

POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21/03/2023 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor McLaren (Chair)
Councillors Alyas, Dean, Harrison, C. Phythian, Wilkinson and
Williamson

Also in Attendance:

Councillor Roberts – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
Anna Da Silva – Chief Executive (Northern Roots)
Paul Clifford – Director of Economy
Andy Hunt – Green Energy and Sustainability Manager
Neil Consterdine – Assistant Director Youth, Leisure and
Communities
Gerard Jones – Managing Director, Children and Young People
Amanda Youlden – Post 16 Lead Officer
Peter Thompson – Constitutional Services

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Barnes.

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 for this meeting of the
Committee to consider.

5 **MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Overview and
Scrutiny Committee, held on 19th January 2023, 26th January
2023 and 7th February 2023, be approved as correct records.

6 **NORTHERN ROOTS**

The Committee received a presentation from the Chief
Executive of Northern Roots regarding the progress that had
been made with the development of the Northern Roots (NR)
project since November 2021, when this matter was last before
the Committee.

Members were informed of the three main goals of Northern
Roots which were:

1. Creating jobs, training and business opportunities for
local people.
2. Preserving and enhancing biodiversity and the
environment at Northern Roots 160-acre site.
3. Improving the health and wellbeing of local residents and
communities.

Committee Members were advised that the project had been instigated by Oldham Council following 3 years of feasibility, consultation and planning. The NR Charity had recently been established and a small base had been set up on site. £7 million of external funding had been received to date with another Million being bid for. The project had received 100% fund success rate which had never been seen before. There had been a lot of engagement with the public and other organisations including four groups helping to clear the site of litter.

To take the project further a design team had been appointed and a planning application was submitted and approved, early in 2022. Subsequently outline building work was able to begin in spring 2022 with phase 1 of the build commencing in Autumn 2022.

Members asked for and received clarification on the following:

- Did the project have any business sponsors. It was confirmed that some businesses including Park Cakes, United Utilities and Manchester Cabins had become sponsors as grant funding could not be relied upon on its own.
- Site visit for Members. It was noted that a visit would be arranged for Members.

Resolved:

1. That the presentation be noted.
2. That a site visit, to the Northern Roots facility, be requested for Committee Members during the summer months of 2023.
3. That a further update report, on the Northern Roots project, be submitted to the Committee in approximately 12 months.

7

OLDHAM GREEN NEW DEAL DELIVERY PARTNERSHIP

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Economy that provide provided members with an update on work that was ongoing to develop an Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership with the objective of securing investment in, and delivery of, low carbon infrastructure across Oldham borough as set out in Oldham's Local Area Energy Plan.

An Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership has the potential to cut carbon emissions in the borough, working towards the 2030 carbon neutrality target, that was set out in the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy, and additionally to bring significant co-benefits such as jobs, training opportunities, lower energy bills and other environmental and economic outcomes in the medium term, which are declared objectives of the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy.

The Committee was informed that the Oldham Green New Deal (OGND) Strategy had been adopted by the Council in March 2020. The Strategy set a number of objectives and pledges for delivery on environmental issues in a range of work areas,

which broadly fit into three over-arching 'pillars':- Growing the green economy; Low carbon infrastructure and a Local Energy Market: and thirdly Northern Roots.



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The OGND Strategy also established two carbon neutrality targets, namely: For Council Buildings and Street Lighting by 2025; and for the whole of the borough by 2030.

The most recent data available showed that in 2020, overall emissions for the borough fell by 9% on the previous year to 708 ktCO₂. The publication of the figures for 2020 also showed that Oldham achieved the target of a 48% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 on a 1990 baseline set out in the Oldham Climate Change Strategy 2013-2020 – in fact, a reduction of 51% on the 1990 baseline was achieved. Oldham retains its position within Greater Manchester as the borough with both the lowest total carbon footprint and also lowest per capita emissions at 3.0 tCO₂ per Oldham resident. Emissions for Council Buildings and Street Lighting fell to 7,445 tCO₂ in 2021/22, which is a reduction of 8% on the figure for 2020/21 and of 11% on the baseline of 8,395 tCO₂ in the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy.

Of the 7,445 tCO₂ Council carbon footprint for 21/22, 4,039 tCO₂ were from electricity. This means that if the Council were to switch to a zero-carbon electricity tariff (such as nuclear or renewable energy), our remaining carbon footprint would be 3,406 tCO₂, mainly from gas with 17 tCO₂ from water use. This residual carbon footprint will need to be offset by 2025 to meet the carbon neutrality target for Council Buildings and Street Lighting set out in the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy. The Council is currently exploring the most appropriate options for its overall energy purchasing, purchasing of a zero-carbon electricity tariff, and offsetting of its residual carbon footprint. A copy of the full Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report for 2021/22 was enclosed at Appendix A of the Committee's report.

Resolved:

1. That the Committee notes and endorses the progress on the five key complementary strategic initiatives: -
 - a. Growing the green economy and Oldham Green Business Network
 - b. Oldham Energy Futures and Community Led Energy Plans
 - c. Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership – stage 2 market engagement
 - d. GM Strategic Outline Business Case development & BEIS Heat Network Zoning pilots
 - e. Innovate UK Net Zero Living Pioneer Places
2. The Committee requests that a further report, detailing progress on the development of the Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Plan be presented to the Committee in approximately 12 months.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Education that updated Members on the current Participation and NEET (not in education, employment or training) rates together with a summary on activity during the past 12 months and plans for the future to ensure that Oldham Council and relevant partner agencies, are shaping and influencing opportunities where possible for 16 - 18-year-olds in the Borough.

The Local Authority continued to fulfil its duties around encouraging, enabling and assisting young people to participate in education or training and tracking those aged 16 and 17 through the commission of the targeted support offer delivered by Positive Steps, this included some dedicated resource for the SEND (EHC plans) and Children Looked After (CLA) cohort. The commission had been extended for a further year.

The Authority's approach across partners in Oldham was to ensure that young people could access the advice and support they require; that they have opportunities available and to engage with the young people to hear their voices and respond as best possible.

The Committee's report updated Members on current Participation and NEET rates together with a summary on activity planned in the future to ensure that we are shaping and influencing where possible for 16–18-year-olds.

The latest reported data (December 2022) reports that 93.71%-year 12s were participating in some form of EET, this rate has seen a slight decrease over the past 12 months. However, the data highlighted the significantly lower rate of participation for the Y13 cohort. It was highlighted that the current Y13 cohort were the cohort most significantly affected by school closures during the Covid-19 pandemic, and it's continued effects on our young people was still being felt by these young people. Concerns about wellbeing, in particular loneliness, dissatisfaction with life, stress, anxiety, boredom and concerns about the future all continue to affect young people and their levels of engagement and motivation.

The Committee was informed that the actual cohort numbers fluctuated month by month across the year, but the average annual cohort number for Y12/13 combined was 6401.

It was not unusual, Members were advised, to see participation drop in the autumn term and so it was in 2022/23. The drop was also partly attributable to a new cohort of young people transitioning to a new environment, but the data shows a significant drop in participation for the Y13 cohort who continued to struggle to re-engage following the pandemic and re-adjust to a return to participation in person, some struggling with their mental health. The Authority has noted a particular issue in the Autumn term where a significant number of Y13 students just did not return to the second year of their course. The careers advisors working with the NEET cohort work closely to re-engage them in EET or local engagement programmes and it

was expected that some positive engagements during January 2023 which would be reflected in the February 2023 data.



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The Connect to Your Future programme funded GMCA provided an additional support offer for these young people. Teams were able to refer and sign up significant numbers to work with a careers coach or mentor with some excellent outcomes, providing us with evidence that if capacity is available to undertake the work and a young person was willing to engage and take on the practical and emotional support that a mentor can offer, they are able to re-engage in positive activity.

Increasing youth unemployment was an area of concern nationally and locally. Oldham's youth unemployment rate was particularly unsatisfactory, and the gap between the NEET rate and youth unemployment required some work to understand the disparity.

Members of the Committee were advised that the societal impact of unemployment was well-documented, as was the negative impact on life chances for the long-term unemployed. Supporting young people to encourage participation in EET and to prevent an increase in 16- to 18-year-olds becoming NEET, was therefore central to our strategies for addressing disadvantage in Oldham and to prevent longer term disengagement and unemployment. This will continue to be an area of significant focus in our plans and the emerging Work and Skills Partnership will strategically drive this work and Post 16 participation will be a key indicator and work stream.

Resolved:

1. That the Committee notes the current landscape and experiences of 16 - 18-year old's which is impacting on their Participation in education, employment or training.
2. That a further report, detailing progress on this matter, be submitted to the Committee in approximately 12 months.

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RECOMMENDATIONS OF TASK & FINISH SCRUTINY GROUP ON PBI

The Committee received a report of the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and the Deputy Chief Executive which reported the findings of a Task and Finish Scrutiny Study Group into Place Based Integration (PBI). Placed Based working is a key area of transformation within the Corporate Plan aiming to deliver more and more locally, across the Borough's five districts. The Committee's report updated Members on current progress along with some future suggested areas of exploration to check on progress of implementation.

PBI was a person-centred, 'bottom-up' approach used to meet the unique needs of people in one given location. This could be achieved by public and community services working together utilising the best available resources whilst collaborating to share local knowledge and insight. By working in partnership with residents, it aimed to build a picture of the system from a local perspective, taking an asset-based approach that

highlights the strengths, capacity, and knowledge of all individuals and groups involved.



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To date Oldham's PBI approach had been iterative, based on testing and learning. In September 2021 a deep dive report was presented to the Council's Leadership group on the role of district working and place-based integration. This provided the background and current position of district working/PBI across the Oldham Borough and its evolution over the past 10 years. The discussion with Elected Members were positive, focused, as they were, on the need to progress the implementation of PBI, particularly operational arrangements and local governance.

Place Based Working/Integration was a key area of work under the Council's public service reform transformation programme and Corporate Plan. In September 2022, the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed the terms of reference of a task group to investigate Council Policy and Implementation of Place Based Integration. Thematic key areas were agreed for the task group to discuss along with officer support.

Resolved:

1. That the Committee notes and endorses the progress that the Study Group is making regarding the roll-out and implementation of Place Based Integration.
2. That a further report on progress be submitted to the Committee in approximately 12months.

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GENERAL EXCEPTION AND SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS REPORT

The Committee received a report which detailed decisions that have been taken under Rules 13 and 14 of the Council's Constitution since 22nd November 2022.

Resolved that the report be noted.

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POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

The Committee considered its Work Programme for 2022/23.

Resolved:

That the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme 2022/23, be noted.

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KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT

The Committee reviewed the Key Decision Notice which provided an opportunity for the identification of items or policy or service development, not otherwise listed on the Committee Work Programme.

Resolved:

That the report and the Key Decision Notice be noted.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 8.15pm