

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**  
**21/01/2020 at 6.00 pm**



**Present:** Councillor McLaren (Chair)  
Councillors Taylor, Toor, Jacques, Curley, Hamblett (Substitute),  
Price and Surjan  
Canon Jean Hurlston – Co-opted Member

Also in Attendance:

Brian Enright	Principal Regeneration Officer
Dr. Henri Giller	Independent Chair Oldham Safeguarding Adult Board
Subnum Hariff-Khan	Library and Information Manager
Andrew Hunt	Strategy Partnerships and Policy Manager
Sheena MacFarlane	Head of Libraries, Heritage & Arts
Anna da Silva	Project Director, Northern Roots
Andrew Sutherland	Director of Education and Early Years
Sian Walter-Browne	Principal Constitutional Services Officer

1           **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harkness.

2           **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

3           **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

4           **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

5           **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019 be approved as a correct record.

6           **MINUTES OF THE HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019 be noted.

7           **UPDATE ON THE SEND INSPECTION RE-VISIT**

The Board gave consideration to a report of the Director of Education, Skills & Early Years which gave Members an update on the outcome of the SEND re-visit which took place on the week of September 26th, 2019. Due to the election there had been a delay in the final publication of the letter, and it had gone live to the public on December 23rd, 2019.

Members were informed that the Local Authority, together with the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) ('Local Partnership') had responsibility under the Children and Families Act 2014 for an effective SEND provision.



An Inspection by Ofsted & the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in 2017 found that arrangements were not satisfactory and required the Council and CCG to co-produce with parents/carers a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) by 2 March 2018 on five recommendations.

In September 2019 an Ofsted/CQC re-visit took place and three of the five recommendations were signed off as completed. Two recommendations required further action, and these were being worked on at present. It was important to note that the revisit letter praised the Local Partnership in significantly taking forward all the recommendations, including the two outstanding recommendations. The report summarised the key points made in Ofsted CQC revisit and set out the strategy to take forward the remaining recommendations.

The Board were reminded that there were five areas in the original written statement of action. The inspection team said that sufficient progress had been made against three areas, with two remaining outstanding. Members noted there were many very positive comments and one of the key areas that had received positive commendation was leadership of change by the local partnership.

Robust processes had been put in place in respect of the remaining areas to ensure the necessary progress was made.

Members sought and received clarification on:

- Managed moves – if a young person had an EHCP, there would not be managed move. For those with SEN support, there would be monitoring and evaluation, and a move would only happen with the support of the family and young person. Occasionally, a short-term measure of a move of 2/3 days in a different environment was used. Among secondary schools, clusters had been set up and pastoral support was being provided.
- Improvement in ECHP's – 1200-1300 reviews were undertaken in 12 months by the schools. The Council was working closely with schools and SENCO's and all Plans should meet the required standards within 12 months.
- Increased exclusions at Key Stage 4 – some new Heads had started with a zero-tolerance policy, which had caused an upturn in the figures. This had now been resolved and the rates were back where they were expected to be.
- Minimising disruption caused by change – if the move was likely to be disruptive, it would be avoided. A move would only be used if it was appropriate in a particular case.

- Speech and language therapy – communication was a priority. Work was being undertaken with other organisations to avoid duplication, increase capacity and develop strategies. The best successes were where the family was totally engaged. A report on this would be brought to a future meeting.
- Support for parents and children with new languages – the Council was working with the Harmony Trust on immersion programmes and there was a lot of good work happening.
- Bringing those children permanently excluded back into the schools system – initially they would go to Kingsland and would then go back into school via the Fair Access Programme. Children would usually be back in school within 12 weeks.
- Does a named person have an overview of EHCP's – every family with an EHCP has a named Council officer to contact in addition to the SENCO. Quality control audits were now undertaken every month and a robust system was in place.
- Inconsistency between schools – much less than in 2017-18. There were around 8500 pupils with SEN support and schools were willing to share and learn. SENCO meetings had a very high percentage of attendance.

Members noted the progress that had been made and requested that an update be brought to the Board in January 2021.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board commended the Local Partnership for their efforts made between 2017- 2019 which had resulted in a positive Ofsted re-visit letter that commended the transformational changes and improvement in outcomes achieved over the two years
2. The Overview and Scrutiny Board requested an update report in January 2021.

8

**ALEXANDRA PARK ECO-CENTRE AND NORTHERN ROOTS**

The Board received a presentation which updated Members on the progress made regarding the Alexandra Park Eco-Centre and Northern Roots.

In relation to the Alexandra Park Eco-Centre, Members noted that the current depot was reaching the end of its useful life and would be replaced by the new ECO Centre. The presentation showed the Board the proposed layout of the new Centre and how it may look when completed. The Board also received details of the technical options being considered both to make the Centre water and energy efficient and to demonstrate the potential of these options to the visiting public.

Members asked for and received clarification on:

- Accessibility and public transport links – the Centre would be fully accessible. There would be facilities for cycling and the tram was 15 minutes' walk away. Work would be undertaken with Highways to ensure it was easy to walk to. Unlike the depot, which was fenced off, the new Centre would link into the park and could be accessed from all sides of it.
- Would the Biomass unit use Oldham's green waste and could it be rolled out to other parks – the Biomass unit would use Oldham's green waste and the anaerobic digester could also take green waste, though this would be a small demonstrator model. There was potential to take this out to other parks.
- Rainwater harvesting from the lake – it may be possible to use lake water and there would be collection and storage tanks on site. The rainwater would be filtered and would not be used for drinking water.
- What facilities the Centre would open with – everything would be up and running from Day 1.
- When the centre would break even – consultants were currently working on this and it was projected to pay for itself in 5-6 years. There would be revenue savings going forward.
- Green waste capacity – 600 tons for this site, which would produce excess energy to be sold back to the grid. There proposals were specific to the ECO-Centre and other parks may be considered later.

In relation to the Northern Roots project, Members were updated on progress and the four main areas of current work.

The Board noted the project covered a large area and there were complex land and planning issues to be addressed. It was intended that the initial planning application would be lodged this year.

Members were informed of the potential of the Green and Blue Strategy, which would inform the business strategy when the costs and potential savings were fully analysed. The business case and model were being developed and the aim was to licence local operators and individuals to deliver parts of the development. The Board noted this would be a genuine business and the right mix of commercial, environmental and social outcomes would need to be identified.

The Growing Hub, to be relocated as part of the ECO-Centre project, would form the first basecamp from which the Northern Roots project would expand, and activities would be piloted on site to draw people in and enable meaningful consultation and testing of business models.

The Board was informed that funding was complex. The legal and governance structure had been scoped and different options were being evaluated. Members were reminded that these options would be the subject of a workshop on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>

February, at 5.30pm and that papers would be available before the workshop.



It was noted that the project had received a lot of local and national attention as it was trail-blazing. The proposals were relevant to many Councils looking to become carbon-neutral and make best use of their open spaces, and were being looked at by many national organisations.

Members asked for and received clarification on the following:

- Communications and advertising of the project – communications had just been launched and responses would be evaluated.
- Measuring success – the expected outcomes would be set out clearly so success could be measured and demonstrated. Successes in the project would also feed into other Council targets

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The progress made to date regarding the Alexandra Park Eco-Centre and Northern Roots be noted.
2. The date and time of the workshop to consider legal and governance structures, on Monday 3rd February, at 5.30pm, be noted

9

**GENERATION OLDHAM UPDATE (INCLUDING COALESCCE)**

Members gave consideration to a report of the Green Oldham Lead which provided an update on the Generation Oldham community energy programme, including the Interreg Europe COALESCCE project.

Members were reminded that the Generation Oldham programme was the Council's community energy programme, which had been launched in autumn 2014.

In 2016, Oldham Community Power was established, a Community Benefit Society led by three volunteer directors from the community and with a representative from the Council on the Board. Over the summer of 2016, Oldham Community Power installed 220kW of solar PV on the roofs of five schools and a community centre. The majority of the Society was owned by residents and local organisations such as Action Together, with the Council holding a minority shareholding of £100,000. Under the rules of the Community Benefit Society, each Member held only one vote at the Annual General Meeting, so no large shareholders could unduly influence the direction of the Society. Members were informed that scoping was currently underway to establish what Phase 2 of the solar PV installation scheme may look like.

In January 2018, the Generation Oldham programme was augmented by the Interreg Europe funded COALESCCE project. COALESCCE stood for Community Owned And Led Energy for Security, Climate Change and Employment, and the project aimed to build the community energy sector in Greater

Manchester and seven other partner EU regions – in Germany, Spain, Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania. Oldham Council was the Lead

Partner for the project, the concept for which came out of the Generation Oldham programme.



The Board noted Oldham Council had won the national Community Energy Local Authority Award in 2018 for its support for community energy locally, nationally and internationally.

Members asked for and received clarification on the following: Effect of Brexit on the partnership – Brexit may lead to energy price rises. OCP provided the schools with a 20% discount on grid prices, so the schools would still be making savings.

Were the savings in paragraph 1.7 per year – they were made collectively over the last few years.

Were the problems referred to in paragraph 1.5 ongoing – the problem had been with a wrong meter. It was now resolved but had taken two years and MP involvement.

The offer for small community groups – the directors of OCP were volunteers and there was a lack of capacity. Additionally, installations had to be viable and the company would look for ways to help that to happen.

How Members could assist – OCP needed more volunteers and capacity. There would be events around the Green New Deal Strategy and the Leader had requested a Citizen's Panel which would increase publicity.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. The success of Oldham Community Power in consolidating its position after the Phase 1 installations be noted.
2. The ongoing work to scope a potential Phase 2 of OCP's scheme be noted.
3. The success of the COALESCCE project in influencing Greater Manchester's environmental strategy and delivery plan at the highest level be noted.
4. A further report would be received after the Citizen's Panel had been set up.

**ADULTS SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT**

The Board gave consideration to a report of the Independent Chair, Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board, which provided Members with the Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report, April 2018 – March 2019. The Independent Chair attended the meeting and spoke to the report.

Members noted that Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board was a partnership of organisations whose aim was to safeguard adults who were vulnerable to, at risk of or were experiencing abuse and neglect. As a statutory body the primary role of Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board was to strategically lead adult safeguarding within Oldham. The Board was also required to assure itself that organisations and agencies across Oldham

were effectively ensuring the safety and promoting the interests of adults who are vulnerable to abuse and neglect.



Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board was comprised of both statutory and non-statutory members. It was required to produce and publish a strategy every three years which outlined the priorities of the board, and an annual business plan which detailed how it would achieve its aims.

The Annual Report evaluated the effectiveness in achieving the aims in 2018-19 and identified future plans and where strategy would focus and develop going forward.

Members were informed that this was the second year of a three-year plan. The first year had developed the sub-group structure. The report showed the volume of activity and approximately 50% of the concerns expressed became a statutory agenda. Some of the others became non-statutory activity and the high volume was expected to increase in the short-term.

Two important issues were outlined. The first involved the substantive reviews of the quality of deployment of staff, as an early indication had been needed of how Oldham Cares was performing. The reviews had produced 22 recommendations for change, as set out on page 65 of the agenda.

The second issue was the need for the continuing business demand to be met. It was anticipated that, when robust systems were fully in place, more people may be identified as being in need of support.

Member sought and received clarification on:

The most significant recommendations – Recommendation 1, which was a work in progress and implementation would lead to this outcome. A more-robust Business Support Unit would enable the sub-groups to be more self-managing and remove the need for the Executive Group.

Impact of lack of DoLS signatories – a new group of staff was being formed to address the new statutory duties. The necessary Guidance had been delayed and was now expected between March and April.

**RESOLVED that:**

1. Members noted the priority areas of work for 2018/19.
2. A further update be brought to the Board in twelve months.

11

**OLDHAM COUNCIL LIBRARIES UPDATE**

The Board gave consideration to a report of the Head of Heritage, Libraries and Arts which provided an update on Oldham Council Libraries' Performance, highlighting the outreach work to reach non-users and disengaged readers.

Members were informed that Oldham Libraries vision was to be among the best library services in the country; a service that

was synonymous with high quality, creative and innovative service provision.



**Oldham**  
Council

The vision would be achieved by ensuring Oldham's libraries were:

- rooted within, and responsive to, the communities served
- welcoming, animated and flexible spaces
- offering a wide range of free accessible books, information and digital resources, and cultural experiences for all ages
- staffed by skilled, knowledgeable and happy staff

As a statutory service it was committed to being open and accessible to all residents and users. Finite resources and the on-going need to find efficiencies presented challenges to the ability to reach everyone in the borough. Only through the systematic and effective use of data, partnership working and process review could the Library Service ensure it continued to offer a comprehensive and efficient service as required by the 1964 Act.

The report highlighted the Library Service's outreach activity which aimed to reach and engage with non-users of the service, those that were traditionally hard to reach or those that had disengaged from the service.

Members were informed that the use of library cards enabled statistics to be assembled. These could be drilled down to Ward level and could be correlated with community data. The data that could be gathered and used was limited by GDPR restrictions and staff capacity.

The census in 2021 would be wholly online and this would be used as an opportunity to facilitate and offer assistance to those that needed it, and consult with those who were not usually library users.

The impact of the removal of fines continued to be monitored and early positive indicators showed that there had been an increase in library membership figures since fines were removed in August 2019, compared to the same period last year.

As the service had evolved, some provision could be accessed without a library card. The extensive trail-blazing activities, including those to reach out to the homeless and the development of Libraries of Sanctuary, in addition to those tackling loneliness and social isolation were highlighted to and welcomed by the Board. The continuing and developing work with children and families was also considered and praised.

Members asked for and received clarification on the following:

- Were buildings fit for purpose – all buildings were accessible but not all could offer the full library experience. There was an upgrade programme in place to make libraries more attractive.



- Was the technology sufficient to deal with the demands of the census – it was accepted the census would be a challenge. The aim was to ensure the maximum take-up for those who could not complete it at home and there would be a capacity issue to address.
- Could user statistics be broken down into adults and children, and book users by library – this could be done.
- Plan for “At Home” service – this was under review and there would be further consultation. The aim was to work with partners to grow the service.
- Bringing in homeless people to share their life experience – this would be looked into.
- Welcoming refugees - £45,000 was available to be shared between Bolton, Oldham and Manchester, largely for activities to engage communities.
- Engagement of older groups – the provision of adult story-walks was in development.
- Encouragement of local writers and artists – there were already events and groups that encouraged local creativity, including Live at the Library and a short festival for young people with unfinished works. There were active reading and writing groups and many young volunteers. Oral history was encouraged informally, through the various groups and the Local Studies Library could go out and collect stories.

The Board offered its congratulations to Subnum Hariff-Khan on being awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Year’s Honours List.

**Resolved that:**

1. The update be noted.
2. A report to be brought to a future meeting on the relationship with schools.
3. The Board’s congratulations be passed to the Service on its development.

12

**GENERAL EXCEPTIONS AND URGENT DECISIONS**

The Board gave consideration to a report advising of a decision related to ‘Funding of Voluntary Sector Infrastructure’ which had been authorised under Rule 16 (General Exceptions) of the Council’s Constitution.

**RESOLVED** that the report and authorisation granted under Rule 16 (General Exception) be noted.

13

**KEY DECISION DOCUMENT**

The Board gave consideration to the latest published Key Decision Document.

**RESOLVED** that the Key Decision Document be noted.

14

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board gave consideration to the latest Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme.

**RESOLVED** that the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme be noted.



15

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the date and time of the next Overview and Scrutiny Board to be held on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 at 6.00 p.m. be noted.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.45 pm