

Report to CABINET

Proposal to Undertake Statutory Consultation on the Establishment of an Oldham Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC)

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Reason for Decision

To enable Oldham Council to undertake the required statutory consultation on the proposed establishment of an Oldham Mayoral Development Corporation, in order to test public and stakeholder support for a governance model intended to accelerate delivery of the Borough's regeneration programme and Live Well ambitions, before any final decision is taken on formal designation.

Executive Summary

Cabinet is asked to approve the commencement of formal statutory consultation on the proposed establishment of an **Oldham Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC)**.

The MDC would be a statutory body, designated by the Mayor of Greater Manchester, operating within a defined Red Line Boundary (Mayoral Development Area), focused on accelerating delivery of Oldham's regeneration and development programme, including:

- SportsTown (Health, Sport Science & Innovation Campus)
- Town Centre regeneration (including Town Living Partnership sites)
- Cultural & Creative Quarter heritage assets
- Minewater Heat Network and Incubator
- Northern Roots (Phase 2)
- Strategic brownfield residential opportunities

The proposed MDC would support the delivery of:

- The Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) 2025
- Pride, Progress, Partnership: The Oldham Plan 2024–2030
- The Community Regeneration Partnership
- Oldham’s Live Well ambitions

Cabinet approval is sought to:

- Approve commencement of a six-week statutory consultation

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- Approve the commencement of formal statutory consultation on the proposal to establish an Oldham Mayoral Development Corporation.
- Note that following consultation, a further report will be brought to Cabinet to consider the outcome and determine whether to support the Mayor of Greater Manchester in formally requesting designation from the Secretary of State.

Proposal to Undertake Statutory Consultation on the Establishment of an Oldham Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC)

1 Background

1.1 Oldham has secured over £100m of public sector investment in regeneration across the Town Centre and wider intervention areas. The development pipeline spans four intervention areas:

- SportsTown
- Town Centre
- Town Centre Adjacent Sites
- Northern Roots

1.2 Despite significant progress, delivery challenges remain, including:

- Land assembly complexity
- Funding gaps
- Market confidence
- Fragmented governance
- Infrastructure coordination
- Heritage asset viability

1.3 An options appraisal considered a range of delivery vehicles to address these challenges, including:

- Strategic Partnership
- Mayoral Development Zone
- Mayoral Development Corporation
- Other statutory and non-statutory models

1.5 The preferred option identified is a Mayoral Development Corporation, due to its statutory powers, governance clarity, and ability to accelerate regeneration across a defined geography

2 The Proposed Oldham MDC

2.1 Vision: to establish Oldham as Greater Manchester's first Live Well Regeneration Pilot, delivering place-based regeneration aligned to:

- Sport
- Health
- Education and Skills
- Housing
- Connectivity
- Energy transition

2.2 Red Line Boundary: The boundary has been informed by site location, land ownership and delivery alignment. The proposed boundary includes key regeneration sites across:

- SportsTown
- Town Centre core

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- Cultural Quarter
 - Eastern Edge / Mumps
 - Northern Roots

2.3 Powers Proposed. The Council would retain plan-making and development management functions. The MDC would:

- Retain OMBC as Local Planning Authority (no transfer of development management powers)
- Have land assembly and CPO powers
- Have power to acquire, hold and dispose of land
- Hold and spend funds
- Provide discretionary business rates relief
- Undertake infrastructure delivery

3. Governance

3.1 As set out in Appendix A, the proposed structure comprises:

- Independent Chair
- Board (including Council Leader and Executive Member for Regeneration)
- Non-Executive Directors
- Executive Team (including MDC Project Director)
- Delivery Team

3.2 A Shadow Board would be established during 2026 pending formal designation.

4 Options/Alternatives Considered

4.1 A range of delivery vehicle options has been considered through a structured options appraisal process. These included:

Option A – Do Nothing / Continue with Existing Arrangements

Advantages:

- No additional governance structure
- No additional revenue cost for a new statutory body
- Retains full Council control

Disadvantages:

- Fragmented programme oversight
- Slower land assembly and infrastructure coordination
- Reduced ability to leverage external capital at scale
- Limited ability to create a single “front door” for investors
- Risk of reduced delivery pace across complex, multi-site pipeline

This option does not address the delivery challenges identified in the Business Plan, including land assembly, investor confidence, programme coordination and delivery acceleration

Option B – Strategic Partnership Expansion

Expand the existing Town Living Partnership model into a broader Strategic Partnership structure.

Advantages:

- Builds on existing partnership model
- Potential access to private sector finance and expertise
- Less complex statutory route

Disadvantages:

- Primarily suited to defined development packages rather than a multi-sector regeneration geography
- Limited statutory powers (no standalone CPO powers)
- Would not provide the same convening power across health, sport, energy and housing
- Less visible signal of long-term commitment to market

The scale and complexity of the development pipeline extends beyond this partnership model.

Option C – Mayoral Development Zone (Non-Statutory)

A Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ) is a non-statutory designation supported by the Mayor.

Advantages:

- Lower complexity to establish
- May assist with branding and coordination

Disadvantages:

- No statutory powers
- Limited land assembly capability
- Reduced ability to accelerate infrastructure
- Does not materially change delivery tools available

This option would not alter the Council's statutory powers or provide additional delivery leverage.

Option E – Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) [preferred option]

An MDC is a statutory corporation designated by the Mayor.

It would:

- Operate within a defined Mayoral Development Area
- Hold land assembly and CPO powers
- Hold and deploy capital and revenue funding
- Provide business rates incentives
- Coordinate infrastructure and regeneration activity
- Convene cross-sector partners

This is best aligned to the scale and ambition of Oldham's regeneration programme

5. Preferred Option

- 5.1 The preferred option is to consult on the establishment of an Oldham Mayoral Development Corporation (Option E)
- 5.2 This option is preferred because it:
- Provides statutory land assembly and CPO powers to support delivery at pace;
 - Creates a unified governance structure across sport, health, housing, energy and town centre regeneration;
 - Signals long-term commitment to market and institutional investors;
 - Enables coordinated infrastructure delivery;
 - Supports the positioning of Oldham as Greater Manchester's first Live Well Regeneration Pilot;
 - Retains the Council as Local Planning Authority (development management and plan-making functions remain with OMBC)
- 5.3 The MDC model is proportionate to the scale of Oldham's development pipeline and reflects the commitment already secured from GMCA in principle to explore this route.
- 5.4 Consultation does not commit the Council to establishment but enables residents, businesses and stakeholders to formally comment before a final decision is made.

6 Consultation

- 6.1 As noted above, the designation of Mayoral Development Corporations is governed in Greater Manchester by the Localism Act 2011 Part 8, Chapter 2, as modified by the Schedule to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017 ("The Act").
- 6.2 This provides that the Mayor may designate a Mayoral development area only if consultation has been concluded in accordance with the Act. The proposed consultation will be carried out in accordance with the Act, which stipulates the following statutory consultees:
- Members of the GMCA;
 - MPs whose parliamentary constituency contains part of the proposed area
 - Each district council whose areas are within the proposed boundary (in this case Oldham); and
 - Any other person whom the Mayor considers it appropriate to consult.
- 6.3 For the Oldham area, similar to the process for other MDC's in Greater Manchester, the consultation is proposed to be extended to all residents and businesses within the red line, and Council Members in the district for the proposed MDC area.
- 6.4 Accordingly, it is proposed that the consultation will also be publicly accessible through the GM Consult engagement platform, providing information about the proposal and appropriate supporting materials which will run for six weeks. The consultation materials will be prepared by Oldham Council and GMCA officers and hosted on the GM Consult website.
- 6.5 The name and boundary of the proposed MDC will be included as part of the consultation, as follows: Oldham Mayoral Development Corporation. If approved, it is proposed that statutory consultation will open during spring/summer 2026.

6.6 At the end of the consultation, if the Mayor and Council wishes to proceed, and designate the area as an MDC, the Mayor will notify the Secretary of State, who will then make the Order to establish the MDC.

6.7 Following consultation, Cabinet will receive a further report setting out:

- Summary of responses
- Recommended amendments (if any)
- Whether to support formal designation request

7 **Financial Implications**

7.1 The costs associated with the consultation will predominantly be staff time for which there is existing provision and the development of the proposals for which there is an existing commission.

7.2 Should the consultation result in a decision to develop the MDC there will need to be consideration of how the Shadow Board and the Board would be funded. Revenue costs have currently been estimated to be approximately £660k per annum. There are various options available that could potentially finance the Boards including the below:

- GMCA revenue support
- Oldham Council resource realignment
- Pipeline support funding
- Private sector leverage
- Homes England and Government funding streams

7.3 At this stage, the exact funding mix and the potential requirement for the Council to provide funding has not yet been determined. Should the proposals develop further work would need to be undertaken to determine the exact structure of the Shadow Boards/Boards and determine the resourcing requirements. There is no current identified additional funding within the Council's current revenue budget/Medium Term Financial Plan.

(James Postle)

8. **Legal Implications**

8.1 An MDC is established under:

- Localism Act 2011
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017

8.2 The Mayor of Greater Manchester must:

- Undertake public consultation
- Consider responses
- Notify the Secretary of State
- Secure Parliamentary approval via Establishment Order

8.3 The Council remains Local Planning Authority.

9. **Procurement Implications**

9.1 None at this stage.

10 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will follow should the MDC proceed post-consultation.

11 **Key Decision**

11.1 Yes

12 **Key Decision Reference**

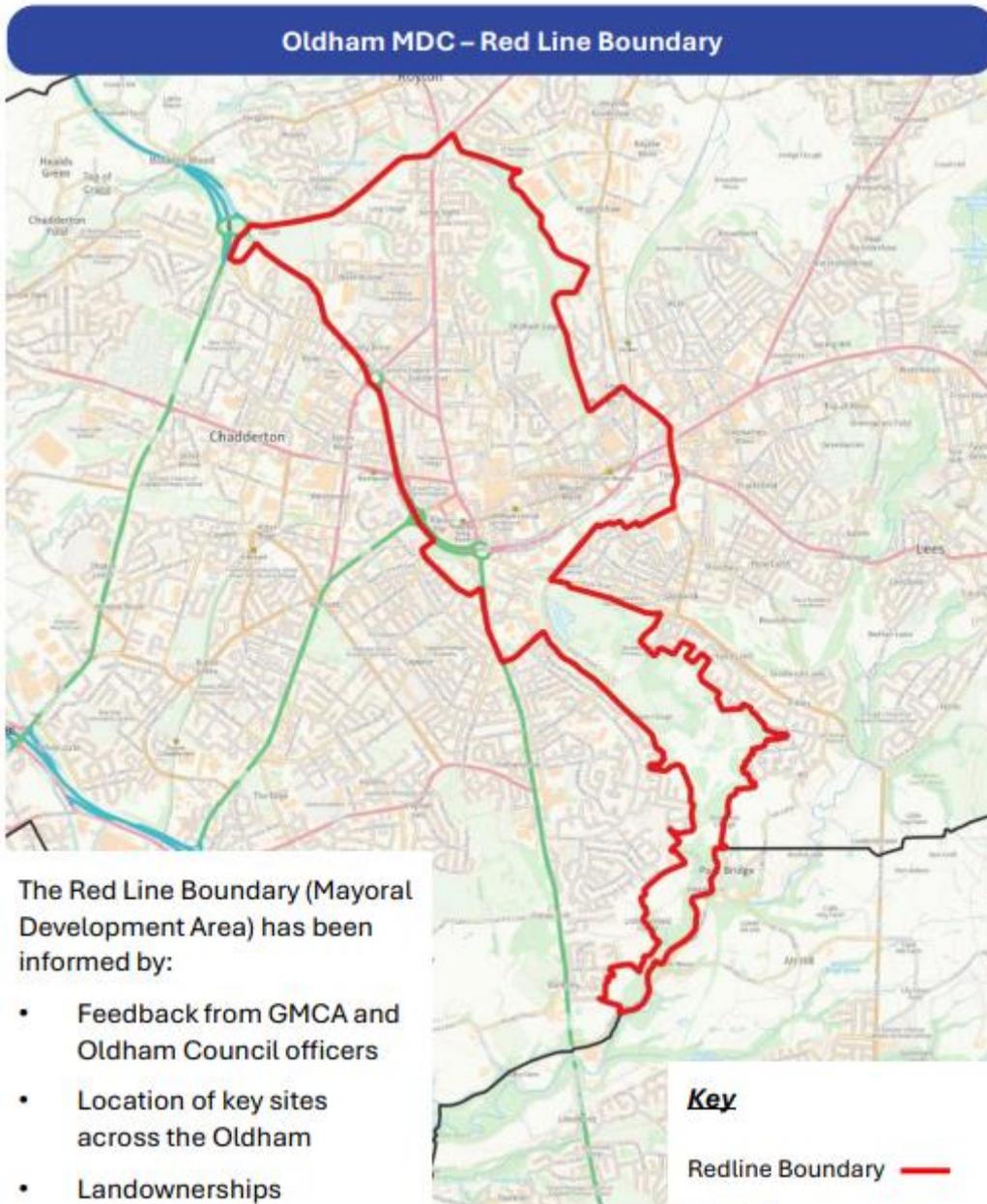
12.1 EDS-14-25

13 **Appendices:**

1: Proposed boundary

2.Options appraisal

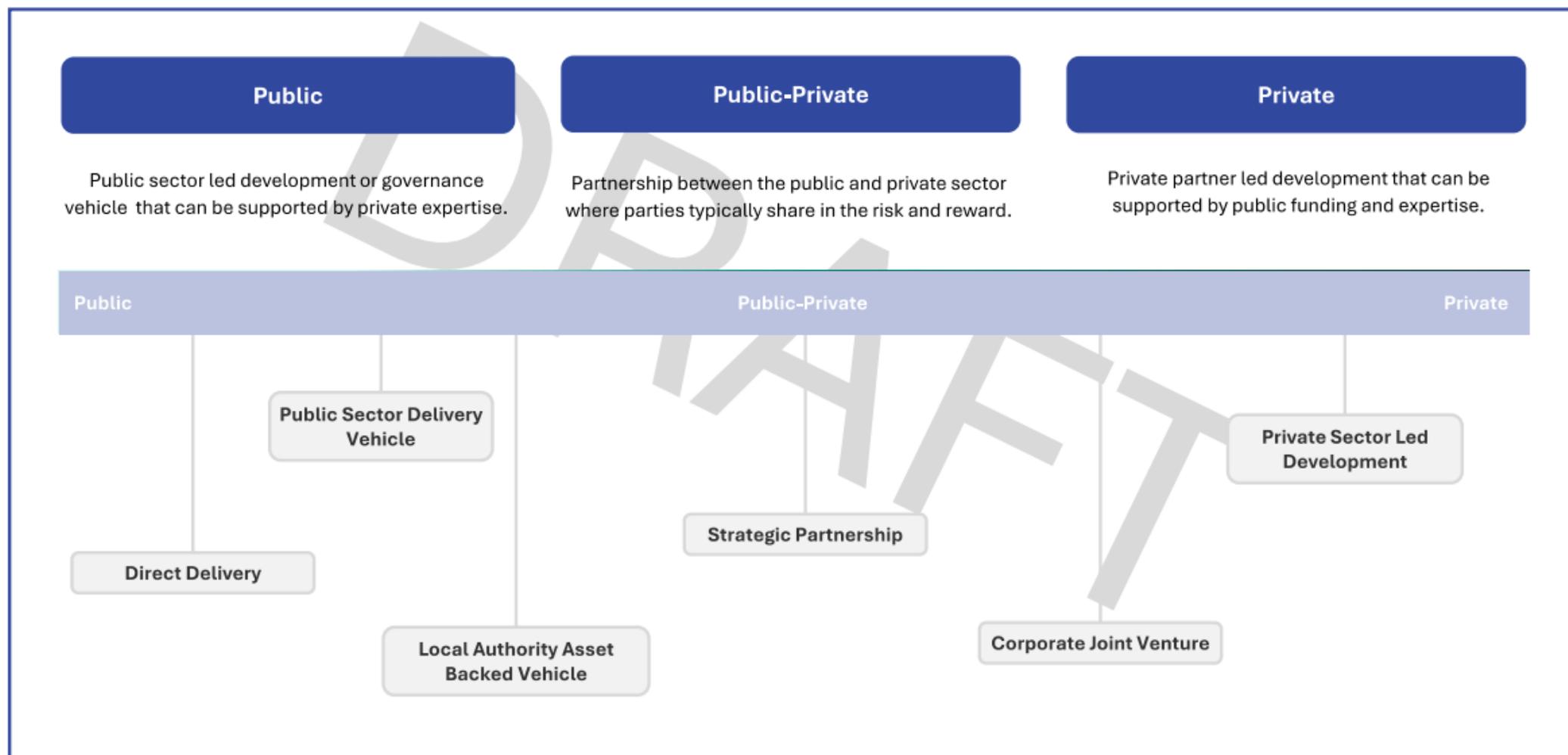
Appendix 1: Proposed boundary



Appendix 2: Options analysis

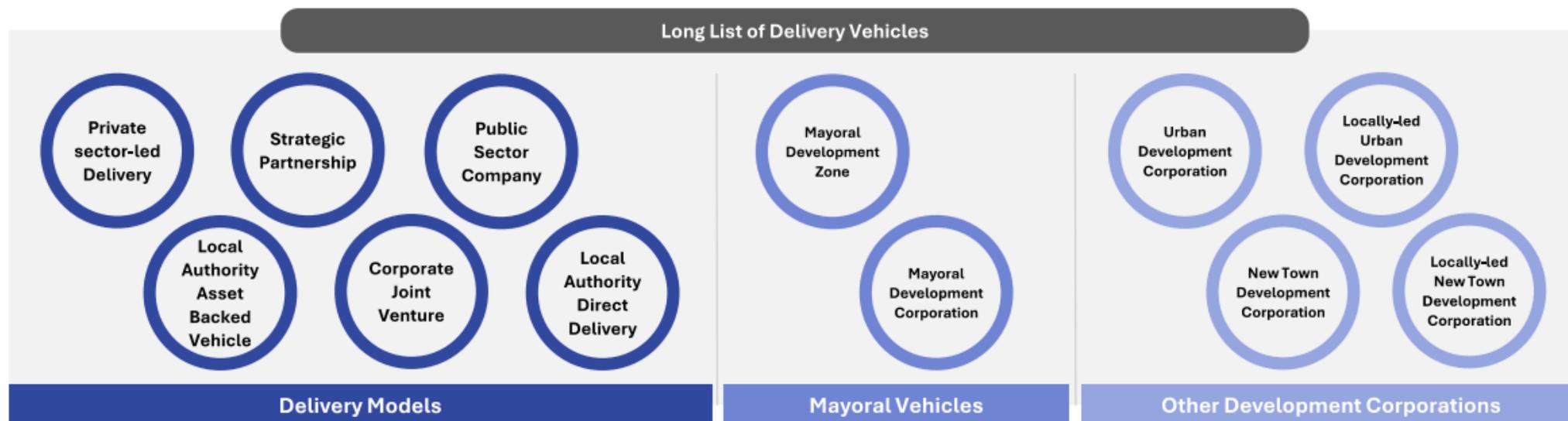
Options Analysis | Delivery Vehicle Options

A range of Delivery Vehicles have been considered as part of the options assessment. This includes, public sector led vehicles, as well as public-private partnerships and private sector vehicles. The full Options Appraisal is set out in **Appendix D**.



Options Analysis | Delivery Vehicle Options Long List & Short List (1)

The long list of Delivery Vehicle Options has been assessed against the objectives and requirements.



Discounted Options

Delivery Models (excl. Strategic Partnership): Non-statutory bodies that lack the powers and authority to fully enable delivery across Oldham. The Oldham development programme comprises of multiple sites and schemes across different sectors (i.e. sport and health). Delivery Models are typically deployed for individual site delivery or smaller packages of sites. The exception to this is a Strategic Partnership which could be established to support early phase delivery and expanded over time (i.e. the Town Living Partnership). Strategic Partnerships have been shortlisted with all other Delivery Models discounted at this stage.

Urban Development Corporation (UDC): Statutory bodies set up for the purpose of regenerating a specific designated area which is known as the Urban Development Area (“UDA”). The UDC and the Board is established by the Secretary of State (“SoS”). A locally developed proposal, established by the GM Mayor, is considered more appropriate for Oldham given its local and GMS significance.

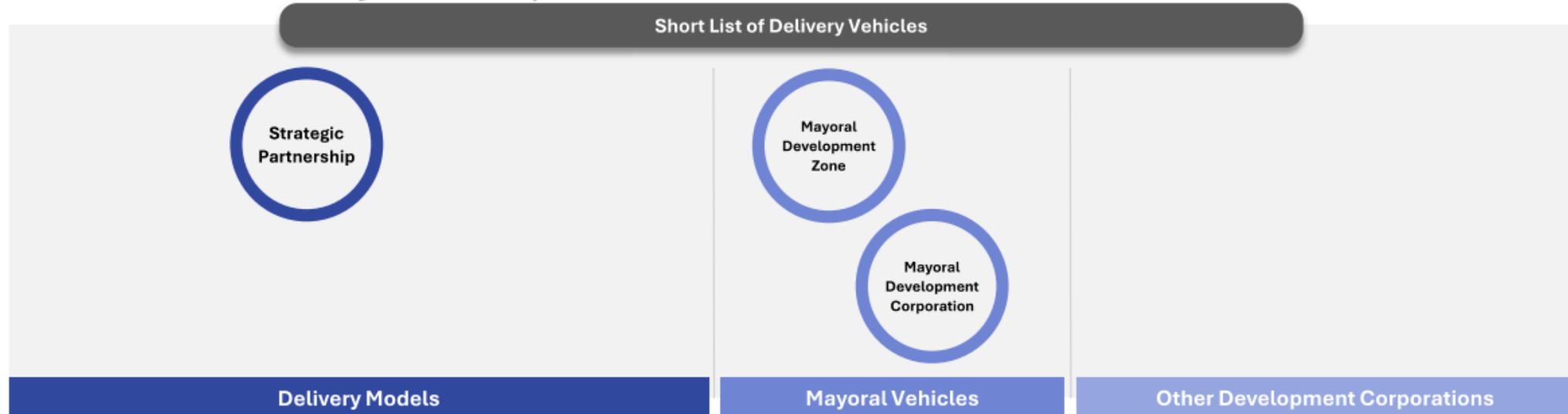
New Town Development Corporation (NTDC): An NTDC is focused on securing the layout and delivery of a new town. There is no political aspiration to establish a New Town in Oldham and so NTDC has been discounted.

Locally-led New Town Development Corporation (LLNTDC): The governance arrangements for an LLNTDC differs to an NTDC. LLNTDCs are designated by the SoS but managed by an “Oversight Authority”, which then appoints Members. This option has also been discounted as there is no political aspiration to establish a LLNTDC in Oldham.

Locally-led Urban Development Corporation (LLUDC): The LURA 2023 makes provision for the designation of a new type of Locally-led UDC mode with the appropriate powers to support transformational regeneration and growth overseen by local authorities, rather than the SoS. At the time of drafting this proposal, LURA had received Royal Assent. However, the release of legislation is pending and so the powers required to establish an LLUDC are not yet exercisable.

Options Analysis | Delivery Vehicle Options Long List & Short List (2)

A short list of Delivery Vehicle Options was then assessed and an MDC identified as the recommended Delivery Vehicle Option for Oldham.



Short List

Strategic Partnership: A Strategic Partnership is a collaborative agreement between two or more parties, combining complementary resources and expertise to achieve a shared goal (i.e. the Town Living Partnership). OMBC and other public sector bodies, such as the GMCA, would come together to create a consortium that is public sector owned but draws in private sector finance and delivery expertise. This route has been explored for Oldham, and there could be an option to expand on the existing partnership with Muse in the future. However, this option has been discounted given the scale and complexities associated with delivery of the broader Oldham development pipeline beyond the Town Centre residential sites.

Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ): A non-statutory designated zone which is supported by the Mayor to deliver regeneration. MDZs enable a focused, collaborative approach to development with appropriate governance to accelerate and unlock delivery.

Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC): A Statutory Body, empowered by legislation and typically public sector led/funded with the ability to deliver accelerated regeneration through powers conferred to the vehicle via specific laws. An MDC is in line with the defined requirements, strategic vision and objectives for a Delivery Vehicle for Oldham. Through its powers, an MDC can unlock barriers to delivery across Oldham and support investment into the area whilst also support case-making for future investment beyond existence of the MDC's operational period.

Preferred Option

Mayoral Development Corporation ("MDC") is the preferred Delivery Vehicle Option.

