

POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15/06/2021 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor McLaren (Chair)
Councillors Brownridge, Curley, Hobin and Williamson

Also in Attendance:

Joanne Betts	Principal Officer, Transport and Highways Policy
Jonathan Downs	Strategy, Partnerships and Policy
Liz Drogan	Head of Democratic Services
Matthew Drogan	Business Intelligence
John Garforth	Trading Standards and Licensing Manager
Mark Hardman	Constitutional Services Officer
Andrew Hunt	Strategy Partnerships and Policy Manager
Abdul Jabbar MBE	Cabinet Member for Finance and Low Carbon
Elaine Taylor	Chair of Licensing Committee
Richard Banks	Transport for Greater Manchester
Christine Wood	Constitutional Services

INFORMAL MEETING

The Chair referred to recent guidance, which had indicated the restricting of the number of people who gather indoors. The Chair also referred to the previous regulations, that had temporarily removed the legal requirement for Local Authorities to hold public meetings in person, that had expired and had not been renewed.

The Committee was advised that it had been proposed and agreed that under the current circumstances, the meeting would be held remotely and on an informal basis, to consider business which had been listed on the Committee's agenda.

The Committee was also advised that the Leader of the Council had provided an assurance that any recommendations made at the meeting, in respect of items to be considered at the Cabinet, would be reported to and considered by the Cabinet.

1

APPOINTMENT OF SHADOW VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED – That Councillor Brownridge be appointed Shadow Vice-Chair of the Committee for the municipal year 2021-2022.

It was noted that the appointment would require formal approval in due course.

2 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Neil Crabtree.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Personal and prejudicial declarations of interest were received from Councillor Hobin in relation to agenda items 12 and 14. Councillor Hobin did not take part in consideration of the items.

4 **URGENT BUSINESS**

No urgent items of business had been received.

5 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No public questions had been received for consideration.

6 **MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on Tuesday, 9th March 2021 be noted.

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

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the remote meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee held on Thursday, 11th March 2021 be noted.

8 **MINUTES - GMCA CORPORATE ISSUES AND REFORM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Corporate Issues and Reform Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 9th February 2021 be noted.

9 **MINUTES - GMCA ECONOMY, BUSINESS GROWTH AND SKILLS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the remote meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Economy, Business Growth and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Friday, 5th February 2021 be noted.

10 **MINUTES - GMCA HOUSING, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the GMCA Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 4th February 2021 be noted.

GREATER MANCHESTER CLEAN AIR PLAN

The Committee was advised that this item had been deferred until the meeting of the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee scheduled on Tuesday, 27th July 2021 due to advanced negotiations which were still on-going with Central Government.

The Committee was further advised that relevant documentation would be made available in the public domain on Thursday, 17th June 2021 for consideration at a future meeting of the GMCA.

GM MINIMUM LICENSING STANDARDS

A report and presentation were received to advise the Committee of the findings of the consultation on Greater Manchester's (GM's) Minimum Licensing Standards (MLS), which had closed in December 2020. The report also covered some of the local impacts of any future policy.

The Committee was reminded that Hackney and Private Hire services are a hugely important part of the transport sector: collectively they provide more journeys for residents and visitors than Metrolink or local rail, and represent a significant part of the economy, employing over 20,000 people across the city region. MLS for all GM Local Authorities represented a means of achieving a range of shared goals, which were outlined within the report. Also outlined within the report was the overall approach that GM looked to providing.

It was reported that the proposed MLS covered the following main areas:

- Drivers;
- Vehicles;
- Operators;
- Local Authorities; and
- Roadmap to zero emission capable vehicles (ZEC)

Details in relation to each of the above were outlined within the report. Securing the above ambitions would require a rolling, progressive programme of reform, with several elements to be designed, developed, agreed and implemented over time.

The Committee was advised of the findings on the GM MLS consultation which had taken place between October and December 2020. Nearly 1700 responses had been received with 59% of responders being from the public, 21% from private hire drivers and 14% from hackney drivers. Details of the headline findings from the consultation were outlined within the report. The comments of the Council's Legal Services Department were also outlined within the report.

The Committee was further advised that officers were currently working through the proposals and consultation responses in order to make recommendations later in the year. Some of the proposals were already in the statutory guidance which had to

be implemented by the end of the year, for example, emissions were covered in the GM Clean Air Plan.



Oldham
Council

Members were reminded that Oldham would still be operating as one of 10 separate GM Councils, but as one with a range of shared goals for safe, visible and high-quality licensed vehicles. Further reports would be brought before the Committee for consideration.

Members were also advised of the decision of the Licensing Committee on 8th June 2021 when it had been resolved that vehicles that reach the upper age limit before the closure of the funding opportunities be extended until 31st December 2021, to allow drivers to apply for grants to upgrade non-compliant vehicles and that consideration of the vehicle colour policy had been deferred. The Committee was also advised that a vehicle would not be changed due to colour.

A discussion took place around the consultation and proposals in which the following points were made:

- It was queried why Oldham had fewer responses to the consultation in comparison to other authorities. The point was acknowledged but no significant explanation was known. All drivers had received the same information and been sent multiple emails with links etc. Paper copies of the consultation had been requested by some Hackney Carriage Drivers, either as part of a group, association or on an individual basis, and these had been provided.
- The issue of cross-border Private Hire was raised and how drivers that did not comply with local regulations could be addressed. The Committee was advised that there was no current legislation to deal with this 'loop hole' and that lobbying of the Government was still taking place to address this issue. Good communications to customers regarding this issue was suggested, such as a communications messaging system promoting the GM 'brand' and advice that if a GM vehicle was not used the local authority could not vouch for the licence or vehicle, as the Authority had no powers to enforce local regulations.
- The purpose of the anticipated £20 million funding becoming available was queried. In response it was advised that the money would be likely just for vehicles requiring compliant engines linked to the emissions requirements of the Clean Air Plan. Such grants would be available only to those with non-compliant vehicles. It was advised that financing options were being looked into for costs that may be associated with other requirements.
- It was queried if vehicle and driver standards were likely to change. The Committee was advised that this was likely and there would be reporting on developments at a future meetings.

RESOLVED – That the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the findings of the GM Minimum Licensing Standards consultation.

13

COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN 2021-2022

The Committee received a report and presentation updating on the draft Covid Recovery Plan 2021-2022 which was attached to the report at Appendix 1, requesting comment prior to progression of the Plan to a meeting of the Cabinet and then Full Council. Oldham's current Corporate Plan had expired in December 2020 and whilst work to refresh that Plan had been due to be completed by summer 2020, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic this had no longer been viable. It had therefore been agreed by Cabinet that a Covid-19 Recovery Strategy would be developed to act as an interim Corporate Plan until at least September 2022.

The Committee was advised that building on the learning so far, and anticipated events, a comprehensive Recovery Strategy had been developed which would help to shape Oldham's approach and vision for the next 18 months, whilst continuing to respond to the pandemic as an ongoing critical incident. The consultation process undertaken to develop the Plan was outlined, along with the six key priority focus areas within the Plan as follows:

1. Driving equality;
2. Investing in quality housing;
3. Championing a green recovery;
4. Creating and protecting jobs and supporting businesses;
5. Prioritising education and skills; and
6. Promoting health and wellbeing and supporting the most vulnerable.

The Committee was further advised that each of the focus areas would form a key strand of the Covid-19 Recovery Plan, with individual actions attached to each priority area and that the Plan would reflect the difficult and challenging anticipated times ahead and opportunities arising as recovery from the pandemic takes place in Oldham. The Plan would also set out how the 'new normal' could be embraced to build a stronger local economy, increase community resilience and public participation, support the local health system, and most vulnerable residents.

It was further reported that the Council's annual business planning process would be the mechanism to assure delivery against the Recovery Plan actions and that quarterly reporting via the Corporate Performance Framework would be provided against identified actions. The Framework would also be redeveloped to ensure oversight of the key performance metrics relating to the agreed priorities as well as to ensure effective service of business usual activity, with an annual performance report detailing progress against the Plan priorities also being produced.

The Recovery Strategy would be launched following approval of the Recovery Plan by the Council, ensuring that the priorities were embedded across Team Oldham which would include creating a full communications and engagement programme across stakeholders and residents.

A discussion took place around the Strategy in which the following points were made:

- The extent of Council control over Plan targets was questioned, noting that the Council did not control land supply for building, did not currently build Council houses, could not control quality employment opportunities etc. The point was acknowledged, but the objectives around, for example, around housing were taken from current housing strategies. Whilst acknowledging that job opportunities might not necessarily be what the Council might want them to be going forward, it was necessary to develop opportunities to attract quality jobs.;
- The ambitions of the Council for several years to keep land for 'quality' employment was noted, but concern was expressed that the Council had then let these go for warehousing type developments. It was acknowledged that Oldham was in competition with other Greater Manchester areas that might appear more attractive. An undertaking to provide feedback as to what Oldham could do to address this was given.
- It was noted that the Priorities listed could not be argued against, but the matters behind these such as the Action Plan and performance indicators were the ones to ensure delivery for local residents. Things such as community engagement were in the Council's hands and needed to be undertaken. It was confirmed that such engagement had been undertaken in developing the Plan and would continue in the long term.
- In considering the housing stock, it was noted that whilst the Council might take action to address poor standards in the private rented stock, that issues recurred with new landlords: such circumstances reinforced poverty and deprivation.
- The need to improve on communications to promote Oldham as an aspirational place to live was commented upon. Young people might leave the Borough for educational purposes but, it was suggested, they did not return. The benefits of the Borough, including house costs, access to countryside, travel connections etc were not, it was suggested, promoted enough.

It was noted that several issues considered had a Greater Manchester (GM) dimension, and work to influence GM

strategies that impact on Oldham was being pursued, along with lobbying of government, the GM Mayor etc.

Returning to targets and monitoring, the nature of these was queried. Members were advised that some could be considered against regional or national indicators. Others would require some qualitative and quantitative work to determine appropriate measures. Further considering community engagement, in the form of encouraging self-help, the voluntary sector and encouraging groups to undertake activity on their own, it was noted that a lot of work had been undertaken in, for example, approaches to poverty, that could be considered in this regard.

It was noted that to manage or provide oversight of the whole Plan would be difficult to do, and it was suggested that Members may be able to look at specific elements where input from the Committee might assist. It was acknowledged that there were various means to consider progress of delivery, such as through a particular focus on particular themes or one Member of the Committee taking responsibility for a priority area.

RESOLVED - that

1. The Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the Covid-19 Recovery Plan 2021-2022; and
2. The Chair and nominee Vice Chair meet with Officers to discuss monitoring or oversight to report to the next meeting of the Committee.

14

GM 2040 TRANSPORT STRATEGY SUB-STRATEGIES

A report and presentation were submitted to the Committee to update and consult on a number of sub-strategies that are being developed to support the GM2040 Transport Strategy. The Committee was advised that the Streets for All Strategy: A Summary, as attached to the report at appendix 3 should not now be considered at the meeting due to the updated timetable and would be presented to the meeting of the Committee in September 2021.

The Committee was further advised that the Updated GM2040 Strategy documents had been approved by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in 2021 which had included a refreshed version of the long-term, statutory Local Transport Plan (LTP) – the GM Transport Strategy 2040; a final version of Our Five-Year Transport Delivery Plan (2021-2026) and ten new Local Implementation Plans (one for each GM Council).

It was reported that to support the overarching LTP documents, a suite of GM2040 sub-strategies were being developed which set out more detailed policies, principles and guidance on how GM intends to deliver the 2040 ambitions. The sub-strategies, which were at varying stages of development included:

- Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy;
- Streets for All Strategy;

- Local Bus Strategy;
- Rapid Transit Strategy; and
- Freight and Logistics Strategy

Details of the sub strategies as detailed above were outlined within the report and appendices considered the following

- Appendix 1 – Note on the GM Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy
- Appendix 2 – Draft GM Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy
- Appendix 3 – GM Streets for All Strategy: A Summary (now to be considered at a future meeting of the Committee).

The Committee was advised that additional reports would be presented to the Committee when available, that timelines were being constantly updated, and that an additional meeting of the Committee may be required to accommodate the timeline/decision making process.

A discussion took place around the Strategies in which the following points were made:

- A query was made regarding proposed Community Charging Hubs, issues of security and areas of terraced housing being raised. The Committee was advised that options addressing these and other issues would need to be more fully explored. A commitment that funding would be made available via the CAP for taxi and private hire vehicles for potential taxi charging hubs. It was recognised that the issue of charging without off street parking was one of the main issues, along with the shortage of land in some areas on which to provide such services. It was also recognised that it would be an offence to place a charging cable on a pedestrian area/pavement.
- The Committee was advised of examples of informal resident sharing schemes that residents had organised themselves. Clarification was sought on the current number of charging points in Oldham. The Committee was advised that there were approximately 15 double headed charging points, mostly in Oldham Town Centre but with coverage elsewhere in the Borough also..
- The role of Housing Associations and other landlords was raised, as it had been suggested that changes would be required to the meter and fuse box to install a vehicle charging facility and that while residents were not permitted to contract the required work privately, it was suggested that a Housing Association would not carry out the required work. It was recognised that it would be important to work with Housing Associations and Landlords to ensure the required work was carried out to

make properties charging facility compliant and a consideration of this issue should be undertaken. It was also suggested that issues such as this could be incorporated into the Local Plan and becoming part of the planning process at the stage of application.

RESOLVED – that

1. that Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) approved updated GM2020 Transport Strategy documents in January 2021, including a refreshed version of the long-term, statutory local transport plan – the GM Transport Strategy 2040, a final version of Our Five-Year Transport Delivery Plan (2021-2026), and ten new Local Implementation Plans (one for each GM Council, be noted;
2. the updates on the development of GM Local Bus, Rapid Transit and Freight and Logistics strategies be noted; and
3. Officers investigate the issue of Housing Association and other tenanted properties becoming charge facility compliant and report back to this Committee.

15

OLDHAM'S APPROACH TO EQUALITY

A report was submitted summarising how the Council currently meets duties in respect of equality in Oldham and proposing the adoption of new Draft Equality Objectives and an Equality Strategy covering 2021-2025 which was attached to the report at appendix 1.

The Committee was reminded that, at a meeting of the Full Council in June 2020, a commitment had been made to develop a new Equality Strategy for Oldham Council, including the adoption of new Equality Objectives and an Equality Strategy covering 2021-2025.

The duties of the Local Authority in respect of equality were outlined to the Committee. How the duties were being met via five main elements to the approach of Oldham were also outlined within the report. Also outlined in the report were the two Equality Objectives that had been adopted and set for four years in April 2015 under the duties of the Equality Act (2010).

The Committee was advised that the objectives now needed to be refreshed to outline Team Oldham's Equality focus for the next four years from 2021-2025. Following consultation with services, portfolio holders and equality leads from across the partnership, it was proposed to adopt four new Equality Objectives that would set out Oldham's commitment for progressing equality, diversity and human rights across the borough as follows:

1. We will identify and mitigate the potential equality impacts caused by Covid-19, informing our response through research, best practice and lived experience.
2. We will provide services that put the citizens' voice at the heart of decision making, advancing equality of opportunity and celebrating diversity and inclusion for all.
3. We will lead the way in championing inclusivity across the borough, working with our partners and communities to make Oldham a fairer place for everyone.
4. We will encourage and enable a skilled and diverse workforce to build a culture of equality and inclusion in everything we do.

Further details of the above objectives were outlined within the report. It was reported that the above objectives would be supported by Oldham's Equality Strategy, which showed how Oldham would achieve these objectives.

The Committee was advised that the proposed strategy sets out the Council's commitment to progressing equality, diversity and human rights across the borough. It also outlined how Oldham would eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and promote good relations between all people regardless of age, disability, race, sex, gender identity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, socio-economic and marital or civil partnership status. The purpose and aims of the Equality Strategy were outlined within the report.

The Committee was further advised that the strategy builds on the four Equality Objectives proposed as above, ensuring that Oldham Council meets the general and specific requirements of the equality legislation in everything we do so that equality is fully embedded within the organisation culture and reflected in our values and principles.

A discussion took place around the Objectives and Strategy in which the following points were made:

- How the new objectives and strategy were going to work in each portfolio area through the Covid Recovery Strategy was queried, it being known that Covid had impacted on services as well as equality implications. The Committee was advised that a comprehensive equality assessment was undertaken at the beginning of the pandemic and that it was now likely appropriate to undertake a similar exercise. It was accepted that there was a lot of work to unpick in bringing together the Covid Recovery Strategy and the equality strategy.
- Clarification was requested around the whistleblowing process and the need for a robust system of reporting to ensure that there is confidence in the policy and that concerns will be listened to and taken seriously. It was

recognised that there was a need to increased transparency and for a proper action plan to be formed. The Committee was advised that operation of the Whistleblowing Policy was the responsibility of the Head of Legal Services.

- Information was requested on how the Strategy would be promoted and there was a need to make sure the community understood the intentions of the Council and its partners. The Committee was advised that when the Strategy had been through the formal process, there would be a communications push to promote. There was a suggestion of a formal launch of the strategy involving the community and partners across the public and private sectors.
- Clarification was sought around how progress would be monitored. The Committee was advised that this would sit within or alongside the Covid-19 delivery plan. Further clarification on targets, how monitoring would be progressed was sought, with a suggestion that poverty, as considered previously by the Committee, should be one of the cross-cutting themes.
- Clarification was also sought around engaging with partners. The Committee was advised that external engagement had included the private and voluntary sector, and next steps would include linkage with the GM Inequalities Commission.
- Information was requested in relation to funding, revenue or grants to support the Strategy. The Committee was advised that there was no specific funding allocated to supporting the strategy but that there were pockets of funding within each of the services.

RESOLVED – That a report including programme would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee

16

GREEN NEW DEAL STRATEGY AND GENERATION OLDHAM - FURTHER UPDATE ON FUNDING

A report was submitted to update the Committee on funding arrangements for activities in the Oldham Green New Deal delivery programme.

The Committee was reminded that the Oldham Green New Deal (OGND) Strategy had been adopted by the Council in March 2020. The Strategy had set a number of objectives and pledges for delivery on environmental issues in a range of work areas, which broadly fit into three over-arching 'pillars':-

- Growing the green economy;
- Low carbon infrastructure and a Local Energy Market;
- and

- Northern Roots.
- The Strategy had also set carbon neutrality targets for Council Buildings and Street Lighting by 2025 and for the Borough by 2030.

The Committee was provided with an update on funding arrangements for activities within the Oldham Green New Deal delivery programme, which sits as part of the Council's overall 'Creating a Better Place' strategic programme. Additionally, the Council's Covid Recovery Plan includes 'Championing a green recovery' as one of its key priorities, which were detailed in the report. It was reported that Green New Deal activities also supported many of the other recovery priorities.

The current position in relation to projects under the following themes were outlined in the report:

- Economy;
- Corporate Estates;
- Housing;
- Spindles; and
- Other Green New Deal activities.

A discussion took place around the approach to identify the finance required to complete some of the projects. The Committee was advised that while much of the programme was funded, £3 million was required to fund the Eco Centre second phase and that while there was a potential £8 million from the Town Fund for Northern Roots, the need to identify revenue funding remained. Other funding sources, such as the Levelling Up Fund was also under consideration.

Reference was made to the application for funding for a heat transfer scheme that has been unsuccessful. In such circumstances feedback from funders was always considered to inform future approaches or applications. It was also reported that an option to combine this scheme with First Choice Homes community heating system could be explored.

It was suggested that the options report for the Towns Fund be shared as there were currently 15-20 schemes at various stages.

RESOLVED – that

1. it be noted that most of the activity in the Oldham Green New Deal programme is currently funded, with potential for further funding in the future from external sources;
2. it be notes that 'Championing a green recovery' is one of the priorities in Oldham's Covid Recovery Plan, and that national government is also prioritising public sector investment in the low carbon and environmental sectors as part of its overall economic recovery strategy; and
3. a report be received at a future meeting focusing specifically on the potential for a strategic partnership

with a commercial low carbon infrastructure provider, to support delivery of the 2030 Net Zero target for Oldham Borough; and

4. a supplementary report be submitted to the September meeting of the Committee to advise on the progress on projects identified.



17 **POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22**

RESOLVED – That the Committee note the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Programme 2021/22.

18 **KEY DECISION DOCUMENT**

The Board gave consideration to the latest Key Decision Document that had been published May 2021 and circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the Key Decision Document be noted.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.20 pm