
Action Plan for the region of Oldham

Part I – General information

Project: FOUNDATION

Partner organisation: Oldham Council

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant):

Country: United Kingdom

NUTS2 region: Greater Manchester

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Part II – Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact: Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
 European Territorial Cooperation programme
 Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument(s) addressed: Oldham Green New Deal

Why the initial policy instrument can no longer be influenced:-

The GMESIF was the original nominated policy instrument for the FOUNDATION project. However, this is now obsolete, closing in 2021 and all of the funds have been allocated. The situation in the UK, post Brexit, has created some uncertainty around the



economic development policy field in terms of the means for applying for funding and influencing the new programmes. We are waiting for the launch of the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Investment Plan which has the potential to deliver investment to our green tech sector. This is expected to be launched in late 2022. The Shared Prosperity Fund has been promoted by government as the funding programme that will replace the structural funds, however this is still in consultation stages and will not be relevant to the timing of the implementation of Phase 2 of the FOUNDATION project.

Once the Shared Prosperity Fund is launched, it is likely that the Greater Manchester 5-Year Environment Plan will form a key delivery pillar of the SPF Investment Plan for Greater Manchester, due to the city region's target of carbon neutrality by 2038 and the "Clean Growth Mission" set out in the GM Local Industrial Strategy and GM 5-Year Environment Plan.

The chosen replacement policy instrument for FOUNDATION, the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy, will influence the GM 5-year Environment Plan Phase 2 which will be prepared over the coming months to begin in 2024 when Phase 1 is complete. Oldham is one of the 10 GM Local Authorities and Oldham's Chief Executive is overall lead for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority on Environment and Low Carbon, giving a direct line of influence from Oldham up to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in respect of investment of structural funds in a range of economic sub-sectors including manufacturing & materials, construction, energy and transport, in order to build capacity in the supply chain to enable achievement of the 2038 Net Zero target.

Name of the new policy instrument to be addressed:-

Oldham Green New Deal Strategy.

Description of the new policy instrument to be addressed:-

The Oldham Green New Deal Strategy (OGNDS) is Oldham Council's economic strategy to address the causes of climate change, i.e. it is an economic strategy with the achievement of Net Zero Carbon targets as its objectives. The focus of the OGNDS is on growing the Green Technology and Services (GTS) sector in Oldham and securing large-scale private sector investment in low carbon energy infrastructure.

When it was adopted by the Council in March 2020, it was the first Green New Deal strategy to be adopted by a UK Local Authority, and it remains the only such strategy in the Greater Manchester city region. As such, the OGNDS is a *de facto* influencer of wider

national and regional environmental strategies (such as the GM 5-Year Environment Plan) from a uniquely economic perspective.

Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

ACTION 1

Name of the action: Green Tech Sector Cluster Partnership

1. Relevance to the project

The development of the FOUNDATION Interreg Europe project has the aim of building regional resilience to industrial structural change in cities and areas throughout Europe. The project had been operating for 6 months when we saw the start of the COVID pandemic, this forced a revised approach to the project to begin exploring how local economies might respond to its impacts and begin the process of rebuilding as we emerge from the restrictions that were placed on normal operating conditions.

During the lockdown period Oldham saw the development and the adoption of the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy. Many Local Authorities around Europe have declared a climate emergency and Oldham, having been the first UK local authority to announce a primarily economic approach to climate change mitigation, sits amongst the most ambitious councils in the UK with a commitment for the Council to be carbon neutral by 2025, and the borough by 2030, which was set out by the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy in March 2020.

The borough 2030 target is 8 years ahead of the Greater Manchester target of 2038 and 20 years ahead of the national 2050 target. The Oldham Green New Deal Strategy recognises the opportunities for economic growth in the Green Technology and Services sector in Oldham for the first time. It highlights opportunities for significant economic, employment and environmental benefits for local communities and residents, as well as having a significant impact on carbon reduction. A recent study for Oldham carried out by Energy Systems Catapult estimates that £5.6bn of infrastructure investment is required for the borough to achieve Net Zero Carbon. This obviously indicates a significant opportunity for businesses in the local supply chain to secure some of the delivery work, which would give a significant boost to Oldham's green economy.

In the recent project webinar held in September 2021, 'Industry Resilience and Clusters', colleagues from both Upper Austria and Cork demonstrated the power of Ecosystem Clusters and how they can very quickly become an important tool in supporting resilience in local economies. These cooperative networks were seen as best placed to address issues in their sectors that were impacted by the COVID pandemic and Oldham are convinced that the development of a Green Tech Sector cluster will help speed the recovery of the Oldham Economy.

Work undertaken by Cork Institute of Technology (now Munster Technological University) strengthened the message that an effective cluster can help speed economic growth and, in the case of Oldham, its recovery.

In the conference we were told how the research undertaken by the (then) Cork Institute of Technology over a number of years supports the use of clusters as an economic growth tool, and that time spent in the initial phase of development and engaging with business helps strengthen longer term commitment from businesses. It is clear from the work done on the V-Link mapping tool as part of the ecoRIS3 (INTERREG Europe) project that there are definite strengths in adopting an ecosystem cluster to sector development.

Throughout the project we have seen and received information on a range of good practice that has relevance to our ambitions in (ultimately) establishing our GTS Cluster. These have taken two forms. The development, establishment and management of business clusters (Cork and Upper Austria) and how Oldham might develop new young businesses or diversify business from existing sectors into the GTS sector (Cork and Emilia Romagna)

Clusterland and COVID-19 – Business Upper Austria

At the start of and in rapid response to the developing COVID pandemic, Business Upper Austria brought together businesses that were able to answer calls for the manufacturing of equipment that might assist action against COVID. The rapid response in forming Clusterland demonstrated that not all clusters develop organically, overtime with the drive and cooperation of businesses. This approach demonstrated that the public sector could be instrumental in driving their development.

Although the short-term emergency and need addressed by the Clusterland Good Practice is related to the initial phase of the Covid-19 crisis, the topic of the resilience of local economies and their ability to react to crisis remains fundamental in developing the resilience of a local economy.

The practice provides an example of how a situation of crisis can be used to address not only the emergency generated by the crisis but also more profound transformation needs of the local businesses and generate new innovation-driven developments representing an investment in the future of the local economy.

Both Cork and Upper Austria, as examples of good practice have demonstrated that the adoption of a strong sector network at the start of the process used in developing the cluster had been critical in ensuring early 'buy-in' from businesses and the business support eco-system.

- 2. Nature of the action** (please describe precisely the content of action 1. What are the specific activities to be implemented?)

The action we will undertake will take the form of creating a strong cluster management cooperative group with strong governance and chaired by a local GTS business leader. This will be an important step to build on the current momentum and further engage with relevant businesses, entrepreneurs and local actors as we develop our Green Tech Sector Cluster over the next 24 months.

Through the FOUNDATION project and other internal activities, the Council has started to engage with green businesses and the GTS ecosystem more broadly. To date this sector has operated in isolation and under the radar of the Council and its business support stakeholders. Our Green New Deal will ensure that from a policy perspective we will seek to grow this sector on a much more cooperative basis. We have already identified 105 existing Green businesses in the borough, with the sector's Circular Economy and Retrofitting and Renewables Installations having the largest number of businesses, followed by Environmental Consultancy and Ecological Services and Renewable Energy Technologies. This base means that there is already an existing GTS market in Oldham; the Council can help grow the sector by supporting these existing businesses.

The OGNDS says:-

Supporting the development of the Green Technology and Services sector across the borough and support and incentivise the wider business community to engage the GTS sector to decarbonise. Initial evidence suggests that:-

- *Oldham has a strong base of engineering, connectivity and affordable premises which the sector needs*
- *the Team Oldham approach adopted by business engagement services already has strong engagement with Oldham businesses in the area of resource efficiency*
- *this asset base can be built upon to harness resources from GM universities and business support organisations and enable Oldham businesses to innovate and diversify*
- *Clustering of green businesses in Oldham can create a virtuous reputational circle which can support decarbonisation of the wider economy*

From the above it can be seen that the OGNDS is the correct policy instrument for FOUNDATION to influence.

In order to inform the FOUNDATION RAP for Oldham, the Council commissioned a SWOT analysis from Aleron consultants, looking at the GTS sector in Oldham. The recommendations from the study inform the RAP.

The main recommendation, which constitutes the main action in Oldham's FOUNDATION RAP, is to establish a Stakeholder Group of local GTS businesses plus other key stakeholders such as The Oldham College, the GM Growth Company, local housing providers, the Council and the local Distribution Network Operator.

The group will be established by the Council.

Once the Stakeholder Group is established, sub-groups will be formed and will be tasked with creating further actions around the following themes:-

1. Developing a green technology cluster
2. Engaging with businesses and residents on sustainability
3. Promoting the retrofitting and installations sector
4. Supporting community energy projects

Key stakeholders from different disciplines will take the lead on creating actions for each of these themes, e.g. The Oldham College may take the lead on promoting the retrofitting and installations sector and a local solar installer may take the lead on supporting community energy groups.

Whilst these thematic areas for action are in line with the high-level commentary in the OGNDS, they constitute the design and implementation of new projects which will be resourced from the new Stakeholder Group (Oldham Green Business Network).

It will also add extra evidence and detail to the OGNDS, improving the way it is implemented through a more specific focus and explicit activities putting the overall strategic approach into practice.

All of the above will result in a more informed and targeted allocation of resources to deliver the OGNDS, and all of this learning will feed directly upwards into the Greater Manchester 5-year Environment Plan refresh, Oldham’s GTS sector effectively constituting the “pilot” local authority area for the Green New Deal approach and “Clean Growth Mission”.

The Oldham Green New Deal Strategy will be reviewed in 2024/25 and the learning from delivery of the FOUNDATION RAP will feed into the refreshed strategy, improving and amending the focus and methodology for decarbonisation of the borough by 2030. Specifically, the identification of a geographical area of the borough for delivery of a new “Green Business Park” GTS sector cluster will be developed through the RAP work and included in the refreshed OGNDS.

3. Stakeholders involved (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the implementation of the action 1 and explain their role)

We have already connected with several key stakeholders who will be critical in ensuring the success of Oldham’s ambition to reach Net Zero by 2030. There is no shortage of enthusiasm in Oldham and there is extensive existing work happening independently which, when drawn together within an ecosystem, will strengthen and grow. This was voiced both in the survey responses and in the interviews we conducted over the past few months.

An ecosystem would entail bringing existing GTS businesses together in a suitable forum to help form local social links between suppliers, investors, manufacturers, installers, and public institutions. It is from these inter-organisational and interpersonal connections that many of the benefits are derived, ranging from the efficient use of shared infrastructure to the exchange of mutually valuable skills, knowledge, and expertise. Our research on identifying existing Green businesses will provide a starting point for engagement with businesses, however, significant effort will be required by the Council to continue to strengthen this network, for example by hosting events or developing an online platform.

Category	Organisation	Name
Oldham Council	Strategic Planning	Elizabeth Dryden-Stuart
Environmental Services		Glenn Dale, Craig Dale
Northern Roots		Anna DaSilva
Warm Homes Oldham		Anees Mank
Get Oldham Working		Jonathan Phillips
Transformation Programme Office		Christopher Lewis
Procurement		Dan Cheetham
Education	The Oldham College	Catherine Broderick
Providers of social housing	First Choice Homes Oldham	Simon Davies

NHS/CCG	Northern Care Alliance Group	Donna McLaughlin
VCSFE	Action Together	Liz Windsor Welsh
Private Sector	TRAILAR Ltd	Denny Hulme
Trust renewables		Andy Barrow
GMCA	GM Director of Environment (responsible for GM 5-year Environment Plan)	Mark Atherton
Ellie Radcliffe	Centre for Local Economic Strategies	Ellie Radcliffe
Business Support Programme	Upturn Enterprise	George Konsta
MIDAS		David Milton
Manchester Growth Company / GMCA		Amy House
Community Energy Sector	Oldham Community Power	Colin Salt
Carbon Coop		Laura Williams
LEP	Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership	Steve Connor
Cabinet	Finance & Low Carbon	CLlr Abdul Jabbar

4. Timeframe (please specify the timing envisaged for action 1)

For the purposes of this section we have divided the implementation timeline of 12 months into phase 1 and phase 2 (both 6 months).

The group will be established and managed by the Business Investment team at Oldham Council. The steps to create the Stakeholder Group are as follows:-

1. Membership of the group to be identified and agreed with attendees – April to June 2022
2. OGNL lead officer to draft a 2-year programme of agenda items for group meetings as well as Terms of Reference – April to June 2022
3. Preparation for launch of group including venue, invitations and materials – June to August 2022
4. Group to be launched by Oldham Council Chief Executive at a Business Breakfast Briefing - September 2022
5. Group to meet quarterly, supported by the Council's Business Engagement Team – from September 2022, January, 2023, April 2023, June 2023.

In phase 1 we will undertake the initial scoping of stakeholders and partners and draw up a draft proposal for the cluster management group. They will then determine the terms of reference for the group

In phase 2 we will hold an initial consultation event with all interested businesses and begin work in developing the ecosystem in the form of a mid-term development plan, divided into a number of themes (work areas) with their own special interest sub-groups.

By the end of the implementation period for the Regional Action Plan we will have:

- Established the GTS Cluster Stakeholder group
- Developed terms of reference for the group
- Held our first

- GTS business to business networking group
- Drawn up a medium-term development plan

5. Indicative costs (please estimate the costs related to the implementation of action 1)
TBC,

6. Indicative funding sources (please describe how action 1 will be financed. Is it through the policy instrument(s) indicated in part II)
Initial funding will come the deployment of existing Oldham Council staff resources.

ACTION 2

Name of the action:

(Add as many sections as needed)

Date: 21. JULY. 2022

Name of the organisation: OLDHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Signature of representative of the relevant organisation

