

## Conserving and Enhancing the Landscape

- 9.68 This policy sets out how development will need to consider the important features and characteristics of the borough's landscapes in a way that enables sustainable, high-quality development and place-making, and contributes to delivering nature positive outcomes.

### Policy G8 - Conserving and Enhancing the Landscape

Development should reflect and respond to the quality, character and sensitivity of the landscape, as identified through the Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment and the emerging borough-wide Landscape Character Assessment. The features and values of local landscapes is an important ecosystem service and therefore should also be considered as part of any assessment of green and blue infrastructure.

Development will be permitted where it demonstrably:

- a) conserves or enhances local landscape character, landscape features and local distinctiveness, having regard not only to its immediate location but its surroundings and context;
- b) conserves or enhances important views and features, and takes opportunities to create new local views and vistas;
- c) enhances the landscape setting of the site by improving the character, appearance and condition of access corridors, gateways, settlement edges and landscape features, including historic environment assets where appropriate; and,
- d) provides public benefits from green and blue infrastructure and contributes to creating a high quality natural and physical environment.

There will be a presumption against development where it would have a significant adverse effect on:

- e) the special qualities and sensitivities of a local landscape character area;
- f) the quality, character and sensitivity of the landscape within areas of strategic green infrastructure.

In accordance with the thresholds in the council's emerging Landscape Character Assessment, any development that could have an adverse impact on the landscape character of an area should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal, undertaken by a qualified practitioner, to inform the design and location of any new development. The need for, and scope of, the appraisal should be determined through consultation with the council.

Wherever possible, development should avoid adverse impacts on landscape, and where this is not possible, provide suitable mitigation measures.

### Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-G1 Landscape Character

### Reasoned justification

- 9.69 The requirement for development to contribute to this policy will generally not be relevant for householder applications, applications for change of use, listed building consent and advertising. The council will exercise discretion and take a proportionate approach where there are potential impacts and opportunities.
- 9.70 Rochdale has a diverse and rich landscape heritage which contributes strongly to local environmental quality and the distinctive character of settlements and their settings and hosts a range of ecological and archaeological assets. Key features include large areas of open moorland; traditional upland farming patterns creating a patchwork of buildings, drystone walls and field patterns; and a series of open, often-wooded river valleys that connect into the core of the urban centre.
- 9.71 There are parts of the Borough's landscape which contain derelict, vacant or poorly managed land and where there has been significant loss of landscape quality, character and features. In many cases such locations are in and around the edges of urban areas which can result in increased pressure on the landscape. In these areas there are significant opportunities to improve place-making and environmental quality by enhancing the character and features of the landscape, whilst also contributing to green infrastructure, nature recovery, and the provision of nature-based solutions.
- 9.72 The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. Policies are needed to ensure that development is designed to protect and enhance landscapes to help achieve well-designed places, plan for climate change, and conserve and enhance the natural environment.
- 9.73 The Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment (GMLCSA) assessed the quality and sensitivity of different landscapes. It identified the following landscape character types and landscape character areas in Rochdale and sets out evidence of their characteristics and sensitivities:

#### Landscape Character Types

- Open Moorlands and Enclosed Upland Fringes
- Pennine Foothills
- Incised Urban Fringe Valleys
- Urban Fringe Farmland

#### Landscape Character Areas

- Rough Hill to Brun Moor
- Rochdale and Oldham South Pennine Foothills
- Simister, Slattocks and Healds Green
- Knowl and Rooley Moors, Fringes and Foothills
- River Roch

- Prettywood, Pilsworth and Unsworth Moss

9.74 To complement the Greater Manchester study and provide additional guidance for planning and development, the Council is undertaking a Landscape Character Assessment. This will identify and explain the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place and particular local value. These landscape studies provide an important source of evidence for developers and will be used by the council to assess the impact of development proposals and the suitability of any proposed mitigation measures.