

Developing a Coherent Strategy for Debt Profiling and Collection

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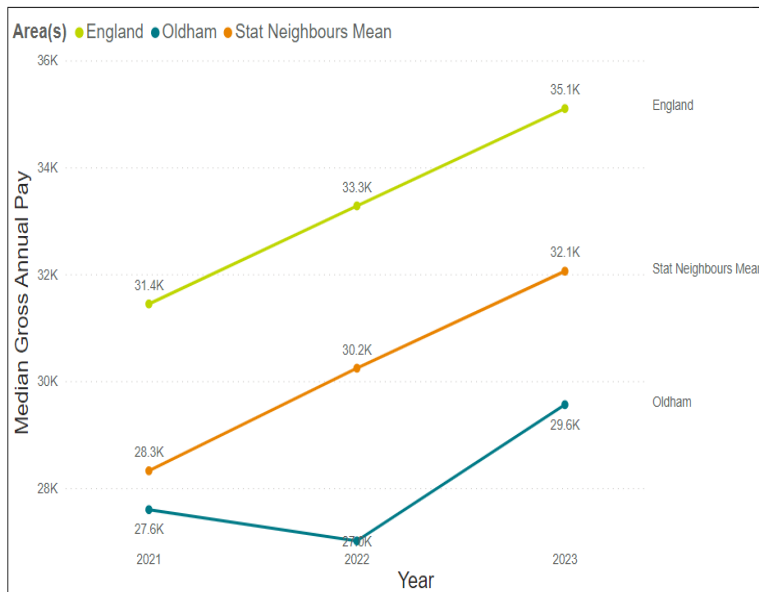


Oldham
Council

An Introduction to Oldham

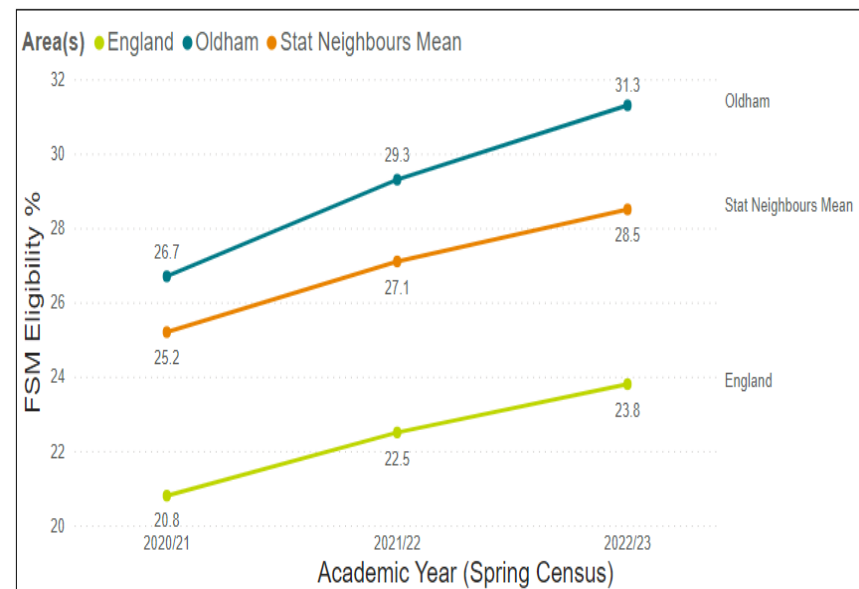
- Population of 243,912, with continued growth
- Former cotton mill town
- Large ethnic minority population
- Inequalities in health, income, and all other measures

Median Gross Annual Pay of Employees, Oldham and Comparator Areas, 2021-2023



These figures show the median gross annual pay for full time employees living in the area who are on adults rates of pay and whose pay was not affected by absence
The orange line shows the average of Oldham's CIPFA 'nearest neighbours' - this is a set of authorities that are similar to Oldham.
Source: LG Inform: [Median gross annual pay of FT employees \(resident\).id.3475](#)

Free School Meal Eligibility % Oldham and Comparator Areas, 2020/21 to 2022/23



The orange line shows the average of Oldham's CIPFA 'nearest neighbours' - this is a set of authorities that are similar to Oldham.
Source: LG Inform. Metadata: [Percentage of all pupils known to be eligible for free school meals \(17582\)](#), Spring Census each Year.


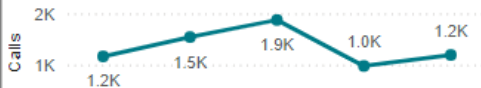





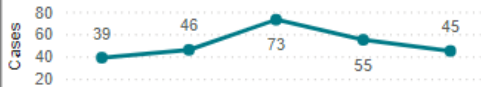





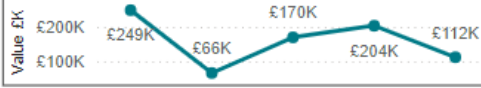


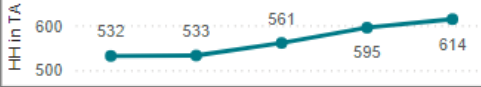


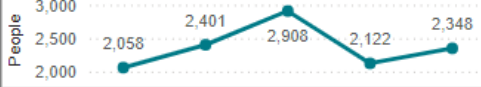



Oldham's Cost of Living Challenge: Compounding existing disadvantage...

- Indices of Multiple Deprivation: Oldham is ranked **16th** out of **317** English local authorities.
- Overall level of poverty in the borough
 37.2% but significant and increasing disparities:
- Unemployment rates are the highest in GM :
 Adult: 6.9% ; Youth 9.6% (May 2022)
- Low incomes: median household income £25,357;
 (national: £32,549); second lowest in GM
- Approx. 15.5% of households will have an income less than 40% of the median income (8% nationally)
- 15.2% of households in fuel poverty (April 2021);
- 4.4% experiencing hunger (January 2021)

Cost of Living Dashboard

- Monthly data from services (council & partners)

Cost of Living Resident Support Dashboard: Summary Page

Service	Last whole month	Same Month Last Year	Last 5 Months	Commentary
Help Line 	1,192 Phone Calls March 24	1,330 Phone Calls March 23		
Access Oldham 	4,371 Visits March 24	4,232 Visits March 23		
SIT Team 	45 New Cases March 24	73 New Cases March 23		
Warm Homes 	£22K Value £ March 24	£22K Value £ March 23		
Welfare Rights 	£112K Value £ March 24	£97K Value £ March 23		
Housing & Homelessness 	614 Households in TA March 24	394 Households in TA March 23		
Food Bank 	2,348 People Helped March 24	2,621 People Helped March 24		
Citizens Advice 	1,086 Clients March 24	1,194 Clients March 23		

The Challenges

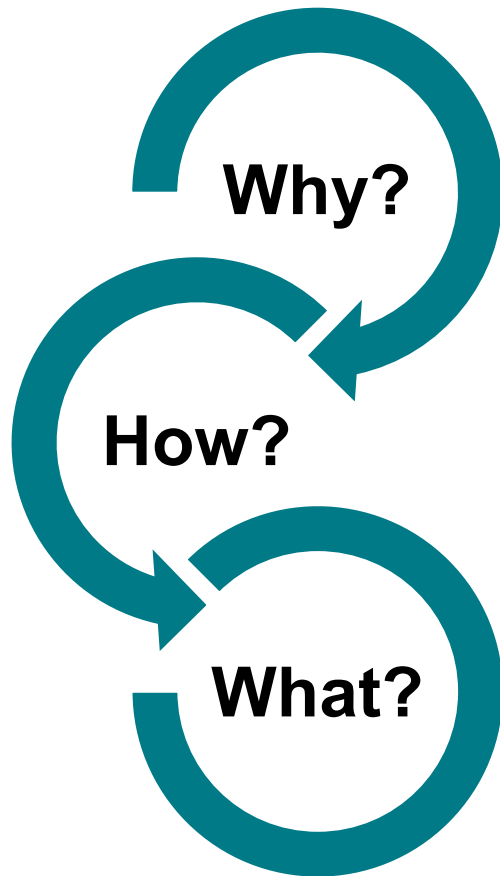


“You don’t need to see the whole staircase, just take the first step”

Martin Luther King Jr

What Are We Doing to Improve?

“Strategy is a route – an adaptable path to get us where we want to go” – Simon Sinek



The Golden Circle

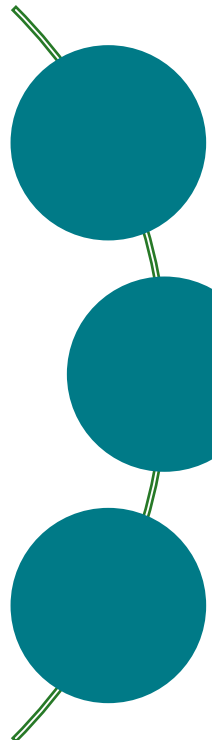
Why do you do what you do? What's the purpose?

How do you do what you do?

What do you do?

Building the Strategy

“Don’t let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do” – *John Wooden*

- 
- Clear out the clutter
 - Don’t chase the uncollectable
 - Utilise data analytics, AI & automation**

Building the Strategy



Vulnerable customers



Affordability assessment



Data Collection



Engagement



Flexible payment plans



Data driven decisions



Segmentation



Review and adapt

The vision



Money £

- Achieve challenging cost saving targets
- Focus on the target cohort for revenue collections – those that **can't** pay, not those that pay or those that *won't* pay

Process

- Support Residents to maximise income to meet expenditure – mechanisms to help the most vulnerable
- Support Residents to access the service via self-service methods where appropriate
- Efficient and add value

Team

- Resident focussed
 - Proactive
 - Effective
- Efficiencies in processes allow for team to focus on value-added activities
 - An empowered team is a motivated and engaged team and in turn will have the added result of staff retention.

Culture

- Resident focused
- Embed Continuous Improvement beyond programme
 - Empowered
- Team members can take and give constructive criticism to each other and the processes, to foster a culture of shared learning without ego or blame

The Way Forward

3 Step Process

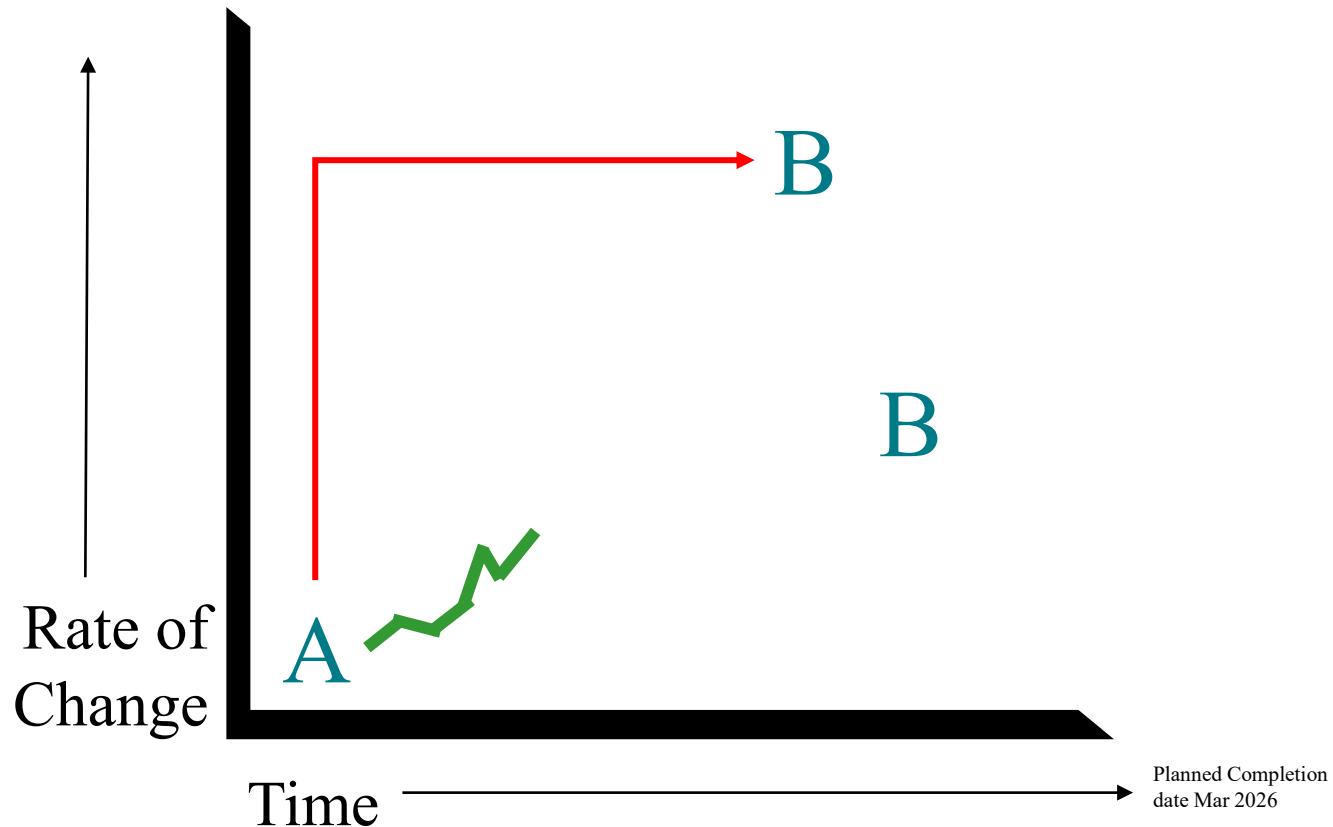


Programme approach



We are planning to follow an Incremental approach.

We are not going to be doing a Step change.



Oldham Council

Back Office Automation (CTAX)

Revenues cases processed from 22/03/2024 to 10/04/2024

AUTOMATED	984	74%
PARTIALLY AUTOMATED	2	0%
BUSINESS RULES	339	26%
INVALID TRANSACTION	74	
TOTAL	1399	100%

Changing the Culture

Delivering a good resident experience is everyone's responsibility.

We are committed to not make someone's circumstances worse by the collection and recovery action we take at any stage of the process.

Supportive recovery action is not the enemy of effective collection.

“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

— Maya Angelou

Any Questions?