

Briefing to Overview and Scrutiny Board

Date: 19/01/2021

Subject: COVID-19 Recovery Planning

For consultation and feedback

Report of:

Jonathan Downs (Corporate Policy Lead)
Jonathan.downs@oldham.gov.uk

Sign-off:

Shelley Kipling, Assistant Director
Communications, Strategy and
Performance

Summary of the issue:

The purpose of this report is to provide O&S with an update on the development plan for Oldham's Covid-19 Recovery Strategy, highlighting the 6 draft areas of focus to gather early input and feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Recommendations to Overview and Scrutiny Board:

To consider this report, review the 6 draft priorities and provide feedback during the period January to March 2021 which will be the substantive engagement period for this plan.

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 During 2019 / 20 colleagues produced a draft Team Oldham Plan (previously called the Corporate Plan) following several consultation sessions with DMT's, Cabinet Portfolio Leads, the Labour Group, and Group Leaders. The draft Team Oldham Plan was due for council sign off in March 2020, but this was delayed due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing our priorities and efforts on supporting our residents, communities and businesses with the impacts of COVID-19 as well as our most vulnerable who were, and still are, disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.
- 1.2 Overcoming COVID-19 involves more than finding a medical cure, there will be difficult decisions to make and it will take time so we must also focus on how we can rebuild our economy and communities to be stronger than before. In Oldham this has meant adapting to the changing landscape, budget pressures, how we work with our partners and the shift in service provision to ensure we are supporting our residents, especially the most vulnerable, during this difficult time.
- 1.3 As we continue to tackle the ongoing impact of COVID-19, it is proposed that a Recovery Plan is developed, covering the next 12 months (April 2020 – April 2021). This Recovery Plan will be based on our vision for Oldham, outlined in the Oldham Model, but with a specific focus on Oldham's recovery from the pandemic:



2 Ares of Focus

2.1 There are 6 main draft focus areas which have been identified using data and intelligence, consultation with services and stakeholders, and through engagement with partners over the last nine months. These are as follows:

1. **Driving equality:** Oldham has a rich history of people from different backgrounds and cultures living and working together. However, we know that there are groups of people that are marginalised, who are more likely to face inequality and discrimination than others. As we recover from the impact of COVID-19 it is critical that we tackle inequality and discrimination head on. We will continue to identify and mitigate the equality impacts caused by the pandemic, informing our recovery planning through lived experience.
2. **Investing in quality housing:** Poor-quality housing has a profound impact on health. The condition of homes, insecure tenure, and wider neighbourhood characteristics all have a considerable effect on health and wellbeing. Groups in the population who are more likely to live in poor housing are often the same groups who are vulnerable to COVID-19 and other health conditions. To tackle this, we will improve housing quality, both in and outside of the home, while bringing forward significant investment in new and affordable homes.
3. **Championing a green recovery:** In Oldham, we want to respond to the impacts of coronavirus in a bold and ambitious way. We want to use this as an opportunity to stimulate a green recovery that accelerates our ambitions around reducing the boroughs carbon footprint and protecting our greenspace for residents to enjoy.
4. **Accessible and resident focused services:** Though COVID-19 has changed how we deliver services, we will continue to ensure every resident can access our offer. We will continue to work with our residents and partners to design modern, accountable services, shaped around the needs of Oldham's communities.
5. **Creating and protecting jobs and supporting businesses:** Many businesses, especially across hospitality and retail, have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with repeated forced closures due to national and local lockdowns. We will continue to create good jobs for our residents, while supporting local businesses to restart and recover from the effects of the pandemic.
6. **Prioritising education and skills:** The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on education and skills, with many young people needing support to 'catch up' in learning after several months of lockdown. We will work with schools and colleges to support children and young people to catch up and succeed in learning. We will also prioritise training for adults who have been made redundant, helping them retrain and secure employment.

2.2 Each of these focus areas will form a key plank of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan, with individual actions and performance metrics attached to each priority area. The Plan will reflect the difficult and challenging times ahead and the opportunities that are arising as we recover from the pandemic as Team Oldham. The Plan will also set out how we can embrace the 'new normal' to build a stronger local economy, increase community

resilience and public participation, support our local health system, and support our most vulnerable residents.¹

- 2.3 A refreshed Corporate Plan will be in place from March 2022, aligning the refresh to the new Oldham Plan (plan for place), which is due to be written in 2022.

3 Next Steps

- 3.1 Over the next three months we will be consulting with a wide range of stakeholders to inform the COVID-19 Recovery Plan, including: residents, Portfolio Holders, SMT and partner organisations. The developed plan will be brought back to O&S in March for further consultation and input.

¹ The COVID-19 Recovery Strategy will link to the developing Equality Strategy and Poverty Strategy, ensuring that we are focusing on tackling the key inequalities that exist across the borough.