GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD
19/11/2026 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillor Woodvine (Chair)
Councillors Charters, F Hussain, J. Hussain, Jabbar, Jackson, Klonowski (Substitute) and Taylor (Substitute)

Also in Attendance:

Mike Barker	Executive Director Health and Care (Deputy Chief Executive)
Emma Barton	Executive Director Place (Deputy Chief Executive)
Katie Charlton	Assistant Director - Education
Neil Consterdine	Director of Communities
Nasir Dad	Director of Environment
Adrian Davies	Assistant Director – Digital Services
Mark Edmondson	Assistant Director - Revenues and Benefits
Alan Evans	Deputy Borough Solicitor
Matthew Gratton	Director of Digital
Jack Grennan	Constitutional Services
Claire Hooley	Assistant Director – Adult Social Care
Tom Pyne	Assistant Director - Procurement
Jayne Ratcliffe	Director of Adult Social Services
Andy Sweeting	Assistant Director - Transformation
Lee Walsh	Director of Finance
Victoria Wood	Assistant Director – Housing

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brooks and Ibrahim.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions for this meeting of the Scrutiny Board to consider.

5 **MINUTES**

Resolved:
That the minutes of the meeting of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, held on 22nd October 2026 be approved as a correct record.

6 **EXECUTIVE DECISIONS MADE BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Resolved:

That the decisions made by the Chief Executive, arising from the minutes of the previous meeting held 22nd October 2026, be noted.

7 **CONTRACT AWARD - CARE AT HOME**

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Services that sought approval to award new contracts for the provision of Care at Home and Night Care Services following completion of a compliant Open Tender procurement exercise undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Approval was sought to:

a. Award Care at Home Services through a cluster-based delivery model comprising ten Lead Providers and five Back-up Providers.
b. Award the Night Care Service contract to a single provider.
c. Authorise commencement of the new contractual arrangements from 1st April 2027.

The contracts were to be awarded for an initial period of four years to 31st March 2031, with options to extend for up to a further two years.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board would consider the commercially sensitive information contained in the report, at Item 32 on the agenda before making a recommendation.

8 **ROYTON LIBRARY - APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE FOR URGENT ASBESTOS REMEDIATION AND ASSOCIATED ENABLING WORKS**

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive that was seeking approval for expenditure required to undertake urgent asbestos remediation and associated enabling works at Royton Library. The work would be instructed under the existing approved DDR and Measured Term Contract arrangements.

The Council's Procurement Service confirmed that the existing Delegated Decision Report approval couldn't be relied upon as the supplier had been awarded a Council wide contract for the Removal and Remediation of Asbestos Containing Materials and this project fell under the Removal and Remediation of Asbestos. Additionally, the localised concrete stabilisation works required for Royton Library were integral to the asbestos remediation works and is not a separate building repair project.

The current work comprised controlled removal of asbestos-contaminated material, affected flooring and debris, environmental cleaning and clearance testing, together with localised concrete stabilisation required to facilitate and complete the asbestos remediation safely.

Completion of these works would provide safe access for a specialist timber survey, which will establish the cause and extent of the dry rot and identify any subsequent remedial or structural works.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board would consider the commercially sensitive information contained in the report, at Item 33 on the agenda before making a recommendation.

9 **GRANT OF A LEASE FOR POPPYFIELD HOUSE AND WILLOW HOUSE**

The Scrutiny Board considered a joint report of the Director of Adult Social Services and the Director of Communities which was seeking approval in principle to grant Regenda Homes a 99-year lease, at a peppercorn rent, for Poppyfield House and Willow House and to delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Legal Services, to approve and complete the final lease documentation once terms have been agreed by both parties.

The primary purpose of this proposal was to support delivery of previously approved Adult Social Care savings and transformation objectives whilst enabling the Council's assets to be managed through appropriate housing management arrangements.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board would consider the commercially sensitive information contained in the report, at Item 34 on the agenda before making a recommendation.

10 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEAR REVIEW REPORT 2026/27**

Members scrutinized a report of the Director of Finance which advised that, in April 2023, the Council had adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve, as a minimum, treasury management semi-annual and annual outturn reports.

The report before members included the requirement in the 2021 Code of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. This half-year report advised members of the performance of the Treasury Management function of the Council for the first half of 2026/27 and provided a comparison of performance against the 2026/27 Treasury Management Strategy and the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators.

The submitted report included the requirement in the 2021 code of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. The report also reviewed and outlined the following:

- An economic update for the first half of 2026/27 (External Context)
- Net Borrowing and Investments (Local Context)

- A review and update of the Council's current treasury management position;
- Council Borrowing;
- Treasury Investment Activity;
- Treasury Performance for the half year;
- Treasury Performance for the half year;
- Compliance
- Treasury Management Prudential Indicators;

The report was also being presented to the Audit Committee, at its meeting on 25th November 2026, to enable that Committee's members to have the opportunity to review and scrutinise the Half-Year Treasury Management report.

Resolved:

1. That the Scrutiny Board endorses the recommendations in the report of the Director of Finance.
2. That the Scrutiny Board commends the report to the Leaders Consultative Committee and to supplementary meetings thereafter, including submission to Full Council on 15th December 2026.

11 **REVENUE MONITOR AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2026/27**

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Director of Finance which provided an update, as at 30th September 2026 (end Quarter 2, 2026/27), of the Council's 2026/27 forecast revenue budget position, the projected Collection Fund position, the financial forecast of the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Housing Revenue Account forecast position alongside the financial position of the capital programme, together with the revised capital programme 2026/27 to 2030/31.

The forecast adverse position for 2026/27 at the end of Quarter 2 was estimated to be £3.622m which had improved by £1.830m from the position previously reported. It was noted that, as part of the approved Budget for 2026/27, the Council had approved a volatility base budget provision of £2.500m. The release of the reported provision was to be accessed over the course of the ensuing financial year. If the reported base budget provision was released in Quarter 2, this would reduce the overall position down to a projected adverse position of £1.122m.

As with previous monitoring reports, a cautious approach was generally taken when preparing forecasts. Assumptions are made that vacant positions would be filled successfully, which, as the year progressed did not always transpire.

The management actions initiated in 2025/56 across all service areas had continued into this new financial year with services putting in place further mitigations to reduce the in-year pressure identified. Forecasts included within this report rely on these enhanced controls and service reviews being in place and it is important that these remain throughout the financial year to assist the financial position and bring the Council to a balanced

position by the end of the financial year, reducing any use of reserves and protecting its financial resilience.

Information on the forecast year end position of the Collection Fund, Dedicated Schools Grant and the Housing Revenue Account were also outlined in the submitted report.

Regarding the Council's Capital Budget position, the report outlined the most up to date capital spending position for 2026/27 to 2030/31 for approved schemes. The revised Capital Programme budget for 2026/27 was £106.775m, as at the close of Quarter 1 (30th June 2026), which incorporated additional funding received. The actual expenditure to 30th June 2026 was £9.432m (8.83% of the forecast outturn).

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board recommends that the Group Leaders meeting on 30th November 2026:

1. Notes the report.
2. Notes the forecast revenue position at the end of Quarter 2 at £3.622m, as detailed at Annex 1, to the submitted report.
3. Notes the requested transfers to/from reserves as at the end of Quarter 2.
4. Notes the forecast position for the Collection Fund, Dedicated Schools Grant and Housing Revenue Account, as at the end of Quarter 2.
5. Approves the revised Capital Programme for 2026/27 including the proposed virements and notes the forecast for the financial years to 2030/31, as at the end of Quarter 1 2026/27, as outlined in Annex 2, to the submitted report.

12 **COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2027/2028**

Members scrutinised a report of the Director of Finance that was seeking approval for the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2027/28. This decision must also be approved by Full Council.

The Council was required to review its Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme annually and to decide whether to revise it or leave it unchanged.

A major consultation exercise has not been undertaken regarding changes to the CTR scheme, and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority had been provisionally advised that no change to the scheme was proposed. In this regard, the proposal is that the CTR scheme for 2027/28 remained the same as that operating in 2026/27, apart from minor amendments to keep it in line with the Housing Benefit scheme e.g. uprating etc., and, therefore, no consultation exercise was required. The current CTR scheme provided a maximum reduction equivalent to 85% of the Council Tax charge for Band A property, and this had been unchanged since 2014/15.

The scheme continued to meet the needs of residents and remained in line with national regulations.

Caseload had continued to gradually decrease, and there have been no national or legislative changes that would require any local amendment.

During 2027/28, officers would be scoping potential options for 2028/29 to assess whether any amendments to the scheme would provide value for money. This would include consideration of the cost of system changes, any potential administrative savings, and the ongoing need to ensure the scheme continues to support residents effectively.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board recommends that the Chief Executive be authorised to approve that the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme remains unchanged, apart from minor amendments to keep it in line with the Housing Benefit scheme e.g., uprating etc., for 2027/28.

13 **INCOME AND DEBT MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

Members scrutinised a report of the Director of Finance that sought approval to appoint Liberata to help in recovering aged debt and to undertake a review of the authority's Council Tax Single Person Discounts.

Approval was given for the Revenues and Benefits service to look at appointing a third-party company to help with reviewing and recovery of aged debt. Officers had worked with colleagues in the Procurement service and had identified Liberata as a suitable partner to undertake this work.

Resolved:
1. That the Scrutiny Board recommends that the Chief Executive approve the appointment of Liberata to review the Council's aged debt and Council Tax Single Person Discounts, with the aim of increasing the authority's Council Tax base and reducing the amount of aged debt held by the Council.
2.That a Senior Officer within the Service, be asked to review all complaints that came in regarding the scheme for its first few months of operation.
3. That the Assistant Director of Revenues and Benefits be requested to present a report to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Board, reviewing progress.

14 **TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Board received a report of the Director of Finance which asked Members to note tthe purpose and rationale for the Transformation Fund and to approve the operation of the fund for four separate cases for change to support service transformation and to release savings.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board would consider the commercially sensitive information contained in the report, at Item 38 on the agenda before making a recommendation.

15 **PROCUREMENT OF SPECIALIST ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION (RPA) CONSULTANCY SUPPORT**

The Scrutiny Board received a report of the Director of Digital that was seeking approval to procure specialist Robotic Process Automation (RPA) consultancy support, up to a £194.000 (excluding VAT), to establish, accelerate and embed an internal RPA capability within the Council.

The consultancy will deliver production-ready automations while putting in place the governance, standards, reusable components, documentation and internal skills the Council needs to sustain and grow the capability itself, without long-term reliance on external specialists.

The £194k (excluding VAT) figure was the maximum procurement envelope. It was not a commitment to spend that amount. Actual expenditure would be determined by the outcome of the procurement, the agreed delivery model and phasing, and the services called off against agreed milestones. The value released by individual automations is separate again and will be baselined and tracked automation by automation.

The decision being sought related to consultancy support only.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board recommends that the Chief Executive:

1. Approves the procurement of specialist RPA consultancy support up to a maximum contract value of £195.000 (excluding VAT), for an initial period of up to 12 months (TBC), through a compliant route to be confirmed by Procurement in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement Act 2023.
2. Notes that £195.000 (excluding VAT) is a maximum envelope and not a forecast of spend. The contract should be structured in phases, with a formal review point at the end of the initial Foundation and Discovery phase (months 1–3) and continuation subject to evidence of delivery progress, knowledge transfer and benefits.
3. Notes that the requirement includes business analysis, process discovery, governance, quality assurance, benefits tracking, training and knowledge transfer, and is intended to create a sustainable internal capability rather than purchase isolated automations.
4. Notes that the funding source for the consultancy is to be confirmed by Finance (TBC), and that contract award will be made in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules following the procurement.

16 **APPROPRIATION OF LAND FOR PLANNING PURPOSES FOR LAND AT SOUTHLINK, ST MARY'S.**

Members of the Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Director of Growth which sought authority to utilise powers under S122 of the Local Government Act 1972 to appropriate land for planning purposes at Southlink, Oldham, to facilitate its development by Vistry Partnership who were approved as the Council's preferred developer by Cabinet in October 2024.

Under the Council's Property Protocols decisions relating to the appropriation of land are made in two stages. The first stage report – approved in August 2026 and attached at Appendix One, authorised the in-principal appropriation of the land for Planning purposes, subject to the advertising in an appropriate publication of the proposal and allowing time for objections.

This second stage report recommended appropriation and noted that no objections have been received following the four-week statutory consultation period.

Resolved:
The Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board recommends that the Council authorises the proposed appropriation for planning purposes in respect to the Council owned land at Southlink, Oldham (as shown edged red in Appendix Two of the report) in accordance with the provisions of s122 of the Local Government Act 1972.

17 **HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FRAMEWORK**

The Scrutiny Board received a report of the Director of Environment that was asking for approval to establish a new framework to provide specialist asset management and professional services to ensure continued compliance with Department for Transport (DfT) transparency reporting and incentive funding. This would allow Oldham to ensure that it stays at the front of changes within the highways maintenance well-managed assets approach and that any additional incentive funding made available by DfT is achieved to maximise the capital maintenance programmes within the borough.

Resolved:
That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board recommends that approval is given to establish a new Highways Asset Management and Professional Services Framework, as set out in the Director of Environment's report.

18 **DIRECT AWARD - FLEET MANAGED STORES**

Members received a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive which was seeking approval to appoint a fleet parts supplier for the council. This was required to ensure the timely delivery of parts to repair and maintain the council's fleet to the correct standards and in an operational condition.

The main vehicle maintenance workshop is situated at the council depot on Moorhey Street, Oldham. As well as fleet, the site is also the base for Waste Management and Highways

Services. There is a dedicated stores facility based within the vehicle workshop containing parts and materials, supplied and managed by an external provider.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board would consider the commercially sensitive information contained in the report, at Item 35 on the agenda before making a recommendation.

19 **SUSTAINABLE RAINWATER MANAGEMENT DONATION**

Members scrutinized a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, that was asking for approval to accept a donation of £360,100 (split into two milestone payments of £200,000 & £160,100) from United Utilities Plc's Sustainable Rainwater Fund and for the Council to enter into a Donation Agreement to receive the funding. Signing of the donation agreement and site mobilisation to use as a contribution to the construction and long-term maintenance costs of the sustainable urban drainage and soft landscaping infrastructure at George Square.

Further work would be required to determine the cost of the ongoing maintenance of the sustainable urban drainage and soft landscaping aspects of the George Square scheme.

A proportion of this donation was expected to be utilised within the Capital Programme.

Resolved:
The Governance Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board recommends that Option 1, in the submitted report, to accept the donation of £360,100 from United Utilities Plc's Sustainable Rainwater Management Programme, recognising it as a contribution to the construction and on-going maintenance of the sustainable urban drainage and soft landscaping aspects of the George Square scheme, be approved.

20 **ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDING AND COMMENCEMENT OF DELIVERY OF THE NATIONAL JOBS GUARANTEE PROGRAMME - OLDHAM**

The Scrutiny Board received a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive that was seeking approval of Oldham Council's participation in the National Jobs Guarantee Programme as a delivery partner within the GC Employment supply chain, including acceptance of external funding, establishment of staffing resources required for delivery, and commencement of programme activity supporting approximately 410 young people between November 2026 and May 2028.

The National Jobs Guarantee Programme was a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) funded employment programme designed to support young people who were unemployed, economically inactive or facing barriers to employment through personalised employment support, employer engagement, job matching, skills development and in-work support.

Following a successful procurement exercise undertaken by GC Employment, Oldham Council has been identified as a proposed delivery partner through the Get Oldham Working programme.

Indicative delivery assumptions developed during the bid process were based upon supporting approximately 410 young people between November 2026 and May 2028 through a dedicated delivery model funded through an estimated external funding allocation of approximately £730,000.

The programme would enable Oldham Council to increase support available to young people whilst attracting significant external investment into the borough. The indicative funding allocation would support approximately six fixed-term FTE posts together with participant support costs, employer engagement activity, contract management and programme overheads.

Resolved:
That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board recommends that the Chief Executive be authorised:

1. To approve Oldham Council's participation in the National Jobs Guarantee Programme as a delivery partner within the GC Employment supply chain.
2. To approve the acceptance of external funding of approximately £730,000 (subject to final contract value confirmation) for the period November 2026 to May 2028.
3. To approve the establishment and recruitment of approximately six fixed-term Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts required to deliver the programme.
4. To approve entry into the necessary contractual arrangements with GC Employment.
5. To approve mobilisation and commencement of programme delivery through Get Oldham Working from November 2026.
6. To delegate authority to the relevant Executive Director, in consultation with Finance, HR, Legal and Procurement colleagues, to finalise contractual, staffing and operational arrangements.

21 **LIVE WELL JOURNEY TO EMPLOYMENT FUTURE DELIVERY PROPOSAL FOR A 15 - 24 EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING (EET) SUPPORT SERVICE**

The Scrutiny Board considered a joint report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Children and Young People which advised that Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) was working with each of the ten local authorities (LA's) to determine how devolved funding will operate across employment and skills. This activity was taking place with teams across the Council and had implications for various services and choices that the Council wants to make. This is part of the latest devolution deal and includes an integrated settlement that allows GMCA to prioritise areas of activity to deliver the GM Strategy and constituent policies, including Get GM Working, Live Well and Local Growth Plans.

This report specifically relates to the Education, Work and Skills (EWS) portion of the Integrated Settlement (IS) funding that is being allocated via GMCA.

A report was presented to Cabinet in March 2026 outlining Year 1 plans for the funding for the Live Well Journey to Employment. This report outlined the funding confirmed to Oldham from GMCA at that stage for extensions to 3 projects currently being funded in the Oldham area and covered the financial year 2026/2027.

The Council was in receipt of an indicative budget for EWS Integrated Settlement funding for 2027/2028 and 2028/2029. The submitted report aimed to advise on one element of the proposed future delivery plan. Further reports on the future delivery plan will update Leaders when information is clear. The submitted report also covered the new service that will be created, that will provide an offer of education, employment and training (EET) support specifically aimed at 15 – 24-year-olds, who are at risk of, or who have become NEET (not in education, employment or training).

Resolved:
That the Chief Executive be recommended to agree the proposals for the new service and agree for officers to continue to work with Procurement timescales to achieve a 1st April 2027 delivery start date, which requires that the LA should go out to tender for a new service without a GFA in place with GMCA.

22 **ACCEPTANCE OF GMCA HOUSING ENFORCEMENT GRANTS**

Members scrutinised a report of the Director of Environment that sought acceptance of an additional £185,000 in grant funding from Greater Manchester Combined Authority in relation to enhancing enforcement of housing standards and to utilise £35,000 of Selective Licensing reserves for match funding.

The GMCA through its Housing Strategy Team have made a range of funding available to local authorities with the intention of enhancing and increasing capacity to improve standards in the private rented sector. In October 2025, the GMCA invited the Public Protection service to submit a proposal for £150,000 of grant funding focused on increasing the use of Rent Repayment Orders over a 2-year period (£75,000 per year).

Resolved:
That the Chief Executive be requested to approve:

1. That the Council accepts £150,000 of grant funding for the purposes of increasing enforcement activity against private landlords with a focus on utilising Rent Repayment Orders
2. That the Council accepts £35,000 of grant funding and match funds this from Selective Licensing ringfenced reserves to support enforcement activity and increase training for housing standards and tenancy relations officers.

23 **APPROVAL OF THE 2026/27 ROUGH SLEEPING PROGRAMME GRANT AND PROPOSED EXPENDITURE**

The Scrutiny Board received a report of the Director of Communities that was looking for approval for Oldham Council to accept £418,307 of 2026/27 Rough Sleeping Programme revenue funding and, once received and approved by Legal Services, to enter into the associated grant agreement with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).

Written confirmation of the allocation was received from GMCA on the 4th of September 2026.

The grant agreement is awaited. The full allocation must be committed and spent on eligible activity by the 31st of March 2027, with no assumption of carry-forward.

The funding would strengthen Oldham's response to rough sleeping by creating rapid routes off the street, improving throughput from emergency and short-stay accommodation, and developing sustainable pathways into supported housing, the private rented sector, social housing, SMART Housing and Housing First. The programme was designed around the principle that accommodation is the platform for intervention, while the intended outcome is a safe and sustainable route away from rough sleeping with core aim of ending 'revolving door homelessness'.

The central aim was to improve throughput within existing supported housing by helping people who are ready to move on to access suitable longer-term accommodation, thereby releasing capacity for those who continue to need support. Local data lived experience and ongoing performance monitoring will be used to identify unmet need and gaps in the current supported accommodation market. This would be a test-and-learn approach, aligned with the wider borough-wide demand analysis for supported accommodation, with findings used to inform future commissioning priorities and service requirements.

The programme would also address the needs of people experiencing entrenched and repeat rough sleeping, while also responding to the recent increase in people sleeping rough. Early intervention for this group would help prevent new rough sleeping from becoming recurring or entrenched.

Resolved:
That the Chief Executive be recommended to:

1. Approve the acceptance of £418,307 of 2026/27 Rough Sleeping Programme revenue funding from Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
2. Authorise the Diretor of Legal Services, or his nominated representative, to enter into the associated grant agreement with Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

24 **LATIC ZONE - HIGH NEEDS PROVISIONS CAPITAL ALLOCATION**

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Director of Education and Early Years that was asking for approval to accept the most advantageous tender (MAT) submission in relation to the refurbishment of the location previously known as Latics Zone and which is now part of Kingsland Pupil Referral Unit.

The Latics Zone proposal, including HNPCA funding of £200,000, was approved by the Cabinet Member for Education & Skills and the Director of Early Years, Education and Skills in February 2025 and outlined the conversion of the Latics Zone location into a tier two provision for eight vulnerable children who are at severe risk of poor outcomes. The scheme includes the refurbishment of the site with the installation of a kitchen and toilets, and improved security. The location will offer time-limited intensive placements in a fit for purpose alternative provision, allowing vulnerable young people access to education and support currently unavailable to them within Oldham Borough.

Tenders were received and evaluated on both quality and price criteria with the quality submission weighted at 60% (including 10% social value) and cost weighted at 40%. Following moderation, Jamieson Contracting Limited has been identified as the most advantageous tender. The total cost of refurbishment of Latic Zone is £133,507.27 (excl. VAT) or £160,208.72 (incl. VAT).

The submitted report also requested that delegated authority over the construction work and spending of the HNPCA grant be given to the Director Education and Early Years as part of the monitoring and reporting process for the SEND Reforms.

Resolved:
That the Chief Executive be authorized to:

1. Accept the Most Advantageous Tender (MAT) for the refurbishment and reconfiguration of Latics Zone.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Education and Early Years to finalise and execute all necessary documentation as part of the wider National SEND Reforms.

25 **OLDHAM HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2026 - 2031**

The Scrutiny Board received a report of the Director of Communities which advised that all Local Authorities were required to publish a new Homelessness Strategy as a minimum of every five years based on a review of homelessness in the district. Oldham's current Strategy covered the period 2021 - 2026. The submitted report sought approval for the new Homelessness Strategy, covering the years 2026 - 2031.

Oldham Council's new Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 - 2031 had been developed in consultation with residents, stakeholders and Elected Members, and was informed by a comprehensive Review of homelessness between 2021 - 2025. The Review particularly focused on an in-

depth analysis of customer groups presenting to the Housing Options service, their support needs and the reasons why they came to be homeless.

The Strategy Action Plan took a pragmatic approach to tackling homelessness in Oldham, acknowledging that resources were finite, and the lasting impact homelessness had on communities. Its focus was on making best use of current resources, demonstrating an effective business case for further investment and working in partnership to deliver the following priorities:

- Earlier identification and intervention to prevent homelessness
- Ensuring that when homelessness occurs it is rare, brief and non-recurring
- Improving access to affordable, safe and suitable accommodation
- Strengthening partnership working to end homelessness and rough sleeping

Resolved:

1. That the contents of the Oldham Homelessness Review 2021 – 2025, be noted.
2. That the Chief Executive be recommended to approve the contents of the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 - 2031.

26 **GREATER MANCHESTER MINERALS AND WASTE PLAN**

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive which advised that a new Greater Manchester wide plan making legislative framework required certain decisions, such as ones in relation to the timetable to be made at speed. In addition, having agreed to produce a joint plan some of the required steps must be completed simultaneously by all of the 10 Greater Manchester authorities. The proposed delegations, detailed in the submitted report, would enable the plan to be progressed in a timely fashion and in line with regulations. Not having appropriate delegations in place could potentially result in difficulties in producing the plan to the 30-month timeline required by legislation.

Resolved:
That the Chief Executive be recommended to:

1. Approve the decisions set out in the table at Appendix 1, to the submitted report.
2. Approve delegated authority, to the extent not already captured by existing delegations, or delegated to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, to the Assistant Director of Planning and Development to take any executive decisions necessary for the Authority to progress through the plan making stages including those identified in the table at Appendix 1, to the submitted report.

27 **DIGITAL & DATA STRATEGY DOCUMENTS**

The Scrutiny Board received a report by the Director of Digital which advised that the Technology, Digital and Data Services had produced two strategies for Oldham Council regarding Digital Technology and Data. The purpose of presenting these documents for an executive approval decision was to ensure that the strategies were understood by members, as they formed the backbone of all new technology, digital and data project work.

The meeting was informed that approved Digital and Data Strategies were important for the Council because they provided an agreed direction, governance framework and organisational commitment needed to modernise services and ensure technology and data investments supported the Council's priorities.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board recommends that the Chief Executive approves:

a. The Digital Data and Technology Strategy 2025 to 2030.
b. The Data Strategy 2025 to 2030.

28 **LOCAL AREA NETWORK (LAN) REFRESH PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny considered a report of the Director of Digital, the purpose of which was to obtain capital funding to enable the Local Area Network (LAN) Refresh Programme to modernise, standardise and rationalise the Council's Local Area Network (LAN) infrastructure across all of the in-scope sites.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board would consider the commercially sensitive information contained in the report, at Item 35 on the agenda before making a recommendation.

29 **FIREWALL COLOCATION HOSTING AND DATA CENTRE EXIT**

The Scrutiny Board received a report of the Director of Digital which was seeking approval to implement a new primary internet and security architecture through the procurement and deployment of two firewalls across two Greater Manchester co-location sites.

Oldham Council's network was heavily reliant on the Civic Centre for internet connectivity, cloud access, and core network services. With Oldham Civic Centre scheduled for decommission in 2027, this dependency presents a significant business risk, compounded by ageing infrastructure, complex network routing, and multiple single points of failure.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board would consider the commercially sensitive information contained in the report, at Item 36 on the agenda before making a recommendation.

30 **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 seven
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.

31 **CONTRACT AWARD - CARE AT HOME**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 7: Contract Award - Care at Home.

Resolved:
That the Chief Executive:

1. Approves Option 2, as outlined in the confidential report, as outlined below:

a. Approves the award of Care at Home contracts to ten Lead Providers and five Back-Up Providers for the period from 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2031, with the option to extend for a further two years to 31 March 2033.

b. Approves the award of the Night Care contract to 1 Homecare Ltd for the period from 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2031, with the option to extend annually for up to two further years.

c. Delegates authority to the Director of Adult Social Services, in conjunction with the appropriate elected member to approve any contract extensions, where performance and service requirements justify continuation.

32 **ROYTON LIBRARY - APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE FOR URGENT ASBESTOS REMEDIATION AND ASSOCIATED ENABLING WORKS**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 8: Royton Library - Approval of Expenditure for Urgent Asbestos Remediation and Associated Enabling Works.

Resolved:
That the Chief Executive:

1. Approves expenditure of up to £119,549.76 inclusive of VAT and Council professional fees for the urgent asbestos remediation and associated enabling works described in this report.
2. Approves the instruction of D Hughes Demolition for works valued at £95,647.74 inclusive of VAT under the existing approved DDR and Measured Term Contract arrangements. The Procurement Service have confirmed that the existing approval can be relied upon because the localised concrete stabilisation is integral to the asbestos remediation and is not a standalone building repair.
3. Notes that the proposed D Hughes Demolition instruction is £95,647.74 inclusive of VAT and is within the £100,000 inclusive-of-VAT limit of the existing DDR approval.

4. Notes that the specialist timber survey, subsequent dry rot remediation, structural repairs, reinstatement works and any further works required to reopen Royton Library are outside the scope of this approval.
5. Notes that these future stages will be separately scoped and brought forward through the appropriate budget, procurement and governance approval route.

33 **GRANT OF A LEASE FOR POPPYFIELD HOUSE AND WILLOW HOUSE**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 9: Grant of a lease for Poppyfield House and Willow House.

Resolved:

1. That the Chief Executive be requested to approve Option 4, as detailed in the confidential report), to agree in principle to issue a peppercorn lease for 99 years to Regenda Homes, who are a Registered Provider under the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), to enable them to take on the landlord functions for Poppyfield House and Willow House. Under the terms of the lease Regenda Homes will be granted full liability for costs, compliance, repairs and insurance during the 99-year period.

2. That the Chief Executive be requested to approve to delegate final sign-off of the lease to the Director of Adults Social Care, in conjunction with the Director of Legal once both parties have agreed to the terms. This is to expedite the implementation and bring Willow House back into use, which supports the Adult Social Care savings targets for 2026/27.

34 **DIRECT AWARD - FLEET MANAGED STORES**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 14: Direct Award - Fleet Managed Stores.

Resolved:
That the Chief Executive be requested to allow the award of a 4-year contract to Fleet Factors (current supplier) using the NEPO/TPPL Vehicle Parts, Tyres and Workshop Equipment framework, reference NEPO201. Lot 5 of this framework is a single supplier lot making the direct award compliant with procurement regulations.

35 **LOCAL AREA NETWORK (LAN) REFRESH PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 28: Local Area Network (LAN) Refresh Programme.

Resolved:
That capital funding of £670,000 be approved to procure circa 90 network switches for the LAN Refresh Programme.

36 **FIREWALL COLOCATION HOSTING AND DATA CENTRE EXIT**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 29: Firewall Colocation Hosting and Data Centre Exit.

Resolved:
The Scrutiny Board recommends to:

1. Proceed with the migration of the Council's core network from the Civic Centre to two GM1 Colocation sites and any remaining services to be migrated into Spindles PCR1 and PCR2, enabling the permanent shutdown of the Civic Centre Data Centre.
2. Authorise TDS to undertake all necessary design, testing, migration and decommissioning work, including coordination with third-party suppliers.
3. Complete decommissioning of all remaining networking equipment in the Civic Centre Data Centre once services are migrated allowing full decommission of IT services in the Civic Data Centre.

37 **TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 14: Transformation Programme.

Resolved:

1. That the principles and background to the Transformation Programme and Transformation Investment Fund be noted.
2. the Scrutiny Board recommends that the Chief Executive approves that the Council utilises the fund for six projects to support service transformation and release savings, as detailed in the submitted report.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.30 pm