

Topic paper: Housing

Housing considerations

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Housing needs



Any Housing Needs assessment that forms part of Saddleworth's Neighbourhood Plan must have regard to Oldham's Local Plan review, and the Places for Everyone plan in development.

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

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.

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

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

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

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

In order of response, the weighted preferences for types of housing (most preferred first) were:

- 1) Terraced (2.53)
- 2) Retirement homes (2.76)
- 3) Semi-detached (2.80)
- 4) Sheltered / supported accommodation (2.91)
- 5) Shared space (e.g. flats) (3.30)
- 6) Detached (3.49)

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

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.

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.

Allocated sites



Allocated sites for development that form part of Saddleworth's Neighbourhood Plan must have regard to Oldham's Local Plan review, and the Places for Everyone plan in development.

The SHLAA is a technical document identifying land that might have potential for housing at some stage in the future. It forms a key component of the evidence base underpinning housing policies and land allocations and will help the Local Plan to meet the area's housing needs.

The current Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is at:
<https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200709/documents-in-the-local-plan/2134/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment>

Oldham's brownfield land register – those sites in the SHLAA which are brownfield only – can be found at
<https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200585/local-plan/2043/brownfield-land-register>

The Neighbourhood Plan can designate Neighbourhood Development Orders, which are suitable for particular types of development, for example including designations for commercial or domestic use.

There are also a number of designations which fall outside the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan, for example Assets of Community Value, and Green Belt designation - see the section on designations.

Source data on potential allocated sites can be found in the responses to the Saddleworth survey – individual answers to question 11.

The research identified a number of potential sites for allocation:

- Bailey Mill
- Knoll Mill
- Stonebreaks Quarry
- Fletchers Mill
- Saddleworth School site
- Ashbrook Valley
- Old railway lines
- Natwest Uppermill
- Toilets near Fletchers Mill
- Land by King Bill
- Burnedge Lane, Grasscroft
- Dunmfries Farm
- Oaklands Road near Trainline
- Shed next to Greenfield Park
- Garages on Greenbridge Lane
- Garages next to Grotton Pavilion
- Junction of Coverhill Road and Oldham Road
- KW Auto site Greenfield
- Kilnbrook Close, Grotton
- Mossley Road (derelict garages)
- Off Church Road, Uppermill
- Springhead Park

It should be noted that inclusion in this list is no indication of whether the Parish Council regards these sites as ones that should be allocated or not, merely that they have been identified by the community research.

A number of these sites may also be identified already as having potential for residential within the SHLAA, or being considered within the Local Plan Review.

For background information on the assessing and allocating sites for the the Neighbourhood Plan, access the Neighbourhood Planning portal at: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/Site-Assessment-and-Allocations-Toolkit-FINAL-exceptions-removed-110220-1555.pdf>

Role of design



The NPPF states that design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics.

Key targets for any policies adopted should be to meet the needs of the users (including safety, healthy lifestyles (see also traffic and transport), are convenient to use and manage, and take into account specific environmental circumstances (see also flooding).

Visual appeal is an important part of design, and it is important to recognise Saddleshworth's unique nature. The Neighbourhood Plan should include a statement of its nature, backed up by specific statements reinforcing this from the community surveys.

This can then be used to encourage development which is sympathetic to local character and history, and to encourage development which is inclusive, adds to the area's identity, and is accessible and appealing.

The responses to questions 25 and 26 of the Saddleshworth Survey, and pages 15–22 of the Dobcross survey can be used to develop this description.

Although they fall outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, reference should also be made to the 26 Conservation Areas in Saddleshworth – noting that two of them, Delph and Grasscroft have had specific character appraisals.

Saddleshworth also has – at time of writing – 385 listed buildings and 2 scheduled monuments, which can be found at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/advanced-search/>

Encouragement can be given to how developments will encourage connectivity within the district (particularly given the lack of train or tram access to the district).

Any distinctively local building materials to Saddleshworth which can be identified and included could form a part of the plan.

Specific layouts of buildings can be identified. Saddleshworth has in particular a rich heritage of weavers cottages and traditional mill buildings, and the plan can include recommendations to integrate new developments which address and echo these sensitively. If required, it can also address how to encourage contemporary design in the context of the area.

In particular, the GM Landscape and Character Needs Assessment 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.

Traffic and parking were clearly identified as problematic across Saddleshworth, and the plan can include specific recommendations on car parking.

Traffic and transport



It is important to note that a considerable number of responses to traffic and transport issues fall outside the responsibility of the Neighbourhood Plan to pursue, and comments have been sent to the appropriate authorities – primarily Oldham Council, to ensure that they are taken on board in the preparation of the Local Plan, and by other relevant areas.

A number of key issues can be included as part of the Neighbourhood Plan:

- adequate parking and servicing provision, including for bicycles
- cycle paths
- access arrangements
- transport capacity

In addition, when looking at environmental concerns, it would be reasonable to include future proofing considerations around cycle storage and access, charging for electric cars, and pedestrian and cycle routes.

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.

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.

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

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

Requirements for charging points could be factored into planning applications as part of the neighbourhood plan. Providing support for public charging could be considered as part of the infrastructure considerations for section 106 money.

Responses on cycling facilities are on question 33. 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.

Provision for cycling facilities could be factored into planning applications and infrastructure needs, as per charging points.

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

Infrastructure



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

However, the Neighbourhood Plan can be used to address specific infrastructure deficiencies which need to be addressed before development can go ahead, e.g. highway impact, public open space, affordable housing

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

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.

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

Community facilities to be added?

For background information on the infrastructure part of the Neighbourhood Plan, access the Neighbourhood Planning portal at:

<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/CIL-toolkit-060420-MHCLG-updatesPDF.pdf>

Environment



It is important to note that the Neighbourhood Plan will require a Strategic Environment Assessment – or if not, it will require a statement of reasons as to why one is not required.

The environment must be read in conjunction with the expected green infrastructure plan which is currently being prepared to inform the Local Plan Review.

In part the environmental assessment should refer to the analysis of local character, referred to in the role of design section of this paper, and to the topic papers on countryside and landscape character, and on greenbelt and natural environment being developed for this Neighbourhood Plan.

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.

Particular items that can be considered for the environmental approach include views that need to be protected, the relationship to the Peak Park.

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

Consideration should also be given to the views of church spires from across the area, and the aqueduct, for example.

The plan should also identify 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

The data from the surveys also identifies an extensive number of sites which might be included as local green spaces.

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.

A major part of the environmental aspect is the response on potential flooding issues, which is to be considered in a separate but related topic paper. Data on flooding concerns can be found in Dobcross data (p 148), and in the individual answers to question 12 on the Saddleworth survey.

Consideration could also be given to the status of Ancient Woodlands, although this would need to not be in conflict with any proposals coming forward as part of the Oldham Local Plan.

Possible recommendations on environmental standards in housing.

Background information from the Neighbourhood Planning portal on whether an SEA will be required is at: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/16-LOCALITY-Screening-neighbourhood-plans-SEA-HMAA-text-updated-230120-0925.pdf>

Background information from the Neighbourhood Planning portal on considering the environment is at: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/Environment-Toolkit-20181220FSfixed-links.pdf>

Designations



The primary designation that can be considered as part of the Neighbourhood Plan are Local Green Spaces, as highlighted in the section on Environment.

As well as Local Green Spaces, local parks and spaces can be nominated as Assets of Community Value. While those fall outside the Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council can help nominate those Assets to the Borough Council. Again, the Neighbourhood Plan can identify areas of importance, and make reference to the process for nomination.

Saddleworth has 385 listed buildings and 2 scheduled monuments, which can be found at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/advanced-search/>

Consideration could be made as to whether any of the identified sites or buildings from the survey should be referred to Historic England for additional consideration. However, their designation would again fall outside the reference of the Neighbourhood Plan.

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

Community-led housing



Additional matters



Conservation areas can be found on the proposals map – <https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200709/documents-in-the-local-plan/978/adoption-of-joint-core-strategy-and-development-management-policies-development-plan-documents-dpds>

A full list of historic buildings in Saddleworth is available via the Historic England website: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>