

Frequently Asked Questions

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Section 1 – About the Plan

What is the in the Plan?

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.

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

The Oldham Local Plan will sit alongside the [Places for Everyone Joint Plan](#)¹ (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.

Together these documents will inform decision-making on planning applications in the borough of Oldham (excluding within the Peak District National Park).

How will the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan benefit me and my local area?

The Oldham Local Plan will benefit the local community through its commitment to supporting Oldham Partnerships [‘The Oldham Plan’](#)² and the Council's [Corporate Plan](#).³ The Local Plan represents the spatial expression of these plans and is key to delivering an Oldham that can thrive.

The Plan Objectives outline how the Oldham Local Plan will benefit the local area through:

- Building quality homes to meet local needs and diversify the housing offer;
- Providing opportunities to learn and gain new skills;

¹ Places for Everyone is available at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/strategic-planning/places-for-everyone/pfe-adoption/>

² The Oldham Plan webpage is available at:
https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201261/oldham_plan/3207/oldham_plan

³ Oldham Council's Corporate Plan is available at:
https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200146/strategies_plans_and_policies/2888/corporate_plan

- Boosting northern competitiveness by providing access to employment opportunities and growing local businesses;
- Supporting the regeneration of Oldham Town Centre and creating thriving centres;
- Protecting and enhancing Oldham's landscapes;
- Protecting, restoring and enhancing the natural environment;
- Promoting sustainable development that mitigates and adapts to climate change;
- Uplifting the health and well-being of our residents and local communities;
- Improving and valuing a better historic and built environment; and
- Promoting accessible and sustainable transport choices.

Why does it not include site allocations anymore?

The Draft Plan stage of the Oldham Local Plan initially did include site allocations however, the role and purpose of the Oldham Local Plan has changed since preparation of, and consultation on, the Draft Local Plan.

The Oldham Local Plan focuses on non-strategic planning policies that deal mainly with development management matters alongside supporting the delivery of Places for Everyone (PfE) in Oldham. It therefore does not include allocations for future development anymore as the policies within the Oldham Local Plan seek to deliver the housing and development requirements set out in PfE.

The main reasons for the change in focus for the Oldham Local Plan are that:

- PfE is now in place (following its adoption in March 2024). It now forms part of our development plan and provides us with a suite of policies that set the strategic planning framework for the borough. As part of the development plan for the borough regard must be had to the policies within PfE when preparing and assessing development proposals. It is therefore unnecessary to repeat strategic planning matters addressed through PfE, and it would be unhelpful to do so and lead to ambiguity.
- Since preparation of the Draft Local Plan changes in national planning policy have taken place and proposed planning reforms have been announced that will introduce a new-style plan making system. The Council is aware that at some point in the future a new-style plan will need to be prepared. However, we do still feel that there is a need for more 'local-level' non-strategic policies that complement those in PfE but also reflect the borough's priorities and regeneration ambitions. As such, the Council is continuing to prepare the Oldham Local Plan under the transitional arrangements set out in national planning policy that requires 'old-style', or 'legacy', plans to be submitted for examination by December 2026.

How does this Plan relate to Places for Everyone?

Places for Everyone (PfE) sets the strategic policies and direction for the borough. Oldham's Local Plan interprets these at a more detailed local level to reflect our priorities and support delivery of the Council's regeneration ambitions and Building a Better Oldham. The Oldham Local Plan sits alongside and supports PfE and must be read together with PfE when planning decisions are made.

Places for Everyone:

- Provides the strategic planning framework sitting above the Oldham Local Plan;
- Sets out specific requirements to be taken forward through the Oldham Local Plan in relation to housing, offices, and industry and warehousing;
- 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 – 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.

How does the emerging Planning Reforms affect the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan?

The current system used for examining Local Plans will remain in effect during 2026 as the new system is introduced. These two systems will both operate until the end of 2026 meaning the Oldham Local Plan will not be affected by the revised NPPF and emerging Planning Reforms as it will be submitted prior to this end date.

Where can I view the Publication Local Plan documents?

The Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan documents are available to view on our website at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review⁴ (please follow tab to Publication Plan) and our consultation portal at [The Big Oldham Convo](#)⁵.

If you would rather see paper copies, we have the main Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan documents available within our [libraries](#)⁶ and at the Oldham Council [Customer Service Centre](#), Spindles Shopping Centre, Oldham, OL1 1HD (please check opening times).

Please note that paper copies are limited to the following documents:

- Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan
- Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan Appendices
- Oldham Local Plan: Policies Map
- Integrated Assessment (including the Habitats Regulations Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment) and Appendices
- Integrated Assessment Non-Technical Summary
- Integrated Assessment Scoping Report Update 3
- Statement of Representation Procedure

However, Oldham Council library staff and strategic planning staff will be happy to help direct you to these topic and background papers if you wish to see them.

How can I view the policies map for the Publication Plan?

The policies map can be viewed here <https://www.oldham.gov.uk/localplanreview>. This webpage also includes an online interactive policies map. This interactive version will enable you to choose which policy layers you would like to view individually and zoom in on the map for a heightened display and understanding of our policies map.

What is the Integrated Assessment?

The Integrated Assessment (IA) is an assessment of the impacts of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan on environmental, economic and social objectives and forms one of the supporting documents to the Local Plan review.

In recognition that there will be linkages across the various assessments undertaken on the Local Plan, the Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment,

⁴ The Local Plan Review is available at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review

⁵ The Oldham Local Plan consultation portal website is available at: <https://bigoldhamconvo.oldham.gov.uk/>

⁶ Oldham's libraries and opening hours are available to view at: <https://www.oldham.gov.uk/libraries>

Equalities Impact Assessment, Health Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment all form part of the 'Integrated Assessment'.

The IA identifies any necessary mitigation and / or enhancements required to the Oldham Local Plan as the plan is prepared.

Where can I find the Sustainability Appraisal for the Oldham Local Plan:
Publication Plan?

The Sustainability Appraisal forms part of the Plan's Integrated Assessment (IA) and can be found at <https://www.oldham.gov.uk/localplanreview>. The IA also includes the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) and a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has also been integrated into the IA.

Section 2 – Tests of Soundness

What makes a Local Plan 'sound'?

The term 'sound' is used to describe a Local Plan that has been prepared in accordance with what Government expects of local planning authorities. These expectations are set out in paragraph 35 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#)⁷ (December 2024, as amended February 2025) as follows:

- a) Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's 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.
- d) Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

What makes a Plan 'legally compliant'?

People are asked to comment on whether they think the plan is 'legally compliant'.

You should consider the following before making comments on legal compliance:

- The Local Plan should be included in the current [Local Development Scheme](#)⁸ (LDS) and the key stages should have been followed.
- The process of community involvement for the Local Plan should be in general accordance with the Local Planning Authorities [Statement of Community Involvement](#)⁹ (SCI).
- The Plan should comply with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations).

⁷ National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) is available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf

⁸ Oldham Council's Local Development Scheme webpage is available at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/homepage/1240/local_development_scheme

⁹ Oldham Council's Statement of Community Involvement is available at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201232/engagement/253/statement_of_community_involvement

- The Local Planning Authority is required to provide a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) when it publishes a plan (we refer to this as the Integrated Assessment). This should identify the process by which the SA has been carried out, the baseline information used to inform the process, and the outcomes of that process.
- The Local Planning Authority is required to demonstrate how they met have met 'Duty to Co-operate' requirements when preparing the plan. Further information on the Duty to Co-operate is provided below.

What is Duty to Co-operate?

The Duty to Co-operate has been a requirement of the planning system following its insertion into the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 by the Localism Act 2011. The Duty requires local planning authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis with neighbouring authorities, and other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.

The new plan-making system provided by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 does not include the Duty. Instead, the new system uses a new tier of strategic planning to ensure effective co-operation between plan-making authorities. The Regulations for the new system 'save' the current plan-making system for a period to allow emerging plans to progress to examination by 31 December 2026 – this is the system under which Oldham Council is progressing the current review of the Oldham Local Plan.

On 27 November 2025, the Minister of State for Housing and Planning wrote¹⁰ to the Planning Inspectorate setting out Governments intention to revoke the Duty to Co-operate requirement under the current plan-making system. The Duty will therefore cease to apply when the Regulations come into force in 2026, including for plans at examination at that point.

Whilst the formal Duty to Co-operate will be revoked, there is still a need for local planning authorities to continue to collaborate across their boundaries, especially in relation to addressing unmet development needs from neighbouring areas, and in line with the policies in the NPPF on 'maintaining effective co-operation'

¹⁰

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69286415345e31ab14ecf67d/Local_Plans_letter_to_PI_NS.pdf

Section 3 – The detail of the Plan

What does the Plan say about the environment?

Oldham is well situated to have access to the Peak District National Park and is home to a wealth of open spaces that support biodiversity, recreation and wellbeing. As such, the Oldham Local Plan places a strong emphasis on protecting and enhancing Oldham's environment whilst also providing a strong framework to mitigate any development proposals impact on climate change. It will also ensure that development proposals increase resilience for nature, wildlife and green infrastructure.

The Oldham Local Plan focuses on the environment by:

- 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.
- 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.

It includes policies to:

- Not conflict with and where possible enhance the purposes of the Peak District National Park (Policy OL1 – Consideration for the Peak District National Park)
- Safeguard sites of international, national and local nature importance (Policy N1 – Protecting Nature)
- Deliver biodiversity net gain and nature recovery from new development (Policy N2 – Restoring Nature)
- Retain, enhance and create green infrastructure across the borough (Policy N3 – Enhancing Green Infrastructure through Development)
- Protect trees and woodland and contribute towards increased tree canopy cover (Policy N4 – Trees)
- Support nature-based solutions for flood risk, climate adaptation and health (Policies CC1 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy; CC2 – Managing Flood Risk; CC3 – Sustainable Drainage – Foul and Surface Water; CC4 – Water Efficiency; CC5 – Groundwater Source Protection Zones)
- Protect dark skies and tranquillity (Policy OL5 – Protecting Dark Skies and Tranquillity)
- Protect Local Green Spaces (Policy OL4 – Local Green Spaces)

What about the Green Belt?

The Oldham Local Plan is committed to preserving the openness and permanence of the Green Belt and any inappropriate development will be refused except in very special circumstances. The Plan sets out how National Green Belt policy will be applied for some types of development that are generally classed as ‘appropriate’ within the Green Belt. The Local Plan includes minor technical amendments to our Green Belt boundary to ensure it is ‘tidied up’. Boundary revisions are shown in Appendix 8 of the Publication Plan and are reflected on the Policies Map.

Within the Green Belt:

- New buildings, extensions and changes of use are tightly controlled
- Opportunities for appropriate uses such as agriculture, outdoor recreation and limited infilling are carefully assessed

The following policies set out the full guidance for Oldham’s Green Belt:

- Policy OL2 – Oldham’s Green Belt; and
- Policy OL3 – Extensions and Alterations to Existing Buildings within the Green Belt

Does the plan identify Grey Belt?

The Grey Belt is not being addressed in the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan, however this will be considered as part of a future plan such as a Spatial Development Strategy for Oldham. Proposals for the development of sites that is perceived as being Grey Belt land may still come forward, and these will be assessed in line with the NPPF until a strategy is set out by Oldham Council.

What does the plan say about transport?

The Oldham Local Plan will help support an integrated transport system and the priorities set out by [Oldham’s Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan](#)¹¹ which reflects the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040. The Plan sets out the aim to encourage sustainable and active travel choices whilst also providing good accessibility for the borough’s population to jobs and services. This will help ensure Oldham retains and supports a healthy environment whilst helping to enable safe, accessible and connected travel.

The Oldham Local Plan:

- Promotes walking, wheeling and cycling as everyday travel choices
- Supports improved public transport, including Metrolink, rail and bus services

¹¹ Oldham’s Transport Strategy is available at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201058/transport_parking_and_travel/3030/transport_strategy

- Encourages travel hubs and park-and-ride facilities
- Requires new development to be located in accessible and sustainable locations
- Manages car parking appropriately
- Supports the rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure

The following policies set out the full guidance on Transport in Oldham:

- Policy T1 – Delivering Oldham’s Transport Priorities
- Policy T2 – Travel Hubs and Park and Ride Facilities
- Policy T3 – Parking Provision
- Policy T4 – Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
- Policy T5 – Vision-led Transport Statements, Transport Assessments and Travel Plans

What infrastructure is being proposed?

The Oldham Local Plan ensures that any development proposals will be carefully considered to ensure new or strengthened infrastructure is put into place to reduce the chance of unacceptable pressure being placed on existing services. The Plan maintains that infrastructure must be delivered and supported alongside housing and economic growth, and new developments will be expected to contribute where necessary.

This supporting infrastructure includes:

- Schools and education facilities
- Health facilities, such as GP surgeries
- Community facilities and open space, sport and recreation provision
- Digital infrastructure, including broadband and telecommunications
- Utilities, drainage and flood risk management
- Low-carbon energy infrastructure, including district heat networks and renewable energy

The following policies set out guidance on Infrastructure in Oldham, whilst guidance relating to the list above is found in the individual plan policies for these areas:

- Policy IN1 – Digital Infrastructure and Telecommunications
- Policy IN2 – Planning Obligations
- Policy IN3 – Delivering Social Value and Inclusion

This will ensure that infrastructure is delivered in the right place at the right time so that existing communities and services are and will be provided through new development and planning conditions to ensure this occurs.

An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared to support the Publication Plan and forms part of the evidence base. This is available at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review

The IDP sets out how infrastructure provision has been, and will be, considered during the preparation and implementation of the Plan. It provides a comprehensive assessment of infrastructure across the borough and sets out what infrastructure is likely to be required to support new development over the plan period. The IDP then sets out how policies within the Oldham Plan, in addition to PfE, will help to support delivery of this infrastructure.

Section 4 – The Consultation

What are you asking for views on?

This is the plan that Oldham Council intends to submit to the Secretary of State for examination. This is a formal stage of consultation and is used to gather feedback on two specific areas, whether the Plan is 'sound' and 'legally compliant'.

Where will I be able to view the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan documents?

The plan and supporting documents relating to the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan are available to view on our website at

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review (follow tab to Publication Plan) and our consultation portal at [The Big Oldham Convo](#).¹²

If you wish to view the main documents as a paper copy rather than digitally, they will be available to view within our [libraries](#)¹³ and the Oldham Council [Customer Service Centre](#) in Spindles Shopping Centre¹⁴ (please check opening times).

How can I take part in the consultation and give you my views?

The Council is keen to promote the submission of comments electronically and would encourage anyone with access to the internet to make their responses in this way. Comments can be submitted online via the council's [consultation platform](#).⁷

Oldham's libraries provide free access to the internet, if you do not have access at home.

Alternatively, comments can be emailed to SPI.Consultations@oldham.gov.uk

Or addressed to:

Strategic Planning and Information
Oldham Council,
Spindles Shopping Centre,
Oldham,
OL1 1LF

A Comments Form is also available at

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review (go to Publication Plan tab).

¹² The Oldham Local Plan consultation portal website is available at: <https://bigoldhamconvo.oldham.gov.uk/>

¹³ Oldham Libraries webpage is available at: <https://www.oldham.gov.uk/libraries>

¹⁴ Access Oldham webpage is available at:
https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200609/contact/937/access_oldham

Comments on the Oldham Local Plan, and / or its supporting documents, must be received by **23:59 on 27 March 2026**.

How long is the consultation open for?

Consultation on the Oldham Local Plan and supporting documents is taking place from **4 February to 23:59 on 27 March 2026**, for a period of 7 weeks.

Comments on the Oldham Local Plan, and / or its supporting documents, must be received by **23:59 on 27 March 2026**.

Can I respond anonymously?

Unfortunately, we can't accept anonymous consultation responses. In order for us to consider your comments as part of the formal planning process, we need to be able to contact you - just your name and an email address is enough.

Can I respond more than once?

Yes, you can respond with multiple different comments to the Plan but please don't respond with the same comment more than once. If you respond online, you don't also need to send something through the post, and vice-versa. During analysis of the feedback, we will be checking for duplicate responses and removing these.

How is this different from earlier consultations?

Earlier stages (like Regulation 18 on Issues and Options and Draft Plan) were for gathering issues and options related to the borough's development and giving comments on drafted policies. The publication stage seeks comments on the final vision, plan objectives and policies. It is the final stage of consultation prior to submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

Will there be any opportunities to ask for further information?

Yes, there will be the opportunity for people to request an appointment slot to discuss the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan in person. These appointments will be focussed on explaining the Plan in further detail if needed and for giving guidance on how to respond with any representations you may wish to submit.

If you would like to discuss the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan or ask any questions before making your representation, you can book a telephone appointment with a planning officer, or in-person at the Council's Spindles Shopping Centre offices.

To book an appointment please email spi.consultations@oldham.gov.uk or call 0161 770 4105.

What happens next?

After the consultation:

- All representations will be analysed to draw out the main issues raised for the Inspector to review;
- The Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State, meaning all documents, evidence, and public comments will be formally passed to the Planning Inspectorate for independent scrutiny;
- An independent Planning Inspector will examine the Plan, testing whether it meets legal requirements and national policy, and may invite individuals who made representations to attend hearings or provide further information if clarification on their comments is required;
- The Inspector will decide whether the Plan can be adopted, with or without modifications, issuing a report that may include recommended changes the Council must consider before formally adopting the Plan.

I would like to join / be removed from the Local Plan mailing list – how do I do this?

Oldham Council maintains a database of consultees who wish to be kept informed about the Local Plan. If you wish to be added or removed from the mailing list please visit our [consultation webpage](#)¹⁵ or email us at spi@oldham.gov.uk.

¹⁵ The consultation webpage is available at <https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201232/engagement/1825/consultation>