

Oldham Borough Council

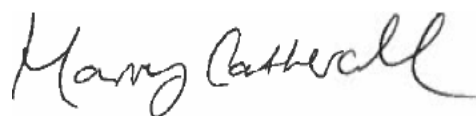


Council Meeting
Wednesday, 11th September
2024

OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

- 9 Public Questions (Pages 1 - 6)
(Public questions with answers)

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 11th September 2024

	From / Date	To	Question	Response
1	Megan Birchall 20/8/24 14:34	Councillor E Taylor/ Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Decent Homes	Can I submit the following question for the upcoming full council meeting: The government announced mandatory housing targets after the election - does this mean we will need to build more homes than PfE said?	The Government proposals restore, and update, the nationally-set Local Housing Need calculation in NPPF as mandatory. Based on the mandatory LHN calculation the housing requirement for Oldham would increase from the average annual housing requirement of 680 under Places for Everyone to 1,049 new homes per year. This represents a 54% increase. It is anticipated that this new requirement would not apply immediately for Oldham given the recent adoption of PfE, However, this is not entirely clear in the consultation document. If this were the case, we would continue with the housing requirement set under PfE. We would then be expected to commence the preparation of a brand-new Local Plan to meet the new housing requirements.
2	Ghazala Rana 20/08/2024 14:41	Councillor A Jabbar/Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability	I heard Ed Miliband say "Britain will be a clean energy superpower" - What does this mean for Oldham?	There are two national initiatives on energy which could benefit Oldham – Great British Energy and the Local Power Plan. GB Energy will provide investment into renewable energy projects and the Local Power Plan will provide grants and other support to local authorities and communities to develop renewable energy projects, so that the financial benefit of energy generation can be kept in local economies.

				<p>Oldham is well placed to benefit from this, as our existing plans under Oldham's Green New Deal will already bring in large-scale private sector investment in low carbon infrastructure, and our Green New Deal Delivery Partnership model puts communities at the heart of energy planning.</p> <p>These new national initiatives will complement and strengthen the approach that the Council has already developed, and which has already secured over £10m in grant funding to implement.</p>
3	<p>Lisa Phillips 20/08/2024 16:24</p>	<p>Councillor Dean/Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities & Culture</p>	<p>I was pleased to see the town centre was busy for the recent Festival Oldham; are there going to be more events like this upcoming to get people in the town spending money with local businesses?</p>	<p>We have a planned programme of events for the town centre including a new event on 28 September – Nostalgic Oldham with many of the town centre businesses taking part.</p> <p>We also have a busy Christmas programme starting with the Christmas Light Switch-On taking place on Saturday 16 November.</p> <p>On Saturday 31 August we also launched the Oldham Giftcard which is available for anyone to buy to give to their friends, family and colleagues as a gift. This is another way we are working with businesses to keep people spending money locally.</p>
4	<p>Alison Shore 20/08/2024 16:52</p>	<p>Councillor Dean/ Cabinet Member for Thriving</p>	<p>I have heard that Access Oldham had moved into Spindles. What services are offered there & is it now fully open.</p>	<p>Access Oldham relocated from its base in the Civic Centre tower, over to the new site positioned in the lower mall of the Spindles shopping centre, reopening as the Customer Service Centre on 18th July. The improved service delivers Benefits, Council Tax and Blue Badge support together with access to Welfare Rights, Support & Inclusion team and</p>

		Communities & Culture, includes Customer Services		<p>Client Finance as well as access to several partner organisations including Citizens Advice, TOG Mind and Turning Point. Freephones for contacting other council services and public access computers for online services are also available.</p> <p>Our Housing Options Team are currently providing support and services next to Rochdale Road Reception at the Civic Centre in a space that provides more space to meet demand including private meeting facilities and additional waiting areas for residents.</p>
5	<p>Kyle Phythian</p> <p>29/8/2024</p> <p>17:40</p>	Councillor Mushtaq - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Oldham's children are the most important thing the council looks after - how is our children's services department performing?	<p>Thank you for your question Mr Phythian.</p> <p>Ofsted are responsible for the external assurance of local authorities Children's Services. We've recently been through a thorough inspection on our performance, making sure we were keeping children safe and improving outcomes.</p> <p>We are delighted that Ofsted has recognised our Children's Services to be 'good' across all areas and the positive difference our workforce make every day. Post inspection action plans are underway to enable the service to drive further improvements over the next 12 months, as outlined in the report which is available at the link https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50252252</p>
6	Jayson Pape-Jones	Councillor Mohon Ali – Cabinet	Can I ask the cabinet member for education how Oldham has done	I want to praise the resilience of our students and pupils in overcoming the challenges of the Covid pandemic to achieve excellent grades in 2024.

	31/8/2024 20:46	Member for Education and Skills	in this year's GCSE and A-Level results?	<p>On GCSE results day, Cllr Nasheen and I visited 10 schools to congratulate pupils and staff. The unvalidated results for GCSEs show that most schools in Oldham improved their outcomes since 2019, and this improved borough attainment. At the same time, the number of strong passes at grades 9 to 5 in English and Maths increased.</p> <p>It's a testament to the hard work of our children and young people that since the pandemic our GCSE outcomes have improved at a better rate than national and are moving closer to the average.</p> <p>On post-16 results day, I was pleased to visit Oldham Sixth Form College and Oldham College to celebrate the achievements of our young residents receiving A-Levels, T-levels and BTECs grades.</p> <p>Unvalidated A-Level results show that A-E grade passes were higher than last year, higher than the national average and are back in line with pre-pandemic results. The A*-C pass rate showed a significant improvement on the 2023 figure and this narrowed the gap to national average.</p> <p>These academic successes are rooted in the excellent work that the Council, Trusts, academies, schools and colleges have done to increase attendance rates, raises aspirations, and continue to further improve the quality of teaching and learning since the pandemic.</p>
7	Imran Ghaffer 5/9/24	Councillor Shah/ Leader & Cabinet	As a seasoned cyclist who rides 60 miles a week to work, I want to commend the council for its	The council are grateful for Mr Ghaffer's positive feedback on our proposals to promote healthier and more sustainable

	14:55	Member for Building a Better Oldham	<p>efforts to encourage more people to cycle. It's great to see initiatives that promote healthier, more sustainable transport options.</p> <p>However, I do have concerns regarding the placement of the new cycle lane on one of the biggest hills in Oldham, particularly on St Mary's Way, as this may deter rather than encourage new cyclists. While experienced riders may manage, I imagine many would find this challenging.</p> <p>Additionally, I would be interested to know how many current councillors have cycled up this hill and, more broadly, how many of the 60 councillors cycle to work or council meetings. As public figures leading this initiative, it would be great to see councillors setting an example.</p> <p>I look forward to your response and thank you again for the work being done to support cycling in our community?</p>	<p>transport options – it's something we think needs to be at the heart of place-making in Oldham.</p> <p>Mr Ghaffer raises a really good point about the challenge of cycling in Oldham as it does have more hills than many other towns and cities, but that shouldn't stop us from creating the safe and pleasant environments for people to walk and cycle as part of their daily journeys if they are able to.</p> <p>Hopefully by creating these spaces, more people will walk and cycle, and they will develop those healthier habits that means their fitness grows and they can manage to cycle up the steeper routes as well.</p> <p>In addition, the increased availability of e-bikes may help residents tackle Oldham's more challenging hills!</p> <p>As for councillors, I don't think we have any specific statistics about how many cycle or walk to work or their council duties, but I know a number do walk or cycle where the opportunity allows, and so creating these fantastic new routes can only encourage that amongst the councillors who are able to.</p>
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