Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan

Referendum Information for Voters

On 10th December 2026 there will be a referendum to accept or reject the neighbourhood plan for Saddleworth Parish.

This statement explains more about the planning system, neighbourhood planning and how you can take part in the referendum.

The Town and Country Planning System

The purpose of the planning system is to help achieve sustainable development. This means deciding what gets built and where so that places can grow for homes, businesses and new technologies in a way that respects and protects the natural and historic environment.

In England is governed by the planning system, which is 'plan-led', this means policies set out in development plans guide what can be built and where. Most new buildings, major changes to existing buildings or major changes to the local environment need planning permission. In Saddleworth Parish, it is Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority who are responsible for deciding whether (most forms of) development should go ahead within their respective authorities. Decisions are based on national planning policy framework and guidance, and the adopted Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan would form part of the Development Plan if supported in the referendum.

National Planning Policy Framework

In August 2026, Central Government released an updated National Planning Policy Framework which provides guidance to local planning authorities (councils and national park authorities) on how local development plans should be drawn up and how decisions about planning applications should be made.

The adopted Development Plan

The adopted Development Plan for Oldham is actually made up of several documents and, if supported in a referendum, any Neighbourhood Plans would be included within this. The current documents that make up the Development Plan for Oldham are:

The current development plans that guide planning in Saddleworth are:

- The Places for Everyone Joint Plan
- Oldham's Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD
- The Greater Manchester Waste Development Plan
- The Greater Manchester Minerals Development Plan

All of these documents can be viewed at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201229/current_local_planning_policy

Oldham Council are currently in the examination period for a new Local Plan, which contains policies for the development and use of land in the borough. This will replace the Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD once adopted. The current version of this draft Local Plan can be viewed at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review

Within the Peak District National Park Authority, their Development Plan comprises of the Peak District Local Development Framework Core Strategy and the Development Management Policies which can be viewed at https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/planning/policies-and-guides/core-strategy and https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/planning/policies-and-guides/development-management-policies

Neighbourhood Planning

What is neighbourhood planning?

Neighbourhood planning was introduced under the 2011 Localism Act and enables local communities to write a neighbourhood plan – part of the statutory development plan – for their own area. Neighbourhood plans must have regard for national planning policy, contribute to sustainable development, be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the area and be compatible with environmental and other legal obligations and human rights requirements.

Who makes Neighbourhood Plans?

Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by town or parish councils or by designated neighbourhood forums in areas where there is no town or parish

council. However, once prepared and examined, the document becomes the responsibility of the local planning authority (in this Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority) and it forms part of their Development Plans if the Neighbourhood Plan is supported at referendum.

How are they made?

There is a statutory process that must be followed. The plan must be prepared in consultation with local residents and businesses. An independent examiner checks that it meets legal requirements, reports whether any modifications should be made. The local planning authority then considers the Inspector's report and decides whether the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum.

The referendum asks residents to consider whether the local planning authority should use the neighbourhood plan to help it decide planning applications in the area concerned. All those registered to vote within the neighbourhood area are entitled to vote in the referendum.

What status do plans have?

If more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the neighbourhood plan, the local planning authority must make it part of the Development Plan for the area to be used in determining decisions on planning applications.

Saddleworth Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2025 – 2045

Since November 2016, Saddleworth Parish Council have been preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, with advice and support from Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA).

Saddleworth Parish Council carried out various stages of consultation including

- A public launch event in February 2017
- Community group meetings between 2017 and 2018
- A public consultations survey in 2020
- Formal consultations on the pre-submission neighbourhood plan took place between 2nd April and 10th June 2024

A draft plan was submitted to Oldham Council and the PDNPA on 11th November 2025, and a period of consultation took place between the 10th

June and 25th July 2026, where interested parties were invited to comment on the draft plan.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan was subsequently submitted for independent examination on the 10th August 2026. The independent examiner found that the plan, subject to modifications, does meet the legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.

The Referendum

A referendum on the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan will be held on Thursday 10th December 2026.

The question that will be asked in the referendum is:

"Do you want Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Saddleworth to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

The Referendum area is identified on the map which is included with this information statement.

The Referendum area is identical to the area which has been designated as the Saddleworth Parish Neighbourhood area.

A person is entitled to vote in the referendum, if on 24 November 2026:

- they are entitled to vote in a local government election in the Referendum area; and
- their qualifying address for the election is in the Referendum area. A person's qualifying address is, in relation to a person registered in the register of electors, the address in respect of which they are entitled to be registered.

A copy of the specified documents, that is those documents listed below, may be viewed as follows:

On-line at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2517/saddleworth_neighbourhood_plan

Paper copies of the specified documents are also available to view at:

Lees Library, 9 Thomas Street, Lees, Oldham, OL4 5DA (Open Mondays to Thursdays 9am-7pm, Friday 9am-5pm and Saturday 9:30am-1pm)

Uppermill Library, St Chad's House, Uppermill, Oldham, OL3 6AZ (Open Mondays to Thursdays 9am-7pm, Friday 9am -5pm and Saturday 9:30am-1pm)

Delph Libraries, 1 Millgate, Delph, Oldham, OL3 5JG (Open Tuesdays to Thursdays 2-5pm and Fridays to Saturday 10am-1pm)

Greenfield Library, Chew Vale, Greenfield, Oldham, OL3 7EQ (Open Tuesdays to Thursdays 2-7pm and Friday to Saturday 9:30am – 1pm)

Oldham Council's Spindles Shopping Centre reception (please press the intercom for reception and go upstairs to the second floor), West Street, Oldham, OL1 1LF (open Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm)

Peak District National Park Authority's Office (subject to prior request, paper or electronic copies may be made available) at Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1AE from 8.45am to 5pm Monday to Friday (closed bank holidays)

The specified documents are:

- Saddleworth Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan;
- report of the independent examiner;
- summary of the representations submitted to the independent examiner;
- statement by the local planning authority that the draft plan meets the basic conditions and complies with the relevant legislation;
- an information statement; and
- this statement that sets out general information about town and country planning including neighbourhood planning and the referendum.

Voting Procedure

Am I registered to vote?

You have to be registered to vote no later than Tuesday 24th November 2026 in order to vote in the referendum.

You can check if you are registered to vote by contacting The Electoral Registration Officer at Oldham Council, Election Office, JR Clynes Building, Greaves Street, Oldham, OL1 1AL or by email at election@oldham.gov.uk

You can register to vote on-line at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote or contact Oldham Council on 0161 770 4718

Ways of Voting

In Person on 10th December 2026

Most people vote in person at their local polling station. A member of staff will help you if you are not sure what to do.

- You will receive a polling card telling you where your polling station is
- Polling stations are open from 7am to 10pm
- If you do not receive your polling card, contact Oldham Council on 0161 770 4718

If you are unable to go to the polling station in person you can apply to vote by post or appoint someone to vote as a proxy on your behalf.

By post

Existing postal voters who receive a **postal vote** for local government elections will automatically receive one for the referendum. Those requiring a postal vote should contact Oldham Council on 0161 770 4718 or email election@oldham.gov.uk to request an application form. The deadline for receiving applications is 5pm on Wednesday 25th November 2026. Postal votes will be dispatched around 30th November 2026 and must be returned before 10pm on 10th December. If you are given a postal vote you will not be able to vote in person at the polling station although you may, if you wish, hand your postal vote to the Presiding Officer at the polling station.

By Proxy

Existing proxy voters who receive a **proxy vote** for local government elections will automatically receive one for the referendum. Those requiring a proxy vote should contact Oldham Council on 0161 770 4718 or email election@oldham.gov.uk to request an application form. The deadline for receiving applications is 5pm on Wednesday 2nd December 2026.

If you appoint a proxy you can still vote in person at the polling station but only if you get there before your proxy has voted on your behalf.

If you are appointed as a proxy for another person you can apply to exercise that vote by post but your application must be received by the Electoral Registration Officer before 5pm on Wednesday 25th November 2026.

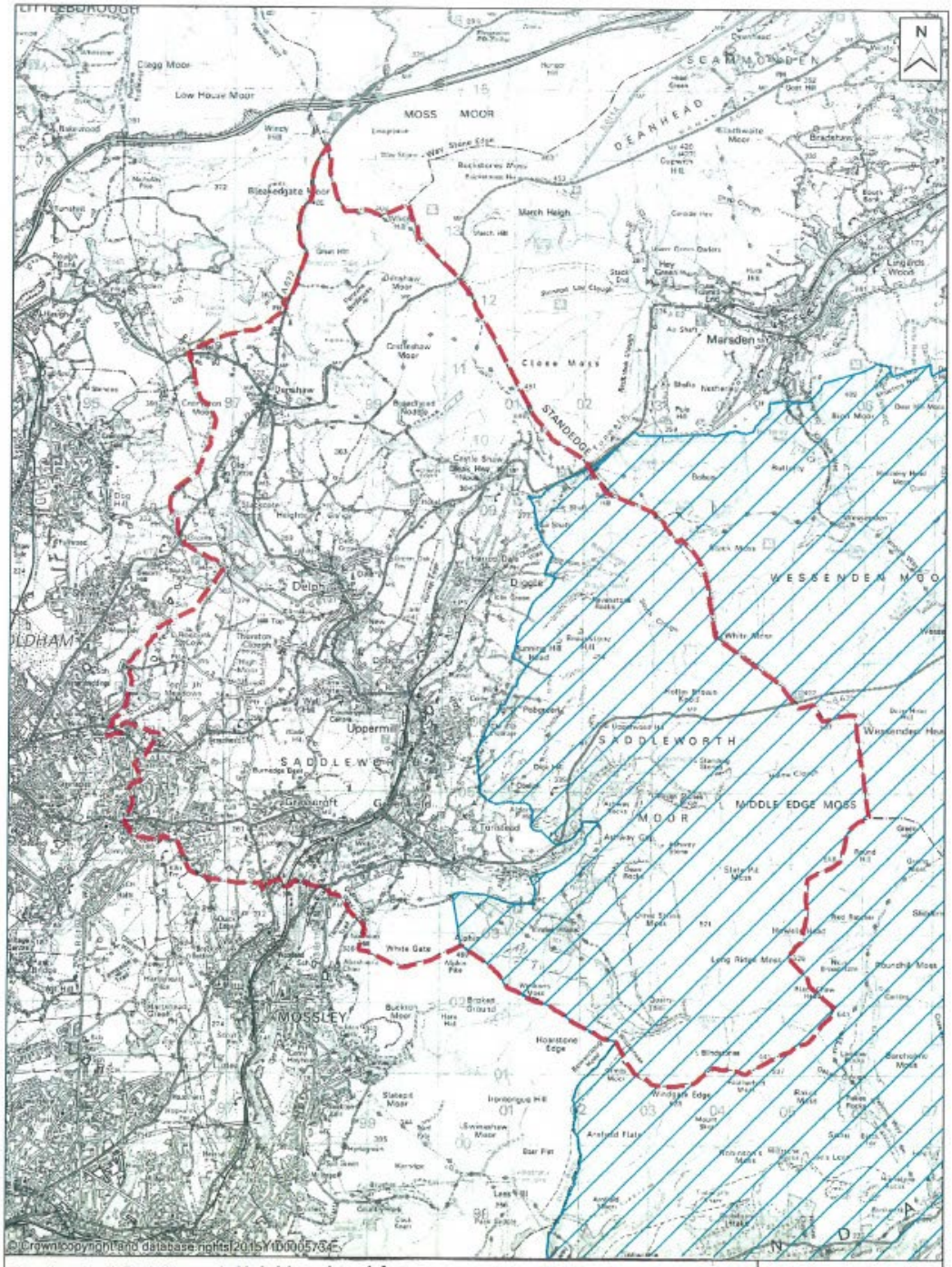
You cannot vote as proxy for more than 2 people unless you are their spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild.

Emergency proxy

If after 5pm on Wednesday 2nd December you are unable to vote in person because you:

- have a medical emergency
- cannot go to the polling station because of work reasons

you can apply to vote by proxy. Completed applications forms must be received by the Electoral Registration Officer, Oldham Council, JR Clynes Building, Greaves Street, Oldham, OL1 1AL by 5pm on Thursday 10th December 2026. Please contact Oldham Council on 0161 770 4718 if you require an emergency proxy.



Designated Saddleworth Neighbourhood Area

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Peak District National Park

Scale 1:50,000 @ A3

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK