

## Report to COUNCIL

# Submission of Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan

### Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Elaine Taylor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods

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

**Report Author:** Elizabeth Dryden-Stuart, Strategic Planning and Information

**Email:** [elizabeth.dryden-stuart@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.dryden-stuart@oldham.gov.uk)

**25 March 2026**

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## Reason for Decision

The purpose of this report is to approve submission of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for examination following the period of representations.

## Executive Summary

On 19 January 2026 Cabinet approved the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan, Policies Map and supporting documentation for publication and consultation, pursuant to Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for a six-week period for representations to begin no earlier than 28 January 2026.

The 'Publication Plan' stage is a formal 'statutory' consultation, providing an opportunity for organisations and individuals to submit their final views on the content of the Plan. Consultation on the Publication Plan commenced on the 4 February 2026, and following an extension to the consultation period, is due to end on 27 March 2026.

Council approval is now sought for the submission of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for

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examination following the end of the consultation and once representations and the necessary supporting documentation have been collated. Submission is expected to be in May or June 2026. This is called the 'Submission stage', pursuant to Regulation 22 and is the subject of this report to Council.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that Council:

Approve the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan, Policies Map and supporting documentation for submission to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for examination following the period of representations, pursuant to Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

## Submission of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan

### 1 Background

- 1.1 The Council must prepare a Local Plan to provide an up-to-date and positive planning framework for the Borough, that will help to meet our housing needs and address other economic, environmental and social objectives, as per the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup> (NPPF). The policies set out in the Local Plan will also support the implementation of Places for Everyone<sup>2</sup> across Oldham and delivery of the Council's regeneration objectives and priorities.
- 1.2 The Government are in the process of reforming the current system for preparing Local Plans, to ensure that going forward plans are faster to prepare and simpler for end users to access and understand. Guidance on how plans are to be prepared under the new plan-making system is still to be published. In the meantime, for plans progressing to adoption under the current plan-making legal framework (which includes the review of the Oldham Local Plan) Government require these 'legacy plans' to be submitted for examination by 31 December 2026.
- 1.3 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012<sup>3</sup> ('the Regulations') set out the requirements for local authorities producing and consulting on Local Plans under the current plan-making system. There are various stages in the production of a Local Plan. Informal consultations have been carried out under Regulation 18 through the Regulation 18 Notification (July / August 2017), Issues and Options (July / August 2021) and the Draft Plan (January to February 2024).
- 1.4 Following approval at Cabinet on 19 January 2026 consultation is now underway on the Publication Plan, pursuant to Regulation 19, which having been extended is due to end Friday 27 March 2026. The 'Publication Plan is a formal 'statutory' consultation stage that provides an opportunity for organisations and individuals to submit their final views on the content of the Plan.
- 1.5 Details of all consultations to date and specifically the Regulation 19 consultation on the Publication Plan can be found at [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local\\_plan\\_review](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review).
- 1.6 Following consultation on the Publication Plan, representations received and other relevant supporting documentation, are submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local for examination by the Planning Inspectorate. This is called the 'Submission stage' and is the subject of this Council report.
- 1.7 In terms of the purpose of this report the legal, financial and procurement implications are considered in sections 6, 7 and 8. With regards to other implications:

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<sup>1</sup> The National Planning Policy Framework can be found at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF\\_December\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Places for Everyone can be found at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/strategic-planning/places-for-everyone/>

<sup>3</sup>The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulation 2012 can be found at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents>

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- (a) Community Cohesion Implications, including crime and disorder implications under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – not applicable
  - (b) Risk Assessments – not applicable
  - (c) If relevant, Co-operative Implications, Human Resource Implications, IT implications, Property Implications, and Environment and Health and Safety Implications – Submission of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for examination is the next stage in the preparation of the Plan and provides an opportunity for those who wish to do so to participate in the examination. Oldham Council assets may fall within designations proposed as part of the Local Plan, however, planning policies are consistent with national planning policy and PfE. No sites are being allocated for development.

1.8 In terms of how the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan links to the Corporate Plan priorities it provides an opportunity to bring together and express spatially those parts of The Oldham Plan and the Council's Corporate Plan that can be shaped and delivered through the planning system. Their aspirations and priorities are the golden thread that runs through the Local Plan, along with supporting and facilitating delivery of the Council's Building a Better Oldham agenda.

## 2 Current Position

### *Oldham's current Local Plan*

- 2.1 Oldham's current Local Plan comprises a series of documents which together provide the statutory development plan for the Borough and are:
- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan for Bury, Bolton, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan, adopted March 2024
  - The Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD), adopted in November 2011
  - Proposals Map
  - The Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan, adopted in April 2012
  - The Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan, adopted in April 2013
- 2.2 With the Core Strategy being over 10 years old there is the need for a succinct and up-to-date plan that:
- Accords with PfE and supports its implementation at a local level;
  - Meets the latest national planning policy and guidance where relevant; and
  - Reflects the changes in the Council's regeneration ambitions and Building a Better Oldham.
- 2.3 In terms of scope, the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan does not repeat the strategic policies set out PfE. The focus of our revised Local Plan is instead on development management policies, which will help to implement PfE at an Oldham level whilst helping to deliver our regeneration ambitions and priorities for the Borough. For this reason, the Local Plan does not allocate sites for future development – either housing or employment related, and it has been prepared to align with the plan-period of PfE, that is 2022-2039.

*Progress to date*

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2.4 Details of progress to date are set out in the report that went to Cabinet on the 19 January 2026 which gave approval to publish and consult on the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan<sup>4</sup>. This has included consultations on the Regulation 18 Notification between July and August 2017, Issues and Options between July and August 2021, and the Draft Local Plan from 10 January to 25 February 2024. Details of the Local Plan Review can be found at [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local\\_plan\\_review](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review).

### *Oldham's Publication Plan*

- 2.5 Oldham's Local Plan will guide development in the Borough up to 2039 to reflect the plan-period of PfE, that is 2022 to 2039. Underpinning the Plan are the principles of sustainable development, and it will meet the needs of Oldham and its residents whilst also achieving high quality design, addressing climate change and increasing accessibility for all.
- 2.6 The Oldham Local Plan will cover the whole Borough except that part which falls within the Peak District National Park.
- 2.7 The main purposes of the Plan are to:
- Set out the policies through which the Council will manage development coming forward and use to determine planning applications;
  - Identify designations for the protection of the Borough's environmental and historical assets, our town centres, employment areas and infrastructure; and
  - Enable the development of supporting infrastructure, such as transport, health, education, open space, sport and recreation facilities and utilities.
- 2.8 The policies contained in the Publication Plan are organised by theme – Homes; Economy and Employment; Our Centres; Oldham Town Centre; Addressing Climate Change; Natural Environment and Open Land; Addressing the Biodiversity Emergency; Oldham's Historic Environment; Achieving High Quality Design; A Sustainable, Active, Accessible Network for Oldham; Communities; Protecting our Local Environment; Infrastructure and Delivery in Oldham; and Monitoring.
- 2.9 The Local Plan provides an opportunity to bring together, and express spatially, those parts of The Oldham Plan and the Council's Corporate Plan that can be shaped and delivered through the planning system. Their aspirations and priorities are the golden thread that runs through the Local Plan, along with supporting and facilitating delivery of the Council's Building a Better Oldham agenda. A myriad of other plans and strategies such as Oldham's Green New Deal Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Cultural Strategy and Green Infrastructure Strategy have also been reflected in the Plan.
- 2.10 Underneath the overarching theme of Building a Better Oldham there also sits several thematic priorities for Oldham that policies within the Local Plan seek to address, such as the creation of healthy communities, tackling the climate emergency, and responding to the housing crisis we currently face across the Borough.
- 2.11 In terms of designations for the protection of the Borough's environmental and historical assets, this includes the designation of areas known as 'Local Green Space' (LGS) in line with national planning policy. LGS are spaces that are important to local communities due to their proximity to the community and because they are demonstrably special and hold local significance due to beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity, or richness of its wildlife. Most LGS are already designated Other Protected Open Land

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<sup>4</sup> The Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan report to Cabinet on 19 January can be found at <https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=144&MIId=9619&Ver=4>

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(OPOLs) in the Core Strategy. A review of these OPOL has been undertaken against the LGS criteria set out in NPPF, to ensure the policy approach is robust and up to date. As a result of this updated evidence there have been boundary changes to some LGS, five have been de-designated (either because they do not meet the new LGS criteria or they have been allocated for development as part of PfE), and a new LGS has been identified in Sholver.

- 2.12 The Borough's Green Belt has been established through PfE. As such, the Publication Plan does not propose any strategic Green Belt boundary revisions. A 'tidy up' of Oldham's Green Belt has, however, been carried out to identify minor changes of a technical cartographical nature that have arisen primarily from the move to GIS mapping. These minor technical boundary revisions proposed to the Green Belt are set out within Appendix 8<sup>5</sup> of the Publication Plan and can be seen on a comparison map<sup>6</sup> which shows the existing (adopted) and proposed Green Belt for clarity.
- 2.13 The Publication Plan is supported by an Integrated Assessment (IA)<sup>7</sup> which incorporates the following:
- Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA);
  - Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA);
  - Oldham Impact Assessment Tool (incorporating the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA); and
  - Health Impact Assessment (HIA).
- 2.14 A comprehensive evidence base has been prepared to support preparation of the Local Plan, details of which can be found at <https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201236/evidence>. Most recently, this has included a Local Plan Viability Assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that policy requirements for developer contributions are assessed for viability at the plan-making stage, alongside proportionate evidence in relation to infrastructure requirements and affordable housing need for example. This is to ensure that such policies do not undermine the deliverability of the Plan.
- 2.15 Several thematic Topic Papers<sup>8</sup> have also been published alongside the Publication Plan. These pull together the evidence in one place and set out how this and previous consultations have helped to inform the Publication Plan.
- 2.16 Paragraph 24 of NPPF sets out that local planning authorities continue to be under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries. Through the Duty strategic policy-making authorities are required to collaborate on the identification of relevant strategic matters which they need to address in their plans. This is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy.
- 2.17 Furthermore, to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working paragraph 28 of NPPF states that strategic policy-making authorities should prepare and maintain one or more

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<sup>5</sup> Appendix 8: Minor Green Belt Boundary Amendments can be found at [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2474/oldham\\_local\\_plan\\_publication\\_plan\\_appendices](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2474/oldham_local_plan_publication_plan_appendices)

<sup>6</sup> The map of Minor Green Belt Boundary Amendments can be found at <https://map.oldham.gov.uk/map?name=Green%20Belt%20Comparison>

<sup>7</sup> The Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan Integrated Assessment can be found at [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2471/oldham\\_local\\_plan\\_publication\\_plan\\_integrated\\_assessment\\_and\\_the\\_appendices](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2471/oldham_local_plan_publication_plan_integrated_assessment_and_the_appendices) can be found at [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2470/oldham\\_local\\_plan\\_publication\\_plan\\_ia\\_appendices](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2470/oldham_local_plan_publication_plan_ia_appendices)

<sup>8</sup> Thematic Topic Papers supporting the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan can be found at [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local\\_plan\\_review/3319/publication\\_plan](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review/3319/publication_plan)

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statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these.

- 2.18 As previously stated, PFE sets out our strategic policies and spatial strategy and those matters with cross boundary implications are dealt with through the Joint Plan, including districts local housing need. As such, given its local-level development management policy focus there are limited cross-boundary matters relating to the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan. Furthermore, a recent letter from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) dated 27 November 2025 removes the Duty requirement for 'legacy plans' being prepared under the current planning system. Nevertheless, local planning authorities are still encouraged to collaborate across their boundaries, including on unmet development needs from neighbouring areas. As such, the Council has sought to continue to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities and key organisations, in a bid to ensure that those aspects with cross-boundary and strategic implications are appropriately addressed.
- 2.19 A Statement of Common Ground has therefore been prepared to support the review of Oldham's Local Plan and has been published alongside the Publication Plan. The Statement has been updated at each stage of the Local Plan review process, providing updates on cross-boundary matters, demonstrating our commitment to working collaboratively with our neighbouring authorities and the relevant public bodies.

#### *Consultation on the Publication Plan*

- 2.20 At Publication Plan stage, whilst anyone can make a representation on any point, only those pertaining to 'soundness' will be considered by the examining Inspector(s). As set out in paragraph 36 of NPPF, plans are sound if they are:
- a) **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
  - b) **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
  - c) **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
  - d) **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework and other statement of national planning policy, where relevant.
- 2.21 Inspectors also consider representations concerning legal compliance issues, for example the Integrated Assessment, the Habitats Assessment Regulation and the Duty to Co-operate.
- 2.22 Consultation on the Publication Plan has been carried out in accordance with our Statement of Community Involvement, most recently adopted July 2021<sup>9</sup>. The minimum requirements set out in paragraph 4.65 of the SCI 2021 have been met. In addition to which, those who wish to do so have been able to arrange appointments (by telephone or in person) with planning officers to find out more about the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan and on how representations should be submitted. Details of the consultation have also been made available at The Big Oldham Convo<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Oldham Council's Statement of Community Involvement (28 July 2021) can be found online at [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201232/engagement/253/statement\\_of\\_community\\_involvement](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201232/engagement/253/statement_of_community_involvement)

<sup>10</sup> The Big Oldham Convo can be found at <https://bigoldhamconvo.oldham.gov.uk/>

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### *Submission and Examination of Oldham's Local Plan*

- 2.23 Following consultation on the Publication Plan, representations made at the Regulation 19 stage, and supporting 'submission' documents will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination on behalf of the Secretary of State. This is called the 'Submission stage', pursuant to Regulation 22. This requires approval at Council.
- 2.24 It is intended that the Council will submit the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan in May / June 2026, along with representations received and the necessary supporting 'submission' documentation.
- 2.25 The local plan examination starts upon submission and concludes when the Inspector has issued their report. During the examination the Planning Inspector will assess whether the local plan has been prepared in line with the relevant legal requirements (including the duty to cooperate) and that it meets the aforementioned tests of 'soundness' contained in NPPF.
- 2.26 As per paragraph 050 of national planning guidance on Plan-Making the examining Inspector(s) is required to work proactively with the local planning authority, with the expectation that:
- Issues not critical to the plan's soundness or other legal requirements do not cause unnecessary delay to the examination of the plan.
  - Inspectors should identify any fundamental concerns at the earliest possible stage in the examination and work with the local planning authority to clarify and address these.
  - Where these issues cannot be resolved within the examination timetable, the potential of pausing the examination should be fully considered, with the local planning authority having an opportunity to assess the scope and feasibility of any work needed to remedy these issues during the pause, so that this can be fully considered by the Inspector.
  - Consideration should be given to the option of the local planning authority making a commitment to review the plan or particular policies in the plan within an agreed period, where this would enable the Inspector to conclude that the plan is sound and meets the other legal requirements.
- 2.27 If considered necessary the Council may ask the Inspector to recommend modifications to the Plan that would address any issues with soundness or procedural requirements that are identified during the examination. The Inspector can only recommend modifications if the Council asks them to do so, and where they are necessary to achieve a sound plan.
- 2.28 Upon adoption the Local Plan will replace the Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD, and any remaining saved Unitary Development Plan policies and allocations (see Appendix 1 of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan for more information).
- 2.29 The Oldham Local Plan will sit alongside PfE, as part of a suite of documents that form the development plan for the Borough. which also includes the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan and Joint Minerals Plan. Together these documents will inform decision-making on development proposals and planning applications in the Borough of Oldham.
- 2.30 The costs for the examination of the Local Plan are estimated to be around £143,000. This includes the planning inspector fees; the funding of a programme officer (who will manage the examination process and act as the conduit between the inspector(s), the Council and

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those who wish to take part in the examination) from submission through to receipt of the Inspectors Report; and additional preparation costs.

### 3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 **Option 1:** Members approve submission of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan, Policies Map and supporting documentation to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for examination following the period of representations, pursuant to Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Advantages – this is the next stage in the Local Plan review having carried several periods of consultation and when adopted will ensure that the Council has in place an up-to-date Local Plan in place that supports implementation of PfE at a Borough-wide level. Thereby, providing a planning policy framework to enable delivery of the Council’s regeneration ambitions and Building a Better Oldham, whilst meeting requirements of national planning policy and regulations.

Disadvantages - there are no disadvantages to this option as it provides a positive planning policy framework for the Borough and meets the legislative requirements at this stage in the preparation of a Local Plan.

- 3.2 **Option 2:** Members do not approve submission of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan, Policies Map and supporting documentation to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for examination following the period of representations, pursuant to Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Advantages – there are no advantages to this option.

Disadvantages - not approving submission of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan would mean that we are not able to progress preparation of the Local Plan to the next stage. Without an up-to-date Local Plan in place the Council would be reliant on the existing Core Strategy (elements of which are out of date) and the strategic policies in PfE when making decisions on planning applications for the foreseeable future. The Council would not have the benefit of the positive planning framework set out in the Publication Plan that supports implementation of PfE at a Borough-wide level whilst enabling delivery of our Council regeneration ambitions and priorities.

### 4 Preferred Option

- 4.1 To approve submission of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan, Policies Map and supporting documentation to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for examination following the period of representations, pursuant to Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

### 5 Consultation

- 5.1 Details of consultation carried out to date and the process for the Publication Plan consultation can be found in paragraphs 2.20 to 2.22 above.

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## 6 **Financial Implications**

- 6.1 Oldham Local Plan examination cost is estimated to be around £143k. This includes Planning Inspector fees, the appointment of a Program Officer, and associated preparation costs.
- 6.2 The expenditure will be fully funded from the Local Plan Reserve, which currently has a balance of £227k.
- 6.3 As the timing of the examination is outside of the Council's direct control, it is anticipated that the examination costs may commence towards the latter part of 2026/27 and could potentially run into 2027/28. The £143k use of reserves will therefore need to be ringfenced for this activity.
- 6.4 Following the utilisation of £143k from the reserve, the remaining balance on the Local Plan Reserve will be approximately £84k.

(Mohammed Hussain)

## 7 **Legal Implications**

- 7.1 In accordance with section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 a local planning authority must submit every Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination. The purpose of the independent examination is to determine whether the plan is considered to be sound (section 20(5)(b)). Regulation 4(3)(ca) of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 requires the decision to approve the submission of a local plan to the Secretary of State to be made by full Council. (A Evans)

## 8. **Procurement Implications**

- 8.1 None. (SKapoor- Commercial Procurement Unit).

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

- 9.1 An Oldham Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out to inform preparation of the Publication Plan as part of the Integrated Assessment.
- 9.2 In summary the assessment found that the Publication Plan has a neutral impact on most equality characteristics, except for age and disability on which it was considered to have a strong positive impact.
- 9.3 The assessment found that the Publication Plan is very likely to have a strong positive impact on the council's three missions / corporate priorities – A Great Place to Live; Green and Growing; and Happier Healthier Lives, over the long-term.

## 10 **Key Decision**

- 10.1 N/A

## 11 **Key Decision Reference**

- 11.1 N/A

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12      **Background Papers**

The Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan Consultation report to Cabinet on 19 January 2026 can be found at

<https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=144&MId=9619&Ver=4>

Details of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan can be found at

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local\\_plan\\_review/3319/publication\\_plan](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review/3319/publication_plan)

Details of Oldham's Local Plan Review can be found at

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local\\_plan\\_review](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review).

National Planning Policy Framework can be found at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF\\_December\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf) .

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 can be found at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents> .

13      **Appendices**

N/A