

Report to Cabinet

Covid-19 Recovery Strategy 2021 – 2022

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic and Social Reform

Officer Contact:

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Reason for Decision

Oldham's current Corporate Plan expired in December 2020. Work to refresh Oldham's Corporate Plan was due to be completed by summer 2020, however, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that this was no longer viable. Instead, it was agreed at Cabinet that a COVID-19 Recovery Strategy would be developed, acting as an interim Corporate Plan until at least September 2022.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Covid-19 Recovery Strategy is forwarded to Full Council for approval.

COVID-19 Recovery Strategy 2021 – 2022**1 Background**

- 1.1 Oldham's current Corporate Plan expired in December 2020. Work to refresh Oldham's Corporate Plan was due to be completed by summer 2020, however, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that this was no longer viable. Instead, it was agreed by SMT, Leadership and ultimately Cabinet, that a COVID-19 Recovery Strategy would be developed, acting as an interim Corporate Plan until at least September 2022.
- 1.2 As a Co-operative Council, Oldham is committed to tackling the impact of COVID-19, protecting our most vulnerable residents and communities. The steps we are taking to tackle the pandemic and the subsequent recovery planning aim to support people across the borough, especially those groups who have been most impacted.
- 1.3 Building on the learning so far and the anticipated events to come, we have developed a comprehensive Recovery Strategy, which will help shape our approach and vision for Oldham over the next 18 months. We do this whilst we continue to respond to an ongoing critical incident.
- 1.4 Our objectives and approach to the Recovery Strategy are rooted in our vision, the Oldham Model, ensuring as we adapt to a changing world that we remain focused on building thriving communities, an inclusive economy and to deliver co-operatively.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 To develop the new COVID-19 Recovery Strategy priorities, consultation has taken place at Directorate Management Team Meetings (DMT), with Cabinet Members individually, through a workshop at SMT and through engagement with overview and scrutiny.
- 2.2 The Recovery Strategy is attached at **Appendix 1** for approval, prior to progressing to Council. Key priority areas in the strategy are:
 1. **Driving equality:** Oldham is rich in diversity with a wealth of people from different backgrounds and cultures living and working together. However, we know that there are groups 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, 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 borough's carbon footprint and protecting our parks and greenspace for residents to enjoy.

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4. **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.
 5. **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.
 6. **Promoting health and wellbeing and supporting the most vulnerable:** We will continue to promote and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities, contain the spread of COVID-19 locally and target action to protect our most vulnerable residents and communities.

2.3 Each of these focus areas forms a key strand of the COVID-19 Recovery Strategy, with individual actions attached to each priority area. The Strategy reflects the difficult and challenging times ahead and the opportunities that are arising as we recover from the pandemic as Team Oldham. The Strategy also sets 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.

3.0 **Monitoring the Recovery Plan**

3.1 The Council's annual business planning process is the mechanism through which we will assure delivery against the Recovery Plan actions. Quarterly reporting via the Corporate Performance Framework will be provided against identified actions. In addition, our Corporate Performance Framework will be redeveloped to ensure oversight of the key performance metrics relating to our agreed priorities as well as to ensure effective service delivery of business as usual activity. An annual performance report detailing progress against the Recovery plan priorities will be produced.

3.2 To ensure continued oversight of delivery and performance against our six agreed priority areas, we will schedule focused Leadership sessions on each over the coming months.

3.3 Following Full Council approval, we will launch the Covid-19 Recovery Strategy, ensuring the priorities are embedded across Team Oldham. This will include creating a full communications and engagement programme, both within Team Oldham, with stakeholders and residents. We will also create an online tool to regularly update on progress.

4 **Options/Alternatives**

4.1 Option one – to recommend that the Covid-19 Recovery Strategy is taken to Council for approval.

4.2 Option two – to recommend that the Covid-19 Recovery Strategy is not taken to Council for approval.

5 **Preferred Option**

5.1 Option one is the preferred and recommended option.

6 **Consultation**

6.1 Consultation has taken place at DMTs, with Cabinet Members individually, through a workshop at SMT and through engagement with overview and scrutiny.

7 **Financial Implications**

7.1 The Council approved its 2021/22 revenue budget and capital programme on 4 March 2021. This sets out the financial framework for the year and the total funding envelope (subject to any further 2021/22 funding notifications).

7.2 There are within the approved budget, some resources to support the Councils response to COVID. In addition, some specific grant funding received in 2020/21 will be carried forward. These resources can be used, within eligibility criteria to support the COVID recovery plan. However, it is important to note that the Council must deliver £8.8m of savings in 2021/22 and has a significant financial challenge to be addressed in 2022/23 and 2023/24. Therefore, the COVID Recovery Plan must be guided by the financial context in which the Council is operating. (Anne Ryans, Director of Finance)

8 **Legal Services Comments**

8.1 N/A (Colin Brittain)

9. **Co-operative Agenda**

9.1 The Corporate Plan is the strategy which will help us to achieve our co-operative ambition over the next eighteen months.

10 **Human Resources Comments**

10.1 N/A

11 **Risk Assessments**

11.1 N/A

12 **IT Implications**

12.1 N/A

13 **Property Implications**

13.1 N/A

14 **Procurement Implications**

14.1 N/A

15 **Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**

15.1 N/A

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

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- 16.1 N/A
 - 17 **Equality Impact Assessment Completed?**
 - 17.1 N/A
 - 18 **Key Decision**
 - 18.1 No
 - 19 **Key Decision Reference**
 - 19.1 N/A
 - 20 **Background Papers**
 - 20.1 N/A
 - 21 **Appendices**
 - 21.1 Appendix 1: COVID-19 Recovery Plan