

Present: The Mayor – Councillor Hussain (Chair)

Councillors Ahmad, Akhtar, Alcock, A. Alexander, G. Alexander, Ames, Azad, Ball, M Bashforth, S Bashforth, Bates, Briggs, Brownridge, A Chadderton, Chauhan, Cosgrove, Dawson, Dean, Dearden, J Dillon, Fielding, Garry, Haque, Harkness, Harrison, Heffernan, Hibbert, Houle, Hudson, Iqbal, Jabbar, Judge, Kirkham, Klonowski, Larkin, Malik, McCann, McLaren, McMahan, Moores, Murphy, Mushtaq, Price, Qumer, Rehman, Roberts, Salamat, Sedgwick, Shah, Sheldon, Shuttleworth, Stretton, Sykes, Toor, Williamson, Williams and Wrigglesworth

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

The Mayor advised the meeting that the first item on the agenda in Open Council was Public Question Time. The questions had been received from members of the public and would be taken in the order in which they had been received. Council was advised that if the questioner was not present, then the question would appear on the screen in the Council Chamber.

The following public questions had been submitted: (20 mins)

1. Question from Peter Davis via email:

“When UKIP Councillor Warren Bates was elected last May in Failsworth West, he said he was going to put Failsworth back on the map. So when I looked at his Annual Report of Activities, I was shocked to see what he had reported, you could have fitted his achievements on a postage stamp.

I asked a question at the last Full Council Meeting, when Cllr Bates had made pledges at previous election campaigns to donate half his allowance to charity, Council confirmed Cllr Bates had claimed his full entitlement to allowances and gave him the opportunity to respond, which he refused to do despite the Mayor giving him opportunity several times, he responded by saying no comment.

Since then I have learnt that Councillor Bates has been in front of the Standard's Committee after a number of complaints that he has been found to have disrespected an 84 year old former soldier and received a three month ban from Failsworth Town Hall when The Failsworth Historical Society holds its meetings. Would Council agree that his actions have brought the role of Councillor into disrepute?”

Mr. Davis asked his question.

Councillor McMahan, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and City Region responded thanks for his question. He expressed his disappointment with recent events. He explained the annual report provides information as

to what councillors were doing in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Elected Members were offered support and training to help complete the form. The way the report had been completed appeared disrespectful of the process. The Standards complaint would be discussed later on the agenda. The public have a right to be treated with respect and on this occasion the Councillor fell short of expectations. A lot of time had been taken in dealing with complaint and counter complaints which was not a good use of officer and member time.

2. Question from Maria Dawn Ellis via email:

"I am Maria Ellis, chairperson of Peace Talks Oldham - We support the message of Mr Prem Rawat, given the title "The Ambassador of Peace" by the European Parliament. He has traveled worldwide for almost 50 years, with the message that "Peace is Possible".

Firstly I would like to thank Oldham Council & the Mayor for their support for the Peace Day event at Gallery Oldham on Saturday 20th September. Simon Shuttleworth and the District Partnership were very helpful & we are proud to report that 236 people attended the 4 hour event. WE were told that of all the events running throughout the UK for Peace Day, Oldham had the best attendance. As a group WE have held activities previously in Oldham and Manchester but never had an event like the one the Council helped us stage, or had so many attend! Peace Talks Oldham have recently signed the Pledge To Peace, established in 2011 by the European Parliament. The document suggests that ideal signatories include "Local Government Institutions".

I understand that later in this meeting Oldham Council will discuss becoming the first Local Authority to sign The Pledge To Peace. I would like to congratulate the Council for considering this proposal.

I am pleased that the Council wishes to host a 2nd event on Saturday 19th September at the Gallery. This is part of our 2015 Peace Plan submitted to the Pledge To Peace. It could also be a commitment made by the Council as a signatory.

Peace Talks Oldham attended the "Making A Difference" conference last year & saw it as a positive step forward to running more Peace activities in the Borough.

Following the conference WE visited Warrington Peace Centre & established links with Oldham Interfaith Forum. WE hope to work with both organisations this year.

My question is – would the Council please consider working with us to create a peace plan for the borough? This need not cost much and give you recognition as the first local Council to sign the Pledge to Peace!"

Ms. Ellis asked her question.

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Cooperatives thanked Ms. Ellis for her question and that it was encouraging that the event was a success. The Council recognised the importance of such initiatives in helping to foster

better relationships between the communities of Oldham. The Council would be discussing the Pledge to Peace later on the agenda. The Council undertakes a range of work to build community relations and to resolve and manage conflict which included the proposed event in September in support of International Peace Day. The Council was pleased to work in supporting this and related initiatives.

3. Question received from Janet Feltham via email:

"I am very concerned about two matters relating to Cop Road/Bullcote Lane Shaw. Firstly the condition of the road surface and the deep potholes that need to be repaired. Secondly and a more important concern is the number of children who use the road to walk to school. The problem is not the walking children - they should be commended for walking to school but the concern is the dangerous lack of pavements for the students to use for their safety. The road is narrow with many bends and for the most part unlit - a child walking in a dark school uniform on winter mornings or afternoons is in danger from vehicles using the road. As a driver one is concentrating on avoiding the deep potholes - bends in the road and oncoming cars. Then suddenly there is a child in the road. I fear it will take the serious injury or worse the death of a child before any action is taken. I would like to know if the Council is going to take some action regarding the dangerous situation as outlined in my email and provide paths - lighting and repair the many deep potholes on Cop Road/Bullcote Lane."

Councillor David Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport responded that a Highway Improvement Scheme had been approved and was programmed to be constructed within the next few months. The scheme involved a short stretch of carriageway widening works and the provision of a footway and street lights around the sharp bend adjacent to Bullcote Farm. The condition of the carriageway would be addressed following this work. The level of the repair would be dependent on the budget available in the 2015/16 financial year.

4. Question received from Louie Hamblett via email:

"It must be noted that we used to use the camera car in this area but since the proposed change in legalisation by Government we have not been able to do so."

"In response to Cllr Stretton's reply first of all thank you for the promised additional enforcement action. I would welcome an update on the effectiveness of this activity. But I would like to ask why has the Council already ceased to use camera cars given the Deregulation Bill has not yet received Royal Assent?"

Councillor Stretton, Cabinet Member for Town Centres, Culture and Tourism responded that the government had interfered with the use of CCTV. It was about safety and never about money. It was sensible to restrict the use to areas around schools and bus routes. When the bill becomes an Act, it would be enforced

as stringent as allowed with a focus on road safety. Councillor Stretton confirmed the enforcement officers visited Market Street on a regular basis and would ask for patrols to be increased in the area.



5. Question received from Frank Whitehead via email:

“Dear Members of Oldham Council,
I live at number 13 The Link in High Crompton Shaw, we have a problem with inadequate Street Lighting. When the lighting was upgraded { ? }, modernized, we were told that although the number of lights on the street was being reduced the quality of the light would be improved. This has not proved to be true, the two lights on the street nearest to our house cast very little light in our direction, such that from our front room we can only see darkness outside on the street. We can vaguely make out if someone is moving, but lose all sight of them if they stop, we could not possibly recognize them. This can be extremely worrying when someone is at home by themselves.

Is there any possibility that additional street lights could be provided, or that at least the present lights could be made brighter.”

Councillor David Hibbert, Cabinet member for Housing, Planning and Transport responded to the concerns over the lighting levels. The Council had entered into a Street Lighting Private Finance which would see 80% of the street lighting columns replaced within the Borough by next June and the replacement lighting needed to be installed to a particular standard. Councillor Hibbert would arrange for a Council officer to arrange a meeting to ensure the lighting was compliant.

6. Question received from Chris Gloster via email:

“The ramped pathway from Dawn Street, Shaw into ASDA’s car park was fitted as part of a planning application for the ASDA drive through store facility several months ago.

Despite the drive through being in daily use, a dropped kerb, part of the planning agreement to aid wheelchair and push chair access and egress, has not been provided.

Will the Council take action to ensure a dropped kerb is fitted as soon as possible?”

Councillor David Hibbert, Cabinet member for Housing, Planning and Transport, responded and thanked for bringing this to his attention. He had asked officers from Planning to investigate the issue and report back to him and to Mr. Gloster.

7. Question received from Julia Turner via email:

“I am really disappointed to see the tennis courts have been closed at High Crompton Park due to surface damage.

Now the clocks have gone forward and we have lighter nights and hopefully some good weather ahead of us, will Council please authorise funds for repairs or replacement as soon as possible so this facility can be used to its full potential.”



Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Cooperatives responded that the tennis courts had suffered over the winter period. The Council was getting estimates and would seek funding to make the repairs.

8. Question received from Stephen Barrow via email:

“West Street and Dawson Street in Lees have been reported to this Council on at least four occasions by residents as in need of urgent repairs. I understand that promises of action were given to some residents that broken and dangerous roads would be repaired as soon as possible.

Given that other roads in the borough have been repaired it looks like Lees residents are being ignored. Can we now please have a true time scale as to when the relaying of these two streets will take place or at least a date when repair will be completed?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport, responded that there were no actionable defects and was not a significant risk to the asset. However, it was on the list to be resurfaced when the relevant budget became available and reviewed for alternative solutions. The two outstanding repair orders for West Street would remain on the list for resurfacing until a budget became available.

9. Question from Stuart Taft received via email:

““What difference would the Devolution make to Oldham in general and where would the money for the NHS be spent in relation to Oldham's Health Services after the elections?”

Councillor Harrison, Cabinet Member for Social Care and Public Health responded that the deal announced in March saw NHS England, 12 Clinical Commissioning Groups, 15 NHS providers and the local authorities including Oldham agreed a framework for health and social care – with plans for joint decision making on integrated care to support physical, mental and social wellbeing. The devolution of responsibilities to GM would see a combined £6bn of Health and Social Care budgets transferred to the region. This budget covered the whole of the health and care system and would create an agreement that bound together the 10 GM locality budgets and plans within a single GM framework. It was important to clarify that this was not the creation of a single GM Health & Social Care budget.

The intention was to have full devolution of agreed budget with preferred governance arrangements and underpinned GM and local agreements in place by April 2016.

This was an early step on the road for devolution of decisions and budgets to regional level and it was welcome. It was believed a better and more efficient way to delivery services could be created that were arranged around people, not institutional silos. Health and Social Care has some of the best and highly-regarded frontline workers and they, like the Council, recognised there were gaps in the current system would only be resolved through true integration.

Implications for Oldham were still being considered as further detail on the form and functions of devolution evolved. A Member Working Group would be established to develop and local understanding of the implication of devolved health and social care decision making powers and budgets.

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

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

1. Councillor Sedgwick to Councillor Chadderton:

““Recently the Cabinet Member for Education stated that "The children of Saddleworth do not deserve to be educated in second-rate buildings." Whilst acknowledging that this referred to secondary education, I should like to draw her attention to a school in my Ward - Springhead Infant and Nursery School – where the fabric of the building does not even come up to the standard of second rate.

This school is over 100 years old and is probably the oldest non Church school in the Borough. The Governors have for many years been campaigning to make necessary repairs and improvements to the environment for both staff and pupils. They have recently uncovered the 2013 Local Authority Condition Survey that highlighted over £500,000 of Priority 2 work which was deemed "Essential within 2 years", yet nothing has been done.

The Local Authority Suitability Survey, also from 2013, confirmed that even with £500,000 Priority 2 work completed the building would remain substantially unfit for purpose.

Would the Cabinet member confirm that repair is entirely uneconomical and illogical and that a new school building is now a priority?”

Councillor Chadderton, Cabinet Member for Education responded that she agreed that funding schools for repairs was uneconomical. The Government had taken away 45% of the budget and there was no money to build new schools. There was a strategy on bidding to national government which addressed both poor building conditions and additional pupil places. She was aware of the issues at Springhead and these were being addressed by the Capital Investment Programme Board to fund the repairs. With the funding available, repairs were necessary at this time.

2. Councillor Haque to Councillor Hibbert:

“United Utilities have announced a major scheme to upgrade Oldham’s wastewater system – with the aim of improving water quality in the River Irk which borders Chadderton North.

We are told that the works will involve the sinking of a pipeline between the Oldham wastewater treatment plant at Chadderton and Royton. The route of the pipeline running through Chadderton North. It is anticipated that the work will commence this summer.

Can the cabinet member responsible, please provide advice on what measures will be in place to mitigate the anticipated disruption and inform residents of activity during the construction phase.“

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport responded that this was a major civil engineering project and United Utilities have asked for comments and involvement of affected parties. The first public consultation had taken place over a year ago. With each public the feedback received affected the route of the pipeline and the build-ability and the arrangement of the planned construction phase.

Works were in the planning stage and every reasonable measure would be taken to minimise disruption to the livelihoods of residents, shop owners and business. Detailed traffic management proposals were yet to be discussed with United Utilities but initial discussions undertaken with them stipulated that the Highway Authority would not support the total closures of main routes such as Middleton Road and Foxdenton Lane unless absolutely necessary. The temporary traffic management would aim to minimise disruption and keep construction time as short as possible. Closer to the actual works taking place, there would be further communication from United Utilities regarding the traffic management, the duration and details of the scheme.

Councillor Hibbert would keep everyone informed.

3. Councillor Sheldon to Councillor Hibbert:

“I would like to ask the cabinet member if he would consider the following suggestions.

To consider using land off Oaklands Road Greenfield as an extension to car parking for railway users.

To provide disabled access and general pedestrian access to both platforms by re-opening and modifying the existing tunnel under the railway tracks.

To plan a wider road bridge with greater visibility to replace the existing stone bridge at Greenfield Station when the electrification needs are met.

These suggestions will benefit the many users of Greenfield Station by creating car parking adjacent to the Station. The current parking provisions at Chapel Road, Saddleworth Rangers, Shaw Hall Bank Road, and Tesco are fast becoming inadequate for the current rail users.



The underground tunnel with lighting and security cameras will create an easy passage from each platform, and the metal steps and bridge could be removed.

The road bridge over the railway could be designed with greater visibility this would reduce the number of accidents which occur at this notorious junction. A wider bridge would also improve traffic flow at this road junction.

If requested I will be pleased to expand on these ideas with the cabinet member.”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport responded that Network Rail was developing a scheme to electrify the rail line between Manchester and Leeds which involved works to structures on the line through Saddleworth including Greenfield Station. Network Rail were unclear about the timescale but the Council would work for the best possible solution for all affected, not only on completion of the works but also during the construction stage. The suggestions made were welcome and would be considered as part of the process and Councillor Hibbert was happy to discuss them further.

In terms of the planned electrification the Council had been lobbying the Department for Transport, the MP for the area and Transport for Greater Manchester regarding the need for full disabled access provision at Greenfield Station. The Council were also engaged with Transport for Greater Manchester regarding the Invitation to Tender which had been issued for the Northern Rail franchise which was up for renewal and which could provide an opportunity to secure additional improvement at all rail stations which served Oldham residents including Greenfield. Councillor Hibbert would consult with local members and keep the community informed.

4. Councillor Heffernan to Councillor Hibbert:

“Errors in Satellite Navigation systems are still sending unsuspecting car and lorry drivers up many unsuitable narrow country lanes in Saddleworth instead of advising them to use the main road network.

Many drivers rely on Sat Navs when driving in unfamiliar areas and have found themselves stranded on narrow or unadapted roads or tracks when following Sat Nav instructions. In at least one instance that led to a large lorry being stranded for several hours causing great inconvenience to the driver and other road users.

Will the relevant Cabinet Member support me in calling on the current and the incoming Government to introduce the necessary legislation or regulation to force the Sat Nav companies to amend their software when they are notified of errors by car drivers, lorry drivers and Councils?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport, responded that much reliance was placed on the transportation for goods and services not just in the borough but across the country and it was vital that it arrived quickly and

efficiently. The increased use of satellite navigation technology placed on a greater responsibility on the providers of the mapping information to get it right. Councillor Hibbert offered his full support and that of officers.

5. Councillor Iqbal to Councillor McMahon:

“I was pleased to read that Hartford Mill could be demolished fairly soon. As we all know this site have been a Tip & eyesore for many years. Could the Cabinet Member please update the council & residents when we can look forward to the demolition starting?”

Councillor McMahon, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and City Region, responded that Cabinet had recently taken a decision with regard to Hartford Mill. There would be a planning application for demolition due to the current listed building status. This would be subject to discussions with English Heritage. It was hoped to have a solution soon and residents would see progress. Councillor McMahon thanked ward councillors for their support.

6. Councillor McCann to Councillor Harrison:

“The Greater Manchester devo max agreement should mean that ward councillors will be able to secure NHS services that are locally based and are more responsive to better meet the needs of their constituents.

With this in mind, in advance of devo max, would Oldham Council be willing to review the withdrawal of the Retinopathy Service from the Saddleworth Health Centre?

The Retinopathy Service takes an annual photo of the back of the eye of diabetic patients to detect early damage to the eye. Early detection ensures earlier treatment and helps prevent sight loss. It has previously been delivered from local centres in Coldhurst and Saddleworth, but now the NHS wants solely for its administrative convenience to deliver the service from centres in Oldham and Royton.

When a diabetic patient has their annual review, eye drops are administered to dilate the eye. This can affect sight for up to 6 hours, preventing driving or in some cases safe walking through busy streets, making the present change unreasonable and causes unnecessary difficulties for those affected.

It is especially disappointing that there was not any consultation amongst patients of the service prior to the changes being made.

I would like to ask the relevant Cabinet Member if they will support my demand that the Retinopathy Service be reinstated in Saddleworth?”

Councillor Harrison, Cabinet Member for Social Care and Public Health responded that the Devolution for Greater Manchester was an opportunity for all partners to work together to achieve better health outcomes for all residents however specific arrangements were yet to be fully determined.

NHS England had lead responsibility for commissioning Diabetic Retinopathy Screening services for Oldham residents and services for Oldham residents and as part of its Public Health role, Oldham Council had responsibility for seeking assurance from NHS England that screening services were in place and supported local efforts for an increase in uptake.



The Council had sought assurance from NHS England and were made aware that local Diabetic Retinopathy Screening provision was reviewed last year. The review was in response to concerns that the quality of the service provision may have fallen below than expected and as a result interim changes had been made.

The interim arrangements were intended to ensure the right patient outcomes and services quality was achieved. These included maintaining high quality screening (equipment moved around to several sites which could result in poor quality screening images), being able to offer sufficient appointment times and reduction of travel times.

NHS England stated that they were now working with Pennine Acute Hospitals Trust to undertake a formal review to establish longer term configuration of services which would include engagement with patients and other stakeholders.

Accessibility, transport and appointment times would be key considerations and they would be working to ensure that the needs of patients were central to how services were designed.

The Council (Health and Wellbeing Board) would seek continued assurance from NHS England regarding these arrangements going forward.

7. Councillor Shuttleworth to Councillor Hibbert

“May I first of all begin by offering sincere congratulations to all those members of staff, employed either by Oldham Council or Unity Partnership, for once more securing much needed funding for the maintenance and/or reinstatement of the highways throughout the borough of Oldham.

As result of this very welcome news may I ask the appropriate Cabinet Member to put some flesh on the bones and outline how this funding may improve the highways within my own ward of Chadderton South, and I feel certain that other elected members, not to mention residents, will look forward to hearing how this will impact within their own areas.”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport, responded that the award of the challenge fund would allow improvements to the carriageway condition of the A62 Manchester Road between the M60 and Manchester Street Roundabout which included sections of Drury Lane to Spencer Street that falls within Chadderton South. The challenge fund would also improve the condition of the A62 Oldham Way and necessary maintenance of Middleton Road bridge.

The A62 Manchester Road and the A62 Oldham Way formed part of the Gateway Corridor Programme and required further investment to ensure the ongoing 24 hour maintenance promise and would no longer funding out of the LTP budget. Councillor Hibbert passed on congratulations the teams on the bids and noted they had a record of success which should be supported and recognised. The fund would free up money that would have been allocated otherwise.

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

RESOLVED that the questions and the responses provided be noted.

2 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Blyth and Ur-Rehman.

3 **TO ORDER THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 4TH FEBRUARY 2015 AND 25TH FEBRUARY 2015 BE SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council Meetings held on 4th February 2015 and 25th February 2015 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, Councillors Judge, Shuttleworth and Heffernan declared a personal prejudicial interest in Item 11, Cabinet Minutes, 23 February 2015 by virtue of being a Board Member of the Oldham Coliseum; Councillors Brownridge and Stretton declared a personal interest in Item 11, Cabinet Minutes, 23 February 2015 by virtue of being a member of the Shadow Board of Oldham Coliseum; Councillors Brownridge, Chauhan, Harrison and McCann declared a personal interest in Item 14b – Minutes of the Oldham Care and Support and Oldham Care and Support At Home Company by virtue of their appointment to the Board. Councillor Akhtar declared a personal interest in Item 11, Cabinet Minutes 23 February 2015, items 15 and 25. Councillor Ahmad declared a personal interest in Item 15, by virtue of his appointment as a Non-Executive Director at the Pennine Acute Hospital Trust. Councillor McMahon declared a personal interest in Item 14a and 15 by virtue of his appointment to GMCA / AGMA Executive. Councillor Sheldon declared a pecuniary interest in 3 by virtue of his business in the Saddleworth area.

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 advised the meeting that no items had been received related to the business of the Council.

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

The Mayor advised that two petitions had been received for noting by Council:

Neighbourhoods and Cooperatives

Save Our Youth Services (e-petitions started 6th October 2014 and closed 27th February 2015) (773 signatures) (Ref 2014-20)

Request for Road Humps, Waverley Street, Derker, Oldham (received 5th February 2015) (51 signatures) (Ref 2015-05)

RESOLVED that the petitions received since the last meeting of the Council be noted.

8 OUTSTANDING BUSINESS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Mayor informed the meeting that there were two items of outstanding business from the previous meeting.

"Motion 1

Councillor Akhtar **MOVED** and Councillor Ball **SECONDED** the following Motion:

The New Economy recently published a report which reviewed the impact of benefit sanctions. This has been reviewed by the Oldham Poverty Action Group and local data collected through a workshop. The Group has stated that:

- The sanctions system itself is complex and the wording in official letters is difficult to understand. Local residents do not know they can access hardship payments from the DWP and are not clear about Local Welfare Provision.
- Many organisations that work to support claimants believe that sanctions are applied when they shouldn't be. For example when there are exceptional circumstances that have led to the claimants actions e.g. when a person is sanctioned for not attending an interview when the letter inviting them arrived after the date of the meeting.
- People who are already vulnerable are often more likely to incur sanctions e.g. concerns were expressed about

people with mental ill health and with poor literacy/numeracy skills.

- Overall there seems to be less support services available to help people facing multiple disadvantages who are affected by sanctions which means people are left isolated and need to turn to charitable help.



According to the Children in Poverty Action Group only about one third of sanctioned claimants appeal and yet 56% are successful at getting the sanction overturned which implies that confidence and understanding about the appeal process is likely to be poorly understood and that too many sanctions probably shouldn't have been applied. A number of work clubs in Oldham are now trying to support claimants with the appeal process and it appears that where claimants have skills issues (e.g. literacy issues) that they will not engage in submitting appeals. I thereby call on the Chief Executive to write to the Government asking it to urgently review its approach to sanctioning. It is accepted that sometimes sanctions are required but there should be a fairness test and clear support pathways for those sanctioned.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Sykes MOVED and Councillor McCann SECONDED the following amendment:

"Insert before the start of the motion:

'This Council notes that:

- Benefit claimants enter into a Claimant Commitment in which they agree to meet certain conditions in return for benefit payments, referred to as "conditionality".
- Sanctions are imposed when a claimant fails to satisfy "conditionality" without "good reason".

This Council wishes to ensure that local benefit claimants are made aware of:

- The advice and support available from Job Centre Plus, Get Oldham Working and the Oldham Work Club Network.
- The importance of meeting "conditionality" and of furnishing "good reason" as soon as possible where they cannot do so.
- Their right to appeal against sanctions, and the support that is available to them from the Citizens' Advice Bureau and the Welfare Rights team.
- Their right to apply for a Hardship Payment or for Local Welfare Provision, and the importance of refreshing their claim for Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support should they be sanctioned'.

Delete: 'The' before New Economy in the First Line of the original motion.

Replace: 'Oldham Poverty Action Group' with 'VAO Poverty Agenda Group' in the Second Line of the original motion.

Replace: 'Children in Poverty Action Group' with 'Child Poverty Action Group' in the Eighteenth Line of the original motion.



Insert after the end of the Twenty Fourth Line of the original motion ending 'submitting appeals' the following wording and bullet points:

'Council therefore welcomes:

- The recent publication of the Oakley Review with its many recommendations to improve communications and support from Job Centre Plus staff to help claimants meet "conditionality", avoid sanctions, access hardship payments, and appeal.
- The recent publication of a report by the Work and Pensions Select Committee following an inquiry into "the purpose, effects and efficacy of benefit sanctions" and whether their use is "appropriate and proportionate" for jobseekers with ill health and disabilities.
- The recent work at the Oldham Job Centre, in conjunction with the Oldham Housing Investment Partnership, to develop a pilot training project for roll-out to external advisors so they are better able to help claimants meet "conditionality".
- The publication of the Sanctions Toolkit for advisors by the Salvation Army.'

Delete in the Twenty Fifth Line of the original motion: 'I thereby call on the Chief Executive to urgently review its approach to sanctioning'.

Insert at the end of the original motion the following wording and bullet points:

'Council therefore resolves to:

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the next Secretary of State for Work and Pensions asking the new Government to:
 - o Adopt all of the Oakley Review recommendations
 - o Adopt all of the recommendations resulting from the recent Work and Pension Select Committee's inquiry
 - o Establish a broad independent review of benefit conditionality and sanctions as soon as is practicable in the next Parliament
- Ask the Chief Executive to specifically reference in her letter two of the recommendations arising from the recent Work and Pension Select Committee's inquiry, namely that:
 - o In advance of new legislation, there should be pilot areas where a written warning and a non-financial sanction (a so called "yellow card") is employed where a claimant fails in the first instance to meet conditionality
 - o A Vulnerability Guide should be developed, in conjunction with healthcare professionals and local welfare-to-work agencies, for use by Job Centre staff with vulnerable claimants

And ask the Chief Executive to request in her letter that Oldham be the location of pilot projects for testing these concepts.

- Ask the Overview and Scrutiny Board to convene a special workshop to which elected members, Job Centre staff and representatives from relevant local agencies can be invited to establish "best practice" in the application of benefit sanctions, particularly where applied to vulnerable claimants.
- Ask the appropriate Cabinet Member and officers to work with the Employer and Partnership Manager at the

Oldham Job Centre and with the Chair of the VAO Poverty Agenda Group to support the roll out of the recently developed Job Centre training programme for advisors working with claimants.

- Ask the appropriate Cabinet Member to ensure that the Sanctions Toolkit is distributed electronically as widely as possible to advisors and relevant organisations by the District Partnership Teams’.



The motion as amended would then read:

“This Council notes that:

- Benefit claimants enter into a Claimant Commitment in which they agree to meet certain conditions in return for benefit payments, referred to as “conditionality”.
- Sanctions are imposed when a claimant fails to satisfy “conditionality” without “good reason”.

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This Council wishes to ensure that local benefit claimants are made aware of:

- The advice and support available from Job Centre Plus, Get Oldham Working and the Oldham Work Club Network;
- The importance of meeting “conditionality” and of furnishing “good reason” as soon as possible where they cannot do so.
- Their right to appeal against sanctions, and the support that is available to them from the Citizens’ Advice Bureau and the Welfare Rights team.
- Their right to apply for a Hardship Payment or for Local Welfare Provision, and the importance of refreshing their claim for Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support should they be sanctioned.

New Economy recently published a report which reviewed the impact of benefit sanctions. This has been reviewed by the VAO Poverty Agenda Group and local data collected through a workshop. The Group has stated that:

- The sanctions system itself is complex and the wording in official letters is difficult to understand. Local residents do not know they can access hardship payments from the DWP and are not clear about Local Welfare Provision.
- Many organisations that work to support claimants believe that sanctions are applied when they shouldn’t be. For example when there are exceptional circumstances that have led to the claimants actions, e.g. when a person is sanctioned for not attending an interview when the letter inviting them arrived after the date of the meeting.
- People who are already vulnerable are often more likely to incur sanctions e.g. concerns were expressed about people with mental ill health and with poor literacy/numeracy skills.
- Overall there seems to be less support services available to help people facing multiple disadvantages who are affected by sanctions which means people are left isolated and need to turn to charitable help.

According to the Child Poverty Action Group only about one third of sanctioned claimants appeal and yet 56% are successful at getting the sanction overturned which implies that confidence and understanding about the appeal process is likely to be poorly understood and that too many sanctions probably shouldn't have been applied. A number of work clubs in Oldham are now trying to support claimants with the appeal process and it appears that where claimants have skills issues (e.g. literacy issues) that they will not engage in submitting appeals. It is accepted that sometimes sanctions are required but there should be a fairness test and clear support pathways for those sanctioned.

Council therefore welcomes:

- The recent publication of the Oakley Review with its many recommendations to improve communications and support from Job Centre Plus staff to help claimants meet “conditionality”, avoid sanctions, access hardship payments, and appeal
- The recent publication of a report by the Work and Pensions Select Committee following an inquiry into “the purpose, effects and efficacy of benefit sanctions” and whether their use is “appropriate and proportionate” for jobseekers with ill health and disabilities.
- The recent work at the Oldham Job Centre, in conjunction with the Oldham Housing Investment Partnership, to develop a pilot training project for roll-out to external advisors so they are better able to help claimants meet “conditionality”.
- The publication of the Sanctions Toolkit for advisors by the Salvation Army.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the next Secretary of State for Work and Pensions asking the new Government to:
 - o Adopt all of the Oakley Review recommendations
 - o Adopt all of the recommendations resulting from the recent Work and Pension Select Committee’s inquiry
 - o Establish a broad independent review of benefit conditionality and sanctions as soon as is practicable in the next Parliament
- Ask the Chief Executive to specifically reference in her letter two of the recommendations arising from the recent Work and Pension Select Committee’s inquiry, namely that:
 - o In advance of new legislation, there should be pilot areas where a written warning and a non-financial sanction (a so called “yellow card”) is employed where a claimant fails in the first instance to meet conditionality
 - o A Vulnerability Guide should be developed, in conjunction with healthcare professionals and local welfare-to-work agencies, for use by Job Centre staff with vulnerable claimants

And ask the Chief Executive to request in her letter that Oldham be the location of pilot projects for testing these concepts.

- Ask the Overview and Scrutiny Board to convene a special workshop to which elected members, Job Centre staff and representatives from relevant local agencies can be invited

- to establish “best practice” in the application of benefit sanctions, particularly where applied to vulnerable claimants.
- Ask the appropriate Cabinet Member and officers to work with the Employer and Partnership Manager at the Oldham Job Centre and with the Chair of the VAO Poverty Agenda Group to support the roll out of the recently developed Job Centre training programme for advisors working with claimants.
 - Ask the appropriate Cabinet Member to ensure that the Sanctions Toolkit is distributed electronically as widely as possible to advisors and relevant organisations by the District Partnership Team.”

A vote was then taken on the AMENDMENT.

On being put to the VOTE, FOURTEEN VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with FORTY THREE VOTES cast AGAINST and NO ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST.

Councillor Akhtar did not exercise his right of reply.

A vote was then taken on the ORIGINAL MOTION.

On being put to the vote FORTY FIVE VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the MOTION with THREE VOTES AGAINST and NINE ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the Chief Executive write to the Government asking it to urgently review its approach to sanctioning. It is accepted that sometimes sanctions are required but there should be a fairness test and clear support pathways for those sanctioned.

The Mayor informed the meeting that the time limit had expired for this item.

Motion 2

The Mayor informed the meeting that the time limit for this item had expired and Councillor Briggs as Mover of the Motion and Councillor Judge, as Seconder of the Motion, requested that the MOTION be put to the VOTE.

Councillor Briggs MOVED and Councillor Judge SECONDED

This Council recognises the hazards caused by Sky Lanterns (also known as Chinese Lanterns).

Sky Lanterns have given rise to a number of serious safety concerns including:

- The risk to human life, especially to those who are members of the emergency services
- Risks to Pets, livestock, birds, wildlife and marine life.
- Fires and damage to property and vehicles.
- The impact on the environment, including littering.

Sky Lanterns were responsible for the fire at the Smethwick Recycling Plant in June 2013, which resulted in damage totalling around £6m. They have also been responsible for 62 fires within Greater Manchester.

Death and injury has been inflicted on Pets, livestock, birds, wildlife and marine life mainly through ingestion and entrapment caused by the lanterns wire frames.

The RSPCA, Fire and Rescue Authorities, farmers and vets have all warned of the dangers of Sky Lanterns. They have also been banned in several other countries including Australia, Spain and Germany.

This Council therefore, resolves to ban the sale and use of sky lanterns on any of its property or premises.

In addition, that the Council resolves to write to our three local Members of Parliament and urges them to support Early Day Motion 266 which states: *'That this House expresses concern regarding the use of sky lanterns, also known as Chinese lanterns and their impact on livestock, crops and the environment; notes that Cleveland Fire Brigade recognises that the lanterns pose a serious fire safety hazard due to their uncontrolled and unpredictable flight paths; further notes the existence of a ban on their use in Spain as a result of damage to property and death or injury to livestock caused by discarded lanterns and increases on the fire service, police and medical emergency services; and urges the Government to act swiftly.'*

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Council ban the sale and use of sky lanterns on any of its property or premises.
2. The Council write to the three local Members of Parliament and urge them to support Early Day Motion 266 which states: *"That this House expresses concern regarding the use of sky lanterns, also known as Chinese lanterns and their impact on livestock, crops and the environment; notes that Cleveland Fire Brigade recognises that the lanterns pose a serious fire safety hazard due to their uncontrolled and unpredictable flight paths; further notes the existence of a ban on their use in Spain as a result of damage to property and death or injury to livestock caused by discarded lanterns and increases on the fire service, police and medical emergency services; and urges the Government to act swiftly.'*

The Mayor advised the meeting that there were no items of business received from the Youth Council.



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10

LEADER AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

The Leader of the Opposition raised the following three questions:

1. Introduction of the National Living Wage

“In December 2013 the Liberal Democrat Group brought a motion to Council proposing that Oldham Council become a National Living Wage Employer by April 2014.

The Leader will doubtless recall that in response to the motion that he made a personal commitment to ensure that every employee of this authority would be paid at least the National Living Wage by April 2015.

During the last Council Budget Meeting the Leader rightly paid tribute to the hard work and commitment of our employees, but in becoming a National Living Wage employer, this authority will commit itself to rewarding them fairly for their efforts and we will also set an example for other progressive employers in this Borough to follow.

My first question to the Leader tonight is two-fold – can he confirm that his commitment to introduce the National Living Wage for all staff will be honoured from today?

And can he also confirm whether home care workers and staff employed by contractors engaged by this Council will also receive the National Living Wage?”

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council responded that from today Council staff were in receipt of the National Living Wage and tied into the Fair Employment Charter. This gave the Council the credibility of getting its own house in order and extended to contractors as well as Oldham Care and Support. More businesses would be asked to share the effort to make Oldham a fair and decent town.

2. Renovation of Union Street West Footbridge

“I am pleased to see that the much-hated Manchester Street footbridge is now finally demolished.

The Leader will recall that I made reference to the need to demolish this footbridge in a question to Council last year, but in my question I also referred to the dilapidated state of Union Street West Bridge which links the town centre and the Sixth Form College to Coppice.

The £900,000 bridge was opened in 2000, but it has always been plagued with broken glass panels, caused by the natural

movement and flexing of the structure as pedestrians use it. Because of this the bridge is 'tinned up'.

This causes two problems the metal barriers obscure vision, which has led to instances of vandalism and out-of-sight attacks on passers-by.

It also crosses one of the main arterial roads in Oldham – the Oldham Way – it is an eyesore to the many motorists that daily pass by it. Not the sort of gate way feature any of us would want I am sure?

I am sure the Leader will agree that the risk to the safety of residents and the less than favourable impression of Oldham created by the current condition of footbridge are both reasons to find a solution as soon as possible.

I was pleased to hear that the Department of Transport has recently awarded Oldham Council £3.16m to upgrade parts of the A62 and the Oldham Way, including carrying out vital structural repair works to the Oldham Way Bridge over Middleton Road.

Please can the Leader tell me tonight whether any of this money from the Department of Transport will be used by this Administration to fix the Union Street West Bridge as it too spans Oldham Way and if so when?

If not these funds from the Department of Transport what is being done to tack this eye sore?

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, responded that thanks to the intervention of ward councillors who have pressed the issue, he was able to inform that following intervention, work would start this summer on repairs to the bridge.

3. E-on and Elected Members

At February's Council, the Leader responded to a question from my colleague, Councillor Dave Murphy, about the strained relationship between E-on and Elected Members in Shaw and Crompton.

In his question, Councillor Murphy made specific reference to the fact that E-on had revised point-blank to send a representative in response to a specific invite to attend a meeting of the Shaw and Crompton District Partnership.

In the Leader's response he rightly expressed his "disappointment" that relations had not improved despite this issue being raised on several occasions in this Chamber and promised to send a letter to both the Community Lighting Partnership and to E-on to "make it absolutely clear that Ward Members need to be taken seriously."



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Could a copy of this letter be shared with all Elected Members please?



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Like Councillor Murphy and the Leader, I too am disappointed at the service received by residents and the responses received by their Councillors from E-on and the Community Lighting Partnership and I too want to see something done about it.

Members of the public concur with this view judging by the number of letters and emails we continue to receive from irate constituents.

This contract is costing the council tax payers of Oldham many millions of pounds and we have the right to expect more from the contractors so I am sure that Councillors and constituents alike will be keen to hear whether the promised letter has been sent and what if any the reply was.

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, responded that the issues were part of a commercial contract, the matter was being taken seriously and suggested that a meeting be convened with officers and E-on to determine what action was being taken.

The Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Hudson, raised the following question:

Councillor Hudson referred to and welcomed being a Cooperative Borough helping with police facilities, that this had been done in Failsworth and asked if other districts would have the same chance to help with police activities.

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, responded "Yes".

The Leader of the UKIP Group, Councillor Peter Klonowski referred to Bury Council moving to a waste collection every three week and asked if there were plans to do the same in Oldham.

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, responded "No".

Members raised the following questions:

Councillor Mushtaq to Councillor Hibbert:

1. Councillor Mushtaq to Councillor Hibbert:

"A number of residents have raised the issue of potholes and the road works taking place around the borough. The issues are not in relation to the number of potholes or road works taking place rather the quality of the work being carried out.

The quality of the work or the materials is being questioned on the basis that once surfaces have been re-laid it's not long before the same surfaces are showing signs of disrepair. Reference has been made to utility and other companies carrying out work and weakening road surfaces which

consequently cause longer lasting damage that becomes apparent after a delayed period of time.

Can the relevant Cabinet member shed any light on these issues? Are we aware of the longevity of repairs carried out on our roads and the impact of other companies' works on the structure of said roads? Or is this simply the outcome of increased traffic on our roads juxtaposed with adverse weather conditions?"

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport responded that currently throughout the Borough the second year of the Gateway/Corridor Programme to raise the quality of highways surfacing conditions on 9 key routes to the level that the 24 hour repair promise could be implemented continued. This meant that in order to achieve the greatest possible benefit, a range of surfacing interventions had been utilised which included the micro-asphalting surface dressing technique which was evident on many of the corridors to maximise the ongoing residual life of the carriageway in the most cost effective manner.

The technique, when combined with other more traditional methods, such as full hot rolled asphalt resurfacing maximised the length of the highway that was being managed in a planned rather than reactive way, thus reducing the burden on revenue funds for these routes. This would allow programmes of highways maintenance to be compiled over the next five years and beyond which actively predicted when those routes may require further intervention. It would also allow the limited revenue funds available to be optimised elsewhere on necessary reactive maintenance in the borough using the very cost effective and efficient jet patcher technique for potholes and small patches, thus having a more positive impact on these routes as well within available revenue resources.

All highways maintenance work carried out was subject to full supervision and any defects were repaired by the same contractor at their cost as part of their contractual obligations prior to the final account being agreed and paid, this ensured quality according to the appropriate specification was achieved.

To ensure that utility companies reinstatements were managed, Unity Partnership Ltd, on behalf of the Council, currently carried out utilities inspections under the New Road and Street Works Act 1991. 100% of Oldham's reinstatements were inspected, the statutory minimum was 10%, and for the past three years the Council had undergone an extensive programme of core testing which ensured material compliance.

During this period the Council had observed marked improvements to the quality of utility reinstatements from around 25% compliance in 2012 to over 60% compliance today.

2. Councillor Iqbal to Councillor Brownridge

“Over the last few years we have seen a proliferation of re-cycle cloth banks popping up all over the town. It seems that these big metal containers are appearing suddenly overnight and people are using these as a rubbish dump.

Could the Cabinet Member please advise what the council's policy is and what the council is doing to get these cloth bank banks regulated so that they require consent from the Council and local residents before they are placed in location. Also could we put an onus on the collection company to take all the contents and not just dump wanted items.”

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Cooperatives, responded that when the Council found out about the banks, the policy was to contact the organisation who had left the bank and ask them to remove it in five working days or it would be removed. If the bank had been left on the public highway the Council was able to deal with it, but not on private land.

3. Councillor Haque to Councillor Akhtar

““Can the relevant Cabinet Member please inform Council what progress is being made on the introduction of a fast broadband connection for Oldham.”

Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Employment and Enterprise responded that having access to faster broadband speeds was becoming more essential for everyday living and was certainly essential if local businesses were to reach their full growth potential. The Council had therefore invested £369,000 towards a Greater Manchester Broadband Programme which would ensure that 99.6% of the premises would have access to superfast broadband by the end of 2017. The programme was being delivered in 8 of the Greater Manchester authorities by BT and was in addition to the commercial expansion of superfast broadband planned by BT and other providers.

In addition, the Council had launched the broadband vouchers scheme in Oldham. This scheme gave a grant of up to £3000 to a business to pay towards the costs of getting connected. This would be available to all SME's in the Borough. Interested business should visit www.manchester.gov.uk/superconnected to register for the voucher scheme. There was only a limited amount of funding available nationally and was on a first come first served basis and businesses were urged to take up the opportunity as soon as possible.

If residents and businesses wanted to see whether they already had superfast broadband or when it would be provided in the future, they should look at the Get Digital website, www.get-digital-faster.info

4. Councillor Malik to Councillor Hibbert

“With fading white lines causing problems for motorists on our Streets and Roads, can the cabinet member please advise us what are the plans and how he intends to address the issues?”



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Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport, responded that the current maintenance budget set aside for road markings was limited to £45K per year and the budget was utilised as best as it could. It was recognised that there was more to be done in this areas and as a result an additional £200K had been allocated to the budget this year. Conditions of road markings throughout the borough were being assessed and an inspection of the whole principal road network had been completed which was 68 miles. A condition rating had been assigned to the various roads.

In order to prioritise the £200K road markings with a below average condition would be prioritised. In the first instance, this would be the A roads which carried the largest volume of traffic in the borough. This work had started and would continue over the coming weeks and would complement the 27 miles carriageway resurfacing work which had been carried out and where new road markings had been included.

5. Councillor Williamson to Councillor Chadderton

“Any employee has the right to carry out their duties in a safe and non-threatening working environment. Regrettably a recent Freedom of Information Act request has revealed that this is not the case for staff in Oldham’s schools.

Incidents involving threats, intimidation, or verbal/physical attacks on staff in our schools have increased from 39 (involving pupils) and 6 (involving parents of pupils) in 2010/11 to 127 (involving pupils) and 4 (involving parents, including 1 incident of an intoxicated parent verbally abusing the Head-teacher) in 2013/14.

I am sure that the Cabinet Member will be as shocked as I was to hear these figures. Can I therefore please ask the Cabinet Member what is being done to instil good behaviour and discipline amongst pupils and to impress on parents what is expected of them when they come into school to reduce the number and severity of these incidents? And can I also please ask the Cabinet Member to inform Council if any successful criminal prosecutions have been brought to punish offenders, whether pupils or parents?”

Councillor Chadderton, Cabinet Member for Education, responded that any threats, intimidation or verbal/physical attacks on staff in our schools were unacceptable and the Council worked in various ways to support schools in both preventing and tackling such behaviour by pupils or parents.

Schools were able to warn and ban parents where necessary and the Council’s legal team had supported this where necessary. Prosecutions were normally a matter for the police.

In partnership with the relevant trades unions and professional associations, officers were monitoring incidents and putting in actions as appropriate to address and prevent incidents of this nature.

6. Councillor Murphy to Councillor Hibbert

“Regrettably I need to refer the Cabinet Member to the tragic accidents that took place at the Milnrow Road / Crompton Way crossing in Shaw.

Thankfully a sizable Council investment has now led to a much safer crossing, but a large determinant in deciding upon the right course of action was the number of accidents that had historically occurred at this ‘black spot’.

At that time, it appeared to me that a significant point of dispute between our officers and members of the public related to the fact that the number of accidents ‘on the record’ was significantly lower than the number of actual accidents cited as having taken place ‘off the record’.

According to the Transport for Greater Manchester website – and I quote – “Road accident data is collected by the Greater Manchester Police. The number of injury accidents not known to the Greater Manchester Police is not easily identified. It would seem reasonable to assume that all ‘fatal’ accidents are reported, but these represent only a small proportion of the total. However, the limited evidence available indicates that ‘serious’ and ‘slight’ accidents are under reported. It has been assumed historically that 20% and 35% respectively have not been reported”.

The website also reports that understandably “Accidents that do not become known to the police” are excluded, but for some reason so too are those that “only become known 30 days or longer after their occurrence” and that “deaths or injuries occurring on the public highway without a vehicle being involved are not classed as road traffic accidents”.

Given these facts would the Cabinet Member agree with me that under-recording of accidents is occurring? And will he please ask Council officers to undertake a review with colleagues in Greater Manchester Police to ensure that data relating to ALL accidents on the public highway are recorded so that future decisions on measures to reduce accidents can be based on an appraisal of the full facts?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transport, responded that in response to the terrible accident that had occurred, the Council had reacted quickly, convened a meeting with the leaders of the group leaders, worked closely with ward councillors and officers and the new facility was installed.

Road traffic safety reporting followed the national standards and set out in the Department for Transport statistics and it was not

possible to change the process locally within Oldham or Greater Manchester. Injury data was used by engineers to inform safety measures if there were appropriate levels of intervention identified as well as extensive speed and volume surveys at crash locations. Councillor Hibbert committed to review the process, discuss with officers on responses which required better safety provision.



7. Councillor Sedgwick to Councillor Shah

“Increasingly public services are accessed on-line, especially now the Council is promoting My Account.

Unfortunately in Oldham many residents still do not have the necessary skills to use computers and many are still unable to access a computer at home.

The Council has published details of where computers may be accessed across the borough for free on its website, but unfortunately these details can only be accessed on-line.

Great if you have the wherewithal, but not much use if you don't have the skills to use a computer or a computer to use.

Can the Cabinet Member please tell me what support the Council is offering residents who are not computer literate so that they can access our on-line services?”

Councillor Arooj Shah, Deputy Cabinet Member for Policy and Communications, responded that a wide range of support services was offered to residents which included the promotion of online courses to get internet access, a series of events had been held, information had featured in the Borough Life publication as well as briefings for Councillor and staff in partner organisations. The Council was doing a tremendous amount of work.

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

RESOLVED that the questions asked and responses provided be noted.

11

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE UNDERMENTIONED DATES, INCLUDING THE ATTACHED LIST OF URGENT KEY DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL, AND TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR OBSERVATIONS ON ANY ITEMS WITHIN THE MINUTES FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE CABINET, AND RECEIVE RESPONSES FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Minutes for the meetings held on 26th January 2015 and 23rd February 2015 were submitted. The Mayor reminded the meeting that, as previously agreed by Council, the last eight minutes of this section would be reserved for observations on responses received and responses to observations.

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



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Councillor McCann – Cabinet meeting - 23 February 2015, Item 7(d), page 58, Welfare Reform, where it was resolved that “maximising the use of Discretionary Housing Payment to ensure the full amount of government grant was allocated”. Could the Cabinet Member confirm all funds allocated by the Government have now been disbursed and that no further administration costs over the £73,000 already spent have been incurred. Should there be any money left, advise how much is left and confirm this will be spent?”

Councillor Jabbar advised that Discretionary Housing Payments were additional payments which could be made to recipients who did not receive full Housing Benefit and cannot afford to make up the shortfall in their rent. In 2014/15 Oldham Council received funding from the DWP of £500,082 and keen to ensure that the full amount of the funding was spent to support residents in Oldham especially those affected by welfare form. He announced that for the year 2014/15 £506,908.51 Discretionary Housing Payments had been allocated to residents of Oldham. This was slightly above the amount awarded by the DWP with the additional amount being met by the Council. There were concerns about the level of support that could be provided for 2015/2016 as the DWP had nationally reduced the amount of money available for Discretionary Housing Payments. In Oldham funding had been reduced by 24.5% to £377,386. In relation to the cost of the administration for Discretionary Housing Payments, it was confirmed that there were no additional costs paid as it was within the overall costs of running the Benefits Services.

Members made the following observations:

1. Councillor Houle – Cabinet Meeting, 23rd February 2015 – page 58, Item 7 – Impact of Welfare Reform and expressed concerns on the number of residents impacted by sanctions which were the highest in Greater Manchester, the number of people who visited foodbanks, proposed further cuts in welfare and the probability of increased number of sanctions.
2. Councillor Harkness, Cabinet Meeting, 23rd February 2015 – page 62 – Item 13 - Proposed Disposal of Land at Ward Lane Diggle, Oldham (Asset 987) – Councillors had met with residents and assets team, councillors had supported the scheme for land to be sold for housing but had wanted social housing, eco scheme and self-build scheme which would benefit first time buyers and expressed disappointment that the Cabinet had agreed more executive housing.
3. Councillor Heffernan – Cabinet meeting – 23rd February 2015, page 57 and 65, Agenda Items 6 and 21 – Oldham Coliseum Theatre and Heritage Centre – Project

Implementation – expressing delight that a report had been presented for the replacement of the Coliseum and gave his support to the scheme going forward.



RESOLVED that:

1. the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 26th January 2015 and 23rd February 2015 be noted.
2. The questions and observations on the Cabinet Minutes be noted.

12

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Motion 1

Councillor Akhtar MOVED and Councillor Chadderton
SECONDED

“This Council notes with great concern the announcement made by this Liberal Democrat/Tory Government of a further 25% reduction in the budget for adult skills for 2015/16.

This adult budget is the money which funds adults returning to education who have not achieved through the school system. It includes money which we use to fund 19 year olds who have not completed their Level 2 or Level 3 courses by the age of 18 (either because of their low attainment at 16, or other factors in their lives).

It also funds adults of any age coming back into education later in life, and it supports English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) which plays such an important role in community cohesion.

The serious negative impact of this cut on Oldham should not be underestimated.

Currently, 60% of Oldham resident adults hold qualifications no higher than Level 2. As high skilled jobs in the City Region demand a skill level of 4-6, and it is estimated that 50% of future jobs will require this level of skills.

Indeed, many of those 60% of adults, who did not achieve well at school, will simply be stuck in a low skilled, low paid trap - the consequences of these cuts will greatly influence the future of our town.

The Council resolves:

- To instruct to the Chief Executive to write to the appropriate government minister immediately after the General Election upon the forming of the next government, expressing the councils concern in regards to the future of adult skills funding.
- To ask our three Members of Parliament after the General Election to lobby the appropriate Secretary of State in regards to adult skills and its future funding, emphasising the specific concerns raised in regards to Oldham.”

AMENDMENT

Councillor Harkness MOVED and Councillor Williams
SECONDED



“This Council notes:

- with great concern the announcement made by the Coalition Government of a further 25% reduction in the budget for adult skills for 2015/16.

This adult budget is the money which funds adults returning to education who have not achieved through the school system. It includes money which we use to fund 19 year olds who have not completed their Level 2 or Level 3 courses by the age of 18 (either because of their low attainment at 16, or other factors in their lives).

It also funds adults of any age coming back into education later in life, and it supports English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) which plays such an important role in community cohesion.

The serious negative impact of this cut on Oldham should not be underestimated.

Currently, 60% of Oldham resident adults hold qualifications no higher than Level 2. As high skilled jobs in the City Region demand a skill level of 4-6, and it is estimated that 50% of future jobs will require this level of skills.

Indeed, many of those 60% of adults, who did not achieve well at school, will simply be stuck in a low skilled, low paid trap - the consequences of these cuts will greatly influence the future of our town.

- that in addition to Government making a commitment to education from 'cradle to college', there needs to be a long-term financial settlement for post 18 education, including funding for adults seeking to return to a learning environment to re-skill for a new career later in life.

- that compared to the provisions for higher education and apprenticeships for the 18-24 age group post-25 adult education is poorly treated while this is likely to become over time an increasingly important part of the educational system of the country.

- that the devolution of the £2 billion annual skills budget by the Coalition Government to a new Greater Manchester authority, led by an elected Mayor, provides a unique opportunity to invest to address skills shortages amongst the current and future workforce of the City Region.

- that the strategy and practical application of the devolved budget will fall under the remit of a revitalised Greater Manchester Skills and Employment Partnership.

- that it is therefore imperative that Oldham Council be fully involved in the work of the Partnership at the highest level.

- it would be useful for regular reports on the work of the Partnership to be tabled on Council agendas for member scrutiny.

The Council resolves:

- To instruct to the Chief Executive to write to the appropriate government minister immediately after the General Election

upon the forming of the next government, expressing the councils concern in regards to the future of adult skills funding and to request that a cross-party Commission be established to secure a long-term funding settlement for the public funding of re-skilling and lifelong learning.

- To ask our three Members of Parliament after the General Election to lobby the appropriate Secretary of State in regards to adult skills and its future funding, emphasising the specific concerns raised in regards to Oldham and to advocate the establishment of the cross-party commission.

- To ask the relevant Cabinet Member, in consultation with the appropriate senior officers, to ensure the Oldham Council is represented at the highest level in the workings of the Greater Manchester Skills and Employment Partnership and to table regular reports on the work of the Partnership on Council agendas for member scrutiny.”

A vote was then taken on the AMENDMENT.

Councillor Akhtar exercised his right of reply.

Councillor Harkness exercised his right of reply.

On being put to the VOTE, NINE VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with FORTY EIGHT VOTES cast AGAINST and NO ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST.

Councillor Hudson spoke on the motion

Councillor Mushtaq spoke in support of the motion

Councillor Heffernan spoke on the motion

Councillor Rehman spoke in support of the motion

Councillor McCann spoke on the motion

Right of reply – Councillor Akhtar did not exercise his right of reply.

A vote was then taken on the ORIGINAL MOTION.

On being put to the VOTE, FIFTY FIVE VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the MOTION with TWO VOTES cast AGAINST and NO ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Chief Executive be instructed to write to the appropriate government minister immediately after the General Election upon the forming of the next government, expressing the councils concern in regards to the future of adult skills funding.
2. The three Members of Parliament after the general election be asked to lobby the appropriate Secretary of State in regards to adult skills and its future funding, emphasising the specific concerns raised in regards to Oldham.

Motion 2



Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Wrigglesworth
SECONDED

This Council recognises the wholly unequal and unfair way in which this Liberal Democrat/Tory Government has directly cut its funding to local authorities and towns such as Oldham. While Oldham has lost £176 Million in government support since 2009 with another £30 Million more to hit next year (2016/17) other councils such as Tewkesbury and Surrey have seen over 3% increases this year in their spending power.

This Council notes with concern comments made by the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee in regards to cuts to local authority funding, stating. "Councils with the greatest spending needs – the most deprived authorities – have been receiving the largest reductions. Further cuts could not just undermine the entire viability of most optional services, but might threaten some statutory services in these areas."

This Council calls for a fairer local government settlement from central government and recognises a recent Sigoma 'Protecting Vital Services' Report in which abhorrently unfair local and regional inequalities are presented. Furthermore this report and this Council stress the need for government to take a fresh look at local government finance going forward, especially given our increasing roles.

The Council resolves:

- To instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government immediately after the General Election and the forming of the government, representing this Council's concern and alarm at the inequality of council funding across the country, negatively effecting towns such as Oldham.
- To write to Oldham's 3 Members of Parliament asking them to make representations to the relevant ministers regarding the unfair and unbalanced local government funding model employed by this Liberal Democrat/Tory Government.

AMENDMENT

Councillor McCann MOVED and Councillor Williamson
SECONDED the amendment.

"Delete in Lines 1 to 3 the wording from: "the wholly" to "Oldham"

Insert in Line 1 after "This Council recognises" new wording and bullet points: as follows:

"- that cuts in public spending by the Coalition Government have been necessary to address the massive debt left to this country by the last Labour Government as a result of their woeful mismanagement of the nation's finances.

- however the cuts to central government grants to local authorities have been excessive and unfair when compared to those made to the budgets of central government departments.

- that the cuts to local authorities in the north of England have been disproportionate to many of those in the south”.

Follow with original wording in a new paragraph: “While Oldham has lost £176 Million in government support since 2009 with another £30 Million more to hit next year, other councils such as Tewkesbury and Surrey have seen over 3% increases this year in their spending power”.

Insert in original Line 7 after “This Council notes with concern” a new bullet point.

Insert before “comments” the word “personal” and before “Chair” the word “Labour”.

Insert a further new bullet point after the end of this paragraph as follows:

“- that the Labour Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls MP cannot commit himself to reversing any of the cuts in central Government funding to local authorities should he come into office following the general election in May”.

Insert new wording after this:

“However Council does warmly welcome the Coalition Government's 'devo - Manc' proposals that:

- A new authority of the leaders of the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities unified under an elected Mayor will be able to access a devolved budget of billions per annum to support the delivery of services and initiatives in the City Region.

This devolved budget will greatly assist the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities in addressing the deficiencies in grant funding made available from central Government

- The new authority will also now be able to manage its own £6 billion annual health budget enabling the 10 local authorities in Greater Manchester to collectively provide more responsive local health services and to better address health inequalities

- The new Greater Manchester authority will be able to retain 100% of new business rates providing a real spur for the authority to support the creation of new businesses in the City Region”.

Delete the original wording in Lines 14-18 and instead insert the following:

“This Council calls for:

- A fairer local government settlement from central government that addresses unfair local and regional inequalities”.
- The new Government to take a fresh look at local government finance going forward, especially given our increasing roles
- The new Government to consider the introduction of additional property bands for the setting of Council Tax, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats.

In original Line 26 after “funding model” delete “employed by this Liberal Democrat/Tory Government” and insert: “and to introduce additional property bands for the setting of Council Tax”.

MOTION AS AMENDED TO READ:

This Council recognises:

- that cuts in public spending by the Coalition Government have been necessary to address the massive debt left to this country

by the last Labour Government as a result of their woeful mismanagement of the nation's finances.

- however the cuts to central government grants to local authorities have been excessive and unfair when compared to those made to the budgets of central government departments.
- that the cuts to local authorities in the north of England have been disproportionate to many of those in the south.

While Oldham has lost £176 Million in government support since 2009 with another £30 Million more to hit next year, other councils such as Tewkesbury and Surrey have seen over 3% increases this year in their spending power.

This Council notes with concern:

- the personal comments made by the Labour Chair of the Public Accounts Committee in regards to cuts to local authority funding, stating. "Councils with the greatest spending needs – the most deprived authorities – have been receiving the largest reductions. Further cuts could not just undermine the entire viability of most optional services, but might threaten some statutory services in these areas."

- that the Labour Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls MP cannot commit himself to reversing any of the cuts in central Government funding to local authorities should he come into office following the general election in May.

However Council does warmly welcome the Coalition Government's 'devo-Manc' proposals that:

- A new authority of the leaders of the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities unified under an elected Mayor will be able to access a devolved budget of billions per annum to support the delivery of services and initiatives in the City Region.

This devolved budget will greatly assist the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities in addressing the deficiencies in grant funding made available from central Government

- The new authority will also now be able to manage its own £6 billion annual health budget enabling the 10 local authorities in Greater Manchester to collectively provide more responsive local health services and to better address health inequalities
- The new Greater Manchester authority will be able to retain 100% of new business rates providing a real spur for the authority to support the creation of new businesses in the City Region.

This Council still however calls for:

- a fairer local government settlement from central government that addresses unfair local and regional inequalities.
- government to take a fresh look at local government finance going forward, particularly the introduction of additional property bands for the setting of Council Tax, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats.

The Council resolves:

- To instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government immediately after the General Election and the forming of the government, representing this Council's concern and alarm at the inequality of council funding across the country, negatively effecting towns such as Oldham.
- To write to Oldham's 3 Members of Parliament asking them to make representations to the relevant ministers regarding the

unfair and unbalanced local government funding model and to introduce additional property bands for the setting of Council Tax.



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A vote was then taken on the AMENDMENT.

On being put to the VOTE, ELEVEN VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with FORTY SIX VOTES cast AGAINST and NO ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST.

Councillor Jabbar did not exercise his right of reply.

A vote was then taken on the ORIGINAL MOTION.

On being put to the VOTE, FIFTY FIVE VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the MOTION with TWO VOTES cast AGAINST and NO ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Chief Executive be instructed to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government immediately after the General Election and forming the government, representing this Council's concern and alarm at the inequality of council funding across the country, negatively effecting towns such as Oldham.
2. The Chief Executive be instructed to write to Oldham's 3 Members of Parliament asking them to make representations to relevant ministers regarding the unfair and unbalanced local government funding model employed by this Liberal Democrat/Tory Government.

13

NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS

Motion 1

Councillor Heffernan MOVED and Councillor Sedgwick SECONDED

"This Council notes that in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale local residents have since 2010 been encouraged to sign up for the "Love Rochdale Card", a loyalty card scheme managed by the Rochdale Town Centre Management Company.

The scheme rewards residents for shopping locally at over 200 shops and businesses in the town centre.

This Council recognises the merits of establishing a similar scheme for Oldham and its district centres as this helps support local businesses, local jobs and the local economy, as well as being better for the environment and promoting variety and choice on the high street.

This Council resolves to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Board to examine (in conjunction with the District Executives) the practicalities and timescale of introducing a shop local loyalty card scheme in Oldham and its district centres to encourage our residents to shop locally and so support our local economy.”



Councillor Murphy spoke in support of the motion
Councillor McLaren as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board accepted the motion.

A vote was then taken on the MOTION.

Councillor Heffernan did not exercise his right of reply.

On being put to the VOTE, FIFTY FIVE VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the MOTION with NONE cast AGAINST and TWO ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board examine (in conjunction with the District Executives) the practicalities and timescale in introducing a shop local loyalty card scheme in Oldham and its district centres to encourage our residents to shop locally and so support our local economy.

Motion 2

Councillor Murphy MOVED and Councillor McCann SECONDED

“This Council notes that:

- Section 106 planning contributions have historically been spent locally to benefit residents in the immediate area of a development. This has led to enhancements to the physical environment such as play spaces and community gardens that have been enjoyed by local people.
- The Community Infrastructure Levy, being introduced by Government to replace the Section 106 planning contributions, is prescriptive with Council being permitted by law to only spend 15% of the CIL planning gain in the immediate area and 85% being returned to the centre.
- This means that, unlike Section 106, there may be little direct benefit to the local community.

Council believes that:

- The prescription by central government of the 15:85 split is contrary to the spirit of localism and runs contrary to the Government’s intention that the arrangements for the levy should be ‘fairer and more transparent’.
- As well as deciding the actual amount of the levy, local authorities should be able to decide for themselves what percentage of the CIL planning gain is spent in the immediate area and how much is returned to the centre.

Council resolves to:

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government stating the Council’s position that local authorities should be able to determine the split of the levy between the local community and the centre.

- Ask the Cabinet Member for Planning to request officers investigate the merits of whether the Council should apply to the Government for the right to make its own determination of the split under the provisions of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007, and to bring a report back to Council on this issue.”



Councillor Hibbert spoke against the motion.

A vote was then taken on the MOTION.

Councillor Murphy exercised his right of reply.

On being put to the VOTE, ELEVEN VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the MOTION with FORTY SIX VOTES cast AGAINST and NO ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore LOST.

- 14 (a) To note the Minutes of the following Joint Authority meetings and the relevant spokespersons to respond to questions from Members

To note the Minutes of the Joint Authority meetings and the relevant spokespersons to respond to questions from Members

Minutes of the Joint Authorities were submitted as follows:

Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority December 2014	5 th
Police and Crime Panel November 2014	28 th
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority December 2014	4 th
National Park Authority December 2014	5 th
Transport for Greater Manchester 2015	16 th January
Greater Manchester Combined Authority December 2014	19 th
2015	30 th January
Joint GMCA/AGMA Executive December 2014	19 th
2015	30 th January

Councillor Williamson asked a question in relation the minutes of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, 30th January 2015, Minute 05/15, PSR Development Fund – Domestic Abuse Funding related to the wording of the minutes and the use of funding within

the GM Development Fund to support domestic abuse – the wording does not read well and could this be brought to the attention of officers.



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Councillor McMahon responded that he would raise the issue with the relevant officers to amend the wording.

Councillor Heffernan asked a question in relation to the minutes of the National Park Authority, 5th December 2014, attendance, and asked why the authority had not been represented.

Councillor McLaren responded that he could not attend the meeting on 5th December 2014 as the National Park Authority had not confirmed his representation until 23rd December 2014. He had attended all meetings since that date.

Councillor Heffernan asked a question in relation to the minutes of the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, 4th December 2014, Minute 68, Corporate Plan/Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015-28 and asked that the Council respond to the changes proposed to flammability tests. All Councils had worked together 27 years ago for these to come into force and asked for these not to be ignored.

Councillor Dillon asked a question in relation to the Transport for Greater Manchester Committee minutes, 16 January 2015, Minute 14/70, Metrolink 2017 and referred to the routes and operations being looked at for Metrolink and if employment opportunities were being taken into account and asked whether the Leader or spokesperson had this in mind and also comments on the six-minute service to the Borough.

Councillor Hibbert responded that with the second city crossing, some stops were being closed down but members were looking at issues raised. He also commented that the six minute service would commence when the Exchange Square Extension was completed.

RESOLVED that:

1. the minutes of the Joint Authorities as detailed in the report be noted.
2. The questions raised and observations made, along with the responses, given be noted.

14 (b) To note the Minutes of the following Partnership meetings and the relevant spokespersons to respond to questions from Members

Minutes of the Partnership Meetings were submitted as follows:

Oldham Care and Support Company
November 2014

19th

February 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnership meetings as detailed in report be noted.

15

THE DEVOLUTION OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE RESPONSIBILITIES TO GREATER MANCHESTER

Consideration was given a report which provided information on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) developed between Greater Manchester local authorities, Greater Manchester Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and NHS England which created a framework for the delegation and ultimate devolution of health and social care responsibilities to Greater Manchester. The report also set out the actions required by Oldham to meet the requirement of the MoU and the timelines within which the actions would need to be completed.

As detailed in the report, the integration of health and social care within and across Greater Manchester had been a major priority of Greater Manchester's growth and reform strategies.

The 10 AGMA local authorities, CCGs and NHS England have agreed the next step in the process was the development of a "Road Map" which would set out what was required from all parties to progress to full devolution of NHS England powers and funding to Greater Manchester by April 2016. The "Road Map" would include the development of plans for all localities to work with their local CCGs for the production of "whole system" local areas plans by April 2016.

The report outlined the scope of the Memorandum of Understanding, the areas of the Health and Social Care System to be included in the agreement, the key enablers of the transformation programme and shared principles which would support the development and implementation of a Strategic Sustainability Plan for Greater Manchester.

Councillor Murphy made an observation on the Devolution
Councillor Bates spoke against the Devolution
Councillor McMahon spoke in support of the Devolution
Councillor Sykes spoke in support of the Devolution

On being put to the vote FIFTY FIVE VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the MOTION with ONE VOTE cast AGAINST and ONE ABSTENTION. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

RESOLVED that:

1. the report regarding the Devolution of Health and Social Care Responsibilities to Greater Manchester which was

considered and agreed at the Joint GMCA and AGMA Executive Board meeting on 27th February 2015 be noted.

2. the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by representatives of AGMA, GM CCGs and NHS England be agreed and endorsed and that the important and significant step in the development of a new collaborative partnership for health and social care in Greater Manchester be recognised.
3. the implications, current position and next steps for Oldham as set out in the report be endorsed.

16

STANDARDS HEARING SUB-COMMITTEE - OUTCOME OF THE HEARING REGARDING COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLOR BATES

Consideration was given to a report which noted the outcome of the hearing undertaken by the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee in respect of a complaint against Councillor Bates.

The Standards Hearing Sub-Committee had resolved to reports its findings to Council. The Standards Hearing Sub-Committee also recommended to Council that Councillor Bates be censured.

Councillor Moores as the Chair of the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee MOVED the report and Councillor Sedgwick SECONDED.

Councillor McMahon spoke on the report
Councillor Bates was offered a right of reply but made no comment.
Councillor Garry spoke on the report.

Councillor McMahon apologised on behalf of the Council to Mr. Crompton and thanked him for the work he had done on behalf of the community.

On being put to the vote FIFTY THREE VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the MOTION with TWO VOTES cast AGAINST and TWO ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

RESOLVED that:

1. The findings of the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee be noted.
2. Councillor Bates be censured.

NOTE: Councillor Williams entered the room during this item but took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

17

COUNCIL COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY COHESION

Consideration was given to a report which sought approval of a policy statement on community cohesion and set out a set of principles for the Council to follow. The Council had also been

asked to sign up to three initiatives related to building good community relations which included:

- The Greater Manchester Pledge of Hope and Guidance on Peaceful Protest;
- The Bruxelles Declaration of Pledge to Peace; and
- The We Stand Together Initiative.



A Council policy statement on community cohesion had been developed and it was intended that this be adopted by Council. The statement sets out principles which would inform decisions over priorities or to help to determine the circumstances in which the Council would need to take action. Examples included decisions about priorities for resource allocation; the ways in which the Council communicates with or involved residents or businesses; tackled anti-social behaviour; terms and conditions of Council staff; support the inclusion of disabled people; activity which encouraged positive interactions between people from different backgrounds; work which supported the integration of new migrants to Oldham and prevention and resolution of conflict within communities.

The Bruxelles Declaration of Pledge to Peace was established on 28th November 2011 at the European Parliament in Brussels. The pledge aimed to create a network of people with a “shared vision of the value of peace, who have the potential to create, promote and communicate tangible projects and initiatives” which could promote peace within their communities. The Council had been asked to become a signatory to this. If the Council agrees, Oldham would be the first local authority in the UK to make this commitment.

The pledge of hope and guidance on peaceful protest had been developed by a group of Greater Manchester faith leaders in discussion with the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner. The pledge sought to balance the right of individuals to peaceful protest against those of others who may be affected by a protest which encouraged that protests be undertaken in responsible ways which did not cause division or incite hatred.

The We Stand Together was a national campaign which sought to celebrate difference, challenge hatred and intolerance and build a stronger United Kingdom. This included a focus on tackling hate crime. It had arisen from concern about the impact of recent terrorism and extremism incidents. It was intended that a public awareness campaign would stimulate a wide range of community activity which would bring people together and encouraged mutual understanding and respect.

RESOLVED that:

1. The policy statement about community cohesion be approved.
2. The Council become a signatory to the Bruxelles Pledge to Peace be agreed.

3. the Greater Manchester Pledge of Hope and Guidance on Peaceful Protest be endorsed.
4. the We Stand Together campaign be endorsed and promoted.

18 **WELFARE REFORM - IMPACT ON VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

Consideration was given to the first quarterly welfare reform research which was a follow up to the latest annual "Impact of Welfare Reform in Oldham" briefing which was presented to members in October 2014.

The report and accompanying dashboard provided a high-level analysis of the impact of welfare reform on vulnerable groups in Oldham. The report also identified the common demographic characteristics of people and groups affected by the key provisions of welfare reform and those residents who used local services to mitigate the impact.

The report looked at a wide range of local and national data available on Oldham residents affected by welfare reform. Analysis suggested that some groups were more vulnerable than others as well as multiple impacts on certain groups and these were highlighted within the report.

A question was raised with regard to the timetable list in the report and the Cabinet Member for Finance and HR clarified that the timetable that was for receipt of reports to Cabinet.

A question was raised regarding the community shop and the Leader of the Council responded members were committed to the same objective, that the community shop was being investigated but funding could not be agreed without a business plan

RESOLVED that the report and accompanying dashboard be noted.

19 **COUNCIL CALENDAR 2015/16 AND 2016/17**

RESOLVED that the item be WITHDRAWN.

20 **UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL**

Consideration was given to a report which informed Members of actions that had been taken following previous Council meetings and provided feedback on other issues raised at the meeting. An updated timetable was requested with regard to the Dog Fouling Motions approved at a previous Council meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.