

Report to COUNCIL 1 November 2023

Cabinet Report of Reform and Regeneration Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Arooj Shah, Cabinet Member, Reform and Regeneration

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Borough Strategy

The Local Government Association are supporting Oldham Council with a Corporate Peer Challenge this week, 31 October to 3 November. This improvement activity brings peer officers and members from across the country to Oldham to help us assess our progress against our plans and ambitions and to identify areas for improvement.

Peer Challenges are a key part of the LGA's improvement activity, and all local authorities are expected to have one every four years.

The Peer Challenge team will meet officers and members alongside partners from across Oldham and the wider city-region.

The outcome of the Peer Challenge will be published by the LGA in December with the Council due to publish an action plan in response by March 2024.

Communications

The Communications function have supported and promoted a range of activities including:

- Unveiling a new blue plaque to honour suffragist, Marjory Lees;
- Organising and promoting some fantastic family-friendly Halloween activities and the Halloween Half Marathon;
- Promoting the Big Bang Bonfire which takes place tomorrow– a fantastic free, family event for the whole community;
- Announcing and promoting our Christmas events programme which aims to drive visitors and spend in local businesses throughout the Christmas period;

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- Distributing our free newspaper 'Oldham Council Working for You' updating local residents about available services, events and activities across the borough.

External Relationships and Partners

Visited the Violence Reduction Unit's community-led programme – a project launched to prevent young people from getting involved in crime.

Council Leader Arooj Shah met with the head of Eton during September to discuss plans for Oldham's new Eton Star College. Worked with the landowner so the chimney at Hartford Mill could be demolished – paving the way for much-needed new homes.

Economic Growth

On the 30th September 2023 the government announced a new levelling fund of £1.1 billion to help long-term plans for 'left-behind towns'. Fifty-five towns will be given £20 million endowment-style funds each over 10 years to invest in local people's priorities.

Chadderton is one of the towns who will be allocated £20m of funding and the Council will now work within the framework set out by government to capitalise on this opportunity.

Capital Projects and Investment

The Creating a Better Place Programme bi-annual report to Cabinet in October provided an update on project progress, 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.

In October the team met Tommyfield traders to update them on the exciting plans for their new market at Spindles. Wilmott Dixon also started the ground works for the new market, events and archive space off Parliament Square. Piling rigs are on site which are preparing the foundations for the new steel structure.

Corporate Property and Assets

Ongoing restoration works to Royton Town Hall remain on programme and are due to compete in Spring 2024. The new Place Based Integration site at Shaw Lifelong Learning Centre is up and running for residents to access services until the works at Royton are complete.

Transport

During October Government announced the cancellation of the HS2 project between Birmingham and Manchester with a commitment to spend the money saved on local transport projects. We await detail on the amount of funding available to Greater Manchester and, in turn to Oldham.

The Greater Manchester Bee Network launched in Wigan, Bolton and Bury during October and is due to roll out in Oldham from March 2024.