

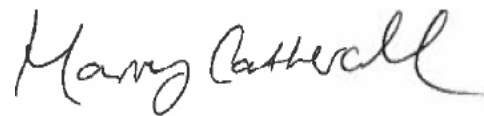
Oldham Borough Council



Council Meeting
Wednesday 6th September 2023

**OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
Supplementary Agenda**

8a Public Questions (Pages 1 - 18)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harry Catherall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Harry Catherall
Chief Executive**

No.	From	Question	To	Answer
1	Megan Birchall	I saw the video of the old T.J. Hughes building being demolished I can also see a visible difference already in the town centre. There's still lots of work going on and lots to do I was wondering what the timescale is for the various projects?	Cllr Shah	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>The new workspace in Spindles will be completed first with council staff moving into the space over the winter months ahead of the new year, this will immediately increase footfall in the spindles and spending in our town centre businesses, it will then also free up the site where the civic centre is for some much needed housing land.</p> <p>This includes moving Access Oldham and the TfGM Travel Shop into the unit that used to house H&M opposite Rhode Island Coffee, to provide a new single front door to access help and support in the Town Centre.</p> <p>The HIVE social enterprise hub will also be completed later this year to support local residents with business start-up support, and to provide enhanced opportunities for local businesses to network and grow.</p> <p>In 2025, the new market hall, archives & heritage centre, and the new event space are due for completion – and following the demolition of TJ Hughes the steel works for the new structure will start to go in place before Christmas this year.</p>
2	Shadab Qumer	I saw the press release about the new partner for the Town Centre regeneration and development of the area including housing. I want to know what type of housing will be built and will there be affordable housing for those that are finding it hard to afford good housing?	Cllr Taylor	<p>Thanks Mr Mayor & thanks to Shadab for his question.</p> <p>All of us in Oldham Council are really excited about the next stage in our town centre regeneration and the appointment of Muse as our private sector development partner.</p> <p>The exact type of housing that will make up the 2,000 town centres homes hasn't yet been decided and will be subject</p>

				<p>to formal planning applications – including consultation with residents – in due course.</p> <p>There will however be a range of housing to be provided, both in terms of type – ie the number bedrooms - and tenure and the Council will seek to ensure that a <u>minimum</u> of 25% of the new homes are affordable homes, as per our stated targets.</p> <p>We will also look to make sure that all homes are built to zero or low carbon standards to help Oldham meet its ambitious climate emergency targets.</p>
3	Adam Pape-Jones	What does appointing a private sector development partner	Cllr Shah	<p>Thanks, Adam for your question.</p> <p>Appointing a private sector partner allows the Council to harness Muse’s considerable experience, resource capacity, technical expertise, financial resources, and strong relationships with key stakeholders including Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Homes England and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (amongst others) to accelerate progress and delivery of the much-needed new homes in the town centre.</p> <p>The Council are delighted to have selected Muse Places (who are a multi-award-winning master-developer of national acclaim) as its partner, especially given the personal commitment from their Managing Director who is himself an Oldhamer, who understands the importance of our heritage, the pride in our communities and shares our passion to have quality, affordable, efficient and sustainable homes.</p>

4	Shona Farnworth	<p>In Oldham there are many unpaid carers to friends and families, such as providing personal care, arranging medical and social support, and attending appointments and with the carer's leave bill being passed recently in parliament does the council believe that more action is needed, both nationally and locally, to support people in work with caring responsibilities and the boroughs unpaid carers</p> <p>Will the council support this effort by launching an unpaid carers survey in Oldham so that carers can have their say on the support and services they need, and will the council offer efficient, effective support and guidance that is always available for carers, throughout the borough</p>	Cllr Brownridge	<p>Thanks Mr Mayor & thanks to Shona for asking a really important question, here in Oldham 9.8% of our population are unpaid carers and they do an amazing job.</p> <p>We do believe we – as an organisation – can do more to support unpaid carers and later this year the Council will launch a new Carers Strategy.</p> <p>A recent survey has helped inform the strategy & the priorities for the next few years. The Carers strategy will focus on early intervention and prevention for unpaid carers & ensuring there is sufficient information, advice and support to unpaid carers.</p> <p>Ongoing annual surveys will take place with carers, but the carers service is happy to hear your thoughts and feedback at any time. We are re-establishing the carers partnership board and are always looking for board members to represent the views of unpaid carers, so if you'd like to participate drop me an email and I'll pick this up with officers.</p>
5	Connor Green	<p>What conversations has the council had with TfGM and Transpennine Express about the potential closure of the ticketing office at Greenfield train station?</p>	Cllr Shah	<p>Thank you for your question. The Council have been working with TfGM in relation to the proposals to close the rail ticket office at Greenfield, following announcements from Transpennine Express.</p> <p>Both the Council and TfGM have significant concerns about this proposal and have expressed strong objections back to Transpennine through consultation responses, I've written a joint response with Oldham's MPs Jim McMahon and Debbie Abrahams. We are currently waiting for feedback on this matter.</p>

				<p>I think it's a disgrace that last week the rail operators themselves admitted that they knew that this will make it harder for older and disabled residents to travel by train and yet they've put these proposals forward anyway with apparently no shame. Railways are a vital connection for many of our residents – especially in Saddleworth – and preventing vulnerable residents from being able to access the city-region and beyond is unforgivable.</p> <p>As I said, we've objected to this as a Council and we hope that the plans do not go ahead.</p>
6	Latif Choudhury	How will the Council and TfGM measure success when it comes to the school streets schemes across Oldham?	Cllr Goodwin	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>Thank you for your question and I'd like to say I'm really positive about the school streets scheme. This will improve the safety of our children and their parents or guardians and will also reduce the amount of pollutants in the air around our schools - the air that our children breath.</p> <p>The council measures the success of school street schemes via the school's travel plan and a hands-up surveys conducted twice a school year. This shows changes over time and before / after results for the school streets schemes, based on how children travel to the school – ideally moving from car trips to active travel choices, which includes walking, cycling, scootering.</p> <p>From the outset, all schools are made aware of the Mode-shift Stars accreditation scheme and that every scheme needs to achieve a minimum of “bronze” award. However, in Oldham, schools aim for “silver” accreditation, which means the children at the school are achieving at least a</p>

				<p>10% shift from cars to active travel choices, like walking, cycling, or scooting.</p> <p>The council also does multiple informal consultations with parents and residents to understand their experiences before / after a school street trial, to measure the success. This includes views on driver behaviours, safety, congestion and impact on the local community.</p>
7	Stephanie Shuttleworth	"I know Broadway is managed by National Highways but is there anything the Council can do to work with National Highways and Costco to try and mitigate against the queues of traffic caused by people wanting to fuel up at Costco?"	Cllr Goodwin	<p>Thank you for your question. The Council is aware of these concerns and is working with National Highways on this matter. National Highways are looking at ways in which they can increase the number of traffic lanes along Broadway, especially on the approach to the motorway junction, to increase capacity and reducing congestion.</p> <p>The approach to the Costco / Long Lane junction is also included in the investigation. The council has been informed that proposals are being developed and new road layout designs are being finalised with the intention of consultation early next year. Depending on feedback from local communities and understanding any complexities for the construction programme, this could be underway next year.</p> <p>The Council has been liaising with National Highways regarding this problem and together we have also been working with Costco on their internal operations for accessing and egressing the car park. I will take this opportunity to assure residents that despite statements by individuals on social media, there has not been any planning application from Costco to provide an alternative exit since the erection of the petrol station. Transport for Greater Manchester (Urban Traffic Control team) have also</p>

				been involved with regards to reviewing the signal timings, where appropriate, to ease congestion in the meantime.
8	Anita Lowe	<p>On 14th July 2023 the Manchester Evening News and in a report in the Oldham Times produced results of the 12 worst rated GP Surgery's according to a patient survey in Greater Manchester. Out of those 12 listed, 5 were rated poor in Oldham</p> <p>They are listed as follows</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Werneth Medical Centre 4) Oldham medical Service 6) Royton medical centre 8) medlock Vale centre 8) kapur medical Werneth <p>I would like to question cabinet member for Health and Social care Barbara Brownridge or her deputy Cllr Marie Bashforth? Since this was published what contact have you made - if any - with these practices in Oldham to support and offer guidance in bringing patient satisfaction up to an acceptable standard?</p>	Cllr Brownridge	<p>This survey is just one way to understand GP performance, but all practices have been contacted by GM Integrated Care Board – which I'm a member of - and asked to submit plans to address the concerns. All of the practices were obviously disappointed with the results of the survey and accepted that further action is required to address issues.</p> <p>All 5 practices highlighted in the Oldham Times piece are among 26 Oldham practices that have submitted an expression of interest for Modern General Practice Access funding because they recognise residents' frustrations.</p> <p>Clearly there is work to be about access to appointments and understanding how the GP system works and I just want to reassure residents and councillors that access to GP appointments is an issue that's constantly raised with the new integrated care system – both locally and at a GM level – as it's one of the number one complaint that residents have when we're out on the doorsteps.</p>
9	Imran Choudhary	Councillor Abdul Jabbar, Nazrul Islam and Mohon Ali all continue to openly fraternise with the former Chairman of Oldham Central Mosque. This man is	Cllr Jabbar	<p>A key part of the role of a local councillor is to attend local events and to engage local communities.</p> <p>We end up sitting next to and meeting with loads of people. We have no way of knowing what someone does in their</p>

		<p>a convicted sex offender. How can Oldham Council promote a Victim & Survivors Charter for victims of CSE whilst its councillors take part in this behaviour? Does the Council feel it is appropriate for any of its councillors to attend community events and sit alongside convicted sex offender(s)?</p>		<p>private life and equally we don't DBS check everyone before attending events.</p> <p>Sexual abuse, exploitation and violence in any form is abhorrent. We stand firmly with survivors and victims of CSE. We support the Police and criminal justice system in wanting to ensure anyone found guilty of these offences is brought to justice.</p>
10	Kyle Phythian	<p>How can regular Oldhamers help those who are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis and sky-rocketing demand at community hubs like Oldham Foodbank?</p>	Cllr Shah	<p>Oldhamers who wish to help their fellow residents are able to volunteer their time to help others in need. There are a number of opportunities available, residents wanting to get involved can find more info on either the Council's website or on Action Together's website.</p> <p>Can I just take this opportunity to thank Action Together for everything they do for the people of Oldham by the way, Laura and her team are really good assets for the Borough, and I can say this as the GM Lead for Communities – our voluntary and community sector is miles ahead of others in GM and we should cherish it.</p> <p>Back to the question at hand, over 90% of the food distributed by foodbanks is donated by the public – the foodbank relies on the goodwill and support of the people of Oldham helping their fellow Oldhamers. If you want to help there is the page on the foodbank's website all about donating food, money or time to them. I know there's plenty of Councillors in the Chamber tonight – including our Deputy Mayor Cllr Moores - who have given up their time to deliver food-parcels on behalf of the foodbank.</p> <p>I also want to give a shout out to the Saddleworth Labour Party's second annual Tea for Trussell event held in July</p>

				this year where they raised £450 and hundreds of items of food donated by the community.
11	Sharon Jones	Was the Council aware that Chief Superintendent CHRIS BOWEN had fled the town? Can the Council reassure the public that we are safe and that nothing untoward has taken place with the sudden departure of Oldham's most senior police officer?	Cllr Goodwin	<p>Thank you for your question, I'm grateful for the opportunity to clear this up and prevent the spread of further conspiracy theories. Obviously, personnel decisions taken by GMP are up to them but I can say that Greater Manchester Police frequently reviews the portfolios for which its senior employees are responsible for; moving senior officers into different roles to provide specialist skills where they are needed and to maintain professional development.</p> <p>Chief Superintendent Goodman-Bowen had been in post as District Commander for Oldham for nearly two years and, rather than fled Oldham, has now been reassigned by GMP in a role appropriate for his skills and experience.</p> <p>Temporary Chief Superintendent Phil Hutchinson, who has been the Operations Superintendent for the Oldham district since early 2022, is currently providing leadership to the district pending their routine scheduled promotion process and I'd like to reassure the public that nothing untoward has taken place and police operations are continuing as normal.</p>
12	Sheila Brophy	Knife crime destroys lives and blights communities. Will the relevant Cabinet member of Oldham Council therefore please detail what the Council is currently doing to raise awareness of the dangers of knife crime and do they agree that anyone found to be guilty of wielding a	Cllr Goodwin	<p>Oldham Council recognises the significant impact and harm that knife and weapon crime has on Communities and has implemented a number of measures to attempt to reduce such types of behaviour, using research from the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit, adapting recognised good practise from other areas, and listening to residents to establish why they feel the need to carry a knife or weapon.</p> <p>The responses have included inputs in schools using presentations and the commissioning of a play regarding</p>

		<p>machete should be nowhere near a councillor or the council chamber.</p>		<p>knife crime. And we've commissioned targeted works with individuals at risk of engaging in knife crime and focusing on messaging on how we keep residents safe, so they do not feel the need to carry a knife or weapon.</p> <p>We are also working closely with Greater Manchester Police to identify individuals involved in knife crime, supporting their criminal prosecutions, where appropriate, through Civil remedies such as Criminal Behaviour Orders.</p> <p>We've also funded knife arches in the past at the request of GMP, which were deployed in hotspot locations.</p> <p>And in reference to the Council Chamber, I can confirm that we have robust security and screening operations in place to ensure that no member of the public is able to access the chamber with a knife or a weapon to protect both elected members and the general public during public meetings. Members across the chamber will be grateful for your concerns for our safety.</p>
13	Liz Adamson	<p>Does the council leader recognise and support the need for improved health provision in Saddleworth, including the furtherance of a new Health Centre? And will Arooj Shah agree that the new Health Centre will get the council's go ahead?</p>	Cllr Brownridge	<p>Can I start by thanking Liz for her question and say that although it's addressed to Cllr Shah, I'll respond as Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care and Chair of the Oldham NHS Integrated Health and Care Partnership.</p> <p>I know this is an important issue for the people of Saddleworth. And as the elected member responsible I'll continue to champion the need for a local health facility. I understand and absolutely value the need for local provision within districts across Oldham.</p> <p>The GM Integrated Care Board has started a piece of work to look at capacity and demand and future projections in likely usage of healthcare facilities and forecast</p>

				<p>demographic changes. The Council is working with ICB colleagues to understand the outcome of this work.</p> <p>And we stand ready to assist the NHS in whatever way they need to provide the very best health facilities for all our residents across the Borough.</p>
14	Ghazala Rana	<p>Following the universal activity offer made by Oldham Council which was very much needed because of the restrictions of the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme can the council please tell me how it benefitted the children and families across Oldham?</p>	Cllr Mushtaq	<p>Thank you Mr Deputy Mayor.</p> <p>And thanks to Ghazala for her question, the universal activities offer – that is free activities that are available to Oldham families, because we recognise that not everyone who is struggling at the minute is on benefits and that all children deserve new experiences - have been available to families over the summer holidays has benefitted almost four-thousand children and young people.</p> <p>As the cost of living crisis continues many families have struggled to find enjoyable and affordable activities in the school holidays. This initiative aimed to ensure that children would have the opportunity to be active, socialise and spend time in their communities. The universal activities offer has been available in all five districts of Oldham and has been very popular with almost every space utilised by residents.</p> <p>As a council we work to see issues that may affect residents and offer support wherever possible. In this case we wanted to ensure that the children and young people in Oldham did not miss out on happy summer experiences and memories because of family finances and so we arranged and funded partner agencies across the town to offer free, fun and safe activities. This benefitted the children and families across Oldham who took part by giving them the opportunity to be included, be more active, learn more</p>

				<p>about things like health and nutrition – whilst they're not in school and most importantly, play and have fun.</p> <p>Activities have included the chance to see a play, access to swimming passes, sports and craft camps in the parks, a theatre workshop camp, cookery and coding lessons, inflatables, and cinema experiences. It allowed our young residents to have memorable experiences and feel pride in their home town. It also gave them the chance to try things they may not have before, such as a yoga or a visit to our outdoor pursuits centre.</p>
15	Michael Harwood	Are there any plans to make Oldham's parks more inclusive for children with disabilities?	Cllr Goodwin	<p>Thank you for your question. All of the parks maintained by Oldham Council are inclusive and accessible for people with disabilities. We have and continue to develop our play sites using the natural landscape to enhance the offer for all children whether they suffer from a physical or mental disability, or not, to ensure inclusivity.</p> <p>We have a number of play facilities within parks that are accessible for children with disabilities, and I've asked Officers to make sure the parks with accessible play equipment are on our website and searchable.</p> <p>However, we would welcome further information from any residents if they have experienced or observed any particular concerns, to enable the Council to review this further and provide any additional information needed.</p> <p>With this in mind I would like to ask residents to contact officers at environmentalservices@oldham.gov.uk who manage our parks to enable further discussions to take place.</p>

16	Ken Rustidge	<p>How many jobs had all the work in and around Spindles delivered for Oldhamers?</p>	Cllr Shah	<p>Thank you for your question. Ensuring we achieve substantial social value, including creating jobs, from our regeneration and other activities across Oldham is one of our key priorities.</p> <p>So far, we've achieved 679 weeks' worth of Apprenticeship time, employed 72 Oldhamers, spent £24m with local companies, delivered 468 hours' worth of education sessions with schools and colleges, and 584 hours of volunteer time from contractors supporting local charities and organisations – including the Oldham Foodbank, in all it's around £15m worth of Social Value with another £23m scheduled across the town centre regeneration projects.</p> <p>And we know the job's not done, we continue to work closely with contractors through our procurement processes and ongoing conversations to maximise the social value from our activities.</p>
17	Paul Fisher	<p>Could the relevant councillor please answer the following question</p> <p>I watched the last full council meeting in regards to Whit Friday and the continual backing of the council for these events to go ahead with funding not only from the councillors own budget but from the council itself.</p> <p>That being said there was no mention of the unsung volunteers that help out in these events such as the Whit Friday walks and band contest.</p>	Cllr Dean	<p>Oldham has a fantastic voluntary sector, and Mr Fisher is absolutely right.</p> <p>These volunteers are absolutely crucial to the smooth running of events, and I'd like to take the chance right now to thank them for everything they do across the Borough on behalf of the Council, we absolutely recognise the how important they are and we're exploring how best we can celebrate and reward volunteers success going forward.</p> <p>Collectively speaking everyone in Oldham owes so much to volunteers and I think it's right that we show them how proud we are of them.</p> <p>Watch this space and hopefully we'll be in a position to announce something exciting soon.</p>

		<p>The volunteers as these such events such as Whit Friday prepare the event space hours before the event is due to take place so the wider communities of Oldham can enjoy the event.</p> <p>They also stay behind after the event has finished to clear away the event space sometimes not getting home till the early hours of the morning.</p> <p>Whit Friday was used as an example but there's other events in the wider community of Oldham which I'm sure has many volunteers at there events</p> <p>I'd like to ask how the council how will they recognise the volunteers at these events not only next year but for many years to come, as like I said these events wouldn't go ahead without them giving up there time to help these events would cease to remain.</p>		
18	Clint Phythian	<p>With the end of the summer months coming to an end soon,the cost-of-living crisis isn't going away, what work is the council doing to make sure that residents have a safety net this winter when temperatures plummet and energy bills remain sky high?</p>	Cllr Shah	<p>Thanks to Clint for this question, I know Clint is passionate about ensuring our residents get the very best service from the Council and helping them deal with the Tory cost-of-living crisis as it continues to bite residents.</p> <p>Following the £3m investment Oldham Council made last winter to support our residents during the cost-of-living crisis, our programme continues to provide vital support for residents across the borough, helping with issues like</p>

				<p>personal debt, energy insulation, and accessing emergency aid.</p> <p>We are continuing to work with services and partners to review how we best support residents this winter. This will include continuing to support our most vulnerable residents. The best thing Oldhamers can do is to check in on their neighbours, friends and family who may need help – if someone you know is struggling, please point them in the direction of our helpline – 0161 770 7007.</p>
19	Jane Barker	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Independent Report into the state of the building of existing Coliseum Theatre has now been published. This shows that the building is not beyond repair and for a fairly modest 500k over 3 years to complete all works, the building could remain open indefinitely. The planned replacement theatre is inferior to the old theatre, with half the audience capacity, half the stage area, no fly tower, no rigging, no turntable stage, and accessibility issues for toilet facilities for disabled people. Why is the Council spending £24m on a new building that is unpopular with residents and theatregoers and is clearly not fit for purpose? 2. The Oldham Town Investment Plan that supports the Town Fund 	Cllr Dean	<p>Thank you for your questions. As the Coliseum agreed more than 10 years ago, the Fairbottom Street building was not fit for purpose and sadly was not a long-term option for our town's theatre. Despite major works over several years, it had reached the end of its lifespan. This is why the Coliseum board were involved in the design of Oldham's new theatre, and have been working with us over several years to make a new, modern and inclusive theatre a reality.</p> <p>Unfortunately the Fairbottom Street building, though it was much-loved, had significant issues requiring a huge amount of investment. It would have needed major works and the addition of new facilities to bring it up to modern day standards. The constraints of the site, and the age of the building, were also further difficulties in addressing these crucial improvements.</p> <p>The building condition survey carried out in February this year, and the subsequent independent report from the new board, do not address these major underlying issues. Instead, as these reports clearly state, they relate only to any urgent repair works which would have needed to be</p>

		<p>Bid states that the existing theatre has come to the end of its life, which is at odds with the Independent Building Report and the opinion of the Chair of the Board of the Oldham Coliseum. Why has Oldham Council submitted a bid document that is factually incorrect?</p> <p>3. Why doesn't the Oldham Town Investment Plan disclose that the replacement theatre has half (at best) the capacity of the old theatre, and duplicates the 100 seat studio facilities that exist in the library next door?</p> <p>4. The Oldham Town Investment Plan discloses that, and I quote, "no direct community engagement has so far taken place" on the replacement theatre when the Town Fund Bid was submitted, even though Oldham Council was aware of what the plans would look like and what capacity and facilities would be available. Why are officers of Oldham Council stating that consultation took place during the Big Conversation event, when plans for the new theatre were not even available at that time and this directly contradicts</p>	<p>immediately addressed if the Fairbottom Street building was to be used again, for a very limited period of time. The costs of these repair works cannot therefore be interpreted as the costs of bringing the theatre back into use in the longer term.</p> <p>The approved Towns Fund business case for the theatre developed subsequently to the adoption of the Town Investment Plan included an operational business plan. This operational business plan has been developed in conjunction with the Coliseum Board which has directly informed the current design for the new theatre.</p> <p>The planning application for the new theatre is supported by a Statement of Community Involvement which sets out how the views of the community have been sought and taken into account. The statement submitted outlines the extent of the consultation completed and explains how the feedback from the consultation process has influenced the submitted application</p> <p>At this stage, there are no defined plans established either in respect of the current Fairbottom Street building or site and the focus for the Council has been to secure the buildings.</p>
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		<p>the statement in the Oldham Town Investment Plan that no consultation has taken place?</p> <p>5. A public consultation on the new theatre plans took place for 1 week between 27th June and 3rd July. Why haven't any of the observations and suggestions from members of the public and theatre professionals, such as the small size of the stage and the position of the seats, been taken into account in the plans? No amendments seem to have been made. Was this just lip service so that the consultation box could be ticked on the planning application?</p> <p>6. When was the Leadership of Oldham Council going to come clean that, according to the Oldham Town Investment Plan, the old Coliseum Theatre is in an area marked for residential development and will be demolished for new homes?</p>		
20	Jane Barker	<p>The Towns Fund Bid within the Town Investment Plan from 2020 includes testimonials from the actors Shobna Gulati and Julie Hesmondhalgh in support of the proposed new theatre on Union Street. At that time, the design for the new theatre was not</p>	Cllr Dean	<p>The Council were provided letters of support from a range of actors which were submitted as part of the Town Investment Plan in late 2020 by the previous Coliseum executive team.</p> <p>The Town Investment Plan led to the Town's Fund being awarded facilitating the delivery of the new Theatre, without</p>

		known as detailed plans had not been prepared or published and it seems difficult to reconcile the detail in the testimonials with what was known about the new theatre at the time the bid was submitted. Were these testimonials originally intended for the previous iteration of the theatre that was cancelled in 2018, and if so, did Oldham Council have the actors permission to use them in support of the Town Investment Plan and Towns Fund Bid submitted in 2020?		this funding then the Theatre project would not be able to proceed.
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