

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.

The Oldham Plan – Our Future Oldham

Work is underway to establish a new, collaborative ambition for the future of Oldham. Lots has changed since the current Oldham Plan was adopted so it feels right that we re-align our ambition to deliver Pride in Oldham with the collective ambition of Oldham Leaders, whether that be our fantastic educational establishments, our committed Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector or our thriving business network. It'll take everyone to be focused on a shared, collaborative vision for 2030, to make Oldham a welcoming, fair, and inclusive place. It's our ambition to bring forward a new, collaborative Oldham Plan for formal ratification at Full Council in November.

Building a Better Oldham:

I had the honour of reviewing the refurbishment progress at **Royton Town Hall** the other week, where it was interesting to see all the heritage features brought back to their original form. The new community garden to the rear of the building will be in memory of John Hogan VC. The plans to reopen the building and the library services are on track for 16 September.

I am also pleased to be able to confirm that the **Eton Star College Oldham** will be built on what is the current Tommyfield outdoor market site, bringing the very best education opportunities right to the heart of the new-look town centre. The 16-19 college will aim to recruit young people who have had fewer opportunities in life, providing them with a first-class education and supporting them to achieve places at the very best universities. The admission policy of the new college will be designed to reflect this ambition and the Council is now actively working with Star Academies on the wider construction programme which will see the college opening in September 2027.

Public consultation on **Town Centre Living / New Homes** commenced on 24th July and closes later tonight (11th September). We've had a great response so far, with many people stopping to speak to the Muse and Council team at the various drop-in events, attending and viewing the online webinar, and responding to the online survey. As the consultation draws to a close, the team are collating the feedback received to inform refinements to the programme, and will directly inform the planning applications to ensure community voices have co-created and co-designed their future town centre housing community.

The first phase of our **new town centre park** opened at the beginning of August as the new gardens on Rock Street provide a fantastic new accessible route into the town centre from St Mary's community and the north-east of the town centre. You may have also noticed that the Snipe Inn has been demolished and the new Snipe Gardens are emerging to form a gateway into the town centre from the bus station. With two sections of the new town centre park well underway, and with community feedback from the recent consultation helping to

shape future phases, we look forward to sharing the updated plans and next phases with you soon.

Transport and the Bee Network:

Delighted to provide an update on the latest **School Street** which opened on 4 September, in connection with Hey with Zion and St. Edward's RC Primary Schools on Medlock Way in Lees. Members will be aware of the real challenges schools, local residents and parents have faced with congestion, dangerous driving and inconsiderate parking at school drop-off and pick-up times in this location, so we're really pleased to trial this latest School Street to try and alleviate some of the local road safety pressures. This is also the first school street where we're using ANPR cameras to enforce the road closure at school drop-off and pick-up times.

We have been talking to our communities about the **new improvements for St Mary's Way**, following concerns about road safety and requests to improve accessibility between the town centre and neighbouring local communities to the north of the town centre. Emerging proposals following local feedback include new traffic lanes with a stunning new tree-lined road, with a clearly marked footpath and cycle path and safer crossing points: all of this will be funded by the Council's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.

Nostalgic Oldham – a new event in the town centre calendar takes place on Saturday 28 September. Taking a look back in time at music and entertainment, toys and games, as well as fashions, visitors to the town centre will be able to take a walk down memory lane and share their own childhood memories.

Pride in Oldham, Together

It is our ambition to build pride in Oldham. Once at the heart of Lancashire's Cottonopolis, people flocked to this corner of England for new opportunities and a better life. Today, people should feel proud to live, work and visit Oldham and that means building a sense of pride in our borough from the ground up.

It's our mission, as your council to drive that sense of pride. Pride in Oldham starts with getting the basics right – clean streets, good schools, safe neighbourhoods, vibrant high streets.

It's also our goal to make Oldham an exciting place to invest in existing and new businesses, provide attractive and affordable homes, and extend new opportunities for work, education, and training. Pride in Oldham is also about making this a welcoming, fair, and inclusive place.

As your council, we will put residents and their aspirations at the centre of everything we do and will be open and transparent about the decisions we take, the services we support and provide, and the investments we make. But we are only one player in this endeavor. We share this challenge with others.

Oldham has enjoyed a long history of collaboration, cooperation, and commitment to deliver the very best. We will continue to support, enable, and encourage local leaders, communities and neighbours, regional agencies, and national organisations to work with us on achieving the best possible outcomes for Oldham. Together, we will build that shared pride in Oldham.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.