



Cabinet Report of Reform and Regeneration Portfolio

Oldham Council

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Arooj Shah, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Reform and Regeneration

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to portfolio responsibilities.

Economic Growth

The autumn settlement released on the 22 November confirmed details of the new Investment Zone within Greater Manchester. The fact that Atom Valley has been allocated Investment Zone status with a focus on Advanced Manufacturing and Materials sets out a clear signal on the strategic importance of Atom Valley. In Oldham we are working with Rochdale to bring forward the Stakehill Site to drive forward opportunities for local residents and local businesses.

On the 28 November, I was pleased to host the first strategic partnership board meeting with Muse. Although the partnership is still relatively new it has been impressive to see the breadth of activity already taking place, in the coming months enabling works will begin on the three main strategic sites linked to our recent successful One Public Estate funding award. Work is also progressing on the development of a Strategic Regeneration Framework which will set out our bold ambitions for Oldham Town Centre.

I can also confirm that the Spindles Workspace will be completed early in the new year. Staff will start to transfer out of the Civic Centre and over into the new workspace throughout February and March, ensuring a consistent footfall of 1,000 people in the Spindles Shopping Centre daily – supporting local shops and other businesses.

Outside of the Town Centre, work to develop Growth Plans for each district of the borough is now underway. District Growth Plans will be developed jointly with communities, residents and businesses ensuring that they reflect the things that are most important to each area. I am pleased to be able to confirm that work has now started on the first two plans which will cover the North (Royton, Shaw and Crompton) and West (Chadderton and Werneth) districts. It is also hoped that the West District plan will be aligned to the government's £20 million funding announcement in September.

On 6 November, I was pleased to be able to attend the Royton business event at Mazzo's Restaurant. Over 40 businesses were in attendance and we discussed a range of topics and shared updates on some of the planned regeneration works within the area including Royton Town Hall and the Quality Bus Corridor.

One of the key messages I heard during the Royton event and a common message that businesses share with me is a desire to be able to work with the Council on our regeneration programme and more widely on core activity. I also regularly hear that local businesses also really want to do more business with other Oldham businesses keeping spend within the

Town. With that in mind, I am pleased to announce that in January I will be hosting a procurement event open to all businesses who wish to help us shape this area in the future. Following last month's news that Oldham was awarded Social Enterprise Place status, the Council and Upturn Enterprises hosted a Social Value summit. It was real privilege to be able to attend and speak at this event to an impassioned audience in a key sector which has so much to offer to our local economy.

Frank's latest Business Breakfast meeting took place on 24th November with more than 100 companies present. Businesses often cite that one of the main issues that they face is recruiting the right people for their business – those with the right personal, academic and technical skills. The purpose of this event was to demonstrate the range of employment and recruitment support that is currently on offer to businesses in the Borough. The event showcased a range of public and private sector support from helping businesses with ready to fill vacancies, pre-employment programs and more tailored solutions such as apprenticeship schemes with thanks to partners such as The Oldham College, North Lancs Training and Get Oldham Working we can help more residents into better jobs.

Communications

The organisation and marketing of Town Centre Events are a key element of the borough's Place Marketing approach. Events are evaluated through visitor interviews and surveys to determine their success and the level of spending driven to local businesses.

The annual Christmas Parade and Light Switch on event was held in November, with the parade and switch on elements being combined into one day for the first time. The event had an estimated attendance of 10,000, and received highly positive feedback across social media from residents, with many praising the event as one of the best in years. As part of the event, we once again promoted some businesses by pushing specific offers online across our channels. We also surveyed businesses following the event, and 88% of them said they had seen an increase in both footfall and sales on the day, due to the event.

At the end of October Oldham Town Centre hosted the Halloween Half Marathon alongside a range of fun family activities. The event attracted around 7,000 visitors, and footfall figures from the Sunday in Spindles Shopping Centre show an increase in footfall of around 4% on the previous year and around 5% compared to the weekend before. For the first time in the event's history, the Oldham half marathon sold out, and the wait list was also full. This was great to see after four years away, and provides a strong basis for the event to come back even bigger and better in 2024.

November's Bonfire event held at Oldham Edge attracted around 5,000 attendees, over 90% of them Oldham residents. Families reported they enjoyed the event and there was praise for the fireworks display.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.