

Date: 03 June 2024



Saddleworth Parish Council
FREEPOST SPC N PLAN

Economy
Planning, Transport and Housing
Delivery

Tel: 0161 770 4105

Dear Saddleworth Parish Council,

Re: Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan consultation – Regulation 14

Thank you for consulting Oldham Council on the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 14 ‘Pre-submission consultation and publicity’.

Oldham Council has a duty to advise and assist Saddleworth Parish Council in the preparation of its neighbourhood plan. Our consultation response forms part of that role, and we will continue to provide advice on the next steps of the neighbourhood plan as it progresses through the remaining stages of the neighbourhood planning regulations.

As you are aware Places for Everyone (PfE) provides the strategic policies for the neighbourhood plan and the neighbourhood plan must be in general conformity with it. PfE was adopted in March 2024 and the neighbourhood plan should reflect this status in the next version of the plan.

Strategic policies will also emerge within the Local Plan that is currently being prepared. Saddleworth Parish Council should continue to work closely with Oldham Council to ensure that the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with emerging policies within the forthcoming Local Plan.

Other planning documents will also emerge which will be of relevance to Saddleworth – this includes the South Pennines Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will help mitigate recreational disturbance on the South Pennine Moors SAC /SPA, in accordance with PfE Policy JP-G5: Uplands.

Oldham Council has informally provided feedback on draft versions of the plan to date. Our last informal comments were sent on version 1.13. Many of these comments have been incorporated into the neighbourhood plan that is subject to the regulation 14 consultation and Oldham Council is pleased that much of the feedback has been taken on board.

However, some comments have not been incorporated. We have listed those below that have not been incorporated and which could still strengthen the neighbourhood plan:

Policy 1: Green Infrastructure

Reference to “All development” within policy may be onerous in terms of expecting minor developments such as change of use, small extensions to meet all criteria. The policy could be worded to remove reference to ‘All.’

For information Footnote 2 has a minor typo – it should read “Development must meet PfE Policy JP-G5 ‘Uplands, which deals with...”.

Sites of Biological Importance:

Page 23, paragraph 58 - In hindsight it would be better to add (2020) after the list of SBIs.

Flood Risk:

Paragraphs 68 and 69 do not appear to relate well to this section. In addition, our comments on draft 1.13 flagged that the text within paragraph 69 is already contained within the legislation section and to avoid repetition could be removed.

Policy 6 Sustainable Construction:

As set out in previous correspondence the neighbourhood plan will need to respond to any changes in national policy restricting energy efficiency targets that go beyond building regulations.

In addition a [Local Area Energy Plan](#) has been prepared for Oldham and there could be subsequent energy plans covering the neighbourhood plan area. Our suggested text in relation to Policy 6 was: “and solar power, hydropower and other types of energy highlighted in local energy plans”.

This was to highlight that opportunities may be identified within energy plans covering the neighbourhood plan area. However, the policy as worded reads like developments are required / expected to prepare a local area energy plan.

Policy 9 Chew Brook Vale:

Please note that in finalising PfE, the Chew Brook Vale Allocation is now PfE Allocation 13 (amended from 15).

Objective 8:

We commented on Objective 1 which is now within Objective 8 which reads “To prioritise sustainable and brownfield sites and their best use.”

As before we suggest that this is amended to “To ensure that development prioritises the use of sustainable sites, and makes effective and efficient use of brownfield land, and”. The reason this is being flagged again is that not all brownfield land will necessarily be the most sustainable – overtime brownfield land can become ecologically rich. Land may be subject to flood risk and so on. So, it is important that sustainable sites are bought forward (in terms of their location, constraints and access to public transport etc) and that we make the most of deliverable brownfield land.

Policy 12: Housing

A Local Housing Needs Assessment is being prepared for Oldham. When this is available the evidence should underpin the neighbourhood plan to ensure that policies are justified by up-to-date evidence.

Policy 15: Community and Self Build

We do not think the advice from the Peak District National Park Authority and Oldham Council has been picked up and we feel it is important to note.

The advice stated that for custom/self-build it is not possible to restrict to local occupancy. This is based on the government guidance and the NP group not being a ‘relevant authority’, as defined by the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (legislation.gov.uk).

A suggestion was made to split the self-build from the community build as they are different types of build and subject to different opportunities/constraints. It would then be possible to put the local connection requirement onto the community build (if there is evidence that there is a need to limit housing to people with a connection to Saddleworth). It might also be possible to put a primary residency clause on the self-build (again, if there is evidence that this is an issue) if that is something you wish to do.

If a local connection test is used, then you would need to think about a cascade system to avoid properties being empty. The PDNPA sent a link to theirs on page 89 https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0024/95091/Webpage-Final-Branded-DMP-Doc-Copy.pdf With regards to the development being built within 2 years, is there evidence of why this is an issue? Including such evidence will help to strengthen the policy.

Restricting occupancy is something which is difficult to monitor/ maintain. The problem with a condition restricting occupancy is that it is not easily monitored and if a breach was identified it would then be necessary to consider whether it is expedient to take action. If there has been a

breach for a lengthy period that could make it difficult to justify. In addition, after 10 years of any breach that condition is not enforceable at all.

We would therefore suggest any restrictive occupancy would need to be set out in a S106 which, depending on the wording, would remain an ongoing agreement in perpetuity or for a minimum of years (which would need to be agreed as part of the S106) following completion/first occupation etc.

We think the Parish Council could make this a more positive policy about supporting high-quality self and custom build. Or as suggested above split out community-led housing – you could even note you will support community-led schemes or even look to identify opportunities in the future. A community-led scheme could work well in Saddleworth.

Policy 18: Tourism and Leisure

The page numbers referenced within the policy need to be updated.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) have prepared a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) on the Saddleworth Neighbourhood plan.

A revised HRA should be prepared for the next consultation version of the neighbourhood plan to assess any policy amendments.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Oldham Council prepared a Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening in consultation with the PDNPA and statutory consultees. This has determined that a full SEA is not required based on the draft plan. It should be noted that substantial changes to the scope of the plan, such as sites being allocated could change this conclusion.

Next Stages

Saddleworth Parish Council will need to satisfy the neighbourhood planning regulations and any relevant legislation. The next stage is regulation 15 for which several additional documents will be required including the consultation statement and basic conditions statement.

The Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap provides a user friendly summary, which can be read alongside legislation https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/NP_Roadmap_online_full.pdf.

Saddleworth Parish Council should start to prepare these documents alongside amending the plan having regard to representations made.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Richards', with a stylized, cursive script.

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