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**PLACE, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY BOARD**  
**31/01/2024 at 6.00 pm**



**Present:** Councillor McLaren (Chair)  
Councillors Ibrahim, Iqbal, Jabbar and Kenyon (Substitute)

Also in Attendance:

Rhys Attwell	Constitutional Services
Paul Clifford	Director of Economy
Nasir Dad	Director of Environment
Abdul Jabbar	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

1           **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies for absences which were received from Cllr Ghafoor, Cllr Moores, Cllr Hindle and Cllr Williamson.

2           **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3           **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4           **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

5           **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PLACE, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY BOARD MEETING**

**RESOLVED-** that the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2023 be approved as a correct record.

6           **OLDHAM GREEN NEW DEAL DELIVERY PARTNERSHIP**

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Resources, Paul Clifford: Director of Economy and Nasir Dad Director of Environment presented to the Scrutiny Board a presentation on Oldham Green New Deal.

The Director of Economy presented the first half of the presentation on Oldham's new green deal update.

It was noted that Oldham Council are working towards 2025 and 2030 carbon neutrality targets, with the 2022/23 Council's carbon footprint being at 6,379 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, a decrease by 25% on the 2018/19 baseline. Oldham Borough had emissions at 841.5 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e and per capita emissions were at 3.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. Emissions had rose by 10% in the borough in 2021, with this being suggested as a result of covid-19 lockdowns.

The Scrutiny Board noted that the Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership had been working on new initiatives for the last few years and was now moving to the implementation phase. The Council had secured 1.5 million from the DESNZ local Net Zero Accelerator Program via the GMCA to fund the

implementation and expansion of the community led energy planning approach developed by Carbon Co-op.



A Green New Delivery Group had been established as a subgroup of the Oldham Partnership Board, with it being noted that the board is a mixed group of regional, businesses and community stakeholders.

Members heard that an independent Assurance provider had been procured although had not been appointed at the time of the meeting.

The Director for Economy informed the Board that the Council was also applying for £150K of grant funding from Innovate UK, with the objectives of using the funding to support community wealth building.

Members noted the Oldham Low Carbon Heat Network phase 1 as detailed in the presentation. Phase 1 involved an expansion of the existing St Mary's heat network with a new 2MW hybrid energy centre using heat from air source, wastewater source and mine water source. In addition, the expansion would involve 27 building connections across 5 phases including council, educational and residential sites with 30GWh/ annum heat demand and around 4.6km of new pipework. This was to be delivered by a JV with OGND delivery partner.

Members heard that Oldham Low Carbon Heat network phase 2, the core scheme located in St Marys cost £30 Million. The future expansion of remaining areas would cost £90 Million, with the hopes that delivering carbon savings will go a long way to helping Oldham Council achieve net neutrality.

Members noted that for Oldham Low Carbon Heat Network phase 3, the Council had secured £.8.7 Million from the Green Heat Network fund grant, which also included £1 Million in revenue for the next stage of feasibility and to evaluate mine water boreholes at Rhodes Bank. It was stated that Phase 3, would deliver Carbon savings of an estimated 3,700 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per annum.

Members were informed that as part of Phase 3, Oldham's Local area energy Plan showed potential for up to £340 Million of heat network opportunities in the borough.

As part of Oldham Low Carbon Heat Network phase 4, there were 9 zones which had been assessed on the objective of decarbonisation at a local level. With Members noting the first step priorities areas and long-term deployment areas, which had been identified in different areas within the Oldham borough. In addition to the heat network, other projects were included as part of the Oldham Green New Deal, including Wrigley Head Solar Farm, Net Zero Spindles, Area- based Retrofit Scheme and a Carbon Literacy e-learning package.

The Second part of the presentation was titled "Environment Strategy: Climate Change and Adaptation, and was delivered by Nasir Dad, the Director of Environment.

The Director of Environment explained the need for an environment strategy, with it being highlighted that on a national level there were greater challenges from climate extreme, from warmer or drier summers to colder winters. It was due to these extreme weather events that resulted in flooding, fires, and droughts that Oldham had developed a strategy that tried to mitigate these challenges at a local level.

Members heard that Oldham Council had developed a 5-year plan of priorities to ensure that the environment strategy connected with the Greater Manchester Strategies. It was noted within this that the new green deal priorities were focused upon homes, workplaces and public buildings, energy supply, transport, and travel. Other areas of priorities focused upon green spaces, air quality and how waste is managed locally.

Members were informed that the strategy was close to being completed a finalised, with the draft strategy still currently under review. It was noted that it was paramount that emergency plans were updated and reviewed regularly, with there being a need to work collaboratively with local businesses and the voluntary sector to deliver on the objectives of the environment strategy.

Members noted that as part of the delivery for the environment strategy, that there needed to be a stable form of governance which would encompass short-, medium- and long-term strategies in place, and a work stream operating alongside these strategies.

The Director of Environment explained to Members that Oldham's Garbage fleet would have to change to accommodate the environment strategy, which would involve the trial of electric bin trucks.

Members asked questions concerning the management of resident's expectations and the affordability of the projects in the face of public perception. It was explained by the Director of Economy that when introducing new infrastructure there can be misperceptions with the public. In direct relation to finance, the Cabinet member for Finance and Corporate Resources explained that for phase 1, 2 and 3 there is bigger ambition with government support through external funding.

Members asked questions regarding the lack of contract management skills which had been previously highlighted at other Scrutiny Board meetings. It was confirmed by the Director for Economy that they are building the necessary contract management skills are being built into the system.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources stated that now there is only one person with the appropriate contract management skills, with there being a need to have more people externally with the same skill set.

Members were pleased to see that St Marys was the starting place for the heat network, but there were some reservations about the 12-month period for a climate change plan.

It was confirmed by the Director of Environment that the baseline for the project would be achieved in 12 months.

Members asked questions on when removing the trees on private land would there be replacement trees. The Director of Environment stated that there was a tree planting schedule. It was noted that trees are normally only removed based on health and safety or the tree being diseased.

Members asked what species of tree's were planted, with the Director of Environment stating that they are unsure on the varied species of trees which were planted but could find out and inform members following the meeting.

Members asked if Oldham Council would continue to develop a partners' network as part of the strategy, with hopes of including the private sector. The Director for Economy and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources confirmed that there is room for private sector and voluntary sector to have role. It was noted that community lead initiatives had been encouraged, to make change.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources informed members that a 'Green Summit' will be held in March, which will bring different stakeholders together.

Members asked if there would be a "Green drop-in session" which would be used to raise awareness. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources responded that they had been considering how to interact with the public, with a green drop inn session something which could be carried out.

Members asked if the Oldham Council will ensure that strategic partners who are supplying the energy, will always be cheaper than competition which uses gas.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources stated that this would be the case, and part of the aim and ambition. It was noted target overall cost would be subsidised by government grants which might help.

Members asked what lessons can be learnt for Oldham Council from Northern Roots. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources responded that there is a 168-acre plot which is being run by the council and charities with the aim of giving people the skills to run their own business. It was noted that there are still things to learn at the early stages of the project, Members are invited to attend events and see how progress is coming along.

Members asked if events relating to Northern Roots could be incorporated into the proposed drop-in sessions. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources confirmed that Northern

Roots could be incorporated into drop-in sessions, along with specific training.



**Oldham**  
Council

Members asked if training could be given to elected members of the Council. The Cabinet member for Finance and Resources and Director for Economy confirmed that training could be provided, with there being a wish to see elected members learn the literacy surrounding environmental science in relation to carbon neutrality.

Members wished to know if a developer could not fit renewable energy technology onto buildings, if there were any other ways to offset the carbon levels. The Director for Environment answered that there would need to be legislation and legal mechanisms for this to take place and was unsure of the legal procedure around it.

Members wished to know that in relation to extreme weather what was the localised issue for Oldham. The Director for Environment stated that at this moment in time there is no extreme weather issues, but this does not mean for future events there will not be localised issues, especially around urban areas.

The Chair wished to review this topic again in 12 months' time.

**Resolved:** - that

- a) Members noted the Oldham Green New Delivery Partnership report.
- b) The Scrutiny Board suggestion for the creation of "Green drop-in sessions" are to be established following the meeting.

## 7 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered it's work programme for 2023/24.

**Resolved-** that

- a) The Place, Economic growth and environment Scrutiny Boards work programme 2023/24 be noted.

## 8 **KEY DECISION DOCUMENT**

The Board considered the Key Decision document, which had recorded the key decisions that the authority is due to take.

**Resolved:** that the Key Decision Document be noted.

The meeting started at 18:00pm and ended at 19:17pm.

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