

Creating a Better Place Update

Portfolio Holder(s):

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Reform

Councillor Jabbar MBE, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Low Carbon

Councillor Chadderton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Housing

Councillor Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Councillor Chauhan, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

Councillor Moores, Cabinet Member for Children Services

Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise

Report Author: Emma Barton, Director of Economy

17 February 2022

Reason for Decision

Cabinet approval was first obtained in January 2020 for the Council's '**Creating a Better Place (CaBP)**' strategic framework and capital regeneration programme. Following the onset of the pandemic, the programme was reviewed to re-prioritise and reconfirm the projects included in the programme to ensure alignment to the borough's economic recovery and to support the financial implications associated with responding to the Covid-19 virus: this was reported to Cabinet in July 2021.

With a focus on delivery in support of economic recovery plans, this report seeks further approvals to formally accept new external funds to support various projects to proceed through to the next stage of delivery; provides a summary of the community, business and market trader engagement recently undertaken for the Local Plan and various town centre projects; and, following comments and feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2021 on the programme, funding and outcomes, this report provides a holistic update on the progress being made to **Create a Better Place** and accelerate the delivery of new homes and job creation for re-affirmation.

Recommendations

Cabinet Members are asked to approve:

- the project specific recommendations outlined in sections three and four of the report which support a reduction in carbon, creation of new jobs, apprentice opportunities, accelerate opportunities for new homes for residents and act as a catalyst for economic recovery and increased Social Value.
- the acceptance of external funds to accelerate project delivery;
- the draw-down of council funds from the approved budgets within the Council's capital programme to support progress and continued delivery of priority projects; and,
- to approve the proposals and recommendations within the part b report which include approvals for future delegated officer decisions in consultation with portfolio holders for certain projects, where delivery is in flight and already subject to Cabinet approvals.

Creating a Better Place

1.0 Background:

- 1.1 'Creating a Better Place' strategic framework was approved by Cabinet in January 2020 to provide a new focus 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.
- 1.2 In light of the pandemic and national implications coming into effect in March 2020, the Council had to respond with the provision of significant funding support to ensure the safety and welfare of Oldham's local communities. This resulted in a serious funding impact on the Council's financial plans, and therefore the programme was reviewed, refined and re-prioritised in August 2020.
- 1.3 Engagement activities continued through the various lockdown periods to ensure local communities, members and town centre businesses could have their say about the regeneration priorities and projects in flight following the review. Important messages about family friendly activities, improved accessibility, sustainability, green energy, new jobs and apprenticeships, new businesses, filling empty units, more things to do and places to visit came through strongly in alignment with Council ambitions and covid recovery plans.
- 1.4 This was reported to Cabinet in July 2021 in addition to seeking formal acceptance of new external funds to support delivery of much-needed homes; for various projects to proceed through to the next stage of delivery; and, for additional more detailed community engagement to take place in line with activities now permitted under the Government's roadmap to recovery.
- 1.5 This additional report provides Cabinet members with a further update on the various projects in flight and seeks further approval of new external funds to support project delivery in support of the Council's commitment to carbon reduction and reducing the impact on rising energy prices.

2.0 Creating a Better Place: Summary Overview

- 2.1 The pandemic has seen many national retailers close their doors for the final time: some due to more residents choosing to shop on-line for convenience (and safety during the lockdown periods), while others have decided to change their business models and shop unit requirements. This contributes to a cycle of disappearing shops which is out of the control of local authorities, but the associated impact is seen further through reduced visitor numbers and, in some areas, a rise in anti-social behaviour.
- 2.2 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, they feel safe, and it is an exciting place where people can live, work and spend time.
- 2.3 Growing our economy through social enterprise, starting new business ventures and supporting the expansion of existing businesses, apprentice opportunities for work and skills development, and development and construction employment opportunities is increasingly more important to ensure residents have access to paid work to support themselves and their families. This is having a really positive impact following the pandemic, and something which will be reported on separately at a future meeting.

- 2.4 In alignment with GM strategies such as the GM Local Industrial Strategy and the new Greater Manchester Strategy, previous reports to Cabinet have confirmed a new vision for Oldham Town Centre as part of previous reviews into the priorities for the Creating a Better Place programme. The Big Oldham Conversation has allowed many residents, local businesses and traders to have their say on the plans, proposals and projects to help ensure we are meeting the needs of our local communities, and ensuring they have a town centre that continues to thrive for future generations.
- 2.5 This previous review of the CaBP programme reduced the value of the capital programme by c£100m. Since the review, c£40m of additional external funds have been awarded and accepted to support accelerated delivery of various projects, the details of which were reported to Cabinet last July (2021). This report includes approvals to accept further external grant awards to support the carbon reduction agenda and to progress alternative heating / energy solutions given the escalating rates across the country.
- 2.6 CaBP also provides important revenue savings opportunities to ensure the best use of public funds, value for money is demonstrated and social value is embedded into all projects for wider community benefits. The financial savings have been embedded into the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme. Separate annual reports are due for Cabinet consideration once again, which includes Creating a Better Place financial matters, as part of the annual budget setting procedures.
- 2.7 The following sections provide an overview of the projects seeking approval for progress through this report, with more detail and commercial / legal / financial terms in the part b reports.

3.0 Creating a Better Place: Strategic Updates (Key Decision Ref: ESR-10-21)

3.1 Places for Everyone

Places for Everyone (PfE) is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester local authorities (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. Greater Manchester Combined Authority are leading on this work on behalf of the Greater Manchester Mayor and the nine local authorities involved.

The plan is a joint development plan which will determine the kind of development that takes place, maximising the use of brownfield land and urban spaces while protecting Green Belt land from the risk of unplanned development. It will also ensure all new developments are sustainably integrated into Greater Manchester's existing transport network and confirm where new infrastructure is required.

The PfE plan is the result of a process that began as the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) in 2014 and has been informed by the feedback received from residents, businesses and the development industry to previous consultations on that Plan.

Following the final consultation exercise, which closed on 3 October 2021, GMCA and the nine authorities are finalising the Plan and associated documentation for submission to the Secretary of State for Examination in Public. The final Plan to be examined:

- sets out how the nine boroughs should develop up until 2037;

- identifies the amount of new development that will come forward across the nine boroughs, in terms of housing, offices, industry and warehousing, and the main areas in which this will be focused;
- supports the delivery of key infrastructure, such as transport and utilities;
- protects the important environmental assets across the nine boroughs;
- allocates sites for employment and housing outside of the existing urban area; and
- defines a new Green Belt boundary for Greater Manchester

Any comments submitted during the period of consultation (9 August to 3 October 2021) will be submitted electronically to the Secretary of State for consideration by the Planning Inspector(s) as part of the Examination in Public, and they will be published in due course on the GMCA PfE webpages as part of the evidence base informing the plan.

We appreciate that local communities have many questions and queries about the PfE examination in public and information continues to be available via:

> GMCA website: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/places-for-everyone/>

> phone line - 0161 778 7006

> email - planningandhousing@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk.

Recommendations for members: to note the update and imminent submission of the PfE documentation to the Secretary of State for consideration by the Planning Inspectorate, and alignment with the Local Plan development (see next section).

3.2 Local Plan (& Mills Strategy)

The new Local Plan for Oldham needs to align with the Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan Document (see section above) and will contain planning policies that will be used as the basis for determining planning applications. The Local Plan will cover the whole borough, except the part that falls within the Peak District National Park, and will identify where developments should be permitted, as well as areas where development should be restricted.

The recent consultation on the Local Plan was an important “Issues and Options” stage, which, together with its supporting documents, was subject to an eight-week consultation period that ran from 5th July until 29th August 2021. To get the most from the consultation, we asked specific questions and presented spatial options within the document.

Topic Papers were prepared and published as part of the process of evidence gathering to support the consultation period. The principal aim of the Topic Papers was to set out current key policies, plans and strategies that could form the basis for the development of the Local Plan. They also present a profile of the borough and highlight key issues and opportunities that the Local Plan should seek to address. The following Topic Papers are available:

- Housing
- Economy and Employment
- Our Centres (incorporating retail)
- Communities (incorporating community facilities, health and well-being, education, open space, sport and recreation provision and infrastructure etc).
- Open Land (incorporating Green Belt, Other Protected Open Land and Land Reserved for Future Development)
- Natural Environment (incorporating landscape, nature conservation designations and wider Green Infrastructure)
- Built Environment (incorporating design, heritage)
- Transport
- Climate Change, Energy and Flood Risk

Topic Papers are 'living' documents that will continue to be updated as we progress through the preparation of the Local Plan. One important recent additional evidence paper was the completion of **Oldham's Mill Strategy** – developed in partnership with Historic England. The mills form a fundamental part of Oldham's historic environment and provides distinctive character.

The majority of the mills remain in good condition and are in active use, particularly those mills within established employment areas that continue to provide well-utilised premises for a range of businesses. There are however some notable exceptions where mills have stood vacant for a prolonged period and, as a result, have fallen into disrepair and attracted anti-social behaviour, and they have become blights on local communities.

This new strategy reflects on the importance of the under-utilised mill sites and how they could be repurposed for accommodating future housing and employment development needs, minimising the release of Green Belt land. This work has been embedded into the evidence base for both PfE and the emerging Local Plan, and it supports the prioritisation of brownfield development land as a priority for redevelopment.

Recommendations for members: to note the new strategy and (subject to the completion of accessibility requirements), that the document will be uploaded on the Council's website for future reference.

3.3 Town Centre Engagement – Update

Consultation work has taken place over the last two years with our local communities to help clearly define and ensure wider awareness and engagement with regeneration ambitions. This work has also helped ensure that local priorities, and ideas and suggestions from local communities and businesses were embedded into the Programme and associated project work now progressing.

The Council recently launched the Big Oldham Conversation, with specific consultation and engagement events both digitally and in person with specialist groups, residents, town centre businesses and market traders to help raise awareness and seek feedback on various town centre projects and the overall vision for the future of the town.

A new website / consultation portal (<https://oldhammasterplan.commonplace.is>) was launched providing a helpful reference to the overarching strategy, Creating a Better Place, and within the interactive site, there is information on each of the projects with plans and opportunities for local communities and businesses to submit their views, ideas and suggestions. The site includes plans for the new town centre park, a new theatre, new Tommyfield market, event space, new entrepreneur workspace, an arts and heritage archive centre and improved shopping opportunities.

In addition, the Council launched a brand-new video, bringing the town centre transformation plans to life. The fly-through film outlines what we plan to do and where – including the redevelopment of Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre, the creation of a brand-new town centre park and a dedicated cultural quarter with new theatre. The video can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/7tre-Lzql8E>

Thousands of people have visited the site and told us what is important to them, including protecting and bringing heritage buildings back into use, re-energising the town centre, providing more family friendly activities, and providing a safer, cleaner and greener town centre environment. All of these suggestions have been reviewed and incorporated into the plans and projects.

Further project consultation will take place at the appropriate time in conjunction with standard practice for project development / planning application considerations, however

feedback from residents, local business, visitors, and market traders continues to be really helpful for shaping the following projects ahead of seeking approval for progression.

An overview and update on some of the priority projects is summarised in the next section of this report for members to review, given the commitment to make timely progress so local communities can actually see the projects brought to life on site.

3.4 Green New Deal

The Oldham Green New Deal (OGND) Strategy was adopted by the Council in March 2020, and set a number of objectives and pledges for delivery on environmental issues in a range of work areas, including growing the green economy; low carbon infrastructure; and, investigating a Local Energy Market.

The most recent data available shows that, in 2019, overall emissions for the borough fell by 6% on the previous year to 772.6 ktCO₂. Oldham retains its position within Greater Manchester as the borough with both the lowest total carbon footprint and also lowest per capita emissions at 3.3 tCO₂ per Oldham resident.

An update report on the Oldham Green New Deal programme was presented to the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee recently, updating members on the work done to develop the concept of a public-private sector partnership to deliver low carbon infrastructure in the borough.

In summary, the Council has carried out a soft market testing exercise, inviting private sector low carbon infrastructure companies to provide feedback to the Council on its proposed approach to setting up a public-private sector partnership to deliver against the 2025 and 2030 carbon neutrality targets. Alongside this soft market testing exercise, a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) has been developed for Oldham by Energy Systems Catapult who are leading delivery of the GM Local Energy Market project.

Oldham's Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) (appended to this report) identifies a requirement for £5.6bn to be invested in Oldham's energy infrastructure, to enable the borough to achieve its 2030 carbon neutrality target. Whilst this can be seen as a significant challenge, it also presents a significant commercial opportunity for private sector providers of low carbon infrastructure and provides an evidence base supporting an over-arching strategic business case for decarbonisation of the borough. If even a fraction of this required £5.6bn were to be spent with Oldham companies in the local supply chain, the borough would benefit very significantly. Additionally, the benefits to residents and businesses from reduced energy bills and more comfortable homes and work premises could also be very significant.

Additionally, the Council has commissioned a report on Oldham's Green Technology and Services (GTS) Sector, with an analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) and an Action Plan for key stakeholders in the borough to support growth in this important economic sector.

Recommendations: members are asked to note this update and whilst the focus of the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy is of course on Oldham borough, it seems clear that success will depend to a large extent on Oldham working effectively with the other GM districts and the GM Combined Authority to co-ordinate activity and secure maximum delivery value from existing programmes and initiatives. Members are asked to endorse the LAEP appended to this report and recognize that there is still an opportunity within the GM framework for Oldham to secure a leading position through our innovative Green New Deal approach, for the benefit of our residents and businesses

4.0 Creating a Better Place: Project Updates (Key Decision Ref: ESR-10-21)

4.1 Cultural Quarter: new theatre / performance space

Oldham Coliseum Theatre is much-loved and has a proud history in the borough, but sadly is no longer fit for modern audience needs. Spaces are constrained, it is restricted in terms of how the space can be used and, structurally, the theatre is nearing the end of its lifespan.

This project will provide a new, fit-for-purpose performance space in the town centre that meets modern requirements and provides additional, flexible, creative arts and performance spaces. It safeguards the role the Coliseum Theatre has played in Oldham for so many years, while creating a new theatre suitable for modern audiences and performers.

Supported by a successful bid to the Government's Towns Fund, plans continue to develop through more detailed stages to repurpose the Old Post Office (84 Union Street) and the former Quaker Meeting House behind it on Greaves Street in the heart of our cultural quarter. The proposals aim to expand the existing performing arts offer in Oldham; bringing in new audiences, creating new opportunities for people to take part in theatre-based activities, and improving the range of events on offer.

Recommendations: members are asked to note the ongoing detailed design work and positive feedback from the local community during the recent consultation and engagement programme. The work will continue ahead of a planning application being submitted later this year.

4.2 Cultural Quarter: Old Library Building

In direct response to requests from local residents to help protect the important local heritage buildings in the town centre and bring them back into use, the Council are investing in the Old Library building (a key part of our cultural quarter).

The building is currently undergoing significant maintenance and repair work to ensure it is protected for future uses. We continue to review the numerous suggestions for future use from members of the public, including more space for family friendly events, meeting spaces, more space for Gallery Oldham, more opportunities for local artists and performers to display their work or embrace creative collaborations, and support for a wider range of activities / events.

Recommendations: members are asked to note the ongoing maintenance work on site at this time, with a further report to come back to Cabinet in the near future once all the options for future use have been assessed and an outline business case has been developed.

4.3 Tommyfield Market

We continue to work with market traders and have regular discussions about the proposals to move into the Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre, which was requested by the traders ahead of the Council acquiring the site. The new market would stretch from Town Square, through the former TJ Hughes unit and extend into Parliament Square. The space will be completely redeveloped to provide a purpose-built new market.

This new location offers enhanced visibility in the heart of the town centre, with direct access to both the shopping centre and the Old Town Hall. The plans are for a split-level market with a retail market and a wide range of services at mall level while on the lower level, linking to Parliament Square, a food court would be created where visitors could enjoy food and drink from an array of existing Tommyfield traders. Further details will be set out in the planning application due for submission imminently.

Market traders acknowledge and accept that refurbishing the existing market hall would not solve issues and concerns about fewer shoppers coming through the doors, and the existing location of the market being set away from the key areas in the town centre. They are now considering the specific requirements needed to move to the new location, including ways in which we can minimise business disruption during the move.

Recommendations: members are asked to note the positive response to the consultation from the local community, local businesses and market traders, and support the ongoing dialogue with market traders to ensure officers are listening and responding to further ideas and suggestions. Members are also asked to endorse the commencement of feasibility work for supporting traders with moving to the new location and establishment in the new market hall. This work could include detailed consideration of rent concessions or rent-free periods, direct financial assistance with the physical move, and / or tailored investment into the look and feel of the new stalls / layout to enhance and support traders in the new market hall.

4.4 **Archive Store**

Some of Oldham's archives and museum artefacts are currently stored in various locations within council-owned buildings, due to the lack of specialist storage space. The distribution of artefacts across various buildings also makes it difficult to allow viewing of items as they are not readily accessible. The proposed Accessible Archive & Collections Centre will house museum and archive items that are not on display, in a safe and accessible environment with a degree of public access through an opportunity to locate the new collections store within currently unused space in the Spindles Town Square building.

Members of the public welcomed this new facility during the consultation and engagement events, especially with opportunities to provide enhanced accessibility for some of the collections. Further details will be set out in the planning application due for submission imminently.

Recommendations: members are asked to note the positive response to the proposals from the local community ahead of formal consultation as part of the planning process.

4.5 **New Event Space**

The proposed new event space will ensure that there is a sustainable, modern, and flexible town centre location for future business events, weddings, ceremonies, conferences and other creative performances. Cabinet have previously considered the future of the QE Hall and the significant cost implications for maintaining the building, as it has exceeded its life expectancy. However, this new space will ensure events can continue in the heart of the town centre, with seated cabaret space for c.500 people, theatre style seating for c.700 people and standing room for c.1,000 people as a music venue (*for example*) – this space can also be sub-divided as needed to host smaller public and private functions.

Available both day and night, with an adjacent car park, and directly next to the new market trader food and drink space, the consultation exercise confirmed that local communities would welcome this new facility, with a wider selection of activities and a more diverse offer to support the future of the town centre for all generations to enjoy. Further details will be set out in the planning application due for submission imminently.

Recommendations: members are asked to note the positive response to the proposals from the local community ahead of formal consultation as part of the planning process.

4.6 **Flexible / Social Enterprise Space**

As part of our economic recovery plans, we are very keen to continue to support new business startups, and social enterprise opportunities in the town centre: therefore, a new dedicated workspace is proposed on the upper mall of Spindles. It will open in an area currently not accessed by the public above the former Topman unit/entrance to Town Square and will look out over the High Street. The project is being supported by the Towns Fund.

The space will support businesses such as start-ups, micro-enterprises, social enterprises, and small businesses, as well as larger, more established, businesses looking for contemporary workspace as part of their post-pandemic ways of working. Oldham has nothing similar to offer, and this is an opportunity to inject something new into the local economy. Further details will be set out in the planning application due for submission imminently.

We particularly want to support growing sectors such as creative design and media, in order to deliver new jobs for local people and replicate successes elsewhere in Greater Manchester. The area will provide a flexible co-working space, creating room for these businesses to collaborate and flourish. To encourage and support local entrepreneurs, we will want to work with partners and other stakeholders to provide a dedicated business growth and investment team based within the workspace. This team will help local entrepreneurs in a wide range of ways – whether it's advice on getting their business idea off the ground, business growth assistance, or support with accessing funding and grants.

We envisage the space to include rooms for private meetings and consultations, and the whole space will be inclusive for all including people with additional needs. There is also potential to keep the workspace open into the evening – providing complementing networking opportunities, training and panel discussions, so that as businesses grow, we will support them to establish a more permanent base (including at a new business hub within the town centre which we are launching with the support of the Future High Street Fund). A separate report will be considered by Cabinet in the near future on this additional business hub proposal.

Recommendations: members are asked to note the positive response to the proposals from the local community, including interest from local and Greater Manchester partners for dedicated social enterprise, start-up business advice and business growth support.

4.7 **Town Centre Park**

The redevelopment of Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre and relocation of Tommyfield Market will free up previously developed land across the town centre to enable brownfield sites to be repurposed for much-needed new homes. With a commitment for over 2,000 new homes in the town centre, this was fed into the PfE to significantly reduce the amount of development in the Green Belt across the borough.

To complement these significant residential areas, we are also developing design plans following feedback during the consultation events for a new brand new 5.7 acre park to create new green, open space for residents to exercise, play, or spend time with friends / family and for town centre workers / colleagues to enjoy outdoor space in their lunch breaks. Recent decisions have confirmed that the new town centre park will be named Jubilee Park in honour of the Queen's 70 years on the throne.

Concerns have been registered about future maintenance and anti-social behaviour: this has been factored into the emerging design ideas with indirect surveillance from the neighbouring residential areas, new opportunities to ensure the space is used for outside events, and local schools and community groups have access to the space for leisure and sensory activities.

Recommendations: members are asked to note the ongoing design work including comments, suggestions and feedback from local residents on the park proposals. Members are also asked to note that a further report will come back to Cabinet in the near future outlining a comprehensive plan for the strategic development and delivery of the 2,000 town centre homes.

4.8 **Spindles and Town Square:** Various project updates in the above sections.

Feedback from local residents has recently included requirements for a new customer service centre as Access Oldham remains closed. Options are being considered for having a new customer service centre within the Spindles redevelopment, and the vacation of H&M later this month provides an ideal location for consideration.

Planning application(s) – approval has been obtained for the demolition of the TJ Hughes retail unit and the full planning application for the Spindles Shopping Centre is due for submission imminently, following pre-application consultation events. There will be further opportunities for local businesses and residents to have their say on the proposals – please keep an eye on the planning portal, or for ease of reference links will be uploaded on to the town centre engagement portal (continued engagement, comments and ideas welcomed on the various projects).

Procurement – questions were asked during the consultation events about the appointment of technical specialists for the design, development, and planning application processes for this project – all of which have gone through Cabinet for detailed review and consideration, with full compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and all relevant EU regulations, and with financial transactions complying fully with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

In line with the Council's ambitions for supporting our local economy, procurement opportunities for the early phases of the Spindles redevelopment work have now completed. With planning approval obtained – an early programme of works is the demolition of TJ Hughes unit – for which the vacant area of Town Square has currently been closed to members of the public while assessments take place to inform / and in readiness for the demolition work. Subject to planning approvals, Cabinet members are also asked to review and approve the procurement process for selecting a main contractor to deliver the new Tommyfield Market, Event Space, Archive and Social Enterprise areas as described in recent consultations, detailed further in the planning application, and set out in the part b report.

Recommendations: Cabinet members are asked to review the detail and approve the recommendations in the part b report. Members are also asked to note the positive response to the consultation from the local community, local businesses and market traders for the Spindles redevelopment plans, especially with regards to the commitment to delivery and contract award to local development companies. Members are also asked to note the timeline for planning application submission and the additional recent addition to include a new customer service centre.

4.9 **Town Centre Heat Network**

Minewater-fed district heating schemes are being developed at a number of locations in the UK and feasibility work carried out by the Coal Authority, on behalf of Oldham Council, indicates potential to extract around 4MW of heat from Oldham's minewater, which would make it one of the largest schemes in the UK. A minewater heat network in Oldham Town Centre could make a significant contribution to carbon emissions reduction and could also stabilise the cost of heat for town centre businesses and residents.

The Council secured a grant from the department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Heat Network Development Unit (HNDU) to carry out first stage feasibility on the potential minewater heat network, which was completed in spring 2021. In October 2021, a further grant application submission was made to BEIS Heat Network Development Unit, seeking funding to support the next stage of feasibility work – i.e. a wide-scale district heat network combining the existing St Mary's heat network with a new heat network serving large town centre buildings/development sites.

Recommendations: The new HNDU grant application has now been approved by BEIS HNDU and this report seeks member approval to accept the grant funding and commence work on detailed project development / outline business case feasibility work.

4.10 Princes Gate / Mumps Redevelopment, Lidl

In November 2018, Cabinet agreed to enter into an agreement with Lidl for the redevelopment of the land at Princes Gate / Mumps, which was completed in February 2019. Works were progressing towards the submission of a planning application when the pandemic commenced in early 2020.

With public reports of Travelodge going into administration in late 2020, Lidl's development team have taken time to scrutinise plans and business case decisions, before confirming the progression of the agreed redevelopment of the site during recent discussions.

With apologies to the local community for not being able to provide any updates on this project during the lockdown periods, we are delighted to confirm that the development is once again progressing, and a planning application is expected for submission later this year.

Recommendations: Members are asked to note the update and continuation of the development proposals.

4.11 Royton Town Hall

Royton Town Hall and Library buildings have been identified for retention and investment as part of the Council's Creating a Better Place Asset Review. The investment will see the buildings brought back into enhanced use as a more accessible, friendly and welcoming community facility, with sustainable / energy efficiency measures. The works have already commenced on site with refurbishment of the clock tower (minimising the impact on local businesses during the busy Christmas period) and soon the demolition of the extension buildings will commence, taking a number of months to complete, before the erection of a new gable end wall and windows in-keeping with the history of the building to the rear of the property. With the new rear elevation complete, a significant amount of work will then follow to ensure the roof is wind and water-tight, while the internal refurbishment works are deployed.

Works will involve a significant amount of scaffolding to be erected during the various phases, and we continue to ask for patience and support from local residents and businesses as we continue to minimise the impact on the local community while the works take place.

During the construction works, the library and associated services will relocate temporarily to the Methodist Church near the shopping precinct to provide service continuity for the local community.

Recommendations: Members are asked to note the progress on site and overview of the programme of works, and to endorse regular communications to help inform and update the local community on the progress being made with the building works.

4.12 **Accessible Oldham: Public Realm Improvements**

This project will improve streets and roads across the town centre making it easier and more enjoyable to get around – especially for pedestrians and cyclists. The first phase of the scheme has now started with work on Albion Street and Henshaw Street - improving the highway and creating new rain gardens, seating areas and quality public space.

Outside market traders have been consulted and have agreed to new locations / arrangements while the works take place. A new site office is located in one of the units in Tommyfield Market, so members of the public, traders or town centre businesses have easy access to the project team for any questions or queries that might arise during the construction works. However, we continue to ask for patience and support from local residents and businesses as we continue to minimise the impact on the local community while the works take place.

Accessible Oldham is a four-year project and other phases will create new cycle routes, traffic-free zones and much more across the town centre.

Recommendations: Members are asked to note the progress on site and overview of the programme of works, and to endorse regular communications to help inform and update the local community on the progress being made with the building works.

4.13 **Alexandra Park Eco Depot**

Work to build a new environmentally friendly depot at Alexandra Park has started and is due to complete in winter 2022. The new depot will provide a modern working space for our Environmental Services teams and will also play an active role in the community through a range of uses such as spaces for events, education and recreation.

The new energy efficient building – which is the first phase of our plan to create a sustainable hub at the park – will be heated by air source heat pumps providing more sustainable heat and hot water.

Recommendations: Members are asked to note the progress on site and overview of the programme of works, and to endorse regular communications to help inform and update the local community on the progress being made with the building works.

4.14 **New Saddleworth School**

The new Saddleworth School is scheduled to be handed over in February 2022, ahead of the school officially reopening on 2 March. It is being built at the former WH Shaw Pallet Works Site in Diggle and will have capacity for 1,500 pupils.

The new school will replace the existing Saddleworth School in Uppermill and will give pupils a much needed, modern learning environment, with new sports provision including an artificial all-weather pitch which will also be open to the community.

There has been significant works on the highway network to support the new school location, this includes junction improvement works, new and enhanced pedestrian footpaths and new parking locations for local residents.

Recommendations: Members are asked to note the progress on site and completion timeline.

5.0 Financial Comments

- 5.1 The financial implications are either contained the Part B report, have already been reported in separate reports, or will be included in future reports as and when individual Creating a Better Place Projects progress. (James Postle, Finance Manager)

6.0 Legal Services Comments

- 6.1 Specific legal information is contained within the part B report.
- 6.2 External legal advice may be required from time to time to support the delivery of Council projects as part of the Council's Capital Programme and aligned to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. This will dovetail with in-house legal teams and help to ensure all necessary steps are taken/documents are in place to protect the Council's position and commercial interests. Any such commissions will be obtained through lawful and compliant procurement exercises to ensure value for money and services are fit for purpose.
- 6.3 All work carried out/advice given will need to be governed by and in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- 6.4 Any contracts for the supply of works, goods or services made in the name of the Council will need to comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and all relevant EU regulations. All land transactions will need to comply with the Council's Land and Property Protocol. All financial transactions will need to comply with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
- 6.5 In developing the Medium-Term Property Strategy and Projects to support it alongside the Council's Capital Programme the Council will need to be mindful of the following :
- Procurement issues
 - State aid issues
 - The Council's Fiduciary Duty
 - Best Consideration
 - Vires Considerations
- 6.6 Part B of this report contains information as is detailed in Paragraph 3 of the revised Part 1 of Schedule 1A of the Local Government Act 1972. The exclusion from publication is justified for the reasons stated.
- 6.7 All legal issues will be reviewed and kept under advisement during the process and as Schemes and Projects come forward and progress. (Rebecca Boyle – Group Solicitor, Corporate Team)

7.0 Co-operative Agenda

- 7.1 The revised programme, the 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. (Jonathan Downes)

8.0 Human Resources Comments

- 8.1 There are no HR implications identified at this time. (Catherine Pearson, Strategic HR Lead)

9.0. Risk Assessments

9.1 All risk information is contained within the part b report. (Mark Stenston)

10.0 IT Implications

10.1 None identified at this time. (Lindsey Al-Basri)

11.0 Property Implications and Health & Safety

11.1 All property information is contained within the part b report. (Adam Smith)

12.0 Procurement Implications

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

13.0 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

13.1 Creating a Better Place is an essential transformational element in achieving environmental targets and wider economic regeneration objectives such supporting growth for Oldham's green economy, reducing carbon and reducing the impacts from national increases to energy bills. (Andrew Hunt)

14.0 Equality, community cohesion and crime implications

14.1 There has been a detailed stage one Equality Impact Assessment completed for the Creating a Better Place programme. Colleagues in Policy have reviewed this document and have provided feedback. At the heart of the projects contained within this programme there is the desire to enhance to community cohesion and promote equality. (Sarah Whittle)

15.0 Equality Impact Assessment Completed?

15.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the Creating a Better Place Programme. This will be reviewed again as the projects progress and are further developed. (Gail Aspinall)

16.0 Key Decision

16.1 Yes

17.0 Key Decision Reference (for Creating a Better Place)

17.1 ESR-10-21

APPENDIX: