

Oldham Borough Council



**Council Meeting
Wednesday 25 March 2026 –
Item 9, Member questions**

OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

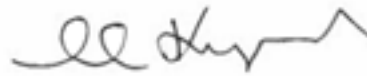
To: ALL MEMBERS OF OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL,
JR CLYNES BUILDING, GREAVES STREET, OLDHAM, OL1 1AL

Agenda Item 9: Member Questions to the Leader and to Cabinet Members

Item No

9 Questions to Leader and Cabinet (Pages 1 - 30)

Member questions to the Leader and to Cabinet Members with answers.



Shelley Kipling
Chief Executive

Questions to Leader & Cabinet

From / Date	To	Question	Proposed Response
Cllr Saj Hussain Monday 23 rd March	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	The report confirms that the number of households in temporary accommodation has fallen to 508, the lowest level since December 2023, and that B&B placements are down from over 200 families to just 9. Can the Portfolio Holder explain what specific interventions have driven this improvement and how the council plans to sustain this progress?	<p>Thank you Cllr Hussain, for your question. The growing need for temporary accommodation has been a significant pressure on local authorities across the country, and is sadly anticipated to be so for some years to come. Last year, a report by Shelter projected an increase in the number of households in TA of 44% nationwide, between now and 2029. In that context, we should be rightly proud of the inroads made in reducing numbers in Oldham over the last 18 months, with a reduction of over 25%, compared to the peak in September 2024. In particular, the significant reduction in the use of B&B is to be welcomed, as we know that the lack of access to cooking facilities can have a real detrimental impact on families already experiencing such difficult circumstances.</p> <p>The reductions seen so far have been, in large part, as a result of our invest to save approach – the Housing Options team have been reinforced with additional staffing, allowing for a greater focus on preventing homelessness, and on supporting those who do find themselves homeless to move on as quickly as possible. The extra staffing has allowed the team to spend more time working holistically around the needs of individuals and families, to ensure they can access the help they need as easily as possible, and to identify where there are specific needs that may make them suitable for more specialist accommodation. It has also meant that the team have been able to carry out welfare checks with every household in TA, addressing any concerns that have been raised. We have also been able to work more closely with our housing partners, allowing us to more quickly solve</p>

			<p>problems together, and to look at how we can deliver better quality, and more cost effective accommodation for homeless households.</p> <p>As well as improving the situation of hundreds of our residents, our efforts so far have meant that our spend on TA in 2025/26 will be around £2.5million less than in the previous year. However, we know that we have much further to go, and have plans to make further improvements in the next year.</p> <p>Monday's Cabinet saw a number of reports brought forward that will support in this, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the approval of our new allocations policy, which will bring a fairer approach to how our social housing is accessed by residents • acceptance of two grants, totalling over £4million, which will allow us to bring empty homes back into use, and to acquire more properties for TA • a report on the development proposals for Prince's Gate, which will include 75 homes for social rent <p>In addition to these measures, the service are working to bring forward further opportunities to improve both our TA stock, and the availability of more permanent homes for homeless households to move on to. We will also continue to develop our preventative offer, and a key part of this will be delivered through proposals to move the Housing Options team to a new, more suitable location, in order to make the service more accessible to residents.</p>
Cllr Abdul Malik	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet	The Cost of Living Crisis continues to impact many residents and the action against Iran which has closed	Thank you for your question Cllr Malik.

Monday 23 rd March	Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainab ility	the Strait of Hormuz may make matters worse. Could the Cabinet Member comment on the support available from the Council for people facing unexpected financial hardship and what impact Government decisions to tackle child poverty will have in Oldham?	<p>As one of the most deprived local authorities in England, Oldham faces persistent financial pressures. I know firsthand that many residents are managing on tight budgets where one unexpected bill or change in circumstance can make things difficult very quickly.</p> <p>I am delighted to share that from 1 April we are receiving £5.7 million per year for three years of Government Funding through the new Crisis and Resilience Fund.</p> <p>As part of our offer, residents facing sudden financial hardship will be able to apply to our £1m Crisis Payment Scheme. This will act as a safety net for those on lower incomes who experience a sudden financial shock. We will in every case take a resident focussed approach to ensure we understand the specific circumstances of each resident. Our offer includes energy vouchers, food vouchers, essential furniture and kitchen items for residents experiencing sudden financial shocks.</p> <p>We are also supporting our incredible voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector here in Oldham with crisis funding to support residents to access crisis support within their communities.</p> <p>Eligible residents claiming Housing Benefit or Universal Credit will also be able to apply for a Housing Payment to meet shortfalls in their housing costs.</p> <p>Over the summer, we will be building our resilience services to ensure that wherever possible financial crises' can be avoided. I look forward to sharing this offer in the coming months.</p>
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<p>Cllr Pete Davis</p> <p>Monday 23rd March</p>	<p>Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability</p>	<p>The report notes that a £26 million projected overspend has been reduced to under £5 million through spending controls and a revised MRP policy. Can the Portfolio Holder outline the key decisions that delivered that improvement?</p>	<p>The Council position has moved from a reported forecast adverse variance at Qtr1 of £26m to an estimated unfavourable position of £4.946m as at the end of January 2026. There have been several contributing factors to this positive movement in the position with early mitigating actions implemented by Members and Senior Leaders of the organisation which included additional controls on non-essential spending, a recruitment freeze for non-essential posts, service reviews, looking at income maximisation opportunities, utilising revenue resources differently and a review of the capital programme. Most recently, the Council has also been exploring opportunities with its treasury management advisors around capitalising interest costs for assets under construction and this has resulted in a one-off positive movement of £10.056m. Work to reduce the adverse position wherever possible will continue as move towards the closure of the financial year.</p>
<p>Cllr Umar Nasheen</p> <p>Monday 23rd March</p>	<p>Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for</p>	<p>The report notes that the rate of agency social workers has been reduced from 29.4% to 13.9% in a single year. Can the Portfolio Holder explain what recruitment and</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Nasheen.</p> <p>The investment made into the Social Care Workforce Strategy has successfully supported initiatives including 'grow our own' workforce model and 'Choose Oldham' recruitment campaign.</p>

	Children & Young People	retention measures have driven this improvement, why this is important for the children supported by social workers and how the council is ensuring permanent staff are properly supported?	<p>This has significantly impacted on workforce stability and at the end of Quarter 3, the rate of agency social workers had reduced to 13.9% and the turnover rate reduced to 13.5%.</p> <p>The Social Work Academy led by the Principal Social Worker provides a comprehensive training and development offer to all staff and combined with a stable front line management team and manageable case- loads supports the retention of staff in a highly competitive employment profession.</p> <p>A stable workforce allows social workers to form and develop meaningful and trusting relationships with children and families which all contributes to improved practice and better outcomes.</p>
Cllr Naz Islam Monday 23 rd March	Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	Oldham's recent Ofsted Focused Visit confirmed timely and high-quality safeguarding practice. Can the Portfolio Holder say what the inspectors specifically highlighted as examples of strong practice, and how those findings are being shared and built upon across the service? And how this benefits children and families in Oldham	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Islam</p> <p>The Ofsted inspection highlighted several areas of strong practice, including the timely and well-informed decision-making in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), effective multi-agency information-sharing, high-quality strategy discussions, and thorough, analytical assessments that reflect children's voices and family history.</p> <p>Inspectors also recognised the impact of Oldham's stable and well-supported workforce, strengthened by significant investment and strong leadership oversight. These findings have been embedded through the robust quality assurance framework, reflective learning circles, supervision, and the ambitious Achieving Excellence strategy that is understood across the workforce.</p> <p>As a result, children and families in Oldham benefit from prompt, consistent and culturally sensitive support, better continuity of</p>

			social work relationships, and decision-making that keeps them safe and gets them the right help at the right time.
Cllr Ken Rustidge Monday 23 rd March	Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing	The Council's Adult Social Care service has been rated Good by the Care Quality Commission, placing Oldham in the top third of over 100 local authorities assessed in England. Can the Portfolio Holder say what are the key areas in developing plans that focus on both addressing areas of continuous improvement and building on the good work highlighted throughout the report.	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Rustidge.</p> <p>I am very proud the Care Quality Commission published its assessment report on adult social care in Oldham on 4 February 2026. Adult social care received a good rating and a score of 67.</p> <p>In the final report the CQC praised Oldham for its strong leadership, positive culture, and person-centred approach, with most people telling assessors they had a good experience of local services. Assessors also highlighted the empathy, professionalism and clear communication shown by ASC staff.</p> <p>Residents described the support they receive as “outstanding” and spoke highly of the advice they were given, including on safeguarding and financial matters.</p> <p>Partnership working was also identified as a key strength, with Oldham commended for working closely with health services, care providers and community organisations to deliver joined up, coordinated support.</p> <p>The CQC also praised Oldham’s safeguarding arrangements, noting strong leadership oversight, effective systems, and a well-coordinated multi-agency approach to keeping people safe.</p> <p>In response to the CQC findings and building on this strong foundation the directorate has identified several key areas for</p>

continuous improvement, which will be incorporated into the Adult Social Care Business Plan:

- **Reducing waiting times for Care Act reviews and financial assessments.** This work is already delivering positive outcomes for residents.
- **Embedding recent changes within mental health services,** following the move to a new partnership arrangement with Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust.
- **Strengthening co-production,** supported by our newly established resident group, ensuring lived experience continues to shape service development.
- **Ensuring services reflect Oldham's diverse communities,** with a focus on cultural competency and equitable access.
- **A new Strategic Lead for Carers has been appointed to enhance support for unpaid carers** improving access to assessments and respite, ensuring consistent information and advice, and strengthening involvement in decision-making.

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The directorate will continue to implement its transformation and improvement programme. Ongoing priorities include:

- Completing the operating model across all adult social care services, with a clear focus on prevention and early intervention services.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesigning digital systems to improve case management and reporting. • Improving transitions for young people entering adulthood. <p>This inspection demonstrates that Oldham's Adult Social Care is performing strongly, with committed staff, solid leadership and positive experiences for residents. The improvement actions will help us build on this success and continue delivering high-quality, compassionate and inclusive support for our community.</p>
<p>Cllr Umar Nasheen</p> <p>Monday 23rd March</p>	<p>Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing</p>	<p>The report highlights the successful micro-elimination of Hepatitis C through Oldham's drug and alcohol services. Can the Portfolio Holder tell us more about how this was achieved, and whether this model of targeted public health intervention is now being applied to other conditions?</p>	<p>The service has implemented a targeted approach based on the four criteria for Hepatitis C micro-elimination. With support from Turning Point's national team and Blood Borne Virus (BBV) Lead, the service analysed weekly data to identify service users who required testing. In response, several awareness-raising days have been delivered, including the use of incentives to encourage testing. Staff have received training through the Hepatitis C Trust, and targeted outreach activity has been developed to ensure individuals with barriers to physically accessing the service can still be tested.</p> <p>In addition, the service has recently established a joint on-site clinic with ABL, the local smoking cessation provider. A number of service users have a diagnosis of COPD and are supported through the respiratory pathway, which has now been rolled out</p>

			across the service. The service also participates in the BBV & STI Working Group, as well as wider partnership initiatives focusing on gambling harms and suicide prevention.
Cllr Holly Harrison Monday 23 rd March	Cllr Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member for Education & Skills	The Department for Education has selected Oldham to lead the North West attendance improvement programme, backed by £80,000 from the Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence fund. Can the Portfolio Holder explain what Oldham's approach to attendance has been and what lessons the council will be sharing with other local authorities across the region?	Oldham has been chosen by the Department for Education (DfE) for the Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) programme because, over the past four years, we have prioritised inclusion and improved attendance at a much faster rate than the national picture. The rate of improvement in secondary schools is 3 times that nationally between 2021-22 and 2024-25. Our approach has focused on data analysis, communication, practical and sustainable support for schools and strong multi-agency partnerships. We have shared our learning with local authorities in Greater Manchester, supported regional networking and held webinars for colleagues from schools and academies. The DfE RISE programme has enabled this to reach a wider audience across the North West, where we have shared our KS2-3 transition models, Early Years work and predictive analytics tools in a Playbook. The evidence-based approaches that have driven improvement in Oldham will support other boroughs to prioritise attendance. The Children's Commissioner for England Dame Rachel De Souza praised Oldham's 'trailblazing' work, highlighting it as an example of how to remove barriers and help children into school.

<p>Cllr Colin McLaren</p> <p>Monday 23rd March</p>	<p>Cllr Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member for Education & Skills</p>	<p>Some parents in Oldham will share the anxieties raised more widely about the proposals in ‘Every Child Achieving and Thriving ‘ – what changes does the Cabinet Member anticipate for families in Oldham and how can they have their say on the proposals?</p>	<p>We are well-placed to respond to the SEND reforms in Oldham, building on the strong and effective partnership working highlighted in our positive Ofsted/CQC monitoring inspection of the area SEND partnership in November 25. Building on this strong foundation, we anticipate the reforms will enable earlier identification of need, clearer pathways for support, more timely assessments, and stronger coordination between education, health and care services so that children and young people receive the right help at the right time. Parents, carers, young people and professionals are invited to share their views as part of the national consultation. The consultation opened on 23 February 2026 and will close on 18 May 2026. The link can be found here Respond to the consultation</p>
<p>Cllr Saj Hussain</p> <p>Monday 23rd March</p>	<p>Cllr Fida Hussain – Cabinet Member for Enterprise</p>	<p>It’s good news that unemployment continues to fall in Oldham and the number of businesses to increase. Can the Cabinet Member give us any further details of the Youth Hub and Youth Guarantee and how those Labour initiatives will help improve employment for Oldham’s young people?</p>	<p>The Youth Guarantee is the Government’s national commitment to ensure every young person aged 16–24 can access the support and opportunities needed to move into work, training or education.</p> <p>Over the next three years, Government will invest £2.5 billion, supporting almost one million young people and unlocking up to 500,000 jobs, training and learning opportunities.</p> <p>This is a really important programme for places like Oldham where we want to support the future economy to grow by giving our young people the best start to their careers.</p> <p>Key Elements of the Youth Guarantee</p> <p>1. Employer funding to support routes into employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully funded apprenticeship training for 16–24-year-olds

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Oct 2026: £2,000 apprenticeship incentive for non-levy employers, with further incentives (£1,000–£2,000) for priority young people. • Youth Jobs Grant: £3,000 incentive for hiring 18–24-year-olds on Universal Credit for six months (from June 2026). <p>2. Youth Hubs Expansion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion from around 100 to over 360 Youth Hubs nationally, giving all young people access to local employment, training and wrap-around support. • Hubs will match employers to young talent and provide integrated support services. <p>What does this mean for Oldham? The Council, through the Get Oldham Working service already operates a Youth Hub in partnership with DWP. The team are looking to expand this with other partners to ensure it is open to all 16-24 year olds.</p> <p>The Council through the Employment and Skills Strategy is committed to support young people to progress into good jobs. The Youth Guarantee will support this and we will work with our public and private sector networks to ensure that this is a success for Oldham’s young people.</p>
Cllr Abdul Malik	Cllr Fida Hussain – Cabinet Member	What is the council doing to embed local procurement across its major development programmes?	<p>Thank you for the question.</p> <p>We aim to ensure that as many local businesses and residents as possible benefit from investment in the Borough, especially through our major development projects. To achieve this, social</p>

<p>Monday 23rd March</p>	<p>for Enterpris e</p>		<p>value clauses are negotiated as an important part of a contract award to ensure that developers use local businesses as part of their supply chain and local residents as part of their workforce.</p>
<p>Cllr Aftab Hussain Monday 23rd March</p>	<p>Cllr Peter Dean – Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure</p>	<p>The illuminate Festival followed another great year of events across Oldham. Can the Cabinet member let the council know how the council measures the success of these events, and what events can we look forward to over the next year?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>Illuminate, is our flagship annual light festival that we have been delivering for 10 years. The success of our events is measured in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the community participation that takes place in the lead up to the event, e.g through numbers of families participating in the lantern making workshops and qualitative feedback • Number of people that attend the festivals/events each year. Illuminate attracted 10,710 footfall in 2026 • Surveys conducted on the night and post event to gather feedback and data about visitors to inform future programming. • Feedback from artists and community groups that we work with on the festivals/events <p>There are plans to continue delivering a range of outdoor cultural festivals, events and programmes next year including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next – Big Market Opening – events stage, performance and live music in Parliament Square to celebrate the opening.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festival Oldham in May • Nostalgic Oldham September • Christmas events – November / December • And Illuminate again next February.
<p>Cllr Colin McLaren</p> <p>Monday 23rd March</p>	<p>Cllr Peter Dean – Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure</p>	<p>The Sports Club Taster Week sounds like it was a brilliant opportunity for local clubs to showcase what they do for residents across the borough. Can the cabinet member tell the council what the take up of Sports Club Taster Week was across the borough?</p>	<p>The Sports Club Taster Week was designed to showcase the fantastic sports clubs, activities and facilities available in Oldham, whilst encouraging more residents to get involved in sport and physical activity. The first Sports Club Taster Week featured five clubs, offering a range of activities, including football, rugby league, hockey, fitness, and Muay Thai. We do not yet have any numbers from the clubs regarding uptake across the sessions, but we are pleased to see this take place and look forward to growing the number of clubs and opportunities next time. We have already had additional clubs' express interest in future involvement.</p>
<p>Cllr Naseem Aslam</p> <p>Monday 23rd March</p>	<p>Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways</p>	<p>Could the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways provide an update on the measures in place to manage the impact of construction works at Hollinwood Junction, particularly around dust, air quality, and the cleanliness of nearby roads?</p> <p>I've had a number of residents get in touch with concerns about vehicles leaving the site without being properly cleaned, so it would be helpful to understand what steps are</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Aslam.</p> <p>We understand resident concerns regarding the importance of environmental protection at construction sites. As with other developments, the contractor involved in the construction of this warehouse building has to comply with all appropriate environmental, health and safety, and highways legislation.</p> <p>Planning Enforcement officers are investigating to ensure compliance against planning conditions and legal requirements – where non-compliance is identified, necessary action will be taken to ensure compliance and to protect both residents and the environment.</p>

		being taken to minimise disruption and protect the local environment and residents' wellbeing.	
Cllr Junaid Hussain Monday 23 rd March	Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways	<p>In Medlock Vale, a significant number of grass verges have been damaged due to ongoing parking pressures in densely populated residential areas. This has resulted in unsightly streets, reduced green space, and concerns around drainage and long-term maintenance.</p> <p>Other local authorities across the UK have begun implementing innovative solutions—such as reinforced permeable verge systems and grass protection measures—that allow vehicles to park while maintaining drainage and protecting the environment.</p> <p>Could the cabinet member outline what actions are currently being taken to address verge damage in Medlock Vale, and whether there are any plans to adopt or pilot similar sustainable solutions</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Hussain.</p> <p>I share your and resident concern regarding the damage to highway verges by inconsiderate parking.</p> <p>The Council has taken steps to repair verges and to re-seed them to support grass growth. However, the problem of parking has persisted, causing damage to any repairs completed. This said, where the path or the road has been damaged, Council Highways teams will continue to undertake repairs to ensure highway/pedestrian safety.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we are not able to support wholesale conversion of grass verges to parking areas. Generally, there is insufficient width to allow parking on both sides of many residential roads and some of the verge areas are not designed to take the weight of cars and pose a risk to utilities that may be located under the verge. In addition, grass verges also provide sustainable drainage.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, I have asked officers to look into sustainable options which are in use nationally and consider their suitability to locations in Oldham.</p>

<p>Cllr Nadeem Iqbal</p> <p>Monday 23rd March</p>	<p>Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>I would like to ask the Cabinet Member regarding the ongoing issue of abandoned properties and the application of the Council’s Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) policy, particularly in relation to my ward.</p> <p>Despite repeated concerns being raised, the situation with abandoned properties in the area remains unresolved. These properties are having a clear negative impact on the local community, including concerns around safety, anti social behaviour, and the overall appearance and value of the neighbourhood.</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member please clarify:</p> <p>What criteria are currently being used to determine when a property qualifies for action under the CPO policy?</p> <p>Given the ongoing nature of this issue and its impact on residents, I would also like to know what timeline the Council is working to in order to see meaningful progress.</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Iqbal. I am pleased to inform you that GMCA have allocated funding for local authorities within GM to deliver a programme aimed at bringing empty properties back into use, as part of wider plans to ensure appropriate quality housing for those in temporary accommodation (TA), as well as reducing the financial impact on councils of providing TA.</p> <p>Proposals have been put forward for a three-year scheme. In the meantime, Oldham Council has been given an initial grant allocation which is a mixture of revenue and capital funding. This will allow funding so we can consider our plan to bring empty homes back into use.</p> <p>Where there are concerns regarding safety or the appearance of a property, Council teams do take necessary and proportionate enforcement action, either to secure properties where they may be open to access or to use planning enforcement powers where the appearance is such that it impacts the wider area.</p> <p>Such instances can be reported to Environmental Health and Planning Enforcement of investigation.</p>
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		I look forward to a clear update on how this policy will be more effectively applied to resolve these long standing concerns.	
Cllr Neil Hindle	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	<p>I recently attended a residents meeting at Woodhouses Cricket Club regarding a planning application to build 68 new houses on the greenbelt.</p> <p>We all know and understand the need for more social housing and this application does promise 100% affordable new homes - but given that Places for Everyone (PfE) was designed to provide enough housing for the next 15 years through strategic land allocation, both the Failsworth Independent Councillors voted for PfE to protect against this kind of development and excessive building on greenbelt land.</p> <p>Therefore, can the Cabinet Member please confirm that the council will do everything it can to ensure that the land allocated in PfE is prioritised.</p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), development in the Green Belt is considered inappropriate unless one of several exceptions are met, or unless very special circumstances are demonstrated that would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt caused by any proposed development.</p> <p>As such, with a good supply of housing land in the borough because of PfE we are able to resist general market-led housing developments in the Green Belt.</p> <p>On this basis, the council is doing all it can to ensure that PfE allocations do come forward for development – and we are seeing that already.</p> <p>However, notwithstanding that, where a scheme offering 100% affordable housing is proposed, in some situations this can generate the very special circumstances that would outweigh harm to the Green Belt, and the council as local planning authority has to consider such proposals and assess them on their own merits.</p>

Cllr Luke Lancaster	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability	Ward budgets	<p>A review of all Council reserves was carried out, and a reserves policy for 2024/25 and 2025/26 was agreed by the Cabinet in November 2024.</p> <p>This was subsequently reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2024.</p> <p>The policy established a number of principles including the creation and decommissioning of reserves to support the revenue budget and financial resilience of the council.</p> <p>As a result, all unspent budgets from 2024/25 contributed to the overall financial position of the Council, and this includes the carry forward of Ward Councillor budgets.</p>
Cllr Luke Lancaster	Cllr Peter Dean – Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure	Castleshaw Roman Forts	<p>Thanks for your question Cllr Lancaster.</p> <p>I'm not aware of the specifics here, but I'll chat to officers and we'll be back in touch with a proper written reply in due course.</p>
Cllr Dave Arnott	Cllr Peter Dean – Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure	Oldham Rugby League Football Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our clear preference has always been that Roughyeds stay in Oldham, part of the reason we gave a grant to Boundary Park was to create the conditions that Roughyeds could play there if the clubs came to an agreement. • But for clarity, this is a commercial dispute between the two clubs and Oldham Council is not involved in the ground-share arrangement at Boundary Park. • And it's not our place to attempt to arbitrate these disagreements, we of course hope a conclusion can be

			reached for the benefit of both clubs sooner rather than later.
Cllr Christine Adams	Cllr Chris Goodwin	Elk Mill Roundabout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're obviously aware of the two serious accidents in the vicinity of Elk Mill retail park, one of which, unfortunately, resulted in a fatality, and our thoughts are with this individuals loved ones. • All serious accidents are investigated by the Greater Manchester Police Serious Accident Investigation Unit - these two incidents are no different. • Once findings of the investigation are complete, Oldham Council Highways will work closely with GMP and National Highways to implement learning and where necessary, introduce necessary safety measures.
Cllr Dave Murphy	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability	Can the Cabinet Member confirm why local ward budgets were cut without meaningful consultation or proper notice? What explanation does the Cabinet Member offer to members of the public and community groups as to why ward projects such as environmental and highway improvements, community events and even a permanent Holocaust Memorial will now all be cancelled.	<p>A review of all Council reserves was carried out, and a reserves policy for 2024/25 and 2025/26 was agreed by the Cabinet in November 2024.</p> <p>This was subsequently reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2024.</p> <p>The policy established a number of principles including the creation and decommissioning of reserves to support the revenue budget and financial resilience of the council.</p> <p>As a result, all unspent budgets from 2024/25 contributed to the overall financial position of the Council, and this includes the carry forward of Ward Councillor budgets.</p>
Cllr Garth Harkness	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet	The Mayoral precept rose by a staggering 19.4% after previous years of significantly above inflation	Thanks for your question Cllr Harkness.

	Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability	rises. Residents have recently been asking why the rate is so high each year and why there is no local say on this by Oldham council, Would the cabinet member be able to provide their view on why the amount is so high during a cost-of-living crisis?	<p>The Mayoral General precept has increased, and I appreciate your use of percentages to make this seem like a mammoth rise.</p> <p>In reality the Mayoral General Precept – which includes fire services – has gone up by £20 a year for residents living in a Band B property in Oldham, which equates to 38p a week.</p> <p>This increase is paying for the rollout of free all-day travel for older or disabled residents, roll out of phase two of the GM travel safe programme – which will make our transport network safer and other improvements to the Bee Network and keeping the fares capped at £2.</p>
Cllr Howard Sykes	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	The ruling Labour and Independent coalition has cut five of the council's six district coordinator posts. These staff are worth their weight in gold. These cuts are short-sighted and will cost the council dearly in lost experience and expertise. Will the Cabinet Member consider pulling one of those famous Labour U-turns and reversing these cuts before there is no one left to pick up the phone and get things done for the districts outside Oldham Town Centre?	<p>Thank you for your question - The decision regarding the district coordinator posts was a budget decision, taken in the context of the extremely challenging financial position facing the Council. As a result, the overall resource available for district working has been reduced.</p> <p>However, I want to be clear that this does not mean the end of dedicated support for our districts. A new model for neighbourhood working is being developed, and this will ensure that staff are retained in each district to continue support residents, and community priorities.</p> <p>This new approach will protect our ability to respond to local issues, maintain strong relationships with communities, and</p>

			ensure that the most essential functions of neighbourhood working continue despite the financial constraints.
Cllr Diane Williamson	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	<p>I would like to ask a question regarding planning applications and taking pictures.</p> <p>The other week at the planning committee where I attended as a substitute, a very sensible lady brought to the attention of those on the dais an issue that she felt seemed not a sensible way to gauge the environment surrounding any planning application.</p> <p>This is particularly true when it comes to highways; all pictures are taken during the day which is when you would expect because the light is better and you get clearer pictures. However, how about mixing it up and taking some pictures either early morning or early evening when the comings and goings of households and the little communities that surround the planning application.</p> <p>Residents' complaints – or loud concerns, I have heard for many</p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>Officers do visits sites at a variety of times and take photos when they visit the site. Likewise, as referred to, residents send in photos too.</p> <p>However, especially in winter, the weather and early nights do limit when officers can take meaningful photos sometimes.</p> <p>As such, wherever possible, officers often include a mix of photos in their slide presentations to Planning Committee and, whether they have photos available or not, the officer reports set out the concerns raised by residents and any established issues with the environment around a given application site, so that members of the planning committee can make fully informed planning decisions in a fully transparent way.</p>

		<p>reasons, but the biggest one is planning.</p> <p>I believe this would put some trust into the planning process.</p>	
Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	<p>With the promise that there would be a named officer in each neighbourhood, and that neighbourhood officers would not be withdrawn to support officers elsewhere, could the Cabinet Member responsible explain why Saddleworth has been repeatedly without enough named officers, why there have been periods of time without a sergeant, and why there have been so many officers who have been being seconded to support work elsewhere in the region?</p>	<p>This is an operational question for GMP, however I've asked officers to be in touch with them and we've received this response from Chief Inspector Ian Partington:</p> <p>Thank you for the question. I welcome the opportunity to clarify the current policing position in Saddleworth and to address the concerns raised.</p> <p>First and foremost, Saddleworth does have a named neighbourhood officer, with PC Peddar serving as the dedicated Neighbourhood Police Officer for the area. He is supported by PCSOs Turley and Ballagher, and the team is led by Sgt Holian, who has recently taken up post.</p> <p>I would like to stress that Saddleworth has not been left without a sergeant at any point. There was only a brief, planned, one week transition between the outgoing sergeant, PS Brook, and the incoming sergeant, Sgt Holian, to ensure continuity of supervision. As is normal across policing, officers, including sergeants will have periods of annual leave, and during those times supervisory cover is provided by other district sergeants to maintain resilience and oversight.</p> <p>Since taking up his role, Sgt Holian has hit the ground running, already building strong local partnerships. This includes engaging with Cllr Bishop around the forthcoming Dovestones multiagency</p>

			<p>information day, demonstrating his commitment to visible, collaborative neighbourhood policing from day one.</p> <p>Saddleworth continues to be well policed, not only by the dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Team but also by the 24hour response teams, who regularly base themselves in the area and provide immediate coverage for emergency incidents.</p> <p>It is important to recognise that, while we remain committed to keeping neighbourhood officers focused locally, there will always be exceptional and serious incidents where neighbourhood resources from across the district must be brought together to protect the public.</p> <p>A recent example was the incident on King Street yesterday, where a building collapse required all neighbourhood teams from their various areas to be deployed to ensure the greatest possible public safety. This type of mobilisation is rare, but when it is necessary, it is done to safeguard the people of Oldham as a whole.</p> <p>In summary, Saddleworth retains its full neighbourhood policing structure, is well supported operationally, and continues to benefit from a committed, visible and effective policing presence.</p>
Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services	Following reports that multiple members of staff within GMP have been dismissed following investigations into abnormal keystroke patterns when working from home, with further officers resigning, or under investigation, could the Cabinet Member	<p>This shows just how little faith the Liberal Democrats have in our hard-working staff.</p> <p>I don't think we need to spy on our staff, we trust them to deliver for our residents. Oldham Council does not use keystroke-monitoring technology. Our approach focuses quality and outputs of work rather than individual keystroke activity.</p>

	& Sustainab ility	responsible let us know what measures Oldham Council has in place to ensure that similar practices are not happening here? Could they confirm that similar actions will be taken if such practices are happening?	<p>We're not complacent but performance issues are managed though the normal performance, conduct, and capability processes. Appropriate action would always be taken in line with our policies.</p> <p>I for one, would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who works for this council, we value and trust you.</p>
Cllr Garth Harkness	Cllr Chris Goodwin	<p>Nudger Green in Dobcross was due to be resurfaced in 2019 however, there was poor weather at the time and the works were cancelled. The council policy is that if a scheme that is delayed by weather it remains within the programme and is delivered at the next possible available date, ideally within the same financial year. The road has however, not been resurfaced and has not appeared on subsequent capital programmes. I have yet to receive any reason as to why it was not done but just told it has not appeared on any recent capital programmes.</p> <p>Would the cabinet member look into this and see why the work has not been done after this and if the work is to be done any time soon?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Harkness.</p> <p>I have discussed this issue with the highways department, and I understand that there has also been a recent exchange between Cllr Harkness and the Team regarding this road and the issue of resurfacing.</p> <p>I can clarify that neither Cllr Harkness nor the Highways Team have any direct evidence or information that indicates that this road was was a capital scheme that was not completed in 2019.</p> <p>The Council's ongoing Highway Safety Inspection Policy is based on regional and national guidance and follows a risk-based approach where priorities are determined following inspection and assessment by qualified safety inspectors. Any deterioration in this area detected by the monitoring regime will be treated as necessary</p> <p>We truly recognise resident concerns regarding highway improvements, that's why this Labour administration committed an additional £2m in capital investment to improve the boroughs road network as part of the 2026/27 budget. This is separate to national government funding that the council receives, which as</p>

			<p>we outlined at Budget council earlier this month is around £16m worth of highways improvements over the next three years.</p> <p>The impact of the additional investment will become clear in the coming months when the weather hopefully improves allowing works to begin.</p>
Cllr Mark Kenyon	Cllr Chris Goodwin	<p>Will Cabinet Member consider offering rates relief for businesses affected by the long-proposed closure of Uppermill for the TransPennine upgrade? What other help will you offer?</p>	<p>The Council is not proposing a discretionary business rate relief scheme for businesses affected by the proposed Transpennine Route Upgrade works in Uppermill.</p> <p>Where a business is affected by significant disruption from works, the usual route would be to approach the Valuation Office Agency to consider whether a temporary reduction in rateable value is appropriate.</p>
Cllr Helen Bishop	Cllr Chris Goodwin	<p>Since Stagecoach took over the contract from First for the Bee Network, the minimum gap between shifts for drivers has been decreased from 10 hours to 8 and a half hours.</p> <p>Logic dictates that 8 and a half hours does not provide a realistic amount of time for travel to and from home, having a meal and getting a decent amount of sleep between shifts.</p> <p>Is the cabinet member aware of this and does he know what provisions have been made to monitor whether</p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>This question would be more suitably addressed to TfGM, who manage the contracts related to the Bee Network, and so perhaps you could ask Cllr Sykes to raise this when the Bee Network Committee next meets.</p>

		<p>such decisions impact negatively on both the health of drivers and the safety of passengers?</p> <p>Whilst this is technically legal, is it good practice?</p>	
Cllr Mark Kenyon	Cllr Chris Goodwin	<p>Will Cabinet Member consider opening up the old school site for Uppermill parking whilst there are currently no plans for the site?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>The final phase of the demolition works to the former school are due to commence at the end of April. When these works are concluded the Council will be completing a range of surveys and investigations to help inform the future use of this key site.</p> <p>As such, it is not possible to open up the site for parking at the present time.</p>
Cllr Alicia Marland	Cllr Arooj Shah	<p>Since the redevelopment of town centre started, there have been many car parks closed only for the land to be repurposed. The old leisure centre car park was lost for the site of the proposed Eton College. The Tommyfield market parking is set to close this year along with the civic centre car park. In addition the Mumps car park closed last year and the Town Square is still not open months after it was supposed to be and Bradshaw Street Car Park is only half accessible. The event space,</p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>The council are aware of the concerns over car parking in the town centre and are currently assessing options for creating new car parks to replace those that will be lost as new developments begin on various sites across the town centre.</p> <p>However, there is availability of parking spaces daily on council car parks at Waterloo Street, Roscoe Street and Bow Street that would be suitable for people working in the town centre.</p> <p>Whilst there are of course costs for parking in the town centre, particularly all day, Oldham's costs are well below that typical for town centres in Greater Manchester. There is also good access via public transport to Oldham town centre, which is always a</p>

		<p>The Loom, is about to open but where is there to park?</p> <p>Businesses in Oldham are also suffering as anyone working here all day will pay a minimum of £5 for the day. Their concerns on the increasing costs, inability to pay electronically and decreasing availability of parking spaces was raised to the Leader but no response was received.</p> <p>I would like to ask the Cabinet Member what they are doing to provide more parking spaces and offer a discount for those who work in Oldham to encourage them to stay in Oldham.</p>	<p>more sustainable option, particularly for those spending all day in the town centre.</p>
Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani	Cllr Arooj Shah	<p>Could the Cabinet member responsible provide a copy of the consultation that was done on the decision to rename Tommyfield Market as just "The Market"?</p>	<p>This is something we thought about a lot, ultimately we decided that it wouldn't be right to carry the Tommyfield name over to the new market hall because it isn't on Tommy's field.</p> <p>Tommyfield will however live on in the new town centre park.</p> <p>We did consult with our Town Deal Board on the wider rebranding naming and signage as part of our wider regeneration programme. That board includes local businesses, traders and other key stakeholders.</p>

Cllr Helen Bishop	Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	<p>The rate of children aged 10 to 17 in Oldham Borough who enter the criminal justice system is 54% higher than the national average. Entering the criminal justice system at such a young age can have harmful and life-long impacts on a child's chances. What is the Cabinet Member doing, by way of early intervention, to bring these numbers down and target the causes of child criminalisation?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Bishop.</p> <p>I have to say that I'm not familiar with the stats that you've referred to in your question.</p> <p>I am pleased to report the rate of first-time entrants (children entering the criminal justice system for the first time) in Oldham has been decreasing consistently over the past 12- month period. It was 202 per 100 000 in the previous reporting year, 2024-25, at the end of January 2026, it had reduced to 131 per 100 000. This is below the Greater Manchester rate of which stands at 162 and England rate of 152.</p> <p>The partnership in Oldham has a robust offer in terms of early intervention and prevention. On a weekly basis, Oldham Youth Justice service receive data from GMP in relation to all children who have been linked to a crime. These children are referred into the bi- weekly Oldham Multi- Agency Prevention Panel to ensure these children receive the right support, from the right service at the right time.</p> <p>All work delivered within Oldham Youth Justice Service is in line with Child First principles, strengths focussed.</p> <p>The Youth Offending Service is an integral part of the Family First Partnership through a pilot of a multi- disciplinary team in the South District of Oldham where there will be a Senior Engagement Worker focussing on early intervention in terms of serious youth violence.</p>
Cllr Garth Harkness	Cllr Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member	<p>Recently the Liberal Democrat group submitted our response to the consultation on the White Paper</p>	<p>The Schools White Paper (Every child achieving and thriving) and the accompanying SEND reform consultation (published 23 February 2026) sets out a 10 year programme to realign the education and SEND systems around earlier identification,</p>

	<p>for Education & Skills</p>	<p>SEND reform: putting children and young people first</p> <p>Has the cabinet member responded to the consultation and if not will they be responding?</p> <p>Will they agree that currently there is too much of a post code lottery and gaps in provisions which have resulted in “cash cows” from alternative provision and independent specialist provisions. Local Authorities are left we being held to ransom. Would he agree that there needs to be regulation and a cap on the profit they can get.</p> <p>The aim to significantly reduce the number of EHCPs is met with some concern and funding for students with high need in mainstream schools in the long term is a concern. Do they agree that. It is important to ensure that rights to SEND</p> <p>assessment and support are maintained and the voices of children and young people with SEND and that of their families and carers is put at the centre of the reform process. Will they also agree</p>	<p>stronger mainstream inclusion, and clearer national standards, with phased implementation and legislation expected from 2029.</p> <p>In Oldham we are well placed to both respond to and deliver on the SEND reforms. Since the Area SEND inspection of 2023 we have delivered substantial improvement as a partnership. For example we are seeing much reduced waiting times for speech and language therapy and community pediatrics, along with much improved timeliness for EHC assessments.</p> <p>This substantial improvement was recognised following an Ofsted monitoring visit in November 2025 reporting that effective action had been taken against the key area priorities identified. Our strong partnership and governance arrangements were also recognised.</p> <p>We are fortunate also to have a strong Educational Psychology offer. Our EPs are involved in far more than just undertaking assessments of our children and young people, supporting our Local Inclusion Support Offer to schools. We have not found this work to be at odds with OFSTED or other professionals, rather it has attracted praise.</p> <p>As a Partnership we will continue to hear the voice of our children, parents and carers. We will work with our schools and settings to ensure that our children and young people receive the help and support they need to make progress and succeed in their learning. We will work also to ensure that any needs are identified early to avoid potential further complexities. In doing so, we will indeed ensure that rights to SEND assessment and support are at the centre of our work as an Area Partnership.</p>
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		<p>that there is sometimes a disconnect with recommendations from Educational Psychologists and other professionals and OFSTED?</p>	<p>In relation to consultation on the White Paper, one of the consultation questions invites feedback on Government proposals for 'suitable placements to be made available at a fair cost'. I would certainly agree that independent specialist school costs are too high and that this has placed significant strain on Council budgets. We would therefore welcome regulation of costs in this sector.</p> <p>We are currently inviting feedback from our schools and settings and collating this feedback with our other key partners across health, care and of course our parent/ carer voice. Any individual school or organisation can respond on their own but we will submit our collective voice, as a partnership, to GMCA colleagues who will then submit a joint GMCA response.</p>
Cllr Mark Kenyon	Cllr Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member for Education & Skills	<p>Will the Cabinet Member confirm what agreements have been signed with Eton and Star Academies and what agreements will be signed before the local elections?</p>	<p>A preferred site for Eton Star Oldham has now been formally agreed with the Department for Education. The agreement of Heads of Terms for the land allocation marks a significant step in bringing the prestigious Eton and Star Academy Partnership to Oldham.</p> <p>Building will start on the former Tommyfield outdoor market site next year, and once complete, will create new opportunities for children from Oldham and across Greater Manchester, helping to raise aspirations and attainment levels.</p> <p>Eton Star Oldham will focus on supporting young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, helping them to fulfil their potential through access to high-quality education, enrichment opportunities, and pathways to some of the country's leading universities.</p>

			Whilst many sixth forms across Greater Manchester are achieving strong outcomes, the data shows that not enough of our young people are accessing the same level of opportunity.