

CABINET Agenda

Date Monday 23 January 2023

Time 6.00 pm

Venue Crompton Suite, Civic Centre, Oldham, West Street, Oldham, OL1 1NL

Notes

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST- If a Member requires any advice on any item involving a possible declaration of interest which could affect his/her ability to speak and/or vote he/she is advised to contact Paul Entwistle or Liz Drogan in advance of the meeting.

2. CONTACT OFFICER for this Agenda is Liz Drogan Tel. 0161 770 5151 or email elizabeth.drogan@oldham.gov.uk

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS – Any member of the public wishing to ask a question at the above meeting can do so only if a written copy of the question is submitted to the Contact officer by 12 Noon on Wednesday, 18 January 2023.

4. FILMING – This meeting will be recorded for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. The whole of the meeting will be recorded, except where there are confidential or exempt items and the footage will be on our website. This activity promotes democratic engagement in accordance with section 100A(9) of the Local Government Act 1972. The cameras will focus on the proceedings of the meeting. As far as possible, this will avoid areas specifically designated for members of the public who prefer not to be filmed. Disruptive and anti social behaviour will always be filmed.

Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed for the Council's broadcast should advise the Constitutional Services Officer who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.

Members of the public and the press may also record / film / photograph or broadcast this meeting when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded. Please note that anyone using recording equipment both audio and visual will not be permitted to leave the equipment in the room where a private meeting is held.

Recording and reporting the Council's meetings is subject to the law including the law of defamation, the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act and the law on public order offences.

Please also note the Public attendance Protocol on the Council's Website

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/homepage/1449/attending_council_meetings

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CABINET IS AS FOLLOWS:

Councillors Akhtar, Ali, Brownridge, Chadderton, Jabbar, Moores, Mushtaq, Roberts and Taylor

Item No

- 1 Apologies For Absence
- 2 Urgent Business
Urgent business, if any, introduced by the Chair
- 3 Declarations of Interest
To Receive Declarations of Interest in any Contract or matter to be discussed at the meeting.
- 4 Public Question Time
To receive Questions from the Public, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- 5 Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held 12th December 2022 (Pages 1 - 8)
- 6 Site A - Prince's Gate Oldham
- 7 Bulky Collections & Local Welfare Provision Contract (Pages 9 - 26)
- 8 Council Tax Tax Base and Non-Domestic Rates Tax Base Forecast 2023/24 (Pages 27 - 42)
- 9 Wrigley Head Solar Farm - Delivery Options (Pages 43 - 52)
- 10 Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3a Grant Acceptance - Spindles (Pages 53 - 58)
- 11 Oldham's Transport Strategy, Delivery Plan and Town Centre Parking Strategy (Pages 59 - 216)
- 12 LA Policy on Academy Conversion and Guidance for Schools (Pages 217 - 254)
- 13 Urgent Business - Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme (Pages 255 - 260)
- 14 Exclusion of the Press and Public

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(s) 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.

- 15 Site A - Prince's Gate Oldham
- 16 Bulky Collections & LWP Contract (Pages 261 - 284)

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Present: Councillor Chadderton (Chair)
Councillors Akhtar, Ali, Brownridge, Jabbar, Moores, Mushtaq,
Roberts and Taylor

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence received.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

5 **MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 14TH
NOVEMBER 2022**

RESOLVED – That the minute of the Cabinet meeting held on
14th November 2022 be approved.

6 **CHILDREN'S SERVICES INVESTMENT PROPOSALS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Managing Director,
Children and Young People, (DCS) which sought approval of the
proposed investment into children's services and the invest to
save strategy aligned with it

In May 2022, Annual Council adopted the Administration's
priorities for 2022/23. One priority area for the Council was to
have a relentless focus on children and young people to ensure
that they enjoy a happy, healthy and safe childhood. In
September 2022, the Council further declared children and
young people to be its number one priority, underpinning the
organisation's new five-year corporate plan.

As part of this focus the Council's Children's Social Care and
Early Help services had embarked upon a challenging "Getting
to Good" programme that would see the Council improve the
quality of its vital social work and safeguarding services and the
experiences and outcomes of those in need of them.

To support both our overall priority for children and young
people and the continuous improvement of our existing services
the Council was proposing a significant investment into services
that support and safeguard children, young people, and their
families.

The proposal Cabinet was being asked to approve was to invest
£14.7 million into vital children's social care and family support
services in the borough. This investment would;

- Provide better support for families, at an earlier stage, to
avoid the need for social care involvement, including:

- The targeting of £3 million of external funding to provide a greater range of services, support and activities at key children's centres
- The targeting of £2.7 million of external funding to target support for families currently struggling and needing less intensive support
- Extra work with schools, colleges and with voluntary, community and faith organisation's to improve the amount and level of support available for families in local communities
- Provide the very best care for Oldham's most vulnerable children and young people by:
 - Investing in additional capacity in the teams assessing and making-decisions on vulnerable children and young people's care and support needs
 - Increasing the teams, supporting fostering and special guardianship orders so that more children and young people have a home within a family setting
 - Increasing the amount of move-on accommodation available in Oldham to support those young people ready to leave care to live independently
 - Establishing a scheme to provide deposits and first month's rent and/or acting as guarantors for young people ready to move into independent accommodation and housing
 - Establishing a new council-run children's home for local children and young people with learning disabilities so fewer children need to be cared for outside of the borough
- Make Oldham one of the best places to be a social worker by:
 - Recruiting 50 more permanent social workers to ensure manageable caseloads and reduce the need for agency social workers as much as possible
 - Recruiting 17 new Social Work Support Officers to free up social workers for more time with children and families
 - Reviewing current pay and conditions for children's social work staff to ensure the Council was able to attract and retain the most talented social workers
- Recognise, reward and better support Oldham's Foster Carers by;
 - Increasing allowances and skills payments by 10%
 - Recruiting five highly trained specialist foster carers to offer additional training, support and advice to foster carers across the borough – focusing on supporting those who care for some of the most vulnerable children and young people to help them remain in foster care.

Option 1 – Approve the investment as detailed within the report which aimed to improve services for children, young people and families and to support quality social work and reward foster carers.

Option 2 – Not to invest in the service as detailed within the report. This would removed the ability to tackle rising demand for support leading to spiralling costs to deliver quality children's services.

RESOLVED – That:

1. The proposed investment into children's services and the invest to save strategy aligned with it as detailed within the report be approved.
2. The decisions resulting from the implementation of the invest to save strategy be delegated to the Managing Director of Children's Services and the Director of Legal Services.

7

BUDGET FORECASTS FOR FINANCIAL YEARS 2023/24 AND 2024/25

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Finance which sought approval of the updated forecast budget reduction requirement for 2023/24 and 2024/25, having regard to the financial position reported at Budget Council on 2 March 2022, the changing events which had impacted on the finances of the Council in the period leading up to 17 November 2022 when the Autumn Statement was announced by the Chancellor and the subsequent Government funding indications included in the Autumn Statement.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy covering the five year period 2022/23 to 2026/27 was agreed by Council on 2 March 2022. At that time, the financial outlook both globally and nationally was significantly different.

Since then there had been a wide range of developments which had impacted upon the financial forecasts presented to Council in March 2022.

On 17 October 2022, the Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered an Emergency Statement which reversed a number of the economic policy changes introduced by the previous Chancellor. This stabilised turbulence in the financial markets which had made financial planning difficult and which had resulted in a number of Local Authorities publicly declaring significant reductions in future financial resilience. The Chancellor also advised that there would be an Autumn Statement to follow shortly afterwards.

This was subsequently deferred until 17 November 2022.

The Autumn Statement has provided the Council with enough information to enable a review of its financial estimates in advance of the receipt of the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement. As the Autumn Statement focussed on 2023/24 and 2024/25, it had enabled the financial forecasts for those years to be revised to give Members a more informed view of the financial position. This report therefore sets out the

updated estimates for 2023/24 and 2024/25 and details the assumptions supporting these projections.

Whilst the Autumn Statement confirmed Government departmental budgets would be maintained at the levels announced in the Spending Review of October 2021, it deferred an element of the planned adult social care reforms, whilst maintaining the level of funding previously announced for the implementation of the reform, thus easing some of the immediate financial concerns. The Government also announced extra support for adult social care and confirmed Local Government would be compensated for the freezing of the Business Rates multiplier. Whilst the exact financial impact will not be clear until the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement is announced, it has enabled the financial projections to be updated based on the assumptions set out in this report. These assumptions have also incorporated the current financial projections for the 2022/23 outturn as reported elsewhere on this agenda.

Given the financial pressures which had emerged such as increased energy costs, extraordinary inflationary increases and the exceptional on-going demand for Adults and Children's Social Care services, the budget reduction requirement for the Council had increased from the previously reported position of £16.711m as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy agreed at 2 March 2022 Budget Council to £27.975m.

The report set out how the Council was proposing to bridge the budget gap by its programme of transformational change which would include demand management, income maximisation, budget reductions and the potential use of one off sources of funding.

The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was not expected to be published until the week commencing 19 December 2022. This would give the Council better information to refine its estimates for the budget reduction requirement for 2023/24 and 2024/25. The updated position would be reported to Members in January 2023.

Options/alternatives considered

Option 1 – To approve the updated financial projections as set in the report for 2023/24 and 2024/25 as at 12th December 2022.

Option 2 – To propose an alternative updated financial projection and revise the forecasts for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

RESOLVED - That the updated financial projections of the Council as set out in this report, identifying a budget reduction requirement of £27.975m for the financial year 2023/24 and £14.575m for the financial year 2024/25 be approved.

8

REVENUE MONITOR AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2022/23 QUARTER 2 - SEPTEMBER 2022

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Finance which provided Cabinet with an update on the Council's 2022/23 forecast revenue budget position at Annex 1 and the financial position of the capital programme as at 30 September 2022 (Quarter 2) together with the revised capital programme 2022/23 to 2026/27, as outlined in section two of the report at Annex 2.

The current forecast outturn position for 2022/23 was a projected deficit variance of £4.452m after allowing for approved and pending transfers to and from reserves. An operational deficit of £6.172m reduced by £1.720m with the anticipated effect of management actions and strengthened restrictions in relation to expenditure and recruitment.

The position included additional costs and pressures that have been identified by the Authority in this financial year as a direct result of the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There were two areas which continued to endure significant pressures attributed to the ongoing impact of the Pandemic; Community Health & Adult Social Care was reporting an adverse variance of £7.028m and Children's Social Care was recording £3.961m.

These pressures were being offset against a corporate provision of £12.000m COVID-19 Legacy funding which was set aside during the 2022/23 budget setting process.

An update on the major issues driving the projections was detailed at Annex 1 to the report.

The report outlined the most up to date capital spending position for 2022/23 to 2026/27 for approved schemes. The revised capital programme budget for 2022/23 was £68.318m at the close of Quarter 2, a net decrease of £31.930m from the original budget of £100.248m. Actual expenditure to 30 September 2022 was £18.842m (27.58% of the forecast outturn). Without doubt the forecast position would continue to change throughout the year with additional re-profiling into future years.

RESOLVED – That:

1. The Forecast revenue outturn for 2022/23 at Quarter 2 being a £4.452m adverse variance having regard to the action being taken to manage expenditure be approved.
2. The Forecast positions for both the Housing Revenue Account, Dedicated Schools Grant and Collection Fund be approved
3. The Revised capital programme for 2022/2027 as at Quarter 2 be approved.

9

SCHOOLS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Finance which provided detail regarding the resources available for School Funding for 2023/24 and required the Cabinet to consider how the funding for Schools and Academies should be distributed in 2023/24.

This report provided detail of the level of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2023/24 together with its allocation across the three funding blocks for which information was currently available. The funding was based on October 2021 pupil numbers and would be subject to change once calculations have been updated to reflect October 2022 pupil numbers.

The report also provided information about the National Funding Formula (NFF) for Schools, the High Needs Blocks for Oldham and also presented a recommended approach for the distribution of the Schools Funding Block of the DSG to Schools and Academies for 2023/24.

In addition, the report presented the proposed option (Model 1 as detailed in Appendix 1) to move to the 2023/24 NFF cash values in full except for the Area Cost Adjustment (ACA) where it was proposed that the factor applied in Oldham was initially reduced from 1.00547 to 1.00000. However, Members were advised that if there are any resources available once funding allocations based on updated pupil numbers are received, then this additional funding will be allocated through an increase to the ACA.

The indicative Schools block allocations to Local Authorities were funded by multiplying a Primary Unit of Funding (PUF's) and Secondary Units of Funding (SUF's) cash value by each pupil. The PUF's and SUF's for 2023/24 have been calculated based on school and pupil characteristics data from the 2022/23 Authority Proforma Tool (APT) data which was based on October 2020 census information. They would not be updated for any characteristic changes to the October 2022 census until 2024/25. If there was a significant change in characteristics such as eligibility for free school meals, the factor values in the local formulae would be adjusted as necessary to meet any affordability pressures.

It was also proposed for the second year there was no movement of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block as the DSG was forecast to be in surplus by the end of 2023/24 as required by the Department for Education.

Options/alternatives considered

In view of Oldham being at the National Funding Formula values and not proposing any change from the prior year funding, Members are not therefore presented with an alternative approach.

RESOLVED – That:

1. The model outlined in the report which reflected the 2023/24 NFF cash values in full except for the Area Cost Adjustment factor, which was reduced to 1.00000 be approved.
2. A reassessment of the allocation arrangements would take place once the actual 2023/24 funding allocations were received with a view to moving the full Area Cost Adjustment if sufficient resources were available.
3. A transfer of funding between the Higher Needs and Schools Blocks if this was required as a means of finding the Area Cost Adjustment be approved.
4. The adjustment of the model if there was a significant change in characteristics such as eligibility for free school meals to meet any affordability pressures be approved.

AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SCHOOL SWIMMING TRANSPORT SERVICES

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Director Youth, Leisure and Communities which sought approval to award a contract for the provision of the School Swimming Transport services following a full tender process.

The School Swimming Service delivered high quality, safe and structured swimming lessons to Oldham schools. The school's

benefit from the qualified teaching staff delivering the service at the Leisure Centre's across the Borough including events and competitions. The service also offered a range of personal survival and water safety support. The service works in line with the National Curriculum guidelines and in partnership with Swim England to deliver physical activity, increase participation in school sport and develops key essential life & water safety skills. The service could be utilised by pupils in Primary, Senior and Special Schools. Pupils are transported over 190 school days per year. There was a huge benefit for the service to provide and coordinate the transport and work in close partnership with transport providers to establish a transport schedule weekly. All transport cost incurred are recharged to Schools via Service Level Agreements

An open tender exercise for the school swimming transport provision was started via The Chest portal on 14 June 2022. The tender submissions were evaluated by a panel consisting of the School Swimming Manager, School Swimming Business Support Officer, and the Sport Leisure & Wellbeing Service Manager with the support of the procurement team.

Option/alternatives considered

Option 1 - Extend the current transport contract for a further 12 months

but the previous Delegated Cabinet Member Decision form (December 2021) Option 2 - The contract to go out to tender for procurement so that the Council could provide value for money

RESOLVED – That following on from an open and competitive tendering process, a contract with Matthews Travel (K Matt Coaches) based in Oldham be awarded for the School Swimming Transport Provision in accordance with the results of the tendering exercise which has been carried out through a robust evaluation process (based on technical ability & quality, social value, and price) for three years, with an option to extend for a further two years.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 6.21pm

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Report to CABINET

Bulky Collections & LWP Contract

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Hannah Roberts, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods

Officer Contact: Nasir Dad, Director of Environment

Report Author: Mark Husdan – Operations Manager (Waste & Fleet)

Ext. x2144

Cabinet – 23 January 2023

Reason for Decision

The report is seeking approval to award a new bulky waste collection and local welfare provision (LWP) contract to start 1st April 2023. The new contract is attempting to combine these two Council services, which are currently being operated under separate contracts. The main aims of the new contract will be to develop financial and resource efficiencies whilst at the same time maximising the flow of bulky collected pre-loved furniture and white good items into the LWP scheme. The new contract will improve the Council's ability to help and support the needs of vulnerable residents (in furniture poverty) when trying to establish or maintain a home in the borough.

Recommendations

To award a new bulky collection and LWP contract to FRC Group following the outcome of the evaluation of bids as a result of the competitive tender process.

1.0 Bulky Bobs Ltd Background

- 1.1 Oldham Council has a statutory duty to ensure the provision of a bulky waste collection service within the borough of Oldham. 'Bulky waste' is defined in the Controlled Waste Regulations 1992 as any article of waste which exceeds 25 kilograms in weight; and/or any article of waste which does not fit or cannot be fitted into a bin.
- 1.2 The Council has contracted out its statutory duty to collect bulky waste since 2005 (17 years) due to the financial and social value benefits this model creates. Our current contractor Bulky Bobs Ltd has held this contract throughout this time.
- 1.3 Bulky Bobs Ltd, carry out approximately 6,000 collections a year on behalf of the council.
- 1.4 Under the current contract, all residents who have qualified for the Council's assisted waste collection service receive a free bulky waste collection per year (this will continue under the terms of the proposed new contract).
- 1.5 The cost for a bulky collection (2022/23) is £20 for 3 items and £7 for each item collected thereafter. The charges for bulky collections are agreed within the Council's annual fees and charges report.

2.0 Local welfare provision (LWP) background

- 2.1 The Welfare Reform Act 2012, ended the provision of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for living expenses under the Discretionary Social Fund administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 2.2 Funding was transferred from the DWP to Local Authorities (LAs) from 1 April 2013 to provide a locally administered scheme to aid vulnerable residents in the Borough.
- 2.3 There was no statutory duty requiring LAs to deliver a scheme, but Oldham Council considered it to be in the best interests of the residents of the Borough to operate a scheme. As a result of the reduction in funding, the Council administered a scheme in a way that ensures the funding provides support to Oldham's most vulnerable residents.
- 2.4 Oldham's scheme is known as the Local Welfare Provision (LWP) scheme. Please see the Council's LWP policy (2021) at Appendix 1 of the report.
- 2.5 The purpose of the Local Welfare Provision Scheme is to provide support to meet short term emergency/immediate support needs of vulnerable residents. To assist vulnerable residents to establish or maintain a home in the community.
- 2.6 Examples of the types of residents and the circumstances where an LWP award may be considered are:

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- Care Leavers under the age of 25
 - People who have suffered a disaster/crisis such as fire or flood
 - Families under exceptional financial pressure, including the impact of COVID 19
 - People who are homeless or rough sleepers
 - Vulnerable older people
 - People fleeing domestic violence
 - People moving out of institutional or residential care
 - People moving to supported accommodation/independent living
 - People who are leaving prison or detention centres
 - People who are chronically or terminally ill
 - People with alcohol or drug issues
 - People with learning difficulties
 - People returning to work after a short term on benefits

3.0 A combined bulky and LWP contract model

The following section details the Council's main aims within the new combined contract.

3.1 To maximise the number of collections within the bulky waste collection service.

The current bulky contract undertakes approximately 6,000 collection jobs per year. The new contract will endeavor to increase this number, to improve the amount of income raised within the contract and the number of pre-loved items which can be used within the Council's LWP scheme.

3.2 To maximise the number of pre-loved items available in the first instance to the Council's LWP scheme, and secondly, to other associated organisations within Oldham (e.g. charities, community welfare organisations etc).

The Council's current bulky collection operation produces many pre-loved items. The new contract will use as many of these pre-loved items within the LWP scheme, reducing the need for new items to be bought. Where there is a healthy stock of certain items within the contract, these can then be offered to other organisations that help and support Oldham residents.

3.3 The efficient supply of new items within the LWP scheme.

When pre-loved items are not available, the new contractor will supply new items to the LWP scheme. This will require adequate and appropriate management of supply chains.

4.0 Contract procurement

The following section details the Council's procurement process.

- 4.1 In May 2022, the Council started a procurement process to combine its current bulky collection and LWP contracts into one new contract model. Please see full procurement timetable provided in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 4.2 Three potential suppliers submitted initial bids and after a dialogue session, two suppliers submitted final bids, Calico Ltd and FRC (Bulky Bob)
- 4.3 Evaluation of the two submitted final bids shows that FRC submitted the most economically advantageous tender.
- 4.4 The revenue contract contributions of the waste management service and LWP programme have started but are yet to be concluded. The LWP programme will be required to contribute a percentage of their future cost savings back into the bulky collection element of the contract. For this contribution they will receive a number of future benefits outlined in section 5.0. All internal financial arrangements will be agreed and finalised for the proposed contract start date (1st April 2023).

5.0 Benefits of a combined contract with FRC Group

The following section highlights the main benefits of operating a combined contract.

- 5.1 **Cost savings/mitigation** – initial cost figures show that combining the two contracts will save money. This is in an environment where many third-party Council contracts have seen significant increases due to high levels of inflation, material costs, supply and demand issues. This financial position will be actively monitored through agreed quarterly financial reporting and contract management.
- 5.2 **Growth potential** – the intention within any new combined contract will be to develop and grow the current operations and systems within both current contracts to benefit both parts of the business. Increasing collection numbers within the bulky side increases income and items available to the LWP scheme. Better reporting systems and internal communication improves the flow of collected pre-loved items to new owners/homes within the Borough. Growth work will also include a fresh look at opportunities and partnership working with housing associations, private landlords, third sector collaboration and commercial bulky item collections.
- 5.3 **Operational efficiencies** – monitoring of the operation, the working environment and the performance figures may allow further efficiencies, opportunities and savings to be achieved within contract.
- 5.4 **Increased number of items available to LWP scheme** – the Council's current LWP scheme is based around the supply of approximately 20 key items (i.e. beds, sofas and white goods). The existing bulky collection service is currently collecting over 150 items which could be made available to LWP scheme applicants.

5.5 **Profit cap** – within their submitted bid, the FRC group has offered a 5% profit cap within any contract they are awarded. Any new contract would, therefore, be based on financial transparency on the part of the supplier (i.e. open book accounting, with associated profit and loss clearly identifiable).

5.6 **Environmental benefits** – increasing the number of bulky collected pre-loved items into the LWP scheme will produce significant environmental benefits. The main one being the reduced need to supply new items, which, negatively impact the environment through their production, manufacture and transportation. LWP activity being managed from the Bulky Bob depot in Oldham will save on the transporting of goods from Trafford Park and new electrical reuse activity planned for the new contract will save items which have been previously sent for disposal. All the above activity will contribute to the Council's environmental and carbon neutral policies moving forward.

6.0 Risks and mitigations

The following section highlights the main risks of operating a combined contract.

6.1 **Flow of items into LWP scheme** – there is a financial saving in combining the two Council contracts currently being operated separately. This saving is based on increasing the flow of pre-loved items into the LWP scheme replacing the requirement to purchase new items. The figures submitted by bidders within the procurement process have been forecasted, meaning that these figures may not prove to be entirely accurate. There is a risk, therefore, that should the predicted flow of pre-loved items not be achieved then the savings figure may reduce. This could cost the Council more money in terms of new items being required for purchase (rather than pre-loved items being used) or reduce the number of approved applications that the LWP scheme would be able to process.

6.2 **External factors** – a new bulky collection and LWP contract will be vulnerable to external factors and influences. As a logistical operation, there are ongoing issues with the costs and availability of vehicles, fuel and HGV drivers. There are also supply and demand issues being faced within many of the product items being purchased by the LWP scheme. Whilst the FRC group have provided assurances and comprehensive resilience plans, there is still a risk that external factors could impact any new contract. These external factors could increase costs within the contract or remove/delay the availability of certain new LWP items throughout the contract lifespan. Please note, however, that these external influences would be the same if the contracts were operated combined under the reports proposals or separately moving forward.

6.3 **LWP funding** – the Council has only agreed LWP funding up until 2024/25 with no agreed new funding stream currently identified. There is, therefore, the potential for the LWP programme funding to stop and this would impact on any new combined contract. Whilst this is right to be flagged as a risk, there is comfort that should this happen within contract, there is potential for the LWP element to be removed and the contract to revert to a bulky collection only operation/contract. This would remove all LWP associated costs from within the combined contract (i.e. number of staff, vehicles, activity etc). A new combined contract would also benefit the LWP

programme as the current LWP supply contract is out of date and so a new one is required to cover the level of spend currently within the programme. This would save the LWP undertaking any further procurement work. Combined contracts would also reduce the current costs within the LWP programme, which, in turn, would hopefully extend the life of the current funding.

7.0 Options/Alternatives

The following section details the options available to cabinet.

- 7.1 **Option 1** – to approve a new combined bulky collection & LWP contract be entered into with FRC (Bulky Bob's).
- 7.2 **Option 2** – to not award FRC a new contract and undertake a new procurement process with the aim of awarding two new separate contracts. There are no perceived operational benefits to this model.
- 7.3 **Option 3** – to not award FRC with a new contract and continue as we are. This is not a viable option as both the current Bulky and LWP contracts require renewal and due to the costs associated, compliant contracts are required.

8.0 Preferred Option

- 8.1 **Option 1** – to approve a new combined bulky collection & LWP contract be entered into with FRC (Bulky Bob's).

9.0 Consultation

None.

10.0 Financial Implications

- 10.1 The Local Welfare Provision (LWP) is funded from reserves and based on the current trajectory of spend the reserve will be fully utilized by 2024/25. The combined contract is to commence in 2023/24 and is for 3 years with an option to extend by a further 2 years.
- 10.2 The intention with the letting of this contract is to recycle used items rather than buying new which should extend the funds held in reserve. It is assumed that the contract will have no financial detriment to the Council and that if funds are depleting the LWP policy will need to be revisited. This is to be managed by the Head of Customer Services.
- 10.3 Any potential overspends would have to be managed from with the Customer Services budget. (Nicola Harrop – Finance Manager)

11.0 Legal Services Comments

The tender process has been conducted in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules, incorporating the Public Contract Regulations 2015, and it is proposed that a contract is entered into with the tenderer who submitted the most economically advantageous offer. Provided the tender evaluation team is satisfied that all tenders have been evaluated in accordance with the advertised award and scoring criteria, there are no known legal implications to the proposed option (Sarah Orrell – Commercial & Procurement Solicitor).

12.0 Co-operative Agenda

The proposed combining of contracts will increase the amount of furniture and white goods available for re-use and redistribution through the Council's Local Welfare Provision. This is in line with the Council's Co-operative Agenda in supporting the development of Thriving Communities and Co-operative Services (Amanda Richardson).

13.0 Human Resources Comments

None.

14.0 Risk Assessments

N/A

15.0 IT Implications

No immediate implications for IT. Should the service be looking for efficiencies through web form integration for bulky collections with on-line payments, then this could be picked up as a separate requirement at a later stage (Lindsey Al-Basri (Head of IT Projects)).

16.0 Property Implications

None

17.0 Procurement Implications

The Commercial Procurement Unit supports the recommendation outlined in the report. Competitive dialogue was the chosen procedure as it would allow conversations to be had with bidders on their approach, delivery and costing of the contract given combining the two separate contracts was something relatively new for the market and the Council. This process was managed by the Procurement team and undertaken in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Social value was included in the quality aspect of the evaluation criteria and the successful bidder committed to delivering a number of social value commitments ranging from local training and employment opportunities, liaising with education settings, volunteering and supporting local organisations. Delivery of these

commitments will be monitored using the Social Value Portal and reviewed during contract review meetings. (Emily Molden)

18.0 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

18.1 Within the past three years, there have been no prosecutions or notices recorded on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) enforcement website against:

- Furniture Resource Centre Limited
- Bulky Bob's 2015 Limited

18.2 Health and Safety critical documentation such as risk assessments, safe systems of work etc. have not been assessed by the health and safety service as these checks must be undertaken by the relevant project manager as should relevant supervisory checks of any contractors/works (Matthew Hill).

19.0 Equality, community cohesion and crime implications

19.1 N/A

20.0 Equality Impact Assessment Completed?

20.1 N/A

21.0 Key Decision

21.1 Yes

22.0 Key Decision Reference

22.1 NEI-17-22

23.0 Background Papers

23.1 None

24.0 Appendices

24.1 Appendix 1 – Local welfare provision policy 2021

Local Welfare Provision Policy 2020/21

**Guidelines for the operation of the Local Welfare
Provision Scheme.**

January 2021

Local Welfare Provision Policy 2020/21

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 ended the provision of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for living expenses under the Discretionary Social Fund administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 1.2 Funding was transferred from the DWP to Local Authorities (LAs) from 1 April 2013 to provide a locally administered scheme to provide assistance to vulnerable residents in the Borough.
- 1.3 There was no statutory duty requiring LAs to deliver a scheme, but Oldham Council considered it to be in the best interests of the residents of the Borough to operate a scheme. As a result of the reduction in funding the Council administered a scheme in a way that ensures the funding provides support to Oldham's most vulnerable residents.
- 1.4 Oldham's scheme is known as the Local Welfare Provision (LWP) scheme.
- 1.5 As a Co-operative Council, the Council is committed to making the most of the strengths that lie in communities and neighbourhoods across the borough. This is reflected in the LWP scheme, which makes use of the expertise and local knowledge of community groups, charitable organisations, and partner agencies in working together to support residents in difficult circumstances.
- 1.6 Oldham Council is also committed to supporting local people to find sustainable, long-term solutions, so that help is provided to prevent people from facing crises and needing support in the future. As part of the process of assessing a claim for LWP, the Council seeks to identify whether applicants could benefit from other forms of support (such as benefit, debt or budgeting advice) which gives them the tools to address the root causes of any short-term problems which are causing them to turn to LWP for help.

Response to COVID 19

- 1.7 The Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has allocated £361,000 of funding to Oldham to support the allocation of food and essential supplies. Of this sum, £105,000 of this funding has been set aside to help broaden support currently available through the Local Welfare Provision Scheme. This additional funding is only available in 2020/21. This funding has been allocated as follows
 - £80,000 to help meet additional requests for support from the scheme as more residents experience crisis during the COVID 19 pandemic
 - £25,000 to fund a wider package of essential household items to those in crisis including bedding, crockery, cutlery, cleaning products and COVID protection pack (face mask/hand sanitiser, etc.).

2. Purpose of the Scheme

2.1 The purpose of the Local Welfare Provision Scheme is to provide support:

- To meet short term emergency/immediate support needs of vulnerable residents.
- To assist vulnerable residents to establish or maintain a home in the community.

2.2 Examples of the types of residents and the circumstances where an award may be considered are:

- Care Leavers under the age of 25
- People who have suffered a disaster/crisis such as fire or flood
- Families under exceptional financial pressure including as a result of the impact of COVID 19
- People who are homeless or rough sleepers
- Vulnerable older people
- People fleeing domestic violence
- People moving out of institutional or residential care
- People moving to supported accommodation/independent living
- People who are leaving prison or detention centres
- People who are chronically or terminally ill
- People with alcohol or drug issues
- People with learning difficulties.
- People returning to work after a short term on benefit

This list is not exhaustive.

3. Principles of the Scheme

3.1 The LWP scheme is based around the following principles:

- The Council will treat each resident fairly and equitably with full consideration being given to their circumstances.
- The LWP scheme is a fund to support those in crisis who do not have ready access to other means of support. This will ensure that funding is prioritised to support those residents in most need. The scheme is discretionary, which means an applicant does not have a statutory right to an award.
- The Council will consider making LWP awards to applicants who meet the qualifying criteria specified in this policy, providing that there is sufficient funding available.
- In each financial year the Council will spend no more on LWP awards than the DWP or other government department makes available in grant funding to support the scheme.
- The Council reserves the right to vary the operation of the scheme during the year to ensure that the level of awards made does not exceed the funding available.

- The Council will provide support to applicants by means of signposting or referrals to other partners, regardless of the outcome of their claim for LWP, to avoid a future need to claim LWP and to maximise the support offered.
- The Council will consider bids for LWP funding from groups / organisations who provide support to Oldham residents. Successful bidders will be awarded monies from the fund providing there is sufficient funding. In these cases, residents may be awarded LWP support without the requirement to complete an application form.

4. Eligibility Criteria

4.1 To be eligible for an award the applicant must:

- Be aged 16 or over
- Be a resident of the borough
- Be in receipt of or about to receive one of the following:
 - Income Support
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - Employment and Support Allowance (income-related)
 - Pension Credit
 - Universal Credit
 - Housing Benefit
 - Council Tax Reduction
 - Child/Working Tax Credit
 - Disability Living Allowance
 - Personal Independence Payment
 (NB Awards may be made in exceptional circumstances to applicants who are not in receipt of one of the above benefits)
- Have taken all reasonable steps available to maximise income e.g. claiming Council Tax Reduction, Universal Credit, Discretionary Housing Payments
- Have insufficient means to meet the need of the applicant and/or the applicant's family after an emergency or crisis

4.2 During the COVID 19 crisis, consideration will also be given under the scheme to use discretion to consider applications from those significantly impacted by the COVID crisis and in need of emergency financial support. Examples of this may include where the applicant

- runs their own business and cannot trade or
- runs a business that has been impacted as a result of the pandemic or
- has been laid off or furloughed
- has suffered personal illness or where illness of the applicant's family has resulted in financial crisis

4.3 To avoid duplication., the Council will signpost the applicant to other available support as part of this assessment including Test and Trace Support Payments, support available from the Get Oldham Working and Invest teams.

4.4 An award will not be made where:

- the applicant has already applied to another fund or scheme for the same items covered by LWP
- the applicant has access to other funds which could be used to cover the costs, such as savings.
- the applicant owns a property other than the one in which they live.
- the need for LWP has been self-imposed by the applicant e.g. a benefit sanction enforced, loss of employment due to misconduct etc. except in exceptional circumstances e.g. unjust sanction where there is no other support available. In this circumstance, the applicant must be supported by a trusted referrer or support worker.
- the applicant has received an LWP award in the past 3 months

In cases of significant exceptional need, the above criteria can be relaxed.

5. The Application Process

5.1 The application process is clear, transparent and accessible.

5.2 Applicants can request support through a number of access channels:

- Online via the Council website
- Through a dedicated telephone line (telephone number here)
- Through a trusted referrer - these will be in a wide range of organisations across the Borough and from a range of services within Team Oldham.

5.3 The application can be made by:

- the person to whom the application relates (the applicant)
- another person on behalf of the applicant (the representative/referrer)

5.4 The application process is designed to provide consistent and fair decision making by gathering appropriate data and supporting information in an accessible way.

5.5 The Council may request reasonable evidence in support of an application for an LWP award.

- The applicant will be asked to provide the evidence within 10 working days of the request although this will be extended in appropriate circumstances.
- If the applicant is unable to or does not provide the required evidence within the timeframe stipulated, then the application will be treated as withdrawn by the applicant.
- The Council reserves the right to verify any information or evidence that the applicant supplies with third parties including other Council departments, Government agencies, other Local Authorities, external organisations or individuals. The Council may also use the information for the detection and prevention of fraud.
- Under data sharing powers contained within the Welfare Reform Act 2012, those administering the scheme will have access to DWP data in relation to benefits to support decision making.

5.6 Dependent upon the circumstances, the Council may signpost or refer the applicant to other sources of funding and assistance rather than or in addition to making an LWP award.

5.7 The Council will also undertake proactive exercises to determine specific categories of resident or group of vulnerable residents who may be eligible for LWP support.

6. Decision Making

6.1 In determining an LWP award, the Council will take a holistic look at the applicant's needs and circumstances, as well as the amount of funding available in the LWP fund.

6.2 The Council will consider:

- the financial circumstances of the applicant, their partner, their dependents, and anyone else who lives with them
- any savings or other available finances
- any other help which is likely to be available from other funds or schemes
- any expenditure of the applicant, any partner, their dependents and anyone else who lives with them
- the level of debt of the applicant and their family
- any medical issues, or other exceptional needs, of the applicant, their partner, their dependents, or anyone else who lives with them
- whether an LWP award could address the needs of the applicant
- whether granting an award would help prevent further or additional needs.

6.3 If the Council decides that an LWP award can be made they will determine the type of support to be awarded.

6.4 The Council may retrospectively enhance a 2020/21 award if it is felt that the provision of additional essential items will assist the resident in moving out of crisis and in establishing or maintaining a home in the community.

7. Types of Support

7.1 Types of support available include but are not limited to:

- **Beds**
- **Washing machine**
- **Cooker**
- **Fridge**
- **Sofa and chairs**
- **Carpets**
- **Clothing**
- **Emergency transport costs**
- **Food**
- **Help with Fuel costs**

- **Kitchen pack** including kettle, toaster, saucepan set and frying pan, crockery set, cutlery and cleaning products
- **COVID protection pack** including hand sanitiser, anti-bacterial wipes and spray and reusable face mask (this will be included with every successful application)
- **Single and double bedding packs** including quilt and quilt cover, pillows and pillowcases, sheets, hand and bath towels

This list is not exhaustive

7.2 LWP awards would not normally be given for:

- A television or satellite cost or repair
- Installation of a telephone or telephone line
- Housing costs or arrears of rent
- Costs which can be met from other sources
- Debts
- Motor vehicle expenses
- TV license
- Costs associated with care provision

This list is not exhaustive.

7.3 The Council has the discretion to determine which goods or services are essential and will consider the circumstances of each claim.

8. **Methods of Support**

8.1 The Council will determine the most appropriate method of support to be provided to successful applicants. The decision will be made based on the type of support required and the individual's circumstances.

8.2 The Council may make awards of support to:

- the applicant
- their partner
- an appointee or authorised representative

8.3 The Council will make awards in the following ways:

- Vouchers for food
- Order and payment by the Council to suppliers of suitable goods or services
- Pre-payment cards for goods and utilities
- Cash payments will only be awarded in exceptional circumstances.

This list is not exhaustive.

9. Notification

- 9.1 The applicant and any other interested party such as representative or trusted referrer will be notified of the outcome of the application within 2 working days of the date of application.
- 9.2 The Council will notify the applicant of the decision by the most appropriate method. This may be by telephone call, letter or email.
- 9.3 Where the application is successful, the notification will include details of:
- the amount of the award;
 - the purpose for which the award should be used;
 - the method of support
 - signposting to websites and contacts for other support agencies.
- 9.4 Where the application is unsuccessful or the award does not meet the full level of support that the applicant requested, the notification will include:
- an explanation of the reasons why the application was unsuccessful
 - details of the right to request a review
 - signposting to websites and contacts for other support agencies.

10. Rights of Review

- 10.1 LWP awards are not subject to a statutory appeals process.
- 10.2 An applicant (or their representative) who disagrees with a decision may request a review of the decision within 14 days of the date of the decision
- 10.3 The review will be undertaken by an officer who was not involved in determining the original decision.
- 10.4 The request can be made
- On line via e-mail
 - By telephone through a dedicated telephone line
 - In writing
- 10.5 The applicant (or their representative) will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review.
- 10.6 There is no further right of appeal. However, the resident or their representative will have the right to make a complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. www.lgo.gov.uk. Telephone 0300 061 0614

11. Fraud and recovery of awards

- 11.1 If the Council becomes aware that the information contained in an application for an LWP award was incorrect or that relevant information was not disclosed either intentionally or otherwise, the matter will be investigated.

11.2 Any applicant who tries to fraudulently claim an LWP award may be committing a criminal offence under the Fraud Act 2006 and could lead to criminal proceedings.

11.3 The Council will seek to recover the value of any LWP award made as a result of a fraudulent application.

12. Monitoring

12.1 The scheme is subject to monthly reporting and review.

12.2 ICT systems have been implemented which provide detailed and robust management information to allow continuous monitoring and real time information in relation to:

- payment of awards
- methods of payment
- projected allocation of funds
- awards made
- equalities data
- speed of awards
- number of reviews
- outcome of reviews
- referrals or signposting to other agencies

12.3 Where funding has been allocated to groups / organisations who provide support to Oldham residents, separate monitoring processes will be implemented specific to that arrangement.

13. Publicity

13.1 The Council will publicise the scheme and provide information to relevant agencies, stakeholders, the community, faith and voluntary sector and other services in Team Oldham, including a list of trusted referrers.

14. Policy Review

14.1 In addition to an annual review, the policy will be reviewed in the light of any budget changes, legislative changes; trends or other factors that impact on the effectiveness of the policy.

14.2 The Council reserves the right to review and revise the scheme at any time based on information gained as a result of operating the scheme.

14.2 The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Green in conjunction with the Director of Finance are authorised by Cabinet to agree any revisions to the scheme.

14.3 The latest version of the policy is available on the Council website

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Report to Cabinet

Council Tax Tax Base and Non-Domestic Rates Tax Base Forecast 2023/24

Portfolio Holder: Report of Councillor Abdul Jabbar MBE,
Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance and Low Carbon

Officer Contact: Anne Ryans (Director of Finance)

Report Author: John Hoskins (Finance Manager)

23 January 2023

Reason for Decision

This report presents to Cabinet the Council Tax Tax Base and provisional Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) Tax Base forecast for 2023/24 which will underpin the forthcoming Council Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy scheduled for consideration at Budget Council on 1 March 2023.

The report also seeks delegated authority to finalise the 2023/24 Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates) forecast to reflect up to date Non-Domestic Rates details to be submitted to Central Government via the annual NNDR 1 return by the statutory deadline of 31 January 2023.

Executive Summary

This report sets out information on the Council Tax Tax Base for 2023/24 using the most up to date valuation list and all other information and estimates available.

The total number of chargeable properties included in the Council Tax Tax Base calculation in Oldham for 2023/24 is 95,980. This figure is reduced to 87,000 after allowing for discounts and exemptions and translates to the equivalent of 69,175.3 Band D properties. After applying adjustments for the Local Council Tax Support scheme offset by the additional charging for empty properties and an anticipated increase in the number of properties to be included in the valuation list over the forthcoming year, the number of Band D equivalent properties reduces to 60,465.1. The final Tax Base after the application of the anticipated collection rate of 96.75% is 58,500 which is an increase of 1,050 when compared to the Council Tax Tax Base for 2022/23 of 57,450.

The 2023/24 Tax Bases for Saddleworth and Shaw and Crompton Parish Councils of 8,952 and 5,615 respectively, have been calculated using the same methodology.

Statute requires local Billing Authorities to prepare and submit to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) a locally determined and approved Business Rates forecast through the NNDR 1 return by 31 January each year. This forecast will be used to determine the 2023/24 “demand” and payment schedule for Business Rates between Oldham Council and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). Being a participant in the Greater Manchester 100% Rates Retention Pilot Scheme which was confirmed for the financial year 2023/24 in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (PLGFS) which was announced on 19 December 2022 means the Council no longer pays a share of Business Rates to Central Government. Instead, Oldham currently retains 99% of the income with 1% being paid to the GMCA for Fire and Rescue services.

The estimated rating income for 2023/24 attributable to Oldham Council using the latest information which includes the Business Rates Revaluation is currently £48.499m which is a decrease of £0.106m compared to 2022/23. Delegation is sought to enable the Business Rates forecast to be updated to take account of up-to-date Non-Domestic Rates information, enabling the submission to Central Government of the annual NNDR 1 return by the statutory deadline of 31 January 2023.

As the 100% Business Rates retention regime is continuing, the Council has assumed a benefit of £4.180m from the pilot scheme for 2023/24. The current arrangement is that the Council can retain 75% of this benefit with the balance attributable to GMCA. The Council’s share, £3.135m will be made available to support the 2023/24 budget whilst the GMCA share will be transferred to a reserve to be paid to the GMCA once the final position has been agreed. These figures will only be confirmed by the end of 2023/24.

It is important to highlight to Members that the preparation of Council Tax and Business Rates Tax Bases is being undertaken in a period of unprecedented uncertainty and volatility. The current economic climate including uncertain prospects for economic growth, Government changes in policy in year, the revaluation of Business Rates from 1 April 2023 and the economic impact of the conflict in Ukraine are amongst the issues which make forecasting challenging.

The Collection Fund has moved into a projected surplus position in 2022/23 providing the opportunity to use the surplus to support the 2023/24. This is the result of the lifting of COVID-19 related restrictions during the year and consequent improved collection rates. It also reflects the level of Government support provided via Business Rate reliefs which has reduced any losses in collection.

In addition, April 2023 signifies the start of a new Business Rates Revaluation list with all properties being reassessed to identify new rateable values. A property’s rateable value is an assessment of the annual rent the property would generate if it were available on the open market at a fixed valuation date. From 1 April 2023, the rateable values are based on the valuation date of 1 April 2021. Revaluations are undertaken to maintain fairness in the system by redistributing the total amount payable in business rates, reflecting changes in the property market. In terms of

volatility for the Collection Fund, then there is a risk that appeals against any revaluation increase over the levels assumed in modelling the financial projections.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 1) Cabinet approves:
 - a) The Council Tax Tax Base for 2023/24 at 58,500 Band D equivalent properties.
 - b) The latest estimate for 2023/24 Business Rates revenue that is attributable to Oldham Council as being £48.499m.
 - c) The drawing down from the Collection Fund of £4.180m of Business Rates retention gains anticipated for 2023/24, of which the Council will utilise £3.135m (75%)
- 2) Cabinet notes the Tax Bases for Saddleworth and Shaw and Crompton Parish Councils of 8,952 and 5,615 respectively.
- 3) Cabinet delegates the decision to vary the final Business Rates forecast and hence the Business Rates Tax Base, if required, to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Low Carbon in consultation with the Director of Finance.

Council Tax Tax Base and Non-Domestic Rates Tax Base Forecast 2023/24**1 Background**

- 1.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 requires the Council as the Billing Authority to calculate and approve the Council Tax Tax Base for 2023/24 by 31 January 2023, based on the valuation list and other information and estimates available. The method of calculation is contained in the regulations.
- 1.2 This report presents for approval, Oldham Council's Council Tax Tax Base for 2023/24 and the extracted Tax Bases for Saddleworth and Shaw & Crompton Parish Councils. This will enable Tax Base information to be made available to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in relation to major precepting functions and the two Parish Councils in Oldham.
- 1.3 The Council will use the Council Tax Tax Base for 2023/24 in setting the Council Tax and determining the level of Council Tax income for 2023/24.
- 1.4 Notification of the 2023/24 Council Tax Tax Base must be provided to Major Precepting Authorities by the statutory deadline of 31 January 2023. The GMCA is responsible for determining the two major precepts, the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept and the Mayoral General Precept (which incorporates precepts for both and Mayoral General Service provision and the Fire and Rescue Service)
- 1.5 The Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013 set out a timetable for informing the Government and precepting Authorities of the Business Rates revenue calculation. The Council is required to submit a Government return (NNDR 1) by 31 January in the year prior to the financial year for which the calculation is being made. The return estimates the amount of Business Rates (Non-Domestic Rate (NDR)) that it is expected will be collected in the following financial year. Given the legislative changes introduced from April 2013 and the extension of the 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot arrangements for a further year, the estimates now take on a higher profile because the Council is using a greater proportion of the business rates collected.
- 1.6 Consequently, the Council must formally approve the NDR forecast in a manner similar to the Council Tax Tax Base.

2 Current PositionCollection Fund Forecast Outturn Position for 2022/23

- 2.1 The Collection Fund forecast outturn position is presented within the revenue monitoring reports considered by Cabinet throughout the year. As explained later in this report, it is exceptionally challenging to accurately forecast both Council Tax and Business Rates revenues over the short to medium term.

- 2.2 In 2022/23, the Government continued the extension of Business Rates discounts giving a 50% discount up to a rateable value of £110,000 in respect of retail, leisure, hospitality, and nursery properties for the period April 2022 to March 2023. Business Ratepayers for these businesses were therefore not required to pay their full Business Rates and the Government instead compensated the Council for the loss of income via a grant. This grant is currently estimated to be £4.122m. These Business Rate reliefs have been revised and expanded into 2023/24 and have therefore influenced the level of Business Rates income that will be collected in 2023/24 as explained later.
- 2.3 At this stage, for budget setting purposes and for the purpose of notifying the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) as major preceptor, the Collection Fund in year forecast outturn position for both Council Tax and Business Rates for 2022/23 will be an estimated surplus of £4.179m. The Council has chosen to utilise this surplus to support the 2023/24 budget with a share allocated to the major preceptor of £4.130m.

Estimated Collection Fund Forecast Position as at Month 8

Collection Fund Balance	Council Tax £000	NDR £000	Total £000
Balance Brought Forward	2,958	6,175	9,133
Contribution to deficit carried forward from 2021/22	(2,873)	(10,379)	(13,252)
Prior Year Balance Brought Forward	85	(4,204)	(4,119)
(Surplus) /Deficit for the Year	(133)	73	(60)
Net (Surplus)/Deficit Carried Forward	(48)	(4,131)	(4,179)

Collection Fund – 2022/23 Share of Balances; Forecast Position

Collection Fund Balance	Council Tax £000	NDR £000	Total £000
Share - Oldham Council	(40)	(4,090)	(4,130)
Share – Greater Manchester Combined Authority Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner	(5)	-	(5)
Share – Greater Manchester Combined Authority Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services)	(3)	(41)	(44)
Total (Surplus)	(48)	(4,131)	(4,179)

- 2.4 The preceptors will be notified of the 2022/23 Council Tax surplus by the statutory deadline.

Calculation of the Council Tax Tax Base for 2023/24

- 2.5 The Council Tax Tax Base determines the Council Tax revenue generated at a given collection rate, for each £1 of Council Tax levied. It is the estimated full year equivalent number of chargeable dwellings. This is expressed as the equivalent number of Band D dwellings with two or more liable adults in occupation.
- 2.6 In October each year the Government requires the submission of a return, the Council Tax Base 1 (CTB1), and a version of this is used as the basis for the calculation of the Tax Base. Using the CTB1, Appendix A shows the total number of dwellings on the valuation list in Oldham is 98,118. Allowing for exemptions, demolitions and disabled relief dwellings, this number reduces to 95,980 chargeable dwellings which are then allocated across the nine Council Tax Bands. Some of these chargeable dwellings receive discounts from Council Tax (e.g., dwellings occupied solely by students) whilst single person households pay only 75% of the charge otherwise payable. The number of dwellings is therefore adjusted to reflect these discounts and exemptions, giving a figure of 87,000 dwellings.
- 2.7 The nine Council Tax Valuation bands provide the basis for the Tax Base calculation, with the number of chargeable dwellings in each band being calculated through to its 'Band D equivalent'. A bill for a Band A property is equivalent to 6/9 of that of a Band D property whilst a Band H property is equivalent to 2 times (18/9) of a Band D property. The application of the Band D equivalent calculation therefore reduces the Tax Base to 69,175.
- 2.8 A further adjustment is required to the Tax Base due to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS). The scheme replaced Council Tax Benefit and was introduced for the first time in 2013/14. The LCTRS is treated as a discount rather than a benefit and therefore reduces the Tax Base. The Council has not undertaken a public consultation on changing the LCTRS for 2023/24 and therefore the assumption at this stage is that the scheme will remain the same as that for 2022/23 with discount anticipated to continue to be capped at 85% of a Band A property.
- 2.9 The summarised method of calculating the 2023/24 Tax Base is shown in Appendix A. This shows that, taking the above issues into account, the Tax Base would be 60,465 at a 100% collection level but would be 58,500 at a collection rate of 96.75%. The Tax Base has increased by 1,050 compared to the figure for 2022/23 (the Tax Base in 2022/23 was 57,450), largely reflecting an expected decrease in the number of households claiming Council Tax Reduction as the economy continues to recover from the Coronavirus pandemic and an increase in the number of chargeable dwellings.

Estimated Collection Rate

- 2.10 A recent review of collection levels has been undertaken to inform the 2023/24 budget process. This review has been informed by:

- The impact of the LCTRS on Council Tax revenues. Evidence indicates that entitlement to benefit has begun to reduce from the levels seen at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, similarly collection rates in 2022/23 are showing some signs of improvement (however, the recent worsening of the economic outlook, which is outside the control of the Council, may impact on this position but this is yet unknown).
- The inflationary pressures on households (often referred to as the Cost-of-Living Crisis) impacting on their ability to manage their finances which has the potential to see increasing numbers of Council Taxpayers falling into arrears in the future.

2.11 In view of the above uncertainty and potential volatility it is considered appropriate to maintain the anticipated collection rate at 96.75%. The Council will however continue to closely monitor the collection rate and Tax Base position to determine whether the changing environment around the wider economic outlook has any impact on the Council Tax collection rate and Collection Fund position.

Parish Council Tax Bases

2.12 The Tax Base calculated for 2023/24 for the Parish Councils of Saddleworth and Shaw & Crompton are 8,952 and 5,615 respectively. This represents an increase for Saddleworth of 120 Band D equivalent properties and for Shaw & Crompton an increase of 67 Band D equivalent properties when comparing totals to the Parish Tax Bases for 2022/23. The Tax Bases have been calculated on a basis consistent with those for the Borough as a whole.

2.13 The Council provides grant compensation to the two local Parish Councils for losses associated with the introduction of Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes in 2013/14. Whilst Central Government originally provided grant funding in 2013/14 to cover these losses, the funding was subsequently rolled into Revenue Support Grant and cut year on year. Between 2016/17 and 2019/20, the grant payable to Parish Council's was scaled down to match continued reductions in Revenue Support Grant. Grants payable to the Parish Councils have subsequently continued to be maintained at 2019/20 levels. The amount of grant payable to each Parish for 2023/24 is detailed in the table below.

	2023/24 £000
Saddleworth Parish Council	13
Shaw & Crompton Parish Council	5
Total Parish Grant Payable	18

Business (Non-Domestic) Rates

2.14 Local billing authorities are required to prepare and submit to the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) a locally determined and approved Business Rates forecast through the NNDR 1 return by the statutory deadline of 31 January each year. This forecast is used to determine the 2023/24 "demand" and payment schedule for Business Rates

revenues between Oldham Council and the GMCA. The GMCA determines the Mayoral General Precept which covers general Mayoral service provision as well as Fire and Rescue functions for which (due to the piloting of the 100% Business Rates Retention Scheme as explained below) it receives 1% of all Business Rates Revenues collected across Greater Manchester. Under the 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot scheme arrangements, Central Government does not receive a share of Business Rates revenues.

- 2.15 Over the past few years, the Government has introduced a series of Business Rates reliefs. This has meant the Council has received Grant in Lieu of Business Rates as compensation for the Business Rates not billed due to the reliefs given to businesses. Each year the Council forecasts its allocation for Grant in Lieu of Business Rates for the following financial year as part of the NNDR1 return. The initial estimate for 2023/24 is £25.939m of which the Councils' share is £25.694m.
- 2.16 The Government has announced an extension of current Business Rates reliefs, most notably the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates Relief scheme which will see an increase from 50% in 2022/23 to 75% in 2023,24 on properties with a rateable value of up to £110,000. The calculated Business Rates Tax Base has therefore fallen whilst the Grant in Lieu of Business Rates received as compensation for the lost Business Rates income has correspondingly increased.
- 2.17 Business Rates are a highly complex and volatile tax, and it is exceptionally difficult to forecast movements over the short to medium term with great accuracy. Since the change to the Business Rates regime in 2013/14 and the revaluation exercises undertaken by the Valuation Office Agency (effective from 1 April 2017 and most recently 1 April 2023), much more uncertainty has been introduced into the setting of Council budgets as the Tax Base is prone to significant changes and can fluctuate for many reasons; the most common of which are listed below:
- Changes in liability resulting from a change in occupancy.
 - Appeals against rating decisions, the length of time it takes to conclude appeals and the requirement to make an assessment of the cost of appeals prior to settlement;
 - Demolitions and the point at which properties are removed from the rating list;
 - New builds and the point at which rateable occupation is triggered;
 - Changes in building use and alterations to building size or layout;
 - Changes in entitlement to mandatory and/or discretionary reliefs;
 - Action taken by property owners/occupiers to avoid full liability and maximise relief; particularly empty property and charitable relief;
 - Changes in Council policy in relation to discretionary rate relief;
 - Changes in the requirement to provide for doubtful debts.
- 2.18 Fluctuations in the amount of Business Rates income collected are also strongly influenced by the performance of the wider economy. In an economic downturn there is a heightened risk of properties being left empty and lower levels of development activity. Conversely, when the economy is

more buoyant, business activity and thereby rating income can increase. As the economy is currently in recession then this creates even greater uncertainty in projecting Business Rates income for 2023/24.

- 2.19 The level and timing of appeals against a rateable value are perhaps the most significant factors that can have an impact on variability in yield. Appeals are dealt with by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) and can date back many years. Recent information highlights that appeals covering around £13m of rateable value (in advance of the application of 2023 Revaluation changes to rateable value) remain unresolved. Total rateable value for the Oldham Billing Area is around £156m meaning appeals currently impact on approximately 8% of the overall Business Rates Tax Base.
- 2.20 The Check, Challenge & Appeal process introduced by the VOA after the 2017 revaluation exercise has tried to incorporate a degree of consistency to the appeals submission process, whilst simultaneously seeking to limit the number of 'speculative' claims. The revised process has significantly reduced the number of claims that reach the appeal stage. However, it is not clear whether the process is reducing the real number of appeals or simply causing delay. What is clear is that greater financial provision will need to be made for individual claims that reach the appeal stage as, having been through check and challenge, their probability of securing a rateable value reduction is much greater than under the previous arrangements. Furthermore, March 2023 sees the end of the current six-year rating list period, any appeals from businesses received before this date which then prove to be successful will potentially result in businesses having a revision to their Business Rates bills backdated to possibly April 2017. It is yet unknown whether this will lead to a spike in Business Rates appeals lodged before deadline of the financial year end.
- 2.21 Recognising the challenges that this volatility presents, the Council has put in place arrangements to monitor Business Rates liability on a monthly basis. The output from these monitoring arrangements shows that net liability tends to reduce as the year progresses from each the start of the financial year in April. These reductions are the result of:
- Reductions in gross rates payable as outstanding appeals are settled.
 - Increases in mandatory and empty property relief as more claims are submitted and processed as the year progresses.
- 2.22 These trends/movements set against the base position form the basis of the forecast business rates outturn position for 2022/23 and forecast for 2023/24.

Greater Manchester (GM) 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot Scheme

- 2.23 On 1 April 2017, the GMCA, Oldham Council and the nine other GM districts commenced a pilot scheme for the 100% local retention of Business Rates. Under the pilot scheme, additional Business Rates income was initially offset by reductions in other funding streams such as Revenue Support Grant and Public Health Grant in exchange for the local retention of all future growth in Business Rates revenue (rather than just 50% as is the case with the national scheme of business rates retention). The pilot scheme has delivered

year on year financial benefits for its participants. Whilst there has been some uncertainty as to the continuation of the 100% Business Rates retention piloting arrangements, the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (PLGFS) announced on 19 December 2022, advised that the pilot scheme would continue for at least the financial year 2023/24. Therefore, based on best estimates the Council has assumed a total benefit of £4.180m from the pilot scheme for 2023/24. The current arrangements are that the Council retains 75% of this benefit with the balance attributable to the GMCA. The Council's has assumed the same share at 75%, although this is still subject to confirmation, with £3.135m being made available to support the 2023/24 budget whilst the GMCA share will be transferred to a reserve to be paid to the GMCA once the final position has been agreed. It is important to note that these figures will only be confirmed at the end of 2023/24.

GM Business Rates Pool 2023/24

- 2.24 Members will recall that the opportunity to join a Business Rates pool to retain a share of Business Rates growth with other neighbouring Local Authorities was first introduced in 2015/16. In the years up to 2021/22, the Council participated in Business Rates pooling with the nine other GM Councils and Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils. Pooling was not pursued in 2021/22 and 2022/23 as it was not advantageous as the two Cheshire Councils chose not to participate. However, an expression of interest was submitted to Government for a 2023/24 pool consisting of all ten GM Councils.
- 2.25 The fact that Greater Manchester is piloting full Business Rates retention, suggests participating in Business Rates pooling is no longer necessary as there are no additional financial gains to be made. However, a decision on membership could not be taken until the contents of the 2023/24 PLGFS had been examined and the impact understood. Confirmation of pool membership had to be made within 28 days of the receipt of PLGFS information (notified on 19 December 2022). After examining the Settlement information, a collective decision of all ten Authorities was made not to proceed with pooling for 2023/24 and the Government was notified accordingly.

Grants in Lieu of Business Rates

- 2.26 It should be noted that the Council receives significant sums from Central Government as compensation for loss of Business Rates revenue resulting from previous national policy changes such as multiplier caps and the introduction of new business rates reliefs and discounts. These grants for 2023/24 awarded under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 are currently forecast to be worth around £25.939m (of which the Councils share is £25.694m). However as mentioned in paragraph 2.17 reliefs and discounts can be a particularly difficult area to forecast with changes in Government policy resulting in vastly different outcomes to those originally estimated. The current forecast reflects the reliefs and discounts announced as part of the Autumn Statement 2022 and confirmed in the Business Rates Information Letter (7/2022): Business Rates guidance and general information, published on 21 December 2022.

2023/24 Business Rates Forecast – Conclusion

- 2.27 It is important to highlight to Members that the preparation of Council Tax and Business Rates Tax Bases are being undertaken in a period of unprecedented uncertainty and volatility. The impact of the cost of living crisis and the economic recession has the potential to reduce both the Council Tax and Business Rates income collected in 2023/24.
- 2.28 In addition, April 2023 signifies the start of a new Business Rates Revaluation list with all properties being reassessed to identify new rateable values. A property's rateable value is an assessment of the annual rent the property would generate if it were available on the open market at a fixed valuation date. From 1 April 2023, the rateable values are based on the valuation date of 1 April 2021. Revaluations are undertaken to maintain fairness in the system by redistributing the total amount payable in Business Rates, reflecting changes in the property market. They are not carried out to generate extra revenue.
- 2.29 Having considered the issues above, many factors are outside the control of the Council. Central Government confirmation that Local Government will continue to be fully compensated for implementing policy announcements made within previous Budgets provides assurance for short-term forecasting. However, over the long term, the switch to more frequent revaluations and the on-going results of Business Rates Retention are extremely difficult to assess. Forecasts for 2023/24 have been prepared based on trends emerging from the monthly monitoring of Business Rates liability during 2022/23.
- 2.30 For the purposes of formal decision making, Oldham Council's share of the Business (Non-Domestic) Rates forecast for 2023/24 is presented at £48.499m a decrease of £0.106m compared to 2022/23 (reflecting offsetting receipt of grant compensation). This represents the best estimate available currently and is the assumption underpinning the 2023/24 budget estimates. However, delegation to vary the Business Rates Tax Base is sought as the final Business Rates forecast for 2023/24 will only be confirmed when preparing the submission of the Council's NNDR 1 return in late January 2023.
- 2.31 The calculation of the current Council forecast of £48.499m is summarised in the table below:

Forecast Business Rates Yield	2023/24 £000
Oldham Council Share (99%)	48,499
GMCA Share (for Fire and Rescue functions) (1%)	490
Total Forecast Yield	48,989

- 2.32 As advised above, in addition to the £48.499m to be used to support the Councils 2023/24 budget, £0.490m will be precepted and allocated to GMCA for its share of the Business Rates income forecast to support Fire and Rescue Services.

- 2.33 In addition, the Council will also precept £4.180m which is the anticipated share of Business Rate gains as a result of the 100% Business Rates pilot scheme. The Council is expecting to utilise 75% of this, a sum of £3.135m, (although this has not yet been confirmed by GMCA) bringing the total Business Rates funding available to the Council for 2023/24 to £51.634m. The balance of the Business Rates gains (£1.045m) will be allocated to GMCA.
- 2.34 As advised above, delegation is sought to vary these figures dependent on the submission of the NNDR1 form to Government. The Business Rates income used to support the 2023/24 budget may therefore be subject to change on or around 31 January 2023.

3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 The Council has little discretion in the calculation of the number of properties incorporated into the Council Tax Tax Base given the legislative framework that is in place. However, there is some discretion in estimating the number of new properties that will be included on the Council Tax register during 2023/24 and the change to the number of claimants of Council Tax Reduction. A prudent view has been taken in this regard. The main area for an alternative approach is over the level of assumed collection rate. An increase in the collection rate would boost the anticipated Council Tax income and a decrease in the rate would decrease income. The Council has chosen to maintain its 2023/24 collection rate at 96.75%. This decision has been influenced by prevailing economic circumstances and current trends in collection rates.
- 3.2 The NNDR1 return generates the figures upon which the Business Rates Tax Base is prepared. It is not therefore appropriate to consider an alternative approach. However, as the figures included on the NNDR1 return on 31 January 2023 may vary from the estimated level, delegation is sought to allow the opportunity to revise the Business Rates forecast and approve a revised and more accurate position for budget setting.

4 Preferred Option

- 4.1 It is recommended that Members approve the Council Tax Tax Base of 58,500 and an estimate of the Council's Business Rates Tax Base of £48.499m (plus a further £3.135m resulting from a Business Rates pilot scheme gain). Delegation to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Low Carbon in consultation with the Director of Finance is however sought for the final Business Rates Tax Base decision, the final estimated net business rate yield and ultimately the Council's retained Business Rate income for 2023/24.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 Indicative Tax Base information has been shared with precepting Authorities to assist them in the budget projections, subject to confirmation by this report.
- 5.2 The Council will advise the preceptors of the approved Council Tax and Business Rates Tax Bases (as appropriate) by the statutory deadline of 31 January 2023 and will submit the final NNDR1 also by that date.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 Dealt with in full in this report.

7 Legal Services Comments

- 7.1 It is necessary for the Cabinet to set the Council Tax Tax Base having regards to the appropriate Regulations and to notify that to the relevant precepting bodies. Additionally, it is now required that the Business Rates Tax Base is approved by Cabinet.

8. Co-operative Agenda

- 8.1 Income generated from Council Tax and Business Rates supports the Council's budget process and hence supports the delivery of the cooperative agenda.

9 Human Resources Comments

- 9.1 None.

10 Risk Assessments

- 10.1 There is a risk that if the anticipated Council Tax collection level is too high, there will be a shortfall in the income anticipated. This would influence the budget setting arrangements in future years. With the introduction of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, collection rates are now much more difficult to assess, and these will be kept under constant review however the proposed collection rate seeks to minimise the risk with a prudent approach taken to setting the collection level.
- 10.2 There is also a risk that if the anticipated level of Business Rates is not achieved it would lead to budget pressures in future financial years. Hence a prudent approach will be taken in assessing the anticipated business rates income levels.
- 10.3 There are economic risks outside the control of the Council which have the potential to reduce the levels of Council Tax and Business Rates income assumed in the financial modelling undertaken by the Council.
- 10.4 There is a risk the Council does not receive the 75% share of pilot gains anticipated within the report.

11 IT Implications

11.1 None.

12 Property Implications

12.1 None.

13 Procurement Implications

13.1 None.

14 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

14.1 None.

15 Equality, community cohesion and crime implications

15.1 None.

16 Equality Impact Assessment Completed?

16.1 Not applicable.

17 Key Decision

17.1 Yes.

18 Key Decision Reference

18.1 FLC-19-22

19 Background Papers

19.1 The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act:

File Ref: Background Papers are contained in Appendix A
Officer Name: John Hoskins

20 Appendices

20.1 Appendix A Calculation of the Council Tax Tax Base for 2023/24

APPENDIX A

Calculation of Council Tax Tax Base 2023/24 (Based on all properties)

Bands	A reduced	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Total
Total number of Dwellings on the Valuation List		50,896	17,469	16,538	7,180	3,446	1,579	927	83	98,118
Total number of Exempt and Disabled Relief Dwellings on the Valuation List	157	(1,430)	(286)	(347)	(115)	(54)	(18)	(22)	(23)	(2,138)
No. of Chargeable Dwellings	157	49,466	17,183	16,191	7,065	3,392	1,561	905	60	95,980
Less: Estimated discounts, exemptions and disabled relief	(7.5)	(5,617.2)	(1,492.5)	(1,188.7)	(396)	(160.7)	(72.5)	(41.7)	(3.2)	(8,980)
Total equivalent number of dwellings after discounts, exemptions and disabled relief	149.5	43,848.8	15,690.5	15,002.3	6,669	3,231.3	1,488.5	863.3	56.8	87,000
Factor stipulated in regulations	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9	9/9	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9	
Band D equivalent	83.1	29,232.5	12,203.7	13,335.3	6,669	3,949.3	2,150.1	1,438.8	113.5	69,175.3
Net effect of Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) and other adjustments – reduction in Band D Equivalents										(9,582.2)
Increase in Band D equivalents in 2022/23 based on estimates of changes in discounts & exemptions and the acceleration of planned housing/ regeneration schemes.										872
Total after LCTRS and other adjustments										60,465.1
Multiplied by estimated collection rate										96.75%
Band D Equivalents										58,500

For information: Parish Council Tax Tax Bases –

Saddleworth 8,952

Shaw & Crompton 5,615

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Report to CABINET – 23 January 2023

Wrigley Head Solar Farm – delivery options

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Abdul Jabbar, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Low Carbon

Officer Contact: Director of Economy

Report Author: Andrew Hunt, Green Energy & Sustainability Manager

Ext. 6587

CABINET – 23 January 2023

Reason for Decision

To provide a decision on the preferred option for delivery of Wrigley Head Solar Farm.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:-

- Notes that Wrigley Head Solar Farm could make a contribution towards meeting the Council's 2025 carbon neutrality target of around 50 tCO₂ / annum as well as contributing 891kW to the GM 5-year Environment Plan target of 4.5MW of solar PV for Oldham borough by 2025, demonstrating community leadership on renewable energy development at both borough and GM levels and building local energy security to support development of a Local Energy Market
- Notes that with improvements in technology, the scheme may have potential to achieve 1MW of generating capacity. This will be established by a procurement exercise for the main design and construct contractor
- Notes that the scheme has secured Planning Permission
- Notes that new financial modelling for the project suggests that it is viable using current assumptions around capital cost and forecast wholesale energy prices

-
- Notes the potential to regain the circa 40% capital grant originally allocated to the scheme from the Unlocking Clean Energy in Greater Manchester project, which would further mitigate risks to the financial model from electricity price volatility
 - Notes the interest in the scheme from both construction contractors and energy infrastructure developers, as per Lots 4 and 5 of the GM Go Neutral framework
 - Agrees to the preferred delivery option (Option 2) and approves the allocation of £1,350,581 capital funding from the Creating a Better Place programme for construction of the project
 - Agrees to delegate appointment of a contractor further to a mini-competition on the GM Go Neutral framework to the Director of Economy and the appointment of an Owner's Engineer in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economic Growth, the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Low Carbon, the Chief Executive and the Directors of Finance and Legal Services
 - Agrees to delegate acceptance of any grant funding from the Unlocking Clean Energy in Greater Manchester project to the Director of Economy in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economic Growth, the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Low Carbon, the Chief Executive and the Directors of Finance and Legal Services

Wrigley Head Solar Farm**1 Background**

- 1.1 The project is a 891kW ground mounted solar PV array at a Council-owned former industrial landfill site at Wrigley Head in Failsworth. The solar farm would improve the site, including in terms of biodiversity via wildflower planting and other measures, and would generate a significant amount of renewable energy, potentially contributing to the Council's 2025 carbon neutrality target and / or the borough 2030 target. The project would save an average of 50 tonnes of CO2 per annum over the lifetime of the scheme and cost around £1.1 million to develop. The specification of the project was set in 2019 when the original feasibility work was done – it is possible that with improvements in technology, the scheme could achieve 1MW of generating capacity.
- 1.2 The project was originally conceived in summer 2018 as part of a prospective ERDF-funded Greater Manchester level project, "Unlocking Clean Energy in Greater Manchester". An initial no-cost feasibility study carried out by Electricity North West indicated the potential for a viable solar farm at the Wrigley Head site, and further feasibility work by Aecom confirmed that such a facility would be viable, either (with a 'private wire' connection) supplying electricity directly to a local business, or (with an ERDF grant subsidy) supplying electricity to the Council via the grid, by means of a "sleeving" agreement with our main energy supplier.
- 1.3 The ERDF project would have provided a grant subsidy at a rate of around 40% of the capital cost of the scheme. The Council has incurred costs of around £120K in developing the project up to and including the submission of a Planning Application.
- 1.4 In spring 2020, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and national lockdown on the economy meant that the long-term outlook for wholesale electricity prices was revised downwards. The change in this assumption underlying the financial model for the solar farm meant that with the new outlook, the solar farm no longer showed a viable business case.
- 1.5 As a consequence, the project was considered by Cabinet in the summer of 2020 in the context of the Creating A Better Place capital programme review. A decision was taken at that time to stop work on the project.
- 1.6 Before work on the project was paused, a fee was paid to Electricity North West to accept a grid connection offer. A further 'staged payment' of around £35K was due in 2020 but was not paid as a consequence of the Cabinet decision to pause work on the project. Electricity North West have confirmed that the grid connection offer is still valid and have provided updated details in terms of grid connection costs and timescales.
- 1.7 The solar farm scheme is dependent upon a cable easement across third party owned land. Two adjoining landowners have indicated a willingness to grant a cable easement across their land, however, no terms have been agreed. It is expected that the third-party landowner will want a payment or the transfer of the council's adjoining land for nil consideration for the grant of the easement.
- 1.8 The Council's 2025 and 2030 carbon neutrality targets, and GM 5-year Environment Plan
The Greater Manchester 5-year Environment Plan sets a carbon neutrality target for the city region of 2038. It also sets a target of an extra 45MW of solar PV generating capacity to be delivered across the city region by 2024 – which if divided equally between GM districts equates to 4.5MW per local authority area.

1.9 In July 2019 at Full Council, a new 2025 carbon neutrality target for the Council was announced - to cover Council buildings and street lighting. The Oldham Green New Deal Strategy (adopted in March 2020) confirms the Council carbon neutrality target for 2025 and sets an additional carbon neutrality target of 2030 for the borough as a whole. The strategy provides a framework for Oldham to work towards these targets and those in the GM 5-year Environment Plan, whilst bringing economic benefits to the Council and our partners, residents and businesses.

1.10 According to methodology from Salix, it is estimated that Wrigley Head Solar Farm could save around 50 tonnes per annum of CO₂. The outline financial model also shows that the project could generate an IRR of between 3.5% and 7% from savings on the Council's energy bill. The expected lifetime of the solar farm is 30 years.

2 **Current Position**

2.1 The project gained Planning Permission in December 2021, with a number of Planning Conditions attached relating to environmental surveys and the construction of a screening fence alongside the tram track, which was agreed with TfGM in order to remove their objection to the scheme.

2.2 Electricity North West have confirmed that the grid connection offer for the solar farm is still valid. ENWL are now waiting for the next 'staged payment' of around £35K for connection works already accepted (which was not made after the project was paused in 2020).

2.3 For the scheme to be taken forward, negotiations will need to resume with the third party landowners who own the land across which the cabling connecting the proposed solar farm to the ENWL grid connection point must pass. This will likely be done by ENWL as part of the grid connection works, rather than by the Council.

2.4 Since the scheme was paused in 2020, wholesale electricity prices have risen substantially, and are forecast to be high in the short to medium term before slowly falling again. This means that the solar farm project is now forecast to be viable, within a range of electricity price sensitivity. Although Oldham forfeited the ERDF grant subsidy from the project when the project was paused, the Council still benefits from technical support from Energy Systems Catapult who are leading that project, and ESC have provided an updated and more detailed financial model for Wrigley Head Solar Farm, which suggests that the project is viable. However, it may still be possible to regain the 40% grant from the UCEGM project due to an underspend on that project, which would further mitigate risks around electricity price volatility. In order to secure grant funding, the scheme would need to be delivered by September 2023.

2.5 The GM Combined Authority recently set up a framework agreement for low carbon projects called the "Go Neutral" framework. This framework has a number of lots, including two lots relevant to the Wrigley Head solar farm project. Lot 4 is for Council-funded ground mounted solar and Lot 5 is for developer-led and funded hybrid low carbon projects on Council-owned land, which can include ground-mounted solar. The framework agreement is available to Oldham Council.

2.6 In September / October 2022, the Council tested the market for the Wrigley Head project by placing an Expression Of Interest on both lots 4 and 5 of the Go Neutral framework. These EOIs were placed to attract market feedback in terms of the practical deliverability of the project (Lot 4) and the financial case for the project (Lot 5). The EOI process is now complete and attracted two returns on each of Lots 4 and 5.

-
- 2.7 One of the two respondents on Lot 4 stated that due to a rise in costs, the Council should increase the available budget for the scheme by 25%. This would mean that the **estimated capital budget** required to construct the solar farm will rise from £1,080,465 to **£1,350,581**. This is the most accurate estimate of project cost available at the time of writing. A final cost can only be established through a full procurement process – which is likely to take the form of a mini-competition on the GM Go Neutral framework.
- 2.8 It is estimated that **a revenue budget of around £70K** will be required to progress the scheme to construction stage. This figure comprises £35K for a ‘staged payment’ on the grid connection, and £35K for the procurement and appointment of an ‘owners engineer’ in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules to act as a ‘client side’ external Project Manager for the scheme, overseeing the ‘Engineer, Procure and Construct’ (design and build) contractor.
- 2.9 The Council has been receiving support on the financial model for the scheme from Energy Systems Catapult via the Unlocking Clean Energy in Greater Manchester (UCEGM) ERDF-funded project in which Oldham is a partner. The sensitivity analysis included in this financial model shows that even with a 25% capital cost uplift on the original cost estimate, the project is viable using current assumptions around forecast wholesale energy prices, which have been modelled independently by Energy Systems Catapult.
- 2.10 If the Council decides to proceed with the recommended option (Council to fund and own the solar farm), the next step would be a mini-competition on Lot 4 of the Go Neutral framework. This will give the Council formal bids from contractors on the framework, from which a successful bidder will be selected. As two contractors have expressed interest in the project, it is likely that the Council will receive bids from these two in a formal mini-competition.
- 2.11 It should be noted though that the Council also received interest from two contractors on Lot 5 of the framework (contractor funds, constructs and operates) from the EOI. In the unlikely event that the Council does not receive any bids on a formal Lot 4 mini-competition, there may still be the option to run a mini-competition on Lot 5 and achieve delivery of the solar farm via a contractor funded model.
- 2.12 Alternatively, if no bids were received on Lot 4 and the Council’s preference continues to be to fund and own the solar farm itself, the Council could run an independent tender outside of any framework. However, this option could be time consuming and market research would need to indicate that this would be worthwhile and likely to achieve the desired result.

3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 Option 1: Do nothing. Under this option, no further work will take place on the project, and no further expenditure will be incurred. However, the project will not generate a revenue income for the Council nor make any contribution to reducing carbon emissions in Oldham, GM nor generate electricity for a future Oldham Local Energy Market.
- 3.2 Option 2: Proceed with a mini-competition under Lot 4 of the GM Go Neutral framework and procure the Owner’s Engineer. Under this option, the Council will see a contractor to design, build and operate the solar farm, which will be funded and owned by the Council, with the Council receiving the electricity generated via a Power Purchase Agreement with the Council’s main electricity supplier.
- 3.3 Option 3: Proceed with a mini-competition under Lot 5 of the GM Go Neutral framework and procure the Owner’s Engineer. Under this option, the Council will seek a contractor

funded and operated model for delivery of the Wrigley Head solar farm, with the Council purchasing electricity from the developer via a Power Purchase Agreement at a rate yet to be determined.

4 Preferred Option

- 4.1 Option 2: Proceed with a mini-competition under Lot 4 of the GM Go Neutral framework and procure the Owner's Engineer. Under this option, the Council will see a contractor to design, build and operate the solar farm, which will be funded and owned by the Council, with the Council receiving the electricity generated via a Power Purchase Agreement with the Council's main electricity supplier.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 Consultation on the scheme has taken place with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, local ward members, local residents, and senior Council officers. The Moston Brook Project Officer has been closely involved in the development process for the solar farm and the public consultation process. The consultation for local residents was held on Thursday 13 February 2020 and was attended by around 50-60 people including local Ward Members. Some questions and concerns were raised, which were addressed in the Planning Application which was submitted at the beginning of March 2020. The Planning Application consulted the statutory consultees.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The £1.35m costs associated with the construction of the Solar Farm would be capital expenditure and would need to be financed from Funds Held for Emerging Priorities within the existing Capital Programme. There would also need to be an allocation of £70k of revenue funding to progress the scheme to the construction phase which would need to be met from within the existing Regeneration revenue budget or the Creating a Better Place Earmarked Reserve.
- 6.2 The Council has engaged with Energy Systems Catapult to undertake financial modelling of the proposed Solar Farm and the modelling has indicated that the project would have a positive Net Present Value including Prudential Borrowing costs and, therefore, financially viable. However, this is largely due to large cashflows in the first few years, with high electricity prices, and the overall position becomes marginal once electricity prices are assumed to reach a more stable level from 2027/28.
- 6.3 It should be noted that the financial modelling is dependent on assumptions of the retail electricity price over a 30 year period which due to volatility could be higher or lower than anticipated and impact on the viability of the project over time. However, this should be offset by the impact on the Council's wider electricity bill.
- 6.4 Further modelling work will be required as the project develops and the total costs become more certain, along with the finer details of how any Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) will be secured. Any variance to the costs/financing of the project will be the subject of a further report.

[James Postle]

7 Legal Services Comments

- 7.1 The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has entered into multi lot framework agreements to enable local authorities to achieve carbon reduction and other benefits through the implementation of smart energy technologies on public sector owned assets.

The Council has carried out under Lots 4 & 5 and is recommending that the project is progressed by way of mini competition under Lot 4 (Ground mounted solar PV and battery storage (grid connected and private wire). There are 5 contractors appointed to this lot.

A mini competition conducted under the GMCA's "Go Neutral" Framework Agreement is a valid route to market and would be undertaken in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules, incorporating procurement legislation, and under the management of the Commercial Procurement Unit. The call-off contract would be in accordance with the terms and conditions prescribed by the Framework Agreement. Legal input into call-off contract will be essential.

The procurement of the Owner's Engineer would be conducted through the Commercial Procurement Unit in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules. A suitable form of contract would be put in place.

As detailed in this report, the solar farm scheme is dependent upon a cable easement across third party owned land. This would need to be agreed before any mini competition was progressed.

[Sarah Orrell – Commercial and Procurement Solicitor]

Property issues/risks

- 7.2 There are access and title issues affecting the site in terms of the main access and also access across third party land to install, run, maintain etc. the required cables. The Report author is working with colleagues in Legal, Estates and Highways to investigate these issues and possible solutions. At this stage however, it is not possible to guarantee that solutions can be found, or the costs involved, particularly in relation to the cable easements which require negotiation with adjacent landowners and the utility company has unfortunately advised that it is not able to use statutory powers to assist. There is no evidence of Council ownership for the main access way or for part of the greenspace at the opening of the tunnel.

In addition, there are issues with flooding in the vicinity of the site which need to be investigated further to ascertain whether this could pose any risk to the viability of the scheme, and/or further cost implications.

Further work and due diligence will be required to assess the impact of these issues and risks including investigating solutions and negotiating with third parties. This will take time and inevitably involve more cost to the Council which will require further reporting and approvals at a later stage. There is a risk that an ultimate inability to sort these issues at all/in a timely manner and at a palatable cost to the Council could render the scheme unviable.

(Rebecca Boyle – Group Solicitor, Corporate Team).

8. Co-operative Agenda

- 8.1 The proposed solar farm at Wrigley Head would demonstrate how a renewable energy generation facility can be sensitively incorporated into a semi-urban post- industrial setting with improvements in the ecology, amenity and visual appearance of the site, as part of the Moston Brook corridor. A local public consultation has been carried out as part of the Planning Application process, and if built the facility could also provide an educational resource for local schools. The project could potentially in future provide electricity for an

Oldham Local Energy Market to assist residents and businesses with their energy bills, as set out in the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy.

[Andrew Hunt]

9 Human Resources Comments

9.1 No HR implications

[Catherine Pearson, Strategic HR Lead]

10 Risk Assessments

10.1 The cost the scheme receives for the electricity it receives is likely to fluctuate and at certain levels below that it would currently generate may not cover the repayment of the capital costs on the scheme.

10.2 There is a possibility this project attracts a capital grant from the GMCA due to slippage elsewhere on the GMCA managed programme. Given the tight timescale to spend this grant it is expected if successful the scheme construction costs will not be completed in a timescale to maximise the total grant award

[Mark Stenson]

11 IT Implications

11.1 None.

12 Property Implications

12.1 As indicated in the report, the solar farm scheme is dependent upon the Council being granted permanent rights to install and maintain an electricity cable across third party owned land, to the ENWL grid connection point on Tweedale Way. Two adjoining landowners have previously been approached about this and both indicated a willingness in principle to the granting a cable easement across their land, however, given that limited technical information was available at that time, no terms were discussed or agreed. Only one adjoining landowner needs to grant the cable easement, however, it is expected that the third-party landowner will want a payment or the transfer of an area of the council's adjoining land (not required for the solar farm) for nil consideration. The Council will also be required to pay the third-party landowner's legal and surveying fees.

12.2 The report author has now confirmed that ENWL would deal with the cable easement across third party owned land as part of the grid connection works, rather than the Council.

12.3 I understand that access is required under the railway bridge for the purpose of constructing and maintaining the solar farm. As far as I am aware the council don't own the land under the railway bridge and it is not adopted highway. As such Legal Services need to confirm if the Council has the access rights required and/or that access rights can be acquired by the Council.

[Liz Garsrud]

13 Procurement Implications

- 13.1 The Commercial Procurement Team will lead on the procurement of both the Owner's Engineer and solar farm contractor in line with any applicable funding conditions, public procurement law and the Council's Contract Procedural Rules. Both procurements are estimated to be below the respective services and works thresholds with reference to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Due diligence has been conducted on the GMCA Go Neutral Smart Energy Framework Agreement DN562301 GMCA 374. Expressions of Interest run under the Framework Lots have not committed the Council to proceeding with the project through the Framework or otherwise but have established valuable information on levels of market interest, market insights and feedback which can now be used to inform strategy and the drafting of tender documentation. At the time of writing, research on the most appropriate and efficient route to market for the Owner's Engineer appointment has yet to be concluded, and the strategy finalized. There are potentially suitable third-party framework options available. Support from our Legal Team will be sought in particular with reference to the forms of contract to be employed.

[Emma Tweedie, Senior Category Manager]

14 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

- 14.1 Environment: Development of the Wrigley Head Solar Farm scheme will contribute towards the reduction of the carbon footprint of the Council for our 2025 carbon neutrality targets and towards the reduction of the carbon footprint of the borough for our 2030 target. The scheme also aims to improve biodiversity opportunities at the development site through planting schemes and provision of wildlife runs under the security fence.

[Andrew Hunt]

14.2 Health and Safety:

Following approval of this scheme, it must be ensured going forward that health and safety legislation is complied with, in particular the Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015. During the procurement of any contractors, the health and safety performance of those contractors must be considered. Thereafter, ongoing monitoring of contractors throughout the construction project must be implemented.

[Laura Smith]

15 Equality, community cohesion and crime implications

- 15.1 Residents within the locality have experienced significant levels of anti-social behavior and criminal damage 2017/2018, however this was addressed by the District Team and funding was secured for a CCTV camera to be installed at Wrigley Head Crescent. More recently levels of anti-social behavior and criminal damage have been low.
- 15.2 Residents will be concerned about the security of the site and how this will impact their lives and property. Assurances at the consultation was given that the site would be appropriately fenced and have the necessary CCTV requirements.

[Penny Kenworthy]

16 Equality Impact Assessment Completed?

16.1 No

17 **Key Decision**

17.1 Yes.

18 **Key Decision Reference**

18.1 FLC-08-22

19 **Background Papers**

19.1 None.

20 **Appendices**

20.1 None



Report to CABINET

Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3a Grant Acceptance - Spindles

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Abdul Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance and Low Carbon

Officer Contact: Director of Economy

Report Author: Andrew Hunt, Green Energy & Sustainability Manager

Ext. 6587

23 January 2023

Reason for Decision

To accept a grant of £2,153,354 from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3a for energy works at the Spindles, and to commence the works.

Recommendations

That Cabinet accept the grant and the Council commence works. Under this option, the Council will enter into a partnership agreement with GMCA for disbursement of the grant, and the works will be carried out by the Spindles project team already appointed for the wider renovation programme at the site.

Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3a Grant Acceptance – Spindles**1 Background**

- 1.1 The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme is a UK Government funded programme, administered by Salix.
- 1.2 The Council has previously benefited from PSDS grant funding for two projects – LED lighting at Oldham Leisure Centre (circa £100K) and Air Source Heat Pumps at Alexandra Park Eco-Centre (circa £290K)
- 1.3 In October 2021, the Council applied (via a GMCA consortium) to the PSDS3a funding round, for decarbonisation works at the Spindles, including the installation of roof and wall insulation, glazing, solar PV and heat pumps. The grant funding was not awarded at that time, due to the overall funding envelope being exceeded by the time Salix received Oldham's application (via GMCA)
- 1.4 However, in September 2022 Salix approached GMCA asking whether Oldham would still be looking for the funding, as the PSDS3a programme was underspent after the first 12 months of operation.
- 1.5 The PSDS3a application form for Spindles has been updated to take into account changes to the proposed project over the past 12 months, and has now been approved by Salix, who have signed a Grant Agreement with GMCA for the grant funding. The actual grant amount received by GMCA from Salix will be £2,291,822. However, the GMCA will 'top-slice' this grant amount as a management fee (£138,468 or 6%) and the actual grant amount to be received from GMCA by Oldham will be £2,153,354.
- 1.6 The decarbonisation works at the Spindles will contribute to the carbon neutrality targets set out in the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy and will also support the "A Clean and Green Future" priority set out in the Corporate Plan. They are also forecast to save around £45K annually in energy costs at the complex.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 The Spindles project has been offered £2,153,354 in grant funding against a total project value of £3,956,223, requiring a match funding element from the Council of £1,802,869.
- 2.2 The grant funding must be spent by 31st March 2025.
- 2.3 Key to successful delivery of the project will be accurate and timely reporting to GMCA on progress and effective draw-down of the grant funding. This will in turn depend on a detailed understanding by the contractors delivering the scheme as to which items are grant eligible, itemised invoices as evidence, how the Council's match funding for the scheme is accounted for, and robust assurance in terms of meeting the conditions of the grant. The Council will therefore need to ensure that appropriate governance is in place to support successful delivery of the grant-funded scheme.

3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 Option 1: do not accept the grant. Under this option, the grant funding will not be accepted and the additional energy works proposed at the Spindles complex will not be implemented.
- 1.7 Option 2: accept the grant and commence works. Under this option, the Council will enter into a partnership agreement with GMCA for disbursal of the grant, and the works will be carried out by the Spindles project team already appointed for the wider renovation programme at the site.

4 Preferred Option

- 4.1 Option 2: accept the grant and commence works. Under this option, the Council will enter into a partnership agreement with GMCA for disbursal of the grant, and the works will be carried out by the Spindles project team already appointed for the wider renovation programme at the site.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Low Carbon.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The capital grant funding of £2.153m and associated match funding of £1.803m will support an overall package of works of £3.956m in relation to decarbonisation works at the Spindles as part of the overall Spindles redevelopment. The match funding is contained within the existing capital budget for the Spindles redevelopment. It is currently anticipated that a portion of the grant funding could fund items that are covered by the existing budget and may reduce the amount of Prudential Borrowing needed for the Spindles redevelopment. If Prudential Borrowing could be reduced then the revenue implications of the project would also fall. However, further work is necessary to determine the exact amounts.
- 6.2 As indicated in the Legal Services and Procurement comments, the Green Energy and Sustainability team and the Spindles Redevelopment team will need to ensure that all spend is in line with the requirements of Salix and the associated GMCA grant agreement to ensure that there is no claw- back of any grant funding.

[James Postle]

7 Legal Services Comments

- 7.1 Legal Services agrees with and echoes the comments provided by the procurement team.

A comprehensive draft Grant Agreement has been provided by GMCA and this has been reviewed by Legal Services who have advised that the Green Energy and Sustainability team should familiarise themselves with the content of the Grant Agreement and in particular the obligations that are placed on them in terms of reporting and spending of the grant monies. Where any clarifications are required by team on any part of the Grant Agreement, they should seek legal advice immediately. The final form of Grant Agreement will be reviewed to ensure it is in line with the draft agreement before it is submitted for execution. Legal Services considers that the grant may result in the

provision of a subsidy, but all necessary procedures and assessments will be undertaken prior to any expenditure of the grant to ensure compliance with subsidy control rules.

[Sarah Orrell – Commercial & Procurement Solicitor]

8. **Co-operative Agenda**

- 8.1 The Spindles is one of the Council's key regeneration projects which will house not just retail units but also offices, an events space and an archive. As such it will be a key community asset, and the proposed energy works will support the asset by reducing energy costs and carbon emissions.

[Andrew Hunt]

9 **Human Resources Comments**

- 9.1 No HR implications

[Catherine Pearson, Strategic HR Lead]

10 **Risk Assessments**

- 10.1 The biggest challenge linked into the Council accepting the grant is the slippage on the scheme results in expenditure being incurred after the grant has expired. This is partially offset by an element of the capital cost this grant finances would be incurred on the project without the grant.

[Mark Stenson]

11 **IT Implications**

- 11.1 None.

12 **Property Implications**

- 12.1 Acceptance of this grant funding will enable additional works to be carried out to The Spindles to improve the energy efficiency of the public spaces and shell and so are welcomed.

[Rosalyn Smith]

13 **Procurement Implications**

- 13.1 The GMCA funding agreement provides fully detailed conditions on the Procurement of Capital Equipment, Goods and Services:

- 13.2 The procurement of all works, equipment, goods and services required to deliver the Project must be carried out in accordance with the Recipient's internal procurement guidelines and financial regulations, and with all applicable laws including the Procurement Regulations. The Secretary of State shall not be liable for the Recipient's failure to comply with its obligations under such guidelines, regulations or laws.

- 13.3 As part of the funding agreement, the Council shall, as part of the procurement process of all main contractors and Tier 2 sub-contractors of all works, equipment, goods and services required to deliver the Project, identify and provide the following information to GMCA as requested by GMCA from time to time:

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- all relevant details required to identify the Suppliers (including the company or organisation name of the Suppliers);
 - the monetary sum of the Grant which will or has been spent on Greater Manchester based businesses;
 - the percentage of Suppliers which pay the Real Living Wage to their direct employees;
 - the percentage of Suppliers who measure their carbon footprint; and
 - the percentage of Suppliers who plan to become carbon neutral by 2050.
- 13.4 The consultant team appointed to the Spindles project i.e., architect and engineers, have been compliantly procured via a third party public sector framework that complies with the public contract regulations 2015 – any variations that have been implemented to these contracts will need to satisfy framework conditions and council contract procedure rules. All appointed consultants' have signed up to deliver social value commitments.
- 13.5 The works contractor appointed initially under a pre-construction services agreement to deliver the Spindles scheme, has been procured via a third party public sector framework that complies with the public contract regulations 2015 – all works packages agreed through the pre-construction services agreement, shall be tendered via the contractor on a fully open book basis and that can demonstrate best value, along with social value commitments.
- 13.6 The funding agreement also outlines a number of Project Specific Conditions that must be satisfied, these are detailed as part of Schedule 4.
- [Dan Cheetham]
- 14 **Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**
- 14.1 Environmental: It is estimated that the proposed energy works at Spindles to be funded by this grant will reduce carbon emissions from the complex by over 300 tonnes annually. This will contribute towards the 2025 and 2030 carbon neutrality targets set out in the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy.
- [Andrew Hunt]
- 15 **Equality, community cohesion and crime implications**
- 15.1 None.
- 16 **Equality Impact Assessment Completed?**
- 16.1 No
- 17 **Key Decision**
- 17.1 Yes
- 18 **Key Decision Reference**
- 18.1 ESR-30-22
- 19 **Background Papers**

19.1 None.

20 **Appendices**

20.1 None.



Report to CABINET

Oldham's Transport Strategy, Delivery Plan and Town Centre Parking Strategy

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Chadderton, Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Housing

Officer Contact:

Emma Barton, Executive Director of Place and Economic Growth

Report Author:

Helen Fallon, Strategic Transportation Team Leader

23 January 2023

Reason for Decision

To adopt and publish the Oldham Transport Strategy.

Executive Summary

The Oldham Transport Strategy sets out how Oldham will meet the ambitions set out in the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and sub strategies, whilst ensuring investment is prioritised to ensure Oldham's Transport and Highways Network support a Healthy, Clean and Thriving borough.

The Vision for Oldham as set out in the strategy is to create a connected borough with increasing use of public transport and active travel that provides all people with safe and inclusive access to opportunities and healthy choices.

The Transport Strategy sets out the council's transport and highways ambitions in relation to:

- A Healthy Oldham
- A Clean Oldham
- A Safe Oldham
- An Accessible Oldham
- A Connected Oldham and
- A Thriving Oldham

The Oldham Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan align with the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 'Right Mix' ambition for half of all journeys to be made by active and sustainable transport modes by 2040. The aim of Oldham's Transport Strategy is to reduce carbon emissions from transport, increase cycling, walking and public transport use and enable the borough to become an increasingly attractive place to live, work and visit.

Our Transport Strategy will support the borough's ambitions for sustainable growth and development over the next 20 years.

The Delivery Plan sets out transport interventions to be delivered over the following time periods:

- short term 0 - 5 years;
- medium term 5 -10 years;
- long term 10 – 20 years (up to 2040); and
- beyond 20 years - 2040 onwards.

The Transport Strategy also includes the first proposed sub-strategy - an update to the Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy. The refreshed Town Centre Parking Strategy is necessary to support the current regeneration proposals for the town centre, which are aimed at providing quality homes within the town centre, increasing office and service space, and promoting decreasing road traffic and increased access to public transport. These growth plans need to be supported by the right parking infrastructure, with the right levels of car parking provided in the right places at the right tariff. An updated car parking strategy is therefore needed to ensure that appropriate mechanisms and processes are in place to plan for future provision.

A number of recommendations have been made in the Parking Strategy which range from improvements to signage around the town centre, updates to parking technology, such as mobile phone application, Mobility Hubs and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure. Following the adoption of the Parking Strategy work will be undertaken to establish a supporting delivery plan facilitating the implementation of the identified recommendations.

As we identify actions to support the aims set out in the Transport Strategy, we will be developing further sub strategies to support this, including an Active Travel Sub Strategy to set out how we will ensure we meet our Transport ambitions to get more people walking, wheeling and cycling.

Recommendations

To adopt the Oldham Transport Strategy including the Delivery Plan and Oldham Town Centre parking strategy, to embed meeting the aims of the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 (GM2040) in the borough and ensure our transport and highways networks enable the building of homes and the creation of jobs.

1 Background

- 1.1 Oldham is an integral part of the Greater Manchester city-region and the Council is working to deliver GM2040. However we are a unique borough with our own significant challenges and opportunities.
- 1.2 The population of Oldham has grown by around 14,000 people over the last decade, which compares to a similar rate of growth in Greater Manchester.
- 1.3 Oldham is an ethnically diverse borough which in the last decade has seen population growth in the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, as well as groups primarily made up of Polish and Romanian heritage. Oldham's diversity presents opportunities for businesses and training to access the skills required.
- 1.4 Oldham has high levels of community deprivation. In 2019 most of the Oldham urban area was within the 50% most deprived areas nationally.
- 1.5 When the Covid-19 pandemic struck the economic consequences impacted heavily on the poorest communities, which means many neighbourhood areas in Oldham require support with their travel.
- 1.6 A large proportion of the Oldham population works in sectors that have seen big changes to demands during the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore high levels of vulnerability. The top five employment sectors are health, manufacturing, retail, education, transport and warehousing. Together, these sectors make-up 55% of employees in Oldham. Retail has seen national and local declines in employment whilst transport and storage is a growing area of employment for the region.
- 1.7 As a Council we are making unprecedented investment in the borough to help build a thriving economy and need a transport offer that will support our wider health, environmental, economic and regeneration ambitions, such as those set out recently in the 'Creating a Better Place' boroughwide plan, which builds on the Council's refreshed vision for Oldham Town Centre.
- 1.8 It was agreed in 2020 that Oldham Council should develop our own Transport Strategy in the context of the agreed GM Transport Strategy (GMTS) to establish our own local transport vision, objectives, strategy and priorities that will provide a robust and cohesive framework to direct transport investment for all modes going forward.
- 1.9 The commitment is to enable the borough to become an increasingly attractive place to live, work and visit. This means Oldham Council want to provide safer facilities for walking and cycling and improve their integration with public transport services.
- 1.10 Walking, cycling and public transport services that integrate with better information and facilities is important to supporting the local economy and high streets in the short and longer-term to 2040.
- 1.11 The Oldham Transport Strategy aligns to the national, regional and local policy. This means alignment with the aims by the Government, TfGM and Oldham's Corporate Plan.

2 The Oldham Transport Strategy

- 2.1 The strategy sets out a transport vision and objectives for Oldham based upon meeting local priorities for Oldham Council, as well the Spatial Theme priorities and ambitions within the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy, (GMTS) 2040.
- 2.2 The vision is for a connected borough with increasing use of public transport and active travel that provides all people with access to opportunities and healthy choices with infrastructure that is safe and inclusive.
- 2.3 The Transport Strategy sets out the council's transport and highways priorities in relation to our following six ambitions:
- A Healthy Oldham
 - A Clean Oldham
 - A Safe Oldham
 - An accessible Oldham
 - A Connected Oldham and
 - A Thriving Oldham
- 2.4 It provides a strategic view of transport matters across the borough and sets out a delivery plan with priority schemes and interventions that will feed into the Greater Manchester transport intervention pipeline and how Oldham Council will work towards meeting the objectives of the Greater Manchester 2040 Transport Strategy over the next 5, 10 and 20 years, including the Right Mix Vision, Network Principles, Modal Principles and Spatial Theme ambitions. This will be achieved by:
- Improving walking and cycling routes in Oldham to support healthy travel choices and provide the environmental benefits from reduced vehicles emissions by continuing to deliver the Bee Network and implementing campaigns to promote active travel including to schools, residence and workplaces.
 - Improving actual safety, perceived safety and reducing fear of crime for all people using our highway and public transport networks in Oldham, working with partners from TfGM and transport providers.
 - Working with our partners to improve the public transport offer in Oldham and ensure it is developed to respond to the needs of the borough, supports the economy for travel for work and leisure, ensuring our residents are connected to opportunities.
 - Maintaining the highway to ensure a reliable and resilient network that can support essential journeys, including buses and freight to provide journey time reliability throughout the year within, into and out of the borough.
 - Lowering traffic related emissions from vehicles and improving air quality in Oldham for cleaner air, health and wellbeing including facilitating and accelerating the shift to electric vehicles by incentivising their use and ensuring access for all our residents to affordable charging infrastructure.
 - Ensuring our network is resilient to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather, eg flood mitigation measures, green infrastructure to increase bio-diversity.
- 2.5 It identifies how these policies can be applied across the different districts in the borough, adapting the vision to suit local area characteristics such as connectivity,
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urban density and topography, supporting the 'right- mix' sustainable mode share targets appropriate for the trip and destination, as set out in the GM 2040 Transport Strategy.

- 2.6 The strategy builds the case for transport investment in Oldham, and demonstrates Oldham's role in supporting Greater Manchester's economic, social and environmental aspirations for the period to 2040 to ensure Oldham is poised to grasp opportunities to bid for external funding as and when they arise.
- 2.7 It includes cycling and walking interventions that will further develop Oldham's Bee Network proposals into a comprehensive cycling and walking network, including connections to public transport.
- 2.8 It presents a clear statement to the public and our partners of our transport priorities and the interventions needed to make ensure a healthy, clean, safe, connected, accessible and thriving Oldham.
- 2.9 The Strategy will support the Council's wider economic, environmental, regeneration and social aspirations as set out in key strategy and policy documents:
 - The Oldham Corporate Plan and Future Oldham Vision;
 - The Local Plan (currently being reviewed) identifying where additional land should be safeguarded for possible future transport interventions;
 - Greater Manchester's Plan for Homes, Jobs, and the Environment
 - The Oldham Strategic Investment Framework;
 - the boroughwide 'Creating a Better Place' plan;
 - the Oldham Environment Strategy and Green New Deal strategy;
 - the refreshed vision for Oldham Town Centre and the emerging Oldham Town Centre Masterplan; and
 - other local masterplans such as the Royton Masterplan.

3 The Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy

- 3.1 The updated parking strategy now forms part of Oldham's Transport Strategy and assesses the existing parking stock within the Town Centre area, reviews the previous assumptions with regard to future growth in demand to take account of recent land use development plans, which have been developed since the previous Parking Strategy was issued, and assesses the implications of the latest set of regeneration proposals.
- 3.2 An assessment of current and future demand for public car parking has been undertaken in order to establish existing car park usage and identify any potential future shortfall in parking provision.
- 3.3 The main aims of the Town Centre Parking Strategy are to:
 - Draw together the existing evidence base and work completed to date to provide a one stop location of understanding Oldham's Parking Strategy;
 - Examine the potential implications for parking provision associated with the latest land use development proposals and identify a recommended strategy for managing car parking in Oldham;

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- Reflect the aspirations of Oldham and seek to maximise the opportunities it has for sustaining both the economy and delivering new homes across the borough; and
 - Include a wide-ranging remit incorporating the level of parking provision provided, parking charges and revenue implications, provision of disabled and EV charging spaces, and consideration of a mobility hub location.
 - Facilitate the creation of a supporting delivery plan.
- 3.4 This updated parking strategy considers an updated 15-year period from 2022 to 2037.
- 3.5 Three options have been considered in relation to future development. The first considered the impact of closing nine town centre car parks and relocating their existing demand elsewhere on the network. The second and third scenarios contained within the Parking Strategy consider the land use development proposals put forward by Simpson Haugh in the Creating a Better Place (2020) strategic framework and subsequent Development Plan Prospectus (2022).
- 3.6 Both of these documents indicate a number of existing town centre car parks which could be redeveloped to different land uses (mostly residential) and so are reviewed in terms of displacement of existing demand and the additional demand generated by the new developments.
- 3.7 Overall conclusions of the assessment are as follows:
- All development options assessed will see a net loss of spaces across the Town Centre (which is to be expected).
 - Based on an assumption of 40% on site provision for residential development combined, work to support modal shift combined with TRICS modelling, demand is anticipated that the loss of parking provision can be contained within the reduced parking stock.
 - Demand will be managed by a number of methods, such as: introduction of Mobility Hubs, reduction in price of public transport, improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure, prioritisation of improvements to the perception of safety (in partnership with Transport for Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester Police and Metrolink) and Park & Ride facilities.
 - With the exception of the Mecca Bingo site, parking demand from new development is expected to be contained on site. The displaced Mecca Bingo site parking demand is expected to be contained within the reduced overall town centre capacity.
 - The strategy notes that parking charges are currently broadly comparable with benchmarked neighbouring towns including Bolton, Bury, Rochdale and Stockport. This is however an area which must remain under constant review to ensure that a balance between strategic transport aspirations and achieving the ambition to have a vibrant and strong town centre is achieved.
- 3.8 The report also sets out a number of recommendations. These include:
- Improvements to signage around the town centre, both in relation to the use of Variable Message Signs and the location of signs to promote the use of Park & Ride facilities.
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- Updates to parking technology, such as mobile phone application with multiple functions (e.g. parking space availability and price) should be extended across all town centre parking locations. All locations should offer contactless or in-app payment options for parking.
- Relocated and new Blue Badge spaces should have locations determined in liaison with local disabled user groups. Use of Blue Badge spaces should be monitored to determine when an increase in provision is required.
- Mobility Hubs could be located at Spindles car park, Oldham Central Bus Station and the New Leisure Centre. This would have the join benefit of offering emission free options for local deliveries, as well as providing uses with options for making sustainable journey choices.
- It is recommended that further Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure is provided as demand grows.
- The Council should continue to manage demand for on-street and off street car parking, and enforcement action should be taken against illegal, inconsiderate and dangerous parking, and unregistered vehicles.
- The Council should monitor for any negative impacts associated with displaced parking following the closure of a number of town centre car parks.
- The council will consider Controlled Parking Zones / Residents Parking Zones, where appropriate.

3.9 The Council's ongoing work with TfGM and partners on programmes such as Accessible Oldham, will ensure that walking and cycling can be a genuine mode choice for people of all abilities, and combined with planned improvements to public transport and the perception of safety on public transport, will help to mitigate future parking demand. Moving forward a supporting delivery plan will be developed to ensure that the recommendations contained in the Parking Strategy are implemented.

4 Engagement

4.1 Engagement has been undertaken with key internal and external partners and stakeholders in the preparation of the transport strategy, pipeline of interventions, identification of priorities and the development of the delivery plan, including:

- Oldham Council officers working in highways ((including Unity Partnership for engagement pre April 2022), strategic planning, development management, regeneration, environmental policy, health, the town centre manager;
- Officers within the Economic and Environment Directorate, in particular our Highways Service
- Oldham Council Leader and Elected Members
- Oldham District Leads; and
- Transport for Greater Manchester

4.2 The development of the Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy included steer from the Transport Strategy project team to ensure it reflected the views previously provided by key stakeholders. This has ensured that the recommendations are consistent with and support the ambitions set out in the Transport Strategy, particularly relating to a Healthy, Clean and Accessible Oldham.

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- 4.3 Following approval at Cabinet, there will be further communication and engagement to raise awareness of the delivery plans across each of our districts including key priorities. We will also be identifying how we can progress the ambitions and recommendations across the strategies which may include developing further action plans and sub strategies in addition to the Parking Strategy, including an Active Travel Strategy setting out further detail on how we will work to increase walking and cycling in Oldham and Road Collision Reduction Strategy.

5 Options/Alternatives

- 5.1 Option 1: To adopt and publish the Transport Strategy, Delivery Plan and Town Centre Parking Strategy to support our framework to direct transport investment for all modes going forward to support sustainable growth and development to enable and ensure a healthy, clean, safe and connected.
- 5.2 Option 2: To not adopt and publish the Transport Strategy, Delivery Plan and Town Centre Parking Strategy, which will weaken the case for transport investment in the borough, as there will not be clear direction on the need and justification for the investment, and links to how it meets the targets set out in the GM2040 Strategy.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the adoption of the Transport Strategy. As individual programmes of works and schemes are developed the detailed financial implications will be included in future reports. (James Postle)

7 Legal Services Comments

- 7.1 Local Transport Plans (LTPs) were established by the 2000 Transport Act, as statutory documents to be produced by all local authorities, setting out a 5-year programme for investment for local transport, supported by statements on wider local transport policies to support the delivery of a longer term vision and strategy for their given area. The adoption of an LTP had to be approved by full Council. Under changes mainly introduced by the Local Transport Act 2008, the duty to produce an LTP for Greater Manchester was transferred to the sole responsibility of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). In addition the requirement to produce a 5-year programme was replaced by a duty to keep the LTP under review, alter it if considered appropriate to do so and replace it as the GMCA think fit. As the statutory duty to produce an LTP is now the sole responsibility of the GMCA, there is no requirement for Oldham's Transport Strategy to be approved by full Council. (A Evans)

8 Co-operative Agenda

- 8.1 Adopting an Oldham Transport Strategy will assist the Council's Co-operative Agenda by ensuring Oldham has a Transport Strategy that reflects Oldham's specific transport needs and ambitions and makes the case for transport investment in the borough. The Strategy will cover all modes of transport and is boroughwide so should benefit all residents.

9 Human Resources Comments

- 9.1 N/A

10 Risk Assessments

10.1	None provided
11	IT Implications
11.1	N/A
12	Property Implications
12.1	N/A
13	Procurement Implications
13.1	If option one is selected to adopt and publish the Transport Strategy to support Oldham Council's direct transport investment for all modes, Oldham Council may require additional external resources to support successful delivery. Any external consultancy and professional services required for effective delivery must be procured compliantly within the stated terms of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015) utilizing all compliant procurement procedures listed within the Act, PCR Chapter 2 section 3 & 4, r26-34.
14	Environmental and Health & Safety Implications
14.1	The Transport Strategy sets out ambitions for a Healthy, Safe and Clean Oldham and supports the GM Transport Strategy 2040 to deliver programmes to increase active travel to improve the health of our people, reduce emissions from transport through both a reduction in private car and switch to less polluting vehicles and or active and sustainable modes, and reduce road danger to improve safety across the highway and public transport network.
15	Equality, community cohesion and crime implications
15.1	All schemes that are brought forward for delivery through the Strategy will be designed in accordance with the relevant guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and in compliance with all DDA standards which will mean improved accessibility and safety for non-motorised road users including those with a sensory disability, those in wheelchairs and those with prams and pushchairs.
16	Implications for Children and Young People
16.1	This decision supports children and young people as it seeks to improve options for walking, cycling and public transport to schools, as well as improved road safety around schools and access to cycle training.
17	Equality Impact Assessment Completed?
17.1	Trialling Impact Assessment Tool
18	Key Decision
18.1	Yes
19	Key Decision Reference
20.1	Nei-18-22
21	Background Papers

21.1 The following is a list of background papers

Two baseline reports have been developed to support the evidence, ambitions and measures within the Oldham Transport Strategies. The baseline reports are:

- Oldham Council Transport Strategy Policy Baseline Report, 2021.
- Oldham Council Transport and Spatial Change Report, 2021.

22 **Appendices**

22.1 Appendix 1 - Oldham's Transport Strategy (Draft for Management Board)

22.2 Appendix 2 – Oldham Town centre Parking Strategy (Draft)

Oldham Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan

Oldham Council

02 November 2022

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Foreword

Transport plays a huge part in the lives of Oldhamers of all ages.

It can influence where we live, work, study and train and also impacts our health, the air we breathe and our access to opportunities.

This new strategy, supports the aims of the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 to have 'World-class connections that support long-term sustainable economic growth and access to opportunity for all' and can deliver real benefits for our residents and the borough.

There will be challenges, but over the coming years there will be opportunities to make sure that the borough's transport network connects all our communities, supports healthy travel choices and is safe and accessible.

Our ambition is to make it easier for residents to get about without using their cars, helping to cut pollution and freeing up road space for essential journeys.

By improving our transport links we'll be helping people access learning and career opportunities.

This will tackle inequalities and support the development of new homes, jobs and businesses.

Across the borough we will look to provide a transport system which:

- supports long term economic growth and makes it easier and quicker for people and goods to get around;
- Improves the quality of life for all by being integrated, affordable and reliable;
- Improves our environment and our air quality because protecting the health of the borough's residents is a priority
- Uses the newest technology and innovation by supporting Greater Manchester's overall target to be net zero carbon by 2038

For us to do all of this we will be investing in safe walking and cycling routes - prioritising space to ensure all our residents have the opportunity to make healthy choices.

We will make improvements that will deliver a reliable highway network for buses, essential freight and other essential journeys – creating a resilient transport network.

We will continue to work with partners to ensure all public transport is safe and accessible and where necessary look to improve current services or introduce new ones. Better connectivity supports the creation of new homes and jobs.

Not all journeys can be made via walking, cycling or public transport.

The council will look to use a greener fleet and we will also invest in our infrastructure – creating more electric charging points and promoting access to

shared mobility clubs, cycle hire, e-bikes and cargo bikes. This will help make the switch to cleaner options easier, especially for businesses and residents.

This isn't a one-size fits all strategy, we'll adapt policies to suit different areas within the borough to benefit the people who live here.

Councillor Amanda Chadderton – Leader of Oldham Council

1. Introduction

1.1 Vision for Oldham

This strategy sets the strategic direction for travel and mobility within Oldham. It captures existing commitments and priorities for all our communities and identifies the requirements for transport in the future both for growth and in response to changing travel technologies. The Oldham Transport Strategy is an all-encompassing transport plan for Oldham, including the town's core and each Neighbourhood District Area including the Pennine edge and the city-region travel to work area.

Delivering Our Future Oldham

The Oldham Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027 sets ambitions that the Transport Strategy aligns to:

- Healthy, safe and well supported residents.
- A great start and skills for life.
- Better jobs and dynamic businesses.
- Quality homes for everyone.
- A clean and green future.

Delivering against these priorities means the Council can help residents and make Oldham the best place it can be and the transport network is an important foundation and enabler to achieving the priorities for Oldham.

If you live in Oldham the least you should expect are the basics of a fulfilling life, as well as some of the things that make life joyful. The basics include:

1. The chance to attend a good school, and to gain the skills and experience for a fulfilling life.
2. The opportunity to get a good job that pays well and offers security and flexibility.
3. Public transport to every part of the city region that's quick, cheap and easy.
4. A home that is affordable, well maintained, and appropriate.
5. Easy, timely access to vital services to keep people healthy and safe.

Beyond those basics, we want Oldham to be a rich and vibrant place to live. That means every resident can expect:

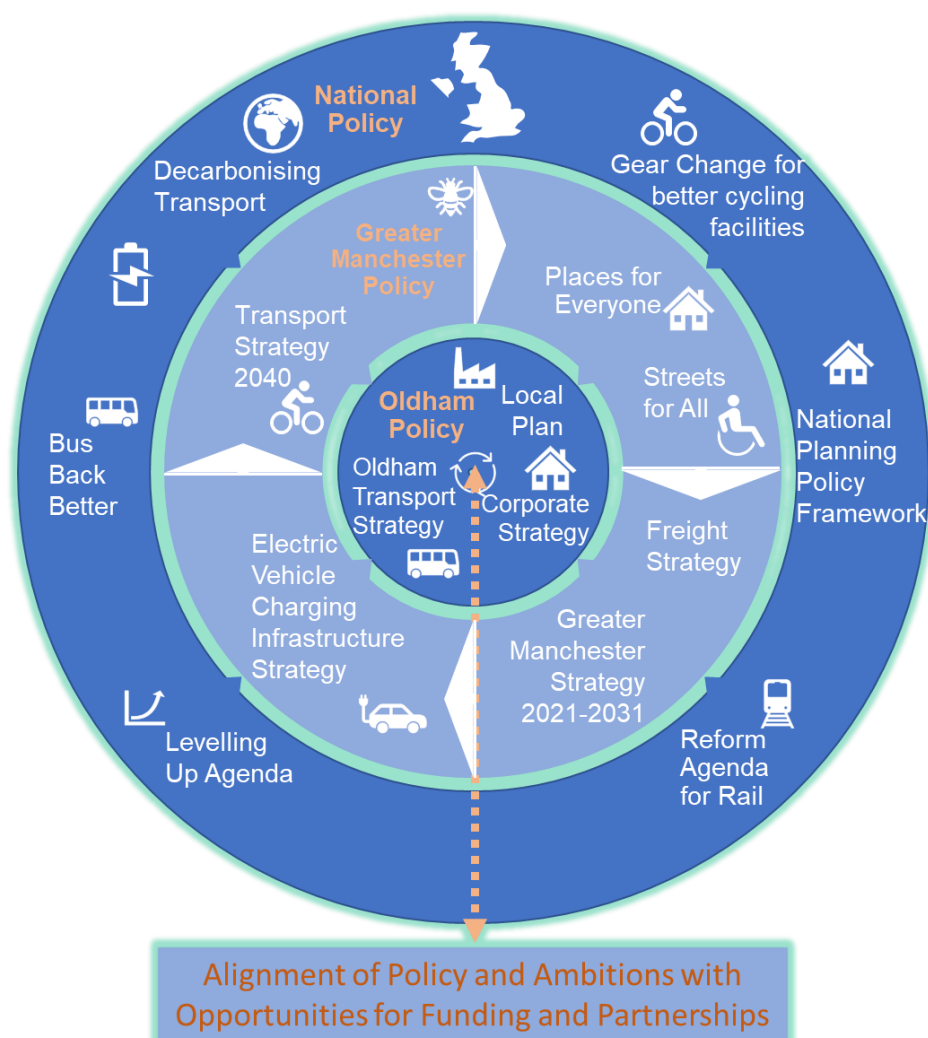
1. A healthy environment and access to green space.
2. Opportunities to get together with neighbours across communities.
3. A thriving local area that celebrates our diversity, with regular activities to boost physical and mental health.

To help us meet these basics and ensure Oldham is a rich and vibrant place to live, we need to invest in the transport network. This means investing in and working with partners to develop facilities for active travel, access and capacity of public transport, and supporting decarbonisation of both the public and private transport in the borough.

1.2 Our Transport Strategy Fits with the National and Regional Policies of our Neighbours

The diagram below (**Figure 1-1**) illustrates the importance of aligning the measures and ambitions in the Oldham Transport Strategy to the policy framework nationally and regionally with our neighbours in Greater Manchester. This means our transport ambitions in Oldham should align to our carbon reduction and sustainability aims nationally, and with the cross-boundary ambitions with our neighbours in Greater Manchester. This is important because the alignment of our ambitions with our neighbours can stand Oldham in a stronger position to attract funding opportunities and inward investment. In addition, the alignment of our ambitions will be better for transport improvements, skills and wellbeing for all neighbourhoods in Oldham.

Figure 1-1: Alignment of Our Policy Ambitions Nationally and with Our Neighbours.



Consultation with our communities

The programmes and measures in the Oldham Transport Strategy are indicative and will benefit from further consultations. The Oldham Transport Strategy has a 20-year timescale and is not expected to realise all the measures in the first 5-years. The Oldham Transport Strategy fully aligns to measures identified for Oldham in the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and Oldham Council is fully committed to that delivery strategy. Oldham Council will continue to work closely with TfGM and our communities to realise the ambitions for all Neighbourhood District Areas across Oldham.

1.3 Overview of Oldham

Transport services and routes in Oldham are essential to connect people with opportunities and training. This requires improved local connections to all neighbourhood districts and employment centres both within the borough and with the wider region.

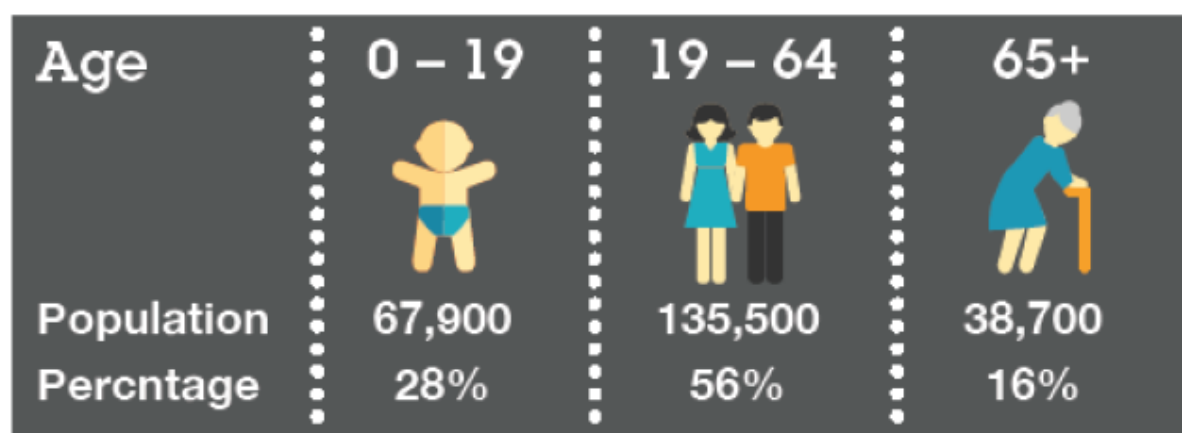


Between 2011 and 2021 our population increased by **7.6%**

This is a larger increase than that seen across Greater Manchester (6.9%) and England (6.6%).



It is expected that the number of older people in Oldham's population will grow by 30% in the next 20 years.



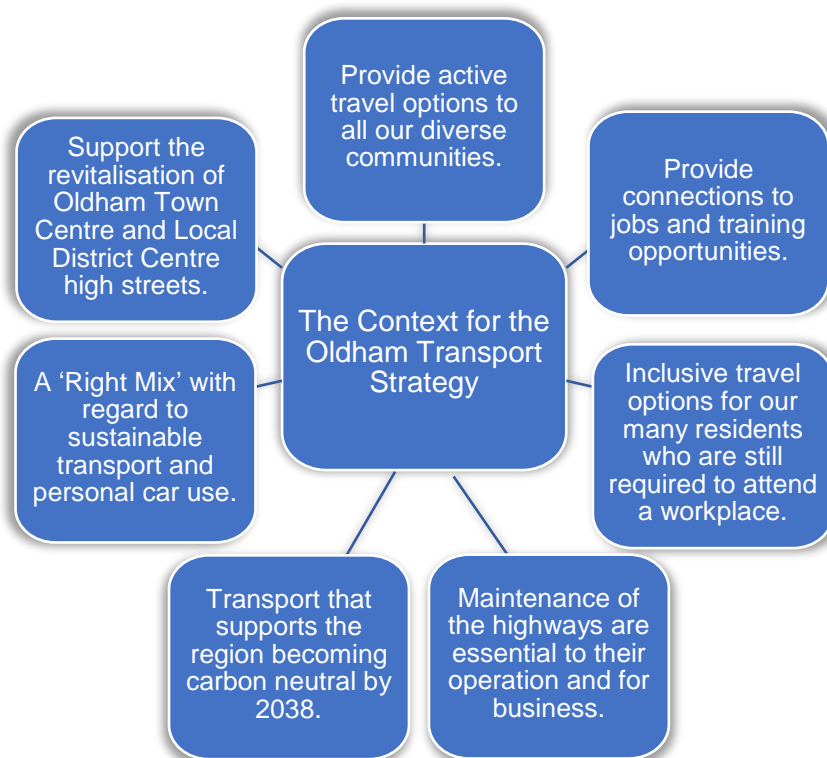
The population of Oldham has grown by around 14,000 people over the last decade, which compares to a similar rate of growth in Greater Manchester.

Oldham is an ethnically diverse borough which in the last decade has seen population growth in the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, as well as groups primarily made up of Polish and Romanian heritage. Oldham's diversity presents opportunities for businesses and training to access the skills required.

Oldham has high levels of community deprivation. In 2019 most of the Oldham urban area was within the 50% most deprived areas nationally.

When the Covid-19 pandemic struck the economic consequences impacted heavily on the poorest communities, which means many neighbourhood areas in Oldham require support with their travel.

A large proportion of the Oldham population works in sectors that have seen big changes to demands during the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore high levels of vulnerability. The top five employment sectors are health, manufacturing, retail, education, transport and warehousing. Together, these sectors make-up 55% of employees in Oldham. Retail has seen national and local declines in employment whilst transport and storage is a growing area of employment for the region.



1.4 Ambitions for Transport in Oldham

The Oldham Transport Strategy is categorised into six ambitions illustrated in **Figure 1-2**. Planning transport for the future requires a balance of healthier travel behaviours and reducing harmful transport emissions. Similarly, the Government and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) aim to reduce carbon emissions.

Transport is a major contributor to poor air quality whilst being essential to connect communities with opportunities. This means the Oldham Transport Strategy will need to support the Greater Manchester ambitions to grow economically in a way that also supports the region becoming carbon neutral by 2038.

Healthier travel choices mean being able walk and cycle on routes and in our neighbourhoods whilst feeling safe and confident in being able to do so. Quality of walking and cycling facilities, better active travel information, street lighting and including the needs of the disabled.

To improve road and travel safety, Oldham Council will work with partners such as Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), Greater Manchester Police and the freight sector to improve safety on the transport network at all times of the day. People should be able to use the services and public transport facilities at all times of day without concern for their safety.

Connected Oldham means Oldham Council will prioritise maintenance of the highways, footways and Public Rights of Way, which are essential to their operation, wellbeing and leisure. Maintenance needs vary in scale and engineering complexity, notably in the East Neighbourhood District and the Pennine fringe where the hilly topography creates additional weather and structural needs.

The English Indices of Multiple Deprivation identifies Oldham has a higher proportion of deprived communities when compared to similar metropolitan areas nationally. The disabled of all ages and abilities require safe access to the transport network in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Perceptions of safety and 'fear of harm' factors are a barrier to travel for many disabled people and vulnerable groups. This means improving access is a priority and is important for reducing deprivation in Oldham whilst supporting our communities.

Figure 1-2: Oldham Transport Ambitions.



1.5 Baseline Reports for the Oldham Transport Strategy

Two baseline reports have been developed to support the evidence, ambitions and measures within the Oldham Transport Strategies. The baseline reports are:

- Oldham Council Transport Strategy Policy Baseline Report, 2021.
- Oldham Council Transport and Spatial Change Report, 2021.

2. Background and Context for Transport Improvements in Oldham

2.1 Introduction

The Oldham Transport Strategy needs to conform with the national, regional and Greater Manchester City-Region transport policy framework that sits above it, particularly the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040. It also needs to conform with and support local plans and strategies such as the Creating a Better Place agenda, the Corporate Plan and the Local Plan.

2.2 Safety on our Transport Network

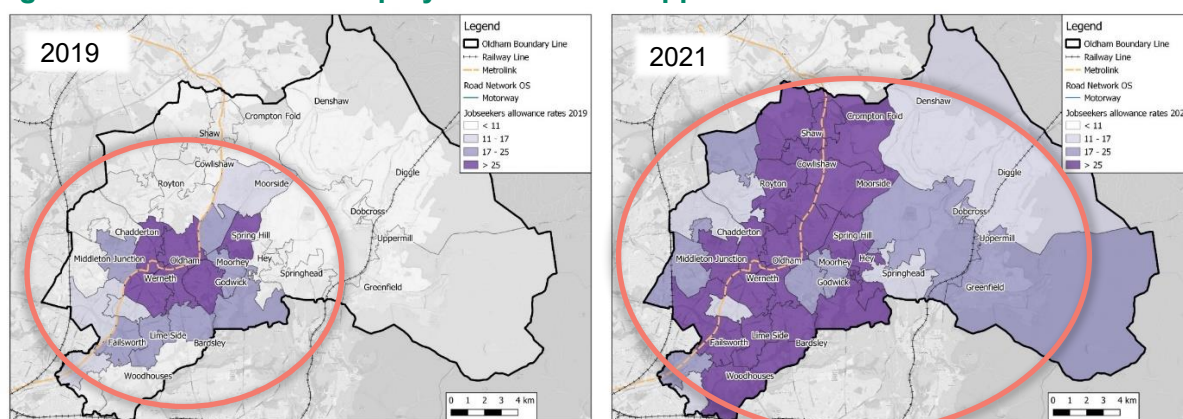
Oldham Council will work with partners at TfGM to identify ways to make the transport system feel safer for lone women and vulnerable age groups who currently do not think some tram stops are safe places during hours of darkness. This means we want to improve Metrolink and bus stops so they are an environment people feel safe in and people feel safe using the trams at night.

2.3 Our Employment Challenges for a Thriving Oldham

Emerging strongly and more resiliently from the Covid-19 pandemic is a primary focus for Oldham Council. Going into the pandemic, Oldham already had many unemployment challenges and a need to better connect people with local employment and training opportunities.

National deprivation data¹ shows that in 2019 most of the Oldham urban area was within the 50% most deprived areas nationally, whilst many areas were within the 10% most deprived nationally. As the pandemic struck the economic consequences impacted heavily on people and businesses. This is illustrated in **Figure 2-1** which shows the large rise in unemployment benefit support. Oldham had in Autumn 2020 higher levels of unemployment than the North West of England average.

Figure 2-1: Growth in Unemployment Benefit Support Between 2019 and 2021.



Oldham has a much higher proportion of people with no qualifications (13.3%) compared to the North West of England average (8.7%)². Opportunities such as the UK Government Lifetime Skills Guarantee and developments at Oldham College as well as colleges and

¹ English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), 2019

² Office for National Statistics Labour Supply data; Annual Population Survey; Qualifications (Jan 2019-Dec 2019); Economic inactivity (Oct 2019-Sep 2020); Employment and unemployment (Oct 2019-Sep 2020)

universities across Greater Manchester require people to have affordable transport links to connect them to raise attainment.

The Oldham Transport Strategy will continue to support the needs of people who travel to Manchester City Centre and beyond using the bus, Metrolink and railway network. The quality of bus and tram stops, and the safe accessibility of railway stations at Greenfield and neighbouring Mills Hill are important areas for improvement in the Strategy.

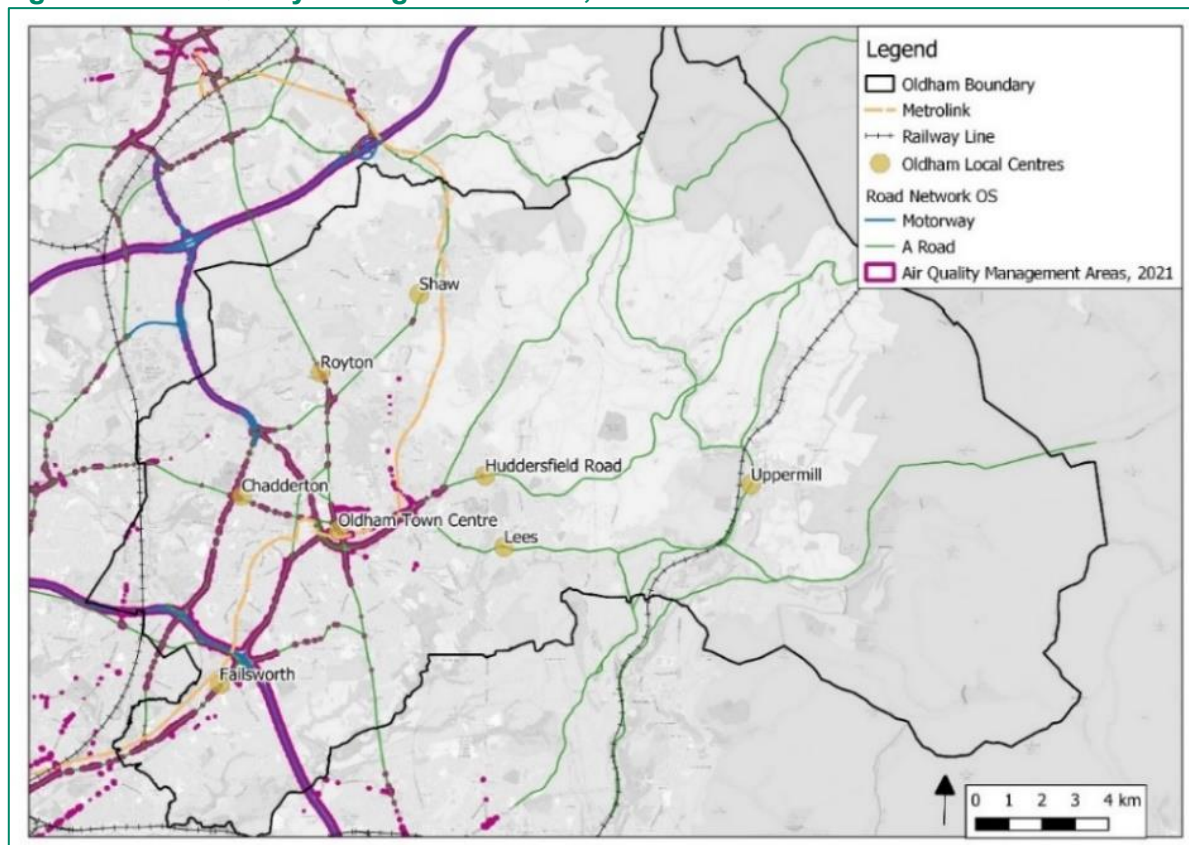
2.4 A Clean Oldham that Provides Better Air Quality for Our Communities

The GMCA, comprising the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities, has declared a climate emergency. Greater Manchester is planning a Clean Air Zone which will reduce the number of harmful vehicle emissions such as Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and fine particulate matter. The priorities for improved air quality in Greater Manchester are to improve the fleet of low and zero emission buses and taxis, lower emission road freight and the increased use of walking and cycling.

The Oldham Transport Strategy responds to the priorities with measures to improve infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians. It will facilitate the increasing demand for walking, cycling and improved accessibility for disabled users. Active travel over shorter travel distances can both support improvements to air quality whilst supporting the health and wellbeing too. In addition, measures that support cleaner air in our communities also support national policy targets related to Climate Change.

Climate Change and transport network resilience are key challenges because of the increasing tendency for extreme weather events such as localised flash flooding. Oldham is on the Pennine fringe and therefore has topographical and highway maintenance challenges associated with the geography. The Oldham Transport Strategy will support local air quality improvements whilst aligning with Climate Change aims because in the long-term the consequences could adversely impact our transport network.

Oldham has Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) which means the areas are monitored with regard to the harmful air quality for transport and potential other source. The AQMAs in Oldham concern the motorway network including the M62 and M60, and local roads, which are shown in **Figure 2-2**.

Figure 2-2: Air Quality Management Areas, 2021.

2.5 Connecting Oldham with Highway Maintenance, Development and Infrastructure Plans

Strategic housing and employment sites in Oldham are included in the draft Greater Manchester 'Places for Everyone' Joint Development Plan Document. Transport interventions are required to support the delivery of the housing and employment sites, which may include improvements to the existing highway, traffic calming for existing residential areas, and measures for public transport, cycling and walking.

Oldham Council will continue to work with TfGM to support development opportunities that will require connections across the borough, Greater Manchester and the wider region. The **Oldham Transport Strategy Delivery Plan** (Chapter 7) provides a timescale for change that has been informed by development priorities and interdependencies with key developments.

2.6 An Accessible Oldham with Better Public Transport

Oldham is served by Metrolink between Rochdale Town Centre and Manchester Victoria and includes three stops in Oldham Town Centre. Footfall at Metrolink stops in Oldham has risen year-on-year as a whole from 2016/17 to 2019/20 before the pandemic impacted commuting behaviours. Metrolink usage has recovered during 2022 with Manchester City Centre and Exchange Square having the highest 'tap-offs' in the last three years.

Improving access to opportunities and supporting growth in Oldham requires continued expansion of the Metrolink network, which Oldham Council will develop with our partners at TfGM. Potential expansion of; the existing line to Heywood in Rochdale; a need for a direct Metrolink connection between Oldham and Manchester Piccadilly; a potential Oldham to Middleton extension; and improvements to existing stops are key priorities for Oldham Council.



Buses are central to the sustainable transport mix in Oldham and Greater Manchester because the bus services occupy the highest mode-share for all sustainable modes for journeys up to 10 miles. Bus services, their reliability and punctuality have received particular attention with the move to the Bus Franchising model of operation in Greater Manchester. Oldham Council will work with partners to improve bus services such as the A671 / A627 corridor, which is planned to become a Quality Bus Transit route. Other key routes into Oldham Town Centre and to all neighbourhood district areas require better quality and frequent bus services that provide users with up-to-date information on timetables, fares and availability.

Looking to the immediate future for bus services, the Covid-19 support funding has been extended throughout 2022. Concerns nationally for lower bus passenger levels overall required a focus on opportunities, such as attracting younger users to bus services with digital information and lower carbon technology.

Oldham Council will work with partners at TfGM to integrate our ambitions for Metrolink and bus improvements with the longer-term HS2 high speed rail plans for Greater Manchester. This will consider the infrastructure opportunities that Oldham Council should develop in a way that aligns to our transport ambitions.

2.7 New Transport Technologies

Technological developments are increasingly enabling innovations in bus, Taxi / Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) use or alternatives that use smartphone apps to connect our journey needs (**Figure 2-3**).

Zero emission vehicles such as electric cars and other alternative forms of fuel for the transport system, such as hydrogen, are growing in use. This is important because innovations for transport providers such as bus and taxi operators, present us all with opportunities for innovative approaches to transport and mobility.

Taxis / PHVs provide invaluable transport services at times when public transport is not an option for some vulnerable groups. These services can be especially valuable in enabling people with restricted mobility to access key amenities or health services.

The onset of new technologies and apps are broadening the ways people can access public transport services for facilities for hire, such as bicycles. For Oldham this will give people, and particularly young and elderly age groups, more options to travel. This may include communities that experience travel affordability barriers for travel to edge of urban employment opportunities that have limited public transport service.

High-speed internet and access to technology influence how we travel and are important factors in both the development of the transport system and consumer travel choices. The Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint is developing a clear strategic vision on 5G and fibre optic communications. It is looking at the commercial opportunities to maximise their value to the city region for growth and prosperity.

Figure 2-3: Smartphones and other technology are an opportunity to increase flexibility, written and spoken information in many languages.



Source: Transport Extra

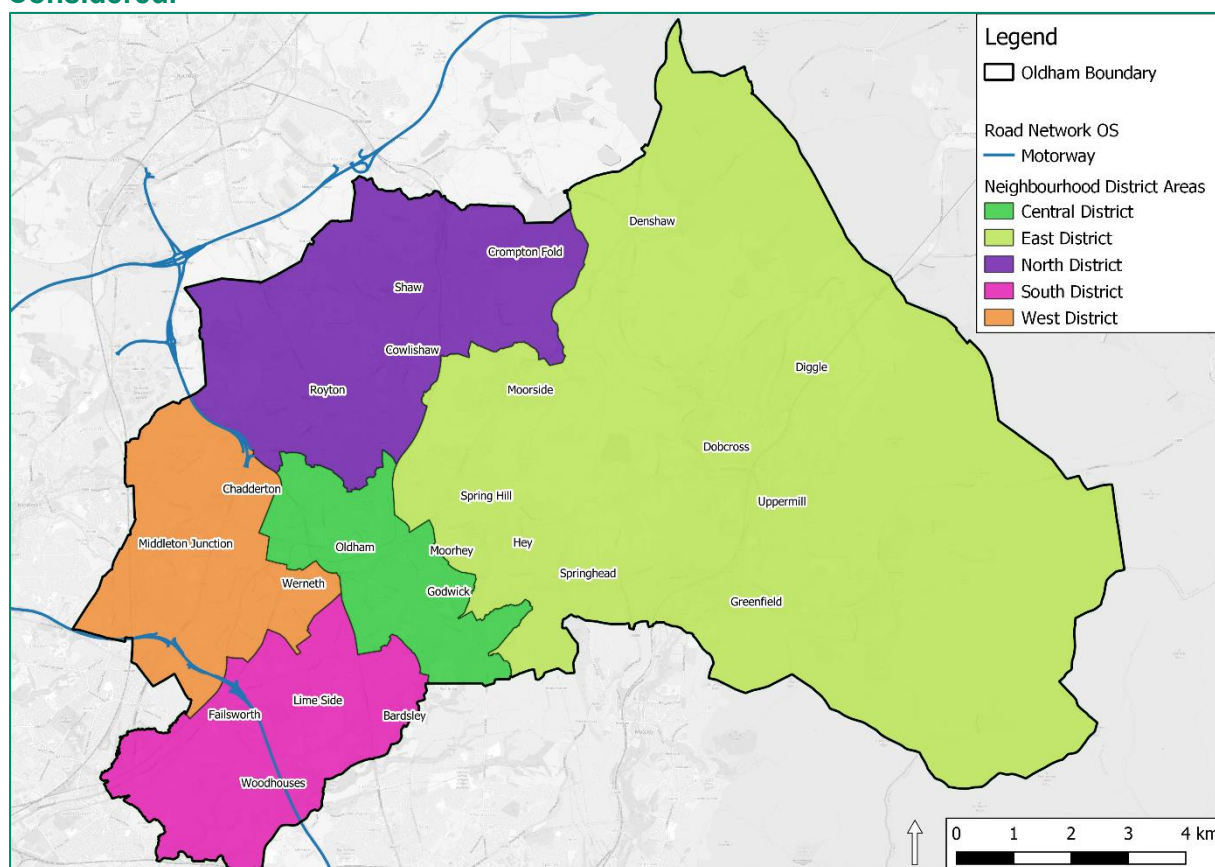
2.8 Oldham Transport Strategy Spatial Areas

The Transport Strategy for Oldham considers five spatial areas summarised in **Table 2-1**, and which are mapped in **Figure 2-4**. The spatial areas correspond with the five Oldham Neighbourhood Districts and the wards within each.

Table 2-1: Spatial Areas for the Oldham Transport Strategy.

Spatial Area	Wards within Each Spatial Area
North District	Crompton, Royton North, Royton South, Shaw.
Central District	Alexandra, Coldhurst, St Mary's.
West District	Chadderton Central, Chadderton South, Chadderton North, Werneth.
East District	Saddleworth North, Saddleworth South, Saddleworth West and Lees, St James', Waterhead.
South District	Failsworth East, Failsworth West, Hollinwood, Medlock Vale.

Figure 2-4: Transport Strategy Spatial Plan – the Five Neighbourhood District Areas Considered.



Unique to Oldham is the topography and seasonal challenges associated with the Pennines, which means the road and rail network in the East Area has varied geometry, level changes, retaining structures and winter resilience issues that are not as pronounced elsewhere on the Oldham transport network.

The East Area is also important to identify because it is relatively rural and less populous. For transport this means ensuring communities continue to be served by public transport services as national budgets experience post-pandemic challenges, and that opportunities to enhance services are captured.

3. Placing the Oldham Transport Strategy with Policy Context

3.1 Introduction

The Oldham Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan align with the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, which is the overarching Transport Strategy for the city-region. The strategy includes a 'Right Mix' ambition for half of all journeys in Greater Manchester to be made by active travel or public transport by 2040 (**Figure 3-1**).

For Oldham, the commitment is to enable the borough to become an increasingly attractive place to live, work and visit. This means Oldham Council want to provide safer facilities for walking and cycling and improve their integration with public transport services.

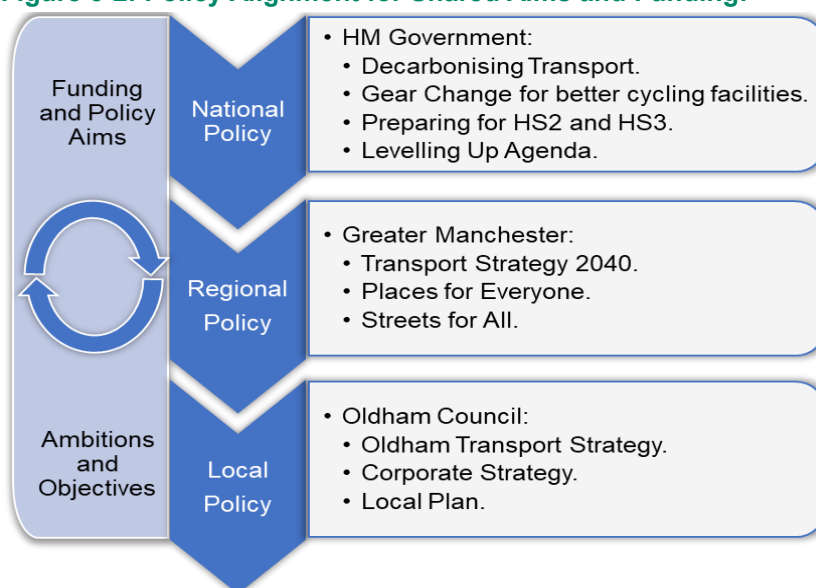
Figure 3-1: Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040; 'Right Mix'.



Walking, cycling and public transport services that integrate with better information and facilities is important to supporting the local economy and high streets in the short and longer-term to 2040.

Figure 3-2: Policy Alignment for Shared Aims and Funding.

The Oldham Transport Strategy aligns to the national, regional and local policy. This means alignment with the aims by the Government, TfGM and Oldham's Corporate Plan. The alignment is summarised in **Figure 3-2**. Alignment is important to position Oldham is a strong position when capturing funding opportunities arise.



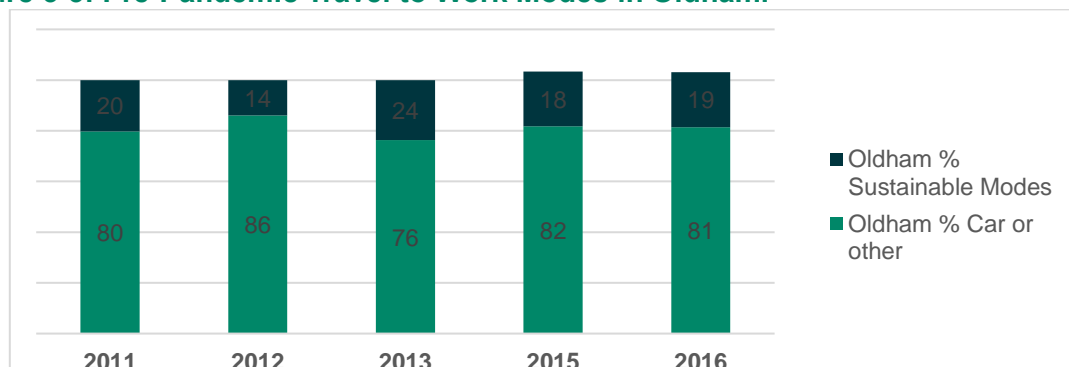
3.2 The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Travel Policy

The Oldham Transport Strategy 2022 provides a framework for responding to challenges and opportunities following the Covid-19 pandemic. The draft Oldham Local Plan and the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 have highlighted the need for a unified strategy to set a strategic direction for Oldham's transport network.

Data leading up to the Covid-19 pandemic that is illustrated in **Figure 3-3** shows the balance of sustainable travel and personal car use in Oldham has been dominated by car travel for

trips to work. This means to achieve the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 'Right Mix' ambitions for a 50 / 50 split between sustainable modes and car modes, policies should both support and encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport.

Figure 3-3: Pre-Pandemic Travel to Work Modes in Oldham.



Source: Labour Force Survey 2017

3.3 Transport Challenges for Greater Manchester Since the Pandemic

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, TfGM have published Greater Manchester-wide travel mode information (TfGM Transport Network Performance Update May 2022), which shows to May 2022:

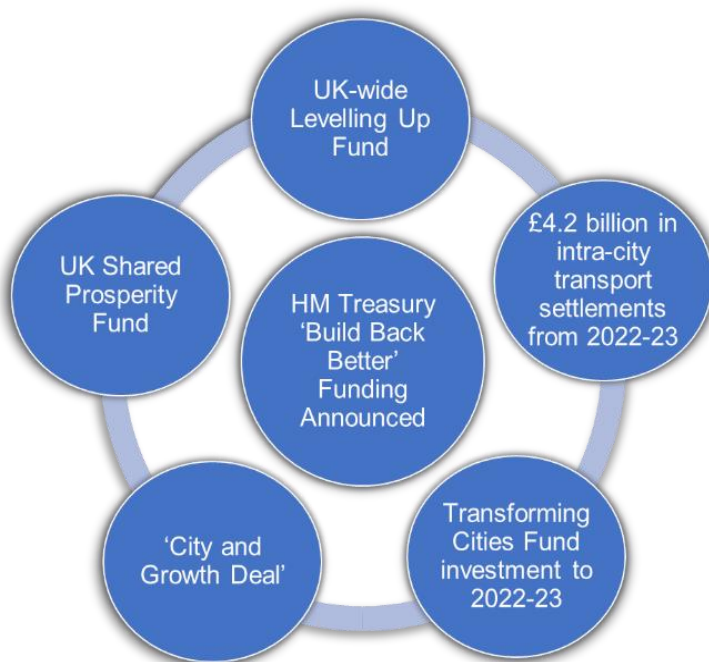
- Metrolink and bus patronage (public transport) were 70% and 91% of the pre-pandemic levels respectively. In addition, Northern Rail and Trans Pennine rail services in Greater Manchester are 85% and 80% of pre-pandemic levels respectively. This means public transport usage continues to be less than it was before the Covid-19 pandemic. Leisure demand has increased but commuting is only 40% of pre-pandemic levels.
- Highway trips have recovered to pre-pandemic levels overall across the week. Weekday demand is 1% below pre-pandemic levels whilst weekend demand is 2% higher. This means currently in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, when people do travel in Greater Manchester, they are favouring the car / van over public transport modes. Industry wide issues at bus and rail operators such as driver shortages, may account for some impact to the network performance.
- Walking and cycling activity is currently in line with pre-pandemic levels as measured by TfGM over a 28-day rolling average.

3.4 National Policy Context

3.4.1 Levelling Up Agenda

The HM Treasury 'Build Back Better' strategy is the Government's ambitious vision and priorities for how the country will return to growth following the Covid-19 Pandemic. The document sets out the ambition to 'Level Up' the whole of the UK (**Figure 3-4**).

Figure 3-4: Government Build Back Better with Levelling Up Ambitions.



While funding opportunities come and go, the shift towards regional devolution is likely to have more staying power. Greater Manchester has been a trailblazer on devolution in the UK, and as such Oldham's relationship with the rest of the city region should only strengthen in the coming years.

GMCA have committed to a strategy for progress focused on three areas: economic growth, greater equality, and climate change.

For Oldham this will mean working closely with the city region on issues including transport, skills and business investment, homelessness and employment support, and efforts tackle pollution.

The Oldham Transport Strategy is the pillar for enhancing transport connectivity in Oldham as part of the Levelling Up agenda. For example, if people in Oldham want to access the free fully funded Level 3 courses announced with the Government's 'Build Back Better' strategy, they will need good travel options by bus, Metrolink, walking and cycling to improve their skills and opportunities.

HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail are important to the release of rail capacity on the rail network, which will be important for service improvements at Greenfield Station, Mills Hill and others in the region that communities in Oldham depend on. It will be important for Oldham Council to work closely with GMCA, TfGM and transport agencies to ensure Oldham can fully harness the benefits of major rail schemes.

3.4.2 Decarbonisation; Reducing Our Carbon Emissions from Transport

The transport network is one of the biggest contributors to carbon emissions and this means measures must be taken locally and nationally to reduce vehicle carbon emissions or enable travel by zero emission modes. The GMCA have announced a carbon-neutral aim to be achieved by 2038. This means the City Region should be producing no more carbon emissions than that which is being saved by transport and other factors.

Transport decarbonisation will be achieved by encouraging people and businesses to use zero emission vehicles such as electric buses, vans and taxis, which will be supported by plans in Oldham for electric vehicle charging points. We will work with partners such as a

bus operators, represented by the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), who have pledged to only procure low emission and zero-emission electric buses by 2025.

Walking, cycling and shared mobility measures such as the Greater Manchester Cycle Hire Scheme and Bee Network of cycleways all feature within the ambitions to support lower carbon journeys. The ambitions include walking and cycling schemes such as better road crossings and path refurbishment, new cycle ways and improved cycle parking in local district centres. Decarbonising transport can be achieved if a higher proportion of travel is by walking and cycling, notably for short trips to schools, workplaces or transport interchanges with bus and Metrolink.

School Travel Planning support has attracted significant attention and more funding support for school travel is a key ambition.

3.4.3 Preparing for HS2 and HS3 in Greater Manchester

High Speed 2 (HS2) will connect with Manchester City Centre and Manchester Airport as part of the Phase 2b Western Leg of the new high speed railway line. The Government aims for this phase be open for use between 2035 and 2041 to provide both increased railway capacity as a whole as well as high inter-city connections.

Connections to HS2 stations in Greater Manchester by public transport and active travel are important to ensure users can access the services and opportunities the next work will bring both during operation and construction. Oldham Council will work with TfGM to support the development of the HS2 Wider Connectivity Study and what needs and infrastructure opportunities may be required for Oldham Council to develop further.

HS3 is the railway network and travel time improvements being developed for travel across the north of England and is being principally led by Transport for the North (TfN). This means the current limitations to capacity, speed and disruption to services between the cities of the north would be improved to support HS2 improvements and harness the new capacity HS2 and HS3 improvements will bring.

3.4.4 National Reform Agenda for Rail

In 2021 the Government published its plan to substantially reform the running of the country's railways. The most significant proposal is a change from the franchised system of route and station control by private operators to a new model of Passenger Service Contracts (PSCs). Great British Railways is the new body being established to operate the system.

Improved Service and Station Control for Local Leaders:

"Partnerships will include the ability for local leaders to integrate ticketing and fares with other local transport services, control stations and buy additional services or infrastructure to achieve local transport and housing priorities more effectively than today, using funds raised locally. Local railway managers will be scrutinised by local politicians through joint governance arrangements to provide clear accountability locally in areas where such arrangements are appropriate" (Greater British Railways: The William-Shapps Plan for Rail, 2021).

The changes reflect a number of concerns including public frustration with the high-ticket prices and the operational failures of some franchises including Northern Rail. Railway stations will become hubs for local bus services with better information displayed about

connecting services and integrated ticketing between rail, Metrolink and bus services will be introduced. Oldham Council will work with partners at TfGM to realise the ambitions.

3.4.5 Gear Change

Gear Change is the vision for better cycling infrastructure and participation in cycling across England. This has been complemented by the appointment of Chris Boardman as the National Cycling and Walking Commissioner. The principles of the Gear Change ambitions are included in the Oldham Transport Strategy priorities. This means the local highway network, town centre ambitions; bus and Metrolink service should all better integrate with walking and cycling facilities.

The actions Gear Change recommends align to the objectives of the Greater Manchester 'Made to Move' strategy which means cycle routes should be safe and user friendly. Cycle routes should be continuous and of a standard that provides a genuine alternative mode-choice. In Oldham the latest national cycling design standards in LTN1/20 will be used.

3.5 Regional Plans

3.5.1 Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040

TfGM and GMCA have prepared an updated transport strategy that cover the entire city-region and the transport network including Metrolink and Bee Network. A refreshed version of the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and a final version of the Five-Year Delivery Plan (2020-2025) sets out the practical actions planned over the next 5 years.

For each Local Authority district, ten new Local Implementation Plans (LIP) have also been prepared, one for each Greater Manchester council, including Oldham.

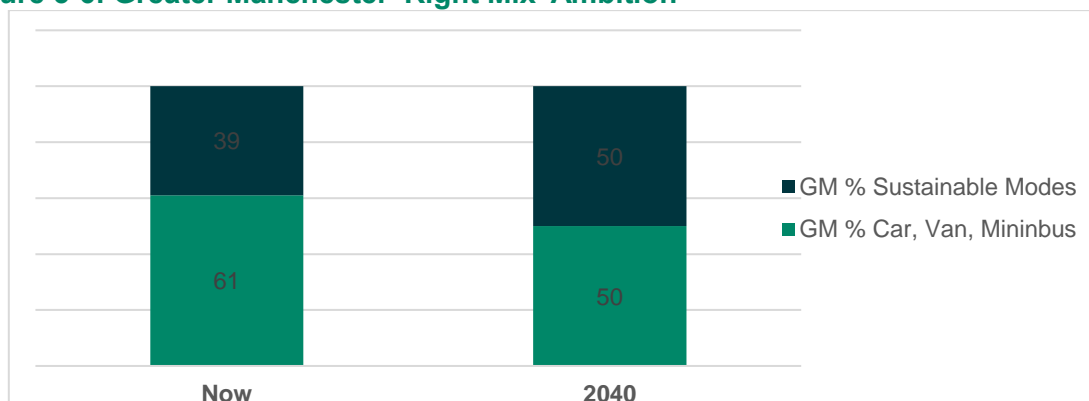
The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 (**Figure 3-5**Error! Reference source not found.) includes short, medium and long-term needs. The Oldham Transport Strategy has close synergies with the objectives and includes all the proposed schemes within the latest 5-year Local Implementation Plan.

The refreshed 2040 Transport Strategy includes the aim for the "Right-Mix" of people's mode of travel. This means at least 50% of all journeys will be made by active travel and public transport by 2040. There is an increased emphasis on the importance of cycling and walking and use of public transport with improvements to those modes of travel.

Figure 3-6Error! Reference source not found. shows travel in Greater Manchester has been dominated by personal car use for all types of journeys as a whole. However, as the 'Right Mix' ambition is to achieve a 50/50 mix of travel.

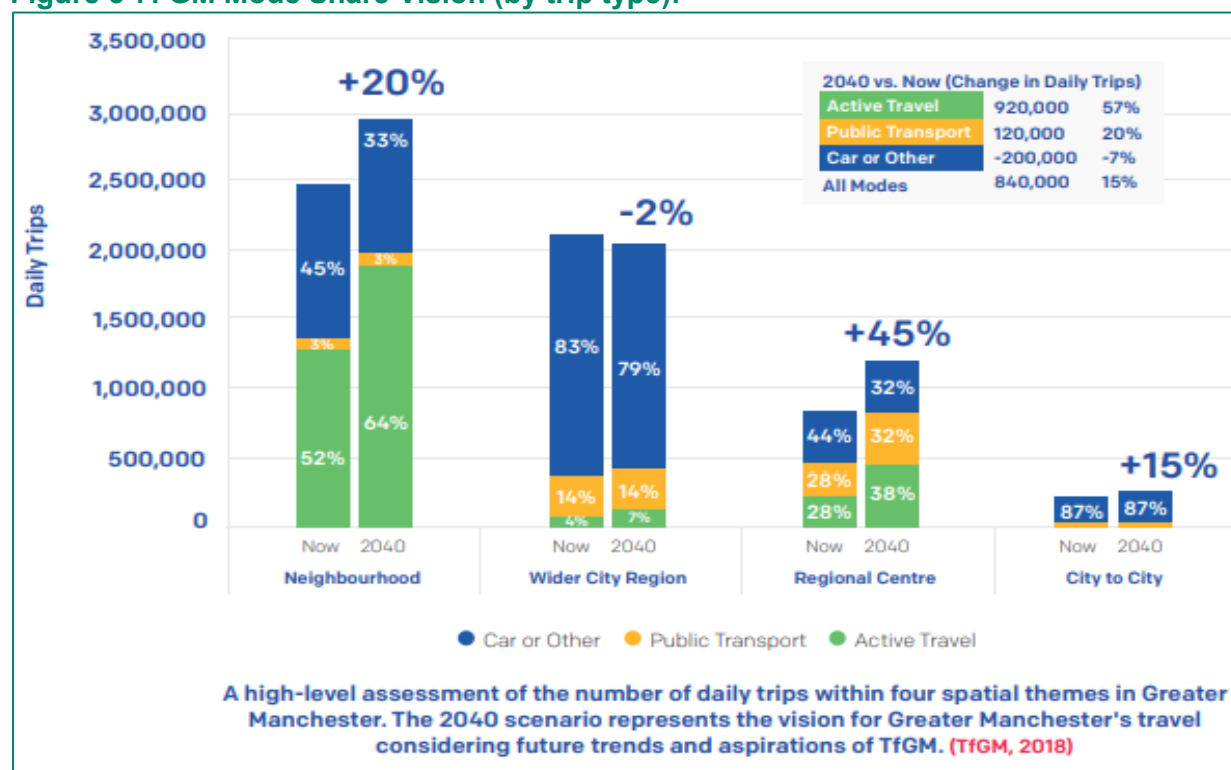
Figure 3-5: Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 Objectives.



Figure 3-6: Greater Manchester 'Right Mix' Ambition

Source: Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040.

The 'Right Mix' vision is further defined across the four spatial themes with assessed changes in the number of daily trips across each mode of travel. **Figure 3-7** Error! Reference source not found. shows the number of neighbourhood trips and trips to the regional centre are expected to grow by 20% and 45% respectively by 2040. Neighbourhood trips and the high proportions of active travel mode share currently, and more so by 2040, are closely associated with local trips within Oldham.

Figure 3-7: GM Mode Share Vision (by trip type).

Source: Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework 2040.

The climate emergency declared by GMCA and all ten councils; and the development of the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan (GMCAP) also align to the 'Right Mix' ambition.

3.5.2 Streets for All

Streets for All is Greater Manchester's emerging approach to thinking about the role of streets in creating sustainable, healthy and resilient places. It focuses attention on the needs of people and place, rather than considering the movement of vehicles alone. The Streets for All framework has five place categories, which are illustrated **Figure 3-8** Error! Reference source not found. aim to capture both the highway hierarchy and reframe what the priority

Figure 3-8: Streets for All Place Categories.



considerations should be in each.

The Streets for All approach permeates through the Oldham Transport Strategy ambitions and has been a consideration for each of the measures identified. The Strategy aligns the transport measures with the travel and place making principles being considered by Greater Manchester.

3.6 Local Policy

3.6.1 Oldham Council 'Covid Recovery Strategy' 2021

Oldham Council's Corporate Plan expired in December 2020 and was superseded by the Covid-19 Recovery Strategy, which will act as an interim Corporate Plan until at least 2022 (**Figure 3-9** Error! Reference source not found.). For transport planning this means responding to changing consumer and travel trends following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The transport aims of the Covid Recovery Strategy (**Figure 3-9**) are to reduce carbon emissions from transport and increase cycling, walking and public transport use. This can be achieved by:

- Improve walking and cycling routes in Oldham and continue to deliver the Bee Network.
- Implement a campaign to promote active travel including to schools, residents and workplaces.
- Work with partners to improve the public transport offer in Oldham.
- Facilitate and accelerate the shift to electric vehicles by expanding the public Electric Vehicle charging network.

Addressing the skills gaps in the borough of Oldham are a high priority which means ensuring that school and college leavers move on to education, employment and training. In addition, Oldham Council will support the conditions for an inclusive and thriving town centre by investing in transport infrastructure and digital infrastructure for better internet connectivity.

TfGM, TfN and other academic and private sector bodies have published high-level transport scenarios for policy makers that relate to the short-term response to Covid-19³. The Oldham Transport Strategy has considered the TfGM Covid-19 scenarios when considering transport measures in the strategy. However, in 2021 policy makers are alert to the likelihood of further developments in consumer and travel trends going into 2022 and beyond. The monitoring of the Oldham Transport Strategy objectives (Chapter 8) will be important in both the short-term and over the lifespan of the strategy.

Figure 3-9: Covid Recovery Strategy - 2021-2022.



³ Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place.

3.6.2 Corporate Plan 2022-2027

The Oldham Council Corporate Plan sets out the Council's priorities, with specific actions for the next three years. It works in parallel with the Our Future Oldham vision, which is a blueprint for the next decade.

Our Future Oldham: A Shared Vision for 2030

sets the direction for our borough as a whole, based on extensive consultation with residents and partners. It shows what we're trying to achieve overall, and specifically the minimum expectations every resident should have by 2030. The Corporate Plan is the Council's contribution and the Oldham Transport Strategy aligns with both sets of aims, which are summarised.

The Corporate Plan and Oldham Transport Strategy relate back to national policy aims such as transport and business decarbonisation, Levelling Up in the deprived communities and regions, and addressing the skills gaps in our society with better transport connections and solutions.



Delivering Our Future Oldham

The Oldham Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027 indicates this means:

- Healthy, safe and well supported residents.
- A great start and skills for life.
- Better jobs and dynamic businesses.
- Quality homes for everyone.
- A clean and green future.

Delivering against these priorities means the Council can help residents and make Oldham the best place it can be. The transport network is an important foundation and enabler to achieving these priorities for Oldham.

Delivering the Corporate Plan in Oldham means the Oldham Transport Strategy will provide quick, cheap and easy transport to every part of the city region. This will require partnership working both within Oldham borough and with our regional partners. The Transport strategy aims to open up a wide range of jobs and other opportunities for Oldham people across the city region and beyond. This matters for all communities and groups. During the Corporate Plan consultation, children and young people indicated a very strong preference for a shift towards greater reliance on public transport over private vehicles. This matters to them both for sustainable travel and to protect the climate.

Our Future Oldham: A Shared Vision for 2030 captures the preference for public transport and accessible travel for all communities. For Oldham this includes increased capacity on our existing tram network, improved bus transit between Rochdale, Oldham and Ashton, and accessibility improvements that will make active travel in and around our towns easier. The Delivery Plan sets out the measures we will take forward to achieve the vision.

3.6.3 Places for Everyone and the Oldham Local Plan

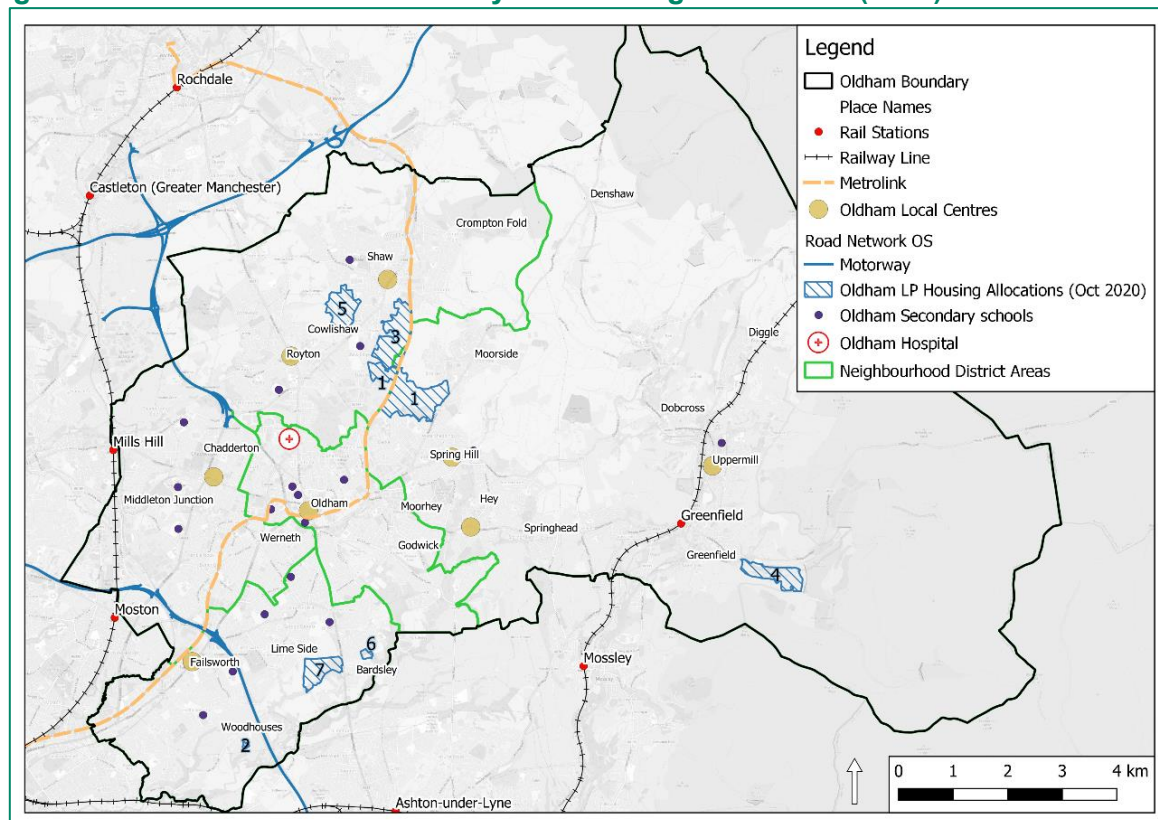
The Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Documents (joint DPD) is Oldham Council's Local Plan for the realisation of housing, employment, the Green Belt and other infrastructure needs to 2026. The joint DPD aligns with the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan by nine districts of Greater Manchester.

On 14 February 2022, the Places for Everyone Joint Plan and other supporting documents were submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination. The plan aims to maximise the use of brownfield land and urban spaces while protecting the Green Belt. It will ensure all new developments are integrated into Greater Manchester's transport network or will be supported by new infrastructure to provide people with a genuine alternative travel choice to the private car.

Places for Everyone is a plan that:

- Sets out how the nine boroughs should develop over the plan period to 2037.
- Identifies the amount of new development that will come forward across the 9 local authority areas in terms of housing, offices and industry and warehousing, and the main areas in which this will be focused.
- Supports the delivery of key infrastructure, such as transport and utilities.
- Protects the important environmental assets across the city region.
- Allocates sites for employment and housing outside of the existing urban area.
- Defines a new Green Belt boundary for Greater Manchester.

The Oldham Transport Strategy aligns with the strategic housing allocations in, Oldham which are shown in **Figure 3-10** and listed in **Table 3-1**. In addition, the Atom Valley MDZ which is the GMCA's North East Growth Location, consists of both employment and residential land-uses shown in **Figure 3-11**.

Figure 3-10: Oldham Places for Everyone Housing Allocations (2021).**Table 3-1: Oldham Housing Allocations.**

Ref No.	Site Name
1	Broadbent Moss
2	Bottom Field Farm (Woodhouses)
3	Beal Valley
4	Chew Brook Vale (Robert Fletcher's)
5	Cowlshaw
6	South of Rosary Road
7	Land South of Coal Pit Lane

The Oldham Council housing trajectory for the housing allocations to 2037 shows in the period 2025 to 2030 around 1,600 dwellings are forecast to be completed versus around 700 in the period 2031 to 2035. Only the largest allocation, Broadbent Moss, is expected to build-out beyond 2037.

The **transport implications for the current housing trajectory (2021)** is the **Broadbent Moss and Beal Valley** allocations are expected to substantially build out by 2030, which means the proposed Cop Road Metrolink Stop in the Greater Manchester 2040 Transport Strategy, and the Beal Valley / Broadbent Moss Spine Road are key priorities. The location may also require other active mode and public transport accessibility needs.

The **Cowlshaw** site is also expected to mostly build-out by 2030 which means public transport services in the area should be improved, including measures to prevent inappropriate use of existing residential routes ('rat running').

3.6.4 Creating a Better Place

Creating a Better Place incorporates significant programmes of work that are being progressed in order to set out a comprehensive vision and strategic framework for the borough. Creating a Better Place focuses on building more homes for residents, creating new jobs through town centre regeneration, and ensuring Oldham is a great place to visit with lots of family friendly and accessible places to go. Oldham Town Centre is a key focus of the Creating a Better Place approach, which includes transformational town centre projects. Improving connectivity to and across Oldham Town Centre is central to Creating a Better Place.

3.7 Development and Infrastructure Plans

3.7.1 Access to Employment and Growth Areas

Within Oldham key employment locations include industry, warehousing and office locations (**Figure 3-11**). The information shows employment areas in Oldham are clustered in the west of the borough in closer proximity to the motorway and Metrolink network. The potential for the sites to be developed further will rely on transport connections by road, public transport and active modes.

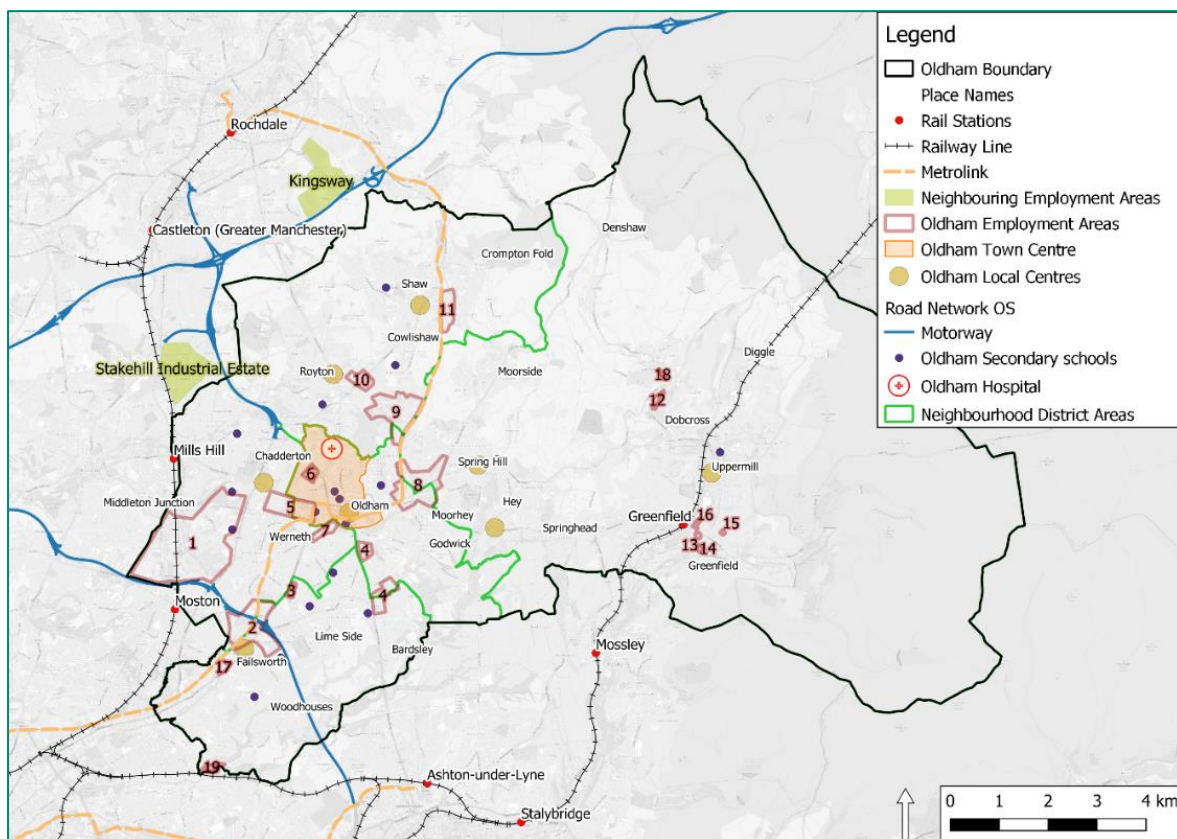
Cross-boundary connections with neighbouring Greater Manchester authorities are important for housing and employment opportunities. The Atom Valley MDZ North East Growth Location includes a significant part of Rochdale local authority area, alongside parts of Bury and Oldham local authority districts. The MDZ is focussed around three principal growth sites Northern Gateway, Stakehill and Kingsway Business Park, which are shown in **Figure 3-11**. The MDZ consists of both employment and residential land-uses.

The 2011 Census revealed the two largest travel to work flows from Oldham are to Manchester and Rochdale⁴. However, accessing neighbouring employment sites and other edge-of-urban locations is challenged by public transport provision that often has limited frequency and overnight services to accommodate 24-hour shift operations. There is a generally poor accessibility trend for edge of urban employment locations, which in the North West have become a significant employer by the many companies that operate within them.

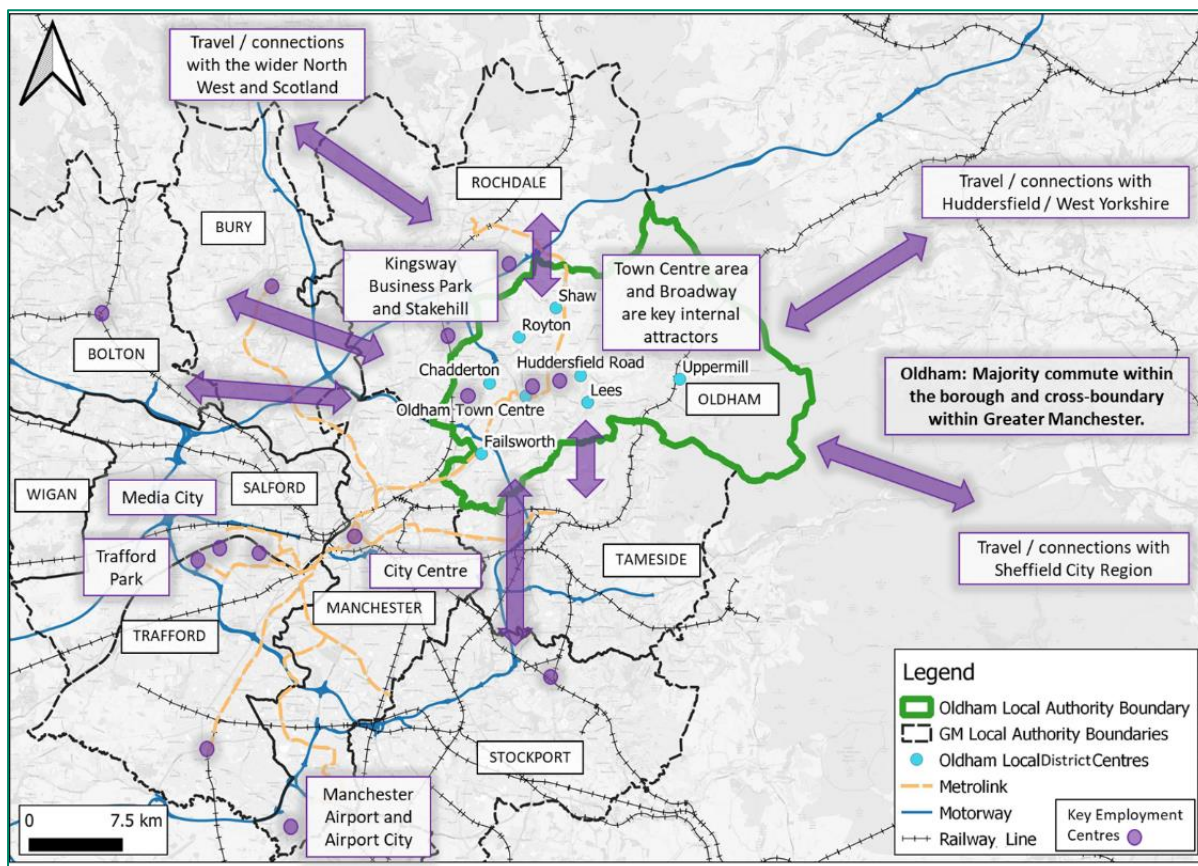
Access to major employment areas:

The Oldham Transport Strategy includes measures to further assess the opportunities and potential solutions to the problem of employment access. This may include opportunities associated with the proposed Greater Manchester Bus Franchising operator model, which could directly plan for routes and times of operation to reduce people's barriers to travel. Without change, many locations will remain accessible most flexibly by car or van but which is not a means of travel that is available to the most disadvantaged people in Oldham.

⁴ Oldham Transport Strategy; Transport and Spatial Change Baseline Report, 2021.

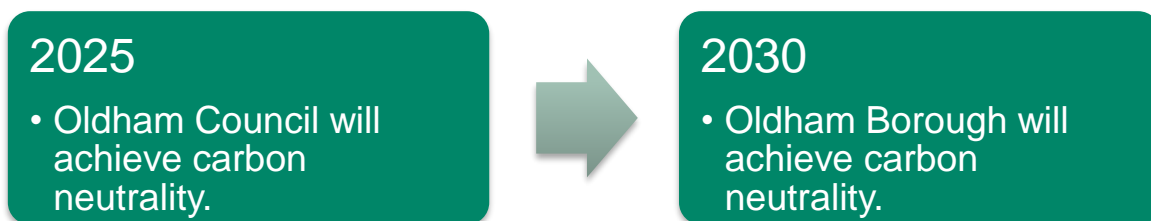
Figure 3-11: Oldham and Neighbouring Employment and Commercial Attractors.

Source: AECOM / GM Mapping / Oldham Council.

Figure 3-12: Oldham and Wider Regional Employment and Commercial Attractors.

3.7.2 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Strategy

The Oldham Council Green New Deal Strategy 2020 - 2025⁵ aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2025 for the Council and 2030 for the borough. This means reducing carbon emissions associated with energy use within buildings, street lighting, sustainable transport and other energy users.

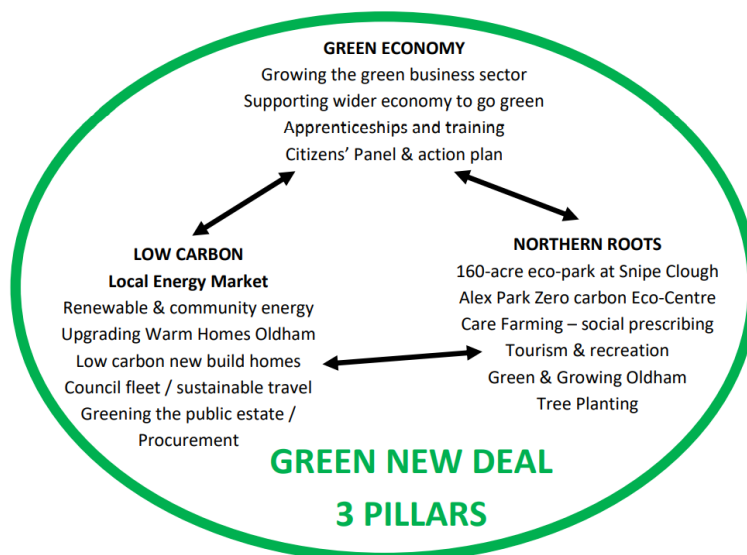


The measure for the 2025 target will include council buildings and street lighting. The Council will also aim to reduce emissions from other areas under its control and influence such as the Council vehicle fleet and waste services.

The measure for the 2030 target is a metric currently published by central government two years in arrears and which splits emissions into domestic, business and transport sectors⁶. Oldham Council will maximise the local benefits from Greater Manchester and national level schemes which aid decarbonisation and 'clean growth' from the public and private sectors.

The carbon neutrality aims form a strategy that ties with the green economy (**Figure 3-13**). Locally this means ambitions to reduce carbon emission can create jobs and apprenticeships related to low carbon energy and transport. The Northern Roots eco-park will improve access to green spaces and provide an attraction that can support the visitor economy.

Figure 3-13: Oldham Council Green New Deal Strategy 2020 – 2025.



Oldham Council will maintain and improve Public Rights of Way and cycle routes which are important to physical health and mental health. Routes for walking and cycling may be both destination places and provide essential linkages to the Pennines, parks and open spaces. The **Northern Roots Country Park**, **Town Centre Linear Park** and maintenance of all other parks will support peoples growing desire for healthier lifestyles.

⁵ https://www.oldham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/7116/oldham_green_new_deal_strategy.pdf

⁶ <https://www.local.gov.uk/delivering-local-net-zero>

4. The Objectives and Success Criteria

4.1 Introduction

The Oldham Transport Strategy aligns with the policy ambitions for Greater Manchester and the key national policy such as decarbonising transport. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) spatial development strategy; 'Places for Everyone' is developed by all ten 10 of the Greater Manchester local authority district council, including Oldham. The strategy identifies key growth and development areas inkling housing and employment opportunities. In addition, the GMCA Transport Strategy 2040 identifies how we with our neighbours will respond and development the transport network for growth.

The Oldham Transport Strategy includes the GMCA Transport Strategy 2040 ambitions and goes further to capture local neighbourhood priorities. We will support the borough's ambitions for sustainable growth and development over the next 15 years. The transport system will enable the building of homes and the creation of jobs, including the strategic housing ambitions in GMCA spatial development strategy.

Oldham Council will monitor a number of indicators against the Oldham Transport Strategy objectives to determine the progress of the transport ambitions behind them. This activity will also gauge possible changes to the measures.

4.2 Objectives and Indicators

The Oldham Transport Strategy will be monitored against the success criteria in **Table 4-1**. The monitoring is achievable and can measure the success of the objectives effectively.

Table 4-1: Oldham Transport Strategy Monitoring Criteria and Data Sources.

Category	Objectives	Success Criteria	Data Sources
Support Strategic and Economic Growth Plans	Facilitate growth areas for housing and employment.	Planned growth areas in proximity to transport interventions progress through planning process.	Oldham Council planning applications and housing monitoring data.
	Enable the realisation of the Investment Strategy location(s).	Planned Investment Strategy locations in proximity to transport interventions progress through planning process.	Sites attract planning proposals or commitments.
Respond to Environmental Need & Climate Change	Increase provision of infrastructure for electric and alternatively fuelled vehicles.	Increased quantities of charging facilities in each spatial area; residential; town centre; short-stay amenities; strategic fast recharge locations.	Quantity of new related facilities across Oldham and compared with ULEV registrations in each Oldham postcode area (dataset VEH0134)

Category	Objectives	Success Criteria	Data Sources
	Encourage and enable more walking, cycling and public transport use.	Increase in the share of sustainable travel to 50% of trips and reduce car's share of trips to no more than 50%.	Year-to-year comparison of wide travel mode-share data. Oldham Town Centre cordon data and traffic count data (HFAS).
	Improve the resilience of the road network to extreme weather, both events and engineering resilience.	Reduced road closure events due to damage.	Annual Engineering Inspection and RAG rating of the overall network.
	Lower transport emissions on the network.	Reduced average NOx and fine particulate emissions.	Measured with regional air quality partners.
Actively Support Social & Economic Inclusivity	Ensuring the public transport system is accessible and inclusive for everyone.	The highway and active mode routes meet standards of lighting, disabled, blind and partially sighted access. Continuity of footway measures.	Count of new / upgraded facilities and crossing points. Perception survey feedback from user groups (third party surveys).
	Address travel barriers to Oldham and cross-boundary employment areas for deprived communities.	Improved access to Broadway, Coldhurst and neighbouring opportunity areas in the Atom Valley MDZ. Improvements to public transport accessibility.	Annual Greater Manchester Accessibility Levels dataset. Single scheme monitoring.
Supporting Neighbourhood District Areas	Improving cycling and walking accessibility to Neighbourhood District Areas.	Higher standards of public realm, cycle parking and facilities.	Quantum of new active mode facilities.
	Improving public transport accessibility in each Neighbourhood District Area.	Improved public realm, lighting, information provision. Improved public transport stops. Services maintain a higher frequency in off-peak times.	Count of new / upgraded facilities. Bus Open Data (DfT), and year-to-year ticket trends.
	Support permeability and reduce barriers.	New and improved facilities, paths, crossing points, lighting, and other passive surveillance features.	Count of new / improved facilities. Perception surveys.

Category	Objectives	Success Criteria	Data Sources
Enhance Traffic and Network Performance	Improve network reliability and reduce congestion.	Reduced average journey delay on the network. New junction / road modifications.	Measured with Trafficmaster data.
	Ensure that sustainable freight options are available in the borough and town centre.	The freight and logistics fleet serving the borough, with to zero-emission vehicles.	Ensure that sustainable freight options are available in the borough and town centre.
	Reduce traffic collisions and those involving pedestrians / cyclists.	Measurable reduction over five years.	STATS19 accident data.
	Improve journey time reliability on key bus corridors.	Reduced average journey delay.	TfGM bus reliability data. Operator reporting.

5. Transport Ambitions for Oldham Metropolitan Borough

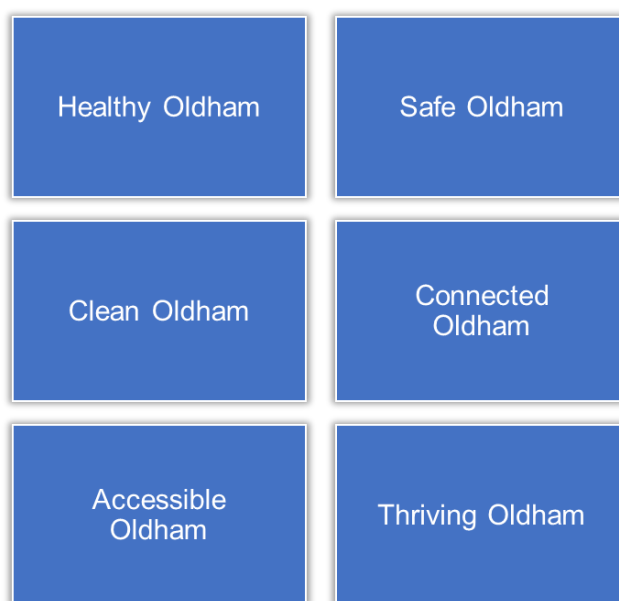
5.1 Introduction

Oldham Council's vision for the transport network spans six core ambitions which are illustrated in **Figure 5-1**. They relate to the Oldham Corporate Plan 2022-2027 and the Council's Vision to 2030. This means the ambitions support:

- Healthy, safe and well supported residents.
- A great start and skills for life.
- Better jobs and dynamic businesses.
- Quality homes for everyone.
- A clean and green future.

The Government's Levelling Up agenda has been one of the assessment criteria for the measures. Locally this means measures have a particular focus on our Neighbourhood District Areas. Rail, Metrolink and active travel measures also feature strongly because they are all pertinent to the Levelling Up ambitions. The ambitions and supporting measures relate to the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 including the Oldham Local Implementation Plan.

Figure 5-1: Oldham Transport Ambitions.



5.1.1 Ambition 1: Healthy Oldham

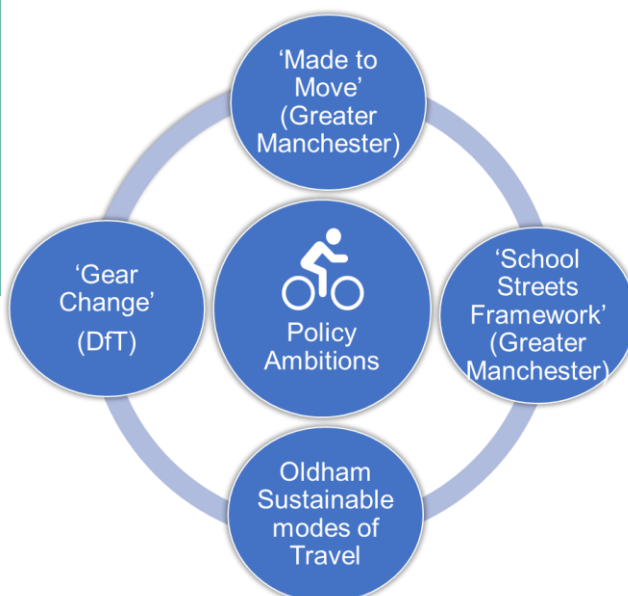
5.1.1.1 Pedestrians and Cyclists.



It is important to better integrate walking and cycling with public transport services and other options that use a Smartphone.

The Oldham Council Transport Strategy is in alignment with the main policy drivers for change in Greater Manchester, which are illustrated in the policy ambitions diagram.

In Oldham and across Greater Manchester there is need to better support pedestrians and cyclists so people can access opportunities.



Walking and cycling is important to cleaner air and revitalising our high streets and town centres. Supporting more walking, cycling and public transport use is being addressed with existing schemes partnerships and new priorities.

Partner organisations include TfGM, Sustrans, Canals & Rivers Trust, and community groups such as disabled and partially sighted representatives.

Oldham Council is working with TfGM on the Mayor's Bee Network and 'Active Neighbourhoods' programme, which will introduce safer streets for people to walk and cycle with funding from the Mayor's Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund (MCF) and other regional funding.

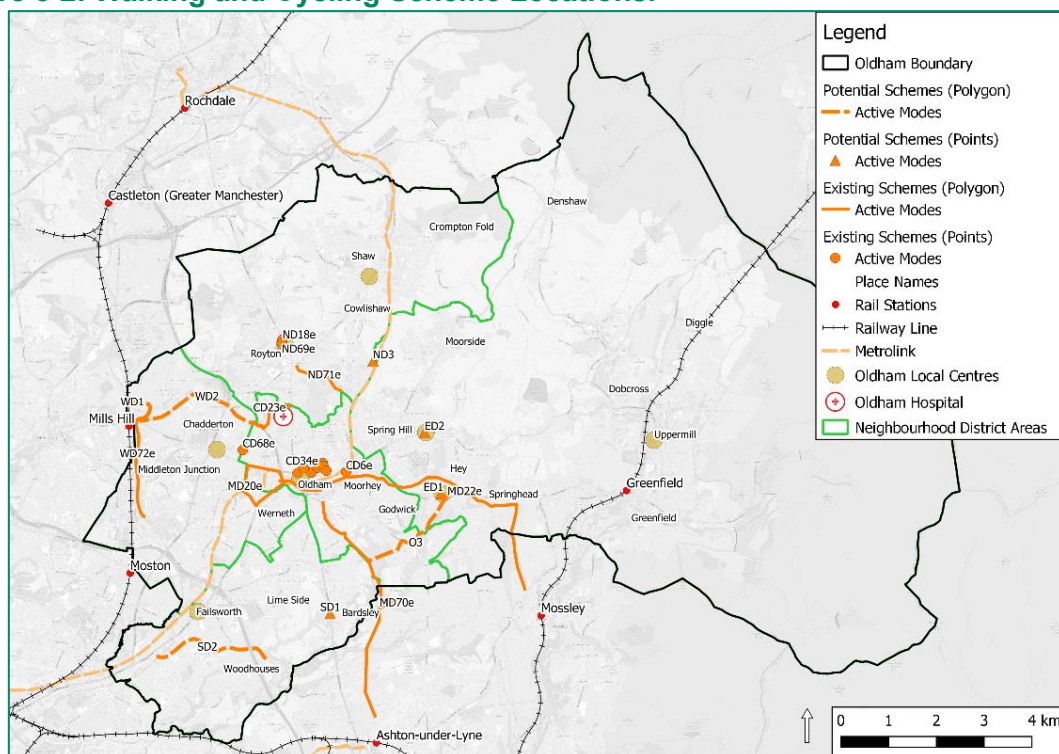
Oldham Council partners with Sustrans to improve the National Cycle Network which routes through the borough. The paths could be improved to better connect with local high streets, major employment areas and neighbouring authorities.

Need For Change

- 23% of households in Oldham do not have access to a car or van. They rely on safe walking routes to public transport services or safe cycling facilities and routes.
- Walking and cycling to school is key to supporting health efforts such as reducing childhood obesity and increasing participation in exercise.
- Oldham has higher levels of unemployment than the North West average and a much higher proportion of people with no qualifications (13% of residents) compared to the North West average (9% of residents). This means affordable access to opportunities by active modes and public transport is essential to inclusive growth.
- Road accident data between 2016 and 2019 points to a need for greater road safety measures to reduce the incidence of fatal and serious accidents, which have numbered 19 fatal and 206 serious accidents.

Walking and cycling is closely linked with efforts to improve bus services in Greater Manchester and the Government's plans with the National Bus Strategy (2021). Bus users will almost entirely walk or use a wheelchair to get to bus stops. Their use should be convenient, safe and have accessible information for all age groups and abilities.

New measures have been identified in the Oldham Transport Strategy and are shown in **Figure 5-2**. They are a response to the baseline analysis, needs and policy priorities. They have been assessed against policy criteria and potential deliverability over the short, medium and long-term.

Figure 5-2: Walking and Cycling Scheme Locations.

5.1.2 Ambition 2: Safe Oldham

5.1.2.1 Improving Safety on the Transport Network

Oldham Council will prioritise safety on the transport network at all times of the day including Metrolink, footways and streets. Key needs include the safety of residential routes related to traffic speeds and traffic calming and considering the needs of bus operators for safe bus stops.

The vulnerable, disabled, black and ethnic minority groups (BAME), the LGBTQI+ community, women and girls, should all be confident of using the transport network for work and leisure related travel without concerns. This is important for both for user safety and to support the overall shift to the 'Right Mix' of travel by sustainable modes of transport in the Greater Manchester.



Need For Change

- Anti-social behaviour is impacting Metrolink and bus services in Oldham and people's confidence to use them. This concerns both the fleet and within the vicinity of Metrolink and bus stops.
- Oldham Council will strenuously work with operators, law enforcement services and the **TfGM Travel Safe Unit** to identify ways of improving surveillance on the network.
- Traffic accidents on the highway network that particularly involve pedestrians are a problem for all of Greater Manchester. Oldham has hot spots that the council will focus on with regard to potential traffic calming, improved road crossings and driver visibility.

Oldham Council and partners at TfGM are developing a School Streets Programme, which will encourage short journeys between home and school to use walking and cycling as much as possible. Congestion and air quality issues related school travel impact communities' ability to travel and people's health.

Safety in design will be used to improve transport and public realm areas in Oldham Town Centre, local district centres and the wider network. The design of good public realm and improvements to transport interchanges are an opportunity to ensure adequate lighting and visibility features in the solutions. This approach can help ensure users feel confident at all times of day, and in all seasons.

Walking and cycling routes, which are also used by disabled users, will be designed by the council and our partners to the Greater Manchester Bee Network standards and national Cycling Design Guidance LTN 1/20. This is important to raise safety standards related to both traffic and pedestrian safety.

Oldham Council want design consultations related to safety to include street lighting, enforcement stakeholders and the TfGM Disability Design Reference Group. This is important to raise awareness among those implementing schemes of the needs of vulnerable members of society. Oldham Council have a Road Safety Team that work with road user groups such as the freight and construction sectors to raise standards and expectations for heavy vehicles using the roads in Oldham. Measures to improve the awareness of lorry blind-spots, speed in the vicinity of schools and high streets, and safer routes are important aims.

5.1.2.2 School Road Safety

Oldham Council and partners at TfGM are developing a School Streets Programme, which will encourage short journeys between home and school to use walking and cycling as much as possible. Car drop-off and collection at schools increases the risk of collisions in the vicinity of schools and places pressure on local roads. Congestion and air quality issues impact on people's time, health and wellbeing.

Many schools in Oldham are situated in the middle of residential areas in the Central West and South Districts. In the East District schools are the small villages. In all school localities there is minimal parking. Car use and the desire for people to making onward journeys after the school drop-off are a challenge. Catchment areas have increased in size and without change to how people travel to schools, car drop off will become increasingly common.

5.1.3 Ambition 3: Clean Oldham

5.1.3.1 Clean Air Plan

Lowering traffic related emissions is important for cleaner air, health and wellbeing. The proposed GMCAP is a priority for Oldham Council and aligns with the council's Clean Oldham ambitions. Oldham Council will work with TfGM on the development of the GMCAP including support packages to enable people to adapt to the changes.

5.1.3.2 Support the Transition to Electric Vehicles

All types of vehicles are going through a major change to how they are powered. Electric vehicles, referred to as Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) and zero emission vehicles (ZEVs), are growing in demand and the infrastructure must keep up (**Figure 5-3**).

Oldham is experiencing this change in demand for ULEVs. **Table 5-1** shows Oldham has a growing uptake, albeit from a low base of ULEVs historically. Oldham Council and our partners across Greater Manchester need to quickly adapt for plug-in vehicles in a range of locations. More electric vehicle charging points are required as well as consideration of alternative fuels such as hydrogen.

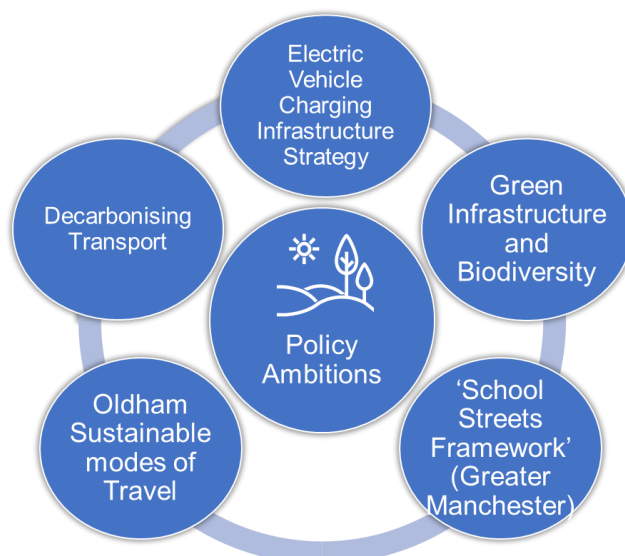


Figure 5-3: Terraced street EV charging with no driveways is a challenge for Oldham where pavement space is limited.



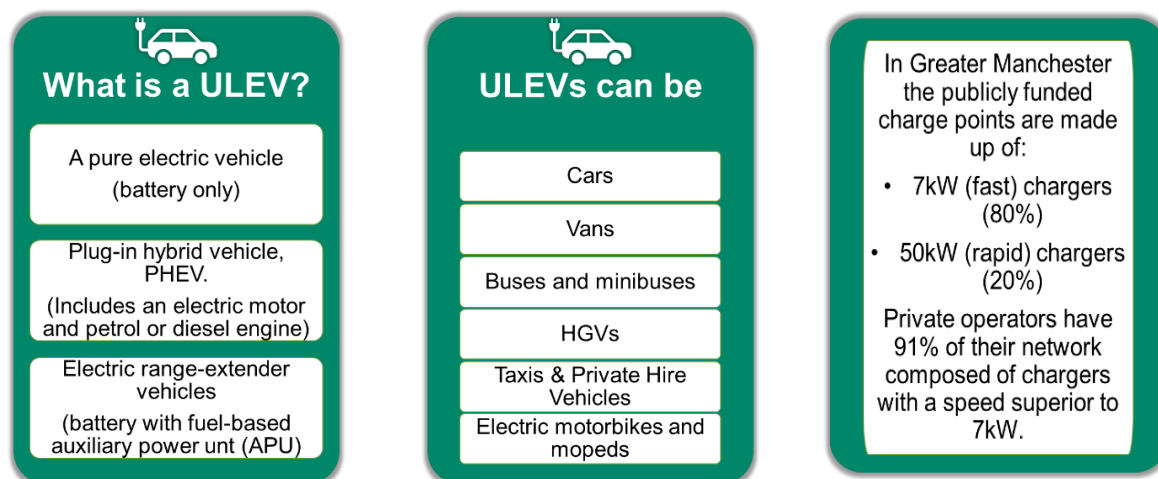
Table 5-1: Licensed Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) from 2016 to 2020.

Area	2016 Total ULEVs	2020 Total ULEVs*
United Kingdom	27,543	73,206
Greater Manchester	173	936
Bolton	36	147
Bury	61	129
Manchester	68	141
Oldham	11	62
Rochdale	29	64
Salford	20	97
Stockport	7	8,342
Tameside	17	58
Trafford	22	141
Wigan	31	97

*2020 total as of Q3 (latest data published).

**Stockport numbers of ULEVs are understood to reflect commercial vehicle registrations at an address within the area.

Source: DfT, December 2020: Table VEH0132a.



Oldham Council is working with TfGM to roll-out the aims of the Greater Manchester **Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy (EVCIS)**. This focuses on the publicly accessible charging points to enable Greater Manchester's businesses and residents to transition to electric vehicles.

The ECVI approach identifies three types of electric vehicle charging facility, slow, fast and rapid:

- Slow Chargers (3.5kW), typically home charging.
- Fast Chargers (between 7kW to 23kW for AC, and 10kW to 22kW for DC), potential located at supermarkets and short-stay locations.
- Rapid Chargers (between 43kW to 44kW for AC, and 50kW to 62.5kW for DC), potentially located at petrol stations, dedicated facilities and motorway service stations.

In Greater Manchester, the current publicly owned Electric Vehicle Charging network 'BeEV' accounts for approximately one third of the charge points, with the remaining two thirds delivered by over 20 private sector providers and operators.

Need For Change

- The number of electric vehicles is rapidly growing in Oldham and across the country.
- Operators of the transport network need to better understand what electric vehicles will need in terms of infrastructure, highway maintenance and data connections.
- The GMCAAP will include supportive measures to support lower traffic emissions and reduced congestion are required.
- The **Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy Update** will reflect the changing needs with regard to electric vehicles charging, and access to Oldham Town Centre.

Oldham Council is working with TfGM on the development of locations for Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles to plug in their electric and hybrid vehicles, which is important for the disabled and elderly people who depend on their services.

5.1.3.3 Addressing Administrative Barriers to Electric Vehicle Recharging

Oldham Council and TfGM will collaborate with government on aims to improve the accessibility of the electric vehicle recharging network, which presently requires a range of user memberships and registrations to access them. This has prompted a rise of 'recharging anxiety', which is the concern felt by users that they may not be able to use a recharging point because they are not a subscriber to the network or do not have visibility of a charging

points availability before they arrive at it. The ambition is for electric vehicle recharging points to be as easy as using a petrol station.

5.1.3.4 Hydrogen Fuel and its Possible use for Operators of Large Vehicles

There is a long-term aspiration for Oldham Council to support the increasing use of hydrogen vehicles and the implication of hydrogen refuelling on the transport network. Bus and haulage operators are front-runners to use the technology which is being actively pursued by North West-based collaborations such as HyNet North West⁷, Essar Oil, BOC Ltd and vehicle manufacturers such as Renault and Alexander Dennis. Oldham Council will keep abreast of the changes in new technology and respond accordingly.

5.1.4 Ambition 4: Connected Oldham

5.1.4.1 Road Maintenance and Barrier Repairs

The maintenance of highway, footways and Public Rights of Way are essential to their operation, wellbeing and leisure. The ambitions summarised in the diagram below are equally important to new highway developments. Maintenance of highways ensure they remain useable, safe and that delays are reduced as much as possible. A resilient highway network supports businesses and public transport operators by improving journey time reliability on the network.

Maintenance needs are numerous and vary in scale and engineering complexity. The road lining refresh programme and pothole repairs are important for the safe use of roads across the borough by vehicles and cyclists.

The safety barrier replacement programme is underway to ensure that where barriers are required, they are able to operate within the safety tolerances required to save lives. Safety barriers and retaining walls are particularly notable in the East Neighbourhood District and the Pennine fringe because the hilly topography require it.



Need For Change

- The topography of Pennine roads places a higher engineering and maintenance costs on them.
- Without spending commitments to aging structures such as bridges, safety barriers and retaining walls, the routes could become closed for extended periods of time, weight-limited or unusable.

5.1.4.2 Improving the Local Highway Network for All Users

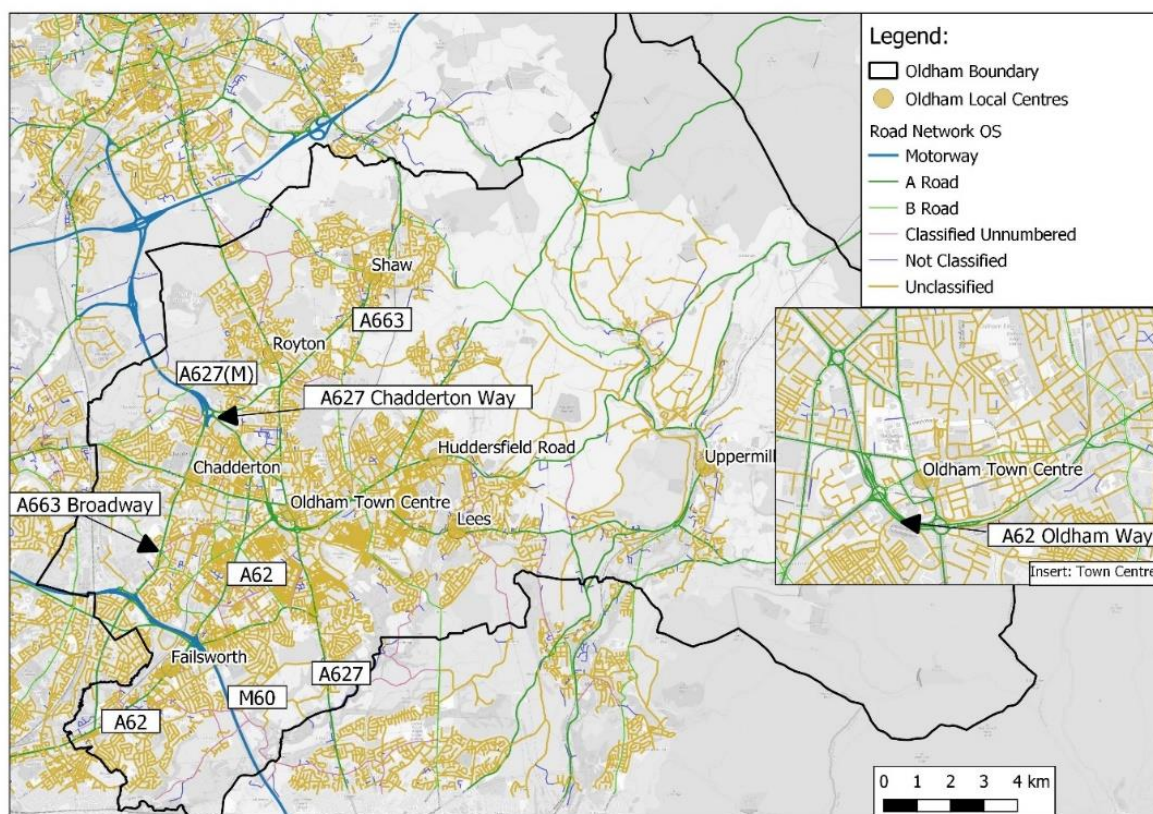
The roads and footways in Oldham are essential for people and businesses to function. All road vehicles, including bus and freight, require a road network that is reliable and maintained to provide journey time continuity. The road hierarchy in Oldham is shown in **Figure 5-4**.

⁷ HyNet North West [online] <https://hynet.co.uk/about/>

The road network in Oldham comprises of; local authority managed roads; the Greater Manchester Key Route Network; Strategic Road Network (SRN); and the Major Road Network (MRN). The routes in Oldham that are part of the Greater Manchester Key Route Network are the; M60; A663; A62; A627; A671 Rochdale Road; and A669 Lees Road.

Local roads, footways and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in all Neighbourhood District Area are the responsibility of Oldham Council. The council will continue to collaborate with the GMCA to identify highway needs and priorities including pedestrian safety.

Figure 5-4: Road Hierarchy in Oldham.



Source: AECOM / GM Mapping.

Figure 5-5 shows the locations of some of the local highway improvements and electric vehicle schemes.

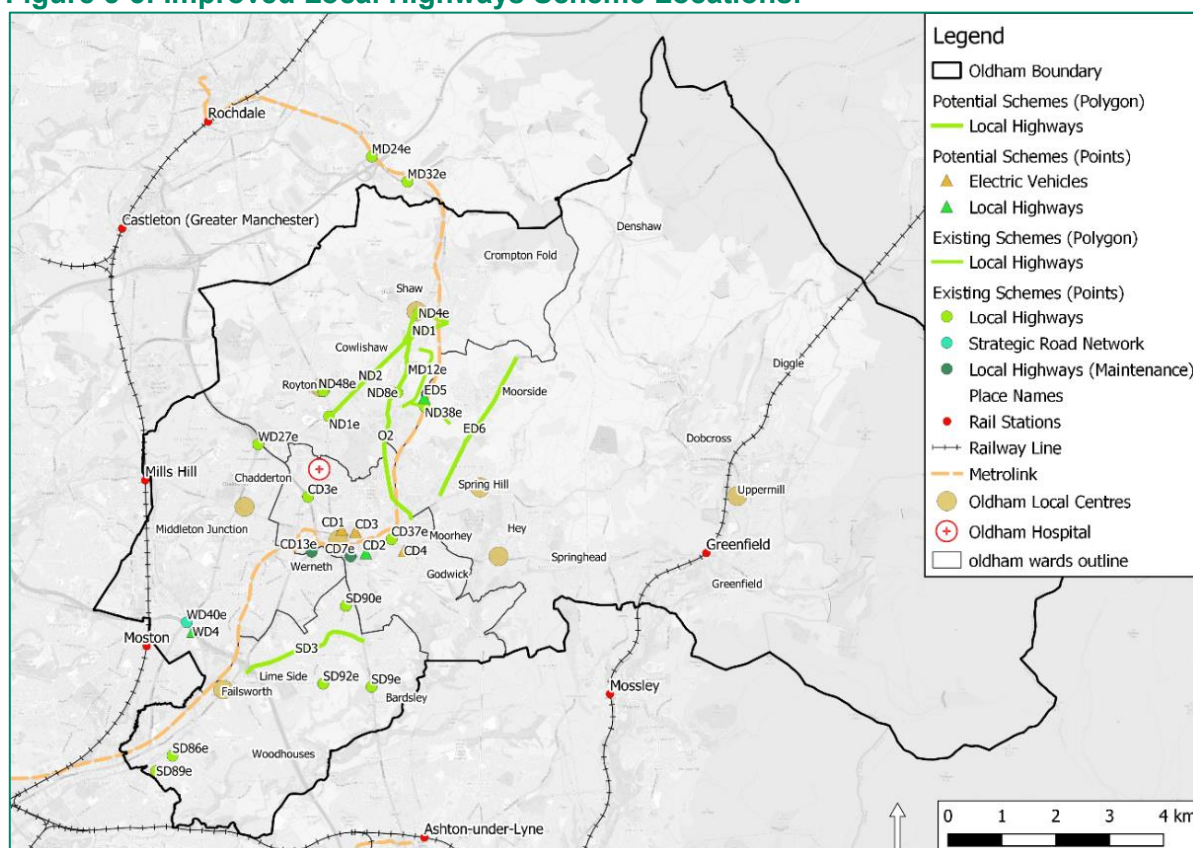
Need For Change

- There were 19 fatal accidents and 206 serious accidents on roads in Oldham between 2016 and 2019 (similar to rates in Greater Manchester as a whole).
- Road safety is a priority in the vicinity of schools where vulnerable young people and traffic cause a risk of collisions. Many of the borough's schools are on minor road routes in residential areas where traffic speeds should be lower.
- Road safety is a priority for Oldham Council who have a Road Safety Team that work with partners, including Greater Manchester Police, to identify ways to increase safety awareness, enforce traffic speeds and encourage people to walk or cycle over shorter distances.

Local Plan growth in terms of housing, employment land and leisure needs to be accommodated by the road network. Corridor studies will be commissioned where travel demands may change with growth plans. This will include considering active travel and public transport modes and how they can be better accommodated.

Until the Covid-19 pandemic, the average delay on roads in Oldham was increasing on most local A roads. This is detrimental to commuters, bus and freight operators. The Department for Transport (DfT) expect the Covid-19 pandemic to generate a 'new normal' in how we use our roads and the times of day when they are busiest. Despite the changes in travel behaviour, safety of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists, will remain the highest priority for the local highway.

Figure 5-5: Improved Local Highways Scheme Locations.



5.1.4.3 Highway Viaducts

The highway viaducts on main A and B routes in the borough are vital pieces of infrastructure, without which the highway network would not function at all. Viaducts are routinely inspected for maintenance needs and Oldham Council will work with partners at GMCA to communicate requirements and funding needs. The measures identified in the Oldham Transport Strategy align with the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 for maintenance needs. The Manchester Street Viaduct Refurbishment is a case in point for essential maintenance, without which the road network would experience significant delays and impacts to bus services.

Climate Change and the increased tendency for extreme weather events such as prolonged UK heat waves or more frequent major flood events are notable maintenance concerns. This is because extreme weather can damage and block the highway surfaces, drainage systems and other infrastructure at a faster rate than maintenance schedules have anticipated in the past. Oldham Council prioritises flood water management and drainage to ensure such systems function as expected, and where additional measures are needed, Oldham Council will identify solutions.

5.1.4.4 A Strategic Road Network that Better Connects with Oldham's Local Roads

The SRN in England represents the most important roads with respect to the movement of traffic. In Oldham, these roads are illustrated on the right and the existing SRN schemes are shown in **Figure 5-6**.

National Highways (NH) operate and manage the SRN. Oldham Council will continue to work closely with both NH and TfGM to progress measures identified in the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, and additional measures identified in the Oldham Transport Strategy that relate to key junction improvements.

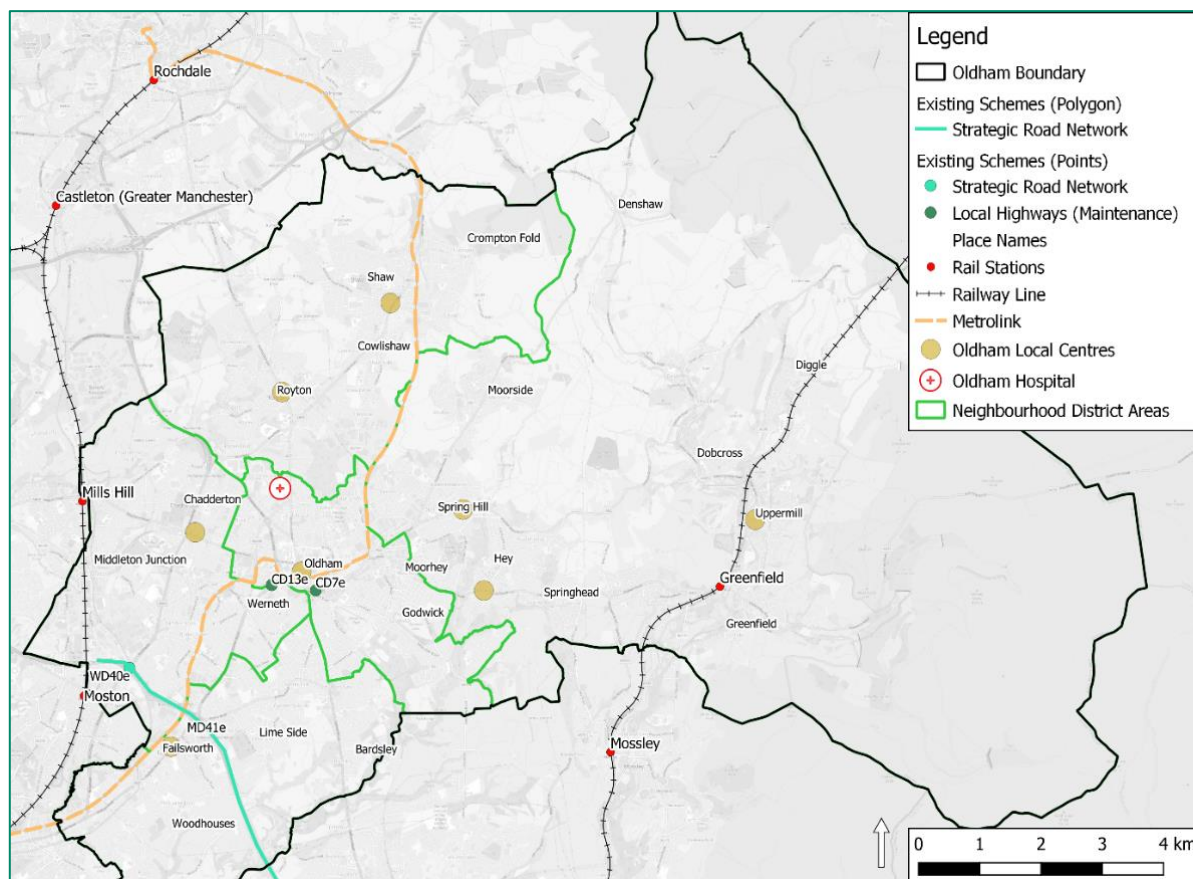
Strategic Road Network Roads in Oldham:

M60
A627 (M)
A663 Broadway (T)

Local highway connections to the SRN are vital for the Oldham economy and that of the wider region. This means Oldham residents and businesses require efficient connections to the M60 and A627(M) at M60 junctions 21 and 22, and the A627(M) at the Chadderton Way / A663 junction. There are a number of issues on the SRN that Oldham Council would like to see NH resolve, including restricted access to junction 22 at Hollinwood, which creates congestion and delay on the local road network. The council will influence the NH investment plans to address the congestion and journey reliability issues.

Need For Change

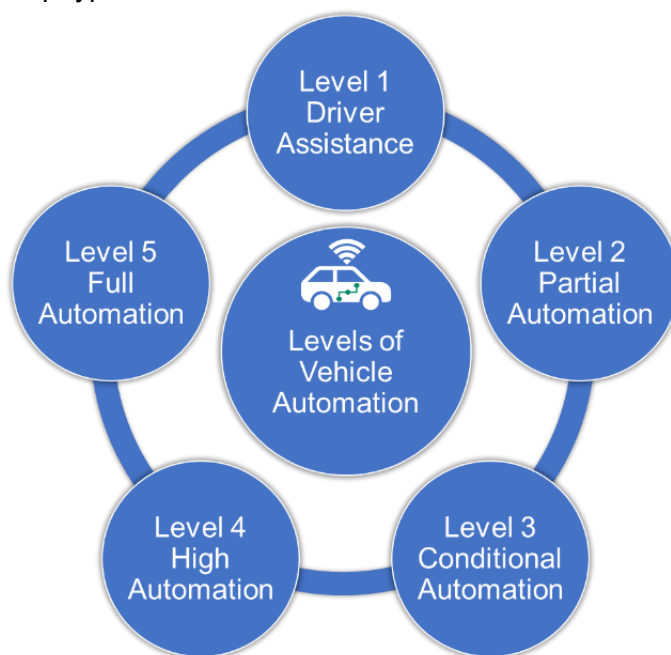
- The A627(M) / Chadderton Way / A663 junction experiences significant congestion at peak times and is the principal connection to the M62 for commuters and business users.
- The A663 Broadway / Shaw Road corridor experiences significant congestion due to traffic routing to both the motorway and for local trips. Improvements to the A627(M) / Chadderton Way / A663 junction should consider the corridor as a whole.
- At M60 J21, the Semple Way and Broadgate routes consistently experience congestion and this has continued throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The A62 Oldham Road and A6104 Hollins Road are important connections with M60 Junction 22. They similarly experience frequent peak-time delays, which also impact frequent bus services routing through the junction.

Figure 5-6: Existing Strategic Road Network Scheme Locations.

5.1.4.5 Preparing for Increased Vehicle Automation

Vehicles are increasingly being built with aspects of automation and sensors that will improve road safety, reduce shunt and bump type accidents and enable the network to be smarter using a vehicle's internet connectivity.

Vehicle automation ranges from the current presence of 'automated braking' and 'adaptive cruise control' in vehicles now (**Level 1 automation**) to the very low volumes of vehicles that can accelerate, decelerate and change lanes themselves, but with the driver closely monitoring the vehicle (**Level 3 automation**). Over the next decade vehicles that are fully autonomous and do not need a driver at all (**Level 5**) are expected to operate on the national road network along with increasing automation generally. Freight operators and freight vehicle manufacturers are among the key innovators.



Need For Change

- The number of electric vehicles is rapidly growing in Oldham and across the country.
- Vehicles produced today increasingly feature connected and automated features, and vehicle automation is expected to increase over the next decade.
- Operators of the transport network need to better understand what electric and automated vehicles will need in terms of infrastructure, highway maintenance and data connections.
- Oldham's varied highway topography requires a better understanding of what the increasing use of vehicle automation technology means with regard to highway infrastructure needs.
- Connected, battery powered micro-mobility, such as electric assisted bicycles, are growing in popularity and filling a travel gap for young people. The high cost of gaining a driving licence and car insurance are key reasons for the rapid adoption of micro-mobility in Britain in recent years.

The long-term aspiration for Oldham Council is to support and better understand the implications of increasing vehicle automation for the road network. However, this is unlikely to impact on the Oldham Transport Strategy in the short-term. For Oldham, this may mean the road network, including traffic signals, road signs and street lighting may need to increasingly connect with traffic and other sensors.

Oldham Council will aim to develop greater understanding of how the adoption of autonomous vehicles can be accommodated by changes to infrastructure on the road network. This means traffic signals manufacturers will increasingly offer system that are able to communicate to a car dashboard when a light is going red or green. Similarly, Oldham Council will stay abreast of how road signs and lighting may need to be maintained so that autonomous vehicles can read and recognise speed limit signs.

5.1.4.6 Mobility-as-a-Service

What is MaaS?

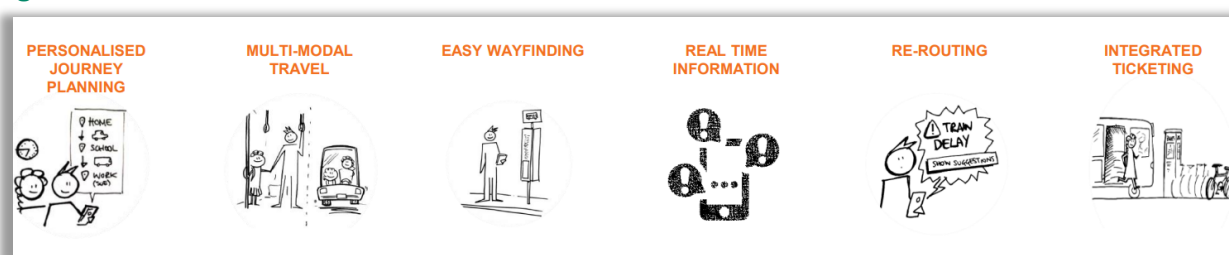
Mobility-as-a-Service brings together all the different ways we travel into one, easy-to-use app. Imagine if you could book a train, hire a car and find the quickest walking route all in one place. It has the potential to make all our journeys simpler, quicker and cheaper and our transport network more efficient.

Source: TfGM

Oldham Council will work with TfGM to support the development and roll-out of Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) and its implications for particular locations such as transport interchanges. Visible changes could include the addition of bicycle and car-club hire services at some Metrolink stops and bus stations so people can complete their journey to the door of a workplace or leisure destination. Proposed 'Travel Hubs' by TfGM, which will include multiple travel options, could be incorporated with MaaS.

Oldham Council will work with TfGM related to the setting of the MaaS service offer and pricing to ensure it is affordable and inclusive (**Figure 5-7**). MaaS will need to accommodate disabled and vulnerable users across the range of travel options.

Figure 5-7: MaaS Functionalities.



Source: TfGM / Atkins

5.1.4.7 Support Travel Hubs in Greater Manchester

The GMCA have rolled out a cycle hire service with provider Beryl since November 2021 (**Figure 5-8**), which is similar to cycle hire in London and other cities. The initial roll-out involves Manchester City Council, Salford City Council and Trafford Council. Oldham Council will work with partners at TfGM to understand the progress and successes with a view to expanding the scheme into Oldham in a later phase.

Figure 5-8: 'Beryl' cycle hire scheme rolled-out in Greater Manchester in 2021.



TfGM are planning the rollout of Travel Hubs. Travel Hubs provide a range of active travel needs and types of bicycles in one place, or a wide range of mobility needs including electric vehicle charging, car clubs and bus services that are in addition to the active travel offer.

Larger Mobility Hubs may also include e-cargo bikes to support small business transport and delivery needs, as well as accommodating some docking locations for the Beryl cycle hire scheme. Oldham Council is working with TfGM to identify potential locations in Oldham, which may include each Neighbourhood District Area, Oldham Town Centre, car parks, Metrolink Stops and Greenfield Station.

Similar to cycle hire, car clubs are a growing car hire innovation that often use dedicated on-street parking bays to enable people and businesses to access a car or small van when it is required. This can save users on both motoring costs and space by not having a vehicle sitting idle for large parts of the week. Oldham Council will similarly work with TfGM and service providers in Greater Manchester to consider the role car clubs in Oldham and where they may best be located.

Need For Change

- Many apprentices and trainees rely on car sharing from their peers to get to work and this is a key method of travel to support the post-pandemic recovery in Oldham.
- Car club services are not currently available in Oldham, whereas they are available in other districts in the city-region to the benefit of residents and businesses served by them.

Car sharing, whereby two or more people share a car or van for their journey to work, is an attractive form of travel for employees at the same workplace who would otherwise drive separately. Car sharing saves people money on motoring costs because the cost is shared. In addition, workplaces and educational facilities that encourage it can better accommodate their car parking needs and improve their environmental performance in terms of carbon reduction measures. Oldham Council will similarly work with TfGM and car share website providers to encourage the practice and expect developers and site managers in the borough to include car sharing in their Workplace Travel Plans.

5.1.4.8 Micro-Mobility; The Growing Popularity of Battery Powered Single Person Transport

Electric assisted bicycles, e-scooters and other battery powered single-person transport enable point-to-point travel and are increasingly popular and often bought online. However, they are at different stages of legislative backing for use on the highways in the UK and have been a divisive issue in the many areas that have trialled e-scooter hire with the DfT (**Figure 5-9**).

Legislation and research of the benefits or risks of e-scooters and other battery-powered transport is being developed by the UK Government. The UK Government is set to create a low-speed, zero-emission vehicle category which, will be 'independent from the cycle and motorcycle categories'. Oldham Council and partners at TfGM will remain abreast of the changes to legislation and plan accordingly, which could include changes to highway signage and travel information.

For many people, micro-mobility transport provides low cost, point-to-point transport links where there are perceived gaps in the public transport network related to journey needs and affordability. They can provide an affordable alternative to the high cost of motoring and other travel modes.

Micro-mobility and the Smartphone apps have supported the rise of employment opportunities in food courier services, known as 'aggregator services'. These business services and employment opportunities did not exist only a short time ago. They are expected to remain an import part of the economy and provide opportunities for work, training and entrepreneurship.

Figure 5-9: E-Scooter Trials: The UK Government has run trials in response to popular demand and to understand the widespread concerns before making proposed changes to legislation for their use.



Source: DfT / Guardian

Need For Change

- In the last decade travel consumer technology such as Smartphones, lower cost internet access and travel apps have transformed people's potential travel choices, and they should be available in Oldham where appropriate.
- The high cost of motor insurance for many people and public transport travel barriers for some deprived communities present a need, which shared mobility choices can help to mitigate.

5.1.5 Ambition 5: Accessible Oldham

Oldham has a higher proportion of deprived communities when compared to similar metropolitan areas nationally according to the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation. The disabled of all ages and abilities require safe access to the transport network in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.



Oldham has a higher average of people from BAME backgrounds than Greater Manchester. This means information and ticketing may need to be inclusive of people whose first language may not be English, or whose religion may influence their travel preferences including women unable to travel alone.

Oldham Council will work with TfGM and partners for the provision of supported travel and Travel Training, which is important for some people to raise their confidence and understanding of the transport network. In addition, people 'not in employment, education or training' (NEET) are a priority group for supported travel, which may require supporting them with free or discounted tickets to access interviews and events.

Gaps in the transport network remain for disabled access to platforms at Greenfield Station and improved pedestrian crossings on the road network.

Public realm areas and footways should be appropriately maintained, designed and illuminated to feel accessible for everyone. They should be accessible for people who are blind or partially sighted.

Perceptions of safety and 'fear of harm' factors are a barrier to travel for many disabled people and vulnerable groups. This means improving access is a priority and is important for reducing deprivation in Oldham.

Figure 5-10: Transport inclusion is important for all vulnerable groups to full access the network and to feel safe when doing at all times of the day.



Source: TfGM

Need For Change

- Rail and bus users should enjoy step-free access on all modes of travel as much as possible.
- Public realm and footways should be designed and maintained to provide safe access to disabled and partially sighted people.
- High streets should be safe for vulnerable groups at all times of day.
- There are areas in the borough underserved by public transport services, many of which include deprived communities according to the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

5.1.7 Ambition 6: Thriving Oldham

5.1.7.1 Transport Investment to Unlock Growth

Oldham Council will support new homes and employment land-uses in the district by working with developers and TfGM through the planning process to support sustainable development. This means development should be accessible to and connected with public transport services and walking and cycling links that are designed to the latest design standards (**Figure 5-11**).



Figure 5-11: Housing development with sustainable transport connections is essential for communities to thrive.



Source: *Transport Network.co.uk*

Proposals in the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and Oldham Local Implementation Plan will deliver significant investment in Metrolink stops, the Bee Network and road network. The council will also commission further studies related to improved public transport and active travel connections to major housing land allocations and employment centres.

5.1.7.2 Freight, Logistics and the 'Last-Mile'

Oldham Council will support the growth and development of the freight and logistics sector in Oldham and in neighbouring district areas. This is important to their operations and access by employees at all times of the day and night.

Locations such as Broadway Business Park in Oldham and neighbouring Stakehill Industrial Park and Kingsway Business Park in the Atom Valley MDZ, are important destinations for Oldham residents to access opportunities. However, access to the locations is often car dependent which means many people are unable to access those areas if they have no car or van.

The freight sector is continuing to diversify and their fleets for business and home delivery, especially in the 'last-mile'. This means Oldham Council and partners at TfGM will encourage a more efficient and sustainable freight fleet in our communities and low speed routes.

The delivery of goods is going through a shift to low emission and electric vehicles. The 'last mile' in particular is increasingly being served by buggies and bicycles, examples of which are shown in (**Figure 5-12**).

Oldham Council support this transition to zero emission vehicles by the freight and logistics sector because it is a thriving part of our economy and important to our communities. More efficient 'last mile'

What is the 'last mile'?

- Relates to parcel delivery and collection over the final or first mile.
- Concerns mostly urban parcel delivery between a distribution centre and a home or business.
- Is a challenging part of the logistics supply chain because homes, offices and the routes vary so much.
- This 'last mile' is increasingly used by small buggies or courier bicycles to be more efficient.

delivery and can support the growth in online retail and home-delivery and help improve both the safety and air quality of our streets.

Figure 5-12: Potential changes to the freight and logistics fleet in Oldham; increasing use of electric van, buggies and bicycles to service residential and commercial customers.



Source: DPD



Source: Royal Mail

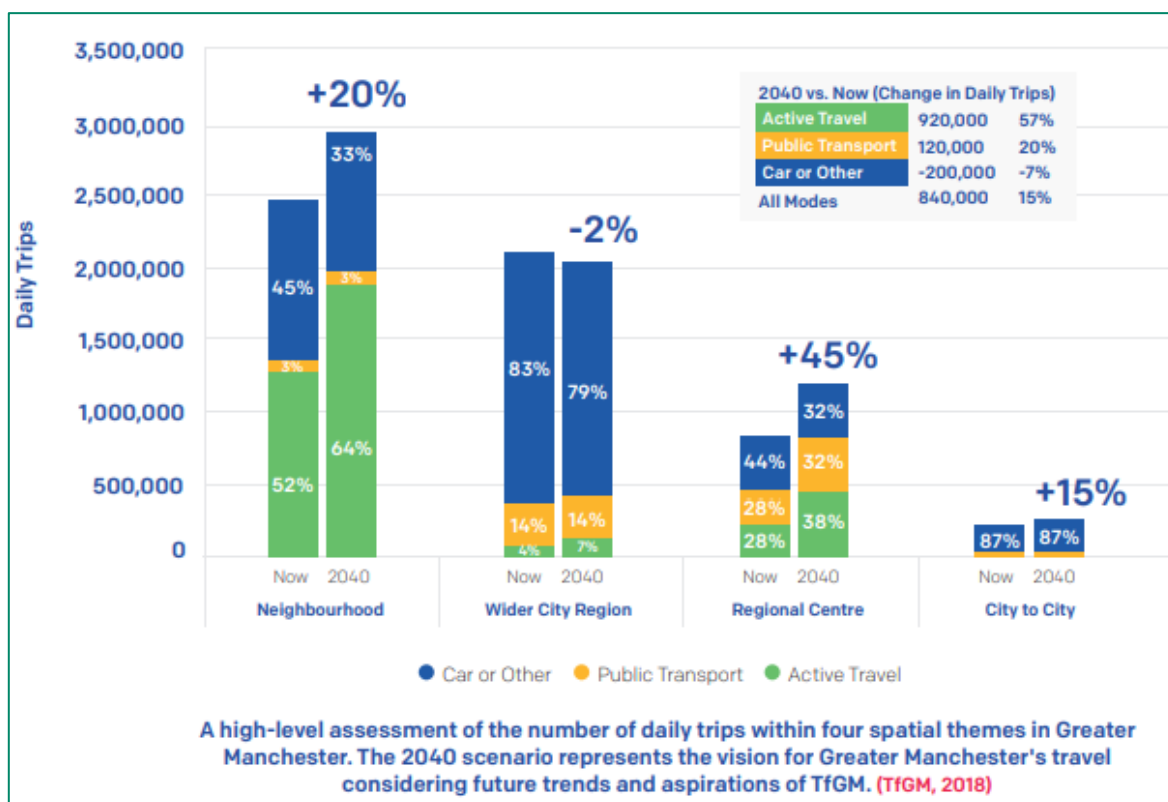
5.1.7.3 Thriving Neighbourhood District Areas

The Oldham Transport Strategy aims to support all neighbourhoods with measures that align to the six ambitions. Better sustainable travel choices are important for accessing all areas of Oldham by public transport, walking and cycling. Chapter 6 provides further details of the measures that will be taken forward in each Neighbourhood District Area. Travel needs include local, regional and city to city travel. This means trips either to the local high street or longer distance travel to another city are equally important to help people and businesses thrive.

Need For Change

- The Oldham Retail & Leisure Study 2020 reported the health of town centres have deteriorated and the proportion of vacant units in Oldham is around double the national average.
- Planned new and affordable housing will be better served with integrated services, including transport, health and wellbeing measures, and connections to green spaces and leisure uses.
- There is a need for greater social inclusion and wellbeing considerations, including access to green spaces and improved walking and cycle routes.

The council's ambitions align with Greater Manchester's ambitions for an increase in travel demand but with a greater proportion of trips using sustainable modes. The travel vision for each trip type in Greater Manchester is shown in **Figure 5-13**. In Oldham this means a higher proportion of trips will use walking, cycling and public transport and we will work partners to provide those facilities.

Figure 5-13: Greater Manchester Mode Share Growth and Vision by Trip Type.

Source: TfGM

6. Spatial Priorities of Oldham's District Neighbourhoods

6.1 Introduction

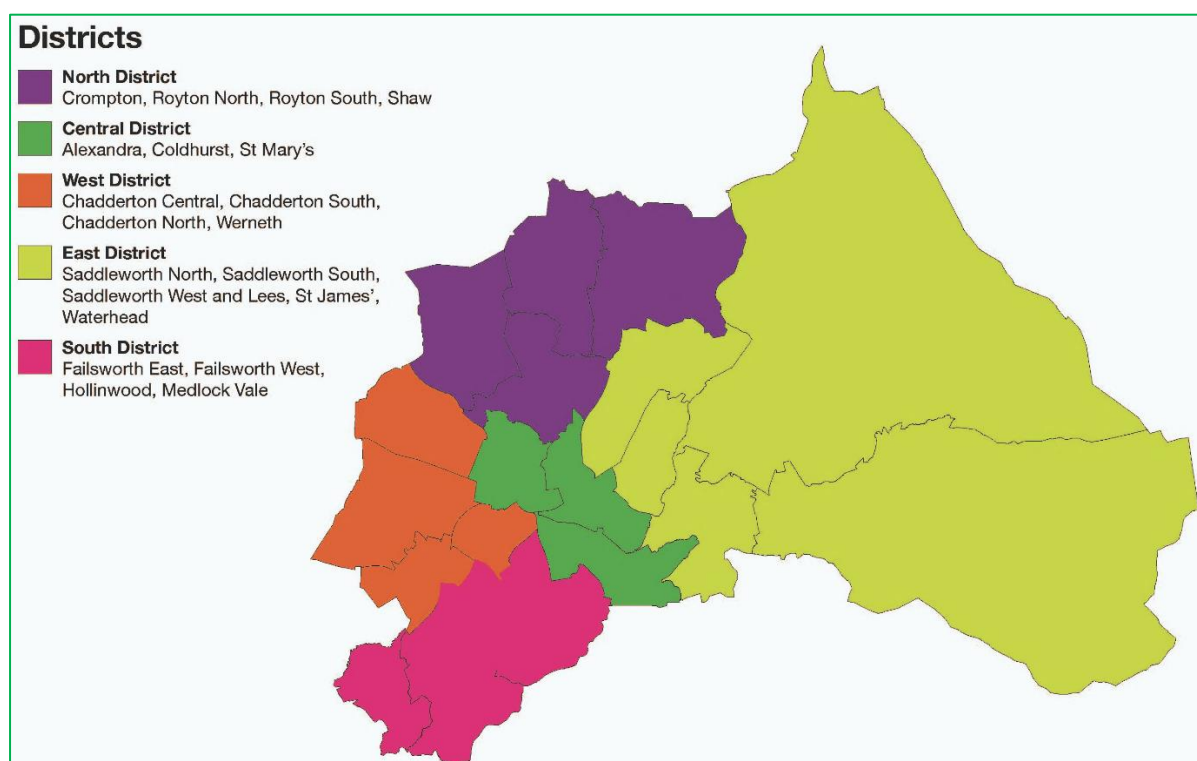
This chapter provides increased focus on the five district neighbourhoods of Oldham, the local regeneration ambitions, existing transport priorities and emerging needs that Oldham Council will develop. The five district areas are summarised in **Figure 6-1**.

The Oldham Transport Strategy aligns with the policy ambitions for Greater Manchester and the key national policy such as decarbonising transport. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) spatial development strategy; 'Places for Everyone', and the GMCA Transport Strategy 2040 identifies how we will respond and develop the transport network for growth with our neighbours. The Oldham Transport Strategy captures local neighbourhood priorities across each of our five district neighbourhoods to respond to the growth ambitions both in Oldham and across Greater Manchester.

Each of Oldham's Neighbourhood District Areas are considered within the Oldham Transport Strategy including measures in the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040; Local Implementation Plan. The differences in the number and type of measures in each Neighbourhood District Areas reflects the geography of Oldham, which is a mix of urban and semi-rural areas. This is reflected in both the measures identified for Oldham in the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, and Oldham Transport Strategy.

All areas will continue to attract the same level of commitment to communities' transport needs over the short and long-term. The needs and issues of each Neighbourhood District Areas will be reviewed as funding opportunities and partnerships develop.

Figure 6-1: Five District Neighbourhoods of Oldham.



Source: Oldham Council

Oldham Council wants each district neighbourhood to be supported by sustainable transport services including better public transport, walking, cycling facilities and a good standard of road maintenance.

The six ambitions, a healthier, safe, clean, connected, accessible and thriving Oldham means better facilities that will improve travel in all five of the Neighbourhood District Areas. Local centres and transport services in each area are important to meet communities' day-to-day needs in terms of retail and key services. This means local district centres should be safely accessible for the disabled, women and children at all times of the year and with better street lighting.

Oldham Council will improve footways, Public Rights of Way, road safety and air quality, public transport services and access to public transport stops. This is important because our communities need to feel safe in using more sustainable transports services when they are provided.

The spatial priorities of each Neighbourhood District Area are considered within this chapter including mapping for each district that uses the referencing in **Table 6-1**.

Table 6-1: Neighbourhood District Area; Referencing of Measures.

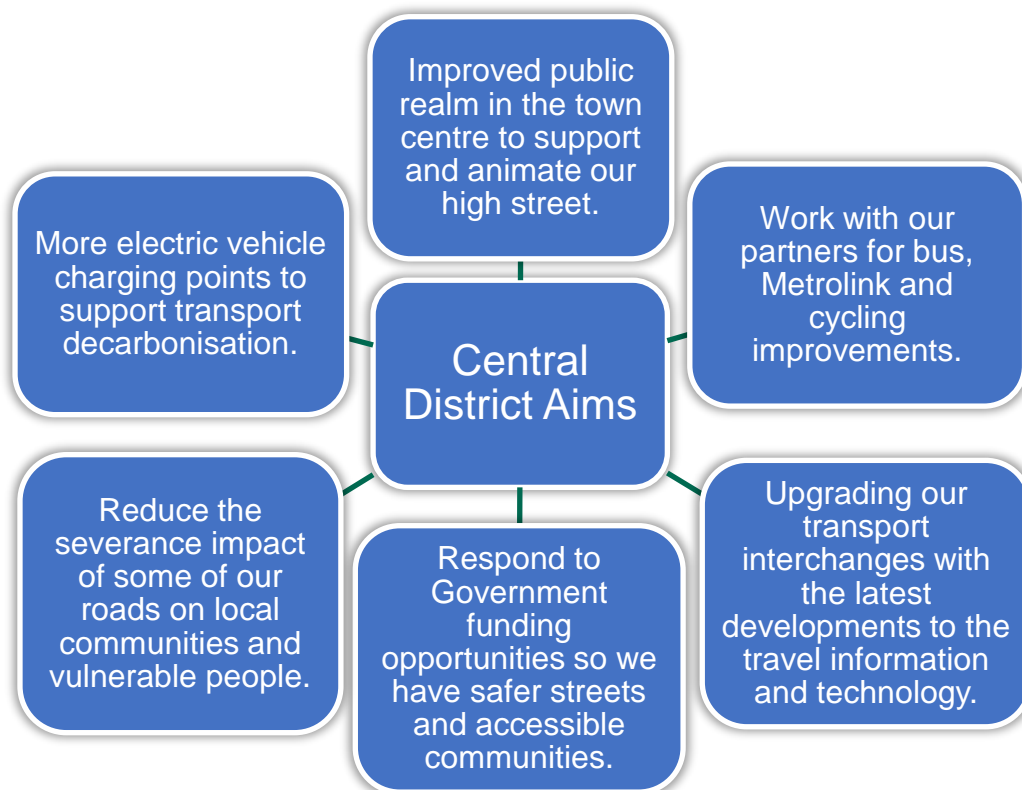
North District (ND)
Central District (CD)
West District (WD)
East District (ED)
South District (SD)
Scheme that relates to multiple districts (MD)
Other scheme that are not yet specific to a specific area or locality (O)

6.2 Central District

6.2.1 Introduction

This chapter aligns to the policies for transport nationally and the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040. For the Central District, the measures we will develop are summarised below in **Figure 6-2** and mapped in **Figure 6-5**. The aims relate to key national and Greater Manchester policies including the High Streets Strategy and Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 including the Local Implementation Plan for Oldham.

Figure 6-2: Central District Aims to Support the Six Oldham Transport Strategy Ambitions.



The Central District includes Alexandra, Coldhurst and St. Mary's, and notably includes the town centre. The neighbourhood area has priorities to improve the town centre area with public realm, walking, cycling and public transport.

The neighbourhood area is separated by Oldham Way which forms both an important highway connection for the borough but also creates severance between Alexandra and the Town Centre and neighbouring residents and businesses south of Oldham Way. Improvements have been made to the existing crossings in the last decade including a new pedestrian bridge into Oldham Sixth Form College and the town centre, but improvement will be identified for safe pedestrian movement.



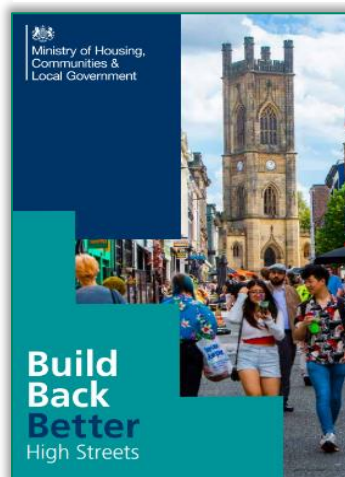
6.2.2 Background and Context

Transportation is important to bringing together all aspects of movement, accessibility and a better high street environment to support the regeneration of Oldham Town Centre. Oldham Council and our partners at TfGM require wanting to encourage lower carbon taxis and buses, better walking and cycling routes, and good public realm that supports the high street, education and connections with Metrolink.

Oldham Council is responding to the challenges for our high streets and retail sector, which were reported in the Oldham Retail & Leisure Study (2020). Our ambitions for safer pedestrian movement and public realm aligns with the Government's High Streets Strategy (**Figure 6-3**), which also includes elements of transport need such as integration with public transport (**Figure 6-4**). This mean our transport interchanges for Metrolink are important for access to retail, leisure and educational facilities.

All transport services should respond to the needs of both the daytime and evening economy in terms of travel for work and leisure. For the town centre this means frequent services that run later into the evening on some days, such as Friday and Saturday. Oldham Council will advocate for such service improvements with partners at TfGM, bus partners and taxi and Private Hire Vehicle operators.

Figure 6-3: In 2021 the Government Published a Build Back Better High Streets Strategy.



6.2.3 Vision for Oldham Town Centre

Oldham Council's success at securing funding from the Government for the town centre will help deliver public realm improvements, cultural destinations and support other regeneration needs such as affordable housing. The Oldham Transport Strategy includes commitments and ambitions to support the vision becoming a reality.

Figure 6-4: Proposed Town Centre Linear Park and High Standard of Public Realm.



The Transport Strategy incorporates the draft 'Oldham Covid-19 Recovery Plan'⁸, including 'championing a green recovery'. Sustainable travel modes, zero-emission fleets and integrating transport needs with town centre ambitions are notable.

Oldham Council is progressing the Town Centre Vision:

- Acquiring Spindles Shopping Centre.
- Repurposing vacant units for new office, leisure, culture and a permanent new home for Tommyfield Market.
- Releasing the site of Tommyfield Market Hall for an urban linear park and new homes.

⁸ Oldham Council, 2021, online: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/6875/coronavirus_recovery_plan_report

Without the changes and improvements to the town centre summarised above, the trends for a struggling town centre that were identified in the Oldham Retail & Leisure Study (2020) could continue. The Oldham Transport Strategy aims to support lasting positive changes in Oldham Town Centre.

6.2.4 Town Centre Funding Successes

Oldham Council has had recent success with funding applications to make the vision for the Town Centre a reality. This has included:

- **Government funding for Oldham**
 - Towns Fund £24.4m award.
 - Future High Streets Fund £10.7m award.
- **Greater Manchester Combined Authority Funding for Oldham**
 - Active Travel Fund - providing improvements to active travel in the Town Centre and Royton, such as walking and cycling facilities, including for the disabled.
 - MCF for cycling schemes and Active Neighbourhoods, which will provide improved, safe cycling and walking facilities according to design standards.

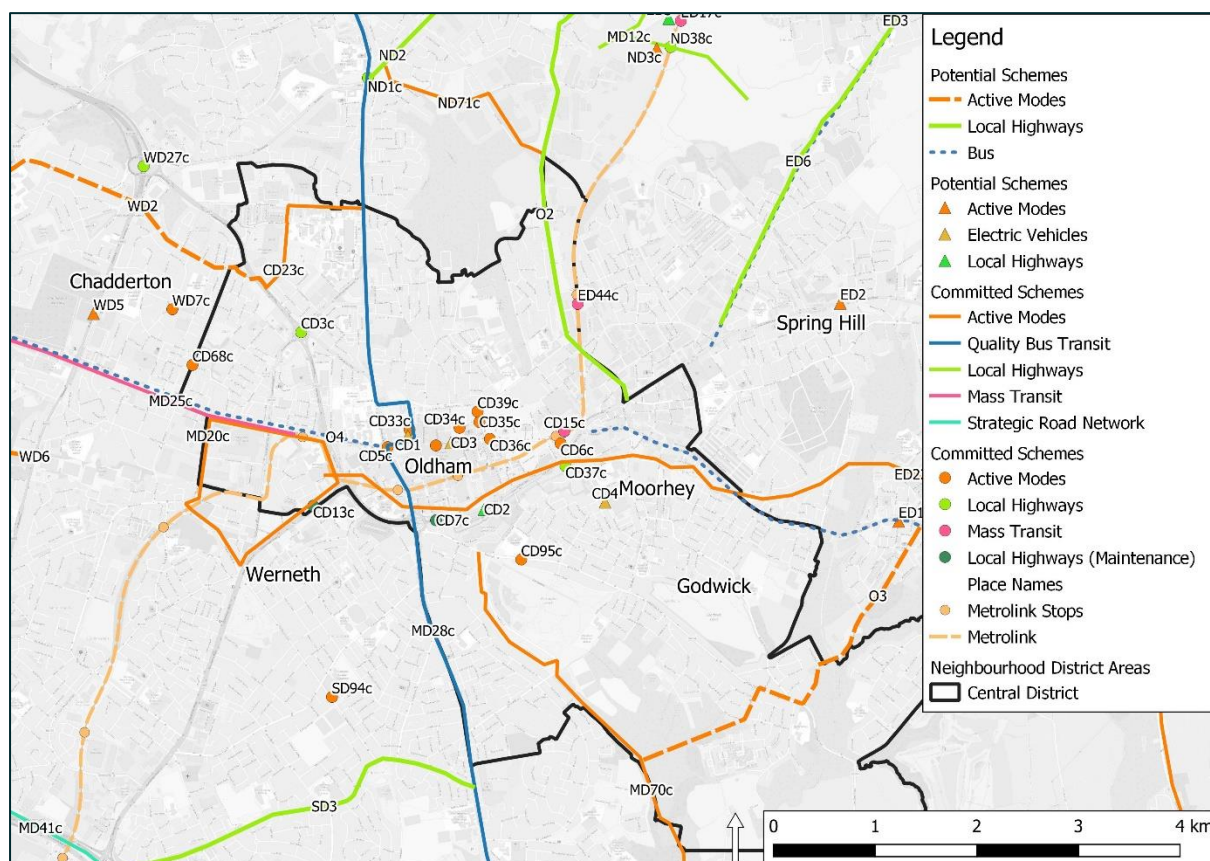
Oldham Council has been working with partners on a range of transport schemes to date with a focus on the town centre and improving connectivity through the **Accessible Oldham** programme, which is a programme of public realm and highway improvements in and around Oldham Town Centre.

The delivery of **Accessible Oldham Phase 1** is underway, with funding secured from the Local Growth Deal, the Greater Manchester MCF and the Future High Streets Fund. The programme includes Oldham's first Bee Network CYCLOPS junction at St. Mary's Way / Rock Street which will improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists (**Figure 6-6** Error! Reference source not found.).

The Accessible Oldham works will complement the Oldham Town Centre Linear Park (**Figure 6-6**) and the Cultural Quarter access and public realm works. These measures are key elements of the Town Centre Vision.

6.2.5 Transport Commitments and Priorities

Error! Reference source not found. **Figure 6-5** and **Table 6-2** illustrate the existing commitments by Oldham Council to deliver transport improvements in the Central District either with partners or independently using funding that has been secured. The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040; Local Implementation Plan (LIP) for Oldham includes many of the existing commitments and delivery timescales. The delivery timescales for each are illustrated in Chapter 7 Delivery Plan later in this report.

Figure 6-5: Central District Potential Schemes.**Table 6-2: Mapped Scheme Numbers - Transport Improvement and Maintenance Schemes in the Central District.**

Map Ref.	Transport Schemes	Committed	Potential / Non-Committed
CD2	Oldham Way Severance Reduction		✓
CD8	Town Centre Highway Access Study of key town centre routes and function		✓
CD6c	Oldham Mumps Corridor Improvements (CRSTS)	✓	
CD7c	Oldham Way KRN Structures Refurbishment: Waterloo Street and Wellington Street Bridges	✓	
CD3c	Featherstall Road Roundabout Partial Signalisation		✓
CD13c	Oldham Way KRN Structures Refurbishment: Manchester Street Viaduct Refurbishment (CRSTS)	✓	
CD15c	Oldham Mumps Interchange Redevelopment	✓	
CD10	Expansion of Oldham Town Centre Bee Network		✓
CD23c	Royal Oldham Hospital: Westhulme Avenue cycle route (ATF2)	✓	
CD3	Expand the Publicly Funded Electric Vehicle Recharging Network		✓
CD4	Provide dedicated electric vehicle charging infrastructure for taxis / PHVs		✓

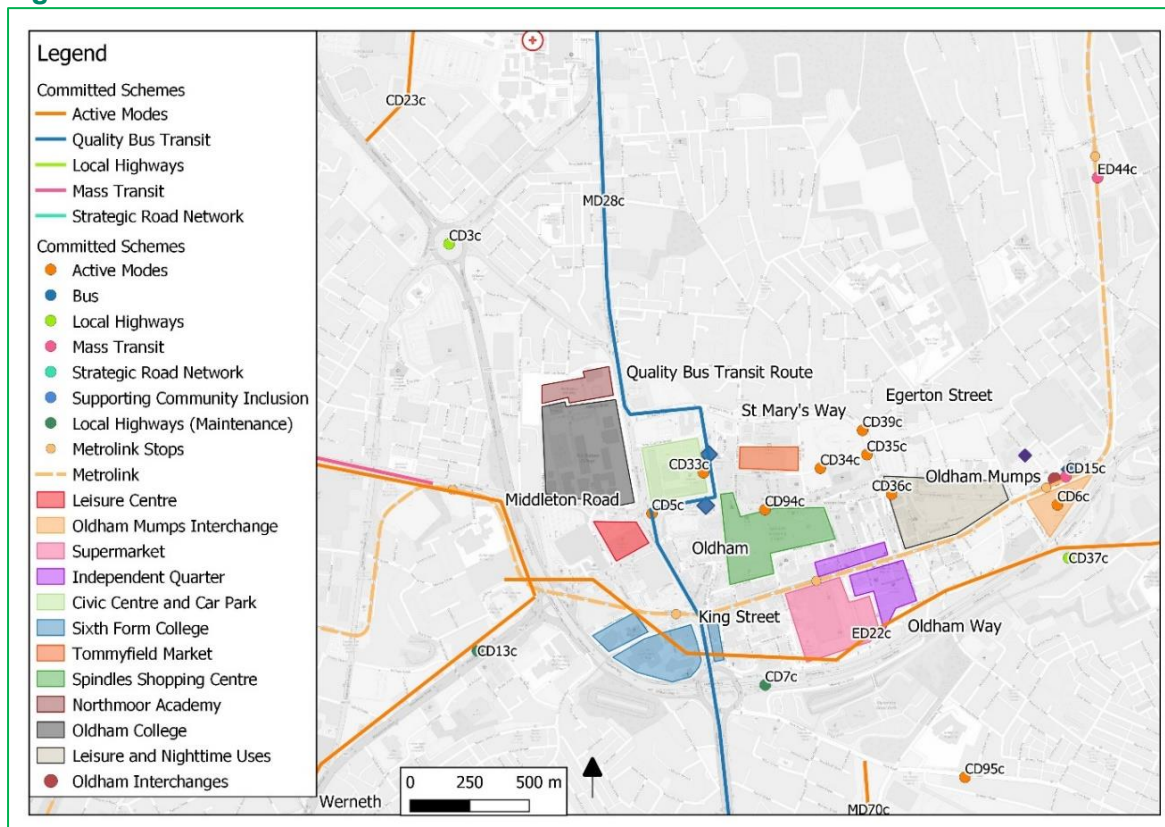
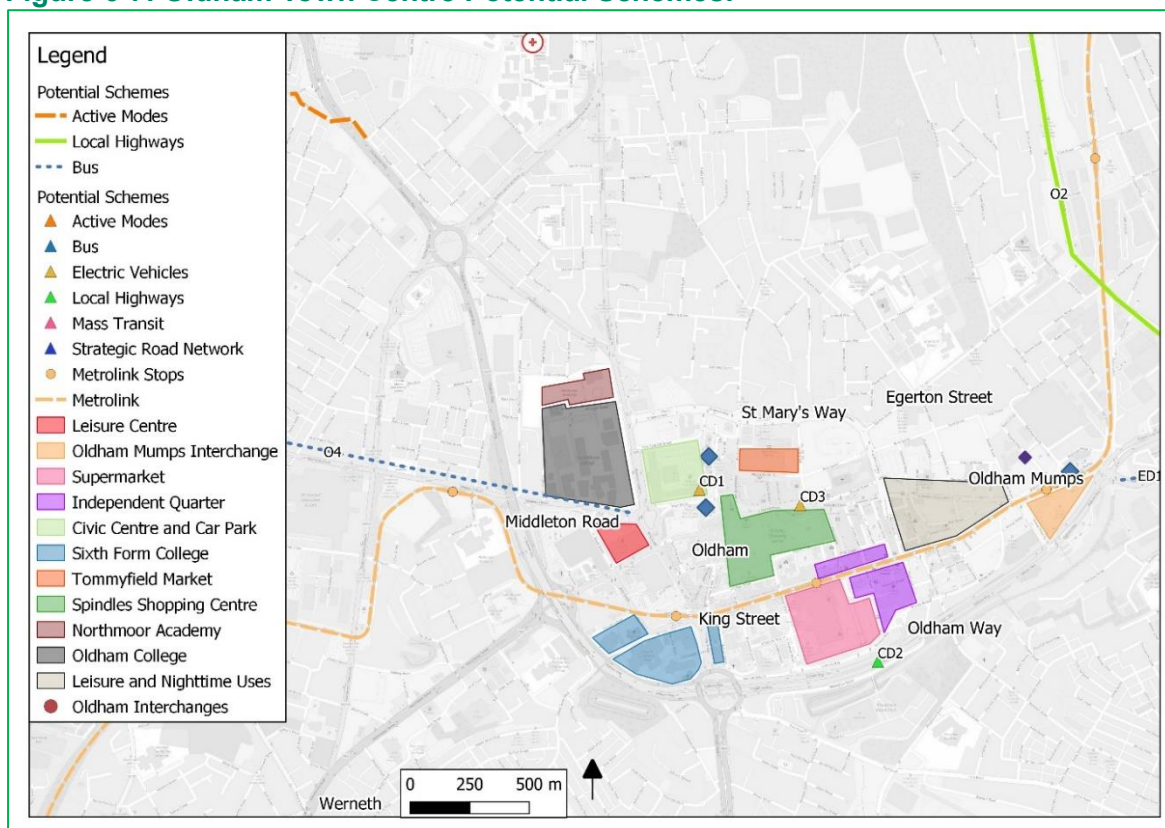
Map Ref.	Transport Schemes	Committed	Potential / Non-Committed
CD6c	Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy Refresh	✓	
CD7	Expansion of GM Car Clubs into Oldham		✓
CD33c	Accessible Oldham: Civic Hub and High Street Public Realm Improvements	✓	
CD34c	Accessible Oldham Town Centre: Town Centre Linear Park	✓	
CD35c	Accessible Oldham Town Centre Phase 2: St Mary's Way Streets for All scheme.	✓	
CD36c	Accessible Oldham Town Centre: Cultural Quarter - access and public realm improvements.	✓	
CD37c	Accessible Oldham: Southlink New Access and Signal Improvements	✓	
CD11	Northern Roots Accessibility Study		✓
CD39c	Egerton Street / St Mary's Way Cyclops Junction (MCF)	✓	
CD9	Accessible Oldham Town Centre - Southlink internal access infrastructure		✓
CD5	Accessible Oldham Town Centre - George Street – Manchester Chambers connectivity		✓
CD68c	Bee Network: Chadderton Improvements (funded)	✓	
CD94c	Oldham Town Centre: Accessible Connectivity Phase 1	✓	
CD95c	Bee Network: Park Road NCN 626 Town Centre Connection (MCF)	✓	
MD29c	Oldham – Lees – Grotton Side Road Crossings (ATF2)	✓	

Note: the suffix 'c' denotes a committed scheme that is ongoing at the time the Oldham Transport Strategy was prepared.

6.2.5.1 Transport Priorities for the Town Centre

The development of the Oldham Transport Strategy has identified additional priorities for Oldham Town Centre that will either enhance existing schemes or introduce new measures that will respond to technological changes, such as electric vehicle recharging points (**Figure 6-6, Figure 6-7 and Table 6-2**).

The existing priorities for Oldham Town Centre are measures that Oldham Council with partners at TfGM have identified in the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040. In addition, improvement and maintenance measures that Oldham Council will bring forward within their existing pipeline of works are considered here.

Figure 6-6: Oldham Town Centre Committed Schemes.**Figure 6-7: Oldham Town Centre Potential Schemes.**

Oldham Way is the principal highway route around the town centre and is important both for local trips and longer distance travel. It is an important winter resilience route and provides people with connections to Metrolink and bus services. However, Oldham Way also creates

a barrier to movement for residents in Glodwick and other areas to the south of the town centre due to limited or less suitable pedestrian routes across it.

Improvements have taken place to pedestrian links at King Street Roundabout and a dedicated pedestrian bridge into Oldham Sixth Form College but there is a need to reduce the severance effect of Oldham Way further. A highway access study of town centre routes and functions will be prepared with the aim of identifying longer-term options for improving pedestrian movement (CD2 in **Figure 6-6**).

6.2.5.2 Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy Update

Car parking in Oldham Town Centre is being reviewed as part of the Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy Update. This will identify how facilities may be reconfigured to enable the delivery of the town centre masterplan.

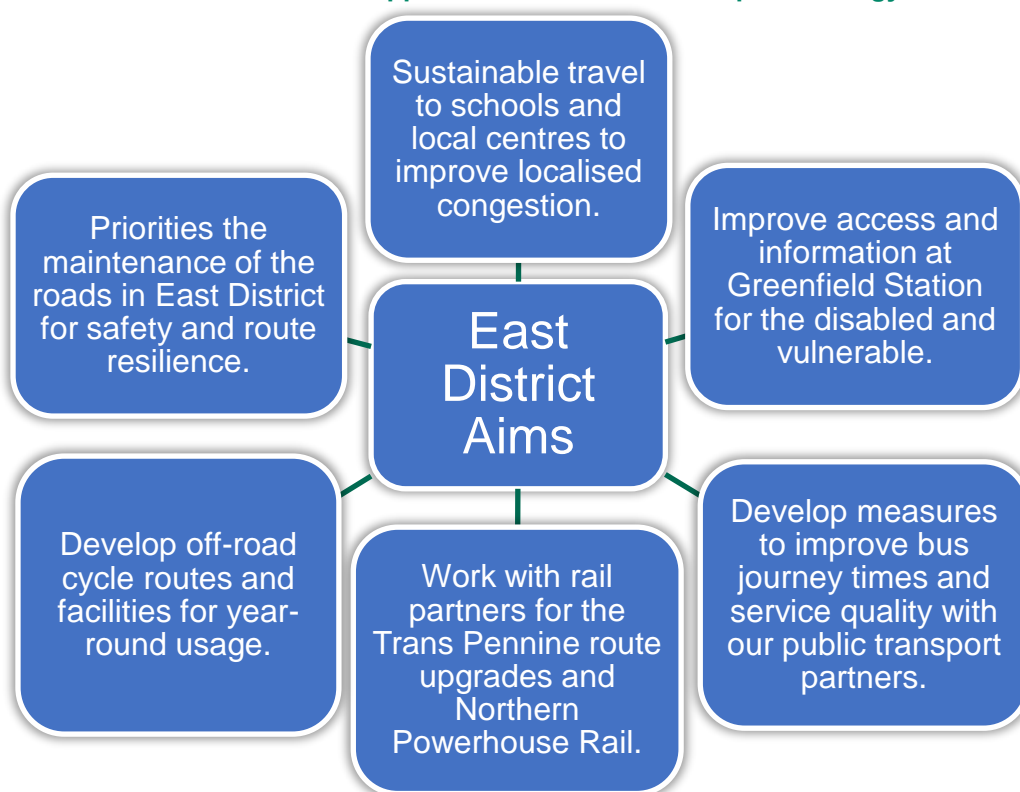
6.3 East District

6.3.1 Introduction

The East District neighbourhood area includes Saddleworth North, Saddleworth South, Saddleworth West and Lees, St James', and Waterhead. The area is notably in the Pennine Fringe with a semi-rural landscape and lower density population that require particular focus for public transport services and transport resilience. We want the East District to benefit from same connectivity that other districts get with regard to rail, bus services and active travel. For the East District, the measures we will develop are summarised below in **Figure 6-8** and mapped in **Figure 6-9**.

The hills and topography present road and rail maintenance needs that are associated with the higher elevation, bridge structures across waterways and the attraction of the areas Public Rights of Way and cycle ways, which are important for local businesses that serve visitors to the area. Larger businesses operate in the area at Greenfield and Uppermill that require reliable roads and access to skills.

Figure 6-8: East District Aims to Support the Six Oldham Transport Strategy Ambitions.



6.3.2 Trans Pennine Routes

The borough of Oldham includes a number of Pennine routes to West Yorkshire and connector roads to the M62, which are all important for commuters, leisure travel and winter resilience. Oldham Council will prioritise with partners the routine investments and maintenance in the East District for the benefit of Oldham, Greater Manchester and the Pennine connections. Oldham Council will work closely with the GMCA to focus regional priorities on the engineering needs associated with Trans Pennine routes

Winter Resilience, Essential for Freight, Bus and Key Road Users

In recent years the winter resilience of trans Pennine routes such as the M62 and A672 Ripponden Road has been challenged by disruptive winter weather. This means traffic routing to and from Greater Manchester rely on routes through Oldham when bad weather events occur and trans Pennine travel is disrupted. The A635 Holmfirth Road and the A62 Manchester Road east of Diggle provide alternative trans Pennine connections other than connecting with the M62. If there are problems on the M62 these routes provide travel resilience.



6.3.3 Transport Commitments and Priorities

Figure 6-9 illustrates the existing commitments by Oldham Council and the potential schemes to deliver transport improvements in the East District either with partners or independently using funding that has been secured.

The schemes include highway improvements, bus corridors and rail accessibility improvements at Greenfield Station, the only heavy railway station in Oldham.

Figure 6-9: East District Schemes.

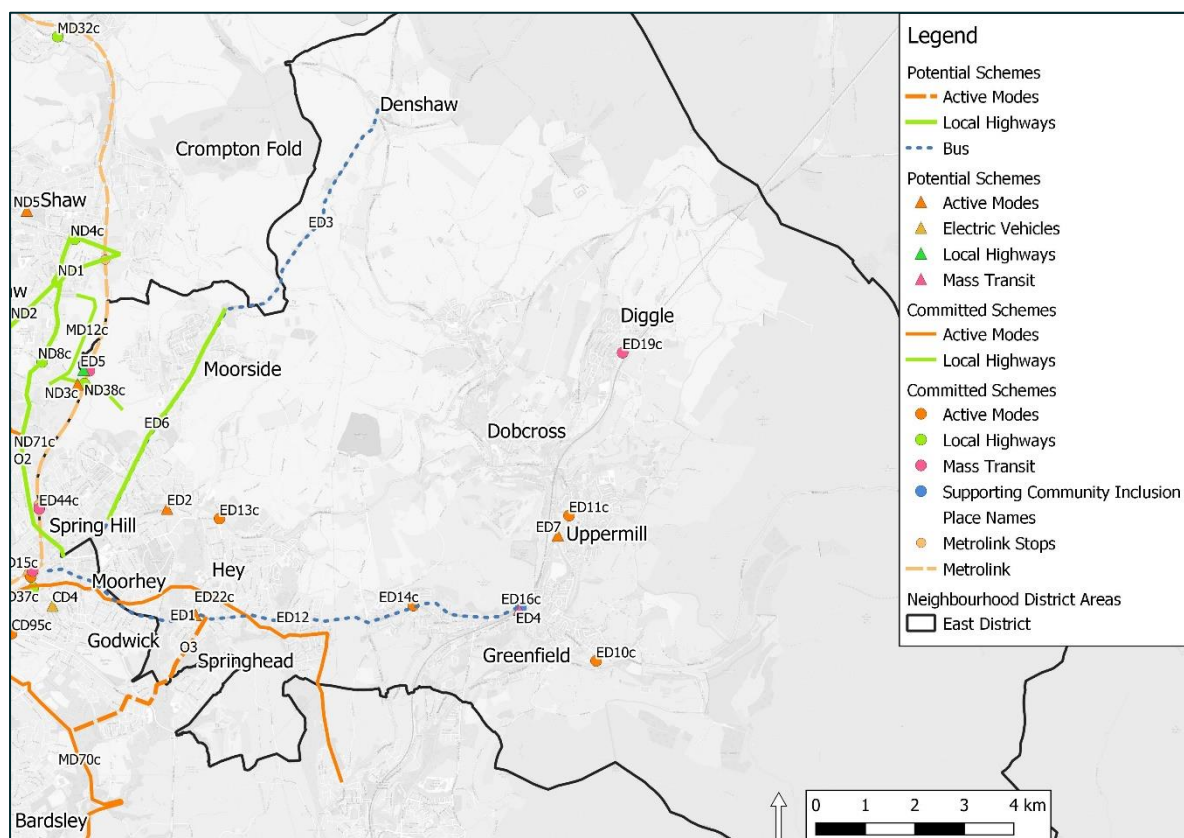


Table 6-3: Mapped Scheme Numbers - Transport Improvement and Maintenance Schemes in the East District.

Map Ref.	Transport Schemes	Committed	Potential / Non-Committed
ED1	Lees Local Centre access improvement		✓
ED2	Huddersfield Road Local Centre access improvement		✓
ED7	Uppermill Local Centre access improvement		✓
ED4	Greenfield Station accessibility improvements and upgrade to better function as an interchange		✓
ED5	Cop Road access and active mode improvements (for proposed Metrolink stop)		✓
ED19	Diggle New Rail Station and Park and Ride		✓
ED3	Denshaw Bus Improvements		✓
ED16c	Greenfield Station Disabled Access (trackside elevator access to Platform 2)	✓	
ED17c	New Cop Road Metrolink Stop and Travel Hub / Park & Ride	✓	
ED10	Improvements to orbital cycling route - Ashton-Oldham Greenway (NCN 626)		✓
ED6	A672 Ripponden Road Corridor Study		✓
ED44c	Derker Metrolink Stop Park and Ride Expansion and Multi-Modal Travel Hub	✓	
ED9	Trans Pennine Route Upgrade		✓
ED8c	Br306 Shaws Lane Footbridge, Uppermill	✓	
ED10c	St Marys Primary School, Chew Valley Road, Greenfield - Zebra Crossing (ATF2)	✓	
ED11c	Safer Roads – Zebra Crossing and Traffic Calming (High Street, Uppermill)	✓	
MD71c	Bee Network Crossings (MCF)	✓	
ED12	Improvements to Bus Services/Routes		✓
ED13c	Safety Scheme: Stamford Road / Dunham Street / Oldham Road Junction Improvement	✓	
ED14c	A669 Oldham Road, Grasscroft – Pedestrian Improvement Scheme	✓	
MD6c	Oldham Mumps Corridor Improvements (CRSTS)	✓	
O1	A669 Greenfield – Oldham – Middleton Bus Corridor Improvements		✓
O3	Lees - Holts Lane - Glodwick Lows Orbital Cycling Improvements		✓

Note: the suffix 'c' denotes a committed scheme that is ongoing at the time the Oldham Transport Strategy was prepared.

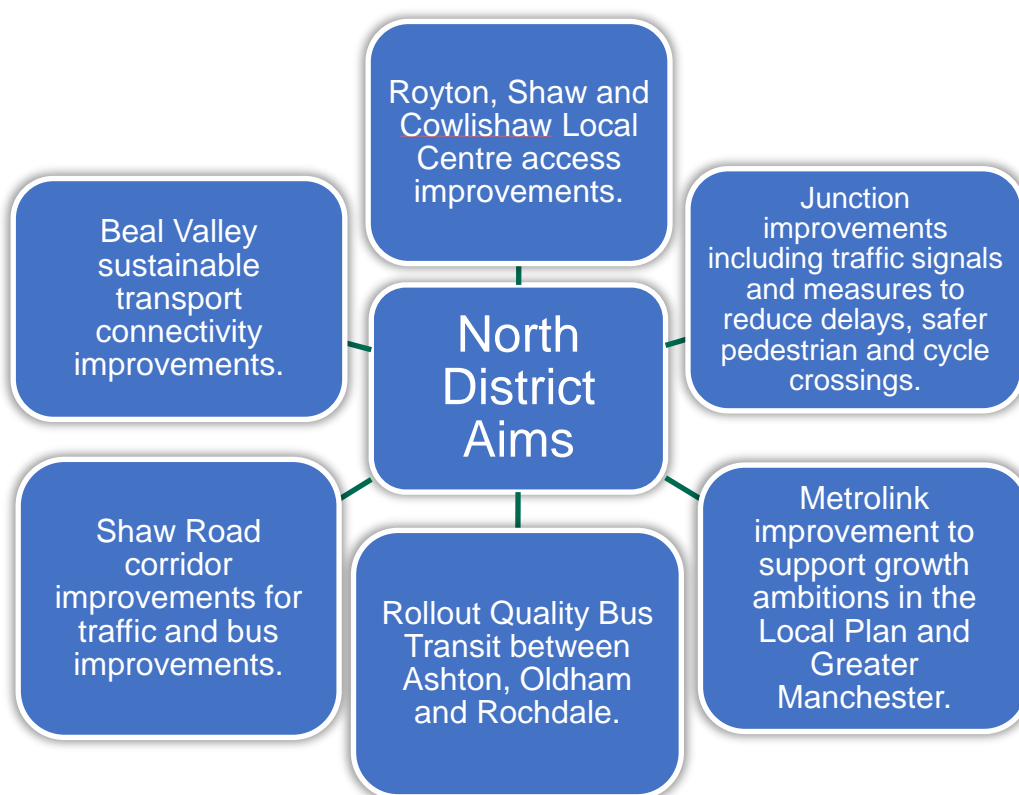
6.4 North District

6.4.1 Introduction

The North District neighbourhood area includes Crompton, Royton North, Royton South and Shaw. The area includes Royton, which has a masterplan in place for the improvement of the local district centre for improved public realm, pedestrian and cyclist access. The council and partners at the GMCA have identified potential housing and employment growth for Shaw and Crompton in the Greater Manchester Spatial Development Strategy, which will necessitate improvements to public transport and local roads.

The measures are broadly summarised in **Figure 6-10** below and relate to policies for improving sustainable transport provision and public transport services, and addressing air quality problems. The transport ambitions for a health, safe, clean, connected, accessible and thriving Oldham are all supported by the aims.

Figure 6-10: North District Aims to Support the Six Oldham Transport Strategy Ambitions.



The North District is served by frequent bus services between the Town Centre, Rochdale and Ashton-under-Lyne. Oldham Council will develop the bus services and highway into a Quality Bus Transit corridor, which means the improvements at junctions and pinch points will improve bus journey times and service reliability.

The North District has important cross-boundary connections with Rochdale and the Atom Valley MDZ, which is an ambition of the GMCA. We will work with GMCA and our partners to open up the opportunities that the MDZ presents by improving transport connections with the Kingsway Business Park by public transport and active travel. In addition, we will prioritise road maintenance and improvements at key junctions that are important for businesses and bus operators.

6.4.2 Transport Commitments and Priorities

Figure 6-11 illustrates the existing commitments by Oldham Council and the potential schemes to deliver transport improvements in the North District either with partners or independently using funding that has been secured.

Figure 6-11: North District Existing and Potential Schemes.

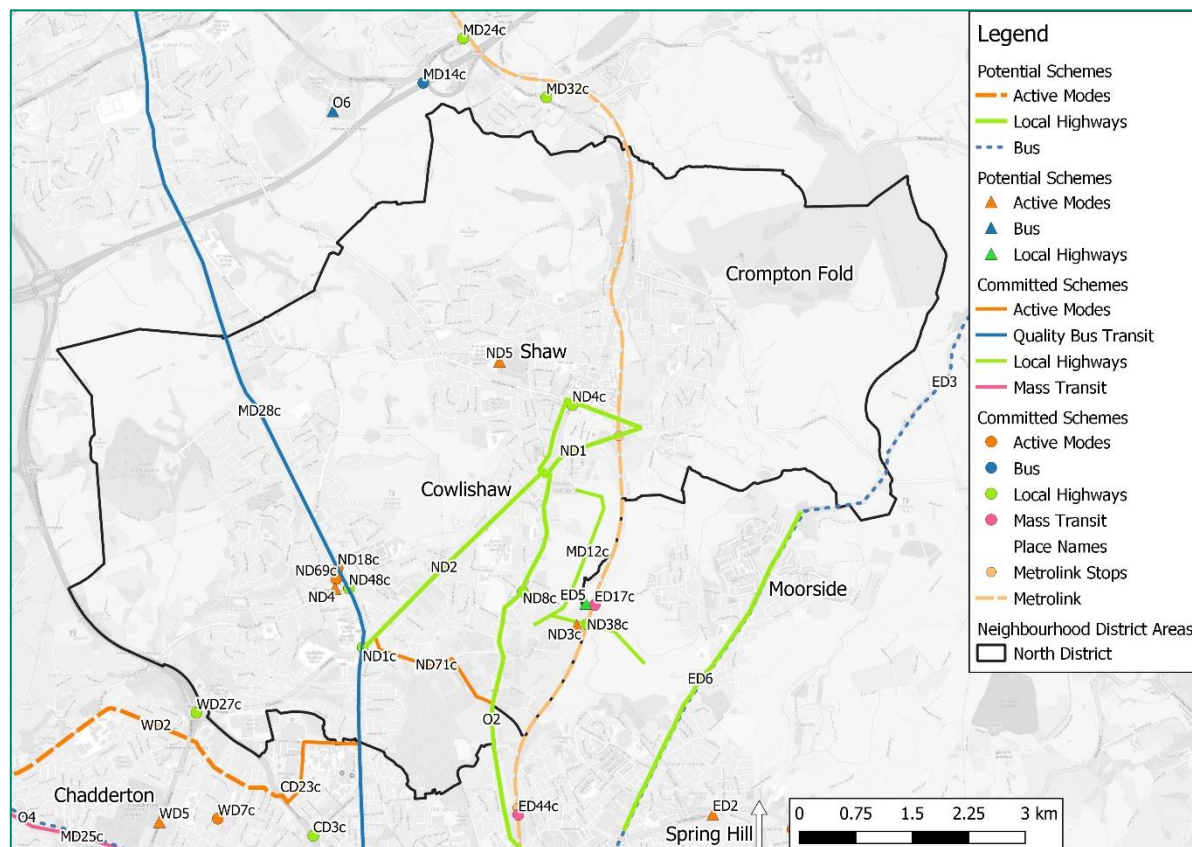


Figure 6-11 shows the North District schemes notably include junction and corridor improvements to improve journey time reliability and mitigate congestion on the busy Shaw Road, Oldham Road and connection with the A627(M). The schemes complement existing bus plans for a north-south Quality Bus Transit corridor to Oldham Town Centre, as well as Bee Network cycling schemes. Without the improvements identified, plans for housing growth in the north of the borough identified in the Greater Manchester Places for Everyone proposals would be limited by congestion.

Table 6-4: Mapped Scheme Numbers - Transport Improvement and Maintenance Schemes in the North District.

Map Ref.	Transport Schemes	Committed	Potential / Non-Committed
ND4	Royton Local Centre access improvement		✓
ND5	Shaw Local Centre access improvement		✓
ND1	Cowlshaw traffic signal upgrades (for buses)		✓
ND3c	Northern Beal Valley Transport Connectivity (CRSTS)	✓	
ND1c	Improvement of A663 Shaw Road / A671 Oldham Road junction - UTC SCOOT improvements	✓	
ND18c	Royton Town Centre Streets for All Improvements (part of the QBT)	✓	

Map Ref.	Transport Schemes	Committed	Potential / Non-Committed
ND2	A663 Shaw Road Corridor Study		✓
ND48c	A671 Rochdale Road / B6195 High Barn Road / A671 Oldham Road / B6195 Middleton Road	✓	
ND69c	Bee Network: Royton Town Centre Connection (funded)	✓	
ND71c	Bee Network: Higginshaw Link to Royton	✓	
ND4c	Improvement of A663 Crompton Way / Rochdale Road / Beal Lane	✓	
ND8c	Improvement of B6194 Heyside / Water Street / Bullcote Lane junction	✓	
ND38c	Metrolink Overbridge	✓	
ND39c	Footway Widening and Parallel Zebra Crossing, Church Road, Shaw (ATF2)	✓	
MD28c	Quality Bus Transit scheme – Rochdale-Oldham-Ashton Corridor	✓	
MD29c	Bee Network Crossings (MCF)	✓	

Note: the suffix 'c' denotes a committed scheme that is ongoing at the time the Oldham Transport Strategy was prepared.

6.4.3 Royton Town Centre Masterplan

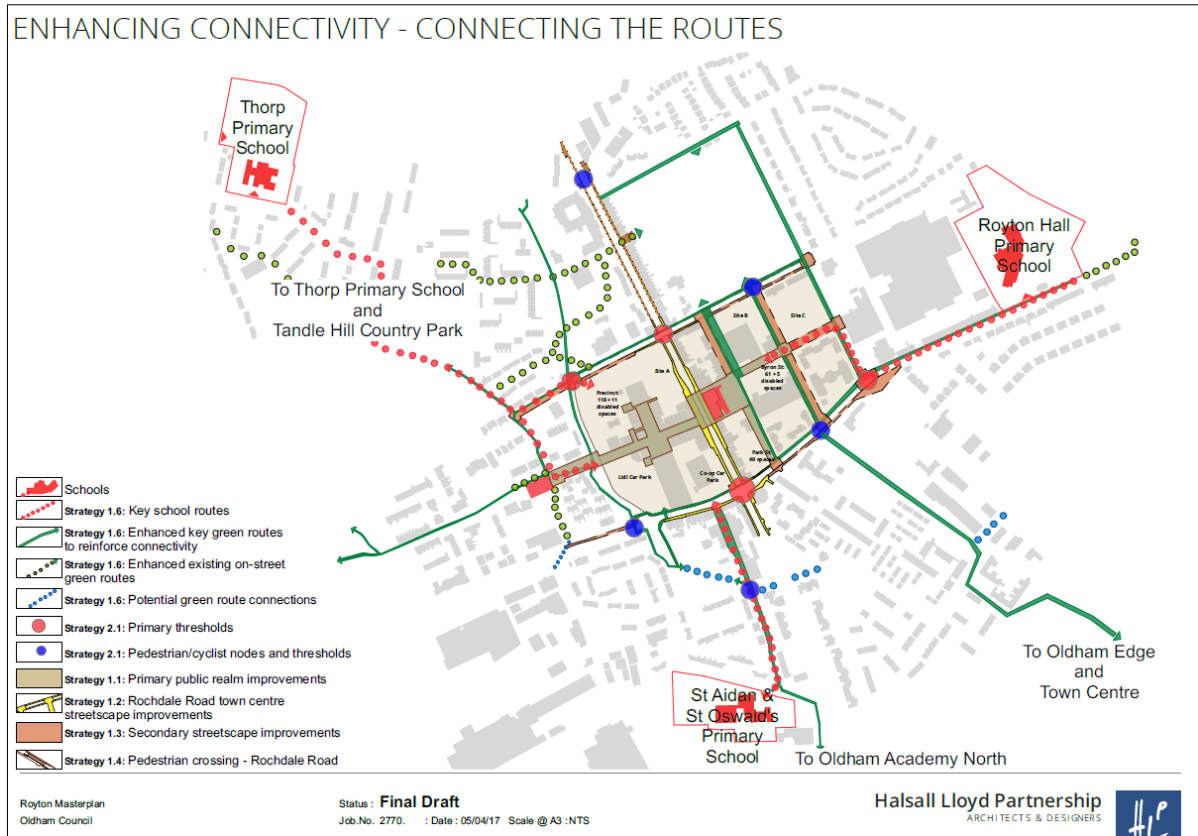
The Royton Town Centre Masterplan includes the proposal for the A671 to be traffic calmed in the vicinity of the Royton high street with improved bus services and pedestrian spaces.

The document represents a spatial masterplan that establishes a vision for Royton and acts as guidance for future development over the next 10 years. The masterplan includes proposals to diversify and enhance the retail, leisure and cultural offer to foster new opportunities and jobs. The masterplan will also investigate transport requirements and improve public realm. **Figure 6-12** illustrates how the masterplan may provide better connections.

The Transport Strategy supports the Royton Town Centre Masterplan by tying into the masterplan complimentary measures to public realm and streetscape including **bus facilities, active modes and safer pedestrian crossings, enhanced connectivity, and electric vehicle charging.**

The Transport Strategy will address challenges including:

- Air pollution and avoiding the exceedance of legal level of NO_x emissions in the near-term.
- Severance issues within Royton Town Centre caused by congested highways.
- Integration of the masterplan for the high street with accessible and affordable transport services.

Figure 6-12: Royton Town Centre Masterplan - Enhancing Connectivity.

Source: Oldham Council, 2021

6.5 South District

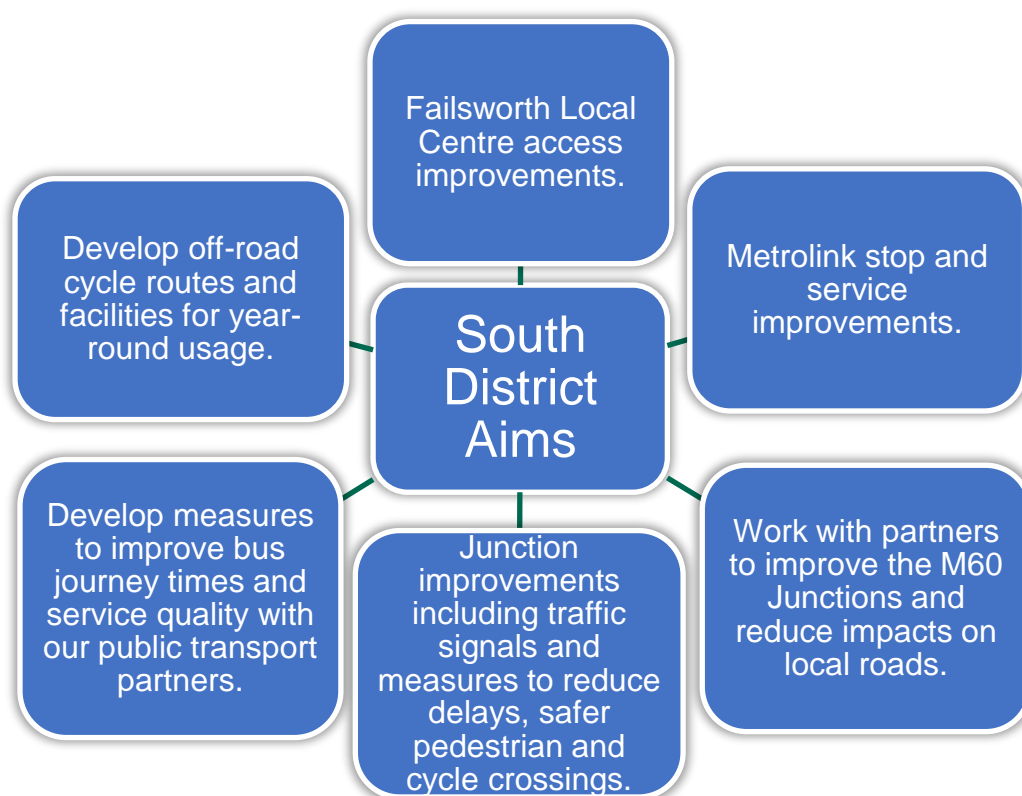
6.5.1 Introduction

The South District neighbourhood area includes Failsworth East, Failsworth West, Hollinwood and Medlock Vale. The area includes the Failsworth Local District Centre and important transport connections with:

- Metrolink.
- The A62 corridor to Manchester City Centre and the frequent bus services that route via A62.
- Broadway key highway route.
- The M60 and junctions 21 and 22.
- Route 66 Bee Network cycle route.

The measures for the South District are broadly summarised in **Figure 6-13** below. They relate to policies to support local high streets, improve public transport services, and addressing air quality problems on the road network with measures to improve delays at junctions.

Figure 6-13: South District Aims to Support the Six Oldham Transport Strategy Ambitions.



The neighbourhood area also includes pockets of community deprivation that require better connections to opportunities in neighbouring Manchester district and the city centre. We will improve shorter-distance connections with Broadway Business Park and the town centre, as well as links by walking and cycling bus and Metrolink services in the area. This is important to support access to key services and opportunities for communities in the area.

6.5.2 Transport Commitments and Priorities

Figure 6-14 and **Table 6-5** illustrates the existing commitments by Oldham Council and potential schemes to deliver transport improvements in the South District either with partners or independently using funding that has been secured.

Figure 6-14: South District Schemes.

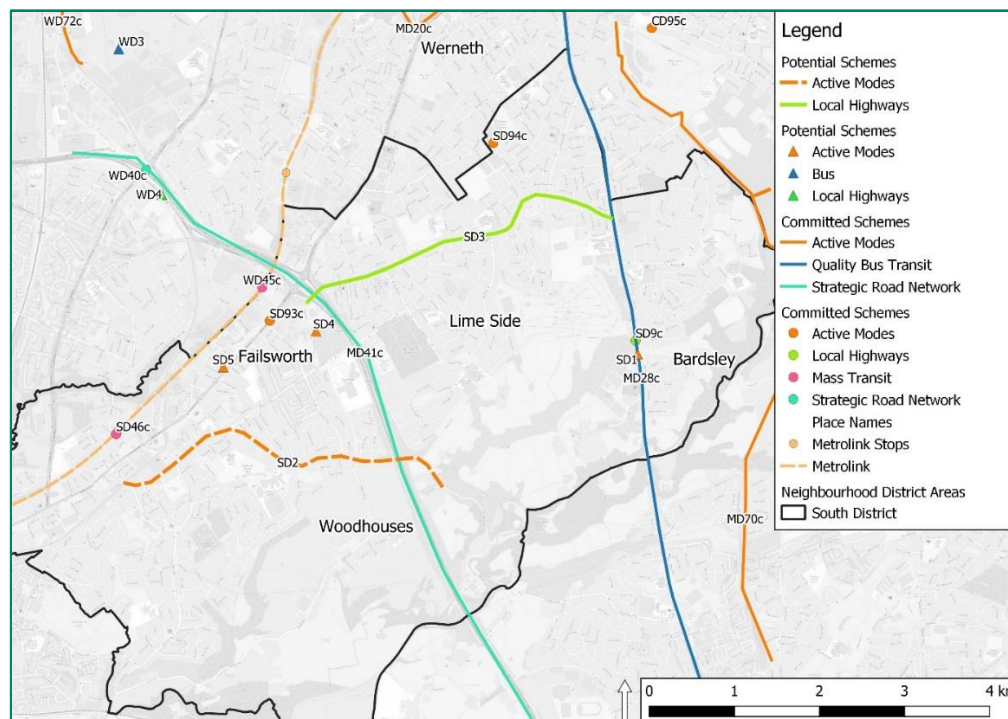


Table 6-5: Mapped Scheme Numbers - Transport Improvement and Maintenance Schemes in the South District.

Map Ref.	Transport Schemes	Committed	Potential / Non-Committed
SD1	QBT Mobility Hub and access connections for Lime Side (Land South of Coal Pit Lane Housing Site)		✓
SD4	Hollinwood Junction Travel Hub Proposed Location		✓
SD5	Failsworth Local Centre access improvement		✓
SD2	Woodhouses - Ashton Road East - Canal Towpath Cycling Corridor		✓
SD3	A6104 Hollins Road Corridor Study		✓
SD9	Improvement of Coal Pit Lane/A627 Ashton Road Junction	✓	
SD46	Failsworth Metrolink Stop Improvements		✓
SD93c	Wickentree Lane / A62 Oldham Road / Wrigley Head, Failsworth - Junction Improvement and Width Restriction Scheme	✓	
SD94c	Chamber Road – School Safety Zone	✓	
MD28c	Quality Bus Transit scheme – Rochdale-Oldham-Ashton Corridor	✓	
MD41c	M60 Junctions 21-24 Smart Motorway (National Highways scheme)	✓	

Note: the suffix 'c' denotes a committed scheme that is ongoing at the time the Oldham Transport Strategy was prepared.

6.6 West District

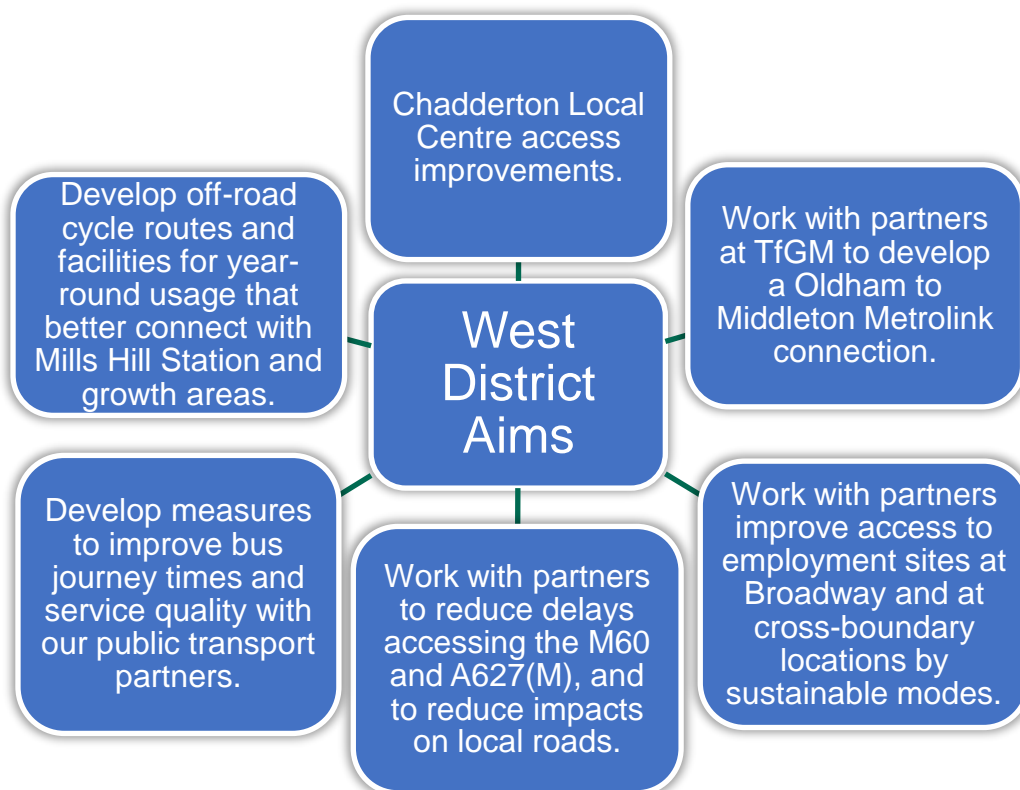
6.6.1 Introduction

The West District neighbourhood area includes Chadderton Central, Chadderton South, Chadderton North and Werneth. We will work with TfGM to identify improvements for the important east-west movement into Oldham Town Centre and cross-boundary into neighbouring Manchester District.

The long-term policy aims by TfGM and Oldham Council include a proposed Metrolink connection between Oldham and Middleton to improve orbital connectivity. Oldham Council want to improve the Middleton Road bus corridor to improve bus journey time reliability and integration of bus services with rail services at Mills Hill Station. This relates to the Oldham Transport Strategy ambitions for a safer, cleaner and more accessible Oldham.

Figure 6-15 below summarises the aims for the West District.

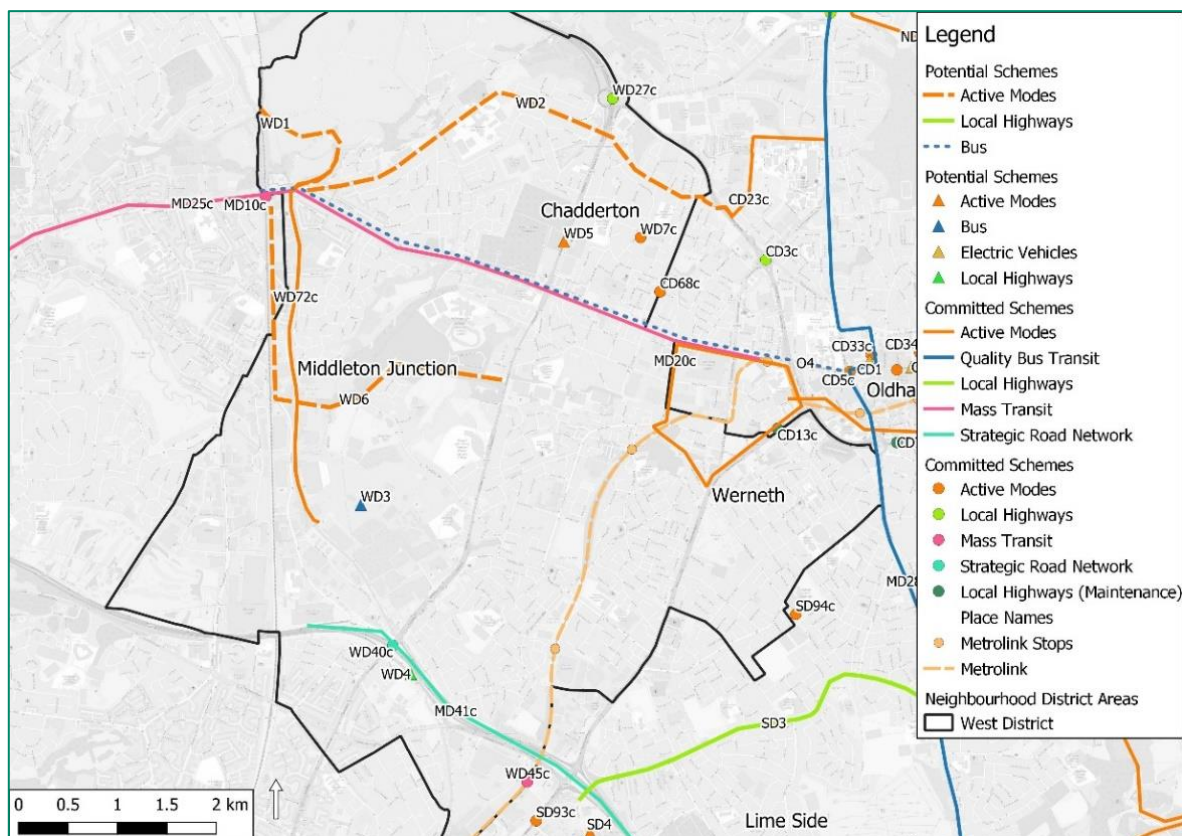
Figure 6-15: West District Aims to Support the Six Oldham Transport Strategy Ambitions.



The West District needs better connections with employment and training opportunities in other Neighbourhood District Areas such as the Town Centre, Broadway Business Park and cross-boundary to Stakehill and the Atom Valley MDZ in Rochdale. This means we will work with partners to develop public transport and other infrastructure to support walking and cycling journeys that are safe and accessible. Oldham Council want to support deprived communities in the West District with the Transport Strategy ambitions for cleaner, safer, healthier and accessible travel choices that support communities to thrive.

6.6.2 Transport Commitments and Priorities

Figure 6-16 and **Table 6-6** illustrates the existing commitments by Oldham Council and potential schemes to deliver transport improvements in the West District either with partners or independently using funding that has been secured. The area includes schemes that are specific only to the district and measures that span multiple Neighbourhood Districts.

Figure 6-16: West District Schemes.**Table 6-6: Mapped Scheme Numbers - Transport Improvement and Maintenance Schemes in the West District.**

Map Ref.	Transport Schemes	Committed	Potential / Non-Committed
WD5	Chadderton Local Centre access improvement		✓
WD6	Mills Hill to Lydia Becker Way / Broadway Cycling Improvements		✓
WD2	Burnley Lane to Westhulme Avenue (Hospital) Orbital Cycling Improvements		✓
WD3	Broadway Bus Accessibility Improvements (DRT or other)		✓
WD4	Semple Way Clockwise Access at M60 J21		✓
WD40c	M60 J21 / A663 Broadway Junction upgrade (HE scheme)	✓	
WD45c	Hollinwood Metrolink Stop Park and Ride Expansion and Multi-Modal Travel Hub	✓	
WD72c	Bee Network: Chadderton - Broadway Canal Link	✓	
WD27c	Improvement of A627 (M) / Chadderton Way / A663 Broadway interchange	✓	
WD7c	Chadderton North & Westwood Active Neighbourhood (MCF)	✓	
MD25c	Middleton to Oldham Metrolink Extension	✓	

Note: the suffix 'c' denotes a committed scheme that is ongoing at the time the Oldham Transport Strategy was prepared.

7. Delivery Plan

7.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the transport measures and proposed timeline for developing them. The Oldham Transport Strategy considers the Oldham Neighbourhood District Areas (**Figure 2-4**). Some measures fall within multiple districts or are not specific to a district or locality.

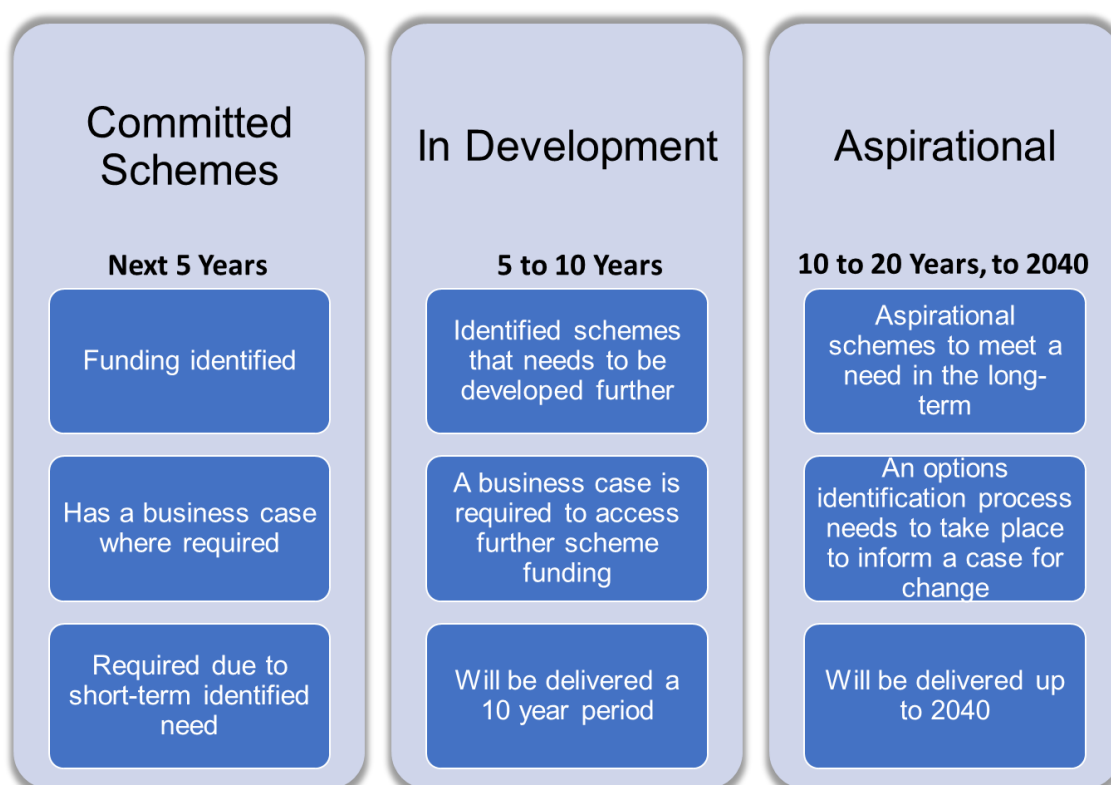
Consultation with our communities

The programmes and measures in the Oldham Transport Strategy are indicative and will benefit from further consultations. The Oldham Transport Strategy has a 20-year timescale and is not expected to realise all the measures in the first 5-years. The Oldham Transport Strategy fully aligns to measures identified for Oldham in the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and Oldham Council is fully committed to that delivery strategy. Oldham Council will continue to work closely with TfGM and our communities to realise the ambitions for all Neighbourhood District Areas across Oldham.

7.1.1 Delivery Periods to 2040

The three delivery periods align with similar periods for the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and are explained in **Figure 7-1**.

Figure 7-1: Delivery Periods and Criteria.



The Delivery Plan for each of the Neighbourhood District Areas includes existing and proposed schemes that are prefixed with an alphanumeric reference that relates to the respective Neighbourhood District Area where the scheme is located (**Table 7-1**). The referencing does not relate to a ranking.

Table 7-1: Neighbourhood District Area Delivery Plan Referencing.

North District (ND)
Central District (CD)
West District (WD)
East District (ED)
South District (SD)
Scheme that relates to multiple districts (MD)
Other scheme that is not specific to a specific area or locality (O)

The Delivery Plan timelines for each Neighbourhood District Area are shown in **Figure 7-2** to **Figure 7-8**. The timelines show the measures for each district over the delivery periods and gives an indication of the range and types of priorities in each. The variation occurs because the district may or may not have a key transport route or network within it, such as Metrolink or the Motorway network.

7.1.2 Delivery Plan Timelines for Each Neighbourhood District Area

- **Figure 7-2** shows the North District Schemes Delivery Plan.
- **Figure 7-3** shows the Central District Schemes Delivery Plan.
- **Figure 7-4** shows the West District Schemes Delivery Plan.
- **Figure 7-5** shows the East District Schemes Delivery Plan.
- **Figure 7-6** shows the South District Schemes Delivery Plan.
- **Figure 7-7** shows the Multiple Districts Schemes Delivery Plan.
- **Figure 7-8** shows the Other Schemes Delivery Plan.

The Central District has the highest number of measures listed including public realm and public transport interchange improvements. The West District and South District appear to have the least number of measures listed in their areas. However, both districts include multiple district (**Figure 7-7**) measures because they are orientated in the south and west which means Metrolink, Quality Bus Transit and Motorway measures span multiple areas. In addition, the other schemes delivery plan (**Figure 7-8**) includes measures that may either apply to all of Oldham or are yet to be developed further.

Figure 7-2: North District Schemes Delivery Plan.

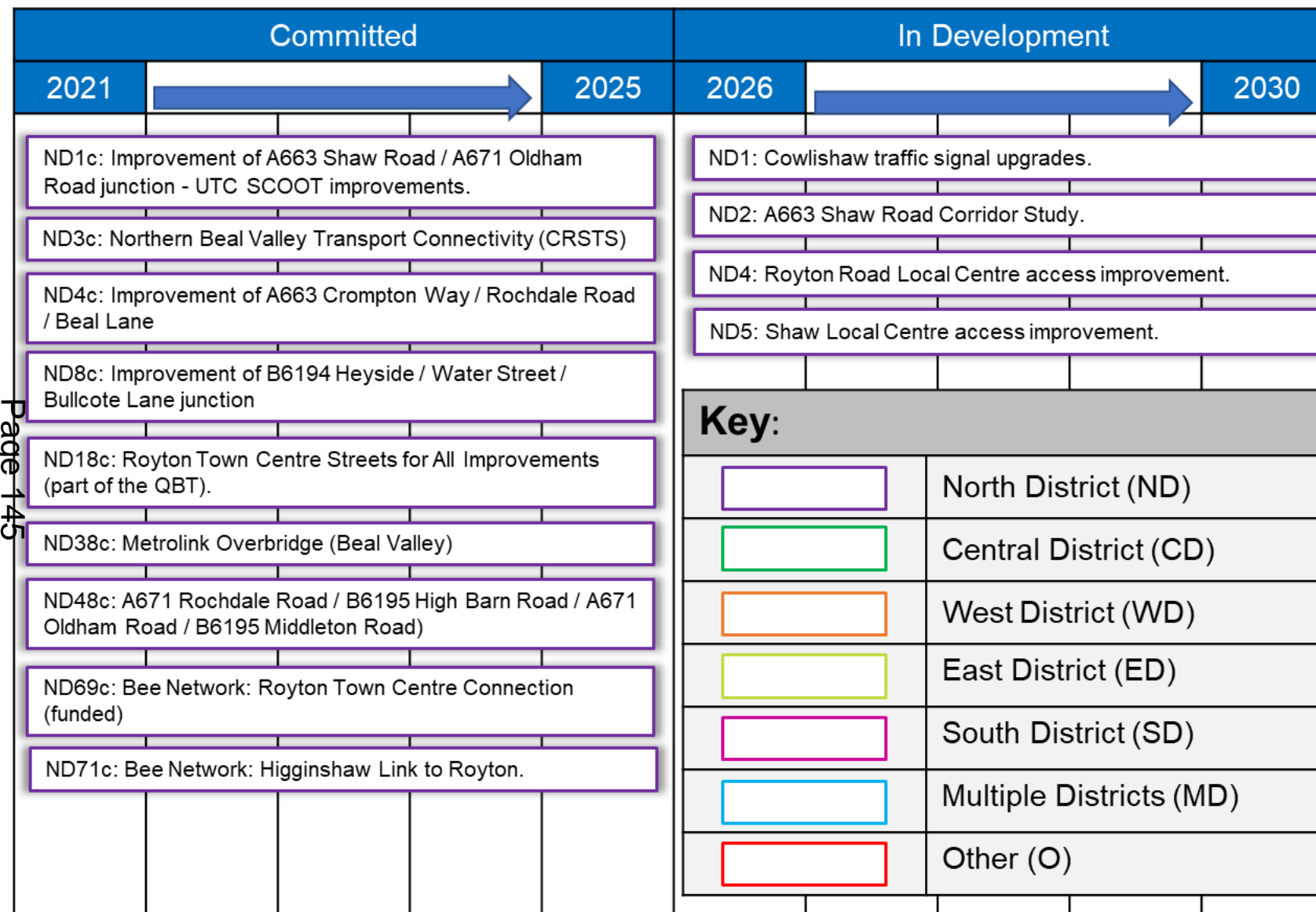


Figure 7-3: Central District Schemes Delivery Plan.

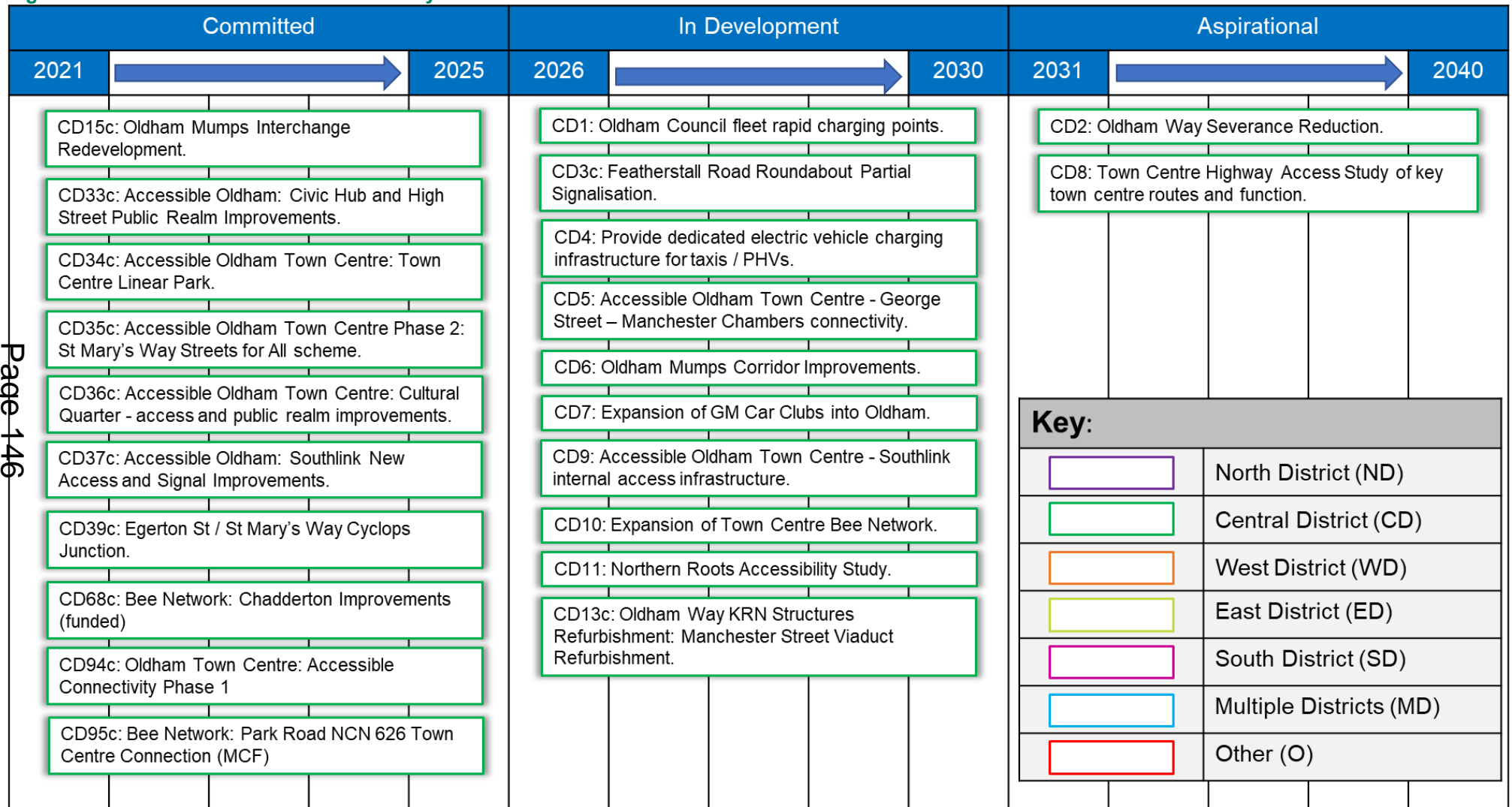
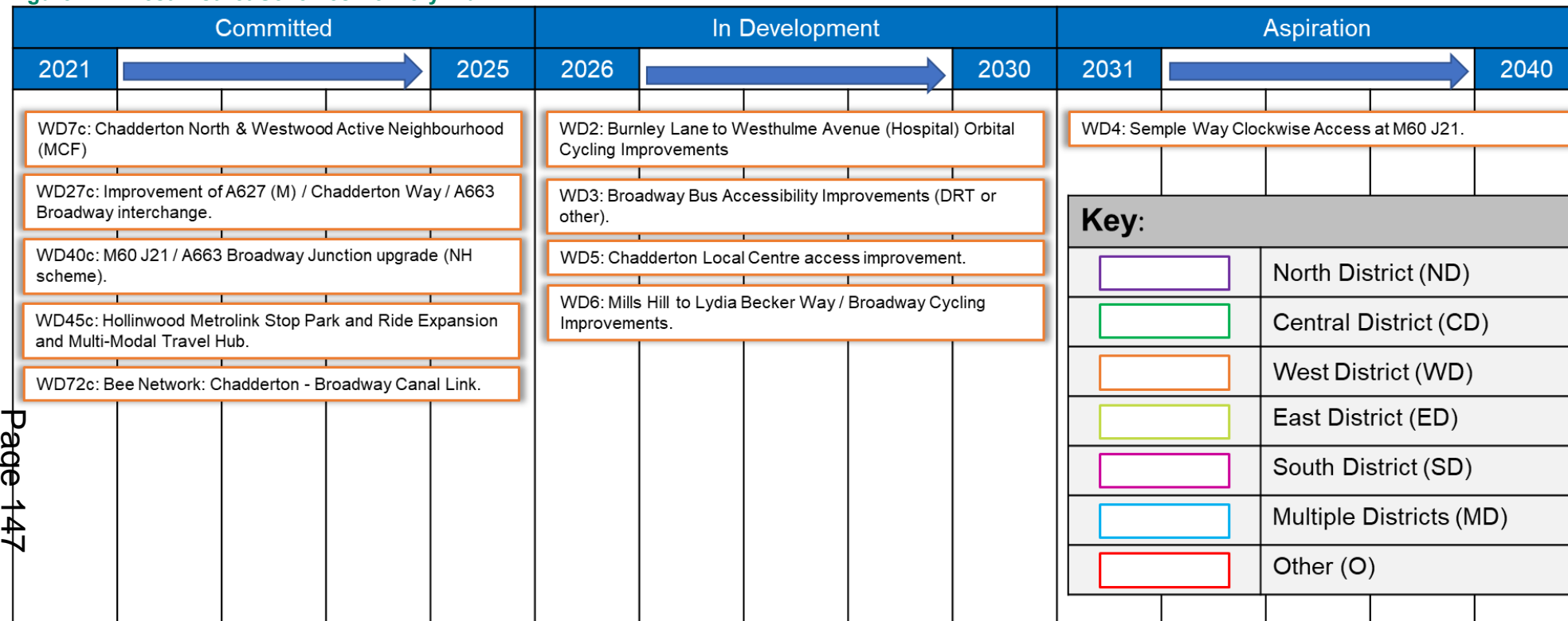


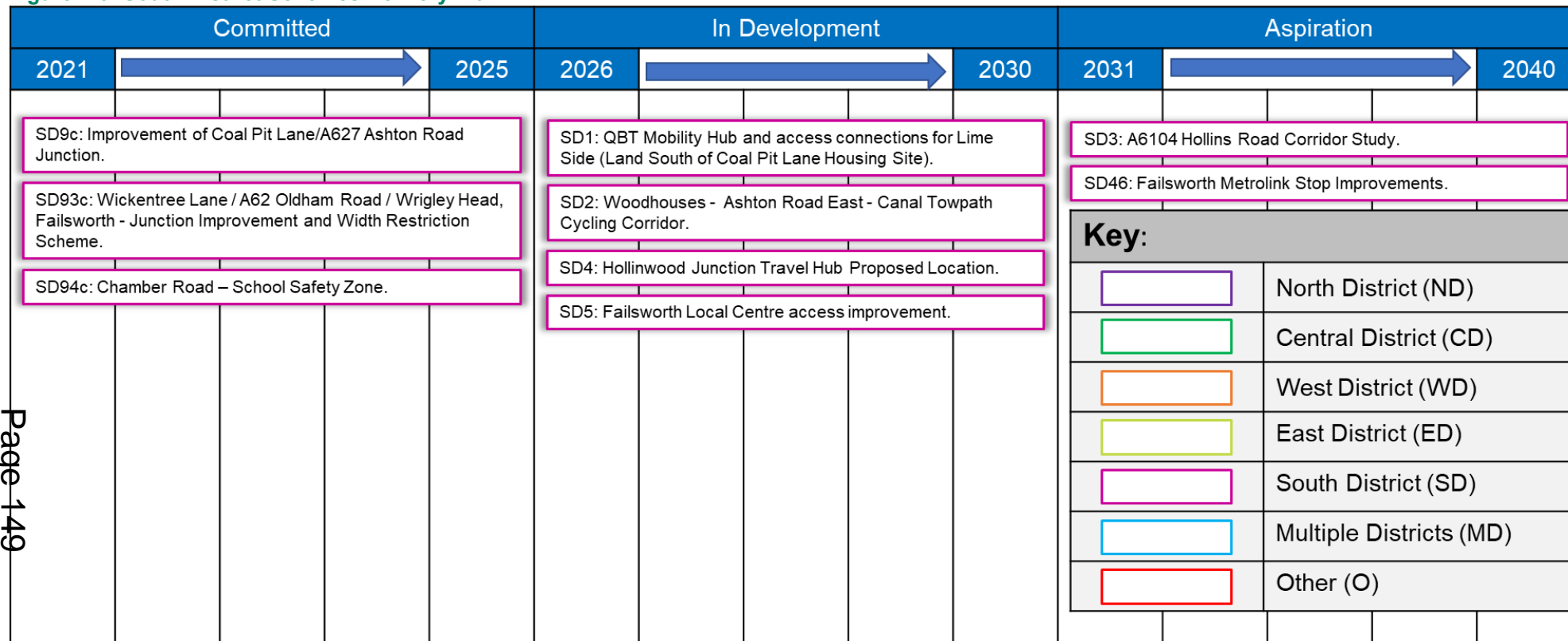
Figure 7-4: West District Schemes Delivery Plan.



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Figure 7-6: South District Schemes Delivery Plan.



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Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy

Oldham Council

Project number: 60681847

October 2022

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Executive Summary

AECOM has been reappointed by Oldham Council to develop a refresh of the Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy, which is a sub-strategy of the Oldham Transport Strategy.

The Transport Strategy sets out the strategic direction for travel within Oldham and the Parking Strategy is necessary to support the current regeneration proposals for the town centre, which are aimed at providing quality homes within the town centre, increasing office and service space, and promoting decreasing road traffic and increased access to public transport. These aims are supported by six ambitions within the Transport Strategy. The vision to decrease road traffic and subsequently improve local air quality, is supporting Oldham Council's proposals to redevelop a number of town centre parking locations and in turn supports the Transport Strategy ambitions:

- Healthy Oldham (through supported mode shift away from private car), Safe Oldham (through reduced road traffic);
- Safe Oldham (through reduced reliance on private cars, thus reducing road traffic volumes and improving road safety);
- Clean Oldham (through reduced road-traffic related emissions);
- Connected Oldham (through development of Mobility Hubs on a number of existing car park locations);
- Accessible Oldham (designing and maintaining public realm areas that cater for the needs of everyone); and
- Thriving Oldham (supporting the provision of new homes and businesses on existing car park locations).

The update to the Parking Strategy reflects current parking issues/numbers, updated land use development proposals and considers the on-going impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Existing baseline car parking occupancy levels have been determined both through a site visit and by analysis of car park ticketing data provided by Oldham Council. Due to uncertainty surrounding the 'new normal' associated with the pandemic, car parking levels have been factored back up to a 2019 pre-pandemic position (as this was found to be higher), and therefore represents a 'worse-case' scenario. The current position of parking provision in Oldham Town Centre is the presence of 3,639 publicly available spaces, a decrease of 285 spaces compared with the previous baseline in 2019, although only 63 spaces fewer than the 2015 baseline. It should be noted that since the previous Parking Strategy, the Council has now taken control of the car parking available within Spindles Shopping Centre, which has a capacity of 1,370 spaces. Across the town centre the spaces were found to have an approximately daytime maximum use occupancy of 55%.

Three options have been considered in relation to future development. The first considered the impact of closing nine town centre car parks and relocating their existing demand elsewhere on the network. The second and third scenarios

consider the land use development proposals put forward by Simpson Haugh in the Creating a Better Place (2020) strategic framework and subsequent Development Plan Prospectus (2022). Both of these documents indicate a number of existing town centre car parks which could be redeveloped to different land uses (mostly residential) and so are reviewed in terms of displacement of existing demand and the additional demand generated by the new developments (forecast using TRICS) and car ownership Census data for residential sites.

Overall conclusions of the assessment are as follows:

- All development options assessed will see a net loss of spaces across the Town Centre (which is to be expected).
- Based on an assumption of 40% on site provision for residential development combined with TRICS modelling, demand is expected to be contained within the reduced parking stock. Demand will be managed by a number of methods, such as: introduction of Mobility Hubs, reduction in price of public transport, improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure, prioritisation of improvements to the perception of safety (in partnership with Transport for Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester Police and Metrolink) and Park & Ride facilities. These, and other measures, are discussed in greater detail in the overarching Oldham Transport Strategy document.
- With the exception of the Mecca Bingo site, parking demand from new development is expected to be contained on site. The displaced Mecca Bingo site parking demand is expected to be contained within the reduced town centre capacity. However, the redevelopment of the Mecca Bingo site was not included within the most recent development proposals (Development Plan Prospectus) and therefore the demand related to any future redevelopment on this location could differ from that which has been assessed.
- Parking charges seem to be broadly comparable with benchmarked neighbouring towns including Bolton, Bury, Rochdale and Stockport.

A number of recommendations have been made at the end of this document. These include:

- Improvements to signage around the town centre, both in relation to the use of Variable Message Signs and the location of signs to promote the use of Park & Ride facilities.
- Updates to parking technology, such as mobile phone application with multiple functions (e.g. parking space availability and price) should be extended across all town centre parking locations. All locations should offer contactless or in-app payment options for parking.
- Relocated and new Blue Badge spaces should have locations determined in liaison with local disabled user groups. Use of Blue Badge spaces should be monitored to determine when an increase in provision is required.
- Mobility Hubs could be located at Spindles car park, Oldham Central Bus Station and the New Leisure Centre. This would have the join benefit of offering emission free options for local deliveries, as well as providing uses with options for making sustainable journey choices.
- It is recommended that further Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure is provided as demand grows. Further to this, feasibility assessments should

be carried out on all council-owned car parks to determine if they are suitable locations for solar charging.

- The Council should continue to manage demand for on-street and off-street car parking, and enforcement action should be taken against illegal, inconsiderate and dangerous parking, and unregistered vehicles.
- The Council should monitor for any negative impacts associated with displaced parking following the closure of a number of town centre car parks. The council will consider Controlled Parking Zones / Residents Parking Zones, if appropriate.
- The Council will continue to liaise with TfGM and developers, to ensure that alternatives to car ownership in car free/car light developments will be promoted.

The Council's ongoing work with TfGM and partners on programmes such as Accessible Oldham, will ensure that walking and cycling can be a genuine mode choice for people of all abilities, and combined with planned improvements to public transport and the perception of safety on public transport, will help to mitigate future parking demand.

1. Introduction

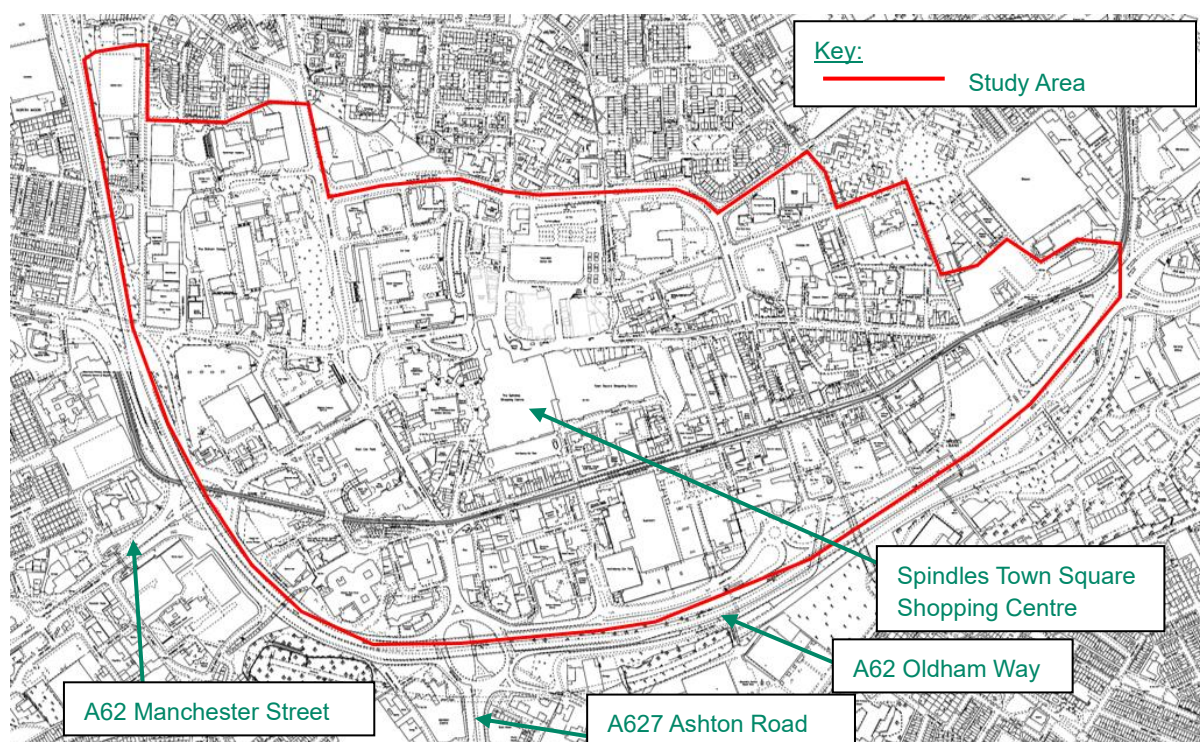
1.1 Background

AECOM has been appointed by Oldham Council to develop the Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy. The refreshed Town Centre Parking Strategy is necessary to support the current regeneration proposals for the town centre, which are aimed at providing quality homes within the town centre, increasing office and service space, and promoting decreasing road traffic and increased access to public transport. This Parking Strategy will also sit as a sub-strategy to the recently developed Oldham Transport Strategy, which is set out in more detail below.

These growth plans need to be supported by the right parking infrastructure, with the right levels of car parking provided in the right places at the right tariff. An updated car parking strategy is therefore needed to ensure that appropriate mechanisms and processes are in place to plan for future provision.

For the purpose of this study, the area defined as the Town Centre is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Oldham Town Centre Study Area



In 2019 Oldham Council appointed AECOM to update the Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy from 2015 in support of regeneration proposals which were aimed at providing expanded employment and residential opportunities. The parking strategy update assessed the existing parking stock within the study area, reviewed the previous assumptions about future growth to take account of development activity that had taken place since the previous parking strategy and assessed the implications of previous regeneration proposals. An assessment of the current and future demand for public car parking was also undertaken to establish existing car parking usage and identify any potential future shortfall in parking provision. The 2019 update related largely to opportunities to increase parking capacity to replace space lost upon the opening of Oldham Leisure Centre (2015) and the demolition of the Hobson Street multi-storey car park (2016).

Since the strategy refresh in 2019, Oldham Council has introduced ambitious regeneration plans for Oldham town centre and the wider borough through the *Oldham Town Centre Vision* (June 2019), *Creating a Better Place* strategic framework (January 2020) and *Oldham Town Centre Development Prospectus* (June 2022). It is also responding to the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and focused upon a recovery period that improves opportunities for local recreation, employment, and interaction for communities.

AECOM was re-appointed in 2022 to refresh the Town Centre Car Parking Strategy, to take onboard the current parking issues and development proposals, as set out in the documents above. This refresh, described in this report, follows a similar format to the previous 2019 update, taking into account the most recent development proposals, which have changed since the previous iteration of the strategy. In addition to the updated car parking baseline and proposed future development, this refresh also includes an updated benchmarking exercise in relation to number of spaces and pricing. This refresh also considers the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased governmental focus on electric vehicles (EV).

This latest parking strategy therefore provides an updated picture of the current parking provision associated with the latest development proposals and identifies a recommended strategy for managing car parking in Oldham.

1.2 Purpose of this Report

This parking strategy assesses the existing parking stock within the study area, reviews the previous assumptions with regard to future growth in demand to take account of recent land use development plans, which have been developed since the previous Parking Strategy was issued, and assesses the implications of the latest set of regeneration proposals.

An assessment of current and future demand for public car parking has been undertaken in order to establish existing car park usage and identify any potential future shortfall in parking provision. The main aims of the Town Centre Parking Strategy are to:

- draw together the existing evidence base and work completed to date to provide a one stop location of understanding Oldham's Parking Strategy;
- examine the potential implications for parking provision associated with the latest land use development proposals and identify a recommended strategy for managing car parking in Oldham;
- reflect the aspirations of Oldham and seek to maximise the opportunities it has for sustaining both the economy and delivering new homes across the borough; and
- include a wide-ranging remit incorporating the level of parking provision provided, parking charges and revenue implications, provision of disabled and EV charging spaces, and consideration of a mobility hub location.

The previous parking strategy covered a 15-year period from 2019 to 2034. This updated parking strategy considers an updated 15-year period from 2022 to 2037.

1.3 Report Structure

This Town Centre Parking Strategy has the following structure:

- Oldham Transport Strategy;
- Review of Baseline Data;
- Future Development Proposals;
- Demand Management Strategy;
- Benchmarking; and
- Implications for Wider Parking Strategy.

2. Oldham Transport Strategy

2.1 Background

Oldham Council has recently developed a Transport Strategy which sets out the strategic direction for travel and mobility in Oldham. The Strategy captures existing commitments and priorities for Oldham communities, and identifies the requirements for transport in the future both for growth and in response to the changing travel technology. It is an all-encompassing plan for Oldham and covers both the town centre and five 'Neighbourhood District Areas'. The Strategy works towards building an inclusive economy that benefits everyone, supports thriving communities where people have the power and resources to be healthy, happy and make positive choices, and delivers co-operative services that work with Oldham communities.

The Transport Strategy is categorised into six ambitions, which recognise the need going forward to balance healthier travel behaviours alongside reducing harmful transport emissions as the United Kingdom and Greater Manchester aim to reduce carbon emissions.

Transport is a major contributor to poor air quality whilst being essential to connect communities with opportunities. This means the Oldham Transport Strategy and Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy need to support the Greater Manchester ambitions to grow economically in a way that also supports the region becoming carbon neutral by 2038.

2.2 Transport Strategy Ambitions

The six ambitions of the Oldham Transport Strategy are:

- **Healthy Oldham** – This ambition is centred on the need to better accommodate pedestrians and cyclists so people can access education and employment. It looks to better integrate walking and cycling with public transport, and is important to achieve cleaner air and revitalisation of the high street and town centre. Schemes to fulfil this ambition are being addressed as a priority. Oldham Council is actively working with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) on schemes such as the Bee Network Active Neighbourhoods programme, which will introduce safer streets for people to walk and cycle. These improvements to provide better signage, path surfaces and segregation from road traffic as much as possible, indicate Oldham's aim for cycling to be a genuine mode choice for people. Improvements to walking and cycling facilities will also support the Government's plans to improve bus services (National Bus Strategy, 2021), as bus users will almost entirely walk (or use a wheelchair) to get to bus stops.
- **Safe Oldham** – This ambition will prioritise safety on the transport network at all times of day, including Metrolink, footways and streets. People should be able to use the services and waiting facilities at all times of day without concern for their safety or a perception that their experience will be impacted by crime and anti-social behaviour. Oldham Council will work in partnership with Metrolink, Greater Manchester Police and TfGM to identify firm prioritise and will then make immediate changes to public realm, street lighting and consenting surveillance equipment.
- **Clean Oldham** – This ambition will focus on lowering traffic related emissions from vehicles and improving air quality. The proposed Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan (GMCAP) is a priority for Oldham Council and aligns with the council's ambitions. When GMCAP comes into place, private cars and motorbikes will not be impacted by measures, however, some types of the most polluting commercial and passenger vehicles will have to pay a daily charge to travel within Greater Manchester. Demand is growing for electric vehicles (EVs) and infrastructure must keep up. Oldham Council, partners across Greater

Manchester and utilities stakeholders need to quickly adapt for ‘plug-in’ vehicles in a range of locations. Oldham Council is working with TfGM to roll-out the aims of the Greater Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy (EVCI). This focuses on the publicly accessible charging points to enable Greater Manchester’s businesses and residents to transition to electric vehicles.

- **Connected Oldham** – This ambition means Oldham Council will prioritise maintenance of the highways, footways and Public Rights of Way, which are essential to their operation. Maintenance of highway ensures they remain useable, safe and that delays are reduced as much as possible. A resilient highway network supports businesses and public transport operators by improving journey-time reliability on the network. Oldham Council will also work with TfGM to support the development and roll-out of Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) and its implications for particular locations such as transport interchanges. Visible changes could include the addition of bicycle and car-club hire services at some Metrolink stops and bus stations so people can complete their journey to the door of a workplace or leisure destination. Proposed Mobility Hubs by TfGM, which will include multiple travel options, could be incorporated with MaaS.
- **Accessible Oldham** – This ambition will address gaps in disabled access in the transport network. Public realm areas and footways will be appropriately maintained, designed and illuminated to feel accessible for everyone, including those who are blind or partially sighted. Perceptions of safety and ‘fear of harm’ factors are a barrier to travel for many disabled and vulnerable groups. This means improving access is a priority and is important for reducing deprivation in Oldham.
- **Thriving Oldham** – This ambition will support new homes and employment land-uses in the district by working with developers and TfGM through the planning process to support sustainable development. This means development should be accessible to and connected with public transport services and walking and cycling links that are designed to the latest design standards. Delivery of goods is going through a shift to low emission and EVs, including by bicycle. Oldham Council aims to support this transition to help decarbonise transport whilst supporting the growth in online retail and home delivery. Supporting a thriving town centre requires allowing businesses and services to receive deliveries in an increasingly sustainable way.

This Parking Strategy supports the ambitions of the Oldham Transport Strategy, by:

- **Healthy Oldham** – Supporting the mode shift away from reliance on private car by reducing car parking provision. The Transport Strategy sets out a number of initiatives to encourage mode shift towards active modes and public transport.
- **Safe Oldham** – Supporting the reduced reliance on private cars, thus reducing road traffic volumes.
- **Clean Oldham** – Supporting the reduced reliance on private cars, which in turn improves local air quality. Supports the delivery of EV charging infrastructure, again benefitting local air quality.
- **Connected Oldham** – Supports greater connectivity through the development of Mobility Hubs on a number of existing car park locations.
- **Accessible Oldham** – Supports accessibility for all by maintaining and monitoring requirements for Blue Badge spaces. Updates to car parks will be in line with latest government guidance and will cater for the needs of everyone.
- **Thriving Oldham** – Supporting the provision of new homes and businesses on existing car park locations. Managing the Council’s assets (car parks) efficiently and maximises returns and contribution to Council priorities.

3. Review of Baseline Data

3.1 Summary of Previous Baseline

With regard to the overall parking stock within Oldham Town Centre, the parking strategy takes account of publicly available off-street car parking, both private and Council operated. No account is taken of car parks which are not open to the general public, i.e. those which are attached to specific developments or which are only available for contract parking. These car parks not open to the general public are considered to be few enough in number so as to not cause an issue in relation to the Parking Strategy.

The previous 2019 update identified a number of changes to assumptions when compared with the 2015 Parking Strategy. These are summarised under developments and car parks below:

Land Use Development

- Construction of 800-seat Old Town Hall Cinema, which opened in 2016. Associated parking demand included within revised baseline calculation. Oldham Council has contractual obligation to provide 400 parking spaces within a 500m radius of the cinema.
- Construction of new leisure centre to replace the former sports centre. New leisure centre opened in late 2015, with the former sports centre closing at the same time. Associated changes to parking demand were included in revised baseline calculation.
- Eastern Gateway (now Princes Gate). Changes in proposed anchor tenants from M&S to Lidl, but otherwise only minor changes to assumed development proposals.
- Coliseum relocation. No longer proposed in short-term. Development may still go ahead at some point but no firm plans.

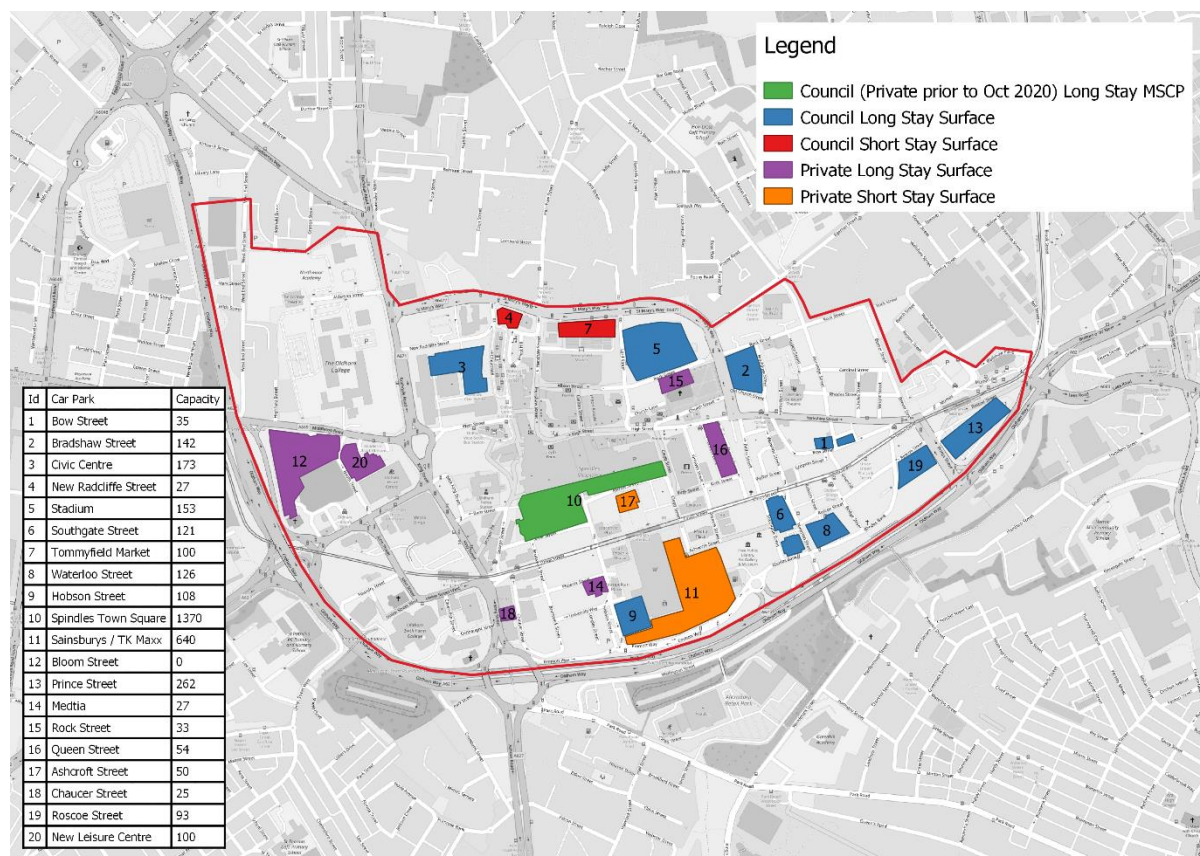
Car Park

- Hobson Street. Replacement of former multi-storey car park (MSCP) with new 108-space surface car park, opened 2017.
- Sports Centre. Old sports centre demolished in 2016. Former sports centre car park expanded into demolished area to provide additional 135 spaces. Expanded car park re-branded as Stadium and re-opened in 2017.
- Mumps Park and Ride. Creation of new 270-space car park to the north of Mumps, opened in 2017 and officially restricted to Metrolink users only. Former 262-space park & ride car park to south of Mumps reverted to Council control and re-branded as Prince Street.

3.2 Current Position

Since the 2019 parking strategy update, the parking situation in Oldham town centre has evolved. A number of developments have now come forward and are open for use, and some other developments no longer form part of the future regeneration plans for the town centre or have altered from what was originally assumed. A major example of change with implications for town centre parking is the Council's purchase of Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre with integrated MSCP in October 2020.

The locations of the current off-street car parks within the study area, and their associated capacities, are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Location of Town Centre Car Parks Baseline and Associated Capacities 2022

Oldham town centre suffers from many of the traditional parking issues seen elsewhere, such as lack of supply in certain areas. A balance needs to be struck between providing adequate parking provision whilst also meeting other objectives of liveability and town centre vitality and to cater for those who live, work, shop and spend leisure time in the town centre.

Available car park ticketing data has been provided by Oldham Council for dates in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. As October to December 2019 data was only available for one car park location (Civic Centre West), this location has been used as a proxy to factor up other parking locations, and for the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to be assessed.

For locations where new ticketing data was not available, new car parking locations that had not previously been considered, and to review the current situation (in terms of overall usage and number of available spaces) at all other locations, a 'snap-shot' site visit was undertaken on Thursday 21st July 2022. As Civic Centre West car park was also included in this survey, the 2019 ticking data at this car park has been used to factor up the present day snap-shot survey demand data (as usage is currently still lower than pre-COVID).

It can be seen from Table 1 that there have been a number of changes in parking stock since the July 2019 strategy work. Key changes are summarised below:

- Sport Stadium / Former Leisure Centre – during the time of the July 2022 site visit, contractors were using approximately 1/3 of the spaces for private parking and plant. The total number of spaces in the table has been adjusted accordingly.
- Bloom Street - during the time of the July 2022 site visit it was found that this car park has been closed for new development on the site.
- Rock Street – total number of spaces reduced by two due to introduction of inPost lockers.
- Roscoe Street – new 93 space car park.
- New Leisure Centre – new 100 space car park.

The overall parking stock has decreased by 285 spaces compared to the previous baseline, although this is only 63 spaces fewer than the 2015 baseline following the closure of Hobson Street MSCP, Cannon Street and Garlick Street car parks.

It should also be noted that since the previous Parking Strategy, the Council has now taken control of the car parking available within Spindles Shopping Centre, which has a parking capacity of 1,370 spaces.

Two documents, Creating a Better Place strategic framework (January 2020) and Oldham Town Centre Development Plan Prospectus (June 2022), have subsequently been published and set out a new vision for future development within Oldham town centre. A number of the future developments proposals included within the documents are for locations where the developments would be constructed on what is currently a Council owned car park. This Town Centre Parking Strategy looks to assess the current available capacity within the car parks in Oldham and any impacts the proposed future developments would have on parking.

Table 1 Publicly Available Off-Street Car Parks within the Study Area

Ref.	Location	Ownership	Type	Feb 2015 Baseline		July 2019 Baseline		July 2022 Baseline	
				Capacity	Approx. Max. Daytime Occupancy	Capacity	Approx. Max. Daytime Occupancy	Capacity	Approx. Max. Daytime Occupancy
1	Bow Street	Council	Surface	35	42%	35	36%	35	40%
2	Bradshaw Street	Council	Surface	142	93%	142	51%	142	30%
3	Civic Centre	Council	Surface	173	86%	173	85%	173	81%
4	New Radcliffe Street	Council	Surface	28	96%	27	81%	27	78%
5	Stadium (former leisure centre)	Council	Surface	94	66%	229	38%	153 ¹	51%
6	Southgate Street	Council	Surface	121	96%	121	57%	121	42%
7	Tommyfield Market	Council	Surface	92	82%	100	68%	100	64%
8	Waterloo Street	Council	Surface	126	75%	126	27%	126	15%
9	Hobson Street	Council	Surface	-	-	108	71%	108	70%
10	Spindles Town Square	Private (Council since Oct 2020)	MSCP	1,370	50%	1,370	8% ²	1,370	32% ³
11	Sainsburys/ TK Maxx	Private	Surface	640	50%	640	50%	640	90%

¹ During the AECOM site visit on 21st July 2022, it was noted that contractors are currently using approximately one third of the spaces for private parking and plant. The number of available spaces has therefore been reduced accordingly (from 229 to 153, reduction of 76 spaces).

² Based on Spot count undertaken on 23rd July 2019

³ Spindles Occupancy was not calculated during the site visit. Data was provided by the Spindles of daily occupancy figures for January and February 2020. Similarly to the car parking data provided by Oldham Council, this has been factors up to a 2019 figure.

12	Bloom Street	Private	Surface	400	95%	400	66%	0 ⁴	-
13	Princes Gate	Council	Surface	254	95%	262	53%	262	11%
14	Medtia Square	Private	Surface	27	80%	27	87%	27	56%
15	Rock Street	Private	Surface	35	85%	35	66%	33 ⁵	100%
16	Queen Street	Private	Surface	90	95%	54	98%	54	100%
17	Ashcroft Street	Private	Surface	50	30%	50	44%	50	34%
18	Chaucer Steet	Private	Surface	25	60%	25	69%	25	48%
19	Roscoe Street – new car park	Council	Surface	-	-	-	-	93	40%
20	New Leisure Centre	Private	Surface	-	-	-	-	100	74%
TOTAL		-	-	3,702	Avg: 67%	3,924	Avg: 59%	3,639	Avg: 55%

⁴ During the AECOM site visit on 21st July 2022, this car park as noted as being closed for new development on the site. These spaces have therefore been removed from the total above (reduction of 400 spaces).

⁵ During the 2022 site visit it was noted that two spaces now have an inPost locker installed, and as such the total has been reduced (reduced from 35 to 33 spaces).

3.3 Current Parking Charges

Existing car parking charges have been investigated at locations across Oldham town centre. A summary of the charges per hour, for four hours and for 24 hours are set out in Figure 3.2, Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.2 Location of Town Centre Car Parks Baseline and One Hour Parking Charge

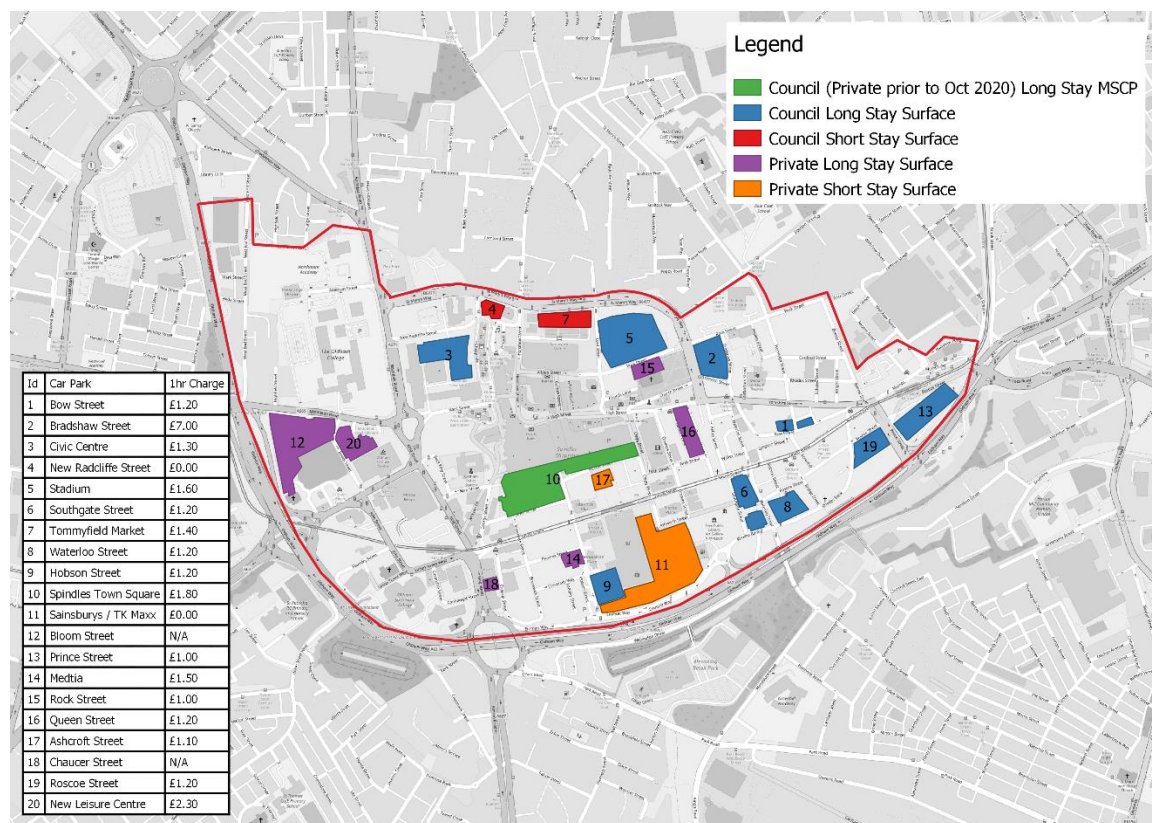


Figure 3.3 Location of Town Centre Car Parks Baseline and Four Hour Parking Charge

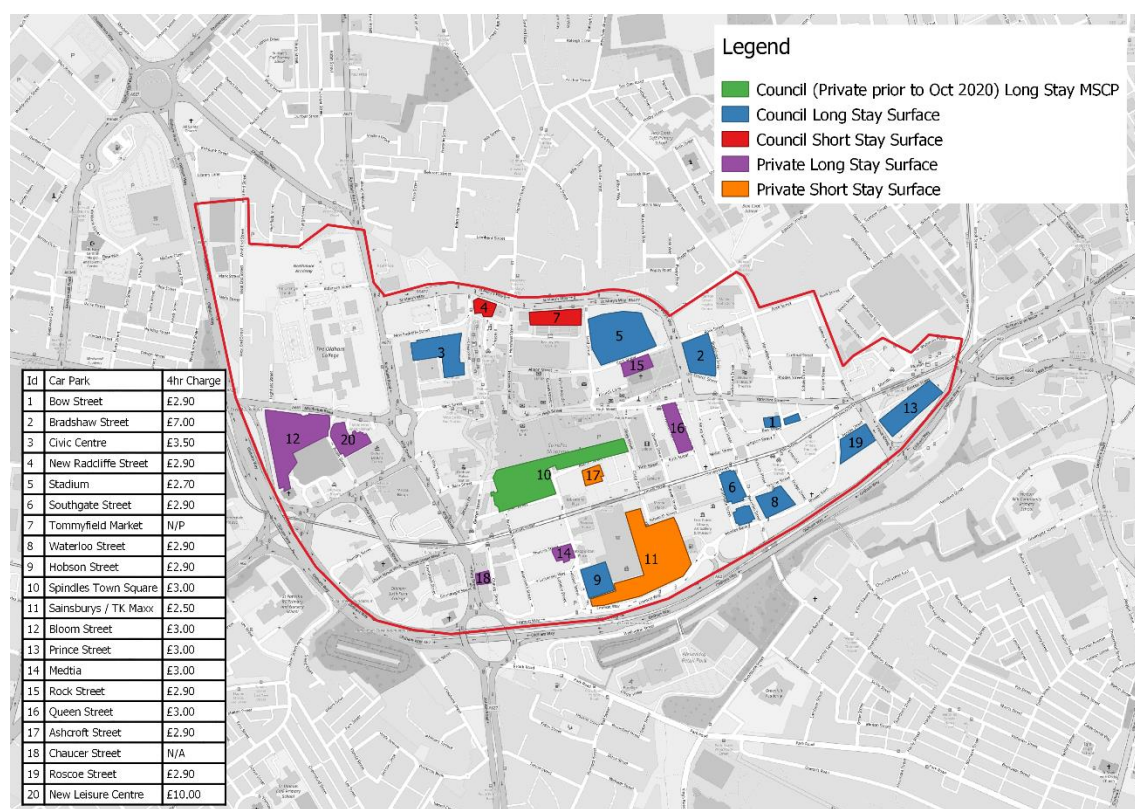
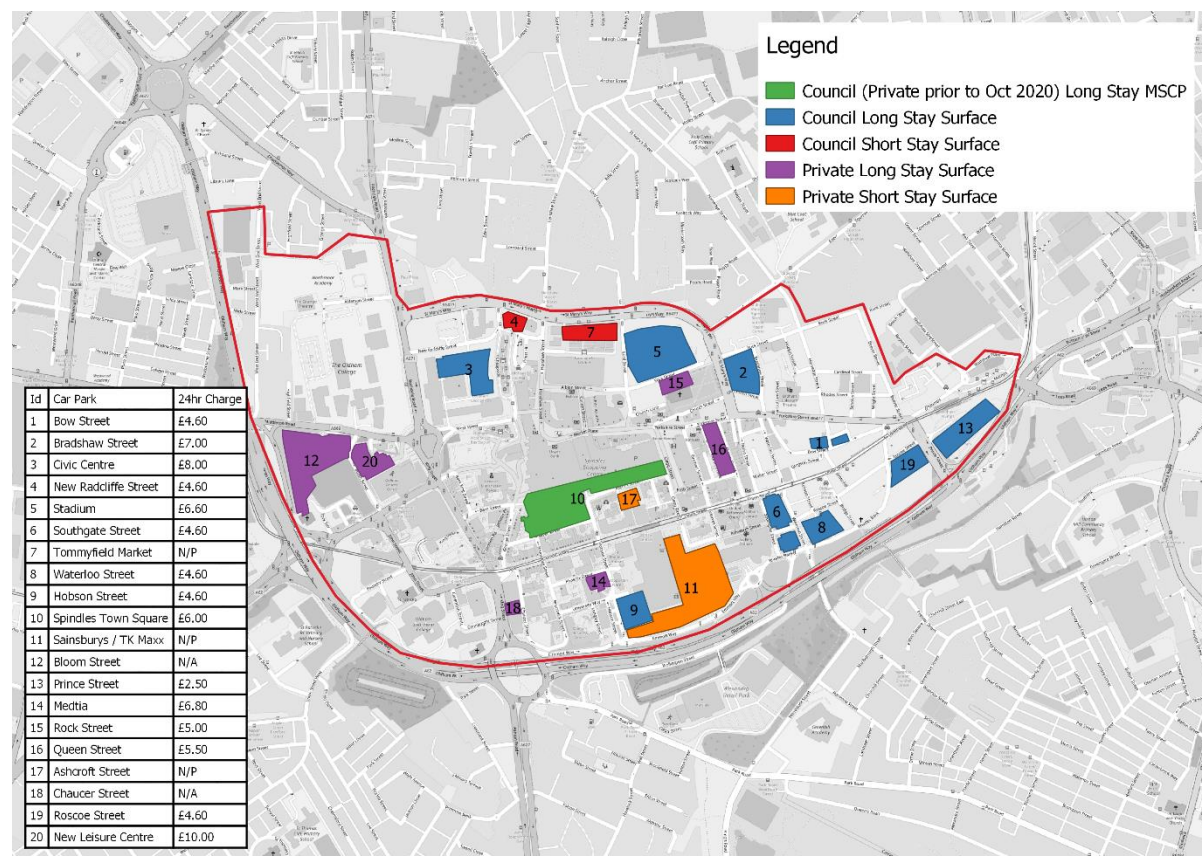


Figure 3.4 Location of Town Centre Car Parks Baseline and 24 Hour Parking Charge



Further comparison of Oldham car parking charges against those in comparator towns is set out in Section 5.

4. Future Development Proposals

4.1 Introduction

Details for how Oldham Town Centre might be redeveloped in the coming years are set out in two documents, the Creating a Better Place strategic framework developed by Simpson Haugh (2020), and the subsequent Development Plan Prospectus (Simpson Haugh, 2022). The individual details of development locations, sizes and proposed land uses are set out in further detail below.

Some of the proposed developments could be built on existing car parks. This section therefore investigates the impact on the remaining car parks, both in terms of the displacement of vehicles currently using the car parks to be developed, and any additional impact of the trips generated by the proposed developments.

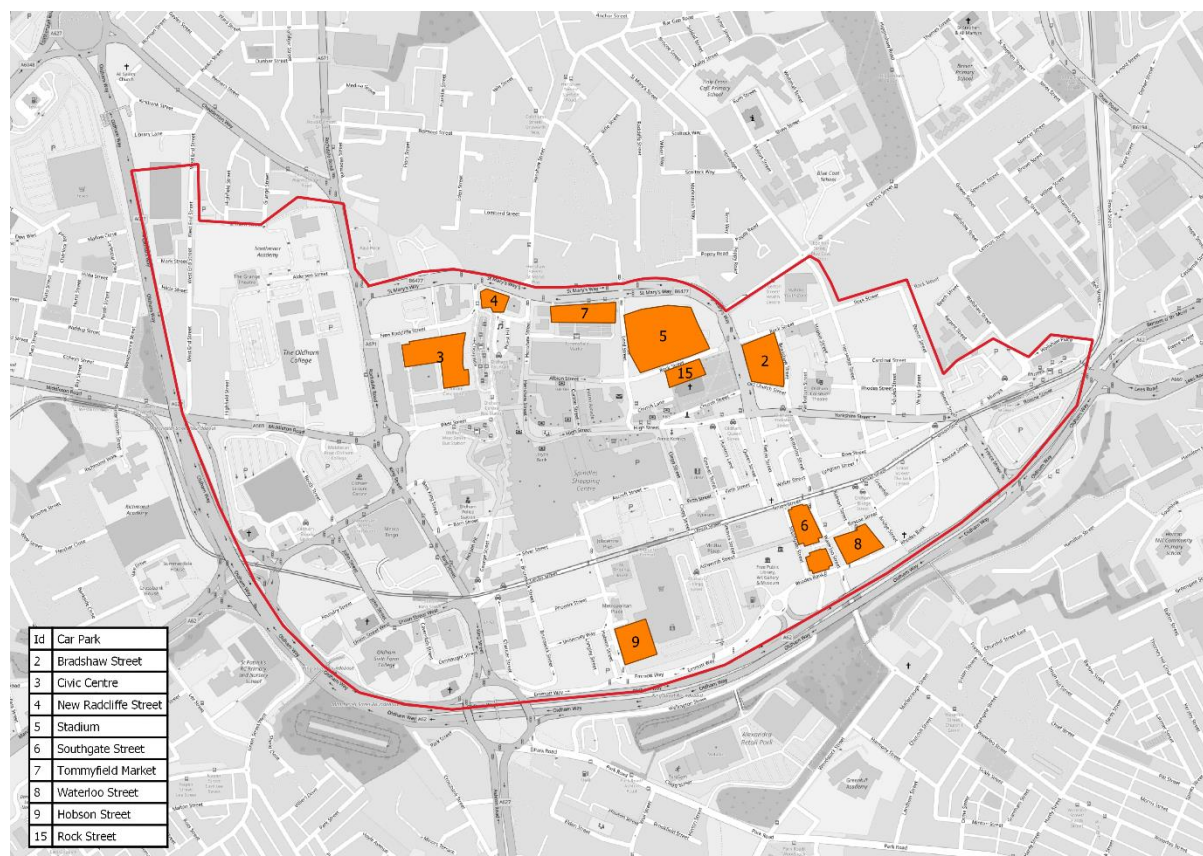
4.2 Car Parks for Potential Redevelopment

Oldham Council has identified a number of existing car parking locations within the town centre which could potentially be redeveloped to provide land for either housing or employment uses. The car parks being considered for development are:

- Bradshaw Street;
- Civic Centre;
- New Radcliffe Street;
- Stadium (former leisure centre);
- Southgate Street;
- Tommyfield Market;
- Waterloo Street;
- Hobson Street; and
- Rock Street.

These car parks are identified in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Car Parks for Potential Redevelopment



4.3 Simpson Haugh Work

The *Creating a Better Place* strategic framework, developed by Simpson Haugh, set outs the potential proposed developments within the town centre. Details of the relevant developments to be included in this assessment, including location, proposed land use, likely development size are included within the *Framework & Development Sites – Initial Study* document, which fed into the final strategy. This work is referred to below as the Simpson Haugh Work. Together, these proposed and potential development sites will impact on the overall parking provision in the town centre, in terms of loss of spaces due to the development sites being located on existing car parks, generating additional demand, the remaining parking provision, and altering the proportion of parking spaces within Council control and management.

The document also includes reference to several potential development sites included within Oldham Council's current Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The majority of these are not located on existing car parks and consist of small plots which are unlikely to impact on town centre parking. However, a small number are sufficiently large as to have the potential to generate additional demand for town centre parking.

A total of 39 potential development sites were identified within the study area, which are likely to be progressed within the lifetime of the Local Plan. These developments are summarised in Table 2, including relevant information relating to type and composition. The status of the SHLAA developments included within the *Framework & Development Sites Initial Study* document has been cross-checked and updated based on information available on Oldham Council's online SHLAA map⁶.

⁶ Oldham Council's SHLAA interactive map, available online at:
<https://maps.oldham.gov.uk/webmap/?initialDialog=2&initialDialogName=SHLAA>

Table 2 Summary of Likely Future Developments Impacting on Parking Supply and Demand in Oldham Town Centre – Simpson Haugh Work

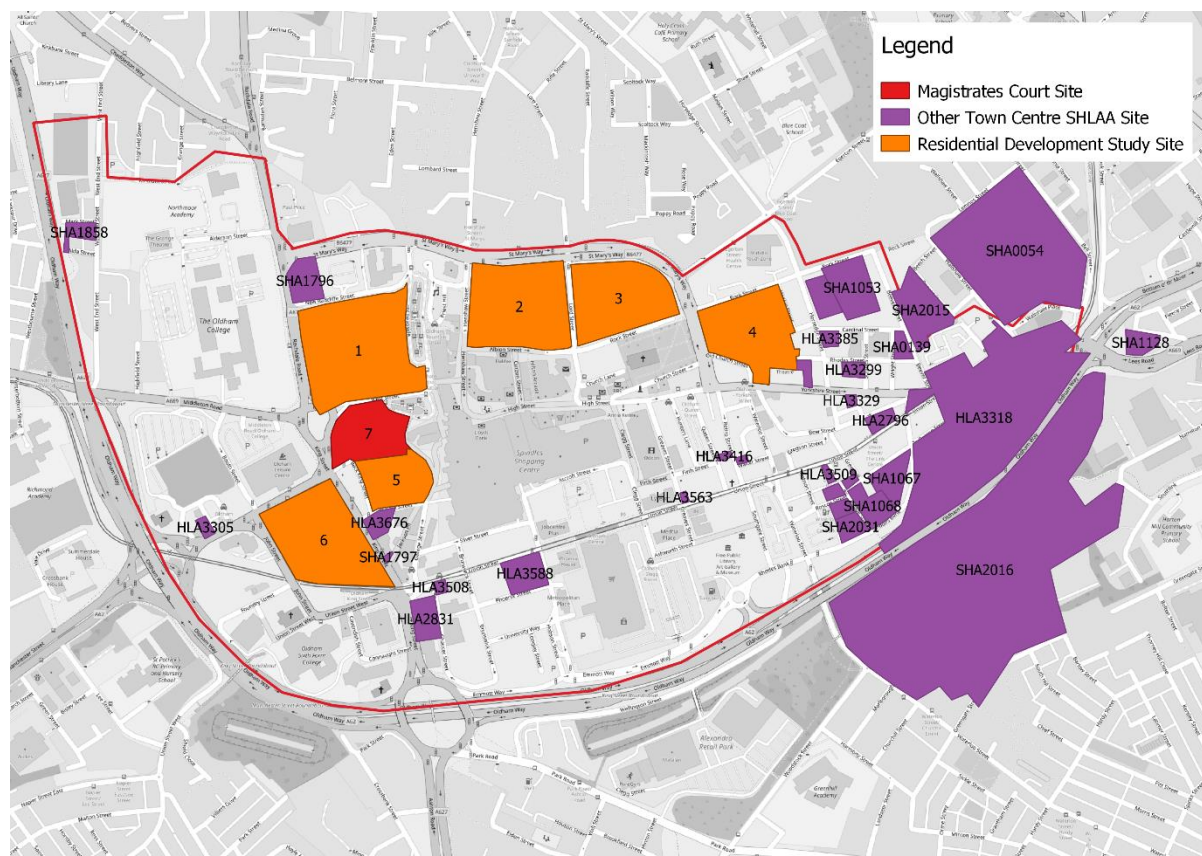
Ref.	Development Name	Land Use	Dwellings	Plot Area
1	Civic Centre (Option 1) ⁷	C3	480	2.1 ha
1	Civic Centre (Option 2) ⁸	C3	512	2.1 ha
2	Tommyfield Market	C3	244	1.7 ha
3	Former Leisure Centre	C3	185	1.5 ha
4	Bradshaw Street	C3	175	1.3 ha
5	Police HQ	C3	165	0.6 ha
6	Mecca Bingo	C3/C1/E	275	1.8 ha
Town Centre SHLAA Sites Under Construction				
HLA 3508	4-10 Union Street	C3	6	0.03 ha
HLA 3676	23-25 King Street	C3	12	0.09 ha
HLA 3766 (assumed to replace HLA 3563)	39 Greaves Street	C3	12	0.02 ha
HLA 3299	9 Scholes Street	C3	5	0.056 ha
Town Centre SHLAA Sites With Permission				
HLA 3508	Brunswick House, 86 Union Street	C3	24	0.14 ha
HLA 3082	Cabaret Club, 2 Bridge Street	C3	14	0.36 ha
HLA 3401	64 Bridge Street	C3	1	0.046 ha
HLA 3509/HLA 3509.1	120 Union Street	C3	2	0.028 ha
HLA 3678	87-89 Yorkshire Street	C3	11	0.048 ha
Town Centre SHLAA Sites With Lapsed Permission				
HLA 2831	53-55 King Street	C3	126	0.15 ha
HLA 2796	169 Union Street	C3	30	0.33 ha
Town Centre SHLAA Sites in Study Area				

⁷ Civic Centre (Option 1) – Assumes refurbishment of existing tower and podium as residential.⁸ Civic Centre (Option 2) – Assumes refurbishment of existing tower as residential, and demolition of podium.

7 / SHA 2001	Magistrates Court Site ⁹	C3	N/A	N/A
SHA 1858	Land off Mark Street, West End Street	C3	7	0.07 ha
SHA 1796	122A Rochdale Road (Oldham County Court)	C3	25	0.26 ha
SHA 1797	Kings House, King Street	C3	12	0.01 ha
SHA 1052	Rock Street	C3	17	0.17 ha
SHA 1053	Social Services Training Centre, Rock Street	C3	41	0.43 ha
SHA 0054	Corner of Wallshaw Street	C3	290	3.03 ha
SHA 0139	Corner of Rhodes and Wright Street	C3	6	0.06 ha
SHA 2015	Land between Beever Street and Regent Street	C3	44	0.46 ha
SHA 1128	Bridge House, Lees Road	C3	10	0.10 ha
SHA 1069	CAB, Bridge Street	C3	9	0.03 ha
SHA 1067	Land at Roscoe Street	C3	22	0.23 ha
SHA 1068	Corner of Bridge Street and Roscoe Street	C3	24	0.25 ha
SHA 2031	Land south of 64 Bridge Street	C3	7	0.08 ha
SHA 2016	Southlink - land at	C3	250	5.76 ha
HLA 3318/HLA 3318(1)	Land at Mumps	C3	136	6.74 ha
HLA 3305	116 Manchester Street	C3	1	0.014 ha
HLA 3566	19-21 Retiro Street	C3	5	Not provided
HLA 3416	29 Queen Street	C3	1	0.011 ha
HLA 3329	First Floor, 104 Yorkshire Street	C3	1	0.007 ha
HLA 3385	8-10 Horsedge Street	C3	1	0.038 ha
HLA 3104	3-5 Hamilton Street	C3	11	0.15 ha

The locations included within the *Creating a Better Place* document are shown in Figure 4.2.

⁹ Magistrates Court Site (site no. 7) is also within the SHLAA for an alternative residential option for 77 dwellings. It was stated in the 2020 document that this would remain under review.

Figure 4.2 Simpson Haugh Work - Development Location Plan¹⁰

4.4 Oldham Town Centre Development Plan Prospectus

The *Oldham Town Centre Development Plan Prospectus* (2022), also prepared by Simpson Haugh, builds upon the work included within the *Creating a Better Place* document. The document set out that Oldham Council is creating a high-quality town centre for the benefit of residents, visitors and investors, while delivering priority development elsewhere in the borough of Oldham. It also states that Oldham Council is now seeking to appoint a master developer to design, fund and deliver 2,000 residential housing units across eight town centre sites.

As with the *Creating a Better Place* document, the *Development Plan Prospectus* sets out the details of relevant developments to be included in this assessment, including location, proposed land use and likely development size. These developments have then been assessed in the same way as the developments included within the *Creating a Better Place* document in terms of the sites impact on the overall parking provision in the town centre, including the overall loss of spaces due to the development sites being located on existing car parks, generating additional demand, the remaining parking provision, and altering the proportion of parking spaces within Council control and management.

The *Development Plan Prospectus* focuses on a number of key development sites, and as such does not include SHLAA sites in the same way that the *Creating a Better Place* document did.

A total of eight potential development sites were identified within the study area and are summarised in Table 3, including relevant information relating to type and composition.

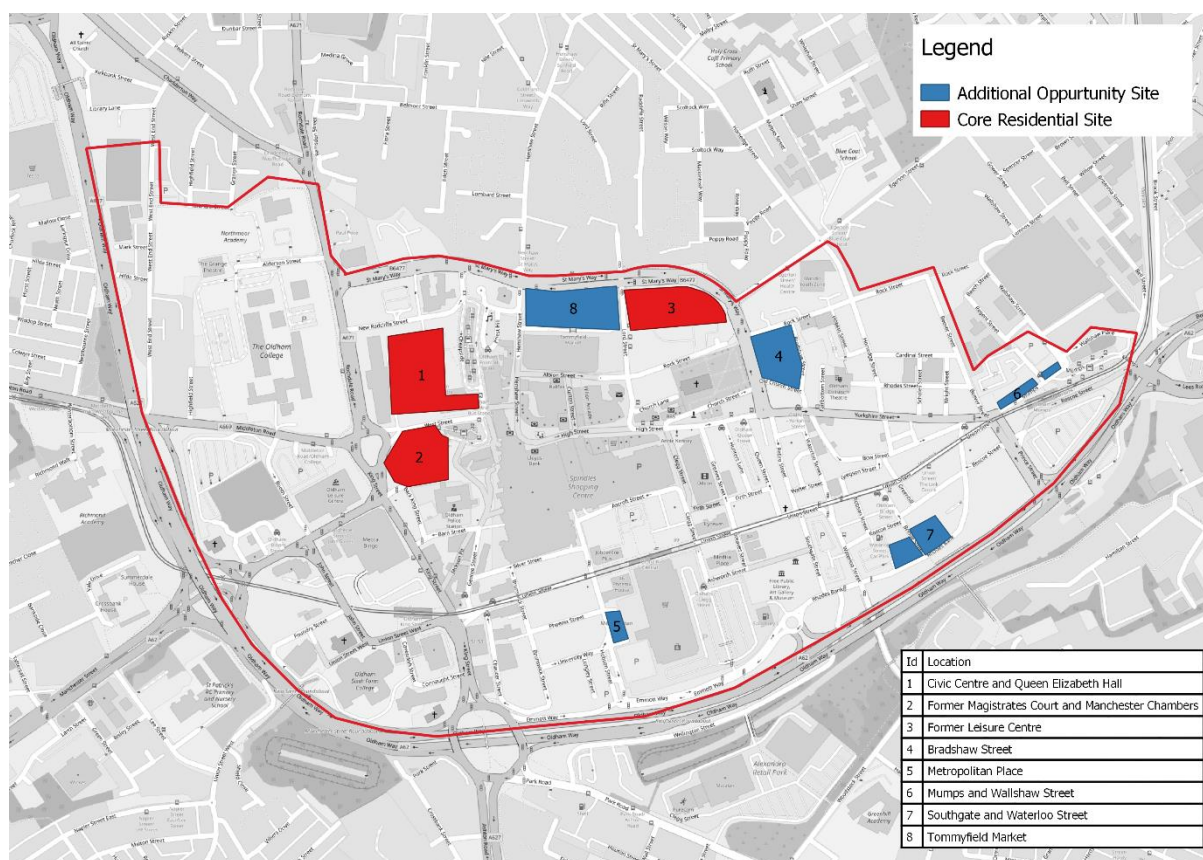
¹⁰ Town Centre Framework Area and Development Sites + SHLAA Sites, Source, Page 59 of 'Framework & Development Sites – Initial Study' (Simpson Haugh, May 2020).

Table 3 Summary of Likely Future Developments Impacting on Parking Supply and Demand in Oldham Town Centre – Development Plan Prospectus

Ref.	Development Name	Land Use	Dwellings	Plot Area
1	Civic Centre	C3	600	2.33 ha
2	Former Magistrates Court	C3	225	0.81 ha
3	Former Leisure Centre	C3	250	0.93 ha
4	Bradshaw Street	C3	150	0.403 ha
5	Metropolitan Place	C3	75	0.088 ha
6	Mumps & Wallshaw Street	C3	100	0.24 ha
7	Southgate Street & Waterloo Street	C3	250	0.479 ha
8	Tommyfield Market	C3	350	1.07 ha

The locations included within the Development Plan Prospectus document are shown in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3 Oldham Town Centre Development Location Plan – Development Plan Prospectus¹¹



¹¹ Oldham Town Centre Development Location Plan - Development Plan Prospectus. Sources page 18 and 19, 'Oldham Town Centre Development Prospectus' (Simpson Haugh, 2020).

4.5 Impact of the of the Proposed Developments on Parking Demand

In order to assess the likely impact of these developments on the town centre parking stock, the first step was to summarise the various future changes associated with each of the masterplan development sites. This includes a review of which of the existing car parks would be closed to facilitate the development, the demand for parking that could be generated by the new developments, whether this demand could be accommodated within the parking provided by each of the developments, and which of the retained car parks are likely to be affected by each of the developments.

The likely demand for parking generated by the new land uses was investigated using the TRICS (Trip Rate Information Computer System) software to provide vehicle trip rates for each of the different developments. These trip rates, alongside Census vehicle ownership data for residential sites, were used to calculate a parking accumulation in order to identify the demand for parking at various times of day. These included the AM and PM local highway network peak periods, the maximum daytime and evening demand both on weekdays and weekends. For all investigated developments, the trip rate was based on land use and gross floor area (GFA).

For the potential residential sites that could come forward in the longer-term (largely the SHLAA sites), on-site parking in the region of 40% of the total number of dwellings has been assumed, in line with the previous 2019 Parking Strategy. This parking allocation had been based on a review of existing residential sites in urban centres and showed that such sites typically provide on-site parking spaces in the region of 40%. This proportion has therefore been assumed for each of the non-allocated residential developments without parking details, included in Table 2 and Table 3.

The likely demand for off-site town centre parking resulting from each development (i.e. demand which cannot be accommodated within any parking spaces provided as part of each development site) was calculated by subtracting the maximum daytime parking demand from the assumed on-site parking provision.

Table 4 Estimated Demand from new Development VS Expected Parking Provision – Simpson Haugh Work

Expected Parking Demand

Development Name	Expected On-site Parking Provision	Weekday 08:00-09:00	Weekday 17:00-18:00	Maximum Weekday Daytime	Weekday Evening	Saturday Daytime	Saturday Evening	Does Maximum Demand Fit in Proposed Car Park
Civic Centre (Option 2) ¹²	341	125	143	129	227	118	142	Yes
Tommyfield	168	71	85	75	99	67	84	Yes
Former Leisure Centre	127	56	69	60	81	54	68	Yes
Bradshaw Street	124	61	79	67	93	58	79	Yes
Police HQ	114	45	52	47	61	43	51	Yes
Mecca Bingo	194	504	351	822	245	75	104	No
Excess Demand		310	157	628	51	-	-	
All SHLAA sites included	389	319	367	331	428	302	363	No
Excess Demand from SHLAA		-	-	-	38	-	-	
Total Excess Demand		310	157	628	89	-	-	No

¹² Civic Centre Option 2 has been included in the table due to containing a higher proposed number of dwellings (512 units) when compared with Option 1 (480).

Table 5 Estimated Demand from new Development VS Expected Parking Provision – Development Plan Prospectus

Expected Parking Demand

Development Name	Proposed Parking Provision	Weekday 08:00-09:00	Weekday 17:00-18:00	Maximum Weekday Daytime	Weekday Evening	Saturday Daytime	Saturday Evening	Does Maximum Demand Fit in Proposed Car Park
Civic Centre	243	165	190	171	221	156	187	Yes
Former Magistrates Court	91	62	71	64	83	58	70	Yes
Former Leisure Centre	101	69	79	71	92	65	78	Yes
Bradshaw Street	61	41	47	43	55	39	47	Yes
Metropolitan Police	30	21	24	21	28	37	26	Yes
Humps & Wallshaw Street	40	27	32	28	37	26	31	Yes
Southgate Street & Waterloo Street	101	69	79	71	92	65	78	Yes
Tommyfield Market	142	96	111	99	129	91	109	Yes
Excess Demand		-	-	-	-	-	-	

The assessment of the likely demand for off-site town centre car parking for the Simpson Haugh Work is summarised in Table 4. It can be seen that whilst the majority of the sites included within the Simpson Haugh work propose adequate levels of on-site car parking to cater for the associated demand, the potential demand generated by the proposed development of the former Mecca Bingo site is likely to lead to higher demand than the parking provision proposed. This site proposes to include 275 apartments, 15,190 sqm of office floorspace and 8,910 sqm of hotel land use. It can be seen from the table below that the daytime parking demand, generated by the office land use, far outweighs the level of proposed parking, with a maximum excess delay during weekday daytime of 628 spaces.

The SHLAA sites, grouped together below, also indicate a potential shortfall in parking across the town centre. As mentioned previously, sites under construction, with planning permission, or with lapsed planning permission have had parking included as per their permissions, whilst remaining sites have been allocated a 40% provision based on housing numbers. With a number of sites being constructed without any parking, it is likely that there will be a displaced demand for parking, resulting in some requirement for town centre parking (38 spaces, weekday evening), as identified in Table 4.

The sites included within the Development Plan Prospectus have been assessed in the same way, with results set out in Table 5. The Development Plan Prospectus does not include any proposed parking numbers, and so a 40% provision has been assumed. Should the 40% provision of space be met in relation to parking numbers, then the predicted demand should not exceed the number of parking spaces provided on the development site.

These figures relate solely to demand based on estimated average trips generated by new developments. There is also a need to take account displaced existing car parking as a result of the redevelopment of a number of car parks. No background growth is included in this assessment, as it was found on the site visit that current parking levels continue to be significantly lower than pre-COVID-19 levels, and as such the assessment has been undertaken with site visit occupancies factored-up to 2019 levels, to give a worst-case scenario.

5. Demand Management Strategy

5.1 Town Centre Zoning System

The 2015 parking Strategy proposed the implementation of a zoning system in order to assist with identifying the geographical distribution of town centre developments and help to allocate associated parking demand to appropriate car park locations.

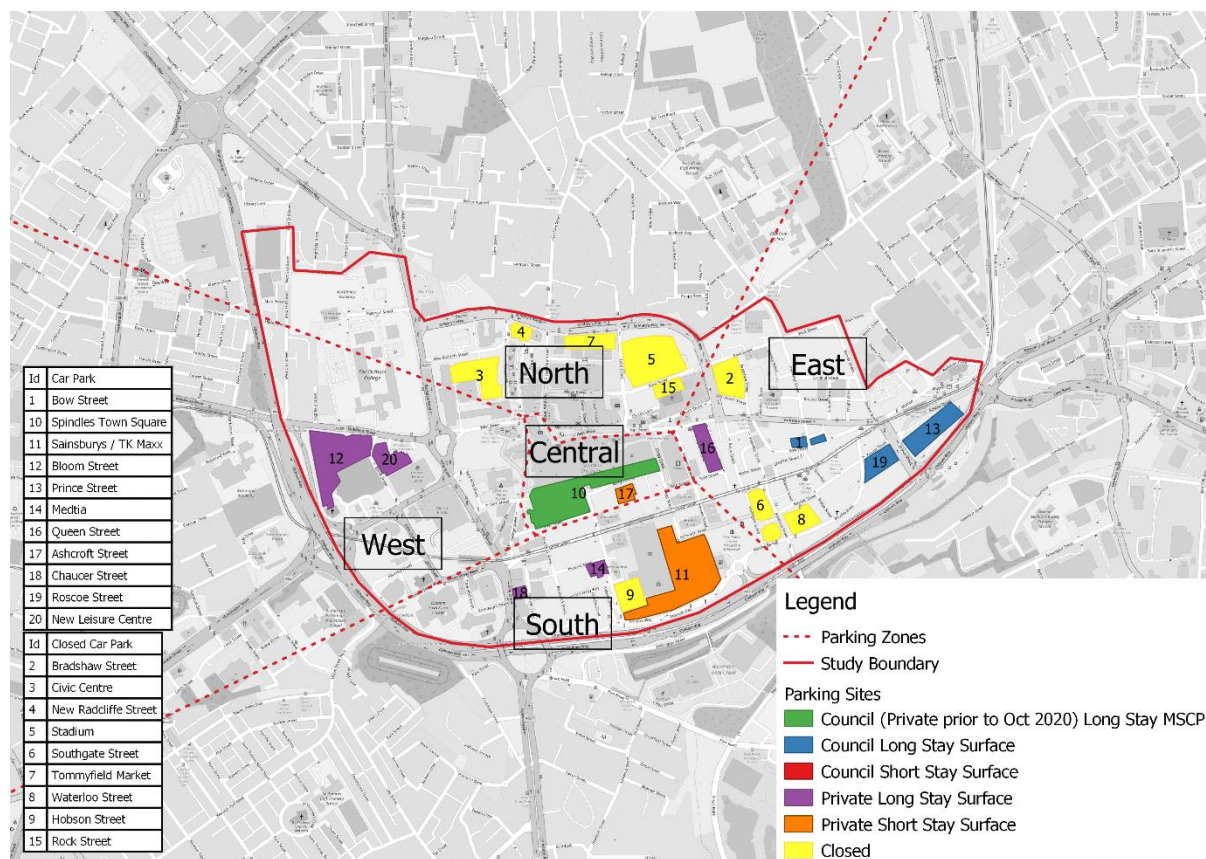
This zoning system has once again been adopted in order to develop the updated demand management strategy. The zoning system is based on a Central 'ring' zone around the main retail core, which includes Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre and the Old Town Hall. Four further zones then radiate out from this central hub, which are identified geographically as North, East, South and West.

The aim of this zonal system is to create a more evenly distributed provision of car parking spaces around the town centre. When combined with a complementary routing and signage strategy, this will allow drivers to be guided quickly to an appropriate car park depending on the direction from which they approach the town centre. This should reduce incidences of traffic circulating the town centre searching for a car parking space.

When considered alongside the car park pricing strategy, the zoning system can also help to focus more expensive parking towards the central areas, with less expensive parking options located around the edges of the town centre, with the aim of reducing the impact of vehicles penetrating the town centre.

The parking zones are illustrated in Figure 5.1, which also shows the future parking situation in context with the proposed development locations.

Figure 5.1 Town Centre Parking Zones and 'Do-Minimum' Car Park Locations



5.2 'Do-Minimum' Situation

By allocating the proposed car parks for redevelopment, as identified in Figure 5.1, into the appropriate zones, the estimated demand for parking in each zone can be calculated across the strategy period.

Comparing the existing (factored to 2019 to allow for the current reduction as a result of COVID-19) demand, to the proposed supply of parking in each zone gives an indication of where there is potential for a shortfall in parking supply. This is referred to as the 'Do Minimum' situation since it assumes no intervention in providing additional parking capacity.

It should be noted that in each zone, the type of parking (i.e. long-stay or short-stay) has been allocated based on time-limited parking restrictions where applicable.

The supply and demand figures are summarised in Figures 4.2 to 4.7 below. A full breakdown of supply against demand across the strategy period is included in Appendix A.

Figure 5.2 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Minus Nine Car Parks for Redevelopment - Total

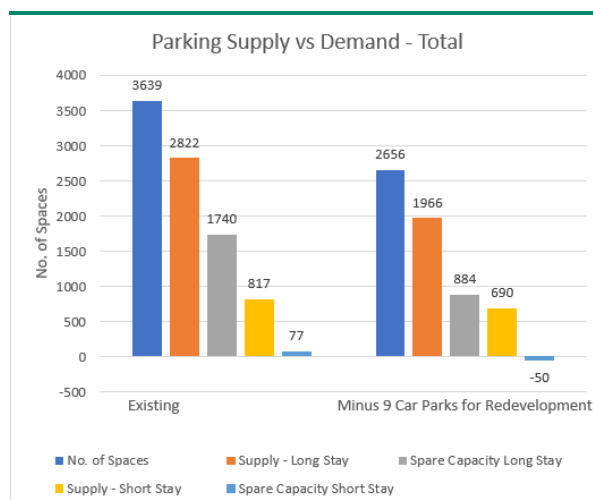


Figure 5.3 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Minus Nine Car Parks for Redevelopment - Central

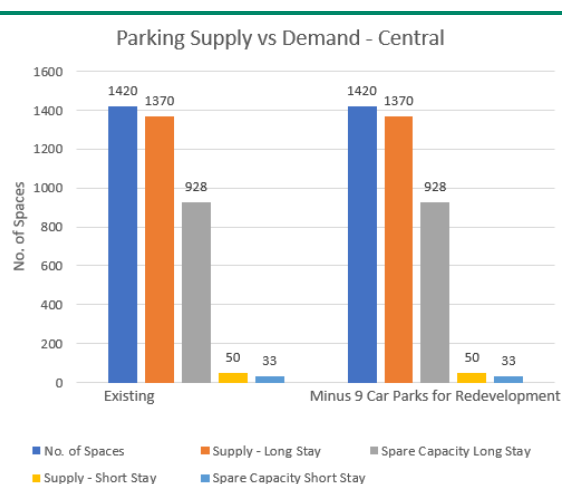


Figure 5.4 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Minus Nine Car Parks for Redevelopment - North

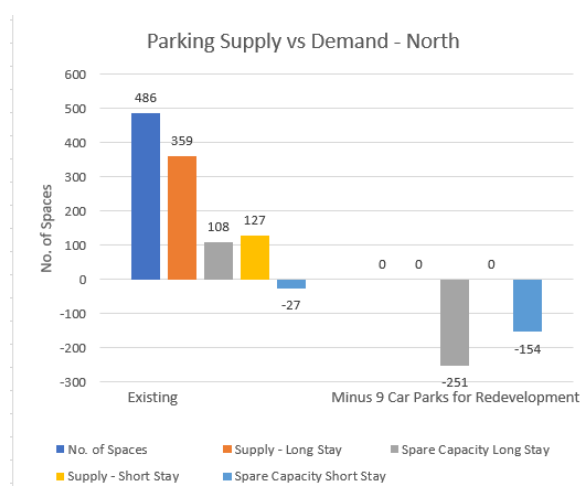


Figure 5.5 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Minus Nine Car Parks for Redevelopment - East

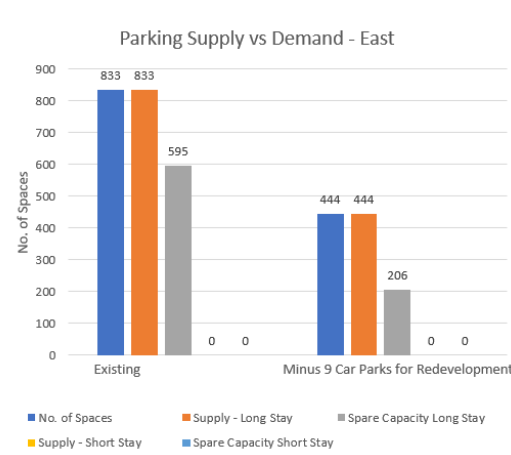


Figure 5.6 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Minus Nine Car Parks for Redevelopment - South

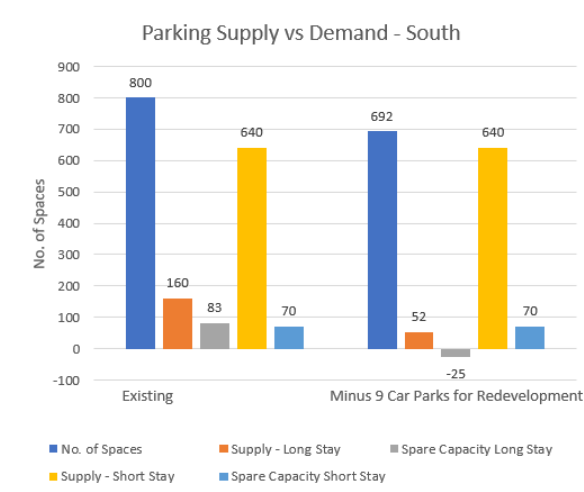
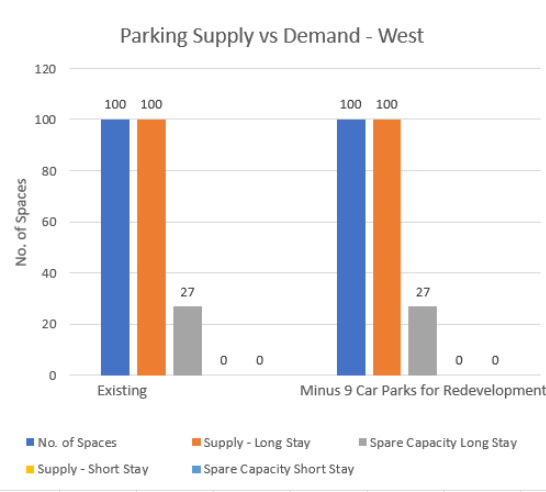


Figure 5.7 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Minus Nine Car Parks for Redevelopment - West



The assessment shows that the most significant change regarding the proposed closures of a number of car parks, could be a forecast shortage in short-stay car parking (50 spaces).

There is already no dedicated short-stay only parking in the East or West zones, and an under provision of short-stay parking in the North zone.

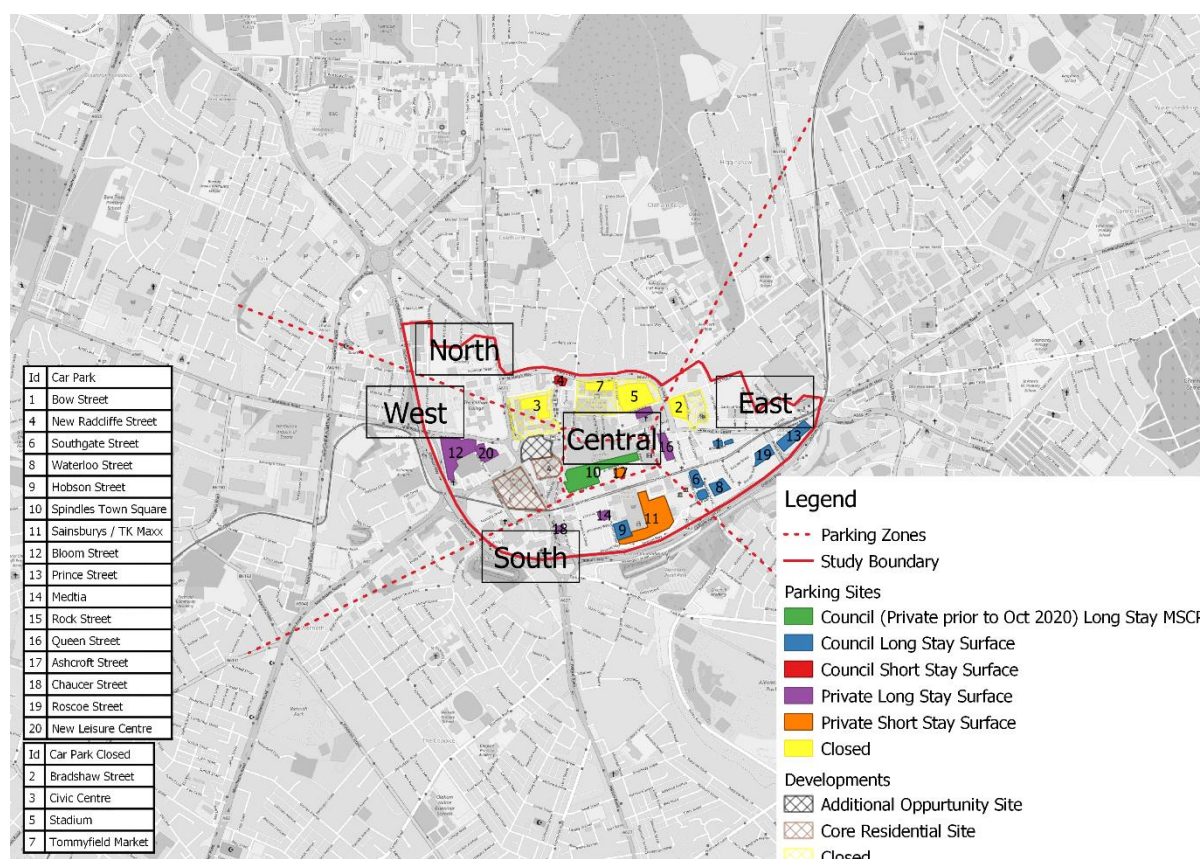
The proposed car parks for redevelopment include Tommyfield and New Radcliffe Street, both identified as being short-stay locations. Some of those currently using these car parks could relocate to Ashcroft Street, which has a spare short-stay capacity of 33 spaces, but it is unlikely that drivers could relocate to, the only other existing short-stay location, Sainsbury's, both due to lack of available spare capacity at that location and its status as being for shoppers only. However, across the remaining car park in Oldham Town Centre there would be sufficient spare capacity to cater for the displaced vehicles at other locations (although other identified are identified as long-stay, all off the option to park for shorter durations).

The total provision of parking spaces at present is 3,639 spaces, of which 74.5% are Council owned and 25.5% are privately owned. Should the nine car parks, as identified in Figure 5.1 close, this would bring the total car parking provision to 2,656 spaces. Of these, 66.3% would be Council owned while the remaining 33.7% would be privately owned.

5.3 'With Development' Situation – Simpson Haugh

A revised assessment has been undertaken to assess the impact of the additional demand generated by the Simpson Haugh development proposals alongside the closure of a number of car parks, as identified on Figure 5.9.

Figure 5.8 Town Centre Parking Zones and 'With Development – Simpson Haugh' Car Park Locations



As shown in Table 4, part of the development (namely the proposals for the former Mecca Bingo site) are forecast to generate excess demand that cannot be accommodated within the site. This is therefore likely to be displaced onto surrounding town centre parks. The site sits within the West Parking Zone, so spare capacity within this area was investigated first. It was found that at midday on a weekday there was likely to be approximately 27 spaces available within this zone. Secondly, wider zones were investigated for available capacity to cater for the excess demand, starting at the next nearest location. Capacity for long-term

parking was found in both the South (83 spaces) and Central Zones (518 spaces). It should be noted that whilst the parking provision on site could be free, there would be an additional cost for users for using parking off-site, alongside the additional walking distance (less than 400m from Mecca Bingo to Spindles). The impact of these proposals in relation to the supply and demand alongside exiting car park closures is shown on Figures 4.9 to 4.14 below. A full breakdown of supply against demand across the strategy period is included in Appendix A.

Figure 5.9 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Simpson Haugh Proposals - Total

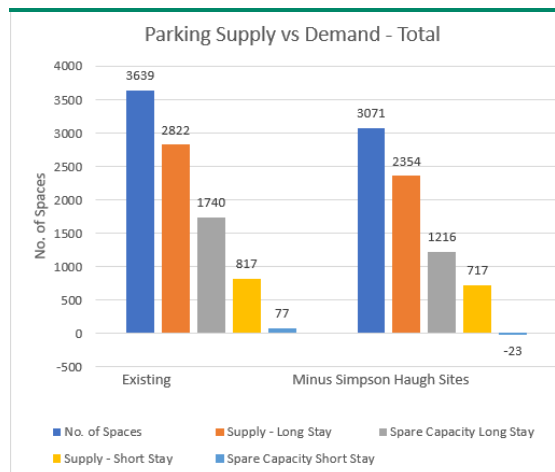


Figure 5.10 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Simpson Haugh Proposals - Central

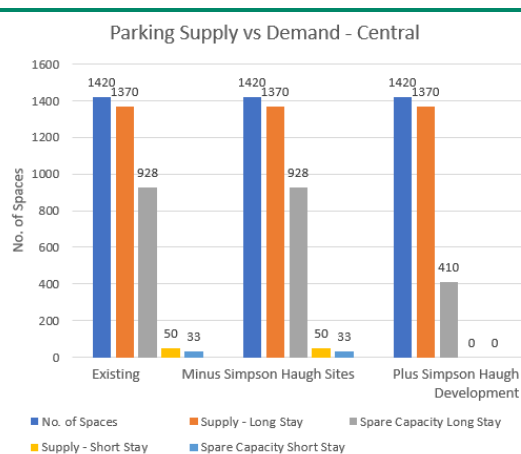


Figure 5.11 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Simpson Haugh Proposals - North

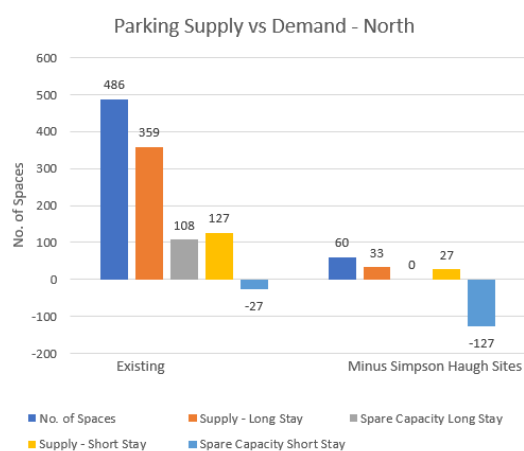


Figure 5.12 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Simpson Haugh Proposals - East

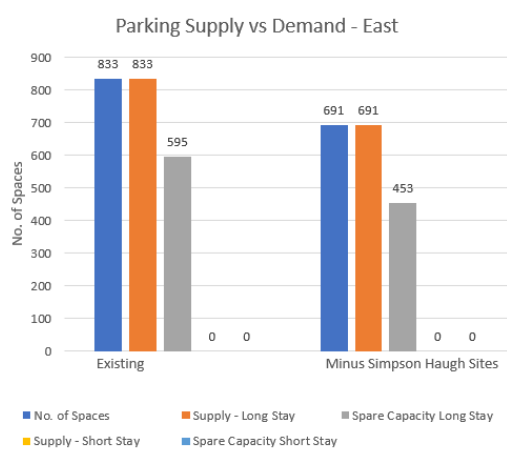


Figure 5.13 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Simpson Haugh Proposals - South

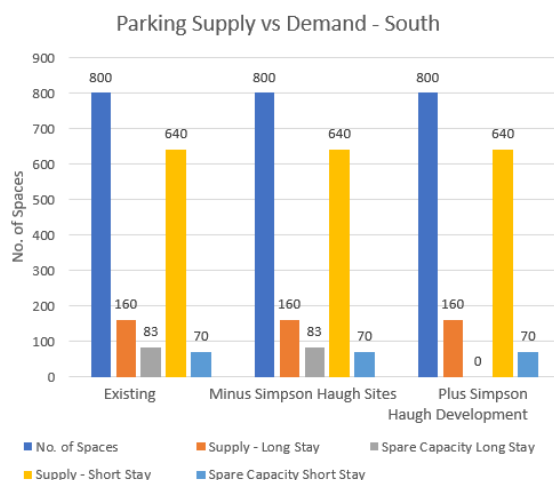
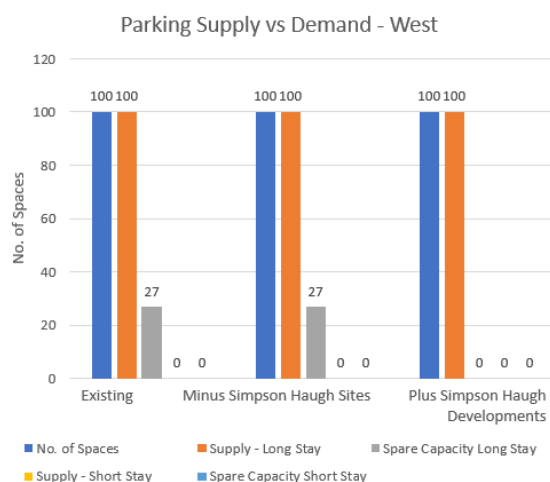


Figure 5.14 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Simpson Haugh Proposals - West



Similarly to the above assessment of the closure of nine car parks, the assessment of the Simpson Haugh proposals again shows a forecast shortage in short-stay car parking (23 spaces (less than the 50 spaces above as in this scenario New Radcliffe Street remains open)). There is already no dedicated short-stay only parking in the East or West zones, and an under provision of short-stay parking in the North zone. As above, these short-stay parkers could be accommodated into other car park locations that do not solely cater for short-stay.

With the addition of the excess demand from the development proposals, this can be seen to have a significant impact on parking availability, specifically to the west of the town centre where the former Mecca Bingo site is located. The only car park now situated within the West Zone is the New Leisure Centre (following the closure of Bloom Street – as noted from the site visit). Whilst this car park is primarily aimed at those using the leisure facilities (parking is free if ticket validated as a leisure centre user), non-members can pay and display.

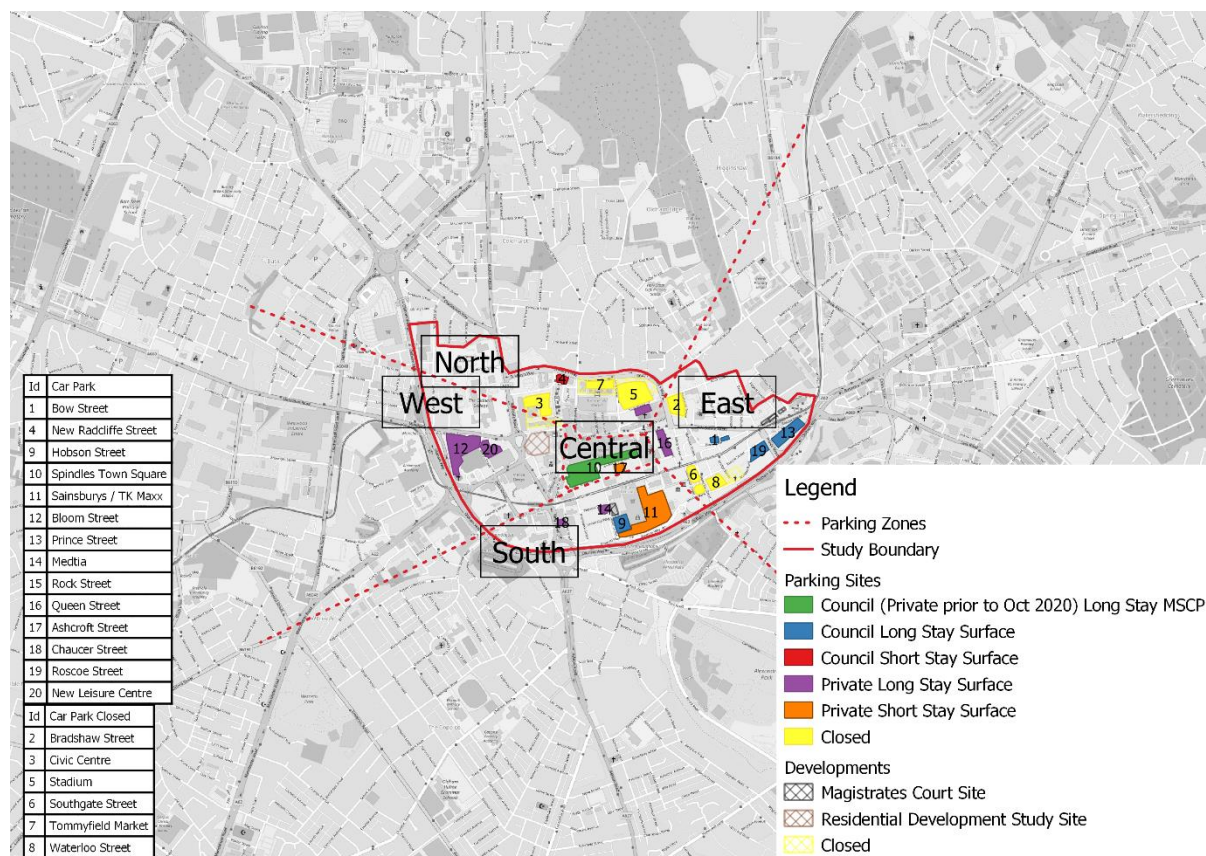
The excess demand of 628 car parking spaces has been found possible to accommodate, split across the West (27 spaces), South (83 spaces) and Central (518 zones). It should be noted that whilst this development demand can be accommodated, it leaves the associated car parks in a position where there would be no spare capacity in the West zone and no spare long-stay capacity in the South zone (70 short-stay spaces at the Sainsburys car park still available). The development demand is largely accommodated by available capacity within the Spindles car park in the centre of Oldham.

The total provision of parking spaces would be 3,071 spaces, 568 fewer than the existing situation. The proportion of Council owned to privately owned spaces is 69.7%, compared to 30.3% privately owned.

5.4 'With Development' Situation – Development Plan Prospectus

A second revised assessment has been undertaken to assess the impact of the additional demand generated by the Development Plan Prospectus development proposals alongside the closure of a number of car parks, as identified on Figure 5.15.

Figure 5.15 Town Centre Parking Zones and 'With Development – Development Plan Prospectus Car Park Locations



Unlike the Simpson Haugh development proposals, the proposals within the Development Plan Prospectus are not anticipated to generate excess car parking demand that cannot be accommodated within the sites (assuming a 40% provision of parking is provided for each site), as shown in Table 5. There will, however, be displacement of existing car park users into other town centre car park locations. The impact of these proposals in relation to the supply and demand alongside exiting car park closures is shown on Figures 4.16 to 4.21 below. A full breakdown of supply against demand across the strategy period is included in Appendix A.

Figure 5.16 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Development Plan Prospectus Proposals - Total

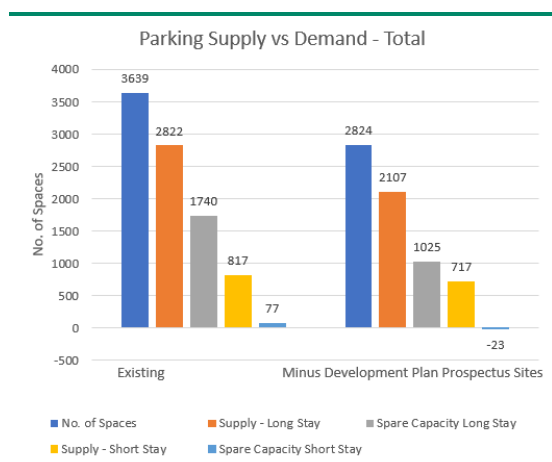


Figure 5.17 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Development Plan Prospectus Proposals - Central

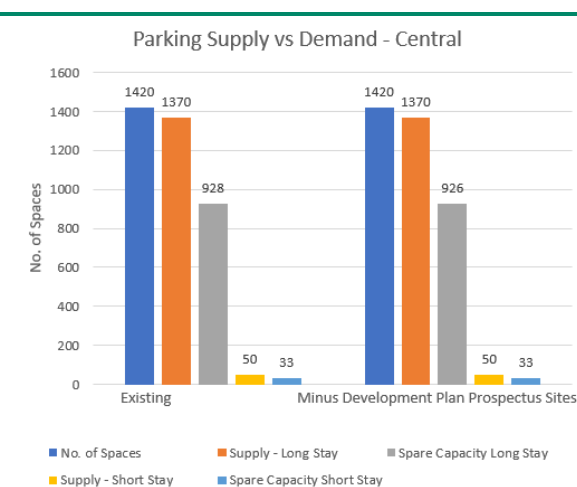


Figure 5.18 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Development Plan Prospectus Proposals - North

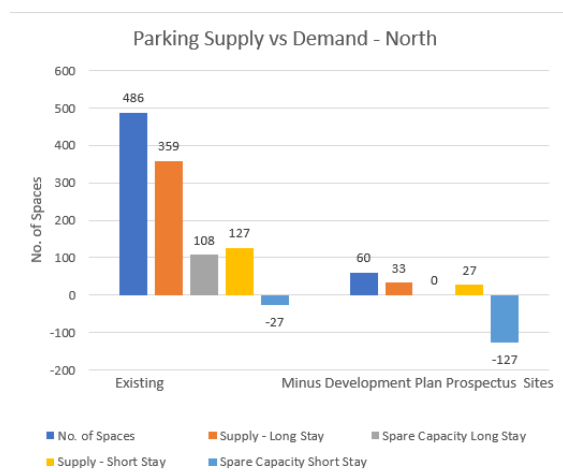


Figure 5.19 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Development Plan Prospectus Proposals - East

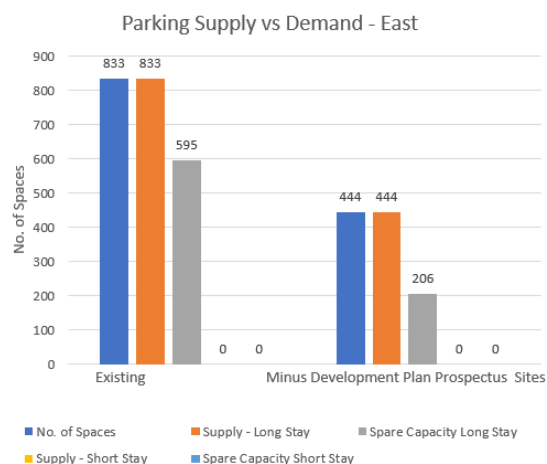


Figure 5.20 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Development Plan Prospectus Proposals - South

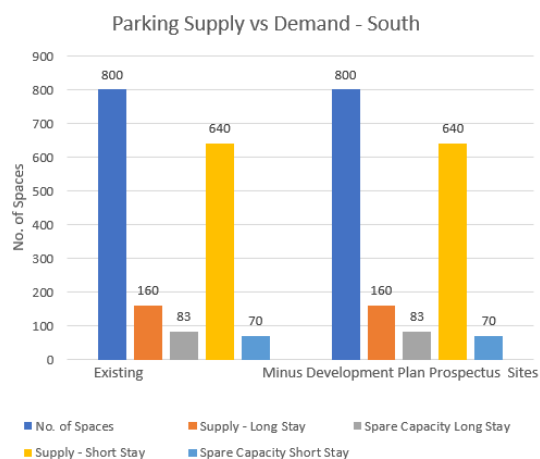
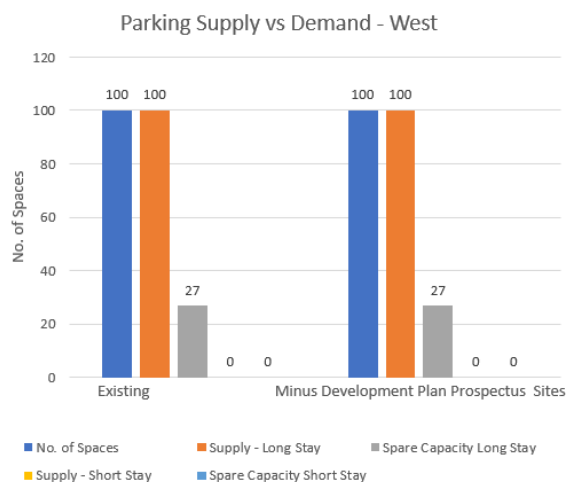


Figure 5.21 Parking Supply VS Demand – Existing VS Development Plan Prospectus Proposals - West



Similarly to the above assessment of the closure of nine car parks and the assessment of the Simpson Haugh proposals, the Development Plan Prospectus proposals again shows a forecast shortage in short-stay car parking (23 spaces). There is already no dedicated short-stay only parking in the East or West zones, and an under provision of short-stay parking in the North zone. As above, these short-stay parkers could be accommodated into other car park locations that do not only cater for short-stay.

All the forecast impacts of the Development Plan Prospectus proposals relate to the displacement of the existing car park users. Spare capacity in the North is reduced by 100 spaces due to the loss of Tommyfield car park. The number of spaces available in the East Zone is reduced from 833 to 444, with the spare capacity reducing from 595 to 206 due to the removal of the Waterloo Street, Bradshaw Street and Southgate Street car parks.

Whilst the Development Plan Prospectus proposals reduce the number of spaces from 3,639 to 2,824, the overall displaced traffic can be accommodated within other town centre car parks. The total spare capacity in long-term car parks across Oldham is reduced from 1,773 to 1,058, while the spare capacity in short-term car park is reduced from 44 to -56, again a number that can be accommodated elsewhere in the network.

The total provision of parking spaces would be 2,824 spaces, 815 fewer than the existing situation. The proportion of Council owned to privately owned spaces would be 66.3%, compared to 33.7% privately owned.

6. Benchmarking

6.1 Introduction

A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken which looked at comparator towns in Greater Manchester to understand how they are responding to similar issues to those experienced in Oldham.

The specific locations selected for this exercise include towns and cities of roughly equivalent size and/or with approximately equivalent issues to Oldham, within the Greater Manchester area.

6.2 Local Car Parking Offer

Although comparisons cannot be made between Oldham and comparable local centres in terms of historic offer, it is important to understand the offer of local retail competitors for the local population. In 2020, Oldham Council acquired control of the car park within Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre, therefore taking over the main alternative to Council car parks within the town centre boundary. The new main alternative is the Sainsbury's / TK Maxx private car park, which offers free parking for two hours for shoppers. Whilst some of these facilities (particularly the temporary and lower quality facilities further out from the town centre) are able to undercut the Council in terms of on-the-day pricing due to their extremely low overheads, several of the more central and quality private car parks are equivalent in price to Council owned facilities. It is considered important to see these facilities as part of the wider town centre offer and to incorporate the additional capacity that they provide into the strategy for Oldham as a whole.

Within Oldham, the main alternative to chargeable parking is provided at the Mumps Metrolink Park and Ride car park to the east of the Town Centre. This currently provides all-day free parking. However, the car park is intended for use only by Metrolink ticket holders, and it is anticipated that controls could be put in place by TfGM to enforce this. Free parking is available at the Alexandra Retail Park, although this is located just to the south of the town centre boundary and is not ideally situated for use as a town centre car park due to the lack of convenient pedestrian connectivity across Oldham Way.

The key local competitors for Oldham are, however, competing local centres as well as out of town retail and shopping park locations that are able to provide free parking and offer no benefit to the town centre in terms of passing trade or linked trips. These include the Trafford Centre shopping complex to the west of Manchester city centre which, although remote from Oldham, is often attractive to local residents due to large size of the retail/leisure offer and associated free parking. More local 'competitors' with free car parking include the Ashton Moss leisure/retail developments.

6.3 Pricing Comparison Comparator Towns

A pricing comparison of neighbouring towns is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Local Area Price Comparison

Town/City		Rochdale	Bury	Bolton	Stockport	Average	Oldham	Oldham
Short Stay	Example	Reed Hill	Parsons Lane	Central Street	Heaton Lane	Average (Excluding Oldham)	Tommyfield Market	Oldham Average
	1 hr	£0.00	£2.00	£1.70	£0.90	£1.15	£1.40	£1.48
	2 hrs	£0.00	£2.00	£3.50	£1.80	£1.83	£2.00	£2.01
	3 hrs	£0.00	£2.30	£4.50	£2.70	£2.38	£3.00	£3.07
	4 hrs	£1.00	£5.00	£4.50	£3.60	£3.53	Not permitted	£3.59
	5 hrs	£1.30	£5.00	£8.50	£4.50	£4.83	Not permitted	£4.97
	6 hrs	£1.60	£5.00	£8.50	£5.30	£5.10	Not permitted	£5.91
	7 hrs	£5.00	£5.00	£8.50	£6.20	£6.18	Not permitted	£5.98
	8 hrs	£5.00	£5.00	£8.50	£7.10	£6.40	Not permitted	£5.98
	Eve	£0.00	N/A	N/A	£0.00	-	£0.00	
Long Stay	Example	High Street	Bolton Street Station	Octagon MSCP (NCP)	Redrock (NCP)	Average (Excluding Oldham)	Civic Centre	
	1 hr	£0.00	£2.00	£1.50	£0.90	£1.20	£1.30	
	2 hrs	£0.00	£2.00	£2.50	£1.80	£1.60	£1.80	
	3 hrs	£0.00	£2.30	£3.50	£2.70	£2.15	£5.50	
	4 hrs	£1.00	£5.00	£4.50	£3.60	£3.28	£3.50	
	5 hrs	£1.30	£5.00	£5.50	£4.50	£3.65	£3.70	
	6 hrs	£1.60	£5.00	£6.50	£5.30	£4.33	£8.00	
	7 hrs	£5.00	£5.00	£6.50	£6.20	£5.28	£8.00	
	8 hrs	£5.00	£5.00	£6.50	£7.10	£5.23	£8.00	
	Eve	£0.00	£0.00	N/A	N/A	-	£1.30	
Population Local Authority area (Census 2021)		223,800	193,800	296,000	294,800		242,100	

This indicates that in terms of ticket machine prices, Oldham generally offers neither the cheapest nor the most expensive parking in comparison with other locations although is generally higher than the average cost across the locations for parking duration of six hours or less. Rochdale and Stockport generally offer the cheapest parking for both long- and short-stay car parks, with Bury and Bolton having the most expensive car parks. Oldham is generally around the average for all tariff bands.

6.4 Benchmarking Space Comparison

A comparison has been undertaken of the total number of off-street spaces and the total percentage under Council control for some comparator towns and cities.

As can be seen from Table 7 **Error! Reference source not found.** below, Oldham has a higher proportional control over its parking stock than nearly all of the other comparator towns and cities. This is primarily due to Oldham Council recently acquiring the car parking within The Spindles. The proportional control exerted by a local authority is directly related to the opportunity for that authority to effect and lead change in a town.

Table 7: Local Area No. of Spaces Comparison

Location	Population	No of Off-Street Spaces	No of Council Spaces	
			No.	%
Oldham	242,100	3,639	2,710	74.5%
Bury	193,800	4,519	1,281	28.4%
Rochdale	223,800	2,499	860	34.4%
Stockport	294,800	5,910	1,959	33.2%
Trafford Centre	N/A	10,000	0	0.0%

The figures in Table 7 indicate that the proportional control currently held by Oldham Council puts the council in a great position to provide the opportunity for it to lead the way in implementing improvements to the accessibility, quality, location and promotion of parking within the town centre, and to be a major partner in managing demand. Depending on which development proposals are taken forward, the Council owned share of car parking spaces will reduce from 74.5% to either 66.3% (should the nine identified car parks close), 69.7% following the Simpson Haugh proposals or 67.1% following the Development Plan Prospectus proposals.

7. Implications for Wider Parking Strategy

7.1 Introduction

The following section considers the implications for the wider Town Centre Parking Strategy arising from the revised car parking baseline and updated future demand outlined above. Unless otherwise stated below, the recommendations included within the “Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy – Strategy Development and Implementation Report” (AECOM, June 2015) and subsequent “Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy – 2019 Update” (AECOM, August 2019) remain unchanged.

7.2 Routeing, Access and Signage Strategy

The proposed car park access and signage strategy previously recommended was based on directing visitors to appropriate car parks within each of the parking zone areas based on the approach direction from each of the main routes into the town centre. For instance, a western approach along Manchester Road would sign ‘Car Park West Zone and North Zone’, while an eastern approach along Huddersfield Road would sign ‘Car Park East Zone and South Zone’, to reduce the need for drivers to travel through the Town Centre to reach car parks.

Overall this approach remains applicable, other than a minor alteration to reflect the proposed reduction in number of car parks in the North zone (Simpson Haugh and Development Plan Prospectus), or absence of car parks in the North zone (initial investigation into closure of nine car parks). Signage would require updates as appropriate as the car parks are redeveloped.

Car parking should be strategically sign-posted to:

- Reduce traffic from entering the town centre by encouraging use of the Park and Ride sites.
- Advise of the availability of town centre spaces to help inform choice to use Park and Ride.
- Direct cars to the nearest suitable car park with available space closest to the route they travel in on to reduce cross centre traffic.

A review of traffic signs is required to ensure:

- Park & Ride sites are easy to find.
- Drivers are aware of any capacity or congestion issues in the town centre in time to decide to divert to Park and Ride.
- Drivers are aware of the capacity of town centre car parks as they drive into the town.
- Drivers are aware of the pricing differentials to inform their choice of car park.
- Drivers are aware of the short and long stay options to inform their choice of car park.

It is recommended that improved signage is needed to help visitors navigate to and around the town centre car parks. This could be in the form of Variable Message Signs (VMS). It is also recommended that the location of signage is reviewed to ensure ample opportunities are presented to visitors to avoid travel by private car into the town centre including Park & Ride locations well sign posted, along with availability of spaces in town centre car parks to help inform choice to use Park & Ride.

7.3 Parking Technology / Customer Experience

In addition to signs, technology can be used to better communicate with users, for example computer and mobile phone applications that give real-time information on parking space availability, Park & Ride bus times, journey times into the town centre and even car park

prices. These applications could also allow capture of and response to usage data and other customer feedback.

To support local vitality the Council will need to share information, such as location, capacity and pricing to digital platform providers. As the car parks develop, the Council will invest in new technologies to enable better information sharing with platforms such as in-car systems and third-party apps which will improve the customer experience of finding spaces. As the car parks are updated, newer technologies will be implemented to improve the customer experience to making finding spaces and parking more convenient. The Council will continue to collect performance data to inform the management of its car parks going forward. Post COVID-19, an acceleration of digital technology solutions is likely to respond to changing consumer behaviour.

Oldham Council has already made a significant investment in the adoption of contactless and in-app payment for parking. It is recommended that these alternative payment methods, as well as app technologies, be extended across all parking sites.

7.4 Park Mark Accreditation

The Safer Parking Scheme is a national standard for UK car parks that have low crime and measures in place to ensure the safety of people and vehicles. A Park Mark¹³ is awarded to each car park that achieves the challenging standards. The distinctive Park Mark signage helps drivers find car parks where they can confidently leave their vehicle, knowing the environment is safe.

In the UK, a quarter of car parks have achieved the Park Mark Award. To ensure continuous high standards are maintained, car parks are assessed every year and if it passes, a Pass Mark is awarded for a further 12 months.

The accreditation process involves visits to each car park location by a British Parking Association employee and a specially trained police assessor. The car park is reviewed against a list of good management practices and preventative security measures, including CCTV, lighting, crime recording, vehicle and pedestrian access, traffic flows, quality of surfaces, cleanliness, signage, staff training and secure boundaries and perimeters.

At the time of writing, three car parks within Oldham had received Park Mark Accreditation. These are: Medtia Square Car Park, Spindles Shopping Centre Car Park and Metrolink Park & Ride Oldham Mumps Car Park. It is recommended that each of the car parks within Oldham town centre are upgraded to the point where it can achieve Park Mark accreditation.

7.5 Visitor Demand

Oldham Council will manage visitor demand through public transport investment (which will improve the reliability and decrease the cost of bus travel), encourage the use of Park & Ride sites (through improved signage) and improve safety on the public transport network through the Travel Safe Partnership (launched in 2015, the initiative provides a dedicated team of police constables, police community support officers, special constables and security personal to provide regular patrols, to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour). This is in line with GMTS Policy 15.

7.6 On-Street Parking

There is currently a total of approximately 180 on-street pay and display parking spaces available in the town centre. These spaces are predominantly located to the east of the town centre, along Union Street (27 spaces) and Yorkshire Street (28 spaces) and the surrounding side streets. There are no proposed changes to on-street parking numbers at present.

¹³ Park Mark, part of the Safer Parking Scheme, information available online at: <https://parkmark.co.uk/about-the-safer-parking-scheme>

7.7 Blue Badge Parking

At the time of writing Oldham has 78 public blue badge spaces within car parks: one in the Bow Street car park, four in Bradshaw Street car park, two in Civic Centre car park, seven in Hobson Street car park, 27 in New Radcliffe Street car park (this car park is blue badge holders only), 16 in Princes Street car park, six in Roscoe Street car park, nine in Old Sports Stadium, six in Tommyfield car park. There are a number of additional on-street blue badge spaces. As a number of these car parks are planned for redevelopment, the blue badge spaces should be located to other suitable locations with level access.

It is recommended that these locations are determined in liaison with local disabled users. It is also recommended that the locations of these blue badge spaces are monitored in relation to the frequency of their occupancy, as this, combined with updates to policy, will determine when increased provision is required.

7.8 Mode Shift

As set out in more detail in the Oldham Transport Strategy (2022), Oldham Council has produced the 'COVID Recovery Strategy' (2021), which for transport planning means responding to changing consumer and travel trends following the COVID-19 pandemic. The transport aims are to reduce carbon emissions from transport and increasing cycling, walking and public transport use, which could be achieved by:

- Improved walking and cycling routes in Oldham and continue to deliver the Bee Network. Oldham Council is working in partnership with TfGM on the Bee Network and Active Neighbourhoods programme, which will introduce safer streets for people to walk and cycle with funding from the Mayor's Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund (MCF) and other regional funding;
- Oldham Council is also working with Sustrans on improvements to the National Cycle Network which routes through the borough. The paths could be improved to better connect with local high streets, major employment areas and neighbouring authorities. Oldham's aim is for cycling to be a genuine mode choice for people of all abilities;
- Oldham Council has been working with partners on a range of transport schemes to date with a focus on the town centre and improving connectivity through the Accessible Oldham programme, which is a programme of public realm and highway improvements in and around Oldham town centre. The delivery of Accessible Oldham Phase 1 is underway, with funding secured from the Local Growth Deal, the GM Mayor's Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund and the Future High Streets Fund. The programme includes Oldham's first Bee Network CYCLOPS junction at St. Mary's Way / Rock Street which will improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Implement a campaign to promote active travel including to schools, residents and workplaces; and
- Work with partners to improve the public transport officer in Oldham.

The Oldham Transport Strategy aims to align to the six ambitions of the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy (GMTS) 2040. It is intended that people should be able to make sustainable travel choices for accessing Oldham town centre and local district centres by public transport, walking and cycling as much as possible.

Policy 23 of the GMTS states: *"We [TfGM] will work with partners to improve walking and cycling facilities across Greater Manchester, including through the development of a strategic walking and cycling network (the 'Bee Network'), wayfinding and cycle parking, and supporting 'Streets for All' design guidance to ensure consistently high quality standards across the network'.*

Oldham's vision is neighbourhood trips will have a higher proportion of walking and cycling trips and car use will decline as a proportion. This requires active travel trips to increase to a mode share of 64% (from 52%), public transport to remain consistent at 3%, and car/other trips to reduce to 33% (from 45%).

Mode shift could be further supported by the planned reduction in the cost of bus fares being promoted across Greater Manchester by the Mayor, Andy Burnham. The plan is for the whole city-region and by the end of 2024 bus operators would bid to run services, giving local leaders control over fares and ticketing.

Whilst the reduction in town centre parking supports Oldham's vision of a decline in car use, the associated demand for parking is likely to be greatly reduced through the Oldham Transport Strategy measures to support a mode shift to active modes and public transport. This mode shift will help achieve the ambitions of a Healthy Oldham, Safe Oldham and Clean Oldham, reducing vehicles numbers, improving local air quality and supporting active travel.

7.9 Mobility Hub

Oldham Council is working with TfGM to identify potential location in Oldham for Mobility Hubs, which may include each Neighbourhood District Area, Oldham town centre, car parks, Metrolink stops and Greenfield Station.

TfGM is already planning the rollout of Travel Hubs, which provide a range of active travel needs and types of bicycles in one place, or a wider range of mobility needs including EV charging, car clubs and bus services that re in addition to the active travel offer. It is proposed that larger Mobility Hubs may also include e-cargo bikes to support small business transport and delivery needs, as well as accommodating some docking locations for the Beryl cycle hire scheme (cycle hire scheme rolled out by Greater Manchester Combined Authority since November 2021).

This Town Centre Parking Strategy recommends that a town centre Mobility Hub could be located within the Spindles car park, which would include EV charging, bike hire and cargo bikes for local businesses. Other locations for bike hire/cargo bike hire Mobility Hubs could be at Oldham Central Bus Station, to allow users to utilise multiple modes of travel along their journey, or potential within the car park of the New Leisure Centre, which could help to support mode shift in the West parking zone (particularly supportive should the Mecca Bingo redevelopment generate excess parking demand).

7.10 Electric Vehicle Charging

Oldham Council recognises the benefits of EVs in reducing harmful emissions and improving local air quality. EV use and ownership will be encouraged as one element of a wider move towards increasing sustainable transport.

One of the transport aims of the Oldham Council 'COVID Recovery Strategy' (2021) is to:

- *"Facilitate and accelerate the shift to electric vehicles by expanding the public Electric Vehicle charging network".*

In November 2020, the Government took steps towards net-zero with banning sales of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030¹⁴. From 2035, all new cars must be fully zero emission at the tailpipe. Between 2030 and 2035, new cars and vans can be sold if they have the capability to drive a significant distance with zero emissions (i.e. plug-in hybrid or full hybrid). The announcement was accompanied with investment to accelerate the rollout of EV charging in homes, streets across the UK and on motorways across England, so people can more easily and conveniently charge their cars.

The Oldham Transport Strategy continues to state that transport decarbonisation will be achieved by encouraging people and businesses to use zero emission vehicles such as electric vans, which will be supported by plans in Oldham for EV charging points for taxis,

¹⁴ Source: *Government takes historic step towards net-zero with end of sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2020* (DfT, 2020). Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-takes-historic-step-towards-net-zero-with-end-of-sale-of-new-petrol-and-diesel-cars-by-2030>

Private Hire Vehicles and other road-users, and includes a Figure (Figure 5-4 in the strategy document), which shows location of some proposed EV schemes.

The Government has released *Taking Charge: The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy* in March 2022. It states that in December 2021, over a quarter of all new cars sold in the UK were battery EVs and that this is set to be accelerated as part of the decarbonisation plan.

The Strategy also seeks to answer the question of ‘what is the long-term charging solution for those without off-street parking?’, to which it states that by 2050 there could be around 10 million electric cars and vans that are regularly parked overnight on-street in the UK. The need for EV charging provision should be provided through a mix of charging solutions including some local on-street charging, some destination charging and some workplace charging and rapid charging. It also defines that this will require a shift of as much charging activity as possible into the off-peak to minimise the burden on the electricity system, and to offer access to the lowest cost charging traffic to consumers.

Oldham Council is working with TfGM to roll-out the aims of the Greater Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Strategy. The EVCI sets out five typologies which have been developed by considering charging behaviours, dwell times and charger types and assigning these to particular locations or land uses. The typologies for EV charging infrastructure are as follows:

- **Home charging often overnight** – (available to EV users with access to off-street parking) which takes advantage of the long dwell times of vehicles and is best suited to slow or fast chargers.
- **On-street charging** – at on-street parking bays which could include a broad range of dwell times and accommodate fast or rapid chargers depending on likely dwell times.
- **Business and Residential community charging** – (for EV users unable to charge at home) also able to take advantage of the long dwell times of vehicles and is best suited to fast chargers.
- **Destination charging** – Defined as locations other than where the EV user resides, which includes a broad range of dwell times and can accommodate fast, rapid and ultra-rapid chargers depending on the average dwell times of vehicles.
- **On-route charging** – which would typically require rapid and ultra-rapid chargers due to the higher proportions of short dwell times.

At the time of writing Oldham has 11 public EV charging spaces: four in the Civic Centre car park, two in Waterloo Street car park, two in Hobson Street car park, two on-street on Rock Street (due to be removed as part of the Accessible Oldham works) and one on-street on George Street. Should a number of these car parks close, the existing EV charging infrastructure should be relocated to an alternative nearby car park. Locations of existing and proposed EV charging infrastructure are included in the Oldham Transport Strategy. Retained car parks will be used to facilitate the delivery of the GMCA (Greater Manchester Combined Authority) EVCI, which will positively contribute towards the decarbonisation aspirations (Clean Oldham).

It is recommended that more charging infrastructure is provide as demand increases.

GMCA has also undertaken data and spatial analysis to identify local authority-owned land and car parks that have potential to house smart energy technologies such as solar photovoltaics (PV) panels, as well as EV charging. Working with technical experts, GMCA was then able to identify key criteria that each asset must meet to ensure that it is appropriate for such smart energy opportunities; for example, whether the necessary infrastructure is in place to ensure that solar PV-generated electricity can be used by a nearby building. GMCA then developed an Excel tool to run each asset against these various criteria and assigned each asset a score, generating a shortlist of potential sites for smart energy opportunities. Local authority partners have worked through this shortlist, in conjunction with the spatial map produced for MappingGM to help with visualisation. Using

their local expertise, local authorities have been able to identify a smaller number of assets that could be taken forward to the procurement stage of the project.

Ultimately, this research and the developed tool will help ensure that only assets deemed likely to be suitable for smart energy will be taken to the procurement stage. The efficient and reliable identification of such sites will support Greater Manchester in meeting its 45MW target.

It is recommended that a feasibility assessment is taken out for each of the Council-owned car parks in Oldham.

7.11 Delivery Management

Delivery and servicing management is considered in more detail in the Transport Strategy, under Ambition 6: Thriving Oldham. Oldham Council and TfGM will encourage cleaner, more sustainable freight fleet and will take necessary steps to accommodate the changes, which can improve local air quality. This could be through a shift towards low emission vehicles, including bicycle. Oldham Council aims to support this transition to help decarbonise transport while supporting the growth in online retail and home-delivery. Supporting a thriving town centre requires allowing businesses and services to receive deliveries in an increasingly sustainable way. Larger Mobility Hubs may also include cargo bikes to support small business and their delivery needs. This could have the joint benefits of decreased emissions as well as a reduced reliance on car, and subsequently on parking demand.

It is recommended that Oldham Council continues to work towards decarbonising deliveries within the town centre.

7.12 Parking Enforcement

The Council will manage the demand for on-street and off-street parking, taking into account the needs of residents, commuters, shops and businesses. This will include meeting the requirements of Blue Badge holders, including the provision of parking spaces in areas of high demand. The Council will enforce to discourage illegal, inconsiderate and dangerous parking, and unregistered vehicles, in order to promote a safe environment for highway users, the free-flow of traffic and the maximum turnover of parking spaces.

The Council issues Penalty Charge Notices where:

- A vehicle is parked in loading bays, but is neither loading or unloading;
- A vehicle is parked outside of bay marking;
- A pre-paid parking time limit has expired;
- A vehicle is parked in a restricted area (on yellow lines); and
- Untaxed vehicles.

The Council will ensure a consistent approach to challenges, representations and appeals, considering each case on its merits and taking into account matters of proportionality, fairness and objectivity. The Council will ensure that any surplus income from enforcement operations is invested in parking, public transport, highway maintenance or environmental improvements.

7.13 Introduction of New Parking Restrictions

The Council will monitor the impact of the closure of a number of town centre car parks and any negative impacts this might have on residential areas outside of the town centre. The Council will review Oldham as a whole and will look into introducing Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ)/Residents Parking Zones (RPZ) as appropriate. A CPZ/RPZ is a parking scheme mainly used in urban areas. They are used by local

councils to address particular parking problems in a community. This means that parking is only permitted in designated areas with a permit, the remainder of the kerbside space is subject to yellow line restrictions.

7.14 Car Free/ Car Light Developments

Alternatives to car ownership in Car Free/ Car 'Light' developments will be promoted to ensure reduced demand. This will be pursued by both the developer (through funding of Travel Plan measures, such as: cycle hire, bike vouchers, bus taster tickets) and by TfGM or Council led incentives with car club bays, memberships, etc. This links back to the ambitions within the Transport Strategy to promote a Healthy Oldham and a Clean and Connected Oldham.

7.15 Supporting the Night Time Economy

The night time economy is a major part of Greater Manchester's economy, with approximately 33% of ¹⁵the Greater Manchester workforce being active at night. Greater Manchester's cultural and leisure offer (as well as the retail sector and infrastructure that supports it) accounts for 42% of employment in the night time economy, 24-hour health and social care accounts for 32%, and other night-time economic activity (manufacturing and logistics) account for 26%.

A Night Time Economy Strategy (2022) has been developed and outlines seven priorities: safety, diversity, workers, transport, national and international partnerships and campaigns, regeneration and business and sector support. Transport is essential for the night time economy to function. Workers and customers need to be able to move around as safely, affordably and efficiently as possible. Consultation on users thoughts about travelling at night was undertaken in 2019. The Strategy sets out that by March 2024, GMCA will have:

- Worked with TfGM to develop a business case building upon our [GMCA] previous extended hours tram pilot to deliver another later night transport pilot for a longer period of time across multiple modes of public transport that tests the viability of later night public transport across the city region in conjunction with TfGM, partners and the business community.
- Worked to better understand and mitigate peoples' concerns within public transport at night, most notably safety concerns in line with the GM Police's proposed approach.
- Worked with TfGM to support the Bee Network bicycle hire scheme and promotes its 24-hour availability.
- Promoted the new GM Minimum Licensing Standards for taxis, encouraging residents and visitors to use those taxis that are visibly recognisable as having adopted the new standards.

7.16 Town Centre Footfall

Oldham's Town Investment Plan set outs the targets of the Town Deal Investment to 2030, which includes: linking with other key investments to make the town centre a thriving economy and social hub with increased levels of footfall, supported by a diverse leisure and recreational offer. Town centre footfall and potential growth will be supported by the redevelopment of town centre car parks into other land uses.

7.17 Monitoring

It is recommended that the Strategy is updated at regular intervals, to capture the impact of developments as they occur, enabling the Council to plan for future demand

¹⁵ GM Night Time Economy Strategy (March 2022), available online at: <https://democracy.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/documents/s20056/17%20Night%20Time%20Economy%20Strategy%202021-24%20Final%20GMCA%2015032022.pdf>

and growth/supply fall. Data Should include a review of occupancy levels across the town centre car parks at various times of day and an ongoing review of charges.

7.18 COVID-19 Impact

Whilst the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are still ongoing, on much of the road network, traffic demand levels have not yet returned to pre-pandemic (i.e. prior to March 2020) levels and it is still too early to see definitive fixed trends or determine what a 'new normal' might be.

The Department for Transport (DfT) is yet to release official guidance on how to account for the impacts of the pandemic on transport modelling/transport planning. In order to assess the potential impacts of COVID-19 on travel demand in the long-term, the DfT is continuing to monitor outturn data on travel demand, with their current intention being to release updated formal guidance on accounting for COVID-19 before the May 2023 TAG (Transport Appraisal Guidance) update¹⁶. The current guidance is based on pre-pandemic Cost of Living economic data, which is now out of date.

Some studies¹⁷ have been done, however, on the behavioural changes associated with the pandemic, and the headlines insights are as follows:

- *“Car traffic is not back to pre-pandemic levels. Weekday car traffic in England stabilised around 10% below pre-pandemic levels through Summer and Autumn 2021 with falls in peak time congestion.*
- *Working from home, for those who can, has played a critical part in reducing traffic levels. Even if people who have worked from home go back to travelling for half of their working week, this will still be a reduction of 16% in car commute miles.*
- *Car ownership has fallen. The sale of used – and, in particular, new – cars has fallen below pre-pandemic levels. There has been a significant increase in the number of households reducing from two cars to one. The pandemic did not lead to a ‘dash to the car’.*
- *Retail spending has been broadly stable but people have visited ‘bricks and mortar’ shops much less often. More intensive shopping and more on-line purchasing have both been a factor in this reduction.*
- *Many more people have walked more often. The huge increase seen in October 2020 has been maintained well into 2021.”*

There is therefore some considerable uncertainty over the associated future demand for car parking. The current ‘cost of living crisis’ and ‘energy crisis’ may also lead to further uncertainty in car travel and future parking needs.

7.19 Car Park Profiles and Summary of Future Strategy

Table 8 provides a car park by car park summary of the existing usage, anticipated future changes, and proposed recommendations for each of the Council operated car parks within Oldham Town Centre.

Table 8. Summary of Proposals for Oldham Councils Car Parks

Bow Street	
Existing Capacity	35

¹⁶ Source: ‘Forthcoming Changes to TAG’ (DfT). Available online at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1096956/dft-forthcoming-changes-november-2022.pdf

¹⁷ ‘Less is More: Changing travel in a Post-Pandemic Society’, (Anable, J., Brown, L., Docherty, I. and Marsen, G., 2022), Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions.

Existing Use	Long-stay surface car park
Anticipated Future Changes	None
Future Capacity	35
Strategy Proposals	No proposed changes to existing use or capacity.
Bradshaw Street	
Existing Capacity	142
Existing Use	Long-stay surface car park. Predominantly used by town centre shoppers. Also, currently main car park for Coliseum Theatre. (Coliseum pass holders currently park for free whilst attending shows, however, there is no written agreement).
Anticipated Future Changes	Potential long-term use of site for housing. Coliseum will potentially be relocating to new site, but no committed proposals or timescales.
Future Capacity	0 – This car park has been considered for redevelopment in both the initial assessment of the closure of nine car parks, the Simpson Haugh development plans and the subsequent Development Plan Prospectus development plans.
Strategy Proposals	Potential for car park to be lost to development in long-term.
Civic Centre	
Existing Capacity	173
Existing Use	Mainly long-stay surface car park used by town centre shoppers and Civic Centre workers.
Anticipated Future Changes	Potential long-term use of site for housing. Civic Centre worker parking to locate to Spindles shopping centre car park, which is now controlled by Oldham Council.
Future Capacity	0 – This car park has been considered for redevelopment in both the initial assessment of the closure of nine car parks, the Simpson Haugh development plans and the subsequent Development Plan Prospectus development plans.
Strategy Proposals	Proposed housing development likely to include on-site parking for residents only.
New Radcliffe Street	
Existing Capacity	27
Existing Use	Long-stay surface car park for use by Blue Badge holders only.
Anticipated Future Changes	Potential long-term use of site for housing, so was considered in initial assessment of closure of nine car parks. However, this

	location has not been included in either the Simpson Haugh or Development Plan Prospectus work.
Future Capacity	27
Strategy Proposals	No proposed changes to existing use or capacity. Recommended that proposed new long-stay tariff structure is implemented.
Stadium	
Existing Capacity	153 (previously 229 but on July 2022 site visit 1/3 closed and being used by contractors).
Existing Use	Long-stay surface car park used by town centre shoppers/workers.
Anticipated Future Changes	Car park expanded in 2017 following demolition of former sports centre. Site likely to be developed as housing, with associated on-site resident's car park.
Future Capacity	0
Strategy Proposals	Strategy assumes that car park will be closed to accommodate new development.
Southgate Street	
Existing Capacity	121
Existing Use	Long-stay surface car park, although predominantly used by town centre shoppers.
Anticipated Future Changes	Potential long-term use of site for housing, should the proposals within the Development Plan Prospectus go ahead. Loss of car park could affect attendance at events at the cultural quarter for the existing Library and Gallery Oldham but also the Coliseum new performance space development at 84 Union Street. Car parking spaces will also be required for staff and members relocated to the Old Library Building.
Future Capacity	0
Strategy Proposals	Strategy assumes that car park could be closed to accommodate new development, should the Development Plan Prospectus proposals go forward.
Tommyfield Market	
Existing Capacity	100
Existing Use	Short-stay surface car park adjacent to market and main retail core.
Anticipated Future Changes	Potential long-term use of site for housing.

Future Capacity	0 – This car park has been considered for redevelopment in both the initial assessment of the closure of nine car parks, the Simpson Haugh development plans and the subsequent Development Plan Prospectus development plans.
Strategy Proposals	Proposed housing development likely to include on-site parking for residents only.
Waterloo Street	
Existing Capacity	126
Existing Use	Long-stay surface car park, although predominantly used by town centre shoppers.
Anticipated Future Changes	Potential long-term use of site for housing, should the proposals within the Development Plan Prospectus go ahead.
Future Capacity	0 - This car park has been considered for redevelopment in both the initial assessment of the closure of nine car parks and the subsequent Development Plan Prospectus development plans.
Strategy Proposals	Strategy assumes that car park could be closed to accommodate new development, should the Development Plan Prospectus proposals go forward.
Hobson Street	
Existing Capacity	108
Existing Use	Long-stay surface car park.
Anticipated Future Changes	This car park has been considered for redevelopment in the initial assessment of the closure of nine car parks, although at present has not been taken forward in either the Simpson Haugh work or Development Plan Prospectus.
Future Capacity	108
Strategy Proposals	Potential for car park to be lost in the long term
Prince Street	
Existing Capacity	262
Existing Use	Long-stay parking for commuters.
Anticipated Future Changes	None
Future Capacity	262
Strategy Proposals	No proposed changes to existing use or capacity.
Ashcroft Street	
Existing Capacity	50

Existing Use	Short-stay parking.
Anticipated Future Changes	None
Future Capacity	50
Strategy Proposals	No proposed changes to existing use or capacity.
Roscoe Street	
Existing Capacity	93
Existing Use	Long-stay parking.
Anticipated Future Changes	None
Future Capacity	93
Strategy Proposals	No proposed changes to existing use or capacity.
Chaucer Street	
Existing Capacity	25
Existing Use	Long-stay parking.
Anticipated Future Changes	None
Future Capacity	25
Strategy Proposals	No proposed changes to existing use or capacity.
Medtia Square	
Existing Capacity	27
Existing Use	Long-stay parking.
Anticipated Future Changes	None
Future Capacity	27
Strategy Proposals	No proposed changes to existing use or capacity.
New Leisure Centre	
Existing Capacity	100
Existing Use	Long-stay parking.
Anticipated Future Changes	None
Future Capacity	100
Strategy Proposals	No proposed changes to existing use or capacity.
Sainsburys	
Existing Capacity	640
Existing Use	Short-stay parking.
Anticipated Future Changes	None

Future Capacity	640
Strategy Proposals	No proposed changes to existing use or capacity.
Rock Street	
Existing Capacity	33
Existing Use	Long-stay surface car park.
Anticipated Future Changes	This car park has been considered for redevelopment in the initial assessment of the closure of nine car parks, although at present has not been taken forward in either the Simpson Haugh work or Development Plan Prospectus.
Future Capacity	33
Strategy Proposals	Potential for car park to be lost in the long term
Queen Street	
Existing Capacity	54
Existing Use	Long-stay parking.
Anticipated Future Changes	None
Future Capacity	54
Strategy Proposals	No proposed changes to existing use or capacity.
Spindles	
Existing Capacity	1,370
Existing Use	Long-stay parking in MSCP, aimed primarily at town centre shopping and workers.
Anticipated Future Changes	None
Future Capacity	1,370
Strategy Proposals	No proposed changes to existing use or capacity.
On-Street	
Existing Capacity	180
Existing Use	Short-stay parking for town centre retail visitors.
Anticipated Future Changes	None
Future Capacity	180
Strategy Proposals	No proposed changes to existing use or capacity.

8. Summary

AECOM was reappointed by Oldham Council in 2022 to develop a refresh of the Oldham Town Centre Parking Strategy. The Parking Strategy was first developed in 2015 and had a previous update to development proposals in 2019. This further update is to reflect current parking issues/numbers, updated land use development proposals and to consider the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This refresh considers updates to the baseline car parking situation in Oldham. Since the previous iteration of the Parking Strategy, Oldham Council has acquired Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre, Bloom Street car park has closed, Stadium/Former Leisure Centre and Rock Street car parks both have a reduced number of parking spaces available, and two new car parks have been opened; Roscoe Street and New Leisure Centre.

Car park ticketing data was provided by Oldham Council for dates in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. October to December 2019 data was only available for Civic Centre West car park. A comparison of occupancy at this site was therefore undertaken comparing occupancy pre-COVID-19 to present occupancy levels. As pre-COVID-19 occupancy was found to be higher, and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is yet to be fully understood, occupancy data for other car parks where only post 2020 data is available, have been factored up to a 2019 level as a 'worst-case scenario'. A site visit was undertaken to confirm the numbers of car parking spaces, prices and occupancy levels (particularly at sites where ticketing data was not available).

Three options have been considered in relation to future development within the town centre. The first involves a high-level review of the impact of closing nine town centre car parks and investigating if their existing demand can be catered for elsewhere within the town centre. The second and third scenarios considered the development proposals put forward by Simpson Haugh in the Creating a Better Place (2020) strategic framework and subsequent Development Plan Prospectus (2022). Both of these documents indicate a number of existing town centre car parks which could be redeveloped to different land uses (mostly residential) and so are reviewed in terms of displaced existing demand and the additional demand generated by the new developments (forecast using TRICS) and car ownership Census data for residential sites.

All development options were considered in relation to the five parking zones included within the previous strategy update. While it was found that the closure of the nine car parks would lead to a shortage of dedicated short-stay spaces (50 spaces), there was sufficient spare capacity across the town centre to cater for this existing displaced demand (in locations that also allow long-stay parking).

Within the developments included within the Creating a Better Place work, the proposed number of car parking spaces associated with each development was included. It was found that while the majority of residential sites contained sufficient parking to cater for the development demand forecast for that site, the proposals for the former Mecca Bingo site would lead to a higher demand than the parking provision proposed. The site proposals included 275 apartments, 15,190 sqm of office floorspace and 8,910 sqm of hotel land use. It was found that the daytime parking demand, generated by the office land use, far outweighs the level of proposed parking, with a maximum excess demand during weekday daytime of 628 spaces. It was found that the existing displaced demand and excess development demand could, however, be catered for across the town centre car parks (with the majority of the excess development demand being catered for within the Spindles car park in the central zone) which is likely to include an additional cost to the user, alongside an additional walk.

For the Development Plan Prospectus, there was no indication of the proposed number of car parking spaces to be included with each of the proposed developments. Therefore, an onsite parking provision of 40% of the total number of dwellings was assumed, in line with the previous update to the Parking Strategy. Should this level of parking be provided, there

was not anticipated to be any excess demand that could not be catered for on the development sites. As such, similarly to the investigation of the closure of the nine car parks, it was just the existing displaced demand to be catered for in the remaining town centre car parks, which was found to be possible as the Development Plan Prospectus includes closures to fewer existing car parks than the initial investigation (of impacts of nine closures).

A benchmarking exercise was undertaken to compare the price, number of spaces and number of spaces in Council control in Oldham to similar comparator towns in Greater Manchester. It was found that Oldham offers neither the cheapest nor the most expensive parking, and is generally around average for all tariff bands. It found that Oldham Council has the highest proportion of control of spaces when compared to other comparator councils, which provides a great opportunity to lead the way in implementing improvements to accessibility, quality, location and promotion of parking within the town centre. Should the development proposals in either the Creating a Better Place or Development Plan Prospectus come forward, Oldham Council would still retain control of the majority of car parking spaces in Oldham.

It is recommended that improved signage is needed to help visitors navigate to and around the town centre car parks. This could be in the form of Variable Message Signs. It is recommended that the location of signage is also reviewed, to ensure ample opportunities are presented to visitors to avoid travel by private car into the town centre (Park & Ride locations well sign posted, along with availability of spaces in town centre car parks to help inform choice to use Park & Ride). Updates to parking technology, such as mobile phone applications that give real-time information on parking space availability, Park & Ride bus times, journey time into town centre and car park prices, should be extended across all town centre parking locations. In addition, all locations should offer contactless or in-app payment options for parking.

It is recommended that locations for relocated and new, Blue Badge spaces are determined in liaison with local disabled users. It is recommended that these Blue Badge spaces are monitored in relation to the frequency of their occupancy, to determine when increased provision is required. The closure of a number of car parks in the town centre supports Oldham Council's transport aims of reducing carbon emissions (Clean Oldham) whilst supporting economic growth (Thriving Oldham). The closures, alongside a number of other measures, such as the reduction in bus fares and improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure (Healthy Oldham, Connected Oldham, Accessible Oldham), and improvement to the perception of safety (Safe Oldham), show the council is committed to its vision to decrease the number of trips made by car. Oldham Council is working with TfGM and partners to ensure that walking and cycling can be a genuine mode choice for people of all abilities, and combined with planned improvements to public transport, will help to mitigate future parking demand.

It is recommended that each of the car parks within Oldham town centre is upgraded to the point where it can achieve Park Mark accreditation.

It is recommended that Mobility Hubs could be located within the Spindles Car Park (to help support local businesses and local delivery needs), Oldham Central Bus Station (to allow users to utilise multiple modes of travel along their journey) or within the New Leisure Centre car park (to support mode shift in the West parking zone).

Oldham Council is working with TfGM to roll-out the aims of the Greater Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Strategy, to ensure that sufficient infrastructure is provided to cater for growing local demand and support government steps towards Net-zero. It is recommended that more charging infrastructure is provided as demand increases. It is also recommended that a feasibility assessment in relation to suitability for solar charging is taken out for each of the council-owned car parks in Oldham.

Mobility hubs will also help to provide options to decarbonise deliveries within Oldham. It is recommended that Oldham continue to work towards decarbonising all deliveries within the town centre.

It is recommended that the Council manage the demand for on-street and off-street parking. The Council will enforce to discourage illegal, inconsiderate and dangerous parking, and unregistered vehicles, in order to promote a safe environment for highway users, the free-flow of traffic and the maximum turnover of parking spaces.

The Council should monitor the impact of the closure of a number of town centre car parks and any negative impacts this might have on residential areas outside of the town centre. If required, the Council will look to introduce a Controlled Parking Zone / Residents Parking Zone as appropriate.

The Council will continue to liaise with TfGM and developers, to ensure that alternatives to car ownership in car free/ car light developments will be promoted.

Whilst it is still too early to fully quantify the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on transport and its assessment (government guidance on how to forecast future traffic post-COVID-19 anticipated in mid-2023), this assessment of parking occupancies has been based on 2019 levels of traffic in order to represent a current 'worse-case' scenario in terms of traffic demand.

It can be concluded that at present, factoring up to previous 2019 traffic levels, the displaced existing parking demand due to car park closures and the forecast demand associated with the development proposals included within either the Creating a Better Place (2020) or Development Plan Prospectus (2022) (assuming a 40% provision of car parking spaces), could be accommodated within the remaining car parking stock.

Appendix A

Existing Car Parks - Parked Vehicles - Factored up to 2019 Levels - Remaining Spaces should Nine (Highlighted) Car Parks Close

	262	126	142	50	93	35	121	25	153	27	100	108	100	27	640	33	54	173	2269	1286	1370						
Hour	Prince Street	Waterloo Street	Bradshaw Street	Ascroft Street	Roscoe Street	Bow Street	Southgate Street	Chaucer Street	Sports Stadium	Meditia Square	Tommyfield Market	Hobson Street	New Leisure centre	New Radcliffe street	Sainsbury's	Rock Street	Queen Street	Civic Centre	Total Parked	Total Remaining Spaces	Total remaining spaces minus 9 car parks	Spindals Car Park	Total Parked	Total Remaining Spaces	Total remaining spaces minus 9 car parks		
	East	East	East	Central Short	East	East	East	South	North	South	North	South	West	North	South	North	East	North				Central					
	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Short Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Short Stay	Short Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay		5	2264	1281	Long Stay	3	8	3631	2648
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	5	2264	1281					
6	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	20	2249	1266	5	25	3614	2631	
7	4	0	1	2	5	0	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	10	3	75	4	7	18	140	2129	1146	13	153	3486	2503	
8	24	3	7	8	17	2	11	6	13	7	14	16	34	11	268	16	25	68	550	1719	736	52	601	3038	2055		
9	41	12	23	15	32	5	30	10	32	13	82	41	63	20	493	29	47	146	1134	1135	152	204	1338	2301	1318		
10	41	15	37	17	36	5	35	12	42	15	117	46	72	22	560	32	53	161	1318	951	-32	353	1672	1967	984		
11	42	15	43	17	37	5	36	12	49	15	124	49	74	23	576	33	55	162	1367	902	-81	419	1787	1852	869		
12	43	15	45	17	37	5	38	12	55	15	131	51	73	23	570	33	54	164	1380	889	-94	442	1822	1817	834		
13	46	15	41	16	34	6	39	11	61	14	133	54	68	21	529	31	50	161	1329	940	-43	444	1773	1866	883		
14	47	14	38	15	33	6	34	11	58	13	100	50	65	20	506	29	48	154	1240	1029	46	391	1631	2008	1025		
15	49	12	33	13	29	6	30	9	49	11	80	47	56	17	439	25	42	137	1085	1184	201	286	1371	2268	1285		
16	45	9	29	10	22	6	23	7	36	9	45	41	44	14	346	20	33	99	838	1431	448	203	1041	2598	1615		
17	37	6	25	8	17	5	17	6	24	7	12	31	34	11	265	15	25	62	607	1662	679	83	690	2949	1966		
18	36	5	20	6	14	5	16	5	0	6	2	28	28	9	219	13	21	49	481	1788	805	27	508	3131	2148		
19	11	2	5	6	13	1	5	4	0	5	0	8	25	8	193	11	18	13	328	1941	958	23	351	3288	2305		
20	3	0	1	6	13	0	1	4	0	5	0	2	25	8	194	11	18	3	295	1974	991	46	340	3299	2316		
21	1	0	0	6	13	0	0	4	0	5	0	1	25	8	194	11	18	1	289	1980	997	23	312	3327	2344		
22	1	0	0	6	13	0	0	4	0	5	0	0	25	8	194	11	18	1	286	1983	1000	6	292	3347	2364		
23	0	0	0	6	13	0	0	4	0	5	0	0	0	8	194	11	18	0	285	1984	1001	3	288	3351	2368		

Existing Car Parks - Remaining Capacity - Factored up to 2019 Levels - Remaining Spaces should Nine (Highlighted) Car Parks Close

	262	126	142	50	93	35	121	25	153	27	100	108	100	27	640	33	54	173	2269	1286	1370			
Hour	Prince Street	Waterloo Street	Bradshaw Street	Ascroft Street	Roscoe Street	Bow Street	Southgate Street	Chaucer Street	Sports Stadium	Meditia Square	Tommyfield Market	Hobson Street	New Leisure centre	New Radcliffe street	Sainsbury's	Rock Street	Queen Street	Civic Centre	Total Parked	Total Remaining Spaces	Total remaining spaces minus 9 car parks	Spindals Car Park	Total Parked	Total Remaining Spaces
	East	East	East	Central Short	East	East	East	South	North	South	North	South	West	North	South	North	East	North				Central		
	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Stay Private	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Private	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Private	Short Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Private	Short Stay Council	Short Stay Private	Long Stay Private	Long Stay Private	Long Stay Council				Long Stay Council		
5	262	126	142	50	93	35	121	25	153	27	100	108	100	27	637	33	54	172	5	2264	1281		8	3631
6	262	126	142	50	92	35	121	25	152	27	100	108	98	27	628	32	53	171	20	2249	1266		25	3614
7	258	126	141	48	88	35	119	23	150	25	99	107	90	24	565	29	47	155	140	2129	1146		153	3486
8	238	123	135	42	76	33	110	19	140	20	86	92	66	16	372	17	29	105	550	1719	736		601	3038
9	221	114	119	35	61	30	91	15	121	14	18	67	37	7	147	4	7	27	1134	1135	152		1338	2301
10	221	111	105	33	57	30	86	13	111	12	-17	62	28	5	80	1	1	12	1318	951	-32		1672	1967
11	220	111	99	33	56	30	85	13	104	12	-24	59	26	4	64	0	-1	11	1367	902	-81		1787	1852
12	219	111	97	33	56	30	83	13	98	12	-31	57	27	4	70	0	0	9	1380	889	-94		1822	1817
13	216	111	101	34	59	29	82	14	92	13	-33	54	32	6	111	2	4	12	1329	940	-43		1773	1866
14	215	112	104	35	60	29	87	14	95	14	0	58	35	7	134	4	6	19	1240	1029	46		1631	2008
15	213	114	109	37	64	29	91	16	104	16	20	61	44	10	201	8	12	36	1085	1184	201		1371	2268
16	217	117	113	40	71	29	98	18	117	18	55	67	56	13	294	13	21	74	838	1431	448		1041	2598
17	225	120	117	42	76	30	104	19	129	20	88	77	66	16	375	18	29	111	607	1662	679		690	2949
18	226	121	122	44	79	30	105	20	153	21	98	80	72	18	421	20	33	124	481	1788	805		508	3131
19	251	124	137	44	80	34	116	21	153	22	100	100	75	19	447	22	36	160	328	1941	958		351	3288
20	259	126	141	44	80	35	120	21	153	22	100	106	75	19	446	22	36	170	295	1974	991		340	3299
21	261	126	142	44	80	35	121	21	153	22	100	107	75	19	446	22	36	172	289	1980	997		312	3327
22	261	126	142	44	80	35	121	21	153	22	100	108	75	19	446	22	36	172	286	1983	1000		292	3347
23	262	126	142	44	80	35	121	21	153	22	100	108	75	19	446	22	36	173	285	1984	1001		288	3351

Existing Car Parks - Parked Vehicles - Factored up to 2019 Levels - Remaining Spaces should Four (Highlighted) Car Parks Close (Simpson Haugh)

	262	126	142	50	93	35	121	25	153	27	100	108	100	27	640	33	54	173	2269	1701	1370						
Hour	Prince Street	Waterloo Street	Bradshaw Street	Ascroft Street	Roscoe Street	Bow Street	Southgate Street	Chaucer Street	Sports Stadium	Meditia Square	Tommyfield Market	Hobson Street	New Leisure centre	New Radcliffe street	Sainsbury's	Rock Street	Queen Street	Civic Centre	Total Parked	Total Remaining Spaces	Total remaining spaces minus 4 car parks	Spindals Car Park	Total Parked	Total Remaining Spaces	Total remaining spaces minus 4 car parks		
	East	East	East	Central	East	East	East	South	North	South	North	South	West	North	South	North	East	North				Central					
	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Short Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Short Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Short Stay	Short Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay				Long Stay					
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	5	2264	1696		3	14	3625	3063
6	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	12	1	1	2	20	2249	1681	5	44	3595	3046	
7	4	0	1	2	5	0	0	2	2	3	2	1	1	10	3	75	4	7	18	140	2129	1561	13	293	3346	2918	
8	24	3	7	8	17	2	11	6	13	7	14	16	34	11	268	16	25	68	550	1719	1151	52	1151	2488	2470		
9	41	12	23	15	32	5	30	10	32	13	82	41	63	20	493	29	47	146	1134	1135	567	204	2471	1168	1733		
10	41	15	37	17	36	5	35	12	42	15	117	46	72	22	560	32	53	161	1318	951	383	353	2990	649	1399		
11	42	15	43	17	37	5	36	12	49	15	124	49	74	23	576	33	55	162	1367	902	334	419	3154	485	1284		
12	43	15	45	17	37	5	38	12	55	15	131	51	73	23	570	33	54	164	1380	889	321	442	3202	437	1249		
13	46	15	41	16	34	6	39	11	61	14	133	54	68	21	529	31	50	161	1329	940	372	444	3101	538	1298		
14	47	14	38	15	33	6	34	11	58	13	100	50	65	20	506	29	48	154	1240	1029	461	391	2871	768	1440		
15	49	12	33	13	29	6	30	9	49	11	80	47	56	17	439	25	42	137	1085	1184	616	286	2456	1183	1700		
16	45	9	29	10	22	6	23	7	36	9	45	41	44	14	346	20	33	99	838	1431	863	203	1879	1760	2030		
17	37	6	25	8	17	5	17	6	24	7	12	31	34	11	265	15	25	62	607	1662	1094	83	1297	2342	2381		
18	36	5	20	6	14	5	16	5	0	6	2	28	28	9	219	13	21	49	481	1788	1220	27	990	2649	2563		
19	11	2	5	6	13	1	5	4	0	5	0	8	25	8	193	11	18	13	328	1941	1373	23	679	2960	2720		
20	3	0	1	6	13	0	1	4	0	5	0	2	25	8	194	11	18	3	295	1974	1406	46	635	3004	2731		
21	1	0	0	6	13	0	0	4	0	5	0	1	25	8	194	11	18	1	289	1980	1412	23	600	3039	2759		
22	1	0	0	6	13	0	0	4	0	5	0	0	25	8	194	11	18	1	286	1983	1415	6	578	3061	2779		
23	0	0	0	6	13	0	0	4	0	5	0	0	25	8	194	11	18	0	285	1984	1416	3	573	3066	2783		
																										0	

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Existing Car Parks - Remaining Capacity - Factored up to 2019 Levels - Remaining Spaces should Four (Highlighted) Car Parks Close (Simpson Haugh)

	262	126	142	50	93	35	121	25	153	27	100	108	100	27	640	33	54	173	2269	1701	1370				
Hour	Prince Street	Waterloo Street	Bradshaw Street	Ascroft Street	Roscoe Street	Bow Street	Southgate Street	Chaucer Street	Sports Stadium	Meditia Square	Tommyfield Market	Hobson Street	New Leisure centre	New Radcliffe street	Sainsbury's	Rock Street	Queen Street	Civic Centre	Total Parked	Total Remaining Spaces	Total remaining spaces minus 4 car parks	Spindals Car Park	Total Parked	Total Remaining Spaces	Total remaining spaces minus 4 car parks
	East	East	East	Central	East	East	East	South	North	South	North	South	West	North	South	North	East	North				Central			
	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Stay Private	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Private	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Private	Short Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Private	Short Stay Council	Short Stay Private	Long Stay Private	Long Stay Private	Long Stay Council				Long Stay Council			
5	262	126	142	50	93	35	121	25	153	27	100	108	100	27	637	33	54	172	5	2264	1696	1367	2963	676	1699
6	262	126	142	50	92	35	121	25	152	27	100	108	98	27	628	32	53	171	20	2249	1681	1365	2963	676	1686
7	258	126	141	48	88	35	119	23	150	25	99	107	90	24	565	29	47	155	140	2129	1561	1357	2965	674	1574
8	238	123	135	42	76	33	110	19	140	20	86	92	66	16	372	17	29	105	550	1719	1151	1318	2973	666	1203
9	221	114	119	35	61	30	91	15	121	14	18	67	37	7	147	4	7	27	1134	1135	567	1166	2885	754	771
10	221	111	105	33	57	30	86	13	111	12	-17	62	28	5	80	1	1	12	1318	951	383	1017	2758	881	736
11	220	111	99	33	56	30	85	13	104	12	-24	59	26	4	64	0	-1	11	1367	902	334	951	2701	938	753
12	219	111	97	33	56	30	83	13	98	12	-31	57	27	4	70	0	0	9	1380	889	321	928	2681	958	763
13	216	111	101	34	59	29	82	14	92	13	-33	54	32	6	111	2	4	12	1329	940	372	926	2674	965	817
14	215	112	104	35	60	29	87	14	95	14	0	58	35	7	134	4	6	19	1240	1029	461	979	2722	917	852
15	213	114	109	37	64	29	91	16	104	16	20	61	44	10	201	8	12	36	1085	1184	616	1084	2816	823	901
16	217	117	113	40	71	29	98	18	117	18	55	67	56	13	294	13	21	74	838	1431	863	1167	2879	760	1066
17	225	120	117	42	76	30	104	19	129	20	88	77	66	16	375	18	29	111	607	1662	1094	1287	2977	662	1177
18	226	121	122	44	79	30	105	20	153	21	98	80	72	18	421	20	33	124	481	1788	1220	1343	3021	618	1246
19	251	124	137	44	80	34	116	21	153	22	100	100	75	19	447	22	36	160	328	1941	1373	1347	2980	659	1395
20	259	126	141	44	80	35	120	21	153	22	100	106	75	19	446	22	36	170	295	1974	1406	1324	2943	696	1452
21	261	126	142	44	80	35	121	21	153	22	100	107	75	19	446	22	36	172	289	1980	1412	1347	2963	676	1436
22	261	126	142	44	80	35	121	21	153	22	100	108	75	19	446	22	36	172	286	1983	1415	1364	2979	660	1422
23	262	126	142	44	80	35	121	21	153	22	100	108	75	19	446	22	36	173	285	1984	1416	1367	2981	658	1420

Existing Car Parks - Parked Vehicles - Factored up to 2019 Levels - Remaining Spaces should Six (Highlighted) Car Parks Close (Development Plan Prospectus)

	262	126	142	50	93	35	121	25	153	27	100	108	100	27	640	33	54	173	2269		1454	
Hour	Prince Street	Waterloo Street	Bradshaw Street	Ascroft Street	Roscoe Street	Bow Street	Southgate Street	Chaucer Street	Sports Stadium	Meditia Square	Tommyfield Market	Hobson Street	New Leisure centre	New Radcliffe street	Sainsbury's	Rock Street	Queen Street	Civic Centre	Total Parked	Total Remaining Spaces	Total remaining spaces minus 6 car parks	
	East	East	East	Central	East	East	East	South	North	South	North	South	West	North	South	North	East	North				
	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Short Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Short Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Short Stay	Short Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay	Long Stay				
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	5	2264	1449
6	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	12	1	1	2	20	2249	1434
7	4	0	1	2	5	0	2	2	3	2	1	1	10	3	75	4	7	18	140	2129	1314	
8	24	3	7	8	17	2	11	6	13	7	14	16	34	11	268	16	25	68	550	1719	904	
9	41	12	23	15	32	5	30	10	32	13	82	41	63	20	493	29	47	146	1134	1135	320	
10	41	15	37	17	36	5	35	12	42	15	117	46	72	22	560	32	53	161	1318	951	136	
11	42	15	43	17	37	5	36	12	49	15	124	49	74	23	576	33	55	162	1367	902	87	
12	43	15	45	17	37	5	38	12	55	15	131	51	73	23	570	33	54	164	1380	889	74	
13	46	15	41	16	34	6	39	11	61	14	133	54	68	21	529	31	50	161	1329	940	125	
14	47	14	38	15	33	6	34	11	58	13	100	50	65	20	506	29	48	154	1240	1029	214	
15	49	12	33	13	29	6	30	9	49	11	80	47	56	17	439	25	42	137	1085	1184	369	
16	45	9	29	10	22	6	23	7	36	9	45	41	44	14	346	20	33	99	838	1431	616	
17	37	6	25	8	17	5	17	6	24	7	12	31	34	11	265	15	25	62	607	1662	847	
18	36	5	20	6	14	5	16	5	0	6	2	28	28	9	219	13	21	49	481	1788	973	
19	11	2	5	6	13	1	5	4	0	5	0	8	25	8	193	11	18	13	328	1941	1126	
20	3	0	1	6	13	0	1	4	0	5	0	2	25	8	194	11	18	3	295	1974	1159	
21	1	0	0	6	13	0	0	4	0	5	0	1	25	8	194	11	18	1	289	1980	1165	
22	1	0	0	6	13	0	0	4	0	5	0	0	25	8	194	11	18	1	286	1983	1168	
23	0	0	0	6	13	0	0	4	0	5	0	0	25	8	194	11	18	0	285	1984	1169	

Existing Car Parks - Remaining Capacity - Factored up to 2019 Levels - Remaining Spaces should Six (Highlighted) Car Parks Close (Development Plan Prospectus)

	262	126	142	50	93	35	121	25	153	27	100	108	100	27	640	33	54	173	2269	1454	
Hour	Prince Street	Waterloo Street	Bradshaw Street	Ascroft Street	Roscoe Street	Bow Street	Southgate Street	Chaucer Street	Sports Stadium	Meditia Square	Tommyfield Market	Hobson Street	New Leisure centre	New Radcliffe street	Sainsbury's	Rock Street	Queen Street	Civic Centre	Total Parked	Total Remaining Spaces	Total remaining spaces minus 6 car parks
	East	East	East	Central	East	East	East	South	North	South	North	South	West	North	South	North	East	North			
	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Short Stay Private	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Private	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Private	Short Stay Council	Long Stay Council	Long Stay Private	Short Stay Council	Short Stay Private	Long Stay Private	Long Stay Private	Long Stay Council			
5	262	126	142	50	93	35	121	25	153	27	100	108	100	27	637	33	54	172	5	2264	1449
6	262	126	142	50	92	35	121	25	152	27	100	108	98	27	628	32	53	171	20	2249	1434
7	258	126	141	48	88	35	119	23	150	25	99	107	90	24	565	29	47	155	140	2129	1314
8	238	123	135	42	76	33	110	19	140	20	86	92	66	16	372	17	29	105	550	1719	904
9	221	114	119	35	61	30	91	15	121	14	18	67	37	7	147	4	7	27	1134	1135	320
10	221	111	105	33	57	30	86	13	111	12	-17	62	28	5	80	1	1	12	1318	951	136
11	220	111	99	33	56	30	85	13	104	12	-24	59	26	4	64	0	-1	11	1367	902	87
12	219	111	97	33	56	30	83	13	98	12	-31	57	27	4	70	0	0	9	1380	889	74
13	216	111	101	34	59	29	82	14	92	13	-33	54	32	6	111	2	4	12	1329	940	125
14	215	112	104	35	60	29	87	14	95	14	0	58	35	7	134	4	6	19	1240	1029	214
15	213	114	109	37	64	29	91	16	104	16	20	61	44	10	201	8	12	36	1085	1184	369
16	217	117	113	40	71	29	98	18	117	18	55	67	56	13	294	13	21	74	838	1431	616
17	225	120	117	42	76	30	104	19	129	20	88	77	66	16	375	18	29	111	607	1662	847
18	226	121	122	44	79	30	105	20	153	21	98	80	72	18	421	20	33	124	481	1788	973
19	251	124	137	44	80	34	116	21	153	22	100	100	75	19	447	22	36	160	328	1941	1126
20	259	126	141	44	80	35	120	21	153	22	100	106	75	19	446	22	36	170	295	1974	1159
21	261	126	142	44	80	35	121	21	153	22	100	107	75	19	446	22	36	172	289	1980	1165
22	261	126	142	44	80	35	121	21	153	22	100	108	75	19	446	22	36	172	286	1983	1168
23	262	126	142	44	80	35	121	21	153	22	100	108	75	19	446	22	36	173	285	1984	1169

Ref No:	Development Name	Land Use	Dwellings	Size	Units	Site Area (Hectares)	Calculation Assumptions	Expected Parking Provision On-site	Parking Demand Weekday 8-9	Parking Demand Weekday 5-6	Max M-F Daytime Parking Demand	Parking Demand Eve	Parking Demand Sat day	Parking Demand Sat eve
	Simpson Haugh Developments													
1a	Civic Centre (Option 1) - houses	C3	47						27	40	32	48	26	41
1b	Civic Centre (Option 1) - apartments	C3	433						119	137	123	159	112	135
1	Civic Centre (Option 1) - Total							341	146	177	155	208	138	176
2a	Tommyfield Market - houses	C3	14						8	12	9	14	8	12
2b	Tommyfield Market - apartments	C3	230						63	73	65	85	60	72
2	Tommyfield Market - Total							168	71	85	75	99	67	84
3a	Former Leisure Centre - houses	C3	19						11	16	13	20	10	16
3b	Former Leisure Centre - apartments	C3	166						46	52	47	61	43	52
3	Former Leisure Centre - Total							127	56	69	60	81	54	68
4a	Bradshaw Street - houses	C3	44						25	37	30	45	24	38
4b	Bradshaw Street - apartments	C3	131						36	41	37	48	34	41
4	Bradshaw Street - Total							124	61	79	67	93	58	79
5a	Police HQ - apartment	C3	165					114	45	52	47	61	43	51
6a	Mecca Bingo - apartments	C3	275						75	87	78	101	71	86
6b	Mecca Bingo - Office	E		15190	sqm				362	193	680	55	0	0
6c	Mecca Bingo - Hotel	C1		8910	sqm				67	72	64	89	3	18
6	Mecca Bingo - Total							194	504	351	822	245	75	104
1a2	Civic Centre (Option 2) - houses	C3	58						0	0	0	60	0	0
1b2	Civic Centre (Option 2) - apartments	C3	454						125	143	129	167	118	142
1	Civic Centre (Option 2) - Total							341	125	143	129	227	118	142
	Development Sites - Town Centre Framework		1556											
	Development Plan Prospectus													
1	Civic Centre	C3	600			2.33Ha		243	165	190	171	221	156	187
2	Former Magistrates Court	C3	225			0.81Ha		91	62	71	64	83	58	70
3	Former Leisure Centre	C3	250			0.93Ha		101	69	79	71	92	65	78
4	Bradshaw Street	C3	150			0.403Ha		61	41	47	43	55	39	47
5	Metropolitan Place	C3	75			0.088Ha		30	21	24	21	28	19	23
6	Mumps & Wallshaw Street	C3	100			0.24Ha		40	27	32	28	37	26	31
7	Southgate Street & Waterloo Street	C3	250			0.479Ha		101	69	79	71	92	65	78
8	Tommyfield Market	C3	350			1.07Ha		142	96	111	99	129	91	109
	Town Centre SHLAA Sites													
SHA 1858	Land off Mark Street, West End Street	C3	7			0.07	Assumes 40% provision	3	2	2	2	3	2	2
SHA 1796	122A Rochdale Road (Oldham County Court)		25			0.26	Assumes 40% provision	10	7	8	7	9	6	8
SHA 1797	Kings House, King Street		12			0.01	Assumes 40% provision	5	3	4	3	4	3	4
SHA 1052	Rock Street Osf		17			0.17	Assumes 40% provision	7	5	5	5	6	4	5
SHA 1053	Social Services Training Centre, Rock Street		41			0.43	Assumes 40% provision	16	11	13	12	15	11	13
SHA 0054	Corner of Wallshaw Street		290			3.03	Assumes 40% provision	116	80	92	82	107	75	90
SHA 0139	Corner of Rhodes and Wright Street		6			0.06	Assumes 40% provision	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
SHA 2015	Land between beever Street and Regent Street		44			0.46	Assumes 40% provision	18	12	14	13	16	11	14
SHA 1128	Bridge House, Lees Road		10			0.1	Assumes 40% provision	4	3	3	3	4	3	3
SHA 1069	CAB, Bridge Street		9			0.03	Assumes 40% provision	4	2	3	3	3	2	3
SHA 1067	Land at Roscoe Street		22			0.23	Assumes 40% provision	9	6	7	6	8	6	7
SHA 1068	Corner of Bridge Street and Roscoe Street		24			0.25	Assumes 40% provision	10	7	8	7	9	6	7
SHA 2031	Land south of 64 Bridge Street		7			0.08	Assumes 40% provision	3	2	2	2	3	2	2
SHA 2016	Southlink - land at		250			5.76	Assumes 40% provision	100	69	79	71	92	65	78
HLA 3318/HLA 3318(1)	Land at Mumps		136			6.74	Assumes 40% provision	54	37	43	39	50	35	42
HLA 3305	116 Manchester Street, OL9 6EG		1			0.014	Assumes 40% provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HLA 3566	19-21 Retiro Street, OL1 1SA		5			Not provided	Assumes 40% provision	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
HLA 3416	29 Queen Street, OL1 1RD		1			0.011	Assumes 40% provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HLA 3329	First Floor, 104 Yorkshire Street, OL1 1ST		1			0.007	Assumes 40% provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HLA 3385	8-10 Horsedeg Street, OL1 3SX		1			0.038	Assumes 40% provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HLA 3104	3-5 Hamilton Street, OL4 1DA		11			0.15	Assumes 40% provision	4	3	3	3	4	3	3
	Under Construction - Town Centre SHLAA Sites													
HLA 3508	4-10 Union Street, OL1 1BD		6			0.03		6	2	2	2	2	2	2
HLA 3676	23-25 King Steret, OL8 1DP		12			0.09		0	3	4	3	4	3	4
HLA 3766 (assumed to replace HLA 3563)	39 Greaves Street, OL1 1TJ		12			0.02		0	3	4	3	4	3	4
HLA 3299	9 Scholes Street, OL1 3SX		5			0.056		5	1	2	1	2	1	2

	With Permission - Town Centre SHLAA Sites											
HLA 3588	Brunswick House, 86 Union Street, OL1 1DE	24			0.14	10	7	8	7	9	6	7
HLA 3082	Cabaret Club, 2 Bridge Street, OL1 1EA	14			0.36	0	4	4	4	5	4	4
HLA 3401	64 Bridge Street, OL1 1ED	1			0.046	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HLA 3509/HLA 3509.1	120 Union Street, OL1 1EA	2			0.028	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
HLA 3678	87-89 Yorkshire Street, OL1 1ST	11			0.048	0	3	3	3	4	3	3
	Lapsed Permission - Town Centre SHLAA Sites											
HLA 2831	53-55 King Street	126			0.15	0	35	40	36	46	33	39
HLA 2796	169 Union Street	30			0.33	0	8	9	9	11	8	9
	Other Town Centre SHLAA Sites	1163	0	0	19.198	389	319	367	331	428	302	363
							-70	-22	-59	38	-87	-27



Report to CABINET

LA Policy on Academy Conversion and Guidance for Schools

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Mohan Ali (Cabinet Member for Education)

Officer Contact: Gerard Jones, Managing Director Children and Young People (DCS)

Report Author: Andy Collinge (Head of School Support Services)
Ext. 4239

23rd January 2023

Reason for Decision

The purpose of the report is to seek formal approval for a revised LA Academy Conversion Policy and Guidance and its application in all cases where maintained schools convert to academy status.

The original Local Authority Policy on Academy Conversion was agreed in 2016. In March 2022 the government released a new white paper 'Opportunity for All'. A key aim of the white paper is to enable the conversion of all maintained school to academies by 2030. In September 2022 the Department of Education also published new guidance on schools causing concern. In effect this means that schools that are currently meet the Dfe definition of 'coasting schools' will be required to convert to academy status. The guidance is also clear that this process will be accelerated in areas that are designated as EIA (Priority Education Investment Areas). Oldham is one of four such areas within GM (Greater Manchester)

Recommendations

It is recommended that the attached policy and guidance is approved by Cabinet for distribution to all maintained schools within the borough.

It is recommended that authority be given to the Director of Education and Early Years and the Cabinet Member for Education to authorise all associated agreements in respect of academy conversions and approve any changes to the policy resulting from changes to primary legislation.

Cabinet

LA Academy Conversion Policy and Guidance

1 Background

- 1.1 Currently there are 13 Secondary Schools, 86 primary schools and 6 special schools in Oldham. Since 2010 10 secondary schools in the borough have converted to academy status along with 25 primary schools and 5 special schools. There are currently 61 primary schools, 3 secondary schools and a pupil referral unit maintained by the Local Authority, of these 31 are community schools/voluntary controlled schools, 22 are Voluntary Aided Church of England Schools and 12 are voluntary aided Catholic Schools. Currently there are 13 academy trusts operating in the borough.

The recent White Paper, 'Opportunity for All' signals the Government's aim that all schools convert to academy status by 2030. As a result of these developments it is anticipated that there will be a very significant increase in the number of academy conversions, and we are already seeing an increase schools who have made the decision to convert to academy status. There is therefore a need for the LA to proactively manage and influence the process within the current statutory framework in order to both shape the future of education in Oldham and on an operational level manage any reputational, educational and financial risks.

- 1.2 Given the current educational landscape it is vitally important that the LA seeks to have maximum influence over the choice of sponsor for every school currently maintained by the Local Authority. The economic future of the borough and the life chances of its young people are closely linked to the quality of its education system. The recommended policy on conversions outlines what criteria the LA should insist on for any sponsor hoping to run a school within Oldham, this includes working in partnership with the LA and its strategic partners to develop and improve the education offer for parents, young people and the community.
- 1.3 The principal issues in relation to conversion are: the transfer of staff; transfer of land; and transfer of Assets and Contracts. These matters are dealt with in two main documents, a Commercial Transfer Agreement (CTA) and Lease Agreement together with supporting ancillary documentation, although it should be noted that conversion can take place even if these agreements are not concluded. The suggested policy on Academy Conversion is clear that these agreements must be in place and agreed by the LA before any conversion can take place.
- 1.4 The advantage to the LA in completing these agreements is that the interests of the LA can be protected as much as possible. If a lease agreement is not concluded the Secretary of State may direct a form of disposal of the land under his/her powers under the Act. This could result in terms which are less favourable to the LA than those contained within the Lease Agreement. The Commercial Transfer Agreement contains certain indemnities and warranties that protect the LA against certain future liabilities. If the agreement is not concluded the LA would not have the benefit of these. The agreements provide clarity and certainty with regard to the obligations between the parties.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 The current LA Policy on Academy Conversions was approved by Cabinet in 2016, therefore there is a requirement to update this policy to reflect recent changes in legislation and Department of Education Guidance.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 There are no suggested alternatives.

4 **Preferred Option**

4.1 The recommended option is to formally adopt the attached revised Academy Policy and Guidance on Academy Conversion as this will provide a framework for securing the best sponsors in order to drive forward the LA's ambitions for the borough and its young people. A revised policy will also provide assurances with regard to management of any financial or reputational risks.

5 **Consultation**

5.1 Consultations have taken place with a range of services within the LA and its partners including finance, legal and HR. Trade Union colleagues have also been consulted.

6 **Financial Implications**

6.1 Academies will receive their funding direct from the Education Funding Agency following conversion to an academy and the Dedicated School Grant received by the Local Authority will be reduced by the budget share of the academy.

6.2 The Local Authority will charge schools converting to academies to recover the considerable amount of officer time required for academy conversions.

Schools will be charged a rate of £10K and PFI conversion costs will be agreed on a case-by-case basis. Schools receive a grant of up to £25,000 for conversion costs.

Only schools that are converting on a voluntary basis can be charged for conversion costs, schools who are subject to conversions due to falling into a category for intervention cannot be charged conversion costs.

6.3 Schools converting to academy status will only receive funding for any capital works if the expenditure has already been agreed by the Cabinet Member for Education or by Cabinet if the value is over £400,000. The LA will only consider funding projects prior to conversion in very exceptional circumstances such as works required immediately due to health and safety implications.

6.4 If a school is a converter academy and is in deficit the Education Funding Agency will recover the deficit from the school. If a school is a sponsored academy the deficit remains the responsibility of the Local Authority. The Local Authority will work closely with schools to manage any potential deficit at conversion.

6.5 All contracts, agreements and arrangements should only be negotiated to run up to the date of conversion so that there is clarity over financial liabilities and commitments. The Council will therefore seek to minimize the on-going legacy costs that might have to be financed once schools become Academies.

6.6 Teachers working in an academy fall within the scope of the Teacher's Pension Scheme (TPS), just as if they were employed in a local authority-maintained school. As an employer, the academy is responsible for remitting contributions to the TPS and for all other administrative responsibilities that fall to employers who employ teachers who are subject to the teachers' pension regulations.

6.7 In respect of non-teaching staff, an academy is a "Scheduled Body" within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) which allows non-teaching staff to be members of

the local authority's pension scheme, with members of staff transferring from the "old" maintained school to the "new" academy retaining their membership of the LGPS. Newly appointed academy non-teaching staff should also have the right to join the scheme.

6.8 The admission of all non-teaching staff within converting Academies into the Oldham Council "pension pool" and hence the continuation of these non-teaching staff within the LGPS is in accordance with the Councils Pension Policy approved by Cabinet at its meeting on the 13 November 2013 and further approved at the Council meeting of 18 December 2013.

6.9 The Council is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of its Pension Admission Policy in the light of the proposed Schools Bill 2022 and any future applications could be subject to a potentially amended policy.

LIZ CAYGILL/JOHN HOSKINS

7 Legal Services Comments

7.1 Legal issues are addressed in the body of the report.

COLIN BRITTAIN

8. Co-operative Agenda

8.1 Schools who convert to academy status will continue to play an active part in supporting and collaborating with other Oldham Schools.

ANDY COLLINGE

9 Human Resources Comments

9.1 As a school is re-designated as an academy the staff will have their employment transferred from the existing employer to the new academy, following Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE). Schools which currently purchase the HR Advisory SLA from the Local Authority will receive support in ensuring that correct process are followed. There may be an additional cost levied to the school for the due diligence process. Schools not receiving support through the LA's HR Advisory Service will need to engage with their preferred HR provider for advice and support.

ADELE SAVAGE

10 Risk Assessments

10.1 The Council policy on Academy Conversions seems appropriate to manage its risks from a Risk Management perspective.

MARK STENSON

11 IT Implications

11.1 There are no implications for IT.

MARK EDGAR

12 Property Implications

-
- 12.1 It is considered that all property related matters have been captured and addressed within the LA Academy Conversion Policy and Guidance.

ROSALYN SMITH

13 **Procurement Implications**

- 13.1 There are no procurement implications

DAN CHEETHAM

14 **Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**

- 14.1 For the schools that become academies the LA will no longer be responsible for any breaches of Environmental and Health and Safety Legislation. Academies will still require ongoing Health and Safety advice from a 'competent' person. This can be provided for a fee from the Health and Safety Team, or they can chose to use another company, or employ a competent person to fulfill their legal obligations.

SAMANTHA COX

15 **Equality, community cohesion and crime implications**

- 15.1 None.

16 **Equality Impact Assessment Completed?**

- 16.1 No

17 **Key Decision**

- 17.1 Yes

18 **Key Decision Reference**

- 18.1

19 **Background Papers**

- 19.1 N/a

20 **Appendices**

- 20.1 Revised Oldham Local Authority Policy and Guidance on Academy Conversions.

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Oldham Local Authority Policy and Guidance on Academy Conversions

2022

Oldham LA Policy & Guidance on Academy Conversions 2022

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Section One: Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The policy and associated guidance outlines the LA's position with regard to schools who either wish to join a MAT (Multi-Academy Trust) or those who are required by legislation to convert to academy status. The policy and guidance cannot override the requirements of primary legislation specifically the Academies Act 2010 and Schools Bill 2022
- 1.2 The introduction of the Education and Adoption Bill 2015 requires the LA to set out how it will work with schools who wish to join a MAT or establish a MAT with other partner schools, this includes those schools who as a result of underperformance become eligible for intervention by the Secretary of State. This policy provides a framework for determining LA decisions It is the governments wish that all schools become academies by 2030 and this is reflected in the White Paper (Opportunity for All, March 2022) and will be further strengthened by the Schools Bill 2022.
- 1.3 Academies are independent of local authorities and conversion leads to changes in responsibilities, finance and working relations between local authorities and academies. This policy and guidance outlines the approach that will be taken by the LA and offers practical advice and guidance on how the LA will manage conversion and how governing bodies should approach the issue of conversion.
- 1.4 The educational vision of the LA includes the whole family of schools in Oldham regardless of whether they are academies or maintained schools. This vision envisages all schools, stakeholders, and the LA working together in partnership to provide the best possible outcomes for all children and young people.
- 1.5 Secondary Head Teachers and Primary Head Teachers continue to discuss matters and work together in their representative groups (OASHP) and Executive Primary Heads Group regardless of their school status. The LA's policy will be to continue to include all Oldham Schools in its communications, consultations, and discussions for the benefit of all Oldham children and young people.
- 1.6 The LA recognises that as a result of the academy conversion agenda that its overall revenue funding received from the Education Services Grant (ESG) will reduce as academies receive the Education Services Grant as part of their revenue funding. The ESG used by the LA for statutory duties relating to services relevant to the Education Services Grant. The LA undertakes that it will work to mitigate any financial or job losses by promoting the services and those of its strategic partners with MAT's in order to ensure the highest level of buyback possible. The LA will ensure that where appropriate contracts are novated as part of the CTA (Commercial Transfer Agreement).
- 1.7 The LA is the employer for staff in Community Schools and Voluntary Controlled schools and the monitoring and maintaining authority for all non-academy schools. It is a requirement that all schools will inform the LA if they are considering joining a MAT or seeking to establish a MAT with other partner schools.
- 1.8 The Education and Adoption Act 2015 extended the academies programme to:
 - Require every school judged 'inadequate by Ofsted to be turned into a sponsored academy.
 - Give new powers to the Secretary of State for Education to intervene in schools considered to be underperforming and constrain local authorities from doing so in some circumstances.
 - Extend the legal definition of 'eligible for intervention' category to include 'coasting' schools and enable (but not require) the Secretary of State to turn such schools into sponsored academies or intervene in them in other ways

- Allow the Secretary of State to issue directions, with time limits to school governing bodies and local authorities to speed up academy conversions.
- Place a new duty of schools and local authorities in specified cases to take all reasonable steps to progress the conversion.
- Require schools and local authorities in specified cases to work with an identified sponsor toward the 'making of arrangements' with that sponsor.
- Remove the requirements for general (i.e., public consultation) to be held where a school eligible for intervention is being converted to a sponsored academy.
- Statutory Guidance (Schools Causing Concern) effective from September 2022 further strengthens the capacity of Regional Directors to intervene in underperforming schools. In most cases this means that schools with consecutive RI (Requires Improvements) Ofsted judgements will be required to convert to academy status.

1.9 For schools not eligible for intervention, under current legislation there are two routes to becoming an academy: -

- Join an existing Multi Academy Trust
- Establish a Multi-Academy Trust with other partner schools

2. Definitions and Abbreviations

DfE	Department of Education
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment Regulations
CTA	Commercial Transfer Agreement
CIPB	Capital Investment Programme Board
CIF	Condition Improvement Fund
ETO	Economic, Technical and Organisational
NJC	National Joint Council
STPCD	School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document
ICO	Information Commissioners Office
LA	Local Authority

3. Conversion costs

3.1 Converting schools are entitled to a DfE grant of £25,000 to prepare for conversion (up to £37,000 for PFI schools). The LA receives no additional funding in order to deal with the financial impact and increased workloads created by and associated with the conversion work.

Schools undergoing voluntary conversion will be charged for work undertaken by the LA.

3.2 As the ceding employer, and in order for each academy conversion to happen, the LA is obliged to carry out a number of functions on behalf of the school, these functions include:

- Providing initial information to the DfE
- Leading or supporting the formal TUPE process (this may be part of an SLA)
- Carrying out the financial reconciliation and closure of accounts

- Preparing documents for the transfer of land and assets
- Liaising with the schools appointed solicitors on the CTA (Commercial Transfer Agreement)
- Preparation of documents for the transfer of pensions

3.3 These activities involve a number of different departments with the LA and require a considerable amount of officer time. There is therefore a not inconsiderable cost to the LA whenever a school becomes an Academy. Therefore, the LA will make the following charges for voluntary Academy Conversions to cover these costs:

- Converter Academies £10 K
- PFI Conversion costs will be agreed on a case-by-case basis.

3.4 In addition to the above, schools should note that the LA will invoice trusts/schools for any additional fees that may arise as a result of unforeseen circumstances.

4. Data and Records

4.1 The LA is responsible for the accurate recording and safety of all pupil data and records prior to the school's conversion to academy status.

4.2 As part of the CTA (Commercial Transfer Agreement), the LA will require all converting schools to deliver to the LA all ex-pupil records boxed, logged, and stored by destruction date and alphabetically. A list of contents of each box must be attached to each box.

4.3 The LA will expect all converting schools to comply with the Education (Pupil Information, England) Regulation 2005 and any associated guidance produced by the ICO further information.
The link below is a useful source of further information.

http://intranet.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3533/records_responsibilities_and_archiving_guidance_for_closing_schools_merging_to_become_academies

4.4 The LA will expect that Academies will share with them all data and records relevant to pupil wellbeing and performance.

5. Council's Preferred Sponsor

5.1 The LA will work closely with schools and the Department of Education and Regional Directors to ensure that academy sponsors share the LA's vision for high performing schools which are responsive to local needs and offer a valuable contribution to the borough education offer to parents.

5.2 Oldham LA is an ambitious authority and good and outstanding schools are a key part of the authority's vision for a thriving forward-looking and prosperous borough.

5.3 The LA recognises that the educational landscape is changing at a fast pace and will work in partnership and cooperation with a range of autonomous providers of education and related services.

5.4 The LA recognises the value of a wide range of provision and to that end, the LA is committed to working in partnership with a range of providers. As part of the educational offer to Oldham parents, the LA expects academy sponsors to demonstrate the following: -

The ability to:

- Secure effective leadership which will demonstrate an ambitious vision for the school and high expectations for what every pupil and teacher can achieve and set high standards for quality and performance including management of learning and teaching.
- Offer sharp challenge and the impetus to act where improvement is needed based on clearly identifying strengths and weaknesses.
- Promote rigour in school self –evaluation enhancing a school’s capacity to drive its own improvement
- Secure rapid improvement in attainment for all pupils
- Offer targeted professional development to secure good or better teaching throughout the school
- Develop a curriculum that meets children’s needs, engages them, and prepares them for a variety of career paths.
- Gain the confidence of the community in the school and position the school so that it plays a significant part in supporting families to meet high aspirations for all pupils
- Build on existing partnerships with parents and carers and the community and ensure that all stakeholders are valued partners in the life of the school
- Ensure that residents and service users actively inform decision making and co-produce services with communities in line with cooperative values and principles
- Ensure the environs of the school are fit for learning and accessible to the community
- Work in partnership with the LA and Oldham Learning to enable the LA to fulfil its statutory responsibilities with regard to safeguarding, SEN, school performance outcomes and school admissions. This includes an agreed process for sharing key information with the LA.

In addition, the LA would expect sponsors to demonstrate: -

- A firm commitment to adhere to local terms and conditions of employment (including signing up to the Fair Employment Charter and the Real Living Wage).
- A willingness to engage local professional associations and a commitment to developing that engagement.
- That they understand and can pay heed to the values and aspirations of the local community and can contribute to the wider community served by the school.
- That they will engage in meaningful consultation with all stakeholders regardless of whether the school is eligible for intervention or converting on a voluntary basis.
- That they will actively engage with the wider work of the Local Authority, Oldham Learning and National and Local Professional Associations.

6. Capital Works

6.1 The allocation of funds to undertake capital maintenance work on schools are proposed by the LA CIPB (Capital Investment Program Board).

This body is not a decision-making body, but its role includes recommending funding allocations and priorities for capital works that are required across the school estate.

Any works identified need to be approved either by the Cabinet Member for Education or for works of a value in excess of £0.400m full Cabinet. As such, schools converting to or considering converting to academy status should not assume that because works may feature in the CIPB Plan that they are agreed by the Council.

Only works agreed by the Cabinet Member or by Cabinet if the value is over £0.400m can be deemed to be agreed by the LA. The LA will only consider funding projects prior to conversion in very exceptional circumstances such as works required immediately due to health and safety implications.

- 6.2 Academies and schools with a signed academy order are able to gain funding for capital projects through the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF). Schools with an academy order at the start of September 2021 are invited by the DfE to apply via the CIF.

7. Financial Considerations

- 7.1 The Governing Bodies of schools converting to academies will be responsible for the school budget and financial management arrangements in the period leading to conversion.
- 7.2 School should not enter into any new leasing agreements or contracts in the name of the old school that extend beyond the conversion date. Advice should be sought regarding any existing leasing arrangements to ensure these are dealt with (which may mean termination and re-establishment) in the correct way.
- 7.3 The school will need to have an up-to-date copy of the school inventory.
- 7.4 Schools converting to academies need to ensure the only transactions that appear in their old school budget relate to the period before the school converts to an academy. Transactions relating to the academy should not be charged to the old school budget.
- 7.5 Schools looking to convert to an academy need to ensure they buy into any service level agreements up to the proposed conversion date and set up new service level agreements with services for the academy after conversion.
- 7.6 When the conversion of the school is approved a budget plan should be calculated up to the date of conversion.
- 7.7 If a school has surplus balance when it converts to academy status, the 2013 Regulations provide that:
- *The LA must determine and notify the amount of that surplus within four months of the date of conversion.*
- 7.8 If a school is a converter academy and is in deficit the Education Funding Agency will recover the deficit from the school. If a school is a sponsored academy the deficit remains the responsibility of the Local Authority. The Local Authority will work closely with schools to manage any potential deficit at conversion.
- 7.9 The LA will work closely with schools to manage any potential deficit at conversion.
- 7.10 Schools converting to academy status that have chosen to operate their own bank account with either the LA bankers or an approved financial institution of their choice need to ensure all direct debits/credits are cancelled, the bank account is closed and any stationary (unused cheque books etc) are returned to the LA.

Monthly cheque book returns will still need to be completed and balanced by the school until the bank account is closed. Schools converting to academy status that have an imprest account

need to ensure the bank account is closed and any stationery is returned to the LA. Schools will also need to ensure that the initial imprest advance is returned to the LA.

8. TUPE and Service Recognition

- 8.1 Staff in schools that are re-designated as academies have their employment transferred from one establishment to the other, following the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) TUPE Regulations. The LA directly and via its HR Service provider will support converting schools to ensure that correct processes are followed. This will include the following:
-

- Due diligence work on HR records and personal data.
- Completion (where possible) of all outstanding HR issues
- Support and attendance for all consultation meetings with staff and associated paperwork.

- 8.2 The LA will not fund any staffing changes or school restructures that occur for ETO reasons as a result of measures taken by the Academy Trust in connection with the conversion.

- 8.3 Staff transfers from an LA school or voluntary aided school to an academy have ALL employment rights protected upon transfer, however, if a member of staff accepts a new academy contract or subsequently moves of their own volition back to the LA the contractual rights that transfer are different for support and teaching staff.

8.4 Support staff

NJC terms are protected because of TUPE and continuous service is protected by the Modification Order. Academies are members of the Modification Order and as such should an employee return back to the LA from an Academy their continuous service will be recognised for calculation of the following: -

- Redundancy pay entitlement
- Occupational maternity pay
- Occupational sick pay
- Annual leave entitlement

8.5 Teachers

STPCD (School Teachers Pay and Conditions) and Burgundy Book are primarily concerned with LA employment only. Continuous service for the purposes of calculating Redundancy pay entitlement is recognised under the Modification Order, however, the following elements would not be recognised by the LA for teachers who return from an Academy to an LA School.

- Teacher's maternity pay starts from zero as teachers' maternity rights are linked contractually to LA service and continuity is broken once a teacher leaves LA employment.
- Teacher's occupational sick pay is also linked to LA service and so continuity is broken as soon as they leave the LA. Employment with the Academy will not count. However, sickness entitlement is based on aggregated LA service therefore prior LA service will be recognised but not the intervening period of employment with the Academy.

In the event of any member of staff returns to the LA as a result of a TUPE transfer from the Academy then all employment rights and continuous service are again protected (in reverse) and in accordance with TUPE legislation.

9. Pensions

- 9.1 With regard to the treatment of existing pension the liabilities the following will apply in respect of schools that have converted to academy status and free schools within the borough: -
- 9.2 The LA will give consideration to pension pooling arrangements on a case by case basis for converting Academies and Free Schools within the borough of Oldham in respect of non-teaching employee pensions. This will be subject to an assessment of the following criteria: -
- A commitment to adhere to the criteria listed in section 5 of this policy.
 - The LA is satisfied that such schools are financially secure and can demonstrate that they can meet their obligations as a scheme employer.
 - The extent to which Academy or Free School Sponsors will assist with the mitigation of any residual LA risks that are associated with Pension Fund transfers, pooling, and Admitted Body arrangements.
 - That the establishment of such schools is aligned to the Council's overall strategy for pupil place planning.
 - That Trusts agree to sign up to and adhere to the 'Local Authority Pooling Agreement'

10. PFI Schools

- 10.1 The LA has a number of PFI (Private Funded Initiative) schools within the borough. Three secondary schools in Oldham have either been built or refurbished using PFI funds.

The conversion process is more complex as these schools operate under PFI contracts. To allow these conversions to take place the LA, Governing Body, MAT, DfE and PFI Contractor must enter into a suite of contracts to reflect the schools change in status and transfer the assets required for the Academy Trust to operate the school.

- 10.2 To enable PFI schools to convert to academy status the LA will require that the Academy Trust enter into the following agreements.
- 1) Commercial Transfer Agreement (CTA). This covers the transfer of staff, assets and contracts held by the Governing Body and the LA in respect of the converting school to the Academy Trust.
 - 2) Lease Agreements to grant a 125-year leasehold to the Academy Trust.
 - 3) A 'School Agreement' to flow down the relevant rights, obligations and liabilities enjoyed by the LA pursuant to the Project Agreement to the Academy Trust
 - 4) Deeds of Variation to the Project Agreement to vary the Project Agreement in recognition of the school's change in status. The LA will also provide an LGCA Certificate in respect of this agreement.
 - 5) Principal Agreements to provide a guarantee from the DfE in respect of some of the payment liabilities of the Academy Trust in the event of non-payment.
- 10.3 The LA can contribute towards the annual repayments (a contribution towards the building running costs/facilities management charge) and to capital repayments (affordability gap).

In the event of any of these schools either being subject of an Academy Order or opting to join a MAT then neither the Academy nor the LA should be better or worse off financially than if the Academy had remained an LA maintained school.

LAs and schools will honour the payment commitments that were agreed at the time that the PFI contract was signed. The contract remains between the LA and the contractor, regardless of the number of schools within that contract converting to academy status.

11. Leases

11.1 As part of the conversion process a school's land and buildings will transfer to the academy on a 125-year lease. The terms of such leases will be as required by the DfE and the following will be key features of all leases to academies.

- The property can only be used for educational purposes set out in the Academy Trusts 'Article of Association'.
- The lease cannot be assigned to another body without the permission of the Secretary of State.
- The lease will allow the LA to forfeit the lease and re-enter the Property if the Academy Trust fails: -
 - To use the property for the purpose originally agreed
 - Becomes dissolved, struck off or removed from the Register of Companies or otherwise ceases to exist.
- The lease will automatically end if the Academy funding agreement is terminated and there is no replacement funding agreement for educational purposes.
- In the event of the lease being forfeited or ending due to some other reason the site would revert back to the Council as the freehold owner

11.2 Where the LA considers that a school has land surplus to its needs the LA will seek to retain any surplus land if this land forms part of a strategic need.

11.3 The LA will, as part of any lease negotiations seek to protect the interests of third parties such as community groups or before and after school clubs who share facilities with schools seeking academy status.

11.4 The LA reserves the right to include or exclude land beyond the school's physical boundary if that land formed part of the original school footprint.

12. Sources of Information and Support

- Department of Education website - www.education.gov.uk
- Finance (Liz Caygill - liz.caygill@oldham.gov.uk)
- HR & General Information (Andy Collinge – andy.collinge@oldham.gov.uk)
- Legal (Debbie Taylor– debbie.taylor@oldham.gov.uk)
- Pensions (John Hoskins – john.hoskins@oldham.gov.uk)
- Pupil Records (Tim Hanstock – tim.hanstock@oldham.gov.uk)
- Capital Works (Alan McCarthy – john.winterbottome@oldham.gov.uk)
- PFI Projects (Chris Kelsall – chris.kelsall@unitypartnership.com)

13. Interpreting the Policy

In the event of a dispute regarding the interpretation of this policy, advice must be sought from the LA Legal Department. The LA may seek further advice before issuing any guidance.

Any advice regarding interpretation will automatically become incorporated into this policy.

Section Two: Guidance

Guidance for Schools on Academy Conversion.

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Introduction and Content

This guidance has been designed to support Governing Bodies in giving full consideration to all implications of joining a MAT (Multi-Academy Trust) or establishing a MAT with other schools, and whether it is an appropriate step for the school.

Conversion to academy status is probably one of the most important decisions any Governing Body can make and has significant and far-reaching implications for the school.

There are a number of different forms academy conversion can take and this guidance is specifically focused on those schools who are considering becoming 'converter academies' and joining or forming Multi-Academy Trusts with other schools, however, schools who are eligible for intervention should also follow this guidance in order to ensure that the conversion process is well managed and full consideration is given to all the implications of conversion and the necessary practical steps that need to be taken.

There are several requirements in order for a school to be able to convert to academy status and these can be summarised as follows: -

- Conversion follows governor led local consultation, and governor application to the Secretary of State for approval to convert.
- Converter academies are not new schools and retain their original DfE number.
- The process typically takes around 4 to 5 months to complete.
- The process for PFI schools can take up to 12 months to complete.

This guidance is non-statutory but represents good practice and assists Governing Bodies in giving full consideration to the key aspects of conversion which include: -

- The decision-making process.
- Consultation
- Cost and practical implications
- The application process

Academy Conversion Guidance

The Academy Decision Making Process and Consultation

Initial Considerations

Step One

The GB should consider the following:

- 1 The views of Governors
- 2 The view of the Head Teacher and views expressed by staff governors about the likely feelings of staff.
- 3 In the case of VC/VA schools, obtain the view of the diocese.
- 4 Invite the LA to discuss the process with the full Governing Body.

If the view is that the GB wish to explore academy conversion, they should move to step two.

Step Two

The Governing Body (GB) sets up a working party of 2-3 governors to obtain and consider more details and make recommendations to the GB.

The recommendation may be that:

- On balance, there are clear advantages in joining or forming a MAT now (If this is the recommendation, the working party should draft a consultation document for GB to approve).
- On balance, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages, but the GB and school is not yet ready and will need to be strengthened in a number of areas.
- On balance, there are insufficient advantages – and significant disadvantages – to justify continued interest.

Step Three

Working party reports back to GB with recommendations.

Step Four

GB considers working party recommendations and decides:

1. to proceed to consultation OR
2. to ready itself to consider joining a MAT later or collaborating with other schools to form a MAT
3. not to proceed with the proposal.

Step Five

In the case of (1) the working party should proceed as follows: -

- a. Consult stakeholders.
- b. The GB should consider stakeholder responses
- c. If following consultation exercise, the GB wish to join a MAT or form a MAT with other schools the GB should record their decision and communicate this to stakeholders.

Step Six

In the case of (2) the working party should proceed as follows:

1. Identify training needs
2. Arrange for governors (and senior staff) to attend relevant training
3. Identify organisational (and staffing) requirements
4. Decide and implement a strategy to strengthen the organisation and staffing
5. Meanwhile, keep abreast of developments that may change the advantages vs. disadvantages assessment.
6. When governors feel the time is right, the GB will need to check that:
 - a. The balance of advantages points to academy conversion.
 - b. The GB and school are now in a position to join a MAT to form a MAT with other schools.

There is a decision-making process flow chart at **Appendix A**

There is suggested Pro-forma for initial consultation at **Appendix B**.

Working Party Considerations (Pre-Consultation)

Issue	Suggestions	Notes
Who to notify/consult?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation/Trust • Parents • Pupils • Staff • LA: Staff unions/associations • Diocese • Other local schools 	<p>Do we have contacts for all these groups before proceeding to consultation?</p> <p>Staff don't have to be consulted except for TUPE later in the process, however, we would recommend that they are Consulting the full list would be considered good practice</p>
When?	Before the GB makes its final decision	Avoids the perception of the decision already having been taken
How to inform? Page 237	<p>Hard copy letter</p> <p>Online website</p> <p>Newsletter</p> <p>Meetings – School Council, Parent Forums, staff meetings</p> <p>Community or parish magazines</p>	<p>Who decides on the way in which groups are informed?</p> <p>GB/Working Party/school</p> <p>Questions raised in Meetings of e.g., School Council, Parent Forums. The GB should publish the answers to any formal questions.</p>
What information should be provided	<p>We suggest you consult parents, students, staff, and local partners. In order for the consultation to be meaningful, full information on the implications would need to be provided. Information could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • main advantages identified by the GB including what you would do differently • the disadvantages that the GB considered • details of the proposed academy arrangements • details of the proposed governance arrangements 	<p>The conclusions you reach as you consider each of the 'differences and implications' should have been noted so that they can be included in your consultation document.</p>

Issue	Suggestions	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any proposed changes in the arrangements for the curriculum, for special educational needs, for pupil discipline, exclusion and for complaints, and confirmation that there will be no change in the admissions arrangements. details of any additional obligations and costs which fall on the school if it joined a MAT 	
Timescale	Deadline for responses	Allowing reasonable time for stakeholders to respond while maintaining momentum
How to collect and collate views? Page 138	<p>Do we know what we want to get out of the pre-consultation process?</p> <p>What kind of information would be useful?</p> <p>Methods of collection – questionnaire/statement inviting comments/interviews/meetings? Sample size?</p> <p>Responses to go to....</p>	Once you have the data, will it be easy to analyse?
Reporting the results of consultation to the GB	<p>Agree working party members who will collate responses.</p> <p>Schedule working party meeting to agree report for GB</p>	

Academy Conversion – Considering Differences, Implications & Costs

Before focusing on the differences, governors should be reminded of the things that remain the same:

- Academies are still part of the community. They serve children and families in a particular area and they retain the same responsibilities as any maintained school as part of the learning community. Governors are advised to consider how they ensure their institution is seen as part of the community, whatever the decision they make.
- The Headteacher still needs to work in partnership with the governing body/trust/LA on strategic matters.
- Academies are still subject to the law on employment, equality, admissions, and special educational needs.
- Academies are required to follow the same rules over pupil exclusion as maintained schools.
- Academies need to operate a complaints policy in the same way as any maintained school.
- Academies are still subject to Ofsted inspection.
- Academies are still subject to Freedom of Information legislation.

In considering the differences described below, governors are advised to refer to the Governing Body's vision and values. In considering each of the differences, it is suggested that governors ask themselves the questions listed in the second column.

Some of the differences may mean additional income and/or additional costs/ Additional staff time may be required for the associated tasks. The fourth column allows governors to set out more clearly the possible or probable financial implications for their own school.

Governors should not be expected to make a decision to proceed without the best estimate of financial implications.

School Performance

Differences	Questions	Notes	Indicative costs
Freedom from National Curriculum – although still required to be 'broad and balanced'	Do we currently feel constrained? What would the trust do differently? How would our children benefit? On balance what do we gain?	Schools already have more freedom from the national curriculum than people realise. Academies/trusts must include English, Maths and Science in the curriculum for all students up to the age of 16. It is important to take account of the 'The National Curriculum 2014' when considering options.	
Freedom from the LA	Do we currently feel constrained? What would we do differently? How would our children benefit? On balance what do we gain?	Schools already have considerable autonomy with issues such as finance and staffing. On joining or forming a MAT the GB need to consider what governance arrangements/decision making powers/delegations will be in place post-conversion	

Differences	Questions	Notes	Indicative costs
		A major part of the school's budget is generated through pupil formula funding. Spending decisions are then delegated to schools.	
Trusts are expected to support other schools	<p>Do we already work in partnership?</p> <p>Might we prefer to federate/collaborate?</p> <p>What more can we offer and to which schools?</p> <p>What effect would becoming an academy have on our local and partner schools?</p>		

Governance

Differences	Question	Notes	Indicative costs
GB no longer subject to existing statutory governance regulations but following them is deemed to be good practice	<p>Do we feel constrained?</p> <p>What would we do differently?</p> <p>How would our children benefit?</p> <p>On balance what do we gain?</p>	GB must be familiar with articles of association for the MAT they are seeking to join or in the case of schools seeking to form a MAT they should be clear on how governance will operate in the MAT	
Composition of GB may be different as outlined in the Articles of Association	<p>Do we feel constrained?</p> <p>What would we do differently?</p> <p>How would our children benefit?</p> <p>On balance what do we gain?</p>	<p>Schools opt who join a MAT (Multi-Academy Trust) should note that Trusts are under no legal obligation to have a GB in each school within the trust.</p> <p>Where local GBs are in place it is the Trust Board who decide, what powers are delegated to local GB's/Advisory Boards.</p>	

HR

Differences	Question	Notes	Indicative costs
The Academy Trust is the employer of staff	<p>Have we considered the implications?</p> <p>Do we currently feel constrained?</p> <p>What would be different?</p>	Only different for community and VC because in VA and Foundation schools and Trusts the GB/Trust is already the employer.	

Differences	Question	Notes	Indicative costs
	How would our children benefit? Is HR advice provided by the Trust or externally? On balance what do we gain?	Any redundancy costs must be met from academy/trust budget. The Trust is the legal respondent in Employment Tribunal Cases and other legal challenges.	
Ability to set own pay and conditions	Have we considered the implications? Do we currently feel constrained? Do we use current flexibilities? What would we do differently? How would our children benefit? On balance what do we gain?	STPCD is set in law, so maintained schools must work within it – Academies do not have to comply. However, TUPE transfer applies for existing staff so some pay, and conditions are likely to apply initially. but may change subsequently following consultation with staff and unions. In practice, very few academies have deviated from national or local terms and conditions.	

Finance

Differences	Question	Notes	Indicative costs
Academies will receive funding from the LA to pay for 'EHC' plans for mainstream and early years pupils. Funding is also paid by LA's for 3 and 4-year-old children accessing free entitlement to early education.		In addition to the individually assigned resources (IAR) i.e. Notional SEN, for pupils requiring more support above 9.5 hours, academies will receive funding for SEN pupils from the High Needs Block. Academies must comply with 'SEN obligations imposed on governing bodies of maintained schools.	
		Note: Funding of Academies is for the academic year – not financial year. Trusts will still need to purchase services. They may be able to purchase services from LA. Do individual schools in the trust have a choice about what services they buy?	
Surplus or deficits – On becoming an academy, schools may be able to carry forward any surplus. Circumstances,	What is our current financial situation?	If the school is in deficit, the repayment plan needs to be agreed by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) not the LA.	

Differences	Question	Notes	Indicative costs
when budgets can be carried forward, are included in the 'Scheme for Financing Schools'. Schools with deficits must have a repayment plan in place			

Legal

Differences	Question	Notes	Indicative costs
GB subject to Trust which will: 1) Register land 2) Appoint governors 3) Have a broad strategic oversight	How helpful will this be? On balance what do we gain?	Governors will be appointed to the GB by the academy trust (made up of members)	
Academy Trust is a charitable trust subject to charity law	Have we considered the implications? What will we do differently? On balance do we gain?	Academies are charitable trusts that are publicly funded independent schools. If the academy was to become bankrupt the members of the Trust body could be held liable to the amount set out in the Articles of Association. The most common level of liability is set out as £10 per trustee.	

Premises

Differences	Question	Notes	Indicative costs
Trust has total premises responsibility	Have we considered the implications? Do we currently feel constrained? What will be different? How would our children benefit? On balance do we gain? What condition is our school building in? What are the trust's plans for the building?	Do we have local support in the event of emergencies? Refer to your LA's current schedule of centrally funded repairs and maintenance which would no longer be available to Academies.	

Behaviour & Attendance

Differences	Question	Notes	Indicative costs
Trust does not have to consult LA when considering an exclusion Attendance service free for maintained schools but academies must pay for services except for prosecutions and statutory work.	Do we currently feel constrained?	GB is not expected to seek the advice of an LA officer when considering exclusion, but parents can request LA Officer attendance and/or an SEN expert attendance. Trust will need to organise (or buy-in) Independent Review Panel for Permanent Exclusions. Academies must comply with all other requirements in national guidance on exclusion.	
		In addition to the individually assigned resources (IAR) for pupils requiring more support, academies will receive funding for SEN pupils. Academies must comply with 'SEN obligations imposed on governing bodies of maintained schools.	

Admissions

Differences	Question	Notes	Indicative costs
Trusts have the ability to determine own admission arrangements; however, can be subject to direction from the SoS.	Do we currently feel constrained? What would we do differently? How would our children benefit? On balance what do we gain?	VA and Foundation schools already set their own admissions. This will only be different for community and VC schools. All schools must comply with the National Admissions Code of Practice and participate in Coordinated Admissions organised by the LA. Trusts are not allowed to introduce selection but may continue existing selection arrangements. The Trust will be responsible for independent Appeal Panel arrangements for school admissions.	

Insurance

Differences	Question	Notes	Indicative costs
Academy Trust needs to purchase own indemnity insurance	What are the options?	A governor as trustees/director has a limited liability of £10. Governors need liability insurance because anyone acting as a trustee/director of an Academy Trust	

Differences	Question	Notes	Indicative costs
		<p>has unlimited liability for his/her own defaults.</p> <p>A trustee/director is not liable for any debts or liabilities providing s/he acts properly and within the powers and authority delegated to her/him. If s/he acts outside those parameters a trustee/director can be liable, without limit, for the loss caused to the Academy Trust. Liabilities to external parties would ordinarily be those of the academy trust (not the governors).</p> <p>Governors of academies need to have indemnity insurance, taken out by the trust and are subject to charity law. Whereas GBs of maintained schools have their own legal identity and corporate responsibility and local authorities normally provide indemnity insurance.</p>	

Health & Safety

Differences	Question	Notes	Indicative costs
<p>Trusts has total responsibility for Health and Safety</p> <p>No 'employer' role or responsibilities exist for the LA.</p> <p>Trust must obtain H&S advice/support from a 'competent person'</p>	<p>Have we considered the implications?</p> <p>What will we do differently?</p> <p>As we will have no health and safety support from the LA, will we need to spend more than we do currently on H&S advice and support?</p> <p>On balance do we gain?</p>	<p>VA and foundation schools already are responsible for their premises, staff, and visitors. This will only be different for community and VC schools.</p> <p>Trusts will need to purchase specialist advice from a 'competent health and safety person' and implement sufficient H&S management systems. These systems will need to be regularly reviewed and audited to ensure compliance with all H&S related legislation.</p>	

Other Considerations

Differences	Question	Notes	Indicative costs
Academies/Trusts accountable to SoS	How do we feel about this? What would we do differently? How would our children benefit? On balance what do we gain? Do we continue to manage the HT or is that the Trust?	SIPs employed by DfE will support and challenge academy. SIPs will not support Performance Management of the Headteacher. This is deemed to be the responsibility of the Trust or Academy governing body. Academy can purchase external adviser time to support governors in headteacher Performance Management	
Sustainability – of senior leadership team	Do our current headteacher and senior leadership team have the skills and attitudes to lead the academy? When the time comes, how likely are we to be able to appoint a headteacher with the skills to continue academy development? How can we ensure that the leadership is secure when key leaders are out of action? Who will facilitate finding acting headteachers for us to consider?	Academies are tied into a seven-year funding agreement. The decision to become an academy cannot be reversed.	
Sustainability of governors and trustees	Do governors have the capacity to be effective trustees as well as governors? How likely is it that the level of skills and commitment can be maintained as governors and trustees retire?	A Governance Handbook is available for trustees of academies, and multi-academy trusts and governors of maintained schools.	
Changing role of clerk and administrative staff	How keen are staff who would have to take on new responsibilities, for example, secretary to the governing body and those dealing with finance? Do they have the appropriate skills? Will they require additional training and more time to complete additional tasks?		

Academy Conversion – The Application Process

When you have considered the differences and implications above, you are advised to consider the additional work and costs involved in making an application. The process is outlined below so that you can take this into account in your recommendation.

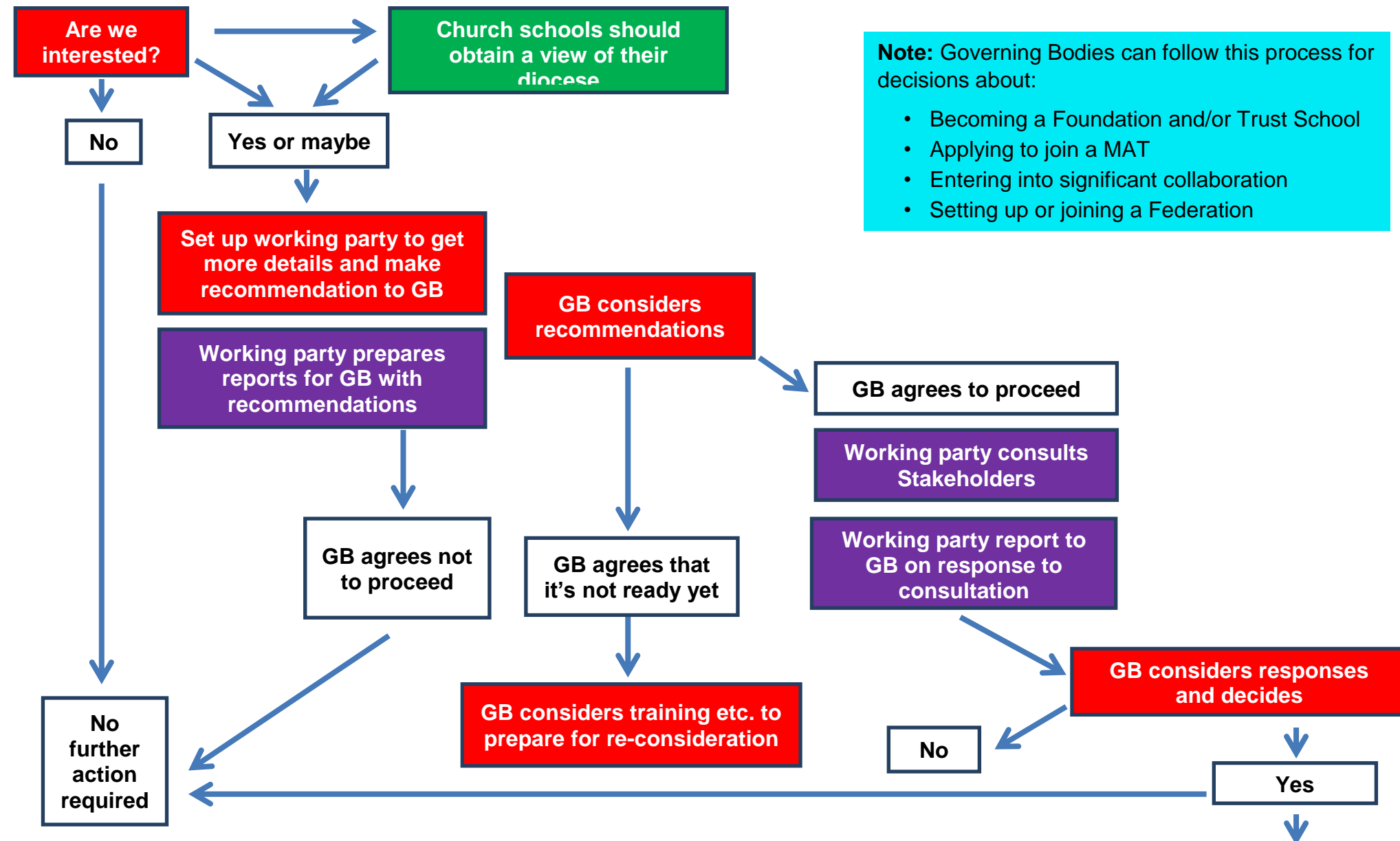
Note: Schools seeking academy status will receive a one-off grant of £25K. Governing bodies will need to consider whether the school and governing body have the capacity to complete the application and how might the one-off grant be spent to increase capacity? It will be essential to agree who or what group will be involved in each aspect of the application process.

In addition, the LA will also charge schools (who convert on a voluntary basis) for work undertaken by LA Officers for the purpose of conversion.

Prior to application	By whom?	With whom?	Notes including estimated time required	Indicative costs
Consultation	Governing Body	Stakeholders – see above		
Report on responses leading to governing body decision	Governing Body	All governors		

Prior to application	By whom?	With whom?	Notes including estimated time required	Indicative costs
Seek formal agreement from Trustees/Foundation and the body responsible for appointing foundation governors for example the diocese	Governing Body	Trustees/Foundation and the body responsible for appointing foundation governors	Only required if school is Foundation, Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled	
Submit online application to convert (to academy) form	Governing Body	DfE	DfE will assign a Civil Servant to advise and assist the governing body through the conversion process	
Start TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) consultation and negotiation	Trust/Governing Body	Unions, LA, and staff	Please see paragraph 3 of this policy.	
Seek Secretary of State approval and Academy Conversion Order.	Secretary of State	Governing Body		

Prior to application	By whom?	With whom?	Notes including estimated time required	Indicative costs
Completion of registration form to register the Academy as part of a MAT	Trust/Governing Body	DfE		
Establish Trust – Memorandum and Articles of Association	Trust/Governing Body		These documents will need to then be posted on the school's website	
Register the Academy Trust with the Charity Commission	Trust	Charity Commission		
Agree land and building leasing arrangements with the Foundation/Trust/LA	Trust Solicitors	Foundation/Trust/LA		
Agree asset and property transfer arrangements	Trust Solicitors	Foundation/Trust/LA		
Ensure all required consultation has been undertaken	Trust/GB/LA	LA	All considerations and decisions must be recorded in the governing body minutes	
Complete TUPE process	Trust/LA/Governing Body	Unions, staff, and LA		
Sign Funding Agreement – legally binding for 7 years	Academy Trust	Secretary of State	Funding Agreement will state when the Academy opens and the date of conversion. This is the date when the LA will cease to maintain the converting school	



Appendix B

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX School Consultation on the proposal to apply for Academy status

As you will know, the government is encouraging schools such as ours to apply to join a Multi Academy Trust. The Governing Body set up a working party to consider the differences and implications.

It has been recommended that we consult on a proposal to move to join or form a MAT. When we are considering significant changes, we always take into account the views of our stakeholders and this is what we are now doing.

The Governing Body has not made the decision on whether to apply to join or form a Multi Academy Trust. We are interested to hear and consider the views of stakeholders before we make a final decision.

The working party consider the following factors to be significant advantages which will lead to benefits for pupils at the school.	
The main things that the school would do differently if it were to become an academy are: (Include here any proposed changes in the arrangements for the curriculum, for special educational needs, for pupil discipline, exclusion and for complaints....)	
There are a number of things that will remain unchanged. These are: (....and confirmation that there will be no change in the admissions arrangements)	

The working party identified the following possible disadvantages:	
We believe that we can avoid or overcome them in the following ways:	
Services that the school would need to purchase either separately or via the Trust Examples may include:	Anticipated cost per year
• Legal Services	
• Insurance	
• Licences	
• Property Services	

There are additional costs associated with the following features of academies

See examples below	Anticipated cost per year
Academies are subject to charity law	
Academies are liable for VAT	

There are additional costs associated with increased freedoms and responsibilities.

Freedom	Responsibility	Estimated additional costs per year
Control of own premises	Pay for professional premises advice	
Direct employer of staff	Pay for all HR services and payroll	
Control own admissions	Pay for all admissions appeals	

The working party considered whether the school has the capacity to complete all the processes which would be required if the Governing Body were to agree to make an application to join a MAT.

There will be a grant of £25K to help with this but the costs we have estimated are:

A few examples are shown below	Estimated cost
• Land transfer	
• Legal advice	
• Administration of application process	
• Cost of rebranding, signage etc.	
• LA charges	
Total cost	
Net cost (subtract £25K grant)	

<p>The school recognises that it has a responsibility, shared with all other schools in its locality, for the young people and families in the area. We would seek to work with other schools and agencies in the following ways:</p>	
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The consultation process will run from (date) to (date).

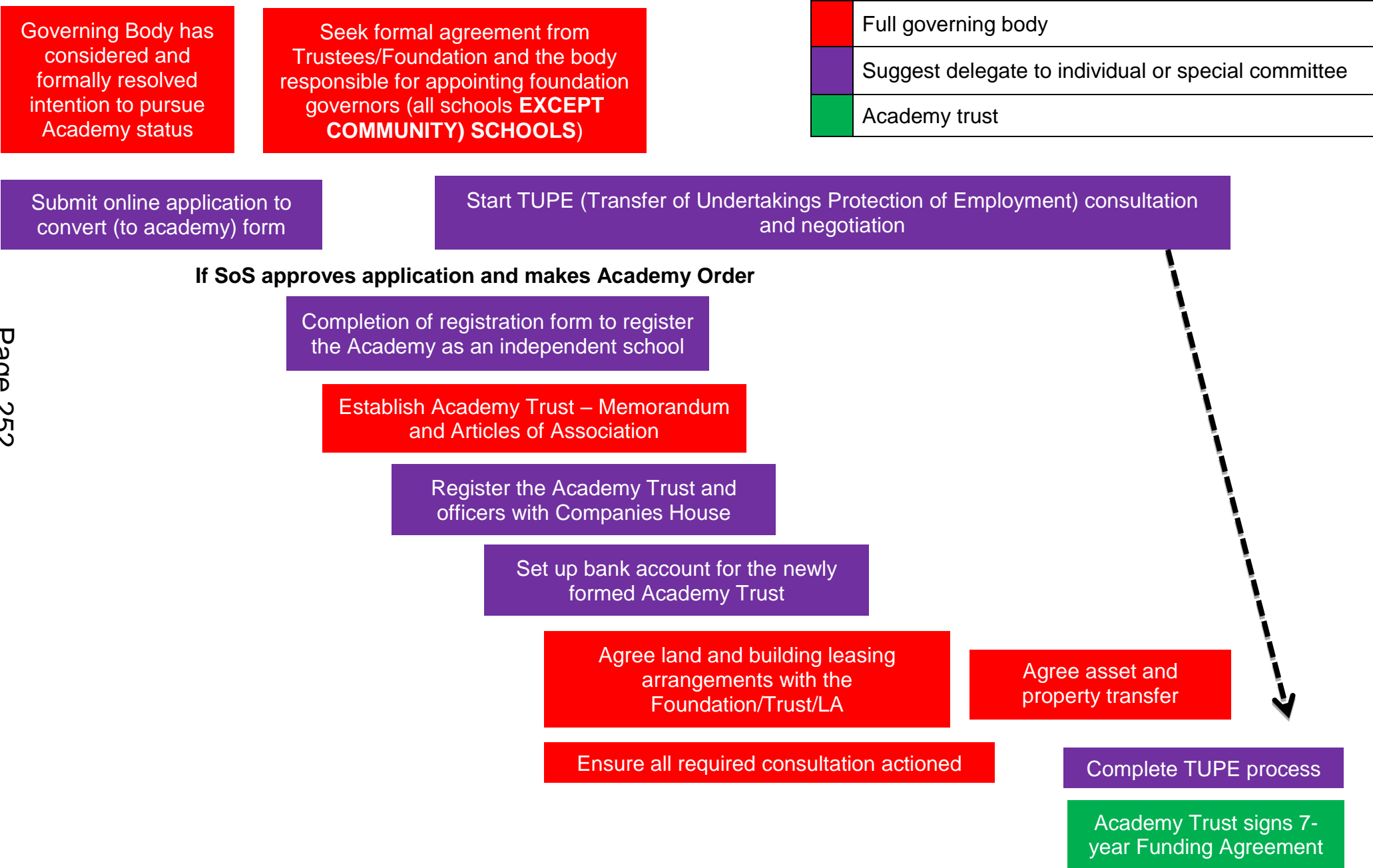
If you have any comments on these proposals, please provide them in writing and send them to:

The Governing Body plans to consider the outcomes of this consultation at its meeting on.....date.

Signed

Chair of Governors

The Process From Resolution To Conversion



POLICY ADOPTION AND REVISION DETAILS			
LEAD ADVISER	Andy Collinge	NEXT REVIEW DUE	
SIGNED BY LA DATE	October 2022	L.A	October 2023

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PART A Report to CABINET

Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Moores, Cabinet Member for Children & Young people

Officer Contact: Gerard Jones, Managing Director of Children and Young People (DSC).

Report Author: Paula Healey, Head of Early Years

Ext. paula.healey@oldham.gov.uk . 07875235198

23rd January 2023

Reason for Decision

The purpose of the report is to explain the principles and objectives of the Government's Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme and to seek approval to receive associated funding from the Department for Education and Department of Social Care to support transition to the new model.

Authorisation is also sought to delegate authority to agree all spending decisions related to the Family Hubs to the Director of Education and Early Years and the Director of Public Health after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, noting the role of a new Early Years and Early Help strategic partnership and the Children's Transformation Board in this process.

Executive Summary

Oldham is one of seventy-five local authorities pre-selected by the Department for Education (DfE) for the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme. Oldham is set to receive an indicative allocation of £3.48 million over three financial years of 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25. The Oldham sign up form attached to this report details spending priorities identified for Oldham for this period. A comprehensive delivery plan detailing

indicative costings is currently being completed with partners for submission to the DfE by the 31 December 2022 for final approval.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- the content of the report is noted and that approval is given to accept Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme funding from Government as indicated in para 2.5.
- authority to make all spending decisions relating to Family Hubs and the Start for Life Programme (including key decisions) be delegated to the Director of Education, Skills and Early Years and the Director of Public Health, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People
- authority be delegated to the Director of Education, Skills and Early Years and the Director of Public Health to award contracts stemming from a compliant procurement process and authority be delegated to the Director of Legal Services to sign/seal such contracts and any necessary incidental and/or ancillary documents.

Cabinet – Part A - 23rd January 2023
Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme, 2022-2025

1 Background

1 Background Summary

- 1.1 In April 2022 the Department for Education (DfE) announced that Oldham was one of 75 upper tier local authorities eligible for government funding to deliver Start for Life and Family Hub services over the next three financial years.
- 1.2 Family hubs aim to make a positive difference to parents, carers, and their children by providing a mix of physical and virtual spaces, as well as outreach, where families can easily access non-judgemental support for the challenges they may be facing. They integrate services across health (physical and mental health) and social care as well as voluntary and community organisations and education settings.

2.0 Current Position

2.1 the current position is detailed within the Part B restricted part of this report.

3. Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 Option 1: Approve the recommendations set out in the report
- Approve the receipt of the Family Hubs and Start for Life funding to support the transition to more integrated and accessible services that provide support to parents and carers and contribute to a reduction in inequalities in health and education outcomes for babies, children and families
 - Approve authority to make all spending decisions relating to Family Hubs and the Start for Life Programme (including key decisions) be delegated to the Director of Education, Skills and Early Years and the Director of Public Health, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People
 - Approve authority be delegated to the Director of Education, Skills and Early Years and the Director of Public Health to award contracts stemming from a compliant procurement process and authority be delegated to the Director of Legal Services to sign/seal such contracts and any necessary incidental and/or ancillary documents.
- 3.2 Option 2: Do nothing. This will result in loss of funding for Oldham to deliver the Family Hub & Start for Life Programme

4 Preferred Option / Recommendation

- 4.1 Option 1 is the preferred option because:
- additional funding is needed to affect a smooth transition to the new model of service delivery. Failure to accept the indicative funding that is being made available to the Council will seriously impede ability to implement an improved service offer as set out in the report for Oldham's children and families
 - a speedy approval process for project spend is needed to ensure the programme is delivered to local and DfE timescales; and that all DfE programme reporting requirements are met.

5 Consultation

5.1 The sign-up form, which sets out programme priorities was developed through consultation with a wider range of partners from across the Council, Health and the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector over a series of individual and focus group discussions and a Stakeholder event held on the 17 October 2022.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 Financial Implications are contained within the Part B restricted part of this report.

7 Legal Services Comments

7.1 Legal comments are contained within the Part B restricted part of this report.

8. Co-operative Agenda

8.1 The Family Hubs will make a positive difference to parents, carers, and their children by providing access to a range of integrated support services for the challenges they may be facing. This will develop skills and knowledge, enabling families to help children get the best start in life. As such the proposal aligns with the aims of the Council's Co-operative agenda (Thriving Communities theme).

9 Human Resources Comments

9.1 Human Resources comments are contained within the Part B restricted part of this report.

10 Risk Assessments

10.1 Risk Assessment comments are contained within the Part B restricted part of this report.

11 IT Implications

11.1 None

12 Property Implications

12.1 Property Implications are contained within the Part B restricted part of this report.

13 Procurement Implications

13.1 Procurement Implications are contained within the Part B restricted part of this report.

14 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

14.1 None

15 Equality, community cohesion and crime implications

15.1 None

16 Equality Impact Assessment Completed?

16.1 No

17 Key Decision

17.1 Yes

18 Key Decision Reference

18.1 CHS-01-23.

The Chair of Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor McLaren, authorized the approval of a 'Rule 13' form on 18th January 2023, allowing this item to be considered as a 'late item' insofar as it was allowed onto the agenda after the publication of the agenda.

19 Background Papers

19.1 Reference to Background Papers are included within the Part B restricted part of this report.

20 Appendices

20.1 Appendices are contained within the Part B restricted part of this report.

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