

Enhancing Local Distinctiveness and Improving Local Character

- 10.21 This policy aims to enhance the special character the borough has to offer and to celebrate its distinct uniqueness across each township and local areas. By prioritising distinctiveness there are many wider-ranging benefits. Enhancing distinctiveness in placemaking can contribute to economic outcomes, support the wellbeing of residents and play a part in reducing some of the impact of complex multifaceted social issues connected with deprived neighbourhoods.

Policy PE4 - Enhancing Local Distinctiveness and Improving Local Character

Development proposals should be designed around features which support and enhance local character and identity, reflect the unique character of the area, and promote, celebrate and enhance local distinctiveness.

Development should have a positive impact on image and sense of place, reflecting history and culture, whilst enriching the local built environment. Where development is designed sympathetically and has regard to the significance of its character and heritage features, this will be supported.

Development should have regard to the following characteristics of a local area:

- a. Topography and landscape features;
- b. Historic assets and features, including views of, to and from them;
- c. Pattern, size and arrangement of street blocks, plots and buildings, including building lines;
- d. Scale and shape of buildings, including height, massing, silhouettes and roofscapes;
- e. Vertical and horizontal rhythms
- f. Materials, boundary treatments and landscaping;
- g. Vistas, panoramas and views of natural and built landmarks;
- h. Make reference to an area's main (or former) uses, local traditions, social history and cultural expression.
- i. Link key destinations together with enhanced connectivity and movement
- j. Be compatible with the existing character

Proposals should reflect an understanding of the context of the area. Where there is no distinct local character in place, development should contribute to enhancing a distinctive and coherent environment. The Council will refuse applications where the harm to local character outweighs the proposed benefits.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-P2: Heritage

Policy JP-P3: Cultural Facilities

Reasoned Justification

- 10.22 Rochdale has a rich and diverse history of enterprise and industrialism. Responding appropriately to local identity and contributing to establishing local character are key to raising design standards and creating an attractive and distinctive environment. New development should integrate and be sympathetic to local architecture and placemaking that respects the borough's heritage. Enhancing heritage assets also plays an important role in supporting the visitor economy. Locally appropriate, sensitive design can improve the image and attractiveness of an area and help reinforce local identity, culture, sense of community and promote a meaningful place.
- 10.23 Creating a strong identity is fundamental to good design and character. In areas with strong local architectural styles, the character and local distinctiveness of the area should be respected so that it is maintained and where appropriate, enhanced. Places that have been well considered in proposals should incorporate the unique and historical features of a place.
- 10.24 The Council will support development plans that positively take into consideration and sympathetically respond to local heritage assets, where they improve poor existing urban and natural environments, they enhance the boroughs special qualities and reveal the significance of the historic environment.
- 10.25 The design of development should be inspired by the distinctive qualities of the place where it is situated and should respond to the features of the local character, such as vertical and horizontal rhythms created by window arrangements and architectural composition. Where applicable, materials and boundary treatments should be of high quality and materials used in development and placemaking should reflect the character of the local area. Locally important heritage assets that are of value to a community, should be sympathetically restored and reflect the character of the area.
- 10.26 Alterations to existing buildings and new development should be designed to complement the local distinctiveness of an area and make a positive contribution to the quality of the local environment. Any service elements including appropriate utilities, waste and recycling provision, cycle storage, Electric Vehicle charging points and heat pumps etc. should be included without causing detriment to the street scene. Where appropriate, consideration should also be given to mitigating the impacts of climate change, through opportunities to make use of site layout, building orientation and design features to increase sustainability and energy efficiency.
- 10.27 Where applicable, development should take into consideration the setting, character and appearance of (and including) Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and other important heritage assets. New development where necessary, should preserve, maintain and make reference to locally important natural features and water assets (such as at Hollingworth Lake, Rochdale Canal etc.) and ensure the preservation of memories and associations to the local environment are complimented. Development proposals should also seek to maintain locally important views, open spaces, vistas, or landscape features, particularly in edge of settlement or rural locations and where appropriate, enhance natural and built features.
- 10.28 Restoration of heritage assets that are at risk of further decline should be prioritised. Where there is no distinct local character in place, development should make a

contribution to enhancing a distinctive and coherent environment. The Council will refuse applications where inappropriate development, and the loss of harm is considered to outweigh the proposed benefits.