

**POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**09/11/2021 at 6.00 pm**



**Present:** Councillor McLaren (Chair)  
Councillors Alyas, Brownridge, Hobin and Surjan

Also in Attendance:

Paul Axon	Positive Steps
Emma Barton	Director of Economy
John Garforth	Trading Standards and Licensing Manager
Kaidy McCann	Constitutional Services

1           **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Williamson, Councillor K Phythian and Councillor Curley.

2           **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Hobin declared a personal interest at item 8 by virtue of being a private hire licence holder.

3           **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

4           **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

5           **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021 be approved as a correct record.

6           **CREATING A BETTER PLACE**

Consideration was given to a report on the overview on the progress of the Creating a Better Place strategic framework and capital regeneration programme.

The Committee was informed that Approval from Cabinet was obtained in August 2020 for the revised programme. Following discussions with Scrutiny Committee Members, the new programme reflected on the priority areas to support the Borough's economic and social recovery in support of the financial implications associated with the response to the Coronavirus (CV19).

Members were provided with the priority areas which were as followed:

- Building quality homes
- Providing opportunities to learn and gain new skills

- Providing opportunities to grow local businesses and create jobs
- Ensuring Oldham is the greenest Borough
- Embedding sustainability, energy efficiency and low (zero) carbon
- Improving life-chances and the health and well-being of our staff, residents, and local communities.

The priority areas would bring social benefits to the Borough, which included the potential to deliver over 2,000 homes in the town centre by embracing brownfield sites to support urban development which would reduce the amount of greenbelt needed to meet Oldham's Housing Need. Alongside that there was a potential to deliver an additional 1,000 jobs and 100 apprenticeships whilst also improving the populations life chances and health and well-being.

Members were informed of the Environmental Benefits which included:

- Public sector leading by example – zero carbon by 2025
- Zero carbon new homes and businesses by 2030
- Energy efficient buildings – homes and businesses
- Greenest Borough in Greater Manchester
- Cleaner air
- More electric vehicle parking / promotion
- Better connected environment for healthier travel choices
- Thriving communities and businesses.

The revised programme had helped reduce the Capital investment by c£90m with external funding bids to be sought. The programme had also identified £8.5m of revenue savings over the next 5 years, with the first year covering 2021/22. There had been a £285m capital commitment from the Council along with seven confirmed bids, two bids awaiting news and one bid to be submitted following publication of the White Paper, However, it would initially cost £125k of revenue to secure the Levelling Up Fund bid. The programme would allow for a 5-year delivery programme with +22% social value added. Out of the £7.5m contract value, £3m had been received back.

Whilst there were several benefits to the programme, there would be challenges to face mainly around construction. Within the construction market, Contractors were not able to hold prices by more than a few weeks (standard 90 days) that could be affected due to the decision-making processes. There were also issues of material shortages that caused escalation of prices and longer ordering timescales. The construction market had also suffered during Covid due to sourcing sufficient labourers and drivers and sourcing site accommodation. It was estimated that the current issues would cause a minimum of 20-25% increase to budget costs with Economic Specialists predicting that the problems would continue for 3-5 years.

Construction Insurance had also become a major challenge, prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, 17 insurers were available to

underwrite building renovation works. That had reduced to 4 as a result of high-profile losses including Grenfell, Glasgow School of Art, Mandarin Oriental, and Primark in Belfast. It had been recommended by insurers to market six months ahead of the works being undertaken to assess the appetite for the projects.



The Committee were provided details of strategic partnerships in place at Broadway Green with Grasscroft and Seddons and at Hollinwood with Langtree. Members were also informed of the various housing projects which included the 19 x 5 bed homes for Affordable Rent at Primrose Bank, the various HRA infill sites that would create c40 new homes over 7 cleared sites and the housing pipeline development of c2,000 new homes which included over 900 in the town centre and 12 brownfield sites identified for different tenures/house types. To facilitate those projects £800k had been allocated from the Growth Deal Fund to facilitate road access onto the Southlink site and a Brownfield Housing Land Grant of £6m towards Derker and Southlink.

The programme included the School Capital Programme. Saddleworth School would be completed in early 2022 and Greenfield Primary, Crompton House, Oldham Academy North, Kingfisher Hydropool, Mayfield Primary, and St Pauls Primary School gone through practical completion. Future school developments included:

- North Chadderton: Cabinet approval Nov/Dec '21. Start on site expected 2022
- Kingsland: Design progressing in collaboration with school.
- Bluecoat (II): Land deal confirmed with DfE. Planning approved. DfE appointed Willmott Dixon to progress design work
- Kingfisher MAT Free School: New Special Educational Need Free School to open 2022.

The Committee were advised of the Green New Deal Projects which included:

- Oldham Energy Futures (CWB): Externally led Carbon Co-op, funded.
- Oldham Community Power: solar panels installed on 5 school rooves (phase 1). Currently seeking funding to all roll out of phase 2 (more schools and health sites)
- Green Your Neighbourhood: appropriate community engagement to complement street cleaning and other community "green" priorities
- COALESCCE: Interreg Europe revenue funding to lead integration of actions into GM Env Strategy. (complete)
- Local Energy Market / green Power Purchase Agreements: GM programme procurement work needed
- Growing the green economy / jobs & skills: integrated into Economic Growth Strategy refresh.

Members were informed of the £10m confirmed Future High Street Fund allocation that would be used for the Egyptian Room fit out, the Prudential Building, Union Street for the

potential use as an incubator hub, and Accessible Oldham to enhance the public realm development around Mumps for pedestrians, cycling and public transport routes. £24m had been confirmed for the Town Deal Projects which would be used for Northern Roots, the new Theatre and Performance Space, Tommyfield Market and an Entrepreneur Space. To advertise and gain the public's view on the schemes and programme, the Council had launched The Big Conversation which was now live.

Members asked for and received clarification on the following:

- Projected and actual costs of schemes. Members were advised that Officers working on the projects would calculate the costs and contingencies would be in place if there was a need to go over budget.
- Creation of green jobs. It was noted that a consultation would be held to look at green working for Oldham residents in the Borough. Oldham College had a construction qualification available that could be linked to future projects.
- The creation of the Council's own companies. Members were advised that 3 separate teams had recently applied for the Kickstart Grants to look into that option.
- Possibility for the Committee to tour the sites and potential projects. It was noted that it would be arranged for the Members to attend.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The progress and updates provided for the Creating a Better Place strategic programme be noted.
2. An update be provided to the Committee in June 2022.

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## **GAMBLING POLICY REVIEW**

Consideration was given to a report which updated the Committee on the recent review of the Councils Gambling Policy and sought their views on the suggested amendments required prior to Council approval.

The Committee was informed that the current policy was adopted in January 2019 and had to be reviewed every 3 years by law. The policy at Appendix 1 proposed amendments since it had last been approved. It was noted that the ten Greater Manchester Authorities had worked collaboratively to develop a common policy framework with local issues and profiling added in addition to the common policy text.

The Committee was informed that, in setting its local policy, the Council must show how it would seek to promote the licensing objectives under the Act, which were:

- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime and disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime;
- Ensuring gambling was conducted in a fair and open way; and

- Protecting children and other vulnerable people from being harmed or exploited by gambling.



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The updated policy paid significant attention to the Public Health concerns which surrounded gambling addictions in the policy. It was noted that within Oldham, data suggested that there were around 3,000 problem gamblers and 9,000 at risk gamblers. To combat this, a Greater Manchester Gambling Harm Reduction Strategy had been compiled with funding allocated to support pathways and research. Members made note of a new part of the policy which requested operators to submit a return to the Licensing Authority in order to measure the number of interventions they were taking to assist customers and self-exclude those who require that option.

Members noted that the proposed policer would be considered by the Licensing Committee on the 30<sup>th</sup> November prior to moving forward for approval by Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

Members asked for and received clarification on the following:

- Could a ban request of the premises be requested on behalf of another person if the user had mental health problems. Members were advised that consent was needed from the person however some operators would accept ban referrals from family members.
- Power to prevent gambling premises from opening and reviewing applications. It was noted that language in the guidance encouraged granting of the licences. Within Oldham, the number of licensed premises had reduced from 37 pre-covid to 23. Applications for these licences were rarely submitted. As with Alcohol premises licences, any breach of the licence would be investigated and reviewed by the Licensing Panel.
- How the number of problem gamblers was estimated within the Brough. Members were advised that the data was based on referrals within Greater Manchester. Oldham was currently ranked in the middle of the Greater Manchester Authorities.

**RESOLVED** that the draft Gambling Policy be noted and commended to the Council for approval.

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### **GM MINIMUM LICENSING STANDARDS (VEHICLES)**

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with the recommendations on Private Hire and Hackney Vehicle Taxi Licensing Policy for Greater Manchester following a consultation in 2020.

Members were informed that, collectively, Hackney and Private Hire services provided more journeys for residents and visitors than the Metrolink or local rail, representing a significant part of the economy and employing over 20,000 people across the city region. Having Minimum Licensing Standards across all Greater

Manchester Authorities represented a means of achieving a range of shared goals which included:

- Improving public safety
- Helping deliver clean air and reduced carbon emissions
- Supporting the locally licensed Hackney and Private Hire trades; and
- Complying with the Governments statutory guidance on safeguarding.

Overall, the Greater Manchester approach looked to provide:

- the public with safe, visible and high-quality hackney and private hire services
- the hackney and private hire trades with clarity over what the required standards will be over the long term, and through the GM Clean Air Plan, with unprecedented investment to help renew the fleet
- local authorities with the continued regulatory role in relation to driver, vehicle and operator licensing whilst retaining scope to exceed the MLS as agreed locally by elected members.

Members were informed that there were 10 policy standards and were provided with the recommendations to meet those standards which were as followed:

- Vehicle emissions - That vehicles should be at least Euro 6 compliant for diesel vehicles and Euro 4 compliant for petrol vehicles subject to upper age policies. For non-compliant vehicles they will have until 1st April 2024 to become compliant.
- Vehicle age - Private Hire Vehicles may be first licensed up until 5 years old and can be licensed up until 10 with the exception of wheelchair accessible vehicles which can stay on until 15. Hackney Carriages may be first licensed as wheelchair accessible vehicles up until 7 years of age and can stay in until 15. Final transitional arrangements are being developed by Officers.
- Vehicle colour - That all hackney carriages in Greater Manchester shall be black in colour. A single colour for private hire vehicles remains an aspiration of the MLS programme.
- Wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) - That all hackney carriages in Greater Manchester shall be wheelchair accessible. That for existing saloon emission compliant hackney carriages they be allowed to stay on the fleet until 10 years of age and then change to WAV.
- Vehicle livery - That there be a standard livery across Greater Manchester with the addition of local council logos.
- Vehicle testing - That vehicles under three have one test a year and those over three have two. Oldham already goes further than that and specifies that vehicles over eight have three tests a year.
- Vehicle CCTV – That members approved, in principle, a policy of licensed vehicles having in car CCTV. That

further work on a draft policy be commissioned and consulted on for bringing back before members.

- Executive Hire - To adopt a common set of standards in relation to executive vehicles not having to display signage and licence plates.
- Vehicle licence conditions - That members approve a common set of GM conditions for vehicle licences.
- Vehicle design - That members approve a range of vehicle standards covering:
  - Vehicle conformity
  - No retrofitting of engines
  - Emissions technology to be CVRAS accredited
  - Minimum standard of window tints
  - No written off vehicles to be licensed
  - No roof signs permitted on PHVs
  - No advertising other than Council issued signage on PHVs

Members asked for and received clarification on the following:

- How to persuade drivers to make their vehicles wheelchair accessible. Members were advised that there was now Government funding with up to £17.5k to become part of the accessible fleet.
- Could operators be directed to use drivers only licenced from Oldham. it was noted that this was not allowed for Private Hire Drivers. However, operator conditions now included the condition to notify the users that the vehicle was not licensed with Oldham before dispatching the vehicle.

**RESOLVED** that the recommendations being submitted to Greater Manchester Combined Authority be noted.

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## **YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report which advised the Committee of the responsibilities of the Youth Justice Service and its priorities for 20/21. Members were also advised of the financial arrangements and performance for the previous year.

Members were informed that the Youth Justice Management Board Annual Plan was a requirement of grant allocation for Oldham's Youth Justice Service and was overseen by the Youth Justice Board nationally. It was noted that the plan included the following areas:

- Purpose of Plan
- Introduction
- Positive Steps
- Structure & Governance
- Overall Structure
- Youth Justice Management Board
- Strategic Priorities and Plans
- Performance Report
- Headline Performance areas - Local and National
- Rate of Re-offending

- Custody
- Accommodation Suitability
- ETE Rates
- Looked After Children convicted of an offence
- Diversity
- Youth Justice Service Budget
- Resources and Value for Money
- Service Priorities for 2020/21

Members were advised that first time entrants in Oldham had a 20% reoffending rate compared to 34.1% in Greater Manchester and 37.1% England. Per reoffence, the frequency rate per reoffender was 3.23 compared to 4.23 in Greater Manchester and 3.93 in England. The frequency rate of 0.93 was significantly better than the 1.76 for Greater Manchester and 1.45 England. The custody rate for 10-17 year olds per 1,000 population in Oldham was 0.04 compared to the North West at 0.13 and England at 0.13.

Members asked for and received clarification on the following:

- How had the service done so well with no money. It was noted that over the past 10-15 years the service users had reduced by a third due to offenders receiving more warnings than previously. However, staff had been upskilled to support young people as much as possible.
- The type of work done to reduce reoffenders. Members were informed that the service worked on a child first approach and mentors and consultants were available. Different ways of therapy were also an approach such as art therapy.
- Members felt that there was not enough communication around the good news stories and hoped to share the information to the Borough.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

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#### **POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22**

**RESOLVED** that the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be noted.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.38 pm