

## Report to CABINET (Part A)

# Creating a Better Place Update

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor Arooj Shah,  
Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Building a Better Oldham**

**Officer Contact:**

Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

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### Reason for Decision

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, and to deliver against our Green New Deal commitments ensuring Oldham is a great place to live, work and visit with lots of family friendly and accessible places to go.

In alignment with recommendations from Scrutiny Committee, this report provides Cabinet with an update on the strategic progress of the CaBP regeneration programme, including external funding opportunities secured, benefits realised for specific projects and the associated Social Value generated to *Create a Better Place*.

This report seeks approval on the recommendations for various projects after a review of the Council's regeneration and redevelopment capital programme, including outcome delivery, social value capture, positive opportunities and impacts for Oldham's residents and local businesses, and where applicable note the challenges and mitigations in place linked to reprofiling of capital resource to allow the continued delivery and completion of flagship projects.

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### Executive Summary

The Council and our partners continue to make significant progress on the delivery of the Creating a Better Place (CaBP) programme which will ultimately reshape Oldham Town Centre but also reaches out across the borough. This report seeks to provide a comprehensive update on delivery achieved, it acknowledges the successes to date and sets out key milestones in respect of the flagship projects sitting across the programme.

The transformational plans for the town centre can also be viewed via a fly through video, bringing the town centre plans to life with the film outlining what we plan to do and where – including the redevelopment of Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre, the creation of a brand-new town centre park and a dedicated cultural quarter with new theatre. The video can be viewed here [Welcome to your new town centrepa - YouTube](#). Visible progress can be seen at various locations in the town centre, and regular updates are shared via various communication channels as projects work their way through the planning process combined with those currently on site. All town centre projects are supporting the future footfall and vibrancy within the Town Centre and already starting to see an increase.

Town Centre projects include: redevelopment work at the Spindles on new office accommodation with certain phases now complete including relocation of staff and partners from the civic Centre, new archives centre, the new Tommyfield Market, Food Court, and new Event Space. In addition, other schemes currently on site in the town centre to safeguard and ensure the future sustainability of historical / heritage buildings, including the Old Library as part of our ongoing development of Oldham's Cultural Quarter. Wider than the town centre other schemes include the comprehensive refurbishment of Royton Town Hall and Library and strong progress of the Chadderton Levelling Up Partnership.

Whilst the CaBP vision for the town centre and wider programme is clearly articulated we continue to explore further opportunities for a sustainable town centre that is safer, cleaner and greener with an improved shopping experience and regular events for all generations within the Town Centre. Further details on the various projects in development or delivery can be viewed here: [Creating a Better Place | Oldham Council](#)

Nationally it has been widely recognised that there are significant delivery challenges in respect of the delivery of major capital regeneration schemes. Those challenges relate to a number of external factors which are often outside of the control of the Council. This includes elements such as rising supply chain costs, inflation, labour market challenges and over-saturation of the commercial market to name a few.

Unfortunately, Oldham and the CaBP Programme has not been immune to those factors. This report therefore seeks approval for the reprofiling of existing capital resource, necessary changes to specification works through contract variations in order to deliver the necessary outcomes for Oldham's residents and communities within the overall CaBP budget allocation.

The CaBP programme is focused on delivery, and this is evidenced by the projects in delivery with 'spades in the ground' which will reach completion over the next twelve to twenty-four months and significant transformational regeneration projects in development.

To date the CaBP Programme has **generated £28.3m worth of Social Value with an average 22% SV against contracts**. The social value benefits and outcomes measured / monitored have been reported previously to Scrutiny Committee as part of a performance related update on CaBP, but in summary the approach has delivered a number of benefits to date including:

- 81 locally employed people / new job opportunities created
- 812 weeks of apprenticeship training
- 2,665 hours of Career Support sessions
- £46.5 million of additional local spend (use of local suppliers, materials, donations to communities etc.)
- 615 Volunteer Hours

This report aims to acknowledge and celebrate the successes to date whilst setting out the exciting journey over the coming year as we work towards realising the vision of Creating a Better Oldham.

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## Recommendations

Cabinet Members are asked to note and approve:

- the progress being made in relation to the Creating a Better Place (CaBP) Programme that supports 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.
- the social value gained for Oldham's residents and communities through the design, development and delivery of the projects within the CaBP programme.
- the technical, legal and commercial recommendations for certain projects set out within Part B of this report.
- the delegation of approval to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) in consultation with the relevant portfolio holders and Directors of Economy, Finance and Legal for the associated changes to contractual, technical or financial decisions for the delivery of the CaBP projects referenced within the Part B of this report.

## Creating a Better Place

### 1.0 Background:

- 1.1 The Creating a Better Place (CaBP) programme has enabled a number of key partnerships to be strengthened ensuring Oldham has a strong narrative locally, regionally and nationally enabling Oldham, amongst other things, to secure substantial external funding to invest within the town and accelerate delivery of our regeneration activities to CaBP. Most notable of these is the partnership with MUSE to create up to 2,000 new homes across a number of strategic sites within Oldham Town Centre on land released by a series of the ongoing projects (i.e., relocation of colleagues and partners from the Civic Centre to the new Spindles office accommodation).
- 1.2 The projects within the Town Centre will ensure its sustainability including the Spindles that the Council have acquired and works on site to develop new office accommodation, a new food court, new home for the indoor market and a Performance space. In addition, across the Town Centre we are creating a new public park, the delivery of 2,000 new homes whilst also protecting and investing in our historical assets through the redevelopment of the Old Library.
- 1.3 CaBP also provides important revenue savings opportunities to ensure the best use of public funds, value for money is demonstrated and social value is embedded into all projects for wider community benefits. The financial savings have been embedded into the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme. Separate annual reports are due for Cabinet consideration once again, which includes CaBP financial matters, as part of the annual budget setting procedures.
- 1.4 Strong progress is being made against the priorities identified through comprehensive and ongoing consultation with members, residents and businesses to deliver family friendly activities, improved accessibility, sustainability, green energy, new jobs and apprenticeships, new businesses, filling empty units, more things to do and places to visit. The update contained within this report evidences our progress in delivering against these key priorities.

### 2.0 Creating a Better Place: Strategic Updates

- 2.1 The CaBP Programme continues to make a strong positive impact to the regeneration of the town, creating Social Value and delivering financial savings. The programme has delivered **£3.5m of revenue savings to date** through better utilisation of corporate buildings and embracing new ways of working / energy savings with further additional savings projected over the next four years to the value of c£5m. The programme has in addition delivered **Capital receipts to date of £13.9m**.
- 2.2 Working closely with various partners locally, regionally, and nationally Oldham's strong vision, plans and ability to deliver schemes have resulted in the CaBP Programme **securing external funding in excess of £80m to date** with the Council continuing to identify additional funding opportunities moving forward. The details have been reported separately through Cabinet reports to accept the grants or through Capital Treasury reports.
- 2.3 The Council's Green New Deal continues to progress at pace with various schemes in development and delivery, these include large capital infrastructure schemes including the Oldham Town Centre Low Carbon District Heat Network and Wrigley Head Solar Farm. The Green New Deal Programme continues its strong track record of securing external funding with further details contained within this report.
- 2.4 The programme continues to act as a catalyst for new jobs within Oldham through the various projects both planned and in delivery. The Broadway Green development is a prime example that is in the final stages of its development in delivering **600,000sq feet of employment space, creating up to 2,000 new jobs and up to 500 new homes** on the development. The

development is clear evidence of the private sector investing in Oldham. Jobs and apprenticeships are also being created through the construction work both planned and underway within the Town Centre and across the town.

- 2.5 We continue to perform well against our housing targets with the delivery over the last three years of **1,263 homes against our all-years target of 2,250 by 2026/27, over half-way towards our target.**
- 2.6 In support of the Housing Crisis, the Leader set a target for an additional 500 socially affordable homes to be built. In addition, the Council has announced a new strategic partnership with MUSE is set to deliver 2,000 much needed homes within the Town Centre whilst also progressing with other locations across the borough. Further information on the MUSE strategic partnership is detailed later within this report.
- 2.6 A key component of the CaBP programme is generating social value, which has substantial opportunity to benefit both individual residents and our wider communities. Social value is firmly embedded within CaBP as part of our procurement processes and secures a contractual commitment from our partners and contractors to deliver wider / additional benefits for Oldham's residents and communities. Examples include new apprenticeships, job creation and educational sessions at local schools and colleges etc.
- 2.7 To date the CaBP Programme has **generated £28.3m worth of Social Value with an average 22% SV against contracts.** The social value benefits and outcomes measured / monitored have been reported previously to Scrutiny Committee as part of a performance related update on CaBP, but in summary the approach has delivered a number of benefits to date including:
- 81 locally employed people / new job opportunities created
  - 812 weeks of apprenticeship training
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  - £46.5 million of additional local spend (use of local suppliers, materials, donations to . communities etc.)
  - 615 Volunteer Hours

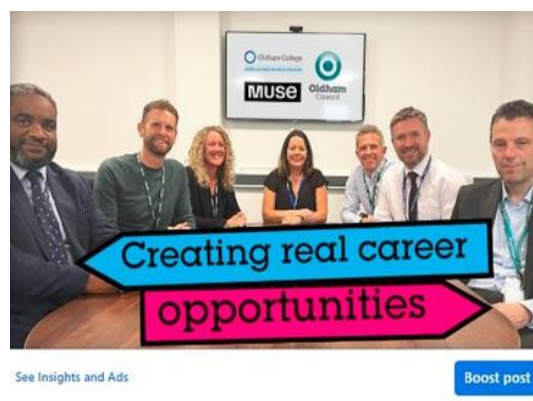
Below are a few case study examples of where the Council's construction partners have contributed to community action:

### Case Study

Willmott Dixon met with year 9 pupils as part of "World of Work" day, to explore the many differing jobs in the construction industry



Muse partnered with Oldham College to create real, on the ground, career opportunities for young people



## Case Study



Tilbury Douglas working on the Old Library donated to the Christmas Toy Appeal. In addition, our Strategic housing partner MUSE have contributed to the Council's Easter Egg campaign.

## Case study

Rowan Ashworth (RA) working with East Crompton St. George's Primary School invested £20,000 to deliver a multisensory room at the School.



More on this story can be found using the following links  
[New immersive room shines a light on social value | Oldham Council](#)

The following section of this report provides an overview of the projects progress, with commercially sensitive, legally sensitive, contractual and / or financial information within the part B report. Much of this latter information will be publicly available in due course, but for now, it is reported within the part B to protect the commercial and legal position of the council and / or third-party partners or businesses.

### 3.0 Creating a Better Place: Project Updates

#### 3.1 Town Centre

3.1.1 The transformational plans for the town centre can also be viewed via a fly through video, bringing the town centre plans to life with the film outlining what we plan to do and where – including the redevelopment of Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre, the creation of a brand-new town centre park and a dedicated cultural quarter with new theatre. The video can be viewed here [Welcome to your new town centre - YouTube](#). Visible progress can be seen at various locations in the town centre, and regular updates are shared via various communication channels as projects work their way through the planning process combined with those currently on site. All town centre projects are supporting the future footfall and vibrancy within the Town Centre.

3.1.2 Town Centre projects currently under construction include: redevelopment work at the Spindles for a new archives centre, the new Market Hall, a new Food Court, and new Event Space. In addition, the new office accommodation, training centre, and business enterprise space (The Hive) are all now complete and the relocation of staff and partners from the Civic Centre into the new space has gone well, with increased footfall seen immediately for the retail space within the centre. In addition, other schemes are currently on site in the town centre to safeguard and ensure the future sustainability of historical / heritage buildings, including the Old Library as part of our ongoing development of Oldham's Cultural Quarter.

3.1.3 Whilst the CaBP vision for the town centre and wider programme is clearly articulated we continue to explore further opportunities for a sustainable town centre that is safer, cleaner and greener with an improved shopping experience and regular events for all generations within the Town Centre.

Further details on the various projects in development or delivery can be viewed here: [Creating a Better Place | Oldham Council](#)

3.1.4 Members will recall that CaBP programme was reprioritised following comprehensive consultation with our local communities and businesses to help clearly define and ensure wider awareness and engagement on regeneration ambitions. This work has also helped ensure that local priorities, and ideas and suggestions from local communities and businesses were embedded into the programme and associated project work in various stages from planning through to delivery.

3.1.5 The engagement process formed part of the Big Oldham Conversation, with additional and more recent specific consultation and engagement events taking place both digitally and in person with specialist groups, residents, town centre businesses and market traders. These engagement sessions helped raise awareness about the proposals and allowed officers to seek feedback on the various town centre projects and the overall vision for the future of the town.

3.1.6 Further project consultation will take place at the appropriate time in conjunction with standard practice for project development / planning application considerations, however feedback from residents, local business, visitors, and market traders continues to be positive and really helpful for shaping the following projects ahead of seeking approval for progression.

3.1.7 The last six months has seen further interest in the town centre redevelopment with:

- Long term lease signed for the Egyptian Room with Oldham Food Hall Ltd, part of The Northern Lights Group (NLG), which runs some of the north west's most exciting and renowned restaurants and entertainment venues.
- TfGM opening of a new Supervisors Office and Travel Shop within the Spindles, whilst Oldham also hosted the launch of the tranche 2 Bee Network

- Opportunity to participate on the governments levelling up partnership conversation.
- Substantial grant funding secured for various projects including our Green New Deal initiatives.

3.1.8 The following section provides a summary outline of the progress being made with each project.

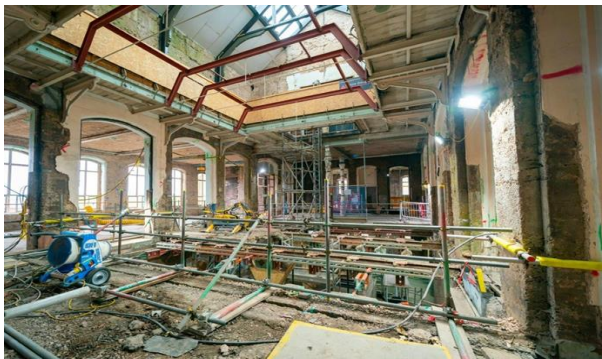
### 3.2 Old Library Building

3.2.1 In direct response to requests from residents to help protect our important local heritage buildings and bring them back into use, the Council are investing in the Grade Two listed Old Library building on Union Street within the Town Centre as part of the ongoing development of the Cultural Quarter.

3.2.2 The building is currently undergoing significant restoration with the first phase to protect the integrity of the building, preserve and restore where possible the historical features including the central staircase, replace steel work where appropriate and new roof now complete.

3.2.3 The next phase of the project is now underway and will see a full internal refurbishment, retaining and retro fitting where possible historical features, that will create a new council chamber and function facilities, a gallery and 'flexible spaces' linked to Gallery Oldham for local artists and performers to display their work and embrace creative collaborations whilst also hosting family friendly events.

3.2.4 The building holds a special place in the hearts and memories of Oldham residents and will play a pivotal role as part of the Town Centre regeneration when it opens in summer 2025, forming a cornerstone of the Cultural Quarter. The scheme is already receiving positive recognition being shortlisted for the National construction News Awards in the Community Engagement category, the award was submitted in partnership with Tilbury Douglas our construction partner on the scheme..



### 3.3 Old Library: Community Garden / Green Space

3.3.1 Located between the Old Library and Old Post office is Oldham's first public park, Oldham recently approved plans to further strengthen the Cultural Quarter offer with a new public realm enhancement that will see the creation of an open flexible space off Southgate Street, which will become a centerpiece of the growing cultural quarter bringing together key buildings – the current Library and Gallery and the restored Old Library. The space will be able to hold an outdoor stage and will also be adaptable to suit activities such as outdoor arts classes, theatre performances and more.





As part of the work, improvements will also be made to Southgate, Ashworth, and Greaves Street to include planting, new trees, seating areas, external lighting and improved paving. Improvements will be made to pedestrian and vehicle access to the town's growing cultural quarter to ensure increased visitor numbers to the area are adequately managed.

### **3.4 New Theatre**

- 3.4.1 Oldham Council has been working with cultural partners to secure the future of producing theatre in the borough for more than fifteen years.
- 3.4.2 Proposals have been developed for a new theatre building with detailed plans submitted for planning consideration. Comments were received from thousands of Oldham residents, community groups, theatre-goers, and many performers whose creative journeys started in Oldham. The planning consultation feedback also showed an overwhelming level of support from Oldham's communities linked to the Fairbottom Street site in preference to the proposals on Union Street, and much of this feedback showed a strength of passion and pride to retain the existing building rather than building a new and more modern theatre.
- 3.4.3 From the feedback received, including from key stakeholders, the fundamental difference was that the Fairbottom Street has a larger auditorium and an existing fly-tower facility which can facilitate specific requirements for producing theatre. Regardless of the building specifics, concerns remain with both building options with regards to the theatre model / operational business plan and the challenge this creates for a sustainable future for theatre and performance space, despite best endeavours and lessons learned from previous projects. This was linked to present challenges for any operating theatre organisation, in terms of their ability to generate income capable of providing a long-term sustainable business model in a post-covid economic era.
- 3.4.4 Dialogue has continued with key stakeholders, including Oldham Coliseum Theatre Trust and the Save Oldham Coliseum action group (SOC), and in listening to Oldham's communities, a commitment was made by the Leader of the Council to review the theatre building proposals and to crucially examine how theatre organisations could work together to generate and create a sustainable model and income in the future.
- 3.4.5 To do this it was agreed that returning to the opportunities that remained in a refurbished Oldham Coliseum Theatre at Fairbottom Street, together with a progressive asset ownership model based on cooperative principles, should be examined further.
- 3.4.6 Provisional assessments have been completed to review the building condition issues that would need to be addressed in order to re-open the doors to the Fairbottom Street site.
- phase 1- re-open Fairbottom Street theatre and ensure operational compliance / theatre setting
  - phase 2- additionality required over and above Phase 1 including accessibility improvements for visitors, back-stage improvements for performers in order to achieve additional reasonable adjustments to the building.
  - phase 3 – Set out future opportunities for improvements to the entrance, box office area, and the general appearance of the building, including improved parking facilities.
- 3.4.7 The review work shows that the Fairbottom Street theatre building can be re-opened with some significant repair and maintenance works to provide a safe and complaint operational space with current estimate of up to c£10m. This could be facilitated by utilising the Town Deal theatre funds and Council capital to tackle the important building issues (heating, lighting, asbestos etc.) and to enhance the accessibility of the performance space.
- 3.4.8 Feasibility of establishing a sustainable future operating model for the theatre continues with ongoing engagement with the wider cultural partnership, Arts Council England and GMCA Culture team. We are also exploring a co-operative community collaboration model which could help provide a more sustainable future for the theatre. This new community model could be used to galvanize stakeholder support for the much-loved building and for producing

theatre in Oldham and could also enable a passive source of rental / management income to support the theatre's operating model.

### 3.5 New Market Hall

3.5.1 We continue to pro-actively work with market traders and have regular discussions about the process of transitioning across into the new indoor Market within the Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre.

3.5.2 The new market will link directly into the Spindles shopping mall and out onto Parliament Square expected to deliver increased footfall for the traders who recognise the constraints of their current location. The plans are for a split-level market with a retail market and a wide range of services at mall level whilst on the lower level, linking to Parliament Square, a food court is to be created where visitors can enjoy food and drink.



3.5.3 The creation of the new indoor market within the Spindles complex will enable the existing Tommyfield Market site to be redeveloped as part of the new Town Centre Park, new homes and location of Eton College.

### 3.6 New Event Space

3.6.1 Our regeneration plans include an exciting new event space which will be located above Tommyfield Market and the new Food court with linkages directly into the Spindles shopping Centre and out onto Parliament Square boosting Oldham's cultural, leisure, entertainment and events offer. The design ensures a sustainable, modern, and flexible town centre location for future business events, weddings, ceremonies, conferences, and other creative performances. Cabinet have previously considered the future of the QE Hall and the significant cost implications for maintaining the building, as it has exceeded its life expectancy. However, this new space will ensure events can continue in the heart of the town centre, with seated cabaret space for c.500 people, theatre style seating for c.700 people and standing room for c.1,000 people as a music venue (*for example*) – this space can also be sub-divided as needed to host smaller public and private functions.

3.6.2 Available both day and night, access to the facility will be via Parliament Square and a second entrance on Ashcroft Street with an adjacent car park. Consultation on the Town Centre regeneration confirmed that local communities would welcome this new facility, with a wider selection of activities and a more diverse offer to support the future of the town centre for all generations to enjoy.

3.6.3 The pictures below illustrate the progress on site where TJ Hughes was previously located, and which will house the indoor Market, Food Court and new Events Space. The illustration (right) is an artist's impression of the new façade onto Parliament Square.



### **3.7 New Archive and Heritage Facility**

- 3.7.1 Some of Oldham's archives and museum artefacts are currently stored in various locations within council-owned buildings, due to the lack of specialist storage space. The consolidation of artefacts distributed across various buildings also makes it difficult to allow viewing of items as they are not readily accessible. The proposed Accessible Archive & Collections Centre will enable members of the public to view the museum and archive items that are not on display, in a safe and accessible environment within the Spindles shopping centre. Initial design options are currently under consideration.
- 3.7.2 Members of the public welcomed this new facility during the consultation and engagement events, especially with opportunities to provide enhanced accessibility for some of the collections.

### **3.8 The Hive - Flexible / Social Enterprise Space**

- 3.8.1 As part of our economic recovery plans, we are very keen to continue to support new business startups, and social enterprise opportunities in the town centre: therefore, a new dedicated workspace has been created on the upper mall of Spindles.
- 3.8.2 The space will support businesses such as start-ups, micro-enterprises, social enterprises, and small businesses, as well as larger, more established, businesses looking for contemporary workspace as part of their post-pandemic ways of working. Oldham currently has nothing similar to offer, and this is an opportunity to inject something new into the local economy.
- 3.8.3 We particularly want to support growing sectors such as creative design and media, in order to deliver new jobs for local people. The area will provide a flexible co-working space, creating room for businesses to collaborate and flourish. To encourage and support local entrepreneurs, we are working with partners and other stakeholders to provide a dedicated business growth and investment team based within the workspace. This team will help local entrepreneurs in a wide range of ways – whether it's advice on getting their business idea off the ground, business growth assistance, or support with accessing funding and grants.
- 3.8.4 The space has been designed to include rooms for private meetings, hot desking, consultations, and the whole space will be inclusive for all, including people with additional needs. The proposal is to keep the workspace open into the evening – providing complementary networking opportunities, training and panel discussions, so that as businesses grow, we will support them to establish a more permanent base.



3.8.5 As a further development of quality accommodation space for businesses we are converting the space located above the new Spindles office accommodation. The space will provide additional capacity for start up businesses within Oldham. Works have already commenced with the initial strip out of the vacant space nearing completion.



### 3.9 Workspace / Offices

3.9.1 Similar to lots of other organisations post pandemic our new Spindles office accommodation reinforces our New Ways of Working post pandemic, which means no one will have an allocated desk, but teams will have a zone with plenty of working space. In addition to meeting rooms there are meeting pods, single person pods for focused work or confidential calls, soft furnished areas creating an alternative space for conversations, traditional desks and kitchen areas throughout. The new office has been designed to support staff's health and wellbeing and includes new kitchen areas, bike storage, shower facilities and a prayer room.

3.9.2 Relocating staff out of the Civic Centre and other sites generates into the Spindles office accommodation enables the Council to save money and release building no longer required whilst also and redeveloping the Civic Centre site as part of our strategic partnership with Muse Places and our ambition to build 2,000 new homes in the town centre strengthening its sustainability and Creating a Better Place.

3.9.3 The new office accommodation continues to strengthen our collaboration with partners ensuring a strong a resident focus. MioCare, Northern Care Alliance, Pennine Care and Greater Manchester Police are now co located in our new office accommodation with the opportunity for other partners to co locate moving forward.

#### 3.9.4 Customer Service Centre – Oldham Working from You

As part of the developments within the Spindles we will shortly be opening a new Customer Service Centre replacing the existing Access Oldham in the Civic Centre Tower. The modern and friendly environment will enable residents to access advice, guidance and referrals in person whilst also receiving support to use our digital services. The front facing service will be located at the entrance in the Spindles in a prominent position enabling easy access for residents. A number of partners will be sharing the space to offer services to residents including Citizen Advice Bureau and the Credit Union.

- 3.9.5 Oldham recently launched the Tranche two Bee network with an event in the new Spindles offices, we were thrilled to welcome over 80 attendees, including Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, Greater Manchester's Active Travel Commissioner and Olympian Dame Sarah Storey and Transport Commissioner Vernon Everitt, Elected Members and members of Oldham Council senior leadership team, alongside representatives from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and bus operators.
- 3.9.6 In addition to the Bee Network launch, we also announced the opening of the new TfGM Travel Shop inside Spindles Shopping Centre. This is the first of its kind in Greater Manchester, designed to ensure a resident-focused approach. In April, we will be running workshops that bring together existing TfGM Travel Shop staff and our customer service colleagues from Access Oldham. This initiative is aimed at fostering an understanding between the teams, enabling effective referrals and ensuring that our residents and visitors receive a more rounded and efficient service.



### 3.10 Egyptian Room

3.10.1 The transformation of the Old Town Hall's Egyptian Room is nearing practical completion and Oldham Food Hall Ltd, part of The Northern Lights Group (NLG), which runs some of the north west's most exciting and renowned restaurants and entertainment venues, has signed a long-term lease for the Egyptian Room. The company will shortly be recruiting new staff for the venue, another boost for employment within Oldham. It's a significant milestone in the plans for the future of the historic building – which will be transformed into a modern food hall, featuring six casual dining-style food stalls, a bar and a central seating area. Catering for around 150 people, the Grade Two-listed space will offer both indoor and outdoor seating and will complement existing offers in Parliament Square and the Food Court under construction within Spindles.

3.10.2 The Egyptian Room will be converted into a bespoke contemporary food hall, all while preserving its historic character and original features. The scheme is another example of the Council restoring and ensuring the sustainability of historic buildings across Oldham. The Egyptian Room is a prime example of restoration of Victorian architecture with historical significance. It features original decorative glazed wall and column tiling, parquet and terrazzo flooring, plastered ceilings and original arched windows and doors. Below is an artist's impression of the space.



3.10.3 The scheme is being partially funded by the Future High Street Fund with the Council working in partnership with the Town Deal Board. The scheme is expected to complete in the summer of 2024.

### 3.11 New Town Centre Park

3.11.1 The redevelopment of Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre and relocation of Tommyfield Market will free up previously developed land across the town centre to enable brownfield sites to be repurposed for much-needed new homes. With a commitment to over 2,000 new homes in the town centre, this was fed into the PfE to significantly reduce the amount of development in the Green Belt across the borough.



3.11.2 To complement these significant residential areas, we are also developing design plans following feedback during the consultation events for a new brand new 5.7-acre park to create new green, open space for residents to exercise, play, or spend time with friends / family and for town centre workers / colleagues to enjoy outdoor space in their lunch breaks. Work is already underway at the Rock Street end of the site and the remaining elements of the park is currently planned to open in Spring 2026, with pictures below showing progress on site



3.11.3 Concerns have been registered about future maintenance and anti-social behaviour: this has been factored into the emerging design ideas with indirect surveillance from the neighboring residential areas, new opportunities to ensure the space is used for outside events, and local schools and community groups have access to the space for leisure and sensory activities.

### 3.12 Accessible Public Realm Improvements

3.12.1 The Accessible Oldham public realm improvements programme is currently in various stages from design through to delivery and will improve the streets and roads across the town centre making it easier and more enjoyable to get around – especially for pedestrians and cyclists. The first phase, Albion Street and Henshaw Street is now complete with the next phase West Street, Cheapside and Fountain St currently nearing completion. The scheme will progress throughout the Town Centre creating new rain gardens, seating areas and quality clean public space that will complement the other projects already underway and planned. The programme has secured external funding in excess of £16m to date.

3.12.2 A site office is located in one of the units in Tommyfield Market, so members of the public, traders or town centre businesses have easy access to the project team for any questions or queries that might arise during the construction works. However, we continue to ask for patience and support from local residents and businesses as we continue to minimise the impact on the local community while the work takes place.

3.12.3 The various schemes including pedestrianisation, public realm improvements, cycle routes creation of residential and leisure spaces, St Mary's Way and works associated with the

new Town Centre Park have various timelines and further information can be provided on request.



### **3.13 The Green New Deal**

- 3.13.1 The Oldham Green New Deal (OGND) Strategy deals with the upgrade of energy to achieve carbon neutrality targets and aims to achieve this by securing investment and delivery capacity in low carbon infrastructure to: realise a range of benefits such as jobs and training opportunities for residents in this key growth sector; contracts for Oldham's local Green Technology and Service sector businesses; lower energy bills for businesses and residents; and, improvements in local green infrastructure for communities.
- 3.13.2 The OGND programme comprises a range of projects including large capital infrastructure schemes such as the Oldham Town Centre Low Carbon District Heat Network (£30m with potential for up to £200m with the new national Heat Network Zoning programme of which Oldham is one of the trailblazers), decarbonisation retrofit of Spindles (£4m) and Wrigley Head Solar Farm (£1.3m).
- 3.13.3 Oldham is one of three trailblazers in the GM / national Advanced Zoning Programme, where expansion of low carbon heat networks will be underpinned by financial support and new national primary legislation mandating buildings to connect to heat networks. This has the potential to bring large-scale inward investment into Oldham for critical energy infrastructure, and also brings the potential for local companies to be involved in delivery.
- 3.13.4 The OGND Delivery Partnership initiative aims to establish a cross-sector investment and delivery partner to work with Oldham's anchor organisations and communities to develop and deliver a pipeline of low carbon projects to meet local needs and priorities (including the reduction of energy bills for residents and businesses).
- 3.13.5 The Council has secured £1.5m of revenue grant funding from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) via the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) from the national Local Net Zero Accelerator programme which will fund all costs associated with establishing the OGND Delivery Partnership.
- 3.13.6 The Council secured £140K revenue grant funding from Connected Places Catapult to develop area-based retrofit schemes for 'able to pay' Oldham residents to support them to improve the energy performance and comfort of their homes and reduce their energy bills over the longer term, and Oldham will also be a pilot under the DESNZ / GMCA Local Net Zero Accelerator programme for an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy which will provide a template for the other nine GM local authorities.
- 3.13.7 The Council has also secured £150K from Innovate UK to work with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) to develop a suite of performance indicators not only for the Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership, but also across the wider Oldham Economic Strategy of which Oldham's Green New Deal is a cross-cutting programme.

### 3.14 Town Centre Heat Network

- 3.14.1 The Council has been carrying out feasibility work for a district heat network to serve civic, commercial and residential buildings in Oldham Town Centre. This process has been supported by revenue grant funding from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (formerly BEIS) Heat Network Delivery Unit.
- 3.14.2 The Coal Authority has also been commissioned to provide desktop feasibility reports looking at the potential to use heat extracted from the Minewater in disused coal mines underneath the Town Centre, in particular at the Rhodes Bank site which is the preferred location for a new low carbon energy centre.
- 3.14.3 Construction of the new heat network will take place in phases through to 2028 and will be aligned with current regeneration works in the town centre and the programme of residential development being delivered by the Council's strategic developer partner Muse.
- 3.14.4 The work shows potential for a £27m low carbon district heat network, and this inward investment will also bring significant opportunities for local Oldham businesses to participate in delivery of the infrastructure, which will bring major decarbonisation and energy security benefits to the town and borough.

### 3.15 Royton Town Hall

- 3.15.1 The Victorian styled Royton Town Hall and Library buildings are benefitting from investment from the Council to see the buildings brought back to their former glory with enhanced community use as a more accessible, friendly, and welcoming community facility, with sustainable / energy efficiency measures incorporated where possible.
- 3.15.2 The works have already commenced on site with refurbishment of the clock tower, some internal alterations and demolition of the extension buildings to the rear now complete. Strong progress on the scheme has been made with a new roof installation and other elements of the scheme coming to completion including a new rear gable end wall and windows in-keeping with the original architectural design of the building and refreshed internal layout restoring and retaining historical features wherever possible.



- 3.15.3 Communities will have seen a significant amount of scaffolding around the building and both the Council and Seddons construction have been working closely with local businesses and residents to avoid any major disruption. We are now in the process of deconstructing the scaffolding over the coming weeks.
- 3.15.4 During the construction works, the library and associated services have been temporarily relocated to the Methodist Church near the shopping precinct to ensure continuity of services for the local community. The library currently remains on programme to open in August/September 2024 and the Town Hall in October 2024.



### 3.16 Alexandra Park Eco Depot

- 3.16.1 Work to build a new environmentally friendly depot at Alexandra Park is underway to provide a modern working space with training / community event space.



- 3.16.2 The new energy efficient building, which is part of our commitment through the Green New Deal to decarbonise our estate where possible, is the first phase of our plan to create a sustainable hub at the park that will be heated by air source heat pumps providing sustainable heat and hot water

- 3.16.3 The Eco Centre is currently programmed to open in Summer 2024.

## 4. Financial Comments

- 4.1 The financial implications are either contained the Part B report, have already been reported in separate reports, or will be included in future reports as and when individual Creating a Better Place Projects progress.

(Chris Kelsall, Asst. Director of Finance)

## 5 Legal Services Comments

- 5.1 Specific legal information relating to various projects is contained within the part B report.
- 5.2 Part B contains information as is detailed in Paragraph 3 of the revised Part 1 of Schedule 1A of the Local Government Act 1972. The exclusion from publication is justified for the reasons stated.
- 5.3 All legal issues will be reviewed and kept under advisement during the process and as Schemes and Projects come forward and progress.

(Rebecca Boyle – Group Solicitor, Corporate Team)

## 6 Co-operative Implications

- 6.1 The refreshed programme, continued direction and approach provides numerous opportunities to support the development of a Co-operative Borough both through how decisions are taken and the engagement of key partners, service providers and communities in this; and the creation of new opportunities for development that includes more co-operative businesses.

(Jonathan Downs – Corporate Policy Lead)

## 7 Human Resources Comments

- 7.1 There are no HR implications identified at this time.

(Sarah Brown, Strategic Workforce Partner)

## **8. Risk Assessments**

8.1 All risk information is contained within the Part B report.

(Victoria Gallacher, Head of Insurance and Information Governance)

## **9 IT Implications**

9.1 IT are engaged in projects listed and are feeding into the respective projects.

(Lindsey Al-Basri, IT Head of Projects)

## **10 Property Implications**

10.1 All property information is contained within the Part B report.

(Katy Webster, Corporate Property)

## **11 Procurement Implications**

11.1 All procurement information is contained within the Part B report.

(Raj Jassal, Procurement Business Partner)

## **12 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**

12.1 CaBP is an essential transformational element in achieving environmental targets and wider economic regeneration objectives such as reducing carbon emissions, supporting growth for Oldham's green economy, securing inward investment for green infrastructure and reducing the impacts on residents, businesses and the Council from national increases to energy bills.

(Andrew Hunt, Green Energy and Sustainability Manager)

## **13 Community cohesion disorder implications in accordance with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

13.1 There has been a detailed stage one Equality Impact Assessment completed for the CaBP programme. Colleagues in Policy have reviewed this document and have provided feedback. At the heart of the projects contained within this programme there is the desire to enhance community cohesion and promote equality.

(Sarah Whittle, Public Health Policy and Strategy Officer)

## **14 Oldham Impact Assessment Completed (including Impact on Children and Young People)**

14.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the CaBP Programme. This will be reviewed again as the projects progress and are further developed.

(Gail Aspinall, Capital Programme and Special Projects Manager)

## **15 Key Decision**

15.1 Yes

## **16 Key Decision Reference**

16.1 ESR-05-24

## **17 Background Papers**

17.1 Please find below a link to the CaBP web page that also includes a fly through video. In addition, for information please find below previous CaBP update reports.

Creating a Better Place Website Link:

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201248/creating\\_a\\_better\\_place#:~:text=Creating%20a%20Better%20Place%20is,jobs%20and%20100%20apprenticeship%20opportunities.](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201248/creating_a_better_place#:~:text=Creating%20a%20Better%20Place%20is,jobs%20and%20100%20apprenticeship%20opportunities.)

File Ref : [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 17/02/2022 16:00 \(oldham.gov.uk\)](#)

Name of File : Agenda Documents for Cabinet 17-02-22

Records held in Democratic Service, Civic Centre Oldham

Officer Name : Peter Thompson

Contact No :0161 770 4716

Contact No : File Ref :

Name of File : Creating a Better Place Part B 17-02-23

Records held in Democratic Service, Civic Centre Oldham

Officer Name : Peter Thompson

Contact No :0161 770 4716



Creating a Better  
Place - (Part B) - Feb

File Ref : [Agenda frontsheet 25th-Jul-2022 18.00 Cabinet.pdf \(oldham.gov.uk\)](#)

Name of File : Creating a Better Place Update: Spindles Redevelopment

Records held in Democratic Service, Civic Centre Oldham

Officer Name : Peter Thompson

Contact No :0161 770 4705

File Ref : Agenda Documents for Cabinet 17-02-23 – Part B

Name of File : Creating a Better Place Update Spindles

Records held in Democratic Service, Civic Centre Oldham

Officer Name :Peter Thompson

Contact No :0161 770 4716



Creating a Better  
Place Update Spindl

## 18 Appendices

### 18.1 Appendix A - Oldham Impact Assessment (EIA)



Creating a Better  
Place 2023 EIA.pdf