Emergency Powers Decision Report

Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Growth
Directorate: Place
Report Author: Elizabeth Dryden-Stuart, Head of Strategic Planning and Transport; Emma Brennan, Graduate Planning Officer (Policy)
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Date of Decision: 19 October 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

Following receipt of the Inspector's Report on the Independent Examination of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan, Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority must now decide what action to take in response to the recommended modifications; and if the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum.

Recommendations are to approve:

1. The recommended modifications to be made to the submission Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan, as set out in the Inspector's Report to Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority of the Independent Examination of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan, and publication of the Decision Statement.

2. Submission of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan for the plan period up to 2045, subject to the recommended modifications (see recommendation 1), to a referendum based on the area that was designated as a Neighbourhood Area by the Peak District National Park Authority on 11 November 2016 and by Oldham Council on 21 November 2016.

3. Reason for urgency

The Inspector's Report on the independent examination of the submission Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan was received by Saddleworth Parish Council, the PDNPA and Oldham Council on the 17th September 2026. The report finds that subject to specified modifications, the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements and should be submitted to a referendum. As per Regulation 17A of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, we now have 5 weeks from the day immediately following that on which we received the Inspector's Report to decide what action to take in response to the modifications recommended. A decision is therefore required by 23rd October 2026.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

The Council, as lead authority for the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan, would fail to meet Regulation 17A of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, which requires publication of the Decision Statement (see Appendix 2 of the main report) within 5 weeks from the day immediately following that on which we received the Inspector's Report (which is 23rd October 2026).

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

If Oldham approves the modifications recommended by the Independent Inspector, Oldham Council will then need to publish a decision statement and subsequently arrange a referendum for the Neighbourhood Plan.

The referendum is estimated to cost approximately £0.065m, with the possibility of claiming a £0.020m grant from the MHCLG towards the administration of the referendum proceedings. The estimated costs will need to be funded from existing revenue budget held within the Planning Service. The estimated net cost of the referendum has already been assumed within the current Planning forecast for 2026/27.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name
Date
Comments

If the Council approves the modifications recommended by the Independent Inspector, a referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan will be required. The referendum is estimated to cost £65k, with up to £20k of grant funding available from MHCLG towards administration costs. The net cost will be funded from existing Planning Service revenue budgets.

It should be noted that the Planning Service is currently forecasting a potential overspend of £180k by the year end. This potential additional cost would increase the forecast overspend position as at 31 March 2027.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name: Alex Bougatef
Date: 13 October 2026
Comments:

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required and it cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.