

COUNCIL
18/12/2013 at 6.00 pm



Present: The Mayor – Councillor Hudson

Councillors Akhtar, Alcock, Alexander, Ames, Azad, Ball, M Bashforth, S Bashforth, Battye, Beeley, Blyth, Briggs, Brownridge, A Chadderton, O Chadderton, Chauhan, Dawson, Dean, Dearden, J Dillon, P Dillon, Fielding, Garry, Haque, Harkness, Harrison, Heffernan, Hibbert, Hindle, Houle, Hudson, Hussain, Iqbal, Jabbar, Judge, Larkin, Malik, McCann, McDonald, McLaren, McMahan, Moores, Price, Qumer, Rehman, Roughley, Salamat, Sedgwick, Shah, Shuttleworth, Stretton, Sykes, Thompson, Toor, Ur-Rehman, Williamson, Williams and Wrigglesworth

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QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS FROM THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ON WARD OR DISTRICT ISSUES

Councillor McMahan, Leader of the Council, opened the meeting by offering his sympathies, along with those of his fellow Councillors, to the family and friends of the young girl who had been tragically killed in a road accident in Shaw the previous evening. Councillor Blyth, Ward Councillor for Shaw, also offered his sympathies on behalf of the three Shaw Ward Councillors.

Council was then asked if they would agree to the suspension of the Council procedure rules to allow the time limit for Council to be increased to enable questions to be asked in relation to the tragic accident.

RESOLVED that the time limit for Council to be increased, to enable questions to be asked in relation to the tragic accident.

Cllr Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing informed the meeting that a number of questions regarding the tragedy had been received for tonight's meeting; he paid tribute to those members of the emergency services who had been in attendance at the scene of the accident and who, together with the Council, were assisting the police with their investigations. Reference was made to misleading reports regarding previous accidents and the lack of a school crossing patrol at the site and Councillor Hibbert advised that whilst he realised that people wanted answers to the many questions care should be taken not to prejudice the investigations in any way. The meeting was informed that the Council would continue to work with the Ward Councillors who had raised the issue as a matter of urgency and further public updates would be issued once the situation allowed. Councillor Hibbert expressed his deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the young girl.

The Mayor reiterated the fact that a number of questions had been received to be put before tonight's meeting but

unfortunately it would not be appropriate to answer or comment on them at this stage.



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The Mayor advised the meeting that Open Council would continue with Public Question Time. Questions had been received from members of the public and would be taken in the order in which they had been received. If the questioner was not present then the question would appear on the screen in the Council Chamber.

The following questions had been submitted:

1. Question received from Imran Yousef via email

"I understand that the Get Oldham Working initiative is the Council's main priority over the coming years, aiming to create 2015 work related opportunities by 2015. Can I ask the relevant Cabinet Member for some examples of how these opportunities can be created or facilitated?"

What support is available to local businesses to help them grow and take on more Oldham residents for employment?"

The Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills, Councillor Amanda Chadderton, advised the meeting that the Council was committed to Get Oldham Working, it was the Council's number one priority; creating opportunities by bringing in new capital developments and supporting existing business. An internal drive existed, within the Council to increase the number of Trainees and Apprenticeships. The Council was also supporting local businesses to grow by working in partnership with the other Greater Manchester Local Authorities to deliver business support and expansion advice through Blue Orchid and the Growth Hub.

Council was informed that the Get Oldham Working campaign, the Council and the Oldham Business Leadership Group had also recently set up the Oldham Enterprise Trust.

Furthermore Oldham Council now had a dedicated team to help local businesses employ and train local people through the Get Oldham Working Partnership. The partnership had a proven track record of delivering an excellent service for local businesses and consisted of many employment and skills providers. Through this partnership businesses would be able to access a number of services for example a free recruitment service and access to local labour, subsidised pre-employment training for new staff, subsidised training package for employed staff, an in work support programme for all recruited staff and access to employment grants.

2. Question received from Colin Eaves via email

"The programme of building new properties in Derker is very encouraging indeed and most local people are pleased at the success.

Sadly the pot holed roads and damaged kerbs do nothing to

match the new properties.

Could the council confirm when the roads in the area will be resurfaced and repaired to compliment the appearance of the new properties.”



The Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing, Councillor Hibbert, gave the following response:

I visited Derker recently and was tremendously encouraged to see how Derker was emerging from the desolation that had resulted from the HMR Programme. I can confirm that there is a Section 106 agreement in place for this development. This will provide funding for the improvements to the highways and footways in the area. The works will enhance the area and provide the improved appearance to match the new properties. The work will be carried out when the developer has completed the building work so the new surface will not get damaged by heavy machines needed for the development works

3. Question received from Karolina Jantas via email

“The pavements in the Derker and Watersheddings area are in treacherous condition, particularly, Buxted Road, Sydenham Street, Yates Street, Harcourt Street, Mayfield Road, Jowett Street and Tilton Street.

This is due to the fact they are full of de-composing leaves that haven't been cleared, the residents on the streets many of whom are elderly try extremely hard to keep their own patch clear, they are fighting a losing battle due to the fact all of these streets are lined with overgrown trees that are in need of serious maintenance.

I wish to ask what measures the council intend taking to ensure the pavements in these area are cleaned, cleared and made safe.”

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing, Councillor Hibbert, gave the following response:

“Thank you for bringing this service request to our attention. I am pleased to hear that people are doing their bit for their area. Obviously following the onset of cold weather and the heavy winds over the last 2 weeks we experienced extensive leaf drop over a relatively short period of time. The highway sweeping team are working the scheduled routes on a shift system operating 7 days a week. I am assured that this area has now been swept clean with tree lined streets being more regularly swept during times of leaf fall and as such have received very little in requests for reactive sweeps.”

4. Question received from Alan George via twitter

"Why do I pay 27 pound a month council tax. I live in a 2 bed council house 3 adults 2 children under 4, I have a friend 2 doors down 2 bed 2 adults 1 working don't pay a penny council tax explain that 1."



The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jabbar, advised that there was insufficient information available about Mr George's neighbour for him to comment but he assured him that everyone of working age had a Council Tax liability. A new scheme had been brought in this year and Councillor Jabbar gave the reassurance that the Council was doing everything in its power to pursue any outstanding Council tax payments.

5. Question received from S A Harrison via twitter

"Are you going to get some back alley gates for the middle end of Hollins road?"

The Cabinet Member for Cooperatives & Neighbourhoods gave the following response:

"I have asked our Failsworth and Hollinwood community safety officer to get a quote for the gates and fencing that will be required to gate this alley. He has arranged to meet a contractor on site in the morning to inspect the site. We will start consultation with residents after Christmas and if the required percentage are in favour we will establish funding from the District Partnership to cover the cost. There is a legal process of applying for a gating order which we will also have to go through and I will ensure that this process is started as soon as possible."

6. Question received from Johan Gabar

"As you have recently launched the Enterprise Trust. You have also announced the first 3 winners. Would you please be able to tell me why a Rochdale Resident received more money than an Oldham resident? This was given in a form of a grant. I thought we are promoting Oldham entrepreneurs. I thought this where Get Oldham Working comes in. At the moment we are looking after other borough residents."

The Cabinet Member for Business & Town Centres, Councillor Akhtar, advised the meeting that applications were being managed by the Oldham Business Leaders Group and not the Council and gave the following response:

"The aim of Oldham Enterprise Trust is to benefit Oldham young entrepreneurs and individuals who are studying and working in Oldham.

The grants have a specific focus on fostering young people's talents and entrepreneurial spirit. The young person in question is eligible under the grant criteria to apply as he is a student in Oldham. This criteria is easily accessible through the Councils website and Oldham Business Leaders website.

Besides studying in Oldham the successful applicant is a founder member of YENO (Youth Enterprise Network Oldham) and is currently negotiating on premises for establishing his business in Oldham. He is 16 years of age and at present does not employ anyone but he is a proactive young man, with a concerted focus on business growth. The size of awards relates to the quality of the individual, their potential for business growth and creating future job opportunities. Additionally, all applicants are assessed on the strength of their business plan.”

7. Question from Elizabeth Flynn via facebook

“Why does everything OMBC markets touch have the kiss of death. Tommyfield, Shaw, Royton Food market, Craft markets Street Markets they do not know how to run organize and support once up and running. Take a ride out on the metro to other towns Ashton have a Great market and Their Christmas events are second to none. Be very ashamed that our market town is no more. Why.”

The Cabinet Member for Business & Town Centres, Councillor Akhtar, stated that he was bemused by the question; he pointed out that “there had been some challenges with Tommyfield Market but nowhere near as bad as reflected in the question and he advised Council that Tommyfield Market on Saturday is 100% occupied with 96 stalls, 26 pitches. The goods sold on the market reflect and satisfy the existing customer base and brings people into the town centre from far afield such as Huddersfield, Sheffield and even Birmingham.

Monday and Wednesday, occupancy has increased slightly, however it is a constant battle to try and find new traders as they find it difficult to trade profitably with the completion surrounding them such as Primark, Home bargains and Poundland Stores.

Royton market on Thursday is 100% occupied and is fully supported by the community in Royton.

Work is ongoing with members and district co-ordinators to improve footfall to Shaw market, however, the community in Shaw are not as supportive as Royton. Work already undertaken: customer surveys, advertising individual traders on I love Shaw web-site, distribution of flyers, vinyl banner advertising the market in prime position opposite ASDA car park.

The craft market opened in June this year in the Hilton Arcade. We have an average attendance of 15 crafters and the majority of crafters who attended in June still attend today.

Since 2010 two new markets have been created Royton Real Food and the Craft market. An ambition is to improve the ‘specialist’ market offer, using the space in the arcade.

For the first time this year a Christmas market was held in the town centre to add to the Christmas light switch on. This was

very successful with visitors and traders, the majority who would return next year.

The street market has been enhanced by the addition of children's rides and I have anecdotal evidence of visitors coming onto Albion Street because the entertainment is available."



Councillor Akhtar closed his response by detailing the events held in the Town Centre this year which had attracted over 39,000 visitors to the town; around 22,000 visitors had attended the four Christmas Events that had taken place. Reference was also made to the Car Parking offers that had existed in the Town Centre throughout the year.

8. Question from Sophie Beard in relation to Saddleworth School

"What's being done about the appalling access issues? When will the promised traffic survey be completed?"

The Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills, Councillor Amanda Chadderton gave the following response:

"The Council have met with Highway Engineers to understand the problem of how accessibility into Diggle can be improved to support the new school and mitigate its impact on the existing residents of the village. A range of options have been put forward which include;

- An early drop off point so that parents would not necessarily have to travel into Diggle itself.
- Widening the existing carriageway at the entrance to Diggle, to provide a minimum 6.5m width, this would be sufficient to allow two buses to cross each other.
- Widening the footpath at key points.
- Introducing parking restrictions to prevent cars parking in front of the residential properties at 20-44 Huddersfield Road to improve traffic flow. Introducing of a school zone which would slow traffic down, which is particularly important as the Council are considering the removal of the parked cars (fronting 20-44 Huddersfield Road) which do serve to slow traffic.

The Council are also considering a further option, which was suggested by the Technical Group setup by the School themselves. However, this is subject to commercial discussions with third parties and therefore, further details cannot be released at this stage."

At this point in the meeting the Mayor advised that the time limit for Questions from members of the Public had expired.

The following questions were submitted by Councillors on Ward or District matters:

1. Councillor Moores to Councillor Hibbert

“Recently I reported a blocked gully on Greengate in Chadderton, within one hour of reporting the problem the highways team had cleared the gully and this occurred on a Sunday afternoon. Why is it that when we report similar problems on Broadway the gullies are still blocked weeks and in some cases months later. Can the cabinet member advise me of what action is being taken to rectify the problems on Broadway?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Environment & Housing gave the following response:

“Broadway is a trunk road and part of the strategic road network for the country. It is therefore maintained by the Highways Agency and not Oldham Council. We are currently meeting with representatives of the Highways Agency in order to resolve some of the maintenance issues along this section of road. I can confirm that the gullies have been cleared recently and the Highways Agency are monitoring the area to ensure that any other flooding issues are resolved. Recently meetings have been introduced on a regular basis with the Highways Agency to resolve maintenance issues. We now have a positive relationship with the Agency and have addressed numerous problems with drainage systems, blocked gullies and dropped kerbs – hotspots for which have been identified.” Councillor Hibbert promised to visit more regularly and react quickly to any problems identified.

2. Councillor McCann to Councillor Hibbert

“I note that some of the micro asphaltting works proposed for roads in Saddleworth South are being delayed due to the cold, wet winter weather. Whilst it is a pity this work could not have started earlier, and so be complete by now, could I ask for confirmation that this work will take place as soon as possible as the funding will have been carried forwards?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Environment & Housing gave the following response:

“It is envisaged by the Microasphalt contractor, that works will resume in late February / early March to be completed by the end of March, dependant on the weather. We are currently in discussions with the contractor to develop a new programme for these works that we hope to have issued by early January. I have also instructed Officers to look at alternative materials”

3. Councillor Harkness to Councillor Jabbar

“The Ward Councillors have been working with Delph Methodist Church for several months over the ongoing issues with the car park at the rear, its lease and the resurfacing. In a recent press statement the Cabinet Member for Finance said that the “Council were unable to reach an agreement that

would be affordable and that the Council will continue to work with the church to source funding”.

The church tells me that they have not received any contact from the Council in terms of offering support for funding. Can the Cabinet member tell me what options they have provided to the church and what support the Council intends to offer the church in sourcing funding?”

Councillor Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance gave the following response:

“The Council has, for many years, taken a lease from Delph Methodist Church to provide a public car park within the parish . In 1998 the lease for the car park at Delph Methodist Church was due for renewal. Following a strategic review of the asset, which considered issues such as usage, cost and condition of the asset, and cost of the lease, the Council made the decision not to renew the lease in question.

Since 1998, the Church has retained ownership of the land and there have been ongoing discussion as to whether the Council would like to take a further lease of the land for car parking purposes.

Unfortunately, to date, no agreement has been reached. The site is in relatively poor condition, and with challenging budgetary targets being set for the Local Authority, it has not been possible to reach an agreement which would be affordable to the Council.

This is a difficult challenge during difficult financial times however, the Council will continue to work with the church to try and source suitable funding options to allow the site to be used as a car parking facility for the parish.

We have had several discussions with Delph Methodist Church over the last two years regarding the cost of works required in order to bring up to suitable standard and have suggested various funding options. Unfortunately none of these options have been successful and at present there are no ongoing discussions with the Church.”

4. Councillor Malik to Councillor Hibbert

“Can the cabinet member for transport, please assure us that the safety issues raised by Richmond junior school and parents in relation to Winterbottom Street and Middleton Road junction metro crossing are been addressed and everything possible is being done to protect the safety of parents and children of Richmond Junior School.”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Environment & Housing gave the following response:



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“Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and the contractor MPact-thales (MPT) have kept close contact with Richmond School before and during the construction of the Oldham town centre extension.

Prior to the commencement of the dynamic tram testing, MPT’s Oldham town centre Section Agent visited Mrs Dixie at Richmond School and discussed the forthcoming tram movements across Winterbottom Street and adjacent to Richmond School, in detail, with her. TfGM also sent letters describing the upcoming dynamic testing, to all local stakeholders including Richmond School.

TfGM is also intending to introduce additional measures at the bottom of Winterbottom Street to “shepherd” both adults and children to use the provided crossing points. These measures include an additional pedestrian guardrail to keep pedestrians to the footpaths and also heavy white lining across the actual crossing point to clearly show the usable crossing area.

Driver route training has commenced along the Oldham town centre extension. A letter has been sent out to stakeholders, including Richmond School, confirming this. This training will ensure that drivers are familiar with the new route and its junctions, signals and stops prior to opening the Oldham town centre Metrolink extension.

The operator MRDL will also include a specific briefing as part of their driver training of the high number of pedestrians in this specific area during peak school hours in the morning, at lunchtime and the afternoon. MPT has also provided 2 pedestrian marshals at the Winterbottom Street tram crossing point during the first couple of days of the driver route training. With driver route training in mind, TfGM have recently offered to give a presentation to all local schools, including Richmond Primary School. The purpose of this presentation will be to raise awareness of the tram system, for passengers, pedestrians and cyclists.

The Metrolink Stakeholder team have also given a talk on safety around the new trams to all the children in the local school during a recent assembly on 5th December 2013.”

5. Councillor Sedgwick to Councillor McMahon

“I have seen that Oldham Council has recently submitted a planning application to clean and repair the Lees War Memorial. This is good news and represents progress for which I thank the Leader and the relevant Cabinet Member. Could I ask the Cabinet Member to please inform Council when it is anticipated that planning permission will be obtained and the work carried out?”

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Strategic Projects confirmed that the planning application for cleaning the Memorial had been submitted on 10 October 2013, and a decision, was expected by the 6 January 2013. Once planning permission had been approved the work would take approximately two weeks to complete, weather permitting.

6. Councillor Roughley to Councillor Hibbert

“The present contract to replace all the street lighting in the borough has been controversial from day one with Eon and its sub-contractors ignoring the terms of the agreement regarding the siting of replacement columns.

Conservation Areas are important protectors of the Borough’s heritage yet here again Eon have started erecting inappropriate lighting columns without the public consultation which is supposed to take place.

Will the appropriate Cabinet Member please support ward councillors in their continuing concerns about the way this company is carrying out its obligation under this PFI deal? Further, with the need to make savings in all aspects of the council’s operations, it seems increasingly likely that many of these new street lights will be dimmed or even turned off, as is happening in other local authorities.

Do you agree that this agreement with Eon needs looking at again with a view to reducing the overall costs of this expensive PFI deal, which as it stands will remain a burden on the council tax payers of this borough for many years to come?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Environment & Housing gave the following response:

“Conservation Areas have my full support and it is understood that there is a need to make savings not only on this contract, but to all areas of service where efficiencies can be made. Councils face a difficult challenge of reducing budgets and increasing demand and legislation. This is being addressed through the contract which enables a number of innovations to be considered which will reduce energy consumption and carbon and therefore the associated overall running costs too. This type of work includes the use of LED’s and localised dimming.

Recent trials, which have taken place in Chadderton late at night and which I have attended, have demonstrated that there is scope for dimming without a noticeable difference to the public or affecting safety on our roads and footpaths. The new equipment installed through the PFI makes this an effective way to make the efficiencies needed.”

7. Councillor J Dillon to Councillor Hibbert

“There are two main roads from Shaw Town Centre to Oldham, one via Oldham Road (B6194) and one via Manchester Road (A663). In recent times, there have been road works on both roads at the same time causing traffic chaos and queuing traffic delaying many people travelling by car and bus.

Whilst I appreciate the work has to be done why is it that work on both roads was programmed to be carried out at the same time?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Environment & Housing gave the following response:



“The works on Oldham Road are scheduled resurfacing works being carried out on behalf of the Council. Those at the Manchester Road and Shaw Road junction were carried out by a utility company to repair a burst water pipe which required a rapid response.

Officers are currently both monitoring sites. The resurfacing of the water pipe has now been finished. The other site is expected to be finished soon, though this depends largely on the weather.

We do not schedule two sets of planned works that would cause disruption in this way. In this instance, however, nobody could have predicted a burst water pipe and I am sure that people understand the need to repair it straight away.

I can appreciate the disruption that the work is causing for drivers in Shaw and ask them to bear with us whilst these essential repairs are completed.”

8. Councillor Harkness on behalf of Councillor Williamson to Councillor Hibbert

“On a number of occasions in the last year my Crompton colleagues and I have reported issues to the Highways Department – for example, potholes, missing street furniture, collapsed roads, surface erosion and other issues relating to the road surface – and once we have received the acknowledgement email from them it is a guessing game as to where highways are up to with issues and it is often the case that we have to physically view the areas constantly, to find out where they are up to.

This is not a criticism of highways officers, but more a pleas for information which can then be passed on to residents who report the issues to us - it makes us and the Council look bad.

Therefore, can I ask that the relevant cabinet member, please look into how the Highways Department can keep members more informed about when work is happening and completed”.

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Environment & Housing gave the following response:

“As part of our move to develop more online services we are implementing a new online system to report potholes and road defects. This new system will automatically update anyone who reports defects to let them know if and when work is due to be carried out and inform them when it has been completed.

As part of the launch of this new system we are improving all of our communications to residents and elected members including redrafting letters and emails to promote the work of the

Highways team and ensure key stakeholders understand the timescales for repair.

We will also be introducing a monthly Highways briefing for elected members which will outline key work completed over the previous month in their area and planned work for the months ahead.”



At this point in the meeting the Mayor advised that the time limit for this item had expired.

2 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Newton and Sheldon.

3 **TO ORDER THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON THE 23RD OCTOBER 2013 BE SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 23rd October 2013 be **AGREED** as a correct record

4 **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY MATTER TO BE DETERMINED AT THE MEETING**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct the following Councillors declared a personal interest in the item indicated:

Councillors Brownridge, Dearden, Harrison and Thompson – Item 11 Cabinet Minutes – Budget Proposals – by virtue of their appointment to the Board of Oldham Care and Support.
Councillor Brownridge – Item 12.1 - by virtue of her membership of the Board of Governors at North Chadderton School.
Councillor Judge – Item 12.1 - by virtue of his membership of the Board of Governors at Royton and Crompton School.
Councillor Moores – Item 12.1 - by virtue of his membership of the Board of Governors at Blue Coat School.
Councillor Roughley – Item 12.1 - by virtue of his membership of the Technical Advisory Group on Saddleworth School.
Councillor Ur Rehman – Item 12.1 - by virtue of his appointment as Chair of the Board of Governors of Hathershaw College.
Councillor Heffernan – Item 15 - Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18th November – Proposed Amalgamation of Springhead Infant and Nursery School and Knowsley Junior School by virtue of his appointment as Chair of the Board of Governors at Knowsley School.
Councillor Beeley – Item 15 - Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18th November – Proposed Amalgamation of Springhead Infant and Nursery School and Knowsley Junior School by virtue of her membership of the Board of Governors at Springhead Infant and Nursery School.

Councillor Marie Bashforth declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 12.1 – by virtue of her employment at Royton and Crompton School. Councillor Bashforth left the meeting for this item and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

5 **TO DEAL WITH MATTERS WHICH THE MAYOR**

CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT BUSINESS

The Mayor informed the meeting that no items of urgent business had been received.

6

TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

The Mayor informed Council of a number of communications relating to the business of the Council as follows:

1. The Mayor made reference to the recent deaths of former Mayor and Councillor, Ann Wingate and former Councillor Ian Thompson.

Councillors John Dillon, Sykes and Battye all spoke in remembrance of former Councillor Ann Wingate.

Councillors Briggs and Heffernan spoke in remembrance of former Councillor Ian Thompson.

Council held a minutes silence in memory of Ian Thompson, Ann Wingate, Nelson Mandela and Annalise Holt, the young girl who tragically died in the accident in Shaw yesterday.

2. The Mayor advised Council that this would be the last meeting that Charlie Parker, Chief Executive, would be attending before leaving Oldham to take up his new post as Chief Executive of Westminster Council.

Councillors McMahon, Sykes, Akhtar, Williams, McCann and the Mayor, Councillor Hudson, all thanked Charlie Parker for his contribution to the achievements of Oldham Council over the last five years. Members paid tribute to his hard work and drive that had brought the Council to where it was today.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jim McMahon, on behalf of Council, presented the Chief Executive with a number of gifts in recognition of his contribution to the journey undertaken by Oldham Council during his time in post.

In response Charlie Parker thanked Members for their comments and paid tribute to the Group Leaders for providing real leadership; to his Senior Management colleagues without whom this journey would not have been possible; to all Members across the Chamber for the way in which they had embraced change and taken tough decisions; to Partners and Stakeholders who had worked with him and finally he thanked all the staff of Oldham Council, the frontline staff who had achieved amazing things and those staff with whom he had regular close contact, all were brilliant. He closed by saying that he was incredibly proud and privileged to have been Chief Executive of Oldham Council.

7

TO RECEIVE AND NOTE PETITIONS RECEIVED RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

The Mayor advised the meeting that a petition had been received for noting by Council.



RESOLVED that the following petition received since the last meeting be noted:

Neighbourhoods

Petition to relating to Failsworth Higher Memorial Park (received 24 October 2013) (107 signatures) (Ref 2013-022).

8 **OUTSTANDING BUSINESS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Mayor informed the meeting that there was no outstanding business from the previous Council meeting.

9 **YOUTH COUNCIL**

The Mayor informed the meeting that there was no Youth Council business.

10 **LEADER AND CABINET QUESTION TIME**

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Sykes, raised the following three questions:

1. "I was pleased to see that as part of Democracy Week an exhibition was staged in Gallery Oldham about the ten men from the Borough of Oldham who fought as part of the International Brigades against Fascism in the Spanish Civil War.

April 2014 will mark 75 years from the ending of the war – the tragedy for Spain is that the Fascists won, immersing the country in a stifling dictatorship that only ended in 1975.

Oldham has recently rightly honoured its dead from both World Wars with a refurbished war memorial.

It would therefore also seem appropriate to ensure that the men who served in this lesser known, but critical, conflict receive their due recognition.

In 1986 former Mayor Alwyn McConnell unveiled a memorial plaque to these unsung heroes in the Local Studies Centre.

Unfortunately this is now sadly languishing somewhere in the vaults – available for inspection only upon request to the curator.

Can I therefore ask the Leader if he will commit himself to ensuring that this plaque is placed on display in a prominent position in a town centre public building as was intended in time to mark the 75th anniversary of the ending of the war?

And can I also ask him to ensure that there will be a re-dedication ceremony to be held on a date agreed with the International Brigade Memorial Trust to which relatives, representatives from the Trust and veterans organisations, and local civic leaders can be invited."

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, responded to Councillor Sykes agreeing that this was a very good idea but pointed out that at present there were no plans in place however, he suggested that this be considered by the Group Leaders and if a dedication was to take place he would ensure that the family and friends of these men were invited.

2.” Climate change is of increasing concern to the public – as inhabitants of this Earth every one of us has a personal responsibility for ensuring we cause no harm to the planet – but as local leaders, elected members also have a collective responsibility for showing the way.

I was therefore very pleased to hear that the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities has set ambitious targets for reductions in carbon emissions for each of the ten authorities and that Cabinet has recently discussed how Oldham Council will contribute to these targets.

One way that other local authorities have done this is by supporting the development of local renewable electricity generation schemes, whether hydro, solar or wind, often in conjunction with a specialist commercial operator, and these schemes have been part-financed through a community share offer to the public.

Such schemes are revenue-raising as they provide a long-term income stream to the authority, but they also embody the co-operative agenda as local authorities and communities work together to achieve a common goal.

There are some factors in Oldham’s favour.

We have a track record with the establishment of a community-owned hydro scheme at Dovestones Reservoir, new (Passive House) Passivhaus carbon-neutral homes at St. Marys, and our electric-charging points.

We also have local expertise in this field - a splendid Regional Science Centre and The Oldham College Green Technology Centre.

So there is no reason why Oldham cannot be ambitious.

Can I therefore please ask the Leader if he will agree to convene a renewable energy think-tank – rather along the lines of the recent successful Feeding Oldham Event – with key partners and players, to identify future renewable energy projects for our borough?”

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, stated that there was a need to do far more to increase awareness of energy use and climate change. If we wanted to make a real change in Oldham’s carbon footprint then the rate of recycling in some areas in particular needed to increase, some areas did not do their bit and discussions needed to take place with residents in these areas. Equally there was a need to consider how the Council was funded, more income was needed from other sources and the Council was keen to look at renewables.

Councillor McMahon stated that he would welcome cross party working on this.

3. “Given the significant level of public investment proposed by this Council in the coming years, I am sure that the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Finance would welcome any opportunity to access cheaper money to finance infrastructure projects.

The Chairman of the Local Government Association, Sir Merrick Cockell, has recently stated that the revival of a municipal bond market would help local Government access finance at a lower cost than the Public Works Loan Board.



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It was Sir Merrick's view that this would also provide local Government with greater independence from central Government.

Sir Merrick has issued an invitation to Councils to participate as partners in a new agency to work up a practical proposition for municipal bonds and so far 18 Councils have expressed an interest in joining such an agency.

Given that this proposition could save our Borough's hard pressed Council tax payers money from servicing reduced interest payments, can I ask the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance to consider taking up Sir Merrick's invitation, or can they inform Council that they have already done so?"

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, advised Council that he had been in discussion with the LGA and in principle he considered it to be a good idea, however, he was unsure if it was right for the Council at this time.

Greater Manchester had taken the view that it would make more sense to develop an investment structure that was recyclable and referred to the green investment fund where money was being used for regional growth. A fund which would be self sustaining, that was independent and would hopefully still be there when other funds had dried up. The Leader pointed out that the best way forward for the Borough at the present time was through the Public Works Loan Board, this made financial sense and also made sense for the residents of Oldham.

Councillor McMahon encouraged Members to read the Treasury Management Strategy that had been adopted by the Council which, in his opinion, was a very measured approach. The Leader pointed out that it would be in Oldham's interest, along with those of the other nine authorities in Greater Manchester, to develop a recyclable loan fund over the next 10 to 15 years but added that everyone needed to buy into it in order for it to succeed.

Advance notice had been given of questions relating to the following:

1. Question from Councillor Thompson

"Recent press coverage highlighted the case of a senior staff member who was temporarily re-employed by the council shortly after receiving a considerable redundancy payment. The case caused disquiet amongst other members of staff and criticism from the public. The perceptions were of favouritism and waste of public money.

Let me be clear: I have enquired about the specific case and received assurances that the person was not re-employed on fat-cat terms and I know that he served the council well in the past. It is not about the person.

My concern is that the council put itself in the position where its fairness in employment was questioned. The unions raised a

broadly similar case during my time as cabinet member. Staff found it galling to be working alongside someone who had been paid a lump sum to go. We agreed then that the council would be more sensitive in future.



Such cases are unusual, but it is clear they upset other staff and look bad with the public. Will the cabinet member please give an assurance that the council will not put itself in a position again where its fairness in employment or its management competency can so obviously be called into question?"

Councillor Harrison, Cabinet Member for Commissioning and Public Sector Reform, advised that "the case referred to was an unusual occurrence in that a number of projects were identified that required short term support to be undertaken on a part time basis and so the projects were entirely separate from the individuals previous role with the Council. The individual concerned was re-employed via an employment agency on a part time basis and on a lower grade and contrary to opinion, did actually offer value for public money. That is why, on this occasion and after careful consideration by the management team concerned, the decision to re-employ for a short period was taken.

From a policy position, the Council currently has no such stipulations to prevent re-employment as this is a practice which as I have just described, on occasion can be an efficient approach to resourcing key projects. I cannot comment about the example that occurred sometime ago when you were Cabinet member but I can comment that on this occasion, management demonstrated their knowledge and ability to weigh up options and act from an informed position with the public purse in mind.

Nevertheless I recognise that such a decision can be perceived in the way you describe. Therefore I have requested that a review of our recruitment policy with regards to re-employment following redundancy is undertaken, not necessarily to dis-allow re-employment but to consider whether a timescale before re-employment can occur takes place. As a member of the Local NJC that approves such changes, you will be involved in any policy amendment."

2. Question from Councillor Roughley

"I would like to ask a two-part question about the safety of cyclists in the borough.

Tragically in a two week period during November six cyclists were killed in London. They were killed either by lorries swerving into the cycle lane or by turning left in front of the cyclist. In each case the cycle lanes consisted of painted lines on the highway, as are almost all those in Oldham.

Will the Cabinet Member please advise me if there any plans for any present or future cycle routes in the Borough to be made safe by having a physical barrier between cyclists and motorised

traffic. This is usual in most West European countries and we are just wasting public money if we create cycle lanes that are so dangerous that many would be cyclists are too frightened to use them

The second part of my question relates to training runs apparently being carried out at night by cyclists practising in connection with next year's Tour de France, which passes through Calderdale and Kirklees. Groups of up to 30 cyclists have been seen on several of Saddleworth's roads, usually in two's but occasionally three or even four abreast. Despite each cyclist wearing headband lights, they are not easy to see on a wet night and it would only take a wide vehicle coming the other way round a tight corner to cause a serious accident.

Can the Council please liaise with these cyclist groups to ensure that these runs are scheduled for daylight hours?

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing, gave the following response:

"The deaths in London were indeed tragic and improving safety for cyclists of all abilities and for all vulnerable road users are at the core of Oldham's transport policies. There is an average of 5 serious accidents per year involving cyclists in Oldham and the total number of incidents involving injury to cyclists has dropped steadily from 73 in 1999 to 23 in 2012.

I agree that the ideal solution is to ensure the physical separation of cyclists from motorised vehicles. Unfortunately, very few roads in the UK have been designed to adequately cater for this separation unlike many of our European counterparts, for example Holland. In fact, many of the roads in Saddleworth and in other parts of the Borough are too narrow to include dedicated cycle lanes – with or without the addition of a physical barrier.

For this reason, Oldham Council advocates off-carriageway cycle tracks rather than the use of cycle lanes on our roads wherever possible. It is important to also segregate cycle tracks from footways where possible. This approach is in line with best practice from across Continental Europe and emerging best practice from across the UK. However, where we do provide new cycle lanes on roads, they need to be sufficiently wide to cater for cyclists and pedestrians and designs need to be of a high standard to ensure cyclists can negotiate side roads and junctions safely. Improving safety for on-carriageway cycle lanes is also a high priority. For example, we are using Cycle Safety Funding to introduce Advanced Stop Lines and Trixi mirrors at selected traffic signal junctions to improve the visibility of cyclists for HGV drivers when turning left at junctions.

These works are carried out as and when funding is available and the funding is invested in accordance with an overall plan for a safer cycle network.

In terms of the second part of your question regarding night cycling rides, we can investigate further and discuss this with the club, but if the cyclists are behaving safely and using appropriate lights etc then they have as much right to be using the carriageway as any other vehicle. The Council cannot tell them when to do their training rides.”

3. Question from Councillor Williamson

“I would like to ask the relevant Cabinet Member a three part question in relation to this issue - Please could he tell us how many drivers the camera cars have booked outside schools? How they were employed over the school summer holidays? And how the Council employs the revenue resulting from fines?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing, gave the following response:

“In response to the three part question, I would advise that:

- a) Between the 19/11/12 and 15/12/13 a total of 798 PCNs (penalty charge notices) have been issued outside schools
- b) Outside of school hours and during the school holidays both cars are deployed to loading bays, no waiting areas and other hotspots within the Borough
- c) Revenues resulting from PCN income is put back into the budget to help pay for the service and the deployment of the CCTV cars.”

4. Question from Councillor Sedgwick

“In August the Liberal Democrat Business Minister Jo Swinson announced new plans for the Government to tackle rogue traders and to give better protection to vulnerable and elderly consumers. It is estimated that these consumers are hoodwinked or intimidated into handing over £4 billion in payments for inadequate or non-existent goods and services.

The new proposals (which amend the over-long and not very lovingly-titled - Consumer Protection Regulations from Unfair Trading Regulations) give consumers:

- 90 days to cancel a contract and receive a full refund if they have been misled or bullied into agreeing it. After 90 days consumers will still be entitled to a partial refund. This provides clarity in a situation that was previously muddled.
- New rights to recover payments made to traders who mislead or bully them into paying money which was not owed, and to claim compensation for any alarm or distress caused. In the past such consumers who had been tricked or threatened to make payments found it much more difficult to get their money back or to receive damages.

Please can the cabinet member tell us what the Council will be doing to make consumers aware of their new rights and so help put these rogue traders - who are on a par with common thieves and loan sharks - out of business?"

Councillor Stretton, Cabinet Member for Cooperatives and Neighbourhoods gave the following response:

"I thank Cllr Sedgwick for her question but I think her call for me to make consumers aware of their new rights is somewhat previous. The legislation has not yet come into force. Currently this is the Draft Consumer Rights Bill and it is in the early stages of working its way through parliament.

The measures that Cllr Sedgwick quotes and the measures to cover digital downloads are welcome. But the bill does not go nearly far enough. Labour MPs are already challenging the government saying that this is a missed opportunity to tackle energy costs and rail fares, a missed opportunity to demand better standards in the private rented sector. And the most ludicrous proposal of all in this bill removes the power of trading standards officers to enter premises unannounced. And how does this protect consumers? It doesn't. It does protect the kind of rogue traders that Cllr Sedgwick refers to in her question. It's a safe bet that if a rogue trader has counterfeit or dangerous goods in his shop when our Trading Standards Officer rings to make the appointment they won't still be there when he turns up for the appointment! And why do they say they are doing this – to deregulate to reduce business burdens and costs. So business first and consumer second. Not to mention the impact of the cuts on local authorities, which have led to the loss of hundreds of Trading Standards jobs across the country and funding for this area of work reducing from £245m in 2010 to £142 million now. Cuts imposed on local government by national government with the support of Lib Dems like Jo Swinson.

When the Bill becomes an Act I would encourage Cllr Sedgwick to come back here and ask the question again. We will see then whether the Bill has been watered down even further to make it even more toothless and whether is anything left in it for Liberal Democrats here or in government to brag about. And whether there are sufficient trading standards officers left to implement the Act."

At this point in the meeting the Mayor advised that the time limit for this item had expired.

RESPONSES FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Minutes for the meetings held on 21st October 2013 and 18th November 2013 were submitted.



Questions and observations were raised by the following Councillors on the Cabinet Minutes as detailed below:

1. Councillor McCann – Cabinet meeting – 18th November 2013, pages 41 and 43, Agenda Items 9 and 12 – Budget Proposals 2014/15 and Revenue Monitor 2013-14; Month 4, 5&6 (September) with reference to budget pressures on Adult Services – He agreed that there had been a loan of £2M from the reserves to cover emergency expenditure, the exceptional demand may not go down as hoped and what would happen if management were not able to recoup the funds over the next two years?

Councillor Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance, advised that Government was cutting funding for the service at a time when people were living longer and as a result requiring more care. The issue had been considered by PVfM and the Cabinet and Councillor Jabbar was confident with the measures that had been put in place. The challenge to colleagues in Adult Care was that they should try and manage the service with the budget that was in place and if it did not work out then the service would have to be reviewed. Reductions in the grant would have a severe impact on the quality of the service. Again the settlement figures were worse than the Council had anticipated and if the Government continued to reduce the grant in this way then the Council would not be able to fund the services as they had done in the past.

2. Councillor Blyth – Cabinet meeting – 18th November 2013, pages 41 and 43, Agenda Items 9 and 12 – Budget Proposals 2014/15 and Revenue Monitor 2013-14; Month 4, 5&6 (September) with reference to budget pressures on Adult Services – Does the current estimated funding gap of £23.04M include the £2M?

Councillor Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance, confirmed that the £2M was included in the figure.

Members made the following observations:

1. Councillor Thompson – Cabinet meeting – 21st October 2013, page 36, Agenda Item 8 – Council Performance Report Q1 2013-14 – expressing a number of concerns relating to the actual figures not being great, with particular reference to those for the number of adults taking part in sports and physical activities being below target; as were the figures for Council Tax and Business Rates. Reference was also made to the number of flagship projects operating without targets and gave Troubled Families as an example.

A number of issues no longer reported for example clean streets and placements for looked after children had both disappeared from the list.



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Councillor Harrison, Cabinet Member for Commissioning an Public Sector Reform, offered to meet with Councillor Thompson to discuss these issues.

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, also responded to the observation advising that a few things have changed in the way performance was reported; for the first time ever the Council was outward with its performance reporting, via the website and the residents' survey. Residents decide what is important and they say how the Council is performing – is a particular service up to standard. The figures reported are what residents have asked for. Figures will be reported twice a year – not all feedback is good but we publish it and we listen to what people have to say. Councillor McMahon pointed out that demand for services was going through the roof and gave Adult Care and Safeguarding as examples. Both these services providing the best service they can with the budget available to them.

Councillor McMahon urged all Councillors to work together on this.

12

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Councillor Marie Bashforth left the room at this point in the meeting.

Motion 1

Councillor A Chadderton MOVED and Councillor Alexander SECONDED the following motion:

“This Council is committed to providing outstanding education in good facilities which gives the young people of this borough the best possible educational experience.

This Council regrets that the severe curtailment of the BSF programme which would have seen the replacement of Saddleworth and Royton & Crompton schools together with the upgrading of Hathershaw School, Blue Coat and Crompton House.

The Council notes that both Saddleworth and Royton & Crompton schools had reached the end of their useful lives and required full replacement to obtain best value for money.

The Council welcomes the opportunity to support Saddleworth School and its governing body to apply for new funds through the Education Funding Agency but acknowledges that, the timescales involved the available sites and the available budget present challenges.

Once the funding for the replacement of Saddleworth School is confirmed this Council resolves to:

1. Lobby the Government to fund the replacement of Royton and Crompton and work towards a replacement school at the earliest opportunity.



2. Lobby for greater devolved capital and other funding to invest in urgent repairs and upgrades required for the remaining secondary school estate.

Also:

3. This Council reconfirms the position it adopted under the BSF programme that the present site of Saddleworth School in Uppermill is an unsuitable and inadequate site for a replacement Secondary School. The Uppermill site is not fit to meet the education needs of future generations of students, nor does the proposal by some residents to rebuild Saddleworth School on the present Uppermill site meet the aspirational wishes of parents, staff and school governors.
4. This Council requests our MPs to support this resolution and Oldham Council's determination to campaign to providing outstanding education in good facilities which gives the young people of this borough the best possible educational experience.”

Councillor Harrison spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor Ur Rehman spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor Roughley spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor Battye spoke in support of the Motion and requested that a recorded vote be taken.

Councillor Sykes spoke in support of the Motion.

In accordance with Council Procedure rule 12.3 at least five Members requested a recorded vote on this Amendment. The Vote was recorded as follows:

Councillor		Councillor	
Akhtar	FOR	Hussain	FOR
Alcock	FOR	Iqbal	FOR
Alexander	FOR	Jabbar	FOR
Ames	FOR	Judge	FOR
Azad	FOR	Larkin	FOR
Ball	FOR	Malik	FOR
Bashforth Marie	NO VOTE DoI	McCann	FOR
Bashforth Steve	FOR	McDonald	FOR
Battye	FOR	McLaren	FOR
Beeley	FOR	McMahon	FOR
Blyth	FOR	Moores	FOR
Briggs	FOR	Newton	ABSENT
Brownridge	FOR	Price	FOR
Chadderton Amanda	FOR	Qumer	FOR
Chadderton Olwen	FOR	Rehman	FOR
Chauhan	FOR	Roughley	FOR

Dawson	FOR	Salamat	FOR
Dean	FOR	Sedgwick	FOR
Dearden	FOR	Shah	FOR
Dillon John	FOR	Sheldon	ABSENT
Dillon Philomena	FOR	Shuttleworth	FOR
Fielding	FOR	Stretton	FOR
Garry	FOR	Sykes	FOR
Haque	FOR	Thompson	FOR
Harkness	FOR	Toor	FOR
Harrison	FOR	Ur-Rehman	FOR
Heffernan	FOR	Williams	FOR
Hibbert	FOR	Williamson	FOR
Hindle	FOR	Wrigglesworth	FOR
Houle	FOR	Hudson	FOR

On a recorded vote being taken FIFTY SEVEN VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the MOTION with NO VOTES cast AGAINST. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

RESOLVED that:

1. This Council is committed to providing outstanding education in good facilities which gives the young people of this borough the best possible educational experience.
2. This Council regrets that the severe curtailment of the BSF programme which would have seen the replacement of Saddleworth and Royton & Crompton schools together with the upgrading of Hathershaw School, Blue Coat and Crompton House.
3. Council notes that both Saddleworth and Royton & Crompton schools had reached the end of their useful lives and required full replacement to obtain best value for money.
4. Council welcomes the opportunity to support Saddleworth School and its governing body to apply for new funds through the Education Funding Agency but acknowledges that, the timescales involved, the available sites and the available budget present challenges.
5. Once the funding for the replacement of Saddleworth School is confirmed this Council resolves to:
 - i). Lobby the Government to fund the replacement of Royton and Crompton and work towards a replacement school at the earliest opportunity.
 - ii). Lobby for greater devolved capital and other funding to invest in urgent repairs and upgrades required for the remaining secondary school estate.
6. This Council reconfirms the position it adopted under the BSF programme that the present site of Saddleworth School in Uppermill is an unsuitable and inadequate site for a replacement Secondary School. The Uppermill site is not fit to meet the education needs of future generations of students, nor does the proposal by some residents to rebuild Saddleworth School on the present Uppermill site meet the aspirational wishes of parents, staff and school governors.
7. This Council requests our MPs to support this resolution and Oldham Council's determination to campaign to providing

outstanding education in good facilities which gives the young people of this borough the best possible educational experience.



NOTE: Councillor Marie Bashforth left the room for consideration of this item and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

Motion 2.

Councillor Dearden **MOVED** and Councillor Haque **SECONDED**:

Newcastle City Council passed a declaration in May 2013 to tackle the harm smoking causes our communities. It has since been supported by the Public Health Minister, the Chief Medical Officer and Public Health England.

All councils are being urged to sign up to the Declaration which will be formally launched in Parliament on December 11th 2013. The Declaration commits councils to:

- Act at a local level to reduce smoking prevalence and health inequalities and to raise the profile of the harm caused by smoking to our communities
- Develop plans with our partners and local communities to address the causes and impacts of tobacco use
- Participate in local and regional networks for support
- Support the government in taking action at national level to help local authorities reduce smoking prevalence and health inequalities in our communities
- Protect our tobacco control work from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry by not accepting any partnerships, payments, gifts and services, monetary or in kind or research funding offered by the tobacco industry to officials or employees
- Monitor the progress of our plans against our commitments and publish the results
- Publicly declare our commitment to reducing smoking in our communities by joining the Smokefree Action Coalition, the alliance of organisations working to reduce the harm caused by tobacco.

Oldham has a higher percentage of people who smoke (27.2%) than the average for North West (22.8%) and England (20.7%). Being part of this campaign will help us to raise awareness and improve the health of Oldhamers.

Therefore: This Council resolves to adopt the tobacco declaration.

Councillor Dearden as Mover of the Motion and Councillor Haque as Seconder of the Motion requested Council to permit the motion to be rolled over for discussion at the next Council meeting.

RESOLVED that the Motion be considered at the next Council meeting to be held on 5th February 2014.



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Motion 3. Councillor A Chadderton MOVED and Councillor McMahon SECONDED the following motion:

This council notes that

- Universal Credit is a single system created by the Government to replace a number of individual tax credits and benefits including Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and Housing Benefit;
- Oldham is one of eight pilot areas nationally for Universal Credit since July 2013;
- On 15 November 2013, the Chief Executives of Oldham, Tameside and Wigan Councils (the Universal Credit Pathfinder areas of Greater Manchester) wrote jointly to the Department for Work and Pensions highlighting their concerns with the publication of the Jobseeker's Allowance figures in these local authority areas, having received no data since July 2013;
- On 22 November 2013, the Department for Work and Pensions' Director of Information, Governance and Security David Frazer responded to this letter highlighting that information would be released on 3 December 2013.

This council believes that the information released by the Department for Work and Pensions on 3 December 2013 is insufficient and lacks clarity for the following reasons

- A wait of up to 4 months for relevant information is deeply unhelpful in assisting our efforts for timely support under Get Oldham Working - a monthly release of statistics would be a much better schedule;
- It highlights the monthly number of new starters to the Universal Credit system from July to September in Oldham but does not include a breakdown by previous tax credit or benefit type indicating how these residents would have been assisted prior to Universal Credit.
- It also gives no indication of how many of these residents are completely new to the benefits system and how many have been mandated off other forms of benefits including Jobseeker's Allowance: We know that the numbers of people in Oldham receiving Jobseeker's Allowance has fallen by over 2100 since April 2013 but are not able at present to clarify how many of this number have been mandated on to Universal Credit and therefore how many remaining have found work;
- It highlights the caseload of Universal Credit claimants from July to September in Oldham but includes no information about discrepancies between starter and caseload figures (i.e. what is happening to those who

come off Universal Credit: how many are mandated off it, and how many are finding work etc)



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This council therefore resolves to

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions outlining our concerns and asking for the urgent confirmation of the requested information so that the council is able to more effectively target its resources to help people into work;
- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the borough's MPs to highlight this issue and request their help in lobbying to resolve it.

On being put to the vote FIFTY SEVEN VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the MOTION with NO VOTES cast AGAINST. The Motion was therefore CARRIED.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Chief Executive be asked to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions outlining the Council's concerns and asking for the urgent confirmation of the requested information so that the Council is able to more effectively target its resources to help people into work;
2. The Chief Executive be asked to write to the borough's MPs to highlight this issue and request their help in lobbying to resolve it.

At this point in the meeting guidance was sought from Officers as to the possibility of extending the guillotine until 10pm and in accordance with Part 4 of the Council's Constitution – Rules of Procedure paragraph 8.4 (m) Councillor McMahon MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED that the guillotine for the meeting be extended to 10pm to allow debate on the remaining items to take place.

RESOLVED that in accordance with the Rules of Procedure paragraph 8.4 (m) the guillotine for the meeting be extended to 10pm.

13

NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS

Motion 1

Councillor McCann MOVED and Councillor Beeley SECONDED the following motion:

“This Council believes that the ‘national living wage’ first established by the National Living Wage Foundation in the UK in 2001 should be the minimum pay rate for all employees. Other local authorities who have adopted the ‘national living wage’ rate have found that staff morale, productivity and retention improves as a result.

The current rate for employees outside of London is £7.65 per hour, a figure significantly higher than the National Minimum Wage set by statute.

Creditably this Council has introduced an intermediate Oldham Living Wage guaranteeing employees the equivalent of £7.31

per hour; however this is still 34 pence per hour less than the out-of-London 'national living wage' rate.

Employees working for other public or private sector organisations across Oldham fare much worse.

As a leading employer in the borough, this Council resolves to lead the way by:

- Committing itself to introducing the 'national living wage' rate for all employees at the earliest possible time, with the timetable being determined through consultation between the three party group leaders, senior officers and trades unions
- Seeking thereafter accreditation from the Living Wage Foundation as a living wage employer
- Seeking the same wage rate for the staff of contractors, arms-length organisations and agencies engaged in contracts with the Council
- Promoting the adoption of the 'national living wage' rate to other Oldham employers
- Asking the Chief Executive to write to:
 - The Living Wage Foundation expressing the Council's support for the campaign
 - Our three local MPs and the leaders of the Government and principal Opposition parties calling upon them to support legislation to replace the National Minimum Wage with the 'national living wage' as the statutory minimum.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Wrigglesworth SECONDED the following amendment:

"Insert new resolution 1:

'Calling on Government to fund the additional cost of moving from the Oldham Living Wage of £7.31 per hour to the National Living Wage of £7.65 per hour'

Insert in resolution 2 after 'for all employees':

'with this support'

Insert in resolution 5, bullet point 2 after 'the statutory minimum':
'and asking for financial support from the Government to assist in this aim.'

The amended resolution would now read:

This Council believes that the 'national living wage' first established by the National Living Wage Foundation in the UK in 2001 should be the minimum pay rate for all employees.

Other local authorities who have adopted the 'national living wage' rate have found that staff morale, productivity and retention improves as a result.

The current rate for employees outside of London is £7.65 per hour, a figure significantly higher than the National Minimum Wage set by statute.

Creditably this Council has introduced an intermediate Oldham Living Wage guaranteeing employees the equivalent of £7.31

per hour; however this is still 34 pence per hour less than the out-of-London ‘national living wage’ rate.

Employees working for other public or private sector organisations across Oldham fare much worse.

As a leading employer in the borough, this Council resolves to lead the way by:

Calling on Government to fund the additional cost of moving from the Oldham Living Wage of £7.31 per hour to the National Living Wage of £7.65 per hour

Committing itself to introducing the ‘national living wage’ rate for all employees with this support at the earliest possible time, with the timetable being determined through consultation between the three party group leaders, senior officers and trades unions

Seeking thereafter accreditation from the Living Wage Foundation as a living wage employer

Seeking the same wage rate for the staff of contractors, arms-length organisations and agencies engaged in contracts with the Council

Promoting the adoption of the ‘national living wage’ rate to other Oldham employers

Asking the Chief Executive to write to:

The Living Wage Foundation expressing the Council’s support for the campaign

Our three local MPs and the leaders of the Government and principal Opposition parties calling upon them to support legislation to replace the National Minimum Wage with the ‘national living wage’ as the statutory minimum and asking for financial support from the Government to assist in this aim.”

No Members spoke on the Amendment.

Councillor Jabbar exercised his right of reply.

Councillor McCann waived his right of reply

In accordance with Council Procedure rule 12.3 at least five Members requested a recorded vote on this Amendment. The Vote was recorded as follows:

Councillor		Councillor	
Akhtar	FOR	Hussain	FOR
Alcock	AGAINST	Iqbal	FOR
Alexander	FOR	Jabbar	FOR
Ames	FOR	Judge	FOR
Azad	FOR	Larkin	FOR
Ball	FOR	Malik	FOR
Bashforth Marie	FOR	McCann	AGAINST
Bashforth Steve	FOR	McDonald	FOR
Batty	FOR	McLaren	FOR
Beeley	AGAINST	McMahon	FOR
Blyth	AGAINST	Moore	FOR
Briggs	FOR	Newton	ABSENT
Brownridge	FOR	Price	FOR
Chadderton	FOR	Qumer	FOR



Amanda			
Chadderton Olwen	FOR	Rehman	ABSENT
Chauhan	FOR	Roughley	AGAINST
Dawson	FOR	Salamat	FOR
Dean	FOR	Sedgwick	AGAINST
Dearden	FOR	Shah	FOR
Dillon John	AGAINST	Sheldon	ABSENT
Dillon Philomena	AGAINST	Shuttleworth	FOR
Fielding	FOR	Stretton	FOR
Garry	FOR	Sykes	AGAINST
Haque	FOR	Thompson	AGAINST
Harkness	AGAINST	Toor	FOR
Harrison	FOR	Ur-Rehman	FOR
Heffernan	AGAINST	Williams	FOR
Hibbert	FOR	Williamson	AGAINST
Hindle	AGAINST	Wrigglesworth	FOR
Houle	FOR	Hudson	ABSTENTION

On a recorded vote being taken FORTY TWO VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT and FOURTEEN VOTES cast AGAINST with ONE ABSTENTION. The AMENDMENT was therefore CARRIED.

A vote was then taken on the Substantive Motion.

In accordance with Council Procedure rule 12.3 at least five Members requested a recorded vote on this Amendment. The Vote was recorded as follows:

Councillor		Councillor	
Akhtar	FOR	Hussain	FOR
Alcock	FOR	Iqbal	FOR
Alexander	FOR	Jabbar	FOR
Ames	FOR	Judge	FOR
Azad	FOR	Larkin	FOR
Ball	FOR	Malik	FOR
Bashforth Marie	FOR	McCann	FOR
Bashforth Steve	FOR	McDonald	FOR
Battye	FOR	McLaren	FOR
Beeley	FOR	McMahon	FOR
Blyth	FOR	Moore	FOR
Briggs	FOR	Newton	ABSENT
Brownridge	FOR	Price	FOR
Chadderton Amanda	FOR	Qumer	FOR
Chadderton Olwen	FOR	Rehman	ABSENT
Chauhan	FOR	Roughley	FOR
Dawson	FOR	Salamat	FOR
Dean	FOR	Sedgwick	FOR
Dearden	FOR	Shah	FOR
Dillon John	FOR	Sheldon	ABSENT
Dillon Philomena	FOR	Shuttleworth	FOR

Fielding	FOR	Stretton	FOR
Garry	FOR	Sykes	FOR
Haque	FOR	Thompson	FOR
Harkness	FOR	Toor	FOR
Harrison	FOR	Ur-Rehman	FOR
Heffernan	FOR	Williams	FOR
Hibbert	FOR	Williamson	FOR
Hindle	FOR	Wrigglesworth	FOR
Houle	FOR	Hudson	ABSTENTION

On being put to the vote FIFTY SIX VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR OF THE SUBSTANTIVE MOTION with NO VOTES cast AGAINST and ONE ABSTENTION. The Motion was therefore CARRIED.

Motion 2.

Councillor Thompson MOVED and Councillor McCann SECONDED the following motion:

“This Council is committed to working with registered providers, and as a social landlord itself, to making best use of the social housing stock in the borough by promoting ‘right sizing’. ‘Right sizing’ would free up larger family homes for occupation by applicants living with over-crowding, whilst supporting under-occupying tenants taking in lodgers or wishing to move to smaller properties to avoid housing benefit penalties, to reduce their heating or maintenance bills or because of infirmity or disability.

Council notes that:

- In the report on welfare reform dated 17th July 2013, of the social housing stock, 341 properties were under-occupied by 2 bedrooms, 25 by 3, and 7 by four or more spare bedrooms.
- This figure fails to account for tenants over working age, who are under-occupying, yet are in receipt of full housing benefit or tenants who under-occupy and pay their rent from their own resources.
- In contrast, as of 30th June 2013, there were 2,118 applicants on the waiting list requiring homes with three or more bedrooms, many households living with overcrowding

This Council therefore resolves to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Board to examine the practicalities of:

- Reinstating the council’s downsizing policy to encourage under-occupying households to move;
- Giving an appropriate additional priority to those who are under-occupying on the waiting list, with greatest additional priority being given to those under-occupying by two or more bedrooms;
- Establishing procedures to vet and match up tenants who can property share or who wish to take in a lodger, with a model legal agreement being supplied free for any tenant taking in a lodger;
- Examining the effectiveness and use of the housing exchange and transfer option;

- Promoting the services and the offer of the AGMA Help with Rent housing team which supports tenants moving into smaller properties;
- Explore the adoption of a no eviction policy and the creation of a hardship fund using monies from the Housing Revenue Account to meet the rent arrears for tenants who under-occupy Council properties but who are actively seeking a move until such time as two reasonable offers of alternative accommodation have been made;
- Examining the legal remedies available to the authority to take possession of properties that are abandoned or grossly under-occupied”

AMENDMENT

Councillor Hibbert MOVED and Councillor Brownridge SECONDED the following Amendment:

“Delete the first paragraph and insert ‘This Council recognises the distress, trauma and desperation that has been caused by the Coalition Government’s policy commonly referred to as the ‘Bedroom Tax’. We are committed to campaigning for its repeal. However, we also wish to achieve the best use of the borough’s housing stock by promoting the provision of accommodation that is appropriate to tenants’ needs and requirements.’

Second paragraph, delete “Right sizing would’ and insert ‘We would seek to’. After ‘under-occupying tenants’ insert ‘who are considering’.

The motion as amended would now read:

This Council recognises the distress, trauma and desperation that has been caused by the Coalition Government’s policy commonly referred to as the ‘Bedroom Tax’. We are committed to campaigning for its repeal. However, we also wish to achieve the best use of the borough’s housing stock by promoting the provision of accommodation that is appropriate to tenants’ needs and requirements.

We would seek to free up larger family homes for occupation by applicants living with over-crowding, whilst supporting those who are considering taking in lodgers or wishing to move to smaller properties to reduce their heating or maintenance bills, to avoid housing benefit penalties, or because of infirmity or disability.

Council notes that:

In the report on welfare reform dated 17th July 2013, of the social housing stock, 341 properties were under-occupied by 2 bedrooms, 25 by 3, and 7 by four or more spare bedrooms.

This figure fails to account for tenants over working age, who are under-occupying, yet are in receipt of full housing benefit or tenants who under-occupy and pay their rent from their own resources.

In contrast, as of 30th June 2013, there were 2,118 applicants on the waiting list requiring homes with three or more bedrooms, many households living with overcrowding

This Council therefore resolves to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Board to examine the practicalities of:

Reinstating the council's downsizing policy to encourage under-occupying households to move;
Giving an appropriate additional priority to those who are under-occupying on the waiting list, with greatest additional priority being given to those under-occupying by two or more bedrooms;
Establishing procedures to vet and match up tenants who can property share or who wish to take in a lodger, with a model legal agreement being supplied free for any tenant taking in a lodger;
Examining the effectiveness and use of the housing exchange and transfer option;
Promoting the services and the offer of the AGMA Help with Rent housing team which supports tenants moving into smaller properties;
Explore the adoption of a no eviction policy and the creation of a hardship fund using monies from the Housing Revenue Account to meet the rent arrears for tenants who under-occupy Council properties but who are actively seeking a move until such time as two reasonable offers of alternative accommodation have been made;
Examining the legal remedies available to the authority to take possession of properties that are abandoned or grossly under-occupied."

Without debate Council moved to the vote on the AMENDMENT.

On being put to the vote FORTY TWO VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT and FOURTEEN VOTES AGAINST with ONE ABSTENTION. The AMENDMENT was therefore CARRIED.

A vote was then taken on the Substantive Motion.

On being put to the vote FIFTY SIX VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR OF THE SUBSTANTIVE MOTION with ONE ABSTENTION. The Motion was therefore CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board be requested to examine the practicalities of:

- Reinstating the council's downsizing policy to encourage under-occupying households to move;
- Giving an appropriate additional priority to those who are under-occupying on the waiting list, with greatest additional priority being given to those under-occupying by two or more bedrooms;
- Establishing procedures to vet and match up tenants who can property share or who wish to take in a lodger, with a model legal agreement being supplied free for any tenant taking in a lodger;
- Examining the effectiveness and use of the housing exchange and transfer option;
- Promoting the services and the offer of the AGMA Help with Rent housing team which supports tenants moving into smaller properties;

- Explore the adoption of a no eviction policy and the creation of a hardship fund using monies from the Housing Revenue Account to meet the rent arrears for tenants who under-occupy Council properties but who are actively seeking a move until such time as two reasonable offers of alternative accommodation have been made;
- Examining the legal remedies available to the authority to take possession of properties that are abandoned or grossly under-occupied.

3. Councillor Harkness MOVED and Councillor Sedgwick SECONDED:

This Council, being committed to supporting local jobseekers to secure employment, recognises that there are practical barriers that prevent jobseekers from attending job interviews or taking up employment opportunities.

Council is heartened to hear of the support made available to benefit claimants through Job Centre Plus, particularly:

- Access to the Flexible Support Fund from which payments can be made to “remove any barrier to employment” for a claimant, including reimbursing travel expenses and unavoidable overnight accommodation, providing work clothes and tools, and meeting the cost of specialist training provision.
- The new Travel Support to Jobseekers pilot in Greater Manchester that enables claimants to claim a travel voucher that can be exchanged for a day’s travel on public transport for the purposes of job-seeking, coupled with a concessionary travel ticket for only £25 in each of the first three months of employment.
- The Stagecoach Group “Back on Board” scheme which permits claimants to receive a 50% discount on the majority of Stagecoach services.
- Assistance with travel planning from Job Centre Plus advisors and Transport for Greater Manchester.

This Council is however disappointed that this support is not more widely publicised to eligible claimants.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Promote this provision via elected members, the Make the Most of Your Money and Get Oldham Working teams, District Executives, Parish Councils and partner agencies such as the Oldham Work Club Network, the Citizens’ Advice Bureau and the Oldham Credit Union to maximise take up
- Seek training from Transport for Greater Manchester so appropriate officers in each of the localities can become travel planning ‘champions’
- Negotiate with Job Centre Plus and Transport for Greater Manchester to secure stocks of the daily travel vouchers and establish a mechanism by which these can be disbursed through district centres so local claimants need not travel to the Oldham Job Centre to submit a claim

Seek to negotiate a similar concessionary scheme from Metrolink in conjunction with TfGM and the other AGMA authorities.



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The Mayor informed the meeting that the time limit for this item had expired and Councillor Harkness as Mover of the Motion and Councillor Sedgwick as Seconder of the Motion requested Council to permit the motion to be rolled over for discussion at the next Council meeting.

RESOLVED that the Motion be rolled forward and considered at the next Council meeting to be held on 5th February 2014.

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TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING JOINT AUTHORITY AND OLDHAM PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS AND THE RELEVANT SPOKESPERSONS TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

Minutes of the Joint Authorities were submitted as follows:

Association of Greater Manchester Authorities Executive	27 th September 2013 25 th October 2013
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	27 th September 2013 25 th October 2013
Police and Crime Panel	26 th July 2013
Transport for Greater Manchester	13 th September 2013 11 th October 2013 15 th November 2013
National Park Authority	4 th October 2013
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority	17 th October 2013
Unity Partnership Board	4 th September 2013

RESOLVED that the Joint Authority Minutes be noted.

15

LGA CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE: OLDHAM COUNCIL, OCTOBER 2013 - REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Consideration was given to a report of the Deputy Chief Executive which highlighted the findings of the LGA Peer Support Challenge which had been carried out in Oldham during October 2013. In moving the report Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, pointed out that this had not been an inspection but a combination of cross party work and work with officers, a culmination of a significant amount of work that was important in terms of external validation. In seconding the report Councillor Sykes, Leader of the Opposition concurred with the Leader stating that the Council had been tested and the results of these tests would help identify the direction in which the Council should be moving forward. It was the little things that mattered

and it would be these things that would make a difference. The report gave a good external recognition of the Council.



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RESOLVED that:

1. Council welcomes the findings of the 2013 LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report of Oldham Council
2. Council endorses the response to the findings set out in this report.
3. A report be presented to a future meeting of Cabinet outlining progress against the areas identified for consideration.

16

APPOINTMENT OF THE INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE - REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PEOPLE SERVICES

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Executive Director, People Services which detailed the recommendations of the Selection Committee regarding the appointment of an Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service following the resignation of the current post holder, Charlie Parker.

RESOLVED that:

1. The appointment of Doctor Carolyn Wilkins as the Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, effective from 13 January 2014 be approved;
2. In accordance with the Council's Pay Policy Statement, a salary of £154,143 per annum be approved;
3. The interim appointment to incorporate the responsibility for the roles of:
 - Clerk to the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority
 - Returning Officer for local elections;
4. This interim appointment to incorporate the role of Returning Officer for any Parliamentary, European and Police and Crime Commissioner for which, a separate payment as determined by Statute is made by central government;
5. The short term specialist advisory service to be provided by Sir Howard Bernstein of Manchester City Council to support Oldham Council's ongoing commercial and regeneration activities;
6. It is expected that, following an appropriate recruitment and selection process, the appointment of a permanent successor to Charlie Parker will be recommended to full Council in July 2014, following an appropriate recruitment and selection process.

17

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2014/15 - REPORT OF THE BOROUGH TREASURER

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Treasurer which sought approval of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2014/15.



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RESOLVED that:

1. Option 2 be agreed as the preferred option and the Council implement a Council Tax Reduction Scheme from 1st April 2014 for all applicants of working age as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

This would:

- Increase the maximum amount of reduction available to 80% of a Band A rate of Council Tax.
- Maintain other changes introduced in the 2013/14 scheme, these are not to award second adult rebate and to disregard 100% of any payments received from War Disablement, War Widows and Armed Forces Compensation Schemes.

2. The scheme at Appendix 2 to the report to be subject to any changes resulting from prescribed requirements issued by the Secretary of State under paragraph 2(8) of Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and any changes from time to time to the figures prescribed by central government for welfare benefits purposes.

18

A CO-OPERATIVE APPROACH TO THE USE OF COUNCIL ASSETS - REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMERCIAL SERVICES

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director Commercial Services which sought approval of the revised Land and Property Protocols, Governance arrangements for Community Right to Bid and Community use of Assets Policy & Procedure.

RESOLVED that:

1. The revised Land and Property Protocols be approved.
2. The governance arrangements for Community Right to Bid be approved.
3. Use of this process in relation to application recently received relating to Boundary Park.
4. The streamlined and updated Community use of Assets Policy & Procedure to extend spectrum of opportunities be approved.
5. The existing Community Asset Transfer Strategy be discontinued

19

CIVIC APPRECIATION NOMINATION - REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive which sought approval of the nomination to receive the Civic Appreciation Award, in recognition of service and dedication to the local community. Group Leaders have recommended that Mr Roger Tanner be nominated to receive this award.

RESOLVED that:

1. Roger Tanner be the agreed nomination to receive the Civic Appreciation Award for 2014.
2. That the ceremony for the award will take place at the Council meeting of 5th February 2014.

20

CONSTITUTION REVIEW - REPORT OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor informing Council that arising from the work which had been undertaken by the Constitution Working Group, there was a requirement to make changes to the Council's Constitution, details of which were outlined in the report. The Mayor advised the meeting that the recommendation at 2.2 of the report had now been removed and Members should note that the individual Councillor Budget referred to in paragraph 3.1 was £3,000 and not £2,000 as stated.

Councillor McMahon MOVED the report and Councillor Akhtar SECONDED the report with these changes.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Sykes MOVED and Councillor Thompson SECONDED the following Amendment:

"That Section 3 – Supporting Local Leaders – (Page 176 of the Council Green Book) – be removed from the report in its entirety."

Without debate the Amendment was put to the vote.

On being put to the vote FOURTEEN VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT and FORTY TWO VOTES cast AGAINST with ONE ABSTENTION. The AMENDMENT was therefore lost.

A vote was then taken on the Report.

On being put to the vote FORTY TWO VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR OF ACCEPTING THE REPORT and FOURTEEN VOTES cast AGAINST with ONE ABSTENTION.

RESOLVED that, subject to the removal of the recommendation at 2.2 of the report and the fact that the individual Councillor Budget referred to in paragraph 3.1 stood at £3,000, be noted, the recommendations, as outlined in the report, be approved and the Borough Solicitor be authorised to make any consequential amendments to the Council's Constitution.

21

UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor informing Members of actions that had been taken following previous Council meetings and providing feedback on other issues raised at the meeting.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 10.05 pm

