



Rochdale Borough Local Plan Publication Plan

July 2026



ROCHDALE
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Document Control

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Summary

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	6
2. Spatial Portrait	9
3. The Spatial Vision	14
4. Strategic Objectives	15
5. Rochdale Spatial Strategy - A Place for Growth	18
6. A Sustainable and Resilient Place	32
7. A Prosperous Place	46
8. A Place for Homes	70
9. A Greener Place	86
10. A Place for People	110
11. A Connected Place	138
12. Development Management	159

List of Figures

Figure 1	Planning Policy Hierarchy
Figure 2	North East Growth Corridor
Figure 3	Local Plan Key Diagram
Figure 4	Rochdale Borough Townships
Figure 5	Heywood Township
Figure 6	Middleton Township
Figure 7	Pennines Township
Figure 8	Rochdale Township
Figure 9	Heat Network Zones
Figure 10	Rochdale's River and Canal Network

List of Tables

Table 1	List of Employment Zones
Table 2	Rochdale's Housing Requirement to 2039
Table 3	Tree Replacement Requirements
Table 4	Open Space Standards
Table 5	Open Space Typologies

Appendices

Appendix 1	List of Local Centres
Appendix 2	Parking Standards
Appendix 3	Transport Statements
Appendix 4	Accessibility Criteria

List of Policies

6. A Sustainable and Resilient Place	33
Sustainable and Energy Efficient Development	33
Climate Resilience	35
Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Infrastructure	37
Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage	40
Managing Water Quality and Efficiency	42
Reducing the Impact of Pollution, Contamination and Land instability	44
7. A Prosperous Place	47
Hierarchy of Centres	48
Creating Vibrant Main Town Centres	50
Primary Shopping Areas in Town Centres	55
Local and District Centres and Local Shops	56
Out of Centre Retail and Leisure Uses	59
Delivering Employment Floorspace	61
Business, Industry and Warehousing Development	63
Office Development	65
Employment Zones and Existing Employment Sites	66
Promoting the Visitor and Rural Economy	69
8. A Place for Homes	71
Delivering the Right Amount of Housing in the Right Places	71
Delivering the Right Types of Homes	72
Providing Affordable Homes	75
Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	78
Homes to meet specialist housing and supported living needs	79
Homes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers	82
Householder Applications	85
9. A Greener Place	87
Nature Positive Development	87
Green and Blue Infrastructure	88
Watercourses and their Settings	93
Urban Greening	97
Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands	99
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	105
Conserving and Enhancing the Landscape	108

10. A Place for People	111
A Well-Designed Borough.....	111
Achieving a Healthy Place	113
Health and Wellbeing.....	115
Hot Food Takeaways.....	117
Enhancing Local Distinctiveness and Improving Local Character.....	119
Preserving Heritage in the Borough	121
Non-Designated Heritage Assets	124
Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments.....	125
Delivering Services and Facilities in the Community	126
Providing Social Value and Supporting Economic Inclusion	128
Improving Facilities for Education and Skills in the Borough	130
Residential Development and School Places	131
Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities	132
11. A Connected Place	139
Delivering Transport Priorities	139
Creating Sustainable Streets	141
Parking Provision and Drop-off Facilities.....	143
Transport Statements, Assessments and Travel Plans for New Development.....	145
Accessibility Criteria.....	148
Active Travel – Walking, Wheeling and Cycling	149
Bee Network – Public Transport	151
Strategic Road Network	154
Local Highway Network	156
Maximising Local Transport Network Operation.....	157
12. Development Management.....	160
General Development Requirements	160
Delivering Planning Contributions and Infrastructure	161

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A Local Plan is a planning document produced by Local Authorities to guide decisions on future development proposals and address the needs and opportunities of the area. The Local Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and be consistent with the government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.2 The plan will build on key themes for the borough as set out in the Places for Everyone Joint development plan document, including boosting Northern Competitiveness, increasing the attractiveness of the northern areas to highly paid, highly skilled workers, tackling inequality, creating new employment opportunities, revitalising green spaces and reshaping town centres.
- 1.3 In the last decade, the borough has undergone significant changes, with this plan including opportunities for transformational growth, particularly through developments such as at Atom Valley. The challenge for the Local Plan is to balance and facilitate further economic investment and promote sustainable neighbourhoods and environments whilst maximising development opportunities.

Context of the Local Plan

National Planning Policy

- 1.4 The NPPF provides a framework within which locally prepared plans can be produced and is supported by several other policy documents. Development plans are written in accordance with planning law, legislation, guidance and national planning policy as identified in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Therefore, the new Rochdale Local Plan has been underpinned by national guidance and in alignment with the adopted Places for Everyone plan (PfE).
- 1.5 As the planning system in England is plan-led, this means that an adopted local plan is used as a mechanism to decide planning applications by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). For an application to be successful, planning permission is determined by applications being in accordance with the policies outlined in the Local Plan.

Places for Everyone (PfE)

- 1.6 PfE was adopted in March 2024 and sets the strategic context for nine of the ten districts of Greater Manchester (excluding Stockport). This includes setting overall requirements for housing and employment growth and allocating a number of strategic development sites in the borough to assist in meeting these targets. The strategic allocations will deliver around 4000 new homes and 420,000 square metres of employment floorspace.

- 1.7 This Local Plan provides a more detailed set of locally specific planning policies that sit alongside the PfE plan. This Local Plan will therefore be consistent and complimentary to PfE policies, whilst addressing the more local, spatial priorities within the borough. The Local Plan must therefore be read as whole and together with the Places for Everyone plan.

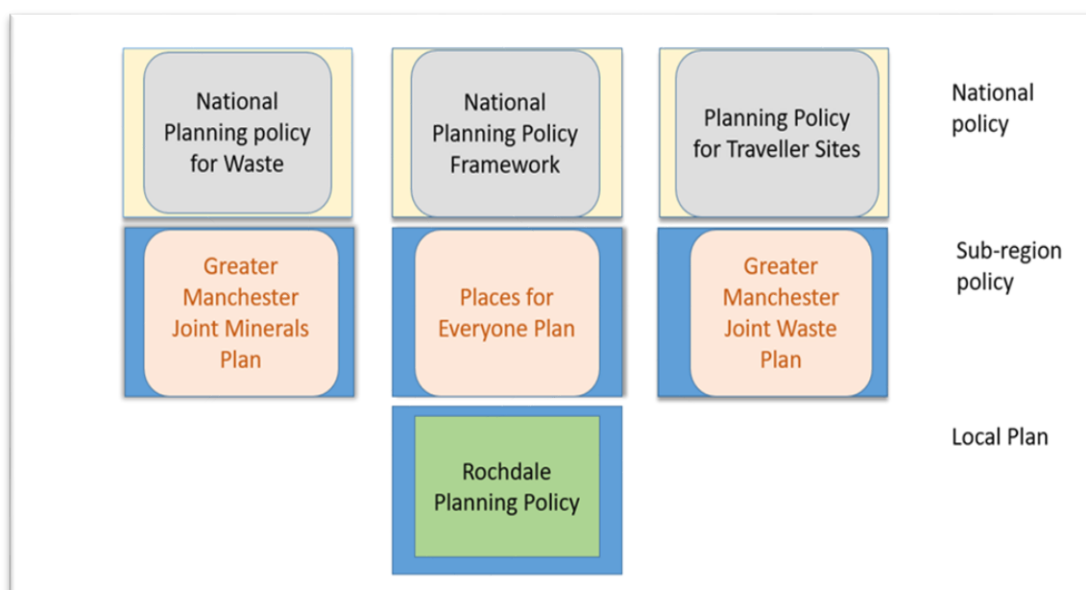
Greater Manchester Joint Minerals and Waste Plans

- 1.8 Rochdale along with the other nine Local Authorities in Greater Manchester is responsible for land use planning matters related to waste and minerals development. The Greater Manchester districts produced a Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document (the Waste Plan) adopted in 2012, and a Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan Document (the Minerals Plan) which was adopted in 2013. A review of the Joint Waste and Minerals Plan has indicated that there is a need to update both plans which is expected to commence shortly.
- 1.9 The Waste Plan provides development management policy relating to all types of waste arising and allocates sites to provide sufficient waste management facilities across the city-region. The Minerals plan provides a guide to operators and the public about where mineral extraction may take place in the future and safeguards mineral resources from other forms of development.

Policy Hierarchy

- 1.10 Figure 1 below sets out the hierarchy of planning policies that are relevant to Rochdale.

Figure 1: Planning policy hierarchy



- 1.11 The Local Plan, Places for Everyone Joint Plan and the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals and Waste Plans (including any new replacement ones) should be read in conjunction, informing the plan making decision process for the borough. This Local Plan therefore does not need to include policies that are covered within other development plan documents or in national policy.
- 1.12 There are also a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that form part of the borough's planning policy. These are either for specific sites such as regeneration areas, or strategic sites allocated through the Places for Everyone Plan, or, or for thematic areas such as housing and nature conservation. These are available on the Council website.¹

Rochdale strategies

- 1.13 The Local Plan is also written in the context of other Council policies and strategies. The main document 'People, Place and Planet – Council Plan 2028' sets out the Council's corporate priorities around under those three headings. Therefore, these priorities are considered in the formulation of Local Plan policies and objectives.
- 1.14 The Local Plan also takes into account other Council strategies where relevant, such as Rochdale's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2025-30).

Evidence base

- 1.15 The Council has undertaken research to help inform the proposals and policies in this Plan. This is called the evidence base, and includes background information, the Council's existing strategies as well as specially commissioned studies on topics where more detailed information was needed. A list of the full evidence base underpinning the Plan can be found on the Council's website local plan pages.

¹ [Supplementary Planning Documents \(SPDs\) and guidance | Planning briefs and Supplementary Planning Documents | Rochdale Borough Council](#)

2. Spatial Portrait

- 2.1 The borough of Rochdale is located in the northeast of Greater Manchester, the major conurbation in the northwest region of England. It borders other Greater Manchester districts of Oldham, Bury and Manchester, as well as Rossendale, Blackburn with Darwen and Calderdale.
- 2.2 The borough is made up of four main towns, with Rochdale, Heywood Littleborough and Middleton as the main centres for amenities. The borough is split into five townships – Rochdale North, Rochdale South, Heywood, Middleton and Pennines - which are considered in more detail in the Spatial Strategy.

Transport

- 2.3 Rochdale is well connected to both the city-region, West Yorkshire and the North of England, through its position on the Strategic Road Network, Rail Network and Greater Manchester Bee Network.
- 2.4 The M62 motorway runs through the borough, connecting Manchester and Rochdale towards Leeds. The M62 supports a variety of businesses in the borough and is at the centre of significant plans for economic development. In the south of the borough, the M60 motorway connects Rochdale to the neighbouring towns in the city-region, and connections to North Wales and the south of England via the M56 and M6. To the west of the borough, between Heywood and Bury, the M66 connects the borough to Rossendale and central Lancashire.
- 2.5 There are five railway stations in the borough, (Mills Hill, Castleton, Rochdale Smithybridge and Littleborough) with direct links to Manchester Victoria and Leeds, and other parts of the North West and Yorkshire.
- 2.6 The Metrolink opened in 2014 and connects Rochdale through Oldham to Manchester city centre and South Manchester. This includes stops at Kingsway Business Park, a major employment centre, and the settlements of Milnrow and Newhey in the Pennines township. Plans are progressing to deliver further transport and connectivity improvements in the borough, with a Tram-Train Pathfinder (Oldham – Rochdale – Castleton – Heywood – Bury), and to extend the Metrolink / busway to improve connections from the centre of Manchester to Middleton / Northern Gateway.
- 2.7 There has also been significant investment in the buses in the borough, operated under a locally controlled franchised system, forming part of the Bee Network, overseen by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM). New Bee Network buses were introduced in 2024, many of which are zero-emission vehicles, in the recognisable yellow branding. Further investment in the public transport network is planned through several Quality Bus Corridors, which will improve linkages both within the borough and to neighbouring areas, including Bury, Oldham and Ashton-under-Lyne.

Economy

- 2.8 The borough is home to several major existing employment sites along the M62 corridor, including Heywood Distribution Park, Stakehill Industrial Estate and Kingsway Business Park. This area is at the heart of plans for transformational change in the region as part of Atom Valley, spanning across three Local Authorities, with the potential to create up to 20,000 jobs. The Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ) was established in 2022 to accelerate the development process and align public and private investment. The area is expected to span a range of sectors such as manufacturing, materials and machinery, as part of an innovation cluster. On Kingsway Business Park, the Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing Centre (SMMC) is under construction, which will support these objectives and link research and business development.
- 2.9 Rochdale already has a high proportion of jobs in manufacturing, as well as a higher proportion of jobs in sectors such as retail, car repair and transport and storage. While plans for economic growth build on existing sectors in the region, they are also aimed at opportunities to boost skills and access high-quality jobs and training for local residents.
- 2.10 The borough is home to several higher and further education institutions, including Hopwood Hall College in Rochdale, and Hopwood Hall College and University Centre in Middleton. Rochdale Sixth Form College is also located in Rochdale Town Centre.

Demographics

- 2.11 Rochdale does have a relatively young population, with a higher proportion of children under 15 than the national and regional averages. An effect of this is that the population is expected to grow faster than the regional and national averages.
- 2.12 There are over 80 different spoken and written languages used in the borough of Rochdale, with approximately 10% not speaking English as their first or main language.
- 2.13 The demographics of Rochdale borough and within townships is mixed, with affluent parts but also some of the country's most deprived wards. In 2019 the borough was ranked as the 15th most deprived Local Authority in England, with 30% of the population being in the top 10% most deprived areas nationally.
- 2.14 The health needs of the borough are shaped by large areas of deprivation. Healthy life expectancy for female residents is 58.5 years and for males is 57.4 years, which is significantly lower than the national rates of 63.9 and 63.

Housing

- 2.15 Rochdale has a need to deliver a greater number and mix of houses, to meet the needs of a growing population. Different parts of the borough have distinctive housing market characteristics, but all provide opportunities to deliver the range and quality of housing that the borough needs.

- 2.16 In the inner urban areas of Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale, land in and around town centres and close to railway stations can help to deliver regeneration and provide new homes at a range of densities, including affordable homes. Other parts of the borough, particularly outer areas and the rural fringe, have the potential to deliver larger, higher value homes. This is important across the borough given the current higher than average proportion of homes in council tax bands A and B. In delivering these types of dwellings it will still be important to ensure a supply of affordable homes to meet local needs and deliver inclusive communities.

Historic Environment

- 2.17 The borough has a rich historic environment, characterised by its industrial heritage and mill buildings, as well as grand municipal buildings, the most notable being the recently refurbished Grade-I listed Rochdale Town Hall in Rochdale Town Centre. In Middleton, there are a number of listed buildings designed by renowned local architect Edgar Wood. In total there are 30 Conservation Areas and 370 listed buildings in the borough.
- 2.18 However, several listed buildings and Conservation Areas in the borough are included on the Heritage at Risk register. There has been recent investment in these areas to improve the quality of the built environment, with a Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) established in Rochdale Town Centre and Drake Street receiving an Historic England grant for targeted regeneration. A Middleton Heritage Trail was also recently funded to showcase the town's impressive heritage assets.
- 2.19 There are several Scheduled Monuments in the borough, including Blackstone Edge Roman Road, and the Wayside Cross located on Slate Pit Hill, both to the east of Littleborough. The Ellenroad Ring Mill is also in Pennines, located in Milnrow. Finally, March Barn Bridge, is situated on the Rochdale Canal in Castleton. There are four Registered Parks and Gardens in the borough – three in Rochdale (Broadfield Park, Falinge Park and Rochdale Cemetery) and one in Heywood (Queen's Park).
- 2.20 There are also a number of non-designated heritage assets across the borough, including industrial and mill buildings, farm buildings, public houses, churches and residential dwellings. The borough also has significant archaeological potential, ranging from the prehistoric period, through the medieval age up to its industrial heyday.
- 2.21 Key heritage assets within the borough (both designated and non-designated) include but are not limited to the following:
- Industrial heritage - this includes the borough's mills and ancillary buildings. It also includes the canals and canal structures and the railways and associated infrastructure. This category also includes evidence of early industry, such as domestic loom-shops,
 - Victorian and Edwardian Architecture and Open Spaces during the borough's industrial heyday. These assets include public buildings and spaces such as the Town Hall and many of the borough's parks. Some domestic architecture from this period. This includes the housing of wealthy industrialists, as well as examples of the more modest workers' housing.

- The architecture of Edgar Wood and J.H Sellers. Edgar Wood was an eminent local architect, and his buildings can be found across the borough, with the highest concentration in his hometown of Middleton. Some of his most famous buildings, were undertaken as part of a partnership with J. H Sellers.
- Vernacular and rural architecture and landscapes, predating the industrial revolution. This includes the small, rural settlements, known locally as folds, found throughout the borough, and associated farmhouses, loomshops, barns and laithe houses.
- Rochdale was the birthplace of the Cooperative Movement in the 19th century. Much of the architecture associated with the Rochdale Pioneers and the Labour Movement survives, including the first co-operative store on Toad Lane, today the home of the Rochdale Pioneers Museum.
- Archaeology:
 - a. Prehistoric sites are predominantly, but not exclusively, found in the Southern Pennine Fringe to the North and East of the borough such as Windy Hill and Piethorne Reservoir.
 - b. There is evidence of Romano-British activity within the north-east of the borough around Littleborough. This includes the Littleborough Hoard, chance finds and possible early evidence around the scheduled Blackstone Edge Roman Road.
 - c. The archaeological potential of our town centres includes a rich tapestry of Medieval and Post-Medieval settlement and Early Industrial development capturing the establishment and occupation of towns within the borough through these periods, as well as the later archaeological evidence for the pioneering invention and boom of these towns during the Industrial Revolution.

Environment

- 2.22 Rochdale has a number of protected sites for nature, with the largest being the South Pennine Moors on the eastern side of the borough, which is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and (in part) designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA), and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Rochdale Canal SAC and SSI also runs through the borough. There are currently 50 designated Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) which are located throughout the borough.
- 2.23 There are a range of water resources including several reservoirs in the northern and eastern parts of the borough, the River Roch which runs through Littleborough, Rochdale and Heywood, and the River Irk which runs through Middleton before joining the Irwell in Manchester City Centre. Parts of the borough are at a higher risk of flooding from rivers and surface water.
- 2.24 There are 10 Green Flag parks located throughout the borough which are important for exercise and recreation, including Broadfield Park in Rochdale, Queen's Park in Heywood, Milnrow Memorial Park in Pennines and Truffet Park in Middleton.

- 2.25 In July 2019, Rochdale Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency and launched a Climate Strategy and Delivery Plan, as well as supporting the Biodiversity Emergency declared by the GMCA in 2022.

3. The Spatial Vision

- 3.1 The below section sets a vision for the borough for 2039, that the plan's objectives and thematic policies will seek to contribute to.

People, Place, Planet - Planning for Resilient Growth

The Local Plan will support the Council's priorities by tackling health, poverty and environmental inequalities, minimising the impacts of climate change, and creating opportunities that will improve the lives and prospects of everyone. It is a spatial portrait of how we will manage the use of land and natural resources to deliver resilient growth for all. By 2039, our Local Plan for Resilient Growth will have enabled investment in our people, places, and planet, and helped us respond to the significant challenges and opportunities we face in a rapidly changing world.

The borough will be a more vibrant and attractive place to live and work, with a strong economic core around the transformative investment at Atom Valley, which will provide space for high value business development and innovation, as a driver for economic growth in the city-region. Residents will be able to access high-quality jobs due to significant investments in transport infrastructure, linking new and existing residential areas. New job opportunities will help to deliver a more prosperous borough with improved living standards, higher wages and a more skilled workforce.

Our town centres will be revitalised, as attractive places to live, work, and spend leisure time in, linked by high-quality public realm and spaces for walking and cycling. Delivering new homes in sustainable locations in town centres and near railway stations, as well as through strategic sites, will significantly broaden the housing offer in the borough. New development will be designed to a high quality and reflect local character, supporting active lifestyles and sustainable travel, which will improve the health and wellbeing of residents.

The energy demands of homes, buildings, transport and infrastructure will be reduced and more renewable energy will be produced and used locally. Investment in our green infrastructure will help us to make space for nature, reduce the local impacts of climate change, air pollution and flood risk, and create a more attractive place for people to live, work and visit. The borough's water and other natural resources will be managed in a sustainable way, without depleting those for future generations. A more resilient and resurgent natural environment will be central to economic growth and people's quality of life.

4. Strategic Objectives

- 4.1 The following strategic objectives link to the plan's Vision and the Council's corporate priorities of people, place and planet. In short, these objectives support the overarching aim of the National Planning Policy Framework in achieving sustainable development. These are grouped under six thematic areas, accompanied by more specific objectives underneath.

SO1: A Sustainable and Resilient Place

- Contributing to the Greater Manchester target of net zero by 2038;
- Requiring all development to be highly energy efficient and designed to minimise associated carbon emissions;
- Supporting the production of renewable energy where appropriate;
- Increasing the borough's resilience to the effects of climate change, with a focus on nature-based solutions;
- Embedding sustainable water management principles in development through sustainable drainage and water efficiency measures;
- Reducing the likelihood and impacts of flooding through appropriate flood risk management; and
- Reducing environmental pollution and managing natural resources sustainably.

SO2: A Prosperous Place

- Deliver the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone to transform the local economy;
- Maximise the opportunities presented by the Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing Centre (SMMC) to meet the ambitions to build a world class cluster of advanced materials and manufacturing in Atom Valley;
- Support improvements to skills through training and education to maximise the benefits of this economic growth for local people;
- Establishing strong, thriving and attractive town centres which provide a range of services and meet the needs of the community;
- Delivering more homes in our town centres to create sustainable communities and increase vibrancy;
- Building on the borough's tourism assets to create a strong visitor economy;
- Support economic growth through the provision of high-quality green, social and transport infrastructure

SO3: A Place for Homes

- Delivering the number of homes required to meet housing need and support economic growth;
- Improving the range of housing to meet needs and aspirations, including affordable housing and more high value housing;
- Creating well-designed, desirable housing areas to retain and attract residents;
- Focusing housing growth on sustainable locations where it helps to deliver regeneration and economic growth (e.g. Town Centres and close to railway stations);
- Deliver homes for specific groups that addresses local needs whilst creating strong and successful communities; and

- Ensuring that new housing is supported by community facilities, service infrastructure and high-quality green and blue infrastructure.

SO4: A Greener Place

- Ensure that development achieves nature positive outcomes which deliver wider social, economic and environmental benefits;
- Protect, maintain, enhance and expand a resilient, well-connected and high-quality network of green and blue infrastructure to deliver multiple benefits;
- Recognise the value of watercourses and their settings, and promote their positive management to create attractive, healthy, resilient places;
- Protect and enhance biodiversity and support nature recovery; and
- Value landscapes to help achieve well-designed places, plan for climate change, and conserve and enhance the natural environment.

SO5: A Place for People

- Prioritises health and wellbeing in all aspects of managing the built and natural environment and therefore supporting healthier lifestyles;
- Social value is embedded into new development, thereby delivering positive outcomes for all residents;
- Communities have access to social infrastructure and leisure facilities enhancing and providing opportunities for improving health and wellbeing, active participation and reducing health inequalities;
- Ensuring the design of buildings, places and spaces delivers equity for all.
- Expecting good quality education and skills-based learning opportunities are available for all members of the community from early-years onwards;
- Create, protect and enhance distinctive places and buildings by understanding their contribution to the wider setting;
- Across the borough, the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of historic buildings, structures and places is prioritised; and
- Ensure access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for formal and informal sport and recreation and participation in activities, which also delivers wider benefits for nature, whilst supporting efforts to address climate change and enhance biodiversity.

SO6: A Connected Place

- Direct development to the most accessible locations (town / local centres and public transport corridors) or those that can be made more accessible by sustainable transport;
- Deliver strategic transport connections to drive economic growth in the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone and new and existing developments, including to the regional centre and key destinations both in and outside the Borough;
- Extend the Bee Network to offer more travel choice, maximising walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport opportunities and reduce the number and length of single occupancy car journeys;
- Ensure new development contributes to transport improvements and the use of public and other sustainable transport;
- Support measures to enhance safety and access to vulnerable road users including people with impaired mobility, protect traffic sensitive town centres and residential

communities and provide street environments that are more appealing to travel along and spend time;

- Reduce emissions from traffic to support delivery of the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan, 2050 Transport Strategy and GM “Right Mix” targets for modal shift through healthier travel behaviour and technical innovations to improve network operation; and
- Integrate the design of the transport network with other infrastructure networks and natural environmental features.

5. Rochdale Spatial Strategy - A Place for Growth

- 5.1 The Rochdale Local Plan will provide a strong framework for strategic growth in the borough and contribute to the success of Greater Manchester and the wider region, through ambitious housing and employment developments, linked to sustainable transport infrastructure. The plan will ensure that this development will be resilient to the demands from a changing climate and environment and deliver a quality of place that will support health and wellbeing.
- 5.2 The box below outlines some of the spatial priorities and interventions that will be pursued to achieve the plan's vision and objectives. Priorities relating to the borough's specific townships are considered later in this section.

Rochdale Borough – Spatial Priorities

- Promote the borough as an attractive location in terms of jobs, housing, shopping, the built and natural environment, image, tourism and quality of life;
- Deliver the development opportunities in the North-East growth corridor and Atom Valley to support the economic growth of the sub region;
- Deliver a mix of high-quality housing to meet the housing target for the borough as set out in the PfE plan;
- Deliver residential masterplans in town centres and around railway links to boost sustainable growth and regeneration in the city-region;
- Strengthen transport infrastructure and connectivity to nearby towns and cities, support future expansion of Metrolink / busway rapid transit to Middleton and the Tram-Train Pathfinder (Oldham - Rochdale - Castleton - Heywood - Bury), as well as high-quality bus corridors, and active travel improvements; and
- Deliver strategic green infrastructure and nature recovery in the city-region, secure climate resilience in the design of new development, and support opportunities for renewable energy generation where appropriate.

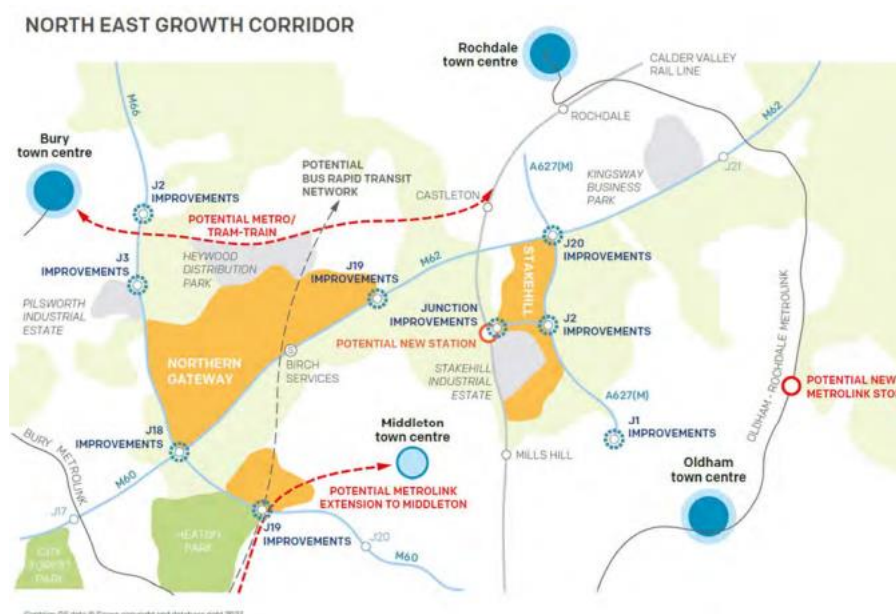
Places for Everyone

- 5.3 The Rochdale Local Plan sits under the Places for Everyone (PfE) plan, which sets the spatial strategy for the city-region, to deliver sustainable and inclusive growth. A key part of this is boosting the competitiveness of the Northern districts by the provision of significant new employment opportunities and supporting infrastructure whilst delivering high quality homes.
- 5.4 The PfE plan allocated a number of large, strategic sites for housing and employment development across all townships in the borough. This has involved working with neighbouring authorities Bury and Oldham, to deliver cross-boundary strategic sites that will provide a significant boost for economic growth in the region.

North-East Growth Corridor

- 5.5 As shown in PfE, Rochdale is positioned at the centre of a planned corridor of growth focused around the M62 and extending across Bury, Oldham and Rochdale, which is referred to in the plan as North-East Growth Corridor, or Atom Valley. This area has the potential to deliver transformative change for the borough and the wider region.
- 5.6 This has led to the designation of the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ), formal designation of the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ) covering the three key areas for growth at the Northern Gateway (policy JPA1.1 and policy JPA1.2), Stakehill (policy JPA2) and Kingsway Business Park (including the Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing Centre). The designation of the Atom Valley MDZ provides a clear mechanism to align public and private sector investment and ensure that there is commitment to the principle to delivering inclusive and sustainable growth across the three sites and adjoining towns.
- 5.7 While this area is close to an existing population which can benefit from the expected jobs and investment, it will also be alongside investments in sustainable transport infrastructure to link new and existing settlements to employment opportunities. This will be through Bus Rapid Transit connections to surrounding towns, and potential tram-train operation-linking Oldham - Rochdale - Castleton - Heywood - Bury and Metrolink / busway expansion to Middleton / Northern Gateway.

Figure 2: North-East Growth Corridor



Rail Corridor Strategy and Town Centres

- 5.8 Alongside this planned growth along the North-East corridor through strategic housing and employment allocations, the borough continues to pursue a strategy of focusing development around the borough's railway stations, and in the regeneration of town centres.

- 5.9 The Rochdale Rail Corridor strategy identifies capacity for thousands of homes close to the borough's five railway stations, as well as employment and leisure opportunities, and improvements to the public realm. Being on the Calder Valley line, these new homes would have easy access to the major cities of Manchester and Leeds, as well popular locations such as Hebden Bridge and Halifax.
- 5.10 Town centre regeneration is also a priority, with area-based masterplans and supplementary planning documents (SPDs) being produced in Rochdale, Heywood, Middleton and Littleborough, to guide development in these areas. These will have a focus on residential development around existing or planned transport, as well as active travel improvements, and an enhanced public realm.
- 5.11 The Local Plan will also support the aims of the Rochdale Growth Plan 2020-2030, which seeks to make the most of the borough's assets to deliver economic growth, around the themes of residential development, town centres, employment development, and new and improved transport infrastructure.

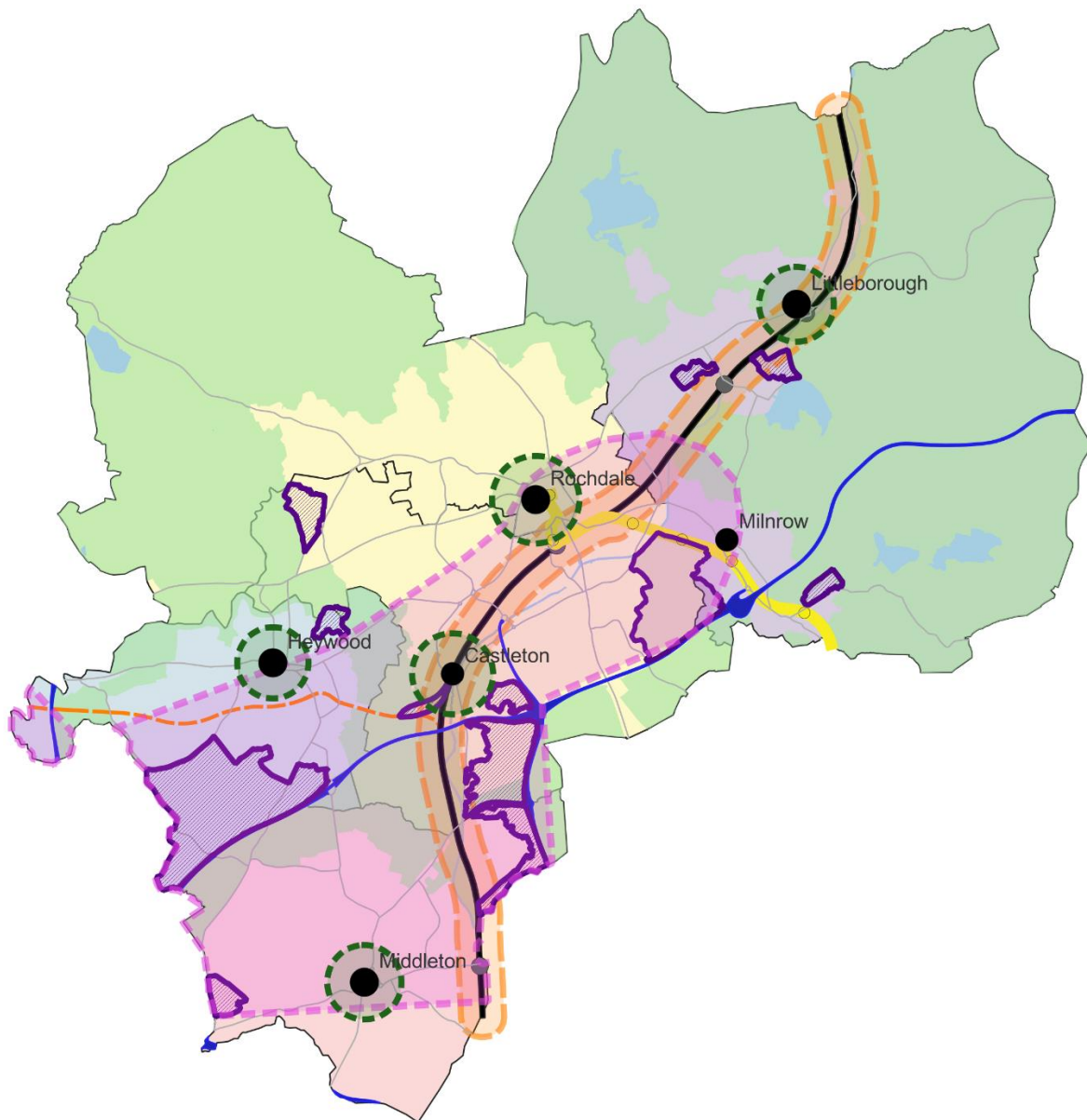
Natural Environment

- 5.12 In the context of the climate and biodiversity emergencies, it is important that economic growth is carried out in a sustainable manner. Greater Manchester has adopted a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for the city-region, which sets how and where across the region that steps for nature recovery should be taken. It notes that the strategy is not a barrier to growth and development but shows areas where nature needs continued protection or enhancement, and opportunities for creating and restoring habitats alongside other land uses.

Key Diagram

- 5.13 Figure 3 below shows the Key Diagram for the Local Plan, which sets out the main locations for growth and development, as well as transport infrastructure and the borough's townships and town and district centres.

Figure 3: Local Plan Key Diagram



Key

Settlements

- Town Centres
- Local Centres

Housing and Employment

- Town Centre Masterplan/ SPD
- North East Growth Location (inc Atom Valley)
- Strategic Development Sites (PFE)
- Kingsway Business Park

Transport Infrastructure

- Motorways
- Strategic Road Network
- Metrolink Stations
- Metrolink Line
- Railway Stations
- Railway Line
- Rail Corridor

- Proposed Tram-Train Line

- Water Environment
- Green Belt

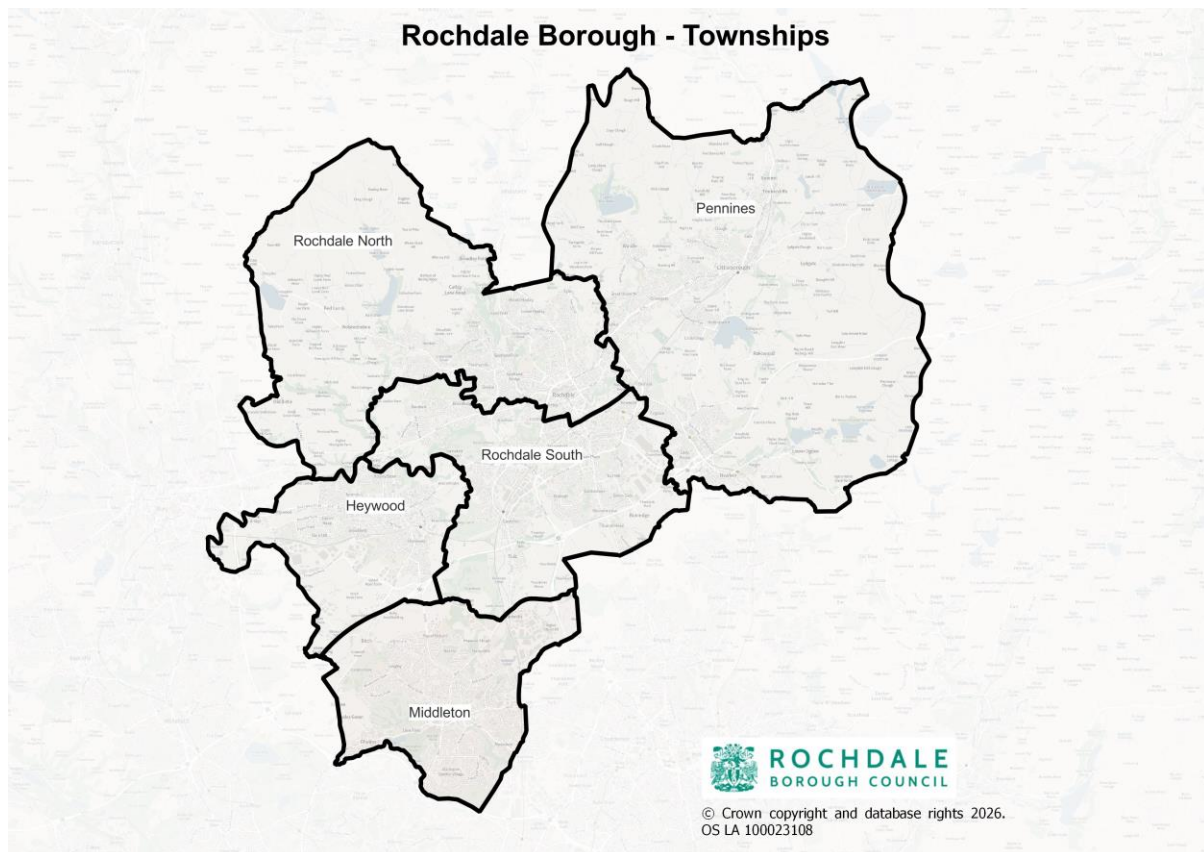
Townships

- Middleton Township
- Heywood Township
- Pennines Township
- Rochdale Township

Townships

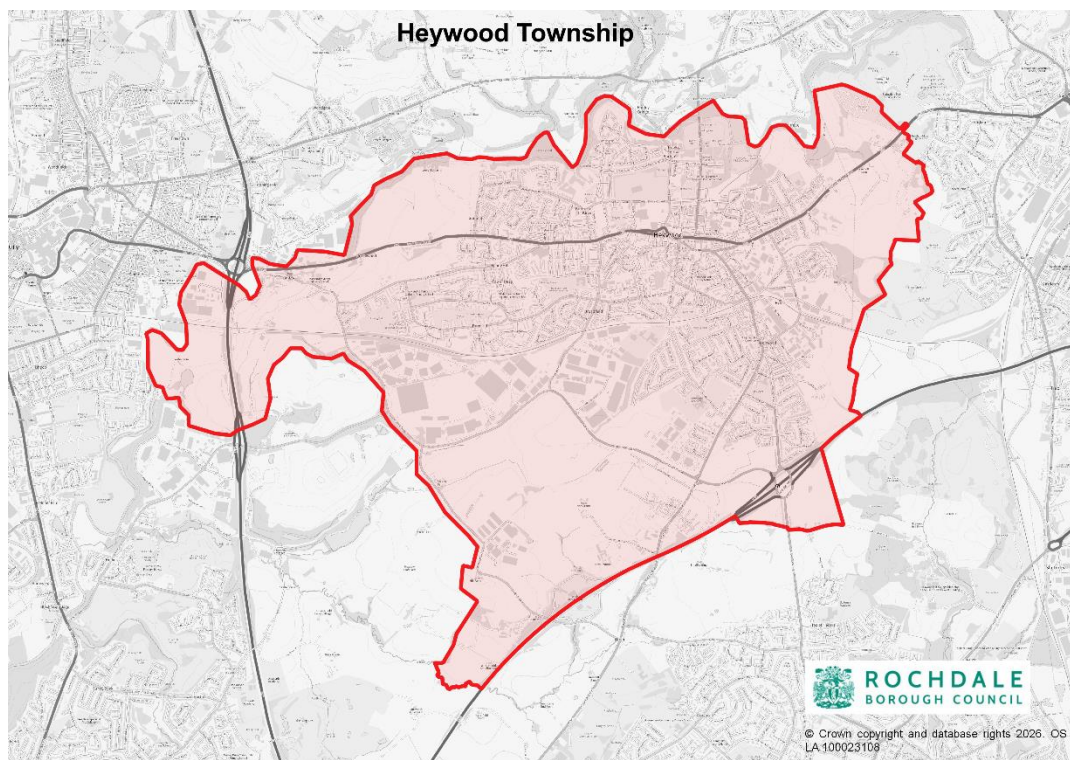
- 5.14 Rochdale borough consists of several distinct townships – Heywood, Middleton, Pennines and Rochdale (which for democratic purposes is split into North Rochdale and South Rochdale) – which each have their own distinctions and opportunities. This section provides a brief overview of each township and some of the spatial priorities which the policies in the Local Plan will seek to support.

Figure 4: Rochdale Borough Townships



Heywood

Figure 5: Heywood Township Boundary



- 5.15 Heywood is situated between the towns of Rochdale and Bury, with the urban area adjoining countryside including the Roch, Ashworth and Cheesden valleys, extending to moorland in the north. It consists of three electoral wards – West Heywood, North Heywood and Hopwood Hall.
- 5.16 A masterplan for Heywood Town Centre was adopted in 2021, which sets the vision for regeneration in the town, to deliver new residential developments, improve public realm and accessibility, and protecting and enhancing key assets. Several sites in and around the town centre have been redeveloped in recent years, with further sites under construction to deliver a mix of housing types and expand the housing offer in the town. Works to revamp Heywood Civic Centre and public square are currently underway, which will provide a focus point for leisure and culture in the town and improved open space.
- 5.17 There is also significant potential for transport improvements and associated opportunities for regeneration, with the East Lancashire Railway (ELR) extending into Heywood, and plans to connect the town to Rochdale and Bury with new tram-train technology. Due to its location by the M62 and M66, south Heywood attracts high quality distribution businesses at Heywood Distribution Park. There is also a significant development in progress close to Junction 19 of the M62, delivering new homes and employment development. Chamber House, Greater Manchester's largest publicly owned solar farm is also situated in Heywood.

Spatial Priorities - Heywood

Town Centre

- Promoting appropriate retail, leisure and cultural opportunities in a more focused town centre (Policy **PR2**)

- Delivering a mix of new homes in and around the town centre to widen housing choice (Policies **H1**, **H2**)
- Improving public realm and accessibility in the town centre (Policy **PR2**)

Housing

- Delivering high-quality residential development on the Crimble Mill strategic allocation identified in PfE (Policy **H1**)
- Completing the approved scheme at M62 Junction 19 - South Heywood and associated infrastructure (Policy **H1**)
- Delivering new homes on brownfield sites and those identified in the housing land supply to widen housing choice (Policies **H1**, **H2**)

Economy

- Delivering strategic employment allocations and associated infrastructure at Northern Gateway including the approved scheme at M62 Junction 19 – South Heywood (Policy **PR6**)
- Protecting existing employment zones including Heywood Distribution Park (Policy **PR9**)

Transport

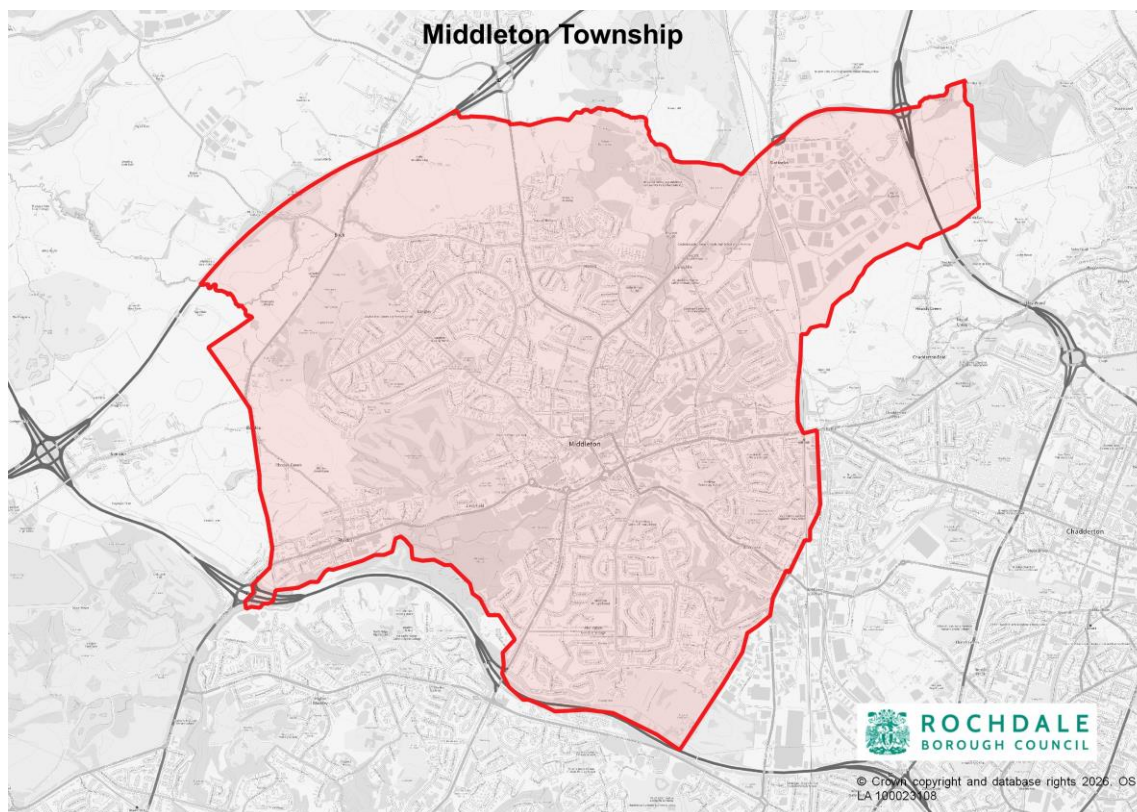
- Progressing a tram-train service connecting Heywood with Rochdale and Bury (Policy **T7**)
- Delivery of quality bus corridor through Heywood linking to Rochdale and Bury (Policy **T7**)
- Rapid Transit links from Heywood to serve the Atom Valley Growth Location (Policy **T7**)
- Improving accessibility for pedestrian and cyclists, and delivering Bee Network priorities (Policy **T6**)

Environment

- Protecting and enhancing the Roch and Ashworth Valleys as important green infrastructure and biodiversity corridors (Policies **G2**, **G3**, **G6**)
- Conserving and enhancing the character and distinctiveness of Heywood's heritage assets (Policies **PE4**, **PE5**)

Middleton

Figure 6: Middleton Township Boundary



- 5.18 Middleton lies southwest of Rochdale, adjoining Manchester, with strong connections to the city for work and leisure. The township consists of four electoral wards – North, East, South and West Middleton.
- 5.19 Currently Middleton is subject to significant regeneration ambitions, both in the town centre and as part of Atom Valley. A Middleton Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) is being established to drive forward the regeneration of Middleton. This will focus on accelerating housing and commercial growth around planned transport infrastructure and funding opportunities. A masterplan for Middleton Town Centre was adopted in 2023 to guide regeneration and placemaking in the town centre. This includes opportunities for residential development and public realm improvements, and includes significant consented sites such as Warwick Mill, a prominent building and one of many with heritage significance in the town.
- 5.20 Middleton is at the centre of the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ), with transformative employment and residential development planned at strategic sites at Northern Gateway and Stakehill, a nationally significant development to provide high-quality jobs and homes.
- 5.21 Middleton has close links to Manchester for work and leisure and so linking Middleton to the city through improved transport infrastructure, as well as to future employment opportunities at Atom Valley is essential for inclusive economic growth. Plans to extend Metrolink from the city centre to Middleton are progressing, as well as proposals to link residential areas to Atom Valley through improved bus services and Rapid Transit links.

- 5.22 In recent years there has also been significant developments outside of the centre of Middleton, such as the residential led regeneration of Langley and developments in the east of the town, close to Mills Hill Railway Station.
- 5.23 Middleton also has several natural assets and areas of green infrastructure, with the River Irk and Rochdale Canal, and Alkrington and Hopwood Woods.

Spatial Priorities – Middleton

Town Centre

- Promote the delivery of opportunities to achieve the ambitions of the proposed Middleton Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) (Policy **PR2**)
- Supporting the reuse of brownfield sites in and around Middleton Town centre for residential development (Policy **H1**)
- Supporting the visitor economy and promoting local heritage assets in Middleton Town Centre (Policy **E10**)
- Improving public realm and accessibility in the town centre (Policy **PR2**)

Housing

- Delivering the residential development identified in strategic allocated sites in PfE (Policy **H1**)
- Complete regeneration of Langley and other sites identified in the land supply to provide a mix of house types (Policy **H2**)

Economy

- Delivering strategic employment allocations, as part of the Atom Valley Growth Location (Policy **PR6**)
- Protecting existing employment zones including Stakehill Business Park (Policy **PR9**)

Transport

- Supporting plans to extend the Metrolink / busway into Middleton Town Centre (Policy **T7**)
- Delivering rapid transport link to/from Middleton, and to serve the Atom Valley Growth Location (Policy **T7**)
- Improving accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists and delivering Bee Network priorities (Policy **T6**)

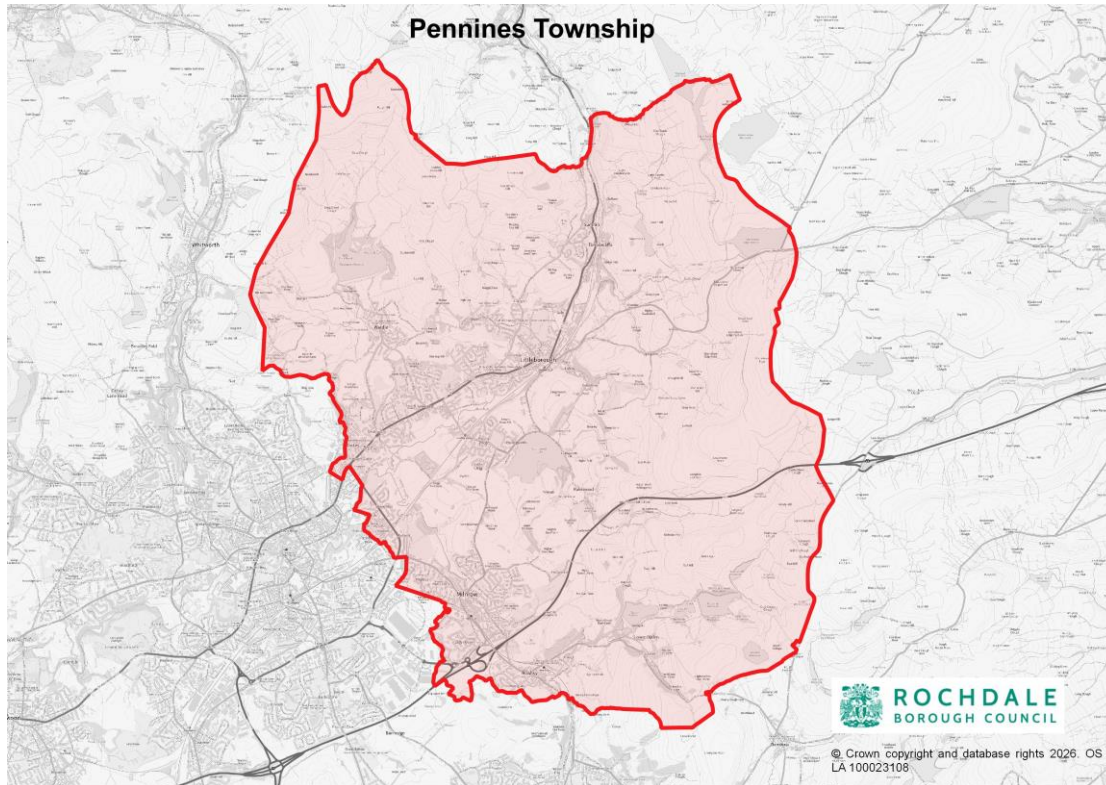
Environment

- Protecting and enhancing key nature assets, such as Alkrington Woods (Policy **G6**)
- Enhancing the quality of the River Irk and tributaries (including Wince Brook), as important green infrastructure, and supporting opportunities to open waterbodies for leisure and recreation (Policies **G2, G3**)

- Conserving and enhancing the town's heritage assets, and seeking opportunities to enhance or better reveal their significance (Policy **PE5**)

Pennines

Figure 7: Pennines Township Boundary



- 5.24 The Pennines township covers the eastern part of the borough, and consists of four wards – Smallbridge & Firgrove, Milnrow & Newhey, Wardle, Shore & West Littleborough and Littleborough Lakeside.
- 5.25 Due to its amenities, access to open space and connectivity, there is significant demand for housing development in Pennines, with several large sites being progressed for residential development through the PfE plan.
- 5.26 There are a variety of water resources in Pennines, with Hollingworth Lake, several reservoirs, the River Roch and the Rochdale Canal. While these along with other rural attractions are popular for visitors and tourists, some areas are at a higher risk of flooding from the River Roch in particular. The Environment Agency are currently constructing flood defences in the Roch Valley to reduce the risk of future incidents, and the Resilient Roch programme is working to enhance property and community flood resilience.
- 5.27 The upland moorland landscape is also a major asset for recreation and as an important habitat, with several protected sites nature, including a section of the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation.

Spatial Priorities - Pennines

Town and District Centres

- Preserving the primary shopping area in Littleborough town centre (Policy **PR3**)
- Delivering the opportunities set out in the Littleborough Station Masterplan and SPD (Policy **PR2**)
- Support proposals that enhance the vitality of Milnrow District Centre (Policy **PR4**)

Housing

- Delivering the residential development identified in strategic allocated sites in PfE (Policy **H1**)
- Support appropriate opportunities for residential development in the town centre and around railway stations to provide a mix of housing types. (Policies **H1, H2**)

Economy

- Protect key employment sites to retain a source of local job opportunities (Policy **PR9**)
- Supporting the visitor economy as a place for leisure and tourism, particularly around Littleborough, Hollingworth Lake and the South Pennine Moors. (Policy **PR10**).

Transport

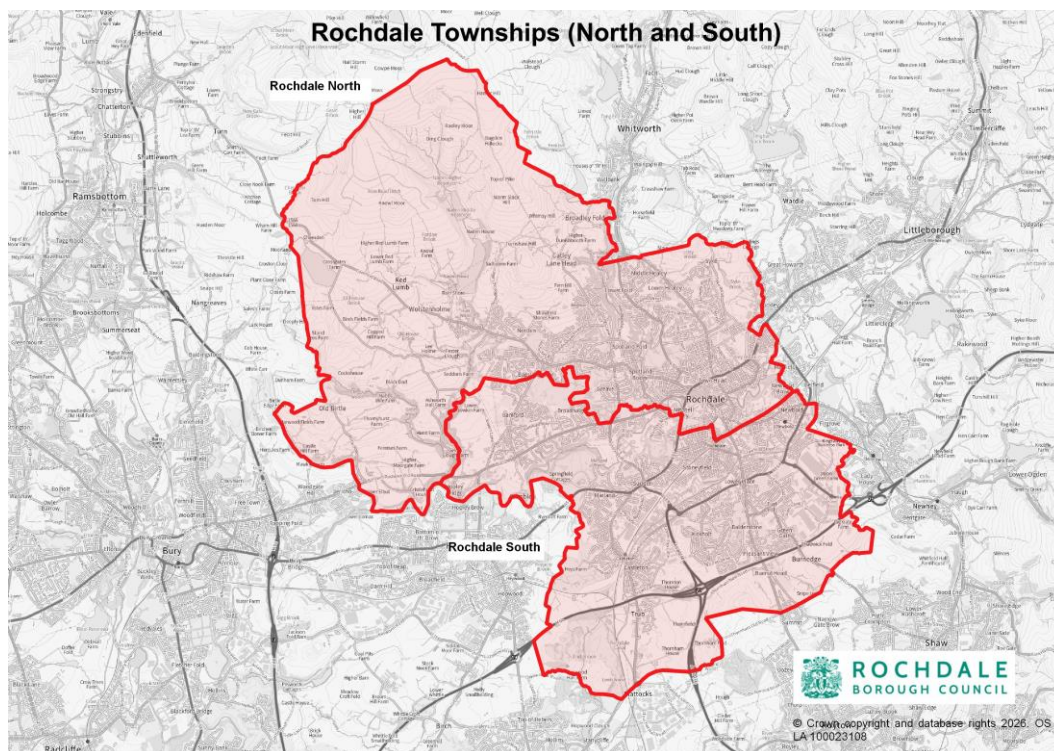
- Delivering improvements to the Local Highway Network to reduce congestion in this part of the borough (e.g. Smithy Bridge Residential Relief Road) (Policy **T9**)
- Improving active travel links and accessibility for walking and cycling and delivering Bee Network priorities (Policy **T6**)

Environment

- Protecting and enhancing the South Pennines Moors and Rochdale Canal Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) (Policy **G6**)
- Protecting and enhancing the Roch Valley water environment (including the River Roch) and its tributaries as important green infrastructure and biodiversity corridors. (Policies **G2, G3, G6**)
- Delivering flood alleviation schemes in Littleborough to reduce risk of flooding, and opportunities for SuDS (Policy **S4**)
- Conserving and enhancing the character and distinctiveness of Pennines' settlements and heritage assets (Policies **PE4, PE5**)

Rochdale

Figure 8: Rochdale Township Boundary



- 5.28 Half the borough's population lives in Rochdale which is the main centre for shopping, services, leisure, local government and employment. Rochdale is split into North and South, with the electoral wards of Norden, Healey, Spotland & Falinge and Central Rochdale in the North, and Bamford, Milkstone & Deeplish, Kingsway, Balderstone & Kirkholt and Castleton in the South.
- 5.29 Rochdale has a mix of neighbourhoods, with some areas of high-quality housing and access to green space in the northern part of the town. However, parts of the town in inner areas have high levels of deprivation, with several wards falling into the worst fifth nationally in terms of life expectancy. Some of the housing stock is poor in these areas, with a living environment that adjoins older employment areas and transport corridors.
- 5.30 The town centre is a focus for regeneration, with several schemes completed in recent years, such as Riverside retail and leisure development and Upper Banks hotel and residential development. The £20m redevelopment of the Grade-I listed Rochdale Town Hall completed into 2024, which will be a key tourist attraction, along with the Touchstones Gallery, enhancing the town's cultural offer. Residential development in the town centre is also a priority, with prominent sites such as Station Gateway close to Rochdale Railway Station, expected to deliver over the plan period. Rochdale's other railway station, Castleton, is also a focus for residential development and the delivering the Rail Corridor strategy, with strategic sites allocated for development through the PfE plan either under construction or with planning applications progressing.
- 5.31 The south of Rochdale also forms part of Greater Manchester's North-East Growth Corridor and Atom Valley, with Kingsway Business Park forming a major element of the area, as a site for high-quality employment premises and advanced manufacturing research.

- 5.32 The Roch Valley has potential as a green infrastructure resource and a key landscape feature to assist regeneration, as well as the Rochdale Canal. Local nature reserves Healey Dell and the Ashworth Valley are also important sites for nature and recreation.

Spatial Priorities for Rochdale

Town Centre

- Focusing growth and major retail, leisure and office developments in Rochdale as the borough's main town centre (Policy **PR1**)
- Maximising opportunities for residential development in the town centre where appropriate (Policy **PR2**)
- Improving public realm and accessibility in and around the town centre, including around Rochdale Railway Station (Policy **PR2**)

Housing

- Delivering the scale of residential development in allocated sites and associated infrastructure (Policy **H1**)
- Supporting residential development of an appropriate density along the Rail Corridor and around Rochdale and Castleton railway stations (Policy **H1**)
- Delivery of brownfield sites and other sites identified in the housing land supply to provide a mix of housing types (Policies **H1**, **H2**)

Economy

- Delivering strategic employment sites, as part of the Atom Valley Growth Location, including the completion of Kingsway Business Park (Policy **E6**)
- Protecting and enhancing key existing employment sites to support wider economic growth and job opportunities (Policy **E9**)
- Supporting the visitor economy and cultural assets such as Rochdale Town Hall and Touchstones (Policy **E10**)

Transport

- Supporting the Tram-Train Pathfinder between Oldham, Rochdale, Castleton, Heywood and Bury (Policy **T7**)
- Delivery of Quality Bus Transit links between Rochdale, Heywood and Bury; Rochdale, Oldham and Ashton and Rochdale and Manchester (Policy **T7**)
- Delivery of Rapid Transit links from Norden to serve Atom Valley Growth Location (Policy **T7**)
- Improving accessibility for pedestrian and cyclists, and delivering Bee Network priorities (Policy **T6**)

Environment

- Protecting and enhancing sites for nature, including the Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (Policy **G6**)

- Protecting and enhancing the Roch Valley water environment (including the River Roch and the Spodden Valley), and its tributaries as important green infrastructure and biodiversity corridors. (Policies **G2, G3, G6**)
- Supporting opportunities for green infrastructure enhancements and climate resilience in Rochdale (Policy **S2**)
- Conserving and enhancing the town's heritage assets and seeking opportunities to enhance or better reveal their significance (Policy **PE5**)

6. A Sustainable and Resilient Place

- 6.1 The purpose of the planning system continues to be to deliver sustainable development (NPPF, 2024), with the three overarching objectives – economic, social and environmental. Delivering economic, social and environmental benefits together, in a mutually reinforcing way, is central to this Plan and will contribute to tackling climate change and moving to a low carbon economy, whilst delivering resilient growth.
- 6.2 Rochdale Borough Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and taking action on climate change is a key corporate priority. As part of the Greater Manchester city-region, the Council is working towards being carbon neutral by 2038, proposing to go faster than the national 2050 target. As such it is important that new development is sustainable and of a sufficient standard to support our emissions targets.
- 6.3 Communities in Rochdale are already experiencing the effects of climate change, with hotter, drier summers and milder, wetter winters, as well as an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. No matter what steps are taken to mitigate CO2 emissions in the future, these effects are likely to continue in the coming decades, with the impact of mitigation measures being apparent in the long term. Therefore, climate change mitigation and adaptation must be tackled in parallel. Developing climate resilience is increasingly seen as the necessary response to this issue, by increasing the capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of hazardous climatic events while incurring minimal damage to societal wellbeing, the economy and the environment. Climate adaptation can increase our resilience to climate change.² This is not an alternative strategy reducing greenhouse gas emissions but a complementary and necessary one.

Sustainable and Energy Efficient Development

- 6.4 This policy sets out the principles that should be followed to achieve low carbon and energy efficient development, to support the requirements of PfE policy JP-S2 for new development to work towards net zero. This supports the target for a carbon neutral borough by 2038.

Policy S1 – Sustainable and Energy Efficient Development

1. New development should be designed to:

- Minimise energy demand, considering factors such as building form, massing, orientation and window design.
- Maximise energy efficiency, through low carbon heating systems and reduced dependence on the use of fossil fuels.
- Maximise renewable energy generation through the installation of Solar PV, or other sources where appropriate.

² UKGBC [Climate-Resilience.pdf](#)

In applications which are for existing buildings:

- d. Retrofitting for carbon and energy efficiency will be supported providing it is sympathetic to the design and character of the existing building. In historic buildings, retrofitting measures should comply with the requirements of Policy PE5.
- e. Where planning permission is required for the change of use of an existing building, including for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs), proposals should achieve at least an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of 'C' where feasible.

Applications are expected to consider all carbon emissions used in construction, through the following:

- f. All development will be expected to minimise its embodied carbon content, by ensuring that buildings are efficient in material use, form and design from the outset.
- g. The selection of materials in construction should be informed by their carbon footprint, prioritising reused and recovered existing materials, natural materials from sustainable sources, and local materials.
- h. Where there are existing buildings on site, their re-use should be explored and demonstrated to be unfeasible before resorting to demolition.
- i. Applicants are encouraged to use embodied carbon standards (as measured by CO₂ e/m²) to demonstrate how embodied carbon has been reduced.

Applicants will be required to submit an Energy and Carbon Statement and Proforma to demonstrate how the proposed development meets the requirements of this policy and PfE Policy JP-S2.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-S2 Carbon and Energy

Reasoned Justification

- 6.5 This policy provides additional guidance in order to meet the carbon reduction and energy efficiency targets outlined in PfE Policy JP-S2. This will support national targets and ambitious local targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- 6.6 Ensuring that new developments are sustainable and energy efficient is not just about meeting wider emission targets but delivering multiple benefits for the borough's residents, such as lower energy bills and well-insulated homes. This is particularly important for the health of the borough's more vulnerable residents so should be provided across all types of housing.
- 6.7 While improved construction specifications can help to meet carbon reductions targets, this can come at a cost premium if not carried out alongside sustainable design. Applicants should have regard to the Net Zero design guidance on the GMCA³ website and detail how the proposed development meets the energy and carbon policies contained in PfE Policy JP-S2. This should be demonstrated through the submission of

³ GMCA [Net Zero Design Guidance - Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#)

an Energy and Carbon Proforma and Energy and Carbon Statement, appropriate to the type and size of development. Guidance for completing these is also available on the GMCA website.

- 6.8 For development proposals that involve historic buildings, applicants should have regard to guidance contained in Historic England's Advice Note 18⁴ - Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency.
- 6.9 A major source of carbon emissions is from existing buildings, and so it is important that planning policies are supportive of the retrofitting agenda to deliver on the 2038 net zero ambition. As with new buildings, retrofitting for energy efficiency can deliver benefits for the borough's residents in terms of lower energy bills and health and wellbeing. Where proposals are for changes of use, applicants are encouraged to use the appropriate Energy and Carbon proforma⁵ to demonstrate improvements to the building fabric for reducing energy demand and energy efficiency.
- 6.10 PfE Policy JP-S2 also refers to emissions 'in construction' from 2028, also referred to as embodied carbon (i.e. materials and construction processes throughout the whole lifecycle of a building). This currently makes up 20% of UK built environment emissions and so is essential to meet local and national targets. The simplest way to reduce embodied carbon is avoiding demolition and reusing buildings where possible. However, it is acknowledged that in some instances, it is not practicable or viable to consider refurbishment, or that some refurbished buildings may not be able to achieve a sufficient level of energy efficiency and demolition is a more sustainable option.
- 6.11 The GMCA website includes further guidance on reducing embodied carbon, as well as recommended targets for new types of development (kg CO₂/m²). A summary of efforts to reduce upfront embodied carbon is part of the Energy and Carbon proforma.

Climate Resilience

- 6.12 This policy seeks to ensure that new developments are resilient to the effects of climate change, building on national and regional policy and reflecting the characteristics of the borough. While climate resilience intersects with other policy areas, it is an important consideration in the design of new developments, particularly in areas that are more vulnerable to extreme weather events.

Policy S2: Climate Resilience

Development proposals must incorporate measures which increase resilience to climate change effects, including:

- a. Being designed to minimise overheating risks, prioritising passive design measures such as design, layout and shading, before installing active cooling systems;

⁴ Historic England [Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency - Historic England Advice Note 18 | Historic England](#)

⁵ GMCA Energy and Carbon Proforma - [Net Zero Design Guidance - Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#)

- b. Maximising opportunities for flood resilience, including through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that are multi-functional and integrated with landscaping where possible, permeable surfacing and planting of street trees;
- c. Measures to improve water efficiency and water re-use features;
- d. Maximising nature-based solutions and green and blue infrastructure for climate resilience, particularly in urban areas; and
- e. Applying the Urban Green Factor (Policy G4) on sites that are greater than 0.5 ha and within a Critical Drainage Area (Policy S4).

Addressing the requirements of this policy demonstrated with the planning application submission and be commensurate to the scale and location of the proposed development.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-S2 Carbon and Energy

Policy JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment

Reasoned Justification

- 6.13 The policy supports national guidance in relation to climate adaptation and resilience, and local objectives such as in the Greater Manchester 5 Year Environment Plan (2025-2030), and the borough's Climate Change Strategy.
- 6.14 The current and future risks to the region due to climate change are shown in the Greater Manchester Climate Change Risk [assessment](#). Rochdale is particularly at risk of flooding because of more frequent and severe storm events. However extreme heat is also a risk that is increasing, so it is important that developments account for these. Several wards in Rochdale are in the highest 10% nationally in terms of deprivation, which puts them at greater risk from the effects of climate change, and therefore it is important that climate resilience measures are maximised in these areas.
- 6.15 As the climate gets warmer and incidents of extreme heat are more common, there is a greater risk of overheating in buildings, particularly in heavily glazed buildings, or those with more vulnerable residents. The GMCA [website](#) includes design guidance for new developments to reduce overheating risk. The Energy and Carbon Proforma includes a section on overheating risk which applicants are required to complete.
- 6.16 Climate change risks will not be experienced evenly across the borough, with increased risk in areas of higher social deprivation, and those with more older residents and other groups who are at more risk of extreme weather events. Environmental factors can also increase risk, such as highly built-up areas with fewer street trees and green infrastructure which increases the urban heat island effect.
- 6.17 Proposals should focus on delivering high-quality landscaping and green infrastructure in new development, which both enhances the public realm and reduces impermeable areas to slow the flow of surface water. Even in urban environments there are many examples of how features such as green roofs, permeable surfacing, soakaways, filter drainage, swales, bioretention tree pits and rain gardens can be used to introduce

landscaping features that increase resilience to heavy rainfall events and combat the heat island effect.

- 6.18 The Urban Greening Factor (UGF) is a useful planning tool to improve the provision of green infrastructure, which can contribute to climate resilience. More details are contained in Policy G4: Urban Greening.

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Infrastructure

- 6.19 This policy supports the positive approach to renewable and low carbon energy schemes in PfE Policy JP-S2 and sets the local requirements that will be assessed in considering development proposals. For heat and energy networks, proposals are expected to meet the criteria contained in PfE Policy JP-S3 and sets out further local information.

Policy S3: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Infrastructure

Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy developments, including micro-renewables, and associated infrastructure, will be supported providing there is no unacceptable impact on:

- a. Local amenity including noise, vibration, light, air quality, dust and visual impact
- b. Highways, air traffic safety and telecommunications
- c. Landscape character
- d. Heritage assets and their setting
- e. Biodiversity and geodiversity
- f. Water resources and flood risk
- g. Open space
- h. Public rights of way and recreation

Where there are landscape impacts, these should be minimised and appropriately mitigated against. Applications should be accompanied by a detailed Landscape Impact Assessment and take account of any Landscape Character Assessment at a borough or Greater Manchester level.

Applications for renewable energy schemes should deliver additional beneficial uses where feasible, such as for biodiversity and agriculture.

Proposals should include details of the arrangements for decommissioning and restoration of the site at the ends of its operational life, which will be secured by planning condition.

Heat Networks

The following areas have been identified as planned heat and energy networks in the borough. Further areas will be defined as projects are progressed and evidence updated.

- Rochdale Town Centre Heat Network

In areas identified as a Heat Network Zone, development proposals should comply with the requirements of PfE Policy JP-S3: Heat and Energy Networks, criterion 2 (a-d).

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-S2 Carbon and Energy

Policy JP-S3 Heat and Energy Networks

Reasoned Justification

- 6.20 Increasing renewable energy generation is essential to achieving the transition to a low carbon economy and meeting carbon reduction targets. It can also boost energy independence, reduce energy bills and support high-skilled jobs. This can be either on large stand-alone schemes, or micro-schemes added to individual buildings. There are already major renewable energy developments in the borough, with nationally significant onshore wind schemes situated at Scout Moor (65MW) and Crook Hill (37.4MW). In 2023, a large solar development at Chamber House Farm, Heywood opened, generating up to 5.5MW of electricity.
- 6.21 For applications involving the installation of renewable energy infrastructure on historic buildings, applicants should have regard to guidance contained in Historic England's Advice Note 18 – Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency.
- 6.22 While the benefits of renewable energy are recognised it is important that they do not have an unacceptable impact on the environment and maximise opportunities for enhancements where possible. Well-designed renewable energy developments can deliver biodiversity enhancements and other environmental benefits e.g. ground-mounted solar arrays can provide an undisturbed area to support a variety of species. They can also retain agricultural uses such as grazing of livestock.
- 6.23 The Rochdale Local Area Energy [Plan](#) (2022) produced a high-level screening exercise to assess potentially suitable sites for renewable energy development in the borough based on several land use constraints. Further assessment would be required to consider the site in detail including the impact of large-scale renewable developments on grid constraints. Smaller scale renewable energy projects at site and building level will also play an important part in the energy transition.
- 6.24 As the UK transitions towards net zero and fossils fuels are replaced by increasing volumes of low-carbon electricity, it is vital that sufficient infrastructure is in place to support this. As such, existing electricity infrastructure will be protected, and future reinforcement and expansion supported where appropriate. If a scheme is likely to impact on this, applicants should engage as early as possible with the relevant operators (i.e. National Grid and Electricity North West).
- 6.25 Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) are an important part of a sustainable energy system. However, their location and design must carefully consider environmental impacts including:
- a. Exposure to flood risk

- b. Pollution risks to surface water and groundwater, particularly from fire-water runoff
- c. Interactions between flood risk and pollution pathways
- d. Requirements for effective end-of-life battery management

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero has published the guidance *Health and Safety in Grid-Scale Electrical Energy Storage Systems*⁶ which covers design, technology selection, site layout and emergency planning.

Heat and Energy Networks

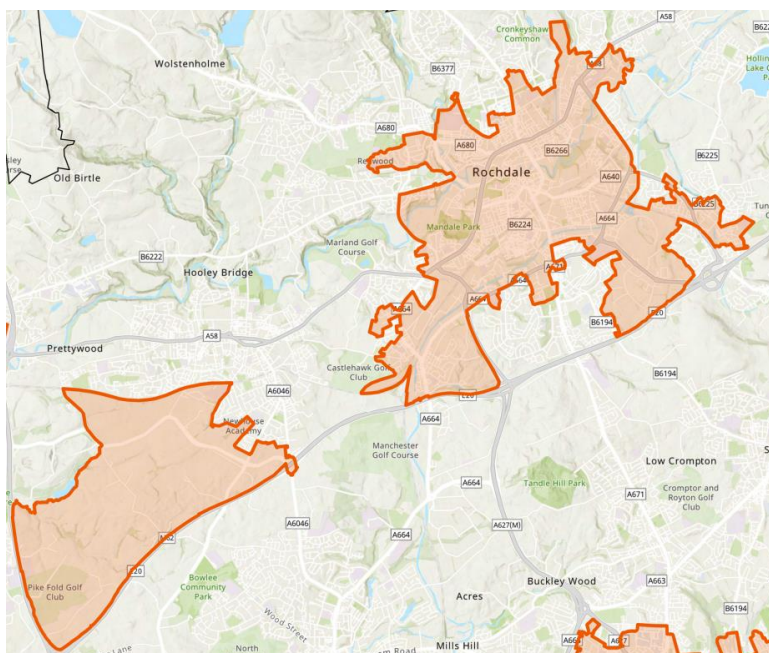
- 6.26 Heat and Energy networks are expected to play a significant part in reducing carbon emissions, with the Rochdale Local Area Energy Plan (2022) stating that district heating could supply in the region of 21% of Rochdale’s dwellings.
- 6.27 PfE Policy JP-S3 sets the requirement for new development to connect to existing or planned heat networks and identifies broad ‘Heat and Energy Network Opportunity Areas’. It notes that these will be further refined by districts when more local evidence becomes available. The Rochdale Town Centre Heat Network is now progressing, and as such, it is essential that development in this area can connect to this where feasible.

Heat Network Zones

- 6.28 A national zoning model (NZM) is being developed to support and inform heat network zoning policy by identifying potential heat network zones across England. These are areas where heat networks are expected to be the lowest cost, low carbon heating solution to buildings.
- 6.29 Indicative zones from the fifth national model run of the in-development NZM are shown in Figure 3 below. These zones must be understood to be “work in progress” and should not be used for local decision making. The NZM is still under development, and the outputs are subject to change ahead of zoning policy launch. Furthermore, the NZM is only the first step in identifying areas where heat networks are expected to provide the lowest cost option for decarbonising heat. The outputted zones will then undergo refinement to account for local factors, and public consultation before formal designation.

Figure 9: Extract of Heat Network Zoning Map: Greater Manchester (Indicative zones)

⁶ Department for Energy Security & Net Zero: [Health and Safety Guidance for Grid Scale Electrical Energy Storage Systems](#)



Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage

- 6.30 The following two policies are additional to PfE Policy JP-S4 and set out local requirements in relation to flood risk, sustainable drainage and water resources. New development is expected to follow an integrated water management approach, incorporating flood risk, water supply and quality, as well as climate resilience.

Policy S4 - Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage

Development is expected to follow an integrated water management approach. In relation to flood risk and sustainable drainage, we will require:

Flood Risk

- Full regard to and compliance with the advice of relevant flood risk management authorities and the objectives and priorities set out in the latest North West River Basin District Flood Management Plan, Irwell Catchment Plan and Rochdale Flood Risk Management Strategy;
- Full regard to published and other up to date evidence of local flood risk and its significance as included in Strategic Flood Risk Assessments, Surface Water Management Plans and other recognised sources of flood risk data;
- In addition to the requirements for site-specific Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs) set out in Planning Practice Guidance, an appropriate FRA for all development proposals, including changes of use, on sites greater than 0.5 ha within Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs);
- In reservoir flood risk locations, an assessment to be carried out in accordance with the NPPG;

- e. An assessment of sewer flood risk through consultation with the wastewater undertaker;
- f. The design of proposals must assess and respond to the existing hydrological characteristics of a site to ensure a flood resilient design is achieved.

Sustainable Drainage

- g. All applications to be supported by a strategy for foul and surface water management, following the hierarchy of drainage as set out in National Guidance;
- h. On developments that form part of a wider development or site allocation, foul and surface water strategies must be part of a holistic site-wide strategy;
- i. Sustainable drainage (SuDS) schemes should be integrated with the landscaped environment and designed to deliver multifunctional benefits in accordance with the four pillars of sustainable drainage, having regard to national standards and best practice.
- j. To demonstrate any reduction in discharge rates, applicants must submit clear evidence of existing operational connections from the site with associated calculations on rates of discharge. Where clear evidence of existing connections is not provided, applicants will be required to discharge at a greenfield rate of run-off.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment

Reasoned Justification

- 6.31 Rochdale has experienced significant flooding incidents in the past, most notably on Boxing Day 2015 following Storm Eva, with some parts of the borough at higher risk of flooding. With climate change leading to more extreme weather events, the risk of flooding in the borough will continue to be a significant issue.
- 6.32 The policy in relation to flood risk is informed by national and local guidance, and evidence including the Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and the Greater Manchester Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP). Parts of Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale have been identified as Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs) as areas of high risk of surface water flooding.
- 6.33 Sewer flood risk could affect the developable area, the need to apply the sequential test and the principle of development. Therefore, consultation with the wastewater undertaker is essential. The consultation with the wastewater undertaker regarding sewer flood risk must confirm:
 - if there are any sewer surcharge levels at the point of connection that could influence site design;
 - whether there is an incident of sewer flooding at, or in the vicinity of, the proposed development site; and
 - if sewer modelling data indicates that existing sewers that pass through or near to the site present a modelled risk of sewer flooding.

- Applicants must not assume that changes in levels or that changes to the public sewer (including diversion), will be acceptable as such proposals could increase / displace flood risk.
- 6.34 The hydrological assessment of the site must consider topography, naturally occurring flow paths, ephemeral watercourses and any low-lying areas where water naturally accumulates to inform site layouts. These should consider exceedance / overland flow paths from existing and proposed drainage features and confirm ground levels, finished flood levels and drainage details. Drainage details, ground levels and finished flood levels are critical to ensure the proposal is resilient to flood risk and considering impacts from climate change.
- 6.35 The sustainable drainage hierarchy is defined in the Government's National Standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)⁷. Clear evidence must be submitted to demonstrate why alternative preferable options in the surface water hierarchy are not available.
- 6.36 Foul and surface water drainage must be considered early in the design process. SuDS should be designed in accordance with best practice as specified in local and national guidance, including Greater Manchester's Sustainable Drainage Guide (2024) and National Standards for SuDS (2025) unless superseded. The four 'pillars' of SuDS design broadly fit into four categories: water quantity, water quality, amenity and biodiversity. Therefore, increasing the emphasis on amenity and biodiversity benefits alongside the main drivers for SuDS of controlling water quantity and water quality.
- 6.37 Holistic site-wide drainage strategies will be required to ensure a coordinated approach to drainage between phases, developers and when delivered over a number of years. Applicants must demonstrate how the approach to drainage on any phase of development has regard to interconnecting phases within a larger site with infrastructure sized to accommodate interconnecting phases. Pumped drainage systems must be minimised and a proliferation of pumping stations on a phased development will not be acceptable. When necessary, the holistic drainage strategy must be updated to reflect any changing circumstances between each phase. The strategy shall be prepared in liaison with infrastructure providers and outline how each phase interacts with other phases.

Managing Water Quality and Efficiency

- 6.38 This policy is additional to PfE Policy JP-S4 and sets out local requirements in relation to water quality and efficiency.

S5 – Managing Water Quality and Efficiency

Development is expected to follow an integrated water management approach. In relation to water quality and water efficiency, we will require:

⁷ National Standards for SuDS - [National standards for sustainable drainage systems \(SuDS\) - GOV.UK](#)

Water Quality

- a. In consultation with the Council and relevant statutory bodies, consideration of the potential impacts on water quality resulting from the design, construction and operation of proposed development. Where necessary, development proposals must include measures to reduce any risk to the water environment and aim to protect and improve water quality.
- b. Development proposals within Groundwater Source Protection Zones must accord with the latest national guidance on Groundwater Protection. Applications for new development within Groundwater Source Protection Zones will be required to be supported by:
 - i. A risk assessment and mitigation strategy;
 - ii. Masterplanning which mitigates the risk to the water environment; and
 - iii. A development management plan relating to construction and activities that will take place during the operation / lifecycle of any permitted development.
- c. Development proposals on land used for public water supply catchment purposes should consult with the relevant water undertaker.

Water Efficiency

- d. All new residential developments must achieve as a minimum the tighter water efficiency standard set through Building Regulations Requirement G2: Water Efficiency or any future updates; and
- e. All major non-residential development must achieve at least the BREEAM 'Excellent' standard for the 'Wat 01' water category, unless demonstrated to be unfeasible.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment

Reasoned Justification

- 6.39 Currently all the borough's river waterbodies are failing to reach 'good' ecological status as established by the Water Framework directive. It is important to ensure that new development does not cause further deterioration to water bodies in the borough and wherever possible can support improvements. As well as surface water bodies, there are a number of groundwater resources in the borough, including aquifers that surface waterbodies or are used by licensed abstractors or private potable supplies.
- 6.40 Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) are areas often used for public drinking water supply purposes so preventing pollution is important for public health. SPZs are defined on the Environment Agency [website](#)⁸ which includes some parts of the borough of Rochdale. Development will only be acceptable where it is demonstrated to the Local Planning Authority that there will be no unacceptable impact on the groundwater environment and public water supply.

⁸ Groundwater Source Protection Zones - [Groundwater source protection zones \(SPZs\) - GOV.UK](#)

- 6.41 Applicants should also be aware of non-statutory Drinking Water Safeguard Zones which are located in parts of the borough, with more information available on the EA website.⁹
- 6.42 On land used for public water supply catchment purposes the first preference will be for proposals to be located away from this. Where proposals are brought forward on catchment land used for public water supply, careful consideration must be given to the location of the proposed development and a risk assessment of the impact on public water supply may be required with the identification and implementation of any required mitigation measures.
- 6.43 The PfE plan notes that district local plans should consider setting a tighter water efficiency standard where there is a local need. The effects of climate change, a growing population and the requirements of modern industry are putting increased pressure on water resources. Increased water efficiency will also help to reduce carbon emissions from water treatment and contribute to the borough's emissions targets.
- 6.44 Investment in water and wastewater infrastructure will be necessary in order to respond to future growth and environmental requirements. Such infrastructure developments, on new or existing utility sites will be supported where appropriate.

Reducing the Impact of Pollution, Contamination and Land instability

- 6.45 This policy supports the requirements of the NPPF and transects with other regulatory frameworks which deal with environmental protection from a range of sources. Development proposals which can remediate areas with contamination will generally be supported providing they meet the relevant requirements.

Policy S6: Reducing the Impact of Pollution, Contamination and Land Instability

We will reduce all forms of pollution, contamination and land instability, by requiring that:

- a. Development does not have impacts that lead to an unacceptable increase in air, water, soil, noise, light or other forms of pollution.
- b. The impact of existing sources of pollution on new development is appropriately assessed and mitigated where required, to ensure an appropriate standard of amenity and safety for occupiers.
- c. Where an application is in or would affect an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), the development must be designed to include appropriate mitigation measures.
- d. Any risks from contaminated land or land instability, including development within former mining areas, are fully investigated and remediated
- e. Soils are managed in a sustainable way during the construction phase of development. All major development should demonstrate this by the submission of a Soil Management Plan and Strategy.
- f. Any risk to surface water and ground water resources from the disturbance of contaminated land is identified and mitigated if necessary.

⁹ Drinking Water Safeguard Zones - [Drinking Water Safeguard Zones \(Surface Water\)](#)

- g. Any surface water run-off from development and associated roads is minimised, with the inclusion of appropriate design measures to prevent pollutants from entering the watercourse.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-S1 Sustainable Development

Policy JP-S5 Clean Air

Reasoned Justification

- 6.46 Reducing the impacts of pollution in the built and natural environment are fundamental for a safe, healthy and sustainable borough. The policy is to ensure that new developments do not lead to adverse impacts or be adversely impacted by nearby uses. Where necessary, planning conditions and/or obligations will be used to ensure that the impacts of pollution, contamination and/or land instability are sufficiently mitigated against or remediated where necessary.
- 6.47 An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is in place along major road corridors (A58 and M62 motorway). Where there are development opportunities near major transport corridors it is important to consider impacts on health and to mitigate against air pollution through the schemes design, or through planning obligations where appropriate. PfE Policy JP-S5 Clean Air contains further guidance on air quality.
- 6.48 Previous industrial uses and past coal mining activity have left some parts of the borough at risk of contamination and land instability. The possibility of contamination should be assumed on all land subject to or adjacent to current or previous industrial use. Land contamination can also arise from uses such as waste management, small-scale manufacturing, fuel and energy operations, transport and utilities, and certain agricultural practices. It is important that a detailed survey of ground conditions is completed prior to development, and appropriate remedial measures set out and implemented to address any land contamination or instability issues.
- 6.49 Good quality soils are essential to a range of functions, including food production, biodiversity and carbon storage. With improper handling and storage and disposal, they can easily be irreparably damaged and lost during the construction phase of developments. The Government previously published a Code of Practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites as part of the 'Safeguarding our Soils' strategy. Developments should follow the soil protection hierarchy, by leaving best quality soils undisturbed and protected, moving high-quality soils as little as possible, reusing good quality soils on site, remediating lower quality soils where possible before resorting to landfill for worst quality soils.
- 6.50 A Soil Management Plan and Strategy should include:
 - a. A Soil Quality Baseline report that provides a clear baseline assessment of the existing soil quality of the site.
 - b. Construction phase soil management plan.
 - c. Post-construction soil management and monitoring strategy.

This should have regard to the guidance outlined in the Defra Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites, or the most up to date guidance at the time of submission.

- 6.51 Water pollution can sometimes result from surface water run-off, and it is important for developments to incorporate run-off management measures (e.g. SuDS). More guidance in respect of this can be found in PfE Policy JP-S5. Proposals which are likely to result in contaminants entering formal surface or foul water drainage systems will not be permitted without express consent of the asset owner. If this is refused, applicants must demonstrate how contaminated water will be addressed at source in their remediation strategy.

7. A Prosperous Place

- 7.1 A more prosperous local economy, which is diverse, competitive, sustainable and lower carbon, is essential to the success of Rochdale borough. It can help to:
- Create the right environment for more successful and healthier communities;
 - Create more attractive town, district and local centres;
 - Attract more inward investment;
 - Create a greener environment;
 - Provide more resources to improve services, facilities and quality of life; and
 - Improve the image of the borough as a destination of choice for businesses.
- 7.2 NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest to support economic growth and drive innovation. The PfE Plan sets out how this is to be achieved and sets a target for employment floorspace. Within the overall aim to grow the economy is the objective to boost the competitiveness of the north of the conurbation, including Rochdale.
- 7.3 To meet this objective, the PfE Plan allocates two large cross-boundary allocations at Northern Gateway and Stakehill. These allocations, together with Kingsway Business Park, has led to the formal designation of the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ). This area provides an opportunity to deliver new employment floorspace of a type and scale that is truly transformational for Rochdale and the north of the conurbation as a whole.
- 7.4 The delivery of Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing Centre (SMMC) on Kingsway Business Park has the potential to drive this advanced manufacturing sector and build a world class cluster of advanced materials and manufacturing in Atom Valley.
- 7.5 In addition to the growth of new and existing employment areas, Rochdale's town centres are focal points for economic growth and prosperity which serve as hubs for commercial, retail, leisure, employment, service, civic and cultural opportunities. They are an important contributor to the boroughs local character and identity.
- 7.6 In recent years several significant challenges to the retail sector have highlighted the vulnerability of our town centres. The opening of Rochdale Riverside in 2020 had broadened the retail and leisure offer in Rochdale town centre but the need to improve the quality and diversity of uses in the rest of Rochdale town centre and our other town centres remains. Masterplans are in place for Heywood, Middleton and Littleborough town centres and the delivery of these will provide significant improvements.
- 7.7 The policies below seek to protect and enhance our centres. The employment policies identify the level of new employment floorspace to be delivered, as set out in PfE, as well as providing guidance for new employment development to ensure that the is high-quality and is supported by appropriate levels of infrastructure to deliver a growing, diverse and sustainable economy.

Hierarchy of Centres

- 7.8 This policy identifies the hierarchy of centres in the borough and the roles they play in meeting the needs and priorities of the borough.

Policy PR1 – Hierarchy of Centres

The borough's main town centre uses hierarchy is defined as:

Principal Town Centre

Rochdale Town Centre – Principal Town Centre & Sub-Regional Centre

Will provide the focus for future retail growth in the borough and will accommodate the majority of new development.

Main Town Centres

Middleton Town Centre

Will play a supporting role in the sub-regional centre and will accommodate new development and growth to serve more localised catchments.

Heywood Town Centre

Will aim to improve the retail offer and promote a greater diversity of uses such as office, leisure, and cultural facilities.

Littleborough Town Centre

Will meet the basic needs of the local catchment and expand the role as a visitor, recreational and leisure location.

District Centres

Milnrow District Centre

Castleton District Centre

Will meet day to day shopping and service needs and serve a localised catchment.

Local Centres

See Appendix 1 for amended list of Local Centres

Will be maintained and tailored to serve purely local needs

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-P4 New Retail and Leisure Uses in Town Centres

Reasoned Justification

- 7.9 Places for Everyone recognises the roles of main town centres as economic drivers which will continue to be developed, providing the primary focus for office, retail, leisure and cultural activity for their surrounding areas. Each town centre is accompanied by a collection of smaller centres and local centres which respond to unique local culture and

context. It is important that town centres promote environmental sustainability and economic resilience so they can adapt when required.

- 7.10 Much of the existing hierarchy of centres will be retained however, following review, the number of local centres has been amended. Considering their offering, size, location and catchment – there are now 31 local centres. All these different centres are identified and mapped on the policies map.

Main Town Centres

- 7.11 PfE policy JP-Strat-12 identifies Rochdale as a main town centre in the context of the Greater Manchester region in the PfE plan area. Vibrant town centres are essential to Rochdale's prosperity therefore it is essential to direct development, both public and private to the most sustainable areas, including those close to key public transport gateways, taking advantage of the services and facilities on offer.
- 7.12 Heywood, Middleton and Littleborough town centres have area-based masterplans and SPD's which assist in guiding development and building a case for investment. These tools set out a vision and strategy for each area reflective of the Council's aspirations and priorities.
- 7.13 Town centre living has become an increasingly central aim in Government policy, recognising that the higher density of people living in town centres, the more their attractiveness and vitality will improve, in turn encouraging more visitors and investment. To support an increased residential catchment in these centres, the Council is committed to improving the public realm, amenities, green spaces and infrastructure in these spaces to maintain an enhanced standard of living which compliments residential development to support green growth and climate conscious urban living. In addition, the Council will support schemes for residential development for edge of centre sites where they may be better suited.
- 7.14 Rochdale has a rich historic environment and therefore developments in the main town centres will be given careful consideration where it would be in the vicinity of both natural and historic assets.

District Centres

- 7.15 Rochdale's district centres are successful areas providing a dynamic mix of uses tailored to their local catchments such as health and dental services, post offices, local shops and takeaways, care homes, public houses and so on, thereby reducing the need to travel. They serve as social anchors that sustain vibrant centres and foster interaction which will be protected and enhanced. For reasons of viability, it is important these uses are grouped together near public transport gateways, ensuring they are accessible to all which supports successful communities.

Local Centres

- 7.16 Local centres are important to the vitality and vibrancy of smaller communities and local life. Typically anchored by a small supermarket and other day-to-day services, local centres provide easy access to essential amenities and help to minimise the need to travel. Rochdale has a network of 31 local centres. In addition, there are many small parades of shops that serve local areas, and other locations offering specialist retail

provision. The Council encourages investment in local centres which should be the focus for retail and service development. In time, the addition of new local centres will be required to support and serve larger population increases through the larger residential and employment development schemes.

Creating Vibrant Main Town Centres

- 7.17 Main town centres are recognised as vital hubs for retail, leisure and community life. This policy seeks to support their sustainable growth, improved accessibility and safeguard their distinct identity whilst ensuring they are resilient and adaptable to change, where necessary.

Policy PR2 – Creating Vibrant Main Town centres

As the boroughs designated main town centres, these locations will continue their role in meeting the majority of everyday needs for residents. These centres will be maintained and enhanced to promote the long-term viability and vitality of Rochdale's central and preferred shopping and leisure destinations to maintain them as sustainable and thriving centres. The centres will be maintained as the key locations for retail, leisure, cultural, office, residential and other main town centre uses, as defined in national practice guidance.

1. General Development Requirements

The Council will support proposals for new development in main town centres having regard to the following:

- a. The development is of an appropriate scale and character for that centre and the catchment area it serves;
- b. Where the development proposes the change of use from retail (Class E(a)) to non-retail, this must not result in the over proliferation of any one type of use in that centre, with reference to hot-food takeaways, which may detract from the centre's vitality;
- c. All development should ensure an active shop frontage at ground floor level to maintain functionality and appeal of the centre;
- d. The potential to deliver public realm improvements and enhancements, which must be linked to climate resilience principles as part of the development;
- e. The creation of convenient, attractive and safe access within and around the town centre to transport interchanges and surrounding neighbourhoods, including supporting objectives outlined in PE2; and
- f. The delivery of an improved evening economy offer for a range of mixed uses including restaurants, bars, cafes and leisure making these areas more vibrant, active and safe in the evening to encourage visitor stays to reinvent the night-time economy.

2. Priorities for Rochdale town centre

Rochdale town centre will serve as the primary hub for major developments, drawing significant footfall and investment. Proposals will be actively supported that enhance the town

centre's vitality and viability. This includes developments in key sectors such as retail, leisure, culture, and office space. To do this we will:

- a. Encourage high-quality developments that contribute to the town centres appeal and functionality;
- b. Support the production of a masterplan for the town centre to identify opportunities and deliver regeneration;
- c. Support initiatives that improve accessibility, public spaces, culture and the overall visitor experience;
- d. Support improvements to the town centre including redeveloping key sites, upgrading buildings, and making public spaces more attractive, interactive and welcoming;
- e. Increase the number of new homes to provide sustainable living, increase vibrancy and boost housing delivery; and
- f. Build upon the restoration of the Grade I listed Rochdale Town Hall and its surrounding environs to establish a distinctive, heritage-led tourism offer. We will also celebrate the borough's rich history while enhancing its cultural appeal and visitor experience.

3. Priorities for Middleton town centre

Middleton will maintain its role in serving the primary needs of its local catchment, supporting sustainable growth and contributing to the wider spatial strategy for the region. It will continue to evolve with development shaped by its strategic location being the closest of the borough's town centres to Manchester City Centre. We will:

- a. Support the delivery of the Middleton Town Centre Spatial Masterplan and the proposed Middleton Mayoral Development Corporation, focusing on the regeneration and enhancement of the town centre and its public realm;
- b. Support the delivery of new homes within the town centre to increase vibrancy;
- c. Improve the design and appearance of Middleton town centre through the creative re-use of vacant buildings, enhancing public spaces, shopfront improvements and promoting high-quality development that respects the historic character of the area;
- d. Improve connections between the town centre and surrounding areas beyond the ring road, including Assheton Way, Oldham Road and Middleton Way. This will ensure these areas are better integrated with the town centre, creating a more cohesive and accessible urban environment;
- e. Encourage active travel routes and options for residents and visitors by focusing on improving pedestrian and cycle connectivity whilst efficiently managing traffic within the centre;
- f. Support the potential delivery of the TfGM expansion to the Metrolink through the town centre to enable enhanced connections to Manchester City Centre; and
- g. Redefine a modern town centre which reflects and builds on the historic form of Middleton's heritage.

4. Priorities for Heywood town centre

Heywood town centre will continue its offer of a diverse range of independent shops creating a niche retail experience. Proposals will be supported where they are well-connected and celebrate local culture. We will:

- a. Deliver new homes on existing brownfield sites;
- b. Support the transformation of Market Street and Lance Corporal Stephen Shaw MC Way which are to be reimagined as a bus transit-led corridor as well as various accompanied active travel routes within the town centre;
- c. Support applications which seek to improve the physical environment and any public realm improvements around Market Street; and
- d. Build on the transformation of Heywood Civic Centre and Peine Square creating a vibrant cultural and public space.

5. Priorities for Littleborough town centre

Littleborough town centre meets the primary needs of its residents with acknowledgement that wider shopping needs can be met in Rochdale. Littleborough will also be promoted as a Pennine Edge tourism centre which builds on the success of Hollingworth Lake Country Park. To do this we will:

- a. Promote accessible transport including footpaths and public bridleways. We will improve linkages to the centre and wider realm of the Rochdale Canal, Hollingworth Lake, Watergrove and the Ogden reservoirs to attract visitors;
- b. Continue to support independent convenience and comparison retailing to offer a unique shopping experience complimented by opportunities for culture and the visitor economy;
- c. Support the redevelopment of the Station Area through the Littleborough Station Area SPD and Masterplan, including the delivery of new homes on suitable sites;
- d. Support proposals that enhance connectivity to the canal, improve station gateways, and refurbish railway arches and properties along Victoria Street to increase footfall and strengthen the local economy; and
- e. Prioritise the delivery of additional parking provision, particularly at the station, in response to identified community demand.

6. Residential Development

We will continue to diversify our main town centre uses to enhance vitality, including further emphasis on increasing the residential offer to support town centre living, including bringing into use vacant and underused upper floor premises. Proposals for high quality and sustainable residential development (including specialist housing) with a diversity of tenure within the boundary of a designated centre will therefore be supported on appropriate sites that reflect the distinctive role and design of the town centre where it can be demonstrated that:

- a. The development is of an appropriate density, scale, character and design, with regards to Places for Everyone policy JP-H4: Density of New Housing;
- b. Does not result in the loss of an active ground floor frontage;
- c. Would not present any undue harm to local heritage assets; and

- d. The provision of green and blue infrastructure will be maintained and where possible, enhanced.
- e. The development is accessible and viable to residents via sustainable modes of transport, including walking, wheeling and cycling.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-P4 New Retail and Leisure Uses in Town Centres

Reasoned Justification

- 7.18 Rochdale's centres serve local communities through the provision of a range of retail, community, employment, cultural and leisure facilities, as well as contributing to local identity and acting as a focal point for communities. The centres will continue in a co-ordinated approach to perform an important role in providing for weekly and day-to-day shopping requirements, employment, community facilities and leisure opportunities in easily accessible locations. They can minimise the need to travel, by providing the opportunity for 'linked trips' to shopping, employment and other frequently used services.
- 7.19 The delivery of new homes in the borough's town centres is encouraged to increase vibrancy and assist in meeting housing targets going forward. The provision of homes in our town centres will widen the housing offer as well as delivering new homes in a highly sustainable location.
- 7.20 All the town centres are distinct and deliver a varying range of services. These are summarised below.
- Rochdale
- 7.21 Rochdale is the borough's principal town centre, recognised as a centre of sub-regional significance under PfE policy JP-Strat 12. It has maintained economic autonomy and undergone major regeneration in recent years, including the opening of the Riverside Retail and Leisure development, the restoration of the Grade I listed Rochdale Town Hall and its associated environs, the opening of the River Roch, and the recent completion of the Upperbanks residential towers and a hotel. With strong competition from Manchester City Centre and neighbouring districts which may host larger retail and leisure offers, this has led to a degree of retail leakage. However, Rochdale has seen significant transformation in recent years, boosting retail activity and economic spending and redefining the town centre as a hub for leisure, business, and residential living, encouraging residents to use the town centre for their shopping needs.
- 7.22 The centre offers a broad range of services to its residents including a good level of independent shops. A varied provision of retail and other financial services is also provided, mainly along Yorkshire Street. Rochdale has also seen significant growth in its leisure offer, mainly due to the Riverside leisure development, including restaurants, bars, cafes and a new cinema and arcade.
- 7.23 The vacant Wheatsheaf Shopping Centre provides a significant opportunity site within the town centre. Proposals for the re-purposing or redevelopment of this large site will be

supported where it can be demonstrated that the regeneration would deliver benefits to the wider town centre through increasing vibrancy and vitality.

- 7.24 The town centre is served by major modern transport infrastructure including the bus Interchange and Metrolink with Rochdale railway station a short distance from the centre. Rochdale remains integral to Greater Manchester's Active Travel Mission, the Bee Network, with planned infrastructure to ensure connectivity.
- 7.25 The Council's Growth Plan places heritage at the centre of Rochdale's town centre revitalisation, recognising its unique cultural assets as catalysts for regeneration and enhancing resident and visitor experience. Central to this vision is the restoration of the Grade I listed Rochdale Town Hall and its associated public square. Heritage Action Zone grants, and Conservation Area Appraisals also contribute to the centre's heritage-based offer. These projects contribute to Rochdale becoming a major heritage attraction which enhances public access and engagement.

Middleton

- 7.26 Middleton, the borough's second largest town centre, has seen substantial investment in recent years, including the refurbishment of the shopping centre, the bus station, Middleton Arena, and a Tesco superstore. Its proximity to Manchester City Centre makes strong transport links essential, with many residents commuting for work. To ensure a resilient and sustainable future, the town must adapt to environmental, societal, and economic changes by enhancing green infrastructure, rebalancing street space, and improving the public realm. Planned travel infrastructure aims to reduce reliance on private vehicles, promoting active travel while taking the opportunity to redevelop vacant and underused buildings to revitalise the town centre.
- 7.27 In order for the town centre to benefit from the planned growth, it must redevelop in a way that builds on its potential. The existing masterplan, supported by the proposed MDC will provide further guidance and assistance in the delivery of these ambitions.

Heywood

- 7.28 Heywood town centre is well-utilised by residents and has seen recent improvements enhancing its overall image. It offers a diverse range of independent shops, creating a niche retail experience for residents. Times Retail Park, located on the edge of the centre, features a large superstore and a comparison store. Planned growth initiatives aim to transform the town centre further, improving the physical environment for shoppers and visitors.
- 7.29 The Heywood Town Centre Masterplan envisions a vibrant, well-connected town centre that celebrates local culture, enterprise, and heritage with active travel and people at its core. Market Street and Lance Corporal Stephen Shaw MC Way are to be envisioned as a bus-transit led corridor and subsequently upgraded to a Streets for All with a people-centred approach to street planning, inclusive of pedestrians and cyclists. Hill Street will be formalised as a car park serving both businesses and shoppers, with added landscaping and enhanced public realm improvements around Market Street.
- 7.30 The masterplan considers current and future needs of its residents to ensure the town is resilient and adaptable to change and is both viable and sustainable. The masterplan will

guide development in Heywood throughout the Local Plan period, supported by already secured and potential funding opportunities.

Littleborough

- 7.31 Littleborough is recognised as a thriving town centre that effectively serves its surrounding community. It meets day-to-day needs through a strong mix of national and independent retailers and benefits from excellent public transport links, particularly via Littleborough Train Station. The centre also presents a valuable opportunity to strengthen the borough's role as a leisure and recreation destination, building on the popularity of Hollingworth Lake Country Park.
- 7.32 The Littleborough Station Area Masterplan sets out a vision for sustainable development around the station, including improvements to Victoria Street, Hare Hill Road and the Village centre. The station square and its associated environs will benefit from improved transport links and the possibility for the revitalisation of the surrounding underutilised commercial buildings. The masterplan will be used in the determination of planning applications for Littleborough Town Centre to establish and build a case for investment, highlighting specific focus areas.

Primary Shopping Areas in Town Centres

- 7.33 This policy establishes the need to safeguard the core retail function of the Primary Shopping Areas (PSAs) through restricting certain non-Class E retail and leisure uses within protected shopping frontages, for reasons of vitality.

Policy PR3 – Primary Shopping Areas in Town Centres

The borough has one key primary shopping area, located in Rochdale Town Centre, as shown on the policies map, where retail development and high levels of footfall are concentrated.

Within the primary shopping area, all new development should provide an active frontage at ground level or mall level, contribute to the vibrancy of the centre and promote the objectives of policy PR2.

Within the primary shopping area of a main town centre, the change of use of Class E(a) shops at ground floor or mall level will not be permitted where a proposal would:

- a. Result in the proportion of Class E(a) retail units not remaining the predominant use. Where this is already the case, proposals for non-Class E(a) uses will normally be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that an alternative use which does not fall within the standard Use Class E(a) would be appropriate; or
- b. Lead to an over dominance of more than two separately occupied non-Class E(a) uses adjacent to each other where this would not adversely affect the vitality of the protected shopping frontage; or
- c. Introduce a non-main town centre uses within the identified frontages.

Applications for residential development on an upper floor within the boundary of a defined primary shopping area will be supported providing it retains an active ground floor frontage and does not compromise or undermine the fundamental retail use of the unit.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-P4 New Retail and Leisure Uses in Town Centres

Reasoned Justification

- 7.34 Designated shopping frontages are generally areas with the highest concentration of retail activity. The maintenance of the appropriate retail profile is important to the shopping function and character of the town centre. Accordingly, it is considered that primary shopping areas will typically be occupied by a majority of Class E(a) (following 2020 Use Class Revisions) retailers selling goods at ground floor and mall level. However, given the ongoing degree of flexibility of Primary Shopping Area's and their core function, there is an acceptance that in some instances an alternative use which does not fall within the Use Class E(a) category may be considered appropriate where it would not be considered harmful to the primary role of the shopping frontage. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- 7.35 The PSAs previously identified in the UDP have been amended and removed where necessary, taking into account current land uses, policy considerations and any new development in the centres. In Rochdale Town Centre, the PSA has been amended to include the new 'Riverside' retail-led mixed-use development whilst the Wheatsheaf Shopping Centre has been removed to give greater flexibility to its potential redevelopment. The town centres core retail function is focused along an east-west axis, supported by a linear commercial corridor, Baillie Street, that connects the primary shopping areas across the town centre. In Middleton, Heywood and Littleborough, primary and central shopping area boundaries have been removed in recognition of the most up to date evidence that reflects the changing roles of town centres and increased flexibility of the Use Class Order.
- 7.36 For sequential testing purposes, unless policies specifically state otherwise, the PSA represents in-centre for Class E retail proposals (in accordance with National Policy). Therefore, unless policies specifically state otherwise, Class E retail proposals outside of Primary Shopping Areas but within centre boundaries will be considered as out of or edge of centre depending on distance from the Primary Shopping Area. For all other town centre uses, the centre boundary will be considered as in-centre. For District and Local Centres, it is not appropriate to have a Primary Shopping Area and therefore all main town centre proposals outside of the centre boundary will be considered as out or edge of centre if it is immediately adjacent to the centre boundary.

Local and District Centres and Local Shops

- 7.37 This policy seeks to support a balanced mix of uses to help local centres thrive as hubs for daily shopping and social interaction, reinforcing their role as focal points within the community.

Policy PR4 – Local and District Centres and Local Shops

1. District Centres

There are two district centres in the borough, Milnrow and Castleton. To maintain and improve on the quality of these centres, development will be expected to:

- a. Be of an appropriate scale, character and function consistent with the position of the centre in the hierarchy set out in policy PR1; and
- b. Not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity, traffic conditions or the surrounding environment which could not be overcome by the imposition of conditions

2. Local Centres

Rochdale hosts a network of 31 local centres serving the day-to-day needs of local areas as defined on the policies map. Development in local centres will be expected to:

- a. Maintain an appropriate balance of key uses for that local centre;
- b. Generate a reasonable level of footfall and be of public interest or service;
- c. Not harmfully dominate or fragment the centres retail frontage;
- d. Include a shopfront with a display function; and
- e. Demonstrate that any proposal seeking for the conversion of a vacant commercial premises to residential development will assist regeneration. The centre must also have a high overall vacancy rate.

3. Local Shops

Where there is a proposal for shops which fall outside the designated boundary of a town, district and local centre, or is proposed within a new large-scale housing development or ancillary retail within employment areas, the development must meet the following locational and design criteria:

- f. Be of an appropriate scale and within a location where there is an identified deficiency in local shopping or service provision from the absence of a nearby existing centre, local shop or service provision within a reasonable walking distance;
- g. Remain proportionate to and primarily serve the needs of the development or its surrounding catchment and does not undermine the vitality and viability of existing centres;
- h. Not unduly affect the amenity of nearby residents or other uses;
- i. Be well-connected to the surrounding area having regard to active travel routes to reduce the need for vehicular trips; and
- j. Demonstrate compliance with the sequential and impact assessment requirements as set out in PR5, where applicable.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-P4 New Retail and Leisure Uses in Town Centres

Reasoned Justification

- 7.38 Neighbourhoods across Rochdale are generally well served by a network of district and local centres. These centres offer accessible and convenient facilities for residents, typically located within walking and cycling distance and are well connected by high-frequency public transport routes. The boroughs district and local centres will continue to be protected and enhanced to ensure a suitable range of local services are maintained to provide for everyday needs.
- 7.39 District centres are smaller than town centres, usually comprising a varied group of shops and services, often containing at least one supermarket. District centres are not limited to sole retail use and will also contain other services which serve the immediate community such as pharmacies, cafes, restaurants, petrol filling stations and takeaways.
- 7.40 Local centres are the lowest on the hierarchy therefore the smallest of the boroughs identified centres. They serve purely local needs, often accessed by residents on foot. Local centres typically offer a variety of shops providing everyday essentials such as groceries and fresh food, alongside key services like post offices and pharmacies. They often feature specialist or independent retailers that enhance the character and uniqueness of each centre. In addition, cafés, pubs, and financial services contribute to their vibrancy and community appeal. The borough hosts a network of 31 local centres, each of a different size, character and condition. Some local centres encompass residential development at ground floor level, whilst others have residential properties on upper floors. Conversion of vacant commercial premises to residential could be beneficial in some centres providing it is in line with policy PR2, which aims to target and boost regeneration.
- 7.41 Both of the borough's district centres have a range of shops together with appropriate supporting non-retail facilities and services which collectively form a coherent shopping experience for the local catchment. The retail emphasis in district centres is largely on food and other convenience goods though both host a good level of comparison retailers as well as smaller independent shops.
- 7.42 Covering the east of the borough and set within the Pennines township, Milnrow district centre is considered a suitable location for the diverse range of uses it hosts, recognising its role in serving a more limited catchment area in comparison to the borough's main town centre. Milnrow has remained economically autonomous with a well performing centre for a number of years. The function and role of Milnrow will continue to be protected to provide for shopping needs and other key services and facilities.
- 7.43 Castleton is a vibrant district centre providing a good mix of retailers. There are ambitious plans for Castleton which encompass the district centre boundary, as highlighted in the Castleton Station Area Masterplan, which represents a strategic priority for the Council. The Masterplan details residential and business opportunities with excellent transport links, including into Manchester City Centre. Castleton has also benefitted from planned transport infrastructure as part of Phase 1 of the Greater Manchester Bee Network strategy, with major improvements to Manchester Road from Castleton Railway Station to The Royal Toby Hotel.

Local shops will likely be appropriate in larger scale residential and employment areas to assist regeneration where they are not reasonably served by an existing centre. The Rochdale Town Centres Policy Advice Study considers a 'reasonable walking distance' to be within an 800m radius (to be measured from the boundary of the proposed development to the boundary of the centre) as set out as the 'preferred acceptable' maximum walking distance by The Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot (The Institution of Highways & Transportation, 2000). The scale and character should be consistent with its surroundings, having regard to local amenity and connectivity to the community it is serving. Its main function should be subordinate to the primary residential or employment function and should not undermine their roles. A proposal for local shops in this instance should be supported by the appropriate assessments which demonstrate compliance with the sequential and impact tests, as outlined in PR5. The assessment should clearly set out the intended catchment area, the specific business model requirements and the associated justification as to why it could not be accommodated within a defined centre. Consideration must also be given to any cumulative impacts of ancillary uses to ensure that they do not evolve into independent commercial destinations that would be more appropriately located within established centres.

Out of Centre Retail and Leisure Uses

- 7.44 The Council will seek to maintain the vitality of the boroughs designated centres and the pivotal role they play for local communities by ensuring any proposals for main town centres uses are appropriately located and of a scale that would not have any significant adverse impacts to any existing centres.

Policy PR5 – Out of Centre Retail and Leisure Uses

Sequential Test

In accordance with national policy, main town centre uses should be located within existing centres, then in edge of centre locations, and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered. Preference will be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre.

Proposals should take a flexible approach to scale and format to determine whether it would have any significant adverse impacts.

The sequential approach should not be applied to applications for small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development.

Impact Assessment

The Council will strongly resist any out of centre retail and leisure development that could harm the health and vitality of any existing centre. Therefore, where there is an out of centre application, an impact assessment will be required and should satisfy the locational requirement floorspace threshold set out locally;

- The proposal exceeds 500 sq.m gross and above
- The proposal is within 800m of Middleton, Heywood and Littleborough town centres or Milnrow and Castleton district centres and exceeds 300 sq.m; or
- The proposal is within 800m of a local centre and exceeds 200 sq.m

For the avoidance of doubt, the above thresholds apply to new floorspace (including mezzanine), extensions, changes of use and applications seeking to vary any existing conditions.

Applications which do not satisfy the sequential test or where it is deemed the proposal would have significant adverse impacts to an existing centre will be refused.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-P4 New Retail and Leisure Uses in Town Centres

Reasoned Justification

- 7.45 For some time, town centres have faced competition from developing out of town locations including those hosting bulky-good retail parks, many of which eventually evolved into shopping parks. Large out of centre stores have also applied pressure on town centres through influencing shopping behaviours, in effect providing a mini and alternative shopping centre providing free parking, enhanced environments and extended openings.
- 7.46 Main town centre uses are central to the viability and vitality of town centres. National planning policy recognises the importance of maintaining healthy centres and the pivotal role they play to local communities. The Council is therefore keen to support the borough's centres by ensuring that they remain the focus for main town centre uses. By locating large scale retail and leisure facilities in the borough's designated centres, helping to drive footfall and trading revenue to business in town centres, in turn, maintaining and enhancing town centre vitality and also reducing the need to travel and make multiple linked trips.
- 7.47 Where a retail impact assessment is required, it must include a thorough appraisal of its impact to the catchment area of the proposed development, with due regard to its scale, the cumulative impact of any recent developments and the impact on the town centre in the context of local consumer choice and trade in the centre. The Council expects applicants to consider both existing, committed and planned public and private investment in these centres to justify a chosen location outside of the preferred designated central locations within a sequential test. The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate compliance with sequential test requirements including evidence they have first considered locations which fall within an existing town centre, as well as the preferable edge of centre sites. If the authority is satisfied the evidence presented prove these locations are unsuitable, the test will be passed.
- 7.48 The Rochdale Town Centres Policy Advice identifies a 800m distance as being the 'preferred maximum' acceptable walking distance to a centre, as set out in The

Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot (The Institution of Highways & Transportation, 2000). Therefore, where a proposal is within the 800m distance of a main town centre (Middleton, Heywood and Littleborough) and a district centre (Milnrow and Castleton), the lower threshold of 300sq.m will apply and where a proposal is within a 800m distance of a local centre, the lower threshold of 200sq.m will apply. Otherwise the default threshold across the Rochdale borough remains at 500 sq.m.

- 7.49 Though listed as a 'main town centre use', the NPPF does not require office development outside of centres to be supported by an impact assessment (but should be supported by the sequential test).
- 7.50 Compliance with both an impact assessment and sequential test does not guarantee permission will be granted. The application will still be subject to all relevant planning considerations.
- 7.51 Policy PR1 establishes the Boroughs hierarchy of centres, taking into account a variety of factors, with each tier offering a different level of resistance to new development in that catchment area. The centres highest on the list, considered Rochdale's 'principal and main town centres', will inevitably offer the strongest impact resistance to the introduction of new development without it undermining its vitality and viability. These centres will most likely be able to accommodate larger scale development outside of their town centre boundaries, subject to the necessary assessments. Lower down in the tier, the district and local centres are of smaller scale, with a more localised catchment and retail offer therefore will be more sensitive to large scale development which may significantly impact investment and activity in these areas.
- 7.52 The deviation from the nationally set threshold of 2,500sq.m is considered appropriate to allow the Council to retain appropriate control and expectations for development in these catchments and have been derived from the The Rochdale Town Centres Policy Advice. This should not be interpreted that proposed developments with a floorspace above the set thresholds for that area are necessarily inappropriate in scale but there to give better consideration as to its impact.

Delivering Employment Floorspace

- 7.53 The delivery of high-quality employment floorspace is required to provide strong economic growth within the borough and support the PfE objective of boosting northern competitiveness. This policy sets out how requirements for new employment floorspace set out in PfE policies JP-J3 and JP-J4 will be met.

Policy PR6 – Delivering Employment Floorspace

We will ensure a sufficient supply of suitable land, buildings and infrastructure in the right places to support the delivery of at least 575,444 sq.m of employment floorspace, comprising around 504,641 sq.m of industrial and warehousing floorspace and 70,803 sq.m of office floorspace up to 2039.

The requirement will be met by:

- a. The delivery of the strategic allocations in PfE – JPA 1.1 Northern Gateway (Heywood / Pilsworth) and JPA 2 Stakehill;
- b. The completion of Kingsway Business Park;
- c. Development within existing Employment Zones and on other suitable sites in accordance with policy PR7; and
- d. In the case of offices, the delivery of suitable sites in accordance with policy PR8.

To support economic growth the Council will promote the delivery of infrastructure, such as improved transport, housing, education, energy (including decentralised energy networks), water and wastewater, and information and communications technology (including high speed broadband).

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-J2 Employment Sites and Premises

Reasoned Justification

- 7.54 PfE policies JP-J3 and JP-J4 identify gross floorspace requirements for the whole plan area for offices and industry/warehousing development over the period 2022 to 2039. The requirements are for at least 3,513,000 sq.m. of industrial and warehousing floorspace and 2,019,000 sq.m. of office floorspace. These requirements are not broken down to district level, although tables 6.1 and 6.2 in PfE set out the distribution of the identified supply for offices and industry and warehousing.
- 7.55 To ensure that Rochdale makes a sufficient contribution to meeting the overall employment requirements identified in PfE, at least 504,641 sq.m of industrial and warehousing floorspace and at least 70,803 sq.m. of office floorspace and will be provided in Rochdale over the period 2022 to 2039. These requirements have determined by calculating Rochdale's proportion of the total supply of floorspace across the 9 districts as shown in PfE tables 6.1 and 6.2 and applying this proportion to the policy requirement figures in PfE policies JP-J3 and JP-J4.
- 7.56 The approach taken to disaggregating the overall employment requirements to a district level is that put forward by the 9 PfE districts through main modifications proposed during the examination of the Plan. The Inspectors determined that such modifications were not necessary to make the plan sound given there is no specific requirement in national policy to establish district level requirement figures as part of a joint plan. Notwithstanding this, the methodology is considered to remain appropriate for disaggregating the employment requirements set out in PfE for the purposes of the Local Plan.
- 7.57 In order to provide further detail on the existing employment position in the borough and to further evidence the local target derived from PfE, an updated Employment Land Study (ELS) 2026 has been undertaken. This study concluded that the forecasted need for employment floorspace over this period is very similar to the overall target derived from PfE and it is therefore considered that this study supports the use of the PfE target to ensure conformity with that plan. The target is not a ceiling and could be exceeded

through the delivery of sustainable employment development supported by necessary infrastructure.

- 7.58 The ELS 2026 does demonstrate a forecasted need for a greater proportion of office space. However, it does acknowledge that this is based around forecasted growth in certain sectors and that current viability in terms of delivery is challenging. the study concludes that realistically, most office provision in Rochdale, moving forward is likely to be contained with the larger industrial and warehouse schemes currently being progressed.
- 7.59 A large proportion of the new employment development in the borough will be delivered on the strategic allocations at Northern Gateway and Stakehill along with the completion of Kingsway Business Park. Together these will provide a scale and type of development to drive economic growth through the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ). This will be complemented by the delivery of employment development on other sites, including town centres, to provide a range of employment opportunities to help diversify the local economy and make it more resilient.
- 7.60 It is important that employment development is supported by good quality infrastructure. The provision or planned provision of infrastructure not only helps to attract investment but also ensures the timely delivery of sustainable growth.
- 7.61 Elements of the new modern economy, such as data centres, can be major users of water resources, with associated consequential requirements for wastewater discharge. Applicants must demonstrate how the impact on water resources, wastewater infrastructure and the environment has been mitigated and managed, in accordance with policies S4, S5 and DM1 of the plan. Proposals for new Data Storage facilities should undertake early engagement with United Utilities in relation to water and wastewater requirements. Data centres also produce a lot of heat, and as such should consider the reuse of waste heat as part of a heat network (see Policy S3).

Business, Industry and Warehousing Development

- 7.62 The delivery of development relating to these sectors will be the main driver of economic growth in the borough over the plan period. This type of development will form the majority of the new employment development in the borough, and the scale and quality of that development will help us to deliver Atom Valley, as well as creating sustainable areas of employment. The policy below sets out how proposals for development of this type of employment will be considered.

Policy PR7 – Business, Industry and Warehousing Development

The Council will support the delivery of these types of development in appropriate locations. Encouragement will be given to businesses and uses that assist in the delivery of economic growth, particularly those that support and complement the Atom Valley growth location.

Proposals for new business, industry and warehouse development (Use classes E (g) (ii) & (iii), B2 and B8) will be permitted within Employment Zones and on other suitable sites outside Employment Zones where:

- a. It is for a use that is appropriate given the nature of the Employment Zone and the surrounding uses;
- b. The scale, height and massing is appropriate having regard to neighbouring buildings and local character;
- c. The site can be accessed and serviced, including sufficient space for manoeuvring vehicles;
- d. The proposal incorporates high-quality landscaping and boundary treatment; and
- e. It satisfies the general development requirements of policy DM1

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-J4 Industry and Warehousing Development

Reasoned Justification

- 7.63 The Council is keen to support the delivery of new business, industry and warehousing development in appropriate locations. The borough already contains a number of successful business parks and employment sites, and this policy is intended to ensure that these areas continue to thrive, complemented by the strategic allocations set out in PfE.
- 7.64 The scale of the allocations in PfE and supply on other sites, as evidenced in the ELS 2026, demonstrates that there is a good supply of land to deliver this employment floorspace. The council will seek to ensure that the development of these areas broadens the economic base within the borough, maximises economic growth and delivers the transformational change envisaged through the Atom Valley. This will be complemented by opportunities to regenerate and intensify existing employment zones and areas to deliver new developments and meet employment needs outside this strategic location (policy PR9).
- 7.65 In supporting new development of this type, it is important that it is suitably located and of a scale and design that fits in with the surrounding area. This policy will be used as a basis for assessing the overall design and environmental impact of new proposals. Ensuring good design in terms of scale, size, density, layout, height and materials is important in maintaining and improving the image of the Borough.
- 7.66 It is also important that the surrounding amenity is protected and therefore any proposal would need to satisfy the requirements of policy DM1 along with other relevant policies of the plan.

Office Development

- 7.67 The provision of sufficient and suitable office space is important as part of a diverse local economy. The policy sets out where office accommodation is expected to be provided in line with national guidance as well as where it may be permitted in certain circumstances.

Policy PR8 – Office Development

The Council will seek to encourage office growth [Class E(g)(i)] at an appropriate level to support the spatial strategy set out in the Places for Everyone Joint Plan and the aim to boost northern competitiveness.

As a main town centre use, new office development should be located in the Borough's main town centres in accordance with national guidance, PfE policy JP-J3 and policy PR2.

Proposals for offices outside town centres will only be permitted where:

- a. It is ancillary to the main employment use on the site; or
- b. It can be clearly demonstrated that there are specific needs associated with the proposal that require it to be in that location.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-J3 Office Development

Reasoned Justification

- 7.68 The Council will support the provision of office development in the right locations and of a suitable scale to support economic growth. National guidance defines office development as a main town centre use and local planning authorities are required to apply a sequential test to proposals for main town centre uses. Proposals for office development should be directed to town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.
- 7.69 Proposals for office development in main town centres should be in accordance with Policy E2 Creating Vibrant Main Town Centres'.
- 7.70 There may be occasions where it is appropriate for office development to be provided outside town centres. This includes office space that is ancillary to the main employment use of the site – sometimes referred to as 'back office'. The nature of this can vary but is often typified by a block or area of the main building being given over to offices to support the principal employment use on the site. The ELS 2026 notes that given the current viability challenges around the delivery of dedicated office space within the borough's town centres, office development that is part of the significant proposed industrial (including research and development) and warehousing within the

borough is likely to provide a large proportion of the office development and associated jobs over the plan period.

- 7.71 There may also be instances where there are specific locational needs which requires offices to be developed outside a town centre. These would need to be clearly demonstrated but may be supported in certain instances, for example, where they are needed to support development and sectors delivered as part of the wider Atom Valley growth location.

Employment Zones and Existing Employment Sites

- 7.72 The borough contains a number of Employment Zones and employment sites. The protection of these areas is important to retain a range of employment types as well as providing opportunities for the growth and expansion of existing premises.

Policy PR9 – Employment Zones and Existing Employment Sites

The Council will protect those existing employment zones and employment (Use classes E (g) (ii) & (iii), B2 and B8) sites outside employment zones which are most suited to continued employment use. The identified Employment Zones are shown on the Policies Map.

The Council will support the regeneration and intensification of employment zones and existing employment sites where the proposals are in accordance with policy PR7. This will particularly be the case where the proposal would address gaps in local employment supply. Uses other than employment will only be permitted in Employment Zones (excluding Heywood Distribution Park and Stakehill Business Park) and on existing large employment sites outside employment zones (over 0.4 ha) where:

- a. There is a proven lack of demand for the site for a suitable employment use; or
- b. The site is no longer suited in land use terms to any employment use; or
- c. It will enable high-quality mixed-use employment development close to town centres or transport interchanges, or
- d. It will help support the delivery of the Council's regeneration priorities in the area; or
- e. Redevelopment of the site would enable reinvestment that will provide jobs in the borough; or
- f. Development would remove a severe environmental problem.

If, having regard to the above, an alternative use is considered acceptable in principle, it would need to be demonstrated by the applicant that the alternative use proposed would not impact on the ability of existing businesses to operate satisfactorily or that any impacts could be appropriately mitigated.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-J2 Employment Sites and Premises

Reasoned Justification

- 7.73 In ensuring a high-quality employment offer in the borough it is important to retain employment generating areas alongside new provision. The borough contains a number of existing employment zones and employment sites that provide a range of job opportunities. Whilst the provision of new employment floorspace is necessary to grow the local economy it is important that this is complemented through the retention of existing business.
- 7.74 Table 1 below sets out the employment zones within the borough and these are included on the Policies Map.

Table 1: List of Employment Zones

Reference	Location
EZ1	Kingsway Business Park
EZ2	Stakehill Industrial Estate
EZ3	Heywood Distribution Park
EZ4	Sandbrook Park, Rochdale
EZ5	Two Bridges Road, Newhey
EZ6	Buckley Road, Rochdale
EZ7	Whitworth Street, Milnrow
EZ8	Royle Road, Castleton
EZ9	Queensway, Castleton
EZ10	Phoenix Close Heywood
EZ11	Waterfold Farm, Heap Bridge
EZ12	Broadfield Industrial Park, Heywood
EZ13	Yeargate Industrial Estate, Heap Bridge
EZ14	Wallhead Road, Rochdale
EZ15	Rhodes Business Park, Rhodes
EZ16	Millers Brook Mill, Heywood
EZ17	Roeacre Business Centre, Heywood
EZ18	Mellor Street, Rochdale
EZ19	Albion Road Industrial Estate, Rochdale
EZ20	Rugby Road, Rochdale
EZ21	South East of Railway Station, Rochdale
EZ22	John Street, Rochdale
EZ23	Eagle Technology Park, Rochdale
EZ24	Caldershaw Centre, Spotland
EZ25	Coldwell Industrial Estate, Rochdale
EZ26	Caldermoor, Littleborough
EZ27	Evans Business Centre, Rochdale
EZ28	Greenvale Business Park, Littleborough
EZ29	Riverside Drive, Rochdale
EZ30	Chichester Street, Rochdale
EZ31	Hanson Street, Middleton

EZ32	Grimshaw Lane, Middleton
EZ33	Fieldhouse Industrial Estate, Rochdale
EZ34	South of Mills Hill Station, Middleton
EZ35	South of Don Street, Middleton

- 7.75 As well as these employment zones, there are a number of larger one-off employment sites that provide important opportunities.
- 7.76 The Employment Zones and larger employment sites also provide significant opportunities for re-development and intensification for employment generating uses. A significant proportion of the supply of employment floorspace comes from these sources as identified in policy PR6. As a result, protecting such areas not only helps to retain existing businesses and jobs, but also provides opportunities for businesses and employment areas to expand and evolve over time.
- 7.77 The existing Employment Zones within the borough were assessed as part of the ELS 2026. Although there is variation in the scale and quality of these areas, the study concludes that these zones provide active and successful employment locations, which should continue to be identified and protected for E(g)/B-Class uses in the Local Plan.
- 7.78 The ELS 2026 notes that a large proportion of the employment land supply is concentrated in the south of the borough and in and around the main town centres of Rochdale, Middleton and Heywood. Whilst this is appropriate in terms of the delivery of larger scale development to support the ambitions of Atom Valley, it is important to encourage development that meets more local employment needs. The employment zones and existing employment sites in the north and east of the borough therefore have a key role to play in maintaining these opportunities and their regeneration and intensification can provide better quality employment development to meet local needs.
- 7.79 Whilst the protection of existing businesses is important, there are occasions where premises become vacant or under-used. In these instances, alternative uses may be considered appropriate if it can be demonstrated that it is no longer possible to retain viable employment uses on the site or such a change would outweigh the need to retain a potential source of employment.
- 7.80 Where an alternative use is considered appropriate it is also necessary to ensure that introducing such a use will not adversely affect the ability of existing businesses to continue to operate effectively. Where more sensitive uses (e.g. residential) are proposed, the onus will be on the applicant/developer as the ‘agent of change’ to demonstrate this through a comprehensive assessment of any impacts and how any that arise can be adequately mitigated. Any mitigations will be the responsibility of the applicant or developer. This will ensure that the continued operation of any established employment site is not compromised by new development. This avoids a situation where an employment area is eroded over time and viable businesses put at risk.

Promoting the Visitor and Rural Economy

- 7.81 Encouraging the visitor economy through enhanced visitor attractions will benefit the local economy by broadening its economic base, providing additional employment and improving the image of the borough. Much of the borough accommodates rural activity, particularly the upland areas, and it is important that this is supported to maintain this important economy.

Policy PR10 – Promoting the Visitor and Rural Economy

The Council will encourage the visitor economy by promoting enhanced visitor attractions that will benefit the local economy by broadening its economic base, providing additional employment and improving the image of the borough.

To achieve this the Council will support:

- a. Proposals that improve the visitor economy and resist those that could adversely affect it;
- b. The provision of built leisure, tourism, cultural facilities and overnight accommodation subject to the following sequential approach:
 - i. Town centres if sites are available; or
 - ii. Areas where a need can be demonstrated (i.e. for business visitors and / or close to tourism attractions) in support of existing and new tourism opportunities within the borough and economic growth areas such as Atom Valley.
- c. Camping sites and touring and static caravan sites provided that they are appropriately located and do not have an adverse effect on the appearance or character of the countryside; and
- d. Outdoor sport and water-based recreation facilities appropriate to the location.

The visitor economy also forms a key element of the Borough's rural economy. In promoting the rural economy, we will support proposals that:

- e. Enhance the South Pennine Moors landscape;
- f. Enhance the role of key rural settlements, facilities for tourism, recreation and associated products and services for local communities and visitors
- g. Improve the recreational and tourist value of the Rochdale Canal, Hollingworth Lake, the Roch Valley corridor, Pennine Way and Pennine Bridleway and other strategic tourist and recreational routes and sites;
- h. Support agriculture, rural businesses and other appropriate activities and facilities which help to sustain economic activity whilst maintaining and improving the appearance and rural character of the borough's countryside;
- i. Re-use redundant farm buildings and mills, and derelict, underused or neglected land for new rural business activity which contribute to a sustainable low carbon economy (for example overnight accommodation, creative, digital and emerging media industries, renewable energy, and other environmental technologies); and
- j. Do not result in the loss of agricultural land, particularly the best (Grade 3a and above), unless there is an overriding strategic need for development and no appropriate land exists elsewhere.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-P3 Cultural Facilities

Reasoned Justification

- 7.17 The borough has a lot to offer to visitors. It has good access to the South Pennines and Manchester city centre, attractive countryside, a rich heritage and many opportunities to attract more visitors.
- 7.82 The current and potential visitor economy in the borough includes both facilities and attractions within the urban area and outside the urban area in more rural locations such as Hollingworth Lake and the South Pennines Moors. Although some of the borough's assets are well known there are others which could benefit from further development and promotion.
- 7.83 Supporting the growth of the visitor economy is important to attract visitors and investment as well as improving the overall image and perception of the borough. In accommodating such growth, it is important that this is focussed to the right locations and also has regard to the local area and landscape, particularly as such attractions and opportunities are often in sensitive locations.
- 7.84 There is a strong link between the visitor economy and the wider rural economy. The rural landscapes and communities of the borough cover approximately two thirds of its total land area. These rural areas support a wide range of economic activities and provide key services and infrastructure for the borough and Greater Manchester. This includes agriculture, forestry, minerals, waste, energy, water, tourism, sport and recreation.
- 7.85 The rural areas of Rochdale are varied and diverse in character. They include both the uplands of the South Pennines (in the north) and the open pasture land and river valleys of the Urban Mersey Basin (in the south). Within the upland areas the population is small and scattered, with the agriculture mainly sheep grazing.
- 7.86 National guidance sets our general advice in terms of development associated with the rural economy. Locally, the rural economy is defined very much by the landscape, agricultural and visitor assets of the borough. As with the visitor economy, the growth of this sector is encouraged, having regard to the sensitive nature of certain landscapes and locations. As such, the Council will support proposals that conserve and where possible enhance these areas, paying particular attention to functionally linked land, access management and education.

8. A Place for Homes

- 8.1 The policies in this plan seek to deliver the NPPF objective of boosting the supply and delivery of new homes. This will be achieved by ensuring that sufficient land is provided for new housing on a range of sites that meets the needs of existing and new residents within the borough.
- 8.2 The housing requirement for Rochdale up to 2039 is set out in Policy JP-H1 of the Places for Everyone Plan. The table below shows the targets for Rochdale over this period.

Table 2: Rochdale's Housing Requirement to 2039

	Annual average 2022- 2039	2022- 2025 (annual)	2025- 2030 (annual)	2030-2039 (annual)	Total 2022- 2039
Rochdale	616	568	616	632	10,472

- 8.3 In addition to providing a sufficient number of homes, it is important that those homes are of a high-quality and meet the varying needs of the area in terms of type, size and tenure. It is also important that the needs of specific groups are met to ensure inclusivity in the housing market.
- 8.4 The Council has declared a Housing Emergency and, as a result, the delivery of affordable housing, including social housing, is a high priority. Alongside this, the Council will continue to focus on the delivery of larger, family housing to provide a more balanced range of housing across the borough.
- 8.5 This chapter sets out policies to ensure that these needs are met as well as deliver the overall numbers of homes required.

Delivering the Right Amount of Housing in the Right Places

- 8.6 This policy sets out how the adopted housing target Rochdale within policy JP-H1 of PfE will be delivered within the borough.

Policy H1 - Delivering the Right Amount of Housing in the Right Places

We will provide sufficient land to deliver at least 616 net additional dwellings per year up to 2039 to assist in the creation of successful, inclusive and mixed communities and meet the housing needs of the borough. To do this we will:

- Deliver the strategic allocations within the Places for Everyone Plan;
- Work proactively with developers and landowners to deliver sites for residential development identified within the Councils Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA);

- c. Allow the development of suitable windfall sites that are in accordance with other land use policies in this plan and satisfy policy DM1; and
- d. Bring forward sites identified through the Council's regeneration priorities including:
 - i. Opportunities to significantly boost the delivery of new homes in town centres; and
 - ii. The delivery of new homes around railway stations and Metrolink stops.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-H1 Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development

Reasoned Justification

- 8.7 The Places for Everyone Plan set a housing target for the borough that matched the borough's ambitions for economic growth. The Council has a strong track record of identifying sufficient housing to meet its targets as well as passing the Government's Housing Delivery Test (HDT). Boosting the supply and delivery of homes continues to be a priority and will ensure that NPPF objectives are met.
- 8.8 The Places for Everyone Plan identifies a number of large, strategic housing allocations totalling over 4,000 new homes. These allocations will be supported through a mix of housing sites identified in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.
- 8.9 The Council is also actively engaged in a number of regeneration projects across the borough. The Rochdale Rail Corridor Strategy sets out how existing and proposed sustainable transport links will help spearhead the next major phase of regeneration for the borough. This Strategy, supported by a number of area specific SPDs, will promote the delivery of new homes in sustainable locations. In addition to this, masterplans and SPDs have been produced and are proposed for the borough's main town centres that will focus on the continued delivery of homes in these locations to deliver sustainable development and improve vibrancy.
- 8.10 This requirement is not a ceiling, and the Council will work to maximise the delivery of homes on suitable sites in accordance with the other policies within this plan.

Delivering the Right Types of Homes

- 8.11 Policy JP-H3 of PfE recognises the need for residential developments to provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes reflecting local needs, including specialised housing. Creating the right mix of homes on sites, particularly on larger developments, can help to create sustainable neighbourhoods that meet the needs of multiple age groups. This policy sets out what is required within Rochdale to meet local needs and provide a choice of suitable homes.

Policy H2 - Delivering the Right Types of Homes

We will deliver the right types of homes, well designed and built to appropriate densities, to meet the overall needs and aspirations of the borough. To do this we will:

- a. Ensure new development provides an appropriate mix of housing types, agreed with the Local Planning Authority, that takes account of local needs and aspirations;
- b. Deliver good quality affordable housing, including larger family homes, to satisfy the requirements of policy H3;
- c. Ensure that the supply of larger and higher value housing in the borough is improved to provide a more balanced housing stock;
- d. Require a high standard of design and layout that produces attractive places, which are energy efficient and resilient to a changing climate, having regard to relevant national guidance and standards that support inclusive design (Policies PE1, S1, S2);
- e. Promote densities, in accordance with PfE policy JP H4, that make efficient use of land, balances the need for a range of housing to widen choice in the borough, and reflects local character;
- f. Ensure all new dwellings are built to the nationally described space standards, and the “accessible and adaptable” standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations unless specific site conditions make this impracticable in accordance with PfE Policy JP-H3;
- g. Allow the alteration and extension of existing properties in accordance with Policy H8 and the Council’s Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development SPD;
- h. Support the provision of homes to meet the needs of specific groups on appropriate sites, including as part of the mix on larger residential schemes (Policies H4, H5 and H6); and
- i. Support the delivery of sites for self-build and community build projects to meet identified needs.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-H3 Type, Size and Design of New Housing

Policy JP-H4 Density of New Housing

Reasoned Justification

- 8.12 Delivering the right types of homes in the right locations is important to create inclusive and sustainable communities.
- 8.13 Providing the right mix of homes on a site not only helps to meet housing needs but also creates diversity within a scheme to broaden the appeal of the site and deliver more varied and attractive layouts. What constitutes an appropriate mix on a site should be based on the most up to date evidence including the Council’s Housing Need Assessment (HNA), and where appropriate, the Specialist Housing and Supported Living Needs Assessment and Market Position Statements. This will also include delivering good quality affordable housing in accordance with policy H3. A key aim, as set out in the affordable housing policy, is the need to deliver larger, family homes as part of the mix of affordable housing. Proposals should also consider, where appropriate, any evidence of particular housing needs for people from diverse cultural, ethnic and faith backgrounds to support different patterns of family life.

- 8.14 Within the borough there is currently a disproportionate amount of properties in Council Tax bands A and B. In ensuring that all housing needs are met across the borough it is important that larger, higher-value homes are also provided to create a more varied housing stock and support economic growth. The types of higher value houses can vary but are generally characterised by homes that are situated in well-landscaped settings, with spacious plot sizes and larger internal floorspaces. They can also include smaller properties which are built to a high specification incorporating the latest technologies.
- 8.15 The precise mix of housing on a site should be determined on a site-by-site basis taking into account the latest evidence as well as the site location (including density requirements set out in PfE Policy JP-H4), site characteristics and the nature of the surrounding area. In the case of small sites, again these will be considered on a site-by-site basis and may contribute to some of the more specific needs identified for that area rather than the full range.
- 8.16 In applying the density requirements set out in PfE policy JP-H4, the Council will have regard to the potential justifications for lower densities as set out in that policy.
- 8.17 As well as providing the right type of homes to meet housing needs it is important that homes are well-designed, built at appropriate densities and meet nationally prescribed standards for internal space and accessibility. Delivering such homes not only creates more attractive and inclusive places but also ensures that homes meet the requirements for modern living and meet the needs of the occupants as they vary over time.
- 8.18 The provision of an appropriate mix of housing must also consider the need for specialist and supported accommodation. The location and design of such housing will depend to some extent on the type of provision and the client group that the provision is for. However, the general expectation is that specialist and supported accommodation should be in sustainable locations with reasonable access to community and support facilities (either on or off site), shops and services and public transport connections. New homes should be designed so that they can be used safely, conveniently and with dignity by as many people as possible, including disabled people, older people, people with reduced mobility, people with sensory impairments, families with young children and people whose needs change over time. The creation of multi-generational communities will be supported.
- 8.19 The delivery of smaller sites is important in terms of overall delivery and making the best use of land available for development. These smaller sites often provide opportunities for self-build and community build projects. The Council maintains a self-build register in accordance with national requirements. The current level of interest, and locational requirements, in terms of self-build does not justify a specific percentage to be specifically required on sites within the borough. It is considered that the existing small and medium sites within the housing land supply provide sufficient opportunities to deliver self-build and community build homes.

Providing Affordable Homes

- 8.20 Policy JP-H2 of PfE states that local plans should set targets for the provision of affordable housing to maximise delivery having regard to evidence of local need and taking account of viability. This policy sets targets for the proportion and types of affordable housing and how we expect that to be delivered to ensure the provision of high-quality homes that meet local needs.

Policy H3 - Providing Affordable Homes

We will require 15% affordable housing on all developments of 10 dwellings or more.

Affordable homes should be provided on-site and meet the following requirements:

- a. Deliver a type, size and tenure of homes agreed by the developer and the local authority based on local evidence with a minimum of 80% of the affordable homes being for rent, preferably social rent, with the remainder for affordable home ownership;
- b. Homes should be delivered in partnership with a Registered Provider, where appropriate;
- c. The provision of affordable homes should be fully integrated into the scheme and be indistinguishable from the market housing and built to the same specifications; and
- d. Ensure that affordable homes take account of a range of lifestyles, abilities and stages of life and allow for lower-cost living including:
 - i. Requiring all affordable housing to be built to the “accessible and adaptable” standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations;
 - ii. Require 10% of all affordable homes on sites to be built to Part M4(3) of the Building Regulations (or any subsequent revisions to the standard); and
 - iii. Ensuring that affordable homes have low-running costs through low-carbon technologies.

Affordable homes may be provided off-site either through delivery on an alternative site (where the criteria of a-d this policy would also apply) or via a financial contribution in exceptional circumstances, for example, where:

- e. The type of housing on the site makes it difficult to provide an element of affordable housing; or
- f. It is not practical to properly manage an element of affordable housing on the site e.g. on-site provision would only deliver a very small number of homes.

Vacant building credit - Where an applicant can demonstrate that there are building(s) on the application site which are genuinely vacant, the Council will credit the existing floorspace of the vacant building(s) against the overall floorspace of the new development. This will be used to adjust the affordable housing requirements on those sites where it is demonstrated that such a credit would apply.

The Council will work proactively in partnership with registered providers, Homes England, developers and landowners to maximise opportunities for affordable housing delivery across the Borough. This will include the delivery of schemes with a much higher percentage of affordable homes (including 100% affordable schemes) on suitable sites with a preference for these to be for social rent.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-H2 Affordability of New Housing

Reasoned Justification

- 8.21 The Council has declared a housing emergency based on an acute assessed need for housing of all types and tenures across the Borough. There are a large number of applications in the Council's housing register, many of which are households in legally defined housing need, including homeless individuals and families. This demonstrates a significant demand for affordable housing and, in particular, social housing.
- 8.22 The recent Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) demonstrates a strong need for affordable homes. The HNA concludes that there is an annual need for 768 affordable homes. This clearly demonstrates the need for a policy to deliver affordable homes whilst acknowledging that planning guidance states that these need does not have to be met in full. Evidence relating to housing need will be kept up to date in order to ensure that the affordable housing required on-site or via off-site contributions will be of a type and tenure that addresses the latest assessment of needs within the borough.
- 8.23 In meeting affordable housing needs it is also important to consider the accessibility and adaptability of such homes. In line with PfE policy JP-J3, all homes and affordable homes must be built to the "accessible and adaptable" standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations unless specific site conditions make this impracticable. In addition to this, given the evidence of need in the HNA, 10% of affordable homes should be built to M4(3) standards. On smaller sites, where this percentage requirement would not equate to one dwelling, the provision of such units will have regard to evidence of local need and the viability of delivery. A threshold of site size for the provision of such homes is not considered appropriate as smaller grant funded schemes may be able to deliver such homes.
- 8.24 In considering the proportion of homes that should be affordable, it is important to have regard to evidence in respect of viability. Taking account of the latest viability evidence, it is considered that the targets set out in the policy provide an appropriate balance between the delivery of affordable homes whilst ensuring that housing development remains viable. Any proposals for new homes in the Green Belt that come forward will be required to deliver the proportion of affordable housing set out in national guidance for such development.
- 8.25 Current evidence shows that affordable housing needs would be best met through the provision of social rent due to affordable rents increasing above average market rents, particularly in relation to larger properties where there is currently a shortage. The provision of more homes for social rent is also a priority within current government

targets for the delivery of affordable homes. Consequently, social rent is expected to form a majority of the affordable provision on sites. Evidence from applications for First Homes in the borough demonstrates that those who wish to purchase such properties could meet their housing needs on the open market. In light of the above, the Council does not consider 'First Homes' to be suitable products for meeting affordable housing needs in the borough.

- 8.26 As with market housing, it is important affordable housing is of a high-quality, incorporated seamlessly into well designed layouts and constructed in a way that minimises living costs going forward. Too often affordable housing is located in the least attractive part of the site and designed in a way which means that it is easy to differentiate from the other homes in the scheme. This policy seeks to ensure that affordable housing delivered as part of any scheme is indistinguishable from other homes on the site which will help to create attractive and inclusive neighbourhoods.
- 8.27 National guidance requires local planning authorities to take account of the viability of a scheme in seeking the provision of affordable homes. As set out above, the general viability of this policy has been tested as part of the whole plan viability assessment. Where applicants seek to demonstrate that the provision of affordable housing in line the policy is not viable, a robust assessment will be required to be submitted. This would then need to be considered and agreed by the local authority before any reduction in the policy requirement is accepted.
- 8.28 There may be occasions where, due to the location, size and nature of the site, the local authority considers that it would not be viable to deliver affordable homes on a particular site. This would be considered on a case-by-case basis and would be based on the view that the regeneration of a site, the need to ensure housing delivery or the need for off-site contributions for other types of infrastructure means that the provision of affordable homes is not sought in that instance.
- 8.29 In line with National Planning Practice Guidance, a 'vacant building credit' will be applied to appropriate developments where a vacant building is either converted or demolished. The vacant building credit will be equivalent to the gross internal area of the building to be demolished or brought back into use.
- 8.30 In determining whether the vacant building credit will apply, the Council will require the applicant to demonstrate that that the building(s) on the application site is genuinely vacant. The Council will assess each site on a case-by-case basis, but it will expect that a building has been vacant for a minimum of 12 months and will require the developer to demonstrate that extensive efforts have been made to market the building at a value that is considered reasonable for the building's particular use and location. The Council may at its discretion choose not to apply vacant building credit where it is clear that a building has been made vacant for the sole purposes of redevelopment, or the building is covered by an extant planning permission or one that has expired within the last twelve months for a similar proposal. The vacant building credit will not apply where there is evidence that the building has been abandoned.
- 8.31 Past completions demonstrate that the provision of affordable housing through developer contributions will not be sufficient to meet affordable housing needs. The

Council will continue to work in partnership with registered providers, Homes England, developers and landowners to maximise opportunities for affordable housing delivery across the Borough.

Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 8.32 This policy seeks to meet the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople and will help ensure that this group of people are not disadvantaged.

Policy H4 - Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

We will work with stakeholders and community groups to identify appropriate sites to meet the requirement for additional pitches within the borough.

The current Council site at Roch Vale will be extended to include the land on Liley Street to provide additional formal pitches.

In identifying opportunities to meet the remaining requirement a site will be acceptable if:

- a. It is acceptable in land use terms, having regard to other policies within this plan;
- b. It is sustainably located in terms of access to a range of services and local facilities;
- c. It is appropriately sited and is / can be designed in a way which respects the amenity of new and existing residents;
- d. It can be satisfactorily accessed from the public highway;
- e. It has appropriate provision for parking, turning and servicing on site; and
- f. It includes appropriate provision for landscaping in order to give structure and privacy and maintain visual amenity.

These criteria will be used both in terms of joint work in identifying sites and in considering planning applications for both Council and privately operated sites.

All development will be expected to comply with the general development management criteria outlined in policy DM1.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP- H3 Type, Size and Design of New Housing

Reasoned Justification

- 8.33 The Greater Manchester Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Assessment (GM GTAA) that was completed in 2024 shows a need for 16 additional pitches within the borough up to 2042. The Council currently operates a 27-pitch traveller site at Roch Vale, Rochdale. There is a site to the south-west of the existing site which is currently informally used by travellers. The intention is to formalise this area to provide 2-3 additional pitches.

- 8.34 The Council continues to work closely with the gypsy and traveller community to identify suitable sites to meet needs going forward. This approach will ensure that sites identified are those that are most suited to the needs of the travelling community. Any sites that are identified will need to meet the criteria set out in the policy to ensure they are well located and designed.
- 8.35 Evidence gathered in relation to the GM GTAA showed that there was currently no demand for travelling showpeople accommodation within the borough. The need to provide for travelling showpeople will continue to be monitored and if local need arises any identified sites will be assessed using the above criteria and relevant good practice guidance.

Homes to meet specialist housing and supported living needs

- 8.36 This policy seeks to meet the needs of an older population and people with specific housing design needs, including people with disabilities, long-term health conditions, sensory impairments, mobility needs and changing needs over their lifetime.
- 8.37 Providing homes that are accessible, adaptable, well located and capable of supporting independent living, and helping residents remain in their homes for longer, is an important step in creating sustainable and inclusive places. This includes meeting the existing needs of residents as well as providing housing that can be adapted as needs change over time.

Policy H5 - Homes to meet specialist housing and supported living needs

The Council will support the delivery of homes for older people and people with specialised housing needs, including specialist housing, supported living or housing designed to meet specific access, mobility, sensory, care or support needs, where proposals meet the following criteria:

- a. The need for the type and tenure of accommodation proposed in the area is evidenced;
- b. The homes are built to the 'accessible and adaptable' standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations unless specific site conditions make this impracticable, in accordance with PfE Policy JP-H3, and consideration is given to the delivery of wheelchair user dwellings to Part M4(3) where evidenced need exists;
- c. The design and layout of homes, communal areas and external spaces respond to the needs of intended occupiers, including step-free access, suitable circulation space, accessible parking and safe, legible routes to entrances, facilities and public transport;
- d. Where relevant, proposals demonstrate how the design, layout, location and management of specialist housing or supported living respond to the cultural, ethnic, faith and language needs of intended occupiers, including access to community networks, culturally appropriate support and inclusive communal spaces;

- e. In the case of proposals for 'retirement living' (e.g. over 55's accommodation) an element of affordable housing is provided in accordance with policy H3;
- f. The scale, design and layout of the proposed development takes account of the surrounding area having regard to local character and land-use;
- g. The site offers safe, convenient and inclusive access to community facilities, local services, health and care services, open space, public transport and wider support networks;
- h. The proposal provides sufficient car parking for occupiers (dependant on the nature of the development), staff (in the case of C2 use) and visitors; and
- i. The proposal is designed to reflect relevant best practice. This should include the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) ten key design elements for those types of accommodation to which this standard applies.

Within larger residential schemes the Council will support the delivery of accommodation for older people, people with specialised housing needs and people requiring supported living as part of the housing mix where appropriate.

Developers, registered providers and care and support providers are encouraged to have early engagement with the relevant council services to inform proposals seeking to deliver specialist homes and supported living.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP- H3 Type, Size and Design of New Housing

Reasoned Justification

- 8.38 The number of people aged 65 and above is expected to grow significantly over the next 20 years and is forecasted to represent 40% of the total population by 2044. Within this the number of people ages 75+ and 85+ is also expected to rise.
- 8.39 The Ageing and Living Well Market Position Statement (ALWMPS) 2025-2030 sets out sets out our intentions for the way adult social care services will commission and deliver services to better support the needs for people who are living and ageing well. This includes evidence around the housing needs of older people over this period and trends beyond but acknowledges that people wish to remain at home for longer and maintain their independence. This shows the importance of developing more accessible and adaptable housing to make this option more feasible going forward. This should include the delivery of homes to meet the optional standard in Building Regulations Part M4(3) of the Building Regulations where possible, given that evidence in the Housing Needs Assessment and relevant Market Position Statements shows a need for this standard of accessible housing.
- 8.40 Despite the increased desire for older people to remain in their own home, there will still be a need to provide more specific older persons housing, such as Extra Care and Residential and Nursing Care. In terms of this type of provision, need is more likely to be

linked to more complex care needs which may have more specific requirements in terms of the type and location of sites.

- 8.41 As with meeting older persons housing need, in relation to accommodation for people with physical disabilities or long-term conditions it is recognised that people's preference is to live in mainstream accommodation rather than supported living. This places a greater emphasis on the need to deliver more accessible and adaptable housing to meet these needs and reduce the demand for specialist accommodation.
- 8.42 People with housing design needs are not a single group and their requirements can vary significantly. For some residents, appropriate housing may require step-free access, wider doorways and circulation space, accessible bathrooms, space for carers or equipment, suitable storage and charging space for mobility aids, or layouts that are easy to understand and navigate. For others, design features such as good natural light, acoustic separation, accessible outdoor space and proximity to services, public transport and support networks can be important to independent living and wellbeing. For accessible, specialist and supported accommodation, digital access should be considered as part of the design of the scheme in order to support people who rely on assistive technologies.
- 8.43 For specialist and supported accommodation, proximity to community services and support networks can be central to independent living, wellbeing and inclusion. Good location and design can reduce isolation, support access to care and health services, enable participation in education, employment, volunteering and community life, and help residents remain connected to family, friends, faith groups and local support organisations.
- 8.44 Proposals for specialist housing and supported living should also consider design requirements to meet housing needs for people from diverse cultural, ethnic and faith backgrounds to support different patterns of family life. For example, larger or flexible homes for multi-generational living, layouts that provide privacy and adaptable internal spaces, and space for caring responsibilities.
- 8.45 Council will work proactively with developers and providers to deliver high-quality accommodation to meet identified needs for specialist housing and supported living.
- 8.46 Developers, registered providers and care and support providers are encouraged to review the Council's Market Position Statements and related commissioning documents when preparing proposals for specialist housing, supported living and accessible accommodation. These documents provide information on current and future supply and demand, commissioning intentions, market opportunities and identified gaps in provision, and should be used alongside planning policy evidence to help ensure that new development responds to local needs. The Market Position Statements are available from Rochdale Borough Council at:
<https://www.rochdale.gov.uk/commissioning-health-social-care-services/market-position-statements>.
- 8.47 The market can also access Rochdale's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), which reports on the health and wellbeing needs of the people of Rochdale borough and

provides wider evidence on population, inequalities and service needs. The JSNA is available at: <https://www.rochdale.gov.uk/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-jsna> .

Homes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers

- 8.48 National guidance advises that local plan policies should aim to meet the housing needs of specific groups, including looked after children. This policy seeks to address these needs in a sustainable way which takes account of the potential vulnerability of this group.

Policy H6 - Homes for Looked after Children and Care Leavers

In determining applications for new children's homes and Ofsted regulated semi-independent supported accommodation the Council will seek to ensure that new provision:

- a. Is in a suitable, sustainable location and appropriate premises;
- b. Meets all relevant national regulatory requirements and quality standards for accommodation for children and young people, including the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and associated Quality Standards, or the Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023 and associated Quality Standards where applicable;
- c. Does not result in the clustering or over-concentration of provision for looked-after children in any particular area of the borough; and
- d. Is in accordance with policy DM1 to ensure the amenity of occupiers and existing residents is taken into account.

With regards to criterion c, permission may not be granted where it will be within 400 metres of existing properties meeting similar needs. The Council will make a decision on a case-by-case basis and considering the factors listed above and any site-specific circumstances.

Applicants should liaise with Children's Services within the Council at the earliest opportunity to seek to ensure that priority is given to children and young people from the borough in the first instance.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP- H3 Type, Size and Design of New Housing

Reasoned Justification

- 8.49 Meeting the needs of looked after children is an important part of the Local Authority's role, and it is important that these potentially vulnerable children and young people are provided with the right homes in the right places, with access to schools / colleges and the support that they need.

- 8.50 The relevant acts and guidance relating to children's homes and accommodation for care leavers sets specific requirements for registration and standards for such housing. This includes the preparation of location assessments to show the steps that have been taken to make sure that the home is needed locally, is in the right place and is safe, and that it promotes positive opportunities for children and young people.
- 8.51 For children's homes, applicants and providers must have regard to the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the Department for Education's Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the Quality Standards. These establish national expectations for registered children's homes, including the quality and purpose of care, children's views, wishes and feelings, education, enjoyment and achievement, health and wellbeing, positive relationships, protection of children, leadership and management, and care planning. They also require homes to provide accommodation that is suitable, safe, secure, homely and appropriate to the needs of the children who will live there.
- 8.52 For supported accommodation for looked after children and care leavers aged 16 and 17, applicants and providers must have regard to the Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023, the associated Department for Education statutory guidance and Ofsted registration and inspection requirements. The relevant national standards include the protection standard, accommodation standard, support standard and leadership and management standard. These require provision to keep young people safe, provide suitable and well-maintained accommodation, support young people to develop independence and prepare for adult life, and ensure effective management and oversight.
- 8.53 Planning permission does not remove the need for Ofsted registration or compliance with all relevant national standards, and applicants are encouraged to demonstrate at application stage how the premises and management arrangements will meet those requirements.
- 8.54 Accommodation created for children's homes and care leavers should be in sustainable locations, appropriate for the proposed occupants and comply with the criteria set out in the policy. New facilities must be well integrated into the local community and operated in accordance with a robust management plan.
- 8.55 In order to support the best interests of the occupants of these homes and to protect local character and amenity, it is important that new developments do not result in an over-concentration of homes for looked after children and care leavers within a local area. In order to demonstrate that the proposed development would not result in any clustering of children's residential care home uses and Ofsted registered supported accommodation, the Council will seek to avoid new provision being approved within 400 metres of existing provision. Applicants should carry out an assessment and provide this as part of their planning application, although it is acknowledged that some such information will not be publicly accessible in order to safeguard the children in care. The Council will utilise GIS and other desktop assessment tools in assessing the information provided.

- 8.56 It is important to note that planning permission will not be required in all cases of development of children's homes, including for changes of use from dwelling houses in class C3 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 where the children's home remains within class C3 or there is no material change of use to class C2 (to be determined on a case by case basis). It will not be possible to apply this policy in such situations. We would however encourage all accommodation providers to engage with the Local Authority to ensure that the accommodation and its location are appropriate to meet local needs.
- 8.57 If the Council determines that such changes of use require further control to ensure that vulnerable children and young people are accommodated in appropriate locations and any wider issues of community integration are addressed, then the Council may take a view that a change of use from a dwelling-house to a children's care home will result in a material change of use, on a case-by-case basis. If appropriate the Council will seek to introduce an Article 4 Direction covering part, or all, of the Borough to remove relevant permitted development rights.

Policy H7 - Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

Proposals for new HMOs, either conversions or new-build, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- a. The proposal would not have a significant adverse impact upon the character of the surrounding area and the amenity of residents in any neighbouring properties by reason of noise, visual intrusion or loss of privacy;
- b. The proposal would provide adequate outdoor amenity space and bin storage areas;
- c. The proposal would make suitable, safe and convenient arrangements for access, parking and servicing; and
- d. The proposal would not result in an unacceptable concentration of HMOs in the area. Proposals which would result in more than 10% of properties (residential and commercial) being classed as HMOs within a 50m radius of the application property will not be considered acceptable.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP- H3 Type, Size and Design of New Housing

Reasoned Justification

- 8.58 HMOs can provide a cost-effective form of accommodation and contribute to meeting housing needs. However, such uses require careful control to ensure they do not compromise the residential amenity of the neighbourhood or the amenity of individual dwellings.
- 8.59 It is also important to ensure the HMOs provide suitable living standards for future occupants. This will include having regard to the Council's HMO licensing requirements, internal layout of the property, as well as the appropriate provision of outdoor amenity space and the general development requirements set out in policy DM1. Planning applications for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) which would deliver 10 or more

bedrooms will also be required to make provision for new or enhanced open space, sport and recreation to meet the needs of the prospective residents in accordance with the standards set out in policy PE10.

- 8.60 It is important to note that HMOs may not always require planning permission for conversion from a single dwelling, because they may be subject to permitted development rights, or the proposed use may be judged not to be materially different from the existing use. It will not be possible to apply this policy in such situations. If there is evidence that such changes of use are having a significant negative impact on the character of residential neighbourhoods then the Council will seek to introduce an Article 4 Direction covering part, or all, of the Borough to remove the relevant permitted development rights. If an Article 4 Direction is introduced, then this policy would apply to all applications relating to the creation of HMOs within the area covered by the Direction.

Householder Applications

- 8.61 Some extensions and development relating to existing homes will require planning permission. This policy seeks to ensure that proposals take account of the existing area in terms of both the scale and design of the scheme, as well as the amenity of residents.

Policy H8 - Householder Applications

Proposals for extensions to residential properties should:

- a. Be compatible with the property to be extended in terms of scale, size, design and building materials;
- b. Not adversely affect the character of the street scene;
- c. Not unduly affect the privacy and amenity of adjoining residents through overlooking, overshadowing, dominance at close quarters or daylight;
- d. Not unduly deprive the property to be extended of private garden/amenity space, including parking areas; and
- e. Not prejudice highway safety by obstructing the views of motorists or pedestrians.

Reasoned Justification

- 8.62 This policy applies to extensions to dwellinghouses, flats, houses in multiple occupation, extra care, residential homes and nursing homes.
- 8.63 Whilst changes to the General Permitted Development Order now allow some forms of residential alteration or extension to go ahead without a need for planning permission, some still require planning permission. A large proportion of planning applications determined by the Council are for what are commonly termed 'householder' applications. If carried out to a satisfactory standard, an extension can provide valuable additional living space and, thereby, improve the quality of life of the property's residents.
- 8.64 Extensions can, however, have a significant impact on the street scene and, over time, the character of residential areas. This policy seeks to ensure that residential extensions

do not affect adversely the privacy or amenity of adjoining householders or the character of the surrounding area. Proposals for extensions should also be in accordance with policy DM1 of this plan and the Council's Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development SPD.

9. A Greener Place

- 9.1 In recent years, the framework of natural environment policy and regulation has grown significantly in response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies. The Environment Act introduced mandatory biodiversity net gain and nature recovery to the planning system, and there is much greater understanding of the role of the natural environment in creating healthy, sustainable and resilient places for people.
- 9.2 The policies in this chapter recognise the importance of nature for the benefits it provides. Rochdale's natural environment matters to all of us because of the vital role that nature plays in supporting our society and economy. It increases our defence against climate change, helps reduce flood risk, improves water and air quality, mitigates the impact of heatwaves in urban areas, creates attractive and sustainable places to live and work, and improves our physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- 9.3 However, the abundance and diversity of nature is in long-term decline, which means that our natural environment is becoming less resilient, and less able to provide us with the essential goods and services which underpin our prosperity and quality of life.
- 9.4 The council recognises the challenge for developers to respond to the increasing requirements for environmental protection and improvement. Through a more holistic approach and designing schemes that embed consideration of the natural environment from the outset, there are also significant opportunities for development to create well-designed, attractive and healthy places where people choose to live and work.
- 9.5 Through a nature positive approach, the council is seeking an overall improvement of the natural environment in a way that also supports developers to achieve resilient and sustainable growth.

Nature Positive Development

- 9.6 This is an overarching policy. It sets out that the policies in the Greener Place chapter are intended to be complementary and work together to enable development to make an overall positive contribution to the natural environment and help nature recover, rather than create separate and conflicting requirements.

Policy G1 - Nature Positive Development

Development should meet the different policy requirements for green infrastructure, biodiversity, open space, and landscape through a joined-up approach that delivers an overall nature positive outcome whilst also enabling resilient growth and development.

Proposals for major development should show how the functions and value of green and blue infrastructure will be maintained and enhanced, thereby increasing benefits from nature.¹⁰

¹⁰ Policy G2 sets out in more detail how development should consider green and blue infrastructure.

Minor development will be encouraged to play its part by showing how the proposals will deliver a net benefit for nature. This may include, for example, the provision of bird and bat boxes, sustainable drainage schemes, and increasing tree canopy cover.

Householder applications should seek to retain natural features such as trees and hedgerows and where possible create nature friendly features in gardens.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-G1 Landscape Character

Policy JP-G2 Green Infrastructure Network

Policy JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Reasoned Justification

- 9.7 Whilst the requirement for development to provide a nature positive outcome does not apply to householder applications, applications for change of use, listed building consent and advertising, these types of minor development should seek opportunities to retain natural features and provide enhancements for nature where possible. The council will exercise discretion and take a proportionate approach.
- 9.8 Nature is the world around us: air, land, water, soils, plants and animals, habitats and ecosystems, and natural processes. Everything from our urban back yards to our allotments, parks, river valleys, wild moorland landscapes, and beyond.
- 9.9 The abundance and diversity of nature is in long-term decline, which means that our natural environment is becoming less resilient, and less able to provide us with the essential goods and services which underpin our prosperity, quality of life, and health and wellbeing.
- 9.10 Places for Everyone sets out how development should play its part in achieving an overall aim of a major net enhancement of biodiversity value and improved access to nature.
- 9.11 The Environment Act and National Planning Policy Framework provide a framework to respond to the climate and biodiversity emergencies. Rochdale's Nature Positive approach is intended to enable development to meet existing environmental regulations and policies in a more holistic way, and thereby help protect, restore and enhance the natural environment and deliver multiple benefits for people and places.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 9.12 High quality green and blue infrastructure in the right place provides a wide range of benefits to society. Green and blue infrastructure is an umbrella term used to describe a range of assets such as open spaces, public rights of way and recreation routes, playing fields, woodland (including ancient woodland), residential gardens, sustainable drainage features, trees, river corridors, ponds and canals.

- 9.13 This policy seeks to protect, maintain and enhance a resilient, well-connected and high-quality network of green and blue infrastructure for promoting good mental and physical health, providing access to nature, creating liveable places, and supporting economic growth.
- 9.14 It also sets out how the planning and design of new development should take account of green and blue infrastructure, to maintain and enhance the multiple functions and benefits it provides.

Policy G2 – Green and Blue Infrastructure

The Green and Blue Network

Across the borough, the many and varied green and blue spaces and features combine to create an interconnected network of green and blue infrastructure. The council will take a strategic approach to protect, maintain, and enhance this network to maximise ecosystem service benefits for people and support nature recovery.

The areas of Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure are of particular importance and are shown on the policies map. Within these areas, proposals should take opportunities to improve connectivity with the wider landscape and natural environment, expand the network where possible, have regard to the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and improve public accessibility and opportunities for informal recreation.

New development

Development should maintain and enhance the functions and benefits of green and blue infrastructure and help deliver a high-quality network, having regard to local priorities and opportunities, including the LNRS. Proposals should have regard to all green and blue spaces and features, regardless of size, for their contribution to the overall network.

Applicants should provide sufficient information with their application to demonstrate that green and blue infrastructure has been properly considered in the design of a scheme.

Proposals for major development should be supported by a green and blue infrastructure statement demonstrating how the overall benefits of green and blue infrastructure will be improved, as part of a design and landscape-led approach to place-making. The proposal should include:

- a. a plan showing existing green and blue infrastructure provision;
- b. an evaluation of the condition, functions and benefits of existing green and blue infrastructure within the development site and how this will be enhanced; and,
- c. an Urban Greening Factor calculation (Policy G4).

Development will be permitted provided:

- a. there will be no net loss of green and blue infrastructure functions and benefits on the site, having followed the mitigation hierarchy;
- b. it does not lead to negative impacts on green and blue infrastructure on adjoining land;

- b. it does not adversely affect the integrity and function of the overall green and blue network;
- c. it does not result in a net deterioration, fragmentation or isolation of the functions and benefits of areas of strategic green and blue infrastructure;
- d. proposals maximise opportunities for high quality, functional green and blue infrastructure to deliver community benefits; and,
- e. a plan for its future management and maintenance is agreed.

Mitigation and/or compensation for any loss of green and blue infrastructure will need to be agreed and secured by a condition or s106 obligation. Where on-site compensation is not possible, the council may seek a contribution towards the improvement or provision of existing or new green and blue infrastructure, in accordance with local need.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-G2 Green Infrastructure Network

Reasoned Justification

Green and Blue Network

- 9.15 National policy requires local plans to take a strategic approach to protecting, maintaining and enhancing networks of green and blue infrastructure, and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a landscape scale, to deliver a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- 9.16 At a Greater Manchester level, the Places for Everyone Joint Plan provides strategic context through the identification of the following priority types of green and blue infrastructure, alongside the Local Nature Recovery Strategy: river valleys and waterways; uplands; urban green spaces; and trees and woodland.
- 9.17 Places for Everyone has identified three areas of the borough as having strategic potential for the delivery of ecosystem services at a Greater Manchester level:
- South Pennine Moors
 - Roch Valley
 - Hollingworth Lake and surrounds
- 9.18 The council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Study (2026) showed that 69% of the borough is green (agriculture, forestry, moorland, parks, golf, playing fields etc); 29% is grey (urban – including built land and private gardens) and 2.5% is blue (rivers, canals, lakes and other waterbodies).
- 9.19 The green and blue infrastructure network is important for nature recovery and provides opportunities for people to connect. Many parts of the green and blue network overlap with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. There are also several strategic recreational routes and rights of way across the borough and many of these also overlap with the network.

- 9.20 However, it is important to note that the type and range of functions and benefits provided by green and blue infrastructure is largely dependent on the condition of the underlying habitats. In general, where habitats are in a good condition they will be capable of providing more ecosystem service benefits.
- 9.21 High-quality green and blue infrastructure makes an important contribution to healthy and sustainable development, and is fundamental to creating successful, vibrant and healthy places to live and work. Our green and blue infrastructure is essential to the future success of Rochdale, not just because of the wide variety of environmental objectives that it helps to meet but also because it improves quality of life, supports economic growth, enhances the image of the Borough, assists in mitigating the impacts of climate change, and promotes social objectives such as good physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- 9.22 We want to ensure that everyone has access to a high-quality network of green and blue infrastructure close to where they live and work. We will do this by protecting and enhancing existing provision, and creating new infrastructure where needed, to provide a functioning, well-connected network throughout the Borough and beyond.
- 9.23 Across the borough, the many and varied green and blue spaces are important in their own right and add significant value and distinctiveness to the local area. However, it is the combination of, and interrelationships between, these areas that is particularly significant. Ensuring that there is a high-quality network of green and blue infrastructure is therefore vital to the borough's long-term success and quality of life.
- 9.24 Due to their scale, the areas of Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure are of particular importance to the character and appearance of the borough, for maintaining and enhancing a coherent well-connected network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and features and reducing fragmentation and isolation of the borough's natural capital. They provide the backbone of the green and blue network and are therefore particularly important for the range of functions and benefits they provide and their role in sustaining a coherent and connected network. These areas are complemented by core and opportunity areas identified in the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and other green and blue infrastructure features including trees and scrub, smaller areas of woodland and grassland, gardens, ponds, open space and public rights of way.

New Development

- 9.25 The requirement for development to demonstrate consideration of green and blue infrastructure should be appropriate to the scale of development. It does not apply to householder applications, applications for change of use, listed building consent and advertising. However, these types of minor development should seek opportunities to provide enhancements to green and blue features where possible. The council will exercise discretion and take a proportionate approach.
- 9.26 National planning guidance highlights the importance of protecting and enhancing green and blue infrastructure as natural capital. The role of green and blue infrastructure in the context of planning and development is to help to achieve well-designed places, promote

healthy and safe communities, mitigate climate change and flooding, and conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment.

- 9.27 Green and blue infrastructure can provide a wide range of social, economic and ecological functions, which provide multiple benefits for people, known as ecosystem services. The extent to which green infrastructure provides ecosystem services depends on how it is designed and maintained, and the maturity and health of the biodiversity that underpins it.
- 9.28 Green and blue infrastructure needs and opportunities should be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals, as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision, and take account of existing natural assets and the most suitable locations and types of new provision.
- 9.29 Proposals should maximise the delivery of multiple benefits from nature by protecting and enhancing the functions of green and blue infrastructure, including how it is integrated with the strategy for sustainable management of surface water. Proposals should also reflect the framework of guidance set out in Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standard, including the five principles of what good green infrastructure is and why it's important.
- 9.30 Proposals should have full regard to local evidence on landscape, green and blue infrastructure, and open space, alongside the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy in order to identify appropriate priorities and opportunities.
- 9.31 The council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Study (2026) is a particularly important source of evidence. It provides:
- a. an overview of the main GBI assets across the Borough, supported by maps;
 - b. evidence and analysis against the Natural England principles;
 - c. detailed summaries for each Township including priorities and opportunities; and,
 - d. an assessment of the functions, benefits and opportunities for GBI in each of the areas of strategic green and blue infrastructure identified on the policies map.

The Study also includes an interactive, map-based GBI assessment tool which can be used to review the baseline ecosystem service function of each area of strategic green and blue infrastructure, as well as high-level analysis across the Borough.

- 9.32 Where development is proposed that may have an adverse impact on an area of strategic GBI, proposals should consider the relative condition, quality and benefits of existing assets and features.
- 9.33 Development should first incorporate measures to avoid and then mitigate any impacts on existing benefits, or as a last resort, replace the benefits that green and blue infrastructure provide, not simply replace assets and features. These benefits are the basis for valuing green and blue infrastructure. Green and blue infrastructure that generates more benefits, or benefits that are more difficult to replace, may be given greater weight in decision making.

- 9.34 Benefits is a broad term which captures a very wide range of goods and services provided, for example, reducing flooding, urban cooling, supporting biodiversity, screening and landscaping, or providing amenity and mental health benefits. Replacing one asset or feature with another does not necessarily replace the specific benefits originally provided. It is necessary to consider what is good about the green and blue infrastructure and how could that be replaced if it was lost.
- 9.35 This policy is designed to work alongside and complement biodiversity net gain to deliver an overall nature positive outcome. The metric used to calculate biodiversity net gain includes within it many common green infrastructure habitat features, such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs), and their inclusion in a scheme design can contribute towards meeting BNG requirements. Enhancing the biodiversity value of, or creating new, green infrastructure, can also be used to meet BNG requirements to optimise wider environmental benefits for people and nature.

Watercourses and their Settings

This policy sets out how development is expected to protect and enhance watercourses, their riparian zones, and their wider settings, ensuring that waterbodies function as key components of the green and blue infrastructure network and deliver multiple benefits for people, places and nature.

Policy G3 – Watercourses and their Settings

Development proposals near watercourses should support the strategic importance of the borough's network of blue infrastructure by contributing to relevant River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) objectives and maximising economic, social and environmental benefits.

Proposals will be supported where they promote positive management to conserve and enhance the watercourse, its riparian zone, and its wider setting. Such measures include:

- a. helping to achieve requirements of the Water Framework Directive including identifying and implementing opportunities for re-naturalising the watercourse and improving water quality and ecology, having regard to the relevant RBMP and Greater Manchester (GM) Local Nature Recovery Strategy;
- b. taking opportunities to de-culvert watercourses and designing schemes that avoid culverting wherever possible. Culverting will not be considered until other options have been fully explored, for example, open span bridges, revision of site layout to incorporate an open watercourse; or diversion of the watercourse in an environmentally sympathetic manner. Design and operation should be in accordance with recognised, industry best practice. Proposals that involve culverting will need to provide clear, justifiable and robust reasons why it cannot be avoided and demonstrate that there is no viable alternative;

- c. maintaining and restoring the natural geomorphological connectivity along the waterbody, while avoiding disturbance to the riverbed and removing redundant structures;
- d. enabling the watercourse to provide natural flood management functions;
- e. enhancing the role of watercourses in sustainable placemaking including safe and inclusive spaces for all; integration with the wider public realm, improved access and visibility, walking and cycling routes which provide links to adjacent neighbourhoods and green spaces, and improving connectivity of the green and blue network;
- f. maintaining a minimum ten meter undeveloped and unobstructed buffer from the top of the bank and the development, unless, in exceptional circumstances, existing physical constraints prevent this. Buffer zones should retain a natural character and be supported by a long-term landscape and ecological management plan;
- g. designing new riparian development, where feasible, to positively front the watercourse, enhancing the environmental quality of river corridors while reducing long-term maintenance issues, fly-tipping, and potential encroachment from private gardens; and
- h. ensuring that any layout maintains access to watercourses for maintenance, including any existing and proposed outfalls.

Proposals that may adversely affect a watercourse should include a Water Framework Directive Assessment, or similar, which explains the nature of any impacts on the watercourse, its riparian zone and setting; how the proposals will affect measures in the RBMP to achieve good status in water bodies; and how the development will comply with other relevant regulatory requirements relating to the water environment.

Development that has an adverse impact on watercourses may only be supported where all reasonable measures to avoid impacts have been fully explored and are not achievable.

Where the council agrees that it is not possible to avoid adverse impacts on the watercourse, suitable mitigation should be provided. Where mitigation cannot be provided, as a last resort, suitable compensation may be secured by legal agreement.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-G3 River Valleys and Waterways

Reasoned justification

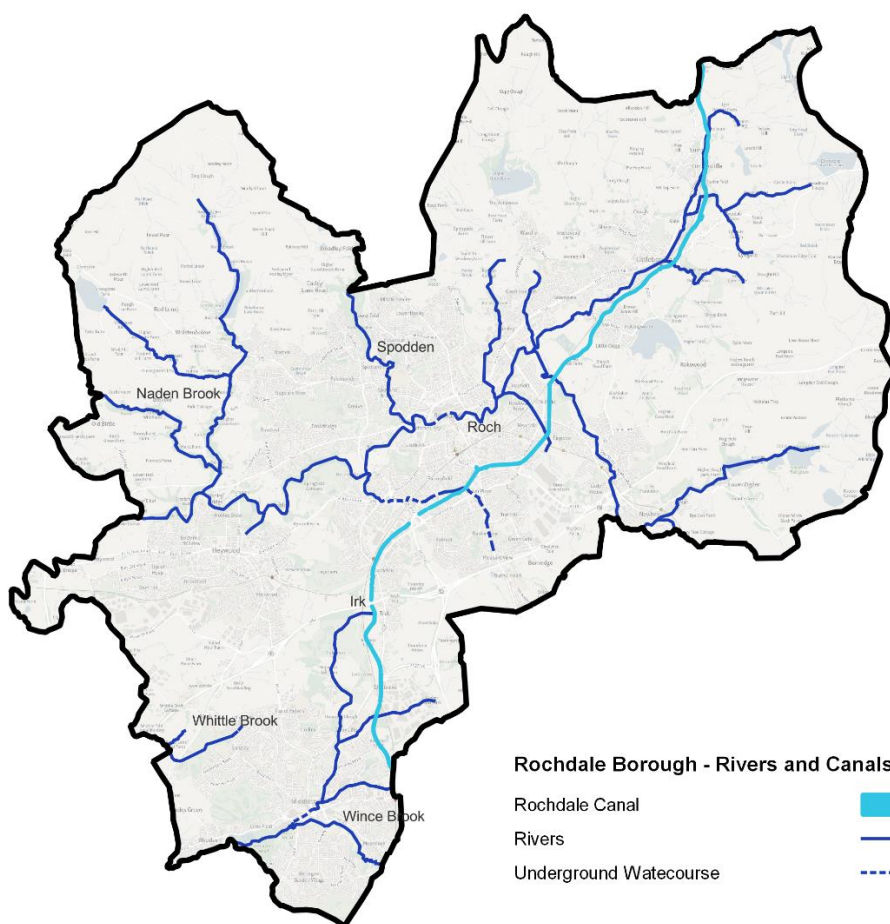
- 9.36 The aim of this policy is to ensure that future development protects and enhances the water environment and supports the improvement of the wide range of benefits it provides.
- 9.37 Rivers, streams, canals, and their settings are a central component of the borough's landscape. They are vital elements of the network of green and blue infrastructure and

provide many important functions in their own right. This includes upland river catchments which are important for water quality and water management.

- 9.38 In the borough, they are often the only remaining physical link between existing areas of semi-natural habitat and open space and are therefore essential for halting and reversing the decline in nature and providing critically important ecosystem services, including addressing climate change and flooding, urban cooling, recreation, tourism and landscape.
- 9.39 The borough's main rivers and tributaries and the Rochdale Canal are shown on Figure 10. However, there are other smaller watercourses that may also need to be considered in relation to proposed development.
- 9.40 Watercourses should provide an integral part of the setting for new neighbourhoods and should not be overlooked for their contribution to place making. Blending future development needs with the role the waterways play in terms of ecology, flood defence, climate adaptation, wellbeing and recreation will be key to delivering successful communities.
- 9.41 The protection and enhancement of these functions will be a key consideration in assessing development proposals that impact on watercourses and their settings.

Figure 10: Illustrative map of Rochdale's River and Canal Network¹¹

¹¹ A detailed map of the borough's waterbodies is available here: [Roch Irk Medlock Operational Catchment | Catchment Data Explorer](#)



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- 9.42 In accordance with NPPF, planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to unacceptable levels of water pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve water quality, considering relevant information such as river basin management plans.
- 9.43 National planning guidance recognises that multiple benefits for people and the environment can be achieved through good design and mitigation. For example, flood risk can be reduced and biodiversity and amenity improved by designing development that includes permeable surfaces and other sustainable drainage systems, removing artificial physical modifications (for example, weirs and concrete channels) and recreating natural features. Water quality can be improved by protecting and enhancing green infrastructure.
- 9.44 Places for Everyone requires new development to be designed to protect and improve river valleys as central components of our green and blue network and a vital part of a Nature Recovery Network, making a major contribution to local identity, quality of life and the natural environment. New development should integrate river corridors and their associated habitats into site design, enhancing them wherever possible and

ensuring their long-term sustainable management. Development should also consider opportunities to address Water Framework Directive issues. This approach will help create high-quality environments, deliver economic benefits through multifunctional ecosystems and land value uplift, and strengthen resilience to future climate pressures while improving biodiversity’.

- 9.45 The North-West River Basin Management Plan, required under the Water Framework Directive, and implemented through UK legislation, provides the statutory framework for protecting and enhancing the benefits provided by the water environment.
- 9.46 The borough’s watercourses have a diverse character, from rural to urban, but all are heavily modified from their natural state. Whilst significant improvements to Rochdale’s watercourses have taken place over the last few decades, further improvements are essential. None of the borough’s rivers are in good condition, as required by the Water Framework Directive. Ecological health is generally assessed as moderate and many of our watercourses fail on the grounds of chemical pollution.
- 9.47 The setting of a watercourse can be defined as the width of the channel in which water flows, together with its influence on the surrounding landscape necessary for its natural functioning. Any development which could impact upon a watercourse in any way (pollution, abstraction, visual impact etc) should ensure that the watercourse setting is conserved and enhanced.
- 9.48 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.

Urban Greening

- 9.49 Urban greening covers a range of options including, but not limited to, street trees, sustainable drainage schemes, amenity grassland, semi-natural vegetation, green roofs, green walls, and rain gardens. The Urban Greening Factor (UGF) is a planning tool to improve the provision of urban greening and increase the amount of nature positive land within new development.
- 9.50 This policy requires the use of an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) for major development as a standard way of identifying and measuring the amount of greening required to meet the needs of residents and help deliver the overall green and blue infrastructure network. It can also help to meet other policy requirements, such as Biodiversity Net Gain, and provide a range of benefits including amenity space, landscaping, and helping to combat the effects of climate change.

Policy G4 - Urban Greening

Proposals for major development should use the latest version of the national Urban Greening Factor (UGF) calculator to demonstrate that the development will meet the following UGF target scores as a minimum:

- a. 0.2 on previously developed land¹²
- b. 0.3 for predominantly non-residential development on non-previously developed land; and
- c. 0.4 for predominantly residential development on non-previously developed land.

Applicants should consider urban greening at the start of the design process and integrate green features with other requirements, for example, sustainable drainage.

Where it can be demonstrated that the UGF score is difficult to achieve, for example, due to the provision of other social infrastructure of benefit to the local community as part of the overall scheme or due to insurmountable technical constraints such as contamination or subsurface issues, developers will be expected to justify fully the UGF score that has been reached.

Where the implications of meeting the target score would demonstrably undermine development viability, the UGF should be used to demonstrate a measurable increase in green and blue infrastructure from the pre-development baseline to the post-development scenario.

The borough's priorities are to improve resilience to flooding and urban heating, and support climate change mitigation and adaptation. Therefore, when considering urban greening measures, priority should be given to increasing tree cover, sustainable drainage schemes and provision of permeable surfaces within the public realm.

The UGF calculation for major development should be submitted alongside, and be consistent with, the GBI proposal required by Policy G2.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-G6 Urban Green Space

Reasoned Justification

- 9.51 Making sufficient provision for green infrastructure is a core requirement of national planning policy to promote healthy and safe communities, achieve well-designed places, meet the challenge of climate change and flooding, and conserve and enhance the natural environment.
- 9.52 The Urban Greening Factor (UGF) forms one of the five headline green infrastructure standards introduced in 2023 by Natural England.
- 9.53 Places for Everyone recommends the development of standards in relation to a "Green Factor" which sets out the level of on-site green infrastructure that new developments are expected to provide, to meet their occupants' needs and contribute to the extent and interconnectedness of the wider network of green infrastructure.

¹² Where sites include a mix of PDL and non-PDL, the areas should be scored separately. Alternatively, where a site contains less than 75% PDL, it should be calculated as predominantly residential or non-residential development as appropriate.

- 9.54 The Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy includes an action to create new multi-functional green spaces as part of new development to meet a local authority-set Urban Greening Factor.
- 9.55 The Urban Greening Factor will provide a baseline expectation of urban greening based on the proportion of the site that is covered by different types of green infrastructure features.
- 9.56 The inclusion of UGF in new development will result in an increase in green cover across Rochdale and should be integral to planning the layout and design of new buildings and developments. It should be considered from the beginning of the design process to achieve design excellence and a sense of place.
- 9.57 Development that is subject to Biodiversity Net Gain, may also be subject to the Urban Green Factor, whereas some development sites with low or zero biodiversity value may only be subject to the Urban Green Factor Policy.
- 9.58 The Urban Greening Factor is designed to work alongside and complement biodiversity net gain to deliver an overall nature positive outcome. The metric used to calculate biodiversity net gain includes within it many common green infrastructure habitat features, such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs), and their inclusion in a scheme design can contribute towards meeting BNG requirements. Enhancing the biodiversity value of, or creating new, green infrastructure, can also be used to meet BNG requirements to optimise wider environmental benefits for people and nature. Where there are conflicts, and the requirement to deliver BNG makes it difficult to achieve the target UGF score, this will be taken into account.
- 9.59 Where a scheme requires a BNG metric and a UGF score, the developer is expected to ensure that documentation is consistent in terms of measurements and definitions of habitats (BNG) and surface cover types (UGF) in order to avoid confusion and delay in the process of determining an application and discharging conditions.
- 9.60 Tree planting should be carried out in accordance with the requirements for planting and aftercare set out in Policy G5.
- 9.61 Applicants should provide details of how the green and blue features will be managed and maintained. It may be appropriate for the maintenance requirements for on-site BNG to be used to demonstrate the long-term maintenance of surface cover types that create an acceptable urban green factor score i.e. a HMMP submitted for on-site BNG can form the basis for addressing management of UGF.
- 9.62 The implementation of the proposed target scores will be reviewed in the future, and where the evidence supports it, target scores may be revised.

Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands

- 9.63 This policy recognises the important contribution trees (including woodland and hedgerows) make to the character and quality of urban environments, nature recovery, green and blue infrastructure, and the wider social, economic and environmental benefits they provide, including mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- 9.64 Accordingly, through planning and development, it seeks to protect and enhance trees, increase tree canopy cover to deliver attractive, resilient and healthy places, and connect people to the trees and woodland around them.
- 9.65 The council supports ‘All Our Trees’, Greater Manchester’s Urban Forest Plan, which seeks to manage and protect existing trees and woodlands and increase tree canopy cover across the City Region.
- 9.66 The council will adopt a natural capital approach to protecting, increasing and enhancing the treescape, whereby the benefits that trees provide are identified, measured, and form the basis for decision making.

Policy G5 – Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

Protecting trees, hedgerows and woodland

Trees are vital green infrastructure. They provide multiple public benefits which should be protected in accordance with national planning policy and Places for Everyone.

Proposals that may affect trees on or adjacent to the development site should be supported by a tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment in accordance with British Standard 5837.

Development should retain and positively integrate existing trees wherever possible. The loss of trees with material arboricultural, amenity, landscape, conservation, or cultural value should be supported by a clear and robust justification.

Loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, or ancient or veteran trees, will not be permitted unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists. Development should avoid loss or deterioration of priority habitat containing trees (hedgerows, broadleaved woodland, wood pasture and parkland, and traditional orchards) and trees that contribute to the character of a Conservation Area.

Proposals should be accompanied by an Arboricultural Method Statement, prepared in accordance with BS5837, which includes measures to protect retained trees during demolition and construction.

Enhancing trees, hedgerows and woodland

Development should identify opportunities to enhance existing trees wherever possible. Enhancement includes any measures that lead to a sustainable increase in the benefits provided by trees to people, nature and the environment. Management should follow arboricultural best practice, and the priorities set out in relevant plans and strategies. Planning decisions will take account of enhancement where it is appropriately secured and would not otherwise have occurred.

Replacement of trees, hedgerows and woodland

Where tree retention is not possible, as a last resort, replacement planting will be required. This will be based on the type and size of the trees to be lost. Trees that are growing individually should be replaced based on their stem diameter (see Table 3).

Trees growing in groups, or woodland, should be replaced based on their canopy area. Proposals should ensure a significant net increase in canopy area, and that the character and quality of planting areas will be equivalent to or better than those they replace. For example, naturally regenerating woodland should not be replaced by trees over amenity grass.

Hedgerow should be replaced based on length. Proposals should ensure a significant net increase in hedgerow. The species diversity, height and width of new hedges should match or exceed those they replace. The number and/or quality of connections between hedgerows, tree lines, woodland and ponds should be maintained or increased.

If replacement according to these terms is not appropriate due to overriding site-specific constraints or objectives, an alternative approach may be agreed with the council, based on the replacement of the benefits that would be lost.

Where the requirements for replacement planting cannot be met on-site, the council may seek a contribution towards replacement planting elsewhere. The amenity, landscape and natural capital value of the tree will form the basis for discussions. The council will look favourably on off-site planting and developer contributions where these support improvements in tree equity, objectives set out in All Our Trees, or measures in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Table 3: Tree Replacement Requirements

Trunk diameter of tree lost (cm at 1.5 metres above ground level)	Number of Replacement Trees
Less than 7.5	1
7.5 - 29.9	2
30 – 39.9	3
40 – 49.9	4
50 – 59.9	5
60 – 69.9	6
70 – 79.9	7
80+	8
Loss of ancient, veteran, historic or notable trees	Case by case basis based on value and benefits e.g. CAVAT for amenity, BNG metric for biodiversity.

Increasing tree canopy cover

In accordance with All Our Trees, the council aims to increase the quantity, benefits and neighbourhood equity of tree canopy cover in the borough.

Development should take opportunities to increase tree canopy cover in conjunction with the requirements for biodiversity net gain, urban greening, and design. For major development, the council would welcome early discussion about how this will be achieved and reflect the priorities set out in the council's green and blue infrastructure study.

Proposed new trees should be integrated into the design as part of the public realm wherever possible and integrated with the strategy for surface water management. Tree planting in private gardens should not be counted towards tree replacement requirements because of the potential removal of trees by householders in the future.

Tree planting and aftercare

All tree planting and aftercare must achieve high standards in design and delivery to maximise benefits and ensure the highest possible survival rates in accordance with 'BS8545 – Trees: from Nursery to Independence in the Landscape' or alternative local standards set out by the council. Proposals must meet the cost of planting and establishing new trees, provide an appropriate management and maintenance plan, and ensure adequate financial resources to deliver it for a minimum of five years, including watering for a minimum of two years.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-G7 Trees and Woodland

Reasoned Justification

- 9.67 National planning policy recognises the important contribution trees and woodland make to the character and quality of urban environments, and the provision of ecosystem services.
- 9.68 Places for Everyone highlights the importance of the Greater Manchester Tree and Woodland Strategy and the contribution that planning and development can make to help deliver the aims and objectives of the Strategy.
- 9.69 The aim of this policy is to protect and, if necessary, replace the benefits that trees provide, not just the trees. These benefits are the basis for valuing trees. Trees that generate more benefits, or benefits that are more difficult to replace, may be given greater weight in decision making.
- 9.70 Benefits is a broad term which captures a very wide range of goods and services provided by trees, for example, reducing flooding, urban cooling, contributing to the setting of a listed building, supporting biodiversity, screening and landscaping, or providing amenity and mental health benefits. Replacing one tree with another does not necessarily replace the specific benefits the original trees were providing. It is necessary to consider what is good about trees and how could that be replaced if it was lost.
- 9.71 This natural capital approach also provides a basis in which the replacement of trees can be tailored to pursue the benefits that would be lost by their removal, for example, through decisions around species choice, planting location, planting design, and in some cases quantity.

- 9.72 The average tree canopy cover across towns and cities in England is 16% although there is significant variability between and within urban areas. Evidence suggests that 20% tree canopy cover is a suitable aspiration for towns and cities.
- 9.73 In Greater Manchester, the average tree canopy cover baseline is currently 15% and there is an aspiration to increase this to 17%. However, due to underlying land cover types, the figures are highly variable across the different geographies of Greater Manchester. In Rochdale, due to the large areas of upland and lowland agriculture, the current average baseline is 8%, although this is also highly variable between wards and neighbourhood areas of Rochdale: some areas meet the minimum standards for towns and cities whereas other areas are deficient.
- 9.74 Our aspiration is to achieve greater tree equity across Rochdale whilst also increasing the percentage of tree canopy cover more in line with other areas of Greater Manchester. The aim of this policy is for development to contribute to increasing tree canopy cover and enhancing the benefits provided by trees. This means avoiding tree loss wherever possible.
- 9.75 As a last resort, where tree replacement is necessary, planting at a ratio greater than 1:1 is required to a) contribute to tree canopy cover and b) replacing the benefits within a reasonable timeframe and mitigating the risk of some failures. Replacement of trees on a 1:1 basis would typically represent a reduction in benefits provision over time, both because of the risk factor, and the delay in which the benefits are replaced. When replacing more mature trees, it will take a long time to recover the canopy volume, biodiversity value, and wider benefits such as amenity, urban cooling and carbon storage. This is reflected in the tree replacement requirements set out in this policy, based in part on PfE policy JP-G7 which requires replacement on the basis of two new trees for each tree lost, or other measures that would also result in a net enhancement in the character and quality of the treescape and biodiversity value in the local area. However, this approach does not take account of the range of benefits provided by more mature and larger trees and the length of time it takes for newly planted small trees to provide these benefits. Therefore, we have modelled this policy's tree replacement requirements on the well-established Bristol Tree Replacement Standard as set out in the Bristol City Council Core Strategy and Planning Obligations SPD 2012.
- 9.76 Replacement trees should be a minimum of 12-14cm girth trees (containerised bag-grown or root-balled). Trees will be planted and managed in accordance with BS8545 – Trees: from Nursery to Independence in the Landscape.
- 9.77 BS 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction' describes the different tree categories - Category A (trees of high quality); Category B (trees of moderate quality); and Category C (trees of low quality).
- 9.78 BS 5837 also describes how only trees with a DBH of 75mm or above are to be included within BS 5837 Tree Surveys, hence why the ratios start at 0.75cm.

- 9.79 Notable trees could include rare, unusual, commemorative trees or trees with significant conservation or ecological value as per the Woodland Trust's Practical Guidance 4: What are ancient, veteran and other trees of special interest (2008).
- 9.80 In accordance with national planning policy, development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists. Where it is necessary to remove Veteran/Ancient/Historic or Notable trees compensation will be considered on a case-by-case basis using an appropriate benefits valuation tool e.g. CAVAT for amenity or BNG metric for biodiversity. A sum would be paid as a commuted sum to the council for tree planting improvements across Rochdale.
- 9.81 Where the tree replacement requirements are not already met in full by biodiversity net gain requirements, development will still be expected to meet the tree replacement standard.
- 9.82 Proposals will need to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right place. Native species common to the area should be planted in locations where there will be a long-term public benefit, and therefore private gardens should not form part of the calculation for tree canopy cover.
- 9.83 Prior to planting trees, applicants must review the public sewer and water main map. Any construction activities in the vicinity of any public sewers and water mains, including any assets or infrastructure that may be located outside the red line boundary, must comply with national building and construction standards and United Utilities' 'Standard Conditions for Works Adjacent to Pipelines'.
- 9.84 Where an applicant has demonstrated that replacement trees cannot be accommodated within the development site, the council will consider a monetary payment as part of a section 106 agreement so that the required trees can be planted on land nearby or where priorities are highest across the borough. In these cases, the value per tree will be commensurate with the industry standard figures for tree replacements.
- 9.85 It will be a planning requirement, secured by condition, that adequate measures are taken to protect trees during construction.
- 9.86 Landscaping proposals, including proposals for tree-lined streets, should be integrated with the strategy for sustainable surface water management.
- 9.87 Where applicants propose to enhance the benefits provided by trees, an appropriate level of evidence should be provided, having regard to the council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Study, All Our Trees, and the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- 9.88 Where replacement trees fail to become established within three years, replacement planting will be required.

- 9.89 Applicants should not fell trees to degrade the development site, and the council will take a dim view of this. Where there is evidence that existing tree cover has been deliberately reduced prior to the application being submitted, tree replacement will be calculated based on the trees that existed immediately prior to those activities taking place. Where appropriate, the council will take enforcement action.
- 9.90 The council will aim to achieve an increase in in tree canopy cover across all neighbourhoods, especially those urban areas which are currently deficient, as identified in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Study 2026.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 9.91 Biodiversity (the variety of living organisms) and geodiversity (the range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms) underpin the value of the natural environment and its ability to provide a wide range of important benefits, including supporting human health and quality of life.
- 9.92 In conjunction with the statutory requirement for biodiversity net gain, this policy sets out how development should protect and enhance existing biodiversity (including geodiversity and soils) and support nature recovery to deliver nature positive outcomes.

Policy G6 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity

The council will apply the mitigation hierarchy to all proposals for development. This means that if significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated (like for like as a minimum), or, as a last resort, compensated for, then development should not be permitted.

International, national and local sites designated for nature conservation and geodiversity will be protected in accordance with national policy.

Proposals should demonstrate how the development will protect and enhance biodiversity, geodiversity, and the conservation value of its natural environment assets, having regard not only to its immediate location but its surroundings and context.

Where the council considers it necessary, to protect the natural environment, developers may be required to provide an appropriate ecological appraisal to enable the council to properly assess and determine the merits or otherwise of the development proposal. This includes all planning applications submitted for development within, in close proximity to, or likely to have an impact on any designated sites, priority habitat, or protected species.

During the construction phase, developers should implement measures to prevent any harm to ecological features. Where the council considers it appropriate, this may include the preparation of a Landscape and Ecological Management Plans (LEMP), or similar, which will outline clear protocols for protecting biodiversity and soils, managing pollution risks and mitigating disturbance, as well as the monitoring of these measures, throughout the construction phase and post-development.

Development on peat

The uplands and parts of the lowland areas of Rochdale are characterised by peaty soils. Peat-based habitats and peaty soils are particularly important for addressing multiple green infrastructure priorities and conserving and enhancing biodiversity. The council will work with partners and stakeholders to protect existing areas and seek opportunities for the positive restoration of degraded areas of peat.

Development should prioritise the protection and positive restoration of peat and peat-based habitats. Areas of deep peat, of 40cm depth or more, may be considered irreplaceable habitat.

The England Peat Status Greenhouse Gas and Carbon Storage dataset indicates areas of deep peat and should be used as an initial tool to determine whether further hydrological and ground investigations are required. Where there is evidence of deep peat, hydrological and ground investigations will be required to determine the extent and quality of any peaty soils to inform the potential for restoration and identify any areas of irreplaceable habitat where loss or deterioration should be avoided.

Where development would adversely affect peat, an assessment will need to be made regarding its value and whether a scheme could safeguard the resource, or whether there is an acceptable type and level of mitigation that could be provided should loss be unavoidable.

Where it would be technically possible to restore much of the deep peaty soil within a site to wetland habitats such as fen and wet woodland with some areas potentially transitioning to active bog in future decades, it is likely to be considered irreplaceable habitat. Where development would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitat, it will only be permitted where exceptional reasons exist. Where this is the case, applicants will need to minimise adverse impacts and agree a suitable compensation strategy with the council to facilitate the restoration of currently degraded peatlands either within the site or elsewhere.

Nature recovery

Development should seek to support and deliver on the priorities and actions for nature recovery that are set out in the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

The core areas for nature recovery are the designated sites listed above and development likely to have an adverse impact on land within or adjacent to these areas will need to protect and enhance the integrity of these sites by applying the mitigation hierarchy.

The areas of opportunity for nature recovery are priority locations which offer the greatest potential to expand and better connect the core sites, thereby helping to create a functioning and resilient nature network.

Development within or adjacent to areas of opportunity for nature recovery should seek to:

- a. create, restore and enhance habitats to improve biodiversity value and expansion of these areas;

- b. improve habitat connectivity within the development site and beyond, especially any core areas nearby, and mitigate any physical barriers that could be detrimental to achieving enhanced biodiversity connectivity;
- c. incorporate the relevant priorities and measures set out in the Greater Manchester LNRS.

Outside of the mapped areas, development should have regard to unmapped actions in the LNRS to deliver nature recovery outcomes, for example, when considering green and blue infrastructure proposals.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) proposals should support the priorities and actions set out in the Greater Manchester LNRS and where possible expand areas of habitat and ecological connectivity. Local priorities for green and blue infrastructure should also be used to inform BNG proposals to secure multiple benefits for people and nature.

Developers must follow the biodiversity gain hierarchy. As far as possible, BNG should be provided on site. Full justification for any off-site provision will need to be submitted to and agreed by the council. Where possible, the Greater Manchester LNRS should be used to guide the locations of any offsite provision in accordance with the following locational hierarchy:

- 1. Within the borough;
- 2. Within Greater Manchester, the Southern Pennines or Manchester Pennine Fringe National Character Areas;
- 3. Elsewhere in England.

The purchase of statutory credits should only be used as a last resort.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Reasoned justification

- 9.93 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.
- 9.94 The Greater Manchester State of the Environment Report (2024) provides important evidence on the state of biodiversity. Key bird and mammal species have declined by up to 40% over the last 30 – 40 years. Only 5% of the city region's protected sites are in favourable condition; none of our rivers are in good ecological condition; and our woodlands are poorly managed and threatened by invasive species.
- 9.95 The plan area contains a wide range of important sites designated for their high nature conservation value, including the internationally designated South Pennine Moors and Rochdale Canal, 3 Local Nature Reserves, and 26 locally designated Sites of Biological

Importance and Regionally Important Geological Sites. These are shown on the policies map. The council will support the designation of additional local sites, such as Local Nature Reserves, to help meet the Greater Manchester LNRS headline targets to safeguard and restore wildlife rich space.

- 9.96 These sites are important in their own right as places where biodiversity should be protected and enhanced. However, the council will also seek opportunities to expand and connect these core sites to create a functioning and resilient green and blue network which supports nature recovery.
- 9.97 Where appropriate, new development should meet the requirements of relevant PfE policies in relation to the Manchester Mosses SAC, South Pennine Moors SPA/SAC, and Rochdale Canal SAC.
- 9.98 The statutory biodiversity gain hierarchy is a legally binding, stepwise approach and must be applied where there is a requirement to deliver statutory biodiversity net gain. Applicants may seek flexibility in the application of the hierarchy by providing justification for where it is not possible to follow the hierarchy. For example, where on-site BNG is inappropriate because it would constrain expansion of, or prevent access to, essential public utilities infrastructure.
- 9.99 The areas of opportunity set out in the GM LNRS have the greatest potential for enhancing, enlarging and providing connections between core sites. They do not prohibit development, but consideration must be given to how habitats can be enhanced and connections provided for wildlife. More detail on the Core Sites and Opportunity Areas can be found in the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Developers would be expected to consider enhancements to those habitats relevant to their site.
- 9.100 It is also important to note that areas of biodiversity value exist beyond the mapped LNRS network, and actions to enhance and extend nature can be implemented almost anywhere in Rochdale.

Conserving and Enhancing the Landscape

- 9.101 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, contributes to delivering nature positive outcomes, and supports the visitor and rural economy (Policy PR10).

Policy G7 - Conserving and Enhancing the Landscape

Development should be informed by and respond positively to the quality, character and sensitivity of the landscape, as identified through the Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment and the Rochdale Landscape Character Assessment.

Development will be permitted where it demonstrably:

- a. Conserves and, where possible, enhances local landscape character, landscape features and local distinctiveness, having regard not only to its immediate location but its surroundings and context;
- b. Protects and, where possible, enhances important views, visual amenity and skyline characteristics, and takes opportunities to create new local views and vistas;
- c. Responds positively to 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, provides public benefits from green and blue infrastructure and contributes to creating a high-quality natural and physical environment;
- d. Avoids significant adverse effects on landscape character areas, their special qualities and sensitivities; and,
- e. Maintains the quality and character of the landscape in areas of strategic GBI.

Development proposals should deliver proportionate landscape enhancements, including restoration, improved management or strengthening of landscape features, particularly in areas identified as being in poor or declining condition.

Where development is likely to result in significant effects on landscape character or visual amenity, proposals should be supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), prepared by a suitably qualified professional and proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal. The requirement for, and scope of, an LVIA will be determined by the sensitivity of the landscape and the magnitude of change, in consultation with the council, having regard to the borough's Landscape Character Assessment.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-G1 Landscape Character

Reasoned justification

- 9.102 The requirement of this policy will be applied in a proportionate manner. It will not normally be relevant for householder applications, applications for change of use, listed building consent and advertising, unless such proposals have the potential to affect landscape character or visual amenity.
- 9.103 Rochdale has a diverse and rich landscape heritage which makes a significant contribution to environmental quality, local identity and the setting of its settlements. The borough's landscapes encompass extensive open moorland, upland fringe farmland characterised by drystone walls and dispersed buildings, and a series of river valleys which provide important connections between the uplands and urban areas. These landscapes also support a wide range of ecological, cultural and archaeological assets and deliver multiple ecosystem services, including opportunities for recreation, climate regulation and biodiversity.
- 9.104 There are parts of the Borough's landscape which contain derelict, vacant or poorly managed land where landscape quality and characteristic features have been degraded. In these areas there are significant opportunities to improve placemaking and environmental quality by enhancing character and features through good design. There is

also the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of green infrastructure, nature recovery, and wider nature-based solutions. The functions and value of local landscapes in providing ecosystem services, including benefits for health, wellbeing and climate resilience, should also be considered and recognised in the assessment and design of green and blue infrastructure.

- 9.105 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.
- 9.106 The Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment (GMLCSA) provides a strategic understanding of landscape character, quality and sensitivity across the city region, identifying a range of landscape character types and areas within Rochdale. It identifies a suite of landscape character types and landscape character areas in Rochdale and sets out evidence of their characteristics and sensitivities.
- 9.107 To complement the Greater Manchester study, the council has undertaken a Landscape Character Assessment of the borough, which provides more detailed, locally specific guidance on landscape characteristics, features and valued attributes. These landscape assessments 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.
- 9.108 Development proposals should be informed by this evidence and demonstrate how they respond to local landscape character, including the key features, patterns and relationships that contribute to a sense of place. In doing so, proposals should seek to avoid or minimise adverse effects and deliver proportionate enhancements, particularly in areas identified as being in poor or declining condition.
- 9.109 Where development has the potential to result in significant effects on landscape character or visual amenity, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will be required. This should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal and prepared in accordance with recognised good practice. The LVIA will inform the design, layout and mitigation of development, ensuring that landscape and visual considerations are fully integrated into the decision-making process, including the assessment of cumulative effects where relevant.

10. A Place for People

- 10.1 The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises the importance of good design and high-quality places. This chapter sets out policies to ensure that development meets the design, social, education and health and wellbeing expectations of the borough.
- 10.2 Supporting residents in experiencing a higher quality of life, better social connections and a healthier lifestyle is a key theme that overarches many policies in this Local Plan. Strengthening strong, vibrant and healthy communities is a key part in delivering resilient, sustainable development and meaningful value in achieving economic outcomes and supporting residents in living well. As a borough it is a priority to create an environment where people can live longer and have wider access to quality health and community facilities.
- 10.3 The built and natural environment is an important factor in the determinants of health and wellbeing. There is evidence that supports well-designed places add overall positive value to people's lives¹³. Well-designed places encourage people to engage in them in a meaningful way and this can have clear health benefits. This is through actions such as increased physical activity, participating in social activities, improving mental health and increasing overall wellbeing. The built environment also has a functional role in facilitating social cohesion and providing spaces where people can meet and interact. The planning system can directly and indirectly support the improvement of health outcomes and can contribute to improving wellbeing through policy making in this Plan.
- 10.4 Therefore, it is essential that new development in Rochdale provides appropriate community infrastructure. Improving access to these facilities builds stronger communities and helps to address in part, inequalities and social exclusion within the borough. In tackling some of these priorities of poor health and deprivation, it is vital that community needs are assisted through appropriate access to social infrastructure, such as having access to good education. This contributes to supporting overall wellbeing in the local area.
- 10.5 Alongside the Places for Everyone Plan, the Local Plan has a substantial role in influencing the wellbeing of residents. Implementing measures such as safer housing, accessible community spaces, active travel, healthcare, green spaces, parks and recreational areas and effective transport options are all facilitated in this plan. This section specifically sets out policies intended to help create healthy and resilient communities.

A Well-Designed Borough

- 10.6 The Council will support proposals that promote the enhancement of well-designed places across the borough.

¹³ Cabe Space <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/the-value-of-public-space1.pdf>

Policy PE1 - A Well-Designed Borough

Development proposals should demonstrate how design supports the delivery of a high-quality, inclusive environment. New development is required to be well-designed and be compliant with relevant local and national design guidance and/or codes, or supplementary planning documents.

Significant projects such as large-scale housing and mixed-use developments are to be comprehensively masterplanned and a design code should be produced before any part is to come forward. Any masterplan must be informed by a site-wide infrastructure strategy that covers all phases of development to ensure that development is designed and delivered in a holistic and co-ordinated manner.

Applications for major development should be accompanied by a design and access statement, which should demonstrate how the relevant policy considerations have been addressed and taken into account. This should include a design analysis and rationale for the scheme.

Where appropriate, development proposals are expected to make use of design tools, advice and review arrangements and assessment frameworks, including demonstrating early, proactive and effective community involvement in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places

Reasoned Justification

- 10.7 In accordance with Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Council expects applicants to adopt a design-led approach, supporting inclusive, safe and enhanced local environments. Proposals should aim to deliver the right type of design in the right location, and one that benefits the existing quality of the natural and built environment.
- 10.8 All development should take available opportunities to integrate the principles of sustainable design and construction into their proposals. The development and re-use of under-used land, buildings and spaces should be maximised and provide a high standard of internal and external amenity that creates comfortable places to live, work and visit. Development proposals must also demonstrate how it has considered the impact on other residents, including the privacy and amenity of neighbours.
- 10.9 Development should also not burden users with onerous ongoing maintenance or management requirements. Good design principles should also establish creating environments that promote a variety of uses for its residents, whilst also at the same time considering the most vulnerable people in society. This may include considering environments that support people with different needs, for example, people that are less mobile, experience social exclusion, have additional needs or facilitating

participation by members of the community when thinking about implementing design principles and supporting the end user.

- 10.10 The Council will update supplementary planning documents and/or site-specific design codes to support the design policy. Where guidance is adopted, development proposals must demonstrate accordance with it. In the absence of this, the principles of the National Model Design Code and ten characteristics, should be followed in conjunction with local and national planning policy.
- 10.11 Design and access statements should accompany certain planning applications which explain the design process and rationale behind a proposed development. Where applicable, the Council will require these statements to demonstrate a good level of understanding and analysis of the existing area, environment and its character to ensure any new development sits in lieu of an already established scene. Opportunities for engagement should be taken at the earliest stages.
- 10.12 Where appropriate, major, large or sensitive development proposals may be referred to an independent Design Review Panel. The Council will establish or participate in such a panel, and the outcomes of a design review will be considered in the determination of applications.
- 10.13 The Council will not accept development that is of poor-quality design under the premise it is reflective of existing poor design in that area. New development will be expected to improve and enhance local design outcomes and not be of detriment. Developers should therefore be pragmatic in this approach and actively look to re-balance the quality of development if other development in the immediate area is identified as being of a poor standard. This should be supported and underpinned by appropriate masterplans, supplementary planning documents and local evidence as per the outline above.

Achieving a Healthy Place

- 10.14 The promotion of healthy places will be achieved by a series of measures. These are expected to reflect up to date national and local guidance on planning and sustainability. The Council will improve the borough through intentional placemaking and approaches that support shaping the urban and natural environment.

Policy PE2 - Achieving a Healthy Place

The Council will support measures that support healthy places as a priority. Proposals must consider the wellbeing of residents to ensure a better quality of life is delivered, by putting health outcomes at the heart of healthy environments and ensuring places are equitable for all. This will be accomplished by:

- a. Providing a suitable range of appropriate and good quality housing that supports wellbeing for all members of the community, including those that are most vulnerable in society;

- b. Facilitating safer streets and places through design and natural surveillance to improve social cohesion and community participation in both urban and rural settings;
- c. Delivering public spaces, streets and pedestrian routes that are attractive, well landscaped and safe for all users and prioritise the movement of active travel and sustainable transport users over other modes, in line with Policy T6;
- d. Ensuring that new development is designed to have a positive impact on improving health and wellbeing as per Policy PE3;
- e. Pedestrians having priority, by improving pedestrian access within residential neighbourhoods, supporting and facilitating active environments for all in placemaking. All opportunities should be maximised to create and maintain activity and participation.
- f. Having a good range of accessible open space, green space and recreation facilities nearby, prioritising a beneficial greener, biodiverse and resilient environment;
- g. Supporting accessible multifunctional spaces for all members of the community to enjoy and participate, that also fulfils the wider requirements of community needs across all members of society;
- h. Prioritising social infrastructure and having a good range of appropriate quality shops, leisure, restaurants and community spaces nearby and being easily accessible for residents, therefore making it easier to access local amenities;
- i. Supporting and facilitating access to healthy food and healthy eating places across the borough by:
 - i. providing greater access to healthier food options;
 - ii. by further enhancing the role of allotments;
 - iii. supporting food markets and local shops and;
 - iv. providing available to fresh and locally produced food.
- j. Ensuring all proposals for hot food takeaways are in accordance with Policy PE4;
- k. Working in partnership with stakeholders in regard to maintaining and enhancing new health services in accessible locations, and;
- l. Supporting proposals for new sustainable health care facilities that are easily accessible by public transport links, and via walking, wheeling and cycling routes in areas such as local, district and town centres.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places

Policy JP-P6: Health

Reasoned Justification

- 10.15 A healthy place refers to designing, developing and managing the environment in a way that benefits the wellbeing of communities and their needs. This incorporates creating environments that support health for all by, promoting physical and mental wellbeing and safeguarding ecological, economic and sustainability objectives. Consideration should be given to creating high quality placemaking, the impact on the environment and increasing the positive perception and overall design standard of the borough including having a clear impact on reducing health inequalities.

- 10.16 Investing in healthier places is shown to contribute to longer, healthier and a higher quality of life and have economic benefits. By prioritising health and wellbeing and sustainability in planning and design, the Council can create an environment for people where the needs of residents are well-served.
- 10.17 Facilitating health and wellbeing in environments, spaces and places should be embedded into design practices in the early stages of the planning process rather than the latter stages. Developers and partners of major developments in the design of buildings spaces and environments should also consider and contribute to creating inclusive places as part of their evaluations. This may include but is not exclusive to providing spaces for young people, spaces for older people, providing quieter spaces, leveraging opportunities for community participation and creating an environment that supports inclusivity for members of the community who are vulnerable or living with additional or complex needs.
- 10.18 Social environments should provide opportunities for community involvement and enhancing wellbeing. These should include supporting public art, historic places, meanwhile uses and markets and other social activities as appropriate. Proposals should support people-friendly, safe, vibrant and uncluttered public areas and incorporate Active Design principles as established by Sport England¹⁴ guidance. The guidance seeks to promote opportunities for individuals and communities to lead active and healthy lifestyles. The guidance identifies ‘Ten Principles of Active Design’: activity for all.
- 10.19 Prioritising liveability in communities can help create calmer and safer streets and enhance community cohesion. Development proposals should be designed to ensure a safe and secure environment that also reduces opportunities for crime and facilitates safety in the streets. This approach maximises opportunities for natural surveillance and avoids creating hiding spots and secluded areas. Where relevant, planning applications should be supported by a statement which demonstrates how they have addressed the healthy places policy criteria as part of their proposals.

Health and Wellbeing

- 10.20 Inequalities in health and wellbeing will also be addressed through many other policies in the Plan. This integrated approach ensures that the borough demonstrates an example of supporting healthy, robust and sustainable outcomes that benefit everyone in the community over the next few decades.

Policy PE3 - Health and Wellbeing

New development will be expected to take appropriate steps to mitigate any negative effects on health and wellbeing. Health will be prioritised and embedded into every stage of the planning and development process, with an aim of reducing and tackling health inequalities

¹⁴ <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>

across the borough. The Council will support these measures in new development by ensuring:

- a. Proposals take appropriate steps to mitigate the impact on health;
- b. New development considers all users, are accessible and, where necessary, accommodates need with appropriate adaptations that support independent living;
- c. Residential development is of a high-quality liveable standard and supports wellbeing, and;
- d. Where appropriate, new development supports measures which reduce social inequality, deprivation and isolation.

The Council will require a Health Impact Assessment for planning applications and proposals that would have the potential to have a significant impact on health and wellbeing and where the Council believes there are likely to be clear health implications as a result of the proposal.

The Council will also where necessary, seek the provision of new or improved health facilities to address the unmet need generated by the development. Where the demand resulting from a major residential development will create or exacerbate a shortfall or loss in health provision, this requirement will be expected.

Where appropriate, the Council will work in collaboration with partners to support healthy communities, promote equitable living environments and support development which contributes to reducing health inequalities.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places

Policy JP-P6: Health

Reasoned Justification

- 10.21 The Council is committed to improving the health of residents. Improving health and reducing health inequalities are key considerations that the Council assesses through the planning system. The health impact of any proposed development is expected to be assessed and considered by the applicant at the earliest stage and throughout the process. Proposals should consider all users appropriately, including vulnerable users and occupants with additional needs such as people living with disabilities. This is to ensure wider positive health outcomes for all the community. Any development proposals should be of a standard which meets the criteria outlined in the most up to date national planning policy. The Health Impact Assessment (HIA) must regard the broader issues of health and not just access to health services.
- 10.22 The Council will require developments where potential health issues are likely to arise to complete a screening assessment as early as possible in the development process, to determine whether a full Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is required. A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a structured process that is used to evaluate the effects of development on health, and which checks that a policy or project will not have unforeseen impacts. It also provides evidence-based recommendations that can help mitigate negative health impacts but also can enhance positive health outcomes and

influence environmental conditions. The HIA process helps ensure that public health is prioritised and that all potential health risks and benefits are considered when decision-making. It is unlikely a HIA would be required for non-major residential development, and some non-major commercial development, however there may be some specific circumstances where impact is likely to be significant irrespective of size, such as uses, for example, a drive through outlet, where this may then apply. On this basis, the policy has therefore not set out a threshold. This approach means proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- 10.23 Where the screening assessment identifies that a full HIA is required, this must be prepared as early as possible in the development process so that any health potentials can be maximised and any negative impacts can be mitigated. Pre-applications must also have regard to the HIA requirements and submission of draft screening assessments is strongly encouraged at this stage. Developments where potential health issues are likely to arise include hot food takeaways and fast food outlets. HIA's where required, should be submitted at the planning application stage and this must be proportionate to the scale of the development. The HIA should maximise any positive health impacts of the proposed development and minimise any potentially negative outcomes. HIA's provided in support of proposals will be expected to be in accordance with the most up to date relevant national guidance.

Hot Food Takeaways

- 10.24 All proposals for hot food takeaways should comply with the most up to date national and local guidance. This policy should be read in conjunction with any existing local policy or guidance and any national updates should be reflected when decision making.

Policy PE4 - Hot Food Takeaways

Hot food takeaways will be considered alongside other Plan policies and by also meeting the following criteria:

- a. Outside of centres, listed in b) hot food takeaways will not be permitted within 400m of schools and places where children and young people congregate.
- b. Opening hours are to be restricted at school opening times, lunchtimes and school closing times.
The site is within a town or district or local centre, and would not result in:
 - i. More than 5% of the total ground floor units within a defined Primary Shopping Area being hot food takeaways;
 - ii. More than 20% of the total ground floor units within an area of a defined centre, outside the above areas, being hot food takeaways;
 - iii. More than two hot food takeaways being located adjacent to each other;
 - iv. Any fewer than two Sui Generis units between hot food takeaways;
 - v. Other uses being sandwiched between two hot food takeaways.
 - vi. The proposal does not negatively decrease the vitality of an area;

Where the above standards have not been met, hot food takeaways will not normally be supported.

- c. All proposals for hot food takeaways within and outside of centres must also demonstrate the following environmental impacts have been considered, including:
 - i. There will not be an over concentration of hot food takeaways and not be placed in areas where an over proliferation may adversely impact on the wellbeing of residents;
 - ii. It would not exacerbate unhealthy eating habits in areas with higher levels of obesity
 - iii. The local amenity of nearby residents is taken into consideration in regard to noise pollution, smell and the control and management of litter;
 - iv. The opening hours are appropriate and reasonable for the location;
 - v. The proposal would not give rise to unacceptable adverse impacts on privacy;
 - vi. Traffic and parking implications are addressed and there would be no adverse impacts for highway safety;
 - vii. There would not be an increase in anti-social behaviour in the area as a result of the new premises and;
 - viii. The design of the fume extraction/ventilation equipment causes no detrimental nuisance or disturbance to nearby properties

All applications for hot food takeaways must be supported by a Health Impact Assessment as per policy PE3.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-P2: Health

- 10.25 The borough has higher than average levels of health inequalities and deprivation as highlighted in the most recent data in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2025¹⁵. In areas of deprivation, a large concentration of fast-food outlets has been shown to be detrimental to health¹⁶. Prevalence of unhealthy weight and obesity is shown to be at its highest in areas with those that are living in deprived areas¹⁷. This indicates there may be a correlation between deprivation levels, the volume of fast-food outlets in an area and unhealthy weight in the population. Therefore, planning has a role in supporting healthier environments by reducing the density and proportion of fast-food outlets.
- 10.26 The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment¹⁸ highlights that in the borough 67.5% of adults are classified as having excess weight. This is also above the England average of 63.8%. Healthy life expectancy (years spent in 'very good' or 'good health') is much lower across the borough compared to national figures, meaning residents may spend more time in poorer health for longer years. As a result of this, the time people are able to work and live well into older age is reduced, meaning there are also considerable social and economic impacts.
- 10.27 The Council recognises that unhealthy food sources can be found in many places and retail outlets, including online delivery services. Policy in relation to hot food takeaways cannot practically solve the wider issues of unhealthy eating and maintaining a healthy

¹⁵ Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2025) <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025>

¹⁶ Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Public health profiles. 'Wider determinants of health: statistical commentary on the location of fast food outlets, February 2025' Copyright 2026 [Wider Determinants of Health - Data | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)

¹⁷ Obesity profile: short statistical commentary, May 2025 - GOV.UK

¹⁸ JSNA Healthy Life Expectancy <https://www.rochdale.gov.uk/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-jsna/adult-wellness-jsna/5>

lifestyle, however high levels of health disparities also reflect a high prevalence and overabundance of fast-food outlets¹⁹. This also reflects the position nationwide, where in the most deprived areas access to unhealthy food impacts food poverty through lack of convenience to healthier options.

- 10.28 This policy is to give clarity on hot food takeaways and strengthen local policy in regards to the impact of these proposals. These uses are most appropriately located within town, district and local centres and other mixed-use areas, where their impact will tend to be least damaging and demand for their services is greater, such as serving the local community and businesses.
- 10.29 Hot food takeaways may create potential environmental and highway safety issues which need to be carefully controlled.
- 10.30 The Council also considers that where a development is acceptable in principle, the Council may impose conditions on an approval to mitigate the effects of these uses and/or protect the amenity of nearby residents. The factors to be considered when assessing planning applications mainly relate to the effect on, particularly where residential properties are close to the premises. This may exacerbate noise pollution, anti-social behaviour, road safety and traffic issues. These conditions may include measures to control the hours of opening, noise, smell and the storage of refuse and the collection of litter.
- 10.31 A 400m restriction buffer is considered to be a reasonable walking distance. The buffer will be measured in a straight line from the centre of the proposed site to the boundary of the grounds of each school and places where children and young people congregate.

Enhancing Local Distinctiveness and Improving Local Character

- 10.32 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 in the borough there are many wider-ranging benefits. Enhancing distinctiveness in placemaking can contribute to positive 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. This policy is to be read in conjunction with other heritage policies where relevant.

Policy PE5 - Enhancing Local Distinctiveness and Improving Local Character

Development proposals should be designed around features which support and enhance local character, local 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

¹⁹ Brown et al. (2022) No new fast-food outlets allowed! Evaluating the effect of planning policy on the local food environment in the North East of England
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953622004324?via%3Dihub>

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

- 10.33 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 and reflects the borough's history and 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.
- 10.34 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.
- 10.35 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, and they enhance the boroughs special qualities and reveal the significance of the historic environment.

- 10.36 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.
- 10.37 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.
- 10.38 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.
- 10.39 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.

Preserving Heritage in the Borough

- 10.40 Rochdale has a unique and diverse historic environment, with heritage sites spanning from the prehistoric to the 20th century. This heritage is an important asset. Successful heritage led regeneration schemes, such as Rochdale Town Hall and Broadfield Slopes, show the benefits that this special historic environment can bring to the borough.
- 10.41 This policy seeks to preserve and protect Rochdale's designated heritage assets. (For scheduled monuments and archaeology) see policy PE8.

Policy PE6 - Preserving Heritage in the Borough – Designated Heritage Assets

All development proposals that affect conservation interests should conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the special character, appearance and distinctiveness of the borough's historic environment. This will involve conserving designated heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the contribution made by their settings, and in a viable use that is consistent with their conservation.

Applications which affect or have the potential to affect heritage assets will be required to provide a heritage statement.

Listed Buildings

Proposals for additions or alterations to listed buildings; change of use of a listed building; or development within or affecting the curtilage/setting of a listed building should:

- a. Respect the building's historic context and setting, including its historic landscape or townscape, as well as relationship with other heritage assets. This should include views to and from the building; and
- b. Preserve the building's special interest through appropriate design that is sympathetic to the asset, and its setting and any adjacent heritage assets, in terms of scale, siting, materials, finishes, architectural details and form.

Favourable consideration will be given to conversion schemes that represent the most appropriate way of conserving a listed building, its special interest and its setting. This will be particularly the case with buildings identified as being at risk and where the proposal supports regeneration and secures the long-term conservation of the heritage asset.

Proposals that better reveal the significance of a listed building will be supported.

Conservation Areas

Proposals for development in a conservation area or affecting the setting of a conservation area should pay special attention to:

- a. The location, form, scale, massing, materials, density, layout, landscaping, and end use of the development;
- b. the impact on any key views within, into or out of the conservation area;
- c. the effects upon the historic layout and plan form including green spaces, and gaps or spaces between buildings which make a positive contribution to the character in the conservation area; and
- d. the wider social and environmental effects generated by the development.

Wherever possible the sympathetic restoration and re-use of buildings that make a positive contribution to the special interest, character and appearance of a conservation area will be encouraged, thereby preventing harm through the cumulative loss of features which are an asset to the conservation area.

Where applications propose the demolition of a building in a conservation area it will need to be clearly demonstrated that:

- a. The building detracts from or does not make a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the conservation area;
- b. The building is wholly beyond repair or is not capable of beneficial use; or
- c. The demolition is necessary to assist in the delivery of wider regeneration proposals supported by the Council.

Where a replacement building(s) is proposed, the development should make an equal or greater contribution to the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation area.

Registered Parks and Gardens

Development proposals should protect Registered Parks and Gardens and their settings. They should:

- a. Ensure that development proposals are sensitive to the features of the Park and Garden which contribute to its significance – including any buildings and structures of significance, historic or planned layouts;
- b. Ensure that the development maintains or enhances the significance of the registered park and garden; and
- c. Consider the impact of the development on the setting of registered parks and gardens and views into and out of them.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-P2: Heritage

Reasoned Justification

- 10.42 Designated heritage assets include conservation areas, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens. Schedule monuments covered by policy PE8.
- 10.43 The Plan sets out a positive approach to the management of the historic environment and outlines the overarching approach to protecting and conserving designated heritage assets across the borough.
- 10.44 All applications for proposals which may impact the significance of designated heritage assets will be determined in accordance with legislation requirements and the balancing principles set out in national policy and guidance.
- 10.45 Proposals which better reveal or enhance the significance of designated heritage assets will be supported. Examples include the removal of later unsympathetic extensions or the replacement of unsympathetic windows with windows of an appropriate style, material and finish.

- 10.46 Development proposals for the re-use of designated heritage assets will be favourably considered where the proposals represent the optimum viable re-use and are consistent with their conservation. Proposals will be considered against the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that the historic environment can bring.
- 10.47 Proposals to introduce energy efficiency and renewable energy measures affecting heritage assets will be approached positively and weighed against any harm to the significance of the heritage asset and the wider historic environment. Any proposals will need to be in accordance with Policy S1 – Sustainable and Energy Efficient Development.
- 10.48 The Council will work proactively to safeguard heritage assets at risk and will continue to work alongside owners and relevant partners including Historic England and other heritage bodies to secure the restoration and optimum viable re-use of heritage assets at risk.
- 10.49 The need to provide a heritage statement will be determined proportionate to the scale of the development and potential impact, in accordance with NPPF. Heritage Statements should be written using appropriate expertise to describe the significance of the assets. This should include describing their setting and landscape context at a level of detail proportionate to the significance of the asset or area using recognised methodologies and, if necessary, undertaking a field survey. The Historic Environment Record should be consulted as a minimum. The level of assessment should be sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the asset's historic interest, character and setting.
- 10.50 There may be instances where demolition in conservation areas is considered appropriate. This would need to be demonstrated through a robust assessment of the building or buildings and their role within the conservation area. In relation to the demolition of buildings to support wider regeneration, it would need to be clearly demonstrated that any demolition is necessary in achieving wider objectives for the area.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 10.51 This policy seeks to preserve and enhance the borough's non-designated heritage assets.

Policy PE7 – Non-Designated Heritage Assets

The planning authority will seek to ensure the retention, enhancement and viable use of heritage assets of local importance, including those present on the Council's Local list. There

will be a particular focus on retaining, enhancing and securing the viable use of those assets which are identified as being of key importance to the borough's historic environment.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-P2: Heritage

Reasoned Justification

- 10.52 The borough's non-designated heritage assets includes buildings, parks and open spaces, as well as features such as the canals and railways. Many of these non-designated heritage assets are of key importance to the borough's historic environment.
- 10.53 Proposals that better reveal or enhance the significance of non-designated heritage assets will be supported.
- 10.54 All applications which affect or have the potential to affect heritage assets will be required to provide a heritage statement.
- 10.55 Permission for proposals which would result in harm to, or the loss of, a non-designated heritage asset or its setting will only be granted provided that a balanced judgement has been made that takes into account the scale of harm to, or loss of significance of the non-designated heritage asset.
- 10.56 Any harm to these assets should be minimised through the retention of features of significance and / or good design and / or mitigation measures.

Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

- 10.57 This policy seeks to preserve the borough's archaeological assets and their settings.

Policy PE8 – Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

Where Scheduled Monuments and archaeological assets and their settings are affected by proposed development there will be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation in situ.

Development which, by virtue of its scale and/or location, could adversely affect assets of archaeological interest, and their settings, will require a suitable desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation undertaken by persons with the appropriate expertise, that should be submitted as part of any planning application. Permission for proposals which would result in harm to, or the loss of, archaeological remains or their setting will only be granted provided that a balanced judgement has been made that takes into account the scale of harm to, or loss of significance of the remains.

Where preservation in-situ of an archaeological asset is not possible or feasible then development will not be permitted until a programme for excavation, investigation and recording has been submitted and agreed by way of a pre-commencement condition. Where archaeological remains are to be lost to development, a suitable dissemination strategy, commensurate with the remains' significance, for the evidence and associated archive to be made publicly accessible must be undertaken in agreement with the local authority. The ability to record and disseminate archaeological evidence should not be a factor in deciding if this loss should be permitted.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-P2: Heritage

Reasoned Justification

- 10.58 Presumption in favour of physical preservation in situ can include, for example, modification of design, layout, drainage, landscaping or the siting and location of foundations. This presumption will be applied unless it can be demonstrated that public benefits will be secured which outweigh that harm or loss in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework.

Delivering Services and Facilities in the Community

- 10.59 Local community facilities are necessary for neighbourhoods to be sustainable, to provide convenience and to facilitate the purpose of participating in day-to-day activities. New development should increase access to local social facilities, with current and future considerations and opportunities for delivery being maximised.

Policy PE9 - Delivering Services and Facilities in the Community

The development of community facilities should consider the needs and requirements of everyone in the community and meet local need. Appropriate measures and adaptations should also be included where necessary. The Council will expect facilities to be:

- a. set at an appropriate scale to the local area;
- b. adaptable and multi-functional in order to future proof services;
- c. able to support a wide range of community uses, and;
- d. accessible and well-served by public transport, footpaths and cycle routes.

Proposals that would result in the loss of facilities will need to demonstrate that is no longer needed or practical and that it would not create a shortfall. This is to be demonstrated through an up-to-date needs assessment and shown to be justifiable.

Any replacement facility must be of at least equivalent quality, quantity and accessibility to that of the existing facility, and take into consideration the wider environment.

In order to mitigate the impact of new development on local services and meet the needs of residents, it may be necessary to provide additional, new or extended provision of social and community facilities for significant housing or development proposals. Where this is deemed necessary, this will be decided throughout the planning stages.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-P3: Cultural Facilities

Reasoned Justification

- 10.60 Services in the community are required to support local residents and support social wellbeing and future needs. This policy seeks to protect, retain and improve the provision of community needs. It supports the development of new community facilities and sets out the expectations of limited circumstances in which the loss of existing facilities may be considered acceptable and or justifiable. All reasonable efforts must be made to preserve existing facilities in community use. The Council strongly supports the retention of social infrastructure which makes a significant and meaningful contribution to the mental and physical wellbeing, learning and education of residents and facilitates a sense of community across the borough. Any loss of open space should adhere to criteria set out in policy PE10 and guidance set out in Sport England's Playing Field Policy²⁰. These can mean buildings, facilities and services that meet the day-to-day needs of communities such as:
- libraries,
 - post offices,
 - public houses
 - cultural and entertainment venues
 - indoor and outdoor sports venues
 - community meeting places
 - youth groups
 - places of worship
 - village halls
 - EV charging points/petrol filling stations/collection points
- 10.61 Community facilities are an essential part of enabling residents to meet their practical everyday needs. The loss of a valued local community facility or service can have an adverse impact on the wellbeing and social networking of a community.
- 10.62 Social and community infrastructure must be located in areas convenient for the communities they serve and be accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes. Local facilities should be in a walkable distance and therefore will facilitate other benefits such as increasing social interaction, increasing accessibility by being able to keep fit and well both physically and mentally, and residents being able to access what they need, near where they live and work. Putting greater importance on active design

²⁰ Sport England (2021) 'Playing Fields Policy and guidance' <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport/playing-fields-policy>

and travel by including an emphasis on walking, cycling and wheeling in new and existing development, is especially significant in integrating opportunities to stay fit and well.

- 10.63 Proposals will be considered on an individual basis, with weight placed on the significance of the amenity to the local community, for example e.g. theatres and museums, which are vital to attract visitors and to support local culture and improve the borough's image. Facilities must integrate with the surrounding area and create or enhance places where people using facilities feel welcome. To ensure high quality social and community infrastructure is provided, the design of facilities must demonstrate it has addressed a number of factors, including the need for infrastructure to be inclusive, accessible, flexible and sustainable.
- 10.64 The designation of centres recognises the role these facilities have as part of the broader function of a neighbourhood. The importance of readily accessible community services means that local plan policies should seek to retain these and protect them from changes of use or redevelopment. However, it is recognised that over time community needs change. The Plan therefore needs to be flexible and promote the potential for the dual use of buildings or to allow change of use where this can help fund new provision in a more appropriate or viable location. It will be expected that large-scale developments contribute to social infrastructure.

Providing Social Value and Supporting Economic Inclusion

- 10.65 Increasing social value is the overall positive effect development has on a community by improving access to opportunities for residents and the wider community.

Policy PE10 - Providing Social Value and Supporting Economic Inclusion

The Council will require all applications for major development to be accompanied by a Social Value Strategy. New development will be expected to demonstrate how the proposal will deliver social value throughout the lifetime of the development through planning obligations and other means. The Council will expect that development:

- a. ensures that the maximum benefit is obtained for the residents of the borough including greater social inclusion, particularly for vulnerable groups;
- b. takes into account social value at all stages of the designing, construction and operation of buildings;
- c. supports local labour and training agreements and utilises local supply chains and procurement;
- d. has a positive impact on economic inclusion particularly for vulnerable groups and those acquiring access to work and training opportunities;
- e. maximises opportunities for using public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling accessibly; and
- f. has a positive impact on the local environment.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-J1: Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth
Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge

Reasoned Justification

- 10.66 Social value is a model increasingly being used by businesses in order to consider how their activities contribute to the wider economic, social and environmental objectives. This supports the sustainable development objectives of the NPPF, the strategic objectives of the region and the local plan. The Council will work positively with developers depending on the type of development the opportunity presents and the options available to provide the right type of social value for the area. This approach will ensure that opportunities start to be identified at an earlier stage.
- 10.67 A collaborative approach in the earlier stages means social benefits are more likely to be considered by developers and be of advantage to local businesses and residents. It also demonstrates a commitment from the start to providing social value and economic benefits. This may be (but not mutually exclusive) to practices that deliver, jobs, training, opportunities and skills, making use of the local economy, workforce and supporting positive change within a community.
- 10.68 The Social Value Act (2012)²¹ mandates that public services consider the wider benefits of contracts that are awarded. This includes the economic impact, the wider social benefits and environmental considerations whilst offering good value to local communities. The Social Value Model provides a clear way of supporting wellbeing, healthier, safer and more resilient communities, promoting skills and development and furthering sustainability. Therefore, when the Council commissions, it is anticipated that the wider benefits to residents, communities, the environment and the economy will be ensured, and that social value accomplishes positive change by supporting opportunities for equity in the local environment.
- 10.69 Meaningful work is also linked to positive health and wellbeing outcomes. This can be supported through providing suitable variety of access to local employment opportunities. To address the complex issues around inequalities and deprivation around Rochdale, it will be necessary for new development to take all practicable measures to maximise its wider social value and improve the economic wellbeing and prospects for all residents. To help bring forward some of the opportunities to deliver social value, this should be taken at the earliest stages and both during the construction and operational phases.
- 10.70 Residents who may have difficulty entering or returning to the labour market may include, people living in deprived neighbourhoods, people living with a disability, physical or chronic conditions, people where English is a second language, low skills and qualifications, carers, lone parents, young people, older adults and ex-offenders. This approach incorporates supporting all members of the community that are disadvantaged in the labour market, therefore, having a positive impact on wider society.

²¹ Social Value Act: Information and Resources <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-value-act-information-and-resources/social-value-act-information-and-resources>

- 10.71 Developers should consider how they can utilise local supply chains, to maximise the benefits to local businesses and the wider local economy in proximity to the development. Developers will be expected to sign up to Greater Manchester's Good Employment Charter²² and engage with the Council and stakeholders in the production of a Social Value Strategy. The Council will promote partnership working, connecting employers and local training providers alongside one another. This will assist in developing the skills and knowledge of the local resident work force.

Improving Facilities for Education and Skills in the Borough

- 10.72 Improving education and skills in the borough is a high priority. This will improve productivity, social and community cohesion, including the overall prosperity and quality of life for people in the borough.

Policy PE11 - Improving Facilities for Education and Skills in the Borough

Development proposals will be supported where local education, skills and learning facilities are prioritised. Proposals should support the needs of a diverse community, including for existing and new residents and future population changes.

High quality education establishments should be suitable for all sectors of the population and will be expected to:

- a. Provide a variety of accessible good quality schools including, early years and pre-schools, primary and secondary facilities and for special educational needs.
- b. Provide opportunities to enable residents to fulfil their potential and support wider skills training, businesses and adult/lifelong learning. Where education facilities underpin wider skills training, we will support places for learning, support wider networks with employment agencies and local businesses, promote better links to local schools and colleges and encourage commercial enterprise.
- c. Drop off and collection points in new or expanded education establishments should be located in highly accessible locations, with convenient access to active travel and public transport networks. These should be designed to avoid traffic disruption ensuring safer streets.

Developer contributions may be sought for the provision of educational facilities, employment skills and training where the proposal would have an impact on local need and demand for such services.

Development proposals that would result in a loss of education facilities will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that there is no ongoing or future demand.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge

²² Greater Manchester Good Value Charter <https://www.gmgoodemploymentcharter.co.uk/>

Reasoned Justification

- 10.73 The Council will support proposals for new education facilities as they emerge, including training and employment opportunities for people in areas of greatest need. The Council has a key role in supporting parents and families through promoting a good supply of strong educational facilities which reflect the aspirations of local communities. It is also important to ensure that facilities in the borough and further education establishments meet the requirements of modern education institutions.
- 10.74 The Council is committed to ensuring that all young people have access to good education and that there is a suitable school for every child in the borough. In working together with education partners, an assessment determining where and how the additional capacity to support new growth, should be provided. There is currently an issue with secondary school provision in the east of the borough and therefore proposals that address any identified need would be promoted in a suitable location.
- 10.75 Access to good high-quality childcare (pre-school and school-age) has a key role in children's development. Childcare facilities should be safe, accessible for all and provide both indoor and outdoor learning opportunities. Where it is shown that the number of pupils generated by a development is greater than the number of school places available, the Council may also require a contribution to fund the provision of the additional school places. This may include for ages between 0-19, children and young people needing provision for special educational needs (SEND) places, (this may be due to the potential of greater travel distances and other factors). Where it necessitates, there may be other situations including, circumstances when accommodating temporary and permanent needs, for example, transport costs to and from school, and temporary school provision before a permanent new school opens.
- 10.76 To achieve the direct benefit from skills and jobs for local people, the Plan needs to follow a strategy that positively and proactively ensures sustainable economic growth. Many high academic achievers leave the borough for better employment opportunities. There has been intention to create better opportunities by providing a wider range of local jobs and accommodation choices to try and retain these skill sets within the borough. Schemes such as the proposed Atom Valley as part of Northern Gateway, are an attempt to address this imbalance and gaps in opportunity. Additionally, it is also important that opportunities exist for residents in the borough to improve their education and skills, in order to access the wider job opportunities that initiatives such as Atom Valley provides.

Residential Development and School Places

Policy PE12 -Residential Development and School Places

For major residential developments where there are insufficient school places to meet the demand arising from the development, the Council will seek contributions to address the identified need for the additional places.

This will be calculated in accordance with the requirements of the pupil yield methodology.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge

Reasoned Justification

- 10.77 New residential development places demand on existing education provision in the borough. The Council will seek to secure provision for additional school places through Section 106 developer contributions, where the existing provision is unable to accommodate the additional demands arising from a new residential development. The pupil yield methodology will be used to calculate the level of provision required.

Financial contributions are calculated based upon expected pupil yields²³, resulting from the proposed development as informed by local evidence and identified costs per school place to accommodate expansion of provision. These costs will be based on the national pupil costs at that time. The identified yield will need to be accommodated through either the existing provision, or where it is found that there is insufficient capacity of school place provision in the area, through developer contributions towards new provision. This will be determined at application or pre-application stage.

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

- 10.78 This policy sets out how development should protect and enhance existing open space, sport and recreation facilities and where appropriate, deliver new or enhance existing provision to meet identified need as an important component in achieving sustainable development.
- 10.79 Open space provides health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby, and as part of the green infrastructure network it also provides a wide range of additional benefits for people and the environment.

Policy PE13 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

The council will ensure that the borough's network of open space, sport and recreation facilities is protected, managed, enhanced, and where appropriate expanded, to provide both formal and informal sport and recreation, as part of a multi-functional green and blue infrastructure network.

Protection of open space, sport and recreation facilities

Existing open space, sports and recreational facilities should not be developed unless an assessment is undertaken clearly showing land or buildings are surplus to requirement, the

²³ Department of Education (2023) Estimating pupil yield from housing development
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64d0f71be5491a00134b5940/Estimating_Pupil_Yield_from_Housing_Development.pdf

loss will be replaced, or the development is for alternative sport and recreational provision, the benefits of which outweigh the former use. Any assessment should consider quantity, quality, value and accessibility.

Proposals that involve the loss of open space should ensure replacement of at least equivalent provision, having regard to the council's Open Space Assessment (2026) and the standards in Table 4.

Proposals that involve the loss of an area of playing field, playing pitch or formal sports provision will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the evidence set out in the most up to date Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy.

Within existing open spaces, supporting and/or ancillary development for sport and recreation, which does not have an adverse effect on the environmental and open character, appearance and function of open space will be supported. Proposals to enhance green infrastructure and support nature recovery on playing fields should not reduce or limit opportunities for sport and recreation.

Provision of new and enhanced open space, sport and recreation facilities

The council's priorities are to enhance the quality and accessibility of existing open space and ensure greater open space equity throughout the borough.

Major residential development of 10 homes or more, and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) with 10 or more bedrooms, should ensure that all residents have access to high-quality open space within 200-300m walking distance of where they live²⁴. Proposals should contribute to achieving the council's overall standards and need for open space, sport and recreation, and the management and maintenance of any facilities provided or improved.

Major development of less than 100 bedrooms is unlikely to deliver meaningful on-site open space provision, and the council will therefore require a section 106 contribution to enhance off-site provision, delivered in accordance with local needs and priorities.

For development of 100 bedrooms or more, suitable on-site provision will normally be required unless it is considered that identified need would be achieved more appropriately through off-site provision, for example, where the development is within easy access of appropriate, existing open space, and it is therefore more beneficial to enhance existing facilities.

Where on-site provision is needed, the proposals should incorporate meaningful open space and facilities to support the new homes, including children's equipped play areas and, where appropriate, facilities for older children and teenagers. Open space within new development should be planned, designed and located to deliver maximum public benefit and high-quality place making. Incidental, small areas of urban greening will generally not constitute public open space nor contribute to achieving the standards.

The design and specification of any new or enhanced provision should be agreed with the council and proposals must include suitable arrangements and funding for their ongoing

²⁴ Fields in Trust Standards - Creating great spaces for all

maintenance and to ensure their continued public access. Where appropriate, contributions to open space provision will be secured through planning obligations or conditions.

Where outdoor sports provision on educational land is to be made available for community use, a Community Use Agreement should be agreed to secure well-managed and safe community access to those facilities. Proposals for community use of sports facilities will need to ensure that amenity impacts are appropriately considered and addressed.

All proposals for new or enhanced open space should set out how they will:

- improve the quantity and/or quality of publicly accessible open space, sport and recreation facilities in the local area;
- improve and connect the existing network of open space with the walking, cycling and active travel network, wherever possible; and
- address any quantitative, qualitative and accessibility deficiencies revealed through Rochdale's Open Space Assessment.

Standards

The standards set out in Table 4 provide the basis for contributions from new development to borough-wide provision of open space. New and enhanced provision should seek to achieve these standards.

Needs and opportunities for outdoor sports provision are identified within the most up to date Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy. This should be used when considering the development of new or improved outdoor sports provision, to ensure provision contributes to meeting local need.

Table 4: Open Space Standards²⁵

Type of open space	Quantity standard (ha per 1,000 population)	Accessibility standard (walking times are approximate)	Quality standard	Value standard
Allotments and community gardens	No standard	No standard	At least 70%	At least 60%
Amenity greenspace	0.8ha	480m (5-minute walk)		
Cemeteries and churchyards	No standard	No standard		
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	1.8ha	720m (10-minute walk)		
Parks and gardens	0.8ha	710m (10-minute walk)		

²⁵ Open Space Standards will be kept under review and updated, if necessary, through relevant evidence.

Provision for children and young people	0.25ha	LAP – 100m LEAP – 400m NEAP – 1000m MUGA – 700m		
Outdoor sports facilities	No standard	1200m (15-minute walk)	Best practice for each sport	Best practice for each sport

Reasoned Justification

- 10.80 Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of communities, and can deliver wider economic, social and environmental benefits.
- 10.81 Places for Everyone highlights the importance of ensuring the continued availability of, and easy access to, a high-quality range of sport and recreation facilities, to achieve key objectives such as improving the health of residents and making Greater Manchester a more attractive place to live and visit.
- 10.82 Open space refers to a broad range of typologies which have public value, whether that be for formal or informal sport and recreation, or the provision of visual amenity and contact with nature within an urban landscape. This includes formal sports pitches and playing fields, amenity greenspace within a development, Country Parks, linear corridors and public rights of way. It includes both public and private spaces but excludes private gardens. All open space, regardless of size, typology, accessibility or ownership, contributes to Rochdale’s green and blue infrastructure.
- 10.83 Table 5 below provides a brief description of the different types of open space. An important distinction should be made between playing fields and sports pitches whereby the latter may be a smaller area.

Table 5: Open Space Typologies

Open Space Typology	Description
Allotments and Community Gardens	Opportunities for people to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
Amenity greenspace	Most commonly but not exclusively found in housing areas. Includes informal recreational green spaces and village greens.
Cemeteries and churchyards	Cemeteries and churchyards.
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	Includes country parks, nature reserves, publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands, wetlands and wasteland. Does not include open countryside unless a self-contained site.
Parks and formal gardens	Includes urban parks and formal gardens. Parks usually contain a variety of facilities and may have one of more of the other types of open space within them.

Formal outdoor sports provision	Usually in the form of playing fields and pitches or other sports provision, such as football, rugby or cricket, as well as tennis courts or bowling greens.
Provision for children and young people	Areas designed primarily with equipped play facilities for younger children and areas designed primarily for teenagers and older children.

- 10.84 The council's Open Space Assessment (2026) provides up-to-date evidence of the provision of open space across the borough and where different types of new and/or enhanced open space are needed to meet identified need. It also provides evidence for the standards set out in this policy.
- 10.85 Rochdale benefits from a good overall quantity of provision of publicly available open space. The Natural England Accessible Greenspace Standard sets out a district wide capacity standard of 3 ha per 1,000 population. This includes publicly accessible green space but does not include formal sports provision or play areas. Rochdale's Open Space Assessment (2026) has identified that the borough currently meets the standard for publicly accessible greenspace.
- 10.86 However, open space is not distributed evenly across the borough. Some areas have good provision of most open space typologies whereas other areas have less open space provision per capita. The quality of open space also varies between open space type and area. It is important to note that quantity of provision should not be considered in isolation because accessibility and quality are often equally important in determining whether provision meets need.
- 10.87 All open space above 0.2ha identified by the 2026 Assessment is shown on the Policies Map. Areas of open space not shown on the Policies Map remain protected by the provisions of this policy and are subject to the application of the exceptions test in national policy.

New and enhanced open space

- 10.88 It is important that new development does not place undue pressure on existing open space provision in the borough and ensures that all residents have access to high-quality open space close to where they live.
- 10.89 Major residential development is required to provide sufficient public open space provision. It is also considered appropriate to seek developer contributions towards open space provision as part of the development of HMOs which have 10 or more occupants because the additional number of residents could impact on existing open space provision, in a similar way to major residential development.
- 10.90 Proposals should contribute to achieving the council's overall standards and need for open space, sport and recreation, and the management and maintenance of any facilities provided or improved.

- 10.91 The council's priorities are to enhance the quality and accessibility of existing open space, and ensure greater open space equity throughout the borough, rather than creation of new open space.
- 10.92 Where existing open space is to be enhanced, a financial contribution should be provided. The location and typology of the open space should be identified in line with any deficiencies identified in the Open Space Assessment (2026).
- 10.93 A developer contributions calculator has been developed, as part of the Open Space Assessment, which will guide the council in determining appropriate open space contributions towards offsite provision. Costings included within this calculator will be updated over the lifetime of the plan as required. The contributions required per bedroom are set out on the council's website and will be updated in line with inflation.
- 10.94 Where new onsite open space is to be provided, regard should be had to the Open Space Assessment (2026) to target improvements in open space deficiencies in the area in which the site is located.

New and enhanced playing pitches and outdoor sports provision

- 10.95 Major residential development is required to provide sufficient sport or recreation provision. Where appropriate, for new major residential development, Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator may be used to estimate the demand that may be generated for the use of playing pitches by the new population of the development.
- 10.96 Where existing outdoor sport and recreation provision is to be enhanced, a financial contribution should be provided. The location and type of provision should be identified in line with any needs and deficiencies identified in the PPOSS.
- 10.97 Where new onsite facilities are to be provided, this should be in accordance with need in the area in which the site is located, identified by the PPOSS.

Open space standards

- 10.98 The council supports Natural England's minimum standard of 3ha of publicly accessible greenspace per 1,000 population²⁶. This is the minimum level of open space residents should expect across the whole borough.
- 10.99 Open space provision in the borough has been assessed against the standards of quantity, quality, accessibility and value, to identify levels of current provision relative to need. The Open Space Assessment (2026) identified the current and predicted future levels of open space provision and population-based demand against these standards to identify current deficiencies and therefore where new or improved open spaces will be most needed. Open space provision is assessed for each township.
- 10.100 For development, new and enhanced open space provision should be provided in line with these standards (Table 4). The requirements for outdoor sports provision are not

²⁶ Recommended by Natural England: [Accessible Greenspace Standard](#)

included within Table 4, as these are considered on a site-by-site basis as set out above. A detailed explanation of the standards for quantity, quality, accessibility and value is set out in the Open Space Assessment (2026) report.

- 10.101 It is important to note that the standards are based on public open space, defined as sites that are accessible to the public and perform a role in the local community. The total amount of publicly accessible open space is therefore not necessarily the same as the overall amount of open space in the borough.

11. A Connected Place

- 11.1 Improving accessibility and providing active and sustainable transport and travel options is key to delivering the Borough's development ambitions through strategic proposals e.g. Atom Valley Growth Locations, local town centres and brown and allocated green field land use allocations. This will:
- Improve access to jobs, education and training, shopping, health, leisure and other essential amenities;
 - Promote and support economic growth and attract inward investment;
 - Increase local prosperity;
 - Increase opportunities for sustainable travel making it easier to get to places; and
 - Make the borough a destination of choice.
- 11.2 The Rochdale Borough is in a key strategic location with transport links providing good access to vibrant Manchester and Leeds City Region economies via east-west motorway and rail networks. This makes it a favourable location for sustainable development, and the transport network has potential for further connectivity enhancements and more links to access and enhance Greater Manchester's Bee Network.
- 11.3 To strengthen these connections, our policies will:
- Progress and deliver sustainable transport improvements to access development proposals located in the most appropriate locations;
 - Minimise trips, especially single occupancy car journeys and trip length;
 - Extend the Bee Network to offer more travel choice and walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport opportunities;
 - Support measures to enhance safety and access for vulnerable road users including people with impaired mobility, protect traffic sensitive town centres and residential communities, provide public realm that makes streets more appealing to travel along or spend time; and
 - Reduce emissions from traffic contributing to delivery of the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan and Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan (GMLTP) including GM "Right Mix" Targets for modal shift through healthier travel behaviour and technology innovations to tackle vehicle emissions and improve network operation.

Delivering Transport Priorities

- 11.4 This policy details how land use allocations and planning decisions can assist delivery of GM Transport priorities and the boroughs local growth and sustainability ambitions.

Policy T1 – Delivering Transport Priorities

To ensure the Local Plan supports delivery of the GM Transport Strategy 2050, GM Transport Delivery Plan (2027-2037) and Local Implementation Plan (LIP) priorities, new development should:

- a. Be located where access by active and sustainable transport modes is or could be made available, convenient and proposals for improvement can be provided that connect to the Bee Network;
- b. Be supported by measures to reduce the need for travel, encourage modal shift and promote sustainable travel choices that minimise the number and length of car trips;
- c. Facilitate and encourage walking, wheeling and cycling to key local services and amenities, enhance public realm, make provision for people with impaired mobility, and protect, maintain and enhance the Bee Network, and Public Rights of Way, bridleways and recreational routes;
- d. Take a co-ordinated approach to new development access design and layout to encourage shared use, enhance highway safety and minimise traffic congestion, including through the integration of Streets for All design principles, safe speed limits and traffic management in appropriate locations that protect vulnerable road users; and
- e. Where appropriate, provide necessary and proportionate contributions and / or safeguard land for provision or improvement of highway, active travel and public transport proposals.

Places for Everyone Links:

JP-C1 – An Integrated Network

JP-C3 – Public Transport

JP-C6 – Walking and Cycling

Reasoned Justification

- 11.5 Transport Policy and investment supports delivery of successful development and well-designed, sustainable infrastructure that drives local economic growth and social inclusion. Promoting active travel and public transport journeys can minimise the environmental impact of proposals and help tackle the climate emergency declared by the Council. It also offers health benefits by encouraging walking, wheeling and cycling, integrating physical exercise into daily life. Providing safe well-designed routes will also enable people to access local jobs, services and the amenities they need, to support daily life and their personal wellbeing.
- 11.6 The Council will continue to work with stakeholders and partners including Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to develop the Bee Network, removing barriers to active travel particularly for short trips and improving public transport so that it is accessible and affordable for more households and communities. The Bee Network improvement pipeline will assist this but, also help to tackle increasing obesity levels and illnesses e.g. diabetes and heart disease. Active travel can also improve mental wellbeing and help to address loneliness and social exclusion.

- 11.7 In enabling people to get where they want to go, infrastructure design should balance place and movement, incorporate public realm improvements and accentuate and protect locally valued and historic assets. Unnecessary street furniture and barriers should be removed making it easier to make journeys while creating places that allow people to spend time and socialise.
- 11.8 A comprehensive network of frequent, affordable and accessible bus services provides access to many local amenities e.g. health services, healthy food, leisure and sporting activities and green spaces as well as jobs and education.
- 11.9 At peak times parts of the borough's transport network are at capacity affecting journey reliability, connectivity and punctuality of public transport services. Many areas are well served; others have more limited sustainable travel choices.
- 11.10 People should be able to travel easily between neighbourhoods with connectivity between key residential settlements, employment areas and local services particularly strategic growth locations such as the Atom Valley Growth Locations. Developers should provide or contribute to Bee Network improvements that benefit their proposals and provide an appropriate mix of travel modes (walking, wheeling, cycling, bus, Metrolink or Tram Train) that contribute to achieving the GM "Right Mix" for half of all journeys to be made by active and sustainable modes by 2040.
- 11.11 Developers will be expected to contribute investment to highway infrastructure and public transport services from which they will benefit creating wider travel choices for their employees, customers or residents. These include potential strategic proposals such as new Motorway Service Areas, Railway Stations, Tram-Train Pathfinder or Metrolink expansion and any land required for future Quality / Orbital Bus Rapid Transit in the Borough.

Creating Sustainable Streets

- 11.12 Policy T2 aims to achieve a more equitable balance on the transport network between active / sustainable modes and motorised vehicles. This seeks to improve access to public transport and create safe routes that are conducive to walking, wheeling, cycling and to spend time in town centres and residential areas, minimising intrusion of motorised traffic.

Policy T2 – Creating Sustainable Streets

New developments and transport improvement schemes will be required to support the creation of sustainable streets, active neighbourhoods and school streets which have regard to their wider function through:

- a. Ensuring street design has regard to the Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) Streets for All Design Guide and any applicable Streets for All Supplementary Technical Guidance to deliver active travel enhancements that link with local amenities, destinations and transport hubs. Active travel routes should be direct, well

illuminated and overlooked by adjacent development, so they are safer to use at night;

- b. Including design features to prevent pavement parking and its detrimental impact on movement for pedestrians and people with disabilities;
- c. Providing varied spaces and public realm for people to meet, spend time, rest and for children to play, encouraging positive community and social interaction;
- d. Incorporating green infrastructure to enhance biodiversity, contribute to biodiversity net gain and enable wildlife movement and maximise sustainable drainage features and manage / reduce flood risk; and
- e. Supporting local distinctiveness, identifying and enhancing features and uses that provide visual interest and activity.

Ensuring development and transport investment considers the needs of all modes that make the most efficient and sustainable use of limited road space, set out in the following hierarchy (highest priority listed first):

- i. People with mobility aids and pedestrians;
- ii. Cyclists, Powered two Wheelers and public transport users;
- iii. People doing business or providing services (such as taxis / private hire, deliveries or waste collection);
- iv. People in motorised vehicles.

Places for Everyone Links:

JP-C1– An Integrated Network

JP-C5 – Streets for All

JP-C6 – Walking and Cycling

Reasoned Justification

- 11.13 The transport hierarchy seeks to increase priority of travel by sustainable and socially inclusive modes and particular journey purposes. It provides a foundation to ensure the needs of more vulnerable groups (pedestrians, wheelers, cyclists, people with disabilities or who are mobility restricted and people living with dementia) are given greater consideration. This will help to drive modal shift and improve accessibility and fairness for all those making journeys in the borough. Evidence of how developments adhere to the transport hierarchy should be included in Design and Access Statements that support proposals where relevant in line with the GM Places for Everyone Policy JP-C5.
- 11.14 The impact of Covid-19 and the Change a Region to Change a Nation (GMCA – Jan 2020) report, highlighted how vital it is that people can use footpaths and cycleways to access good quality green spaces. Enabling active lifestyles contributes to improving health outcomes of people in the borough.
- 11.15 Developments will also be expected to show how they have incorporated requirements of Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20, which advises on cycle infrastructure design and consistency with the Greater Manchester Streets for All Design Guidance and

Checklist²⁷. The Council will as appropriate, support the introduction of Active Neighbourhoods making streets in local communities liveable for people reducing the dominance of traffic. This may entail specific streets being closed to traffic (other than for residents' access) and will be located in areas where access to greenspace will be improved for people and encourage walking, wheeling and cycling where it is the preferred mode for making journeys of less than 2km. School Streets will also be supported allowing for street closures at school drop off and pick up times. These will be implemented where schools are supportive and do not require planning approval. Supporting infrastructure required to create them however may need planning permission.

Parking Provision and Drop-off Facilities

11.16 This policy set standards for the provision of parking and Drop-off Facilities.

Policy T3 – Parking Provision and Drop-off Facilities

The Council will require all development to provide appropriate parking and servicing provision. New development will be subject to the provision of the Council's Parking Standards (the 2026 Parking Standards are set out in Appendix 2) and have regard to:

- a. The need to ensure the development is inclusive and accessible to all users;
- b. the efficient use of land;
- c. the type, mix and use of development;
- d. The inclusion of design features that provide pedestrian-only safe routes through and around parking areas and prevention of obstructive and inconsiderate parking;
- e. The location of development sites including the availability and opportunities for accessibility by sustainable travel modes (walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport);
- f. Avoiding the creation of off-site car parking demand that would have an unacceptable impact on the:
 - i. safe operation of the highway network; or
 - ii. environmental quality or residential amenity of the local area.
- g. The provision of mitigation measures to prevent the impacts of unacceptable off-site parking (including funding for or contributions towards resident parking schemes, public transport provision or on-street parking restrictions and their enforcement.
- h. Maximising integration of parking and drop off facilities with the surrounding streetscape/landscape and the provision of well-designed sustainable drainage features to reduce flood risk.

The standards vary between different uses and, for car parking provision, are generally framed as maximum standards. Provision below the parking standards maybe be appropriate in locations where there is good availability of sustainable travel modes (e.g. within 400m of a town centre, Metrolink stop or railway station).

²⁷ Greater Manchester's Streets for All Design Guide - [Streets for All](#) | [Bee Network](#) | [Powered by TfGM](#)

The need for car parking, drop-off points, taxi ranks and car club / car sharing bays within developments will be considered through the vision –led Transport Statement / Assessment. It will take account of all relevant evidence including likely demand and taxi operator and private hire association knowledge where it is available.

The Council will ensure adequate levels of public parking provision is made in the Borough's town and district centres but will give priority to short and medium stay parking.

Places for Everyone Links:

JP-C8 – Transport Requirements of New Development

Reasoned Justification

- 11.17 Appropriate provision of car parking in new development can be beneficial and help to achieve borough and wider GM sustainability aspirations including carbon reduction targets, the 2040 “right mix” targets and air quality improvements. Managing levels of car parking provision can facilitate modal shift to active travel and public transport use whilst reducing impacts on communities, the environment and the highway network. This approach aligns with the draft GM Transport Strategy 2050 objectives.
- 11.18 The level of parking within developments should be a balance between accessible, cycle, electric vehicle and general parking spaces to ensure a successful development site discouraging unnecessary private car journeys and inefficient use of land. Transport choices made by individuals will strongly influence the Council's ability to achieve its carbon neutrality targets.
- 11.19 Effective parking provision in new developments can make a positive difference for all vehicle types influencing choice of travel mode for journeys, by encouraging more walking, wheeling and cycling for short journeys and more sustainable travel for longer journeys such as public transport. Sufficient provision is necessary to prevent parked vehicles dominating the street scene and obstructing or preventing access for pedestrians, cyclists and buses.
- 11.20 The quality of parking provision is as important and should be attractive and practical to use. Pedestrian routes need to be direct, safe, level and emphasize pedestrian priority. Cars should not be able to park overhanging footpaths or cycle routes and pedestrians should be able to cross car entrances safely. Design of parking facilities should be integrated with local surroundings such as sustainable drainage features reducing flood risk or enhancing green infrastructure and encouraging greater biodiversity.
- 11.21 Accessible parking spaces should be located as close as possible to the main entrance and facilities served by the parking. Routes should be well maintained with no obstructions to access. Accessible spaces should be larger than regular parking spaces providing extra space for wheelchair users and people with mobility and other impairments in getting in and out of a vehicle.
- 11.22 The 2026 parking standards in Appendix 2 include cycle parking. This should include space for non-standard cycles such as cargo bikes as well as facilities for e-Cycle

charging. The design of car parking provision should be future proofed to enable conversion or re-purposing for alternative uses if occupancy and demand reduces in the future.

- 11.23 Providing secure cycle parking at homes and other locations will encourage increased cycling from residential development. Regarding non-residential development, cycle storage must be safe, secure and accessible for both long and short stay visitors and have easy access to the entrance. Cycle storage should be provided in an obvious location, overlooked, well-lit and clearly signed.
- 11.24 The location of electric vehicle charging spaces influences how often and how easily they are used by residents, businesses and visitors, therefore careful consideration should be given to the location and design of these spaces. They should be positioned to avoid impacts on walking, wheeling and cycling.
- 11.25 Some commercial uses will be frequently served by larger vehicles. Where there is a case, parking, loading and standing areas should be provided. Consultation at an early stage with the Council on proposals that generate HGV's and other large commercial vehicles will be encouraged.
- 11.26 Pedestrians should be able to move around parking areas safely and easily and design should consider pedestrian desire lines, both in respect of pedestrians arriving from outside the site and walking towards entrances and people arriving in cars and the movements they will make between their vehicle and entrances to the development. This should be an early consideration in determining the overall layout of the site and spaces.
- 11.27 When determining the accessibility of a site the DfT's Transport Connectivity Tool should be used as explained in Policy T5 (Accessibility Criteria). This can identify areas with high levels of sustainable accessibility and therefore support higher density developments. Demand for car parking spaces is expected to be reduced as the choice of alternative travel options widens and environments are more walkable. Density thresholds are set out in Places for Everyone Policy JP-H4 Density of New Housing.
- 11.28 Where development generates off-site car parking levels that will have an adverse impact on the surrounding area, appropriate mitigation measures will be required. This could include development funding or contributions to resident parking schemes, public transport provision or on-street parking restrictions and their enforcement.

Transport Statements, Assessments and Travel Plans for New Development

- 11.28 This policy relates to development proposals that are required to be supported by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan or Transport Statement setting out measures to mitigate their trip generation impact on the local transport network and pro-actively prioritise active travel and sustainable transport provision through a "vision-led"

approach. For PfE allocations, Policy JP-C8 Criteria 16 of the Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan addresses this.

Policy T4 - Transport Statements, Assessments and Travel Plans for New Development

Planning applications will be accompanied by a “vision led” Transport Assessment (TA) / Transport Statement (TS) and Travel Plan where appropriate, which prioritises sustainable transport modes to assess their impacts and determine appropriate mitigation on the borough’s transport network. This approach aims to ensure sites consider the transport needs of all users and enable wider environmental, health, safety, wellbeing benefits and sustainable design can influence development from the outset.

Transport Assessments where required should set out a baseline position using existing mode split data that reflects current transport options available within or near the site. Future modal splits should then be considered that are viable for the site and reflect any proposed improvements to active travel and public transport offer.

A clear implementation plan and commitment to delivery of proposals will be required during the life of the development, indicating what the proposal is and seeks to achieve. This will determine the optimum design and mitigation measures required to address any material increases in traffic movements whether adjacent or remote from the site. Consultation should be undertaken at the pre-application stage.

Transport Statements, Transport Assessments and Travel Plans will be required to:

- a. Outline how the development will support access by active travel and public transport;
- b. Commit to the implementation of measures and initiatives to facilitate and encourage active travel and public transport use;
- c. Set out how the design and use of the site will not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety for all users;
- d. Justify proposed parking levels with proportionate evidence on likely demand, local parking conditions, sustainable transport accessibility, highway safety, walking and cycling provision, and how any under- or over-provision will be managed or mitigated;
- e. Consider how trips generated by the development can be adequately served by the local and Strategic Road Network (SRN) to ensure that the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would not be severe. Engagement; and
- f. Identify where there are any significant impacts of the development and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are identified and in place before it is occupied as agreed with the Council.

The information provided to address these issues is expected to be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development.

Where applications will affect the Strategic Road Network, applicants should initiate early engagement with National Highways in the initial stages in considering transport inputs affecting the SRN. The scope and detail of the Transport Assessment and Travel Plan should be sufficient to assess the application within the statutory timescales.

Any developments that are required to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment will need to consider air quality impacts on Holcroft Moss within the Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation in accordance with Policy JP-C8 of PfE.

Developments that require a Transport Assessment will be accompanied by a Travel Plan (TP). Thresholds for the requirement of a TA, TS and TP are detailed in Appendix 3.

Places for Everyone Links:

JP-C8 – Transport Requirements of New Development

Reasoned Justification

- 11.29 Policy T4 is based on NPPF (paragraphs 115 to 118) which outlines a vision-led approach prioritising the development of sustainable travel interventions with improvements benefiting other transport users. This is also consistent with Policy C8 (including criterion 16) of the GM Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan.
- 11.30 Transport Statements / Assessments and Travel Plans are used to assess and mitigate the negative transport impacts of proposals and promote sustainable developments. A Transport Assessment (TA) will be required for developments likely to have significant transport impacts, while a Transport Statement (TS) will be required when developments are expected to generate fewer trips but has a moderate impact on the local transport network.
- 11.31 Developments that require a “vision led” Transport Assessment will be expected to be supported by a Travel Plan so that the likely impact of proposals can be assessed and monitored. Applicants should reinforce the transport vision for the site, explain what the proposals are seeking to achieve to enhance opportunities for walking, wheeling and cycling and test a set of scenarios to determine the optimum design and transport infrastructure to deliver the vision.
- 11.32 Transport Statements, Transport Assessments and Travel Plans should be:
- Proportionate in size and scope with the proposed development;
 - Prepared and established at the earliest possible stage of a development proposal;
 - Be tailored to local circumstances, and
 - Be brought forward in collaboration with the local planning / transport authorities, transport operators, rail network operators, National Highways where there may be implications for the operation of the Strategic Road network (SRN) and any other relevant stakeholders.
- 11.33 When determining the sustainable accessibility of a site the DfT Connectivity Assessment Tool should be used. This is explained in Policy T5.
- 11.34 Loading areas and arrangements for manoeuvring, servicing and parking of vehicles should be clearly identified. The TA and TS should describe and analyse existing transport conditions, how the development will affect those conditions and propose measures to address any concerns. It should also identify measures to improve access

by sustainable and active travel modes, assess the demand for parking associated with a proposal and mitigate any wider impacts from a development.

- 11.35 In relation to applications affect the Strategic Road Network (SRN), applicants should set out how DfT Circular 01/2022 The Strategic Road Network and the delivery of sustainable development has been reviewed and considered. Transport planning is moving away from predicting future demand to provide capacity to approaches that deliver outcomes that and communities want to achieve and provides solutions that deliver those outcomes. Where required development promoters must put forward clear targets and commitments to minimise traffic impact of development and maximise accessibility to, from and within sites by walking, wheeling, cycling public transport and shared travel.

Accessibility Criteria

- 11.36 This policy sets out the Council's ambition for local development proposals to be accessible by active and sustainable travel modes providing competitive journey times compared with motorised travel.

Policy T5 - Accessibility Criteria

Development allocations and submitted proposals will seek to maximise access by active and sustainable travel modes in line with the vision-led approach to assessing the impact of proposals. Current levels of accessibility for all locations are provided in the DfT Connectivity Tool which indicates a measure of current accessibility levels to everyday services by walking, cycling, public transport and driving across England and Wales.

The DfT Connectivity Tool is favoured for assessing the accessibility of development proposals however other approaches to assessment can be used such as GMAL for public transport accessibility which is suggested in PfE.

The vision-led approach to the assessment of development proposals is expected to identify measures to improve sustainable travel options to local amenities which maintain or increase accessibility levels in the DfT Connectivity Tool. The Accessibility Criteria set out in Appendix 4 or any future thresholds agreed by Greater Manchester Local Authorities support this and offer a more sensitive method to measure smaller changes in accessibility and provide a sense check to verify the impacts of the vision led approach.

Developers are expected to have regard to these and work in partnership with the Council from proposal conception to implementation to deliver the vision-led approach. enhancing the convenience of access to / from communities and jobs, shops, schools and colleges, leisure and health facilities.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-C3 Public Transport

Policy JP-C6 Walking and Cycling

Reasoned Justification

- 11.37 The DfT Connectivity Tool seeks to enhance the understanding of the connectivity of places in England and Wales to everyday services by walking, cycling, public transport and driving. It also has a facility to assess the impact of access improvements on the connectivity rating. The Tool is based on a grid of 100m x 100m squares covering all of England and Wales. Each of these squares is rated out of 100 to give an accessibility score. The higher the score the more accessible the location.
- 11.38 The vision led approach in prioritising sustainable transport improvements is expected to improve access to local services and amenities even if this does change the connectivity rating. It is expected that more significant transport improvements supporting major and strategic development will in time increase the Connectivity Tool score where sustainable and public transport networks are enhanced to better connect development to everyday amenities.
- 11.39 All developments generate new trips, however improving opportunities to travel sustainably, supports the Borough's contribution to the Greater Manchester "Right Mix" targets for 50% of all journeys in the sub-region to be made by active travel or public transport by 2040. Proposals in locations with an environment that offers safe walking, wheeling and cycling options for short trips and / or are well served by public transport (bus, Metrolink or rail) should reduce the number of parking spaces they provide. They should also offer travel planning and familiarity information to end users informing them of the travel choices available to them to access employment, education, health, shopping and local amenities.

Active Travel – Walking, Wheeling and Cycling

- 11.40 This policy details how the local Active Travel Network will continue to develop supporting access to local amenities and existing and future development proposals.

Policy T6 – Active Travel – Walking Wheeling and Cycling

New development will enhance the borough's active travel network links for pedestrians, wheeling and cycling:

- to / from and within the borough's growth locations, development focus areas, town centres, schools, health facilities and neighbourhoods;
- by enhancing public realm and creating space on local streets to encourage active travel and improve local safety for vulnerable road users, by easing conflict with motorised traffic;
- by integrating the Atom Valley Growth Location active travel network with conventional bus, Metrolink, future tram train and bus rapid transit services, to access local centres including Heywood, Castleton and Middleton, within and outside the borough;
- by building a well maintained, continuous, safe and coherent active travel network in the Borough that connects with neighbouring authorities and town centres to deliver a connected strategic network. This includes the Public Rights of Way and Bridleway

Network where this complies with GM Streets for All Guidance and Bee Network specifications; and

- e. to / from bus interchanges, Metrolink stops, railway stations and town centres, employment areas and local amenities incorporating pedestrianisation, secure cycle parking and Mobility Hubs as appropriate.

Proposals included in the GM Transport Strategy 2050 and GM Transport Delivery Plan are:

- i. Castleton Phase 2 - continuation of the Castleton walking / cycling scheme to Rochdale Town Centre; and
- ii. Slattocks Railway Bridge active travel scheme for safer, higher capacity walking / cycling.

Designs will be expected to have regard to the GM Streets for All Design Guide and checklist where possible, as well as any applicable Streets for All Supplementary Technical Guidance.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-C6 Walking and Cycling

Reasoned Justification

- 11.41 Developing the Active Travel Network and widening active and sustainable transport choices is a key transport priority in Greater Manchester in contributing to meeting its “Right Mix” target by 2040. The policy aligns with those in the Places for Everyone (PfE) plan and the draft Greater Manchester 2050 Transport Strategy (GM Local Transport Plan (LTP)).
- 11.42 This policy will assist the drive to continue development of an Active Travel Network linking communities to local amenities and new development sites towards a connected Active Network (Walking, Wheeling and Cycling) that is easy to access and safe to use. This includes linking the Atom Valley Growth Location and local developments to the Bee Network. It also offers greater choice for local travel to employment and education / training opportunities, homes, adjacent communities and local amenities including Metrolink Stops, railway stations.
- 11.43 This policy also provides opportunities for leisure and recreational travel encouraging well-being, promote better health and improve fitness. This supports the wider objectives of the plan and of wider stakeholders seeking to promote active travel and moving more through Active Design²⁸, a concept promoted by Sport England.
- 11.44 The Rights of Way network is an important asset in the Borough which should be protected, improved, extended, maintained, way marked and sign posted, particularly definitive routes. Bridleways offer a limited number of safe routes in some rural parts of the Borough for horse riding. These multi-use routes should be considered in the development of active travel and local access provision. Public Rights of Way and other routes associated with green and blue infrastructure provide valuable local access but

²⁸ Sport England Active Design Guidance - [Active Design | Sport England](#)

should only form part of the Bee Network if they comply with standards such as safe for 24-hour use, well illuminated, suitable design and surfacing etc.

- 11.45 All new routes, junction improvements and access measures will have regard to the Streets for All Design guide and checklist. The existing network over time will be upgraded to a similar standard through an ongoing pipeline of investment in transport schemes. Third party and private developer finance will be expected to contribute where appropriate and at levels proportionate with the impact of their proposals along with any matched funding where it is secured.

Bee Network – Public Transport

- 11.46 This policy sets out how the borough's Bee Network will develop to improve local travel and access to amenities, existing and future development by public transport, providing a local perspective to Places for Everyone Strategic Plan Policy JP-C3.

Policy T7 - Bee Network – Public Transport

The Council will support improvements to the borough's public transport network and facilities that promote more sustainable transport choices and measures that reduce reliance on private motor vehicles.

In supporting existing and new development these will lead to:

- a. Increased public transport network capacity and improved reliability, frequency, speed, directness and coverage of routes and services;
- b. Improved services linking key destinations such as town and local centres, employment areas and growth zones, education, health and leisure amenities;
- c. More effective integration, including through better service co-ordination, improved interchanges / hubs and integrated ticketing promoting connected multi-modal trips;
- d. Enhanced passenger on-service experience, including safety, security, comfort and the waiting environment;
- e. Improved access to public transport to/from the wider network particularly for people with impaired mobility, providing local bus access to/from rapid transit stops and stations with drop-off facilities, and additional park and ride facilities if required;
- f. Provision of travel hubs which could include car share, e-bikes, e-scooters and facilities for secure non-motorised modes e.g. Cycles, scooters etc;
- g. Reduced harmful emissions including through the ongoing "roll out" of low and zero emission vehicles.

The following proposals will be identified on the Local Plan Policies Map as Public Transport interventions that will contribute to improving accessibility and connectivity in the Borough:

- i. Rochdale Rail Corridor Transit Orientated communities on development sites within walking distance of the borough's railway stations;
- ii. Tram-Train Pathfinder – Oldham – Rochdale – Castleton – Heywood – Bury potentially including additional stops;
- iii. Rochdale – Oldham – Ashton Quality Bus Transit (QBT) Corridor
- iv. Rochdale – Heywood – Bury Quality Bus Transit (QBT) Corridor

- v. Rapid Transit links to serve Atom Valley Growth Location (including Northern Gateway) from Middleton, Heywood, Norden, Bury, Oldham and Manchester
- vi. Rapid Transit links to / from through Middleton
- vii. Manchester - Rochdale Radial Quality Bus Transit (QBT) Corridor;
- viii. Slattocks proposed rail station on the Calder Valley Line between Mills Hill and Castleton as outlined in the GM Transport Delivery Plan 2027-2037.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-C3 – Public Transport

Reasoned Justification

- 11.47 Convenient, efficient and affordable public transport integrated with other travel modes provides a genuine alternative to the motor vehicle for many journeys. It is also key to influence delivery of modal shift and decisions on how people choose to travel. Better public transport also supports the Borough's long term economic growth.
- 11.48 Improving the connectivity, reliability, comfort, safety and security of services enables them to more strongly compete with motor vehicle journey times and contribute to a thriving local economy, town centres and local communities. It also contributes to achieving the "Right Mix" target of 50% of journeys in Greater Manchester being made by active or sustainable transport modes by 2040.
- 11.49 The Borough's public transport network links key local destinations and public amenities, but on some bus routes there are avoidable delays. Metrolink runs from Rochdale Town Centre south to Oldham and on to Manchester City Centre. Patronage since the line was completed in 2014 has grown significantly and is a key Bee Network asset for the local communities it serves, as well as inter-urban travel between Rochdale and Oldham Town Centres.
- 11.50 A quicker alternative for trips to and from the regional centre is the train using the Calder Valley Railway Line (Leeds to Manchester and beyond) with stations in the Borough at Mills Hill, Castleton, Rochdale, Smithybridge and Littleborough. Park and Ride is currently provided at Rochdale serving both Metrolink and rail passengers with some parking provision for rail passengers at the other stations. There are ambitions to increase this at other stations in the borough.
- 11.51 Bus services in the borough are a mix of local routes from town centres to suburban residential areas and rural communities with inter urban services providing links of varying frequency to Bury and Bolton, Oldham and Ashton, Rawtenstall and Bacup, Halifax and Manchester City Centre. These serve many locations and communities that do not have convenient access to Metrolink or the rail network but there are gaps in services to access commercial and employment areas particularly outside daytime working hours.
- 11.52 Some bus services interchange with the Metrolink and rail network and offer convenient transfer opportunities for passengers, but these need better promotion. Improvements through bus franchising and integrated ticketing is starting to address these, promoting

public transport as a competitive alternative to car travel as it becomes more affordable and reliable.

- 11.53 Public Transport links between Heywood / Castleton and Manchester will be enhanced through the development of Bus Rapid Transit corridor proposals along A58 and connecting Heywood to the Calder Valley Railway Line by the Tram-Train Pathfinder proposals to public rail passenger services as well as extending the East Lancashire Heritage Railway Line to Castleton. These proposals will help to drive economic growth in the borough.
- 11.54 Capacity Improvements to line speeds and journey times on the Calder Valley Railway Line between Manchester, Leeds and the town and city centres along the route to / from the Borough's Railway Stations will be supported including: -
- Continued delivery of measures to unblock delay and pinch points on the rail network;
 - Phased or full electrification of the Calder Valley Line;
 - Support for TfGM and rail Industry bodies in bringing the GM sections of the line to become part of the GM Bee Network;
 - Local initiatives and events to encourage off peak use of the Calder Valley Line.
 - Improving access, facilities and park and ride at the railway stations, Metrolink stops, and transport interchanges / hubs which contribute to economic growth, enhance community value and integrate with the Bee Active Network; and
 - Congestion Relief measures on A58 Littleborough to Rochdale, Heywood and Middleton and Milnrow Town Centres include Bus Priority and improved active travel links and provide shared mobility and travel choice options.
- 11.55 The Bee Network and the Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy provide proposals to connect the main town centres and major developments by public transport. This includes the Tram-Train Pathfinder linking Oldham, Rochdale Heywood, the Northern Gateway Growth Allocation and Bury. This will be supported by Rapid Transit links from the existing Metrolink network to Middleton and onward connections to the Atom Valley Growth Corridor (Northern Gateway and Stakehill). These proposals will provide a network linking existing and future employers to local customer markets and a source from workforces can be recruited.
- 11.56 Improving Bus Network Infrastructure will be key, with Bee Network proposals already progressing to link Rochdale, Oldham and Ashton under Lyne and Rochdale and Bury via Heywood. These projects along with Bus Service Improvement Programme (BSIP) measures will enhance bus journey times. Service and infrastructure improvements between Bury, Atom Valley, Heywood, Middleton and Oldham and potentially other inter urban routes will follow, alongside the phased delivery of development proposals in Atom Valley
- 11.57 Addressing pinch point delays and implementing local route improvements aim to improve the reliability of bus services. Recognised through bus franchising, a pipeline of local proposals will be identified and implemented to address delays and tackle this.
- 11.58 Eight GM routes in Greater Manchester have been identified by the GM Mayor to be run locally and become part of the Bee Network by 2030, including the Manchester –

Rochdale line. There are rail journey reliability shortcomings caused by a range of issues such as services being cancelled, running short or omitting stops as well as a historic lack of rail infrastructure investment. The recently formed Calder Valley Community Rail Partnership (CVCPR) is promoting the line to local community groups and potentially new rail users, in seeking to increase travel outside peak hours and strengthen local community affinity and “ownership” of the line.

- 11.59 Railway Stations are key gateways to town centres and local communities and although the Council has ambitions to improve park and ride provision, demand to access our stations by car will not be met. Railway stations in the borough are in sustainable locations therefore where appropriate could provide hubs offering convenient interchange with the wider Bee Network and incorporating shared transport first / last mile travel options alongside with cycling, walking and wheeling opportunities. These should also be available at Metrolink Stops and Transport Interchanges along with connecting infrastructure to provide convenient access for active travel modes.
- 11.60 Public Transport journeys in Heywood are significantly lower than other parts of the borough with journeys made by active travel or car. This is indicative of bus services not going where or when people want to go so do not meet the needs and expectations of local people. Bus priority proposals are included in the Heywood Town Centre element of the programmed Streets for All scheme, with the Tram Train Pathfinder Project proposals including the potential provision of a new stop at Broadfield. This would serve the Northern Gateway PfE allocation and be supported by first and last mile travel options to the new development for businesses / employers and residents.
- 11.61 The bus priority measures in Heywood Town Centre will include focus points for bus interchange so that passengers have identified locations to catch the bus or change services. This will be supported by clear signing and wayfinding. The proposals include measures giving greater priority to active travel modes and enhance public realm, reducing car dominance and giving people safer access to local shops and businesses. Streets for All proposals are also identified in the Middleton Town Centre masterplan.
- 11.62 There are several pinch points, congestion issues and delays that occur along A58 between Littleborough and Rochdale; to help tackle these the Smithy Bridge Residential Relief Road proposal will create a balanced road network on both the new and existing routes incorporating active / sustainable modes in line with Streets for All design principles. Part of the route will form the main access to the Roch Valley PfE allocation provided by a third party. The scheme will also align with the Spatial Priorities for Pennines and Rochdale, including those relating to planned flood alleviation works and protection and enhancement of the Roch Valley.

Strategic Road Network

- 11.63 This policy reaffirms the Council’s commitment to work in partnership with National Highways and other strategic bodies to minimise traffic growth on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and maximise the appeal of making trips by active and sustainable modes.

Policy T8 – Strategic Road Network

The Council will continue to work with National Highways, Department of Transport, Transport for the North, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and other stakeholders to deliver a vision-led approach to highways consistent with National Highways guidance and necessary improvements to mitigate impacts of increased traffic on the Strategic Road Network (SRN). It is expected that there will be early engagement with these organisations where proposals interface with the SRN.

This collaboration seeks to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the planning and delivery of interventions on the SRN and interfaces with the local network to accommodate the growth over the plan period. This is key to delivery of the PfE spatial strategy, the Atom Valley Growth Location and the Rochdale Local Plan vision.

Where sustainable transport measures form part of developments that interact or connect to the SRN, consideration should be given to ensure highway safety and network operation are not adversely affected

Locations where interventions may be required to tackle delays and congestion on the SRN include:

- i. M62 Junction 18 – Simister Island
- ii. M66 Junctions 2 and 3
- iii. M60 Junction 19, and
- iv. M62 Junctions 19 and 20.
- v. A627(M) Corridor.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-C4 – The Strategic Road Network

Reasoned Justification

- 11.64 The Strategic Road Network (SRN) will continue to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Collaboration is ongoing between National Highways, TfGM and Local Councils to ensure it operates as effectively and efficiently as possible and best contributes to sustainable economic growth across the borough and GM.
- 11.65 Even with the support of substantial investment in active travel and public transport networks to accommodate trips generated from future development such as the Atom Valley Growth Location, improvements to the already congested Strategic Road Network (SRN) will be necessary. Developers will be expected to contribute to proposals at levels proportionate to their impact on the network operation (both SRN and local roads). It is expected that public sector investment from GM sources and DfT / National Highways will support these and address the full impact.
- 11.66 National Highways are progressing proposals to ease congestion and reduce delays at M62 Junction 18 Simister Island. As Northern Gateway progresses, further works at adjacent junctions on the M66 and M60 Junction 19 west of Middleton will be required. Trips generated from other PfE allocations including Stakehill and Kingsway and local

brownfield allocations will lead to the need for investment in M62 Junction 20 and the A627(M) corridor even if congestion levels remain as they are now.

Local Highway Network

- 11.67 This policy outlines how the Local Highway Network will be enhanced to improve its operation, connectivity and safety to support existing and new development and key locations to drive growth.

Policy T9 - Local Highway Network

The Council will work to ensure that the Borough's highway network supports the local economy and operates efficiently, effectively and safely by:

- a. Development proposals that identify and implement suitable highway measures that mitigate the trips generated by their proposals including access to / from the highway network and contribute towards off-site mitigation works agreed with the council;
- b. Ensuring development proposals where appropriate provide appropriate access for service vehicles, cyclists, wheelers, pedestrians and access to public transport;
- c. Targeting investment in the Borough's highway network e.g. Smithy Bridge Residential Relief Road, Slattocks Roundabout improvements and Stakehill access improvements as outlined in the GM Transport Delivery Plan. These will address congestion, bottlenecks improving journey reliability and create options to improve active and sustainable travel;
- d. Constructing highways to an adoptable standard in accordance with Local Authority design criteria and Bee Network and Streets for All design guidance;
- e. Identifying, designating and signing suitable routes for commercial and freight vehicles to access local businesses, minimising conflict with residential communities, pedestrians and other vulnerable road users avoiding impact on local communities and sensitive land uses. Decisions must involve the local communities affected, interest groups, logistics and freight operators informally or through Freight Partnerships.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-C5 – Streets for All

Policy JP-C7 – Freight and Logistics

Reasoned Justification

- 11.68 It is essential that the transport implications associated with new development are fully considered at the planning application stage. Where a new development may lead to a significant increase in the need to travel, proposals should be supported by robust information on the implications particularly for the highway network and identify measures that mitigate any adverse impacts.
- 11.69 Developers will provide suitable access from their proposals to the existing transport network, including measures to enhance the local active and sustainable travel

network. Provision of new sections of highway or junction improvements will also be consistent with Streets for All design and Bee Network principles considering access, safety, bus priority and links to the existing network.

- 11.70 Many local businesses generate Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) trips to / from industrial and commercial areas and town centres. Travelling between these and the SRN, Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) should follow designated routes agreed with hauliers to minimise conflict and negative impacts on local communities and sensitive land uses. Agreements must be in place between businesses, hauliers, the Council and local communities. This will be a key issue on routes that have been or could in the future be subject to Streets for All measures and road space is re-balanced to improve active and sustainable transport. Some of these routes may still be required to allow access to some larger vehicles.

Maximising Local Transport Network Operation

- 11.71 This policy details the range of measures (many are technological) that could come forward to widen active and sustainable travel options, improve network operation provide travel information and tackle transport emissions. Some of these may require planning decisions.

Policy T10 - Maximising Local Transport Network Operation

Technological advancements in managing, maintaining and transport network operation continue to be developed, trialled and implemented where they are proven. This innovation will be encouraged where it delivers benefits in reducing delays, broadening journey choice, improving reliability and access to the Bee Network. These include:

- a. Demonstrable advances enhancing urban traffic management systems, satellite navigation, real time passenger information, variable message signing, wayfinding etc. to improve ease of travel for all journeys;
- b. Ensuring the transport network is increasingly safer and more secure for all users through proposals that contribute to the GM Vision Zero Strategy target to reduce fatalities and life changing injuries to zero by 2030. Initiatives and measures to tackle unacceptable and anti-social behaviour will be delivered on an ongoing basis.
- c. Promoting opportunities to take shorter and infrequently taken trips using shared travel modes (Car Clubs, Bike and e-Bike Hire Cargo and e-Cargo Bikes etc) through licenced, regulated schemes or demand responsive services (Local Link, Dial a Ride, Taxis etc.) operated by Zero or Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) and supported by charging infrastructure;
- d. Encouraging provision of Travel hubs linking public and shared transport and active travel. Railway Station and Metrolink Park and Ride facilities will provide local bus interchange, drop off facilities, and secure cycle storage and cycle hire opportunities along with electric vehicle charging points, e-bikes, e-scooters and parcel lockers;
- e. Introduction of driverless vehicles and emerging sustainable fuels, which have future implications for the transport network and new developments which will need to be accommodated in the future; and

- f. Supporting proposals to transport more freight by sustainable modes. This could be bulk goods and large loads by rail, waterways etc or short journey deliveries by Cargo Bikes and smaller vehicles for “first and last mile” deliveries in suitable locations.

The Council will continue its ongoing programme of maintaining footways, cycleways, drainage, signing, lighting, verges, public realm, roads and structures consistent with GM Streets for All Design Guidance.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-C1 – An Integrated Network

Policy JP-C5 – Streets for All

Policy JP-C7 – Freight and Logistics

Reasoned Justification

- 11.72 The future development and introduction of technological advances is anticipated to deliver a revolution in methods, options and innovations to manage the transport network. Where it is proven to be successful, measures will be introduced to tackle delays, reduce emissions, improve journey time reliability and safety of the network for all modes or provide more information to transport users to inform their journey travel choices.
- 11.73 Innovations are already being deployed in GM to manage traffic flows and disruption on the key route network, provide information on traffic conditions, availability of parking space, journey information and apps supporting shared transport schemes (car clubs, e-travel, hire schemes) or ticket product purchases. Advances in these will continue.
- 11.74 Enhancing transport network operational efficiency, live journey information provision and initiatives to enhance journey reliability can also reduce NO₂ and particulate emissions from traffic. This contributes to achieving emissions reduction targets and allows information to be electronically communicated to control or reduce use of the network at times when it is constrained or congested.
- 11.75 The Council will encourage initiatives to move goods by sustainable modes such as rail and waterways for larger loads and e-Vans and cargo bikes for smaller loads and local first and last mile deliveries. These may be from local retailers or larger consolidation centres where goods are delivered to a central location, and smaller clean vehicles distribute goods locally.
- 11.76 Technology providing travel information and mapping also assists active travel and public transport users. It can also assist in improving bus service punctuality tackling delays at bottlenecks or roadworks providing more reliable journeys. This may mitigate some network operation impacts caused in delivering GM CRSTS pipeline and other projects on the key route network and radial routes. It is also expected to assist vulnerable transport users feel safer in making sustainable and active travel journeys. More electric charging points need to be provided as the proportion of electrically powered vehicles increase. Charging point sites will need to be provided in areas where properties do not have driveways.

- 11.77 Provision of rental and shared mobility schemes are increasing and popular with some sectors of the travelling public. They are in demand for people who do not have access to a car. Shared Transport schemes will be encouraged providing alternative and modern forms of low and non-carbon travel (Car Clubs, Bike and e-Bike Hire, e-Scooter trials, cargo and e-Cargo Bikes etc) for “first and last mile” journeys. Schemes need to have clear local support, whether provided locally or are Greater Manchester operated schemes.

12. Development Management

- 12.1 In delivering new development in the borough, it is important that it is of the right quality and provides the infrastructure required to support it. The preceding policies set out more specific requirements in terms of the types of development and land use in the Borough to deliver our growth in a sustainable way. The policies within this section provide a list of requirements to apply to all developments along with the general approach to the provision of supporting infrastructure.

General Development Requirements

- 12.2 All development must take account of all the relevant policies within the Local Plan. However, there are a number of basic planning considerations that apply to all development and instead of repeating these in a number of policies within the Plan, they are set out in the policy below.

DM1 - General Development Requirements

All development proposals, including changes of use of land and buildings, extensions and alterations, will be expected to demonstrate that they:

- a. Are of high-quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area;
- b. Are compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents / users;
- c. Do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy;
- d. Mitigate against any impacts due to noise, air, dust, light and odour pollution, traffic generation or inadequate access, where such mitigation is identified as being necessary;
- e. Provide or enhance existing active travel routes which are safe, direct and encourage walking, wheeling and cycling. Where possible, these should connect to public transport stops and interchanges;
- f. Provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account the proposed use and location;
- g. Do not have an adverse impact on health, through its impact or the effect of existing problems e.g. land contamination or poor air quality;
- h. Provide, or demonstrate the availability of, the service and community infrastructure necessary to meet local needs e.g. local shops, community, leisure and sport facilities and provision of open space;
- i. Minimise opportunities for crime against people or property;
- j. Take account of ground conditions including unstable or contaminated land - where a potential risk exists, a survey should be carried out and any necessary remedial measures identified and carried out;
- k. Incorporate, where appropriate, high-quality landscaping schemes;

- l. Have taken account of drainage and considered the availability of water and wastewater infrastructure, any need for additional capacity and ensure no adverse impact on the existing utility services; and
- m. Respect natural features by conserving, restoring or enhancing biodiversity and minimising any adverse impact.

12.3 All new development will be expected to demonstrate that the relevant requirements within this policy have been taken into account. In some instances, more detail is included in relevant SPD's linked to the policies in this plan and national guidance.

Delivering Planning Contributions and Infrastructure

DM2 – Delivering Planning Contributions and Infrastructure

We will require developers to:

- 1. Provide, or contribute towards the cost of providing, any physical and social infrastructure that is needed because of proposed development; and/or
- 2. Mitigate the impact of development, through planning obligations and agreements, if the development would otherwise have an unacceptable negative impact.

The types of infrastructure, services and facilities that will be the subject of planning obligations includes:

- a. Affordable housing (Policy H3);
- b. Open space, sport and recreation provision and maintenance (Policy PE10);
- c. Biodiversity Net Gain (Policy G7);
- d. Health and wellbeing (Policy PE3);
- e. Education facilities (Policies PE8 and PE9);
- f. Community facilities (Policy PE6);
- g. Flood management infrastructure (Policy S4); and
- h. Other site-specific contributions that may be appropriate to a scheme e.g. off-site highway, active travel, public transport and access improvements.

Consideration will be given to the need to ensure that schemes remain viable whilst also taking into account the need for the contributions or infrastructure required to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms.

12.4 This policy requires contributions from developers towards infrastructure or measures to mitigate against the impact of new development. These contributions are often delivered through Section 106 agreements and seek to ensure that any requirements for infrastructure, services and facilities, as well as any impact on the environment, that arise from new development are met. National policy, including appropriate tests for these agreements, is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 12.5 Where necessary, SPDs and/or other guidance documents will be prepared to provide further explanation of the policies in this plan, and their application, good practice to be followed and the circumstances where mitigation, maintenance and other matters will need to be agreed. These documents will provide guidance on matters such as:
- When contributions may be needed;
 - The type and scale of contributions, taking account of the viability and deliverability of the scheme;
 - The circumstances when financial rather than direct provision will be required;
 - How financial contributions will be calculated; and
 - The form and timing of legal agreements.
- 12.6 In considering the extent of planning obligations, the Council will have due regard to the statutory tests set out in national guidance and the viability of the development. If an applicant considers that a scheme cannot fully support the required planning obligations, they should submit comprehensive and robust evidence on scheme viability and, where possible, this should be done through an open book approach to improve the review of evidence submitted and for transparency.
- 12.7 Viability changes over time and some schemes can take a number of years to be implemented. Therefore, where appropriate, the Council will incorporate a clawback mechanism into a legal agreement to ensure that additional mitigation or provisions are made if the development becomes more viable than originally assumed through the viability assessment.

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Local Centres

Reference	Site Name
LC1	Oldham Road/Kingsway
LC2	Milkstone Road, Rochdale
LC3	Milkstone Road/Maldon Street
LC4	Bury Old Road, Bamford
LC5	Manchester Road (48-54)
LC6	Bamford Precinct
LC7	Norden Village Centre
LC8	Cutgate Centre
LC9	Spotland Road
LC10	Shawclough Village Centre
LC11	Halifax Road, Hamer
LC12	Stephenson Square, Smallbridge
LC13	Milnrow Road, Newbold
LC14	Castleton Local Centre, Castleton.
LC15	Manchester Road/Queensway
LC16	The Strand, Kirkholt
LC17	Whitworth Road
LC18	Yorkshire street
LC19	Boarshaw Road
LC20	Alkrington Court, The Downs
LC21	Kirkway/Mainway, Alkrington
LC22	Manchester New Road/Kingsway, Alkrington
LC23	Mount Road/Kirkway
LC24	Rhodes Village Centre, Middleton
LC25	Lakeland Court, Langley
LC26	Wood Street, Langley
LC27	Nowell Road, Hollins
LC28	Birch Road/ Ramsden Road, Wardle
LC29	Newhey Village Centre
LC30	Argyle Parade, Darnhill
LC31	Grimshaw Lane, Middleton

Appendix 2: 2026 Parking Standards

Schedule of parking standards for the provision of car, cycle, motorcycle and disabled spaces in new developments and change of use proposals.

Development Type	Maximum Standard for Car Parking Provision	Minimum Standard for Cycle Space Provision	Minimum Standard for Powered Two Wheeled Vehicle Parking Provision
E(a): RETAIL			
Food Retail (<900m ²)	1 space per 25m ² Gross Floor Area (GFA)	1 secured, covered staff space per 150m ² (minimum of 2 spaces) + 1 secured, covered visitor space per 150m ² (minimum of 2 spaces)	Considered Individually
Food Retail (>900m ²)	1 space per 16m ² GFA	1 secured, covered staff space per 150m ² (minimum of 2 spaces) + 1 secured, covered visitor space per 150m ² (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 600m ² (min 2 spaces)
Non-Food Retail (<900m ²)	1 space per 25m ² GFA	1 secured, covered staff space per 150m ² (minimum of 2 spaces) + 1 secured, covered visitor space per 150m ² (minimum of 2 spaces)	Considered Individually
Non-Food Retail (>900m ²)	1 space per 22m ² GFA	1 secured, covered staff space per 150m ² (minimum of 2 spaces) + 1 secured, covered visitor space per 150m ² (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 900m ² (min 2 spaces)
Retail Warehouses	1 space per 45m ² GFA	1 space per 200m ² (min 2 spaces)	1 space per 900m ² (min 2 spaces)
E(b): FOOD AND DRINK			

Restaurants	1 space per 7m2 Public Floor Area (PFA)	1 secure, covered staff space and locker per 100m2 + 1 visitor space per 100m2	1 space per 280m ² PFA (min 2 spaces)
Cafes / Snack Bars	1 space per 6m2 PFA	1 secure, covered staff space and locker per 100m2 + 1 visitor space per 100m2	1 space per 280m ² PFA (min 2 spaces)
E(c): FINANCIAL & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES			
Banks, Building Societies, Betting Offices, Estate & Employment Agencies	1 space per 35m2 GFA	1 secure, covered staff space and locker per 50m2 plus changing and showering facilities + 1 secure covered visitor space per 500sqm	Considered Individually
E(d): INDOOR SPORT, RECREATION			
Indoor Sports or Recreation	1 space per 25m2	1 space per 250m2 (min 10 spaces)	1 space per 1,000m2 (min 2 spaces)
Gymnasium	1 space per 25m2 PFA	1 space per 250m2 (min 10 spaces)	1 space per 880m2 (min 2 spaces)
E(e): MEDICAL OR HEALTH FACILITY			
Medical or Health Facility	1 space per 2 FT Staff Equivalent + 4 spaces per Consulting Room	1 secure, covered space & locker per 4 FT Staff Equivalent (min 2 spaces) plus shower and changing facilities	1 space per 40 FT Staff Equivalent (min 2 spaces)
E(g): BUSINESS			
Stand Alone Offices	1 space per 40m2	1 secure, covered staff space & locker per 100m2 plus shower and changing facilities + 1 visitor space per 500sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 1,400m2 (min 2 spaces)
Business Parks	1 space per 40m2	1 secure, covered staff space & locker per 100m2 plus shower and changing facilities +	1 space per 1,400m2 (min 2 spaces)

		1 visitor space per 500sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	
Research & Development	1 space per 32m2	1 secure, covered staff space & locker per 100m2 plus shower and changing facilities + 1 visitor space per 500sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 1,400m2 (min 2 spaces)
Call Centres	1 space per 32m2	1 secure, covered staff space & locker per 100m2 plus shower and changing facilities + 1 visitor space per 500sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	1 space per 1,400m2 (min 2 spaces)
Light Industrial	1 space per 100m2	1 secure, covered staff space & locker per 100sqm (min 2 spaces) plus shower and changing facilities	1 space per 1,400m2 (min 2 spaces)
E(f): CRECHE, DAY NURSERY OR DAY CENTRE			
Creche, Day Care, Day Nursery.	1 space per FT Staff Equivalent.	1 secure, covered space and locker per 10 FT Staff Equivalent + 1 space per 10 children (minimum of 2 spaces)	No Standard
B2: GENERAL INDUSTRY			
General Industry	1 space per 60m2	1 secure, covered staff space and locker per 300m2 plus shower and changing facilities + 1 visitor space per 500sqm	1 space per 2,800m2 (min 2 spaces)
B8: STORAGE/ DISTRIBUTION			
Storage / Distribution Warehousing	1 space per 100m2 All lorry parking should be accommodated within the site	1 secure, covered staff space and locker per 300m2 plus shower and changing facilities + 1 visitor space per 500sqm	1 space per 4,000m2 (min 2 spaces).

C1: HOTELS			
Hotels (Additional Leisure / Conference facilities considered separately)	1 space per Bedroom (including staff)	1 secure, covered space and locker per 4 FT Staff Equivalent plus shower and changing facilities + 2 space per 10 bedrooms (min 2 spaces)	2 space per 40 bedrooms (min 2 spaces)
C2: RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS			
Hospitals	Determined through Transport Assessment	1 secure, covered space and locker per 4 FT Staff Equivalent plus shower and changing facilities + 1 space per 10 beds (short stay)	Determined through Transport Assessment
Care / Nursing Homes	1 space per 4 beds	1 space per 20 beds (min 2 spaces)	1 space per 160 beds (min 2 spaces)
Sheltered Accommodation	1 space per 3 beds	1 space per 20 beds (min 2 spaces)	1 space per 160 beds (min 2 spaces)
Residential School/college or training centre	1 space per 2 staff + 1 space per 4 beds	1 secure, covered space and locker per 5 FT Staff Equivalent plus shower and changing facilities + 1 secure, covered resident space per 2 students + 1 visitor space per 20 residents (min 2 spaces)	Determined individually
Student Accommodation	1 space per 3 beds	1 secure, covered space per 4 FT Staff Equivalent + 1 visitor space per 20 beds (min 2 spaces)	1 space per 160 beds (min 2 spaces)
C3: RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS			
Single Bedroom Houses	1 space per dwelling & 0.25 per dwelling allowance for unallocated visitor spaces	1 secure, covered cycle storage space per bedroom (If no garage or secure area is provided within curtilage of dwelling)	No Standard
2+ Bedroomed Houses within Town Centres	1 space per dwelling & 0.25 per dwelling allowance for	1 secure, covered cycle storage space per bedroom (If no	No Standard

	unallocated visitor spaces	garage or secure area is provided within curtilage of dwelling)	
2+ Bedroomed Houses outside Town Centres	2 spaces per dwelling, (not including a garage)	1 secure, covered cycle storage space per bedroom (If no garage or secure area is provided within curtilage of dwelling)	No Standard
Single Bedroom Apartments	1 space per dwelling & 0.25 per dwelling allowance for unallocated visitor spaces	1 secure, covered cycle storage resident space per unit and 1 visitor space per 10 units (min 2 spaces)	Considered Individually
2+ Bedroom Flats & Apartments within Town Centres	1 space per dwelling & 0.25 per dwelling allowance for unallocated visitor spaces	1 secure, covered cycle storage resident space per unit and 1 visitor space per 10 units (min 2 spaces)	Considered Individually
2+ Bedroom Apartments / Flats outside Town Centres	2 spaces per dwelling	1 secure, covered cycle storage resident space per unit and 1 visitor space per 10 units (min 2 spaces)	Considered Individually
Sheltered Housing	1 space per 3 dwellings / bedrooms + 1 space per 2 FT Equivalent Staff	1 space per 6 residents & 1 space per 4 FT Equivalent Staff	No Standard
C4: HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMO)			
Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) and Sui Generis HMOs	0.5 unallocated spaces per bedroom. Alternative provision levels to be considered on a case-by-case basis e.g. in sustainable locations.	1 secure, covered cycle storage space per bedroom (If no garage or secure area is provided within curtilage of dwelling)	Considered Individually
F1: LEARNING AND NON-RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS			
Adult Training Centre	1 space per FT Staff Equivalent.	1 secure, covered space and locker per 10 FT Staff Equivalent (min 2 spaces for students)	1 space per 40 FT Equivalent staff (min 2 spaces)

Schools (Primary & Secondary)	1.5 spaces per Classroom	1 secure, covered space and locker per 4 FT Equivalent Staff + 1 space per 5 pupils	1 space per 40 FT Equivalent staff (min 2 spaces)
Higher or Further Education	1 space per 2FT Equivalent Staff + 1 space per 15 students	1 secure, covered space and locker per 10 FT Equivalent Staff + 1 space per 5 students	1 space per 80 FT Equivalent staff + 1 per 600 students
Special Education Needs (SEN) Schools	Parking provision for proposals for Special Education Needs (SEN) Schools will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.	Parking provision for proposals for Special Education Needs (SEN) Schools will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.	Parking provision for proposals for Special Education Needs (SEN) Schools will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
Art Gallery, Museum, Exhibition Hall or Library	1 space per 30m2 PFA	1 secure, covered space and locker per 4 FT Equivalent Staff + 1 space per 100m2 PFA (min 2 spaces)	1 space per 1,200m2 PFA (min 2 spaces)
Place of Worship	1 space per 5m2 PFA	1 secure, covered space per 50m2 PFA (min 2 spaces)	1 space per 200m2 PFA (min 2 spaces)
Library	1 space per 30m2 PFA		
Law Courts	Parking provision for proposals for law courts will be assessed on a case-by case basis.	Parking provision for proposals for law courts will be assessed on a case-by case basis.	Parking provision for proposals for law courts will be assessed on a case-by case basis.
F2: LOCAL COMMUNITY USES			
Outdoor Sport or Recreation	1 space per 2 people expected to use the facility at any one time (typical peak occupancy) Considered on an individual basis depending on type of facility	10 spaces plus 10% of vehicle spaces	Considered Individually
Halls or Meetings Places	1 space per 5m2 PFA	1 secure, covered space and locker per 4 FT Equivalent Staff + 1 visitor space per 50m2 PFA or 1 per 60 seats (minimum of 5)	1 space per 200m2 PFA (min 2 spaces)
Swimming Pools/Ice Skating Rinks	1 space per 25m2 PFA	1 secure, covered space and locker per 4 FT Equivalent Staff + 1	

		visitor space per 50m2 PFA or 1 per 60 seats (minimum of 5)	
MISCELLANEOUS / SUI GENERIS			
Railway Station, Bus Station & Tram Stops	Considered Individually	Minimum of 10 spaces per station. Tram stops considered individually	Considered Individually
Theatres	1 space per 5 seats Adequate turning / loading facility for a coach or 16.5m HGV.	1 secure, covered space and locker per 10 FT Equivalent Staff + Greatest of 1 per 40sqm or 1 per 60 seats /capacity	Considered Individually
Car Showrooms	1 space per 50m2 (internal showroom)	1 secure, covered space and locker per 10 FT Equivalent Staff	Considered Individually
Open Car Display Areas	1 space per 100m2	1 secure, covered space and locker per 10 FT Equivalent Staff	Considered Individually
Car Workshops	1 space per 20m2	1 secure, covered space and locker per 10 FT Equivalent Staff	Considered Individually
Car Wash	2 spaces for first 70m2 then, 1 space per 30m2. 4 standing spaces per wash	1 secure, covered space and locker per 10 FT Equivalent Staff	No standard
Cinema, Bingo Hall, Casino or Music/ Concert Hall	1 space per 8 seats	1 secure, covered space and locker per 10 FT Equivalent Staff + Greatest of 1 per 40sqm or 1 per 60 seats /capacity (min 2 spaces)	1 space per 320 seats (min 2 spaces)
Dance Halls (not Night Clubs)	1 space per 22m2 PFA	1 space per 220m2 (min 4 spaces).	1 space per 880m2 (min 2 spaces)
Drinking Establishments (e.g. Public Houses, Wine Bars etc)	1 space per 6m2 PFA	1 space per 140m2 PFA (min 2 spaces).	1 space per 280m ² PFA (min 2 spaces)
Stadia / Spectator Seating	1 space per 18 seats + 1 coach parking space per 1,000 seats (Min standard)	1 space per 10 FT Equivalent Staff + greatest of 1 per 40m2 or 1 per 60 seats /capacity	1 space per 600 seats (min 2 spaces)

Fast Food Drive Through	1 space per 8.5m ² Public Floor Area (PFA)	1 space per 100m ² PFA (min 2 spaces)	1 space per 280m ² PFA (min 2 spaces)
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Disabled Car Standards

Total Number of General Parking Spaces Provided	Minimum Standard of Disabled Car Parking Provision to be Provided. (in addition to the general car parking provision)
Below 12 spaces	10% of total capacity
12 to 200 spaces	3 bays or 6% of total capacity (whichever is the greater)
Over 200 spaces	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity

Electric Vehicle (EV) and Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) Standards

Type of Development	Charging Infrastructure Standard
Residential Dwellings	For every dwelling with allocated car parking, at least one parking space shall be provided with an active electric vehicle charge point
Residential apartment buildings with more than 10 associated parking spaces	For every dwelling with allocated car parking, at least one parking space shall be provided with an active electric vehicle charge point plus passive charging provision for all remaining parking spaces
Non-residential buildings, residential institutions, secure residential institutions and hotels with more than 10 parking spaces	10% of spaces to have access to an electric vehicle charge point (Active Provision) and a further 10% to have passive charging provision

Car Parking

The car parking standards comply with the maximum levels set out in National Guidance although for some use classes, the standards are slightly more restrictive to reflect local circumstances.

Disabled car parking

These are based on recommendations in a Department of Transport Advisory Note on Parking for Disabled People.

Cycle parking

The cycle parking standards are slightly higher than the level of parking provision suggested in the National Cycling Strategy to reflect the high priority of cycle provision in the Council's Accessibility Hierarchy.

Powered two-wheeled vehicles parking

These standards generally allow for 2.5% of maximum car parking provision

Appendix 3: Transport Assessment, Transport Statement and Travel Plan Thresholds

The Council will require Transport Assessments (TA) and Travel Plans (TP) for:

- a. Residential developments of 80 units or more;
- b. All schools and Further Education Institutions (including extensions);
- c. Developments located in, or having an impact on, Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA);
- d. Areas where the Council has defined initiatives or targets to reduce traffic, restrict development growth, promote public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling or measures to promote low emissions and tackle poor air quality;
- e. Areas where the local transport infrastructure is inadequate e.g. sub-standard roads, poor pedestrian / cycle access or public transport provision; and
- f. Areas where additional development traffic is likely to increase accidents or conflicts between motorised and non-motorised users, particularly children, the elderly or people with impaired mobility.

We will also expect developments to be supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) and Travel Plan (TP) if forecast trips exceed the indicative thresholds set out in DfT Guidance on Transport Assessments or any of the following thresholds:

- a. 100 or more vehicle movements per day (24 hours);
- b. 60 or more person trips in any peak hour (between 07-00 & 10-00 and / or 16-00 & 19-00);
- c. 30 or more vehicle movements in any hour;
- d. More than 20 Heavy Goods Vehicles (over 7.5 tonnes) movements per day;
- e. Any goods vehicle movement between midnight and 6am;
- f. Any significant abnormal loads; and
- g. 50 or more car parking spaces are proposed.

We will require a Transport Statement for smaller developments that exceed the guidance on Transport Assessment thresholds or:

- a. Generate 50 to 99 vehicle movements per day (24 hours);
- b. Generate 30 to 59 person trips in any peak hour (between 07-00 & 10-00 and / or 16-00 & 19-00);
- c. Generate 20 to 29 vehicle movements in any single hour;
- d. Generate up to 20 Heavy Goods Vehicles (over 7.5 tonnes);
- e. Propose 10 to 49 parking spaces; or
- f. Consist of 50 to 79 residential units.

Appendix 4: Accessibility standards / targets (see policy T5)

Table 1: Accessibility Standards/Targets

From	Residential	Employment Uses	Offices	Key Leisure Facility	Children's Play / Local Open Space	Formal Outdoor Sports Facilities	Public Transport Interchange	Bus Stop
To								
Residential	-	30 mins by PT including walk to / from stop	-	20 minutes by PT including walk to / from stop	LAP < 100m walk (1 min) LEAP < 400m walk (5 mins) NEAP < 1km (15 mins)	20 mins by PT including walk to / from stop	-	< 400m
Employment Uses	30 mins by PT including walk to / from stop.	-	-	-	-	-	-	< 400m
Offices	To be decided	-	-	-	-	-	< 400m	< 400m
Key Leisure Facility	20 minutes by PT including walk to / from stop	-	-	-	-	-	-	< 400m
Children's Play/ Local Open Space	LAP < 100m walk (1 min) LEAP < 400m walk (5 mins) NEAP < 1km (15 mins)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Rochdale Borough Local Plan
July 2026

Formal Outdoor Sports Facilities	20 minutes by PT including walk to / from stop	-	-	-	-	-	-	<400m
Public Transport Interchanges / Bus Stations	-	-	-	Within 10 mins walking time.	-	-	-	Integral to the facility.
Bus Stops	< 400m	< 400m	< 400m	< 400m	-	< 400m	Integral to the facility.	-
Railway Stations	< 800m, if not < 400m from bus stop or PT interchange.	< 800m, if not < 400m from bus stop or PT interchange -	< 800m, if not < 400m from bus stop or PT interchange	Within 20 mins walk time	-	-	Linked by sustainable means of travel.	< 50m
Town Centres	-	-	< 300m of Town Centre boundary	< 300m of Town Centre boundary.	Within the Town Centre	-	Within the Town Centre	Within the Town Centre
Local Centres	< 400m	-	Within the local or town centre boundary (depending on size)	-	-	-	-	< 50m
Local Shops	< 400m	-	< 400m	-	-	-	-	< 50m
Health Centres	< 400m	-	-	-	-	-	-	< 50m
Hospitals	30 minutes by PT (including walk to / from stop)	-	-	-	-	-	-	< 50m from main entrance
Primary Schools	< 400m	-	-	-	-	-	-	< 400m
Secondary Schools & Post 16 Colleges	30 minutes by PT (including walk to / from stop.	-	-	-	-	-	-	< 400m

Table 2: Accessibility Standards/Targets

From	Local Centres	Local Shops	Health Centres	Hospitals	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools & Post 16 Colleges
To						
Residential	< 400m	< 400m	< 400m	-	< 400m	30 minutes by PT (including walk to / from stop)
Children's Play / Local Open Space	-	-	-	-	< 400m	< 400m
Formal outdoor sports facilities	-	-	-	-	< 400m	< 400m
Bus stops	<50m	<50m	<50m	< 50m from main entrance	<50m	<50m
Local Centre	-	-	Individual consideration	-	-	-
Railway Station						Individual consideration
Town Centres			Individual consideration			

The above table shows our standards / targets on how accessible (or close) various major land uses should be each other. Some of these standards are those set in best practice or national guidance, others have been set where it is reasonable for the two land uses to be accessible to each other. Where an entry is left blank, we don't think there needs to be (or it makes any sense to have) a standard / target. It is expected that these thresholds are a guide and that developments should strive to meet as many of them as is reasonable. These will vary according to the nature and location of new development.

Rochdale Borough Council
Number One Riverside
Smith Street
Rochdale OL16 1YH

 rochdale.gov.uk

 01706 647474

 council@rochdale.gov.uk

