

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD
16/01/2018 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor McLaren (Chair)
Councillors Dean, Goodwin (Vice-Chair), Williams, Harkness
(Substitute) and J Larkin

Also in Attendance:

Dami Awobajo	Head of Business Intelligence
Ray Ward	Executive Director, Corporate and Commercial Services
Andrew Hunt	Strategy Partnership and Policy Manager
Sarah Whittle	Community Services Innovation Project Officer
Peter Wood	Head of Strategic Assets and Facilities Management
Tom Stannard	Director of Economy and Skills
Caroline Lee	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Business Support
Sheena McFarlane	Head of Heritage, Libraries and Art
Subnum Hariff-Khan	Library and Information Manager

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Toor and Williamson.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Dean declared a personal interest on item 20 – Smart Project, by virtue of his appointment as a member of the Unity Partnership Board.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

5 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 28th November 2017 be approved as a correct record.

6 **MINUTES OF THE HEALTH SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 19th December 2017 be noted.

7 **MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
PERFORMANCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY SELECT
COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee meeting held on 21st November 2017 be noted.

8 **MINUTES OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY (GMCA) ECONOMY, BUSINESS GROWTH AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Economy, Business Growth and Skills Scrutiny Committee meetings held, respectively, on 8th September and 13th October 2017 be noted.

9 **MINUTES OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY (GMCA) HOUSING, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Housing, Planning and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings held, respectively, on 7th September and 18th October 2017 be noted.

10 **MINUTES OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY (GMCA) CORPORATE ISSUES AND REFORM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Corporate Issues and Reform Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17th October 2017 be noted.

11 **GENERATION OLDHAM UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a progress report of the Strategy Partnership and Policy Manager on the Generation Oldham community programme which had been established in 2014.

It was reported that all objectives agreed at the commencement of the scheme had been achieved. A new set of objectives had been developed as part of a Green Oldham Strategy.

It was reported that Solar PV systems were installed on all Phase 1 sites of the scheme as follows:

- Blackshaw Lane Primary School – Royton district
- Mather Street Primary School – Failsworth & Hollinwood district
- Medlock Valley Primary School – West Oldham district
- Beever Primary School – East Oldham district
- Holt Street Community Centre (NEON Hub) – East Oldham district
- Whitegate End Primary School – Chadderton district

Phase 1 required £250,000 from the sale of community shares which had been launched in June 2016 and had run until mid-August 2016, in which Oldham Community Power (OCP), Oldham's community energy scheme, had raised around £35,000 from Oldham residents and £15,000 from a Pioneer Share Holding taken by the Council. The Council had provided a secured bridging loan for the remainder, to enable Phase 1 installation to go ahead, on the basis that this loan would be repaid from a second share or any loan amount remaining

unpaid after a period of two years (summer 2018) would be converted into normal shares.



Oldham
Council

The second share offer had been launched in April 2017 and would run until summer 2018. So far OCP had repaid £70,000 of the Council loan and further promotions in Spring 2018 were planned to raise further funds.

Future phases for OCP could include further Council buildings such as libraries and secondary schools (including independent schools), and also the roofs of industrial buildings and other privately owned sites across the borough.

The Council and OCP were in discussion with Electricity North West, who might be able to source some funding from the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM) for a pilot scheme using remotely controllable solar PV for grid balancing activities.

Members sought and received clarification / commented on the following points:

- Decreasing profitability of solar panels and opportunities for a Phase 2 of the programme – It was explained that, initially, Phase 2 was going to be funded entirely by the Council. However, Electricity North West had expressed an interest in supporting the initiative. If this offer was successful, it would be possible to implement Phase 2 and 3 of the programme simultaneously.
- Regeneration programme and future housing projects and opportunities to incorporate this energy scheme – It was explained that community energy schemes were more suited for commercial projects.

RESOLVED that:

1. The progress on the Generation Oldham programme be noted.
2. A progress report be presented in January 2019.

12

STREET CHARTER

Consideration was given to a progress report of the Community Services Innovation Officer on the implementation work that had been taking place following agreement by Council in March 2017 to adopt the “Who Put That There” Street Charter for Oldham which sought to make Oldham more accessible for visually impaired and partially sighted people.

The author of the report was in attendance to present the information and address the enquiries of the Committee.

A working group had been formed to look at the action plan that had been written 12 months ago to refresh it and to embed it in the Council’s business. The group was formed by Officers from different Council’s services such as Regeneration, Licensing, Policy, Environment, Resident First, representatives of the charity Henshaws and Elected Members. The aim was to promote the Street Charter through a strong communication campaign and incorporate its main principles into the Town

Centre Master Plan, the regeneration process for Oldham's Town Centre.

The group would meet every six months to evaluate the progress against the reviewed action plan.

Members sought and received clarification / commented on the following points:

- Obstructions on pavements and Enforcement – An effective campaign had been conducted a few years ago and this had led to significant actions. It was agreed that this could be added in the action plan as a further strand of work.

RESOLVED that:

1. The progress report on Street Charter be noted;
2. The progress outlined at page 70 of the report be noted;
3. A progress report be presented in September 2018.

13

REVIEW OF TOWN CENTRE PARKING STRATEGY

The Committee gave consideration to a report of the Head of Strategic Assets and Facilities which provided an update on the Town Centre Car Parking Strategy previously submitted in December 2016.

The author of the report and the Director of Economy and Skills were in attendance to present the information and address the enquiries of the Committee.

It was explained that, due to the closure of a number of car parks, the car parking capacity in the town centre had been reduced by 55% in the last four years. To mitigate this issue, several measures had been put in place in the last year:

- The construction of a new surface car park at Hobson Street that provided 104 car parking spaces. This opened on 9th January 2017.
- A temporary car park was opened at Princess Gate, Oldham Mumps, on 19th June 2017 currently providing 262 car parking spaces.
- A temporary car park at the old leisure centre site currently providing 240 car parking spaces;

It was also reported that, to assist with traffic enforcement measures and to encourage residents to use more public transport, bus lanes enforcement had been introduced to three main roads in the Borough. Furthermore, work was being undertaken with Strategic Transport Planning Infrastructure Section to submit a bid for grant funding to improve the on street parking across the town centre. It was also highlighted that the regeneration programme of the town centre might also lead to the loss of parking spaces. However, this would be balanced by a new multi-storey car park that would be constructed as part of the Town Centre regeneration plan to meet future demand.

The Committee sought and received clarification / commented on the following points:

- Promoting Park and Ride schemes in Oldham – It was explained that Oldham was different from other town centres as the traffic flow was less intense. The success of Park and Ride schemes depended on the publicity given by Transport for Greater Manchester as well as local signposting and advertising. Conversations were ongoing between the Council and Acute Trust at Royal Oldham Hospital to look at the implementation of a Park and Ride scheme that could connect the town centre and the hospital.
- Outcome of the parking review in the town centre and private car parking provision – It was explained that private car parking provision had been considered in the assessment of parking spaces available in the town centre. Furthermore, the Committee was informed that there were significant areas of land in the town centre that could be dedicated to public or private car parking provision.

RESOLVED that:

1. The content of the report be noted.
2. An update on the Town Centre Parking Strategy be presented in conjunction with the progress report on the Town Centre Master Plan in November 2018.

14

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Consideration was given to a progress report of the Head of Benefits and Business Support on the roll out of Universal Credit Full Service in Oldham.

The author of the report was in attendance to present the information and address the enquiries of the Committee.

It was explained that the roll out of the full service Universal Credit (UC) from April 2017 was a new entirely online based system and claimants had to apply for and manage their claim on line. Currently, there were 8,709 Universal Credit claimants in Oldham (as at November 2017). These figures had been doubled since June 2017 when Oldham had 4,334 Universal Credit claimants.

Since the introduction of UC, the Housing Benefit caseload had reduced as new claimants claimed UC rather than HB. The number of Council Tax Reduction (CTR) claims had also reduced and this could be because residents now needed to make a separate claim for help towards paying Council Tax. Under the HB system, HB/CTR and Free School Meals (FSM) entitlement was dealt with via one claim to the Council. Residents eligible for UC now needed to claim this support directly from the DWP and also claim CTR and FSM separately from the Council. The Council had worked to raise awareness of this for residents in a number of ways including launching radio campaigns and working closely with the DWP to ensure full entitlement to benefits were claimed. As at December 2017, the Council had a CTR caseload for claimants who were in receipt of UC of 2,568 which was an increase of 1,910 since the

introduction of UC at the end of April. This caseload figure was less than the overall number of UC claimants in the borough as not everyone will be liable for Council Tax or entitled to CTR as well as those residents who might be unaware that a separate claim needed to be made.

A number of changes to UC had been announced in November 2017 by the Chancellor of Exchequer in the Autumn Budget. Consequently, from February 2018, the seven day waiting period for UC claimants (no payment at all was made for the first week of a new claim) would be abolished and all new claimants would be eligible from UC from the first day they claimed it. Other changes were outlined in the report.

RESOLVED that:

1. The content of the report be noted;
2. The date to present a progress report on Universal Credit be agreed following the visit of the Committee to the Department of Work and Pension.

15

OLDHAM COUNCIL LIBRARIES SAVINGS AND IMPACT UPDATE

Consideration was given to a progress report of the Head of Heritage, Libraries and Arts on the impact of budget savings to Oldham Council Libraries. The report also outlined the service's current challenges and developments.

The author of the report and the Library Information Manager attended the meeting to present the information and address the enquiries of the Committee.

It was reported that following a period of service review, a restructure had taken place which had led to the achievement of savings, recruitment of volunteers and decentralisation of the service. An issue had been identified with regards to residential homes and a plan was in place for the Library Service to enhance the opportunities to engage with the residents. Following work with the Trade Unions, it had been possible to move successfully to single staffed libraries in Greenfield, Northmoor and Chadderton.

The summary of the Library and Information Service Strategy 2020 was outlined as well as the statistics showing the Oldham's Library Service position against the other local authorities in Greater Manchester. New initiatives and projects, funded by successful bids to external funding streams were presented: Reading Friends, Live@theLibrary, Comics and Cosplay: Caring for Young Minds and other initiatives that showcased innovative practice in Oldham Libraries and raised the profile of the service nationally.

Members sought and received clarification / commented on the following points:

- Was the Book Fund still being maintained? – It was explained that the Book Fund was still in use and it had been rather popular in the last few years.
- Oldham’s Library Services was performing well compared to other local authorities in Greater Manchester – It was explained that there was a strong focus to make the Library Service more accessible to residents.
- Can the use of volunteers in libraries be increased? – It was explained that the recruitment of volunteers was an ongoing activity and that resources were dedicated to this task; currently, teenage volunteers were being recruited to give young people opportunity to experience work in the libraries.
- E-book offer in the libraries – It was explained that Oldham Libraries were already offering e-books and e-magazines which were available to download free from the web-site.
- Libraries, capital programme and small scale intervention – It was explained that Libraries were part of the Resident First programme. Therefore, training and resource were currently being considered in order to support the Council with new ways of providing services to residents. The next project would look at the library environment.

RESOLVED that:

1. The content of the report be noted.
2. A progress report be presented in January 2019.

16

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

Consideration was given to the Work Programme of the Board for the current Municipal Year. The Chair informed the rest of the Committee of the following points:

- Following a conversation with the Planning and Infrastructure Team, the workshop on the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) would take place in June 2018 due to the revised timetable for GMSF.
- The workshop on the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) would need to be rescheduled after 19th February 2018. This was necessary as a review of Children’s Services would take place at the end of this month.
- Communication with the Department for Work and Pension was in progress to find suitable dates for a visit to the Job Centre Plus in Oldham.

RESOLVED that the update on the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2017/18 be noted.

17

GENERAL EXCEPTIONS AND URGENT DECISIONS

The Board gave consideration to one decision authorised under Rule 16 of the Council’s Constitution concerning Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority’ levy.

RESOLVED that the General Exception Decision concerning Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority’s be noted.

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT

The Board gave consideration to the latest Council's Key Decision Document published on 21st December 2017.

RESOLVED that the content of the Key Decision Document published on 21st December 2017 be noted.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they contain exempt information under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and it would not, on balance, be in the public interest to disclose the reports.

SMART PROJECT

Consideration was given to a commercially sensitive report of the Executive Director Corporate and Commercial Services which informed the Board of a project concerning Unity Partnership Ltd.

The Board Members raised questions on some of the matters outlined in the report and commented on various aspects of its content. The report author was in attendance and addressed the Members' questions and comments.

It was agreed that a progress report would be presented at the next meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED that:

1. The content of the report be noted.
2. A progress report be presented at the next meeting of the Board, on 6th March 2018.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board take place on Tuesday 6th March 2018 at 6pm as per the 2017/18 Municipal Calendar.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.39 pm