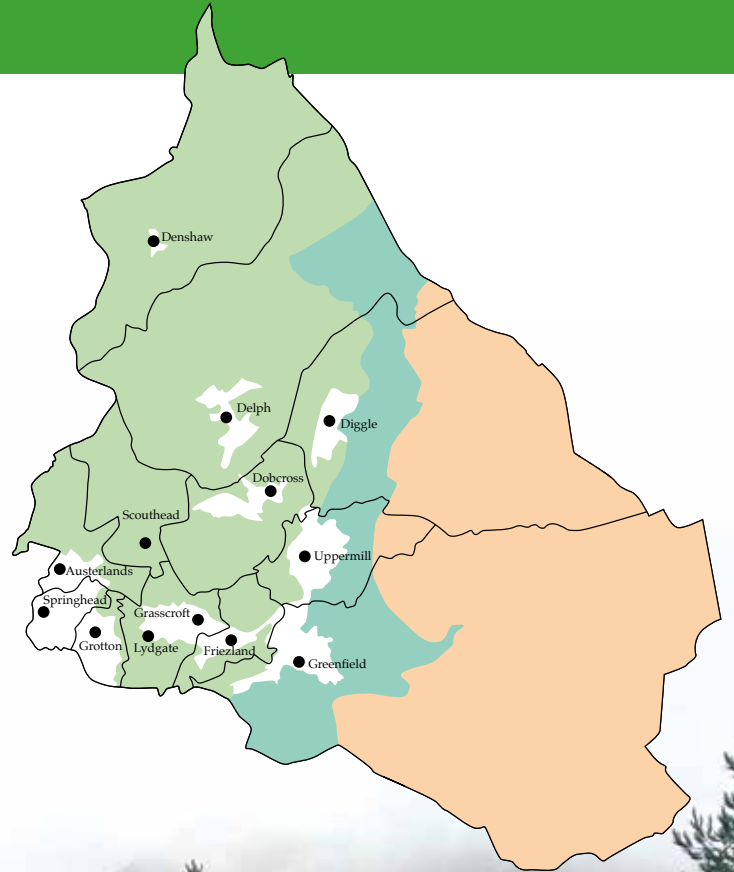




SADDLEWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2022–2042 DRAFT 1.7



Introduction

A Neighbourhood Plan helps to shape what happens in an area over for years to come. This plan will help to shape what happens in the Parish of Saddleworth over the next twenty years. These policies sit alongside those in other strategic planning policies, listed in full on page 12.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed every five years and covers a period to 2042.

The designated area agreed with Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park is the land within the boundary of the Parish of Saddleworth.

Neighbourhood Planning gives the residents the power to develop a vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their locality. They can choose where they want new homes, shops, offices and community facilities to be built and have their say on what the new buildings should look like, what infrastructure should be provided.

Neighbourhood Planning gives a powerful set of tools for local people to use to ensure that they get the right sort of development for their neighbourhood and where the ambition of the residents is in line with the needs and priorities of the wider area.

Consultees on the plan were:

The residents of the Parish of Saddleworth, the Community and Residents' Associations, the children of local schools, Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority.

The Police, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Churches of all faiths and denominations, local business groups and historical societies were also consulted.

Full details of the consultation are contained within the separate consultation statement prepared in coordination with this plan.

*Saddleworth Parish Council
Strategic Planning Committee,
January 2022*

Cover picture: Dovestone Reservoir. Below: view towards Greenfield from Ladcastle Road.

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History

Saddleworth is crossed by two rivers – the river Tame and its tributaries in the east and the river Medlock and its tributaries in the west. The river Tame and its catchment area contains the settlements of Denshaw, Delph, Dobcross, Diggle, Uppermill and Greenfield. The river Medlock catchment area contains the settlements of Scouthead, Austerlands, Grasscroft, Lydgate, Grotton and Springhead.

Situated on the western side of the Pennines, but historically part of the West Riding of Yorkshire, Saddleworth has long looked in two directions – over the Pennines and eastward to the towns of Huddersfield, Halifax and Leeds and westward to its Lancashire neighbours of Oldham, Ashton, Rochdale and Manchester. This dual identity is as true today as it was in the Middle Ages and in the time of the Tudors and the Stuarts, when its absentee Lords of the Manor lived far away in Yorkshire and administration was from Pontefract and later Wakefield. Ecclesiastically, however, it was in the parish of Rochdale and Diocese of Chester. Today, it is administered by Oldham Council, forms part of the sub-region of Greater Manchester, but is partly in the Peak District National Park and is a part of the South Pennines Countryside Character Area.



Slackcote Mill is one of the Saddleworth mills which has found a new lease of life as a home to modern industry

Saddleworth was at the forefront of the industrial revolution with many water-powered textile mills¹ springing up along the River Tame and the emergence of one of the most impressive turnpike road networks in the country. The construction of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, with its three miles long tunnel under the Pennines, was one of the major engineering feats of its day.

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a transformation of Saddleworth from a community of industrial stone built villages to a largely dormitory area for the major employment centres on both sides of the Pennines. The motorway network accelerated this change. Local shops and services declined in most of the villages and with this change came a decline in the local economy. House building mushroomed especially in the west, as Saddleworth was transformed from an industrial landscape to a district of attractive Pennine villages with a valued industrial heritage.

The present Civil Parish dates from the local government reorganisation of 1974, but its boundaries are essentially the same as those of its predecessor which was formed by the amalgamation of Saddleworth Urban District Council with Springhead Urban District Council in 1937. Saddleworth Urban District Council had been in existence since 1900, and the medieval Township dated back to the Saxon period. This long history gives a real sense of local identity both at a parish level and at a village community level.

¹ Oldham's Mill Strategy was released in 2021, which includes a history of Oldham's mills, and listings of the existing mills in Saddleworth. It can be found at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201213/local_plan_review/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

Profile

Saddleworth, like many communities, faces many challenges today and in the future. These relate mostly to the pressure of development accompanied by rising land prices, the decline of a mixed local economy, the lack of affordable housing, and the expense of maintaining local services and infrastructure in a geographically large rural district. However, these are balanced by Saddleworth's strengths: its largely prosperous, healthy, and well-educated population; its strong community spirit; its businesses and entrepreneurial spirit; and its beautiful countryside, recreational facilities, farming, tourism, biodiversity and heritage. The vibrancy of the community is shown by the large number of voluntary societies and organisations and community festivals such as the annual Whit Friday Brass Band Contest, and the Rush Cart Weekend.

The population of Saddleworth is around 26,000. It is split 49/51 male/female, which is a marginally larger gap than across Oldham borough as a whole.

Ethnicity in the area is over 97% white British, which is significantly higher than across Oldham as a whole (77.5%). At the 2010 census, the average for the UK as a whole was 79.1% white.

Age: The proportion of residents aged 65+ increased by nearly 25% between 2011 and 2018, while younger people are significantly under-represented.

Employment: Median household income is over £30,000, while the employment rate is around 67.5%. Both figures are significantly higher than for Oldham borough as a whole (£22k, 58.2%). In 2021, the UK median wage was £31,800, and employment rate was 75.5% (ONS). Youth unemployment is also significantly lower than for Oldham borough as a whole (1.4% compared to 7%).

Households: There are around 12,000 households in Saddleworth. There is a high proportion of owner-occupied properties (>80%), and a low proportion of social rented properties (<7%). Around 9% of households are in fuel poverty. Median house prices are in the region of £240,000, although there is a significant difference across the Parish between the urban areas close to Oldham town and the more rural areas where values are higher.



Education: Across Saddleworth, >85% of pupils enter the Early Years Foundation stage with a good level of development, compared to a UK average of 71.8%. Less than 17% of adults have no qualifications, and >35% of adults have a first degree.

Health: <17% of adults have limiting long-term illnesses, which is higher than the proportion for Oldham borough as a whole, although this is likely to be related to the significantly higher proportion of elderly residents. Male life expectancy is over 81 years, and female life expectancy is over 85 years. Health behaviours are good throughout, and this is then reflected in good health outcomes.

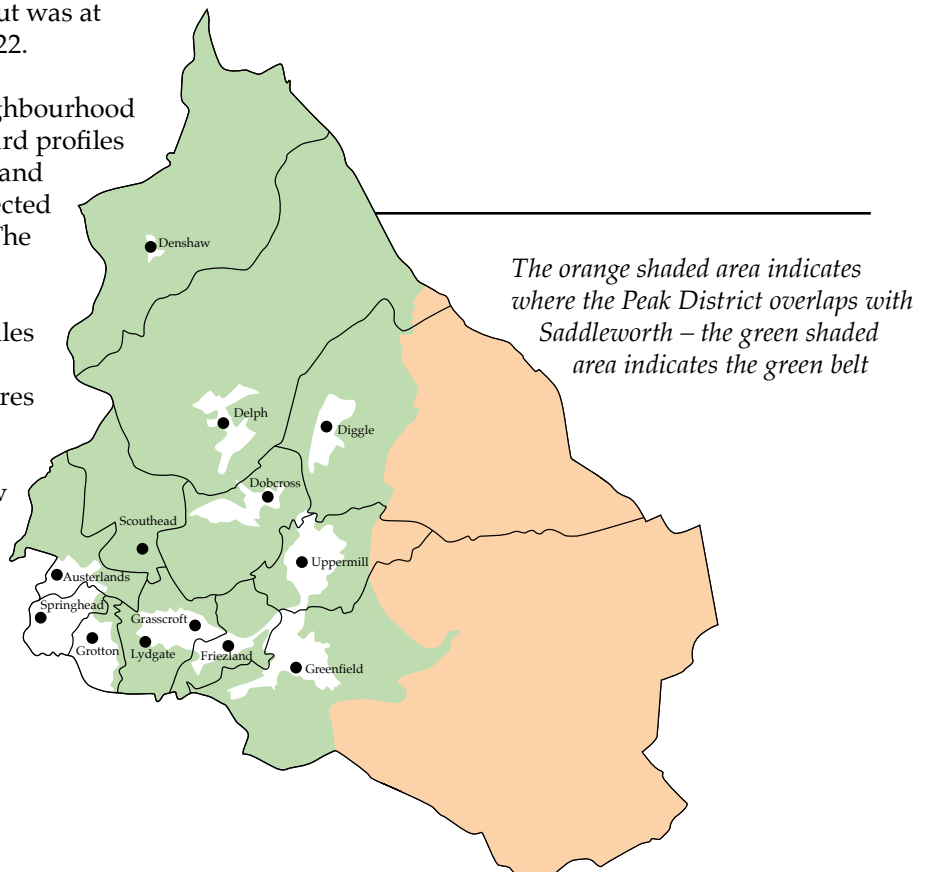
Community safety: Around 1,500 crimes were reported in Saddleworth in 2018, with reported crimes of <56 per 10,000 population (compared to an Oldham average of 124). The average for the UK as a whole in 2018–19 was 89.7 per 100,000.

Community: >91% of residents reported themselves to be satisfied with the local area. Nearly 50% volunteered within the last 12 months. Voter turnout was at around 36% at the local elections in 2022.

The figures contained within this Neighbourhood Plan have been produced using the ward profiles produced by Oldham Council in 2019, and will change significantly over the expected lifetime of this Neighbourhood Plan. The up-to-date ward profiles are currently found at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/179/ward_profiles

Geography: The area totals 7,876 hectares and over half is Green Belt. The lowest lying areas of Saddleworth are around the valleys of the river Tame and Chew Brook, through the most populous villages, as well as Springhead and Grotton. The highest areas are above the villages, with White Hill at 467m, Standedge at 457m, and Ashway Moss at 497m.

There are substantial blanket peat bogs in Saddleworth, with work by RSPB and United Utilities covering over 4,000ha above Dovestone Reservoir (not all in Saddleworth). The peat bogs have huge significance in holding carbon, providing homes to wildlife and ensuring water quality.



Infrastructure

Education: Saddleworth has one secondary school, which has recently moved to a new site at Diggle, with capacity for 1,500 pupils.

A significant proportion of children from across the area are educated outside the Parish, with two secondary schools – Waterhead Academy and Leesbrook Academy – falling just outside the Parish boundaries, and a number of schools in Oldham borough also having intake from across Saddleworth.

There are 12 primary schools: Bright Futures; Christ Church CofE, Denshaw; Delph Primary School; Diggle School; Friezland Primary School; Greenfield Primary School; Greenfield St Mary’s CofE; Holy Trinity CofE, Dobcross; Knowsley Junior School, Springhead; Springhead Infants; St Anne’s CofE Lydgate; and St Chad’s CofE, Uppermill.

Health: There are medical centres located across the Parish, but many patients travel outside the Parish to receive treatment.

The main GP practice is Saddleworth Medical Practice, located in Uppermill. Other centres include Pennine Medical Centre in Greenfield, and the Gartside Street Clinic in Delph, which are satellite centres from the Pennine Medical Centre in Mossley and the Saddleworth Medical Practice respectively.



Saddleworth Medical Practice

Other practices located outside the Parish but providing services for Saddleworth residents include Lees Medical Practice, Leesbrook Medical Practice, Moorside Medical Practice, and the Pennine Medical Centre in Mossley (which also falls outside the Borough). The two nearest hospitals are the Royal Oldham Hospital and Tameside Hospital (again, Tameside Hospital falls outside the Borough).

Services such as physiotherapy and mental health are also provided by smaller practices located across the area.

There are a number of dental practices across the area, with a mix of private and NHS dentists.

Saddleworth School



Transport: The Parish is served by a single railway line, and one station, located at Greenfield. Trains run towards Manchester and Huddersfield. There are accessibility issues at the station with only stepped access to the Huddersfield-bound platform.



The Metrolink service runs through Oldham, with stations located at Oldham Mumps, Derker, Shaw and Milnrow, all outside the Parish boundaries.

Bus services mainly operate as spokes from Oldham, although some services also connect to Huddersfield, Ashton and Holmfirth. There is also the Saddleworth Rambler – a local service intended to connect the individual villages. A Ring and Ride service is available upon registration for residents who find it difficult to use public transport.

The main motorways near to Saddleworth are the M62, with junction 22 at Rishworth Moor falling just outside the Parish boundary, and the M60 ring road, which falls several miles outside the Parish. The primary arterial roads through the Parish are the A62, the A672 and the A670.

With around 12,000 households in Saddleworth, and an estimated number of cars per household in the UK¹ of between 1.393 for rural town and fringe, and 1.77 for rural village, hamlet and isolated dwellings, that would suggest around 19,000 cars.

Parking in many of the Saddleworth villages is restricted by the traditional rural nature of the villages, with many of the earlier homes and roads being designed prior to the need to provide parking spaces for one or multiple cars.

There is an extensive network of footpaths across Saddleworth. A full map of public rights of way in Saddleworth can be found at <https://maps.oldham.gov.uk/>

There are no cycle routes in Saddleworth that form part of the national cycle network; the nearest route is route 601, which runs from Oldham to Hyde. More information can be found here: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/national-cycle-network>

TfGM has a map of Bee Network cycle provision in Greater Manchester, at <https://mappinggm.org.uk/bee-network/>. No definitive list of local cycle routes exists.

Housing: The Local Plan for Oldham includes a housing needs analysis for Saddleworth.

Oldham's housing requirement, based on the standard methodology, is for 705 homes per year. This applies from April 2022. An updated housing land supply position, measured against this requirement will be published soon as part of Places for Everyone.

Communities: There are at least 15 churches across Saddleworth, catering to a range of denominations. There is a Buddhist Temple on Court Street in Uppermill, as well as a Spiritualist Church on High Street, and Oldham borough as a whole contains places of worship for a wide range of faiths.

The Parish also contains a large number of community centres and buildings, including the Saddleworth Civic Hall in Uppermill, which is also home to the Parish Council, and Saddleworth Museum.

¹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/299972/average-age-of-cars-on-the-road-in-the-united-kingdom/>

Issues

Development

Saddleworth has an identified lack of appropriate housing for young families, with local first-time entrants into the housing market unable to find properties to rent or buy. Similarly there is a lack of affordable housing for people to downsize to when they are older.

Alongside this is the need to protect the unique character, landscape and heritage of the area, which can be damaged by inappropriate development that fails to take into consideration the nature of the Parish.

The existing natural beauty and heritage of Saddleworth adds significantly to the well-being of its residents, and any threat to that risks undermining its communities, and the lives of those who live and work there.

Climate change and environment

The biggest threat to our way of life not just in Saddleworth, but across the world, is climate change and damage to the environment.

Key issues in Saddleworth include air quality, the development of the natural environment, energy use and production, flooding and water use, and a lack of energy-efficient housing stock.

Addressing climate change is such a critical issue that as well as being addressed specifically in this report, it is also embedded throughout each section.

The Parish Council has declared its ambition to be carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030, and Oldham Council's target for the wider borough is to be carbon neutral by 2030. It is expected that all new building or renovation work should be done with that ambition in mind, with regards to building methods, environmental impact of use, and minimising associated environmental costs such as transport.



Low water levels at Dowry reservoir are a prime example of environmental change, as are more extreme weather events

Transport

A critical issue is the lack of public transport and public transport infrastructure. There is minimal access to the rail network, and no access to the tram network. Bus services have been massively reduced, and continue to be under threat.

At the same time, there are unresolved issues around private transport, in particular a lack of provision for electric vehicle charging or other renewables, a lack of parking both on the road network and on residential and commercial property, and the general maintenance of roads.

There is also a lack of joined up infrastructure for pedestrian and cycle routes, and a lack of investment in their maintenance.

Health and well-being

One of the most common comments in the survey of residents was concern that there was a lack of education and healthcare facilities and, where there are facilities, some residents are excluded due to lack of accessible transport.

In particular, emphasized by the Covid-19 pandemic, is an issue around social exclusion, particularly for the elderly and vulnerable. For those in outlying areas, especially those poorly served by public transport, isolation can be extremely difficult to escape. This was particularly identified as an issue for young mothers.

As well as difficulty accessing GP services, there is a lack of support for other critical healthcare needs.

There is also a growing awareness and concern about anti-social behaviour, and its increasing impact on the sense of community that is one of the strengths of Saddleworth's villages.

Consultation and local voices

An additional concern voiced through the consultation was that local residents often feel overlooked in decision-making processes, particularly around investment and development – most notably planning.



An empty former bank in Uppermill

Other

There has been a gradual loss of many local facilities from villages, with post offices and banks being prime examples. As a result, an issue facing Saddleworth is ensuring that there remain cohesive communities which retain their identity. Saddleworth remains very distinct from Oldham in terms of its economy and employment, which is reflected throughout this document.

Many services which would enable people to live and work in the area, such as high-quality broadband, remain under-provided. There is also a lack of a coherent approach to employment and industries – particularly tourism, retail, farming – and no alternative vision to Saddleworth serving as a commuter area.

Local facilities, in the form of community centres, leisure facilities and open-air provision are also under threat.

Vision

The fundamental principle which underpins our vision and the policies in this plan is that of sustainable development. This means:

- achieving simultaneous and carefully balanced progress in pursuit of economic, social and environmental objectives – not prioritising one of these issues at the expense of the others;
- considering the long term legacy of our actions – ensuring that young people and generations to come can enjoy a quality of life at least as good as that we enjoy in Saddleworth today;
- having a wide geographic perspective – recognising that our local actions can have much wider impacts. Climate change is just one example.

We are very clear that Saddleworth must not become just a dormitory area for Greater Manchester and the West Yorkshire conurbation.

“ Our vision is that Saddleworth will be made up of many thriving communities, each a place with its own strong identity, each one offering great opportunities for people to make their homes, to work, and to spend their leisure time. Many of local people’s needs for services, such as for shops, education, and healthcare will be effectively met within Saddleworth. New developments will be accommodated but will be located and designed with sensitivity and with investment in the necessary supporting infrastructure. Saddleworth will be known for the quality of its countryside and the care with which land owners manage it. ”

A long term vision is an essential part of a Neighbourhood Plan. It sets out the direction in which this Plan, and subsequent Plans, should take us.

Our vision for Saddleworth reflects views expressed by local people during the extensive public engagement which has informed the preparation of this Plan.

Saddleworth must work together with Oldham for the benefit of both the parish and the wider borough.

Saddleworth will benefit greatly from its vital economic, social and environmental links with the rest of the Greater Manchester area, and also its strong connections to West Yorkshire. These neighbouring areas will continue to provide great opportunities for our residents, for instance, for employment and entertainment.

Likewise, the particular qualities which make Saddleworth such an asset to the North of England must be conserved and enhanced. The contribution which it will continue to make to the Peak District National Park is particularly noteworthy. Saddleworth’s natural landscapes, its attractive and diverse villages, and its outstanding opportunities for a wide range of outdoor recreation are great strengths. These make Saddleworth a great place to live and visit, but they will also help to underpin its economic contribution. The tourism and leisure sector is an obvious example, but we envisage that other small and medium sized enterprises will make Saddleworth their base because of its excellent environment and its vibrant communities, and because highly skilled people will choose to live here.

Plans & legislation

The Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan 2022–2042 has been developed in parallel with other planning legislation, which includes the National Planning Policy Framework, the emerging Places for Everyone and Greater Manchester’s Transport 2040, Oldham Council’s forthcoming Local Plan, and the Peak Park Management and Local Plans

The revised National Planning Policy Framework sets out government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It currently falls under the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2>.

Places for Everyone has been submitted to the Government at the time of this Neighbourhood Plan being developed. Every effort has been made to ensure that this plan is aligned to *Places for Everyone* as required by national legislation. The Places for Everyone portal can be found at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/places-for-everyone/>.

Oldham Council’s Local Plan is still under development at the time of this Neighbourhood Plan being adopted. Every effort has been made to ensure that this plan is aligned to the current and forthcoming Local Plans for Oldham, as required by national legislation. The portal for Oldham’s Local Plan can be found at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200199/planning_and_building/1809/local_plan_review

The planning policies for the Peak District National Park are found in the Development Plan which consists of the Core Strategy (2011) (<https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/planning/policies-and-guides/core-strategy>) and the Development Management Policies (DMP) Document (2019) (https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/95091/Webpage-Final-Branded-DMP-Doc-Copy.pdf). Other plans and guidance (which can be found on their website) include the Management Plan, Corporate Strategy 2019–24, the Landscape Strategy, Climate Change and the Peak District National Park, and the Cultural Heritage Strategy. The statutory purposes of National Parks are defined in the Environment Act 1995, S61 and S62.

The Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan does not include a Strategic Environment Assessment, as it has been developed in conjunction with Oldham Council’s Local Plan, which includes a landscape character assessment, which has been used for the purposes of the Landscape Character and Quality Section of this Report.

This Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for development – allocated sites for development can be found in Oldham Council’s Local Plan, and the *Places for Everyone* proposals.

The Parish Council covers an area with a number of sensitive environmental assets. However, a large proportion of the area of the Parish Council falls within the Peak District National Park, where the Peak Park Management and Local Plans are the relevant planning documents for development.

In the remaining area, the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have significant environmental effects not already addressed through the sustainability appraisal of Oldham Council’s Local Plan.

The majority of land in Saddleworth is classified as Green Belt or other protected open land (OPOL)¹, in addition to which there are 22 defined Conservation Areas. As such those environmental assets have been already classified, and protected by existing plans and legislation. This can be viewed at <https://mappinggm.org.uk>

Comprehensive links to relevant policies and guidance can be found on pages 46 and 47 of this Neighbourhood Plan.

¹ These are under consideration for redesignation as Local Green Spaces

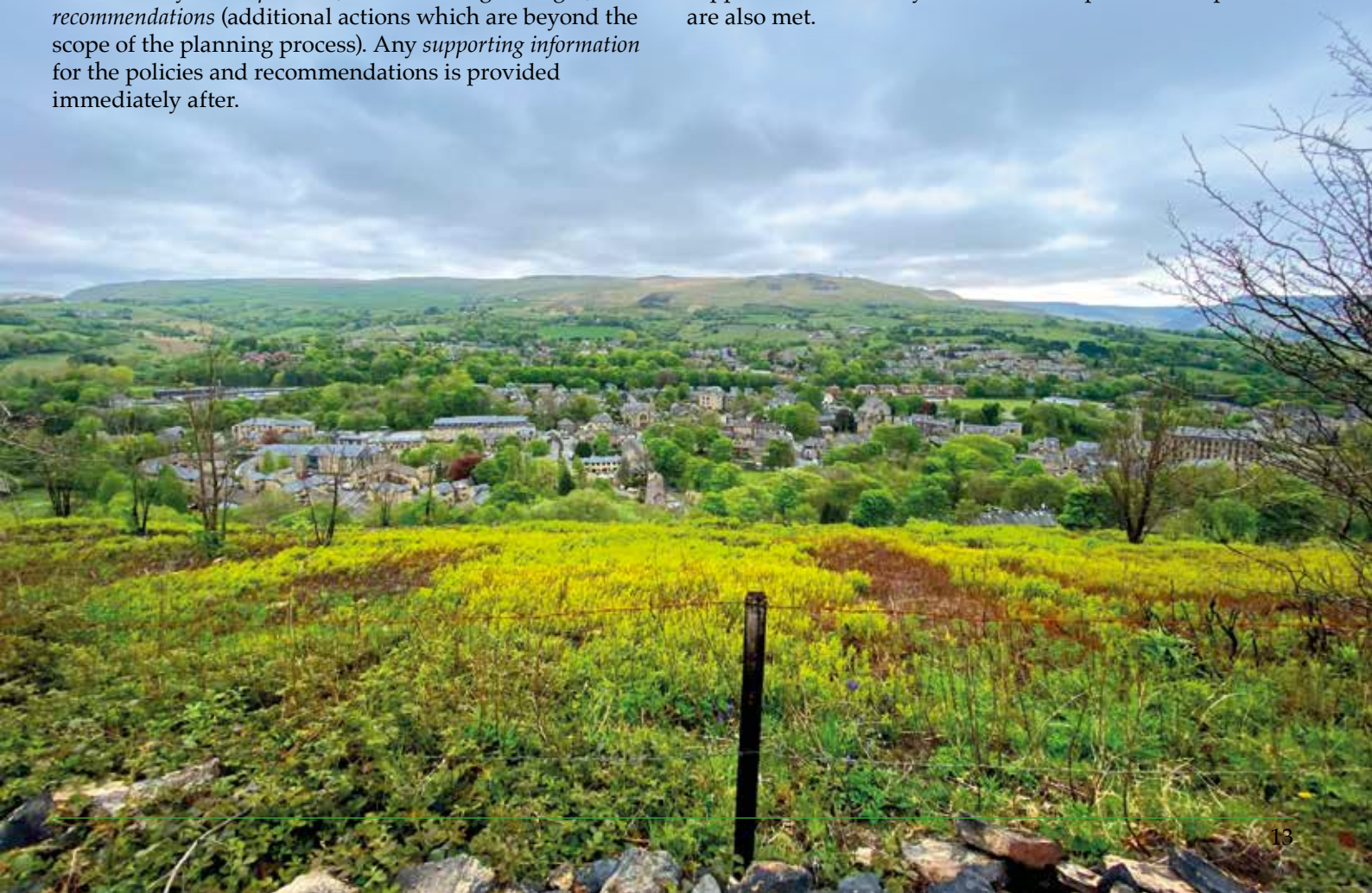
Policies and recommendations

The policies and recommendations contained within this document are intended to be viewed as a whole, and with the other plans and policies listed on page 12.

Each section has a series of *objectives*. Each objective is addressed by either *policies* (which have legal weight); or *recommendations* (additional actions which are beyond the scope of the planning process). Any *supporting information* for the policies and recommendations is provided immediately after.

Some information which doesn't fall into these categories was still considered important for context, and has been included in yellow boxouts.

For clarity, if a specific policy says that something “will be supported”, this is only when all other policies and plans are also met.



Environment

OBJECTIVES: To ensure that any development ensures prioritises brownfield sites and their best use, and wherever possible maintains green belt and green spaces.

To identify and protect recreation and nature conservation corridors, and local green spaces, in addition to the green belt already identified in the area, to ensure that where new development takes place it respects and where possible enhances the local environment.

POLICY 1: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Developments must aim to deliver:

- the appropriate provision of new small green/open spaces, in line with identified needs/deficiencies such as pocket parks and active green spaces (e.g. green walls and green roofs) and their maintenance, and an overall increase in the provision of green space;¹
- a positive impact on the relationship between urban and natural features, where the development is adjacent to existing green spaces, so that it integrates positively with any natural features;
- protect and enhance any existing wildlife, particularly by keeping features that support existing wildlife, providing alternatives where there are overriding reasons for their removal, and incorporating new supporting provision in new buildings and across the development;
- support wildlife movement and foraging through, for example, the provision of green infrastructure such as native hedgerow and tree planting, and the use of wild flower planting in areas of open space;

Development must respect the need for increased tree coverage in the Saddleworth lowlands, and in particular encouraging the expansion of native species across the district.

Developments will not be supported which:

- do not meet Oldham Council's target provision for the replacement of trees;
- do not replace any loss of green space with an equal or greater new provision of green space;

This Neighbourhood Plan does not include a Strategic Environmental Assessment – please see the introductory section on *Plans & legislation* for detail.

The environment section must be read in conjunction with the expected green infrastructure plan which is currently being prepared to inform the review of the Local Plan for Oldham.

The environmental assessment should also refer to the analysis of local character, referred to in the design, character and heritage policies, and to the sections on countryside and landscape character, and on greenbelt and natural environment in this Neighbourhood Plan.

- would result in the loss of or harm to Ancient Woodland.

If it is not possible to replace any lost green space with an equal or greater provision, consideration would be given to proposals to enhance existing green space, but this would be a less preferred option.

In the Neighbourhood Survey carried out to support the Neighbourhood Plan, 73.26% of people cited environment as one of the three most important issues concerning Saddleworth currently, rising to 79.78% of people when asked for the three most important issues concerning Saddleworth in 20 years time. Only housing rated more highly as an issue.

The disused railway lines which run through Saddleworth are particularly noteworthy in creating recreation and nature conservation corridors. These are already identified as Recreation Routes/Open Spaces but good to note these should continue to be identified as key Green Infrastructure features.

The Local Plan for Oldham has identified Local Green Spaces, as well as other green infrastructure. It has already been identified that at least three OPOL sites should be considered for Local Green Spaces status, those being:

- Dacres
- Stoneswood
- Wall Hill

¹ See Oldham Council's Green Infrastructure Policy for reference.



Moorland above Dovestone reservoir

The data from the surveys conducted for this Neighbourhood Plan also identifies an extensive number of sites which might be included as further Local Green Spaces. This has been addressed in the policies on landscape character and quality.

While a number of the comments focused on the protection of existing Green Belt and OPOL spaces as a generality, specific recommendations were received on Austerlands chimney, the canalside, Chapel Gardens, Dawsons Field, Dick Clough, Pickhill Valley, and a number of more generally described areas (see recommendation 3 on Design, Character and Heritage).

Tree coverage and peatlands

Greater Manchester's Green Infrastructure policy identifies "an ambition to plant one million trees in Greater Manchester by 2024 to contribute to a 'clean, carbon-neutral, climate resilient city region with a thriving natural environment'. This means that Oldham, being one of ten authorities, could plant up to 100,000 trees by 2024 which would bring many benefits to people and nature. However, peat is present in the east of the borough which needs restoring and enhancing and extensive tree planting would not be suitable here. Tree planting also needs consideration so as not to interrupt distinctive views."

It also targets work with agricultural landowners and stakeholders to promote more carbon sequestration (removing CO₂ from the atmosphere by storing carbon). There is a commitment to target peat bogs around Denshaw Moor, agricultural land on high ground between Delph and the eastern fringes of Oldham, and heathland around Alphin Pike.

In the early decades of the twentieth century the countryside areas of Saddleworth had very little tree cover.

From the 1970s onwards major efforts were made to promote tree planting. This was primarily in the valley bottoms and lower hillsides. It was initially mainly a publicly funded programme, designed to enhance the environment, and was based on the reintroduction of native species. This has prompted natural seeding and has transformed the appearance and biodiversity of the river valleys in a relatively short time.

There are also areas of commercial forestry at Dovestone including non-native tree types.

A warmer climate is now allowing the creation of a more wooded landscape on higher hillsides which have for generations had an open farmland character. Tree cover has been extending upwards on these slopes due to planting and natural seeding.

Very recently there is evidence of self seeded tree growth on the moorland plateaux at over 1,300 feet (400m) elevation. This is currently very dispersed, small in height, and mainly coniferous species, such as Sitka Spruce. The spread of tree cover on the moorland tops could accelerate quickly. The open moors have been a characteristic ingredient in the Saddleworth landscape for generations. They are celebrated in Saddleworth culture (e.g. the literature of Ammon Wrigley and local landscape painting and photography). The blanket bogs on the moorland plateaux are important both for the habitats they provide and as a carbon sink.

Oldham's Parks department's current approach to tree planting, which is supported by the City of Trees initiative, is not to plant new trees at heights above 800ft (250m).

While active planting programmes are not being pursued at heights over 800ft, there is likely to be some incursion from self-seeding trees. However, priority in planting approaches is given to the preservation of peatlands, which have a greater positive environmental benefit than new tree planting.

Historically, Saddleworth's landscape has changed so significantly with regards to the number of trees across its lowlands that it cannot be easily used as a reference point to justify any particular tree density. It has gone from heavy coverage to minimal coverage, and neither have been maintained so consistently as to justify a particular course of action.

Consideration has also been given to the status of Ancient Woodlands. It is not anticipated that the policy adopted will be in conflict with any proposals coming forward as part of the Local Plan for Oldham.

Note: Please also see the related aspects of transport provision, in particular with regards to car charging, improvement of public transport, and pedestrian and cycle access.

Ownership and usage

There is no comprehensive record of the ownership/usage of Saddleworth's rural areas but types would include:

- Land owned privately, mainly farmed under grazing, some set aside for wildlife conservation. In some places the land is the subject of public access requirements.
- Land owned by water utilities and under the same mix of uses
- Land owned by local authorities, often formerly derelict before reclamation for the purpose of landscape enhancement, recreation and biodiversity.
- Land owned by private individuals and managed for its landscape or biodiversity value. One or two small examples exist, but generally uncommon in Saddleworth
- Land owned or managed by voluntary/charitable organisations for landscape, biodiversity or recreation purposes, for example the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) at Dovestone Reservoir.

Should it be the case that development does occur in high risk areas (subject to the policies in local plans), we would require defensive design for any new areas.

RECOMMENDATION 1: FLOODING

As well as the requirement for SUDS, it is recommended that efforts should be made to identify pre-existing drainage and culverted waterways, and report them to Oldham Council, to improve knowledge of existing potential flood risks.

OBJECTIVES: To enhance the environment, and ensure that the threat of environmental damage to the area is minimised, and to ensure that where possible, this takes place with clear evidence, including concerns such as flooding, energy use, and sustainability.

To have clear information about watercourses for the purposes of risk assessment and response.

POLICY 2: EROSION AND FLOODING

Developments will be supported which use natural techniques to avoid flood risk, such as Slow the Flow initiatives on tributary streams and catchment areas, or "wilding" initiatives to create a natural sustainable drainage systems (SUDS).

Incidents of extremely heavy rainfall against a background of generally wetter ground conditions have led to increased flood damage and erosion in recent years. This can damage the landscape; but the landscape can also play a role in slowing the speed of run off.

Surface water run off can be slowed by protecting and enhancing the boglands on the high plateaux, increasing tree cover, a reduction in close cropped or cut grassland and the creation of water holding features. Hard surfacing of the ground and straightening, channelling and culverting of watercourses exacerbates the problem.

In the Neighbourhood Survey, of 266 specific responses 79% specifically called for more to be done to address flooding issues, including avoiding development on flood risk areas, the use of SUDS (sustainable drainage systems), and the use of wilding initiatives to manage water flows.

“More is needed – priority should be re-wetting and replanting the moors, where its low enough, or the bare farmland around it, banning land being managed for grouse, following Scotland’s recent example. Rivers should be allowed to have soft banks, which is proven to help reduce flooding – exactly the opposite of what’s recently been allowed in the new build areas around Greenfield, which will make the problem worse, creating fast flowing water which will build up and flood at points where the water can escape, instead of being softened along its route. People should be made aware when house are being built on land at flood risk.”

Survey response

Data on flooding concerns can be found in Dobcross data (p 148), and in the individual answers to question 12 on the Neighbourhood Survey.

The Dobcross submission specifically stated that: “The vast majority of respondents (90%) were not concerned about a risk of flooding.” However, it should be noted that Dobcross is largely situated well away from the rivers that run through several of the Saddleworth villages, which is likely to account for this low response.

Peak District expansion

Pennine Prospects is in the process of developing a new non-statutory uplands park, known as the South Pennines Regional Park. Parts of Oldham are included within this and the aim is to have a management plan that reflects the importance of investing public money for public good in accordance with the Agricultural Bill (2021). It is described as ‘a landscape for the future, a space for everyone and a distinctive local economy’. More information can be found at: <https://southpenninespark.org>

Such an expansion of the National Park setting has been supported by both Saddleworth Parish Council and Oldham Council. The size and location of the park would likely have a particular impact on Saddleworth and this Neighbourhood Plan and future revisions.

OBJECTIVE: To promote and encourage the stewardship and conservation of a beautiful and locally distinctive rural landscape in a period of changing climatic and economic conditions (including partnership work as outlined in recommendation 3 – design, character and heritage, and recommendation 7 – farming and rural environment).

POLICY 3: CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF LAND ADJACENT TO THE NATIONAL PARK

Development must respect the setting of the Peak District National Park by being sensitively located and designed so as to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the National Park.

Planning policies to protect Landscape Character Areas across Saddleworth

The existing Local Plan for Oldham has defined Landscape Character Areas which form the basis for planning policies, and it is expected that the forthcoming Local Plan for Oldham will continue this, with potential for minor revisions to boundaries.

It is possible that this approach can be made even more effective by further refining the Landscape Character Area in some of the city region’s localities (by, for instance, giving them a finer grained geography, adding more detailed landscape descriptions, and capturing more fully the specific characteristics and qualities that contribute to local distinctiveness). Neighbourhood Planning could play an important role in “localising” the approach, especially in areas where the landscapes are both fragile and of high environmental, economic, social and cultural importance.

The setting of the Peak District National Park

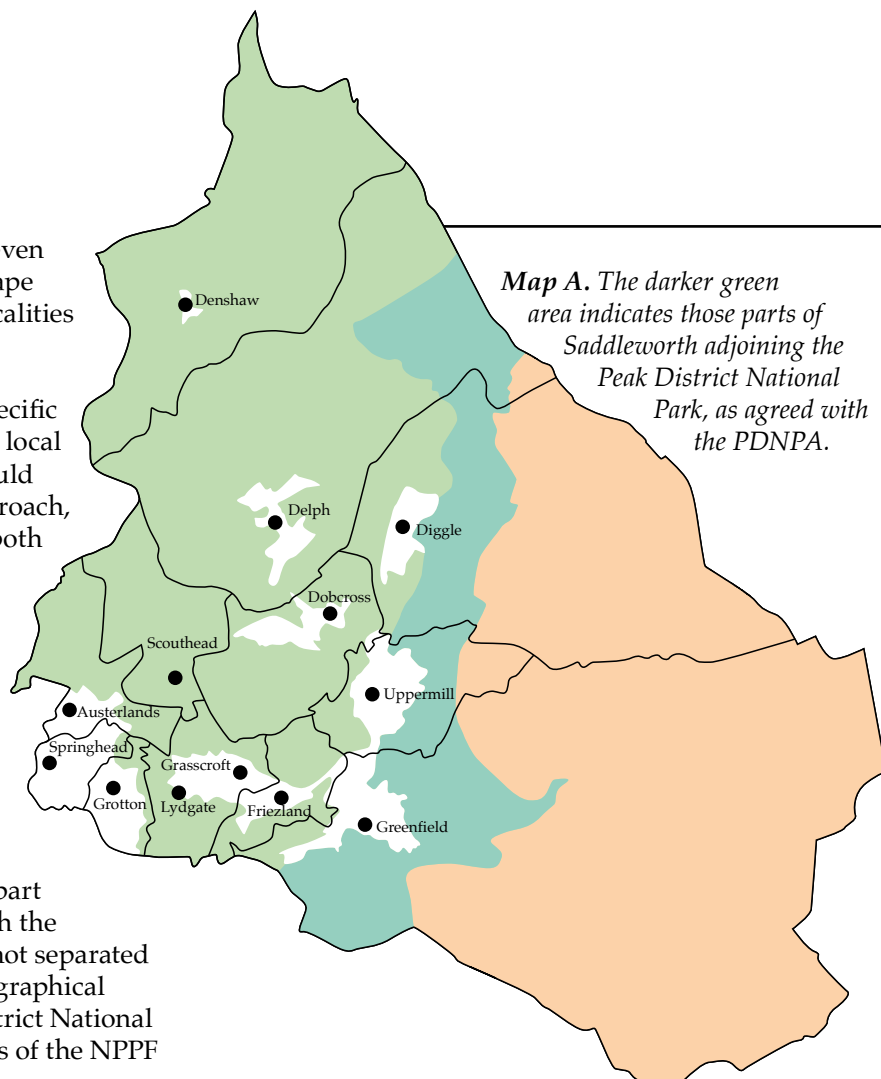
However, this Neighbourhood Plan should have regard to the NPPF requirement in respect of the setting of the National Park. Saddleworth’s rural landscapes adjoin a long section of the boundary of the northernmost part of the National Park. Along most of this length the landscapes on each side of the boundary are not separated or distinguished by any strongly marked geographical feature or character differences. The Peak District National Park Authority wishes to see the requirements of the NPPF reflected in this Neighbourhood Plan.

The geographic extent of a “setting” is difficult to define. A large development or one which would involve a very significant change in the landscape might have a very significant impact on the National Park even though it is located at some distance from the boundary.

Map A shows the rural areas which can be described as “directly adjoining the National Park”. Proposed developments within this area would be assessed against policy 1. However, this does not exclude the possibility that proposed developments which are located at a greater distance from the National Park may be considered to adversely affect the Park by reason of being in its setting – wind turbines are one example of a potentially impacting development.

The dramatic and distinctive rural landscape of Saddleworth provides many great benefits. These include its:

- scenic value,
- aesthetic function as a backdrop for the local villages,



Map A. The darker green area indicates those parts of Saddleworth adjoining the Peak District National Park, as agreed with the PDNPA.

- contribution to local and distant views,
- providing a setting for recreation and tourism.
- creating a sense of personal well being, and
- economic, cultural and artistic value.

The landscape of Saddleworth is a huge asset, not only for the community of the Parish but for the whole of Oldham, Greater Manchester and beyond.

Approximately 40% of Saddleworth is in the Peak District National Park. This area makes a tremendous contribution to the local landscape with all the benefits that this entails. However, because it is in the Park, policies from the Peak District Core Strategy and other strategies take priority.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (paragraph 176) refers to National Parks and states that “development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas”.



The war memorial at Pots and Pans is an example of a significant site, and the view from Xxxxx would be considered an example of a publicly valued viewpoint.

The current National Park Core Strategy (2011) can be found at <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/planning/policies-and-guides/core-strategy> and the Development Management Policies (DMP) Document (2019) at https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/95091/Webpage-Final-Branded-DMP-Doc-Copy.pdf.

Peak District National Park has made a recommendation to support this policy where it has been used in the Dore Neighbourhood Plan (<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/sites/default/files/docs/planning-and-development/dore/referendum%20documents%202021/adopted-dore-neighbourhood-plan-october-2021.pdf>).

A high percentage of the rural area of Saddleworth outside the National Park is in the Green Belt. This can protect the landscape against urban and suburban encroachment but is no guarantee against other unwelcome landscape changes. These changes can have many causes. They can result from inappropriate development, from unsympathetic land management, direct damage, and from the impacts of climate change, such as land erosion and invasion by non native flora.

Many parts of the Saddleworth countryside have been greatly enhanced over recent decades. Tree planting and derelict land reclamation has had a transformational impact, particularly along the valley bottoms. The Huddersfield Narrow Canal has been restored to use. Disused rail lines have become tree lined recreation routes. New countryside leisure areas have been created and the network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways has been enhanced.

Nonetheless many parts of the Saddleworth landscape are fragile. The stretches of countryside between and around the Saddleworth villages are narrow. They are under great pressure from various types of development even though much of the land is within the Green Belt. The open slopes on the valley sides are highly visible. Any landscape change on these hillsides has a great impact on local and distant views. It would be very easy for all the great benefits provided by the Saddleworth landscapes to be eroded.

The Neighbourhood Survey identified over-development as a major concern, and several respondents drew particular attention to the impact on community cohesion and community identity. This was in particular identified in response to question on how people would like to see Saddleworth in 20 years time. A typical response was:

“I would like it to be pretty similar to as it is today but with a thriving, varied, independent economy that reaches all of the villages. I would like all green spaces to be preserved as these are some of the last in Oldham and are the very reason I moved back to Oldham.”

and more simply:

“Not an urban sprawl.”

POLICY 4: PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT VIEWS

There will be a presumption against development which takes place between a significant site and publicly valued viewpoint across Saddleworth.

Any development which does take place must be sensitively located and designed so as to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the view.

The Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment in particular notes the Saddleworth War Memorial on Pots and Pans as the subject of such a view.

Consideration should also be given to the views of church spires from across the area, particularly the Church of St Chad, Castleshaw Roman Fort, Dovestone Reservoir, Heights Chapel and the Uppermill viaduct.

Castleshaw Roman Fort is one of two scheduled monuments listed in Saddleworth by Historic England. Pots and Pans, as well as being a grade II listed structure, is of particular relevance as the centre of Armistice Day celebrations. The Church of St Chad is a Grade II* listed building, as is Heights Chapel. The Uppermill Viaduct is a Grade II listed structure. All of these were also specifically named by residents in response to the survey question on sites that should be identified and promoted for tourism and heritage, although this is not an exhaustive list.



The Church of St Chads

OBJECTIVE: To ensure that existing heritage assets across the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan Area are preserved and enhanced, for the benefit of both residents and visitors, and to ensure that new developments are, wherever possible, of a high enough standard to create new heritage assets for the Parish in the future.

POLICY 5: "BARN" CONVERSIONS

Should agricultural buildings or stables be proposed for change of use, the development would be supported if it was deemed to have no detrimental impact on the agricultural economy, nor on the openness and people's enjoyment of the green belt.

The following conditions would have to be met:

- the building is of permanent and substantial construction, and has been in active use for at least 10 years;**
- the building footprint or height would not substantially increase, or if so, without significant impact on the wider visual surroundings;**
- appropriate ecology surveys are undertaken, and measures secured to ensure that there is net biodiversity gain.²³**

For conversions that are taking place within the Peak District National Park, Core Strategy policy HC1 on housing requires that the conversion is needed on conservation and/or enhancement grounds (i.e. they need to be considered a heritage asset).

Between 2018 and 2022, 27 applications were received in relation to planning in Saddleworth which involved the conversion to or replacement with dwellings of existing agricultural buildings. That is above and beyond any conversions which were allowed under permitted development rights.

² Some barn conversions will fall under "permitted development", and therefore will not be required to apply for planning permission. Such development cannot therefore be subject to these conditions.

³ For a definition of "substantial" in this context, please refer to Oldham Council's Local Plan.

Permitted development rights for conversion of agricultural buildings in force since April 2018 stipulate that the agricultural building must have been built prior to April 2013, or have been in agricultural use for 10 years before permitted development rights apply; this policy adopts the 10-year provision for planning applications.

The conversion of unused or under-used agricultural buildings into dwellings, which would help contribute to housing targets, is positive.

However, it should not be the case that agricultural buildings can be erected in the green belt (without any requirement for planning permission) and subsequently converted to housing simply to avoid restrictions on housebuilding in the green belt. The intention of this policy is to remove the latter option; but to ensure that agricultural buildings can still be built where required, and that former agricultural buildings which have fallen into disuse can still be converted where appropriate.

Further policies

See also:

Policy 6 – sustainable construction, with regards to environmental standards for individual buildings, including zero-carbon approaches, energy generation and drainage.

Policy 7 and recommendation 2 – design, character and heritage, with regards to the character of individual buildings or areas, and for the identification of areas of special interest, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs).

Policy 9 – accessibility to transport, with regards to minimising vehicle journeys and accessing pedestrian and cycle routes or public transport.

The Travel and Transport section (Policy 17 and Recommendation 8 – cycling, pedestrian and leisure infrastructure; Policy 18 and Recommendation 9 – public transport; and Recommendation 10 – air quality and vibration monitoring), with regards to minimising vehicle journeys, accessing pedestrian and cycle routes or public transport, and air quality.



Moorland above Denshaw

Design

OBJECTIVES: To ensure that all new development is built sustainably, and creates spaces which remain sustainable and with a positive (or minimally negative) impact on the environment throughout their lifetime.

To support opportunities for energy generation and the minimisation of energy use.

POLICY 6: SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

Developments must aim to deliver:

- modern standards of design and construction, where appropriate, to minimise the environmental impact of the construction process. Where modern approaches are not used – for example, to match historic building methods – efforts must still be made to minimise this impact;
- meeting or exceeding national environmental guidelines and recommendations, or requirements set out in Places for Everyone for zero-carbon homes across their lifetimes;
- the inclusion, where appropriate, of small-scale and/or district energy provision;
- the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) in all development, which offer multi functional benefits, unless not feasible, or there is a clear, supported recommendations for alternative provision;
- minimised flood risk, and ensure development is safe from flood risk taking into account climate change.

See also the supporting evidence for policy 1 – green infrastructure.

In response to the Neighbourhood Survey question on preferred methods of providing renewable energy, preferences by weighted average (where 1 is most preferred and 5 is least preferred), were 1 – solar panels (2.26); 2 – hydroelectric (2.41); 3 – ground source heat pumps (2.63); 4 – air source heat pumps (3.17); 5 – biomass (3.34); 6 – domestic wind turbines (3.55); 7 – commercial wind turbines (4.11). A small, but significant, number of respondents did not answer the question because they did not have sufficient knowledge of the technologies involved in the question, suggesting that there needs to be better communication to accompany any approaches.

The planning process – background

At the moment, planning decisions for proposals in Saddleworth outside the National Park are decided by Oldham Council, either by delegated decision by officers, or through the Borough Planning Committee. The Parish Council is statutorily notified of planning applications, and provides responses to the Council via the Parish's Planning Committee.

Planning applications within the National Park are decided by the PDNP, with the Parish Council as a consultee.

Previously, decisions on Oldham Council planning applications were delegated to the Parish Council, and there is no legal impediment to decisions being delegated on this basis in the future.

The student consultation showed strong support for the use of renewable energy. They gave us examples, such as the use of solar panels and wind turbines which ultimately use what is already around us, wind, sunlight and water. They also wanted further promotion of cycling and public transport to help tackle climate change. Some liked the idea of a solar powered school.

OBJECTIVES: To ensure that where possible, traditional, unused heritage assets are brought back into new use.

Development must maintain or improve the unique local vernacular, with particular respect paid to historical design and methods of construction.

POLICY 7: DESIGN, CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

There is a strong presumption in favour of developments which retain an existing heritage asset to the fullest extent. If the original asset is not going to be used, the application must be accompanied by structural and viability surveys which demonstrate why it is not possible to retain the asset.



Traditional stone weavers' cottages in Uppermill

All development shall be of a high quality of design. The design should complement and enhance the distinct local character and identity of Saddleworth's villages. (See supporting information for examples of the types of existing design and context that have been identified in Saddleworth.)

This shall be achieved by, for example:

- the use of distinctive local building materials, with particular relevance to the design and materials used in the weavers' cottages and associated mill buildings, or by making concerted efforts to deliver complementary design to enhance and improve the distinct Saddleworth vernacular.
- a presumption in favour of a colour palette which reflects, or is in harmony with, the materials of its context. In particular, extensions and infill development should respect and be sensitive to their context and settings;
- having regard to not only the context of the significant views (see policy 2), Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, but also OPOL (and future local green spaces) and other types of protected status. Proposals which substantially harm the special character, and/or architectural and/or historical significance, and setting of Conservation Areas, heritage assets, and adjoining vernacular styles in the area will not be supported;
- the provision of associated high-quality public realm.

Development that enhances or preserves Conservation Areas and heritage assets in the area – as well as their distinct character, appearance, and setting – will be supported.

Account will be taken of the Local Heritage List designations (once adopted) when considering planning and development.

With particular regards to large redevelopment sites, a comprehensive masterplan should include an indication of how the development should be phased.

RECOMMENDATION 2: DESIGN, CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

The Parish Council will endeavour to promote the use of Local Green Space status, as well as other protected statuses, such as SBIs and SSSIs, and support local residents in applying for these protected statuses, as well as applying for them itself where appropriate.¹

Saddleworth Parish Council will work in coordination with other organisations to enhance and preserve existing heritage and at risk assets – including, but not limited to, Saddleworth Civic Trust, Historic England, the Yorkshire Milestone Society, Oldham Council, and the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA).

Saddleworth Parish Council will support and provide information on other forms of support for the maintenance and enhancement of heritage assets, such as grant funding to maintain or repair existing heritage assets.

The NPPF contains strong policy to prevent harm to heritage assets, in particular paragraphs 80, and 189–208.

¹ Local green space status can only be allocated as part of a local plan review.

In defining Saddleworth's existing design, character and heritage, the Greater Manchester Landscape and Character Needs Assessment identifies a "unifying vernacular of traditional millstone grit farms and cottages, with small villages and clusters of buildings in sheltered locations often fringed by trees", with specific reference to St Chad's Church and Diglea.

Saddleworth has, in particular, a rich heritage of weavers' cottages and traditional mill buildings, and new developments should be integrated in such a way as to address and enhance these sensitively.

Earlier buildings used gritstone for the walls and flagstones for the roofs. With the building of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal in the mid-19th century, large amounts of slate became available and building styles changed to incorporate this much cheaper material.

As well as the above description of Saddleworth's vernacular; there are distinct identities and styles which exist in each village and in specific areas, such as village high streets.

Common vernacular styles also include terraced properties, semi-detached and detached Victorian/Edwardian properties. Currently, character appraisals exist for only two of the conservation areas – Grasscroft and Delph, which can be accessed at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200291/heritage/1908/conservation_areas – there are a further 20 conservation areas in Saddleworth for which Oldham Council is expected to produce character appraisals.

This Neighbourhood Plan has specifically not excluded contemporary design, but instead has stated that it must be complementary to existing design, and reflect or be in harmony with existing designs.

Privately owned heritage assets and those under the control of other public authorities

When considering Saddleworth's local heritage, immediate thoughts are the buildings or structures that are formally 'listed'. However, heritage assets include more than just buildings and monuments; they also include sites, places, areas or landscapes. The unifying factor is that the asset has a degree of significance that merits consideration in planning decisions.

Historic England maintains the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) – the only official, up to date, register of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites in England – listed buildings, scheduled monuments, protected wrecks, registered parks and gardens, and battlefields.

There are currently 386 designated heritage assets in Saddleworth on the National List for England, of which five are Grade II* listed buildings and two are scheduled monuments – the Bowl Barrow NNE of Knarr Barn, and Castleshaw Roman Fort. Full information on listed buildings and the two scheduled monuments in Saddleworth are available at Historic England's website at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

In addition to this, there is a Local Heritage List project. The Greater Manchester Local Heritage List Project is being run by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) together with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Oldham Council.

The aim of the project is to identify non-designated heritage assets that make a significant contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the borough and are considered by their local community to be of historic importance. Once accepted onto the Local List, these cherished historic buildings and sites can be given greater consideration in the planning process.

There are a substantial number of heritage assets within Saddleworth that fall under the remit of other public authorities, in particular Oldham Council. Saddleworth Parish Council will support residents to ensure that they can report heritage assets that are not being maintained in a manner that enhances or preserves their heritage, so that appropriate action can be taken, such as Urgent Works Notices, Repairs Notices or Compulsory Purchase Orders.

The current conservation areas are: Hey (Springhead); Stonebreaks (Springhead); Lydgate; Scouthead; Grasscroft; Royal George Mills (Friezland); Ladhill Lane (Greenfield); Boarshurst (Greenfield); Hey Top (Greenfield); Uppermill; St Chad's Church (Uppermill); Holly Grove (Uppermill); Dobcross; Tame Water (Dobcross); New Delph; Delph; Diglea; Harrop Green (Dobcross); Grange (Delph); New Tame (Slackcote); Denshaw; and Bleak Hey Nook (Delph).

The Parish Council is responsible for a number of assets which have heritage status or characteristics, and as such has direct responsibility for their upkeep.



Saddleworth Parish Council Cemetery

- Former British Telecom phone boxes
- Bus shelters
- Saddleworth Parish Council Cemetery
- Saddleworth Civic Hall and car park

The maintenance of these assets falls under the remit of the Assets Management Committee of the Parish Council, which will ensure that they are maintained in a manner which enhances or preserves them and their distinct character, appearance and setting.

In addition, there are a number of heritage assets that are maintained within the Parish by the Borough Council. In particular, this includes heritage street lighting (at: Brook Lane, Dobcross; Carr Lane, Diggle; Dale Lane, Delph; Pastures Lane, Delph; Sandbed Lane, Scouthead; Stoneswood Road in Delph; and Oldham Road in Denshaw), and the milestones across the parish. The Yorkshire Milestone Society maintains lists of milestones throughout Yorkshire. There are about 30 milestones situated on roads and additional ones in isolated non-road areas.

Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs)

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) operates the SBI register for, and on behalf of, the ten Local Authorities that comprise Greater Manchester. This dataset contains all current SBI boundaries (based upon the 2018 review), including the name of each site and its defining features. SBIs are Greater Manchester's equivalent to Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).

SSSI impact risk zones

Natural England maintain a database of which types of developments are likely to impact on SSSIs, which can be found at <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/Defra::sssi-impact-risk-zones-england/explore?location=52.791703%2C-2.504131%2C7.73>

The 16 current SBIs in Saddleworth are Alphin Pike & Buckton Moor (North), Dark Peak Moors, Hull Brook, Slackcote Valley, and South Pennine Moors (South) (all Grade A); Castleshaw Pasture, Dacres, Dick Clough, Hey Bank, Huddersfield Narrow Canal (North), Medlock Headwater and Strinesdale, Moorgate Quarry, Royal George (all Grade B); and Armit Road Lodge, Fields by White Brook, and Tame Water Woodland (all Grade C).

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

An SSSI is a conservation designation denoting a protected area. This can be based on biological or geological criteria. In England, SSSIs are determined by Natural England.

According to a DEFRA report, “SSSIs protect a large proportion of species in England and Wales, including most rare species. Although there are some gaps, they are seen to be representative of our biodiversity as a whole. SSSIs have helped to protect some species in England and Wales which would otherwise be at risk of extinction nationally.”

Special protection area and Special Area of Conservation

The South Pennine Moors are classified as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The SPA covers an area of 45,270.52 ha., and covers part of the moorland in Saddleworth (as well as in Barnsley, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Kirklees, Sheffield, Staffordshire and Tameside).

The original citation states that the site qualifies as it is used regularly by more than 1% of the British population of the merlin (30–36 pairs), golden plover (443–445 pairs) and short-eared owl (22–25 pairs).

The purpose of the Green Belt

The NPPF sets out the five purposes of Green Belt:

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

All proposals for development within the Green Belt will need to be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which makes clear that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

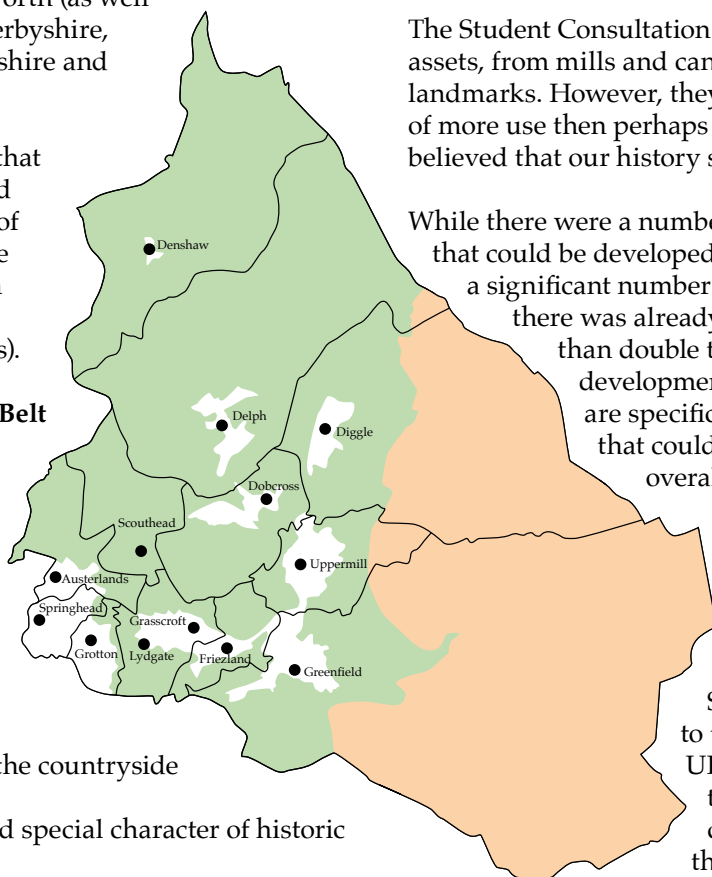
Thus designation as Green Belt does not provide a means of ensuring that the particular character or quality of a rural landscape is protected, conserved or enhanced – only that, in general terms, it remains free of urban or suburban development – add something about Local Green Spaces.

Paragraph 141 of the NPPF says: “Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.”

The Student Consultation wanted to protect our heritage assets, from mills and canals to other statues and landmarks. However, they understood that if sites could be of more use then perhaps we should redevelop them. They believed that our history should be kept alive.

While there were a number of responses identifying sites that could be developed within the area, there were also a significant number of responses which stated that there was already too much development – more than double the number for any individual development site. It is clear that while there are specific instances of brownfield sites that could be reused, there is a significant overall concern about the loss of green space.

Collectively, the SBIs, SSSIs, and the Special Protection Area highlight the critical importance of much of Saddleworth’s natural resources to the biological diversity of the UK, and as such, the critical role their protection must play in development decisions that affect the area.



OBJECTIVE: To ensure developments are designed to promote physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Design with public safety in mind, ensuring that the public realm has considered design which minimises risk from, and reduces the likelihood of, antisocial behaviour.

POLICY 8: SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Development must aim to deliver:

- new and/or enhanced spaces which deliver routes for active travel. Particular priority is given to spaces which are developed with an awareness of the benefits for physical and mental health that good design can deliver. Developments will be supported which can demonstrate clear improvements for wellbeing, for example, by having an impact on reducing social isolation;
- public realm which is conducive to public use, while minimising the risk of anti-social behaviour (ASB). Where there is new public realm that could provide a risk of anti-social behaviour, applications should be accompanied by a risk assessment statement and (where appropriate) policy;

For major developments there is a strong presumption that applications should include a traffic statement, identifying how traffic flows will address safety and well-being concerns.

The Neighbourhood Survey identified crime and antisocial behaviour as a significant concern for residents. Under “other” it was the second most significant current concern (after access to education and healthcare), and the third most significant future concern (over development taking second place on that question).

OBJECTIVES: Objectives relating to design and transport are addressed in the Travel and Transport section of the Neighbourhood Plan (p. 37–40)

POLICY 9: ACCESSIBILITY TO TRANSPORT

Development must aim to deliver:

- the provision of cycle and pedestrian access to local facilities and transport connections over and above the minimum standards, particularly where there is provision of one-bedroom housing and social housing;

- a requirement that the entire site can easily access existing public transport (within recommended guidelines for distances to bus or train stops);
- provision of electric charging (or alternative renewable provision) as standard for all new dedicated parking provision, whether for residential, public or commercial use, and consideration given to how to provide charging for other parking provision;
- high-quality pedestrian and cycle access design for major developments. In particular, designs which complete existing gaps in the provision of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure will be supported, creating safe and convenient continuation of sustainable traffic routes;
- safe, accessible cycle storage;
- improved accessibility for people with mobility issues, or those with pushchairs.

Data on parking space requirements and access is included on pages 77–78 of the Dobcross submission. Over 90 per cent of respondents said that parking spaces and access to a main road should be prerequisites for planning permission. Data on electric cars is included on pages 92–97. Over 65% of respondents said that they were considering an electric car in the next five to 10 years. 56% said that they would be able to charge it at home. 48% said that public charging facilities would be a factor in their purchasing decision.

The Dobcross submission on travel and transport showed: “Over 90% of respondents thought having parking spaces and access to a main road should be a prerequisite to gaining planning approval.”

Saddleworth is under-served by public transport, as discussed further in the Traffic and Transport section, which means that it will remain overly dependent on private transport – particularly cars. Our policies have therefore concentrated on two aspects, provision of environmentally friendly charging points to ensure that private transport is as low impact as possible, and the improvement of 20 minute neighbourhoods, to minimise the need for private or public transport when using local facilities.

Data on footpaths and bridle paths is included in the responses to question 29 of the Neighbourhood Survey. Suggestions largely centred on working with community groups, and increased maintenance.

The Dobcross submission showed: “A small majority of people (54%) think that the lack of pavements on certain roads are an important issue.” Particular locations referenced in Dobcross were around the bridge near Dobcross School and along Platt Lane and Sugar Lane leading into the Square. Residents also highlighted issues at the top of Woods Lane and on Sandy Lane.

Data on car usage is on page 34 or the summary responses (question 30), with the vast majority of respondents having 1 (44.24%) or 2 (38%) cars.

Suggested locations for charging points is included in the responses to question 31 (primarily existing car parks).

Requirements for charging points have been factored into planning applications as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. It should be noted that requirements for charging points should also be considered for retail and commercial development, as noted in the section on retail and commerce. When considering money raised through section 106 agreements with developers, public electric vehicle charging points should be viewed as a local requirement.

Cycling facilities were addressed on question 33 of the Saddleworth consultation. Safety issues were cited extensively, with users requesting better road management to make cyclists feel safe and better, more joined-up, off-road provision.

Provision for cycling facilities is a factor in planning applications and infrastructure needs, as are electric vehicle charging points.

The Dobcross submission specifically referenced that “Most respondents are unsatisfied with the state of the roads and footpaths.”

Accessibility needs are included in responses to question 34 of the Neighbourhood Survey. The most common issue raised was the availability of bus services.

Further policies

See also:

Policy 1 – green infrastructure, with regards to encompassing environmental design.

Policy 2 – erosion and flooding, and Recommendation 1 – flooding, with regards to design of flood prevention and response.

Housing

OBJECTIVES: To address under-provided housing needs, in particular, suitably affordable (including social) housing stock for first time entrants in to the market looking to stay in the area, or for pensioners to move into appropriate and easily maintained homes. In particular, this would include 1- and 2-bedroom homes, as indicated by the current housing needs analysis and surveys carried out for this Neighbourhood Plan.

To help facilitate appropriate housing in Saddleworth, and the means of providing it (which could include such options as a community land trust with Parish Council involvement, or Parish-Council supported development).

POLICY 10: HOUSING

Development must aim to deliver a range of housing types, with specific focus on the provision of affordable, social and intermediate housing. In particular, it should deliver one-bedroom accommodation targeted at young people, allowing those leaving family homes for the first time to remain in the area, and appropriate homes for the elderly and disabled, which promote accessibility.

Individual developments which fit those needs will also be looked upon favourably.

In the National Park local needs housing is prioritised (as per Core Strategy policy HC1) with open market dwellings only accepted on enhancement grounds.

POLICY 11: DERELICT AND EMPTY PROPERTIES AND SITES

Developments will be supported which bring derelict/empty properties back into use.¹

The Local Plan for Oldham has a specific brownfield first policy, which is strongly supported for development in Saddleworth.

¹ The forthcoming Local Plan for Oldham will include a specific policy on infill development and the conversion of residential space, and any potential problems this may cause.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

One frequent concern raised about planning decisions is with regards to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). For clarity, no planning permission is currently required for HMOs for up to six residents. The Local Plan for Oldham is currently considering the imposition of an Article 4 direction which would change this situation – a decision which is restricted to the Borough Council.

RECOMMENDATION 3: HOUSING

Major developments should have as a condition of their approval, the formation of a consultation group with local residents and groups, to discuss the development between planning approval and completion.

Development should facilitate positive and proactive engagement with the community by those bringing forward plans for development, both as plans are prepared and submitted, and as development takes place. In support of this, all planning applications for development which are likely to have an impact beyond the immediate site should be accompanied by a Statement of Community Engagement.

Saddleworth Parish Council will explore, or encourage others to explore, the creation of a Community Land Trust. In particular, it should explore options for self-build and community build.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that the objectively assessed need for housing in a housing market area is met in full in local plans. Oldham Council maintains an updated Local Housing Needs Assessment, including a specific analysis of the needs of Saddleworth.

Places for Everyone (Pfe) (formerly The Greater Manchester Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment – GMSF) has now been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and examination will take place from November 2022. Pfe proposes a stepped housing requirement for Oldham of: 352 homes per year for the first five years of the plan period (2020–25); 680 homes per year for years 6–10 (2025–30); and 868 homes per year for years 11–17 (2030–37).



A typical housing mix in Delph: red brick semi-detached houses, stone terraces, a more modern estate, and new stone-built housing

The LHNA identifies that Saddleworth and Lees has the highest median house prices of any of the districts in the borough.

Saddleworth and the Saddleworth villages are identified as a clear identifiable sub-market, with a distinct need for affordable housing. The LHNA identifies a complete lack of 1-bedroom housing, and limited housing for older residents, both of which are needed. Demand for housing is high across the district.

Data on the community response to housing needs can be found on pages 71–73 of the Dobcross submission, and pages 7–10 of the data from the Neighbourhood Survey.

Specific data on property type and size is included on pages 45 and 46, while information on tenure is included on page 51. Comparable market rent data is on page 58.

The Neighbourhood Survey found that residents identify that there was little priority given to shared space housing (e.g. flats) – just 9% of respondents cited it as their first priority. Just over 45% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Survey specified detached houses as their least preferred development type, by far the strongest response to any particular type of housing.

In order of response, the weighted preferences for types of housing (most preferred first) were: 1) Terraced (2.53); 2) Retirement homes (2.76); 3) Semi-detached (2.80); 4) Sheltered/supported accommodation (2.91); 5) Shared space (e.g. flats) (3.30); 6) Detached (3.49)².

There was little need identified for private rented accommodation, with 64% wanting more owner-occupied, and 37% wanting more social rented stock.³

There was a strong preference for three bedroom houses (64%), then two bedroom houses (39%). There was small demand identified for four bedroom or more (6.5%) or one bedroom (6%). This contrasts with the Oldham Housing Needs Analysis; however, the neighbourhood survey received only 9% of responses from people under 25, so is likely to be weighted in such a way as to fail to identify this need, so more weight is given to the Housing Needs Analysis.

The Student consultation showed that they understand that as they grow up they hope they will be able to continue to live in Saddleworth. However, houses will need to be made more affordable in order for this to happen.

Many of the pupils believed that houses should replace the school in Uppermill, some even brought up the Fletchers Mill site in Greenfield. The overall opinion is that there should be considerable thought given about where houses are built.

There was also worry amongst the students for the young people who hope to settle down here. One particular student raised the concern that if more houses were to be built in Saddleworth there would be a knock on effect across the area, with more demand being put on schools and health services not to mention the number of extra cars on the roads.

The students were clear about the merits of good design, emphasizing that houses should be more attractive.

² The more preferable the option, the lower the score.

³ Respondents could choose more than one option.

Oldham Council maintains a register of individuals and groups which would like to self or custom build in the area. Currently there are 334 entrants on the register, with 79 new entries added in the last year for which information is available. Of those, 29% of entrants citing Saddleworth as a desired location, making it the most desired location for a plot.

OBJECTIVE: To address the under-provision of parking across the area, and to ensure that on street parking is used appropriately.

POLICY 12: HOUSING – TRANSPORT

New housing development must aim to deliver:

- provision for two parking spaces per dwelling. The exception to this would be new one-bedroom housing, which would make provision for one parking space per property;
- provision of visitor car parking, with a ratio of 0.5 spaces per dwelling, in line with the preferred design guidelines encouraging off-road parking.

Any major developments where this level of provision is not being proposed will need to demonstrate how high accessibility⁴ will mitigate the requirement for this, particularly in relation to the relatively low provision of public transport across the area.

Peak District National Park parking standards can be found in Appendix 9 of the DMP document, and are the relevant standard for developments in the National Park.

The Neighbourhood Survey showed that transport to be a major concern for over two thirds of respondents, whether that was across Saddleworth as a whole, or in their village.

More specifically, in the “other” category, lack of parking was raised by over 25% of the responses in their village.

The Dobcross submission on travel and transport showed: “Over 90% of respondents thought having parking spaces and access to a main road should be a prerequisite to gaining planning approval.”

OBJECTIVES: Ensure that key infrastructure needs are supported by any development, in particular ensuring that there are sufficient places at schools and health centres.

Ensure the provision of sporting, leisure and recreational facilities and spaces for the population.

POLICY 13: HOUSING – INFRASTRUCTURE

Development should:

- mitigate any impacts from the development on education and healthcare,
- where required, deliver appropriate provision for healthcare and education support, either through facilities as part of the development, or by section 106 agreements. These would include specific clauses to deliver appropriate facilities or financial support. In particular, this should cover: new school places, health care facilities, public transport facilities, and new community facilities where there is an identified need;
- for large developments, deliver appropriate commercial or public provision – for as part of the development.

RECOMMENDATION 4: INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

Larger developments would be requested to provide a report about what local healthcare provision exists, how accessible it is to the development (with particular regards to the preference for 20 minute neighbourhoods and public transport access), and what impact the development will have on the number of people accessing that healthcare provision, with a view to enabling an informed decision being taken with regards to any section 106 provision.

⁴ As defined in the Local Plan for Oldham.



Mixed stone and brick terraced housing in Springhead

Oldham Council does not use the Community Infrastructure Levy, which would otherwise form one of the primary aspects for any response on infrastructure as part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

This Neighbourhood Plan has looked at specific infrastructure deficiencies which need to be addressed before development can go ahead, e.g. highway impact, public open space, affordable housing, education and healthcare.

In particular, the answers to questions 4 and 5 of the Neighbourhood Survey, and questions 9 and 10 of the Dobcross submission provide information on identified infrastructure needs.

In the Neighbourhood Survey, 82.25% of people identified housing, planning and development as one of their three key issues for the next five years, and the same chose it over 20 years. In other responses, education and healthcare places, and roads and parking were the most common responses. Under "other" responses, access to healthcare and education were the most identified concerns in the survey, both for current concerns, and for future concerns.

The Dobcross submission primarily identified issues around traffic and parking in both the current and future issues facing the village.

Further policies

See also:

Policy 6 – sustainable construction, with regards to environmental standards for individual buildings, including zero-carbon approaches, energy generation and drainage.

Policy 7 and recommendation 2 – design, character and heritage, with regards to the character of individual buildings or areas.

Policy 9 – accessibility to transport, with regards to provision of parking facilities, including cycle storage and electric (or alternative renewable) charging.

Policy 15 – homeworking and connectivity, with regards to housing design to ensure flexible spaces for current and future working.

Retail, commerce and industry

OBJECTIVES: Retain existing traditional industries, and take advantage of the highly-qualified workforce, to develop opportunities in emerging and future technologies and business.¹

To achieve a balance of people who access Manchester, West Yorkshire and Oldham for work, and those who work within Saddleworth.

POLICY 14: COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

New office, retail and commercial development² will be supported within existing or new employment areas subject to the following criteria:

- the scale and nature of the proposals would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of adjoining activities;
- the scale and nature of the proposals would not have an unacceptable impact on existing commercial activity on adjacent land, including agricultural activity; and
- the proposal would not have unacceptable impacts on the local road network, particularly in respect of the volume of HGV traffic.

Developments will be required to provide travel assessments and/or travel plans in line with the policies in the Local Plan for Oldham.

In addition to site allocations in the Local Plan for Oldham, proposals will be supported which result in the creation or sustainable expansion of existing and new businesses, particularly those defined as micro (sole traders or those with fewer than ten employees) or small (ten to fifty employees).

Such proposals will be supported where the following all apply:

- The site is located outside the Green Belt or the development is acceptable in terms of national Green Belt policy;
- The proposal supports new business investment or the expansion of an existing business;
- The site can be connected to the existing highway network and will not result in adverse traffic impacts on surrounding roads;
- The site is large enough to accommodate car parking, including electric vehicle charging points (or other renewable technology), service areas and landscaped areas appropriate to the scale of the business;
- The proposals recognise the overall aim to reduce carbon emissions through sustainable design and promoting access by walking, cycling and public transport.

Development is preferred which involves the re-use of existing buildings. Where re-use of the existing buildings is not possible, redevelopment of those sites would then be considered.

There will be a strong presumption against the loss of commercial premises, or land which provides employment or future potential employment opportunities.

The Local Plan for Oldham provides the criteria for change of use around viability, marketing and regeneration benefits. In Saddleworth, as part of the marketing assessment, we would expect to see that land has not been in active use for at least 12 months, and that the marketing campaign would be for a continuous period of six months.

In the National Park, commercial and industrial development must be considered against PDNP Core Strategy policy E2 (business in the countryside) which gives scope for farm diversification but excludes business use in the open countryside.

¹ Examples might include, but are not limited to, manufacturing on demand, smart infrastructure, energy transition, regenerative medicine, and integration of electronics and photonics.

² See the Local Plan for Oldham for types of use, and what the local employment areas are.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places particular importance on building a strong competitive economy and states that local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.



One of the designated Saddleworth Employment Areas in Greenfield

The NPPF also states that local plans should positively encourage sustainable economic growth and support the expansion of existing businesses, as well as supporting economic growth in rural areas. It specifies achieving this both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

Employment land can be placed under pressure from alternative uses: therefore it is important for the wellbeing of the local economy to secure the long-term future of a range of employment opportunities.

The Dobcross submission states: “If more business is to be located in the area the preference would be for shops, cafés and restaurants but there is some support for office accommodation and light industrial units.”

In the Neighbourhood Survey, around 20 per cent of respondents indicated that they were considering starting working locally in the next few years. In terms of developments most likely to help them, there was a preference for offices (32.94%) or light industrial space (32.94%), although there were also requirements for all other forms of space indicated (leisure, retail, agricultural and tourism).

OBJECTIVE: To ensure sufficient improved infrastructure, including communications, to allow residents to work from home with a view to encouraging entrepreneurial development, and to ensure that growing businesses can remain in the area.

POLICY 15: HOMEWORKING AND CONNECTIVITY

Proposals which promote the role of homeworking within the economy will be supported.³

Development proposals should incorporate suitable infrastructure to support integrated communication technologies, providing for future improvements in technology so far as possible. Developers should be encouraged to review and improve this throughout the design and build process.

Development will be supported which allows houses to be used flexibly, currently or in the future, to allow for homeworking.

New developments will be supported which make provision for homeworking, through provision of high quality broadband and telecommunications.

On sites allocated for residential development in the Local Plan for Oldham or Places for Everyone, and on all other new buildings, all properties should be served by superfast broadband (fibre optic) connections⁴, unless it can be demonstrated through consultation with providers that this would not be either possible or practical.

³ Note: The provision of business advisory groups falls outside the remit of a Neighbourhood Plan, but would be encouraged as part of an accompanying Parish Plan.

⁴ or equivalent high-standard connection, as technology improves.

Research from House of Commons library data showed that at the start of 2022, 3.1% of homes in Saddleworth had gigabit broadband connections. The current rate of progress would only deliver this to 37.2% of homes by 2025.

In response to question 21 of the Neighbourhood Survey, there were very mixed responses. 29 respondents stated that broadband provision was not good enough for homeworking, and three gave mixed responses. 42 stated that it was currently good enough.

OBJECTIVE: Tourism is to be encouraged with a view to its importance to the local economy. Attention should, however, be paid to the potential negative impacts, particularly with regards to ensuring tourism is spread across the area, and awareness of current issues where tourism is concentrated on key pinchpoints. This should include approaches such as a tourism strategy, with consideration to accessibility, impact and shared benefits.

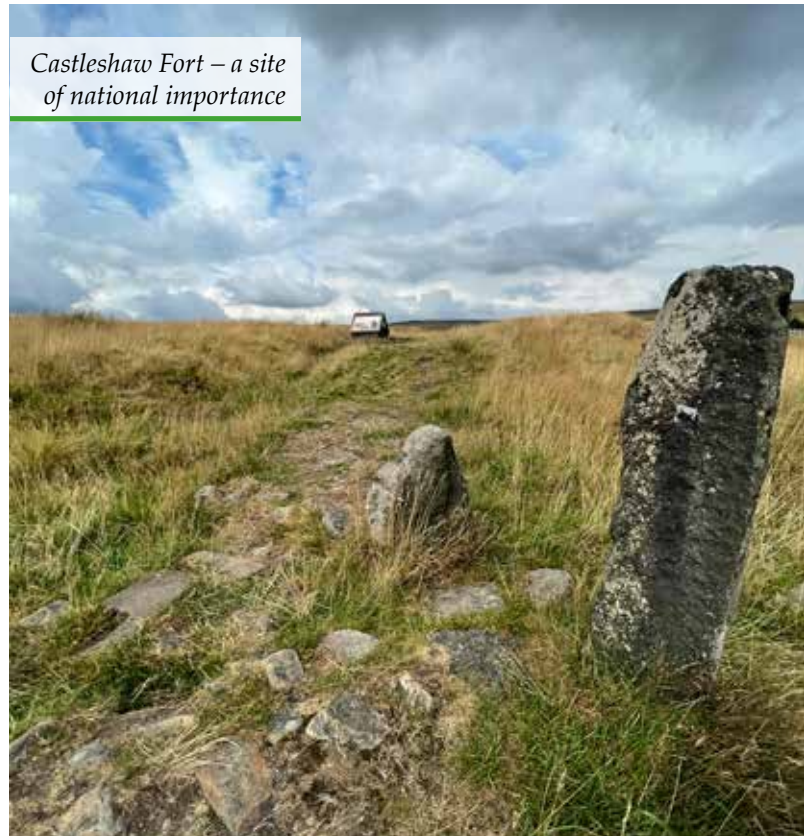
POLICY 16: TOURISM AND LEISURE

Development of new tourist facilities will be supported where it contributes to the following criteria:

- it contributes to the spread of tourism across the whole of Saddleworth, in particular by making additional locations for tourism more accessible;
- it mitigates problems associated with existing over-used sites;
- it encourages longer-stay tourism (with associated benefits for the local economy);
- it develops new facilities which also are available for the benefit of the local community;
- it is appropriate to the surrounding landscape character

Development of community, leisure and sports facilities which contribute to the improvement of the health and well-being of the population will be supported.

Development proposals which enhance or improve existing community facilities will be supported. Proposals which offer the following types of community activities will be particularly welcome:



Castleshaw Fort – a site of national importance

- opportunities to develop social networks for people who are isolated;
- promoting community based healthcare and wellbeing;
- promoting adult learning opportunities;
- promoting early years activities for parents, carers and children; and
- food and craft markets.

Development proposals that will result in the loss or reduction in scale of a community facility will be resisted unless:

- alternative facilities of equal or better accessibility, size and suitability are provided; or
- it can be demonstrated that the community facility is no longer viable.

Please note the transport section with regards to the provision of walking and cycling routes, pages 39–43.



Agricultural land at Scouthead

Please also note the section on heritage, and in particular the policy on protected views, page 16, and recommendation on local list designations (page 23).

RECOMMENDATION 5: TOURISM AND LEISURE

To support local events which add to the tourism and leisure potential of Saddleworth, particularly to identify opportunities for funding and promotion.

Paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that tourism makes a significant contribution to the economy, particularly in rural areas, and that the planning system should facilitate and encourage development and improvement in tourism provision.

However, there can be drawbacks arising from tourism, including additional public authority costs, traffic and parking congestion, commercialisation of the historic environment and conflicting uses of land in the countryside. The Parish Council's approach is, therefore, to encourage the expansion and improvement of the range and type of tourist facilities in a sustainable manner that safeguards Saddleworth's environment.

In line with the NPPF, when determining applications for tourist facilities in rural areas, the local economic benefits of a proposal should be weighed against the need to protect the environment.

The Neighbourhood Survey (question 22) identified a small number of people who stated that tourism had no benefits to the local economy (21). Over 92% listed economic benefits as the prime advantage of tourism, with a small number also noting that it could encourage protection and pride in green spaces and heritage sites.

The Survey also identified that the primary issue with tourism and leisure was the lack of parking facilities and public transport. 169 of the responses to question 24 (how to manage tourism to benefit Saddleworth) identified parking and public transport as a major issue – no other issue got more than 11 responses.

The most notable other issues identified from the Survey were spreading out tourism (11 responses), better information (10 responses), and being conscious of the balance of businesses it encouraged, with an over-reliance on cafés (7 responses).

The student consultation identified that Saddleworth has many leisure facilities and sports clubs dispersed across the whole area with most villages having their own cricket clubs, but they think there could be a broader spectrum of activities offered, and they would like to see more spaces for older children and teenagers.

The student consultation showed the students in favour of more cafés and pubs, they also thought there should be more places to eat and to buy clothes. They also thought a petrol station would be helpful. They worry that businesses and work places are becoming too centralised around Uppermill while other villages miss out. One pupil felt strongly that Dobcross was missing out.

With regards to tourism the students made it clear that the natural beauty and scenery around Saddleworth is the main appeal to tourists. Some students wondered if there could be more attractions. The children even noted that the recent fires on the moors had appealed to many tourists who came to watch it and take photographs. Whit Friday band contests are recognised as a big source of tourism from all over the world. However, some saw the problem of tourists clogging up roads as there is not enough space to park cars.

Particular attention is drawn to Policy 3 on Peak District Character and Quality, and Policy 4 on Protection of Important Views, given the potential locations for tourist facilities.

OBJECTIVE: To recognise the importance of farming to the economy of Saddleworth, and to ensure that it continues to contribute to and improve the economy and the local environment.

RECOMMENDATION 6: FARMING AND RURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Parish Council will seek to engage in a partnership scheme with local farmers for the twin purposes of promoting the farming industry in Saddleworth and conserving and enhancing the rural environment in the area.

Farming makes an important contribution to the economy of Saddleworth. The geography and climate of the area favours the livestock sector.

The impact of new Government policies and changing trading conditions on the future direction of farming in Saddleworth is currently difficult to predict. Will upland sheep farming decline? Will “wilding” and flood control be matters of high priority, supported by grant aid? Will there be continued grant support for the conservation of upland bird habitats?

What is certain is that the maintenance of a high quality rural landscape is of critical importance to the future of Saddleworth. This quality must be maintained, and indeed enhanced, so that Saddleworth remains a great place for people to live, work and visit. Local farmers have a critical role in this. The challenge is to ensure that a strong agricultural sector can also provide excellent stewardship of the local countryside.

Most local farmers act as good custodians of the countryside but sadly there have been instances where activities on some farms have been damaging to the environment. These include, for instance:

Maintenance of agricultural land

Particularly with regards to flooding, it is important to understand who is responsible for maintenance of agricultural land, particularly if there are absentee landlords.

In part, this will depend on the tenancy of the land. Some tenants may have a full repairing tenancy, in which case they will be responsible for the maintenance of any drains, ditches and watercourses.

Since 2011, most private drains have been transferred to statutory drainage providers. The landlord will therefore only be responsible if the relevant drains have not been adopted.

If flooding interferes with the tenant’s ‘quiet enjoyment’ (i.e. possession without interruption) of the farm, the landlord can find himself liable.

- tipping on or reshaping of land;
- dressing of access tracks with builders’ waste materials such as broken tiles, glass and plastics;
- culverting of watercourses and rerouting of watercourses (sometimes leading to increased bank erosion);
- redundant farm machinery left to decay;
- disrepair of the dry stone walls which are such feature of the upland landscape;
- barn conversions in open countryside; especially where garden “clutter” is uncontrolled, e.g. sheds, greenhouses, inappropriate boundary structures, etc;
- barns built to create the opportunity for converting to new houses.

On the other hand farmers suffer from problems such as theft, vandalism, trespass, litter and dog attacks on livestock.

The Parish Council wishes to help to support local farming in ways which also enhance the rural environment. It envisages a partnership with local farmers. This partnership could also engage with local shops, cafés and restaurants; with local schools; and with community volunteers with expertise in skills such as dry stone walling, hedge planting etc.

The activities of a partnership might include:

- increased promotion of Saddleworth farm products in local shops and restaurants;
- farm–school links (fostering an appreciation of the importance of local food production);
- information for countryside visitors about issues such as uncontrolled dogs and littering;
- community engagement in activities such as dry stone wall repairs and tree and hedge planting;
- a Countryside Stewardship Award Scheme to celebrate the contribution made by local farmers to the conservation of the Saddleworth landscape.

OBJECTIVE: To ensure that each village retains or maximises a core set of services, such as banking, post offices, local shops and community facilities.

POLICY 17: SERVICES

Developments will be supported which make provision for or allow for the retention of key services within individual village centres, in particular supporting the model of 20-minute neighbourhoods.

Sustrans analysis of 20 minute neighbourhoods defines the following services part of the minimum features of a 20-minute neighbourhood:

Destination and services: food retailers and supermarkets; education, including early years, primary school and nearby secondary schools; health services, such as a pharmacy, GP and dentist; financial services, such as post office or bank; employment and jobs either within the neighbourhood or nearby; public open space, such as parks and recreation grounds; and entertainment, such as leisure, culture and entertainment facilities.

It does acknowledge that in rural areas, 20 minute neighbourhoods will be difficult, and that villages will need to adopt shared services, with high quality public transport.

The Neighbourhood Survey identified a consistent preference for the maintenance of villages with clear identities, both through comments on the retention of green belt (development on the green belt was the least preferred option), and through comments on people’s vision of Saddleworth in the future, for example:

“Villages with identity. Separation between the villages so you can tell where one starts and ends. Central services in each village.”

The Dobcross submission revealed that over 80% respondents thought it was very important that Dobcross keeps its Post Office and shop.

Further policies

See also:

Policy 5 – “barn” conversions, with regards to the use of agricultural land

Policy 7 and recommendation 2 – design, character and heritage, with regards to the character of individual buildings or areas (with particular awareness of local high streets as commercial areas that have a distinct heritage).

Policy 9 – accessibility to transport, with regards to provision of parking facilities, including cycle storage and electric (or alternative renewable) charging.

Policy 18 – cycling, pedestrian and leisure infrastructure with regards to 20-minute neighbourhoods and access to services.

Policy 13 – housing: infrastructure and recommendation 4 – infrastructure delivery, with regards to provision of health and education services.

Travel and transport

Environment

Environmental issues were identified as cross-cutting and crucial in the issues section at the start of this plan. Transport is a particular area of concern for improving the environment.

In particular the Saddleworth Parish Council pledge for the district to be carbon neutral by 2030 should be noted.

OBJECTIVE: Address parking issues by addressing parking issues, including lack of parking, inappropriate use of existing parking, and making parking available for specific uses

Please see policy 9 – accessibility to transport, for specific information on provision of charging for cars; policy 12 – housing: transport for specific criteria for parking on residential development; and policy 15 – commercial and industrial development for specific criteria for parking on commercial development.

RECOMMENDATION 8 – PARKING

Saddleworth Parish Council will work with other public bodies and groups to identify methods to redress lack of availability or misuse of parking facilities.

In the Neighbourhood Survey, transport was the current third priority of concern. When it came to future priority it became more important to people the further they were from the urban end of Saddleworth – in Springhead it was the 4th priority (32%); in Uppermill it was the 3rd priority (67%); and in Slackcote it was the 2nd priority (80%).

Car ownership in the survey showed that the majority of households owned one (44.24%) or two cars (38.01%). Only 6.23% owned no car at all.



Electric vehicle charging

It was a common consensus in the Student consultation that there was much need for more car parking spaces, and some even went as far as to say that the quality of the roads was appalling in parts with lots of potholes. They agreed that traffic and congestion can get so bad they find it easier to walk to and from school.



Saddleworth Viaduct

OBJECTIVE: Ensuring safe and accessible cycling and pedestrian routes, and to enhance the construction of Bee Network routes across the area.

Reduce existing congestion on the local and key route network running through Saddleworth by ensuring that new developments are located so that they minimise the use of the private car (unless using renewable technology), for all but essential journeys. Most of the settlements in Saddleworth have the potential to become '20 minute neighbourhoods' and it is important to ensure that new development is located within a reasonable walking/cycling distance to existing services and transport hubs.

POLICY 18: CYCLING, PEDESTRIAN AND LEISURE INFRASTRUCTURE

Developments which improve the connectivity of existing cycling and pedestrian infrastructure will be supported.¹²

Public realm works which improve the provision of safe cycle parking points in all villages and at key sites will be supported.

There will be a presumption against development where there is a loss of a public right of way, significant diversions, or unless alternative accessible provision is made.

See also policy 9 – accessibility to transport, and policy 13 – housing: transport.

RECOMMENDATION 8: CYCLING, PEDESTRIAN AND LEISURE INFRASTRUCTURE

Saddleworth Parish Council will work with neighbouring authorities and the Peak Park Authority to provide and promote sustainable and responsible off-road cycling and walking.

¹ See also policy 9 – accessibility to transport

² The historic nature of Saddleworth's villages, in particular its road and route layouts mean that there are restrictions on what can be achieved in some areas.

Saddleworth Parish Council will work with those groups which maintain and preserve the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

On cycling, the TfGM Transport Plan 2040 states that “while strategic routes have been developed inside the M60, investment elsewhere has been more piecemeal.” While the Bee Network has been envisaged as a way of improving facilities, no Bee Network plans currently exist to deliver any new provision in Saddleworth, meaning that prioritising cycle routes must be achieved through other means.

The Huddersfield Narrow Canal runs from the Ashton under Lyne basin, through Saddleworth to Huddersfield. It was abandoned in 1944 and the last small section in 1963. In the 1980’s a campaign was started to reopen stretches of the canal and it reopened in 2001. It has the highest, longest and deepest canal tunnel in Standedge Tunnel in the UK. It is now used by leisure craft, mainly narrowboats, and sight seeing trips. This contributes to the tourism economy of the area.

The student consultation particularly identified a need for more road crossings to enhance the safety of pedestrians.

OBJECTIVES: To ensure quality public transport infrastructure, including connections between villages, as well as to the rest of the borough and beyond. Connections to healthcare provision and leisure facilities should be a particular priority.

To minimise the reliance on private transport across the district.

To promote local representation on the development of local transport plans for Saddleworth.

To maximise accessibility for those with mobility and health needs throughout the Parish, especially in rural areas.

Integrated Transport Plan for the North and Midlands

The Integrated Transport Plan includes a specific reference to the rail line through Saddleworth, proposing a high-speed link from Warrington to Marsden (along the route of the current rail line).

While the improvement of the rail line is welcome, concerns are noted that the improved line stops at Marsden, rather than connecting further into West Yorkshire.

There are also significant concerns over the impact that the works to introduce this high-speed line will have, with the likelihood of closures being commonplace while the upgrade takes place over the next 25 years, and with no alternative route to take traffic. The removal of an alternative high speed line running from East–West has removed the possibility of this helping to mitigate the impact of the works.

POLICY 19: PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The train station should have access for all, and development which supports investment in the existing station at Greenfield, particularly where it addresses the accessibility restrictions on the Leeds bound side at Greenfield station will be supported.

The principle of additional railway stations in Saddleworth is supported, to increase the capacity of the local network, and to address the accessibility issues at the current station.

RECOMMENDATION 9: PUBLIC TRANSPORT

There needs to be greater consultation with the residents on any changes to bus services and routes.

A rural bus service which takes into account alternatives to the traditional bus services should be introduced in order to meet the needs of all the villages.

Saddleworth Parish Council will support the provision of a dedicated budget for the upkeep of rights of way and bridleways and other leisure sites.

The Parish Council will look to support transport planning across the borough and wider region that recognises the lack of public transport infrastructure across the Parish, and provides opportunities for better connectivity for people travelling outside Saddleworth for work.

Support will be given to public transport approaches which help reduce the reliance on private cars throughout Saddleworth, with particular attention drawn to the issues at beauty spots such as Dovestone reservoir.

Support for public transport approaches which ensure comprehensive access across the whole of Saddleworth, including late at night.

Saddleworth Parish Council will work with neighbouring authorities and transport authorities to address the particular expense of travel from Greenfield to Marsden and onwards through Yorkshire.

“[Saddleworth needs] better transport links so that people can realistically choose to live here as adults and not need a car but be able to rely on good bus and train links” – Survey response

Greenfield in Saddleworth has the only rail station in the Oldham. The number of trains is restricted by the age of the track and lack of investment in the infrastructure. Being up to 3 miles from the nearest metro link station means that commuters rely on this service.

The nearest Metrolink station is three miles from many of the remoter areas. There has not been a real drive to link all the modes of transport together other than providing park and ride facilities for motorists. There is no suggestion of extending metro link eastwards into Saddleworth in the TfGM Transport Plan 2040.

The need for bus routes which allow for residents to connect between the village centres is reinforced by the TfGM Transport Plan 2040 which states “Quality bus transit can provide a step-change in the public transport offer, especially for travel between adjacent town centres and intermediate locations”.

The TfGM Transport Plan 2040 notes that cross-border journeys can also be a problem because of differing ticketing and fares. This is a significant issue for communities living close to the Greater Manchester boundary, such as in the Pennine areas of Oldham, where people wish to access towns such as Huddersfield.

It further states: “The Peak District National Park, which extends into Oldham, is a natural and recreational resource of both local and national importance and a significant trip attractor. Leisure trips add to localised congestion in communities on the eastern fringe of the conurbation, where the roads also form part of vital transpennine routes. Pressure on the road network in this area is increasing as incidents on the motorway cause motorists to seek alternatives. There is also a need to improve access for leisure without causing damage to the environment, and improved evening and weekend public transport services would be beneficial.”

OBJECTIVE: To improve air quality, particularly near vulnerable groups. This would include monitoring and improving air quality across the area, as well as other

To reduce risks to buildings from additional heavy traffic.

RECOMMENDATION 10: AIR QUALITY AND VIBRATION MONITORING

Measures will be encouraged which which provide robust air quality monitoring, particularly in locations where there are existing air quality issues, vulnerable people, and traffic congestion. In particular, this information should be made freely available to the public.

Where there is a risk of development causing disturbances to local buildings, particularly those of heritage value, including through increasing traffic during construction and once in use, vibration monitoring is encouraged to ensure that any risk of damage can be anticipated, and work to mitigate issues or alternative approaches to reduce vibrations can be taken.

In the Neighbourhood Survey, environment was the second most important consideration for residents across Saddleworth as a whole (73.26%), and in their village (70.11%), and this increased when considering the most important issues in Saddleworth in 20 years time (79.78%).

Further policies

See also:

Policy 9 – accessibility to transport, with regards to provision of parking facilities, including cycle storage and electric (or alternative renewable) charging.

Policy 11 – housing: transport, with regards to parking facilities for residential development, and the requirements for high accessibility.

Policy 13 – commercial and industrial development, with regards to parking provision on commercial developments

Glossary

Affordable housing: The full definition is found in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In the main, it refers to houses for sale or rent discounted by at least 20% from the prevailing market rate for the area. More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2>

Community Infrastructure Levy – The Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. Oldham Borough does not operate a Community Infrastructure Levy. More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy>

GMAAS: Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service – an organisation funded by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) primarily to provide advice to the county's ten district authorities on all matters relating to archaeology and the planning process. More information can be found at <https://gmaas.salford.ac.uk>

GMCA: Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Saddleworth Parish Council falls under Oldham Council, which in turn is one of the 10 authorities that make up the Combined Authority.

GMEU: Greater Manchester Ecological Unit – provides specialist advice to the ten district councils that make up the GMCA, as well as maintaining the list of sites of biological interest for Greater Manchester. More information can be found at <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/ecologyunit>

Green belt – defined and maintained areas established by local authorities in their local plans intended to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. More information can be found at <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn00934/>

HMOs: Houses in multiple occupation – a planning term referring to a house where both of the following apply: at least 3 tenants live there, forming more than 1 household; and it has shared toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities with other tenants. A large HMO is where at least five tenants live there. More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/private-renting/houses-in-multiple-occupation>

Landscape Character Areas – Landscape Character Assessment is a method of describing an area in a systematic way. It describes what elements make a place distinctive. It does not assign values to landscapes. The Local Plan for Oldham evidence includes Landscape Character Areas as defined in through a Landscape Character Assessment. More information can be found at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1213/oldham_local_landscape_character_study.pdf

LGS: Local Green Space – this specific planning designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space>

LHNA: Local Housing Needs Assessment – this is the method used by local authorities to assess the need for housing in an area, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework. More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

LWS: local wildlife sites – areas of land that are especially important for their wildlife. They are some of our most valuable wildlife areas. Local Wildlife Sites are identified and selected locally using scientifically-determined criteria and surveys. See also *sites of biological importance*. More information can be found at <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/local-wildlife-sites>

NHLE: National Heritage List for England – the only official, up to date, register of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites in England - listed buildings, scheduled monuments, protected wrecks, registered parks and gardens, and battlefields. More information can be found at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

NPPF: The National Planning Policy Framework – this sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2>

OPOL: Other Protected Open Land – a local land designation. Under the new Local Plan for Oldham, all sites are being reassessed against Local Green Space criteria. Once all sites have been assessed, OPOL will be withdrawn as a designation.

SAC: Special Area of Conservation – a site of community importance designated by the Member States¹ through a statutory, administrative and/or contractual act where the necessary conservation measures are applied for the maintenance or restoration, at a favourable conservation status, of the natural habitats and/or the populations of the species for which the site is designated. More information can be found at <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/Defra::special-areas-of-conservation-england/about>

SBIs: Sites of biological importance – a non-statutory designation used locally by the Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Staffordshire County Councils in England to protect locally valued sites of biological diversity which are described generally as Local Wildlife Sites by the UK Government. <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/81cbf1a0-6304-470c-ade8-60272be0d219/sites-of-biological-importance-sbi-lws-in-greater-manchester>

Section 106 – Planning obligations are legal obligations entered into to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal. Planning obligations are also commonly referred to as ‘section 106’, ‘s106’, as well as ‘developer contributions’ when considered alongside highways contributions. More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-obligations>

Social housing: Social housing has rents pegged to local incomes and provides truly affordable, secure housing option for people. More information can be found at https://england.shelter.org.uk/support_us/campaigns/what_is_social_housing

SPA: Special Protection Area – land classified under Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds. SPAs are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive, which came into force in April 1979. More information can be found at <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/Defra::special-protection-areas-england/explore?location=52.742087%2C-2.229306%2C7.47>

SSSIs: Sites of Special Scientific Interest – the finest sites for wildlife and natural features in England, supporting many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features. More information can be found at <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/maps/f10cbb4425154bfda349ccf493487a80>

SUDS: sustainable drainage systems – systems designed to manage stormwater locally (as close its source as possible), to mimic natural drainage and encourage its infiltration, attenuation and passive treatment. More information can be found at <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/severe-weather/flooding/sustainable-drainage-systems>

TfGM: Transport for Greater Manchester – the local government body responsible for delivering Greater Manchester’s transport strategy and commitments. More information can be found at <https://tfgm.com/>

Twenty minute neighbourhood: The basic premise is a model of urban development that creates neighbourhoods where daily services can be accessed within a 20 minute walk. More information can be found at: <https://tcpa.org.uk/collection/the-20-minute-neighbourhood/>

¹ This designation was created when the UK was part of the EU, but has been maintained since.

Links

Bee Network: <https://beeactive.tfgm.com/bee-network-vision/>

Bee Network cycle routes: <https://mappinggm.org.uk/bee-network/>

Character appraisals for the Grasscroft and Delph Conservation Areas: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200291/heritage/1908/conservation_areas

Climate Change and the Peak District National Park: <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/climatechange/climate-change-and-the-peak-district>

Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1727/greater-manchester-landscape-character-and-sensitivity-report.pdf>

Historic England listed buildings: <https://historicengland.org.uk>

Integrated Transport Plan for the North and Midlands: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-rail-plan-for-the-north-and-the-midlands>

Local Energy Plan for Oldham (and other Greater Manchester local authorities): https://gmgreencity.com/resource_library/greater-manchester-local-area-energy-planning-overview-and-insight/

Local Heritage List for Oldham: <https://local-heritage-list.org.uk/greater-manchester/oldham>

National Cycle Network map: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/national-cycle-network>

National Planning Policy Framework: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Oldham Local Housing Needs Assessment: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/5592/oldham_local_housing_needs_assessment_final_report

Oldham Local Plan portal: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200199/planning_and_building/1809/local_plan_review

Oldham Mill Strategy: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201213/local_plan_review/2819/oldham_mills_strategy

Oldham Ward Profiles: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/179/ward_profiles

Peak District National Park Management Plan: <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/strategies-and-policies/national-park-management-plan>

Peak District National Park Corporate Strategy 2019–24: <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/strategies-and-policies/corporate-strategy>

Peak District National Park Landscape Strategy: <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/strategies-and-policies/landscape-strategy>

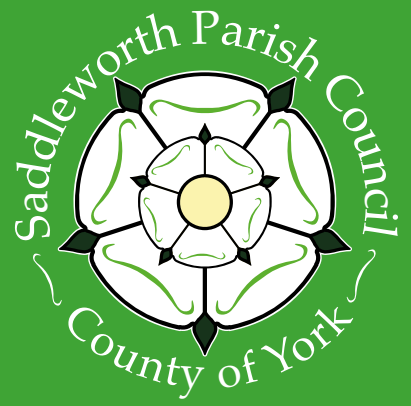
Peak District National Park Planning Policies: <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/planning/policies-and-guides>

Peak District National Park Cultural Heritage Strategy: <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/strategies-and-policies/landscape-strategy/culturalheritage>

Places for Everyone: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/places-for-everyone/>

Public rights of way in Oldham: <https://maps.oldham.gov.uk/>

TfGM Transport Strategy 2040: <https://tfgm.com/2040-transport-strategy>



SADDLEWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2022–2042

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