

Oldham Borough Council

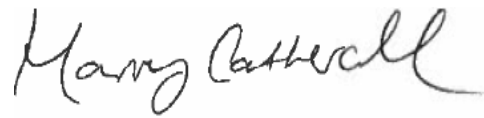


**Council Meeting
Wednesday 13th July 2022**

OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

8a Public Questions (Pages 1 - 12)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Harry Catherall', written in a cursive style.

**Harry Catherall
Chief Executive**

Public Questions - Full Council 13th July 2022

	From / Date	To	Question	Response
1	Megan Birchall 26 th May 2022	Councillor Taylor	With Oldham Pride being held next weekend, Could the relevant cabinet member update the council on what steps Oldham Council is taking to support LGBT+ people in the borough?	<p>Thank you so much for this question Megan. Oldham Council is proud to be supporting Oldham Pride this year and we're looking forward to celebrating with our LGBT plus community next weekend.</p> <p>The Council is helping to financially support this year's event as well as supporting the event management too.</p> <p>We want to make sure it is a huge success, Oldham's labour councillors will be there to take part in the celebrations and we'd urge as man Oldhamers as possible to get out and support the event.</p> <p>In addition to this we work closely with LGBT plus groups across the borough in our work to tackle hate crime and improve hate crime reporting. We also work across schools, colleges and our partners to promote tolerance and celebrate our borough's amazing diversity.</p> <p>Through our equality advisory group we seek the views of the community on policies and current issues to make sure we're making</p>

				<p>decisions that fit the needs of everyone in the borough.</p> <p>But, we're always keen to do more if we can. If there are any suggestions you have for how we can be more supportive, more inclusive please do let us know.</p>
2	Chris Charters 26 th May 2022	Councillor Chadderton	<p>With Oldham Athletic relegated out of the football league last season, we have seen the consequences of football's failure to regulate club ownership. Will the council work with Oldham Athletic fans to explore options to help save the club and ensure it's legacy as a founding member of the Premier League is preserved for future generations?</p>	<p>The Council have remained consistent in our approach to ensuring the future success of Oldham Athletic Football Club for the benefit of the residents and fans across the borough.</p> <p>We are delighted to hear the news of a new ownership for Oldham Athletic Football Club - this is really good news for the club, its supporters, and the whole borough after the despair and heartache of recent years.</p> <p>We're looking forward to working with the new owner and understanding more about their plans to take the club forward.</p> <p>The club continue to have our full support and we wish them well for the coming season, while we keenly await confirmation about new arrangements to allow the Council and the various fan groups to support and enhance the future of the club</p> <p>We all want to see Latics back in the football league - it'll give the whole town a boost.</p>

3	Lynne Kelly 28 th May 2022	Councillor Chadderton	<p>It is now 1 year since the ex-leader of Oldham Council (Arooj Shah) had her car firebombed. There was clear CCTV footage of the attack that has been shared across the world as have the news stories portraying Oldhamers as racists. Even our own Council has contributed to this allegation via its social media pages.</p> <p>If someone in a position as high as the ex-leader of Oldham Council can be attacked in this way and with the police failing to prosecute anyone, especially with the CCTV footage as proof. Then doesn't it send out a clear signal that it is open season for other criminals to do the same to any of our residents. Hence perhaps why there has recently been a huge rise in arson attacks throughout our borough. More of GMP's failures to stop this.</p> <p>Do for the interest of democracy and as a demonstration to her commitment to the rule of law, will the new leader of Oldham Council now write to Chief Superintendent Chris Bowen - Oldham District Commander demanding he issues</p>	<p>Thanks for your question, I'm unaware of any news stories relating to that horrendous attack on a councillor's car that portrayed Oldhamers as racist. What the reports may have referenced is the undeniable scale of racist abuse suffered by the former leader – both online and in 'real life'.</p> <p>It is not for me to determine whether this was related to that offence – it is for GMP to thoroughly investigate the arson attack and bring those responsible to justice.</p> <p>If you have information that may help secure that justice it's imperative you share it with the police as soon as possible. I'm sure your analysis of the CCTV footage will be of significant use to their investigation and will hopefully lead to a quicker outcome to the case.</p> <p>Might I suggest you ask Greater Manchester Police for an update yourself as clearly this is of significant interest to you.</p>
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			<p>an update on their progress in investigating the firebombing of Arooj Shah's car? It is not right that we, the townsfolk, are portrayed as racists when the CCTV footage clearly shows quite different.</p>	
4	Lynne Kovacs 28 th May 2022	Councillor Chadderton	<p>As an Oldhamer I am super proud that a member of the LGBT+ community is now our council leader. It should send a clear message out to those elsewhere who think that we are all prejudiced in Oldham.</p> <p>We are definitely not. We believe in equality for all.</p> <p>Therefore, will the leader of Oldham Council please clarify whether a woman can have a penis?</p> <p>Also will her Council protect the rights of women to access exclusive safe spaces including toilets and changing rooms for those that were born female rather than have to share these spaces with individuals that have self identified as women?</p>	<p>An interesting question - put simply no, I don't believe that biological women can have a penis. I believe there is a clear difference between sex and gender and that we shouldn't mix up the two.</p> <p>Women should be protected, as per the Equality Act, on the basis of their sex.</p> <p>Transwomen should also be protected on the basis of their gender identity which society should both support and respect.</p> <p>There is absolutely a way to debate and negotiate the rights of cis-women and trans women in a respectful and tolerant way but that tone has been sadly lacking in the debate around these issue recently.</p> <p>I need to be clear that I don't believe the people of Oldham are prejudiced – I believe them to be fair minded and reasonable.</p> <p>However, I worry that you have asked this question to sow division in the LGBT</p>

				<p>community as you have sought to do among other communities in the past.</p> <p>In fact, just a few weeks ago at the local elections you were witnessed delivering racist and misogynistic election material that sought to convince people of the author's overarching conspiracy theory that this town was in the grip of a shadowy 'asian cartel'.</p> <p>I note that as you now have an LGBT Leader of the council the tone of your questions has moved away from divisions based on race to one of divisions based on identity.</p> <p>I hope that this is merely a coincidence and not the start of a pattern of behaviour aimed at dividing people in this town.</p>
5	Gary Tarbuck 28 th May 2022	Councillor Jabbar	<p>In the lead up to the election, the businessman Frank Rothwell distributed a leaflet in Chadderton South promoting Arooj Shah. Whilst many may consider this unbecoming behaviour of someone who has become Freeman of the Borough, will the Council please confirm how much it has paid Mr Rothwell's various businesses in contracts and what the Council's current business interests are with him?</p>	<p>Mr Rothwell is not paid for his role as Oldham's Business Ambassador – he offers his time for free to support and promote local businesses. This should be applauded and is just one of the reasons why Frank was awarded Freeman of the Borough for his fantastic contributions to business and communities.</p> <p>The Council has no ongoing contracts with Mr Rothwell's businesses and no business interests.</p>

				<p>However, as a local business, and in keeping with our policies to spend money locally we have used Manchester Cabins to provide us with storage containers, portable toilets and other supplies in line with our normal procurement processes. In total over the last six years this adds up to less than £14,000 – with spend in year falling since 2015.</p>
6	Denise Leach 28 th May 2022	Councillor Chadderton	<p>A worrying petition online that Oldham Council is involved in Operation Hexagon and that this is a joint Council and GMP operation that is targeting whistleblowers that have exposed the now proven cover up of the grooming and gang rape of our towns children.</p> <p>Will the new leader of Oldham Council please confirm if OMBC are involved Operation Hexagon? And if so, as an open and transparent council, is the leader prepared to order the release of all the paperwork involving Operation Hexagon?</p>	<p>Operation Hexagon was a Greater Manchester Police initiative examining the community impact of historic Child Sexual Exploitation being made online. Oldham Council supports this initiative by Greater Manchester Police. Any request for the sight of paperwork connected with Operation Hexagon would have to be made to Greater Manchester Police.</p>
7	Julie Heywood 28 th May 2022	Councillor Chadderton	<p>Previous to becoming leader of Oldham Council, Amanda Chadderton held the portfolio for schools whilst Jim McMahon was leader of Oldham Council. Will she now confirm that during her role in</p>	<p>As the person asking this question knows, nobody can guarantee that any child is safe, anywhere, at any time.</p> <p>Unfortunately there are evil and twisted people in the world who abuse children and</p>

			<p>charge of schools, that white working-class girls were safe and there was no grooming at the school gates?</p>	<p>young people and the battle to keep them safe is underway every day across the borough.</p> <p>Local people can be reassured that we work with schools and colleges through our safeguarding partnership to raise awareness of the risks to children and young people and equip them and their parents with the knowledge they need to stay safe.</p> <p>The Partnership has a dedicated Training Officer for Children & Young people who visits schools to deliver healthy relationship work, online sexual harassment and consent.</p> <p>This takes place at primary, secondary and further Education Establishments and covers sexualised behaviours, Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation and grooming.</p>
8.	Warren Bates 29 th May	Councillor Chadderton	<p>At the last full Council labour Leader Amanda Chadderton Nominated Dr Chauhan for Deputy. Mayor. The council went through the normal sham of voting him in. I choose the word sham speaking as an ex-councillor, the reason being, that the Doctors role he had already announced at a meeting held in Mirpur, Pakistan the week previous.</p>	<p>Nominations for Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Borough for 2022/23 were undertaken in line with the agreed procedures for making such appointments and these were consequently formally approved at the Annual Council meeting on 25th May 2022.</p>

			Will the Leader remind fellow labour Cllrs that policy decisions about our town should not be mentioned anywhere, especially in another country, until our full council has debated them before a democratic decision is agreed?	
9	Phillida Shipp 30 th May 2022	Councillor Jabbar	With energy costs at an all-time high, how is Oldham Council leading the way on green energy that is affordable, and what support is the government giving to the council to expand this?	<p>The Council knows that the cost of energy is a key concern for Oldham residents and businesses, especially at this time. The award-winning Warm Homes Oldham programme to insulate the homes of low-income families is continuing.</p> <p>Additionally, the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy was adopted in March 2020, which sets out the Council's ambition to create a Local Energy Market for Oldham to supply locally generated green energy to residents and businesses at affordable prices.</p> <p>An update on Oldham's Green New Deal was presented to the Council's Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2022, which included the completion of a Local Area Energy Plan for Oldham borough. This work is complex but includes market engagement with providers interested in joining a Delivery Partnership to build large-scale renewable energy generation across the borough.</p> <p>The Council is supported in this work by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Local Energy Market project, and the</p>

				<p>Government has indicated that it may be prepared to look at reforming the national energy market to allow 'locational pricing' which would support the Council's work. The energy market regulator Ofgem includes 'locational pricing' in its forward work programme.</p> <p>Finally, the Council is looking to develop a number of energy infrastructure projects including the proposed Minewater District Heat Network for Oldham Town Centre, which if successful could supply town centre businesses and residents with affordable green energy for years to come.</p>
10	Jeffrey Smith 18 th June 2022	Councillor Stretton	Dual carriageway leading from Manchester roundabout to Westwood/Featherstall Road North roundabout, on both sides of the dual carriageway why can't it all be cleaned up? I'd do it myself but I'm not allowed but I've been asking councillors for years. Thanks	Thank you for your question, Oldham Way is mechanically swept on a weekly basis, through the summer months all verges are litter picked and cleaned monthly as part of the grass cutting and bed maintenance programme. The Most recent cut and clean was on Wednesday, 13th July. If there is a section you think is being missed, please advise further and the teams will ensure this is picked up.
11	Richard Thompson 22 nd June 2022	Councillor Jabbar	Given the state of the planet what is our local council doing about free energy also corruption theft also what is our doctors still not doing face to face	Clarification on this question is being sought from the questioner

12	Amanda Cawdron 26 th June 2022	Councillor Chadderton	<p>Cllr Chadderton in her new position as Leader of the Council agreed that there had been previous failings and that it is now time to get things right. The CSE report found Oldham Council had been 'more concerned about covering up their failures' than acknowledging they failed to take action.</p> <p>Is Cllr Chadderton prepared to take action to remove the council of those officers and cllrs that we're responsible for these failures and cover ups?</p>	<p>The report is clear that there was no 'cover up' of the issue of child sexual exploitation in Oldham or the complexities in tackling it.</p> <p>It provides evidence of work carried out to communicate the risk of CSE to school children and their parents and cites this as good practice for the time.</p> <p>However, as Ms Cawdron identifies it does rightly highlight poor responses that the council sent to an adult victim of abuse where we clearly were not open and transparent in our past failings. In that case we did not readily accept our past failings and potentially caused further distress to someone who we had also failed as a child. I'm clear this cannot happen again.</p> <p>I have asked for a thorough review of this victim's contact with the council as an adult so we can understand how that happened and make sure it doesn't happen again.</p> <p>That review will also look at staff conduct and whether disciplinary action is appropriate.</p>
13	Lord Christopher Baddeley 29 th June 2022	Councillor Chadderton	<p>I would like to know the name of the person who supplied Shabir Ahmed, convicted of CSE in Rochdale, with a character reference. I have been informed that the person responsible is a current Labour Councillor. Is this correct?</p>	<p>Councillor Chadderton replied here is no record of anyone from Oldham Council providing Shabir Ahmed with a reference.</p> <p>Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Low Carbon also addressed the Council on</p>

				this point and rebutted allegations, which had been made online and elsewhere, that he personally had provided Shabir Ahmed with a reference.
14	Karl Bardsley 1 st July 2022	Councillor Chadderton	In a statement from Andy Burnham on Friday 1st July he states that "Operation Sherwood will investigate the historic cases identified by the review team to bring any perpetrators to justice." My question is what is being done about the victims that were not in the review, like the lady that was subjected to abuse in 1981?	Thank you for this question. I can confirm that Operation Sherwood will investigate all historic cases of CSE from any time period. It will start with those in the review but will also pick up any others that are brought forward to the team. We will work with GMP to promote Operation Sherwood and encourage historic victims to come forward. We will also make sure they are given the support they need as they bravely seek justice for their past abuse.

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