to the Natural Environment and Open Land that we face in Oldham, underpinned by proportionate and relevant evidence.

#### Statutory Purposes of Protected Landscapes

- 3.2. The IA identified the need to ensure that development makes a positive contribution to landscape and townscapes, local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- 3.3. Part of Oldham falls within the Peak District National Park, as shown on the Policies Map, which is a protected landscape. It was designated in 1951 and was Britain's first National Park.
- 3.4. The purposes of designation for National Parks are to:
- conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and
  - promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks by the public.
- 3.5. NPPF states that great weight should be given to protected landscapes.
- 3.6. Although the planning boundary for the Local Plan excludes the PDNP, Planning Practice Guidance makes clear that local planning authorities 'must seek to further' the purposes for which National Parks are designated.
- 3.7. This includes land outside of the national park as proposals may affect the national park's setting or protection.

#### Protecting the Green Belt

- 3.8. NPPF sets out what type of development is not inappropriate in the Green Belt. It adds when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness (Other than in the case of development on previously developed land or grey belt land, where development is not inappropriate).
- 3.9. NPPF allows, where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries through non-strategic policies.
- 3.10. PfE has revised the Green Belt boundary for each of the nine Greater Manchester authorities included within the plan, including Oldham, and this is shown on the adopted Policies Map. The Local Plan does not address strategic Green Belt boundary revisions.
- 3.11. However, a 'tidy up' of minor boundaries (detailed amendments) of a technical mapping nature have been undertaken and have been incorporated into the Green Belt layer on the Publication Plan Policies Map. Appendix 8 in the Local Plan sets out boundary revisions to the Green Belt and these will be shown on a separate web map.

- 3.12. Green Belt boundary changes have typically been proposed where:
- the base map has changed over time through improved mapping tools and the
  - Green Belt layer needs to reflect the base map;
  - the Green Belt boundary did not appear to have a clear boundary, marked by physical features that are recognisable and likely to be permanent and therefore a change has been proposed to improve this; and
  - the Green Belt may have overlapped slightly with a residential curtilage and it is the Council's view that this was not the intention when the Green Belt was drawn up so the dwelling / and or curtilage has been proposed to either be all included within the Green Belt or all be removed.
- 3.13. Appendix 1 of this topic paper lists the detailed Green Belt boundary amendments and the reason(s) why.
- 3.14. Consideration has also been given as part of preparing the Local Plan to where further detail would be helpful in relation to Green Belt policy. Officer feedback considers matters such as extensions, and detail on agricultural buildings, appropriate facilities, including those for outdoor sports and recreation, and limited infilling.
- 3.15. The Council has previously used up to one third of the original building as a guide for what constitutes an acceptable extension / addition in the Unitary Development Plan (2006), and this may well be appropriate to most extensions / additions requiring permission. However, there have been proposals where permission has been granted within the borough which exceed one third and these have been found to be acceptable. Therefore, some flexibility has been built into the policy allowing up to 40% as an indicative guide.
- 3.16. Extensions under 40% may still be found unacceptable. Applications will be determined on a case-by-case basis and the 40% is not a target. Anything that exceeds 40% would need to be justified to demonstrate that the proposal is proportionate or that very special circumstances apply.

### Local Green Spaces

- 3.17. The Integrated Assessment identified the need to promote quality and accessible open spaces and protect and enhance a multi-functional green infrastructure network including biodiversity, geodiversity and nature recovery networks.
- 3.18. NPPF outlines that Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. Whether to designate land is a matter for local discretion.
- 3.19. A [Local Green Space Assessment](#)<sup>12</sup> for Oldham was published in July 2021.

---

<sup>12</sup> A Local Green Space Assessment can be found at [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/7043/local\\_green\\_space\\_assessment](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/7043/local_green_space_assessment)

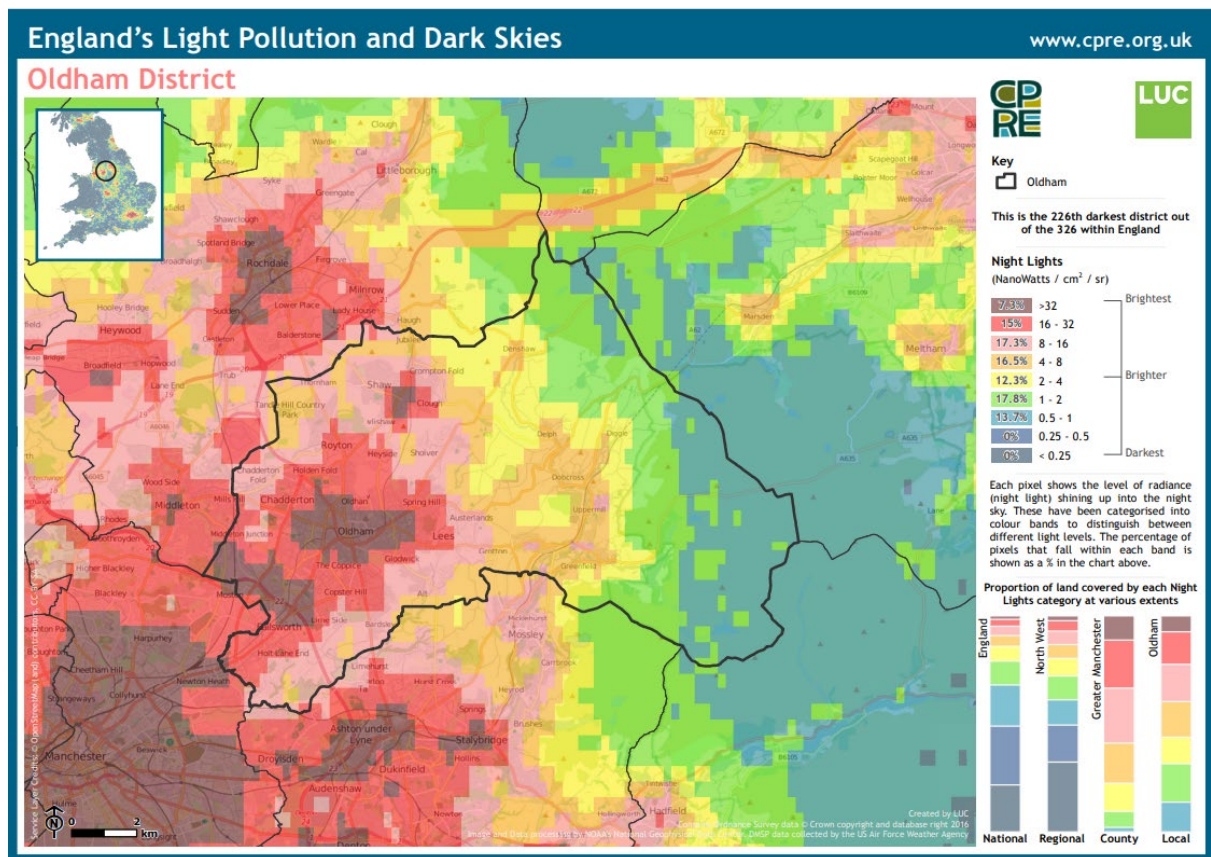
- 3.20. There are 19 designated Other Protected Open Land (OPOL) sites allocated in the existing Local Plan (the Core Strategy). There is no reference to OPOL in NPPF, however it does set out an approach for Local Green Space (LGS) designation, which the Council considers is similar in its function and purpose as OPOL.
- 3.21. LGS is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. A LGS can only be designated through a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan. To align with NPPF it is proposed that OPOL be redesignated as LGS where it meets the NPPF and its supporting guidance.
- 3.22. NPPF states the LGS designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used where the green space:
- is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  - demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
  - local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 3.23. The Council has therefore re-assessed OPOL against the LGS criteria in NPPF to ensure that any OPOL sites redesignated as LGS can be justified by up-to-date robust evidence.
- 3.24. The assessment recommends the de-designation of two OPOL sites (OPMONIR8 and OPOL 20). These sites are not proposed for development. In addition, three OPOL sites (OPOL 9, OPOL10 and OPOL 22) have already been de-designated through PfE and reallocated for development. The outcome of the assessment is shown in Appendix 2.
- 3.25. All of the sites assessed were considered to be reasonably close to the community and local in character and not an extensive tract of land.
- 3.26. Since the Local Green Space Assessment further detailed boundary amendments have been proposed to ensure that the boundaries are consistent with the designation. Examples of where boundary amendments have taken place include:
- to remove land where new development now exists;
  - to reflect residential curtilages;
  - to reflect the basemap better and follow up to road or tree lines; and
  - to include additional areas of green infrastructure.
- 3.27. The proposed LGSs, with any boundary amendments to the former OPOL, can be seen in Appendix 9 of the Local Plan.

### Protecting Dark Skies

- 3.28. The Integrated Assessment identified the need to protect and improve local environmental quality.

- 3.29. NPPF states that planning policies should ensure development is appropriate for its location taking into account effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment. In doing so they should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.
- 3.30. The eastern part of the borough, particularly the area closest to the Peak District National Park, Kirklees and Calderdale are areas that currently offer darker skies within the borough. Dark skies contribute towards tranquillity and natural wildlife behaviour and is a key characteristic of the countryside.
- 3.31. Light pollution affects human health as well as wildlife through for example disturbing sleep patterns and is associated with poorer mental health. There is also little evidence that brightly lit areas reduce crime and road accidents.
- 3.32. CPRE, The Countryside Charity has produced interactive maps of light intrusion and dark skies. As you would expect the denser the area in terms of development the brighter the level of night lights.

**Map 1: Oldham District Light Pollution and Dark Skies**



- 3.33. The Council has utilised this map to define Category 1 and Category 2 areas.
- 3.34. Oldham's dark skies (category 1 – blue areas) are the darkest parts of the borough. These areas also fall within important areas for nature conservation (South Pennine

Moors Special Area of Conservation / Special Protection Area / Site of Biological Interest), making the case for protection even more important.

- 3.35. Category 2 (green areas) overlaps with Oldham's Green Belt and several nature designations. This area has limited light intrusion.
- 3.36. The Council has also liaised with engineers within the Council who recommended the use of guidance [GN01 For the reduction of obtrusive light 2021](#) <sup>13</sup>.

---

<sup>13</sup> Guidance on the reduction of obtrusive light is available at <https://theilp.org.uk/resource/gn01-ilp-guidance-note-1-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021.html>

## **4. The Natural Environment and Open Land and the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan**

- 4.1. This section of the Topic Paper looks at each of the policies contained in the Natural Environment and Open Land chapter of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan.
- 4.2. For each policy the Topic Paper shows how policies within the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan have been shaped to provide an appropriate strategy for the borough that is based on proportionate evidence and having regard to:
  - The key issues, challenges and opportunities facing the borough in relation to the Natural Environment and Open Land;
  - Responses received as part of the Oldham Local Plan: Draft Plan consultation and Duty to Co-operate discussions; and
  - The outcomes of the Integrated Assessment, including any requirements of the Habitat Regulations Assessment.

### **Policy OL1: Consideration for the Peak District National Park**

#### **Summary of evidence**

- 4.3. The Integrated Assessment identified the need to ensure that development makes a positive contribution to landscape and townscapes, local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- 4.4. Part of Oldham falls within the Peak District National Park. NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks.
- 4.5. Planning Practice Guidance makes clear that local planning authorities 'must seek to further' the purposes for which National Parks are designated. This includes land outside of the national park as proposals may affect the national park's setting or protection.

#### **Draft Local Plan consultation and Duty to Co-operate**

- 4.6. At Issues and Options stage, the PDNP Authority responded and raised that there was no mention of the requirements to have regard to National Park purposes.
- 4.7. In response to this Policy OL1 was drafted at Draft Plan stage. The following comments were received, which the Council addressed.

**Table 1: Summary of comments and amendments to Policy OL1 Consideration for the Peak District National Park at Draft Plan stage**

Respondent	Summary of Comment	Council Response
Natural England, Jones Planning, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Kirklees Council, Daniel Scott (individual)	Support policy.	N/A
PDNPA	Recommend strengthening references to the National Park - text on the new version of Section 62 Duty provided and the Local Plan should now reflect that updated text.	Text amended to "Where possible, opportunities to further the purposes of the Peak District National Park will be sought."

4.8. A detailed summary of the responses received can be found in the Schedule of Comments and the Council's Response document.

4.9. The Council liaised with the PDNPA on the amended text informally.

#### Policy Approach

4.10. It was felt after considering the response from the Peak District National Park Authority that the plan would benefit from a local policy which shows consideration for the National Park and reflects NPPF.

4.11. The policy states development within the planning boundary of Oldham Borough will be permitted where it does not conflict with the purposes of the Peak District National Park. Where possible, opportunities to further the purposes of the Peak District National Park will be sought.

4.12. The Reasoned Justification explains more about the statutory duty relating to furthering the purpose introduced by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

4.13. In addition to the amendment made above in response to the PDNPA representation since Draft Plan stage some text has been removed to ensure the policy remains non-strategic.

#### Integrated Assessment

4.14. The Integrated Assessment of Policy OL1 resulted in 8 positive / significantly positive scores and 17 neutral scores.

4.15. There was one negative score. IA12 scored negative as the policy could constrain renewable energy, in particular wind energy, however mitigation is not required as



this area is unlikely to be acceptable for wind turbines and other plan policies address energy.

- 4.16. The HRA has screened the policy out. No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.
- 4.17. For previous stages of the IA please see the IA report.

## Policy OL2: Oldham's Green Belt

### Summary of evidence

- 4.18. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
- 4.19. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness (Other than in the case of development on previously developed land or grey belt land, where development is not inappropriate).
- 4.20. NPPF sets out the types of development within the Green Belt that is not inappropriate, such as extensions or alternations to a building, replacement buildings, limited infilling and redevelopment of previously developed land.

### Draft Local Plan consultation and Duty to Co-operate

- 4.21. At Draft Plan stage eight representations were received regarding Policy OL2 (called 'Protecting and Enhancing Oldham's Green Belt' at the time) which are summarised below along with the Council's response.

**Table 2: Summary of comments and amendments to Policy OL2 Oldham's Green Belt at Draft Plan Stage**

Respondent	Summary of Comment	Council Response
Daniel Scott	Support Policy.	N/A
Emery Planning on behalf of Mr W Lumb, Sheridan Group, Joe Jaskolka and Chasten Holdings Ltd	Further Green Belt release is required to meet the housing requirement moving forward.  Landowners sites were each suggested for Green Belt release or for designation as Safeguarded Land.	PfE has amended the Green Belt boundary for the purposes of meeting development needs and considered these sites as part of this process.  There is no need to review the Green Belt for the Local Plan. Therefore, only detailed amendments are being looked at as part of the Local Plan non-strategic policies.
Chorlton Planning	There should be a full Green Belt Review, rather than a technical "tidying up" exercise.	PfE has amended the Green Belt boundary for the purposes of meeting development needs. There is no need to review the Green Belt for the Local Plan. Therefore, only technical amendments are being

Respondent	Summary of Comment	Council Response
		looked at as part of the Local Plan non-strategic policies.
Lancashire Wildlife Trust	<p>In general agreement with the policy but would suggest amending the final paragraph 'The enhancement and positive use of Green Belt will be encouraged in line with national planning policy and PfE Policy JP-G10'.</p> <p>Suggest that the positive enhancement of Green Belt needs to be a requirement if Green Belt land is lost to development and not simply encouraged.</p> <p>In general agreement to the list of acceptable enhancements to the Green Belt in paragraph 14.13, recommend there be a requirement to protect, existing nature conservation interest and that increased accessibility should not lead to unacceptable increased disturbance to sensitive habitats or species.</p>	Reference to the enhancement and positive use of the Green Belt has been removed as this is covered by PfE.
Jones Planning	<p>Objects to the policy. It does not need to be as detailed as the NPPF provides clear guidelines for assessing development in the Green Belt. The existing policy regarding the Green Belt is more acceptable. There is no need to define the design of stable construction - notwithstanding its materials the key issue is whether it harms openness and not whether it is built out of timber, stone or brick - design considerations should be covered by a general design policy. Limited infilling in villages must be determined on a case-by-case basis.</p>	<p>The Council has expanded on these types of development further to ensure that developments such as facilities for recreation, for example stables, and buildings for agriculture are appropriate for their intended use through considering the design, layout and form of construction. This is to prevent permission being given for the above intended uses later being subject to a planning application for the re-use of buildings for an alternative use such as residential use. However, wording on infilling has been amended to take into account the appeal statement for Steadway.</p>

- 4.22. A detailed summary of the responses received can be found in the Schedule of Comments and the Council's Response document.

### Policy Approach

- 4.23. The purpose of the policy is to expand on NPPF green belt policy where it was considered that further guidance would be helpful in relation to some types of acceptable developments.
- 4.24. Policy OL2 addresses certain types of developments within the Green Belt to provide clarity. The policy covers agricultural buildings, appropriate facilities including those for outdoor sports and recreation, including stables and limited infilling.
- 4.25. The Reasoned Justification sets out detail on very special circumstances and harm.
- 4.26. The main amendments between Draft Plan stage and Publication Plan stage were to remove reference to the enhancement of the Green Belt as described above. This was to avoid duplication. Other amendments were presentational.

### Monitoring

- 4.27. Policy OL2 will be monitored by the Local Plan monitoring framework in line with Local Plan Policy M1.
- 4.28. The Local Plan indicator that will be used to monitor this policy is:
- Number and type of developments permitted in the Green Belt.
- 4.29. Policy M1 of the Local Plan sets out that where monitoring identifies underperformance or unintended outcomes:
- Further guidance on the relevant policy matter may be produced.
  - Policy revisions and an early review of the Local Plan may be triggered.
  - Engagement with stakeholders may be undertaken to address delivery barriers.
- 4.30. The monitoring framework is therefore considered to be appropriate to ensure the deliverability of Policy OL2.

### Integrated Assessment

- 4.31. The Integrated Assessment of Policy OL2 resulted in 17 positive / significantly positive scores and 8 neutral scores. IA12 (energy) scored a mixed score of negative / uncertain as the policy could constrain some types of low carbon energy in the Green Belt.
- 4.32. For IA12 mitigation is not needed as it may not be acceptable for renewable schemes, particularly wind turbines, to be permitted and proposals needs to be determined on their own merits in line with plan policies. Other policies address

energy including Local Plan policy CC2. No amendments were made to the policy as a result of the IA at Publication Plan Stage.

4.33. The HRA has screened the policy out. No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.

4.34. For previous stages of the IA please see the IA report.

## Policy OL3: Extensions and Alternations to Existing Buildings within the Green Belt

### Summary of evidence

- 4.35. National planning policy allows for the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
- 4.36. National planning policy defines an original building as “A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was originally built.” Subordinate means of lesser importance / not equal to the original building.
- 4.37. The policy seeks to strike a balance between the needs of residents living in the Green Belt to adapt their properties, whilst protecting the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 4.38. The Council has previously informally used up to one third of the original building as a guide for what constitutes an acceptable extension / addition, and this may well be appropriate to most extensions / additions requiring permission. However, there have been proposals where permission has been granted within the borough which exceed one third and these have been found to be acceptable. Therefore, some flexibility has been built into the policy allowing up to 40% as an indicative guide.

### Draft Local Plan consultation and Duty to Co-operate

- 4.39. At Draft Plan stage the policy was worded slightly differently to say that where the individual or cumulative total volume exceeds more than 30% of the volume of the original building, approval is more unlikely to be granted.
- 4.40. There was one support and one agent objected stating the 30% figure for extensions to existing buildings must be fully justified for it to have any relevance.
- 4.41. A detailed summary of the responses received can be found in the Schedule of Comments and the Council’s Response document.
- 4.42. The policy provides clarity on how the Council may determine whether an extension or alternation is proportionate or is disproportionate over and above the size of the original dwellings.
- 4.43. In preparing this policy, plan policies prepared elsewhere across England were examined. There have also been proposals where permission has been granted within the borough which exceed one third such as HH/344737/20 (volume increase 36%).
- 4.44. In addition, planning appeals have also justified a higher percentage than 33% which had previously been used - Appeal Ref: PP/W4223/D/18/3193000<sup>14</sup>.

---

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.planningappealsnorthwest.com/extension-was-not-a-disproportionate-addition-to-a-building-within-a-green-belt-location-oldham>

- 4.45. In addition, there have been Local Plans adopted with allowing extensions more than one third of the original building in principle:
- [Sevenoaks District Council](#)<sup>15</sup> Policy GB1, which permits up to 50% increase for dwellings in the Green Belt;
  - [North Somerset Development Management Policies](#)<sup>16</sup> Policy DM12 allows an extension up to 50%
  - [Waverley Local Plan Part 2 Policy DM14](#)<sup>17</sup> – allows an increase in floor space up to 40%
- 4.46. Similarly other districts have up to one third or 30%.
- 4.47. Reflecting on this further, and that one third as a rule of thumb is not used as an absolute figure internally, a pragmatic approach has been taken, and the policy has been amended to 40%. Therefore, some flexibility has been built into the policy and anything that exceeds 40% would need to be justified to demonstrate that the proposal is proportionate or that very special circumstances apply.

### Policy Approach

- 4.48. The policy has been prepared to provide policy guidance, in addition to NPPF, on what is determined to be a proportionate extension.
- 4.49. The policy states extensions and alterations to existing buildings will be supported where they are not disproportionate to the size of the original building.
- 4.50. In considering whether extensions and/or alterations are disproportionate consideration will be given to all the following criteria to help determine whether the development preserves openness:
1. the size and scale of the extension / alteration should be subordinate to the original building. Where the building has previously been extended, the assessment will consider the cumulative impact of the existing and proposed extensions taken together;
  2. the design, including materials, colours and style is required to be sympathetic in keeping with the character of the original building, and as appropriate the surrounding vernacular; and
  3. where the individual or cumulative total volume exceeds more than 40% of the volume of the original building, approval is more unlikely to be granted.
- 4.51. The Reasoned Justification provides more detail on disproportionate extensions.

---

<sup>15</sup> Sevenoaks District Council Development Management Policies is available at [https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/file/304/the\\_allocations\\_and\\_development\\_management\\_plan\\_adopted\\_version\\_february\\_2015](https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/file/304/the_allocations_and_development_management_plan_adopted_version_february_2015)

<sup>16</sup> North Somerset Development Management Policies is available at <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-11/CD5.02%20North%20Somerset%20Sites%20and%20Policies%20Plan%20Part%201%20-%20DMP.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Waverley Part 2 Local Plan is available at [https://www.waverley.gov.uk/portals/0/documents/services/planning-and-building/planning%20policy/waverley%20borough%20local%20plan%20part%20two%20-%20final%20publication%20\(version%204\)%20-%20optimised%20pdf%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.waverley.gov.uk/portals/0/documents/services/planning-and-building/planning%20policy/waverley%20borough%20local%20plan%20part%20two%20-%20final%20publication%20(version%204)%20-%20optimised%20pdf%20(1).pdf)

- 4.52. The policy was amended between Draft Plan and Publication Plan stage to change the percentage of the volume of the original building that may be permitted, as set out above. Other amendments were minor.

#### Monitoring

- 4.53. Policy OL3 will be monitored by the Local Plan monitoring framework in line with Local Plan Policy M1.

- 4.54. The Local Plan indicator that will be used to monitor this policy is:

- Number and type of developments permitted in the Green Belt.

- 4.55. Policy M1 of the Local Plan sets out that where monitoring identifies underperformance or unintended outcomes:

- Further guidance on the relevant policy matter may be produced.
- Policy revisions and an early review of the Local Plan may be triggered.
- Engagement with stakeholders may be undertaken to address delivery barriers.

- 4.56. The monitoring framework is therefore considered to be appropriate to ensure the deliverability of Policy OL3.

#### Integrated Assessment

- 4.57. The Integrated Assessment of Policy OL3 resulted in 4 positive / significantly positive scores and 22 neutral scores. No amendments were made to the policy as a result of the IA at Publication Plan Stage.

- 4.58. The HRA has screened the policy out. No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.

- 4.59. For previous stages of the IA please see the IA report.



## Policy OL4: Local Green Spaces

### Summary of evidence

- 4.60. NPPF allows for the designation of Local Green Space and sets out the criteria for Local Green Space. Planning Practice Guidance provides further detail.
- 4.61. Oldham Council has prepared a Local Green Space Assessment as part of the Local Plan evidence. The outcome of the assessment is shown in Appendix 2.
- 4.62. The proposed LGSs, with any boundary amendments to the former OPOL, can be seen in Appendix 9 of the Local Plan.
- 4.63. Policies and decisions for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy on Green Belt. This does not include Grey Belt and Previously Developed Land.

### Draft Local Plan consultation and Duty to Co-operate

- 4.64. At Draft Plan stage the following comments were made against Policy OL4. The Council's response to these is shown.

**Table 3: Summary of comments and amendments to Policy OL4 Local Green Spaces at Draft Plan Stage**

Respondent	Summary of Comment	Council Response
Jones Planning, Alan Chorlton and Daniel Scott	Support Policy	Support noted.
Lancashire Wildlife Trust	<p>Support the identified Local Green Space (LGS).</p> <p>Made comments in relation to the de-designation of OPOLs that formed PfE allocations and their role for wildlife.</p> <p>It is therefore vital that any proposed development must provide sufficient ecological surveys and data to ensure the identification of existing biodiversity interest.</p> <p>Development plans must detail the protection of any identified section 41 species, and where this is not possible, they must provide sufficient off-site compensation to ensure that their populations are not adversely impacted.</p>	<p>Support noted. The plan must be read as a whole. Policies on nature address the concerns raised. However, a sentence has been added to the justification to make clear that where necessary ecological surveys are required in line with Policy N1.</p>

Respondent	Summary of Comment	Council Response
Sport England	Where the LGSs as listed in Table OL1 a contain playing field, the policy does not provide sufficient protection and is inconsistent with the NPPF in this regard. Suggest adding wording to reflect the intent of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy Exception E4 and Planning for Sport Objective 'Protect' which requires replacement provision to be accessible to existing and new users within catchment.	The plan must be read as a whole. Policy CO1 addresses protection of existing open space.
CRE8 Land and Planning	Object to the land off Maltby Court being proposed LGS Thornley Brook on the grounds that it does not meet the requirements for a LGS. An assessment has been included setting out the reasons as to why the site does not meet the criteria.	The Council's Local Green Space Assessment provides the evidence to support the site being designated as LGS. The appeal statement on Land off Maltby Court supports that development would cause a harmful intrusion to the green, undeveloped character. The decision states that NPPF sets out the need for development to be sympathetic to local character and to contribute to the enhancement of the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. It states that undeveloped land can perform many functions and in this respect I consider this can include the OPOL's aims of preserving the distinctiveness of an area.
Millson Group on behalf of Stonesbreak Group	Disagree that LGS 11 (Stonebreaks) has met the criteria for designation as a LGS and sets out a number of reasons in the form of a LGS Assessment as to why the site does not meet the criteria.	The Council's Local Green Space Assessment provides the evidence that Stonebreaks meets the LGS criteria. There is no methodology stated in NPPF or the guidance for carrying out LGS Assessments however the Council considers the LGS assessment to be robust. Evidence from GMEU and GMAAAS has fed into it.

Respondent	Summary of Comment	Council Response
Alison Shore	In relation to LGS 18 Sholver, is a significant proportion of the existing 'Sholver Millenium Green'. It is not 'new' Local Green Space. Is the Plan proposing to change the designation of this land in order to offer it further protection from development or to identify it as deserving of further investment? It needs more support.	<p>A Local Green Space designation is a planning designation separate from a Millenium Green. Therefore, the LGS designation will give the site protection against inappropriate development in addition to any controls given by the Millenium Green status. The policy outlines what developments would generally be permitted but does not remove any further protections already afforded to the land. It does not however guarantee any further investment for the land. To clarify this an additional paragraph has been added to the Reasoned Justification to state:</p> <p>"The Local Green Space designation gives the land additional protection against inappropriate development in addition to any other constraints / designations, such as open space and nature designations relevant to the site. Parts of Sholver LGS is also a Millenium Green."</p>
Elswood Family (Stantec)	Object to the inclusion of Foxdenton Hall Farm within LGS 3.	Having reviewed the representation and the assessment further the Council agrees that most of the land at Foxdenton Hall Farm should be removed. An amended boundary has been proposed.
Royton Cricket Club	In relation to OPOL 1 Royley Clough - welcome the proposal but would like the designation to only cover the pavilion, cricket pitch and landscaping and spectator areas immediately adjacent to the cricket pitch. The area is shown on a map.	The Council has amended the boundary to that shown in the representation.
United Utilities	Note the policy includes a list of exceptions provided that they do not substantially harm other qualities related to the	The policy is in line with national policy on Green Belt, as recommended by NPPF policy for Local Green Spaces.

Respondent	Summary of Comment	Council Response
	LGS. Request that utilities infrastructure is added to this list of exceptions.	However, the policy does list engineering operations as one of the exceptions.

- 4.65. A detailed summary of the responses received can be found in the Schedule of Comments and the Council's Response document.

### Policy Approach

- 4.66. The policy has been prepared to identify and designate Local Green Spaces and to set out a policy that is consistent with Green Belt policy to determine planning applications against. There is no PfE policy on Local Green Spaces as it is not a strategic matter.
- 4.67. Policy OL4 outlines that Local Green Spaces are identified on the Policies Map and will be protected from inappropriate development to ensure the significance of the Local Green Spaces is protected and enhanced.
- 4.68. The sites to be designated as LGS are listed within the policy.
- 4.69. The policy then sets out that development will generally be deemed inappropriate and lists the exceptions to this provided they do not substantially harm qualities related to the Local Green Space. These exceptions have come from NPPF Green Belt chapter.
- 4.70. Limited infilling in villages has not been included as the LGS tend to be open space next to the built-up area rather than including land that constitutes a village.
- 4.71. Limited affordable housing is also not included as an exception as housing would undermine the reasons why the Local Green Space is of local significance to the local community. This is also the case for limited infilling and redevelopment of previously developed land. NPPF states that Green Belt policy on grey belt and previously developed land does not apply to Local Green Space.
- 4.72. The boundary amendments have considered land that is already developed.
- 4.73. Mineral extraction has also not been listed as this would likely destroy the significance of the Local Green Space and Local Green Space is currently not covered by Minerals Safeguarding Area. However, it is acknowledged that Minerals Safeguarding Area is subject to change and areas outside the MSA can be viable for minerals.
- 4.74. The policy states when assessing development proposals, the Council will consider the impact of development on the designated Local Green Space as a whole and its qualities which make it significant. There will be a presumption against development proposals that will substantially harm the significance of the Local Green Space

- 4.75. The Reasoned Justification points to the evidence and maps of the Local Green Spaces. The text also explains what the designation means and its relationship with other designations and legal protections.
- 4.76. The Reasoned Justification asks for a statement setting out how proposals will impact on the significance of the Local Green Space. Ecological surveys may also be required.
- 4.77. The text also sets out further detail on how harm will be assessed.
- 4.78. The Reasoned Justification also provides information about Community Right to Build Orders.
- 4.79. Since Draft Plan stage the policy has been amended to make clear that new housing will be deemed inappropriate.
- 4.80. Reference to Very Special Circumstances has also been removed as on reflection this applies to Green Belt and is not felt appropriate to apply to Local Green Spaces given their limited scale. Very Special Circumstances would likely be used to justify housing proposals which would remove or harm Local Green Spaces.

#### Monitoring

- 4.81. Policy OL4 will be monitored by the Local Plan monitoring framework in line with Local Plan Policy M1.
- 4.82. The Local Plan indicator that will be used to monitor this policy is:
- Number and type of developments permitted in Local Green Spaces.
- 4.83. Policy M1 of the Local Plan sets out that where monitoring identifies underperformance or unintended outcomes:
- Further guidance on the relevant policy matter may be produced.
  - Policy revisions and an early review of the Local Plan may be triggered.
  - Engagement with stakeholders may be undertaken to address delivery barriers.
- 4.84. The monitoring framework is therefore considered to be appropriate to ensure the deliverability of Policy OL4.

#### Integrated Assessment

- 4.85. The Integrated Assessment of Policy OL4 resulted in 18 positive / significantly positive scores and 8 neutral scores. No amendments were made to the policy as a result of the IA at Publication Plan Stage.
- 4.86. The HRA has screened the policy out. No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.
- 4.87. For previous stages of the IA please see the IA report.

## Policy OL5: Protecting Dark Skies and Tranquillity

### Summary of evidence

- 4.88. NPPF requires that planning policies should ensure development is appropriate for its location and should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.
- 4.89. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), The Countryside Charity has produced interactive maps of light intrusion and dark skies. The eastern part of the borough includes areas that currently offer darker skies. Dark skies contribute towards tranquillity and natural wildlife behaviour and is a key characteristic of the countryside.

### Draft Local Plan consultation and Duty to Co-operate

- 4.90. As part of Duty to Cooperate Natural England shared '*Natural England sources of Local Plan Evidence\_Oldham BC 10.05.22*' and within this it advised that the Local Plan should identify relevant areas of tranquillity and provide appropriate policy protection to such areas as identified in the NPPF.
- 4.91. The note stated that tranquillity is an important landscape attribute in certain areas e.g. within National Parks, particularly where this is identified as a special quality. The note advised that CPRE have mapped areas of tranquillity, which could be used as evidence.
- 4.92. In response to this the Council responded positively and drafted Policy OL5.
- 4.93. At Draft Plan stage the policy received five representations, all supporting the policy, including Natural England and the PDNPA.
- 4.94. A detailed summary of the responses received can be found in the Schedule of Comments and the Council's Response document.
- 4.95. The policy has not therefore been discussed at Duty to Cooperate meetings.

### Policy Approach

- 4.96. The policy has been prepared in response to Natural' England's suggestion as part of Duty to Cooperate and to build on NPPF.
- 4.97. Policy OL5 outlines that the borough's dark skies will be protected and avoids light pollution. The policy refers to the Policies Map which has defined Category 1 and Category 2 dark skies. Within these areas, where there is a demonstrated need for external lighting the use of dark sky friendly lighting will be used.
- 4.98. Elsewhere good lighting management and design will be expected to minimise and where opportunities arise reduce light spillage and glare.
- 4.99. The policy sets out the information that should be submitted with an application for outdoor lighting schemes.

- 4.100. The policy Reasoned Justification provides more information on the justification, the areas defined, and guidance.
- 4.101. Since Draft Plan stage, the policy has been amended to clarify what was meant by 'strictly controlled' now referring to a demonstrated need and the use of dark sky friendly lighting. Although the approach is the same for Category 1 and Category 2 in the Publication Plan by mapping Category 1 separately to Category 2 on the Policies Map this will make clear that this part of the borough is the darkest part and should be protected from light pollution.
- 4.102. The policy has also been amended by adding reference to guidance within the Reasoned Justification.

#### Integrated Assessment

- 4.103. The Integrated Assessment of Policy OL5 resulted in 9 positive / significantly positive scores and 17 neutral scores. No amendments were made to the policy as a result of the IA at Publication Plan Stage.
- 4.104. The HRA screened the policy out. No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.
- 4.105. For previous stages of the IA please see the IA report.

## 5. Conclusion

### Providing an Appropriate Strategy

- 5.1 Policies OL1 to OL5 of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan provide the policy framework for ensuring that we positively manage landscape and townscapes, local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- 5.2 In terms of the test of soundness listed at paragraph 36 of NPPF it is considered that these have been met as follows:
- a) **Positively prepared:** the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan supports delivery of PfE which provides the strategic direction and context for the borough. The Local Plan sets out how certain developments in the Green Belt identified in PfE will be determined locally in Oldham. Policies on consideration for the PDNP, Local Green Spaces and dark skies support the natural assets identified in PfE in relation to valuing the special qualities and key sensitivities of our landscapes recognising the importance of an area's appearance to the sense of place held by those who live in or visit it. Policies on consideration for the PDNP and on dark skies have been prepared in response to duty to cooperate. Policies on the Green Belt have been prepared in response to feedback from Development Management in terms of what they would find useful to have further detail on in addition to NPPF. The policy on Local Green Spaces protects the spaces that are important to Oldham's local communities.
  - b) **Justified:** policies OL1 to OL5 provide an appropriate strategy in relation to natural environment and open land across Oldham. The PDNP forms part of the borough boundary and NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks. Planning Practice Guidance makes clear that local planning authorities 'must seek to further' the purposes for which National Parks are designated. The policy has been developed through the duty to cooperate.

PfE has revised the Green Belt boundary for each of the nine Greater Manchester authorities included within the plan and detailed amendments have been made as part of the Oldham Publication Plan, as permitted in NPPF. NPPF sets out what development may be permitted within the Green Belt. Policies OL2 and OL3 provide further detail on some of these uses. The policies have been developed through consultation feedback and through research on other plan policies elsewhere for comparison.

Policy OL4 on Local Green Spaces is justified through the Local Green Spaces Assessment published in 2021, which is considered up to date evidence to support the spaces proposed as Local Green Spaces. The Assessment has followed the criteria set out in NPPF and has taken into account planning guidance.

Policy OL5 has been prepared in response to Duty to Cooperate. It is justified by CPRE light intrusion mapping evidence and NPPF which states planning policies



should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

These policies help deliver the Local Plan Vision of conserving and enhancing the key characteristics of Oldham's landscape types; helping Oldham residents to be healthy from access to green infrastructure and having a clean, green and healthy environment.

The policies help deliver the following Plan Objectives:

PO5 on Protecting and enhancing Oldham's landscapes by:

- protecting and furthering the purposes of the Peak District National Park;
- promoting the positive use of the Green Belt;
- identifying Local Green Spaces and supporting their enhancement.

PO8 Uplifting the health and well-being of our residents and local communities by:

- protecting and enhancing access to, and providing for / or improved, open spaces, sports and recreation facilities, to meet the needs of new development and communities; and
- providing and maintaining high standards of amenity and local environmental quality

The policies also align with the Corporate Plan and Oldham Plan missions for a Great Place to Live, which aims to create neighbourhoods where residents are proud to live, and work with the Council to keep them clean and green. A Great Place to Live also seeks to improve parks and green spaces and vibrant outdoor environments for everyone to enjoy.

- c) **Effective:** the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan supports delivery of PfE which defines the borough's Green Belt and sets out the special qualities and key sensitivities of our landscapes contributing to the sense of place. The plan period of up to 2039 reflects that of PfE and continued effective joint working arrangements with PfE districts on cross-boundary strategic matters, will support delivery of the joint and local plans. Finally, deliverability of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan is also evidenced by the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Statement of Common Ground.
- d) **Consistent with national policy:** policies OL1 to OL5 support delivery of sustainable development in accordance with relevant national policy, in particular:
- i. By giving great weight to National Parks and seeking to further the purposes for which National Parks are designated.
  - ii. By providing more detail on development that may be permitted within the Green Belt as set out in NPPF.

- iii. By identifying Local Green Spaces in line with the criteria in NPPF and ensuring the policy approach is consistent with national planning policy on Green Belt<sup>18</sup>.
- iv. By limiting the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

---

<sup>18</sup> Excluding provisions relating to grey belt and previously developed land set out in chapter 13 of NPPF.

## Appendix 1: Detailed Green Belt boundary change and reason

**Table 4: Detailed Green Belt boundary change and reason**

Green Belt Map	Reason for Green Belt boundary amend
<b>Alexandra</b>	
Alexandra Road	To achieve a clear boundary up to footpath / technical map change
<b>Chadderton North</b>	
2 Irk Vale Drive	To achieve a clear boundary defined by the residential curtilage / remove minor overlap with residential curtilage
Burnley Lane	To achieve a clear boundary up to Burnley Lane / technical map change
Haigh Lane and Chadderton Hall Road	To achieve a clear boundary up to up to Haigh Lane / technical map change
Haigh Lane	To achieve a clear boundary defined by Towpath to Rochdale Canal
Riverside and Rookwood	To achieve a clear boundary defined by Rochdale Canal towpath
<b>Crompton:</b>	
Gazey's Farm	To achieve a clear boundary up to track by Gazey's Farm / technical map change
Mossgate Road	To achieve a clear boundary up to Mossgate Road (track) / technical map change
Mossgate Road	To achieve a clear boundary up to Mossgate Road (track) / technical map change
Thornham Road	To achieve a clear boundary up to Thornham Road / technical map change
<b>Failsworth East</b>	
Cutler Hill Road	To achieve a clear boundary up to Cutler Hill Road
Farmstead Close	To achieve a clear boundary through adding open land north of Farmstead Close to Green Belt
Hartshead Crescent	To achieve a clear boundary up to Hartshead Crescent / technical map change
<b>Failsworth West</b>	
Rose Hey Lane and Green Lane	To achieve a clear boundary up to Rose Hey Lane and Green Lane / technical map change
<b>Hollinwood</b>	
Coal Pit Lane	Technical Map change at Coal Pit Lane
<b>Royton North</b>	
32 Tandlewood Park	To achieve a clear boundary up to curtilage of 32 Tandlewood Park
Garden Terrace	To achieve a clear boundary at Garden Terrace / technical map change

<b>Green Belt Map</b>	<b>Reason for Green Belt boundary amend</b>
West of Harewood Drive	To achieve a clear boundary west of Harewood Drive, incorporating whole of buildings / technical map change
Street Bridge Road	To achieve a clear boundary at Street Bridge Road / technical map change
Tandlewood Park	To achieve a clear boundary at Tandlewood Park / technical map change
Thorp Cottage and Brima House	To achieve a clear boundary at Thorp Cottage and Brima House, incorporating whole buildings / technical map change
<b>Royton South</b>	
Park Lane	To achieve a clear boundary up to Park Lane / technical map change
<b>Saddleworth North</b>	
Barnmeen, Austerlands	To achieve a clear boundary along hedgerow at Barnmeen
Brownhill Lane, Uppermill	To achieve a clear boundary up to Brownhill Lane / technical map change
Clifton Holmes, Delph	To achieve a clear boundary up to Clifton Holmes / technical map change
Clifton Holmes, Delph	To achieve a clear boundary along Clifton Holmes / technical map change
Dale Road, Rumbles Lane and Ainsbrook Avenue, Delph	To achieve a clear boundary up to Dale Road, Rumbles Lane and Ainsbrook Avenue / technical map change
Delph Lane, Delph	To achieve a clear boundary up to Delph Lane / technical map change
Delph New Road, Dobcross	To achieve a clear boundary up to Delph New Road / technical map change
Delph New Road, Delph	To achieve a clear boundary up to Delph New Road / technical map change
Denshaw Fold, Denshaw	To achieve a clear boundary following lines of Denshaw Fold / technical map change
Denshaw Road, Delph	To achieve a clear boundary up to Denshaw Road / technical map change
28 and 34 Grains Road, Delph	To achieve a clear boundary adjacent to 28 and 34 Grains Road / technical map change
Harrop Green Lane, Diggle	To achieve a clear boundary up to Harrop Green Lane / technical map change
Hillcrest Cottage, Strinesdale	To achieve a clear boundary incorporating whole building at Hillcrest Cottage, Strinesdale
North of Holland Close, Delph	To achieve a clear boundary along road and footpath by Holland Close / technical map change
Husteads Lane, Dobcross	To achieve a clear boundary up to Husteads Lane / technical map change
Knott Hill Lane, Delph	To achieve a clear boundary along Knott Hill Lane / technical map change

<b>Green Belt Map</b>	<b>Reason for Green Belt boundary amend</b>
Ladcastle Road, Dobcross	To achieve a clear boundary up to Ladcastle Road / technical map change
Long Lane, Dobcross	To achieve a clear boundary up to Long Lane / technical map change
Pingle Lane, Delph	To achieve a clear boundary along Pingle Lane / technical map change
Platt Lane, Dobcross	To achieve a clear boundary up to Platt Lane / technical map change
Rochdale Road, Denshaw	To achieve a clear boundary up to Rochdale Road / technical map change
Sandy Lane, Dobcross	To achieve a clear boundary up to Sandy Lane / technical map change
Stoneswood Road, Delph	To achieve a clear boundary up to Stoneswood Road / technical map change
Stoneswood Road, Delph	To achieve a clear boundary up to Stoneswood Road / technical map change
Streethouse Lane, Dobcross	To achieve a clear boundary up to Streethouse Lane / technical map change
Thorpe Lane, Scouthead	To achieve a clear boundary up to Thorpe Lane / technical map change
Wall Hill Road	To achieve a clear boundary up to Wall Hill Road / technical map change
Ward Lane, Diggle	To achieve a clear boundary up to Ward Lane / technical map change
Woodbrook Road, Springhead	To achieve a clear boundary up to Woodbrook Road to include whole buildings and curtilages / technical map change
Woodbrook Road, Springhead	To achieve a clear boundary by removing remainder of dwelling and curtilage at end of Woodbrook Road
Woodhouse Knowl, Delph	To achieve a clear boundary by adding land up to Woodhouse Knowl
<b>Saddleworth South</b>	
A640 / Oldham Road, Greenfield	To achieve a clear boundary up to A640 / Oldham Road / technical map change
Boarshurt Lane, Greenfield	To achieve a clear boundary up to Boardshurt Lane / technical map change
Burnedge Lane, Greenfield	To achieve a clear boundary up to Burnedge Lane / technical map change
Carr Lane, Greenfield	To achieve a clear boundary up to Carr Lane / technical map change
Church Road, Greenfield	To achieve a clear boundary along Huddersfield Narrow Canal / technical map change
Church Road, Uppermill	To achieve a clear boundary up to Church Road / technical map change
Friezland Lane, Greenfield	To achieve a clear boundary up to Friezland Lane / technical map change

<b>Green Belt Map</b>	<b>Reason for Green Belt boundary amend</b>
Friezland Lane, Greenfield	To achieve a clear boundary up to Friezland Lane / technical map change
Lovers Lane, Grasscroft	To achieve a clear boundary up to Lovers Lane / technical map change
Manchester Road, Greenfield	To achieve a clear boundary up to Manchester Road / technical map change
Park Lane, Greenfield	To achieve a clear boundary up to Park Lane / technical map change
Shaw Hall Bank Road, Greenfield	To achieve a clear boundary up to tree line along Shaw Hall Bank Road / technical map change
Shaws Lane, Uppermill	To achieve a clear boundary up to Shaws Lane / technical map change
Swallow Bank, Greenfield	To achieve a clear boundary through removing Green Belt from curtilage and road forming boundary
<b>Saddleworth West and Lees</b>	
Knowls Lane, Springhead	To achieve a clear boundary up to Knowls Lane / technical map change
Lawton Fold, Springhead	To achieve a clear boundary up to Lawton Fold / technical map change
Stonesbreak Road, Springhead	To achieve a clear boundary up to Stonebreaks Road / technical map change
<b>Shaw</b>	
Buckstones Road	To achieve a clear boundary up to Buckstones Road / technical map change
Button Hole	To achieve a clear boundary up to Button Hole Road
West of Brookfield	To achieve a clear boundary / technical map change
West of St. Saviour's Church	To achieve a clear boundary up to road, west of St. Saviour's Church
<b>St James:</b>	
Turf Pit Lane, Moorside	To achieve a clear boundary up to Turf Pit Lane / technical map change
<b>Waterhead</b>	
Counthill Road	To achieve a clear boundary up to Counthill Road / technical map change
Counthill Road	To achieve a clear boundary up to Counthill Road / technical map change
Culvert Street, Waterhead	To achieve a clear boundary up to Culvert Street / technical map change
Waterworks Road	To achieve a clear boundary up to Waterworks Road / technical map change

## Appendix 2: Summary of Local Green Space Assessment

Table 5 shows the conclusions of the Local Green Space Assessment for the remaining OPOL sites and new LGS site at Sholver.

**Table 5: Summary of Local Green Space Assessment**

OPOL	Does the site meet Local Green Space Criteria?
OPOL 1: Royley Clough, Royton – with extension including cricket ground	Yes. The OPOL, with the proposed extension, meets the criteria based on richness of wildlife, beauty, historic significance and recreation.
OPOL 2: Ferney Field Road	Yes. Overall, the land is considered to be of local significance due to richness of wildlife.
OPOL 4: Foxdenton Hall Park with extension including Foxdenton Hall Park and Albert Taylor Recreation Ground	Yes. It is considered that the OPOL with the proposed extension is of local significance due to recreation, historic significance, beauty and richness of wildlife.
OPOL 5: Crossley Bridge Playing Fields	Yes. It is considered that the site is of local significance due to its recreational value.
OPOL 6: Moston Brook and Hole Bottom Clough	Yes. It is considered that the site is of local significance due to beauty, recreation, historic significance, richness of wildlife and tranquillity.
OPOL 7: Simkin Way	Yes. It is considered that the site is of local significance due to historic significance.
OPOL 8: Oldham Edge	Yes. The land is considered to be of local significance due to richness of wildlife, historic significance, recreational value and also tranquillity and beauty in parts of the site.
OPOL 11: Land at Greenacres, including Lees Cemetery and Mills recreation ground	Yes. The land is of local significance due to its beauty, tranquillity, richness of wildlife, recreational value and historic significance.
OPOL 12: Thornley Brook East	Yes. The land is of local significance due to its beauty, richness of wildlife, tranquillity, historic significance and local recreational value.  An application was approved for 265 homes on part of the OPOL. This part of the OPOL has not formed part of the assessment and will not be taken forward as Local Green Space.
OPOL 13: Stonebreaks	Yes. The land is of local significance due to its beauty, tranquillity, historic significance and local recreational value. A small part of the site is also of local significance due to its wildlife.
OPOL 14: Dacres Hall	Yes. The land is of local significance due to beauty, tranquillity, historic significance and richness of wildlife.
OPOL 15: Wall Hill	Yes. It is considered that the existing OPOL is locally significant due to historic significance and richness of wildlife.
OPOL 16: Ryefields Drive	Yes. The land is of local significance due to its beauty and richness in wildlife.

OPOL	Does the site meet Local Green Space Criteria?
OPOL 17: Stoneswood	Yes. The land is considered to be of local significance due to its historic significance and richness in wildlife.
OPOL 18: Rumbles Lane / Lumb Mill	No. Although the site will add to the attractiveness of the area it is not considered that the site is demonstrably special against the reasons set out in NPPF.
OPOL 19: Ainley Wood	Yes. The site is considered to be of particular local significance due to its beauty, tranquillity, historic significance and richness in wildlife.
OPOL 20: Land South of Oaklands Road	No. Although a section of the site provides some priority habitats it is not considered that the whole site should be designated as LGS due to this alone as the extent is small in comparison to the whole site. The site is a rail embankment.
OPOL 21: Land at Summershades Lane	Yes. It is considered that the site is of local significance due to richness in wildlife and historic significance.
OPOL 23 Rear of Elk Mill / Cotswold Drive	Yes. It is considered that the site is of local significance due to beauty, richness of wildlife, tranquillity and recreational value.
Sholver Lane (new site)	Yes. It is considered that the site is of local significance due to beauty, richness of wildlife, historic significance, recreation and tranquillity.