

## **Report to CABINET**

# **Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper**

### **Portfolio Holder:**

Councillor Elaine Taylor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods

**Officer Contact:** Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

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**21 July 2025**

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### **Reason for Decision**

To approve the Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper for publication on the council's website, to assist in the interpretation and implementation of existing planning policies in Oldham's Local Plan.

### **Executive Summary**

The Interim Planning Position Paper supports the implementation of policy 23 'Open Spaces and Sports' within Oldham's Local Plan – The Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document, adopted November 2011. This paper supersedes the previous 'Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper' published by the council in March 2012.

The paper sets out the council's updated position in relation to open space policy, including the threshold for policy application, the seeking of new and enhanced open space and playing pitches and outdoor sports provision.

It must be read alongside the Local Plan as a whole, but in particular - Local Plan Policy 23 'Open Spaces and Sports'. It must also be read alongside Places for Everyone (PfE) policy JP-P7 'Sport and Recreation'.

This paper is informed by the council's Open Space Study (2022) and the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS) (2025) as key evidence base documents.

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This paper provides updated evidence to inform the interpretation and implementation of the policies in Oldham's Local Plan. It is a material consideration and should be used in decision making as appropriate.

The council's approach to updated national guidance and local evidence will be considered further and inform policy preparation as part of the Local Plan Review.

## **Recommendations**

Cabinet to:

- i. Approve the Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper for publication on the council's website, to assist in the interpretation and implementation of existing planning policies in Oldham's Local Plan.
- ii. Note that the item will be exempt from call-in, under Rule 14 of the Constitution, as the matter will be considered by the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board on 24th July 2025.
- iii. Grant delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods to take the final decision on approval of the Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper for publication, having considered any comments made by the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board on 24 July 2025.

## Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper

### 1 Background

- 1.1 The Interim Planning Position Paper supports the implementation of policy 23 'Open Spaces and Sports' within Oldham's Local Plan – The Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document, adopted November 2011. This paper supersedes the previous 'Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper' published by the council in March 2012.
- 1.2 The paper sets out the council's position in relation to open space policy - including the gathering of developer contributions towards open space provision (including playing pitch and outdoor sports provision).
- 1.3 The paper will be used when assessing planning applications and development proposals relating to open space provision and developer contributions for open space provision (including contributions required as part of new residential development) in line with Local Plan Policy 23 'Open Spaces and Sports'. It must also be read alongside Places for Everyone (PfE) policy JP-P7 'Sport and Recreation'.
- 1.4 This paper is informed by the council's Open Space Study (2022)<sup>1</sup> and the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS) (2025)<sup>2</sup> as key evidence base documents. Further detail on these evidence base documents is provided in the paper.
- 1.5 The paper provides updated evidence to inform the interpretation and implementation of the policies in Oldham's Local Plan. It is a material consideration and should be used in decision making as appropriate. The positions set out within this paper are summarised below.
- 1.6 In terms of new or enhanced open space, the paper sets out that residential development of 10 homes and above should contribute towards the provision of new or enhanced open space, unless it can be demonstrated by the developer that it is not financially viable for the development proposal or that this is neither practicable nor desirable. In line with National Planning Policy the policy threshold for seeking new or enhanced open space has been updated from 'all residential development' to major development (of 10 homes and above). However, where the loss of an open space is proposed, the policy requirements set out within policy 23 remains as is published in the Local Plan. The policy requirements for

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<sup>1</sup> Open Space Study (2022):

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2184/open\\_space\\_study\\_documents\\_2022](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2184/open_space_study_documents_2022)

<sup>2</sup> Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (2025):

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/3270/playing\\_pitch\\_and\\_outdoor\\_sports\\_strategy\\_2025](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence/3270/playing_pitch_and_outdoor_sports_strategy_2025)

replacement provision or contributions towards new or enhanced open space provision to account for any loss of open space continue to apply to all levels and types of development.

- 1.7 In determining the appropriate location for or contribution to new or enhanced provision, the council will have regard to the proposed development and the open space surpluses and deficiencies in the area, as determined by the Open Space Study (2022). Where an area (ward) within which a site is located is deficient in at least one of the standards of open space provision (accessibility, quality and quantity) the area is classed as deficient and onsite provision or a developer contribution towards off-site new or enhanced existing open space provision will be required.
- 1.8 Developer contributions will be used as appropriate to secure the provision and maintenance of new, or enhanced, open space provision. Contributions should go towards at least one of the deficient typologies within the area and considering the accessibility and quality assessment (carried out as part of the Open Space Study 2022).
- 1.9 The current local standards of open space provision set out in table 11 of the Local Plan is superseded by table 1 'Open Space Standards' within the paper (see below), as updated evidence. New or enhanced open spaces should aim to meet the open space standards set out within this table.

**Table 1 - Open Space Standards (derived from Open Space Study 2022)**

| Type of Open Space                                 | Quantity Standard (the number of hectares required per 1,000 population) | Quality Standard | Accessibility Standard                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Allotments and Community Gardens                   | No standard                                                              | At least 70%     | No standard                                                                                                                                |
| Amenity Greenspace                                 | 0.46                                                                     | At least 70%     | 720 metres (15-minute walk)                                                                                                                |
| Cemeteries and Churchyards                         | No standard                                                              | At least 70%     | No standard                                                                                                                                |
| Civic Spaces                                       | No standard                                                              | At least 70%     | No standard                                                                                                                                |
| Green Corridors                                    | No standard                                                              | At least 70%     | No standard                                                                                                                                |
| Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace                | 1.95                                                                     | At least 70%     | Natural and Semi-Natural - 720 metres (15-minute walk)<br><br>Strategic Natural and Semi-Natural over 20ha - 7.85km (20-minute drive time) |
| Outdoor Sports Facilities (excluding Golf Courses) | 1.35                                                                     | At least 70%     | 720 metres (15-minute walk)                                                                                                                |
| Parks and Gardens                                  | 0.40                                                                     | At least 70%     | Local Parks and Gardens - 720 metres (15-minute walk)<br><br>Strategic Parks and                                                           |

| Type of Open Space                      | Quantity Standard (the number of hectares required per 1,000 population) | Quality Standard | Accessibility Standard                               |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
|                                         |                                                                          |                  | Gardens of 15ha and above - 7.85km (20-minute drive) |
| Provision for Children and Young People | 0.25                                                                     | At least 70%     | 480 metres (10 minute walk)                          |

- 1.10 In terms of playing pitches and outdoor sports provision, the PPOSS provides updated evidence in relation to the borough's playing pitch and outdoor sports provision. It identifies the current and future needs for particular sports and sets out an Action Plan<sup>3</sup> for future investment and improvement. The PPOSS should be used to inform where and what type of new or enhanced playing pitch and outdoor sports provision is provided.
- 1.11 In terms of new residential development, Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator<sup>4</sup> should be used to inform contributions towards new or enhanced provision as part of new residential development. The calculator considers the provision needs identified by Oldham's PPOSS.
- 1.12 Informed by the outcomes of the Playing Pitch Calculator, the PPOSS Action Plan should be used to identify potential sites for offsite enhancement or where new provision may be needed, based on the identified deficiencies/ need.
- 1.13 Any enhanced or replaced playing pitch or outdoor sports provision provided to account for the loss of such provision should also be informed by the PPOSS, considering need and the Action Plan.
- 1.14 The council's approach to updated national guidance and local evidence will be considered further and finalised as part of the Local Plan Review. Further details about the Local Plan Review can be found online<sup>5</sup>.

## 2 Current Position

- 2.1 The Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper supports the interpretation and implementation of policy 23 'Open Spaces and Sports' within Oldham's Local Plan – The Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document (Local Plan), adopted November 2011. It sets out evidence of open space need and standards for provision, including evidence relating to playing pitch and outdoor sport's needs, to assist in planning application decision-making. The paper sets out the council's current position until relevant policies are reviewed as part of the new Local Plan.

## 3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 Option 1 - To approve the Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper for publication on the council's website, to assist in the interpretation and implementation of policy 23 'Open Spaces and Sports' in Oldham's Local Plan.

<sup>3</sup> PPOSS Action Plan: [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/8144/oldham\\_pposs\\_action\\_plan](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/8144/oldham_pposs_action_plan)

<sup>4</sup> Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator for further information: <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/playing-pitch-calculator>

<sup>5</sup> Oldham's Local Plan Review: [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local\\_plan\\_review](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review)

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Advantages – approving the Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper for publication will ensure effective and consistent decision-making which is in line with local evidence and local and national planning policy. It will provide guidance to developers and planning officers on the interpretation and implementation of open space policy within the current Local Plan.

Disadvantages – there are no disadvantages to approving the Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper for publication.

- 3.2 Option 2 – To not approve the Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper for publication on the council's website.

Advantages – there are no advantages to not approving the Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper for publication.

Disadvantages – not approving the Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper for publication could lead affect consistent decision-making and impact the effective implementation of local planning policy.

#### 4 **Preferred Option**

- 4.1 Option 1 is the preferred option - to approve the Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper for publication on the council's website, to assist in the interpretation and implementation of existing planning policies in Oldham's Local Plan. This will support consistent decision-making and the effective implementation of local planning policy.

#### 5 **Consultation**

- 5.1 Formal consultation on Interim Planning Position Papers is not required, however relevant internal officers have been consulted as part of the preparation of the paper.

#### 6 **Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper will be published on the council's website. Therefore, no additional revenue costs will be charged to the service.

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#### 7 **Legal Implications**

- 7.1 Interim Planning Papers provide further advice and guidance on applicable planning policy matters which may have arisen since the relevant statutory planning document was adopted by the Council. They are not part of the statutory Local Plan but they are a relevant material consideration in the determination of planning applications, albeit with limited weight.

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#### 8 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

- 8.1 The completed Oldham Impact Assessment can be found below:



Open Space IPPP  
Oldham Impact Asse

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- 8.2 In terms of equality characteristics the Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper was found to have moderate positive impact on age. With regards to the council's missions the paper was found to have strong positive impacts on all three – green and growing; a great place to live; and happier healthier lives.

9 **Key Decision**

- 9.1 Yes

10 **Key Decision Reference**

- 11.1 ESR-08-25

12 **Background Papers**

- 12.1 There are no background papers for this report.

13 **Appendices**

- 13.1 Appendix 1 – Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper (2025)