

Oldham

Local Plan

Publication Plan Document

January 2026



Oldham
Council

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Seeking views on the Publication Oldham Local Plan

This Publication Plan follows on from the Draft Local Plan consultation that was carried out in early 2024. It builds upon the comments we received and has been informed by on-going studies and pieces of evidence work. It contains a vision for Oldham, a set of plan objectives and non-strategic planning policies covering a wide range of topic areas including housing, open land, centres, our economy, climate change, design, transportation and our communities. Planning affects many aspects of our lives and our environment – from where we live, work, shop and how we spend our leisure time. In producing this Local Plan, we are not just considering land uses, but we are also considering other issues that can be affected by land use, including health, education and community safety.

This document is called the ‘Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan’ (‘Publication Plan’) and is the final draft Local Plan that is consulted on prior to submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination. This stage of Local Plan consultation is known as a Regulation 19 consultation and representations at this stage must focus on the ‘legal compliance’ and ‘soundness’ of the Local Plan and whether we have complied with Duty to Cooperate.

Plans are ‘sound’ if they are:

- a) **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the areas objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- b) **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- c) **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- d) **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

Comments are invited on the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan. Details of the Publication Plan consultation can be found online¹, together with the information on how and where the plan may be viewed, as well as how to submit representations.

¹ Details of the Publication Plan consultation can be found online at <https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201232/engagement/1825/consultation>

1 Introduction

- 1.1. Oldham's Local Plan will guide development in the borough up to 2039. The main purposes of the Plan are to:
 - Set out the policies through which the Council will manage development coming forward and use to determine planning applications;
 - Identify designations, such as those for the protection of the borough's environmental and historical assets, our town centres, and employment areas; and
 - Facilitate the development of supporting infrastructure, such as transport, education and utilities.
- 1.2. The Local Plan covers the whole borough except that part which falls within the Peak District National Park (PDNP). Where development proposals lie within that part of Oldham which falls within the PDNP applicants must consider the Peak District National Parks' relevant planning policies and apply to the PDNP Authority for planning permission.
- 1.3. The Oldham Local Plan will sit alongside the Places for Everyone Joint Plan (PfE) as part of a suite of documents that form the development plan for the borough that also includes the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document (adopted April 2012) and the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan Document (adopted April 2013). As well as any neighbourhood plans that may come into force during the lifetime of the Plan.

Interpreting policies within the Oldham Local Plan

- 1.4. The policies contained within the Oldham Local Plan are organised by theme, for example Homes, Economy and Employment, and Addressing Climate Change. Policy text is in bold and separated into a box for clarity. There then sits the reasoned justification which provides further detail regarding how the policy will be applied and what detail may be needed to accord with the policy requirements.
- 1.5. The policies contained within this plan must be read alongside Places for Everyone and the Greater Manchester Waste and Minerals Plans. These documents form part of our statutory development plan, alongside the Oldham Local Plan. Further detail regarding Places for Everyone and its relationship to the Oldham Local Plan can be found in chapter 2.
- 1.6. And at the end of each thematic chapter there is a monitoring section that shows the indicators through which the chapter will be monitored.

Integrated Assessment

- 1.7. Preparation of the Oldham Local Plan has informed by an Integrated Assessment (IA). The IA includes the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) and a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been integrated into the IA.

- 1.8. The role of a SA is to promote sustainable development through assessing the emerging Local Plan against economic, environmental and social objectives (including opportunities for net gain). Significant adverse effects should be avoided and wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued. Where significant adverse impacts are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures should be proposed (or, where this is not possible, compensatory measures should be considered). The purpose of the HRA is to ensure that protection of the integrity of European protected sites is an integral part of the planning process at the local level.

The Oldham Local Plan and the Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document

- 1.10. Upon adoption, the Oldham Local Plan will replace the Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD. It will also replace any saved planning policies, and associated allocations, that remain from the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006, aside from those already replaced through Places for Everyone and the Greater Manchester Minerals and Waste Plans.
- 1.11. A list of all Core Strategy and saved UDP policies and how these have been replaced or deleted, including those that have been replaced through Places for Everyone and the Greater Manchester Waste and Minerals Plans, can be found at Appendix 1. Maps of each allocation and designation not to be carried forward through to the Local Plan can be found in Appendix 2 and 11.

2 Oldham's Local Plan and Places for Everyone

- 2.1 The Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan Document (DPD), is a strategic plan that 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.
- 2.2 Places for Everyone provides the strategic framework for the Oldham Local Plan, and:
- Sets out specific requirements to be taken forward through the plan in relation to housing, offices, and industry and warehousing.
 - Identifies the main areas where growth will be focused as part of its spatial strategy.
 - Identifies the important environmental assets which will be protected and enhanced.
 - Allocates sites for employment and housing outside of the urban area to meet our growth needs. In Oldham this is JPA2 Stakehill (a cross-boundary allocation with Rochdale), JPA10 Beal Valley, JPA11 Bottom Field Farm, JPA12 Broadbent Moss, JPA13 Chew Brook Vale, JPA14 Cowlshaw, JPA15 Land south of Coal Pit Lane and JPA16 South of Rosary Road.
 - Supports the delivery of key infrastructure, such as transport and utilities; and
 - Defines a new Green Belt boundary.
- 2.3 The purpose and role of the Oldham Local Plan is to support delivery of PfE in Oldham. Providing more detailed non-strategic 'development management' policies that support the strategic policies in PfE, whilst ensuring that together they reflect, and support delivery of, the Council's priorities and those of our Building a Better Oldham regeneration ambitions. It is therefore important that policies contained within the Oldham Local Plan are read alongside those in PfE, to ensure that all policy requirements are understood and met.
- 2.4 The Oldham Local Plan has been aligned with the plan period of PfE – up to 2039, given that it is supporting delivery of the Joint Plan. In addition, as this Local Plan focuses on non-strategic planning policies that deal with primarily development management matters, it does not include allocations for future development, whether that be for new homes or employment. Instead, the Plan supports the delivery of our housing and employment land supply through the positive planning framework provided by the plan policies. During preparation of the Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in December 2024, where relevant. However, as the Oldham Local Plan includes policies that seek to deliver the housing requirement and development growth set out PfE it has been prepared in accordance with the relevant previous version of the Framework as per paragraph 235 of NPPF. In this instance this is NPPF 2021 under which PfE was examined. Nevertheless, the Council has sought to ensure that the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan is in conformity with the December 2024 where relevant.

- 2.5 The Council recognises that the emerging planning reforms will require the preparation of a Spatial Development Strategy covering the Greater Manchester region. At an appropriate time, this will need to be supported by a new Local Plan for Oldham prepared under the new, and emerging, new plan-making system. If needed allocations will be considered as part of this future reiteration of the Local Plan to support the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater Manchester that will be required by the new local planning regulations when in place.

3 Building a Better Oldham

- 3.1 This chapter explores the Council's key priorities, ambitions and initiatives that have informed the policies within the Local Plan and which the Plan will help to facilitate and deliver.

Our Corporate Priorities

- 3.2 The Oldham Plan 2024-2030² is prepared by the Oldham Partnership and sets out a clear set of priorities for the borough that respond to the needs and aspirations of our communities. It recognises that no single organisation can tackle all our challenges alone and brings together leaders from across the Council, health services, housing, education, safety, and local businesses. Each one brings their own skills and resources to help make Oldham stronger and fairer for everyone.
- 3.3 The Partnership's vision for Oldham is 'a place where everyone can thrive, with great education, good jobs, safe homes and access to necessary services. We aim to build a greener, healthier borough focused on sustainability and well-being for all'. This vision is translated into the three missions set out below:
- **A Great Place to Live** – through providing more affordable, quality homes, improving public spaces, and creating a strong economy with vibrant communities.
 - **Healthier, Happier Lives** – through ensuring that everyone has access to the care, support, and opportunities they need to live a good life. With a commitment to tackling poverty, improving health and well-being, providing high-quality social care, and promoting lifelong education.
 - **Green and Growing** – where economic growth benefits all residents, creating opportunities for businesses to succeed while ensuring our community and environment thrive. Through attracting new investment, supporting local business and leading in green technologies, quality job opportunities will be generated, and people will be equipped with the skills they need to succeed.
- 3.4 Oldham Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2027³ reflects the Partnership's missions and sets out how the Council will support their delivery. In an ever-changing environment, where strategies must remain flexible and responsive, our cooperative ambition drives us forward, guided by a core set of values and behaviours. These principles form the foundation of Oldham Council's approach, ensuring that we stay true to our core purpose and direction.
- 3.5 The Local Plan represents the spatial expression of The Oldham Plan and the Council's Corporate Plan and is a key tool through which the Council can help to support the Partnership's missions and achieve its ambition. Delivery of these missions are the golden thread that runs through the Oldham Local Plan.

² This document can be found at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201261/oldham_plan/3207/oldham_plan

³ This document can be found at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200146/strategies_plans_and_policies/2888/corporate_plan

Building a Better Oldham

3.6 Building a Better Oldham⁴ is the Council's ambitious transformation programme for the borough and will be achieved by:

- building quality homes
- providing opportunities to learn & gain new skills
- providing opportunities to grow local businesses and create jobs
- ensuring Oldham is the greenest borough
- embedding sustainability, energy efficiency & low (zero) carbon
- improving life-chances, health and well-being of our residents and local communities

3.7 Projects include:

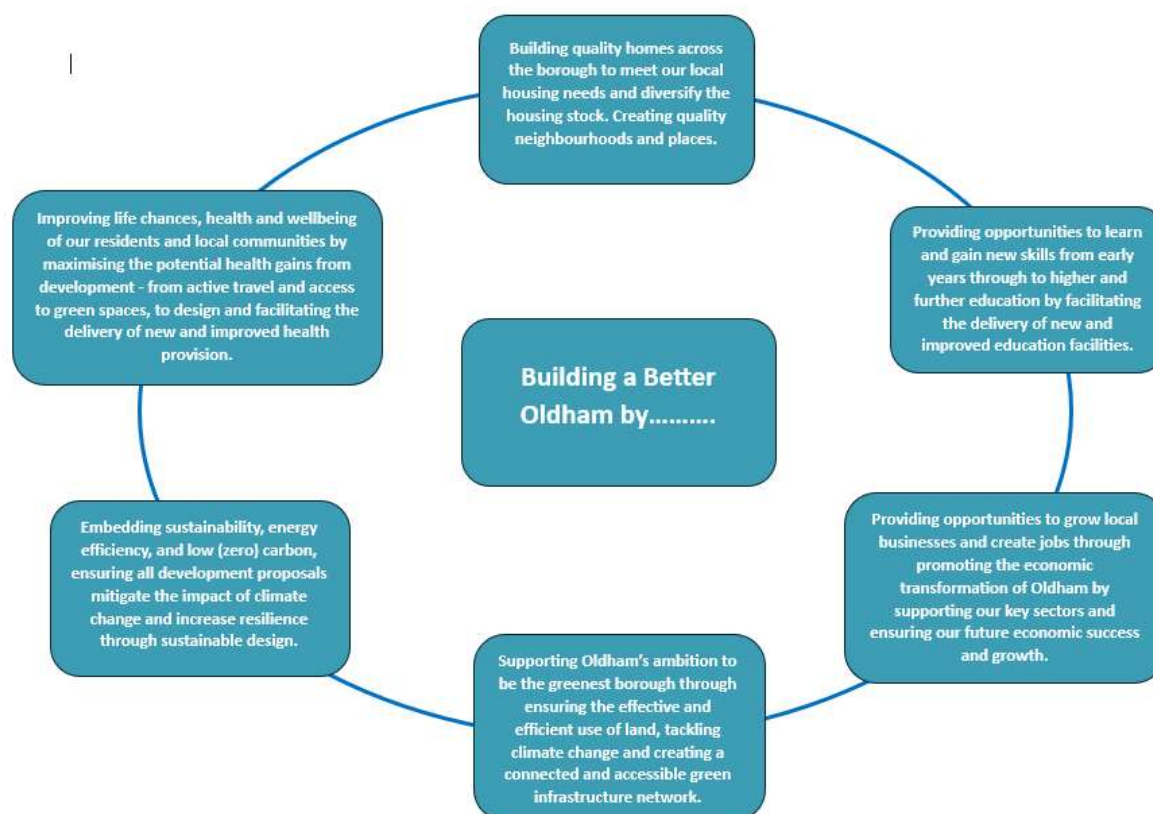
- Introducing residential living into Oldham Town Centre through the development of around 2,000 high-quality new homes alongside vibrant public spaces, and exciting commercial opportunities.
- The redevelopment of Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre to provide a new home for Tommyfield Market, new space for work and an improved leisure and entertainment offer for people of all ages, in a way that will safeguard the centre and create a sustainable retail offer for the future.
- Preserving our buildings and heritage to drive Oldham's cultural quarter through, for example, the restoration of the Old Library which will be home to the Oldham Theatre Workshop, a gallery, and a new Council chamber and offices.
- Making it easier and safer to travel around the town centre through Accessible Oldham which is transforming our streets by improving roads, footpaths and public areas, alongside public realm improvements comprising new rain gardens, seating areas and public spaces.
- Northern Roots Country Park⁵, which as part of the Council's 'Green and Growing' priority will be the UK's largest urban farm and country park, providing new green space for communities from across Oldham and beyond.

⁴ More information can be found at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201248/building_a_better_oldham

⁵ More information can be found online at <https://northern-roots.uk/>

3.8. The Oldham Local Plan support's delivery of this ambitious programme as illustrated in Figure BB1 below.

Figure BB1: Flow diagram illustrating how the Council's Building a Better Oldham agenda has been embedded into the planning framework



Oldham's Green New Deal

3.9 The Council's Green New Deal Strategy⁶, sets challenging new carbon neutrality targets whilst bringing a new focus on building the green economic sector in Oldham to generate inward investment, jobs and training opportunities for residents.

3.10 Central to the Green New Deal Strategy are two new ambitious targets for achieving carbon neutrality:

- **carbon neutrality for the Council by 2025** – to be achieved through reducing CO2 emissions from council buildings and street lighting; investing in large-scale renewable energy generation; and implementing local, meaningful and verifiable 'carbon offset' measures (i.e. tree planting).

⁶ More information can be found online at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201249/green_new_deal/3002/oldham_green_new_deal_strategy

- **carbon neutrality for the borough by 2030** – to be achieved through developing a Local Energy Market to incentivise renewable energy development; investing in and supporting the development and roll-out of large-scale low carbon anchor energy infrastructure such as low carbon heat networks; supporting the development of the Green Technology and Services sector across the borough; and maximising the local benefits from GM and national level schemes which aid decarbonisation, including air quality and transport.

3.11 The Green New Deal Strategy sets out the Council's approach to achieving these targets, enabled by the development of, and investment in, the 'green' sector in Oldham's local economy. There are also wider benefits in terms of improving the health and wellbeing and quality of life for residents, delivering social value and an improved environment for nature, wildlife and the green infrastructure.

3.12 In support of the Council's Green New Deal ambitions the Local Plan provides a robust framework for ensuring that development proposals mitigate the impact of climate change, make their contribution to meeting nationally binding targets to reduce greenhouse emissions and increase resilience. Through:

- Ensuring that development is located to take account of all sources of flood risk and that it is designed to increase water efficiency, reduce demand on water resources and protect water quality.
- Encouraging the use of decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy in new developments and that through their construction, design and layout they minimise energy consumption.
- Using the multi-functional benefits from Green Infrastructure creation, enhancement and protection to underpin our response to climate change and carbon reduction whilst providing connected and resilient networks.
- Reducing the need to travel and promoting active travel and the use of sustainable modes of transport, including supporting the expansion of electric vehicle charging capabilities.

3.13. Our approach to tackling the climate change emergency also has many benefits and outcomes that link to our health and wellbeing priorities in that it will help to ensure Oldham residents can afford to live comfortably in their homes; will increase access to an enhanced Green Infrastructure network; and promote active travel choices, including walking, wheeling and cycling.

Improving Oldham's Health and Wellbeing

3.14. Improving health and well-being for our residents is a key part of the Partnership's mission - Healthier, Happier Lives. Some of the most pressing health challenges faced in Oldham, such as obesity, physical inactivity, deprivation and social inequality, fuel poverty and the needs of an ageing population, can all be affected by the quality of our built and natural environment. Tackling these 'wider determinants of health' through the planning system however requires a holistic approach, ensuring that they are embedded throughout the Local Plan.

3.15. Through the policies contained within the Plan the Council will encourage and facilitate development in the borough that provides opportunities for healthy lifestyles, contributes to the creation of healthier communities, and helps to reduce health inequalities. These policies will help to:

- Create healthy, inclusive and safe places that are well connected to key services and facilities and high-quality open spaces.
- Provide a diverse, and affordable, housing offer that addresses local housing needs with homes that are adaptable.
- Promote sustainable and accessible transport that enables active travel, including walking, wheeling and cycling, and the maximises opportunities to enhance our green infrastructure.
- Support healthy eating and promote healthy food choices through, for example, increasing opportunities for community food growing spaces and setting a policy framework for the consideration of hot food takeaways.
- Support the delivery and improvement of access to healthcare facilities and education, employment and skills training.

4 Oldham's Local Plan and Neighbourhood Planning

- 4.1 Communities can prepare Neighbourhood Plans for a designated neighbourhood area. Once these are prepared and adopted they become part of the statutory development plan and are used to determine planning applications (alongside the Oldham Local Plan and PfE) for the designated neighbourhood area. The Neighbourhood Plan can have its own vision, objectives, strategy, policies and designations / allocations.
- 4.2 In the borough of Oldham currently Saddleworth Parish Council are preparing Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan for the parish council area and The New Chadderton Partnership forum are preparing a neighbourhood plan covering three Chadderton wards.
- 4.3 It is important that these plans, and any other neighbourhood plans that come forward, are positively prepared and support, and do not conflict with, the strategic policies of Places for Everyone and the Oldham Local Plan. In the case of Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan, this will need to also be in conformity with the planning policies of the Peak District National Park.

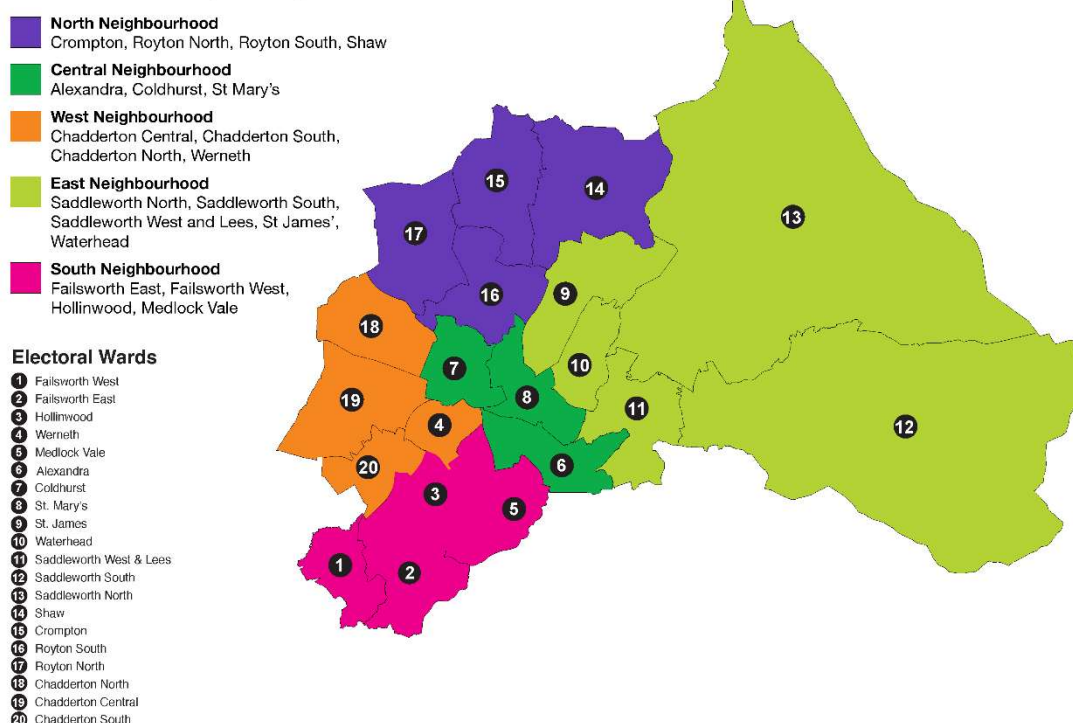
5 Spatial Portrait

Context

- 5.1 Oldham is situated in the northeast of Greater Manchester. It covers an area of 55 square miles. Our neighbouring boroughs are Rochdale, Manchester, Tameside, Peak District National Park, Kirklees and Calderdale. The borough is made up of the town of Oldham and the areas of Chadderton, Failsworth, Hollinwood, Royton, Shaw and Crompton and Saddleworth and Lees. It has a real rural and urban mix, reaching from within five miles of Manchester City Centre, to the moorlands of Saddleworth, with almost a quarter of the borough within the Peak District National Park.

Figure SP1: Map illustrating Oldham's wards and neighbourhood teams

Oldham Borough Neighbourhood Teams



Population and Housing

- 5.2 Oldham is home to around 251,560 residents who live across five districts and twenty wards and make up 8.4% of Greater Manchester's population⁷. The borough has a higher proportion (34.8%) of ethnic minority residents than in Greater Manchester (28.7%), the North-West (18.8%), and England (26.5%)⁸. The ethnic composition in Oldham currently stands at 65.2% White British, 13.5% Pakistani, 9% Bangladeshi

⁷ ONS, Population estimates for England and Wales: mid-2024. Information on the mid-year estimates can be found here: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationestimatesforenglandandwales/mid2024#local-authorities>

⁸ Census, 2021. Information on the Census can be found here: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

and 9.3% 'other'⁹. Equality and diversity are embraced within Oldham and the number of ethnically diverse communities continue to grow. This diversity is reflected within schools, with 98 different languages recorded as being spoken¹⁰. Oldham brings together a variety of cultures and is proud of the uniqueness that this brings to the borough.

- 5.3 The borough has a relatively young population, with a high proportion (22.5%) of residents aged under 16 and proportionally fewer (15.7%) aged 65 and over¹¹. Our increasing population profile is a result of improving life expectancy, internal migration and the growth in Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities.
- 5.4 In general, the people of Oldham have poorer health than the England average, with Oldham's life expectancy significantly lower than the England average - for males in Oldham it is 77.2 yrs and females 80.5 yrs and in England it is males 79 yrs and females 83 yrs¹². Rates of childhood obesity, physical inactivity and smoking prevalence are also higher in Oldham than the England average¹³. There is also health inequalities linked to areas of deprivation – people living in more deprived neighbourhoods are more likely to experience poor health outcomes¹⁴.
- 5.5 Oldham has a very high proportion of terraced housing (approximately 45% of all housing stock). This housing is largely concentrated in the parts of the borough, around inner Oldham, which also have the greatest levels of disadvantage and deprivation, according to the Indices of Deprivation¹⁵. Oldham also has a high proportion of properties in lower council tax bands, with 70% of homes in band A or B category¹⁶. Levels of overcrowding are high and there is a legacy of historic low supply of new larger family accommodation.

Economy and Employment

- 5.6 There are over 8,425 businesses, employing 84,000 people in Oldham¹⁷. Those businesses span key economic sectors including advanced manufacturing, health and social care, construction, education, digital and creative and financial and professional services. The borough is home to a number of well-known and high-profile businesses including Reach plc (formerly the Trinity Mirror Group), Diodes Incorporated, Seton Healthcare Ltd, Park Cake Bakeries, Innovative Technologies, Ambassador Textiles,

⁹ Census, 2021. Information on the Census can be found here: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

¹⁰ School Census, 2025

¹¹ ONS, Population estimates for England and Wales: mid-2024. Information on the mid-year estimates can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationestimatesforenglandandwales/mid2024#local-authorities>

¹² ONS, Life expectancy in the UK. Information on the mid-year estimates can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/lifeexpectancies/bulletins/nationallifetablesunitedkingdom/2021to2023additionaldata>

¹³ Oldham Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022-2030), available at:

<https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/documents/s136004/ITEM%2010%20-%20health%20and%20wellbeing%20strategy.pdf>

¹⁴ Oldham in Profile (2025), available at: <https://www.jsnaoldham.co.uk/cms-data/depot/profile-depot/Oldham-in-Profile.pdf>

¹⁵ Oldham Indices of Deprivation Report (2019), available at: <https://www.jsnaoldham.co.uk/cms-data/depot/profile-depot/IMD-2019-briefing-1-Accessible-.pdf>

¹⁶ Oldham Local Housing Needs Assessment (2024) - Valuation Office Agency Data, 2022

¹⁷ Interdepartmental Business Register, 2023

and Nov Mono Pumps. The [Oldham Independent Economic Review](#)¹⁸ identified a strong “entrepreneurial culture” in the borough, with large numbers of business start-ups and small and micro businesses. Wholesale and retail, construction, and professional services contribute significant numbers of jobs, with manufacturing the largest single sector in terms of Gross Value Added (although this has declined).

- 5.7 The unemployment rate in Oldham currently stands at 6.8%, compared to 5% within Greater Manchester and 4.1% in England¹⁹. Oldham’s overall rank in the [indices of deprivation](#) has maintained a clear downward trend since 2004, relative to other authorities. The worsening of the ‘extent’ rank may indicate that deprivation (relative to other areas rather than in absolute terms) is taking on a wider geographic scope across Oldham. Pockets of deprivation are particularly concentrated around the inner Oldham area. The borough is the 11th most deprived local authority area²⁰ in the country, with seven Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA's) sitting within the worst 1% nationally, two more than in 2019.
- 5.8 The median household income for Oldham in 2025 was £32,662, which is below Greater Manchester (£35,242) and national (£39,597) levels²¹. Oldham has traditionally had a weak skills base, a legacy of generations of manual employment, which means Oldham residents have found it difficult to enter key economic sectors in recent years. In relation to skills the latest census data shows that the proportion of residents with no qualifications has decreased from 22.2% in 2011 to 19.6% in 2021. However, the 2021 figure still remains above Greater Manchester (14.5%) and England (12.4%) proportions. The proportion of residents with NVQ 4+ (Degree level or above) has increased from 20.3% in 2011 to 26.6% in 2021. The 2021 figure still remains below both Greater Manchester (35.0%) and England (37.1%) proportions.
- 5.9 The Council’s ambitions for Oldham Town Centre aim to create a more vibrant, revitalised centre that plays a greater role in Greater Manchester. Oldham’s cultural offer includes Gallery Oldham which has collections of regional and national importance, a variety of museum collections, archives and arts, the Oldham Theatre Workshop and libraries. Gallery Oldham continues to attract a high number of visits with visitors enjoying the fantastic range of exhibitions and events on offer.
- 5.10 In relation to tourism, Oldham has two distinct areas that make up the main tourist destinations, Oldham Town Centre and Saddleworth. Oldham Town Centre has attractions such as Gallery Oldham and a growing evening economy around Odeon Cinema and a number of independent restaurants. Saddleworth's attractions include Saddleworth Museum and Gallery, Uppermill village, the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and the open countryside leading to attractions such as Dove Stone reservoir. A number of successful events are held annually in the borough including Santa's Reindeer Parade which attracts on average around 9,000 visitors, the Big Bang

¹⁸ The document can be found at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201162/research_and_statistics/3306/oldham_economic_review_board

¹⁹ ONS Claimant Count, August 2025. This information can be viewed at: [CC01 Regional labour market: Claimant Count by unitary and local authority \(experimental\) - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

The English Indices of deprivation 2025 can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025>

²¹ CACI, 2025

firework display and Illuminate, a late-night arts festival, which attracts performers from all over the world.

- 5.11 In terms of sports and open space, the emerging SportsTown centred around Boundary Park is a multi-million-pound investment which will deliver transformative sporting, health and education facilities. SportsTown will create business, educational and career opportunities in sport and health, as well as delivering improved and new facilities for a range of sports, including football, rugby, netball and cricket.

The Natural Environment

- 5.12 Over half of the borough is open land that provides an attractive setting to built up areas and is an important natural resource supporting agricultural, tourism and recreational activities.
- 5.13 Over a quarter of the borough falls within the Peak District National Park, offering residents and visitors access to the Peak Parks diverse landscapes and recreation. Oldham acts as a gateway to the Peak Park, particularly around the areas of Dove Stone Reservoir and Saddleworth Moors and provides the setting to the Peak District. Development can ensure that it helps to further the purposes of the Peak District National Park in relation to its natural beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage and understanding and enjoyment of it's special qualities.
- 5.14 The majority of the open land is designated Green Belt or locally protected open countryside. River valleys and waterways, including the Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, provide habitats and corridors for wildlife, as well as opportunities for recreation, tourism and regeneration.
- 5.15 There is also a range of nature conservation areas, from international through to those of local importance. Oldham has one Special Protection Area (SPA) for rare and vulnerable birds (South Pennine Moors).
- 5.16 Oldham has six Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within the borough. They are listed below):
- Rochdale Canal;
 - South Pennine Moors;
 - Standedge Tunnel;
 - Ladcastle and Den Quarries;
 - Lowside Brickworks; and
 - Dark Peak.
- 5.17 In addition, there are currently 40 Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) across the borough (one within the Peak District National Park), one Local Nature Reserve (Glodwick Lows) and two Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS) at Glodwick Brickpit and Rocher Vale. There are also areas of ancient woodland within Oldham.
- 5.18 The South Pennine Moors, which is designated a SPA and SAC, as well as a SSSI and SBI, has the highest degree of international importance for birds and habitats. The Uplands is also an important area for peat soils however there is a need for restorable

deep peat to be stabilised, restored and re-wetted to enable it to store carbon and support notable habitats. The Moors for the Future Partnership is dedicated to preserving 8,000 years of moorland history. Moors for the Future have been working to reverse more than 200 years of damage that left large areas of these uplands bare of vegetation. The partnership works at landscape scale across the Peak District and South Pennines Moors to stabilise degraded peat and help moorland plants re-establish. Their purpose focuses on enhancing habitats, improving water quality, tackling climate change, reducing flood risk and wildfires and providing space for health and wellbeing.

- 5.19 Northern Roots is a project in Oldham which is creating the UK's largest urban farm and eco-park on Snipe Clough, 160 acres of green space in the heart of Oldham. The aim is to develop Northern Roots to create a unique community hub and visitor destination. Northern Roots aims to create inspirational spaces and opportunities for people to connect around food, growing, nature, learning, creativity, sport, enterprise, work and play; and to do this in a way that supports nature, enhances wellbeing, creates jobs, and builds hope, pride and aspiration.
- 5.20 Transformation of the site has already begun with permission approved for a visitor centre with café, production kitchen, shop, performance, learning and meeting spaces. Permission has also been granted for a forestry skills centre to support vocational learning. Longer term plans include bike hubs and trails, play facilities, further learning and wellbeing facilities, a market garden and swimming pond.
- 5.21 Green Infrastructure provision helps to underpin people's quality of life. It has a key role to play in the protection of the environment: supporting biodiversity, habitats and nature conservation; and combating the effects of climate change. The borough has a number of large, attractive parks including Alexandra and Dunwood and boasts a wide range of green spaces, such as Daisy Nook Country Park and Tandle Hill Country Park.

The Historic Environment

- 5.22 Heritage and conservation are very important within the borough. There are 36 conservation areas totalling around 255 hectares, 550 listed buildings, three registered parks and gardens and two registered scheduled monuments, all of which contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the borough. The Heritage at Risk Register is the tool used for the Heritage at Risk campaign to save historic sites and places from decay, neglect and inappropriate development. In Oldham there are nine entries on Historic England's "At Risk" Register (2024), including Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 5.23 Oldham Town Centre has a high number of listed buildings and numerous buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the town centre and conservation area. The high number of listed buildings and buildings of positive townscape character offers the opportunity for heritage-led regeneration, within the core of the town centre, as seen with the restoration of the Old Town Hall, a Grade II Listed Building, into a 805-seat Odeon cinema with restaurants, which opened in November 2016.

- 5.24 The Council adopted the '[Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document](#)'²² (SPD) in August 2019. The appraisal and management plan was a high priority due to the conservation area being "at risk". The SPD proposed four extensions to the conservation area, which have been designated under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and are reflected on the Policies Map
- 5.25 A plan showing these extensions can be found in Appendix 3. The Management Plan sets out policies and recommendations around enhancement, regeneration and community engagement.
- 5.26 [The Oldham Mills Strategy \(2021\)](#)²³ was commissioned by Oldham Council and Historic England in order to develop a positive strategy for the sustainable future of the textile mill stock across Oldham. The Mills Strategy identifies the non-designated mills across Oldham which are of particular landscape and heritage value and sets out a robust strategy to ensure their sustainable future, which considers their potential for future development focussing on residential and employment uses.

Transport

- 5.27 Oldham has good transport connectivity with its road and motorway network links, including the A62, A627 (M), A663, A671, A669, A635 and easy access to the M60 and M62. These transport links offer locational advantages for the borough with opportunities for accessing two major centres of importance, Manchester and Leeds, and also Manchester Airport.
- 5.28 Pollution from road traffic is the most significant cause of poor air quality, with sections of the A62, A627, A663 and the M60 the worst affected in the borough.
- 5.29 The Oldham Metrolink system opened as far as Mumps in June 2012, Shaw & Crompton in December 2012 and Rochdale Railway Station in February 2013. It operates from Rochdale, through to Oldham Town Centre into Manchester City Centre where the network links to Bury, Media City, Manchester Airport, Tameside, Eccles, Altrincham and East Didsbury. Park and Ride facilities within Oldham are located at Shaw, Derker, Mumps and Hollinwood. There are also Cycle Hubs at Mumps and Hollinwood. The rail network in Oldham provides connections to West Yorkshire and Manchester and beyond, with railway stations at Mills Hill and Greenfield. Oldham has an extensive walking and cycling network, including a Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network that covers around 450km and towpaths.

Energy

- 5.30 The Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership, funded via the DESNZ / GMCA Local Net Zero Accelerator programme will be a Joint Venture between the Council and a commercial low carbon energy infrastructure provider. The Delivery Partnership

²² This document can be found at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/1599/oldham_town_centre_conservation_area_appraisal_and_management_plan_caamp_supplementary_planning_document_spd

²³ The Oldham Mills Strategy can be found at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

will include key organisations from the private sector, the Oldham Partnership, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Electricity North West.

- 5.31 The project will focus on delivering the £5.6bn of low-carbon infrastructure Oldham needs to get to Net Zero, which is set out in Oldham's Local Area Energy Plan.
- 5.32 The Delivery Partnership initiative also aims to roll out the Community Led Energy Planning approach, piloted in Westwood and Sholver under the Oldham Energy Futures project.
- 5.33 Oldham will be the third local authority nationally to establish a Strategic Energy Partnership and will be the first to combine this approach with the delivery of a heat network zone as well as Community Led Energy Planning.
- 5.34 One of the anchor projects is a low carbon district heat network for Oldham Town Centre linking to Council assets and other key town centre asset owners as the core within a larger network.
- 5.35 A council-owned solar farm at Wrigley Head has also been approved and construction is underway.
- 5.36 The Council's main office has relocated to the spindles in an energy efficient fit out with long term plans to be zero carbon from electricity supplied from renewables.

6 Vision for Building a Better Oldham

Our Local Plan Vision

- 6.1 The vision for Oldham is that by 2039...
- 6.2 Oldham will have a clean, green and healthy environment. We will have responded to both the Biodiversity and Climate Change emergencies through the protection, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment and having a substantially reduced carbon footprint from meeting the Council's ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Oldham will be a carbon neutral exemplar with a resilient and multifunctional Green Infrastructure network which brings multiple benefits to the natural and built environment as well as to the health of its residents and visitors.
- 6.3 Through delivering at least 11,560 new homes of different sizes and types, including affordable housing, Oldham will have quality homes for everyone that meet the needs of Oldham's residents. New homes, delivered in sustainable and accessible locations, will contribute to inclusive and vibrant communities where everyone can live.
- 6.4 Oldham will be a key contributor to Greater Manchester's economy, with a strong reputation for clean growth and green innovation. It will be a place of dynamic businesses with better job opportunities, where those businesses local to Oldham are supported to thrive and grow, and those new to Oldham are attracted to invest. Every resident will be enabled to contribute to, and benefit from, economic growth of the city region providing significant progress in living standards, wages and skills for everyone in Oldham.
- 6.5 Oldham will have accessible and sustainable transport choices, providing improved connectivity across the borough, the city-region and beyond - for all. We will have an integrated transport system that enables the local economy to prosper and our residents to fully contribute to and benefit from job opportunities, and a comprehensive network of on and off-road walking, wheeling and cycling routes that encourage active travel, making it easier and safer for people to get to key local destinations.
- 6.6 Oldham Town Centre will be a place that thrives by combining a retail core with quality homes, opportunities to learn, develop new skills and gain employment, and a diverse culture, leisure and night-time offer that supports its local communities and attracts visitors. Oldham Town Centre will be supported by the borough's other centres – Chadderton, Failsworth, Hill Stores, Lees, Shaw, Royton and Uppermill which will continue to provide a vital role in meeting the needs of the borough's communities, connecting our residents to local services and facilities in a way that fosters a sense of community and local identity.
- 6.7 Oldham residents will be healthy, safe and well-supported, having a great start from early years and with skills for life. They will have access to local community facilities and health and well-being provision and will have active and healthier lifestyles gained from access to active travel, green infrastructure and opportunities for sport and recreation.
- 6.8 Opportunities for excellent training and life-long education will be available to all Oldham residents, raising aspirations, reducing inequalities and tackling poverty. Providing residents with a great start and skills for life so that they can make the most of opportunities available to them, whilst meeting the needs for local businesses and helping to attract and retain new business opportunities.

- 6.9 New development will be net zero and in line with co-design expectations and design codes developed with Oldham's communities, whilst the key characteristics of Oldham's townscape and landscape types and Oldham's historic environment and rich heritage will be conserved and enhanced.

7 Plan Objectives

7.1 The following plan objectives will be central to achieving the spatial vision. The Local Plan Vision for Oldham up to 2039 will be achieved by:

PO1 Building quality homes to meet local needs and diversify the housing offer by:

- providing for, and supporting the delivery of, at least 11,560 new homes;
- delivering a diverse housing offer to meet the needs of all our residents including affordable housing and homes for families, older people and disabled people;
- ensuring the delivery of high-quality, sustainable and well-designed new homes; and
- ensuring appropriate densities and making the best and most effective use of brownfield land.

PO2 Providing opportunities to learn and gain new skills by:

- supporting the provision of suitable, modern services and facilities for the education and training of all age groups, including addressing the needs for primary and secondary school places; and
- encouraging employment and skills opportunities for local people as part of new developments.

PO3 Boosting northern competitiveness by providing access to employment opportunities and growing local businesses by:

- providing for, and supporting the delivery of, at least 57,481m² of office floorspace and at least 240,656m² of industrial and warehousing floorspace;
- protecting designated sites that are suitable and attractive for existing and new businesses to locate to and expand on;
- encouraging and facilitating the development of the borough's key economic sectors with a focus on clean growth and green technologies;
- supporting the expansion of digital infrastructure to assist economic growth; and
- supporting a range of sustainable leisure and tourism activities.

PO4 Supporting the regeneration of Oldham Town Centre and creating thriving centres by:

- supporting the delivery of the Oldham Town Centre Development Framework and appropriate plans or projects that facilitate the regeneration of the borough's other centres; and
- promoting and enhancing the vitality and viability of the borough's centres to ensure their long-term sustainability.

PO5 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; and
- ensuring high quality new development makes a positive contribution to Oldham's landscape and townscape features and characteristics.

PO6 Protecting, restoring and enhancing the natural environment by:

- protecting and restoring core areas of wildlife;
- promoting nature recovery networks and improving connectivity in areas of lower biodiversity;

- using nature-based solutions to mitigate against, and be resilient to, climate change;
- delivering on the priorities for nature recovery within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy; and
- implementing Oldham's Green Infrastructure Strategy and supporting projects such as Northern Roots.

PO7 Promoting sustainable development that mitigates and adapts to climate change by:

- achieving high standards of sustainable design and construction;
- adopting a positive approach towards energy schemes and the identification of low carbon and renewable energy opportunities;
- reducing the risk of flooding to people and property taking into account climate change;
- managing flood risk using integrated water management and the provision of multi-functional green infrastructure;
- promoting the efficient use of water resources and water quality; and
- protecting and reinstating restorable peat, allowing it to act as an important carbon sink.

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

- facilitating and encouraging local and accessible health and well-being provision;
- 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;
- supporting sport and recreation projects such as Oldham's SportsTown;
- providing spaces to grow food in new and existing communities, such as allotments and community gardens and connecting people to nature;
- supporting and protecting new and existing community facilities;
- reducing crime and fear of crime and promoting community safety, through good design of the built environment;
- improving air quality for the benefit of everyone; and
- providing and maintaining high standards of amenity and local environmental quality.

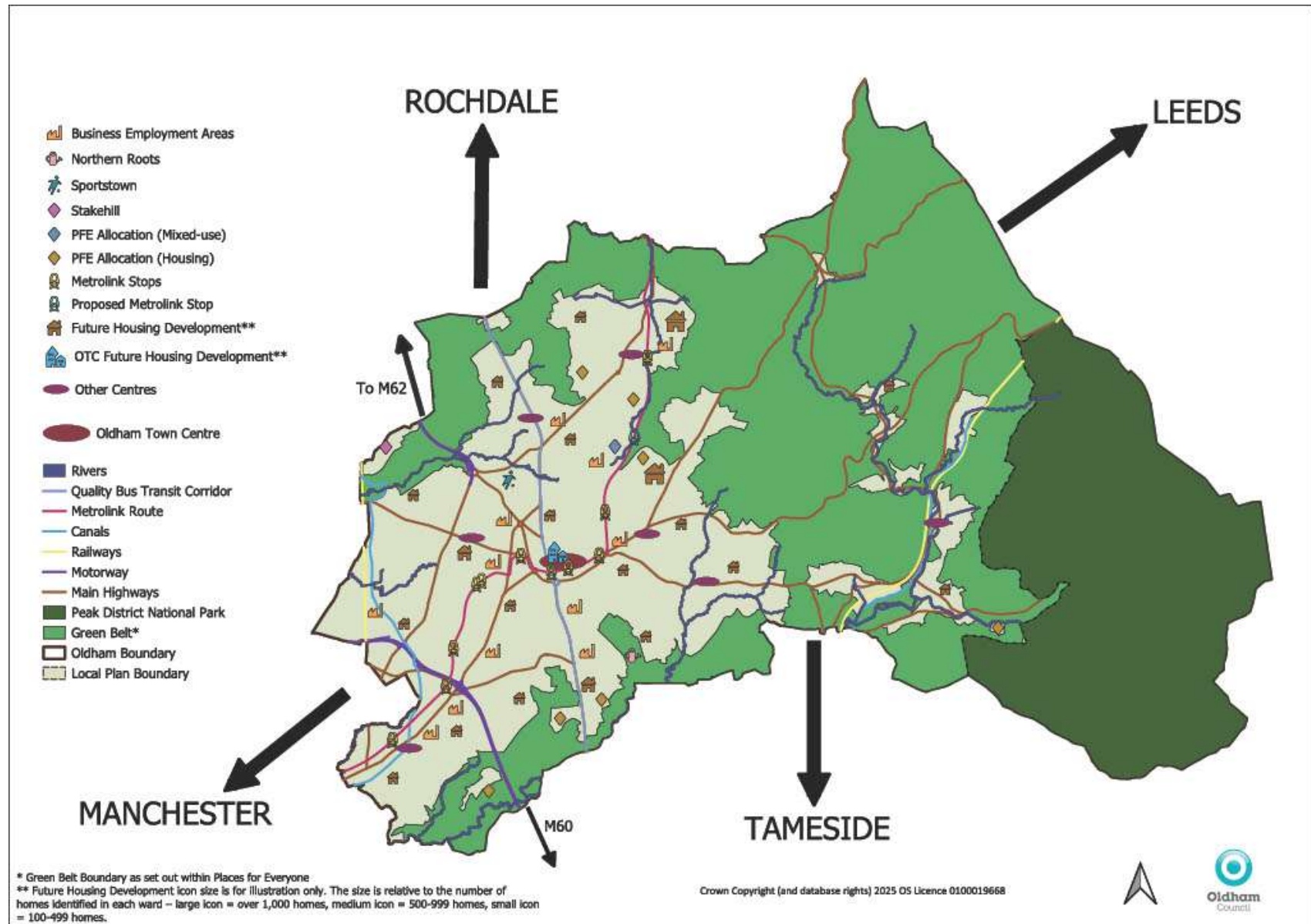
PO9 Improving and valuing a better historic and built environment, by:

- delivering high-quality design and placing greater emphasis on place-making, with buildings and spaces that respond positively to local distinctiveness and character;
- conserving and enhancing the borough's historic environment and heritage assets, including the borough's textile mills; and
- ensuring that proposals within Oldham Town Centre follows the recommendations set out in the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan with the aim of removing the Conservation Area from the 'at-risk' register.

PO10 Promoting accessible and sustainable transport choices, by:

- supporting delivery of Oldham's Transport Strategy and the Right Mix approach to encourage active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling) and an increase in travel by sustainable modes;
- reducing the need to travel by car through ensuring new development is located in areas with access to public transport, local services and facilities; and
- improving public transport connectivity for Oldham's residents to key areas of employment within the borough, the city region and beyond.

Key Diagram



8 Homes

- 8.1 Oldham has a strong housing market, offering a unique draw for residents by having a wealth of green spaces and open countryside, whilst being well-connected to Manchester City Centre and neighbouring towns. Despite the positive characteristics the ever-increasing need for housing has meant there is a shortage of suitable housing to meet local needs. Like other Greater Manchester borough's, the industrial legacy has meant some of Oldham's existing housing stock is not suitable to meet current needs and new housing needs to be built.
- 8.2 Every Oldham resident should have access to good quality, suitable housing. Housing is a significant determinant for health and wellbeing and is a draw for investment and employment opportunities. The construction of new homes can contribute to the local economy and generate local employment opportunities.
- 8.3 [The Local Housing Needs Assessment \(LHNA\) \(2024\)](#)²⁴ has assessed current housing provision and future needs and has found that there are imbalances in the size, mix and type of new homes required across the borough to meet local housing needs. There is also increasing numbers of people at risk of, or currently experiencing, homelessness in the borough. In addition, there is an outward migration of young people in the borough, as such there is a need to ensure there is an attractive housing offer available in the borough to retain and attract young people. There are also issues of overcrowding in some of Oldham's neighbourhoods, an increased need for larger inter-generational family housing, and an increasing ageing population and a need for housing suitable for disabled people.
- 8.4 It is important that the Local Plan ensures a diverse range of housing that is attractive and meets the needs of different sections of the population at different life stages.

²⁴ Policies within this section have been informed by the evidence set out within the 2024 Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA). The document can be found at:
https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/5590/housing_strategy_needs_assessment

Policy H1 - Delivering a Diverse and Sustainable Housing Offer

The Council will promote a diverse housing offer to meet the differing needs of all Oldham's residents.

Oldham's minimum local housing need (the number of new homes needed) is set out in Policy JP-H1 of PfE.

PfE sets out that Oldham is required to deliver at least 11,560 homes over the period of 2022-2039, which equates to an average of 680 homes per year. The housing requirement is phased through a stepped housing requirement as set out in Table H1.

Table H1 Phasing of Housing Requirement²⁵

	Annual Average	2022-2025	2025-2030	2030-2039	Total
Number of homes required	680	404	680	772	11,560

Planning applications for residential development, in whole or as part of a mixed-use scheme, will be permitted where the proposed development is consistent with national planning policy and guidance, PfE and other Local Plan policies. Proposals for the development of previously developed land will be considered favourably.

The Council will support residential development proposals that are in sustainable and accessible locations and that promote and encourage use of public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling. All residential development should be accessible by active travel and achieve Greater Manchester Accessibility Level (GMAL)²⁶ 4 or above. In all cases, distances should be measured from the centre of the application site. This requirement should be met unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant that it is not appropriate, or the development provides exceptional benefits to the surrounding environment and community.

Reasoned Justification

- 8.5 The Council will support sustainable housing development for all housing need groups where it complies with national planning policy and guidance, the policies within PfE and this Plan.
- 8.6 Oldham's minimum housing requirement for 2022-2039 is set out within PfE Policy JP-H1.
- 8.7 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)²⁷ and Brownfield Register²⁸ provide details of sites considered suitable, available and achievable for residential development, and should be used as a starting point to identify potential development sites. Sites may be allocated for residential development in a future development plan document.

²⁵ Adapted from PfE policy JP-H1 Table 7.2.

²⁶ Or any future measures of accessibility that become available and are relevant to assessing the accessibility of development.

²⁷ This document can be found at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201230/monitoring/2134/strategic_housing_land_availability_assessment_shlaa

²⁸ This document can be found at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/homepage/1386/brownfield_land_register

- 8.8 The redevelopment of brownfield land is central to achieving sustainable development and maximising our housing land supply. The Council will encourage the redevelopment of suitable brownfield land. The majority of sites identified within the SHLAA are brownfield, however there are also a number of sites which are made up of both brownfield and greenfield land, and also some greenfield sites. It is important in meeting our housing requirement and addressing local needs, that we deliver all sites within our housing land supply. This policy will also support the delivery of the housing on other suitable sites that may become available.
- 8.9 Ensuring that new residential development is sustainably located is essential in encouraging the use of sustainable travel alternatives, reducing climate change and supporting healthy communities.
- 8.10 Greater Manchester Accessibility Levels (GMAL) are a detailed and accurate measure of the accessibility of a point to both the conventional public transport network (i.e. bus, Metrolink and rail) and Greater Manchester's Local Link (flexible transport service), taking into account walking time and service availability. The method is a way of measuring the density of the public transport provision at any location within the Greater Manchester region. The GMAL measure reflects:
- Walking time from the point-of interest to the public transport access points;
 - The number of services (bus, Metrolink and Rail) available within the catchment;
 - The level of service at the public transport access points - i.e. average waiting time; and
 - The operating areas of Local Link (flexible transport) services.
- 8.11 Areas are scored on a scale of 1 to 8, with 8 being the most accessible. GMAL scores are published online at data.gov.uk. Public transport accessibility will be regularly monitored and updated, as necessary, over the life of the local plan. Other measures of transport accessibility may be used for this policy in the future, as and when they become available, which could replace GMAL.

Policy H2 - Density of New Housing

It is important in making the most efficient use of land, to achieve appropriate densities on residential developments. In line with PfE Policy JP-H4, new residential developments should achieve the minimum densities set out in Table H2 below.

Table H2: Minimum Densities for Residential Developments²⁹

Location (use highest density that applies when a site falls within more than one location) ³⁰	Minimum net residential density (dwellings per hectare)	Minimum net residential density (dwellings per hectare)	Minimum net residential density (dwellings per hectare)
<i>Designated Centres</i>	<i>Within the location</i>	<i>Within 400m</i>	<i>Within 800m</i>
Oldham Town Centre	120	70	50
The borough's other centres (Lees, Hill Stores (Huddersfield Road), Failsworth, Chadderton, Royton, Shaw and Uppermill)	70	50	35
<i>Public transport stops/ hubs</i>	<i>Within the location</i>	<i>Within 400m</i>	<i>Within 800m</i>
Metrolink stops within Oldham Town Centre	N/a	120	70
Rail stations with a frequent service (Greenfield and Mills Hill Stations) and all other Metrolink stops	N/a	70	50
Areas within GMAL 6 ³¹ and above or its equivalent	50	35	35

Outside of the areas identified within Table H2 above, a minimum density of 35 dph will be applied.

²⁹ Adapted from PfE Policy JP-H4 – Density of New Housing ([Places for Everyone](#)).

³⁰ Where more than one density applies to the same part of the site, the highest density should be used. Different densities may apply to different parts of the site. Distances should be measured from the boundary of the designated centre or GMAL area. All distances are measured in a straight line.

³¹ GMAL is an abbreviation of Greater Manchester Accessibility Level, which measures the accessibility of locations across Greater Manchester by walking and public transport. Areas are scored on a scale of 1-8, with 8 being the most accessible. GMAL scores are published online at data.gov.uk and are available on [MappingGM](#).

In some circumstances exceptions to the minimum densities may apply, such as:

- **to meet a funding requirement or to deliver a particular housing need³²;**
- **to respond to specific site characteristics (i.e. flood risk, design context, heritage assets, green infrastructure); and**
- **to provide for specialist housing accommodation (i.e. extra care housing, bungalows).**

The Council will assess this on a site-by-site basis and only allow exceptions where necessary.

To help assess and monitor the density of residential development, planning applications should provide the gross and net developable area of the proposed housing development in hectares.

Reasoned Justification

- 8.12 Ensuring brownfield land is used efficiently means that less land will be required for housing, thereby assisting the protection of our green spaces. PfE Policy JP-H4 sets out minimum densities for developments relative to their accessibility to public transport and key services. This policy sets out the requirements of JP-H4 as relevant to Oldham - defining Oldham's centres and public transport stops.
- 8.13 Increasing the densities of development in appropriate locations will help reduce the need to travel by car, as more people will live closer to shops, services and public transport links, enabling more active travel. Increasing densities for development within our town centres will also support the regeneration of them, creating centres where people can live, work and partake in leisure activities.
- 8.14 To achieve an appropriate mix of housing, developments should include the provision of houses and/or apartments having regard to the following assumptions:
- a. 35-70 dwellings per hectare: primarily houses.
 - b. 70-120 dwellings per hectare: mix of houses and apartments.
 - c. 120+ dwellings per hectare: primarily apartments, incorporating houses and/or ground floor duplexes where practicable.
- 8.15 In some circumstances, developments may be allowed to be built at lower densities to the minimum densities, relative to their location, set out in Table H2. Examples of circumstances where this may be acceptable are set out within the policy. The Council will assess this on a site-by-site basis and only allow exceptions where necessary and fully evidenced.

³² As informed by local evidence, such as the LHNA (2024), or subsequent updates.

Policy H3 - Housing Mix

New residential developments should contribute to a diverse housing mix across the borough, ensuring that Oldham's housing needs can be met.

Oldham's Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA)³³ provides evidence in relation to housing mix, including tenure, bed size and house type. Table H3 (reasoned justification) identifies the recommended housing mix for all tenures³⁴.

It is important to ensure that new housing development contributes to meeting the need for level-access homes and bungalows. Level-access homes will come forward as part of the overall housing mix, especially within town centres and highly sustainable locations, in line with Policy H2.

For some developments an alternative housing mix to what is set out in Table H3 may be appropriate, including in the circumstances listed below:

- 1. It can be clearly evidenced that an alternative mix is required in relation to specific funding requirements and the proposed development is still able to contribute to meeting local housing needs;**
- 2. It can be clearly demonstrated that the site has distinct characteristics that make an identified housing mix inappropriate or impracticable, such as flood risk, design context, impact on heritage assets;**
- 3. The development is for specialist accommodation, such as for older and/or disabled people, or there is a demonstrable need for different types of homes that cannot be delivered at a particular density (for example bungalows or residential institutions); and/ or**
- 4. There is a need to vary existing housing mix in the locality of the proposed development, for example, to provide smaller or larger house sizes.**

Alternative housing mix for development should be agreed with the Council at the earliest opportunity, ideally through seeking pre-application advice. All mix requirements shall be rounded to the nearest full dwelling once the relevant proportion has been applied.

The Council will also support the delivery of housing for Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding.

Reasoned Justification

- 8.16 The Council will support the delivery of a mix of housing suitable to meet a range of housing needs and which provides housing choice and diversity. This can include family housing, smaller housing for single people and couples, bungalows and level-access homes, and plots for Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding.
- 8.17 The LHNA (2024) provides evidence relating to housing need and mix. Table H3 below identifies the recommended overall housing mix by size/ type and tenure. The mix is

³³ LHNA 2024, or future updates.

³⁴ Where necessary, housing mix will be updated over the lifetime of the Local Plan in line with updated local evidence.

presented as a range to ensure flexibility. The table should be used to inform the housing mix for new development across the borough.

Table H3: Summary of Overall Recommended Dwelling Type/ Size and Mix by Tenure³⁵

Dwelling type/size	Market	Affordable/ Social rented	Affordable home ownership	Total
Overall % split	80%	12%	8%	100%
Dwelling type				
House	70-75%	35-40%	65-70%	60-65%
Flat	2-5%	30-35%	15-20%	10-15%
Bungalow/level-access	25-30%	30-35%	15-20%	25-30%
Size (bedrooms)				
1 to 2	30-35%	70-75%	35-40%	40-45%
3	40-45%	20-25%	40-45%	35-40%
4+	25-30%	5-10%	20-25%	20-25%

- 8.18 Table 5.2 in the LHNA³⁶ provides a further breakdown of the recommended housing mix for each tenure by district, including for Oldham Town Centre.
- 8.19 A significant proportion of Oldham's housing land supply is expected to be delivered within Oldham Town Centre. As such, it is important that this housing is attractive, diverse and contributes to meeting Oldham's housing needs. In line with policy H2, the majority of housing within Oldham Town Centre will be for apartments, ensuring an appropriate density is achieved. However, the LHNA has also identified a need for houses, including larger homes of 3 and 4 beds³⁷. Future developments should consider the existing housing mix and aim to provide a diverse mix of house types across the town centre.
- 8.20 In terms of affordable housing, the LHNA identifies that a broad mix of dwelling sizes is required. For affordable/ social rented homes a similar proportion should be provided of all house types, with a slightly higher need for houses. This housing should mainly be for smaller house sizes of 1 to 2 bedrooms (72%), with a smaller proportion provided for larger homes (23% 3 bedrooms and 5% 4+ bedrooms). For affordable home ownership, the majority should be houses, with a smaller amount provided for flats and bungalows/ level-access homes. This housing should mainly be for 1 to 2 bedrooms (37%) and 3 bedrooms (43%) with a smaller amount provided for larger homes of 4+ bedrooms (21%).

Bungalows and Level-access Homes

³⁵ Adapted from Table 5.1 of the LHNA (2024). Tables 5.1 and 5.2 of the LHNA provide further guidance on the recommended housing mix by tenure and by district.

³⁶ See LHNA (2024) Table 5.2 'Overall dwelling type/size mix recommendations by tenure by district'.

³⁷ See Table 5.2 (LHNA 2024).

- 8.21 The LHNA has identified a need for level-access homes and bungalows to meet the needs of older people and disabled people. The LHNA has identified that approximately 25 to 30% of the overall housing mix should be for level-access homes or bungalows, to meet local housing needs. There is a greater need for bungalows/ level access homes of affordable/ social rented tenures, compared to market homes and affordable home ownership. The area with the greatest need for level-access homes is the north district.
- 8.22 It is important that new housing development contributes to this need. Level-access homes/ apartments will come forward as part of the housing land supply, particularly in our town centres and sustainable locations in line with policy H2.
- 8.23 The Council will also encourage new developments to incorporate the provision of bungalows or level-access homes into the overall housing mix.

Housing Standards

- 8.24 In terms of house sizes, as set out within PfE Policy JP-H3, all new homes must comply with the nationally described space standards. It is important that houses are safe and suitable for residents and can contribute to a good standard of living. Exceptions to the application of the described space standards apply, as is set out in national planning policy and guidance.
- 8.25 In addition, in line with PfE Policy JP-H3, all new homes must be built to the 'accessible and adaptable' standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations unless specific site conditions make this impracticable. These will be determined by the Council on a case-by-case basis.

Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding

- 8.26 There is a need to provide a range of house types, including opportunities for those individuals or groups wishing to build their own homes, to ensure Oldham has an attractive and varied housing offer.
- 8.27 The Council will support planning applications for the delivery of homes for Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding where the proposed development is compliant with national planning policy and guidance, the policies within PfE and this Plan.
- 8.28 As required by national planning policy, the Council maintain a Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register of individuals or groups seeking plots to build their own homes within the borough. To ensure availability, where plots are provided as part of larger development schemes, developers should ensure that the plots are actively marketed at an appropriate price, and the information be provided to the Council to be distributed to all appropriate individuals on the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register.

Policy H4 - Providing for Local Housing Needs

The Local Plan will support the delivery of housing, which is suitable for residents with specialist housing needs, including housing suitable for older people, disabled people, looked after children and care leavers.

Specialist housing provision should have easy access to community facilities, local services and public transport, and be well integrated within the wider neighbourhood.

The Council will seek to secure a range of housing options for older people and disabled people, by:

- a. Requiring all new homes to be built to the 'accessible and adaptable' standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations³⁸;
- b. Supporting physical home adaptations and improvements to existing specialist accommodation, where there are no unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring properties;
- c. Supporting the development of new specialist accommodation and supported housing, including:
 - i. Age-restricted general market housing;
 - ii. Extra Care Housing;
 - iii. Sheltered Housing/ Assisted Living; and
 - iv. Nursing and Care Homes.

Specialist housing provision of 10 homes and above are expected to provide affordable housing, in line with Local Plan Policy H5.

The development of housing for older people and disabled people, should be guided by the following principles:

- a. Promote ease of movement on foot and with mobility aids;
- b. Be sustainably located, with access to public transport, local services and facilities (including a hospital or GP practice), accessible to the development via active travel means;
- c. Feature parking spaces and setting down points in proximity to entrances; and
- d. Have accessible and appropriately designed built environments, including seating areas, step free spaces and gentle approaches suitable for wheelchair users and people with visual or mobility impairments.

The delivery of housing for children and care leavers will be supported where the proposed development is compliant with other policies in PfE and the Local Plan, and:

³⁸ In accordance with PfE Policy JP-H3.

- e. Is in a sustainable and accessible location, with easy access to education facilities, public transport and open space, sport and recreation;
- f. Provides appropriate accommodation for the number of proposed occupiers and their needs; and
- g. Gives priority to children and young people from Oldham in the first instance, in line with local need.

For the development of all specialist housing provision, early discussions with the Council through pre-application advice are encouraged to discuss local housing needs. Regard should be had to the evidence of housing need set out within the Local Housing Needs Assessment, and other local evidence, for specialist need groups. Where appropriate, provision should be delivered via a specialist provider or other appropriate body.

Reasoned Justification

8.29 This policy supports the delivery of housing, which is suitable for residents with specialist housing needs, including housing suitable for older people, disabled people³⁹, looked after children and care leavers. Specialist housing provision should be sustainably located, in line with Local Plan Policy H1, and well-integrated into existing communities.

Older People and Disabled People

8.30 Oldham has an ageing population. [Oldham Council's Market Position Statement \(MPS\)](#) identifies that there are approximately 39,000 people aged 65 and over living in Oldham currently, which is expected to increase by 26.62% to over 49,500 people by 2040. Also, the number of people in Oldham over the age of 85 is projected to increase by 43% by 2040. Between 2023 and 2040 there is an expected increase of 38.4% in people over 65 with dementia.

8.31 As a result, there will be an increase in the number of people needing care and also the care needed will become increasingly complex. The LHNA has identified a net need for:

- 3,139 additional specialist older persons dwellings over the period 2022 to 2041 or 165 each year;
- a need for 955 C2 Extra Care units or 50 each year; and
- 775 C2 residential care bedspaces or 41 each year.

8.32 There is a particular need for leasehold sheltered housing, enhanced sheltered, and Extra Care housing for sale.

8.33 There is also a need to build more adapted, or adaptable, accommodation so that people can be supported at home for as long as possible (51% of over 65s would prefer

³⁹ Including people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health needs.

to be at home with support). Oldham's Adult Social Care Team can assist in supporting people to 'Live Well at Home'⁴⁰.

- 8.34 There is expected to be an increase in the number of households experiencing a disability in Oldham over the plan period. The LHNA identified that around 48,800 people reported as experiencing a disability in 2022 - this represented 20% of households in Oldham. This is expected to increase by 14.7% by 2041, which represents an additional 7,200 people experiencing an illness or disability⁴¹.
- 8.35 In particular, the MPS identifies that in 2023 there were estimated to be 795 adults with a moderate or severe learning disability in Oldham – this is expected to increase by over 6% to 846 adults in 2040. There is also expected to be an increase over the plan period in the number of people with autism spectrum disorders and people experiencing a mental health disorder.
- 8.36 There is a need for more wheelchair accessible homes and appropriate housing for those with other physical disabilities, dementia, a learning disability and mental health disorders. The LHNA has identified a need for 5% of new dwellings to be built to the M4(3) wheelchair accessible standard (an average target of around 34 per year over the plan period).
- 8.37 PfE Policy JP-H3 requires all new homes to be built to the 'accessible and adaptable' standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations. Accessible and adaptable housing enables people to live more independently, whilst also saving on health and social costs in the future.
- 8.38 The definitions of provision that is suitable for older people, including the level of care that is associated with the provision, is set out in Planning Practice Guidance⁴². There is a significant amount of variability in the types of specialist housing for older people. The list provided within the policy is an indication of the different types of housing available but is not definitive. Any single development may contain a range of different types of specialist housing.
- 8.39 It is recognised that provision for older people may also be suitable for those with disability in some circumstances, especially where the disabled resident is of an older age. However, there is a need for suitable provision for disabled people who are not within this group, who are able to live independently or semi-independently and those living in their own homes. There is also a particular need for suitable accommodation for young adults and those with complex behavioural needs.
- 8.40 Inclusive design is integral to ensuring provision is fit for purpose and reflects the needs of its users. Planning Guidance has informed the inclusive design principles set out in points 1 to 5 of the policy. In addition, the [HAPPI Principles](#)⁴³ are a good starting point for designing provision suitable for older people and disabled people:
- Integration with the surrounding context
 - Social spaces that link with the community
 - Space standards that facilitate flexibility

⁴⁰ Further information on the 'Live Well at Home' agenda and access to support is available at:

<https://livingwellathome.co.uk/> and https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200369/live_at_home

⁴¹ LHNA (2024), data interpreted from ONS Family Resources Survey 2018/19 and ONS 2018-based population projections.

⁴² This guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-for-older-and-disabled-people>

⁴³ This document can be viewed at: <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/HAPPI/>

- Enhanced natural light
- Priority for pedestrians in outdoor spaces

8.41 Accessible and adaptable housing will provide safe and convenient approach routes into and out of the home and outside areas, suitable circulation space and suitable bathroom and kitchens within the home. Wheelchair user homes include additional features to meet the needs of occupants who use wheelchairs or allow for adaptations to meet such needs.

Children and Young People

8.42 Caring for looked after children is a key part of the Council's role. A children's residential care home falls within Class C2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). Such uses are intended for the provision of care and are therefore governed by the provisions of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015. A child may live in a residential care home up to the age of 18 if their needs are judged to require the provision of care as defined by the Regulations.

8.43 There is a need to ensure that suitable housing is available for all looked after children, with a range of housing options, including smaller group homes and homes suitable for children with disabilities.

8.44 Provision for looked after children should reflect the needs of the occupants. It should be sustainably and accessibly located and integrated into the local community. Provision should also be of an appropriate size for the number of proposed occupiers and meet their housing needs, including ensuring any necessary adaptations are in place to support children with disabilities.

8.45 The delivery of appropriate housing options for support care leavers⁴⁴ is important to support the increasing numbers of young people moving from the care system into independence⁴⁵. For some, this housing might be supported group living accommodation, homes in multiple occupation (with or without a care element), or an affordable flat or house. The Local Plan will support the delivery of housing, which is suitable for care leavers, where it is compliant with other relevant policies.

8.46 Oldham Council has a Care Leavers After Care Team which supports care leavers to find a suitable home, access employment, education and training opportunities and provide support and advice in relation to health and wellbeing and finance.

8.47 Housing provision for children and care leavers should also comply with the necessary regulations.

8.48 It is important that any provision within Oldham supports local housing needs. In terms of any proposed development for children and care leavers - applicants should liaise with the Council at the earliest opportunity to ensure priority is given to children and young people from Oldham in the first instance, in line with local housing need.

⁴⁴ A 'care leaver' is defined by the [Children \(Leaving Care\) Act 2000](#) as someone aged 16 or 17 who has been looked after by a local authority for a prescribed period, or periods amounting in all to a prescribed period, which began after they reached a prescribed age and ended after he reached the age of 16.

⁴⁵ Local Authorities are required to prepare a pathway of support for when they cease to look after them, which can include helping them to find suitable housing to meet their needs.

Policy H5 - Affordable Housing

The Local Plan will ensure that a diverse type and tenure of affordable housing is provided to accommodate all households in need. Affordable housing will be provided alongside other tenures of housing, pepper potted throughout the site to ensure balanced and mixed communities.

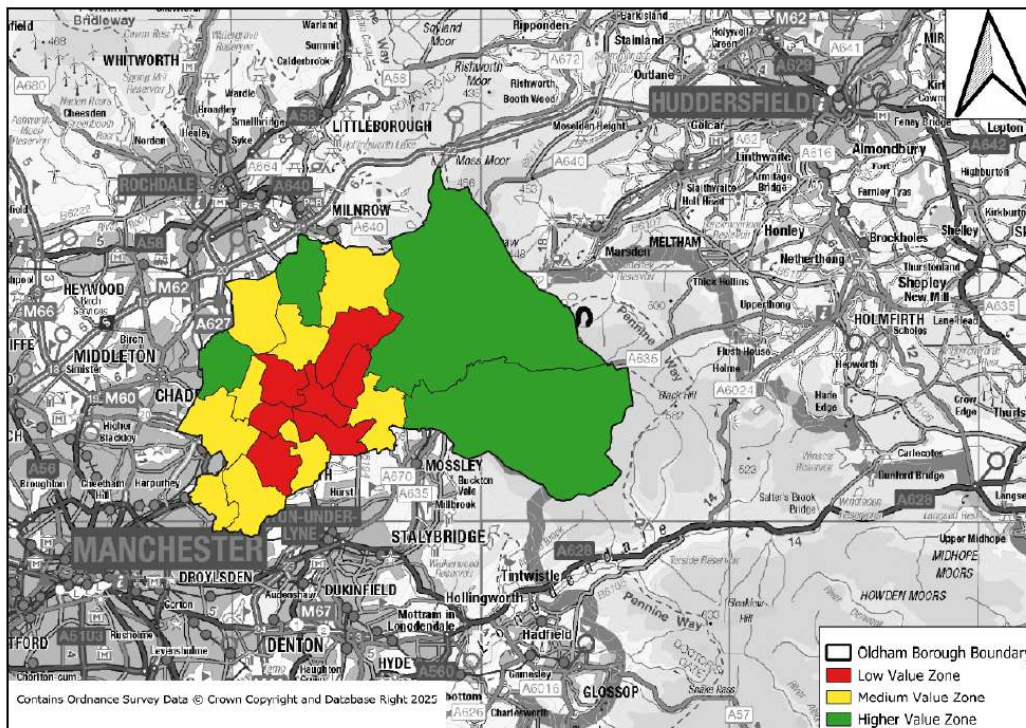
Amount, Type and Tenure of Affordable Housing

All developments that provide 10 or more net additional homes⁴⁶, will be required to deliver an appropriate portion of the total site capacity as affordable housing⁴⁷ in line with the value area in which the site is located and the land type – as set out in Table H4. A map of the borough's value areas is provided at Figure H1.

Table H4: Affordable Housing Requirements

Value Area	Brownfield Land	Greenfield Land
High Value	20% of site capacity	25% of site capacity
Medium and Low Value	10% of site capacity	10% of site capacity

Figure H1: Oldham's Value Areas⁴⁸



⁴⁶ Developments of less than 10 dwellings are not generally required to provide affordable housing unless they form part of a rural exception site.

⁴⁷ Affordable housing as defined in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

⁴⁸ Source: AspinallVerdi, QGIS December 2025

In line with the evidence set out in the Local Housing Needs Assessment, the tenure split for new affordable housing should be provided as follows⁴⁹:

- 25% affordable rented;
- 35% affordable home ownership; and
- 40% social rented.

Exemptions to this tenure mix apply where the proposed development:

- a) Provides solely for Build to Rent homes⁵⁰;
- b) Provides specialist housing to meet local housing needs;
- c) A specific tenure mix is required to meet funding requirements;
- d) Is exclusively for self-build or custom-build; or
- e) Is exclusively for affordable housing or is an exception site⁵¹.

Policy H3 identifies the house type and size recommendations for affordable housing (see Table H3). The applicant is required to evidence an alternative tenure split or mix, considering local affordable housing needs. Any proposed alternatives will be agreed with the Council at planning application stage.

The tenure split set out above, and the housing mix set out within Policy H3, will be reviewed as part of future updates of the Local Housing Needs Assessment or other evidence, as appropriate.

All affordable housing requirements shall be rounded up to the nearest full dwelling once the relevant proportion has been applied.

Affordable Housing Delivery

Developments should provide affordable housing onsite. However, by exception, it may be more appropriate, in meeting local needs for the payment of a commuted sum/ developer contribution to off-site provision, or a mixture of onsite/off-site provision. Off-site contributions should provide the number of units that would have been delivered on site.

The value of any commuted sum/ developer contribution shall be calculated in negotiation with the Council and a registered affordable housing provider. Relevant evidence, such as the LHNA, will be used to assist the calculation of a contribution, where relevant.

Where appropriate, affordable housing will be secured in perpetuity to retain the benefits of affordability for initial and subsequent owners and occupiers. This will be secured by conditions or planning obligations (see Policy IN2).

⁴⁹ These tenure requirements have been rounded based on evidence set out in the LHNA 2024. These requirements may be updated in line with future updates of the LHNA, or other relevant evidence.

⁵⁰ All Build to Rent homes should be provided in line with the definitions set out in Annex 2 of NPPF. Build to Rent schemes are required to provide affordable housing, with Affordable Private Rent (APR) being the normal and preferred tenure for on-site provision.

⁵¹ Including community-led development exception sites, First Homes exception sites or rural exception sites. Any exception sites should meet the relevant requirements set out within NPPF and/ or PPG, and relevant local plan policies.

The affordable homes provided will be offered to those on the Council's affordable housing need register in the first instance and in line with the local authority's local connection test⁵², to ensure the affordable homes provided help address the borough's affordable housing need.

Exceptional Circumstances

Whilst it is important to ensure the delivery of affordable housing to meet local needs, there may be some exceptions to providing the full amount of affordable housing required (either on or off-site)⁵³. The following exceptions may be acceptable, at the Council's discretion on a case-by-case basis:

1. There is a high level of existing affordable housing and there is a need to diversify the housing offer in a particular location (to be agreed with the Council); and
2. Developments which involve the conversion or demolition of a vacant building, through the application of Vacant Building Credit (VBC), to support viability. In determining whether VBC applies, the Council will assess the evidence submitted by the applicant and its compliance with the criteria set out in PPG⁵⁴.

Reasoned Justification

- 8.49 The Local Plan will ensure a diverse mix of quality housing, which is affordable for local residents, is provided by working with partners and registered providers.
- 8.50 Oldham's existing affordable housing stock is not able to accommodate the demand. Nor is the existing stock suitable for all types of people in need of affordable housing. In the current economic climate, including the increasing cost of living, the need for affordable housing continues to increase in Oldham, and across the country.
- 8.51 The LHNA (2024) has found that there is a shortfall of affordable housing across the borough, which equates to a need for approximately 669 additional affordable homes each year over the next 10 years⁵⁵. Whilst PPG is clear that only a portion of this need will be met through the planning system, it emphasises the significance of affordable housing need in Oldham. Also, when this need is compared to the findings of the previous LHNA (2019), which identified a need for approximately 204 additional affordable homes each year, it is clear that the need for affordable housing is increasing.
- 8.52 There are disparities in the affordability of housing in parts of the borough, with some areas distinctly lacking adequate affordable housing provision to meet local needs. There are deficiencies in smaller accommodation in the form of 2 and 3 bed houses. However, this is indicative of a lack of choice in the market and respondents'

⁵² Further information on the Councils housing needs register and the criteria of the local connection test are available within the [Oldham Council Allocation Scheme](#).

⁵³ In line with Local Plan Policy IN2.

⁵⁴ See Planning Practice Guidance 'Planning Obligations' – paragraphs 26-28 – for vacant building credit criteria: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-obligations>

⁵⁵ As set out within the LHNA (2024) the ten-year period modelling aligns with the affordable need calculation methodology – see table C7.

expectations, as Oldham's local housing register indicates a need for larger family housing in certain areas of the borough also.

- 8.53 There are issues with attracting and retaining young professionals and families. In some parts of the borough, there are not enough affordable homes for people to live in the area in which they grew up, leading to an out-migration of these households to neighbouring boroughs. There is also a lack of smaller single person affordable housing and affordable housing for older people and disabled people. Suitable affordable housing should also be provided for key workers.
- 8.54 [National Planning Policy Annex 2 'Glossary'](#)⁵⁶ defines affordable housing as housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers)⁵⁷. This includes Social Rent, other affordable housing for rent, discounted market sales housing and other routes to home ownership, including shared ownership and Rent to Buy.
- 8.55 To ensure that affordable housing is provided where it is most needed and to account for viability challenges within the borough, the affordable housing requirement for new residential (or mixed-use) development is variable. The amount of the total site capacity which is required to be delivered as affordable housing is varied, informed by the value area within which the site is located and the land type of the site as set out in Table H4.
- 8.56 Generally, greenfield sites are more viable than brownfield sites, as are sites within high value areas compared to those within low value areas. The policy requirement reflects this.
- 8.57 In addition, the varied requirement aims to rebalance the lack of affordable housing in several areas of the borough, including high and medium value areas. The LHNA has identified a need for affordable housing within these areas, particularly to ensure that people who have grown up there can afford to buy their own homes. There is also a need for affordable family housing and larger homes in these areas.
- 8.58 The affordable housing requirements should be considered as a minimum. The Council support and encourage higher proportions of affordable housing to be provided, including sites which are fully for affordable housing.
- 8.59 The tenure of affordable housing should be provided in line with the mix set out within the policy, which is based on local evidence⁵⁸. The mix is informed by evidence of affordable tenure preferences and incomes of existing and newly forming households. It also takes account of the increased government emphasis on delivering social rented affordable housing and Oldham Council's commitment to delivering social housing.
- 8.60 The LHNA has identified that social rent is the only affordable housing option available to people in Oldham on lower incomes. Households of medium income earners have access to a broader range of affordable housing, such as affordable rent and affordable home ownership options. As such, it is important that housing is delivered at a price which is affordable to local people, and our affordable housing supply should support this.

⁵⁶ This annex can be found at: [National Planning Policy Framework - Annex 2: Glossary - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/national-planning-policy-framework-annex-2-glossary-guidance)

⁵⁷ This definition should be read in conjunction with relevant policy, including that of First Homes, as set out in the Affordable Homes Update Written Ministerial Statement published on 24 May 2021. There is no longer a requirement to provide a certain amount of affordable housing as First Homes as is clarified in footnote 33 in NPPF.

⁵⁸ As identified in the LHNA (2024) or other subsequent updates/ local evidence. The tenure mix has been rounded based on the evidence set out within the LHNA (see table C13 of the LHNA 2024).

- 8.61 Policy H3 (Table H3) identifies the affordable housing mix (house type and size) which should inform development proposals for affordable housing. For affordable/ social rent the mix is identified as follows:
- 35-40% houses, 30-35% flats and 30-35% bungalow/ level-access.
 - 70-75% 1 to 2 bedroomed, 20-25% 3 bedroomed and 5-10% 4+ bedroomed.
- 8.62 For affordable home ownership the mix is identified as follows:
- 65-70% houses, 15-20% flats and 15-20% bungalow/ level-access.
 - 35-40% 1 to 2 bedroomed, 40-45% 3 bedroomed and 20-25% 4+ bedroomed.
- 8.63 Exceptions to the identified tenure split (and mix) may apply in certain circumstances and where evidenced, as set out in the policy.
- 8.64 Affordable housing requirements (Table 4), tenure and mix will be kept under review throughout the lifetime of the Plan and will be updated as appropriate, through supporting guidance if needed, in line with updated local evidence.
- 8.65 Early discussions with the Council and registered providers are encouraged, preferably at the pre-application stage, to ensure that affordable housing provision will meet relevant requirements and standards.
- 8.66 As is set out in the policy, affordable housing should be provided onsite. This will support the delivery of balanced and sustainable communities. Affordable housing should be well integrated into developments, being pepper-potted throughout the development alongside market housing, where appropriate. It should not be obvious which homes are affordable compared to market housing. The design principles set out within Policy D1 will apply to all types of housing.
- 8.67 The Council can support developers in engaging with registered providers and to access funding opportunities to support the delivery of affordable housing as part of development.
- 8.68 By exception, the payment of a commuted sum/ developer contribution to off-site provision, or a mixture of onsite/off-site provision, may be acceptable to meet local housing needs. Contributions towards off-site provision should be sufficient to provide the number of affordable units that would have been delivered on site. The value of any commuted sum/ developer contribution towards off-site provision shall be calculated in negotiation with the Council and a registered affordable housing provider and considering relevant evidence – including that set out in the LHNA relating to tenure costs and household income⁵⁹.
- 8.69 Where necessary, the provision of affordable housing will be secured in perpetuity through a Section 106 agreement. The agreement will specify the timing for delivery of the homes and/ or the payment schedule of commuted sums. Any future variation to an affordable housing contribution must be done in line with the terms set out in the agreement. This is to ensure we have a constant supply of affordable homes available for those in need.
- 8.70 Where necessary and fully evidenced, exceptions to providing the full amount of affordable housing may apply, as set out in the policy. Policy IN2 provides further detail on planning obligations and viability.

⁵⁹ See tables 3.7 and 3.8 of the LHNA (2024).

- 8.71 One exception to providing the full amount of affordable housing includes through the application of VBC. VBC allows for a deduction of a financial 'credit', equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of any relevant existing vacant buildings within the redline boundary of the application site brought back into lawful use or demolished for redevelopment, from the overall affordable housing contribution.
- 8.72 The aim of VBC is to stimulate the development of vacant buildings, supporting the delivery of housing on brownfield sites VBC will apply where it complies with the criteria set out within PPG. A site which has last been used for employment purposes must also meet the requirements for redevelopment as set out in policies E3 and E4, regardless of whether the building is now vacant. The requirements of policies E5 and HE4 will also apply if the building is a mill⁶⁰.

⁶⁰ Oldham Mills Strategy identified Oldham's Textile Mills, available at:
https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

Policy H6 - Houses in Multiple Occupation

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) will be supported where the proposed development:

- 1. Does not result in the loss of, or impact on the character or amenity to the area as a consequence of increased traffic, noise or general disturbance;**
- 2. Does not result in an undue concentration of HMO provision in any particular area of the borough. Permission may not be granted where the proportion of HMOs (either C4 or Sui Generis)⁶¹ will result in HMOs representing 10% or more of properties within a 50 metre radius measured from the centre of the application site;**
- 3. Ensures that no two adjacent properties apart from those that are separated by a road are converted to HMOs; and**
- 4. Complies with the relevant design and amenity standards as outlined in policy D1, and any existing or future HMO standards or guidance developed by the Council.**

The Council will make a decision on HMO applications on a case-by-case basis considering the factors listed above.

For the development of a HMO that requires a license, the applicant should meet the Council's licensing requirements⁶².

Applications for all HMOs are required to provide a Statement of Community Engagement and Impact Assessment.

HMOs within Oldham Town Centre

It is important to ensure a well-balanced mix of housing across the Town Centre. Oldham Town Centre is well-connected to services, facilities and public transport. HMOs are best suited to areas with these assets.

However, it is important to protect the core functions and character of Oldham Town Centre. As such, applications for HMOs in this location will be considered in line with the criteria listed above. In addition, within the town centre HMOs should not occupy ground floor uses, unless the proposed development would comply with the exceptions listed in Policy C3.

Reasoned Justification

- 8.74 A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is a property rented out by at least three people who are not from one 'household' (for example a family) but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen. HMOs can provide various types of accommodation including**

⁶¹ Including those which are permissioned but have not yet been implemented

⁶² As set out on the Council's website:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201198/help_for_landlords/258/houses_in_multiple_occupation

bedsits, a hostel, private halls of residence, a shared house, a block of converted flats and shared self-contained cluster flats.

- 8.75 HMOs can be a valuable source of housing to meet the local housing needs of various groups, including students, young adults and people with disabilities. They also provide smaller and affordable accommodation which has been identified as being required in the borough. However, there is also a need for larger family housing. As such it is important that large family homes are not extensively lost to subdivision as a result of HMO development.
- 8.76 Furthermore, extensive concentrations of HMO development can result in amenity issues and change the character of an area. Amenity and local character have a significant impact on the way in which people live and experience spaces. It is important that HMO development does not result in the loss of, or impact on the character or amenity to the area as a consequence of increased traffic, noise or general disturbance. Factors which may be considered in terms of assessing amenity include privacy levels, overbearing effects, natural light and outlook, environmental effects and design. The local character of a place should help people understand a place through reinforcing its historic legacy and links to the natural and built environment. Development should therefore be sympathetically designed to the existing local character.
- 8.77 It is considered that a concentration of HMOs which would result in 10% or more of properties within a 50 metre radius (measured from the centre of the application site), could impact on the character of an area. As such, applications for HMOs should include an assessment of the existing concentration as per the criteria listed in the policy and provide this as part of their planning application. GIS and other desktop assessment tools will be utilised in assessing the information provided.
- 8.78 Oldham Town Centre is a highly accessible and sustainable location which is suited to HMOs, particularly for students and young adults. However, it is important that HMO development is carefully managed in this location to ensure the viability and vitality of Oldham Town Centre, protect its unique character and maintain its core retail and leisure function. As such, applications for HMOs in this location will also be considered in line with the criteria listed within the policy. The Council will also not support proposals for the development of HMOs that would occupy ground floor uses, unless the proposed development would comply with the exceptions listed in Policy C3, at the Council's discretion. The Oldham Town Centre boundary is defined on the Policies Map.
- 8.79 Any applications for HMOs must ensure that the proposed development is of a high standard and complies with the relevant design and amenity standards within Policy D1, and any existing or future HMO standards developed by the Council.
- 8.80 In addition, HMOs should be sustainably located, with public transport, local services and facilities, accessible to the development by active travel. Further information for developers and landlords of HMOs regarding development and living quality and HMO regulations is available on the Council's website⁶³.
- 8.81 By requiring all planning applications for new HMOs to provide a Statement of Community Engagement and Impact Assessment, this will ensure that issues of community cohesion, integration and concerns relating to the perceived negative impacts of HMOs can be addressed and discussed with the community at an early

⁶³ https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201198/help_for_landlords/258/houses_in_multiple_occupation

stage. This assessment should be appropriate and proportionate to the size of the proposed development.

Policy H7 - Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Proposals for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sites will be supported where they are consistent with national and local guidance and policies and meet the following criteria:

- 1. The site is located within a sustainable location, with access to local services and facilities, including schools, healthcare, shops and public transport;**
- 2. The site is not subject to physical constraints or other environmental issues that cannot be mitigated to an acceptable level;**
- 3. The site provides adequate space for pitches / plots, on-site facilities and operational needs including the on-site parking, turning and servicing of vehicles and storage and maintenance of equipment;**
- 4. There is safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access to the road network;**
- 5. The development protects the residential amenity and safety of current and future occupiers of the site and neighbouring uses;**
- 6. There is, or can be, access to appropriate infrastructure required to meet the needs of the occupiers (including facilities for sewage and waste disposal, water, power supplies and drainage); and**
- 7. Appropriate screening and landscaping is used to mitigate the visual impact on the surrounding area.**

Proposals for Travelling Showpeople sites will also be required to demonstrate that:

- 8. There is safe and functional access for larger vehicles; and**
- 9. The proposed development is compatible with surrounding land uses.**

Reasoned Justification

8.82 As set out in national planning policy, the specific housing needs of different groups in the community, including travellers, should be assessed and reflected in local planning policies.

8.83 The latest evidence (set out in the 2018 and 2024 Greater Manchester Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA)) identified no need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Oldham up to 2041. For Travelling Showpeople the 2018 assessment found a shortfall of 204 plots across Greater Manchester up to 2035/36, driven by household formation and overcrowding on existing yards. In addition, the need to provide for 59 transit pitches across the study area was also identified.

- 8.84 Whilst there is no identified need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Oldham, it is recognised that additional need may arise over the plan period. Further work to understand and identify the spatial distribution of plots for Travelling Showpeople and transient pitches may also include the identification of specific sites in Oldham in the future.
- 8.85 The criteria set out within this policy will therefore provide a basis on which planning applications for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation can be determined. The policy will ensure that sites come forward in sustainable and appropriate locations, having regard to the needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community as well as surrounding neighbourhoods. In addition, criteria 8 and 9 addresses the specific size and locational requirements that plots for Travelling Showpeople may have to ensure that plots are able to cater for larger vehicles and the storage and maintenance of equipment.

Monitoring

8.86 The main Local Plan indicators that will be used to monitor this chapter are:

- Plan period and housing targets; Net additional dwellings - in previous years; Net additional dwellings - for the reporting year; Net additional dwellings - in future years; and Managed delivery target
- New and converted dwellings – on previously developed land
- Number of planning applications approved achieving the minimum density requirements as appropriate
- Total housing completions by size and type on major sites
- Number of completions for new-building affordable housing by tenure, type and size
- Total number of planning applications approved for specialist housing provision
- Number of planning applications approved for Homes in Multiple Occupation
- Number of vacant properties
- Net additional pitches (Gypsy and Traveller)

8.87 The main PfE indicators that will be used to help monitor this chapter are⁶⁴:

- Deliver approximately 9,063 homes annually by 2025
- Deliver approximately 10,305 homes annually by 2030
- Deliver approximately 10,719 homes annually by 2039
- Number of new affordable homes completed
- Percentage of new homes meeting Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS)

⁶⁴ Please note, as PfE is a Joint Plan of Bury, Bolton, Oldham, Manchester, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan, the PfE indicators apply plan-wide (including all districts). As such, indicators where delivery figures are monitored represent the delivery across all districts, not just Oldham. The minimum amount of homes Oldham is required to deliver over the plan period is set out in Policy H1 and PfE Policy JP-H1.

- Percentage of new homes meeting Accessible & Adaptable (A&A) standard
- Percentage of residential development on brownfield land
- Developer contributions for the delivery of affordable housing

9 Economy and Employment

- 9.1 NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. It goes on to say that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development and that the approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.
- 9.2 As set out in [Oldham's Corporate Plan](#)⁶⁵ our ambition is to make Oldham a place where economic growth benefits all residents, creating opportunities for businesses to succeed. By attracting new investment, supporting local businesses and leading in green technologies we will generate quality job opportunities and equip people with the skills they need to succeed. If Oldham is to achieve this ambition it is essential that we have a portfolio of diverse, sustainable, suitable and attractive employment sites for existing businesses to grow and relocate to and to attract new businesses to invest in the borough. We need to ensure that we seek higher value jobs and job creation through maximising the potential of the boroughs key economic sectors.
- 9.3 In the past, Oldham's economy has failed to benefit fully from growth at a Greater Manchester level in many ways, including business start-ups, Gross Domestic Product, wages and skills levels. The fact that Oldham has a significantly higher percentage of its working age population with no qualifications, is a major issue if we are to compete with other Local Authorities and attract new businesses. The '[Levelling Up Oldham](#)'⁶⁶ paper produced by the Oldham Economic Review Board in March 2022 estimated that in 2020 the share of the local workforce working in the foundational economy could have been as high as 70% of all workers. The 'foundational economy' includes jobs in utilities, food production and processing, retail and distribution, and health, education, housing and welfare. The jobs that lie within the foundational economy perform an essential role in the economy; however they tend to be low paid and the contracts relatively unstable.
- 9.4 If we are to make a shift from an overreliance on a foundational economy, our employment areas must be attractive to key economic sectors going forward so we can support and promote their growth in Oldham. PfE identifies a number of key economic sectors to the Plan area, including advanced manufacturing, business, financial and professional services, creative and digital, health innovation and logistics. In promoting these key economic sectors, it will be important to ensure there are links with the Council's ambitions regarding the building of the Green Technologies and Services sector (GTS). This will include supporting companies who are looking for opportunities to develop sustainable, environmentally friendly materials; decarbonise energy; tap digital innovation for doing more with less; and extend the life cycle of goods within a "zero waste to landfill" framework. All of these companies would fall under the 'advanced manufacturing' and 'creative and digital' sector.
- 9.5 In terms of economic development, PfE establishes the quantitative floorspace requirements for industrial and warehousing and office development across the Plan area and seeks to ensure a distribution of development that helps to achieve the strategic economic priorities for Greater Manchester. This includes the aim to rebalance the Greater Manchester economy by boosting the economic output of the northern districts and the identification of the Northern East Growth Corridor strategic

⁶⁵ This document can be found at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200146/strategies_plans_and_policies/2888/corporate_plan

⁶⁶ This document can be found at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201162/research_and_statistics/3306/oldham_economic_review_board

employment site to help to achieve this. The North East Growth Corridor, which extends eastwards from Junction 18 to 21 of the M62 to include parts of Bury, Rochdale and Oldham and incorporates the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone, will deliver a nationally-significant area of economic activity. In Oldham this includes Stakehill (PfE Policy JPA 2) which will deliver a 150,000m² green employment park with a focus on suitable provision for advanced manufacturing and/or other key economic sectors. It is also important that policies within this plan help to enhance connectivity between these wider employment opportunities and beyond for our residents.

- 9.6 The [Oldham Mills Strategy \(2021\)](#)⁶⁷ was commissioned by Oldham Council and Historic England in order to develop a positive strategy for the sustainable future of the textile mill stock across Oldham. The Mills Strategy identifies the non-designated mills across Oldham which are of particular landscape and heritage value and sets out a robust strategy to ensure their sustainable future, which considers their potential for future development focussing on residential and employment uses. In relation to employment the Mills Strategy provided a high-level overview of the economic potential of each mill based upon a limited range of criteria relating to heritage, condition, suitability, allocation and strategic location. However, it is important to note that the Strategy stated that even in instances where a mill was identified as having the potential for housing it does mean that this would be the best use, as many of these sites are in active employment use, in well-established employment areas and are of benefit to the communities in which they are situated as a source of employment.
- 9.7 There is very little land available within our existing employment areas, and with over half the borough being open land and the pressure of delivering future housing growth it means that opportunities for new employment land across the borough are limited. How our employment allocations within PfE come forward, how we make better economic use of our existing mill stock and how we ensure that our designated Business and Employment Areas (BEAs) remain attractive to a range of employment generating uses, particularly key economic sectors, will therefore be fundamental to ensuring our future economic success and growth.

Policy E1 - Employment Floorspace Requirements

To contribute towards achieving the overall employment floorspace requirements set out in PfE policies JP-J3 and JP-J4, at least 57,481m² of office (E(g)(i)) floorspace and at least 240,656m² of industrial and warehousing (B2 and B8) floorspace will be provided in Oldham over the period of 2022-2039.

Reasoned Justification

- 9.8 PfE policies JP-J3 and JP-J4 identify gross floorspace requirements for the PfE plan area for offices and industry and warehousing development over the period 2022 to 2039. The requirements are for at least 2,019,000m² of office floorspace and 3,513,000m² of industrial and warehousing floorspace, across the PfE plan area.
- 9.9 Within PfE, tables 6.1 (JP-J3) and 6.2 (JP-J4) set out the distribution of the identified *supply* for offices and industry and warehousing across the PfE districts. However, PfE does not set out distributed *requirements* for offices and industry and warehousing floorspace.

⁶⁷ This document can be found at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

9.10 As such, this policy sets out Oldham's employment floorspace requirements for the Local Plan period (2022-2039) of at least 57,481m² of office floorspace and at least 240,656m² of industrial and warehousing floorspace. This is to ensure that Oldham makes a sufficient contribution to meeting the overall PfE plan area employment requirements identified in policies JP-J3 and JP-J4.

9.11 These requirements have been determined by:

- Calculating Oldham's proportion of the total supply of office and industry and warehousing floorspace across the 9 districts as shown in PfE tables 6.1 (JP-J3) and 6.2 (JP-J4); and
- Applying this proportion to the overall office and industry and warehousing requirement figures in PfE policies JP-J3 and JP-J4.

9.12 This methodology is set out in Table E1 below.

Table E1: Methodology used to calculate Oldham's employment land requirement

	Total PfE supply	Total Oldham (only) supply	Oldham's supply as a % of PfE total supply	Minimum PfE Requirement	Oldham's 'Requirement' based on % of PfE supply
Office	2,880,150	81,998	3%	2,019,000	57,481
Industry and Warehousing	4,100,571	278,922	7%	3,513,000	240,656

9.13 The approach taken to disaggregate the overall employment requirements to a district level, as set out above, is that which was put forward by the PfE districts through main modifications proposed during the examination of the PfE Plan. Ultimately, it was determined in the Inspectors' Report⁶⁸ that such modifications were not necessary to make the plan sound given there is no specific requirement in national policy to establish district level employment requirement figures as part of a Joint Plan.

9.14 Notwithstanding this, the methodology is considered to remain appropriate for disaggregating the employment requirements set out in PfE to apply to Oldham district for the purposes of this Local Plan.

9.15 The amount of office and industrial and warehousing floorspace completed will be monitored annually to ensure that the existing supply is sufficient to meet quantitative and qualitative needs of Oldham and our local businesses, and to ensure that PfE's overall strategy is being adhered to. Should monitoring indicate that the employment requirement (at a district or strategic level) needs to be reviewed, an update will be carried out as necessary. Sites may be allocated for employment development in a future development plan document.

⁶⁸ This document can be viewed here: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/9282/pfe-inspectors-report-01-final.pdf>

Policy E2 – Business and Employment Areas

It is important that Oldham has a range of sustainable employment areas to support the local economy. There will be a strong emphasis on protecting and enhancing our existing employment areas. Designated employment areas are spread across the borough. These Business and Employment Areas (BEAs) provide land for existing firms to expand and for new firms to locate to, so providing for job opportunities.

There are 23 BEAs designated across the borough. These are identified on the Policies Map and set out in Table E1 below.

Table E1 Business and Employment Areas

Business and Employment Areas	
BEA 1 Wrigley Street	BEA 2 Hawksley Street
BEA 3 Greengate / Broadgate	BEA 4 Busk
BEA 5 Primrose Bank	BEA 6 Hathershaw (site a and site b)
BEA 7 Higginshaw	BEA 8 Shaw Road
BEA 9 Shaw	BEA 10 Linney Lane
BEA 11 Greenacres	BEA 12 Hollinwood
BEA 13 Broadway Green	BEA 14 Chadderton
BEA 15 Oak View Mills	BEA 16 Hey Bottom Mill
BEA 17 Chew Valley Road	BEA 18 Boarhurst Lane
BEA 19 Waterside Mill	BEA 20 Delph New Road
BEA 21 Valley Mills	BEA 22 Warth and Ellis Mills
BEA 23 Greenbridge Lane	

The uses that will be permitted within our BEAs are:

- 1. General industry – B2**
- 2. Storage and Distribution – B8**
- 3. Offices (E(g)(i)) where it does not detract from the role of the borough's centres as the primary focus for office activity)**
- 4. Research and development (E(g)(ii))**
- 5. Light industrial (E(g)(iii))**
- 6. Building and construction related uses – Sui Generis**
- 7. Transport and transport related uses (including garages, scarp yards, car show rooms, taxi companies, bus depots etc) – Sui Generis**
- 8. Waste management facilities (in line with the Greater Manchester Waste Development Plan Document policies) – Sui Generis**
- 9. Other Sui Generis uses that are considered compatible in an employment area.**

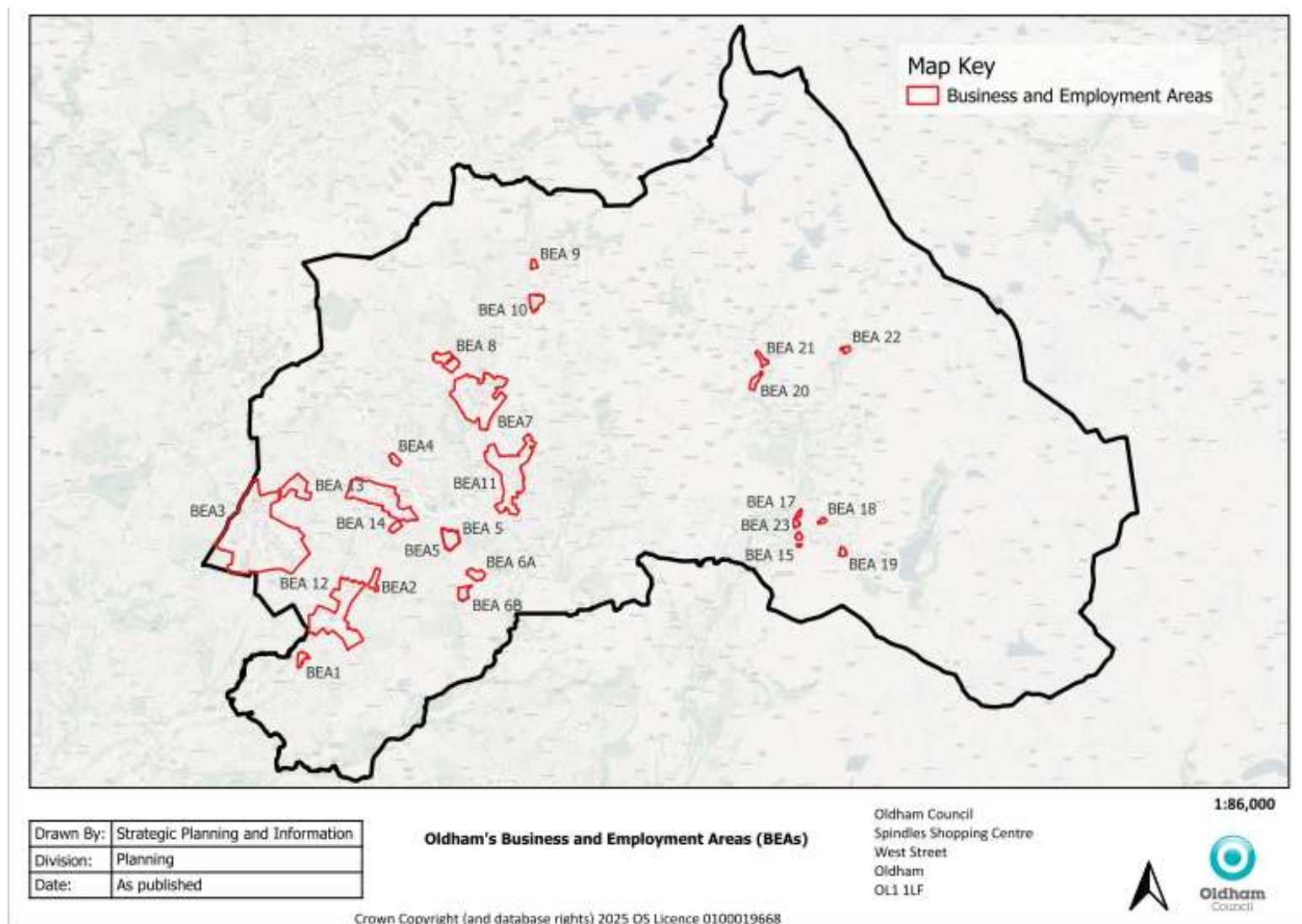
Permitted change of use rights for other Class E uses will be withdrawn by condition of planning permission.

Reasoned Justification

- 9.16 It is important that Oldham has a range of sustainable sites to support the local economy. The Council has designated Business and Employment Areas (BEAs) across the borough for a broad and diverse range of appropriate employment-generating uses.
- 9.17 The BEAs will help meet the needs of our changing local economy. They provide land for existing firms to expand and for new firms to locate here, so providing job opportunities. Protecting the BEAs for employment uses provides businesses with a degree of certainty as to the future use of these areas, avoiding the introduction of conflicting land uses and they have an important part to play in retaining local employment opportunities.
- 9.18 Many of our BEAs accommodate appropriate sui generis uses. They can include uses such as builders' merchants, builders' yards, engineering depots, demolition yards, transport depot, haulage yards, motor vehicle hire and sales, scrap yards, utility company depots, private hire and mini-cab businesses, plant hire and skip hire. The location and nature of our BEAs is that they can sometimes be the most appropriate location for such uses.
- 9.19 Planning Use Class E includes a variety of uses that have permitted development rights and the GPDO (part 7) contains various permitted development rights, including for shops, offices, GPs, cafés and restaurants. In our BEAs it will be necessary to withdraw these permitted development rights using conditions through the planning application process, as appropriate, so that such changes would not materially impact on the nature and function of the employment area or its economic potential.

- 9.20 It may be appropriate to locate some small scale and complementary uses to the employment function within the BEAs, where appropriate. This could include gyms, cafes and convenience shops, provided that the scale of such uses, and their location and arrangement within the BEA, means that they will primarily serve those employed in that area.
- 9.21 There have been some amendments made to the boundaries and the titles of the BEAs and Saddleworth Employment (SEAs) that were designated in the 2011 Core Strategy. Appendix 4 sets out these amendments and all the BEAs are identified on the Policies Map.

Figure E1: Oldham's Business and Employment Areas (BEAs)



Policy E3 - Exceptions within Business and Employment Areas

Uses other than those set out in Policy E2 will not be permitted within BEAs unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it is no longer appropriate to continue the existing use. This can be done by the applicant providing information to the Council to demonstrate one of the four criteria below:

- 1. The site and premises have been subject to a detailed marketing appraisal, for a period of not less than 12 months, that clearly demonstrates that there is no current or likely future demand for them to continue for any of the above employment or commercial uses; or**
- 2. The site is specifically identified as being appropriate for other uses in a masterplan or framework and its retention as an employment site would conflict with the masterplan or framework; or**
- 3. The site is required for a facility or infrastructure meeting a regional or national need and there is no more suitable alternative site within the borough of Oldham; or**
- 4. The site and premises are no longer suitable for the existing use when taking into account the modern needs of businesses for highways access, site location, infrastructure, physical constraints, environmental considerations or neighbour amenity issues.**

In addition to meeting one of the above criteria the applicant would also need to submit a statement outlining that the proposal meets both of the following criteria:

- 5. That there is a clear need for the proposed land use; and**
- 6. That the proposed redevelopment would not compromise the primary function and operations of neighbouring users.**

Mill Buildings

Proposals for the loss of an employment site that relates to a mill building⁶⁹ will be assessed against Policy E5 'Reuse and redevelopment of Mill Buildings'.

Reasoned Justification

- 9.22 Instances can arise when uses other than those listed within the policy may be appropriate within the BEAs. The policy outlines circumstances where development proposals for other uses may be permitted.
- 9.23 In relation to carrying out a marketing appraisal the Council would expect, as a minimum, the following details to be included:

⁶⁹ This must either be a listed mill or a mill that is included within the Oldham Mills Strategy which can be found here: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

- A long-term view of the economic prospects of the site or premises and that consideration be given to both the re-use or refurbishment of any buildings on site;
 - An explanation as to why it is not possible to retain or replace any existing occupiers;
 - Consideration of the potential to reuse, refurbish and redevelop the site to accommodate the full range of uses that would be appropriate within an existing employment area. A flexible approach should be adopted including both freehold and leasehold options; and
 - An analysis of recorded and potential interest in the site or premises for a use appropriate within an existing employment area. Where possible the applicant should try and obtain from interested parties reasons as to why they were not willing or able to proceed. This analysis should be informed by the findings of a comprehensive and prolonged marketing exercise of the site and premises and have regard to enquiries and deals relating to similar sites or premises in the local area.
- 9.24 A lesser financial return on investment relative to other development options will not be sufficient to justify the site not continuing to be available for employment use. In instances where the Council considers the marketing exercise has been inadequate, the applicant will be advised that the planning application will be recommended for refusal.
- 9.25 With regard to the site specifically identified as being appropriate for other uses in a masterplan or framework, it is expected that the masterplan or framework will have been subject to public consultation and prepared collaboratively with, and formally endorsed by, the Council. The development proposals must be in accordance with the endorsed masterplan or framework.
- 9.26 A concern for the Council when considering proposals for non-employment uses within the BEAs will be whether the proposed development would be likely to have any adverse implications for other existing businesses operating within the BEA as well as for the prospective occupiers of the non-employment uses. For example, where housing is proposed near existing employment uses, this may give rise to pressure to curtail employment uses to the detriment of the wider BEA. Therefore, a statement will be expected to be submitted alongside the application demonstrating that there is a need for the proposed development and that there will be no unacceptable adverse impact of remaining businesses within the BEA.
- 9.27 This policy does not apply where the proposal relates to a mill building that is either a listed mill or was included within the [Oldham Mills Strategy](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy)⁷⁰. In relation to these mills, it is acknowledged that there may be circumstances where securing its reuse outweighs the loss of the site for employment purposes. Policy E5 'Reuse and redevelopment of Mill Buildings' sets out how the Council will determine those proposals.

⁷⁰ This document can be found at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

Policy E4 - Employment sites outside of Business and Employment Areas

Outside designated BEAs, the Council will seek to retain existing employment sites in employment generating uses⁷¹ to help to create a sustainable and competitive local economy, to ensure a diverse supply of employment sites and to maintain accessible employment opportunities for our residents.

Where the applicant has demonstrated that an employment site is unsuitable, in land use terms, the Council will give favourable consideration to alternative uses.

However, in instances where an existing site is still considered a suitable employment location, an applicant will be required to provide evidence to show that the re-use of the site for employment purposes is not commercially viable. In doing this, evidence that the site has been robustly marketed for a minimum of 12 months at a realistic value should be supplied to demonstrate that there is no reasonable prospect of the site (either in full or part) continuing to be used for employment purposes under current market conditions.

In all cases, proposed alternative uses should comply with other relevant Local Plan policies.

Mill Buildings

Proposals for the loss of an employment site that relates to a mill building⁷² will be assessed against Policy E5 'Reuse and redevelopment of Mill Buildings'.

Reasoned Justification

- 9.28 Outside the BEAs set out under Policy E2, Oldham contains a significant amount of either individual or small clusters of employment uses which, given the borough's industrial heritage, can often comprise older premises in secondary locations and close to residential areas.
- 9.29 These sites can often provide more affordable accommodation and offer the opportunity for people to work close to where they live, in turn potentially reducing travel distances. Therefore, this policy aims to support the retention of appropriate sites as important local opportunities for employment.
- 9.30 Where existing employment sites are inappropriate in land use terms, for example due to neighbouring uses, proposals for other non-employment uses will be supported provided they accord with other Local Plan policies.
- 9.31 Where non-employment uses are proposed on a site that is considered appropriate in land use terms, the Council will require the applicant to submit robust evidence to demonstrate that there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for employment purposes under current market conditions. In doing so, an applicant will be required to provide evidence to show that the re-use of the site for employment purposes is not

⁷¹ Employment generating uses are set out in Policy E2.

⁷² This must either be a listed mill or a mill that is included within the Oldham Mills Strategy which can be found here: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

commercially viable and that the site has been robustly marketed for a minimum of 12 months at a realistic value, showing the full extent of interest in the site as a result.

- 9.32 This policy does not apply where the proposal relates to a mill building that is either a listed mill or was included within the [Oldham Mills Strategy](#)⁷³. In relation to these mills, it is acknowledged that there may be circumstances where securing its reuse outweighs the loss of the site for employment purposes. Policy E5 'Reuse and redevelopment of Mill Buildings' sets out how the Council will determine those proposals.

Policy E5 – Reuse and redevelopment of Mill Buildings

Proposals for non-employment generating uses within mills⁷⁴ either in designated BEAs or elsewhere in the borough may be permitted in appropriate circumstances where the benefits of retaining and securing the active re-use of mill buildings could be seen to outweigh the loss of the use of the site for wholly employment generating purposes.

The applicant is required to demonstrate that the proposed redevelopment would not significantly compromise the primary function of the BEA or locality, or the operations of neighbouring users.

The applicant would also need to demonstrate through a viability exercise that their proposals would secure the future of the mill that otherwise would be left vulnerable to deterioration. Any proposals would need to be in conformity with the Policy HE4 Oldham's Mills.

Reasoned Justification

- 9.33 Oldham has a rich industrial heritage with around 100 textile mills remaining. Many of the mills are in active use, offering low-cost premises to certain employment uses, residential use, retail or for social uses such as sports clubs. However, some mills have been derelict for many years or are underused with upper storeys not in use, which puts them at risk of falling into poor condition and may make conversion more difficult in the future. They are also often close to existing residential properties and may not always be in the best location for their current use. Building on work done as part of [Oldham's Mill Strategy](#)⁷⁵, the '[Levelling Up Oldham](#)⁷⁶' paper stated that Mill conversion has the potential to deliver significant returns for the borough in terms of employment, skills and jobs while also retaining a link to Oldham's heritage.
- 9.34 The reuse of mills can add to local distinctiveness as part of place making, attract investment and help retain Oldham's strong identity and sense of place. However, it is recognised that, due to the age, scale, format and condition of former mill buildings, it may not always be economically viable to secure the repurposing of individual mills to provide modern, fit for purpose employment and/or commercial floorspace. It is acknowledged that innovative solutions and flexibility regarding the uses permitted may

⁷³ This document can be found at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

⁷⁴ This must either be a listed mill or a mill that is included within the Oldham Mills Strategy which can be found here: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

⁷⁵ This document can be found at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

⁷⁶ This document can be found at: https://oerb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ING6167_UofM_Levelling-up-Oldham-22-03-22.pdf

sometimes be required to support the full occupation of individual mills that are currently underutilised, particularly the upper floors of such buildings.

- 9.35 There may, therefore, be circumstances where securing the reuse of mill buildings outweighs the loss of the site for employment purposes. In this instance a statement is required to be submitted alongside the application demonstrating that there will be no adverse impact on the operations of neighbouring users. In addition, a viability assessment should be submitted, the scope of which having been agreed with the Council prior to its completion, and the level of detail included should be proportionate to the proposed development. Further guidance on viability assessments can be found in [Planning Practice Guidance: Viability](#)⁷⁷.
- 9.36 How we move forward with the repurposing of our mills will be crucial in terms of economic development, housing provision and in the protection and enhancement of our historic environment. More detail on the future of our mills can be found in Policy HE4 Oldham's Mills.

Monitoring

- 9.37 The main Local Plan indicators that will be used to monitor this chapter are:
- Total amount of additional floorspace (office, industry and warehousing) developed by type square metres (sqm) gross
 - Total amount of employment floorspace (office, industry and warehousing) developed on previously developed land by type (sqm) gross
 - Employment land available by type hectares (ha)
 - Total amount of employment land (office, industry and warehousing) developed by type hectares (ha) gross
 - The percentage of areas in Oldham among the 10% most deprived areas in England
 - Unemployment rate
 - Youth unemployment rate
 - Number and type of developments permitted on non-designated Mills
- 9.38 The main PfE indicators that will be used to help monitor this chapter are:
- Percentage of gross employment development on brownfield land
 - Percentage increase in GVA per job
 - Proportion of our residents (working age) in employment
 - Number of local labour agreements
 - Increase in office floorspace (gross)
 - Increase in industry and warehousing floorspace (gross)

⁷⁷ This document can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/viability#viability-and-decision-taking>

10 Our Centres

- 10.1 Oldham's centres play a vital role in meeting the needs of people of all ages, through the provision of a range of shops, services, community, leisure, cultural and employment opportunities. The centres are an important contributor to local identity, acting as a focal point for surrounding communities. NPPF states that planning policies should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.
- 10.2 There is a need to diversify our centres to promote vitality and vibrancy and their long-term sustainable future. As the role of traditional retail reduces within our centres and new homes are built within them, their importance as community lifelines that connect our residents to services and the local environment will increase. The connectivity they provide as transport hubs to key services, open spaces and neighbourhoods will be essential and the services that are provided within them will foster a sense of community and vibrancy.
- 10.3 The management of the future development of our centres will ensure their long-term success, with a clear focus on sustaining and creating vibrant destinations where activity can continue into the evening, with the retention of a robust retail presence complemented by a varied mix of uses including a leisure and community offer. Opportunities will be taken to make the most of the unique identity of each of the borough's centres and the opportunities within them, access to and through centres will be improved and improvements to the public realm of our centres will be delivered.

Policy C1 - Our Centres

A key aim for the Local Plan is to promote and enhance the vitality and viability of the borough's centres, to ensure their long-term success. The centres hierarchy in Oldham is as follows:

- 1. Oldham Town Centre;**
- 2. The borough's other centres of Chadderton, Failsworth, Hill Stores, Lees, Royton, Shaw and Uppermill; and**
- 3. Local Shopping Parades.**

Oldham Town Centre will meet the majority of the everyday needs for our residents for shops and other town centre uses as defined in national planning guidance.

The enhancement of each of the borough's other centres will take advantage of the unique character of each centre. In a co-ordinated approach they will deliver a diverse mix of uses, that supports their future vitality and viability.

There will be an emphasis on each centre providing a strong convenience retail function so they can continue to minimise the need for our residents to travel further. In addition, they will be complemented by a range of other main town centre uses and housing.

Our Local Shopping Parades will contribute towards vibrant communities by providing convenient facilities near people's homes, reducing the need to travel and providing a valuable service for less mobile members of the community.

Reasoned Justification

- 10.4 Oldham's centres play an important role in meeting the varied needs of people of all ages, through the provision of a range of shops, services, community, leisure and employment opportunities, and public transport options. The centres are an important contributor to local identity, acting as a focal point for surrounding communities.
- 10.5 In addition, local services and facilities that are clustered in our Local Shopping Parades represent convenient facilities that help meet the day-to-day needs of our residents. Such services help reduce the need to travel, provide a focus for community interaction and help to distinguish one area from another. They also provide an essential service for less mobile residents and residents in more rural areas. Appendix 5 shows the Local Shopping Parades, and these are also identified on the Policies Map.
- 10.6 A [Boroughwide Retail and Leisure Study](#)⁷⁸ was completed in September 2020 by Stantec. The report provided an assessment of retail and leisure needs in Oldham and carried out a health check on all the borough's centres.
- 10.7 The Retail and Leisure Study concluded that there is no 'need' for additional convenience retail provision over the life of the new Local Plan and therefore the Local Plan does not need to plan for any. There will be a small need over the plan period for comparison retail floorspace (2,381m²) and it was recommended that this is focused in Oldham Town Centre.
- 10.8 There have been some amendments made to the boundaries of Oldham Town Centre and the centres of Lees and Shaw since the 2011 Core Strategy. Appendix 6 sets out these amendments and all the centres are identified on the Policies Map.

Policy C2 – Protecting the vitality of our centres

In order to recognise our centres as the heart of their communities, proposals for centre uses⁷⁹ such as retail, leisure and offices, outside of our existing centres will be resisted.

Unless the proposal is for small scale stand-alone local service provision where Policy C4 'Local Services and Facilities' applies, or unless it can be demonstrated that all relevant tests can be satisfied, as set out below, proposals will be refused.

Sequential Test

Centre uses shall be located in accordance with the sequential approach outlined in national planning policy.

⁷⁸ This document can be found at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1157/retail_and_leisure_study

⁷⁹ As set out in Annex 2 of NPPF:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf

Proposals in sequentially less preferable locations will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that there are no available suitable sites or premises in sequentially preferable locations, and that a flexible approach to scale and format has been applied.

Impact Assessment

Proposals for centre uses outside the centres of Chadderton, Failsworth, Hill Stores, Lees, Royton, Shaw and Uppermill of between 300m² gross and 1,499m² gross will be required to be accompanied by an impact assessment to determine its likely effects on all centre(s)⁸⁰ located within the anticipated catchment area of the new development.

Proposals for centre uses of 1,500m² gross floorspace or above, outside of one of our centres, will be required to be accompanied by an impact assessment to determine its likely effects on Oldham Town Centre and all other centres located within the anticipated catchment area of the new development.

The assessment should consider the following criteria:

- 1. All relevant impacts set out in national planning policy;**
- 2. Likely effects of development on any appropriate plans or projects that facilitate the regeneration of the borough's centres;**
- 3. Whether the proposal is of an appropriate scale in relation to the size, role and character of the intended catchment area;**
- 4. The cumulative impact of the proposal and other similar outstanding permissions or recent completions; and**
- 5. Where the catchment area of the proposed development includes a market location, the specific predicted impact on market trading.**

For the avoidance of doubt, this policy applies to new floorspace, extensions to existing floorspace, changes of use, applications seeking variations to conditions and developments within our existing out of centre retail and leisure parks⁸¹.

Where any proposal fails to satisfy the sequential test or is likely to have a significant adverse impact on a defined centre, it will be refused.

Reasoned Justification

10.9 Town centre uses are defined in national planning policy as retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development

⁸⁰ This should not include Oldham Town Centre

⁸¹ Oldham's existing out of centre retail and leisure parks are Elk Mill, Alexandra Retail Park and Gateway Retail Park

(including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

- 10.10 Locating larger scale retail and leisure facilities within the borough's centres is considered the most sustainable way of meeting the needs of our residents. It helps to reduce the need to travel and can increase footfall and improve trading conditions within centres. Allowing larger scale town centre uses in other areas would be likely to adversely affect the vitality and viability of the centres, leading to their gradual decline and reducing their ability to attract new retail floorspace to the borough and serve the needs of residents.
- 10.11 It is therefore essential that as much of the new retail floorspace and as many other leisure and community facilities as possible are located within our centres, in accordance with the national planning policy.
- 10.12 The Retail and Leisure Study considered the scale of Oldham Town Centre and its relatively high turnover, but also its health, high vacancy rate and potential vulnerability to market changes. Taking all that into account the study recommended that the impact threshold for Oldham Town Centre should be set at 1,500m² gross. It then went on to conclude that the borough's other centres are considered much more vulnerable to impacts from edge-of-centre and out-of-centre retail proposals and therefore a threshold of 300m² gross was considered appropriate for those.
- 10.13 Where impact testing is required, it should assess the net and (where relevant) cumulative impact of the proposal on the vitality and viability of any centre from which the proposal may derive its spending or its users. Whether such impact is acceptable will depend on a combination of factors including the existing health of the centre and how this will affect its ability to withstand impacts from competing development within the defined centre, any reduction in local consumer choice, any increase in vacancies and/or any loss or delay to planned investment.
- 10.14 The detail for carrying out the sequential test can be found in national planning policy.

Policy C3 - Changes of use and redevelopment within the borough's centres

The role of our centres in meeting a wide range of local needs will be protected and enhanced. A strong retail function will be retained for each centre and will be complemented by a broad range of other services and facilities, including leisure and community uses.

Changes of use and redevelopments within our centres will be managed to ensure that they support, rather than detract from, the successful functioning of the centres and their ability to meet local needs. All such proposals will be required to:

- 1. Make a positive contribution to the vitality, viability and diversity of the centre;**
- 2. Not have a detrimental impact on footfall;**
- 3. Maintain a strong role for the centre in providing a varied range of convenience goods and meeting other day-to-day needs;**

- 4. Positively restore and/or enhance the character and appearance of the frontage;**
- 5. Maintain the continuity of active frontages; and**
- 6. Be of a scale and type of use appropriate to the size and function of the centre, or part of the centre concerned.**

Within our centres, proposals for uses that do not fall within NPPF's definition of main town centre uses, such as hot food takeaways, payday loan shops and gambling uses, will only be supported where the development would:

- a. Not be harmful to the overall shopping function of the centre;**
- b. Not result in a concentration of uses that would be harmful to the vitality of our centres;**
- c. Extend the offer and range of activities available to shoppers and other users to enhance the visitor experience of the centre; and**
- d. Provide an active frontage and a direct service to visiting members of the public.**

Any proposals for hot food takeaways should also be in line with Policy CO7.

The provision of homes will generally be supported in our centres where it is demonstrated the residential use will not be detrimental to the vitality and viability of the centre, including through the conversion of under-utilised upper floors of commercial buildings into residential properties.

Ground floor residential uses will be permitted in our centres where it is demonstrated by the applicant that the proposed development:

- e. Is in an area of frontages with low levels of footfall;**
- f. Does not unreasonably restrict existing businesses and community facilities in line with Policy LE1 in relation to the 'agent of change'; and**
- g. Is designed to ensure the character of the centre is not harmed and allows the premises to be easily converted back to retail use in the future.**

The applicant is required to also demonstrate that there is no realistic prospect of securing an active retail or commercial use in the unit.

Reasoned Justification

10.15 Successful centres are underpinned by a strong retail function both in terms of convenience and comparison goods, and this role should be protected and retained. This is important in meeting the day-to-day needs of residents. Centres must also have an appropriate mix of leisure, community, cultural and service provision, whilst creating new business opportunities and making them 'destination' places of social and cultural interest.

- 10.16 This will be increasingly important for ensuring that they can generate the footfall necessary to remain attractive in the face of the growth in online shopping and the shift in working patterns to more people working from home.
- 10.17 It is vital that changes of use and redevelopments within our centres are carefully managed, so as to support the long-term success of the centres and their ability to meet local needs. In this context, it is recognised that Oldham's centres vary in scale, function and composition of uses, and this needs to be taken into account in the determination of individual proposals.
- 10.18 Paragraph 10.9 above sets out NPPF's definition of main town centre uses. In addition, national planning policy states that planning policies should recognise the important role that residential development has in ensuring the vitality of centres. These are the uses that will help ensure our centres remain at the heart of their communities and therefore are the uses we are supporting in our centres.
- 10.19 In responding to the changes within the retail sector, the Use Classes Order was amended in 2020 and now allows much greater flexibility with the introduction of a new use class, Class E (Commercial, Business and Service). Changes of use between the different uses within Class E, which includes typical high street uses, can take place without the need for planning permission. This is to help our high streets and town centres adapt quickly to changing demand and trends.
- 10.20 Given this greater degree of flexibility, and in order to protect the vitality and viability of our centres, applicants for uses that may undermine the role and function of our centres will have to demonstrate in their planning statement that the proposed development meets the four criteria (a to d) set out in the policy above.
- 10.21 Issues associated with some uses can include, in relation to hot food takeaways, a detrimental impact on residential amenity, environmental quality, and the health of the local population, and in relation to pay day loan shops and gambling uses social, economic and health impacts. A proliferation of hot food takeaways and gambling uses are not considered compatible with the positive outcomes sought through our plans for the regeneration of our centres. See Policy CO7 for policy and guidance on hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets.
- 10.22 The Council will support proposals for the development of new homes that would occupy ground floor uses within our centres where it is demonstrated that the proposed development would comply with the exceptions listed in the policy (e to g above). This is to ensure that there are no detrimental impacts to the vitality and viability of the centre.

Policy C4 - Local Services and Facilities

Locally available services contribute towards vibrant communities by providing convenient facilities near people's homes, reducing the need to travel and providing a valuable service for less mobile members of the community.

The Council will facilitate the need for local shops and services, where appropriate and in line with other Local Plan policies, by protecting existing clusters of these premises and by permitting new local services and facilities within existing built-up areas.

Protecting Local Shopping Parades

The Council recognises the importance of local retail and service facilities within our Local Shopping Parades⁸². In determining proposals for the change of use at the ground floor level from a commercial, business or service use (Use Class E⁸³) to alternative uses, the Council will have regard to the following factors:

- 1. The vitality and viability of the parade and whether this would be benefited by the proposal;**
- 2. The particular nature and character of the use proposed, including the level of activity associated with it;**
- 3. That the proposal is appropriate in scale and character and is necessary to serve local needs which would not otherwise be met; and**
- 4. Whether the proposal would result in an over concentration of uses that do not provide a local retail or service facility which could change the nature or character of a parade as a whole.**

New Local Services and Facilities

Where appropriate, and within existing built-up areas, local shops and services that fall within Use Class E with a gross floorspace of 300m² or less will be permitted outside Oldham Town Centre and the centres of Chadderton, Failsworth, Hill Stores, Lees, Royton, Shaw and Uppermill.

For the avoidance of doubt, this policy applies to proposals whereby the overall gross floorspace does not exceed 300m². Proposals involving multiple units, which individually have a gross floorspace less than 300m² but when taken together cumulatively exceed 300m², will be assessed against the requirements in Policy C2 Protecting the vitality of our centres.

Reasoned Justification

10.27 Local services and facilities represent convenient facilities that help meet the day-to-day needs of our residents. Such services help reduce the need to travel, provide a

⁸² See Appendix 5 for details of the Local Shopping Parades

⁸³ For a full list of the uses permitted in Use Class E, please see the Planning Portal at: <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/common-projects/change-of-use/use-classes>

focus for community interaction and help to distinguish one area from another. They provide an essential service for less mobile residents and residents in more rural areas.

10.28 Local services and facilities include small food stores, post offices, pharmacies, advice centres, cafes and other small-scale services of a local nature. For the purpose of this policy, developments with a gross floorspace of 300m² or less will be taken to represent a small-scale service or facility.

10.29 The Use Classes Order was amended in 2020 and now allows much greater flexibility with the introduction of a new use class, Class E (Commercial, Business and Service). Class E includes retail, the sale of food and drink, and professional services. Changes of use between the different uses within Class E can take place without the need for planning permission. Therefore, the uses that could operate within our Local Shopping Parades are wider ranging than those which might traditionally have been considered to be a local service. Notwithstanding this, the Council's preference for our Local Shopping Parades is that they are occupied as local retail and services, such as those mentioned above, that help meet the day-to-day needs of our residents.

10.30 Appendix 5 shows the Local Shopping Parades, and these are also identified on the Policies Map.

Monitoring

10.31 The main Local Plan indicators that will be used to monitor this chapter are:

- Number of planning applications granted in Oldham Town Centre and the borough's other centres, for main town centre uses
- Number of homes completed within the borough's centres
- Number of day visits and staying visits to Oldham borough

10.32 The main PfE indicators that will be used to help monitor this chapter are:

- GVA in and within 800m of the main town centres

11 Oldham Town Centre

- 11.1 Over the last decade, Oldham Town Centre has witnessed several major transformational projects, in particular the redevelopment of the Old Town Hall, improvements to the public realm and investment in public transport infrastructure.
- 11.2 The focus is now on redefining Oldham Town Centre's retail and residential offer over the next 15 years as part of Building a Better Oldham.
- 11.3 Our vision is to create a town centre with character, with thousands of new homes and an emphasis on sustainability, community and quality – an inclusive and welcoming place to live and spend time in. A town centre that acknowledges Oldham's industrial heritage while looking towards a bright, modern future. With homes built in a safer and healthier environment and where we prioritise local jobs and learning opportunities for Oldham residents.
- 11.4 Our key proposals set out in the Oldham Town Centre Development Framework 2024, and which policies within this Local Plan will support the delivery of, are:
- The introduction of up to 2,000 new homes located within safe, inclusive and attractive neighborhoods.
 - The redevelopment of Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre to redefine the retail core.
 - The Green Shoots Business and Innovation Centre, and Minewater District Heat Network Energy Centre, which form part of the Council's Greener Oldham commitment.
 - The re-use and refurbishment of several prominent heritage assets, specifically the Prudential Building, the Old Library and Gallery, and the Lyceum Building.
 - Enhancing accessibility, connectivity and movement, providing sustainable infrastructure connections through the Accessible Oldham programme.
 - The enhancement of the town centre's Green Infrastructure with the creation of Tommyfield Park and Snipe Gardens.
 - Upgrading the night-time and creative economy, to make the town centre a destination of choice.
- 11.5 These proposals focus around five key areas which have informed our approach within the Local Plan. These are illustrated in Figure OTC1 and are:
- Area 1 – Civic and Residential Quarter
 - Area 2 – The Retail Core
 - Area 3 – The Cultural and Creative Quarter
 - Area 4 – Eastern Edge and Oldham Mumps
 - Area 5 – Western Edge and Educational Quarter

Figure OTC1: Character Zones taken from the Oldham Town Centre Development Framework⁸⁴



Policy OTC1 - Oldham Town Centre

To deliver our vision, proposals for the continued enhancement, redevelopment and regeneration of Oldham Town Centre will be supported where they align with and reflect the following character areas:

The Civic and Residential Quarter will be the focus for our residential offer on sites such as the Civic Centre and Queen Elizabeth Hall. These new homes will be supported by complementary active uses at ground floor level and social infrastructure to create mixed-use neighbourhoods where residents can readily access amenities and day to day needs are met.

The Retail Core will be the focus for an enhanced, vibrant and sustainable retail offer, including the relocated Tommyfield Market and the new events space 'The Loom', in the Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre, as well as a new outdoor market space on George Square complementing the existing independent retailers on George Street. Retail uses will be consolidated to the ground floor of the shopping centre, linking into the new market through a retail 'loop' that will provide shoppers with an improved shopping experience. This will be supported by quality office space for both private sector tenants and Oldham Council, and events space linked to Parliament Square that will boost the cultural, leisure and entertainment offer within Oldham.

⁸⁴ Taken from the Oldham Town Centre Development Framework 2024 which can be found online at <https://oldhamtownliving.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/DP824-Oldham-Development-Framework-NOV-2024-WEB.pdf>

Within Oldham Town Centre's retail core, proposals will be supported that contribute towards the redefining of the core and a consolidation of retail uses within the retail 'loop'.

The Cultural and Creative Quarter, centered around the historic core of the town centre and the Creative Improvement District (CID), will be the focus for our night-time and visitor economy, providing an improved food and drink offer, expanded entertainment and leisure sector and cultural attractions, with opportunities for residential development. The re-use of existing listed buildings, such as those on Union Street, will make space for live performance, complementing a refurbished Coliseum Theatre, and innovative and flexible office space aimed at attracting creative and digital businesses to Oldham. Development proposals will need to positively respond to surrounding heritage assets, including the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area and listed buildings in the vicinity.

The Eastern Edge and Oldham Mumps area acts as a key gateway into Oldham Town Centre from the east of the borough. It will be the home of the low carbon district heat network that is to be developed, which will create an environmentally friendly power source that will help deliver our ambitions for carbon neutrality, and the Green Shoots incubation space. In addition, a new residential offer will be provided across several sites, including Prince's Gate.

The Western Edge and Educational Quarter acts as a key gateway from the west of the borough and will remain home to high-quality further and higher education establishments, with enhanced connectivity into Oldham Town Centre.

In addition to those set out in policies OTC2, OTC3 and OTC4, principles that are expected to form part of any development proposals for Oldham Town Centre include:

1. The promotion of high-density, high-quality and sustainable development that reflects the distinctive role of the town centre and positively responds to key landmarks and views;
2. The use of low carbon design that contributes to the borough becoming carbon neutral by 2030 is incorporated as standard and connections are made to the District Heat Network where feasible;
3. The conservation and enhancement of heritage assets across the town centre, including their setting, so as to maximise their contribution to the distinctiveness of Oldham and contribute to the removal of Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area from Historic England's heritage at risk register;
4. The incorporation of well-designed and integrated ground floor uses and environments to create an active street scene and enhance the residential offer;
5. The incorporation of cycling, wheeling and walking links, and improved wayfinding, to create and contribute to, enhanced permeability and connectivity, in a way that supports active travel and helps to define, and enhance local character and sense of place;

- 6. Car parking in line with Policy T3, reflecting the sustainable location. Where car parking is provided, this will include provision for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure. Secure cycle parking will also be required; and**
- 7. Opportunities to maximise the generation of social value through design, construction and operation.**

Reasoned Justification

- 11.6 Oldham Town Centre is at the heart of the Building a Better Oldham and this policy seeks to support and facilitate delivery of the ambitious regeneration programme, ensuring the development coming forward aligns with its key principles.
- 11.7 The town centre can be divided into several quarters, or zones, that will be the focus for certain types of development – whether that be residential, culture and leisure, education, commercial or its core retail function. Whilst ensuring that each quarter comes forward in a sustainable, accessible and connected way through the integration of complementary uses, the creation of a green infrastructure network and public realm.
- 11.8 The retail core has been redefined through amending the town centre boundary (see Policy C1) to better reflect the Council's priorities in relation to Building a Better Oldham and consolidating retail uses so there is a more focused retail 'loop' that will provide visitors with a better user experience. The re-location of Tommyfield Market into the Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre will complement and strengthen the existing uses which will also be supported by quality office space which will help to increase footfall and presence throughout the town centre.
- 11.9 The town centre will be transformed with the new Tommyfield Park, one of the largest, new, urban parks to be proposed in England. This will be connected to the wider town centre and beyond through the creation of 'stepping-stone' open spaces and the integration of green infrastructure as part of new developments. Alongside sustainable infrastructure connections and high-quality public realm the green infrastructure network will aid and enhance accessibility, connectivity and movement through the town centre connecting key locations and new developments together and with the wider area.
- 11.10 Upgrading the night-time and creative economy, including improving the food and drink offer, expanding the entertainment and leisure sector and developing the cultural attractions, is an essential part of ensuring a sustainable future for Oldham Town Centre. The Council is working on delivering several projects around the historic core of the town centre as part of the Cultural and Creative Quarter and Creative Improvement District (CID). The CID covers an area of the town centre directly adjacent to, and interfacing with, the retail core and which includes the Town Centre Conservation Area and listed buildings within it and many historic landmark buildings.
- 11.11 The creation of opportunities for residential living across the town centre is a key part of the Building a Better Oldham and ensuring the efficient use of land across the borough so as to minimise the use of greenfield land. Around 2,000 new homes will be delivered within the town centre across several sites which form part of our housing land supply, including at:
 - Civic Centre and Queen Elizabeth Hall
 - Manchester Chambers and the former Magistrates Court site

- Former Oldham Sports Centre
- Mumps and Wallshaw Street
- Prince's Gate
- Southgate Street
- Waterloo Street
- Bradshaw Street

11.12 This policy also supports the combination of these residential opportunities with complementary uses, so as to support the development of sustainable and functional neighbourhoods within the town centre.

11.13 A central part of the Council's Green New Deal is development of the Town Centre low carbon district heat network. This aims to develop a district heat network in the town centre that will use heat from renewable sources, such as Air Source Heat Pumps, whilst also exploring the potential to use heat, reclaimed from floodwater in disused coal mines beneath the Town Centre. This could heat a range of Town Centre buildings, including the Old Library and new Performance Space, as well as other Council and residential sites. It will be important to ensure that new developments coming forward take every opportunity to connect to this network.

Policy OTC2 - Protecting and Enhancing Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area

It is important that development within Oldham Town Centre conservation area contributes towards the aim of removing the conservation area from Historic England's heritage at risk register.

Proposals affecting the setting and character of the conservation area should take into consideration the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document.

Development proposals will be encouraged and supported where they:

1. secure the viable reuse of vacant heritage assets to prevent their decay and dereliction, including opportunities for short-term temporary uses that engage the local community whilst ensuring their long-term preservation;
2. include positive interventions to improve the condition of buildings, or reverse inappropriate alterations;
3. improve active uses at ground floor level, ensure high quality shopfronts are installed, and that adverts and signage are of a quality and design appropriate to the conservation area;
4. promote the identity, and ensure the significance and appearance of the conservation area is preserved and positive characteristics enhanced;
5. carefully consider and reflect the character and appearance of the conservation area through the use of high-quality design of an appropriate scale, density, height, form, massing, layout, plot position, materials, colours, composition and detailed design;
6. protect established and valued views, into and out of the surrounding area which contribute to the historic context and setting of Oldham Town Centre, as well as local views into and out of the conservation area as defined in the CAAMP⁸⁵ and the Oldham Town Centre Development Framework⁸⁶;
7. ensure new interventions in the public realm are considered carefully in the context of good surviving examples of street furniture, surface coverings and public art / sculptures / monuments so as to preserve and enhance the essential character of the conservation area;
8. encourage the introduction of appropriate multi-functional green infrastructure and landscaping;
9. improve wayfinding into and around the conservation area and between key transport links; and

⁸⁵ Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document available at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/1599/oldham_town_centre_conservation_area_appraisal_and_management_plan_caamp_supplementary_planning_document_spd

⁸⁶ Oldham Town Centre Development Framework available at: <https://oldhamtownliving.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/DP824-Oldham-Development-Framework-NOV-2024-WEB.pdf>

10. engage the public through measures such as public art to enliven the conservation area and better define the conservation area.

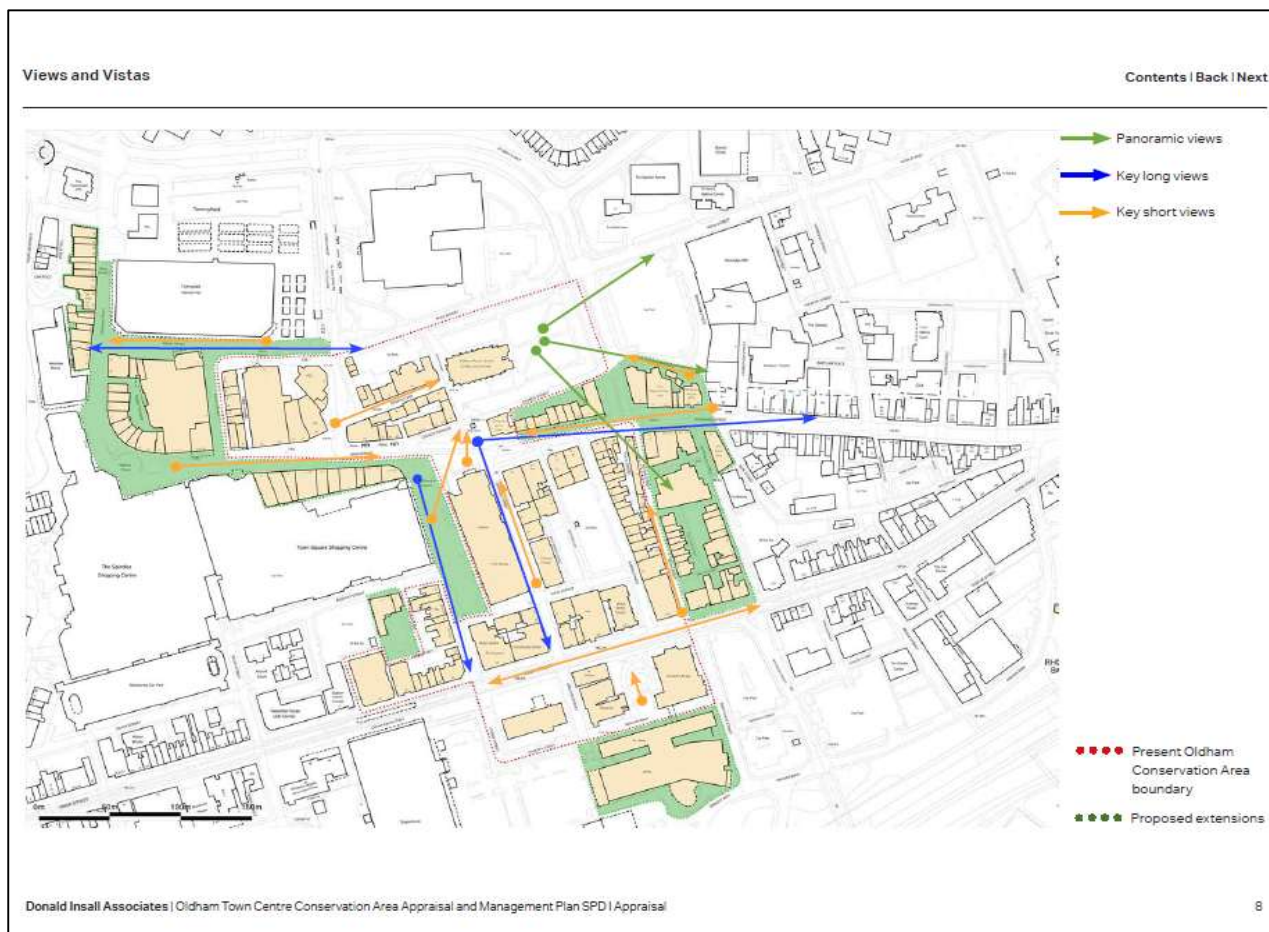
Reasoned Justification

- 11.14 The [Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\)](#)⁸⁷ was prepared to address the issues facing the at-risk conservation area and sets out a positive approach to enable the conservation area to be enhanced and its eventual removal from the at-risk register. The appraisal outlined that some of the negative features in Oldham Town Centre are detracting features, such as vacancy levels and buildings being in poor condition. However, the most significant detracting feature is retail frontages, where the poor-quality contemporary shopfronts dominate handsome buildings. Roller shutters also create a deadening frontage and add to the perception of crime and antisocial behaviour. The lack of wayfinding, need for a stronger identity and the appearance / re-use of vacant sites are also key issues to be addressed.
- 11.15 The Management Plan includes policies to address these issues, providing opportunities to enhance, and uplift the human experience of, the conservation area. The policy areas are reflected in the above policy to ensure they are given full consideration specific to Oldham Town Centre conservation area. The policy areas include securing the viable reuse of vacant heritage assets, opportunities to improve shop fronts, retail frontages and signage and the opportunities that new development can make to improving the character and appearance of the conservation area. Through addressing these issues, the conservation area, and Oldham Town Centre, will become a place that people find welcoming, and which contributes to sense of identity, local pride and well-being.
- 11.16 Improved wayfinding, use of public art and co-ordinated street furniture will further emphasise the conservation area, and its local character and identity, helping people to identify when they have entered or left the area. To support this, street furniture and surface coverings will be of a suitable standard of design, which accords with the patterns of items already in use (such as the established green / gold design in the retail core and owl motif). Generally, it should also be sited to be visually unobtrusive, having regard to the character and quality of the existing townscape.
- 11.17 In accordance with the Management Plan, the area will require a conservation-led approach that seeks sensitive, well-proportioned and designed new development, which retains the unique historic character reflected in the street pattern, urban grain and townscape and responds to the town centre's distinctive topography and resulting views. The appraisal identifies those buildings which make a positive, neutral or negative contribution to the conservation area, key views and vistas, and townscape. These established and valued views (as shown in Figure OTC2), into and out of the conservation area, are protected through the policy as they make an important contribution to the historic context and setting of Oldham Town Centre and include:
- the Church of St Mary and St Peter and along Church Lane,
 - views through Parliament square;
 - looking west up Yorkshire Street towards Parliament Square;
 - along Greaves Street;

⁸⁷ This document can be found at:
https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201229/current_local_planning_policy/256/supplementary_planning_documents

- views along Albion Street, Retiro Street, Union Street; and
- from Gallery Oldham.

Figure OTC2: Valued Views and Vistas



11.18 The appraisal proposed four extensions to the existing Oldham Town Centre conservation area boundary. The extensions have been designated under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and will be adopted as part of the Local Plan. The amended boundary for Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area is on the Policies Map, and further in Appendix 3.

11.19 The Gazetteer, which forms part of the SPD, provides an important reference of each of the buildings at a point in time within the extended conservation area, noting condition of the assets and a character description. This can be useful for enforcement as well as for development proposals.

Policy OTC3 – Creating a Better Public Realm for Oldham Town Centre

Major development that makes a positive contribution to the public realm of Oldham Town Centre and its identity by virtue of its siting, design and materials, will be supported.

The public realm will be developed and enhanced in Oldham Town Centre in accordance with the following principles:

- 1. A simple and uncluttered environment that enhances the character of the existing buildings and provides a functional and accessible streetscape;**
- 2. Adds to, and complements, the existing spatial hierarchy of routes through and around the town centre, underpinned by a coherent and consistent palette of materials;**
- 3. It should be designed for all to feel welcome, comfortable and safe, carefully considering the use and location of lighting, overlooking onto routes, and having regard to relevant standards and guidance;**
- 4. The introduction of trees and landscaping (supported by a management scheme) in appropriate locations to create a greener, cooler and biodiverse town centre with the delivery of sustainable drainage solutions where appropriate;**
- 5. At appropriate locations opportunities should be taken to create areas where the public may stop and dwell, providing opportunities for play and leisure, and encouraging social interaction for all ages; and**
- 6. The use of robust and durable materials that promote cost effective and sustainable maintenance to ensure long-term quality.**

For major development a financial contribution towards public realm improvements may be required where appropriate.

Reasoned Justification

- 11.20 At present the public realm, whilst improving and of high quality in certain locations, is generally in poor condition with limited cohesion across the town centre. Alongside green infrastructure, enhancing the public realm is therefore central to bringing the town centre and key development proposals together, and improving its vitality and viability.
- 11.21 The Oldham Town Centre Development Framework identifies enhancing the public realm as a key opportunity - developing a high-quality and distinctive public realm that is cohesive and contributes to a sense of place. This will be done through creating attractive gateways into the Town Centre, improving the experience around key public transport arrival points and maximising the public realm impact of key intersections within the built environment. High-quality and robust materials will be used, and spaces will be welcoming and inclusive for all ages and cultures, facilitating improved health and well-being.
- 11.22 A Landscape and Public Realm Strategy has been prepared alongside the development framework, which:
- seeks to create accessible and balanced landscaped streets;

- secures public realm enhancements along key routes through and into the town centre, maximising opportunities for softening of the streetscape;
- identifies key junctions for public realm enhancement and improved gateways into Oldham Town Centre; and
- responds positively to long-range landscape outlooks towards Oldham's surroundings.

11.23 The development framework also identifies several opportunities for the public realm as part of an Access and Movement Strategy, including the creation of better public realm and wayfinding between transport hubs, the retail core and key developments. This links to the Accessible Oldham programme, the principles of which have informed the establishment of a hierarchy for streets and spaces that guide the quality of the public realm including new spaces and refurbishments within Oldham Town Centre.

11.24 Enhancements to the public realm will need to respond positively to the local character and distinctiveness of the town centre and its townscape.

11.25 The principles established in this policy, will have a significant impact on the quality of the public realm in the town centre as it continues to re-imagine itself as a place for people to live, work and socialise in. The principles will also help create a people friendly town centre that encourages a diverse street culture.

Policy OTC4 - Green Infrastructure within and around Oldham Town Centre

Proposals will be supported that protect, create and enhance multi-functional Green Infrastructure within and around Oldham Town Centre, including:

- 1. the creation of Tommyfield Park, a focal point open space providing a linear route of Green Infrastructure;**
- 2. the creation of active travel routes across the town centre, linking it to Northern Roots and Oldham Edge, and PfE JPA12 Beal Valley and JPA14 Broadbent Moss beyond;**
- 3. the use of greenspaces as stepping stones to promote nature recovery networks linking Alexandra Park, Glodwick Lows Local Nature Reserve and Oldham Edge;**
- 4. having regard to the nature network within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy including opportunities in relation to woodland, upland and urban green spaces and buildings.**
- 5. the incorporation of biodiversity enhancements such as green walls and roofs, trees, and landscaping - encouraging wildlife, and creating interest and shade; and**
- 6. the use of nature-based solutions and sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water flood risk in the town centre and its integration as part of multi-functional green infrastructure.**

Reasoned Justification

11.26 Proposals will be supported that protect, create and enhance Green Infrastructure within and around Oldham Town Centre, having regard to the Oldham Town Centre Development Framework, the place-based opportunities within the Oldham Green Infrastructure Strategy for the central district, and the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

11.27 The [Oldham Green Infrastructure Strategy](#)⁸⁸ identifies that Oldham Town Centre has virtually no open space or other types of green infrastructure which is typically limited to mown grass and ornamental trees. The Oldham Way is also a major section of road infrastructure that creates severance in terms of movement from the town centre to the south and west.

11.28 The Oldham Town Centre Development Framework identifies enhancing the town centre's green infrastructure and its connections to the surrounding area, as a key priority and opportunity. The framework sets out a series of strategic objectives for the town centre, many with implications for green infrastructure, and which include:

- Supporting bespoke Town Centre Green Infrastructure principles which align with Oldham's Green Infrastructure Strategy;

⁸⁸ This document can be found at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2183/oldham_green_infrastructure_strategy

- Connecting Oldham Edge in the North with Northern Roots / Alexandra Park in the South through a series of 'stepping stones';
 - Providing sustainable drainage solutions, including through multi-functional green infrastructure, as part of new development.
- 11.29 A central part of the strategy for Oldham Town Centre is the creation of Tommyfield Park – a linear park that will be a focal point running through the town centre and connecting with the built environment, delivered as part of a wider Landscape and Public Realm Strategy sitting alongside the development framework. The Oldham Greenway is then a movement strategy that will link the town centre with Northern Roots in the south, and Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss PfE allocations in the north beyond Oldham Edge. The aim being to create stepping stones of green spaces that will create green branches of active travel routes, and strategic landscape and wildlife corridors, reaching from the town centre and beyond.
- 11.30 Green infrastructure needs to be multi-functional, not only providing biodiversity benefits but also providing nature-based solutions, such as to manage surface water flood risk in the form of sustainable drainage systems.
- 11.31 The Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) identifies a nature network including opportunity areas which include parts of Oldham Town Centre. Mapped actions identified include:
- Woodland - Bigger and better-connected woodlands, trees and scrub, integrated with patchworks of other habitats;
 - Woodland - Enhance existing woodlands, scrub, and hedgerows through positive management, diversify them and increase their resilience to pests, disease and climate change;
 - Upland - Encourage the restoration and regeneration of existing upland woodlands and clough woodlands; and
 - Upland - Create transitional habitats or corridors to increase linkage between our uplands and lowland habitats, where conditions allow.
- 11.32 Outside of the mapped actions the LNRS also identifies actions for urban green spaces and buildings acknowledging that outside the nature network areas are equally as important for pursuing nature recovery.

Monitoring

- 11.33 The main Local Plan indicators that will be used to monitor this chapter are:
- Number of planning applications granted in Oldham Town Centre and the borough's other centres, for main town centre uses
 - Number of homes completed within the borough's centres
 - Number of day visits and staying visits to Oldham borough
 - Number of listed buildings in Oldham Town Centre and number of buildings in the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area lost through new development
 - Number of S106 Planning Obligations for new or enhanced open space provision in Oldham Town Centre
- 11.34 The main PfE indicators that will be used to help monitor this chapter are:
- Number of residential units (net) delivered in main town centres

- GVA in and within 800m of the main town centres
- Gross area of new habitat created from the application of biodiversity net gain
- Number of trees planted annually (metric to be determined with respect to tree planting programmes and on-site delivery as a result of planning decisions where available)

12 Addressing Climate Change

- 12.1 The UK government has set a target to become carbon neutral by 2050. National planning policy stipulates that the planning system should help the transition to a low carbon economy. The Local Plan needs to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate storm and flood risks, reduce overheating and water scarcity, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience, and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
- 12.2 Creating a carbon neutral city region by 2038 where all citizens have access to affordable renewable energy and warm climate resilient homes is part of the vision outlined in the [Greater Manchester Five-Year Environment Plan](#)⁸⁹. It sets out aims for our energy infrastructure to be smart, flexible and fit for a low carbon future; our buildings to be sustainable and energy efficient and our city region to be better adapted and more resilient to the increasing impacts of climate change.
- 12.3 Places for Everyone policies JP-S2 and JP-S3 sets out how development can help achieve the drive to carbon neutrality. In addition, the [Greater Manchester Net Zero Design guidance](#)⁹⁰ has been produced to support the implementation of these adopted PfE policies.
- 12.4 The Council's Building a Better Oldham reflects Oldham's commitment to climate change and seeks to build a better Oldham by ensuring Oldham is the greenest borough through embedding sustainability, energy efficiency & low (zero) carbon. In June 2019, Oldham Council declared its ambition to be the UK's first Green New Deal Council. It subsequently declared a Climate Emergency in September 2019.
- 12.5 The Council's [Oldham Green New Deal Strategy](#)⁹¹ was adopted by the Council in March 2020. The Strategy's objective is to 'Future-proof the regeneration of the borough by establishing Oldham as an exemplar Green City on energy, carbon, water and green infrastructure'. The Strategy puts in place a framework to work with our residents and partners to make Oldham an even greener, smarter, more enterprising place.
- 12.6 Nature plays an important role in providing key services for climate change adaption such as cooling, shading, clean air and water, as well as building in resilience and accommodating changes in the natural environment by restoring natural processes. Nature-based solutions can help communities become more resilient to climate change, whilst enhancing nature and biodiversity.
- 12.7 Through the Local Plan we will seek to address climate change through a positive approach on renewable and low carbon energy, flood risk, green infrastructure, design, air quality and transport infrastructure and accessibility. We will also support growth of the green technologies sector. Below we set out our policies on energy, flood risk and water supply. Other plan policies linking to climate change can be found throughout the plan.

⁸⁹ This document can be found at: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/five-year-environment-plan/>

⁹⁰ The Net Zero guidance can be found at: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/strategic-planning/places-for-everyone/net-zero-design-guidance/>

⁹¹ This document can be found at: <https://www.oldham.gov.uk/gnds>

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Policy CC1 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development including supporting infrastructure, will be supported where the following criteria have been appropriately addressed:

- 1. Local amenity, including noise, air quality, traffic, vibration, dust and visual impact, light (including reflection, glint, glare and shadow flicker);**
- 2. Highway safety and network capacity;**
- 3. Biodiversity, including nature designations, particularly in relation to displacement and disturbance and functionally linked land within 2.5km of the South Pennines Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Special Protection Area (SPA);**
- 4. Agricultural land, high quality soil and peat where it is in a condition to support habitats or can be restored to a condition to support notable habitats;**
- 5. Geodiversity;**
- 6. The openness of the Green Belt and whether very special circumstances have been demonstrated to justify otherwise inappropriate development;**
- 7. Loss of open space;**
- 8. The significance of Local Green Space;**
- 9. Flood Risk, hydrology, water supply, and water catchment land;**
- 10. Land stability and contamination;**
- 11. Public rights of way including access tracks and recreational routes;**
- 12. Telecommunications and other networks, including operational equipment required to connect to the National Grid, electromagnetic production and interference and aeronautical impacts such as radar systems;**
- 13. The qualities and sensitivities of key landscape characteristics and townscapes and visual impacts;**
- 14. The purposes of the Peak District National Park;**
- 15. The historic environment including heritage assets and their settings;**
- 16. Mineral Safeguarding Areas; and**
- 17. Cumulative effects with other existing and proposed energy developments.**

Where a development proposal would have a landscape impact, proposals should be accompanied by a detailed Landscape Impact Assessment carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced professional.

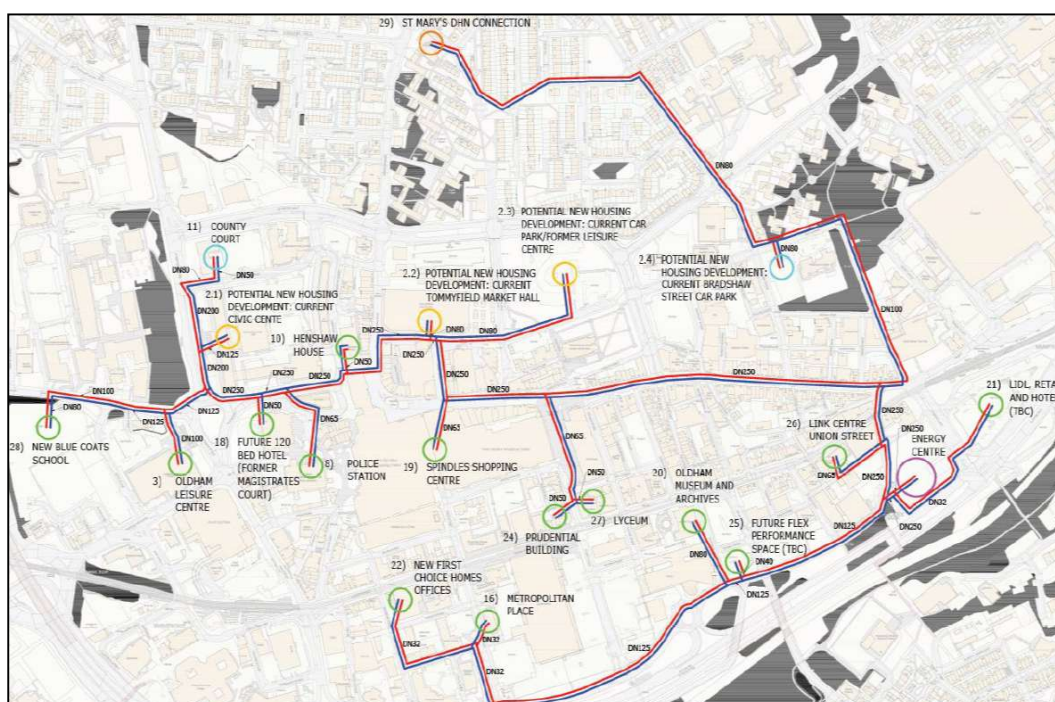
Proposals for wind energy can be considered across the borough, except within 400m of the South Pennines Moors SAC /SPA as shown on the Policies Map.

Where appropriate, any proposal should include full details of the arrangements for decommissioning and the reinstatement/restoration of the site at the end of its operational life.

Reasoned Justification

- 12.8 The renewable and low carbon energy sector plays a significant role in ensuring the energy security of the UK. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions limits the impacts of human induced climate change and stimulates investment in new jobs and businesses, with a range of environmental and economic benefits, such as reduced air pollution and lower energy bills for residents and businesses.
- 12.9 Planning has an important role in the delivery of new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure in locations where the local environmental impact is acceptable.
- 12.10 The [Oldham Local Area Energy Plan](#)⁹² (LAEP) identifies opportunities for low carbon energy including solar, hydrogen, heat pumps, electric vehicle charging and a district heat network. In addition, the Council is working on an Oldham Mine Water Heat Network project which can be seen in Figure CC1 below.

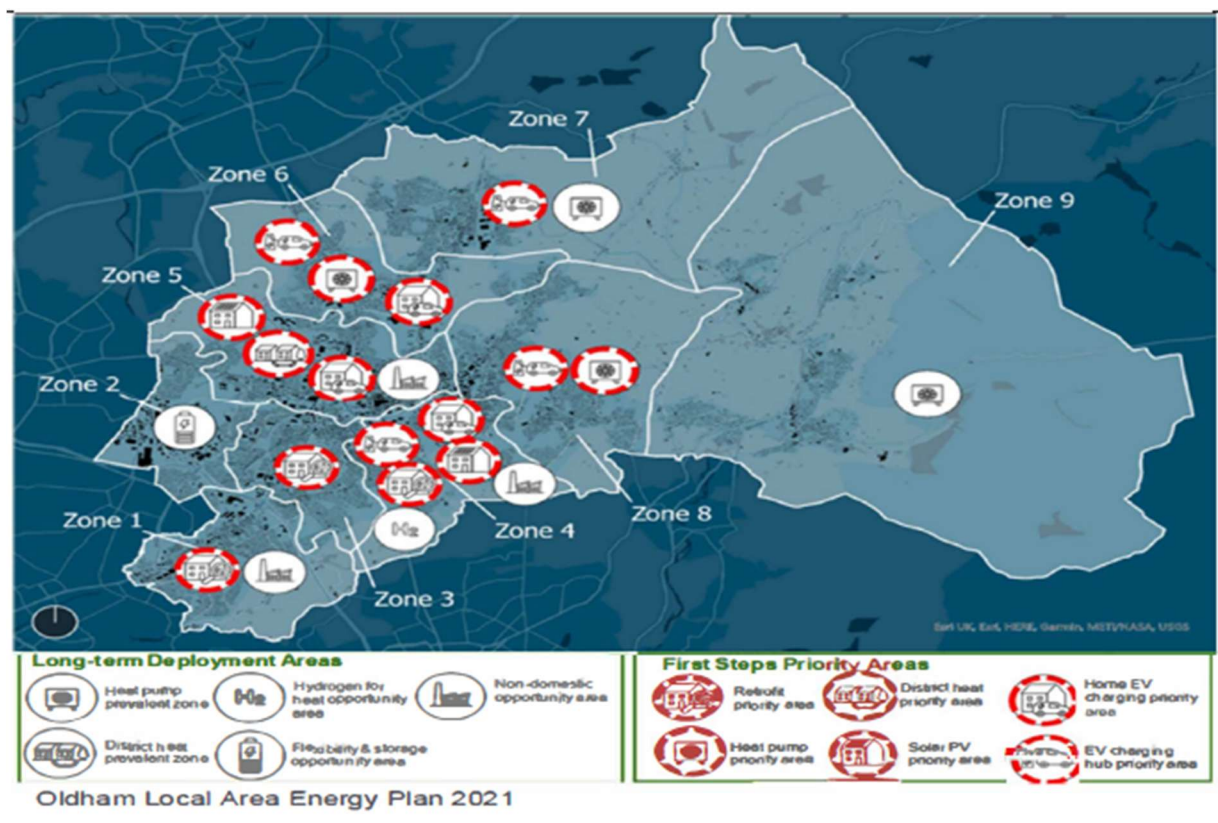
Figure CC1: Potential expansion of St Marys Heat Network across Oldham Town Centre including a new Minewater Energy Centre



⁹² This document can be found at:
https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/documents/s129736/OS%20Feb%2022%20-%20OGND%20Appx%20C_Oldham%20LAEP.pdf

- 12.11 The Council will support proposals for renewable energy providing that any environmental and social aspects are appropriately addressed including: impacts on landscape, townscape, natural, historical, and cultural features, Green Belt, biodiversity, flood risk and areas of nature conservation interest. Proposals should also ensure that high quality design features are used to minimise the impacts on the amenity of the area in respect of visual intrusion, noise, dust and odour and traffic generation.
- 12.12 Planning applications for hydropower should normally be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment. Early engagement with the Council and the Environment Agency will be necessary to identify any potential planning issues which are likely to be specific to the location. The Environment Agency has published [advice](#) on environmental protection for new hydropower schemes⁹³.
- 12.13 Most renewable and low carbon energy developments have a limited lifespan after which they will need to be decommissioned. Planning permissions for renewable energy proposals will be subject to a planning condition requiring the removal of infrastructure and reinstatement of the site should the development cease to be operational.

Figure CC2: Oldham Local Area Energy Plan



- 12.14 The local plan area is considered an area of search for wind energy proposals, except for within 400m of the South Pennine Moors SAC/ SPA due to PfE Policy JP-G5 Uplands. Whilst this policy relates to urban edge effects it is considered that a precautionary approach should be applied to wind energy with regards to the SAC/SPA. The South Pennines Moors SAC / SPA SPD should also be referred to. The SPD provides further guidance on Policy JP-G5 'Uplands', which seeks to ensure that development does not have an adverse impact on the SAC/SPA from urban edge

⁹³ This document can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-hydropower-scheme-apply-to-build-one>

- effects or from loss of and/or disturbance to functionally linked habitats within 2.5km of the SAC and SPA boundaries.
- 12.15 The policy lays out constraints that need to be considered for wind energy proposals. Planning Practice Guidance on 'Renewable and low carbon energy' also outlines considerations for renewable and low carbon energy.
 - 12.16 Battery energy storage systems (BESS) stores electricity when supply is higher than demand, which can then be released when needed. BESS play a role in the replacement of fossil fuels and contribute to supporting net zero.
 - 12.17 The acceptability of individual proposals will be subject to a detailed assessment demonstrating clearly how all the policy criteria has been addressed satisfactorily before granting planning permission.
 - 12.18 Designations and constraints such as Green Belt, Local Green Space, conservation areas, nature designations, geodiversity sites and Minerals Safeguarding Areas are shown on the Policies Map. Other constraints can be found through other sources such as Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England. Greater Manchester Ecology unit also hold a database of information.
 - 12.19 Within the Green Belt, applications for energy are classed as inappropriate development and will need to demonstrate very special circumstances.
 - 12.20 Peat plays an important role in nature-based solutions such as carbon storage and biodiversity support. It is important to protect peat where the condition allows it to perform important functions, including supporting notable habitats. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
 - 12.21 Development proposals on land used for public water supply purposes will be required to consult with the relevant water undertaker. The first preference will be for proposals to be located away from land used for public water supply purposes. Where proposals are brought forward on catchment land used for public water supply, careful consideration must be given to the location of the proposed development and a risk assessment of the impact on public water supply may be required with the identification and implementation of any required mitigation measures.

Flood Risk and Water Quality

- 12.22 Planning has a role to play when it comes to considering new development and assessing flood risk and water resources. There is a need to direct development away from areas of flood risk (looking at Flood Zones and other sources of flood risk), taking into account climate change, and to manage and mitigate flood risk.
- 12.23 National planning policy and its practice guidance sets out clear tests for assessing planning applications to ensure that development is focussed on sites with lower flood risk probability and that developments are made safe for their lifetime. Flood risk is also addressed in PfE, particularly Policy JP-S4.
- 12.24 PfE addresses water quality. In addition, the [Integrated Water Management Plan](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/strategic-planning/integrated-water-management-plan/)⁹⁴ aims to work together to manage Greater Manchester's water to enhance the environment, support people and forge prosperous places. The plan links to policies

⁹⁴ This document can be found at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/strategic-planning/integrated-water-management-plan/>

within the Local Plan on sustainable drainage and nature-based solutions to create water positive developments.

Policy CC2 - Managing Flood Risk

Development proposals will be determined in line with national planning policy and guidance on Flood Risk, applying a sequential approach to all forms of current and future flood risk.

The functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b) is identified on the Policies Map. The functional flood plain will be used to store water and for Green Infrastructure benefits. No development shall take place in Flood Zone 3b unless for essential infrastructure, which has passed the Exception Test, or where development is water compatible.

Development will ensure the flow of water within Flood Zone 3b is not impeded or the volume available for the storage of floodwater reduced.

Development should be located in areas with the lowest risk of flooding, taking all sources of flood risk and climate change into account. The Council's preference is for new development proposals to be located outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3. Development proposals outside of Flood Zone 1, which require a sequential test will apply an area of search, to be agreed with the local planning authority in advance of undertaking the search.

A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required where a site is:

- 1. Within Flood Zone 3a or Flood Zone 2;**
- 2. Within Flood Zone 1 and 1 hectare or greater in size;**
- 3. At risk from surface water flooding or on land which has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems (i.e. within an Area with Critical Drainage Problems (ACDP));**
- 4. Over 0.5 hectares within a Critical Drainage Area (CDA);**
- 5. Situated in an area currently benefiting from flood defences or an area where flood defences are planned;**
- 6. Land identified as being at increased flood risk in future;**
- 7. At risk of flooding from other sources than fluvial, such as Canal Hazard Zones, or at residual risk;**
- 8. Subject to a change of use to a higher vulnerability classification, as set out in national planning guidance, which may be subject to other sources of flooding; or**
- 9. Situated over a culverted watercourse or where development will require controlling the flow of any river or stream or the development could potentially change structures known to influence flood flow.**

Where required, development proposals will be granted subject to a satisfactory site-specific Flood Risk Assessment showing that:

- a) The national planning policy and guidance have been adhered to together with appropriate consultation with the relevant local planning authority, Lead Local Flood Authority, the Environment Agency and United Utilities, where applicable;**
- b) The effects of climate change have been taken into account using the latest allowances developed by the Environment Agency;**
- c) There is no loss in floodplain storage resulting from the development;**
- d) The development will not increase flood risk elsewhere;**
- e) The operational functions of any existing flood defence infrastructure is not affected;**
- f) Proposed resistance and resilience measures designed to deal with current and future risks are appropriate;**
- g) Appropriate sustainable drainage techniques, prioritising the use of natural flood management techniques that connect to the wider Green Infrastructure network, will be incorporated into the design of the site, where applicable;**
- h) Whether the development will be safe for its lifetime and has passed the Exception Test, if applicable; and**
- i) An appropriate Emergency Plan is included that accounts for the possibility of a flood event and shows the availability of safe access and egress points accessible during times of flood.**

Reasoned Justification

- 12.25 Flood Zone 3b, described as the functional flood plain, has been mapped as part of the Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and outputs from the updated Beal modelling. Land falling within Flood Zone 3b will be safeguarded from development and forms part of the borough's Green Infrastructure network.
- 12.26 Where the sequential test is required an area of search will be agreed with the Council on a case-by-case basis and agreed through pre-application discussions.
- 12.27 Some developments are not subject to the sequential test, as outlined in national planning policy, such as change of use (except for a change of use to a caravan, camping or chalet site, or to a mobile home or park home site); minor development such as householder development (except where a separate dwelling would be created within the curtilage or the subdivision of houses to flats); and alterations that do not increase the size of buildings. These developments may require a site-specific flood risk assessment, however.
- 12.28 Change of use applications need to consider how the vulnerability classification, as set out in national planning guidance, may change as a consequence of development and ensure that where required the site-specific flood risk assessment takes this into

account to ensure the development can be designed to be safe, including access and egress.

- 12.29 Where the exception test is required and development is within higher flood risk areas after applying the sequential test development must be of exceptional quality, which includes design features that allow resilience to flood risk and climate change such as spaces for water to flow, locating the development to the lowest risk areas within the site boundary, considering resilient design, including internal fittings such as cupboard's and sockets located higher and the use of water resilient materials. Development should include multi-functional sustainable drainage.
- 12.30 When undertaking site-specific flood risk assessments regard should be had to the latest Environment Agency peak rainfall allowances in the climate change allowances: flood risk assessments. This is important to understand and manage the effects of climate change on surface water flood risk and informing the design of drainage systems for new development.
- 12.31 ACDPs may be designated where the Environment Agency is aware that development within a certain catchment / drainage area could have detrimental impacts on fluvial flood risk downstream, and / or where the Environment Agency has identified existing fluvial flood risk issues that could be exacerbated by upstream activities.
- 12.32 In these instances, the Environment Agency would work with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and local planning authority to ensure that adequate surface water management measures are incorporated into new development to help mitigate fluvial flood risk. There are currently no ACDPs in Greater Manchester, however, the Environment Agency can designate areas.
- 12.33 In addition, CDAs can be identified through local evidence such as Strategic Flood Risk Assessments. CDAs are those identified from historical flood events and/ or modelled data as having a significant risk from surface water flooding and include drainage catchments for the sewer network. The CDAs for Greater Manchester were updated in 2023.
- 12.34 Although well managed there is a residual risk from the Rochdale Canal and Huddersfield Canal that should be considered where developments fall within the Canal Hazard Zone.
- 12.35 The borough also has a number of reservoirs, which form part of the historic environment and unique landscape of Oldham. Where applicable site-specific flood risk assessments should also have regard to any reservoir extents to take into account risk if the reservoir was breached.
- 12.36 Natural processes should be used, as far as practicable to mitigate flood risk and deliver multi-functional benefits. The Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Oldham's Green Infrastructure Strategy can be helpful in considering this.
- 12.37 Early discussions should take place with the LLFA and where required the Environment Agency and United Utilities. The LLFA are a statutory consultee for major developments. Applicants must engage with United Utilities if a site is identified as being at risk of flooding from a reservoir. Consultation with United Utilities should confirm:
- a) if there are any sewer surcharge levels at the point of connection that could influence site design;
 - b) whether there is an incident of sewer flooding at, or in the vicinity of, the proposed development site; and

- c) if sewer modelling data indicates that existing sewers that pass through or near to the site present a modelled risk of sewer flooding.

12.38 Applicants must not assume that changes in levels or that changes to the public sewer (including diversion), will be acceptable as such proposals could increase / displace flood risk.

Foul and Surface Water

12.39 Surface water flood risk is a boroughwide issue and will affect most development sites to varying degrees. It is important that foul and surface water is managed appropriately and that opportunities to improve the current discharge of surface water on previously developed sites are implemented.

Policy CC3 - Sustainable Drainage – Foul and Surface Water

Applications will be supported by a strategy for foul and surface water management, where appropriate, that takes account of the following components:

Surface water must be discharged in the following order of the surface water hierarchy (moving from steps 1 to 5) of:

- 1. Collected for non-portable use**
- 2. An adequate soakaway or some other form of infiltration system.**
- 3. An attenuated discharge to a surface water body.**
- 4. An attenuated discharge to public surface water sewer, highway sewer or another drainage system.**
- 5. An attenuated discharge to public combined sewer.**

Proposals should be designed to maximise the retention of surface water on-site and minimise the volume, and rate of, surface water discharge off-site.

Developments on greenfield sites are expected to achieve greenfield run off rates⁹⁵.

Developments on brownfield sites will be required to achieve greenfield run off rates, particularly within Critical Drainage Areas. A relaxation on outflow controls and/or the extent of attenuation storage will only be permitted with the agreement of the LLFA and LPA at an early stage of the project but should never exceed the rate of discharge from the existing development. Applicants will submit clear evidence of existing operational connections from the site with associated calculations on rates of discharge to demonstrate any reduction that deviate from achieving greenfield run off rates.

Applicants should consider site topography, naturally occurring flow paths, temporary watercourses, and any low-lying areas where water naturally accumulates. Applications will be required to consider exceedance / overland

⁹⁵ See Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage for further advice on greenfield run off rates.

flow paths from existing and proposed drainage features and confirm ground levels, finished floor levels and drainage details. Resultant layouts will reflect such circumstances to ensure a flood resilient design is achieved and water is not deflected or constricted.

Applications for major development will be supported by a sustainable drainage strategy and designed in accordance with the four pillars of sustainable drainage⁹⁶, in preference to underground piped and tanked storage systems, unless there is clear evidence why such techniques are not possible. It should be integrated with the landscaped environment and the strategy for biodiversity net gain.

For any development proposal which is part of a wider development / allocation, foul and surface water strategies will be part of a holistic site-wide drainage strategy. Pumped drainage systems should be minimised and a proliferation of pumping stations on a phased development will not be acceptable.

Applications are required to be accompanied by drainage management and maintenance plans, having regard to any watercourse within the application site or an adjacent watercourse where the application site is afforded riparian rights.

Any development proposals which have the potential to cause foul and surface water discharges to water-sensitive designated sites should be subject to project-level HRA.

Reasoned Justification

- 12.40 Application of the hierarchy for managing surface water is a key requirement for development sites to reduce flood risk and the impact on the environment. [National standards for sustainable drainage systems](#)⁹⁷ place increased emphasis on non-portable use - reusing water (rainwater harvesting) for uses such as toilet flushing, washing machines and gardening applications. Clear evidence must be submitted to demonstrate why alternative preferable options in the surface water hierarchy are not available.
- 12.41 Developers should be aware that surface water discharges to some waterways, including canals owned by the Canal and River Trust, may require the consent of riparian landowners. Developers should ensure that they gain relevant consent(s) as appropriate.
- 12.42 Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs) have been mapped across Greater Manchester (2023) and are shown on the Policies Map.
- 12.43 Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 in England will provide a framework for the approval and adoption of sustainable drainage systems into new developments. Foul and surface water drainage must be considered early in the design process. Sustainable drainage should be integrated with the landscaped environment and designed in accordance with the four pillars of sustainable drainage (water quantity, water quality, amenity and biodiversity) reflecting the opportunity for nature-

⁹⁶ The four pillars of sustainable drainage are referenced in Ciria SuDS Manual and planning practice guidance

⁹⁷ National standards for sustainable drainage systems is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems>

based solutions. It should identify SuDS opportunities, including retrofit SuDS opportunities, such as green roofs; permeable surfacing; soakways; filter drainage; swales; bioretention tree pits; rain gardens; basins; ponds; reedbeds and wetlands. Any drainage should be designed in accordance with 'Ciria C753 The SuDS Manual', [Greater Manchester's Sustainable Drainage Design Guide](#)⁹⁸ the [National standards for sustainable drainage systems](#)⁹⁹, sewerage sector guidance, or any subsequent replacement guidance.

- 12.44 Drainage details, ground levels and finished floor levels are critical to ensure the proposal is resilient to flood risk and climate change. It is good practice to ensure the external levels fall away from the ground floor level of the proposed buildings (following any regrade), to allow for safe overland flow routes within the development and minimise any associated flood risk from overland flows. In addition, where the ground level of the site is below the ground level at the point where the drainage connects to the public sewer, care must be taken to ensure that the proposed development is not at an increased risk of sewer surcharge. It is good practice for the finished floor levels and manhole cover levels (including those that serve private drainage runs) to be higher than the manhole cover level at the point of connection to the receiving sewer.
- 12.45 Holistic site-wide drainage strategies will be required to ensure a coordinated approach to drainage between phases, between developers, and over a number of years of construction. Applicants must demonstrate how the approach to drainage on any phase of development has regard to interconnecting phases within a larger site with infrastructure sized to accommodate interconnecting phases. When necessary, the holistic drainage strategy must be updated to reflect any changing circumstances between each phase(s). The strategy shall demonstrate communication with infrastructure providers and outline how each phase interacts with other phases.
- 12.46 Applicants are expected to provide information on their sustainable drainage proposals in the following documents:
- Completed SuDS Pro-forma; and
 - Sustainable drainage strategy which takes account of the recommendations from the site-specific flood risk assessment where applicable; and where necessary.
- 12.47 Where a site-specific flood risk assessment is required, this can be combined with the drainage strategy.
- 12.48 The HRA for the Local Plan recommends that any development proposals which have the potential to cause foul and surface water discharges to water-sensitive designated sites should be subject to project-level HRA.

⁹⁸ Greater Manchester's Sustainable Drainage Design Guide is available at https://gmgreencity.com/resource_library/greater-manchesters-sustainable-drainage-design-guide/

⁹⁹ The National standards for sustainable drainage systems is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems>

Water Efficiency and Climate Change

- 12.49 Water is essential to life - to flora, fauna and the human population. It is vital that water resources are carefully managed to reduce water stress and scarcity. Pressures such as population, housing growth and climate change adds stress to water resources therefore we need to manage sustainable growth and resilience to climate change through policies which can help manage water supplies sustainably.

Policy CC4 - Water Efficiency

All new residential developments are expected to achieve, as a minimum, the optional requirement set through Building Regulations Requirement G2: Water Efficiency or any future updates.

Major non-residential development will be required to achieve five credits for category Wat 01 of BREEAM unless demonstrated impracticable.

Reasoned Justification

- 12.50 A tighter water efficiency standard in new development has multiple benefits including a reduction in water and energy use, as well as helping to reduce customer bills. Building Regulations currently includes a requirement for all new dwellings to achieve a water efficiency standard of 125 litres of water per person per day (l/p/d). In 2015 an 'optional' requirement of 110 l/p/d for new residential development was introduced.
- 12.51 Non-residential development must achieve full credits (5 credits) for category Wat 01 of BREEAM unless it is impracticable. A further exemplary credit is available for outstanding performance. Five credits will typically give a 55% improvement over the baseline. A BREEAM pre-assessments will need to be submitted as part of the planning application to demonstrate that BREEAM credits for Wat 01 are being targeted. Compliance can then be secured through a planning condition.
- 12.52 The Local Plan requires this higher standard, which ties in with our approach to be a greener borough and declaring a climate emergency and Greater Manchester declaring a biodiversity emergency. Pressures from water supply also affect the achievement of the Water Framework Directives through impacts on water quality, species and habitats. As such there are environmental reasons for addressing water efficiency as well as helping our residents achieve lower bills in new housing, reducing effects of deprivation.
- 12.53 Major non-residential development applies to developments over 1000m².
- 12.54 This is justified by evidence provided by United Utilities, which is summarised in the supporting Topic Paper on climate change.

Ground Water Source Protection Zones

- 12.55 The Environment Agency defines Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) and these are available on the Environment Agency's website. These are areas that are often used for public drinking water supply purposes. Preventing pollution to drinking water is critical to ensure it is safe to use for public health.

Policy CC5 - Groundwater Source Protection Zones

In consultation with the Council and relevant statutory bodies, applicants are required to consider the potential impacts on water quality resulting from the design, construction and operation of proposed development. Where necessary, development proposals must include measures to reduce any risk to the water environment and aim to protect and improve water quality.

Development proposals within Groundwater Source Protection Zones are expected to accord with the latest national guidance on Groundwater Protection and will be expected to conform to the following:

- 1. Risk Assessment - a quantitative and qualitative risk assessment and mitigation strategy with respect to groundwater protection will be required to manage the risk of pollution to public water supply and the water environment;**
- 2. Masterplanning – is required to mitigate the risk of pollution to public water supply and the water environment; and**
- 3. Construction Management Plan – a Construction Management Plan will be required to identify the potential impacts from all construction activities on both groundwater, public water supply and surface water and identify the appropriate mitigation measures necessary to protect and prevent pollution of these waters.**

Reasoned Justification

- 12.56 The SPZs are shown in Appendix 7 and are defined around large and public potable groundwater abstraction sites. The purpose of SPZs is to provide additional protection to safeguard drinking water quality through constraining the proximity of an activity that may impact upon a drinking water abstraction. This is part of an initial screening process in assessing impacts to groundwater resources. Zones around location sites are defined by groundwater travel time to an abstraction.

- 12.57 SPZs provide a visual representation of the increased risks as you get closer to the abstraction. The following subdivisions are defined within SPZs:

- **Zone 1: (Inner Protection Zone) - This zone is defined by a travel time of 50-days or less from any point within the zone at, or below, the water table. Additionally, the zone has as a minimum a 50-metre radius. It is based principally on biological decay criteria and is designed to protect against the transmission of toxic chemicals and water-borne disease.**
- **Zone 2: (Outer Protection Zone) - This zone is defined by the 400-day travel time from a point below the water table. Additionally, this zone has a minimum radius of 250 or 500 metres, depending on the size of the abstraction. The**

travel time is derived from consideration of the minimum time required to provide delay, dilution and attenuation of slowly degrading pollutants.

- Zone 3: (Total catchment) - This zone is defined as the total area needed to support the abstraction or discharge from the protected groundwater source.

12.58 In Oldham, SPZs 1 and 2 have been defined and include parts of Shaw, Crompton and St James wards. New development should ideally seek to be located away from SPZs, especially Source Protection Zone 1.

12.59 Applicants should take note of '[The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection' position statement](#)¹⁰⁰.

12.60 The risk assessment requires applicants to follow the source-pathway-receptor approach. This means thinking how activity from development may be a 'source' of pollution to groundwater (such as landfill), the 'pathways' that the pollution could take to reach groundwater from the development site (such as engineered measures such as a landfilled lining system, or infiltration system), and the potential groundwater 'receptors' that could be affected by that pollution (such as abstraction boreholes, the ecosystem dependent on groundwater or the groundwater). It shall identify all possible contaminant sources and pathways for the life of the development and provide details of measures required to mitigate any risks to groundwater and public water supply during all phases of the development.

12.61 Subject to the outcome of the risk assessment, the mitigation measures may include the highest specification design for the new foul and surface water sewerage systems (pipework, trenches, manholes, pumping stations and attenuation features).

12.62 Within source protection zones careful masterplanning is required. For example, open space can be located so that it is closest to the boreholes in order to minimise the potential impact on groundwater with an appropriate management regime.

Monitoring

12.63 The main Local Plan indicators that will be used to monitor this chapter are:

- % of households living in fuel poverty
- Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on water quality grounds
- Number of new developments agreed with the Council incorporating Natural Flood Management (NFM)

12.64 The main PfE indicators that will be used to help monitor this chapter are:

- Number of planning permissions approved against EA advice

¹⁰⁰ This document can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groundwater-protection-position-statements>

13 Natural Environment and Open Land

Oldham's Open Land

- 13.1 The Peak District National Park is a protected landscape that's falls within the borough of Oldham. It was designated in 1951 and was Britain's first National Park. The diverse landscape contrasts with Oldham's industrial and urban landscapes.
- 13.2 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.
- 13.3 National Parks protect landscapes and wildlife habitats, whilst also providing places where people live and work, and provide a focus for recreation and tourism. They also offer places of tranquillity.

Policy OL1 - Consideration for the Peak District National Park

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.

Reasoned Justification

- 13.4 National planning policy applies great weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks.
- 13.5 The determination of planning applications within the part of Oldham falling within the Peak District National Park is undertaken by the Peak District National Park Authority. However, parts of Saddleworth that fall within Oldham Council's planning boundary may be considered to fall within its setting and contribute to the Peak District National Park's natural beauty.
- 13.6 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 section 245 states in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in any National Park in England, a relevant authority must seek to further the purposes and if it appears that there is a conflict between those purposes, must attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area comprised in the National Park.
- 13.7 This applies to functions outside of the designated area which affects land within the protected landscape. [Defra guidance](#)¹⁰¹ confirms that natural beauty, special qualities and key characteristics can be dependent on the contribution provided by the setting of a protected landscape. Aspects such as tranquillity, dark skies, cultural heritage and remoteness are important considerations.

¹⁰¹ This document can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-protected-landscapes-duty/guidance-for-relevant-authorities-on-seeking-to-further-the-purposes-of-protected-landscapes>

- 13.8 In determining planning applications, the Council will need to be satisfied that granting planning permission will leave the special characteristics of the national park unharmed. Contributions to the conservation and enhancement of the protected landscapes natural beauty, special qualities and key characteristics are encouraged.

Oldham's Green Belt

- 13.9 The Green Belt is land which meets at least one of the following five purposes:

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

- 13.10 Places for Everyone (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.

- 13.11 However, a 'tidy up' of minor boundaries of a technical mapping nature has been undertaken and these are also reflected on the Policies Map. Appendix 8 sets out boundary revisions to the Green Belt.

Policy OL2 - Oldham's Green Belt

The openness and permanence of Oldham's Green Belt will be preserved, in line with national planning policy.

Within the Green Belt, national planning policy will be applied including the refusal against inappropriate development except in very special circumstances.

Proposals for agricultural buildings constitutes appropriate development, however the Council will have regard to the design, layout, and form of construction of any buildings to assess the suitability for agricultural purposes.

Proposals for the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or change of use), including those for outdoor sports and recreation, as described in national planning policy, must preserve the openness of the Green Belt, and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Therefore, built development and associated infrastructure such as car parking, lighting and hardstanding must be kept to a minimum and be sensitively designed.

In assessing whether a proposed stable constitutes 'appropriate' development for sport and recreation in the Green Belt, the Council will have regard to the design, layout, and form of construction of any buildings to assess the suitability for stabling purposes.

National planning policy allows for the limited infilling in villages within the Green Belt. Determining whether a proposed development is within a village will be assessed on a case-by-case basis having regard to the particular character, layout, and function of the settlement.

Similarly, whilst there is no set definition for 'infilling', the Council would consider such sites to comprise the following:

- **a small gap or space between other buildings or structures; and**
- **within a continuous built-up frontage or within built development; and**
- **which relates well to the existing built form.**

The development of gaps which merge sites or buildings which are presently not spatially or visually well-related to the existing settlement would not be deemed to conform to the aim and purposes of the Green Belt.

Reasoned Justification

13.12 National planning policy and supporting guidance sets out what types of development are not inappropriate within the Green Belt. This has been extended to include additional development, such as that on 'grey belt'. These will be permitted where they also satisfy other relevant planning policies.

13.13 Inappropriate development is considered harmful to the Green Belt and will only be approved in 'Very Special Circumstances', which clearly demonstrate that the potential harm is outweighed by other considerations. 'Very Special Circumstances' will be judged on a case-by-case basis.

13.14 Applicants are required to clearly set out the level of harm to the Green Belt including definitional harm (by reason of inappropriateness); harm to the openness¹⁰² - volume, visual impact, duration of development and related activities such as traffic generation; and harm to Green Belt purposes where the land is not previously developed or grey belt. Any other planning harm should also be clear as part of the planning application. Any measures to reduce or mitigate the harm and the 'Very Special Circumstances' (i.e. all the benefits) of the proposed development must also be clearly set out. A statement should be submitted with sufficient detail to allow the Council to be able to make an informed decision on whether the test is passed, and development permitted.

13.15 The General Permitted Development Order also allows some types of development without the need for planning permission. This applies to the Green Belt but does not usually apply where land within the Green Belt also falls within a conservation area.

¹⁰² National planning policy does not require substantial weight to be applied to harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness, where the development is on previously developed land or grey belt land.

Policy OL3 - Extensions and Alterations to Existing Buildings within the Green Belt

Extensions and alterations to existing buildings will be supported where they are not disproportionate to the size of the original building.

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.**

Reasoned Justification

- 13.16 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. The above policy is intended to help guide development proposals that require permission for extensions and alterations to existing buildings.
- 13.17 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.
- 13.18 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.
- 13.19 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. Extensions under 40% may still be found unacceptable. Applications will be determined on a case-by-case basis and the 40% is in no way 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 Space

- 13.20 A number of areas have been identified as ‘Local Green Space’ (LGS) in line with national planning policy. LGS are spaces that are important to local communities due to their proximity to the community and because they are demonstrably special and hold

local significance due to beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity, or richness of its wildlife.

Policy OL4 - Local Green Spaces

The Local Green Spaces in Table OL1 are identified on the Policies Map and will be protected from inappropriate development to ensure the significance of the Local Green Space is protected and can be enhanced.

Table OL1: Local Green Spaces

Local Green Spaces	
LGS 1 Royley Clough	LGS 2 Ferney Field Road
LGS 3 Foxdenton Hall Park	LGS 4 Crossley Bridge Playing Field
LGS 5 Moston Brook and Hole Bottom Clough	LGS 6 Simkin Way
LGS 7 Oldham Edge	LGS 8 Land at Greenacres
LGS 9 Thornley Brook	LGS 10 Stonebreaks
LGS 11 Dacres Hall	LGS 12 Wall Hill
LGS 13 Ryefields Drive	LGS 14 Stoneswood
LGS 15 Ainley Wood	LGS 16 Land at Summershades Lane
LGS 17 Rear of Elk Mill / Cotswold Drive	LGS 18 Sholver (Land between Pearly Bank and Longfellow Crescent)

Development proposals, including new housing, will generally be deemed inappropriate in order to protect the significance of each Local Green Space.

Exceptions to this include the following types of development, provided they do not substantially harm qualities related to the Local Green Space:

1. Small scale proposals that enhance recreational value such as appropriate facilities, including buildings, for outdoor sport and recreation;
2. Appropriate facilities for cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments;

3. **Proposals to enhance the historic significance, such as interpretation trails;**
4. **Buildings for agriculture and forestry;**
5. **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;**
6. **The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;**
7. **Engineering operations;**
8. **Local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Local Green Space location;**
9. **The re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;**
10. **Material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and**
11. **Development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.**

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.

Reasoned Justification

13.21 The methodology and evidence for identifying LGS is set out in the [Local Green Space Assessment](#)¹⁰³. Appendix 9 shows the LGS' and these are identified on the Policies Map.

13.22 Some enhancement opportunities have been identified in the LGS assessment; however, these are not exhaustive. It should be noted that enhancement of LGS is not to be used to justify the harm caused to part of a LGS as a result of development proposals.

13.23 The LGS 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. In time LGS sites could also be used as BNG habitat banks too which would also mean they are legally secured for at least 30 years and not available to new development unless excluded from the habitat bank. Some of the LGS also include playing pitches which must be protected in line with Policy CO1. This includes works such as tree planting, pathways, etc that may affect sports facilities.

¹⁰³ This document can be found at:
https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/7043/local_green_space_assessment

- 13.24 The policy allows for small scale development to support the role of particular LGS', for example changing facilities for a cricket pitch, which would enhance its significance.
- 13.25 New housing development would not be appropriate development within a LGS.
- 13.26 Planning applications are required to be supported by a statement explaining how the development proposal will impact on the significance of the LGS (i.e. the reason why it was designated), the level of harm and benefits that the proposal will deliver.
- 13.27 Harm will be assessed by determining the impact on the significance of the LGS. Substantial harm for example may include the loss of recreation facilities or the ability of people to use that recreation facility in the same way; the loss, reduction or severance of wildlife; and the reduction in the ability of the LGS to provide a tranquil space - for example because the site will become more urbanised. Less than substantial harm may involve minor developments, for example an extension to an existing building that does not affect the significance of the LGS.
- 13.28 Proposals must, where necessary, be supported by sufficient ecological surveys in line with Policy N1.
- 13.29 A Community Right to Build Order is a type of Neighbourhood Development Order which are subject to their own legal tests and processes. A designated community organisation could obtain outline or full planning permission through a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order, for example for homes, including affordable homes, community facilities or playgrounds for the benefit of the community.
- 13.30 The type, quantity and design of buildings and the location is decided through the neighbourhood planning process and consulted on before being submitted to the local planning authority. The Order would then be subject to an independent examination, which will look at whether the basic conditions have been met¹⁰⁴. A local referendum can then be held, and the Order brought into force if over 50% of those voting have supported the Order. If an Order is for outline planning permission, then reserved matters would still need to be addressed through the planning process.

Protecting Oldham's Dark Skies

- 13.31 The eastern part of the borough, particularly that which is closest to the Peak District National Park, Kirklees and Calderdale, includes 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.
- 13.32 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.
- 13.33 Campaign to Protect Rural England (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.

¹⁰⁴ The basic conditions are set out in Paragraph 8(2), Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Policy OL5 - Protecting Dark Skies and Tranquillity

The borough's dark skies are an important part of Oldham's countryside character and will be protected. Development will be supported that protects dark skies, as shown on the Policies Map, and avoids light pollution.

The Policies Map outlines Category 1 and Category 2 dark skies. Category 1 are our darkest parts of the borough, followed by Category 2.

Within the areas classed as dark skies where there is a demonstrated need for external lighting the use of dark sky friendly lighting will be used.

Elsewhere good lighting management and design will be expected to minimise and where opportunities arise reduce light spillage and glare.

Proposals for any development involving outdoor lighting schemes will be expected to demonstrate as part of the planning application that:

- a. The proposed lighting is the minimum required for security or working purposes;**
- b. Light spillage and glare are minimised, particularly in areas of open countryside or on the edge of settlements; and**
- c. There is no significant harm impact on sites of nature conservation value.**

The impact on amenity including on surrounding residents and highway safety will also be considered.

Reasoned Justification

13.34 National planning policy states that decisions should ensure new development is appropriate for its location taking into account likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. Decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

13.35 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. These dark skies should be protected, and opportunities taken across the borough to reduce light pollution. Therefore, if there is a demonstrated need for external lighting for short periods the use of dark sky friendly lighting should be used.

13.36 Category 2 (green areas) overlaps with Oldham's Green Belt and several nature designations. This area has limited light intrusion.

13.37 Opportunities should be taken to reduce light pollution, including for example considering the types of materials used and landscaping measures. Choosing appropriate street lighting can make a strong contribution to reducing light pollution and reducing energy consumption.

13.38 Development proposing external lighting should consider guidance set out in [GN01 For the reduction of obtrusive light 2021](#)¹⁰⁵ (or any successor guidance). Developments within Category 1 should be in line with Zone E1 and developments in Category 2 should be in line with Zone E2. There may be areas outside of Category 1 and 2 where the use of Zone 2 guidance will be considered, determined on a case by case basis.

Monitoring

13.39 The main Local Plan indicators that will be used to monitor this chapter are:

- Number and type of developments permitted in the Green Belt
- Number and type of developments permitted in Local Green Spaces

¹⁰⁵ GM01 For the reduction of obtrusive light 2021 is available at [GN01 For the reduction of obtrusive light 2021](#)

14 Addressing the Biodiversity Emergency

14.1 Biodiversity has a strong role to play in our lives and offers many benefits as outlined in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy including:

- Benefits for people: a green and healthy environment; more recreation and leisure opportunities; improved air quality and less noise pollution; improved physical and mental health; more resilience and adaptation to climate change; and stronger communities;
- Benefits for businesses: a more attractive place to work, encouraging local economic growth; increased resilience through reduced risk of, and better adaptation to, environmental hazards; a healthier, happier and more productive workforce; higher land and property values; increased green jobs and skills; more visitors and sustainable tourism opportunities; and more productive land for food security and other resources that can be grown locally;
- Ecological benefits: Protection of rare and threatened species and habitats; repaired natural cycles and natural processes; a greater abundance and diversity of wildlife and healthier ecosystems, reversing biodiversity decline; capture and sequestration of carbon dioxide, helping tackle climate change; more resilience to future changes in climate and greater resilience of species to pests and diseases.

14.2 Across the country there has been a decline in land and freshwater based species since 1970 and a rapid change in the abundance of species and declines in key indicator species. The [Greater Manchester State of Nature](#)¹⁰⁶ report was compiled to highlight the urgent challenges faced by nature across the city-region, which was reflected in the declaration of a biodiversity emergency in GM in March 2022. The report covers trends in our wildlife, the use of land and pressures on nature, the wider benefits we receive from nature and people's access to nature and engagement with it.

14.3 Echoing national trends, key species of birds and mammals in GM and the North West of England are declining. Individual bird species population show declines of up to 40% over the last 40 years and the abundance of once common mammals has dropped by between 20-40% since 1995. GM is home to many populations of birds. Mirroring national trends, we have seen some worrying declines in our bird populations including Tree Sparrows, Skylarks, Redpoll, Twite, Snipe, Spotted Flycatcher, Tree Pit and Lapwings. Regionally there has been a significant decline in rabbits, red fox, brown hare and hedgehogs.

14.4 Pressures on nature as noted in the State of Nature report include competing land uses, pressures on waterbodies and water; pathogens and diseases, invasive species and climate change.

14.5 For nature to recover, species need habitats that are bigger and better but importantly connected. [The Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#)¹⁰⁷ (LNRS) sets out a shared vision for nature recovery in Greater Manchester; shared priorities, targets and actions for different habitats and species we can all work towards to help deliver them. Actions that are not mapped are applicable for consideration across the borough wherever they are relevant. For example, urban actions are not mapped but are applicable in any urban location and all habitat themes can be checked for relevance with regards to unmapped actions that can inform site layout and design.

¹⁰⁶ This document can be found at: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/9526/gm-state-of-nature-report.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ This document can be found at: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/natural-environment/our-plan-for-nature-recovery/>

- 14.6 Maps of a Greater Manchester Nature Network have been developed made up of:
- Core local nature sites - existing valuable areas for nature which include our nature designations; and
 - Nature Recovery Opportunity Areas - opportunity areas where action should be focused across the city-region.
- 14.7 Biodiversity will also be enhanced through developments including through the use of the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain tool, which can take account of the LNRS as well as through embedding Green Infrastructure generally.

Policy N1 - Protecting Nature

The borough's hierarchy for designated sites and wider ecological networks is identified below and will be safeguarded in line with national policy:

1. **Internationally designated sites including the Peak District Moors SPA, South Pennine Moors Phase 2 Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPAs) and South Pennine Moors Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and the Rochdale Canal SAC;**
2. **Nationally designated sites including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) at Dark Peak, South Pennine Moors, Ladcastle and Den Quarries, Lowside Brickworks, Rochdale Canal and Standedge Road Cutting;**
3. **Irreplaceable habitat including ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees and blanket bog;**
4. **Locally designated sites including Sites of Biological Importance (SBI's), Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS) and Local Nature Reserves;**
5. **Sites that are not designated for nature but contain substantive nature conservation value of local significance including priority habitats and species and other protected species, peat which is capable of restoration to support notable habitats, green corridors and recreational routes.**

Avoiding significant harm includes protecting biodiversity on site, whilst also avoiding harmful impacts to biodiversity outside the development site from development.

Development will not be permitted where it would impact on the integrity of the above SAC/SPAs.

An ecological assessment will be required as part of the planning application where a site contains, adjoins or may impact on a site which contains nature as described in the above hierarchy.

Reasoned Justification

- 14.8 Designations for nature are shown on the Policies Map. New designations, such as SBI, may be made over time, and these will be shown on an ecological layer on the Council's website to ensure the latest information can be reflected and accessed.
- 14.9 PfE Policy JP-G5 sets out that development is not permitted within 400 metres of the South Pennine Moors SAC/SPAs boundaries unless, as an exception, the development and/or its use would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC or SPAs. The South Pennine Moors SAC/SPAs SPD sets out guidance on what the exceptions may include.
- 14.10 PfE Policy JP-G5 also sets out that within 2.5k of the SAC/SPAs boundaries developments are required to provide assessment to determine if the application site provides foraging habitats for the qualifying bird species of the SPAs. The South Pennine Moors SAC/SPAs SPD provides further guidance on the assessment and mitigation.
- 14.11 Planning applications which are required to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment will need to consider air quality impacts on Holcroft Moss, within the Manchester Mosses SAC with reference to PfE Policy JP-C8 and the Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations SPD, as explained under Policy T5.
- 14.12 Where developers are required to assess the impact on an internationally designated site Natural England must be consulted and developers are encouraged to use Natural England's conservation advice for land-based protected sites.
- 14.13 Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs. Natural England has produced Impact Risk Zones, which can be viewed online, to give an initial indication of potential risks to SSSIs posed by development.
- 14.14 Irreplaceable habitat is defined in national planning policy as habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen. Maps of ancient woodland can be seen on MappingGM.
- 14.15 There are currently 39 Sites of Biological Importance within Oldham and the number and extent of SBIs has gradually increased since 1984. The existing SBIs within Oldham are shown on the Policies Map and listed at Appendix 10.
- 14.16 Where a new SBI, RIGS or Local Nature Reserve is proposed, the Council will seek to designate these, where they do not conflict with other strategic objectives.
- 14.17 Green corridors are important for ecological movement and also assist recreational movement. They are shown on the Policies Map. Most green corridors and links overlap with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy nature network. Some parts of the green corridors will include areas already important for biodiversity – core areas including nature designations, where it will be important that the biodiversity hierarchy is applied. Maps of the Green Corridors and Links being de-designated and with boundary changes can be found in Appendix 11.
- 14.18 There are also a number of strategic recreational routes across the borough and many of these also overlap with the LNRS nature network. Development proposals on sites

affecting green corridors and recreational routes, will be permitted where they do not dissect the open land corridor into sections or harm the potential for wildlife or people's access and enjoyment of the corridor.

- 14.19 Some brownfield sites can be of high environmental value. Open mosaic habitats can be found on sites such as railway sidings, quarries, former industrial works and brick pits. Brownfield sites with open mosaic habitats show previous disturbance through soil being removed or severely modified by previous use, or the addition of materials such as industrial spoil, with spatial variation developing across the site. The variation results in a mosaic of different habitats being supported in close proximity. This habitat diversity can support rich assemblages of invertebrates, which has led to 'open mosaic habitats on previously developed land' being added to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) as a Priority habitat listed on Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act).
- 14.20 Restorable peat has an important role to play in supporting notable habitats (blanket bog, lowland raised bog and fens) but also for carbon storage. Peat is not currently an irreplaceable habitat however account should be taken on any national policy changes in relation to peat should this change. Whether peat is restorable will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 14.21 A [Peat Map for England](#) (May 2025) has been published by Natural England. This may provide useful information when looking at proposals. Natural England may request on a case-by-case basis peat surveys to inform applications where they consider that development may affect deep peat masses either directly or indirectly and may request mitigation measures for impacts on peat. Where a peat survey is needed Natural England recommend that The Peatland Code Fields Protocol¹⁰⁸ is used.
- 14.22 There can sometimes be an overlap between different levels of nature designations, for example Glodwick Lows Local Nature Reserve contains a SSSI and a RIGS. Proposals must ensure that they satisfy all relevant policy, with the highest level of nature designations taking priority.
- 14.23 Priority habitats are shown on [Natural England's Priority Habitats Inventory](#)¹⁰⁹. Other protected species may be identified through the planning application process.
- 14.24 When determining impacts on nature conservation interests any requirement for species enhancements and management would need to be considered.
- 14.25 Mitigation measures can vary and will depend on the site and proposal. Mitigation measures may include setting appropriate buffer zones between development plots and biodiversity, the erection of screening barriers to protect from noise and dust, measures to reduce noise or light and managing recreational pressures. Buffer zones and other mitigation measures should seek to connect to the wider green infrastructure network.
- 14.26 Mitigation for rivers and streams may include adopting or extending green space buffers, restoration techniques such as de-canalising or de-culverting waterbodies, restoring lost floodplain connectivity, removing invasive non-native species, removing or modifying redundant weir structures or adopting true multifunctional SUDs solutions when designing new site surface water drainage schemes. These opportunities should be assessed early in the design process.

¹⁰⁸ The latest Peatland Code Field Protocol can be found at [Peatland Code Field Protocol: Assessing eligibility, determining baseline condition category and monitoring change : NbS Knowledge Hub](#)

¹⁰⁹ This dataset can be found at <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/Defra::priority-habitats-inventory-england/about>

- 14.27 Compensation may be secured through a planning condition or obligation covering the long-term management, monitoring and / or maintenance of the site.

Policy N2 - Restoring Nature

A net increase in biodiversity will be achieved across the borough. Development will have regard to the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and should seek to support and deliver on the priorities and actions for nature recovery within the strategy.

The core local nature sites in our nature recovery network will be safeguarded and development will avoid harm to the core network in line with national planning policy. Where mitigation measures are considered, they should have regard to the priorities and actions within the LNRS and /or any actions within relevant management plans.

Development¹¹⁰ on land within an opportunity area should seek to:

- 1. Protect and enhance existing habitats; and**
- 2. Restore and create habitats in a way that significantly improves connectivity within the development site and beyond.**

Where the opportunities arise to enhance connectivity, particular consideration should be given to:

- 3. The expansion and enhancement of existing habitats;**
- 4. The strategic creation and restoration of habitat to better connect existing habitats;**
- 5. The design and layout of the development; and**
- 6. Any infrastructure that could be detrimental to achieving enhanced connectivity, such as roads, buildings and other barriers to species movements (e.g. fences).**

The LNRS opportunity areas are to be regarded as being of strategic significance in terms of the Biodiversity Net Gain metric.

Where relevant development has demonstrated, following application of the biodiversity gain hierarchy, all reasonable opportunities to achieve measurable Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10% onsite have been exhausted, the following principles apply to the selection off-site areas:

- a. Proximity to loss – there is an expectation that off-site areas will be located as close as possible to the development site, incentivised by the biodiversity metric's spatial risk multiplier, so that the area experiencing**

¹¹⁰ This is considered to apply to major and minor developments. Change of use and householder applications should consider other ways to incorporate biodiversity as set out in Policy N3 and actions under Urban green spaces and buildings in the Greater Manchester LNRS.

loss of biodiversity through the proposed development benefits from the compensation.

- b. Best biodiversity value – offsite areas should be chosen in line with local priorities and actions for nature recovery, particularly those set out in the LNRS.**

Reasoned Justification

- 14.28 The core areas of the nature network include national and local nature designations and irreplaceable habitats and these are shown on the Policies Map. These are areas where nature is already recognised for its importance and this will therefore include parts of the hierarchy in Policy N1. Development will not be permitted that does not adequately address the principles of biodiversity as set out in national planning policy. If mitigation needs to be considered this should consider the priorities and actions within the LNRS but also any relevant conservation objectives or management plans that may be prepared.
- 14.29 Across Oldham the LNRS sets out opportunities (and which species they will support) for:
- Woodlands, Trees, Scrub and Hedgerow;
 - Grasslands, Farmland and Lowland Heath;
 - River, Canal and Waterbodies;
 - Lowland, Wetland and Mossland;
 - Upland Moorland; and
 - Urban green spaces and buildings.
- 14.30 The LNRS also identifies local species particularly at risk and practical actions for the target species or species groups.
- 14.31 The LNRS opportunity areas are strategically identified areas that are crucial to developing a coherent nature recovery network across Greater Manchester, through expanding or joining up our core local nature sites. These opportunity areas have no existing statutory protection and have significant potential to become of particular importance for biodiversity. They represent the best areas to connect-up spaces for nature across Greater Manchester and are where effort should be concentrated to achieve the most for biodiversity. Developments within opportunity areas should be ambitious for nature recovery.
- 14.32 The LNRS notes that high-impact invasive species, such as Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and Giant hogweed, and diseases, such as ash dieback, are found across Greater Manchester and impact upon the quality of our remaining habitats and their ability to support wildlife. The actions within the LNRS also include tackling invasive species.
- 14.33 For implementation of statutory Biodiversity Net Gain, the areas identified in the LNRS as areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity (or “opportunity areas”) are to be categorised as “formally identified in local strategy” for the purposes of scoring high strategic significance in the [Statutory Biodiversity Metric](#)¹¹¹.

¹¹¹ The Guidance Note can be found at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/natural-environment/biodiversity-net-gain/biodiversity-net-gain-in-greater-manchester/>

- 14.34 Applicants should also follow advice as set out in the [Greater Manchester BNG Guidance](#)¹¹² in addition to relevant regulations and legislation. This guidance outlines the biodiversity gain hierarchy which is to avoid adverse effects to on-site habitats firstly, mitigate any adverse effects which cannot be avoided and enhance and then create on-site habitat before looking at offsite solutions.
- 14.35 Where applicants are wishing to secure a third-party habitat bank via a Section 106 with the Council it is advised that they refer to the [Greater Manchester Habitat Bank Verification and Auditing Guidance](#)¹¹³.
- 14.36 In addition, biodiversity mitigation / enhancements should not be located directly over water and wastewater assets or where excavation onto the asset would require removal of the biodiversity.
- 14.37 Planning applications for householders and change of use are currently not required to use the Statutory Biodiversity Metric to demonstrate net gain. Instead, applicants can provide a plan or statement for the measure(s) they will undertake. These measures could include nest boxes or the planting of a native tree species, should space allow. Alternatively, the applicant could consider donating to a third party to plant a tree such as the Woodland Trust, their local Wildlife Trust or City of Trees.
- 14.38 The loss of irreplaceable habitat should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where bespoke compensation has been agreed. Any mitigation and/or compensation requirements for “Habitats Sites”, other statutory designated sites or irreplaceable habitats should be dealt with separately from biodiversity net gain provision.

Oldham's Green Infrastructure

- 14.39 Green Infrastructure is an umbrella term used to describe a range of assets such as open spaces, playing fields, woodland (including ancient woodland), residential gardens, sustainable drainage features, trees, green roofs and walls and ‘blue infrastructure’, such as river corridors, ponds and canals, which all offer habitats for biodiversity.
- 14.40 Over 75% of Oldham consists of Green Infrastructure. This includes agriculture (25%), semi-natural habitat (18%), private gardens (12%), deciduous woodland (6%) and amenity space (6%). Although Green Infrastructure is extensive, we need to manage it more effectively to better respond to the needs of people and nature, and ensure it is resilient to the changing climate.
- 14.41 The vision for Oldham's Green Infrastructure is that by 2037, Oldham will be a carbon neutral exemplar with a resilient, multifunctional Green Infrastructure network which brings multiple benefits to the natural and built environment and provides a solid foundation for the Council's response to climate change. Oldham will be a greener and healthier place to live, work and visit.

¹¹² This document can be found at: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/natural-environment/biodiversity-net-gain/biodiversity-net-gain-in-greater-manchester/>

¹¹³ The Greater Manchester Habitat Bank Verification and Auditing Guidance is available at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/natural-environment/biodiversity-net-gain/biodiversity-net-gain-in-greater-manchester/>.

Policy N3 - Enhancing Green Infrastructure through development

New development is expected to make an appropriate contribution to addressing local needs and opportunities for Green Infrastructure provision by retaining, enhancing and creating green spaces and corridors.

All development will make a proportionate contribution to Green Infrastructure, taking into account the scale and type of development. Opportunities for development to enhance Green Infrastructure include:

1. Protecting and improving the Green Infrastructure network, including the ecological network, on and around the site through providing or enhancing functional links or corridors between different Green Infrastructure assets;
2. Providing new Green Infrastructure and/or introducing multifunctional use of existing green spaces in response to a site-specific assessment of need and Green Infrastructure opportunity;
3. Protecting existing high quality and multifunctional corridors, and where present, using opportunities for riparian development sites to create a high-quality river corridor and Green Infrastructure asset; and
4. Aligning with the priorities and actions set out in the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Developments for 20 homes¹¹⁴ or more, or non-residential development of 1,000m² or more, will be required, where appropriate, to:

5. Enhance the landscape setting of the site by improving the character, appearance and condition of access corridors into the site, gateways, settlement edges and landscape features, including historic environment assets;
6. Enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity between residential areas, town centres, schools and workplaces, outdoor sports, tourism and recreational facilities, public transport services and the countryside around the site; and
7. Facilitate for the production of food (e.g. allotments and community gardens) within residential or mixed-use developments.

Major developments¹¹⁵ should use the latest version of the national Urban Greening Factor calculator, or equivalent, to demonstrate that the development will achieve Urban Greening Factor scores, or equivalent, of at least:

- a. 0.3 for developments that are predominantly commercial; and
- b. 0.4 for developments that are predominantly residential.

¹¹⁴ Developments of 20 homes and above or those of 1,000m² and above are of an appropriate size and scale to accommodate meaningful green infrastructure as part of the development. A higher number of homes can justify the additional requirements for green infrastructure.

¹¹⁵ The definition for Major Developments is set out in national planning policy.

An operation and maintenance plan must also be included which satisfactorily demonstrates that the green features will be successfully retained throughout the life of the development.

Applications for householder and changes of use are not required to meet the above criteria but are expected to protect and aim to enhance Green Infrastructure and incorporate practical measures to support biodiversity such as swift bricks, hedgehog highways, bat boxes or access tiles and living walls. Applicants should provide a statement detailing the measures that will be incorporated.

Reasoned Justification

14.42 Development should have regard to the [Oldham Green Infrastructure Strategy](#)¹¹⁶, including the assessment of Green Infrastructure functions, needs and opportunities set out within the following seven priority themes:

1. thriving wildlife for Oldham;
2. carbon neutral Oldham;
3. healthy and active communities;
4. green access for all;
5. distinctive landscapes;
6. slowing the flow and a quality water environment; and
7. sustainable growth and green jobs.

14.43 Green Infrastructure assets can each serve one or more functions. Development should aim to incorporate Green Infrastructure assets that are multi-functional by supporting as many of the above themes as possible.

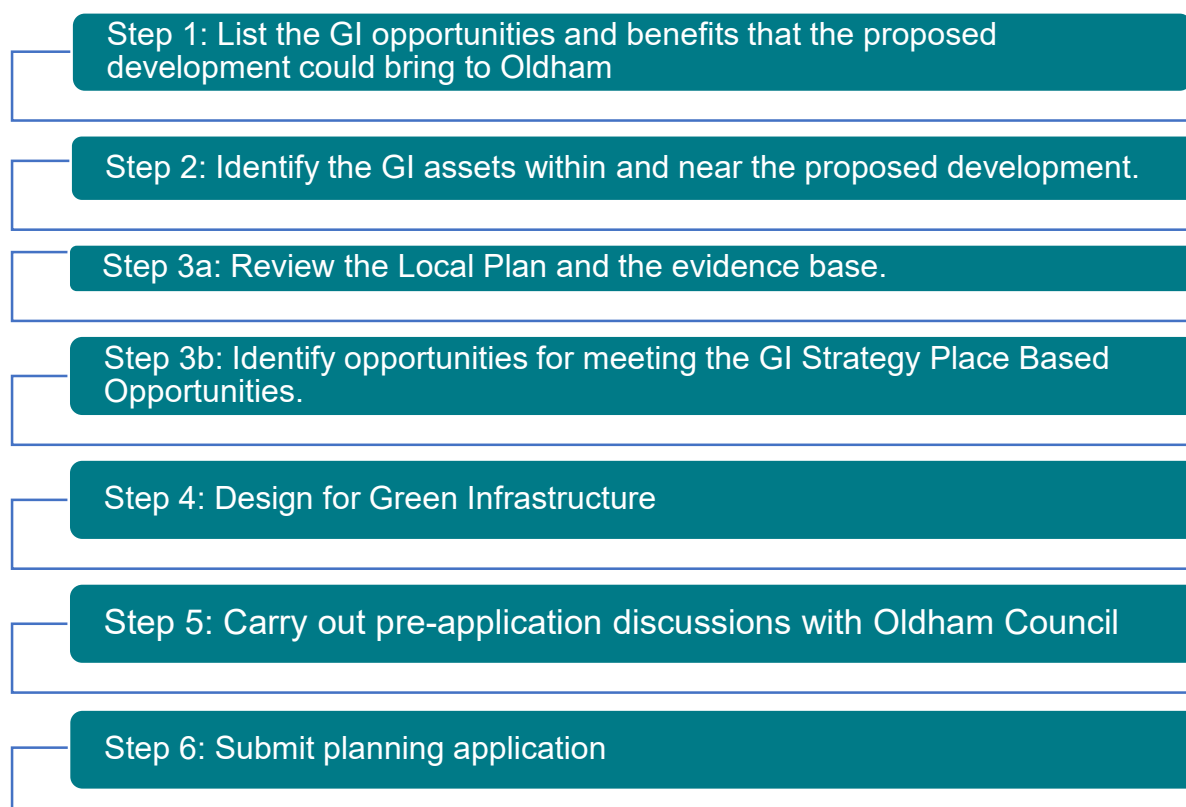
14.44 The Green Infrastructure Strategy provides an up-to-date assessment of current Green Infrastructure provision and opportunities using existing data sets. The spatial data sets produced within the Green Infrastructure Strategy, highlight opportunity areas aligned to local need and can be used to guide development decisions.

14.45 The Green Infrastructure Strategy proposes place-based opportunities including Nature Recovery Networks and some of these are shown on the [Green Infrastructure Network and Opportunity Map](#)¹¹⁷.

14.46 The Green Infrastructure Strategy sets out a step-by-step guide as to how to implement the strategy when considering a development proposal. An outline of the steps is set out below:

¹¹⁶ This document can be found at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2183/oldham_green_infrastructure_strategy

¹¹⁷ This map can be found at: <https://map.oldham.gov.uk/map?name=Green%20Infrastructure>



- 14.47 Development proposals are expected to protect the ecological network and where possible extend or enhance this network.
- 14.48 The Council will seek to improve the Green Infrastructure network by requiring that development proposals adjacent to green corridors and recreational routes provide an extension or link between green corridors and routes.
- 14.49 The Urban Greening Factor (UGF) is a planning tool to improve the provision of Green Infrastructure particularly in urban areas and can be used to contribute towards BNG, the Local Nature Recovery strategy and Oldham's Green Infrastructure Strategy. The target scores reflect the recommended targets by Natural England.
- 14.50 Urban Greening Factor requirements should be considered at the earliest possible stage of design development alongside mandatory BNG requirements to ensure these requirements are considered from the outset of design.
- 14.51 Applicants should set out in a statement detail of how this policy has been incorporated into the design of proposals. Account may also be taken of Sport England's Active Design Principles¹¹⁸ and the voluntary use of other standards such as Building with Nature.
- 14.52 Riparian development sites can contribute to creating a high-quality river corridor by considering opportunities for creating a continuous and enlarged open space adjacent to the rivers; removing poor quality buildings that encroach up to the bank top of watercourses; restoring heavily canalised or culverted waterbodies; removing or

¹¹⁸ Sport England's Active Design Principles can be found at: <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>

modifying redundant weirs; reconnecting a river to its floodplain; and removing invasive non-native species. Further policy on water quality is included within PfE.

- 14.53 Landscaping proposals, including proposals for tree-lined streets, should be integrated with the strategy for sustainable surface water management.
- 14.54 Landscaping proposals including changes in levels and proposals for ecological mitigation, will have regard to the impact on existing utility infrastructure.
- 14.55 Where on-site Green Infrastructure provision is not feasible, the Council will, where reasonable, seek developer contributions either towards the improvement of existing green spaces or towards the provision of new Green Infrastructure in an area of need.
- 14.56 Where compensation is required for the loss of existing Green Infrastructure, then the provision of new or enhanced Green Infrastructure as required by the scale of the development should be in addition to the requirement for compensation.
- 14.57 The Council will also seek developer contributions for the future management and maintenance of Green Infrastructure, where appropriate.
- 14.58 For minor applications such as householder and change of use the Local Nature Recovery Strategy outlines actions that can help enhance nature such as supporting species by installing homes for wildlife and reduce barriers to species movements across and between gardens.
- 14.59 This is supported by national planning guidance which states developments should integrate nest boxes (swift bricks), where possible.

Increasing Tree Cover

- 14.60 The National Tree Mapping dataset confirms that the average canopy cover across the borough is 13.4%. The Green Infrastructure Strategy highlights each wards canopy cover and notes the absence of tree canopy in some of the more elevated areas of Saddleworth and Shaw wards due to the presence of peatland habitat where large areas of tree planting is not always suitable.
- 14.61 The Green Infrastructure Strategy recommends the tree canopy should aim for 20% cover, taking account of the retention of existing trees and the future canopy growth of trees to be planted as part of the landscape for the site. The exception to this is in parts of the Shaw and Saddleworth wards, where the existing peatland habitat takes precedence.
- 14.62 Therefore, it is important that as well as planting new trees existing trees are protected. Where they do need to be replaced this needs to contribute towards this target.
- 14.63 PfE Policy JP-G7 requires replacement trees on the basis of two new trees for each tree lost, or other measures that would also result in a net enhancement in the character and quality of the treescape and biodiversity value in the local area, with a preference for on-site provision. The below policy incorporates two new trees as a minimum but adds further detail to ensure a net enhancement locally.

Policy N4 - Trees

Development proposals are required to aim to protect and retain tree cover within a development site. Developments will:

1. Demonstrate how existing trees and hedgerows and their health have been retained, wherever possible, through careful siting and design, which avoids overshadowing of development;
2. As appropriate, having regard to its scale and nature, contribute to increasing the borough's tree canopy cover and its multi-functional benefits. This should take account of the Green Infrastructure Strategy, the GM LNRS, BNG metric and competing land uses which take precedence such as restorable peat.

The loss of or damage to trees may only be justified where:

1. Adequate replacement planting is proposed; and
2. It is demonstrated that the tree is dead, dying or dangerous; or
3. The tree is causing significant damage to structures; or
4. The tree has little or no amenity value; or
5. It has been demonstrated that all suitable options to retain the tree have been explored and its retention is not possible as part of the development; or
6. Felling the tree is considered good arboricultural practice.

There will be a presumption against development that causes loss of or deterioration to ancient woodland, and ancient and veteran trees.

The Council will use a fixed number system to secure new trees in replacement for those to be removed. The number of replacement trees required will depend on the trunk diameter of the tree proposed for removal as shown in Table N1. The requirement will apply to A and B category trees, category C trees will be replaced on a 2:1 basis in accordance with PfE.

Table N1: A and B Category Tree Replacement Requirements

Trunk Diameter of tree proposed for removal (mm measured in line with BS5837 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction')	Number of replacement trees required
75-199mm	2
200 – 299mm	3
300-399mm	4
400-499mm	5
500-599mm	6
600-699mm	7
700-799mm	8
800mm+	9

Trunk Diameter of tree proposed for removal (mm measured in line with BS5837 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction')	Number of replacement trees required
Veteran/Ancient/Historic / Exceptional	Case by case based on CAVAT value and current government, Woodland Trust and Ancient Tree Forum guidance.

Reasoned Justification

- 14.64 Size class distribution is an important factor in managing a sustainable tree population, as this will ensure that there are enough young trees to replace those older specimens that are eventually lost through old age or disease. The majority of trees in Oldham are in the lowest size categories, 72% of the trees recorded have a diameter at breast height (dbh) of less than 30cm, whilst around 40% of the trees have diameters less than 15cm. Across Oldham approximately 28% of the tree population is larger than 30cm dbh. This compares favourably with cities and towns in other regions of England, where the Trees in Towns 2 survey found that on average only 10–20% of trees have a dbh that is greater than 30cm. Large mature trees offer unique ecological roles not offered by smaller or younger trees. Furthermore, older trees with larger crowns provide greater benefits than a similar number of smaller sized trees.
- 14.65 To maintain or increase a level of mature trees, young trees are needed to restock the larger size classes (with surplus) to include planning for mortality. Therefore, the tree replacement requirements aim to retain mature trees by having a higher number of trees that would be required if a more mature tree was lost or damaged rather than a blanket approach of 2:1. This approach aims to ensure developments avoids loss of trees, particularly mature trees, where possible.
- 14.66 Section 4.5 of BS 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations' describes the different tree categories - Category A (trees of high quality); Category B (trees of moderate quality); and Category C (trees of low quality).
- 14.67 BS 5837 also describes how only trees with a DBH of 75mm or above are to be included within BS 5837 Tree Surveys, hence why the ratios start at 75mm.
- 14.68 Exceptional trees could include rare, unusual, commemorative trees or trees with significant conservation or ecological value.
- 14.69 In accordance with national planning policy, development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists. Where it is necessary to remove Veteran/Ancient/Historic or Exceptional trees compensation will be considered on a case by case basis using CAVAT (Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees) value as well as current [government guidance](#)¹¹⁹, Woodland Trust and Ancient Tree Forum guidance. A sum would be paid as a commuted sum to the Council for tree planting improvements across Oldham.

¹¹⁹ Government guidance on ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions>

- 14.70 CAVAT provides a method for managing trees as public assets rather than liabilities. It is designed not only to be a strategic tool and aid to decision-making in relation to the tree stock as a whole, but also to be applicable to individual cases, where the value of a single tree needs to be expressed in monetary terms.
- 14.71 Replacement trees will be a minimum of 12-14cm girth trees (Containerised – bag-grown or root balled). Watering and maintenance must be included until trees are established in the landscape. Where replacement trees cannot be provided on site a contribution will need to be paid to the Council. Trees will be planted and managed in accordance with BS5455 – Trees: from Nursery to Independence in the Landscape – Recommendations.
- 14.72 Species and locations for planting should be appropriate and agreed by the Council's Arboricultural and Countryside Team and where necessary highways.
- 14.73 Where the tree replacement requirements are not already met in full by biodiversity net gain requirements, development will still be expected to meet the tree replacement standard on-site or off-site through an appropriate legal agreement.
- 14.74 Where an applicant has demonstrated that replacement trees cannot be accommodated within the development site the Council will consider a monetary payment as part of a section 106 agreement so that the required trees can be planted on land nearby or where priorities are highest across Oldham. In these cases, the value per tree will be commensurate with the latest landscape institute figures for tree replacements (£412.00 – 2022).
- 14.75 Planning applications must include an accurate survey of the location, size, condition and species of all trees on the site and whether the trees are used by bats or breeding birds. One should not fell trees before the planning application is granted in order to fully consider the retention of trees and the policy aim.
- 14.76 Where trees are to be retained on a development site, buildings must be located at a sufficient distance to preserve levels of amenity for future users of the property, particularly in the case of residential development, and rear gardens must not be unduly overshadowed. It will be a planning requirement, secured by condition, that adequate measures are taken to protect trees during construction.
- 14.77 Landscaping proposals including proposals for tree-lined streets should be integrated with the strategy for sustainable surface water management.
- 14.78 Local authority consent must be obtained to carry out works to a tree with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on it. Permission must also be obtained to fell or prune trees within conservation areas. Decisions are usually made within six weeks.
- 14.79 The Council may take out TPOs on sites with significant tree cover as development proposals for sites emerge.
- 14.80 Applicants should not fell trees in order to degrade the development site. As well as seeking to avoid loss of biodiversity existing trees should be taken into account in the biodiversity net gain metric. Where there is evidence that the existing tree cover of a site has been deliberately reduced prior to the application being submitted, the number of replacement trees required will be calculated based on the number of trees that existed on the site immediately prior to those activities taking place.

Monitoring

- 14.81 The main Local Plan indicators that will be used to monitor this chapter are:

- Single data list 160-00 Proportion of local sites where positive conservation management is being or has been implemented
- Change in areas of biodiversity designations (i.e. SBI updates)
- Percentage of sites designated for nature in active management for nature conservation
- Percentage of tree canopy cover

14.82 In addition, Biodiversity Duty Reports will be prepared including information on BNG.

14.83 The main PfE indicators that will be used to help monitor this chapter are:

- Gross area of new habitat created from the application of biodiversity net gain
- Number, area and condition of SBIs
- Number of trees planted annually (metric to be determined with respect to tree planting programmes and on-site delivery as a result of planning decisions where available)

15 Oldham's Historic Environment

- 15.1 Building a Better Oldham seeks to ensure we are building quality homes; providing opportunities to learn and gain new skills; to grow local businesses and create jobs; ensuring Oldham is the greenest borough and improving health and well-being. The historic environment can contribute towards each of these objectives.
- 15.2 Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance so they can be enjoyed for their contribution to quality of life.
- 15.3 Oldham with its hugely significant industrial past is rich in history and heritage with both designated and non-designated assets. In particular, the clusters of mills contributing to Oldham's landscape character, give the borough an exceptionally strong identity and sense of place¹²⁰.
- 15.4 The Local Plan sets out a positive strategy for heritage. Two areas that the Local Plan has focussed on is a strategy for the boroughs non-designated mills¹²¹ and an appraisal and management plan to enhance Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area with the aim of removing the conservation area from the 'at risk' register¹²².
- 15.5 The borough of Oldham is characterised by rich and diverse heritage that plays an important part of Oldham's identity. Significant historic buildings, industrial townscapes, and landscapes amid the South Pennines, make up and provide a multitude of designated and non-designated heritage assets. Therefore, new development will be sought in a way that compliments and respects this rich history. Consisting of the historic buildings, conservation areas, parks and gardens, archaeology, waterways, areas of distinct local character and townscapes. The Local Plan seeks to proactively manage change and move forward, whilst reflecting the borough's capacity to preserve its irreplaceable heritage.

Policy HE1 – The Historic Environment

Development proposals that positively conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their setting, will be supported by the Council. In addition to fulfilling its statutory obligations, and working with partners, we will:

- 1. Secure the preservation and enhancement of Oldham's heritage assets;**
- 2. Promote and support heritage-led regeneration and development;**
- 3. Produce or update conservation area appraisals and management plans;**
- 4. Continue to enhance Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area with the aim of removing it from the 'at risk' register;**

¹²⁰ Information on mill clusters can be found within the Oldham Mills Strategy, including the landscape overview available at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

¹²¹ Oldham Mills Strategy can be found at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

¹²² The Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan can be found at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

- 5. Manage development proposals affecting conservation areas and ensure that elements which contribute to a conservation area's special character and appearance are preserved and enhanced;**
- 6. Seek to identify and acknowledge local non designated heritage assets;**
- 7. Work positively to help implement the Oldham Mills Strategy to safeguard the future of heritage assets at risk;**
- 8. Protect and enable restoration and appreciation of the canals; and**
- 9. Maximise opportunities to increase the understanding and interpretation of the borough's historic environment.**

Reasoned Justification

- 15.6 As a result of Oldham's extensive and evolving past, the borough has a rich historic environment. Oldham's heritage can be traced back for nearly 10,000 years, with worked stone tools from the Mesolithic period found in the eastern part of the borough. The Bowl Barrow of Knarr Barn, provides important information on the diversity of beliefs and social organisations amongst early prehistoric communities, thus being worthy of protection as a scheduled monument. A further scheduled monument in Oldham is the Roman Fort of Castleshaw. This fort served as permanent bases for auxiliary units of the Roman Army and provides important information on the early occupation of the north of England.
- 15.7 Changes in the division of land in the 16th century resulted in the escalation of farming and their associated farm complexes, folds and workers cottages. However, over time land sizes shrunk and thus profits reduced, pushing the production and sale of textiles. The emergence of independent yeoman clothiers saw the development of grander, wealthy clothier houses and by the mid 1700's rows of weavers' cottages to house the small communities of people dependent on the textile industry. Many significant examples of such are still seen across Saddleworth and are designated as listed buildings. Local market centres, such as Greenfield, Shaw and Delph were established and places such as Uppermill developed on important trade routes. Many of which are now designated as conservation areas.
- 15.8 Through Industrialisation, a large number of water powered cotton and woollen mills were built on the rivers Irk and Irwell. With the development of steam power, resulting in large multi storey mills and associated terraced housing, to accommodate industrial workers, that had a major impact on the landscape across Oldham. Although many existing mills are designated heritage assets, the [Oldham Mills Strategy](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy)¹²³ aims to safeguard the remaining mill stock that is non designated. The associated development of transport, such as canals and railways, had a significant impact on the industry and landscape of the district and are still evidenced across the borough. Including the listed Uppermill Viaduct and the historic canals. These assets should be protected, restored where needed and appreciated for the role they played.
- 15.9 In the late 1800's/ early 1900's Oldham Town Centre adopted a commercial and civic identity. A new market, civic buildings, banks, arcades, hotels and shops were built.

¹²³ This document can be found at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

However, the industrial decline of the early 20th century and economic depression led to unemployment and thus vacancy and degradation of these grand buildings.

- 15.10 Additionally, during Oldham's prosperity, middle class suburbs developed on the fringes of the historic core. Some of these around public parks with formal layouts, landscaping and structures such as the registered Alexandra Park and Garden and surrounding conservation area. Remaining large detached and semi-detached homes represent an early element of suburbanisation which helps to increase the understanding and interpretation of the borough's historic environment.
- 15.11 It is therefore essential that the most important elements of Oldham's historic environment are protected as positive assets whilst contributing to the ongoing growth of the borough. Therefore, change must come forward in a managed way and be informed by a proper understanding of the evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal significance of these heritage assets.
- 15.12 The [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#)¹²⁴ sets out statutory duties and responsibilities in relation to designated heritage assets, their listing and protection. It also outlines the procedures for the designation and management of conservation areas. Part I deals with listed buildings and Part II deals with conservation areas. The act includes controls for the demolition, alteration or extension of buildings, objects, or structures of particular architectural or historic interest, as well as conservation areas.
- 15.13 In addition, the [Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979](#)¹²⁵ provides specific protection for monuments of national interest and [The Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953](#)¹²⁶ makes provision for the compilation of a register of gardens and other land (parks and gardens, and battlefields).
- 15.14 A Greater Manchester Local Heritage Listing Project is also underway and is being coordinated by Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS). The aim is to identify and recognise non designated heritage assets that make a significant contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of an area and place them on a local list. The Local List will be added to the Council's website when completed.
- 15.15 The Historic Environment Record (HER) is also being updated and digitised by GMAAS. Details of where this can be accessed will be added to the Council's website when available.

Policy HE2 - Securing the Preservation and Enhancement of Oldham's Heritage Assets

Development proposals will be supported which sustain and enhance heritage assets and their settings. The Council will support opportunities to put heritage assets to viable sustainable uses consistent with their conservation and sensitive restoration.

Proposals will be assessed in line with national planning policy having regard to circumstances of the case. Proposals affecting a designated heritage asset (or an archaeological site of national importance) and its setting should identify the degree of harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset.

¹²⁴ This Act can be found at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents>

¹²⁵ This Act can be found at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46/contents>

¹²⁶ This Act can be found at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/1-2/49/contents>

Harm to designated heritage assets will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The Council will take a proactive approach to secure the appropriate restoration or maintenance of heritage assets at risk, including enforcement action which includes compulsory purchase orders, urgent works notices, repair notices and dangerous structure notices, where appropriate.

Development will be supported where it is designed sympathetically having regard to the significance of the asset, its character, features and setting.

Development proposals affecting an archaeological site of less than national importance is required to conserve those elements which contribute to their significance in line with the importance of the remains. Where developments affecting such sites are acceptable in principle, the following approach will be followed:

- 1. Mitigation of damage will be ensured through the preservation of archaeological features in situ as a preferred solution; and**
- 2. In cases where the balanced judgement concludes preservation in situ is not justified and should not be pursued, it will be a requirement that they are appropriately excavated and recorded, before or during development. Subsequent analysis, publication and dissemination of the findings will be required to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and deposited with the Historic Environment Record.**

Applications, which will affect an archaeological site of either less than national importance or of national importance, should submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Proposals that would result in the total or partial loss of a heritage asset, will require the full recording of the heritage asset and the record and commentary deposited with the Local Planning Authority and the Historic Environment Record.

Applications affecting heritage assets and their setting should be fully justified and accompanied by full information necessary to assess the impact of the proposals on the heritage asset. Proposals that affect heritage assets will require the submission of a Heritage Statement (which may form part of a Design and Access Statement) proportionate to the asset's significance.

The statement should:

- a. describe the significance of the asset, including its setting;**
- b. assess the impact / identified harm the proposal has on its significance; and**
- c. provide clear and convincing justification for the proposed works that outweigh any identified harm.**

Reasoned Justification

- 15.16 The Council will work supportively with applicants on proposals to ensure the continued use of heritage assets, particularly where they are 'at-risk' or vulnerable to ensure that Oldham's distinctive character is maintained, that heritage assets play a role in helping to meet our development needs and that heritage can be an asset for future generations to enjoy.
- 15.17 The Council will take a proactive approach to secure the appropriate restoration or maintenance of heritage assets at risk, including enforcement action which includes compulsory purchase orders, urgent works notices, repair notices and dangerous structure notices, where appropriate. The owners of heritage assets are encouraged to be proactive in seeking grant funding opportunities.
- 15.18 The setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral. The Council will support opportunities within new developments to enhance the setting of heritage assets for example removal or replacement of negative buildings with better design, introducing new views that add to public experience or improving public access to, or interpretation of, the asset and its setting. Applicants should follow guidance set out in [Historic England Good Practice Advice Planning Note 3 \(The Setting of Heritage Assets\)](#)¹²⁷.
- 15.19 Significance is defined as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. The Council recognises the valuable contributions that heritage assets make to the borough, therefore, a clear understanding of the significance of these assets should be presented as part of any planning application. [Historic England's Advice Note 12](#)¹²⁸ provides guidance on analysing significance in line with national planning policy.
- 15.20 National planning policy identifies the degree of harm (from a designated assets alteration, destruction, or from development within its setting) as either 'total loss', 'substantial harm' or 'less than substantial harm'. Within each category, the extent of harm may vary and must be clearly articulated and justified by the applicant. Appendix 12 expands upon national planning policy to try and help towards a potential further understanding of the scale of harm that can be used to assess the degree of harm to an asset's significance.
- 15.21 In terms of public benefits these could be anything that flows from the proposed development and delivers economic, social and/or environmental objectives of a scale that would make a positive contribution to the local surrounding area. This may be in terms of tackling any local issues such as low income, health deprivation, skills attainment and employment levels as well as enhancement of the environment. Having

¹²⁷ This document can be found at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/>

¹²⁸ This document can be found at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/statements-heritage-significance-advice-note-12/>

regard to strategic opportunities such as those identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy or the Council's [Green Infrastructure Strategy](#)¹²⁹.

- 15.22 A range of supporting evidence can be considered when considering heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. These can include Landscape Character Assessments, conservation area appraisals and management plans, urban design frameworks, masterplans and design codes.
- 15.23 When undertaking a Heritage Statement, the Historic Environment Record should be consulted as a minimum and the Council would expect applicants to liaise with GMAAS, in addition to any further available evidence and expertise. The Council would expect to see which heritage assets and their settings are affected, a thorough understanding of the significance of the asset and its settings; and how significance has been considered and reflected in any proposal to ensure harm is minimised and enhancement maximised.
- 15.24 Historic England maintains the Heritage at Risk register¹³⁰. The register identifies assets that are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. The register is intended as a way to focus on the heritage assets that are at greatest risk and that offer the best opportunities for positive development.
- 15.25 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act provides the Council with powers to intervene where heritage within the borough is at risk. Additionally, masterplans and development frameworks should look for opportunities to use vacant heritage assets and improve the condition where they are deteriorating.
- 15.26 A Local List is currently being prepared and should be consulted when considering proposals for non-designated heritage assets. Occasionally, a new, undesignated asset - usually archaeological - will be found in the course of investigating a site or preparing it for development. Further investigation is usually required to understand the significance of the heritage asset, particularly archaeological sites. Development proposals which may affect archaeological heritage assets shall be informed by sufficient evidence. Information on archaeology and the planning systems can be found in [Historic England's Advice Note 17 'Planning and Archaeology'](#)¹³¹ (or any subsequent updates).
- 15.27 Where potential heritage assets have not been included on the HER, they will be assessed according to the criteria set out for local listing in Historic England's [Guidance Note 'Local Heritage Listing: Historic England Advice Note 7'](#)¹³², or subsequent national guidance.
- 15.28 Where proposals are likely to affect significant archaeological sites of known importance, or those that become apparent through the development management process, background research followed up by archaeological investigation will be required prior to their determination.

¹²⁹ This document can be found at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2183/oldham_green_infrastructure_strategy

¹³⁰ For the latest Historic England at risk register please visit: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/>

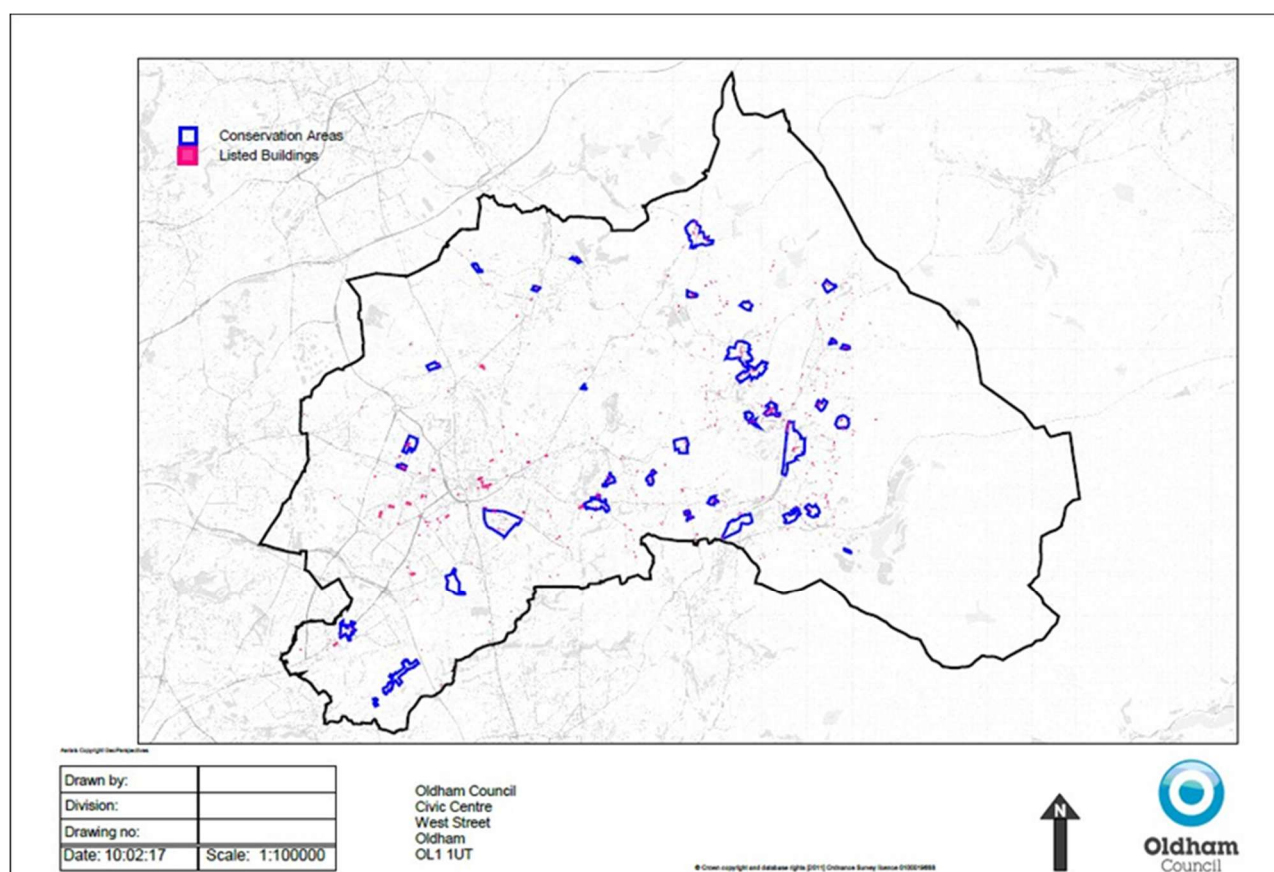
¹³¹ This document can be found at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/planning-archaeology-advice-note-17>

¹³² This document can be found at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/>

Conservation Areas

- 15.29 There are 36 conservation areas in the borough covering 250.79 hectares. The existing conservation areas were designated in the 1970s and 1980s and with the exception of Oldham Town Centre would benefit from updated appraisals and management plans, particularly as 20 conservation areas in the borough are 'vulnerable'. Management Plans will ensure that identified risks are appropriately managed to prevent further conservation areas from being identified on the 'at risk' register.
- 15.30 The existing conservation areas are shown on Figure HE1 below and will be shown on the Policies Map.

Figure HE1: Oldham's Existing Conservation Areas



Policy HE3 - Development Proposals Affecting Conservation Areas

Impact on Conservation Areas:

Proposals affecting a conservation area should preserve or enhance those elements which contribute to its character and appearance especially any elements identified in Conservation Area Appraisals as making a positive contribution to the significance of that area.

Proposals that would result in the loss of a building or other element which make a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area will be treated as substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) or less than substantial harm. Proposals leading to substantial harm will not be

supported unless exceptional¹³³ circumstances apply. If the harm is less than substantial, this will be weighed against any public benefit that the same development might make.

Proposals within a conservation area or affecting the setting should:

1. be of high quality, which respects and reflects the character and appearance of the conservation area and should be of appropriate scale, density, height, form, massing, layout, plot position, materials, colours, composition and detailed design. Imitation of earlier styles is not encouraged;
2. retain original building plots, where their relationship with the pattern of development and other plots makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area;
3. protect existing street patterns, open spaces, walls, railings, materials and other elements that are an integral part of the conservation area; and
4. carefully consider the consequent changes to a use of a building, including amongst others, delivery access, parking, and external services, such as condensing units. Changes that have a detrimental impact on the conservation area will not be permitted.

Shopfronts, retail frontages and signage within Conservation Areas:

5. New shopfronts will be in-keeping with the character and appearance of the host building and relate to the design of the upper parts of the facade;
6. New shopfronts within historic buildings will preserve those elements that contribute to the traditional character of the building including historic corbels, pilasters, fascias and stall risers, or seek to reinstate them where missing. Size, scale, elaborate or simple design and detailing, the use of correct materials and colour schemes must all be considered in making shopfronts acceptable;
7. Signage will be sensitively designed and integrated into the shopfront and streetscene;
8. Signage should relate to its character, scale and architectural features, avoiding dominating the building façade;
9. Proposals are required to avoid internally illuminated box fascia or projecting signs;
10. Shop signs will be located at fascia level and follow the pattern within the street, avoiding high level signs;
11. The location of signage on non-retail buildings must be carefully considered so as to not harm the appearance of the building;
12. Opportunities should be taken to remove detracting elements of shopfronts and signage; and

¹³³ See national planning policy.

13. Solid external security roller shutters will not be permitted unless the need for them can be robustly justified. Lattice grilles or internal roller shutters would be acceptable alternatives.

Applications affecting the character or appearance and / or the setting of a conservation area will be required to submit a Heritage Statement.

Applicants are required to take into account statutory provisions for the protection of trees.

Reasoned Justification

- 15.31 The total loss of a building or element (for example open space) that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area would not be supported unless exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated. For example, if the proposal allows an asset back into viable use or the loss of an asset that would better reveal or enhance another asset or the character, appearance and / or setting of the conservation area. A positive building or element may be listed or unlisted. Nearly all conservation areas within the borough have listed assets within them. Development proposals should seek to preserve the elements of the conservation area which make a positive contribution and should aim to enhance any neutral and negative contributions. There will be the presumption that only negative or neutral buildings or elements will be permitted for demolition where the public benefits outweigh the loss.
- 15.32 It is felt that some policies from the [Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan](#) (CAAMP) SPD¹³⁴ are applicable to many other conservation areas. As such, specific policies on shop fronts and signage (for example a conservation area including a centre) and new development have been incorporated into the Local Plan. The CAAMP highlighted that poor signage and shopfronts can be very detracting features, affecting the significance of conservation areas as well as the amenity of the area. Solid external roller shutters will not be permitted unless the need for them can be robustly justified, for example through details of unreasonable increases in insurance costs.
- 15.33 Trees in conservation areas are covered by Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act. Anyone wishing to carry out works to a tree in a conservation area must notify the local planning authority through a 'section 211 notice'. This may or may not result in a TPO being made. Consent must be obtained, unless covered by exceptions, to carry out works to trees covered by a TPO from the Council.
- 15.34 Development proposals should have regard to any existing and future conservation areas appraisals and management plans.
- 15.35 The Council may also designate further conservation areas, where justified by robust appraisals.

¹³⁴ This document can be found at:
https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/1599/oldham_town_centre_conservation_area_appraisal_and_management_plan_caamp_supplementary_planning_document_spd

Oldham's Textile Mills

- 15.36 The Oldham Mills Strategy was commissioned by Oldham Council and Historic England to develop a positive strategy for the sustainable future of the textile mill stock across Oldham. This work complements Historic England's wider project Mills of the North.
- 15.37 The Oldham Mills Strategy identifies the non-designated mills across Oldham which are of particular landscape and heritage value and sets out a robust strategy to ensure their sustainable future, which considers their potential for future development focussing on residential and employment uses.
- 15.38 This is also part of our positive approach to making the most efficient use of brownfield land and existing buildings, reducing the need for additional pressure on greenfield sites and reducing our carbon footprint. The reuse of mills can add to local distinctiveness as part of place making, attract investment and help retain Oldham's strong identity and culture.

Policy HE4 - Oldham's Mills

The Council will proactively support, through planning decisions and in fulfilling its wider functions, proposals that establish a positive future for Oldham's Textile Mills through their reuse and repair. Development proposals affecting Oldham's mill stock will need to be supported by a robust assessment of viability, heritage significance and structural and building condition, in line with the findings of the Mills Strategy.

Proposals should retain those elements of the mill stock which contribute to the local identity and sense of place of Oldham and ensure they are appropriately conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Development proposals will be assessed having regard to the following criteria relevant to the identified level of priority and clusters contained within the Oldham Mills Strategy.

High Priority Mills:

The high priority mills make a clear positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and are identified as non-designated heritage assets. The Council will support applications which include the retention and reuse of the identified high priority mills and all associated buildings and structures. Proposals which would remove, harm or undermine the significance of a high priority mill or its contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place will be permitted only where the public benefits of the development would outweigh the harm.

Medium Priority Mills:

The Council will actively encourage and support applications that include the retention and reuse of identified medium priority mills and associated buildings and structures. Development proposals that include the alteration, extension or demolition of any medium priority mills and their associated buildings will need to demonstrate with clear justification, in relation to the significance and setting of the asset and identified public benefits.

Low Priority Mills:

The identified low priority mills are generally considerably altered and make a limited contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place. Development proposals involving the comprehensive redevelopment of low priority mills and / or their retention will be supported in principle subject to compliance with other policies of the Local Plan.

Table HE1: Mills Level of Priority

Priority	Mills
High Priority Mills	Ace Mill (Gorse Mill No.2); Bell Mill; Briar Mill; Cairo Mill; Earl Mill; Falcon Mill; Gorse Mill No.1; Heron Mill; Ivy Mill; Longrange Mill (Orme Mill); Majestic Mill (Lower Mill); Malta Mill; Marlborough (No.1) Mill; Osborne Mill; Ram Mill; Rasping Mill (Valley Mill); Raven Mill; Slackcote Mill; Swan Mill; Warth Mill (Wharf Mill); and Werneth Mill (Henley Street / Featherstall Road North)
Medium Priority Mills	Adelaide Mill (Hartfold Old Works); Albert Mill; Austerlands Mill; Belgrave Mill; Delta Mill; Duke Mill; Fountain Mill; Gatehead Mill; Grape Mill; Haybottoms Mill; Jubilee Mill; Jubilee Mill (Fulling) (Woodbottom Mill); Knarr Mill; Lilac Mill; Lumb Mill; Oak View Mills; Pingle Mill (Pringle Mill); Stockfield Mill; Thornham Mill; Vale Mill (Chamber Road); Vine Mill; Waterside Mill; and Wellington Mill (Knoll Mill)

Priority	Mills
Low Priority Mills	Alliance Mill; Bee Mill; Britannia Mill; Dob Lane End Mill; Forge Mill; Greengate Mill; Kinders Lane Mill ¹³⁵ ; Lane End Mill (Royton Lane Mill); Morton Mill; Prince of Wales Mill ¹³⁶ ; Springfield Mill; Springfield Works; Vale Mill (Stockfield Road); Werneth Mill (Manchester Road); and Woodend Mill

Mill Clusters:

The clustering of particular groups of mills provides a unique character to the local landscape and give Oldham an exceptionally strong sense of place and local distinctiveness. The Council will support applications which retain mills and their associated buildings that have been identified as contributing to an identified cluster:

Cluster 1 – Briar Mill, Lilac Mill and Duke Mill;

Cluster 2 – Majestic Mill, Cairo Mill and Longrange Mill;

Cluster 3 – Manor Mill, Werneth Mill (Featherstall Road North), Osborne Mill, Anchor Mill, Stockfield Mill and Hartford Works;

Cluster 4 – Chadderton Mill, Nile Mill, Raven Mill, Ace Mill, Gorse Mill and Ram Mill;

Cluster 5 – Vale Mill, Devon Mill, Heron Mill, Earl Mill and Bell Mill; and

Cluster 6 – Ivy Mill, Regent Mill and Marlborough Mill

Development proposals which will detract or harm a mill cluster through demolition, interruption of key identified views or through inappropriate development by virtue of its design will not be supported unless there is a clear and convincing justification.

Proposals that would result in the total or partial loss of elements of Oldham's mill stock, will require the full recording of the heritage asset and the record and

¹³⁵ Kinders Lane Mills scored medium on the heritage assessment and therefore planning applications for these mills must be accompanied by heritage statements proportionate to the heritage significance to provide clear justification for the proposed approach and applicants should consider incorporating social significance into the scheme.

¹³⁶ Prince of Wales Mill scored medium on the heritage assessment and therefore planning applications for this mill must be accompanied by a heritage statement proportionate to the heritage significance to provide clear justification for the proposed approach and applicants should consider incorporating social significance into the scheme.

Reasoned Justification

- 15.39 The non-designated mill stock forms a fundamental part of Oldham's historic environment and gives the landscape of the borough a clear distinctive character thereby contributing to local identity and sense of place. Proposals should retain those elements of the mill stock which contribute to the local identity and sense of place of Oldham and ensure they are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 15.40 The Mills Strategy has provided the Council and applicants with a policy framework, within which to assess proposals affecting textile mills. When valuing and assessing the viability of an individual mill for whatever purpose, it is essential to take into account market conditions prevailing at the date of assessment, location, individual physical characteristics, structural condition, tenure, planning restraints (if any) covenants and all other relevant factors. The appraisals and strategies contained within the Mills Strategy are, therefore, to be taken solely as a guide and each mill should be assessed individually on its own merits and on the market conditions at the time when decisions are being made about its future.
- 15.41 It should also be noted that many of the mills are in employment use and are likely to continue in employment use over the medium to long term. Therefore, proposals for alternative uses, whether this is conversion, refurbishment or redevelopment will need to ensure that policies relating to the loss of employment land are met.
- 15.42 The high priority mills are non-designated heritage assets. Planning applications relating to high priority mills must be accompanied by detailed Heritage Statements to provide clear justification for the approach adopted and should also consider how social significance of the mills could be incorporated into the scheme. For example, this could include the delivery of public art within the scheme linked to the past use of the mill or reflecting the social significance of a mill within the public realm. Proposals involving the full demolition or partial loss of important mill elements will need to be supported by robust evidence including detailed viability assessments and evidence of marketing to demonstrate the re-use of the mill for alternative uses is not viable. Building recording must be undertaken in connection with proposals involving the loss of key elements of high priority mill building fabric.
- 15.43 The medium priority mills are considered as non-designated heritage assets on a case-by-case basis as planning applications come forward for their redevelopment based upon their relative heritage and landscape value. Planning applications relating to medium priority mills must be accompanied by detailed Heritage Statements to provide clear justification for the approach adopted and should also consider how social significance of the mills could be incorporated into the scheme. The alteration, extension or demolition of any buildings contributing to the landscape or heritage interest will require clear justification in relation to the significance and setting of the asset. Building recording must be undertaken in connection with proposals involving the loss of key elements of medium priority mill building fabric.
- 15.44 Low priority mills could be considered as non-designated heritage assets on a case-by-case basis as planning applications come forward for their redevelopment based upon their relative heritage and landscape value. Planning applications relating to low priority mills must be accompanied by Heritage Statements to provide justification for the approach taken. Building recording must be undertaken in connection with

proposals involving the loss of key elements of low priority mill building fabric, where deemed appropriate.

- 15.45 The Landscape Overview highlights the contribution that the mill stock makes in defining the distinctive character of Oldham and demonstrates that Oldham's landscape character would be irreversibly changed if particular individual mills or clusters of mills were demolished or significantly altered to the extent that the original mill character is permanently lost.
- 15.46 The mill names shown are as listed in the Public Gazetteer in the Mills Strategy. However, many people will know the mills by alternative mill names, and these are shown in brackets within the policy, where applicable. Sometimes a road name is also shown to clarify which mill this is where there are mills with the same name.
- 15.47 The policy focuses on non-designated mills, with the exception of the mill clusters. Mills that are listed (or in conservation areas) are already protected by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and covered by other planning policies.

Canals

- 15.48 The Huddersfield Narrow Canal and Rochdale Canal both pass through Oldham Borough. The canal network has played a significant part in the development and heritage of the settlements in Oldham since the 18th century. The conservation, development and improved access to Oldham's canal corridors will allow for the community and visitors to celebrate the unique industrial heritage of these historic manmade waterways. They also have recreational and ecological roles, contribute to the borough's local identity, and enhance Oldham's tourism offer.

Policy HE5 - Canals

The Huddersfield Narrow Canal and Rochdale Canal will be protected as heritage assets (designated and non-designated heritage), which contribute to the borough's sense of place.

To ensure that the future restoration of the canals is enabled, development alongside the line of the canal and towpath shall not prevent its restoration, conservation and enhancement of the waterway's heritage and built environment. Green Infrastructure incorporating walking, wheeling and cycling routes and heritage interpretation features along its line should be provided.

Proposed development that harms the setting or appearance of the canal will not be supported. Any new development should respect the canal frontage, ensuring active quality elevations, whilst respecting the unique character of the waterway and its associated heritage assets. Opportunities should be taken to improve the appearance and vitality of the canal side environment.

Reasoned Justification

- 15.49 The canal system of water transport played a vital role in the industrial revolution at a time when the road network was not able to transport mass goods from place to place.

- 15.50 This is especially evident at Failsworth Pole Conservation Area and Uppermill Conservation Area, where the Rochdale and Huddersfield Narrow canals respectively provide an important focal point alongside neighbouring historic former industrial buildings. The canals provide part of the setting, experience and communal value contributing to the sense of place for many of Oldham's textile mills. The canals contain several heritage assets, including lock cottages, lock features, stone walls and bridges, some of which are designated.
- 15.51 As well as being important heritage assets, the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and Rochdale Canal also yield other benefits to the borough, such as providing recreational routes for exercise and an associated tourism offer and ecological networks.

Monitoring

15.52 The main Local Plan indicators that will be used to monitor this chapter are:

- Number of heritage assets on the National Heritage List for England
- Number of listed buildings and number of buildings in conservation areas lost through new development
- Number and type of developments permitted on non-designated Mills

15.53 The main PfE indicator that will be used to help monitor this chapter are:

- Increase percentage of buildings on the “at risk register” with a strategy for their repair and re-use

16 Achieving High Quality Design

- 16.1 National planning policy places great importance on design as a key aspect of sustainable development and an essential part of good planning. This is demonstrated through the [National Design Guide](#)¹³⁷ (NDG), and the [National Model Design Code](#)¹³⁸ (NMDC), which illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.
- 16.2 Well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create their physical character and distinctiveness. The NDG identifies the following ten characteristics which contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in national planning policy:
- **Context** – understanding the location of a development and how it relates to its surroundings.
 - **Identity** – that is attached to buildings and spaces which contributes to character and local distinctiveness.
 - **Built form** – the pattern of the built environment and how this contributes to local character and sense of place.
 - **Movement** – ensuring that places are accessible and easy to move around.
 - **Nature** – by ensuring that nature forms an integral part of well-designed places that contribute to quality of place and people's quality of life.
 - **Public spaces** – ensuring that these are safe, social and inclusive.
 - **Uses** – by creating sustainable places with a mix of uses that support everyday activities.
 - **Homes and Buildings** – by creating functional, healthy and sustainable homes and buildings.
 - **Resources** - The creation of efficient and resilient places and buildings that conserve natural resources, including land, water, energy and materials.
 - **Lifespan** – developments that are made to last and adaptable.
- 16.3 The policies below seek to reflect the above characteristics and clarify our design expectations and establish some of the key principles against which the design and layout of all new development will be considered.

Policy D1 – Achieving High Quality Design

All development is required to achieve a high standard of design, consistent with local design guides or design codes where available. Developments that are of a poor standard of design will be refused.

Development proposals, where applicable, should through their design:

- 1. deliver buildings and spaces that are appropriate, in terms of their form, massing and height, for the site and surrounding context, and positively respond to local distinctiveness and character;**

¹³⁷ This document can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

¹³⁸ This document can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code>

2. encourage and facilitate active travel with convenient, safe and inclusive pedestrian and cycling routes and promote wayfinding for all travel modes;
3. be based on a clear street hierarchy, with clearly defined public and private environments;
4. ensure that site layout, orientation, design, and where applicable, common spaces provide privacy, adequate daylight and active frontages with the public realm. Noise from any common areas to individual dwellings should be reduced;
5. provide adaptable and resilient buildings and places, that are easily maintainable and resistant to the effects of ageing, weather and climatic conditions;
6. ensure buildings and spaces are designed in a way to be inclusive to different users (e.g. age, gender, mental and physical ability);
7. ensure that recycling and waste disposal, storage and any on-site management facilities are conveniently located, appropriately screened and are designed to work effectively;
8. promote health and well-being through active design;
9. incorporate appropriate landscaping and urban greening, such as green roofs, green walls, trees and shrubs and support nature through the incorporation of wildlife-friendly features (such as nest boxes) and integration with the nature recovery network;
10. adopt a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to development, respecting existing site constraints including utilities situated within, and running through, the site;
11. ensure that the design and layout minimises actual and perceived opportunities for crime, anti-social behaviour, disorder and terrorism;
12. ensure parking areas reduce their visual impact through landscaping and boundary treatments; and
13. in the case of residential development, make appropriate provision for gardens and / or outdoor amenity space that reflects the type and size of each dwelling.

In addition to the above development proposals involving tall buildings should:

- a) ensure the lower section or base of the building is designed to relate well to the street environment and context, through the use of architectural detailing and definition of any upper storey setback;
- b) not unduly affect their surroundings adversely in terms of microclimate, wind turbulence, overshadowing and shading, noise, reflected glare, aviation, navigation and telecommunication interference; and
- c) incorporate active frontages at ground level where appropriate.

Where required details of how the proposal addresses these principles are to be set out in a Design and Access Statement.

Proposals for strategic developments should be supported by a design-led masterplan or framework and, where appropriate, a site-specific design code to show how it achieves the principles above.

Developments that raise significant design issues will be expected, where appropriate, to undergo a local design review¹³⁹ before any planning application is determined.

Reasoned Justification

- 16.4 The goal of a design-led approach is to ensure that new development not only meets functional and regulatory requirements but also enhances the overall quality of life in a community. It aims to create places that are not only visually appealing but also sustainable, functional, and resilient, fostering a sense of identity and belonging among residents and visitors.
- 16.5 High quality design can respond to a wide range of issues such as tackling climate change, improving local biodiversity, enhancing a sense of place, promoting inclusivity and providing healthier and more active places. Important design considerations therefore feature in other policies in this plan, particularly in relation to the historic environment, biodiversity, flood risk and transport. Being able to respond appropriately to these considerations and understanding how they interact is a key part of achieving high quality design.
- 16.6 As part of the preparation of any statements, applicants may consider referring to guidance produced by specialist organisations in relation to specific design issues, such as:
- Streets for All Design Guide published by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM);
 - Greater Manchester's Sustainable Drainage Guide published by TfGM;
 - Active Design Guidance and The Ten Principles of Active Design published by Sport England;
 - Designing Out Crime published by the Design Council;
 - Manual for Streets
 - Raising the healthiest generation in history: why it matters where children and young people live published by the TCPA;
 - Building with Nature;
 - Building for a Healthy Life (formerly Building for Life 12) published by Homes England;
 - Green infrastructure Planning and Design Guide published by Natural England; and
 - In relation to historic buildings, sites and landscapes, technical guidance notes from Historic England.
- 16.7 For the purposes of this policy, a tall building is defined as any building that is significantly taller than its surroundings and/or any building of five storey's or more.
- 16.8 Strategic developments that are required to be supported by a design-led masterplan or framework include relevant allocations within Places for Everyone as well as other sites that come forward which may be of strategic importance. For example, Oldham

¹³⁹ An independent consideration of the planning application proposal undertaken by a panel of relevant professionals prior to the formal determination of the proposal by the Council, with all costs met by the applicant.

Town Centre, sites comprising multiple landowners or where it is necessary to secure consistency in layout and/or design across more than one site.

- 16.9 Where required, the format of design reviews for any development should have regard to the Design Council's guidance [Design Review Principles and Practice](#)¹⁴⁰.
- 16.10 It is intended that this policy will be supplemented by design guides and codes as appropriate which will set out more detailed advice on achieving high standards of design that reflect the local character of the area. Regard will be given to the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code where no locally produced design guides or codes are in place.

Policy D2 – Advertisements, Signage and Shop Fronts

Advertisements and Signage

Advertisements and signage shall contribute positively to the visual amenity and safety of the built environment. To ensure this, advertisements and signage will be supported where they:

- 1. have regard to the character and appearance of the local area, site and host building;**
- 2. are appropriate in terms of siting, design, size, scale, number, colour, and method and level of illumination;**
- 3. would not lead to an excessive, cluttered or overbearing appearance on the host building or vicinity of the site;**
- 4. would not interfere with public highway safety or management (including associated footpaths), cause or worsen light pollution or any other safety hazard;**
- 5. would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of nearby residents and / or occupiers of sensitive uses; and**
- 6. do not harm the significance of any listed buildings, conservation areas, or other designated heritage assets in accordance with the heritage policies.**

Shop Fronts

Shop fronts should be designed to fit with the character and context of the building itself and the surrounding area. When determining planning applications, the Council will have regard to whether a proposal contributes positively to the visual appearance of the area during opening and non-opening hours. Considerations will include:

¹⁴⁰ This document can be found at:
https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/Design%2520Review_Principles%2520and%2520Practice_May2019.pdf

- 7. how the fascia design respects the proportions of the shop front by being appropriately scaled, and follows the vertical and horizontal symmetry of the building;**
- 8. how the fascia takes into account the height, position, design and scale of adjacent shop fronts in the same parade;**
- 9. how the design of the entrance ensures safe and easy access for all;**
- 10. that the colours and materials proposed do not clash with building materials of the host and adjoining buildings; and**
- 11. the use of solid security shutters, which should be avoided wherever possible and will not be permitted in Oldham Town Centre, any of the borough's other centres, local shopping parades or along main arterial routes, unless the need for them can be robustly justified. Lattice grilles or internal roller shutters would be acceptable alternatives.**

Applications affecting heritage assets or conservation areas should comply with policies HE2 and HE3 respectively.

Reasoned Justification

- 16.11 The design of shop fronts is important as firstly they can attract the attention of customers in order to ensure economic success and secondly, they can improve the appearance and attractiveness of our shopping streets and our centres. The shop front, advertisements, signage, canopies, external lighting, shop security measures and access facilities are all elements, which if well designed can help to promote a confident image of the shop itself. They can make positive contributions to the character and trading success of the street or centre in which it is located.
- 16.12 The policy aims to set clear criteria to enable adverts to be placed in the right places without detriment to the amenity of the surrounding area and whilst protecting character and appearance, as well as public and highway safety. The policy applies to all advertisements requiring consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) England) Regulations 2007.
- 16.13 The borough has a mixture of different places from town centres to rural communities and countryside. The type of advertisements prevalent in these areas can vary greatly but often the concerns remain the same, to protect visual amenity and highway and public safety. However, there are also key differences between what may be accepted in a town centre and what will be appropriate in a rural settlement. Applicants should be aware of this when considering aspects such as scale and the method and level illumination, taking into account Policy OL5.
- 16.14 It is important that any advertisements do not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of nearby residents or occupiers of sensitive uses such as schools, nurseries and care homes. In addition, the Council will resist advertisements where they contribute to or constitute clutter or lead to an unsightly proliferation of signage in the area.
- 16.15 Where advertisements are displayed on buildings, they should complement the facade and must not obscure architectural features. On buildings with heritage value this will be particularly critical where features contribute to heritage significance. Some commercial areas are set within places that contribute to the distinctive character of

the borough, such as the predominantly Georgian townscape of Greenfield, Diggle, Delph and Uppermill and the historic character of Oldham Town Centre. The design of advertisements should not detract from the heritage value of these areas and where possible should be used as an opportunity to enhance their distinctive character and sense of place.

- 16.16 Applications for advertisements in areas where there are already a high number displayed will be considered in relation to existing advertisements, or signage for the same business. Where the need for additional controls over advertisements in particular areas can be demonstrated, for example through conservation area appraisals or neighbourhood plans, the Council may consider the introduction of Areas of Special Control of Advertisements, as appropriate.

Policy D3 – Creating a Better Public Realm in Oldham

Development proposals that include the creation of new public realm should, where applicable:

- 1. ensure it is well-designed, easy to understand, and related to the local and historic context;**
- 2. ensure it is inclusive and fully accessible to all users, including people with disabilities, older people, and families with children;**
- 3. create a sense of place, with opportunities for social activities and interaction during, formal and informal play and social interaction during different times of the day and night, days of the week and seasons;**
- 4. ensure that appropriate shade, shelter, seating and, where possible, areas of direct sunlight, are provided having regard to microclimatic considerations such as temperature and wind;**
- 5. ensure that lighting is carefully considered and well-designed in order to minimise intrusive lighting infrastructure and reduce light pollution in line with Policy OL5;**
- 6. use durable, attractive, and locally appropriate materials in paving, street furniture, and landscaping and ensure appropriate management and maintenance arrangements are in place;**
- 7. support biodiversity, and integrate green infrastructure and surface water management in line with Policy N3;**
- 8. prioritise active travel through providing safe, legible and well-connected routes whilst discouraging travel by car and excessive on-street car parking; and**
- 9. ensure that any buildings are of a design that activates and defines the public realm and provides natural surveillance.**

Where appropriate, opportunities should be identified for the meanwhile (temporary) use of phased development sites to create attractive public realm.

Reasoned Justification

- 16.17 Public realm has a significant influence on quality of life because it affects people's sense of place, security and belonging, as well as having an influence on a range of health and social factors. As such, development proposals must contribute positively to the public realm by delivering well-designed, accessible, and safe spaces that reflect local character and support social interaction and environmental sustainability.
- 16.18 The public realm includes all the publicly accessible space between buildings, whether public or privately owned, from alleyways and streets to squares and open spaces. It should be seen as a series of connected routes and spaces that help define the character of a place. Legibility and signposting make an important contribution to whether people feel comfortable in a place and are able to understand it and navigate their way around.
- 16.19 The specific balance between the different functions of any one space, such as its place-based activities, its function to facilitate movement and its ability to accommodate different uses, should be at the heart of how the space is designed and managed. The [Streets for All](#) approach¹⁴¹ explains how the design and management of streets can support a wide range of activities in the public realm as well as encourage and facilitate a shift to active travel.
- 16.20 Places should be distinctive, attractive and of the highest quality, allowing people to meet, congregate and socialise, as well as providing opportunity for quiet enjoyment. Public realm is valuable for Oldham's cultural activity, providing a stage for informal and everyday activities and organised events. The opportunity to incorporate these uses should be identified and facilitated through community engagement, careful design and good acoustic design. Careful consideration is needed of the benefits of using the public realm for events and their impact on the use and enjoyment of the space by the public.
- 16.21 The effective management and ongoing maintenance of public realm should be a key consideration in its design and secured through the planning system where appropriate. Materials used for paving, street furniture and landscaping must be durable, attractive, and locally appropriate. Lighting also requires careful consideration to ensure it is appropriate to address safety and security issues and make night-time activity areas and access routes welcoming and safe, whilst minimising light pollution.
- 16.22 Whether publicly or privately owned, public realm should be open, free to use and offer the highest level of public access. These spaces should only have rules restricting the behaviour of the public that are considered essential for safe management of the space.
- 16.23 Opportunities should be identified by applicants for the meanwhile (temporary) use of phased development sites to create attractive public realm. Parameters for any meanwhile use, particularly its longevity and associated obligations, should be established from the outset and agreed by all parties. Whilst the creation of temporary public realm makes the best use of land and provides visual, environmental and health benefits to the local community, planning permission for more permanent uses is still required.

¹⁴¹ Further information can be found at: <https://tfgm.com/strategy/streets-for-all>

Policy D4 – Extensions and alterations to, and development within the curtilage of, a dwellinghouse

An extension or alteration to an existing dwelling, or the construction of an ancillary outbuilding, structure, boundary treatment or hardstanding within the residential curtilage, will be supported where, having regard to any previous development affecting the original building or its curtilage, the following criteria are met:

- 1. it is in keeping with the character and appearance of, and is subordinate to, the original dwelling and surrounding properties;**
- 2. it would not have a significantly adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residential properties, or the future occupiers of the dwellinghouse;**
- 3. suitable provision is included for:**
 - a. access and parking;**
 - b. waste and recycling storage; and**
 - c. private residential amenity space;**
- 4. there is the implementation of sustainable surface water management by directing surface water to a permeable surface or an infiltration system wherever possible; and**
- 5. where the building was originally constructed for a non-residential purpose e.g. agricultural, religious or industrial use, the resulting development would be of a scale consistent with the architectural and functional character of the original building.**

In the case of a replacement dwelling these will be supported where criteria 2) and 3) above are met, and it would not be significantly larger than the existing dwelling and is in keeping with the scale, character and appearance of its surroundings.

Proposals within the Green Belt will need to meet policies OL2 and OL3 and proposals within a Local Green Space will need to meet Policy OL4.

Reasoned Justification

16.24 This policy seeks to ensure that extensions or alterations to an existing dwelling, or development within the curtilage of a residential property (such as ancillary outbuilding, structure, boundary treatment or hardstanding) is in keeping with the character and appearance of the original dwelling and surrounding property / area, without having a detrimental impact on amenity.

16.25 When permitting such development, it is important to ensure that there continues to be suitable provision for access and parking; waste and recycling storage; and private residential amenity space.

- 16.26 Surface water should be directed to a permeable surface or an infiltration system wherever possible.
- 16.27 Ensuring that the extension or alteration to, or the replacement of, an existing residential dwelling respects the character, appearance and scale of the original building and its surroundings will also help to ensure a diverse range of dwelling sizes and types.
- 16.28 As a general guide:
- subordinate and small-scale extensions/outbuildings are less likely to be approved where they would increase the size of the original dwelling by more than 40% (notwithstanding permitted development rights); and
 - replacement dwellings are less likely to be approved where they are significantly larger (i.e. more than 40%) than the existing dwelling.
- 16.29 The increase in size of the original or existing dwelling will generally be determined by assessing the net increase in floorspace (measured externally). In cases where the increase proposed involves an increase in the overall building height, the net increase in volume (measured externally), will also be taken in to account. This assessment will not include any allowance or credit from the demolition of existing detached buildings or structures. If planning permission is granted, planning obligations/conditions may be applied to remove permitted development rights where necessary.
- 16.30 All outbuildings or structures within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse which are built after the construction of the original dwelling, will be treated as being an extension to the original building.
- 16.31 The assessment of whether a development is in keeping with the character and appearance of, and is subordinate to, the original dwelling and surrounding properties, and the wider setting, will have particular regard to the design, scale, height, massing, material finishes, visual appearance and character of buildings, and the prevailing layout and landscaping of the development.

Monitoring

- 16.32 The main Local Plan indicators that will be used to monitor this chapter are:
- Number of major developments refused on landscape grounds
 - Number of approved applications for strategic developments with a masterplan or framework and design code

17 A Sustainable, Active, Accessible Network for Oldham

- 17.1 [Oldham's Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan](#)¹⁴² sets the strategic direction for travel and mobility within Oldham, identifying transport requirements that align with our future growth needs and in response to changing travel technologies.
- 17.2 It reflects the [Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040](#)¹⁴³ which sets out the long-term vision for how the transport system needs to change across Greater Manchester and the key priorities for achieving this, including reference to:
- the 'Right-Mix' ambition for at least 50% of all journeys to be made by active travel and public transport by 2040;
 - details of the Greater Manchester Mayor's 'Our Network' plan to create an integrated, modern and accessible transport network;
 - an increased emphasis on the importance of cycling and walking; and
 - the climate emergency declared by GMCA and all ten councils; and the development of the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan.
- 17.3 As set out in Oldham's Transport Strategy, planning for transport that is suitable for the future requires a balance of healthier travel behaviours and reducing harmful transport emissions. The Strategy is structured around six principal transport ambitions which have a focus on:
- Healthy Oldham: providing for healthier active travel choices through, for example, improving walking, wheeling and cycling routes and facilities to enhance connections across our neighbourhood, the borough and beyond;
 - Safe Oldham: improving road and travel safety;
 - Thriving Oldham: supporting Greater Manchester's ambitions to grow economically and connecting our communities to services and opportunities across the borough and beyond;
 - Clean Oldham: improving air quality and supporting Greater Manchester's ambitions for becoming carbon neutral by 2038;
 - Connected Oldham: prioritising the maintenance of highways, footways and Public Rights of Way; and
 - Accessible Oldham: improving access to public transport and active travel reflecting its importance for reducing deprivation whilst supporting our communities.
- 17.4 The Local Plan will help deliver an integrated transport system that enables and encourages sustainable and active travel choices, provides good accessibility for the borough's population to jobs and services, and supports a healthy environment.
- 17.5 The Bee Network¹⁴⁴ was launched in September 2023 and is Greater Manchester's vision for a joined up, touch in, touch out, London-style transport system. Since its launch the Bee Network has delivered transformational change, with growing numbers

¹⁴² This document can be found at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/7693/oldham_transport_strategy_and_delivery_plan

¹⁴³ This document can be found at: <https://tfgm.com/2040-transport-strategy>

¹⁴⁴ Further information can be found here: <https://tfgm.com/the-bee-network#bee-network>

of people travelling on more reliable bus services. It's also seen the introduction of affordable fares, new and extended routes and better, more accessible buses connecting communities to jobs, skills and education opportunities. All local bus and tram services are now part of the Bee Network with eight commuter rail lines planned to join in three phases through to 2028, with improved services and stations. The continued delivery of the Bee Network will encourage much higher levels of both walking, wheeling and cycling and help to address low levels of physical activity and promote mental wellbeing.

- 17.6 Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) have produced [Streets for All](#)¹⁴⁵ which places a strong emphasis on reducing traffic and road danger, and on improving the street environment for everyone travelling along, spending time in, or living on them. It is a people-centred approach to street planning, design and network management and is needed to deliver the Bee Network, support growth and productivity and enable us to meet our decarbonisation targets. The Streets for All vision is that 'We will ensure that our streets are welcoming, green and safe spaces for all people, enabling more travel by walking, cycling, and using public transport while creating thriving places that support local communities and businesses' and the policies within this Local Plan aim to support that vision.

Policy T1 – Delivering Oldham's Transport Priorities

To support Oldham's role in the Greater Manchester economy, measures will be supported where they:

- 1. Help improve connectivity and accessibility from Oldham to the key growth locations identified in PfE¹⁴⁶.**
- 2. Encourage and enable the movement of people and goods in the most efficient, sustainable, safe way using on the most appropriate modes, on the most appropriate routes, at the most appropriate times.**
- 3. Demonstrate a reduction in congestion and emissions.**

The Local Plan will support the delivery of Oldham's Transport Strategy by ensuring that new development:

- 4. Prioritises and promotes active travel to key points of interest by integrating Active Design principles into their design.**
- 5. Maintains and improves the Public Rights of Way network, including by increasing the networks accessibility.**
- 6. Ensures the amenity and safety of the public realm is protected, avoiding street clutter and unnecessary obstructions.**
- 7. Maintains safe and suitable access for all users and mitigates any significant impacts from the development on the existing transport network or on highway safety.**

The Council will seek developer contributions¹⁴⁷, where appropriate, towards the provision or enhancement of highway, public transport and / or active travel schemes.

¹⁴⁵ This can be found at: <https://tfgm.com/strategy/streets-for-all>

¹⁴⁶ Policies JP-Strat1 to JP-Strat12 in PfE set out the key growth locations in Greater Manchester.

¹⁴⁷ This will include through section 106 agreements and section 278 agreements.

The Council will support improvements to our public transport network and facilities to promote more sustainable transport choices and reduce reliance on private motor vehicles.

The Local Plan will support future transport projects, including Standedge Tunnels, Diggle Station and Cop Road Metrolink stop and Park and Ride.

Any development that may impact the Strategic Road Network (SRN) should involve National Highways at the earliest opportunity.

Reasoned Justification

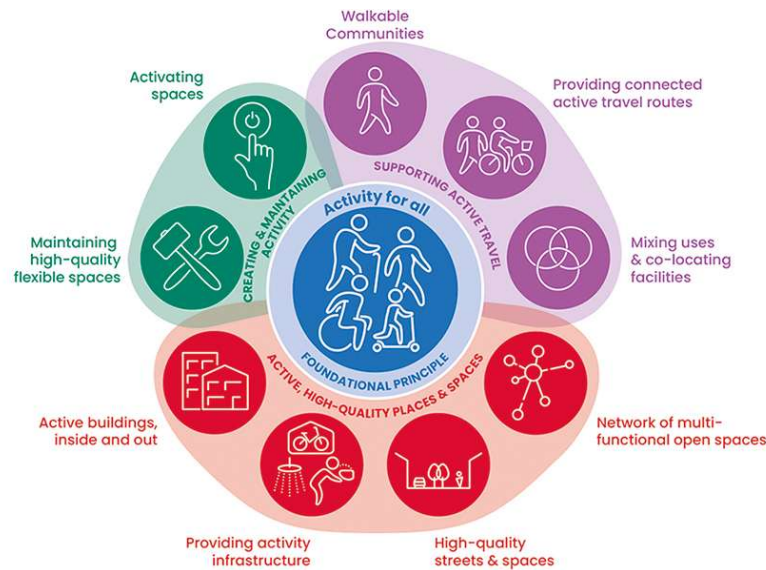
- 17.7 A key requirement of Oldham's sustainable transport network going forward is that people are easily able to travel between neighbourhoods and that connectivity and accessibility from Oldham to the key growth locations identified in PfE is improved. This will require an integrated, high quality, sustainable transport system, which the Bee Network will provide. People need sufficient travel choices so that they can conveniently travel to visit friends and relatives, community facilities, and services, across Oldham, Greater Manchester and beyond.
- 17.8 Freight and logistics are essential for both our economy and productivity. [Government's Future of Freight: a long-term plan](#)¹⁴⁸ states that the multi-modal freight and logistics sector is critical to every supply chain into, across and out of the UK and is fundamental to our economic wellbeing. It goes on to say that the planning system has a crucial role in promoting development that supports the efficient supply of goods.
- 17.9 In Oldham, the distribution of people and goods by sustainable modes, and methods that reduce the number of vehicular trips, will be encouraged and supported. Innovative solutions such as urban distribution centres, last mile access by cargo bikes or electric vehicles, and emerging technologies, all have the potential to service the demand for deliveries in a more sustainable way.
- 17.10 Transport planning and investment can play a significant role in delivering a healthy borough in three primary ways. Firstly, through encouraging active travel such as walking, wheeling and cycling, with the significant direct health benefits that are derived from physical exercise; secondly, through making it easier for people to get to services they need for their personal well-being and the things that will help them live healthier lives; and thirdly, through designing a safer, more accessible and environmentally sustainable transport system.
- 17.11 Integrating [Sport England's Active Design principles](#)¹⁴⁹ is one way to help create a safer, more accessible, and environmentally sustainable transport system.

¹⁴⁸ The document can be found at:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62b9a2ec8fa8f53572e3db68/future-of-freight-plan.pdf>

¹⁴⁹ This document can be found at: <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>

Figure T1: Sport England's Active Design principles



- 17.12 The design of transport infrastructure should be high-quality and appropriate to the location in terms of getting the right balance between place and movement, supporting the public realm, protecting the setting of historic assets and removing street clutter and barriers, thereby making it easier for people to move around. The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 explains that truly connected neighbourhoods enable everyone to access work, local facilities and recreation and to interact with other people in a pleasant environment.
- 17.13 Designing new infrastructure and services to improve accessibility for people with mobility problems, including reducing street clutter and unnecessary obstructions, will have the additional benefit of future-proofing the transport network to meet the needs of an ageing society.
- 17.14 Streets for All places a strong emphasis on reducing traffic and road danger, and on improving the street environment for everyone travelling along, spending time in, or living on them. Developers and applicants will be expected to have regard to the vision and principles within the [Greater Manchester Streets for All Design Guide](#)¹⁵⁰ which sets the standard for how our streets and public spaces will look, feel and function in the years ahead.
- 17.15 Oldham's Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network covers around 450km, and the Council is committed to maintaining and improving the network. A key focus for improvement is to increase the network's accessibility to make it more inclusive for all users. Measures could include substituting stiles for gates or surface and/or drainage works to provide more level surfaces for those with mobility impairment.
- 17.16 An attractive, efficient and cost-effective public transport network that is fully integrated with other forms of transport and which provides a genuine alternative to travelling by private motor vehicle will be key if public transport is to play a fundamental role in

¹⁵⁰ This document can be found at:
https://downloads.ctfassets.net/nv7y93idf4jq/2RzPPk1drrKMvdlfPtZwYP/365c591edec7439b449d385d745b831f/Greater_Manchester_Streets_For_All_Design_Guide_v1.2.pdf

achieving a modal shift in the way we travel. In Greater Manchester our public transport network is known as the Bee Network and proposals to improve this network and its facilities will be supported, particularly where they are in line with Greater Manchester and Oldham's Local Transport Plans.

- 17.17 In line with [DfT Circular 01/2022 The Strategic Road Network and the delivery of sustainable development](#)¹⁵¹ ('the Circular') policies must not compromise the SRN's prime function to enable the long-distance movement of people and goods. The SRN within Oldham consists of sections of the M60 and M627(M) motorways, as well as the A663 Broadway trunk road. Development within Oldham might also impact the SRN outside of our boundary, such as the M62 motorway.

Policy T2 – Travel Hubs and Park and Ride Facilities

The Council will support schemes for new and improved travel hubs and park and ride facilities where it can be demonstrated that the proposed facility:

- 1. forms part of a wider strategy for increasing the use of public transport and active travel and has been developed in conjunction with Transport for Greater Manchester and, where appropriate, other organisations such as Highways England and Network Rail;**
- 2. will improve the attractiveness and increased use of public transport thereby reducing overall levels of private vehicular traffic on the borough's highway network;**
- 3. will not lead to unacceptable levels of traffic congestion in the vicinity of the facility;**
- 4. ensures a safe and secure environment for users and where appropriate provide a high standard of vehicle security; and**
- 5. includes provision for secure non-motorised vehicles such as bicycles and scooters.**

In the case of replacement provision this should be of equivalent or greater capacity and have equivalent or improved connections to the relevant transport infrastructure, where appropriate.

Reasoned Justification

- 17.18 The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 sets out that the aim in Greater Manchester is to work with partners to improve access to public transport, including enhanced park-and-ride provision and the evolution of park-and-ride towards multi-modal travel hubs that improve access and integration. These facilities are essential for enabling seamless and convenient multi-modal journeys and to improve access to the Bee Network, particularly for residents without direct links to rapid transit.
- 17.19 Transport hubs are designed to co-locate transport modes, improve first and last mile connectivity, and deliver a consistent, high quality customer experience. They are central to supporting modal shift, reducing car dependency, and expanding access to

¹⁵¹ This document can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-road-network-and-the-delivery-of-sustainable-development/strategic-road-network-and-the-delivery-of-sustainable-development>

sustainable travel. Park and ride facilities, when appropriately located, can complement this approach by intercepting longer car journeys and connecting users to the rapid transit network.

- 17.20 It is important that any such facilities are provided in the right location and are designed in a way that actively encourages their use whilst avoiding potential issues of congestion in the vicinity of the facility. Poorly located and designed proposals can sometimes actively encourage more car journeys and may generate significant traffic levels on surrounding roads to the detriment of residential amenity and highway function. Therefore, it is important that any such facilities are provided in the right location and are designed in a way that actively encourages their use whilst avoiding potential issues of congestion in the vicinity of the facility.
- 17.21 It is also important that the needs of cyclists are met within the facility in terms of including provision for safe and secure cycle parking.

Policy T3 – Parking Provision

To ensure the careful management of parking, development¹⁵² will be supported that provides appropriate levels of parking spaces.

The level of parking proposed as part of new developments should:

- 1. Support the efficient use of land;**
- 2. Reflect the type, mix and use of the development;**
- 3. Ensure the safe and efficient use of the highway is maintained; and**
- 4. Take account of the location of the development site, including its accessibility by walking, wheeling and cycling and public transport.**

Parking spaces will be expected to be provided for general car parking, accessible parking, cycle and motorcycle parking and parking for electric vehicle charging (See Policy T4 for more details on electric vehicle charging).

In justifying the parking levels proposed as part of any development, the applicant should, either in the Design and Access Statement or the Transport Statement/Assessment, have regard to the following:

- a. Consideration of likely trip generation and parking needs for the proposed development evidenced as appropriate;**
- b. Parking capacity and occupancy levels in the surrounding area;**
- c. Local car ownership levels;**
- d. Evidence that there is no alternative way of accommodating all the travel demands likely to be generated by the development, and that all reasonable efforts are being made to minimise reliance on the private car;**

¹⁵² This includes planning applications for the material changes of use

- e. **The public transport accessibility of the site, including the distance to bus and tram stops and to train stations, along with the frequency of those services;**
- f. **Details of road safety and traffic management in the area;**
- g. **The quality of provision for pedestrians and cyclists such as width of footways, quality of surfaces, access and egress points to the site, provision of street furniture and lighting, cycle parking and any restrictions on cycle movement; and**
- h. **Details of how the parking will be managed and how that will mitigate any potential under or over-provision.**

The information provided in relation to the above would be expected to be proportionate to the scale and nature of development proposed.

The design of parking areas needs to include pedestrian-only safe routes through and around parking areas.

In relation to non-residential developments there is a need to increase the attractiveness of commuting to work by walking, wheeling and cycling. Appropriate facilities should therefore be provided for staff, including the provision for lockers and changing and showering facilities.

Provision of coach and lorry parking will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the proposed development's use, volume of users/visitors and location. Storage and distribution uses (B8 uses) should accommodate all lorry parking within the site.

Where development would be likely to lead to levels of off-site car parking that would have a negative impact on the surrounding area, appropriate mitigation measures will be required. This could include, for example, developments funding, or contributing towards, resident parking schemes, public transport provision, and on-street parking restrictions and their enforcement.

Reasoned Justification

- 17.22 The level of parking within developments should strike a balance between accessible, cycle, electric vehicle and general spaces to ensure that it supports the successful functioning of the site, whilst also discouraging unnecessary private car journeys and the inefficient use of land. Parking that minimises land consumption and reduces congestion can contribute to a more efficient use of land.
- 17.23 Oldham is committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and the transport choices that individuals make will strongly influence the Council's ability to achieve this target. One of the ways in which we can make a positive difference is through effective parking provision for all vehicle types in new developments. We want to encourage more walking, wheeling and cycling for shorter journeys, and for longer journeys encourage more sustainable options such as using public transport wherever possible. The level of parking provision in new developments can have a key influence on the choice of travel mode.

- 17.24 Providing sufficient parking for all types of vehicles will be necessary so that parked vehicles do not dominate the street scene or prevent access for pedestrians, cyclists and buses.
- 17.25 Certain development will require the production of a Travel Plan (in line with Policy T5) which must include measures to significantly reduce the use of private car travel to and from the development.
- 17.26 When determining the public transport accessibility of a site, Greater Manchester Accessibility Levels (GMAL) ¹⁵³ should be used as explained in Policy H1.
- 17.27 The quality of parking provision is as important as the quantity and it should be attractive and practical to use. Pedestrian routes need to be direct, safe, level, and should emphasise pedestrian priority. Cars should not be able to overhang footpaths or cycle paths and pedestrians should be able to cross entrances to car parks safely.
- 17.28 Accessible parking spaces should be located as close as possible to the main entrance to the facilities served by the parking. The route between the spaces and the main entrance should be well maintained with no obstructions to access. Accessible spaces should be larger than regular parking spaces to provide extra room for wheelchair users and people with mobility and other impairments to get in and out of a vehicle.
- 17.29 Providing secure cycle parking at people's homes and other locations is critical to increasing the rates of cycling. Internal cycle storage is preferable for security reasons and to avoid impacting on the street scene. Where internal storage is not possible, external cycle stores should be secure and weatherproof. In relation to non-residential development if staff are using a different entrance, their cycle parking needs to be well related to their entrance. Safe, secure, and accessible cycle parking for long term and short-term visitors is needed, and cycle storage should be provided in an obvious, overlooked and well-lit location and be supported by clear signage.
- 17.30 The location of electric vehicle charging spaces has a strong influence on how often and how easily they are used by residents, businesses and visitors, therefore careful consideration should be given to the location and design of these spaces. In addition, they should also be positioned to avoid negatively impacting on walking, wheeling and cycling.
- 17.31 Certain uses will be frequently serviced by larger vehicles including Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs). Where this is the case, parking, loading and standing areas should be provided. Consultation with the Council at an early stage on all applications that would involve the use of HGVs and other large commercial vehicles is recommended.
- 17.32 Pedestrians should be able to move around parking areas safely and easily. The design of parking areas will need to consider likely pedestrian desire lines, both in respect of pedestrians arriving from outside the site and walking towards the entrances, and in respect of people arriving in cars, and the movements they will make between where they will park and the entrances to the development. This should be an early consideration in determining the overall layout of the site, and the layout of the spaces.

¹⁵³ Or any future measures of accessibility that become available and are relevant to assessing the accessibility of development.

Policy T4 – Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

New development shall make provision for electric vehicle charging infrastructure, using dedicated charge points specifically designed for charging all types of electric vehicle, in accordance with the following standards (unless superseded by higher standards in the Building Regulations):

- 1) For dwellings with off-street parking, at least one dedicated charge point per dwelling.**
- 2) For non-residential developments, 10% of spaces shall accommodate a dedicated charge point. In addition to this, a further 20% of spaces shall accommodate appropriate ducting infrastructure to facilitate future provision. A reduced requirement will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the specific characteristics of the development would result in lower levels of demand for electric vehicle charging.**

These standards will be applied to the total scale of car parking provision that is proposed in the development in line with Policy T3. Additional car parking spaces should not be provided in order to meet these electric vehicle charging points.

Shared active charging points should be located so that they can be accessed by the maximum number of parking spaces possible at the development.

Electric vehicle charging infrastructure within new development shall meet the minimum technical specification list published by the Office for Low Emission Vehicles.

Exceptions

There may be limited circumstances where, due to the exceptionally high cost of securing the necessary additional electrical capacity to a site, it is not feasible to make provision for electric vehicle charging infrastructure in accordance with criteria 1 to 2 above. Where this is the case, the applicant will be expected to demonstrate that the costs associated with the installation of charge-points would compromise development viability and shall instead incorporate appropriate ducting infrastructure to facilitate future provision.

Reasoned Justification

- 18.34 The transport network is one of the biggest contributors to carbon emissions and this means measures must be taken locally and nationally to reduce vehicle carbon emissions or enable travel by zero emission modes.
- 18.35 Creating a carbon neutral city region by 2038 is part of the vision outlined in the Greater Manchester Five-Year Environment Plan. It is acknowledged in the plan that to meet Greater Manchester's ambition of reaching carbon neutrality by 2038, there is a need for a fundamental shift in attitudes towards car journeys, alongside a major shift to sustainable transport modes, as both are essential to reduce the number and use of fossil fuel vehicles. Delivering a major shift to electric vehicles is seen as key to help make that shift from high carbon transport modes to more sustainable modes

and supporting the transition to electric mobility is cited as one of the plans objectives.

- 18.36 New development can make an important contribution to enabling the use of electric vehicles. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is potential for significant advances in low emission technologies, electric vehicles are a key part of this, and it is therefore considered important that this Local Plan supports the development of the electric vehicle infrastructure network.
- 18.37 Ensuring that residential properties with garages and drives incorporate a charging point will help to facilitate home charging, and the additional cost of providing this infrastructure is considered to be minimal. Non-residential development can also have a significant role to play, for example by providing dedicated charging points for a proportion of parking spaces to support workplace and visitor charging.
- 18.38 Whilst the historic environment should not be a barrier to the installation of charge points, in the limited circumstances that making provision for electric vehicle charging infrastructure would be considered to cause unacceptable harm to a heritage asset, the requirements detailed in criteria 1) to 2) in the above policy will not apply.

Policy T5 – Vision-led Transport Statements, Transport Assessments and Travel Plans in New Development

Proposals for developments that are likely to generate significant travel demands should be designed in a way that maximises the opportunity for walking, wheeling and cycling, and public transport trips.

Vision-led Transport Statements, Transport Assessments and Travel Plans will be required on a case-by-case basis when a proposed development would generate significant amounts of movement.

Factors that will be taken into consideration when determining whether an application needs to be accompanied by a Transport Statement, Transport Assessment and Travel Plan include:

- 1. the scale and type of the proposed development and its potential for additional trip generation;**
- 2. the public transport accessibility of the site;**
- 3. the cumulative impacts of multiple developments within a particular area, including known committed future developments; and**
- 4. any known transport issues in the surrounding area – such as peak time congestion.**

Transport Statements, Transport Assessments and Travel Plans will be required, where applicable, to:

- 5. outline how the development will support access by active travel and public transport.**
- 6. commit to the implementation of measures and initiatives to facilitate and encourage active travel and public transport use.**
- 7. set out how the design and use of the site will not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety for all users.**

8. consider how trips generated by the development can be adequately served by the local and Strategic Road Network to ensure that the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would not be severe; and
9. identify where there are any significant impacts of development and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are identified and in place before the development is occupied as agreed with the Council.

The information provided in relation to the above would be expected to be proportionate to the scale and nature of development proposed.

Where applications will affect the Strategic Road Network, applicants should provide confirmation from National Highways that the scope and detail of the Transport Statement and Travel Plan is sufficient for the purposes of assessing the application within the statutory timescales.

Any developments that are required to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment will need to consider air quality impacts on Holcroft Moss, within the Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation in accordance with Policy JP-C8 of PfE¹⁵⁴.

Reasoned Justification

- 17.38 Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements are all ways of assessing and mitigating the negative transport impacts of development to promote sustainable development.
- 17.39 In line with NPPF all developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a vision-led transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.
- 17.40 In setting out a vision-led transport strategy for new development, applicants should reinforce the transport vision for the site, explain what the proposals are seeking to achieve in terms of walking, wheeling and cycling and then test a set of scenarios to determine the optimum design and transport infrastructure to realise this vision.
- 17.41 Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements should be:
 - proportionate to the size and scope of the proposed development;
 - established at the earliest possible stage of a development proposal;
 - be tailored to particular local circumstances; and
 - be brought forward in collaboration with the local planning authority/transport authority, transport operators, rail network operators, National Highways where there may be implications for the SRN and any other relevant bodies.
- 17.42 When determining the public transport accessibility of a site, Greater Manchester Accessibility Levels (GMAL) should be used as explained in Policy H1.
- 17.43 As set out in PfE, in order to assess the cumulative impacts of growth, developers will need to consider committed development. In consultation with the local highways'

¹⁵⁴ ¹⁵⁴ This document can be found at: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/strategic-planning/places-for-everyone/joint-supplementary-planning-documents/holcroft-moss-planning-obligations-spd/>

authority, developers should agree the committed developments and allocations that should be considered in the assessment.

- 17.44 In relation to applications that affect the SRN, applicants should set out how [DfT Circular 01/2022 The Strategic Road Network and the delivery of sustainable development](#)¹⁵⁵ ('the Circular') has been reviewed and considered. The Circular explains in paragraph 15 that transport planning is moving away from predicting future demand to provide capacity ('predict and provide') to planning that sets an outcome communities want to achieve and provides the transport solutions to deliver those outcomes. It goes on to say in paragraph 44 that Travel Plans are an effective means of incentivising the use of sustainable modes of transport and that where they are required development promoters must put forward clear targets and commitments to minimise the traffic impact of development and maximise the accessibility of and within sites by walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared travel.
- 17.45 PPG [Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements](#)¹⁵⁶ and 'the Circular' includes further details and advice on what Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements should contain.
- 17.46 Further information regarding the consideration of air quality impacts on Holcroft Moss, within the Manchester Mosses SAC can be found in PfE Policy JP-C8 and the Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations Joint SPD.

Monitoring

- 17.47 The main Local Plan indicators that will be used to monitor this chapter are:
- Per capita emission estimates, industry, domestic and transport sectors
 - Number of pedestrian or cycling casualties per year
 - Number of travel plans secured as a condition of planning permission
 - Number of days in Greater Manchester where air pollution was moderate or higher
- 17.48 The main PfE indicators that will be used to help monitor this chapter are:
- Exceedance of the legal level of NO₂ (as an Annual Mean) in local AQMA and Clean Air Plan Monitoring
 - Percentage of daily trips made by active travel, public transport, car and other (monitoring subject to further analysis of data collection methods – TRADS monitor undertaken by TfGM)
 - Percentage of new housing (net) within 800m of good public transport accessibility and percentage of new employment floorspace within 800m of good public transport accessibility *definition of good public transport accessibility to be agreed with TfGM
 - Number of EV charging points (% change can be monitored year to year or over longer time series)

¹⁵⁵ This document can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-road-network-and-the-delivery-of-sustainable-development/strategic-road-network-and-the-delivery-of-sustainable-development>

¹⁵⁶ This document can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-plans-transport-assessments-and-statements>

18 Communities

Open Space, Sport and Recreation

- 18.1 Open space is an important part of the borough's green infrastructure network. It has a key role to play in the protection of the environment, enhancing the biodiversity of the borough and mitigating against climate change. Access to quality open space is essential to the health and well-being of communities, enabling increased physical activity, opportunities for social interaction and inclusion and contributing to improved mental health.
- 18.2 Open spaces, include allotments and community gardens, amenity greenspaces, churchyards and cemeteries, green corridors, natural and semi-natural greenspace, outdoor sports facilities, parks and gardens and play spaces¹⁵⁷.

Policy CO1 – The Protection of Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision

The Council will protect existing open space, sport and recreation provision, in the borough.

The loss of open spaces¹⁵⁸ through development (in whole or part) will only be acceptable in the following circumstances:

- 1. The development is for alternative open space, sport or recreation provision, where the need for a change in typology can be clearly demonstrated based on local evidence¹⁵⁹; or**
- 2. Based on local evidence, the Council consider that the open space is surplus to local needs and the land is not required to meet deficiencies in other open space typologies within the appropriate accessible standard distance to the development site¹⁶⁰; or**
- 3. A small-scale loss of part of the open space is required to enable development on adjacent land which would not prejudice the overall open space function of the site.**

With the exception of circumstance 2 above, the loss of open space resulting from proposed development should be replaced by at least equivalent or improved open space (having regard to the open space standards) either onsite in a different part of the proposed development, or offsite in a suitable location which should be determined by the identified deficiencies and accessibility standard. All replacement provision should be provided in line with the requirements for new or improved open space provision set out in Policy CO2.

¹⁵⁷ Also known as open space typologies.

¹⁵⁸ Including strategic open spaces which will be identified on the Policies Map, and all other open spaces as identified in the Open Space Study (2022), or any subsequent update.

¹⁵⁹ Oldham's Open Space Study (2022) and Playing Pitch Strategy (2025), or any subsequent updates.

¹⁶⁰ As identified by the accessibility standard and measured from the centre of the proposed development site and/or the site which would be lost.

Playing fields, pitches and outdoor sports provision

All playing fields, playing pitches and outdoor sports provision will be protected in line with this policy, national planning policy and other relevant policy and guidance.

The proposed loss (in whole or part) of a playing field, playing pitch or outdoor sports provision will be considered on a site-by-site basis, having regard to Oldham's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (2025) (PPOSS)¹⁶¹. In line with circumstance 2 above, consideration should also be given to whether the site could be used for an alternative sport in need of provision and/or facilities.

Where appropriate, any loss of provision should be replaced by at least equivalent or improved provision in another location, as agreed by the Council, and relevant sporting bodies.

Reasoned Justification

- 18.3 Open space generally refers to several types of spaces which are available to the public, from formal sports pitches to allotments and community gardens to open areas within developments.
- 18.4 Oldham's open spaces are identified on the Policies Map¹⁶² and the Green Infrastructure Network Opportunity Maps¹⁶³. Open spaces make up a significant part of Oldham's Green Infrastructure Network and can contribute to providing Biodiversity Net Gain, on appropriate sites.
- 18.5 As such, it is important to ensure that open spaces are protected from development. The policy sets out that the loss, or part-development, of open spaces will only be considered acceptable in specific circumstances and, where appropriate, any lost provision should be replaced in line with Policy CO2. The Council will consider whether a particular development would comply with the circumstances listed above on a case-by-case basis and based on the information provided as part of the application. The Council's Open Space Study (2022) and PPOSS (2025) provide key evidence of local needs and will be considered when assessing whether the loss of a site is acceptable.
- 18.6 Specifically, any loss of a playing field, pitch or outdoor sport provision is required to be in accordance with national planning policy and other relevant policy and guidance, such as Sport England Guidance¹⁶⁴. The PPOSS provides evidence of needs and opportunities on a site-by-site basis. Any proposed loss will be considered against the evidence set out within the PPOSS and should not compromise the delivery of actions within the PPOSS Action Plan or worsen existing and future deficiencies of sports provision.

¹⁶¹ Oldham's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (2025) (PPOSS), or any subsequent update.

¹⁶² The open spaces have been identified by the Open Space Study (2022). These will be updated as part of future updates to the Open Space Study, or other available evidence.

¹⁶³ Oldham's Green Infrastructure Network Opportunity Maps:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2183/oldham_green_infrastructure_strategy

¹⁶⁴ Sport England's Playing Fields Policy, available at: <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport/playing-fields-policy>

- 18.7 It should also be considered whether the site which is proposed to be lost could be used to alleviate provision deficiencies in other areas in the borough, and for other sports that could realistically be played on the site, other than what the site was last used for.
- 18.8 Where appropriate, any lost provision of playing fields, pitches or outdoor sports provision should be replaced by at least equivalent or improved provision in another location, as agreed by the Council, and other relevant sporting bodies. The PPOSS should be used to inform where replacement provision should be located. In delivering replacement provision, the Council can support discussions with local clubs, sporting governing bodies and Sport England, where required.

Policy CO2 – New and Improved Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision

The Council will support the enhancement of existing, and the creation of new, open space, sport and recreation provision in the borough.

Residential developments of 10 homes and above will be required to provide sufficient public open space, sport or recreation provision onsite. Where it is not possible to provide onsite, a financial contribution towards new or enhanced existing offsite public open space, sport or recreation provision will be sought.

Onsite provision or contributions to offsite new/ replacement provision and enhanced existing provision, should be determined by local open space needs and deficiencies and accessibility to existing provision, as set out in local evidence¹⁶⁵.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) with 10 or more occupants, will be required to contribute to offsite new or enhanced open space, sport and recreation provision to meet the needs of the residents.

Proposals for built sports facilities and formal sports provision will be supported where they are in accordance with other Local Plan policies, national planning policy and other relevant policy and guidance.

Oldham's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator¹⁶⁶ should be used, where appropriate, to inform where and what type of new or enhanced playing pitch and outdoor sports provision is provided, based on identified deficiencies/ need.

Open space provided onsite should:

- 1. be appropriately located within the development proposed and accessible to all users, including those with mobility impairments¹⁶⁷;**
- 2. deliver multi-functional benefits, where appropriate;**

¹⁶⁵ As identified in the Open Space Study (2022) and the Playing Pitch Strategy (2025), or subsequent updates.

¹⁶⁶ See Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator for further information: <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/playing-pitch-calculator>

¹⁶⁷ Active design guidance can inform the creation of inclusive and sustainable open space, sport and recreation provision: <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>

3. be of a high-quality design, in line with Policy D1; and
4. be well connected to the existing green infrastructure network having regard to the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Where appropriate, contributions to new or improved open space provision will be secured through planning obligations or conditions, as necessary, in line with Policy IN2.

Open Space Standards

Open Space Standards (Table CO1) have been developed to ensure that open space provision is of a high quality and contributes towards meeting local needs. New or improved provision should seek to achieve the standards set out below.

Site-by-site needs and opportunities for outdoor sports provision are identified within the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy¹⁶⁸. This should be used when considering the development of new or improved outdoor sports provision, to ensure provision contributes to meeting local needs.

Table CO1: Current Open Space Standards¹⁶⁹

Type of Open Space	Quantity Standard (the number of hectares required per 1,000 population)	Quality Standard	Accessibility Standard
Allotments and Community Gardens	No standard	At least 70%	No standard
Amenity Greenspace	0.46	At least 70%	720 metres
Cemeteries and Churchyards	No standard	At least 70%	No standard
Civic Spaces	No standard	At least 70%	No standard
Green Corridors	No standard	At least 70%	No standard
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	1.95	At least 70%	Natural and Semi-Natural - 720 metres Strategic Natural and Semi-Natural over 20ha - 7.85km
Parks and Gardens	0.40	At least 70%	Local Parks and Gardens - 720 metres Strategic Parks and Gardens of 15ha and above - 7.85km
Provision for Children and Young People	0.25	At least 70%	480 metres

¹⁶⁸ Namely the Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan (2025, or subsequent updates), which sets out needs on a site-by-site basis.

¹⁶⁹ Open Space Standards will be kept under review and updated, if necessary, through relevant evidence.

Value Standard

In addition to Table CO1, a value standard has also been introduced to ensure that the borough's open spaces are meaningful and beneficial to the local community.

Proposals for new open spaces are required to demonstrate (through a value audit) that they meet the following value standards:

1. Destination or flagship sites should achieve a high value score (60-100%)
2. All other open space sites should achieve a medium value score (40-59%)

Further guidance on the value standard and how value should be audited is provided below and in the Open Space Study (2022).

Reasoned Justification

New Open Spaces

- 18.9 It is important that new development does not place undue pressure on existing open space provision in the borough and ensures that all residents have access to high quality open space close to where they live. This supports sustainable development.
- 18.10 As such, major residential development is required to provide sufficient public open space, sport or recreation provision. It is also considered appropriate to seek developer contributions towards open space provision as part of the development of HMOs which have 10 or more occupants because the additional number of residents could impact on existing open space provision, in a similar way to major residential development.
- 18.11 New onsite open spaces provided as part of development should seek to improve open space deficiencies in the area in which the site is located. For example, where a development site is not currently accessible to a particular typology of open space (as identified by the [Open Space Accessibility Maps](#)¹⁷⁰) the new space should seek to include provision of the deficient typology. Where a site is accessible to all forms of open space, the development should seek to provide appropriate onsite open space which is in line with the Open Space Standards.
- 18.12 Where it is not possible to provide adequate onsite open space, a financial contribution towards the creation of new or the improvement of existing offsite provision should be provided. The location and typology of which should be identified in line with the deficiencies (in terms of accessibility, quantity, quality and value) within the ward, or close to the development site, as identified in the [Open Space Study](#)¹⁷¹.
- 18.13 A developer contributions calculator has been developed, as part of the Open Space Study which will guide the Council in determining appropriate open space contributions towards offsite provision. Costings included within this calculator will be updated over the lifetime of the plan as required.

¹⁷⁰ The Open Space Accessibility Buffers are also available to view interactively at: <https://map.oldham.gov.uk/map?name=Green%20Infrastructure>

¹⁷¹ Appendix F identifies the open space deficiencies by ward. This document can be found at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2184/open_space_study_documents_2022.

Playing Pitches and Outdoor Sports Provision

- 18.14 Where appropriate, for new residential developments (of 10 homes and above), Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator may be used to estimate the demand that may be generated for the use of playing pitches by the new population of the development. The calculator is based on the deficiencies and needs identified in Oldham's PPOSS and is intended to inform what provision should be included onsite as part of new development.
- 18.15 New outdoor sports provision should be provided onsite, however contributions towards new or enhanced provision offsite will also be permitted, as agreed by the Council.
- 18.16 Offsite contributions towards new or enhanced playing pitch and outdoor sports provision should be informed by Oldham's PPOSS to ensure provision contributes to meeting local needs.
- 18.17 Proposals for new outdoor sports facilities and formal sports provision should also consider [Sport England guidance](#)¹⁷².

Open Space Standards

- 18.18 New and enhanced open space provision should be provided in line with the identified Open Space Standards (Table CO1) which have been devised as part of the Council's Open Space Study (2022).
- 18.19 Open Space provision in the borough has been assessed against the Standards of Quantity, Quality, Accessibility and Value, to identify deficiencies in provision. The Study assessed the current (at 2021) and predicted future (at 2037) levels of open space provision and population-based demand against these standards to identify current deficiencies and where they are expected to arise over the plan period, and therefore where new or improved open spaces will be most needed. The Open Space Study identifies the open space deficiencies by ward.
- 18.20 The requirements for outdoor sports provision are not included within Table CO1, as these are considered on a site-by-site basis as set out above.
- 18.21 The Standards are explained in turn below.

Accessibility

- 18.22 The accessibility standard is a measure of distance which reflects the accessibility needs of potential users of that type of open space provision. In general, smaller, local types of open spaces such as Children's Play Areas, Amenity Greenspaces, smaller Natural and Semi-Natural spaces and Outdoor Sports Pitches (playing fields etc) should be accessible within a short 10-to-15-minute walk time.
- 18.23 Larger spaces, such as Golf Courses, large scale strategic Natural and Semi-Natural spaces (such as Oldham Edge and Strinsedale Country Park) and large-scale strategic Parks and Gardens (such as Alexandra Park and Tandle Hill) are often considered to be 'destination locations' that might be visited for the day or an extended period and should be accessible within a 20-minute drive.
- 18.24 Due to the characteristics of the type of provision, accessibility standards have not been set for Allotments and Community Gardens, Cemeteries and Churchyards, Civic

¹⁷² This guidance can be found at: <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport>

Spaces and Green Corridors. The Council will continue to ensure that any new spaces provided within these typologies are sustainably located where appropriate.

18.25 Open Space Accessibility buffers are available to view online¹⁷³.

Quantity

18.26 Quantity is a measure of how much open space is available against a measure of population (the number of hectares required per 1,000 population). The quantity standard has been determined based on the premise of protecting existing open space as much as possible and securing new open space, where appropriate, ensuring that new residential development does not adversely impact upon existing open space provision.

18.27 Due to the characteristics of the type of provision, quantity standards have not been set for Cemeteries and Churchyards, Civic Spaces and Green Corridors. The Council will continue to ensure this type of provision is protected and enhanced where appropriate¹⁷⁴.

Quality

18.28 Quality is a measure of how the site performs against specific criteria, based on the Green Flag Award criteria¹⁷⁵, including indicators related to 'welcoming place', 'healthy, safe and secure' and 'well maintained and clean'. The borough's open space sites were scored in quality bandings of 'excellent – 90% to 100%', 'very good – 80% to 89%', 'good – 70% to 79%', 'fair – 50% to 69%' and 'poor 0% to 49%'. The Open Space Study (2022) recommended that a standard of 70% should be introduced to ensure that the borough's open spaces aim for at least a good standard to provide a positive benefit to the local community and the environment.

18.29 Quality is closely linked to value and together the standards can be a useful guide for investment, for example some high value sites may be poor quality and as such contributions could be spent improving these spaces to enhance and support community use.

Value

18.30 Open space value is a measure of functionality and usage by communities. As part of the Open Space Study (2022), sites were assessed against several 'value criteria' including, context, historical/ heritage, contribution to local amenity, sense of place, recreation, play, ecological and biodiversity. The Study scored sites as 'high (60-100%)', 'medium (40-59%)' and 'low (0-39%)' based on the value criteria. The Study recommended that a value standard of high value be applied for destination or flagship sites and a standard of medium value be applied for all other open space sites. The Council will advise in terms of identifying flagship sites - examples include Alexandra Park, and Waterhead Park.

18.31 Where new open spaces are proposed, the provider must demonstrate through a 'value audit' that the proposed provision meets the relevant value standard set out within the policy. The audit should be proportionate to the size and typology of provision that is

¹⁷³ See Green Infrastructure Network and Opportunity Map and Open Space Study documents <https://map.oldham.gov.uk/map?name=Green%20Infrastructure> and https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2184/open_space_study_documents_2022

¹⁷⁴ Cemeteries, churchyards and green corridors also form a significant part of the borough's green infrastructure network which are protected under Policy N3.

¹⁷⁵ Open Space Study (main document) (2022), Chapter 3, Table 2.

proposed and be completed by a competent person, reflecting the criteria and scoring set out within the Open Space Study¹⁷⁶.

- 18.32 In most cases, financial contributions towards existing offsite open space should go towards those spaces assessed with either a low or medium value score and a low or fair quality score. In some instances, to improve provision, it may be appropriate for contributions to go towards sites which are high quality but low value, or vice versa.
- 18.33 Adding value to open space is important as it enables them to provide multi-functional benefits, maximising the positive impacts of open space for communities. Providers can add value to open spaces in various ways, including, for example, adding street furniture, planting, improving signage and accessibility, and promoting spaces for events or sports use, to promote or improve their contextual, heritage, local amenity, sense of place, recreation, play and ecological value.

Policy CO3 - Community Facilities

The Council will support development proposals for new and improved community facilities where:

- 1. Any unacceptable impacts on neighbouring uses, the local environment, highway safety and traffic generation can be mitigated; and**
- 2. They are accessible by public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling.**

Development proposals relating to new residential care homes and nursing homes, non-residential education and training facilities, and health facilities will be assessed against policies H4, CO4 and CO6 respectively.

The loss of sites and premises used for community facilities will only be supported where:

- a. It is proved the existing use has insufficient demand to support it or is no longer needed; or**
- b. The loss is part of a wider proposal to improve service provision in the locality; or**
- c. It is demonstrated that existing facilities nearby can adequately serve identified needs, in an equally accessible manner.**

The views of the local community, including existing users, and relevant Parish Councils will be important to establish the significance of, and demand for, individual facilities and to develop solutions to enable their retention.

Reasoned Justification

- 18.34 The purpose of this policy is to allow for new community facilities and services in sustainable locations and to prevent the premature loss of important local facilities where their continued use is considered to remain a reasonable prospect.

¹⁷⁶ Open Space Study (main document), (2022), Chapter 3, pages 24-26.

- 18.35 Community facilities within the borough provide for the health and wellbeing, social, educational, spiritual, recreational and leisure and cultural needs of the community. Some serve a local community (e.g., post office), while others serve a wider area. These facilities and services help create supportive communities by meeting day to day needs of residents and businesses, such as:
- Public halls, (including community and youth centres)
 - Post Offices
 - Non-residential education and training facilities
 - Children's nurseries and creches
 - Childcare centres
 - Doctors surgeries, dentists, health centres and clinics, chemists and hospitals
 - Residential care homes and nursing homes
 - Village shops
 - Village pubs
 - Places of worship and church halls
 - Museums, libraries and art galleries
 - Performance spaces
- 18.36 New and enhanced community services and facilities will be supported where they are well related to the communities they serve and cause no adverse impacts upon neighbouring uses. Facilities should be easily accessible by public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling.
- 18.37 Oldham Council is committed to place-based integration where public services work collaboratively to provide timely and effective support to our residents and communities. Through this policy and the Local Plan the establishment of Family Hubs across Oldham as a network of integrated health and community resources will be supported. These hubs will enable and support people in the local community to live independently and to access support at the earliest opportunity as part of the Oldham prevention framework to improve health and well-being and reduce escalation of demand within the public sector.
- 18.38 The Council will seek to minimise the loss of land and buildings that are being used as community facilities. A loss of a community facility will only be supported where it meets one of the criteria a to c above and proposals for the redevelopment of a community facility will therefore be carefully assessed, particularly where there is no alternative provision planned. The approach taken within the policy recognises that there will be instances where facilities and services are no longer needed, in their entirety or in their current form, and that the impact of their loss has been considered as part of a wider strategy.
- 18.39 The [Localism Act 2011](#)¹⁷⁷ allows local groups within a community (including Parish Councils) the right to identify and protect facilities that are important to them from immediate disposal. Communities can nominate a building or an area of land to be

¹⁷⁷ This Act can be found at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

listed as an 'Asset of Community Value'. An asset can be privately or publicly owned and can vary from local shops and pubs, through to parks, open space areas and community centres.

- 18.40 Once listed, the process allows community organisations the opportunity to bid to buy listed assets under the 'Community Right to Bid' process. However, there is no obligation for owners to sell their asset to a community organisation and there is no control over who takes ownership.
- 18.41 The impact of a development proposal on a registered Asset of Community Value is a material planning consideration.

Policy CO4 - Education and Skills

Development proposals for early years, schools and post-16 facilities shall be supported where they are:

- 1. located within the community it is intended to serve and will be accessible by public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling;**
- 2. located, designed and managed to minimise the impacts of associated traffic and car parking on the surrounding area, including the safe provision of drop-offs and pick-ups to avoid congestion; and**
- 3. providing high-quality indoor and outdoor facilities suitable for the intended number, and age range, of students.**

Where opportunities arise through new built development and change of use, the shared use of facilities by the local community will be encouraged through planning conditions or planning obligations as appropriate and where such usage can be accommodated without compromising the quality and accessibility for new and/or existing users.

Land and buildings in educational use will be protected. Proposals that result in the net loss of educational facilities will be considered in accordance with Policy CO3: Community Facilities.

The Council will work with the local education authority to identify suitable sites for educational use where a need has been identified.

Reasoned Justification

- 18.42 National policy requires local planning authorities to take a proactive, positive, and collaborative approach to ensure that there is a sufficient choice of school places available to meet the needs of existing and new communities.
- 18.43 The Council is committed to ensuring that all young people get the education they deserve and that there is a good school within reach of every child in the borough. This requires an assessment in collaboration with education partners of the current capacity of schools and their ability to cater for new growth together with determining where and how the additional capacity to support new growth should be provided.

- 18.44 Access to adequate, affordable, and high-quality childcare (pre-school and school-age) can play a key role in children's development. Where it enables increased parental employment rates of low-income households, it may also help to reduce income inequalities. Childcare facilities should be safe, accessible for all, and provide both indoor and outdoor learning opportunities.
- 18.45 Enabling the shared use of facilities within schools can be an important and valuable resource for the local community, where this does not compromise the day to day use of the land or buildings. Through for example, allowing the use of playing fields, gym halls and classrooms by the local community during after-school hours.
- 18.46 The Council will support improvements to the education and skills of the borough's population by working with a range of education partners, including the University Campus Oldham, Oldham College and Oldham Sixth-Form College and with developer contributions to facilitate the development of new and improved education facilities.

Policy CO5 - Securing Educational Places through New Residential Development

Where a residential development of 10 dwellings or more would create or exacerbate a shortfall in the number of local school places, the Council will seek to secure new and/or improved education facilities. This is to address the unmet need, proportionate to the number of people aged 0-19, that the development is likely to accommodate.

Such provision will typically involve making a financial contribution towards the expansion of an existing education facility in agreement with the local education authority.

Where it is not practicable or desirable to meet the unmet demand through expanding capacity on-site provision may be required and the Council will negotiate with developers to secure the setting aside of land to accommodate the additional education provision.

For each relevant type of education provision, the scale of any financial contribution will be calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Pupil yield factor} \times \text{Cost per pupil place} = \text{Financial contribution}$$

Reasoned Justification

- 18.47 The Council has a statutory duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure that there are sufficient school places available within the borough to meet the educational needs of the population.
- 18.48 Whilst the Government provides funding to local authorities for the provision of new school places, the funding is reduced to take account of developer contributions to avoid double funding of school places. DfE therefore, expects local authorities to seek developer contributions towards school places that are created to meet the need arising from housing development.
- 18.49 It is important that the impacts of new residential development are addressed including:

- The education needs arising from a new development, based on an up-to-date pupil yield factor;
- The capacity of the existing schools that would serve the development; and
- The extent to which developer contributions are required and the degree of certainty that these will be secured at the appropriate time.

- 18.50 The Council will seek to secure new and/or improved education facilities and provision through S106 developer contributions where the existing provision is unable to accommodate the additional demands arising from a new residential development.
- 18.51 Where it is demonstrated that the number of pupils generated by a development is greater than the number of school places available, the Council may require a contribution to fund the provision of the additional school places.
- 18.52 Financial contributions will be calculated based upon expected pupil yields resulting from the proposed development and identified costs per school place to accommodate expansion of provision. Expected pupil yield will be identified in accordance with the Department for Education's (DfE) guidance on estimating pupil yield from housing development¹⁷⁸ and be informed by local evidence. At present, one dwelling, proposed as part of a new residential development, will yield 0.46 of a primary school place and 0.29 of a secondary school place.
- 18.53 Costs per school place will be identified using the DfE's most recently published local authority school places scorecards¹⁷⁹.
- 18.54 In addition to primary and secondary school places, developer contributions will be sought for early years, post-16 and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) places, recognising the duty placed on the local authority to secure sufficient education and training provision for young people with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan up to the age of 25. Costs associated with providing places in special schools and alternative provision are likely to be higher than those for mainstream school places and the DfE's [Securing Developer Contributions for Education](#)¹⁸⁰ guidance provides further advice on this matter.
- 18.55 Engagement with the local education authority early on, as part of pre-application discussions, will be important to ensure that the education demands generated by the development proposed are appropriately met.

¹⁷⁸ Estimating pupil yield from housing development, August 2023; Department for Education - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64d0f71be5491a00134b5940/Estimating_Pupil_Yield_from_Housing_Development.pdf

¹⁷⁹ The DfE's most recently published local authority school places scorecards are available at <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/local-authority-school-places-scorecards/2024>

¹⁸⁰ This document can be found at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64d0f70d7a5708001314485f/Securing_Developer_Contributions_for_Education.pdf

Policy CO6 - New Development and Health

Proposals for new health facilities will be supported where they are:

- 1. located in areas of identified need, as evidenced by the GM Integrated Care Partnership – Oldham Locality and relevant NHS strategies;**
- 2. co-located with other community services where appropriate, to support integrated care delivery.**

Improvements in the quality and accessibility of health and social care facilities will be supported.

The loss of a healthcare facility will only be supported where it has been formally declared surplus to the operational healthcare requirements of the NHS or identified as surplus as part of a published estates strategy or service transformation plan.

Health Impact Assessments

In line with PfE Policy JP-P6 a Health Impact Assessment will be required for all developments screened for an Environmental Impact Assessment, and other proposals which, due to their location, nature or proximity to sensitive receptors, are likely to have a notable impact on health and wellbeing.

The HIA should demonstrate how the development will impact on health and wellbeing through the consideration of the following, where relevant:

- a) housing standards and affordability;**
- b) access to healthcare services and other social infrastructure**
- c) access to open space and the natural environment;**
- d) air quality, noise and amenity;**
- e) accessibility and active travel;**
- f) crime reduction and community safety;**
- g) adaptation to climate change;**
- h) access to work and training; and**
- i) access to healthy food choices.**

Where a development is found to have significant negative impacts on health and wellbeing the Council may require applicants to provide for the mitigation of such impacts through the use of planning conditions and / or financial contributions secured via a planning obligation.

Development that would have an unacceptable impact on health or wellbeing will not be permitted.

Residential development and providing for health facilities

Where the demand resulting from a residential development (of 10 dwellings and above) will create or exacerbate a shortfall in health provision the Council will seek the provision of new or improved health facilities to address the unmet need generated by the development, as appropriate.

Developers should engage with the GM Integrated Care Partnership – Oldham Locality and Integrated Care Board at the earliest opportunity to determine the health care requirements associated with new development.

Reasoned Justification

18.56 Through creating Healthier Happier Lives, the Council aims to build a community where everyone has access to the care, support, and opportunities they need to live a good life. We are committed to tackling poverty, improving health and wellbeing, providing high-quality social care, and promoting lifelong education. Being resident focussed this also means providing support and care that is as close to, and connected with, homes and community as possible¹⁸¹. The health estate must be supported to develop and modernise, or be protected in line with integrated NHS strategies, and planning has a key role in helping to deliver these ambitions, through helping to secure quality and accessible health provision that meets the needs of our local communities.

18.57 It is important to ensure that the demands placed on health provision are met by new residential development as it comes forward and that a proportionate contribution is made towards funding the healthcare needs. The local planning authority will work with the GM Integrated Care Partnership – Oldham Locality and Integrated Care Board to ensure that the capacity of health facilities in Oldham increases in line with growing and changing needs. New or improved health facilities required to address unmet need generated by a new residential development of 10 dwellings and above will be secured through a Section 106 Planning Obligation in accordance with Policy IN2 Planning Obligations. Early dialogue with the GM Integrated Care Partnership – Oldham Locality and Integrated Care Board is essential to ensure that appropriate provision is provided.

18.58 Developers have the potential to positively influence health and well-being through maximising the health benefits of a proposal, minimising the potential harm, and reducing inequalities. Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is an objective assessment tool for identifying the health impacts of a proposed development and can be used to inform its design, thereby leading to a development that is sustainable and which positively contributes to the borough's health and wellbeing.

18.59 To ensure that new developments have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of new and existing residents, the Council will require a HIA for relevant development proposals.

18.60 The HIA should identify the health impacts of the proposed development having regard to the matters a) to i) listed above as relevant. In doing so the assessment should consider and identify the following:

- a) the potential positive and negative impacts on health and wellbeing, both on end users and the local population;

¹⁸¹ Oldham Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2030 can be found at: https://www.jsnaoldham.co.uk/cms-data/depot/profile-depot/HealthAndWellbeingStrategy_Approved210323.pdf

- b) the impacts on different groups, taking into account that some groups will be more vulnerable to negative impacts, and identify those groups that will be most affected; and
- c) actions to maximise positive impacts, and minimise and mitigate adverse impacts, on health and wellbeing, having regard to the most affected groups.

18.61 Applicants are advised to seek advice from the local planning authority before carrying out a HIA to ensure that the correct level of HIA is being prepared and that it is proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed.

Policy CO7 - Hot Food Takeaways and Fast-food Outlets

Within Oldham Town Centre planning permission for hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets may be permitted provided it is demonstrated it would not result in an unacceptable concentration of uses.

Outside of Oldham Town Centre planning permission for hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets will not be granted where they are within 400m of:

- 1. a primary or secondary school; or**
- 2. places where children and young people congregate.**

Proposals for all hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets will be required to demonstrate that:

- a) there would be no unacceptable impact on residential amenity;**
- b) there would be no adverse implications for traffic management, parking or highway safety;**
- c) the hours of operation are appropriate for its location and having regard to neighbouring uses;**
- d) appropriately designed and sited fume extraction systems and/or noise insulation are provided;**
- e) an appropriate location for commercial trade waste including recycling facilities has been identified;**
- f) litter will be contained within the curtilage of the premises, stored to avoid odour nuisance, be convenient for refuse collection and screened to protect visual amenity. Any litter bin provision should be retained in perpetuity; and**
- g) healthier food and drink options will be promoted and made available as a standard part of the menu.**

Applications for hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets must be supported by a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) that is proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and in line Policy CO6.

Reasoned Justification

- 18.56 National planning guidance states that local planning authorities should refuse applications for hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets under certain criteria linked to distance to schools and / or where there is evidence that such uses have adverse impacts on local health, pollution or anti-social behaviour.
- 18.57 There is a growing body of evidence on the association between exposure to fast food outlets and obesity. There are also concerns about the effect fast food consumption is having on children's diets and eating behaviours, with health problems such as obesity starting to develop at primary school age and behaviour that's established early in life following through to adulthood.
- 18.58 In Oldham 38.6% of year 6 aged children are overweight or obese. This is higher than the England rate of 35.8% (2032/24). For adults, the latest figures highlight that 71.3% of adults in Oldham are classified as overweight or obese. This is higher than the England average of 64.5% (2023/24).
- 18.59 The density of fast-food outlets in Oldham is also above that in England. With there being 124.4 per 100,000 population as opposed to 96.5 across England (2017).
- 18.60 High levels of deprivation in Oldham coincide with a high prevalence of unhealthy weight and high numbers of fast-food outlets, as all tend to be within the inner Oldham wards. The latest Joint Service Needs Assessment shows that 35% of areas in Oldham are amongst the 10% most deprived areas in England (this is 7 out of 20 wards). This mirrors the position nationally, where increased access to fast food outlets in the most deprived areas has been shown to adversely impact unhealthy weight and health inequalities.
- 18.61 The policy applies a 400m walking distance from a primary or secondary school and from places where children and young people congregate.
- 18.62 For the purposes of this policy, places where children and young people congregate include the following:
- Parks
 - Leisure facilities such as cinemas, climbing walls, sports centres
 - Out of centre retail parks such as Elk Mill and Alexandra Retail Park
 - Sixth forms and colleges
 - Libraries;
 - Community, children's and youth centres
 - Places of worship
- 18.63 This list will be kept under review throughout the lifetime of the Plan and will be updated as appropriate.
- 18.64 Seeking to limit the proliferation of hot food takeaways, having regard to such issues as the proximity to locations where children and young people congregate; evidence indicating high levels of obesity and health inequalities; the over-concentration of certain uses within a specified area; and other issues such as odours and noise impact, refuse and litter will both help to maintain and support the economic vitality and viability of Oldham Town Centre and the borough's other centres.

18.65 See Policy CO6 for further details regarding what is required as part of a HIA and how to ensure the assessment is proportionate to the scale and nature to development proposed.

Monitoring

18.66 The main Local Plan indicators that will be used to monitor this chapter are:

- Number of planning applications that result in the gain or loss of identified on-site open space
- Number of S106 Planning Obligations for new or enhanced open space provision
- Life Expectancy
- Proportion of physically active adults
- Childhood obesity rates
- State funded primary and secondary school capacity and forecasts
- Number of planning applications approved for education related facilities
- The number of new hot food takeaways approved within 400 metres of a primary or secondary school, or places where children and young people congregate

18.67 The main PfE indicators that will be used to help monitor this chapter are:

- Number of hectares of green infrastructure (metric will consider publicly accessible GI where information is available)
- Numbers of school places
- Consideration of 'headroom' statistics where available.
- Percentage of working age population with Higher Level (4+) qualification(s) and percentage of working age population with sub-Level 2 qualification.

19 Protecting Our Local Environment

- 19.1 Quality of life is affected by the local environment. Addressing amenity and tackling pollution will have impacts on health and wellbeing and the environment. The purpose of these policies is to maintain, protect and enhance living and working conditions that will maintain a high standard of amenity for all users and occupiers.

Policy LE1 – Ensuring a High Standard of Amenity in New Development

All developments will be expected to provide and maintain a high standard of protection from noise pollution and vibration for all users and occupiers, including both future occupants and users of the proposed development as well as existing occupants and users of neighbouring land and buildings. This should be achieved and maintained without preventing, or unreasonably restricting, the continued operation of established authorised neighbouring uses and activities.

Proposals will be required to demonstrate, at planning application stage, that where applicable the following matters have been adequately addressed in relation to both the construction and operational life of the development:

- 1. noise and vibration (particularly with regards to noise-sensitive uses), including internal and external levels, timing, duration and character; and**
- 2. traffic movements to, from and within, the site including car parking and arrangements for deliveries.**

The Council will not support proposals where new residents and occupiers would be likely to raise complaints about neighbouring existing uses. Where new developments could be affected by an existing operation or business in its vicinity, the applicant (or ‘agent of change’) is required to provide suitable mitigation to be agreed with the Council.

Depending on the scale and nature of the development proposed, a detailed assessment to be agreed with the Council may be required to address criteria 1 and 2 above.

Reasoned Justification

- 19.2 A key role of the planning system is to ensure that new development does not have an adverse impact on the amenity¹⁸² of existing properties and that adequate levels of amenity will be enjoyed by future occupiers of the proposed development.
- 19.3 All development (including minor developments and extensions) can cause a disturbance to nearby residents or users of neighbouring land and buildings resulting in the quality of their amenity being impacted. However, the continuance of established existing businesses should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them

¹⁸²For the purposes of this policy, ‘amenity’ is defined as those desirable features of a place that ought to be protected in the public interest.

because of the introduction of new and incompatible land uses. Such matters are an important planning consideration in relation to amenity.

- 19.4 Noise generating development should, wherever possible, be located away from noise-sensitive development (e.g., housing). Conversely noise-sensitive development will not be supported in the vicinity of established noise-generating uses unless appropriate measures are taken to ensure that the noise does not adversely affect levels of amenity. Considerations will include the internal and external levels, timing, duration, and character of noise.
- 19.5 Where noise-sensitive uses are proposed close to an existing noise source, or when noise-generating uses are proposed, the Council will require noise impact assessments and/or vibration surveys to accompany a planning application. The remit and methodology should be agreed in advance with the Council and should be undertaken in accordance with the most relevant national guidance and industry codes of practice.
- 19.6 Traffic and parking provision can have a significant impact on the amenity of occupiers and users in relation to vehicle movements to and from the destination. The resulting disturbance from the noise and vibration of passing vehicles can have a significant impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties – especially if it involves Heavy Goods Vehicles.
- 19.7 Light pollution is also an important consideration and is addressed by Policy OL5.

Policy LE2 - Ground Conditions and Contaminated Land

Development proposals for sensitive end uses will be permitted on contaminated land, or land which may have been subject to previous industrial activity or affected by landfill gas or land instability, where appropriate measures can be taken to remediate and/or satisfactorily mitigate the risk of contamination and/or existing ground conditions.

Planning applications for proposals on land that is potentially unstable or contaminated shall be accompanied by an appropriate Coal Mining Risk Assessment, land stability or slope stability risk assessment or Contaminated Land Assessment carried out by a qualified professional showing:

- 1. the nature and extent of contamination or instability issues and the potential effects this may have on the development and its future users; and**
- 2. the measures needed to allow the development to go ahead safely considering the potential end users.**

Where remedial measures are required to allow the development to go ahead safely, these will be secured by a condition of planning permission.

Reasoned Justification

- 19.8 Activities associated with industrial/commercial and agricultural processes can result in adverse ground conditions which can pose a risk to development, future site users and the environment. Oldham has a rich industrial heritage and previous

manufacturing, engineering and industrial processes have resulted in the potential for contaminated land across the borough. Typical causes of land contamination include industrial or commercial usage, mining, and landfilling. Contamination can also occur naturally due to certain types of minerals being present in rocks and soils.

- 19.9 Where contamination is known or suspected, applicants should ensure that any potential issues are identified and discussed with the Council as early as possible in the development process. Development proposals will be expected to seek sustainable solutions to the remediation of contaminated land.
- 19.10 To ensure that a sufficient and proportionate level of information is provided, a Contaminated Land Assessment will need to be submitted with all new development proposals where contamination is suspected or known on the site (or adjacent land) and/or where the proposed development for a sensitive end use would be particularly vulnerable to the presence of contamination. This may include residential schemes, care homes, holiday lets, allotments.
- 19.11 A Coal Mining Risk Assessment will need to be submitted with all new development proposals where the site lies within an area that is known to be at risk of historical mine workings.
- 19.12 Land stability or slope stability risk assessment will also be required where land is potentially unstable.
- 19.13 Remediation will need to remove unacceptable risks and make the site suitable for its new use. As a minimum, after carrying out the development and commencement of the new use, the land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under the [Environmental Protection Act \(1990\)](#).¹⁸³

Policy LE3 - Air Quality

The Council will seek to improve air quality within the borough and contribute towards the achievement of national air quality objectives and Greater Manchester's Clean Air Plan.

Development will be supported in line with PfE policies that does not:

- 1. Impede the achievement of any air quality objective(s), particularly in locations declared as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs);**
- 2. Introduce a significant new source of any air pollutant, including odour, fumes, smoke, dust and other sources; and**
- 3. Increase exposure to poor air quality, particularly where vulnerable people are located (such as health care facilities, care homes or schools).**

Air Quality Assessments will be required to support planning applications for the following:

- 4. Residential development of over 100 dwellings**
- 5. Development involving more than 10,000m² of floorspace**

¹⁸³ This Act can be found at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/43/contents>

6. Developments which introduce new exposure into an area of existing poor air quality (e.g., an AQMA)

Depending on the scale and nature of the development proposed, Air Quality Assessments may be required to support other applications including industrial processes where there are direct emissions to the air, as well as proposals with significant vehicle movements and significant changes to highways infrastructure.

Development that is likely to produce an odour, should demonstrate that there is no negative impact on residential amenity by providing an Odour Impact Assessment.

Reasoned Justification

- 19.14 Air pollution can arise from many sources and activities, including traffic and transport, industrial processes, commercial premises, energy generation, agriculture, waste storage treatment and construction sites. Increasing temperatures can heighten the impact of air pollutants, and so climate change further raises the importance of addressing air quality issues.
- 19.15 This policy relates to air pollution from all potential sources in any potential form and includes dust, fumes, and odour.
- 19.16 Good practice for air quality should be applied to all developments. Development should be designed to minimise public exposure to pollution sources for example by locating habitable rooms away from busy roads, or directing combustion generated pollutants through well sited vents.
- 19.17 In accordance with Policy T5, where development generates significant additional traffic, the provision of a detailed Travel Plan will be required, which sets out measures to encourage sustainable means of transport such as subsidised or free-ticketing, improved links to bus stops, improved infrastructure and layouts to improve accessibility and safety. The provision of a Travel Plan should include measures to help reduce the impact of transport related emissions which are likely to have an impact on air quality (such as the provision of cycle parking and changing facilities).
- 19.18 Some developments may require an Air Quality Assessment where there is the risk of an adverse air quality effect, either from a new development causing an air quality impact or creating exposure to high concentrations of pollutants for new residents. Where the need for an Air Quality Assessment is triggered, it should show the likely changes in air quality or exposure to air pollutants as a result of the proposed development, including a review of monitoring data. Where monitoring is not currently undertaken, it may be requested to inform the application or to confirm the effects. The purpose of the assessment will be to determine the predicted impact of a development on local air quality, public health and/or the local environment, to help determine the appropriate level of mitigation from a development.
- 19.19 Planning applications which are required to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment will need to consider air quality impacts on Holcroft Moss, within the Manchester Mosses SAC in accordance with PfE Policy JP-C8.
- 19.20 It is recommended that developers contact the Council's Environmental Health team to confirm whether an Air Quality Assessment is likely to be needed in support of a future planning application. Air Quality Assessments will need to be proportionate to the

nature and scale of development proposed and the potential impacts (considering existing air quality conditions), and because of this are likely to be location specific.

- 19.21 Where proposals have the potential to release significant odours or where a sensitive use is being proposed close to a wastewater treatment works or other sources of odour, applicants will be required to provide an Odour Impact Assessment. The Assessment must be carried out in consultation with the relevant statutory undertaker to confirm that there are no adverse amenity impacts on future occupiers or that the adverse impacts can be appropriately mitigated.
- 19.22 Odour can arise from activities such as wastewater treatment works, intensive livestock farming and some industrial processes. An Odour Impact Assessment will be required to accompany any proposal that would introduce new sources of odour close to sensitive receptors, or the development of sensitive uses close to existing sources of odour. The Odour Impact Assessment will be required to be undertaken by a suitably qualified person in accordance with good practice guidance and consultation with the relevant statutory undertaker.

Monitoring

19.23 The main Local Plan indicators that will be used to monitor this chapter are:

- Number of planning applications with conditions attached relating to contaminated land
- Number of days in Greater Manchester where air pollution was moderate or higher
- Per capita emission estimates, industry, domestic and transport sectors
- Annual mean nitrogen dioxide

19.24 The main PfE indicator that will be used to help monitor this chapter are:

- Exceedance of the legal level of NO₂ (as an Annual Mean) in local AQMA and Clean Air Plan Monitoring

20 Infrastructure and Delivery in Oldham

Digital Infrastructure

- 20.1 To facilitate residents demand to access services digitally, Oldham Council is implementing a digital strategy, so that where possible and there is resident demand, end-to-end digital services are available. Much of the strategy focuses on what the Council can do to improve its digital presence. However, for the digital infrastructure to be a success, there is a need for Oldham's digital fibre infrastructure to be strengthened so that homes and businesses can access digital connections that reflect current and future demand.

Planning Obligations

- 20.2 Planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) are a mechanism that may be used to make a development proposal acceptable in planning terms, that would not be otherwise. They should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.
- 20.3 A planning obligation must only be sought where they meet the test set out in national planning guidance, which is that it is:
- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - b) directly related to the development; and
 - c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 20.4 Common uses of planning obligations across Oldham are to secure affordable housing, and provide for open space, sport and recreation provision and infrastructure such as school places. A planning obligation can be used to:
- 1. restrict the development or use of the land in a specified way;
 - 2. require specified operations or activities to be carried out in, on, under or over the land;
 - 3. require the land to be used in a specified way; or
 - 4. require a sum or sums to be paid to the authority on a specified date or dates or periodically.
- 20.5 The planning obligation is a formal document, a deed, which states that it is an obligation for planning purposes, identifies the relevant land, the person entering the obligation and their interest and the relevant local authority that would enforce the obligation. The obligation can be a unitary obligation or multi-party agreement. If the planning obligation is not complied with, it is enforceable against the person that entered into the obligation and any subsequent owner of the land against which it was made.

Policy IN1 Digital Infrastructure and Telecommunications

The Council will support the provision of infrastructure that extends and improves digital connectivity across the borough, particularly where it provides access to 5G and gigabit-capable full fibre technology.

Where new telecommunication sites are proposed, including those for prior approval, proposals will be considered in accordance with the relevant Government guidance.

New masts or telecommunications equipment will be permitted where:

- 1. it has been demonstrated that there are no reasonable opportunities for sharing a site, mast or facility with existing telecommunications infrastructure in the area before new sites are considered;**
- 2. the siting, height and design of the equipment will not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area in which it is located, including the significance and setting of historic assets;**
- 3. any building-mounted installations would be located and designed to minimise the appearance on the host building;**
- 4. it can be demonstrated that the equipment will not cause any interference with other electrical equipment or detrimental impact on air traffic safety;**
- 5. the development does not impact on the movement of pedestrians or cyclists or highway safety; and**
- 6. provision is made for the removal of the structures and reinstatement of the site as soon as reasonably practicable after it is no longer required for telecommunication purposes.**

All new residential and employment developments should enable Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) broadband infrastructure. Where it is demonstrated that FTTP is not viable, proposals should ensure that new development is broadband ready through the installation of appropriate ducting and equipment. Where no broadband provision is included, developers will be required to demonstrate through consultation with broadband providers that such connections are not deliverable or viable.

Reasoned Justification

- 20.6 The purpose of this policy is to improve digital connectivity across the borough. The Council is committed to securing high-quality communication infrastructure that is essential for growing
- 20.7 a sustainable economy and for social wellbeing. Access to high quality digital infrastructure supports productivity and new business opportunities. It can also facilitate social inclusion, enable home working, diversify the rural economy, enhance educational and social opportunities, as well as improve access to a wide range of services that are increasingly provided online. It can also help to mitigate air quality

impacts by reducing the need to travel. As technology advances the demand for new telecommunications infrastructure will continue to grow.

- 20.8 [Part 16 of the General Permitted Development Order \(1995\)](#)¹⁸⁴ (as amended) allows telecommunications operators to install and replace certain types of telecommunications equipment without the need for planning permission provided certain criteria are met.
- 20.9 Some smaller scale masts fall within 'permitted development' but require the 'Prior Approval' of the local planning authority. In these instances, the Council can exercise control over the siting and appearance of telecommunications equipment in the interests of protecting amenity. Appearance of a mast includes its materials, colour and design, and consideration of siting will involve its impact on the ecological value of the site, the wider landscape and its proximity to buildings and housing and the availability of alternative infrastructure in the area. The criteria in the policy will be applied in these cases and for those more significant radio and telecommunications infrastructure that do not constitute permitted development.
- 20.10 Maximising the use of existing infrastructure and facilities will be prioritised. It is essential that the proliferation of new telecommunications structures is controlled, their visual impact appropriately mitigated, and opportunities for the rationalisation or screening of equipment already installed on existing masts, buildings and associated street cabinets provided.
- 20.11 Planning applications must be accompanied by detailed supplementary information which provides the technical justification for the proposed development, details of any consultation undertaken, the proposed structure and measures to minimise its visual impact.
- 20.12 The provision of gigabit-capable connectivity to new build developments is a crucial element of meeting the Government's ambitious broadband targets. These are fibre-based networks and certain advanced wireless networks capable of delivering reliable high speeds. The Government has therefore secured commitments from network operators, outlining their commitment to work with housing developers on providing gigabit-capable connections to all new build developments across the UK. These commitments alongside the amendments to the Building Regulations 2010 to require all new build developments to have gigabit broadband will ensure that 99% of all new homes will be able to be built with gigabit-capable broadband.
- 20.13 It is important that new developments must be 'future-proofed' with appropriate digital infrastructure that will meet existing and future communication needs. New sites (residential and non-residential) should be provided with in-built broadband infrastructure to enable the delivery of high-speed broadband services. It is essential that the Council works with developers to make sure that the appropriate digital infrastructure is incorporated, including 5G networks (or future technologies as they become available).

¹⁸⁴ This can be found at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/596/schedule/2/part/16/made>

Policy IN2 – Planning Obligations

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.

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.

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.

Developers are encouraged to enter into early discussions with the Council to discuss planning obligations and requirements.

Further information and detailed guidance in respect of planning obligations and policy requirements can be found in individual policies throughout the Plan.

Viability

In some cases, a site-specific viability assessment 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, in line with NPPF and PPG.

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:

1. the value of the planning obligations has been maximised having regard to likely viability;
2. a clawback mechanism has been incorporated into the 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
3. the benefits of the development outweigh the lack of full mitigation for its impacts, having regard to other material considerations.

The viability assessment of any such application will be independently verified by the Council, at the expense of the applicant.

Reasoned Justification

- 20.14 New development should make a positive contribution to local communities and should not place unnecessary pressure on existing services, facilities, infrastructure and open spaces. As such, new development will be expected to contribute to new, and/or enhance existing, provision of services and facilities to ensure sustainable development.
- 20.15 Further information and detailed guidance in respect of planning obligations and policy requirements can be found in individual policies throughout the Plan.
- 20.16 In some cases, such as in terms of delivering affordable housing, it may be more appropriate to secure provision through planning conditions rather than planning obligations. This is set out in the relevant policy where appropriate.

Viability

- 20.17 A whole plan Viability Assessment has been carried out as part preparing the Publication Plan. The assessment has tested 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.
- 20.18 It will be the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate whether circumstances justify the need for a site-specific viability assessment at the application stage.
- 20.19 Any such site-specific viability assessment should be proportionate, comply with national planning policy and guidance and should refer to the methodology and approach set out within the whole plan Viability Assessment. All assessments should be made publicly available as part of the planning application process, ensuring transparency in line with national planning policy.
- 20.20 The price paid for land is not a relevant justification for failing to accord with relevant policy requirements in the Local Plan. Landowners and site purchasers should consider this when agreeing land transactions.
- 20.21 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 if there has been a change in circumstances since the adoption of the plan.
- 20.22 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 on the evidence of local needs and priorities set out within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 20.23 Where development is permitted which does not fully comply with policy requirements on the grounds of viability a clawback mechanism will be incorporated into the legal agreement to enable the review of viability over the course of development, or after planning permission is granted, and to ensure that additional mitigation is secured where viability has been improved. This will ensure the fullest possible compliance with the Local Plan is secured.

Policy IN3 - Delivering Social Value and Inclusion

All development shall be located, designed, constructed and operated in such a way as to maximise its social value.

All planning applications for major developments shall be supported by a Social Value Strategy.

A condition will be included on all relevant planning permissions to ensure the preparation and implementation of a Social Value Strategy, to be approved by the Council. This will include a requirement for compliance with the relevant parts of the strategy to be confirmed prior to the commencement and occupation of the development as appropriate.

The Social Value Strategy shall identify how the development will support and deliver social value and inclusion throughout its lifetime. Where relevant this shall include consideration of how the proposed development will:

- 1. Help to reduce inequalities in Oldham and their adverse impacts on residents**
- 2. Support local residents and vulnerable groups to participate in society**
- 3. Create inclusive places through its design in accordance with Policy D1**
- 4. Promote opportunities for good mental and physical health and wellbeing**
- 5. Promote economic inclusion, through (but not exclusively) the following:**
 - a) Ensuring that access arrangements cater for all needs, including maximising opportunities for walking, wheeling and cycling;**
 - b) Promoting on-site employment opportunities to Oldham residents;**
 - c) Providing training opportunities for Oldham residents;**
 - d) Utilising local supply chains; and**
 - e) Signing up to Greater Manchester's Good Employment Charter**

Further guidance on delivering social value may be developed through a supplementary planning document (SPD).

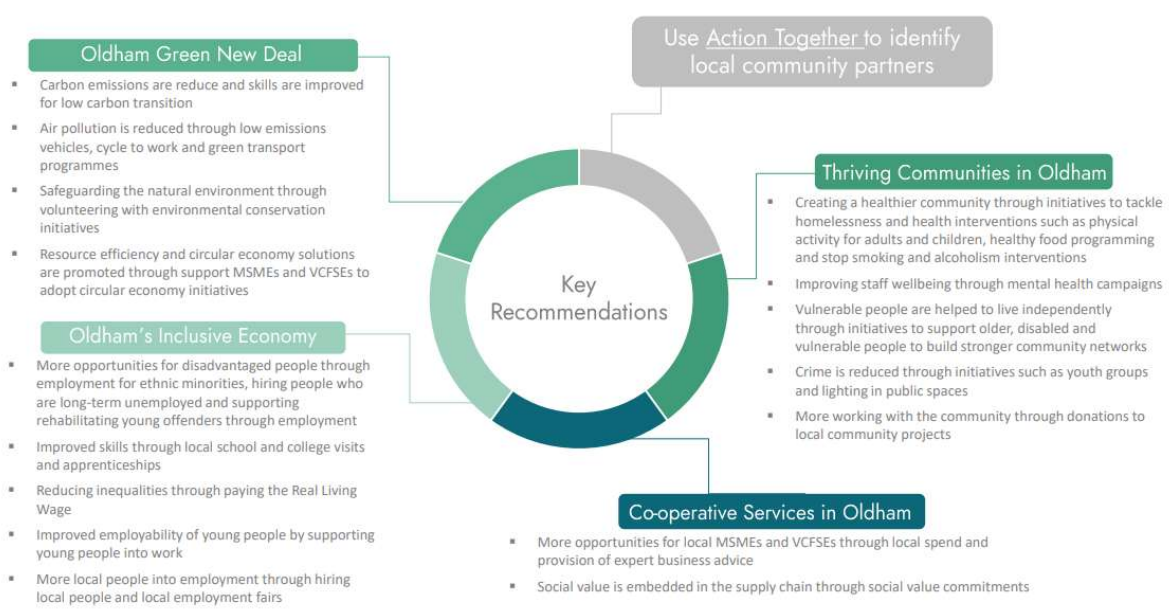
Reasoned Justification

20.24 The Oldham Partnership's ambitions for Oldham are set out within the Oldham Plan 2024-30. The Plan identify three priorities – A Great Place to Live, Healthier Happier Lives, and Green and Growing. These reflect the Partnership's shared ambitions for Oldham, which are for vibrant, safe neighbourhoods where people are proud to live;

opportunities for healthier, more fulfilled lives; and a sustainable, thriving economy. At the heart of this is the creation of a borough where residents feel a deep sense of belonging and ownership, where they can celebrate the unique identity and heritage of Oldham. Ensuring new major development coming forward has regard to social value through the completion and implementation of their Social Value Strategy is a key part of how, through planning, we can help to support and deliver these ambitions and priorities.

- 20.25 A [Local Needs Analysis](#)¹⁸⁵ was carried out by the Social Value Portal on behalf of the Council in 2022 with the aim to provide guidance for stakeholder, suppliers, developers, contractors and others working in Oldham to develop robust social value strategies and inform procurement. The recommendations coming out of the 2022 local needs analysis as shown below at Figure IN1 illustrate the importance of social value and the role that planning can play in achieving it.

Figure IN1: Recommendations from the Local Needs Analysis



- 20.26 A key aspect of delivering social value through planning is economic inclusion and ensuring that residents share in the benefits of future development and economic growth. In Oldham, unemployment currently stands at 7.0% (June 2025). This is the highest claimant rate in GM and higher than that for England (4.3%). In 2024 the average household income in Oldham was £30,414, as opposed to England's average of £37,861, and in 2022/23 42.2% of children lived in relative low-income families, which is more than double the national figure of 19.8%. Furthermore, 22.7% of areas (7 wards) in Oldham are among the 10% most deprived areas in England (2019). This above average unemployment rate, low incomes and high levels of deprivation across parts of the borough highlight the importance of taking every opportunity to improve economic inclusion for the borough's residents, including the promotion of social value. Through for example helping Oldham residents into employment and/or training, new development can help to tackle deprivation by raising people out of poverty and reducing inequalities, whilst benefiting directly in terms of improved access to a larger, healthier and more highly skilled labour supply.

¹⁸⁵ This document can be found at: <https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200195/business/1901/procurement>

20.27 As a Co-operative borough we also want to build a fair and prosperous local economy where everyone does their bit and everybody benefits. We believe that fair employment is central to our ambitions for Oldham and will help to create thriving business with proud and committed staff. As part of demonstrating economic inclusion in the Social Value Strategy applicants are also encouraged to be part of and sign up to [Greater Manchester's Good Employment Charter](#)¹⁸⁶, a voluntary membership and assessment scheme that aims to raise employment standards across GM, for all organisations of any size, sector or geography.

20.28 Further guidance on what to include within a social value strategy and the type of measures that could be used to assist developers in identifying how development can maximise its social value may be published to support Policy IN3.

Monitoring

20.29 The main Local Plan indicators that will be used to monitor this chapter are:

- Infrastructure Funding Statement: Total amount of money received secured through s106; Total amount of s106 receipts collected before the reported year but which have not been allocated; and Total amount of s106 expenditure for the reported year (including transferring it to another person to spend)

20.30 The main PfE indicators that will be used to help monitor this chapter are:

- Links provided to each Districts Infrastructure Funding Statement / Annual section 106 monitoring report
- Number of premises with full fibre connectivity

¹⁸⁶ More information on this can be found at: <https://www.gmgoodemploymentcharter.co.uk/>

21 Monitoring

21.1 This chapter sets out a framework for the monitoring of policies contained within the Local Plan.

Policy M1 – Monitoring Framework

This monitoring framework will enable the Council to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the policies contained within the Local Plan. Monitoring of the plan is essential to ensure that it delivers its vision and objectives, and to identify where policy intervention or review may be required.

An Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) will be published annually. The AMR will:

- 1. report on progress made against the Local Development Scheme (LDS);**
- 2. assess housing delivery including net additional dwellings and affordable housing;**
- 3. monitor the implementation of Local Plan policies;**
- 4. provide updates on neighbourhood planning activity across the borough;**
- 5. report on planning obligations (Section 106) receipts and expenditure; and**
- 6. detail actions under the Duty to Co-operate.**

Each policy in the Local Plan will be monitored using specific indicators as set out in the policy's linkages box found at the end of each chapter and listed in Table M1 below.

Where monitoring identifies underperformance or unintended outcomes:

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

Further guidance on the relevant policy matter may be produced through the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents.

Reasoned Justification

21.2 National planning guidance states that 'Local planning authorities must publish information at least annually that shows progress with local plan preparation, reports any activity relating to the duty to cooperate, any information collected which relates to

indicators in the plan, and any policies which are not being implemented'. A key component of the monitoring framework will therefore be the annual preparation and publication of the authorities Monitoring Report.

- 21.3 Aswell as reporting on the progress against the Council's LDS, assessing housing delivery, updating on preparation of neighbourhood plans across the borough and providing information on planning obligation secured, this framework will monitor the implementation of Local Plan policies. At the end of each chapter the Council has identified local indicators that will be monitored to ensure effective implementation of the plan. These indicators will be monitored to identify when a future review may be required and are set out in Table M1 below.
- 21.4 As part of the Integrated Assessment (IA) of the Local Plan several proposed IA Objectives have been identified along with corresponding indicators. More information on the methodology used to identify these can be found in the Integrated Assessment of the Local Plan Review: Scoping Report Update 3. These are also identified in Table M1 below.

Table M1: Local Plan Monitoring Indicators

Indicator	Source	IA Objective
Single data list 160-00 Proportion of local sites where positive conservation management is being or has been implemented	Oldham Council	IA1
Change in areas of biodiversity designations (i.e. SBI updates)	Natural England and GMEU	IA1
Percentage of sites designated for nature in active management for nature conservation	Oldham Council / GMCA	IA1
Percentage of tree canopy cover	Oldham Council / GMCA	IA1, IA9, IA13
Number of planning applications that result in the gain or loss of identified on-site open space	Oldham Council	IA2, IA8
Number of S106 Planning Obligations for new or enhanced open space provision	Oldham Council	IA2, IA7, IA8
Number of major developments refused on landscape grounds	Oldham Council	IA3
Number of heritage assets on the National Heritage List for England	Historic England	IA4
Number of listed buildings and number of buildings in conservation areas lost through new development proposals	Oldham Council	IA4
Number and type of developments permitted on non-designated Mills	Oldham Council	IA4

Indicator	Source	IA Objective
Number of approved applications for strategic developments with a masterplan or framework and design code	Oldham Council	IA5
Number and type of developments permitted in the Green Belt	Oldham Council	IA6, IA11
Number and type of developments permitted in Local Green Spaces	Oldham Council	IA3, IA6
Infrastructure Funding Statement: Total amount of money received secured through s106; Total amount of s106 receipts collected before the reported year but which have not been allocated; and Total amount of s106 expenditure for the reported year (including transferring it to another person to spend)	Oldham Council	IA7
Life Expectancy	Oldham JSNA	IA8
Proportion of physically active adults	Oldham JSNA	IA8
Childhood obesity rates	Oldham JSNA	IA8
The number of new hot food takeaways approved within 400 metres of a primary or secondary school, or places where children and young people congregate	Oldham Council	IA8, IA15
Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on water quality grounds	Oldham Council	IA10
Number of new developments agreed with the Council incorporating Natural Flood Management (NFM)	Oldham Council	IA1, IA7, IA9, IA10, IA13
Number of planning applications with conditions attached relating to contaminated land	Oldham Council	IA11
Percentage of households living in fuel poverty	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy	IA12
Number of days in Greater Manchester where air pollution was moderate or higher	Oldham Council	IA14, IA15
Annual mean nitrogen dioxide	Oldham Council	IA14, IA15
Per capita emission estimates, industry, domestic and transport sectors	Department of Energy Security & Net Zero	IA14, IA15, IA16, IA17

Indicator	Source	IA Objective
Number of pedestrian or cycling casualties per year	Reported Road Casualties, Great Britain	IA15
Number of travel plans secured as a condition of planning permission	Oldham Council	IA16
Total amount of additional floorspace (office, industry and warehousing) by type square metres (sqm) gross	Oldham Council	IA18, IA19
Total amount of employment floorspace (office, industry and warehousing) developed on previously developed land by type (sqm gross)	Oldham Council	IA6, IA18, IA19
Employment land available by type (ha)	Oldham Council	IA18, IA19
Total amount of employment land (office, industry and warehousing) developed by type hectares (ha) gross	Oldham Council	IA18, IA19
Number of planning applications granted in Oldham Town Centre and the borough's other centres, for main town centre uses	Oldham Council	IA20
Number of homes completed within the borough's centres	Oldham Council	IA20
Number of day visits and staying visits to Oldham borough	Marketing Manchester	IA21
The percentage of areas in Oldham among the 10% most deprived areas in England	IMD	IA8, IA18, IA19
Unemployment rate	Oldham Council	IA18, IA19
Youth unemployment rate	Oldham Council	IA18, IA19
State funded primary and secondary school capacity and forecasts	Department for Education	IA7, IA22
Number of planning applications approved for education related facilities	Oldham Council	IA7, IA22
Plan period and housing targets; Net additional dwellings - in previous years; Net additional dwellings - for the reporting year; Net additional dwellings - in future years; and Managed delivery target	Oldham Council	IA23
New and converted dwellings – on previously developed land	Oldham Council	IA6, IA11, IA23

Indicator	Source	IA Objective
Number of planning applications approved achieving the minimum density requirements as appropriate	Oldham Council	IA6, IA23
Total housing completions by size and type on major sites	Oldham Council	IA23, IA25
Number of completions for new-building affordable housing by tenure, type and size	Oldham Council	IA23, IA25
Total number of planning applications approved for specialist housing provision	Oldham Council	IA23
Number of planning applications approved for Homes in Multiple Occupation	Oldham Council	IA23
Number of vacant properties	Oldham Council	IA6
Net additional pitches (Gypsy and Traveller)	Oldham Council	IA23, IA25
Number / percentage of new homes approved that achieve Greater Manchester Accessibility Level (GMAL) 4 or above	Oldham Council	IA17

21.5 In addition to the above Local Plan indicators a number of indicators are also monitored by GMCA to monitor Places for Everyone, The Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document and the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan Document. These indicators are also useful for monitoring the Local Plan. For completeness, those indicators are listed in Appendix 13.

22 Glossary

Accessible, Accessibility – The terms 'accessible' and 'accessibility', as used in this document in relation to transport and other services, refer to the proximity of services and to the ability of all sectors of the community to use those services.

Affordable Housing - National Planning Policy Annex 2 defines affordable housing as housing that meets one of the following definitions:

- a. Social Rent - the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent; the landlord is a registered provider; and it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision
- b. Other affordable housing for rent – including Affordable Rent; Build-to-Rent or Affordable Private Rent. Rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy or is at least 20% below local market rent;
- c. Discounted Market Sales Housing – housing sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value; and
- d. Other affordable routes to home ownership – including shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent).

Air Quality Management Areas – An area which has failed to meet national air quality guidelines.

Amenity - Desirable features of a place that ought to be protected in the public interest.

Ancient Woodland - An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

Biodiversity – Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth, including us. It is the animals, plants and all the other lifeforms which interact and depend on each other to survive in every corner of the globe – from the driest deserts to the deepest oceans.

Biodiversity Net Gain – An approach to new development that aims to leave nature in a measurably better state than it was found.

Care Leaver - Defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 as someone aged 16 or 17 who has been looked after by a local authority for a prescribed period, or periods amounting in all to a prescribed period, which began after they reached a prescribed age and ended after he reached the age of 16.

Climate Change - Climate change is caused by accumulating greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, resulting in large-scale, long-term shifts in our planet's weather patterns and an increase in the average temperature often referred to as 'global warming'.

Community facilities – includes uses such public halls, (including community and youth centres), Post Offices, non-residential education and training facilities, children's nurseries and creches, childcare centres, doctors surgeries, dentists, health centres and clinics, chemists and hospitals, residential care homes and nursing homes, village shops, village

pubs, places of worship and church halls, museums, libraries and art galleries and performance space

Community Right to Build Order - An Order made by the local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a site-specific development proposal or classes of development.

Comparison Retailing - The provision of items not purchased on a frequent basis, such as clothing, footwear and household goods.

Conservation Areas - Areas designated by the local planning authority which are considered of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Contaminated Land - Defined in The Environment Protection Act Part IIA, Section 78A(2) as 'any land which appears to the local authority in whose area it is situated to be in such a condition, by reason of substances in, on or under the land, that: significant harm is being caused or there is a significant possibility of such harm being caused, or; pollution of controlled waters is being, or is likely to be, caused.'

Convenience Retailing - The provision of everyday essential items, such as food, drinks and newspapers.

Deliverable – National planning policy says to be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. In particular:

- a) sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).
- b) where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.

Derelict Land - Land damaged by industrial or other development that cannot be put to beneficial use without prior treatment.

Design concepts and terms –

- Character - relates to the distinct and recognisable features and qualities of an area, neighbourhood, or place. It includes the architectural style, historic significance, and visual and functional attributes that make a place unique.
- Form - relates to the shape, size, and overall design of buildings and developments. It encompasses the architectural style, massing, and overall aesthetic qualities of structures.
- Inclusive design - aims to create environments that are welcoming, accessible, and usable by everyone, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. It's a crucial aspect of creating an equitable and socially inclusive built environment, and it helps ensure that public spaces and facilities are designed to be enjoyed and utilized by a diverse range of people.

- **Layout** - the way in which buildings, open spaces, roads, and other elements are arranged within a development or site. It includes the organization and distribution of various components in a coordinated and efficient manner.
- **Ongoing maintenance** - the regular care, repair, and management required to keep buildings, infrastructure, and public spaces in good working order. It ensures that the built environment remains safe, attractive, and functional over time.
- **Orientation** - the positioning of buildings or structures in relation to the sun, wind, and surrounding context. It involves the direction in which a building faces and how it interacts with its environment.
- **Outside space** - areas of land that are not enclosed within a building but are instead open to the external environment. Outside space can include a variety of open areas, such as gardens, courtyards, public parks, plazas, playgrounds, and other outdoor spaces. These spaces play a significant role in urban and rural planning and development, as they contribute to the quality of life, environmental sustainability, and overall well-being of communities.
- **Quality** - in the context of planning, refers to the standard of design, construction, and materials used in a development. It assesses the overall excellence of the design and how well the development meets established design and sustainability criteria.
- **Usability** - the degree to which a building, infrastructure, or space can be easily and efficiently used for its intended purposes. It assesses how well a development or facility meets the needs of its users.

Design Code - A set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code should build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area.

Designated heritage asset - A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

Employment Land - Land allocated in Development Plans for business, industrial and storage/distribution uses.

Flood Risk Assessment - An assessment of the risk of flooding from all flooding mechanisms, the identification of flood mitigation measures and should provide advice on actions to be taken before and during a flood.

Geodiversity - The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

Green Belt - Areas of land where development is particularly tightly controlled. The purposes of Green Belt are to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns from merging; to safeguard the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and to aid urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Greenfield Land - Land which has not been previously developed. It can include land which used to have built development on it but where little development remains; land where the development on it is limited by a planning condition which requires the land to be restored to its original pre-development condition when it's useful life ends (i.e. a quarry); and land where development has been used for forestry or agriculture and that development is no longer needed for that purpose.

Green Infrastructure – A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other

natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.

Heritage asset - A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Historic Environment - All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - A ward-level index made up from six indicators (income; employment; health deprivation and disability; education; skills and training; housing; and geographical access to services). IMD can help to identify areas for regeneration.

Infrastructure - Services necessary to serve development, such as roads and footpaths, electricity, water, sewerage.

Irreplaceable habitat - Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen.

Landscape Character Assessments - Landscape character assessment (LCA) is the process of identifying and describing variation in character of the landscape. LCA documents identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive by mapping and describing character types and areas. They also show how the landscape is perceived, experienced and valued by people.

Local Green Space - Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

Local Housing Need - The number of homes identified as being needed for a local authority determined by national planning policy and guidance.

Local Nature Reserves - Nature reserves are managed areas of land that protect wildlife, habitats and natural features. They support scientific research and can provide educational and recreational opportunities.

Main town centre uses - defined in national planning policy as retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Major Development - For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Nature Conservation - The practice of protecting Earth's natural resources such as air, water, soil, plants, and wildlife—and managing ecosystems to ensure their health, diversity, and survival for current and future generations, preventing depletion and habitat loss through responsible management and restoration.

Nature Recovery Network - A growing national network of wildlife-rich places, stretching from our cities to countryside, mountains to coast. It is supported by green and blue spaces that buffer and connect these wildlife-rich sites.

Open Space – All open space of public value which can offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity. There are several typologies of open space, including: allotments and community gardens, amenity greenspace, cemeteries and churchyards, civic spaces, green corridors, natural and semi-natural greenspace, outdoor sports facilities, parks and gardens and provision for children and young people. Outdoor sports facilities can include or constitute playing fields/ pitches, as well as other types of outdoor pitches.

Original building – defined in national planning policy defines as “A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was originally built.”

Peak District National Park – As a designation was founded in 1951. The Peak District National Park Authority oversees the planning function of the Park. The statutory purposes of the Authority (as defined by the Environment Act 1995) are:

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

Planning Obligation – An agreement made between the council and another party that concerns a particular aspect of, or is associated with, a development. It is usually made in connection with the granting of planning permission through Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Playing Field - The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Policies Map – A map with an Ordnance Survey base that illustrates the policies and proposals of a Development Plan Document.

Previously Developed Land (often referred to as brownfield land) - Land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed). It also includes land comprising large areas of fixed surface infrastructure such as large areas of hardstanding which have been lawfully developed. Previously developed land excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

Housing provision that is suitable for older people - set out in Planning Practice Guidance and includes Age-restricted general market housing, Extra Care Housing, Sheltered Housing/ Assisted Living and Nursing and Care Homes.

Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS) - non-statutory sites selected to protect the most important places for geology, geomorphology and soils, complementing the network of legally protected Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). RIGS are selected for their scientific, educational, historical and aesthetic features.

Renewable and low-carbon energy - Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Self-build and Custom-build Housing - Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.

Significance (for heritage policy) - the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Sites of Biological Importance (SBI's) – Areas designated by local authorities due to significant local wildlife, habitats and species.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) – Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Special Areas of Conservation - Is the land designated under Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora.

Special Protection Areas - A Special Protection Area (SPA) is the land classified under Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds.

Strategic environmental assessment - A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) - An assessment of land availability which identifies a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing development uses over the plan period. The assessment is an important source of evidence to inform plan-making and decision-taking, and the identification of a 5-year supply of housing land. These assessments are required by national planning policy.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

Sui generis - Describes land or building uses that don't fit into standard use classes, requiring specific planning permission for changes because they have unique impacts.

Sustainable development – Defined by the Bruntland Commission (1987) as “Development which meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to achieve their own needs and aspirations”.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) - A sustainable drainage system controls surface water run off close to where it falls, combining a mixture of built and nature-based techniques to mimic natural drainage as closely as possible, and accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change. The type of system that would be appropriate will vary from small scale interventions such as permeable paving and soakaways that can be used in very small developments to larger integrated schemes in major developments.

Travel Plan - A Travel Plan is a document that lays out the strategy for managing travel to and from a site and improving accessibility, particularly by sustainable modes, to reduce the impact of a site on the surrounding road network and to manage the use of local car parking capacity.