

# Consultation statement

## Compliance with Regulation 15 (Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012)

Saddleworth Parish Council submits its Neighbourhood Plan to Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) on 30th March 2025 for independent examination.

This Consultation Statement complies with requirements of Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and provides the response to Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations (pre-submission statutory consultation). It has been prepared by Saddleworth Parish Council Strategic Planning Committee to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

Section 15(2) of Part 5 of the Regulations sets out what a Consultation Statement should contain:

- a contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
- b explains how they were consulted;
- c summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted;
- d describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

This Consultation Statement summarises all statutory and non-statutory consultation undertaken with the community and other relevant statutory bodies and stakeholders in developing Saddleworth Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan. In particular the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan describes how concerns have been addressed and what changes have been made to the final Neighbourhood Plan as a result of statutory pre-submission consultation. Changes are included in the Neighbourhood Plan submitted to the Local Planning Authority which can be cross-referenced to comments received as part of statutory consultation (regulation 14).

## Background to consultation on Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan

**In February 2016 Saddleworth Parish Council declared its intention to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. Oldham Council and the PDNPA ran their consultation on the designation of the boundary from 19 August 2016 to 30 September 2016.**

The application to designate Saddleworth Parish Council boundary as a neighbourhood area was approved at Oldham Council Cabinet on Monday 21 November 2016. It was also approved at the Peak District National Park Authority Planning Committee on Friday 11 November 2016.

Responsibility for the Neighbourhood Plan was delegated to the Parish Council's Strategic Planning Committee, which is made up of nominated members of the Parish Council and co-opted members bringing specific expertise.

On 21 February 2017, 7pm–9pm, the Strategic Planning Committee formally launched the Neighbourhood Plan with a presentation at Saddleworth Civic Hall, followed by a question and answer session.

The Strategic Planning Committee embarked on an initial series of exploratory meetings with specific neighbourhood groups, in particular the community associations in each of the villages covered by the Saddleworth Parish, children from the secondary school, and consultations with the two parent planning authorities – Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park. They also attended a business breakfast with local businesses to give a presentation on the potential impact and opportunities of the Neighbourhood Plan. More details are provided in the “Consultation meetings” section.

The aims of the Saddleworth Parish Neighbourhood Plan consultation process were:

- To involve as much of the community as possible throughout all consultation stages of Plan development so that the Plan was informed by the views of local people and other stakeholders from the start of the Neighbourhood Planning process;
- To ensure that consultation events took place at critical points in the process where decisions needed to be taken;
- To engage with as wide a range of people as possible, using a variety of approaches and communication and consultation techniques; and
- To ensure that results of consultation were fed back to local people and available to read (in both hard copy and via the Parish website) as soon as possible after the consultation events.

In preparing Saddleworth Parish Council’s Neighbourhood Plan the Strategic Planning Committee has consistently ensured that residents and other stakeholders including local authorities, interest groups, land owners, businesses and statutory bodies have regularly been consulted and that their comments have been noted and where appropriate incorporated into the plan as it evolved.

A greater level of consultation has been undertaken than the legislation requires and full details of all consultations are provided in the appendices to this consultation statement.

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## Understanding the issues

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**A number of consultation exercises were designed by the Strategic Planning Committee to help understand the issues of importance to the wider community. During the consultation that followed, the views of local residents have been obtained through a variety of exercises including survey questionnaires, public events, seminars and written contributions. Local organisations and businesses were consulted and invited to respond to questionnaires and/or provide submissions in writing or by way of discussion groups and meetings.**

Contact details have been available on the website, [www.saddleworthparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.saddleworthparishcouncil.org.uk) and in all updates and advertised at every event with a statement encouraging engagement.

During the development of the final Neighbourhood Plan, the Peak District National Park Authority and Oldham Council were regularly consulted, as were the community associations of each of the villages in the Parish. Regular consultation has maximised the opportunities for those living and working in Saddleworth to shape their final Neighbourhood Plan.

# Overview of consultation approaches to engage the community

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**Information on the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan has been held on the Saddleworth Parish Council website throughout the process. From inception, the information was on a dedicated website on a subdomain of our main site: at [neighbourhood.saddleworthparishcouncil.org.uk](https://neighbourhood.saddleworthparishcouncil.org.uk).**

When the Parish Council's website was updated in July 2023, the Neighbourhood Plan was moved to the main website, with its own menu item to make it more central to the online presentation of information.

The website contains an introduction to the Neighbourhood Plan; the consultation documents, including all the responses to the initial consultations; the topic papers on each proposed area of the Neighbourhood Plan; each draft version of the plan as it was taken through the development process; the consultation version of the plan, together with the Habitats Regulation Assessment and the Strategic Environmental Assessment; and the formal (Regulation 14) consultation on the Plan.

Additionally draft Neighbourhood Plan documents were regularly shared with both Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority.

Regular public events and consultations were held during the various stages of the production of the Plan. Notices and posters were also a regular means of communication through full use made of the parish notice boards.

A series of informal lectures and information sharing events were also organised by the Strategic Planning Committee, to help the community to understand the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Finally the role of the Strategic Planning Committee has been integral to the Plan process. The Neighbourhood Plan has been the primary focus of the Strategic Planning Committee from the initial decision to develop the Neighbourhood Plan, with regular attendance from Oldham Council representatives throughout, and from village community associations and the PDNPA as required.

Oldham Council and the PDNPA were also kept informed throughout about the consultations and communications taking place.

## Consultation meetings

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### 21 February 2017

A launch meeting was held in the Saddleworth Civic Hall attended by around 100 people. A presentation on the process was given, followed by a question and answer session, with residents given the opportunity to leave notes with any questions that were not answered during the session.

The meeting was advertised in Parish Council minutes, Saddleworth Monthly, Saddleworth Independent, the Oldham Evening Chronicle, [www.saddleworthparishcouncil.org.uk](https://www.saddleworthparishcouncil.org.uk), and Parish Notice Boards.

A copy of the presentation that was used for both the launch meeting and the subsequent meetings with individual villages is included as Appendix 1 to this document (pages 1–7).

### May to November 2017

A series of meetings were held with individual village community groups, with attendance varying between 10 and 100 people (with the exception of Slackcote, which is by far the smallest community covered as an individual village).

There were events for Grotton and Springhead; Lydgate; Greenfield and Grasscroft; Uppermill; Delph; Slackcote; Austerlands and Scouthead; Dobcross; Diggle and Denshaw.

This followed the general format of the launch meeting, with a presentation followed by questions and answers from residents.

Regular correspondence was received from the Saddleworth Civic Trust and members of the public.

The meetings were advertised through the individual Community Groups in each locality, and on the parish noticeboards.

A summary of the themes raised from these meetings is included as Appendix 2 to this document (page 8). This formed the basis of the initial outline of the Neighbourhood Plan, included as Appendix 3 to this document (page 9), and then the extended outline – Appendix 4 to this document (pages 10–17).

Dobcross Community Association carried out their own survey in Autumn 2017, bringing forward a written submission to the Council together with the underlying data supporting it. This was advertised through their community newsletter, which is delivered to each home in the village by volunteers.

The Dobcross submission and the data from the Dobcross survey are referred to in Appendix 5 to this document (page 18), and are available at <https://www.saddleworthparishcouncil.org.uk/downloads/dobcross-overview.pdf> and <https://www.saddleworthparishcouncil.org.uk/downloads/dobcross-traffic-and-transport.pdf>

### **January to July 2018**

Meetings were also held with sports groups; the Saddleworth Parish Youth Committee; and Saddleworth School.

### **January to March 2020**

An initial survey about the Neighbourhood Plan was done online and on paper. The survey (pre-Regulation 14) was open from the 1 January 2020 to 28 February 2020. The online consultation was available until March 7 to allow for any late responses.

As well as being available on the Parish Council website, the consultation was published in local Facebook groups, and on the Parish Council's Facebook page.

The paper consultation was an eight page insert in the Saddleworth Independent, a free local newspaper with an estimated readership of 25,000. As well as the insert, an additional 1,000 copies were printed and distributed to specific sites across the borough, including community centres, libraries and pubs.

In total, we received 476 responses to the initial consultation (combined total for online and paper). The consultation responses are detailed in the accompanying documents.

The questions in the survey on the Neighbourhood Plan and references to the responses are included as Appendix 6 to this document (pages 19–29), and the data is available at Overview (data-led responses): <https://www.saddleworthparishcouncil.org.uk/downloads/future-of-saddleworth-overview.pdf> and: <https://www.saddleworthparishcouncil.org.uk/downloads/future-of-saddleworth-individual-responses.xlsx>

Drawing on the extended outline and the responses gained from the Dobcross and Future of Saddleworth surveys, a series of topic papers were drawn up by the Strategic Planning Committee; links provided as Appendix 7 to this document (page 30).

The topic papers formed the basis of the draft Neighbourhood Plan, which went through 15 separate versions. The draft Neighbourhood Plan was developed through the Strategic Planning Committee at its regular meetings. Through consultation with the two parent councils (Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority) and the village associations, who were also invited to the Strategic Planning Committee meetings, the topics were gradually revised to the final topics.

The iterative versions of the Neighbourhood Plan are linked in Appendix 8 to this document (page 31).

# Pre-submission consultation on draft Neighbourhood (Regulation 14)

## Consultation time frame

The time frame for the consultation was set as follows: “Consultation with the community and statutory bodies on the final Draft Plan The consultation period runs from 00.01am on April 2, 2024, until 11.59pm on June 10, 2024.”

## Who was consulted

The following stakeholders were consulted:

- Residents and businesses in Saddleworth
- Land owners
- Statutory consultees (as per regulation 14, including Schedule 1)
- Neighbouring parishes
- Other community stakeholders and interest groups e.g. neighbouring planning authorities, business organisations, nature, heritage and sports organisations.

A total of 73 consultees were directly contacted and asked for their views/comments on the plan. This includes Schedule 1 consultees referred to in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. A full list is provided as Appendix 9 to this document (pages 32–33).

A letter was sent to all consultees informing them of the statutory consultation process and inviting comments on the final draft Neighbourhood Plan. This included a link to the full draft Neighbourhood Plan, available on the Saddleworth Parish Council website. They were encouraged to submit their comments via email or letter during the consultation period to the Clerk of the Council via post or email. They were also given the option of submitting their comments using the online portal.

The initial survey had been delivered with the local newspaper, the *Saddleworth Independent*, which at the time distributed print copies of the newspaper. However, this had ceased to be distributed on paper by the time of this consultation, so the Parish Council contracted LDM to deliver 12,000 copies of an eight-page consultation document to all houses in the Parish. The consultation document could be returned as a paper document, and also included the links to complete the consultation online, as well as access to all the preliminary documents that had formed the process.

Residents were also given the option to request a print copy of the full draft Neighbourhood Plan, or to visit the Saddleworth Civic Hall or Saddleworth libraries to receive copies. Copies were distributed to each of the libraries in Saddleworth (Greenfield, Uppermill and Delph).

## Summary of Statutory consultation techniques:

- All final draft documents were posted onto the website
- E-mail responses and comments to the Committee
- Posted responses to Strategic Planning Committee

A public meeting was organised at the Civic Hall on 14 May 2024 in order to inform and consult with local residents and businesses about the Neighbourhood Plan. Copies of the Plan were available along with members of the Strategic Planning to answer any questions. The event was open from 7.30pm to 9pm and around 30 people attended.

The public meeting was advertised in the Saddleworth Independent, Parish Notice Boards, Parish Council Minutes, and on the Council’s Facebook page and in local Facebook groups.

## Summary of consultation responses

A total of 221 responses to the statutory consultation were received, plus statutory respondents gave feedback on the draft Neighbourhood Plan resulting from statutory consultation (see Appendix 9).

In total, 14 responses were provided from statutory consultees.

Section	Summary of feedback	Summary of changes	Source
Issues	Improved emphasis on biodiversity required	Added “biodiversity and resilience” to key issues section.	Lancashire Wildlife Trust
Vision	Improved emphasis on biodiversity required	Added text on enhancing biodiversity of the area, and on a flourishing natural environment.	Lancashire Wildlife Trust
Plans and legislation	PDNPA state major developments are not acceptable in the National Park.  More clarity needed about site allocation.	Added line on major development being inappropriate in the National Park.  Move site allocation text to boxout, and reword text.  Additional minor corrections for grammar and deleted repeated text from earlier section.	PDNPA  Internal review
Policies and recommendations	More clarity needed about site allocation.  Extensive feedback given requesting more information on healthcare requirements for the area.	Additional narrative given about site allocations, including explanation that policy 9 (Chew Brook Vale) is to add policy detail to an existing site allocation.  Narrative included to explain creation of health, wellbeing and education section, and provide clarity on which healthcare elements could be addressed within the Neighbourhood Plan, and which could not.	Resident consultation
Policy 1	The existing policy covers multiple areas in a single policy, and relevant supporting text is not clearly associated with the relevant policy section.  Improved emphasis on biodiversity required.	Split existing Policy 1 into three policies, on Green infrastructure; Biodiversity; and Protected areas.  Move supporting text to accompany appropriate sections of Policies 1–3.	Oldham Council  Lancashire Wildlife Trust  PDNPA



Section	Summary of feedback	Summary of changes	Source
Policy 2	Reference needed to GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Additional footnote on GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Lancashire Wildlife Trust
	Clarity needed on native species.	Minor changes made for clarity on native tree and bird species.	
	Improved emphasis on biodiversity required.	Additional supporting text on biodiversity	
Policy 3	Residents wanted to see more protection of green spaces	Following the drafting of a new report on Local Green Spaces, provided as an additional document, four sites have been added, with additional supporting text.	Resident consultation
Policy 4(2)	Text of Environment Act 1995 has been updated	Text updated to match.	PDNPA
Policy 5(3)	Policy should require green infrastructure rather than encourage.	Text changed to specify incorporation of green infrastructure.	PDNPA
	Repeated text on application to PDNP.	Repeated text deleted.	
Policy 7(5)	Additional detail needed on foul and surface water, and on requirements for drainage, including supporting guidance.	Insert footnote on Oldham Local Plan, and paragraph on examination of drainage patterns for planning applications.	United Utilities
Policy 8(6)	Better clarity needed on presentation of what approaches are supported or not	Break bullets out into two paragraphs, the first of which is supported, the second is not.	Oldham Council
Policy 9(7)	Policy language is narrative, rather than prescriptive	Narrative removed.	PDNPA
Policy 10(8)	More clarity needed on when design masterplans are required.	Opening paragraph amended to give precise figures for design masterplans being required.	Canal and River Trust
	More detail required on foul and surface water, and adding blue infrastructure requirements.	Amended text to reflect foul and surface water approaches and blue infrastructure requirements.	United Utilities
Policy 12(10)	Clarity needed on off-site infrastructure	Additional text to opening bullet on off site development.	Canal and River Trust

Section	Summary of feedback	Summary of changes	Source
Objective 8	“Best use” is a very subjective term – more clarity needed. Objective covers two areas.	New opening sentence to objective on brownfield and sustainable sites.  Split off text on housing and community land trusts to create new Objective 9	Oldham Council
Policy 14(12)	Update needed on Local Housing Needs Assessment	Text amended to reflect development of Oldham’s Local Plan.	Oldham Council
Policy 16(14)	Policy lacks clarity on partially empty properties	Reference to partially empty properties added	Internal review
Policy 17(15)	Main residence clause is open-ended, which could be problematic.  To be enforced through section 106 agreements not planning conditions.	Two year minimum time limit added, and reference to planning conditions removed.  Minor grammatical changes for clarity.	Oldham Council
Policy 19(17)	Concerns raised over large-scale homeworking	Additional “appropriate scale” clause added.	PDNPA
Policy 20(18)	Policy should require meeting the criteria, not contributing to it.  Additional detail requested on public transport as an alternative to parking provision.  Charity and voluntary work should be added to community activities.  Concerns raised over balance of tourism versus protection of habitats.	Opening paragraph amended to “meets”.  New text on public transport connections.  Charity and voluntary work added.  Reference added to policy 1 and protected habitats.	Resident consultation
Policy 23(21)	References at end need updating.	References to two policies removed, as they have now been incorporated into the transport section.	Internal review
Policy 24(22)	More protection required for existing rights of way.  References at end need updating.	Default position established of not supporting a loss of quality or provision of rights of way.	Resident consultation



Section	Summary of feedback	Summary of changes	Source
Policy 25(23)	Reference to policies on charging points unclear	Text revised for clarity.	Internal review
Policy 27(25)	Building regulations (Part S) updated during development of plan.	Footnote added with reference.	Internal review
Recommendation 1	This is really a request to developers	Moved to boxout	Internal review
Recommendations 2–7	Recommendations could be viewed as a misleading term.	Changed named to Parish Actions, and moved to Appendix	Internal review
Recommendation 8	This requires action by developers, and therefore should be a Policy	Changed to Policy 28, amended language to be consistent with presentation of policies, and added supporting text	Internal review
Addendum	Uppermill is not the largest village by population.	Reference removed.	Internal review

Details of all feedback from each respondent following statutory consultation is provided in Appendix 11. Where statutory consultees provided specific feedback on policies, they were sent a detailed response breaking down all changes to policies as a result of their feedback, or if the Committee decided not to make changes to the document as a result of the feedback, they were given an explanation as to why not.

A very consistent response throughout the public consultation was that the Parish Council needed to ensure the provision of additional healthcare facilities. This clearly falls outwith the ability of the Parish Council to provide beyond the policies outlined in the Health, wellbeing and education section, so the Parish Council passed a motion to write to the Secretary of State raising this issue, and proposing that there should be more latitude in planning law to deliver further healthcare facilities with major developments.

As a result of the feedback, 71 changes were made to the consultation version of the Neighbourhood Plan, to create our draft plan for submission (version 2.1). These are summarised in the preceding table.

Appendix 13 gives all the details of changes made as a result of the regulation 14 consultation.

There are no material changes following review of policies that would require a second consultation. There have been four Local Green Spaces designated in this plan (under Policy 3.3) following feedback from residents, which resulted in the Parish Council carrying out an exercise to evaluate suggested locations from our first consultation against the Local Green Space criteria. This is well supported by the feedback from all stages of consultation. Oldham Council and the PDNPA will consult on this as part of regulation 16 consultation.

The Neighbourhood Plan being presented to the LPA shows the changes identified in Appendix 13.

## Conclusion

This Consultation Statement and the supporting consultation reports are considered to comply with Section 15(2) of part 5 of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.