

**Present:** Councillor Shah (in the Chair)  
Councillors M Ali, Brownridge, Dean, Goodwin, F Hussain,  
Mushtaq and Taylor

1           **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jabbar.

2           **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3           **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Brownridge declared a 'registerable interest' in agenda items 13 and 17 (Northern Roots - Contract Award and Next Steps for Phased Delivery), by virtue of the fact that she was a Council appointed Trustee of Northern Roots. Councillor Brownridge left the room during the consideration of these agenda items.

4           **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions for this Cabinet meeting to consider.

5           **MINUTES**

Resolved:  
That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024 be approved as a correct record.

6           **SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Resolved:  
That the minutes of the meeting of the Shareholder Committee, held 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024 be approved, as a correct record.

7           **OLDHAM TOWN CENTRE BUILT HERITAGE PROJECT**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Economy, which outlined a project to develop a clear vision and delivery plan incorporating surveys and appraisals of a minimum of five heritage buildings. The aim was to increase the understanding of at-risk heritage buildings with the objective of enabling their restoration and repurposing back into viable uses.

The delivery of the project aligned with the Creating a Better Place framework to regenerate and enhance Oldham town centre and across the wider borough.

The Cabinet was advised that the listed and heritage buildings in Oldham town centre make a positive contribution to the town's character. However, the historic nature of the buildings and associated high costs to repurpose has discouraged their renovation and occupation leading to their declining use and creating a heritage deficit. The recommendations contained in this report seek to unlock these obstacles by setting out a clear pathway to understand the costs to refurbish, repurpose and

align future uses to provide a sustainable economic and social value.



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The proposed Heritage Vision and Asset Delivery Plan responds to the concerns of the local community about the deterioration of Oldham town centre heritage assets, obtained during public conversations and consultations including Oldham's Big Conversation; the Oldham Town Centre Vision linked to the Creating a Better Place strategic regeneration framework; and meetings of the Oldham High Street Partnership (since February 2024) and Oldham Town Centre Board (since February 2020).

Options/alternatives considered:

Option 1: to accept the external revenue grants offered by Historic England and Greater Manchester Combined Authority. This will commit the Council to providing revenue funding to the maximum value of £100,000 for spend by 31 March 2026.

Option 2: decline the offer of external grants from Historic England and Greater Manchester Combined Authority. This would lead to there being insufficient budget to proceed with the project and increase hurdles to the future use and occupation of the heritage buildings in the town centre.

Preferred Option: Option 1.

Resolved:

The Cabinet authorises the following:

1. The delivery of a project to survey a minimum of five heritage buildings in Oldham town centre and generate a new strategic vision and delivery plan for these assets by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.
2. The acceptance of a revenue grant worth £200,000 from Historic England.
3. The acceptance of a revenue grant worth £100,000 from Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
4. The Council to provide match funding towards the external grants at a ratio of 25% subject to a maximum Council commitment of £100,000.
5. The delegation of approval to the Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham in consultation with the Director of Economy, the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, the Director of Finance (or their appointed nominees) to:
  - (i) appoint external advisors (for the provision of professional services) up to contract value of £400,000 in accordance with the Council's procurement procedures and
  - (ii) select the buildings which are to be part of the project.
6. The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer or his nominated representative to sign and/or affix the Common Seal of the Council to all the documents and associated or ancillary documents referred to above and/or required to give effect to the recommendations in this report.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Public Health that sought approval for the award of the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSFE) infrastructure grant of £270,500 per annum to Action Together CIO and for a grant funding agreement to be entered into with Action Together CIO under which the total funding of total £811,500 would be provided for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028 (3 years).

The Cabinet was informed that the Council had, for a number of years, provided grant funding to Action Together CIO (AT) in contribution to a project designed and delivered by AT under which free support is provided to a range of voluntary, community and faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector organisations. The grant is funded through the Council's Priority Programme Fund (PPF). The grant funding includes VCFSE infrastructure provision.

AT provided a range of VCFSE infrastructure support in Oldham, as well as in both Tameside and Rochdale. They also play a prominent role in the leadership of the sector at a Greater Manchester level through 10GM and the GM VCFSE Leadership Group which champions the role of communities in devolution. Further, AT has an influential voice within these forums, which contributes to Oldham's co-operative ambition to influence across the Greater Manchester city region.

In considering the report the Cabinet expressed their gratitude to the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Dean, the Director of Public Health and her staff and to Action Together for the work involved in the compilation of this report.

Options/alternatives considered:

Option 1 - Cabinet approves the award of the VCFSE infrastructure grant of £811,500 (£270,500 per year) to Action Together CIO (subject to a satisfactory subsidy control assessment), and authority is given for the Council to enter into a suitable form of grant funding agreement with Action Together CIO for a period of three years (1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028), as detailed in this report. The grant funding agreement would be drafted by Legal Services on standard terms and conditions and subject to a fit for purpose project specification. Also, Cabinet approves the Borough Solicitor carries out all necessary legal formalities. The grant does not cover the full costs of delivery and represents a real term cut year on year taking into account the increase of costs. Given the limitations of the funding available the agreement should ensure continued focus on core provision of community development, volunteering and strategic representation. The option would provide medium-term continuity of provision and strategic support for the wider VCFSE sector.

Option 2 – The VCFSE Infrastructure Grant is renewed for a further one year (1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028) at the same level. This would be out of line with current NAVCA best practice and commitment in the Greater Manchester GM VCFSE Accord.

The short-term nature of the agreement may impact on the level and quality of support available for the wider VCFSE sector. Option 3 – Do not award the infrastructure grant. This is not regarded as a viable option as there would be a loss of infrastructure support to the VCFSE sector in Oldham. This would impact upon the capacity of the sector to develop and grow, the recruitment and placement of volunteers, and opportunities for securing external funding.

Preferred Option: Option One.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approves the recommendation that a VCFSE infrastructure grant of £811,500 to Action Together CIO is approved (subject to a satisfactory subsidy control assessment), and that authority is given for the Council to enter into a suitable form of grant funding agreement with Action Together CIO for a period of three years (1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028), as detailed in this report. The grant funding agreement would be drafted by Legal Services on standard terms and conditions and subject to a fit for purpose project specification.
2. Cabinet is also asked to grant approval for the Borough Solicitor, or his nominated representative, to carry out all necessary legal formalities.

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### **ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDING ALLOCATIONS 2024-2025 FOR OLDHAM LIFELONG LEARNING SERVICE**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Education, Early Years and Skills which sought the acceptance of the funding allocation for the academic year 2024/2025 for the Lifelong Learning Service.

The submitted report detailed the funding offer received from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in respect of the Adult Education Budget grant for the 2024/2025 academic year and highlighted how this funding will be used to meet GMCA's and the Council's key priorities.

The Cabinet were informed that following devolution of the Adult Education Budget, the Council's Lifelong Learning Service is now funded by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (prior to devolution this was directly awarded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency). The Service is designed to meet the GMCA Strategy, the Council's ambition and key objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan and to support the Oldham Partnership Our Future. The Service works with the 5 district partnerships with a focus upon the Council's 'Get Oldham Working' campaign and the Co-operative Agenda. The funding will support the Service to specifically assist the Council to deliver outcomes against the Healthier, Happier Lives corporate mission.

Options/alternatives considered:

Option 1: To accept the funding and to enter into suitable funding agreements.

Option 2: To decline the funding.

Preferred Option: Option 1.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet accepts the Adult Education funding offer from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority for the academic year 2024/2025.

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### **OLDHAM'S MONITORING REPORT 2023/24**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Economy that sought approval for the publication of the Oldham's Monitoring Report (AMR) 2023/2024.

Under Regulation 34 and 35 of The Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, local planning authorities must make monitoring information available for inspection as soon as possible after the information becomes available. The Monitoring Report covers the previous financial year that is 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. In terms of housing land supply, the Monitoring Report presents the position as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

Oldham's Monitoring Report was attached at Appendix One to the submitted report. In line with the Regulations the Monitoring Report provided details on whether the council is meeting the milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) for preparing the various Local Plan documents. Performance is monitored against the LDS that was in place at the start of the monitoring period. The Monitoring Report also monitors a range of planning indicators, such as housing, employment and biodiversity, which seek to assess the effectiveness of the council's land-use planning policies, and whether they are achieving their objectives and delivering sustainable development. The submitted report was Oldham Council's 20<sup>th</sup> Monitoring Report.

Options/alternatives considered:

Option 1 – To approve the authorities Monitoring Report and send it to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). (Advantages – approving the Monitoring Report will help with implementing and reviewing our local planning policies, whilst also being transparent and meets the requirements of the regulations). (Disadvantages – there are no disadvantages to approving the Monitoring Report and sending it to MHCLG.)

Option 2 – To not approve the authorities Monitoring Report 2023 – 2024 and not send it to MHCLG. (Advantages – there are no advantages in not approving the Monitoring Report.) (Disadvantages – not approving the Monitoring Report could result in less certainty and confidence in developments coming forward and would result in us not meeting the regulations.)

Preferred Option: Option 1.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet approves the Monitoring Report 2023/2024 for publication.

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### **DEMOLITION OF OFFICE BLOCK 1, SOUTHLINK,**

## **OLDHAM**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Economy which advised Members that in February 2020, the Council, via a delegated decision, had approved, the demolition of Office Block 1 at Southlink. The submitted report updated Members on the latest position and sought re-approval to demolish the vacant building.

The Cabinet had approved Vistry Partnership to develop land at Southlink following the completion of a competitive land sale process in October 2024. Vistry were to deliver 146 affordable homes, including 32 at Social Rent, on the Southlink site which includes the land in question.

Options/alternatives considered:

The options were detailed in the confidential report.

Resolved:

that the Cabinet will consider the confidential recommendations, in the report, at agenda item 15.

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## **SELECTION OF PREFERRED DEVELOPER**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Economy that sought to appoint Rowland Homes to develop land at South Chadderton following the completion of a competitive land sale process. Rowland's will deliver 149 homes, including 60 affordable homes with 15 for Social Rent. All homes were to be constructed to the low carbon 'Future Homes Standard'.

Options/alternatives considered:

The options were detailed in the confidential report.

Resolved:

that the Cabinet will consider the confidential recommendations, in the report, at agenda item 16.

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## **NORTHERN ROOTS - CONTRACT AWARD AND NEXT STEPS FOR PHASED DELIVERY**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Economy and the Chief Executive of the Northern Roots Charity, which advised that the Cabinet had previously approved the Northern Roots project/masterplan (2019) and acceptance of external funding allocations: namely Town Deal Fund (Cabinet 14 November 2022) and Levelling Up Round 2 (20 March 2023) grant awards, where allocations have been ringfenced for a new visitor centre and forestry skills centre.

With planning approvals in place for the proposals, the submitted report sought to draw down the funds and award a construction contract with Wilmott Dixon Construction, WDC so that the works can start on site. A fully compliant procurement process undertaken to award WDC a pre-construction services agreement (PCSA, 18 September 2023) and through this work WDC have confirmed a lump sum for the works, (which has been reviewed and verified by the Council's cost estimator) and

this is within the external budget allocation. The legal, commercial, and technical details of the contract award were set out in Part B of this report.



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Cabinet members were also asked to note that the delivery of the works set out in this report would act as an enabler and facilitator to further works at the site, to delivered by the Northern Roots Charity and funded from other external funding sources awarded directly to the charity.

In considering the report Cabinet Members expressed their gratitude to Northern Roots for their valuable work in the community.

Options/alternatives considered:

The options were detailed in the confidential report.

Resolved:

that the Cabinet will consider the confidential recommendations, in the report, at agenda item 17.

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#### **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:

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 five items of business, on the grounds that they contain exempt information under paragraph 3 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and it would not, on balance, be in the public interest to disclose the reports.

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#### **DEMOLITION OF OFFICE BLOCK 1, SOUTHLINK, OLDHAM**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 11: Demolition of Office Block 1, Southlink, Oldham.

Resolved:

Approval be granted for the demolition of Office Block 1, Southlink, Oldham, with a budget estimate of £270,000.

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#### **SELECTION OF PREFERRED DEVELOPER**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 12: Selection of Preferred Developer.

Resolved:

That Rowland Homes be selected for the purchase for the former South Chadderton School Site, Butterworth Lane, Chadderton.

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#### **NORTHERN ROOTS - CONTRACT AWARD AND NEXT STEPS FOR PHASED DELIVERY**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 13: Northern Roots – Contract Award and Next Steps for Phased Delivery.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet:

1. Notes the progress to date within the report and the various objectives to be achieved by the progression of the Northern Roots project
2. Approves the draw down of the allocated external grant awards to progress with the visitor centre, skills centre and associated works at the site.
3. Approves awarding a Stage 2 design and build contract to Willmott Dixon Construction Limited to undertake the contract works as set out in this report. Noting robust monitoring of the works to ensure delivery on time, within budget and to the required standards to meet the funding criteria/objectives.
4. Agrees to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) in consultation with Portfolio holders, the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer to approve the procurement and appointment of sub-contractors and service providers to supply any works, supplies or services needed to deliver the project.
5. Agrees to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) in consultation with Portfolio holders, the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, or his nominated representative, to progress leasing/licensing arrangements to facilitate delivery of the capital build and delivery of the masterplan.
6. Agrees to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) in consultation with Borough Solicitor, or his nominated representative, to reset the governance arrangements with the Northern Roots Charity to ensure effective working relationships, effective management of the site, and monitoring of the required objectives.

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**INCLUSION FOR OLDHAM MUMPS, PRINCESS GATE INTO THE TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP - PLACE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Economy that set out the position in respect of the recommendations presented by the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board at their meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024, where the Cabinet Report 'Inclusion for Oldham Mumps, Princess Gate into the Town Centre Development Partnership', that was presented to the Cabinet's meeting on dated 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and which was then subject to review through the Councils Call In Process.

The Cabinet considered the Director of Economy's report and the recommendations presented by the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board. Following consideration of the content of the Director of Economy's report, the Cabinet agreed to endorse their original recommendations, which were set out in the Cabinet meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (minute 14 refers).

Resolved:



1. That the Cabinet Members approve the inclusion of the Oldham Mumps into the Master Development Agreement (dated 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023) via a Supplementary Agreement to ensure MUSE's obligations and timescales for stratifying the core sites are maintained.
2. That the Cabinet agrees to delegate authority to the Leader, Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and to the Interim Borough Solicitor to agree the final details and then finalise the supplemental agreement with Muse.
3. That the Cabinet agree to delegate authority to the Leader, Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and Director of Finance to review all legal, financial and commercial details, ahead of entering into relevant agreements to support pre-development partnership costs (up to £5 Million).

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### **SCHOOL CATERING REVIEW**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Economy that set out the position in respect of the recommendations presented by the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board at their meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024, where the Cabinet Report 'School Catering Review', that was presented to the Cabinet's meeting on dated 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and which was subject to review through the Councils Call In Process.

The Cabinet considered the Director of Economy's report and the recommendations presented by the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board. Following consideration of the content of the Director of Economy's report, the Cabinet agreed to endorse their original recommendations, which were set out in the Cabinet meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (minute 11 refers – Catering Review Implementation).

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet approve the transition of the school catering provision from Oldham Education Catering Service to schools through a comprehensive and supportive change management process.
2. That the Cabinet approve the withdrawal of the OECS from the school meal provider market no later than September 2025.

The meeting started at 4.00pm and ended at 4.20pm