



Oldham
Council

Report to CABINET

Creating a Better Place

Portfolio Holder(s):

Councillor Fielding, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economy and Enterprise

Councillor Jabbar MBE, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services

Councillor Shah, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Justice and Communities

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Housing

Councillor Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Councillor Chauhan, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

Councillor Ur-Rehman, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services

Councillor Chadderton, Cabinet Member for Children Services

Senior Responsible Officer:

Helen Lockwood, Deputy Chief Executive People and Place

Report Author:

Emma Barton, Director of Economy

27 January 2020

Reason for Decision

Cabinet approval is sought for the revised vision and strategic framework for the borough 'Creating a Better Place'.

Executive Summary

'**Creating a Better Place**' incorporates significant programmes of work that have been progressed over the past eighteen months in order to set out a comprehensive vision and strategic framework for the borough. These include the:

- Updated vision for Oldham Town Centre;
- Housing Strategy 2019; and
- Updated Medium Term Property Strategy.

Creating a Better Place focuses on building more homes for our 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.

This approach has the potential to deliver 2,000 new homes in the town centre designed for a range of different budgets and needs, 1,000 new jobs and 100 new opportunities for apprenticeships, and is in alignment with Council priorities to be the Greenest Borough.

Oldham Council is ambitious and bold, and it is on the cusp of an exciting programme of significant change, which is essential to achieve its wider objectives including health, education and improved transport connectivity and public realm. Corporate land and property assets are critical to this agenda and therefore the previously approved Medium-Term Property Strategy (MTPS) has been refreshed to ensure it meets the scale of the change required.

At a strategic level, the work completed across the last eighteen months has confirmed that the property portfolio can be a catalyst for building new homes, creating job opportunities, re-skilling residents through new apprenticeship opportunities, and re-engaging communities and partners through property / estate co-location and collaboration. This strategic work also supports the Council's ambitions for inclusive growth, thriving communities and co-operative services.

Delivery of the ambitious programmes of work within '**Creating a Better Place**' requires efficient and effective systems and processes in place. Significant work has already taken place during 2019 to ensure the right resources are in place for robust, fit for purpose governance and effective delivery. Changes to the Council's Land and Property protocols are also proposed to further strengthen this.

Recommendations

Cabinet Members are asked to approve:

- '**Creating a Better Place**' as the comprehensive vision and strategic framework for the borough.
- the proposed approach to accelerate delivery of new homes, new jobs, enhanced training, places to visit and ensure Oldham is a place for investment.
- the ambition to deliver '**Creating a Better Place**' in ways that contribute to a reduction in carbon in support of the Green New Deal.

Creating a Better Place

1.0 Background:

- 1.1 The very best towns and cities around the world have one thing in common – they are both people and quality focused. Quality of place is paramount to thriving communities and we want Oldham to be a place where people feel they belong, an exciting place where people can live, work and spend time. Quality design and attention to the public realm will be critical to this success.
- 1.2 This report seeks approval for a new set of exciting plans for property led change, including town centre regeneration with a new ‘homes’ focus as set out in the recently approved Town Centre Vision, closer working with the Clinical Commission Group and One Public Estate, drive and direction from the new Housing Strategy, and a desire to review and expand property investments to help secure revenue funding.
- 1.3 New core areas of focus have been identified for property services, which incorporate key priority themes: Housing, Investments, Regeneration (especially the Town Centre) and the Corporate Estate. These themes are explored in more detail later in this report.
- 1.4 Delivery of the ambitious programmes of work within ‘*Creating a Better Place*’ requires efficient and effective systems and processes in place. Significant work has already taken place during 2019 to ensure the right resources are in place for robust, fit for purpose governance and effective delivery. Changes to the Council’s Land and Property protocols are proposed here in order to further strengthen this.

2.0 Proposed Approach

- 2.1 More widely, local authorities across the UK are increasingly expected to deliver economic growth and major regeneration projects whilst coping with financial challenges. Work continues across Oldham to fully realise the ambitions of an inclusive economy and thriving communities.
- 2.2 This report incorporates a number of strategic pieces of work that have taken place over the last eighteen months, (namely the revised Town Centre Vision, the Housing Strategy, and a review of the Medium Term Property Strategy (MTPS), (corporate estate - public land and property), to collectively provide an approach for the Council to support inclusive growth, thriving communities and the co-operative agenda ... **‘*Creating a Better Place*’...**
 - ...by building quality homes
 - ... by providing opportunities to learn & gain new skills
 - ... by providing opportunities to grow local businesses and create jobs
 - ... by ensuring Oldham is the greenest borough
 - ... by embedding sustainability, energy efficiency & low (zero) carbon
 - ... by improving life-chances and the health / well-being of our residents and local communities
- 2.3 Our vision for Oldham includes new core areas of focus, which cover: **Housing, Investments, Regeneration (especially the Town Centre) and the Corporate Estate.**

An example of this approach is the refreshed Town Centre Vision, which was approved in July 2019, and demonstrates the need for new homes balanced with jobs, safe and inviting public realm, accessible transport and a family friendly night-time economy. (Vision appended to this report for ease of reference).

2.4 Housing

Our aim is to provide a diverse housing offer that meets the needs of different sections of the population at different times in their lives. Our proposals go beyond numbers alone with a focus on the significant contribution a quality housing offer makes to quality of life. For example, helping an older person to meet their need for a smaller more manageable home which, with the right adaptations, can protect and enhance independence.

Oldham's Housing Strategy was approved at full council in July 2019. The Strategy highlights the priorities and needs for the borough and is supported by a robust delivery plan that sits behind it to enable its objectives to be achieved.

The new Housing Strategy was developed in line with Oldham Plan, the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and the Greater Manchester housing strategy. The strategy included a new Local Needs Housing Assessment to provide evidence-based insights into how the housing economy currently works, forecasts future needs and identifies gaps.

There are many projects identified in the delivery plan that accompanies the Housing Strategy - funding for the development and delivery of these projects and activities will be required to meet these strategic priorities. Various projects are detailed in Part B papers appended to this report.

2.5 Regeneration

We have set out a new vision for Oldham town centre which recognizes that the purpose of town centres is changing at scale and pace linked to the convenience of shopping online at home and the popularity of out of town retail parks. This contributes to a cycle of disappearing shops, reduced visitor numbers and a potential rise in anti-social behavior.

Our vision for Oldham town centre is aligned with national regional and local priorities by ensuring that it has a focus for everyone has a place to live, work, visit and enjoy.

Our approach will see us strengthen the town centre as a cultural designation while bringing new homes, jobs and business opportunities. Already we have delivered a range of projects which include:

- The redevelopment of the Old Town Hall to create a new leisure and food/drink offer
- Improved connectivity with three Metrolink stops in the town centre
- Redevelopment of Oldham Leisure Centre
- Redevelopment of Parliament Square

We are currently helping to deliver the transformation of the former Oldham Library into a state-of-the-art £13m arts and heritage centre which will offer galleries, a modern archive facility and a performance space. Construction work is due to start shortly.

We are also looking to actively encourage more walking and cycling to the town centre by improving access routes and connectivity through a series of public realm improvements linked to the Local Growth Deal.

There are a number of further priority areas which will be developed in 2020, to continue to meet our ambitions for town centre living, employment creation, skills development, the green environment, green energy, accessible public realm, family friendly activities, enticing night-time economy and enhanced safety / security are progressed to instigate the catalytic transformation of the town centre with the ambition for housing at its core. Various projects are detailed in Part B papers appended to this report.

2.6 Investment

Oldham is one of 101 towns identified for support of up to £25m to develop a Town Deal via the £3.6bn Towns Fund. According to the prospectus published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in November 2019, the objective of the Towns Fund is to increase economic growth with a focus on regeneration, improved transport, better broadband connectivity, and skills and culture.

The aim is to drive long-term transformative change within local economies, meaning that capital projects must form the core of proposals submitted by local authorities for Towns Fund grant funding. Oldham Council is required to submit a 'readiness checklist' by 19th December 2019 to help MHCLG gauge how quickly Oldham is able to prepare for a Town Deal and, importantly, understand local plans for the funding. The Council must also establish a Town Deal Board, ideally chaired by a representative of the local business community, by 31st January 2020. The Town Deal Board will be the vehicle through which the vision and strategy for Oldham is defined; it will produce a Town Investment Plan setting out an understanding of the area's assets, opportunities and challenges, and inform the Town Deal, including the amount of investment secured through the Towns Fund.

The MHCLG also launched the competitive Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) in December 2018 to support plans to make England's high streets and town centres fit for purpose. Oldham Council submitted an Expression of Interest for FHSF funding and, thereafter, a business case for a 'shovel-ready' intervention in Oldham town centre: the transformation of the Egyptian Room in the Old Town Hall into a contemporary food hall.

Separate to the Town Deal, the Council is bringing forward plans to develop one of the largest urban farms and eco centres in the UK as part of the Northern Roots project which runs from Alexandra Park to Daisy Nook country park. This will include the potential redevelopment of Alexandra Park depot to be replaced by an environmental centre.

2.7 Corporate Estate

The remit of this thematic area is to holistically review land and property assets whether Council owned or within the ownership of One Public Estate partners, to ensure the Council:

- delivers against ambitions for energy efficiency;
- delivers against ambitions for public buildings to be carbon neutral by 2025;
- ensures scrutiny of its own accommodation to ensure value for money and best utilisation for staff and services;
- considers the views of Ward Members / Portfolio holders are considered as part of any proposal to declare an asset within the Council's Land & Property Portfolio as being surplus to the Council's operational requirements.

The Corporate Property Board (CPB) is a new governance forum to support the strategic alignment and scrutiny of all property decisions / service activity going forward. The Board will comprise Directors of Finance, Legal and Economy, Deputy Chief Executive and Portfolio Holders for Finance and Corporate Services and the Leader of the Council. A quorum of at least 3 members of the Board will be required to conduct business, including finance, economy and Member representation.

2.8 Benefits:

Social - This approach has the potential to deliver 2,000 new homes in the town centre, 1,000 new jobs and in addition 100 new opportunities for apprenticeships.

Financial - set out in section 3 below in this report.

Environmental - This approach supports the Council's new Green Deal and would enable the public sector to lead by example with aspirations to be zero carbon by 2025 and for new homes and businesses to be energy efficient, and carbon neutral by 2030.

3.0 Funding for development and delivery

3.1 **Creating a Better Place** galvanises the approach and direction for property services over the next 5 years, and more importantly, provides an insight for enhanced revenue savings and property investment.

3.2 The work from the last eighteen months has provided new assumptions to allow a new savings plan to be explored for the property portfolio, and a potential enhanced savings target of £10.961m (£10.461m from 2020/21 onwards as set out below).

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	
Revenue Savings	£0.5m	£0.261m	£1.634m	£2.391m	£6.175m	£10.961m

3.3 The work undertaken has included further assessment of proposed savings and a revised savings profile is being/has been developed. It is important to note that the revised savings estimates contained in this report are indicative at this stage. If the proposed approach contained in this report is approved, more detailed project specific information, feasibility and business case details will be presented as required.

3.4 As there are many interdependencies between the various themes and work programmes, decisions will need to be made holistically, in alignment with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme.

3.5 The table below presents the scale of the capital investment required in order to deliver the Creating a Better Place programme. In overall terms, investment will total £306m split between capital projects of £102m and investment projects of £204m.

Priority Projects:	Capital Projects £m	Investment Projects £m (revenue return)
Regeneration: New Homes	70	87
Regeneration: Town Centre	32	71
Regeneration: Boroughwide Opportunities	-	46
TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT	102	204
	£306 m	

4.0 Consultation

4.1 Extensive consultation has taken place over the last 36 months through the development of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. More in-depth consultation and engagement has taken place on the Town Centre Vision (refresh), the Housing Strategy, and more recently the Locality Asset Review (linked with the One Public Estate work), these latter documents are now formally adopted.

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- 4.2 Consultation and engagement work has taken place with stakeholders, partners, Council teams and services, elected members, public sector organisations and different voices from our local communities to help clearly define regeneration ambitions, and to ensure that a vision was in place that was alignment with national, regional and local strategic priorities.

The residential opportunities identified have been shaped by local people and stakeholders through engagement and consultation, especially with regards to ensuring the Council explores brownfield land in the first instance, to release the pressures on Green Belt land to meet our housing need.

- 4.3 Consultation has included face to face meetings, drop-in events, postal survey (to 15,000 residents of the borough), workshops, engagement meetings, briefing sessions, and stakeholder events.
- 4.4 Portfolio Holders have been consulted on the findings, and both staff and elected members have been engaged throughout this process to allow ideas and suggestions to be fed into the review work from the start.
- 4.5 Project consultation will take place at the applicable time in conjunction with standard practice for project development.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 All financial information is contained within the part b reports appended to this report.
(Sam Smith)

6.0 Legal Services Comments

- 6.1 All legal information is contained within the part b reports appended to this report.
(Rebecca Boyle)

7.0 Co-operative Agenda

- 7.1 This new vision, direction and approach provides numerous opportunities to support the development of a Co-operative Borough both through how decisions are taken and the engagement of key partners, service providers and communities in this; and the creation of new opportunities for development that includes more co-operative businesses.
- 7.2 Decisions on which assets should be retained, managed and disposed of should be mindful of the need to maintain the infrastructure required to ensure partners and residents can still access the services they need, and that place-based integration of services is supported.
(Jonathan Downes)

8.0 Human Resources Comments

- 8.1 None identified at this time.
(Adele Savage)

9.0 Risk Assessments

- 9.1 All risk information is contained within the part b reports appended to this report.
(Mark Stenston)

10.0 IT Implications

10.1 None identified at this time. (Chris Petrie)

11.0 Property Implications

11.1 All property information is contained within the part b reports appended to this report. (Jason McEwen)

12.0 Procurement Implications

12.1 All procurement information is contained within the part b reports appended to this report. (Dan Cheetham)

13.0 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

13.1 In July 2019, the Council committed to becoming carbon neutral as an organisation by 2025 and to leading the borough to carbon neutrality by 2030. This approach is an essential transformational element in achieving these environmental targets and wider economic regeneration objectives such as building the green economy. (Andrew Hunt)

14.0 Equality, community cohesion and crime implications

14.1 None identified at this time.

15.0 Equality Impact Assessment Completed?

15.1 Not required at this time. This will be picked up with programme development.

16.0 Key Decision

16.1 Yes

17.0 Key Decision Reference

17.1 ECEN-18-19

APPENDICES

A: Town Centre Vision

(1) Medium Term Property Strategy

(2) Land and Property Protocols

(3) Housing

(4) Housing Opportunity

(5) Town Centre Vision (phase 1)

(6) Town Centre Vision (phase 2)

(7) Town Centre Vision (phase 3)

APPENDIX A: TOWN CENTE VISION

