



Generation Oldham

Generation Oldham is Oldham's community energy programme. The original objectives for the programme, set in November 2014, were as follows:

- a. One community energy scheme under development or fully operational in each of the six districts within the first twelve months
- b. A network of community energy collaborators in place and operating effectively
- c. Increased resident awareness of community energy options and opportunities
- d. A Youth Council representative in place for each district
- e. A bespoke package of support and development opportunities in place for Youth Council champions
- f. To secure external resources to support schemes and build community capacity

These objectives have now all been met and a summary against each is below.

Objective a: One community energy scheme under development or fully operational in each of the six districts within the first twelve months

Oldham Community Power Ltd (OCP), has 4 Directors and has been operating for 18 months.

The Directors are:

- Alan Price – long-time environmental activist and volunteer in Oldham borough
- Bill Edwards – existing Director of Saddleworth Community Hydro
- Colin Salt – qualified solar PV installer currently working for a social housing provider
- Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Oldham Council Cabinet Member for Finance & HR, Deputy Leader of the Council

Solar PV systems were installed on all Phase 1 sites of the scheme as follows:

- Mather Street Primary School – Failsworth & Hollinwood district
- Medlock Valley Primary School – West Oldham district
- Beever Primary School – East Oldham district
- Holt Street Community Centre (NEON Hub) – East Oldham district
- Whitegate End Primary School – Chadderton district
- Blackshaw Lane Primary School – Royton district

Phase 1 required £250,000 from the sale of community shares which was launched on Sunday 12 June 2016 and ran until mid-August 2016, in which OCP raised around £35,000 from Oldham residents and £15,000 from a Pioneer Share Holding taken by the Council. The Council provided a secured bridging loan for the remainder, to enable Phase 1 installation to go ahead, on the basis that this loan would be repaid from a second share or any loan amount remaining unpaid after a period of two years (summer 2018) will be converted into normal shares.

The second share offer was launched in April 2017 and will run until summer 2018. So far this has raised nearly £90,000 and further promotions in Spring 2018 are planned to raise further funds.

Future phases for OCP could include further Council buildings such as libraries and secondary schools (including independent schools), and also the roofs of industrial buildings and other privately-owned sites across the borough.

The Council, OCP and ENWL are in discussion with Forum for the Future, who are developing a national community energy asset bank scheme (dubbed "Power Paired") which aims to match up building owners with local community energy groups. Oldham will be working with Forum for the Future to pilot the scheme in Oldham and across GM to identify buildings across the borough for a potential Phase 2 of OCP's solar PV programme, and assist other community energy groups across GM.

Objective b: A network of community energy collaborators in place and operating effectively

The network of community energy collaborators established by the Generation Oldham programme continues to strengthen. Examples include:

- Action Together have now become a member of OCP with a £25,000 investment
- Hack Oldham is collaborating with OCP on a project to build and operate remote monitoring equipment for OCP's solar PV installations. If successful, this could potentially save OCP thousands of pounds annually on buying in external monitoring services and equipment
- Electricity North West are now working closely with OCP and the Council on a potential Phase 2 of the scheme, as well as other local initiatives such as the new town centre regeneration
- Big Clean Switch, who are running a green energy switching scheme for Greater Manchester, are working with Oldham Council on an approach which enables community energy groups such as OCP to generate income from 'referral fees' if they promote the scheme
- In November 2017, Oldham Council won the Local Authority category in the national Community Energy Awards, administered by Community Energy England, the national body representing community energy organisations

Objective c: Increased resident awareness of community energy options and opportunities

The main success under this objective since the last update is that Oldham residents have now invested over £120,000 in the scheme. Additionally, the sites receiving solar panels are also



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learning what it means to be part of a community energy scheme, and the students at the participating schools have been receiving assembly presentations from the OCP directors.

Objective d: A Youth Council representative in place for each district

This was achieved in the early phases of the programme. For 2017/18 young people are now involved through Groundwork through a module for the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme.

Objective e: A bespoke package of support and development opportunities in place for Youth Council champions

Generation Oldham programme (2015/16) piloted by the Youth Council and included:

- Bespoke course materials
- Site visits to renewable energy installations, the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales, and 'The GM' University Technical College in Oldham
- A specialist day's training in engineering, given by Saddleworth Hydro
- Bespoke "Generating Young Oldham Leaders" course plus project management designed and delivered by the Development Academy
- Public speaking/presentation training delivered by Oldham Theatre Workshop

Benefits for participants included AQA Unit Awards (which are accreditations recognising achievement rather than formal qualifications) in:

- 73829 – Social Education, Personal Development and Peer Leadership
- 77409 – Communication and Leadership
- 89677 – Introduction to Youth Leadership.

Year 1 culminated in the Generation Oldham young people's eco-conference which they planned and delivered. It was opened by the Mayor and attended by around 30 young people from schools across Oldham.

Generation Oldham Young People's Programme (2016/17) is being delivered in partnership with Groundwork and Mahdlo and has secured funding for a wider Sustainability Ambassadors programme. Year 2 continues with the same core offer plus experience in other areas of sustainability. Groundwork promoted the programme at the eco-conference, and the programme is available to young people from schools, Mahdlo and elsewhere. Contact details for the scheme are available from the Council's "Your Environment" pages.

New national apprenticeship standard – Community Energy Specialist. Oldham Council has now completed the development of this first national Level 4 Apprenticeship with Government and a range of partners from the UK's community energy sector, and the standard is available nationally to employers.

There is an ambition to ensure that the first ever Community Energy Specialist apprentice will work in Oldham on the Generation Oldham programme, and potentially even at GM level with the other community energy organisations across the city region. Funding is currently being sought for this.

Objective f: To secure external resources to support schemes and build community capacity

External resources secured so far by the Generation Oldham programme include:



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- A £17,000 project development grant for OCP from DECC which enabled OCP to bring in Sharenergy, consultant experts in the field, and external legal advice to help prepare Power Purchase Agreements and roof leases. £4,000 of this was paid to the Council for supporting school's engagement activities
- Feed In Tariff income from the solar PV projects from the national scheme
- Volunteer time from three OCP Directors and Action Together (two staff) as well as many other community volunteers
- Over £120,000 in community shares investment from Oldham residents
- £25,000 in investment from Action Together
- £65,000 from DECC for a GM-wide community energy innovation programme which OCP benefited from in the shape of a grant to develop ways to engage low income households in share ownership
- Around £600,000 for Oldham over 4 ½ years as lead partner in the successful 1 million Euro INTERREG Europe bid for the COALESCCE project, aimed at building the community energy sector in seven partner regions

Oldham Community Power has now been successfully operating for around 18 months. The solar PV installed in Phase 1 totals around 210kW worth around £250,000, forecast to save the building occupants around £4,800 annually (rising with energy price inflation) across the six sites, and returning around a 4% per annum return to Members of the Society over 20 years.



For further information contact:

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