

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Arooj Shah, Leader of Oldham Council
Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham

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

Economic Growth and Regeneration:

The Creating a Better Place programme continues to be on track to deliver significant transformational projects across the borough, to build much needed new homes, to create jobs and support businesses to grow. As recommended by Scrutiny Committee, a report is due to be considered by Cabinet next week to review the performance of this programme in terms of the construction works, but also the additional opportunities these projects have created for residents and local businesses through the associated social value this important programme has created. The report will also consider the substantial amount of external funding that has been secured to invest in the borough to accelerate delivery of various projects across the districts.

I'm delighted to see that a public consultation exercise is at last underway on various town centre projects – town centre park, St Mary's bypass, proposals for the new Eton/STAR Academy School and the new homes through the town centre living partnership with MUSE. Linked to this, many people will have noticed the Snipe Pub demolition works are also well underway now, with the replacement community garden due to be completed later this year.

Oldham Coliseum:

Cabinet will formally consider the final proposals for the theatre in Oldham Town Centre following extensive engagement with many residents across Oldham and with many local community and performance groups, including Save Oldham Coliseum Theatre Group and the Oldham Coliseum Board.

Transport and the Bee Network:

Many people will be able to see the new yellow buses around the borough following the launch of the Bee Network here in Oldham, and the new bus station facilities in the Town Centre.

Finally, I am pleased to confirm that Oldham Council has been shortlisted for a Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) award for our School Streets pilots at St Annes in Royton and at Buckstones Primary school in Shaw. The project has been shortlisted in the 'Safety and Wellbeing' category and is very much testament to the partnership working with the schools, parents, students and local residents working towards getting the pilots live. The results will be announced shortly.

Communications

Communications and Marketing work has secured wide awareness, reach and positive response for events including the Women's Tour of Britain, and Festival Oldham. Our commitment to giving people great experiences and attracting people to our borough to spend money and support local businesses was borne out by findings of visitor surveys at the event. These also highlighted that of people attending who live in the Borough, 93.5% stated the events made them feel 'proud of Oldham'.

Recent months have included two 'pre-election periods' which restrict public bodies' communications activity. Nonetheless, activity includes the delivery and planning of work as above, plus various other activities.

Key campaigns

Key campaigns contributing to our priority areas such as Creating a Better Oldham, and giving young children and people the best start in life included targeted marketing activity to raise awareness and generate interest and uptake in Fostering, and joining the Council as a social worker.

Oldham continued to celebrate our 175 Anniversary as a borough, with birthday messages from prominent local figures, a fantastic new exhibition at Gallery Oldham, and more, generating wide reach and positive feedback.

Important work to benefit our residents' health included public health awareness and uptake campaigns such as MMR uptake and measles awareness, activities for parents/carers and young children hosted at Family Hubs, and the 'Oldham on the Move' theme - promoting active travel for environment and health benefits.

Work has also begun on public consultation on our exciting plans to build 2,000 new Town Centre homes in partnership with world-leading developer Muse, and further Town Centre transformation to improve connectivity and access to the Town Centre for local people, and more green spaces.

Alongside all this work, further projects and short campaigns have included:

- Elections awareness short campaign including awareness raising of voting processes and Voter ID
- Love your local market campaign involving market traders
- Reducing fly tipping campaign
- We have launched a new 'What's On Oldham' website

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.