

Report to COUNCIL

Climate Change and Green Oldham

Portfolio Holder:

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

Officer Contact: Strategic Director of Reform

Report Author: Andrew Hunt, Strategy Partnerships and Policy Manager (Environment)

Ext. 6587

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Reason for Decision

Report is for information only.

Executive Summary

This is a report to update the Council on Oldham's progress on tackling climate change and other environmental issues over the last few years, and our current ongoing commitments to the agenda, as well as the benefits these activities bring to Oldham residents and businesses.

Recommendations

That the Council notes:-

- The progress Oldham has made to date in tackling climate change and other environmental issues;
- Oldham's leadership role at Greater Manchester level and more widely; and
- Our continuing commitment to action on climate change and environment and our ambitions for the future.

Climate Change and Green Oldham**1 Background**

- 1.1 In December 2013, Oldham Council adopted a Climate Change Strategy, which set a target of a 48% cut in CO2 emissions by 2020 on a 1990 baseline. This target was in line with the GM Climate Change Strategy.
- 1.2 In March 2019, the new GM 5-year Environment Plan was launched, setting a new target for the city region of carbon neutrality by 2038. The Plan also included a range of commitments for local authorities, including a target to develop 45MW of solar PV over the next 5 years.
- 1.3 In June 2019, the new Local Industrial Strategy for GM was launched, setting the UK's first ever Clean Growth Mission for the city region.
- 1.4 Also published in June 2019 was a United Nations report, which highlighted the disproportionate impact of climate change on those already on low incomes and in poverty. According to the report by Philip Alston, climate change threatens to undo the last 50 years of progress in development, global health, and poverty reduction. It could push more than 120 million more people worldwide into poverty by 2030 and will have the most severe impact in poor countries, regions, and the places poor people live and work.

1.5 Links to Corporate Plan:-***An Inclusive Economy where people and enterprise thrive:-***

- Attracting investment and encouraging business and enterprise to thrive
- Delivering key regeneration projects that are growing our business base, creating jobs and transforming opportunities
- Working with partners to create quality work prospects - and ensuring all residents can access new skills and opportunities and be work-ready

Thriving Communities where everyone is empowered to do their bit:-

- Increasing the sense of involvement and ownership of issues that affect people and they care about

Co-operative Services with people and social value at their heart:-

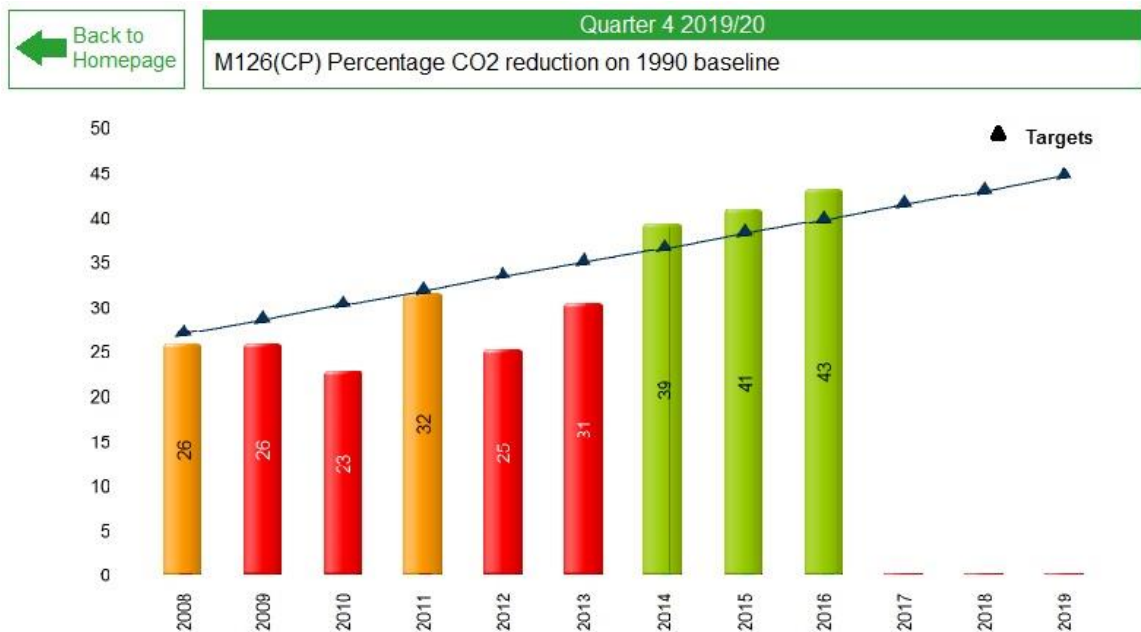
- Building a sustainable co-operative workforce that innovates based on the principle of being equal partners and co-creators

2 Current Position

2.1 This section sets out Oldham's achievements over the past few years, and what we are currently committed to in order to continue to make sure that Oldham is a leading local authority area on climate change and the environment, for the benefit of residents, businesses and future generations.

2020 target for a 48% cut in emissions on a 1990 baseline

2.2 The graph below, from the Council's CorVu performance management system, shows Oldham borough's progress towards the 2020 target. The data come from central government (BEIS) and are published two years in arrears. We can see that from the most recently published data, the borough is on course to meet the 2020 target.



Council buildings

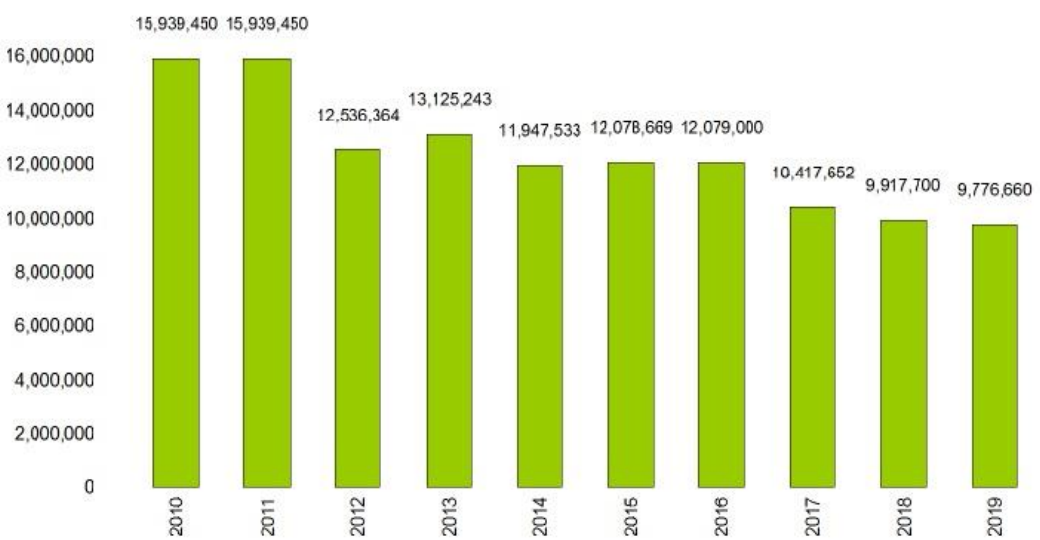
2.3 The Council's energy bill is around £7 million annually – this figure has stayed constant for the past few years despite rising energy prices, thanks to reductions in the amount of energy used by the Council. Reducing energy use still further will help to avoid future cost rises and could even reduce these ongoing revenue costs as well as cutting carbon emissions.

2.4 As an organisation, the Council's performance over the past few years in cutting the carbon emissions associated with its estate and operations has been good. We have installed a number of energy efficient adaptations to major buildings such as the Civic Centre, including a new efficient boiler house and control systems for major electrical and mechanical equipment, as well as energy efficient upgrades in other buildings as part of standard maintenance work.

2.5 The two graphs below show respectively the direct emissions from Council operations (mainly gas and gas oil burned for heating, and vehicle fuel) and indirect emissions (the emissions generated as a consequence of the use of grid electricity).

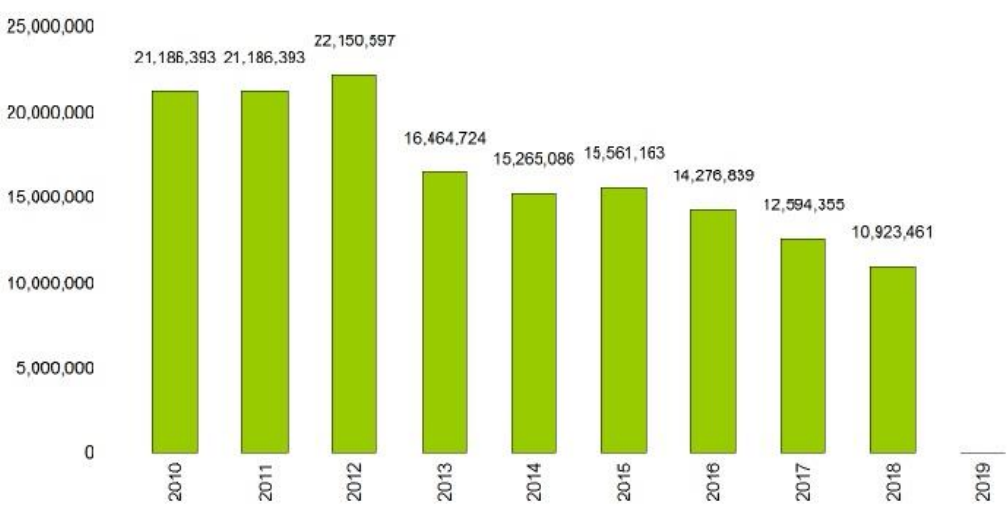
[← Back to Homepage](#)

Quarter 4 2019/20
M127 Direct carbon emissions from Council Operations – gas and transport fuel - tCO2



[← Back to Homepage](#)

Quarter 4 2019/20
M128 Indirect carbon emissions from Council Operations - electricity - tCO2



2.6 Carbon emissions from street lighting have fallen dramatically over the last few years as a result of new control systems and more efficient bulbs, as can be seen from the table below:-

Year	Customer	Units	Total (Annual)
2019/20	Carbon total	Tonnes CO ₂	183
2018/19	Carbon total	Tonnes CO ₂	2,622
2017/18	Carbon total	Tonnes CO ₂	3,230
2016/17	Carbon total	Tonnes CO ₂	3,672
2015/16	Carbon total	Tonnes CO ₂	4,949
2014/15	Carbon total	Tonnes CO ₂	5,827
2013/14	Carbon total	Tonnes CO ₂	6,102

(obviously the figure from the current financial year, 2019/20 is incomplete).

2.7 The Council has owned and operated 10 electric vehicles (8 cars and 2 vans) for the past 5 years. These have cost a minimal amount to run, only needing servicing, with no breakdowns or failure to parts, over the entire time we have owned and operated them.

2.8 Additionally, the Council's Environmental Services team owns and operates electric power tools:-

- 3 Stihl hand blowers
- 1 Stihl Backpack blower
- 16 Stihl Hedge trimmers
- 1 Stihl pole saw
- 1 Stihl Chainsaw
- 1 Stihl strimmer
- 1 Stihl pedestrian Mower
- 2 Overton Stalker stand on mowers CHAOS48
- All our hand power tool fleet

Renewable energy generation

- Tommyfield Market Hall solar PV system

2.9 In 2016, the Council installed a 110kW solar PV system on the roof of Tommyfield Market. Since it was installed, the system has:-

- Saved 7.4 tonnes of carbon dioxide
- Generated £25,008.98 in Feed In Tariff payments (which is repaying the £116,285 capital cost of the system)
- Saved the Council £26,266.27 on its electricity bill for the Market Hall
- Solar PV on PFI social homes

2.10 The Council has installed around 1MW of solar PV on its PFI social housing – nine times as much as on the roof of Tommyfield Market. Residents benefit from reduced electricity bills, helping to tackle fuel poverty in the properties we control.

2.11 We are also working to encourage other housing providers like First Choice Homes to look at ways they can provide renewable energy for the benefit of their residents (see RED WoLF below).

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- Solar farms

- 2.12 As part of our commitment to meeting the GM 5-year Environment Strategy of delivering 45MW of solar PV across the city region (4.5MW per local authority area), the Council is carrying out feasibility work on a number of potential solar farm sites. Work is in its early stages but initial indications are that there may be potential for a 1MW solar farm on one site, and up to 5MW on another site. However, many factors will need to be taken into account and we will need to look at all options for solar PV generation, including in existing buildings and new developments.
- 2.13 Developing solar farms can pay a return of 4% and upwards to the Council, and also help to cut the Council's electricity bill through supplying ourselves with our own renewably generated electricity.
- 2.14 The development of solar farms can also benefit the local environment if it includes (for example) wildflower planting and other measures to enhance the biodiversity opportunities around the site, and

Community energy

- Generation Oldham

- 2.15 The Council formally launched its community energy support programme, 'Generation Oldham', on 3rd December 2014.
- 2.16 The programme aimed to set up community-owned renewable energy projects across the borough, along with engaging residents and community groups in the climate change agenda, creating a local network of activists and providing opportunities for young people to gain training and employment in the fast-growing low carbon and environmental sector.
- 2.17 The Generation Oldham programme supported the set-up of Oldham Community Power (below), and the Council is also a Member of Saddleworth Community Hydro, with a £1,200 shareholding.

- Oldham Community Power

- 2.18 Oldham Community Power (OCP) is the Community Benefit Society (a type of co-operative) which the Council supported through the Generation Oldham programme to install around 230kW of solar PV on five schools and one community building in the first phase of their scheme. The project aimed to reduce carbon emissions and the electricity bills of the building occupants, whilst raising awareness of climate change action.



Picture: OCP solar PV system at NEON Hub

- 2.19 The OCP board comprises four volunteer directors from the community, plus a director from the Council which has a permanent seat on the Board, due to the fact that the Council owns the buildings on which the solar PV is installed.
- 2.20 The Council supported OCP to install their first phase with a loan of £250,000 which enabled the group to meet installation deadlines to secure the Feed In Tariff. OCP ran a share offer which raised around £150,000 from Oldham residents, who now own the majority of the Society, and expect to receive a return of around 4% on their investment. The Society currently has 77 members, including the Council, which has £100,000 in shares. Being a co-operative, each Member has one vote at the AGM, irrespective of shareholding.
- 2.21 Since installation in 2016, the OCP solar PV systems have saved the schools and community centre around £5,700 on their electricity bills, and already have reduced carbon emissions by around 135 tonnes – the equivalent of taking around 67 cars off the road for an entire year.
- 2.22 This “Oldham Model” for supporting community energy is now recognised as an example of best practice, both nationally and internationally, Council officers are regularly asked to speak about it at conferences.
- 2.23 OCP are hoping to push ahead with a second phase of solar PV installation in the near future, with a target of a further half a megawatt (500kW) of solar power. The Council will look to support OCP to make this a success.

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- Community Energy Specialist apprenticeship standard

2.24 Working with a range of national partners and stakeholders, Oldham Council has developed the UK's first ever community energy apprenticeship standard – a 2-year Level 4 apprenticeship for “Community Energy Specialist”.

2.25 This new apprenticeship standard is a high quality apprenticeship, containing a range of transferable skills such as community engagement, report writing, financial modelling, project and stakeholder management, and technical knowledge of renewable energy and energy efficiency. This apprenticeship standard will bring an opportunity for young people across the country to gain training and accreditation to work in one of the UK's fastest growing economic sectors.

2.26 It is hoped that the country's first ever Community Energy Specialist Apprentice will work here in Oldham, supporting Oldham Community Power and other groups across Greater Manchester as part of Oldham's community energy leadership role, and discussions are underway with Unity Partnership as to how that could happen.

- Generation Oldham young people's programme

2.27 The Generation Oldham Young People's programme ran as an 18-month pilot and members of Oldham Youth Council took part. The programme offered site visits to renewable energy and community energy installations, and day trips e.g. to the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales, as well as bespoke Generation Oldham folders containing information on environmental sustainability and renewable energy technologies, as well as advice on how to organise events and other community engagement skills.

2.28 The Council's Organisational Development team developed a bespoke course called “Young Oldham Leaders”, equipping the Youth Council Members with leadership skills to become ambassadors for the Generation Oldham programme. Participants also received accreditation in a number of learning areas around renewable energy and environmental sustainability.

2.29 At the end of the 18-month course, the young people organised their own Eco-conference at Oldham College, and produced a short film for the occasion, which can be viewed here:-

<https://youtu.be/9tU1tDMYNzA>

2.30 The pilot was a success and the programme was updated to meet the requirements of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and is now offered as a DofE module by Groundwork working with Mahdlo.

- GM Community Energy Innovation Project

2.31 In 2016/2017, Oldham Council delivered a BEIS-funded £65,000 Greater Manchester project to help four community energy organisations develop their innovative business ideas. Oldham Community Power were awarded a grant to explore ways to engage low income households in community energy, Biomass Energy Co-op received a grant to develop a boiler capable of burning biomass pellets made from used coffee grounds, Bury Community Hydro received assistance to look at a ‘virtual private wire’ approach to local energy supply, and Carbon Co-op received a grant to develop a “My Home Energy Planner” online tool for homeowners.

2.32 Oldham Council worked with Electricity North West and Community Energy England to deliver the innovation project.

- COALESCCE



2.33 COALESCCE (Community Owned And Led Energy for Security, Climate Change and Employment) is a £1.2 million Interreg Europe project with seven international partners from Germany, Spain, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary, as well as Greater Manchester for the UK. COALESCCE is a 4 ½ year project to build the community energy sector in the partner regions, and Oldham is the Lead Partner.

2.34 Through the COALESCCE project and Oldham’s leadership on the community energy agenda in GM, the new GM 5-year Environment Plan was influenced to include community energy – local authorities are required to assess their assets for renewable energy suitability and to develop them either in-house or in partnership with a community energy group. Additionally, there is a Community Energy Action Plan which commits the community energy sector to delivering 10% of the overall GM renewable energy requirement – which would be 4.5MW of solar PV across the city region or 450kW per local authority area. The Leader spoke about COALESCCE at the 2019 GM Green Summit.

2.35 At the 2018 Green Summit, Oldham’s Deputy Leader also pledged to support the “Power Paired” initiative, which is an online portal service to match up community energy groups with the owners of buildings and other assets which could be developed for renewable energy.

2.36 As a result of the COALESCCE project, a number of GM-level working groups have been set up, with the aims of setting up a permanent GM Community Energy Hub, a Finance workshop to identify funding sources for community energy groups, and a buildings group to encourage large private sector landlords to engage with the sector. All of these new resources could benefit Oldham community energy groups such as Oldham Community Power for future phases of installations.

2.37 As a result of work on Generation Oldham, the GM Community Energy Innovation Project and COALESCCE, and developing the UK’s first Community Energy Specialist apprenticeship standard, Oldham Council won the national Community Energy Local Authority Award in 2017.

2.38 Oldham Council also represents the community energy sector on the GM Low Carbon Hub Energy Group.

Single-use plastics

2.39 In December 2018, the Council approved a Single-Use Plastics Strategy. The Strategy aims to cut, and ultimately eliminate, the use of single-use plastic by the Council. Significant progress has already been made with the removal of plastic cups in public and Council areas and meeting rooms, the removal of plastic items from the internal catering service, the provision of compostable carrier bags to Town Centre businesses, a campaign to highlight shops and council sites which offer free water refills to residents, posters designed (badged up with either Oldham Council’s logo or Oldham Partnership’s logo) promoting reusing drinks bottles and travel cups and a new offer to schools offering milk in glass bottles.

2.40 A number of significant challenges remain, and the Strategy was also presented at the Oldham Leadership Board to invite and encourage our strategic partners to join us in our drive to eliminate single-use plastics and so reduce the impact on the environment from their manufacture and disposal.

Waste, recycling and enforcement

- Bulky waste collection service

2.41 The bulky waste collection service has continued to offer the cheapest collections of large, unwanted items in Greater Manchester and is still very well used by Oldham residents. Through a new contract which began on 1st January 2018, the proportion of goods reused or recycled has now been increased to 70% so even more good quality items are being supplied back into the local community. We are also now taking a much tougher stance on the most environmentally damaging items like fridges, to encourage the 'polluter pays' principle.

- Compostable Liner Project

2.42 We now have partnerships with over 100 local shops to supply dual-use compostable liners into the local community, as well as offering through 12 of Oldham's libraries. The bags are very popular and have diverted over 4,000 tonnes of waste since the project began in 2013. On the back of the bags success the GMCA has this year (2019) launched a generic compostable bag available to all businesses in the Greater Manchester area (as a replacement for single-use plastic bags they may currently be using).

- New bin collection scheme roll-out

2.43 In October 2016, we introduced a new bin collection scheme which changed the pattern of waste collections to encourage people to recycle more and only use their general rubbish bin for things that cannot be recycled. The new collection pattern was rolled out smoothly across 90,000 properties and has resulted in an increase in recycling rates to 46% and an annual diversion of around 6,000 tonnes of residual waste. Supported by ongoing education & engagement work across the borough.

- Changing Behaviours

2.44 Our education and enforcement programme has now become part of mainstream services and we continue to take a zero tolerance approach to dumping and fly tipping. In 17/18, we have continued to serve hundreds of fixed penalty notices and made a number of high profile, successful prosecutions against people who fly tipped. In the 2017/18 financial year, 126 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued for litter such as cigarette ends, 248 FPNs were issued for black bagged waste offences, and there were 52 prosecutions for litter and 34 prosecutions for fly tipping.

Transport

2.45 Emissions from road transport are one of the three main sources of greenhouse gases, as well as being one of the main causes of air pollution, and so improving the borough's opportunities for clean transport is very important to our climate change and healthy living ambitions.

2.46 A new Greater Manchester Transport Strategy was published in February 2017. This is a joint Strategy which covers all ten Greater Manchester local authority areas, including

Oldham. The Strategy has four key goals, including protection of the environment, which includes taking action to reduce CO₂ emissions from transport. We are continuing to implement measures through the GM2040 Transport Strategy to reduce emissions by:

- Encouraging more use of sustainable forms of travel such as cycling, walking and public transport; and
- Encouraging the use of electric vehicles.

2.47 The transport actions included in the Oldham Climate Change Strategy 2013-2020 have all been delivered:-

Action	Update
Open Oldham Town Centre Metrolink Extension (a Transport for Greater Manchester project supported by Oldham Council)	The Oldham Town Centre Metrolink Extension was open in January 2014. The Metrolink Park and Ride at Mumps has been relocated as part of the regeneration plans for the Prince's Gate area. The car park includes electric vehicle charging points which are part of the Greater Manchester Electric Vehicle (GMEV) network.
Provide a free Metroshuttle bus service until the Town Centre Metrolink extension is open	The free Metroshuttle bus service did operate from summer 2012 until the Town Centre Metrolink Extension opened in January 2014.
Deliver the Better Bus Fund programme	The Better Bus Fund programme was delivered by March 2014 and resulted in improvements to the bus network across such as bus stop clearways and yellow keep-clear boxes to help improve bus reliability and punctuality.
Install Advanced Stop Lines for cyclists at selected junctions (to be agreed with TfGM)	A grant-funded programme to install Advanced Stop Lines and Trixi mirrors to improve the safety and visibility of cyclists at selected junctions was delivered.
Deliver the MOBISEC community engagement programme	The MOBISEC community engagement programme was delivered as part of a European project which included initiatives such as led rides and leader training in Chadderton.
Deliver Local Sustainable Transport Fund Let's Get to Work sustainable access projects In Oldham - four capital schemes: Rochdale Canal cycle way, Kingsway to Shaw link, Broadway cycle facilities and pedestrian facilities for Metrolink	A number of cycle facilities were delivered as part of the Government-funded Local Sustainable Transport Fund 'Let's Get to Work' programme, including improvements along the Rochdale Canal cycle way and parts of Broadway as well as new crossing facilities for pedestrian on routes to Metrolink stops.
Deliver Local Sustainable Transport Fund Let's Get to Work travel choices programme in Oldham (in partnership with Transport for Greater Manchester)	The Let's Get to Work travel choices programme was also delivered in partnership with Transport for Greater Manchester including travel advice for businesses to enable sustainable commuting; travel support for jobseekers, adult cycle training and bike maintenance courses. A Local Link demand responsive transport service to Kingsway Business Park was also introduced covering Sholver, Royton and Shaw as part of this programme.

2.48 The measures included in the Oldham Climate Change Strategy are not the only ones that have been delivered to help reduce emissions. Other measures that are ongoing or have been delivered include:

- A new 20 space cycle hub at the Hollinwood Metrolink Stop, which opened in January 2018 and forms part of the Greater Manchester Cycle Hub Network
- A new 40 space cycle hub at Mumps, which opened in March 2018 and forms part of the Greater Manchester Cycle Hub Network
- The installation of 15 electric vehicle charging points (providing 29 electric vehicle charging bays) at various locations across the borough, all of which are part of the GMEV network
- Improvements to cycle crossing facilities at Hollinwood junction delivered as part of the Government-funded Cycle City Ambition grant programme
- Cycle and pedestrian improvements along King Street delivered as part of the Campus Oldham scheme and the refurbishment of the shared pedestrian/cycle bridge from Union Street West across Oldham Way, all funded through a £1.2 million grant allocation from the Government's Cycle City Ambition Grant fund for in Oldham Town Centre
- The refurbishment of King Street shared pedestrian/cycle bridge, which began in autumn 2018

GM Energy Company

2.49 At the 2018 GM Green Summit, Oldham Council's Deputy Leader pledged to lead work on the development of a Greater Manchester Energy Company. The initiative has three main objectives:-

- To reduce the energy bill of public sector organisations
- To support the development of renewable energy generation, including community energy
- To help tackle fuel poverty

2.50 To this end, Oldham commissioned a review of the previous work carried out by GMCA, and this review recommended further exploration of two potential models, both of which would consider a Joint Venture arrangement with the private and academic sectors to develop an "Energy Innovation Company". Further work is continuing at GMCA level, and a new report to Leaders is due in the autumn

2.51 In the meantime, Oldham continues to pursue additional potential innovations such as the use of exciting new technological approaches to enable 'peer to peer' energy trading via a virtual "blockchain"-enabled platform, which could potentially cut the electricity bills of residents and businesses significantly, whilst boosting the value community energy groups such as OCP, and the Council, can obtain from the sale of renewable electricity generation which is exported to the grid.

2.52 Of all the Local Authorities in GM, only Oldham seems to have the all-round commitment to the three objectives above which puts us in an ideal position to develop a model which could benefit the whole of GM, and indeed other areas across the UK, or even globally.

Oldham Town Centre regeneration

2.53 The Council is looking at ways in which the regeneration of Oldham Town Centre can make the most of the opportunity to future-proof it in terms of low carbon infrastructure and energy security.

2.54 The Town Centre action plan has three actions on low carbon:-

1. Explore the possibility of using existing district heat networks to supply low carbon heat to town centre buildings, including ground source heat from disused coal mines
2. Design the buildings and layout in such a way as to maximise the amount of renewable energy generated within the town centre from solar PV and other technologies
3. Explore the options available to maximise renewable energy and electric vehicle charging assets in the town centre

2.55 A particularly exciting opportunity could be to use the heat from the disused flooded coal mines underneath the Town Centre. The national Coal Authority has said that Oldham is potentially the best opportunity in the UK for this technology, and the Council is working with a private sector technical partner who are developing plans for a test borehole to see if this would be feasible.

2.56 The energy centre at St Mary's also has 3.5MW of biomass boiler heat generating capacity, which could also potentially be used to supply buildings in the Town Centre. The Council will continue discussions with First Choice Homes to see what might be possible as plans for the Town Centre regeneration progress.

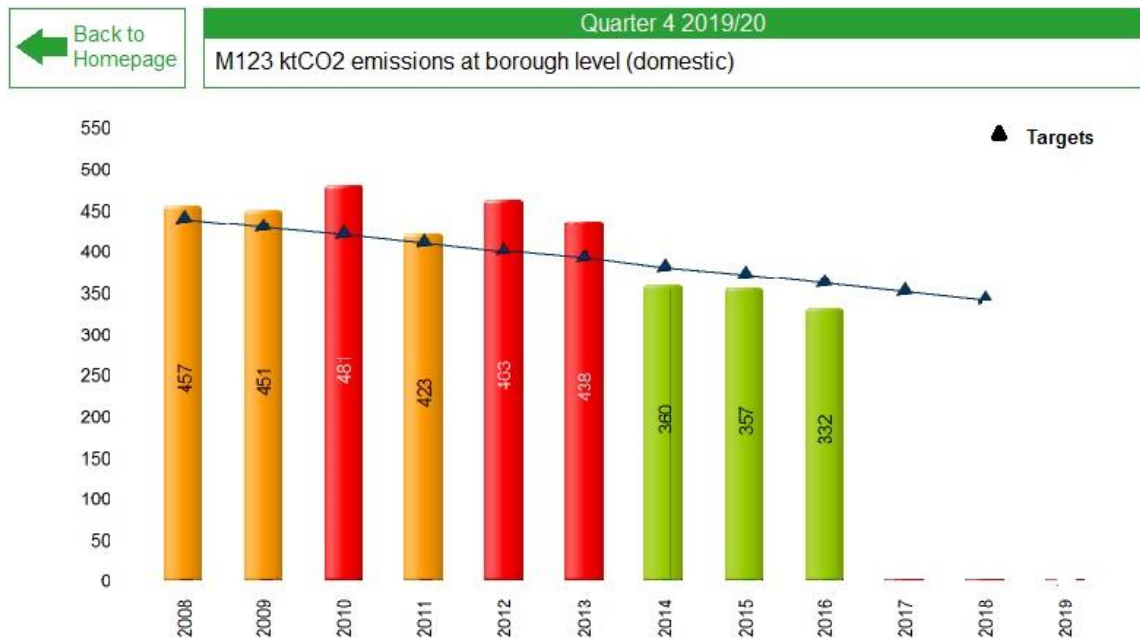
2.57 All of the options above could also apply to existing Council-owned buildings such as Tommyfield Market Hall, and any new civic buildings which might be part of the regeneration scheme.



Picture: inside the Energy Centre at St Mary's

Housing

2.58 Carbon emissions from Oldham's housing stock are falling, as the graph below shows:-



- Warm Homes Oldham

2.59 In August 2012 Oldham Council, the Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Oldham Housing Investment Partnership (OHIP) signed the country's first 'Joint Investment Agreement' to help tackle fuel poverty in the Borough.

2.60 There can be serious consequences for the health and wellbeing of those living in fuel poverty. In 2015/16 there were 24,300 excess winter deaths in England and Wales.

2.61 Groups most vulnerable to cold conditions are:-

- Older people
- People with long term illnesses and disabilities, especially respiratory and cardiovascular conditions, depression, arthritis
- Children – especially those with asthma
- Pregnant women

2.62 By reducing fuel poverty, the partners hope to reduce demand, and therefore make significant savings in other areas such as health care and social services.

2.63 Currently, it is estimated around 12% of households in Oldham are living in fuel poverty, approx 11,000 households (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2017). The joint investment agreement has targets each year to help people out of fuel poverty through the Warm Homes Oldham Scheme.

2.64 The improvement of the energy efficiency of homes also helps to reduce the emissions of carbon dioxide from home heating systems, which helps us work towards our 2038 carbon neutrality target.

In the last six years, the scheme has achieved the following:

- Helped 6,788 people stay warm and well in their homes;
 - Installed 7,818 small measures (draught-proofing, LED light bulbs, reflective radiator panels) free of charge;
 - Installed 1,386 boilers and central heating systems free of charge;
 - Insulated 877 lofts and walls free of charge;
 - Brought in around £4.3 million of external grant funding for energy efficiency measures;
 - Secured £812,519 of extra benefits for residents who weren't claiming what they were entitled to;
 - Achieved over £513,000 in total savings to household bills per year;
 - Secured £235,467 of trust fund grants to wipe-off fuel debt or pay for boilers or white goods.
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- RED WoLF and the 'Oldham Code'

RED WoLF



- 2.65 Oldham Council and First Choice Homes are working together as part of a 14-partner Interreg North West Europe project called RED WoLF, which stands for Rethinking Electricity Distribution Without Load Following. RED WoLF started in January 2019 and will run until June 2022.
- 2.66 One of the aims of the GM 5-year Environment Plan is the transition of heating systems in domestic properties from gas to electricity, and the aim of RED WoLF is to develop a new design of all-electric heating system, combining solar PV renewable energy generation with battery storage and modern storage heaters, for use in Oldham homes and across GM. It is hoped that an Oldham company could eventually supply the system across Greater Manchester.
- 2.67 Additionally, the Council aims to develop a new 'Oldham Code', a higher standard for new build homes which could combine the RED WoLF heating system with other measures such as superior insulation and rainwater harvesting. The 'Oldham Code' could eventually be rolled out across Greater Manchester and could help the city region to meet the 2028 target for zero carbon new buildings in the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, as well as the 2038 carbon neutrality target in the GM 5-year Environment Plan and Local Industrial Strategy.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 2.68 In 2017, the Council published the report, "Valuing Oldham's Urban Forest", compiled as part of the Greater Manchester iTrees project.
- 2.69 Headline figures include:-
- Oldham's Urban Forest stores over 66.5k tonnes of Carbon worth over £4.2 million.
 - It sequesters over 3k tonnes per year of Carbon worth over £200k per year.
 - It Removes over 64 Tonnes of Air Pollution worth over £1 million per year.

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- It intercepts over 200k m³ of water worth over £300K per year.
- 2.70 From 2016 to 2018 we planted over 900 new urban trees and created over 5 hectares of new woodland. Tree planting is targeted to areas where most environmental benefit will be gained, for example in areas where air quality is poorest we target the best species and locations “placing trees between people and pollution” We also aim to plant trees and woodland where it is best placed to “slow the flow” and using green infrastructure interventions for flood prevention.
- 2.71 Oldham borough does not generally suffer from flooding caused by watercourses. However, there are areas in the borough which suffer from surface flooding caused by sudden downpours, which have happened on numerous occasions over the past few years.
- 2.72 Whilst some of these instances can be dealt with by the Council, others require cross-partnership working with e.g. United Utilities and the Environment Agency, and local Elected Members are also involved in the co-ordination process. External funding can be accessed via these organisations, and one-off grants for householders have also been made available on occasion to enable them to address flooding risk in their own property.
- 2.73 Specific initiatives include:-
- The Council is working with Manchester Metropolitan University to study water run off on Crompton Moor with the intention of targeting new woodland for flood alleviation. Baseline measurements have been taken on several different land types (heathland, grassland and woodland). During winter 2018/19, different tree species mixes were planted with different ground preparations, and Manchester Metropolitan University continues to monitor run-off to establish the best formula for ground prep and planting mix for flood prevention. This scheme will be ongoing for a number of years after planting as full woodlands develop. This is the first trial of its kind in the UK.
 - The Council has planted 1 hectare of new woodland on Warwick Road open space to “slow the flow” and improve water quality. This scheme is complete, and whilst no monitoring will take place, we will be able to apply the Crompton moor methodology as above to quantify the benefits in the longer term - benefits that will increase as the woodland develops.

New Alexandra Park Eco-Centre and Northern Roots

- 2.74 The need to update and renew the Council depot at Alexandra Park has brought an opportunity to build a new flagship ‘Eco-Centre’, which will both fulfil the Council’s need for a service depot and provide a range of other facilities, such as classrooms, greenhouses for growing bedding plants, and onsite renewable energy generation to achieve a zero-energy cost development with highly energy efficient and biodiversity-friendly buildings.
- 2.75 The Council has a facility at Alexandra Park Depot to produce its own wood chip biomass fuel, and it is hoped that the new Eco-Centre will be able to use this fuel to heat its buildings and growing facilities. A local heat network could even potentially extend to the Northern Roots site, for buildings and growing facilities there too.
- 2.76 The Council has also committed to exploring the potential for a new eco-park called Northern Roots on the Snipe Clough site adjacent to Alexandra Park. Northern Roots could potentially be a facility and attraction of national significance, but will primarily be driven by local residents, aiming to provide opportunities such as a home for community food businesses, learning around agriculture, leisure activities such as walking, mountain biking and bushcraft,
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a venue for weddings and other celebrations, and potentially a whole range of other benefits for Oldham residents.

Food and growing

- 2.77 Oldham has a range of community-based food growing groups and initiatives, including an Oldham Food Partnership and successful groups such as Veg In The Park, Lees Park Eco-Hub, Dunwood Park and Failsworth Growing Hubs, all of which have been supported by the Council's Get Oldham Growing initiative, which aims to tackle social isolation through community growing.
- 2.78 The Growing Oldham: Feeding Ambition initiative takes things a stage further, offering Food Enterprise Fund investments to help residents set up in business. This initiative is also supporting Northern Roots with a budget contribution, and the Food Enterprise Fund will eventually become Northern Roots' service to incubate, encourage and support local community food enterprises.



- 2.79 As with community energy and the energy company initiative, Oldham also leads for Greater Manchester on the sustainable food agenda. We are a partner in the Interreg Europe "Food Chains 4 EU" project. Our participation in this project has allowed us to showcase Oldham's achievements and ambitions in this area, and we have also had the opportunity to learn from good practice elsewhere in Europe, to make sure that Northern Roots is as good as it has the potential to be. Through the Food Chains 4 EU project, which funded and co-hosted a regional 'Food Listening Event' to identify recommendations, as well as Oldham's leadership on Sustainable Food in GM, the new GM 5-year Environment Plan was influenced to include food priorities – including endorsing the Good Food Greater Manchester Partnership Board. Additionally, there is an Action Plan which involves supporting an approach to strengthen strategic leadership around the whole food system across Greater Manchester. As well as working with partners to develop a Food Innovation offer for the Food and Drink Sector. The success of this cross-partnership, multi-level approach to key food issues with communities in Oldham at the centre, helped to successfully achieve the Sustainable Food Cities Bronze Award for the Borough.

Green Oldham social media campaign

- 2.80 The Green Oldham campaign was launched on 5 June 2018 to showcase the very best in green spaces, wildlife and environmental initiatives across Oldham. Each month we have focused on a different theme highlighting the amazing work carried out by members of the community who are devoted to making the borough a better place. It also gave us the opportunity to make the most of the fantastic green areas that surround the town; showcasing our natural environment, renewable energy developments, Warm Homes Oldham initiatives, community litter picks, wildlife walks and many more activities taking place in our schools. Instead of the usual press release format, we opted to present the information on each monthly topic as a video via the council's social media pages, which proved to be very popular with our residents.
- 2.81 We hoped that the campaign would help residents to make green choices as well as encouraging organisations to do the same. In July 2018, the campaign included a "Big Green Survey" which asked residents to give their views on a wide variety of issues, and the

answers to one question showed that ‘98% of respondents thought that “Individuals have a responsibility to look after the environment to ensure the wellbeing of future generations”’, a statistic quoted by the Leader at the 2019 Green Summit.

- 2.82 So far we have promoted the following topics: community renewable energy; walking to school; country parks; single-use plastics; food growing and gardening; Warm Homes Oldham; community clean-ups; recycling; Fairtrade products; tree planting and Clean Air Day.
- 2.83 Over the 12 months to date, the Facebook campaign has reached 301,429 people, with the videos having been viewed 182,115 times. The videos have been viewed another 2,647 times on YouTube, and 1,894 people clicking through to the Council’s Green Oldham website.

Carbon literacy

- 2.84 The Warm Homes Oldham programme contains elements of behaviour change, such as showing residents how to correctly programme their heating systems, and other easy ways to save energy and reduce fuel bills.
- 2.85 For the St Mary’s estate, First Choice Homes Oldham delivered both an energy switching campaign and a behaviour change programme called “B Green” to accompany the renovation of the district heat network.
- 2.86 Oldham Community Power’s directors have been giving assembly talks to the pupils at schools which have solar PV systems as part of their scheme.
- 2.87 A “Fuelling Connections” initiative, connecting via social media homeowners who have an interest in improving the energy efficiency of their homes, has been delivered in Oldham by environmental charity Hubbub and Incredible Futures Oldham. “Fuelling Connections” has also helped to promote the Warm Homes Oldham scheme.
- 2.88 A number of key Council officers have received Carbon Literacy certificates after taking the official course, which is accredited by Cooler Projects in Manchester. The Council is aiming for ‘Carbon Literate Organisation – Bronze’.

Green Oldham Strategy

- 2.89 The Council will bring forward an “Oldham Green New Deal” Strategy, setting out our continuing commitment and ambition around the clean growth, climate change and environmental agendas, and how taking action can support other Council priorities such as health and wellbeing and economic growth and prosperity.
- 2.90 The new “Oldham Green New Deal” Strategy will contain a number of pledges, as well as a new Vision for the borough and strategic objectives for the next 3-5 years.

3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 Report is for information only.

4 Preferred Option

- 4.1 Report is for information only.

5 **Consultation**

5.1 Services from across the Council have provided information for this update report.

6 **Financial Implications**

6.1 There are no specific financial implications associated with this report. [Nicola Harrop – Finance Manager]

7 **Legal Services Comments**

- 7.1
1. Any property transactions must comply with the provisions of the Land & Property Protocol;
 2. Any procurement of works or services or contracts entered into must comply with the provisions of the Contract Procedure Rules;
 3. The Council's Financial Procedure Rules must be complied with at all times.
 4. In relation to the Council's property portfolio and regeneration plans, compliance must be ensured with all relevant environmental regulations and legislation such as MEES.
 5. On the Northern Roots Project, the following work is being undertaken by legal colleagues alongside the client department:
 - Company administration and work around the charitable objects
 - Investigation of charitable trusts and issues on site
 - Registration of unregistered land pockets in the ownership of the Council
 - Title investigation and deduction
 - Site assembly

[Rebecca Boyle]

8. **Co-operative Agenda**

8.1 As a Co-operative Council, Oldham is committed to creating a green and sustainable borough. This is reflected throughout our varied environmental initiatives and the Green Oldham programme, with its strong emphasis on community engagement, benefits to residents and aim to establish and support local businesses and enterprises committed to the environment. (Jonathan Downs – Policy).

9 **Human Resources Comments**

9.1 N/A

10 **Risk Assessments**

10.1 N/A – for information only.

11 **IT Implications**

11.1 None.

12 **Property Implications**

12.1 Where green technologies are being considered within new and existing properties, consideration is needed in regard to the condition, business case and suitability of such proposals in line with Building Control (SBEM and BRUKL) requirements. [Peter Wood]

13 **Procurement Implications**

13.1 None.

14 **Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**

14.1 Environmental: The report as a whole details Oldham's environmental achievements and commitments around action on climate change, and how they support the GM 5-year Environment Plan and GM Local Industrial Strategy. (Andrew Hunt)

14.2 Health and Safety: No comments. (Laura Smith)

15 **Equality, community cohesion and crime implications**

15.1 None.

16 **Equality Impact Assessment Completed?**

16.1 No

17 **Key Decision**

17.1 No

18 **Key Decision Reference**

18.1 N/A

19 **Background Papers**

19.1 None

20 **Appendices**

20.1 None.