

Oldham Borough Council



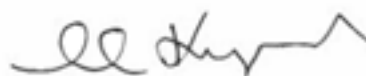
**Council Meeting
Wednesday 17 September 2025
Supplement – Item 9**

OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

To: ALL MEMBERS OF OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL,

Item No

9 Questions to Leader and Cabinet

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shelley Kipling', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Shelley Kipling
Chief Executive**

Appendix A

Council – 17th September 2025

Item 9 - Questions to Leader & Cabinet

From/Date	To	Question	Proposed Response
Cllr Dave Arnott 11 th September 11:19am	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	· Former Dog and Partridge Pub on Middleton Road Royton	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Arnott.</p> <p>This site was granted planning permission for the development of 14 apartments in 2021 and, whilst there was a start on site, the developer / property owner was unable to complete the development.</p> <p>Unfortunately, this resulted in the half-built apartments remaining in this condition for some time.</p> <p>We understand that the property has been sold and that the new owner intends to complete the development, including discharging the relevant conditions on the planning permission.</p>
Cllr Christine Adams 11 th September 11:19am	Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for	· The Northern Care Alliance NHS Trust	<p>In this Chamber we all know how well our local NHS served us during the pandemic. We all also understand that the level of rising demand it now faces and the pressure to reduce waiting lists also goes alongside 14 years of austerity. NHS staff are facing real</p>

	Adults, Health & Wellbeing	<p>challenges. Whether NHS trust league tables will be helpful to the public is questionable, because hospital performance is not as simple as 'good' or 'bad'. In reality, there is no consistent relationship between how well a hospital trust ranks on its four-hour A&E waiting times and how well it ranks on its 18-week elective waiting times or 28-day faster cancer diagnosis.</p> <p>The Northern Care Alliance has received a ranking of 116 out of 134 hospitals but the NCA has four hospitals in Salford, Bury, Rochdale and Oldham. These rankings don't highlight where the good areas of practice are and where things need to improve or in which part of the NCA. In fact they tell us virtually nothing and certainly nothing we don't already know or understand. So, I am not going to get into an NHS bashing argument in this Chamber; doing so risks undermining confidence in our local NHS services.</p> <p>The ranking is the ranking. It does not change the fact that NHS colleagues continue to work on areas where improvement is needed.</p>
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<p>Cllr Shoab Akhtar</p> <p>11 September 2025 16:26</p>	<p>Cllr Arooj Shah</p>	<p>Can the Cabinet Member responsible for registrars and cemeteries please explain the rationale behind the recent decision to alter the Registrar's office availability to include weekends and bank holidays?</p> <p>Who was consulted in making this decision?</p> <p>Given that a weekend burial service (issuing of green burial certificate) has been successfully provided by two local volunteers, Nazar Hussain and Zaffar Iqbal, for over 20 years without complaint or delay, and was cost-neutral to the Council, can the Cabinet Member confirm:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What assessment was made of the existing volunteer-provided service? 2. What financial implications are anticipated with the new arrangement? 3. Can the Cabinet Member provide assurance that this change represents a long-term commitment and not a potentially reversible budget decision? 	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Akhtar.</p> <p>The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) introduced the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death Regulations 2024 in September 2024. This changes the way in which the causes of death are scrutinized and certified in England and Wales with the introduction of a statutory Medical Examiner system. The changes means that independent scrutiny by a Medical Examiner is a statutory requirement prior to the registration of all non-coronial deaths in England and Wales. The regulation introduces the new medical certificate cause of death to be used by attending practitioners and medical examiners. The General Registrars Office (GRO) stipulate that the medical certificate is required for the Registrars service to issue the 'green form' to enable a burial to take place.</p> <p>The changes resulting from the new regulation has resulted in an updated approach to mirror the hours worked</p>
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Furthermore, would the Cabinet Member join me in formally expressing gratitude to Nazar Hussain and Zaffar Iqbal for their outstanding and dedicated volunteer service to the community of Oldham over the past 20+ years?

by the medical examiner and to ensure that we are delivering a resident focused out of hours service for death registrations that reflect the new regulations, meets the needs of our communities and are also clear and transparent.

To enable this, data from the service was reviewed alongside benchmarking across Greater Manchester.

The Registrars budget has and continues to be in a positive position due to income from fees and charges and the costs associated with this approach at circa £30,000 per annum are met within the services existing budget.

Prior to this change, the service did not have contingency in place resulting in the service manager being required to complete the necessary paperwork outside of working hours when alerted by the volunteer-provided service of a death. The support of Nazar Hussain and Zaffar Iqbal has been much valued and appreciated and as Leader of Oldham Council I contacted them both to express my gratitude. I would like to extend my thanks publicly here tonight

			for their kindness and compassion they have shown to the family and friends of those who have sadly passed.
<p>Cllr Shoab Akhtar</p> <p>11 September 2025 16:40</p>	Cllr Abdul Jabbar	<p>Could the Cabinet Member responsible for procurement please advise whether Oldham Council will consider incorporating social value clauses into its contracts which are worth several million pounds, requiring contractors and suppliers to contribute to local community projects as part of their corporate social responsibility? Specifically, would the Council explore adopting a model similar to Kent Council and Birmingham City Council's 'Match My Project' portal, which facilitates transparent matching of community organisation requests with contractor and supplier offers, thereby enhancing the visibility and delivery of social value initiatives within Oldham's communities?</p>	<p>The Council currently uses the 'Social Value Portal' platform for recording Social Value achievements against each contract, which is included in procurement processes and provides details to the Supplier about the Social Value Portal. We do have standard social value clauses in our contracts, but the main social value requirement for each commission is set at the tender/ITT stage and performance is then recorded in the Portal. The Social Value approach for the Council was established and is led by procurement colleagues as part of the Commercial Procurement Unit. Currently, we have no details of the 'Match My Project' initiative and how it works in practice, but we would be interested to learn more to establish and understand the logistics, benefits, and cost of integrating such an approach moving forward. This would need to be led as a corporate initiative as Social Value cuts across all Council services as part of the procurement process.</p>

Cllr Josh Charters	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	What are we doing to replicate the positive results of Operation Vulcan and the Community HAF events in other parts of the borough?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Charters.</p> <p>The Council's Community Safety Team utilise the same type of problem-solving approach as Operation Vulcan in each of the district areas. However, it is recognised that the additional police resource that Op Vulcan has brought in cannot be met.</p> <p>Our approach does include joint working with partners from GMP and other statutory and VCFSE sector organisations to fully understand the causes and impact of anti-social behaviour and crime and to develop short, medium and long-term solutions.</p> <p>Wider roll out of similar targeted activities like those deployed as part of Operation Vulcan continues to be a discussion point with key partners including GMP.</p>
Cllr Nadeem Iqbal	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for	Can Cllr Taylor update us on the issues with the planning portal over the last few weeks where residents were receiving error messages when submitting comments on applications?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Iqbal and I'm sorry that residents were receiving the error message from the planning portal.</p> <p>Planning have investigated the issues with the Council's IT team, but they</p>

	Neighbourhoods		<p>have not identified any issues and other comments are being submitted by residents without errors being detected. Officers have engaged directly with some of the residents who were experiencing the problem and have replicated the circumstances and the comments were submitted without any issue.</p> <p>As such, we only suggest that this was a glitch and we continue to advise residents to ensure that they draft their comments in a word document or email before copying them into the portal, to avoid losing their comments should anything go wrong.</p> <p>Should residents find they cannot submit their comment on a planning application online for any reason, they are able to submit their comments via email to planning@oldham.gov.uk</p>
Cllr Holly Harrison	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	Given the report makes reference to abandoned vehicles, can Cllr Taylor outline the process and timeline for having them removed?	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Harrison.</p> <p>When an abandoned vehicle is reported to the Council, our first obligations are to check the vehicle against the legislation, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No registered keeper on DVLA's database and it is untaxed

- It has been stationary for a significant amount of time
- It is significantly damaged, run down or unroadworthy, for example has flat tyres, missing wheels or broken windows
- It is burned out
- A number plate is missing

Only one of these criteria needs to be met, and then efforts are made to contact the owner.

If the owner is found, the Council can issue a fixed penalty fine of £200 for the offence.

If the owner cannot be identified or located, a legal notice will be issued, giving them a period of time to remove the vehicle (7 days if on the Highway and 15 days for private land).

If the vehicle is not claimed within these timescales, the Council has a duty to remove the vehicle and store it for a period of time, before disposal – all costs are claimed back from the owner.

Cllr Junaid Hussain	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability	<p>Can the Cabinet Member explain how the feedback gathered through the OPAN workshops is shaping our approach to the new Crisis and Resilience Fund?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Hussain.</p> <p>I welcome the Government's commitment through the new Crisis and Resilience Fund in providing what we understand will be a multi-year settlement to help support the most financially vulnerable residents in our borough. The Government has advised Council's that scheme guidance and funding allocations will be shared at a later date. As soon as we receive this, the planning will start to make the most of this vital funding here in Oldham.</p> <p>Understanding and acting on the lived experiences of residents is at the centre of our approach in delivering a resident focus. I would like to extend my personal thanks to Oldham Positive Action Network (OPAN), Action Together and the lived experience commissioners for their invaluable time and contributions. An initial workshop takes place next week. It will focus on listening to experiences of navigating support and services and understand how improvements can be made to ensure residents seek advice and support at the earliest opportunity. Further</p>
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			workshops will be helped as the findings are gathered and we are committed to work with OPAN and others partners to reshape our financial support offer as the details of the Crisis and Resilience Fund become clearer.
Cllr Colin McLaren	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability	How are we using the success of our graduate and early careers programmes to promote the Council as an employer of choice for local people?	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr McLaren.</p> <p>We are proud of our continued efforts to build career pathways into employment for local people.</p> <p>We have actively promoted success stories on social media – notably LinkedIn – of individuals who have undertaken T Levels at the Council.</p> <p>We use existing and available opportunities to showcase success stories and opportunities to our local people. For example, we have a presence at the Get Oldham Working Jobs Fair on 18th September which will promote career pathways and available roles at the Council.</p> <p>We have promoted our good work across Greater Manchester and have been identified as an organisation of good practice against the GM Inclusion Standards for this work. We</p>

			<p>have agreed to showcase our work at GM level at a webinar later in the year.</p> <p>Looking forward, we are determined to, build on this momentum. We will continue to create more opportunities for Oldham residents by deepening engagement with schools, colleges and the VSFE sector, working with Jobcentre Plus and other partners and expanding our early careers pathways – from T Levels and apprenticeships through to graduate programmes and work placements, ensuring there are routes into every area of the organisation.</p> <p>We continue to be relentless in our ambition to create opportunities for the people of Oldham.</p>
Cllr Umar Nasheen	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability	Could we hear how the Council is building on its strong performance in Council Tax collection and benefit take-up campaigns to support more residents?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Nasheen.</p> <p>We've had a strong start to Council Tax collection this year, and I want to thank all the residents who continue to pay on time, especially given the financial pressures many are facing. We know that more households are struggling financially, which makes collecting payments more challenging. Despite this, we're committed to keeping up our strong performance</p>

while offering support to those in genuine hardship. We're also reviewing our processes to make things easier for residents, improving the customer experience, making sure bills are accurate, and collecting payments earlier to help the Council manage its finances more effectively.

We are preparing for the Winter to support residents to maximise their income. Building on the success of last winter's Pension Credit campaign which saw over £1.7 million extra in the pockets of Oldham residents over the average life expectancy of claimants, we are once again writing to and calling residents who may be eligible and offering support to make an application for this vital benefit. We will also be looking to maximise attendance allowance later this year and into early 2026 alongside Healthy Start vouchers into Spring next year.

I'd like to take this opportunity to make my message loud and clear – if you think you are entitled to benefits be it pension credit, attendance allowance, housing benefit, Council Tax Support or healthy start vouchers – please do not hesitate to claim The money is

			rightfully yours and could make a big difference to your life.
Cllr Junaid Hussain	Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	Could the Cabinet Member share how we are celebrating and building on the positive feedback from Ofsted to maintain momentum for improvement?	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>We plan to celebrate the positive feedback from the Ofsted focused visit with our workforce and partners at our annual Children's Services conference in early 2026.</p> <p>The areas of recommendation have been incorporated into our Achieving Excellence Action Plan. Progress is reviewed by the leadership team on a quarterly basis and reported to Children and Young People Scrutiny Board bi-annually to ensure momentum continues in improving outcomes for our most vulnerable children, young people and their families.</p>
Cllr Pete Davis	Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	How are we continuing to strengthen outcomes for care leavers, particularly following the co-production of the new Pathway Plan?	<p>Thank you for this question.</p> <p>We are very proud of our leaving care service and the work the service has done to encourage and promote the voice and influence of young people, including the co-production of the new pathway plan. The goal of the revised pathway plan is to provide young people with a more visible plan that they can use in their day-to-day lives,</p>

			<p>with the support of their Personal Adviser. We strive to ensure young people are involved in all our initiatives, which include enhancing our offers from Get Oldham Working and with Housing services. This year our Leaving Care Football Team has grown from strength to strength including playing in a national tournament and being nominated for participation awards. This in turn is an excellent place to capture views and influence service development.</p>
Cllr Josh Charters	Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	Can the Cabinet Member tell us whether there are plans to expand Mockingbird Hubs or other innovative foster care initiatives across Oldham?	<p>Thank you for the question.</p> <p>We are extremely pleased with the progress the Mockingbird initiative has made. We now have three hubs in operation, with a plan to open a fourth this financial year. In addition, we plan to open a further two Hubs in 2026/27 in order to complete the Mockingbird offer. Feedback from Foster Carers is consistently positive and we have seen increased stability in children's placements.</p> <p>We continue to think creatively and strive to recruit and retain as many foster carers as possible. Initiatives include a targeted campaign to step down children in residential care into</p>

			<p>foster care, an enhanced offer for Special Guardians and the annual awards event, celebrating the longevity and achievements of our foster carers. This year included a foster carer who has fostered for over 30 years with the Council.</p>
Cllr Abdul Malik	Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing	<p>Could the Cabinet Member tell us how Oldham's achievement of micro-elimination of Hepatitis C is being shared as an example of national best practice?</p>	<p>Hepatitis C is a blood borne virus which if left untreated can lead to serious damage to the liver and can be life-threatening. It is really important that we test and find cases of Hepatitis C and treat them. In 95% of cases it is entirely treatable.</p> <p>It is an important achievement for Turning Point as our Drugs and Alcohol Treatment provider to have achieved Micro Elimination of Hepatitis C. This means that they are offering and providing testing to their clients, and ensuring that they complete their treatment. Turning Point work regionally and nationally to share their good practice and we have shared details with the Department of Health and Social Care.</p> <p>The Micro Elimination achievement is reviewed six monthly and so the work continues.</p>

Cllr Ken Rustidge	Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing	How are we engaging residents and care providers as we prepare to recommission the Care at Home and Extra Care Housing frameworks?	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Rustidge.</p> <p>Oldham Council is committed to ensuring that both residents and providers are fully engaged as we prepare to recommission the Care at Home and Extra Care Housing frameworks.</p> <p>For residents, initial communications were issued on 8th August to those currently receiving Care at Home and Extra Care services, advising them of the forthcoming re-tender process.</p> <p>Alongside this, a resident questionnaire was circulated to capture feedback on their experiences, priorities, and suggestions for improvement. Residents have also been invited to express an interest in taking part in the evaluation and moderation stage of the tender, ensuring that the lived experience of service users directly informs Adult Health and Social Care commissioning decisions. We will continue to provide residents updates as the process develops.</p> <p>For providers, a market engagement event was held on 26th June and advertised widely through The Chest</p>
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			<p>(the council's procurement portal), giving providers the opportunity to understand our commissioning intentions, ask questions, and help shape the specification. Clarifications raised during and after the event were published on The Chest to ensure transparency. We plan to hold a further engagement session with providers to go through the new specification in detail, explain the bidding process, and answer any additional queries. Alongside these sessions, providers will also be able to submit questions via The Chest during the tender process itself to ensure fair and open communication.</p> <p>This two-way engagement with both residents and providers helps to ensure that the recommissioned frameworks reflect local needs, promote quality, and deliver improved outcomes for Oldham residents.</p>
Cllr Naz Islam	Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member	Can the Cabinet Member update us on how local communities are being involved in the planning of the Saddleworth and Chadderton Health Centre projects?	<p>Both these projects are being led by NHS colleagues.</p> <p>In terms of Saddleworth, it is currently technical work looking at what options exist. The NHS team is committed to working up a business case but before</p>

	for Adults, Health & Wellbeing		<p>that can be done, the options need to be considered and narrowed down. That work is underway now</p> <p>In terms of Chadderton the focus is on understanding the current lifespan of the building. Reclassifying the building as coming to the end of its lifespan is helpful as it now means the building owner which is NHS Property Services will engage in starting to develop a plan for the future</p> <p>We are not anywhere near engaging communities on the design of buildings on either project yet.</p>
Cllr Nadeem Iqbal	Cllr Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member for Education & Skills	Could the Cabinet Member tell us how the Local Inclusion Support Offer is being rolled out to ensure every school has access to practical help and advice?	<p>We are pleased to be working with the Department for Education on piloting the development of a Local Inclusion Support Offer (LISO).</p> <p>In Oldham we will roll out the LISO by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ordinarily Available Provision – ensuring all mainstream schools/settings have excellent quality provision in place (as standard) for children with SEND. 2. Early and Targeted Support – further support for school staff to identify a child's additional

			<p>needs and access timely help without needing an EHCP.</p> <p>3. Specialist Support Pathways – clear pathways for school access to specialist services through an expansion of the work we are already doing with Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC) and our Mental Health Support Teams in schools.</p>
Cllr Holly Harrison	Cllr Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member for Education & Skills	What work is being done to celebrate this year's Key Stage 2 results and share best practice with schools that still face challenges?	<p>We welcome the Oldham 2025 Key Stage 2 results which shows that our children's reading, writing & mathematics rate increased by 2.2% since 2024, compared to an increase across England of 1.1%. We're pleased that the results show a reduction in the gap between the rate for girls and boys, and for children who access free school meals and those who don't.</p> <p>The Assistant Director for Education & Early Years shared congratulations with the primary headteacher executive group.</p> <p>The School Improvement Partner programme shares best practice with targeted schools facing challenges.</p>

			There is further to go with literacy, so we are focussing on Reading as the priority this year.
Cllr Colin McLaren	Cllr Peter Dean – Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure	Could the Cabinet Member tell us whether there are plans to expand the Time Trek Heritage Trail to reach schools and visitors from outside the borough?	<p>Thank you Cllr McLaren for your question.</p> <p>Originally scheduled to run until June 2026, the Oldham Time Trek has been extended to June 2027 thanks to funding from the High Street Accelerator Partnership.</p> <p>The free, family-friendly heritage trail has been marketed extensively across the borough and the rest of Greater Manchester using fliers, press releases, social media posts and website updates since the launch event in June.</p> <p>In the autumn, the trail will be complemented by up to 20 new stops across Oldham town centre. The QR codes at the new stops will give residents and visitors free access to brand new audio histories by Jeremy Sutcliffe from the Oldham Area Civic Society, and original poems and mini plays by local theatre company Dare to Know Theatre.</p>
Cllr Pete Davis	Cllr Peter Dean –	How are we encouraging more residents to use our newly	Thanks for your question Cllr Davis.

	Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure	refurbished libraries and leisure centres as key community hubs?	<p>As vital district community hubs, our libraries are being used by multi-disciplinary teams and services, and we are working closely with the Customer and District Teams to co-ordinate and promote activity. Plans for a clear communicated core offer is being developed with the marketing and communications teams.</p> <p>Northmoor and Oldham Library have been newly refurbished. Northmoor library re-opened following refurbishment on Sat 9th August. We held an official opening event that was publicised including a leaflet drop to homes in the locality. We continue to programme a range of sessions and activities to encourage use including English conversation classes, coding club sessions, and bounce and rhyme. Colleagues from the Oldham Council District Team attend Northmoor Library every other Tuesday, 2-4pm to offer support, advice and signposting. Coming soon – our community garden will be a fantastic resource that we anticipate will attract interest and participation from local residents.</p> <p>Oldham Library refurbishment is almost complete – we have introduced flexible shelving, improved wayfinding</p>
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signage, a new refreshed welcome desk and retail space and increased study and meeting pods. All study tables have access to power for residents who bring in their own devices to study/work.. A new 360° virtual tour and prominent way-finder signage have significantly improved the accessibility of Oldham Library, making it a more neurodiversity-friendly service for use by Oldham residents and partner services working with people with additional needs and disabilities.

We are still finalising the refurb at Oldham Library, with chip and pin payments for Wi-Fi printing to be introduced and digital signage. We are planning a social media marketing campaign, press release and a series of events to promote use in the coming days and weeks.

We have already held a health forum event with over 20 stall holders, illustrating how we can flexibly use the space to hold large events. As vital community hubs we are welcoming groups to the space including Speak English Together, Visually Impaired

			<p>Hearing Group, Brews, Biscuits and Banter, and Reading Friends Groups.</p> <p>Working with a range of partnership organisations the newly remodelled spaces will also host numerous targeted offers and interventions welcoming new and existing audiences to the libraries. Sessions include TOG Mind appointments, POINT Parent drop-ins, Action Together information stalls, Pure Innovations - Individual Placement & Support Service, the Menopause Cafe', Oldham writer's group and the Oldham Microscopical society, to name but a few.</p> <p>We are also working closely with the Youth Service and Family Hubs to bring more family programming to our libraries.</p>
Cllr Saj Hussain	Cllr Fida Hussain – Cabinet Member for Enterprise	How are we encouraging local businesses to make the most of supply chain opportunities created by major projects such as Muse's housing development?	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>We are keen to ensure that local businesses benefit from the investment the council and its partners are making in the borough.</p> <p>Last month one of the council's major developer partners held a supply chain briefing at The Hive to let local</p>

			<p>businesses know about the upcoming opportunities.</p> <p>Next week Wilmott Dixon are also hosting a supply chain event at the Hive with details of all their forthcoming projects across Greater Manchester.</p> <p>And there are plans emerging for another event in the coming months for another developer partner. These events are well attended and many opportunities for supply chains, services and materials are available.</p> <p>We continue to encourage all local businesses to attend and to connect into these opportunities.</p>
Cllr Nadeem Iqbal	Cllr Fida Hussain – Cabinet Member for Enterprise	Can the Cabinet Member share how we are celebrating the success of Get Oldham Working to inspire more residents to take part?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Iqbal.</p> <p>We're working hard to showcase Get Oldham Working's impact and encourage even more residents and employers to get involved. Our approach includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent evaluation – an external review is underway to evidence our impact, improve what we do and showcase outcomes.

- **Developing customer engagement and feedback** – we're working with a local drama social enterprise to co-create a production telling the story of residents supported by GOW.
- **Sharing case studies and success stories** through our website and social media channels to show how local people have benefitted.
- **Running high-profile events** – for example, our large **Jobs Fair this Thursday at Queen Elizabeth Hall** with over **60 employers** and an expected **3,000 visitors**.
- **Raising GOW's profile at local events** – we were the **match sponsor for Oldham Athletic vs Bromley** last weekend, highlighting GOW to thousands of fans, and we're also **sponsoring the Oldham Business Awards on 3 October**.
- **Celebrating key milestones internally and externally** – such as opening a **third**

			<p>therapy room, now offering up to 100 hours of counselling support per week to help residents overcome barriers to work.</p> <p>Together these actions both celebrate our success and actively drive more residents and businesses to engage with GOW.</p>
Cllr Naz Islam	Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways	Could the Cabinet Member tell us how we are ensuring Oldham's voice is heard as part of the GM Rail Vision and Tram-Train Pathfinder scheme?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Islam.</p> <p>Oldham's Strategic Transport Team maintains regular and proactive contact with colleagues at Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), making sure that the views and needs of our residents are consistently represented across all transport matters.</p> <p>Our Transport Lead has played an active role in shaping the new GM Rail Vision, contributing directly to its drafting and formation through both the monthly meetings. This involvement will continue as we move into the next phase, helping to develop the strategies that will underpin the</p>

			<p>vision and ensure it delivers for Oldham.</p> <p>We are also working closely with TfGM on the Tram-Train Pathfinder initiative. The Oldham team is actively encouraging regular engagement and collaboration to ensure that this innovative scheme reflects local priorities and opportunities.</p>
Cllr Saj Hussain	Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways	Can the Cabinet Member update us on how we are keeping residents informed about pothole repairs and drainage improvement works across the borough?	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>The Council's Highways inspection team monitors the condition of all 800km of adopted highways across the borough through a range of inspection frequencies.</p> <p>These inspections are carried out according to nationally agreed standards and timescales with any safety defects including "potholes" being identified for repair. The repair of these identified defects are prioritised according to severity and then actioned by Highways Operations over nationally agreed timescales ranging from 2 hrs to 28 days.</p>

In addition, resident reports regarding highways issues, including potholes, are added to inspection lists, with residents and members being informed of outcomes directly.

These processes happen in parallel and are in addition to the annual capital programme of highways works where capital funds from central government are targeted towards those roads needing complete surfacing and surface treatments to prevent potholes forming in the first place.

The Council is currently approximately halfway through its gully cleaning programme of all 47,500 gullies - this is reducing any drainage risks significantly across the borough.

In addition, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, the Council also identifies areas of risk, determines responsibilities and carries out works where external funding via central government can be sought – there is also funding within the annual capital programme to carry out small drainage works throughout the financial year that become a priority.

			<p>Finally, The Council also works with drainage partners such as the Environment Agency and United Utilities with an aim to gain funding and develop and carry out works together as has been the case in works within the town centre recently, and also proposed in the new park.</p>
Cllr Ken Rustidge	Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways	How are we engaging schools and residents to grow participation in the School Streets and Active Travel programmes?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Rustidge.</p> <p>Oldham's Active Travel team deliver a range of initiatives to engage both residents and schools with our goal to increase levels of active travel in the borough.</p> <p>We work closely with the Public Health team to embed healthier travel habits, over-come barriers to active travel and build capacity in communities. This takes the form of training, providing equipment and messaging about the benefits of active travel. We also support and amplify the campaigns of TfGM and GM Moving.</p> <p>The Active Travel team support schools to conduct pilots and establish School Streets where suitable. We provide site-assessments, conduct consultation events and communicate with stakeholders. Schools are</p>

			<p>supported to establish travel plans and deliver behaviour change activities as part of an accreditation process led by TfGM.</p> <p>The Active Travel team will continue to deliver School Street pilots over the next 12 months and apply for future funding to implement more schemes.</p>
Cllr Garth Harkness	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	<p>I recently wrote to Royal Mail about concerns over the changes to post boxes in Dobcross, Delph and Diggle. They have been turned into digital post boxes so that small parcels can be left in them. For larger items, support with forms and collections etc. residents will then need to travel elsewhere. It is clear that some residents would struggle with a new digital drop off point.</p> <p>In Diggle and Dobcross, they are the only shops and Dobcross runs a community led shop. These changes could significantly impact the viability of the post offices and shops and leave no coverage of post offices in the area. This will</p>	<p>Thank you for your query Councillor Harkness.</p> <p>Obviously Royal Mail operate independently from the Council and haven't consulted us on any of these changes, however I'm happy to write to them to pass on yours and your residents concerns and the associated impact in the community.</p>

		<p>impact residents who rely on the services they provide.</p> <p>Nobody asked for these changes. It is clear from the strength of feeling that nobody wants them.</p> <p>I have asked our MP to write to object, which I am pleased she did alongside a number of residents. Would the Cabinet Member do the same and write to Royal Mail to oppose these changes?</p>	
Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability	<p>The initial budget for the Old Library building was £16 million. The finished cost was £32 million. The initial budget for the Spindles was £68 million, but the full cost has been reported to be an estimated £80 million currently. There are several major regeneration projects going on across Oldham town centre. If the projects are similarly overspent – as previous projects have been – how much would the total overspend be?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question Councillor, however as I said after your press release on this matter Cllr Al-Hamdani, categorising these projects as being overspent is both incorrect and misleading.</p> <p>The projects you have referenced have been delivered within their allocated budgets.</p> <p>As part of the works, additional works have been identified and new budgets established as a project phase 2, phase 3, all of which has undergone robust governance processes which are in place for the delivery of capital projects.</p>

			<p>The wider net borrowing increasing reported in the recent Treasury report is separate from the regeneration schemes – it is not correct to infer this direct alignment and connection</p> <p>The increase in borrowing from £144m to £187m over the course of 2024/2025 is consistent with the capital programme that was approved for that time period.</p> <p>The report also highlights that the council's capital financing requirement is £336m and its authorised limit for borrowing is £350m, and the existing borrowing is well within these limits.</p> <p>The Council's capital programme includes numerous projects, not just regeneration, however the regen programme is very visible and proving to be a huge success, which we will continue to build on so that residents and local businesses can benefit from them for years to come.</p>
Cllr Garth Harkness	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance,	How many chairs, tables and desks were bought for the Old Library and how much did they cost?	<p>Thank you for your question councillor.</p> <p>This information is already in the public domain, however happy to provide an answer once again – in total there were 267 items of furniture</p>

	Corporate Services & Sustainability	How many chairs, tables and desks have been left at the Civic Centre and tower block?	<p>purchased for The JR Clynes Building at a cost of £80,348.68</p> <p>As members and our communities know, we continue to recycle as much furniture as possible within property projects like Spindles, The JR Clynes Building, Royton Town Hall, Chadderton Town Hall, Failsworth Town Hall, the Eco Centre and various Council owned building projects.</p> <p>There is furniture left within the Civic Centre which did not meet our compliance checks or did not fit within the new room sizes. The main issue with most of the desks left at the civic centre because the desks are banks of 12, 8, or 6 and these cannot be split as they share legs. This has restricted where we can re-use the desks.</p> <p>Tables and chairs from meeting rooms at the civic centre have all been recycled into various council buildings across the borough.</p> <p>The only tables left at the Civic are being used in Lees Suite and Lees A plus Housing Options area of the building including room 222.</p> <p>Most of the chairs left in the Civic Centre are 14 years old and the gas</p>
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			<p>mechanism had started to fail on lots of them, which was leaving oil stains on the carpets, and has been failing when staff or members wish to change the seating configuration.</p> <p>Some chairs were recycled into other Council Buildings including Family Hubs, Town Halls, Libraries, Community Centres and Children's homes wherever we can. The rest of the chairs have been offered out to charities and Partner Organisations if they are in a reasonable condition.</p>
Cllr Mark Kenyon	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability	Oldham Council agreed to be carbon neutral on all council buildings and street lighting by 2025. With four months left of the year, how close is the council to meeting its goal? Council also agreed to a target of net zero for the borough by 2030. Can the Cabinet Member confirm whether Oldham is on track and update Council on the progress that is being made?	<p>thank you for your question councillor</p> <p>Energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions data are not yet available for the current year.</p> <p>The Council's GHG emissions report has just been completed for the 2024/25 Financial Year and shows emissions from Council Buildings and Street Lighting to be 5,878 tCO₂e, a significant fall on the previous year's figure of 6,224 tCO₂e and a reduction of almost one third on the baseline year of 2019/20 when the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy 2020-25 was adopted.</p>

The Oldham Green New Deal Strategy was adopted in March 2020, one week before the first national Covid19 lockdown. Needless to say that the Council had not anticipated a pandemic when it set the targets in the strategy. However, despite that the Council has made significant achievements in decarbonisation since the adoption of the strategy such as the renovation of the Spindles complex which now operates entirely without fossil fuels, as does the Alexandra Park Depot Eco-Centre.

The Council is pushing on with the decarbonisation of the borough with the Oldham Green New Deal Partnership, a public-private Strategic Energy Partnership which will be only the third of its kind in the UK after Bristol and Coventry. The OGND Partnership will bring the large-scale investment and delivery capacity needed to achieve Net Zero and upgrade the borough's energy infrastructure for the 21st Century, bringing with it extra benefits in the form of local economic growth and jobs and training opportunities in the fast growing low carbon sector.

			<p>The OGND Partnership will in its first 5 years of operation deliver a range of Council-led projects including a new £27m low carbon heat network in Oldham Town Centre which will on its own save more carbon than the Council's entire carbon footprint. The town centre heat network will form the core of a much larger £265m heat network zone, which will be supported by new national legislation coming in in 2026. Other Council-led renewable energy and electric vehicle charging schemes will form the basis of a wider effort to decarbonise the borough as a whole, working with local businesses and communities to deliver the infrastructure that residents want and need.</p> <p>The Council aims to go out to tender for our OGND Partner early in 2026.</p>
Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani	Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	White Ribbon Day is November 25 this year, and Oldham Council is a White Ribbon accredited organisation. In some recent years, the Council has organised sessions for local schools and school children to tackle safeguarding and child protections issues as part of the day. What plans does the	<p>The centrepiece of the 2025 White Ribbon fortnight of action will be a domestic abuse conference on 25 November in partnership with Made by Mortals called “Walking on Eggshells – ending male violence against women”. It will use audio stories and short films to bring to life stories of domestic abuse, based on characters co-</p>

		<p>Council have to support White Ribbon Day this year?</p>	<p>created by community members with lived experience of domestic abuse.</p> <p>This will be supplemented with a programme of professional development to build skills in tackling and preventing domestic abuse across the multi-agency workforce, This will be delivered in partnership with the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership and Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board.</p>
Cllr Murphy	<p>Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing</p>	<p>Can the Cabinet Member confirm when there will be a trauma kit installed in the redeveloped Spindles, as first requested in 2023 in line with national guidance following the Manchester Arena inquiry?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question councillor</p> <p>There is already a bleed kit in the box with the defibrillator on Silver Street side of Spindles. We have another for Parliament Square which also covers the Town Square side of the building.</p> <p>Staff within the centre are first aid trained and would assist if there was a need to.</p> <p>We will review the specific request for a trauma kit with the centre management team to ensure all requirements are met for on-site first aid versus procedures for when formal medical attention is required.</p>

Cllr Marland	Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing	<p>Saddleworth Medical Practice is the hardest practice in the borough to contact via telephone. I have been receiving an increasing number of concerns from residents about not being able to get through on the phone, when they do, they are often redirected to the extended hours service or 111 and told there are no appointments. Several residents have also said that when they do get an appointment the surgery is often virtually empty whether that is the Delph or Uppermill site. I must admit the last couple of visits myself I was either the only one in there or there were one or two others.</p> <p>Would the cabinet member be able to assist in lobbying for improved contact rates and access to the surgery and also see if you can find out why the surgery appears to be empty so frequently?</p>	<p>Thanks for your question.</p> <p>Yesterday I asked our Deputy Chief Executive to look into the issues you raised. His team have since made contact with the Practice. I can provide you with a detailed account outside of the Chamber.</p> <p>However, I can confirm that the practice is committed to making services more accessible and responsive to the needs of Saddleworth residents. From the beginning of October 2025, with the help of the ICB team have invited agreed to enter into the national General Practice Improvement Programme which means they will have access to a facilitator to work with the practice to identify where further improvements can be made.</p>
Cllr Bishop	Cllr Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member for	Can the cabinet member confirm reports that there are leaking classroom ceilings at Waterhead Academy which have impacted on the school's ability to use them for	The Director of Education has contacted the school. They have confirmed that there are no leaks and all classrooms are available for teaching.

	Education & Skills.	teaching students and, if so, what is being done to rectify the situation?	
Cllr Marland	Cllr Peter Dean – Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure	As noted in the portfolio report, the Oldham Histories Festival and Heritage Open Days are running later this month which aim to celebrate the heritage of Oldham. Part of the town's heritage is the nuclear bunker underneath the Civic space so is the Cabinet member able to confirm that this forms part of Oldham's heritage or has it been overlooked?	<p>Thank you for your question councillor, I recall there has been a question on this previously.</p> <p>Future plans for the Civic Tower and the basement space are still under consideration with the Council's partner MUSE, and options are still being considered.</p>
Cllr Bishop	Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways	<p>At the members briefing in September 2024, prior to the commencement of the ward by ward gully clearance programme, we were explicitly told that the purpose of the switch from an annual inspection of every gully was necessary to address the backlog, which has led to some gullies being solidly blocked for years.</p> <p>Fast forward 12 months and the goalposts appear to have shifted, with easier gullies being attended to and those that are actually the problem being left until an unspecified date. Ward Councillors</p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>The overall goal of the Gully Cleaning Programme which started September 2024 is to visit all 47,500 gullies across all 20 wards of the Borough. The programme was supported with additional investment in operatives and vehicles.</p> <p>To date, almost half of the 20 wards have been visited and the programme is the same as that outlined on the Council's website.</p> <p>Of the approximately 24,000 gullies visited so far, the vast majority of these have been cleared and are running correctly and this has been</p>

		<p>are also reporting a lack of communication about where and when the teams are attending (hence why so many parked vehicles are blocking access). Doesn't this fly in the face of the whole point of the scheme?</p>	<p>done as quickly as possible across the borough using the two gully clearing wagons. However, as expected, there are some gullies that were either inaccessible, or were too firmly blocked to be cleared by the gully wagons, requiring further, more substantial work. Some we're blocked with materials such as tarmac or concrete and some were damaged and need a repair or replacement.</p> <p>All needing further work have been logged, and a follow up programme, which will run concurrently is to be started in the near future. There are now enough gullies needing the additional work and can be programmed more efficiently and coordinated with ward members.</p>
Cllr Marland	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	<p>My colleagues and I receive daily complaints from residents about the lack of weeding that has been done around every street and path in our Borough. Our neighbourhoods are unkempt and overgrown with weeds which have been left for so long that they are now becoming trees. It is clear to our communities that this administration does not care that people living or visiting our area see the endless array of scruffy streets</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. The Council recognises the importance of keeping the borough clean and understands what this means to residents. It is for this reason that after contractor failure in the Summer of 2024, the Council made a significant investment to bring the weed spraying service in house.</p> <p>The additional investment in training and equipment means that Council</p>

		<p>and footpaths.</p> <p>Fortunately most people of this Borough care deeply about where they live and have pride in their areas but are rightly demanding answers. I would like to know how many visits have been made by a weeding specialist this summer – I wouldn't be surprised if some have never been visited. And is it only actioned by request or will every street automatically be visited before the end of Autumn.</p>	<p>operatives have been able to deliver boroughwide weed spraying this year. The first round was completed by the end of July 2025 and the second round is currently ongoing, but this has been significantly impacted by the weather – with intermittent rain making weed spraying ineffective.</p> <p>For clarity, every adopted road and path in the borough is subjected to weed spraying. However, there are instances where, due to parked vehicles or other obstructions, some areas may be missed. Where this happens, operatives follow up with handheld spraying – this approach does impact the wider delivery programme as handheld spraying takes much longer.</p> <p>Once the area has been sprayed, it can take 2-4 weeks for the weeds to die. The area is then swept, either manually or mechanically to remove the dead weeds. We fully appreciate that some weeds are resistant to traditional weed killers, and where this is an issue, more targeted work is undertaken, including additional sprays and then follow up visits. This will continue over the coming months.</p>
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Cllr Sandra Ball	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	<p>Higher Memorial Park, Failsworth</p> <p>Could you expand on what plans are in process for this park and when they will progress, as a resident approached me who has been told it is to be completely refurbished.</p>	<p>Thank you for your question councillor.</p> <p>The Council is aware of various ambitious plans for many of the boroughs parks and green spaces as there are many Friends Groups who are keen to improve and enhance the green spaces and facilities available for residents and communities.</p> <p>I'm not aware that there is any council funding aligned to these plans at this time, and I have the officer teams for an update on any / all discussions on emerging plans for community spaces.</p>