

## Report to CABINET (Part A)

# Creating a Better Place Update.

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor Arooj Shah,  
Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Growth**

**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 Place Scrutiny Committee, this report provides Cabinet with a formal update on the strategic progress of the CaBP regeneration and redevelopment 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 following 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.

### 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 across the programme either in development or currently in delivery.

The transformational plans for the town centre can also be viewed through a refreshed fly through video, bringing the town centre plans to life outlining what we have achieved, plan to do and where – including the creation of a brand new Town Centre Park and redevelopment of Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre which has received a number of awards to date. The video can be viewed here [Building a Better Oldham](#).

Strong visible progress can be seen at various locations across the borough, but especially in the town centre, as regular updates are shared through various communication channels as projects work their way through the planning process alongside those currently on site. All town centre projects are supporting the traders and local businesses, and we are seeing sustainable footfall growth and vibrancy.

This report includes specific updates on the following projects: redevelopment work at the Old Library building, initial environmental cleaning works underway at the recently acquired Prudential Building, latest phase of the Spindles redevelopment including additional office space, a new indoor Market Hall, a new Food Court, Archives Centre and new Event Space. This report also includes plans for the new location for the outdoor Market in George Square and a feasibility study to investigate, safeguard and ensure the future sustainability of heritage buildings within the town centre.

Wider than the town centre other schemes include the now complete comprehensive refurbishment of Royton Town Hall and Library, establishment of the Chadderton Levelling Up Partnership, establishment of the Community Regeneration Partnerships and the design phase for the refurbishment of Foxdenton Hall.

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 within the Town Centre. Further details on the various projects in development or delivery can be viewed here: [Building a Better Oldham | Oldham Council](#)

The programme also drives progress with the Council's response to the Housing Crisis, and **578 new homes were built** in Oldham in 2024/25, against a housing delivery target of 404 homes (Places for Everyone). The housing target increases to 680 new homes for 2025/26, as the need for delivering new homes continues to be essential for the residents in Oldham. In addition, 2024/25 saw a significant increase in the **numbers of affordable homes being delivered (216, 37% of the total number of homes built)** to help and support residents desperately in need of a truly affordable home.

Nationally it has been widely recognised that there are ongoing significant delivery challenges in respect 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 that have successfully completed and 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 Creating a Better Place Programme has **generated £31.6m worth of Social Value with an average 25% SVP against contract value.** 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:

- 1,005 weeks of apprenticeships
- 4,479 hours of Career Support sessions
- 173 locally employed individuals
- £46.9m of Local Spend
- 700 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.

## **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 site to the new Spindles office accommodation).
- 1.2 The projects within the Town Centre will strengthen and ensure its future sustainability including the Spindles that the Council acquired and have already successfully completed a number of schemes including the office accommodation, Hive entrepreneurial business growth hub and co-working space, new TfGM offices whilst nearing completing on the new food court, new home for the indoor market, archives centre and a new Performance space. In addition, across the Town Centre we are creating a new public park, a new gateway from the bus station into the town centre, delivery of 2,000 new homes whilst also protecting and investing in our heritage assets through the redevelopment of the soon to be complete Old Library and initial work underway at the recently acquired Prudential Building.
- 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 benefit. 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 businesses, new jobs and apprenticeships, filling empty shop 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, The programme is not purely focussed creating new buildings and spaces, it is equally focussed on creating Social Value and delivering financial savings. The programme has delivered **£3.7m of revenue savings to date** through better utilisation of corporate buildings and embracing new ways of working / energy savings with further additional savings projected. The programme has in addition delivered **capital receipts to date of £14.3m**.
- 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 £138m 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.

Formal Market Engagement for the Delivery Partner procurement was published on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025. 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 delivering **500,000sq feet of employment space, creating up to 2,000 new jobs and over 500 new homes** on the development. The Hollinwood Junction development will have a new LIDL store bringing additional jobs, with planning obtained for **192,000 sq. ft of employment space and plans for upto 150 new homes** on the former Kakenmoor school site. These developments clearly evidence 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 across Oldham with the delivery over the period 2022-2025 of **1,401 new homes significantly exceeding the target of 1,212 homes** under Places for Everyone.
- 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. Achievement against these targets is proactively managed to ensure delivery. Examples include new apprenticeships, job creation and educational sessions at local schools and colleges etc.
- 2.7 To date the CaBP Programme has **generated £31.6m worth of Social Value with an average 25% 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:
- 1,005 weeks of apprenticeship training
  - 4,479 hours of Career Support sessions
  - 173 locally employed individuals/ new job opportunities created.
  - £46.9m of additional local spend (use of local suppliers, materials, donations to communities etc.); and
  - 700 Volunteer Hours

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

### Case Study

Contractors supporting the Christmas Gift Campaign including Tilbury Douglas, Armstrong Interiors Ltd, Weststone Construction, Ellis Williams Architects, and Tranco Ltd.





## Case Study

Resurfacing of the access road and Car Park of Sholver & Moorside Community Centre.by Rowan Ashworth.Ltd



## Case study

First year Plumbing T level students from Oldham College alongside Tilbury Douglas at the Oldham Old Library restoration project passing on essential skills to the next generation, ensuring craftsmanship, like restoring stained-glass windows and traditional carpentry isn't lost to time.





## Case study

West End Playing pitches clean up supported by various contractors, local businesses. and residents.





- 2.8 The following section of this report provides an overview of the projects' progress. There is more commercially sensitive, legally sensitive, contractual and / or financial information within this Part B report. Much of this latter information will be publicly available in due course, but for now, it is reported separately 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 refreshed fly through video, bringing the town centre plans to life with the film outlining what we have achieved, plan to do and where – including the redevelopment of Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre which has received a number of awards to date, and the creation of a brand-new 5.7 acre town centre park. The video can be viewed here [Building a Better Oldham](#). 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.
- 3.1.2 Town Centre projects include: the soon to complete 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, TfGM travel shop and new entrepreneurial growth hub and co-working space (The Hive) are all now complete and operational within the Spindles with increased footfall being experienced within the centre which is creating a positive thriving environment. To further compliment and support market traders design work is underway to relocate the outdoor Market to George Square releasing the existing Tommyfield indoor market site for redevelopment. Other schemes currently on site in the town centre to safeguard and ensure the future sustainability of heritage buildings, include the refurbishment of the Coliseum Theatre on Fairbottom Street and work at the Old Library which is now nearing completion as part of our ongoing development of Oldham's Cultural Quarter and initial environmental cleaning works are underway at the recently acquired Prudential Building. Wider than the town centre other schemes include the now complete comprehensive refurbishment of Royton Town Hall and Library, strong progress of the Chadderton Levelling Up Partnership and initial design work now underway on refurbishment of Foxdenton Hall.
- 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: [Building a Better Oldham | Oldham Council](#)
- 3.1.4 Members will recall that CaBP programme continues with its track record of comprehensive consultation with our local communities and businesses to help clearly define and ensure wider awareness and engagement on our regeneration ambitions. This work has also helped ensure that local priorities, ideas and suggestions from local communities and businesses were embed 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, most recently on the proposals for homes within the town centre. 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 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 installation of a new roof now complete.

3.2.3 The final phase of the project is now underway with 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 forming a cornerstone of the Cultural Quarter. The scheme is due to complete in Summer 2025 for which we are organising a community open day, so that our residents and communities can come and see how the heritage building has been brought back into public use.



### 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, this new public realm space will further strengthen and become a key component of the growing Cultural Quarter offer. The scheme brings together and connects key buildings – the current Central 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.



3.3.2 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 Oldham Coliseum Theatre

3.4.1 The Oldham Coliseum theatre on Fairbottom Street, which was first constructed in 1885, is currently undergoing renovation. The venue will be incorporated into an innovative co-operative model of ownership and operation within Oldham and beyond that will help ensure that the Coliseum Theatre is more resilient and sustainable ensuring it is able to continue inspirational work for generations to come.

3.4.2 The reopening of the Coliseum puts culture at the heart of this new town centre neighborhood while attracting visitors, supporting businesses, and creating/producing cultural performances and opportunities for local people.

3.4.3 Delivery of the project inevitably has complexities due to the nature and age of the historic building with work progressing at pace.

### 3.5 New Market Hall

3.5.1 We continue to pro-actively work with the 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. The scheme is 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 and new homes.



The scheme is due to complete in Autumn 2025.



### 3.6 New Event Space

- 3.6.1 Our regeneration plans include an exciting new event space which will be located above the new indoor market and food court within the Spindles 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.

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 against the original artist's impression of the new façade onto Parliament Square and is expected to complete in Autumn 2025.



- 3.6.3 To further enhance connectivity between the events space and Parliament Square we are currently in the design stage of a new entrance. The approach will create a grand entrance enabling smoother movement into the venue from Parliament Square and increase the appeal of the new venue for various events including Weddings, conferences and leisure activities including music events. The location will further enhance the connectivity with the food and beverage offer within parliament square supporting local businesses and job creation.
- 3.6.4 Below is an initial illustration of the new entrance design.





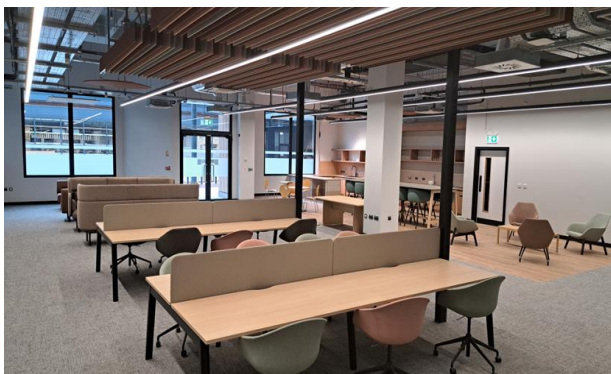
### 3.7 New Archive and Heritage Facility

- 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 a 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.

The scheme is due to complete in Autumn 2025

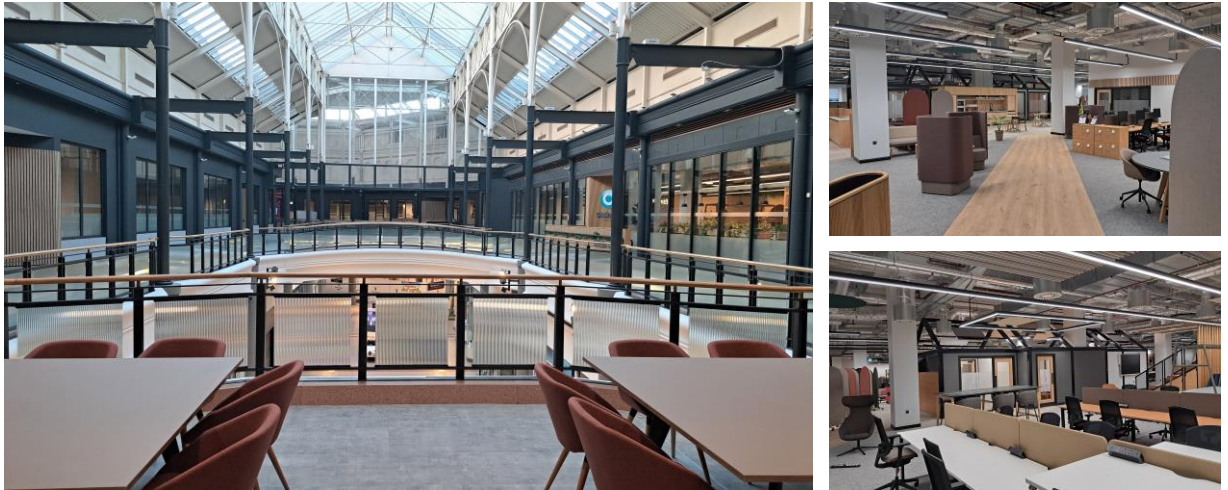
### 3.8 The Hive – Flexible / Social Enterprise Space

- 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 and is now operational.
- 3.8.2 The space supports 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 previously had nothing similar to offer, and this is an opportunity to inject something new and of high quality 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 bringing together the Council's business growth and investment team and Hive (Social Enterprise) 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.



### 3.9 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. Having been operational for over twelve months feedback has been positive for both staff, partners and visitors. 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.
- 3.9.2 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.



- 3.9.3 Relocating staff out of the Civic Centre and other sites into the Spindles office accommodation enables the Council to save money and release buildings no longer required whilst also 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.
- 3.9.4 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.

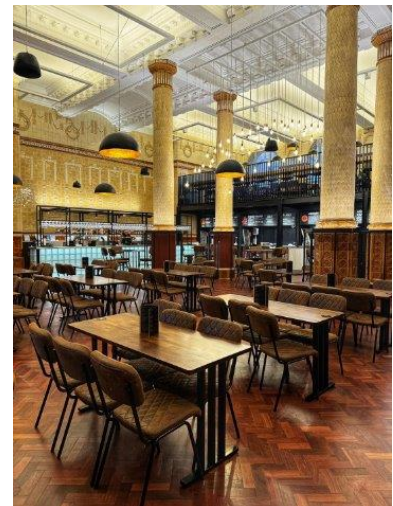
### 3.10 Metropolitan Place Building

- 3.10.1 A key mitigating response to the current housing challenge will be to look at flexible delivery models in order to quickly deploy stock that can be accessed by households in temporary accommodation against need and provide preventative services to avoid homelessness. Through the housing recovery board, work is underway to establish various approaches to address the issues being experienced.
- 3.10.2 As we consolidate our office accommodation to realise financial savings and ensure increased collaboration this releases sites for redevelopment. One of these sites is Metropolitan Place that provides a unique opportunity to create a bespoke space for residents to access temporary accommodation provision, and the Housing Options Service which is a multi-disciplinary team of council and partners providing a variety of preventative services, including Social Prescribing and the Get Oldham Working employability team.
- 3.10.3 The scheme is currently in the design stage and programmed for completion in 2026.



### 3.11 Egyptian Room

- 3.11.1 The transformation of the Old Town Hall's Egyptian Room is now complete. It's a significant milestone in the plans for the future of the historic building – which has been transformed into a modern food hall, featuring various casual dining-style food stalls, a bar and a central seating area. Catering for around 150 people, the Grade Two-listed space offers both indoor and outdoor seating and will complement the Food Court across Parliament Square within the Spindles. The Egyptian Room has received positive press coverage including high profile food bloggers.
- 3.11.2 The Egyptian Room has been 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.
- 3.11.3 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 has recruited new staff for the venue, through the Get Oldham Working initiative, providing another boost for employment within Oldham.



- 3.11.4 The scheme has been partially funded by the Future High Street Fund with the Council working in partnership with the Town Deal Board. The venue opened in November 2024 and received positive coverage including high profile food bloggers.



### 3.12 New Town Centre Park

- 3.12.1 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.



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



- 3.12.3 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.

### 3.13 Accessible Public Realm Improvements

- 3.13.1 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 Albion Street, Henshaw Street, West Street, Rock Street, Cheapside are now complete with the next phase currently underway including Market Place, Curzon Street and High Street underway. 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.

- 3.13.2 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.
- 3.13.3 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 Snipe Gardens

- 3.13.1 The Snipe Gardens project is currently on site and will create a landscaped gateway to Oldham's town centre. Snipe Gardens has been named after the 130-year-old Snipe Inn pub, which has been demolished to enable delivery of the gateway. The approximately 12,300 sq. ft site will be a "vibrant" green space providing a safe and attractive connection between Oldham bus interchange through to the Town Centre opening up to the new town centre park. The scheme will complement the Accessible Oldham work underway within the Town Centre. Expected completion: June 25.





### **3.14 New Outdoor Market at George Square**

- 3.14.1 The relocation of the outdoor market from its current location, at the rear of the Tommyfield indoor market, is another key component to the ongoing transformation of the town centre. It will radically transform George Square, a small plot of communal space between Spindles Shopping Centre and the police station progressing up to the edge of the bus station. The location will create a strong link between the new homes proposed on the Old Magistrates Court site, connecting with many independent businesses on George Street. The location is well placed to benefit from strong connectivity to the bus station, the existing Spindles car park and the Metrolink for both residents and visitors to access the new market.
- 3.14.2 The new space will be multi-functional, when not in use for the outdoor market the location can be used for various events, and with proposals including new seating and greening of the space it will provide a tranquil space for relaxation.
- 3.14.3 The scheme is currently in development and additional information will become available as the scheme progresses in the coming months. An illustration, purely for information, is below and is subject to change as the scheme continues through the required design stages.



### **3.15 The Green New Deal Partnership**

- 3.15.1 The Oldham Green New Deal (OGND) Strategy deals with the upgrade of energy infrastructure in the Council's estate and Oldham borough to achieve stretching carbon neutrality targets. The strategy 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.
- 3.15.2 The OGND delivery programme comprises a range of initiatives and projects including large capital infrastructure schemes such as the Oldham Town Centre Low Carbon District Heat Network (£27m with potential for up to £300m with the new national Heat Network Zoning programme of which Oldham is one of the trailblazers with GMCA and DESNZ), decarbonisation retrofit of Spindles (£4m) and Wrigley Head Solar Farm (£2m).



- 3.15.3 With the exception of Wrigley Head, most of these capital schemes have either secured grant funding (e.g. by the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme) or the intention is that they will be funded and delivered by the private sector should the Council wish to proceed on this basis (e.g. Town Centre District Heat Network which has secured £8.7m grant funding from the Green Heat Network Fund and will be the ‘anchor’ project for the Oldham Green New Deal Partnership – see below).
- 3.15.4 The OGND Partnership initiative is the most significant of all of the projects within the OGND programme, and aims to establish a cross-sector investment and delivery partnership which will procure a major commercial infrastructure developer partner to work with Oldham’s anchor organisations and communities to develop and deliver a pipeline of low carbon infrastructure projects to meet local needs and priorities (including the reduction of energy bills for residents and businesses).
- 3.15.5 The Council has secured £1.3m of revenue grant funding from DESNZ via GMCA from the national Local Net Zero Accelerator programme which will fund all costs associated with establishing the OGND Partnership. The partnership will be designed to be self-funding on an ongoing basis. Formal Market Engagement for the forthcoming Delivery Partner procurement was published on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025 and it is anticipated that the Full Tender will be published around August 2026.
- 3.15.6 Working with GMCA, the Council continues to develop area-based housing 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 is also 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.

### **3.16 Town Centre Heat Network**

- 3.16.1 The Council has been carrying out feasibility work looking at the potential for a wide-scale low carbon 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. The Town Centre heat network project, and the wider £300m designated Oldham Heat Network Zone, form the ‘anchor’ project for the procurement of the Oldham Green New Deal Partner.
- 3.16.2 Construction of the new heat network will take place in phases and will be aligned with current regeneration works in the town centre and the programme of residential development being delivered by the Council’s Master Developer Partner Muse. The Council is working with Muse, Buro Happold and Triple Point (the GHNF funder) to scope a programme of “early works” which could see heat network infrastructure being installed at the same time as Highways works associated with the Town Centre regeneration programme.

### **3.17 Royton Town Hall**

- 3.17.1 The Victorian styled Royton Town Hall and Library buildings is an example of our commitment to retain, invest and ensure future sustainability of heritage buildings for local communities, the town and future generations. The comprehensive restoration has brought back the historic building to its original Victorian splendour.



- 3.17.2 A new community garden has also been created at the rear, named in the memory of a local war hero, Sergeant John Hogan who received the Victoria Cross in 1914 for his bravery during WWI.
- 3.17.3 The community have welcomed the transformation with strong positive feedback, the works have included a new-look library, community space, Changing Places facility and garden area.



### 3.18 Alexandra Park Eco Depot

- 3.18.1 Work to build a new environmentally friendly depot at Alexandra Park is now complete providing a modern working space for our Environmental Services teams and will also play an active role in the community through a range of uses such as spaces for events, education and recreation.



- 3.18.2 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.



### 3.19 Northern Roots Visitor Centre and Forestry Hub

- 3.19.1 The Northern Roots project is creating the UK's largest urban farm and eco-park on 160 acres of urban greenspace in the heart of Oldham. The contractor for the construction of the new Visitor Centre and Forestry Hub has been appointed with works on site commencing and completion currently programmed for 2026.



### 3.20 Foxdenton Hall

- 3.20.1 Chadderton Together have successfully secured funding to commence the planning to refurbish Foxdenton Hall. Continuing to support historical buildings within Oldham is a key theme of Creating a Better Place, Oldham Council will work alongside Chadderton Together on the scheme. The initial phase will be to confirm the refurbishment works required and a plan for its ongoing sustainability moving forward, similar to the approach with other historical assets ensuring they are retained for future generations.





### **3.21 Heritage Building Feasibility work**

- 3.21.1 Oldham's town centre benefits from a wealth of important heritage buildings thanks to the town's rich economic and cultural history. A number of these buildings have become vacant, underutilised and require investment to protect the buildings and seek to ensure their future sustainability whilst enhancing economic and social value these buildings can bring to the local economy.
- 3.21.2 The Council are working with Historic England and GMCA to deliver a Vision and Delivery Plan for selected heritage assets within the town centre. Developing this vision will require detailed surveys, development appraisals and analysis of potential future uses and needs. Engaging with key partners the ambition is to establish a clear pathway to understand what is required to bring the buildings back into viable and sustainable use. As part of the engagement with partners, the Council has been awarded external grant funding by Historic England and Greater Manchester Combined Authority to deliver the Heritage Building feasibility initiative, these grants are further supported by Council match funding.

## **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.

(James Postle, Capital Finance Manager)

## **5 Human Resources Comments**

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

(Rebecca Jones, HR)

## **6 Legal Services Comments**

- 6.1 Specific legal information relating to various projects is contained within the part B report.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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)

## **7 Co-operative Implications**

- 7.1 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)

## **8. Risk Assessments**

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

Joanne James (Risk, Insurance and Information Governance)

## **9 Property Implications**

- 9.1 All property information is contained within the Part B report.

(Alison Evans, Corporate Property)

## **10 IT Implications**

- 10.1 IT are engaged in many of the projects identified here and are feeding into the respective projects.

Lindsey Al Basri, IT Head of Projects

## **11 Procurement Implications**

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

Jasmin Banks-Lee, Commercial Procurement Unit

## **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

File Ref : [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 16/10/2023 18:00](#)

Name of File : Creating a Better Place Update Spindles

File Ref : [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 15/07/2024 18:00](#)

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

## 18 Appendices

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



Creating a Better  
Place 2023 EIA.pdf