

# **Oldham Borough Council**



**Council Meeting  
Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025  
Supplement – Items 8 and 9**

## **OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

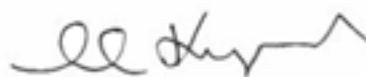
**To: ALL MEMBERS OF OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL,  
CIVIC CENTRE, OLDHAM**

8. Public Questions (Pages 1 - 12)

*Answers provided by the Leader and the various Cabinet Members*

9. Questions to Leader and Cabinet (Pages 13 - 42)

*Answers provided by the Leader and the various Cabinet Members*



**Shelley Kipling  
Chief Executive**

## Public Questions Full Council 250409

#	From / Date	To	Question	Sent to	Proposed Response	Director Sign Off	Exec Director sign-off
1	Christine Turner 27 <sup>th</sup> Jan 19:37	Cllr Elaine Taylor – Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Decent Homes	<p>There are exceptions to Permitted Development legislation that allow elected and unelected officials to support residents with negotiating telecom infrastructure, such as, planning dropped kerbs, building driveways, and householders' deeds, which restrict overhead infrastructure. Are officials aware they can support their constituents in these circumstances?</p> <p>IXW's poor practices have recently endangered ENW engineers and the public by installing poles too close to electricity lines. Is Oldham Council willing to risk constituents' safety by allowing this company's reckless behaviour?</p> <p>Can cabinet members confirm any changes to the Government's guidance for telecoms companies on best practices for installing new equipment?</p>	<a href="#">@Peter Richards</a>	<p>Thank you for your question Ms Turner. The council are aware of concerns raised about IX Wireless' infrastructure and how their contractors are installing it.</p> <p>However, unfortunately, there are no exceptions to permitted development legislation that allow the council as local planning authority to intervene, as you suggest.</p> <p>In relation to highways permits, council officers have liaised with IX Wireless recently on the installation of their infrastructure by contractors and, for a time, withdrew all permits to IX Wireless whilst they provided comfort to us that they and their contractors would improve their procedures for installations. They have now done so, and we are granting highways permits, where appropriate, to IX Wireless again.</p> <p>In terms of guidance from the Government for telecoms companies on best practice for such installation</p>		

					of new equipment, ultimately we as a local planning and highways authority are governed by legislation and regulations, and none of the relevant planning and highways related legislation and regulations for communications infrastructure have recently changed.		
2	Mark Rowe 27 <sup>th</sup> Jan 23:40	Cllr Elaine Taylor – Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Decent Homes	During the recent council meeting Councillor Shuttleworth raised an important point on housing development. The council lead did not have the information to hand but promised to supply councillors Shuttleworth with the information. How will the answer to that question be conveyed to the residents and voters of Oldham?	<a href="#">@Peter Richards</a>	<p>Thank you for your question Mr Rowe. The council recently published its Annual Monitoring Report, which includes data on planning applications and housing permissions, such as that asked about by Cllr Shuttleworth.</p> <p>Ordinarily questions we receive advance notice of are published on the Council's website after the Council meeting, however in this case there was an honest mistake made in the proceedings and even though Cllr Shuttleworth had given notice of his question. In relation to Cllr Shuttleworth's specific questions, he asked:</p> <p><b>1. Within the last five years, how many housebuilding applications have been granted?</b></p>		

					<p>Over the past five years (2019-2024), a total of 420 applications (for 3,854 homes) have been granted.</p> <p><b>2. In which districts have such applications been submitted and for how many properties?</b> Applications have been approved in all districts (the most in North – 1,251 homes, and the least in West – 410 homes).</p> <p><b>3. How many approved developments have yet to see a spade in the ground?</b> 73% of the homes granted permission have either been completed or are under construction, leaving only 27% of the homes granted permission on sites where we are yet to see “a spade in the ground”.</p>		
3	Nicola Brown Tue	Cllr Jabbar, Deputy	In February 2024 Councillor Sykes wrote to the CEO and Leader asking as only 13 councillors had valid DBS	<a href="#">@Steve Hughes</a> <a href="#">@Wendy Jackson</a>	Thank you for a really important question.		

	04/02/2025 16:52	Leader & Cabinet Member for VfM & Sustainability	checks what actions they would take to ensure due diligence was carried out and by when it would be expected for all to have one. Twelve months on can the Leader confirm the number of Councillors who have valid DBS checks? If below 60, are steps being taken to address this, and when can we expect all 60 Councillors to have one? Should any Councillor fail the DBS check, will this information be shared and will they be removed from office ?	@Alex Bougatef	<p>Council can't force members to complete a DBS check but we do encourage them to do so, it also means Council can't remove a member from Office should they 'fail' a DBS check.</p> <p>What's clear is that there have been some issues recently regarding member DBS checks and as a result Officers are currently working on a new member DBS Policy that will require all members to have a DBS check and all Cabinet and Committee members to have an enhanced DBS. This report will be finalised within the next few months and brought to cabinet seeking approval later in the year.</p> <p>The new policy will mean that we are going above the recommendations of the Independent Review carried out by Simon Bailey to ensure we operate to the highest standards and the public can have confidence in political representatives.</p> <p>We will engage the group leaders for their support and take the policy to Standards Committee to make a recommendation to Council. We will</p>		
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					look at the practical ways that we can support Councillors to apply for a DBS check to make the process as smooth as possible.		
4	Shadab Qumer Tue 04/02/2025 17:10	Councillor Shah, Leader & Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham	I've seen publicity about Tommyfield Market traders moving soon to their new home in the Spindles. Could the Leader of the Council clarify when this is taking place and what range of market stalls will be trading from the new venue?	@Maria Cotton @David Hughes @Emma Barton	<p>Thanks for the question Shadab. We are currently planning the move with market stallholders and a final moving date will be decided and confirmed once the specific fitouts of the individual stalls are all confirmed and agreed.</p> <p>We expect the actual move to be in the summer and we will announce a formal opening date once this is jointly agreed with the stallholders.</p> <p>I'm really pleased that to reconfirm as we did when we announced the Community Regeneration Fund, we'll be covering some of the moving costs and new equipment for traders, and the market will include over 50 businesses from the current Tommyfield Market, with others moving into larger units in Spindles and other areas of the Town Centre.</p> <p>Our market traders are a really important part of our town centre and I'm pleased, on a personal level, about how we've managed to work closely with them over the last two years. I can't wait until the new market opens this summer and for our residents to get in there and support them to thrive as we begin this new chapter.</p>		

5	Hannah Roberts Tue 04/02/2025 17:23	Cllr Dean, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communi ties and Culture	The Millgate Theatre in Delph is a community theatre offering live theatre, music and film run by and for local people based in a historic building in a Conservation Area. The Saddleworth Players will be 100 years old in 2027. What support can the Council give towards the Building for the Future fundraising campaign to preserve and extend the work at the Millgate including developing the Saddleworth Players youth group?	@Maria Cotton @Emma Barton	<p>Thank you for your question Hannah.</p> <p>The Council are currently in the process of transferring the freehold of the property to the Arts Centre to allow them to apply for external funding to complete the structural works to the building and preserve it for future generations.</p>		
6	Kathryn Phillips Tue 04/02/2025 18:25	Cllr Shah, Leader & Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham	<p>I am really dismayed that WH Smith has put up all of their high street shops for sale, including the one in the Spindles. This was announced just after it became public the Post Office is also under threat. What can the Council do to makes sure there is an easily accessible Town Centre Post Office? Is it possible for a Crown Post Office to be reopened?</p>	@Maria Cotton @Emma Barton	<p>Thank you for your question Kathryn.</p> <p>I was really disappointed to see that WH Smith had decided to close their Oldham shop, its unfortunate that another big high street brand has taken the decision to step away from town centres. But we've already had inquiries about the future use of the space and I'm hopeful that we'll attract a retailer that Oldhamers want to shop at and conversations are ongoing.</p> <p>Turning to the matter of the town centre post office, the Post Office have been working towards appointing a new Post Master for the town centre since WHSmith announced their decision to close their store in Spindles. They are following their usual application process for the new opportunity, which we have</p>		



					<p>been told by those who know slightly more about this that it can be a lengthy process.</p> <p>Applicants are required to submit a business plan which includes details of the premises in which they operate or plan to operate. So, because the council is keen to retain the Post Office within the town centre we have worked via our appointed letting agents to help this process as much as we can.</p> <p>We have received a number of enquiries from interested parties about details of available units in Spindles for a new post office, and our letting agents have agreed costs and lease terms with a number of potential franchisees.</p> <p>It is now up to the Post Office to select their preferred Post Master. This is a confidential process with the Post Office and unfortunately, we can't provide an update until the Post Office confirms they have appointed a new operator.</p>		
7	Lewis Farnworth Fri 7/3/24 20:24	Cllr Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing	My question is about pip payments due to the cuts on PIP that those unable to work are you going to carry on taking pip contribution to care despite the National Labour party reducing PIP payments which will leave the most vulnerable in poverty	<a href="#">@Jayne Ratcliffe</a> <a href="#">@Claire Hooley</a> <a href="#">@Hayley Eccles</a>	<p>Thank you to Mr Farnworth for his question.</p> <p>People in receipt of adult social care services are required to be means tested to determine eligibility for financial assistance with care costs. Through the financial assessment process people are asked about</p>		

					<p>their earnings, including pensions and benefits they are in receipt of to calculate their individual financial situation.</p> <p>As a result of the recent announcements and changes to Personal Independence Payments it is likely that people in receipt of this benefit will need to be reassessed, as a result of their income changing. As per the legislation we're operating within we have a duty to continue to financially assess people and the income they are in receipt of, which is a consistent and fair approach.</p> <p>Essentially, we need to remember, that this is a change that is being processed through a Green Paper, and as such opportunities for consultation will take place.</p>		
8							
After all  other	Mark Rowe 27 <sup>th</sup> Jan 23:59	Cllr Shah - Leader & Cabinet Member for Building a	During council debates the use of Jargon particularly by portfolio leads in my experience is prolific. Whilst councillor may well understand the jargon used the general public including me do not. Can the council explore ways of limiting the jargon used. There are a number of cost	<a href="#">@Steve Hughes</a> <a href="#">@Smyth Harper</a>	<p>Thank you Mr Rowe for your question and it raises an important point. Elected members are public representatives, and council officers are public servants. For both the key word there is "public", and we should all remember that the public should always come first. We should therefore always try to speak in plain English. We should always</p>		

qu est ion s  as  2nd  qu est ion .		Better Oldham	effective solutions to this issue. For example a crib sheet for attendees, or a jargon notes list on the You Tube channel		avoid jargon. Sometimes we may need to use technical language but when we do, we should always explain it. The Local Government Association has a glossary which sets out some of the commonly-used, but often not understood, terms in local government and I would recommend it to members of the public. It is available at <a href="http://lga.gov.uk/glossary">lga.gov.uk/glossary</a> . But, more importantly, I'll take this opportunity to remind my Cabinet colleagues and the officers present that we should always strive to speak in a way that the public understands.		

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Colour Code Chart	
Cllr Arooj Shah – Leader & Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham	#FFC9C9
Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Decent Homes	#FBE4D5
Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability	#DAD8F0
Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	#FFF2CC
Cllr Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member for Education & Skills	#CEFEFD
Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing	#DEEAF6
Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Don't Trash Oldham	#E2EFD9
Cllr Fida Hussain – Cabinet Member for Enterprise	#FECFEEB

Cllr Peter Dean – Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities & Culture	#D6BAF4
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*Cllr Nazrul Islam:*

*How will the Cultural Co-operative model support the Coliseum to deliver the best offer for Oldham?*

The Cultural Co-operative model is all about putting local people at the heart of Oldham's cultural future. It brings together residents, artists, community groups, and partners to shape our towns cultural offer – including what happens at the new Coliseum theatre.

By involving the community in this way, we're creating a cultural offer that truly reflects Oldham – its people, its stories, and its ambitions. It means more opportunities for local creatives, more space for diverse voices to be heard, and more chances for residents to take part in culture, whether on stage, behind the scenes, or in the audience.

It also supports the local economy by attracting visitors, creating jobs, and ensuring investment in the arts stays in Oldham. Ultimately, the Cultural Co-operative model makes sure the new Coliseum isn't just a building, it's a shared resource that belongs to the whole community.

*Cllr Alicia Marland:*

*The upgrade of the TransPennine train line is an ongoing project which has been planned by Network Rail for many years and significant work is scheduled including electrification of the railway line. The initial electrification work is scheduled to take place over two weekends in late April and early May which will involve both a road closure of Uppermill High Street and a pedestrian closure of the canal towpath.*

*These closures will have a detrimental effect on all the businesses and residents of Uppermill and surrounding villages and will also impact the planned Saddleworth Art Trail where visitors take a self-guided route from the Diggle to Lydgate to review the local art groups.*

Thank you for your question, Cllr Marland.

The Council recognises and supports the upgrade of the Trans Pennine Route, due to the benefits the improved network will bring for the residents in the borough.

This Network Rail project is a huge National Infrastructure project and the Network Rail team held a public meeting and consultation events to bring the project into the public arena, with specific elected member meetings in Uppermill last year.

The re-ballasting of the Uppermill rail viaduct is a part of the enabling works required prior to the main works commencing. To close the rail network, rail possession has to be booked many months in advance by the Network Rail project Team - this is something that Oldham Council are not privy to and was decided before Oldham Council was involved.

When we are made aware of works, as with any external works or utility company, we challenge the working methods and works duration. In this case, we were made aware of the requirement for road closures in late December 2024.

*It was confirmed by Network Rail that notification was sent to the Council on this road closure in January however there has been a significant failure by both Network Rail and the Council neither shared this communication with residents, businesses, Saddleworth Parish Council and Councillors until 7th March. By this stage it is too late to enter any discussion on the matter.*

*Please can the Cabinet Member tell us why there was as communication failure in getting this message shared as soon as it was received and what will be done to ensure this does not occur again.*

*Network Rail have confirmed that this is just the first of many disruptions in this area so does the Cabinet member know if June's Whit Friday will be affected in case they have more road and pedestrian closures planned?*

*Cllr Lewis Quigg:*

*Q: Can the Cabinet member responsible clarify the following:*

- A. Is the annual running cost of the BEE Network £226 million?*
- B. Confirm the statutory charge for Oldham taxpayers for the financial year 2024/25?*
- C. If a passenger survey has been conducted on the following services: 182, 181 and 409? If yes, can he share the results?*
- D. Where non franchised services have been withdrawn due to the franchising model that*

Due to the nature of the location, the structure involved, and the works required, Network Rail have no choice but to close the routes beneath the viaduct for the duration of the works.

Oldham's Engineers have challenged both the working methods and the works duration, but are satisfied that in this situation, Network Rail's proposals are the only way forward.

Both Network Rail and the Councils Communications Teams have been working together since January to get the information regarding the works out in the public domain, this include Network Rails Team contacting all affected Ward Members, The Parish Council and affected business and residents.

**There are no proposed Network Rail works in the Saddleworth area that will impact the Whit Walks and Band Competition on 13 June this year.**

We will continue to work with Network Rail on the overall electrification programme that will affect Greenfield Station bridges and other bridges in the Saddleworth area in the coming years - we continue to challenge works methodology and durations to ensure the minimum impact on residents, businesses and road users.

The below details have provided by TfGM colleagues:

- A. The £226 million figure relates specifically to the annual net cost of the franchised bus network for financial year 2025/26, rather than the Bee Network as a whole, as detailed in the GMCA Transport Budget report presented on 7 February 2025. More details can be found at [Report Pack for Greater Manchester Combined Authority, 07/02/2025](#) (Page 104).
- B. The statutory transport charge specified in the GMCA Transport Budget report noted above refers to the financial year 2025/26, rather than 2024/25. Overall, the charge remains static across the two financial years. The charge is based on each local authority's share of the overall Greater Manchester population. For Oldham the charge was £7.262m in 2024/25 and is budgeted at £7.237m for 2025/26.
- C. Passenger surveys have been conducted on service 409 as part of developing a baseline to monitor and evaluate the impacts of the City Region Sustainable



*the BEE Network has replaced the like for like service, in particular I refer to the inconsistent service that is the 182/181?*

Transport Settlement-funded Rochdale – Oldham – Ashton Quality Bus Transit scheme. The survey was designed to gather baseline perceptions and satisfaction with the reliability and punctuality of the 409 service, the bus waiting environment, and ease of interchange between modes along the corridor; the survey revealed the following key insights:

- Respondents are mostly frequent users (using the bus at least once a week) travelling towards the main town centres on the route - particularly Oldham with shopping trips, commuting to/from a regular place of work, recreation or leisure the top three trip purposes.
- Connecting with other public transport (another bus, train, tram) is important with around a third doing so before boarding the bus; and 30% when leaving the bus.
- Half could have made their journey by car (as a driver or passenger); in future surveys it will be key to understand reasons why bus was the preferred option and if the scheme encouraged modal shift.
- Connecting with other public transport (another bus, train, tram) is important with around a third doing so before boarding the bus; and 30% when leaving the bus.
- Half could have made their journey by car (as a driver or passenger); in future surveys it will be key to understand reasons why bus was the preferred option and if the scheme encouraged modal shift.
- When it comes to satisfaction with the bus stop and services in general - frequent users are less satisfied with factors compared to infrequent bus users.
- 81% are satisfied with the bus journey made when handed the questionnaire. Satisfaction varies across the corridor with those travelling towards Oldham from Rochdale/Royton more satisfied than those travelling towards Oldham from Ashton.
- Punctuality of the bus arriving at the stop (45%) is the lowest scoring factor and punctuality of the bus arriving at the destination at the time expected stands at 53% satisfied. This is reflected through comments received on suggested improvements

Page 10  
 Cllr Nadeem Iqbal:  
*The Labour Government removed the need for Secretary of State approval of wider Selective Licensing schemes last December. What plans does the Council have to use this new freedom to improve private sector standards across the borough?*

Cllr Abdul Malik:  
*What more can the council do together with partners in the Voluntary and community and statutory sector to reduce the numbers of people are becoming homeless?*

to the route with 34% about reliability and 18% referring to punctuality and buses to arrive on time.

It should be noted that we are also continuing with public engagement on schemes in Oldham on the 409 route. The survey closes 31st March 2025 and can be accessed here: <https://tfgm.com/projects/improving-journeys/rochdale-oldham-ashton/oldham>

D. Services 181 and 182 were bolstered by adding additional vehicles in late February 2025, addressing previously identified performance issues. While there were some disruptions to these services when they were brought into the Bee Network due to highway works, service performance is expected to gradually improve. Ongoing monitoring and reviews will continue to ensure consistent service delivery.

Cllr Elaine Taylor – Deputy Leader – Cabinet Member for Decent Homes

Thanks for the question, Cllr Iqbal.

Having secured additional funding from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Oldham Council is looking to expand the selective licensing scheme in conjunction with the Greater Manchester Mayor.

In order to ensure guidance is followed and the scheme is correctly applied, a research exercise has been commissioned to determine the extent of the areas that will fall within a selective licensing scheme.

We anticipate that this exercise will be completed later this year and in accordance with the guidance, the scheme will come into effect in early 2026.

In the meantime, the private sector housing team continues to respond to a range of issues raised by tenants in Oldham and uses a range of legal powers to ensure compliance and property standards.

Thank you for your question, Cllr Malik.

As a Council, we have a proud track-record of working with, and recognising the value of, the VCFSE sector in Oldham. Local organisations are often at the forefront of supporting vulnerable people in times of need, and this is no different when it comes to help around

	<p>housing and homelessness, as well as the various factors that lead towards Oldhamers finding themselves in such a situation.</p> <p>To help further improve our relationship with the local voluntary sector, we are currently working with the Oldham Positive Action Network, supported by Action Together. The network has recently held two workshops with people with lived experience of homelessness and other housing issues, and with the organisations that support these people. Next month, Council and housing partner officers will be meeting with the network to discuss the learning from these workshops, and how we can use this to improve how we work together, in order to ensure people in Oldham get the best possible support for their situation.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Marc Hince:</i></p> <p><i>I have recently been working with a group of residents in Shaw who have all had letters to say their rents will increase 40% over the next 2 years. This is absolutely appalling behaviour from the landlord which I understand to be Places for People or an arm of them.</i></p> <p><i>Given that Places for People has long been understood by residents to be operating as a social housing provider, how can a 40% rent increase – especially during a cost-of-living crisis — be seen as anything other than outrageous and unjust?</i></p> <p><i>What steps can this council take to challenge this decision and support residents who are now facing the very real risk of being priced out of their homes and long-standing community?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Hince. and I agree this is not the sort of behaviour we would expect from a social housing provider.</p> <p>As you know I have been involved with the resident's group to offer my support from a Cabinet Member perspective and to understand what tenancy agreements the residents each have.</p> <p>I will be challenging Places for People's decision to increase the residents' rents by such an astronomical amount as I believe it is morally and ethically wrong. I plan to write to Places for People's Chief Executive to highlight their immoral practice and the devastating impact their behaviour is having on their tenants.</p> <p>I will also write to every local authority's Leader of the Council to make them aware of Place for People's actions as I suspect residents in other localities will also be affected. I will also brief the local MP on this matter to seek support by raising this matter in the House.</p> <p>From an officer perspective, the Housing Team are working with the residents concerned to offer them advice and support as needed through offering support at the residents' meetings as a collective and are also offering one to one bespoke advice and support as some residents are affected by this in different ways.</p>

<p><i>Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani:</i></p> <p><i>The Housing Act 2004 clarifies the definition of a house in multiple occupation (HMO), replacing the definition under the Housing Act 1985. The definition of an HMO is found in Part 7 of the 2004 Act. There are three tests that can be carried out to see if a building is an HMO: the standard test for HMOs; the self-contained flat test; and the converted building test.</i></p> <p><i>How many buildings has Oldham Council defined as an HMO, by year, excluding those which are defined as such by licensing or by planning, since 2020?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Al-Hamdani.</p> <p>Planning permission is needed for two categories of HMO - 1) any HMO accommodating more than 6 unrelated people or 2) any HMO being created by converting a non-residential property to an HMO for 3-6 unrelated people.</p> <p>A HMO licence is required for any HMO for 5 or more unrelated people.</p> <p>Therefore, your question effectively relates to those HMOs of 3 or 4 unrelated people that has been created by converting a residential dwelling to an HMO.</p> <p>It is extremely difficult to provide a definitive number of HMOs in the borough that fit this description because landlords of such HMOs are not required to notify the council or any of our partners of this change of use.</p> <p>As a result, the only way we have of identifying some of the small HMOs of 3 or 4 unrelated people is where the conversion has involved some internal works requiring building regulations approval or where officers happen to have become aware of such a small HMO in the course of their daily work.</p> <p>As of October 2023, we were aware of 253 HMOs (out of 369 HMOs in total) that did not require a licence or planning permission, with some of these likely having been in existence as an HMO since the 1990's.</p> <p>Given the challenge with providing a reliable figure for the number of HMOs fitting this description, we do not hold reliable comparator data by year.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Lewis Quigg:</i></p> <p><i>Q: Can the relevant Cabinet member please advise on the cost to the taxpayer for enforcement action on securing dilapidated buildings and if planning permission on these sites has expired or is outstanding, such as: The Old Dog and Partridge Public House of Middleton Road, Royton. Park Lane House at the junction of Rochdale Lane, and Park Lane. Thornham Mill, on Oozewood Road.</i></p>	<p><b>Old Dog &amp; Partridge</b> - PA/344187/19   Residential development to form 14 no residential apartments (Use Class C3) following demolition of existing public house.   148 Middleton Road Royton Oldham OL2 5LL.</p> <p>Development of the site has commenced, and so the permission cannot now expire.</p> <p>A S215 prosecution against the owners is currently ongoing. Legal fees for that prosecution have cost the council £2,175.</p> <p>Enforcement action to make the owner secure the building was carried out in January 2025 and the works were carried out in default of the owner and a charge put on the property. Unable to retrieve the cost details in the time frame given.</p>

**Park Lane House** – there is no outstanding planning permission for this property, and no planning enforcement action has taken place.

Enforcement action to make the owner secure the building was carried out May 2019 and May 2023 and the necessary works carried out in default. Cost charged on property £860.

**Thornham Mill** - FUL/346141/21 | Demolition of existing derelict mill to be replaced with the proposal of a 5 storey, 60 unit residential development with under-croft parking and shared landscaped amenity. | Thornham Mill Oozewood Road Royton Oldham OL2 5SJ.

Planning permission granted in June 2022, so will not expire until June 2025.

After initial complaints in 2021, no planning enforcement action was considered expedient. No complaints about the building have been received since.

Records show that requests to secure the building were complied with.

Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Deputy Leader – Cabinet Member for Value for Money and Sustainability

*Cllr Junaïd Hussain:*

*Can Cllr Jabbar give us an update on the pension credit, how many residents have now successfully claimed money they were entitled to and how much extra money has this put in Oldhamers pockets?*

Thank you for your question Cllr Hussain.

We ran a Pension Credit campaign from October to December 2024 with the aim of increasing uptake of this important benefit.

We reviewed our data and wrote to residents who we felt we likely to be eligible. We followed up with a phone call from the Helpline Team offering support to make an application with the option of a visit from the District Team to support filling in an application.

I'm delighted to share that following on from the Department of Working and Pension processing Pension Credit applications, 53 residents from the 180 we contacted are now claiming Pension Credit. The average annual value to each household is an extra £3,494 with an annual benefit for these 53 residents of £185,188. Factoring in average life expectancy and passported benefits, the lifetime impact for these residents is likely to reach over £1.7 million.

	<p>There are more claims to be processed by DWP and I anticipate the number of successful applications to increase and most importantly put more money in the pockets of Oldham residents who deserve this support.</p> <p>Moving forwards, I have asked Officers to develop a series of campaigns to increase benefit uptake to ensure we are doing our bit to maximising income for as many Oldhamers as we can.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Naseem Aslam:</i></p> <p><i>What steps is the council taking to improve Council Tax and Business Rate collection?</i></p>	<p>The Council recognises the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis, which continues to affect both residents' ability to pay and the financial resilience of any local businesses. We are therefore taking a balanced approach - strengthening our collection processes whilst provided support to those who need it most.</p> <p>Key actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The introduction a Corporate Debt Policy, which sets out a more consistent and coordinated approach to debt collection across all services. This aims to ensure residents and businesses are treated fairly, while also improving overall collection rates and reducing duplication in recovery efforts.</li> <li>• Automation of key processes, we are also making use of automation and digital solutions to improve efficiency and customer experience. For example, improvements to our billing systems mean that new Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates accounts are now being set up and billed more quickly, helping to reduce delays and increase early payment rates.</li> <li>• Ongoing work to increase the Council Tax base and identify new non-domestic properties to ensure all liable properties are correctly identified and brought into charge.</li> <li>• Continued provision of the Localised Council Tax Reduction scheme which reduces the amount of Council Tax low-income households are asked to pay.</li> </ul> <p>These measures are supported by a continued focus on early intervention, clearer communications, and offering support where it is needed, to help residents and businesses meet their payment obligations.</p>

	<p>While support and early engagement remain our priority, where payment is not made and no reasonable engagement is possible, the Council will, where appropriate, utilise enforcement agents and take legal action as a last resort to recover outstanding debts. This ensures fairness for those who do not pay and protects essential funding for local services.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani:</i></p> <p><i>In recent years, the Council has been using local small businesses to pay out Household Support Vouchers, who then claim the money back from the Council.</i></p> <p><i>I have been approached by a number of businesses who have found the very small payments available for managing the scheme not worth the amount of time it takes. They are faced by hostile claimants, and they have to keep cash on site which makes them vulnerable, and they have to wait to get the money back once they have paid it out.</i></p> <p><i>I have also been told – but not yet had verified – that there have been some businesses who have been charging claimants an administration fee for processing the claim.</i></p> <p><i>Will the Cabinet Member consider finding an alternative way to manage providing this money to residents?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Al- Hamdani.</p> <p>Thank you for sharing the feedback from the businesses you have spoken to. We were advised by our supplier that the outlets were provided 1½ weeks' notice to prepare for issuing the cash. The method of payment was identified for residents to access the monies locally. We hope that the additional footfall to the outlets supported local businesses.</p> <p>For any potential future schemes, we will assess whether additional measures are required, such as improving communication with residents and considering alternative payment methods to support a cash first approach wherever possible.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Lewis Quigg:</i></p> <p><i>Q: Can the Cabinet member responsible confirm whether Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council intends to launch an investment scheme to help fund their environmental initiatives? To note: In Bristol, 238 taxpayers have collectively invested £175,750 in the</i></p>	<p>There are currently no plans for Oldham Council to launch an investment scheme such as the one cited in Bristol.</p> <p>However, the Council will shortly be procuring a commercial low carbon energy infrastructure provider to form a Joint Venture with the aim of bringing in the investment and delivery capacity required for the decarbonisation of Oldham borough, and one requirement of this Delivery Partner will be that they offer shared ownership options for</p>

*Bristol Climate Action Investment to help fund heat pump installations, solar panels and energy improvements in its own offices. In Hackney 103 have invested £128,345 the Council's green projects, including funding energy efficiency improvements at a local school. In total, 15 councils have launched the investment products, according to Abundance Investment. But investors could face issues getting their money back if the council did run into trouble. This is because the investment is a peer-to-peer loan and is therefore not eligible for the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS), which can protect up to £85,000 of your deposit if the provider goes under. Savers could also lose money if they decide to sell up. Investors must sell on a secondary market, and there is no guarantee they will find a buyer.*

*Cllr Lewis Quigg*

*Q: Can the relevant Cabinet member please provide an update on the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy (OGNDS) and advise:*

- 1. The pounds and pence cost to date for achieving the carbon neutrality target by the end of 2025 and for the Borough by 2030?*
- 2. Confirm if Oldham is an outlier given it was the first authority to adopt such a plan?*
- 3. How many jobs have been lost and created because of the OGNDS?*
- 4. How much capital has been invested by companies, government and charities and trusts in pounds and pence into achieving net*

low carbon infrastructure schemes which will enable Oldham residents to invest if they wish to do so.

Oldham Council has for many years supported community energy initiatives such as Saddleworth Community Hydro and Oldham Community Power and intends to continue support for this sector to enable Oldham residents to take part ownership in renewable energy generating projects where they can afford to do so.

1. It is not possible to provide a full answer in the time available. However, the Council has been successful in securing grant funding for decarbonisation projects including:-

2025 target (Council Buildings & Street Lighting)

- £100K towards the cost of LED lighting in Oldham Leisure Centre
- £290K towards the cost of Air Source Heat Pumps at Alexandra Park Depot
- 1.4m towards the cost of electrical heating systems and insulation at Spindles

2030 target (Oldham borough)

- Heat Network Delivery Unit and Green Heat Network Fund – around £10m towards the cost of developing a new low carbon heat network for Oldham Town Centre
- GMCA Local Net Zero Accelerator – around £1.4m towards the cost of establishing a public-private JV with a low carbon energy infrastructure provider, and further rolling out the Council's approach to Community Led Energy Planning



zero by the end of 2025 and 2030 respectively?

5. *If any geological surveys have been done or if the Council have been approached regarding the exploitation of natural energy resources and if a pounds and pence figure has been provided?*
6. *How many buildings owned by the council have been retrofitted and the pounds and pence cost of delivering this?*
7. *How many private buildings have been retrofitted?*
8. *If the Council will be welcoming onshore windfarms and if any sites have been identified?*
9. *If the solar farm at Wrigley Head: - Expects to breakeven and what the pounds and pence figure will be and a date of when they expect to achieve that?*
- a. *What the final capital cost for the site (see notes below) and if that figure has been met? To note: A £1.35m costs associated with the construction of the Solar Farm would be capital expenditure and would need to be financed from Funds Held for Emerging Priorities within the existing Capital Programme. There would also need to be an allocation of £70k of revenue funding to progress the scheme to the construction phase which would need to be met from within the existing Regeneration*

- Levelling Up Fund – around £20m towards the cost of green projects including the new Town Centre Linear Park and Northern Roots
- 2. It is not clear what the question is asking
- 3. It is not possible to provide a full answer in the time available. However, the following is known:-
  - A 2022 study of Oldham's Green Technology and Services sector showed around 100 companies operating in Oldham in this sector, employing around 2,000 people. GM Green Economy (part of the GM Growth Hub) have recently revisited the findings and although some of the companies identified in 2022 no longer exist, Green Economy identified an additional 16 companies they currently deal with which were not identified in the 2022 study
  - The Northern Roots project over its development period so far has secured grant funding enabling it to support 31 jobs during 2024, although many of these were part time. The project is currently recruiting again after securing further grant funding, and the long-term aim of the project is to create permanent roles as it moves from development into operations
  - Companies employed on Council decarbonisation projects:-
  - Leisure Centre LEDs used Oldham company NPS Electrical for the feasibility study
  - Tommyfield Market solar PV – local company Thomas Halliwell has been used by the Council to maintain the system
  - Wrigley Head solar farm – Blackburn company Vital Energi is the main design, build & operate contractor and they are using local sub-contractors where possible
  - Spindles refit – Oldham company Willmott Dixon has been used for the refit including the energy systems
  - Alexandra Park Eco-Centre – a local contractor will be used to install the solar PV system there

revenue budget or the Creating a Better Place Earmarked Reserve.

- b. If the issues with flooding in the vicinity of the site could pose any risk to the viability of the scheme, and/or further cost implications?
- c. The annual running and maintenance cost of the site?
- d. If other land has been identified in Borough for Solar farms and whether the Council will permit arable farming land to be built on in the Borough?

- Two jobs are being created in Westwood as the charity National Energy Action is establishing a Retrofit Advice Hub there. The two jobs will be temporary until September 2026 but with the intention to make them permanent if possible
  - Growth of sector nationally - the net zero sector is growing three times faster than the overall UK economy, new analysis has found. A report by the Confederation of British Industry found that 22,000 net zero businesses, from renewable energy to green finance, employ almost a million people in full-time jobs and the average annual wage in the businesses – £43,000 – was also £5,600 higher than the national average. [Guardian: Britain's net zero economy is booming, CBI says](#)
4. It is not possible to provide an answer in the time available – the Council does not hold most of this information.
  5. Desktop studies have been undertaken looking at the potential for minewater heat in Oldham. FWS Geotechnical consultants carried out a study looking at the potential for minewater heat at the Council's Rhodes Bank site with a view to feeding the new town centre low carbon heat network – the study found potential but further work is required to establish whether minewater is feasible at that site. Separately, the Coal Authority has produced a study (below) showing Oldham as having the best potential opportunity for minewater heat in GM.

Mine Water Heat Opportunity Mapping for 10 Cities in England

July 2022

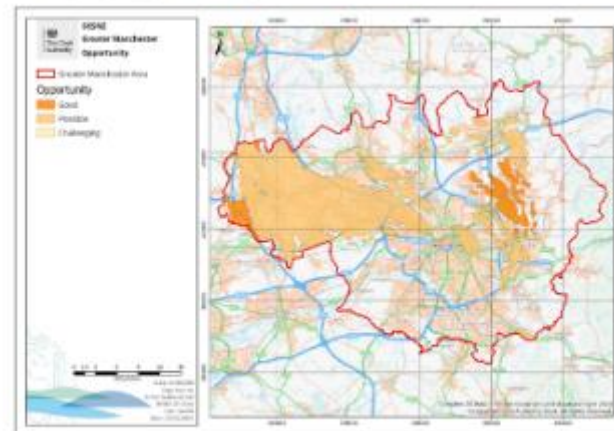


Figure 4.5: Mine water heat opportunity map for Greater Manchester

© Coal Authority

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6. Please see the response to Q1.
7. It is not possible to provide an answer in the time available – the Council does not hold information about privately owned business premises or private homes where the occupier has retrofitted the property themselves. However, over the last two years (figures are not available beyond that), privately owned homes in Oldham have received 591 carbon reducing measures retrofitted worth almost £1.3m, which have reduced energy bills for owner occupiers by an average of £551 annually
8. The Council will in principle be welcoming onshore wind farms in the borough, subject to the views of local residents and Elected Members, and some potential sites have been identified.
9. As currently modelled the solar farm at Wrigley Head is expected to break even over its lifetime.
  - a) The final cost is still being established due to the need to confirm the final grid connection arrangements with Electricity North West and the cabling route between the solar farm and the ENWL sub-station.
  - b) A full flood risk assessment has been carried out on the proposals and no problems are anticipated from the historical flooding under the railway bridge which has been remediated as part of the pre-construction works for the scheme or any other potential source of flooding
  - c) Around £11,535 annually
  - d) Land in Oldham borough which could be suitable for solar farms is set out in the [Local Area Energy Plan](#) for the borough, developed as part of the GM Local Energy Market project. As most of this land is in private ownership, it will be up to the landowner to decide whether they would like to develop it for renewable energy generation and any schemes put forward for Planning Permission will be subject to the normal Planning rules around such developments

There will be a Green New Deal update report going to Place Scrutiny on 2<sup>nd</sup> April where there could be an opportunity for a more in-depth discussion.

*Cllr Lewis Quigg*

*Q: Oldham Councillors voted to sell shares in the Greater Manchester Councils Pension fund because they invest in British defence, fuel and mining companies that may sell goods to and in Israel.*

*Companies like BAE systems help keep Britain's Armed Forces equipped. They help keep the Royal Navy afloat, Trident Nuclear submarines deployed and the RAF in the sky. At this time of global threats should this Council not be proudly investing in British defence companies?*

*Can the Cabinet member responsible clarify:*

- 1. What discussions were held before the vote or after the vote to sell holdings in perfectly legal British companies, and whether a valuation has been carried out on the sale of existing shareholdings and the value such as sale would have on staff pensions and what the cost would be to sell this many shares in fees, commission and tax due to the sale of existing holdings?*
- 2. Given it concerns staff pensions can they confirm what legal advice was provided and why no impact report was provided to advise members on the implications of such a decision?*
- 3. Will the Council be demanding that Oldham erase its proud history with BAE systems who once provided hundreds of skilled jobs, and does Oldham Council not want Boeing and*

I think Cllr Quigg has fundamentally misunderstood what the motion passed at Council called for.

The motion in question asked that GMPF outline a divestment plan from fossil fuels and arms to ensure that members pensions are aligned with Oldham's and GMCA's climate goals.

In short:

1. No such discussions were held as the motion did not mandate the sale of shares in any companies. It requested that GMPF begin a process of divestment. The Pension Fund can choose not to do so.
2. Impact reports are not usually provided on motions to Council, unless they specifically ask for it.
3. No of course not, this is performative nonsense once again from Cllr Quigg. To suggest that wanting ethical investments is paramount to hating Britain is shameful.

<p><i>Honeywell, Shell, BP and Glencore to bring jobs and investment to Oldham all to appease those who hate Britain?</i></p>	
<p><b>Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children &amp; Young People</b></p>	
<p><i>Cllr Ken Rustidge:</i></p> <p><i>Its great to see our Youth Service thriving, with young people able to access some amazing opportunities through the council. Can you give an update on what provision we will have for young people throughout the Easter holidays?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Rustidge.</p> <p>The Youth service have a full programme of activities for young people throughout the Easter Holidays including, continued delivery of our core weekly sessions but also additional opportunities including 3 residentials for young people to develop leadership skills, a photography programme, a Football tournament, and a trip to Wigan Warriors rugby league as well.</p> <p>We also have a very comprehensive Holiday Activities and Food programme across the Borough for young people aged 5-16 years in receipt of free school meals.</p> <p>There are 47 camps available providing at least 1500 children and young people with the chance to participate in enriching activities as well as receiving a nutritious healthy meal.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Nadeem Iqbal:</i></p> <p><i>What will be the most significant changes for children and young people in Oldham from delivering the national Children's Social Care reforms under the Children's Wellbeing and School Bill.</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>The most significant changes will be re-designing and integrating targeted early help with section 17 child in need to create a Family Help Service with the development of a Family Help Lead Practitioner. Legislating for multi-agency child protection teams made up of statutory partners. Strengthening support to family networks and kinship care through offering family group decision making to all families before applying to take a child into care.</p> <p>This will provide the earliest possible support to children, young people and families to improve their lives and prevent the need for more specialist statutory intervention.</p>
<p><b>Cllr Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member for Education &amp; Skills</b></p>	
<p><i>Cllr Umar Nasheen:</i></p> <p><i>I think Oldham Virtual School supports the education of children looked after, as well as the initiatives in the</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>Oldham Virtual School supports the education of children looked after and has recently extended its duties for children previously looked after and those in kinship care. Education is monitored through Personal Education Plans and there is an extensive</p>

<p><i>report can the Cabinet Member outline what else this service delivers?</i></p>	<p>programme of Raising Aspirations. Examples include courses in skills like cookery and university visits. More details are available in the Virtual School Annual Report which was presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in January 2025.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Pete Davis:</i></p> <p><i>It is great to see that the NEET figures are dropping thanks to targeted intervention. Is this something that will continue to be a priority for the council or are we at risk of this figure creeping back up?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for the question.</p> <p>The Council is focussed on supporting young people to progress into education, employment and training. For instance, we have recently worked hard to attract both the YMCA and North Lancs Training back into Oldham. This means we now have more training opportunities available for our young people. We continue to work hard with our commissioned partners, Positive Steps, to support all our young people into employment and training opportunities. Our ambition is to build upon this positive trend with the development of the Government's Get Britain Working Youth Guarantee when it is rolled out.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Helen Bishop:</i></p> <p><i>Schools will be receiving only a 0.7% rise in funding. This is below inflation and will nowhere near cover the rising costs. Many local councils are in a deficit in terms of high needs funding and Oldham council has just gone into this category. Thanks to inaction by government, SEND funding continues to be a ticking time bomb and with spending reviews like this so will school funding overall.</i></p> <p><i>Will the cabinet member be lobbying his colleagues in government to fund schools properly and to address the SEND funding crisis?</i></p>	<p>I recognise that there is significant financial pressure on schools generally and specifically in relation to services for children with SEND. As stated in my council motion, I welcome the steps being taken by this Labour Government to finally review and reform the SEND system in England. Additionally, however, I can assure the Cllr that I, along with all my fellow cabinet members, will continue to ask government, as part of its comprehensive spending review, to address the deficit in High Needs Spending by Local Authorities and put spending to support children with SEND on a sustainable footing.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Lewis Quigg:</i></p> <p><i>Q: Can the Cabinet member responsible provide an update on the Eton Star Academies?</i></p>	<p>In October 2024 the Department for Education announced that forty-four planned free schools (including Eton-STAR Oldham) would be reviewed on the basis for value for money. The outcome of that review has yet to be announced.</p> <p>Every Oldham child, no matter where they live or their background, is entitled to the opportunities which can help them fulfil their potential. We believe the Eton-Star Oldham proposal supports us in achieving this ambition. We're confident in the difference this</p>

	<p>project will make to the lives of children and young people in Oldham and we'll continue to make this case to the government.</p> <p>We remain hopeful of the outcome of this review and we believe we have put forward a strong case to the Secretary of State on the merits of this proposal and the positive outcomes it will deliver to Oldham's residents.</p>
Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing	
<p><i>Cllr Marie Bashforth:</i></p> <p><i>What have we done differently to ensure that more people had NHS Health Checks at the GP?</i></p>	<p>Thanks for your question Cllr Bashforth.</p> <p>Our Public Health team and Oldham's primary care providers continue to work closely together to improve the reach and quality of NHS Health Checks in Oldham.</p> <p>We monitor both the number of Health Checks delivered by GP practice and the percentage achievement of the ten elements involved in a complete NHS Health Check every quarter by GP practice.</p> <p>We are seeing continual improvements in both the quantity and quality of Health Checks delivered meaning residents get to know and understand their risk of Cardio Vascular Disease and how to improve their health.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Holly Harrison:</i></p> <p><i>The reports highlights the ongoing consultation on the NHS plan – what examples of good practice from Oldham can be included to help improve the NHS more widely?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Harrison.</p> <p>I'm quite pleased to be able to say that Oldham is already well ahead of the Government on this agenda.</p> <p>Our integrated care partnership is the style of model the 10 Year Plan is likely to advocate.</p> <p>This is enabling us to work collaboratively to shift activity out of hospitals and closer to communities.</p> <p>Our Community Diagnostic Centre is one example of this. With the Council working to unlock planning, the NHS committing to Capital development we now have one of the most envied CDCs in the region which means people are now accessing diagnosis tests for things like cancer much faster and closer to where they live.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Garth Harkness:</i></p>	<p>There are a wide range of social activities available in communities locally. Action Together, our local infrastructure organisation for the voluntary and community sector,</p>



*I have been contacted by a long-standing community campaigner and former parish councillor in Saddleworth around the topic of loneliness.*

*He has produced a document with significant amount of work in this area and has asked questions of the council, such as how can lonely individuals readily gain information about organisations that help the lonely – especially with access to digital services?*

*Are hard copies of helpful information available? Or PDF versions that could be shared?*

*Through the Health & Wellbeing Board, would the council consider conducting an assessment into existing schemes and services targeting loneliness and isolation across the borough?*

*Identifying any examples of ‘good practice’ and establish a plan of promoting and enabling these to work.*

have a searchable database of community activities on their website. There are also a range of activities hosted in local libraries and leisure centres, information is available in those centres and on their respective websites.

The Council commissions a Social Prescribing service which is available to residents experiencing social isolation or loneliness. Leaflets are available (and can be shared) providing residents with the details of how to access the service directly, or via a referral from their GP, social worker or other professional. The service works with approximately 3,000 residents per year, supporting them to build confidence and access activities and support in their communities.

We will take the item to a future health and wellbeing board for further partnership discussion and will seek to include representation from the ICB who lead on the Living Well Approach - which seeks to help people achieve good mental health in community settings.

#### Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Don't Trash Oldham

*Cllr Luke Lancaster:*

*Thank you, Mr. Mayor.*

*Elected Members, including those serving on the Highway Regulation Committee, work hard with Council officers to introduce road safety schemes, to address resident concerns. Frustratingly, a significant enough minority of motorists prone to disobedience and discourtesy ignore parking prohibitions, undermining the effectiveness of these schemes. Would the Cabinet Member support stronger deterrence? If so, could the Administration please*

Thank you for your question, Cllr Lancaster.

Currently, within Oldham, 80% of penalty charge notices (PCN) issued are for on street offences with the remaining 20% relating to off street offences.

By issuing on foot, officers can also check for a number of further issues including, vehicles parked out of bay within car parks, causing an obstruction, or misusing disabled bays.

PCN charges are set nationally in legislation and the British Parking Association, of which Oldham Council is a member, is currently lobbying Government to increase the charges.



<p><i>make representations to national government for this local authority to be given the necessary powers to increase Penalty Charge Notice fares? For reference, the PCN cap in London has recently been increased and is double that of areas outside of our capital city.</i></p> <p><i>In order to further strengthen our local approach, will Oldham Council also ask the UK Government to allow the deployment of Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras across local authority car parks? With this technology in place, enforcement officers could then concentrate their efforts in monitoring street road safety schemes.</i></p>	<p>In terms of using ANPR, the recent De-regulation Act, which amended the Traffic Management Act 2004, limited the possible use of CCTV and ANPR to on street enforcement only, in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus Lanes</li> <li>• Red Routes</li> <li>• School Keep Clears</li> <li>• Bus Stop/stand and clearways</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the Secretary of State indicated that it was unlawful for local authorities to use CCTV/ANPR in public car parks.</p> <p>Red Routes schemes involving ANPR technology are currently being designed and progressed at certain key strategic locations within the borough. Further details regarding these proposals will be shared in due course.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Graham Shuttleworth:</i></p> <p><i>Following the change in October as to which items can now be placed in the brown recycling waste bin, has there been any significant increase in items sent for recycling and a reduction to that which goes to landfill?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Shuttleworth.</p> <p>The Council recognises the need to improve recycling and help local communities to recycle more by recycling the right objects in the right bins.</p> <p>The recent changes mean that residents can now recycle plastic pots, tubs and trays – previously, these had to be returned to the store for recycling, and this meant that they were being added to the general waste collections, or they were being thrown in the recycle bin which was contaminating the load.</p> <p>The new changes mean that less waste is being landfilled or incinerated and it is much easier for residents to know which items can go in which bin. Many of the additional items being recycled are lightweight items, and given the existing volume that re recycle, the overall tonnage of recycling hasn't increased significantly.</p> <p>We will continue to work with partners across the region to support greater recycling and will response to changes in policy and practices to support our residents.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Colin McLaren:</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr McLaren.</p>

*Can you give an update on the council's road maintenance programme as I saw in the paper that if we don't demonstrate that we are fixing potholes we might lose some funding?*

The approved 2024/25 capital highways programme was completed according to schedule and we are currently putting together the overall capital infrastructure highways programme for 2025/26. This will include the carriageways programme and details will be shared/approval sought in the coming weeks.

The Council has a team of specialist Highways safety inspectors who constantly carry out inspections across all 800km of the highways network according to planned and risk assessed routes based on national standards. Among other issues, potholes are identified and repaired according to timescales determined by individual risk assessments. Members' and residents' queries are investigated and actioned in parallel.

As to the government's recently announced initiative, the reporting required is likely to be much more than simply pothole data – we have provided significant information to central government for many years – as a result of this reporting, Oldham Council has received the its full share of capital funding.

As a result, and although the reporting requirements are changing, details of which are awaited, we do not expect to lose out on additional financial support as we are meeting the existing criteria.

*Cllr Aftab Hussain:*

*How can residents support the council in making sure that our trees and woodland are looked after across the borough?*

Thank you for the question, Cllr Hussain.

Trees provide a range of environmental benefits in the urban environment – some of these are improved air quality, carbon storage and sequestration, natural flood risk management, habitats and biodiversity, shading and cooling, placemaking, shelter and amenity.

Residents can help identify possible sites for new trees and plant trees on their own land and in their own gardens.

Residents can become involved in volunteer groups through our various partnerships like City of Trees and become involved in tree planting projects and woodland creation.

Residents could join forces with partner organisations to undertake a wide range of woodland improvement works such as small-scale coppicing and thinning, invasive weed control, litter picking, habitat creation (bird and bat boxes, habitat piles etc)

	I would encourage all residents to be vigilant and continue to report issues such as disease so we can inspect and take the appropriate action.
<p><i>Cllr Helen Bishop:</i></p> <p><i>There has been a worrying spate of fires across our moorland in recent weeks. Please can Council be advised as to any measures that are being taken – alongside GM Fire &amp; Rescue and other partners - to address the situation, reassure residents and promote fire safety and prevention?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Bishop. The Council recognises the significant issues posed by Moorland Fires and works closely with partners including Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service to support them in educating and informing visitors to the Moorlands regarding how to use the Moors responsibly.</p> <p>The Local Authority have also sought to reduce the risk of fire related harm on Moorland through the implementation of a Public Spaces Protection Order. This Order prohibits the following activities on the Moorland;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lighting of fires</li> <li>• The use of barbecues</li> <li>• The use of open flame sourced lanterns</li> <li>• The use of fireworks</li> </ul> <p>Any of these activities are an offence.</p> <p>Furthermore, any individuals found to be involved in deliberate fire setting on the Moorland, with the intention to cause harm, would be subject to criminal prosecution by Greater Manchester Police and the Local Authority would also seek to take appropriate civil action against the individual which may include the pursuit of an Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction or Criminal Behaviour Order, to prevent them from engaging in such behaviours in the future’.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Dave Murphy:</i></p> <p><i>Given that the council’s local flood risk management strategy has not been updated since 2014, are there any other important environmental policies that have not been reviewed, and have redundancies impacted on the local authority’s ability to undertake its duties with regard to risk management?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Murphy.</p> <p>Oldham’s flood risk strategy is due for review. However, from a data perspective, the Council’s flooding team is aware of areas where there are risks of flooding. This work is done with partners, including the Environment Agency – and is considered at a GM level and is priority/risk based as national funding is determined on this basis.</p> <p>Funding is only allocated if it can be determined that the works will alleviate risk of property flooding – there have been 9 schemes in Oldham since 2017, with the aim to manage water flow/alleviate flooding risks.</p>

	<p>There are other schemes that Officers are currently discussing with partners such as the EA and United Utilities which will manage urban water networks and reduce risks of localised flooding. Details of these will be shared in due course.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Alicia Marland:</i></p> <p><i>Please can the Cabinet Member confirm if the gully clearance programme is on course to be completed and if so by what date?</i></p> <p><i>What percentage of the workload has been deemed inaccessible and what plan will be taken for revisits, along with a programme date for completion.</i></p> <p><i>Finally, when will councillors know the outcome of the clearance project and how the analysis has determined those areas will need frequent clearing in the future?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Marland.</p> <p>I can confirm that there is the scheduled programme of gulley cleaning and there is the urgent / reactive programme.</p> <p>To date, 25% of the 47,500 gullies in the have been cleaned under the scheduled programme.</p> <p>The adverse weather during winter months, generated numerous additional and significant concerns for our communities which required more reactive visits, therefore the planned programme is slightly behind schedule. It is still our intention to deliver the scheduled programme within the overall 18-24 month programme and Officers hope to claw this time back during drier periods (when there are less reactive / emergency requests).</p> <p>We do not have a figure for “incompleted cleans”, however the scheduled work programme has built-in flexibility to allow for what is actually found – this can include numerous issues like actual “dig downs” as well as removing physical obstructions or where the gulley is totally inaccessible.</p> <p>In addition to cleaning the gullies, officers also record the volume of silt present – this will inform a future maintenance programme, details of which will be shared once the exercise is complete.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Helen Bishop:</i></p> <p><i>In the past few months, we have seen serious flooding incidents and numerous wildfires on large areas of our moorland.</i></p> <p><i>Does the Cabinet Member agree that our rural environment is just as important as our town centres when it comes to the health and wellbeing of the borough, and that we should be doing more to identify</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Bishop.</p> <p>The last major flooding incident for the GM region occurred over the new year period – for context, according to the Met Office maps, our area received somewhere between 75mm and 125mm of rain - this was well over half a month’s worth of rain in less than 24 hours with 31st December 2024 being the second wettest day on record for the North-West (the wettest being on 3rd November 1931 in a series dating back to 1891).</p> <p>When this much rain falls in such a short period of time, flooding is unfortunately inevitable. Once the river and sewer network has reached capacity (which it did on New</p>

<p><i>and bid for environmental funding opportunities to maintain and protect, and enhance our areas of natural beauty?</i></p>	<p>Year's Eve/Day in many areas), no more water can get into it and the whole system simply backs up until such time as the rainfall reduces and river / stream levels are lowered.</p> <p>Officers in the Councils Flooding Team do work with both United Utilities and the Environment Agency to identify schemes that require implementing to alleviate flooding risks.</p> <p>A previous question has answered part of your question relating to the importance we place on wild-fires, so I won't repeat that here.</p> <p>Finally – I can confirm that we are always seeking opportunities for external and additional funds to support these important environmental programmes of work. Such funding opportunities have not been available over recent years, however we regularly check for all opportunities to secure funding for Oldham's communities and will continue to do so, especially for our beautiful green spaces and for environmental or climate change concerns.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Alicia Marland:</i></p> <p><i>It's been positive to see the weed clearance team in action already but after the problems experienced last year please can the Cabinet Member confirm if this work is to be done by Parks staff or a weeding contractor this year?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Marland.</p> <p>It is correct that this year's programme has already started – the mild spring weather, although positive, has supported early weed growth.</p> <p>I can confirm that the weed spraying programme is being delivered by Council staff – we have made significant financial investment in new equipment, materials and training to ensure that the programme delivers on time and effectively.</p> <p>Once an area has been sprayed, it takes roughly two to three weeks for weeds to die off. Our teams start early in the morning so residents may not always see them and our programme is dependent upon the weather, as we don't spray when it's breezy or wet.</p> <p>Weeds are sprayed with a low toxicity herbicide which can be used safely without harming people or animals.</p> <p>Depending on the weather, weeds may return between treatments. Where problems recur, we will undertake further sprays and consider the use mechanical removal too.</p>

	Please bear with us as we continue around the rest of the borough over the coming weeks.				
<p><i>Cllr Lewis Quigg</i></p> <p><i>Q: Can the relevant Cabinet member please confirm when the toilets at Tandle Hill Café will be once again operational as it has been months since officers have advised on action being taken to fix the toilets? One of the busiest parks in Oldham has been without a fully functioning set of toilets.</i></p>	<p>The repair and re-opening of the toilets is aligned with the leasing of the café. The café tenant will take on responsibility for the toilets under the terms of a long-term lease. This is to ensure that the toilets can be well managed for users.</p> <p>The lease is currently in negotiation. Once the lease terms are agreed approval is required from the Charity Committee. Once dates are known this will be shared with the local community.</p>				
<p><i>Cllr Lewis Quigg</i></p> <p><i>Q: Can the relevant Cabinet member confirm: How much it costs to reactively clean gullies and grids versus proactively cleaning gullies and grids, will the Cabinet member please provide a pounds and pence figure?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The date for when Royton will see its gully's/grids cleaned as residents have complained that several gullies and grids such as those on: Flake Lane, Rochdale Lane, Sandy Lane, Fir Lane, Dogford Road, Middleton Road, Springfield Lane, Tandle Hill Road, Cecil Street, Holden Fold Lane and Hindle Drive to name a few are either blocked or silted up.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The Council's current defined programme of visiting and cleaning all 47,742 gullies in the borough was agreed last July / August and started on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2024. It is a proactive approach with the first 5 wards having been visited, and over 12,000 gullies cleared to date.</p> <p>The Council policy as it states on the website does also include for reactive visits if a blocked gully is putting a property at risk of internal flooding – it will be then inspected and cleared if necessary. The policy does, therefore, include both a proactive programme with defined reactive cleans.</p> <p>The programme is currently in the wards of Hollinwood and Medlock Vale. Whilst we cannot say specific dates precisely as the time to clean in each ward will vary depending on a number of factors and other related highways activities, it is likely that the team will be in Royton around August / September 2025.</p> <p>In terms of cost, given that the resources need were already in house, and the approach altered, on average, each gully costs approximately £15. Some will cost significantly more where a 'dig-out' is required.</p>				
<p><i>Cllr Lewis Quigg</i></p> <p><i>Q: Can the relevant Cabinet member please confirm: How many legal notices have been issues to private</i></p>	<p>Notices served for rubbish on land:</p> <table> <tr> <td>2019/20</td><td>1385</td></tr> <tr> <td>2020/21</td><td>851</td></tr> </table>	2019/20	1385	2020/21	851
2019/20	1385				
2020/21	851				

<p><i>landowners to clear up fly tipping and rubbish in the period:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2019/20,</li> <li>• 2020/21,</li> <li>• 2021/22,</li> <li>• 2022/23,</li> <li>• 2023/24,</li> <li>• 2024-to date.</li> </ul>	<table> <tr> <td>2022/23</td><td>1526</td></tr> <tr> <td>2023/24</td><td>150</td></tr> <tr> <td>2024-to date</td><td>93</td></tr> </table>	2022/23	1526	2023/24	150	2024-to date	93
2022/23	1526						
2023/24	150						
2024-to date	93						
<p><i>Cllr Lewis Quigg</i></p> <p><i>Q: Can the relevant Cabinet member confirm what measures can the Council put in place to prevent the growing menace of fly tipping on and has the Council confirm:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>If they will install motion sensitive cameras?</i></li> <li>• <i>If they have looked at crushing fly tippers vehicles?</i></li> <li>• <i>Does consider the crushing of vehicles</i></li> <li>• <i>That the Council will release a ward by ward breakdown of fly tipping and the pounds and pence cost per ward in response to dealing with fly tipping?</i></li> </ul>	<p>The Council has used a range of enforcement approaches to deal with fly tipping. This includes installation of CCTVs where it is appropriate.</p> <p>However, this has not always created the deterrence value that was expected. The use of Motion Sensitive cameras have not been considered given the costs linked to their installation, servicing and monitoring. Moreover, recent experience has shown that cameras are often subject to vandalism and theft. Cameras on private property in certain locations have been effective as a deterrent and for identifying individuals. Where evidence has been provided, officers have taken enforcement action against those responsible.</p> <p>Crushing of vehicles used for fly tipping is considered by the Council where appropriate and historically has been carried out on one occasion via approval from the courts. This option is considered when dealing with persistent, criminal gangs that are involved in fly tipping.</p> <p>Ward data for flytipping service requests is recorded. However, this does not extend to financial costs for enforcement and disposal for each ward as the teams visit more than one ward in any one day when collecting waste.</p>						
<p>Cllr Fida Hussain – Cabinet Member for Enterprise</p>							

<p><i>Cllr Josh Charters:</i></p> <p><i>Can Cllr Hussain give us an update on the closure of the Post Office and WH Smith in Spindles?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Charters, I think the Leader answered most of your question earlier during public question time, however I'll just reiterate that we want to see a Post Office in the town centre continuing to operate.</p> <p>Our appointed letting agents have received a number of enquiries from interested parties around details of available units in the Spindles for a new post office.</p> <p>Our letting agents have agreed costs and lease terms with a number of potential franchisees.</p> <p>And it is now up to the Post Office to select their preferred Post Master. This is a confidential process with the Post Office and therefore we are unable to provide an update until they do.</p> <p>We are told unfortunately that this can be a lengthy process, however we are ready to do what we can to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.</p> <p>It's our understanding that staff at WH Smith had been offered jobs in other stores in the region, however I know that our Get Oldham Working team will be able to help anyone who cannot for whatever reason move to another store or have not been offered that opportunity.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Saj Hussain:</i></p> <p><i>I'm delighted to see in the report that good, skilled jobs are coming to Oldham with the opening of a facility in Fitton Hill by Cygnet Health Care. Are there other opportunities that the council is pursuing to ensure that more good jobs come into the borough?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question. The investment by Cygnet Health Care and their collaboration with the Get Oldham Working team has meant that Oldham residents secured 61% of the jobs created.</p> <p>As a Council we are committed to creating jobs through our Creating a Better Place strategy and through the development of new areas for businesses, such as Atom Valley.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Mark Kenyon</i></p> <p><i>As the UK copes with the impact of Trump's 10% tariffs on exports to the US, does the Cabinet Member have any idea how many Oldham and Greater Manchester businesses and jobs are reliant in on trading with the US?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Kenyon.</p> <p>Clearly the recent announcements from the United States are a concern for the UK and we are working with our partners across Greater Manchester to assess and understand potential impacts on our businesses.</p> <p>We are mindful that with the tariffs in the UK being lower than those imposed on other areas including the EU at 20% and many Asian countries also being much higher, there may also be new opportunities for UK businesses to compete including local businesses,</p>



<p><i>What is the council and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority doing to help them? What is the council's assessment of President's Trump's actions?</i></p>	<p>and we are keen to ensure our business community are prepared to seize any opportunities that might emerge.</p> <p>We are echoing the advice of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, by asking that our local companies proactively assess how they will be impacted across supply chains, understanding rules of origin and putting in place a duty management plan.</p> <p>Business can contact us via <a href="mailto:invest@oldham.gov.uk">invest@oldham.gov.uk</a> and we can connect them with specific support at this time.</p>
<p><i>Cllr Lewis Quigg</i></p> <p><i>Q: Can the relevant Cabinet member please confirm:</i></p> <p><i>- If background checks (including criminal record checks for fraud and criminality) are completed on those who use the HIVE in the Spindles?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• If any elected members have any conflict of interest with any business that uses the HIVE in the Spindles?</i></li> <li><i>• If the Council is permitting use of the HIVE in the Spindles to be used as a registered business address?</i></li> </ul>	<p>The Hive co-working space is managed by Upturn Enterprise and is open to any business to join as a member, with access levels of daily, weekly and monthly membership. Oldham Council is not involved in assigning co-working space.</p> <p>We're proud to work in partnership with Upturn who have an amazing track record in supporting Oldham businesses.</p> <p>We're sure that Upturn would be more than happy to show councillors around The Hive and demonstrate how valuable the space is to Oldham's business community.</p>
<p><b>Cllr Peter Dean – Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities &amp; Culture</b></p>	
<p><i>Cllr Angela Cosgrove</i></p> <p><i>After Operation Vulcan launched in March, residents have come to me with lots of positive feedback about the action they have seen taking place. Can you give an update on the results that have been achieved and what the long term plan is for Derker when GMP end the operation?</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Cosgrove and I am pleased to hear the positive resident feedback. I can report in the first month of Vulcan Derker, there has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A stakeholder launch with over 100 delegates giving commitments to the project.</li> <li>• A community launch held in the heart of Derker at Mayfield Primary School involving a presentation on the project, with questions and answers from the residents of Derker.</li> <li>• 3 days of action with partners</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 warrants executed</li> <li>• 29 stop searches</li> <li>• 25 arrests</li> <li>• 2 safeguarding referrals</li> <li>• £11,000 cash seized</li> <li>• £50,000 worth of class A and class B drugs seized</li> <li>• 7 weapons seized</li> <li>• 21 vehicles, including e-bikes seized</li> </ul> <p>Vulcan has a three-strand approach – clear, hold and build. The project is currently in the clear stage with planning starting for the hold and build stages. The Neighbourhood Policing Team will have a continued presence in the area with proactive partnership working continuing when the Vulcan Team move to another location.</p>
<p>Cllr Lewis Quigg</p> <p><i>Q: Can the relevant Cabinet member confirm: If the Licensing team and Greater Manchester Police have a strategy in place to deal with the disorder that was seen in the New Year in Royton Precinct outside of Bono's?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>According to figures I have obtained, half of all incidents were not attended to in Royton Town Centre. Does the Cabinet member agree with me that more needs to be done?</i></li> <li>• <i>To note: Despite having a population of 21,000, Royton has 5.7 pubs per 10,000 people compared to Oldham's 4.1 per 10,000 people. Since 2 That the Council has a plan to improve the cleanliness of Royton Precinct and</i></li> </ul>	<p>A joint strategy is in place with colleagues from GMP.</p> <p>Insp. Matt Catlow in the Neighbourhood Prevention Hub (who manages the GMP Licensing Officer) responded as follows <i>"As all parties are aware there were violence based issues of concern outside the Bono's Licensed premises in February 2025.</i></p> <p><i>The Policing response from GMP was swift and directed. The Licensing Officer has met with the ownership to discuss and define expectations alongside licensing legislation and new actions were defined around staff placement, roles and also responsibilities both inside and immediately outside the club if issues could be attributed to that location.</i></p> <p><i>This was formally documented in a problem-solving record that was managed in the GMP Prevention Hub. This was supported by the allocation of frontline divisional resources at key times of demand creating a more visible presence, with a visible reduction in ongoing issues. The club ownership has engaged positively with GMP and at this time they have seen a reduction of calls related to Bono's to almost zero."</i></p>

*town centre given the growth of the nighttime economy in Royton, when compared to the 22% drop in Oldham since 2012 and a 3% drop in Bury?*

In summary, the Prevention Hub Inspector gives his personal and professional assurance that based on the facts that GMP are aware of, they have provided a robust, open and transparent Policing response to issues raised.

In terms of Cllr Quigg's comments around half of incidents being unattended, to review that situation the Inspector in the Prevention Hub has requested extra data around those issues and the source of reporting so that he may review further.

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