

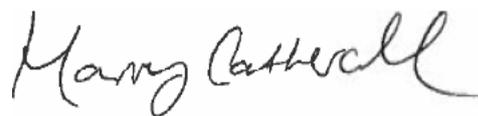
# Oldham Borough Council



**Council Meeting**  
**Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024**  
**Public Questions and Answers**

# OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

8 Public Questions (Pages 1 - 10)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harry Catherall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

**Harry Catherall**  
**Chief Executive**

Public Questions - Full Council 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024

	From / Date	To	Question	Response
1	Mark Birchall 13/12/23 18:46	Councillor Jabbar	<p>Having just watched the meeting on the 13/12/2023 I was surprised to see the youth council requesting stationary, then hijacked by the labour party to use it as a political football.</p> <p>Can you please disclose how much money has been used so far to fit out the lavish offices being built in the Spindles for the Council's staff and what monies have been provisioned for further work?</p> <p>Can you please also verify that full attendance by staff in these offices are being achieved and the working from home has been restricted and staff are encouraged to come into work. Bearing in mind one of the statements made was staff in the Spindles will shop in the town?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. The Council offices in Spindles are a central part of redeveloping the town centre to support local shops - traders in spindles are already reporting increased footfall and spend as a result of the moves which is encouraging.</p> <p>In addition this change in public service office space has released vital brownfield sites that will be used to provide much needed new homes for Oldham's residents.</p> <p>We have reused existing furniture in the new space and the costs for the new infrastructure and fit out is around £800,000; and the costs of maintaining the new office space are lower than the costs for maintaining the Civic Centre.</p> <p>The new office space offers a range of working arrangements, with some staff working from an office environment every day, some working from various Council and partner bases depending on the nature of their work, and some staff who</p>

				work flexibly between offices and home. However, the new space can accommodate up to 1,000 people, which is important to continue to support town centre traders.
2	Lewis Farnworth 15/12/22 19:22	Cllr Jabbar/Cllr Brownridge	Will the council consider instead of unpaid carer's grant, a unpaid carer's loan this would provide essential support for what we unpaid carer's deserve please can Councillor Jabbar or Councillor Barbara Brownridge to answer. This would better support us the low rate to pay back would potentially save the council funds that would have to be paid back	<p>Thank you for our question, and for the suggestion about ways we could support our valued carers in Oldham.</p> <p>Oldham Council's Carers offer includes a range of free services for unpaid carers across the borough and i would urge Mr Franworth to get in touch to discuss what support we offer now and how we might better support him. :</p> <p>Heath issues</p> <p>Entitlement to benefits</p> <p>Mobility issues</p> <p>Equipment and assistive technologies</p> <p>Carers rights</p> <p>Carers employment issues</p> <p>One-to-one practical and emotional support</p>

				<p>Carers assessments</p> <p>Carers personal budgets (subject to eligibility criteria which is based on the Care Act)</p> <p>Signposting / referrals to social services and other providers</p> <p>Oldham carers emergency support scheme (OCESS)</p> <p>Activities / Talks / Training</p> <p>Access to Carers Support Groups and Networks</p> <p>Oldham currently has 2,257 unpaid carers registered with 1,369 receiving support via an assessment in the previous 12 months and 1,226 in receipt of a Carers personal budget.</p> <p>We are aware that there are national organisations who offer additional support of grants and additional extra financial help which we can help signpost local carers to. This information is also available on the Carers Uk website.</p>
3	Meg Birchall 19/12/23	Cllr Brownridge	How is the council working with the NHS to ensure that sites for	Thank you for your question. The Council has no direct responsibility for building

	15:40		new health centres are identified and that these are built?"	<p>new health centres: this is the responsibility of the NHS.</p> <p>It is for the NHS Greater Manchester to identify what facilities it needs in the future and then to propose a way of funding that, albeit those requests would be in competition with all of the requests from the whole of the NHS nationally.</p> <p>The council continues to work with local health organisations to lobby for additional health services and centres to meet local needs</p>
4	Paul Scoltock 19/12/23 16:02	Cllr Taylor	<p>What is the Council doing about takeaway drivers on the High Street as they are a real nuisance and sometimes drive dangerously?</p> <p>Please can the Council take action before someone gets hurt?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>Our teams regularly patrol the town centre and issue penalty notices to vehicles found in contravention of the restrictions. We are well aware that drivers continue to flout the restrictions and are working hard to tackle this using the powers we have and seeking new ones.</p> <p>We receive many reports about vehicles driving dangerously in the town centre and we continue to encourage people to report this to the Police, as they are the</p>

				<p>only authority who can deal with the dangerous driving behaviours.</p> <p>We have already introduced hydraulic bollards to limit vehicular access to the pedestrianised area of the Town Centre, and there are more measures to be installed as works to the town centre continue to roll out.</p>
5	<p>Kelly Jones</p> <p>19/12/23</p> <p>17:24</p>	Cllr Goodwin	<p>How is the council working with partners to combat anti-social behaviour and crime when we are seeing less PCSOs and police officers on the streets? How can people feel safe in the community after reporting crime and anti-social behaviour</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. The Council and its partners continue to work together and are committed to tackling anti-social behaviour and crime. Information from residents helps us to fully understand the problem, to identify those responsible and to intervene as early as possible. Information can be provided confidentially or anonymously. Non-urgent information can be reported on 101, via the GMP web portal at <a href="http://gmp.police.uk">gmp.police.uk</a> or through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111</p>
6	<p>Imran Ghaffar</p> <p>27/2/24</p> <p>20:30</p>	Cllr Shah	<p>I would like to ask the Leader, how can she and her cabinet give Oldham athletic a £1 million to spend on a football pitch, while road maintenance projects receive comparatively less funding. Could you kindly provide</p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>Put simply the investment into a new pitch at Boundary Park was made to secure the future of Rugby League in Oldham as it allowed a ground sharing partnership between Latics and</p>

			<p>an explanation and justification for this allocation?</p> <p>Understanding the reasoning behind such decisions would greatly help in fostering transparency and trust within the community.</p>	<p>Roughyeds to be developed. It also opened the door to other community led use of the pitch including by youth teams and by different sports.</p> <p>The Council investment is a catalyst to unlocking further funding opportunities directly aimed at supporting grass roots provision, youth sports, community engagement and participation through both Oldham Athletic and Oldham Rugby League Clubs. I wouldn't want to apologise for investing in the things that matter to this town and to the people in it – especially where that investment provides the opportunity for so much more.</p> <p>That said, the council also continues to ensure funding is available for road and pavement maintenance, emergency repairs and road safety projects, and has invested over £4m over the last year because we know that the state of our roads matter to local people too.</p>
7	<p>Vikki White</p> <p>28/2/24</p> <p>17:02</p>	<p>Councillor Taylor</p>	<p>I've seen in the news about 500 social homes being built, can we find out more about them? Where are they going? When will they be built etc?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>During the Housing Round Table event held in February, the Council made a shared commitment to deliver 500 new social homes over a 5 year period in a</p>

				<p>response to the national housing crisis which is directly impacting on Oldhamers.</p> <p>Work is well underway on council owned sites including in the town centre to determine how many homes, of what size etc will be built in each site.</p> <p>This will be based on the individual site specifications and local need and full details will be included in detailed plans as they are brought forward.</p>
8	<p>Kyle Phythian</p> <p>28/2/24</p> <p>19:02</p>	<p>Councillor Goodwin</p>	<p>With the rise in gang related violence in Failsworth what is the council doing to liaise with GMP to put more police and community outreach workers onto the streets in Failsworth to tackle the issue at source?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. The Community Safety Team and other partners work very closely with GMP. Significant work has taken place in the Failsworth area to resolve issues and this continues on a daily basis. Partners involved in this work also include TfGM and the business sector.</p> <p>In order for services to identify those involved in these behaviours, it is important that incidents are reported and information is provided. This enables us to identify the root causes of the issues and to respond in a solution focussed way with the community.</p> <p>Violent incidents and other crimes can be reported confidentially or anonymously</p>

				via 101at gmp.police.uk or through Crimestoppers . In an emergency, incidents should be reported to GMP using the 999 service.
9	Jayson Pape-Jones 28/2/24 21:20	Councillor Shah	<p>When will the snipe pub be coming down and where will you be putting that artwork installation that's in between the snipe and the shop next door?</p> <p>I've seen the CGI mock-ups online and they look really good, it'll make that alleyway between the bus station and the high street much safer.</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. Demolition of the Snipe Inn is planned to start this Spring – probably in the next month. with works lasting till summertime.</p> <p>The 'Light Squeeze' artwork currently in the alleyway next to the Snipe is to be protected and taken away for a condition assessment and refurbishment works. We are hopeful that the artwork can be reincorporated into the town centre at a later date.</p>
10	Tom James 7/3/24 16:16	Councillor Shah	<p>Why are you wasting time with two different motions about Gaza on the agenda tonight, hasn't Oldham got enough real issues to deal with rather than this virtue signalling?</p> <p>There are enough challenges for indigenous people in Oldham let's deal with that?</p>	<p>We're absolutely committed to dealing with a wide range of issues that local people bring to us in this chamber and via case work directly to us. Be that highways improvements, the state of public services after nearly 15 years of austerity, supporting them with the impacts of the cost of living crisis or housing crisis. We work every day to meet the needs of Oldham's residents.</p> <p>But while the conflict in Gaza may be taking place geographically far from Oldham the impacts ARE being felt here.</p>

				<p>Oldham is home to Palestinian residents who are impacted by the ongoing conflict as they fear for the safety of their loved ones who remain in Palestine. In the last fortnight in fact a local woman was reunited with her husband who had been trapped inside Gaza and injured in the incessant attacks that continue to injure innocent people.</p> <p>The borough is home to both Jewish and Muslim residents both of whom as communities are dealing with the impact of growing anti semitism and islamohobia which continues to be stirred up by this conflict.</p> <p>It is easy to think that this conflict is nothing to do with us here in Oldham and to shy away from discussing what many Oldham residents want us to discuss,</p> <p>But that doesn't sit right with me, and doesn't feel in keeping with Oldham's proud history of standing up for what's right. During the American Civil War, when cotton was blockaded and many in Oldham faced a lack of work and income as a result, Oldham people stood up for what was right. Historical records show that mill towns like Oldham showed some</p>
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				<p>of the highest support for abolition of the slave trade during this time – despite the impact that blockades and the war were having on their income.</p> <p>Oldham has a proud history of supporting those who are in danger, those who are persecuted, those who are terrorised. We should continue that proud tradition to speak up for others and fight for the rights and protections of our fellow humans across the globe.</p>
11	Mr and Mrs Ash 11/3/24 13:46	Councillor Shah	In addition to calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire observed by both sides, will the council also please call for an immediate release of all the remaining innocent Israeli hostages abducted by Hamas on 7th October 2023?"	<p>I'd like to thank Mrs Ash for her question.</p> <p>The answer is yes, this council has and will continue to call for the release of hostages from Gaza back to their homes.</p> <p>I pray for the safety of those hostages and for the safety of all those caught up in this terrible conflict that continues to impact so many in such tragic ways.</p>