# Oldham's
# Local Economic Assessment
# 2019

## Section 3: Transport and Business Connectivity

**An analysis of the local economic conditions in Oldham**

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# Transport and Business Connectivity: Key Points

### Overall

Improved transport connectivity is economically critical in terms of opening up new employment and business to business opportunities.

### Transport Connectivity

- The **car** is the dominant mode of **transport**, with both car ownership and car usage increasing across Oldham.
- This has resulted in a rise in **traffic congestion,** particularly during peak hours.
- **Metrolink** passenger numbers have been increasing gradually since the line opened in January 2013, but have started to stabilise in 2018.
- **Annual scheduled bus miles** have **reduced** in Oldham from 2013 up to 2017. 2018 has been the only year where there has been no change.
- The number of **rail passengers** using **Greenfield station** has more than **doubled** since 2004/5.
- The majority of **freight** that is carried to and from Oldham is done so by **road**.
- Road travel times to Manchester are not as efficient as those from other sub-regional centres, placing the borough at economic disadvantage.

### Business Connectivity

- The GM digital strategy highlights plans to increase average mobile and fixed mobile broadband speeds significantly by 2025.
- The **capital investment programme** is still ongoing and will provide a **boost** to Oldham's economy of around **£38 Million** whilst creating over **2000 new jobs**. Princes Gate development has started the confirmation of tenants, with Travelodge securing their place alongside Lidl as future tenants.

### GMSF

- There are currently 12 allocations within the GMSF for Oldham. 8 of which are located from the central region of Oldham, up towards the north west of Oldham. Three of the allocations are within the south west of Oldham bordering Tameside.
- A requirement for an **additional 14,290 dwellings** has been set to be reached by the year 2037.

### Future Transport of Oldham

- Oldham currently lacks a **direct link** with **Piccadilly** station in Manchester.
- The transpennine route from Manchester to Leeds will have a £3 billion pound upgrade, which will include works within Oldham. This should see potential disruption to the Greenfield train station, which will affect commuters.
- There will be a case put forward to see an improvement to the Rochdale-Oldham-Ashton bus route.
- The Metrolink currently lacks capacity which is being addressed by TFGM. Also a business case is going to be put forward within the next 5 years to have a new Metrolink station at Cop Road.

# Transport and Business Connectivity: Recommendations

The Transport and Business Connectivity chapter has demonstrated that transport connectivity has improved for certain areas, especially those that are connected to the Metrolink. Improved transport connectivity is economically critical in terms of opening up new employment and business to business opportunities.

Key points are:

**Recommendation 1 – Increase Public Transport connectivity**

Key actions

- Ensure that Hollinwood, Kingsway and other areas have good public transport access to maximise employment opportunities for Oldham residents
- Promote sustainable transport by improving connectivity throughout the community with pedestrian routes, cycle ways, and high quality public transport.
- Ensure Oldham leverages future TfGM strategic developments to deliver the best possible transport networks for Oldham residents, businesses and workers linked to key GM investment sites, e.g. proposed Advanced Materials City.

**Recommendation 2 – Increase usage of new technologies and exploit new markets**

Key actions

- The Oldham economy needs to increase its access to the Global economy and this is in part done through finding new markets and internationalisation which the Growth Company and ERDF monies will support, however, it is predicated upon businesses becoming more digitally dependant.
- Ensure Oldham gains and retains a competitive digital infrastructure

**Recommendation 3 – Retain focus on key employment sites**

Oldham has a shortfall in the availability of good quality sites, this alongside the economic restructuring means there is a need to ensure the sites that are assembled meet the needs of the local economy, and well-utilised when in place to ensure a transition to high wage, high skill employment.

Key actions

- Development of key sites such as Foxdenton and Hollinwood Business District
- Ensure the development of a thriving Independent Quarter and develop independent business in the district centres.

# Introduction

High quality infrastructure, particularly transport and digital connectivity are essential elements for successful long term sustainable economic growth in Oldham. This chapter of the LEA focuses on Oldham's transport network, its digital connectivity, local business networks, the GMSF, and future transport and regeneration investments all of which are key factors to attracting new business to the borough.

# Oldham's Transport Network

The transport network plays a vital role in supporting the economic prosperity of Oldham by ensuring people can go about their day to day activities of journeys to work, training, shopping, leisure and recreation. A well-functioning transport system enables people and goods to be moved sustainably, efficiently and reliably.

Overall, Oldham is well served by road and rail networks. The area has two main motorway connections, linking it with other areas of Greater Manchester via the M60, and with Leeds via the A627 (M) and M62, providing strong internal and external connectivity. Oldham has relatively recently seen the arrival of Metrolink, which has already greatly improved public transport, particularly the connectivity into Manchester and Rochdale centres and beyond.

In the Greater Manchester Business Survey, Oldham's business base highlighted that 74% of those surveyed were very/fairly satisfied with the road transport access in Oldham, which is higher than the GM average of 69%.

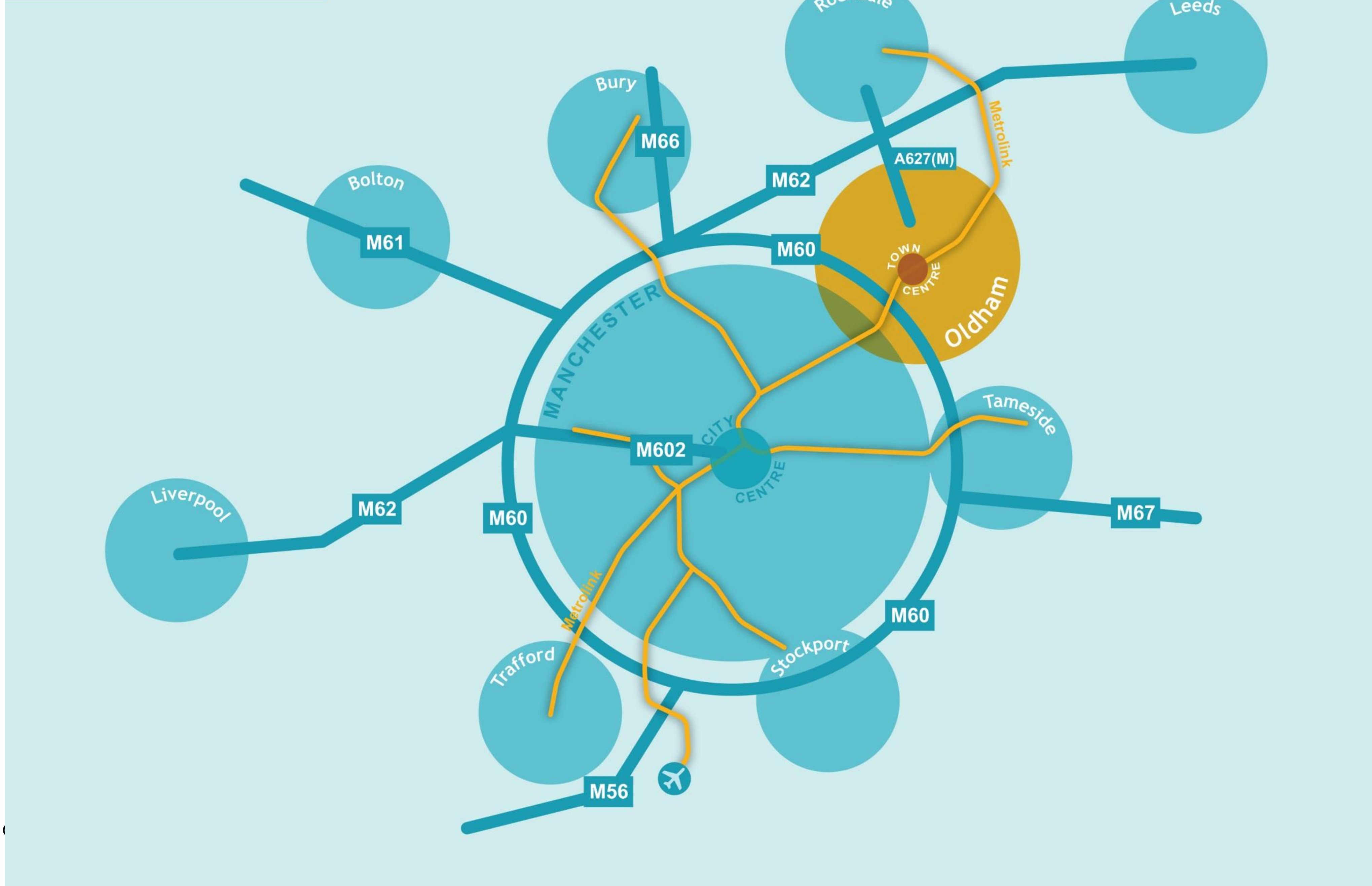
**Figure 1 - Key Facts**

| | Oldham | Greater Manchester |
|---|---:|---:|
| 2018 Population* | 235,623 | 2,780,844 |
| Area (sq km) | 142 | 1,276 |
| 2015 Total Road Length (km) | 821 | 9,186 |
| Motorway Length | 7 | 174 |
| A Road Length | 98 | 865 |
| B Road Length | 31 | 385 |
| Minor Road Length** | 686 | 7,761 |
| | | |
| Trunk Road Section with Highest Flow | M60 Between Junctions 22 & 23 | M60 between Junctions 12 & 13 |
| Traffic Flow - 24 Hr AAWT | 118,000 | 183,500 |
| Non Trunk Road Section with Highest Flow | A62 Oldham Way, Oldham | A57(M) Mancunian Way, Manchester City Centre |
| Traffic Flow - 24 Hr AAWT | 58,300 | 88,000 |

* from ONS 2018 Mid-Year Estimates for Population Change

* *NB: Minor roads figures combine both C and U road classes.

## Oldham's regional context



# Car Transport

## Car Ownership

An increase in the number of people with cars will inevitably lead to more cars on the roads therefore increasing congestion. In Oldham, the percentage of households with a car has risen from 57.4% in 1991 to 68.8% in 2011. This is slightly lower than the GM average of 69.4% but still noticeable lower than the England average (74.2%). Low levels of car ownership are viewed as an indicator of deprivation. This makes Oldham still more reliant on public transport for longer journeys.

**Figure 2 – Car Ownership by Local Authority**

| Local Authority | % Households with car 1991 | % Households with car 2001 | % Households with car 2011 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bolton | 62.0 | 69.7 | 71.7 |
| Bury | 68.2 | 74.0 | 76.1 |
| Manchester | 43.4 | 52.2 | 55.5 |
| Oldham | 57.4 | 65.6 | 68.8 |
| Rochdale | 57.9 | 66.5 | 68.6 |
| Salford | 51.8 | 60.8 | 63.1 |
| Stockport | 71.4 | 76.4 | 78.0 |
| Tameside | 59.3 | 67.4 | 70.4 |
| Trafford | 69.1 | 75.3 | 78.3 |
| Wigan | 65.0 | 72.5 | 75.4 |
| GM | 59.4 | 67.2 | 69.4 |
| England | 67.6 | 73.2 | 74.2 |

Source: ONS - Census 2011.

**Figure 3 – Types of Motor Vehicles**

| | Cars | Motorcycles | Light Goods Vehicles | Heavy Goods Vehicles | Buses and coaches | Other vehicles | Total | Diesel Cars | Diesel Vans |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Oldham %** | 86.1% | 2.8% | 8.4% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.9% | | 31.6% | 25.8% |
| **GM %** | 85.7% | 2.6% | 8.3% | 2.2% | 0.4% | 0.8% | | 31.0% | 8.1% |
| **Oldham % 2011-18** | +8.1% | +10.9% | +10.8% | -8.7% | -26.6% | +27.3% | +7.9% | +45.0% | +12.3% |
| **GM % 2011-18** | +7.0% | -0.6% | +11.6% | +14.0% | -6.4% | -0.8% | +7.2% | +40.1% | +13.2% |

Source: Department for Transport Statistics, 2018

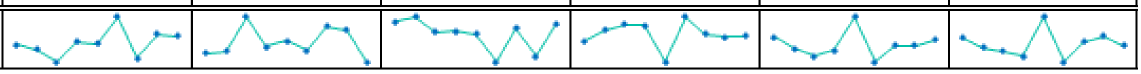
Across the spectrum of different types of motor vehicles the percentage in Oldham is similar across the board than to that of the GM average. However, the only area of difference is that Oldham has half the number of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) than the GM average. This indicates that there are fewer businesses in Oldham which require larger HGVs. There is a higher percentage diesel vans in Oldham than they are in GM. With more diesel vans there is a higher level of NOx pollution related with large diesel engines.

## Car Usage

Along with an increase in car ownership, there has been an increase in car usage, especially in terms of people choosing the car as their primary method to travel to work. As outlined in chapter 2 of the LEA, the labour market has become more flexible, with people willing to travel further from their homes to get to work. This is due to the more challenging nature of the economy but does mean that the economy becomes more resilient in the process. 36,000 residents commute out of Oldham each day while 29,000 people commute in. The most significant outward flows are to Manchester (17,700), Rochdale (5,900) and Tameside (4,600). Coming into the borough, the main flows are from Rochdale (8,000), Tameside (4,900) and Manchester (4,500).

When travelling to Oldham's town centre 60.8% use their car, 20.2% use public transport and 18.7% walk. Since the last decade the number of car users has trended downwards but those using public transport have fluctuated year upon year. Over the past decade the number of Oldham residents walking into the town centre has increased gradually. This could be a deprivation signal indicating that residents are priced out of owning a car or just making healthier choices.

**Figure 4 – Method of travelling to Oldham key centre**

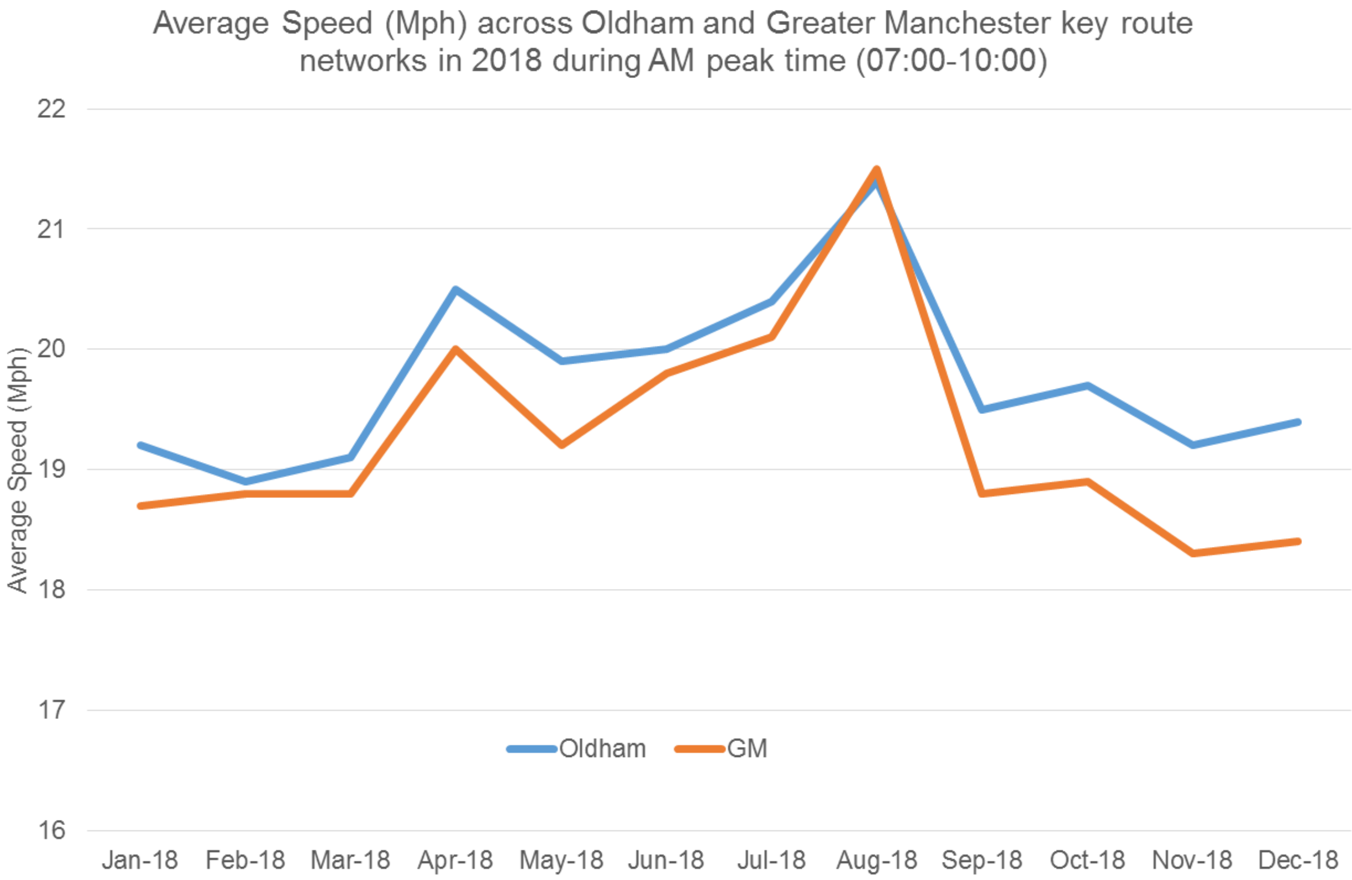
| Local Authority | Oldham | | | Greater Manchester | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % Car, Van, Minibus | % Bus. Coach, Private Bus | % Walk | % Car, Van, Minibus | % Bus. Coach, Private Bus | % Walk |
| 2007 | 79.5% | 6.7% | 13.7% | 77.1% | 11.2% | 11.8% |
| 2008 | 78.3% | 7.1% | 14.6% | 78.9% | 10.1% | 11.0% |
| 2009 | 75.4% | 12.6% | 11.9% | 80.0% | 9.4% | 10.6% |
| 2010 | 80.2% | 7.8% | 12.0% | 79.8% | 10.0% | 10.3% |
| 2011 | 79.7% | 8.7% | 11.6% | 73.4% | 13.1% | 13.5% |
| 2012 | 86.0% | 7.3% | 6.7% | 81.4% | 8.9% | 9.8% |
| 2013 | 76.3% | 11.1% | 12.5% | 78.2% | 10.4% | 11.4% |
| 2015 | 81.8% | 10.5% | 7.7% | 77.7% | 10.4% | 11.9% |
| 2016 | 81.4% | 5.4% | 13.2% | 77.9% | 10.9% | 11.2% |
| Trend |  | | | | | |

Source: Labour Force Survey & TFGM 2017.

## Congestion

The increasing demand for travel, particularly car travel, has a significant impact on the local economy. Traffic congestion is the major by product, effecting journey times and reliability, which are particularly costly to business. Increasing congestion means that it now takes longer to make a journey at most times of the day than it used to. Figure 5 on the next page shows the average transport speeds across key routes within Oldham's in 2018.

### Figure 5 - Road Traffic Congestion




Source: TFGM - Transport Statistics Oldham 2018

Average speed during the first 3 months of 2018 were at their lowest indicating that congestion was at its highest. After that the average speed increased in the summer months reaching their peak in August where congestion would have been at its lowest. After that the average speed on these major access routes decreases throughout the remainder of 2018, as congestion increases closer to the Christmas times.

The average speed across key route networks across GM was less than in Oldham for the entire year besides August 2018. This indicates that there is slightly more congestion across GM major routes than compared with Oldham. August is the holidays for the academic year which indicates that all universities in GM and all public and private schools are closed for the summer which is most likely the possible cause for the peak in average speed on key routes for GM as a whole.

# Public Transport

Public transport provision in Oldham has continued to improve which has helped in managing the additional demand for travel. Encouraging more commuting by public transport is a key aim of the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan. Public transport is vital both in terms of ensuring geographical mobility for the workforce and ensuring that access to Oldham's shopping districts is good, maximising their potential customer base. Within Oldham, it consists of bus networks, Metrolink, and peripheral rail networks.

**Figure 6 – Public Transport Journeys in Oldham 2015-2017 (TFGM, 2018)**

**21.3 million Journeys per year on Public Transport**

**Bus: 15.7 million**

**Train: 0.8 million**

**Tram: 4.7 million**

### Metrolink

The Metrolink has been the largest change for transport in Oldham, with it being introduced in 2013 its usage keeps increasing year upon year. Data provided by Transport for Greater Manchester (TFGM) show passenger numbers using the new Metrolink line have been positive and have had an immediate impact for Oldham economy and its residents. Numbers of passengers, who start or finish their journey in Oldham, have been climbing since the tram opened in January 2013.

Many of these passengers use the tram to commute to work but as the chart below shows, there is a distinct seasonal pattern, impacted by shoppers and people not travelling during the Christmas holidays, which is likely to impact commuter numbers. The 12 month moving average trend link shown below shows that usage has started to tail off over the past year indicating that the Metrolink has started to reach its maximum usage in Oldham.

**Figure 6 – Metrolink passenger numbers**


Source: TFGM 2019

In December 2018, there are approximately 11,142 passengers a day that start or end their Metrolink journey within Oldham. This is lower than in 2017 (11,153 per day) and higher than the passenger commuter numbers in 2016 (11,517 per day). The greatest flows of passengers[1] (7,856) use the Metrolink to travel from Oldham into Manchester City Centre and beyond. The flow of passengers into Oldham is much smaller (1,147 in Dec 2018), but that would be expected as Manchester is the main importer of labour and the primary destination for all other districts in Greater Manchester. Within Oldham itself, 3,568 passengers use the tram to travel within the borough and up to Rochdale, a large proportion of these (22%) start their journey at Shaw and Crompton.

**Figure 7 - Direction of Travel for Oldham's Metrolink Passengers**

| Direction of Travel | Passengers |
|---|---:|
| Outflow to Manchester and further afield | 7,856 |
| Inflow to Oldham | 1,147 |
| Within the Oldham – Rochdale Line | 3,568 |
| Total Daily Passengers | 11,142 |

Source: TFGM 2019

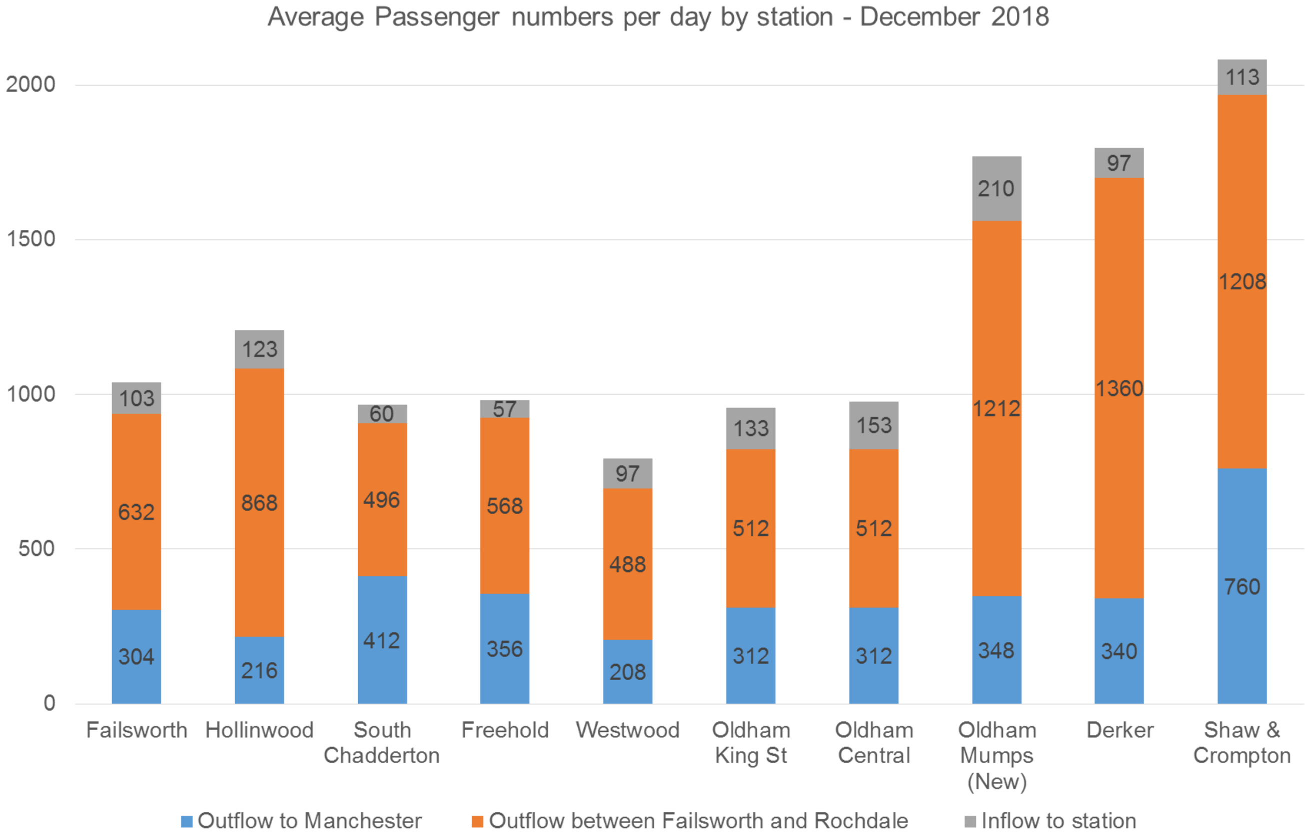
[1] Initial outward journey

The number of passengers using the different Metrolink stations in December 2018 varies considerably within Oldham. Oldham Town Centre (Oldham Mumps, Oldham Central and King Street) see the largest combined number of daily passengers (3,704), although Shaw and Crompton is the most frequently used individual station in the borough (2,081). This is followed by Derker (1,796) and Oldham Mumps (1,770). Each of these stations has a park and ride facility and the majority of passengers using these stations are heading into Manchester or further afield on the network. Historically residents from Shaw, Crompton and Derker have often chosen rail as their preferred method of transport to commute into Manchester (Oldham Loop ran through Shaw, Crompton and Derker before it was closed and converted to the Oldham-Rochdale Metrolink Line) as it is quicker than using the bus.

This is probably not the case for residents of Failsworth and Hollinwood who are better serviced with more established bus routes, so would account for lower passenger numbers. Shaw and Crompton also have a large number of passengers travelling locally, which will include passengers travelling up to Rochdale. Stations to the west of Oldham Town Centre are not as frequently used, particularly Westwood (696).

Metrolink has certainly helped to significantly increase the appeal of public transport in the borough to skilled and higher-earning commuters and links residents in areas historically poorly served by public transport with employment, retail and leisure destinations throughout the conurbation.

**Figure 8 – Metrolink Passenger numbers by station**




Source: TFGM 2018

## Bus

Oldham has two Quality Bus Corridors which link Oldham with Manchester, Ashton under Lyne and Rochdale: Manchester-Oldham-Saddleworth (A62/A669); and Rochdale-Oldham-Ashton (A671/A627). The western part of the borough is particularly well served by bus routes. The majority of bus services are provided commercially by First Bus. Oldham's major bus terminal is located in the town centre and each week day around 1,249 people start their journey from this location. Departure numbers decrease during the weekend to around 1,125 on a Saturday and only 592 on a Sunday. The number of departures from both bus stations in Oldham have decreased since 2016.

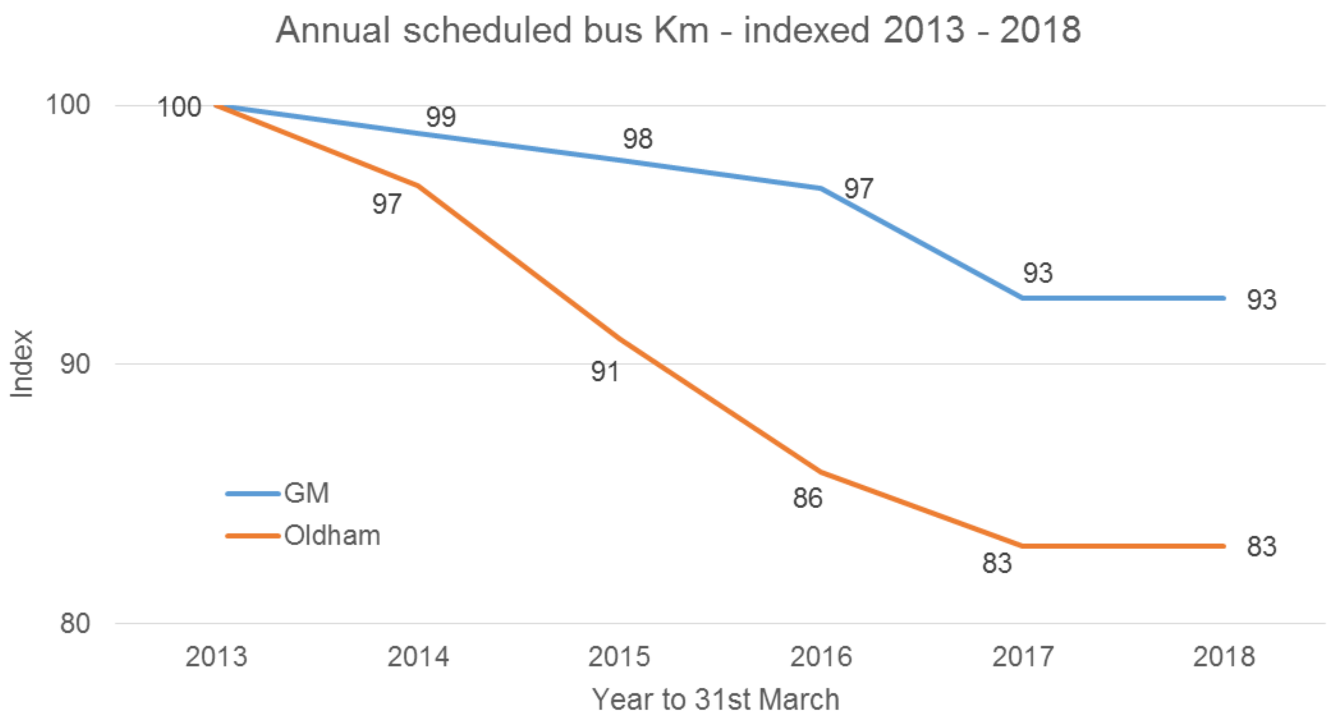
**Figure 9 - Bus Departures from Oldham Town Centre (2018)**

| Bus Station | Departures Weekday | Departures Saturday | Departures Sunday |
|---|---|---|---|
| Oldham Bus Station 2018 | 1249 | 1125 | 592 |
| Oldham Bus Station 2016 | 1450 | 1300 | 700 |
| % Change 2016 to 2018 | **-13.8** | **-13.5** | **-15.4** |

Source: TFGM 2018

Transport for Greater Manchester has also provided data on the indexed total scheduled bus mileage in Oldham and Greater Manchester. It highlights that between 2013 and 2018 annual scheduled bus miles have reduced in Oldham and GM, but the reduction is much more pronounced in Oldham. This is due to a combination of things which include the introduction of Metrolink and changes in demand for bus services.

**Figure 10 – Annual scheduled bus mileage in Oldham (2013- 2018)**



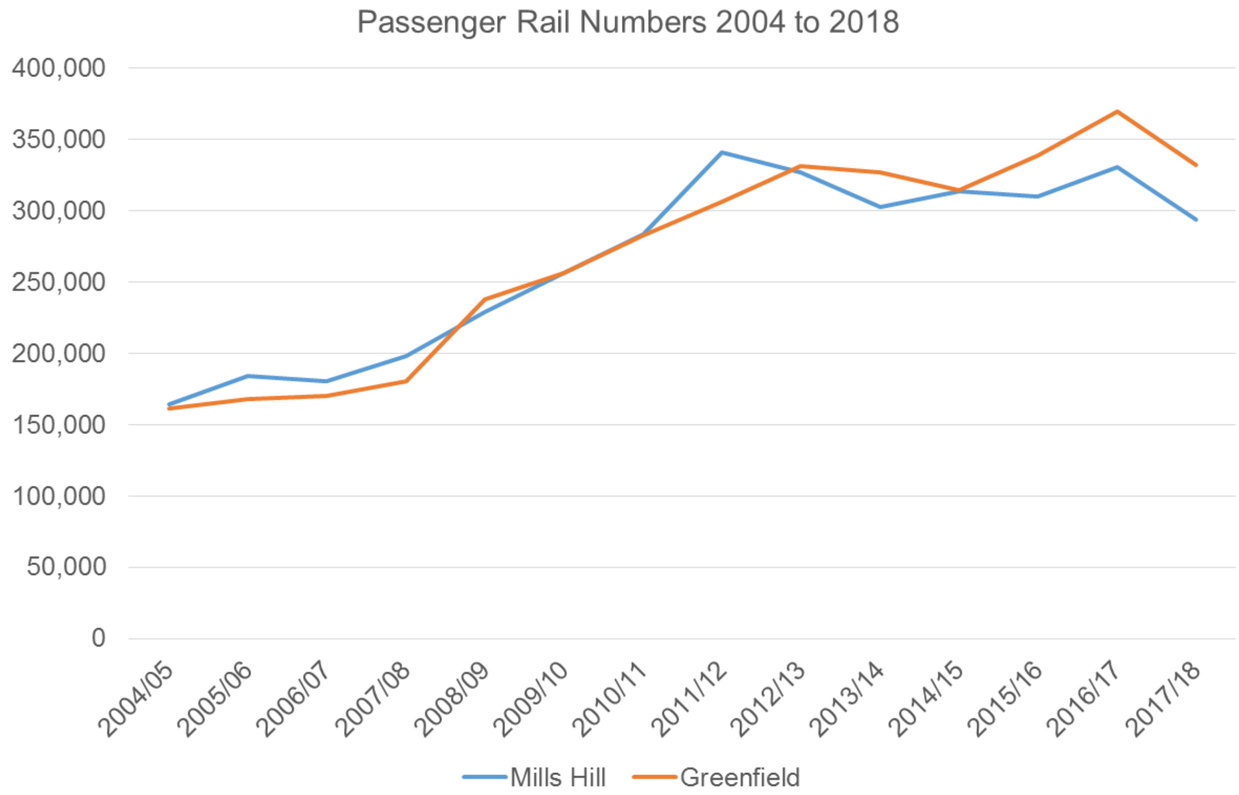

Source: TFGM database of scheduled annual bus miles, 2018

## Rail

There is one route which runs through the borough with a station at Greenfield. The Trans-Pennine route provides a key corridor between Manchester, Huddersfield and Leeds. The Manchester Victoria to Rochdale, Leeds and York rail route runs to the west of the borough. There are no stations on this line in Oldham, however, the Mills Hill Station (in Rochdale) fall within 100m of the Oldham boundary and serve areas to the west of the borough.

Since 2004/5 there has been a large increase in passenger numbers from both Greenfield and Mills Hill stations. Greenfield have seen numbers increase from 161,558 (2004/5) up to 332,332 (2017/18), an increase of 106%. Mills Hill has seen a relatively similar trend from 164,520 to 298,405, a 78% increase. However since 2013/14 passenger numbers in Mills Hill have started to decrease. This is likely due to the introduction of Metrolink.

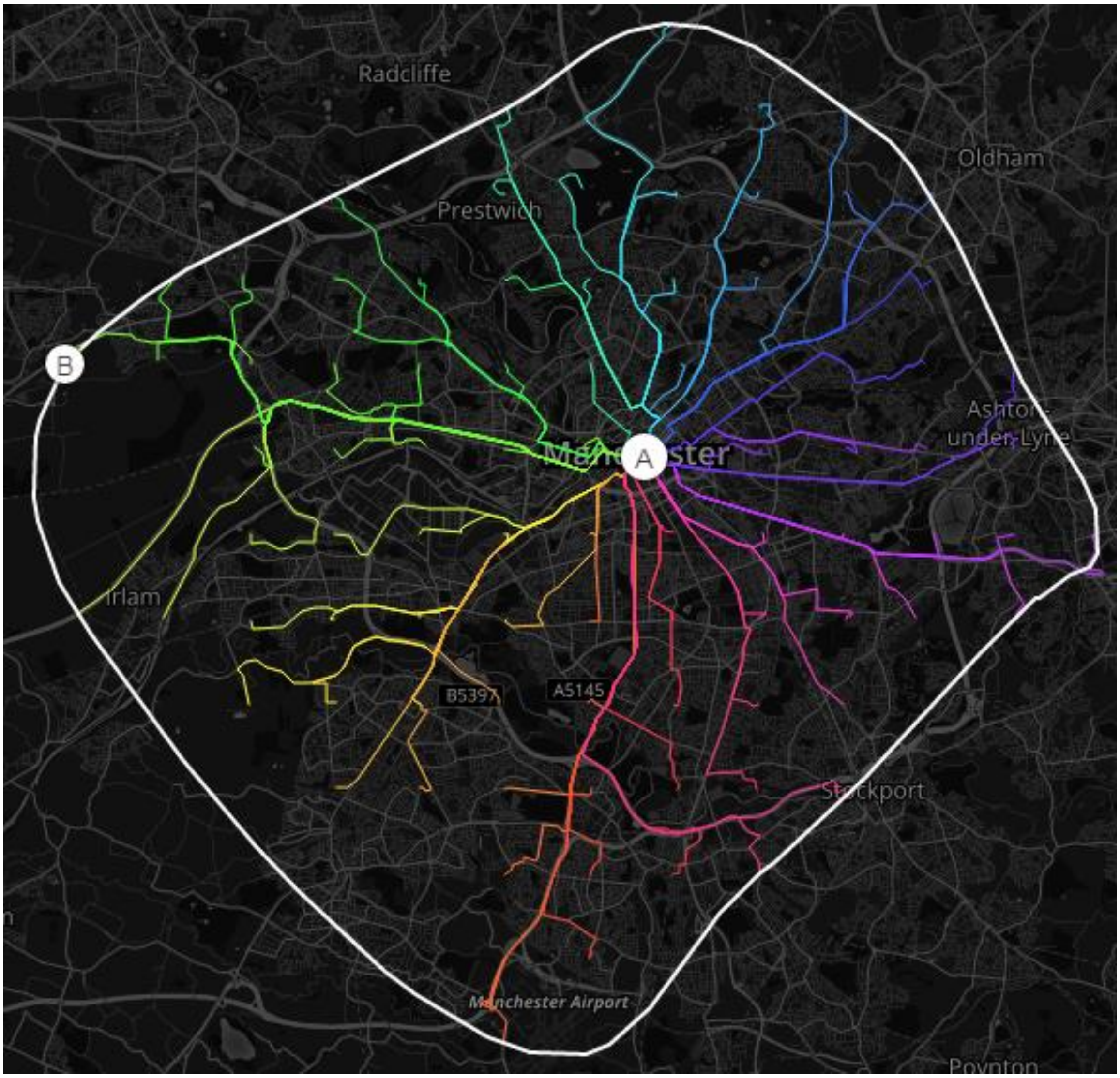
**Figure 11 – Rail Passenger Numbers (2004/5- 2017/18)**




Source: TFGM, 2018

In addition to the excellent road and rail networks, Oldham is within reach of Manchester airport. This transport infrastructure provides a strong foundation for supporting existing business and creating a competitive advantage for future growth.

## GM Infrastructure Disparity




The Map above[2] shows the average distance travelled, 15 minutes by car, from Central Manchester (Point A). The results show that you can travel a larger distance when heading towards the Southern and Western regions of GM. However, when heading towards the Northern or Eastern regions of GM from Point A, it is clear that a considerably shorter distance can be reached, especially when heading towards Oldham.

This illustrates the poor connectivity between the Hub of Greater Manchester and Oldham itself. This affects businesses, employees and other economic outputs which rely on this key infrastructure corridor between Oldham and Manchester City centre.

[2] The map was taken from http://roadstorome.moovellab.com/explore

# Business Transport

The movement of freight and the logistics sector in general are key components of Oldham's economy. Logistics is essential to the functioning of the Oldham economy and impacts the lives of all its residents, businesses, workers and visitors, either through the availability of goods and services or through the impact of goods vehicles on the transport network or the wider environment. Better connectivity in Oldham and across GM will enable fast and affordable access to employment opportunities and efficient transfer of goods.

The Logistics and Distribution industries have changed radically in the last five years in response to changing consumer behaviours, with next-day and same-day delivery becoming increasingly commonplace, and significant growth in local distribution jobs. This has led to the development of Fourth Party Logistics Firms (4PL), businesses that act as a supply chain manager to deliver a comprehensive supply chain solution from national down to the local level. One such company, Yodel, which is a worldwide delivery company, has a base in Oldham at the national distribution centre located in Shaw. Also nearby, Yodel has a base at Stakehill Industrial Estate in Middleton.

Oldham as a location is fairly attractive to logistic firms, given the low rental costs for modern warehouses, its proximity to a well-developed strategic road network, and being within Greater Manchester, with its 2.7 million populations which offers a large market for retailers and also offers a local supply of labour.

**Transport and Freight's Future**

Annually, freight in the UK accounts for 9% of GDP and 7% of total employment. It is a highly competitive market which is ran entirely by the private sector. Freight interests lie with ensuring low cost on time deliveries. Any interventions or new initiatives will only be adopted if they don't incur disproportionate associated costs. The vast majority of freight is carried by road, which causes congestion, carbon emissions (especially at low speeds, which is the case in urban areas such as Oldham), poor air quality, noise pollution and conflict with vulnerable road users. Oldham or GM in general does not have much in terms of water based freight distribution. However, with the pending upgrade of the Transpennine route, there is scope for freight to move to and from Yorkshire. Also in the future, Northern hub rail advancements will triple the current freight capacity within GM, should the demand for it be there.

The structure of the freight economy has changed in order to amalgamate geospatial technological advances and changing consumer trends, which has seen a change in warehousing location and the method by which goods are finally distributed to the consumer. HGV's were traditionally used to distribute goods to the consumer but they have now been replaced by light commercial vehicles for last-mile logistics.

Due to the growth in last-mile freight, in the case for Oldham it would be wise to balance the demand for this with the available road space. The associated risks with policy changes involved with increasing the number of operating bicycles or pedestrians (such as the town centre regeneration package in Oldham) is that increases in the smaller commercial freight vehicles could increase the incidence of associated collisions. There has to be a fine balancing where peak time congestion is kept to a minimum; whilst minimising noise impact on residential areas and ensuring that businesses receive goods and services on time.

Oldham sits at an advantage when it comes to future transport development as the TFGM transport strategy states that “New logistics sites should ideally be accessible by rail and/or water, but some goods cannot be transported by these modes and for others it would not be practical due to timescales, routes and other issues”, and Oldham has first access to the Transpennine gateway which connects Yorkshire to the Northwest. Coupled with the fact that Oldham has reasonable transport links with Manchester city centre, there is great potential for freight and logistics expansion within Oldham.

The Council and its partners can assist the freight industry by operational planning such as disseminating live traffic data and encourage sustainable distribution practices through awareness campaigns, for example, regarding air quality and driver training. The understanding of what the needs are within the freight industry will be improved through the GM Logistics Forum, which will facilitate engagement.

A key intervention will be to maximise the practise of consolidation, whereby deliveries to the same location are bundled together or where goods are delivered to locations for onward distribution by smaller, low emission vehicles (including cycles or electric-assisted cycles in town and city centres), or for collection by individuals. This should reduce the number of HGV and other large vehicles in city and town centres, which should in turn reduce noise, congestion and air pollution. Central government wishes to peruse Clean Air Zones (CAZ) to improve air quality. There will be an assessment to determine the potential impact of a CAZ, including the impact on freight operators.

# Digital Connectivity

It is critical that appropriate levels of digital infrastructure are in place for an economy to thrive. Access to broadband is particularly important for knowledge-based businesses but it is increasingly the case that all businesses and organisations need to be able to access reliable, high-speed broadband services. High-speed broadband connectivity is now seen by many as an important a 'utility' as electricity or running water. It is not just business that needs access to broadband. Increasingly, public services and sources of information are being delivered via the Internet. Children are expected to use the Internet as a research tool and many information sources are only available online. Those without access to the Internet and to broadband are increasingly disadvantaged.

Within the GMCA have outlined their vision entitled: "A digital city with a difference". Their aim is to have GM become a top 5 European digital city by the year 2020. In order to achieve this they feel these 2 criteria are essential:

1. Empowers and enables residents to have the highest quality of life.
2. Supports the creation of high quality jobs and achieves the highest possible productivity levels.

**Figure 13 – GM Digital Strategy: Confirmed Digital Goals and Measures**

| | |
|---|---|
| **1. Local demand for digital services** | To increase the percentage of GM companies' total turnover (excluding financial sector) that comes from online sales by 2020. |
| **2. Digital skills pipeline** | To reduce the percentage of GM digital businesses that report turning down work due to lack of talent from 20% to 5% by 2020. |
| **3. Digital Infrastructure** | a) To increase average mobile internet download and upload speeds from 24.09 Mbps and 11.05 Mbps to 75 and 25 Mbps respectively by 2025; and b) To increase average fixed broadband internet download and upload speeds from 40.78 Mbps and 17.45 Mbps to 120 and 50 Mbps respectively by 2025. |
| **4. Gender balance in digital companies** | To change the ratio of men: women among IT and tech workers in technical roles from 79:21 to 60:40 by 2025. |
| **5. Digital public services that are designed around residents' needs** | a) By 2020 residents will be able to see what information is being shared and how by the public sector in GM. b) By 2025 all resident information on health & care, education and employment will be digitised and joined up with citizen access. |
| **6. Digital Inclusion** | Increase the percentage of adults who have used all five basic digital skills (communicating, creating, transacting, problem-solving and managing information) from 42% to 60%, with no borough below 50%, by 2020. |

Source: GM Digital Strategy, 2018

Greater Manchester aims to become one of the world's top 20 digital cities by 2020. The Greater Manchester Get-Digital programme aims to achieve this ambition by ensuring that as many residents and businesses as possible have access to fibre broadband, stimulating growth, supporting innovation, and helping SMEs to grow and generate new employment.

Greater Manchester's push to further improve the digitisation of online commercial and retail businesses should see a boost within the education of business development across greater Manchester. This should further promote business to business networking and commerce.

The further proposed development of the internet's infrastructure to boost broadband speeds for both mobile and fixed broadband is a positive step on both the commercial digitisation and the improvement in living standards. The targeted campaign at low digitally skilled employment, if met, could see a drastic change within GM's digital ecosystem, because as employee skills and meaningful employment increases, so does job security and business productivity.

# Business Networks

Having a high level of business connectivity is an essential requirement in attracting inward investment to Oldham. Oldham Council currently works closely with the local business base to provide businesses with the access to the intelligence and support they need to prosper.

Oldham prides itself on being a business-friendly community, which is demonstrated by a range of networks delivered by the business community, supporting business growth and development. They are important as a key engagement tool for the Council but more importantly as a means of local businesses working to support each other through the provision of advice, referrals and as a source of business opportunities. The Economy and Skills cluster facilitates certain key initiatives and networks, and is reviewing business connectivity to ensure a more resilient business community.

In Oldham there are currently a range of business engagement tools that are used to increase and improve the connectivity of businesses. These include:

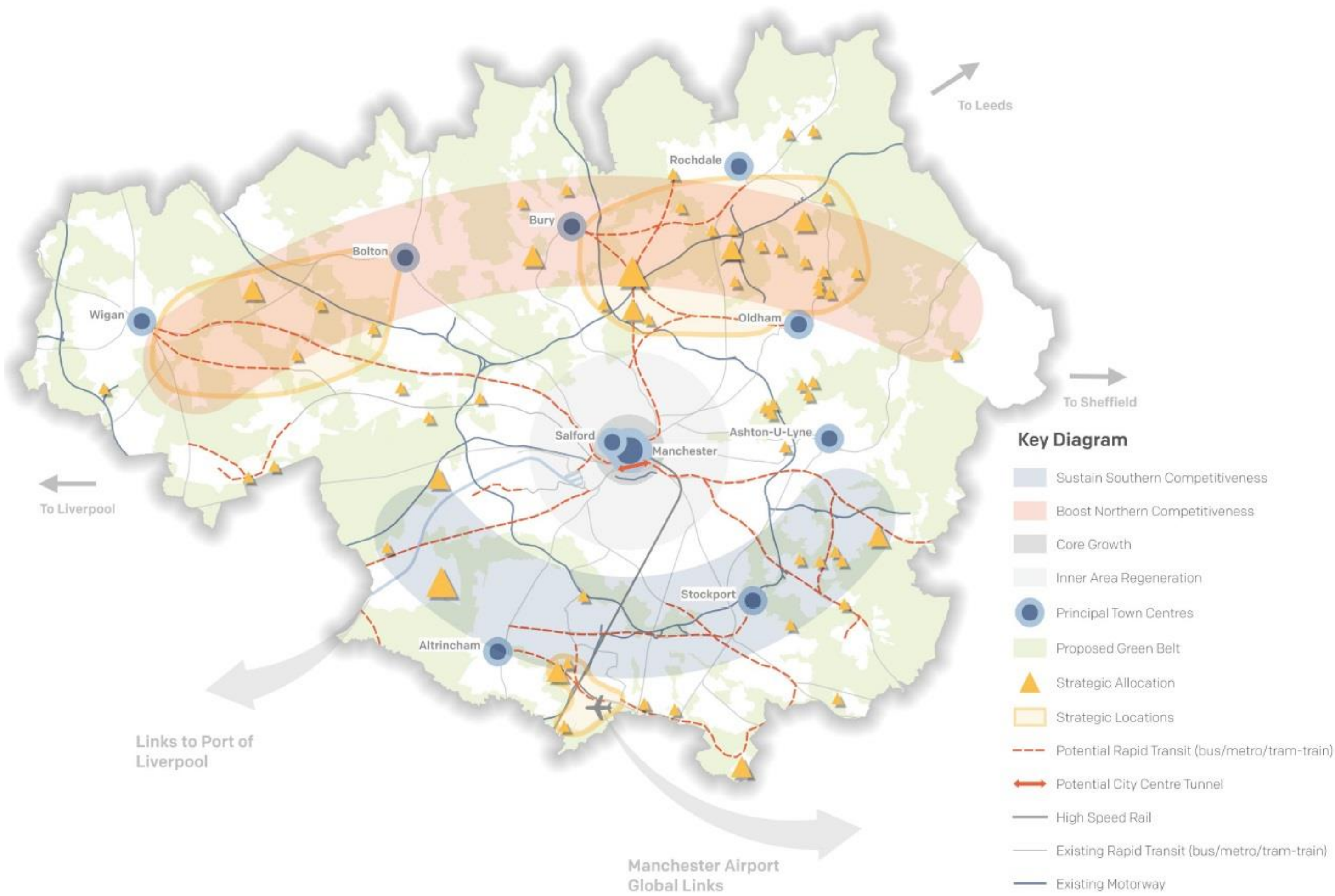
- **Oldham Enterprise Trust** - The Oldham Enterprise Trust, Business Growth Hub and GM Chamber host frequent networking meetings for local businesses to attend.
- **Oldham Business Network (OBN)** - OBN is a virtual that enables local businesses to engage with and work with each other providing help, support and guidance as well as business-to-business opportunities.
- **Oldham Construction Sector Group** - A series of networking events aimed at helping local construction companies understand what contracts are available, the timescales and how the procurement system works.
- **Town Centre Partnership** – A quarterly meeting for Town Centre businesses, where Oldham Council and its partners share their activities. Businesses can also share their views with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Town Centre.
- **#oldhamhour** – a twitter based social media network that takes place weekly on Monday evenings between 9-10pm. This was set up by a local private sector businesses and based on similar successful models from other parts of the country.
- **Strategic Business Breakfasts** – Local businesses are invited to attend business breakfasts with the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council.

Based on the information above, while there is significant generic networking, there is potentially a gap around sectoral networking and networking for new businesses. While there are plans to develop further networks in the tourism and property sectors, this would still not represent a full spectrum of support. This might in turn have negative impacts on the development of key sectors that Oldham wishes to develop into the future.

# Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF)

In 2014, the 10 Local Authorities that make up Greater Manchester started work on the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) to identify the future housing and land requirements for the region. The GMSF is a strategic plan that will guide the city region's growth for the next 20 years. This framework is seeking to enable the region to be more prosperous, better connected and a greener place to live. The Framework has identified the amount and location of land which will be needed across GM to accommodate a minimum requirement set of 50,000 new affordable homes and an estimated growth of 110,000 jobs in the next 2037 years. The GMSF aims to direct new development to urban brownfield land where possible but recognises the need to release carefully selected Green Belt sites. The draft GMSF proposes allocation of a number of major strategic sites for homes and employment land across Greater Manchester (GM). The overall spatial strategy is shown in the Key Diagram below.

**Figure 14 – GMSF overall spatial strategy**




Source: GM Spatial Framework, 2019

**What does the GMSF mean economically for Oldham?**

- **Deprivation** - The GMSF highlights that Salford, Rochdale and Oldham as within the top 100 most deprived areas in the country.

- **Competitiveness** - The GMSF highlights an overall economic strategy for Greater Manchester, which includes a core growth area which is Manchester City centre. The southern region off GM has been highlighted as an area to sustain competitiveness and the northern region of GM has been identified as an area which requires significant uplift to competition.

- **Development and Workforce** - The north of the borough is the location of a number of regionally significant “strategic” development allocations, providing opportunities to deliver high quality, modern employment facilities and create additional housing land;

- **Office Development** - Up until 2037, the GMSF highlights that Oldham has a total office space supply of 84,423$^2$m, of which 72,084$^2$m is Brownfield land and 12,339$^2$m is a combination of both Brownfield and Greenfield land;

- **Housing Development** - Until 2037 Oldham has a total land supply for building homes of 15,137$^2$m is allocated according to the GMSF, of which 7,585$^2$m is Brownfield land, 1,174$^2$m is Greenfield land and 2,004$^2$m is a mixture of both Brownfield and Greenfield.

- **Housing** - A requirement for an additional 14,290 dwellings has also been set over this time period. This equates to 7.1% of the GM total and would mean an average of 752 new homes being built every year, representing a significant increase on current house-building targets;

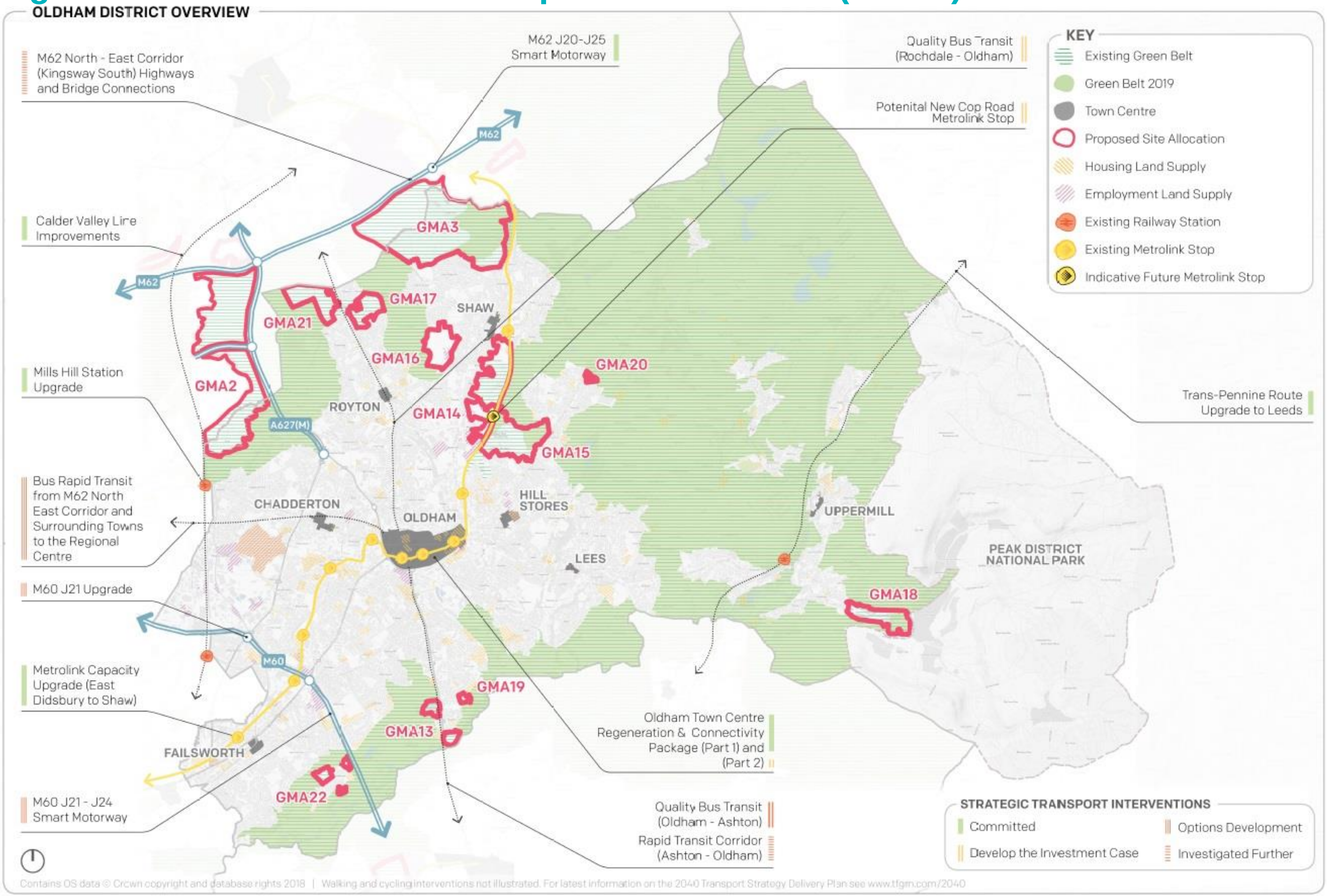
- **Housing** - This housing will be delivered across the borough but the largest sites will be found within Oldham’s strategic allocations;

- **Environmental** - The identification of new development sites will entail loss of Green Belt and this is likely to be contentious;

- **Town Centre** - The town centre will continue to be recognised as the primary focus for economic, civic and cultural activity (including retail, leisure and tourism), as well as a public transport hub, with residential development being supported in this location where it complements other uses. There has been a bid submitted to the Future High Streets Fund, which is distributing grants to Local Authorities in order to re-invigorate the Oldham town centre;

- **Tourism** - Dovestone Reservoir in Saddleworth is specifically identified as a key tourist and recreation asset, in recognition of its role as a gateway to the Peak District.

# Figure 15: Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) – Oldham Allocations



**Allocations**

**The following GMSF[3] strategic site allocations, in whole or in part, are located in Oldham:**

- **GMA 13: Ashton Road Corridor** - Deliver 250 new affordable diverse homes in Medlock Vale within the Green Belt. TFGM have identified the A627 between Rochdale – Oldham – Ashton as an important road of development to improve connectivity in GM. Any development will need to replace any open space, sport or recreation consequently lost.

- **GMA 14: Beal Valley** - A comprehensive masterplan is required to deliver around 480 homes. With a strong housing market in the area there is the potential to have a range of high quality housing. The development area will have improved connectivity to Shaw Town Centre by addressing congestion issues. The development provides opportunity to develop green infrastructure and biodiversity of the site and improve access to the countryside for the local community.

- **GMA 15: Broadbent Moss –** The closest allocation to the town centre is required to deliver around 1,450 homes, with a range of development types and sizes to incorporate an inclusive neighbourhood and meet local needs which means high quality family housing. Deliver 21,720sqm employment floor space extending the existing employment opportunities at Higginshaw business employment area.

- **GMA 16: Cowlishaw -** On the border of Royton South and Crompton this allocation has proposed a mix of 460 affordable small and larger family homes. The site is currently designated as an OPOL in the Oldham Local Plan. The site is well connected to neighbouring residential communities in Low Crompton, Cowlishaw, Royton and nearby Shaw town centre where there is a Metrolink stop.

- **GMA 17: Hanging Chadder -** This next allocation, mainly in Royton North, is designated as green belt but developable for 260 homes. This site is on the edge of a rural area with a strong housing market, essentially making it ideal for attractive high quality housing. Infrastructure around the sites sees it well connected to surrounding neighbourhoods and is only 1.6km away from Royton town centre.

- **GMA 18: Robert Fletchers -** This site includes the redundant Robert Fletchers Mill on brownfield land within Saddleworth South. This site is the gateway to the Peak District National Park and provides a strategic economic opportunity to promote tourism and leisure. The allocation will also include holiday lodging facility and boutique hotel. The will also be a range of high quality executive family homes in an attractive rural location. Historical assets play an important role in the area's local history and cultural identity and any new development will have to take these assets into consideration.

[3] All information taken directly from the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF)`

- **GMA 19: South of Rosary Road -** This site has the potential to delivery 60 new homes within Fitton Hill (which falls within 10% of the most deprived neighbourhoods within the country). The site has some ecological value adjacent to it, which would need to be integrated into the multi-functional green infrastructure. The site is well connected to the neighbouring communities in Fitton Hill. A heritage impact assessment will also need to be undertaken as the effect the development will have on the landscape has to be taken into consideration.

- **GMA 20: Spinners Way/Alderney Farm -** The site is located at the edge of urban territory approaching Saddleworth. The allocation west of Rippoden Road, which falls within the 10% of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. Therefore the 50 new homes proposed hopes to diversify the current housing offer. The site is also well connected to existing neighbouring residential communities in Moorside and Sholver. The site also lies 2.5km to 3km away from Hill Stores Centre.

- **GMA 21: Thornham Old Road -** The greenbelt site is proposing 600 new homes. The topographical constraints and proximity of Tandle Hill Country Park will need to inform the development of the site so as to ensure that any development has regard to, and minimises the impact on the park. The site is approximately 2km away from Royton Town Centre and has good links to Rochdale road. The A627/A671 Rochdale-Oldham-Aston corridor has been identified by TFGM as an area of focus for development to improve streets for public transport, walking, cycling and orbital connectivity.

- **GMA 22: Woodhouses -** This site is projected to incorporate 260 new homes within Greenbelt. The location has a strong housing market and the site has the potential to meet local housing need with a wide range of quality housing in attractive and accessible locations. The site will retain and enhance Public Rights of Way running through the site. Provide for an additional school places to meet the increased demand that will be placed on existing provision.

# Investment and Regeneration

For Oldham to generate economic growth and prosperity it's vital that the borough can attract inward investment to the area. As previously highlighted the Metrolink has acted as the catalyst for redevelopment in Oldham but attracting new businesses to Oldham (whilst at the same time retaining the existing ones), is an essential prerequisite to achieve this.

Oldham's previous investment programme to support the economic regeneration of the town centre and transform the area to a more vibrant and attractive location for new enterprise to come and do business. This investment has already attracted new businesses to the area has created new jobs and is generating additional GVA for Oldham. There will also be improvements to commercial premises across the town centre. A bid to The Future High Street Funds has been submitted for Oldham regarding a proposal to achieve funds to regenerate the town centre.

**Figure 16 – Town Centre Regeneration Key Projects**[4]

| New Development | Aim | NET additional GVA per annum |
|---|---|---|
| Town Centre Vision<br>• Tommyfield Market<br>• Hotel<br>• Civic Offices<br>• Residential | Redevelopment (refurbishment or new build) of the market hall to ensure it is fit for purpose in today's retail market. New Hotel and conferencing. New town centre residential offer. | TBC |
| Eastern Gateway<br>(Princes Gate) | Redevelop the Eastern Gateway of Oldham creating a mix use development of retail, hotel, housing, and office use. | Total GVA over the construction phase of £36M<br>GVA per annum associated with operational employment of £35M |
| Heritage Centre (OMA) | The refurbishment of a former Grade 2 listed library building into a new heritage and arts centre (to be known as OMA). | £1.9M |
| Independent Quarter | The refurbishment of key buildings and the relocation of existing businesses along Yorkshire Street, Union Street and surrounding streets. | £1.0M |

Source: Oldham Council, 2019

[4] These projects could change depending on elections and the current leader's preferences.

# Future Transport Investments and Connectivity

The anticipated increase in demand for travel will continue to put pressure on existing transport infrastructure and services.  Increased traffic on roads will lead to greater pressure on the structural network whilst population growth and new developments will also place greater pressure on public transport.  Improvements to public transport can relieve pressure on the road network by lowering car usage and can help to reduce carbon emissions.

There are a number of programmes currently underway to address current and future demand on highways and public transport across the borough. These are primarily focused on improving the conditions of the highways, improving connectivity to Oldham town centre, and promoting Cycling and Sustainable transport.

**Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040**

TfGM is currently producing a new long-term Transport Strategy for Greater Manchester. This Transport Strategy will cover the period up to 2040, with particular detail on potential interventions for the period up to 2025.

A specific aim of the Transport Strategy is to ensure that GM has the appropriate transport infrastructure and services to support future growth in Greater Manchester (GM). Therefore the Transport Strategy will be closely aligned with the GM Spatial Framework. The transport strategy needs to be flexible to enable the Spatial Framework in order to influence and support proposals as they are identified.

This flexibility is achieved through a series of five-year Delivery Plans, which will accompany the Transport Strategy. The initial 5 year plan will largely see the delivery of committed schemes funded through the GM Local Growth Deal, along with partners' commitments. As additional funding is secured in the future, the delivery plan will be updated. Currently there are a range of committed scheme elements that impact on Oldham. These include:

**Figure 17 – Regeneration Key Projects**

| Key interventions for Oldham |
|---|
| **i) Committed to delivering by 2025** |
| Oldham Town Centre Regeneration and Connectivity Package Phase 1 (£6 million Growth Deal 3 programme to improve transport and the public realm). |
| Increased tram capacity on the Shaw – East Didsbury Metrolink line. |
| Cycling and Walking Infrastructure, including the refurbishment of King Street foot/cycle bridge and completion of Union Street West bridge refurbishment. |
| Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade to Leeds (pre-Northern Powerhouse Rail) (Network Rail). Greenfield station will be closed down temporarily whilst construction takes place, which will not only cause operation disruption but construction based disruption. |
| Station accessibility improvements at Mills Hill Rail Station. |
| **ii) Investment cases for early delivery to be completed by 2025** |
| A new Metrolink Stop at Cop Road. |
| Quality Bus Transit on key bus corridors: Oldham-Rochdale. |
| Quality Bus Transit on key bus corridors: Oldham-Ashton. |
| Improved Metrolink capacity between Piccadilly and Victoria stations, including to address the GMCA's intention to provide direct Metrolink services from Rochdale and Oldham into Piccadilly. |
| A663 Broadway / M60 J21 junction upgrade (Highways England). |
| **iii) Further work to be undertaken to identify options and determine feasibility** |
| The Oldham Town Centre Regeneration and Connectivity Package Phase 2. |
| Oldham Mumps Interchange redevelopment. |
| **iv) To be investigated beyond 2025** |
| Rapid transit corridor Ashton-Oldham. |
| Rapid transit corridor Ashton-Stockport. |
| Oldham Mumps Interchange redevelopment. |

Source: Oldham Council, 2019

# Transport and the Economy

Investment in transport infrastructure and services needs to support our ambitious regeneration and land use plans if we are to create the jobs and homes we need in order for Oldham residents to thrive.

At the same time, we need to address long term challenges such as congestion, air pollution, health and social inclusion.

As a member of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, we are able to benefit from investment in GM Transport Network through the policies and interventions being brought forward by the GM2040 Transport Strategy, such as:

- the Mayor's Congestion Deal;
- the emerging Clean Air Plan;
- potential Bus Reform proposals that are currently being assessed; and
- the Mayor's Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund.

The GM2040's ambition is for half of all journeys in Greater Manchester to be made by public transport, walking or cycling, especially for shorter journeys around local neighbourhoods in order that GMSF economic growth ambitions can be met. This will mean a million more sustainable journeys every day by 2040.

The GM2040 Transport Strategy, in which we are a partner authority, is enabling us to access funding opportunities such as the Local Growth Deal Fund. Growth Deal funding is part of the Government's Northern Powerhouse initiative and aims to generate growth, jobs and ambition in towns and cities.

Through this fund we have secured a number of schemes that will help the local economy. Examples include:

- **Albert Street, Hollinwood**, where a Local Growth Fund contribution of £800,000 is helping to deliver new access roads within the site, which will enable us to unlock 6.3 hectares of brownfield land for a mixed-use development, which will help to create:
  - 120 temporary construction jobs per annum over the length of the Hollinwood Junction build (100 direct and 20 through the supply chain and employee spend);
  - up to 760 permanent jobs (including effects of expenditure in the local economy);
  - up to 150,000 sq. ft. of new employment space;
  - £0.6m additional business rates per annum;
  - £30 million total construction investment; and
  - Additional GVA estimated at £35m p/a.

- **Mumps -** £3.5 million Local Growth Fund grant to relocate the former park and ride site at Mumps and release land for a retail and hotel development. We will be carrying out further investment in the public realm and highway infrastructure to support that development and improve the attractiveness of Oldham Town Centre as a place to shop, visit and invest later this year.

- **Oldham Town Centre** - £6 million of transport funding to invest in Oldham Town Centre and improve access by sustainable modes such as cycling, walking and public transport. We launched a public consultation on *the Accessible Oldham* scheme in spring 2019, the results of that consultation have been analysed and the results will shape the designs going forward.

We have also secured transport funding from other sources to support regeneration, including, for example:

- At **Broadway Green**, where a combination of funding sources is helping to create the transport infrastructure needed to support development of the site, such as a new link road connecting Broadway and Foxdenton Lane, which in turn will help to deliver:
  - up to 700,000 sq. ft. of employment space;
  - up to 500 new homes on site;
  - 2,000 new jobs to the local area as well as much needed new housing; and
  - a £5.4m annual boost to the local retail economy from new resident spending.

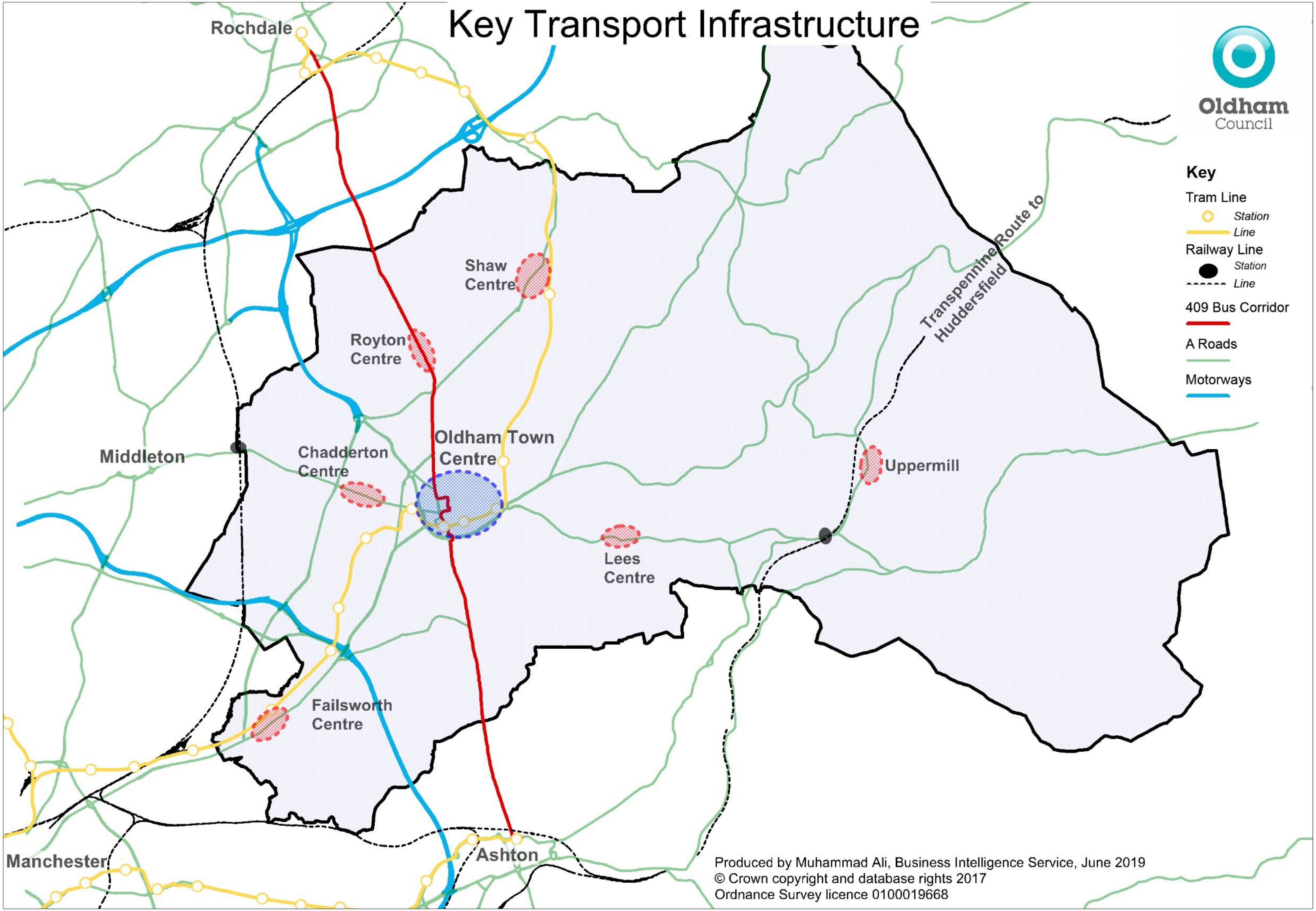
As a Council we recognise that a well maintained and resilient highway network is the foundation of a thriving economy, which is why we are investing £18 million over the next 4 years to improve the condition of the highway network. We need Transport for Greater Manchester to invest in public transport and will continue to press for a direct Metrolink connection from Oldham to Manchester Piccadilly Rail Station. The updated GM2040 Delivery Plan that is currently out to public consultation alongside Greater Manchester's Plan for Homes, Jobs, and the Environment (GMSF) could lead to investment in the following infrastructure, subject to the development of business cases and resources being available:

- A new Metrolink Stop at Cop Road;
- Quality Bus Transit on the Oldham-Rochdale and Oldham-Ashton orbital corridors; and
- Further investment within Oldham Town Centre.

In addition to securing investment through our own funding bids and through Transport for Greater Manchester, we need other transport providers to invest in the borough. On the Trans Pennine Rail Route, for example, we need the Government to commit to the long awaited full electrification and the benefits that will bring to Oldham, not just in terms of the economy, but also the benefits this would bring to disabled people trying to access rail services in at Greenfield.

It is important that we build on the successes we have had to date and ensure that investment comes to Oldham through GMSF and GM2040 and that others invest in the transport network in Oldham in order that it meets the needs of our residents and helps our local economy to flourish and prosper.

# Key Transport Infrastructure

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