



Minutes

MEETING	OLDHAM TOWN DEAL BOARD MEETING	DATE	28 th February 2020
VENUE	Education Suite, Gallery Oldham, Oldham Cultural Quarter, Greaves Street, Oldham, OL1 1AL	TIME	13.30

PRESENT	Abrahams, MP Debbie Adil, Mohammed Baiket, James Courtie, Pete Eastwood, Richard Fielding, Councillor Sean Firth, Nicola Flanagan, Mike Francis, Alun Frith, Roger Harris, Liam Hewitt, Sara Holbrook, CBE Peter Khan, Nawaz Lightfoot, Andrew Lockwood, Helen Lockwood, Stuart Lovat, Bill McMahon, MP Jim Moore, Graeme Patterson, John Penn, Jennifer Riley, Michelle Tarbuck, Stuart Tolan, James Wallis, Andrew Wildman, Susan Wilkins, Dr. Carolyn	MP for Oldham East and Saddleworth Youth Worker, Oldham Council Communications and Media Officer, Office of MP Jim McMahon Relationship Manager, Arts Council England Equity Partner, Pearson Solicitors Leader, Oldham Council Chief Officer, Northern Care Alliance (Royal Oldham Hospital) Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre Manager, Kennedy Wilson Principal and Chief Executive, Oldham College Head of Regeneration and Development, Oldham Council Member, Oldham Youth Council Markets and Town Centre Manager, Oldham Council Chief Executive, Social Enterprise UK Regeneration Team Leader, Oldham Council Deputy Chief Executive, Greater Manchester Combined Authority Deputy Chief Executive, Oldham Council Chief Executive, Oldham Community Leisure Regional Director, The Regenda Group MP for Oldham West and Royton Planning Officer, Oldham Council Chief Clinical Officer, NHS Oldham CCG Regeneration Officer, Oldham Council Owner, Cob and Coal Tap Interim Head of Communications and Research, Oldham Council Principal Regeneration Officer, Oldham Council Project Principal, Mott MacDonald Interim Chief Executive, Oldham Coliseum Theatre Chief Executive, Oldham Council / Accountable Officer, NHS Oldham CCG
APOLOGIES	Barrett, Suzanne Barton, Emma Beckett, Jessica Bloor, Jon Cumberland, Nick	Regeneration Officer, Oldham Council Director of Economy, Oldham Council Communications Manager, Oldham Council Head of Lifelong Learning, Employment and Skills, Oldham Council Senior Specialist (Housing), Homes England

Dawson, Beverley	Senior Manager (Capital and Projects), Arts Council England
Dryden-Stuart, Elizabeth	Planning Team Leader, Oldham Council
Rahim, Fazal	Project Coordinator, Oldham Interfaith Forum
Rayner, MP Angela	MP for Ashton-under-Lyne
Windsor-Welsh, Laura	Strategic Locality Lead (Oldham), Action Together
Windsor-Welsh, Liz	Chief Executive, Action Together
Yousaf, Adnan	Real Estate Manager, The Cross Group

ITEM

1.0 Welcome and Introductions (Councillor Sean Fielding)

1.1 The meeting opened with a round of introductions followed by apologies and housekeeping.

2.0 Town Deal Board Governance (Councillor Sean Fielding)

2.1 The Town Deal Board voted unanimously in favour of the following appointments:

Independent Chair: Peter Holbrook CBE
(proposed by Councillor Sean Fielding and seconded by Bill Lovat)

Peter Holbrook is an experienced social entrepreneur who supports community-led development and has been responsible for the regeneration of some of the UK's most deprived communities. He is Chief Executive of Social Enterprise UK, the national membership body for social enterprises and their supporters.

Independent Vice-Chair: Mike Flanagan
(proposed by Councillor Sean Fielding and seconded by Susan Wildman)

Mike Flanagan is the manager of the Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre in Oldham town centre.

2.2 The Town Deal Board approved the draft Terms of Reference supplied as pages 1-22 of the agenda pack, accepting procedures relating to declarations of interest and confidentiality.

** Councillor Sean Fielding handed control of the proceedings to Peter Holbrook. Mike Flanagan joined the top table. **

2.3 Based on the *Towns Fund* prospectus, the Town Deal Board must develop a Town Investment Plan proposing major capital projects worth up to £25m by the end of summer 2020. It will consider four initial project ideas from Oldham Council and propose alternative and/or additional projects linked to local ambitions and priorities.

2.4 The *Towns Fund* is not competitive but the Government's Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will need

to be content with the quality of the Town Investment Plan for Oldham to secure a Town Deal worth up to £25m. As the Town Deal Board has only a few months in which to develop the Town Investment Plan, members must be ambitious but pragmatic in their approach.

3.0 Regeneration in Oldham: Creating a Better Place (Councillor Sean Fielding)

3.1 Oldham Council launched a £306m regeneration programme called *Creating a Better Place* in January 2020. The programme is designed to ensure that Oldham is a great place to live, study, work and visit. It will create more than 2,000 new homes in Oldham town centre, 1,000 new jobs and 100 apprenticeship opportunities, as detailed online:

https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/documents/s111096/Cabinet%20Report%20-%20Creating%20a%20Better%20Place%20Dec%202019%20-%20final_A.pdf.

3.2 *Creating a Better Place* will build on past successes and complement live projects in order to diversify the retail-led economy and, with the help of Sacha Lord, Night Time Economy Adviser for Greater Manchester (GM), revitalise the night time economy. The investment will help Oldham to shape its role within the GM city-region whilst retaining its unique identity as shaped by heritage and culture assets including the Old Town Hall, Coliseum Theatre and, from late 2021, Oldham Museum and Archive. Early responses from the local markets have been very positive; over 100 potential developers and investors attended the NW Business Insider event on 25th February to learn about *Creating a Better Place* and a new brand/image for Oldham.

4.0 Towns Fund (Roger Frith)

4.1 Oldham Council introduced a new vision for Oldham town centre in 2019: <https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/documents/s106317/Our%20Town%20Centre-%20New%20Vision.pdf1>. It goes beyond the scope of the former Oldham Town Centre Masterplan in terms of both geography and scale of proposed residential development.

4.2 A flythrough video highlights five potential development sites in the town centre: land currently home to the Civic Centre, Tommyfield Market, Sports Stadium car park and Bradshaw Street car park, plus land which once housed Oldham Magistrates' Court. Opportunities for the sites include townhouses and apartments; a hotel; a multi-storey car park; a new civic hub; an improved Tommyfield Market offer; and enhanced public realm. Other development sites include Eastern Gateway (Mumps), King Street, and Union Street.

5.0 Delivering the Vision (Roger Frith)

5.1 Town centre challenges and issues include deprivation, a legacy of underinvestment by the private sector, high vacancy rates in the shopping centres and Tommyfield Market, and an underperforming night time economy. The biggest employment sectors in Oldham like health and

social care, business services and manufacturing also experienced significant decline between 2015 and 2017.

5.2 The Town Deal Board must align the Town Investment Plan with the GM Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and the emerging work and skills strategy for Oldham. It is positive that Oldham accounts for approximately 8% of the GM population yet receives approximately 12% of the GM budget for business support.

5.3 MP Jim McMahon expressed support for diversifying the local economy and called for all centres in the borough to have defined roles in the GM hierarchy. Roger Frith confirmed that the intention is to complement, rather than compete with, Manchester city centre. Councillor Sean Fielding added that Oldham Council may be a facilitator as well as or instead of an investor; he highlighted positive growth in the district centres of Royton and Uppermill stemming from investment by local people.

5.4 MP Jim McMahon urged Oldham Council to have due regard for GM's Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment and the growing demand for modern industrial space when proposing housing developments. He questioned the scale of housing proposals under *Creating a Better Place*, commenting that successful housing schemes often grow naturally. Richard Eastwood suggested that, for residential developments in the town centre to work and attract mixed age groups, they will need to be delivered at scale, offer high quality environments, and be multi-tenure. Helen Lockwood explained that housing providers were attending a housing strategy workshop that afternoon to consider private sector interventions necessary to complement the £60m housing investment planned through *Creating a Better Place*. There is promising collaboration and co-production between the public and private sectors.

5.5 Alun Francis suggested using the *Towns Fund* to help the 1,000 local businesses with turnovers of over £500k to create new employment opportunities and move away from traditional models linked to university innovation. He considers the roll out of the skills agenda and the regeneration of outlying districts to be as important to the success of the borough as the regeneration of Oldham town centre. He commented that Oldham collects more tax than it pays back, and called for transformational change to make Oldham a destination of choice.

5.6 Peter Holbrook called on the Town Deal Board to consider local context and past, present and future delivery models and processes when critiquing and proposing projects for the Town Investment Plan.

6.0 Towns Fund in Oldham (Roger Frith)

6.1 Before MHCLG announced that Oldham would receive up to £25m via the *Towns Fund*, it invited local authorities to bid for up to £25m for capital projects via the competitive *Future High Streets Fund (FHFSF)*. In April 2020, Oldham Council will work with the consultant Mott MacDonald to bid for *FHFSF* capital for interventions in the town centre.

- 6.2 Although the *FHSF* offers up to £25m per location, most bidders will receive £5-10m. Under the *FHSF*, bidders must demonstrate positive benefit-cost ratios (BCRs) of at least two for the investment. There is expected to be a greater degree of flexibility in relation to BCRs under the *Towns Fund* but this is currently unconfirmed.
- 6.3 *FHSF* and *Towns Fund* projects must be long-term, transformational and complementary. The availability of capital as opposed to revenue under both funding streams could affect the long-term sustainability of projects.
- 6.4 MHCLG will issue guidance about the Town Investment Plan in March 2020. Having worked up the draft business case for the *FHSF*, consultant Mott MacDonald is well-placed to support the production of the Town Investment Plan.
- 6.5 The geographical area of focus for the *Towns Fund* has been specified by MHCLG based on levels of deprivation in the town centre, and extended to the south to incorporate Snipe Clough at the request of Oldham Council. If Oldham secures a Town Deal, Oldham Council will receive the capital allocation after April 2021 and will need to ensure that all funds received are contractually committed by 2026. A second round of the *Towns Fund* is due in 2020 but no details are currently available.
- 6.6 Oldham Council's four project ideas for the Town Investment Plan are:
- 1) Northern Roots urban farm and eco-park (a major catalyst for growth in the green tourism and green economy sectors)
 - 2) Town centre heat network (heat exchangers in flooded coal mines, linked to the Green New Deal Strategy)
 - 3) Town centre office campus (Grade A space to address the loss of office accommodation in recent years and high occupancy rates of around 80% in the remaining space)
 - 4) Performance space (a flexible venue, designed to complement the heritage centre development which is progressing)

7.0 Round Table Discussion

The following points were made by members in the room:

- 7.1 The role of the Town Deal Board is flexible. Members could choose to meet after the Town Investment Plan has been submitted to MHCLG in order to provide scrutiny, support and advice during project delivery.
- 7.2 Risk registers for the four initial project ideas are essential, as is comfort/evidence that Oldham Council has capacity to deliver major capital projects simultaneously, on time and within budget.
- 7.3 Oldham Council should consider and use all appropriate communication and engagement mechanisms in order to engage local communities in local issues, including project co-design for the Town Investment Plan. It is important to build community wealth and benefits for all, including those in the outlying districts.

- 7.4 People and skills are critical to the borough's success and Oldham town centre will always reflect people's economic circumstances. There is a lack of space for businesses to access the type of support traditionally offered by universities, even though associated infrastructure can be relatively inexpensive. The *Towns Fund* is unlikely to offer the amount of revenue needed to develop skills, raise aspirations and open up opportunities, meaning that steps must be taken to secure revenue from trusts and other sources.
- 7.5 The *Towns Fund* will sit as part of the overarching *Creating a Better Place* programme, underpinned by the GM LIS and other strategies, and complementing live capital projects. MHCLG is likely to respond well to the four initial project ideas because they are linked into a strategic framework. Indeed, MHCLG is thought to support the *FHSF* project ideas because they are pre-existing rather than brand new. The *Towns Fund* and *FHSF* project ideas are at similar stages of development.
- 7.6 Like the GM Cultural Strategy, regeneration needs to focus on delivering benefits for people. Delivering a new performance space, for example, is as much about skills as it is creating a physical space. Oldham's role in delivering the Cultural Strategy is still undetermined; a narrative is needed for GM, and for Oldham as a component of GM.
- 7.7 Oldham Council is implementing a mechanism to capture data and insight into the social value outcomes it wishes to achieve and those that are actually delivered for Town Deal projects.
- 7.8 Efforts should be made to link residents in the most deprived wards with apprenticeships designed to address skills shortages e.g. in the health economy.
- 7.9 Member organisations and companies are encouraged to share their own ambitions and data where those demonstrate support for, or align with, with the work of the Town Deal Board.
- 7.10 Incubator space for businesses is vital and the office campus sounds promising. Students from local colleges could perhaps use the new space(s) to help start-up businesses with tasks such as logo/web design.
- 7.11 Action Together should hold engagement sessions in Oldham town centre to raise interest in the *Towns Fund*. Participants should be asked for regular feedback as project ideas emerge, to check that the Town Investment Plan is going to meet local people's needs and wants. Consultation fatigue could be hard to overcome.
- 7.12 According to Transport for London, improving accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians can dramatically increase spending in town centres.
- 7.13 There are opportunities for licensees to work together to improve the local night time economy so that it competes successfully with other GM evening economies.

8.0 Next Steps (Peter Holbrook)

- 8.1 The following recommendations were agreed:
- a) Peter Holbrook to send the Town Deal Board meeting minutes to Oldham Leadership Board
 - b) The Town Deal Board to commission Mott MacDonald to support the development of the Town Investment Plan by the end of summer 2020*
 - c) The Town Deal Board to commission Action Together, a local charity, to coordinate and facilitate community engagement/co-design on its behalf*

* The combined value of the commissions must not exceed the *Towns Fund* capacity funding revenue allocation received by Oldham Council.

9.0 AOB (Peter Holbrook)

Closing comments and next steps were as follows:

- 9.1 The Town Deal Board members need to have a shared commitment to delivering long-term value for the residents of Oldham.
- 9.2 The Town Deal Board could be retained beyond summer 2020, for example to ensure it has a degree of influence over the end use of any spaces built or reconfigured as a result of *Towns Fund* investment.
- 9.3 The Independent Chair and Vice-Chair's contact details will be circulated after the meeting, along with the minutes and presentation slides.
- 9.4 Anyone wishing to stand down from the Town Deal Board is asked to notify the Independent Chair in writing at their earliest convenience.
- 9.5 Members are asked to consider the need for sub-groups to take forward particular activities e.g. community engagement or social value, and their ability to chair and/or attend sub-group meetings.
- 9.6 Members are advised to expect further information about their roles and responsibilities, the Town Investment Plan, and the four initial project ideas before the next meeting (17th April 2020).
- 9.7 Members with project suggestions and/or questions, comments or concerns about the Town Deal Board are invited to contact the Independent Chair, Independent Vice-Chair or Roger Frith.

10.0 Close of meeting (Peter Holbrook)

- 10.1 Members were thanked and the meeting closed at 15.30.