

Report to Place, Economic Growth & Environment Scrutiny Committee

Oldham Economic Review Update

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Shah, Leader and Cabinet Member for Reform and Regeneration

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Reason for Report

For Scrutiny to note and discuss progress to date on the implementation of the recommendations from the Oldham Economic Review (OER).

Executive Summary

The Oldham Economic Review was undertaken at the request of the Leader of Oldham Council, with a remit to examine the town's approach to improving its economic prospects.

A summary of the recommendations from the OER are set out as below:

1. **THE LONG GAME:**

- Oldham must set out its long term ambitions and aspirations, with missions and targets, for the aims and ambitions for Oldham through to 2030.

2. **ECONOMIC PURPOSE:**

- Breaking Oldham's dependence on "foundational economy" employment should be a central target in reshaping its long term economic purpose. And Oldham needs to set out clear plans for how it intends to achieve this.
- Relentlessly anchor all future activity and projects back to the delivery of Oldham's long-term transformation, that it is organised through a set of coherent sub-strategies, with missions and targets which are directly connected to the delivery of that transformation.

3. **BUSINESS AND INNOVATION:**

- A clear strategy for productivity and business, which includes manufacturing, business support, enterprise and innovation, all within a single strategic framework, with a clear set of missions and targets around improving productivity, increasing wages and boosting standards of living.

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- Proactive engagement with neighbouring authorities in the Northern Gateway, and in particular the AMPI project to support manufacturing.
 - Liaise with Innovation GM for Oldham to play a leading role in extending the emerging innovation network in Greater Manchester, into Oldham town centre. Develop a “best practice” programme for anchor institutions.
 - Develop a broader strategy for social enterprise, including its engagement with Greater Manchester initiatives to build capacity, share and develop expertise.

4. INSTITUTIONS:

- Recognise the mutual importance of the six capitals in driving improvements and develop a strategy to capacity build and support key institutions.
- Set up a new overarching ‘levelling up’ board, with independent representation, to oversee the delivery of the 2030 vision, with clear reporting around the local “levelling up” Missions and targets, back to the Council and Oldham Leadership Board.
- Work with Greater Manchester partners to ensure transparency about the investment of resources and expertise into Oldham and the impact of these on Oldham’s levelling up vision for 2030.
- Work with the University and the college, and other key institutions, to develop a bespoke leadership and training programme, to focus the “common purpose” of all stakeholders around the 2030 vision for Oldham.

5. SKILLS AND JOBS:

- Take a lead in setting the missions and targets for adult skills, with negotiation with local providers (the two main ones are Oldham Council and Oldham College) and GMCA, which will shape the use of adult funding in the borough to 2030. This should include its own analysis of the challenge of adult skills, and the levels of investment needed to make the borough competitive in the labour markets of Greater Manchester.
- Capacity build its general further education college to maximise its impact, including the delivery of a coherent alternative set of pathways, both work-based and classroom based, for those young people and adults seeking to progress into careers outside of the residential three year degree route, should be a clear policy priority.
- Undertake a review of post-16 provision which assesses the positive and negative impacts of competition between providers throughout the post-16 phase (16-18, adult, apprenticeships and higher education), whether this is helping or hindering the pursuit of more effective provision, and what can be done to improve collective impact. Oldham should pilot and adapted the LSIP model, addressing skills supply and demand in a much broader economic context including business support and innovation. It recommended that this work is led through a partnership between Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Oldham College.

6. CIVIC PRIDE AND ‘A SENSE OF PLACE’:

- Receive and act on the Institute for Place Management diagnostic report on ways that town centre management can be improved.
- Continue to work with partners from all sectors to enhance private sector engagement in the regeneration of the town centre, and increase investment from all sources.

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- An assessment is built into all current and future projects, to ensure that their purpose is clear, and their contribution is robust, transparent and accountable to the “long game”.
 - Build on the mill strategy to a brownfield mill redevelopment project as a demonstrator of new technologies and materials (including environmental/net zero) of best practice and a site for future excellence in both high-level skills, apprenticeships and firm innovation.
 - Review the potential for a stronger neighbourhood approach to those areas where multiple indicators – education, skills, health and crime – appear to overlap and consider focussed partnerships to test out new approaches to improvement.
 - Develop a strategic plan to protect and develop its key voluntary, community, cultural and sporting institutions, and a strategy for how they, along with the anchor institutions, can work together to build the foundations of the long-term transformational plan.

While the key recommendations are summarized above, an executive summary has been appended to this document for ease ahead of the Scrutiny meeting, with the full report and evidence / analysis which provided the background to the OER Board can be found here - [LevellingUpOldhamFullReportFinal.pdf \(oerb.org.uk\)](https://oerb.org.uk/LevellingUpOldhamFullReportFinal.pdf)

Members will receive more detail on the progress to date through a presentation at the meeting, which will include following:

- Alignment and progress of the Oldham Economic Review Recommendations
- Overview of the Economic Board (membership / governance)
- Outline key activity currently being delivered by the Economic Board
- Overview of key focus moving forward

Recommendations

Members are asked to consider the following discussion topics to ensure the Board continue to focus on key priority areas:

- Views from scrutiny are welcomed in relation to the alignment of the Economic Board to the delivery of the core recommendations of the Oldham Economic Review
- Feedback from scrutiny welcome on the scope of the proposed supporting Economic Strategic Framework.