

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD
26/11/2019 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor McLaren (Chair)
Councillors Taylor, Toor, Jacques, Curley, Hamblett (Substitute)
and Price

Also in Attendance:

Mark Hardman	Constitutional Services
Fiona Carr (item 9)	Principal Homelessness Strategy Officer
Victoria Wood (item 9)	Housing Strategy Team Leader
Andy Hunt (item 10)	Green Oldham Lead

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Harkness and Surjan.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

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 22nd October 2019 be approved as a correct record.

6 **MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY SELECT COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Performance and Value for Money Select Committee meeting held on 3rd October 2019 be noted.

7 **ADVERTISING A-BOARDS AND SIGN POLICY REVIEW**

The Board received a report noting that the Advertising 'A' Board and Signage Policy had been approved by the Council on 12th December 2018 after consideration by the Board. The report further responded to a request for an update in respect of the Policy and action taken.

It was noted that this is a relatively low level issue as evidenced by the few occasions on which matters are reported to the Council. Since December 2018, the Environmental Health Team had dealt with five service requests relating to the

positioning of 'A' boards on either the public footway, pavement or street. On each occasion the Council Officer has been able to discuss the positioning with the business owner and resolve the situation without the need for formal action.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and no further reports on this issue be required.

8 **YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN - ANNUAL REPORT**

RESOLVED that consideration of this item be deferred.

9 **CARE LEAVERS HOUSING COMMITMENT**

The Board received a report advising of proposals to ensure that Oldham care leavers who become homeless receive the support of full rehousing duties up to the age of 25 years. The proposal had arisen following review of the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy which, among other matters, included a strengthening of the role that housing played as part of the Corporate Parenting offer. Work being undertaken within the Council and Greater Manchester around care leavers was also considered, including how homelessness legislation is applied and how this positive action sets Oldham apart from many other local authorities. The Board was asked to consider giving their support to the proposals and to the new approach to enhancing the support available for care leavers through the homeless service provision in Oldham.

Young people aged 18-20 years who were formerly in care are, under homelessness legislation, automatically in 'priority need' and are owed a duty to be provided temporary and potentially permanent accommodation if they become homeless. Care leavers aged 21 years and over do not have automatic priority need, the housing authority having to take account of the effect that being in care may have had on them in assessing whether they should be deemed as vulnerable. If found to be vulnerable, they are owed the same duties as 18-20 year olds for the provision of temporary and potentially permanent accommodation, unless they are found to have become intentionally homeless.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a new duty on local authorities to provide Personal Adviser support to all care leavers up to the age of 25 years, if they wanted to access this facility. This is different from the homelessness legislation which the proposals now sought to address. In addition, the Greater Manchester (GM) Care Leavers Trust was working to develop a 'core offer' across GM for all care leavers across several areas including free travel, homelessness prevention, education, employment, training and health offers. While the Council was not obliged to adopt this core offer, it was suggested as good practice in terms of supporting young people as a Corporate Parent.

Looking to prevent homelessness in the first instance, a Member queried whether there was a policy for or any provision of assisted living for those who felt unable to live on their own when leaving care or who may lack a support network. It was confirmed that there was a programme of supported lodgings, supported accommodation with a 24 hour staffing support and dispersed properties with floating support. It was acknowledged that more promotion of the lodging provision was required, including the seeking of more lodging hosts. In response to a further query it was advised that a 'staying put' arrangement was offered that would enable fostered young people to remain with foster carers beyond the age of 18 years. However, it was noted by a further Member that there was a push back against 'staying put' as it resulted in foster carers losing income.

The Chair noted the reported financial implications of the proposal and queried whether there had been any indication of young people coming into the Borough specifically to take up the local offer. A very limited number of such cases were acknowledged, possibly as a result of young people who had been placed into the Borough having become settled in the area and wishing to remain once reaching the age of 18 years. In such cases the young people were referred back, or 'reconnected', to the local authority with which they had a previous connection.

RESOLVED that -

1. the report be endorsed and the proposals which would ensure that care leavers receive the support of full rehousing duties up to the age of 25 years be commended to the Cabinet;
2. Officers report back to this body further when there are significant developments in respect of the rehousing duties owed or made available to care leavers up to the age of 25 years that the Overview and Scrutiny Board may need to consider.

10

CLIMATE CHANGE - STRATEGY

The Board received a report summarising the work undertaken on the forthcoming Oldham Green New Deal Strategy that followed from the resolution of the Council at the meeting held on 10th July 2019 for Oldham to become the first Council in the UK to become a "Green New Deal Council" and which included a target for the Council and the Borough to be carbon neutral by 2025 and 2030 respectively. The Council had committed to develop a new "Oldham Green New Deal" strategy and delivery plan setting out how these carbon neutrality targets will be met, as well as initiatives aimed at maximising the economic benefit for Oldham residents and businesses.

The Council had further declared a 'Climate Emergency' at the meeting held on 11th September 2019, pledging to engage staff, residents, partners and elected members in the creation of a new strategy to replace the Council's current Climate Change Strategy which ends in 2020. As a climate change strategy

should sit alongside a wider 'green new deal' approach, it had been proposed to develop a single strategy encompassing a range of green issues and developments under the umbrella of the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy.



The submitted report presented a headline vision of "Making Oldham a greener, smarter, more enterprising place to be" and several objectives and pledges that could form the basis for the scope and content of the Green New Deal Strategy. It was noted that while the Council could lead, a co-operative effort between the Council, strategic partners, residents, schools and businesses was needed if maximum benefit for Oldham was to be achieved. The Council was therefore committed to hold a Citizens' Assembly and develop a strategic programme of communications to ensure the maximum engagement with all stakeholders across the Borough.

The Board further received a presentation in support of the report which considered the implications of rising energy costs for the Council, households and the Borough as a whole, the value of the Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and Services sector in Oldham and Greater Manchester, and a number of projects and programmes including building a Local Energy Market, building solar farms, supporting community energy and utilising coal mine heat. The presentation concluded that "taking back control" of energy supply and environmental quality meant the developing of strong, confident and prosperous communities in charge of their own destiny and, mindful of the budget challenge, that investment in the green economy could reduce costs and pay dividends.

Members noted that while housing policies would be an important issue, for example keeping green spaces and having high eco-standards for buildings, there was no specific reference to housing development in the pledges. In response it was acknowledged that housing was subject to basic standards in building regulations but noted that work was being undertaken on projects such as developing new heating systems and that the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework was proposing all new developments should be carbon neutral by 2028. It would be difficult to enforce requirements on private developers, but the Council could be clear as to what it would welcome and lead by example by setting conditions on developments on Council owned land.

The Board was advised that a Citizens' Panel had taken place in summer 2019, with several theme groups being supported by specialist advisers to support residents in developing a local action plan thereby enabling citizens to create and develop their own solutions. Responding to a query as to extending the use of Citizens' Panels, the Board was advised that Engagement Officers were writing to residents inviting their involvement in a generic Citizens' Panel.

A Member queried the deliverability of what were big pledges, noting that some of the identified problems appeared to be

insurmountable. Acknowledging these issues needed to be addressed, it was important to manage expectations, for example what might be achieved for people who were renting their homes. The Chair noted the breadth of the pledges, suggesting that some might be considered in further detail, noting for example that an item related to air quality was to be considered at the following meeting which might be connected to a related pledge. Further pledges would be considered at workshop sessions and be incorporated into future Board Work Programmes.

RESOLVED that the breadth and ambition of the Oldham Green New Deal approach, and the commitment of the Council to this ground-breaking approach be noted.

11

COUNCIL MOTIONS

The Board gave consideration to a Motion which had been referred from the meeting of the Council held on 6th November 2019.

“Clean Air Outside Our Schools”

“This Council notes that:

- Our residents, staff and children are exposed to unsafe levels of pollutants outside of schools at peak times in the morning and afternoon.
- Road transport is one of the biggest contributors to particulate matter and pollution in Oldham Borough.
- Epidemiological studies show that symptoms of bronchitis in asthmatic children increase in association with long-term exposure to pollutants, as well as stunting lung growth.
- Only a handful of schools across the country are trialling ‘No Vehicle Idling zones’ yet they bring many health benefits.
- Air pollution poses a serious threat to the health and development of young people. While many of the policy interventions to rectify this problem would have to come from central Government or the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan, this Council can do more and needs to be proactive on this issue.
- That there should be No-Vehicle-Idling zones around schools across the Borough.

This Council resolves to:

- Review the work done by No-Vehicle-Idling nationally in other local authorities and work this into Oldham’s action plan for No-Vehicle-Idling Zones.
- Implement No-Vehicle-Idling Zones, around as many primary schools in the Borough as possible, by the end of 2022.
- Work closely with schools that are part of the scheme to inform parents and carers of the No-Vehicle-Idling Zones.

- Encourage local businesses to sponsor green walls on school buildings and tree planting near schools and the appropriate cabinet member include this in their action plan.”

The Chair noted that an item on air quality was expected for the following meeting of the Board and some of the issues in the Motion might be considered in further detail at that point or in workshop sessions.

RESOLVED that issues raised within the Motion be addressed in an item on air quality to be considered at the next meeting and in connection with the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan when that Plan is received by the Board.

12 **KEY DECISION DOCUMENT**

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

RESOLVED that the Key Decision Document be noted.

13 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

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

Further to the submitted Work Programme, Members were asked to note that

- (a) further work was being undertaken on the Oldham Town Centre Masterplan and a request had been made to defer this item from the January 2020 meeting;
- (b) it had been confirmed that the Safeguarding Adults Annual Report 2018/19 would be available for consideration at the meeting in January 2020; and
- (c) the Work Programme for the March 2020 meeting would require further consideration in order to best manage the business listed across the Work Programmes of all three Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme and further reported matters be noted.

14 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED that the date and time of the next meeting to be held on Tuesday, 21st January 2020 at 6.00 p.m. be noted.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.15 pm