



## Portfolio Report

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Arooj Shah, Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Growth

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to portfolio responsibilities.

### Key Achievements in 2025/26:

#### Major Regeneration & Development

- Development of an **Oldham Mayoral Development Corporation** including new homes, major town centre transformations, Northern Roots, and SportsTown.

#### Town Centre Transformation

- **J.R. Clynes Building** (Old Library) fully reopened as a major civic and cultural hub, including Council Chamber, Mayor's Parlour, community spaces, Oldham Theatre Workshop studios, and gallery.
- **Town Centre Park:** Phase 2 underway to expand green spaces, improve accessibility and integrate with the Accessible Oldham programme.
- Completion and **opening of new Market Hall** and the new event space **The Loom**.
- Building / Construction awards for – Spindles, Egyptian Rooms, JR Clynes Building.

#### Investment in Place

Success at securing external grant awards **c£70m in total** for various projects across the borough. Some highlights listed below:

- **£31.5m Prince Gate from the GM Good Growth Fund**
- **£20m for Alt Community Regeneration Partnership;**
- **£17m Transport funds;**
- **£7.7m Green Heat Network Fund;**
- **£1.5m Pride in Place Impact Fund** secured for community spaces and high streets;
- **£2m grant awards** to fit out new Market Traders' stalls;
- Shop Front Grants offering up to **£10k** each to improve façades in **Union and Yorkshire Streets**.

#### Housing Delivery

- Princes Gate - planning approval in July '25, funding secured Dec'25/Jan '26, now starting on site (March '26) - significant progress delivering **331 new homes**, with **75 socially affordable**.
- Significant planning progress: **297 new homes approved**, including **207 affordable**, across Southlink and South Chadderton schemes.

**Investment Event:** Over 150 businesses, investors, developers registered to attend the investment event held at the JR Clynes Building in February – was also great to see local developers in the room – as we shared updates on the success to date in Building a Better Oldham, and providing a vision and outlining opportunities for the next wave of activities.

Key messages were shared about my leadership and vision for building a better oldham for our residents and communities, and about my passion to bring more heritage buildings back into use across the borough. In partnership with Place North West, the packed audience were very interested in the opportunities and buildings discussed with several formal enquiries submitted and being investigated.

Additional areas of interest related to Oldham being the greenest borough in Greater Manchester for green technology businesses, sustainability embedded into projects, true social value and the

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opportunities created for Oldham's residents and businesses, and enhancing and protecting our green spaces with opportunities like Northern Roots, SportsTown and the new Town Centre Park.

**Community Regeneration Partnership:** I'm proud to confirm that tomorrow we will be celebrating with many community group and organisations to award the Community Regeneration capital grants - £4.9 million investment that strengthens the heart of our communities. Across all five districts, this funding is helping local voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations improve community spaces, grow their services, and support the activities residents depend on.

This funding process supported by MHCLG has been about backing Oldham's community spirit, building resilience, and creating the welcoming, vibrant neighbourhoods that our residents deserve. We will continue to support and work with all the applicants as the submissions exceeded the funding allocation, to help them achieve their goals through the ongoing support from Action Together.

**Pride in Place Funding:** The regeneration plan for Chadderton has now been formally submitted, and we are awaiting feedback from the Government. We also recently held the first community engagement session with residents for Alt/Holts, marking an important step in shaping local priorities. Both Chadderton and Alt/Holts are set to benefit from £20 million in Pride in Place funding each, which will help drive meaningful, long-term improvements for our communities.

**Resident Focus:** I'm delighted to share that from 1 April we will receive a much needed boost for our residents: £5.7m of Government funding each year over the next three years through the Crisis and Resilience Fund. I welcome this investment, and we will ensure it is used both to support residents experiencing financial crisis and to strengthen the longer-term financial resilience and security of our communities.

Alongside this, our resident focused approach continues to deliver improvements in Complaints Performance, with 85% of council-wide complaints responded to on time between October and December 2025, and all services meeting their targets—Children's Services performing particularly strongly at 97%. The Contact Centre also met its call-answering target during this period, and Planning calls transitioned into the Contact Centre in February to further enhance the resident experience.

**Building A Better Oldham:** As we continue to Build a Better Oldham, it is with great excitement that we will be opening the new Spindles Event Space this Friday followed by the new indoor market opening on Saturday morning with a day filled with free family activities. This is a key milestone in the redevelopment of the Town Centre for the benefit of our residents, businesses, and visitors. Tommyfield Market has a long and proud history in Oldham and we are committed to ensuring it has a thriving future in its new location within the Spindles. The Market is designed to bring Oldham's retail core much closer together, sitting in a modern fit for purpose market hall within the Spindles. It will bring together our retail and market offer opening onto Parliament Square, and an upper level linked to Spindles, all designed to create a seamless shopping experience blending traditional market offerings with modern retail.

It has been important that we worked with our market traders to ensure that the offer and timing of opening the new indoor market was right. The move will enable the existing Tommyfield market to be demolished and release the site for development.

The new Spindles event space, The Loom, is situated above the new Indoor Market. It will provide Oldham with a much-needed state-of-the-art event space that provides flexibility and can be subdivided to host events of various sizes. The Loom will hold up to 1,000 people standing, around 700 seated and 500 people for dining. Oldham continues to be externally recognised for our vision, investment and delivery on the ground within the town.

The J.R. Clynes Building was shortlisted as a finalist for the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, UK Building of the Year 2025. Amongst other criteria the award recognises its effect on the local community, its importance in terms of urban regeneration and environmental enhancement, its design excellence, or its contribution to urban design and townscape. The Egyptian Room has

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been shortlisted for the RIBA North West design award which celebrates the best new architecture projects within the region. The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in Liverpool on the 15<sup>th</sup> May.

**Development of our partnerships:** Progress on SportsTown has continued well, with the Council working closely with SportsTown and key partners across sport, education and health to bring forward the £5m Skills Pathway investment at Boundary Park and widen opportunities for our residents.

Progress on Northern Roots has also continued well, with the Council working in partnership with the Northern Roots charity and our contractors to bring forward the new Visitor Centre and Forestry Skills Centre and deliver wider benefits around skills, jobs and our Green and Growing ambitions.

**Housing Delivery:** With confirmation of securing the Greater Manchester Growth Fund Grant allocation of £31.5m for Princes Gate, progress on the pre-development works has progressed well as Muse are on site with enablement works ahead of the main construction of the residential buildings starting in Spring.

In the meantime, several other significant housing sites across the borough have progressed, with planning permission granted for 221 new homes in Fitton Hill and Chadderton (including 85 homes for social rent and 47 other affordable homes) and planning applications being considered for Southlink and the first phase of development at Broadbent Moss. Both developments will be wholly affordable housing providing a total of 395 new homes, including 239 homes for social rent, if granted permission.

**Recommendations:** Council is requested to note the report.