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GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD
Agenda

Date	Thursday 22nd October 2026
Time	6.00 pm
Venue	Council Chamber, JR Clynes Building, Cultural Quarter, Greaves Street, Oldham, OL1 1AL
Notes	1. Declarations of Interest - If a Member requires advice on any item involving a possible declaration of interest which could affect his/her ability to speak and/or vote he/she is advised to contact Alex Bougatef or Constitutional Services at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.
	2. Information regarding this meeting is available from the Constitutional Services team, email: constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk
	3. Public Questions - Any Member of the public wishing to ask a question at the above meeting can do so only if a written copy of the question is submitted to the contact officer by 12.00 noon on Monday, 19th October 2026.
	4. Filming - The Council, members of the public and the press may record/film/photograph or broadcast this meeting when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Constitutional Services Officer who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.
	Please note that anyone using recording equipment both audio and visual will not be permitted to leave the equipment in the room where a private meeting is held.
	Membership of the GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD: Councillors Azad, Brooks, J. Hussain, Ibrahim, Jabbar, Jackson, Kenyon, Moores, Robinson, Shuttleworth and Woodvine (Chair)

Item No

1 Apologies For Absence

2 Urgent Business

Urgent business, if any, introduced by the Chair

3 Declarations of Interest

To Receive Declarations of Interest in any Contract or matter to be discussed at the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

To receive Questions from the Public, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

5 Minutes (Pages 7 - 20)

The Minutes of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, held on 28th September 2026, are attached for approval.

6 Executive Decisions Made by the Chief Executive

Chair to report

7 High Needs Provision in Mainstream Settings Capital Works (St Agnes C of E Primary School, Lees) (Pages 21 - 110)

A report seeking approval for a capital project that will offer additional places and enhance specialist provision for pupils with additional needs and EHCPs who are based St Agnes Church of England Primary School.

8 Contract extension – Mental Health Supported Living Services (Pages 111 - 118)

A report that seeks approval for the extension of the current Mental Health Supported Living Services contract, for a further 2 years up to 30th September 2028.

9 Oldham Advocacy Service - Contract Extension (Pages 119 - 128)

A report that seeks approval for the extension of the current Oldham Advocacy Services contract in place with VoiceAbility for a further one year until 30th October 2027.

10 High Needs Provision Capital Allocation Funding - Oldham College (Pages 129 - 136)

A report that seeks approval for a capital project, to establish additional specialist provision operated by Oldham College.

11 Staying Close (Pages 137 - 158)

A report that seeks agreement for Oldham Council to agree the Staying Close Delivery Plan and receive the grant from the Department for Education.

12 Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement (Pages 159 - 174)

To seek approval to actively procure a highways construction Strategic Partner and a Reserve Supplier to deliver Transport Capital Investment Programmes from 2027 until 2031, for the delivery of key capital civil engineering projects across the borough of Oldham.

13 Young futures hubs and local youth transformation Programme (Pages 175 - 234)

To consider the allocation of funding in connection with the young futures hubs and local youth transformation programme.

14 Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan (Pages 235 - 302)

To consider what action to take in response to the recommended modifications, detailed in the report and to determine if the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum.

15 Power Purchase Agreement for Wrigley Head Solar Farm - appointment of Ovo Energy (Pages 303 - 310)

A report looking to authorise the appointment of Ovo Energy to supply a Power Purchase Agreement for Wrigley Head Solar Farm for a period of 18 months from start of operations.

16 Zoning Co-ordination Body - approval of model and acceptance of grant funding (Pages 311 - 326)

A report seeking approval of the proposed model for a heat network Zoning Co-ordination Body in Greater Manchester to include Oldham Council.

17 Oldham Total Care Limited: Governance Framework (Pages 327 - 380)

A report seeking approval for a revised and integrated governance framework for Oldham Total Care Limited.

18 Strategic Energy Partnership - Womble Bond Dickinson further appointment (Pages 381 - 386)

To appoint Womble Bond Dickinson to a further commission, supporting the procurement of a Strategic Energy Partner for the Borough.

19 Additional Highways Grant Funding Acceptance Report (Pages 387 - 398)

A report seeking approval for formal acceptance of Additional Highways

Maintenance funding and approval of recommendations for delivery, utilising these funds in full, for 2026/27.

20 Greater Manchester Collaborative Contingent Labour Market (Pages 399 - 422)

Approval is sought for Oldham Council to continue participation in the Greater Manchester collaborative Managed Service Provider contract for the provision of contingent labour.

21 Council Web Team: Bolstering Capacity (Pages 423 - 434)

A report seeking approval to strengthen the Council's Web Team's staffing complement.

22 Contractual Arrangement – IDOX Uniform Case Management Software (Pages 435 - 442)

A report seeking approval to enter into a 36-month contract with IDOX LTD procured via Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Framework Agreement ID RM6259.

23 Domestic Property Disability Adaptations Bathing Contract Award Report (Pages 443 - 450)

The purpose of the report is to seek approval from the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS), to award contracts under the Domestic Property Disability Adaptations Framework following completion of a compliant Open Tender procurement process.

24 Cloud hosted Parking Enforcement Solution (Pages 451 - 456)

A report seeking approval to procure and implement a modern, cloud hosted parking enforcement solution which enables digital service delivery and meets future service delivery requirements.

25 Prudential Building Stabilisation Works (Pages 457 - 468)

A report that summarises the current and ongoing defects and condition challenges faced by the Prudential building, with a series of options set out with outline budget costs.

26 Approval of Rubrik Back Up and Recovery Solution (Pages 469 - 472)

A report seeking approval to proceed with the procurement of modern back-up tools through appropriate procurement routes.

27 Extra Care Housing re-tender 2026/27 (Pages 473 - 480)

A decision is required to secure continuity of Extra Care Housing services beyond the expiry of the current contract on 31st March 2027.

28 Cleansing & Waste Service Software (Route Optimisation) (Pages 481 - 486)

A report that seeks approval to purchase software, via a framework direct award to an existing software supplier to the council.

29 Approval For Insurance Tender Process and Award of Contracts (Pages 487 - 490)

A report seeking authority to proceed to tender for the Council's insurance contracts that are due to commence on 1st April 2027.

30 Exclusion of the Press and Public

To consider that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following eight items of business, pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that discussions may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, under paragraph 3 as defined in the provisions of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

31 Contractual Arrangement – IDOX Uniform Case Management Software (Pages 491 - 500)

To consider confidential recommendations, in relation to item 22.

32 Domestic Property Disability Adaptations Bathing Contract Award Report (Pages 501 - 512)

To consider confidential recommendations, in relation to item 23.

33 Cloud hosted Parking Enforcement Solution (Pages 513 - 524)

To consider confidential recommendations, in relation to item 24.

34 Prudential Building Stabilisation Works (Pages 525 - 540)

To consider confidential recommendations, in relation to item 25.

35 Approval of Rubrik Back Up and Recovery Solution (Pages 541 - 550)

To consider confidential recommendations, in relation to item 26.

36 Extra Care Housing re-Tender 2026/27 (Pages 551 - 570)

To consider confidential recommendations, in relation to item 27.

37 Cleansing & Waste Service Software (Route Optimisation) (Pages 571 - 580)

To consider confidential recommendations, in relation to item 28.

38 Approval For Insurance Tender Process and Award of Contracts (Pages 581 - 590)

To consider confidential recommendations, in relation to item 29.

GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD
28/09/2026 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillor Woodvine (in the Chair)
Councillors Brooks, Charters (Substitute), J. Hussain and Robinson

Also in Attendance:

Mike Barker	Executive Director Health and Care (Deputy Chief Executive)
Alex Bougatef	Borough Solicitor and Director of Legal
Neil Consterdine	Director of Communities
Julie Daniels	Executive Director - Children and Young People
Sheila Garara	Assistant Director – Children's Services
Peter Richards	Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Housing Delivery
Christian Walsh	Deputy Director of Adult Social Services
Lee Walsh	Director of Finance
Rebecca Fletcher	Director of Public Health
Peter Thompson	Constitutional Services

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jabbar, Jackson, Kenyon, Moores and Shuttleworth.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Charters declared non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Items 17 and 24 (Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI)).

4 **MINUTES**

Resolved:
That the minutes of the meeting of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board held on 24th March 2026 be approved, as a correct record.

5 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions to consider.

6 **OLDHAM LOCAL HERITAGE LIST**

Members scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive that was seeking approval to undertake a public consultation on a List of Local Heritage Assets, and also on an accompanying guidance note regarding the future revision of the Local Heritage List.

Nominations for a draft List of Local Heritage Assets had been assessed and compiled following an extended public

consultation period between September 2021 and February 2022. Consultation included a dedicated website platform where nominations could be received, supported by communications, information boards and leaflets distributed as part of Oldham Histories Festival. Parish Councils, civic societies, local historic societies and other interest groups were contacted.

The report presented two Options, for consideration:
Option 1 (preferred Option) - to give approval to carry out public consultation on the List of Heritage Assets and the accompanying guidance note on the future revision of the Local List. This decision will mean that Oldham is recognizing, celebrating and making information on non-designated heritage assets worthy of inclusion on the Local List accessible to the public and is in line with proposed changes to national planning policy, specifically stating for development plans to be supported by a Local List to identify non-designated heritage assets that are important to the local community. There are no disadvantages to this option.
Option 2 - To not give approval to carry out public consultation on the List of Heritage Assets and the accompanying guidance note on the future revision of the Local List. This will mean that a Local List is not progressed which will make information on non-designated heritage assets less accessible to the public and applicants and will not support a positive strategy for heritage. There are no advantages.

Resolved:

1. That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive to approve public consultation on the List of Local Heritage Assets and the accompanying guidance note on the future revision of the Local Heritage List.
2. Requests that the Group Leaders meeting concurs, thereby enabling the Chief Executive to formally approve the recommendations in the report.

7 **OLDHAM HEAT NETWORK - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to seek approval to publicly consult on the draft Local Development Order associated with the Oldham District Heat Network.

The report presented two Options.
Option A (preferred Option) – to consult on a draft LDO for infrastructure works related to the Oldham District Heat Network. This Option would allow for a more efficient process related to satisfying the Planning requirement associated with create such infrastructure.
Option B – to not consult on a draft LDO for infrastructure works related to the Oldham District Heat Network. Under this option, the Council and their partners would need to apply for planning

permission each time a section of the infrastructure needed to be brought forward. It would not be practical to have one, large planning permission for the whole network, as detailed design and planning for each section would come forward piece by piece. Therefore, there is the risk that the overall delivery of the network could be complicated or delayed by the requirement to submit a planning application for each set of works.

Resolved:
That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, to approve the draft Local Development Order and Statement of Reason for public consultation and requests that the Group Leaders meeting concurs, thereby enabling the Chief Executive to formally approve the recommendations in the report.

8 **OLDHAM HEAT NETWORK - ZONAL BOUNDARY CONSULTATION**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to seek approval to publicly consult on the draft Zonal Boundary associated with the Oldham District Heat Network Zone which was to be designated as part of forthcoming national Heat Network Zoning legislation.

The report presented two Options:
Option 1 (preferred Option) – To approve a public consultation on the draft Zonal Boundary for the AZP Heat Network Zone in Oldham. Under this option, the Council will be able to progress work to designate Oldham's Heat Network Zone under the forthcoming national Heat Network Zoning legislation and remain compliant with the requirements of the forthcoming Zoning Co-ordination Body, as well as maximising the probability that the Council's procured Strategic Energy Partner will inherit the rights to develop the Heat Network Zone in Oldham.
Option 2 – To not approve a public consultation on the draft Zonal Boundary for the AZP Heat Network Zone in Oldham. Under this option, the Council will not be able to progress work to designate Oldham's Heat Network Zone under the forthcoming national Heat Network Zoning legislation and will not be able to remain compliant with the requirements of the forthcoming Zoning Co-ordination Body. Consequently it would not be possible for Oldham's procured Strategic Energy Partner to inherit the rights to develop the Zone in Oldham, significantly limiting the potential local economic benefits associated with investment in this key energy infrastructure.

Resolved:
1. That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive to:

a. That the draft Zonal Boundary (provided at Appendix A) be approved for public consultation.
b. That once the Zonal Boundary Consultation is complete, authority be delegated for implementation of the results of the consultation and finalisation of the Zonal Boundary to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Directors of Legal Services and Growth, in line with any adopted process in respect of the forthcoming Zoning Co-ordination Body

2. Requests that the Group Leaders meeting concurs, thereby enabling the Chief Executive to formally approve the recommendations in the report.

9 **SITES OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE UPDATE**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to seek the adoption of changes that had occurred to Sites of Biological Importance (SBI), including boundary changes, within the Borough. Appendix 1 to the report provided maps of the revised SBI boundaries (Fennifield Lily Pond and Castleshaw Pasture) and these changes had been outlined in Appendices 2 and 3 alongside details of the SBIs reviewed.

The report presented two Options:
Option 1 (preferred Option) - To adopt the changes to the Sites of Biological Importance (SBI), including their boundaries (at Fennifield Lilly Pond and Castleshaw Pasture) within the borough, as outlined in Appendix 1, 2 and 3. The advantage of this option is that any SBI additions will be subject to the principles set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to avoid, mitigate and as a last resort compensate any harm. It will also contribute to the GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Target 1: To increase the amount of land designated for nature by 5,000ha by 2035, growing this from 11% to 15% of the city-region. There are no disadvantages to this option.
Option 2 – To not adopt changes to Sites of Biological Importance (SBI), including their boundaries within the borough (at Fennifield Lilly Pond and Castleshaw Pature), as outlined in Appendix 1, 2 and 3. The disadvantage is that the boundary additions will not have been designated and therefore the full extent of the SBI's may not be given due consideration under NPPF, Places for Everyone (PfE) and the Local Plan. This option would not contribute to the LNRS Target 1: To increase the amount of land designated for nature by 5,000ha by 2035, growing this from 11% to 15% of the city-region. There were no reported advantages to this option.

Resolved:
1. That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive to:
    a. To adopt the changes to the Sites of Biological Importance (SBI), including their boundaries (at Fennifield Lilly Pond and Castleshaw Pasture)

within the Borough, as outlined in Appendix 1, 2 and 3; and

b. Note the District Synopsis and District Fact Sheet.

2. Requests that the Group Leaders meeting concurs, thereby enabling the Chief Executive to formally approve the recommendations in the report.

10 **PARENT INFANT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Children's Services, which advised that the Council currently commissioned Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust to deliver the Parent Infant Mental Health Service (PIMHS) as part of the Family Hubs and Best Start in Life offer. The current contract expired on 6th January 2027 and contained no option to extend. The service was performing well and provided specialist clinical support for vulnerable families. To ensure continuity of service delivery and to retain the skilled clinical workforce, it was proposed that the Council undertakes a Provider Selection Regime (PSR) Direct Award Process C. This was considered the most appropriate procurement route for a health-based service of this nature. Awarding a further one-year contract would avoid disruption to families accessing the service and provide time to review and develop longer-term commissioning arrangements, taking account of the confirmation of Best Start in Life grant funding through to 2029.

The report presented three Options:
Option 1 (preferred Option) – To approve the completion of a Provider Selection Regime (PSR) Direct Award Process C for the Parent Infant Mental Health Service for a period of one year from 7th January 2027 to 6th January 2028, at a total value of £261,000.00 and to approve the use of Best Start in Life funding to support the contract award. Under this Option, delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services, was sought to award the contract following the successful completion of the PSR process.
Option 2 – To allow the current contract to expire on 6 January 2027 and not to consider future commissioning arrangements.
Option 3 – To undertake a full competitive tender process.

Resolved:

1. That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Executive Director of Children's Services to:
    a. Approve the completion of a Provider Selection Regime (PSR) Direct Award Process C for the Parent Infant Mental Health Service for a period of one year from 7 January 2027 to 6 January 2028, total value of £261,000.00.
    b. Approve the use of Best Start in Life funding to support the contract award.
    c. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children and Young People to award the contract

following the successful completion of the PSR process.

2. Requests that the Group Leaders meeting concurs, thereby enabling the Chief Executive to formally approve the recommendations in the report.

11 **PARENTAL ADVOCACY TENDER**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Children's Services, which was seeking permission to undertake a robust and transparent commissioning and procurement exercise, overseen by a project board including children, young people and families, to commission a new service, Parental Advocacy. This service would have a funding envelope of £83,000 per annum and would be awarded as a two-year contract with the option to extend for up to an additional one-year dependent on funding availability.

The Parental Advocacy service was intended to be funded through the Families First Partnership (FFP) Grant to support and empower parents to fully understand processes, plans and decisions, enabling them to fully participate in Family Help assessments, child in need planning, child protection processes and Family Group Decision Making.

The submitted report presented three Options:
Option One (preferred Option) – To approve the design, tender and contract award of a new service, Parental Advocacy. The service will have a maximum funding envelope of £83,000 per annum as part of Oldham's Families First Partnership Programme with an initial contract period of two years from 1st April 2027 to 31st March 2029 with the option of a one-year extension period up until 31st March 2030 subject to funding being available and the service still meeting need.
This option was recommended as it would provide timely support for Oldham's most vulnerable families and will ensure Oldham fully delivers the DfE Families First Partnership Programme requirements and its statutory duties under the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.
Option Two – To go out to tender for the Parental Advocacy Service as outlined in Option One but delay the start of the commissioning process and have a start date for the service of 1st July 2027.
Option Three - To not develop and commission a Parental Advocacy service in Oldham. This option is not recommended as it puts the council at risk of failing to deliver to the FFP requirements set out by the DfE.

Resolved:

1. That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Executive Director of Children's Services to approve the design, tender and contract award to the highest scoring bidder, of a new service, Parental Advocacy.

2. Requests that the Group Leaders meeting concurs, thereby enabling the Chief Executive to formally approve the recommendations in the report**.**

12 **DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR FUNDING AND RECRUITMENT OF KEY ROLES TO STRENGTHEN EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND PREVENTATIVE SUPPORT THROUGH THE BEST START IN LIFE PROGRAMME**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Children's Services, which advised that Oldham was committed to ensuring that every child grew up healthy, happy and ready to learn, supported by services that gave families the right help at the right time. This ambition was reflected within Oldham's Best Start in Life Strategy and Corporate Plan priorities around prevention, reducing inequalities and delivering healthier, happier lives.

The Department for Education (DfE) had awarded Oldham an additional ringfenced Children with Additional Needs allocation of £1,756,100 across the period 2026 - 2029. The submitted report was seeking to comply with DfE grant conditions, mobilise delivery at pace and strengthen support for babies and young children with emerging additional needs. The proposal provided the workforce capacity required to improve early identification, intervention, inclusion and school readiness outcomes whilst ensuring effective governance and oversight of the funding allocation.

The report presented two Options:
Option 1 (preferred Option) – To approve the acceptance of the Children with Additional Needs allocation, recruitment to the proposed posts and delegate authority for allocation of the remaining funding to the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Director of Finance.
Option 2 – To not approve the acceptance of the funding, creation of the posts or delegated authority arrangements.

Resolved:

1. That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Executive Director of Children's Services to:
    a. Accept the additional £1,756,100 Children with Additional Needs allocation awarded to Oldham by the DfE through the Best Start in Life programme.
    b. Approve the creation and recruitment of 1 Integrated Team Manager post (Grade 10), 5 Early Years Quality Practitioner posts (Grade 5) and 7 Best Start Inclusion Practitioner posts (Grade 5) funded through the Children with Additional Needs allocation to 31 March 2029.
    c. To delegate authority for the allocation of the remaining funding to the Executive Director Children and Young People, in consultation with the Director of Finance.

2. Requests that the Group Leaders meeting concurs, thereby enabling the Chief Executive to formally approve the recommendations in the report**.**

13 **EXTEND THE CHANGING FUTURES TO SUPPORT THE ENHANCED LIVE WELL MODEL AS PRESCRIBED BY GMCA**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Health and Social Care/Deputy Chief Executive, which sought approval to extend the Changing Futures Team to support delivery of the Enhanced Live Well Model prescribed by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) following the end of the national Changing Futures Programme on 1st April 2026. The proposal would maintain continuity of support for residents with multiple and complex needs, increase Local Authority staffing capacity to support implementation, and enable the future development of VCFSE and outreach services as part of the wider Greater Manchester Live Well Neighbourhoods Model.

The report presented two Options:
Option One (preferred Option) – To approve the extension of the Changing Futures Team and create additional roles within the team to maximise the benefits of the service. This will strengthen delivery of the Enhanced Live Well Model and support additional VCFSE outreach activity aligned to the Live Well Neighbourhoods Model.
Option Two – To discontinue and relaunch the service under a new model. However, this would disrupt the existing relationships, referral pathways and support arrangements. Grant conditions would still require funding to be invested in Local Authority staffing as well as VCFSE provision, limiting the benefits of this option.

Resolved:

1. That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Executive Director of Children's Services to:

a. The Director of Adult Social Care (DASS) be authorised to accept the Enhanced Live Well Grant, in full, from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).
b. Approve the extension of the Changing Futures Team for a further three years.
c. Approve the creation of two additional Changing Futures staff to support the delivery of the Enhanced Live Well Model.
d. Approve the continued provision of support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage, including homelessness, substance misuse, mental ill health, offending, domestic abuse, sex work, child removal, physical health needs, learning disabilities, neurodivergence, and care leaver status.
e. Authorise the Changing Futures team to continue supporting individuals affected by reductions in

preventative services and survivors of child sexual exploitation (CSE) who meet the service criteria.

f. Note that a key priority of the Enhanced Live Well Model is supporting people who disengage early from substance misuse treatment. GMCA data shows that, in 2024/25, around one-quarter of opiate users left treatment unsuccessfully, with 66% doing so within their first year and 53% within their first three months of treatment. This proposal will strengthen Oldham's ability to engage and retain this cohort, alongside other residents experiencing multiple disadvantage.

2. Requests that the Group Leaders meeting concurs, thereby enabling the Chief Executive to formally approve the recommendations in the report**.**

14 **FUTURE OLDHAM COMMUNITY LEISURE MODEL**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Health and Social Care/Deputy Chief Executive, which sought approval to extend the Changing Futures Team to advised that the Council was required to decide on the most appropriate future delivery model for the Borough's leisure services to ensure long-term financial sustainability, operational resilience and full alignment with the authority's corporate, and health and well-being priorities, including tackling inactivity and inequalities in our communities.

The Council's arrangements with Oldham Active (also known at Oldham Community Leisure Limited – OCL) was approaching a transition point, hence there was a need for a clear strategic decision that benefits residents and Oldham.

The report represented a strategic choice, not a default about how the Council secures both commercial discipline, growth and public value in the management of a key public asset.

The submitted report sets out the findings of an interim review into the future delivery of Oldham's leisure services and sought approval to advance a preferred option.

The review had considered four models:

a. In-house delivery,
b. A Council owned organisation such as a Local Authority Controlled Trading Company (LATCo),
c. A joint venture company (discounted at an early stage),
d. A competitive procurement process.

Each option has been assessed against financial, operational, governance and strategic criteria.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board would consider the commercially sensitive information contained in the report, at Item 21 on the agenda before making a recommendation.

15 **DPDA LIFE OF CLIENT (LOC) EXTENSION REPORT -**

DOMESTIC PROPERTY DISABILITY ADAPTATIONS

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Health and Social Care/Deputy Chief Executive, which sought approval to exercise the compliant extension options for a further two-year period for the providers currently delivering the Domestic Property Disability Adaptations (DPDA) Life of Client Framework.

This service was jointly commissioned by Oldham and Tameside Councils, with Oldham acting as the lead commissioner. It provided specialist adaptation equipment to support disabled residents across both boroughs.

The service was funded via the locality's allocation of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and enabled individuals to remain safe, independent, and living within their own homes and communities, a key element of the Adult Social Care vision of *supporting people to be independent, healthy, safe and well*.

The Framework had been awarded following a compliant procurement exercise in 2023 and commenced between 1st October 2023 for Lot 2 and Lot 3, and 1st November 2023 for Lot 1. The Framework was established for an initial three-year period with the option to extend for two further periods of 12 months.

The DPDA Framework covered the provision, installation, servicing, maintenance, and removal of specialist equipment including stairlifts, ceiling track hoists, free-standing gantry hoists, step lifts, and through-floor lifts.

Following ongoing contract monitoring and performance review, all providers have delivered services to a satisfactory standard, with no significant performance, quality, contractual, or safeguarding concerns identified. Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, as a partner authority to the Framework, has confirmed its agreement to utilise the available extension period.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board would consider the commercially sensitive information contained in the report, at Item 22 on the agenda before making a recommendation.

16 **EXTEND THE CONTRACT TERM FOR DELIVERY OF ACCOMMODATION BASED SERVICES FOR 12 MONTHS UNTIL 31ST MARCH 2028**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, which sought approval for the modification and extension of three Accommodation Based Service contracts for a further 12 months from 1st April 2027 to 31st March 2028, in accordance with Regulation 72 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, pending implementation of the new national supported housing regulatory framework, completion of

the Council's Supported Housing Needs Assessment, and publication of a new Supported Housing Strategy for Oldham.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board would consider the commercially sensitive information contained in the report, at Item 23 on the agenda before making a recommendation.

17 **AWARD OF LEVI CONTRACT - PREFERRED SUPPLIER**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, which sought approval for Oldham Council to authorise Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to award a contract for the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) project to the preferred supplier following a fully compliant procurement process led by TfGM, and for Oldham Council to be a signatory to both the concession contract and the Greater Manchester Authority Agreement, so that the Council can benefit from this contract arrangement.

In addition, the confidential section of the report (item 24), provided clarity on the financial/commercial arrangements associated with current TfGM provided electric vehicle chargers on Oldham Council land and discussed the merits as to whether or not this arrangement should be continued/extended.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board would consider the commercially sensitive information contained in the report, at Item 24 on the agenda before making a recommendation.

18 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Resolved:
That consideration of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board's Work programme be deferred to the Scrutiny Board's next scheduled meeting on 22nd October 2026.

19 **KEY DECISION DOCUMENT**

The Scrutiny Board considered the Key Decision Document, which recorded key decisions that the authority was due to take, in the coming weeks and months.

Resolved:
That the Key Decision Document be noted.

20 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:
That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting, for the following four items of business, on the grounds that they contain exempt information under paragraph 3 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and it would not, on balance, be in the public interest to disclose the reports.

21 **FUTURE DELIVERY MODEL FOR OLDHAM LEISURE SERVICES**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 14: Future Delivery Model for Oldham Leisure Services.

Resolved:

1. That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Executive Director of Health and Social Care/Deputy Chief Executive, to:

a. Approve the development of a Council owned organisation as the preferred delivery model in principle for the future delivery of Oldham's Leisure services, following consideration of the options set out in this report.

b. Approve delegation of £300k to pay for the development and implementation of the new model. This work will include progression to full business case and implementation planning, including detailed legal, financial, tax, procurement, HR, governance and transition work.

c. Delegate authority to the Director of Public Health, Director of Finance, and Director of Legal in consultation with Chief Executive (CEX) and Leader, to proceed with the necessary work to establish the most appropriate Council owned organisation.

d. Delegate authority to the Director of Legal or his nominated representative to undertake all required legal processes.

e. To note that a Council owned organisation presents the strongest option, retaining Council ownership and strategic control, whilst providing greater operational flexibility, commercial capability and opportunity for income generation. It aligns with a popular model across Greater Manchester and wider, and it offers a platform for transformation, innovation and improved performance and outcomes.

f. To note that whilst a Council owned organisation introduces initial set up costs and governance arrangements to be worked through, these are considered manageable through robust business planning, governance arrangements and oversight. On balance, progressing a Council owned organisation to full business case stage provides the strongest opportunity to deliver a sustainable, modern, and integrated leisure offer to benefit the Borough's residents, and the Council's commercial considerations.

2. Requests that the Group Leaders meeting concurs, thereby enabling the Chief Executive to formally approve the recommendations in the report**.**

22 **CONTRACT EXTENSION – DOMESTIC PROPERTY DISABILITY ADAPTIONS (DPDA) FRAMEWORK – LIFE OF CLIENT**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 15: Contract Extension – Domestic

Property Disability Adaptions (DPDA) Framework – Life of Client.

Resolved:

1. That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Executive Director of Health and Social Care/Deputy Chief Executive, to:
    a. Approve the exercise of the available two-year extension option contained within the Domestic Property Disability Adaptations (DPDA) Framework Agreement.
    b. Approve the continuation of the following contracts:

Lot	Provider	Current Expiry Date	Revised Expiry Date
Lot 1	Handicare Accessibility Limited	31st October 2026	31st October 2028
Lot 2	Hoist and Shower Chair Company Limited	30th September 2026	30th September 2028
Lot 3	Wessex Lift Co Limited	30th September 2026	30th September 2028

2. Requests that the Group Leaders meeting concurs, thereby enabling the Chief Executive to formally approve the recommendations in the report**.**

23 **EXTEND THE CONTRACT TERM FOR DELIVERY OF ACCOMMODATION BASED SERVICES FOR 12 MONTHS UNTIL 31ST MARCH 2028**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 16: Extend the contract term for delivery of Accommodation Based Services for 12 months until 31st March 2028.

Resolved:

1. That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, to:

a. Approve the modification and extension of the following Accommodation Based Service contracts for a period of 12 months from 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2028:
    - Lot 1 – Generic Service – Regenda Limited (delivered by Petrus) - £427,055
    - Lot 2 – Young People's Service – Depaul UK - £363,650

b. Lot 3 – Women's Service – Regenda Limited (delivered by Safenet) - £325,694
Approve the use of Regulation 72(1)(b) of the Public

Contracts Regulations 2015 to enable the contract modifications.

c. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), following consultation with Legal and Procurement Services, to finalise and execute all necessary contractual documentation, including agreement of any inflationary uplift required to support service delivery during 2027/28.
d. Note that the Council intends to undertake a future commissioning exercise following completion of the Supported Housing Needs Assessment, publication of a Supported Housing Strategy and confirmation of the national supported housing regulatory framework.

2. Requests that the Group Leaders meeting concurs, thereby enabling the Chief Executive to formally approve the recommendations in the report**.**

24 **LOCAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE (LEVI)**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 17: Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI)

Resolved:

1. That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, to:
    a. To agree that Transport for Geater Manchester awards the LEVI contract to the preferred supplier.
    b. To agree that Oldham Council be a signatory to the contract and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Agreement.
    c. To agree to not extend the existing host agreements with Transport for Greater Manchester, for the reasons established in the confidential paragraphs of the submitted report.
2. Requests that the Group Leaders meeting concurs, thereby enabling the Chief Executive to formally approve the recommendations in the report**.**

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 7.10pm.

Emergency Powers Decision Report

St Agnes C of E Primary School – Specialist Provision

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Education and Early Years
Directorate: Children's Services
Report Author: Victoria Caldwell
Email: Victoria.Caldwell@oldham.gov.uk
Date of Decision: 2nd November 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

This report seeks approval to allocate capital funding of £619,788 which will be funded from the Basic Need/HNPCA grants and resource funding of £166,000 from the High Needs Block.

3. Reason for urgency

The decision is required urgently to enable the planned expansion of specialist provision at St Agnes CE Primary School to progress in time for 12 additional places to be available from September 2027. Demand for specialist placements continues to increase across the Borough. Any delay in confirming the capital and associated revenue funding will risk the specialist provision not being delivered in time, reducing the Local Authority's ability to meet local demand for children and young people with SEND who require specialist provision.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

Failure to approve the proposal now will prevent the creation of 12 additional specialist places at St Agnes CE Primary School, reducing the Local Authority's ability to meet growing demand for specialist provision. This would place further pressure on existing local capacity and may lead to increased reliance on higher-cost independent and out-of-borough placements. Any delay in approving the funding risks the modular accommodation not being delivered in time for September 2027, resulting in a missed opportunity to increase local specialist capacity and support delivery of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy and Local SEND Reform Plan.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

Failure to proceed with the proposal is likely to result in continued or increased expenditure on higher-cost independent and out-of-borough placements where children and young people cannot be accommodated within local specialist provision. This would reduce the Local Authority's ability to manage demand within existing resources and may result in higher overall costs than investing in additional local capacity. The proposal supports the creation of 12 additional specialist places within Oldham, helping to reduce future pressure on specialist placement budgets.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 4 August 2026
Comments

Approval is sought to allocate £620k of capital funding from the Council's Basic Need and High Needs Provision Capital allocations, provided by Central Government, to expand specialist provision at St Agnes CE Primary School, creating 12 additional in-borough specialist places. Funding will be released through a grant agreement with the school.

Approval is also sought to allocate £166k per annum from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block to support the additional places. The ongoing revenue cost is expected to be partially mitigated through reductions in alternative High Needs expenditure.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef (Monitoring Officer)
Date: 17.09.26
Comments

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year, so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed, as the Council has failed at three successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required and it cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.

Report to CHIEF EXECUTIVE

High Needs Provision in Mainstream Settings Capital Works (St Agnes C of E Primary School, Lees)

Officer Contact: Paul Tinsley (Director of Education and Early Years)

Report Author: Victoria Caldwell (Schools Capital Project Manager)

2nd November 2026

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Reason for Decision

This report seeks cabinet approval for a capital project that will offer additional places and enhance specialist provision for pupils with additional needs and EHCPs who are based St Agnes C of E Primary School. The project will increase local specialist capacity for children and young people with SEND, helping to meet growing demand and reduce reliance on independent and out-of-borough placements.

The report also seeks approval for the allocation of capital funding from the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA) and Basic Need Grant to support delivery of the scheme.

Executive Summary

This report is related to a proposal to enhance the existing provision and provide an additional specialist base for pupils with additional needs at St Agnes C of E Primary School. These proposals are now developed sufficiently for costs and proposals to be placed before Cabinet for a final agreement.

This project will create a total of 12 new places in a mainstream primary school for children with an EHCP, increasing local specialist capacity and supporting children to access education within their local community.

Currently the Local Authority has Basic Needs and High Needs Capital Allocation Funding, which is released to school upon application and consideration by panel. It is proposed that where projects will generate additional places these projects are funded from the HNPCA Grant provision

These developments reinforce Oldham's commitment to an inclusive system where specialist support is available earlier, within mainstream settings, reducing escalation of need and delivering better long-term outcomes for children and young people. This aligns directly with the government's vision that schools should be inclusive by design, with dedicated inclusion bases forming a core component of the future school estate.

Project Outline and Recommendation

St Agnes C of E Primary School

This proposal seeks approval to create up to 12 additional places within a **Specialist Inclusion Base** for children and young people with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC). The development will increase local capacity to meet need within a mainstream school environment and forms part of Oldham's wider SEND Reform Programme.

The Specialist Inclusion Base will provide access to specialist expertise and targeted support whilst enabling children and young people to remain connected to mainstream education and school life. The provision will strengthen inclusive practice, build mainstream capacity and ensure that children can access the right support, in the right place, at the right time. The proposal contributes to a more inclusive and sustainable local system by increasing local provision, reducing reliance on placements outside a child's local community and improving outcomes for children and families.

The cost of this project is estimated to be **£619 788** which includes 20% for contingency. Any use of the 10% contingency funding would require approval from the Director of Education and Early Years. If not used, then the 20% contingency, along with any unspent grant funding would be returned to the High Needs provision budget. It is proposed that this project is funded by the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation Grant.

1 Background

1.1 Demand for resource-based provision in primary schools has risen substantially in recent years. The option recommended in this report provides an opportunity for the Council to provide funding to enhance SEND provision in line with its Corporate Priority, to provide a great start and skills for life. The proposed provision at St Agnes C of E Primary School directly supports this national agenda by developing high-quality inclusion bases within mainstream settings.

1.2 Strategic alignment

The proposal aligns with Oldham's SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and the Local SEND Reform Plan 2026, which seeks to strengthen inclusion, improve local sufficiency and ensure children and young people can access the right support at the right time. The development of this specialist provision will contribute to a more coherent continuum of provision across the borough, supporting positive outcomes for children and young people with SEND while helping to create a more sustainable local system.

2 Procurement Implications

2.1 There are no procurement implications arising from the report directly. Should there be a future requirement to undertake the works/goods/services through a 3rd party supplier, procurement regulations and associated processes/procedures and governance will become applicable.

3 Risk Assessments

3.1 The Council will provide all site-specific documentation before commencement of works.

4 Current Position

4.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to secure sufficient educational provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). In line with Oldham's

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SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027, the Local SEND Reform Plan and the government's Every Child Achieving and Thriving reforms, the Local Authority is committed to developing a more inclusive and sustainable continuum of provision that enables children and young people to access the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

The demand for specialist provision has increased significantly in recent years, placing pressure on local capacity and resulting in a growing number of children and young people requiring independent and out-of-borough placements. The development of specialist provision will strengthen local sufficiency, expand local capacity and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. It will also support the long-term sustainability of the High Needs Block by reducing reliance on higher-cost placements where needs can be effectively met within Oldham.

4.2 To ensure the effective operation and long-term sustainability of the provision, the Local Authority will provide support for the admissions arrangements, placement criteria, governance arrangements, performance expectations, financial responsibilities and reporting requirements, and ongoing oversight of quality, demand and outcomes, ensuring the provision contributes to the Local Authority's sufficiency, inclusion and SEND reform objectives whilst delivering value for money.

5 Options/Alternatives

5.1 Option 1: Approve the capital investment required to establish the specialist provision at St Agnes C of E Primary School, supporting the ambitions of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and the Local SEND Reform Plan.

5.2 Option 2: Do not approve the project, resulting in a missed opportunity to increase local specialist capacity and support the delivery of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and the Local SEND Reform Plan.

6 Preferred Option

6.1 Option 1.

7 Consultation

7.1 All Primary and Secondary schools including all MATS (Multi Academy Trusts) that operate in Oldham.

8 Financial Implications

8.1 **Financial Implications (Capital)**

The cost of the associated work, including a contingency of 20% is **£619,788** and will be a charge to the educational capital programme 2026/27 and 2027/28, which will be funded from the Basic Needs Grant /High Needs Capital Provision Allocation (HNPCA). Any unspent budget will be returned to the Basic Need/HNPCA provision budget. Any use of the 20% contingency funding would require approval from the Director of Education and Early Years. If not used, then the 20% contingency would be returned to the High Needs provision budget. As the school is part of a Diocesan Trust, the grant paid by Oldham Council will include VAT. Should there be any recoverable VAT this will be returned to the Council.

The work will be commissioned directly by the school and funding paid to the school as part of a Grant Funding Agreement upon receipt of periodic claims and verification of capital expenditure and satisfactory works.

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The cost breakdown analysis has been included in the Appendix Document 306 03 Project RIBA Stage 2 Report 210726

Paula Buckley – Finance Manager

8.2 **Financial Implications – (Resources)**

The revenue costs of opening a 12-place specialist base at St Agnes CoE will be funded from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The High Needs Block covers funding to support provision for pupils and students with SEND who require additional resources to participate in education and learning, from their early years to age 25 in a range of provision including special schools, mainstream schools, alternative provision, and independent specialist provision. The funding also contributes towards council centrally retained expenditure for High Needs

The opening of the specialist base, creating 12 additional places would result in £166k of required revenue funding per annum from the High Needs Block, split between base and high needs top up. This would be offset, in part, by savings in other areas of the High Needs Block where the pupils may be currently accessing funding.

Vicky Gibbons – Senior Accountant

9 Legal Implications

9.1 The proposal will benefit the students at the schools and further demonstrate the ongoing commitment by the Council to the education of the children of the Borough with particular emphasis upon the most vulnerable children in the borough.

Alex Bougatef - Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

9.2 The proposal is to make a grant of capital investment to expand specialist provision at St Agnes CE Primary School, supporting the ambitions of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and the Local SEND Reform Plan

9.3 Making the grant is in scope of section 1 of the Localism Act 2021 which give Local Authorities a general power of competence to do anything which an individual may do for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in their area

9.4 Officers must work with legal colleagues to approve and formalise the terms of any grant agreement or MOU in conjunction with Finance and Audit colleagues

9.5 The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and Project Manager must ensure that Subsidy Control is considered in consultation with Legal Services and that all relevant assessments are made and recorded, all relevant notices are published, and all relevant regulations and legislation is complied with to the satisfaction of the Section 151 Officer and in compliance with the Financial Procedure Rules of the Council. External advice may be needed to support these activities which will be a cost to the Project. A grant can amount to a subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Therefore, a subsidy control analysis of the grant funding and what it will be used for is essential before payment of the grant. This process will be undertaken by the Project Team led by the SRO with support and input from Legal Services, Finance and other relevant officers

9.6 In the event that any grant is determined to be a subsidy, details regarding the same must be published within three months of award for all subsidies in excess of £100,000 and the Report Author and SRO will need to liaise with Finance and Audit colleagues in this regard

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9.7 The Transparency obligations of the Council must be complied with

9.8 The terms of the Grant Agreement must be reviewed and agreed by the SRO along with legal and finance colleagues. Provisions of note and/or provisions with associated risk should be highlighted to officers for consideration

Bryan Boese –Solicitor

10 Equality Impact Assessment, including implications for Children and Young People

10.1 There are no negative implications for vulnerable groups or children and young people.

11 Key Decision

11.1 Yes

12 Key Decision Reference

12.1 KDD-26-02

13 Appendices & Background Papers

13.1 SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027
13.2 Send Reform plan 2026
13.3 Project Account Summary - St Agnes.pdf

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SEND & Inclusion Strategy

Supporting children and young people who have special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who may need additional support

2023-2027

Contents

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Executive summary

Our borough is a place that puts residents first and is committed to making every service a good service. This strategy is about how we do that for children and young people who have special education needs and/or disabilities and those who may require additional support.

There is an Oldham commitment to constantly work with residents, and this starts with children, young people and their parents/carer, who are equal partners.

Together, we want to improve our performance and create a truly inclusive Oldham. Local area statutory partners; Oldham Council and the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership; are also committed to working in collaboration with partners. This includes children, young people, parents/carers, childminders, early years education settings, schools, post 16 education settings and the voluntary sector.

We all have an important role in working with our partners and stakeholders across the organisational, private, public, voluntary and community sectors to achieve our vision and long-term ambitions. By 2027, we want all children and young people to experience and feel that they are heard and are included.

Over the last few years, we have been making progress through our SEND Improvement Programme. We have reflected the progress of this and the difference it has made so far in our improvement journey.

As a partnership, we are committed to ensuring that support and provision for children and young people continually improves and that we build the trust and confidence of children, young people and parents/carers in Oldham's provision and services across education, health and care 0-25.

As a local area, we are ambitious for all our children and young people, which is why we have high expectations of our childminders, early years' settings, schools, colleges and support services. We want all children and young people in Oldham to have a great start and skills for life in preparation for their continued progress to becoming happy and productive young adults.

Just as importantly, we want all young people to have access to opportunities for training, education, volunteering, employment and apprenticeships to help them gain the skills they need to become independent participants in their local community.

As a local area, we have a strong focus on disadvantage and want to help everyone to access their right to an education, be included and achieve their full potential. We take a residents first approach to ensure that children, young people and parents/carers experiences are fully embedded and influence how we evolve.

Our SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme underpins our SEND & Inclusion Strategy and provides an overview of current activities to be undertaken to achieve improvements in provision and services across the local area.

Our actions have been specifically identified to improve outcomes for children and young people so that they have the best possible experiences and opportunities to equip them for their future.

We sincerely thank everyone who has invested their time and effort to create our SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027.

Guiding principles and values

As a local area, we strive for constant improvement through shared responsibility, knowledge about ourselves and commitment to achieve the best outcomes for all our children and young people. Our work is targeted towards improved early identification of need, effective targeting of support, services and provision across education, health and care.

Being knowledge rich will ensure our work responds to the needs of the local area, is evidence based, and takes responsibility for the commitments we make to our children and young people. We will do that in a responsible way through directing our resources to the areas that have the most impact and where children and young people are most at risk of poor outcomes.

When we talk about children and young people with SEND, we include those who are vulnerable for many different reasons and who are likely to need support from multiple services during their life. Many children and young people who have SEND will have lives that have been made more complex by all the different, agencies, policy and legislation that shape the support they might need.

Services may include those from education, health and care, including specialist teachers, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), Children with Disabilities and other social care teams, health services and specialist education support, to name but a few.

Other people around the child or young person, including their families, may also have their own support needs and this is when Early Help services may be required. Throughout all of this, it is vitally important that the voice of the child, young person and their family are kept at the heart of decision making with choice and control being paramount.

Our approach is grounded in what works best to improve outcomes for children and young people so that they can have the best future possible and thrive as part of our local community.

This means being efficient and prioritising what we know we need to focus on to provide the right level of support through education, health and care. This is encompassed in the SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme, which underpins the commitments we are making through the SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027.

Oldham's vision for all our children and young people is that they achieve well in their early years, at school, and in further education so that they can find employment, are happy, healthy and fulfilled, and have choice and control over their lives. We believe that all children and young people should be able to:

- Be educated and included in the community where they live.
- Have friendships, relationships and are part of their community.
- Be as independent as possible and do it for themselves.
- Access opportunities that prepare them to be successful in life, learning, volunteering and work.
- Access appropriate high-quality support to build their emotional resilience and improve their positive health and wellbeing.
- Feel, safe and happy when taking part in all the opportunities available to all.
- Feel listened to and actively involved in influencing decisions that affect their lives and communities.
- Feel proud and be ready for life.

Strategic priorities

SEND & Inclusion Strategy	Local area priorities	Young people's priorities	Parents/carers priorities
Priority 1: Early identification and SEN support	A great start and skills for life	Being and feeling safe	Early years SEN support and the graduated response
Priority 2: Health and wellbeing	Healthy, safe and well supported residents	Positive health and wellbeing	Mental health and wellbeing Health services
Priority 3: Community and social inclusion	A clean and green future	Friends, relationships and community	Accessing your community Short breaks and social activities
Priority 4: Joint commissioning for sufficiency of specialist support and provision	Quality homes for everyone	Doing it for ourselves	Independent Living EHCPs and annual reviews Social care
Priority 5: Preparing for adulthood	Better jobs and dynamic businesses	Employment and volunteering	Employment and training Transitions including post-16 Home to school transport
Priority 6a: Communication and interaction: autism	Cross council priorities	Cross council priorities	Included in all the priorities above
Priority 6b: Communication and interaction: SLCN	Cross council priorities	Cross council priorities	Included in all the priorities above
Infrastructure 1: Engagement, participation and coproduction: working in partnership with children, young people, parent/carers and partners, stakeholders			
Infrastructure 2: Quality assurance: keeping support and provision under review, including services, settings and individual provision made via EHCPs			
Infrastructure 3: Local offer: ensuring that what we say about the local area is of high quality, easy to navigate and performs well			
Infrastructure 4: Sustainability: assuring value for money to achieve financial balance and enable the best use of resources to meet need in the local area			
Infrastructure 4: Workforce development: creating an inclusive local area through a highly skilled workforce			

Governance structure

Key to governance levels	
Organisation level	
Executive decision making	
Oversight of performance	
Priority steering groups	
Partners/stakeholders	

The improvements we have identified in the SEND & Inclusion Strategy are underpinned by the wider SEND Improvement Programme. Implementation of the programme will be governed by the system-wide SEND Partnership Board and progress will be monitored and reported to Cabinet, Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership Governing Body and Oldham education settings (inclusive of early years, schools and colleges) as part of the ongoing cycle of reporting.

Work will be done through the priority workstreams and subgroups, which include representation from education, health and care, 0-25, children and young people and parents/carers.

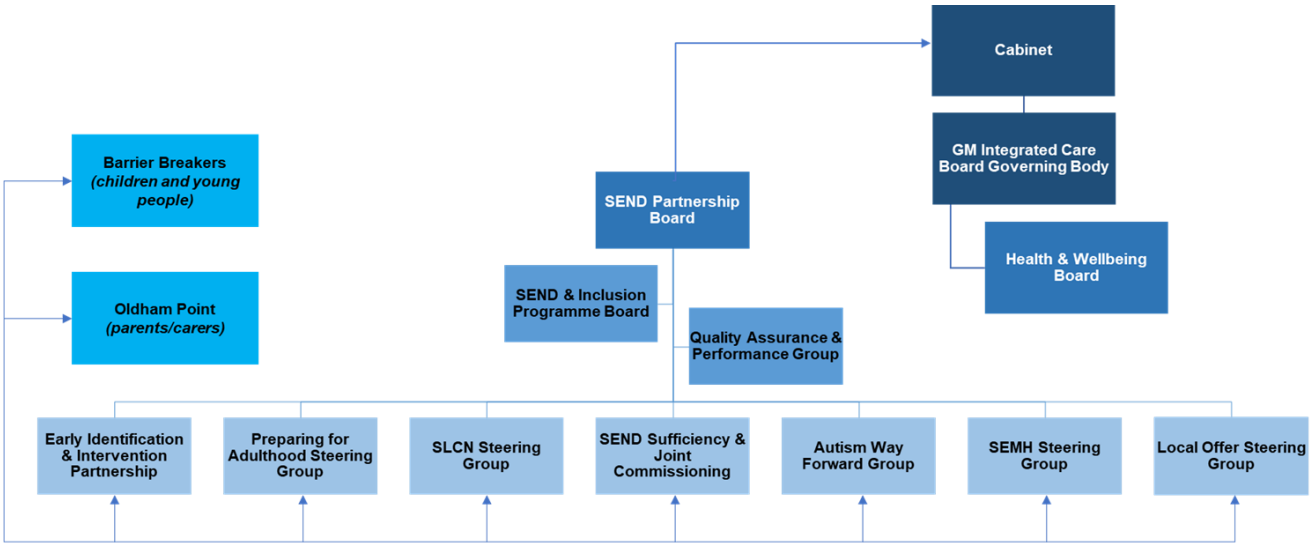
All strategic groups are responsible for parts of the overall SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme. Priority workstreams and subgroups meet every half term and report up to the SEND Partnership Board.

There is regular reporting, and this includes narrative about progress, performance data and financial information so that we know how successful we are.

We recognise it is important to be clear about who has responsibility and accountability for delivery of the SEND & Inclusion Strategy at the strategic and organisation level. Roles of key accountable officers and partners are included in our SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme so that it is plain who is accountable for ensuring the delivery of aspects of the strategy.

We feel strongly that there is shared responsibility and accountability, with all partners, and we want to improve transparency of that through more regular reporting on the local offer.

Ultimately, the benefit of all our work will be felt in the way our children and young people have their needs identified and met across education, health and care, covering the 0-25 age range and in how they are enabled to achieve the best outcomes possible.



What success looks like and how it will be measured

We have included success criteria and a performance data in our SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme, which will show where we were at the beginning of the strategy and how these change over time, to where we want to be.

The overall performance of the local area is measured against national key performance indicators, compared with local, regional and our statistical neighbours (the local areas that are most like us).

The data we use includes *performance data*; things we can measure in numbers or percentages, and *perceptive data*; things we can measure by assessing where we are and how things have improved, according to our partners and stakeholders. We will be reporting our progress regularly, so that we are transparent about what we achieve.

To provide oversight, progress, highlights and challenges will be reported at SEND Partnership Board and in reports to Cabinet throughout the life of the strategy. This will be discussed and monitored at all strategic meetings, workstreams and subgroups and progress against each action will be assessed.

Priority 1 Early identification and SEN support

Headline

The rationale for early identification of potential SEND is that the right provision and intervention can be put in place before gaps in progress and development widen.

Early identification is not restricted to the early years but to any age when concerns might be noticed. We recognise that early and accurate identification of SEND are prerequisites for ensuring effective SEND provision is put into place across the local area.

What we will do

- Review the quality and capacity of the centrally based SEND & Inclusion Service and strengthen the core offer to education settings by providing a clear offer of targeted support for inclusion, regardless of whether there is an education, health and care plan (EHCP) in place.
- Develop an information pack on SEND in the early stages, including a range of information sheets, leaflets and a main poster on SEND to be in education settings and community spaces.
- Ensure that inclusion support is part of a broader, holistic and joined-up offer of across education, health and care.
- Develop a simplified SEN support toolkit of resources that works alongside the graduated response toolkit.
- Work with mainstream education settings to support how they can meet the needs of children and young people at the SEN support and the EHCP level through awareness raising and training at all levels.

Because of what we do

- Children and young people at SEN support level will benefit from having their needs identified and met through robust early identification and intervention in education settings.
- Continuing professional development will increase the knowledge and skills in mainstream education settings, enabling children and young people to be identified and supported at an earlier stage.
- Education settings will have more access to support, including through early years sector support and for whole school SEND and inclusion development.
- There will be a ***consistent*** approach to early identification across the system, and this will lead to reduced suspensions and exclusions and more children and young people engaging in education.
- There will be assurance for parents/carers that there is fair access to placements in the early years and a full education offer through school and further education and they are not being encouraged to electively home educate their child.
- The Education Inclusion Service will better reflect the needs of the local area.

Priority 2 Positive health and wellbeing

Headline

We see positive health and wellbeing as one of the cornerstones of building an effective life and this starts from birth. As a local area, we take a coordinated and evidence-informed approach to mental health and wellbeing and work in collaboration across education, health and care from the earliest years.

Education settings, along with local area partners, have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, by developing approaches tailored to their needs.

What we will do

- Focus on investing in earlier intervention and prevention; and exploring how specialist support can be delivered differently.
- Ensure joint commissioning delivers better, joined-up support by planning pathways of support for specific types of needs, for example autism.
- Put in place effective governance structures and processes to ensure strategic decisions can be taken swiftly and effectively, whatever the make-up of council and the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership.
- Signpost parents/carers to the right support for their own health and wellbeing.
- Create more accessible information, advice and support for young people about the things that are important to them, including sex and relationship education.
- Work with GPs to ensure SEND is considered in the course of their work with children, young people and parents/carers.
- Ensure that there is an effective offer for children and young people who require alternative provision to be put in place because of mental health related difficulties.

Because of what we do

- Parents/carers will know where to get the correct information and advice to support their health needs at the earliest point of time.
- Children and young people will benefit from the people who care for them feeling supported to be as healthy as they can be.
- Children, young people, parents/carers and education settings will have the information they need to know where to get the right support for their mental health needs.
- Parents/carers will have a better understanding of what GPs can offer and will be able to take advantage of what's available, from universal provision to more focused and targeted services, for the right needs and at the right time.

Priority 3 Community and social inclusion

Headline

Friendships, relationships and understanding yourself and who you want to be is a big part of becoming an adult and this starts from the earliest years. As well as understanding what a good relationship or friendship is, finding out more about sexual health, body image and emotions is also important to get around and be included in the local and wider community.

We want to ensure the best experience of community and social inclusion, from the earliest age, so that children and young people are empowered to become as independent, self-reliant and confident as possible, whether this means building and maintaining friendships, joining local groups, taking part in council run activities or accessing services.

What we will do

- Ensure a stronger support network and opportunities for young people who are in the 18 to 25 age phase so that social opportunities don't just stop.
- Work with the voluntary sector to explore what else can be provided in the local community to support community inclusion.
- Advise clubs and providers for activities that are available for everyone, really are available for everyone, regardless of their support needs. This might mean training, support and advice for lots of organisations who provide social and community activities.
- Work in collaboration with partners and stakeholders to provide more information about pathways into sports and afterschool clubs for children and young people who have SEND.
- Promote volunteering opportunities for young people with SEND, which can provide unique experiences. More activities for this, which offer a variety of experiences, will be made available, including within the council.
- Support and signpost parents/carers to wellbeing groups for parents/carers so that they feel empowered and more able to access things in the community for themselves and for their children and young people.
- Work collaboratively with strategic partners to explore and develop the use of personal budgets across education, health and care for young people who have SEND so that they have more choice and control about the services and support they receive.
- Keep all support and provision under review through an agreed schedule to identify what needs reviewing and carrying out focused work to understand how service are working and what needs to change.
- Ensure that children and young people are treated as individuals when professionals are involved, rather than being combined into a general category of need. This also means looking at criteria for access to services and removing diagnosis-based access unless there is a specific and/or justifiable reason for this.

Because of what we do

- Parents/carers will feel supported to have a productive, supportive family life, where families are content and are able to take the opportunities that fit with their own lives.
- Children and young people will:
    - Have a full and stimulating life that includes friends, family and positive relationships.
    - Be able to socialise with friends who support and understand them and explore relationships safely.
    - Feel safe when they are out by themselves and with friends, accessing the local community.
    - Have good knowledge of the clubs and social opportunities they can attend and take advantage of these.
    - Be happy.
    - Be able to put their views across, feel listened to and can express their thoughts and feelings about what is right for them, leading to more power over their own lives.
    - Understand how to make their own decisions in the way that works for them. Benefit from services that are shaped by their own opinions, thoughts and needs.

Priority 4: Joint commissioning for sufficiency of specialist support and provision

Headline

All children and young people are entitled to a mainstream education, and this is the best opportunity for most, including for those at SEN support and EHCP level. Where this is not right for those with the most complex needs, we have high quality special school places, and we want to ensure that there are sufficient places to continue to meet the needs of the local area into the future.

We also want to increase the options for more children and young people, who may need support beyond what mainstream provision can currently offer, to remain in mainstream education. This will be done through the development of a greater range of education options in mainstream primary and secondary schools.

We also want to ensure the right level of provision from support services is available for all children and young people, regardless of their education setting.

What we will do

- Develop a range of 'mainstream plus' options to support children and young people who require provision than is expected to remain in mainstream schools.
- Develop an evidence-informed and collaborative approach to planning places in all types of specialist SEND provision so that there is a transparent plan for how local provision can meet local needs.
- Work with partners to develop more structure and consistency for considering bespoke placements for children and young people with the most complex needs.
- Develop a joined-up network of SEND and inclusion practice across the borough, which is supported by Oldham's early years specialist support services, special schools, mainstream plus practitioners and centrally based specialist services.
- Work with education settings to ensure the best use of the high needs capital funding to improve and enhance the environment to support children and young people with SEND.
- Ensure that there are enough specialist placements to meet the needs of the local population within Oldham and map this out for the period of this strategy and into the future, in consideration of forecast needs.
- Explore what can be done to offer parent/carer support in education settings in partnership with SENCos and services.
- Ensure that there are sufficient options available for young people when they leave school, including apprenticeships, sixth form, work-based opportunities and further education.
- Promote and expand the inclusive offer in Oldham, so that more young people have access to employment pathways that meet their needs including, through; work placements, work experience, traineeships, supported Internships and apprenticeships.
- Review health provision to ensure the right level of health provision is commissioned to meet the needs of the local area.
- Review and develop our commissioning agreements between the local authority and the integrated care system so that key health services have good transition plans between children's and adults' services.

Because of what we do

- More children and young people will have their needs met in mainstream provision and will access the opportunities this provides so that they are able to make a positive contribution and play an active role in their community.
- Children and young people will benefit from the right support, when they need it, so they can continue to learn new skills and knowledge along with their peers.
- Capacity will be built in education settings across all age phases.
- Children and young people with SEND will have, and make use of, the same opportunities as everyone else because there is an expectation that they will get the right support and encouragement.
- Young people will have more options for post 16 pathways available in their community so that they enjoy a sense of achievement as they continue to build skills, leading to future employment.

Priority 5 Preparation for adulthood

Headline

We recognise that preparing for adulthood starts form the earliest years and runs through childhood and into adolescence and appropriate support in the early years can reduce the amount of support a child, young person or family requires when they are older.

As children and young people grow and develop, they should have the opportunity to get involved in their local community in all sorts of ways. Young people grow older, they may want to live alone, or with others, in their own home.

In Oldham, young people have told us that independent living is more than just about where you live. They also feel that being as independent as possible, is just as important as who you live with. We want to make sure that young people can live as independently as possible, no matter what their circumstances.

What we will do

- Be pro-active in gathering feedback from young people about their aspirations and use this to commission pathways that will enable them to pursue their goals.
- For children in the early years, parents/carers will be supported to access health, education and care services for a better start in life.
- Engage with children and young people who are likely to require further support or bespoke pathways to pursue their aspirations and convene local education providers and wider partners to shape corresponding pathways.
- Expand vocational options to support young people who have SEND onto employment pathways, including supported internships and apprenticeships.
- Engage with local employers, in the private, public and voluntary sectors, and support them to develop opportunities for young people with SEND to make a successful transition to the world of work.
- Help employers to understand the needs of the young people with whom they will be working and to put the right support in place for this to be successful.
- Use learning and good practice to show a wider range of employers how transition into the workplace can be done effectively.
- Ensure that there is a strong, joint local offer of education, health and care options to enable young people with the most complex needs to make a successful transition to adult life.
- Ensure that there are effective processes for all transitions for children and young people and early planning of a young person's transition to adult life that will enable a young person to thrive.
- Develop a joined-up transitions team that includes children's and adults social care and provides a consistent offer relating to assessment, support and services.
- Work with education settings to promote more lessons on life skills, including, travelling, money management, and learning about paying bills.
- Develop accessible information about the EHC process and what this means for sixth form, university and going into work much earlier than it is currently provided.
- Enable parents and carers to access information that helps them to support their children and young people to make decisions about their future.
- Ensure that children and young people begin preparation for adulthood and preparing for change throughout their journey, including at all levels of need, so that work is completed to enable children and young people to begin to make decisions about their future.

Because of what we do

- Children and young people will develop the right skills to be as independent as possible in the way that works for them.
- Young people will benefit from having the right support from the people in their lives, including for making decisions when it comes to their own life and care needs.
- Young people can budget and manage their finances, with the right support when this is needed.
- Children and young people will influence services so that they are better aligned with their priorities.

Priority 6a Communication and interaction: autism

Headline

We want Oldham to be a place that values everyone's contribution to their local communities and makes sure they are welcomed, supported and no-one is left behind. We want to achieve an autism friendly approach across the borough through services that are joined up, proactive and of high quality.

We also want to support education settings, service settings and the wider community to have a good understanding of children and young people who have social communication difficulties and autism, what this can mean, and how they can include them in all opportunities that are available universally. Our work in this area will align with the National strategy for autistic children, young people and adults 2021 to 2026.

What we will do

- Work with community and voluntary sector to promote access to universal social activities for children and young people who have autism.
- Engage with partners and stakeholders to identify the training needs regarding autism and social communication difficulties and identify the priority groups for continuing professional development. This will include partners from health, social care, education, housing, employment, leisure, police and criminal justice services to support continuing professional development.
- Co-design training with young people and parents/carers who have lived experience of autism.
- Build on the Autism in Schools project to provide a sustainable training programme for schools, in partnership with parents/carers.
- Create an autism outreach service for children and young people with communication and interaction needs who are in mainstream education settings.
- Expand vocational options to support young people who have autism onto employment pathways, including supported internships and apprenticeships.
- Implement the complex case panel to ensure sound oversight of young people with the most complex needs, and who may require a continuing high level of support, as they prepare for adulthood.
- Develop education provision and accommodation options for young people who are currently accessing provision outside of Oldham, to ensure that they can be supported as close to home as possible, as they transition to adulthood.
- Review pathways for diagnosis for autism.

Because of what we do

- There will be increased opportunities available in the community as more providers will make reasonable adjustments to be autism accessible for all children and young people.
- Education settings and parents/carers will know how to access training at the right time, to boost their understanding of how autism and social communication difficulties affects children and young people and practical ways to support them.
- Children, young people and their parents/carers will know what they should expect from their school or education setting.
- Education settings will benefit from access to specialist support so that they can build capacity for supporting children and young people who have autism.
- Specialist and mainstream services including health, social care, early years, education, housing, employment, leisure, police and criminal justice are inclusive, accessible and accommodating for children, young people and parents/carers.

Priority 6b Communication and interaction: SLCN

Headline

In Oldham, we want every child and young person to be enabled to communicate to the very best of their ability. Within the early years we want early identification of communication needs to be supported with timely access to strategies, interventions and advice to reduce the longer-term impact of communication needs.

To do this, we want to make sure that there is a high level of skill across the workforce. This is because we want to create a local area that is knowledge rich regarding how to foster and support speech, language and communication needs for our children and young people.

What we will do

- Develop a joined-up speech and language pathway that outlines the offer of services for all children from universal to specialist. This will include supportive strategies that families can use at home.
- Embed consistent messages to parents/carers about the importance of the home learning environment and what is important in supporting communication and language development at all stages.
- Explore funding for investment in SLCN across the continuum of need.
- Strengthen the ways we are promoting SLCN awareness across education settings and services who work directly with the KS3/4 and p-16 SEND population.
- Implement a Secondary Language Link pilot to target children and young people at the KS3/4 phase, whose speech, language and communication needs have not previously been identified.
- Review speech, language and communication needs in the local area against the provision available and act where this needs to be improved.
- Promote and support the speech, language and communication framework as a whole school development for schools.

Because of what we do

- Children and young people are supported by professionals who understand their needs and as a result, are supported to get better outcomes.
- Parents/carers are up skilled in understanding their child's needs in relation to speech, language and communication and, as a result, can support their development in this area.
- Older children and young people who have not had speech, language and communication needs identified at an earlier stage will be supported by professionals who understand their needs and support their development as they move towards adulthood.
- Through Secondary Language Link, secondary phase practitioners can identify and meet speech, language and communication needs informed by an enhanced understanding of language development and how to identify and address needs.

Infrastructure 1: Engagement, participation and coproduction

Headline

Engagement, participation and coproduction are a big part of what is happening in Oldham, and we want this to be embedded successfully at all levels across the local area partnership.

Children, young people and their parents/carers, together with partner organisations, are central to developing an effective local area system for SEND and inclusion. Coproduction is how we want to work and is a core expectation for all service leads, commissioners and providers.

What we will do

- Act on our commitment to sharing challenges and solving problems in a spirit of coproduction through ownership, with children, young people and parents/carers, of the SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme.
- Ensure that coproduction is meaningful, by engaging at the earliest stage, openly sharing challenges and enabling parents/carers to generate ideas and shape solutions.
- Develop more opportunities for children, young people and parents/carers to influence the local area system at a strategic level and build the capacity of local groups and networks to fulfil this role.
- Introduce an annual cycle of SEND and inclusion events for parents/carers, with an increased level of adult service and housing representatives involved.
- Ensure that education, health and care services work collaboratively with POINT to share accurate information about services/provision and make sure it is communicated effectively.
- Create a parent/carer pack to provide clarity about pathways to support for different aspects of education, health and care.
- Create and promote a lending library of resources for SEND so that parents/carers can borrow resources, rather than spending money to find out that resources are not right for them and their child or young person.
- Hold parent/carer sessions in different areas of the borough on different days, and at different times so that they fit around busy lives.

Because of what we do

- Parents/carers of early years children, school aged children and young people will be able to access information about their rights and choices without having to ask for it or seek it out themselves because they won't know what they don't know.
- Parents/carers will be an equal partner in strategic and working groups to help to identify issues and implement changes.
- They can also share experiences to help professionals understand some of the impact of SEND on their lives.
- Peer mentoring from other parents/carers will be promoted and will help many other parents/carers.
- Parent/carers will be supported by peer mentors who are well supported themselves by services.

Infrastructure 2: Quality assurance and performance

Headline

We are committed to the delivery of effective provision and services through sound policies, procedures and practice. Quality assurance and performance monitoring is a feature of our work across the local area partnership. Through this, we ensure continuous service improvement by embedding a culture of shared local intelligence and, where quality and performance issues arise, a commitment to learning and acting.

We believe in partners being accountable for the quality of their work and being prepared to account for the impact on the outcomes for children and young people. We will maintain a robust tracking system, which collates and monitors all performance related to SEND and inclusion to support effective challenge and scrutiny.

What we will do

- Implement the EHC Hub, an online system for developing EHCPs and managing annual reviews.
- Strengthen the support available for the early years sector to identify and submit appropriate request via the online service.
- Develop a comprehensive data set for SEND and inclusion, that brings together education, health and care and publish updates on the local offer website.
- Roll out a whole school audit system for schools and develop an early year's version, to also be implemented.
- Implement a reporting process for the completion and results of the formal termly audit for EHCP's, as outlined in the audit process and publish the results on the dashboard and headline report.
- Develop an outcomes dashboard that focuses on what is important to children and young people and how we measure progress for that.
- Report to SENCos and early years providers, through development days, regarding high quality evidenced based interventions.
- Introduce a system for reviewing all commissioned specialist provision on an annual basis.

Because of what we do

- Parents/carers will be able to access more detail about who is involved with their child or young person's support and provision, and they will have access to information about what they do and how to contact them.
- Children, young people and parents/carers will know the date of their next annual review meeting, as this will be set a year in advance from the previous meeting.
- Data will be more accurate and better reflect the local area position so that more informed decision making is supported, and this leads to more targeted support and intervention.
- Data will be better protected and more accurate as areas of error will be minimised.
- Developments for specialist provision will be identified and good practice shared wider through practitioners.

Infrastructure 3: Local offer

Headline

Oldham's vision is to be a place where children and young people will thrive. The local offer is what is available in the local area for children and young people who have SEND, and their families. The local offer website is what we say about this and provides information on what is available in Oldham.

The local offer website has been produced by children, young people, parents/carers and practitioners working together.

What we will do

- Ensure that children, young people and parents/carers can access information in an understandable format so that they can make informed choices. This includes making sure that information is readily available in all formats, including paper based if this is requested.
- Explore the creation of multiple location public information facilities where parents/carers can collect information on what they need in a format that suits them, including accessing advice from professionals, at their own pace.
- Review statutory responsibilities in relation to the local offer and identify improvements.
- Ensure that the local offer website is SEND related and that all information is related to accessible, Oldham based support and provision.
- Explore the use of an App as another aspect of the local offer.
- Simplify the local offer website in terms of jargon so that the language used is consistent and accessible.
- Empower children, young people and parents/carers, to play a strategic role within the local SEND system, through the parent carer sessions and the annual cycle of SEND and inclusion events for families. Create inclusion groups within settings for children and young people to be a part of.

Because of what we do

- Children and young people will be given information about their rights and choices without having to ask for it or seek it out themselves.
- Children, young people and parents/carers will be confident that they are getting the most up to date and accurate information.
- Parents/carers new to SEND will benefit from jargon free information that will be more accessible.

Infrastructure 4: Sustainability

Headline

To make sure that we can keep improving for children and young people we need to have a grip on how we deliver SEND services for children and young people so that they can be protected and developed.

Sustainability will be achieved through understanding the local context and ensuring that resources are targeted based on that knowledge and what we know works well.

What we will do

- Participate in the Delivering Better Value programme in partnership with the DfE.
- Carry out a review and formal consultation, of the resource allocation system of funding related to EHCPs, across all age phases and education settings, both mainstream and special.
- Carry out a review and formal consultation of p16 SEND provision to identify how the range of pathways can be improved.
- Review and update the SEND Transport Policy.
- Create the opportunities for creative and transparent discussions with parents/carers about transport options, with a focus on promoting independence.
- Share good practice in decision-making and transport assessments, co-production of policies and guidance with parents/carers.
- Create a full and creative range of support options for travel to school.

Because of what we do

- The Delivering Better Value programme will support a more targeted budget, in relation to specific identified areas and this provides confidence that resources are being managed effectively.
- There will be confidence that the resource allocation system for EHCPs is fit for purpose, fair and delivers the best system for children and young people.
- Statutory processes will be managed effectively, and this will provide confidence in the system for all partners and stakeholders.
- P16 provision will be in line with statutory requirements, creating a more equitable system for children and young people.

Infrastructure 5: Workforce development

Headline

To ensure that children and young people benefit from the best support that enables them to reach their potential we need a workforce that is skilled, knowledgeable and progressive.

We want our partners to feel confident in their ability to deliver the best possible system. This means having access to the most effective continuing professional development opportunities that are accessible and fit in with the demands of daily work.

What we will do

- Work with regional partner local authorities to define the training offer across the region that promotes access to employment for children and young people.
- Review the training currently available in the borough and identify any gaps for development and create a suite of training available to in different formats.
- Link training and development to the findings through audits, emerging themes and actions plans.
- Establish an autism training steering group to lead on planning and implementation of autism training across the local area.
- Review all current training related to SEND and inclusion and plan an appropriate programme based on the findings.
- Develop and deliver a continuing professional development programme targeting whole school development for SEND and inclusion.
- Ensure the early years sector has access to a professional development programme for SEND and inclusion.
- Promote use of the Graduated Response Toolkit and develop this further.
- Develop and promote a comprehensive transition support pack that covers all key transitions.
- Develop more creative methods for continuing professional development, for example, webinars, podcasts and online courses.
- Build a development offer for professionals and practitioners and use as part of the induction programme to Oldham as well as a maintaining competency programme.

Because of what we do

- Children and young people benefit from better transition planning, ultimately leading to work-based activity, and this improves their outcomes in later life.
- Children and young people benefit from an upskilled workforce who have a better understanding of SEND, and their obligations under the SEND Code of Practice, and can apply this knowledge and understanding.
- Increased awareness and confidence of staff in identifying SEMH and related needs leads to better provision for children and young people.
- All children and young people are supported by a skilled workforce that identifies their needs at the earliest opportunity enabling appropriate support and plans to be put in place.

SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027: Annex A:
Sufficiency of specialist places to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND)

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Aims and ambitions
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5. Considerations
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January 2023

1. Introduction

Across the local area, there is a commitment to deliver high quality education for all children and young people, including those who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Our SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme underpins the strategy and clearly set out the local area's commitment to delivering high quality support and provision across all our schools and educational settings, enabling the best outcomes for every child and young person over six key priorities and five key enablers.

All children and young people are entitled to a mainstream education, and this is the best opportunity for most, including for those at SEN support and EHCP level. Where this is not right for those with the most complex needs, we have high quality special school places, and we want to ensure that there are sufficient places to continue to meet the needs of the local area into the future across all our mainstream and specialist provision.

We recognise that there are children and young people, who may need support beyond what mainstream provision can currently offer and we want to increase the options for this group. This will be done through the development of a greater range of education options in mainstream primary and secondary schools. In addition, further consideration will be undertaken regarding the development of provision in early years and post sixteen education as part of the longer-term strategy.

We also want to ensure the right level of provision from support services from education, health and social care is available for all children and young people, regardless of their education setting.

The sufficiency element of our strategy is monitored and developed through the Joint Commissioning & Sufficiency Partnership, which focuses on joint commissioning for sufficiency of specialist support and provision.

To explain how we are going to achieve our ambitions for the children and young people of Oldham, this annex forms part of the overall SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and focuses specifically on the SEND specialist place sufficiency aspect of the strategy.

2. Aims and ambitions

The overall SEND & Inclusion Strategy details all that we are aiming to achieve across the local area to get the best outcomes for children and young people. The sufficiency annex sets out further detail about how the local authority and partners will address the fundamental challenges being faced in meeting increasing demand for the range of specialist places we need to sustain for children and young people with SEND within the resources available. This will be done in collaboration with partners and stakeholders.

The sufficiency annex to the main SEND & Inclusion Strategy will be based upon the following objectives:

- Ensuring children and young people with SEND have access to the right type of school placement and provision which best meets their needs, and which is within their community. This includes those who have been categorised as having needs relating to social, emotional and mental health; autism and/or speech, language and communication needs.
- Embedding a partnership-based approach, to ensure the appropriate range and capacity of provision is available in local mainstream schools, academies, trusts and specialist settings to enable the needs of a greater number of children and young people to be met, as part of an inclusive culture. This builds upon our commitment expressed in the Education Improvement Strategy.
- Building a sustainable system that provides value for money and the most effective use of available resources, which continues to underpin the strategy and results in improved settings, environments and skill sets that get the best outcomes for children and young people.
- Ensuring that children, young people and their families are at the heart of planning support and provision.

In line with previous years developments, statutory partners continue to work closely to ensure, where possible, that children and young people with SEND do not have to travel out of the borough to have their educational needs met through early identification and support. Work in this area has been undertaken in parallel with improvements to the quality and efficiency of education, health and care plan processes. This is to enable children and young people who require ongoing specialist support to be placed in the best possible provision and have their needs met through a stable and enriching school life.

The strategy further sets out its objectives to continue to address pressures within the SEND system, placing a renewed focus on developing capacity locally through re-setting the balance in favour of borough based resource and satellite provision which is closer to children and young people's home and community, and which prevents the need for significantly more costly, independent provision outside of the borough.

Improving personalisation, through things such as personal budgets, alternative provision and education other than at school is also a key priority to create a system which promotes independence, confidence and aspirations and enables children and young people to make a successful transition to adulthood. Annex B of the SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027 will focus on these aspects.

3. Rationale and evidence of demand

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of children and young people who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) resultant in the current figures shown in table 1.

SEND for school aged children and young people *(excludes early years and post 16)*					
Phase	**Total**	**Special place**	**SEN Support**	**EHCP**	**Total SEN**
Primary	26400	22365	3449	586	4035
Secondary	17985	15724	1889	372	2261
Special	1183	0	18	1165	1183
PRU	37	0	37	0	37
Total	**45605**	**38089**	**5393**	**2123**	**7516**

***Table 1**: School census January 2022*

Numbers continue to show that Oldham has a higher number at the EHCP level and lower at the SEN support level than statistical neighbours and the national average.

	Oldham	**Stat' neighbours**	**National**
Nº of school age pupils	47169	530311	9000031
No of pupils with SEND	7662	89820	1485409
% Who have an EHCP	4.7%	3.9%	4.0%
% At SEN support level	11.5%	12.9%	12.6%
% Total who have SEND	16.2%	16.8%	16.6%

***Table 2:** EHCPs and SEN support comparisons. School census January 2022*

Latest national data, published in June 2022 by the DfE, shows that the most common type of need for children and young people who have an EHCP is autism and for those who are identified as requiring SEN support is speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). This is also reflected in Oldham and there has been an increase in those being diagnosed and/or presenting with autism, both nationally and in Oldham.

In Oldham, for children and young people with an EHCP, data shows us that, autism is the most common primary type of need, with **42%** of children and young people in Oldham schools and settings having this primary type of need. SLCN and SEMH are also significant with **17%** of the Oldham schools EHCP cohort having a primary need of SLCN and **12%** SEMH (Jan Census 2022).

Despite the identified number of children and young people in Oldham schools who have an EHCP with a primary need of SLCN, this may not account for the true level of need in this area. This is because many children and young people will have been categorised as having social, emotional and mental health (SEMH), needs at secondary school whilst at primary they may have been more likely to be identified as having SLCN. This indicates that when they move to secondary school, their SLCN has been under identified or mis-categorised.

Table three shows the latest forecast for Oldham children and young people who have an EHCP, or may need one in future, if we do not change how we do things.

	ASC	HI	MLD	PD	PMLD	SLD	SEMH	SpLD	SLCN	VI	MSI	Other	Totals
2015	371	41	123	82	54	109	153	23	170	17	0	7	1150
2016	411	45	134	90	55	119	167	28	183	20	0	14	1266
2017	498	53	152	98	60	135	191	44	228	24	0	7	1490
2018	592	62	192	118	71	141	239	47	268	29	0	9	1768
2019	668	68	224	125	72	146	283	51	311	30	1	69	2048
2020	770	72	249	136	76	123	321	79	339	32	3	50	2250
2021	803	67	240	143	80	111	340	89	382	32	3	23	2306
2022	914	75	260	150	93	116	405	96	513	39	4	35	2700
2023	1027	76	272	157	97	105	458	99	615	47	6	35	2994
2024	1130	84	299	173	107	116	504	109	677	52	7	39	3293
2025	1243	92	329	190	117	127	554	120	744	57	7	42	3623
2026	1367	101	362	209	129	140	610	132	819	63	8	47	3985
2027	1504	111	398	230	142	154	671	145	900	69	9	51	4384
2028	1654	122	438	253	156	169	738	159	990	76	10	56	4822
2029	1819	135	482	278	172	186	811	175	1090	83	11	62	5304
2030	2001	148	530	306	189	205	893	193	1198	92	12	68	5834

***Table 3**: projected numbers of EHCPs up to 2030, following the current trajectory (actuals at Jan census to 2022 (2023 TBC in spring 2023), forecasted from 2024 based on average 10% national increase).*

For all statutory school aged children and young people with an EHCP reviewed and maintained by Oldham LA, **55%** are educated in special schools (inc. INMSS and maintained special schools) The national average is **34%** and for metropolitan boroughs is **9.9%**. Table 4 shows what this means in numbers of children and young people.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Mainstream	589	648	782	868	932	982
Special	701	794	887	962	1003	1093

***Table 4**: special school places 2017 – 2022*

4. Pressure on high needs funding

INMSS monitoring provides up to child level data to understand the SEND needs required to both develop provision that children in INMSS settings could transition back and therefore provide appropriate local provision. This also enables us to forecast and understand the needs of the population to allow a focused approach to capacity development for specific identified needs, namely autism, SLCN and SEMH.

Tables five and six show an overview of the use of INMSS placements highlighting a reduction on the dependence on the use of these schools due to developments to date.

Financial year	INMSS placements: out of borough	Total costs
2019/2020	94	£3,952,846.00
2020/2021	77	£4,282,601.00
2021/2022	67	£3,973,022.00
2022/2023	62	£3,609,940.00
Costs are based on full academic year costs. Latest information as of 21 October 2022.		

***Table 5**: INMSS placements outside of Oldham.*

Financial year	INMSS placements: in borough	Total costs
2019/2020	50	£802,440.00
2020/2021	46	£1,189,946.00
2021/2022	30	£935,443.00
2022/2023	24	£890,382.00
Costs are based on full academic year costs. Latest information as of 21 October 2022.		

***Table 6**: INMSS placements in the private sector located in Oldham.*

Previous reports have demonstrated that the continual long-term dependence on out of borough and independent non-maintained special schools (INMSS) is not favourable as a long-term sustainable option when viewed against steadily rising increase in needs for these cohorts of children and young people.

The INMSS data full year forecast figures for 2022/23 indicate that 30 children and young people were/are placed in INMSS settings with a primary need of autism at a cost of £1,478,153.40. This is on average £49,000 per place.

The INMSS data full year forecast figures for 2022/23 indicate that 32 children and young people were/are placed in INMSS settings with a primary need of SEMH at a cost of £1,394,534.50. This is on average £44,000 per place.

Primary need	INMSS number	Cost
Autism/SLCN	30	1, 478,153.40
SEMH	32	1, 394,534.50
Other	24	1, 627,634.10

***Table 7**: Costs of INMSS related to specific areas of need.*

Whilst numbers in INMSS continue to reduce, through our concerted efforts, the cost of INMSS rises due to increases in prices in the independent sector, which the LA has no control over. We would like to see more of this funding remaining in Oldham schools and education settings. Our strategy, therefore, is to work towards ensuring more of our resources stay within Oldham education settings.

5. Considerations

The continuing work on SEND sufficiency has clearly identified a gap in educational provision for children and young people with autism/SLCN and/or SLD/SEMH, whose needs are not currently being met in mainstream schools, resourced provision or local special schools. This often results in children and young people being placed in independent non-maintained special school (INMSS) provision out of borough, or in-borough independent settings.

Oldham does have an autism specific special school; however, this is targeted at children and young people who can follow a GCSE pathway and curriculum. There is currently a gap in specialist provision for children and young people who have the following needs:

- Communication and interaction (autism/SLCN) combined with moderate to severe learning difficulties.
- SEMH and combined severe learning difficulties.

There are currently only three established resource provisions in Oldham, providing **36** places in total. This 'mainstream plus' provision needs to grow to enable children and young people to be educated in the borough that they reside and ensure access to the right provision.

Whilst much of the capacity development is providing short and medium term cost avoidance, to ensure resources stay within the borough, the growing need for capacity of in-borough provision set against the rise in EHCP's requires a multi-faceted approach. Utilising early identification and support, graduated response as well as the development of in-borough provision with our maintained and academy partners must be a key part of this.

Demand for EHCPs and specialist places continues to rise and the council's ability to create more places locally within acceptable timescales is compromised. In addition, the complexity of some children and young people's needs, combined with the lack of mainstream specialist places, has meant that the council has been required to make greater use of INMSS to deliver provision.

There is potential to impact on the use of INMSS places currently however this would require several dependencies not least parental consent, appropriate key phase transitions of children in a particular year group.

There is a real concern on the long-term ability to impact on the use of INMSS places without having the ability to develop provision within the local area at the pace and scale needed to affect this. However, Oldham remains a partner within the Northwest Framework to secure specialist placements if required.

Further issues include:

- The unknown cohort of 'in-year' identification of children and young people who have SEND add to additional EHCP number, and these prove difficult to forecast, e.g. families moving into the area, other local authorities placing in Oldham schools, etc.
- Developing the market to encourage more school settings and trusts to develop and/or expand provision in the borough in the short and medium term.
- Development of forecast data for post 16 and review of statutory post 16 ESFA requirements that impact on the rising demand for placements up to the age of 25.
- The success of all identified projects with various approvals required from, capital, planning, providers and the possible impact of BSF/PFI initiatives.

6. SEND sufficiency projects 2023-2027

Progress has already been made on sufficiency projects including Medlock Valley (6 places) and Newman R C (6 places, PILOT only) plus Kingsland School scheduled for January 2023 (12 places). This will provide a further 24 places for the 22/23 academic year and a further 12 the following year.

In addition, an expression of interest went out in the Spring Term 2022 to all schools and settings, requesting they express an interest should they wish to provide resource or satellite provision.

From this initial expression of interest, **17** primary schools, **2** secondary schools and **1** FE provider have requested to be considered for mainstream plus provision. Due to the demand for mainstream plus places in secondary a further secondary mainstream plus provision will be needed in phase 1.

A further 6 mainstream plus provisions will open prior to 2025, giving an additional 108 places in total (36 in 2023, 2024 and 2025).

Development discussions have continued as part of the SEND sufficiency strategy work, assessing the available data to target provision against the needs of children and young people.

This highlights further the need for increased provision related to communication and interaction needs (autism and speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)) as well as SEMH needs.

Discussions continue with education providers to support the LA in its aims of the send sufficiency plan and its drive to significantly reduce the impact on the high needs budget by ensuring children and young people remain in local provision with a reduction in the use of INMSS.

Resource provision	Primary need	Total cost per place*	Year				
			22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	Total
Kingsland School	Autism/SEMH	£19,869	12	0	0	0	**12**
Medlock Valley	Autism/SEMH	£15,127	6	6	6	0	**18**
Secondary 1	Autism/SEMH	£19,869	6	6	6	0	**18**
Secondary 2	Autism/SEMH	£19,869	0	6	6	6	**18**
Secondary 3	Autism/SEMH	£19,869	0	6	6	6	**18**
Secondary 4	Autism/SEMH	£19,869	0	6	6	6	**18**
Primary 1	Autism/SLD	£15,127	0	6	6	6	**18**
Primary 2	Autism, SLD	£15,127	0	6	6	6	**18**
FE 1	Autism, SEMH	£19,869	0	6	6	6	**18**
**Subject to review of resource allocation system.*			**24**	**48**	**48**	**36**	**156**

***Table 8**: Planned creation of resource provision/mainstream plus provision.*

7. High needs provision capital allocations 2021 – 2024

Those SEND projects requiring capital investment have and are being supported through the Special Provision Capital and the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation Grants.

The current sufficiency plan and model is based on developments in the short and medium term with mainstream plus provision developments, but with the recent allocation of additional funding through the High Needs Capital Allocation Grant this could allow for additional capacity to meet the needs sooner.

Oldham have been awarded further funding for 2022-23 and 2023-24, from the DfE's high needs provision capital allocation grant. This creates a cumulative total of 6.0m (from the original 0.8m allocated in 2021-22).

High Needs Provision Capital Allocations 2021-24 *(published March 2022)*			
Updated HNPCA 2021-22	**Updated HNPCA 2022-23**	**Additional HNPCA 2023-24**	**Total HNPCA 2021-24**
£830,009	£2,189,364	£3,012,464	**£6,031,837**

***Table 9**: HNPCA 2021 - 2024*

This funding is to support the development of additional capacity and enhancing school/setting environments to support children/young people with SEND. This is great news for Oldham as it will enable more sufficiency projects to proceed, thereby enhancing the specialist places available within the borough. This will be managed through the Education Provision Team, which reports into the Education Provision Group (EPG).

The potential capacity expansion programme based on the forecast data for children and young people with EHCP's, as well as recognition of those currently in INMSS and their respective year groups would look to provide the additional capacity we need.

8. Collaborative approach

The continuing development discussions with schools regarding additional capacity at mainstream school sites has the potential to align itself to a positive inclusive model. This supports the aims of providing local education places for children and young people with SEND in Oldham and may be more practical in effectively supporting the educational needs and demands of all children in Oldham long term, and successfully impacting, to the extent needed, to reduce the high needs block in the long term that will be sustainable.

Most children and young people should be able to access the support they need to thrive in their local mainstream setting, without the need for an EHCP. To ensure we can achieve this, we need to create a financially sustainable system that provides value and ensures the best outcomes for children and young people.

Previously, we have considered the increase of special school places, however national developments and drivers have caused pause for thought. The Education Act 2011 changed the arrangements for establishing new schools and introduced section 6A, which is known as the academy or free school presumption which, without central government funding, would require the LA to provide the capital to fund any development. In addition, government plans can lead to significant aspects of changes of the education landscape potentially having a significant impact on local authorities, that is not yet known.

Monitoring of the use of INMSS placements and the tracking of year groups as part of the ongoing dedicated schools grant sustainability improvement programme, provides information that supports the development of in borough provision. This will allow us to review the use of INMSS whilst also monitoring the local increases identified in the data around needs and EHCP's. Also of note is that Oldham are part of the SEND North West Framework, used to identify possible placements within an agreed funding range. This is something we need to drive forward.

An additional benefit to our improvements will be enabling children and young people to participate in activities that build self-esteem and independence skills such as those delivered through the Short Breaks Play and Leisure offer.

In summary

The priorities we have identified as part of the overall SEND & Inclusion Strategy are intended to further reduce the need for INMSS because of strengthening the range of provision with the borough. This will enable more of the high needs block to remain within the borough, and it will reduce the social costs for children, young people and families.

To address sufficiency in the best way to meet the needs of children and young people in Oldham, we are proposing to establish sufficiency of specialist places by working in partnership with schools/settings and trusts to develop specialist provision within mainstream schools.

Our commitment is that children and young people have their needs identified promptly, with appropriate support and provision put in place within Oldham at the earliest opportunity and at the level they need it.

9. SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2027

What we will do

- Develop a range of 'mainstream plus' options to support children and young people who require provision than is expected to remain in mainstream schools.
- Develop an evidence-informed and collaborative approach to planning places in all types of specialist SEND provision so that there is a transparent plan for how local provision can meet local needs.
- Work with partners to develop more structure and consistency for considering bespoke placements for children and young people with the most complex needs.
- Develop a joined-up network of SEND and inclusion practice across the borough, which is supported by Oldham's early years specialist support services, special schools, mainstream plus practitioners and centrally based specialist services.
- Work with education settings to ensure the best use of the high needs capital funding to improve and enhance the environment to support children and young people with SEND.
- Ensure that there are enough specialist placements to meet the needs of the local population within Oldham and map this out for the period of this strategy and into the future, in consideration of forecast needs.
- Explore what can be done to offer parent/carer support in education settings in partnership with SENCos and services.
- Ensure that there are sufficient options available for young people when they leave school, including apprenticeships, sixth form, work-based opportunities and further education.
- Promote and expand the inclusive offer in Oldham, so that more young people have access to employment pathways that meet their needs including, through; work placements, work experience, traineeships, supported Internships and apprenticeships.
- Review health provision to ensure the right level of health provision is commissioned to meet the needs of the local area.
- Review and develop our commissioning agreements between the local authority and the integrated care system so that key health services have good transition plans between children's and adults' services.

Because of what we do

- More children and young people will have their needs met in mainstream provision and will access the opportunities this provides so that they are able to make a positive contribution and play an active role in their community.
- Children and young people will benefit from the right support, when they need it, so they can continue to learn new skills and knowledge along with their peers.
- Capacity will be built in education settings across all age phases.
- Children and young people with SEND will have, and make use of, the same opportunities as everyone else because there is an expectation that they will get the right support and encouragement.
- Young people will have more options for post 16 pathways available in their community so that they enjoy a sense of achievement as they continue to build skills, leading to future employment.

SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027: Annex B:
Sufficiency of alternative provision to meet the needs of children and young people who need an alternative approach to access education

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12. Rationale and evidence of demand
13. Considerations
14. SEND and alternative provision sufficiency projects 2023-2027
15. Collaborative approach
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1. Introduction

Across the local area, there is a commitment to deliver high quality education for all children and young people, including those who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Our SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme underpins the strategy and clearly set out the local area's commitment to delivering high quality support and provision across all our schools and educational settings, enabling the best outcomes for every child and young person over six key priorities and five key enablers.

Alternative provision (AP) is defined by the Department for Education (DfE) as: Education arranged by local authorities for children and young people who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for those on a fixed period exclusion; and those being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.

Depending on the reason a child or young person requires AP, placements can be commissioned by the local authority or directly by schools. It is up to whoever is commissioning the support to determine the most appropriate AP provider. In every case, partnership working with parents/carers is crucial and it is expected that consideration of the views of the child, young person, their parents/carers and other professionals.

Types of AP providers include AP academies, AP free schools, pupil referral units (PRUs), hospital schools, independent providers, further education colleges, and voluntary sector providers. In Oldham, we have a range of this provision and have carried out a review of the sufficiency of places currently available and what we may need in the future.

All children and young people are entitled to a mainstream education, and this is the best opportunity for most, including for those who are vulnerable and who may require an alternative approach. Where this is not right for those with the most complex needs, we have good provision in our pupil referral unit (PRU), and we want to ensure that there are sufficient places to continue to meet the needs of all our children and young people into the future across all our mainstream and alternative provision.

We recognise that there are children and young people, who are at risk of disengagement and may need support beyond what mainstream provision can currently offer and we want to increase the options for this group, in line with the DfE SEND & AP Plan to create targeted in school, transitional/time limited and longer-term AP. This will be done through the development of a greater range of alternative provision options in mainstream primary and secondary schools. In addition, further consideration will be undertaken regarding the development of provision in post sixteen education as part of the longer-term strategy.

We also want to ensure the right level of provision from support services from education, health and social care is available for all children and young people, regardless of their education setting.

The alternative provision element of our strategy is monitored and developed through the Joint Commissioning & Sufficiency Partnership, which focuses on joint commissioning for sufficiency of specialist support and provision as a continuum of need across SEND and vulnerable groups.

To explain how we are going to achieve our ambitions for the children and young people of Oldham, this annex forms part of the overall SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and focuses specifically on the sufficiency of alternative provision as part of the overall strategy.

2. Aims and ambitions

The overall SEND & Inclusion Strategy details all that we are aiming to achieve across the local area to get the best outcomes for children and young people. The AP sufficiency annex sets out further detail about how the local authority and partners will address the fundamental challenges being faced in meeting the need for CYP, particularly those with SEMH in accessing alternative provision AP. This will be done in collaboration with partners and stakeholders.

The AP sufficiency annex to the main SEND & Inclusion Strategy will be based upon the following objectives:

- Ensuring children and young people with SEND and specifically SEMH have access to the right type of alternative school provision and support, for the most appropriate period and which is based on sound and consistent principles of early identification, where provision is matched to needs.
- Embedding a partnership-based approach, to ensure the appropriate range and capacity of alternative provision is available and widely understood, ensuring that children, young people and their families are at the heart of planning support and provision.
- Building a sustainable system that provides value for money and the most effective use of available resources, resulting in improved settings, environments, skill sets and outcomes for children and young people, through workforce development, targeted support and improved systems for identification of need.
- Embedding a partnership-based approach to the quality assurance of alternative provision in line with an evidenced based approach (AP-Quality-Benchmark-Toolkit-Summary (integrated.org.uk)) and in a manner which promotes sharing of good practice.

In line with Oldham principles of coproduction, statutory partners and stakeholders continue to work closely to ensure that children and young people can access appropriate alternative provision, as required, from a coordinated range of offers, building on existing provision and resources.

The aspiration of the AP strategy is to strengthen and improve a system of provision which has a greater focus on personalisation of educational opportunity and curriculum, which is purposeful in promoting independence, confidence and aspirations, raising skills and enabling children and young people to make a successful transition to adulthood.

Work in this area has been undertaken in parallel with improvements to the quality and efficiency of education, health and care plan processes and wider sufficient strategy and is consistent with the wider strategy in its overriding objectives to address pressures by placing a renewed focus on developing capacity locally.

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3. Rationale and evidence of demand

In recent years, and since the Covid 19 pandemic, there has been a significant increase in demand for AP.

Schools and Settings commission their own AP for all non EHCP pupils and a Collaborative Provision Register has been implemented as part of the Oldham Pledge: https://www.theoldhampledge.co.uk/

All schools and settings submit returns to the local authority for any children or young people on a reduced timetable and these are discussed at Team Manager level with schools and on the strategic monthly dashboard.

Phase	2020/2021			2021/2022			2022/2023		
	Total	Total EHCP	Total SEN Support	Total	Total EHCP	Total SEN Support	Total	Total EHCP	Total SEN Support
Primary	20	15	3	78	27	37	42	17	24
Secondary	69	7	26	317	18	79	282	35	99
Special	12	12	0	14	14	0	11	11	0
PRU				12		12	13		13
Total	101	34	29	421	59	128	348	63	136
Numbers of CYP on reduced timetables (3-year period)									

***Table 1**: Reduced Timetable returns 2020 - 2023*

The LA commission alternative provision for all those with an EHCP, those who have been permanently excluded from school and those that are unable to attend school for medical reasons.

Kingsland School is the LA commissioned PRU and provider of alternative provision, providing 70 places for children and young people that have been permanently excluded, 30 places for pupils that are unable to school due to medical reasons and 12 places for children and young people with an EHCP that have a primary need of emotional or mental health difficulties.

Work is underway for a second site for Kingsland to provide a step out provision for 30 pupils at risk of exclusion.

Oldham LA exclusion statistics are below. Permanent exclusions have increased over a 3-year period whilst suspensions have decreased year on year from 2021 – 2023. Schools and settings are using a small number of Alternative Providers currently to reduce suspensions.

	Suspensions	% Difference	PEX	% Difference
2020/2021	1523		39	
2021/2022	2655	74%	45	15%
2022/2023	2478	-7%	62	38%

***Table 2:** PEX and Suspensions data 2020 – 2023*

Demand for AP and EOTAS for pupils with EHCPs has also increased in recent years and has significantly risen over the last 12 months, due to pupils with EBSA after the pandemic and the local authority SEND & Inclusion Strategy, ensuring Oldham children and young people are educated wherever possible in the borough that they reside.

Table 3 shows demand for AP and EOTAS. Please note the decrease in demand for high cost out of borough placements and high cost in borough independent placements as Oldham LA commissions more AP and more bespoke provision is created in the borough to meet the needs of our children and young people.

	CYP with EHCP on AP (cumulative)	EOTAS (number named in provision in EHCP	Number of INMSS (out of borough)	Number of INMSS (in borough)
2020/2021	39	5	70	49
2021/2022	31	6	61	47
2022/2023	47	12	59	29

Table 3: *demand for AP and EOTAS 2020 – 2023*

For context regarding PRU provision, the PAN for Broadbent Rd (PRU) is 70. This was increased from 40 in 2020/21 due to demand. The PAN for the Specialist Learning Centre (SLC) is 30. Permanent exclusion (PEX) numbers dropped during the pandemic, likely due to children and young people not being in school. All accessing both sites have been registered at the SEN support level (K code) with most going on to have EHCPs issued. This indicates how crucial it is to review and plan for AP in the wider context of SEND and inclusion.

Provision	Year	Total
PRU	2022/23	81
SLC	2022/23	47
PRU	2021/22	66
SLC	2021/22	30
PRU	2020/21	78
SLC	2020/21	24
PRU	2019/20	116
SLC	2019/20	31
Referrals		
Referrals to SLC	2022/23	81
Referrals to SLC	2021/22	70

Table 4: *number of pupils who accessed PRU and SLC by 16/06 every academic year*

4. Considerations

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility for arranging suitable full-time education for children and young people permanently excluded from school, and for others who would not receive suitable education without such provision. This applies to all children of compulsory school age living in the local authority area, regardless of whether they are on a school roll, and what type of school they attend. The provision of full-time education for excluded children and young people must begin no later than the sixth day of the exclusion.

There is no statutory requirement for how soon full-time education should begin for children and young people placed in AP for reasons other than exclusion. However, the guidance states that local authorities should ensure that they are placed as quickly as possible. In addition, although good AP will differ depending on the circumstances of the child or young person, there are common elements that AP should aim to achieve, according to the DfE, including:

- Good academic attainment on par with mainstream schools, particularly in English, mathematics and science (including IT), and with appropriate accreditation and qualifications.
- That the specific personal, social and academic needs of children and young people are properly identified and met to help them to overcome any barriers to attainment.
- Improved motivation and self-confidence, attendance and engagement with education.
- Clearly defined objectives, including the next steps following the placement such as reintegration into mainstream education, or successful transition to further education, training or employment.

To ensure resources support children and young people to access education within the borough, the growing need for capacity of provision set against the demand requires a multi-faceted approach. Utilising early identification and support, graduated response as well as the development of in-borough provision with our maintained and academy partners must be a key part of this. Whilst much of the capacity for providing sufficiency of AP is providing short and medium term support, a more joined up longer term approach is crucial, including for cost avoidance.

To ensure this can be achieved, there will be a focus on:

- How the system can provide the highest quality support that enables children and young people who are vulnerable to thrive and prepare for adulthood, including employment.
- Supporting parents/carers to make decisions about what kind of support will be best for their child.
- Making sure support across the borough is consistent, joined up across health, care and education services, and that high-quality support is available.
- Striking the balance of local authority provision and inclusive mainstream provision.
- Aligning incentives for inclusion and accountability for schools, and the local authority to make sure the best possible support for children and young people is provided.
- Working collaboratively with school to understand what is driving demand for AP.
- Ensuring that public money is spent in an efficient, effective and sustainable manner.

5. Alternative provision sufficiency projects 2023-2027

An expression of interest went out in the Spring Term 2022 to all schools and settings, requesting they express an interest should they wish to provide resource or satellite provision, including for creating AP.

From this initial expression of interest, **17** primary schools, **2** secondary schools and **1** FE provider have requested to be considered for mainstream plus provision. During conversations with schools to progress projects, some are now being considered for AP, in conjunction with the PRU.

Discussions continue with education providers to support the LA in its aims of the send sufficiency plan and its drive to significantly reduce the impact on the high needs budget by ensuring children and young people can be supported by their own school, with access to high quality AP when required.

Projects requiring capital investment have and are being supported through the Special Provision Capital and the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation Grants.

The current sufficiency plan and model is based on developments in the short and medium term with alternative provision developments, but with the recent allocation of additional funding through the High Needs Capital Allocation Grant this could allow for additional capacity to meet the needs sooner.

Oldham have been awarded further funding for 2022-23 and 2023-24, from the DfE's high needs provision capital allocation grant. This creates a cumulative total of 6.0m (from the original 0.8m allocated in 2021-22).

High Needs Provision Capital Allocations 2021-24 *(published March 2022)*			
Updated HNPCA 2021-22	**Updated HNPCA 2022-23**	**Additional HNPCA 2023-24**	**Total HNPCA 2021-24**
£830,009	£2,189,364	£3,012,464	**£6,031,837**

***Table 9**: HNPCA 2021 - 2024*

This funding is to support the development of additional capacity and enhancing school/setting environments to support children/young people with SEND and who require alternative provision. This is great news for Oldham as it will enable more sufficiency projects to proceed, thereby enhancing the specialist places available within the borough. This will be managed through the Education Provision Team, which reports into the Education Provision Group (EPG).

The potential capacity expansion programme based on the forecast data for children and young people who require alternative provision would look to provide the additional capacity we need.

6. Collaborative approach

The continuing development discussions with schools regarding additional capacity at mainstream school sites has the potential to align itself to a positive inclusive model. This supports the aims of providing local education places for children and young people with SEND in Oldham and may be more practical in effectively supporting the educational needs and demands of all children in Oldham long term, and successfully impacting, to the extent needed, to reduce the high needs block in the long term that will be sustainable.

Most children and young people should be able to access the support they need to thrive in their local mainstream setting, without the need for alternative provision. To ensure we can achieve this, we need to create a financially sustainable system that provides value and ensures the best outcomes for children and young people.

In Oldham we are committed to joining up the system so that a wider range of AP will be on offer, and this will be child and young person centred. Options being considered for development include part time or short term evidence based academic, vocational, therapeutic and personal development programs to support those within a mainstream setting who are at risk of permanent exclusion. The programme will be developed to provide a needs-fulfilment model; through which, high quality initial assessments will determine the right package for each child or young person. This will be done in collaboration with the PRU as a lead partner.

A clear referral process between mainstream schools and AP, and a rigorous entry and exit criteria will be developed, aligned with a revise fair access process. Consideration will also be given to other areas that can create vulnerabilities including in year moves (through normal admissions procedures) and formal managed moves.

Capacity within any newly commissioned AP will need to be flexible to accommodate differences in placement length and style; with some placements being full time, e.g. for in-year admission in Y11, part time, short term (sessional) and one-off.

In summary

The priorities we have identified as part of the overall SEND & Inclusion Strategy are intended to further reduce the need for AP through strengthening the range of provision within the borough and within schools. This will enable more of the high needs block to remain within the borough, and it will reduce the social costs to children, young people and families related to difficulties in accessing education.

To address sufficiency in the best way to meet the needs of children and young people in Oldham, we work in partnership with schools/settings and trusts to develop specialist provision within mainstream schools.

Our commitment is that children and young people have their needs identified promptly, with appropriate support and provision put in place within Oldham at the earliest opportunity and at the level they need it.

7. SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2027

What we will do

- Develop a range of 'mainstream plus' options to support children and young people who require provision than is expected to remain in mainstream schools.
- Develop an evidence-informed and collaborative approach to planning places in all types of specialist SEND provision so that there is a transparent plan for how local provision can meet local needs.
- Work with partners to develop more structure and consistency for considering bespoke placements for children and young people with the most complex needs.
- Develop a joined-up network of SEND and inclusion practice across the borough, which is supported by Oldham's early years specialist support services, special schools, mainstream plus practitioners and centrally based specialist services.
- Work with education settings to ensure the best use of the high needs capital funding to improve and enhance the environment to support children and young people with SEND.
- Ensure that there are enough specialist placements to meet the needs of the local population within Oldham and map this out for the period of this strategy and into the future, in consideration of forecast needs.
- Explore what can be done to offer parent/carer support in education settings in partnership with SENCos and services.
- Ensure that there are sufficient options available for young people when they leave school, including apprenticeships, sixth form, work-based opportunities and further education.
- Promote and expand the inclusive offer in Oldham, so that more young people have access to employment pathways that meet their needs including, through; work placements, work experience, traineeships, supported Internships and apprenticeships.
- Review health provision to ensure the right level of health provision is commissioned to meet the needs of the local area.
- Review and develop our commissioning agreements between the local authority and the integrated care system so that key health services have good transition plans between children's and adults' services.

Because of what we do

- More children and young people will have their needs met in mainstream provision and will access the opportunities this provides so that they are able to make a positive contribution and play an active role in their community.
- Children and young people will benefit from the right support, when they need it, so they can continue to learn new skills and knowledge along with their peers.
- Capacity will be built in education settings across all age phases.
- Children and young people with SEND will have, and make use of, the same opportunities as everyone else because there is an expectation that they will get the right support and encouragement.
- Young people will have more options for post 16 pathways available in their community so that they enjoy a sense of achievement as they continue to build skills, leading to future employment.

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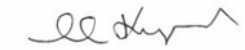
Oldham SEND Reform Plan June 2026

Name of Local Authority: Oldham Council

Name of Integrated Care Board: NHS Greater Manchester ICB

Local SEND Reform Plan SRO: Paul Tinsley, Director of Education and Early Years

Signatories

Role	Name	Signature	Email contact	Date
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Executive Summary

Oldham's Local SEND Reform Plan sets out our shared ambition to deliver a fair, sustainable and inclusive system for children and young people aged 0–25 that identifies and supports need early, equips partners to respond effectively, and secures better outcomes. It reflects both our collective aspiration and our readiness to build on Oldham's SEND transformation and improvement journey, strengthened further by the support of our Greater Manchester Combined Authority and NHS Greater Manchester partners.

Greater Manchester ICB partners across education, health and care are committed to a consistent, collaborative approach to delivering SEND reform across all ten localities through a joined-up, sustainable system with strong governance, commissioning and delivery mechanisms to maximise shared resources, reduce duplication, and improve outcomes and experiences for children, young people, and families.

Since the 2023 Area SEND inspection, Oldham's local area partnership has undertaken sustained, system wide improvement. External validation of this includes a monitoring visit by Ofsted and CQC in November 2025, recognising that leadership across education, health and care is now aligned, visible and accountable. We have been well supported by DfE officers and are delighted with the lifting of our Partnership Improvement Notice on 15 April 2026.

As a Partnership, we take joint responsibility and accountability for our journey of transformation. We continue to see improvement in key priority areas such as coproduction with parents/carers, children and young people, access to health services and developing inclusive practice in our schools. We are strengthening transitions support and have been delivering an ambitious programme of more local inclusion hubs. Through our Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision, Local Inclusion Support Offer and strengthening of early SaLT support, including greater access to specialist expertise to support practitioners in real time, we are building a system that identifies need earlier and strengthens the capacity of mainstream settings to respond effectively.

This will reduce escalation to more complex needs and minimise the need for expensive independent specialist provision. Feedback from our families shows increasing confidence that the system is moving in the right direction. Over the next three years, our improvement journey will transition into a clearly defined operating model where inclusive practice, early intervention and integrated support are consistently delivered across all settings.

The partnership has a clear, coherent and evidence-based SEND & Inclusion Strategy, supported by a Partnership Maturity Assessment and Priority Action Plan that is aligned to wider reforms including Best Start in Life, neighbourhood working and Families First Partnership. Through our Family Hubs and Best Start in Life Programme we will further enhance access to early support as part of our Experts at Hand model, where specialist expertise is available to practitioners, families and settings in real time through locality-based, integrated support.

This includes earlier and more consistent access to specialist advice and intervention, such as speech and language therapy, educational psychology, SEND advisory support and health practitioners, through locality-based, integrated delivery models. By bringing expertise closer to children, families and settings, we will strengthen the capacity of mainstream provision to identify, understand and respond to need at the earliest point. We are moving from a system where support is accessed through thresholds to one where need is identified early and expertise is available as part of everyday practice across mainstream settings.

We know there is more to do. We understand that SEND reform is not a destination, rather a journey of continuous improvement. We are well able to sustain improvement through a strong and effective partnership and governance framework. Previously supported by Dame Christine Lenehan, this oversight will continue under the independent chairing from the CEO of POINT Oldham of our Local Inclusion Partnership Executive Board.

This approach is underpinned by four core reform building blocks; strengthening inclusion across education settings, access to specialist and targeted support, system leadership, partnership and co-production and encouraging inclusive culture and behaviour. This is supported by key enablers including capital investment, workforce culture, programme management capacity, data and digital systems, communication and engagement, joint commissioning and quality assurance.

Progress will be demonstrated through quality assurance activity and headline measures including increased inclusion in mainstream settings, reduced reliance on independent specialist provision, and improved timeliness and access to support across education, health and care.

Our plan:

- Builds on existing improvement activity
- Focuses on early intervention and inclusive mainstream practice

- Addresses workforce and system capacity across education, health, and care, including commissioning, service pathways, and consistency of practice

Through this strong partnership approach, we expect to realise our vision and ambition; **A fair, sustainable and inclusive system that identifies and supports needs early, equips partners and leads to better outcomes for our children and young people.**

Section 1 – Vision and Goals

1. What the local area partnership is trying to achieve?

Oldham's local area partnership is committed to delivering **a fair, sustainable and inclusive system that identifies and supports needs early, equips partners and leads to better outcomes for our children and young people**. Families have confidence in support, and resources are used effectively to secure value for money. Our vision is grounded in a clear principle: support should be needs-led, accessed early and delivered through an integrated system, rather than driven by diagnosis or service boundaries. This means shifting from fragmented and reactive practice to a predictable, inclusive system where needs are identified and met earlier, within local mainstream provision wherever possible.

In practice, this will mean:

- A consistent universal and targeted offer across all settings
- Timely access to multi-disciplinary support, including Experts at Hand
- A more joined-up health, education and care system, with clear pathways and co-ordinated triage
- Specialist provision that is purposeful, supporting complexity while strengthening inclusion
- A system that is transparent and co-produced, with families and young people influencing decisions

Our measurable goals over the next three years:

- Improve outcomes: increase attendance and reduce suspensions and exclusions to better than national averages
- Reduce escalation: reduce refusal to assess by 10–30%, with more needs met at SEN Support
- Increase confidence: improve parent/carer confidence to ≥95% and reduce mediation and tribunal rates by 10–30%
- Improve performance: achieve ≥90% EHCP timeliness and ≥70% annual reviews
- Ensure sustainability: reduce independent placements by 10–30% and stabilise High Needs pressures

Progress against these goals will be tracked through a small number of clearly defined success measures, aligned to demand, inclusion, system performance and experience, providing a transparent performance framework for monitoring impact and ensuring that reform leads to demonstrable improvements in outcomes for children and young people.

Section 2 – Strategy

2. Where the local area partnership expects to be in the next 3 years

Strengthening inclusion across education settings– organising places and provision to meet as many needs as possible, as close to home as possible, with all settings and providers moving towards a shared understanding and consistent practices around inclusion.

System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production – putting in place the enabling conditions across a local area that ensures planning and provision reflects the local area & is joined up, including strategic co-production with parent carers and children and young people.

Access to specialist support and local placements – improving collaboration between settings and deploying expertise from a range of specialist and expert sources, to support schools and settings to meet the needs of children and young people earlier and locally.

Encouraging inclusive culture & behaviours – using funding and shared accountability towards a system that works for children and families while achieving value for money.

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are in Oldham	Where we will be in the next 3 years
Our building blocks in Oldham **Strengthening inclusion across education settings** A strong and consistent universal offer across early years, schools and post-16 settings, with shared expectations for inclusive practice. Early identification and timely intervention are embedded in everyday practice, enabling needs to be recognised and addressed before escalation. Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision (OAIP) is clearly defined, well understood and increasingly embedded across early years, schools and post-16 settings. Mainstream settings demonstrate increased confidence and capability to meet a wider range of needs, supported by clear pathways and accessible expertise Inclusion bases, SEND units and satellite provision are established across mainstream schools, supported by focused and targeted capital investment to build local capacity and reduce reliance on specialist placements. **Access to specialist and targeted support** **Experts at Hand Model– see Appendix 1.** A clearly defined Experts at Hand (EaH) offer embeds specialist expertise within mainstream provision, supporting earlier intervention, reducing reliance on statutory processes, and building consistent confidence and capability across early years, schools and colleges. Reduced reliance on EHCPs as the primary gateway to support is achieved through earlier, need-led intervention and stronger non-statutory routes. More children and young people (CYP) are supported locally, with needs met closer to home wherever possible.	We have established strong foundations for strengthening inclusion across education settings, informed by ongoing self-evaluation, partner feedback and external oversight. A well-embedded OAIP framework, a clear Early Help offer, strong attendance across primary and secondary phases, strong timeliness of EHCPs, and constructive relationships with schools and multi-academy trusts provide a stable and credible platform for continued improvement. External monitoring in November 2025 recognised the strength of the local area partnership, particularly the clarity of strategic direction, shared leadership and growing momentum behind the SEND improvement agenda. Our SEND and Inclusion Strategy provide a robust framework through which partners agree on shared priorities and deliver reform as a connected local system. It brings together need, resources, provision and outcomes, enabling consistent decision-making and clearer accountability. The phased development of inclusion bases, SEND units and satellite provision is progressing at pace, supported by targeted capital investment and strengthened joint working across education and health. These developments are increasing local capacity, keeping CYP educated closer to home, and providing practical models of inclusive practice within mainstream settings. Feedback from schools and partners highlights the value of this approach in building confidence and shared responsibility for inclusion. However, we acknowledge that we are in the development phase of these improvements to the wider system. Access to specialist support within education is increasingly well coordinated through a clearly defined LISO. Strategic oversight, shared triage and joint allocation across educational psychology, advisory teaching and physical and sensory services have improved the timeliness, consistency and effectiveness of specialist input across the graduated response. Collaborative recovery and transformation work with the ICB has significantly reduced speech and language therapy waiting lists and we have agreed on a new delivery model from September 2026.	Over the next three years, the local area partnership will strengthen inclusion across education settings by aligning place planning, specialist support, commissioning and quality assurance into a single, coherent system. Inclusion bases will operate as a core and integrated part of the mainstream education offer, supported by consistent oversight, clear expectations and integrated education and health input. The current support package around inclusion bases will be strengthened and fully aligned with sufficiency planning and quality assurance arrangements. This will ensure that specialist provision within mainstream settings is developed in the right places, to the right standards, and in line with local need. A consistent approach to quality assurance and oversight will be embedded for all inclusion bases across the local area, providing clarity of purpose, improving consistency and supporting continuous improvement. Commissioning decisions for resourced provision, inclusion bases and satellite provision will be underpinned by robust and transparent processes, aligned to sufficiency analysis, quality assurance and outcomes, to ensure growth is strategic, needs led and sustainable. The EaH Offer will underpin this approach by embedding specialist expertise alongside mainstream provision. It will support settings to meet a wider range of needs earlier and without default reliance on statutory assessment, building confidence and capability across early years settings, schools and colleges. This will enable the system to scale what is already working well, while addressing variation in access, thresholds and quality. Over the 3-year period, a clearer alignment of funding between sufficiency planning, placements and the health services that support them will be developed. This will move towards a more transparent and formulaic approach, drawing on the EaH commissioning framework, NHS funding from the ICB, or a combination of both. This alignment will support sustainability and ensure that specialist input follows need rather than placement. For CYP with SEMH needs, the system will also move towards a more integrated and preventative model. This will include the development of a single front door approach, supported by a Single Point of Access and a multi-disciplinary triage panel covering the whole CYP MH system. A public health informed approach will support earlier identification and intervention, recognising risks from pregnancy and early childhood through to adolescence.

A locally designed, multi-agency Local Inclusion Support Offer (LISO) brings together training, advice and specialist support to strengthen inclusive practice and enable earlier identification and intervention without default reliance on statutory routes. **System leadership, partnership and co-production** Clear governance and strong system leadership support shared decision-making across education, health and care. Partnership collaboration and co-production with schools, families and CYP are increasingly embedded in service design and system improvement. Joint performance dashboards, shared commissioning and governance. Strong parent/carer and CYP voice embedded in decision making. **Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviour** A shared ambition for all CYP and an understanding that inclusion is a collective responsibility across the whole system. Consistent thresholds, language and practice are applied across services and settings. The system shifts from escalation responses to earlier, needs-led support. Inclusive leadership, workforce development and shared expectations support more confident practice across settings. Specialist provision and support services actively model inclusive approaches and contribute to whole-setting improvement. **Key enablers** Targeted capital investment across early years, mainstream and further education Workforce culture, training and development with access to specialist expertise Transformation programme management and analytical capacity Data and digital systems to support insight, planning and decision-making Clear communication and engagement Joint commissioning arrangements Quality assurance and oversight	While demand continues to increase and capacity pressures remain in some areas, particularly in early years and some health pathways, these improvements have strengthened local access and laid firm foundations for a more sustainable, place-based model of support. System leadership and partnership working are strong. Governance arrangements are clear, senior system leadership is aligned, and joint commissioning and performance oversight are becoming embedded. The Oldham Learning Board provides a strong forum for aligning SEND and inclusion priorities with wider education system leadership, including school improvement, sufficiency, attendance and workforce considerations. There is clear evidence of shared responsibility in service redesign, workforce development and quality assurance activity, with more consistent engagement from schools and partners shaping system improvement. We are confident in what is working well, supported by positive feedback from schools, CYP and families, our self-evaluation and external monitoring. At the same time, we recognise that further progress is needed to deepen consistency of experience, particularly at universal and early intervention levels, strengthen sustainability, and ensure that learning from frontline practice continues to inform strategic decision-making. These priorities are clearly understood and form the focus of our reform plan. There is a whole system commitment to fund, in equal shares, a single Advanced Practitioner SaLT role with a GM wide remit. This strategic role will ensure a population focused, joined up approach to SLCN across all ten localities, guiding improvement and reducing variation.	Access to specialist support and local placements will be well understood. Schools and settings will understand when to access external services for targeted and targeted-plus support, how to do so, and be able to access support easily. We will build on the foundations created through DBV, CPP, ELSEC and APST in developing our Experts at Hand offer, with PCF. The LA will act as the central vehicle for delivery, building on its successful role in coordinating the current offer, with additional services commissioned via the ICB where required. Existing local authority structures provide a strong platform within which additional staff and services can sit. A core multi-disciplinary team will be developed on a setting and/or cluster basis, with implementation shaped in partnership with settings during year one. This will include targeted approaches based on district needs, particularly in areas such as speech and language, aligned to the Balanced System approach being developed across Greater Manchester. Through this programme we will establish a full 0–19 speech and language therapy offer, with a strengthened early years' service delivered through Family Hubs and directly into early years settings. The core team will link wider systems including Mental Health Support Teams, the developing multi-agency neurodevelopmental hub and triage arrangements, planned mental health single point of access, and Early Help. A team-around-the-school or college approach will support proactive access, reduce inequity in service use, and enable strategic planning across universal, targeted and targeted-plus levels. All settings will have a link educational psychologist, advisory practitioner and speech and language therapist. Oldham are moving towards fully integrated, needs led Learning Disability (LD) services across education, health and social care services; achieved through strategic agreement from the SEND partnership, facilitating CYP to receive support with or without a formal LD diagnosis. Oldham SEND partnership will have completed a review of CYP, parent/carer and schools' Occupational Therapy (OT) needs and designed and implemented a new EaH integrated OT function for early years, school aged and post-16. A streamlined enquiry system, supported by triage and joint allocation, alongside bookable consultations, SEND surgeries and regular engagement with PVIs, will provide clear and timely access to advice, assessment and intervention. Services will increasingly be delivered within schools and settings rather than through clinic-based models. Initially, fixed-term posts will be secured to strengthen universal and targeted provision, with existing specialists supporting targeted-plus

		need. Recruitment plans for EP, OT and SALT will be aligned to population need and national guidance over the medium term. Universal and targeted offers will be retained to prioritise school capacity building over the next 2–3 years and support readiness for legislative change, including strengthened balance across Early Years and post-16. Quality assurance, sufficiency oversight and provider performance will continue to sit within strengthened governance arrangements, supported by permanent QA capacity, regional collaboration and a consistent outcomes framework. Local special schools will be commissioned to deliver an outreach offer focused on strategic leadership, whole-school development and inclusion bases, subject to consultation with the sector. All services will be held to account through annual or bi-annual evaluation, recognising the complexity of measuring impact within a needs-led system.
Success measures **Our comprehensive Outcomes and Performance Framework is based on partnership data already reported, strengthened with metrics in the data template to evidence how we will measure impact of the SEND Reform Plan.** **1. Managing Demand and Reducing Escalation** • Reduction in EHCNA requests • Conversion rate from EHC Needs Assessment to EHCP (EHCNAs resulting in EHCPs) • Reduction in EHCP issued • Number of EHCPs • Number of Individual Support Plans (ISPs) – requires development Outcome = stabilised demand and increased proportion of needs met at an earlier stage without escalation. **2. Sufficiency and Inclusion** • EHCPs by provision type (mainstream vs specialist) • Increase in places in specialist and inclusion base capacity in mainstream settings • Reduction in placements in independent/non-maintained special schools (INMSS) Outcome = more children supported locally and in mainstream provision. **3. System Flow and Timeliness** • EHCNA requests refusal to assess • Refusal to issue an EHCP • Timeliness of issuing EHCP within 20 weeks	**Baseline 2025-26 (latest available data)** • Number of places in mainstream inclusion bases: 80 • Number of INMSS placements: 118 • Percentage of refusal to assess: 42.4% (Q4 2025/26) • Timeliness of EHCP: 82.9% (Q4 2025/26) • Timeliness of annual reviews: 51.9% (Q4 2025/26) • Waiting list in CAMHS: 744 (Q4 2025/26) • Waiting list in clinic-based SALT: 537 (Q4 2025/26) • Waiting list in clinic-based OT: 19 • CYP with SEN EHE: 128 (2025/26) • Attendance of CYP with SEN: primary 93.0%, secondary 87.4% (2024/25) • Suspensions of CYP with SEN: primary 1.83%, secondary 17.4% (2024/25) • Mediation referrals: 116 (Q4 2025/26) • Tribunal appeals rate: 3.87 (2025/26) • Parent/carer confidence survey – 2025/26 = 80%	**Target Metrics – three-year trajectory** • Sufficiency: Inclusion bases - 80; +169 Y1; +82 Y2; +32 Y3; 363 total Y3, with sequencing aligned to need, capital programme delivery, and system capacity. • Number of INMSS: 118 - 10-30% reduction – Y1 106, Y2 95, Y3 85 • Percentage of refusal to assess: 42.4% - 10-30% reduction – Y1 38%, Y2 34%, Y3 30% • Timeliness of EHCP: 82.9% - Y1 85%, Y2 85%, Y3 90% • Timeliness of annual reviews: 51.9% - 10-30% increase - Y1 57%, Y2 62%, Y3 70% • Waiting list in CAMHS: 744 - 10-30% reduction - Y1 669, Y2 595, Y3 520 • Waiting list in clinic-based SALT: 537 – 40-60% reduction Y1 322, Y2 268, Y3 214 • Waiting list in clinic-based OT: 19 – 10-30% reduction – Y1 17, Y2 15, Y3 13 • CYP with SEN EHE: 128 – 10-30% reduction – Y1 115, Y2 104, Y3 93 • Attendance of CYP with SEN: better than national • Suspensions of CYP with SEN: better than national • Mediation referrals: 116 – 10-30% reduction, Y1 104, Y2 93, Y3 81 • Tribunal appeals rate: 3.87 – 1-3% reduction – Y1 3.85, Y2 3.82, Y3 3.78 • Parent/carer confidence survey – 5-15% increase - Y1 85%, Y2 90%, Y3 95%

• Timeliness of annual reviews Outcome = a system that is keeping pace with demand and reducing delay. **4. Workforce and Early Intervention Capacity** • Increase in SaLT, OT and EP workforce FTE • Increase in CYP supported by SaLT, OT, EP, ND Practitioner, LD Nursing, Public Health Nursing and MHST without EHCP or specialist placement – requires development • Reduction in referrals and waiting list in CAMHS, Clinic-based SALT and OT • Improved take-up of annual health checks Outcome = more children receiving earlier support without requiring statutory escalation. **5. CYP Outcomes and System Effectiveness** • Reduction in CYP with SEN not in education (by age) • Reduction in CYP with SEN in Elective Home Education (EHE) • Increase in attendance of CYP with SEN • Reduction in PA / SA of CYP with SEN • Reduction in suspensions of CYP with SEN • Reduction in exclusions of CYP with SEN • Increase in attainment outcomes of CYP with SEN across all phases: • KS2 outcomes: meeting expected standards in Reading, Writing & Maths (combined) • KS4 outcomes: average Attainment 8 score • KS4 outcomes: achieving grades 4–9 in English & Maths • Attainment 8 score at the end of key stage 4 for state-funded schools • Aged 16–18 in Education, Employment or Training or Volunteering Outcome = improved participation, inclusion and transition outcomes. **6. Financial Sustainability** • Reduction in High Needs Block deficit growth / in-year pressure • Reduction in spend on out-of-area and independent placements • Stabilisation of SEND transport cost growth Outcome = a more sustainable system aligned to reform intent. **7. Experience and System Confidence** • Reduction in mediations referrals and tribunal appeals rate • Improved parental and CYP satisfaction (aligned to complaints, surveys		

and engagement) • Improved workforce confidence and schools and settings satisfaction and implementation ability from Expert and Hands advice (aligned to surveys and engagement) Outcomes = increased trust and confidence in the SEND system.		

3. What is the local area partnership's strategy for delivering on the above?

Oldham's local area partnership strategy is focused on moving from improvement to transformation: building a SEND system over the next three years that is consistently inclusive, needs-led and increasingly sustainable.

Our theory of change is grounded in a clear principle: children and young people achieve better outcomes when support is designed around need, accessed early, and delivered through a coherent, joined-up system rather than fragmented services. In Oldham, inclusion is intentionally built into system design. This represents a shift from a system where support is accessed through thresholds and services, to one where need is identified earlier and expertise is available to children, young people and settings as part of everyday practice.

Our strategy prioritises strengthening inclusion across all education settings so that high-quality universal and targeted support becomes the norm. Embedding Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision, confident SEN Support and inclusive classroom practice, underpinned by workforce development and shared expectations, will support earlier identification and intervention, reducing escalation to statutory processes and crisis driven placements. This is supported by a consistent understanding of what is ordinarily available across all settings, with practitioners equipped to respond to need without default reliance on specialist referral or assessment processes.

Access to specialist support will increasingly be delivered through mainstream provision rather than alongside it. The EaH offer is central to this approach, embedding education, health and care expertise around settings and localities so that specialist advice, modelling and intervention are timely, practical and needs led. This enables the system to build on what is already working well while addressing variation in access, thresholds and quality across the local area. Through this model, specialist expertise becomes an integrated part of the graduated response, enabling real time advice, consultation and intervention that strengthens practice and reduces the need for parallel, service led pathways.

Strong system leadership underpins our delivery. Clear governance, shared accountability and joint commissioning enable partners to act collectively and decisively on agreed priorities, supported by strengthening quality assurance and the increasing use of shared data, insight and lived-experience to maintain grip and pace. This creates greater alignment between need, provision and resource, ensuring that commissioning decisions are driven by population need and outcomes rather than service configuration. Over the next three years, this alignment will support sustainable sufficiency planning, improved statutory processes and stronger pathways and transitions, particularly into adulthood.

Together, these changes move Oldham toward a more stable SEND system where inclusion is increasingly predictable, support is delivered locally across the 0-25 system, families understand pathways earlier, and outcomes improve because the system works more consistently as one.

4. Please upload a completed copy of the Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool – attached.

5. What is the local area partnership roadmap for the next 3 years?

Three Year Roadmap Overview – See Appendix 2.

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27 - Establish and Align	2027/28 - Develop and Embed	2028/29 - Sustain and Mature
Strengthening inclusion across education settings • Strong universal offer across early years, schools and post-16. • Early identification embedded in everyday practice. • OAIP clearly defined and embedded across all settings. Oldham OAIP Flip Book (See Appendix 3) • Mainstream settings demonstrate increased confidence. • Inclusion bases and SEND units established in mainstream schools.	Establish and support ISP consistency across all settings, clearly linking need, outcomes, provision and review, aligned to OAIP and the graduated response. Establish shared expectations for inclusive classroom practice through OAIP, reducing reliance on diagnosis and statutory assessment. Strengthen SEND and inclusion reviews to identify variation in practice and target support to settings with greatest need. Develop inclusion bases and SEND units with agreed quality assurance principles, SLA's and oversight to ensure consistency. Prioritise whole-setting advice based around OAIP and consultation to build mainstream confidence and reduce escalation to statutory processes.	ISPs and OAIP embedded as business as usual; inclusion reviews routinely drive improvement. EaH established and strengthening mainstream confidence with emerging evidence of reduced escalation. Buddy SEND reviews and peer challenge embedded across settings.	Inclusive practice the norm. ISPs the standard for SEN Support; OAIP and graduated response applied consistently. Inclusion bases fully integrated, with outreach to surrounding schools. EaH a mature preventative model with sustained reduction in escalation evidenced.
Access to specialist and targeted support • EaH offer embeds multi-disciplinary expertise within mainstream provision. • Reduced reliance on EHCPs as the primary gateway to support. • More CYP supported locally, needs met closer to home. • LISO brings together training, advice and specialist support.	Launch EaH offer embedding specialist education, health and mental health expertise within mainstream, clearly specified, monitored and governed by Head of Service. Recruit fixed-term advisory roles to front-load universal and targeted support; commence EP recruitment as part of longer-term workforce strategy. Establish LA-led communication and interaction team, increased OT capacity, and enhanced mental health and neurodiversity practitioner roles within locality structures. Establish multi-agency team around the setting model beginning with secondary schools, expanding through cluster approaches alongside existing consultation and drop-in pathways. Refresh LISO to clarify how settings and families access training, advice and specialist support	Extend team around the setting to primary and FE settings; full Balanced System rollout for SLCN; embed APST within EaH; Tier-2 step-out provision by September 2027. Agree PfA outcomes with FE partners. Evaluate OT school-facing model; establish annual EaH evaluation cycle with regular EaH manager forums.	Single front door operational across all phases including post-16. EaH and LISO sustained as business as usual. Key fixed-term posts converted to permanent; full workforce sustainability review complete. Balanced System, ND Hub and CYP MH pathway reviews inform commissioning. New funding formula for special school nursing implemented.

	without default reliance on EHCPs; scope structured special school outreach offer.		
System leadership, partnership and co-production • Clear governance and system leadership across education, health and care. • Co-production with families and CYP embedded across system service design. • Integrated dashboards, joint commissioning and governance. • Strong parent/carer and CYP voice in decision making.	Agree PCF and SENDIASS sustainability; review district and cluster model; deploy SENDIASS expertise to strengthen mainstream inclusion. Through POINT as an equal strategic partner, establish a clear referral process ensuring families reach the right service at the right time. Launch POINT SEND Family Hub. Strengthen multi-agency understanding of service roles and thresholds; work with GM and Northern Care Alliance to align sufficiency planning and workforce approaches. Progress Neurodevelopmental Hub and CYP MH pathway redesign through a multi-agency strategic group.	Referral processes consistently applied; POINT and SENDIASS embedded in governance and service design; co-production routinely applied in pathway redesign and evaluation. ND Hub, CYP MH and SaLT pathways refined using data, feedback and lived experience. Joint commissioning increasingly coordinated with GM and health partners. Embed the POINT SEND Family Hub within Oldham's Family Hub and Best Start in Life model, providing visible and accessible family engagement.	POINT leads annual "You said, we did" publication and termly QA reviews; bi-annual BIG SEND Survey shapes priorities. Equity of access monitored across all districts. System partners operate as equal contributors with collective accountability.
Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours • Inclusion is a collective responsibility across the whole system. • Consistent thresholds, language and practice across services. • System shifts from escalation to earlier, needs-led support. • Specialist provision actively models inclusive approaches.	Align inclusive practice expectations system-wide, reinforcing OAIP, SEN Support and graduated response as collective responsibility across education, health and care. Target early action on priority pressures: behaviour and regulation, attendance and reduced timetables, suspension and escalation risk in secondary settings. Strengthen inclusive leadership and workforce development through trauma-informed and relational practice approaches, SENCO support and EP advisory input. Ensure specialist provision actively models inclusive approaches through advice and consultation rather than isolated intervention, contributing to whole-setting improvement.	OAIP applied confidently; suspensions tracked quarterly against baseline. Refreshed CPD aligned to EaH and OAIP available across all phases. Peer challenge and SENCO networks embedded; specialist provision models inclusive approaches. Inclusive leadership strengthened through peer challenge and QA.	Earlier, needs-led support the default; suspension and exclusion rates at or below national comparators. Inclusion enacted as collective responsibility; continuous improvement driven by data and lived experience. Inclusive culture embedded as business as usual; earlier, needs-led support the default response system-wide.
Key enablers • Capital investment across early years, mainstream and further education.	Capital: progress inclusion base and accessibility projects aligned to sufficiency analysis.	All enablers further embedded and routinely informing decision-making; dashboards used consistently across partners. Stronger cross-	All enablers operating as business as usual, driving continuous improvement and long-term sustainability.

• Workforce culture, training and development. • Programme management and analytical capacity. • Data and digital systems. • Communication and engagement. • Joint commissioning. • Quality assurance and oversight.	Workforce: deploy initial EaH-aligned capacity; begin EP recruitment strategy. Programme management: coordinate delivery, track milestones and manage interdependencies. Data analytics: strengthen shared partnership dashboards including health data to identify pressures and inform decisions. Communications: improve system-wide clarity of pathways and reform expectations for schools, families and partners. Commissioning: strengthen education and health commissioning alignment; agree SLAs with ICB. Quality assurance: embed framework for consistent monitoring and oversight across all workstreams.	system alignment around sufficiency, commissioning and workforce planning Capital: Phase 3 inclusion bases underway. Workforce: EP increases continue; OT model evaluated. Data: dashboard and ISP/LISO tools in active use; AI triage tested. Commissioning: APST in EaH; Tier-2 step-out live. QA: thematic reviews across all phases.	Fixed-term posts converted to permanent; workforce review complete. Real-time shared data drives deployment decisions. New funding formula live. Termly MA QA reviews with POINT; partnership maturity matrix updated.
Success measures • 1. Demand: Reduce EHCNA requests; stabilise EHCPs; increase ISPs. • 2. Sufficiency: Inclusion bases — baseline 80; +169 Y1; +82 Y2; +32 Y3; 363 total Y3. INMSS: 118→106→95→85. • 3. Workforce and Early Intervention: Grow EP, SaLT, OT FTE; CYP supported without EHCP. • 4. CYP outcomes: Improve attendance; reduce suspensions, exclusions. • 5. Experience: Family confidence +5% per year; reduce mediation and tribunals	1. Increased ISP use and OAIP application across settings; early evidence of needs met at SEN Support without statutory escalation. 2. Inclusion bases open or in delivery in priority settings; pipeline established for further development. 169 additional inclusion base places delivered; INMSS reducing toward 106. 3. Increased CYP accessing EaH multi-disciplinary support (EP, SaLT, OT, mental health) without EHCP. 4. Early improvement in attendance; initial reduction in suspensions in identified secondary settings. EHCP demand stabilising, evidenced through shared dashboards. 5. Improved parent/carer confidence in navigation and communication; early stabilisation of demand growth.	1. Stabilising EHCP requests vs 2025/26 baseline; increasing proportion of needs met at SEN Support. 2. Further 82 inclusion base places (cumulative 251). Reduced reliance on independent and out-of-area placements vs baseline. INMSS at 94 3. Growing SaLT, OT and EP FTE; reduced CAMHS and therapy waiting lists. 4. Measurable reduction in suspensions and exclusions, particularly secondary; reduction in persistent absence. Improved post-16 EET participation. 5.Parent/carer confidence minimum 5% increase from baseline; reduced mediation referrals. Sustainability; Reduced HNB deficit growth; reduced INMSS spend; co-production embedded in service design.	1.Sustained stabilisation of EHCP demand; most needs met at SEN Support. 2. 363+ inclusion base places; Minimal out-of-area placements. INMSS at 83. 3. Specialist workforce sustained; CYP supported earlier without statutory escalation. 4. Sustained improvement in attendance; significant reduction in persistent absence. Exclusions at or below national comparators; KS2 and KS4 outcomes improving; strong post-16 EET. 5. Sustained family confidence; reduced complaints, mediation and tribunal appeals. Reduced HNB pressure; strong alignment between need, provision, workforce and funding.

6. What will the local area partnership deliver in the first year?

2026-27 Local delivery plan		Q2		Q3		Q4	
Building block ***Workstream*** ***Outcome*** ***Success measures***	***Responsible lead per workstream***	***Milestones per workstream***	***Target trajectory per workstream***	***Milestones per workstream***	***Target trajectory per workstream***	***Milestones per workstream***	***Target trajectory per workstream***
Building block - Strengthening inclusion across education settings **Workstream 1 (EARLY)** Early identification & intervention Early Years ISP monitoring **Outcomes** Stabilised demand and increased proportion of needs met at an earlier stage without escalation. **Success measures** Managing Demand and Reducing Escalation Indicators	[EARLY] SEND and Inclusion Lead (Schools)	Implement workstream members, agree Terms of Reference. Mechanism for sharing OAIP/audit tool with wider staff in settings determined Provisional agreement in place about sharing of audit tool use/data PVI whole setting support commenced with a model for how the advisory practitioners are deployed System in place which allows oversight so that support for PVIs can be targeted/needs led Review approach to oversight of schools with wider school improvement Share and agree an implementation strategy for training	OAIP working/editorial group minutes Family Hubs staff (area Senco's) Staffing structure Complex schools panel spreadsheet data	OAIP shared and discussed in cluster groups to support schools' inclusion strategy OAIP aligned with DfE national inclusion standards On the basis that guidance is available from the DfE, local ISP guidance and standards will be in development Decreased RAG rating for schools requiring / having received support Pilot buddy SEND reviews taken place	Cluster group minutes Documents (OAIP, guidance)	Most schools (70%) have used the audit tool SEND review format aligned with new Whole School SEND inclusion review and used in at least 3 schools System for buddy SEND reviews agreed and established following initial pilot A mechanism for overseeing quality of ISPs developed	Audit tool completion shared by schools
Building block - Access to specialist and targeted support. Strengthening inclusion across education settings. **Workstream 2 (LOCAL)** EaH Sufficiency & Capital (Inclusion Bases) PfA	[LOCAL] Head of Specialist Support Services	Implement workstream members, agree Terms of Reference. Wider partners and services aware what the EaH is – social care and health will have shared this with all services. LISO updated and aligned with EaH and launched as key communication/navigation tool Key data sets to monitor sufficiency of EaH agreed	LISO document Recruitment and Induction records School enquiry logs HNPCA project update data (capital delivery and forecast spend)	EaH recruitment complete Initial secondary team around the school meeting taken place LA communication and interaction team recruitment completed Link SALTs in development Inclusion base support underway with initial schools	Recruitment and Induction records HNPCA project data evidences progress against capital delivery milestones, with live spend and forecasts aligned to programme delivery	Special School Nursing and Learning Disability Teams' sufficiency is linked with all health services and EaH workforce. Evaluation of sufficiency of current EaH complete, including finalisation of plans for allocations in Year 2 / 3 and any associated commissioning needs (e.g. APST)	Annual satisfaction evaluation Consistent recording of activity Consistent ongoing impact evaluation approach HNPCA project data evidences

Outcomes More children supported locally and in mainstream provision. More children receiving earlier support without requiring statutory escalation. **Success measures** Sufficiency and Inclusion Indicators Workforce and Early Intervention Capacity Indicators		Recruitment and induction of all year 1 staff including escalation through governance where recruitment is challenged. Current PfA workstream reviewed and priority actions identified Identified schools requiring support for inclusion bases Capital programme aligned to SEND Reform Year 1 trajectory, incorporating completed Phase 1 and in progress Phase 2 schemes, with confirmed delivery milestones Place delivery trajectory confirmed and sequenced, reflecting Phase 2 completions and mobilisation of remaining schemes to achieve planned capacity increases Priority schools and settings confirmed for remaining Phase 2 and Phase 3 delivery, aligned to sufficiency gaps and demand analysis Standardised design briefs confirmed for new and expanded resourced provision, including staffing models, SLAs and banding assumptions, informed by Phase 1 delivery SLAs and delivery agreements in place with schools and trusts, defining provision expectations, outreach functions and accountability for outcomes System-wide mapping of secondary school provision undertaken, capturing existing support and specialist base capacity, cohort profiles and need types to further strengthen sufficiency modelling and inform targeted Phase 3 expansion	Sufficiency and place planning dataset (capacity, occupancy and demand baseline) School/Trust leader expressions of interest and delivery pipeline records (Phase 2 and Phase 3) School enquiry logs and engagement records Feedback from participating schools/settings (including SLA implementation and provision model) Capital programme and SEND sufficiency workstream minutes	Initial pilot of single enquiry form complete Task and finish group established for PfA priority actions, which will include agreeing key PfA outcomes relevant for each age range Capital projects progressing in line with programme milestones, with a proportion of Phase 2 schemes completed and Phase 3 schemes in active delivery First tranche of new phase and expanded specialist and inclusion base places operational, with CYP placed for the autumn term and through in-year admissions SLAs implemented across delivering schools and trusts, with provision expectations, outreach activity and reporting arrangements in active use Workforce recruitment and deployment underway, with staffing in place for operational provision and recruitment continuing for remaining schemes Data tracking shows increased capacity and initial occupancy of new places, with early indications of improved local sufficiency and more placements managed within mainstream settings System-wide mapping of secondary school provision completed and validated, with follow-up queries resolved, enabling refined sufficiency	Data shows increased operational specialist and inclusion base places, with occupancy reflecting autumn term placements and in-year admissions Live system data in place for capacity, occupancy and demand, enabling active management of sufficiency School engagement data evidences sustained pipeline and confidence in delivery, including implementation of SLAs System-wide mapping of secondary school provision completed and quality assured, informing refined sufficiency modelling and Phase 3 targeting	Evaluation of year 1 of impact of EaH underway. Proposal for access changes to services and 'one front door' developed for consideration Special School outreach offer scoped and ready to be delivered from April 2027 LA communication and interaction team in situ Advanced practitioner (SaLT) in ICB in place and establishing links with education, health and family hub partners to strengthen early intervention and integrated delivery. Initial draft PfA outcomes agreed for wider consultation and/or sharing Planned increase in specialist and inclusion base places delivered, with Phase 2 schemes largely complete and Phase 3 schemes progressing in line with trajectory New provision fully operational and embedded, with CYP placed and supported within mainstream settings SLAs fully embedded across delivering schools and trusts, with consistent application of provision expectations, outreach	delivery of planned capital programme, with actual spend and outputs aligned to Year 1 trajectory Data shows sustained increase in operational specialist and inclusion base places, with stable occupancy across new provision System data demonstrates improved local sufficiency, with reduced reliance on out-of-borough and independent placements Performance data from schools evidence consistent implementation of SLAs and provision models Refreshed sufficiency model in place, using validated system-wide data to inform forward planning and Phase 3 delivery

				modelling and targeted Phase 3 expansion		and reporting arrangements Sustained data tracking of increased capacity and occupancy Sufficiency model refreshed using validated system-wide data, informing next-phase planning and targeted expansion beyond Year 1	
Building block - Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours **Workstream 3 (FAIR)** Workforce planning Equity of offer including MHST SEND JSNA – health neighbourhood plan Co-production principles **Outcomes** increased trust and confidence in the SEND system. Improved participation, inclusion and transition outcomes. **Success measures** Experience and System Confidence Indicators CYP Outcomes and System Effectiveness Indicators	**[FAIR]** Deputy Chief Executive Officer, POINT	Implement workstream members, agree Terms of Reference. Include the following for baseline: Current Mental Health Support Team (MHST) coverage. Best Start Family Hubs / New SEND Family Hub locations. Current JSNA: Identifying current health and SEND information.	>80% partnership attendance, with clear reporting and decision making in place. Minutes of meetings will evidence	Mapping exercise of: MHST (Schools) coverage. Family Hubs/Best Start and POINT SEND Family Hub district/cluster Offer. Review JSNA SEND Data. RAG rating applied to enable a priority plan to be developed to address and gaps in offer. Review Oldham's current co-production values and involvement levels against NHS model to review any potential changes to our current values and levels. (see above for year 1&2)	Minutes of meeting including the outcomes and next steps, and RAG status	Devise a priority plan based on the mapping exercise to include workforce planning to develop consistent offer for MHST/Family Hubs/Best Start/NEW SEND Family Hub (POINT), including a quality assurance framework to monitor the offer. Update JSNA SEND data to address any population health and/or health services gaps Co-produce an integrated training and induction offer for all services to improve consistency of SEND workforce development offer across the partnership. .	MHST Offer tracking national trends/govt expectations. Move to year 2 and year 3 as above when evaluation will commence. Annual satisfaction evaluation

Building block - System leadership, partnership and co-production **Workstream 4 (EFFECTIVE)** SEND Reform Programme Management Data Maturity & Performance Intelligence Quality Assurance Outcomes Framework Joint Commissioning **Outcomes** A system that is keeping pace with demand and reducing delay. A more sustainable system aligned to reform intent. **Success measures** System Flow and Timeliness Indicators Financial Sustainability Indicators	**[EFFECTIVE]** Assistant Director Children's Services Integration	Revise existing governance arrangements – agree terms of reference of workstreams Develop programme management templates for highlight reports, risk register and board packs for consistent reporting across workstreams Develop Programme Board and SEND LIP Exec forward plans to ensure consistent reporting and oversight from all workstreams Recruitment to SEND reform programme management and capital projects team Scope systems, data and performance priorities linked to reforms plan success measures Test and refine the updated EHCP quality assurance framework Scope and plan experts and hand, sufficiency and capital and other required services commissioning intentions for 2027/28 through the Children's Collaborative Joint Commissioning Group (CJCG) Review education membership across all workstreams and at CJCG for alignment with health commissioning to support delivery and workforce planning.	Programme management - programme plan monitoring and evaluation, risk review Governance Review quarterly See success measures and outcomes in section 2.2 DfE data return	Mobilise SEND Reform governance arrangements for 2026/27 with forward plan of work to be reported into SEND LIP Exec Board Induction of SEND reform programme management and capital projects transformation team Develop outcomes framework Implement finalised EHCP quality assurance framework to include multi-agency induction and training offers for CYP posts across the SEND partnership Procurement process for services required from April 2027/28	Programme management - programme plan monitoring and evaluation, risk review See success measures and outcomes in section 2.2 DfE data returns	Programme management - programme plan monitoring and evaluation, risk review Success measures built into SEND and Inclusion dashboard as part of the performance framework Embed EHCP quality assurance framework Review and update the partnership maturity matrix Mobilisation and contract monitoring arrangements of commissioned services	Programme management - programme plan monitoring and evaluation, risk review Success measures and outcomes in section 2.2 developed into a SEND dashboard DfE data returns
Building block - Access to specialist and targeted support. **Workstream 5 (SHARED)** MDTs Pathway redesign ND Balanced System MH	**[SHARED]** Director of Children's Health	Implement workstream members, agree Terms of Reference. Scope the full programme of work for the workstream and assign action owners and establish subgroups for delivery. Engage with system partners (including GM and Balanced System leads) to map current provision against the 5 strands of the	Success measures built into SEND and Inclusion dashboard	Implementation of the Balanced System for SLCN supporting rollout across early years and school settings. Monitor progress, capacity, demand and make any refinements to the offer. Agree expected impact and outcomes for the balanced system.	Success measures built into SEND and Inclusion dashboard	Evaluate year 1 of the balanced system and develop implementation plan for years 2 and 3. Begin the commissioning and contracting arrangements to mobilise a new CYP MH Pathway with the design of a CYP MH single strategic team (not a single employer) to	Success measures built into SEND and Inclusion dashboard

LD DSR/CETR **Outcomes** More children receiving earlier support without requiring statutory escalation. **Success measures** Workforce and Early Intervention Capacity Indicators		balanced system at universal, targeted and specialist levels. Begin discussions with NHS Greater Manchester leaders and SEND governance groups on the development of a pan GM approach to CETR and DSR, informing them of the CYP MH pathway redesign work Oldham will be delivering within this programme. Scope a system-wide approach to reduce health inequalities in line with Core20PLUS5 for CYP with SEND across 5 key areas: asthma – diabetes – epilepsy – oral health – mental health (linked to PfA) Co-produce a gaps analysis of CYP, Parent/Carer and Schools' Occupational Therapy (OT) needs and/or gaps across early years, school aged and post-16 CYP.		Development of workforce and training. Wider stakeholder engagement for the Balanced System. Work with GM contracts team and Northern Care Alliance on sufficiency planning for special school and school nursing and begin the design phase of a single regional approach to workforce planning, recruitment and funding for special school and school nursing services. Run a series of THRIVE design groups to develop a new CYP MH Pathway, understanding the universal, targeted and specialist services and develop a co-ordination approach and single strategic oversight for MDT delivery of universal and targeted MH Have a fully functioning ND MDT Triage panel in place, with attendance from CAMHS, CPS, CSC, EP, SaLT and EH with the workstream overseeing delivery and performance. Review Special School Nursing sufficiency vs special school placement demand and proposed increases in specialist and inclusion base places. To include SEMH provision/settings to address a gap in Special School Nursing. Review of Special School Nursing service specification and scope for support for Transition		co-ordinate activity in a more coherent and supportive way. To include a population health / preventative approach from the early years. Begin trialling a CYP MH MDT Triage Panel – having mapped a single function across MHST, MHiE, VCFSE, specialist outreach from Special Schools through to CAMHS to provide a universal, targeted, targeted plus and specialist MH offer. Use the learning from the panels to inform new pathways. Continue oversight of performance and conduct a lesson learned review of the ND MDT Triage process. Conduct a review of the ND Hub and identify areas of support and any commissioning gaps in supporting services Lead a design session for CYP Neighbourhood MDTs supported by PCN Review the impact of the ND Transformation programme on the Community Paediatric Service (CPS) delivered by NCA, considering skill mix and capacity; including feedback from CYP, settings and parents/carers for specific health gaps for CYP with ND.	

				Review of LD health services sufficiency for CYP with LD (to aged 25 years) Review output of CYP, Parent/Carer and Schools' Occupational Therapy (OT) needs across early years, school aged and post-16 CYP to begin design of new model		Scope role and remit for Special SEND Public Health Nurse to promote and extend health and SEND expertise across schools/settings Scope role and remit for additional ND Practitioner(s) to promote and extend health and ND expertise in schools/settings	
Projected Investment Spend per quarter – Use of Experts at Hand & Local Authority SEND Transformation Fund			**Q1-Q2**		**Q3**		**Q4**
EaH – SEND advisers, EP, SaLT, OT, mental health, special school outreach, clinics, triage	Strengthening Inclusion / Access to Specialist Support	EaH model agreed and signed off (offer, thresholds, pathways) Recruitment underway for key roles (EPs, advisory, MH, OT, SaLT) Triage model designed and tested (pilot basis)	£60,000	Core EaH workforce in post (phase 1) Multi-disciplinary triage fully operational Clinics and outreach model launched in priority localities	£625,000	Full EaH delivery model operational across partnership Special school outreach and inclusion support embedded Integrated health + education pathways functioning	£625,000
Workforce development & culture – trauma-informed training, inclusive practice, SENCO/EPS support	Encouraging Inclusive Culture	Inclusion framework and training offer agreed Training commissioned (trauma-informed, inclusive practice)	£20,000	SENCO / school workforce training rolled out EPS consultation model supporting schools	£90,000	Embedding of inclusive practice across clusters Peer support / system leadership model operational	£130,000
Health capacity & pathway development – OT, SLCN (Balanced System), Neurodevelopmental	Access to Specialist Support	Agreement of priority pathways (ND, SLCN, OT), Workforce planning with ICB completed	£20,000	Additional OT, SaLT and MH capacity deployed ND / Balanced System pathways implemented (phase 1)	£115,000	Fully integrated pathways across education and health, MDT working embedded through EaH	£115,000

Hub, CYP mental health pathways							
Programme oversight, governance & system leadership – SRO support, programme delivery, commissioning capacity	System Leadership	Programme governance structure fully operational, Workstreams aligned to SEND reform priorities	£25,000	Performance dashboard in use at programme and partnership level, Joint commissioning arrangements strengthened	£70,000	System leadership embedded across partners Commissioning aligned to outcomes framework	£90,000
Data & digital systems – dashboards, analytics, ISP digitisation, LISO navigation, AI-supported triage	System Leadership	Data requirements defined Dashboard development initiated, LISO / navigation model scoped	£15,000	Dashboards developed (waits, demand, performance) Digital triage tools operational	£40,000	Integrated data across education, health and care. AI / triage support embedded (where applicable)	£55,000
Co-production & engagement – POINT, SENDIASS, SEND Family Hub, lived experience activity	System Leadership / Co-production	Co-production framework agreed with POINT / SENDIASS Engagement plan in place	£5,000	Regular lived experience feedback collated, SEND Family Hub model active	£15,000	Co-production embedded in design and evaluation, feedback loops influencing commissioning	£20,000
Quality assurance & evaluation – QA framework, audits, performance monitoring, impact evaluation	System Leadership	QA framework agreed Baseline audits completed	£5,000	QA activity (case audits, MA reviews), Performance reporting aligned to outcomes	£5,000	Evaluation of impact across workstreams, Continuous improvement model embedded	£5,000
Total indicative spend – £2,150,000			£150,000		£960,000		£1,040,000

7. How will the local area partnership deliver the first-year plan?

Delivery in 2026–27 will focus on mobilisation through clearly defined workstreams, building the conditions for sustained system change over the following two years. To meet the requirements set out in the plan and informed by internal learning from the delivery of other national reforms, additional dedicated programme management, analytics and capital projects capacity and capability is essential for delivery with grip, rigour and pace. The programme team, with some roles funded through the Transformation grant, will work with partnership senior leaders and specialist staff within existing teams to manage delivery, support prioritisation, effectively use resources and enable the partnership to move towards a sustainable business as usual model of service delivery through operational teams.

The dedicated team will consist of:

- Programme Manager - Strategic lead for reform implementation, governance, partnership-wide SEND transformation, Ofsted/CQC preparation.
- Project Manager – Manage the delivery and tracking of reform projects to agreed outputs, outcomes, timescales and quality standards.
- Programme Support Officer - Programme planning and governance, reporting, risk/issue management, data coordination, maintaining evidence base for inspection.
- Senior Data Analyst – Develop the outcomes framework and data reporting / maturity for the local area partnership for robust tracking against plan measures and requirements for quarterly reporting.
- Technical Property Project Manager - Lead the SEND capital programme, oversee feasibility, procurement, compliance, and delivery assurance including surveys, scoping, design, contractor management and inspections.

Alongside the dedicated SEND reform capacity, the partnership will be supported by corporate functions in the LA and ICB including finance, HR, legal, procurement, data and insight, IT, strategy and public affairs, transformation and change and commissioning teams to ensure long term sustainable delivery.

The partnership will also draw on resources from Greater Manchester Combined Authority and North West ADCS sector led improvement to support Oldham's delivery.

Progress will be monitored through shared performance dashboards, quality assurance reviews and clear success measures, informing decision-making, and enabling adaptive delivery.

8. Other funding Local Authorities

Block Transfers

Oldham undertook a transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in each of the 5 financial years between 2016/17 and 2020/21 with a cumulative value of £7.247m. The Council is not currently contemplating such a transfer in 2026/27.

If deemed appropriate, any transfer would be focused on supporting SEND reform activity that reduces future demand on statutory and specialist provision. This includes strengthening the universal SEND offer, improving SEN Support in mainstream settings and expanding access to earlier expert advice, including through models such as EaH. These approaches are intended to increase confidence and capability across the system and reduce unnecessary escalation to Education, Health and Care needs assessments.

Alignment with the Schools White Paper is central to this approach. Any block transfer would support collaborative transition to new roles and responsibilities through shared accountability and system support, rather than placing additional risk on individual schools. Use of funding would complement inclusion funding and High Needs Capital investment, supporting more children and young people to have their needs met locally and effectively.

Any decision to implement a block transfer would be subject to Schools Forum approval and transparent governance and reporting arrangements to demonstrate impact, value for money and contribution to longer-term High Needs sustainability.

SEND Sufficiency Model – See Appendix 4.

Oldham's high needs capital strategy is underpinned by a clear commitment to inclusion, placing inclusive mainstream provision at the centre of sufficiency planning across the 0–25 age range. Capital investment is used strategically to reshape local provision so that children and young people with SEND can access the right support, in the right place, at the right time, reducing reliance on special schools, independent provision and out-of-area placements.

Local sufficiency modelling identifies sustained growth in EHCPs, driven primarily by autism (ASC), speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH), alongside increasing complexity. Analysis shows that a significant proportion of this demand can be met within mainstream settings where appropriate environmental adaptations, specialist input and workforce capability are in place. Current pressures therefore reflect historic gaps in mainstream capacity, particularly at secondary and post-16 phases, rather than unavoidable specialist demand.

Our strategy prioritises significant expansion of mainstream capacity through inclusion bases, resourced provision and adaptations to existing settings, ensuring that the majority of additional demand can be met within mainstream provision across all phases. Capital investment has been phased and implemented since 2024 to address these gaps in a planned and sustainable way.

Phase 1 established the foundations of the inclusion model through resourced provision, SEND units and targeted alternative provision across primary, secondary and alternative provision settings, creating local capacity for ASC, SLCN and SEMH cohorts.

In 2026–27 (Phase 2), the focus is on expanding and strengthening inclusion base capacity across mainstream schools, early years and further education. This includes targeted growth in generic SEND, ASC, SLCN and SEMH places, alongside expansion of post-16 provision at the local further education college. Investment is aligned to district-level sufficiency analysis, prioritising areas of greatest need and making effective use of existing school sites, including opportunities created by falling rolls.

In 2027–28 (Phase 3), the programme will extend the inclusion base model across additional primary and secondary schools, with a particular focus on secondary capacity and SEMH provision. This phase strengthens equity of access across districts and improves transition pathways, particularly at KS2–3 and KS4–5, reducing escalation to specialist settings and independent provision.

Year 3 will consolidate the model, respond to updated demand projections and strengthen post-16 and preparation for adulthood pathways, ensuring long-term system stability.

Where specialist or special school provision is expanded, this is based on clear sufficiency analysis identifying cohorts whose needs cannot reasonably be met in mainstream settings, even with enhanced support, particularly for children and young people with the most complex needs. This ensures specialist expansion is targeted, proportionate, and contributes to reducing future system pressure.

Improving the suitability of the mainstream estate is a core priority, aligned to Oldham's accessibility strategy. Investment supports sensory-appropriate environments, accessibility improvements, flexible learning spaces and assistive technology. All proposals include consideration of travel impact, with the expectation of reduced journey times and fewer out-of-area placements.

Delivery is undertaken in partnership with schools, multi-academy trusts and further education providers, with sites identified through sufficiency analysis and ongoing engagement to ensure provision aligns with local need and supports equitable access across the borough.

Overall, high needs capital funding is deployed as part of a coherent reform programme, strengthening inclusive mainstream capacity, improving local sufficiency and delivering better outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Oldham.

9. System partner and stakeholder engagement, and co-production

System Partner and Stakeholder Engagement Summary – See Appendix 5.

Oldham's Local SEND Reform Plan has been developed and will be implemented through strong system leadership, shared accountability and a clear commitment to co-production. Engagement with partners and stakeholders is embedded within an established governance framework including the Local Inclusion Partnership Executive Board, the SEND and Inclusion Programme Board and multi-agency operational workstreams. These arrangements bring together senior leaders across education, health, care and the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCSFE) sector, ensuring collective ownership of priorities, joint decision making and clear accountability for delivery and impact.

System partners have been engaged from the outset in shaping the Reform Plan, including early years providers, schools, multi-academy trusts, alternative provision, further education and post-16 providers, alongside NHS Greater Manchester ICB and key health providers. This has included engagement with providers attended by Oldham children and young people outside the local authority area. Partners have jointly shaped core elements of the reform programme, including the EaH model, strengthening the universal SEND offer, and aligning commissioning, workforce development and sufficiency planning. Shared intelligence, performance data and lived experience insight are used consistently to inform planning, monitor progress and provide challenge where improvement is not happening at sufficient pace.

Engagement with education settings is structured, inclusive and ongoing. This includes school leader briefings, inclusion hub drop-in sessions, locality inclusion forums, SENCO networks, trust-level discussions and targeted briefings. SEND reform proposals have been shared through roadshow events, headteacher forums and online sessions to ensure wide and equitable access. These mechanisms support clarity of expectations around inclusive practice and the graduated response and provide collaborative forums to manage evolving roles and responsibilities in line with the Schools White Paper. Oldham is working with schools and trusts to support transition through peer learning, shared problem solving and consistent system messaging, reinforcing inclusion as a collective responsibility.

Parents, carers, children and young people are central to the partnership approach. The local area has worked closely with POINT, SENDIASS, Parent Carer Forum (PCF) and wider community networks to ensure lived experience informs priorities, service design, delivery and quality assurance. Engagement includes listening events, POINT-led forums, community sessions, surveys, digital engagement and targeted co-production activity. Evidence from the BIG SEND Survey continues to shape priorities and track confidence. Co-production is embedded as a core way of working in Oldham, with plans to further strengthen engagement in line with NHS England guidance, improving consistency, accessibility and feedback loops so contributors can see how their input influences decisions. Co-production and co-design with families and partners has directly shaped key decisions, including the prioritisation of resourced provision phases, redesign of the EHCP quality assurance framework, and the sequencing of investment towards earlier intervention and school based inclusive support.

Further education and post-16 providers are engaged through preparation for adulthood pathways and transition planning, ensuring continuity across the 0–25 system and shared accountability for outcomes.

Planned summer term engagement includes system-wide SEND reform briefings, co-production sessions and facilitated workshops to support implementation. Additional support from senior DfE officials would be valuable to reinforce alignment with national reform and support confident system leadership during transition.

10. Risks and Mitigations

The strategic risk register is owned by the workstreams and SEND Programme Board with escalation for non-delivery reported to the SEND LIP Exec Board for remedial action.

Risk	Workstream Owner	Implications	Impact	Likelihood	RAG	Mitigation	Residual RAG
Workforce capacity and stability across education, health and social care including EPs, OT, SaLT, is insufficient to increase the specialist support offer to Schools to deliver reform at pace	Local Shared	Reduced ability to implement changes, delays in pathway improvement, impact on statutory performance and quality	Critical	Likely	Red	• Phased and prioritised delivery plan focused on high-impact reforms • Targeted recruitment and retention initiatives in critical roles with robust induction • Strengthened workforce development and shared training offer • Use of temporary capacity with clear exit plans	Amber
Financial and capital delivery pressures within the High Needs system undermine timely implementation of inclusive provision and sustainability of SEND reforms	Early Local Effective Shared	Risk of short-term solutions, reduced investment in early intervention and inclusion, increased reliance on statutory processes, delays in delivery of inclusion bases and specialist provision reduce local sufficiency	Critical	Likely	Red	• Alignment of SEND reform activity with High Needs recovery planning • Focus on early intervention and inclusive practice to reduce escalation • Joint commissioning and smarter use of existing resources • Dedicated project management for inclusion base delivery with milestone tracking • Early engagement with planning, estates, and schools to reduce delivery delays with contingency planning for phased opening or temporary provision where delays occur • Regular reporting of capital delivery risks through SEND governance	Amber
Inconsistent ownership and engagement across system partners limits whole-system change, particularly in education settings	Effective	Reforms are implemented unevenly, resulting in variable experience for children and families and limited impact	Moderate	Possible	Amber	• Clear governance through SEND Local Inclusion Partnership Executive Board with senior representation • Agreed system-wide outcomes and accountability framework • Regular performance and impact reporting • Escalation routes for unresolved system blockages	Green
Engagement with children, young people and parent carers is not sufficiently embedded or	Fair	Reduced confidence in reforms, risk that changes do not reflect lived experience	Moderate	Possible	Amber	• Embedded co-production approach across all reform workstreams • Strengthened partnership with Parent Carer Forum	Green

representative across the SEND system, particularly in education settings						• Use of multiple engagement methods to reach under-represented groups • Regular feedback loops demonstrating impact of engagement	
Data quality and shared performance intelligence across the partnership are insufficient to monitor impact effectively	Effective	Difficulty demonstrating improvement, delayed response to emerging risks	Moderate	Possible	Amber	• Development and embedding of a shared SEND performance framework and quality assurance framework • Improved use of qualitative and quantitative intelligence • Regular multi-agency review of data and lived experience • Targeted timely action where performance or outcomes deteriorate	Green

11. Dependencies

Delivery of Oldham's SEND Reform Plan is dependent on, and interacts closely with, a range of national and local reform programmes. The partnership recognises that changes in policy, funding and structures, alongside an Area SEND inspection, may influence the pace, sequencing and delivery of the SEND future state. These dependencies are actively managed through robust governance, programme oversight and system-wide alignment to ensure delivery remains resilient and focused on outcomes.

Ongoing NHS reforms, including Integrated Care System development and service transformation, may impact health capacity within SEND pathways, including contributions to assessments, therapy provision and joint commissioning. To mitigate this, SEND priorities are embedded within ICB governance, the SEND LIP Executive Board and Children's Collaborative Joint Commissioning Group. Shared oversight of demand, performance and outcomes, alongside regular system dialogue, ensures SEND delivery adapts to NHS changes while maintaining statutory compliance. Providers will identify named SEND leads to ensure the quality and timeliness of advice for ISPs and EHCPs.

Following local elections, potential political or organisational changes may affect governance, financial planning and workforce stability. The SEND Reform Plan mitigates this through clear programme ownership, defined standards and documented processes that are not dependent on specific structures. Regular reporting to senior leaders and elected members ensures continuity, supporting delivery momentum regardless of wider organisational change.

National children's social care reforms, including the Families First Partnership Programme and fostering reforms, emphasise early help, relational practice and family networks. While aligned with SEND reform ambition, these changes may create workforce pressures and competing priorities. The partnership is aligning SEND and social care strategies, pathways and workforce development to ensure coherence. Joint oversight of thresholds and demand supports co-ordinated decision-making for children with complex needs across systems.

Best Start Family Hubs programme is a key dependency for strengthening early identification and intervention. Changes to early years' service delivery and access points may affect SEND pathways. To manage this, SEND pathways will be embedded within Family Hub delivery, with clear roles, referral routes and shared insights. This ensures children with emerging needs are identified early and receive co-ordinated, timely support.

Our Local Best Start in Life Strategy shapes investment, workforce development and early years outcomes. While this may influence prioritisation and delivery models, SEND reform is integrated within the strategy. Joint commissioning, shared outcomes and aligned performance measures will ensure SEND priorities are embedded in early intervention approaches, supporting a coherent system and avoiding duplication.

National curriculum and assessment reforms may alter expectations around inclusion, progress and attainment, particularly within mainstream settings. This may affect how SEND provision is delivered and evaluated. The partnership maintains close engagement with policy developments and schools, promoting inclusive practice and personalised outcomes. This ensures SEND support remains flexible and responsive as education expectations evolve.

An Area SEND Inspection may require reprioritisation of activity to address findings, potentially affecting the pace of reform delivery. This will be mitigated through maintaining a strong, evidence-led programme aligned to the inspection framework, enabling rapid mobilisation of improvement actions while sustaining progress against the longer-term reform roadmap.

By embedding SEND reform within wider system change, maintaining strong governance and adopting a flexible, evidence-led approach, the partnership is well positioned to manage these dependencies and sustain progress towards its SEND future state.

Section 3 – Monitoring and Evaluation

12. How will the local area partnership know delivery is on track?

The local area partnership will know delivery of the SEND Reform Plan is on track through a combination of integrated performance data, quality assurance, structured programme oversight and ongoing stakeholder feedback. This approach ensures that both delivery milestones and outcomes and impact for children and young people are consistently monitored and acted upon.

Monitoring Tools and Data

Oldham's integrated multi-agency SEND dashboard, annual SEN2 profile analysis and quarterly Northwest SEND ChAT are primary mechanisms for reporting and tracking progress and impact and are jointly owned across education, health and social care by the SEND Local Inclusion Partnership (LIP) Executive Board. Overseen by the 'Effective' Workstream, the monthly dashboard and other monitoring and insight tools will continue to mature to support timely, shared oversight and decision-making and will be used to monitor:

- **Demand**
  - Requests for EHCP assessments and conversion rates
  - Demand trends by age, need type, provision and locality
  - EHCP and annual reviews timeliness
- **Service delivery and capacity**
  - Timeliness of statutory processes
  - Deployment and capacity of specialist services
  - Sufficiency indicators, including places created in mainstream, specialist and alternative provision
  - Reports on delivery of commissioned providers
- **Outcomes and impact**
  - Attendance, suspension and exclusion rates for children with SEND
  - Placement stability and reduced escalation to specialist provision
  - Transition outcomes, including early years, preparation for adulthood and post-16 destinations

Performance data is reviewed regularly by operational leads, with exceptions and trends escalated through the governance arrangements to enable timely corrective action.

Quality Assurance and Practice Oversight

The revised multi-agency quality assurance framework provides insight into the quality and consistency of SEND practice. This includes regular audits of EHCPs, moderation of decision-making and will include thematic reviews linked to reform priorities such as early years, inclusion, transitions and ISPs. Findings will triangulate with performance data and be used to inform workforce development, service improvement and commissioning decisions.

Programme and Milestone Oversight

Delivery of the SEND Reform Plan is supported by a clear performance management framework, reform roadmap with milestones, timescales and named leads across the core workstreams. The plan is also supported by a Core Minimum Requirements Tracker that aligns to the expectations outlined in the Reforms guidance (attached). Progress will be RAG-rated and reported to the SEND Programme Board and SEND LIP Exec Board, enabling system leaders to distinguish between activity slippage and risks to intended impact.

Feedback Loops and Stakeholder Input

Quantitative data is complemented by structured feedback and engagement to test whether reforms are improving lived experience. This includes:

- Ongoing engagement with parent carers through the Parent Carer Forum, surveys and engagement sessions
- Direct feedback from children and young people, through Barrier Breakers, particularly around inclusion, support and transitions
- Regular dialogue with our workforce, schools and settings on confidence, clarity and impact of SEND pathways
- Use of complaints, compliments and themes from casework as system intelligence

Feedback will be routinely collated and fed into governance and workstreams, creating clear loops between insight, decision-making and service adjustment.

Review and Adaptation

To strengthen evaluation over time, the partnership will maintain a small set of agreed system-level impact measures, undertake focused deep-dives on areas of risk, and apply escalation where delivery or outcomes deteriorate. This will ensure the SEND Reform Plan remains responsive, evidence-led and focused on improving outcomes, rather than static or compliance-driven.

13. Reporting to DfE

Oldham SEND Reform Plan Data Template attached.

Section 4 – Governance

14. How will the local area partnership ensure delivery of plans remain on track?

Governance Structure Charts – See Appendix 6a (LA) and 6b (NHS GM ICB).

Governance Mechanism	Purpose / Responsibilities	Membership	Cadence	Decision Rights	Escalation Route
Building block - Workstream 1 (EARLY) Early identification & intervention Early Years ISP monitoring	Responsible for the delivery of the programmes of work assigned to the group. Setting workstream priorities, delivering milestones and tasks and managing risks. Produces highlight reports for the Programme Board.	Chair: SEND and Inclusion Lead (Schools) POINT PCF LA – SEND and inclusion, early years, public health, children's social care, early help ICB Education, FE and early years settings	Bi-monthly	Workstream priorities, use of existing resources for programme delivery, monitoring spend of allocated budgets / grant funding	To the programme board
Building block - Workstream 2 (LOCAL) EaH Sufficiency & Capital (Inclusion Bases) PfA	Responsible for the delivery of the programmes of work assigned to the group. Setting workstream priorities, delivering milestones and tasks and managing risks. Produces highlight reports for the Programme Board.	Chair: Head of Specialist Support Services POINT PCF LA – SEND and Inclusion, school support, children's and adult's social care ICB and health providers Education, FE and early years settings	Bi-monthly	Workstream priorities, use of existing resources for programme delivery, monitoring spend of allocated budgets / grant funding	To the programme board
Building block - Workstream 3 (FAIR) Workforce planning Equity of offer inc. MHST SEND JSNA – health neighbourhood plan Co-production principles	Responsible for the delivery of the programmes of work assigned to the group. Setting workstream priorities, delivering milestones and tasks and managing risks. Produces highlight reports for the Programme Board.	Chair: Deputy Chief Executive Officer, POINT PCF LA – SEND and Inclusion, school support, youth services Health Education, FE and early years settings	Bi-monthly	Workstream priorities, use of existing resources for programme delivery, monitoring spend of allocated budgets / grant funding	To the programme board

Building block - Workstream 4 (EFFECTIVE) SEND Reform Programme Management Data Maturity & Performance Intelligence Quality Assurance Outcomes Framework Joint Commissioning	Responsible for the delivery of the programmes of work assigned to the group. Setting workstream priorities, delivering milestones and tasks and managing risks. Produces highlight reports for the Programme Board.	Chair: Assistant Director Children's Services Integration POINT PCF LA – SEND and inclusion, data and insight, children's and adults social care, early help, commissioning, youth services, children's transformation, public health, education and early years ICB and NHS providers	Bi-monthly	Workstream priorities, use of existing resources for programme delivery, monitoring spend of allocated budgets / grant funding	To the programme board
Building block - Workstream 5 (SHARED) MDTs Pathway redesign ND Balanced System MH LD DSR/CETR	Responsible for the delivery of the programmes of work assigned to the group. Setting workstream priorities, delivering milestones and tasks and managing risks. Produces highlight reports for the Programme Board.	Chair: Director of Children's Health POINT PCF LA – SEND and inclusion, public health ICB and health providers	Bi-monthly	Workstream priorities, use of existing resources for programme delivery, monitoring spend of allocated budgets / grant funding	To the programme board
SEND and Inclusion Programme Board	Accountable for overseeing the programme workstreams. Workstream chairs and leads report progress against workstream priorities, activities and milestones and risk management through highlight reports. Reports to the LIP Exec Board.	Chair: Director of Education and Early Years (SEND Reform Plan SRO) POINT PCF LA – SEND and Inclusion, Children's Social Care, DSCO, Data and Insight, Transformation, Commissioning, Youth Services ICB commissioners, DCO and health providers Education, FE and early years settings	Bi-monthly	Monitoring of grant funded projects and programmes of work to ensure activity and milestones remain on track and workstream risks are managed	To the LIP Exec Board.
SEND Local Inclusion Partnership Executive (LIP Exec) Board	Senior strategic board for system leaders. Ownership and accountability of the SEND	Chair: Chief Executive Officer of POINT PCF	Bi-monthly	Decision making capacity regarding resource, strategy and transformation	To the SEND Escalation Meeting

	Reform Plan and Priority Action Plan	LA – Lead Member, DCS, SEND and Inclusion, Children's Social Care, DSCO, Data and Insight, Transformation, Commissioning Barrier Breakers Health – NHS ICB deputy place lead, locality commissioning, DCO Education, FE and early years settings		and improvement activity	
SEND Escalation Meeting	Provide oversight and resolve critical issues relating to SEND in Oldham. Considers relevant government developments, and addresses matters that have not progressed with sufficient pace or rigour through the LIP Exec Board	Chair: Oldham Council Chief Executive Chair of the SEND LIP Exec ICB	Quarterly	Decision maker to resolve escalations from LIP Exec Board	To the NHS ICB Chief Executive

Oldham SEND reforms governance structure is attached to illustrate alignment to other governance arrangements and reform programmes which have key members from the SEND LIP Exec Board and Programme Board as active members.

Section 5 – Central Government Support

15. How can we help you?

To support effective delivery of Oldham's Local SEND Reform Plan, targeted support from central government would add value in accelerating implementation, strengthening quality and reducing system risk during this period of transition.

Access to specialist expertise and advisory support would be particularly beneficial in priority reform areas, including the development and scaling of the EaH offer, strengthening SEN Support in mainstream settings, and improving integrated pathways across education and health. Advisory input on inclusive practice, inclusion base delivery and sufficiency planning would help align local implementation with national learning and best practice.

Workforce challenges remain a key constraint. Support with national workforce planning tools, recruitment approaches and strategies to address shortages in educational psychology, therapy services and mental health provision would support sustainable system delivery.

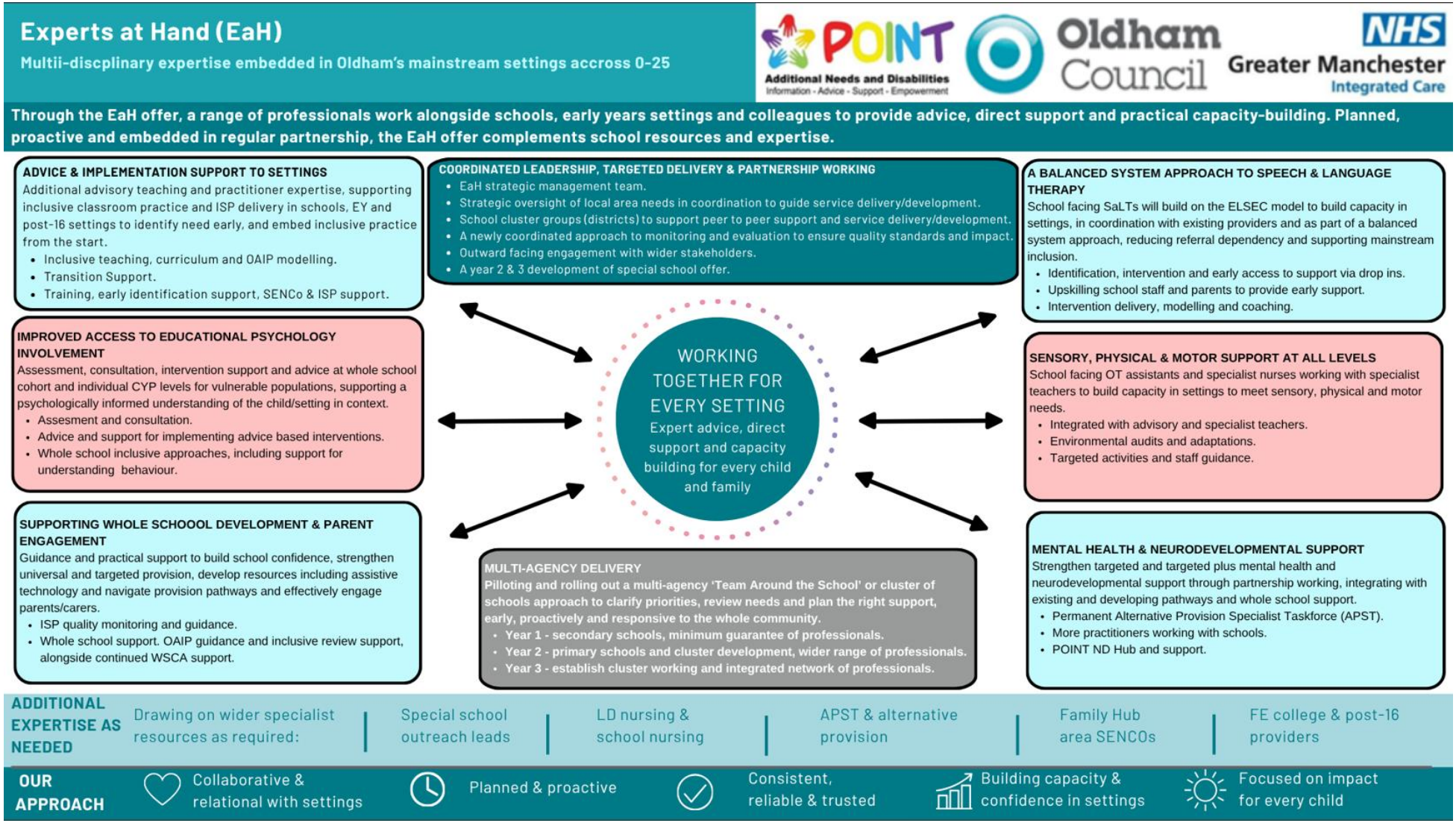
We would also welcome national tools and templates to support data integration, performance reporting and evaluation. Greater consistency in datasets and benchmarking would strengthen local ability to track impact, compare performance and inform decision making.

Facilitated peer learning and regional collaboration, particularly across Greater Manchester, would support the sharing and scaling of effective inclusive practice. Clarity in national policy, including alignment between reform expectations and inspection frameworks, would further support confident implementation.

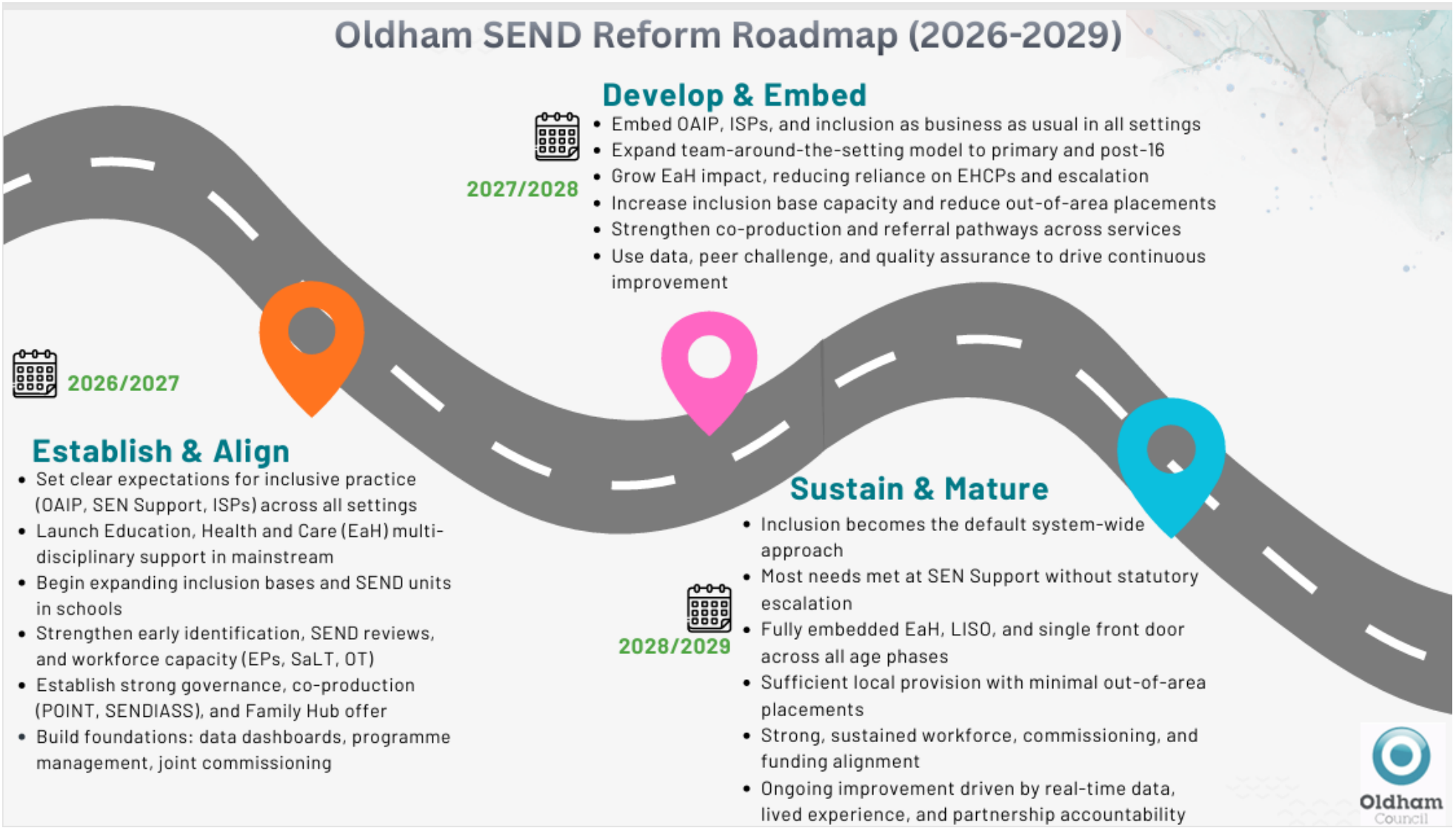
Finally, engagement from senior DfE officials at key local and regional events would support system leadership, reinforce national priorities and strengthen shared ownership across partners.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Experts at Hand Model



Appendix 2 - Three-Year Roadmap Overview



Appendix 3 – Oldham OAIP Flip Book - [Oldham OAIP]

Appendix 4 – SEND Sufficiency Model

Oldham SEND Sufficiency Model

Strategic Capital Investment Plan 2024-2029

Growing Demand

- 44% increase in EHCPs since 2020
- Demand projected to continue rising without system reform (~15%)
- Increasing complexity (ASC, SLCN, SEMH)
- 118 independent placements (£8.6m)
- High refusal to assess (42.4%)

System Challenge

- **Reliance on independent provision:** Insufficient local capacity drives external placements.
- **Rising placement costs:** Increasing use of high-cost provision is impacting sustainability.
- **Local specialist gaps:** Not enough maintained/resource provision to meet need.
- **System pressure:** Demand is escalating faster than local capacity can respond.

Our Strategy

- Inclusion-led strategy: Mainstream provision is central to meeting SEND need.
- Rising demand: Growth driven by ASC, SLCN and SEMH, with increasing complexity.
- Capacity gap: Pressures reflect historic shortfalls, not inevitable specialist demand.
- Targeted expansion: Investment since 2024 grows mainstream capacity across all phases.

Future State

- Reduced independent placements
- More children supported locally in mainstream
- Improved attendance, inclusion and outcomes
- Increased parent confidence

Phased Capital Delivery

Phase 1 (2024–2026) – Foundation

- Established the core inclusion model across the system
- Developed resourced provision and SEND units in mainstream settings
- Expanded targeted alternative provision across primary, secondary and AP
- Created local capacity for ASC, SLCN and SEMH cohorts

Phase 2 (2026–2027) – Expansion

- Expansion of inclusion base capacity across mainstream schools, early years and FE
- Targeted growth in ASC, SLCN and SEMH places
- Increased post-16 provision through local FE colleges
- Investment aligned to district-level sufficiency analysis and areas of greatest need
- Focus on maximising existing school estate, including opportunities from falling rolls

Phase 3 (2027–2028) – Scale & Embed

- Extension of inclusion base model across additional primary and secondary schools
- Focus on secondary capacity and SEMH provision
- Improved equity of access across districts
- Strengthened transition pathways (KS2–3 and KS4–5)
- Reduced escalation to specialist and independent provision

Year 3 will consolidate the model, respond to updated demand projections and strengthen post-16 and preparation for adulthood pathways, ensuring long-term system stability.

Targeted Growth

- **Targeted growth: Expand mainstream inclusion bases and resourced provision aligned to ASC, SLCN and SEMH demand.**
- **Phase focus: Prioritise secondary and post-16 capacity where gaps are greatest.**
- **Localisation: Increase in-borough specialist places to reduce out-of-area reliance.**
- **Workforce & environment: Invest in staffing, training and adaptations to sustain quality and outcomes.**

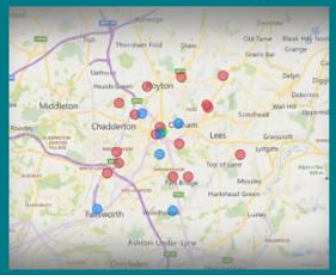
Estate & Accessibility

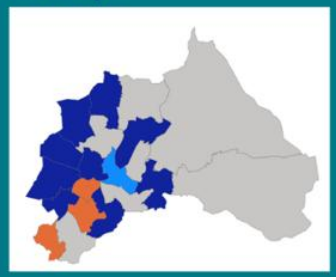
- Ensuring DDA compliance in every setting
- Creating sensory-friendly environments
- Developing accessible transport infrastructure
- Designing more outdoor learning spaces
- Providing therapy, sensory and adapted rooms

Capital Investment Summary

- £22m capital programme (2023–2030) aligned to SEND sufficiency priorities
- Funded through DfE (HNPCA), Local Authority capital, and £1.1 M S106 contributions
- Targeted at expanding mainstream inclusion capacity across primary, secondary and post-16
- Delivered through phased investment linked to demand and sufficiency gaps
- Focused on ASC, SLCN and SEMH cohorts
- Supports adaptation of existing school estate, including accessibility and specialist environments

Use of targeted heat maps





Specialist Places in Resourced Provision, SEND Units



Oldham Council

Appendix 5 – System Partner and Stakeholder Engagement Summary

SEND Reform Consultation – What We Heard

How this is informing our work – co-producing and co-designing for an inclusive and sustainable SEND system in Oldham

Consultation included breakfast briefings, inclusion hub drop-ins, PCF parent sessions, parent briefings, SEND reform road shows, executive head teacher meetings, and engagement across early years, primary, secondary and post-16 sectors.

Schools and Settings

- Support for earlier identification and simpler pathways
- Positive feedback about Educational Psychology and QEST
- Concerns about CAMHS, OT, and increasing SLCN need.
- SENDCOs want more time with children and less bureaucracy
- Workforce reform must be matched with training and capacity

Over 100 school leaders and SENDCOs engaged with the SEND Reform consultation sessions

Partnership and System Feedback

- Greater access to SEND officers requested
- Timely, personalised communication is important
- Support for specialist spaces with the right resources
- MAT professional's welcome stronger co-production
- Schools want streamlined processes and joined-up data

Parents and Carers

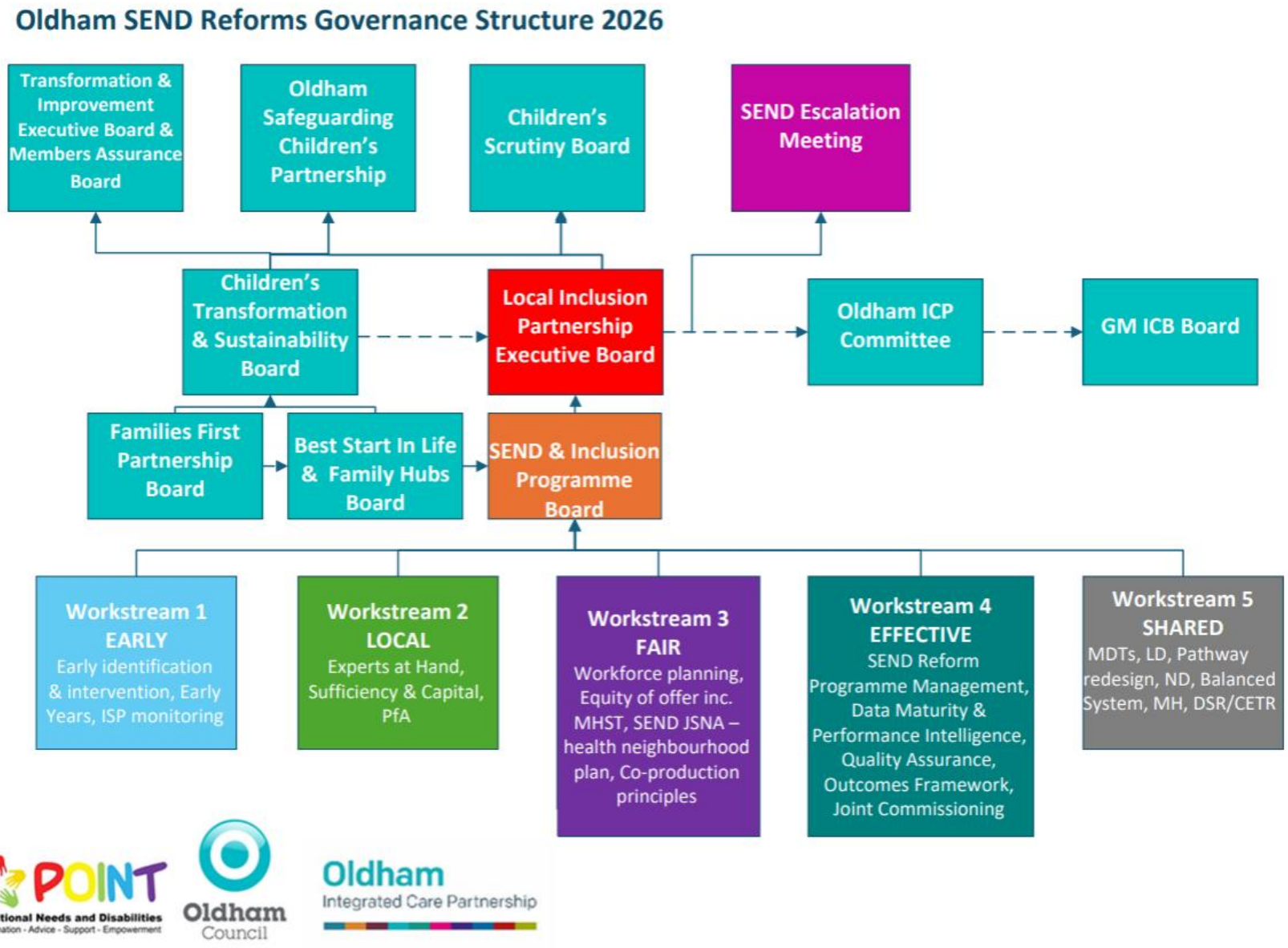
- Early emerging themes from schools were; Families want clearer communication and less waiting
- Families value earlier help before needs escalate.
- Co-production between schools and families need to be stronger
- Parents want clarity around complex needs and EHCP changes.
- POINT and PCF provided robust information to DFE consultation about emerging themes from families in Oldham
- Through POINT social media channels, the total number of interactions and views on posts specific to SEND Reforms is 12,582

Over 500 parents and carers engaged with a wide range of PCF activities focused on SEND Reform

How consultation is shaping reform

1. Earlier intervention and inclusive practice
2. Simpler pathways and clearer communication
3. Stronger co-production with families and schools
4. Better access to specialist advice and local support

Appendix 6a – LA SEND Reforms Governance Structure

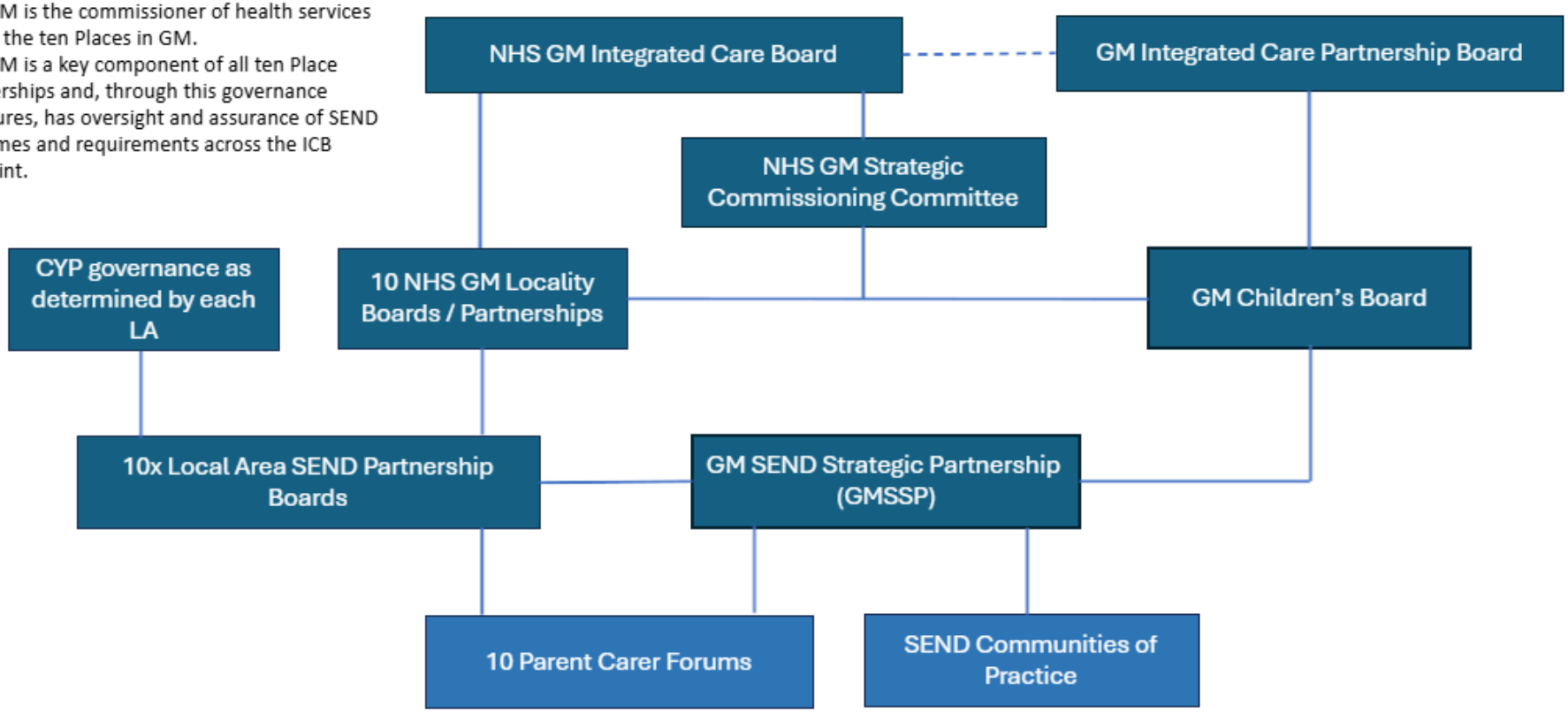


Appendix 6b – GM ICB SEND Governance Structure

NHS Greater Manchester – ICB SEND Governance

NHS Greater Manchester

- This governance chart reflects the current ICB governance as it relates to SEND.
- NHS GM is the commissioner of health services across the ten Places in GM.
- NHS GM is a key component of all ten Place Partnerships and, through this governance structures, has oversight and assurance of SEND outcomes and requirements across the ICB footprint.



ST AGNES C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL, KNOWLS LANE, OLDHAM, OL4 5RU

EXTENSION TO PROVIDE SEN CLASSROOM

PROJECT ACCOUNT SUMMARY - BUDGET ESTIMATE - 31.03.2026

PROJECT FUNDING	BUDGET				
Budget	£ 516,489.82		£ -		£ -
	£ -		£ -		£ -
Other	£ -		£ -		£ -
	£ 516,489.82		**£ -**		**£ -**
CONSTRUCTION COSTS					
Budget Cost Estimate (Refer to attached breakdown)	**£ 372,638.75**		**£ -**		**£ -**
CONSTRUCTION WORKS - SUBTOTAL	**£ 372,638.75**		**£ -**		**£ -**
PROFESSIONAL FEES					
Design & Project Management Fees (Bradbury Consulting) @ 14%	£ 52,169.43		£ -		£ -
M&E Design - *Inc*	£ -		£ -		£ -
Planning Service Charge	£ 100.00		£ -		£ -
Asbestos Survey - *Inc*	£ -		£ -		£ -
CDM Fees (Principal Designer) - *Inc*	£ -		£ -		£ -
Structural Engineer (Fixed fee) - *Inc*	£ -		£ -		£ -
Building Control	£ 4,500.00		£ -		£ -
PROFESSIONAL FEES - SUBTOTAL	**£ 56,769.43**		**£ -**		**£ -**

PROJECT TOTAL	**£ 429,408.18**	**£ -**	**£ -**
Building Insurance (zero VAT)	£ -	£ -	£ -
Planning Fees (zero VAT)	£ 1,200.00	£ -	£ -
VAT	£ 85,881.64	£ -	£ -
PROJECT TOTAL INCL FEES & VAT	**£ 516,489.82**	**£ -**	**£ -**
Project Balance	£ -	£ -	£ -

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Emergency Powers Decision Report

Extension of the current Mental Health Supported Living Services contract in place with Creative Support Ltd

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Adult Social Services
Directorate: Commissioning and Market Management
Report Author: Kate Wrigley
Email: Kate.Wrigley@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision:

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

This report seeks approval to use the powers delegated in the Cabinet report of 14th September 2023 to extend the current contract with Creative Support Ltd for Mental Health Supported Living up to the 30th September 2028.

3. Reason for urgency

The current contract is due to end on 30th September 2026. This decision supports the continuity of the service currently being provided with Creative Support who we are assured are providing the expected levels of support and quality of care outlined within the contract.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

In not approving the extension, the current contract will expire on 30th September 2026. This would mean that a tender exercise would be required for the Mental Health Supported Living contract which could not be successfully completed within the time frame before the contract expires.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

If the extension does not take place, this will result in additional costs, risks and operational pressures associated with undertaking an urgent procurement exercise and/or securing alternative provision for the current 13 service users being supported by Creative Support Ltd.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 6 October 2026
Comments

Approval is sought to extend the contract with Creative Support for the provision of supported accommodation and care services.

The forecast contract cost for the 13 individuals currently supported is £0.364m in 2026/27, rising to an estimated £0.379m in 2027/28 and £0.394m in 2028/29, subject to future uplifts.

The contract extension will ensure continuity of care and avoid the risks and costs associated with securing alternative provision. The costs can be met from existing approved budgets and there are no adverse financial implications for the Council arising from this proposal

b. Monitoring Officer

Name: Alex Bougatef
Date: 13 October 2026
Comments:

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required and it cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.

Report to CABINET

Contract extension – Mental Health Supported Living Services

Portfolio Holder: Not Appointed

Officer Contact: Jayne Ratcliffe, Director of Adult Social Care

Report Author: Kate Wrigley, Contracts and Quality Manager
Email: Kate.Wrigley@oldham.gov.uk

9 September 2026

Reason for Decision
To approve the extension of the current Mental Health Supported Living Services contract in place with Creative Support Ltd for a further 2 years to 30th September 2028.

Recommendations
To utilise the powers granted as part of the decision to award the contract to deliver Mental Health Supported Living Services delegated to the Director of Adult Social Services (see Appendices 1-3 which confirm the delegation to the Director of Adult Social Care), following completion of the open procurement exercise from 1st October 2023 until 30th September 2026, with the option to extend for a further 24 months, as outlined in Option A.

This option supports the continuity of the service currently being provided with Creative Support who we are assured are providing the expected levels of support and quality of care outlined within the contract. Ongoing monitoring of the service will be maintained, in addition to enabling further discussions around developing the provision requirements with Commissioning colleagues.

Cabinet N/A
Emergency Powers 2nd November 2026

Contract extension – Mental Health Supported Living Services

1 **Background**

1.1 A tender process commenced via The Chest on 15th May 2023 for a maximum contract term for the period of 5 years i.e initial 3 years with up to a 2 year extension provision. The maximum annual financial envelope for the tender was advertised at £1,950,000 for the maximum 5 year duration. The successful bidder identified from the competitive procurement exercise was Creative Support. Their submission price was £261,413.36 per year, which is within the allocated budget. The contract commenced on 1st October 2023.

1.2 Creative Support Limited is registered with the CQC under the provider ID 1-101648755 and is registered to provide mental health supported living provision across three properties as detailed below;

Property Address	No. of rooms	No. of Service users
28 and 30 Falmouth Street, Oldham, OL8 1PF	6	6
20 Ferndale Close, Oldham, OL4 5NL	3	3
3 Scowcroft Lane, Shaw, OL2 7BB	4	4

1.3 **Contract and Quality Monitoring**

1.4 Creative Support's contract monitoring is carried out annually, supplemented by unannounced visits to the properties throughout the year including quarterly Quality monitoring to ensure ongoing compliance and quality oversight.[1]

1.5 Creative Support achieved a good rating in their recent assessment, with all domains demonstrating consistently strong performance. The review highlighted not only compliance with expected standards, but also a proactive approach to maintaining quality across their service delivery. Their documentation, staff practice, and responsiveness to emerging issues were all assessed positively, reflecting a stable and well-managed provision.

1.6 When concerns do arise whether through routine monitoring, unannounced visits, or feedback from professionals or tenants, Creative Support are quick to act and follow the correct procedures, communicate clearly, and evidence the steps taken to resolve matters. This level of responsiveness has contributed significantly to their positive rating and ongoing confidence in their service.

[1] Contract QA and Improvement approach | Oldham Council

1.7 Any issues identified during visits are formally recorded and shared through the appropriate channels. Where concerns relate to property conditions, tenancy matters, or landlord responsibilities, these are escalated directly with the social landlord responsible to ensure they are addressed promptly and in line with regulatory expectations. This joint-working approach helps maintain safe, well-managed environments and ensures that any risks are mitigated without delay.

2 Current Position

2.1 Creative Support have approached Commissioning colleagues with a new service proposal in line with the Market Position Statement. The extension to the contract will allow sufficient time to carefully consider the proposed change in provision which will be considered in a separate report in due course.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option A – Approve the extension to the current contract from 1st October 2026. This would enable continuity of services with a provider that provides good quality care whilst meeting their contractual obligations.

3.2 Option B – Not to approve the extension and let the current contract expire on 30th September 2026. This would mean that a tender exercise would be required for the Mental Health Supported Living contract which could not be successfully completed within the time frame before the contract expires.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option A is the recommended option because, as outlined above, this option supports the continuity of the service currently being provided with Creative Support, in addition to enabling further discussions around developing the provision with Commissioning colleagues.

5 Consultation

5.1 Creative Support has been made aware that an extension to the contract is currently being sought.

5.2 The Supported Living Services are delivered in Shaw and Alexandra wards, but residents may be from across Oldham.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The forecast cost for the 13 clients receiving support from Creative Support is £0.364m in 2026/27 which includes the annual uplift that was agreed at 4% for care provision. Assuming similar annual uplifts are applied in subsequent years, the cost is projected to increase to £0.379m in 2027/28 and £0.394m in 2028/29. The current 13 service users are supported across the three properties. The extension will maintain continuity of provision and avoid the potential costs, risks and operational pressures associated with undertaking an urgent procurement exercise or securing alternative provision.

6.2 Beyond the expenditure already provided for within approved budgets, there are no anticipated adverse financial implications for the Council arising from this proposal. (Harji Patel, Senior Accountant)

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The proposal is lawful and complies with the Contract Procedure Rules. The proposed extension was provided for in the original contract which was completed. The contract modification to extend should be by deed and executed by 30 September 2026.

8. Procurement Implications

8.1 The initial tender was a competitive PCR2015 tender under DN662070 which was for 3 years with the option to extend by up to 2 years. The start date was 01 Oct 2023, with the initial term ending 30 September 2026. The contract states:

> **2.** The Council may, upon written agreement with the Provider, extend the Initial Term by no more than two years ("Extended Term").

8.2 The extension will need to be completed prior to the expiry of the initial term, but does not state the required period this needs to be completed in. The original report does seem to allow for the extension within it: 'This report requests approval to award the contract for delivery of Mental Health Supported Living Services to the preferred bidder following an open procurement exercise, from 1st October 2023 until 30th September 2026, with the option to extend for a further 24 months.'

8.3 The contract allows for extension up to 30th September 2028.

9 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

9.1 Not required

10 Key Decision

10.1 Yes

11 Key Decision Reference

11.1 Key Decision Refence is KDD-26-05

12 Background Papers

12.1 N/A

13 Appendices

13.1 N/A

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Emergency Powers Decision Report

Extension of the current Oldham Advocacy contract in place with Voiceability

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Adult Social Services
Directorate: Commissioning and Market Management
Report Author: Kate Wrigley
Email: Kate.Wrigley@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision:

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

This report seeks approval for the Director of Adult Social Services to exercise the delegated authority previously approved by the Council to extend the existing contract with VoiceAbility for the delivery of Oldham Advocacy Services until 31st October 2027.

3. Reason for urgency

The current contract is due to end on 31st October 2026. This decision supports the continuity of the service currently being provided with VoiceAbility who we are assured are providing the expected levels of support and quality of service outlined within the contract.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

In not approving the extension, the current contract will expire on 31st October 2026. This would mean that a tender exercise would be required for the Oldham Advocacy Services contract which could not be successfully completed within the time frame before the contract expires.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

If the extension does not take place, this will result in additional costs, risks and operational pressures associated with undertaking an urgent procurement exercise.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 6 October 2026
Comments

Approval is sought to extend the contract with VoiceAbility for the period 1 November 2026 to 30 October 2027 for a value of £176,850, which is fully funded from existing resources with the ASC budgets, therefore, are no additional financial implications arising from this proposal.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name: Alex Bougatef
Date: 13 October 2026
Comments:

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required and it cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.

Report to CABINET

Contract extension – Oldham Advocacy Service

Portfolio Holder: Not Appointed

Officer Contact: Jayne Ratcliffe, Director of Adult Social Care

Report Author: Kate Wrigley, Contracts and Quality Manager
Email: Kate.Wrigley@oldham.gov.uk

29 September 2026

Reason for Decision

To approve the extension of the current Oldham Advocacy Services contract in place with VoiceAbility for a further 1 year to 30th October 2027.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Director of Adult Social Services exercises the delegated authority previously approved by the Council to extend the existing contract with VoiceAbility for the delivery of Oldham Advocacy Services until 31 October 2027.

This extension will ensure continuity of statutory advocacy provision, maintain service stability for residents, and retain a provider that is currently delivering the required quality and performance standards. The extension will also allow sufficient time for the development and procurement of a new contract arrangement from 1 November 2027, while ensuring robust contract monitoring and performance oversight continue throughout the extension period.

Contract extension – Oldham Advocacy Services

1 Background

Statutory Advocacy Services, through Voiceability's commissioning arrangements

1.1 The Council has a legal duty to ensure the availability of independent advocacy services to support adults who may experience difficulties participating in decisions about their care, treatment or wellbeing. Advocacy services play a critical role in enabling individuals to understand information, express their views, secure their rights and participate as fully as possible in decisions that affect their lives. The commissioning of advocacy services supports the Council to meet its statutory obligations, promotes person-centred practice and helps ensure compliance with wider duties under the Care Act 2014, Mental Capacity Act 2005, Mental Health Act 1983 and associated regulations.

1.2 **Care Act Advocacy**
Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities must arrange for an independent advocate where an individual would experience substantial difficulty in being involved in an assessment, care and support planning process, review, safeguarding enquiry or carer's assessment, and where there is no appropriate person available to support and represent them. Care Act Advocacy ensures that people remain at the centre of decision-making and that their wishes, feelings and outcomes are properly considered throughout statutory processes.

1.3 **Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA)**
The Council is also required to commission Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA) services under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. An IMCA must be appointed in specific circumstances where a person lacks capacity to make a particular decision, has no appropriate family or friends to consult, and decisions are being made about serious medical treatment or long-term accommodation arrangements. IMCAs may also be instructed in safeguarding cases and care reviews where the legal criteria are met, ensuring that the person's rights and views are represented within best-interest decision-making processes.

1.4 **Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)**
Under the Mental Health Act 1983, local authorities and health partners must ensure access to Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) services. IMHAs provide support to qualifying patients who are detained under the Mental Health Act, subject to Community Treatment Orders or certain guardianship provisions. The role of the IMHA is to help individuals understand their legal rights, participate in decisions regarding their care and treatment, and ensure their views are communicated effectively within mental health services.

1.5 **Relevant Person's Representative (RPR) and Paid Representative Advocacy**
The Council is additionally required to commission or secure access to Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) cases, where eligible individuals are subject to authorisation arrangements and meet the statutory criteria. This advocacy function provides an important safeguard for individuals whose liberty is restricted,

ensuring that their rights are protected and that they are able to access support to challenge arrangements where appropriate.

1.6 The commissioning of advocacy services therefore represents a critical component of the Adult Social Care system, providing assurance that legal duties are met, people's rights are protected, and individuals are enabled to exercise choice, control and independence. Effective advocacy provision also supports the Council's wider ambitions around co-production, inclusion, safeguarding and the promotion of wellbeing across the adult population.

1.8 To meet the statutory duties, a tender process commenced via The Chest on 31st May 2023 for a maximum contract term for the period of 4 years i.e. initial 3 years with a 1 year extension provision. The maximum annual financial envelope for the tender was advertised at £720,000 for the maximum 4 year duration. The successful bidder identified from the competitive procurement exercise was VoiceAbility. Their submission price was £707,400 for the 4 year period, which is within the allocated budget. The contract commenced on 1st November 2023.

1.9 VoiceAbility provides support to individuals to ensure their voices are heard, with their views and choices expressed in decision making around their health and wellbeing, and to ensure they understand their rights. IMCAs, IMHAs, Learning Disability and Autism Advocates, Relevant Person Representatives are all provided by VoiceAbility through a single hub model.

2. Contract and Quality Monitoring

2.1 VoiceAbility produces quarterly reports which are reviewed by the Contracts and Quality Team considering the key themes, performance indicators, and any areas requiring attention. Quarterly meetings are held to explore the reports in greater depth, discuss emerging trends, and consider any actions or assurances needed.

2.2 The outcomes are measured under 3 themes:

- Quality of Life – '*Our clients are treated with respect and dignity. They are receiving the care, treatment or support they need and feel confidently independent*.'
- Rights – '*Our clients feel safe from harmful people and situations. They have sufficient knowledge of rights and how to use them and their rights are upheld*.'
- Voice and Control – '*Our clients feel listened to and are having their wishes or beliefs represented and considered. They understand available choices can access information and make decisions, and they can challenge, appeal or raise concerns about decisions*.'

2.3 The service has consistently demonstrated value for residents, throughout the length of the contract, by delivering measurable positive outcomes in quality of life, rights, and voice and control; ensuring access to independent advocacy; supporting individuals through safeguarding and care processes; and enabling vulnerable adults to have their views heard and their rights protected. The high levels of positive outcomes across all three themes provide evidence that the service is making a meaningful difference to residents' wellbeing, independence and ability to influence decisions affecting their lives.

2.4 In the latest monitoring information (Quarter 1 2026/27) data gathered in relation to the outcome measures above demonstrated:

- 91.6% of respondents reported either an improvement or no deterioration in their Quality of Life which suggests that residents are receiving the care, support and advocacy necessary to maintain or enhance their wellbeing, independence, dignity and overall life experience. For residents, this means they are more likely to feel respected, supported in achieving their personal outcomes, and able to live as independently as possible.
- 94% satisfaction for Rights demonstrates that residents are being supported to understand and exercise their legal and human rights. This is particularly valuable for vulnerable individuals who may otherwise struggle to challenge decisions, access services or protect themselves from abuse, neglect or discrimination. It indicates that advocacy support is helping to ensure residents remain safe and that their rights are upheld.
- 96.4% satisfaction for Voice and Control demonstrating that residents are being empowered to participate in decisions about their care and support, have their wishes and preferences heard, and understand the choices available to them. Increased voice and control can lead to more person-centred care and greater satisfaction with services.
- The service received 236 new enquiries during the quarter. IMHA accounted for the largest proportion of activity, with 126 enquiries (53.4%), reflecting the significant demand for statutory mental health advocacy across the borough. Both Care Act Advocacy and Relevant Person's Representative (RPR) services received 30 enquiries each (12.7%).
- Within Care Act Advocacy, support was most commonly provided for Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiries, Care & Support Planning, Care Needs Assessments and Care Reviews. The service also continued to deliver specialist General Advocacy, predominantly supporting individuals with learning disabilities, demonstrating the breadth of advocacy available to meet the needs of vulnerable adults across Oldham.
- Across the reporting period, VoiceAbility continues to demonstrate strong and consistent performance.

2.5 VoiceAbility have consistently met the expected contractual standards throughout the length of the contract. They take a proactive and reflective approach to maintaining quality within their service delivery. Their documentation is thorough and well-structured, staff practice remains professional and person-centred, and they respond promptly and effectively to any issues as they arise. Collectively, this reflects a stable, well-managed, and quality-driven provision that maintains a clear focus on safeguarding, advocacy standards, and positive outcomes for individuals.

2.6 In considering the recommendation to extent the contract, officers have assessed both service performance and the strategic risks associated with changing provider arrangements within a statutory advocacy service. Advocacy provision is a critical component of the Adult Social Care system, enabling the Council to discharge its duties under the Care Act 2014, Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Mental Health Act 1983. Any disruption to service delivery could impact the Council's ability to meet its statutory responsibilities and ensure vulnerable residents receive timely access to advocacy support. Extending the current arrangement provides assurance that these statutory services will

remain in place without interruption whilst long-term commissioning arrangements are developed.

2.7 VoiceAbility has established effective operational relationships with Adult Social Care, Mental Health Servies, safeguarding teams, health partners and other referring agencies across Oldham. These relationships support timely referrals, effective partnership working and positive outcomes for residents. Maintaining continuity of provision protects these established pathways and reduces the risks associated with provider transition, including potential impacts on referral management, workforce capacity, service quality and resident experience.

2.8 The performance information presented throughout the contract period demonstrates that VoiceAbility is delivery positive outcomes across the key domains of Quality of Life, Rights, and Voice and Control. Satisfaction and outcome measures consistently exceed 90%, providing evidence that residents are benefiting from the advocacy support provided and that the service us helping individuals to understand their rights, participate in decision-making and influence outcomes affecting their lives. This sustained performance provides confidence that the provider continues to deliver a high-quality service that meets the needs of Oldham residents.

2.9 The proposed extension will also provide sufficient time to undertake a comprehensive review of future advocacy requirements across Adult Social Care, taking account of changing demand, legislative developments, service pressures and opportunities for redesign. This work has commenced, to support with the 6 month procurement activity. This review work will enable commissioners to engage stakeholders, review service specifications, consider future commissioning models and undertake a robust procurement process for implementation from 1 May 2027, for new contractual arrangements to be in place by 1 November 2027. Extending the contract therefore represents a proportionate and pragmatic approach that balances service continuity, statutory compliance, value for money and effective future market planning.

2.10 Officers are satisfied that the proposed extension represents the option that presents the least operational and implementation risk to the Council whilst continuing to secure positive outcomes for residents. The extension maintains stability within a well-performing service, provides assurance regarding the continued delivery of statutory advocacy functions, and enables the Council to undertake a planned procurement exercise from a position of service strength rather than introducing avoidable disruption to a critical support service for some of the borough's most vulnerable residents.

3 Commissioning intentions

3.1 As this contract is due to expire following this extension request to 30th October 2027, the extension to the contract will allow sufficient time for Commissioning colleagues to carry out a tender exercise for this service.

4 Options/Alternatives

4.1 Option A – Approve the extension to the current contract from 1st November 2026. This would enable continuity of services with a provider that provides good quality services whilst meeting their contractual obligations.

4.2 Option B – Not to approve the extension and let the current contract expire on 30th October 2026. This would mean that a tender exercise would be required for the Oldham Advocacy Services contract which could not be successfully completed within the time frame before the contract expires.

5 Preferred Option

5.1 Option A is the recommended option because, as outlined above, this option supports the continuity of the service currently being provided with VoiceAbility enabling the council to fulfil statutory duties under the Care Act 2014. There are no concerns in relation to the contract delivery to date, with high levels of satisfaction and a positive working relationship in place with the provider.

6 Consultation

6.1 VoiceAbility has been made aware that an extension to the contract is currently being sought.

6.2 The Advocacy Services are delivered across all wards within Oldham.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 The current contract in place with VoiceAbility for the period 1st November 2026 to 30th October 2027 has a total cost of £176,850. All expenditure will be contained within the recurring annual budget established within the MTFS of £176,850 for VoiceAbility.

Andrew Pearson, Accountant.

8 Legal Implications

8.1 The proposal is lawful and complies with the Contract Procedure Rules. The contract was let under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 with express provision to allow for a one year extension. On this basis, pursuant to regulation 72(1)(a), the council may extend the contract.

Bryan Boese, Solicitor

9. Procurement Implications

9.1 Taking into consideration and on good faith, the context and detail contained in this report, along with the critical nature of this service and the commitment to retender, there are no restrictions to approving this extension.

Tom Pyne, Assistant Director: Procurement, Contract Management and Social Value

10 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

10.1 Not required

11 Key Decision

11.1 Yes

12 Key Decision Reference

12.1 Key Decision Refence is KDD-26-07

13 Background Papers

13.1 N/A

14 Appendices

N/A

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Emergency Powers Decision Report

Oldham College – Specialist Provision

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Education and Early Years
Directorate: Children's Services
Report Author: Victoria Caldwell
Email: Victoria.Caldwell@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision:

1. **Power to make the decision**
The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. **Decision Sought**
This report seeks approval to allocate capital funding of **£849,192** which will be funded from the Basic Need/HNPCA grants and resource funding of £203k of required revenue funding per annum from the High Needs Block.

3. **Reason for urgency**
The decision is required urgently to enable the planned expansion of specialist provision at Oldham College to progress in time for 12 additional places to be available from September 2027. Demand for specialist placements continues to increase across the Borough. Any delay in confirming the capital and associated revenue funding will risk the specialist provision not being delivered in time, reducing the Local Authority's ability to meet local demand for children and young people with SEND who require specialist provision.

Risk(s) of not taking the decision
Failure to approve the proposal now will prevent the creation of 12 additional specialist places at Oldham College, reducing the Local Authority's ability to meet growing demand for specialist provision. This would place further pressure on existing local capacity and may lead to increased reliance on higher-cost independent and out-of-borough placements. Any delay in approving the funding risks the modular accommodation not being delivered on time for September 2027, resulting in a missed opportunity to increase local specialist capacity and support delivery of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy and Local SEND Reform Plan.

5. **Financial impact if decision is not taken forward**
Failure to proceed with the proposal is likely to result in continued or increased expenditure on higher-cost independent and out-of-borough placements where

children and young people cannot be accommodated within local specialist provision. This would reduce the Local Authority's ability to manage demand within existing High Needs Block resources and may result in higher overall costs than investing in additional local capacity. The proposal also supports the creation of 12 additional specialist places within Oldham, helping to reduce future pressure on specialist placement budgets.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer
Name Lee Walsh
Date 17 September 2026

Comments

This report seeks approval to allocate £850k capital funding to increase in-borough specialist education capacity through the creation of 12 additional places at Oldham College. The scheme will be funded from the Council's Basic Need and High Needs Provision Capital Allocation. Works will be commissioned by the College and funded through a Grant Funding Agreement, with payments linked to verified expenditure and scheme of delivery.

The report also seeks approval to allocate £203k per annum of revenue funding from the High Needs Block to support the additional specialist provision. While this will increase High Needs' expenditure, the cost is expected to be partially offset by reduced demand for alternative specialist placements currently funded elsewhere within the High Needs Block.

b. Monitoring Officer
Name Alex Bougatef (Monitoring Officer)
Date 17.09.26

Comments

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year, so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed, as the Council has failed at three successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required and it cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.

Report to Chief Executive

Basic/ Higher Needs Provision in Mainstream Settings (Oldham College)

Portfolio Holder: (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills)

Officer Contact: Paul Tinsley (Director of Education and Early Years)

Report Author: Victoria Caldwell (Schools Capital Project Manager)

2nd November 2026

Reason for Decision

This report seeks Cabinet approval for a capital project to establish additional specialist provision operated by Oldham College. The project will increase local specialist capacity for children and young people with SEND, helping to meet growing demand and reduce reliance on independent and out-of-borough placements.

The report also seeks approval for the allocation of capital funding from the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA) and Basic Need Grant to support delivery of the scheme.

Executive Summary

This report relates to a proposal by Oldham College to develop additional specialist provision. The proposal has been developed sufficiently to enable Cabinet to consider the allocation of capital funding.

The project will create 12 additional specialist places for children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), increasing local specialist capacity and supporting children to access education within their local community.

Currently the Local Authority has High Needs Capital Allocation Funding, which is released to schools and colleges upon application and consideration by panel. It is proposed that where projects will generate additional places these projects are funded from the HNPCA Grant provision

Project Outlines and Recommendation

Oldham College

Oldham College provides high-quality education and training that helps learners of all ages achieve their goals. it welcomes almost 10,000 students each year across its full-time and part-time courses. At the time of Ofsted's October 2025 monitoring visit, Oldham College had 442 students receiving Basic Needs funding.

The proposal will establish significant structural improvements including health and safety provision alongside additional classrooms and learning spaces for specialist learning on the Oldham College site. The provision will support children and young people whose needs require specialist intervention whilst maintaining links with a mainstream college environment where appropriate.

The project will create a minimum of 12 additional specialist places for children with EHCPs and contribute to increasing specialist capacity within the borough.

The total cost of this project is estimated to be **£849,192** which includes a 10% contingency. Any use of the 10% contingency funding would require approval from the Director of Education and Early Years. If not used, then the 10% contingency, along with any unspent grant funding would be returned to the High Needs provision budget. It is proposed that this project is funded by the HNPCA

1 **Background**

1.1 Demand for specialist provision for children and young people with SEND has increased significantly in recent years, resulting in growing pressure on local specialist capacity and an increased reliance on independent and out-of-borough placements. The recommended option will enable the Council to invest in additional specialist provision through the development of additional specialist provision at Oldham College, increasing local capacity and supporting children and young people to access appropriate provision closer to home.

1.2 Strategic alignment

The proposal aligns with Oldham's SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and the Local SEND Reform Plan 2026, which seeks to strengthen inclusion, improve local sufficiency and ensure children and young people can access the right support at the right time. The development of this specialist provision will contribute to a more coherent continuum of provision across the borough, supporting positive outcomes for children and young people with SEND while helping to create a more sustainable local system.

2 Procurement Implications

2.1 There are no procurement implications arising from the report

3 Risk Assessments

3.1 The Council will require confirmation from the trust that appropriate insurance in place before releasing funds for the works

4 Current Position

4.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to secure sufficient educational provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND),

including those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). In line with Oldham's SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027, the Local SEND Reform Plan and the government's Every Child Achieving and Thriving reforms, the Local Authority is committed to developing a more inclusive and sustainable continuum of provision that enables children and young people to access the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

The demand for specialist provision has increased significantly in recent years, placing pressure on local capacity and resulting in a growing number of children and young people requiring independent and out-of-borough placements. The development of additional specialist provision within Oldham College will strengthen local sufficiency, expand local capacity and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. It will also support the long-term sustainability of the High Needs Block by reducing reliance on higher-cost placements where needs can be effectively met within Oldham.

4.2 To ensure the effective operation and long-term sustainability of the provision, the Local Authority will enter into a formal commissioning contract with Oldham College. The service specification of the contract will set out the admissions arrangements, placement criteria, governance arrangements, performance expectations, financial responsibilities and reporting requirements. This will support ongoing oversight of quality, demand and outcomes, ensuring the provision contributes to the Local Authority's sufficiency, inclusion and SEND reform objectives whilst delivering value for money.

5 Options/Alternatives

5.1 Option 1: Approve the capital investment required to establish additional specialist provision at Oldham College, supporting the ambitions of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and the Local SEND Reform Plan 2026.

5.2 Option 2: Do not approve the project, resulting in a missed opportunity to increase local specialist capacity and support the delivery of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and the Local SEND Reform Plan 2026.

6 Preferred Option

6.1 Option 1

7 Consultation

7.1 Consultation has taken place with Oldham College and relevant Local Authority officers responsible for SEND sufficiency, capital programmes and educational place planning.

8 Financial Implications

8.1 Financial Implications (Capital)

The cost of the associated works including a contingency of 10% is **£850k** and will be a charge to the educational capital programme 2026/27 and 2027/28, which will be funded from the High Needs Grant (HNPCA). Any unspent budget will be returned to the High Need provision budget. Any use of the 10% contingency funding would require approval from the Director of Education and Early Years. If not used, then the 10% contingency would be returned to

the High Needs provision budget. The College is unable to reclaim their own VAT, therefore any repayments to the college will be paid gross of VAT

The works will be commissioned directly by the college and funding paid to the college as part of a Grant Funding Agreement, upon receipt of periodic claims and verification of capital expenditure and satisfactory works.

Paula Buckley – Finance Manager

8.2 Financial Implications – (Resources)

The revenue costs of opening a 12-place specialist base at Oldham College will be funded from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The High Needs Block covers funding to support provision for pupils and students with SEND who require additional resources to participate in education and learning, from their early years to age 25 in a range of provision including special schools, mainstream schools, alternative provision, and independent specialist provision. The funding also contributes towards council centrally retained expenditure for High Needs

The opening of the specialist base, creating 12 additional places would result in £203k of required revenue funding per annum from the High Needs Block, split between base and high needs top up. This would be offset, in part, by savings in other areas of the High Needs Block where the pupils may be currently accessing funding.

Vicky Gibbons – Senior Accountant

9 Legal Implications

9.1 The proposal will benefit the students at the college and further demonstrate the ongoing commitment by the Council to the education of the children of the Borough with particular emphasis upon the most vulnerable children in the borough

Alex Bougatef - Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

9.2 The proposal is to make a grant of capital investment to expand specialist provision at Oldham College, supporting the ambitions of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and the Local SEND Reform Plan

9.3 Making the grant is in scope of section 1 of the Localism Act 2021 which give Local Authorities a general power of competence to do anything which an individual may do for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in their area

9.4 Officers must work with legal colleagues to approve and formalise the terms of any grant agreement or MOU in conjunction with Finance and Audit colleagues

9.5 The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and Project Manager must ensure that Subsidy Control is considered in consultation with Legal Services and that all relevant assessments are made and recorded, all relevant notices are published, and all relevant regulations and legislation is complied with to the satisfaction of the Section 151 Officer and in compliance with the Financial Procedure Rules of the Council. External advice may be needed to support these activities which will be a cost to the Project. A grant can amount to a subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Therefore, a subsidy control analysis of the grant

funding and what it will be used for is essential before payment of the grant. This process will be undertaken by the Project Team led by the SRO with support and input from Legal Services, Finance and other relevant officers

9.6 In the event that any grant is determined to be a subsidy, details regarding the same must be published within three months of award for all subsidies in excess of £100,000 and the Report Author and SRO will need to liaise with Finance and Audit colleagues in this regard

9.7 The Transparency obligations of the Council must be complied with

9.8 The terms of the Grant Agreement must be reviewed and agreed by the SRO along with legal and finance colleagues. Provisions of note and/or provisions with associated risk should be highlighted to officers for consideration

Bryan Boese –Solicitor

10 Equality Impact Assessment, including implications for Children and Young People

10.1 There are no negative implications for vulnerable groups or children and young people.

11 Key Decision

11.1 Yes

12 Key Decision Reference

12.1 KDD-26-09

13 Appendices & Background Papers

13.1 SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027
13.2 Send Reform Plan 2026
13.3 HNCPA Capital Bid 1

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Emergency Powers Decision Report

Staying Close

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Children's Social Care
Directorate: Children's Services
Report Author: Nick Whitbread
Email: nick.whitbread@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: October 2026

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1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

This paper seeks agreement for Oldham Council to agree the Staying Close Delivery Plan and receive the grant from the Department for Education (DfE).

3. Reason for urgency

Pending DfE final approval, the grant is expected to be received during October 2026 for commencement of the project in November 2026. Delaying the acceptance of the grant will impact the proposed delivery plan and leave the DfE approval at risk.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

Failure to participate would result in the loss of access to the DfE's Staying Close funds that are being offered to Council's across the country. This would have a detrimental impact on care leavers in the council, which we have corporate parenting responsibilities for and statutory duties to ensure suitable accommodation options. The Staying Close Delivery Bid expands these accommodation options with the implementation of a Supported Lodgings offer.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

Failure to participate would result in the loss of access to the DfE's Staying Close funds that are being offered to Council's across the country. This would have a detrimental impact on care leavers in the council, which we have corporate parenting responsibilities for and statutory duties to ensure suitable accommodation options. The Staying Close Delivery Bid expands these accommodation options with the implementation of a Supported Lodgings offer.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 13 October 2026
Comments

The Department for Education (DfE) has invited the Council to submit a Staying Close proposal, with indicative grant funding of £411,701 subject to DfE approval. The report recommends acceptance of the funding to further strengthen the Leaving Care offer. All expenditure relates to new activity and will only be incurred following DfE approval and receipt of a formal grant agreement.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name: Alex Bougatef
Date:13 October 2026
Comments:

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required and it cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.

Report to the Chief Executive

Staying Close

Officer Contact: Julie Daniels

Report Author: Nick Whitbread – Assistant Director – Corporate Parenting

Email: nick.whitbread@oldham.gov.uk

2nd November 2026

Reason for Decision

This paper seeks agreement for Oldham Council to agree the Staying Close Delivery Plan and receive the grant from the Department for Education (DfE).

Recommendations

Approve the proposed grant from the DfE to deliver the Staying Close project, as per the Delivery Plan at Appendix I.

Staying Close

1 **Background**

1.1 The Department for Education (DfE) has invited Local Authorities to participate in the national Staying Close programme, which seeks to improve outcomes for care leavers through enhanced accommodation options, relationship-based support and improved emotional wellbeing provision. Oldham Council has submitted a delivery plan setting out proposals to create a Staying Close offer incorporating Supported Lodgings accommodation, dedicated coordination and mental wellbeing support for care leavers aged 18-25.

1.2 The programme supports the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities and statutory duties towards care leavers by improving access to suitable accommodation, reducing the risk of homelessness, strengthening support networks and promoting independence. The proposal aligns with the Council's priorities to improve outcomes for children in care and care experienced young people and contributes to commitments around prevention, early intervention and supporting vulnerable residents to thrive.

1.3 The DfE has provisionally allocated grant funding of £411,701 to support implementation and delivery of the programme between November 2026 and March 2028, subject to acceptance of the delivery plan.

2 Current Position

2.1 Oldham currently provides a range of support to care leavers through its Leaving Care Service, Personal Adviser offer and wider corporate parenting arrangements. However, the authority does not currently have a dedicated Supported Lodgings programme or Staying Close offer in place.

2.2 The proposed model would establish additional accommodation capacity through Supported Lodgings, provide dedicated Staying Close support and introduce a Mental Health Care Navigator to improve access to emotional wellbeing support. The programme aims to support care leavers who require additional assistance during their transition to adulthood, particularly those who are not eligible for Staying Put arrangements or who may be vulnerable to housing instability.

2.3 The delivery plan anticipates supporting four young people by March 2027 and a further twelve young people during 2027/28 through Supported Lodgings, alongside mental wellbeing support for up to forty care leavers.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1 - Approve the grant and implement the Staying Close Delivery Plan (Recommended)

Advantages:

- Secures up to £411,701 of DfE funding to improve outcomes for care leavers.
- Creates new Supported Lodgings accommodation capacity and expands accommodation choice.
- Improves support for care leavers through dedicated Staying Close coordination and mental wellbeing provision.
- Supports statutory responsibilities towards care leavers and contributes to prevention of homelessness.
- Strengthens the Council's corporate parenting offer and supports improved long-term outcomes.

Disadvantages:

- Requires implementation of a new programme and associated recruitment, governance and performance management arrangements.

3.2 Option 2 - Decline participation in the Staying Close programme

Advantages:

- No requirement to implement the proposed programme or associated staffing and accommodation arrangements.

Disadvantages:

- Loss of access to DfE grant funding.
- Reduced opportunities to improve accommodation options and support available to care leavers.
- Increased risk that care leavers do not benefit from enhanced support designed to reduce homelessness and improve independence outcomes.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 1 is the preferred option.

4.2 Approval of the DfE Staying Close grant and delivery plan will enable Oldham Council to establish a new relationship-based support model for care leavers that combines Supported Lodgings accommodation, dedicated Staying Close coordination and mental wellbeing support. The programme will increase accommodation capacity, improve housing stability and strengthen support for young people transitioning to adulthood.

4.2 The proposal represents an opportunity to secure external funding to enhance the Council's existing Leaving Care offer and further deliver on corporate parenting responsibilities. The programme has clear governance arrangements, defined milestones, identified risks and mitigations, and plans for sustainability through integration into mainstream Leaving Care services.

4.3 Failure to approve the proposal would result in the loss of DfE funding and the associated benefits for care leavers, including access to additional Supported Lodgings accommodation and enhanced support services.

The recommendation is therefore to approve acceptance of the DfE grant and implementation of the Staying Close Delivery Plan as set out in Appendix I.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 The DfE has invited Oldham Council to submit a delivery plan for the Staying Close Offer. The indicative funding is £411,701 but this is subject to the delivery plan being approved by the DfE. The recommended option is to accept the funding which with enable the Leaving Care offer to be further strengthened.

The delivery plan is included in Appendix 1 of the report, and all of the costs are new and will only be incurred once the plan has been ratified by the DfE and a grant agreement is received. It should be noted that the costs for the Mental Health Care Navigator is subject to a separate funding stream and is therefore not included in the £411,701 grant allocation.

(Nicola Harrop – Finance Manager)

6 **Legal Implications**

6.1 The Council has statutory duties towards eligible, relevant and former relevant children under the Children Act 1989 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. The proposed Staying Close programme supports the Council in discharging its duties as a corporate parent and in promoting the welfare, stability and independence of care leavers.

6.2 Acceptance of the Department for Education grant is within the Council's powers and is subject to compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant funding agreement. Delegated authority should be granted to the Exec Director of Childrens Services in consultation with legal services and finance to enter into the necessary grant agreement and associated documentation.

6.3 Where the provision of accommodation, support services or other commissioned wellbeing services is required, officers must ensure compliance with all relevant statutory requirements, including safeguarding, data protection, equality duties and where applicable procurement legislation and the Council's contract procedure rules.

6.4 The report confirms that the grant funding will be to March 2028. Any proposal to continue the service beyond the grant period will require additional consideration and approval.
(Alex Bougatef - Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer)

7. **Procurement Implications**

7.1 There are no immediate procurement implications for receiving the DfE grant. However, Procurement should be consulted with regards to how the grant monies are spent, to ensure expenditure complies with the Council's CPRs and procurement legislation.

Tom Pyne – Assistant Director Procurement

8 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

8.1 Yes

9 **Key Decision**

9.1 Yes

10 **Key Decision Reference**

10.1 KDD-26-11

11 **Appendices & Background Papers**

11.1 Staying Close Delivery Plan

Approved by the Chief Executive following consultation with the political group leaders who were in attendance as follows:- Councillors: Decision made under the authorisation contained in Section 9C (5) Delegations of Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) and Section 3.6 of Part 4 (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions.
Signed: Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive Dated:
Date of Leaders' Consultative meeting:
Summary of feedback from the political group leaders

Appendix I

Staying Close Delivery Plan

Department for Education

Staying Close

Delivery plan form

August 2026

Section 1 – How your plan will be reviewed

There are four questions that we would like further information about. The questions focus on:

1) Your contact details
2) Your existing offer and outcomes for care leavers (you might prefer to attach this separately)
3) Your proposed Staying Close model, and how it will improve outcomes for the young people in your area. A clear and realistic delivery plan.
4) Costings and numbers of young people supported.

Delivery plans will be reviewed to ensure that plans are realistic and feasible for delivery. We will either agree your plan or give suggestions for improvements. As long as we agree plans that are within the scope of Staying Close, this will not impact the funding allocation we offer you – the feedback process is designed to support you to implement the programme, and agree ambitious but deliverable targets.

Section 2 – Contact details

Part A – Contact details

Name of Local Authority (LA)	Oldham Council
Name of Officer	Nick Whitbread
Role of Officer	Assistant Director – Corporate Parenting
Officer contact email	nick.whitbread@oldham.gov.uk
Region (East Midlands, East of England, London, North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire and Humber).	North West

Section 3 – Your local authority profile – context

Oldham		
Existing housing provision		
Number of care leavers in community-building house projects	**Number of care leavers in supported lodgings**	**Number of care leavers in intensive family-based support**
0	0	0
Existing mental health provision		
Bee Connected app, Early Break provision and a Transitions Team with Adult Social Care.		
Statistics		
Number of care leavers aged 17-18 (2025)	**Number of care leavers aged 19-21 (2025)**	**Number of care leavers aged 22-24 (2025)**
74	207	157
Total number of care leavers aged 17-24 (2025)	**Spending on care leaver support (FY 2024-25)**	**Average spend per care leaver (approximately)**
438	£9,752,295	£20,488
Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation aged 17-18 (2025)	**Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation 19 - 21 (2025)**	**Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation 22-24 (2025)**
-	94%	-
Number of care leavers aged 18 - 20 owed prevention or relief of homlessness (Oct to Dec 2025)	**Number of care leavers aged 21-24 owed prevention or relief of homlessness (Oct to Dec 2025)**	
4	1	
Additional information		
N/A		

Section 4 – Your Staying Close model

Q1) Please set out your proposed Staying Close model. This should include:

- Details of your Staying Close offer; how it relates to any existing provision; how it will meet the minimum offer set out in the new Staying Close programme outline and how you plan to enhance your offer through innovative or bespoke elements.
- How your offer will meet the needs of your young people, (with reference to any specific needs or characteristics of your young people or contextual detail of the local area which have relevance to the model and which cohorts you intend to target).
- How your offer will build capacity through additional provision, so that more care leavers can access high-quality accommodation with the right support.

Total word count: (Max 750 words)
Oldham Council proposes to deliver Staying Close through a relationship-based support model that combines dedicated Staying Close support, Supported Lodgings accommodation and enhanced mental wellbeing provision. The model has been designed to reflect the evidence underpinning successful Staying Close programmes, recognising that positive outcomes are achieved through sustained trusted relationships, practical support, emotional wellbeing assistance and stable accommodation pathways. The offer aligns with the national Staying Close programme objective of helping care leavers secure and sustain suitable accommodation whilst strengthening support networks and increasing independence. The model will target care leavers aged 18-25 whose pathway planning identifies a need for additional support to transition successfully into adulthood. Priority will be given to young people who are not eligible for Staying Put arrangements, those at risk of housing instability and those who would benefit from a gradual move towards independent living rather than progressing directly into tenancies or commissioned accommodation. Every young person accessing Staying Close will receive practical, emotional and relational support alongside the accommodation offer. Support will focus on helping young people develop independent living skills, maintain accommodation, strengthen family and community connections, access education, employment and training opportunities and navigate services. The offer will be flexible and responsive, enabling young people to receive additional support during periods of challenge or instability and reducing the risk of homelessness, isolation and placement breakdown. Supported Lodgings forms the accommodation element of the Staying Close model and provides young people with a room in a carefully assessed and trained host household where they can experience supportive family and community environments whilst continuing to develop independence skills.

Young people will be actively involved in decisions about their accommodation and support arrangements. The model will promote co-production, ensuring support plans are developed with young people and reflect their aspirations, strengths and individual circumstances. Where appropriate, Staying Close support will help young people maintain positive relationships with former carers, family members, trusted adults and wider support networks, recognising the importance of belonging and connection in successful transitions from care.

Alongside accommodation and Staying Close support, Oldham will introduce a dedicated Mental Wellbeing Care Navigator funded through the programme. The practitioner will provide early intervention, low-intensity mental health support, advice, guidance and service navigation, working closely with Personal Advisers, Staying Close workers, hosts and partner agencies.

The programme will contribute to improved outcomes across accommodation stability, emotional wellbeing, participation in education, employment and training, social inclusion and independence. Success will be measured through accommodation sustainment, reduced homelessness and housing instability, wellbeing outcomes, EET participation and feedback from young people. Outcomes will be monitored through quarterly performance reporting and regular reviews of accommodation stability, support engagement and young people's experiences. This evidence will be used to demonstrate the impact of the model, inform service development and build the case for continued investment.

Sustainability will be achieved through embedding Staying Close within Oldham's mainstream Leaving Care Service. The Staying Close Coordinator will work alongside Personal Advisers and existing corporate parenting services, ensuring that assessment for Staying Close support becomes part of routine pathway planning and transition arrangements. Learning from the programme will inform the development of family-based accommodation pathways across the wider Family First agenda, whilst outcome data, cost-benefit analysis and evidence of reduced reliance on higher-cost accommodation and homelessness services will support future investment decisions. By developing a sustainable network of local Supported Lodgings hosts and integrating Staying Close into core practice, Oldham will ensure that the benefits of the programme continue beyond the initial funding period.

<u>Recruitment & Retention Strategy</u>

Targeted Marketing & Community Outreach: Use local media, digital campaigns, and community events to reach people from all walks of life—including single adults, couples, and retirees—who have a spare bedroom.

Clear Messaging on the Role: Emphasize that hosts provide a stepping-stone family environment (teaching cooking, budgeting, and emotional resilience) rather than round-the-clock professional care.

Transparent Financial & Practical Offer: Clearly advertise weekly allowances or rent contributions, alongside access to dedicated support workers and comprehensive safeguarding training.

Streamlined Assessment & Vetting: Implement a welcoming yet robust application process—including initial inquiries, home visits, household interviews, and panel approval—while ensuring compliance with regulatory standards.

Retention and Succession Planning: Focus on peer support, ongoing training, and appreciation events to retain experienced hosts and build a sustainable workforce

It is confirmed that this proposal is to fund implementation of additional support that Oldham does not currently have in place. All similar and related support that Oldham already has in place will continue alongside the Staying Close programme.

Q4) Please set out a clear and realistic delivery plan to demonstrate how you will establish and deliver Staying Close in your locality (you may attach relevant plans if available). This should include:

- High level milestones for November 26 - March 28.
- A detailed resource plan (capacity, expertise, roles and responsibilities).
- Risks, mitigations and contingencies.

Total word count: (Max 500 words)

High-Level Milestones

November 2026 to March 2027

- Finalise Staying Close implementation arrangements.
- Appoint co-ordinator within Leaving Care Service.
- Develop Supported Lodgings recruitment and marketing campaign.
- Design policies, procedures and quality assurance arrangements.
- Begin recruitment, assessment and training of new hosts.
- Confirm partnership arrangements for mental health provision.
- Identify first cohort of care leavers for Staying Close support and match with hosts.
- Recruit Mental Health Care Navigator.

April 2027 to September 2027

- Launch expanded Supported Lodgings offer.

- Approve and onboard additional hosts.
- Match Staying Close participants with placements.
- Establish performance monitoring framework and outcome measures.

October 2027 to March 2028

- Increase placement capacity and programme reach.
- Review outcomes, placement stability and young people's feedback.
- Complete service evaluation and sustainability planning.
- Produce cost-benefit analysis and business case for future investment.
- Embed Staying Close assessment within standard Leaving Care pathway planning processes.
- Incorporate successful elements of the model into mainstream Leaving Care practice.
- Develop sustainability plan and future commissioning intentions.

Resource Plan

Assistant Director Corporate Parenting

- Strategic oversight and governance.
- Reporting to Corporate Parenting Board and senior leadership.

Head of Service for Children in Our Care and Leaving Care

- Operational leadership.
- Oversight of delivery, performance and quality assurance.

Leaving Care Team

- Identification and referral of eligible young people.
- Pathway planning and ongoing support.

Supported Lodgings Manager

- Host recruitment, assessment, approval, matching and support.
- Placement monitoring and quality assurance.

Mental Health Care Navigator

- Direct support to care leavers.
- Mental health advice, consultation and service navigation.

Housing and Finance Colleagues

- Housing identification for progressing young people to independent living
- Monitoring expenditure and sustainability planning.

Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
Insufficient host recruitment	Early borough-wide recruitment campaign, use of fostering networks, community organisations and targeted marketing.

Placement instability	Robust matching processes, training, supervision and ongoing support for hosts and young people.
Low referral numbers	Embed Staying Close within pathway planning and care leaver reviews.
Delays recruiting mental health practitioner	Work with Greater Manchester NHS partners and explore interim commissioning arrangements.
Funding sustainability	Demonstrate impact through reduced homelessness, improved tenancy sustainment and reduced reliance on higher-cost accommodation.
Young people decline supported lodgings	Offer choice, co-production and integration with wider accommodation pathways.

The programme will be governed through existing corporate parenting arrangements with quarterly monitoring of accommodation stability, wellbeing outcomes, EET participation, placement occupancy and young people's feedback to ensure continuous improvement and long-term sustainability.

Section 5 - Costings

Please set out how you will use the funding to establish and deliver the offer. Costs should include the number of young people you anticipate will access support each year. You will have received details of your costing allocation separately from your DfE contact.

Sustainable models should be developed and you should evidence how you will realise Staying Close as an ‘invest to save’ opportunity. You should also consider where you can achieve economies of scale over the three years, while maintaining high-quality support to find and keep the right housing for young people.

The Department reserves the right to clarify and challenge costs where it deems necessary.

Part A - Summary of costs

Financial year	**Nov 26- Mar 27**	**2027-28**

Approximate DfE Funding Allocation – housing		
Spending on additional young people in community-building housing projects (optional)		
Spending on additional young people in Supported Lodgings (optional)	**£79,457 – DfE allocation – adjusted in table in Part B**	**£332,369 – DfE allocation – adjusted in table in Part B**
Spending on additional young people in intensive family-based care (optional)		

Financial year	**Nov 26- Mar 27**	**2027-28**
DfE Funding Allocation – mental health – separate funding stream		**£49,948.75**

Part B - Breakdown of costs

Please set out a detailed breakdown of your proposed costs. These costings should provide reasonable assurance that your delivery proposal and delivery of your proposed Staying Close model can be provided within the funding allocation.

Area of Spend	**Detail**	**Nov 26-Mar 27**	**Apr 27-Mar 28**
Staying Close Coordinator	Strategic and operational leadership, recruitment, quality assurance, safeguarding oversight and host support Grade 10 – Full Time post	£27,480	£67,640
Recruitment & Retention Officer	Co-ordinate recruitment activities, progresses assessment and application process, provides continues support Grade 8 – Part Time post – 3 days per week	£14,628	£35,100
Supported Lodgings Placements	Host fees, allowances and any costs for young people	£11,349	£197,629

Recruitment, Assessment and Training	Host recruitment campaign, DBS checks, assessment and training programme, IT and Digital offer	£10,000	£10,000
Independence and Participation Support	Life skills, tenancy readiness, EET and group activities	£10,000	£10,000
Essential, placement-related set up costs	Essential equipment in order to provide smooth transition into accommodation	£6,000	£12,000
Mental Health Care Navigator	Separate funding stream Direct support for young people to assist with their mental wellbeing and ensure appropriate access to services	£0	£49,948.75
Total		£79,457	£332,369
Total grant allocated Nov 26 – Mar 28: £411,701 Total spend identified Nov 26 – Mar 28: £411,826			

Part C - Number of young people your Staying Close offer will support

'Former relevant children' (i.e. care leavers) under the age of 25 should be assessed for Staying Close support as part of pathway planning, to determine whether their welfare requires it. LAs should prioritise young people who are not on Staying Put.

Please set out the number of young people you aim to support in each delivery year. We accept this is an indicative number and recognise that young people will need to access the support at different times and may require the support for different length of times. The quality of advice, support and learning opportunities provided to young people (and those around them) is equally as important as the numbers reached.

	Nov 2026- Mar 27	**Apr 27- Mar 28**
Number of additional young people supported with Staying Close housing	By end of March – 4	Full year – 12 Q1 – 3 Q2 – 3 Q3 – 3 Q4 – 3
Number of additional young people supported with Staying Close light touch mental health support	0	40

Section 6 – Declaration

Please complete the below declaration, to be signed by both the LA's bidding officer and a senior manager with the authority to commit to this plan, such as the Director of Children's Services (DCS).

DECLARATION* (Please complete in block capitals) Signatures must be either be submitted electronically or scanned in.	
I confirm that the information given in this application is true and complete; that, if successful, the local authority will administer any grant in accordance with the letter supplied by the Department for Education.	
Full name:	NICK WHITBREAD
Position (Job Title):	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – CORPORATE PARENTING
Date:	8TH OCTOBER 2026
Contact details including email address:	CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE LEVEL 8 SPINDLES SHOPPING CENTRE OLDHAM OL1 NICK.WHITBREAD@OLDHAM.GOV.UK
Signature:	
Countersigned (by the DCS):	 JULIE DANIELS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – OLDHAM CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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Emergency Powers Decision Report

Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Highways & Engineering
Directorate: Environment
Report Author: Alex Shaw
Email: alex.shaw@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 2nd November 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

To seek approval to actively procure a highways construction Strategic Partner and a Reserve Supplier to deliver Transport Capital Investment Programmes from 2027-2031 to the delivery of key capital civil engineering projects across Oldham of an accumulative total of up to £20m over a four-year term beginning in April 2027.

To approve the delegation of authority to the Deputy Chief Executive for Place in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Directorate, to award the Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement (AOSPA) to the successful Bidder and award a Reserve Supplier Agreement to the second placed Bidder.

To delegate authority to the Director of Economy/Environment/Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Director of Finance, to award the individual Call Off Orders for individual projects.

Finally, to delegate low value Call Off Orders (<£50K) under a direct award via the Assistant Director for Highways in consultation with Budget Holder and Finance Officer.

3. Reason for urgency

To ensure Oldham Council as suitably prepared to deliver Transport for City Region and other capital investment programmes from Spring 2027 onwards.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

Likely delays relating to delivery of projects and potential loss of future investment in Oldham's infrastructure.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

Reduction or withdrawal of capital investment on key infrastructure improvements.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 7 October 2026
Comments

The appointment of an Active Oldham Strategic Partner will facilitate the efficient procurement and delivery of Highway construction works within grant funding timescales. The total value of works procured through the framework is expected to be approximately £20m, subject to the level of grant funding secured. The procurement process will ensure the selection of the most economically advantageous tender, delivering value for money. The revenue costs associated with the tender exercise will be met from within the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement 1 (CRSTS1) external funding.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name: Alex Bougatef
Date: 13 October 2026
Comments:

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required and it cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.

Report to the Chief Executive

Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement

Officer Contact: Shelley Kipling – Chief Executive for Place

Report Author: Alex Shaw Programme Manager, Highways & Engineering

Email: alex.shaw@oldham.gov.uk

2nd November 2026

Reason for Decision

To seek approval to actively procure a highways construction Strategic Partner and a Reserve Supplier to deliver Transport Capital Investment Programmes from 2027-2031 to the delivery of key capital civil engineering projects across Oldham of an accumulative total of up to £20m over a four-year term beginning in April 2027.

To approve the delegation of authority to the Deputy Chief Executive for Place in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Directorate, to award the Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement (AOSPA) to the successful Bidder and award a Reserve Supplier Agreement to the second placed Bidder.

To delegate authority to the Director of Economy/Environment/Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Director of Finance, to award the individual Call Off Orders for individual projects.

Finally, to delegate low value Call Off Orders (<£50K) under a direct award via the Assistant Director for Highways in consultation with Budget Holder and Finance Officer.

Pre-scrutiny meeting 22nd October 2026
Leaders' consultative meeting 2nd November 2026

Executive Summary

The Strategic Transport and Planning Team in collaboration with Highways & Engineering successfully bid for several capital funded multi-disciplinary highway improvement projects to create a pipeline of civil engineering schemes that require construction from 2027 to 2031.
The most recent of these is the Transport for City Regions (TCR).

Oldham Council's Highways & Engineering and Strategic Transport & Planning Teams are currently preparing to deliver up to £20m of highways work in the borough using funding managed by Greater Manchester's Combined Authority (GMCA) and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), who bid to the Department for Transport (DfT) on behalf of the GM Local Authorities, but not exclusively.

In addition, Oldham Council have been actively pursuing United Utilities Plc's Sustainable Rainwater Management funding that includes environmental and sustainable initiatives that complement the highway improvement projects but also create an independent programme of sustainable rainwater management projects across Oldham. Some projects have been identified for delivery via the Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement (AOSPA) Contract.

For Oldham Council to deliver these ambitious programmes of work it was considered necessary to seek a new Strategic Partner (Contractor) to work alongside the Delivery Team and Key Stakeholders during the design and construction process to mitigate the lengthy procurement processes associated with individual tendering packages.

The current method of procuring the delivery of highway construction work is a streamlined method of working and provides efficiency savings across several Departments.

To deliver the programmes within stringent timescales, the simplified and compliant approach enables a swift mobilisation of the work and delivery of the projects.

The Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement is a single supplier delivery model with reserve supplier also appointed to mitigate risk of non-delivery of the programme.

The NEC4 Engineering and Construction Contract (ECC) Option B is a priced contract with a bill of quantities (BOQ). It is primarily a lump sum, fixed-rate contract where payment is determined by remeasuring the actual quantities of work completed against the agreed BOQ rates.

The intention is that individual projects will be procured via a Call Off procedure under the Strategic Partnership Agreement. This will require Director to sign off (in liaison with the Directors of Finance and Legal Services) rather than an individual Cabinet report for each package of work.

The single supplier delivery model currently exists namely the Sustainable Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement (SOPSA) and this partnership replaces the successful but expired Accessible Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement (AOSPA). This method of instructing work has proven extremely successful and has afforded Oldham Council a robust vehicle to deliver a large and diverse programme of civil engineering projects efficiently and effectively.

Recommendations

It is recommended that delegated authority is given to:

- The Assistant Chief Executive for Place in consultation with the Council Leader to procure and award the Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement (AOSPA) and Reserve Supplier Agreement, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Director of Legal Services.

- The Director of Economy/Environment/Growth in consultation with the Director of Finance and Director of Legal Services to award the individual Call Off Orders under the Strategic Partnership Agreement and Reserve Supplier Agreement.
- The Director of Legal Services affix the Council's seal to the Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreements and Reserve Supplier Agreements and to the Call Off Contracts under the Strategic Partnership Agreements and Reserve Supplier Agreements.
- The Assistant Director of Highways & Engineering awards low value Call Off Orders (<£50K) in line with financial approval limits and in consultation with Budget Holder and Finance Officer.

Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement

- **Background**

  - The key objectives of awarding the Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement are to:
    - Facilitate the development and improvement of Oldham's transport infrastructure and rainwater management initiatives, but not exclusively.
    - Improve the attractiveness of sustainable transport routes and infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists and encourage modal shift to sustainable methods.
    - Maintain and improve the integrity of the highway network and reduce the reliance of traditional road gully and highway drainage system usage in Oldham.
    - The objectives align to the Transport for City Regions priorities and regional and local strategy such as the GM 2040 Transport Strategy, Oldham's Transport Strategy and Green Initiatives.

  - The Strategic Transport and Planning Team in collaboration with Highways & Engineering are actively pursuing several capital and external funded multi-disciplinary infrastructure improvement projects through the Transport for City Regions and Sustainable Rainwater Management Programmes, managed by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and United Utilities Plc, respectively.

  - The table below shows indicative scheme budgets and is subject to change pending future funding opportunities:

Project Name	Est Construction Budget
Oldham Edge	£2m
Broadway Canal Link	0.72m
Fountain Street	£1.5m
Featherstall Road Roundabout	£2.25m
Park Road	£1.35m
Jackson Street	£3.5m
Clarksfield Road/Lees Road	£1.25m
Station Street/Oldham Road	£1.5m
Rainwater Management (various schemes)	£5.93m
Total Estimated Value	**£20m**

  - TfGM have increased their expectations in recent years with regards to information being provided by Local Authority Bidders at all stages of the process and thus increased their scrutiny of cost, risk, and resources, at development, design, and delivery stages.

  - For Oldham Council to adapt and proactively address the changes to the process, it is considered necessary to seek a mid-term (4 years) Strategic Partner (Contractor) to assist the Delivery Team at key stages of the business case development and bidding process and fast-track, where applicable, the construction of projects, to meet the expectations and demands of the overseeing organisations.

  - The rationale behind the streamlined procurement process is evident when reviewing the existing route to market.

- The current four years, £35m Sustainable Oldham Strategic Partnership Contract is fully utilised. The Contract does not permit an extension and is financially capped.

- The alternative process would be to approach the market in an open tender format for delivery of each project under the programmes.

- Typically, a project is offered to prospective Bidders who submit cost and technical bids for evaluation. Following the evaluation process, a winner is identified, a Delegated Decision Report (DDR) is distributed for comments, which are compiled and placed on the Cabinet approvals list to seek consent to award the Contract. The typical approvals process takes up to twelve weeks, as many of the Contract values exceed the Cabinet monetary threshold. The process increases the risk of delaying delivery when working to fixed deadlines imposed by Sponsors of each programme.

- The current Sustainable Oldham Strategic Partnership is in its first year of its four-year term and the current pipeline of work will exhaust the term and financial commitment of £35m by 2028/29.

- **Current Position**

  - To mitigate the risks of the programme slippage, development funding via TfGM has been identified to fund the creation of a Strategic Partnership Agreement and Reserve Supplier Agreements using an NEC4 Framework Contract as the basis of the Agreement.

  - The awarding of works packages funded by Transport for City Regions or United Utilities Plc (but not exclusively), to a single Contractor is the preferred method.

  - The Highways & Engineering Team has engaged external expertise to assist in the creation of a Contract and supporting information that meets the current/future demands of the programme allowing the flexibility which Oldham Council requires and includes Social Value (TOMS) to ensure the Contractor aligns its aspirations with those of Oldham Council.

  - It is expected that the benefits will provide the Delivery Team with the necessary support with current and future bidding opportunities whilst also providing Oldham Council with a mid-term Delivery Partner. It also enables construction work to begin a great deal sooner than the traditional route as projects will be issued via a Call Off procedure and awarded through a delegated decision process.

  - The current methodology of preparing reports seeking the approval of the Director of Economy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods through appropriate delegation offers the most efficient means of delivery. All delegated decision reports will contain views from Legal Services and Procurement amongst others, where applicable.

  - The Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement procurement strategy and indicative programme are shown below and will be advertised via The Chest on the 3rd of August 2026 and is expected to be available for use from April 2027 onwards.

	Event	Date
1	Complete Tender documents	June 2026
2	Undertake Market Engagement	July 2026
3	Publish Tender	Mid-October 2026
4	Tender closes	Late November 2026
5	Evaluation Period	December 2026
6	Award of Contract DDR approval	January 2027
7	Publish Award	February 2027
8	Contract Signing/Sealing	February 2027
9	Contract Mobilisation	March 2027
10	Contract commences	April 2027
11	Notify Tenderers of tender outcome and commence Standstill Period	April 2027

Fig 2. Procurement strategy programme

- Under the Procurement Act 2023 (PA23), this sourcing requirement will be an above threshold procurement for this 'works' contract. This will be an Open Procedure with the opportunity advertised on 'find a tender' service. The intention is to award the contract to one key partner who will deliver the contract for the duration with a second place available for one reserve contractor.

- A selection procedure is set out within the Contract for each 'Call Off Order.' A quotation procedure is also set out. The Council retains the right not to issue the Call Off Order should the Client's Representative not be content to do so based on cost, programme, or any other reason.

- The appointed Contractor will be continually monitored on performance via Key Performance Indicators (KPI) based on the following criteria:
    - Health and Safety
    - Social Value
    - Time
    - Cost
    - Quality
    - Local Supply
    - Local Employment

- If performance criteria are not met, then the Council will retain the option to allocate the construction work to the Reserve Contractor. There is also provision for a Reserve Contractor to be utilised if the Primary Contractor is unable to perform its obligations under the Contract.

- **Options/Alternatives**

  Option 1 – Approval and delegated authority are given to:

  - To proceed with the procurement of an Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement.
  - Assistant Chief Executive for Place in consultation with the Leader and/or Chief Executive award the Strategic Partnership Agreement and Reserve Supplier Agreement.
  - the Director of Growth/Environment to award the individual Call Off Contracts for the works packages under the Strategic Partnership Agreement and Reserve Supplier Agreement.
  - the Director of Legal Services to affix the Council's seal to the Strategic Partnership Agreement and Reserve Supplier Agreement, any incidental and ancillary documentation and to the individual Call Off Contracts under the Strategic Partnership Agreement and Reserve Supplier Agreement.
  - The Assistant Director of Highways & Engineering award low value Call Off Orders (<£50K) in line with Head of Service financial approval limits and in consultation with Budget Holder and Finance Officer.

  Option 2 – Competitive Tender process for individual Projects

  - On completion of the individual design packages, adopt a competitive tendering opportunity and present to the market via The Chest to invite submissions in the conventional manner.
  - This would involve an extensive process to procure a suitable Contractor for each project featured across the programmes which in turn would increase the number of Cabinet reports requiring approval and drastically increases the time associated with delivery.
  - This process increases risk and limits opportunities to maximise seasonal windows of opportunity conducive to certain elements of the construction process.

- **Preferred Option**

  Option 1 – Approval and delegated authority are given to:

  - To proceed with the procurement of an Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement.
  - Assistant Chief Executive for Place in consultation with the Leader award the Strategic Partnership Agreement and Reserve Supplier Agreement.
  - the Director of Economy/Environment to award the individual Call Off Contracts for the works packages under the Strategic Partnership Agreement and Reserve Supplier Agreement, if necessary.
  - the Director of Legal Services to affix the Council's seal to the Strategic Partnership Agreement and Reserve Supplier Agreement, any incidental and ancillary documentation and to the individual Call Off Contracts under the Strategic Partnership Agreement and Reserve Supplier Agreement.
  - The Assistant Director of Highways & Engineering award low value Call Off Orders (<£50K) in line with Head of Service financial approval limits and in consultation with Budget Holder and Finance Officer.

- **Consultation**

  - All relevant Council Departments have been consulted during the production phase of the Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement.

- **Financial Implications**

  The appointment of an Active Oldham Strategic Partner should streamline the procurement of the works to be undertaken as part of the Creating a Better Place Capital Programme and enable the completion of the works within the grant funding timescales. The total value of the works that will be awarded via this Framework will be dependent on the levels of grant funding available for works. The total value of works is expected to be in the region of £20m.

  The procurement will ensure that the most economically advantageous tender is selected and enable Value for Money to be achieved for the Active Oldham works. The revenue costs of conducting the tender exercise will be met within City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement 1 budget.

  James Postle (Finance)

- **Legal Services Comments**

  The procurement is above-threshold and must comply with the Procurement Act 2023. The Open Procedure is appropriate, provided the process remains fair, transparent, and within the published scope.

  The use of a single contractor with a reserve supplier is lawful, but the contract should define when the reserve contractor can be used and ensure that call-off orders stay within the original contract scope to remain compliant.

  The Council must also comply with funding conditions linked to external grants. Legal Services will be available to review and advise on the grant terms and conditions once issued, to ensure compliance and mitigate any risk of claw back or funding breach.

  Pamela Nsofor (solicitor)

- **Procurement Implications**

  The sourcing details of this requirement are mentioned above under ‘Current Position’ point 7. A fully detailed ‘Procurement Strategy’ document will be compiled and signed off by the Head of Procurement before commencement. Being a single supplier delivery model with reserve organisation, it is imperative that the tender specification contains clear and measurable contract management criteria for benchmarking ongoing supplier performance. Social Value delivered will be leveraged against the successful single supplier and due to the aggregated value of the contract will have an increased weighting of 15% overall to drive greater commitment.

  Darren Judge (Procurement Manager)

- **Key Decision**

  Yes

- **Key Decision Reference**

  KDD-26-13

- **Background Papers**

- The entitled *City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement 1 Grant Acceptance Report* sought and gained approval in March 2026 to use part of the resource affiliated with the Highways & Engineering Team to progress the development of and tender a Strategic Partnership Agreement with a view to awarding the works packages to a single Contractor to meet the expectations and timescales of the funders that were granted. Refer to Appendix A.

  File Ref: N/A
  Name of File: City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement 1 Grant Acceptance
  Records held in Transportation & Policy Department and ModGov System
  Officer Name: Joanna Ward
  Contact No: Teams or email.

- **Appendices**

Appendix	Document
A	Grant Acceptance: City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) - Revenue Funding

- **Cabinet signatories**

Approved by the Chief Executive following consultation with the political group leaders who were in attendance as follows:- Councillors: Decision made under the authorisation contained in Section 9C (5) Delegations of Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) and Section 3.6 of Part 4 (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions.
Signed: Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive Dated:
Date of Leaders' Consultative meeting:
Summary of feedback from the political group leaders

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Report to CABINET

Grant Acceptance: City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) – Revenue Funding

Portfolio Holder:
Councilor Goodwin, Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

Officer Contact:
Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Report Author:
Joanna Ward, Strategic Transport Team Leader

Email:Joanna.ward@oldham.gov.uk

Mar 2026

Reason for Decision

To formally accept £496,000 in City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS1) revenue grant funding that has been allocated to Oldham Council to Support the development of the borough's transport pipeline and Local Implementation Plan (LIP).

Recommendations

1) That the grant offer from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS1), for revenue grant funding of £496,000 available to Oldham Council to support the development of our transport pipeline and Local Implementation Plan (LIP) be accepted;

2) That approval is granted for part of this resource to be used to support Council teams, as required, in developing a pipeline to potentially secure further capital funding for Oldham; and

3) That approval to the Director of Legal Services or his nominated representatives be granted to execute and complete any contractual documents.

Grant Acceptance: City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Revenue Funding

1 Background

1.1 At the GMCA meeting on 27 June 2025, approval was granted to allocate £5.9m of CRSTS1 revenue funding to Greater Manchester Local Authorities, as set out in

Section 9 of the CRSTS Reprioritisation Strategy Report. Section 9 states:

"In addition to the capital reallocations, it is proposed to allocate 50% (i.e. £5.9m) of the £11.8m of additional CRSTS1 revenue funding to the Local Authorities to support the development and delivery of the Integrated Pipeline, and to retain 50% for the ongoing development of the Bee Network. It is intended that both allocations will be predominantly utilised to support the development of the longer-term transport priorities to be set out in the ten-year Integrated Pipeline and updated Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Delivery Plan."

1.2 Following this approval, a proposal on the distribution of the Local Authority allocation was considered at the Directors of Place (DoP) meeting on 29 July 2025. It was agreed that the 2025/26 revenue funding would be apportioned on a population basis. This approach was subsequently recorded in the DoP report presented on 12 August 2025.

2 Current Position

2.1 As a result of this agreed distribution, £496,000 has been made available to Oldham Council to support the development of its transport project pipeline and Local Implementation Plan (LIP).

2.2 A letter from TfGM to Oldham's Deputy Chief Executive was sent to confirm this on 25th August 2025 (see attached).

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Accept the grant funding of £496,000 and develop the transport project pipeline and Local Implementation Plan (LIP).

3.2

3.3 Decline the grant funding £496,000 and then be unable to develop the transport project pipeline and Local Implementation Plan (LIP). Risk falling behind on required transport plans and potential future funding opportunities.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 That the grant offer from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), providing £496,000 in revenue funding to Oldham Council to support the development of the transport pipeline and the Local Implementation Plan (LIP), be accepted.

4.2 This option will enable the Council to:

- Progress the development of a robust transport project pipeline, ensuring Oldham is well-positioned to secure future capital funding.
- Advance the Local Implementation Plan (LIP), strengthening alignment with Greater Manchester's strategic transport priorities.
- Provide targeted support to Council teams, enabling the necessary technical, planning and business-case work to be undertaken at pace.
- Maximize opportunities within the CRSTS City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, ensuring Oldham benefits fully from regional investment programmes.
- Reduce the risk of missed funding windows, by ensuring schemes are sufficiently developed and ready for submission when opportunities arise.

4.3 Rejecting or delaying this acceptance risks missing further funding opportunities and could undermine Oldham's wider strategic transport and regeneration objectives.

5 Consultation

5.1 The Portfolio Holder (Transport and Highways) and Senior Management were briefed in February 2026.

5.2 Engagement with senior stakeholders and ward members will continue as the pipeline and Local Implementation Plan develops.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 Approval to accept the CRSTS grant will increase the financial resource available to the Council by £496,000. The grant is provided to the Council to support the development of our transport pipeline and Local Implementation Plan (LIP).

6.2 Separate cost centres will be established for each project funded by this grant to ensure individual compliance with the grant conditions and to monitor that all expenditure remains within the allocated funding.

6.3 There is no assumption of any match funding from the Council when accepting the grant. Therefore, there are no adverse financial implications anticipated.

6.4 Although the original grant conditions expected all spend to be incurred by 31 March 2026, a further email from TfGM has since confirmed that the grant may be carried forward into 2026/27. TfGM have confirmed that they will allow eligible expenditure up to the end of September 2026. The service is therefore encouraged to ensure that the grant is fully spent by September 2026.

(Mohammed Hussain)

7 **Legal Implications**

7.1 The proposal to accept the funding from City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement is lawful and in line with the council's constitution. (Bryan Boese – solicitor)

8. **Procurement Implications**

8.1 [None (S.Kapoor Commercial Procurement Unit)

9 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

9.1 No

10 **Key Decision**

10.1 Yes

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 RBO-06-26.

12 **Appendices**

12.1 [All appendices for the report should be listed]

Emergency Powers Decision Report

Youth Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Youth Services
Directorate: Communities
Report Author: Jodie Barber
Email: Jodie.Barber@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 2nd November 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

The Council has been awarded funding of up to £2.05m through the Government's Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme. The funding provides a significant opportunity to strengthen youth provision, improve outcomes for young people and develop a sustainable, place-based model of youth support across Oldham.

To ensure timely implementation of the programme and compliance with the conditions of grant funding, approval is sought to formally accept the funding and delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and Director of Communities, in consultation with the Director of Children's Services, to undertake all actions necessary to deliver the programme. This includes recruitment of programme staff, commissioning and procurement activity, approval of programme expenditure, entering into partnership and grant agreements, and making operational decisions within the approved funding allocation.

The delegation will ensure the Council can respond efficiently to programme requirements, maximise investment opportunities and deliver the programme in accordance with Government timescales and funding conditions.

3. Reason for urgency

The Council has been notified of its successful award of funding through the Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme and is required to commence mobilisation activity within nationally prescribed timescales. Approval is required to enable the Council to formally accept the funding, enter into grant agreements, recruit programme staff, undertake procurement and commissioning activity, commence co-design and planning activity with young people and partners, and establish programme governance arrangements.

Any delay in approval could impact the Council's ability to meet grant conditions, delivery milestones and onboarding requirements set by Government and delivery partners. Early mobilisation is essential to maximise the period available for programme delivery and ensure that Oldham secures the full benefit of the investment available through the programme

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

- Loss of up to £2.05 million external Government funding allocated to Oldham through the programme.
- Failure to meet programme onboarding and mobilisation requirements, potentially resulting in withdrawal or reallocation of funding to other areas.
- Inability to establish the two Young Futures Hubs planned for Oldham, reducing access to integrated support, opportunities and prevention services for young people.
- Missed opportunity to secure additional capital and digital investment in youth infrastructure.
- Reduced capacity to deliver the statutory duty under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 to secure sufficient educational and recreational activities for young people.
- Delay in recruiting key programme staff, resulting in compressed delivery timescales and increased implementation risk.
- Missed opportunity to influence and benefit from national learning, evaluation and best practice development through participation in the Government's Young Futures Programme.
- Reputational risk to the Council and partners arising from failure to proceed with a nationally funded programme after being selected as a delivery area.
- Continued challenges relating to youth wellbeing, access to opportunities, prevention of youth violence, and support for vulnerable young people which the programme is designed to address.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

Financial Implications of not Approving the recommendations:

Failure to approve acceptance of the funding would result in the loss of external investment of up to £1.45 million, comprising:

Funding Stream	Value
Planning and Co-creation	£100,000
Young Futures Hub Delivery	Up to £600,000 per annum for two years

Local Youth Transformation Programme	Up to £500,000
Capital and Digital Investment	Up to £250,000
Total	Up to £2.05m

The programme is fully funded through external grant resources and does not require additional Council funding to deliver the approved activities. Failure to accept the funding would therefore represent a significant lost opportunity to attract external investment into Oldham and improve outcomes for young people without creating a call on the Council's core budget.

In addition, declining or delaying acceptance of the funding may result in future opportunities for external investment being adversely affected should Oldham be unable to demonstrate readiness to participate in national programmes.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name: Lee Walsh
Date 07/10/2026
Comments

The Council has been allocated up to £2.050m of external grant funding over the two-year programme period to deliver the Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme. An initial £0.100m has been confirmed for planning and co-creation activities.

The report seeks approval to establish fixed-term posts to support programme delivery. These posts will be fully funded from the external grant and limited to the funding period. Any extension beyond the funded period would require the identification of alternative funding and separate approval.

All programme expenditure will be funded from external grant resources; therefore, there are no additional financial implications for existing Council budgets, provided expenditure remains within the approved grant allocation.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name
Date
Comments

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Report to Chief Executive

Young Futures Hubs and Local youth Transformation programme

Portfolio Holder:

Officer Contact: Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive, Place
Report Author: Jodie Barber, Assistant Director for Youth and Communities
Email: Jodie.Barber@oldham.gov.uk

2nd November 2026

Reason for Decision

The Council has been awarded funding of up to £2.05m over 2 years, through the Government's Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme. The funding provides a significant opportunity to strengthen youth provision, improve outcomes for young people and develop a sustainable, place-based model of youth support across Oldham.

To ensure timely implementation of the programme and compliance with the conditions of grant funding, approval is sought to formally accept the funding and delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and Director of Communities, in consultation with the Director of Children's Services, to undertake all actions necessary to deliver the programme. This includes recruitment of programme staff, commissioning and procurement activity, approval of programme expenditure, entering into partnership and grant agreements, and making operational decisions within the approved funding allocation.

The delegation will ensure the Council can respond efficiently to programme requirements, maximise investment opportunities and deliver the programme in accordance with Government timescales and funding conditions.

Executive Summary

The Council has been successful in securing funding through the Government's Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme, with a total allocation of up to £2.05m available over the life of the programme.

The programme represents a significant investment in Oldham's young people and supports the Council's ambition to ensure that every young person has access to safe spaces, trusted relationships, positive activities, support services and opportunities to achieve their potential.

The funding will support:

- Development of two Young Futures Hubs in areas of greatest need.
- A boroughwide programme of youth system transformation.
- Improved partnership working and integration between youth, education, health, community safety and voluntary sector services.
- Enhanced youth participation and co-production.
- Workforce development and increased delivery capacity.
- Capital and digital improvements to support accessibility and service delivery.
- Early intervention and prevention activity is designed to improve wellbeing, reduce vulnerability and tackle inequalities.

The programme will require recruitment of a dedicated programme team, commissioning of specialist support, grant administration and investment into local youth provision. To ensure effective implementation, Cabinet is asked to approve acceptance of the funding and delegate authority for all operational, staffing, procurement, financial and delivery decisions required to implement the programme within the approved grant allocation and in accordance with Council policies and procedures.

Recommendations

1. Approve the acceptance of grant funding of up to £2,050,000 from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and associated Government delivery partners for the delivery of the Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme. Grant funding fro the Programme will be issues in Stages.

2. Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and Director of Communities to enter into, execute and deliver all grant agreements, funding agreements, partnership agreements and associated documentation required for the implementation and delivery of the programme.

3. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and Director of Communities, in consultation with the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Finance, to approve and implement all operational and financial arrangements necessary for delivery of the programme.

4. Approve the creation and recruitment of such fixed-term posts as are required to support programme management, delivery, participation, commissioning, monitoring and evaluation functions, provided that all associated costs are fully funded from the external grant allocation.

5. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and Director of Communities to approve expenditure, commission services, award grants, undertake procurement exercises and enter into contracts necessary for programme delivery, subject to compliance with the Council's Constitution, Contract Procedure Rules and Procurement Regulations.

6. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and Director of Communities to approve amendments to programme delivery arrangements and accept non-material variations, extensions or amendments to funding conditions, where these do not increase the Council's financial liability beyond the approved external grant allocation.

7. Note that the Assistant Director for Youth and Communities will lead the operational delivery, governance, programme management and performance monitoring of the funded programmes on behalf of the Council, under the strategic direction of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Communities.

8. Note that programme governance, performance management, risk management and delivery oversight will be led by the Assistant Director for Youth and Communities on behalf of the Council, reporting through appropriate corporate governance arrangements.

9. Note that all programme expenditure will be funded through external grant resources and that any future financial implications requiring additional Council resources will be the subject of a separate approval process.

10. Note the anticipated outcomes, benefits and reporting requirements associated with both funding streams.

Youth Futures Hubs and Local youth transformation Programme

1 Background

1.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 to secure sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people.

1.2 Nationally, concerns regarding youth wellbeing, inequalities, social isolation, participation and youth violence have led to renewed investment in local youth services through the Government's National Youth Strategy and the establishment of the Young Futures Hubs and Transformation Programme.

1.3 The programme seeks to establish locally designed hubs that bring together services and opportunities for young people, while supporting wider transformation of local youth systems. Young Futures Hubs are expected to improve:

- opportunities for young people;
- mental health and wellbeing; and
- crime prevention and community safety outcomes.

1.4 The Local Youth Transformation element supports local authorities to rebuild capability, strengthen strategic leadership, improve planning and ensure sustainable delivery of high-quality youth services that respond to local need.

1.5 Oldham has been allocated funding for the Development of 2 Young Futures Hubs, that should be located in areas of greatest needed and codesigned and developed with young people.

1.6 The Funding available within the programme is as follows:

Funding Stream	Value
Planning and co-creation	£100,000
Youth Future Hub delivery- 2 year funding	Up to £600,000 per annum
Local Youth Transformation programme	Up to £500,000
Capital/digital investment	Up to £250,000

1.5 The programme aligns strongly with the Council's ambition to ensure that all young people can access opportunities, feel safe, be healthy, have a voice in decisions affecting them and achieve their full potential.

2 Current Position

2.1 The borough benefits from a range of youth provision delivered by the Council, schools, voluntary and community organisations and partner agencies.

2.2 However, feedback from young people and partners identifies ongoing challenges including:

- uneven access to youth provision;
- increasing mental health and wellbeing needs;
- barriers to participation and social mobility;
- fragmented service pathways;
- the need for stronger local coordination and partnership working; and
- concerns relating to community safety and youth vulnerability.

2.3 The funding presents an opportunity to address these challenges through system-wide transformation rather than isolated service activity.

2.4 The proposed programme will focus on:

- youth participation and co-production;
- strengthening local youth infrastructure;
- workforce development;
- partnership governance;
- data and insight-led planning;
- improved access to opportunities;
- prevention and early intervention approaches; and
- integrated support around young people and their families.

2.5 Strategic oversight of the programme will be provided by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Communities, ensuring alignment with the Council Plan, Children and Young People's priorities and wider community outcomes. Operational leadership will be provided by the Assistant Director for Youth and Communities, working collaboratively with schools, health partners, Greater Manchester partners, the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector and young people themselves.

2.6 Programme Delivery arrangements. The programme will require the establishment of dedicated programme management and delivery capacity to meet national programme requirements, coordinate partnership activity and ensure effective monitoring and evaluation.

Subject to funding approval, fixed-term posts will be established and recruited to support implementation of the Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme. All staffing costs will be met from the approved grant allocation and will cease on completion of the funded programme unless alternative funding is identified and approved.

The programme may also require the commissioning of specialist support, grant funding arrangements with voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations, and procurement of goods, services, digital solutions and capital works. Appropriate governance arrangements will be implemented to ensure all expenditure represents value for money and is fully compliant with Council procurement and financial regulations.

3 Options/Alternatives

Option 1: Accept the Funding (Preferred Option)

Benefits:

- Secures significant external investment.
- Establishes 2 Young Futures Hubs within the borough.
- Enables transformation of the local youth system.
- Improves outcomes for young people.
- Strengthens youth voice and participation.
- Increases partnership working and service integration.

- Supports delivery of statutory duties.
- Creates a longer-term sustainable model for youth provision.

Option 2: Decline the Funding

Implications:
- Loss of external investment.
- Missed opportunity to improve local youth services.
- Reduced ability to address identified needs.
- Missed opportunity to influence national programme learning.
- Reduced capacity to strengthen local youth infrastructure.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 The preferred option is acceptance of both funding streams.

4.2 The programme supports a whole-system approach to youth provision based on the principles of collaboration, prevention and youth empowerment. It will enable the Council and its partners to create a more connected and responsive local youth offer.

4.3 Young people will play a central role in co-designing both the Young Futures Hub and the wider transformation programme, ensuring services are shaped by lived experience and local need. This reflects the national expectation that young people are active partners in service design and decision making.

4.4 The proposed approach will contribute to:

- improved wellbeing;
- increased participation;
- stronger community connections;
- enhanced employability and life opportunities;
- reduced risk of harm and exploitation; and
- greater local system sustainability.

4.5 The governance arrangements for the programme will ensure robust accountability, with strategic decisions overseen by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Communities and programme delivery coordinated by the Assistant Director for Youth and Communities. This will provide effective leadership, oversight of programme performance, financial assurance and partnership engagement throughout the lifetime of the funding.

4.6 Acceptance of the funding will position Oldham as an active contributor to national youth reform activity, enabling the Council and its partners to test, develop and embed innovative approaches that improve outcomes for young people while strengthening the long-term sustainability of local youth services.

4.7 Delegating authority for programme implementation will facilitate timely delivery of the programme and ensure that staffing, procurement, commissioning and operational decisions can be taken efficiently within the approved funding envelope. This approach reflects established practice for externally funded programmes and provides the flexibility necessary to respond to programme requirements, emerging opportunities and changes to national guidance while maintaining appropriate accountability and governance arrangements.

5 Consultation

5.1 The Expression of Interest submitted included consultation that had been undertaken with young people as part of the boroughwide youth offer needs assessment,.

Further consultation is a key driving principle of the programme and it will be developed through extensive engagement with:

- young people;
- youth providers;
- schools and colleges;
- health partners;
- community safety partners;
- voluntary, community and faith sector organisations;
- employers; and
- local communities

A Youth Advisory Group will be established to support co-design, governance and evaluation of the programme.

The Council will continue to engage with national delivery partners including the National Youth Agency and other sector stakeholders throughout implementation.

6 Financial Implications

Revenue

6.1 The Council has been allocated up to £2.050m of external grant funding over the two-year programme period for delivery of the Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme. Of this, £0.100m has currently been confirmed for Planning and Co-creation activities, with the remaining funding subject to the Council's plans being submitted and approved.

6.2 All expenditure associated with the programme, including staffing, commissioning, grants and other delivery costs, must be managed within the external funding available and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant. Appropriate financial monitoring arrangements will be established throughout the programme to ensure expenditure remains within the approved funding allocation.

6.3 The report proposes the creation of fixed-term posts to support programme delivery. These posts will be fully funded from the external grant and should be aligned to the period for which funding is available. Any extension beyond the funded period would be subject to the identification of an appropriate funding source and separate approval.

6.4 The programme also includes commissioning, grant awards, procurement and capital/digital expenditure. Expenditure will need to be appropriately accounted for against the relevant funding streams and comply with the Council's financial and procurement requirements and any conditions attached to the external funding.

6.5 The Council has currently received confirmation of £0.100m non-ringfenced grant funding for Planning and Co-Creation activities (stage 1). Further funding, up to the overall programme allocation of £2.050m, is subject to the Council's plans being submitted and subsequently approved. The final allocation for the programme will therefore be confirmed at the end of the current financial year, and expenditure should only be committed in line with confirmed funding available.

6.6 A new revenue cost centre will be established for the programme to enable Finance and the service to effectively monitor income and expenditure against the external grant funding. All programme-related expenditure will be charged to the appropriate cost centre and monitored regularly against the approved funding allocations to ensure expenditure remains within the available grant funding and to support accurate grant reporting and reconciliation.

6.7 There is no additional financial implication for existing revenue Council budgets, provided that all expenditure is contained within the external grant funding available. Any costs that are not eligible for grant funding or exceed the approved funding allocation would need to be subject to a separate approval.

(John Hoskins – Finance Manager)

Capital

6.8 There are no capital implications currently. However, subject to the formal submission later in the year, there may be the possibility of securing capital funding, this will be subject to a future report.
(Jit Kara – Senior Accountant)

7 Legal Implications

7.1 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2021 give Local Authorities a general power of competence to do anything which an individual may do for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in their area.

The Council must be satisfied it can meet the objectives and terms and conditions and milestones of the funding imposed by DCMS including any obligation to provide match funding and to monitor, keep any necessary records and file any necessary returns. Officers must also check the terms do not conflict with other funding conditions for the scheme/s or project/property already in place and ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and obtain any necessary Environmental Assessments.

Any works, services and goods procured by or on behalf of the Council must be procured in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and all other relevant regulations including, where applicable, the Financial Procedure Rules and Land and Property Protocol. Officers must work with legal colleagues to approve and formalise the terms of any grant agreement or MOU in conjunction with Finance and Audit colleagues.

The terms of any proposed MOU/Grant Agreement must be reviewed and agreed by the SRO along with legal and finance colleagues. Provisions of note and/or provisions with associated risk should be highlighted to officers for consideration.

Bryan Boese - solicitor

8. Procurement Implications

8.1 There are no immediate procurement implications with regards accepting the funding into the Council. However, The Procurement Team will provide guidance and support with regards the allocation of these funds and will ensure that expenditure with third parties is in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and relevant Procurement Legislation.

Tom Pyne – Assistant Director Procurement

9 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

9.1 Yes

10 **Key Decision**

10.1 Yes

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 KDD-26-14

12 **Background Papers**

12.1 **none**

13 **Appendices**

13.1 Appendix 1: Grant Determination Letter for Programme from DCMS (stage 2)

Appendix 2 – Memorandum of Understanding for programme (stage 2)

Appendix 3: Young Futures Hubs Guidance for Local Authorities

Appendix 4: Local Youth Transformation Programme – Guidance for Local Authorities

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Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

Young Futures Hubs

Guidance for Local Authorities

September 2026

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Who is this document for?

This document has been produced for local authorities and partners working with central government to establish Young Futures Hubs. It sets out the vision for the programme and outlines the “Essential” and “Go Further” practices to develop a successful Young Futures Hubs. This document should be read alongside:

- Young Futures Hubs and Transformation Prospectus (provided alongside this document)
- Outcomes Framework
- Co-creation Guidance
- Out-of-school settings: safeguarding guidance for providers - GOV.UK

How this guidance has been developed and future development:

This guidance has been developed with learnings from the delivery of Early Adopter Young Futures Hubs, existing frameworks, sector briefings, and input from stakeholders, young people and cross government colleagues. As the programme expands, we will continue to develop this guidance by incorporating insights and lessons learned from local authorities.

1. The Foundations: Why, What and Who

1.1. Introduction

This Government is committed to breaking down barriers to opportunity, improving health outcomes, and making Britain's streets safer. Many young people face significant challenges, including poverty, adverse childhood experiences, discrimination, disability, limited access to support, and wider social inequalities.

As we committed to in 'Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy', we are delivering on our **10-year plan** to ensure every young person across the country has **somewhere to go, someone who cares for them and a community they feel part of.** As part of this, DCMS will deliver the Young Futures Hubs and Transformation (YHT) programme to improve local youth services and establish a network of 50 Young Futures Hubs by March 2029.

The Young Futures Programme is a Government manifesto commitment focused on delivering early intervention for young people at risk of poorer outcomes. Through a multi-agency approach, it collaborates with organisations across the health, crime, youth and career sectors to identify these young people sooner, ensuring they can access reliable and accessible support within their local communities. The two programmes are explained below:

Programme	Core Function
Young Futures Hubs	Local authority led, these are open-access spaces providing support focused on mental health and wellbeing, improving opportunities, and reducing vulnerability to crime. They also provide targeted support for those needing tailored interventions.
Young Futures Panels	Multi-agency panels, delivered through Violence Reduction Units/Serious Violence Duty Partnerships, that identify young people vulnerable to being drawn into crime and connect them to appropriate local support. Young Futures Hubs will refer young people vulnerable to becoming involved in crime, as outlined in the Young Futures Panels guidance and/or receive referrals from Young Futures Panels.

Together, these programmes support the Government's Safer Streets, Opportunity, and Health missions. They also align with *Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy* and wider youth funding programmes, while contributing to the Government's commitment to expand open-access wellbeing and mental health support for children and young people. This supports the ambition of the 10-Year Health Plan to shift from treatment to prevention, and from hospital-based care to neighbourhood-based support. This programme will also support local authorities

achieving the outcomes set out within the Children's Social Care National Framework.

1.2. Government's Vision for Young Futures Hubs

The Young Futures Programme will establish a network of 50 Young Futures Hubs by March 2029, building on existing local provision to:

- improve mental health and wellbeing
- increase access to opportunities, including careers support
- reduce vulnerability to young people being drawn into crime

These three objectives are closely linked; progress in one area supports and improves success in the others.

Young Futures Hubs will provide inclusive, open access support for young people aged 10–18 (up to 25 for young people with SEND) with flexibility according to local need, through both physical spaces and digital pathways. They will blend open access activities such as sports, arts, volunteering, and skills development, with targeted, evidence-based support for young people who need it, delivered by trained professionals.

Young Futures Hubs will create a new model of service delivery, using multi-agency partnership working across statutory and non-statutory services, voluntary and community organisations to bring provision together in one space. They will build on existing local expertise and services to introduce new coordination and enhance provision to address young people's needs. Young people must shape the design, delivery, and evaluation of the Hubs. Their involvement must be ongoing and meaningful and not limited to one-off consultation exercises.

1.3. Young People's Vision for Young Futures Hubs

Young people shared their vision for Young Futures Hubs through the Youth Transformation Task and Finish Group of 15 people aged 14–25 and 5 Pop-Up Consultation Events across the country for younger participants (aged 10–14).

They told us they welcomed the ambition of Young Futures Hubs to create safe, accessible, community-based spaces where they can access support, pathways to growth and trusted adults. They highlighted that the success of Young Futures Hubs will depend less on buildings or services and more on whether hubs create meaningful relationships as "staff make or break the experience", their hope for the hubs is that they feel genuinely welcoming and are shaped by the needs of local young people to feel like a "home away from home" rather than an institution.

Successful hubs should be a space where young people:

- Feel safe
- Feel welcome
- Feel understood
- Feel respected
- Feel represented
- Feel listened to
- Feel connected
- Feel able to influence decisions

1.4. Target Cohort

Young Futures Hubs are open to all young people aged 10 - 18 (up to 25 for young people with SEND) with flexibility to change the age range according to local need. Within this open access approach, local authorities should prioritise engagement and support for young people showing early risk factors linked to poor outcomes in mental health, opportunity and crime (see table below). Evidence shows that early intervention delivered through trusted adults with welcoming, accessible provision is effective in preventing escalation and improving long-term outcomes.

Young Futures Hubs should provide non-stigmatising support that builds trust, strengthens resilience, and connects young people to the right help at the right time. While delivery should reflect local context and need, local authorities are expected to ensure that resources are focused on young people at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), vulnerable to being drawn into crime, or developing poor mental health outcomes.

While anyone can access services, hubs should be particularly accessible and tailored toward those with early risk factors, with the aim for 60% of young people accessing Young Futures Hubs targeted services having one or more early risk factor(s).

The following list is not exhaustive and provides early indicators that young people may be at risk. This is to be used alongside practitioner insight and consideration of individual circumstances.

List of Early Risk Indicators Across Programme Objectives
Disengaged, excluded or absent from school/ Not in Education, Employment or Training
Probable mental health condition
Looked after/care-experience

Harm-involved social networks
Experience of poverty or deprivation
Anti-social behaviour (perpetration of) or previous offending (particularly lower-level crimes such as stealing or minor theft)
Having a special educational need or disability (SEND)
Being in contact with social care, or parents contacted by social or educational services about young persons' behaviour
Having a parent/carer or guardian with a disability or mental health condition (including substance misuse).
Multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences[1]

Engagement with the target cohort should be achieved through three primary mechanisms:

- **Strategic Hub Placement:** Establishing Young Futures Hubs within high-need geographic areas to ensure proximity to the target cohort, effectively creating a model of targeted open access.
- **Partner-Led Identification:** Local authorities should use local data, insight, and the expertise of trained professionals and partners to identify, engage, and support these young people to access provision.

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[1]NHS: Most studies addressing the issue have mostly converged on a similar set of experiences falling under this term:

- verbal abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- physical neglect
- emotional neglect
- parental separation
- household mental illness
- household domestic abuse
- household alcohol abuse
- household drug abuse and
- incarceration of a household member

- **Strategic outreach and detached youth work:** Young Futures Hubs should provide a targeted outreach and detached service for young people in spaces and areas that they feel most comfortable.

2. Guiding Principles

Young Futures Hubs should be built on the core values of youth work that prioritise voluntary participation, personal empowerment, and positive relationships between young people and practitioners.

2.1. Young Voices: Experts by Experience

Young people should be involved in decisions that directly affect them, including how services are delivered and when support is available.

Young Futures Hubs should:

- Empower young people to participate in decision-making.
- Use the Lundy Model to ensure young people have:
    - Space
    - Voice
    - Audience
    - Influence
- Actively engage and empower underrepresented groups to share their views, including girls and young women, young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, young people with SEND, and care-experienced young people.

2.2. Trusted Relationships

Trusted relationships are central to effective early intervention. Young people must have access to consistent, non-judgemental support from adults they know and trust.

Young Futures Hubs should:

- employ empathetic, skilled staff who reflect the communities they serve and take all perspectives into account.
- prioritise relationship-based practice across all provision
- support warm handovers between services, particularly during transition points
- create environments that promote belonging, peer support, and community connection

No young person should have to navigate support systems alone.

2.3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Young Futures Hubs must be inclusive, accessible, and welcoming to all young people. No young person should be excluded from support because of their background, identity, needs, or circumstances.

Hubs should:

- provide safe and accessible physical and digital provision for young people aged 10–18 with flexibility (up to 25 for young people with SEND)
- identify and remove barriers to participation, including poverty, transport, discrimination, and accessibility needs
- actively reach and engage underserved groups
- enable access to specialist support where needed

Inclusion must be built into delivery from the outset, not treated as an additional consideration.

2.4. Safeguarding: A Contextual Approach

Safeguarding is a core responsibility and must be embedded throughout all Hub activity.

Hubs must adopt a contextual safeguarding approach, recognising that risks to young people can occur across different environments, including online, in schools, in communities, and in public spaces.

Hubs should:

- Identify and respond to any risks presenting in young people
- Maintain robust safeguarding policies, procedures, and information-sharing arrangements, escalating potential risks or vulnerability to appropriate services. Hubs should work with local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASAs) and safeguarding partner arrangements.
- Provide a named contact and lead for managing high-risk cases
- Ensure all delivery partners meet required safeguarding standards, including safer recruitment and staff training
- Align with Out of School Settings Safeguarding Guidance and National Youth Agency safeguarding standards

Safeguarding must be proactive, coordinated, and central to the way services operate.

2.5. Continuous Improvement

As a programme creating system change, there needs to be a way of reviewing and monitoring progress and ensuring Young Futures Hubs work for the young people they serve.

Hubs should:

- continuously adapt and grow services based on local insights and changing youth needs
- regularly gather and act on feedback from young people, families, and frontline staff to improve delivery in real time
- host regular forums and workshops where staff and partners can share what works and troubleshoot challenges together
- use a range of tools to engage young people e.g. informal youth led sessions, creative workshops, surveys to allow young people to engage through a mechanism that best suits their needs.
- review progress on Young Futures Hubs work quarterly.

By combining informal feedback with standard operational data and new ‘what works’ evidence, the hubs can ensure they are continuing to meet the needs of young people.

3. Operational Set Up

3.1. Governance and Partnerships

Young Futures Hubs will deliver across a complex service landscape. This will include statutory and non-statutory services and a range of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) led offers provided by youth services, crime prevention and justice partners, health partners and employment support.

Young Futures Hubs delivery will require a multi-disciplinary team to support young people's needs in a holistic way; leadership within the Young Futures Hubs needs to ensure a joined-up approach to working to discuss, identify and coordinate appropriate evidence- based interventions, and where required manage referrals and signpost to other local services.

Essential:

- An understanding of existing provision and local needs informed by young people and local organisations to create a plan for delivering the Young Futures Hubs.
- Embed or align the Young Futures Hubs in wider strategic plans within the local authority to provide holistic support to young people.
- Senior leadership buy-in from the local authority and other key services involved in the delivery of provision.
- Form a strategic working group (or utilise an existing group) with clear governance structures and explicit links to existing local authority frameworks and safeguarding arrangements. This group will establish formal terms of reference to map roles and responsibilities across all partners including: youth services, police, health (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) lead, local NHS service senior lead or within Integrated Care Boards(ICB)), social care, educational institutions, alternative provision settings, Department for Work and Pensions Youth Hubs, Best Start Family Hubs, Young Futures Panels, Prevent leads, youth justice leads and Violence Reduction Units/Serious Violence Duty Partnerships and justice partners, including prisons, family services providers and probation (where applicable).
- Develop strong connections with external services referenced in the above bullet point, alongside services in Annex A, to deliver multi-agency support for a variety of needs (via partnerships, alignment or co-location). This could be through:
    - **Joint Planning:** Form cross-agency groups to set shared priorities.
    - **Staff co-location:** Attend partner meetings or host services within the physical hub spaces, and ensure relevant insights are shared in line with information-sharing, consent and safeguarding requirements

    - **Data and information sharing:** Set up monthly information-sharing with health, police, education, and VCSEs, providing clear safeguarding protocols and ensure information management and data sharing protocols are in place.
    - **Partner training:** For example, specialist mental health and trauma training for hub staff.
    - **Insight sharing:** Feed frontline youth trends back to social care, police, and schools.
    - **Shared outreach:** Conduct joint community engagement with partners.
    - **Seamless transitions:** Use named trusted adults and warm handovers to prevent story retelling. Clear two-way referral pathways between the Hub and wider local services.

- Clear safeguarding protocols tailored to the setting, including for drop-in and outreach activities, with a named senior lead for decision making on high-risk cases.

- Young Futures Hubs staff should attend VRU Young Futures Panels, where there is geographic overlap.

- Display a youth-friendly privacy notice that every young person entering the Hub can easily review and query. The privacy notice should include information on how the young person's data might be used or shared, safeguarding processes, and referral pathway explainers.

- Establish robust procedures for young people presenting in forms of severe crisis requiring an immediate social care, healthcare or police response.

- There should be a Partnership/Hub Coordinator to develop partnerships and join up with existing local networks. All partners should have a shared understanding of and commitment to achieving the Young Futures Hubs outcomes.

- Where more than one Hub is established within your local authority, you must establish an agreed approach to services, delivery and workforce and provide a consistent offer, linking up support where appropriate.

- Branding developed for clear recognition of the Young Futures Hubs that is used across all sites and that meets the following requirements. DCMS will provide a branding and logo toolkit to support you with this.

    - The site is referred to as a Young Futures Hub on relevant signage and materials. The exact design of this, including the style and colour, should be determined locally through co-creation activities with young people.

    - The 'Funded by UK Government' logo is visible on all Young Futures Hubs related signage and materials.

- The ‘Youth Matters’ logo associated with the National Youth Strategy is visible on Young Futures Hubs related signage and materials where appropriate.

Go further:

- Meaningful involvement of young people in strategic leadership and governance.
- Remunerate young people for their time and expertise in co-creation and governance roles.
- Explore opportunities to secure co-funding or match funding opportunities.

Helpful Resources

- National Youth Agency safeguarding standards
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- NYA Safeguarding and Risk Management Hub
- Out-of-school settings: safeguarding guidance for providers
- Youth Justice Board Resource Hub: Partnerships
- TLNCF: Building Successful Partnerships
- Youth Voice Resource Partnership Guidance - Youth Justice Resource Hub
- Framework for Integrated Change: Anna Freud
- Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies: guidance for local authorities

Early Adopter Example: Manchester

To illustrate the practical application of the Young Futures Hubs model, the following case study highlights how Manchester approached governance and partnerships to deliver their Young Futures Hubs.

A Networked Delivery Structure
Manchester adopted a networked, partner-led delivery model for its Young Futures Hubs. Rather than relying on a single facility, the model integrated three existing core hubs with six spoke providers, supported by NHS-employed youth workers, VCSE delivery, and capacity-building.

Strategic Coordination and Commissioning
The Manchester local authority acted as a strategic coordinator and commissioner rather than to simply staff the hub directly. This approach enabled Manchester to distribute delivery across a wide ecosystem—including health, youth providers, neighbourhood centres, careers partners, and Greater Manchester networks. This structure facilitated rapid implementation and positioned the Hubs as a catalyst for broader youth system development.

Multi-Directorate Governance
Manchester 'Youth' team is positioned within the Neighbourhoods department rather than Children's Services. This supported a multi-directorate approach, where Strategic Directors from both departments formed a senior management group to oversee the programme. This governance structure was further supported by a cross-departmental Programme Steering Group, ensuring alignment across the organisation.

Partnership and Co-design
The LA prioritised an inclusive partnership approach from the outset. VCSE delivery partners were engaged early, and local VCSE area partnerships were commissioned to lead on youth voice and co-design, ensuring cross-agency consultation across the city. This model allowed the LA to fulfil its Section 507B statutory duty while ensuring youth voice remained central to decision-making. To support the co-design process, the LA commissioned their regional youth work unit, Youth Focus North West, and appointed a lead officer with a public health background to strengthen integration between youth services and public health priorities.

Young Futures Hubs and Panel Partnership
As one of two areas delivering Young Futures Panels and Hubs across North, Central, and South localities, Manchester integrates prevention, open-access support, and targeted multi-agency intervention for youth at risk of crime, exploitation, or violence below statutory thresholds. Operating since 2021 with the GM Violence Reduction Unit, the Panel model works alongside co-located M-Thrive mental health services to bring together police, youth justice, CAMHS, housing, and community partners. The Panel and Young Futures Hubs are closely aligned, with leads sitting in the same local authority directorate and strong operational links in place. Many Panel interventions are delivered from, or linked to, the Hub.
This includes referral pathways between the Panel and M-Thrive, or into identified Hub-based interventions. Referrals from the Young Futures Hub into the Panel generally follow existing Early Help, Education or police-based routes, and have found value in strong relationships between Hub staff, M-Thrive and Panel partners enable this. Young Futures Hub involvement in Panels has increased over time, strengthening referral routes and linking universal provision, targeted support and multi-agency decision making.

This alignment streamlines decision-making and referral pathways into Hub-based support—such as sports, arts, and mentoring—strengthening service consistency across all three localities by expanding existing infrastructure rather than creating new structures.

3.2. Spaces

To meet the needs of diverse young people across different areas, Young Futures Hubs may operate from a range of settings - from large youth or community centres, schools to smaller, locally based sites targeting young people in diverse communities. While facilities may vary, every hub should offer a consistent, welcoming experience. Whilst we recognise the increased need for in person connections, digital tools may be helpful in building trust and reaching young people where they are.

Local authorities will decide in collaboration with local partners, stakeholders and young people where hubs are located within each Top Tier Local Authority (TTLA), based on need, accessibility, and local data. Hubs will make best use of existing provision and infrastructure, with some capital funding available for minor refurbishments to repurpose spaces where appropriate. Identifying suitable spaces early in co-creation will help ensure delivery is proportionate to local scale and need.

Essential:

- Provide a visible, long-term, physical location, accessible via reliable transport. This could be through a single facility or a hub and spoke model with multiple locations. These should be located at neighbourhood, community and/or ward level in areas with high numbers of Young Futures Hubs target cohort and where there may be higher youth crime rates.
- Ensure spaces are accessible, welcoming and safe for young people in the target cohort including consideration of communication needs, neurodiversity, sensory needs, affordability, transport, digital inclusion and cultural understanding.
- Involve young people in shaping and reviewing the design and accessibility of these spaces.
- Include facilities for confidential 1:1 conversations between young people and trusted adults.
- Provide detached and outreach services to ensure engagement from young people less likely to access support and to remove geographic barriers to accessing support, as appropriate.
- Where possible, colocation of services to strengthen local join-up and smoothen young people’s journeys. Where colocation is not feasible, warm handovers and referral processes should be in place (see Section 4.2).
- Establish a "digital front door" so young people (and families) know what to expect before they arrive in person.

Go further:

- Strategically target areas with lower existing provision to meet local young people's needs.
- Where available, utilise data on transport to assess the risk of local transport poverty and the implications for the choice of geographic location of hubs, and to optimise the location of detached and outreach services. The Department for Transport's Transport Poverty Tool is expected to be available in early 2027 and may be a useful resource.
- Mobile youth work buses to provide outreach work.
- Digital youth work.
- Sensory or quiet space available in any physical space for the hub.
- Display information to signal support on specific issues (Mental Health and Wellbeing, Justice Aware, LGBTQ+ topics etc.).
- Access to indoor or outdoor gardens and growing spaces that young people help shape, run and care for, designed to support wellbeing.

Helpful Resources

- NYA: Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EEDIB) Standards
- RHS Wellbeing Garden Blueprint: Youth-led Gardens

Early Adopter Example: Brighton and Hove

To illustrate the practical application of the Young Futures Hubs model, the following case study highlights how Brighton and Hove configured their facilities to support multi-agency partnership and accessibility.

Strategic Placement and Community Visibility
The hub, located in the north of the city, was intentionally situated to maximise community visibility and accessibility. By placing the facility directly adjacent to key local services —including a leisure centre, a medical centre, primary schools, and various sports clubs (such as boxing and table tennis)—the local authority ensured the Young Futures Hubs is a natural part of families' daily routines. Brighton and Hove anticipated that because parents, carers, and families frequently walk past the site for school access, the hub would benefit from organic promotion and word-of-mouth awareness.

Configuring Spaces for Multi-Agency Co-location
To support the multi-agency approach required by the Young Futures programme, Brighton and Hove implemented several physical and operational configurations to

improve service delivery and partnership efficacy:

- **Optimised Access:** The hub replaced traditional local authority Salto access systems with fob key entry, streamlining movement for partners and staff. access systems with FOB key entry, streamlining movement for partners and staff.
- **Confidentiality Protocols:** Recognising the sensitivity of services like wellbeing and sexual health, the team utilised side doors to provide separate, discreet access to confidential spaces.
- **Integrated Layouts:** Designers linked individual rooms to the main hub space. This configuration allows new providers to engage more easily with existing youth club members, facilitating easier referral and connection to new services.
- **Shared Infrastructure:** The hub includes a hot-desk office for co-located staff, ensuring a dedicated workspace for partner organisations. Furthermore, a shared storage agreement allows various providers to access equipment, thereby increasing the range of activities available while simultaneously reducing costs for individual youth providers. The local authority will be added to the Youth database linking external commissioned services to youth monitoring data.
- **Operational Coordination:** While the local authority leads on central timetable setting—prioritising targeted clubs during popular time slots—the structure remains flexible. Delivery providers are encouraged to build relationships with youth workers and attendees during these sessions, fostering a dynamic, youth-led schedule that evolves based on participant needs and partner collaboration.

3.3. Workforce

The workforce within a Young Futures Hubs is likely to consist of a range of paid staff and volunteers, with different skills and competencies, qualification frameworks, and professional bodies. To help staff build essential competencies for their roles, hubs ought to deliver internal and external training along with peer learning opportunities. These programs should adapt to the evolving needs of young people while embedding key youth work principles into every role. Training should also be regularly reviewed using feedback from young people.

Essential:

- The workforce will vary depending on the services offered and is typically multidisciplinary in make-up. However, the type of roles that you would expect to see include:
  - Partnership/Hub Coordinator
  - Lead Youth Worker with Level 6 qualification or equivalent experience
  - Mental Health Practitioner/counsellor, trained and registered to support triaging, and with crisis response as needed.[2]
  - Careers and Opportunity Lead
  - Violence Prevention Lead
  - Safeguarding Lead
  - Volunteers, including young people.
- Staff and volunteers are equipped and enabled to respond to young people's needs, and deliver the services offered in the hub, with reflective practice embedded in the multi-disciplinary team.
- All employers involved in Young Futures Hubs must follow the minimum recruitment practices in your code of practice - i.e. DBS check.
- Staff should be capable of providing early help for common and emerging needs, including anxiety, low mood, emotional distress, trauma-related needs, neurodivergence-related support needs, and family or relationship difficulties. This may include brief assessment, developing a collaborative understanding of need, guided self-help, low-intensity psychological interventions, group work, counselling, peer support, family-informed work and advice for parents or carers.
- Staff should be equipped with the skills to manage complex needs in an appropriate way, including needs that have already materialised but haven't been fully identified such as vulnerability to exploitation, violence, abuse, debt, parent/carer imprisonment and family relationships. This should include staff

[2] This could include Children and Young People's Wellbeing Practitioners (CWP), Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWP), CBT-informed practitioners, peer support workers, youth mental health workers, clinical supervisors and/or named links into local CAMHS or NHS children and young people's mental health services.

training in trauma-informed and non-stigmatising practice, mental health first aid, safeguarding and cultural competence and neurodiversity support.

- Staff are aware of wider local services available that may not be offered within the hub and can confidently link young people to them e.g. housing support, support for parental imprisonment.
- Delivery must align with existing multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, recognising the legal duties of settings and ensuring strong operational links between hubs and safeguarding leads. Staff should understand local safeguarding pathways and wider safeguarding processes.
- Evaluate current operational capabilities and align with professional standards for relevant roles to design and implement a targeted workforce training and development plan based on the insights gained.
- Prioritise workforce stability to give staff time to build genuine, trusted relationships.
- Hubs should ensure appropriate clinical supervision, consultation and escalation arrangements for staff delivering mental health support. This should include clear thresholds and escalation processes for when young people need specialist NHS mental health services, crisis support, safeguarding intervention or other statutory responses.

Go further:

- Involve young people in the recruitment, induction and training of staff.
- Ensure the workforce is relatable and reflective of the local community, including those with lived experiences similar to the young people they are supporting.
- Provide opportunities for young people to be part of the hub workforce.
- Create clear opportunities for youth leadership within the staff structure.
- When developing a workforce training plan, encourage staff to undertake enhanced safeguarding training.

Helpful Resources

- NYA Safeguarding and Risk Management Hub
- UK Youth Safe Spaces Framework
- Provider framework on Mentoring
- Safeguarding in out-of-school settings e-learning
- National Information Centre on Children of Offenders
- Youth Work Code of Ethics

4. Service Delivery and Referrals

4.1. Services

Young Futures Hubs should build on existing strengths while remaining flexible to meet emerging needs. Strong coordination across teams and partners will prevent duplication of services, align new developments with what already works, and create a more integrated and effective offer for young people.

Essential:

- Be co-created with local authorities, partners, and young people - including girls, young women, care experienced and minority ethnic backgrounds (those less represented in youth engagement/co-creation activities).
- Create a regular programme of activities with a timetable so young people can know what to expect and what they can access on any given day. Safe open-access provision during high-vulnerability times (4–6pm weekdays, weekends, holidays).
- Hubs must clearly provide information on urgent local support, crisis lines, and emergency procedures for use when the hub is closed.
- Operate a ‘no wrong door’ approach to ensure young people are advocated for across services.
- Take a strength-based approach focusing on positive goals and assets.
- Protect paid time for staff to build trust and engage in informal conversations with young people outside of structured activities.
- Provide a blend of open access services and targeted support, meeting all three aims of the Young Futures programme (preventing young people from being drawn into violence, improving their mental health and wellbeing, providing opportunities). These can be drawn from Annex B or developed independently.
- Services should be evidence based and build on best practice and resources relevant to each of the programme’s objectives:
    - Interventions providing opportunities and preventing young people from becoming NEET should draw from relevant evidence bases, such as the Youth Futures Foundation, and be designed to ensure clear routes to employment support services if needed, particularly where DWP Youth Hubs are also in place within an area.
    - Interventions to prevent young people from being drawn into violence should draw from relevant evidence bases, such as the Youth Endowment

Fund Toolkit outlining the impact and quality of relevant approaches. Hubs should deliver early, targeted support, and work in partnership with other local services as appropriate.

    - Mental Health and Wellbeing Interventions should be evidence based and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) concordant, where appropriate. The mental health and wellbeing offer should reflect local need and provision but aim to offer more than signposting. Hubs should deliver early, community-based support with clear routes between NHS children and young people's mental health services, Early Support Hubs, Mental Health Support Teams, school nursing, public health, and VCSE providers. This will ensure young people can access the most appropriate support to meet their needs.

- Involve parents and carers on a case-by-case basis only when it is safe, welcomed by the young person, and beneficial. Staff must evaluate safety and individual comfort prior to outreach to prevent discouraging young people from seeking support or compromising the Hub's role as a confidential "third space."
- Develop partnerships connecting across services and a warm handover process (utilising the referral guide in 4.2) for all those receiving targeted support outside the hub, ageing out of the Young Futures Hubs support and accessing adult services (e.g. DWP Youth Hub, Adult Mental Health Services). This can include flexibility for Young Futures Hubs to continue support on a case-by-case basis, considering resource and capacity.

Go further:

- Implement youth-led provision as a central part of the core offer.
- Develop a plan for stigma-free access to food and/or hygiene products so that young people don't have to ask.
- Develop a strategy for out of hours support - flagging helplines and building partnerships with local support in the community.
- Shift away from strictly crisis-driven contact by enabling staff to share positive milestones and progress with families whenever the young person is comfortable doing so.
- Equip staff to signpost families toward relevant local support (e.g., local family hubs, voluntary sector organisations) and establish direct links with the Families First Partnerships program where appropriate.
- Include family support workers where appropriate to support young people to identify needs and communicate this to education staff and other

professionals, as well as work with families and existing professionals to understand individual needs.

Helpful Resources

- Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit
- Youth Work and Violence Prevention
- Youth Futures Foundation Employment Toolkit
- Youth Employment UK Resources
- What Works for Wellbeing
- Youth Access Quality Framework

Early Adopter Example: Bristol

Leveraging Existing Infrastructure
Bristol's approach centred on building upon existing youth provision rather than creating a new system from scratch. The local authority conducted an internal audit to map provision across the area, utilising site visits and analysis of existing offers, staffing levels, and organisational readiness. This process identified critical gaps and strengths, which directly informed the development of an eight-partner network of "spoke" providers, coordinated by Full Circle Docklands as the Hub Lead.

Governance and Operational Structure
Clear operational boundaries were established early to maximise efficacy. The hub maintains responsibility for coordination, commissioning, payment, and quality assurance, while the spoke partners focus on delivering specialist interventions. This division of labour ensures that no single organisation carries the full weight of delivery. Accountability is maintained through shared documentation, including alignment with the National Youth Agency (NYA) Quality and Safeguarding Standards.

Co-Design and Youth Involvement
The service model was co-produced with over 110 young people across twelve sessions. This engagement was instrumental in defining delivery priorities—specifically mental health and wellbeing, opportunities, and crime prevention—and refining the language used to engage with young people effectively.

The "No Wrong Door" Approach
The hub operates on a "No Wrong Door" philosophy, where open-access youth work serves as a universal, low-threshold front door. This model relies on trusted relationships to facilitate the early identification of needs.

Key features of this flow include:

- **Fluid Transitions:** Young people can move from open-access provision into targeted support without the need for formal re-referrals.

- **Continuous Pathways:** Tactical decisions were made to treat open-access and targeted services as one continuous pathway.
- **Reduced Stigma:** By integrating support rather than segregating it, the model allows for earlier intervention, reducing stigma and strengthening existing grassroots provision.

4.2. Expectations for Referrals

Based on insights from our Youth Transformation Task and Finish Group, the following referral principles offer guidance for local authorities and partners. These are core principles to safeguard young people's wellbeing during a referral process that should be adapted to suit local needs and settings.

- **Designate a Referral Coordinator:** A named worker should be responsible for tracking referrals, coordinating with receiving services, and verifying that support has commenced. If a referral is declined, the Referral Coordinator should work with the young person and relevant services to agree an alternative plan and ensure appropriate interim support until ongoing support is in place.
- **Establish a Warm-Referral:** Young Futures Hubs must ensure young people are formally introduced to receiving teams, providing accompanied meetings where appropriate, and maintaining contact until support begins.
- **Ensure Informed Participation:** Young people must receive clear explanations, using communication method(s) tailored to their needs, regarding the purpose of referrals, the services involved, data-sharing protocols, and expected waiting times in accessible formats.
- **Co-Produce Strength-Based Summaries:** Young Futures Hubs should work with young people, as the service users, to create referral summaries that they can review and amend, ensuring they retain agency over their own narrative.
- **Embed the "Tell Us Once" Principle:** Receiving services should review existing data to avoid requiring young people to repeat difficult experiences. Young Futures Hubs should share only necessary information, in line with data-sharing protocols.
- **Implement Youth-Friendly Confidentiality:** Young Futures Hubs must explain data-sharing protocols using practical language, detailing what remains confidential and what will be shared, and the steps taken before contacting parents or carers, where this does not conflict with safeguarding arrangements.
- **Parent/Carer Involvement:** If parent/carer involvement is unsafe, unhelpful, or likely to cause distress, enable the young person to nominate an alternative trusted adult (e.g., mentor, teacher, or youth worker) for support.
- **Provide a "Waiting Well" Offer:** During waiting periods, young people should have a named contact, regular updates, and access to interim resources, and continued Young Futures Hub or alternative support, as appropriate.
- **Guarantee Choice and Review:** Young People should be offered alternative service options, if interventions are unsuitable, ensuring support is not withdrawn if a referral fails.

Annex A: Suggested list of stakeholders and services to engage

While this list is not exhaustive, it hopefully provides a starting point for which services will need to be supported and partnered with to make Young Futures Hubs holistic and connected. Cross-sector conversations and early engagement with these bodies will be vital to maximising the impact of Young Futures Hubs and Transformation Programmes. This engagement should ensure joint ownership of outcomes and ensure widespread buy-in from across sectors. Working closely with these stakeholders and identifying existing services will also avoid duplication of effort.

Public Health, Wellbeing & Specialist Clinical Services,	Safety, Justice & Multi-Agency Safeguarding	Education, Employment & Enterprises	Family, Housing & Systems Transformation	Community, Voluntary & Peer Support Projects
● Health & Clinical Leads: Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), NHSE Mental Health Regional Health Leads, Public Health, School Nursing, Multisystemic Therapy providers, NHS Mental Health Services, Mental Health Support Teams, Health and Justice Vanguard sites. ● Specialist & Target Support: Youth Information, Advice, Counselling and Support (YIACS) partners, Early Support Hubs, and specialist charities (neurodiversity support, domestic abuse, mental health).	● Policing & Community Safety: Local Police, Youth Justice Services (YOTs and YOT management boards), Violence Reduction Units, Serious Violence Duty Partnerships, Probation Services, Prisons, Community Safety Partnerships, Young Futures Panels (where applicable), Prevent leads. ● Safeguarding Hubs: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) and Multi-Agency Support Teams (MAST).	● Education Providers: Schools, Academies, Colleges, Alternative Provision, Holiday Activities and Food Programmes. ● Skills & Employment: Jobcentres, DWP Youth Hubs, Youth Employment Hubs, Careers Services (Careers Advisers, National Careers Service, Local Enterprise Partnerships Careers Hubs). ● Enterprise: Local businesses.	● Social Care & Housing: Housing Associations, Care Leavers Services, SEND services/teams. ● Family Support: Best Start Family Hubs, Healthy Babies services, Family Help teams, children's social care, Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams, Lead Child Protection Practitioners. ● Transformation Projects: Council transformation teams and project officers (e.g., Family First, Child First, SEND reforms).	● VCSE & Local Partners: Youth charities, voluntary organisations, local sports, arts, and cultural organisations. ● Parents, carers and families ● Outreach & Mentoring: Faith-based organisations with youth outreach, mentoring and peer-support providers (aligned to Mentoring Quality Framework). ● Community Hubs: Local VCSE stakeholders, Youth Hubs, and broader community partners. ● Young People

Annex B: Example Service Provision

This non-prescriptive table includes examples of the universal, early help and targeted activities that could take place in a Young Futures Hub. Please note that Intensive Support activities can be outsourced/based in a spoke or co-located space, and some of the activities listed above are suggestions. We expect you to develop your offer in line with local needs/demand.

Universal Support (Open Access)	Early Help & Targeted Support	Specialist & Intensive Support
Drop-in youth provision	CBT-informed self-help	High-intensity counselling
Guidance and signposting, including guided self-help tools	Peer mentoring	Clinical mental health support
Youth work and trusted relationships	Enrichment programmes	Priority psychological support for at-risk young people
Sports, arts and enrichment activities	Targeted sports programmes	VRU and Youth Justice interventions
Positive activities and social action	1:1 asset-based mentoring	Employer job-matching pathways
Community volunteering opportunities	Attendance support	DWP Youth Hub employment support
Post-11 education pathways guidance	School retention interventions	
Educational and careers information	Skills workshops	
Self-development programmes	Work-readiness programmes	
	Career mentoring	

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Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

Local Youth Transformation

Guidance for Local Authorities

September 2026

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Who is this document for?

This document has been produced for local authorities and partners participating in the Local Youth Transformation programme. It sets out the vision and expected practices to develop a successful local youth offer.

1. Introduction

This Government recognises the transformative role that youth services play in young people's lives. On the 10th of December, the Government published 'Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy' alongside a State of the Nation report, with commitments to ensuring that every young person across the country has somewhere to go, something to do, and someone who cares.

Grounded in three core operational shifts, Youth Matters aims to reshape youth provision nationwide:

- **From national to local**: We are empowering local communities to design and deliver programmes in line with their own unique priorities and needs.
- **From fragmented to collaborative**: We are transforming a disjointed landscape into a collaborative ecosystem, where services for young people—from mental health and careers support to youth clubs—work together to ensure young people thrive.
- **From excluded to empowered**: By co-creating every Young Futures Hub and Local Youth Transformation plan with young people, we are ensuring they are the architects of their own future.

Local authorities play a unique, foundational role in bringing this vision to life. Under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 (supported by the latest statutory guidance published in 2023), local authorities hold a statutory duty to "secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people" and to make sure young people have a say in the local offer. We know that some local authorities have faced challenges in meeting this duty – and yet it is key to enabling all young people to unlock their potential.

Our vision is to develop high-quality, sustainable, and inclusive local youth offer across all local authority areas. The Local Youth Transformation (LYT) programme aims to facilitate this, rebuilding local authority capability and leadership to ensure a local youth offer which addresses the needs of young people. By empowering young people, restoring local capability, and embedding continuous improvement, LYT ensures every young person - regardless of their background or location - has access to safe places, engaging activities, and trusted adult support.

Local Youth Transformation funding spans the entire local authority area. Therefore, all associated transformation activities and resources should focus on enhancing all youth provision rather than solely establishing a Young Futures Hub.

Local Youth Transformation is made up of the following key stages: Local Landscape Review, Local Youth Strategy development, collaborative co-creation of an Implementation Plan, and ongoing evaluation.

2. What Transformation Looks Like

Local authorities act as strategic system leaders and stewards of the local youth service ecosystem - shaping vision, driving quality, and maximising impact. Crucially, having strategic oversight of the youth offer does not necessarily mean bringing direct service delivery of youth services in-house.

2.1. In practice, effective local authority stewardship involves:

Understanding sufficiency	Convening partners	Enabling youth voice	Building Workforce and Infrastructure	Aligning Resources	Assuring Quality
Continuously mapping and understanding the local youth population in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, analysing provision to identify gaps, and ensuring a comprehensive, accessible offer meets the varied needs of all young people.	Bringing together voluntary, community, commercial, and public sector organisations to build collaborative networks, eliminate duplication, and deliver a shared local vision.	Embedding opportunities for young people to co-design services, influence strategic priorities, and evaluate provision across the area.	Supporting professional development for local youth workers, facilitating sharing of training and resources, and strengthening long-term sector capacity.	Strategically connecting funding streams, joint commissioning, and working with partners to use combined resources (e.g. training, websites, staff, volunteers) for community benefit.	Setting robust outcome frameworks, monitoring standards, and supporting continuous improvement across all partner provision.

3. Essential Requirements for LYT:

3.1. Local Landscape Review: Local authorities must complete a comprehensive landscape review to gain an understanding of both the current needs of young people and the existing local provision.

3.2. Local Youth Service Strategy: Local authorities must establish a clear and comprehensive Local Youth Strategy. While it may be structured in alignment with Youth Matters, the strategy must directly incorporate insights from the local landscape review and provide a detailed plan for enhancing and expanding local youth provision.

3.3. Implementation Plan: Local authorities must develop a plan of transformation projects and activities in response to the local landscape review findings. The plan should be co-created with young people and local partners.

3.4. Evaluation: Throughout the programme, local authorities must participate in evaluation activities conducted by our evaluation partner.

Throughout all activities, local authorities should comply with the following branding requirements (DCMS will provide a branding and logo toolkit to support with this):

- The materials or products produced contain the Local Youth Transformation title.
- The 'Funded by UK Government' logo is visible on all materials or products.
- The 'Youth Matters' logo associated with the National Youth Strategy is visible on materials or products where appropriate.

Pathfinder Example: Liverpool

The Liverpool Local Youth Transformation Pilot is an example of building the foundations of a stronger youth system co-designed with young people. This transformation addresses systemic challenges through sustained investment, professional development, and putting structures in place to connect all relevant services and organisations. The programme's key initiatives so far include:

- Reconnecting the youth sector through coordinated partnership events called 'Young Liverpool', to give young people meaningful opportunities to directly shape local policy and decisions;
- Commissioning Liverpool's first comprehensive Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for youth work;
- Developing a 'digital front door' (an AI-enabled digital platform to serve as a unified entry point for young people and families); and
- Securing a £1 million annual commitment to youth work through Public Health and the council's core budget, with over £100k invested in workforce development, and 300 funded learning opportunities.

4. Local Landscape Review

First, local authorities must complete a comprehensive review to gain an understanding of both the current needs of young people and the existing local provision. This can be done by conducting a fresh assessment or building upon other recent service reviews.

Essential:

With support from the delivery partner, we expect local authorities and partners to:

- Map the existing youth offer, including local and national initiatives (relevant statutory and non-statutory services, and voluntary sector provision). This should build on existing mapping work, including the National Youth Agency's National Youth Sector Census.
- Assess delivery of youth services to meet the statutory duty, identifying areas to develop through the programme, taking into consideration previous recent service/peer reviews. The sufficiency of provision should be assessed against young people's needs and expectations of service delivery in the area.
- Review the wider characteristics of the existing local youth offer. This should include current levels of provision and need, youth voice and participation, workforce, quality and safeguarding measures, infrastructure, governance, local partnership capacity, funding/resource flows and the authority's own capability to steward the system.
- Understand the needs of young people living and studying in the area, including by engaging with and considering non-formally connected young people such as those with SEND.
- Identify gaps and challenges across the whole local authority youth offer.

Go further:

- Consider the nine essentials of the statutory duty toolkit when planning and structuring the local landscape review.
- Work with local schools, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCSE) services, and outreach services to get the widest possible range of views from young people, especially those facing barriers to engaging.

5. Local Youth Strategy

Local authorities are expected to publish a Local Youth Strategy, co-created with young people and partners. If local authorities already have a local youth strategy this can be updated, amended, or used in its current form if it already aligns with the needs outlined in the local landscape review. Local authorities can decide how to structure the strategy, ensuring it reflects local priorities and the local context.

Essential:

We expect the strategy to:

- Set a clear, ambitious long-term vision and include short- and medium-term actions.
- Align with local services (including health, education, safety, and social care) for a cohesive approach, addressing any gaps in provision identified through the local landscape review.
- Align with the core objectives of Youth Matters: empowering young people, reducing isolation, and improving local support systems.
- Be co-created with young people, ensuring their priorities shape commissioning and delivery, and local partners including statutory and non-statutory services and organisations (e.g. health, policing, and education providers), and the VCSE.
- Be approved by elected members and the Director of Children's Services (DCS).
- Be published publicly as a "live" dynamic document, with annual progress reports (including a review of progress by young people).

We also expect local authorities to engage with local young people at least every 6 months to review progress against the strategy. The approach used to engage young people should be shaped around their needs and should ensure feedback is collected from a diverse, representative group.

Go Further:

- Structure the strategy around Youth Matters pillars/chapters (Places to go, Things to do, and People who care).
- Expand the strategy to cover evidence of need and sufficiency; young people's priorities; organisations active in the local youth system and respective roles; youth voice and accountability; workforce; quality; partnerships and infrastructure; governance; resources and sustainability.

6. Implementation Plan

Drawing on the local landscape review, each local authority must co-create an implementation plan for delivery during the programme – by March 2029. The plan should reflect local strategic priorities, directly align with findings from the landscape review, and set out the intended improvements to local youth offers. Authorities may decide which priorities to address, how many to include, and the approach to delivery.

Essentials:

We expect the plan to:

- Be co-created with young people and other local partners.
- Be based on the local landscape review findings.
- Set out the early steps to deliver the Local Youth Strategy including how, when and by whom the initial actions will be delivered.
- Include clear key performance indicators (KPIs) and delivery milestones to track and measure progress, and detail on how these will be reported on and scrutinised to keep delivery on track.
- Where a local need is identified, implementation plans should cover the following topics (alongside others decided locally):
    - **Establishing/improving structures and systems for the long-term**, such as governance bodies, youth boards, data management platforms, and quality frameworks, that remain embedded beyond initial funding (e.g., Hartlepool's data management systems or Southwark's cross-council commissioning).
    - **Strengthening workforce capability,** for example through structured development pathways (Levels 1–3), annual Continuous Professional Development calendars, and VCSE upskilling programmes so staff can sustain service improvements independently (e.g. models used in Cornwall, Islington, Peterborough, and Derbyshire).
    - **Setting up formal partnership forums, steering groups, and VCSE-led networks** to reduce fragmentation and maintain collaboration long-term (e.g., Peterborough's working groups, Stoke's Youth Collective, or Doncaster's membership-based model).
    - **Adopting shared standards** (such as the National Youth Agency's quality assurance frameworks, updated youth work curricula, and common safeguarding expectations) across all local providers to ensure consistent quality.
    - **Securing senior leadership buy-in** to continuing to take a strategic approach to youth services long-term, co-created with young people and partners, beyond the DCMS funding.

6.1. Pathfinder Examples of Implementation Plan and Delivery:

Cornwall Council *(Implementation Plan Focus: Place-Based Infrastructure & Co-Production)*

Cornwall Council recruited dedicated Area Leads to deliver direct outreach to young people and establish Area Youth Summits with VCSE organisations for joint co-production. This drove collaborative place-based Youth Offers that fed into the broader county-wide strategy while connecting youth feedback directly to local elected officials through Community Area Partnerships. Through this coordination model, the council mapped previously unreached providers and rebuilt trust across the voluntary sector. *Key Implementation Insight:* Dedicated local leads help bridge trust and coordination gaps, though delivery plans in geographically diverse or rural areas must adapt to differing regional sector profiles and physical distance barriers.

Derbyshire County Council *(Implementation Plan Focus: Workforce Development & Governance)*

Informed by findings from its local landscape review, Derbyshire County Council commissioned accredited Level 2 and Level 3 Youth Work qualifications to upskill staff across council departments, district councils, and local VCSE partners. By partnering with StreetGames to integrate youth voice and CPD pathways into workforce development, the council built sustainable sector capability and established a countywide Youth Board for ongoing strategic governance.

Islington Council example *(Implementation Plan Focus: Test-and-Learn Pilots & VCSE Co-Production)*

Islington allocated funding toward agile "test-and-learn" pilots with Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations to deliver targeted support for key groups, including youth at risk of Serious Youth Violence or becoming NEET, and LGBTQI+ groups. By embedding the Lundy Model framework for youth participation, establishing play-to-youth transition pathways, and offering hands-on coaching, the council co-created flexible cross-provider initiatives that directly strengthen local sector capability. *Key Implementation Insight:* Structuring onward grants with built-in reflection loops enables local authorities to harness external expertise, adapt delivery in real time, and produce shared best-practice toolkits for long-term sustainability.

Oxfordshire County Council Example *(Implementation Plan Focus: Hyper-Local Partnerships & Youth Empowerment)*

Oxfordshire local authority established Local Youth Partnerships (LYPs) across six district councils and creating trained youth panels - adapted from existing SEND youth forum models - to evaluate local services and manage micro-grants for youth-led social action. To strengthen local delivery, funding was paired with targeted VCSE capacity building in bid writing, governance, and business planning. *Key Implementation Insight:* When designing multi-district governance structures, local authorities must account for local delivery capacity early and resolve legal barriers (such as data-sharing agreements and onward grant distribution mechanisms) from the outset.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council *(Implementation Plan Focus: Youth-Led Governance & Systemic Co-Production)*

Stoke-on-Trent embedded youth voice directly into governance through a dedicated Youth Participation Officer, cross-sector roundtables, and system-wide adoption of Lundy's Model of Participation. The city created paid Youth Ambassador roles for around 30 young people to facilitate co-production and research, alongside establishing 'Young Health Champions' and 'Young Safeguarding Champions' to co-design interventions with public health and safeguarding teams. *Key Implementation Insight:* Formalising and paying young people as participation leads shifts organisational culture toward sustainable co-production, generating localised evidence while creating a scalable engagement model for other council directorates.

7. Evaluation

Evaluation is crucial to informing our understanding of how the programme is being delivered in different contexts, to help us assess the impact of the programme, and further inform national policy on the Young Futures Hubs and Transformation Programme.

Local authorities will be asked to take part in evaluation activities. This will involve working with the commissioned independent evaluator(s).

Evaluation activities that you may be asked to participate in include, but are not limited to:

- Interviews
- Surveys
- Case studies
- Collection of additional management information

Local authorities will be expected to facilitate engagement in the evaluation, as required. This may include engagement from local authority staff, Young Futures Hubs teams and partners, trusted adults that support young people to engage with Young Futures Hubs, local partners and providers of the wider youth offer, and any other relevant stakeholders. Local authorities will also be required to work with the independent evaluator(s) to consider and develop the approach to monitoring information, data collection and data sharing, and the implementation of a core set of metrics to support evaluation activity.

Participating in the evaluation will also be beneficial to local authorities. It will help understand whether the funding is achieving its intended goals and objectives: identifying areas for improvement, informing decision-making and driving effective service delivery to meet young people's needs. The commissioned independent evaluator(s) will support local authorities in meeting the needs of the evaluation.

We expect local authorities to respond to any reasonable additional requests from the Young Futures Hubs and Transformation Team to support with any retrospective assessment or evaluation as to the impact or value for money of the programme fund. We may also ask for details related to areas of improvement identified during the programme (e.g. information relating to new partnerships or workforce development activity), to examine legacy impacts.

Further information on the evaluation will be shared in due course.

8. Practical Implementation & Governance Guidance

Practical steps to consider:

- **Engage seniors early:** Involve Chief Executives, DCSs, and Lead Members for Youth Services during the initial onboarding and mobilisation stage, and in approving the Implementation Plan. Ensuring senior leadership buy-in early should help with navigating and unblocking internal processes.

- **Establish a Delivery Board (or utilise an existing board):** Set up a monthly Steering Group chaired by the DCS or Senior Sponsor with authority to resolve inter-departmental issues and integrate planning into wider youth related initiatives (e.g. Family Hub networks, Children and Young People's Strategic Partnerships, or *Families First* boards).

- **Procurement preparation:** Understanding internal processes and sign offs and timelines for procurement can help prepare for any blockers. Build a relationship with the commercial lead.

- **Implement escalation processes:** Agree with the Senior Sponsor how to escalate key issues that could delay important progress (e.g., procurement stalls, or resourcing challenges).

- **Prioritise Partner Engagement:** Be open and honest from the start about likely issues, operational hurdles, and the time and input required from them. This is particularly critical when engaging VCSE partners who may operate with constrained budgets and limited capacity. Establish a Terms of Reference or other guidelines for agreed commitments and ways of working.

- **Establish Early Project Management Capacity:** Identify existing staff, in particular project managers, who can be deployed to support delivery and/or use initial planning funding to recruit staff into key roles at pace.

- **Sustainability**: Use evidence of the impact of youth services, including benefits to wider services, to support long-term sustainability. Consider how LYT funding can support longer-term change (e.g. improved delivery models, strengthened VCSE capacity, and multi-year commissioning strategies).

- **Aligning Local Budgets:** Align LYT funding with wider council priorities to embed core youth funding within mainstream local authority budget cycles over the longer term.

Annex A: Helpful Resources

This document should be read alongside:

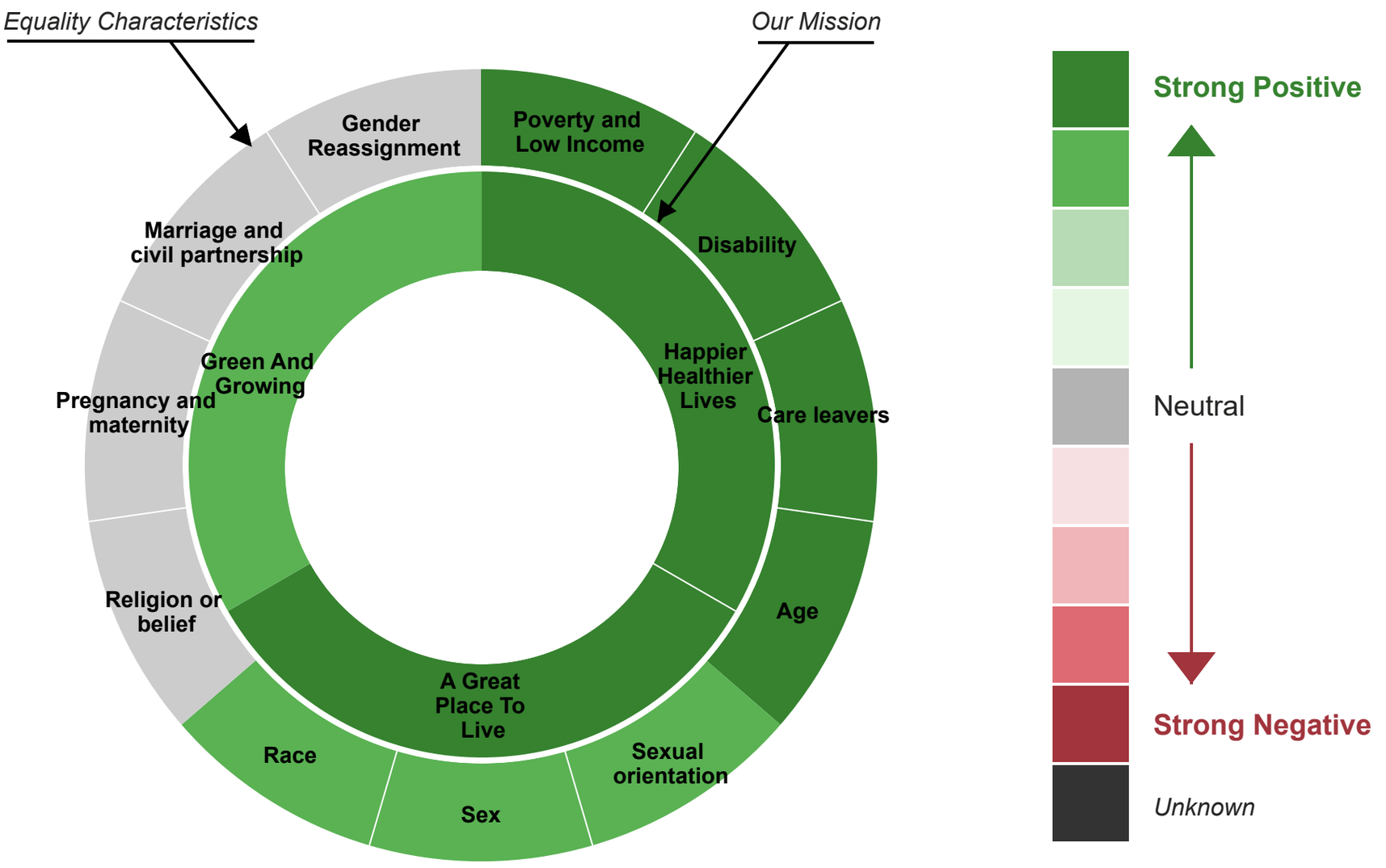
- Young Futures Hubs and Transformation Prospectus
- Young Futures Hubs Guidance, for Local Authorities also participating in the Young Futures Hubs programme
- DCMS Statutory Duty Guidance
- NYA Statutory Duty Toolkit

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Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth Transformation Programme

completed/last updated by Jodie Barber on 16/09/2026

Portfolio	**Children and Young People**
Directorate	**Place**
Service/Team	**Communities**
Is this IA related to a Budget Reduction proposal?	**No**



Equality Characteristics

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Religion or belief	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Race	Moderate Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	4	A strong positive impact is anticipated for children and young people from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and other ethnically diverse communities because Young Futures Hubs and the Local Youth Transformation Programme aim to improve equitable access to support, opportunities and services. By delivering more accessible, community-based and inclusive provision, the programme has the potential to reduce barriers that can contribute to inequalities in outcomes and service engagement.
Sex	Moderate Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	4	A strong positive impact is anticipated for children and young people from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and other ethnically diverse communities because Young Futures Hubs and the Local Youth Transformation Programme aim to improve equitable access to support, opportunities and services. By delivering more accessible, community-based and inclusive provision, the programme has the potential to reduce barriers that can contribute to inequalities in outcomes and service engagement.
Sexual orientation	Moderate Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	4	A strong positive impact is anticipated for lesbian, gay, bisexual and questioning young people because Young Futures Hubs and the Local Youth Transformation Programme are intended to provide safe, inclusive and welcoming environments where all young people can access support, opportunities and services free from discrimination. The programme has the potential to improve wellbeing, belonging and access to support for LGBTQ+ young people, who can experience higher levels of bullying, social isolation and mental health challenges than their peers.
Age	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	A strong positive impact is anticipated for children and young people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. Young Futures Hubs will improve access to integrated support, positive activities, education, employment and wellbeing services, helping to address barriers associated with poverty and deprivation. The programme is expected to enhance opportunities, increase engagement with services, improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for those most at risk of social exclusion. By focusing support within communities and enabling earlier intervention, the hubs have the potential to contribute significantly to improving life chances for disadvantaged young people and their families.
Care leavers	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	A strong positive impact is anticipated for care leavers because Young Futures Hubs and the Local Youth Transformation Programme are designed to provide accessible, coordinated and relationship-based support for young people who may face multiple disadvantages when transitioning into adulthood. Care leavers often experience poorer outcomes than their peers across education, employment, housing, health and wellbeing, making them a key group likely to benefit from the programme.
Disability	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	A strong positive impact is anticipated for disabled children and young people because Young Futures Hubs and the Local Youth Transformation Programme aim to improve access to support, opportunities and services for those who may experience barriers to participation, inclusion and achievement. The integrated and community-based approach provides opportunities to identify needs earlier, coordinate support more effectively and reduce inequalities experienced by disabled young people.
Poverty and Low Income	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	A strong positive impact is anticipated for children and young people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. Young Futures Hubs will improve access to integrated support, positive activities, education, employment and wellbeing services, helping to address barriers associated with poverty and deprivation. The programme is expected to enhance opportunities, increase engagement with services, improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for those most at risk of social exclusion. By focusing support within communities and enabling earlier intervention, the hubs have the potential to contribute significantly to improving life chances for disadvantaged young people and their families.

Our Mission / Corporate Priorities

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Green And Growing	Moderate Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	4	Young Futures Hubs and the Local Youth Transformation Programme contribute to the Green and Growing priority by supporting young people to develop the skills, confidence and aspirations needed to participate in education, employment and training. By focusing on those at greatest risk of disadvantage and exclusion, the programme will help ensure that more young people can benefit from future economic opportunities and contribute positively to Oldham's growth.
A Great Place To Live	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	young Futures Hubs support the Great Place to Live priority by creating safe, welcoming spaces where young people can access support, develop positive relationships and actively participate in their communities. The programme is expected to strengthen community cohesion, increase feelings of belonging and civic pride, and support safer neighbourhoods through prevention and positive engagement activities.
Happier Healthier Lives	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	Young Futures Hubs will make a significant contribution to the Oldham Plan's Healthier, Happier Lives priority by improving the wellbeing, resilience and life chances of children and young people. Through early intervention, integrated support and access to positive opportunities, the programme will help young people reach their full potential, improve mental wellbeing and strengthen connections within their communities. As a result, a strong positive impact is anticipated.

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Emergency Powers Decision Report

Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Growth
Directorate: Place
Report Author: Elizabeth Dryden-Stuart, Head of Strategic Planning and Transport; Emma Brennan, Graduate Planning Officer (Policy)
Email: elizabeth.dryden-stuart@oldham.gov.uk; emma.brennan@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 19 October 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

Following receipt of the Inspector's Report on the Independent Examination of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan, Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority must now decide what action to take in response to the recommended modifications; and if the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum.

Recommendations are to approve:

1. The recommended modifications to be made to the submission Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan, as set out in the Inspector's Report to Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority of the Independent Examination of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan, and publication of the Decision Statement.

2. Submission of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan for the plan period up to 2045, subject to the recommended modifications (see recommendation 1), to a referendum based on the area that was designated as a Neighbourhood Area by the Peak District National Park Authority on 11 November 2016 and by Oldham Council on 21 November 2016.

3. Reason for urgency

The Inspector's Report on the independent examination of the submission Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan was received by Saddleworth Parish Council, the PDNPA and Oldham Council on the 17th September 2026. The report finds that subject to specified modifications, the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements and should be submitted to a referendum. As per Regulation 17A of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, we now have 5 weeks from the day immediately following that on which we received the Inspector's Report to decide what action to take in response to the modifications recommended. A decision is therefore required by 23rd October 2026.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

The Council, as lead authority for the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan, would fail to meet Regulation 17A of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, which requires publication of the Decision Statement (see Appendix 2 of the main report) within 5 weeks from the day immediately following that on which we received the Inspector's Report (which is 23rd October 2026).

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

If Oldham approves the modifications recommended by the Independent Inspector, Oldham Council will then need to publish a decision statement and subsequently arrange a referendum for the Neighbourhood Plan.

The referendum is estimated to cost approximately £0.065m, with the possibility of claiming a £0.020m grant from the MHCLG towards the administration of the referendum proceedings. The estimated costs will need to be funded from existing revenue budget held within the Planning Service. The estimated net cost of the referendum has already been assumed within the current Planning forecast for 2026/27.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name
Date
Comments

If the Council approves the modifications recommended by the Independent Inspector, a referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan will be required. The referendum is estimated to cost £65k, with up to £20k of grant funding available from MHCLG towards administration costs. The net cost will be funded from existing Planning Service revenue budgets.

It should be noted that the Planning Service is currently forecasting a potential overspend of £180k by the year end. This potential additional cost would increase the forecast overspend position as at 31 March 2027.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name: Alex Bougatef
Date: 13 October 2026
Comments:

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required and it cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.

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Report to the Chief Executive

Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan

Officer Contact: Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive – Place]

Report Author: Elizabeth Dryden-Stuart, Head of Strategic Planning and Transport; Emma Brennan, Graduate Planning Officer (Policy)

Email: elizabeth.dryden-stuart@oldham.gov.uk; emma.brennan@oldham.gov.uk

19 October 2026

Reason for Decision

Following receipt of the Inspector's Report on the Independent Examination of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan, Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority must now decide what action to take in response to the recommended modifications; and if the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum.

Recommendations

Approve:

1. The recommended modifications to be made to the submission Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan, as set out in the Inspector's Report to Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority of the Independent Examination of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan, and publication of the Decision Statement.

2. Submission of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan for the plan period up to 2045, subject to the recommended modifications (see recommendation 1), to a referendum based on the area that was designated as a Neighbourhood Area by the Peak District National Park Authority on 11 November 2016 and by Oldham Council on 21 November 2016.

Leaders' Consultative Session **19 October 2026**
Governance Strategy & Resources Scrutiny **22 October 2026**

Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan

1 Background

1.1 Designation of the Saddleworth Parish Council boundary as a neighbourhood area was approved by the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) on the 11th November 2016 and by Oldham Council on the 21st November 2016. Since that time, Saddleworth Parish Council have been preparing the neighhourhood plan, with advice and support from Oldham Council and the PDNPA.

1.2 As part of developing the neighbourhood plan Saddleworth Parish Council have undertaken various stages of consultation including:

- A public launch event – February 2017
- Community group meetings – 2017 and 2018
- Public consultation – survey 2020
- Formal consultation on the pre-submission neighbourhood plan (as per Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012[1]) took place between 2nd April and 10th June 2024

1.3 The Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to Oldham Council and the PDNPA on 11th November 2025, and approval was sought to publicise the Plan, and subsequently submit it for examination, by the PDNPA and Oldham Council in December 2025[2]. A period of consultation then took place between the 10th of June and 24th of July 2026, during which time any interested parties were invited to comment on the plan and supporting documents as per Regulation 16. The Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan was then submitted, alongside representations received to the consultation, for examination by an independent examiner in line with Regulation 17, on 10th August 2026. Through the examination, the independent examiner has considered whether the plan meets the basic conditions and other legal requirements set out in the legislation. Details of the Submission and Examination stages (to date) can be found online here https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201235/neighbourhood_planning/2936/saddleworth_neighbourhood_plan

1.4 In terms of any Co-operative implications, the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan supports Oldham Council's Corporate Policies:

- Supporting Great Places to Live by helping to achieve thriving communities through policies around housing, as well as environment and enjoyment.
- Supporting Green and Growing policies by designating four Local Green Spaces and including policies on Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity, Protected Sites, sustainable construction and clean fuel vehicles.
- Supporting Happier Healthier Lives by including policies on health, social care and education.

1.5 Furthermore, the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan gives residents the power to develop a vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local

[1] The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 can be found online at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents

[2] Report of the Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods seeking approval to publicise Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan and following this submit Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan for examination in line with The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012) can be found on the Council's website at https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=144&MId=9617&Ver=4

area. As set out at paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 preparation of the neighbourhood plan has been supported through extensive consultation with people who live, work and own businesses within Saddleworth. The referendum (see paragraphs 2.8 and 2.9) will also provide the local community of Saddleworth with the decision as to whether to adopt the plan.

2 Current Position

2.1 The Inspector's Report on the independent examination of the submission Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan was received by Saddleworth Parish Council, the PDNPA and Oldham Council on the 17th September 2026. The report finds that subject to specified modifications, the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements and should be submitted to a referendum.

2.2 In summary, the examining inspector recommended the seven modifications within their report, for the submission Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan to meet the Basic Conditions:

- To clarify that the Parish Actions are identified as community aspirations but are points that are not suitable to be statutory planning policies and so do not form part of the Development Plan (*recommended modification 1)*.
- To retitle and adjust the content of the Map on page 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan so that it identifies the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area only (*recommended modification 2)*.
- Amendments to several policies so that all policies have sufficient regard for national policy and are 'clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals' *(recommended modifications 3 to 7).*
- The deletion of Policy 16: Consultation, which states that major developments should require consultation and engagement with local residents and groups as a condition of their approval as this is dependent on the actions of third parties, which is not permitted and it seeks to establish a basis for community engagement that is not proportionate to the scale of proposal and that does not have sufficient regard for national policy relating to pre-application engagement. *(recommended modification 5).* The inspector has recommended that this could be included under Parish Actions instead.

2.3 The Inspector has only recommended modifications and corrections to the Neighbourhood Plan where required so that the plan meets the Basic Conditions and the other requirements. If to any extent, a policy set out in the Neighbourhood Plan conflicts with any other statement or information in the plan, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy - supporting text and other information in the plan must be adjusted to achieve consistency with the modified policies. As such, the Inspector has recommended an additional modification (*recommended modification 8*) to modify general text and figures to achieve consistency with the modified policies; to achieve updates and correct identified errors; to achieve necessary clarifications; and to ensure sufficient regard for national policy.

2.4 The full Inspector's Report can be found at Appendix 1. The individual modifications recommended are set out in Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan Post-Examination Decision Statement at Appendix 2.

2.5 As per Regulation 17A of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, we now have 5 weeks from the day immediately following that on which we received the Inspector's Report to decide what action to take in response to the modifications recommended. A decision is therefore required by 23rd October 2026.

2.6 Oldham Council and the PDNPA, in liaison with Saddleworth Parish Council, have considered the modifications recommended in the Inspector's Report as set out in the Post-Examination Decision Statement at Appendix 2. The Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan document will be updated to incorporate all the modifications required, including any additional modifications needed to address recommended modification 8, and re-titled Referendum Version in time for referendum to be held.

2.7 As part of the Inspector's Report, the examiner is also required to advise the local authority on the referendum voting area. In this regard the examining inspector has confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum based on the area that was designated as a Neighbourhood Area by the PDNPA on the 11th November 2016 and by Oldham Council on the 21st November 2016.

2.8 Following approval, the Inspector's Report, and accompanying decision statement (see Appendix 2), will be published on the Council's website. The Council then must hold a referendum to adopt the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan within 56 working days beginning with the day immediately following the day on which the decision that the referendum must be held is first published, in line with Regulation 2A(2)(b) of the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012[3]. Officers will work with colleagues in the Elections Team to arrange, and prepare for, the referendum. Details of the referendum must be published not fewer than 28 working days ahead of the referendum, in line with Regulation 4 of the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012.

2.9 If more than 50% of those voting in the referendum vote 'yes', then the neighbourhood plan must proceed to become part of the statutory development plan for the area. Oldham Council and PDNPA then have 8 weeks to 'make' (adopt) the Neighbourhood Plan, at which point the Plan must then be used in the decision-making process for planning applications within the designated neighbourhood area (Saddleworth Parish boundary).

2.9 The date for the referendum is to be agreed with the Elections Team and this will inform the publication date for the Decision Statement and notification of the referendum. In the meantime, indicative dates for each key stage that the Council will need to meet are set out below for information:

Stage	**Date**
Receipt of Inspectors Report	17th September 2026
Oldham Council and PDNPA decide what actions to take within 5 weeks of receiving Inspector's Report. *As per Regulation 17A of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012*	By 23rd October 2026
Oldham Council and PDNPA publish as soon as possible after the decision: a) the decision and their reasons for it ("the decision statement"); b) details of where and when the decision statement may be inspected; and c) the Inspectors Report	23rd October 2026 (subject to change as dependent on referendum date)

[3] https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201235/neighbourhood_planning/2936/saddleworth_neighbourhood_plan .

Stage	Date
As per Regulation 18(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012	
Details must be published not fewer than 28 working days before the date of the referendum. *As per Regulation 4(1A)(b) of the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012*	2nd November 2026 (subject to change as dependent on referendum date)
Referendum (poll day must within 56 working days beginning with the day immediately following the day on which the decision that the referendum is first published). *As per Regulation 2A(2)(b) of the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012*	10th December 2026 (subject to change)
Making (adopting) the Plan – Full Council (must be as soon as reasonably practicable after the referendum is held and in any event within 8 weeks of the day immediately following the day on which the referendum was held). *As per section 38A(4)(b) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.*	Potential special Council meeting on 3rd February 2027 (subject to change as dependent on referendum date)

2.10 Once a neighbourhood plan has been independently examined, and a decision statement is issued by the local planning authorities outlining their intention to hold a neighbourhood plan referendum, it must be considered and can be given significant weight when determining a planning application, in so far as the plan is material to the application.

2.11 Once the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan has been 'made' (adopted) it will then form part of the Development Plan for Oldham and the PDNPA and be given full weight in the determination of planning applications and decisions on planning appeals in the plan area.

2.12 The cost of the referendum is estimated to be in the region of £65,000. There is the possibility that the Council is eligible to apply for a Neighbourhood Planning Grant of £20,000 once the Regulation 18 decision statement, confirming our intention to send the neighbourhood plan to referendum, has been published.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 There are two options to be considered:

3.2 Option 1: Approve the modifications recommended by the Independent Inspector. Oldham Council will then publish a decision statement and arrange the referendum for the Neighbourhood Plan.

- Advantage: accepting the recommended modifications will ensure that the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements, so that it can move forward to a referendum.
- Disadvantage: there are no disadvantages to this option.

3.3 Option 2: Not approve the recommended modifications made by the Independent Inspector, and publish a decision statement.

- Advantage: there are no advantages to this option.
- Disadvantage: the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan will not meet the Basic Conditions and will not move forward to a referendum.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Approve the recommended modifications, as set out in the Inspector's Report to Oldham Council and the PDNPA of the Independent Examination of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan; publication of the Decision Statement; and submission of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan to a referendum based on the area that was designated as a Neighbourhood Area by the Peak District National Park Authority on 11 November 2016 and by Oldham Council on 21 November 2016.

5 Consultation

5.1 As set out in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 above, Saddleworth Parish Council have undertaken various stages of consultation to inform preparation of the neighbourhood plan, including consultation as part of Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 between the 10th of June and 24th of July 2026.

5.2 Further details of consultation carried out to inform preparation of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan can be found in the Consultation Statement[4] published at the Regulation 16 stage. Details of representations received to the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan at the Regulation 16 consultation are available online at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201235/neighbourhood_planning/2936/saddleworth_neighbourhood_plan .

6 Financial Implications

6.1 If Oldham approves the modifications recommended by the Independent Inspector, Oldham Council will then need to publish a decision statement and subsequently arrange a referendum for the Neighbourhood Plan.

6.2 The referendum is estimated to cost approximately £0.065m, with the possibility of claiming a £0.020m grant from the MHCLG towards the administration of the referendum proceedings.

6.3 The estimated costs will need to be funded from existing revenue budget held within the Planning Service.

6.4 The estimated net cost of the referendum has already been assumed within the current Planning forecast for 2026/27.

6.5 The current year end forecast for the Planning Service as at Month 6 is a budget pressure of £0.181m.

(John Hoskins)

[4] The Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement and Appendix can be found online at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/download/2524/saddleworth_neighbourhood_plan_consultation_statement_and_appendix

7 **Legal Implications**

7.1 In accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation for local development plan matters, the power to consider the recommendations contained in an Inspector's report on a neighbourhood plan is delegated to the relevant portfolio Member in consultation with the Executive Director. However, the absence of a Cabinet, in accordance with paragraph 3.6 of Part 4D (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council's Constitution, in the event of there being no Leader, Deputy Leader or Cabinet members, executive functions shall in the interim be carried out by the Chief Executive, subject to the Access to Information Rules.

(Alan Evans)

8. **Procurement Implications**

8.1 There are no immediate procurement implications contained within this report.

(Tom Pyne - Assistant Director Procurement)

9 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

9.1 Yes - see Appendix 3

Please do not embed the assessment here. Attach it separately as an appendix.

10 **Key Decision**

10.1 Yes

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 KDD-26-01

12 **Appendices & Background Papers**

12.1 Appendix 1 – Inspector's Report
Appendix 2 - Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan Post-Examination Decision Statement
Appendix 3 – Oldham Impact Assessment

12.2 Background Papers:

- Information on the preparation of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan can be found online at https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201235/neighbourhood_planning/2936/saddleworth_neighbourhood_plan
- The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2031/regulation/4
- The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents

Please do not embed the appendices here. Attach separately.

Approved by the Chief Executive following consultation with the political group leaders who were in attendance as follows:- Councillors: Decision made under the authorisation contained in Section 9C (5) Delegations of Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) and Section 3.6 of Part 4 (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions.
Signed: Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive Dated:
Date of Leaders' Consultative meeting:
Summary of feedback from the political group leaders

Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan

A report to Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority of the Independent Examination of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan

Copy to Saddleworth Parish Council

Independent Examiner Christopher Collison

Christopher Collison

BA (Hons) MBA MRTPI MIED IHBC

Planning and Management Ltd

17 September 2026

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Summary of Main Findings

This is the report of the Independent Examination of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan relates to the Parish of Saddleworth administrative area that was designated as a Neighbourhood Area by the Peak District National Park Authority on 11 November 2016 and by Oldham Council on 21 November 2016. Saddleworth Parish Council is the qualifying body that has submitted the plan to Oldham Council and to the Peak District National Park Authority. The plan period runs until 2045. The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies relating to the development and use of land.

This report finds that subject to specified modifications the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements. It is recommended the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a local referendum based on the plan area.

Neighbourhood Planning

1. The Localism Act 2011 empowers local communities to take responsibility for the preparation of elements of planning policy for their area through a neighbourhood development plan. Paragraph 30 of the National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024 (the Framework) states that “neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area”.

2. Following satisfactory completion of the necessary preparation process neighbourhood development plans have statutory weight. Decision-makers are obliged to make decisions on planning applications for the area that are in line with the neighbourhood development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3. The Regulation 15 statement prepared by Oldham Council on 3 March 2026 confirms the administrative area of Saddleworth Parish Council (the Parish Council) was designated as a Neighbourhood Area (the Neighbourhood Area) by the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) on 11 November 2016 and by Oldham Council on 21 November 2016. The Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Neighbourhood Plan) has been submitted by the Parish Council, a qualifying body able to prepare a neighbourhood plan, to Oldham Council and to the PDNPA in respect of the Neighbourhood Area. The Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by the Parish Council’s Strategic Planning Committee comprising Parish Councillors and other co-opted community volunteers bringing specific expertise.

4. Following consideration of the submission draft Neighbourhood Plan by Oldham Council and the PDNPA in December 2025 it was agreed the plan should proceed to consultation and examination. This report of Independent Examination relates to the submission Neighbourhood Plan and to no other version.

5. Oldham Council, acting also on behalf of the PDNPA, arranged a period of publication between 10 June 2026 and 24 July 2026. Oldham Council subsequently submitted the Neighbourhood Plan documents, and representations received, to me for independent examination which commenced on 10 August 2026.

Independent Examination

6. This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Neighbourhood Plan. The report makes recommendations to Oldham Council and the PDNPA including a recommendation as to whether the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a local referendum. Oldham Council and the PDNPA will decide what action to take in response to the recommendations in this report.

7. Oldham Council and the PDNPA will decide whether the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum, and if so whether the referendum area should be extended, and what modifications, if any, should be made to the submission version plan. Once a neighbourhood plan has been independently examined, and a decision statement is issued by the local planning authorities outlining their intention to hold a neighbourhood plan referendum, it must be considered and can be given significant weight when determining a planning application, in so far as the plan is material to the application.

8. Should the Neighbourhood Plan proceed to local referendum and achieve more than half of votes cast in favour, then the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan and be given full weight in the determination of planning applications and decisions on planning appeals in the plan area unless Oldham Council and the PDNPA subsequently decide the Neighbourhood Plan should not be 'made.' The Housing and Planning Act 2016 requires any conflict with a neighbourhood plan to be set out in the committee report, that will inform any planning committee decision, where that report recommends granting planning permission for development that conflicts with a made neighbourhood plan. Paragraph 12 of the Framework is very clear that where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date neighbourhood plan that forms part of the Development Plan, permission should not usually be granted.

9. I have been appointed by Oldham Council, acting also on behalf of the PDNPA, with the consent of the Parish Council, to undertake the examination of the Neighbourhood Plan and prepare this report of the independent examination. I am independent of the Parish Council and Oldham Council and the PDNPA. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan.

10. I am a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute; a Member of the Institute of Economic Development; and a Member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation. As a Chartered Town Planner, I have held national positions and have extensive experience at local planning authority Director or Head of

Planning Service level. I have been a panel member of the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service (NPIERS) since its inception and have undertaken the independent examination of neighbourhood plans in every region of England, prepared in the full range of types of urban and rural communities.

11. As independent examiner, I am required to produce this report and must recommend either:
    - that the Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to a referendum, or
    - that modifications are made and that the modified Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to a referendum, or
    - that the Neighbourhood Plan does not proceed to a referendum on the basis it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

12. I make my recommendation in this respect and in respect to any extension to the referendum area, in the concluding section of this report. It is a requirement that my report must give reasons for each of its recommendations and contain a summary of its main findings.

13. Paragraph 9 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides that the general rule is that the examination of a neighbourhood plan is to take the form of the consideration of written representations. The Planning Practice Guidance (the Guidance) states “it is expected that the examination of a draft Neighbourhood Plan will not include a public hearing.”

14. The examiner can call a hearing for the purpose of receiving oral representations about a particular issue in any case where the examiner considers that the consideration of oral representations is necessary to ensure adequate examination of the issue, or a person has a fair chance to put a case. This requires an exercise of judgement on my part. All parties have had the opportunity to state their case and no party has indicated that they have been disadvantaged by a written procedure. Regulation 16 responses clearly set out any representations relevant to my consideration whether the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements. Those representations, the level of detail contained within the submitted Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents, and responses to my requests for clarification of matters have provided me with the necessary information required for me to conclude the Independent Examination. As I did not consider a hearing necessary, I proceeded based on examination of the submission and supporting documents; the written representations and comments; and an unaccompanied visit to the Neighbourhood Area.

15. This report should be read as a whole, and has been produced in an accessible format.

Basic Conditions and other Statutory Requirements

16. An independent examiner must consider whether a neighbourhood plan meets the "Basic Conditions." Following the introduction of Sections 98 and 99 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act on 25 March 2026 a neighbourhood plan meets the Basic Conditions if:
    - having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the plan;
    - the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
    - the plan will not prevent development from taking place which is proposed in the development plan for the area and if it took place, would provide housing;
    - the plan will comply with relevant environmental outcomes reports (EOR);
    - the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, assimilated EU obligations; and
    - the prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the plan (meaning that the plan has passed all necessary legal, environmental and procedural requirements).

17. With respect to the Basic Condition relating to EU obligations the European Withdrawal Act 2018 (EUWA) incorporates EU environmental law (directives and regulations) into UK law and provides for a continuation of primary and subordinate legislation, and other enactments in domestic law. The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 clarifies which EU legislation remains in effect in the UK.

18. In addition to what is set out in the primary legislation, secondary legislation requires plans to comply with Habitats Regulations requirements (the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017) and have regard to all material considerations (including Environmental Impact Assessment where relevant).

19. An independent examiner must consider whether a neighbourhood plan is compatible with the Convention Rights, which has the same meaning as in the Human Rights Act 1998.

20. All these matters are considered in the later sections of this report titled 'The Neighbourhood Plan taken as a whole' and 'The Neighbourhood Plan Policies.'

Where I am required to consider the whole Neighbourhood Plan, I have borne it all in mind.

21. The role of an independent examiner of a neighbourhood plan is defined. I am not examining the tests of soundness provided for in respect of examination of Local Plans. It is not within my role to examine or produce an alternative plan, or a potentially more sustainable plan, except where this arises because of my recommended modifications so that the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements that I have identified. I have been appointed to examine whether the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and Convention Rights, and the other statutory requirements.

22. A neighbourhood plan can be narrow or broad in scope. There is no requirement for a neighbourhood plan to be holistic, or to include policies dealing with all land uses or development types, and there is no requirement for a neighbourhood plan to be formulated as, or perform the role of, a comprehensive local plan. The nature of neighbourhood plans varies according to local requirements.

23. Neighbourhood plans are developed by local people in the localities they understand and as a result each plan will have its own character. It is not within my role to re-interpret, restructure, or re-write a plan to conform to a standard approach or terminology. Indeed, it is important that neighbourhood plans reflect thinking and aspiration within the local community. They should be a local product and have meaning and significance to people living and working in the area.

24. I have only recommended modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan (presented in bold type) where I consider they need to be made so that the plan meets the Basic Conditions and the other requirements I have identified. I refer to the matter of minor corrections and other adjustments of general text in the Annex to my report.

Documents

25. I have considered each of the following documents in so far as they have assisted me in determining whether the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements:

- Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan Submission Document 2025-2045 V2.3
- Map of Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan Area

- Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2045 Basic Conditions Statement [In this report referred to as the Basic Conditions Statement]
- Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2045 Basic Conditions Statement Addendum - Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 [In this report referred to as the Basic Conditions Statement addendum]
- Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2045 Consultation Statement including Appendix 1 [In this report referred to as the Consultation Statement]
- Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2045 Statement of Availability
- Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment Determination Statement March 2024
- Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2045 (v2.3) February 2025
- Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan 2025 -2045 Equality Impact Assessment
- Suggested Local Green Spaces November 2024
- Information available on the Oldham Council, Peak District National Park Authority, and Saddleworth Parish Council websites
- Representations received during the Regulation 16 publicity period
- Correspondence between the Independent Examiner and the Local Planning Authorities and the Parish Council including: the initial letter of the Independent Examiner dated 10 August 2026; the letter of the Independent Examiner dated 18 August 2026 relating to the publication of the latest version of the Framework the previous day and the response of the Parish Council on 19 August 2026; and the email of the Parish Council dated 2 September 2026 confirming no comments on the Regulation 16 representations of other parties
- National Planning Policy Framework (2024) [In this report referred to as the Framework] (The National Planning Policy Framework published on 17 August 2026 has also been considered where relevant)
- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan 2022 – 2039, adopted March 2024
- Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document adopted November 2011
- Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies adopted July 2006 saved by the SoS May 2009
- Peak District National Park Core Strategy Development Plan Document Adopted October 2011
- Peak District National Park Development Management Policies Part 2 of the Local Plan for the Peak District National Park Adopted May 2019
- Permitted development rights for householders' technical guidance MHCLG (10 September 2019) [In this report referred to as the Permitted Development Guidance]

- Planning Practice Guidance web-based resource MHCLG (first fully launched 6 March 2014 and subsequently updated) [In this report referred to as the Guidance which should be taken to also include all Written Ministerial Statements]
- Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)
- Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment and Consequential Provisions) (England) Order 2014
- Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment and Consequential Provisions) (England) Order 2015
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)
- Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Housing and Planning Act 2016
- European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018
- Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023
- Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023
- Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025
- Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 and Commencement Regulations 19 July 2017, 22 September 2017, and 15 January 2019
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) [In this report referred to as the Regulations. References to Regulation 14, Regulation 16 etc in this report refer to these Regulations]
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) incorporating Development Control Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018
- Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (Commencement No11 and Saving and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2026 (UK Statutory Instruments 2026 No.169 (C.16) which came into force on 25 March 2026

Consultation

26. The submitted Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by a Consultation Statement which outlines the process undertaken in the preparation of the plan in addition to detailing who was consulted and by what methods. Comments received from

local community members, and other consultees, and how these have been addressed in the submission plan are presented. I highlight here several key stages of consultation undertaken to illustrate the approach adopted.

27. Following a widely publicised launch meeting in February 2017 early consultation meetings were held with local groups including sports groups, the Parish Youth Committee and Saddleworth School. Meetings were also held with community associations and a business breakfast meeting was attended. During the development of the submission plan community associations in each village have been regularly consulted and the Parish Council website has been regularly updated. An initial survey online and in hard copy format in early 2020 resulted in almost 500 responses which informed the production of a series of topic papers that in turn assisted the early versions of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

28. In accordance with Regulation 14 the Parish Council consulted on the pre-submission version of the draft Neighbourhood Plan between 2 April 2024 and 10 June 2024. Twelve thousand copies of an eight-page consultation document were delivered to households and copies of the Neighbourhood Plan were available to download or collect from the Civic Hall and three libraries. A public engagement meeting advertised online, on notice boards, and through the Saddleworth Independent held on 14 May 2024 was attended by approximately 30 people. The 221 public representations and 14 responses from statutory consultees received during the Regulation 14 consultation period are presented in Appendix 9 of the Consultation Statement. Details of the 71 changes made to the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan are set out in Appendix 13 of the Consultation Statement. A Table on pages 6 to 16 of the Consultation Statement summarises the representations and statements of any action taken in response, including modification and correction of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. Representations made in the Regulation 14 consultation have, where considered appropriate, been reflected in changes to the Plan that was approved by the Parish Council and subsequently submitted to Oldham Council and the PDNPA on 11 November 2025. Following the introduction of Sections 98 and 99 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) on 25 March 2026 the Parish Council submitted a ‘Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2045 Basic Conditions Statement Addendum - Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023’ to Oldham Council and the PDNPA.

29. After submission of a plan proposal by a qualifying body, the local planning authority will check it includes all items set out in Regulation 15 and then publicise the plan in accordance with Regulation 16. The local planning authority then sends the Independent Examiner all the documents set out in Regulation 17, which includes a copy of any representations that have been made in accordance

with Regulation 16. The actions necessary under Regulation 16 and Regulation 17 are entirely matters to be undertaken by, and under the control of, the local planning authority. Oldham Council, acting also on behalf of the PDNA, arranged a period of publication between 10 June 2026 and 24 July 2026. Oldham Council subsequently submitted to me the 18 representations that were duly made and has published those representations on the Oldham Council website.

30. Kirklees Council confirms no comments. Mossley Town Council made complimentary comments and proposes joint working. Natural England has set out general advice and stated it does not have any specific comments. The Environment Agency has offered general advice in particular relating to infrastructure delivery and flood risk. Historic England has confirmed no further comments. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has offered general advice. National Grid Electricity transmission has identified its assets within the Neighbourhood Area and set out general planning advice.

31. United Utilities Water Limited suggest an addition to the Neighbourhood Plan vision; additions to Policies 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 18, and 29; and an addition to the supporting text of Policy 4.

32. NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board supported by NHS Property Services has made general comments and detailed comments in respect of Policies 11, 12, 14 and 21.

33. National Highways has confirmed it has no comments or objections as the proposals are not expected to result in any impact on the strategic highway network. Transport for Greater Manchester identifies issues, including social exclusion and access to services, that could be given greater emphasis and suggest some refinements to improve clarity of policies. It is suggested Policy 24 should be more flexible with respect to parking space per dwelling requirements, and recommends unallocated parking provision rather than defaulting to individual driveways. Policies 25 and 26 are strongly supported and additional policy content relating to active travel is recommended. Policy 27 is welcomed with suggested enhancements. The approach of Policy 11 to major development sites is supported again with suggested policy improvements.

34. The Coal Authority state there are recorded coal mining features present at surface and shallow depth including; mine entries and coal workings which may pose a potential risk to surface stability and public safety. As the plan does not appear to allocate any new sites for future development the Coal Authority have no specific comments.

35. A representation states an expectation to see greater inclusion of the importance

to policing and community safety and more references to well-established interagency work between the police and various agencies - health, education, environmental services and community members aimed at making the area a safe place to live and work.

36. Another representation proposes a presumption in favour of residential use on ‘undesignated’ smaller sites to help secure the much-needed present and future supply of houses and flats/apartments in the borough which would help correct the imbalance between housing need and housing demand. Such a policy when applied to small parcels of land would encourage Housing Associations, small builders and self-build groups and would have the potential to create a mix of housing types and tenures. “Such a policy would also encourage these smaller sites to come on stream relatively quickly, when compared with larger sites, and would help the council’s vision of achieving 11,560 new homes.”

37. A further representation suggests reference to the need for more overnight stay tourist accommodation including camping, glamping and limited small chalet units. This representation states a need for more robust enforcement action against unauthorised development generally and especially in the Saddleworth Conservation Area.

38. A representation on behalf of the Saddleworth Property Partnership made in relation to its interests at Saddleworth Business Centre (SBC) at Delph encourages a flexible policy approach to appropriate brownfield development, in particular not unnecessarily constraining redevelopment of sites no longer suitable or viable for their existing use. The representation proposes residential development of the SBC site and proposes modifications to Policies 10; 11; 15; 16; and 19 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

39. The Canal and Rivers Trust request the description of footpaths should be supplemented by reference to the Huddersfield Narrow Canal towpath as an active travel route in addition to being recognised through Policy 3 as a Site of Biological Importance. The Trust propose Policy 1 should refer to blue as well as green infrastructure. The Trust recommend reference is made in Policy 13 (and cross reference is made to Policy 25) to the need to not degrade and improve off-site walking and cycling routes for large developments, and request consideration is given to impacts of adjacent development on the useability and attractiveness of a towpath.

40. Sport England state earlier comments remain relevant and refer to Policy 4 querying the proposed Local Green Space boundary of the playing field at Ashfield, Springhead. It is stated regardless of the boundary alignment the playing field would still be protected by any relevant Development Plan policies

and paragraph 104 of the Framework.

41. I provided the Parish Council with an opportunity to comment on the Regulation 16 representations of other parties. Whilst I placed no obligation on the Parish Council to offer any comments, such an opportunity can prove helpful where representations of other parties include matters that have not been raised earlier in the plan preparation process. On 2 September 2026 the Parish Council sent me a confirmation it had no comments on the representations of other parties.

42. In preparing this report I have taken into consideration all the Regulation 16 representations submitted, in so far as they are relevant to my role, even though they may not be referred to in whole in my report. Some representations, or parts of representations, are not relevant to my role which is to decide whether the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements that I have identified. Where the representations suggest additional policy content that could be included in the Neighbourhood Plan that is only a matter for my consideration where such additions are necessary for the Neighbourhood Plan to meet the Basic Conditions or other requirements that I have identified. Whilst some suggestions for additional policy content have clear merit it is regrettable they are being made at a stage of plan preparation when they cannot influence the nature of the Neighbourhood Plan. Those suggestions could however influence any future review of the Neighbourhood Plan. Having regard to Bewley Homes Plc v Waverley District Council [2017] EWHC 1776 (Admin) Lang J, 18 July 2017, and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Schedule 4B paragraph 10(6), where representations raise concerns or state comments or objections in relation to specific policies, I refer to these later in my report when considering the policy in question where they are relevant to the reasons for my recommendations.

43. The Regulations state that where a qualifying body submits a plan proposal to the local planning authority it must include amongst other items a consultation statement. The Regulations state a consultation statement means a document which:
    a) contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
    b) explains how they were consulted;
    c) summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
    d) describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

44. The Consultation Statement includes information in respect of each of the

requirements set out in the Regulations. I am satisfied the requirements have been met. In addition, sufficient regard has been paid to the advice regarding plan preparation and engagement contained within the Guidance. It is evident the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has taken great care to ensure stakeholders have had full opportunity to influence the general nature, and specific policies, of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan taken as a whole

45. This section of my report considers whether the Neighbourhood Plan, when considered as a whole, meets the Basic Conditions. Each of the plan policies is considered in turn in the section of my report that follows this. In considering all these matters I have referred to the submission, background, and supporting documents, and copies of the representations and other material provided to me.

Consideration whether having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Plan

46. I refer initially to the basic condition "having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the plan." The requirement to determine whether it is appropriate that the plan is made includes the words "having regard to." This is not the same as compliance, nor is it the same as part of the tests of soundness provided for in respect of examinations of Local Plans which requires plans to be "consistent with national policy."

47. Lord Goldsmith has provided guidance (Column GC272 of Lords Hansard, 6 February 2006) that 'have regard to' means "such matters should be considered." The Guidance assists in understanding "appropriate." In answer to the question "What does having regard to national policy mean?" the Guidance states a neighbourhood plan "must not constrain the delivery of important national policy objectives."

48. The most recent National Planning Policy Framework published on 17 August 2026, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The National Planning Policy Framework published on 17 August 2026 states at Paragraph 6 of Annex A ""Neighbourhood plans that have been submitted to the local planning authority under Regulation 15, on or before, the date of publication of this Framework should be prepared in accordance with

the Framework published in December 2024" and "For neighbourhood plans that have already been submitted, the qualifying body may choose to withdraw the plan and update it to take account of this Framework." I have on 18 August 2026 advised the Parish Council of this option and received a reply on 19 August 2026 confirming that the Parish Council do not wish to withdraw the plan and requesting I continue with the Independent Examination in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2024. As a point of clarification, I confirm I have undertaken the Independent Examination in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2024 and the Planning Practice Guidance, as well as Written Ministerial Statements.

49. Part 3 of the Basic Conditions Statement indicates how the Neighbourhood Plan and specific policies have regard to elements of the Framework. I am satisfied the Neighbourhood Plan has regard to relevant identified components of the Framework.

50. The representation on behalf of Saddleworth Property Partnership in respect of land interests at Saddleworth Business Centre, Delph (SBC) states "the Neighbourhood Plan should adopt a flexible policy framework to enable appropriate brownfield redevelopment opportunities to come forward, where supported by evidence. In particular, the Plan should not unnecessarily constrain the redevelopment of sites that are no longer suitable or viable for their existing use". The representation identifies SBC as representing such an opportunity and proposes amendments to Policies 10, 11, 15, 16, and 19 of the Neighbourhood Plan. I have considered the proposed amendments when examining the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan later in my report.

51. It is neither within my role to consider the merits of the potential development of individual sites, nor is it within my role to select, allocate and condition specific development sites. There is no requirement for a neighbourhood plan to allocate land for housing development. I am satisfied the approach adopted to address the quantity of housing need in the Neighbourhood Area is appropriate for the purpose of neighbourhood plan preparation for the Neighbourhood Area and provides the necessary justification that those policies (after recommended modification) that are relevant to housing supply will result in local housing needs being met. The Neighbourhood Plan has sufficient regard for national policy in so far as it will not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area and will not undermine those strategic policies. The approach taken and the choices made in the Neighbourhood Plan regarding housing provision are sufficiently evidenced and justified and have sufficient regard for the Framework and Guidance.

52. The Neighbourhood Plan includes on page 11 a positive vision for Saddleworth that has economic, social, and environmental implications. 18 objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan presented by topic on pages 16 to 52 of the Neighbourhood Plan expand on the vision and identify aims that will support the achievement of the vision. The vision and objectives provide a framework within which the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan have been developed. The policies are presented under the topic headings of: environment; design; health, wellbeing and education; housing; retail, commerce and tourism; and travel and transport. On page 14 of the Neighbourhood Plan it is explained that whilst objectives have been placed in the most relevant section of the plan that includes policies that address that objective, it should be noted other policies throughout the plan will also contribute to meeting those objectives.

53. The Neighbourhood Plan includes, in Appendix 2, identification of 14 Parish Actions presented under 6 headings. The Parish Actions are not directly related to land use so they cannot be addressed directly by the provision of a planning policy. The plan preparation process is a convenient mechanism to surface and test local opinion on ways to improve a neighbourhood other than through the development and use of land. It is important that those non-development and land use matters, raised as important by the local community or other stakeholders, should not be lost sight of. The acknowledgement in the Neighbourhood Plan of issues raised in consultation processes that do not have a direct relevance to land use planning policy represents good practice.

54. The Guidance states, “Wider community aspirations than those relating to the development and use of land, if set out as part of the plan, would need to be clearly identifiable (for example, set out in a companion document or annex), and it should be made clear in the document that they will not form part of the statutory development plan.” The non land use actions are presented in a dedicated Appendix of the Neighbourhood Plan but their status as non-land use actions is not adequately described. I have recommended it is made clear that the Parish Actions do not form part of the Development Plan. I confirm Appendix 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan, including the issues identified, have not been subject to Independent Examination. I am satisfied that subject to the recommended modification the approach to non-land use actions is consistent with the Guidance.

Recommended modification 1:
In Appendix 2 Parish Actions, before the list of actions insert “The following Parish Actions have been identified as community aspirations that will help improve the neighbourhood area but which are not suitable to

be statutory planning policies and do not form part of the Development Plan."

55. Apart from those elements of policy of the Neighbourhood Plan in respect of which I have recommended a modification to the plan I am satisfied that the need to 'have regard to' national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State has, in plan preparation, been exercised in substance in such a way that it has influenced the final decision on the form and nature of the plan. This consideration supports the conclusion that except for those matters in respect of which I have recommended a modification of the plan, the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic condition "having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the plan."

Consideration whether the making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development

56. At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be applied in both plan-making and decision-taking. The Guidance states, "This basic condition is consistent with the planning principle that all plan-making and decision-taking should help to achieve sustainable development. A qualifying body must demonstrate how its plan or order will contribute to improvements in environmental, economic, and social conditions or that consideration has been given to how any potential adverse effects arising from the proposals may be prevented, reduced, or offset (referred to as mitigation measures). To demonstrate that a draft neighbourhood plan or order contributes to sustainable development, sufficient and proportionate evidence should be presented on how the draft neighbourhood plan or order guides development to sustainable solutions."

57. The Basic Conditions require my consideration of whether the making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. There is no requirement as to the nature or extent of that contribution, nor a need to assess whether the plan makes a particular contribution. The requirement is that there should be a contribution. There is also no requirement to consider whether some alternative plan would make a greater contribution to sustainable development.

58. The Framework states there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. Part 4 of the Basic Conditions Statement seeks to demonstrate ways in which the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan support the economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainable

development. The statement does not highlight any negative impacts of the Neighbourhood Plan or its policies.

59. I conclude that the Neighbourhood Plan, by guiding development to sustainable solutions, contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Broadly, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to contribute to sustainable development by ensuring schemes are of an appropriate nature and quality to contribute to economic and social well-being; whilst also protecting important environmental features of the Neighbourhood Area.

60. Subject to my recommended modifications of the Submission Plan including those relating to specific policies, as set out later in this report, I find it is appropriate that the Neighbourhood Plan should be made having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. I have also found the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

Consideration whether the making of the Neighbourhood Plan will not prevent development from taking place which is proposed in the development plan for the area and if it took place, would provide housing.

61. Oldham Council has confirmed the Development Plan applying in the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Area is 'Places for Everyone' adopted March 2024, and the Oldham Council Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document adopted November 2011, and the Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies adopted July 2006 saved by the SoS May 2009. The Peak District National Park Core Strategy Development Plan Document Adopted October 2011, and the Peak District National Park Development Management Policies Part 2 of the Local Plan for the Peak District National Park Adopted May 2019 are the Development Plan in the National Park. Whilst Minerals and Waste Plans also form part of the Development Plan for the Neighbourhood Area, they are not relevant to this Independent Examination.

62. The Basic Conditions Statement addendum prepared by the Parish Council states "the Neighbourhood Plan is designed to not have any impact that would prevent housing development that is put forward in the Development Plan. There are no specific site allocations put forward, and no restrictions placed upon existing site allocations that would reduce the amount of housing being put forward. An example of this is Policy 12 on Chew Brook Vale, which specifically addresses an existing site allocation put forward in the Places for Everyone plan. The policy addresses a lack of clarity around the mix of housing and commercial, retail and leisure facilities in the site allocation. It does so not by putting any restrictions on the amount of housing on the site, but by ensuring that there is a

clear expectation set on the delivery of the full amount of assigned commercial, retail and leisure facilities on the site. Elsewhere, where the Neighbourhood Plan sets out clear expectations as to the quality and impact of development that is expected for any sites coming forward for development; applying the principles and ambitions contained within the NPPF, as well as regional and local development legislation, and applying them in the local context to ensure that development is tailored to ensure the most appropriate development for the locality. By doing so, we expect that development which complies with the neighbourhood plan will be as sustainable as possible, and it is only through the delivery of effective sustainable development that the most appropriate housing development will be delivered for our community's needs over the period of the Neighbourhood Plan and beyond. As such, we consider that the Neighbourhood Plan fully complies with the provisions of sections 99(1)(a) and 99(3)(a) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023."

63. Oldham Council has confirmed the Oldham Local Plan is being prepared to guide development in the Borough up to 2039 through non-strategic policies. On 14 August 2026 the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination. The Peak District National Park Authority has begun the preparation of a new Local Plan for the area. Consultation on the Peak District National Park Local Plan 2026 -2045 Publication Draft (Regulation 19) has begun in July 2026.The National Park Authority website states an intention to submit a draft new Local Plan to the Secretary of State by December 2026. The Guidance states: "Neighbourhood plans, when brought into force, become part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area. They can be developed before or at the same time as the local planning authority is producing its Local Plan". The emerging Local Plans are not part of the Development Plan and are subject to change as plan preparation work proceeds. I am only able to recommend a modification to the Neighbourhood Plan where that is necessary to meet the Basic Conditions. The Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions in so far as it will not prevent development from taking place which is proposed in the development plan for the area and if it took place, would provide housing.

Consideration of Convention Rights

64. Section 6 of the Basic Conditions Statement states "An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken, provided as a supplement to this document, which has found that all the objectives contained within the Neighbourhood Plan are found to either have positive or neutral outcomes for people with protected characteristics." The comprehensive equality impact assessment referred to has been published on the Oldham Council website. I have considered the European

Convention on Human Rights and in particular Article 6 (fair hearing); Article 8 (privacy); Article 14 (discrimination); and Article 1 of the first Protocol (property). The Human Rights Act 1998 which came into force in the UK in 2000 had the effect of codifying the protections in the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. Development Plans by their nature will include policies that relate differently to areas of land. Where the Neighbourhood Plan policies relate differently to areas of land this has been explained in terms of land use and development related issues. I have seen nothing in the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan that indicates any breach of the Convention. I am satisfied the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the obligations for Parish Councils under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in the Equality Act 2010. From my own examination the Neighbourhood Plan would appear to have neutral or positive impacts on groups with protected characteristics as identified in the Equality Act 2010.

Consideration whether the making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, assimilated EU obligations; and the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017; and whether the plan will comply with relevant environmental outcomes reports (EOR)

65. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 contained powers to bring forward a new domestic framework for environmental assessment. The new system of Environmental Outcomes Reports will replace, among other Regulations, the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations. It is anticipated Government will bring forward Environmental Outcomes Reports by the end of 2027. The neighbourhood plan recognises and refers to the natural environment, heritage and landscape. The policies in the neighbourhood plan reflect the importance of these aspects." I am satisfied that the requirement relating to Environmental Outcomes Reports is satisfied given their introduction has not been commenced.

66. At present Strategic Environmental Assessment remains in place. The objective of EU Directive 2001/42 (transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) is "to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment." The Neighbourhood Plan falls within the definition of 'plans and programmes' (Defined in Article 2(a) of Directive 2001/42) as the Local Planning Authority is obliged to 'make' the plan following a positive referendum result

(Judgement of the Court of Justice of the European Union (Fourth Chamber) 22 March 2012).

67. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 require the Parish Council, as the Qualifying Body, to submit to Oldham Council either an environmental report prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or a statement of reasons why an environmental report is not required.

68. The Basic Conditions Statement confirms Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report states "The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening document is provided as an appendix to the Neighbourhood Plan, and in summary concludes that "Oldham Council, in consultation with the Peak District National Park Authority, considers that after having regard to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment". The statutory consultees Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency concurred in January and February 2024 with the conclusion reached. I am satisfied the requirements regarding Strategic Environmental Assessment have been met.

69. The Basic Conditions Statement also confirms "The Habitats Regulations Assessment is provided as an appendix to the Neighbourhood Plan, and in summary concludes that "it should be entirely possible to avoid and mitigate any adverse impacts on designated sites as a result of the operation of the Neighbourhood Plan, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects." Part 9 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment February 2025 document states "The Screening of European sites has established that the following European sites have the potential to be affected by development in Saddleworth proposed by the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan:
    - Rochdale Canal SAC
    - South Pennine Moors SAC
    - Dark Peak Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA
    - South Pennine Moors Phase 2 SPA

    Further, more detailed Assessment of the possible effects of the operation of Objectives and Policies included in the Plan on the European Sites identified in the Screening process has been undertaken. A number of Polices within the Plan were initially Screened In as potentially having a damaging effect on European Sites due to increased recreational use, air pollution effects or effects on functionally linked land. Following further Assessment, air pollution effects were ruled out, but potential effects on functionally linked land, and through increased recreational disturbance, were further considered. Wording included in Policy 3 (Protected Spaces) will act to mitigate for any possible likely significant effects of

the Plan on designated sites. It is therefore concluded that it should be entirely possible to avoid and mitigate any adverse impacts on designated sites as a result of the operation of the Neighbourhood Plan, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects." I am satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of the revised Basic Condition relating to Habitats Regulations.

70. There are other EU obligations that can be relevant to land use planning including the Water Framework Directive, the Waste Framework Directive, and the Air Quality Directive but none appear to prevent the Neighbourhood Plan meeting the Basic Conditions.

71. I conclude that the Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with the Convention Rights, and does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations. I also conclude the making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

72. The Guidance states it is the responsibility of the local planning authority to ensure that all the regulations appropriate to the nature and scope of a draft neighbourhood plan submitted to it have been met for the draft neighbourhood plan to progress. Oldham Council as lead Local Planning Authority must decide whether the draft neighbourhood plan is compatible with EU environmental law obligations (directives and regulations) incorporated into UK domestic law by the European Withdrawal Act 2018 (EUWA):
    - when it takes the decision on whether the neighbourhood plan should proceed to referendum; and
    - when it takes the decision on whether to make the neighbourhood plan (which brings it into legal force).

Consideration whether the prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the plan

73. The requirement to consider whether the Neighbourhood Plan meets the prescribed conditions includes consideration whether the plan complies with the provisions made by or under sections 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (in sections 38A and 38B themselves; in Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Act (introduced by section 38A (3)) as amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023; and in the 2012 Regulations (made under sections 38A (7) and 38B (4) as amended). I am satisfied the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of those sections, in respect to the

Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended (the Regulations) which are made pursuant to the powers given in those sections.

74. The Neighbourhood Plan relates to the area that was designated in November 2016. A map of the Neighbourhood Area is included as Map A of the Submission Version Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area, and no other neighbourhood development plan has been made for the neighbourhood area. All requirements relating to the plan area have been met. I have recommended the map on page 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan should be retitled as presenting the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area and that the shaded areas and supporting text which currently vary from those shown on Map A and on the Map in Appendix 1 should be deleted. I have recommended a modification in these respects so that the policy has sufficient regard for national policy and "is clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals" as required by paragraph 16d) of the Framework.

Recommended modification 2:
Retitle and adjust the content of the Map on page 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan so that it identifies the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area only

75. I am also required to check whether the Neighbourhood Plan sets out policies for the development and use of land in the whole or part of a designated neighbourhood area; and the Neighbourhood Plan does not include provision about excluded development (principally minerals, waste disposal, development automatically requiring Environmental Impact Assessment, and nationally significant infrastructure projects). I can confirm that I am satisfied that each of these requirements has been met.

76. A neighbourhood plan must also meet the requirement to specify the period to which it has effect. The front cover of the Neighbourhood Plan states the plan period to be 2025-2045. The plans and legislation section of the Neighbourhood Plan confirms the plan period runs to 2045.

77. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 requires that so far as the qualifying body considers appropriate, having regard to the subject matter of the neighbourhood development plan, the plan must be designed to secure that the development and use of land in the neighbourhood area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. The Basic Conditions Statement addendum identifies references to climate change in both the issues and vision statement parts of the Neighbourhood Plan and draws attention to objectives and policies of the plan that address aspects of climate change. I am satisfied the Neighbourhood Plan is designed to secure that the development and use of land

in the neighbourhood area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

78. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 also requires that so far as the qualifying body considers appropriate, having regard to the subject matter of the neighbourhood development plan, the plan must take account of any local nature recovery strategy, under section 104 of the Environment Act 2021, that relates to all or part of the neighbourhood area, including in particular— (i) the areas identified in the strategy as areas which— (A) are, or could become, of particular importance for biodiversity, or (B) are areas where the recovery or enhancement of biodiversity could make a particular contribution to other environmental benefits, (ii) the priorities set out in the strategy for recovering or enhancing biodiversity, and (iii) the proposals set out in the strategy as to potential measures relating to those priorities.

79. The Basic Conditions Statement addendum states "The Neighbourhood Plan specifically references the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which was under development at the time of writing, under policy 2 on biodiversity, with a footnote that reads '3 All developments should be informed by and contribute to the emerging Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy and future ecological networks.'" I am satisfied in these respects that so far as the qualifying body considers appropriate, having regard to the subject matter of the neighbourhood development plan, the plan takes account of any local nature recovery strategy, under section 104 of the Environment Act 2021, that relates to all or part of the neighbourhood area, including in the particular required ways.

80. I am satisfied subject to my recommended modifications that the Neighbourhood Plan taken as a whole meets the Basic Conditions and statutory requirements.

The Neighbourhood Plan Policies

81. The Neighbourhood Plan includes 29 policies that are grouped under the topic headings of environment; design; health, wellbeing and education; housing; retail commerce and tourism; and travel and transport.

82. Paragraph 30 of the Framework states "Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct, and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan.

Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies."

83. Paragraph 15 of the Framework states "The planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social, and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings."

84. Paragraph 16 of the Framework states "Plans should: a) be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development; b) be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable; c) be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees; d) contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals; e) be accessible through the use of digital tools to assist public involvement and policy presentation; and f) serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant)."

85. The Guidance states "A policy in a neighbourhood plan should be clear and unambiguous. It should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise, and supported by appropriate evidence. It should be distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area for which it has been prepared."

86. "While there are prescribed documents that must be submitted with a neighbourhood plan ... there is no 'tick box' list of evidence required for neighbourhood planning. Proportionate, robust evidence should support the choices made and the approach taken. The evidence should be drawn upon to explain succinctly the intention and rationale of the policies in the draft neighbourhood plan."

87. A neighbourhood plan should contain policies for the development and use of land. "This is because, if successful at examination and referendum (or where the neighbourhood plan is updated by way of making a material modification to the plan and completes the relevant process), the neighbourhood plan becomes part of the statutory development plan. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material

considerations indicate otherwise (See section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004)."

88. "Neighbourhood plans are not obliged to contain policies addressing all types of development. However, where they do contain policies relevant to housing supply, these policies should take account of latest and up-to-date evidence of housing need." "A neighbourhood plan can allocate sites for development, including housing. A qualifying body should carry out an appraisal of options and an assessment of individual sites against clearly identified criteria. Guidance on assessing sites and on viability is available."

89. If to any extent, a policy set out in the Neighbourhood Plan conflicts with any other statement or information in the plan, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy. Given that policies have this status, and if the Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' they will be utilised in the determination of planning applications and appeals, I have examined each policy individually in turn and presented my recommendations for modifications to reflect the grouping of policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. I have considered any inter-relationships between policies where these are relevant to my remit.

Environment policies

90. 'Policy 1: Green Infrastructure' seeks to establish a basis for the provision of green infrastructure in developments. The term "aim to" does not provide a basis for the determination of development proposals. The meeting of existing deficiencies and the requirement for "overall enhancement" do not have sufficient regard for paragraphs 57 and 58 of the Framework which state planning conditions and planning obligations must relate to the development itself. There is an overlap between the first and third bullet points of part 1.1 of the policy.

91. 'Policy 2: Biodiversity' seeks to establish that developments should protect and enhance biodiversity in stated respects. The term "aim to" does not provide a basis for the determination of development proposals. The word "encouraging" requires correction.

92. 'Policy 3: Protected spaces' seeks to establish requirements for development within the South Pennine Moors Special Protection Area and Special Area for Conservation. The policy has sufficient regard for paragraph 188 of the Framework by distinguishing an international designated site.

93. 'Policy 4: Local Green Spaces' identifies four proposed sites. The policy should be clear that the sites are designated. Appendix 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan

adequately defines the boundaries of the designated sites. With respect to the representation of Sport England no variation of the boundaries of the proposed Local Green Space at Ashfield, Springhead is necessary to meet the Basic Conditions. I find the Local Green Space designations are being made when a neighbourhood plan is being prepared, and I have seen nothing to suggest the designations cannot endure beyond the end of the plan period. I have noted the representation of United Utilities Water Limited but decision makers must rely on paragraph 108 of the Framework that states, "Policies … for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts" and the part of the Framework that relates to 'Protecting Green Belt land', in particular paragraphs 153 to 158. Paragraph 35 of the Neighbourhood Plan presents relevant reasons why the sites are demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular significance. The reasons presented are supported by the Suggested Local Green Spaces topic report November 2024. Each of the areas to be designated are in reasonably close proximity to the community served, are local in character, and are not extensive tracts of land. I am satisfied the areas proposed as Local Green Space are suitable for designation and have regard for paragraphs 106 and 107 of the Framework concerned with the identification and designation of Local Green Space.

94. 'Policy 5: Character and quality of land' seeks to identify land that acts as the setting of the Peak District National Park. It is appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to identify land that is regarded as forming the setting of the National Park within the Neighbourhood Area and establish a policy approach to development within that area. I have earlier in my report referred to inconsistencies of the defined "setting" between maps in the Neighbourhood Plan and recommended a modification in this respect.

95. 'Policy 6: Conversion of agricultural buildings (barn conversions)' seeks to establish a policy approach to development proposing conversion of agricultural buildings. Bullet point 3 of part 6.2 of the policy requires correction. I am satisfied paragraph 187e) of the Framework includes reference to water quality and river basin management plans.

96. 'Policy 7: Protection of important views' seeks to protect important views from interruption or inappropriate development. The policy is imprecise and does not provide a basis for the determination of development proposals. Planning policy may only serve the public interest. Viewpoints must be freely accessible to the public. Paragraph 187 of the Framework refers to protection of valued landscapes. To be valued, a landscape needs to be more than popular with local residents but must demonstrate physical attributes beyond "ordinary" (Stroud

District Council vs. SSCLG [2015] EWHC 488 (Admin) and Forest of Dean DC v. SSCLG [2016] EWHC 2429 (Admin)). I am satisfied the named views have physical attributes beyond ordinary. Policy 7 is not seeking to prevent all development within identified views. Such an approach would be more restrictive than Green Belt designation and would not have sufficient regard for national policy. I am satisfied sustainable development, through careful consideration to siting and design, or other mitigation measures, may be shown to not result in significant harm to an identified view.

97. 'Policy 8: Erosion and flooding' seeks to avoid development exacerbating flood risk. I am satisfied Policy 8 has sufficient regard for paragraphs 170 to 182 of the Framework relating to planning and flood risk.

98. I have recommended appropriate modification of policies, where necessary, so that all policies have sufficient regard for national policy and are "clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals" as required by paragraph 16d) of the Framework.

99. The policies will not prevent development from taking place which is proposed in the development plan for the area and if it took place, would provide housing. The policies serve a clear purpose by providing an additional level of detail or distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policies.

100. The policies seek to shape and direct sustainable development to ensure that local people get the right type of development for their community. Having regard to the Framework and Guidance the policies, as recommended to be modified, are appropriate to be included in a 'made' neighbourhood plan. Subject to recommended modification the Environment policies meet the Basic Conditions.

Recommended modification 3:

In Policy 1

- **in 1.1 delete "aim to"**
- **in 1.1 bullet point 1 delete "/deficiencies", and replace "and an overall enhancement in the provision" with "or an appropriate enhancement of existing"**
- **in 1.1 bullet point 3 delete "create or enhance existing green space, and"**

In Policy 2

- **in 2.1 delete "aim to"**
- **in 2.2 replace "encouraging" with "encourage"**

In Policy 4

- **replace the text before the list of spaces with "The following sites, identified on maps in Appendix 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan, are designated as Local Green Spaces"**
- **delete the note commencing "See"**

In Policy 6

- **in 6.2 bullet point 3 replace "and" with a semi-colon, and insert a bullet point before "developments"**

In Policy 7

- **after "viewpoint" insert "that is accessible to the general public"**
- **after "interruption of" insert "the following"**
- **replace the final full stop with ":**
  - **Views of church spires and towers located within the Neighbourhood Area including: the Church of St Chad viewed from Pickhill Valley; St Anne's Lydgate viewed from the footpath from Coverhill Road; and St Paul's Church in Scouthead viewed from Woodbrook Valley.**
  - **Views of Pots and Pans War Memorial from any of the villages in the Neighbourhood Area."**

Design policies

101. 'Policy 9: Sustainable construction' seeks, outside the Peak District National Park, to ensure sustainable design and construction of new developments and supports appropriate energy generation. The term "particularly supported" does not provide a basis for the determination of development proposals

102. 'Policy 10: Design, character and heritage' seeks, outside the Peak District National Park, to establish support for development that enhances conservation areas and other heritage assets. The references to preservation of heritage assets and retention to the fullest extent do not have sufficient regard for national policy relating to the historic environment which accommodates appropriate change. The term "strong presumption in favour" does not provide a basis for the determination of development proposals. I am satisfied the policy does not prevent consideration of opportunities for new development to enhance or better reveal the significance of a Conservation Area or other heritage assets, or of their setting.

103. ‘Policy 11: Design masterplans’ seeks to establish that defined design masterplans should be prepared for developments of more than 25 dwellings. With respect to the representation of United Utilities Water Limited given the significance of water collection infrastructure in the Neighbourhood Area I have recommended a modification in this respect. It is not necessary to specify all elements, such as primary healthcare infrastructure, to be included in an infrastructure delivery plan. I am satisfied the requirement for design masterplans is capable of being applied proportionately in accordance with the scale of development proposed.

104. ‘Policy 12: Chew Brook Vale’ seeks to establish local requirements to apply to the former Fletcher’s Mill strategic mixed use allocation site in Greenfield.

105. I have recommended appropriate modification of policies, where necessary, so that all policies have sufficient regard for national policy and are “clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals” as required by paragraph 16d) of the Framework.

106. As recommended to be modified I am satisfied the design policies have sufficient regard for Paragraph 132 of the Framework which states “Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development” and for the principles set out in Paragraph 135 of the Framework. The design policies also have sufficient regard for Paragraph 110 of the Framework which states planning policies should provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks, and Paragraph 96 of the Framework which states planning policies should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive, and safe places which promote social interaction, are safe and accessible, and enable and support healthy lifestyles.

107. The policies will not prevent development from taking place which is proposed in the development plan for the area and if it took place, would provide housing. The policies serve a clear purpose by providing an additional level of detail or distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policies.

108. The policies seek to shape and direct sustainable development to ensure that local people get the right type of development for their community. Having regard to the Framework and Guidance the policies, as recommended to be modified, are appropriate to be included in a ‘made’ neighbourhood plan. Subject to recommended modification the Design policies meet the Basic Conditions.

Recommended modification 4:

In Policy 9 part 9.3 delete "particularly"

In Policy 10

- **In part 10.1 replace "preserve" with "conserve"**
- **in the first sentence of part 10.2 delete the text before "developments" and replace "extent" with "possible extent will be supported"**

In Policy 11, part 11.1 bullet point 8 after "management" insert "and demonstrate consideration of implications for water supply infrastructure"

Health, wellbeing and education policies

109. 'Policy 13: Safety and wellbeing' seeks to establish principles that new major developments should deliver. This policy has sufficient regard for paragraph 135 of the Framework which states planning policies should create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible; and for paragraph 111 of the Framework which states planning policies should provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks.

110. 'Policy 14: Health, social care and education' seeks to ensure development provides appropriate and timely health, social care and education infrastructure. The policy requires consideration to accessibility and seeks to establish information requirements for major residential developments. The policy has sufficient regard for paragraph 96 of the Framework relating to support for healthy lives. I am satisfied the policy includes reference to contributions to required relevant infrastructure. With respect to the representation of NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board supported by NHS Property Services relating to Policy 21, I have noted Policy 14 does not refer to development proposals resulting in loss of health, wellbeing or education facilities and there is no requirement that it should.

111. The health, wellbeing and education policies will not prevent development from taking place which is proposed in the development plan for the area and if it took place, would provide housing. The policies serve a clear purpose by providing an additional level of detail or distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policies.

112. The health, wellbeing and education policies seek to shape and direct sustainable development to ensure that local people get the right type of development for their community. Having regard to the Framework and Guidance the policies are appropriate to be included in a 'made' neighbourhood plan. The health, wellbeing and education policies meet the Basic Conditions.

Housing policies

113. 'Policy 15: Housing' seeks to establish support for development which delivers a range of housing types with specific focus on identified types of housing. The term "in particular, preference will be given" does not provide a basis for the determination of development proposals. I am satisfied the policy will enable consideration of viability and deliverability of development schemes.

114. 'Policy 16: Consultation' in part 16.1 seeks to specify a planning condition for approval of major developments that is dependent on the actions of third parties, which it may not. Part 16.2 seeks to establish a basis for community engagement that is not proportionate to the scale of proposal and that does not have sufficient regard for national policy relating to pre-application engagement. It would be appropriate to include an additional Parish Action in Appendix 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan stating the Parish Council will seek to encourage proposers of medium and major scale developments to engage with the local community in both the formulation of proposals and in their implementation.

115. 'Policy 17: Derelict and empty properties and sites' seeks to establish support for developments which bring derelict, empty or partially empty properties back into full use and seeks to support the policy of the Local Plan for Oldham relating to the efficient use of brownfield land.

116. 'Policy 18: Community and self-build' seeks to establish conditional support for individual self-build or community-led projects in respect of local connection. The term "Particularly supported" does not provide a basis for the determination of development proposals.

117. I have recommended appropriate modification of policies, where necessary, so that all policies have sufficient regard for national policy and are "clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals" as required by paragraph 16d) of the Framework.

118. The housing policies will not prevent development from taking place which is proposed in the development plan for the area and if it took place, would provide

housing. The policies serve a clear purpose by providing an additional level of detail or distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policies.

119. The policies seek to shape and direct sustainable development to ensure that local people get the right type of development for their community. Having regard to the Framework and Guidance the policies, as recommended to be modified, are appropriate to be included in a 'made' neighbourhood plan. Subject to recommended modification the Housing policies meet the Basic Conditions.

Recommended modification 5:

In Policy 15

- **delete "In particular, preference will be given to"**
- **after accessibility insert will be supported"**

Delete Policy 16

In Policy 18 delete "particularly"

Retail, commerce and tourism policies

120. 'Policy 19: Retail, commercial and industrial development' seeks to establish conditional support for new office, retail and commercial development within existing or new employment areas. Paragraph 85 of the Framework states planning policies should help to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Paragraph 124 of the Framework states planning policies should support the development of underutilised land and buildings. Paragraph 89 of the Framework makes reference to unacceptable impact on local roads. Policy 19 has sufficient regard for national policy in these respects.

121. Part 19.1 of the policy requires clarification it does not relate to commercial competition which is not a planning policy consideration. The relationship between parts 19.1 and 19.3 of the policy is unclear and the term "particularly" does not provide a basis for the determination of development proposals. The terms "preferred" and "strong" in parts 19.5 and 19.6 of the policy respectively do not provide a basis for the determination of development proposals. Part 19.6 of the policy has not been sufficiently justified in circumstances where premises can be demonstrated to be unsuitable or not viable in their present use.

122. ‘Policy 20: Homeworking and connectivity’ seeks to establish conditional support for homeworking and communications connectivity. The term “within the economy” is imprecise.

123. ‘Policy 21: Tourism and leisure’ seeks to establish conditional support for the development of new tourist facilities; community leisure and sports facilities; and the enhancement or improvement of community facilities. The policy also seeks to establish that development proposals resulting in the loss or reduction in scale of a community facility will be resisted unless stated criteria are met. Paragraph 98 of the Framework states planning policies should plan positively for provision of community facilities such as local shops and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments, and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs. With respect to the representation of I am satisfied Policy 21 relates to tourism and leisure and that Policy 14 relates to health, wellbeing and education. With respect to the representation of NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board supported by NHS Property Services I have recommended a modification to clarify this distinction.

124. ‘Policy 22: Agricultural land’ seeks to establish a presumption against the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land. The term “strong” does not adequately have regard for paragraph 187 of the Framework nor does it provide a basis for the determination of development proposals.

125. ‘Policy 23: Services’ seeks to establish support for developments providing or allowing the retention key services within village centres and includes reference to the model of 20-minute neighbourhoods. I am satisfied the policy does not prevent consideration of evidence on viability, suitability and deliverability.

126. I have recommended appropriate modification of policies, where necessary, so that all policies have sufficient regard for national policy and are “clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals” as required by paragraph 16d) of the Framework.

127. The retail, commerce and tourism policies will not prevent development from taking place which is proposed in the development plan for the area and if it took place, would provide housing. The policies serve a clear purpose by providing an additional level of detail or distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policies.

128. The policies seek to shape and direct sustainable development to ensure that local people get the right type of development for their community. Having regard

to the Framework and Guidance the policies, as recommended to be modified, are appropriate to be included in a 'made' neighbourhood plan. Subject to recommended modification the Retail, commerce and tourism policies meet the Basic Conditions.

Recommended modification 6:

In Policy 19

- **in part 19.1 second bullet point after "unacceptable" insert "environmental or operational"**
- **in part 19.3 delete "businesses, particularly those defined as" and before the full stop insert "businesses"**
- **in part 19.5 replace the first sentence with "Employment development shall re-use existing buildings unless it is demonstrated this is not viable or practical."**
- **In part 19.6 delete "strong", and after "premises" insert "unless it can be demonstrated the premises are unsuitable or not viable in their existing use"**

In Policy 20 replace "within the economy" with "for the site"

In Policy 21 part 21.5 after "scale of a" insert "non-health or education"

In Policy 22 delete "strong"

Travel and transport policies

129. 'Policy 24: Parking standards and housing' seeks to establish that new housing development should aim to deliver specified parking provision. Relevant factors referred to in paragraph 112 of the Framework have been considered. The term "aim to deliver" enables some flexibility in relation to specific circumstances in implementation. I am satisfied the policy is sufficiently flexible to enable unallocated parking rather than a default to individual driveways as referred to by Transport for Greater Manchester.

130. 'Policy 25: Cycling, pedestrian and leisure infrastructure' seeks to ensure developments enhance provision for active travel. The policy has sufficient regard for paragraph 111 of the Framework which states planning policies should provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities.

131. ‘Policy 26: Accessibility to transport’ seeks to establish support for development which delivers accessibility to transport. The policy has sufficient regard for paragraph 109 of the Framework which states plan making should give early consideration to identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use.

132. ‘Policy 27: Public transport’ seeks to establish support for development which addresses accessibility restrictions at Greenfield Station and for developments that increase capacity and usage of the rail network including provision of additional stations.

133. ‘Policy 28: Clean fuel vehicles’ seeks to establish support for development that delivers electric charging or alternative renewable provision, or where not practical enhanced access to transport.

134. ‘Policy 29: Air quality and vibration monitoring’ seeks to establish support for developments proposals that provide robust air quality monitoring, and that consider damage to buildings, particularly heritage assets, including from vibration. The term “particularly supported” in part 29.1 of the policy and the term “is encouraged” in part 29.2 of the policy do not provide a basis for the determination of development proposals. Part 29.2 of the policy does not have sufficient regard for paragraph 116 of the Framework relating to the prevention or refusal of development on highway grounds. The requirement to demonstrate no damage to local buildings is imprecise.

135. I have recommended appropriate modification of policies, where necessary, so that all policies have sufficient regard for national policy and are “clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals” as required by paragraph 16d) of the Framework.

136. The travel and transport policies will not prevent development from taking place which is proposed in the development plan for the area and if it took place, would provide housing. The policies serve a clear purpose by providing an additional level of detail or distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policies.

137. The policies seek to shape and direct sustainable development to ensure that local people get the right type of development for their community. Having regard to the Framework and Guidance the policies, as recommended to be modified, are appropriate to be included in a ‘made’ neighbourhood plan. Subject to

recommended modification the travel and transport policies meet the Basic Conditions.

Recommended modification 7:

In Policy 29

- **in part 29.1 delete "particularly"**
- **replace part 29.2 with "To be supported development that may cause damage, including through vibrations, to heritage assets or other adjacent buildings must demonstrate effective mitigation and monitoring measures."**

Conclusion and Referendum

138. I have recommended seven modifications to the Submission Version Plan. I recommend an additional modification in the Annex to my report. The definition of plans and programmes in Article 2(a) of EU Directive 2001/42 includes any modifications to them. I am satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with the Convention Rights, and would remain compatible if modified in accordance with my recommendations; and subject to the modifications I have recommended, meets all the Statutory Requirements set out in paragraph 8(1) of schedule 4B of the Parish and Country Planning Act 1990, and meets the Basic Conditions:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the plan;
- the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- the plan will not prevent development from taking place which is proposed in the development plan for the area and if it took place, would provide housing;
- the plan will comply with relevant environmental outcomes reports (EOR);
- the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, assimilated EU obligations; and
- the prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the plan (meaning that the plan has passed all necessary legal, environmental and procedural requirements).

I recommend to Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority that the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan for the plan period up to 2045 should, subject to the modifications I have put forward, be submitted to referendum.

139. I am required to consider whether the referendum area should extend beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area and if to be extended, the nature of that extension. I have seen nothing to suggest that the policies of the Plan will have "a substantial, direct and demonstrable impact beyond the neighbourhood area." I have seen nothing to suggest the referendum area should be extended for any other reason. I conclude the referendum area should not be extended beyond the designated Neighbourhood Area.

I recommend that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum based on the area that was designated as a Neighbourhood Area by the Peak District National Park Authority on 11 November 2016 and by Oldham Council on 21 November 2016.

Annex: Minor Corrections to the Neighbourhood Plan

140. I have only recommended modifications and corrections to the Neighbourhood Plan (presented in bold type) where I consider they need to be made so that the plan meets the Basic Conditions and the other requirements I have identified. If to any extent, a policy set out in the Neighbourhood Plan conflicts with any other statement or information in the plan, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy. Supporting text and other information in the plan must be adjusted to achieve consistency with the modified policies.

Recommended modification 8:
Modify general text and figures to achieve consistency with the modified policies; to achieve updates and correct identified errors; to achieve necessary clarifications; and to ensure sufficient regard for national policy.

Chris Collison
Planning and Management Ltd
17 September 2026
REPORT END

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OLDHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

SADDLEWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POST-EXAMINATION DECISION STATEMENT

Regulation 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning

(General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

This document is the decision statement required to be prepared under Regulation 18(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). It sets out the Council's response to each of the recommendations contained within the report to Oldham Council and the Peak District National Park Authority of the Independent Examination of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan ("the Plan") by independent Examiner Mr Christopher Collison, which was submitted to the Council on
17th September 2026.

This decision statement, the independent Examiner's Report, the submission version of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents and the Regulation
17A (2) consultation document can be viewed on the Council's website:
https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201235/neighbourhood_planning/2936/saddleworth_neighbourhood_plan

1.0 Background

Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), Oldham Council ("the Council") has a statutory duty to assist communities in the preparation of neighbourhood (development) plans and to take plans through a process of examination and referendum. The Localism Act 2011 (Part 6, Chapter 3) sets out the Local Planning Authority's responsibilities under neighbourhood planning.

This statement confirms that the modifications proposed by the Examiner's Report

have been considered and accepted by the Council and the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) and that subject to making the recommended modifications (and other minor modifications) the Plan may now be submitted to referendum.

The Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan relates to the area that was designated as a Neighbourhood Area by the PDNPA on 11 November 2016 and the Council on 21 November 2016. This area is coterminous with the boundary of the parish of Saddleworth and falls within the local planning authority area of PDNPA and Oldham Council.

Saddleworth Parish Council undertook a pre-submission consultation on the draft Plan in accordance with Regulation 14. Consultation on the Pre-Submission Version took place between 2nd April and 10th June 2024.

Following the submission of the Saddleworth Parish Council to Oldham Council and the PDNPA on the 11th November 2025, the Council (acting also on behalf of the PDNPA) publicised the draft Plan for a six-week period between 10th June and 24th July 2026, and representations were invited in accordance with Regulation 16.

2.0 Independent Examination

The Council (acting also on behalf of the PDNPA) appointed Mr Christopher Collison BA (Hons) MBA MRTPI MIED IHBC, with the consent of Saddleworth Parish Council, to undertake the independent examination of the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan and to prepare a report of the independent examination.

The Examiner examined the Plan by way of written representations supported by an unaccompanied site visit of the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The Examiner's Report was formally submitted on 17th August. The Report concludes that subject to making the modifications recommended by the Examiner, the Plan meets the basic conditions set out in the legislation and should proceed to referendum. The Examiner also recommends that the referendum area should be the same as the designated Neighbourhood Area, which is the same as the

administrative boundary for Saddleworth Parish.

Following receipt of the Examiner's Report legislation requires that Oldham Council and the PDNPA consider each of the modifications recommended, the reasons for them, and decide what action to take. The Council and PDNPA are also required to consider whether to extend the area to which the referendum is to take place.

3.0 Decision and Reasons

Having considered each of the recommendations made in the Examiner's Report Oldham Council and PDNPA, have decided to accept the recommended modifications to the draft Plan. These are set out in Table 1 below.

Oldham Council and PDNPA consider that, subject to the modifications being made to the Plan as set out in Table 1 below, the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions mentioned in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country
Planning Act 1990 (as amended), is compatible with the Convention rights and meets
the requirements of paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

As a consequence of the required modifications, the Council and PDNPA will modify the
Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan accordingly, for it then to proceed to referendum.

The Examiner recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum based on the designated Neighbourhood Area. Oldham Council and PDNPA have considered this recommendation and the reasons for it and has decided to accept it. The referendum area for the final Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan will therefore be
based on the designated Saddleworth Parish Neighbourhood Area.

This decision will be made by Oldham Council on 22nd October 2026 and by PDNPA on 9th October 2026.

This decision statement will be dated 23rd October 2026.

Other information:

The Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan document will be updated to incorporate all the
modifications required and re-titled Referendum Version. The date for the referendum and further details will be publicised shortly once a date is set by the Council and PDNPA.

Table 1: Examiner's Recommended Modifications

Saddleworth Neighbourhood Section / Plan Policy	Examiner's Report Reference[1]	Recommended Modification	Oldham Council / Peak District National Park Authority Consideration / Justification
Appendix 2 - Parish Actions	RM1; page 16-17	Before the list of actions insert: 'The following Parish Actions have been identified as community aspirations that will help improve the neighbourhood area but which are not suitable to be statutory planning policies and do not form part of the Development Plan.'	Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.
Page 6 - Map of Neighbourhood Plan	RM2; page 23	Retitle and adjust the content of the Map on page 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan so that it identifies the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area only	Agree with the modifications for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.
Environment Policies			
Policy 1	RM3; page 28	In paragraph 1.1: Delete 'aim to' Bullet point 1 - delete '/deficiencies', and replace 'and an overall enhancement in the provision' with 'or an appropriate enhancement of existing' Bullet point 3 - delete 'create or enhance existing green space, and'	Agree with the modifications for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.
Policy 2	RM3; page 28	In paragraph 2.1: Delete 'aim to' In paragraph 2.2:	Agree with the modifications for the reasons set out in

[1] RM stands for Recommendation Modification and the number is as per the Examiner's Report.

Saddleworth Neighbourhood Section / Plan Policy	Examiner's Report Reference[1]	Recommended Modification	Oldham Council / Peak District National Park Authority Consideration / Justification
		Replace 'encouraging' with 'encourage'	the Examiners Report.
Policy 4	RM3; page 29	Replace the text before the list of spaces with 'The following sites, identified on maps in Appendix 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan, are designated as Local Green Spaces' Delete the note commencing 'See'	Agree with the modifications for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.
Policy 6	RM3; page 29	In paragraph 6.2: Bullet point 3 - replace 'and' with a semi-colon, and insert a bullet point before 'developments'	Agree with the modifications for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.
Policy 7	RM3; page 29	After 'viewpoint' insert 'that is accessible to the general public' After 'interruption of' insert 'the following' Replace the final full stop with ': - Views of church spires and towers located within the Neighbourhood Area including: the Church of St Chad viewed from Pickhill Valley; St Anne's Lydgate viewed from the footpath from Coverhill Road; and St Paul's Church in Scouthead viewed from Woodbrook Valley. - Views of Pots and Pans War Memorial from any of the villages in the Neighbourhood Area.'	Agree with the modifications for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.
Design Policies			
Policy 9	RM4; page 31	Part 9.3 - delete 'particularly'	Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the Examiners

Saddleworth Neighbourhood Section / Plan Policy	Examiner's Report Reference[1]	Recommended Modification	Oldham Council / Peak District National Park Authority Consideration / Justification
			Report.
Policy 10	RM4; page 31	Part 10.1 - replace 'preserve' with 'conserve' Part 10.2, first sentence - delete the text before 'developments' and replace 'extent' with 'possible extent will be supported'	Agree with the modifications for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.
Policy 11	RM4; page 31	Part 11.1, bullet point 8 - after 'management' insert 'and demonstrate consideration of implications for water supply infrastructure'	Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.
Housing Policies			
Policy 15	RM5; page 33	Delete 'in particular, preference will be given to' After accessibility insert 'will be supported'	Agree with the modifications for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.
Policy 16	RM5; page 33	Delete	Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.
Policy 18	RM5; page 33	Delete 'particularly'	Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.

Saddleworth Neighbourhood Section / Plan Policy	Examiner's Report Reference[1]	Recommended Modification	Oldham Council / Peak District National Park Authority Consideration / Justification
Retail, commerce and tourism policies			
Policy 19	RM6; page 35	Part 19.1, second bullet point - after 'unacceptable' insert 'environmental or operational' Part 19.3 - delete 'businesses, particularly those defined as' and before the full stop insert 'businesses' Part 19.5 - replace the first sentence with 'Employment development shall re-use existing buildings unless it is demonstrated this is not viable or practical.' Part 19.6 - Delete 'strong', and after 'premises' insert 'unless it can be demonstrated the premises are unsuitable or not viable in their existing use'	Agree with the modifications for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.
Policy 20	RM6; page 35	Replace 'within the economy' with 'for the site'	Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.
Policy 21	RM6; page 35	Part 21.5 - after 'scale of a' insert 'non-health or education'	Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.
Policy 22	RM6; page 35	Delete 'strong'	Agree with the modification for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.

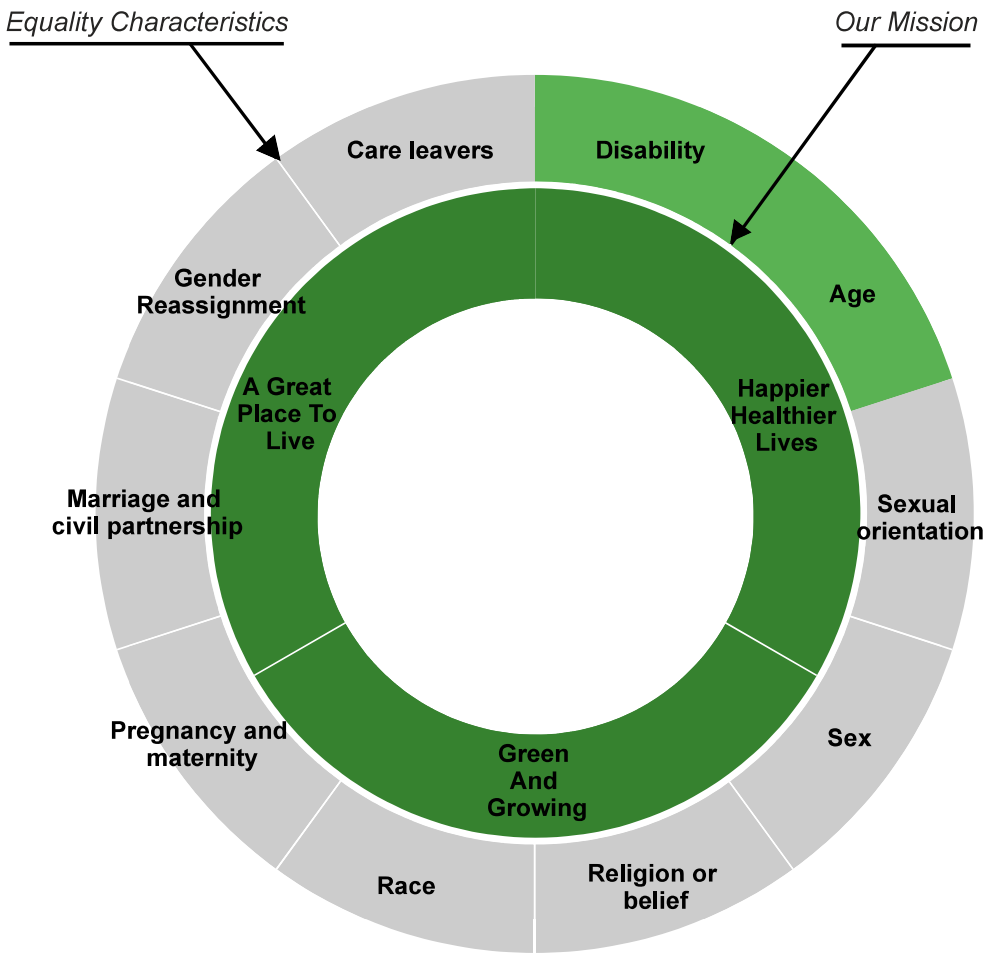
Saddleworth Neighbourhood Section / Plan Policy	Examiner's Report Reference[1]	Recommended Modification	Oldham Council / Peak District National Park Authority Consideration / Justification
Travel and transport policies			
Policy 29	RM7; page 37	Part 29.1 - Delete 'particularly' Part 29.2 - Replace with 'To be supported development that may cause damage, including through vibrations, to heritage assets or other adjacent buildings must demonstrate effective mitigation and monitoring measures.'	Agree with the modifications for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.
Annex			
Minor Corrections to the Neighbourhood Plan	RM8; page 38	Modify general text and figures to achieve consistency with the modified policies; to achieve updates and correct identified errors; to achieve necessary clarifications; and to ensure sufficient regard for national policy.	Agree with the modifications for the reasons set out in the Examiners Report.

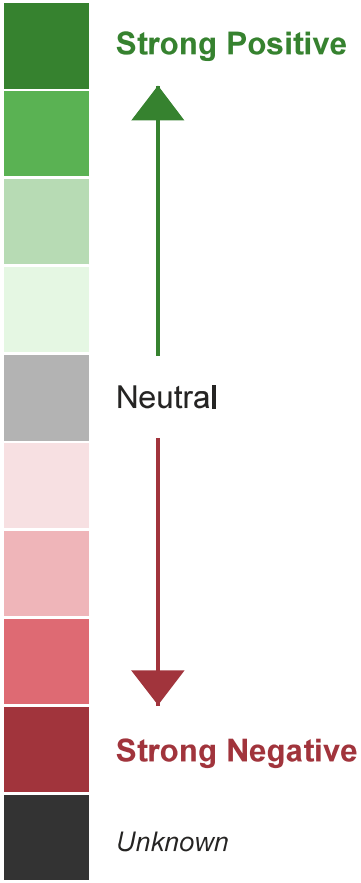
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Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan

completed/last updated by Elizabeth Dryden-Stuart on 09/10/2026

Portfolio	**Decent Homes**
Directorate	**Place**
Service/Team	**Economy**
Is this IA related to a Budget Reduction proposal?	**No**





Equality Characteristics

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Care leavers	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Race	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Religion or belief	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Sex	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Sexual orientation	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Age	Moderate Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	4	The Inspector's Report on the independent examination of the submission Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan finds that subject to specified modifications (outlined in the Decision Statement at Appendix 2), the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements and should be submitted to a referendum. Having regard to the modifications recommended by the Inspector it the conclusions of the Impact Assessment carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan at publication and submission stage remain relevant: The Neighbourhood Plan includes objectives and policies which should lead to a positive impact on people. Objective 4 on sustainable design should help control heat stress etc benefitting older people. Objective 6 on public realm aims to reduce anti social behaviour affecting particular characteristics. Objective 7 on key infrastructure will help ensure sufficient capacity at schools benefitting young people and addressing health needs affecting different age groups. Objective 8 on housing seeks to particularly benefit older people and first time buyers. Objective 14 on services and Objective 16 on cycling and pedestrian routes will benefit young people without access to private transport and older people with mobility issues. Objective 18 on air quality will help vulnerable people including children and older people. This assessment has been informed by the Equalities Impact Assessment undertaken by Saddleworth Parish Council on the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan.
Disability	Moderate Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	4	The Inspector's Report on the independent examination of the submission Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan finds that subject to specified modifications (outlined in the Decision Statement at Appendix 2), the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements and should be submitted to a referendum. Having regard to the modifications recommended by the Inspector it the conclusions of the Impact Assessment carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan at publication and submission stage remain relevant: The Neighbourhood Plan includes objectives and policies which should lead to a positive impact on people. Objective 4 on sustainable design should help control heat stress etc benefitting people with health conditions. Objective 6 on public realm aims to reduce anti social behaviour affecting particular characteristics, such as disabilities. Objective 7 on key infrastructure will help address health needs affecting people with disabilities. Objective 14 on services and Objective 16 on cycling and pedestrian routes will benefit older people with mobility issues. Objective 18 on air quality will help vulnerable people including those with respiratory disease. This assessment has been informed by the Equalities Impact Assessment undertaken by Saddleworth Parish Council on the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan.

Our Mission / Corporate Priorities

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
A Great Place To Live	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	The Inspector's Report on the independent examination of the submission Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan finds that subject to specified modifications (outlined in the Decision Statement at Appendix 2), the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements and should be submitted to a referendum. Having regard to the modifications recommended by the Inspector it the conclusions of the Impact Assessment carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan at publication and submission stage remain relevant: The Neighbourhood Plan vision seeks to create thriving communities and helps to achieve a great place to live through policies on housing as well as the environment and employment.
Green And Growing	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	The Inspector's Report on the independent examination of the submission Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan finds that subject to specified modifications (outlined in the Decision Statement at Appendix 2), the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements and should be submitted to a referendum. Having regard to the modifications recommended by the Inspector it the conclusions of the Impact Assessment carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan at publication and submission stage remain relevant: The Neighbourhood Plan proposes to designate four Local Green Spaces and includes policies on Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity, Protected Sites, sustainable construction and clean fuel vehicles.
Happier Healthier Lives	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	The Inspector's Report on the independent examination of the submission Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan finds that subject to specified modifications (outlined in the Decision Statement at Appendix 2), the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other requirements and should be submitted to a referendum. Having regard to the modifications recommended by the Inspector it the conclusions of the Impact Assessment carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan at publication and submission stage remain relevant: The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies on health, social care and education.

Negative Impacts

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score ▲	What action can be taken to mitigate the potential negative impacts?	Action(s)	Owner(s)	Timescale(s)	If the negative impacts can't be mitigated, why should the project/decision proceed?

Strong Positive Impacts that are Possible

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score ▲	What action can be taken to increase the likelihood that positive impacts are realised?	Action(s)	Owner(s)	Timescale(s)

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Emergency Powers Decision Report

Power Purchase Agreement for Wrigley Head Solar Farm – appointment of Ovo Energy

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Creating a Better Place Team
Directorate: Place & Economic Growth
Report Author: Andrew Hunt, Green Energy & Sustainability Manager
Email: andrew.hunt@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 2nd November 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

To award a Power Purchase Agreement for the exported electricity generated by Wrigley Head Solar Farm to Ovo Energy, and to approve an exemption from the Counci's Contract Procedure Rules to enable the Council to begin receiving revenue income from the PPA as soon as possible.

3. Reason for urgency

The Council's solar farm at Wrigley Head has not yet been energised and so cannot begin to generate revenue income from the Council until a Power Purchase Agreement with an energy company is in place. Informal market research has identified Ovo Energy as a provider of good value PPAs. The time the Council would take to carry out a competitive procurement process would result in the Council losing more revenue income than could be gained from the marginal extra value which could be secured by such a process.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

Wrigley Head Solar Farm will remain inactive for a protracted period and so will not be able to start generating revenue income for the Council.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

The Council is losing in theory over £300 per day on average whilst the solar farm is not generating a revenue income through an appropriate PPA.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 13 October 2026
Comments

This report seeks approval for an exemption to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to enable the direct award of a Power Purchase Agreement to Ovo Energy. The arrangement is expected to generate net revenue income of approximately £188k over the 18-month contract period. The income is anticipated to commence in 2027/28 and will contribute towards operational costs, with the majority available to support wider Council priorities.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name: Alex Bougatef
Date: 13 October 2026
Comments:

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required and it cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.

Principal Decision Report

Decision below £250k and only affects one ward

Subject:	Power Purchase Agreement for Wrigley Head Solar Farm – appointment of Ovo Energy
Decision maker: Senior Officer	Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive (Place)
Decision date:	2nd November 2026
Report author:	Andrew Hunt, Green Energy & Sustainability Manager
Ward (s):	Failsworth East

Reason for decision

To appoint Ovo Energy to supply a Power Purchase Agreement for Wrigley Head Solar Farm for a period of 18 months from start of operations, at an estimated value of £188,500. This appointment to be made by direct award with an exemption from the Council's Contract Procedure Rules due to the urgent need to energise the solar farm.

Recommendation(s)

1. That an exemption from the Council's Contract Procedure Rules be approved for the PPA contract award to Ovo Energy
2. That Ovo Energy be awarded an 18-month Power Purchase Agreement for the electricity generated from Wrigley Head Solar Farm

Background

Wrigley Head Solar Farm is a sub-1 Megawatt ground mounted solar array owned by the Council. Construction of the solar farm has recently completed but the facility cannot be energised and commence exporting electricity to the grid until an agreement is in place for the sale of the electricity generated by the solar farm to a third party.

The Council has carried out some market research and has identified Ovo Energy as being a supplier offering relatively high (for the marketplace) Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) rates for generating facilities of the size of Wrigley Head. Ovo are offering a nominal rate of around £144 per MWh generated by the solar farm.

The Council is currently procuring a Strategic Energy Partner (SEP) for Oldham Borough, and its intention is that once the SEP has been appointed around December 2027, the SEP may be able to offer a preferential rate PPA for Wrigley Head as well as Operation and Maintenance services which will be due for renewal at that point. It is therefore proposed that until that point, the Council establish an 18-month PPA with Ovo Energy to ensure that the solar farm achieves

energisation as soon as possible and so maximises revenue income until the SEP is in place and the PPA arrangement can be reviewed.

The urgent need to achieve energisation of the solar farm and begin generating revenue for the Council means that during the time taken to undertake a competitive procurement process, the solar farm would remain un-energised and would be losing potential revenue income at a rate of approximately £344 per day, based on the unit rate being offered by Ovo Energy. This means that the economic advantage to the Council of a direct award to Ovo Energy as soon as is practicable far outweighs any marginal economic advantage that could potentially be achieved by running a competitive procurement process.

Due to the specialist nature of the contract required, and the critical timescales involved, an exemption from the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) is requested to make this appointment. Section 21 of the CPRs allows exemptions under exceptional circumstances, and in the case of this appointment the following applies:-

- The Contract is for Supplies, Services or the execution of Works which are required in circumstances of extreme urgency

and seeks approval to appoint Ovo Energy via a direct award to begin purchasing the electricity generated by Wrigley Head as soon as is practicable.

Alternative option(s) to be considered *(please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s)*

Option 1 – approve an exemption from the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to appoint Ovo Energy via direct award to provide an 18-month Power Purchase Agreement for the electricity generated by Wrigley Head Solar Farm. Under this option, energisation of the solar farm will be achieved as soon as is practicable and the Council will begin to benefit from revenue income from the sale of the electricity.

Option 2 – do not appoint Ovo Energy. Under this option the Council would run a competitive procurement process to identify the most economically advantageous supplier for a Power Purchase Agreement for the electricity generated by Wrigley Head Solar Farm. However, in the time taken to run this procurement process the solar farm would remain un-energised and would not be generating revenue for the Council.

Consultation *(include any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted)*

N/A

Risks

Implications

Financial	The proposal to approve an exemption from the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to appoint Ovo Energy on a Power Purchase Agreement via direct award will potentially see the Council benefit by an estimated £188,500 (net of VAT). This income generation will be revenue income. It is estimated that this income will be received from the start of the financial year 2027/28. It is assumed that the income will help offset some operational costs such as insurance, but the large majority of the income will be available to help fund wider Council activity. At the end of the 18-month contract period, a further report will be required to confirm future arrangements. John Hoskins
Legal	Procurement have confirmed support for the proposed exemption under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Procurement should be satisfied in conjunction with the Service, that the circumstances support reliance on the exemption. Legal Services has previously undertaken a review of the proposed Power Purchase Agreement with Ovo Energy. Subject to agreement of the final contractual documentation there are no further legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Sukie Kaur - Solicitor
Procurement	Procurement support the urgent requirement for the direct award and the EXEMPTION FROM THE CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES, under 21.3 (h) The Contract is for Services which are required as a matter of extreme urgency. The Council will begin to benefit from revenue income from the sale of the electricity supply. The award for the PPA for Wrigley Head Solar Farm for a period of 18 months from start of operations. This will allow for time to go to open market Competitively and comply with the PCR 23 Regulations. A transparency Notice will be required if this exemption is authorised. Angela Porter – Senior Category Manager
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	N/A

Other	N/A

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes
Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	Yes
Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	Yes

Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

None.

Appendix

None.

Report author sign-off	Andrew Hunt
Role	Green Energy & Sustainability Manager
Date of sign-off	9 October 2026

Approval	
Officer approval sign-off	Shelley Kipling
Role	Chief Executive
Date of sign-off	Xx/xx/xx

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Emergency Powers Decision Report

Zoning Co-ordination Boday - Approval of model & grant acceptance

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Creating a Better Place
Directorate: Place
Report Author: Andrew Hunt, Green Energy & Sustainability Manager
Email: andrew.hunt@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 2nd November 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

Zoning Co-ordination Body – approval of model and acceptance of grant funding

3. Reason for urgency

This decision is required in parallel to similar decisions being taken in Stockport and Trafford Councils in support of a GMCA decision to establish a Zoning Co-ordination Body under the proposed model.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

Oldham may not be able to participate in the GMCA ZCB and may have to establish and potentially fund its own ZCB to comply with forthcoming national secondary legislation.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

Oldham will forego the circa £1m of revenue grant funding associated with ZCB implementation in Oldham and may have to self-fund its own ZCB.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 7 October 2026
Comments

This report seeks approval to accept up to £400k of DESNZ revenue grant funding for 2026/27 to support the implementation of the Heat Network Zoning Co-ordination Body (ZCB) and related programme activities within Oldham.

The programme is fully funded through external grant resources and therefore there are no additional financial implications for Council budgets.

The report also notes potential future grant funding of approximately £565k for the period 2027-2030, subject to DESNZ approval and annual funding allocations. Expenditure will be monitored to ensure compliance with grant conditions.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name: Alex Bougatef
Date: 30th September 2026
Comments:

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year, so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed, as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision is required, and the matter cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.

Report to CABINET

Zoning Co-ordination Body – approval of model and acceptance of grant funding

Officer Contact: Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Report Author: Andrew Hunt, Green Energy & Sustainability Manager

Email: andrew.hunt@oldham.gov.uk

2 November 2026

Reason for Decision
To approve the proposed model for a heat network Zoning Co-ordination Body (ZCB) in Greater Manchester to include Oldham Council, and to accept up to £400,000 in revenue grant funding from DESNZ for activities associated with the design and implementation of the ZCB in Oldham in the 2026/27 Financial Year.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:-

1. Accept up to £400,000 in revenue grant funding from DESNZ for the 2026/27 Financial Year, to support ongoing work on the design and implementation of the ZCB model in Oldham
2. Note the work to date on design of a ZCB model led by DESNZ with the GMCA and Oldham, Stockport and Trafford Councils, including the funding request to DESNZ for up to £5m to fund the initial 3-year implementation of the ZCB within these authorities
3. Note that approval of the ZCB model is required at GMCA level in order to comply with the forthcoming national Statutory Instrument on Heat Network Zoning. Approval at GMCA is being sought concurrently with this Cabinet report
4. Approve in principle Oldham Council's participation in the proposed GMCA ZCB model once the ZCB has been stood up by GMCA
5. Delegate authority to accept Oldham's initial 3-year ZCB funding settlement (which may be circa £565,000 (TBC), awarded on an annual basis), and authority to implement the ZCB in Oldham, to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) in consultation with the Chief Executive, Director of Growth, Director of Finance, Head of Legal Services and Head of Constitutional Services

Zoning Co-ordination Body – approval of model and acceptance of grant funding

1 Background

1.1 In autumn 2026 the Government aims to introduce new secondary legislation which will introduce powers to create designated zones where large energy users and new developments are mandated to connect to district heat networks (wide-scale networks of underground pipes carrying hot water, heated from centralised Energy Centres). The objective is to create a significant new market for heat network developers and a step change in the deployment of this technology which can secure large-scale local and sustainable energy sources and stabilise energy costs for consumers.

1.2 Oldham Council is one of three GM local authorities participating in the national Advanced Zoning Programme (AZP) and to date has received substantial financial and consultant support through this programme. Oldham's current procurement of a Strategic Energy Partner for the borough, if successful, is intended to lead to the appointed partner receiving development rights for Oldham's AZP Zone.

Zoning Co-ordination Body (ZCB)

1.3 A key requirement of the new heat network zoning legislation will be for the GMCA and AZP Local Authorities to create a Zoning Co-ordination Body to designate and administer the heat network zones. This will in effect create a range of new statutory duties for Oldham Council around the administration of the AZP Zone in Oldham.

1.4 The proposed model, developed via a series of workshops led by DESNZ and attended by GMCA and Oldham, Stockport and Trafford, is for GMCA to become the formal ZCB with decisions on individual zones to be delegated to the relevant Local Authority. Approval of the proposed model by GMCA is being sought concurrently with this Cabinet report.

Integration with Strategic Energy Partnership

1.5 Oldham Council is currently out to tender for a Strategic Energy Partner (SEP), to bring large-scale investment in local energy infrastructure. The 'anchor' project for the SEP will be the Oldham district heat network and heat network zone.

1.6 Assuming a successful procurement process, the Council will be looking to commence operations of the SEP around January 2028. Establishing the SEP will require that the Council puts in place the necessary support for the partnership in terms of team structures and staffing allocation. As the SEP will be delivering the heat network zone in Oldham, it will therefore be necessary to ensure that the process to establish both the SEP and the ZCB in Oldham are effectively integrated. The grant funding from DESNZ associated with ZCB implementation will support this work.

Link with Corporate Plan and Priorities

1.7 Priority - Green and Growing:-

- We will build on our reputation as a sector leader to maximise opportunities for green investment and jobs in the green economy.
- We will be on our way to making Oldham a carbon-neutral borough by 2030.

Human Resources implications

1.8 The proposal is expected to create a number of new functions associated with the implementation of the Zoning Co-ordination Body. It is anticipated that some activities will require the recruitment of new grant-funded posts, whilst other responsibilities may be delivered through existing Council services including Finance, Legal and other support functions.

1.9 Detailed workforce requirements and organisational arrangements are not yet finalised and will be developed alongside implementation of the Strategic Energy Partnership. Any new posts will be subject to the Council's recruitment and establishment approval processes and funded from external DESNZ grant funding.

1.10 Ongoing consideration will be required regarding capacity, governance, reporting arrangements and longer-term sustainability of grant-funded resources

Jingwen Yang, Workforce Business Partner

2 Current Position

2.1 Details of the proposed ZCB model for approval can be found at **Appendix A** of this report.

2.2 Oldham's share of the £1.5m revenue grant funding allocated to GMCA for the 2026/27 Financial Year is £400K. This funding will be used to support activities associated with the design and implementation of the ZCB in Oldham as well as any remaining requirement that the Strategic Energy Partner procurement process may have which is not already covered by other grant funding.

2.3 GMCA has submitted a high-level funding request to DESNZ of up to £5m to cover costs associated with the first 3 years of operation of the ZCB in GMCA, Oldham, Trafford and Stockport. Oldham's allocation within this £5m may be circa £565K (TBC), but Oldham will also benefit from support from GMCA who will provide a centralised funded resource to support the three Local Authorities. These figures have been arrived at through a complex and in-depth design process over the past few months with GMCA and DESNZ.

2.4 It is likely that DESNZ will allocate these funds on an annual basis rather than for the full 3 years. It is intended that GMCA, Oldham, Trafford and Stockport will monitor the costs associated with implementation on an ongoing basis to ensure that the funding is sufficient for the required tasks in each organisation and arrange reallocation of funds where needed as activities are likely to be different in each of the four organisations, being dependent on local factors and differing timelines.

2.5 In terms of the details of the expected resourcing requirements, these are not yet finalised although GMCA has carried out some work to identify the likely requirements at both ZCB

and Local Authority level. A summary of the functions identified so far can be found at **Appendix B** of this report.

2.6 It is anticipated that some of the proposed new functions will require recruitment to new DESNZ-funded roles within the Council. Other of the new functions could be additional DESNZ-funded duties to be carried out by existing support services such as Finance and Legal Services. Further functions could potentially be provided by external professional advisors where appropriate.

2.7 The final structure of the ZCB function within Oldham Council will need to be integrated with the Council's Strategic Energy Partnership function, as described above. The final shape of these integrated functions will be determined by the Council's Director of Growth and Deputy Chief Executive (Place).

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1: Approve the proposed GMCA ZCB model and accept the grant funding for 2026/27. Under this option, Oldham Council will progress as a participant in the ZCB programme and will receive grant funding to support the design and implementation process and the ongoing procurement of a Strategic Energy Partner for the borough.

3.2 Option 2: Do not approve the proposed GMCA ZCB model or accept the grant funding for 2026/27. Under this option Oldham Council will need to work directly with DESNZ on an individual Local Authority model which would involve increased costs, reduced co-ordination with GMCA and other GM councils and could potentially have to fund the local ZCB from Council funds.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 1: Approve the proposed GMCA ZCB model and accept the grant funding for 2026/27. Under this option, Oldham Council will progress as a participant in the ZCB programme and will receive grant funding to support the design and implementation process and the ongoing procurement of a Strategic Energy Partner for the borough.

5 Consultation

5.1 N/A

6 Financial Implications

6.1 This report seeks approval to accept up to £400,000 revenue grant funding from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) for 2026/27 to support the design and implementation of the Heat Network Zoning Co-ordination Body (ZCB) within Oldham and associated programme activities.

6.2 The funding is external grant income and therefore does not create an additional financial burden to the Council. The grant will be used to fund Zoning Co-ordination Body (ZCB) implementation activities, including programme management, technical support, governance arrangements, specialist advice, and staffing resources when and if required.

6.3 The report also mentions a potential allocation going forward of approximately £565,000 over the initial three-year implementation period 2027-2030 (subject to confirmation by DESNZ and annual funding approvals). Acceptance of future grant allocations will be subject to formal approval under the delegated authority requested within this report.

6.4 The proposed model has been developed through a series of detailed workshops led by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), involving the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the participating local authorities of Oldham, Stockport and Trafford. Under this model, GMCA would act as the formal Zoning Co-ordination Body (ZCB), providing the overarching governance, strategic oversight and administration required by the forthcoming Heat Network Zoning legislation.

6.5 Responsibility for decisions relating to individual heat network zones would be delegated to the relevant local authority, ensuring that local knowledge, priorities and development plans remain central to decision-making.

6.6 Ongoing monitoring of expenditure and grant conditions will be undertaken by the service area in conjunction with Finance to ensure that funding is utilised in accordance with DESNZ requirements and that any unfunded financial commitments are not entered into by the Council. There is a cost centre (24083) already available to ensure funds are allocated correctly and monitored.

6.7 There are no further financial implications as a result of this proposal.

John Hoskins – Finance Manager

7 Legal Implications

7.1 Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables a local authority to arrange for the discharge of any of their functions by any other local authority and 2 or more local authorities may discharge any of their functions jointly and where arrangements are in force for them to do so, they may also arrange for the discharge of those functions by a joint committee of theirs or by an officer of one of them. The Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2000 provide that in an authority with a Leader and Cabinet (as in Oldham), the persons with the power to make arrangements to discharge functions which are the responsibility of the executive of the local authority to be discharged by another local authority or the executive of another local authority are the Cabinet, a member of the Cabinet or a committee of the Cabinet. Although the details of the proposed functions to be delegated to Oldham are yet to be specified in a statutory instrument, pursuant to section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2000, the Cabinet has the power to agree in principle to any delegation arrangements with the GMCA.

Alan Evans – Group Solicitor (Environment)

8. Procurement Implications

8.1 There are no immediate procurement implications against the recommendation that The Authority accepts the revenue grant funding detailed in this report. The Procurement Team will, however, provide guidance and support in relation to the expenditure of the funds. Procurement are already managing the tender process for a Strategic Energy Partner so are therefore embedded into the wider programme.

Tom Pyne – Assistant Director Procurement, Contract Management and Social Value

9 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

9.1 N/A

10 Key Decision

10.1 Yes

11 Key Decision Reference

11.1 KDD-26-16

12 Background Papers

12.1 None.

13 Appendices

13.1 Appendix A – proposed ZCB model

13.2 Appendix B – proposed funded Local Authority resource

Appendix A – proposed ZCB model

The recommended model, illustrated in Figure 1 below, is for GMCA to be designated as the Zone Coordination Body and to establish a new GMCA Sub-Committee to act as the ZCB Board, using GMCA's existing constitutional and delegation powers. GMCA would chair the ZCB Board and host central ZCB functions, including the Board secretariat.

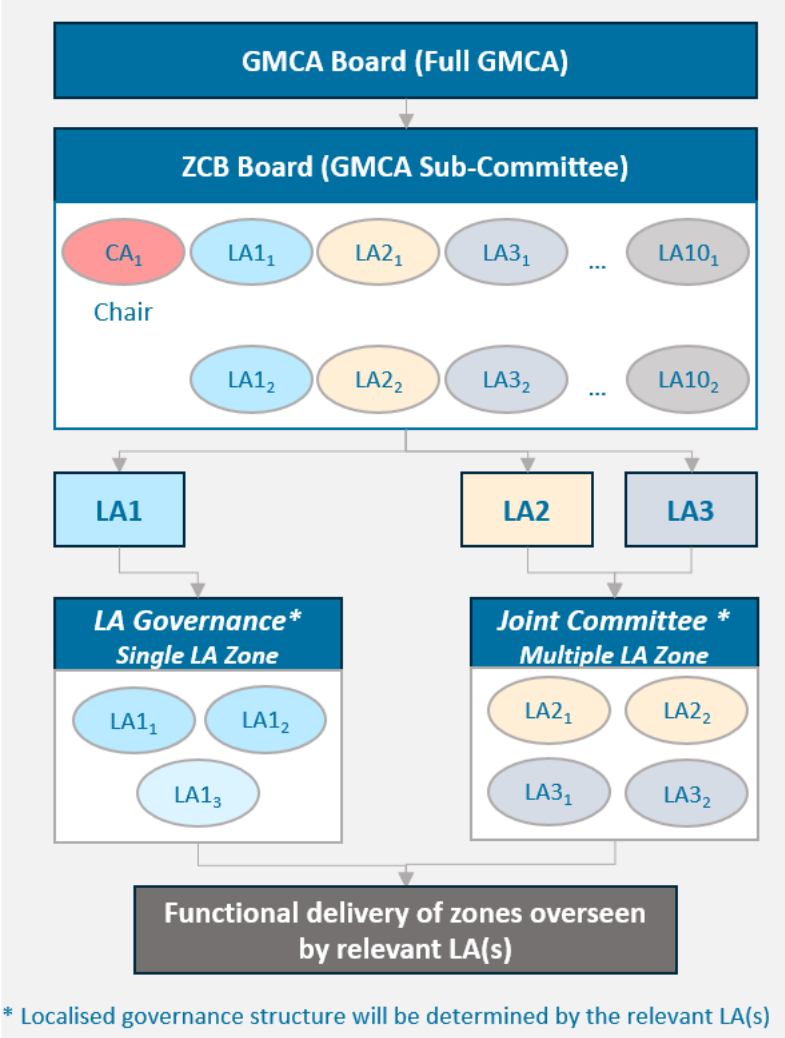


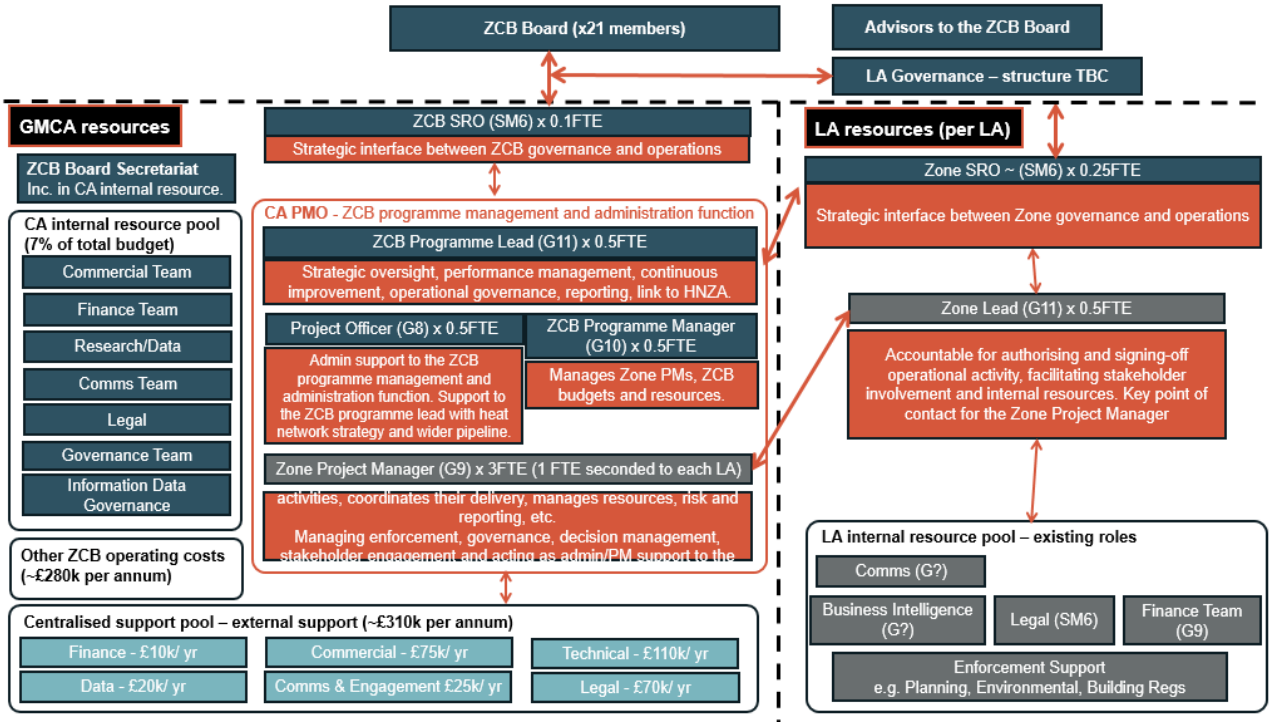
Figure 1: *Recommended organisational and legal model for the Greater Manchester Zone Coordination Body*

Local authority control over individual heat network zones is critical to their success. Using the GMCA Order 2011 would allow the GMCA to delegate non-reserved functions directly to constituent Local Authorities. Accordingly, zone-level decisions that do not require consideration by the ZCB Board would be delegated directly to the local authority. Where a zone spans multiple local authority boundaries, the decisions would be delegated to all relevant local authorities.

It is anticipated that participating local authorities would establish Zone Boards, or equivalent governance arrangements, to exercise delegated decision-making powers at a zone level. These arrangements would only be required once the Central Authority has invited a new zone to proceed. Governance arrangements would need to be developed in accordance with local authority procedures and the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972, including mechanisms for escalation to the ZCB Board where agreement cannot be reached.

Appendix B – proposed funded ZCB resource

Indicative ZCB resourcing arrangement under this model



Implementation Plan & Budget Request

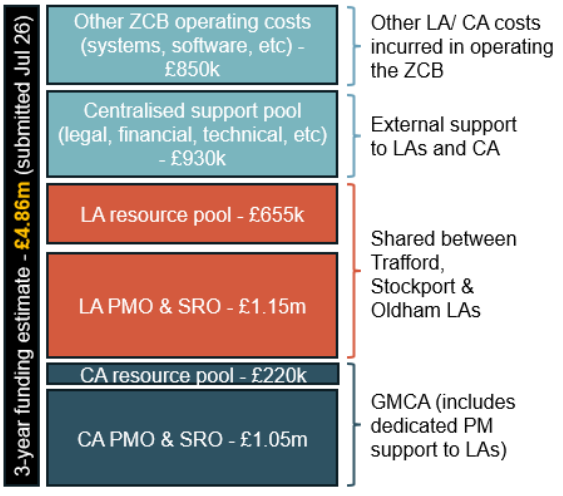
The **ZCB Implementation Plan** sets out the arrangements for establishing the ZCB and achieving operational readiness.

- The plan will be a live document, updated as the ZCB develops.
- Initial draft was submitted to DESNZ in April as a work in progress.

The **ZCB budget** sets out the funding required to establish and operate the ZCB during its first three years.

- A provisional budget estimate for the Trafford, Stockport and Oldham zones was submitted to DESNZ in July. Additional zones brought forward by the established ZCB are expected to require separate funding requests.
- The estimate was based on a detailed top-down and bottom-up assessment of the activities and resources required.
- Beyond the initial three-year period, the ZCB is expected to operate on a cost recovery basis (methodology to be developed).

The implementation plan and budget are being updated for GMCA approval before resubmission to DESNZ.



Anticipated Local Authority resourcing requirement

Potential new roles

Note incomplete – only assessed for zone stages E-H

LA - Zone Lead

Role summary

The Local Authority Zone Lead supports the ZCB in the planning, procurement, delivery and operation of heat network zones.

The role is responsible for coordinating zone delivery activities, managing developer selection and procurement processes, overseeing the development and implementation of Zone Development Plans (ZDPs), and ensuring projects progress through key governance and approval stages. Acting as the primary coordination point between the ZCB, Zone Developers, Building Owners, Heat Source Owners, regulators and other stakeholders, the postholder helps ensure the effective delivery of heat network infrastructure in line with statutory and policy requirements.

Responsibilities include managing programme milestones, coordinating procurement and market engagement activities, supporting the review and approval of Zone Development Plans, facilitating stakeholder communications, preparing recommendations for decision-makers, and overseeing project approvals through to operational delivery.

The role also supports compliance monitoring by identifying delivery risks, assessing potential non-compliance with consent conditions and ZDP requirements, coordinating responses to issues, and escalating matters where formal investigation or intervention is required.

Expected role core skills

Zone Stages: F, G, H
SPs: SP12, SP24, SP26

Zone Development and Delivery Management
- Coordinate activities across the zone development and delivery lifecycle.
- Monitor progress against Zone Development Plan requirements.
- Support mobilisation of appointed Zone Developers.
- Manage delivery milestones and phase approvals.
- Escalate risks, delays and issues affecting delivery.
- Coordinate progression into operational status.

Procurement and Developer Management
- Coordinate developer selection and procurement processes.
- Support market engagement and market testing exercises.
- Manage procurement governance requirements.
- Coordinate inputs from internal teams and external advisors.
- Review developer submissions and assessments.
- Manage appointment processes and developer onboarding.
- Confirm readiness and mobilisation of appointed Zone Developers.

Stakeholder Engagement & Communications
- Engage with Zone Developers, Building Owners, Heat Source Owners and regulators.
- Manage formal notifications and project communications.
- Coordinate consultation and engagement activities.
- Provide updates on project progress and key decisions.
- Communicate approvals, requirements and next steps.
- Notify relevant parties of appointments, approvals and operational decisions.

Approval, Governance and Decision Support
- Prepare recommendations and briefing material for decision-makers.
- Present cases for approval to authorised governance bodies.
- Coordinate governance reviews and sign-offs.
- Support approval of Zone Development Plans.
- Prepare documentation for operational approvals.
- Ensure decisions are implemented and tracked.

Compliance Oversight and Risk Management
- Identify potential instances of non-compliance.
- Assess whether formal investigation or escalation is required.
- Issue information requests and compliance notices where appropriate.
- Monitor delivery against consent conditions and ZDP obligations.
- Manage project risks and delivery issues.
- Escalate concerns through governance and enforcement routes when required.

Note incomplete – only assessed for zone stages E-H

LA - Zone Officer

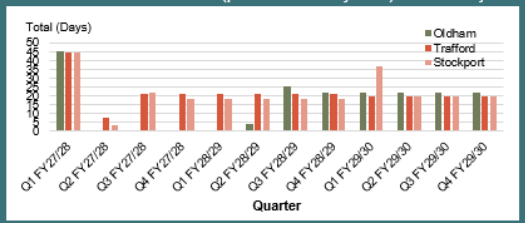
Role summary

The Local Authority Zone Officer supports the Zoning Coordination Body (ZCB) in ensuring that heat network zoning activities are delivered in accordance with statutory, regulatory and governance requirements. The role is responsible for administering governance and enforcement processes across the zoning lifecycle, ensuring that decisions are robust, auditable, effectively communicated and, where necessary, enforced.

The postholder acts as a key point of coordination between the ZCB, Zone Lead, network developers, building owners, heat source owners, statutory consultees and other stakeholders, supporting the implementation of zoning requirements through effective governance, stakeholder engagement and regulatory oversight. Responsibilities include coordinating approvals and decision-making processes, issuing statutory notices and formal communications, maintaining governance and compliance records, and providing assurance that statutory duties and procedural requirements are met.

The role also leads the administration of enforcement activities, including monitoring adherence to zoning requirements, assessing evidence, investigating potential breaches, managing enforcement actions, supporting appeals and reviews, administering penalties and cost recovery processes, and escalating cases of non-compliance where required.

Estimated time allocation (per LA over 3 years): ~ 233 days



Expected role core skills

Zone Stages: E, F, G, H
SPs: SP03, SP12, SP25, SP26, SP35, SP40, SP41

Governance, Approvals & Decision Management
- Coordinate governance and approval processes across the zoning lifecycle.
- Support decision-making forums, authorised approvers and governance bodies.
- Prepare decision notices, reports and supporting documentation.
- Manage stage sign-offs, approvals and formal decision records.
- Record decisions, conditions, justifications and outcomes.
- Publish decisions and supporting information where required.
- Ensure governance processes are compliant, transparent and auditable.
- Maintain governance records and assurance documentation

Regulatory Administration & Stakeholder Communications
- Prepare and issue statutory notices, directions, decision letters and compliance communications.
- Register designated zones and publish zone-related information.
- Notify and engage with Network Developers (NDs), Building Owners (BOs), Heat Source Owners (HSOs), statutory consultees and other stakeholders.
- Communicate decisions, requirements, obligations and regulatory expectations.
- Manage statutory consultations, representations and stakeholder responses.
- Provide guidance on rights, responsibilities, appeals and next steps.
- Maintain communication records and notification logs.
- Ensure all communications meet legal and procedural requirements.

Compliance Monitoring, Investigation & Enforcement
- Monitor compliance with zoning obligations, Zone Development Plans (ZDPs), consent conditions and connection requirements.
- Assess evidence of compliance and identify potential breaches.
- Issue information requests, notices and requests for supporting evidence.
- Investigate suspected non-compliance and determine whether formal enforcement action is warranted.
- Administer notices of intent, compliance notices, enforcement notices and penalties.
- Review representations and responses from regulated parties.
- Monitor corrective actions and assess whether breaches have been rectified.
- Support appeals, reviews and reconsideration processes.
- Escalate unresolved non-compliance in line with statutory procedures.
- Support the enforcement of connection, heat offtake and consent requirements.

Case Management, Records & Regulatory Assurance
- Maintain case files, statutory records and registers.
- Record notifications, decisions, investigations and enforcement actions.
- Develop and maintain complete audit trails and evidence repositories.
- Compile case files, evidence packs and supporting documentation.
- Ensure information quality, traceability and record completeness.
- Support internal assurance, audit and reporting requirements.
- Maintain records within case management and governance systems.
- Ensure decisions and enforcement actions can withstand legal and regulatory scrutiny.

Penalties, Cost Recovery & Financial Administration
- Administer penalty and enforcement cost recovery processes.
- Calculate, record and monitor enforcement-related costs.
- Issue cost recovery notices and associated documentation.
- Monitor penalty payments and repayment periods.
- Maintain accurate financial and enforcement records.
- Track outstanding payments and non-payment cases.
- Recommend escalation to debt recovery processes where appropriate.
- Support the recovery of enforcement costs in accordance with statutory requirements

Potential funded additional duties for existing support services

Note incomplete – only assessed for zone stages E-H

LA - Business Intelligence

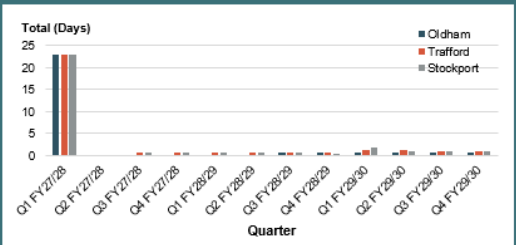
Role summary

The Local Authority Business Intelligence Officer supports the ZCB in managing and maintaining the information and datasets required to administer heat network zones and associated regulatory activities, ensuring that data is accurate, complete, auditable and fit for purpose.

The role involves reviewing and validating datasets and supporting evidence, maintaining statutory zone information and regulatory records, assessing data quality and information-related risks, and documenting assumptions, decisions and conclusions to support effective and transparent decision-making.

Responsibilities include reviewing evidence submitted in support of zone designation, exemption and reclassification applications; maintaining records of rights, restrictions and building classifications; supporting technical viability assessments; and recording enforcement and penalty information within case management systems. The role also includes preparing and maintaining internal decision records, breach summaries, penalty outcomes and justifications, ensuring regulatory information is complete and suitable for assessment, and supporting the development of processes for recording and managing enforcement cost recovery information.

Estimated time allocation (per LA over 3 years): ~31 days



Expected role core skills

Zone Stages: E, G, H
SPs: SP03, SP40, SP41

Decision Records & Case Documentation
- Draft internal decision records.
- Record breach summaries, penalty outcomes and supporting justifications.
- Store decision records within the Case Management Tool (CMT).
- Maintain accurate records supporting enforcement decisions.

Data Review & Validation
- Review NZM outputs and supporting datasets.
- Confirm the quality and completeness of input data.
- Validate evidence submitted to support zoning applications.
- Ensure information is suitable for assessment and decision-making.

Zone Information
- Confirm zone details have been published.
- Record information on rights and restrictions relating to Heat Network Zones.

Technical Assessment Support
- Identify data-related constraints and risks.
- Assess demand and supply information supporting technical viability.
- Evaluate risks and proposed mitigations.
- Confirm technical deliverability and support zone viability assessments.

Application Assessment Support
- Review evidence submitted for exemption and reclassification applications.
- Assess information against relevant exemption and reclassification criteria.

Information Governance & Documentation
- Document assumptions, findings and conclusions.
- Maintain accurate records of evidence and assessments.
- Apply information governance and data quality standards throughout the zoning process.

Note incomplete – only assessed for zone stages E-H

LA Legal Officer

Role summary

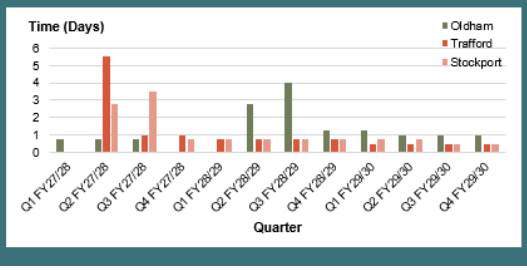
The Local Authority Legal Officer supports the ZCB in providing legal advice and oversight for regulatory and enforcement activities associated with heat network zoning.

The role involves reviewing legal matters relating to developer selection, exclusivity arrangements and enforcement actions, ensuring that statutory decisions are compliant with legislative requirements.

Responsibilities include issuing consent for exclusivity and setting any associated conditions, reviewing original decisions alongside feedback from the Zoning Authority, considering new information and representations, reaching legally sound conclusions on reconsidered decisions, and preparing clear reasons to support those conclusions.

The role also drafts and issues formal enforcement notices to Network Developers where required, provides legal assurance throughout regulatory processes, and supports the effective, transparent and legally compliant delivery of heat network zoning activities.

Estimated time allocation (per LA over 3 years): ~14 days



Expected role core skills

Zone Stages: F, G
SPs: SP35

Consents & Regulatory Approvals
- Issue consent for exclusivity to Zone Developers.
- Specify conditions associated with exclusivity consents.

Legal Review & Decision-Making
- Review original decisions and feedback from the Zoning Authority.
- Consider new information and representations.
- Reconsider remitted cases and reach conclusions.
- Prepare clear reasons supporting reconsidered decisions.

Enforcement Notices & Legal Compliance
- Draft and issue formal enforcement notices to Network Developers.

Note incomplete – only assessed for zone stages E-H

LA Finance Officer

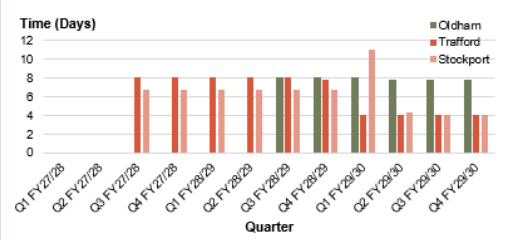
Role summary

The Local Authority Finance Officer supports the ZCB in managing the financial administration associated with enforcement activities and regulatory processes. The role involves calculating enforcement costs, developing and applying cost recovery methodologies, validating expenditure, and ensuring that costs are appropriately attributed to individual Network Developer enforcement cases.

Responsibilities include preparing enforcement cost notices, providing detailed cost breakdowns on request, receiving and processing payments, monitoring the recovery of enforcement costs and civil debts, and supporting decisions to escalate unpaid debts to debt collection where appropriate.

The role also maintains accurate financial records, compiles and reconciles staff time, consultant costs, legal invoices and administrative expenses against finance systems, supports the determination of recoverable enforcement costs, ensures that recovered funds are managed and transferred in accordance with financial governance requirements, and provides financial oversight to support the effective, transparent and compliant delivery of heat network zoning activities.

Estimated time allocation (per LA over 3 years): ~59 days



Expected role core skills

Zone Stages: G, H
SPs: SP12, SP40, SP41

Financial Validation & Cost Assurance
- Compile staff time records, consultant and legal invoices, and administrative overheads.
- Cross-check expenditure against finance systems.
- Attribute costs to individual Network Developer cases.
- Screen costs against enforcement actions to prevent double recovery of costs and penalties.

Enforcement Cost Assessment & Recovery
- Calculate enforcement costs incurred.
- Develop and apply methodologies for calculating recoverable costs.
- Determine the appropriate level of recoverable enforcement costs.
- Prepare enforcement cost notices and supporting documentation.

Debt Recovery & Financial Compliance
- Monitor the recovery of enforcement costs and civil debts.
- Support decisions to escalate unpaid debts to debt collection processes.
- Ensure financial activities comply with statutory and governance requirements.
- Support consistent financial administration throughout enforcement activities.

Financial Reporting & Governance
- Prepare detailed cost breakdowns using agreed calculation methodologies.
- Produce supporting financial documentation on request.
- Maintain records supporting enforcement cost recovery activities.
- Ensure financial information is complete, accurate and auditable.

Financial Administration & Payment Processing
- Receive and process payments relating to civil penalties and enforcement actions.
- Transfer recovered funds to the Consolidated Fund.
- Administer financial processes for the receipt of civil debts and enforcement payments.
- Maintain accurate financial transaction records.

Note incomplete – only assessed for zone stages E-H

LA Enforcement Officer

Role summary

The Local Authority Enforcement Officer supports the ZCB in ensuring compliance with zoning requirements.

The role involves monitoring adherence to statutory obligations, investigating potential breaches, gathering and assessing evidence, and managing enforcement processes.

Responsibilities include issuing compliance and enforcement notices, engaging with developers, building owners and heat source owners, reviewing representations, monitoring remedial actions, and escalating cases where non-compliance persists.

The role also supports appeals and review processes, administers penalties and cost recovery actions where required, maintains accurate records, and provides regulatory oversight to ensure the effective delivery and operation of heat network zones in accordance with legislative and policy requirements.

Estimated time allocation (per LA over 3 years): ~32 days



Expected role core skills

Zone Stages: E, F, G, H
SPs: SP03, SP12, SP25, SP26, SP35, SP41

Regulatory Administration & Statutory Notices
- Register designated zones and publish zone details.
- Publish notices to statutory consultees.
- Issue notices/directions to HSOs.
- Issue notices/directions to BOs, including exemptions where applicable.
- Issue notices of intention to require installation of equipment and heat offtake arrangements.
- Notify NDs, HSOs and other relevant parties of decisions and requirements.
- Issue connection notices to BOs where statutory conditions are met.

Case Management & Decision-Making
- Review applications and determine outcomes.
- Review representations from NDs and other parties.
- Consider requests to extend notice periods.
- Determine final requirements and consent decisions.
- Prepare and issue decision notices.
- Survey buildings, assess evidence and determine whether breaches have occurred.
- Determine whether formal enforcement action should commence.
- Reconsider cases remitted by the ZA.
- Review and implement appeal outcomes

Compliance Monitoring & Investigation
- Assess evidence of compliance.
- Issue information requests and notices requiring evidence.
- Record investigations and decisions.
- Assess whether identified breaches have been rectified.
- Monitor compliance with ZDPs, consent conditions, connection requirements and heat offtake obligations.
- Maintain audit trails and case records.

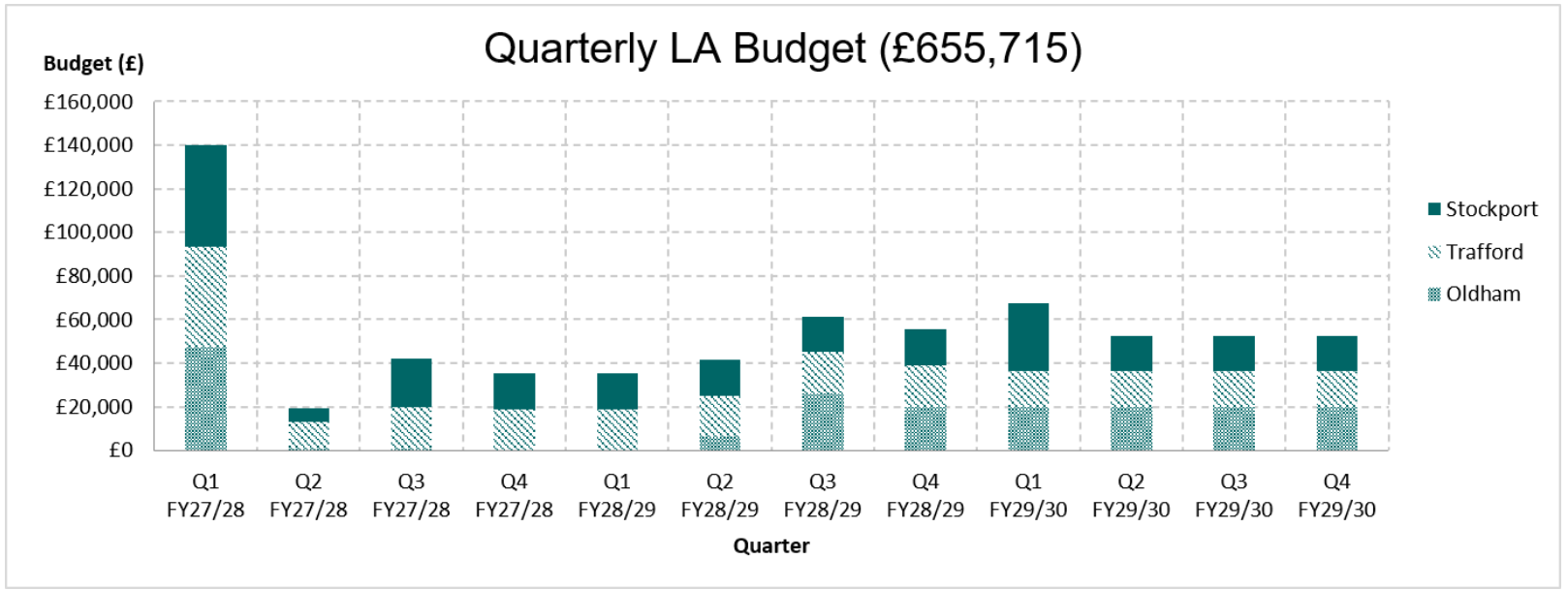
Enforcement & Regulatory Action
- Issue compliance notices specifying remedial actions.
- Enact consequences where breaches remain unrectified.
- Initiate penalty procedures where applicable.
- Issue enforcement cost recovery notices.
- Revoke consents or approvals where statutory requirements are not met.
- Enforce compliance with ZDPs.
- Enforce heat offtake requirements where NDs or HSOs fail to comply.
- Enforce connection requirements where NDs or BOs fail to connect within specified timeframes.

Stakeholder Engagement & Communications
- Communicate decisions, requirements and enforcement actions to NDs, BOs and HSOs.
- Manage statutory consultations and representations.
- Liaise with NDs during application and consent processes.
- Provide clear guidance on regulatory obligations, compliance expectations and appeal processes.

Publication, Records & Governance
- Publish consent decisions and supporting documentation.
- Maintain statutory records and registers.
- Ensure decisions are accurately documented and legally auditable.
- Support transparency, governance and reporting requirements.

Indicative cost breakdown for Local Authority roles

Zone SRO - Trafford	LA	SM6	0.25	113235.09	£	28,309		£	-	
Zone Lead - Trafford	LA	G11	0.75	88986.1	£	66,740		£	-	
Project Officer - Trafford	LA	G8	0.5	65607.86	£	32,804		£	-	
Zone SRO - Stockport	LA	SM6	0.25	113235.09	£	28,309		£	-	
Zone Lead - Stockport	LA	G11	0.75	88986.1	£	66,740		£	-	
Project Officer - Stockport	LA	G8	0.5	65607.86	£	32,804		£	-	
Zone SRO - Oldham	LA	SM6	0.25	113235.09	£	28,309		£	-	
Zone Lead - Oldham	LA	G11	0.75	88986.1	£	66,740		£	-	
Project Officer - Oldham	LA	G8	0.5	65607.86	£	32,804				
							£ 383,557	£	1,150,670	LA PM



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Emergency Powers Decision Report

Oldham Total Care Limited: Governance Framework

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Health & Care
Directorate: Health & Care
Report Author: Mike Barker, Deputy Chief Executive
Email: mike.barker@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 05 October 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

To approve the revised governance framework for Oldham Total Care. The proposed arrangements will provide a clear and integrated governance structure, strengthen accountability and oversight, clarify the respective roles of the Council as sole shareholder and Oldham Total Care Limited as a separate legal entity, and support the effective identification, management and escalation of strategic, operational and financial risks.

3. Reason for urgency

To ensure that the revised governance framework can be implemented without delay, providing clear governance, accountability and oversight arrangements between the Council and Oldham Total Care Limited. Timely adoption of the framework will enable the recommendations arising from recent governance reviews to be progressed, reduce organisational and financial risk, and provide clarity regarding decision-making responsibilities and shareholder oversight. Delaying approval would prolong existing governance uncertainties and could hinder the effective management and strategic direction of the company.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

- Continued uncertainty regarding governance arrangements, roles and responsibilities, leading to reduced accountability and oversight across the organisation.
- Increased risk that strategic, operational and financial issues are not identified, escalated or managed effectively due to the absence of a clear governance framework.
- Potential weakening of the relationship between the Council, as sole shareholder, and Oldham Total Care Limited, resulting in ambiguity around decision-making and reporting requirements.
- Ongoing exposure to financial risks, including ineffective budget oversight, missed opportunities to deliver efficiencies and savings, and reduced ability to monitor and manage financial performance.
- Delays in implementing governance improvements and recommendations arising from recent reviews, increasing the likelihood that identified weaknesses remain unresolved.
- Reduced confidence among shareholders, stakeholders, partners and regulators in the organisation's governance and ability to operate effectively.
- A risk that the company is unable to deliver its strategic objectives and long-term sustainability plans due to unclear governance

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

Failure to approve and implement the revised governance framework could result in continued weaknesses in financial oversight and accountability across Oldham Total Care Limited. This may increase the risk of budgetary pressures not being identified or addressed in a timely manner, reduce the organisation’s ability to monitor financial performance effectively, and limit opportunities to realise efficiencies and value for money. In addition, unresolved governance issues could lead to increased costs arising from operational inefficiencies, potential financial liabilities, and the need for additional work and resources to rectify governance issues and improve accountability.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name: Lee Walsh
Date: 04 October 2026

Comments

The proposed governance framework and associated documents do not, in themselves, give rise to any direct financial implications and do not seek approval for additional expenditure, borrowing, capital investment, changes to care fees, or further financial support for Oldham Total Care Limited.

Any future proposals with financial implications will be subject to separate approval through the appropriate governance processes.
The proposed Oldham Total Care Steering Committee will strengthen financial oversight and reporting between the Council, as shareholder, and the company, providing greater visibility of financial performance and risks while maintaining the company's operational independence.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name: Alex Bougatef
Date: 01 October 2026
Comments

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year, so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed, as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision is required, and the matter cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.

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Oldham Total Care Limited: Governance Framework

Officer Contact: Mike Barker, Deputy Chief Executive (Health & Care)

Report Author: Mike Barker, Deputy Chief Executive (Health & Care)

Email: mike.barker@oldham.gov.uk

Date: 5th October 2026

Reason for Decision

This report seeks approval for a revised and integrated governance framework for Oldham Total Care Limited. The proposed framework combines the Oldham Total Care Limited Single Governance Suite, the Terms of Reference for the Oldham Total Care Steering Committee, and the Directors' Service Agreement and Governance Protocol into a single, coherent governance structure. Together, these documents provide greater clarity regarding roles, responsibilities, accountability and decision-making arrangements, strengthening the relationship between Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council as the sole shareholder and Oldham Total Care Limited as a separate legal entity and wholly owned Local Authority Trading Company. The revised framework will support effective governance, enhance oversight and ensure that both organisations operate within a clear and robust governance structure.

Executive Summary

Oldham Total Care Limited is a wholly owned company of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council. The Council therefore has an important interest in the company's strategic direction, financial sustainability, service quality, regulatory compliance and overall governance.

At the same time, Oldham Total Care Limited is a separate legal entity. Its directors owe their statutory duties to the company, and its Board must retain genuine responsibility for the company's strategy, governance, stewardship and performance. The Council should exercise its rights through proper shareholder, commissioning and constitutional routes rather than through informal operational direction.

The proposed framework is built around a clear principle:

The Council owns the company; the Oldham Total Care Board governs and directs the company; executive management manages its day-to-day business; and the Oldham Total Care Steering Committee provides the strategic interface through

which the Council receives assurance, exercises challenge and considers matters relevant to its position as shareholder.

This is intended to strengthen accountability rather than add another layer of management. It establishes clearer boundaries between the distinct roles of:

a. the Council as shareholder;

b. the Council as commissioner and contracting authority;

c. the Oldham Total Care Board;

d. the company's executive management; and

e. the proposed Steering Committee.

The arrangements also create a more systematic route for the early identification and escalation of financial, quality, workforce, commercial, regulatory and governance risks.

Recommendations

The Chief Executive and Leaders are asked to:

a. approve the Oldham Total Care Limited Single Governance Suite at Appendix 1 as the overarching framework governing the relationship between the Council, as shareholder, and Oldham Total Care Limited;

b. approve the establishment and operation of the Oldham Total Care Steering Committee in accordance with the Terms of Reference at Appendix 2;

c. approve the Directors' Service Agreement and Governance Protocol at Appendix 3 as the standard governance agreement applying to executive and non-executive directors of Oldham Total Care Limited;

d. confirm that the Oldham Total Care Steering Committee will operate as the principal strategic interface between the Council and the company, providing shareholder assurance, constructive challenge and a route for escalation, without assuming the responsibilities of the company's Board or executive management;

e. confirm that the Steering Committee will meet monthly during the current recovery and stabilisation period, moving to a quarterly cycle when sustained stability has been demonstrated and formally agreed by the Council;

f. delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Director of Finance, to make any final technical, legal, financial or drafting amendments required before implementation, provided these do not materially alter the governance principles approved by Cabinet;

g. authorise the Monitoring Officer to ensure that the arrangements are aligned with the Council's Constitution, shareholder decision-making arrangements and the company's Articles of Association;

h. request that the Oldham Total Care Board considers and formally adopts those elements of the governance framework requiring company approval; and

i. require the governance framework to be reviewed annually, and earlier where there is a material change in legislation, regulation, the company's operating model, its Articles of Association or the Council's shareholder arrangements.

Leaders Session **5th October 2026**

Oldham Total Care Limited: Governance Framework

1. Background

1.1 The Council has several distinct relationships with Oldham Total Care Limited. It is the company's sole shareholder, a commissioner and contracting authority, a strategic partner and a local authority exercising statutory responsibilities.

1.2 These roles are connected, but they are not interchangeable. In particular, a commissioning decision should not be treated automatically as a shareholder decision, and shareholder oversight should not extend into the routine operational management of the company.

1.3 Clear governance is particularly important where decisions may affect:

a. the quality, safety or continuity of care;

b. the company's financial sustainability or liquidity;

c. the Council's financial or reputational exposure;

d. workforce capacity and the use of agency staff;

e. regulatory compliance and safeguarding;

f. the company's operating model or commercial strategy;

g. borrowing, capital expenditure or investment;

h. material changes to the company's business plan; or

i. matters requiring formal shareholder approval.

1.4 The proposed documents provide a single, coherent framework for managing these relationships and responsibilities.

2. The proposed governance model

2.1 The Council as shareholder

2.1.1 The Council will determine the strategic outcomes it expects from its ownership of Oldham Total Care Limited, approve matters reserved to the shareholder and hold the company to account for its performance and stewardship.

2.1.2 Formal shareholder powers will continue to be exercised by the person or body holding the relevant authority under the Council's Constitution, delegations, the company's Articles of Association and any applicable shareholder arrangements.

2.1.3 The Steering Committee will be able to consider and make recommendations on shareholder matters. It will not itself exercise formal shareholder powers unless these have been expressly delegated to it.

2.2 The Oldham Total Care Board

2.2.1 The Board will remain collectively responsible for the company's governance, strategy, stewardship, financial sustainability, internal control, risk management and statutory and regulatory compliance.

2.2.2 The Board will approve the company's business plan and budget, scrutinise executive performance and ensure that material risks are identified, managed and escalated appropriately.

2.2.3 The Board will retain responsibility for decisions that are not reserved to the Council as shareholder or lawfully delegated to executive management.

2.3 Executive management

2.3.1 The company's executive management will remain responsible for day-to-day management and for implementing the strategy, plans, policies and decisions approved by the Board.

2.3.2 Executive management will be responsible for providing the Board with timely, accurate and sufficient information and for escalating matters that exceed delegated authority or could materially affect the company or the Council.

2.4 The Council as commissioner

2.4.1 The Council's commissioning functions will continue to specify outcomes, assess needs, manage contracts and obtain assurance about services purchased from Oldham Total Care Limited.

2.4.2 Commissioning and shareholder responsibilities will be kept appropriately distinct. Where a commissioning or contractual issue has a material effect on the company's strategic or financial position, it will be reported through the appropriate company and shareholder governance routes.

3. **Oldham Total Care Steering Committee**

3.1 The proposed Steering Committee will provide the formal strategic bridge between the Council and the company.

3.2 Its principal functions will be to:

a. receive assurance about the company's financial, operational and strategic performance;

b. consider quality, CQC, safeguarding and service-user outcomes;

c. review workforce performance, capacity, recruitment and agency use;

d. review delivery of the company's business, recovery and improvement plans;

e. consider the company's principal strategic risks;

f. provide constructive challenge to the company's Board and executive leadership;

g. identify matters requiring formal shareholder consideration or Council action;

h. support the early escalation of material concerns; and

i. maintain alignment between the company's strategic direction and the Council's objectives.

3.3 The Steering Committee will not replace the company's Board, direct individual company employees, determine operational staffing arrangements or make individual care decisions. It will operate principally as a forum for strategic alignment, assurance, challenge and escalation.

3.4 Its membership will include an appropriate balance of elected member, senior Council officer and company representation. The Chair will be appointed through the appropriate Council governance process.

3.5 During the recovery and stabilisation period, the Steering Committee will meet monthly. It will move to a quarterly cycle once sustained stability has been demonstrated and agreed. Additional meetings may be called where a material or urgent matter cannot wait for the next scheduled meeting.

3.6 A standard performance and assurance pack will support the Committee's work. This will include, as appropriate:

a. actual and forecast financial performance;

b. cash and material financial variances;

c. rates, income and cost-recovery information;

d. occupancy, voids and the income pipeline;

e. workforce, sickness, vacancies, overtime and agency use;

f. CQC, quality, safeguarding, incidents and complaints;

g. the company's strategic risk register;

h. recovery and improvement milestones;

i. commercial development and procurement implications; and

j. matters requiring formal shareholder decision or senior Council attention.

4. Directors' governance arrangements

4.1 The Directors' Service Agreement and Governance Protocol at Appendix 3 sets out the expectations applying to executive and non-executive directors.

4.2 It confirms that directors' statutory duties are owed to Oldham Total Care Limited and that directors must exercise independent judgement, reasonable care, skill and diligence.

4.3 It also covers:

a. the appointment and role of directors;

b. the collective responsibilities of the Board;

c. the distinct roles of executive and non-executive directors;

d. the responsibilities of the Chair;

e. attendance, conduct and continuing development;

f. reporting and escalation;

g. conflicts of interest and confidentiality;

h. remuneration and expenses;

i. indemnity and directors' and officers' insurance;

j. Board evaluation and assurance; and

k. resignation, removal and termination.

4.4 The agreement will provide a consistent basis for director induction, accountability and annual review. It does not replace the Companies Act 2006, the company's Articles of Association or any applicable employment, appointment or shareholder agreement.

5. Reserved matters and decision-making

5.1 The Governance Suite identifies matters that should normally require prior shareholder approval, subject to final legal review and alignment with the company's Articles and the Council's Constitution.

5.2 These include material changes to the company's strategic direction or scope of business, significant borrowing or capital commitments, major acquisitions or disposals, the creation of subsidiaries or joint ventures, amendments to constitutional arrangements, changes to share capital and material transactions outside the ordinary course of business.

5.3 The detailed reserved matters schedule and any applicable financial thresholds must be consistent with the company's Articles, the Council's Constitution and formally approved delegations.

5.4 Matters not reserved to the shareholder will remain the responsibility of the Board or executive management in accordance with the company's scheme of delegation. The framework must not be used to turn shareholder oversight into routine operational control.

6. Risk, assurance and escalation

6.1 A central purpose of the revised arrangements is to support earlier identification and escalation of material issues.

6.2 The company will be expected to escalate matters promptly where they could materially affect:

a. financial sustainability or liquidity;

b. the safety, quality or continuity of care;

c. regulatory standing or safeguarding;

d. the Council's financial or reputational exposure;

e. significant litigation or contractual disputes;

f. procurement or subsidy control compliance;

g. delivery of an approved business or recovery plan; or

h. the assumptions underpinning the company's operating model.

6.3 The governing principle will be timely escalation rather than retrospective reporting after a risk has crystallised.

6.4 The company will maintain a Board-approved strategic risk register. The Steering Committee will receive assurance about the company's principal risks, mitigating actions and changes in risk exposure.

7. Commercial, commissioning and procurement considerations

7.1 Oldham Total Care Limited will continue to operate with a commercial framework consistent with its public-service purpose and responsibilities as a regulated care provider.

7.2 Commercial decisions will need to balance financial sustainability, service quality, safe staffing, efficient use of assets and appropriate development of income.

7.3 Any material expansion of external or private activity will require appropriate procurement advice on the continuing legal basis for Council contracts awarded to the company.

7.4 Commercial growth proposals should therefore include an assessment of procurement, legal and shareholder implications as well as their financial and operational case.

8. Financial implications

8.1 The proposed governance framework and the related suite of documents do not, in isolation have any direct financial implications and therefore do not from a financial perspective seek to approve additional expenditure, borrowing, capital investment, changes to care fees or seek further financial support for Oldham Total Care Limited.

8.2 Any such proposal will require separate consideration and approval through the respective Oldham Total Care and Council governance routes applicable to that decision, commensurate with the Governance arrangements being proposed herein.

8.3 The proposed Governance arrangements introduce the Oldham Total Care Steering Committee which will operate as a forum for strategic alignment, assurance, challenge and escalation between the OTC Board and the Council as Shareholder, this will include assurance in relation to the company's financial position and progress in delivering the company's business, recovery and improvement plan. It will not replace the OTC Board, nor will it seek to direct and determine day to day operational activities and decisions.

8.3 In this way, the strengthened reporting arrangements are intended to improve the Council's visibility of the company's current and forecast financial position and enable earlier consideration of material financial risks whilst still enabling Oldham Total Care to operate autonomously as a separate LATCO entity.

8.4 Within the proposed Governance arrangements the Director of Finance (or his nominated representative), as a member of the OTC Steering group will keep under review and where applicable recommend changes to any specific Shareholder requirements relating to shareholder approvals, Reserved Matters, financial thresholds and financial reporting.

(Andy Cooper, Senior Finance Manager)

9. Legal implications

9.1 Oldham Total Care Limited is a company limited by shares wholly owned by Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council.

9.2 The proposed Governance Framework provides greater clarity in relation to the respective roles of the Council as shareholder, commissioner and

contracting authority, and the Company as a separate legal entity. The framework supports good governance by establishing clear lines of accountability, oversight and escalation whilst recognising the distinct legal status of the Company.

9.3 Directors of Oldham Total Care Limited remain subject to the statutory duties set out within sections 171 to 177 of the Companies Act 2006. Those duties are owed to the Company and cannot be overridden by the Council acting in its capacity as shareholder. Accordingly, the governance arrangements must continue to respect the Company's independent decision-making responsibilities through its Board.

9.4 The proposed Steering Committee is intended to operate as an assurance, oversight and engagement mechanism between the Council and the Company. The Committee does not replace the functions of the Board and must not exercise powers reserved to the Company's directors except where expressly authorised through the Company's constitutional arrangements and the Council's governance framework.

9.5 Any matters reserved to the shareholder must be exercised in accordance with the Company's Articles of Association, any shareholder agreement in force, and the Council's Constitution.

9.6 The governance framework does not in itself authorise any procurement, contractual variation, subsidy, financial assistance, borrowing arrangement or other commercial transaction. Any such proposal must be considered separately and assessed against applicable procurement legislation, subsidy control requirements, public law duties and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules.

Alex Bougatef (Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer)

10. Human resources implications

10.1 The Governance Suite does not itself make changes to the employment arrangements of company staff.

10.2 The Directors' Service Agreement is not a contract of employment unless expressly incorporated within an executive director's employment contract.

10.3 Any employment, appointment, remuneration or organisational changes arising from implementation will be managed through the appropriate company and Council processes.

11. Equality, resident and service-user implications

11.1 The governance framework is not expected, by itself, to create a direct change to residents' care or eligibility for services.

11.2 It is intended to strengthen oversight of service quality, safety, safeguarding, regulatory compliance and outcomes for people receiving services.

11.3 The Steering Committee's assurance arrangements will include appropriate consideration of feedback from residents, service users, families and carers. This will help ensure that governance does not focus solely on finance and organisational performance, but also on people's experience and the quality of care.

11.4 Any future service change or policy decision arising through these governance arrangements will require its own assessment of equality, consultation and service-user implications.

12. Information governance and transparency

12.1 The Steering Committee will require timely and accurate information to discharge its responsibilities.

12.2 Information will be handled in accordance with applicable confidentiality, data protection, commercial sensitivity and Council governance requirements.

12.3 While individual matters may require confidential or exempt treatment, the overall governance relationship should operate with an appropriate degree of transparency and accountability consistent with the company's status as a Council-owned body.

13. Implementation and review

13.1 Subject to Cabinet approval, officers will:

a. complete the necessary legal, financial and constitutional assurance;

b. ensure consistent terminology and cross-referencing across the three documents;

c. finalise the Steering Committee's membership, chairing and quorum arrangements;

d. establish the monthly meeting schedule for the recovery and stabilisation period;

e. agree the standard performance and assurance pack;

f. establish a forward work programme and action-tracking arrangements;

g. put the Directors' Service Agreement in place for each director;

h. secure formal consideration by the Oldham Total Care Board where company approval is required; and

i. confirm the route through which reserved shareholder matters will be submitted for formal decision.

13.2 The effectiveness of the arrangements will be reviewed annually and earlier where required by a material change in the company's circumstances or the wider legal and governance framework.

14. Conclusion

14.1 The proposed arrangements provide a clearer and more disciplined framework for the governance of Oldham Total Care Limited.

14.2 They protect the proper independence and responsibilities of the company's Board while strengthening the Council's visibility, assurance and influence as sole shareholder.

14.3 Most importantly, the framework is intended to ensure that significant issues affecting care quality, financial sustainability, workforce, regulation or the Council's interests are identified and addressed early, with clear accountability for decisions and action.

15. Key Decision Reference

15.1 KDD-26-19

16. Appendices

Appendix 1: OTC governance suite

Appendix 2: OTC Steering Committee

Appendix 3: OTC Dir SLA

OLDHAM TOTAL CARE LIMITED

SINGLE GOVERNANCE SUITE

Board, Shareholder and Steering Group Framework

Company: Oldham Total Care Limited (OTCL)

Shareholder: Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC)

Status: Wholly owned Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo)

Governance model: Independent OTCL Board with OMBC oversight through the OTC Steering Group

Version: Draft 1.1

Date: August 2026

This suite is intended to operate alongside OTCL's Articles of Association and OMBC's Constitution. It should be reviewed by the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and company legal adviser before formal adoption.

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Document Control

Item	Position
Document owner	OTCL Board / OMBC Shareholder Governance
Approval route	OTCL Board and OMBC through the appropriate shareholder decision-making route
Review cycle	Annual and following any material governance, legislative, regulatory or operating-model change
Related documents	OTCL Articles; OMBC Constitution; commissioning contracts; financial regulations; procurement policies; care and safeguarding policies
Primary assurance body	OTC Steering Group
Legal status	Governance framework and protocol; not a substitute for Articles, statute, contract or OMBC constitutional requirements

Suite Structure

1. Part 1 - Governance Framework and Operating Principles
2. Part 2 - Terms of Reference: OTC Steering Group
3. Part 3 - OTCL Board Charter and Directors' Service Level Agreement
4. Part 4 - Shareholder Protocol and Reserved Matters
5. Part 5 - Reporting, Performance, Risk and Escalation Framework
6. Part 6 - Conflicts of Interest and Role-Separation Protocol
7. Part 7 - Commercial, Commissioning and Procurement Protocol
8. Part 8 - Annual Governance and Assurance Cycle
9. Schedules - KPI dashboard, reporting template, decision matrix and declarations

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Part 1 - Governance Framework and Operating Principles

1. Purpose

This Governance Suite establishes a single, integrated framework for the governance of Oldham Total Care Limited. Its purpose is to preserve the legal and commercial independence of OTCL as a company while providing OMBC, as sole shareholder, with structured oversight, challenge, assurance and appropriate control over reserved strategic matters.

The framework is designed specifically to avoid the company being managed as an arm's-length department of Adult Social Care. The shareholder, commissioner, company Board and operational management functions are deliberately separated so that each can discharge its own responsibilities without obscuring accountability.

2. Core Governance Principle

> **OMBC owns OTCL; the OTCL Board governs OTCL; OTCL Executive Management operates the business; and the OTC Steering Group is the structured interface through which OMBC exercises strategic oversight, challenge and shareholder assurance.**

3. Governance Architecture

- OMBC is the sole shareholder and retains those rights and decisions reserved to it by law, the Articles, this suite and any formal shareholder resolution.
- The OTC Steering Group is the principal strategic interface between OMBC and OTCL. It receives performance, finance, risk and assurance information, challenges the company and recommends or routes formal shareholder decisions.
- The OTCL Board is responsible for the direction, governance, strategy and performance of the company and for the discharge of directors' statutory duties.
- OTCL Executive Management is responsible for day-to-day operation and implementation of the Board-approved business plan.
- OMBC commissioning functions specify and manage commissioned outcomes through appropriate contractual and commissioning arrangements and must remain distinguishable from the shareholder function.

4. Board Composition

There will be no serving OMBC elected Members or OMBC officers appointed to the OTCL Board. The Board will comprise Executive Directors and independent Non-Executive Directors selected for the skills necessary to govern a regulated care business and commercially sustainable LATCo.

- An independent Chair or Chair appointed in accordance with the Articles and shareholder arrangements.
- Executive Directors with direct responsibility for the company's management.
- Independent Non-Executive Directors with an appropriate mix of finance, commercial, regulated-care, workforce, governance, risk and transformation expertise.

5. Governing Hierarchy

Nothing in this Governance Suite overrides applicable law, OTCL's Articles of Association or OMBC's Constitution. If an inconsistency arises, the higher legal or constitutional instrument prevails. The suite should then be amended promptly to remove the inconsistency.

6. Legal and Governance Principles

- Directors' general duties are owed to OTCL as the company.
- The Board must retain genuine responsibility for company decisions and must not be displaced by informal departmental direction.
- OMBC should exercise shareholder control through lawful shareholder mechanisms and the agreed Reserved Matters framework.
- Performance, finance and risk must be reported upstream sufficiently early to allow proportionate intervention.
- Commissioning decisions and shareholder decisions should be recorded through their respective governance routes.
- Commercial expansion must be assessed against the procurement-law basis on which OMBC contracts with OTCL, including any applicable controlled-person / vertical-arrangement requirements.

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Part 2 - Terms of Reference: OTC Steering Group

7. Purpose of the Steering Group

The OTC Steering Group provides OMBC with a formal forum for strategic oversight of its wholly owned company. It bridges the shareholder and company governance arrangements without becoming the company's Board or assuming operational management responsibilities.

Its purpose is to ensure that senior political and officer leadership has timely visibility of the company's financial sustainability, commercial performance, quality, workforce, risk and delivery of shareholder objectives.

8. Membership

Membership should be approved by OMBC and may include elected Members and chief/senior officers as determined by the Council. OTCL shall be represented by the Chair and appropriate Executive Director(s), normally including the Managing Director/Chief Executive and finance lead when required.

- A nominated Steering Group Chair.
- Appropriate OMBC elected Member representation.
- Appropriate OMBC chief/senior officer representation, including finance (Borough Treasurer (section 151)) or representative, governance (Borough Solicitor/Monitoring Officer) or representative and Director of Adult Social Care (or representative) and other expertise where relevant.
- OTCL Chair and nominated OTCL Executive Director representation.
- Other advisers by invitation, without voting rights unless formally appointed.

9. Responsibilities

- Review OTCL's strategic direction and alignment with OMBC's ownership objectives.
- Receive and challenge financial, commercial, operational, workforce, quality and risk performance.
- Review delivery of the approved business and recovery plans.
- Review CareCubed rate alignment and the financial consequences of material divergence from sustainable rates.
- Review occupancy, voids and development of functional income streams.
- Review staffing efficiency, agency use and compliance with safe-care requirements.
- Consider matters requiring formal shareholder decision and route them through the appropriate OMBC mechanism.
- Receive assurance on legal, procurement, subsidy control, regulatory, safeguarding and governance risks.
- Ensure material issues are escalated to the Chief Executive, Leader, Deputy Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer or Monitoring Officer as appropriate.

10. Limitations

The Steering Group shall not direct individual OTCL employees, determine operational rotas, substitute itself for the Board, make individual care decisions, or purport to exercise powers vested by law in OTCL's directors. Where OMBC wishes to exercise shareholder control, the decision must be made through a lawful shareholder route.

11. Meetings and Information

- Monthly during the recovery and stabilisation period, moving to quarterly only when sustained stability has been demonstrated and agreed by OMBC.
- Agenda and papers normally circulated at least five working days in advance.
- Minutes to identify decisions, recommendations, actions, owners and due dates.
- OTCL to provide a standard performance pack for each meeting.
- Urgent exception reporting must not wait for the next scheduled meeting.

12. Quorum and Decision Status

The Steering Group's quorum and voting arrangements shall be approved by OMBC in its Terms of Reference. The minutes must distinguish between: (a) scrutiny or challenge; (b) a Steering Group recommendation; (c) an action requested of the OTCL Board for consideration; and (d) a formal shareholder decision made under delegated or reserved authority.

Part 3 - OTCL Board Charter and Directors' Service Level Agreement

13. Role of the Board

The Board is collectively responsible for the success, sustainability, governance and proper management of OTCL. It sets strategy, approves the business plan, monitors performance, oversees risk and ensures that care quality and statutory obligations are not compromised by commercial decisions.

14. Duties of Directors

- Act within powers and in accordance with OTCL's constitutional documents.
- Promote the success of OTCL while having proper regard to the company's purpose and obligations.
- Exercise independent judgement and reasonable care, skill and diligence.
- Avoid, declare and appropriately manage actual or potential conflicts.
- Maintain confidentiality and use company information only for proper purposes.
- Ensure significant dissent or unresolved assurance concerns are properly recorded.

15. Executive Directors

Executive Directors combine their company-law responsibilities with responsibility for management delivery. They are accountable to the Board for implementation of strategy, financial control, care quality, workforce performance, commercial development and delivery of agreed KPIs.

- Provide accurate, timely and complete management information.
- Maintain a rolling financial forecast and recovery plan where required.
- Escalate material adverse variance and risk promptly.
- Deliver agreed occupancy, pricing, staffing, agency and quality objectives.
- Ensure decisions requiring Board, Steering Group or shareholder consideration are identified early.

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16. Non-Executive Directors

Non-Executive Directors provide independent judgement, scrutiny and constructive challenge. They are not operational managers. Their role is to test executive assumptions, scrutinise performance and risk and bring specialist expertise to Board decision-making.

17. Chair

- Lead the Board and maintain an effective relationship with the Steering Group Chair.
- Ensure the Board focuses on strategy, performance, risk and assurance rather than routine operational management.
- Ensure directors receive sufficient information and that conflicts are managed.
- Lead annual Board effectiveness and director performance review arrangements.
- Ensure material issues are escalated to the Steering Group and shareholder route when appropriate.

18. Director Standards

- Attend and prepare for Board and committee meetings.
- Undertake induction and continuing development.
- Maintain a current declaration of interests.
- Comply with confidentiality, data protection, safeguarding and governance requirements.
- Act collectively once lawful Board decisions have been taken, while retaining the right to record dissent.

19. Director Performance and Review

The Chair shall ensure annual evaluation of the Board, committees and individual directors. Executive Director objectives shall incorporate commercial, financial, workforce and quality KPIs. Non-Executive review shall assess independence, attendance, challenge, contribution and relevant expertise.

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Part 4 - Shareholder Protocol and Reserved Matters

20. Shareholder Role

OMBC's shareholder role is distinct from its commissioner role. As shareholder, OMBC determines the strategic outcomes expected from ownership, approves reserved matters and holds the company to account for performance and stewardship. It should not routinely manage the company's day-to-day operations.

21. Shareholder Interface

The OTC Steering Group is the normal strategic interface. Where a matter requires a formal shareholder decision, the Steering Group shall recommend or refer that matter to the person or body holding the relevant authority under OMBC's Constitution, delegations and OTCL's constitutional documents.

22. Reserved Matters

Subject to legal review and alignment with OTCL's Articles, the following should normally require prior shareholder approval:

- Adoption or material amendment of the annual Business Plan and strategic plan.
- Material change to the nature or scope of OTCL's business.
- Material acquisitions, disposals or investments outside the approved Business Plan.
- Borrowing, guarantees or security above agreed thresholds.
- Formation, acquisition or disposal of subsidiaries, joint ventures or material interests.
- Changes to share capital or constitutional documents.
- Material capital expenditure outside approved limits.
- Entry into material transactions outside the ordinary course of business.
- Appointment or removal of the Chair where reserved to the shareholder.
- Material changes to director remuneration policy where reserved.
- Voluntary winding-up, insolvency action or material restructuring.
- Any matter which the Articles expressly reserve to the shareholder.

23. Matters for Board Decision

All matters not reserved to the shareholder remain for the Board or Executive Management under the Board's Scheme of Delegation. The Reserved Matters schedule must not be used to convert OMBC shareholder oversight into routine operational control.

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Part 5 - Reporting, Performance, Risk and Escalation Framework

24. Standard Reporting Pack

The OTCL Board shall provide the Steering Group with a concise but comprehensive performance pack. The purpose is to create early visibility and avoid retrospective discovery of accumulated financial or operational failure.

- Actual and forecast income and expenditure, operating result, cash and material variances.
- CareCubed recommended rates, actual rates and quantified rate variance.
- Occupancy, voids, void days, admissions, discharges and lost-income estimate.
- OMBC, out-of-borough and private placement mix.
- Staffing establishment, actual deployment, dependency requirement, agency, overtime, sickness, vacancies and turnover.
- CQC, safeguarding, incidents, complaints and key quality indicators.
- Corporate risk register and movement in principal risks.
- Transformation/recovery actions, benefits delivered, slippage and decisions required.

25. Core Senior Management KPIs

Domain	KPI	Expectation	Escalation
Financial	Monthly operating result / forecast	Within Board-approved budget and recovery trajectory	Material adverse variance
Pricing	CareCubed rate variance	Transparent and commercially sustainable	Any material under-recovery
Occupancy	Occupied beds / void days	Target set in annual Business Plan	Persistent target failure
Commercial	Out-of-borough/private income	Growth consistent with procurement and business strategy	Material variance or legal threshold risk
Workforce	Staffing vs dependency requirement	Safe, efficient and evidence-based	Systematic overstaffing or unsafe understaffing
Agency	Agency spend and hours	Time-bound reduction target	Target breach
Quality	CQC / safeguarding / incidents	Safe and compliant service	Regulatory or serious safeguarding concern
Delivery	Recovery-plan milestones	On time and benefits evidenced	Material slippage

26. Exception Escalation

The OTCL Chair or appropriate Executive Director shall immediately escalate a matter to the Steering Group Chair and relevant OMBC statutory/senior officer where it could materially affect:

- financial sustainability or liquidity;
- continuity or safety of care;

- regulatory standing or safeguarding;
- OMBC's financial or reputational exposure;
- significant litigation or contractual dispute;
- procurement or subsidy-control compliance;
- delivery of the approved recovery plan; or
- the validity of assumptions underpinning the company's operating model.

The governing principle is early escalation, not retrospective notification.

27. Risk Management

OTCL shall maintain a Board-approved strategic risk register. The Steering Group shall receive the principal risks and trend movement, with clear ownership, controls, target risk and mitigating actions. OMBC should consider the cumulative impact of OTCL risk within its own corporate assurance arrangements.

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Part 6 - Conflicts of Interest and Role-Separation Protocol

28. Structural Separation

The governance model deliberately removes serving OMBC officers and elected Members from the OTCL Board. OMBC participation is instead exercised through the Steering Group and formal shareholder mechanisms. This reduces the risk of the same individual simultaneously acting as commissioner, rate-setter and company director.

29. Declarations and Registers

- All OTCL directors must maintain declarations of interests and declare meeting-specific conflicts.
- Steering Group members must comply with OMBC's applicable Member or Officer codes and declaration requirements.
- Potential conflicts between shareholder and commissioner interests must be recorded and managed transparently.
- Where necessary, independent legal, financial or governance advice should be obtained.

30. Commissioner / Shareholder Separation

OMBC Adult Social Care may specify commissioned outcomes, assess care needs, monitor contract delivery and negotiate commissioning arrangements. It should not assume management of OTCL through the commissioning relationship. Strategic disagreements over rates, capacity or service development should be documented through the appropriate contractual route and reported to the Steering Group where material.

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Part 7 - Commercial, Commissioning and Procurement Protocol

31. Commercial Mandate

OTCL shall operate with a commercial framework consistent with its public-service purpose. The Board should seek sustainable operating performance, appropriate cost recovery, efficient asset use and diversified income where legally and strategically appropriate.

32. CareCubed and Rate Setting

CareCubed or an agreed successor methodology shall provide an objective reference point for residential and nursing care rates. The Board and Steering Group must be able to see the difference between the sustainable/reference rate and the actual rate paid.

- OMBC-funded rates.
- Out-of-borough rates.
- Private fee rates.
- Cost-of-care assumptions and material inflation/workforce changes.
- Quantified financial impact of any deliberate rate divergence.

Where OMBC, acting as commissioner, elects to pay below a rate considered sustainable by the OTCL Board, the consequence should be expressly recorded rather than absorbed invisibly within company performance.

33. Voids and Functional Income Streams

Management shall actively convert avoidable void capacity into functional income streams. Options may include permanent placements, private-pay provision, out-of-borough placements, respite, step-down, intermediate care and specialist commissioned services, subject to demand, care capability and legal/procurement constraints.

34. Workforce Efficiency

Staffing shall be based on resident dependency, acuity, safe-care requirements and regulatory expectations rather than historic establishment. The Board shall monitor overstaffing, overtime, agency use and productivity while ensuring that cost reduction does not compromise safe or compliant care.

35. Procurement and Controlled-Person Position

Before material expansion of external or private activity, OMBC and OTCL shall obtain appropriate procurement advice on the legal basis for contracts awarded by OMBC to OTCL. Where reliance is placed on the Procurement Act 2023 vertical-arrangement exemption, the relevant control and activity tests must be monitored, including the requirement that more than 80% of the controlled person's activities are carried out for or on behalf of the controlling authority/authorities or other persons controlled by them.

A commercial growth strategy must therefore include a procurement-law impact assessment rather than treating external-income growth as solely a commercial question.

Part 8 - Annual Governance and Assurance Cycle

36. Annual Cycle

Timing	Governance Activity	Primary Route
Monthly	Executive performance, finance, workforce, quality and recovery review	OTCL Executive Management
Monthly	Board scrutiny of company performance, risk and decisions	OTCL Board
Monthly during recovery	Shareholder assurance, challenge and action tracking	OTC Steering Group
Quarterly once stable	Strategic shareholder assurance	OTC Steering Group
Annually	Business Plan, budget, pricing, workforce establishment and strategic risk review	Board -> Steering Group -> shareholder approval where reserved
Annually	Board effectiveness and director review	OTCL Chair / shareholder as applicable
Annually	Governance assurance statement	OTCL Board -> OTC Steering Group -> OMBC governance route
Immediate	Material exception escalation	Chair/Executive -> Steering Group Chair and relevant OMBC leadership

37. Annual Governance Assurance Statement

The Board shall provide an annual statement covering compliance with the Articles, this suite, directors' duties, conflicts, financial controls, procurement, risk, regulatory compliance, Board effectiveness, audit recommendations and the effectiveness of the relationship with OMBC.

38. Independent Assurance

OMBC and OTCL should periodically commission independent assurance proportionate to risk. This may include internal audit, external governance review, legal review, procurement assurance, financial assurance and Board effectiveness review. Actions shall have named owners and completion dates and be monitored by the Steering Group.

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Schedule 1 - Governance Decision Matrix

Matter	OTCL Management	OTCL Board	OTC Steering Group / OMBC
Day-to-day service delivery	Decide within delegation	Oversight	No operational direction
Annual Business Plan	Prepare	Approve for submission	Review; formal shareholder approval if reserved
Annual budget	Prepare	Approve for submission	Review; shareholder approval if reserved
CareCubed/rate position	Model and negotiate	Determine company sustainability position	Challenge/consider OMBC commissioner and shareholder implications
Routine recruitment	Decide within delegation	Oversight	No role
Executive appointments	Recommend / as delegated	Decide subject to Articles/reserved matters	Shareholder role only if formally reserved
Major capital/borrowing	Develop proposal	Approve subject to limits	Formal approval where reserved
Material external commercial expansion	Develop proposal	Assess commercial/legal case	Review shareholder/procurement implications; approve if reserved
Serious regulatory/financial event	Manage and escalate	Direct company response	Receive immediate assurance; route OMBC actions

Schedule 2 - Minimum Steering Group Performance Pack

- Executive summary and decisions/assurance required.
- Financial dashboard: actual, budget, forecast, cash and cumulative variance.
- CareCubed rate bridge and quantified under/over-recovery.
- Occupancy, voids and income pipeline.
- Workforce and agency dashboard.
- Quality, CQC, safeguarding and complaints.
- Strategic risk register.
- Recovery/change programme milestones and benefits.
- Reserved matters and formal shareholder decisions required.
- Exceptions and matters requiring Chief Executive/Leader/DCE attention.

Schedule 3 - Director Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood the OTCL Governance Suite and acknowledge my statutory and governance responsibilities as a Director of Oldham Total Care Limited.

Director name: _____

Executive / Non-Executive: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Schedule 4 - Adoption and Review

This Governance Suite should be approved through the appropriate OTCL and OMBC governance routes following legal, financial and constitutional review. It shall be reviewed at least annually and whenever there is a material change in legislation, OTCL's operating model, Articles, OMBC's Constitution or the procurement basis of the OMBC-OTCL relationship.

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OLDHAM TOTAL CARE LTD (OTC)

STEERING COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Status and Purpose

Oldham Total Care Ltd ("OTC") is a Local Authority Trading Company ("LATCo") wholly owned by Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council ("OMBC").

The OTC Steering Committee is established to provide a formal strategic interface between **OMBC, as shareholder and local authority and the Board of Directors of OTC**, ensuring effective communication, alignment, oversight and escalation between the Council and the company.

The principal purpose of the Steering Committee is to bridge the governance relationship between OMBC and OTC, providing a structured forum through which elected members, senior Council officers and OTC directors can jointly consider the strategic direction, performance, risks and development of the company.

The Steering Committee will:

- provide strategic oversight of the relationship between OMBC and OTC;
- ensure that OTC's strategic direction remains aligned with the Council's objectives and expectations as shareholder;
- provide an effective route for two-way communication between the OTC Board, elected members and senior OMBC officers;
- provide constructive challenge and advice to the OTC Board;
- provide early visibility and escalation of significant financial, operational, workforce, regulatory, commercial and reputational issues;
- consider the company's performance against agreed objectives, business plans and key performance indicators;
- support OTC in developing as a sustainable, efficient and commercially capable LATCo while maintaining the quality and integrity of its care services; and
- provide a forum through which matters requiring shareholder consideration, Council action or wider corporate support can be identified and progressed.

The Steering Committee is **not intended to replace the OTC Board of Directors, assume executive management responsibility for the company, or become involved in the routine operational management of care services.**

Unless authority is expressly delegated to it by OMBC or provided for within the company's governance arrangements, the Steering Committee will operate in an **advisory, oversight and coordinating capacity**.

2. Governance Principles

The Steering Committee will operate on the basis of a clear distinction between:

OMBC as Shareholder – setting strategic expectations, exercising shareholder rights and protecting the Council's financial, service and reputational interests;

OTC Board of Directors – responsible for the governance and direction of the company and for discharging directors' statutory and fiduciary duties;

OTC Executive Management – responsible for the day-to-day management and delivery of the company's services; and

OMBC as Commissioner/Client – responsible for commissioning, contract management and assurance of services purchased from OTC.

The Steering Committee should facilitate effective working across these roles without obscuring the separate legal, governance, commissioning and management responsibilities of each party.

3. Objectives

The Steering Committee will provide strategic oversight and advice in relation to:

3.1 Strategic Direction

- OTC's corporate and business strategy;
- alignment with OMBC's corporate priorities and adult social care objectives;
- medium- and long-term development of the company;
- service development, transformation and innovation;
- significant changes to the company's operating model;
- opportunities for growth and diversification; and
- matters which may materially affect the Council's ownership of, investment in or relationship with OTC.

3.2 Financial Performance and Sustainability

The Committee will receive appropriate reporting on:

- financial performance against budget;
- forecast outturn;
- cash flow and financial resilience;
- material financial pressures and variances;
- efficiency and productivity;
- investment requirements;
- financial recovery or improvement plans where required;
- commercial performance and income diversification; and
- the medium-term financial sustainability of the company.

The Committee should provide an early-warning mechanism where financial performance could create a material risk to either OTC or OMBC.

4. Service Quality, Performance and Outcomes

The Committee will receive assurance regarding the overall performance of OTC's services, including where appropriate:

- CQC performance and regulatory matters;
- safeguarding;
- quality and safety;
- service-user outcomes;
- complaints and compliments;

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- feedback from residents, service users, families and carers;
- workforce performance;
- agency usage and recruitment;
- health and safety;
- agreed contractual and corporate KPIs; and
- significant service improvement programmes.

The Committee may request further information or assurance where performance falls materially outside agreed expectations.

5. Corporate Governance

The Steering Committee will maintain oversight of the effectiveness of the governance relationship between OTC and OMBC.

This may include consideration of:

- the effectiveness and composition of the OTC Board;
- Board skills and succession planning;
- significant appointments where shareholder involvement or approval is required;
- governance reviews;
- matters reserved to the shareholder;
- conflicts of interest;
- company constitutional matters;
- compliance with relevant Council and company governance requirements; and
- recommendations arising from internal or external audit, regulatory review or other assurance activity.

Where a matter formally requires shareholder approval, the Steering Committee will make recommendations or facilitate referral to the appropriate OMBC decision-making body in accordance with the Council's Constitution, shareholder arrangements and the company's Articles of Association.

6. Risk and Assurance

The Steering Committee will consider significant strategic risks affecting OTC and/or OMBC arising from the company's activities.

This will include, where appropriate:

- financial risk;
- regulatory and CQC risk;
- workforce risk;
- safeguarding and quality risk;
- legal and contractual risk;
- information governance and cyber security;
- business continuity;

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- commercial risk;
- reputational risk; and
- risks associated with major transformation or investment programmes.

The Committee should focus principally upon **strategic and material risks**, rather than duplicating the detailed risk-management responsibilities of the OTC Board.

7. Commercial Development

Recognising OTC's status as a LATCo, the Steering Committee will provide strategic advice and challenge concerning the company's commercial development.

This may include:

- development of services outside existing OMBC arrangements;
- opportunities for external income;
- partnerships and collaborative ventures;
- market positioning;
- business development proposals;
- investment requirements;
- commercial capability and capacity; and
- the balance between commercial growth, public-service objectives and financial risk.

Detailed commercial decisions remain the responsibility of the OTC Board except where a proposal falls within matters reserved to OMBC as shareholder or otherwise requires Council approval.

8. Relationship with the OTC Board

The Steering Committee and OTC Board should have distinct but complementary functions.

The **OTC Board** remains responsible for company governance, corporate strategy, statutory compliance, financial stewardship, executive accountability and oversight of company operations.

The **Steering Committee** provides the principal strategic interface with OMBC, enabling the shareholder to understand company performance and enabling the OTC Board to understand the Council's strategic expectations, concerns and priorities.

The Steering Committee may make recommendations to the OTC Board but should not routinely direct operational decisions that properly fall within the authority and responsibilities of the company's directors.

Likewise, the OTC Board should ensure that matters materially affecting OMBC as shareholder are brought to the Steering Committee at an appropriately early stage.

9. Membership

The Steering Committee will comprise an appropriate balance of elected member, senior officer and OTC representation.

Membership should include:

OMBC Elected Members

- nominated elected members reflecting the Council's shareholder and strategic interests;
- relevant Cabinet Member(s), where appropriate.

OMBC Chief Officers

- Chief Executive or nominated representative;
- relevant Executive Director(s);
- Director of Finance / Section 151 Officer or nominated representative;
- Monitoring Officer or nominated representative where appropriate; and
- other Chief Officers according to the matters under consideration.

OTC

- Chair of the OTC Board;
- Managing Director/Chief Executive;
- nominated OTC Director(s); and
- Finance Director/lead as appropriate.

Specialist advisers and other officers may attend by invitation where their expertise is required.

10. Chair

The Steering Committee will have a **nominated Chairperson**, appointed through the appropriate OMBC governance process.

The Chair will:

- approve the agenda;
- ensure appropriate balance between strategic oversight and company autonomy;
- facilitate constructive challenge;
- ensure that matters requiring escalation are clearly identified;
- ensure actions and recommendations are appropriately recorded; and
- maintain an effective relationship with the Chair of the OTC Board.

A Vice-Chair may also be appointed to act in the Chair's absence.

11. Meetings

The Steering Committee will normally meet **quarterly**, with additional meetings convened where significant matters require consideration.

The meeting cycle should, wherever practicable, align with the OTC Board reporting cycle so that current information can flow effectively between the two bodies.

The Chair may convene an extraordinary meeting where an issue is sufficiently material or urgent that it should not await the next scheduled meeting.

12. Standing Reporting Framework

A standard reporting pack should be developed to enable consistent oversight.

The standing agenda should normally include:

1. Declarations of Interest;
2. Minutes, actions and matters arising;
3. OTC Chief Executive/Managing Director strategic update;
4. Service Quality and CQC Update;

5. Financial Performance and Forecast;
6. Performance and KPI Dashboard;
7. Workforce and Organisational Development;
8. Strategic Risk Register;
9. Commercial Development and Growth;
10. Major Transformation/Investment Programmes;
11. Governance and Board Matters;
12. Shareholder Matters / Decisions Required;
13. Matters for Escalation to the OTC Board or OMBC;
14. Any Other Business; and
15. Forward Work Programme.

Reports should clearly distinguish items presented for:

Information / Noting – Discussion / Assurance – Recommendation – Decision, where the Committee possesses the relevant delegated authority.

13. Escalation

A key function of the Steering Committee is to provide an effective escalation route between OTC and OMBC.

Matters should be escalated where they:

- represent a material financial risk;
- could significantly affect service continuity or quality;
- involve significant regulatory or safeguarding concerns;
- create material legal or reputational exposure;
- require substantial additional Council financial support;
- involve significant departure from the approved business plan;
- concern matters reserved to the shareholder;
- materially affect the strategic direction of OTC; or
- otherwise require formal OMBC consideration or approval.

The minutes should clearly identify the body or officer to whom an escalated matter has been referred and the action required.

14. Information and Transparency

OTC will provide the Steering Committee with sufficient, timely and accurate information to enable it to discharge its functions effectively.

Members will respect the commercially sensitive, personal and confidential nature of information provided to the Committee.

Where appropriate, agenda items and supporting papers may be treated as exempt or confidential in accordance with applicable legislation and the Council's governance arrangements.

The presumption should nevertheless be that the governance relationship between OMBC and OTC is conducted with an appropriate degree of transparency and accountability consistent with OTC's status as a Council-owned company.

15. Conflicts of Interest

Members must declare any actual or potential conflict of interest relevant to matters under consideration.

Particular care will be taken where individuals hold responsibilities across OMBC and OTC to ensure that it is clear **in which capacity an individual is participating or making a decision**.

Where appropriate, advice will be sought from the Monitoring Officer and/or Company Secretary.

16. Secretariat and Administration

Secretariat support will be provided by OMBC, unless otherwise agreed.

The Secretariat will:

- coordinate the forward programme;
- prepare and circulate agendas;
- coordinate reports;
- record attendance and declarations of interest;
- produce minutes and action schedules;
- maintain an action tracker; and
- ensure matters requiring referral to another decision-making body are appropriately progressed.

Papers should normally be circulated sufficiently in advance to enable effective consideration by members.

17. Quorum

The Committee will be quorate when the Chair or Vice-Chair is present together with representation from:

- OMBC elected members;
- OMBC senior management; and
- the OTC Board/executive.

The precise numerical quorum should be determined when the final membership of the Committee is approved.

18. Decision-Making and Authority

The Steering Committee derives its authority from OMBC and operates within the Council's established shareholder and governance arrangements.

The Committee may:

- receive information and assurance;
- scrutinise and challenge performance;
- make recommendations;
- commission further information or assurance;
- refer matters to the OTC Board;
- refer matters to the appropriate OMBC body or statutory officer; and

- make decisions only where specific authority has formally been delegated to it.

Nothing within these Terms of Reference removes or overrides:

- the statutory duties of OTC directors;
- the responsibilities of the OTC Board;
- the statutory responsibilities of OMBC officers;
- the responsibilities of OMBC as commissioner; or
- decisions reserved to OMBC under the Council's Constitution, shareholder agreement, Articles of Association or other governance documents.

19. Forward Work Programme

The Committee will maintain a rolling forward work programme aligned with:

- OTC Board meetings;
- financial reporting cycles;
- business planning and budget setting;
- CQC and regulatory requirements;
- annual accounts and audit;
- shareholder decisions;
- strategic reviews; and
- major transformation and commercial programmes.

This should enable the Committee to operate proactively rather than principally responding to issues after they have arisen.

20. Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually, or earlier where there is a significant change to:

- OTC's operating model;
- the Council's shareholder arrangements;
- the composition or responsibilities of the OTC Board;
- relevant legislation or regulation; or
- the governance relationship between OMBC and OTC.

Any material amendments will be subject to approval through the appropriate OMBC governance arrangements.

Core Purpose – Summary

The OTC Steering Committee exists to provide the **formal strategic bridge between Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council and Oldham Total Care Ltd**.

Its purpose is to ensure that:

OMBC has appropriate visibility, assurance and influence as shareholder;

the OTC Board has a clear and effective route into the Council for strategic, financial and shareholder matters;

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significant risks and issues are identified and escalated early;

OTC's strategy remains aligned with the Council's objectives while preserving the Board's proper responsibility for the company; and

OTC is supported and challenged to deliver high-quality care, financial sustainability and appropriate commercial development.

The Steering Committee should therefore operate as a forum for **strategic alignment, assurance, constructive challenge and escalation – not as an additional layer of operational management.**

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OLDHAM TOTAL CARE LIMITED

DIRECTORS' SERVICE AGREEMENT AND GOVERNANCE PROTOCOL

For Executive and Non-Executive Directors

Company: Oldham Total Care Limited
Shareholder: Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Status: Wholly Owned Local Authority Trading Company
Version: Draft 4.0

1. Parties and Status

This Directors' Service Agreement and Governance Protocol ("Agreement") applies to each person appointed as a director of Oldham Total Care Limited ("the Company").

The Company is a wholly owned Local Authority Trading Company of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council ("the Council" or "OMBC").

This Agreement is intended to set out the principal terms upon which Directors are expected to discharge their functions and to clarify the relationship between the Board, the Council and the OTC Steering Committee.

This Agreement does not constitute a contract of employment unless expressly incorporated into an Executive Director's contract of employment. In the event of any inconsistency between this Agreement and the Companies Act 2006, the Company's Articles of Association or any other binding constitutional document, the latter shall prevail.

2. Definitions

In this Agreement:

"Articles" means the Articles of Association of the Company as amended from time to time.

"Board" means the board of directors of the Company.

"Director" means any Executive or Non-Executive Director appointed to the Board.

"Executive Director" means a Director who also holds an executive management position within the Company.

"Non-Executive Director" means a Director who does not hold an executive management position within the Company.

"Reserved Matters" means those matters which require the prior approval of OMBC as shareholder in accordance with the Articles, Shareholder Agreement or other agreed governance arrangements.

"Shareholder" means Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council.

"Steering Committee" means the OTC Steering Committee established by OMBC to provide strategic oversight, shareholder assurance and an interface between the Council and the Company.

"Shareholder Agreement" means any agreement entered into between OMBC and the Company governing their respective rights and responsibilities.

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3. Governance Framework

3.1 The Company shall be governed as a separate legal entity in accordance with applicable company law and its constitutional documents.

3.2 The governance arrangements shall maintain a clear distinction between:

(a) OMBC as shareholder;

(b) OMBC in any commissioning, contracting or statutory capacity;

(c) the Board as the body responsible for the governance and direction of the Company;

(d) the Executive Management of the Company; and

(e) the Steering Committee as the principal strategic interface between the Company and OMBC.

3.3 No serving elected Member or officer of OMBC shall serve as a Director of the Company.

3.4 OMBC Member and officer involvement in the strategic oversight of the Company shall be exercised through the Steering Committee and through such formal shareholder arrangements as OMBC may determine.

3.5 Nothing in this Agreement shall permit the Steering Committee or any Council department to assume the statutory functions of the Board or the day-to-day management of the Company.

4. Appointment

4.1 Each Director shall be appointed in accordance with the Articles and any applicable shareholder or Board approval arrangements.

4.2 A Director shall receive written confirmation of:

(a) the date of appointment;

(b) the term of appointment;

(c) whether the appointment is Executive or Non-Executive;

(d) the expected time commitment;

(e) remuneration, if any;

(f) committee appointments;

(g) any particular duties attaching to the appointment; and

(h) the arrangements governing resignation, termination or removal.

4.3 Appointments shall have regard to the skills and experience required for the effective governance of the Company.

4.4 The Board shall periodically review its skills, composition and succession requirements.

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5. Duties of Directors

5.1 Each Director shall at all times comply with the duties imposed upon directors by the Companies Act 2006 and any other applicable law.

5.2 Without limitation, each Director shall:

(a) act within the powers conferred upon them;

(b) promote the success of the Company;

(c) exercise independent judgement;

(d) exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence;

(e) avoid or properly manage conflicts of interest;

(f) not accept benefits from third parties in circumstances prohibited by law; and

(g) declare interests in proposed or existing transactions or arrangements where required.

5.3 The duties of a Director are owed to the Company.

5.4 A Director shall not act solely as the representative of any third party, including OMBC, where doing so would conflict with the Director's statutory duties to the Company.

6. Responsibilities of the Board

6.1 The Board shall be collectively responsible for the governance, strategy and stewardship of the Company.

6.2 The Board's responsibilities shall include:

(a) determining the strategic direction of the Company;

(b) approving the Company's business plan and budget;

(c) maintaining oversight of financial performance and financial sustainability;

(d) determining the Company's risk appetite;

(e) ensuring that appropriate systems of internal control are maintained;

(f) overseeing statutory and regulatory compliance;

(g) approving material corporate policies and strategies;

(h) scrutinising Executive Management performance;

(i) monitoring performance against agreed objectives;

(j) ensuring that material risks are appropriately identified and managed;

(k) maintaining appropriate arrangements for assurance and audit; and

(l) reporting to the Steering Committee and shareholder in accordance with this Agreement and the Company's governance arrangements.

6.3 The Board shall not delegate any duty or decision which, as a matter of law or under the Articles, is required to be exercised by the Directors.

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7. Executive Directors

7.1 An Executive Director shall have both the statutory responsibilities of a Director and such executive responsibilities as may be assigned under their employment arrangements or delegated authority.

7.2 Executive Directors shall be responsible for implementing the strategy, policies and decisions approved by the Board.

7.3 Executive Directors shall ensure that the Board receives timely, accurate and sufficient information to enable it properly to discharge its duties.

7.4 Executive Directors shall act within the authority delegated to them by the Board and shall refer matters to the Board where the limits of that authority are exceeded.

7.5 Nothing in an Executive Director's management responsibilities shall diminish their individual duties as a Director.

8. Non-Executive Directors

8.1 Non-Executive Directors shall provide independent judgement, scrutiny and challenge.

8.2 Non-Executive Directors shall have the same statutory duties as Executive Directors.

8.3 Their role shall include:

(a) contributing to the development of strategy;

(b) scrutinising the performance of Executive Management;

(c) challenging financial, commercial and strategic assumptions;

(d) reviewing the adequacy of risk management and internal control;

(e) contributing relevant professional or sector expertise;

(f) monitoring delivery against agreed objectives; and

(g) contributing to Board evaluation, succession and remuneration matters where appropriate.

8.4 Non-Executive Directors shall not normally undertake operational management functions.

9. Chair

9.1 The Chair shall be responsible for the effective leadership and operation of the Board.

9.2 The Chair shall:

(a) ensure that meetings are properly conducted;

(b) promote effective contribution by all Directors;

(c) facilitate constructive challenge and debate;

(d) ensure that Directors receive sufficient and timely information;

(e) maintain an appropriate distinction between Board governance and executive management;

(f) oversee the effectiveness of Board committees;

(g) lead the periodic evaluation of the Board; and

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(h) maintain an effective working relationship with the Chair of the Steering Committee.

9.3 The Chair shall ensure that material matters requiring shareholder awareness are escalated through the appropriate governance route.

10. OTC Steering Committee

10.1 The Steering Committee shall provide the principal strategic interface between OMBC and the Company.

10.2 Its membership, terms of reference and meeting arrangements shall be determined separately by OMBC.

10.3 The Steering Committee shall not form part of the Board and shall not exercise the statutory duties or powers of the Directors.

10.4 The purpose of the Steering Committee shall include:

(a) receiving assurance as to the performance and governance of the Company;

(b) reviewing delivery against agreed strategic objectives;

(c) considering the financial sustainability of the Company;

(d) receiving information concerning material corporate risks;

(e) considering matters of strategic significance to OMBC as shareholder;

(f) considering matters which may require shareholder approval or intervention; and

(g) maintaining an effective strategic relationship between OMBC and the Company.

10.5 The Steering Committee may challenge, scrutinise and seek assurance from the Board but shall not assume responsibility for the management or direction of the Company.

11. Reporting to the Steering Committee

11.1 The Board shall provide the Steering Committee with such information as is reasonably required to enable OMBC to discharge its responsibilities as shareholder.

11.2 Reporting shall be proportionate and strategic and shall ordinarily include:

(a) performance against the approved business plan;

(b) financial performance and forecast position;

(c) performance against material corporate objectives;

(d) principal corporate risks;

(e) material legal, regulatory or contractual matters;

(f) significant governance matters;

(g) material changes in the Company’s operating environment; and

(h) progress against any agreed improvement or transformation programme.

11.3 Reporting to the Steering Committee shall not extend to routine operational management unless a particular operational matter has become sufficiently material to constitute a strategic, financial, legal, regulatory or reputational risk.

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12. Escalation

12.1 The Board shall ensure that material matters are brought promptly to the attention of the Steering Committee and, where appropriate, OMBC as shareholder.

12.2 A matter shall be treated as material where it may reasonably be expected to:

(a) materially affect the financial position of the Company;

(b) impair delivery of the approved business plan;

(c) expose the Company or OMBC to material legal, regulatory or contractual risk;

(d) significantly alter the Company's risk profile;

(e) materially affect the reputation of the Company or OMBC;

(f) require additional shareholder support or intervention; or

(g) otherwise warrant consideration by OMBC before the next scheduled reporting cycle.

12.3 The Board and Steering Committee shall adopt the principle of timely escalation rather than retrospective reporting of matters which have already crystallised.

13. Relationship Between the Board and Steering Committee

13.1 The relationship between the Board and the Steering Committee shall be one of strategic accountability and shareholder assurance.

13.2 The Steering Committee may:

(a) request information and assurance;

(b) scrutinise strategic performance;

(c) challenge assumptions;

(d) raise shareholder concerns;

(e) make recommendations to the Board;

(f) make recommendations to OMBC; and

(g) consider matters requiring formal shareholder decision.

13.3 The Steering Committee shall not:

(a) direct employees of the Company;

(b) assume executive management responsibility;

(c) substitute itself for the Board;

(d) determine matters properly delegated to Executive Management; or

(e) exercise powers reserved by law to the Directors.

13.4 Formal shareholder powers shall be exercised by OMBC through the mechanisms set out in the Articles, Shareholder Agreement, Reserved Matters or other lawful delegation.

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14. Relationship with OMBC

14.1 The parties recognise that OMBC may have more than one relationship with the Company, including as:

(a) shareholder;

(b) commissioner;

(c) contracting authority;

(d) strategic partner; and

(e) local authority exercising statutory functions.

14.2 Those roles shall, so far as reasonably practicable, be kept distinct.

14.3 The Company shall not be treated as an operational department of OMBC.

14.4 Where matters arising from commissioning, contracting or other arrangements have a material impact upon the strategic or financial interests of the Company, the Board shall ensure that the matter is considered through the appropriate governance arrangements.

15. Corporate Performance

15.1 The Board shall establish and maintain an appropriate corporate performance framework.

15.2 The framework shall enable the Board to assess, at an appropriate level:

(a) financial performance;

(b) delivery against strategic objectives;

(c) organisational effectiveness;

(d) service performance;

(e) statutory and regulatory compliance;

(f) risk management;

(g) workforce performance; and

(h) delivery of significant change or improvement programmes.

15.3 The detailed performance measures shall be determined by the Board and may be amended from time to time.

15.4 The Steering Committee shall receive a summary of corporate performance sufficient to enable it to exercise effective strategic oversight and shareholder assurance.

16. Reserved Matters

16.1 Matters requiring the prior approval of OMBC as shareholder shall be set out in a separate Schedule of Reserved Matters.

16.2 Reserved Matters may include:

(a) material changes to the nature or strategic direction of the Company;

(b) significant borrowing;

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(c) material capital commitments outside the approved business plan;

(d) significant acquisitions or disposals;

(e) establishment of subsidiaries or joint ventures;

(f) amendments to the Company's constitutional arrangements;

(g) matters relating to share capital; and

(h) such other matters as may be agreed between the Company and OMBC.

16.3 The Steering Committee may consider and make recommendations in relation to a Reserved Matter but shall not be deemed to have exercised shareholder approval unless formally authorised to do so.

17. Conflicts of Interest

17.1 Each Director shall disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest in accordance with applicable law and the Company's policies.

17.2 The Company shall maintain a Register of Directors' Interests.

17.3 A Director shall disclose an interest as soon as reasonably practicable after becoming aware of it.

17.4 Where appropriate, the Director shall:

(a) refrain from receiving relevant papers;

(b) withdraw from the relevant discussion;

(c) abstain from voting; and

(d) comply with any further arrangements determined by the Board.

17.5 The Board may obtain independent legal or governance advice where the proper management of a conflict is uncertain.

18. Confidentiality

18.1 Directors shall keep confidential all information received in their capacity as a Director which is confidential by its nature or designated as confidential.

18.2 A Director shall not use confidential information for personal advantage or for the improper advantage of any other person or organisation.

18.3 Nothing in this clause shall prevent disclosure:

(a) required by law;

(b) authorised by the Board;

(c) required under an agreed shareholder reporting arrangement; or

(d) necessary for the proper discharge of the Director's statutory duties.

18.4 The obligations in this clause shall continue after a Director ceases to hold office.

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19. Conduct and Attendance

19.1 A Director shall devote sufficient time to the affairs of the Company to discharge their responsibilities properly.

19.2 Directors shall:

(a) attend Board and relevant committee meetings;

(b) prepare adequately for meetings;

(c) read and consider Board papers;

(d) contribute constructively;

(e) exercise independent judgement;

(f) maintain appropriate knowledge of the Company and its activities;

(g) undertake relevant training; and

(h) maintain appropriate standards of professional conduct.

19.3 Persistent failure to attend meetings or properly discharge the responsibilities of office may be taken into account in considering continuation of the appointment.

20. Remuneration and Expenses

20.1 Any remuneration payable to a Director shall be determined in accordance with the Articles, applicable contractual arrangements and any shareholder requirements.

20.2 No Director shall participate in determining their own remuneration except to the extent lawfully permitted.

20.3 Reasonable expenses properly incurred in carrying out Company business may be reimbursed in accordance with the Company's expenses policy.

21. Indemnity and Insurance

21.1 Subject to the Companies Act 2006 and the Articles, the Company may provide Directors with such indemnities as are lawfully permitted.

21.2 The Company shall maintain appropriate directors' and officers' liability insurance where the Board considers this appropriate.

21.3 Nothing in this Agreement shall indemnify a Director against liability where such indemnification is prohibited by law.

22. Board Evaluation and Development

22.1 The Board shall periodically review its effectiveness.

22.2 The review may include consideration of:

(a) Board composition;

(b) the contribution of individual Directors;

(c) the quality of Board challenge;

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(d) the effectiveness of Board committees;

(e) the relationship between the Board and Executive Management;

(f) the relationship between the Board and Steering Committee; and

(g) the overall effectiveness of the Company's governance arrangements.

22.3 Directors shall undertake such induction and continuing professional development as is reasonably necessary for the proper discharge of their duties.

23. Assurance and Audit

23.1 The Board shall ensure that appropriate internal and external assurance arrangements are maintained.

23.2 These may include:

(a) internal audit;

(b) external audit;

(c) legal and regulatory review;

(d) risk assurance;

(e) governance review; and

(f) Board effectiveness review.

23.3 Material findings arising from assurance activity shall be reported to the Board and, where appropriate, to the Steering Committee.

24. Resignation, Removal and Termination

24.1 A Director may resign by giving written notice in accordance with the Articles and any applicable contractual arrangements.

24.2 A Director may be removed from office only in accordance with:

(a) applicable law;

(b) the Articles;

(c) any Shareholder Agreement; and

(d) any applicable service or appointment agreement.

24.3 Upon ceasing to hold office, a Director shall:

(a) return Company property;

(b) cease to represent themselves as authorised to act for the Company;

(c) comply with continuing confidentiality obligations; and

(d) provide such reasonable handover as the Company may require.

DRAFT

25. Review and Variation

25.1 This Agreement shall be reviewed periodically and normally at least annually.

25.2 It shall also be reviewed where there is:

(a) a material change in the Company's governance arrangements;

(b) an amendment to the Articles or Shareholder Agreement;

(c) a material legislative or regulatory change;

(d) a significant governance issue; or

(e) a material change to the Steering Committee arrangements.

25.3 Any material amendment shall be approved in accordance with the Company's governance arrangements.

26. Governing Law and Jurisdiction

26.1 This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the law of England and Wales.

26.2 Subject to any alternative dispute-resolution arrangements agreed between the parties, the courts of England and Wales shall have jurisdiction in relation to any dispute arising from this Agreement.

DRAFT

27. Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received, read and understood this Directors' Service Agreement and Governance Protocol.

I acknowledge that my statutory duties as a Director are owed to Oldham Total Care Limited and that I am required to act in accordance with applicable law, the Articles of Association and the Company's governance arrangements.

I further acknowledge the respective and distinct roles of the OTCL Board, Executive Management, the OTC Steering Committee and Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council as shareholder.

Director

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

For Oldham Total Care Limited

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Acknowledged for and on behalf of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council as Shareholder

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Governance Principle

For the avoidance of doubt, the parties acknowledge that:

OMBC owns the Company; the Board governs and directs the Company; Executive Management manages the Company; and the OTC Steering Committee provides the principal strategic interface through which OMBC receives assurance, exercises challenge and considers matters relevant to its position as shareholder.

Nothing in the Steering Committee arrangements shall displace the statutory duties of the Directors or the corporate status of Oldham Total Care Limited as a separate legal entity.

DRAFT

Emergency Powers Decision Report

Strategic Energy Partnership – Womble Bond Dickinson further appointment

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Place
Directorate: Growth
Report Author: Andrew Hunt, Green Energy & Sustainability Manager
Email: Andrew.hunt@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 2nd November 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

To appoint Womble Bond Dickinson to a further commission at a cost of £100,000+VAT supporting the procurement of a Strategic Energy Partner for the Borough. This commission will be funded by a £100,000 Advanced Zoning Programme (AZP) grant from DESNZ.

3. Reason for urgency

This appointment is needed to support the current live procurement process for a Strategic Energy Partner for the borough.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

The main risk is of a failed procurement due to lack of sufficient Legal support.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

The failure of a procurement which has been supported by £1.6m of grant funding from the GMCA Local Net Zero Accelerator and further grant funding from the Green Heat Network Fund, plus the £100K AZP grant funding covering this specific appointment.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 7 October 2026
Comments

This report seeks approval to appoint Womble Bond Dickinson to provide additional legal support for the procurement of a Strategic Energy Partner at a cost of £100k. The additional commission will support the ongoing procurement process and delivery of this strategic project.

The commission will be fully funded from a £100k Advanced Zoning Programme (AZP) grant awarded by DESNZ. As all costs will be met from external grant funding, there are no additional revenue implications for the Council.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name
Date
Comments

Principal Decision Report

Decision below £250k and only affects one ward

Subject:	Strategic Energy Partnership – Womble Bond Dickinson further appointment
Decision maker: Senior Officer	Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive (Place)
Decision date:	2nd November 2026
Report author:	Andrew Hunt, Green Energy & Sustainability Manager
Ward (s):	N/A

Reason for decision

To appoint Womble Bond Dickinson to a further commission at a cost of £100,000+VAT supporting the procurement of a Strategic Energy Partner for the Borough. This commission will be funded by a £100,000 Advanced Zoning Programme (AZP) grant from DESNZ.

Recommendation(s)

1. Appoint Womble Bond Dickinson to a further commission at a cost of £100,000+VAT. Under this option, the Council will have sufficient ongoing Legal support for the procurement of a Strategic Energy Partner for the Borough.

Background

The Council is currently out to tender for a Strategic Energy Partner for the Borough. If successful, the procurement will establish a Joint Venture between the Council and a commercial energy infrastructure provider to bring in the large-scale investment needed to upgrade Oldham's energy systems for the future and secure a wide range of economic co-benefits for the borough including jobs, skills, a Social Value Fund and stabilisation of energy bills for residents and businesses.

To date, the project has been funded from a variety of sources including the DESNZ / GMCA Local Net Zero Accelerator and the DESNZ Green Heat Network Fund. Recently the Council received a £100K grant from the DESNZ Advanced Zoning Programme to further support the work. As work has progressed, it has now become necessary to award Womble Bond Dickinson, who are providing Legal support for the project, an additional commission. This additional commission will be funded by the £100K AZP grant.

Womble Bond Dickinson and DESNZ have confirmed that the support activities which will be funded via the DESNZ AZP grant are in scope of the AZP Section 31 Grant Funding Agreement.

Alternative option(s) to be considered *(please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s)*

Option 1 – appoint Womble Bond Dickinson to a further commission at a cost of £100,000+VAT. Under this option, the Council will have sufficient ongoing Legal support for the procurement of a Strategic Energy Partner for the Borough.

Option 2 – do not appoint Womble Bond Dickinson to a further commission. Under this option, the Council will not have sufficient support for the ongoing procurement of a Strategic Energy Partner and this will likely lead to a failed procurement.

Consultation *(include any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted)*

N/A

Risks

N/A

Implications

Financial	This request seeks approval to appoint Womble Bond Dickinson to undertake an additional commission, valued at £100,000 plus VAT, to provide continued legal support for the procurement of a Strategic Energy Partner for the Borough. As the project has progressed, further specialist legal input has been identified as necessary to support the procurement process and ensure the successful delivery of this key strategic initiative. The commission will be fully funded through a £100,000 Advanced Zoning Programme (AZP) grant awarded by DESNZ. Funding is already available within cost centre 24080 M003. There are no further financial implications arising from this proposal, as the full cost of the commission will be met from the existing grant allocation. Waheed Rehman – Accountant
Legal	The appointment of Womble Bond Dickinson is made by the Council under delegated authority in accordance with the Council's procurement arrangements. Womble Bond Dickinson were selected by the service in consultation with Commercial Procurement and instructed by Legal Services as external legal advisers for the OGNDP procurement. The additional appointment relates to legal services falling within the light-touch regime.

	The total aggregate value of services, including this appointment, remains below the applicable threshold under the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council may lawfully proceed by way of direct award subject to compliance with Part 6 (sections 84–88) of the Act. As the value exceeds £30,000, a UK7 Contract Details Notice must be published following contract entry. Subject to the above, Legal Services raise no objection and confirm the recommendations are lawful and compliant with the Council's Constitution. Sukie Kaur - Solicitor
Procurement	Legal Services selected and appointed Womble Bond Dickinson (WBD) for the OGNDP procurement. The nature of the services provided by WBD are covered by the 'light touch' procurement regime for which the threshold triggering full application of the Procurement Act 2023 (PA23) is £663,540 inclusive of VAT. As the total aggregate value of services that WBD will be contracted for is considerably less than this threshold amount, only Part 6 'Below-threshold contracts' (sections 84-88) of PA23 6 is to be contemplated: Given the value of the direct award proposed is above £30,000, the award would constitute a "notifiable below-threshold contract" whereby the Council (under section 87 of PA23) would be required to publish a UK7 Contract Details Notice on the Central Digital Platform as soon as practicable after entering into the contract. Therefore, if approved, the Commercial Procurement Unit needs to be provided with a final/signed version of this report and confirmation that the contract has been entered into, in order to ensure it can meet this transparency obligation on behalf of the Council/Legal Services. Emma Tweedie, Snr Category Manager Commercial Procurement Unit
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	N/A
Other	N/A

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes / No
Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	Yes / No
Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	Yes / No

Report author sign-off	Andrew Hunt
Role	Green Energy & Sustainability Manager
Date of sign-off	10 September 2026

Approval	
Officer approval sign-off	Emma Barton
Role	Deputy Chief Executive (Place)
Date of sign-off	Xx/xx/xx

Emergency Powers Decision Report

Additional Highways Grant Funding Acceptance Report 2026/27

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Highways & Engineering
Directorate: Place
Report Author: Assistant Director Highways and Engineering
Email: gordon.anderson@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 2nd November 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

The allocation of Additional CRSTS Highways Maintenance Grant Funding for 2026/27

3. Reason for urgency

The additional funds being made available through the CRSTS Grant funding are being made available to all 10 GM authorities to spend within 2026/27. Any delays to approval of the funds would further delay delivery of the works, and result in Oldham not spending the full allocation and potentially losing any unspent funding allocation.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

Failure to approve the acceptance report would present several significant risks to the Council, including:

- Possible loss of any Highway Maintenance funding not spent in year being handed back to TfGM.
- Vital funds being made available to improve Oldham's highway network are lost along with the possibility of improving the network condition for road users.
- Reduced ability to demonstrate capacity to deliver further additional funding allocations made available by TfGM in the future.
- Increased risk of revenue repair costs increasing over the winter months due to delays in delivering essential capital maintenance resurfacing works
- Reduced ability to effectively manage and maintain the highway network in accordance with the Council's statutory duties under the Highways Act and associated legislation.
- Increased risk to the Council's ability to continue managing the highway network safely, efficiently and in a manner consistent with recognised asset management principles.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

The council may have to hand back unspent funding to TfGM if not spent in year. Likely increase in revenue costs repairing roads that would have been resurfaced using this funding, but now require urgent maintenance to ensure safety of road users. There is also a risk of increased claims being made against the council where works are not able to take place.

The Council may lose the opportunity to secure future DfT incentive funding and other external investment streams linked to asset management maturity and reporting requirements.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 7 October 2026
Comments

The Council has been awarded £5.258m of CRSTS Highway Maintenance Funding to deliver planned highway maintenance across the borough, comprising £2.508m for preventative maintenance, £1.850m for carriageway resurfacing, £500k for machine-laid patching and £400k for footway works.

The expenditure will be monitored regularly against the approved funding allocation, with any budget variances managed through adjustments to the approved programme.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name: Alex Bougatef
Date: 13 October 2026
Comments:

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required and it cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.

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Report to CABINET

Additional Highways Grant Funding Acceptance Report 2026/27

Officer Contact:
Emma Barton – Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Report Author:
Gordon Anderson – Head of Highways & Engineering
Gordon.Anderson@Oldham.gov.uk

2nd November 2026

Reason for Decision
With the strategic approach for the 5-year City Region sustainable transport settlement (CRSTS) programme approved in March 2022, this report seeks approval for formal acceptance of the Additional CRSTS Highways Maintenance funding and approval of the recommendations for delivery utilising these funds in full, for 2026/27.

Recommendations
That the Chief Executive approves:

- The allocation of Additional CRSTS Highway Maintenance Funding
- The proposed breakdown of funding, which will fully utilise the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) highway maintenance additional grant funding allocation available for 2026/27 as per the formal grant notification from GMCA.
- That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment in consultation with the Director of Finance to take all necessary decisions in relation to the award of contracts arising from this procurement process to ensure procurement decisions can be made within the timescales required to support programme delivery.

- That the Director of Legal Services or their nominated representative be authorised to sign and/or affix the Common Seal of the Council to all contracts/agreements/documents and associated or ancillary paperwork to give effect to the recommendations of this report.

- That any underspend generated as the attached programme progresses (as per the Appendices) be used to deliver additional schemes in priority order (although lower priority schemes may be selected depending on the available budget, value for money, or type of treatment) until the budget is fully expended in year. This approach to utilising underspend means there is no need to gain further approvals to deliver additional schemes, ensuring they can be delivered as soon as practically possible.

Funding

CRSTS Additional Funding	Total
5,258,000	5,258,000

Scheme Delivery

Preventative Maintenance	Carriageway Resurfacing	Machine Laid Patching	Footway	Total
2,508,000	1,850,000	500,000	400,000	5,258,000

Transport Capital Programme 2026/27

1 **Background**

1.1 Funding previously received for Core Highways Maintenance and Integrated Transport Block (ITB) has been consolidated into the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funding settlement, with effect from 2022/23, and for the subsequent 5 financial years.

1.2 On 1 April 2022, Great Manchester (GM) was notified of its final CRSTS allocation of £1.07bn, based upon the CRSTS prospectus, which had been submitted to Government in September 2021, and the draft Programme Case submitted on 31 January 2022.

1.3 This allocation includes an amount of £175m for core highways maintenance and £82m for ITB funding for the period 2022/23 to 2026/27

2 **Current Position**

2.1 **Core Highways Maintenance Funding**

An additional highway maintenance allocation of £60m has been made available to local authorities based on an allocation process agreed with the GM Delivery Group, the GM Highways Group and the GM Treasurers, of which Oldham are set to receive £5,258,000.

The aim is to invest the full £5.25 million into highway planned maintenance activities across the Oldham highway network. The proposed investment strategy has been developed in accordance with Oldham Council's Highway Safety Inspection Policy and the principles of risk-based asset management contained within the Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice.

Prioritising the programme using the most recent condition data from the range of condition surveys undertaken annually, and cross referencing those against claims and enquiry data, has allowed the Council to target the worst roads across the borough, but also continue to reduce highway claims and revenue repairs throughout Oldham.

3 **Options/Alternatives**

3.1 Option 1 – the Chief Executive agrees

- The allocation of Additional CRSTS Highway Maintenance Funding
- The proposed breakdown of funding, which will fully utilise the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) highway maintenance additional grant funding allocation available for 2026/27 as per the formal grant notification from GMCA.
- That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment in consultation with the Director of Finance to take all necessary decisions in relation to the award of contracts arising from this procurement process to

ensure procurement decisions can be made within the timescales required to support programme delivery.

- That the Director of Legal Services or their nominated representative be authorised to sign and/or affix the Common Seal of the Council to all contracts/agreements/documents and associated or ancillary paperwork to give effect to the recommendations of this report.

- That any underspend generated as the attached programme progresses (as per the Appendices) be used to deliver additional schemes in priority order (although lower priority schemes may be selected depending on the available budget, value for money, or type of treatment) until the budget is fully expended in year. This approach to utilising underspend means there is no need to gain further approvals to deliver additional schemes, ensuring they can be delivered as soon as practically possible.

3.2 Option 2 – the Chief Executive does not agree

- The allocation of Additional CRSTS Highway Maintenance Funding

- The proposed breakdown of funding, which will fully utilise the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) highway maintenance additional grant funding allocation available for 2026/27 as per the formal grant notification from GMCA.

- That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment in consultation with the Director of Finance to take all necessary decisions in relation to the award of contracts arising from this procurement process to ensure procurement decisions can be made within the timescales required to support programme delivery.

- That the Director of Legal Services or their nominated representative be authorised to sign and/or affix the Common Seal of the Council to all contracts/agreements/documents and associated or ancillary paperwork to give effect to the recommendations of this report.

- That any underspend generated as the attached programme progresses (as per the Appendices) be used to deliver additional schemes in priority order (although lower priority schemes may be selected depending on the available budget, value for money, or type of treatment) until the budget is fully expended in year. This approach to utilising underspend means there is no need to gain further approvals to deliver additional schemes, ensuring they can be delivered as soon as practically possible.

3.3 Option 1 is recommended to progress delivery of the Additional CRSTS Highway Maintenance Funding 2026/27 and deliver improvements and infrastructure across the borough's highway assets.

4 **Preferred Option**

4.1 Option 1 – the Chief Executive agrees

- The allocation of Additional CRSTS Highway Maintenance Funding
- The proposed breakdown of funding, which will fully utilise the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) highway maintenance additional grant funding allocation available for 2026/27 as per the formal grant notification from GMCA.
- That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment in consultation with the Director of Finance to take all necessary decisions in relation to the award of contracts arising from this procurement process to ensure procurement decisions can be made within the timescales required to support programme delivery.
- That the Director of Legal Services or their nominated representative be authorised to sign and/or affix the Common Seal of the Council to all contracts/agreements/documents and associated or ancillary paperwork to give effect to the recommendations of this report.
- That any underspend generated as the attached programme progresses (as per the Appendices) be used to deliver additional schemes in priority order (although lower priority schemes may be selected depending on the available budget, value for money, or type of treatment) until the budget is fully expended in year. This approach to utilising underspend means there is no need to gain further approvals to deliver additional schemes, ensuring they can be delivered as soon as practically possible.

Scheme Delivery

Preventative Maintenance	Carriageway Resurfacing	Machine Laid Patching	Footway	Total
2,508,000	1,850,000	500,000	400,000	5,258,000

5 **Consultation**

5.1 N/A

6 **Financial Implications**

6.1 The Council has been awarded £5,258,000 CRSTS Highway Maintenance Funding to deliver highway planned maintenance activities across the Oldham highway network, which will be allocated as follows:

Preventative Maintenance	Carriageway Resurfacing	Machine Laid Patching	Footway	Total

2,508,000	1,850,000	500,000	400,000	5,258,000

The expenditure is capital and cost centres have already been set up for these schemes. The budgets will be monitored against expenditure on a monthly basis. In the event that any overspends are identified, the service will be required to identify schemes where the original budget allocation can be reduced to offset the overspend.

Leonnie Wharton-Brown, Senior Accountant

7 **Legal Implications**

7.1 The proposal is lawful and complies with the Council's constitution. The Council is under a statutory duty to maintain highways under the Highways Act 1980. The Contract Procedure Rules should be followed as outlined by Procurement below.

Bryan Boese - solicitor

8. **Procurement Implications**

8.1 The sourcing routes for the additional funding are to be in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) rule 4.1 - where an existing contract, framework or in-house service is available to meet the Council's specific procurement requirements and offers value for money it should be used unless there is particular circumstances which justify an alternative route to market. If Rule 4.1 does not apply, the sourcing must comply with the procurement thresholds noted in rule 4.3, which sets out the required procedure for different Contract Values, the minimum number of tenders that must be invited and how invitations to tender must be publicised.

Darren Judge – Category Manager

9 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

9.1 Yes

10 **Key Decision**

10.1 Yes

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 KDD-26-40

12 **Background Papers**

12.1 N/A

13 **Appendices**

13.1 N/A

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Emergency Powers Decision Report

GM Agency Contract Retender

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: HR&OD
Directorate: resources
Report Author: Jingwen Yang, Workforce Business Partner
Email: Jingwen.yang@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision:

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1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

Approval for Oldham Council to continue participation in the Greater Manchester collaborative Managed Service Provider (MSP) contract for contingent labour following completion of the GM-wide procurement exercise and award of the contract to Reed Specialist Recruitment Ltd.

3. Reason for urgency

The Greater Manchester collaborative procurement exercise has been completed and a new contract has been awarded to Reed Specialist Recruitment Ltd. Continued participation requires a formal decision to enable the Council to access the new contract arrangements when they commence.

The timing of the decision does not align with the Council's ordinary decision-making timetable, and a delay could impact the Council's ability to access a compliant and established route for engaging temporary agency workers where required to maintain service delivery.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

Failure to approve continued participation in the contract may:

- Reduce the Council's ability to secure temporary staffing resources when required, potentially affecting service delivery.

- Increase pressure on existing employees, particularly in services experiencing recruitment challenges or fluctuating demand.
- Require the Council to undertake a separate procurement exercise, increasing administrative burden and procurement costs.
- Reduce opportunities to benefit from Greater Manchester collaborative purchasing arrangements, supplier management arrangements and standardised contractual terms.
- Result in less procurement assurance and compliance than that offered through the GM collaborative contract.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

There is no direct cost associated with participation in the Greater Manchester collaborative contract and no minimum spend commitment. Costs are only incurred where agency workers are engaged and are met from existing service budgets through established approval processes.

Failure to continue participation may remove access to the benefits of collaborative purchasing, including negotiated rates and introductory fees achieved through the scale of the Greater Manchester arrangement.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee walsh
Date 8 October 2026
Comments

Approval of this decision has no direct financial implications and does not require any additional budget provision. Participation in the Greater Manchester collaborative Managed Service Provider (MSP) contract does not commit the Council to a minimum level of expenditure, with any agency staffing costs being met from existing approved service budgets and subject to established approval and financial control processes. The collaborative arrangement is also expected to support value for money through aggregated purchasing and supplier management, with no adverse impact on the Council's overall financial position anticipated.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name: Alex Bougatef
Date:06th October 2026
Comments:

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed

a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year, so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed, as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision is required, and the matter cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.

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Principal Decision Report

Decision between £100k-£250k or the Executive Director/Director considers it to be of such significance that a record of the decision would ensure transparency and accountability.

Subject:	Continued Participation in the Greater Manchester Managed Service Provider contract
Decision maker:	Chief Executive
Decision date:	
Report author:	Jingwen Yang, Workforce Business Partner
Ward (s):	All

Reason for decision

Approval is sought for Oldham Council to continue participation in the Greater Manchester (GM) collaborative Managed Service Provider (MSP) contract for the provision of contingent labour following completion of the GM-wide procurement exercise and award of the contract to Reed Specialist Recruitment Ltd.

Continued participation will enable the Council to access a compliant, established framework for sourcing agency workers where temporary staffing solutions are required to maintain service delivery.

Whilst participation does not require a direct financial commitment, the decision is considered sufficiently significant due to the Council's ongoing utilisation of the contract for contingent labour and its strategic role in supporting service delivery across the organisation.

Recommendation(s)

1. To approve Oldham Council's continued participation in the Greater Manchester collaborative Managed Service Provider contract for contingent labour awarded to Reed Specialist Recruitment Ltd.
2. To authorise officers to utilise the contract for the engagement of agency workers in accordance with the Council's procurement, financial and workforce management procedures.

Background

The Council participates in the Greater Manchester collaborative arrangement for the procurement and management of contingent labour. This arrangement provides access to agency workers through a Managed Service Provider model, ensuring compliance with procurement legislation whilst delivering a consistent approach across Greater Manchester authorities.

The Greater Manchester HR Collaborative is a collaborative of 10 Authorities who work in partnership to procure and manage several workforce and workforce system related contracts. The Managed Service Provider contract is committed to by all 10 Greater Manchester Local Authorities along with Blackpool Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council, Greater Manchester Police and Warrington Council.

A collaborative procurement exercise has recently been completed by Greater Manchester partners to secure a replacement contract for contingent labour services. Following a competitive tender process, the contract has been awarded to Reed Specialist Recruitment Ltd from July 2027 – January 2030 for extension for another year in accordance with the contract terms.

The MSP arrangement does not commit the Council to any minimum spend and there are no direct costs associated with participating in the contract. The Council only incurs costs where agency workers are engaged to meet temporary workforce requirements. Charges are met from existing service budgets and are subject to established approval processes.

The contract provides a mechanism through which temporary staffing requirements can be sourced where services identify a business need, in accordance with existing approval arrangements.

Participation in the GM arrangement also supports collaboration across Greater Manchester, delivering standardised contractual terms, improved supplier management and enhanced governance arrangements.

As part of the Greater Manchester collaborative procurement exercise, Oldham Council participated in the evaluation process alongside other GM authorities. Internal subject matter experts from HR & OD, Children's Social Care, IT/Digital, Procurement, and Governance contributed to the assessment of bidders, helping to ensure the selected provider can meet the diverse contingent labour requirements of participating organisations.

Following completion of the procurement process, the contract has been awarded to Reed Specialist Recruitment Ltd.

Alternative option(s) to be considered *(please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s)*

Option 1: Continue participation in the GM MSP contract (Recommended)

This option provides:

- Access to a compliant and competitively procured contract.
- Consistent contractual arrangements across GM authorities.
- Effective management and oversight of agency spend.
- Access to a broad supply chain of agency providers through a single managed arrangement.

- Reduced procurement and contract management burden for the Council.

Option 2: Withdraw from the GM arrangement and procure independently

This option is not recommended as it would:

- Require the Council to undertake its own procurement exercise.
- Increase administrative and procurement costs.
- Delay access to temporary staffing resources.
- Reduce opportunities to benefit from collaborative purchasing arrangements and GM-wide supplier management.

Consultation *(include any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted)*

The Greater Manchester collaborative procurement exercise was undertaken on behalf of participating GM authorities.

Within Oldham Council, a coordinated evaluation and assessment process was completed to support the re-tender exercise. Representatives from the following services contributed to the evaluation of bids and the selection process:

- HR & OD
- Children's Social Care
- IT/Digital
- Procurement
- Governance

This collaborative approach ensured that the requirements of key service areas and contract users were appropriately considered throughout the tender evaluation process.

No conflicts of interest have been identified.

Risks

Service Delivery Risk

Failure to continue participation may reduce the Council's ability to secure temporary staffing resources when required, impacting service delivery.

Procurement Risk

Alternative arrangements may not provide the same level of procurement compliance and assurance as the GM collaborative contract.

Workforce Risk

Inability to access temporary labour could increase pressure on existing employees, particularly in services experiencing recruitment challenges or fluctuating demand.

Financial Risk

Participation in the Greater Manchester HR Collaborative carries no direct cost, and actually allows for negotiation of preferred rates and introductory fees due to the significant footprint of the contract.

Implications

Financial	There are no direct financial implications arising from approval of this decision. Continued participation in the Greater Manchester collaborative Managed Service Provider (MSP) contract does not commit the Council to any minimum level of expenditure and does not require additional budget provision. The Council will only incur costs where agency workers are engaged to meet identified temporary staffing requirements, with all expenditure being met from existing approved service budgets and subject to established financial regulations, workforce controls and approval processes. Participation in the collaborative arrangement also provides the opportunity to achieve value for money through aggregated purchasing power, negotiated rates and supplier management arrangements across participating authorities. No adverse impact on the Council's overall financial position is anticipated as a result of this decision. (Matthew Kearns – Finance Manager)
Procurement	This report does not contain any immediate procurement implications and Oldham Procurement acknowledge that a compliant procurement process was followed. Tom Pyne – Assistant Director Procurement, Contract Management and Social Value
HR	The continued participation in the Greater Manchester Managed Service Provider (MSP) contract supports the Council's workforce strategy by providing a compliant and coordinated mechanism for the engagement of agency workers where temporary staffing solutions are required to maintain service delivery. The contract will continue to provide access to a managed supply chain for contingent labour, supporting services to meet short-term workforce pressures, address skills shortages, and

	maintain operational resilience where permanent recruitment has proven challenging or where temporary capacity is required. Participation in the contract does not alter the Council's commitment to reducing reliance on agency workers wherever possible. The use of agency labour will remain subject to existing workforce governance, recruitment controls, and financial approval processes. Agency engagement should continue to be considered a temporary solution whilst longer-term workforce planning, recruitment, retention, and succession planning initiatives are progressed. The contract supports workforce flexibility by providing access to temporary labour where required to maintain service delivery, The arrangement complements, rather than replaces, the Council's approach to substantive recruitment and workforce planning. No further workforce implications. Natasha Needham Workforce Business Partner 06.10.2026
Legal	The report confirms that the contract has been awarded following a competitive procurement exercise undertaken on behalf of participating authorities, providing a compliant route for engagement of labour. The Council participating in the arrangement does not create a commitment to any minimum level of expenditure, with agency worker engagements remaining subject to the Council's established financial, procurement and workforce approval processes. Any call-off arrangements and use of agency workers must continue to comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, Financial Regulations and relevant employment and agency worker legislation. Alex Bougatef – Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	n/a
Other	n/a

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes / No

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	Yes / No
Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	Yes / No

Appendices (including any relevant Background Papers)

1. Agency Award Report 2026 signed attached

Report author sign-off	
Role	
Date of sign-off	

Approved by the Chief Executive following consultation with the political group leaders who were in attendance as follows:- Councillors: Decision made under the authorisation contained in Section 9C (5) Delegations of Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) and Section 3.6 of Part 4 (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions.
Signed: Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive Dated:
Date of Leaders' Consultative meeting:

Summary of feedback from the political group leaders

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GM HR COLLABORATION CONTRACT AWARD REPORT

Contract Reference	GM Temporary Staffing Supply
Report For	GM HR Directors
Report Author	Vicky Castle
Team	Tender evaluation team:- Vicky Castle, GM Projects and Contracts Officer Vicky Marshall – Tameside Council Jingwen Yang - Oldham Council Cal Aston – Trafford Council Karen Fairhurst – Bolton Council Jessica Hall – Bury Council Kate Moore – Rochdale Council Natalie Vella – Wigan Council Jo Rabbani – Manchester City Council Janine Hayes – Salford City Council All collaborating organisations were involved in drafting the specification to ensure all requirements were met.
Date	14 September 2026
Contract Value	£100 million per year
Framework Used	YPO Framework Agreement 1140 – Managing Recruitment and Resourcing, Lot 1: Managing Temporary Recruitment for Local Authorities.

OVERVIEW

Star Procurement on behalf of members of the HROD Collaboration tendered for the provision of an agency staffing managed service. All GM authorities and committed to the contract along with: -

- Blackpool Council
- Blackburn with Darwen Council
- Greater Manchester Police
- Warrington Council

The contract value above is indicative of the costs we incur for engaging temporary workers and does not represent the fee paid to Reed as the Managed Service Provider. Reed received around £372k in the last year based on agency staff fees of £100m

Spend by organisation is shown on the next page for 2025/26:-

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Client	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Total
GMCA - Blackburn With Darwen Council	166	148	181	206	138	105	91	73	92	115	126	128	1,570
GMCA - Blackpool Council	85	87	106	137	105	121	178	177	199	201	201	202	1,801
GMCA - Bolton Council	932	716	775	967	728	768	1,021	853	896	827	800	824	10,106
GMCA - Bury Council	891	753	768	985	742	754	914	724	802	741	682	650	9,406
GMCA - Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue	19	27	30	30	18	25	30	29	45	21	35	84	393
GMCA - Greater Manchester Police	237	219	227	264	212	186	266	231	234	259	267	268	2,870
GMCA - Manchester City Council	1,915	1,591	1,589	2,015	1,617	1,742	2,114	1,877	1,764	1,826	1,803	1,914	21,765
GMCA - Oldham Council	1,143	928	947	1,180	879	905	1,070	851	1,007	898	896	962	11,665
GMCA - Rochdale Borough Council	732	620	644	799	652	643	722	627	713	751	676	653	8,233
GMCA - Salford City Council	409	396	385	481	366	335	457	369	341	395	335	370	4,638
GMCA - Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	397	329	342	462	392	395	482	358	375	312	365	328	4,538
GMCA - Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	1,021	872	931	1,076	787	761	948	716	797	781	763	740	10,195
GMCA - Trafford Council	555	491	488	645	503	489	615	507	506	500	503	463	6,266
GMCA - Transport For Greater Manchester	100	44	44	69	59	72	63	34	26	30	20	23	584
GMCA - Warrington Borough Council	235	185	193	275	214	184	237	195	146	168	204	186	2,422
GMCA - Wigan Council	578	460	451	567	443	462	599	410	517	373	368	388	5,616
Total	**9,413**	**7,868**	**8,099**	**10,158**	**7,857**	**7,947**	**9,806**	**8,031**	**8,461**	**8,199**	**8,044**	**8,184**	**102,067**

The contract will commence on 28 July 2027 until 27 January 2030 with one annual renewal allowed potentially extending the contract to January 2031. All councils confirmed the budget is available and with the following KPI's: -

Key Performance Indicators
The successful tenderer will be required to attend an annual contract management meeting and participate in quarterly catch-up meetings with the GM collaborative group.
This meeting will include a review of the following indicative performance indicators.

Service level	Target
Order performance	
Accept and progress order	Within 1 hour (raised 8:00-17:00 Mon to Fri)
Time to fill (shift management) urgent roles Tier 1 – by agreed start date	95%
Time to fill (shift management) non-urgent roles Tier 1 – by agreed start date	95%
Time to fill (shift management) urgent roles Tier 2 – by agreed start date	95%
Time to fill (shift management) non-urgent roles Tier 1 – by agreed start date	95%
Fulfilment level	95%
% Workers provided via a talent pool	10% per annum
Compliance	
Proof of ID and ETW	100%
Referencing levels met	100%
Supplier audits conducted	Bi-annually
Supplier audits provided	Quarterly (or as requested)
Adherence to relevant authorisation process	100%
DfE Assignment Template sent within deadline	100%

Full KPIs and SLAs will be developed as part of the contract process.

The collaboration may review and revise KPI's by mutual agreement with the Provider over the term of the Framework.

BACKGROUND

The first managed service was established amongst core GM Authorities (excluding Manchester CC) in 2008 and this new contract will be the 5th generation of service.
The current contract has now been in place for 5 years and is working well with benefits realised. The original cessation date of the contract was 28 January 2025, however, we extended for a further 18 months to facilitate the exploration of alternative solutions.

The agreement was originally established to:

- Implement a consistent, collaborative approach across GM and other participating partners in terms of contract management
- Provide GM collaboration members an efficient and effective platform for temporary staffing supply
- Improve hiring manager experience and also reduce the time taken to hire suitable candidates
- Realise significant cost savings by purchasing services collaboratively

The current contact is with Reed Talent Solutions and has largely been successful although there are still challenges with the QSW market with the introduction of the DfE statutory requirements

SCOPE OF CONTRACT

The contract allows a managed service provision across the organisations which supports the following requirements: -

- To operate in strategic partnership with the collaboration and, where appropriate/necessary, offer guidance on workforce planning, fulfilment methods and process governance.
- Operationally advise on agency worker need, method, engagement and rates. Additional support in terms of advertising/marketing campaigns may be required for hard to fill/niche roles along with direct contact with agencies to discuss the role requirements.
- Agency worker ordering including technical support.
- Supply chain management (including auditing)
- Vacancy filling including support through the process
- Timesheeting
- Invoicing
- Issue resolution
- Monitoring and reporting
- Ad-hoc permanent recruitment support for hard to fill/niche roles
- Data capture to support with DfE reporting requirements for each organisation

PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The GM collaboration chose to procure a new agency staffing managed service via an existing, dedicated procurement framework administered by YPO. This framework allows for flexible managed service solutions and has an optimum number of capable providers. The mini competition allowed providers, by responding to the Quality Assessment Questions and Pricing Evaluation, to offer proposals for bespoke, innovative and flexible solutions to the collaboration's strategic and operational needs.

By being awarded the right to supply through the YPO Framework, GM is satisfied that tenderers will have already satisfied core operational and technological criteria.

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The timeline for the procurement process is shown in the table below: -

Activity	Date
Issue of Invitation to Tender	Thursday 2 July 2026
Clarification questions deadline	Friday 17 July 2026
Tender submission deadline	Thursday 6 August 12 noon
Evaluation of tenders	Wednesday 26 August
Tender Presentation/Interview (if required)	8 & 9 September
Standstill period begins	November 2026
Standstill period ends	November 2026
Expected date of Contract Award	December 2026
Contract Commencement Date	28 July 2027

The following companies bid: -

- Adecco
- Comensura
- Matrix
- Reed Talent Solutions

The evaluation was based on:-

- Quality 40%
- Social Value 20%
- Price 40%

The moderation session was hosted by the Category Manager at YPO, providing neutrality across the discussions and final scores.

The evaluation results are as shown in the table below:-

	Price Score	Quality Score	Social Value Score	TOTAL Weighted Score	Ranking
Adecco	28.63%	32.60%	8.47%	69.72%	4
Comensura	35.68%	36.80%	11.10%	83.53%	2
Matrix	37.27%	27.00%	9.59%	73.74%	3
Reed	40.00%	39.80%	20.00%	99.75%	1

As there was a clear and obvious winning bid, the evaluation panel felt presentation interviews were not required.

EVALUATION RESULTS

The contract is to be awarded to Reed Talent Solutions.

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BENEFITS / SAVINGS

- No implementation period or fee – the supplier is already well established with our collaboration and are providing a quality and competitive service, therefore a transition period or change in process is not required
- Agency Fees remain relatively stable in comparison to the current contract, with some roles attracting lower fees under the new contract and others remaining unchanged. Fee examples are shown in the table below:-

Job Category	Pay Rate (hourly)	Current Contract Fee	New Contract Fee	% change
Admin & Clerical	£19	£0.55	£0.59	7%
Admin & Clerical	£25	£0.55	£0.50	-9%
IT	£19	£1.75	£1.00	-43%
IT	£25	£1.75	£1.75	-
Manual Labour	Up to £18.99	£0.55	£0.95	73%
Procurement	£19	£1.30	£1.00	-23%
Procurement	£25	£2.40	£1.25	-48%
Social Care Qualified	Up to £29.99	£2.40	£2.40	-
Social Care Qualified	Over £30	£2.40	£2.85	19%
Waste Management	Up to £18.99	£0.55	£0.50	-9%

- For the purposes of evaluation, pricing was calculated by totalling the agency and MSP fees for all agency worker job categories. The results were as follows:-

Supplier	Total Pricing	% difference to Reed
Reed	£207.37	
Matrix	£222.58	7%
Comensura	£232.51	12%
Adecco	£232.51	40%

- Pricing for permanent recruitment was included in the tender (for ad-hoc difficult to fill roles) but was not included in the evaluation. Including this pricing would have skewed the results significantly if a bidder used fairly low percentages against permanent roles. Reed have a flat fee of 15% of annual salary for any permanent role they are asked to fill. Other bidders came in with increasing scales of fees from 5% to 13% dependant on salary. The significant spend on the contract will be contingent labour and so the savings here far outweigh the higher fees we will incur for any permanent roles.

SOCIAL VALUE BENEFITS

The policies / commitments clearly show work undertaken with Voluntary and Community sector and was a comprehensive response showing a clear commitment to the GM region, including a review of social aims and goals which have been undertaken with specific targets and measures put in place. The commitments Reed have included for this contract are shown at Appendix 1.
Reed must update the SV Portal quarterly, so we are able to track their progress against the commitments shown in Appendix 1.

RISKS / ISSUES

There are few risks as Reed are the incumbent supplier. Reed have shown a clear commitment to improving the service and included good innovative approaches to tackling supply in their tender response.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve award of the GM Temporary Staffing Supply contract to Reed Talent Solutions.

APPROVED BY	Sam Betts on behalf of the HROD Collaboration
POSITION	Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development, Salford City Council
DATE	24th September 2026
SIGNATURE	

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APPENDIX 1

GM Temporary Staffing Supply: Social Value Commitments

Supplier: Reed Talent Solutions
Status: Submitted
Contract Value: GBP 400,000,000

Committed:
GBP 107,524,875
Target Add (%):
26.88%

Summary Results by Measure

Ref	Item	Proxy Value	Units	Target		Target Description
				No.	GBP	
NT1	No. of full time equivalent direct local employees (FTE) hired or retained for the duration of the contract	GBP 34,936	no. people FTE	40.83	GBP 1,426,553	RTS currently has 10 full-time employees supporting this contract, all based within Greater Manchester. This includes 4 members of our Direct Sourcing Team, 4 Account Management staff, 1 Tech Delivery Consultant and 1 Screening Specialist, all living within M postcode areas. Should vacancies arise, our strategy is to recruit locally through Reed's Manchester office, advertising roles on Reed.co.uk, LinkedIn and local job boards. We will also utilise relationships with Jobcentre Plus locations across Greater Manchester, including Manchester Central, Oldham, Rochdale and Stockport, sharing vacancies and promoting opportunities through local employment advisers. Vacancies will additionally be promoted through local community networks, colleges and employability partners to maximise access for local residents. This approach ensures replacement roles are filled by local people wherever possible, maintaining employment, skills development and economic benefit within Greater Manchester.
NT2	Percentage of full time equivalent local employees (FTE) on contract - employed directly or through supply chain	GBP 0	%		GBP	
NT3	No. of full time equivalent employees (FTE) hired on the contract who are long term unemployed (unemployed for a year or longer)	GBP 20,429	no. people FTE		GBP	
NT4	No. of full time equivalent employees (FTE) hired on the contract who are NOT in Employment, Education, or Training (NEETs)	GBP 15,382.90	no. people FTE		GBP	
NT4a	No. of full time equivalent 16-25 year old care leavers (FTE) hired on the contract	GBP 15,382.90	no. people FTE		GBP	
NT5	No. of full time equivalent employees (FTE) aged 18+ years hired on the contract who are rehabilitating or ex-offenders.	GBP 24,269	no. people FTE		GBP	
NT6	No. of full time equivalent disabled employees (FTE) hired on the contract	GBP 16,605	no. people FTE		GBP	

NT8	No. of staff hours spent on local school and college visits supporting pupils e.g. delivering career talks, curriculum support, literacy support, safety talks (including preparation time)	GBP 16.93	no. staff hours	112	GBP 1,896	Through our established partnerships with Salford Foundation and Inspiring Futures, RTS will deliver a minimum of 8 school and college engagement sessions annually, supporting career awareness, employability and skills development for local young people. Chloe Brown, our Schools Engagement Lead, will take responsibility for coordinating and delivering this commitment. Sessions will be delivered at Bury Church of England High School (BL9), Bolton Muslim girls school (BL3) Hyde High School (SK14), Edgar Wood Academy (OL10), Holy Family Catholic College (M1 2), The Lowry Academy (M28), All Hallows Catholic High School (M6), Manchester Enterprise Academy (M22), Droylsden Academy (M43) and Albion Academy (M5). Activities will include mock interviews, careers insight sessions and employability workshops. Each session lasts circa 3.5 hours. Based on 8 visits per year, RTS will deliver 28 staff hours annually. We will look to exceed on these hours through support supplier volunteering.
NT9	No. of weeks of training opportunities (BTEC, City & Guilds, NVQ, HNC - Level 2,3, or 4+) on the contract that have either been completed during the year, or that will be supported by the organisation until completion in the following years	GBP 317.82	no. weeks		GBP	
NT10	No. of weeks of apprenticeships or T-Levels (Level 2,3, or 4) provided on the contract (completed or supported by the organisation)	GBP 251.79	no. weeks		GBP	
NT11	No. of hours of 'support into work' assistance provided to unemployed people through career mentoring, including mock interviews, CV advice, and careers guidance	GBP 105.58	no. hrs (total session duration)*no. attendees	2,520	GBP 266,062	RTS will deliver a targeted programme of job fairs across Greater Manchester to support unemployed people into work. Activity will be led by Simon Butler, GM Direct Sourcing Team Senior Consultant, who will use established relationships with Jobcentre Plus, Ingeus and local authority employability teams to provide career advice and access to local opportunities. Working with Manchester, Rochdale and Bury Jobcentre Plus, Ingeus and Rochdale Council, we will deliver a minimum of 6 job fairs annually: 1in Bury, 2 in Manchester, and 1 each in Tameside, Stockport and Rochdale. Based on our previous experience sessions typically last 3.5 hours and we meet an average of 30 people a session. We will promote roles across Administration, Customer Service, Housing, Trades, Grounds Maintenance and Social Care. Support will include CV advice, pre-screening, role matching and XMS registration. Last year we helped 6 unemployed people gain temporary assignments at councils via the job fair route.
NT12	No. of weeks spent on meaningful work placements or pre-employment course; 1-6 weeks student placements (unpaid)	GBP 194.50	no. weeks		GBP	
NT13	Meaningful work placements that pay Minimum or National Living wage according to eligibility - 6 weeks or more (internships)	GBP 194.50	no. weeks		GBP	
NT14	Total amount (£) spent with VCSEs within your supply chain	GBP 0.12	£		GBP	
NT15	Provision of expert business advice to VCSEs and MSMEs (e.g. financial advice / legal advice / HR advice/HSE)	GBP 101	no. staff expert hours	16	GBP 1,616	Annual masterclasses delivered by Keith Rosser, Chair of the Better Hiring Institute and Reed's Screening Director, and Iain MacLeod, Reed EDIB Specialist, will provide free advice on safer recruitment, screening, compliance, inclusive hiring and EDIB practice. Sessions will also include updates on the Employment Rights Bill, helping organisations understand impacts on recruitment, workforce management and compliance requirements. Available to existing and prospective VCSEs, local suppliers and SMEs, these sessions will strengthen capability, support growth and improve recruitment outcomes across Greater Manchester. Reed will promote these opportunities through established supplier, VCSE and employability networks, alongside RTS social media, VCSE forums and GM business networks. Each event will be 2 hours in duration, delivered annually, and measured via Thrive and the SVP.
NT16	Equipment or resources donated to VCSEs (£ equivalent value)	GBP 1	£		GBP	

NT17	Number of voluntary hours donated to support VCSEs (excludes expert business advice)	GBP 16.93	no. staff volunteering hours		GBP	
NT18	Total amount (£) spent in local supply chain through the contract	GBP 0.32	£	201,519,850	GBP 64,637,556	We have curated an effective local supply chain that currently delivers an average £4.11m a month. Through continued collaboration via tailored tiering and committees we will commit a minimum of £201,519,850 over the contract term. This includes spend with key suppliers in crucial categories, including QSW specialists Eden Brown (M1 - £5.6m pa), Liquid Personnel (M1 £4.8pa) and Randstad (M3 - £1mpa); legal suppliers Sellick (M1- £7m pa) and Venn (M3 £2.4m); interim suppliers Michael Page (M3-£1m pa) and NES (M2- £103k pa); manual labour and multi-sector provider Adecco (M2-£1.239m pa); and Search (M3-£103kpa. Alongside other suppliers in GM postcodes, generating £954k spend pa such as Sheldon Philips (M4) Reed has a dedicated Manchester-based sourcing team focused on delivering the GM contract, supported by specialist consultants across QSW, Care & Support, IT and Engineering. Current average spend is £2.091m per month, with additional investment planned in legal and engineering.
NT19	Total amount (£) spent through contract with local micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)	GBP 0.32	£	128,212,763	GBP 41,124,285	Local SME engagement is central to our delivery model and social value strategy. We prioritise local suppliers across core recruitment categories, ensuring local delivery and maximising regional economic impact whilst expanding borough suppliers. Current spend via local SME supply chain is £2.616m per month, £31.4m pa. Our SME supply chain includes Qualified Social Work providers Portman Recruitment (M2- £5,13m pa), Social Work Partners (M2 -£3m pa), Social Personnel (M2 - £3m pa), Vitalis Social Care (M3- £2.5m pa) and Tempest Resourcing (M4-£1.6m pa); Manual Labour providers Bamford Contract Services (OL1), C&H Agency (OL1- £3.7m pa), Travis Hughes Ltd (OL1-£2.65m pa) and Jark (WA1); Engineering specialist Deekay (M41-£725k pa); Care and Support providers PS Recruitment Specialists Ltd (SK4-£2.613m pa) and Cucumber Recruitment Ltd (M41 -£895k pa); and Operational Recruitment providers Jobwise Ltd (M2), Linda Taylors Ltd (M27), Cucumber Catering Ltd (M41) and Peel Recruitment (WA1).
NT20	No. of employees on the contract that have been provided access for at least 12 months to comprehensive and multidimensional wellbeing programmes	GBP 130.29	no. employees provided access	19	GBP 2,476	Reed is committed to providing all employees supporting the GM contract (FTE 19) with access to a comprehensive workplace wellbeing programme centred on work-life balance. Employees benefit from flexible and hybrid working arrangements, enhanced family-friendly policies, moving home leave and sabbatical opportunities. Our wellbeing offer includes discounted gym membership, a cycle-to-work scheme, an online wellbeing hub and a confidential Employee Assistance Programme supporting physical and mental health. The wellbeing hub provides advice on sleep, financial wellbeing and fitness.To promote engagement and inclusion, employees can access High Achiever events, long-service awards and diversity initiatives. Career wellbeing is supported through mentoring, professional qualification sponsorship and learning sessions. "A comprehensive and well-rounded wellbeing programme offering valuable support for both my physical and mental wellbeing." Local RBP.
NT21	Equality, diversity and inclusion training provided both for staff and supply chain staff	GBP 101	no. hrs (total session duration)*no. attendees		GBP	
NT22	Percentage of your procurement contracts that include commitments to ethical employment practices in the local and global supply chain, including verification that there is zero tolerance of modern slavery, child labour and other relevant requirements such as elimination of false self-employment, unfair zero hours contracts and blacklists	GBP 0	%		GBP	
NT23	Percentage of contracts with the supply chain on which Social Value commitments, measurement and monitoring are required	GBP 0	%		GBP	

NT24	Initiatives aimed at reducing crime (e.g. support for local youth groups, lighting for public spaces, etc.)	GBP 1	£ invested including staff time		GBP	
NT25	Initiatives to be taken to tackle homelessness (supporting temporary housing schemes, etc.)	GBP 1	£ invested including staff time		GBP	
NT26	Initiatives taken or supported to engage people in health interventions (e.g. stop smoking, obesity, alcoholism, drugs, etc.) or wellbeing initiatives in the community, including physical activities for adults and children	GBP 1	£ invested including staff time		GBP	
NT27	Initiatives to be taken to support older, disabled and vulnerable people to build stronger community networks (e.g. befriending schemes, digital inclusion clubs)	GBP 1	£ invested including staff time		GBP	
NT28	Donations and/or in-kind contributions to specific local community projects (£ & materials)	GBP 1	£ value	62,400	GBP 62,400	For the Greater Manchester contract, Reed will ringfence three places within the Reed Entrepreneurial Fund to young people living in Greater Manchester, creating opportunities for aspiring business owners. Inspired by our founder Sir Alec Reed's journey and aligned to our purpose of improving lives through work, each successful entrepreneur will receive £20,000 funding, tailored business support and access to experienced mentors. Working with local partners, education providers and community networks, we will promote the fund to ensure diverse and underrepresented young people can access the opportunity. Participants will benefit from expert guidance, networking opportunities and profile-raising support, helping them overcome barriers, build sustainable businesses and contribute to Greater Manchester's economy. In addition, we will continue our £600 annual donations and Christmas gifts for Manchester leaving care, Salford Next Step, Tameside care leavers and children residential sites.
NT29	No. of hours volunteering time provided to support local community projects	GBP 16.93	no. staff volunteering hours	120	GBP 2,032	RTS will deliver 30 volunteering hours annually across Greater Manchester, supporting community wellbeing, food poverty initiatives and environmental sustainability. Volunteering activity will be delivered during working hours and conducted by the account management and delivery teams led by Mo Akuji and Kirsty Walsh. Reed will provide 10 hours with Urban Outreach (Bolton) supporting warehouse operations and packing essential food and Christmas parcels for vulnerable individuals and families. We will also provide 10 staff volunteering hours per year with Bread-and-Butter Thing, assisting with food store replenishment and community food distribution activities to help address food insecurity. We will deliver 10 staff volunteering hours per year supporting environmental projects, including volunteering at Nansen Park with pathway clearance and maintenance activities at Heaton Park. We exceed our commitments through the use of the supplier panel.
NT30	Support provided to help local community draw up their own Community Charter or Stakeholder Plan	GBP 1	£ invested including staff time		GBP	
NT31	Savings in CO2e emissions on contract achieved through de-carbonisation (i.e. a reduction of the carbon intensity of processes and operations, specify how these are to be achieved) against a specific benchmark.	GBP 244.63	tCO2e		GBP	
NT32	Car miles saved on the project as a result of a green transport programme or equivalent (e.g. cycle to work programmes, public transport or car pooling programmes, etc.)	GBP 0.06	miles saved		GBP	

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NT33	Car miles driven using low or no emission staff vehicles included on project as a result of a green transport programme	GBP 0.02	miles driven		GBP	
NT35	Percentage of procurement contracts that include sustainable procurement commitments or other relevant requirements and certifications (e.g. to use local produce, reduce food waste, and keep resources in circulation longer.)	GBP 0	% of contracts		GBP	
NT50	Innovative measures to promote local skills and employment to be delivered on the contract - these could be e.g. co-designed with stakeholders or communities, or aiming at delivering benefits while minimising carbon footprint from initiatives, etc.	GBP 1	£ invested inc. time, materials, equipment etc		GBP	
NT51	Innovative measures to promote and support responsible business to be delivered on the contract - these could be e.g. co-designed with stakeholders or communities, or aiming at delivering benefits while minimising carbon footprint from initiatives, etc.	GBP 1	£ invested inc. time, materials, equipment etc		GBP	
NT52	Innovative measures to enable healthier, safer and more resilient communities to be delivered on the contract - these could be e.g. co-designed with stakeholders or communities, or aiming at delivering benefits while minimising carbon footprint from initiatives, etc.	GBP 1	£ invested inc. time, materials, equipment etc		GBP	
NT53	Innovative measures to safeguard the environment and respond to the climate emergency to be delivered on the contract - these could be e.g. co-designed with stakeholders or communities, or aiming at delivering benefits while minimising carbon footprint from initiatives, etc.	GBP 1	£ invested inc. time, materials, equipment etc		GBP	

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Emergency Powers Decision Report

Council Web Team: Bolstering Capacity

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Customer Experience
Directorate: Resources
Report Author: Fran Lautman, Assistant Director of Customer Experience
Email: Fran.Lautman@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 2 November 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

To approve the bolstering of Web Team capacity. This will increase resiliency and ensure a council wide review and re-write of all content ensuring content is written in Plain English, meets accessibility standards and is easy to use.

3. Reason for urgency

The current Web Team capacity is not sustainable to both sustain and develop the website. This leads to limited development and minimal content changes.

The aim is to make digital services easier for residents to use from start to finish. Where appropriate, residents should be able to:

- find clear and accurate information quickly
- understand what they need to do
- complete applications, requests and reports online
- use their customer account to view and manage their interactions with the Council
- track the progress of applications, reports and issues

- receive appropriate updates without having to contact the Council for progress information.

Increasing Web Team capacity will allow the Council to:

- use customer and web data to identify and prioritise opportunities for channel shift
- reduce avoidable telephone, email and face-to-face contact
- make more Council services transactional online where appropriate
- improve the quality and accessibility of online information
- make it easier for residents to find information and complete tasks
- improve the use of the customer account so residents can track their interactions with the Council
- provide dedicated support to service areas through a business partnering model
- maintain consistent standards for accessibility, plain English and user-centred content
- provide greater resilience for the day-to-day management of Council websites
- measure the impact of digital improvements and use this evidence to inform further work.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

Content will remain inaccurate and of our date in some instances resulting inconsistent advice and guidance.

Limited/ no capacity to meet the needs of services.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

If approval is not granted, the Council will avoid the estimated cost of circa £253,000 associated with the fixed-term posts.

If approval is not granted, the Council will avoid the estimated cost of circa £253,000 associated with the fixed-term posts. However, this may result in reduced capacity within the Web Team to deliver planned digital and web development activities, potentially leading to delays in project delivery, increased reliance on external resources, missed opportunities to improve customer access to online services, and a reduced ability to realise any associated efficiency savings or service improvements.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh

Date 05/06/26

Comments

The report seeks approval to establish one Senior Content Officer and two Content Officer posts within the Web Team on a fixed-term basis for 20 months at an estimated total cost of £253k. The additional capacity will increase resilience within the Web Team and support a council-wide review and rewrite of website content. It will also provide the foundations for further development and improvement of the Council's website.

The proposal will be funded from within existing Resources Directorate budgets in 2026/27. Funding requirements for 2027/28 and 2028/29 will be considered as part of the annual budget-setting process and incorporated into the Corporate Priorities budget, subject to approval.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef

Date 05th October 2026

Comments
The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required and it cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.

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Principle Decision Report

Decision below £250k

Subject:	Council Web Team: Bolstering Capacity
Decision maker: Senior Officer	Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive
Decision date:	2 November 2026
Report author:	Fran Lautman, Assistant Director of Customer Experience Gordon Lee, Web Services Manager
Ward (s):	N/A

Reason for decision

The Council's Web Team currently consists of two permanent officers - a Team Manager and a Senior Officer. The team is responsible for the day-to-day management and development of the Council website, Council service microsites and staff intranet.

Current capacity provides limited resilience during periods of leave or absence and means resources must be carefully prioritised between day-to-day content updates and development work.

The additional capacity will oversee and overhaul of content on the website to ensure it's written in Plain English, meets accessibility standards and is easy to use. There is also an opportunity to make better use of the Council's digital channels to reduce avoidable telephone, email and face-to-face contact. Additional capacity would allow the Council to use customer contact and web data to identify high-demand services and improve digital information and transactions around resident needs.

Approval is therefore sought to strengthen the Web Team with one additional Senior Content Officer and two Content Officers for a fixed term of 20 months.

Recommendation(s)

Approve the addition of one Senior Content Officer and two Content Officers to the Web Team for a fixed term of 20 months.

1. Background

1.1 The Council's Web Team has been part of Customer Operations since 1 October 2026. The team currently has two permanent officers responsible for managing and developing the Council website, service microsites and staff intranet.

1.2 The current structure provides limited capacity and resilience and restricts the amount of proactive development and improvement work the team can undertake. The small team also provides limited resilience during periods of annual leave or other absence.

1.3 With two permanent officers, much of the Web Team's available capacity is required to maintain existing websites and respond to day-to-day requests. This limits the team's ability to proactively review and improve high-demand customer journeys, develop new digital transactions and use customer data to identify opportunities for channel shift.

1.4 Several services have identified a need for additional web content capacity. Rather than creating separate web resources within individual services, it is proposed that this capacity is provided centrally through the Web Team. This will provide a consistent approach to content, accessibility, plain English, user experience and digital development across the Council.

1.5 The Council website is an important route for residents to access information and services often acting as the front door to Council support and services. Where digital services work well, residents should be able to find the information they need, complete transactions and track requests without needing to telephone, email or visit the Council

1.6 Improving digital services therefore provides an opportunity to improve the resident experience while reducing avoidable demand through more resource-intensive channels.

2. Proposed approach

2.1 Additional capacity would allow the team to take a more proactive and evidence-led approach to improving Council services. Web analytics, telephone demand, email contacts and other available customer data would be used to identify services and customer journeys where there is the greatest opportunity for improvement.The team would work with services to understand why residents contact the Council and identify where better information, simpler processes or digital transactions could meet that need

2.2 The approach would be: **Understand demand → identify priority journeys → improve the digital service → measure the impact → continue to improve.**

2.3 This will ensure that resources are focused on improvements that respond to demonstrated resident needs rather than individual service requests alone.

2.4 A business partnering model is proposed, with Content Officers working closely with service areas. One Content Officer would support Adults and Children, with the other supporting Resources and Place.

2.5 The aim is to make digital services easier for residents to use from start to finish. Where appropriate, residents should be able to:

- find clear and accurate information quickly
- understand what they need to do
- complete applications, requests and reports online
- use their customer account to view and manage their interactions with the Council
- track the progress of applications, reports and issues
- receive appropriate updates without having to contact the Council for progress information.

2.6 Increasing Web Team capacity will allow the Council to:

- use customer and web data to identify and prioritise opportunities for channel shift
- reduce avoidable telephone, email and face-to-face contact
- make more Council services transactional online where appropriate
- improve the quality and accessibility of online information
- make it easier for residents to find information and complete tasks
- improve the use of the customer account so residents can track their interactions with the Council
- provide dedicated support to service areas through a business partnering model
- maintain consistent standards for accessibility, plain English and user-centred content
- provide greater resilience for the day-to-day management of Council websites
- measure the impact of digital improvements and use this evidence to inform further work.

2.7 The expanded team will:

- analyse web, telephone, email and other customer contact data to identify priority services and customer journeys
- review and improve high-demand web content and customer journeys
- work with services to identify opportunities to move appropriate contact and transactions online
- work alongside the IT Development Team to develop and improve online transactions

- support the development of the Council's customer account and opportunities for residents to track requests and applications
- work directly with service areas through a business partnering model
- maintain and improve content on the Council website, microsites and intranet
- ensure content meets accessibility, plain English and Council standards
- monitor the impact of improvements, including changes in digital use and assisted contact.

3. Alternative option(s) to be considered

Maintain the current Web Team structure

3.1 The Council could retain the existing two-person Web Team. This would avoid the additional staffing cost but would significantly limit the team's ability to undertake proactive service improvement and channel-shift activity alongside its existing responsibilities .Available capacity would continue to be focused primarily on maintaining existing services and responding to day-to-day requests.

Provide additional web capacity within individual services

3.2 Individual services could employ or identify their own staff to manage web content. This would provide additional capacity but risks creating inconsistent approaches to content, accessibility, plain English and user experience. It could also duplicate specialist web resource across the organisation. A centrally managed team, working with services through a business partnering model, provides additional capacity while maintaining common standards and allowing work to be prioritised using Council-wide customer demand.

Do not undertake proactive content management and channel-shift work

3.3 The Council could continue to provide existing digital services without a coordinated programme of improvement. This would reduce the opportunity to use customer demand data to identify avoidable contact and improve services. Residents may continue to use telephone, email or face-to-face channels where their needs could otherwise be met through effective digital self-service. Content would be out of date and inaccurate.

4. Consultation

4.1 This decision will be presented to Group Leaders for consideration.

5. Risks

5.1 Delivering channel shift will require services to work with the Web Team to review and improve existing customer journeys and web content. If services are unable to provide the required input, some improvements may take longer to deliver.

5.2 Some digital improvements will depend on development work or changes to other Council systems. Competing priorities and limited technical capacity could affect delivery timescales.

5.3 There is a risk that additional digital services do not reduce other forms of contact as expected. Using customer contact and web data to set priorities and measure the impact of changes will help manage this risk.

6. Implications

<table>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>
<u>Revenue Implications</u>

The report seeks approval for the addition of one Senior Content Officer and two Content Officers to the Web Team on a fixed-term basis for 20 months, at an estimated total cost of approximately £253k

<table>
<tr><th>Year</th><th>2026/27</th><th>2027/28</th><th>2028/29</th><th>Total</th></tr>
<tr><td>Grade 8</td><td>£23,660</td><td>£58,440</td><td>£14,950</td><td>£97,050</td></tr>
<tr><td>Grade 6</td><td>£18,950</td><td>£46,810</td><td>£12,020</td><td>£77,780</td></tr>
<tr><td>Grade 6</td><td>£18,950</td><td>£46,810</td><td>£12,020</td><td>£77,780</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>£61,560</td><td>£152,060</td><td>£38,990</td><td>£252,610</td></tr>
</table>

The table above includes the 2026/27 pay award of 3.3% and an annual increment for each post every April, however, it excludes any future pay awards.

The proposal will be funded from within existing Resources Directorate budgets in 2026/27. Funding requirements for 2027/28 and 2028/29 will be considered as part of the annual budget-setting process and incorporated into the Corporate Priorities budget, subject to approval.

(Matthew Kearns, Finance Manager)
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People	The proposal is supported as it seeks to address a recognised resilience and capacity risk within a small specialist team currently comprising two permanent posts. The creation of one Senior Content Officer and two Content Officer posts on a fixed-term basis will support a more strategic and proactive approach to service improvement through business partnering arrangements with directorates. This will in turn allow for service improvement and savings opportunities in the medium term as we drive towards greater digital and self serve options for residents. As these are fixed-term appointments, the Council will need to ensure compliance with fixed-term employee legislation, fair recruitment processes and appropriate workforce planning arrangements. Redundancy costs may apply if individuals have continuity of service, which will require forecasting in due course. Clear success measures should be established to evaluate the impact of the additional capacity and inform future decisions regarding the sustainability of these posts beyond the 20-month period. (Eleanor Devlin, Assistant Director of Workforce and Organisational Culture)
Legal	The Council has the power to determine its staffing structure and make arrangements for the discharge of its functions, provided the proposal is implemented in accordance with the Council's Constitution, approved decision-making processes and applicable legislation. As the proposal relates to the creation of fixed-term posts, any employment law implications arising from those arrangements should be considered, to the extent not already addressed in the People implications section. (Pamela Nsofor, Solicitor)
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	N/A (Jonathan Downs, Corporate Policy Lead)

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes
Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	Yes
Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	Yes

Report author sign-off	Gordon Lee
Role	Web Services Manager
Date of sign-off	05/10/26

Report author sign-off	Fran Lautman
Role	Assistant Director of Customer Experience
Date of sign-off	05/10/26

Approval	
Officer approval sign-off	
Role	
Date of sign-off	

Approval	
Member(s) approval sign-off	
Role	
Date of sign-off	

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Report to CABINET

Contractual Arrangement – IDOX Uniform Case Management Software

Portfolio Holder:

Officer Contact: Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Report Author: Peter Richards, Assistant Director for Planning & Development / Senga Henstock, ICT Senior Buyer

Email: peter.richards@oldham.gov.uk

2 November 2026

Reason for Decision

The Council's contract with IDOX LTD for the Uniform application is due for renewal. This report seeks approval to enter into a 36-month contract with IDOX LTD procured via Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Framework Agreement ID RM6259.

Executive Summary

Approval is sought to enter into a 3-year contract with Idox for the provision of the Uniform and TLC software solutions. Uniform is a business-critical application supporting a range of statutory regulatory services. The system is deeply integrated within existing business processes and technology platforms and contains significant volumes of operational and historical data. Transition to an alternative solution would result in substantial cost, resource requirements, and operational risk. Continued use of Idox Uniform and TLC ensures service continuity, maintains compliance with statutory obligations and provides ongoing access to supplier support, maintenance and product enhancements.

IDOX have confirmed that the annual cost of the system through the CCS Framework. The contract will maintain all existing services, support, and maintenance arrangements without any reduction in service provision.

In addition, two new modules are required to support reporting of data and statistics from Uniform and to monitor and manage the new Building Safety Levy:

- Idox Insights; and
- Exacom Building Safety Levy module.

Recommendations

To approve a 3-year direct award contract with IDOX Ltd via Crown Commercial Framework RM6259, including two additional modules.

Contractual Arrangement – IDOX Uniform Case Management Software

1 Background

1.1 In 2018, approval was granted for the migration from the Acolaid system to Idox Uniform. The Council subsequently entered into a three-year contract with Idox Software Ltd in November 2018. Since then, two contracts have been agreed, with the most recent extension coming to an end on 29 November 2026.

1.2 The migration project took longer than originally anticipated due to challenges associated with extracting data from Acolaid and mapping it accurately into Uniform. Following successful implementation, Uniform was approved to go live in October 2020 and has since become a business-critical application for Oldham Council. The system provides case management functionality for Planning, Building Control and Land Charges services.

1.3 Over the past eight years, the Council has made significant investment in the Uniform platform, including user training, software patches, and both minor and major version upgrades. This investment has ensured the system remains secure, up to date, and aligned with service requirements, while embedding Uniform within the Council's operational processes.

1.4 Having an appropriate software such as Idox Uniform and its associated programs (such as TLC for Land Charges) is crucial to delivering the council services that use the software, and those council services are all essential in delivering the Corporate Plan and its Priorities. Therefore, this contract is necessary to help deliver the Corporate Plan and its Priorities.

1.5 There are no new IT implications arising from this decision as it continues the Council's existing Idox Uniform arrangements and does not introduce a new system or immediate technology change. The renewal will maintain a secure, supported and resilient business-critical service while the Council reviews its future requirements and considers longer-term options. This supports the Council's Digital, Data and Technology Strategy by protecting service continuity and existing data in the short term, while providing the time needed to ensure any future solution is appropriately governed and aligned with the Council's plans for modern cloud-based, integrated and resident-focused services.

2 Current Position

2.1 The Council requires continued access to a Business-critical piece of software and to ensure continuity of service; approval is sought to enter into a new 3-year contract.

2.2 For information, the Council intends to review its requirements over the coming months with a view to initiating a project to define its future needs and commence a procurement exercise.

2.3 Given the timescales typically associated with a procurement of this nature, including requirements gathering, pre-market engagement, completion of the procurement process,

data migration, and implementation, it is anticipated that the end-to-end process will take approximately 24 months.

2.4 Therefore, the intention is to agree a three-year contract term with IDOX to ensure continuity of service for the Council while this work is undertaken. This approach will provide sufficient time to complete the review, procurement, and implementation of activities (including transfer of data should an alternative provider ultimately be identified) without introducing undue service or operational risk.

2.5 In addition to renewing the contract with IDOX for services and software as already provided, there are two additional modules that the council require to improve the services supported by Uniform and to meet a new legislative requirement (the Building Safety Levy).

2.7 The Idox Insights module is an add-on module to the standard system that allows better extraction, reporting and monitoring of data from Uniform (for both Planning and Building Control). Once set up, officers will be able to extract all data fields from Uniform and do so more easily, allowing more comprehensive monitoring of data related to applications for reporting on service improvement. At the moment, officers cannot extract all data fields, and those they can require manual extraction, requiring significant officer time to achieve.

2.8 Exacom (a separate software provider) have created a module to manage the new Building Safety Levy for local authorities that is compatible with Uniform (linking Building Control application data to the Building Safety Levy charges) and available through Idox. The Building Safety Levy is being introducing from October 2026 to place a levy on developments of 10 or more homes that will help fund the removal of unsafe cladding from historic developments following the findings resulting from the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017. Local Authorities are required to collect the Levy through Building Regulations before passing to the Government on a quarterly basis, but they can retain funds from the Levy to cover the costs they have incurred in managing the Levy (such as this Exacom software) and new burdens funding has been provided to help the set-up of the Levy.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1. Approve direct award and enter into a 3-year contract with IDOX and include the Technical Managed Service. In addition, purchase and install the two additional modules for Idox Insights and Exacom Building Safety Levy.

This is the preferred option addressed in this report.

Option 2. Approve direct award and enter into a 3-year contract with IDOX and not include the technical managed service. In addition, purchase and install the two additional modules for Idox Insights and Exacom Building Safety Levy.

This option is not recommended as the management of this bespoke software by the council independent of the provider Idox would be challenging and the benefits of a Technical Managed Service from Idox would result in less disruption, and a smoother running, of the software than if we managed the technical updates and issues that arise ourselves.

Option 3. Go out to market for a new application

This option is not recommended. There is insufficient time to undertake a full Procurement exercise before the existing arrangements expire. In addition, replacing a business-critical application would result in significant procurement, implementation, and change management costs.

The IDOX system is deeply embedded within the Council's service delivery and operational processes. Implementing a replacement solution would require a comprehensive transition plan, including detailed requirements of gathering, procurement, configuration, testing, data migration, user training, and post-implementation support. Developing and delivering such a transition programme would take considerably longer than the time currently available and could introduce significant operational and service continuity risks.

Proceeding with a new system at this stage could therefore adversely impact service delivery and place additional pressure on both service and ICT resources. As a result, this option is considered impractical at the present time and does not represent a viable solution without a substantially longer lead-in period.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 1. Approve direct award and enter into a 3-year contract with IDOX and include the Technical Managed Service.

5 Consultation

5.1 N/A

6 Financial Implications

6.1 Financial Implications are covered in the Part B report.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The Council may enter into a call-off contract under an appropriate framework agreement, subject to compliance with the framework requirements and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Contract documentation should be completed prior to commencement of the new arrangements.

Sukie Kaur – Solicitor

8. Procurement Implications

8.1 Commercial Procurement Unit supports the recommendation: approve a direct award to IDOX Software Ltd for the continued provision, support, maintenance, and associated managed services for the Uniform software solution through the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) Vertical Application Solutions Framework Agreement RM6259, Start date 07/03/2023 End date 06/03/2027 Regulation PCR2015 Agreement type PCR15 Framework.

8.2 Uniform is a business-critical system supporting a range of regulatory and environmental services functions, including planning, building control, licensing, land charges, and related service areas. The system is deeply integrated into existing business processes and contains significant volumes of operational and historical data essential to service

delivery. IDOX is the incumbent supplier, software owner, and sole provider of the Uniform application and associated proprietary support services. The CCS Vertical Application Solutions Framework (RM6259) provides a compliant route to market for the procurement of software solutions, support, maintenance, and associated professional services, including through direct award where the framework criteria are met. Uniform is a critical operational system that supports statutory services. A direct award ensures continuity of service, minimises operational disruption, and maintains access to essential supplier expertise. Any transition to an alternative solution would involve significant implementation of risk, resource requirements, retraining costs, and potential impacts on frontline service delivery. IDOX owns the intellectual property rights to the Uniform platform and is uniquely positioned to provide software updates, security patches, maintenance, and technical support. As the original developer and provider, IDOX possesses the specialist knowledge required to maintain and optimise the system effectively. Procuring through the CCS RM6259 Framework enables the Council to access pre-competed framework rates and terms, providing assurance that pricing has been benchmarked through a compliant public procurement process. The direct award represents value for money when considering the significant costs and risks associated with replacing the existing system, including procurement, implementation, migration, data conversion, testing, and user training. CCS Framework RM6259 explicitly permits purchasing through either direct award or further competition depending on customer requirements. The framework has been established specifically for sector-focused software solutions and includes support and maintenance services relevant to local authority systems such as Uniform.

8.3 The direct award to IDOX through CCS Framework RM6259 is justified on the grounds of business continuity, technical necessity, operational risk mitigation, and value for money. The arrangement provides a compliant procurement route while ensuring the continued support and effective operation of a business-critical system that underpins key statutory and regulatory services. The proposed contract represents the most economically advantageous and lowest-risk option for the Council.

8.4 Commercial Procurement Unit will ensure all required notices are published in accordance with PCR2015 Regulations

Senga Henstock, ICT Senior Buyer, 3rd September 2026

9 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

9.1 No

Key Decision

10.1 Yes

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 KDD-26-03

12 **Background Papers**

Not Applicable

13 **Appendices**

Not Applicable

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Domestic Property Disability Adaptations (DPDA) Framework, Level Access Showers and Shower Over Baths - Contract Award

Officer Contact: Jayne Ratcliffe, Director of Adults Social Services

Report Author: Ayshia Akhtar, Commissioning Manager, ASC Commissioning and Market Management

Email: ayshia.akhtar@oldham.gov.uk

DATE: 22nd October 2026

Reason for Decision

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS), under delegated authority approved by Cabinet on 23rd March 2026, key decision reference HSC-02-26, to award contracts under the Domestic Property Disability Adaptations (DPDA) Framework following completion of a compliant Open Tender procurement process undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

The procurement process has identified Provider A and Provider B as the highest-scoring providers, and it is recommended that these organisations are appointed to deliver:

- Level Access Showers (LAS)
- Shower Over Baths (SOB)
- Associated bathroom adaptations

The contracts will commence on 1st December 2026 for an initial period of two years, concluding on 30th November 2028, with the option to extend for a further two periods of twelve months until 30th November 2030, subject to satisfactory performance, continued funding and the achievement of value for money.

The contract award will ensure continuity of a critical adaptation service following the expiry of the current framework and will support the Council in meeting its statutory duties under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. The framework will continue to facilitate the timely delivery of adaptations that promote independence, improve safety within the home and support residents to remain living independently within their communities.

Cabinet approved the procurement of the DPDA Framework on 23rd March 2026 (HSC-02-26) and delegated authority to the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS), in consultation with the Lead Member for Health and Social Care, to undertake the procurement process and approve the contract award following completion of the tender exercise. This report sets out the outcome of the procurement process and seeks approval to award contracts to the recommended providers in accordance with those delegated arrangements.

Executive Summary

Cabinet approval was granted on 23rd March 2026 to undertake a procurement exercise for a new Domestic Property Disability Adaptations (DPDA) Framework for the provision of Level Access Showers (LAS), Shower Over Baths (SOB) and associated bathroom adaptations. The procurement was required as the current framework arrangements are due to expire on 30th November 2026 following the utilisation of all available extension options.

The procurement was undertaken as an Open Tender in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and Oldham Council's Contract Procedure Rules. The purpose of the procurement was to secure a compliant and sustainable framework capable of meeting increasing demand for home adaptations funded through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme, whilst ensuring value for money, service quality and continuity of provision for Oldham residents.

A total of eight compliant tenders were received from the market, demonstrating strong supplier interest and competition. Suppliers were evaluated against the published criteria of Quality (90%) and Social Value (10%). Pricing was fixed within the tender documentation and was therefore not subject to evaluation. The quality evaluation was undertaken by representatives from the Equipment and Adaptations Team, with moderation facilitated by Procurement colleagues to ensure fairness, transparency and consistency. Social Value submissions were assessed through the Social Value Portal.

Following completion of the evaluation process, Provider A achieved the highest overall score of 83.95%, followed by Provider B with an overall score of 79.10%. Both providers demonstrated a strong understanding of adaptation delivery, effective operational arrangements, good quality assurance processes and a commitment to delivering positive outcomes for residents.

The proposed framework will continue to operate through a rotational allocation model, ensuring capacity, resilience and value for money throughout the duration of the contract. The appointment of two providers will reduce the risk of delays in delivery, improve service flexibility and ensure continuity of essential adaptations provided through the Disabled Facilities Grant programme.

DATE

Recommendations

Option 2 is the recommended option.

It is recommended that the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS), under the delegated authority granted by Cabinet on 23rd March 2026 (HSC-02-26), approves:

- The award of contracts under the Domestic Property Disability Adaptations (DPDA) Framework to Provider A and Provider B for the provision of Level Access Showers (LAS), Shower Over Baths (SOB) and associated bathroom adaptations.

- The award of contracts for an initial period of two years, commencing on 1st December 2026 and ending on 30th November 2028, with the option to extend for a further two periods of twelve months until 30th November 2030, subject to satisfactory performance, continued funding and the achievement of value for money.

- The exercise of any future extension options by the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS), in accordance with the terms set out in the procurement documentation and subject to satisfactory contract performance, continued funding and value for money.

1 Background

1.1 Cabinet approved the commencement of a procurement exercise for the Domestic Property Disability Adaptations Framework on 23rd March 2026. The framework enables the Council to commission Level Access Showers, Shower Over Baths and associated bathroom adaptations for residents who have been assessed as requiring adaptations to remain safe and independent within their homes.

1.2 The current framework commenced on 1st December 2022 and was awarded for an initial period of two years with options to extend annually. All available extension options have now been utilised and the framework is due to expire on 30th November 2026.

1.3 The service plays a significant role in supporting the Council's statutory duties under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and contributes directly to wider Adult Social Care objectives around prevention, independence and reducing demand on health and care services. Demand for adaptations continues to increase due to an ageing population, increasing prevalence of disability and long-term health conditions, and continued pressures associated with hospital discharge and prevention agendas.

1.4 A replacement framework was therefore required to ensure continuity of service and secure long-term, sustainable delivery arrangements.

2 Current Position

2.1 An Open Tender procurement process was undertaken in full compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. The opportunity was advertised via The Chest procurement portal and the Central Digital Platform to maximise market awareness and encourage competition.

2.2 A comprehensive service specification was developed based on lessons learned from the current framework, current demand levels and future service requirements. The specification focused on delivering high-quality adaptations, improving customer experience and ensuring timely completion of works.

2.3 A total of eight compliant tenders were received.

2.4 The evaluation model applied a weighting of 90% Quality and 10% Social Value. Pricing was fixed within the tender documentation and therefore did not form part of the scoring methodology. Following evaluation and moderation, the outcomes were as follows:

Table 1 - Tender Evaluation Outcome

Provider	Quality Score	Social Value Score	Total Score
Provider A	78.00%	5.95%	83.95%
Provider B	74.00%	5.10%	79.10%
Provider C	67.00%	5.16%	72.16%
Provider D	63.00%	6.20%	69.20%
Provider E	62.00%	4.97%	66.97%
Provider F	60.00%	4.76%	64.76%
Provider G	52.00%	8.17%	60.17%
Provider H	33.00%	5.29%	38.29%

2.5 Following completion of the evaluation process, Provider A achieved the highest overall score of 83.95%, with Provider B achieving the second-highest score of 79.10%. Both providers demonstrated a strong understanding of the Council's requirements, robust quality assurance arrangements and a commitment to delivering high-quality disability adaptations within agreed timescales.

2.6 Provider A demonstrated a particularly strong submission, evidencing substantial experience in the delivery of disability adaptations, effective contract management processes and a comprehensive approach to customer engagement. Provider B similarly demonstrated strong operational capability, responsive delivery arrangements and a clear understanding of the requirements of the service.

2.7 The proposed framework will continue to operate using a rotational allocation system. This approach has worked effectively under the current arrangements by ensuring flexibility, provider resilience and continuity of service. The appointment of two providers will support capacity management, reduce delivery risks and ensure that adaptation works can continue to be delivered in a timely manner.

2.8 The Domestic Property Disability Adaptations Framework is funded through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) capital allocation. Based on historic delivery levels, current waiting lists and anticipated future demand, the estimated annual expenditure under the framework is approximately £1.65 million per annum.

2.9 The framework is proposed for an initial period of two years commencing on 1st December 2026, with the option to extend for a further two periods of twelve months. The anticipated spend over the life of the contract is therefore estimated as follows:

Table 2 - Estimated Framework Expenditure

Contract Period	Estimated Spend (£)
Year 1	£1,650,000
Year 2	£1,650,000
Year 3 (Extension Option)	£1,650,000
Year 4 (Extension Option)	£1,650,000
Total Estimated Contract Value	**£6,600,000**

2.10 The framework will operate on a demand-led basis, with works commissioned as required through the Disabled Facilities Grant programme. Expenditure will continue to be monitored against available DFG funding to ensure value for money, effective budget management and continued delivery of statutory adaptation services across the borough.

2.11 Cabinet approved the procurement of the Domestic Property Disability Adaptations (DPDA) Framework on 23rd March 2026 and delegated authority to the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS), in consultation with the Lead Member for Health and Social Care, to approve the contract award following completion of the procurement exercise. The procurement process has now concluded in accordance with the approved procurement strategy and delegated authority arrangements.

3 Options considered

3.1 Option 1: Do Not Award the Contracts Following Completion of the Procurement Process

3.2 This option would involve not proceeding with the appointment of providers following completion of the Open Tender process.

3.3 This is not considered a viable option as the current DPDA Framework expires on 30th November 2026. Failure to award replacement contracts would leave the Council without compliant contractual arrangements for the delivery of Level Access Showers, Shower Over Baths and associated bathroom adaptations.

3.4 This would significantly impact the Council's ability to meet its statutory responsibilities under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and could lead to delays in the delivery of essential adaptations for vulnerable

residents. It would also result in operational, legal and reputational risks for the Council.

3.5 Considered and not recommended.

3.6 **Option 2: Award Contracts to the Highest Scoring Providers Following Completion of the Procurement Exercise commencing on 1st December 2026. (Recommended)**

3.7 This option involves awarding contracts under the Domestic Property Disability Adaptations Framework to Provider A and Provider B following completion of a compliant Open Tender procurement process.

3.8 The providers achieved the two highest evaluation scores and demonstrated the strongest overall submissions against the published quality and social value criteria.

3.9 This option secures continuity of service, ensures compliance with procurement legislation, provides sufficient provider capacity to meet demand and maintains delivery of an essential statutory service for Oldham residents.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 **Option 2 - Award Contracts to the Highest Scoring Providers Following Completion of the Procurement Exercise commencing on 1st December 2026.**

4.2 Option 2 is the preferred option as it represents the outcome of a compliant and competitive procurement process undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

4.3 The evaluation identified Provider A and Provider B as the highest-scoring providers, achieving overall scores of 83.95% and 79.10% respectively. Both organisations demonstrated the capability, experience and capacity required to deliver high-quality adaptation services for Oldham residents.

4.4 The proposed framework will provide continuity of service from 1st December 2026 and will support the Council in meeting its statutory duties through the timely delivery of Level Access Showers, Shower Over Baths and associated bathroom adaptations. The appointment of two providers will provide resilience within the framework, ensure sufficient capacity to respond to demand and reduce the risk of delays in service delivery.

4.5 The estimated annual expenditure through the framework is £1.65 million, with an estimated total framework value of £6.6 million over the maximum four-year term. Funding will continue to be met through the Disabled Facilities Grant programme and expenditure will remain demand-led.

4.6 For these reasons, Option 2 is considered the most appropriate and proportionate option and is therefore recommended for approval by the Director of Adult Social Services under the delegated authority approved by Cabinet.

5 Consultation

5.1 Current framework providers were formally notified that the existing arrangements would expire on 30th November 2026 and that the service would be subject to a competitive procurement exercise. This ensured transparency and provided adequate notice to the market.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The proposed represents capital expenditure and will be a charge against the Community Health and Adult Social Care – Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) capital programme.

6.2 The estimate cost of the scheme is approximately £1.65m per annum but final costs will be dependent on the number of applications, the overall expenditure defrayed on the DFG will be continuously monitored to ensure the projects are managed within the available grant.

6.3 The DFG is allocated annually and it is uncertain as to the level grant support for future years, in recent years it has been around £2.9m per annum. Although, there is a reasonable assumption that the grant funding will not cease due the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) is a mandatory statutory requirement for local councils in England and Wales under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

Jit Kara - Senior Accountant

8 Legal Implications

8.1 I agree the proposal is lawful in compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Contract Procedure Rules.

Bryan Boese - Solicitor

9. Procurement Implications

9.1 This contract was procured as an Open Tender under the Procurement Act 2023 regulations and awarded to the top 2 providers based on the criteria set out in the tender documents. The opportunity was advertised on The Chest procurement portal as well as the central digital platform.

9.2 Bids were received from eight providers and evaluation of the Quality submissions was completed by colleagues from the Equipment & Adaptations Team. The Procurement team chaired a moderation session to finalise the Quality scores and ensure compliance with the scoring criteria.

9.3 Social value responses were evaluated using the Social Value Portal.

9.4 Pricing was fixed for this tender and not scored.

9.5 As detailed in this report the top 2 providers have scored highest across the two criteria of Quality and Social Value and it is recommended that they are awarded contracts for these services.

Ankur Patel – Procurement Lead

10 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

10.1 As detailed within the Equality Impact Assessment completed for the Approval to Tender of the Domestic Property Disability Adaptations (DPDA) Service on 19th January 2026.

11 Key Decision

11.1 Yes, as per previous report - Approval to Tender the Domestic Property Disability Adaptions Framework for the Provision of Level Access Showers and Shower over Baths (HSC-02-26)

12 Key Decision Reference

12.1 KDD-26-08

13 Background Papers

13.1 Approval to Tender the Domestic Property Disability Adaptions Framework for the Provision of Level Access Showers and Shower over Baths (HSC-02-26)

14 Appendices

14.1 None

Report to Chief Executive

Cloud hosted Parking Enforcement Solution – Part A

Officer Contact: Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive, Place

Report Author: Angela Lees, Parking Manager

Email: angela.lees@oldham.gov.uk

2nd November 2026

Reason for Decision

To seek approval to procure and implement a modern, cloud hosted parking enforcement solution that enables digital service delivery, improves operational efficiency, and meets future service delivery requirements.

Recommendations

The report requests the following:

1. Approve the procurement and implementation of a fully (supplier) hosted Taranto Software solution
2. Approve the inclusion of online permit management and online case management as part of the system upgrade

Cloud hosted Parking Enforcement Solution

1 Background

1.1 The Council currently uses the Taranto system to support parking enforcement activity.

1.2 The current version of the system is dated and does not support the level of digital service required to modernise parking enforcement. Residents cannot fully self-serve online for key processes such as permit management, appeals, case tracking and related parking enforcement activity.

1.3 Parking enforcement has recently been brought back in-house. This creates an opportunity to redesign the service, reduce manual processing, improve resident access and make better use of staff capacity. However, the current system is limiting the ability to transform the service. It is also creating increasing operational, security and infrastructure risk.

1.4 The move to a cloud hosted SaaS solution will support the Council's ICT strategy by reducing reliance on Council-managed infrastructure and moving to a more sustainable, vendor-hosted model.

2 Current Position

2.1 The Council is currently using version 185 of the Taranto solution in the live environment. The latest available version is 217. The Council no longer has a working test system. The age of the current software means the Council is missing functionality and efficiency improvements available in the latest version. It also prevents the service from introducing more effective self-service options for residents.

2.2 The current system also relies on outdated handheld devices and printers. The handhelds are reaching end of life, battery life does not reliably last a full shift, and only a limited number of working printers remain available. Without replacement devices, the service faces a risk to operational continuity.

2.3 The current model relies too heavily on manual processes, printed documents, officer handling, paper correspondence and legacy infrastructure. This creates unnecessary cost, delay and avoidable demand. The proposed solution would allow the Council to move towards a modern operating model where residents and businesses can access parking services digitally, reducing avoidable contact and improving the speed and transparency of case handling.

2.4 The current system also limits the Council's ability to move towards more modern enforcement approaches. Upgrading the platform is a necessary foundation for future camera-based enforcement and wider digital enforcement capability.

2.5 The new solution will enable residents and businesses to interact with the parking service digitally and offer the following.

- Online permit applications and renewals
- Online case management
- Improved visibility of case progress
- Reduced reliance on paper correspondence
- Faster and easier access to services
- Improved customer experience

2.6 Financial benefits of the new system include:

- Reduced printing costs
- Reduced paper and envelope costs

- Reduced postage costs
- Reduced manual administration
- Improved processing efficiency
- Better enforcement resilience
- Protection of parking enforcement income
- Reduced risk of income loss caused by device or system failure

2.7 **Operational benefits**

2.8 The hosted solution will reduce reliance on Council-managed infrastructure and remove the need to maintain elements of the current outdated technical environment. It will also provide a working test environment, supporting safer future changes and reducing the risk associated with updates.

2.9 **Operational benefits include:**

- Reduced manual handling
- Faster case processing
- Improved system resilience
- Reduced infrastructure burden
- Improved ability to support future change
- Better support for mobile working
- Improved service continuity

2.10 **Strategic benefits**

The proposal aligns with the Council's ICT strategy by moving towards:

- Cloud hosted services
- Software as a Service
- Reduced reliance on Council infrastructure
- Improved cyber security
- Modern digital service delivery
- A platform capable of supporting future service development

2.11 The system upgrade will also support future enforcement capability, including camera-based enforcement. This is a key strategic benefit and should be viewed as part of the transformation case, not simply as a technical upgrade.

3. Options/Alternatives

3.1 **Option 1**: Move to a fully hosted Software as a Service solution.

3.2 This option would move the Council to a fully hosted Taranto SaaS solution. It would include the online customer-facing modules required to support digital transformation, including online permit management and online case management. It would also include replacement handheld devices and printers required to operate the service effectively.

3.3 **Option 2:** Upgrade existing system within Council hosting

3.4 This option would upgrade the existing Taranto software in the live and test environments, move the database to SQL Server 2022, replace the handheld devices and move remaining infrastructure into Azure where possible. This would address some immediate technical risks but would not deliver the same level of transformation.

3.5 **Option 3**: Go to market for an alternative externally hosted SaaS solution

3.6 This option would involve a full procurement exercise to identify an alternative SaaS supplier.

3.7 This could potentially deliver a modern hosted solution, but it would introduce additional cost, complexity and delay.

3.8 **Option 4: Do nothing**

3.9 This option would mean continuing with the current version of Taranto, current infrastructure, current handheld devices and current manual processes.

3.10 This would leave the Council exposed to increasing operational, cyber and service delivery risk.

4. **Preferred Option**

4.1 Option 1: Move to a fully hosted software as a service solution (SaaS) from Taranto on a new contract to include the additional customer facing portals and replace the current handheld devices and printers. This option immediately addresses the existing infrastructure risks and opens up the opportunity of resident facing portals to improve the customer experience.

5. **Risks**

5.1 The current system is not sustainable and requires upgrading to remove all vulnerabilities and to improve the customer experience.

5.2 **SQL Server End-of-Life (April 2026):** Forced capital expenditure of £50-70k for server replacement and licensing, or immediate compliance failure

5.3 **Legacy Infrastructure:** Aging on-premises server presents PSN security vulnerabilities and ongoing remediation costs of £15-25k

5.4 **Service Transition Pressures:** due to the age of the current system there are enforcement gaps and reputational risk due to inability to enforce some situations.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The financial details are set out in the Part B report.

7. **Legal Implications**

7.1 The proposal is lawful provided procurement is carried out in compliance with the Crown Commercial Service G-Cloud framework and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

7.2 As the solution involves cloud hosting and the processing of personal data, including DVLA transactions, full compliance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 will be required

7.3 Legal Services will be available to review and approve the final contract and ensure appropriate provisions are included for:

- Service performance
- Data protection
- Security
- Termination
- Business continuity
- Continuity of statutory parking enforcement functions during and after implementation

Pamela Nsofor, Solicitor

8. Procurement Implications

8.1 Upon approval of this report, the Commercial Procurement Unit recommends proceeding under the following framework for Option 1:

Agreement number: RM1557.14
Start date: 29 October 2024
End date: 28 October 2026
Regulation: PCR 2015
Agreement type: PCR 2015 Framework

8.2 The Taranto cloud solution, supplied by Taranto Systems Limited, is available to Oldham Council via the Crown Commercial Service G-Cloud 14 framework.

8.3 To ensure compliance with G-Cloud buying guidelines, Procurement will work closely with the service area and ICT colleagues to ensure the software is procured correctly.

8.4 As part of this process, Taranto Systems Limited will be required to complete Oldham Council's IT non-functional, technical and IT security questionnaires.

8.5 Subject to ICT approval, Procurement will work with Legal and Information Governance colleagues to ensure the G-Cloud order form is completed accurately.

8.6 The Commercial Procurement Unit will be responsible for ensuring that all required public notices are issued in accordance with PCR 2015 regulations.

Senga Henstock, ICT Senior Buyer

9. ICT Implications

9.1 ICT supports the recommended option to move to the fully hosted Taranto SaaS solution.

9.2 The proposal will address current system vulnerabilities, reduce risk on Council systems and support the Council's ICT strategy.

9.3 The hosted solution will also provide a platform for further service improvements, including digital resident services, online case management and future enforcement capability.

9.4 The proposal will also support decommissioning of legacy infrastructure and reduce the future burden on Council-managed systems.

Lindsey Al-Basri, IT Head of Projects

10. Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

10.1 No specific equality impacts have been identified at this stage.

10.2 The move to digital services should improve access for residents who prefer to self-serve online. However, the service must ensure that appropriate assisted digital routes remain available for residents who cannot access or use online services.

11. **Key Decision**

11.1 Yes: KDD-26-10

Approved by the Chief Executive following consultation with the political group leaders who were in attendance as follows:- Councillors: Decision made under the authorisation contained in Section 9C (5) Delegations of Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) and Section 3.6 of Part 4 (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions.
Signed:

Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive Dated:
Date of Leaders' Consultative meeting:
Summary of feedback from the political group leaders

Report to Cabinet (Part A)

Prudential Building Stabilisation Options Report

	Details
Subject	Prudential Building Stabilisation Works
Decision maker: Senior Officer	To be confirmed.
Decision maker: Cabinet Member	To be confirmed / N/A depending on delegation route.
Decision date	To be completed.
Report author	Chris Lewis – Strategic Lead for Creating a Better Place Nigel Fraser - Capital Projects Team Leader
Ward(s)	Coldhurst

Reason for decision

Oldham's town centre benefits from a wealth of important heritage buildings thanks to the town's rich economic and cultural history. A number of these buildings have become vacant, underutilised and require investment to protect the buildings and seek to ensure their future sustainability whilst enhancing economic and social value these buildings can bring to the local economy

The Prudential building has seen considerable deterioration over that last decade, with the Council stepping in to carry out urgent health and safety interventions, together with an asbestos and environmental clean in mid 2025.The building remains a target for anti-social behaviour in the Town Centre.

The condition however remains poor and very bad in some places, with ongoing vulnerability to the elements. Further stabilisation works are required to prevent against further deterioration so that potential options for future use may be appraised.

This report summarises the current and ongoing defects and condition challenges faced by the Prudential building, with a series of options set out with outline budget costs, please be aware these are subject to a procurement process and receiving final contractor costings. This is to inform the scope of the stabilisation works to be agreed and taken forward to technical design in order to tender suitable contractors

Recommendation(s)

1. Approve the initial funding budget estimate, subject to contractor procurement process for finalised cost, to undertake a schedule of stabilisation works to the Prudential Building.

2. Note that the recommended stabilisation works package (option 4) is intended to halt further decay, secure the building, and preserve its heritage fabric while future reuse options are considered, utilizing the principles of permanent, external, like for like conservation principles. This potentially allows limited “meanwhile” use or public access before a full redevelopment, thereby improving the building’s attractiveness for future investment.

3. Delegation of authority to the Director of Growth, in consultation with Finance, Procurement and Legal to finalise scopes, confirm affordability, and procure / instruct the additional works within the approved funding envelope using a Procurement compliant framework.

4. Delegation of authority to the Director of Legal Services or his nominees to formalise any necessary legal requirements including signing` and/or sealing any documentation required to give effect to the recommendations and/or delegations in this report.

1.0 Background

1.1 The Prudential Assurance Building is a prominent Grade II listed Victorian landmark occupying a key gateway location on Union Street, directly opposite Oldham Central Metrolink stop. Constructed in 1889 and designed by the renowned architect Alfred Waterhouse, the building is recognised as one of the most architecturally significant commercial buildings of its period. Its highly detailed design, distinctive elevations and surviving historic fabric represent an exceptional example of late Victorian architecture, incorporating an extensive palette of red brick, terracotta, timber and decorative tiling.

1.2 As one of Waterhouse's most accomplished works, the building makes a substantial contribution to the character and historic significance of Oldham, providing a strong sense of place and local identity.

1.3 Despite its significance, the building has reached a critical stage in its decline. It is included on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register and has previously been identified by the Victorian Society as one of the most endangered buildings of its type in the country. Prolonged vacancy, a lack of investment and ongoing exposure to the elements have resulted in extensive deterioration of the building fabric, including roof collapses, significant water ingress, structural instability, severe damage to windows and repeated incidents of vandalism and trespass. Please see Appendix One for photographs of the current condition.

1.4 The building occupies a highly visible location and forms the first impression of Oldham for many residents and visitors arriving via the Metrolink network. Its current condition has a significant adverse impact on perceptions of the town centre and detracts from the wider regeneration activity taking place across Oldham.

1.5 For many years, the building remained in private ownership with very limited maintenance or investment. During this period the structure continued to deteriorate, resulting in increasing risks to public safety. The Council was required to intervene on several occasions to undertake urgent health and safety works, including securing the

building against unauthorised access after the owner failed to respond adequately to requests for action. These interventions were necessary to prevent entry by trespassers, including school children, and to mitigate immediate safety concerns also highlighted by Oldham Councils Community Safety Team.

1.6 The building has suffered substantial damage as a result of long-term neglect, previous lead thefts, vandalism and prolonged exposure to weather. The roof has collapsed in several areas and there remains a risk of further structural failure. The condition of the building has necessitated the closure of part of the adjacent walkway due to concerns regarding falling masonry and debris.

1.7 During periods of severe weather, sections of the roof structure have collapsed internally, and pieces of masonry and other building fabric have fallen externally, creating an immediate risk to public safety. Whilst temporary security measures have been implemented where practicable, the building remains highly vulnerable to further deterioration, unauthorised access and structural failure.

1.8 Given the continuing decline of the building, the escalating risks to public safety and the need to safeguard this iconic heritage asset, the Council pursued a lengthy Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to secure its future, the Prudential Building is now under Oldham Council ownership.

1.9 Following acquisition, the Council undertook a series of assessments to identify immediate health and safety risks and determine the works required to facilitate safe access for further surveys and investigations. This included asbestos inspections and comprehensive site assessments undertaken by specialist consultants and Council officers.

1.10 The Council subsequently commissioned an extensive environmental clean-up operation involving the removal of large quantities of debris and asbestos-containing materials. These works were essential to create safe conditions for detailed structural, engineering and heritage assessments and to better understand the scale of repair requirements.

1.11 Recognising both the heritage significance of the building and the risks arising from its current condition, the Prudential Building has been incorporated within the Union Street Heritage Buildings Options Appraisal Programme, supported by Historic England. This work is intended to explore sustainable long-term uses for key heritage assets along Union Street and support their contribution to the regeneration of the town centre.

2.0 Current Position

2.1 To inform future intervention works, the Council commissioned Buttress Architects to undertake detailed condition inspections and prepare an initial scope of stabilisation and urgent repair works. Their assessment identified the immediate measures required to arrest further decay, address structural failures, make watertight, secure the building and ensure the long-term future of the building.

2.2 The findings of the condition assessment identified the deteriorating parapet wall on the north-east corner of the building overlooking Printer Street at risk of collapse, where masonry has been lost and sections of the wall are leaning outward due to vegetation

growth and the decay of supporting structural timber. Whilst the area below has been cordoned off, the condition of the wall will continue to worsen without remedial action.

2.3 Extensive water ingress resulting from roof failures has caused widespread decay and loss of structural timber elements throughout the building. In some locations, structural intervention is required to prevent further collapse and maintain the integrity of the building. All windows have suffered varying degrees of damage or failure, leaving the interior exposed to rainwater penetration, bird ingress, and continued deterioration.

2.4 The stabilisation, weatherproofing and security works now proposed represent an essential first phase in rescuing the building. These measures will prevent further deterioration, reduce risks to public safety, and protect the historic fabric from irreversible loss while longer-term plans for its sustainable reuse are developed.

2.5 The proposed works will deliver significant public benefits. They will provide an immediate and highly visible improvement to the quality of the historic environment, enhancing the appearance of a prominent town centre gateway seen by thousands of residents, visitors, and Metrolink passengers each year. They will also improve perceptions of safety, civic pride, and confidence in the area.

2.6 Investment in the repair and stabilisation of the Prudential Building will demonstrate a clear commitment to safeguarding Oldham's heritage assets and will support wider regeneration objectives. By addressing one of the town centre's most visible heritage buildings, the Council can help encourage further private investment and reinforce confidence in the future of Union Street and the surrounding area.

2.7 Recognising both the heritage significance of the building and the risks arising from its current condition, the Prudential Building has been incorporated within the Union Street Heritage Buildings Options Appraisal Programme, supported by Historic England. This work is intended to explore sustainable long-term uses for key heritage assets along Union Street and support their contribution to the regeneration of the town centre.

2.8 The proposed intervention represents an urgent and necessary response to the condition of a nationally significant heritage asset. It will reduce substantial risks to public safety, mitigate potential impacts on adjacent public infrastructure including the Metrolink network, prevent the further loss of historic fabric, and support the ongoing regeneration of Union Street and the wider town centre. Most importantly, it will secure the future of one of Oldham's most important historic buildings for future generations.

3.0 Budget Position

3.1 The recommended stabilisation works package (option 4) is intended to halt further decay, secure the building, and preserve its heritage fabric while future reuse options are considered, utilizing the principles of permanent, external, like for like conservation principles. This potentially allows limited “meanwhile” use or public access before a full redevelopment, thereby improving the building’s attractiveness for future investment. A permanent approach to the conservation works means that on-going property maintenance

obligations will be minimised and the work undertaken will be carried out to maximise efficient working practices. This approach is supported by Historic England.

4.0 Alternative option(s) to be considered

4.1 Option 1 – Do Nothing

Given the current poor condition of the building, the do-nothing option would result in the continued exposure of the structure to the elements, leading to ongoing deterioration of the building fabric and increasing the likelihood of structural failure, including the potential for partial collapse.

The risks associated with this option are heightened by the building's prominent location adjacent to Oldham's main Metrolink stop. Any falling debris from the structure could damage the tramway infrastructure, posing a safety risk and potentially disrupting the operation of Transport for Greater Manchester's (TfGM) tram services.

Although measures have been implemented to secure the building, without more permanent interventions it remains vulnerable to further anti-social behaviour. The Community Safety Team has raised concerns regarding reports of children and urban explorers gaining access to the site, including the unstable remnants of the roof structure, creating a significant risk to public safety.

In addition to the ongoing risk of vandalism, there remains the potential for deliberate fire-setting within the building. Any such incident could have serious consequences for neighbouring properties and critical transport infrastructure, including disruption to Metrolink services. The deteriorating condition of the building therefore presents escalating risks to public safety, adjacent assets, and the wider town centre environment.

The do-nothing option is not considered viable due to the escalating risks associated with the continued deterioration of the building. These include threats to public safety, potential damage to adjacent transport infrastructure, ongoing anti-social behaviour and vandalism, and the risk of fire affecting neighbouring properties and the operation of the Metrolink network. Without timely intervention, the Council's exposure to health and safety, operational and reputational risks is likely to increase.

.4.2 Option 2 - Do Minimum

The option comprises the baseline works that are required to stabilise the Prudential's existing construction, and to provide a minimum level of protection against the elements. Fundamentally, the option seeks to prevent water entering the building, while remedying precarious structural issues and reducing the risk to people within the building and the wider public.

This option comprises

- Repair/reinstatement of brickwork and terracotta parapets and copings where these have been de-stabilised.

- Reinstatement of parapet gutters where lead linings have been stolen.
- Removal of vegetation/buddleia growth from all elevations.
- Clearance and repair/reinstatement of rainwater pipes and gutters.
- Installation of protective perforated sheeting to all window openings (to external elevations) to protect against bird/vermin infestations while maintaining ventilation to protect against dampness and decay.
- Repair of failed and severely decayed timber roof structures.
- Removal of external fire escape stair to the rear of the building to prevent easy access for trespassers.
- Installation of temporary sheeting over areas of missing roof covering to enable dispersal of rainwater and protection against ingress.
- Temporary roof structure over central atrium.

Advantages:

- Lowest cost option.
- Prevents/mitigates against further
- deterioration.
- Does not preclude future proposals.

Disadvantages:

- Works are temporary in nature.
- Works address deterioration but do not enhance the heritage asset.
- Future proposals would require the removal of temporary work alongside further access/scaffold costs.

4.3 Option 3 – Repair/Reinstatement

The option goes further than the temporary nature of Option 1 by repairing and reinstating damaged/lost fabric in a longer-term/permanent manner. The works within Option 2 would focus on the stabilisation and conservation of the external building envelope but would not comprise any internal repair works. The option would achieve the same outcomes as Option 1 but would be done in a more permanent manner incorporating traditional methods and materials.

The option comprises:

- Repair/reinstatement of brickwork and terracotta parapets and copings where these have been de-stabilised.
- Reinstatement of parapet gutters where lead linings have been stolen.
- Removal of vegetation/buddleia growth from all elevations.
- Clearance and repair/reinstatement of rainwater pipes and gutters in matching cast-iron.
- Replacement of all missing/lost windows on a like for like basis, with hardwood sliding sash and casement configurations.

- Repair of failed and severely decayed timber roof structures.
- Removal of external fire escape stair to the rear of the building to prevent easy access for trespassers.
- Relaying of roof coverings in slate and clay tile to match existing.

The option proposals will stabilise the building's condition to allow for future reuse opportunities to be considered.

Advantages:

- Prevents against further deterioration.
- Negates the need for future revisiting of works and access/scaffolding.
- Presents a visible enhancement to a prominent heritage asset.

Disadvantages:

- Increased cost in relation to Option 1.
- While addressing ongoing deterioration, internal defects will remain unrepaired, precluding potential occupation or meanwhile use.

4.4 Option 4 – Renewal/Betterment (Recommended Option)

The option essentially comprises the envelope repairs of Option 2 but goes further than this by carrying out targeted internal repairs and enhancements. It is likely that irrespective of future use proposals certain elements will likely be retained and repaired. In addition to fully repairing roofs, windows, and masonry, Option 3 includes restoring significant interior elements (e.g. the historic tiled banking hall and selected plasterwork) to a stable condition. This fully secures the building inside and out, potentially allowing limited "meanwhile" use or public access before a full redevelopment, thereby improving the building's attractiveness for future investment.

The option comprises:

As option 2, plus

- Cleaning and repair to historic tiling/faience.
- Localised/targeted repair/renewal of internal plaster.

Advantages:

- Prevents/mitigates against further deterioration.
- Negates the need for future revisiting of works and access/scaffolding.
- Presents a visible enhancement to a prominent heritage asset and enables engagement/meanwhile occupation.
    - Enables the potential for limited/temporary occupations and/or pop-up usage

Disadvantages:

- Most expensive option.
- Potential for some elements of work to be replaced in any future scheme.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 Historic England has expressed support for a permanent works conservation approach and has part funded the Union Street Heritage Buildings options appraisal programme, which includes the Prudential Building.

6.0 Risks

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Additional funding is not approved	Current funding will only support temporary works and therefore benefits of completing permanent works would not be deliverable	Approve initial funding envelope for permanent conservation works.
Costs increase beyond estimates	Additional budget pressure.	Final scope and procurement exercise to be completed before instruction.
Project delays during decision making process	The building remains a target for anti-social behavior and fabric conditions continue to deteriorate	Property services maintain H&S assessments for public safety

Implications

Financial implications

All financial implications are contained within the Part B report.

James Postle (Senior Finance Manager)

Legal implications

All legal implications are contained within the Part B report.

Pamela Nsofor (Solicitor)

Procurement implications

All procurement implications are contained within the Part B report.

Tom Pyne (Head of Procurement)

Property implications

All property implications are contained within the Part B report.

(John Winterbottom - Divisional Manager – Technical Delivery)

Equality impact including implications for children and young people

There has been a detailed Equality Impact Assessment completed for the Creating a Better Place programme for which this project forms a part.

Report Author Sign-off:	
Nigel Fraser – Capital Projects Team Leader	**Date:** 24/08/26
Chris Lewis – Strategic Lead for creating a Better Place	**Date:** 01/09/26

In consultation with Director of Growth

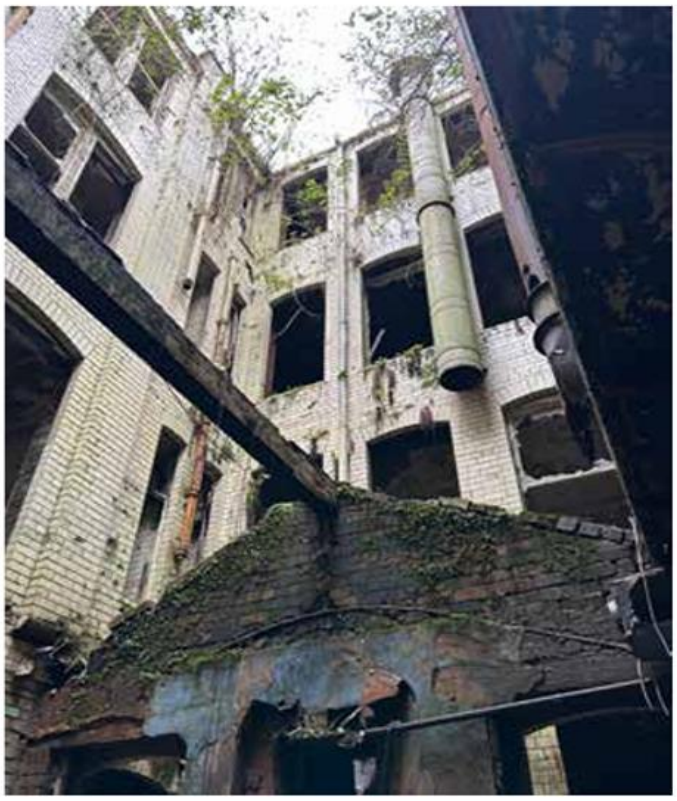
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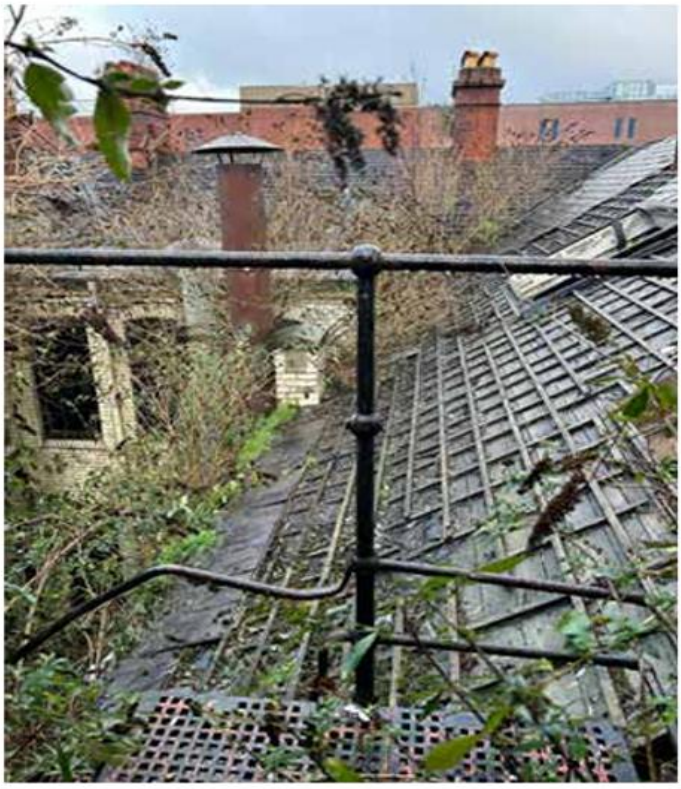
James Kington, Director of Growth

APPENDIX ONE – Prudential Building Condition photos









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Report to CABINET

Approval of Rubrik Back Up and Recovery Solution

Officer Contact: Matthew Gratton, Director of Digital

Report Author: Adrian Davies, Assistant Director of Technology and Data
Email: adrian.davies@oldham.gov.uk

Date: 22nd October 2026

Reason for Decision

Oldham Council intends to strengthen its overall cyber governance and risk management approach by procuring modern tools and processes that support cyber resilience and regulatory alignment. Sensitive financial, cyber-security, operational, and procurement specific information has been removed in this public version.

Executive Summary

The Council aims to maintain and improve its data protection cyber security posture. Adoption of modern back up and assessment tools will support more efficient governance, improved risk resilience, and alignment with national guidance. This public version excludes detailed technical, financial, and cyber-risk information.

Recommendations

Approval is sought to proceed with the procurement of modern back up tools through appropriate procurement routes.

Cabinet **Date: October 2026**

PART A – Back Up Service

1. **Background**

   The Council currently uses modern backup and recovery services. This is a position that we look to cement and build upon to improve the council's security stance in the face of increasing cyber security risk.

2. **Current Position**

   The Council continues to develop its security stance and the basis of this is maintaining and improving it's data backup and recovery systems. Detailed technical descriptions, compliance gaps, and supply-chain vulnerabilities have been removed.

3. **Options/Alternatives**

   Option1 – Expiration of the current arrangements – Not recommended due to vulnerabilities.

   Option 2- Re-Procure and develop the existing modern tool set. This option is preferred to maintain the council's security stance.

4. **Preferred Option**

   The preferred option is option 2 – Re-Procure and develop the existing modern tool set. This option is preferred to maintain the council's security stance.

5. **Consultation**

   N/A

6. **Financial Implications**

   The proposal is expected to be funded out of existing budgets. Detailed costings and financial schedules have been removed.

7. **Legal Implications**

Any procurement will be undertaken through compliant routes. Detailed contractual and framework-specific commentary has been removed.

8. **Procurement Implications**

Procurement will follow approved corporate processes and buying guidelines. All sensitive procurement justifications and vendor evaluations have been removed.

9. **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

No Impact identified

10. **Key Decision**

Yes.

11. **Key Decision Reference**

KDD-26-18

12. **Background Papers**

No background papers.

13. **Appendices**

N/A

Signed _____ Cabinet Member (specify whom)	Dated _____
Signed _____ Executive Director/Deputy Chief Executive	Dated _____

PART A: Report to the Chief Executive

Extra Care Housing re-tender 2026/27

Officer Contact: Jayne Ratcliffe, Director of Adult Social Care (DASS)

Report Author: Claire Hooley, Assistant Director of Commissioning and Market Management

Email: Claire.Hooley@oldham.gov.uk

2nd November 2026

Reason for Decision

A decision is required to secure continuity of Extra Care Housing services beyond the expiry of the current contract on 31 March 2027. While the industrial action and pay dispute remain matters for MioCare and Unison, they introduce uncertainty at a critical stage in the commissioning process. Given that procurement, contract award and mobilisation are expected to take up to six months, a decision is needed now to enable timely procurement activity, minimise transition risks and ensure continuity of support for residents.

Executive Summary

This report sets out the options for the future commissioning of Extra Care Housing services in Oldham when the current contract with MioCare Services Ltd expires on 31 March 2027.

Following consideration of the available options, the report recommends a competitive procurement process, supported by a short extension to the existing arrangements where required. This approach provides the most appropriate balance of service continuity, compliance with procurement requirements and value for money. The report also notes that, should market engagement identify affordability or viability concerns, alternative commissioning arrangements, including a Teckal-compliant award to MioCare, may require further consideration.

Recommendation(s)

1. **Agree** to the recommended option to progress with pre-market engagement, commissioning and procurement activity for the future delivery of Extra Care Housing services
2. **Agree** to a three-month extension of the current contract with MioCare Service Ltd to 30 June 2027 to enable completion of market engagement, procurement, contract award and mobilisation activities.
3. **Note** that the outcome of pre-market engagement will be reviewed prior to finalisation of the procurement approach and contract documentation.

4. **Note** that the outcome of pre-market engagement may require further consideration of commissioning options and may be reported through the Council's governance processes as necessary.
5. **Note** that any future contract award will be subject to completion of the procurement process, and approval through the Council's governance arrangements.

1. Background and Current Position

Commissioning arrangements with MioCare

1.1 MioCare is a council-owned group of organisations established to deliver adult social care services. Through its trading arm, MioCare Services Ltd (MSL), the group is able to bid for commissioned services.

1.2 Oldham Care and Support (OCS) delivers personalised adult social care services to older people, people with learning disabilities, autism, and individuals with complex needs. Service specifications are in place between the Council and MioCare for the delivery of these services.

Extra Care Housing Procurement and Contract Arrangements

1.3 The Extra Care Housing (ECH) service was procured through a competitive tender process rather than a direct Teckal award. Commissioners had evidence through market testing and a review of national delivery models that the service could be delivered by the wider market at competitive rates.

1.4 The procurement process provided an opportunity to test value for money, assess market capacity, and identify innovative delivery approaches. Given the comparatively higher cost base associated with a Teckal delivery model for this service, a competitive process was considered the most appropriate route to demonstrate value for money while ensuring transparency, fairness and compliance with procurement requirements.

1.5 MioCare Services Ltd (MSL) successfully secured the contract to deliver ECH services across the borough from 2019 under a five-year contract with the option to extend for a further two years. Although the contract was due to expire on 31 March 2026, an extension was approved until 31 March 2027 to allow further consideration of the Council's position regarding living wage expectations.

Financial Position and Pricing Approach

1.6 The current ECH (2026/27) contract has an annual value of £2.29m and supports the delivery of care and support across the Council's six Extra Care Housing schemes.

1.7 The pricing model comprises £0.52m in core funding, with the remaining £1.77m linked to assessed care hours for approximately 250 residents. Rates are reviewed annually in line with contractual arrangements, market conditions and the Council's Care Act duties to maintain a sustainable market.

2. Current Position

Unison Pay Claim Industrial Action

2.1 Commissioners became aware of workforce-related maters affecting the incumbent provider during 2026, which resulted in the planned procurement being paused whilst the implications for future service delivery and procurement activity were considered.

Procurement Considerations

2.4 In summer 2026, commissioners agreed to delay publication of the Extra Care Housing procurement to allow further consideration of matters that could influence the future delivery of the service and the procurement approach.

2.5 The delay provided an opportunity to ensure appropriate due diligence was undertaken and that the Council was able to progress a robust and compliant procurement process.

2.6 Since that time, commissioners have continued to review the commissioning environment and service requirements to inform the future procurement approach.

2.7 Further market engagement will be undertaken as part of the procurement process to support the development of a sustainable service model that delivers value for money and meets the needs of residents.

2.8 The current contract expires on 31 March 2027. Given the time required to undertake procurement, contract award and mobilisation activities, a decision is now required regarding the future commissioning approach for Extra Care Housing services across the borough.

2.9 Any future contract award will remain subject to affordability considerations and approval through the Council's governance processes.

3. Options

A. Commence procurement following further pre-market engagement and extend current arrangements

Undertake pre-market engagement to test the market’s appetite and understanding of the risks arising from the industrial dispute, before finalising and publishing the tender. A short-term extension to the current contract would be required to allow for procurement, mobilisation and implementation.

B. Delay procurement until the industrial dispute is resolved

Maintain the current approach and defer procurement activity until there is full clarity on the pay claim and industrial action outcome.

C. Delay for a defined period and reassess

Pause procurement activity for a short, defined period to monitor developments regarding industrial action before taking a final procurement decision.

Note; this option reflects the approach taken to date and has effectively been implemented whilst further information has been gathered.

D. Extend existing arrangements and reprofile procurement

Extend current contractual arrangements and defer procurement until a later date when there is greater confidence regarding workforce matters and market conditions.

E. Direct Award to MioCare through Teckal-compliant arrangement

Should pre-market engagement or a subsequent procurement process demonstrate insufficient market interest, affordability concerns or an inability to secure a suitable provider, the Council could consider a direct award to MioCare through a Teckal-compliant arrangement.

4. Preferred option

4.1 Option A: Commence procurement following further pre-market engagement and extend current arrangements.

4.2 This option reflects the advice provided by procurement and legal services. It provides the most balanced approach to securing service continuity whilst progressing towards a compliant procurement process, maintaining market competition and testing value for money.

4.3 Commissioners will review the outcome of pre-market engagement prior to finalising the procurement approach. Should market engagement identify insufficient provider appetite, affordability concerns or material delivery risks, a further report will be brought forward setting out alternative commissioning options, including consideration of a Teckal-compliant arrangements with MioCare.

Indicative Procurement Timeline

Subject to approval of the recommended option, the proposed timetable is:

Milestone	Timeframe, enabling a 3-Month Extension (Extension to 30th June 2027)
Pre-market engagement and tender publication	November 2026
Tender evaluation and moderation	January to February 2027
Governance and contract award	March 2027

Mobilisation period	April to June 2027
New arrangements commence	July 2027

A three-month extension to the current contract, at an estimated value of £572,500, is required to enable completion of the procurement process and mobilization of any new provider. Where the incumbent provider is successful, the mobilisation period may not be required.

5. Consultation

5.1 Consultation has taken place with MioCare to seek their agreement to extending the current contractual terms for the short period of three months. This short extension period will enable the procurement to take place, including appropriate market engagement exercise, evaluation and moderation, and suitable time to enable mobilization. However, it should be noted, that should MioCare ('MSL') be successful in the tender exercise, the mobilisation period is not required.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The alternate proposals would give rise to additional risks related to procurement and legal challenge in relation to the contract already having been extended for one year beyond the previous agreement end-date. Any procurement challenge associated with further extensions could result in significant financial consequences which have not been provided for within existing budgets.

6.2 The recommended option will require three months' extension to the existing contract in order to complete the tender process allowing for necessary engagement of the market arising from the industrial dispute and associated risks.

6.3 The Extra Care Housing contract for 2025/26 was £2.2m. For 2026/27 a 4% uplift increases the contract value to £2.29m. The estimated cost for the 3 month extension would be £0.57m and would be met from the annual budget without adverse financial impact.

6.4 Any future cost implications arising from the resolution of the industrial dispute or changes to workforce terms and conditions are not currently known and will be considered through the procurement process and reported through the appropriate governance arrangements

Harji Patel – Senior Accountant

7. Legal Implications

7.1 The proposal to extend the contract to permit re-procurement would be lawful pursuant to regulation 72(5)(b) of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 provided the increased

contract value shall not exceed 10% of the original contract value. This would attract low legal risk and should allow an adequate time to complete the procurement process. On this basis I agree the proposal is lawful and complies with the Contract Procedure Rules and the council's constitution.

Bryan Boese – solicitor

8. Procurement Implications

8.1 The preferred option (A) to extend the existing contract to allow for a compliant and safe commissioning and procurement process will necessitate some risk to the Council, on the assumption that the current contract does not allow for any further extension periods. A permitted grounds modification would be required. Procurement and Legal will support where required.

Tom Pyne - Assistant Director Procurement, Contract Management and Social Value

9. Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

9.1 Not applicable for this commissioned service.

10. Key Decision

10.1 Yes

11. Key Decision Reference

11.1 **HSC-19-26**

12. Appendices and Background Papers

12.1 Commissioning Implications for the Unison Pay Claim against MioCare (MSL)

Approved by the Chief Executive following consultation with the political group leaders who were in attendance as follows:-

Councillors:

Decision made under the authorisation contained in Section 9C (5) Delegations of Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) and Section 3.6 of Part 4 (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions.

Signed: Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive Dated:
Date of Leaders' Consultative meeting:
Summary of feedback from the political group leaders

Report to the Chief Executive

Cleansing & Waste Service Software (Route Optimisation)

Officer Contact: Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Report Author: Ben Parsons
Email: Ben.Parsons@oldham.gov.uk

2 November 2026

Reason for Decision
This report is seeking approval to purchase software, via a framework direct award to an existing software supplier to the council. The purpose of this software will be to undertake regular route optimisation exercises for all waste, cleansing and litter bin operations across the borough, leading to more efficient operations and ultimately, delaying the need for further operational growth in the service to meet resident and business growth.

Recommendations
To implement Route Optimisation and a VoomAI route 'time and motion study' for Waste & Cleansing and the Business Waste Portal for Digital Waste Tracking and direct award the contract to the current provider (Bartec) for 18 months of software subscriptions and the one-off costs from the transformation funds.

Pre-decision Governance, Strategy & Resources Scrutiny meeting 22 October 2026
Leaders' consultative meeting 2 November 2026

Cleansing & Waste Service Software (Route Optimisation)

1 Background

1.1 The waste collection service covers domestic and business collections with customers across the borough, and this demand has steadily increased since the last time routes were configured in 2016. In the last decade, growth funding has been provided once, an additional £300K in 2024/25 for an additional round. The additional growth is now fully embedded, unfortunately there are collection cycle day's when service delivery is stretched and is expected to exceed current capacity in the next 3-6 months. When demand is reached, further resources will be required. There is an impact on current service provision/reliability due to imbalanced excessive service demand on specific days.

1.2 In addition to the above, due to regulatory change, more domestic (flats and difficult to access) properties need to start receiving all recycling collections (they have been left out due to it being too challenging) and all businesses need to receive four separate bin collections, irrespective of the amount of waste they produce, which means transitioning them to multiple different bin sizes and collection frequencies.

1.3 Furthermore, bulky waste collection being insourced will also need to be considered as part of the service delivery planning. As part of this optimisation exercise, the Service also wants to ensure smoother operational delivery by planning for fly-tip clearance and street litter bin emptying.

2 Current Position

2.1 Route Optimisation software, using hard, site-based data will be able to provide an accurate route programme that takes into account both the regulatory changes and the service demand as outlined about, both current and those on the horizon. In addition, a separate data collection exercise, supported by AI based software, will provide additional data to verify the current collection model and data baseline to maximise the accuracy of optimisation output.

2.2 Implementing Route Optimisation within both Waste and Cleansing as an overall holistic package will secure a more efficient and lean way of working in both areas, which will improve operational response and either delay or reduce the requirement for additional resources in the future. Moreover, the software will be able to redesign work and explore alternate working patterns across Waste and Cleansing, reducing the requirements for additional rounds (this includes additional vehicles and operatives).

2.3 A number of providers have been considered as part of this exercise. Having completed the review, the provider identified to provide the software is Bartec. This provider is currently used by the Service as part of the in-cab technology, assisting with round collection and data management. Extending the use of this software, subject to compliant procurement, will support easier implementation and integration.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 **Option 1 -** Approve the procurement of Route Optimisation Software and associated software for use across Waste and Cleansing for 18 months. To review and redesign work informed by the necessary data to explore working patterns with the aim to improve efficiency on a continuous basis. Along with a single cycle AI route data collection exercise to verify the current collection model baseline, to be used by the Route

Optimisation Software. The resultant output benefits will be reviewed, and a further report will be submitted after the 18-month period, as per the Recommendation.

3.2 **Option 2 -** Approve a one-off Route Optimisation consultancy exercise to redesign collection routes without ongoing software subscription costs.

This is the quickest way to deliver new routes; however, routes may become outdated before implementation due to service changes and property growth. The option also does not support dynamic routing for ad hoc work, such as bulky waste collections and fly-tipping, and offers limited flexibility for future service redesign.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 1 - Approve the procurement of Route Optimisation Software and associated software for use across Waste and Cleansing for 18 months.

5 Consultation

5.1 N/A

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The financial implications of this report are outlined in the Part B report.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 I agree with this proposal which is lawful and compliant with the Council's constitution. The framework was let before the Procurement Act 2023 came into force, so the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 are applicable.

(Bryan Boese – solicitor)

8. Procurement Implications

8.1 Commercial Procurement recommends using the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) G-Cloud 14 Framework (RM1557.14), Lot 2 – Cloud Software to procure Route Optimisation Software for Bartec Municipal Services.

8.2 To ensure full compliance with CCS Buying Guidelines, CPU will initiate a project on the Digital Marketplace and will follow the six-step buying process throughout. The G-Cloud 14 Framework offers a compliant, efficient, and transparent route to market for cloud-based software solutions. It provides access to a wide range of pre-vetted suppliers, ensuring that the Council engages only with providers who have already met CCS' commercial, technical, and security standards. Using this framework removes the need for a full open tender, significantly reducing procurement timelines, administrative burden, and associated costs.

8.3 This framework is fully compliant with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR2015).

(Senga Henstock, ICT Senior Buyer)

9 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

9.1 No.

10 Key Decision

10.1 Yes

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 KDD-26-21

12 **Appendices & Background Papers**

12.1 Appendix 1 – Breakdown of Costs – included in Part B

Approved by the Chief Executive following consultation with the political group leaders who were in attendance as follows:- Councillors: Decision made under the authorisation contained in Section 9C (5) Delegations of Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) and Section 3.6 of Part 4 (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions.
Signed: Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive Dated:
Date of Leaders' Consultative meeting:
Summary of feedback from the political group leaders

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Report to Chief Executive

Approval For Insurance Tender Process and Award of Contracts

Officer Contact: Lee Walsh, Director of Finance

Report Author: Joanne James, Insurance Manager

Date: 2nd November 2026

Reason for Decision

Oldham Council and its current insurers have been subject to Long-Term agreements in respect of Liability, Property, Terrorism, Motor, Fine Art, and other ancillary insurance policies which conclude in 2026.

The report seeks authority to proceed via the YPO Framework and Procurement's recommended route to market, to tender for the Council's insurance contracts that are due to commence on the 1 April 2027.

Executive Summary

The Council's current insurance programme is designed to protect our financial position in respect of losses it may suffer when undertaking the diverse nature of activities required to meet statutory duties, general business functions and income generating operations.

The current programme is held under a Long-Term Agreement. This agreement ends on the 31 March 2027.

The main Property and Liability insurance policies are currently held with Maven Public Sector and Protector insurance hold the Motor insurance for the motor vehicle fleet.

In addition, the Council purchases several smaller policies with various other insurers. These include, but are not limited to:

- Personal Accident/Business Travel, School Journey & Crime insurance - RMP
- Engineering Insurance – Zurich Insurance
- Fine Art – AXA Art
- Terrorism – AJG
- Legal Expenses - ARAG

The objectives of the tender are to:

- Provide financial certainty in relation to the Council's maximum exposure to individual high value claims and the overall cost of claims in any one year.

- Provide financial certainty for losses that have occurred but may not be reported for many years in the future.
- Comply with the Contract Procedure Rules entered into by the Council.

It should be noted that in the absence of an appropriate insurance programme, the Council will be at risk of significant financial loss.

Given the cost of obtaining new insurance arrangements with Long Term Agreements, we are required to competitively tender for new policies. The process will ensure the Council purchases cover that meets the varied needs of the organisation and ensure that as far as possible, all services are adequately protected.

Due to the specialist nature of the insurance market sector, the process will be overseen by the Council's insurance broker – AJ Gallagher with an evaluation of all bids taking place to include financial certainty, depth of cover, service delivery, claims handling and social value. Contracts will be awarded based on the most advantageous bid, after consideration of all factors in the evaluation matrix.

Insurance cover for all policies will commence on 1st April 2027.

Recommendations

1. To approve the tender process and award of contracts to the most advantageous tenderer based on the tender criteria.
2. To delegate authority to the Director of Finance to award the contracts following the tender, subject to compliance with the Contract Procedure Rules.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Legal Services or nominee to carry out all legal formalities.

Options/Alternatives

Option 1 / Recommended Option:

The Chief Executive accepts the decision to proceed to tender and award contract(s) for insurance to the most advantageous tender(s) in terms of costs and quality and delegate this decision to the Director of Finance.

Option 2:

The Chief Executive does not agree to the tender process and award contracts for insurance but alternatively, self-insure the total cost of risk without the benefit of an insurance policy. The disadvantage of this option is that the Council does not have any financial certainty in the event of large claims which may occur during the 5-year period.

Preferred Option

Option 1 / Recommended Option:

The Chief Executive agrees to the tender process and award of the contract(s) for insurance to the most advantageous bidder(s) in terms of costs and quality and delegate the decision to the Director of Finance. Consultation will be carried out with the Council's procurement team and external appointed brokers AJ Gallagher. The term of the contract will be 3 years with an option to re-new for a further 1 + 1 years.

In a period of financial uncertainty, proceeding without insurance cover is not recommended as the Council would risk significant claims spend, particularly if a total property loss was to be suffered. The Council participating in a tender exercise enables all available market options to be explored, which is considered advantageous whilst the insurance market remains unsettled.

Financial Implications

Further financial and commercial details are set out in the Part B report.

Legal Implications

Further financial and commercial details are set out in the Part B report.

Procurement Implications

Further financial and commercial details are set out in the Part B report.

Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People - N/a

Key Decision

Yes

Key Decision Reference - KDD-26-22

Background Papers - N/A

Appendices - N/A

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