



Oldham See it differently

A Place Marketing Strategy for Oldham

Executive summary



Oldham



Foreword

This strategy sets out our ambitions for Oldham – a place with an exciting future that has so much to build on.

Our borough has its own proud niche in history as the cotton spinning capital of the world.

It is an industrial revolution boom town that went on to manufacture the Lancaster Bomber and today is home to national and international brands – plus major new opportunities.

These are exciting times for Oldham.

We have a new Metrolink line, flagship projects to transform our town centre and remarkably diverse assets that may surprise you.

We have superb connectivity to Manchester city centre and the M62 corridor, for example, yet more than a quarter of our borough sits within the Peak District National Park.

We also have the youngest population in the region, with access to outstanding higher and further education establishments – plus a strong base of more than 5,000 businesses across all sectors.

Yet even with assets like this, we know the work to restructure our economy won't succeed by accident. It needs people, commitment, and aspiration.

Jobs and growth are our clear priorities and to achieve that our place marketing strategy needs to challenge and change perceptions.

To get people to see Oldham differently, the Council is stepping up to play a leadership role like never before.

That's not just about us investing £100m on key regeneration projects, or the great work we've done to create land opportunities, support services and financial incentives to attract inward investment.

It's about working co-operatively alongside people who are equally committed to our ambitions.

It's about having an open door policy. Being prepared to work quickly with partners to make decisions and get results.

By doing so we're already cultivating partnerships with the collective energy to deliver mutual benefits that can push Oldham onto the next level.

And by working to deliver a greener, more sustainable economy with the capacity to support innovation and entrepreneurs, we're also going to play a more prominent role in our City Region.

But it is also now vital that we work to create a whole new generation of ambassadors.

This strategy sets out our clear ambition to sell our message better: showcase our excellent location, transport and heritage, and show the world we are open for business.

Ultimately, we believe it is people who will sell our offer – whether they're opening a business here, buying a new low-carbon home or even just visiting to enjoy our stunning new cinema development.

They can spread the word that Oldham is a great place to invest, visit and live.



Jim McMahon,
Oldham Council Leader



Carolyn Wilkins,
Oldham Council Chief Executive



1. The Place Vision

Oldham is a place of ambition. A place that celebrates and builds on its heritage – the people, places and things ‘made in Oldham’ which help make Oldham distinctive.

Our Place Vision is of Oldham as:

- **A productive place**, with healthy, aspirational and sustainable communities - a place that plays an active role in Greater Manchester.
- **An ambitious place**, delivering economic growth – particularly in the town centre and on strategic employment sites – capitalising on the excellent connectivity and development opportunities we offer, securing investment and creating the confidence and conditions for businesses to thrive.
- **A desirable place**, attracting people to visit, shop, work and live here, with thriving high streets in all our districts – ones which strike the right balance between existing major chains and independent retailers – offering a fantastic mix of events, leisure and cultural facilities.
- **An enterprising place**, home to a young and growing population with continually improving educational achievements and a track record of innovation. Delivering a work-ready, ambitious, self-starting pool of employees and entrepreneurs across the borough, who are ready and prepared for the changing nature of employment opportunities.
- **An inspiring place**, with a co-operative culture that encourages residents and businesses to speak positively about all the area has to offer, now and in the future, and to take pride in its heritage - celebrating the people and products ‘made in Oldham’.

Our ambition

Our ambition is based on our rich heritage and the wonderful natural environment Oldham already has to offer, along with our determination to work in partnership to turn our ambitions for the future into reality. Underpinning our ambition is the need to grow our economy through private and public investment which will create jobs for Oldham residents.

We know that Oldham is already a great place to live, visit and do business in. Our ambition is to make it an even better place and to get as many people as possible to see, understand and believe in its greatness.

This second element of our ambition – challenging and changing perceptions of Oldham – is what drives our place marketing strategy.





2. Oldham

The Place

- 2.1 Oldham is a metropolitan borough of Greater Manchester. An attractive place to live and work between Manchester City Centre and the Peak District countryside, it benefits from:
- A population of 224,900 which is diverse, young, and growing
 - A working age population of over 157,000, of which over 34% are between 25 and 44 years old, providing a long-term sustainable pool of labour
 - A strong business base with over 6,000 businesses spanning key sectors including: advanced manufacturing, construction, health, digital and creative, and, financial and professional services
 - Excellent connectivity to the Greater Manchester City Region and the rest of the country via the M60/M62 motorway, train and Metrolink networks
 - Over 101,500 registered businesses within a 30 minute drive time catchment
 - Brand new, state of the art schools and award-winning parks
 - A wide choice of quality housing across both urban and rural communities.
- 2.2 The borough is home to a number of national and international brands and companies including the Trinity Mirror Group, Diodes Incorporated, Ferranti Technologies, Seton Healthcare Ltd, Park Cake Bakeries, Innovative Technologies, Littlewoods Home Shopping Group, Ambassador Textiles, and Nov Mono Pumps.

- 2.3 Alongside a strong private sector, the borough is also home to a number of local and national public organisations including Guinness Northern Counties, First Choice Homes Oldham, Voluntary Action Oldham, Pennine Acute Hospitals Trust, The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority, University Campus Oldham, Oldham College, and the Oldham Sixth Form College.
- 2.4 Oldham offers a fantastic quality of life, centred on its strong cultural heritage, leisure and independent retail offers.
- 2.5 Major annual events, such as Festival Oldham and the Whit Friday Brass Band contests, and a range of specialist shops and markets across the borough, add to its distinctiveness. They also play a part in making Oldham 'family friendly' – a quality which is further enhanced by our award winning parks; great public transport network; excellent childcare services, and the exhibitions, shows and creative activities on offer through Gallery Oldham, Saddleworth Museum and Art Gallery, Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre, Tommyfield Market, Oldham Theatre Workshop, and Oldham's five theatres.

2. Oldham

The Plan

- 2.6 Oldham is changing and has seen significant financial investment in recent years including £430 million in housing, a £137 million investment in education, and £80 million in healthcare facilities.
- 2.7 This trend is continuing, driven by the Metrolink extension through Oldham town centre; Oldham College's campus transformation; a new Headquarters for First Choice Homes Oldham; and Oldham Council's £100 million capital programme. All of which demonstrate our commitment to 'doing our bit' to transform the borough and realise our ambition.
- 2.8 Key investment projects, many of which are supported by the council's £100 million investment, include:
- **Metrolink** – Phase two of the Metrolink extension to Oldham creating three new stops in Oldham town centre
 - **Old Town Hall** – Creation of a multiplex cinema and family restaurant complex within the listed Old Town Hall
 - **Hotel Future** – 140 bed luxury hotel, conference centre, and national hospitality training centre
 - **New Coliseum and Heritage Centre** – Development of a new theatre and heritage centre in Oldham town centre
 - **Public Realm** – Improvements to key routes in Oldham town centre, key gateway features and building lighting
 - **Eastern Gateway** – A master plan to support mixed development in Oldham town centre's eastern gateway
 - **New Leisure Centres** – Two new leisure centres in Oldham and Royton, helping to deliver Oldham's Olympic legacy

- **Alexandra Retail Park** – A £1.7million retail park redevelopment, anchored by a 40,000 sqft Matalan store.
- **Bloom Street** – A retail-led joint venture next to Oldham College and the new Oldham Leisure Centre
- **Meridian Centre** – Joint venture redevelopment of an edge of centre, Grade II listed office/ industrial complex
- **Foxdenton** – Development of a 110 acre premium business park and high quality homes, close to the M60 and M62
- **Hollinwood Junction** – 16+ acres of retail and business opportunities, across three sites, just off the M60
- **Royton Town Centre** – £22.5 million town centre redevelopment, including 50,000 sq ft foodstore
- **Residential Developments** – Clearance and disposal of former secondary school sites to deliver high quality homes
- **Lancaster Club** – Residential-led mixed use scheme with 144 homes, soccer centre and roadside commercial units
- **New Saddleworth School** – Development of a replacement building for the Saddleworth secondary school.
- **Playing Fields investment** – Improvement of playing fields at three key sites across the borough.

- 2.9 We want people to recognise that this investment will underpin the delivery of our future plans and will have a hugely positive impact on how Oldham will be perceived. The development of a place marketing strategy for Oldham has been identified as one of the four key changes we have to make to ensure we can achieve our overarching ambition. This key change is to 'See Oldham Differently' – as a productive place where business and enterprise thrive creating confident communities.
- 2.10 The Oldham Partnership - whose role is to develop and lead improved outcomes for Oldham's residents, with a particular focus on creating jobs and public service reform – have developed an overarching strategy for their work called the Oldham Plan.
- 2.11 Five priority outcomes within the Oldham Plan form a strategic framework for the Partnership's transformative work over the next ten years. These outcomes are:
- A place to invest with confidence
 - A dynamic, skilled and relevant workforce for the future
 - An enterprising and co-operative culture
 - Well-connected communities and businesses
 - Healthy, confident and empowered population.

What we want to achieve

- 2.12 So what will that look like? What are the characteristics of our 'desired future Oldham' that will shape our approach to place marketing?



Desired Future Oldham - Our approach to place marketing

Oldham will be a great place

To invest...

That is a **first choice location for well known brands and big businesses** delivering on the world stage, some of which are built on home grown talent.

Where the further and higher education sector are **developing their students' skills in partnership** with local and national private sector businesses.

With a **nationally renowned science and technology base** to its economy (advanced manufacturing, health, digital and green technology).

Which **provides employment for its residents**, by creating over 2,000 employment opportunities in the borough and improving access for Oldham's residents to employment opportunities within the Manchester city region.

With a **sustained and growing professional sector**, spanning both traditional and creative industries.

To visit...

Featured in a large number of **short break itineraries** promoted locally, regionally and nationally.

That provides a **locally distinctive visitor experience** through family-friendly festivals and events, alongside boutique, bespoke and independent retailers.

Which people **come back to and stay longer** in, as a result of their positive experiences, created in part by the excellent customer service and product knowledge of the people they meet.

That offers a **rural retreat and a great value base** for people wanting to visit / work in the wider city region.

To live...

Offering low-carbon living (new low-carbon homes and low-carbon forms of transport) and working (commercial properties with the opportunity to lower energy costs and compete globally with minimum travel).

With a significant supply of, and a demand for, **high quality housing** across a wide range of house prices and locations.

Where **people are happy** and feel able to **pursue their ambitions**.

Where **families have the best of both worlds** to choose from, with quality leisure, retail and cultural facilities in the town centres, and nationally important landscapes and parks within easy reach.

That **attracts high earners** from across GM and beyond, who want to enjoy the quality of life and connectivity the borough offers.

3. Place Marketing

A key route to our 'desired future Oldham'

3.1 Place marketing, along with place making and place shaping, is one of three elements which form a holistic approach to place management, designed to deliver growth, investment and jobs (and support our 'Get Oldham Working' initiative).



3. Place Marketing

A key route to our ‘desired future Oldham’

- 3.2 Our co-ordinated approach to place management (based on the diagram on page 11) is focused on following major factors:
- **Place Making** - Basic services are being provided and infrastructure maintained to the satisfaction of Oldham’s residents, businesses and visitors.

• **Place Shaping** - New attractions are needed (e.g. the Old Town Hall Cinema complex) to improve the quality of life to sustain current business and public support, and to attract new investment, businesses or people.

• **Place Marketing:**

» Oldham needs to change how people and businesses see Oldham through a vigorous image and communication programme.

» Oldham must generate support from its residents, leaders, and current institutions for making the place hospitable and enthusiastic about attracting new companies, investment and visitors to its community.

3.3 Place making and place shaping is already well underway in Oldham, for example through our £100 million capital regeneration programme, Co-operative Council agenda and Repositioning Oldham programme. Place marketing activity, such as the Visit Oldham website and Invest in Oldham launch events, is also taking place but requires further development.

3.4 This place marketing strategy provides the framework and long term vision needed to drive forward a co-ordinated place marketing programme.
- 3.5 Place marketing, for the purposes of this strategy, is defined as:

• Marketing Oldham as somewhere that people want to invest, visit, live, and work, by promoting its unique qualities in ways people can relate to.

• Developing coordinated approaches with key partners to marketing Oldham, improving perceptions both inside and outside of the borough, leading to growth of the local economy and enhanced reputation across the region.

3.6 The place marketing strategy for Oldham focuses on three key themes:

Invest: Attracting inward Investment – activity to secure major development, attracting new occupiers, retaining and growing the existing business base

Visit: Boosting the visitor economy – maximising and growing the economic benefit of the visitor economy, focussing mainly on the town centre and countryside offer

Live: Attracting new residents and retaining existing residents that are able to contribute to economic growth.

3.7 In addition, these themes all contribute to, and are underpinned by, a wider place reputation strand of activity.
- Invest

Visit

Live

Place reputation
- # Place management
- | |
|--|
| <div>Place making</div> <div>service delivery</div> <div><div>For example:</div><div><div>• Repositioning Oldham</div><div>• Get Oldham Working</div><div>• Street Scene<div>» Bins</div><div>» Street cleaning</div><div>» Furniture repairs</div></div><div>• Street Lighting<div>» Upgrade</div><div>» Repairs</div></div><div>• Highways<div>» Pot hole repairs</div><div>» Yellow lines</div></div><div>• Parking Services.</div></div></div> |
|--|
- Place marketing selling the place Invest Visit Live Plans and selling outcomes of making and shaping For example • Advertising • Websites • Stakeholder engagement • Ambassadors • Marketing material • Events • Research and marketing. outcomes |
- Place shaping physical improvement For example: • Capital programme » Old Town Hall » New Coliseum » Public Realm • Facilitating development » Foxdenton » Hollinwood • Housing developments • Building Schools for the Future and Academies • Local Transport Plan projects • Metrolink – 3a and 3b • Oldham College Campus. |

4. Place Marketing Strategy

- 4.1 The overarching aim of this place marketing strategy is to:

Improve perceptions of Oldham to make the borough a more attractive choice for investors, visitors and residents/potential residents when choosing where to invest their time and money.

- 4.2 Linked to our three key themes – Invest, Live, and Visit – the strategic objectives for Oldham's place marketing strategy are to:

- Attract investment into the borough – creating new development, businesses and jobs
- Make Oldham a place where people want to live – retaining existing, and attracting new, economically active residents
- Bring visitors into Oldham – supporting local jobs and businesses linked to our visitor economy.

- 4.3 Our approach to place marketing will vary over time - in response to the changes in people's perceptions - as our place marketing activity and the major physical changes taking place start to make an impact.

We have therefore developed a strategic delivery plan that:

- Promotes the borough as it is now (focusing on our best / most locally distinctive aspects and marketing them to relevant target audiences),
- Sells the journey (raising awareness of our aspirations for development and growth, encouraging relevant target to get 'on board' with us at the start of the journey)
- Influences on-going plans for place making and place shaping activity to ensure it contributes towards the achievement of the shared place vision for the borough.

- 4.4 This final element of the strategy is crucial to its successful implementation, as the marketing activity has to relate to real evidence of quality and distinctiveness on the ground or it will fail. In short, the reality (both now and planned) has to match up to the advertising.

5. Delivery

How we're going to achieve our ambitions

- 5.1 A range of delivery mechanisms have been brought together in a strategic delivery plan (which supports this strategy) to co-ordinate activity across these categories. These mechanisms include:

- Advertising
- Stakeholder engagement
- Production of new marketing materials
- Event delivery
- Enquiry/customer relationship management
- Embedding key messages in existing documents.

- 5.2 The delivery plan is a working document and will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect progress and further input and ownership from key partners – both public and private sector, within the borough and across Marketing Manchester, MIDAS, Manchester Solutions and New Economy.

- 5.3 To ensure input and ownership from the public and private sector, the creation of a new place marketing board is planned to oversee the delivery and ongoing development of this strategy. This board will form part of the Oldham Partnership structure and draw membership from a range of public and private sector organisations.

- 5.4 **The Place Marketing Board** will be supported by a virtual operational group known as 'Sales Team Oldham'. An informal and virtual grouping, Sales Team Oldham will bring together all organisations who use the positive qualities of Oldham (the place) as part of their sales pitch / promotional material.

- 5.5 The application of the **Sales Team Oldham** concept will be through both existing stakeholder groups (such as the Economy and Enterprise Board, Town Centre Business Partnership, Oldham Housing Improvement Partnership) and the creation of new stakeholder groups where required (for example a new Tourism Forum).





6. Key Messages

6.1 The aim and objectives above have been used as the basis for a series of key messages which will underpin all of our place marketing activity. The overarching (place reputation) messages for the place marketing strategy are:

- See Oldham differently, because we're doing things differently
- Oldham – get more out of Manchester
- Time to take another look - things are already changing and it's getting even better; join us now and get in ahead of the game.
- We're building a co-operative borough – one where the council works alongside partners, businesses, and residents to realise our ambitions for Oldham.

6.2 There are specific sets of key messages for each of the three audiences below:

Invest

- We're leading by example - investing in schools, health, housing, infrastructure, culture and leisure developments
- Oldham is well connected – to Manchester via Metrolink and the M60 motorway, Leeds and Liverpool via the M62 and just a 19-mile drive from Manchester Airport
- Forward looking with tradition at our heart – a centre of excellence for science, innovation and advanced technology
- Young and confident place – highest proportion of people under 25 in Greater Manchester, a skilled workforce for the future.

Visit

- Manchester's great value destination
- Between Manchester and Leeds, it's so easy to make Oldham part of your short break
- Quality, culture and heritage - family-friendly attractions and events
- Manchester's great outdoors – the northern gateway to the Peak District National Park
- Great markets, independent shops and local produce just waiting to be discovered.

Live

- A great place to live, study and work
- Quality (of life), choice and value in Greater Manchester
- A great base for family life in the heart of Northern England
- State of the art living – schools, health care, leisure facilities and homes
- A great choice of urban and rural living within easy reach of Leeds and Manchester.

7. Audiences and Assets

- 7.1

Place Marketing is aimed at:

- Those inside and outside of the borough
 - Existing and potential audiences.
- 7.2

Target audiences for the place marketing strategy have been segmented into distinct categories based on the objectives above, with specific communication channels identified for each:

	Invest	Visit	Live
Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investors;Financiers;Developers;Contractors;Retailers;Property agents;Businesses looking to relocate into the borough (in particular those considering 'north-shoring');Existing businesses looking to invest in growth;MIDAS;Central Government (Biz);Trade press.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Existing and potential visitors (from within and outside the borough), in particular:<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Outdoor activity participants,» Heritage, arts and culture enthusiasts;» Shoppers visiting town centres/markets;» Countryside day trippers;» Grey Pound;Metrolink users;Northern Rail / Trans Pennine Rail users;Manchester city break visitors;North of England / Derbyshire short breaks visitors;Visitor economy stakeholders such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Tourism businesses;» Events organisers;» Attraction managers;» Marketing Manchester.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Current residents (borough wide);Prospective residents from across Greater Manchester and wider M62 corridor;Housing sector stakeholders such as housing associations, house builders;Applicants for jobs within the borough (where there is the potential for relocation).
Communication Channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Invest in Oldham website;Invest in Oldham events;Business media;Regional media;National media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Visit Oldham website;Go Oldham website;Regional and travel media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Borough Life;Oldham Council website;Facebook; Twitter;Regional and local media;District Executives, Community forums.

- 7.3

The audiences identified on page 18 don't just receive the message; they may also play a role in its delivery too. Acting, in effect, as another channel through which the selected messages can be communicated.

- Local residents and media = place advocates
 - Other destination-brand users e.g. estate agents
- 7.4

The success of our efforts to promote Oldham as a place that people want to visit, live, work and invest in is dependent on getting 'buy-in' from our key stakeholders.
- 7.5

One of our main stakeholder groups is existing residents. Residents present a communications challenge in terms of adding 'noise' to our messages

to both visitors and investors. Their perceptions of Oldham can influence (either positively or negatively) those of shoppers to Oldham town centre, visitors to Saddleworth and can also affect investor perceptions.

7.6

Our place marketing communications must draw clear links between our Big Budget Conversation, Co-operative Council / Co-operative Borough work and Love Where You Live campaign, and the bold move (at a time of austerity) to invest £100m to attract further private sector funding, with the aim of creating jobs and boosting the local economy. By communicating this effectively to residents, we can look to create ambassadors for Oldham – from taxi drivers to businessmen, to the top 100 people of influence in Oldham.





8. Evaluation

- 8.1

A programme of research and customer insight is proposed, to steer future development of the place marketing delivery plan and to monitor its effectiveness. This is intended to give us a mechanism for measuring and evaluation impact on the reputation of Oldham as a place.
- 8.2

In terms of research there is likely to be some overlap between the Live and Visit themes as both are targeted at individuals and likely have overlapping reach areas, whereas the Invest theme is aimed at businesses.
- 8.3

Common to all three themes is the need to:
 - Define a reach area - the area which constitutes the core market for each theme
 - Agree a question set and frequency (likely to be an initial baseline, followed by potentially tri-annual or on-demand follow-ups) for each
 - Agree a common Oldham perception question or questions which can be asked of all three groups.

Place marketing: building an evidence base - recommendations

	Visit	Live	Invest
Defining our reach area	In place	R4: Update reach when 2011 Census migration available	In place
Survey requirements	R1: Design common event survey form/questions, and record responses in consultation portal R2: Log event numbers		R7: Gain further intelligence from 'Tractivity' * contacts R8: Engage with any future GM survey
	R3: Tri-annual Visit / Live Oldham survey in reach area		
Further profiling	R5: User and non-user profiles (Acorn and census)		

* Tractivity is a business enquiry database used by Oldham Council and MIDAS.

- 8.4

A series of eight recommendations are made below which together will transform our intelligence for Place Marketing. These can be summarised as:
- A single approach to measuring and surveying visitors to tourist events

Tri-annual surveys across Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire, into perceptions of Oldham as a place to visit and live

Gaining maximum value from existing business enquiries, and participating in future GM business surveys.

Theme	Reach area	Recommendations
Visit	Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire ¹	1) Implement a standard visitor event survey form and recording process, the results to be stored on the partnership consultation portal to allow analysis of individual events plus aggregated analysis for marketing purposes.
		2) Build an event numbers log - a centralised log of the numbers attending each event, which would allow weighting of survey results to understand reach even better, as well as understanding the true attraction of different events.
		3) Tri-annual Visit/Live Oldham survey across the agreed reach area to understand wider perceptions.
Live	Greater Manchester, West and South Yorkshire ²	4) Review reach area when Census 2011 data is available.
		5) Basic demographic/Acorn analysis of Visit/Live survey respondents, to identify demography and social class of our reach area, and perhaps to differentiate between those who are positive and negative about Oldham.
Invest	Greater Manchester, plus rural fringe beyond the City Region ³	6) Do not undertake a reach area survey, as the cost of such a survey is likely to outweigh the benefits (as resulting data is likely to be of limited quality).
		7) Gain maximum value from “Tractivity” contacts - through further surveying of business enquiries with additional questions asked at the point of enquiry to give year-on-year comparable data. This, taken together with changes in enquiry numbers, would start to give a picture of business need, perceptions and awareness of regeneration/investment activity.
		8) Sign up to future GM business surveys as the costs involved would be lower and results would be comparable with other GM authorities. It might also be possible to piggy-back questions about perceptions of Oldham and/or awareness of investment/regeneration into that survey.

1 Based on current knowledge of major attraction visitor distribution

2 Based on 2001 Census data

3 Based on enquiries from new or relocating businesses recorded in Tractivity

- 8.5

In addition to the place marketing evidence base development outlined opposite, it is also proposed to use a series of measures to assess the impact of our place management activity (place marketing, physical regeneration and service change) on Oldham as a place.
- 8.6

These wider measures are also linked to the three core themes:

Invest

- Increase in the business rates collected

Monetary (GBP) investment in developments including:

The Old Town Hall

Hotel Future

Queen Elizabeth Hall

Alexandra Retail Park.

Visit

- Increase footfall through Oldham town centre [Assumption: The town centre evaluation mechanism is reinstated]

Increase in revenue from town centre car parks

Increase in day visitors (as measured by STEAM data).

Live

- Increase in resident satisfaction as measured by the bi-annual ‘You and Your Community survey’ to establish a baseline of residents perceptions about Oldham

Increase the average annual household income for the borough

Increase the % of wealthy achievers (as defined by Acorn data).



