

**POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**21/09/2021 at 6.00 pm**



**Present:** Councillor McLaren (Chair)  
Councillors Alyas, Hobin, K Phythian and Surjan

Also in Attendance:

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Fiona Carr       | Principal Homelessness Strategy Officer  |
| Andrew Hunt      | Strategy Partnerships and Policy Manager |
| Kaidy McCann     | Constitutional Services                  |
| Donna McLaughlin | Alliance Director, Oldham Cares          |

1           **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence received.

2           **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Hobin declared a personal interest at item 10 by virtue of being a Licensed Private Hire Driver.

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 held on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 be approved as a correct record.

6           **DELIVERY OF LOW CARBON INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE BOROUGH**

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on funding arrangements for activities in the Oldham Green New Deal (OGND) delivery programme which were unfunded at the time of the OGND report to the Committee in June 2021. The report set out the potential opportunities for a strategic collaboration with the private sector to help Oldham meet the carbon neutrality targets set out in the OGND Strategy.

The OGND Strategy set a number of objectives and pledges for delivery on environmental issues which broadly fit into three over-arching pillars, which were as followed:

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

The OGND Strategy also set two carbon neutrality targets:

- For Council Buildings and Street Lighting by 2025
- For the borough by 2030



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Oldham's Green New Deal programme included a number of community energy initiatives which supported residents to build their knowledge and skills base with a view to gaining training and employment in this key growth sector. However, this support needed to be matched by large-scale inward investment into the borough to create those jobs, training and business opportunities. Members were provided with a breakdown of the estimated 2173 number of jobs that could be created as part of the OGND.

Members were informed that private sector energy infrastructure companies were recognising the potential and need to diversify their business models and portfolios by investing in low carbon infrastructure schemes. Examples of such low carbon infrastructure schemes were:

- Solar farms and industrial rooftop arrays
- Wind farms
- Hydroelectric plants
- Energy storage facilities
- District Heat Networks
- Air and Ground Source Heat Pumps
- Electric Vehicle charging facilities

Members were provided with a summary of the resources, benefits and risks of potential Council and Private Sector partnerships. A partnership arrangement could include the setting up of a Joint Venture / Special Purpose Vehicle to deliver and operate the low carbon infrastructure schemes. This could serve to mitigate some of the risks associated with relying on a single external provider and could give the Council more long-term control over some of the infrastructure in the borough. Other anchor organisations in the Oldham Partnership could also be interested in such a co-produced and co-owned approach to infrastructure.

It was noted that the structure of a contract for a strategic partnership could be split into three phases which were as followed:

- Phase 1 – Pilot Scheme / scoping phase - 12-month contract with two objectives:
  - A renewable energy scheme on privately owned land / property with a PPA to the Council.
  - Production of outline programme for Phases 2 and 3.
- Phase 2 – 2-year programme (2025 target) - 2-year contract to follow on from Phase 1:
  - Identification and / or development of renewable energy generation in the borough to contribute to the 2025 Council carbon neutrality target via PPAs with generators and renewable heat infrastructure.
  - Delivery of low carbon schemes which support the Creating A Better Place programme, e.g. Town

- Centre District Heat Network, rooftop solar PV and Electric Vehicle charging points.
- Set up a Joint Venture / Special Purpose Vehicle between the Council and the provider to set up and operate low carbon infrastructure schemes e.g. those mentioned above.
- Support for community energy initiatives in the borough e.g. Oldham Community Power, Oldham Energy Futures.
- Development of a Green Business Park / Centre, potentially either aligned with the Mills Strategy or GM Mayoral Enterprise Zone commitment at Stakehill.
- Production of detailed programme for Phase 3.
- Phase 3 – 5-year programme (2030 target) - 5-year contract to follow on from Phase 2:
  - Net zero decarbonisation strategy for all ‘anchor’ strategic partners, as demonstrated by the Council by 2025 (Phase 2).
  - A net zero offer for homes and businesses, as part of the Warm Homes Oldham / Oldham Enterprise Trust / Oldham in Place offers.
  - Borough-wide net zero transport decarbonisation strategy (EV charging network), working with TfGM, GMCA etc.

Any low carbon infrastructure partnership contract should maximise the social value to Oldham. Oldham’s social value portal used the Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) approach which covered the following areas:

- Carbon emissions
- Air quality
- Natural environment
- Resource efficiency / circular economy
- Sustainable procurement
- Social innovation

Additionally, there were 20 TOMs under the “Inclusive Economy” theme which could also be used for these contracts.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. the progress in securing funding for some of the Council’s previously unfunded projects and programmes, and the forward planning to progress others be noted.
2. the contribution from GMCA-level decarbonisation initiatives and programmes to Oldham’s Green New Deal programme.
3. the proposed approach to engaging the private sector in Oldham’s Green New Deal programme for more detailed consideration by senior officers and Cabinet members be endorsed.

## **YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN**

**RESOLVED** that consideration of the item be deferred to the next meeting of the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **NORTHERN CARE ALLIANCE (NCA) NHS GROUP - EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT, LOCAL RECRUITMENT, AND ONGOING ITEMS.**

The Committee gave consideration to a report by the Director of Social Value Creation at the Northern Care Alliance (NCA) NHS Group which provided an update on Employment Support and Local Recruitment.

The report provided Members with the progress made since January 2021 with a particular focus on the support to young people. There was a strong link between decent work and good health, the NCA would need to use their significant social, economic and human capital to tackle the inequalities within Oldham which had been summarised into their social value ambitions through the 5 pillars of social value; environment, place, people, purchasing and to anchor or influence.

By 2025 the NCA had agreed the ambitions as followed:

- Create 1000 pre-employment opportunities across the NCA for those furthest away from employment from a baseline of 320. Approximately 210 would be created in Oldham from a baseline of 17 (2019-20).
- 85% of pre-employment learners supported into paid work from a NCA baseline of 55% and 31% in Oldham.
- 60% of those employed by the NCA to be local residents of Oldham from 45% (based on NCA configuration of Oct 2019) which would approximately be 80 jobs each year in Oldham.
- Support 1000 staff to become NHS Career Ambassadors by 2023 of which 155 would be in Oldham.

Members were informed on the work ongoing within Oldham schools, Oldham college, and the support to young people to gain skills and experience by volunteering. Members were also informed of the Kickstart Government initiative and the range of apprenticeships on offer for numerous career paths, 105 of which were within Oldham.

The Committee was informed of the GMCA Removing Barriers to Apprenticeships project held jointly with Positive Steps and Oldham Council. Members were provided with three case studies of young people who had accessed the project. The feedback received was positive and those accessing the schemes felt more confident. The funding for the programme was due to run out in December 2021. However, the NCA had managed to secure funding from the Prince Trust to continue and expand the programme for an additional 66 young people for 2022.

Going forward, the NCA had planned to launch a microsite that would list all of their pre-employment programmes, apprenticeships, work experience and career advice in a dedicated website. The site would be kept regularly update on

opportunities as the programmes are expanded to ensure that the NCA objective of 1000 pre-employment learners by 2025 be achieved.



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**RESOVLED** that:

1. A four-way conversation between the Northern Care Alliance, Oldham Council, Oldham College and Department for Work and Pensions be held to discuss employment support and local recruitment within Oldham.
2. An update on the report be provided in 6 months' time.

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## **OLDHAM HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND REDUCTION STRATEGY 2021-26**

Consideration was given to a report on the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2021-26.

The Committee was informed that under the Homelessness Act 2002, there was a statutory requirement on local Authorities to publish a Homelessness Strategy at a minimum of every five years based on a review of homelessness in the Borough. Oldham's most recent strategy ran from 2016 to 2021. The strategy for 2021-26 had been developed in consultation with residents, stakeholders and Elected Members along with a comprehensive Review of homelessness between 2016-2020. The Review had particular focus on the period since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act between 2018-20 and included an in-depth analysis of customer groups that presented to the Housing Options service, the support they needed and the reasonings why they had become homeless.

The Committee was advised that applications for assistance from people who stated to be homeless or threatened or homelessness increased by 38% between April 2018 and April 2020. By April 2020, more households had approached the Housing Options service at the point they had already become homeless (52%) than when it could still be prevented (48%).

It was noted that one fifth of homeless households in Oldham stated to have mental health issues, and almost 15% had physical health issues. 24% of homeless households stated to have no support needs at all in the data analysed in the Review, but in contrast 27% had three or more that suggested large numbers of increasingly complex households. It was felt that this explained why those households were presenting at crisis point, rather than at an earlier stage where homelessness might have been prevented.

The Strategy Delivery Plan took a pragmatic approach to tackling homelessness in Oldham, it acknowledged that resources were finite, and the effects of austerity and the Covid-19 pandemic would have a lasting impact on communities. Its focus was on making best use of what we had, making an effective business case for further investment and working in partnership to deliver the following priorities:

- Advice and information
- Early identification
- Pre-crisis intervention
- Prevent recurring homelessness
- Partnership arrangements

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The report be endorsed to Cabinet to approve the contents of the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2021-26 and its associated delivery plan.
2. An update be provided to the Committee in 12 months' time.

10            **GM TAXI STANDARDS - VEHICLE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RESOLVED** that consideration of the item be deferred to the next meeting of the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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

**RESOLVED** that the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22 be noted.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.56 pm