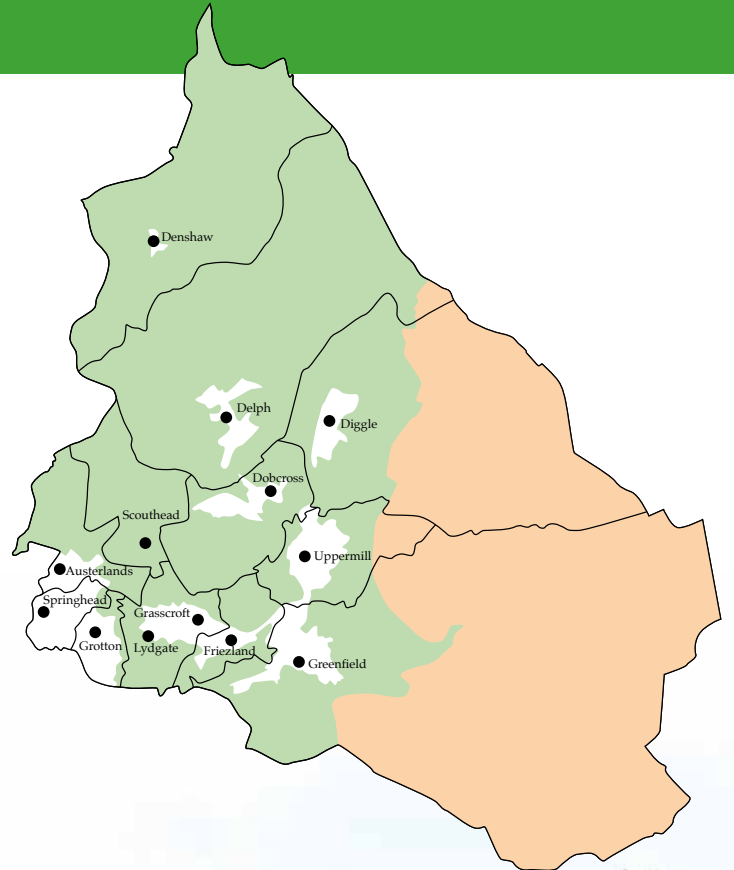




SADDLEWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2022–2042 DRAFT 1.4



Introduction

A Neighbourhood Plan for an area helps to shape what happens in that area in the near future. This plan will help to shape what happens in the Parish of Saddleworth over the next twenty years. The policies take precedence over other policies when making decisions about this Parish.

It will be reviewed every five years and covers a period to 2035.

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. The residents can grant planning permission for the buildings which they wish to see built.

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.

*Saddleworth Parish Council
Strategic Planning Committee,
January 2022*

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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.

Saddleworth was at the forefront of the industrial revolution with hundreds of water powered textile mills 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.

Saddleworth, like many communities, faces many challenges today and going forward. These relate mostly to the threat of over-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. These strengths are shown by the large number of voluntary societies and organisations and community festivals such as the annual Whit Friday Brass Band Contest, the Rush Cart Weekend.

Profile

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 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 underrepresented.

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.

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 >36% at local elections.

The figures contained within this Neighbourhood Plan have been produced using the ward profiles produced by Oldham Borough Council, 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

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.

Health: Medical centres are located across the Parish, although a substantial amount of capacity is from practices located outside the Parish.

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

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 physio and mental health are also serviced by smaller providers located across the area.

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

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 for residents who find it difficult to use public transport, upon registration.

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.

Parking in many of the Saddleworth villages is conditioned 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.

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.

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

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.

Plans & legislation

The Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan 2022–2042 has been developed in parallel with other planning legislation, which includes the National Planning Policy Framework, Greater Manchester’s forthcoming Places for Everyone and Transport 2040, Oldham Borough 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 is still under development 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 Borough Council’s forthcoming 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, 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 Peak District National Park’s National Park Management Plan can be found at <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/strategies-and-policies/national-park-management-plan>

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

This Neighborhood Plan does not allocate sites for development – allocated sites for development can be found in the Oldham Borough Council Local Plan, and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority’s *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 Borough Council’s Local Plan.

The majority of land in Saddleworth is classified as Green Belt or Local Green Space classifications, 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.

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.

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 very 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.

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

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.

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.

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 will 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.

Policies and recommendations



Environment

OBJECTIVES

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 policy 6 – heritage).

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.

To ensure that the threat of environmental damage to the area is minimised, and to ensure that where possible, this takes place with clear evidence. This would include monitoring and improving air quality across the area, as well as other environmental concerns such as flooding, energy use, and sustainability.

POLICY 1 – PEAK DISTRICT CHARACTER AND QUALITY

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.

See paragraphs 1–15 for supporting evidence.

POLICY 2 – PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT VIEWS

There will be a presumption against development which takes place within the visual setting of significant sites 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.

See paragraphs 16–18 for supporting evidence.

POLICY 3 – EROSION AND FLOODING

Developments will be supported which demonstrate the use of Slow the Flow initiatives on tributary streams and catchment areas – especially where they use “wilding” initiatives to create a natural SUDS.

Development will be supported where it can demonstrate defensive design of new developments in high-risk areas.

See paragraphs 19–22 for supporting evidence.

POLICY 4 – TREE COVERAGE AND MOORLANDS

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.

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

See paragraphs 23–29 for supporting evidence.

POLICY 5 – “BARN” CONVERSION

Should agricultural buildings or stables be proposed for change of use, the development would be supported providing that 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.

See paragraphs 29–30 for supporting evidence.

POLICY 6 - HERITAGE

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 Local Heritage List designations when considering planning and development.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

Please also see the section on heritage in design (paragraphs XX and XX).

RECOMMENDATION 1 – HERITAGE

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, and Oldham Borough Council, and the Peak District National 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. **Broaden out**

FURTHER RELEVANT POLICIES

See also the section on design, in particular, policy X on environment, for further policy regarding zero-carbon approaches, open spaces, drainage, wildlife movement, replacement green space and ancient woodland.

See Recommendation X on Design Character and Heritage for the identification of Areas of Special Interest such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Sites of Biological Interest (SBIs), and how the Parish Council intends to support their identification and classification.

Landscape character and quality

1. 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,
- 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.

2. 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.

3. 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 it is not covered by this Neighbourhood Plan.

4. 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”.

5. The current National Park Management Plan can be found at the Peak District National Park website, currently at <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/strategies-and-policies/national-park-management-plan>



6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. There is certainly a concern that the distinctive character and quality of the Saddleworth countryside is being endangered. This has been expressed by (Respondents to public surveys / village associations / environmental volunteers / schools / walking organisations /). Photographic surveys provide evidence of instances of landscape damage.

The setting of the Peak District National Park

10. The extensive upland areas of Saddleworth within the Peak District National Park are not subject to this Neighbourhood Plan. However, the 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.

11. 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.

12. 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. This map has been drawn based purely on physical distance from the National Park (within 1 mile).

Planning policies to protect Landscape Character Areas across Saddleworth

13. 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.

14. This approach would cover the whole of the Saddleworth countryside. At this stage it is not clear whether this means that there will be no need for additional work on this issue as a part of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

15. 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.

Protection of important views

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

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

18. Castleshaw 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 site. 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.

20. 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.

21. On the survey of residents conducted to support the Neighbourhood Plan, 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 Scotlands recent example. Rivers should be allowed to have soft banks, which is proven to help reduce flooding – exactly the opposite of whats 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

Climate change

Responding to increasing erosion and flooding

19. 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.

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

Increasing tree cover across different types of landscape

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

24. 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.

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

26. 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 sides due to planting and natural seeding.

27. Very recently there is evidence of self seeded tree growth on the moorland plateaux at over 400 metres 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.

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

29. 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 to justify a particular course of action.

Change of use

30. Evidence required on examples of change of use from the planning committee to support the need for a change of use policy.

31. [More information here](#)

Ownership and usage

There is probably 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
- Local authority owned land, 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 RSPB at Dovestone Reservoir.

Heritage

32. 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.

33. Traditional Saddleworth architecture has a definite character which typifies the area. Earlier buildings used gritstone for the walls and flagstones for the roof. 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.

34. 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.

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

35. 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.

36. 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.

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

37. There are a substantial number of heritage assets within Saddleworth that fall under the remit of other public authorities, in particular Oldham Borough 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.

Heritage lists

38. 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.

The planning process – background

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

Previously, planning decisions have been delegated to the Parish Council, and there is not legal impediment to decisions being delegated on this basis in the future.

One frequent query 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 – the decision on this is made by the Borough Council, and cannot be delegated to the Parish Council.

As a Parish Council, there are a number of designations available for land and assets, for example with regards to environment and heritage. These include, but are not limited to conservation areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Site of Biological Importance (SBIs). While the Parish Council does not determine these designations, it will provide information on and support appropriate applications for these designations.

39. Historic England has currently listed 384 listed buildings, of which five are Grade II*, and two scheduled monuments – the Bowl Barrow NNE of Knarr Barn, and Castleshaw Roman Forts.

40. 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.

41. The aim of the project is to identify heritage assets that make a significant contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of an area and are considered by local communities to be of importance. Once accepted onto the Local List, these cherished historic buildings and sites can be given greater consideration in the planning system.

1. Refer to heritage topic paper for Places for Everyone.

Design

OBJECTIVES

To ensure that any development ensures best use of brownfield sites, and wherever possible maintains green belt and green spaces.

Environment

With particular attention to the number of unidentified waterways and watercourses, work to improve the mapping of watercourses across the neighbourhood area, and, where possible, that this information is available and usable in considering development.

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.

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.

Provide opportunities for energy generation and the minimisation of energy use.

Design, character and heritage

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.

Health and wellbeing

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.

Transport

Objectives relating to design and transport are addressed in the Travel and Transport section of the Neighbourhood Plan (p. XX)

Infrastructure

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 7 – ENVIRONMENT

Developments should aim to deliver:

- modern standards of design and construction, where appropriate, which will minimise the sunk environmental costs during the building process;
- meeting or exceeding national environmental guidelines and recommendations, or requirements set out in Places for Everyone for zero-carbon homes across their lifetimes;
- 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;
- 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;

- a positive impact on the relationship between urban and natural features, where the development is adjacent to open countryside, 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;
- support wildlife movement and foraging through the provision of green infrastructure such as native hedgerow and tree planting, and the use of wildflower planting in areas of open space;
- minimised flood risk, and ensure development is safe from flood risk taking into account climate change

Developments will not be supported which:

- do not meet the Borough Council's target provision for the replacement of any one tree lost with three new trees;
- do not replace any loss of green space with an equal or greater new provision of green space; **(definition required, organising meeting with Lauren)**

we can request open space is replaced/ contributed to, through Policy 23 of the current Local Plan or a similar policy in the new Local Plan, where it is an identified open space and is for major development. I'm not sure we can apply this to land outside of identified open spaces.

- would result in the loss of 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.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

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.

POLICY 8 – DESIGN, CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

Developments of unused heritage assets should be accompanied by structural and viability surveys. The presumption would be strongly in favour of developments which retain the existing heritage asset to the fullest extent.

All development shall be of a high quality of design, which complements and enhances the distinct local character and identity of Saddleworth's villages, in particular, the rich heritage of weavers' cottages and traditional buildings.

This shall be achieved by:

- 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.

The GM Landscape and Character Needs Assessment provides the above description of Saddleworth's vernacular; however 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.

- 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 protected views, Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, but also local green spaces and other types of protected status. Proposals which detract from 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.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

POLICY 9 – SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Development should aim to deliver:

- new and/or enhanced public realm which is conducive to encouraging positive mental and physical health (in particular, see Housing – environment with regards to informal green spaces, pockets parks and green space, and Housing – transport with regards to pedestrian and cycling access);
- 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.

Request submitted to Wendy Moorhouse to see what determines whether a development would be required to provided a traffic statement.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

POLICY 10 – TRANSPORT

Development should aim to deliver:

- for large developments, minimal or no use of minor, or single-lane roads to access the site. Alternatively, this is can be balanced by 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;
- inclusive design for public transport, or 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 parking provision, whether for residential, public or commercial;
- for large developments, high-quality pedestrian and cycle access design. Both must be designed with existing provision in mind, and consideration given to how any developments can help to extend the existing network, or provide the key priorities above;
- safe, accessible cycle storage design as a priority;
- improved accessibility for people with mobility issues, or those with pushchairs;
- where appropriate, provide paths, cycle and pedestrian crossings to ensure safe and convenient continuation of sustainable traffic routes.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

Also, see the section on Travel and Transport (pages XX–XX).

POLICY 11: HOUSING – INFRASTRUCTURE

Development should:

- mitigate any impacts from the development on education and healthcare,

- where required, provide appropriate provision for healthcare and education support, either through the provision of facilities as part of the development, or by means of section 106 agreements with specific clauses to either 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, provide appropriate commercial or public provision as part of the development.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

RECOMMENDATION 2 – ENVIRONMENT

Measures should be encouraged which monitor the air quality of the area – particularly in locations near to schools, or where there is traffic congestion – and to publicly publish this information.

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 the Borough Council, to improve knowledge of existing potential flood risks.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

RECOMMENDATION 3 – DESIGN, CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

From the Oldham Local Plan review, three locations were identified as appropriate to be considered for Local Green Space status: Dacres, Stoneswood and Wall Hill. In addition to that, specific mentions were made in our survey of the following heritage or green space assets: Austerlands chimney, the canalside, Chapel Gardens, Dawsons Field, Dick Clough, Pickhill Valley, and a number of more generally described areas.

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

With particular regards to large redevelopment sites, such as the Fletcher’s Mill site, any applications should include a phased masterplan.

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.

RK sending letter about powers of enforcement about tenants in the case of absentee landlords. Possible recommendation.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

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

Environment

41. 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.

42. The survey also showed 79% of respondents who answered 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.

43. In response to the 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.

44. 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.

45. The local plan has identified Local Green Spaces, as well as other green infrastructure. It has already been identified that three sites should be considered for Local Green Spaces status, those being:

- Dacres
- Stoneswood
- Wall Hill

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 Local Plan Review.

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.

46. 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.

47. 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 X on Design, Character and Heritage).

48. 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 Oldham Local Plan.

49. The consultation with Year 7 and 8 students 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.

Design, character and heritage

50. In defining Saddleworth's existing design, character and heritage, the plan identifies the "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.

51. Saddleworth has in particular a rich heritage of weavers cottages and traditional mill buildings, and the plan is intended to integrate new developments which address and echo these sensitively.

52. The 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.

53. Full information on the 385 listed buildings and two scheduled monuments in Saddleworth can be obtained from Historic England at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

54. Saddleworth currently has 22 designated conservation areas, which have been identified and maintained by Oldham Borough Council. Two of them – Delph and Grasscroft – have had a character appraisal carried out.

55. 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 purpose of the Green Belt

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

57. Thus designation as Green Belt does not provide the 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.

58. 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."

59. The discussion group of year 7 and 8 students wanted to protect our heritage assets, from mills and canals to other statues and landmarks. However, they saw that if sites could be of more use than perhaps we should redevelop them. They believed that our history should be kept alive.

60. 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.

SSSIs

61. 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).

62. 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).

63. 3,070 ha of Saddleworth is in the Peak District National Park.

Narrative description of tree levels, importance of peatland, and protection of SBIs and SSSIs. Refer to the other protected areas.

Safety and wellbeing

64. The neighbourhood plan consultation 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).

Transport

65. Data on parking space requirements and access is included on pages 77–78 of the Dobcross responses. 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.

66. As per the separate section on Traffic and Transport, Saddleworth is underserved by public transport, 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 through the use of local facilities.

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

68. 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.

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

70. 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. Providing support for public charging should be considered as part of the infrastructure considerations for section 106 money.

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

72. Provision for cycling facilities has therefore been factored into planning applications and infrastructure needs, as per charging points.

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

Infrastructure

74. 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.

75. The 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.

76. In particular, the answers to questions 4 and 5 of the Saddleworth survey, and questions 9 and 10 of the Dobcross survey provide information on identified infrastructure needs.

77. In the Saddleworth 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.

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

Housing

OBJECTIVES

Address underprovided housing needs, in particular, suitably affordable (including social) housing stock for first time buyers 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 ensure that there is adequate provision of 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), to minimise the number of people waiting for access to housing.

POLICY 12 – HOUSING

Development should 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.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

Note: 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.

POLICY 13 – HOUSING: TRANSPORT

Development should 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 developments where it is not possible to provide this level of provision will need to demonstrate how high accessibility will mitigate the requirement for this, particularly in relation to the relatively low provision of public transport across the area.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

RECOMMENDATION 4 – HOUSING

In support of policies 1 and 2, all large developments have as a condition of their approval, the mandatory formation of a consultation group with local residents and groups, to discuss the development between planning approval and completion.

The positive and proactive engagement with the community by those bringing forward plans for development – as plans are prepared and submitted, and as development takes place. 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.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

Housing

79. Oldham's current Local Housing Need Assessment (LHNA) is based on central government's standard methodology. For Oldham, local housing need has recently changed to 693 new homes per year, due to the publication of the government's (amended) standard methodology in December 2020.¹

80. Data on the community response to Housing needs can be found on pages 71–73 of the Dobcross data, and pages 7–10 of the Saddleworth data.

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

82. 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. Demand for housing is high across the district.

83. 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.

84. The community research found that residents identify the that the 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 Saddleworth survey specified detached houses as their least preferred development type, by far the strongest response to any particular type of housing.

85. 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)

86. There was little need identified for private rented accommodation, with 64% wanting more owner-occupied, and 37% wanting more social rented stock.²

87. There was a strong preference for three bedroom houses (64%), then two bedroom houses (39%)². There was small demand identified for four bedroom or more (6.5%) or one bedroom (6%), although this does contrast with the Oldham Housing Needs Analysis.

88. The discussion group with year 7 and 8 students at Saddleworth School 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.

89. Many of the pupils believed that houses should replace the school in Uppermill, some even brought up the Fletchers Site in Greenfield. The overall opinion is that there should be considerable thought given about where they choose to build houses.

90. 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.

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

¹ Oldham's Local Housing Needs Assessment (OHNA) can be found at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/5590/housing_strategy_needs_assessment_report_2019

² Respondents could choose more than one option.

Retail, commerce and industry

OBJECTIVES

1 Commerce and industry

Retain existing traditional industries, and take advantage of the highly-qualified workforce, to develop opportunities in emerging and future technologies and business. Examples might include, but are not limited to, manufacturing on demand, smart infrastructure, energy transition, regenerative medicine, and integration of electronics and photonics.

2 Tourism and leisure

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.

3 Homeworking

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.

4 Farming

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.

- 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 Local Plan Policy.

There will be a strong presumption against the loss of commercial premises (A-class or B-class) or land which provides employment or future potential employment opportunities.

Applications for a change of use to an activity that does not provide employment opportunities will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that: the commercial premises or land in question has not been in active use for at least 12 months; and the commercial premises or land in question has no potential for either reoccupation or redevelopment for employment generating uses and as demonstrated through the results both of a full valuation report and a marketing campaign lasting for a continuous period of at least six months. **Question: should this be longer?**

In addition to site allocations in the Oldham Local Plan, 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;

POLICY 14 – COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

New B-class commercial development will be supported within existing or new employment areas subject to the following criteria:

- The site can be connected to the existing highway network and will not result in severe adverse traffic impacts on surrounding roads;
- The site is large enough to accommodate car parking, including EV 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 redevelopment of derelict sites and re-use of existing buildings. Only where re-use of the existing buildings is not possible would the re-use of those sites for new development be considered.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

POLICY 15 – HOMEWORKING AND CONNECTIVITY

Proposals which promote the role of homeworking within the economy will be supported. These include, where planning permission is required, improvements to broadband and telecommunications infrastructure and extensions to existing residential dwellings which are subsidiary to the main dwelling, subject to other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, relevant Oldham Local Plan Policies, and national planning policies.

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.

On sites allocated for residential development in the Plan all new properties should be served by a superfast broadband (fibre optic) connections¹. Elsewhere in the Plan area all other new buildings should be served with this standard of connection when available unless it can be demonstrated through consultation with network providers that this would not be either possible, or practical.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

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

POLICY 16 – TOURISM AND LEISURE

Development for new and of existing caravan, chalet, camping, cabin or lodge style developments, or other visitor accommodation, may be supported where they:

- contribute to improving the offer to tourists;
- are appropriately screened;
- provide adequate car parking spaces;
- are accessible to people with disabilities;
- do not generate traffic movements of a scale and type likely to have severe adverse impact on highway safety and efficiency;
- mitigate any adverse impact on the capacity of road, sewerage or other infrastructure; and
- are appropriate to the landscape character.

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

Please note the transport section with regards to the provision of walking and cycling routes, [pages XX–XX](#).

¹ or equivalent high-standard connection, as technology improves.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

Please also note the section on heritage, and in particular the policy on protected views, *pages XX–XX*, and the policy on designated local list designations (*pages XX–XX*).

RECOMMENDATION 4 – XX

Can we include a recommendation or policy with regards to events and festivals, e.g. rushcart, band contests and our support for them?

Can we find a way to support community facilities such as Village Halls etc?

Homeworking and connectivity

92. 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.

93. Research from the House of Commons library data showed that at the start of 2022, 3.1% of homes in Saddleworth had gigabit broadband availability, with the current rate of progress likely to mean that on 37.2% would have gigabit broadband availability by 2025.

Tourism and leisure

94. 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 and 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.

95. 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.

96. 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 overreliance on cafes (7 responses).

97. The student discussion group 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.

98. The student discussion group were in favour of more cafes 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.

99. 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 wonder 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.

Farming and rural environment

100. At the time of writing, we do not know the impact of new UK Government farming and countryside policies and changing market conditions.

101. Possibilities include:

- reduced sheep farming in upland areas;
- increased grant support for “wilding”;
- continued support for conservation of upland bird habitats;
- focus on flood reduction measures;
- rewilding schemes.

102. Ideas to promote closer partnership working with local farmers are outlined in Appendix ?

Travel and transport

OBJECTIVES

1 Public transport

To ensure quality public transport infrastructure, including ensuring the ease of connections between villages, as well as connections to the rest of the borough and beyond, in particular connectivity to healthcare provision and leisure facilities. Minimising the reliance on private transport across the district.

Ensuring local representation on the development of local transport plans for Saddleworth.

2 Cycling and pedestrian routes

Ensuring the safest and most accessible cycling and pedestrian routes – within the limitations created by historic road and route layouts.

3 Improved connectivity across the borough

Ensuring that transport connectivity is balanced across the whole of the district, with particular regards to ensuring access in parts of the borough further away from the major urban areas.

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.

4 Parking

Address parking issues by ensuring adequate provision for parking spaces, and sustainable alternative methods of transport

5 Accessibility

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

POLICY 17 – 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 an increased number of railway stations in Saddleworth is supported, to increase the capacity of the local network, and to address the accessibility issues at the current station.

Support will be given to public transport approaches in order to contribute to the reduction of 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 access across the whole of Saddleworth, including late at night.

RK: queried transport provision and analysis and whether the Parish Council can commit to having studies on how to improve it.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

POLICY 18 – CYCLING AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

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

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 a lack of accessible provision.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

POLICY 19 – PRIVATE TRANSPORT

Developments and programmes which: provide alternatives to private vehicles such as high quality broadband; promote walking and cycling to school or work, encourage the use of local shops and services; and the uptake of improved public transport will be supported.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

Also, see policy X on transport as part of the design policies (pages XX–XX).

POLICY 20 – AIR QUALITY AND MONITORING

Developments which provide robust air quality monitoring, particularly in locations where there are existing air quality issues, or vulnerable people, will be supported.

Developments should contribute towards the Saddleworth Parish Council pledge for the district to be carbon neutral by 2030.

See paragraphs XX–XX for supporting evidence.

Also, see recommendation X on environment as part of the design policies (pages XX–XX).

RECOMMENDATION 5 – 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.

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.

RECOMMENDATION 6 – CYCLING, PEDESTRIAN AND LEISURE INFRASTRUCTURE

Support those groups which maintain and preserve the canal.

RECOMMENDATION 7 – COMMUTER TRANSPORT

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

Is it possible to find a good recommendation to include on vibration monitoring.

103. In the Neighbourhood Survey carried out in 2019/2020 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%).

104. 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.

105. Greenfield in Saddleworth has the only rail station in the Oldham Borough. 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.

106. 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.

107. The nearest Metro link 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.

108. 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”.

109. The Huddersfield 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.

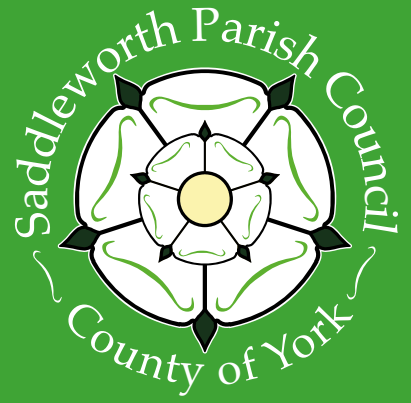
110. The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 states: “The Peak District National Park, which extends into Oldham, is a natural and recreational resource of both local and national importance and a significant trip attractor. Leisure trips add to localised congestion in communities on the eastern fringe of the conurbation, where the roads also form part of vital trans-Pennine 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.”

111. 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.

112. The Year 7 and 8 discussion group identified that many of the students use public transport in order to get to school. However, there was little interest in local bus services such as the Saddleworth Rambler. What was important to them was the price of tickets to use public transport, many felt it was too expensive.

113. It was a common consensus among the student discussion group 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.

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



SADDLEWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2022–2042

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