

## **Creating a Better Place: Bi-Annual Update**

**Portfolio Holder(s):**

**Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Reform and Regeneration**

**Councillor Elaine Taylor, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Licensing**

**Councillor Mushtaq, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

**Councillor Hussain, Cabinet Members for Business, Employment and Enterprise**

**Councillor Jabbar MBE, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Resources**

**Councillor Ali, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

**Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care**

**Councillor Goodwin, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods**

**Councillor Dean, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture**

**Officer Contact:**

Emma Barton, Executive Director of Place & Economic Growth

**Report Author(s):**

Paul Clifford – Director of Economy

Chris Lewis – CaBP Strategic Lead

**Date: 16 October 2023**

## 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 and re-prioritised to confirm the projects included aligned 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.

The programme remains on track to deliver new homes, create jobs and deliver against our Green New Deal commitments ensuring Oldham is a great place to live, work and visit with lots of family friendly and accessible places to go.

Following recommendations from Scrutiny Committee for more regular updates on progress, this report provides Cabinet with an update on the strategic progress of the Creating a Better Place regeneration programme, including external funding opportunities secured, benefits realised for specific projects and the associated Social Value generated to **Create a Better Place**.

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## Executive Summary

The Council and our partners continue to make significant progress on the delivery of the Creating a Better Place programme which will ultimately reshape Oldham Town Centre but also reaches out across the borough.

This report seeks to provide a comprehensive update on delivery achieved, it acknowledges the successes to date and sets out key milestones in respect of the flagship projects sitting across the programme.

Nationally it has been widely recognised that there are significant delivery challenges in respect of the delivery of major capital regeneration schemes. Those challenges relate to a number of external factors which are often outside of the control of the Council. This includes elements such as rising supply chain costs, inflation, labour market challenges and over-saturation of the commercial market to name a few.

Unfortunately, Oldham and the Creating a Better Place Programme has not been immune to those factors. This report therefore seeks approval for the reprofiling of existing capital resource facilitating the continued delivery of the seven schemes set out in section 5.

In summary, Oldham has reached a pivotal point in respect of the Creating a Better Place programme with 'spades in the ground' and a number of significant transformational regeneration projects scheduled to reach completion over the next couple of years. This report aims to acknowledge and celebrate the successes to date whilst setting out the exciting journey over the coming year as we work towards realising the vision of Oldham '*being a great place to visit with lots of family friendly and accessible places to go*'.

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## Recommendations

Cabinet Members are asked to note and approve:

- the progress being made in relation to the Creating a Better Place Programme that supports revenue savings generated, progress towards the borough's carbon reduction targets, creation of new jobs, apprentice opportunities, new homes for Oldham's residents and increased social value.
- the technical, legal and commercial recommendations for certain projects within Part B of this report, including reprofiling the Capital Programme and reconfirming the delegations in place for certain projects in alignment with previous cabinet report resolutions.

## 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, they feel safe, proud and it is an exciting place where people can live, work and spend time.
- 1.2 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 through various challenges including rising inflation.
- 1.3 The Creating a Better Place (CaBP) programme has enabled a number of key partnerships to be strengthened ensuring Oldham has a strong narrative locally, regionally and nationally enabling Oldham, amongst other things, to secure substantial external funding to invest within the town and accelerate delivery of our regeneration activities to Create a Better Place. Most notable of these is the recent partnership announced with MUSE to create up to 2,000 new homes across a number of strategic sites within Oldham Town Centre.
- 1.4 The projects within the Town Centre will ensure its sustainability including the Spindles that the Council have acquired and works on site to develop new office accommodation, a new food court, new home for the indoor market and a Performance space. In addition, across the Town Centre we are establishing a new public park, the delivery of 2,000 new homes whilst also protecting and investing in our historical assets through the redevelopment of the Old Library and conversion of the Old Post Office into a new theatre.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 Strong progress is being made against the priorities identified through comprehensive and ongoing consultation with members, residents and businesses to deliver 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. The update contained within this report evidences our progress in delivering against these key priorities.

## 2.0 Creating a Better Place: Strategic Updates

- 2.1 The CaBP Programme continues to make a strong positive impact to the regeneration of the town, creating Social Value and delivering financial savings. The programme has delivered **£4.2m of revenue savings to date** with further additional savings projected over the next four years to the value of c£7.3m.
- 2.2 Working closely with various partners locally, regionally, and nationally Oldham's strong vision, plans and ability to deliver schemes have resulted in the CaBP Programme **securing external funding in excess of £70m to date** with the Council continuing to identify additional funding opportunities moving forward. The detail has been reported separately through Cabinet reports to accept the grants or through Capital Treasury reports.

- 2.3 Our Green New Deal continues to progress at pace with various schemes in development and delivery, these include large capital infrastructure schemes including the Oldham Town Centre Low Carbon District Heat Network and Wrigley Head Solar Farm. The Green New Deal Programme continues its strong track record of securing external funding including **£2m of external grant funding** to enable decarbonisation works to commence on the Spindles shopping centre in support of the Councils continuing drive to decarbonise the Council's buildings.
- 2.4 The programme continues to act as a catalyst for new jobs within Oldham through the various projects both planned and in delivery. The Broadway Green development is a prime example that includes **600,000sq feet of employment space, creating up to 2,000 new jobs and up to 500 new homes** on the development. The development is clear evidence of the private sector investing in Oldham with the recent addition of an ALDI and Costa on the site. Jobs and apprenticeships are also being created through the construction work both planned and underway within the Town Centre and across the town.
- 2.5 We continue to perform well against our housing targets with the delivery of **403 homes against our target of 352 for 2022/23**. Our recently announced new strategic partnership with MUSE is set to deliver a further 2,000 much needed homes within the Town Centre. Further information on the MUSE strategic partnership is detailed later within this report.
- 2.6 A key component of the CaBP programme is generating social value, which has substantial opportunity to benefit both individual residents and our wider communities. Social value is firmly embed within CaBP as part of our procurement processes and secures a contractual commitment from our partners and contractors to deliver wider / additional benefits for Oldham's residents and communities. Examples include: new apprenticeships, job creation and educational sessions at local schools and colleges etc.
- 2.7 To date the CaBP Programme has **generated £15m worth of Social Value with an average 15% SVP against contracts**. The social value benefits and outcomes measured / monitored have been reported previously to Scrutiny Committee as part of a performance related update on CaBP, but in summary the approach has delivered a number of benefits to date including:
- 679 weeks of apprenticeship training
  - 1,270 hours of Career Support sessions
  - 72 locally employed individuals
  - £24 million of additional local spend (use of local suppliers, materials, donations to . communities etc)
  - 584 Volunteer Hours

Below are a few case study examples of where the construction partner on the Spindles redevelopment, Wilmott Dixon and their partners, have contributed to community action:

#### Case Study:

*The Wilmott Dixon team spent a morning at the Wildbrook Allotments in Oldham, helping the 'Get Oldham Growing' project. The team helped to clear out two overgrown and vandalised polytunnels which will be used to grow produce for the local community. The Spindles project is continuing to supply waste materials to the scheme which can be used at the allotments including items such as cardboard and piping."*



*Willmott Dixon continues to work in various educational settings including recently at Oldham College to deliver a 'World of Work Day' with Year 9 students. The group spent the day rotating around various career focused workshops, where they were provided with information on the various elements of the Construction industry. The collaboration enabled the students to obtain valuable and meaningful careers guidance and advice. Sessions included Programme of works, Cost Design & Build, Tetrahedron Stem activity, information on Careers in Construction and how to continue further research into any areas of interest.*



*Finally, the Willmott Dixon team and supply chain partners donated easter eggs which were kindly donated to Oldham Council Children Services: the eggs were distributed to families across Oldham.*

- 2.7 The following section of this report provides an overview of the projects progress, with commercially sensitive, legally sensitive, contractual and / or financial information within the part b report. Much of this latter information will be publicly available in due course, but for now, it is reported within the part b to protect the commercial and legal position of the council and / or third party partners or businesses.

### **3.0 Creating a Better Place: Project Updates**

#### **3.1 Town Centre**

- 3.1.1 The transformational plans can also be viewed via a fly through video, bringing the town centre plans to life with the film outlining 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 here [Welcome to your new town centre - YouTube](#). Visible progress can be seen at various locations in the town centre, and regular updates are shared via various communication channels as projects work their way through the planning process combined with those currently on site. All town centre projects are supporting the future footfall and vibrancy within the Town Centre.
- 3.1.2 Town Centre projects include: redevelopment work at the Spindles on new office accommodation, new archives centre, the new Tommyfield Market and Food Court, and new Event Space. In addition, other schemes currently on site in the town centre include were prioritised to safeguard and ensure the future sustainability of historical / heritage buildings, including the Old Library and the Old Post Office which will be transformed into a state-of-the-art theatre as part of our ongoing development of Oldham's Cultural Quarter.
- 3.1.3 Whilst the CaBP vision for the town centre and wider programme is clearly articulated we continue to explore further opportunities in parallel to ensure a sustainable town centre that is safer, cleaner and greener with an improved shopping experience and regular events for



all generations within the Town Centre. Further details on the various projects in development or delivery can be viewed here: [Creating a Better Place | Oldham Council](#)

- 3.1.4 Members will recall that CaBP programme was reprioritised following comprehensive consultation with our local communities and businesses to help clearly define and ensure wider awareness and engagement on 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 in various stages from planning through to delivery.
- 3.1.5 The engagement process formed part of the Big Oldham Conversation, with additional and more recent specific consultation and engagement events taking place both digitally and in person with specialist groups, residents, town centre businesses and market traders. These engagement sessions helped raise awareness about the proposals and allowed officers to seek feedback on the various town centre projects and the overall vision for the future of the town.
- 3.1.6 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 positive and really helpful for shaping the following projects ahead of seeking approval for progression.
- 3.1.7 The last six months has seen further interest in the town centre redevelopment with:
  - the national news about funding being confirmed for a new Eton STAR educational facility being confirmed within Oldham Town Centre (location to be confirmed);
  - MUSE being confirmed as the town centre strategic partner to accelerate delivery of new mixed use developments, much needed new homes, and the town centre park; and
  - funding confirmed for accessibility improvements to St Mary's Bypass, to better connect neighbouring local communities to the town centre.

## 3.2 Cultural Quarter: New Theatre

- 3.2.1 Oldham Coliseum Theatre was much loved and has a proud history in the borough, but sadly closed earlier in the year following the withdrawal of the Arts Council England funding.
- 3.2.2 This project will provide a new, state-of-the-art and fit-for-purpose Theatre in the town centre that meets modern requirements and provides additional, flexible, creative arts and performance spaces. The new theatre will meet the expectations of modern audiences and performers adjacent to other cultural buildings including the Old Library and Oldham Library and Gallery.
- 3.2.3 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 from within Oldham and further afield whilst creating new opportunities for people to take part in theatre-based activities and improving the range of events on offer. The new theatre is currently planned to open in 2026.



### 3.3 Cultural Quarter: Old Library Building

3.3.1 In direct response to requests from residents to help protect our important local heritage buildings and bring them back into use, the Council are investing in the Grade Two listed Old Library building on Union Street within the Town Centre as part of the ongoing development of the Cultural Quarter.

3.3.2 The building is currently undergoing significant restoration with the first phase to protect the integrity of the building, preserve and restore where possible the historical features including the central staircase, replace steel work where appropriate and new roof now nearing completion.

3.3.3 The next phase of the old Library is underway and will see the a full internal refurbishment, retaining and retro fitting where possible historical features, that will create a new council chamber and function facilities, a gallery and 'flexible spaces' linked to Gallery Oldham for local artists and performers to display their work and embrace creative collaborations whilst also hosting family friendly events.

The building holds a special place in the hearts and memories of Oldham residents and will play a pivotal role as part of the Town Centre regeneration when it opens in early 2025, forming a cornerstone of the Cultural Quarter.



### 3.4 Cultural Quarter: Public Green Space

3.4.1 Located between the Old Library and Old Post office is Oldham's first public park, Oldham recently approved plans to further strengthen the Cultural Quarter offer with a new public realm enhancements that will see the creation of an open flexible space off Southgate Street, which will become a centerpiece of the growing cultural quarter bringing together the three key buildings – the current Library and Gallery, the restored Old Library and the new theatre with a capacity expected to be c300-350. The space will be able to hold an outdoor stage and will also be adaptable to suit activities such as outdoor arts classes, theatre performances and more.

As part of the work, improvements will also be made to Southgate, Ashworth, and Greeves Street to include planting, new trees, seating areas, external lighting and improved paving. Improvements will be made to pedestrian and vehicle access to the town's growing cultural quarter to ensure increased visitor numbers to the area are adequately managed.



### 3.5 Spindles: Tommyfield Market

3.5.1 We continue to pro-actively work with market traders and have regular discussions about the process of transitioning across into the new indoor Market within the Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre.



3.5.2 The new market will link directly into the Spindles shopping mall and out onto Parliament Square expected to deliver increased footfall for the traders who recognise the constraints of their current location. The plans are for a split-level market with a retail market and a wide range of services at mall level whilst on the lower level, linking to Parliament Square, a food court is to be created where visitors can enjoy food and drink.



3.5.3 The creation of the new indoor market within the Spindles complex will enable the existing Tommyfield Market site to be redeveloped as part of the new Town Centre Park.

### 3.6 Spindles: New Event Space

3.6.1 Our regeneration plans include an exciting new event space which will be located above Tommyfield Market and the new Food court with linkages directly into the Spindles shopping Centre and out onto Parliament Square boosting Oldham's cultural, leisure, entertainment and events offer. The design ensures 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.

3.6.2 Available both day and night, access to the facility will be via Parliament Square and a second entrance on Ashcroft Street with an adjacent car park. Consultation on the Town Centre regeneration 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.



Right above, is a recent photograph of the site where TJ Hughes was previously located, and which will be located the indoor Market, Food Court and new Events Space.

The illustration (right) is an artist's impression of the new façade onto Parliament Square.



### 3.7 Spindles: Archive Store

3.7.1 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 consolidation of artefacts distributed 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 enable members of the public to view the museum and archive items that are not on display, in a safe and accessible environment within the Spindles shopping centre.



3.7.2 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.

### 3.8 **Spindles: Flexible / Social Enterprise Space**

3.8.1 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 currently under construction on the upper mall of Spindles.

3.8.2 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 currently has nothing similar to offer, and this is an opportunity to inject something new into the local economy.

3.8.3 We particularly want to support growing sectors such as creative design and media, in order to deliver new jobs for local people. The area will provide a flexible co-working space, creating room for businesses to collaborate and flourish. To encourage and support local entrepreneurs, we are working 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.

3.8.4 The space has been designed to include rooms for private meetings, hot desking, consultations, and the whole space will be inclusive for all, including people with additional needs. The proposal is to keep the workspace open into the evening – providing complementary networking opportunities, training and panel discussions, so that as businesses grow, we will support them to establish a more permanent base.



### 3.9 **Town Centre: Egyptian Room**

3.9.1 The transformation of the Old Town Hall's Egyptian Room has reached a major milestone with work on the fit-out of the unit. It's a significant milestone in the plans for the future of the historic building – which will be transformed into a modern food hall, featuring six casual dining-style food stalls, a bar and a central seating area. Catering for around 150 people, the Grade Two-listed space will offer both indoor and outdoor seating and will complement the Food Court across Parliament Square within the Spindles.

3.9.2 The Egyptian Room will be converted into a bespoke contemporary food hall, all while preserving its historic character and original features. The scheme is another example of the Council restoring and ensuring the sustainability of historic buildings across Oldham. The Egyptian Room is a prime example of restoration of Victorian architecture with historical significance. It features original decorative glazed wall and column tiling, parquet and terrazzo flooring, plastered ceilings and original arched windows and doors. Below is an artist's impression of the space.



3.9.3 The scheme is being partially funded by the Future High Street Fund with the Council working in partnership with the Town Deal Board. The scheme is expected to complete in the summer of 2024.

### 3.10 Town Centre: New Park

3.10.1 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 to 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.

3.10.2 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. It is currently planned for the park to open in 2025.



3.10.3 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 neighboring 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.



### 3.11 Town Centre: Accessible Oldham Public Realm Improvements

3.11.1 The Accessible Oldham public realm improvements programme is currently in various stages from design through to delivery and will improve the streets and roads across the town centre making it easier and more enjoyable to get around – especially for pedestrians and cyclists. The first phase, Albion Street and Henshaw Street is now complete with the next phase West Street, Cheapside and Fountain St currently underway. The scheme will progress throughout the Town Centre creating new rain gardens, seating areas and quality clean public space that will complement the other projects already underway and planned.

3.11.2 A 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 work takes place.



### 3.12 Green New Deal

3.12.1 The Oldham Green New Deal (OGND) Strategy was adopted in March 2020 and deals with the upgrade of energy infrastructure in the Council's estate and Oldham borough to achieve stretching carbon neutrality targets. The strategy aims to achieve these aims by securing investment and delivery capacity in low carbon infrastructure to realise a range of benefits such as jobs and training opportunities for residents in this key growth sector, contracts for Oldham's local Green Technology and Services sector businesses, lower energy bills for businesses and residents and improvements in local green infrastructure for communities.

3.12.2 The OGND delivery programme comprises a range of initiatives and projects including large capital infrastructure schemes such as the Oldham Town Centre Low Carbon District Heat Network (£40m), decarbonisation retrofit of Spindles (£4m) and Wrigley Head Solar Farm (£1.3m). With the exception of Wrigley Head, most of these capital schemes have either secured grant funded (e.g. by the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme) or the intention is that they will be funded and delivered by our private sector should the Council wish to proceed on this basis (e.g. Town Centre District Heat Network).

3.12.3. This Town Centre Heat Network will form a strategic piece of energy infrastructure linking into the redevelopment of the Town Centre as a whole, including the new Master Developer partnership with Muse, and has already attracted significant grant funding and capacity support from the Department of Energy Security & Net Zero and the GM Combined Authority. First Choice Homes Oldham are also a key partner in that project, and we have the opportunity to transfer the existing heat network at St Mary's into the new town centre wide heat network scheme at a future point in time.

3.12.4 Other projects within the OGND delivery programme include RED WoLF (demonstrating an innovative hybrid low carbon electrical heating system in 19 Council-owned social homes at Primrose Bank), Alexandra Park Eco-Centre (depot renovation), Northern Roots (now an independent charity developing the UK's largest eco-park) and the Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership.

3.12.5 The OGND Delivery Partnership initiative is the most significant of all of the projects within the OGND programme, and aims to establish a cross-sector investment and delivery partnership which will procure a major commercial infrastructure developer partner to work with Oldham's anchor organisations and communities to develop and deliver a pipeline of low carbon infrastructure projects to meet local needs and priorities (including the reduction



of energy bills for residents and businesses). Oldham's Local Area Energy Plan (developed by Energy Systems Catapult as part of the GM Local Energy Market project) shows an opportunity for up to £5.6bn of low carbon infrastructure in the borough which will be required to reach carbon neutrality.

- 3.12.6 The Council has carried out three market engagement exercises which have each showed significant interest from major market players in working in Oldham on a collaborative basis. The Council has also recently submitted a bid for £1.6m of revenue grant funding from Innovate UK (as part of a consortium with GMCA and Manchester CC) which, if successful, will fund all costs associated with establishing the OGND Delivery Partnership. The partnership is expected to be self-funding on an ongoing basis.
- 3.12.7 Further grant funding from the Levelling Up Fund is supporting the creation of the Green Shoots Centre, a state-of-the-art zero carbon business incubator facility to be situated at Rhodes Bank (also the site for the proposed low carbon heat network energy centre), the new town centre park and an education centre at Northern Roots, as well as improvements in active travel infrastructure in the Oldham Greenway.
- 3.12.8 The Council also recently secured £140K revenue grant funding from Connected Places Catapult to develop area-based retrofit schemes for 'able to pay' Oldham residents to support them to improve the energy performance and comfort of their homes and reduce their energy bills over the longer term.

### **3.13 Green New Deal: Town Centre Heat Network**

- 3.13.1 Since 2020, the Council has been carrying out feasibility work looking at the potential for a wide-scale low carbon district heat network to serve civic, commercial and residential buildings in Oldham Town Centre. This process has been supported by revenue grant funding from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (formerly BEIS) Heat Network Delivery Unit. The Coal Authority has also been commissioned to provide desktop feasibility reports looking at the potential to use heat extracted from the Minewater in disused coal mines underneath the Town Centre, in particular at the Rhodes Bank site which is the preferred location for a new low carbon energy centre (adjacent to the Green Shoots Business Centre).
- 3.13.2 This latest piece of feasibility work is now complete which shows potential for a £40m low carbon district heat network incorporating the existing heat network at St Mary's, currently owned by First Choice Homes Oldham (3.5MW biomass boiler) at St Mary's and augmenting it with a new hybrid low carbon energy centre at Rhodes Bank which will be able to generate heat from a variety of different sources including Air Source, Sewer Source and Minewater Source.
- 3.13.3 The next stage of development of the scheme will see the Council apply to the DESNZ Green Heat Network Fund for up to £1m to carry out further work including the drilling of test boreholes at Rhodes Bank as a first step of invasive feasibility work to establish whether Minewater heat is feasible at the site. Once commercialisation work is complete, the Council intends to procure a strategic low carbon investment and delivery partner for the borough, and delivery of the new Town Centre heat network project will be the "anchor" project in that procurement. The Council will not itself be investing in the scheme, but Council buildings will be connected to the new heat network to receive low carbon heat in support of achieving the carbon neutrality targets set out in the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy 2020-25.
- 3.13.4 Construction of the new heat network programmed for completion in 2026.



### 3.14 Green New Deal: Green Shoots Centre

3.14.1 The Green Shoots Centre, funded by the Levelling Up fund, will be located at Rhodes Bank and will address the requirement for collaborative space for 'Green technology' start-ups and growth businesses. The Centre aims to be net zero and is to be located alongside and connected into the Town Centre Minewater Heat Network for sustainable and low-cost heating.

3.14.2 Alongside the construction of the Centre the scheme will work with partners to develop the Green Tech Sector (GTS) Network of businesses linking in with our Green New Deal Strategy, develop links to Higher Education institutes to maximise the opportunity of the 'green economy' across Oldham. The Green shoots centre is currently programmed to open in 2025.



### 3.15 Royton Town Hall

3.15.1 The Victorian styled Royton Town Hall and Library buildings have been identified for retention and investment as part of the Council's Creating a Better Place Strategic Asset Review. It will ensure these buildings of local heritage importance are improved and retained to benefit the local community and wider town. The investment will see the buildings brought back to their former glory with enhanced use as a more accessible, friendly, and welcoming community facility, with sustainable / energy efficiency measures incorporated where possible. The works have already commenced on site with refurbishment of the clock tower, some internal alterations and demolition of the extension buildings to the rear now complete. Work currently underway includes the erection of a new rear gable end wall and windows in-keeping with the original architectural design of the building, a new roof and refreshed internal layout restoring and retaining historical features wherever possible.



3.15.2 Works have involved a significant amount of scaffolding around the building and both the Council and Seddons construction have been working closely with local businesses and residents to avoid any major disruption. We continue to ask for patience and support from local residents and businesses whilst works continue with the building likely to reopen in April 2023.

3.15.3 During the construction works, the library and associated services have temporarily relocated to the Methodist Church near the shopping precinct to ensure continuity of services for the local community. The Library and Town Hall are currently scheduled to reopen in April 2023.

### 3.14 Alexandra Park Eco Depot

3.14.1 Work to build a new environmentally friendly depot at Alexandra Park is underway to 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.



3.14.2 The new energy efficient building, which is part of our commitment through the Green New Deal to decarbonise our estate where possible, is the first phase of our plan to create a sustainable hub at the park that will be heated by air source heat pumps providing sustainable heat and hot water.

3.14.3 The Eco Centre is currently programmed to open in late 2023/ early 2024.

#### **4.0 Financial Comments**

4.1 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)

#### **5.0 Legal Services Comments**

5.1 Specific legal information relating to various projects is contained within the part B report.

5.2 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.

5.3 All work carried out/advice given will need to be governed by and in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

5.4 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.

5.5 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

5.6 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.

5.7 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)

## **6.0 Human Resources Comments**

6.1 There are no HR implications identified at this time.

(Catherine Pearson, Strategic HR Lead)

## **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 Risk Assessments**

8.1 All risk information is contained within the Part B report.

(Victoria Gallagher, Head of Insurance and information Governance)

## **9.0 IT Implications**

9.1 None identified at this time.

(Lindsey Al-Basri, Head of ICT Projects)

## **10.0 Property Implications and Health & Safety**

10.1 All property information is contained within the Part B report.

(Katy Webster, AD Property)

## **11.0 Procurement Implications**

11.1 All procurement information is contained within the Part B report.

(Dan Cheetham, Procurement Business Partner)

## **12.0 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**

12.1 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, Green Energy & Sustainability Manager)

## **13.0 Equality, community cohesion and crime implications**

13.1 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, Public Health Policy & Strategy Officer)

#### **14.0 Equality Impact Assessment Completed including implications for children**

14.1 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, Capital Programme and Special Projects Manager)

#### **15.0 Key Decision**

15.1 Yes

#### **16.0 Key Decision Reference (for Creating a Better Place)**

16.1 ESR-10-21

#### **17.0 Background Papers**

17.1 Please find below a link to the CaBP web page that also includes a fly through video. In addition, for information please find below previous CaBP update reports.

Creating a Better Place Website Link:

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201248/creating\\_a\\_better\\_place#:~:text=Creating%20a%20Better%20Place%20is,jobs%20and%20100%20apprenticeship%20opportunities.](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201248/creating_a_better_place#:~:text=Creating%20a%20Better%20Place%20is,jobs%20and%20100%20apprenticeship%20opportunities.)

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