

Oldham Borough Council



**Council Meeting
Wednesday 6 November 2019**

OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

To: ALL MEMBERS OF OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL,
CIVIC CENTRE, OLDHAM

Tuesday, 29 October 2019

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council which will be held on Wednesday 6 November 2019 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, for the following purposes:

a Public Questions (Pages 1 - 20)

(time limit 15 mins)

NOTE: The meeting of the Council will conclude 3 hours and 30 minutes after the commencement of the meeting.



**Carolyn Wilkins
Chief Executive**

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Public Questions Full Council 6th November 2019

From / Date	To	Question	Response
<p>Garry Chapman</p> <p>By email</p>	<p>Cllr Fielding</p>	<p>Can you please ask the councillors of Waterhead Ward why they don't hold surgeries, as elected councillors they should be available to speak to there constituents, and don't even bother saying to email them as they don't bother answering emails.</p>	<p>The Council's approach is to allow each Member to choose the method most appropriate for the communities which they serve. In some cases, this means holding regular public surgeries. However, many Members have found that these surgeries are poorly attended. In the case of the Waterhead Ward, only two residents had attended surgeries over a two year period.</p> <p>Rather than continue to use public money arranging surgeries that drew little response from local people, Waterhead Ward Members make themselves available by telephone and email, and are happy to arrange to meet up with residents, where requested. Contact details for all Councillors are available via the Council website. In addition, the Councillors in question also attend public</p>

			<p>meetings by invite, and arrange meetings, walkabouts and on site discussions in the different parts of their Ward in order to address specific issues of concern to local people.</p> <p>If you have a particular issue to discuss, the Waterhead Ward Councillors would encourage you to get in touch with them, using the details which can be found on the Council website, here:</p> <p>https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/mgFindMember.aspx?XR=0&AC=WARD&WID=12926&sPC=Enter%20postcode</p>
Eric Dawber By email	Cllr Chadderton	Why has the council only commissioned a review of safeguarding processes in Oldham and not an investigation? Also why is the review only looking at 2012/ 13? Why is it not looking at a full independent investigation from 2012 to the present day?	The council has asked Oldham Safeguarding Partnership, to commission an independent review. It will be chaired by Dr Mark Peel who has a wealth of experience and is one of the most respected academics in his field. I can assure the review will be comprehensive in its nature and will look at whether young people were at risk and whether everything possible was done

			<p>to prevent harm.</p> <p>The remit for Dr Peel will be to see whether the police, council and safeguarding agencies provided an appropriate response to allegations of inappropriate access to young people involving shisha bars, taxi companies and children's homes in 2012/13. He will present his preliminary findings early next year. Any findings from the report will be used as learning by the council in its current practices.</p>
<p>Jeffrey Schofield</p> <p>By email</p>	Cllr Ur-Rehman	<p>Hello, when are the council going to clean all the leaves off the path's and sides of the path's in Hathershaw, plus clean all the leaves in the cycle path ajecent from the park. It's absolutely filthy. Thanks</p>	<p>The Council are currently undertaking all the autumn schedules to remove fallen leaves and footpaths throughout the Borough will be cleared over the next few weeks. However, the very nature of the issue will require most areas to need a number of sweeps and this is obviously also factored in. Should any resident have particular concerns they are encouraged to report on line on the Councils webpage.</p>

<p>Deborah Barratt</p> <p>By email</p>	<p>Cllr Chadderton</p>	<p>Can the council please tell the residents of oldham why an INDEPENDENT Investigation is not happening over historic Grooming gangs using Lee Rigby's Funeral as an excuse to not tell parents of oldham there children are in Danger .</p>	<p>This question is similar to a previous one and the reply is the same.</p> <p>The council has asked Oldham Safeguarding Partnership, to commission an independent review. It will be chaired by Dr Mark Peel who has a wealth of experience and is one of the most respected academics in his field. I can assure the review will be comprehensive in its nature and will look at whether young people were at risk and whether everything possible was done to prevent harm.</p> <p>The remit for Dr Peel will be to see whether the police, council and safeguarding agencies provided an appropriate response to allegations of inappropriate access to young people involving shisha bars, taxi companies and children's homes in 2012/13. He will present his preliminary findings early next year. Any findings from the report will be used as learning by the council in its current practices.</p>
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<p>Rachel Harper</p> <p>By email</p>	<p>Cllr Roberts</p>	<p>Why does labour/oldham council what to destroy our beautiful greenbelt and wildlife for fcho housing when there are brown land available?</p>	<p>The Council does not want to destroy the greenbelt and wildlife in the borough and there have been no planning applications approved from FCHO or any other sizeable developer in the Greenbelt.</p> <p>We want Oldham to be a great place to live:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good housing, schools, colleges and HE offer and also skills and development • Quality employment • Thriving community is supported by strong social infrastructure • Committed to be greenest Borough in GM <p>The Council is also committed to focusing development on brownfield land. At least 74% of the housing land supply as at 1 April 2018 is on brownfield land. However, this has been made more difficult by Government cuts to subsidies which make it feasible to develop brownfield sites,</p>

			<p>many of which have to be cleaned up before houses can be built</p> <p>We want all this and lots of progress is being made despite some extremely challenging circumstances both nationally and locally, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The need to deliver 692 new homes a year to meet our local housing need;• Our current lack of a five-year deliverable housing land supply to meet this need; and• Additional requirements placed upon as a result of the Housing Delivery Test. <p>All of this means that greater weight will have to be given to the need for housing when considering planning applications, which may outweigh other issues and result in developments taking place in areas where developers want it to go, rather than where the Council feels it should go.</p>
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<p>Joanne Jennings</p> <p>By email</p>	<p>Cllr Jabbar</p>	<p>What was the book value of the South Chadderton school site at the time when the Council was forced to hand it over for free to Collective Spirit school which went on to fail?</p> <p>What was the cost to the taxpayer of finding alternative places in other schools for children who were let down by this failed experiment when Collective Spirit was forced to close through being so ineffective?</p>	<p>During the financial years 2008/09 and 2009/10 the school had an overall book value of over £5M. At the time of transfer overall book value of the South Chadderton school site had been adjusted to £1.3M. Upon the decision of the Secretary of State to transfer the site for free to the Education and Skills Funding Agency the Council retained some land with a book value of £34,000. As such the estimated loss on book value is £1.266M.</p> <p>The Education and Skills Funding Agency then transferred the site to the Collective Spirit Free School with a book value of £750,000.</p> <p>During its period of operation, as a school the Education and Skills Funding Agency provided capital funding to Collective Spirit to develop the site as an educational facility before it closed. If further information is required on the exact amount spent on capital works then it will be</p>
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			<p>necessary to contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency Direct.</p> <p>The site remains in the ownership of the Education and Skills Funding Agency. As such the Council has not received a capital receipt for the site and it has not been possible to undertake the planned Regeneration.</p> <p>The costs to the Council were incurred via its capital programme in providing emergency places at the UTC building which was initially constructed for a free school which had already closed before Collective Spirit. The costs of these works were £339,467.67 which was funded by a government grant provided for additional school places.</p> <p>The accounts of Collective Spirit indicate the Education and Skills Funding Agency was also required to give the school an extra amount of funding of £250,000 to enable it to close. This was funded by the taxpayer.</p>
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<p>David Mowbray</p> <p>By Facebook</p>	<p>Cllr Shah</p>	<p>As owner of a small business for the past 16 years - The Colliers Arms, Chadderton - I have seen a reluctance of many customers who are willing to come out after dark as they fear they are not safe - this is having a huge impact not only on my business but also many other small businesses owners and peoples quality of life - what do Oldham Council propose to do to improve the quality for the people of not only Chadderton - but the whole of Oldham with regards to anti social behaviour. It's no good pointing the finger at the Police as this need sto be a JOINT EFFORT and more resources put into it.</p>	<p>The Council and the wider Community Safety Partnership is committed to tackling anti-social behaviour within our communities and we will work with both individuals and communities to identify and take action as appropriate against those who are responsible.</p> <p>We would encourage any person who witnesses or is subject to anti-social behaviour to report it to the Community Safety Team as soon as possible. The Community Safety Officer will work in partnership with the person reporting and other services in the relevant district, including GMP to investigate the report and agree a course of action.</p> <p>Early intervention and engagement of those responsible is key to our response, and actions may include diversion to services and organisations to promote positive behaviours; however</p>

			<p>more targeted action to control behaviours may be undertaken if this is identified as necessary.</p> <p>As well as the community safety officers the council is investing in an improved youth work offer across our districts to support youth engagement and activities.</p> <p>Any individual can make a report in confidence and details of how to report anti-social behaviour to the Community Safety Team can be found on the Council's website.</p> <p>We would still encourage serious and persistent anti-social behaviour to be reported to Greater Manchester Police too as the behaviours may also be criminal in nature and require a police response.</p>
<p>Karen Greenwood</p> <p>By email</p>	Cllr Fielding	Who sold the land under market value to oldham Central Mosque	In late 1995 the Council approved the sale of a package of land to the Central Mosque Committee for the construction of a Mosque. As the sale price

			was less than the assessed market value, the Secretary of State's consent was required. That consent was granted.
Malcolm Potts By email	Cllr Ur-Rehman	When are you going to do something about cars blocking pavements and dropped curbs. The situation on Spencer St is becoming impossible to walk down the street without walking on the road in some places.	<p>Parking on the footway is a problem not unique to Oldham as car ownership has increased. Obstruction of the footways, with parked vehicles, without the presence of yellow lines, is a Police matter.</p> <p>Owing to the amount of objections from residents and the disruption that the introduction of yellow lines can bring, we strive to limit yellow line restrictions to places where there is a demonstrable road safety issue or significant congestion problem to resolve.</p> <p>A proposal to introduce yellow lines along both sides of Spencer Street is likely to meet with significant opposition from residents and therefore I have requested that Highways investigate the need for limited parking</p>

			restrictions, targeted to help improve road safety in the area.
Peter Robinson By email	Cllr Roberts	What part of the affordable housing shortage in Oldham be fulfilled by selling off the OPOL land and building large expensive detached houses on it?	All residential development of 15 homes and above are required to provide an appropriate level of affordable housing provision, as set out in Policy 10 of the Local Plan. The current target is for 7.5% of the total development sales value to go towards the delivery of affordable housing, unless it can be clearly demonstrated to the council's satisfaction that this is not viable.
Mark Birchall By email	Cllr Roberts	Planning and selling public land. Can you please clarify the rules on this subject matter. I am reading disturbing reports on social media regarding possible fraud. Declarations of interest not being followed and family members of councillors gaining advantage in purchasing assets and land.	The law gives Councils the general power to dispose of land provided that the local authority achieves the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained. It also has the ability, like any other land owner, to seek planning permission for that land which may increase its value. There are checks and balances in place to ensure that the one does not influence the other and that

			<p>there is transparency in both procedures; including Legislation, the Council's Constitution, the Scheme of Delegation and officer and member protocols, all of which are available on the Council's website.</p> <p>The Council has also appointed a Monitoring Officer, the Director of Legal Services, who is required to report to the council when it appears that the authority has done anything which would contravene the law or would constitute maladministration. Concerns about specific cases should be directed to the Monitoring Officer in the first instance</p>
<p>Mohammed Razaq</p> <p>Via email</p>	Cllr Mushtaq	<p>I am a local school uniform provider based in Oldham town centre I believe the parents in Oldham should have the freedom to choose where they buy their children's uniform from. Some schools are now restricting suppliers like me and through trademarking have only allowed one shop to provide their uniforms. The Competition and Markets Authority guidance advises against this as it's unfair to parents and businesses.</p> <p>In a place like Oldham where families are struggling parents should be allowed to get the best possible</p>	<p>How a school and its governors choose to market to parents where to buy a school uniform is a matter devolved to the individual school or multi academy trust and the local authority does not have a locus in such decision making.</p> <p>It would be anticipated however that the school</p>

		price. The quality of the uniforms is the same as we all use the same supplier. Can the relevant person tell me what can be done to ensure that parents are not being exploited by this unfair process?	would seek best value for its parent community and the school governors, as the representatives of parents, have an important role to play in this regard. The local authority education service would also support the principle of parents securing best value when buying school uniforms, albeit it has no enforcement powers to influence this
Adam Lynch By email	Cllr Fielding	<p>1. Interested to know what Oldham's vision is for the future?</p> <p>2. also really pleased with how clean the town centre is and the plants etc.</p>	<p>Since becoming leader last year I have focused on four main priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Getting the basics right; investing in the services that will create a cleaner and safer Oldham. 2. Giving every child a great start, and every adult the opportunity to get on 3. Creating places that thrive – supporting our town centres to be places to shop, have fun, work and, most importantly, if we are to deliver the homes we need, live. 4. Harnessing the opportunities that

			<p>devolution to Greater Manchester offered us, and making sure that Oldham's voice was being heard both on the city region and national stages.</p> <p>As I highlighted in my annual statement to council, we've made great progress across all of these. As Mr Lynch notes, we've taken huge strides to make our streets cleaner since investing in more street cleaners and refuse vehicles. We've also just won best city at North West in Bloom for the tenth year in a row!</p> <p>On education, we're creating 4,000 more places at good and outstanding schools, and are starting to see a significant upturn in the results children are achieving. We're also creating more, good jobs, both within the council (partly because we now pay what the Living Wage Foundation considers to be a proper living wage), and in the borough more generally – our</p>
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			<p>Get Oldham Working scheme has created 6,500 work related opportunities to date.</p> <p>We've produced a new vision for Oldham town centre, based on bringing homes, jobs, and culture into the town centre and making it clean, green, healthy and friendly. Individual projects within that vision are progressing well, such as the new Heritage and Arts Centre which is on track to open late next year; and the new supermarket and hotel development at Mumps, which will kickstart the redevelopment of that entire area; including new homes, leisure facilities and office accommodation. Our other town centres, like Royton and Uppermill, are also thriving.</p> <p>At GM and nationally, Oldham is starting to really pull its weight. Attracting investment for a new construction skills centre at Oldham College, the mayor's challenge fund investment in Royton and Our Pass giving free bus travel and opportunities for 16-18 year</p>
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			<p>olds are just three of the benefits we've seen recently.</p> <p>Over the next twelve months we'll be going even further on these priorities, with a vision for a cleaner, greener, safer, wealthier, healthy and friendly Oldham that is a great place to learn, work, age and live.</p>
<p>Molly Ratcliffe</p> <p>By email</p>	Cllr Roberts	<p>What are the council doing to guarantee there is more sufficient affordable housing for Oldham residents?</p> <p>As a 26 yr old single mother to 2 children under 2. I now cant get housing unless I'm homeless and sleeping in a hotel which I did. This then made my child severely ill and myself.</p> <p>Is this the only way or are we going to get a better housing system and be looked after as a resident of the area.</p>	<p>So far this year 92 new affordable homes have been built in the borough but we know we need more and it is scandalous that Tory housing policy means that Oldham can't bid for subsidies from Homes England to build new socially rented housing to the level it is needed in the borough.</p> <p>In July 2019 Oldham's new Housing Strategy was launched with the key aim of providing a bigger choice in new affordable homes in the areas where they are needed.</p> <p>All residential development of 15 homes and above are also</p>

			<p>required to provide an appropriate level of affordable housing provision, as set out in Policy 10 of the Local Plan.</p> <p>The council is also working on several projects to directly deliver new affordable homes in our ownership in the town centre and on a number of sites across the borough. I know we need to do more but to deliver what is needed we need a new Government with a housing policy which will build new Council houses to meet the needs of the 7,000 families currently on the Council's Housing Register and end the Right to Buy which means that the socially rented homes we do have a bought at a discount and not replaced.</p>
<p>Rachel Harper</p> <p>By email</p>	<p>Cllr Shah</p>	<p>Why does all negative post get removed from the I love oldham fb page?</p>	<p>Please see an extract from the council's social media policy:</p> <p>The council would not want to be seen to be endorsing comments which are:</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defamatory, false or misleading; • insulting, threatening or abusive; • obscene or of a sexual nature; • offensive, racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory against any religions or other groups; • promoting illegal activity; or intended to deceive.
Rachel Harper By email	Cllr Fielding	Why did Sean fielding share his ripped underpants and sexual fantasies on Twitter?	<p>As a Councillor I am effectively a lay-member of the community who has been elected to represent an area of the Borough. I live, work and spend my leisure time in the area.</p> <p>Whilst I use my twitter feed to promote both corporate and political messages I also intersperse it with tweets about my daily life and non-political activities that I undertake. I like to think that doing so avoids my followers getting bored and illustrates that, despite holding the office that I do, I am just a</p>

			<p>person from the Borough like any other who does normal things.</p> <p>The tweet to which you refer was intended to be humorous, and whilst some may have taken offence at what was said, many people just took it as the joke that it was intended to be.</p> <p>I am known for having a particularly dry and self-deprecating sense of humour. I acknowledge that not everybody shares such a sense of humour and I will be mindful of this when tweeting in future.</p>
Rachel Harper By email	Cllr Fielding	Are oldham banning postal votes? So we can have a fair election	The elections legislation allows for postal votes and does not permit any Authority to restrict the ability of an individual to apply for a postal vote.