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GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD
Agenda

Date	Thursday 19 November 2026
Time	6.00 pm
Venue	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. Contact officer for this agenda is Constitutional Services 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 noon on Monday, 16 November 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, Charters, F Hussain, J. Hussain, Ibrahim, Jabbar, Jackson, Kenyon, Robinson 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 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 - 28)

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board held on 22nd October 2026 are attached for approval.

6 Executive Decisions Made by the Chief Executive

Chair to report

7 Contract Award - Care At Home (Pages 29 - 36)

To consider proposals for the award of contract for the Care at Home Service

8 Royton Library - Approval of Expenditure for Urgent Asbestos Remediation and Associated Enabling Works (Pages 37 - 42)

A report considering proposals for works at Royton Library

9 Grant of a lease for Poppyfield House and Willow House (Pages 43 - 52)

A report outlining proposals for the grant of a lease for Poppyfield House and Willow House

10 Treasury Management Half Year Review Report 2026/27 (Pages 53 - 82)

A report that reviews the Council's Treasury Management, position at the mid-point of 2026/27 (30th September 20206).

11 Revenue Monitor and Capital Investment Programme 2026/27 (Pages 83 - 126)

To consider a report that provides members with an update, as at 30th September 2026 (end date of Quarter 2, 2026/27), of the Council's 2026/27 forecast revenue budget position.

12 Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2027/2028 (Pages 127 - 142)

To consider the Authority's proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2027/28.

13 Income and Debt Management Action Plan Update (Pages 143 - 154)

A report that seeks approval to appoint Liberata to provide assistance in recovering aged debt and to undertake a review of our Council Tax Single Person Discounts.

14 Transformation Programme (Pages 155 - 158)

A report that considers the purpose and rationale for the Transformation Fund and approval of utilising the fund for four separate cases for change

15 Procurement of Specialist Robotic Process Automation (RPA) Consultancy Support (Pages 159 - 202)

A report 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.

16 Appropriation of land for Planning Purposes for land at Southlink, St Mary's. (Pages 203 - 216)

The purpose of the report is to utilise powers under S122 of the Local Government Act 1972 to appropriate the land for planning purposes at Southlink, Oldham.

17 Highways Asset Management & Professional Services Framework (Pages 217 - 224)

A report that seeks approval to establish new framework to provide specialist asset management and professional services to ensure continued compliance with Department for Transport transparency reporting and incentive funding.

18 Direct Award - Fleet Managed Stores (Pages 225 - 228)

A report detailing options for the delivery of fleet managed services

19 Sustainable Rainwater Management donation (Pages 229 - 258)

To consider a report seeking 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.

20 Acceptance of Funding and Commencement of Delivery of the National Jobs Guarantee Programme - Oldham (Pages 259 - 274)

A report that seeks approval of Oldham Council's participation in the National

Jobs Guarantee Programme as a delivery partner within the GC Employment supply chain.

21 Live Well Journey to Employment Future Delivery Proposal for a 15 - 24 Education, Employment and Training (EET) Support Service (Pages 275 - 296)

A report that seeks the agreement of proposals for a new service and agree for officers to continue to work with Procurement timescales to achieve a 1st April 2027 delivery start date, to facilitate the "Live Well" journey to employment future delivery proposals for a Education, Employment and Training Support Service.

22 Acceptance of GMCA Housing Enforcement Grants (Pages 297 - 304)

Acceptance is sought for an additional £185,000 in grant funding from the GMCA in relation to enhancing enforcement of housing standards and to utilise £35,000 of Selective Licensing reserves for match funding.

23 Approval of the 2026/27 Rough Sleeping Programme Grant and Proposed Expenditure (Pages 305 - 318)

A report to consider approval of the 2026/27 Rough Sleeping Programme Grant.

24 Latic Zone - High Needs Provisions Capital Allocation (Pages 319 - 416)

Approval is sought to accept the most advantageous tender submission in relation to the refurbishment of the location previously known as Latics Zone and which is now part of Kingsland Pupil Referral Unit.

25 Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 - 2031 (Pages 417 - 540)

A report that seeks approval for the new Homelessness Strategy 2026 - 2031.

26 Greater Manchester Minerals and Waste Plan (Pages 541 - 562)

To consider proposals for the Greater Manchester Minerals and Waste Plan

27 Digital & Data Strategy Documents (Pages 563 - 594)

A report that seeks approval for the Digital Data and Technology Strategy 2025 to 2030 and the Data Strategy 2025 to 2030.

28 Local Area Network (LAN) Refresh Programme (Pages 595 - 598)

A report detailing options for a local area network refresh programme

29 Firewall Colocation Hosting and Data Centre Exit (Pages 599 - 602)

To consider a report regarding a firewall co-location hosting and data centre exit service

30 Exclusion of the Press and Public

To consider that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following seven 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 Contract Award - Care at Home (Pages 603 - 630)

To consider confidential recommendations

32 Royton Library - Approval of Expenditure for Urgent Asbestos Remediation and Associated Enabling Works (Pages 631 - 652)

To consider confidential recommendations

33 Grant of a lease for Poppyfield House and Willow House (Pages 653 - 670)

To consider confidential recommendations

34 Direct Award - Fleet Managed Stores (Pages 671 - 684)

To consider confidential recommendations

35 Local Area Network (LAN) Refresh Programme (Pages 685 - 694)

To consider confidential recommendations

36 Firewall Colocation Hosting and Data Centre Exit (Pages 695 - 706)

To consider confidential recommendations

37 Transformation Programme (Pages 707 - 816)

To consider confidential recommendations

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GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD
22/10/2026 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillor Woodvine (in the Chair)
Councillors Brooks, J. Hussain, Jabbar, Moores (Substituting for Councillor Charters), Robinson and Rustidge (Substituting for Councillor F. Hussain)

Also in Attendance:

Jodie Barber	Assistant Director – Community Services
Mike Barker	Executive Director Health and Care (Deputy Chief Executive)
Emma Barton	Executive Director Place (Deputy Chief Executive)
Katie Charlton	Assistant Director – Education and Early Years
Nasir Dad	Director of Environment
Anthony Decrop	Director of Children's Services
Eleanor Devlin	Assistant Director of Workforce and Organisational Culture
Claire Hooley	Assistant Director – Adult Social Care
James Kington	Director of Growth
Vickie Lambert	Senior Finance Manager
Adrian Davis	Assistant Director of Data and Technology
Katie Fitzpatrick	Communications Officer
Peter Thompson	Principal Constitutional Services Officer

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Azad, Charters, F. Hussain, Jackson and Kenyon.

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 submitted for the Scrutiny Board to consider.

5 **MINUTES**

Resolved:
That the minutes of the meeting of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, held on 28th September 2026, be approved as a correct record.

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

A briefing paper was circulated, which summarised the executive and principal decisions taken by the Chief Executive, following their consideration by the previous meeting of this Scrutiny Board, on 28th September 2026 and by the Group Leader's meeting on 5th October 2026.

Resolved:
That the actions of the Chief Executive be noted.

7 **HIGH NEEDS PROVISION IN MAINSTREAM SETTINGS CAPITAL WORKS (ST AGNES C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL, LEES)**

Members considered a report of the Director of Education and Early Years which was 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 C of E Primary School. The project was intended to 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 project was intended to create a total of 8 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. *(The Scrutiny Board were advised of an error in the published report and the Assistant Director of Education and Early Years clarified that there were a total of 8 new places and not 12 as stated in the report).*

The report presented two Options:
Option 1 (preferred Option): To 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.
Option 2: To 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.

Resolved:
That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Director of Education and Early Years to approve the allocation of capital funding from the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA) and Basic Need Grant to support delivery of the scheme.

8 **CONTRACT EXTENSION – MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES**

Members considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care which was seeking approval for the extension of the current Mental Health Supported Living Services contract in place with Creative Support Ltd for a further two years up to 30th September 2028.

The report presented two Options:
Option A – To approve the extension to the current contract from 1st October 2026; which would enable continuity of services with a provider that provides good quality care whilst meeting their contractual obligations.
Option B – Not to approve the extension and let the current contract expire on 30th September 2026; which 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 expired.

Resolved:
That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Director of Adult Social Care to:

1. 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 of the report.
2. Note that Option A 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.

9 **OLDHAM ADVOCACY SERVICE - CONTRACT EXTENSION**

Members considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care, which was seeking approval for the extension of the current Oldham Advocacy Services contract in place with VoiceAbility for a further one year up to 30th October 2027.

The report presented two Options:
Option A (preferred Option) – To 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.
Option B – To not approve the extension and to 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 timeframe before the contract expired.

Resolved:
That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Director of Adult Social Care to:

1. Authorise 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.

2. Note that 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 1st November 2027, while ensuring robust contract monitoring and performance oversight continue throughout the extension period.

10 **HIGH NEEDS PROVISION CAPITAL ALLOCATION FUNDING - OLDHAM COLLEGE**

Members considered a report by the Director of Education and Early Years regarding a proposal by Oldham College to develop additional specialist provision. The proposal was developed sufficiently to enable members to consider the allocation of capital funding.

The project was intended to 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 was released to schools and colleges upon application and consideration by panel. It was proposed that where projects will generate additional places these projects are funded from the HNPCA Grant provision.

The report presented two Options:
Option One (preferred Option) – To 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.
Option 2: To 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.

Resolved:
That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Director of Education and Early Years:

1. To approve 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.

2. To grant 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.

11 **STAYING CLOSE**

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Executive Director for Children and Young People which was seeking agreement for the Council to approve the Staying Close Delivery Plan and to receive the associated grant from the Department for Education (DfE).

The Department for Education (DfE) had invited Local Authorities to participate in the national Staying Close programme, which sought 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 years.

The report presented two Options:
Option 1 (preferred Option) – To approve the grant and implement the Staying Close Delivery Plan, which would secure up to £411,701 of DfE funding to improve outcomes for care leavers, create new Supported Lodgings accommodation capacity and expands accommodation choice, improve support for care leavers through dedicated Staying Close coordination and mental wellbeing provision, support statutory responsibilities towards care leavers and contributes to prevention of homelessness and strengthen the Council's corporate parenting offer and supports improved long-term outcomes.
Option 2 – to decline participation in the Staying Close programme, which would result in a loss of access to DfE grant funding, reduced opportunities to improve accommodation options and support available to care leavers and an increased risk that care leavers do not benefit from enhanced support designed to reduce homelessness and improve independence outcomes.

Resolved:
That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Executive Director for Children and Young People to approve the proposed grant from the Department for Education, to deliver the Staying Close project, as per the Delivery Plan at Appendix 1 of the report.

12 **ACTIVE OLDHAM STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, which sought approval to actively procure a highways construction Strategic Partner and a Reserve Supplier to deliver Transport Capital Investment Programmes from 2027 - 2031 for the delivery of key capital civil engineering projects across the Borough of Oldham for an

accumulative total of up to £20m over a four-year term beginning in April 2027.

The report also sought approval for the delegation of authority to the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Lead Members, 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 Directors of Economy, Environment and Growth, in consultation with the relevant Lead Members, to award the individual Call Off Orders for individual projects and to delegate low value Call Off Orders (under a value of £50,000) under a direct award via the Assistant Director for Highways in consultation with Budget Holders and Finance Officers.

The report presented two Options for consideration:
Option 1 (preferred Option) – to approve and delegated authority to officers, as specified in the submitted report.
Option 2 – to not delegate to officers and instead initiate a time and cost consuming competitive tendering process for individual projects.

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:

1. That the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader Members be delegated authority to procure and award the Active Oldham Strategic Partnership Agreement (AOSPA) and Reserve Supplier Agreement, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Legal.
2. The Directors of Economy, Environment and Growth, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Legal, be delegated authority to award the individual Call-Off Orders under the Strategic Partnership Agreement and Reserve Supplier Agreement.
3. That the Director of Legal, or his nominated representative, be authorised to 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.
4. That the Assistant Director of Highways and Engineering be authorized to award low value Call-Off Orders (under a value of £50,000), in line with financial approval limits and in consultation with the Budget Holder and Finance Officers.

13 **YOUNG FUTURES HUBS AND LOCAL YOUTH TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME**

Members considered a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive which advised that the Council had been awarded funding of up to £2.05m over two years, through the Government's Young Futures Hubs and Local Youth

Transformation Programme. The funding would provide 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 the timely implementation of the programme and compliance with the conditions of grant funding, approval was sought to formally accept the funding and delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Communities, in consultation with the Director of Children's Services, to undertake all actions necessary to deliver the programme.

The report presented two Options:
Option 1 (preferred Option) - to accept the funding. The benefits were the security of significant external investment, establishing two Young Futures Hubs within the borough, enabling the transformation of the local youth system, improving outcomes for young people, strengthening youth voice and participation and creating a longer-term sustainable model for youth provision.
Option 2 – To decline the Funding. This would likely lead to a loss of external investment, missed opportunities to improve local youth services, a reduced ability to address identified needs and a reduced capacity to strengthen local youth infrastructure.

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

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 – noting that the grant funding for the Programme will be issues in Stages.
2. Authorise that the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Communities 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 Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive and the 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 Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive and the 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.

14 **SADDLEWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Scrutiny Board received a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, which informed Members that 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 were required to decide what action to take in response to the recommended modifications; and if the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum.

The report presented two Options:
Option 1 (preferred Option) – To approve the modifications recommended by the Independent Inspector, Oldham Council would then publish a decision statement and arrange the referendum for the Neighbourhood Plan. The Advantage of the implementation of this Option was that it would ensure that the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan met the Basic Conditions (as defined in the submitted report) and other requirements, so that it can move forward to a referendum. There are no reported disadvantages to this option.
Option 2: To not approve the recommended modifications made by the Independent Inspector and not to publish a decision statement. Therefore, the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan would not meet the Basic Conditions and would not move forward to a referendum.

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:

1. That 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. That the 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.

15 **POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENT FOR WRIGLEY HEAD SOLAR FARM - APPOINTMENT OF OVO ENERGY**

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive that sought authority 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, if approved, would 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.

The report considered two Options:
Option 1 (preferred Option) – To 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 would be likely achieved as soon as practicable and the Council would begin to benefit from revenue income from the sale of electricity.
Option 2 – To 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.

In considering the report a Member raised concerns about the length of time that it was taking to progress this matter. The delays he noted were costing the Council revenue and he added that more could have been to progress this matter over the summer months. The Director of Growth undertook to write to members of the Scrutiny Board, outlining the progress relating to the implementation of the decision.

Resolved:
The Scrutiny Board requested that the recommendations in the report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive be approved, as follows:

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 by Wrigley Head Solar Farm.
3. That the Director of Growth be requested to write to Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board explaining the reasons for the perceived delay in presenting the report for approval.

16 **ZONING CO-ORDINATION BODY - APPROVAL OF MODEL AND ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FUNDING**

Members considered a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive that was seeking approval for 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.

The report presented two Options:
Option 1 (preferred Option) – To 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.
Option 2 - To 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.

Resolved:
That the Governance, Resources and Strategy Scrutiny Board requests that the recommendations in the submitted report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive be approved as follows:

1. To 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. To 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. To 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. To approve in principle Oldham Council's participation in the proposed GMCA ZCB model once the ZCB has been stood up by GMCA
5. To 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 and the Director of Legal.

17 **OLDHAM TOTAL CARE LIMITED: GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK**

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Executive Director of Health and Care/Deputy Chief Executive that was seeking approval for a revised and integrated governance framework for Oldham Total Care Limited. The proposed framework combined 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, it was hoped would 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 would also support effective governance, enhance oversight and ensure that both organisations operate within a clear and robust governance structure.

The report presented two Options:
Option 1 (preferred Option) - To approve the recommendations in the submitted report.
Option 2 – To not approve the recommendations in the report.

Resolved:
That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board endorse the recommendations in the Executive Director of Health and Care/Deputy Chief Executive's report, as follows:

1. To 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.
2. To approve the establishment and operation of the Oldham Total Care Steering Committee in accordance with the Terms of Reference at Appendix 2, to the report.
3. To approve the Directors' Service Agreement and Governance Protocol at Appendix 3, to the report, as the standard governance agreement applying to executive and non-executive directors of Oldham Total Care Limited.
4. To 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.
5. To 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.
6. To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Health and Care/Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the 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.
7. To authorise that the Monitoring Officer ensure that the arrangements are aligned with the Council's Constitution, shareholder decision-making arrangements and the company's Articles of Association.

8. To request that the Oldham Total Care Board considers and formally adopts those elements of the governance framework requiring company approval.
9. To require that 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.

18 **STRATEGIC ENERGY PARTNERSHIP - WOMBLE BOND DICKINSON FURTHER APPOINTMENT**

Members considered a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive that 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, it was reported, would be funded by a £100,000 Advanced Zoning Programme (AZP) grant from DESNZ.

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.

The report presented two Options:
Option 1 (preferred Option) – To appoint Womble Bond Dickinson to a further commission at a cost of £100,000+VAT.
Option 2 – To not appoint Womble Bond Dickinson to a further commission. Under this option, the Council will not have sufficient support for the ongoing procurement

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board endorses the recommendation in the report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, to appoint Womble Bond Dickinson to a further commission at a cost of £100,000+VAT, noting that under this option, the Council will have sufficient ongoing Legal support for the procurement of a Strategic Energy Partner for the Borough.

19 **ADDITIONAL HIGHWAYS GRANT FUNDING ACCEPTANCE REPORT**

The meeting received a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive which informed members that with the strategic approach for the 5-year City Region sustainable transport settlement (CRSTS) programme approved in March 2022, the submitted report was seeking 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.

The report presented to Options:
Option One (preferred Option) – To approve the recommendations in the report.
Option Two – To reject the recommendations in the report and to seek alternative funding sources for the projects.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board endorses the recommendations in the report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive to:
That the Chief Executive approves:

1. The allocation of Additional CRSTS Highway Maintenance Funding.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. That the Director of Legal Services or his 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.
5. 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, noting that 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.

20 **GREATER MANCHESTER COLLABORATIVE CONTINGENT LABOUR MARKET**

The Scrutiny Board received a report of the Assistant Director of Workforce and Organisational Culture, which was requesting approval 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 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.

The report presented two Options:
Option 1 (preferred Option - To continue participation in the GM MSP contract. 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 and a reduced procurement and contract management burden for the Council.
Option 2 – To withdraw from the GM arrangement and procure independently. This option was 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 and would reduce opportunities to benefit from collaborative purchasing arrangements and GM-wide supplier management.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board endorses the recommendations in the report of the Assistant Director of Workforce and Organisational Culture, to:

1. 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. Authorise officers to utilise the contract for the engagement of agency workers in accordance with the Council's procurement, financial and workforce management procedures.

21 **COUNCIL WEB TEAM: BOLSTERING CAPACITY**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Assistant Director of Customer Experience which was seeking approval to strengthen the Web Team with one additional Senior Content Officer and two Content Officers for a fixed term of 20 months.

The report presented three Options:
Option 1 – To maintain the current Web Team structure. The Council could retain the existing two-person Web Team.
Option 2 (preferred Option) – To provide additional web capacity within individual services. 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.
Option 3 – To not undertake proactive content management and channel-shift work. The Council could continue to provide existing digital services without a coordinated programme of improvement.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board endorses the recommendations in the report of the Assistant Director for Customer Experience to approve the addition of one Senior Content Officer and two Content Officers to the Web Team for a fixed term of 20 months.

22 **CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENT – IDOX UNIFORM CASE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, which advised that the Council's contract with IDOX LTD for the Uniform application was due for renewal. The submitted report was seeking approval to enter into a 36-month contract with IDOX LTD procured via Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Framework Agreement ID RM6259. Uniform was a business-critical application supporting a range of statutory regulatory services.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board would consider the commercially sensitive information contained in the report, at Item 31 on the agenda before making a recommendation.

23 **DOMESTIC PROPERTY DISABILITY ADAPTATIONS BATHING CONTRACT AWARD REPORT**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Health and Care/Deputy Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to seek approval from the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS), under delegated authority approved by Cabinet on 23rd March 2026, 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.

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.

24 **CLOUD HOSTED PARKING ENFORCEMENT SOLUTION**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, which sought 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.

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.

25 **PRUDENTIAL BUILDING STABILISATION WORKS**

Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, which informed Members that Oldham's town centre benefited from a wealth of important heritage buildings thanks to the town's rich economic and cultural history. A number of these buildings were now vacant, underutilised and required investment to protect the buildings and to seek to ensure their future sustainability whilst enhancing economic and social value these buildings could bring to the local economy.

The Prudential building had 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 remained a target for anti-social behaviour in the Town Centre.

The building's condition remained poor and very bad in some places, with ongoing vulnerability to the elements. Further stabilisation works were required to prevent against further deterioration so that potential options for future use may be appraised.

The submitted report, therefore, summarised the current and ongoing defects and condition challenges faced by the Prudential building, with a series of options set out with outline budget costs, which were subject to a procurement process and receiving final contractor costings. This was presented to inform of the scope of the stabilisation works to be agreed and taken forward to technical design in order to tender suitable contractors.

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.

26 **APPROVAL OF RUBRIK BACK UP AND RECOVERY SOLUTION**

The Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Director of Digital, which informed Members that Oldham Council intended to strengthen its overall cyber governance and risk management approach by procuring modern tools and processes that support cyber resilience and regulatory alignment.

The Council aimed to maintain and improve its data protection cyber security posture. Adoption of modern back up and assessment tools would support more efficient governance, improved risk resilience, and alignment with national guidance.

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.

27 **EXTRA CARE HOUSING RE-TENDER 2026/27**

The Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Director of Adult Social Care, which informed Members that a decision was required to secure continuity of Extra Care Housing services beyond the expiry of the current contract on 31st March 2027. While the industrial action and pay dispute remained matters for MioCare and Unison, they introduced uncertainty at a critical stage in the commissioning process. Given that procurement, contract award and mobilisation were expected to take up to six months, a decision was needed to enable timely procurement activity, minimise transition risks and ensure continuity of support for residents.

The submitted report, therefore, 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 31st March 2027.

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.

28 **CLEANSING & WASTE SERVICE SOFTWARE (ROUTE OPTIMISATION)**

The Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, that was seeking approval to purchase software, via a framework direct award to an existing software supplier to the council. The purpose of this software would 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.

Resolved:
That the Scrutiny Board would consider the commercially sensitive information contained in the report, at Item 37 on the agenda before making a recommendation.

29 **APPROVAL FOR INSURANCE TENDER PROCESS AND AWARD OF CONTRACTS**

The Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board scrutinised a report of the Director of Finance, notifying members that Oldham Council and its current insurers had 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 submitted report was seeking authority to proceed via the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) Framework and Procurement's recommended route to market, to tender for the Council's insurance contracts that were due to commence on 1st April 2027.

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.

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 eight 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 **CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENT – IDOX UNIFORM CASE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 22: Contractual Arrangement – IDOX Uniform Case Management Software.

Resolved:
That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Director of Digital, to approve a 3-year direct award contract with IDOX Ltd via Crown Commercial Framework RM6259, including two additional modules.

32 **DOMESTIC PROPERTY DISABILITY ADAPTATIONS BATHING CONTRACT AWARD REPORT**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 23: Domestic Property Disability Adaptations Bathing Contract Award Report.

In considering the report, a member sought clarification on the location of companies that will be tendering for the works detailed in the submitted report.

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 Care/Deputy Chief Executive, that the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS), under the delegated authority granted by Cabinet on 23rd March 2026, approves:
    a. The award of contracts under the Domestic Property Disability Adaptations (DPDA) Framework to Wrightbuild Ltd and M & R Heating Services for the provision of Level Access Showers (LAS), Shower Over Baths (SOB) and associated bathroom adaptations.

b. 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.
c. 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.

2. That the Director of Adult Social Care be requested to write to Members of the Governance, Strategy and resources Scrutiny Board, detailing the location of companies that will be tendering for the works detailed in the submitted report.

33 **CLOUD HOSTED PARKING ENFORCEMENT SOLUTION**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 24: Cloud hosted Parking Enforcement Solution.

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:

1. To approve the procurement and implementation of a fully (supplier) hosted Taranto Software solution.
2. To approve the inclusion of online permit management and online case management as part of the system upgrade.

34 **PRUDENTIAL BUILDING STABILISATION WORKS**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 25: Prudential Building Stabilisation Works.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Growth undertook to write to Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, clarifying the ownership of the Prudential Building and adjacent building on Union Street, Oldham.

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:

3. To 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.
4. To note that the recommended stabilisation works package (option 4 in the confidential report) is intended to halt further decay, secure the building, and to preserve its heritage fabric while future reuse options are considered, thereby utilising the principles of permanent, external, “like for like” conservation principles;m potentially allowing limited “meanwhile” use or public access before a full

redevelopment, thereby improving the building's attractiveness for future investment.

5. To accept a £1,000,000 Historic England Heritage at Risk Capital Fund (HARCF) grant offer towards funding the proposed works.
6. To approve the offer of £75,000 valuation (plus a basic loss payment of 7.5%) to the former owner of the Prudential Building following receipt of Part 35 valuation reports as part of the Tribunal process.
7. To delegate authority to the Director of Growth, in consultation with appropriate officers from the Finance, Procurement and Legal services to finalise scopes, confirm affordability, and procure/instruct the additional works within the approved funding envelope using a Procurement compliant framework.
8. To delegate authority to the Director of Legal Services, or his appointed 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.
9. That the Director of Growth be requested to write to Members of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, clarifying the ownership of the Prudential Building and adjacent building on Union Street, Oldham.

35 **APPROVAL OF RUBRIK BACK UP AND RECOVERY SOLUTION**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 26: Approval of Rubrik Back Up and Recovery Solution.

Resolved:
That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Director of Digital:

1. That the Chief Executive approves the procurement to maintain the Council's backup, data protection and cyber-recovery service for the next contract term.
2. That the procurement is based on the service scope described in this report, covering Azure/cloud, Microsoft 365, on-premises systems, cloud vault backup and identity protection.
3. To approve the expenditure of £585,785.58. This figure includes cloud and Microsoft 365 protection, cloud vault backup, identity protection, professional services and on-premises licensing and hardware support. Due to the Council's cloud first data center migration strategy, this is a reduced cost compared to the previous 3-year term.

The cost breakdown of the modules is as follows:

Component	Duration	Quantity	cost
Enterprise Edition license (on-premise)	12 months	12 TB	£7,595.08
Hardware support	36 months	1	£1,311.28

Microsoft 365 users	36 months	3,920	£74,430.47
Microsoft 365 storage	36 months	98 TB	£110,333.37
Enterprise Edition Cloud	36 months	130 TB	£288,104.85
Cloud Vault Backup	36 months	390	£34,239.97
Identity protection	36 months	3,920	£64,361.56
Identity professional services	One-off	1	£5,409.00
Total			£585,785.58

36 **EXTRA CARE HOUSING RE-TENDER 2026/27**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 27: Extra Care Housing re-Tender 2026/27.

Resolved:
That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Director of Adult Social Care:

1. To approve the recommended option to progress with pre-market engagement, commissioning and procurement activity for the future delivery of Extra Care Housing services.
2. To agree to a three-month extension of the current contract with MioCare Service Ltd to 30th June 2027 to enable completion of market engagement, procurement, contract award and mobilisation activities.
3. To note that the outcome of pre-market engagement will be reviewed prior to finalisation of the procurement approach and contract documentation.
4. To 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; should pre-market engagement identify insufficient market appetite, affordability concerns, market failure risks or other material factors that affect the viability of a competitive procurement process, officers will return with a further report setting out alternative commissioning options, including consideration of a Teckal-compliant arrangement with MioCare Services Ltd.
5. To note that any future contract award will be subject to completion of the procurement process, and approval through the Council's governance arrangements.

37 **CLEANSING & WASTE SERVICE SOFTWARE (ROUTE OPTIMISATION)**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 28: Cleansing and Waste Service Software (Route Optimisation).

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 implement Route Optimisation and a VoomAI route 'time and motion study' for Waste and 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.

38 **APPROVAL FOR INSURANCE TENDER PROCESS AND AWARD OF CONTRACTS**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 29: Approval for Insurance Tender Process and Award of Contracts.

Resolved:
That the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, endorses the recommendations detailed in the submitted report of the Director of Finance:

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 his appointed nominee, to carry out all the necessary legal formalities.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 7.50pm

Future Commissioning Arrangements Care at Home and Night Care Services - Contract Award – Part A

Officer Contact: Jayne Ratcliffe, Director of Adults Social Services

Report Author: Claire Hooley, Assistant Director of Commissioning and Market Management, Adult Social Care

Email : Claire.Hooley@oldham.gov.uk

DATE: 30th November 2026

Reason for Decision
This report seeks 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 is sought to:

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

The contracts will be awarded for an initial period of 4 years to 31st March 2031, with options to extend for up to a further two years.

The estimated annual contract value is £20.33 million, comprising approximately:

- £20.2 million for Care at Home Services.
- £127,400 per annum for Night Care Services.

The estimated total value is £81.3 million across the initial term and approximately £122 million should all extension options be exercised.

Executive Summary

Care at Home and Night Care Services are critical components of Adult Social Care provision within Oldham. The services support adults with eligible care needs to remain living independently within their own homes and contribute to improved wellbeing, reduced reliance on residential care and effective hospital discharge arrangements.

Following Cabinet approval, the Council undertook a full Open Tender procurement exercise for the future delivery of these services. The procurement generated significant market interest and attracted a high number of compliant submissions.

Providers were evaluated against published criteria comprising:

- Quality (90%)
- Social Value (10%)

A fixed-price model was used, enabling providers to compete on quality and social value outcomes.

Following completion of the evaluation and moderation process, appointable providers have been identified that demonstrated strong approaches to service delivery, quality assurance, workforce sustainability, safeguarding, partnership working and social value.

Collectively, the successful providers have committed to supporting local employment and skills development, workforce sustainability, community wellbeing, engagement with local voluntary and community organisations, increased local spending and environmental sustainability initiatives. Delivery of these commitments will be monitored throughout the contract term.

Award of the contracts will provide continuity of care for residents, support delivery of the Council's statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and establish sustainable contractual arrangements from April 2027.

The recommissioning exercise will also strengthen market resilience through a new cluster-based delivery model, improve workforce sustainability, secure measurable social value outcomes for Oldham communities and provide a more sustainable platform for meeting future demand for community-based care and support services.

Recommendations

Is it recommended that the Chief Executive:

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

- Approves the award of the Night Care contract to the highest-scoring provider identified through the procurement process, as detailed in Part B of this report for the period 1st April 2027 to 31st March 2031, with the option to extend for up to two further years.

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

1 Current Position

1.1 The Council's existing contractual arrangements expire on 31st March 2027.

1.2 The recommissioning programme was designed to deliver more than replacement contractual arrangements. It sought to strengthen market resilience, improve service quality, support workforce sustainability, secure wider social value benefits and ensure the Council remains well positioned to respond to future increases in demand for Care at Home services.

1.3 An Open Tender procurement process was undertaken in accordance 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.

1.4 The procurement attracted significant market interest and a substantial number of compliant bids were received across both service lots, providing a highly competitive process and enabling the Council to identify providers capable of delivering high-quality services.

1.5 All submissions were evaluated in accordance with the published methodology. The evaluation process included independent assessment, moderation and procurement oversight to ensure transparency, consistency and compliance. All awards are recommended on the basis of the Most Advantageous Tender in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023.

1.6 The successful providers achieved the highest scores against the Council's published evaluation criteria and are recommended for contract award. Collectively, they demonstrated strong approaches to service quality, safeguarding, workforce sustainability, mobilisation, partnership working, equality and inclusion, technology-enabled care and social value delivery.

2 Preferred Option

2.1 **Option 2 - Award Contracts to the Highest Scoring Providers Following Completion of the Procurement Exercise commencing on 1st April 2027.**

2.2 This option represents the outcome of a compliant and highly competitive procurement process undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

2.3 The procurement attracted significant market engagement and enabled the Council to undertake a robust assessment of quality and social value proposals. The recommended providers achieved the highest overall scores following evaluation,

moderation and due diligence and therefore represent the Most Advantageous Tenders.

2.4 The proposed model provides greater market resilience through the introduction of geographically based clusters supported by back-up providers, whilst strengthening quality assurance, workforce sustainability and provider accountability. The contracts will also secure measurable social value benefits for Oldham residents through commitments relating to local employment, apprenticeships, workforce development, community wellbeing, local supply chains and environmental sustainability.

2.5 Given the extensive market testing undertaken, the competitive nature of the procurement process and the requirement to have replacement contractual arrangements in place from April 2027, there is no alternative option capable of delivering an equivalent combination of legal compliance, service continuity, quality, market resilience, social value and value for money.

2.6 Awarding the contracts will ensure continuity of critical care services, support the Council's statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and provide a sustainable platform for meeting future demand.

2.7 Adult Social Care will implement a structured mobilisation programme and contract management arrangements to ensure continuity of care, provider readiness and safe implementation of the new contractual arrangements from 1 April 2027.

2.8 This is the recommended option.

3 Consultation

3.1 Extensive engagement was undertaken throughout the procurement process to inform the final service specification and commissioning model. This included consultation with people receiving Care at Home services through letters and questionnaires, engagement sessions with existing and prospective providers to gather feedback on the proposed service model, and a bidder event following publication of the tender to provide clarification and support provider participation. The procurement was also overseen by a multi-disciplinary steering group comprising representatives from Adult Social Care Operations, Commissioning and Market Management, Procurement, Legal Services, Finance, ensuring that the final service model and procurement route reflected operational requirements, market feedback, legal compliance and financial sustainability.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 The estimated annual value of the proposed contractual arrangements is £20.33m, comprising approximately £20.2m for Care at Home Services and £0.130m for Night Care Services. The estimated value over the initial four-year contract term is £81.3m, rising to approximately £122m should the available extension period be fully utilised.

4.2 The proposed expenditure will be funded from within existing Adult Social Care community care budgets. The procurement exercise adopted a fixed-price model and therefore providers competed on quality and social value rather than price. This

approach supports market sustainability by reducing the risk of providers submitting unsustainable pricing in order to secure contractual arrangements.

4.3 Care at Home Services are inherently demand-led, and increases in the number or complexity of care packages may result in expenditure exceeding current forecasts and approved budget provision. Financial monitoring arrangements will continue to be undertaken through established budget management processes to ensure expenditure remains aligned to approved budgets and demand forecasts.

4.4 Whilst the contract values can be accommodated within existing budget provisions, the procurement outcome represents a significant change to the provider market. As part of the mobilisation programme, there may be one-off implementation costs associated with provider onboarding, system configuration, purchasing activity, communications, contract mobilisation and workforce transition arrangements. Any mobilisation and implementation activity will be managed within existing resources and budget provision. Any material financial implications arising during mobilisation will be reported through the Council's established governance arrangements.

4.5 No additional growth funding is being requested as part of this decision. Annual provider uplifts will be determined through the Council's established fee review process and considered within the overall budget-setting framework having regard to affordability, market sustainability and available resources. Any future financial pressures arising from fee uplifts, demand growth, legislative requirements or inflationary pressures will be managed through the Council's medium-term financial planning and budget setting arrangements.

4.6 The following key financial risks should be noted in relation to the proposed contract award:

Demand Risk: Care at Home services are inherently demand led, and increases in the number or complexity of care packages may result in expenditure exceeding current forecasts. Financial performance will require ongoing monitoring against budget and activity trends to identify emerging pressures at the earliest opportunity.

Inflation and Workforce Cost Pressures: Although the procurement model provides short term pricing certainty, the adult social care market continues to face significant cost pressures arising from National Living Wage increases, recruitment and retention challenges, pension costs and wider inflation. Future fee review negotiations may therefore create additional budget pressures during the contract term.

Provider Sustainability Risk: The concentration of service delivery within a reduced number of providers may increase financial exposure should a contracted provider experience operational or financial difficulties. Provider financial health will require regular monitoring through contract management arrangements to mitigate the risk of service failure and associated contingency costs.

Mobilisation and Transition Risk: The implementation of the new contractual arrangements represents a significant operational change across the local care market. Delays in mobilisation, provider readiness issues, workforce shortages or service disruption could result in additional costs associated with contingency

arrangements and commissioning support.

Liz Taylor - Senior Accountant

5 Legal Implications

5.1 The recommendations are lawful and comply with the Contract Procedure Rules and the Council's constitution being in compliance with the Procurement Act 2023.

Bryan Boese – Solicitor

6. Procurement Implications

6.1 Lot 1 Care at Home and Lot 2 Night Care services were procured as an Open Tender under the Procurement Act 2023 regulations. The opportunity was advertised on The Chest procurement portal as well as the central digital platform.

Lot 1: Care at Home Services
The procurement attracted significant market interest and compliant submissions were evaluated in accordance with the published criteria. The quality submissions were evaluated by colleagues from a range of service areas. The Procurement Team then chaired a moderation session to agree the final quality scores and ensure that all submissions were assessed consistently in line with the published scoring criteria.

Social Value formed 10% of the overall evaluation methodology and required providers to demonstrate how they would deliver measurable economic, social and environmental benefits for Oldham residents throughout the contract period. Commitments included local employment opportunities, apprenticeships, workforce development, community wellbeing initiatives, support for local supply chains and environmental sustainability measures.

Lot 1 services are to be awarded via a cluster-based delivery model comprising ten Lead Providers and five Back-Up Providers.

As detailed in Part B of this report the ten Lead Providers and five Back-Up Providers have scored highest across the two criteria of Quality and Social Value and it is recommended that they are awarded contracts for Care at Home Services.

Lot 2: Night Care Services
The procurement attracted significant market interest and compliant submissions were evaluated in accordance with the published criteria. The quality submissions were evaluated by colleagues from a range of service areas. The Procurement Team then chaired a moderation session to agree the final quality scores and ensure that all submissions were assessed consistently in line with the published scoring criteria.

Social value responses were evaluated using the Social Value Portal.

Lot 2 services will be awarded to One Provider on the basis of the most advantageous tender.

As detailed in Part B of this report the most advantageous tender has scored highest across the two criteria of Quality and Social Value and it is recommended that they are awarded the contract for Night Care Services.

Ankur Patel – Procurement

7 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the commissioning and procurement process and identified no impacts that would prevent implementation of the proposed arrangements.

8 Key Decision

8.1 Yes

9 Key Decision Reference

9.1 KDD-26-32

10 Background Papers

10.1 Future Commissioning Arrangements for Care at Home, Extra Care Support, Night Provision Support Services (HSC-13-25)

10.2 Confirmation of further extension to the Current Commissioning Arrangements for Care at Home, Extra Care Support and Night Provision Support Services (HSC-13-25)

11 Appendices

11.1 Part B – Future Commissioning Arrangements Care at Home and Night Care Services – Contract Award.

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Principal Decision Report – PART A

Subject:	Royton Library - Approval of Expenditure for Urgent Asbestos Remediation and Associated Enabling Works
Decision maker:	Chief Executive
Decision date:	30th November 2026
Report author:	Gary Turnock – Property Safety Compliance Manager
Ward (s):	Royton South

Reason for decision

Approval is sought for the expenditure required to undertake urgent asbestos remediation and associated enabling works at Royton Library. The works will be instructed under the existing approved DDR and Measured Term Contract arrangements.

Procurement has confirmed that the existing DDR approval can be relied upon as the supplier has been awarded a Council wide contract for the Removal & Remediation of Asbestos Containing Materials and this project falls under the Removal & Remediation of Asbestos. Additionally, the localised concrete stabilisation works required for Royton Library are integral to the asbestos remediation works and is not a separate building repair project.

The current work comprises 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 this package will 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.

Recommendation(s)

1. Approve the expenditure outline in the Part B report for the urgent asbestos remediation and associated enabling works described in this report.

2. Approve the instruction of the preferred contractor, outlined in the Part B report, under the existing approved DDR and Measured Term Contract arrangements.

   Procurement has 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. Note that the proposed instruction is within the inclusive-of-VAT limit of the existing DDR approval.

4. Note 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.

   These future stages will be separately scoped and brought forward through the appropriate budget, procurement and governance approval route.

Background

Royton Library recently underwent a major refurbishment scheme, which concluded in September 2024. In July 2026, library staff reported that flooring in certain areas was becoming ‘bouncy’. An initial visual survey confirmed severe signs of dry rot.

Due to these unforeseen circumstances, the library was closed to the public from 24 August 2026 to ensure public safety and allow for immediate investigation.

Further physical inspections revealed that the undercroft beneath the library footprint contains asbestos insulation debris to pipework, contaminated items, rubble, and a contaminated soil base.

A small section of the undercroft is already exposed because of the dry rot, meaning an immediate clean-up exercise must be instigated before further dry rot damage spreads throughout the library and adjacent Town Hall.

Before the dry rot specialist can access the area to assess the full extent of the damage and scope out remedial works, the asbestos and contaminated debris must be removed under fully controlled conditions.

The approval of this work will facilitate the necessary dry rot assessment and recommended remedials.

Property Services will oversee cost management and quantity surveying for the project.

Completion of the asbestos remediation and associated enabling works will provide safe access to the undercroft so that a specialist timber survey can proceed.

The survey will establish the cause and extent of the dry rot and identify any subsequent remedial or structural works.

The estimated timescale for the current asbestos remediation package is 5 to 6 weeks.

Proposal

To address the immediate health, safety and building risks, the preferred contractor will be instructed under the existing approved DDR and Measured Term Contract arrangements.

Procurement has confirmed that the existing approval can be relied upon because the concrete stabilisation is integral to the asbestos remediation and is not a standalone building repair.

A new exemption under rule 21 of the Contract Procedure Rules is not required.

The proposed asbestos remediation and associated enabling works are programmed to take approximately 5 to 6 weeks. The primary deliverables are:

- Removal of asbestos-contaminated soil using enclosed, lockable asbestos skips.
- Removal of existing carpet tiles, dry rot-contaminated plywood, affected floorboards and the minimum affected timber necessary to provide safe access for the asbestos remediation.
- Fully controlled environmental cleaning of the undercroft and affected library areas, followed by air testing and four-stage clearance.
- Localised concrete stabilisation within the undercroft where required to facilitate and complete the asbestos remediation safely. This forms part of the asbestos remediation package and is not a standalone building repair.
- Before the asbestos works commence, the fixed shelving and movable fixtures will be relocated. The cost of this specific element is included in the Part B report and must be supported by its own appropriate budget and procurement route.

Following completion of the asbestos remediation, environmental cleaning and clearance process, a specialist timber survey will be undertaken through the appropriate approved route.

The survey will establish the cause and extent of the dry rot and identify any associated structural or remedial works.

As the scope and cost of those future works cannot be determined until the specialist investigation has been completed, the timber survey, dry rot remediation, structural repairs, reinstatement works and any further works required to reopen Royton Library are outside the scope of this decision.

They will be separately scoped and brought forward through the appropriate budget, procurement and governance approval route.

Summary:

The costs associated with the proposed works are included in the Part B report.

Alternative option(s) to be considered

Do not proceed with the works. This is not recommended because the asbestos-contaminated undercroft would remain inaccessible, delaying the specialist timber investigation and increasing the risk of deterioration and prolonged closure.

Undertake a new procurement exercise for the works. This is not recommended because Procurement has confirmed that the works can be instructed under the existing DDR and Measured Term Contract arrangements, provided the concrete stabilisation remains integral to the asbestos remediation package.

If the scope changes so that the concrete stabilisation becomes a separate building repair, the existing DDR must not be relied upon for that element and an alternative compliant approval and procurement route will be required.

Consultation

The Head of Heritage, Libraries and Arts, the Senior Communications Manager, Ward Members, and Estates have been briefed regarding the immediate closure of the library and the exploration of temporary service provision.

Risks

- Structural Deterioration: Failure to complete the clean-up promptly will prevent the dry rot specialist from accessing the undercroft, allowing the rot to spread unabated through the site.
- Cost Overruns: Remedial costs following the dry rot specialist's assessment are currently unknown. Regular cost monitoring will be enforced to mitigate financial drift.
- Health and Safety: Delays in removing the asbestos debris, especially with sections of the undercroft already exposed, pose a severe containment risk.

Implications

Financial	The finance implications are included in the Part B report.
Procurement	The procurement implications are included in the Part B report.
HR	N/A
Legal	The legal implications are included in the Part B Report.

Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. The assessment identifies strong positive impacts for Age, Disability, Poverty and Low Income, and Pregnancy and Maternity, arising from the timely reopening of Royton Library and the restoration of access to learning, digital, wellbeing and community services Subnum Hariff-Khan

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?	No

Appendices (including any relevant Background Papers):

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 2: Interim Contract Direct Award – Removal & Remediation of Asbestos Containing Materials

Report author sign-off	Gary Turnock
Role	Property Safety Compliance Manager
Date of sign-off	04/11/2026

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

Part A: Report to the Chief Executive

Grant of a lease for Poppyfield House and Willow House

Officer Contact: Jayne Ratcliffe, Director Adult Social Care
Neil Consterdine, Director of Communities
James Kington, Director of Growth

Report Author: Alison Berens, Head of Quality and Care Provisioning (Adult Social Care) and Simon Shuttleworth, Service Manager Strategic Housing Recovery (Communities)
Email: Alison.Berens@Oldham.gov.uk and Simon.Shuttleworth@Oldham.gov.uk

30th November 2026

Reason for Decision
This report seeks 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, to approve and complete the final lease documentation once terms have been agreed by both parties.

The primary purpose of this proposal is 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.

Executive Summary

The absence of suitable housing management arrangements on council assets is currently preventing Willow House from being brought into operational use and limiting opportunities to maximise the effectiveness of accommodation-based care and support services. As a result, Adult Social Care is unable to fully realise planned savings associated with reducing reliance on higher-cost care arrangements, including out-of-borough placements.

The proposal will enable Willow House to operate as Supported Living accommodation through a regulated housing provider, allowing identified residents to be accommodated within Oldham rather than remaining in more costly alternative provision. This will support both improved resident outcomes and delivery of approved Adult Social Care budget reduction proposals.

The proposal supports the Council's Care Act duties to promote wellbeing and shape a sustainable care market by increasing the availability of specialist supported living

accommodation within the borough. It enables individuals to live in ordinary housing with support, promotes independence and reduces reliance on more restrictive and higher-cost residential and out-of-borough placements.

In addition to supporting Adult Social Care objectives, the proposal addresses the current absence of formal housing management, tenancy management, repairs, maintenance and compliance arrangements for both properties. Regenda Homes, as a Registered Provider, would assume responsibility for landlord functions, including housing management, repairs, maintenance, compliance and insurance. This would ensure both properties are operated in an appropriate way, while enabling the Council to retain the freehold ownership of the assets.

The arrangement will also remove ongoing property-related liabilities and costs from the Council, generating recurring savings through the transfer of responsibility for repairs, maintenance, utilities, insurance and other property expenditure. It will bring Willow House back into beneficial use, support a more sustainable future for Poppyfield House and reduce operational and regulatory risks associated with the current arrangements.

The proposal is therefore considered to provide the most effective and deliverable option for achieving Adult Social Care savings targets, improving accommodation-based support for vulnerable adults, reducing Council liabilities and ensuring both assets are managed by an experienced and regulated housing provider.

Recommendations

The recommended option (option 4) is 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.

The recommendation also seeks approval 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.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Paragraph (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and it is not in the public interest to disclose the information because the report contains commercially sensitive information about a provider.

Pre-scrutiny meeting 19th November 2026
Leaders' consultative meeting 30th November 2026

Grant of lease for Poppyfield House and Willow House

1 Background to Poppyfield House

1.1 Poppyfield House is a council owned asset located at Sunflower Grove, Chadderton, OL9 0JQ (Chadderton Central Ward). The property can house six residents with office space and an additional bedroom for sleep-in staff. The property is located on a cul-de-sac with two other buildings on, one of which is Willow House (subject to this report) and the other being Mimosa House which Regenda Homes are responsible for from a housing perspective, with MioCare delivering a Supported Living[1] care model on site.

1.2 Poppyfield House is currently occupied by six residents, with the care delivered by Future Directions under a Residential model for Complex Needs.

1.3 Poppyfield was originally a health contract novated to the council alongside the rest of the Learning Disability Reform Grant funding in April 2011. Poppyfield was designated to operate as a 'step down' residential facility for residents from Calderstones (hospital), now known as Merseycare, intended initially as a two-year period. Residents of Poppyfields have dual diagnosis of Learning Disabilities and Mental Health, with forensic support initially provided but subsequently removed from the contract as people's needs stabilised.

1.4 Having reviewed the current needs of residents in the scheme, a new commissioning model is now required. The contract with Future Directions is currently on a fully block model, with a rolling contract with six-month break clause in place. A review of the commissioning arrangements in place has confirmed that the commissioning model should move towards a Supported Living Model, which would provide better value for money for the council and offer more independence to residents who would be able to hold their own tenancy - this will better reflect the current ASC Operating Model, which focuses on strength based approaches and independence.

1.5 Leasing the property to a Registered Provider would transfer responsibility for housing management, repairs, maintenance, compliance and insurance, enabling the property to operate under an appropriate supported housing model and reducing operational risks for the Council.

[1] Supported living is a flexible care model that promotes independence as people live in a home (for example a flat or a shared house) with tailored, personal support. It allows individuals with disabilities, mental health challenges, or age-related needs to live autonomously while receiving the exact amount of daily assistance they require. This care is commissioned through ASC commissioning frameworks and contracts for the care element remain the responsibility of ASC. This differs from a residential care settings such as a care home, where the care provider are responsible for both the property and the care delivery. In Oldham, our approach to Supported Living is for the housing to be provided by a Registered Provider, to ensure that service delivery and tenancy agreements sit under the regulation of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).

2. Background to Willow House position

2.1 Willow House is council owned asset located at Sunflower Grove, Chadderton, OL9 0JQ.

2.2 The property can house six residents with office space and an additional bedroom for sleep-in staff.

2.3 Willow House is currently vacant, having previously operated as a Mental Health Respite facility. The property has been identified for use as supported living accommodation for people with complex needs. This would enable individuals currently placed outside the borough to be supported within Oldham, improving outcomes and supporting delivery of Adult Social Care transformation objectives.

2.4 MioCare have been identified to deliver care on site at the property under their Teckal arrangement with the council and adult social care.

2.5 Residents have been identified but the absence of housing management arrangements is significantly delaying this opportunity as there is no facility to offer tenancy agreements. Expectations of residents and their families who are awaiting moves to the scheme (some from out of area) are being managed and there is an ongoing impact to the ASC planned savings for the current year until the home can be made operational.

2.6 In relation to the asset and housing management of the property, the proposed use sits within the context of the conditions of use as 'Exempt Accommodation' providing supported housing for vulnerable adults. The property is currently vacant and is fully funded through Council budgets with no income stream or providing any benefit to the residents of Oldham. The Council have no ability to provide the housing management services required to operate this property. Leasing the property to Regenda Homes would remove all liability from the Council, making an annual saving on budgets of approximately £11,810 in utilities, business rates, repairs and insurance and allow the building to be operated in a compliant manner and removing all risk from the Council. In the current vacant state, the property could be considered as more of a liability than an asset for the Council.

3. Valuation of Willow House and Poppyfield House

3.1 Independent valuation advice has been obtained and has informed the Council's consideration of the proposed lease arrangement.

4. Projected Willow House Savings

4.1 Financial modelling demonstrates that the proposal supports the delivery of agreed Adult Social Care budget reduction proposals and provides better value than current arrangements.

5. Background to housing position

5.1 The Council remains a stock-holding authority and therefore retains housing regulatory responsibilities. Following a 2025 inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing, the Council is operating under an improvement plan. Any option that expanded direct landlord responsibilities would need to be considered in this context.

5.2 Experience from the Council's existing housing management arrangements at Holly Bank demonstrates the complexity of maintaining separate housing management and repairs functions. Consideration has therefore been given to whether a single landlord model would offer operational and regulatory advantages for Poppyfield and Willow House.

6. Alternative option(s) to be considered*)*

6.1 Option 1: Do Nothing - Maintain the current position with no formal housing management arrangement in place.

6.2 Maintain the current position with no formal housing management arrangements in place for either property.

6.3 This option would not address the current inability to bring Willow House into operational use, nor would it support the transition of Poppyfield House to a more appropriate supported living model. It would leave the Council responsible for ongoing housing-related risks and liabilities and would not support delivery of Adult Social Care transformation objectives.

6.4 **Benefits**

No change to existing arrangements.

6.5 **Risks**

- Willow House remains vacant and unavailable for use.
- Continued operational and regulatory risks associated with the current arrangements
- does not support Adult Social Care service transformation objectives.

6.6 Option 2: Issue Council Tenancies Without Housing Management function in place

6.7 Issue tenancies directly through the Council whilst retaining responsibility for housing management, repairs, maintenance and compliance functions.

6.8 Benefits

- could facilitate occupation of willow House
- allows the council to retain direct control of housing management arrangements

6.9 Risks:

- introduces additional landlord responsibilities and regulatory obligations.
- requires specialist housing management expertise and ongoing operational capacity.
- does not provide a sustainable long-term solution for managing the properties.

6.10 Option 3: Procure a Housing Management Function on the Open Market and Move Properties into the HRA

6.11 Undertake a procurement exercise to appoint an organisation to provide housing management services while the Council retains ownership and landlord responsibilities.

6.12 Benefits:

- provides access to specialist housing management expertise.
- retains the properties within direct Council ownership and control.

6.13 Risks:

- procurement and mobilisation timescales would delay implementation.
- delays utilisation of Willow House and implementation of revised service models
- the council would retain ongoing landlord responsibilities and associated regulatory obligations.

6.14 Option 4: Agreement to grant a lease of 99 years on a peppercorn rent to Regenda Homes for both properties, with liability for running costs, repairs and insurance transferred as part of the lease.

6.15 Grant a 99-year lease at a peppercorn rent to Regenda Homes, enabling them to assume responsibility for housing management, repairs, maintenance, compliance and insurance arrangements.

6.16 Regenda Homes are uniquely positioned to deliver this proposal as they already manage the neighbouring supported living scheme, have established housing management arrangements in place, and have experience of supporting similar resident groups.

6.17 Benefits:

- Enables Willow House to become operational as supported living accommodation.
- Supports Adult Social Care transformation and market-shaping objectives.
- Improves opportunities for vulnerable adults to live independently within their local communities.
- Transfers housing management responsibilities to an experienced and regulated Registered Provider.
- Reduces ongoing operational and regulatory risks for the Council.
- Provides a deliverable solution that can be implemented within the required timescales.

6.18 Risks

- the council would grant a long leasehold interest in the properties.
- appropriate lease protections will be required to safeguard the future use of the assets and protect the Council's interests.

6.19 Summary of Options Assessment

Having considered all options, Option 4 is considered to provide the most effective balance of resident benefit, service delivery, risk management and deliverability. It supports the Council's Care Act duties, enables appropriate use of both properties, and places housing

management responsibilities with an experienced Registered Provider whilst allowing the Council to retain the freehold ownership of the assets.

7. Recommended Option

7.1 **Option 4** is the recommended option. The Council will retain the freehold ownership of Poppyfield House and Willow House whilst granting a long lease to Regenda Homes, an established Registered Provider with existing experience of delivering housing management services for similar supported living schemes within Oldham.

7.2 This option provides the most balanced and deliverable solution, enabling both properties to operate within an appropriate supported housing model while transferring responsibility for housing management, repairs, maintenance, compliance and insurance to an experienced and regulated provider. It will support the re-opening of Willow House, facilitate the development of a more sustainable supported living model at Poppyfield House, and contribute to the delivery of Adult Social Care transformation objectives.

7.3 The proposal will help address gaps in local accommodation-based support, enable more people to live independently within their communities, and support vulnerable adults to remain closer to family and support networks. It also reduces ongoing operational and regulatory risks for the Council by placing landlord responsibilities with a specialist housing organisation.

7.4 Regenda Homes are uniquely placed to deliver this arrangement given their existing management of neighbouring supported living provision on the same site, established local partnerships, housing management expertise and regulatory oversight by the Regulator of Social Housing.

7.5 Approval is sought in principle for the lease arrangement, with final completion subject to agreement of detailed lease terms, satisfaction of all legal requirements, completion of any necessary subsidy control assessments, and the inclusion of appropriate safeguards to protect the Council's interests and the future use of the properties.

7.6 Implementation and Mobilisation

Subject to approval of the lease and completion of the legal documentation, Regenda Homes will commence mobilisation activity to enable Willow House to become operational as a supported living service.

7.7 Mobilisation activity will include:

Milestone	**Indicative Timescale**
Approval in principle	November 2026
Completion of Lease and Mobilisation Commences	December 2026 - January 2027
Housing Management and Tenancy Arrangements Established	January 2027
Willow House Operational	End January 2027
Phased Resident Moves Commence	February 2027
Full Occupancy Achieved	End March 2027

8 Consultation

8.1 Although both properties are located within Chadderton Central Ward, the residents who live in Poppyfield or who will be coming to live at Willow House are from across the whole borough.

8.2 Discussions have taken place with both the commissioned care providers involved in the current and planned arrangements (Future Directions and MioCare). Both currently operate within properties managed by Regenda Homes either in Oldham (MioCare) or in neighbouring authorities (Future Directions) so ongoing relationships are already in place.

9 Financial Implications

9.1 The proposal is expected to reduce ongoing property-related liabilities and support delivery of approved Adult Social Care budget plans. Detailed financial information is contained within Part B of this report due to commercial sensitivity.

Paula Buckley, Finance Manager

10 Legal Implications

10.1 The Housing Act 1996 section 166A (14) provides that a local housing authority shall not allocate housing accommodation except in accordance with their allocation scheme. Tied to the lease there should be a binding agreement to ensure the allocation of places by Regenda complies with the Council's Housing Allocation Policy.

Bryan Boese – Solicitor

10.2 By virtue of section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the necessary statutory powers of disposal in relation to the granting of leases.

10.3 On disposal of its land under section 123, the Council is under a statutory obligation to obtain the open market value of the interest and best consideration that can reasonably be obtained, unless the consent of the Secretary of State is obtained or an exemption applies. Generally, best consideration will be achieved by offering the land for sale subject to open competition. In cases where land has not been exposed to the open market, it is considered prudent for an independent surveyor's valuation to be obtained and/or other appropriate market testing.

10.4 If publicly owned land is disposed of at less than best consideration, the local authority is potentially providing a subsidy to the purchaser. The fact that a disposal is in accordance with the Consent does not affect the position on subsidies.

10.5 Where a land transaction would, under the subsidy control regime, mean that a local authority is deemed to have given a subsidy to an "enterprise", then it will be necessary for that authority to undertake the subsidy control principles assessment. The report author would need to undertake a subsidy control screening to determine whether this would amount to a subsidy.

10.6 It is recommended that the terms for the lease include any additional matters suggested by the legal officer action for the Council which are in the Council's best interests.

Rebecca Butterworth, Solicitor

10.7 Approval can be granted subject to agreement of the final lease terms by Legal Services and Corporate Estates and the terms should include appropriate provisions relating to use of restrictions, repair obligations, compliance requirements, break provisions, insurance, termination rights and reversion of the assets to the Council and of course satisfactory compliance with all the requirements raised in the legal comments.

Alex Bougatef – Director of Legal Services, Monitoring Officer.

11. **Procurement Implications**

11.1 There are no immediate procurement implications

Tom Pyne – AD Procurement, Contract Management and Social Value

12 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

12.1 The proposal is expected to have a positive impact on adults with disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health needs by increasing access to appropriate supported accommodation, promoting independence and enabling people to live closer to their support networks and communities.

13 **Key Decision**

13.1 Yes

14 **Key Decision Reference**

14.1 HSC-15-26

15 **Appendices & Background Papers**

15.1 N/a.

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

Emergency Powers Decision Report

Treasury Management Strategy Mid-Year Review 2026/27

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Finance
Directorate: **Resources**
Report Author: James Postle / Paula Buckley
Email: james.postle@oldham.gov.uk / paula.buckley@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: **30th November 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

To Consider and comment upon the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2026/27 report and the Treasury Management activity and projected outturn position and after such consideration, commend the report to Council.

3. Reason for urgency

The Council is required to consider the performance of the Treasury Management function to comply with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, in line with section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003. The report is presented to enable it to be reviewed and scrutinised prior to its presentation to Council.

The Mid-Year Treasury Management review was be presented to Audit Committee on 25 November 26.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

The Council will not be compliant with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and will be required to provide a formal justification for non compliance to the Council's External Auditor (Forvis Mazars).

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

Non-compliance with the Code of Practice on Treasury Management would impact on the perception of the Council's financial standing. There is also a risk that the Council could be blocked from accessing the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) either entirely or at preferential (certainty) rates, which would impact on the revenue costs of servicing the Council's debt.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 09 November 2026
Comments

The Council is required to review and monitor the performance of its Treasury Management function in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and Section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003. This report provides Members with an update on Treasury Management activity and performance for the first half of the financial year and supports appropriate scrutiny prior to consideration by Council.

The Mid-Year Treasury Management Review was considered by Audit Committee on 25 November 2026, providing an opportunity for challenge and assurance before submission to Council. From a financial governance perspective, the report demonstrates compliance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy and the Council's prudential framework.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef
Date 10 November 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 Audit Committee

Treasury Management Half Year Review Report 2026/27

Officer Contact: Lee Walsh – (Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer)

Report Author: Paula Buckley, Finance Manager (Capital & Treasury)/James Postle (Senior Finance Manager)

25th November 2026

Reason for Decision

In April 2023 the Authority 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.

This report includes the requirement in the 2021 Code of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. This half year report advises the Audit Committee of the performance of the Treasury Management function of the Council for the first half of 2026/27 and provides a comparison of performance against the 2026/27 Treasury Management Strategy and the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators.

Executive Summary

This report includes the requirement in the 2021 Code of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. and review and outlines:

- 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 is presented to the Audit Committee to enable it to have the opportunity to review and scrutinise the Half Year Treasury Management report.

Recommendation

That the Audit Committee

a) considers and comments upon the Treasury Management Half Year report and the Treasury Management activity and projected outturn for 2026/27.

b) Commends the report to Leaders Consultative Committee and supplementary meetings thereafter

1 Background

1.1 The Council operates a balanced budget, which broadly means cash raised during the year will meet its cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure this cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies being invested with low-risk counterparties, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering optimising investment returns.

1.2 The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing needs of the Council, essentially the longer-term cash flow planning to ensure the Council can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans, or using longer-term cash flow surpluses, and on occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

1.3 As a consequence, treasury management is defined as:

"The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

2 Current Position

2.1 Requirements of the Treasury Management Code of Practice

2.1.1 In April 2023 the Authority 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.

2.2.2 This report includes the requirement in the 2021 Code of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. This half year report advises the Audit Committee of the performance of the Treasury Management function of the Council for the first half of 2026/27 and provides a comparison of performance against the 2026/27 Treasury Management Strategy and the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators.

2.1.1 The Authority's treasury management strategy for 2026/27 was approved at the budget Council meeting on 4 March 2026. The Authority has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Authority's treasury management strategy.

2.1.2 This Half Year report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice, and covers 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;
- Compliance

- Treasury Management Prudential Indicators;

2.2 **External Environment Half Year 2026/27**
Economic background

2.2.1 The key story remained the conflict in the Middle East and its impact on global energy prices and inflation, while on the UK politics side, Andy Burham became the new Prime Minister. Although energy prices had shown signs of moderating towards the end of (calendar) Q2, the continuing conflict pushed oil and gas up sharply once again in Q3. Around mid-September, Brent oil and UK gas prices were over 30% and 70% higher respectively compared to the period preceding the Bank of England's (BoE) July Monetary Policy Report (MPR).

2.2.2 Given the inflationary impact of the previous energy shock from the Russia/Ukraine war, central bank policymakers remained alert to higher energy prices feeding into wider price and wage-setting behaviour ('second-round effects'). In the UK, higher fuel and energy prices were evident in headline inflation, but there was limited evidence of material second-round effects. At the same time, underlying wage pressures continued to moderate, and the labour market remained relatively loose.

2.2.3 The BoE's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) maintained Bank Rate at 3.75% throughout the period. In April the MPC voted by 8-1 to leave rates unchanged, with one member wanting a 0.25% increase. The voting subsequently became more hawkish, moving to 7-2 in June and 6-3 in both July and September, with all dissenters preferring to increase Bank Rate to 4.00%. The change in voting patterns reflected increasing policymaker concern over the persistence of the energy shock and the risk that higher headline inflation could become embedded in domestic prices and wages.

2.2.4 At the September MPC meeting, the Committee judged the inflation risks were further to the upside compared to its July MPR. Energy prices had risen again and borrowing costs were materially higher than before the US/Iran conflict. Despite expecting inflation would rise further in the near-term, most members believed that a soft labour market, spare capacity and restrictive monetary conditions would reduce inflation over time. Moreover, the data showed there was still little evidence of material second-round effects, although the MPC emphasised that the risk of these effects would increase the longer elevated and volatile energy prices persisted.

2.2.5 UK headline consumer price inflation (CPI) initially declined, suggesting the initial energy shock was not spreading into a wider range of goods and services. However, later in the period inflation picked up again, with CPI rising from 2.6% in June to 3.1% in August due largely to higher transport costs. Core CPI was 2.6% in July and August, suggesting the divergence between that and headline inflation was due to energy rather than a broad increase in underlying inflation.

2.2.6 UK economic activity was somewhat stronger than initially anticipated over the period. GDP expanded by 0.6% in the first quarter of the calendar year and 0.5% in the second quarter, slightly stronger than the initial estimate of 0.4%. Monthly activity was more volatile, with a contraction of -0.1% in April, followed by gains of 0%, 0.3% and 0.4% in May, June and July respectively.

2.2.7 Labour market data continued to show softening employment conditions. The unemployment rate fell to 4.9% in April and remained at that level to July, against expectations it would tick up. Job vacancies also continued to decline, to 702,000 in the three months to July. Earnings growth moderated, with regular earnings at 3.5% in the three months to July and total earnings at 3.9%, suggesting weaker labour demand was

continuing to restrain domestic wage pressures.

2.2.8 Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, expects Bank Rate will stay at 3.75%. However, higher energy prices due to the ongoing conflict(s) and uncertainty around the government's upcoming Budget have increased the near-term upside risks. Moreover, stronger inflation projections, which accompanied the September MPC decision, shifted market expectations for Bank Rate higher. In addition, despite little evidence of second-round effects to date, the changing tone of the MPC minutes suggests it may not need something seismic to tip the Committee to increase Bank Rate.

2.2.9 The US Federal Reserve held the Fed Funds target range at 3.50%-3.75% through to July. However, inflation pressures rose during the summer, pushing headline CPI to 3.4% in August, with higher petrol prices accounting for much of the increase. This led the Fed to raise its target range to 3.75%-4.00% in September. The move reflected increased concern over inflation at a time when US economic activity and labour-market conditions were relatively resilient.

2.2.10 Following a 0.25% increase in June, the European Central Bank raised its three key policy rates by a further 0.25% in September, taking the deposit facility rate to 2.50%. Inflation increased from 2.9% in July to 3.2% in August, and an initial estimate suggested a further rise to 3.8% in September, with energy prices the principal driver. The ECB emphasised the uncertainty around the duration of the energy shock and the risk prolonged higher inflation could feed into wider price-setting.

Financial markets

2.2.11 After the sharp deterioration early in the period, financial market sentiment improved somewhat as there were ongoing hopes that the US/Iran war would be resolved. However, towards the end of the period, signs of any potential resolution appeared premature and oil prices rose alongside inflation and bond yields while equity market volatility increased as investors weighed conflict-related as well as AI-related concerns

2.2.12 Bond yields in both the US and UK increased markedly over the period, with the gap between gilts and US Treasuries tightening towards the end of the period. While term premia are still embedded in gilt yields given the relatively uncertain fiscal outlook, a more hawkish Fed alongside persistent US inflation and fiscal concerns have pushed the yields on US Treasuries to their highest levels in years.

2.2.13 Some relatively market-friendly announcements were made by Andy Burham in his speech at the Labour Party conference, but it will be the Budget at the end of October that will hopefully provide some clarity on what the UK's fiscal position might look like going forward.

2.2.14 Over the period, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started at 4.86% and ended at a high of 5.43%. The 20-year gilt yield starting at 5.45% and finished at 5.93%, another high for the period. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 3.73% over the period to 30th September.

Credit review

2.2.15 Arlingclose maintained its advised recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on the majority of the banks on its counterparty list at 6 months. The other banks remain on 100 days.

2.2.16 During the period, Fitch upgraded numerous banks due to a rating methodology change, as well as the reference obligations used for Issuer Default Ratings and introduced more

differentiated notching between deposits, senior preferred, senior unsecured and senior non-preferred debt ratings.

2.2.17 Later in the period, Moody's changed the outlook on HSBC to Positive from Stable, while also affirming its long-term deposit rating. This follows a similar action from S&P on HSBC's outlook a few months prior to this.

2.2.18 After spiking in April following escalation in the Iran war, credit default swap prices on UK banks declined during most of the period but started to pick up again in September. They ended the period well below levels that may give cause for concern but remain under constant monitoring.

2.2.19 European banks' CDS prices followed a similar pattern to the UK, while Canadian bank CDS prices rose early in the period and then remained at similar levels, while Australian and Singaporean banks tended to trend downwards.

2.2.20 Overall, at the end of the period CDS prices for all banks on Arlingclose's counterparty list remained within limits deemed satisfactory for maintaining credit advice at current durations.

2.2.21 Financial market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term and, credit default swap levels will continue to be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

2.3 The Oldham Council Treasury Position

2.3.1 On 31 March 2026, the Authority had net borrowing of £211.007m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. This had fallen to £188.48m by the end of Quarter One and as at presented in Table 3 had increased to £203.095m at the half year. This is largely due to increased cashflow in the early part of the year invested which has reduced without replacing any matured temporary borrowing.

2.3.2 The actual and planned level of capital expenditure are the drivers of borrowing for capital purposes. **Appendix 1** shows the actual level of capital expenditure at the end of 2025/26 and includes the forecast as at 30 September 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 forecast for 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29. It also shows the financing including the level of prudential borrowing.

2.3.3 The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below and show the 2026/27 forecast as at 30 September compared to the closing position for 2025/26.

Table 1 - Balance Sheet Summary

	31/3/2026 Actual £000	31/3/2027 Half year review Forecast £000
General Fund CFR	581,037	601,914
Total CFR	**581,037**	**601,914**
Less: *Other debt liabilities PFI/Leases	211,360	215,423
Borrowing CFR	**369,677**	**386,492**
External borrowing	259,957	247,042
Internal borrowing	109,718	139,449
Less: Usable reserves	(151,091)	(146,091)
Less: Working capital	(7,577)	(37,306)
Net Investments	**(48,950)**	**(43,947)**

2.3.4 Table 1 shows the forecast CFR for 2026/27 is £601.914m, an increase of £20.877m compared to £581,037m at the end of 2025/26. The CFR excluding other debt liabilities relating to Private Finance Initiative schemes and leases (Borrowing CFR) is forecast at £386.492m an increase of £16.815m compared to the position at the end of 2025/26.

2.3.5 The table clearly highlights that the Council borrowing is well below the CFR and the Council is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the capital borrowing need (CFR) has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. The Council will continue to analyse and assess the market to determine the optimum time to externally borrow.

2.3.6 The treasury management position as at 30 September 2026 and the change over the quarter is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - Treasury Management Summary

Borrowing/Investment	31.3.26 Balance £'000	Movement £'000	30.09.26 Balance £'000	30.09.26 Average Rate %
Long-term borrowing				
- PWLB	114,195	(2,931)	111,264	4.06%
- LOBOs	75,500	(5,000)	70,500	4.32%
- Other	40,002	(2)	40,000	4.03%
Short-term borrowing	30,260	(4,982)	25,278	4.45%
Total borrowing	**259,957**	**(12,915)**	**247,042**	
Long-term investments	13,610	(433)	13,177	4.74%
Cash and cash equivalents	35,340	(4,570)	30,770	3.80%
Total investments	**48,950**	**(5,003)**	**43.947**	
Net borrowing	**211,007**	**(7,912)**	**203,095**	

As can be seen from the table above, borrowing has been reduced by circa £12.915m in the first half of the year. However, borrowing will increase during the year in line with planned capital expenditure. Overall, the level of investment is £5.003m lower than at the end of 2025/26, principally due to capital grant funding being received in advance of it being spent and council incomes are generally greatest at the start of a financial year.

2.4 Borrowing

2.4.1 As outlined in the treasury strategy, the Authority's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately risk balance between securing lower interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change being a secondary objective. The Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio.

2.4.2 Gilt yields have been volatile, reflecting expectations of tighter monetary policy compared to previous expectations due to the war. Long-term gilt yields are very high, with investors lacking confidence in UK fiscal plans.

2.4.3 The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 5.62% at the beginning of the period and 6.17% at the end. Rates for 20-year maturity loans moved from 6.13% to 6.61% during the period, and 50-year maturity loans from 6.01% to 6.37%.

2.4.4 The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities has been above Bank Rate during the period at 3.8% to 5.5%: costs have risen throughout the period. This is primarily due to many local authorities avoiding more expensive long term rates and relying more heavily on the short term market. Low cash levels and the non-receipt of SEND grants are also likely to have contributed to a high borrowing demand.

2.4.5 CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that Local Authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for Local Authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Authority.

2.4.6 Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans are no longer available to Local Authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes.

2.4.7 Oldham Council has not invested in assets primarily for financial return or that are not primarily related to the functions of the Council, and it has no plans to do so in future.

Loans Portfolio

2.4.8 On 30 September 2026 Oldham Council held £221.764m in long-term loans. There has been no new borrowing undertaken in the first six months of the year. One LOBO loan of £5.000m was called in the period. This, and a proportion of EIP interest on PWLB loan, has resulted in long term borrowing being lower by £7.932m than on 31 March 2026. Outstanding loans on 30 September (borrowing position) are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Borrowing Position

Borrowing Sources	31/3/2026 Balance £'000	Movement £'000	30.9.26 Balance £'000	30.9.26 Weighted Average Rate %	30.9.26 Weighted Average Maturity (years)
Public Works Loan Board	114,196	(2,932)	111,264	4.06%	10.52
Banks (LOBO)	75,500	(5,000)	70,500	4.32%	42.43
Banks (fixed term)	40,000	-	40,000	4.03%	44.02
Local Authorities (short term)	30,000	(5,000)	25,000	4.45%	0.00
Local Bonds (long-term)	1	0	1	3.76%	0
Local Bonds (short-term)	25	-	25	4.66%	0
Local Charitable Trusts (short-term)	235	18	252	3.76%	1
Total borrowing	**259,956**	**(12,914)**	**247,042**	4.38%	

2.4.9 The Authority's short-term borrowing costs have increased over the course of the first half of the year. The average rate on the Authority's short-term loans as at 30 September 2026 of £25m is 4.45%, this compares with £30m 5.08% at 30th June and 4.84% on £30m of loans at 31st March 2026.

LOBO Loans

2.4.10 Oldham Council currently holds £70.500m of LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Council has the option to either accept the new rate and terms or to repay the loan at no additional cost. This a reduction of 5.000m from the position as at 31 March 2025 due to one of the lenders, Dexia, exercising its option to revise the rate payable on the loan in April. The revised interest rate offered was 6.70% and the Council exercised its option to repay the loan in full, utilising available cash balances.

2.4.11 Currently, Oldham Council has £39m LOBO loans with call dates during the remaining six months of this financial year. Of this sum, £19m is held with Dexia Finance, £10m is held with KBC Bank NV and the remaining £10m is evenly split between two other providers, Danske Bank and Just Retirement. At the time of writing no call options have been exercised.

2.4.12 There may be opportunities to repay the Council's historical LOBO borrowing. The Council will investigate all opportunities, including consultation with the council's treasury management advisors, Arlingclose, and will ensure any repayments create revenue savings. If required, the Authority will repay the LOBO loans with available cash or by borrowing from other local authorities or the PWLB.

2.4.13 Council officers will liaise with treasury management advisors, Arlingclose, over the likelihood of the options being exercised for LOBO's within the loan portfolio. If any option

is exercised the Authority plans to repay the loan at no additional cost. If required, the Authority will repay the LOBO loans with available cash or by borrowing from alternative sources or the PWLB, always providing that overall savings can be demonstrated.

2.5 Treasury Investment Activity

2.5.1 CIPFA published revised 'Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral' Guidance Notes on 20 December 2021. These define treasury management investments as investments that arise from the organisation's cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represent balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.

2.5.2 At 30 September, the Council held £30.770m invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the first half of year the Authority's Money Market Fund Investment balances ranged between £21.310m and £72.030m due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4 - Treasury Investment Position

	31.3.26 Balance £'000	Movement £'000	30.09.26 Balance £'000	30.09.26 Income Return %	30.09.26 Weighted Average Maturity days
Money Market Funds	35,340	(4,570)	30,770	3.80%	
- *Property funds*	13,610	(433)	13,177	4.74%	180
Total investments	**48,950**	**(5,003)**	**43,947**		

2.5.3 Both the CIPFA Code and Government guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

2.5.4 As demonstrated by the liability benchmark in this report, the Authority expects to be a long-term borrower, and new treasury investments are therefore primarily made to manage day-to-day cash flows using short-term low risk instruments. The existing portfolio of strategic pooled funds will be maintained to diversify risk into different sectors and boost investment income.

2.5.5 The Council in previous years has invested £15.000m in the Churches, Charities & Local Authorities (CCLA) pooled property fund. As this is a longer-term investment, short term security and liquidity are lesser considerations, and the objectives instead are regular revenue income and long-term price stability. This fund generated an average total return in 2025/26 of £0.626m, and currently yields 4.74% income return. The value is estimated at £13.177m as at 30 September 2026.

Statutory Override

2.5.6 Further to consultations in April 2023 and December 2024 MHCLG wrote to finance directors in England during February 2025 regarding the statutory override on accounting for gains

and losses in pooled investment funds. On the assumption that when published regulations follow this policy announcement, the statutory override will be extended until 1 April 2029 for investments already in place before 1 April 2024. The override will not apply to any new investments taken out on or after 1 April 2024.

2.5.7 The Authority had set up a provision of £2.000m to mitigate the impact of the statutory override not being extended. In view of the fact that the override may not be extended past 2029 the authority has decided to maintain this provision.

2.6 **Treasury Performance**

2.6.1 The Treasury Team measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities both in terms of its impact on the revenue budget and its relationship to benchmark interest rates, as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5 – Treasury Performance

	Budgeted Performance Rates/Benchmark SONIA Return %	Benchmark SONIA Return % Plus 5%	30.09.26 Income Return % (Actual)
Budgeted Investment Rates	3.50%		4.08%
Overnight SONIA	3.73%	3.92%	3.73%

2.6.2 The budgeted investment rate of 3.5% above was included within the annual strategy for 2026/27. The actual rate achieved in the first quarter is above this budgeted rate at 3.78%. The total budget for treasury management income for 2026/27 is £1m, to date General Fund income of £0.480m has been achieved.

2.6.3 Previously the benchmark return was measured on the London Interbank Bid Rate (LIBID) which was a forward-looking interest rate. The Bank of England replaced LIBID with SONIA in December 2021. SONIA is calculated differently to LIBID in that it is a backward-looking rate, based on actual results. The benchmark of SONIA plus 5% has not been achieved, however the actual rate achieved for overnight investments is higher than the average SONIA rate over the period.

Compliance

2.6.4 The Director of Finance reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the quarter complied fully with the principles in the Treasury Management Code and the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy. Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in Table 6 below.

Table 6 - Investment Limits

Investment Limit	Maximum during Half Year 2026/27	30.9.26 Actual	Maximum allowable in 2026/27	Compliance Yes/No
	£000	£000	£000	
Any single organisation, except the UK Government	10,000	-	30,000	Yes
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	10,000	-	20,000	Yes
Unsecured investments with building societies	-	-	20,000	Yes
Money Market Funds	61,420	30,770	80,000	Yes
Strategic pooled funds	13,343	13,177	15,000	Yes

2.6.5 Compliance with the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for external debt is demonstrated in Table 7 below.

Table 7 – Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

	Maximum debt H1	Debt at 30/9/2026	2026/27 Authorised Limit	2026/27 Operational Boundary	Complied? Yes/No
Borrowing	259,957	247,042	390,000	375,000	Yes
PFI and Finance Leases	215,423	215,423	223,500	220,000	Yes
Total debt	**475,380**	**462,465**	**613,500**	**595,000**	

2.6.6 The Operational Boundary represents the expected maximum borrowing position for the Council for the year and was set at £595.000m

2.6.7 The Authorised Limit is the "affordable borrowing limit" required by Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003 and for 2026/27 was set at £613.500m Once this has been set, the Council does not have the power to borrow above this level although it can be revised if required.

2.6.8 Since the Operational Boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the Operational Boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure. No breaches have occurred, and it is not anticipated that there will be any breaches in 2026/27.

2.7 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

2.7.1 As required by the 2021 CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Authority monitors and measures the following treasury management prudential indicators.

Liability Benchmark

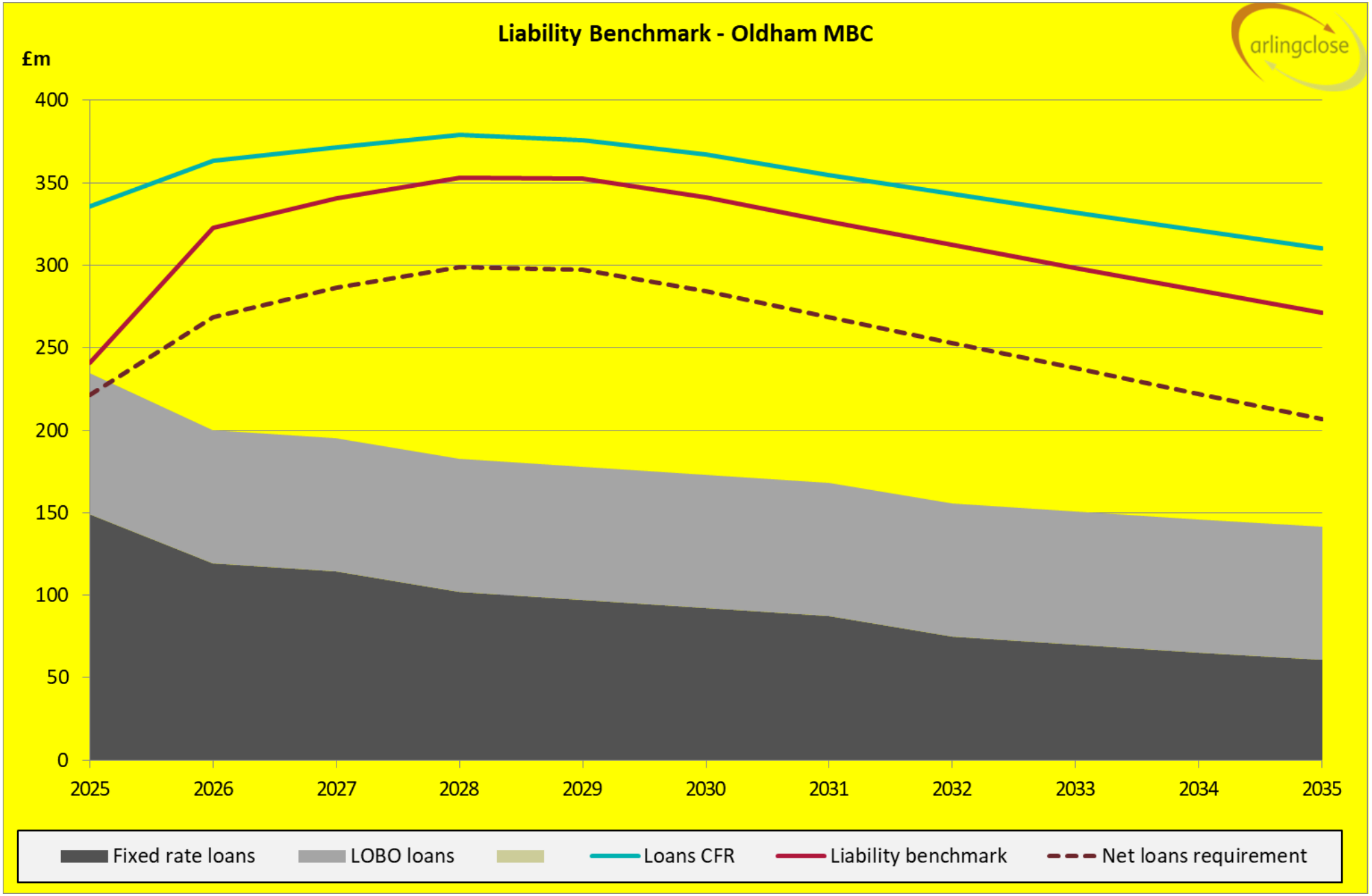
2.7.2 This indicator compares the Authority's actual existing borrowing against a liability benchmark that has been calculated to show the lowest risk level of borrowing. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. It represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level of £20.000m, the level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

Table 8 - Liability Benchmark

Liability Benchmark Measurement	31 March 2026 Actual £'000	31 March 2027 Forecast £'000	31 March 2028 Forecast £'000	31 March 2029 Forecast £'000
Loans CFR	369,677	386,492	389,439	384,956
Less: Balance sheet resources	151,091	120,813	115,813	110,813
Net loans requirement	**218,586**	**265,679**	**273,626**	**274,143**
Plus: Liquidity allowance	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Liability benchmark	**238,586**	**285,679**	**293,626**	**294,143**
Existing /forecast borrowing	**259,956**	**256,764**	**271,764**	**266,764**

2.7.3 As demonstrated by the liability benchmark in the table above, the Council expects to be a long-term borrower to finance the expected capital spend. There could be timing differences between when the Council externally borrows compared to when the expenditure is required due to the nature of capital works, but new treasury investments are therefore primarily made to manage day-to-day cash flows using short-term low risk instruments. The existing portfolio of strategic pooled funds will be maintained to diversify risk into different sectors and boost investment income.

2.7.4 Following on from the medium-term forecast above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing of £35.436 in 2026/27.


Liability Benchmark - Oldham MBC
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arlingclose
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2031
2032
2033
2034
2035
Fixed rate loans
LOBO loans
Loans CFR
Liability benchmark
Net loans requirement

2.7.5 Table 9 below sets out the maturity structure of borrowing at the end of the first quarter of 2026/27 compared to the upper and lower limits set in the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27.

Table 9 - Maturity Structure of Borrowing

Borrowing Timeframe	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	30.6.2026	Complied?
Under 12 months	35%	0%	31.35%	Yes
12 months and within 24 months	35%	0%	15.14%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	35%	0%	20.40%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	35%	0%	8.80%	Yes
10 years to 20 years	60%	0%	2.03%	Yes
20 years to 30 years	60%	0%	4.05%	Yes
30 years to 40 years	60%	0%	6.08%	Yes
40 years to 50 years	60%	0%	4.05%	Yes
50 years to 60 years	60%	0%	8.10%	Yes

2.7.6 Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment. In the case of LOBO loans, the next option date has been used as the measure to determine if it is potentially repayable.

Long-term Treasury Management Investments

2.7.7 The purpose of the Long-Term Treasury Management indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management limits are set out in the table below.

Table 10- Limit / Actual Investments exceeding one year

Limit/Actual Investments Exceeding One Year	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	No fixed date
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£50m	£50m	£50m	£50m
Actual principal invested beyond year end	£15m	0	0	0
Complied?	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A

2.7.8 Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds. For the Council, this is currently the CCLA Property Fund. Long term investments exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term investments.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 In order that the Council complies with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management the Audit Committee has no option other than to consider and approve the contents of the report. Therefore, no options/alternatives have been presented.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 The preferred option is that the contents of the report are agreed and recommended to Cabinet/Leaders Consultative Committee (Decisions) for approval.

5 Consultation

5.1 There has been consultation with the Council's Treasury Management Advisors, Arlingclose, in the production of this report.

5.2 The presentation of the Treasury Management Half Year Report to the Audit Committee for detailed scrutiny on 25 November 2026 will be in compliance with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice. The report will then be presented to Cabinet and then subsequently Council for approval.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 All included within the report.

7 Legal Services Comments

7.1 None.

8 Co-operative Agenda

8.1 The Council ensures that any Treasury Management decisions comply as far as possible with the ethos of the Co-operative Council.

9 Human Resources Comments

9.1 None.

10 Risk Assessments

10.1 There are considerable risks to the security of the Authority's resources if appropriate treasury management strategies and policies are not adopted and followed. The Council has established good practice in relation to treasury management which has previously been acknowledged in both Internal and the External Auditors' reports presented to the Audit Committee.

11 IT Implications

11.1 None.

12 Property Implications

12.1 None.

13 Procurement Implications

13.1 None.

14 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

14.1 None.

15 Equality, community cohesion and crime implications

15.1 None.

16 Equality Impact Assessment Completed?

16.1 No.

17 Key Decision

17.1 Yes

18 Key Decision Reference

18.1 KDD-26-39

19 Background Papers

19.1 The following is a list of the background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by that Act.

File Ref: Background papers are contained with Appendix 1
Officer Name: Paula Buckley/James Postle
Contact No: 0161 770 4247

20 Appendix 1 - Prudential and Treasury Indicators

Appendix 1 - Prudential and Treasury Indicators

The Council measures and manages its capital expenditure, borrowing with reference to the following indicators. The Council has not taken out any Commercial or Service Investments.

The following tables show a summary of the prudential indicators for Half Year 2026/27

Capital Expenditure

Capital Expenditure/Financing	2025/26 Actual £'000	2026/27 Forecast Actual £'000	2027/28 Budget £'000	2028/29 Budget £'000
Expenditure				
General Fund services	71,913	103,620	48,226	15,182
HRA	212	6,189	3,849	0
Total Capital Expenditure	**72,125**	**109,809**	**52,075**	**15,182**
Financing				
Grants & Contributions	(44,744)	(67,159)	(35,780)	(6,358)
Prudential Borrowing	(20,333)	(35,436)	(13,394)	(6,223)
Revenue	(54)	(3,050)	0	0
Capital Receipts	(6,994)	(4,164)	(2,900)	(2,600)
Total Financing	**(72,125)**	**(109,809)**	**(52,075)**	**(15,182)**

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

Capital Financing Requirement	31 March 2026 Actual £'000	31 March 2027 Forecast £'000	31 March 2028 Budget £'000	31 March 2029 8Budget £'000
Total CFR	**581,037**	**601,914**	**598,668**	**587,740**

Gross Borrowing and the Capital Financing Requirement

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement except in the short term. The Authority has complied with and expects to comply with this requirement in the medium term as it is shown below

Gross Borrowing /CFR	31 March 2026 Actual £'000	31 March 2027 Forecast £'000	31 March 2028 Budget £'000	31 March 2029 Budget £'000	Debt at 30 Sept 2026 £'000
Gross Borrowing (incl. PFI & leases)	471,317	472,187	480,993	469,278	462,465
Capital Financing Requirement	581,037	601,914	598,668	587,470	601,914

Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

The authority is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the Authorised Limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower 'operational boundary' is also set as a warning level should debt approach this limit

	Maximum debt Half Year	Debt at 30/9/2026	2026/27 Authorised Limit	2026/27 Operational Boundary	Complied? Yes/No
Borrowing	259,957	247,042	390,000	375,000	Yes
PFI and Finance Leases	215,423	215,423	223,500	220,000	Yes
Total debt	**475,380**	**462,465**	**613,500**	**595,000**	

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cashflow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure. Total Debt has not exceeded either Authorised or Operational Boundary limits in the period April to Sept 2026.

Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP/loans fund repayments are charged to revenue.

The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream (i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants).

Financing Cost/Net Revenue Stream	2025/26 Actual £'000	2026/27 Forecast £'000	2027/28 Budget £'000	2028/29 Budget £'000
Financing costs (£m)	27,027	24,985	27,334	27,550
From Proportion of net revenue stream	7.82%	7.23%	7.39%	7.02%

Impact of a 1% increase in interest rate on debt financing costs

This indicator demonstrates the additional revenue interest costs that would be charged if interest rates were 1% above the current assumptions.

Financing Cost/Net Revenue Stream	2026/27 Estimated £'000	2027/28 Estimated £'000	2028/29 Estimated £'000
Additional Revenue costs (£000)	145	254	246

Treasury Management Indicators

These indicators (Liability Benchmark, Maturity Structure of Borrowing, Long Term Treasury Management investments are included within the main body of the report.

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CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME
2026/27 MONITORING REPORT & 2026/27-2031 Capital Programme
Month 6 – September 2026

1 Background

1.1 The original capital programme for 2026/27 reflected the priorities outlined in the Capital Strategy as approved at Cabinet on 23 February 2026 and confirmed at the Council meeting on 4 March 2026.

1.2 The position at the end of Month 6 (September 2026) is highlighted in this report.

1.3 For the remainder of the financial year, the programme will continue to be monitored and revised to take account of any new developments and changes in the profile of planned expenditure.

Current Position

2.1 Table 1 below shows the capital programme for 2026/27 and a further four years to 2030/31, and reflects the priorities outlined in the Capital Strategy.

Table 1 – 2026/31 Capital Strategy

Directorate Budget	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000	Total £000
Community Health and Adult Social Care	6,495	3,870	-	-	-	**10,365**
Children's Services	9,657	6,481	2,209	10	-	**18,357**
Communities	125	-	-	-	-	**125**
Place and Economic Growth	72,953	25,636	6,016	362	-	**104,967**
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	6,151	3,849	-	-	-	**10,000**
Corporate/Information Technology	3,843	3,336	1,092	-	-	**8,271**
Capital, Treasury & Technical Accounting	3,240	4,973	3,100	5,600	-	**16,913**
Funding for Emerging Priorities	-	902	2,506	-	1,592	**5,000**
Total Expenditure	**102,464**	**49,047**	**14,923**	**5,972**	**1,592**	**173,998**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

Funding	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000	Total £000
Grant & Other Contributions	(62,664)	(32,547)	(5,349)	(256)	-	**(100,816)**
Prudential Borrowing	(33,039)	(13,600)	(6,974)	(3,116)	(1,592)	**(58,321)**
Revenue Contributions	(3,010)	-	-	-	-	**(3,010)**
Capital Receipts	(3,751)	(2,900)	(2,600)	(2,600)	-	**(11,851)**
Grand Total	**(102,464)**	**(49,047)**	**(14,923)**	**(5,972)**	**(1,592)**	**(173,998)**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

New Funding

2.2 Since the last published Q1 report, the 2026-2031 5-year programme has increased by a total of £3.495m across all years in grants and contributions as detailed below:

DFG Private Contributions	£0.009m
Transport schemes	£3.448m
S106 monies re: M0905 Haven Lane	£0.038m

Rephasing & Acceleration of Schemes

2.3 Since the last reported position, the capital programme has been updated to reflect the acceleration of £1.742m of expenditure within Place – Asset Management (£179k) and Highways (£1584k) from future financial years into 2026/27. The programme has also been increased to include £1.262m of new grants and contributions within Place – Highways, together with additional contributions of £9k within Place – Community Health and Adult Social Care. The realignment of £21k between Place – Environment and People – Communities.

2.4 The revised capital programme for 2026/27 to 2020/31, considering all the above amendments in arriving at the revised forecast position, is shown in Table 2 together with the projected financing profile.

Table 2

Directorate Budget	Capital Strategy 2026-31 £000	Revised Budget (M03) £000	Approved Virements (to M06) £000	Proposed Virements (to M06) £000	Revised Budget (M06) £000	Spend to M06 £000
Community Health and Adult Social Care	6,495	7,263	9	-	7,272	1,186
Children's Services	9,657	12,916	-	-	12,916	1,133
Communities	125	125	21	-	146	-
Heritage, Libraries and Arts	-	134	-	-	134	39
Place and Economic Growth	72,953	73,776	3,004	-	76,780	19,605
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	6,151	6,189	-	-	6,189	217
Corporate/Information Technology (IT)	3,843	3,632	-	-	3,632	2,127
Capital, Treasury & Technical Accounting	3,240	2,740	-	-	2,740	-
Funding for Emerging Priorities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**102,464**	**106,775**	**3,034**	**-**	**109,809**	**24,307**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

2.5 Given that this is the position as at Month 6 and in view of the current challenges being faced including the pressure caused by the economic position, there must remain an element of uncertainty about the forecast position. A further breakdown of Table 3 on a service-by-service area basis is shown at Appendices A to I.

2.6 Actual expenditure to 30 September 2026 was £24.307m (22.14% of the proposed forecast outturn). This spending profile is marginally higher than last year's

(21.25%). The position will be kept under review, and budgets will be managed in accordance with forecasts.

2.7 The revised capital programme for 2026/27 to 2030/31, considering all the above amendments in arriving at the revised forecast position, is shown in Table 3 together with the projected financing profile.

Table 3 – 2026/27 to 2030/31 Current Capital Programme

Directorate Budget	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000	TOTAL £000
Community Health and Adult Social Care	7,272	3,870	-	-	-	**11,142**
Children's Services	12,916	9,652	2,209	10	-	**24,786**
Communities	146	-	-	-	-	**146**
Heritage, Libraries and Arts	134	-	-	-	-	**134**
Place and Economic Growth	76,780	26,453	6,775	107	-	**110,115**
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	6,189	3,849	-	-	-	**10,038**
Resources/Information Technology (IT)	3,632	2,878	1,092	502	-	**8,104**
Capital, Treasury & Technical Accounting	2,740	5,373	5,106	5,125	1,592	**19,936**
Funding for Emerging Priorities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**109,809**	**52,075**	**15,182**	**5,743**	**1,592**	**184,401**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

Funding	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000	TOTAL £000
Grant & Other Contributions	(67,159)	(35,780)	(6,358)	-	-	**(109,298)**
Prudential Borrowing	(35,436)	(13,394)	(6,223)	(3,143)	(1,592)	**(59,789)**
Revenue Contributions	(3,050)	-	-	-	-	**(3,050)**
Capital Receipts	(4,164)	(2,900)	(2,600)	(2,600)	-	**(12,264)**
Grand Total	**(109,809)**	**(52,075)**	**(15,182)**	**(5,743)**	**(1,592)**	**(184,401)**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

Capital Receipts

2.8 The capital programme requires the availability of £4.164m of capital receipts in 2026/27 for financing purposes. This includes £2.600m to support transformational activity in the General Fund using the flexibility allowed by Government.

The total net usable capital receipts currently received in year is £5.840m, the first call being the £2.600m outlined above.

2.9 The capital receipts position as at 30 September 2026 is as follows:

Table 4 – Capital Receipts 2026/27

	£000	£000
Capital Receipts Financing Requirement		4,164
Usable Capital Receipt b/fwd.	-	
Actual capital receipts received to date	(6,410)	
Identified in year capital receipts	(3,067)	
Anticipated surplus in 2026/27		**(5,313)**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

2.10 There is a small number of large value capital receipts needed to finance the capital programme in this and future years it is imperative that the capital receipts/disposal schedule is adhered to. An impact on any of these schemes will create a pressure to this capital receipts forecast. This is monitored at the monthly Capital Receipts meeting and will be subject to on-going review throughout the year. It is of course recognised that the ongoing economic instability with high interest rates and the impact on borrowing costs, coupled with the increase cost of living will continue to impact on business/economic activities making capital disposals more challenging.

2.11 The Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2023/31 incorporates an expectation of the level of receipts that is anticipated in each of the respective years and therefore an estimate as to the resultant level of over or under programming in order to present a balanced budget. As can be seen below, the most recent review has produced a forecast which is below the financing projections included in Table 5. Should the currently estimated position prevail then the position would be as illustrated in the table below:

Table 5 – Capital Receipts 2026/27 to 2030/31

Capital Receipts	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000
Capital Receipts Carried Forward	-	(5,313)	(7,946)	(7,059)	(4,459)
Identified Capital Receipts	(3,067)	(5,533)	(1,713)	-	-
Received in year	(6,410)				
Total Receipts	(9,477)	(10,846)	(9,659)	(7,059)	(4,459)
Capital Receipts Financing Requirement	4,164	2,900	2,600	2,600	-
Over/(Under) programming	**(5,313)**	**(7,946)**	**(7,059)**	**(4,459)**	**(4,459)**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

2.12 The capital receipts forecast is currently higher than the required amount, given that this is the month 6 position and there is the opportunity for the forecast to change, at this stage it is considered appropriate to retain the original forecast and review this during the course of the current year. The consequence should the level of capital receipts fall is either, a corresponding increase in the level of prudential borrowing and hence an impact on the revenue budget, or a reduction in the overall capital programme.

Annual Review of the Capital Programmes

2.13 In accordance with previous practice, there is once again a review of the capital programme over the summer months (the Summer Review). This is examining any further opportunities to reallocate, decommission or reprofile resources. It will also include an in-depth analysis of capital receipts to support a revised forecast.

3 Conclusion

3.1 Whilst the current projected position is showing the outturn to match the budget, a detailed review of the capital programme (the Annual Review) is being undertaken to establish if there are any surplus resources that can be realigned or any further re-profiling required. It is therefore likely that there will be further rephasing across all years to reflect developments relating to individual projects/schemes.

3.2 The capital programme is being continually monitored and is reported to Members on a regular basis.

4 Appendices

4.1 Appendix A - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Community Health and Adult Social Care
Appendix B - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Children's Services
Appendix C - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Communities
Appendix D - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Heritage, Libraries and Arts
Appendix E - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Place
Appendix F - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
Appendix G - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Resources/Information Technology
Appendix H - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Capital Treasury and Technical Accounting
Appendix I - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Funding for Emerging Priorities

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) - Community Health and Adult Social Care £000

APPENDIX A

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Adult Services	6,495	7,263	9	-	7,272	1,186
Community Health and Adult Social Care Total	**6,495**	**7,263**	**9**	**-**	**7,272**	**1.186**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) – Children's Services £000

APPENDIX B

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Children, Young People and Families (CYPF)	742	1,079	-	-	1,079	146
Schools - General Provision	3,127	5,041	-	-	5,041	23
Schools – Primary	2,355	2,780	-	-	2,780	192
Schools – Secondary	1,593	1,990	-	-	1,991	73
Schools – Special	1,840	2,025	-	-	2,025	699
Schools – New Build	-	-	-	-	-	-
Childrens Services Total	**9,657**	**12,916**	**-**	**-**	**12,916**	**1,133**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) – Communities £000

APPENDIX C

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Local Investment Fund	125	125	21	-	146	-
Communities Total	**125**	**125**	**21**	**-**	**146**	**-**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) – Heritage, Libraries and Arts £000

APPENDIX D

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Heritage, Libraries and Arts	-	134	-	-	134	39
Heritage, Libraries and Arts Total	**-**	**134**	**-**	**-**	**134**	**39**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) – Place £000

APPENDIX E

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Asset Management – Corporate Premises	2,817	4,432	-	-	4,432	352
Asset Management - Education Premises	1,529	1,532	179	-	1,711	504
Boroughwide Developments	17,363	9,891	-	-	9,891	4,992
Boroughwide District Projects	27	27	-	-	27	-
Cemeteries and Crematorium	1,493	1,488	-	-	1,488	-
Parks & Open Spaces	1,143	1,711	(21)	-	1,690	413
Private Housing	4,702	10,288	-	-	10,288	410
Strategic Acquisitions	1,147	1,631	6	-	1,637	32
Town Centre Developments	16,574	16,839	-	-	16,839	7,033
Accident Reduction	311	856	120	-	976	159
Bridges & Structures	9,120	9,206	395	-	9,601	1,529
Fleet Management	1,926	2,003	-	-	2,003	-
Highway Major Works/Drainage schemes	14,354	13,315	2,038	-	15,353	4,085
Minor Works	354	464	80	-	544	74
Miscellaneous	93	92	208	-	300	22
Place Total	**72,953**	**73,776**	**3,004**	**-**	**76,780**	**19,605**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) - Housing Revenue Account (HRA) £000

APPENDIX F

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Housing Revenue Account	6,151	6,189	-	-	6,189	217
HRA Total	**6,151**	**6,189**	**-**	**-**	**6,189**	**217**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) – Resources/Information Technology (IT) £000

APPENDIX G

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Information Technology	3,843	3,632	-	-	3,632	2,127
Information Technology Total	**3,843**	**3,632**	**-**	**-**	**3,632**	**2,127**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) – Capital Treasury and Technical Accounting

APPENDIX H

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Cross Cutting /Corporate	3,240	2,740	-		2,740	-
Capital Treasury and Technical Accounting Total	**3,240**	**2,740**	**-**	**-**	**2,740**	**-**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) - Funding for Emerging Priorities

APPENDIX I

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Funding for Emerging Priorities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Funding for Emerging Priorities Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

Emergency Powers Decision Report

Revenue Monitor and Capital Investment Programme 2026/27 Quarter 2 – September 2026

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Finance
Directorate: Resources
Report Author: Vickie Lambert, Finance Manager
Email: Vickie.lambert@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 30 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 note the contents of the report, including the forecast revenue position at the end of Quarter 2 at £3.622m, the projected transfers to / from reserves, the forecast Collection Fund position, the anticipated position for the Dedicated Schools Grant and the forecast position for the Housing Revenue Account as at the end of Quarter 2.

To approve the revised Capital Programme for 2026/27 including the proposed virements and note the forecast for the financial years to 2030/31 as outlined in Annex 2.

3. Reason for urgency

The Cabinet is required to review the revenue financial performance of the Council against its approved budget under section 28 of the Local Government Act 2023.

The Cabinet is the approving body for any proposed virements in the Council's Capital Programme, without Cabinet approval the Capital Programme cannot be altered (within the overall envelope of the programme) and this may impact on the

deliverability of the Council's capital schemes and would preclude any alterations to the programme.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

The Council will not be able to demonstrate that it has reviewed its financial performance as required by section 28 of the Local Government Act and will be unable to amend the Capital Programme to deal with any changes in priorities or circumstances of individual capital schemes.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

Failure to consider the Revenue Monitor and Capital Investment Programme for Quarter 2 will mean the Council is not complying with its requirement to consider its financial performance. Failure to approve revisions to the Capital Programme could lead to schemes having to be abandoned as additional funding cannot be vired, which would lead to abortive costs, which would need to be met from the revenue budget.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 5 November 2026
Comments

As detailed above, the Cabinet is required to monitor the financial performance of the Council during the year and approve any revisions to the Capital Programme, to comply with section 28 of the Local Government Act 2003 and to ensure that the Capital Programme remains fit for purpose and reflects the Council's priorities

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef
Date 11 November 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 Chief Executive

Revenue Monitor and Capital Investment Programme 2026/27
Quarter 2 – September 2026

Officer Contact: Lee Walsh, Director of Finance

Report Author: Vickie Lambert, Finance Manager

30 November 2026

Reason for Decision

The report provides Group Leaders with an update as at 30 September 2026 (Quarter 2) 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 (at Annex 1) alongside the financial position of the capital programme together with the revised capital programme 2026/27 to 2030/31 (at Annex 2).

Executive Summary

Revenue Position

The forecast adverse position for 2026/27 at the end of Quarter 2 is estimated to be **£3.622m** which has improved by £1.830m from that previously reported. It must be noted that as part of the approved Budget for 2026/27 the Council approved a volatility base budget provision of £2.500m. The release of this provision will be accessed over the course of the financial year. If this 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 is generally taken when preparing forecasts. Assumptions are made that vacant positions will be filled successfully, which as the year progresses does not always transpire.

The management actions initiated in 2025/56 across all service areas have 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. Details are included in Annex 1 of this report.

Information on the forecast year end position of the Collection Fund, Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is also outlined in the report.

Capital Position

The report outlines 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 is £109.809m at the close of Quarter 2 which incorporates additional funding received. Actual expenditure to 30 September 2026 was £24.307m (22.14% of the forecast outturn). Details are included in Annex 2 of this report.

Recommendations

That the Chief Executive:

1. Notes the contents of the report.
2. Notes the forecast revenue position at the end of Quarter 2 at £3.622m as detailed at Annex 1.
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 2 as outlined in Annex 2.

Revenue Monitor and Capital Investment Programme 2026/27 Quarter 2 – September 2026

1 Background

1.1 The Authority's 2026/27 revenue budget was approved by Council on 4 March 2026 at a sum of £368.053m to be met by Government grants, Council Tax and Business Rates. This report sets out the updated revenue financial position at the end of Quarter 2.

1.2 As the year progresses the monthly and outturn projections will reflect the evolving position of the impact of management actions that were put in place to mitigate in-year pressures, new developments and changes in the profile of planned expenditure and any additional grants that are announced from the Government.

2 Current Position

2.1 This revenue monitoring report for the period to the end of September 2026 highlights some areas of concern which may not just impact on the current year, but also when preparing future budgets. A projected adverse position based on the Quarter 2 controllable budget is £3.622m. Close financial management continues at all levels of the organisation with controls put in place during 2025/26 continued into this financial year to mitigate this position, to limit the impact on setting the budget for 2027/28 and reduce any unbudgeted use of general revenue reserves.

2.2 The main areas of concern identified within this monitoring report are:

- Adult Social Care forecasting an unfavourable position of £0.865m to the financial year end;
- Children's Services with an unfavourable position of £0.826m; and
- Place with an unfavourable position of £0.717m to the end of March 2027.

2.3 The forecast revenue position reported is before any release of the £2.500m Council-wide volatility base budget which was established as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process to offset the financial impact of variances in demand across statutory services. For Quarter 2, this provision has not been released. It must be noted that if this base budget provision was released, this would reduce the overall position down to a projected adverse position of £1.122m.

2.4 Enhanced spending controls across recruitment and expenditure were implemented by Senior Leaders during the previous financial year as a response to the significant adverse variances that had been reported. These controls have been continued into 2026/27 and must remain in place to ensure that the pressured financial position the Council is reporting is kept to an absolute minimum or brought down to a balanced position by the financial year close.

2.5 Any deficit position on the revenue account will have to be met from the use of revenue reserves. Within the Council's approved Reserves Policy agreed at Budget Council in March 2026, a risk reserve was established which created further financial resilience for the revenue budget with regard to volatility. Whilst the use of reserves should be kept to a minimum, this resource provides the required resources to

balance the revenue budget from reserves set aside for this purpose, rather than the use of general revenue usable reserves if needed.

2.6 The forecast Collection Fund deficit position is a variance of £2.742m at the close of Quarter 2 when compared to the base budget position. Further details are included at Annex 1.

2.7 There have been a number of reserve requests as at the end of the reporting period. The net effect of these requests is an overall forecast increase in general revenue usable reserves to £66.470m. Details of these requests are included within the report.

2.8 The cumulative deficit forecast position for the Dedicated Schools Grant at the end of Quarter 2 is £21.048m. The Department for Education has confirmed acceptance of the Council's SEND Reform Plan and with it £6.254m of High Needs Sustainability Grant, and the position reported includes this additional grant funding.

2.9 Included within the report at Annex 1 is detail of the forecast HRA position.

2.10 The original Capital Programme for 2026/27 totalled £102.464m. The revised capital programme as at the end of Quarter 2 taking into account any carry forwards and approved new funding variations gives projected revised expenditure of £109.809m. Actual expenditure at the end of Quarter 2 was £24.307m (22.14% of the forecast outturn). Further details of expenditure and schemes within the capital programme can be found in Annex 2.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 The options that the Chief Executive might consider in relation to the contents of this report are;

a) agree the recommendations
b) to not agree the recommendations and propose alternative forecasts

4 Preferred Option

4.1 The preferred option is that the Chief Executive considers the forecasts and changes within this report; option (a) at 3.1.

5 Consultation

5.1 Consultation with the services within the Council and the Director of Finance.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The full financial implications are detailed in the report.

7 Legal Services Comments

7.1 There are no legal issues at this time.

8 Co-operative Agenda

8.1 Improving the quality and timeliness of the financial information available to citizens of Oldham supports the co-operative ethos of the Council.

8.2 The revenue budget and capital strategy/ programme have been prepared so that they embrace the Council's co-operative agenda with resources being directed towards projects that enhance the aims, objectives and co-operative ethos of the Council. Ongoing budget monitoring is key to ensuring this objective is met.

9 Human Resources Comments

9.1 There are no Human Resource implications as a result of the budget monitoring reports directly.

10 Risk Assessments

10.1 The risk is that the proposed management actions are not achieved in full. Should this be the case then alternatives will be sought and implemented.

11 IT Implications

11.1 There are no IT implications.

12 Property Implications

12.1 There are no Property implications.

13 Procurement Implications

13.1 There are no Procurement implications.

14 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

14.1 There are no Environmental and Health and Safety implications.

15 Equality, Community Cohesion and Crime Implications

15.1 There are no Equality, Community Cohesion and Crime implications.

16 Implications for Children and Young People

16.1 There are no direct implications for Children and Young People

17 Equality Impact Assessment Completed

17.1 An equality impact assessment has been included at Annex 3.

18 Key Decision

18.1 Yes

19 Key Decision Reference

19.1 KDD-26-04

20 Background Papers

20.1 The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act:

File Ref:	Revenue Background Papers are contained in Annex 1 including, Appendices 1 and 2
Officer Name:	Lee Walsh and Vickie Lambert
Contact:	lee.walsh@oldham.gov.uk / Vickie.lambert@oldham.gov.uk
File Ref:	Capital Background Papers are contained in Annex 2 including Appendices A to I
Officer Name:	James Postle
Contact No:	james.postle@oldham.gov.uk

21 Appendices

Annex 1	**Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2026/27 Quarter 2 – September 2026**
Appendix 1	2026/27 Directorate Summary Financial Positions at 30 September 2026
Appendix 2	Budget Savings by Directorate 2026/27
Annex 2	**Capital Investment Programme Report 2026/27 Month 6 – September 2026**
Appendix A	SUMMARY – Month 6 - Community Health & Adult Social Care
Appendix B	SUMMARY – Month 6 - Children's Services
Appendix C	SUMMARY – Month 6 - Communities
Appendix D	SUMMARY – Month 6 – Heritage, Libraries & Arts
Appendix E	SUMMARY – Month 6 - Place
Appendix F	SUMMARY – Month 6 – Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
Appendix G	SUMMARY – Month 6 – Resources / Information Technology
Appendix H	SUMMARY – Month 6 – Capital, Treasury and Technical Accounting
Appendix I	SUMMARY – Month 6 – Funding for Emerging Priorities
Annex 3	Equality Impact Assessment- Financial Monitoring 26-27 (Qtr 2)

ANNEX 1

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2026/27
Quarter 2 – September 2026

1 Background

1.1 The Authority's 2026/27 revenue budget was approved by Council on 4 March 2026 at a sum of £368.053m to be met by Government grants, Council Tax and Business Rates. This report sets out the updated revenue financial position at the end of Quarter 2.

1.2 Under established budget procedures all services are required to monitor and review their approved budgets during the financial year. As part of this process, a forecast of the year-end position has been prepared by all services. The services forecasts include all known commitments, issues, and any planned management actions required.

2 Current Position

2.1 The current net revenue budget is £369.933m which has increased since the base budget reported at Quarter 1 as result of additional unringfenced grant income being received by the Council. Since the last reported period, there has been an additional £1.127m allocated as detailed in the table below:

Movement in Funding	£000
Family Hubs and Start for Life Grant	(1,127)
Net Movement in Funding	**(1,127)**

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

2.3 As detailed within the monitoring reports presented during the previous financial year, enhanced spending controls across recruitment and expenditure were implemented by Senior Leaders to mitigate the ongoing pressures faced by the statutory demand led services delivered by the Council. These enhanced controls remain in place for 2026/27.

Table 1 – Summary of Quarter 2 Forecast Revenue Budget Position

Directorate	Annual Budget £000	Annual Forecast £000	Annual Variance reported at Quarter 2 £000	Annual Variance reported at Quarter 1 £000	Change in Variance between periods £000
Adult Social Care	98,645	99,509	865	2,048	(1,184)
Children's Services	95,944	96,770	826	1,939	(1,113)
Public Health	24,498	24,479	(19)	156	(176)
Place	77,751	78,469	717	1,668	(951)
Resources	41,205	40,011	(1,195)	(309)	(886)
Capital, Treasury and Technical Accounting	31,889	31,576	(313)	(50)	(263)
NET EXPENDITURE	**369,933**	**370,813**	**880**	**5,452**	**(4,572)**
Financed By:					
Locally Generated Income	(215,200)	(215,200)	-	-	-
Government Grants	(155,032)	(155,032)	-	-	-
Collection Fund Deficit	299	3,041	2,742	-	2,742
TOTAL FINANCING	**(369,933)**	**(367,191)**	**2,742**	**-**	**2,742**
OVERALL PROJECTED VARIANCE	**-**	**3,622**	**3,622**	**5,452**	**(1,830)**

2.4 The adverse forecast variance as shown in the table above is **£3.622m** (£5.452m at the end of Qtr 1). The Council holds a volatility base budget provision of £2.500m as agreed by Budget Council. If this base budget provision was released in Quarter 2, this would reduce the overall position down to a projected adverse position of £1.122m.

Significant revenue variances by Directorate

Table 2 – Summary of Quarter 2 Revenue budget variance analysis

2.5 There are significant variances contained within the projected net adverse position and a breakdown of these across type of variance is shown below.

Table 2 – Analysis of variance by Directorate

Directorate	Non-Delivery of Savings (Red & Amber) £000	Expenditure Variance £000	Income Variance £000	Annual Variance reported at Quarter 2 £000
Adult Social Care	-	5,325	(4,461)	**865**
Children's Services	-	1,803	(977)	**826**
Public Health	196	4	(220)	**(19)**
Place	35	865	(183)	**717**
Resources	-	(1,553)	358	**(1,195)**
Capital, Treasury & Technical Accounting	-	406	(719)	**(313)**
NET EXPENDITURE	**231**	**6,851**	**(6,202)**	**880**
Collection Fund Deficit	-	2,742	-	**2,742**
TOTAL NET VARIANCE	**231**	**9,593**	**(6,202)**	**3,622**

2.6 As reported in previous financial years, there are three areas which continue to forecast significant pressures;

- Adult Social Care is reporting a pressure of £0.865m at the end of Quarter 2 (£2.048m at the end of Quarter 1).
- Children's Services is reporting a pressure at the end of Quarter 2 at £0.826m (£1.939m at Quarter 1).
- Place is reporting a pressure of £0.717m at the end of Quarter 2 (£1.668m at Quarter 1).

2.7 Approved at the Budget Council meetings for 2025/26 and 2026/27, significant growth was added to the revenue base budget for these pressured areas. The gross amount added for 2025/26 for Adults Social Care, Children's Services and Place was £39.414m. For 2026/27, further growth has been added to the revenue base for these areas at a gross amount of £42.619m, split across Adults Social Care (£21.297m), Children's Services (£16.106m) and Place (£5.216m), resulting in a total gross increase in revenue base for the three areas at £82.033m.

2.8 Furthermore, at the Budget Council meeting on 4 March 2026, a Council-wide volatility base budget provision of £2.500m was approved. The Council delivers a number of demand-led statutory services where individual client needs drive costs. As can be seen above, significant base provision has been allocated to these areas based on an assessment of needs, entry into care pathways and expected price increases. Despite this, there will always be a degree of volatility across these areas arising from unforeseen circumstances such as a rise in children's placements due to children requiring care provision and where they were previously unknown to the Council. To mitigate for these circumstances, this revenue base budget provision will allow the Council to finance these additional costs whilst the services put the required mitigations in place. This base budget

provision is held within the Capital, Treasury & Technical Accounting Directorate. As at Quarter 2 this provision has not been released.

2.9 It is also worth noting that included within the Council's approved Reserves Policy agreed by Council at Budget Council, a risk reserve was established which created further financial resilience for the revenue budget with regard to volatility. Whilst the use of reserves should be kept to a minimum, this resource provides the required resources to balance the revenue budget from reserves set aside for this purpose, rather than the use of general revenue usable reserves if needed.

Adult Social Care adverse variance at the end of Quarter 2 at £0.865m (Quarter 1 at £2.048m)

2.10 As shown at Table 2, the forecast adverse position for this directorate can be broken down as follows:

- Non- Delivery of Budget Reductions (Red and Amber) -
- Expenditure Variance £5.325m
- Income Variance (£4.461m)

Further details for the expenditure and income variances are included in the following paragraphs.

2.11 At the end of Quarter 2, the Adults Social Care Directorate is forecasting total expenditure of £99.509m against a budget of £98.645m, resulting in an adverse variance of £0.865m, an improvement of £1.184m from the position reported at the end of Qtr 1. The projected adverse position is primarily driven by rising direct care costs, particularly within services supporting individuals with learning disabilities and mental health needs. The main areas of pressure are the supported living and care at home cohorts, where demand and care package costs continue to exceed budgeted levels. Whilst demand growth was concentrated during the first quarter, and package volumes have since stabilised; the full-year impact of new placements continues to place pressure on the forecast outturn position.

2.12 Within Learning Disability services, increased demand during the second quarter has resulted in a number of new Supported Living placements, alongside cost increases within existing care packages. Within Mental Health services, the forecast overspend continues to be driven largely by new Supported Living transitions placements. Additional pressures have also arisen from increased demand for home care following hospital discharge, higher levels of nursing care activity, and the extension of rehabilitation placements.

2.13 The above pressures have been mitigated by additional eligible S117 income contributions from the ICB. This additional income is a direct result of planned service mitigation to review all contributions as detailed in the Quarter 1 report.

Adult Social Care – Planned Mitigations

2.14 There are planned mitigations that are continuing and / or being embedded to reduce the forecast adverse position for this directorate. A summary of these is as follows:

- Engagement of additional temporary resource to clear the assessment backlog with expected benefits to be realised during the financial year.
- Continual review of transition cases using the established Transitions Hub.

2.15 It should be noted that the complexity of need for clients accessing this statutory service remains high and whilst the directorate is working hard to reduce this adverse variance, other factors such as demand and need could impact future forecasts.

Children's Services adverse variance at the end of Quarter 2 at £0.826m (£1.939m at the end of Quarter 1)

2.16 The forecast unfavourable position for this directorate area as at the end of September 2026 can be broken down as follows:

• Non- Delivery of Budget Reductions (Red and Amber)	-
• Expenditure Variance	£1.803m
• Income Variance	(£0.977m)

Further details for the expenditure and income variances are included in the following paragraphs.

2.17 Children's Services are reporting a £0.826m forecast adverse variance for the financial year as at the end of Quarter 2, which is £1.113m improved from the position reported at the end of Quarter 1. The largest pressure within Children's Services is the cost of external placements which at the end of this reporting period is projected to be £1.415m more than the budget provision available. This pressure is partly mitigated by additional CHC income of £0.424m and increased grant income for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) of £0.154m. To mitigate placement pressures the service is continuing the focused reviews of residential care packages as detailed in the previous financial year.

2.18 The Fieldwork & Family Support Service are forecasting a positive variance as at Quarter 2 of £0.166m. The service continues to have reliance on agency staff but due to successful recruitment and the use of GM Pledge rates the projected cost is much lower than previous financial years.

2.19 The adverse position for placements is being offset overall by vacant posts and additional income across services within Preventative Services and Children's Safeguarding areas.

Children's Services – Planned Mitigations

2.20 There are planned mitigations that are currently continuing to reduce the forecast unfavourable position for this directorate. A summary of these is as follows:

- Children with Disabilities – continuation of package reviews with parents and carers.
- Continuation of the positive work around reducing agency staffing engagements.
- Continuation of placements review particularly around those that are high cost.
- Careful placement matching to occupy all internal beds in children's homes and semi-independent accommodation.
- Continue focused recruitment of foster carers, kinship carers and special guardians.
- Continued work on over 18's accommodation through commissioned provision for UASC and housing direct matches for care leavers.

Public Health favourable variance at the end of Quarter 2 at (£0.19m) (£0.156m adverse position at the end of Quarter 1)

2.21 As shown at Table 2, the forecast favourable position for this directorate can be broken down as follows:

- Non- Delivery of Budget Reductions (Red and Amber) £0.196m
- Expenditure Variance £0.004m
- Income Variance (£0.220m)

2.22 The Public Health Directorate including Leisure Services is forecasting a favourable position of £0.019m as at the end of September 2026 which has improved by £0.176m since the position last reported.

2.23 The Public Health service is projecting a favourable position by the financial year end of £0.019m due to vacancies held.

2.24 Leisure Services are forecasting a break-even position as at the end of Quarter 2, however within this forecast position is a pressure with regards to utility benchmarking cost variances across various Oldham Community Leisure (OCL) sites. The Directorate are working closely with OCL and the Council's Legal service to resolve any disputes in this area to mitigate this pressure. A delay in the implementation of the OCL agency model budget reduction due to outstanding external legal work has impacted the forecast position in this area. Further updates will be included in future reports presented.

Place Directorate is reporting an adverse variance by year end of £0.717m (£1.668m at the end of Quarter 1)

2.25 The forecast unfavourable position for this directorate area as at the end of Quarter 2 can be broken down as follows:

- Non- Delivery of Budget Reductions (Red and Amber) £0.035m
- Expenditure Variance £0.865m
- Income Variance (£0.183m)

Further details for the expenditure and income variances are included in the following paragraphs, with details on budget reductions included later within this report.

Environment

2.26 The Environment service area is forecasting an adverse position of £0.697m by the financial year end. The largest driver behind the forecast budget pressure within Environment can be attributed to Waste & Cleansing (£1.007m) and First Response (£0.532m).

2.27 Waste & Cleansing has a forecast budget pressure of £0.905m. This can be summarised into £0.688m of salary pressures, part of which is additional agency expenditure required to backfill vacancies as a result of sickness, alongside fleet pressures of approximately £0.413m. Furthermore, the service recently got approval for the increased use of lease vehicles at a cost of £0.190m, as yet a funding source has not been identified for this cost. These pressures are partially offset by a forecast overachievement of income. Mitigations are currently being actioned to reduce this forecast adverse position further.

2.28 The forecast adverse position for First Response is due to a shortfall in income of £0.143m and £0.207m of additional salary costs due to agency.

2.29 The above pressures are being partially offset by favourable variances across Highways, Street Lighting, Traffic Management and Licensing services.

Growth

2.30 The Growth Division is reporting a £1.023m projected adverse variance by the financial year end. There are three main areas of budget pressure within the Growth Directorate namely Building Control (£0.253m), Town Centre (£0.554m) and Development Control (£0.180m). Both Building Control and Housing Delivery are included in ongoing restructures which once finalised may result in the budget pressures being significantly reduced. The Town Centre budget pressure is linked to the rent reductions previously approved following the transfer of tenants to the new Indoor Market. Agreement was made for 3 months free rent and a further 2 months' rent charged at 50%. This amounts to a 4-month rent free period and a budget pressure of approximately £0.185m.

2.31 Favourable variances in other areas such as Property and Planning are dampening the pressures noted above.

Communities

2.32 The Communities division is forecasting a favourable position by the end of the financial year of £1.003m. The largest contributing factor is within Housing Needs which holds costs related to temporary accommodation provision. Work continues to reduce placements in this area coupled with the sourcing of cheaper accommodation provision. It is worth noting, that this area is particularly volatile and a small increase in the number of placements could lead to a significant rise in costs and have a negative impact on the financial position.

2.33 The above pressure is being offset by favourable variances in Community Safety & Cohesion, Connected Communities, Culture and Youth.

Place - Planned Mitigations

2.34 The planned Place mitigations are continuing to reduce the forecast adverse position for this directorate. A summary of these is as follows:

- Waste & Cleansing - weekly review of agency usage versus service delivery / leave / sickness, plus time and investment into frontline health and wellbeing to improve sickness and retention.
- Full-service review of First Response.
- Rigorous weekly reviews of placement costs, partner performance and priority placements for Temporary Accommodation.
- Full Housing restructure review.

Resources forecast favourable variance at the end of Quarter 2 of (£1.195m) ((£0.309m) at the end of Quarter 1)

2.35 The forecast favourable position for this directorate area as at the end of September 2026 can be broken down as follows:

• Non- Delivery of Budget Reductions (Red and Amber)	-
• Expenditure Variance	(£1.553m)
• Income Variance	£0.358m

Further details for the expenditure and income variances are included in the following paragraphs.

2.36 The key driver for this forecast favourable position is due to slippage on vacant posts across the directorate as a whole but particularly in Transformation and Reform, Finance, HR and Revenues & Benefits services. These favourable positions are offsetting the pressure in Commissioning & Procurement of £0.177m due to the use of agency workers to cover vacant posts. The service is currently undertaking a restructure which, once implemented, is expected to eliminate the reliance on agency staff through the recruitment of permanent employees to vacant posts.

Capital, Treasury and Technical Accounting is reporting a favourable variance of (£0.313m) at the end of Quarter 2 ((£0.050m) favourable variance at the end of Quarter 1)

2.37 The Capital, Treasury and Technical Accounting directorate holds the budgets associated with the Council's Treasury Management activities including interest payable on borrowing and interest receivable on investments and is reporting a favourable variance of £0.313m as at the end of Quarter 2.

2.38 Table 2 includes details of the forecast Collection Fund Deficit position as at the end of Quarter 2. Further details on this position are included at Section 5.

2.39 A detailed revenue table is attached at Appendix 1.

3 Progress on the delivery of the 2026/27 Approved Budget Savings

3.1 Table 3 below presents the progress on the delivery of the 2026/27 approved Budget savings which has been updated to reflect the position at the end of Quarter 2. For savings rated as Red and Amber, work is ongoing to achieve the saving or alternative delivery and in year mitigations are being identified to cover any potential shortfalls which may occur. It is important that the 2026/27 approved budget savings be delivered given the limited Earmarked Reserves availability.

3.2 In terms of savings, £7.874m of the £8.105m approved budget reduction targets are either achieved (Blue) or on track to be delivered (Green) representing 97% of the total savings target. 3% are off track but with targeted work could be achieved (Amber). The table below summarises the progress by Directorate with further detail on savings and mitigations included at Appendix 2 of this report.

Table 3 – Summary on progress on delivery of 2026/27 Approved Budget Reductions

2026/27 Impact of Approved Budget Reductions	Blue (Achieved) £000	Green (On Track) £000	Amber (Off Track with mitigations) £000	Red (Off Track) £000	Total £000
Adult Social Care	(3,116)	0	0	0	**(3,116)**
Children's Services	(83)	0	0	0	**(83)**
Place	(100)	(3,412)	(35)	0	**(3,547)**
Public Health	0	(140)	(196)	0	**(336)**
Resources	(337)	(686)	0	0	**(1,023)**
TOTAL	**(3,636)**	**(4,238)**	**(231)**	**0**	**(8,105)**
Qtr 1 Forecast	(3,669)	(4,289)	(147)	0	**(8,105)**

Transformation Programme

3.3 Approved at Budget Council in March 2026 was £2.000m of savings to be achieved from the Council's transformation programme in 2026/27, £1.900m from Adults Social Care and £0.100m from Children's Services. As at the end of Quarter 2, this budget reduction is rated Green and is on track to be delivered in full by the end of the financial year.

4 Mitigation of Current forecast Budget Position

4.1 As detailed within this report, there is a continuation of the corporate mitigations that were enhanced in the previous financial year along with various service mitigations have been detailed, both with the aim of reducing the forecast adverse variance from the position reported. As the financial year progresses, the impacts of these mitigations are expected to have a favourable impact on the overall position.

4.2 The effectiveness of all management and corporate actions will continue to be closely monitored by the Executive Team. Further updates will continue to be included within future revenue monitoring reports presented.

5 Collection Fund

5.1 The tables below show the forecast outturn position for the Collection Fund (the technical account within in which Council Tax and Business Rates (National Non Domestic Rates (NDR) are managed) and the forecast position in relation to the share of balances between the Council and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Precepting Authorities.

Table 4 - Collection Fund Forecast Position

Collection Fund Balance	Council Tax £000	NDR £000	Total £000
Balance Brought Forward	451	3,607	**4,058**
Payment in respect of 2025/26 deficit	(358)	1	**(357)**
Prior Year Balance Brought Forward	**93**	**3,608**	**3,701**
(Surplus) /Deficit for the Year	861	(1,337)	**(476)**
Net (Surplus)/Deficit Carried Forward	**954**	**2,271**	**3,225**

Table 5 - Collection Fund – 2026/27 Share of Balances; Forecast Position

Collection Fund Balance	Council Tax £000	NDR £000	Total £000
Share - Oldham Council	793	2,248	**3,041**
Share – Greater Manchester Combined Authority - Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner	105	-	**105**
Share – Greater Manchester Combined Authority - Mayoral General Precept (including Fire and Rescue Services)	56	23	**79**
Total (Surplus)/Deficit	**954**	**2,271**	**3,225**

5.2 Council Tax and Business Rates remain a significant source of funding for Council services. These areas can be volatile, the 2026/27 financial year is presumed to be no different and as such the financial position of the Collection Fund is under constant review.

5.3 The Greater Manchester (GM) Business Rates Retention Trailblazer Scheme continues to allow the ten GM authorities to retain 100% of business rates locally for ten years to 2033/34. Any financial benefits arising from membership within the scheme will continue to be monitored, with 25% of benefits realised paid to GMCA in line with the Trailblazer Memorandum of Understanding.

5.4 As highlighted in Table 4 and 5 above, current year end Collection Fund projections are showing an overall deficit of £3.225m, with the Council's proportion of this deficit being £3.041m. For 2026/27, the Council budgeted a Collection Fund Deficit of £0.299m in line with the NNDR1 return, meaning an overall forecast variance as at the end of Quarter 2 of £2.742m.

5.5 This forecast position is due to an increase in the provisions required for bad debt and appeals due to the closing of the 2023 rate list from that included within the budget (NNDR1) and the 2025/26 outturn (NNDR 3), updated with the most current information available as at the end of September.

5.6 This is a particularly volatile area to forecast with many unknowns therefore this area will be closely monitored over the forthcoming months. Any anticipated financial impact in 2026/27 and future years will be considered within the context of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

6 Reserves and Balances

6.1 On 1 April 2026, general revenue usable reserves totalled £63.602m, split between Earmarked Reserves of £40.895m, Revenue Grant Reserves of £3.842m and the General Fund Balance at £18.865m.

6.2 This is an improved position from the start of the previous financial year, with an overall increase in reserves of 17%, which was a positive start in replenishing the Council's reserves and strengthening the financial resilience of the authority. With most other authorities across the country decreasing their reserves positions by the close of the 2025/26 financial year, this change in trajectory is welcomed.

6.3 Reserves and Balances are a key element of the Council's financial resilience and it is important that their use is kept to an absolute minimum, and that balances are increased in line with the Council's approved Medium Term Financial Strategy and Reserves Policy.

6.4 As at the end of the Quarter 2 reporting period, there have been a number of directorate requests to utilise Earmarked Reserves alongside some transfers to Revenue Grant Reserves. In line with the approved reserves policy, there is also a of one-off returns to Earmarked Reserves. The requests are as follows:

Table 6 – 2026/27 Reserve Requests as at Quarter 2

Directorate	Type of Reserve	Transfer (to) / from	Reserve	Requests as at Quarter 2 £
Place	Earmarked Reserve	Transfer from	District Partnerships	39,235.43
Place	Earmarked Reserve	Transfer from	Creating a Better Place	194,400.00
Place	Earmarked Reserve	Transfer from	Health and Social Care Integration - Saddleworth Health Centre	250,000.00
Children's Services	Earmarked Reserve	Transfer from	Child Sexual Exploitation	160,000.00
Capital & Treasury	Earmarked Reserve	Transfer to	Fiscal Mitigation - One-off returns	(2,990,258.97)
			Total Net Earmarked Reserve Requests	**(2,346,623.54)**

Directorate	Type of Reserve	Transfer (to) / from	Reserve	Requests as at Quarter 2 £
Place	Revenue Grant Reserve	Transfer to	Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)	(386,170.04)
Place	Revenue Grant Reserve	Transfer to	Home Office Full Dispersal Grant	(135,740.57)
			Total Net Revenue Grant Reserve Requests	**(521,910.61)**

6.5 After the above projected transfers to / from reserves have been actioned, the forecast balance of general usable revenue reserves will be £66.470m, with a summary included in the table below:

Table 7 – Summary of projected general usable revenue reserves at the end of 2026/27

Reserve	Opening Balance £000	Requests as at Quarter 2 £000	Projected Closing Balance £000
Earmarked Reserves	(40,895)	(2,347)	**(43,242)**
Revenue Grant Reserve	(3,842)	(522)	**(4,363)**
General Fund Balance	(18,865)	0	**(18,865)**
Total	**(63,602)**	**(2,869)**	**(66,470)**

6.6 It should be noted that whilst there are a number of management actions being implemented to address the projected in year deficits, the delivery of all budget reductions, to the extent that mitigations do not cover the deficit, there would need to be a call on reserves. As detailed earlier within this report, the Council has a specified risk reserve that is available to support the authority to balance the budget if it remains at an adverse position by the close of the 2026/27 financial year. This will be monitored and updated throughout the financial year.

7 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

7.1 The in-year position in relation to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) remains as reported at Quarter 1 with a forecast deficit of £20.353m driven by a predicted overspend of £20.206m within the High Needs Block. A DSG deficit of £6.949m was carried forward from 2025/26 into 2026/27.

7.2 The Department for Education has confirmed acceptance of the Council's SEND Reform Plan and with it £6.254m of High Needs Sustainability Grant. As such the previously reported 2026/27 cumulative deficit reduces to £21.048m accordingly. The table below shows the impact of the Grant on an otherwise unchanged position. The grant, essentially a 90% reimbursement of the agreed annual deficit will apply through to 31 March 2028,

which is when the statutory override currently in place, ends. It is uncertain whether future grant payments will be received in each of the two financial years or in a single payment at the end of the remaining two-year period. Further updates on this will be included within future reports.

Table 8 – Projected DSG balance 2026/27

	DSG Income £m	Forecast Expenditure £m	Estimated Outturn £m
Deficit Brought Forward from 2025/26			**(6,949)**
2026/27 Forecast			
Schools Block	288,363	288,510	(147)
Central School Services Block (CSSB)	2,522	2,522	0
Early Years Block	47,611	47,611	0
High Needs Block	71,991	92,197	(20,206)
In Year Movement	410,487	430,840	(20,353)
Cumulative Deficit (Pre Grant)	**410,487**	**430,840**	**(27,302)**
High Needs Sustainability Grant (relating to 2025/26 deficit)			6,254
Estimated Deficit Carried forward 2026/27			**(21,048)**

8 Housing Revenue Account Budget & Forecast (2026/27)

Table 9 – Housing Revenue Account - Quarter 2

	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Spend as at Q2	Forecast Outturn	Variance From Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Income					
Dwelling Rents	(10,571)	(10,571)	(4,568)	(11,030)	(459)
Service Charges & Other Income	(1,503)	(1,503)	(661)	(1,521)	(19)
PFI Credits	(18,799)	(18,799)	(4,700)	(18,799)	0
Interest on Balances	(200)	(200)	0	(300)	(100)
Total Revenue Income	**(31,073)**	**(31,073)**	**(9,929)**	**(31,650)**	**(578)**
Expenditure					
Repairs & Maintenance	51	51	54	88	37
Utilities	778	778	281	822	44
Rents & Rates	116	116	3	82	(34)
RCCO	1	1	0	0	(1)
PFI Management Costs inc MRP	27,603	27,603	12,368	27,953	350
Other Supervision & Management	989	989	465	934	(55)
Central Overheads	904	904	425	854	(51)
Other Miscellaneous	777	777	355	867	90
Depreciation	307	307	0	307	0
Adjustments to the Loss Allowance	136	136	0	19	(117)
Total Revenue Expenditure	**31,661**	**31,661**	**13,952**	**31,925**	**264**
Total HRA (Surplus)/Deficit	**589**	**589**	**4,023**	**275**	**(314)**

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

8.1 The HRA for 2025/26 produced a deficit of £2.665m which was transferred from the HRA Reserve at year end. The main reason for such a significant variance was PFI Management Costs. These were reported as lower than expected due to a change in the accounting treatment. Effectively, this has resulted in additional monies being transferred to the reserve, and this will be required to pay off associated debt in future years.

8.2 The latest HRA forecast for 2026/27 shows a required drawdown of £0.275m from the HRA reserve, compared to a budgeted drawdown of £0.589m. The main areas where the forecasts vary from budget are as follows:

- Income (Rents and Service Charges) – income £0.459m higher than budgeted as forecast void levels have been reduced significantly

- Adjustments to the Loss Allowance – £0.117m - current forecasts show that the required bad debt provision will be less than previously anticipated
- Other Supervision & Management - £0.106m – mainly staffing savings
- Interest on Balances – £0.100m additional income

8.3 These are offset by:

- PFI Management Costs - £0.350m adverse variance forecast. This is circa 1.2% greater than budget and is due largely to higher inflation costs
- Other Miscellaneous – Overspend of £0.090, compared to budget – several areas of spend but mainly aids and appliances, and professional fees relating to the PFI 2 contract.

HRA Capital Programme

8.4 There was no capital expenditure during 2025/26, and it is anticipated that this will remain the case during 2026/27. Capital expenditure consists of:

- works to properties outside of the PFI agreements
- works to PFI properties that are outside the scope of the PFI agreement.

HRA Reserves Position

8.5 Reserves at the start of 2026/27 stood at £21.782m, and the forecast balance would see this reduce to £21.507m.

8.6 The level of reserves is required to meet future commitments in the Housing Revenue Account, and to ensure that the PFI schemes can be funded as the corresponding Government credits do not increase to take account of inflationary pressures.

8.7 In addition, a change in the way that interest repayment on the two PFI schemes is accounted for has resulted in £4.726m of the current reserves being specifically earmarked for repayment of interest after the PFI contracts have ended.

Table 6 – Housing Revenue Account Forecast Reserves position – Quarter 2

HRA Reserve	£000
Balance brought forward from 2025/26	(21,782)
Forecast Transfer from HRA 2026/27	275
Forecast Balance at 2026/27 Year End	(21,507)

9 Summary

9.1 The current projected position as at the end of Quarter 2, shows a potentially adverse position by the end of the financial year. Whilst this an unfavourable position, this is significantly reduced from those positions reported at this stage in previous financial years and to the position reported as at the end of Quarter 1.

9.2 Actions have been taken by the Executive Team and services to address this position with work continuing across the whole organisation to reduce the deficit wherever possible. To ensure that the authority continues to improve its financial resilience and increase revenue reserves, it is important that this position continues to be addressed as a priority and must be reduced by year end to limit the impact it has on the financial sustainability of the Council.

9.3 97% of savings have either been delivered or are on track to deliver by the financial year end, with 3% having a potential to deliver after targeted intervention. This is a positive move in the delivery of savings with achievability being around 80% over the last couple of years. Any non-achievement of savings not only impacts the current year position but has implications on future years budgets so it continues to be important that every budget reduction is achieved in full. Budget Reductions will continue to be closely monitored through the Transformation and Executive Improvement meetings.

9.4 The increasing need for use of the Council's services from residents and businesses, the complexity of the support needed, and inflationary costs continue to put pressure on service budgets and is demonstrated by this forecast outturn position. The Council has added significant growth across these pressured areas as detailed within this report, however the needs of our residents for statutory services continues to be high.

9.5 The forecast position for the DSG is also an area of concern for the Council. The Government have now confirmed additional funding of 90% of the DSG deficit at the close of the 2025/26 financial year, which for Oldham equates to £6.254m. As can be seen within this report, there is however a projected increase in the in year DSG deficit to a cumulated total position at the end of the financial year of £21.048m (including the High Needs Stability Grant funding). Whilst the DSG deficit is currently held within the Council's unusable reserves in line with the statutory override guidance from Government, this is due to end at the end of March 2028. When this ends, any deficit balance held will offset the Council's general revenue usable reserves and as such, impact the authority's financial resilience. Considerable work is being undertaken in this area, and further updates on how this work has impacted the financial position will be included in future revenue monitoring reports.

9.6 In summary, whilst the Council is currently reporting an adverse variance, work continues across the organisation as a whole to mitigate this wherever possible ensuring that the Council continues to increase its reserves in line with its approved strategy.

APPENDIX 1 – 2026/27 Directorate Summary Financial Positions at 30 September 2026

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE AREA	Qtr 2 Annual Budget £000	Qtr 2 Annual Forecast £000	Annual Forecast Variance £000
Adult Social Care	Commissioning	15,837	15,956	119
	Community Business Services	982	831	(151)
	Clusters	3,696	3,646	(50)
	Community Health & Social Care	37,993	38,293	299
	Director Adult Social Care	1,099	1,101	2
	Learning Disability	23,381	25,289	1,909
	Mental Health	14,788	13,580	(1,208)
	Clusters	283	285	2
	Safeguarding	585	528	(57)
Adult Social Care Total		**98,645**	**99,509**	**865**
Children's Services	Children in Care	60,320	61,808	1,488
	Childrens Safeguarding	3,327	3,176	(151)
	Fieldwork & Family Support	10,959	11,125	166
	Children's Services Intergration	6,009	5,670	(339)
	Early Help	5,045	4,788	(256)
	Central Education Services	1,586	1,586	0
	Inclusion Service	(238)	(238)	(0)
	Learning Services	1,973	1,974	1
	Learning Services - Early Years	(482)	(482)	(0)
	School Support Services	77	(4)	(81)
	SEND Services	7,367	7,367	0
Children's Services Total		**95,944**	**96,770**	**826**
Public Health	Public Health (Client and Delivery)	21,825	21,806	(19)
	Leisure Services	2,673	2,673	0
Public Health Total		**24,498**	**24,479**	**(19)**
Place	Building Control	71	324	253
	Strategic Planning	18,376	18,323	(53)
	Development Control	16	196	181
	Housing Delivery	67	182	114
	Facilities Management	(27)	133	160
	Corporate Estates	3,027	3,072	45
	Property Services	(1,531)	(1,808)	(277)
	Town Centre	3,303	3,847	544
	Creating a Better Place	(28)	28	55
	Community / Adult Learning	301	301	0
	Skills and Employment	84	84	0
	Structures	123	123	0
	Operations	1,103	1,094	(10)
	Traffic Management & Maintenance	1,790	1,632	(158)
	Parking Admin & Enforcement	(1,175)	(1,220)	(45)
	Health & Safety	276	237	(39)
	Environmental Health	1,120	1,138	17
	Licensing & Trading Standards	(31)	(59)	(28)
	First Response	(109)	243	352
	Street Lighting	4,453	4,096	(357)
	Waste & Cleansing	25,944	26,952	1,008
	Parks / Ground Maintenance	4,857	4,827	(30)
	Arboriculture	542	540	(1)
	Emergency Planning	130	119	(11)
	Fleet	(400)	(400)	0
	Community Safety & Cohesion	220	178	(42)
	Culture	6,273	6,232	(41)
	Youth Services	1,018	974	(44)
	Housing Needs	7,943	7,080	(863)
	Connected Communities	15	1	(14)
Place Total		**77,751**	**78,469**	**717**

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE AREA	Qtr 2 Annual Budget £000	Qtr 2 Annual Forecast £000	Annual Forecast Variance £000
Resources	Partnership Support (Borough and GM)	1,795	1,795	0
	Strategic Customer Service	119	119	0
	Chief Executive Management	2,236	2,150	(86)
	Communications and Research	775	736	(39)
	Commissioning and Procurement	636	813	177
	External Funding	(27)	(27)	0
	Finance	2,906	2,758	(148)
	Housing Benefit Payments	773	773	0
	Revenues and Benefits	3,527	3,151	(375)
	Transformation and Reform	260	121	(139)
	Risk & Insurance	1,807	1,807	0
	HR Strategy	2,747	2,686	(61)
	Organisational Development	356	356	0
	Audit	922	919	(4)
	Legal	2,523	2,523	(0)
	Governance	4,044	3,936	(108)
	Risk & Insurance	167	144	(23)
	Registrars	(52)	(85)	(33)
	Financial Inclusion	(210)	(210)	0
	Crisis and Resilience Fund	5,320	5,320	0
	Customer Operations	2,179	2,179	0
	Customer Services	17	17	0
	ICT	8,385	8,028	(357)
Resources Total		**41,205**	**40,011**	**(1,195)**
Capital Treasury and Technical Accounting	Corporate Expenses	22,503	22,023	(481)
	Interest and Investment Expenditure and Income	8,962	9,129	168
	Corporate and Democratic Core	0	0	0
	Parish Precepts	424	424	0
Capital Treasury and Technical Accounting Total		**31,889**	**31,576**	**(313)**
Grand Total		**369,933**	**370,814**	**880**
	Collection Fund Deficit			2,742
Total Variance at Qtr 2				**3,622**

Budget Savings Report (2026-27)

Appendix 2

Ref	Name	Approved Budget Reduction (£000)	Approved FTE Reduction	Senior Acct Officer	Service Summary Update	Current DELIVERY RAG (September)	Previous DELIVERY RAG (August)	Finance Update	Current FINANCIAL RAG (September)	Previous FINANCIAL RAG (August)	Annual Budget Reduction Forecast (£000)
ADULT SOCIAL CARE											
ASC-BR26-026	ASC Service Redesign of specialist provision	(185)	4	Jayne Ratcliffe	Vacant posts have been identified and disestablished. The full savings target has been achieved.	Achieved	Achieved	Vacant posts deleted, budget realigned and saving achieved in M1	Achieved	Achieved	(185)
ASC-BR26-024	MioCare Management Fee Reduction	(475)	0	Jayne Ratcliffe	From an ASC perspective, the savings target has been achieved. We will continue to work closely with MioCare to ensure financial performance remains aligned with budget.	Achieved	Achieved	Management Fee reduced accordingly, saving achieved in M1. The MioCare budget will be closely monitored, with quarterly updates provided to the FD.	Achieved	Achieved	(475)
ASC-BR26-035	Introduction of an Oldham Living Wage for Care Workers	(2,456)	0	Jayne Ratcliffe	Rates were consulted on and agreed with providers prior to April 2026. The revised rates were implemented accordingly and updated within the data management system. Commissioners will continue to monitor the impact across the sector through established contract management arrangements.	Achieved	Achieved	Relevant fee uplifts have been agreed and applied within the approved financial envelope. The savings target was achieved from M1.	Achieved	Achieved	(2,456)

Ref	Name	Approved Budget Reduction (£000)	Approved FTE Reduction	Senior Acct Officer	Service Summary Update	Current DELIVERY RAG (September)	Previous DELIVERY RAG (August)	Finance Update	Current FINANCIAL RAG (September)	Previous FINANCIAL RAG (August)	Annual Budget Reduction Forecast (£000)
CHILDREN'S SERVICES											
CYP-BR26-030	Remodel Children's Social Care Senior Management	(83)	1	Anthony Decrop	The post has been deleted in the staffing establishment and the service is overseen through existing management arrangements	Achieved	Achieved	The post has been deleted in the staffing establishment and is therefore achieved in full from the start of 2026-27 financial year.	Achieved	Achieved	(83)
PLACE											
PLC-BR26-038	Place – Top Tier Directorate Restructure	(1,511)	13	Emma Barton	Summary update	On Track	On Track	Within the ongoing budget work are a few restructures that are pending final approval and implementation. Housing, Planning, Transport and Housing Delivery are still to be agreed. The Waste service have identified vacant posts within the service and disestablished these posts to achieve the saving. The budget reduction will continue to be closely monitored.	On Track	On Track	(1,511)

Ref	Name	Approved Budget Reduction (£000)	Approved FTE Reduction	Senior Acct Officer	Service Summary Update	Current DELIVERY RAG (September)	Previous DELIVERY RAG (August)	Finance Update	Current FINANCIAL RAG (September)	Previous FINANCIAL RAG (August)	Annual Budget Reduction Forecast (£000)
PLC-BR26-032	Housing Options – Savings and Mitigations	(1,000)	0	Neil Consterdine	The one-off saving of £1million has now essentially been met. TA Placement figures are on trajectory to meet our target for the end of March 2027, with the number of households in TA now at the lowest since June 2023 The Procurement for our new TA provider framework has been completed, and new providers are now bringing on stock. This (along with the reduction in TA numbers) is giving us more choice in where we place households, helping us to drive better value and increase quality.	On Track	On Track	Invoicing delays from the external providers mean that the full financial impact is not fully been reflected and fully identified at quarter 1. However, current known activity continues to indicate a reduction in TA placements. At this stage at quarter 1, it is difficult to determine the extent to which any savings may be offset by increases in unit costs, but this will be closely monitored. From current data the saving is rated as green and on track with further an update as part of the next budget monitoring report. The Service is continuing to utilise external grants effectively to ensure the outcomes for each grant are achieved yet allows the Council to utilise its own core funding differently generating allowing the achievement of agreed Budget reductions and to identify ongoing revenue savings.	On Track	On Track	(1,000)

Ref	Name	Approved Budget Reduction (£000)	Approved FTE Reduction	Senior Acct Officer	Service Summary Update	Current DELIVERY RAG (September)	Previous DELIVERY RAG (August)	Finance Update	Current FINANCIAL RAG (September)	Previous FINANCIAL RAG (August)	Annual Budget Reduction Forecast (£000)
PLC-BR26-043	Reduction of Grant Awards	(100)	0	Neil Consterdine	Budget reduction achieved and Grant contribution to Mahdlo reduced accordingly. Communicated and confirmed with Mahdlo and new agreement and payment Schedule in place.	Achieved	Achieved	Complete	Achieved	Achieved	(100)
PLC-BR26-040	Waste, Greenspace and Cleansing Re-Prioritisation	(350)	0	Nasir Dad	The majority of these Budget options are expected to be achieved.	Off Track (mitigations)	Off Track (mitigations)	There is a shortfall of £25k against the original £150k budget saving expected from the bringing in-house of the Bulky Bobs service. As the transfer is now due to take place from August 1st, there have been some reductions due to this delay. There is a shortfall of £10k against the security saving option, originally anticipated as being £50k. This is due to a delay in implementation to June 1st. The service continue to look at mitigations to help bridge these shortfalls.	Off Track (mitigations)	Off Track (mitigations)	(315)

Ref	Name	Approved Budget Reduction (£000)	Approved FTE Reduction	Senior Acct Officer	Service Summary Update	Current DELIVERY RAG (September)	Previous DELIVERY RAG (August)	Finance Update	Current FINANCIAL RAG (September)	Previous FINANCIAL RAG (August)	Annual Budget Reduction Forecast (£000)
PLC-BR26-039	Highways – Programme Reprioritisation	(436)	0	Nasir Dad	The Capital reports have been approved on the 15.06.26, which includes the £2m funding. Within this report, the balancing of more reactive maintenance to preventive, is one element that has been approved and this will go towards achieving this budget option. A further £5.258m has been awarded, that could potentially contribute towards reactive maintenance this year.	On Track	On Track	This is expected to be fully achievable, with the focus mainly on the capitalisation on staffing. A review will be undertaken with the Service.	On Track	On Track	(436)
PRE-APPROVED - PLACE											
PEG-BR01-317	Parking Contract Review	(250)		Emma Barton	Budget option of £250k forecasted as fully achievable. Restructure pending.	On Track	- - n/a - -	Service currently £45k favourable at Month 6. This budget option is expected to fully achieved.	On Track	- - n/a - -	(250)
PEG-BR01-400	Asset Rationalisation (CaBP)	(510)	1	Emma Barton	Complete	Achieved	- - n/a - -	The saving is to be found from asset rationalisation and increased letting income.	Achieved	- - n/a - -	(510)

Ref	Name	Approved Budget Reduction (£000)	Approved FTE Reduction	Senior Acct Officer	Service Summary Update	Current DELIVERY RAG (September)	Previous DELIVERY RAG (August)	Finance Update	Current FINANCIAL RAG (September)	Previous FINANCIAL RAG (August)	Annual Budget Reduction Forecast (£000)
PUBLIC HEALTH											
PHL-BR26-029	Impact of Agency Model: Oldham Community Leisure	(336)	0	Rebecca Fletcher	Browne Jacobson (external legal support) have now provided us with all the documents associated with the deed of variation after some delay. They are now being revised with internal finance colleagues, and internal working group meeting has been scheduled to move the work forward after finance have reviewed the docs. Aiming to complete as soon as possible and aiming for a 1st November go live date.	Off Track (mitigations)	Off Track (mitigations)	The £336k budget reduction reflects the full-year savings anticipated from the implementation of the Agency Model for the delivery of the Council's leisure services. The model is now expected to go live on 1 November 2026, resulting in only five months of savings being realised in 2026/27. The service area will mitigate this reduction elsewhere within the directorate.	Off Track (mitigations)	Off Track (mitigations)	(140)
RESOURCES											
RES-BR26-004	Financial Services – Cash Expenses	(20)	0	Lee Walsh	Complete	Achieved	Achieved	Complete	Achieved	Achieved	(20)
RES-BR26-001	Increase in expected Revenues and Benefits Income	(350)	0	Lee Walsh	Complete	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved in full.	Achieved	On Track	(350)
RES-BR26-002	Financial Services – Annual Leave Purchase Scheme	(36)		Lee Walsh	Annual Leave Purchase requests for 2026/27 have been processed with deductions being made via payroll from April 2026.	On Track	On Track	Based upon the number of Annual Leave Purchase Scheme requests processed to date, this agreed budget reduction is projected to achieve in full	On Track	On Track	(36)

Ref	Name	Approved Budget Reduction (£000)	Approved FTE Reduction	Senior Acct Officer	Service Summary Update	Current DELIVERY RAG (September)	Previous DELIVERY RAG (August)	Finance Update	Current FINANCIAL RAG (September)	Previous FINANCIAL RAG (August)	Annual Budget Reduction Forecast (£000)
RES-BR26-003	Financial Services – Additional income from Dividends	(300)	0	Lee Walsh	Achieved in full	Achieved	On Track	Achieved in full	Achieved	On Track	(300)
RES-BR26-042	Procure Partnerships Framework Income	(317)	0	Lee Walsh	Budget reduction has been achieved in full	Achieved	Achieved	Budget reduction has been achieved in full	Achieved	Achieved	(317)
RESOURCES / PLACE											
RES-BR26-034	Essential Car User Review / Fleet Hire Reduction	(150)	0	Nasir Dad	Review and realignment of the fleet hire usage across all Council services, is fully on track and anticipated to be achieved by year end.	On Track	- - n/a - -	The budget saving is on target to be achieved by year end. The fleet costs associated with this approved proposal is across several service areas and will continue to be monitored across the reminder of the financial year.	On Track	On Track	(150)
TRANSFORMATION											
CYP-TR26-002	Transformation Programme - Children's	(100)	1	Anthony Decrop	The budget reduction has been achieved by the review of residential placements for the most complex young people who receive no Health funding. The cases were presented to the Complex Panel and funding was agreed.	Achieved	Achieved	The budget saving has been achieved in full in 2026/27 and this has been reflected in CSC financial position from quarter 1. The Health care funding is additional income.	Achieved	Achieved	(100)

Ref	Name	Approved Budget Reduction (£000)	Approved FTE Reduction	Senior Acct Officer	Service Summary Update	Current DELIVERY RAG (September)	Previous DELIVERY RAG (August)	Finance Update	Current FINANCIAL RAG (September)	Previous FINANCIAL RAG (August)	Annual Budget Reduction Forecast (£000)
ASC-TR26-001	ASC Transformation Programme	(1,900)	1	Mike Barker	The Achieving Better Outcomes & Values programme is undertaking targeted reviews of high-cost care arrangements to deliver both improved outcomes for residents and measurable reductions in care expenditure.	On Track	- - n/a - -	The remaining £1.093m is currently assessed as achievable by year-end; however, delivery will need to accelerate during the remainder of the year to ensure the full programme is achieved and the overall financial position is not adversely affected.	On Track	- - n/a - -	(1,900)
	TOTALS	**(10,865)**	**21**								**(10,634)**

ANNEX 2

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME
2026/27 MONITORING REPORT & 2026/27-2031 Capital Programme
Month 6 – September 2026

1 Background

1.1 The original capital programme for 2026/27 reflected the priorities outlined in the Capital Strategy as approved at Cabinet on 23 February 2026 and confirmed at the Council meeting on 4 March 2026.

1.2 The position at the end of Month 6 (September 2026) is highlighted in this report.

1.3 For the remainder of the financial year, the programme will continue to be monitored and revised to take account of any new developments and changes in the profile of planned expenditure.

2. Current Position

2.1 Table 1 below shows the capital programme for 2026/27 and a further four years to 2030/31, and reflects the priorities outlined in the Capital Strategy.

Table 1 – 2026/31 Capital Strategy

Directorate Budget	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000	Total £000
Community Health and Adult Social Care	6,495	3,870	-	-	-	**10,365**
Children's Services	9,657	6,481	2,209	10	-	**18,357**
Communities	125	-	-	-	-	**125**
Place	72,953	25,636	6,016	362	-	**104,967**
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	6,151	3,849	-	-	-	**10,000**
Resources/Information Technology	3,843	3,336	1,092	-	-	**8,271**
Capital, Treasury & Technical Accounting	3,240	4,973	3,100	5,600	-	**16,913**
Funding for Emerging Priorities	-	902	2,506	-	1,592	**5,000**
Total Expenditure	**102,464**	**49,047**	**14,923**	**5,972**	**1,592**	**173,998**

Funding	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000	Total £000
Grant & Other Contributions	(62,664)	(32,547)	(5,349)	(256)	-	**(100,816)**
Prudential Borrowing	(33,039)	(13,600)	(6,974)	(3,116)	(1,592)	**(58,321)**
Revenue Contributions	(3,010)	-	-	-	-	**(3,010)**
Capital Receipts	(3,751)	(2,900)	(2,600)	(2,600)	-	**(11,851)**
Grand Total	**(102,464)**	**(49,047)**	**(14,923)**	**(5,972)**	**(1,592)**	**(173,998)**

New Funding

2.2 Since the last published Q1 report, the 2026-2031 5-year programme has increased by a total of £3.495m across all years in grants and contributions as detailed below:

Grant and Contribution	2026/27 (£000)	2027/28 (£000)	Total (£000)
DFG Private Contributions	9	-	**9**
Transport schemes	1,225	2,223	**3,448**
S106 monies re: M0905 Haven Lane	38	-	**38**
Total	**1,272**	**2,223**	**3,495**

Rephasing & Acceleration of Schemes

2.3 Since the last reported position, the capital programme has been updated to reflect the acceleration of £1.762m of expenditure within Place – Asset Management (£0.179m) and Highways (£1.583m) from future financial years into 2026/27 offset with the realignment of £0.021m between Place – Environment and People and Communities. The programme has also been increased to include £1.263m of new grants and contributions within Place – Highways, together with additional contributions of £0.009m within Community Health and Adult Social Care.

2.4 The revised capital programme for 2026/27 to 2030/31, considering all the above amendments in arriving at the revised forecast position, is shown in Table 2 together with the projected financing profile.

Table 2- 2026/27 Capital Programme changes

Directorate Budget	Capital Strategy 2026-31 £000	Revised Budget (M03) £000	Approved Virements (to M06) £000	Proposed Virements (to M06) £000	Revised Budget (M06) £000	Spend to M06 £000
Community Health and Adult Social Care	6,495	7,263	9	-	7,272	1,186
Children's Services	9,657	12,916	-	-	12,916	1,133
Communities	125	125	21	-	146	-
Heritage, Libraries and Arts	-	134	-	-	134	39
Place	72,953	73,776	3,004	-	76,780	19,605
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	6,151	6,189	-	-	6,189	217
Resources/Information Technology (IT)	3,843	3,632	-	-	3,632	2,127
Capital, Treasury & Technical Accounting	3,240	2,740	-	-	2,740	-
Funding for Emerging Priorities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**102,464**	**106,775**	**3,034**	**-**	**109,809**	**24,307**

2.5 Given that this is the position as at Month 6 and in view of the current challenges being faced including the pressure caused by the economic position, there must remain an element of uncertainty about the forecast position. A further breakdown of Table 3 on a service-by-service area basis is shown at Appendices A to I.

2.6 Actual expenditure to 30 September 2026 was £24.307m (22.14% of the proposed forecast outturn). This spending profile is marginally higher than last year's (21.25%). The position will be kept under review, and budgets will be managed in accordance with forecasts.

2.7 The revised capital programme for 2026/27 to 2030/31, considering all the above amendments in arriving at the revised forecast position, is shown in Table 3 together with the projected financing profile.

Table 3 – 2026/27 to 2030/31 Current Capital Programme

Directorate Budget	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000	TOTAL £000
Community Health and Adult Social Care	7,272	3,870	-	-	-	**11,142**
Children's Services	12,916	9,652	2,209	10	-	**24,786**
Communities	146	-	-	-	-	**146**
Heritage, Libraries and Arts	134	-	-	-	-	**134**
Place	76,780	26,453	6,775	107	-	**110,115**
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	6,189	3,849	-	-	-	**10,038**
Resources/Information Technology (IT)	3,632	2,878	1,092	502	-	**8,104**
Capital, Treasury & Technical Accounting	2,740	4,471	2,600	5,125	-	**14,936**
Funding for Emerging Priorities	-	902	2,506	-	1,592	**5,000**
Grand Total	**109,809**	**52,075**	**15,182**	**5,743**	**1,592**	**184,401**

Funding	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000	TOTAL £000
Grant & Other Contributions	(67,159)	(35,780)	(6,358)	-	-	**(109,298)**
Prudential Borrowing	(35,436)	(13,394)	(6,223)	(3,143)	(1,592)	**(59,789)**
Revenue Contributions	(3,050)	-	-	-	-	**(3,050)**
Capital Receipts	(4,164)	(2,900)	(2,600)	(2,600)	-	**(12,264)**
Grand Total	**(109,809)**	**(52,075)**	**(15,182)**	**(5,743)**	**(1,592)**	**(184,401)**

Capital Receipts

2.8 The capital programme requires the availability of £4.164m of capital receipts in 2026/27 for financing purposes. This includes £2.600m to support transformational activity in the General Fund using the flexibility allowed by Government.

The total net usable capital receipts currently received in year is £6.410m, the first call being the £2.600m outlined above.

2.9 The capital receipts position as at 30 September 2026 is as follows:

Table 4 – Capital Receipts 2026/27

	£000	£000
Capital Receipts Financing Requirement		4,164
Usable Capital Receipt b/fwd.	-	
Actual capital receipts received to date	(6,410)	
Identified in year capital receipts	(3,067)	
Anticipated surplus in 2026/27		**(5,313)**

2.10 As there is a small number of large value capital receipts needed to finance the capital programme in this and future years it is imperative that the capital receipts/disposal schedule is adhered to. Any changes to these schemes could create a pressure to this capital receipts forecast. This is monitored at the monthly Capital Receipts meeting and will be subject to on-going review throughout the year. It is of course recognised that the ongoing economic instability with high interest rates and the impact on borrowing costs, coupled with the increased cost of living will continue to impact on business/economic activities making capital disposals more challenging.

2.11 The Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2026/31 incorporates an expectation of the level of receipts that is anticipated in each of the respective years and therefore an estimate as to the resultant level of over or under programming in order to present a balanced budget. As can be seen below, the most recent review has produced a forecast which is below the financing projections included in Table 5. Should the currently estimated position prevail then the position would be as illustrated in the table below:

Table 5 – Capital Receipts 2026/27 to 2030/31

Capital Receipts	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000
Capital Receipts Carried Forward	-	(5,313)	(7,946)	(7,059)	(4,459)
Identified Capital Receipts	(3,067)	(5,533)	(1,713)	-	-
Received in year	(6,410)				
Total Receipts	(9,477)	(10,846)	(9,659)	(7,059)	(4,459)
Capital Receipts Financing Requirement	4,164	2,900	2,600	2,600	-
Over/(Under) programming	**(5,313)**	**(7,946)**	**(7,059)**	**(4,459)**	**(4,459)**

2.12 The capital receipts forecast is currently higher than the required amount, given that this is the month 6 position and there is the opportunity for the forecast to change, at this stage it is considered appropriate to retain the original forecast and review this during the course of the current year. The consequence should the level of capital receipts fall is either, a corresponding increase in the level of prudential borrowing and hence an impact on the revenue budget, or a reduction in the overall capital programme.

Annual Review of the Capital Programme

2.13 In accordance with previous practice, there is once again a review of the capital programme over the financial year (the Annual Review). This is examining any further opportunities to reallocate, decommission or reprofile resources. It will also include an in-depth analysis of capital receipts to support a revised forecast.

3 Conclusion

3.1 Whilst the current projected position is showing the outturn to match the budget, a detailed review of the capital programme (the Annual Review) is being undertaken to establish if there are any surplus resources that can be realigned or any further re-profiling required. It is therefore likely that there will be further rephasing across all years to reflect developments relating to individual projects/schemes.

3.2 The capital programme is being continually monitored and is reported on a regular basis.

4 Appendices

4.1 Appendix A - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Community Health and Adult Social Care
Appendix B - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Children's Services
Appendix C - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Communities
Appendix D - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Heritage, Libraries and Arts
Appendix E - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Place
Appendix F - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
Appendix G - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Resources/Information Technology
Appendix H - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Capital Treasury and Technical Accounting
Appendix I - SUMMARY – Month 6 - Funding for Emerging Priorities

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) - Community Health and Adult Social Care £000 **APPENDIX A**

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Adult Services	6,495	7,263	9	-	7,272	1,186
Community Health and Adult Social Care Total	**6,495**	**7,263**	**9**	**-**	**7,272**	**1.186**

(subject to rounding – tolerance +/- £1k)

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) – Children's Services £000 **APPENDIX B**

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Children, Young People and Families (CYPF)	742	1,079	-	-	1,079	146
Schools - General Provision	3,127	5,040	-	-	5,040	23
Schools – Primary	2,355	2,780	-	-	2,780	192
Schools – Secondary	1,593	1,990	-	-	1,991	73
Schools – Special	1,840	2,025	-	-	2,025	699
Schools – New Build	-	-	-	-	-	-
Childrens Services Total	**9,657**	**12,915**	**-**	**-**	**12,915**	**1,133**

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) – Communities £000 **APPENDIX C**

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Local Investment Fund	125	125	21	-	146	-
Communities Total	**125**	**125**	**21**	**-**	**146**	**-**

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) – Heritage, Libraries and Arts £000 **APPENDIX D**

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Heritage, Libraries and Arts	-	134	-	-	134	39
Heritage, Libraries and Arts Total	**-**	**134**	**-**	**-**	**134**	**39**

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) – Place £000 **APPENDIX E**

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Asset Management – Corporate Premises	2,817	4,432	-	-	4,432	352
Asset Management - Education Premises	1,529	1,532	179	-	1,711	504
Boroughwide Developments	17,363	9,891	-	-	9,891	4,992
Boroughwide District Projects	27	27	-	-	27	-
Cemeteries and Crematorium	1,493	1,488	-	-	1,488	-
Parks & Open Spaces	1,143	1,711	(21)	-	1,690	413
Private Housing	4,702	10,288	-	-	10,288	410
Strategic Acquisitions	1,147	1,631	6	-	1,637	32
Town Centre Developments	16,574	16,839	-	-	16,839	7,033
Accident Reduction	311	856	120	-	976	159
Bridges & Structures	9,120	9,206	395	-	9,601	1,529
Fleet Management	1,926	2,003	-	-	2,003	-
Highway Major Works/Drainage schemes	14,354	13,315	2,038	-	15,353	4,085
Minor Works	354	464	80	-	544	74
Miscellaneous	93	92	208	-	300	22
Place Total	**72,953**	**73,776**	**3,004**	**-**	**76,780**	**19,605**

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) - Housing Revenue Account (HRA) £000 **APPENDIX F**

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Housing Revenue Account	6,151	6,189	-	-	6,189	217
HRA Total	**6,151**	**6,189**	**-**	**-**	**6,189**	**217**

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) – Resources/Information Technology (IT) £000 **APPENDIX G**

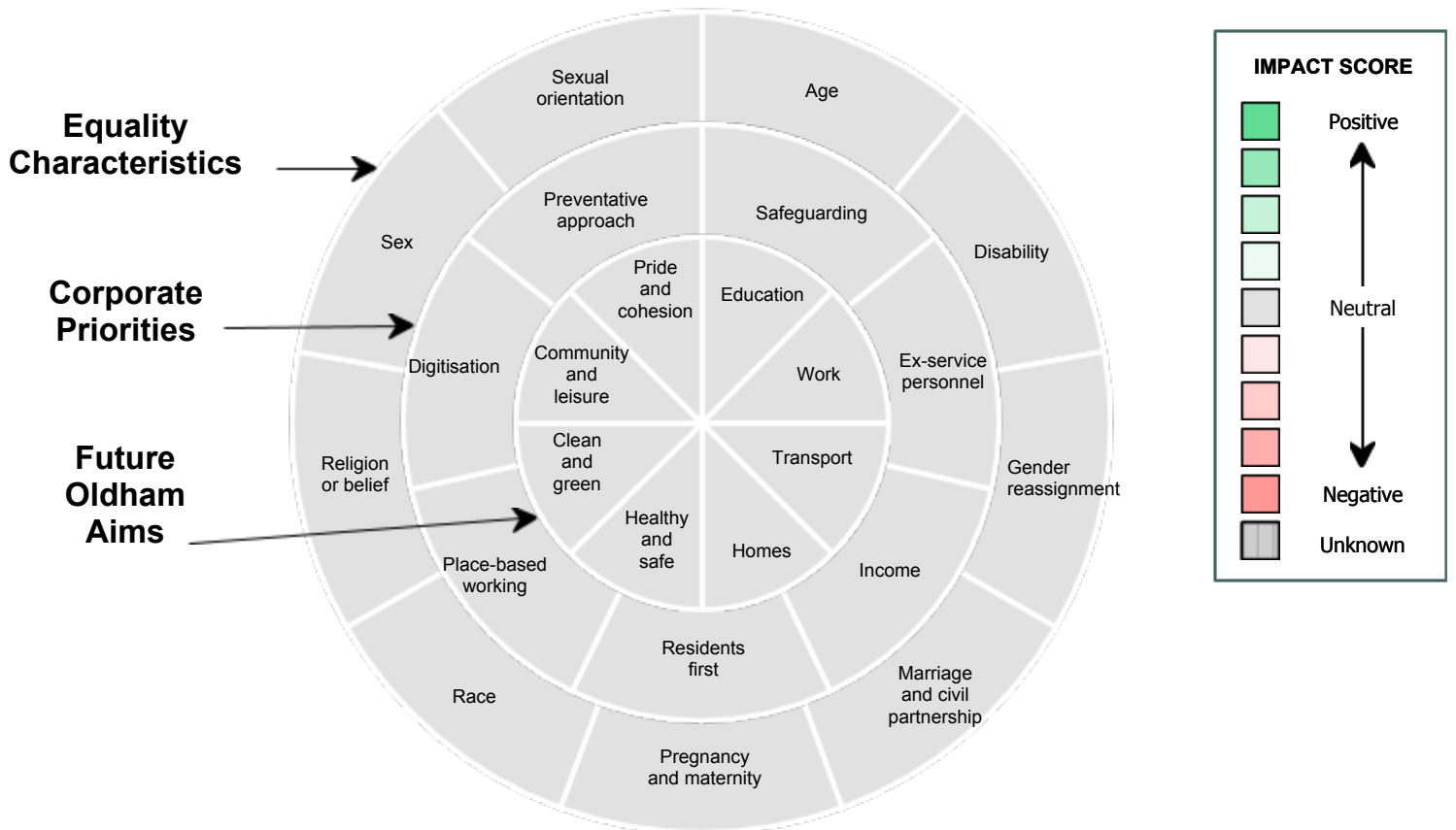
Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Information Technology	3,843	3,632	-	-	3,632	2,127
Information Technology Total	**3,843**	**3,632**	**-**	**-**	**3,632**	**2,127**

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) – Capital Treasury and Technical Accounting **APPENDIX H**

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Cross Cutting /Corporate	3,240	2,740	-		2,740	-
Capital Treasury and Technical Accounting Total	**3,240**	**2,740**	**-**	**-**	**2,740**	**-**

SUMMARY – Month 6 (September 2026) - Funding for Emerging Priorities **APPENDIX I**

Service area	Original Budget	Revised Budget (M03)	Approved Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Proposed Virements 2026/27 (to M06)	Revised Budget (M06)	Expend (to M06)
Funding for Emerging Priorities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Funding for Emerging Priorities Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**



Click to refresh Table

Annex 3- EIA: Financial Monitoring 26/27 (Qtr 2)

	Impact	Likelihood	Duration	Comment
Equality Characteristics				
Age	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	The report considers the 2026/27 financial position of the Council at Qtr 2 (30 September 2026) and as such, in isolation has no direct impact on Equality
Disability	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Gender reassignment	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Race	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Religion or belief	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Sex	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Sexual orientation	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Corporate Priorities				
Safeguarding	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	The report considers the 2026/27 financial position of the Council at Qtr 2 (30 September 2026) and as such, in isolation has no direct impact on Equality
Ex-service personnel	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Income	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Residents first	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Place-based working	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Digitisation	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Preventative approach	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Future Oldham Aims				
Education	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	The report considers the 2026/27 financial position of the Council at Qtr 2 (30 September 2026) and as such, in isolation has no direct impact on Equality
Work	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Transport	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Homes	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Healthy and safe	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Clean and green	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Community and leisure	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above
Pride and cohesion	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	As Above

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Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2027/28

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Revenues and Benefits
Directorate: Resources
Author: Mark Edmondson Assistant Director Revenues and Benefits.
Email: mark.edmondson@oldham.gov.uk
Date of Decision: 30.11.26

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 get approval for the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2027/28. This decision must also be approved by Full Council.

3. Reason for urgency

The Council is required to review its Council Tax Reduction scheme each year and have it approved by full council by 11th March each year. The review for 2027/28 found no operational, legislative, or financial factors requiring amendment, other than those to keep it in line with changes to Housing Benefit. Given the time required to design and consult on changes, it would not have been possible to implement any amendments for 2027/28, and a full review will be undertaken during 2027/28 to inform the 2028/29 scheme.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

Failure to approve a scheme for 2027/28 would result in the default scheme applying for 2027/28.

5. Financial impact if decision is not taken forward

It is estimated that failing to approve a scheme for 2027/28 and the default scheme applying would result in a reduction of circa £3.5m in Council Tax income.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh Director of Finance

Date 5th November 2026
Comments

The proposal to retain the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2027/28, subject to minor uprating and administrative amendments, has no additional financial implications for the Council. Retaining the current scheme avoids the costs and resource requirements associated with any changes, while continuing to provide financial support to eligible low-income households.

A wider review of the scheme will be undertaken during 2027/28 to inform future options and any potential changes for implementation from 2028/29.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef

Date 11 November 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

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2027/28

Officer Contact: Lee Walsh, Director of Finance

Report Author: Mark Edmondson, Assistant Director Revenues and Benefits

Email: mark.edmondson@oldham.gov.uk

30th November 2026

Reason for Decision

The reason for this decision is to get approval for the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2027/28. This decision must also be approved by Full Council.

Executive Summary

The Council is required to review its Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme each year and 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 has been provisionally advised that no change to the scheme is proposed. In this regard, the proposal is that the CTR scheme for 2027/28 remains 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 is required. The current CTR scheme provides a maximum reduction equivalent to 85% of the Council Tax charge for Band A property, and this has been unchanged since 2014/15.

The scheme continues to meet the needs of residents and remains in line with national regulations.

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

During 2027/28, officers will scope potential options for 2028/29 to assess whether any amendments to the scheme would provide value for money. This will 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.

Recommendations
It is recommended that the Chief Executive gives approval 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.

Pre-Decision Scrutiny **19th November 2026**
Leaders' Consultative Session **30th November 2026**

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2027/28

1 Background

1.1 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme was introduced in April 2013 when the Government replaced the national Council Tax Benefit system with locally determined schemes. At that time, Government funding for the new local schemes was reduced by around 10%.

1.2 Oldham Council developed its local scheme to operate within the reduced level of funding while continuing to provide appropriate support to residents on low incomes. Since then, the Council has maintained a local scheme that mirrors the principles of the former national scheme, with annual reviews to ensure it remains fair, affordable, and effective.

1.3 Funding for Council Tax Reduction is now included within the Council's overall financial settlement and is no longer provided as a separate grant. This means that any change to the local scheme must be funded from within existing Council resources.

1.4 Under national regulations, pension-age residents are protected through a prescribed scheme set by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Local discretion applies only to working-age residents. Oldham's scheme continues to mirror the national approach as far as possible, to maintain fairness, simplicity, and consistency of administration.

1.5 The legislation confers an obligation on the Council to consider whether to review the CTR scheme on an annual basis. The scheme cannot be amended in-year and can only be changed following consultation with the public and the major preceptor, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) on behalf of the Mayor of Greater Manchester and the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Council's key objectives for maintaining a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme remain:

- Supporting residents on low incomes.
- Providing work incentives where possible, and
- Maintaining high levels of Council Tax collection to protect essential local services.

When the local scheme was first introduced, it followed an extensive public consultation process. The current scheme design therefore reflects the principles agreed through that consultation and has been reviewed each year since its introduction.

Minor administrative changes have been made over time to reflect national welfare reforms, such as the rollout of Universal Credit and the annual uprating of applicable amounts and income disregards. However, the overall design and intent of the scheme have remained consistent since 2013/14.

Oldham also continues to disregard War Disablement Pensions, War Widows' Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Payments in full, as part of the Council's commitment to support veterans and their families.

2 Current Position

2.1 The Council currently has a CTR scheme that awards a maximum payment of 85% of a Band A rate of Council Tax and has removed the provision to award second adult rebate

for claimants of working age. From April 2019, the Council also introduced changes to support CTR claimants in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) including the application of some earnings disregards and the use of DWP information as a claim for CTR.

2.2 The Council has maintained the same maximum level of support for working age claimants at 85% since 2014/15. The minimum weekly payment has risen from £3.64 in 2019/20 to £4.98 in 2026/27, because of annual increases in Council Tax charges.

2.3 On 1 October 2026, there were 13,298 working age CTR claimants. Current projections for the annual collection rate for CTR cases due in 2026/27 suggest a collection rate of between 75-80%. Given the 5% collection rate range, this is potentially a lower CTR collection rate to that recovered in 2025/26 (76.87%) and 2024/25 (78.36%), although an 80% collection rate would compare well to both years.

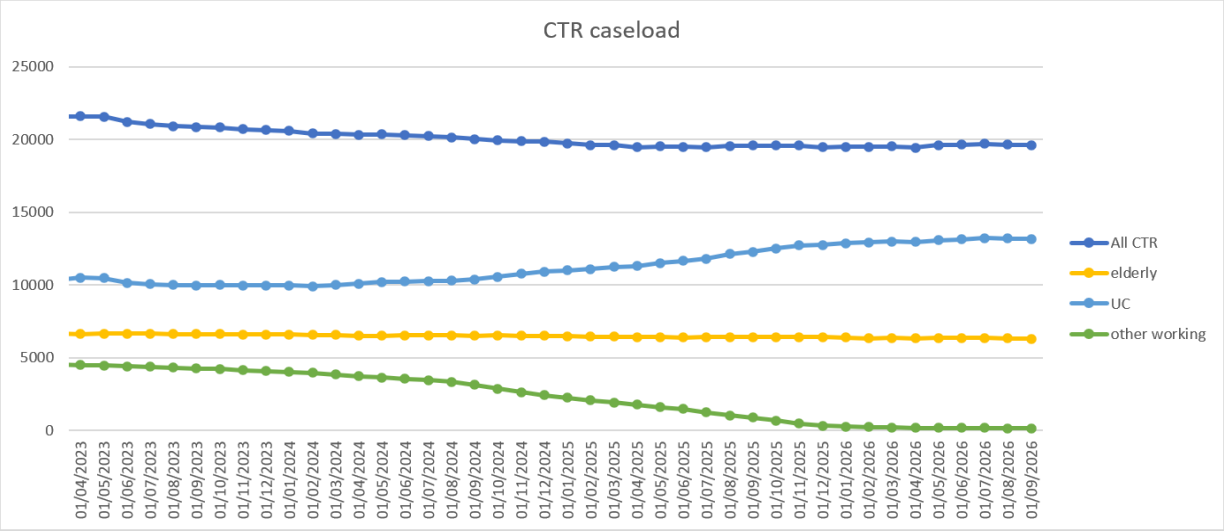
2.4 A reduced collection rate of 1% of CTR debt could result in a reduction of £55k in Council Tax receipts for 2027/28 and hence reduce the resources available to support the financial position of the Council in future years (it should be noted that changes in relation to Council Tax income impact one year in arrears given the accounting arrangements that must be applied).

2.5 The DWP has now completed the migration of all legacy welfare benefits to Universal Credit. This means that the Council would not be able to predict the impact and cost of an amended CTR scheme accurately for working age claimants for 2026/27.

2.6 In most cases, claimants in receipt of legacy welfare benefits receive a higher income than those residents in receipt of UC. This means that residents on legacy welfare benefits receive less support under the current CTR scheme.

2.7 As of 1 October 2026, the overall CTR caseload was 19,605. The caseload for those of pensionable age remains relatively static but Table 1 below demonstrates how CTR claims from those who are in receipt of UC are increasing as other working age CTR cases are reducing, for example, from those who are in receipt of HB. The management of UC/CTR creates an administrative burden for Local Authorities as data files are received each month confirming changes to entitlement, however small.

Table 1: CTR Caseload Changes



2.8 The existing scheme for 2026/27 has operated effectively, providing financial assistance to residents who need support with their Council Tax. There have been no national legislative changes affecting local schemes for 2027/28. As a result, there is no requirement to amend the local scheme, which remains compliant with all relevant regulations and guidance.

2.9 It is therefore proposed that the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme continues unchanged for 2027/28, covering the period from 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2028

.

2.10 The review for 2027/28 found no operational, legislative, or financial factors that require amendment to the current scheme. It continues to run effectively and remains consistent with national requirements. Given the cost and lead-in time of system development, it is more appropriate to maintain the current design while a wider review is scoped during 2027/28 to inform the 2028/29 scheme.

2.11 The Council continues to make awards to residents who are experiencing severe financial hardship under the Exceptional Hardship Payments (EHP) scheme and resources are available to support those who have difficulty in paying Council Tax.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 The Council is required to review its Council Tax Reduction scheme each year and determine whether any changes are needed. The review for 2027/28 found no operational, legislative, or financial factors requiring amendment. Given the time required to design and consult on changes, it would not have been possible to implement any amendments for 2027/28, and a full review will be undertaken during 2027/28 to inform the 2028/29 scheme.

3 Preferred Option

3.1 The preferred option is that the Chief Executive approves 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, and seeks approval from Full Council.

4 Consultation

4.1 Any changes to the 2027/28 scheme require prior consultation with the major preceptor, the GMCA, with regard to the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner precept and Mayoral General Services precept including Fire Services. There would also be a requirement to carry out public consultation.

4.2 No public consultation has been launched and should Council not accept the recommended approach and consider a change to the 2027/28 scheme was appropriate, then the timeline for such a consultation exercise would be extremely limited. The Council has provisionally notified GMCA of its intention not to amend the CTR scheme in 2027/28.

4.3 There is no requirement to undertake public consultation if the scheme is left unchanged.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 The proposal to retain the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2027/28, with only minor uprating and administrative amendments, has no additional financial implications. Retaining the current scheme avoids the costs associated with consultation, policy redesign and system changes whilst continuing to provide support to residents on low

incomes. A broader review of the scheme will be undertaken during 2027/28 to inform future options for implementation from 2028/29.

(Matthew Kearns, Finance Manager).

6 **Legal Implications**

6.1 The legislation states that each year an authority must consider whether to revise its Council Tax Reduction scheme.

6.2 The revision of a scheme is a decision that the legislation reserves to full Council. Any revision to apply to the scheme for the following year must be made no later than 10 March of the preceding financial year.

6.3 No revision of a scheme can occur unless the authority has, in the following order:

1. Consulted with the major precepting authority – The Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
2. Published a draft proposed scheme
3. Consulted with others likely to have an interest in the scheme.

6.4 In order to discharge its duties under the Equality Act 2010, the authority will need to consider the effects of proposals on people with a protected characteristic as defined by the Act, which can be done by way of an equality impact assessment.

6.5 In this circumstance, vulnerable residents and residents generally will benefit from the option proposed i.e., no change. It would therefore be unlikely that any legal challenge would ensue from not changing the policy.

Alan Evans, Group Solicitor (Environment)

7 **Procurement Implications**

7.1 None.

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

7.1 [All reports must include this heading. The reports when drafted should be emailed to the procurement team who will either provide comments to be included in the report or confirm that s/he has no comments in which case the word “none” should be typed in under the heading. When comments are inserted into your report include the name of the person in the Procurement Team at the end of the comments. Ditto the complexity issue mentioned above. Name not initial of person signing off]

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-26-50

11 **Appendices & Background Papers**

11.1 An Oldham Equality Impact Assessment is set out at Appendix 1.

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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Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2027-28

Portfolio

Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability

Directorate

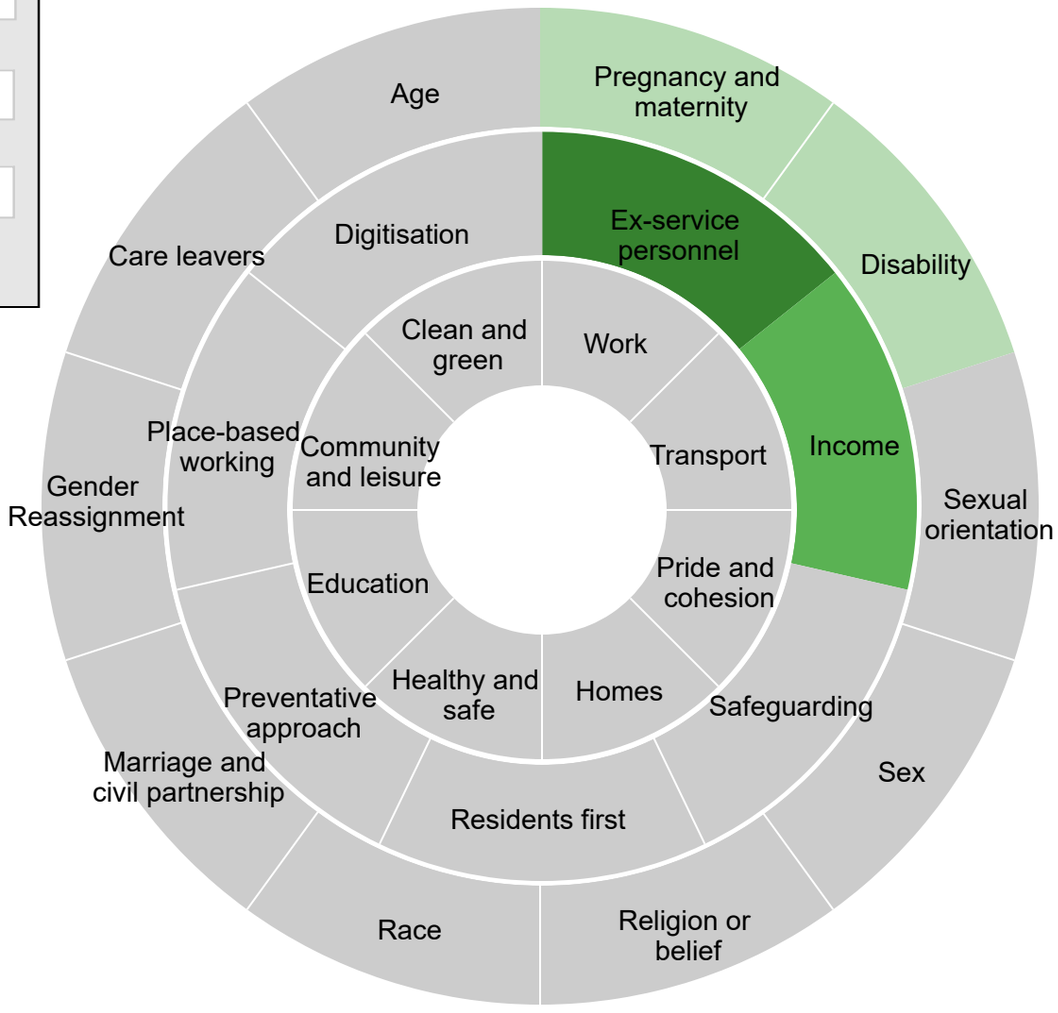
Finance

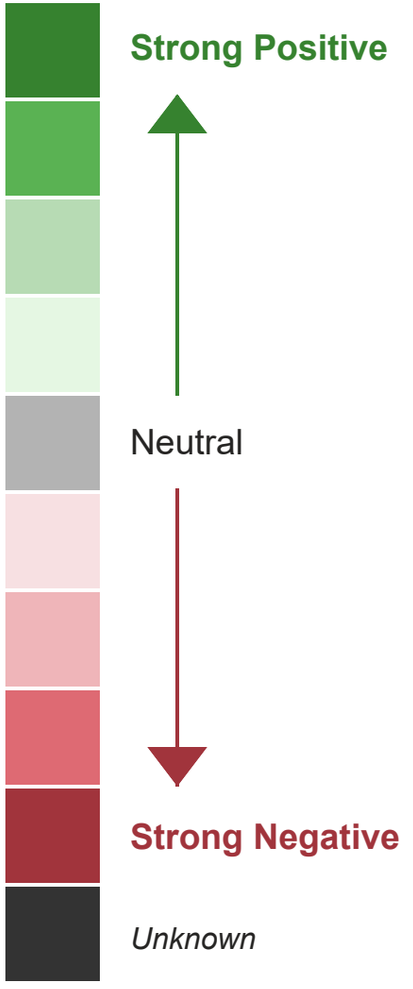
Service/Team

Finance

Is this IA related to a Budget Reduction proposal? No

completed/last updated by Mark Edmondson on 22/10/2026





Equality Characteristics

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Age	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Care leavers	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Race	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Religion or belief	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Sex	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Sexual orientation	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Disability	Moderate Positive	Very Likely	Short Term	2	Residents in receipt of disability premium will have an increased applicable amount (See income), and may be eligible for further Council Tax Reduction.
Pregnancy and maternity	Moderate Positive	Very Likely	Short Term	2	Residents whose household income drops below the applicable amount set by the Department for Works and Pensions may be entitled to Council Tax reduction.

Corporate Priorities

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Digitisation	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Place-based working	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Preventative approach	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Residents first	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Safeguarding	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Income	Moderate Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	4	The CTR Scheme provides financial support to residents who receive a range of benefits including Universal Credit. The amount awarded depends on how much a household's income is less than or equal to their Applicable Amount. The Applicable Amount is the amount of monthly income the government calculates that different categories of household need to live.
Ex-service personnel	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	Income relating to Armed Forces pensions will be disregarding for the purposes of calculating Council Tax reduction.

Future Oldham Aims

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Clean and green	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Community and leisure	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Education	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Healthy and safe	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Homes	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Pride and cohesion	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Transport	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Work	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	

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)

Emergency Powers Decision Report

Income Maximisation Action Plan Update

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Revenues and Benefits
Directorate: Resources
Author: Mark Edmondson Assistant Director Revenues and Benefits.
Email: mark.edmondson@oldham.gov.uk
Date of Decision: 30.11.26

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

Award contract for support with aged debt (Debt Assist) and review of Council Tax Single Person Discounts, as recommended in the report.

3. Reason for urgency

Additional income raised is vital to allow us to continue providing the essential services that we do.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

There will be a delay in implementation, meaning reduced income for the council.

5. Financial impact if decision is not taken forward

It is estimated that implementing the Debt Assist program and conducting a Council Tax Single Person Discount Review will result in significant additional income to the council as detailed in the report.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh Director of Finance
Date 5 November 2026
Comments

The proposal supports the Council's Income and Debt Management Action Plan and is expected to deliver a positive net financial benefit. The aged debt recovery work will be undertaken on a payment-by-results basis, with no upfront cost to the Council and fees only payable on income successfully recovered, limiting financial risk to the Council.

The review of Council Tax Single Person Discounts is estimated to cost £28k and has the potential to generate additional Council Tax income. Whilst the projected annual benefit remains indicative, the proposal represents a strong return on investment and supports the Council's income maximisation objectives.
The proposals represent a prudent investment, support the Council's income maximisation objectives and have the potential to deliver positive net financial benefit.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef

Date 10 November 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

Income and Debt Management Action Plan Update

Officer Contact: Lee Walsh, Director of Finance

Report Author: Mark Edmondson Assistant Director Revenues and Benefits

Email: mark.edmondson@oldham.gov.uk

30th November 2026

Reason for Decision

To seek approval to appoint Liberata to provide assistance in recovering aged debt and to undertake a review of our Council Tax Single Person Discounts.

Executive Summary

Approval was given for the Revenues and benefits service to look at appointing a 3rd party company to provide assistance with reviewing and recovery of aged debt. We have worked with colleagues in our procurement team and have identified Liberata as a suitable partner to undertake this work.

Recommendations

That the Chief Executive approves with appointment of Liberata to review our aged debt and Council Tax Single Person Discounts with the aim of increasing our Council Tax base and reducing the amount of aged debt held by the council.

Pre-Decision Scrutiny **19th November 2026**
Leaders' Consultative Session **30th November 2026**

Income and Debt Management Action Plan Update

1 Background

1.1 The resources available for Income and Debt Management were severely restricted during the period when the service was delivered by Unity Partnership Ltd. As a result, the focus was placed on in-year debt recovery, aiming to maximise income to the council within the constraints of the available resource.

1.2 The Council's Income & Debt Management Plan identified a range of improvement actions to strengthen debt recovery, promote consistency, and reduce arrears across all income streams.

Key actions include:

- Reviewing end-to-end recovery processes for Council Tax, Business Rates, Sundry Debt and Housing Benefit Overpayments.
- Cleansing historic debt and separating collectible from irrecoverable balances.
- Benchmarking recovery performance and adopting consistent write-off and escalation policies.
- Exploring third-party analytical and recovery support to increase collection efficiency.
- Building staff capability and reviewing resource requirements post-restructure.

2 Current Position

2.1 The abolition of Council Tax Benefit, in 2013/14, and its replacement with Local Council Tax Support, coupled with reduced funding from central government has resulted in debt levels increasing across most Local Authorities.

2.2 The Revenues and Benefits service was outsourced and performance metrics led to an emphasis on maximising income by focusing on current year's collection and the amounts identified for write off reduced significantly.

2.3 Council Tax arrears prior to 2026/27 currently total £54.75m, with £36m under 6 years old and £18.75m over 6 years old.

2.4 Oldham Council was one of the last local authorities to have in house bailiffs, and the service was only outsourced in 2024, which meant that collection rates were significantly lower than what we are now achieving.

2.5 Our policy not to refer Local Council Tax Support cases to bailiff's/enforcement agents has also contributed to our arrears being greater than similar GM authorities.

2.6 The Revenues and Benefits Service Restructure has now completed the consultation period and will be implemented shortly.

2.7 We have worked with procurement colleagues and identified a partner to provide assistance reviewing and recovering aged debts enabling Revenues staff to concentrate on collecting current year debt.

2.8 Liberata do this work on a results basis, with no upfront costs i.e., a fee of 20% applies to any income collected, payable on invoice after the funds have been cleared.

2.9 They engage with debtors and try to identify benefits that they may be entitled to and will recommend write off if there is no prospect of recovery.

2.10 We have also identified an opportunity to increase the Council Tax base, resulting in more income for the Council by using a 3rd party company to review our current Council Tax Single Person Discounts.

2.11 All the work is completed by Liberata, with minimal impact on Council staffing resources, meaning collection in year will not be impacted.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1 – Appoint Liberata, via a direct award using GCloud 15, to assist with reviewing our aged debt and Council tax Single Person Discount caseload, increasing income to the council.

3.2 Option 2 – Increase staffing capacity to enable us to carry out this work ourselves. NB this would not be the best use of those resources.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 1 – Appoint Liberata, via a direct award using GCloud 15, to assist with reviewing our aged debt and Council tax Single Person Discount caseload, increasing income to the council.

5 Consultation

5.1 Not applicable.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The proposal supports delivery of the Council's Income and Debt Management Action Plan through the appointment of Liberata to recover aged debt and undertake a review of Council Tax Single Person Discounts (SPD).

6.2 The aged debt recovery work will be delivered on a payment-by-results basis, with no upfront cost to the Council. Liberata will receive 20% of any debt successfully recovered, with the Council retaining the remaining 80%. This approach minimises financial risk, as costs will only be incurred where additional income is generated.

6.3 Liberata's initial assessment indicates that reducing Single Person Discounts from 35% to 31% could potentially generate additional Council Tax income of approximately £650,000 per annum. The review is estimated to cost £28,000, based on a charge of £19.95 per incorrect SPD removed. This represents a strong potential return on investment for the Council. The projected income benefit is indicative at this stage and will be validated once Liberata commences and completes the review.

6.4 Overall, the proposal is expected to increase income collection, deliver a positive net financial benefit, and support the Council's income maximisation objectives.
(Matthew Kearns – Finance Manager)

7 Legal Implications

7.1 It will be necessary to ensure that there is sufficient evidence to support the removal of any Single Person Discounts. (A Evans)

8. **Procurement Implications**

8.1 Commercial Procurement Unit recommends the use of the Central Government Agency (CGA) Framework (RM.1557.15) Lot 3, Cloud Support Services, an Open Framework established under the procurement Act 2023.

8.2 A search of the G-Cloud 15 framework was undertaken using criteria aligned to the Councils requirements, including the scope of services. The search exercise identified a single supplier capable of meeting the Councils specified requirements.

8.3 In accordance with the framework provisions, where a compliant search and selection process has been completed and only one supplier is identified as meeting the requirement, a direct award may be made. The procurement route therefore provides a complaint mechanism for the Council to award the Contract without further competition.

8.4 On this basis, approval is sought to award the Contract to Liberata UK Ltd, as the sole supplier identified through the framework search capable of meeting the Council's requirements. (Senga Henstock, ICT Senior Buyer)

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-26-51.

12 **Appendices & Background Papers**

12.1 EIA Appendix 1.

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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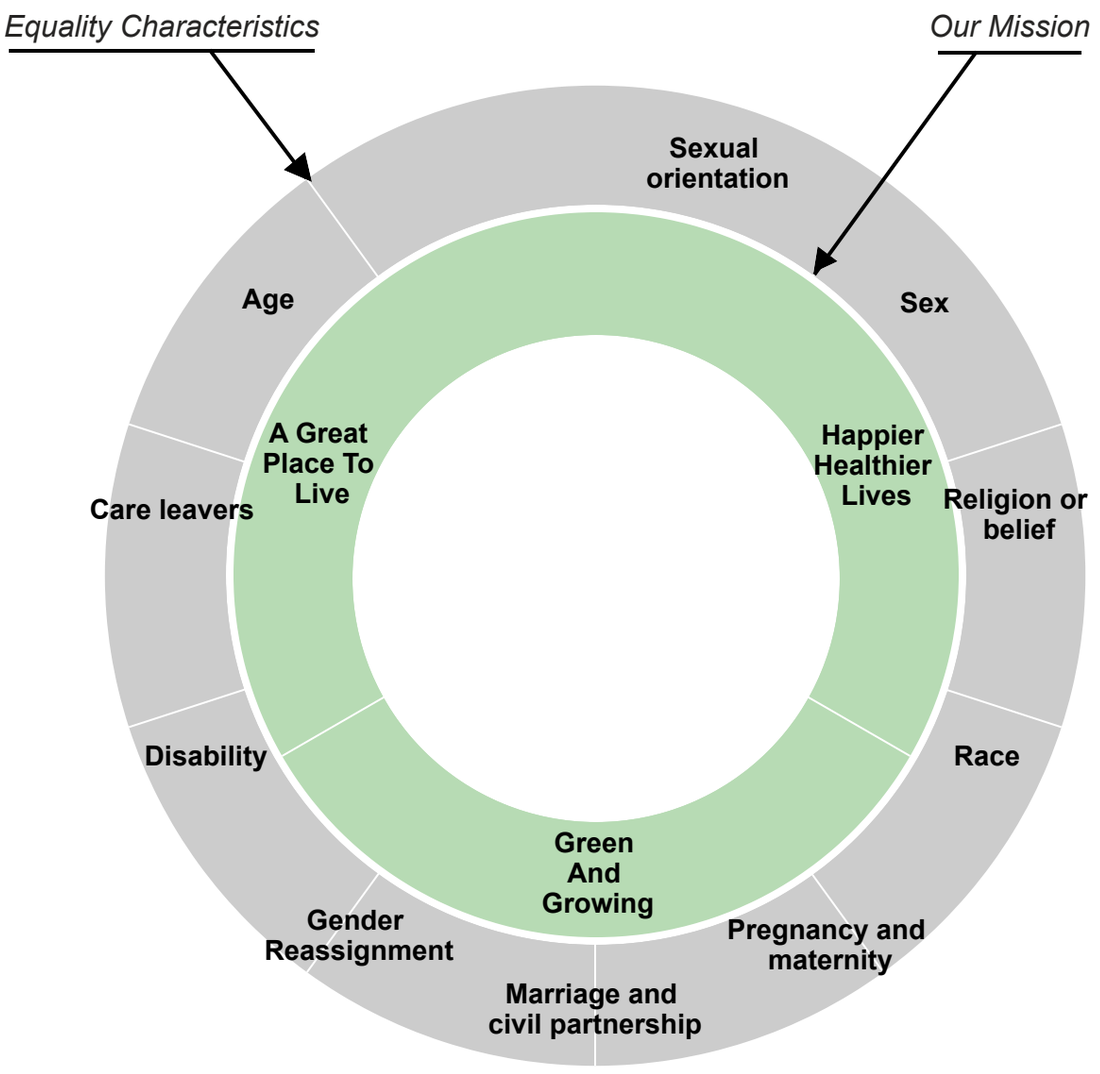
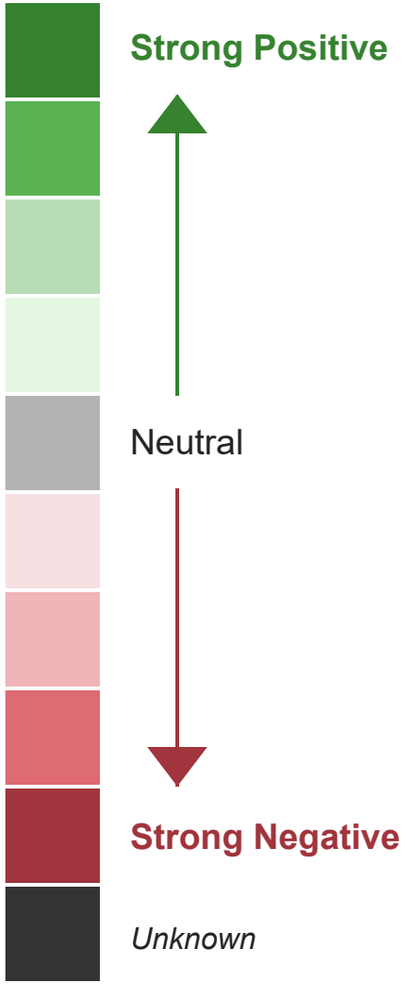
Income Maximisation Action Plan Update

completed/last updated by Mark Edmondson on 20/10/2026

Portfolio
Value for Money and Sustainability
Directorate
Resources
Service/Team
Finance
Is this IA related to a Budget Reduction proposal? **Yes**





Equality Characteristics

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Age	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Care leavers	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Disability	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	

Our Mission / Corporate Priorities

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
A Great Place To Live	Moderate Positive	Possible	Long Term	2	The Income Maximisation Action Plan Update will result in increased income to the Council to support all services.
Green And Growing	Moderate Positive	Possible	Long Term	2	The Income Maximisation Action Plan Update will result in increased income to the Council to support all services.
Happier Healthier Lives	Moderate Positive	Possible	Long Term	2	The Income Maximisation Action Plan Update will result in increased income to the Council to support all services.

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Report to Chief Executive

Transformation Programme

Officer Contact: Lee Walsh, Director of Finance

Report Author: Andy Sweeting, Assistant Director of Transformation and Change

Email: andy.sweeting@oldham.gov.uk

30th November 2026

Reason for Decision
Noting the purpose and rationale for the Transformation Fund and approval of utilising the fund for six separate cases for change.

Recommendations

- Note the principles and background to the Transformation Programme and Transformation Investment Fund.
- Approve that the Council utilises the fund for six projects to support service transformation and release savings.

Leader's Consultative Session **30th November 2026**
Pre-Decision Scrutiny **19th November 2026**

Transformation Programme

1 Background

The Transformation Programme

1.1 The Oldham Council Transformation Programme is a corporate, organisation wide programme designed to respond to sustained service pressures, increasing demand, and significant financial challenges by delivering structured organisational change that maintains service delivery while achieving financial sustainability. It is structured as a portfolio of transformation activity supported by a central Transformation function, comprising programme leadership, a Transformation Portfolio Office, and multidisciplinary capability in business analysis, service design, governance, and delivery. These work with directorate-based transformation boards and thematic programme boards (Children's, Health and Adult Social Care, Place, and Resources), with oversight through executive governance Transformation & Improvement Executive Board.

1.2 The programme is enabled by a dedicated Transformation Fund (£5m per annum for three years) to resource projects that meet defined criteria and progress through gateway and approval processes through the governance structure to improve pace and agility while retaining oversight, reporting, and assurance. Overall, the programme is designed to deliver financial savings aligned to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (approved within the MTFS and future budget proposals), redesign and modernise services (including digital and process improvements), improve efficiency and effectiveness, and ultimately achieve better outcomes for residents while building long-term organisational capability in transformation, change delivery and a more cost-effective ways of delivering Council services.

2 Current Position

Transformation Investment Fund

2.1 The Transformation Investment Fund has been approved as part of the approved Council Revenue Budget and MTFS at The Budget Council meeting in March 2026. Its purpose is to support initiatives that deliver financial savings, redesign services, improve digital capability, and enhance organisational efficiency. The fund plays a critical role in enabling the Council to achieve its transformation objectives.

2.2 The Council refreshed its transformation programme looking at opportunities across Adults and Children's Services, and savings of £18.3m were approved at the Budget Council meeting in March 2026.

2.3 To support this, £15m of Transformation Investment Funding as mentioned above is available to support the development of initiatives to deliver the transformation programme and allocate initial resources for invest to save business cases that will deliver further budget savings that can support the balancing of the council's budget in future years.

2.4 This investment is a key enabler of the Council's shift from short-term savings measures to a medium and long-term transformation programme. The programme will deliver sustainable savings, improve service efficiency, and reduce the overall cost of service delivery.

Funding envelope

2.5 The Transformation Investment Fund has a total allocation of £5 million per annum over a three-year period, as approved within the Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) by Council on 4 March 2026. The fund provides a dedicated resource to support the

delivery of the Council's transformation programme and the achievement of sustainable savings and service improvements.

Eligible expenditure

2.6 Expenditure from the Transformation Fund may include costs associated with staffing, external consultancy, digital tools and systems, and programme management support. All expenditure must demonstrate a clear link to transformation outcomes, including savings delivery, service improvement, or efficiency gains.

3 Preferred Option

Approval of Six Cases for Change

3.1 The Part B report sets out the schemes highlighted below requiring support from the Transformation Investment Fund:

- Waste and Cleansing Route Optimisation.
- Beam Notes AI Transcription.
- Adult Social Care Reablement.
- Adult Social Care Achieving Better Outcomes and Value Team.
- Digital Transformation Programme
- Microsoft 365 Copilot – Council-Wide Deployment of 500 Licenses.

4 Consultation

4.1 This information is contained in PART B of this report

5 Finance Implications

5.1 This information is contained in PART B of this report

6 Legal Implications

6.1 This information is contained in PART B of this report

7 Procurement Implications

7.1 This information is contained in PART B of this report

8 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

8.1 No

9 Key Decision

9.1 Yes

10 Key Decision Reference

10.1 KDD-26-46

11 Appendices

Cases for Change:

11.1 Waste and Cleansing Route Optimisation.

11.2 Beam Notes AI Transcription.
11.3 Adult Social Care Reablement.
11.4 Adult Social Care Achieving Better Outcomes and Value Team.
11.5 Digital Transformation.
11.6 Copilot 500 Licenses.

Emergency Powers Decision Report

Robotic Process Automation - Contract Award

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Resources
Directorate: Technology and Data Services
Report Author: David Cooper
Email: David.Cooper@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 30th November

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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

To seek 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.

3. Reason for urgency
The expiry of the existing contract and the continuity of service

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision
Without a renewed service, the Council would lose the existing tested recovery capability when the current arrangement expires, increasing the risk of data loss, prolonged service disruption and indefinite recovery following a cyber incident or major failure.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

N/A

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 5 November 2026
Comments

The proposed scheme represents capital expenditure and will be funded from the Council's approved Information Technology (IT) Capital Programme. The estimated cost of the scheme is up to £194,000 (excluding VAT), with expenditure anticipated to be incurred across 2026/27 and 2027/28.

Sufficient provision exists within the approved Capital Programme to meet the cost of the scheme, and no additional capital funding is required. The investment will be subject to the Council's established capital monitoring and governance arrangements to ensure expenditure remains within the approved budget.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef
Date 10.11.26
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 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 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:	Procurement of Specialist Robotic Process Automation (RPA) Consultancy Support – maximum contract value up to £250,000 (excluding VAT)
Decision maker:	Chief Executive
Decision date:	
Report author:	David Cooper (Assistant Director Digital Transformation & Innovation)
Ward (s):	Not Applicable

Reason for decision

To seek 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 is the maximum procurement envelope. It is not a commitment to spend that amount. Actual expenditure will 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.

This decision relates to consultancy support only.

Recommendation(s)

1. Approve 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. Note 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. Note 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. Note 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.

Background

Oldham Council continues to operate under significant pressure:

- Budget constraints and the need for ongoing savings
- Rising demand in statutory services
- Workforce shortages and recruitment challenges
- Legacy systems with limited integration options
- Resident expectations for faster, digital-first services

Many internal processes remain manual, repetitive and time-consuming. These include data entry, reconciliations, case updates, document handling and cross-system checks. These tasks consume staff time, contribute to backlogs and increase the risk of error.

RPA provides a practical, relatively low-disruption way of addressing this. Software "robots" work with the Council's existing systems through the same screens staff use, so processes can be automated without replacing underlying line-of-business systems or commissioning costly integrations. RPA is best suited to high-volume, stable, rules-based processes. It is not suitable for every process, and selecting the right processes is central to the approach set out below.

Why specialist consultancy support is required

The Council does not currently have sufficient in-house specialist RPA capacity to establish the capability at the pace required while also building the standards and controls needed to run automations safely in production. RPA is most successful when it is implemented as an operational capability rather than a technology experiment. Without experienced support there is a risk of slow progress, fragile automations that are difficult to support, and benefits that are not evidenced.

The requirement is therefore broader than development resource. The consultancy is expected to provide:

- RPA technical expertise and UiPath development expertise
- Business analysis and process discovery with services
- Development and deployment of production-ready automations
- Prioritisation of the automation pipeline
- Automation governance, including intake, design review and go-live controls
- Quality assurance, including code review, testing and UAT
- Benefits identification, baselining and tracking

- Documentation for every automation (process and solution design, risk assessment, runbook and handover)
- Training and knowledge transfer to Council staff
- Development of internal capability, standards and reusable component libraries
- Support for deploying and operating automations, including a BAU support model
- A planned reduction in long-term reliance on external specialists

The Council would not be buying isolated bots. It would be buying a structured route to stand up an internal RPA capability: live automations, reusable components, documentation, governance, reporting and a route to sustainability. This provides stronger long-term value than relying on a supplier to deliver disconnected automations that need external support for every change.

Proposed approach

The operating model will be lightweight but disciplined. It will make it easy for services to suggest opportunities while ensuring only suitable processes are selected. This prevents RPA from becoming a queue of random requests and helps directors see what value is being delivered. Delivery is proposed in four phases over an initial 12 months:

Phase 1: Months 1–3 – Foundation, Discovery and Initial Delivery. Stand up the RPA function, agree the delivery model, set up infrastructure, create structured documentation, begin component libraries and deploy the first set of automations.

Phase 2: Months 4–6 – Scale Delivery and Standardisation. Move from early proof points into repeatable delivery by expanding automations, building system-specific components and introducing stronger reporting and support controls.

Phase 3: Months 7–9 – Embed Across Services and Build Internal Capability. Expand RPA across the Council, formalise the pipeline, increase internal contribution and introduce stronger quality controls across the live estate.

Phase 4: Months 10–12 – Optimisation, Handover and Sustainability. Optimise the live estate, complete knowledge transfer, formalise BAU ownership and produce a year-two roadmap.

The draft RPA Capability Roadmap (Appendix 1) sets an indicative target of 8–16 live automations in year one. This is a planning assumption, not a commitment, and will be tested through the procurement and confirmed through discovery.

Scale and type of opportunity

The RPA Project List (Appendix 2) records automations delivered at another local authority using the same platform and approach. It is used here to show the scale and type of opportunity, not as a list of Oldham projects. No individual project is approved for delivery by this decision, and the Council's own pipeline will be built and prioritised through discovery. Illustrative examples across different services and automation types include:

- **Adult Social Care:** web referrals of 100+ data fields per form automatically created or matched in the case management system, cutting processing from c.20 to c.3 minutes per referral and helping vulnerable adults to be triaged more quickly.

- **Revenues and Benefits:** weekly processing of 100+ refunds and credit transfers on closed accounts, with eligibility checks, system notes and an audit report, reducing manual effort by c.90%.
- **Environmental Health and Planning:** food business registrations, licensing closures and planning consultation records entered automatically, removing manual keying of 15–20 minutes per record and reducing backlogs.
- **Finance:** scheduled extraction of debt management reports from Agresso, with customer record creation, improving consistency and reducing manual handling.
- **Document processing and data extraction:** conversion of 800+ files a month ahead of redaction, and bulk data extraction to support the decommissioning of legacy systems.

Equivalent processes are expected to exist within Oldham's services, and this will be validated through discovery.

Indicative benefits

Benefits are separated into four types so that they are not overstated or double counted:

- **Cashable savings** – an actual reduction in expenditure, such as licence removal or reduced supplier, agency or overtime spend.
- **Capacity release** – staff hours released by automation that can be redirected to higher-value work, backlogs or demand growth. Capacity release is not treated as a cashable budget saving unless posts or spend are actually reduced.
- **Cost avoidance** – additional staffing, system or supplier expenditure that would otherwise be needed.
- **Service / risk benefit** – faster processing, reduced backlogs, improved accuracy and data quality, auditability and reduced operational risk.

The table below summarises the evidence available from the RPA Project List. The figures relate to another authority and are not Oldham baselines. They should not be added together or extrapolated across the Council.

Automation / Area	Current Manual Effort	Indicative Time Saving	Indicative Financial Benefit	Benefit Type	Evidence / Assumption
Adult Social Care – web referrals entered into Mosaic	15–35 referrals per day at c.20 minutes each (c.5–12 hours per day)	Reduced to c.3 minutes per referral; just under 1 FTE released	Not valued. Capacity release only – cashable only if posts, agency or overtime spend are actually reduced	Capacity release; Service / risk (faster triage of vulnerable adults)	Delivered at another authority (RPA Project List). Hours calculated from the stated volumes and times. Oldham volumes TBC through discovery.
Revenues – closed accounts in credit (NEC Revenues & Benefits)	100+ refund / credit transfer transactions per week	c.90% reduction in manual effort	Insufficient information to value – handling time per transaction not recorded	Capacity release; Service / risk (accuracy, audit trail)	RPA Project List. Baseline handling time TBC.

Automation / Area	Current Manual Effort	Indicative Time Saving	Indicative Financial Benefit	Benefit Type	Evidence / Assumption
Legacy system decommissioning – data extraction (Nalytics, Apex, Egress)	100,000+ records, thousands of documents and 30GB+ of files to extract	1,700+ hours of manual effort avoided (one-off)	Contributed to annual licence savings in excess of £140,000 at that authority	Cashable (licence removal); Cost avoidance (one-off effort)	RPA Project List. Licence saving is not solely attributable to RPA and is specific to that authority's systems. Any Oldham opportunity would be assessed case by case.
Planning – consultation data entry (Civica APP)	15–20 minutes per record; backlogs reported	Manual keying removed except for exceptions	Insufficient information to value – volumes not recorded	Capacity release; Service / risk (backlog reduction)	RPA Project List. Volumes TBC.
Environmental Health – food business registrations (Civica APP)	Emailed forms uploaded manually to records	c.15 minutes per transaction	Insufficient information to value – volumes not recorded	Capacity release; Service / risk	RPA Project List. Volumes TBC.
Document processing – conversion of files to PDF prior to redaction	800+ files per month	Manual conversion removed	Insufficient information to value	Capacity release; Service / risk (compliance, consistency)	RPA Project List. Handling time TBC.

Where the source material does not record volumes or handling times, no financial value has been attributed. Financial benefits will be baselined and tracked for each automation as part of the RPA benefits management process.

Financial envelope and value for money

The costs of the RPA capability are separate and are shown separately:

- **Consultancy (this decision):** up to £194,000 excluding VAT, as a maximum contract value.
- **UiPath platform (separate Administrative Decision):** approximately £18,000 per annum. Depending on the success of the team we would need to purchase additional robots.

Three different figures should not be confused: the maximum contract value (£194,000 excluding VAT); the actual expenditure, which will depend on the tendered price, the phasing agreed and the services called off; and the value released by individual automations, which will be measured separately for each automation. Indicative early market information suggests that a 12-month programme of this type can be delivered within the envelope. The final contract value will be determined through procurement.

The value-for-money case rests on creating reusable organisational capability rather than buying individual automations. Component libraries for common actions and key Council systems reduce the build time of later automations. Mandatory documentation, governance and benefits tracking reduce support risk and give directors evidence for future investment decisions. Knowledge transfer reduces the need for external support for every change after year one.

The evidence available supports the type and scale of benefit RPA can deliver, including capacity release of up to around one FTE from a single high-volume automation, cost avoidance from removing manual processing hours, and cashable licence savings where RPA enables legacy systems to be decommissioned. The evidence is not sufficient to support a defensible return on investment or payback calculation for Oldham at this stage, and none is claimed. Financial benefits will be baselined and tracked for each automation as part of the RPA benefits management process and reported to inform the review point at the end of Phase 1 and any future investment decision.

Alternative option(s) to be considered *(please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s)*

Option 1: Do nothing

Manual processes would continue unchanged. This would not address capacity pressures or backlogs, would maintain the current risk of keying errors, and would provide no opportunity to release staff capacity or realise efficiency savings. The UiPath platform, if licensed, would be under-used. **Rejected.**

Option 2: Continue with manual processes and add administrative capacity

Additional staff or agency capacity could relieve backlogs in specific services quickly and is a reasonable short-term response to peaks in demand. However, there are recruitment challenges across many services and it would increase ongoing salary, training and management costs. It would not address the underlying inefficiencies or system limitations. **Rejected as a general solution**, although services may still need temporary capacity in some cases.

Option 3: Develop the capability solely using existing internal resource

This would minimise external expenditure and build ownership from the outset. However, the Council does not currently have sufficient specialist RPA capacity, and staff would need to be released from existing duties and trained before delivery could start. Progress would be slower, the risk of poorly controlled or fragile automations would be higher, and benefits would take longer to realise. **Rejected for the initial phase.** Internal resource remains central to the recommended option and is expected to take on more of the work over time.

Option 4: Commission automations as an outsourced or managed service

A supplier could build and run automations on the Council's behalf, providing fast initial delivery. However, the Council would remain dependent on the supplier for support and change, would not develop internal skills or reusable assets, and would face continuing external costs. **Rejected.**

Option 5: Procure time-bound specialist RPA consultancy with knowledge transfer (Recommended)

This option provides the expertise needed to establish the capability quickly and safely, delivers production-ready automations from the first quarter, and builds the governance, standards, documentation and internal skills needed for the Council to sustain RPA after year one. Phasing with a review point limits financial exposure while benefits are evidenced.

The choice of RPA platform is addressed in the separate UiPath Administrative Decision and is not repeated here.

Risks

There are risks in adopting any new way of working. These are considered manageable given the track record of the approach at other authorities, provided the mitigations below are put in place:

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Poor process selection	Effort spent on unstable, low-volume or poorly defined processes; weak return	Single intake route and scoring of each opportunity by volume, stability, rules-based content, data quality, risk and benefit before build. Broken processes are fixed before they are automated.
Failure to realise benefits	Investment not matched by released capacity or savings	Baseline manual effort before build; agree success measures with the service owner; track transactions, exceptions and hours saved after go-live; phased contract with a review point at month 3.
Dependency on specialist resource	Capability stalls when the consultancy ends	Knowledge transfer built into every phase; internal staff shadow, then pair-build, then lead smaller builds; handover deliverables written into the contract and tied to milestones.
Supplier dependency	Council unable to support or change automations without the supplier	Council owns all code, component libraries and documentation; mandatory PDD, SDD, runbook and handover pack for every automation; Council-controlled Orchestrator and source control.
Knowledge transfer not achieved	Live estate cannot be sustained internally	Named internal staff assigned from the outset; structured training pathway; knowledge transfer measured as a contract deliverable, not left to the final quarter.
Information governance and data security	Data breach or non-compliant processing of personal data	DPIA and risk assessment per automation where personal data is processed; least-privilege robot accounts; credentials held in a secure vault; full audit logging; IG and Cyber Security engaged before go-live.
Automated processing errors	Incorrect updates replicated at volume	Rules-based validation, business and system exception handling, UAT sign-off by the service, controlled go-live, status reports to the service and manual referral of exceptions.
Business continuity	Service disruption if an automation or system fails	Documented fallback to the manual process; monitoring and alerting; support runbooks; agreed incident and rerun procedures.
Scalability and licensing cost	Costs rise as the estate grows	Licensing scaled only where benefits are evidenced; utilisation reviewed regularly; growth subject to separate decisions.
Service engagement	Services do not release staff time to support discovery, UAT and adoption	Director-level sponsorship; early workshops with priority services; visible pipeline and benefits reporting; use of live examples to explain what RPA can and cannot do.
Internal capacity to sustain the capability	Insufficient internal roles to run the live estate after year one	BAU support model agreed before handover; year-two roadmap to set out internal roles and resourcing for decision (TBC).

Implications

Financial	Capital Implications The proposed scheme represents capital expenditure and will be a charge against the Information Technology (IT) capital programme. The estimated total cost of the capital scheme is up to £194,000 (excluding VAT) and will be defrayed in 2026/27 and 2027/28. Provision exists within the capital programme against which this scheme will be a charge. (Jit Kara Senior Accountant)
Procurement	In accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, Commercial Procurement Unit conducted a compliant open competition via The Chest e-tendering portal under reference DN825199 - Intelligent Automation (RPA) Capability Development and Automation Delivery Partner. A total of 22 tender submissions were received. Following a robust evaluation process, TDS colleagues independently assessed and scored all bids against the published award criteria. A moderation meeting was subsequently undertaken to review and agree the final scores. As a result of this process, Nova Process Automation achieved the highest overall score and has been identified as the preferred supplier. Approval is therefore sought to award and enter into a 12-month contract with Nova Process Automation for the provision of Intelligent Automation (RPA) capability development and automation delivery services. TDS colleagues will be responsible for the ongoing management of the contract, including supplier performance monitoring, delivery oversight, and contract review activities throughout the contract term. Subject to approval, Commercial Procurement Unit will complete all required procurement governance activities, including the publication of the relevant notices in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and associated regulations, and will

	ensure that the contract award is implemented in line with both legislative requirements and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Senga Henstock ICT Senior Buyer 16 October 2026
Legal	The proposal is lawful and complies with the Contract Procedure Rules and the Council's constitution. This is a covered procurement with respect to the Procurement Act 2023 and complies with it. Bryan Boese - solicitor
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	No adverse equality impact is anticipated from this decision. Faster processing of referrals and applications is expected to benefit residents, including vulnerable adults. Each automation affecting residents will be screened for equality impact before go-live, and an Equality Impact Assessment completed where required.
Other	Information governance: a DPIA and risk assessment will be completed for each automation that processes personal data, with IG approval before go-live. IT and cyber security: robot accounts, credentials and access will follow Council security standards and will be reviewed by IT / Cyber Security.

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?	No

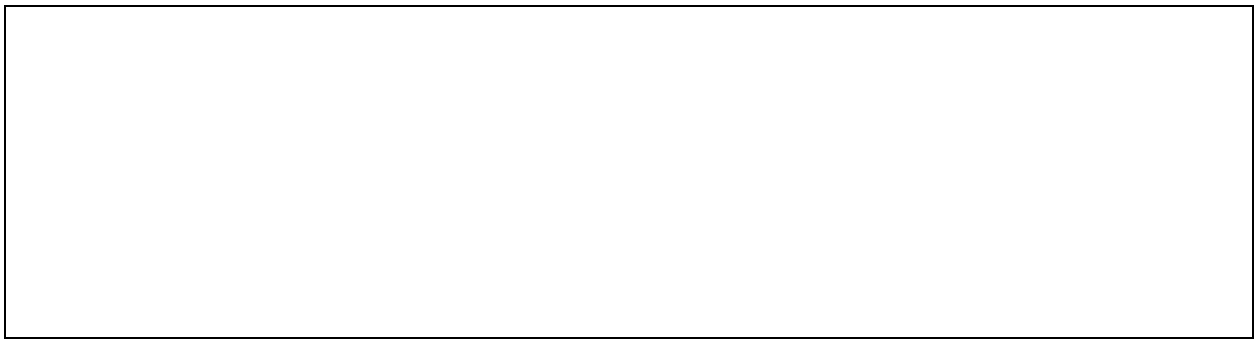
Appendices (including any relevant Background Papers)

1. Appendix 1 – RPA Capability Roadmap: Oldham Council 12-Month Implementation Plan

2. Appendix 2 – RPA Project List (examples of automations delivered at another local authority)
3. Appendix 3 – Background paper – Administrative Decision: Procurement of UiPath Unattended Robot and Associated RPA Platform Licensing

Report author sign-off	David Cooper
Role	Assistant Director of Digital Transformation and Innovation
Date of sign-off	09/10/26

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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RPA Capability Roadmap

12-Month Director Pack: establishing a scalable, sustainable and internally owned RPA capability for Oldham Council

Purpose

This roadmap sets out a practical plan for introducing Robotic Process Automation into a council environment from a standing start. The intention is not to deliver a small number of disconnected bots, but to establish a repeatable automation function that can identify opportunities, build production-grade automations, document and govern them properly, and train internal staff so the capability remains inside the council. The plan is deliberately realistic, targeting **8-16 live automations in year one** while building reusable technical assets and internal knowledge.

8-16	Reusable	Internal	Governed	Supportable	Clear
live automations	component libraries	staff trained	automation pipeline	production estate	year-two roadmap

Commercial positioning

This should be treated as a capability build and delivery programme, not just development resource. The value is in building the operating model, standards, component libraries, training pathway and live automations together.

Core principle

Build internal capability and reduce reliance on external consulting firms by transferring knowledge, documentation and reusable assets into the council.

1. Executive Summary

What the programme delivers and why the approach is structured this way

RPA is most successful in councils when it is implemented as an operational capability rather than a technology experiment. Many council processes still rely on repeatable manual administration: reading emails, validating forms, moving data between systems, updating records, producing reports, routing exceptions and checking case information. These tasks consume significant staff time and create avoidable backlogs, delays and inconsistency.

The proposed 12-month roadmap creates early delivery while building the foundations required for safe scale. It starts with service workshops and infrastructure, then moves through standardised delivery, component library creation, internal training, governance, production monitoring and knowledge transfer. This gives directors visible early value while avoiding the long-term risk of fragile automations that only an external supplier can maintain.

The target of 8-16 live automations is intentionally realistic. It allows enough time for proper discovery, documentation, risk assessment, UAT, deployment, stakeholder engagement and training. The aim is to underpromise and overdeliver, with every automation built to a standard that can be supported and extended.

Quarter	Programme focus	Expected cumulative outcome
Q1	Foundation: workshops with key service areas, VM/machine template setup, access model, documentation standards, first component libraries, first 1-2 processes identified and deployed.	RPA environment live, delivery standards agreed, first automations deployed, first pipeline of opportunities created.
Q2	Scale: 2-4 additional automations, reusable libraries for key systems, queue-based design, monitoring reports, deployment checklists and consistent documentation.	3-6 automations live, repeatable delivery model in place, components reducing future build time.
Q3	Embed: additional service areas engaged, 3-5 more automations, internal staff training, pipeline governance and code review practices.	6-11 automations live, internal staff contributing, RPA recognised as a council-wide capability.
Q4	Optimise: final 2-5 automations, performance review, knowledge transfer, support model, handover and future roadmap.	8-16 automations live, sustainable capability established, reduced dependency on external resource.

2. Operating Model and Delivery Principles

How the RPA function should be built so it scales safely

The operating model should be lightweight but disciplined. It should make it easy for services to suggest opportunities, while ensuring only suitable processes are selected for automation. This prevents RPA from becoming a queue of random requests and helps directors see what value is being delivered.

1. Discover and assess

Run workshops, capture volumes, current handling times, systems used, exception rates, data quality issues and service impact. Score opportunities by value, feasibility, risk and complexity.

2. Design and govern

Produce PDD, SDD, risk assessment, process overview and support approach before build. Confirm business ownership, success measures and UAT route.

3. Build and deploy

Use reusable components, standard exception handling, logging, queues where appropriate, clear deployment checklists and documented handover.

4. Monitor and improve

Track success rates, exceptions, manual referrals, estimated hours saved and system issues. Use reporting to improve automations and evidence benefits.

5. Train internal staff

Move staff from shadowing to active contribution through real process discovery, testing, support, component development and pair building.

6. Transfer capability

By the end of year one, hand over documentation, component libraries, support knowledge, standards and the year-two backlog.

Decision area	Recommended principle	Director-level value
Process selection	Prioritise high-volume, stable, rules-based and measurable processes. Avoid automating broken or unstable processes too early.	Improves ROI and prevents resources being spent on poor candidates.
Documentation	Make PDD, SDD, risk assessment, process overview and handover documents mandatory from the first build.	Creates auditability, reduces support risk and protects the council from knowledge loss.
Reusability	Build libraries for common actions and key council systems rather than rebuilding the same logic repeatedly.	Reduces future delivery cost and increases reliability.
Internal ownership	Train internal staff alongside delivery rather than waiting until the end.	Reduces consultancy dependency and creates a council-owned capability.
Benefits tracking	Capture baseline manual effort and report realistic time savings.	Gives directors evidence for future investment decisions.

3. Component Library Strategy

Reusable technical assets for key council systems

Component libraries are one of the most important parts of scaling RPA. Without them, every automation starts from scratch and repeatedly solves the same problems: logging in, searching records, navigating screens, adding notes, handling pop-ups, reading emails, writing reports and dealing with exceptions. A library-based approach creates reusable building blocks that reduce development time and improve consistency.

The council should start with generic components in Phase 1, then mature into system-specific libraries during Phases 2 and 3. Libraries should be version controlled, documented and treated as production assets. This is especially important for key systems that multiple automations are likely to use.

Library area	Example components	Benefit
Core automation framework	Config handling, credential retrieval, standard logging, exception screenshots, email notifications, retry handling, folder creation, file archiving.	Creates consistency across every automation and reduces basic setup time.
Email and forms processing	Mailbox reading, attachment saving, duplicate checks, subject/body parsing, routing rules, acknowledgement emails and exception emails.	Useful across many council teams where work arrives through shared mailboxes and forms.
Excel and reporting	Read/write data tables, clean CSVs, validate columns, generate status reports, produce summary tables and attach outputs.	Supports reporting, reconciliation, status updates and operational MI.
Key council systems	Login, search person/account, open record, update details, add note, upload document, retrieve reference, controlled logout.	Speeds up future builds and reduces selector duplication.
Queue and transaction handling	Dispatcher/Performer structure, add queue item, process queue item, business exception, system exception, retry rules, final status reporting.	Supports scale, auditability and reliable unattended processing.

Important: component libraries should not be allowed to grow informally. Each component needs a clear purpose, input/output arguments, exception behaviour, version history and usage guidance. This keeps the library useful rather than becoming another unsupported dependency.

4. Delivery Accelerators and Operational Enhancements

Pre-built assets that improve speed, reliability and visibility from day one

In addition to the core component library strategy, a set of pre-developed accelerators and operational enhancements are available. These have been developed through real-world delivery in local government environments and are designed to reduce build time, improve quality, strengthen reporting and make automations easier for services to understand and support.

Accelerator	How it is used	Value to Oldham Council
ROI tracking and Power BI-ready outputs	Template files are already available for tracking ROI and benefits on a weekly basis for live processes. The data can be structured so it can feed into reporting software such as Power BI.	Provides directors with evidence of value, supports future investment decisions and avoids benefits tracking becoming an afterthought.
Reusable utility XAMLs	A library of useful XAMLs is already available, including DataTable to HTML conversion for email bodies, Excel formatting, personalised greetings, password generators and transaction summaries.	Reduces development time, improves consistency and avoids rebuilding common utilities for every automation.
End-user friendly status reports	Every process will include a clear status report designed with stakeholders. Reports include service-agreed columns plus four standard fields at the end: Status, Description, Date and Time.	Gives services a readable operational output showing what happened, what needs action and when each transaction was processed.
Local government REFramework template	A ready-to-go REFramework template is available, customised for local government delivery with exception handling, structured logging and status report outputs built in.	Creates a consistent production standard from the first build and makes future processes easier to support, review and hand over.
Automated credential resilience	Processes can include automatic password generation and reset routines to reduce the risk of failure when robot credentials expire.	Improves resilience, reduces avoidable downtime and lowers reliance on manual intervention from support teams.
Insight processes for larger automations	High-volume processes can have monthly, quarterly and yearly insight runs that compile status report data into summary outputs for easier transaction tracking and reporting.	Turns operational outputs into meaningful management information and can feed reporting tools such as Power BI.
Custom HTML communication templates	Dispatcher, performer and exception emails will use tailored HTML bodies for each process, with clear formatting, stakeholder-specific language and consistent branding.	Improves stakeholder confidence, makes outputs easier to act on and gives every automation a polished, professional communication route.

These accelerators mean the programme is not starting from a blank page. The council benefits from proven delivery assets, reusable technical patterns and reporting structures that can be adopted immediately and refined to match Oldham Council standards.

Phase 1: Months 1-3 - Foundation, Discovery and Initial Delivery

Stand up the RPA function, agree the delivery model, set up infrastructure, create structured documentation, begin component libraries and deploy the first 1-2 automations.

Stand up the RPA function, agree the delivery model, set up infrastructure, create structured documentation, begin component libraries and deploy the first 1-2 automations.

Workstream	Detailed activity	Why this matters
Service workshops	Run workshops with priority areas such as Adult Social Care, Finance, Revenues and Benefits, Housing, HR and customer services. Capture volumes, handling times, pain points, systems, data quality, exceptions and SLAs.	Creates a clear evidence base and prevents automation effort being spent on low-value or unsuitable processes.
Opportunity pipeline	Score candidate processes by value, complexity, risk, data quality, stability, manual effort and service impact. Produce an initial prioritised backlog.	Gives leadership a transparent view of where RPA can deliver value and what should be tackled first.
Infrastructure setup	Set up UiPath tenant/folder structure, unattended robot, machine template, VM, robot account, credentials, access to systems, package feeds and deployment route.	Prevents infrastructure and access issues delaying delivery once demand grows.
Structured documentation	Create templates for PDD, SDD, handover documents, process overview documents, risk assessments, UAT evidence, support runbooks and deployment checklists.	Builds auditability and supportability from day one rather than trying to retrofit governance later.
Development standards	Define logging, exception handling, queue usage, naming conventions, config structure, credential handling, email standards and production support expectations. Use the local-government REFramework template where suitable.	Ensures automations are built consistently and can be maintained by others.
Initial delivery	Select 1-2 low-risk, high-value processes and deploy them into production with documented support routes, stakeholder-friendly status reports and measurable outputs.	Creates early confidence and proves the council can move from concept to live delivery.

Key deliverables

- RPA operating model and intake route
- VM/machine template and unattended robot ready
- Documentation pack: PDD, SDD, process overview, risk assessment, handover and runbook
- Initial component library foundations
- 1-2 live automations and first benefits reporting

Internal training focus

Internal staff should shadow workshops, documentation and the first builds. The focus is on understanding what makes a good automation candidate, how a process is documented, how risks are identified, how UAT works and how production jobs are monitored.

Expected phase outcomes

- RPA environment is live and ready to scale
- First automations deployed with clear ownership
- Initial pipeline of opportunities created
- Directors have visible proof that RPA can work in the council
- Documentation and risk controls embedded from the beginning

Phase 2: Months 4-6 - Scale Delivery and Standardisation

Move from early proof points into repeatable delivery by expanding automations, building system-specific components and introducing stronger reporting and support controls.

Move from early proof points into repeatable delivery by expanding automations, building system-specific components and introducing stronger reporting and support controls.

Workstream	Detailed activity	Why this matters
Delivery expansion	Deliver 2-4 additional automations from the prioritised backlog, using a mix of quick wins and slightly more complex processes.	Builds momentum and demonstrates that RPA is not limited to one team or one process type.
System libraries	Expand component libraries for key systems, including login, search, open record, update record, add note, upload document, retrieve reference and controlled logout.	Reduces build time for future automations and improves resilience when the same systems are reused.
Queue-based processing	Introduce Dispatcher/Performer patterns, transaction references, business exceptions, system exceptions, retries and structured queue reporting where appropriate.	Creates scalable unattended processing and improves auditability.
Reporting and MI	Implement daily or weekly status reports showing transactions processed, successes, exceptions, manual referrals and estimated hours saved. Outputs should align to ROI templates and Power BI-ready datasets.	Gives service owners and directors evidence of value and visibility of issues.
Testing and deployment	Formalise peer review, UAT scripts, defect tracking, deployment checklists, production readiness checks and go-live sign-off.	Reduces production risk and increases confidence from IT and service owners.
Support model	Define who monitors jobs, who owns exceptions, how failed cases are rerun, how service changes are raised, password reset approach and how incidents are escalated.	Prevents automations becoming unsupported once live.

Key deliverables

- 2-4 additional automations live
- Expanded component libraries for priority systems
- Queue-based framework used where appropriate
- Performance reporting model in place
- Deployment and support checklists embedded

Internal training focus

Internal staff should move from observing to contributing. Suitable activities include PDD drafting, process mapping, UAT support, exception review, log review, small component updates and support documentation. This begins the shift from external delivery to internal capability.

Expected phase outcomes

- Cumulative total reaches approximately 3-6 live automations
- Delivery becomes repeatable rather than one-off
- Reusable assets begin reducing future build effort
- Service owners see clear reporting and exception information
- Internal staff start contributing to delivery activities

Phase 3: Months 7-9 - Embed Across Services and Build Internal Capability

Expand RPA across the council, formalise the pipeline, increase internal contribution and introduce stronger quality controls across the live estate.

Expand RPA across the council, formalise the pipeline, increase internal contribution and introduce stronger quality controls across the live estate.

Workstream	Detailed activity	Why this matters
Service expansion	Engage additional services such as Housing, HR, environmental services, customer services or corporate support functions. Use live case studies to explain what RPA can and cannot do.	Creates wider adoption and builds a council-wide pipeline rather than isolated departmental use.
Advanced delivery	Deliver 3-5 further automations, potentially including structured document handling, multi-system updates, exception routing or more complex validation.	Shows that the capability can handle more than simple quick wins while staying controlled.
Pipeline governance	Create a visible backlog with business owner, stage, expected benefit, complexity, risk, dependencies and proposed delivery quarter.	Gives directors transparency and makes prioritisation easier.
Training pathway	Build a structured pathway covering discovery, PDD writing, solution design, UiPath basics, Orchestrator, debugging, testing and support.	Turns training into an organised capability plan rather than ad hoc shadowing.
Quality assurance	Introduce code reviews, design reviews, reusable component checks, standards compliance and go-live readiness checks.	Protects quality as more people contribute to delivery.
Operational embedding	Agree how services receive status reports and exception outputs, how manual checks are routed, how changes are requested and how benefits are reviewed after go-live.	Ensures automations become part of BAU rather than separate technical experiments.

Key deliverables

- 3-5 further automations live
- Prioritised automation backlog visible to leadership
- Internal staff development pathway in place
- Code review and design review process embedded
- Service adoption model agreed

Internal training focus

Internal staff should begin pair development on real council processes. They should own smaller deliverables such as test scripts, support guides, exception analysis, simple workflow changes and component updates. The aim is practical competence, not just attendance on training courses.

Expected phase outcomes

- Cumulative total reaches approximately 6-11 live automations
- RPA is recognised across multiple services
- Internal staff can support and contribute to smaller builds
- The council has a governed backlog rather than ad hoc requests
- Benefits and exceptions are visible through agreed reporting

Phase 4: Months 10-12 - Optimisation, Handover and Sustainability

Optimise the live estate, complete knowledge transfer, formalise BAU ownership and produce the year-two roadmap for continued automation growth.

Optimise the live estate, complete knowledge transfer, formalise BAU ownership and produce the year-two roadmap for continued automation growth.

Workstream	Detailed activity	Why this matters
Final delivery	Deliver the final 2-5 automations needed to reach the year-one target of 8-16 live processes. Prioritise high-value processes with manageable support risk.	Ensures delivery continues while the capability is being stabilised.
Optimisation review	Review each live automation for runtime, exception trends, failure reasons, success rate, support burden, benefits and improvement opportunities.	Improves reliability and helps leadership understand the true value of the live estate.
Documentation completion	Ensure each automation has final PDD, SDD, process overview, risk assessment, handover document, runbook, test evidence and service sign-off.	Creates a complete knowledge base for internal ownership and audit purposes.
Support transition	Define BAU monitoring, incident handling, reruns, access ownership, password management, VM maintenance and escalation routes.	Prevents reliance on one external person for everyday support.
Knowledge transfer	Run structured handover covering Orchestrator, queues, schedules, credentials, component libraries, code structure, reporting templates and common failure scenarios.	Transfers practical knowledge into the council.
Future roadmap	Create a year-two roadmap covering further automations, internal roles, recruitment needs, AI/document understanding opportunities and governance improvements.	Gives directors a clear next investment decision and route to scale.

Key deliverables

- Final automations delivered to reach 8-16 live total
- Optimisation review of full live estate
- Complete handover and documentation pack
- BAU support model agreed
- Year-two roadmap produced

Internal training focus

By the end of Phase 4, internal staff should be able to monitor live jobs, read logs, investigate common failures, support UAT, update documentation, manage controlled changes and contribute to smaller automations. Any remaining gaps should be captured in the year-two training plan.

Expected phase outcomes

- Council has a sustainable RPA capability rather than dependency on external delivery
- Internal staff can monitor and support live jobs
- Leadership has clear evidence of value and remaining opportunities
- Reusable libraries and standards are ready for future development
- The programme can move into lighter advisory support if appropriate

8. Internal Training, Governance and Risk Controls

How the programme avoids consultancy dependency and keeps production delivery safe

A major measure of success is whether the council can continue operating and improving RPA after the initial engagement. Training should therefore run alongside delivery from day one. Internal staff should learn using real council processes, because this is where they understand the relationship between operational process design, system behaviour, exception handling and production support.

Area	Practical approach	Result
Training	Shadowing, pair development, UiPath fundamentals, PDD/SDD writing, testing, Orchestrator monitoring, exception triage and component usage.	Internal staff move from awareness to contribution and support.
Governance	Single intake route, opportunity scoring, service owner approval, design review, risk assessment, UAT sign-off and deployment checklist.	Automation requests are controlled and prioritised.
Risk	Assess data sensitivity, access permissions, operational impact, business continuity, exception handling and audit requirements for each process.	Directors and IT have confidence that RPA is safe and supportable.
Reporting	Track transactions, success rate, exception rate, manual referrals, estimated hours saved, failures, improvement actions and ROI outputs. Larger processes can include monthly, quarterly and yearly insight reporting.	Benefits are evidenced realistically and issues are visible.
Support	Define monitoring, incident handling, reruns, manual exception routing, ownership, automated credential management and escalation routes before go-live.	Live automations are managed as BAU services.

Training outcome

By month 12, internal staff should be able to support the live estate, contribute to documentation and UAT, understand Orchestrator, review logs, triage common failures and build or amend smaller automations under agreed standards.

Governance outcome

By month 12, the council should have a governed pipeline, clear prioritisation model, documented support route, reusable standards, agreed status reporting and a measured view of benefits across live automations.

9. Commercial Structure and Engagement Options

Positioned as a capability build and delivery programme

The commercial structure should reflect the scope of the engagement. This is not only development activity. It includes programme shaping, service discovery, process assessment, UiPath delivery, component library creation, documentation standards, risk management, internal training, production support design, benefits reporting and knowledge transfer.

Commercial item	Proposed structure
Engagement model	Outside IR35, initial 12-month engagement.
Full-time day rate	GBP 1,000 per day.
Quarterly cost	GBP 55,000 per quarter, based on approximately 55 working days.
Annualised value	GBP 220,000 across the initial 12-month period.
Delivery target	8-16 live automations, with internal training, component libraries, governance, reporting assets and support model included.
Flexibility	Can be structured as full-time, phased, or part-time initially depending on budget, urgency and preferred delivery route.

If budget approval requires a lower-risk entry point, the first quarter can be positioned as a foundation and discovery phase with initial delivery. This would allow the council to validate the pipeline, prove the operating model and deploy the first automations before committing to the full year-one scale. The day rate should remain aligned to the capability being delivered; flexibility should be handled through structure, days and phasing rather than undervaluing the work.

Recommended positioning

The council is not buying isolated bots. It is buying a structured route to stand up an internal RPA capability: live automations, reusable components, documentation, governance, reporting, staff training and a route to sustainability. This provides stronger long-term value than relying on a consulting firm to deliver disconnected automations that require external support for every change.

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RPA Projects

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Live

OPPD Referral - Daily

We developed and deployed an OPPD Referral automation to streamline the handling of referral forms submitted to the Older People and People with Disabilities service via the council's website. The primary objective was to reduce the significant administrative burden and delays caused by manually processing 15–35 referrals per day in the Mosaic social care system, each previously taking around 20 minutes. To achieve this, we utilised RPA built in UiPath to extract and process data from complex CSV referral forms containing over 100 data fields, download and attach supporting documents, and intelligently route each referral through the appropriate pathway in Mosaic, including new person creation, existing person matching, or subjectless referrals. The outcome was a robust, end-to-end automated solution that reduced processing time to approximately three minutes per referral, improved accuracy and consistency, ensured vulnerable adults were triaged more quickly, and delivered a time saving of just under one full-time equivalent, supported by comprehensive error handling, audit logging, and automated reporting to stakeholders.

iCasework – Monthly

We developed and deployed an iCasework Data Extract automation to support data visualisation and reporting through a Power BI dashboard. The primary objective was to streamline the monthly data preparation pipeline and ensure timely availability of up-to-date casework information for analysis. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to automatically extract reports from the iCasework system, convert them into the required format, and upload them to the appropriate location for ingestion into Power BI. The outcome was a reliable, repeatable process that reduced manual effort, improved data consistency, and ensured stakeholders had access to accurate and current casework insights for informed decision-making.

Closed Accounts in Credit – Weekly

We developed and deployed a Closed Accounts Credit Processing automation to streamline the weekly handling of refunds and credit transfers within the NEC Revenues & Benefits system. The primary objective was to reduce the manual effort involved in processing over 100 transactions each week while ensuring financial accuracy and consistent decision-making. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to read and validate input data from Excel, assess account eligibility based on criteria such as end dates and account status, and manage exceptions including executor

accounts and accounts in debit. The automation automatically created system notes, transferred balances for eligible accounts, and produced a detailed status report summarising successful completions, skipped cases, and failures, with automated notifications triggered when input files were missing. The outcome was a robust, auditable solution that reduced manual effort by approximately 90%, improved accuracy, and delivered significant efficiency and control improvements across the process.

PDF Conversion Pre-Redaction — *Weekly*

We developed and deployed a Document Conversion to PDF automation to standardise incoming documents for secure downstream redaction processes. The primary objective was to ensure consistency and compliance by converting a wide range of file formats, including Word, Excel, CSV, MSG, text, and image files, into a single PDF format. To achieve this, we utilised RPA built with UiPath to automatically process over 800 files per month, convert them into PDFs, and upload the outputs to a designated SharePoint folder. The outcome was a streamlined and reliable document handling process that eliminated manual effort, ensured all files met redaction requirements, improved accuracy, and strengthened compliance across the document management workflow.

Void Duplicate Extract — Weekly

We developed and deployed a Void Duplicate Removal automation to improve data accuracy and streamline record management within the NEC Revenues & Benefits environment. The primary objective was to identify and remove duplicate records by comparing data from two Excel files while maintaining a clear audit trail. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to extract and compare data from both files, remove duplicate entries from the source datasets, and archive the identified duplicates in a separate Excel file for reference and auditing. The automation runs weekly and is integrated with NEC Revenues & Benefits, sending automated email notifications to subject matter experts summarising the outcome, including scenarios where no files are found, no duplicates are identified, or duplicates are successfully processed. The outcome was a reliable, auditable solution that reduced manual effort, improved data integrity, and provided transparent reporting through automated HTML-formatted email summaries.

CDM and F.30 Extract - Monthly

We developed and deployed an automated CDM and F.30 Extract process to streamline monthly data extraction from SAP. The primary objective was to ensure accurate and timely generation of Dunning and No Dunning reports, reducing

manual effort and improving consistency. To achieve this, we utilised UiPath RPA to execute SAP transaction F.30, download the reports, and upload them into designated SharePoint folders. The outcome was a fully automated solution running on a scheduled basis, delivering benefits such as improved data accuracy, reduced operational risk, and enhanced efficiency through automated notifications and structured file management.

Nalytics & FRA Extraction – One off

We developed and delivered a series of one-off RPA automations to support the decommissioning of legacy systems where data extraction was not straightforward or commercially viable. The primary objective was to securely extract, format, and archive critical data from platforms such as Nalytics, Apex, and Egress, enabling the council to retire these systems in a timely and compliant manner. To achieve this, we utilised tailored RPA solutions executed in parallel across multiple machines to meet strict deadlines, processing large and complex datasets including over 100,000 records from Nalytics, thousands of documents from Apex, and more than 30GB of mixed file types from Egress. The outcome was a successful and accelerated decommissioning programme that saved over 1,700 hours of manual effort, reduced operational risk, and contributed to annual licence savings in excess of £140,000.

Borrowbox - Monthly

We developed and deployed an automation to support data ingestion for a Power BI dashboard. The primary objective was to ensure timely and consistent availability of reporting data. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to automatically extract four reports from the BorrowBox system and upload them to SharePoint for ingestion. The outcome was a reliable, hands-free process that reduced manual effort and ensured up-to-date data for reporting and analysis.

Cautionary Contacts – As necessary

We developed and deployed a Cautionary Contacts solution to centralise and manage sensitive contact information across services. The primary objective was to ensure accurate identification and handling of cautionary contacts, improving safeguarding and compliance. To do this we utilised Canvas Apps, Power Automate and RPA. The outcome was a secure, integrated system enabling authorised staff to access and update records efficiently, delivering benefits such as enhanced safety protocols, reduced risk of errors, and improved collaboration between teams.

Planning Consultation – Daily

We developed and deployed a Planning Consultation Data Entry automation to streamline the entry of consultation information into the Civica APP system within the CMU – Complaints Update screen. The primary objective was to eliminate the time-consuming manual entry of planning consultation data, which previously took staff between 15 and 20 minutes per record and often led to backlogs. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to monitor a designated network folder for incoming CSV files, extract and queue each consultation record in Orchestrator, archive the original files for audit purposes, and automatically input the data into Civica APP using front-end UI automation. The outcome was a reliable, end-to-end process that significantly reduced manual workload, improved data accuracy, and ensured timely and consistent updates to the planning consultation log.

TENS file closure – Daily

We developed and deployed a Licensing Closure automation to streamline the daily updating of licensing records within the Civica APP system. The primary objective was to remove the need for manual data entry and ensure timely, accurate closure of licensing records. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to extract licensing closure data from a daily CSV email attachment, process each row as a separate queue item in Orchestrator, and automatically input the information into Civica APP via the L1U – Licensing Update screen. The outcome was a reliable, automated process that improved data accuracy, reduced administrative effort, and ensured licensing records were consistently updated without delay.

Housing Association Formatting Corrections - Weekly

We developed and deployed Housing Association Formatting Corrections automation to ensure consistent and reliable weekly data submissions from housing associations. The primary objective was to standardise incoming CSV files for the Lets and Voids processes, ensuring they met the required structure of 12 columns for Voids and 7 columns for Lets. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to clean and validate each file by removing blank rows, stripping unwanted characters such as commas and quotation marks, formatting all dates to a standard dd-MMM-yyyy format, and identifying structural issues. Rows with insufficient columns were flagged and saved to a separate incomplete records file, while rows with excess columns were corrected by intelligently consolidating surplus data into the final column. The outcome was a robust, automated data cleansing process that produced audit-ready outputs, reduced manual intervention, improved data quality, and delivered clear email summaries to stakeholders, with cleaned files saved back to the network drive ready for use.

Egress Extraction – One off

We developed and deployed an automated Egress Data Extract process to facilitate the migration of files from the Egress platform to SharePoint following its decommissioning. The primary objective was to ensure accurate and timely transfer of large volumes of data while reducing manual effort and risk of errors. To achieve this, we utilised UiPath RPA to log into Egress, zip subfolders, create replica directories, and upload files to designated SharePoint folders. The outcome was a one-time automated solution that delivered significant time savings, improved data integrity, and enhanced efficiency through structured file management and automated status reporting.

FC & P - Daily

We developed and deployed a Shared Mailbox Statistics Reporting automation to provide consistent, data-driven insight into email volumes and performance across multiple council mailboxes. The primary objective was to replace manual monitoring with an automated, repeatable reporting process that delivered clear and timely operational metrics. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to extract key statistics from each shared mailbox, including completed, incoming, and outstanding email volumes, average email age, and the oldest outstanding item, with additional SAP-based analysis for specific mailboxes covering vendor creation, amendments, queries, and blocking activities. The automation incorporates robust exception handling for undelivered emails, comprehensive logging, and automatically emails stakeholders a summary report containing an HTML-formatted table of key metrics and a dynamic bar chart for visual clarity. The outcome was a reliable reporting solution that improved transparency, reduced manual effort, and enabled more effective workload management and performance oversight.

Food Business Registration – 3X weekly

We developed and deployed a Food Business Registration Upload automation to streamline the handling of registration forms within the Civica APP system. The primary objective was to eliminate the manual effort involved in uploading food business registration forms received via email, ensuring timely and consistent updates for the Environmental Health service. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to monitor a dedicated inbox for incoming registration emails, extract the required details, and upload the original PDF forms directly into the relevant records via the Complaints Update screen in Civica APP. The outcome was an efficient and reliable process that saved approximately 15 minutes per transaction, improved data consistency, and ensured registrations were processed promptly and accurately.

BIDs Refund – 3X weekly

We developed and deployed an automated BIDs Refund process to streamline the handling of refund requests for overpaid BID levies. The primary objective was to reduce manual effort, improve accuracy, and accelerate the refund process. To achieve this, we utilised UiPath RPA to extract refund request forms from NECDM, validate details against NEC BIDS, populate a pre-formatted Excel template, and email the refund request to the relevant BID company. The outcome was a fully automated solution running on a scheduled basis, delivering benefits such as faster processing, improved data integrity, and reduced operational risk through automated logging and exception handling.

ASC Invoices - Weekly

We developed and deployed an automated ASC Invoices process to streamline the handling of care provider invoices within the MOSAIC system. The primary objective was to reduce manual effort, improve accuracy, and ensure timely record management for auditing and payment purposes. To achieve this, we utilised UiPath RPA to download invoices from Outlook, extract the MOSAIC ID, log into MOSAIC, and upload the invoice to the correct provider profile. The outcome was a fully automated solution running on a scheduled basis, delivering benefits such as faster processing, improved data integrity, and reduced operational risk through automated logging and exception handling.

Air Quality Data Extract – As necessary

We developed and deployed an Air Quality Data Extract automation to support the Power BI team in delivering an air quality dashboard. The primary objective was to resolve an ingestion issue caused by source files being received in legacy .XLS format, which was incompatible with the dashboard pipeline. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to automatically receive the .XLS files, convert them into .XLSX format, and securely save them to SharePoint for ingestion. The outcome was a streamlined, hands-free process that eliminated manual intervention, reduced the risk of data handling errors, and ensured timely, consistent data availability for reporting and analysis.

Performance Dashboard Data Extract – Monthly

We developed and deployed an automation that extracts two files from six different systems, converts them into .XLSX format, and saves them to SharePoint for

ingestion into a performance dashboard, ensuring consistent and timely data availability.

Change of Tenants – Daily

We developed and deployed a Change of Tenants automation in alignment with IEG4 to streamline the processing of landlord-submitted forms received via the Southwark website. The primary objective was to reduce manual effort for the Revenue Team by enabling updates to tenant records within NEC Revenue & Benefits. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to extract data from XML files generated by the IEG4 process, transform it into a CSV in the required format, and save it to a shared network drive. The outcome was an integrated, end-to-end process that enabled IEG4's automation to upload the data directly into NEC Revenue & Benefits, improving processing efficiency, data accuracy, and turnaround times while reducing the risk of human error

Premise Update Request – Twice weekly

We developed and deployed a Premise Update Request automation to improve the management of premise records within Civica APP. The primary objective was to reduce the administrative burden and ensure timely processing of change requests submitted by business users who do not have direct access to the system. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to automatically pick up requests submitted via Chaplin, which were previously received by administrators via email, and apply the required updates in Civica APP. This includes creating new premises, editing existing records, and deactivating or reactivating premises. The outcome was a streamlined and efficient process that saved administrator time, ensured prompt and consistent updates, and improved overall data accuracy and service responsiveness.

Council Properties Update – On request

We developed and deployed a Council Properties Update automation to improve the accuracy of property ownership data within the NEC Revenue & Benefits system. The primary objective was to ensure the Revenue Team had reliable information on which properties are council-owned, as these properties follow distinct rules and processes. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to process an Excel file provided by the team, automatically accessing property profiles in NEC Revenue & Benefits to remove incorrect council ownership indicators and then reapply the tick box only to properties confirmed as council owned. The outcome was a cleansed and accurate dataset that improved operational decision-making, reduced the risk of incorrect processing, and strengthened data integrity across the system.

Noise Complaints – Daily

We developed and deployed a Noise Complaints automation to support the efficient handling of complaints submitted by Southwark residents via the website. The primary objective was to reduce the manual effort required by the Noise Complaints team, who previously had to transfer multiple complaint records into Civica APP each day. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to automatically upload complaint data from the website into Civica APP. The outcome was a faster, more reliable process that improved data accuracy, reduced administrative workload, and ensured complaints were recorded promptly, enabling the team to respond more effectively to residents.

Email Address Cleanser – One Off

We developed and deployed an Email Address Cleanser automation to improve data quality within the NEC Revenue & Benefits system, which maintains profiles for both people and places to support Council Tax and related services. The primary objective was to remove invalid email addresses that were impacting communication and data integrity. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to process a report containing approximately 2,400 invalid email addresses, automatically accessing the relevant profiles in NEC Revenue & Benefits and closing the incorrect email records. The outcome was a cleaner, more reliable dataset that improved communication accuracy, reduced failed correspondence, and strengthened overall system data quality.

NRS Data Extract

We developed and deployed an NRS Data Preservation automation to protect critical equipment monitoring data following the liquidation of the NRS system used by the council. The primary objective was to ensure no resident equipment data was lost during the unplanned system closure. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to automatically extract daily reports over a three-week period and store them securely. The outcome was a successful data preservation effort that mitigated risk, maintained data continuity, and safeguarded essential records during the transition.

Service Charge Refund - weekly

We developed and deployed a Service Charge Refund automation to streamline the processing of refund requests submitted by Southwark residents via the website. The primary objective was to reduce manual handling and ensure accurate, timely updates to refund records once applications had been approved. To achieve this, we

utilised RPA to automatically pick up both the original application and the signed-off payment request document from NEC Document Management and update the corresponding refund request in NEC Housing with the validated bank details. The outcome was an efficient, end-to-end process that improved processing times, reduced the risk of data entry errors, and ensured residents received refunds promptly and accurately.

Bulk Upload Creator – Twice Weekly

The Bulk Upload Creator is an automated process designed to streamline how service charge adjustments are prepared for upload into the NEC Housing system. Previously, the team manually reformatted Excel reports into the required .dat file, which was time-consuming and prone to errors. The automation now monitors a shared network folder, extracts the necessary data from Excel files, and converts it into a correctly structured .dat format. The purpose of the automation is to reduce manual effort, eliminate formatting errors, and ensure that the bulk upload data is delivered quickly and consistently. The key objectives are to improve accuracy, enhance operational efficiency, reduce turnaround time, and create a reliable, repeatable method of processing service charge adjustments.

FS Score Update – One off

We developed and deployed a Food Safety Score Update automation to support compliance with a change in legislation affecting food business records held in Civica. The primary objective was to efficiently update existing records with the new Food Safety (FS) score and investigation date, ensuring the data remained accurate and legally compliant. To achieve this, we utilised RPA to process a text file containing approximately 300 record numbers and their corresponding new FS scores, automatically accessing each record in Civica and applying the required updates. The outcome was a timely and accurate bulk update process that reduced manual effort, minimised the risk of errors, and ensured continued compliance with regulatory requirements.

Collating Final Account Letters - Weekly

The Collating Final Accounts process automates the preparation and distribution of Major Works invoices to account holders. Previously, staff manually reviewed, split, and matched summary letters and invoices before sending them to each account holder. The automated workflow now extracts two bulk PDFs from the shared network drive, separates the documents into individual letters and invoices, matches them using the property reference number, combines the correct documents into a single pack for each recipient, and produces an audit spreadsheet. The purpose of

automating this process is to remove manual effort, reduce processing time, and eliminate human error. The objective is to ensure each account holder receives the correct documents reliably and consistently, while improving operational efficiency, accuracy, and reporting visibility.

Benefit Overpayment Closure – One off

An error was identified in Housing Benefit claims for Temporary Accommodation tenants within NEC Revenue and Benefits, affecting approximately 1,260 accounts with outstanding overpayments requiring recovery. The affected cases were provided via a spreadsheet containing claim numbers and transaction details. An RPA solution was implemented to automate the correction process. The bot extracted case details from the spreadsheet into a processing queue, logged into NEC Revenue and Benefits, and searched for each relevant claim number. It navigated to the outstanding overpayments table and located the relevant transaction. If the transaction status was marked as suspended, the bot skipped the case. For all other transactions, the bot cross-referenced the start date, end date, amount, reason code, and recovery start date. Once validated, the bot opened the transaction, removed the recovery start date, and updated the recovery action to ‘HOU – Rents’. A case note was then added to the account.

In UAT

- **Customer Creation & Amendment** - We are automating the creation and amendment of customer records in SAP by extracting data from macro-enabled Excel request forms emailed to the FC & P Customers inbox and processing them directly in SAP, ensuring accurate validation and profile updates.

- **Adult Safeguarding** - We are automating the uploading of adult social safeguarding referrals from multiple sources, including the ambulance, police, professionals, friends, family, and staff. The robot will be uploading the heavy data directly into the MOSAIC system.

- **Rent Refunds** - We are automating the processing of rent refund applications submitted via the Southwark website by extracting approved cases from NEC DM, updating NEC Housing with unauthorised transactions, and logging outcomes in Excel for correspondence.

In Development

- **Service Charge** - We are automating the initial stage of the Revenue Service Charge process by extracting CSV repair data from emails, separating records by contractor into their respective service areas, and distributing the organised sheets to the relevant team members for further analysis of rechargeable costs.

In Discovery

- MASH
- Payment Processing- Trees
- BACs Refund
- Assure management
- Garage Waiting List
- MRI Duplicate Records
- Mortgage Team Letters
- Remise UPRN Update
- Premise Ward Code Update
- Liability Order Enforcements

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Record of Administrative Decision made by an Officer

Decision Maker	Decision Type	Date
TBC **(Executive Director / Director with delegated authority)**	**Administrative Decision between £5k and £100k**	**09/10/2026**

Procurement of UiPath Unattended Robot and Associated RPA Platform Licensing [1]

Exempt/Confidential Report **Please delete as appropriate** **And include the relevant exemption**	~~**Yes**~~	**No**

Decision(s) [2]

To approve the procurement of UiPath Robotic Process Automation (RPA) platform licensing, including the UiPath Unattended Robot, at an indicative cost of approximately £18,000 per annum.

The licensing proposed in the UiPath comprises the UiPath Unified Platform, including:

- 1 x Unified Unattended Robot
- 2 x Unified Developer Licences
- 1 x Unified Test Robot

Cost: approximately £18,000 per annum (excluding VAT).

Term: A three-year term is agreed, the total cost would be approximately £54,000 (£18,000 x 3), subject to confirmation of pricing for years two and three.

Additional Costs: This is based on a one robot solution, should the programme scale up additional robots might need to be purchased.

Funding: year one is proposed to be funded from the IT Capital Programme, which already includes an allowance for RPA. Funding for subsequent years (revenue) this is to be confirmed by Finance.

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[1] A brief title should be inserted here.

[2] Brief details of the decision should be inserted. This note must set out the substance of the decision, options considered and the reason for deciding on the chosen option, although care must be taken not to disclose any confidential or exempt information. Please include proposed timescales for commencement and / or completion of implementation as appropriate.

The decision is within an approved budget	**Yes**	
Does the Directorate Scheme of Delegation authorise the Decision Maker to make this decision	**Yes**	
Does the decision raise new issues of policy		**No**
*** Please refer to constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk**		

Reasons for the decision(s)[3]

The Council faces sustained financial pressure, increasing service demand and workforce capacity challenges. Many internal processes remain manual, repetitive and time-consuming, including data entry, reconciliations, case updates, document handling and cross-system checks.

RPA offers a proven way to reduce this administrative burden by automating repetitive, rules-based tasks through the same system screens staff use, without major system replacement. UiPath provides the technology platform on which these automations are built, scheduled, run and monitored. Unattended robots process work without a member of staff present, which is what allows automations to run on a schedule, work through queues of transactions and operate outside normal working hours.

The platform is needed for the Council to:

- Run automations of repetitive, rules-based processes unattended, at volume and on a schedule
- Operate automations safely and supportably, with central scheduling, monitoring, alerting and exception handling through Orchestrator
- Apply governance and control, including a secure credential vault, role-based access and separate development, test and production use
- Provide auditability, with logging of every transaction processed and status reports for service owners
- Support service continuity, with exceptions referred to staff and documented fallback to manual processing
- Deploy automation across different Council services and systems, such as social care, revenues and benefits, finance and environmental health, without needing APIs

[3] Reasons for the decision must be given.

UiPath is a leading RPA platform widely adopted across UK public services. It was used to deliver the automations recorded in the RPA Project List at another local authority, including high-volume social care referrals, revenues and benefits transactions, and data extraction that supported the decommissioning of legacy systems. Equivalent opportunities in Oldham will be confirmed through discovery.

Without the platform, the Council cannot run production automations. Benefits will be baselined and tracked for each automation as part of the RPA benefits management process, and further licensing will only be sought where benefits are evidenced.

Options/Alternatives considered [4]

Option 1: Do nothing. No RPA platform would be available, so manual processes would continue and the Council would not be able to run unattended automations. This would not address capacity pressures or backlogs and would give no opportunity to realise efficiency savings. Rejected.

Option 2: Continue with manual processes and add administrative capacity. This could relieve pressure in specific services but faces recruitment challenges and would increase ongoing salary and training costs. It would not address the underlying inefficiencies or system limitations. Rejected as a general solution.

Option 3: Commission bespoke system integrations. This could improve interoperability between systems but is a high-cost option with long delivery times and limited feasibility with legacy systems. Vendor support would be required, and it is not flexible when processes change. It remains appropriate where a supplier offers a suitable integration, but rejected as the general route.

Option 4: Adopt an alternative RPA platform. Other platforms exist (e.g. Blue Prism, Automation Anywhere) and have been considered, with demonstrations received. Microsoft Power Automate is also an option for simpler workflows, though unattended operation at scale needs additional licensing (TBC). UiPath offers stronger ease of use, wider public-sector adoption and more flexible licensing, and its document understanding and AI capabilities are more mature. Rejected.

Option 5: Procure UiPath licensing including the Unattended Robot (Recommended). This gives rapid deployment and early benefits, works with existing systems without requiring APIs, can scale across service areas and provides strong governance, audit and security features. Licensing starts at a modest level and is only scaled when benefits are evidenced.

Finance comments Error! Bookmark not defined.

Capital Implications

The proposed scheme represents both capital and revenue expenditure. The capital expenditure will be a charge against the Information Technology (IT) capital programme.

[4] Options must be given.

The estimated total cost of the capital scheme is £18,000 (excluding VAT) and will be defrayed in 2026/27, this represents the initial costs defrayed in relation to the establishing the Specialist Robotic Process Automation (RPA) project.

Provision exists within the capital programme against which this scheme will be a charge. (Jit Kara Senior Accountant)

Revenue Comments

Procurement comments Error! Bookmark not defined.

TBC – comments to be provided by Procurement, including the name of the officer providing them.

HR comment Error! Bookmark not defined.

TBC – comments to be provided by HR, including the name of the officer providing them.

Legal comments[5]

TBC – comments to be provided by Legal Services, including the name of the officer providing them.

……[6]

(Signature of Executive Director/Director)

Decision made pursuant to:

a) **Section 14.3.6 of Part 2 Articles of the Constitution (Administrative Decisions)**
b) **Section 11 of Part 3 Responsibility for Functions of the Constitution**
c) **General delegation under the Council's officer scheme of delegation**

[5]The name of the officer providing comments must be included and these MUST NOT be amended

[6]The signatory must be duly authorised by Executive Director to make a decision in accordance with the relevant sub-delegation scheme. It is not acceptable for the signature to be 'pp' for the authorised signatory.

Emergency Powers Decision Report

Appropriation of land for Planning Purposes for land at Southlink, St Mary's.

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Planning, Transport and Housing Delivery
Directorate: Place
Report Author: Ben Hill – Housing Delivery Team Leader
Email: ben.hill@oldhma.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 30th November 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in paragraph 3.6 of Part 4D (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council's Constitution that 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.

2. Decision Sought

It is recommended that the Council authorises the appropriation for planning purposes in respect to the Council owned land at Southlink, Oldham in accordance with the provisions of s122 of the Local Government Act 1972.

3. Reason for urgency

To enable the disposal of the land to Vistry to proceed.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

This will lead to a delay in the land being disposed of. The development will deliver 147 new affordable homes that will be let to households on Oldham's Housing Register which will be delayed should the appropriation not take place.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

The Council is due to receive a capital land receipt when the disposal to Vistry takes place. This will be delayed should this decision not be taken. External grant has also been secured from GMCA to be drawn down by the developer. This could also be at risk should the project be delayed.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 9 November 2026
Comments

The report authorises the appropriation for planning purposes in respect to the Council owned land at Southlink, Oldham in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.

At this stage there is no direct financial implications however, although not currently anticipated there maybe compensation claims to the Council arising from the appropriation of the land. The risk of this is assessed as low at this present time.

The Council owns 54.2% of site with 45.8% owned by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM). A future capital receipt is anticipated from the disposal of the vacant site. The final capital receipt will be known once the required terms and condition of the sale have been agreed.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef
Date 10 November 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 Chief Executive

Appropriation of land for Planning Purposes for land at Southlink, St Mary's.

Officer Contact: James Kington - Director of Growth

Report Author:
Ben Hill – Housing Delivery Team Leader

30th November 2026

Reason for Decision

The purpose of this report is to utilise powers under S122 of the Local Government Act 1972 to appropriate the 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 1, 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 recommends appropriation and notes that no objections have been received following the 4-week statutory consultation period.

Recommendations

It is recommended that following 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.

Appropriation of land for Planning Purposes for land at Southlink, St Mary's.

1 **Background**

1.1 During the course of de risking the site prior to disposal the purchaser has identified that the land proposed to be sold is subject to rights in favour of various adjoining properties on Southlink Business Park. It is not thought that any of those rights are exercised over the land being sold and that they were granted on the basis that the Business Park may expand.

1.2 The purchaser requires the rights to be extinguished as express release of the rights could be a long process with the owners of the properties who benefit from the rights. Appropriation of the rights by statutory means is considered the most efficient way of extinguishing the rights. Appropriation would be under the Local Government Act 1972.

1.3 The power contained in Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 effectively converts any right of way into a right to compensation which may arise from the interference with such rights, it also removes the potential for excessive financial claims and most importantly, it removes the potential for such owners or occupiers to frustrate the development by obtaining an injunction to prevent interference with their rights.

2 **Current Position**

2.1 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, authorised the in-principle appropriation of the land for Planning purposes, subject to the advertising in an appropriate publication of the proposal and allowing time for objections.

2.2 The intention to appropriate was advertised in the Manchester Evening News on 28th September 2026 and 12th October 2026. No objections were received.

2.3 Following the appropriation, Vistry Partnership will complete the purchase of the site to construct 147 affordable homes for First Choice Homes Oldham. The scheme will deliver 125 homes for Social Rent, 11 for Shared Ownership and 11 Rent to Buy with 97 apartments and 50 houses. All homes are being constructed to the low carbon 'Future Homes Standard'.

2.4 Full Planning Permission **(FUL/355201/25)** was granted in September 2026 and it is anticipated that the full construction programme will commence in early 2027.

3. Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1:

Not to utilise the powers contained in Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972. This option is not recommended as it would result in long delays

in delivering the proposed new homes.

3.2 Option 2:

To satisfy Vistry Partnership in terms to enable the timely development of new homes to be delivered, it is proposed that the Council appropriates the land shown edged red on the plan attached in Appendix 1 for planning purposes in accordance with Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 2 - It is considered preferable for the Council to utilise its powers under Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect to the site shown edged red on the attached plan.

5 Consultation

5.1 Ward Members were consulted on the disposal of the site to Vistry and were fully supporting of this decision. This report will be shared with the Corporate Property Board.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 It is not currently anticipated that there will be any compensation claims to the Council arising from the appropriation of the land.

6.2 If there are any successful compensation claims they will need to be met from within the existing Place revenue budget.

(James Postle)

7 Legal Implications

7.1 Under the Land and Property Protocol the Council is empowered to appropriate land for its statutory purposes by way of statute.

7.2 Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that a principal council may appropriate for any purpose for which the council are authorised by this or any other enactment to acquire land by agreement any land which belongs to the council and is no longer required for the purpose for which it is held immediately before the appropriation; but the appropriation of land by a council by virtue of this subsection shall be subject to the rights of other persons in, over or in respect of the land concerned. The key legal test is whether the land is no longer required for its existing purpose. In determining this the council will need to carry out a balancing act to determine if the public need for the existing use of the land can be adequately met by other facilities or by replacement facilities.

7.3 Appropriation of land for planning purposes means the appropriation of it for purposes for which land could have been acquired under section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 i.e. if the Council think that the acquisition (appropriation) will facilitate the carrying out of development, redevelopment or improvement (including regeneration) on or in relation to the land and the Council

think that the development redevelopment or improvement (including regeneration) is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following objects – (a) the promotion or improvement (including regeneration) of the economic well-being of their area (b) the promotion or improvement (including regeneration) of the social wellbeing of their area (c) the promotion or improvement (including regeneration) of the environmental wellbeing of their area.

7.4 In summary, it has been determined that the statutory test has been passed, and the Council is able to confirm that the land is no longer required for the purpose for which it was held immediately before the appropriation.

7.5 The report notes that no objections were received following the advertisement authorised by the first stage report

7.6 This report is a second-stage report.

7.7 The author of the report has confirmed continued compliance with the Council's Land and Property Protocol.

(Rebecca Butterworth, Solicitor)

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

8.1 Not Applicable

9 **Key Decision**

9.1 Yes

10 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 KDD-26-53

12 **Background Papers**

12.1 The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act.

13 **Appendices**

13.1 Appropriation of land for Planning Purposes for land at Southlink, St Mary's – August 2026.

13.2 Red line Plan of Council owned land.

Report to CABINET

Appropriation of land for Planning Purposes for land at Southlink, St Mary's.

Officer Contact: James Kington - Director of Growth

Report Author:
Ben Hill – Housing Delivery Team Leader

24th August 2026

Reason for Decision

The purpose of the report is to seek authority for the Council to utilise the powers under s122 of the Local Government Act 1972 to appropriate the 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.

This report recommends that land at Southlink be advertised of the Council's intention to appropriate land for Planning Purposes. Any objections to the proposed appropriation received will be contained in a future Stage 2 report with further recommendations.

Under the Council's Property Protocols decisions relating to the appropriation of land are made in two stages. The first stage (subject) report is to recommend the in-principle appropriation of the land for Planning purposes, subject to the advertising in an appropriate publication of the proposal and allowing time for objections. The second stage (future) report will make recommendations for appropriation as mixed use having regard to any objections which have been received during the consultation period.

Recommendations

It is recommended 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 One of the report) in accordance with the provisions of s122 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Appropriation of land

1 Background

1.1 In March 2022 Cabinet approved for the Council to carry out a competitive land sale of vacant land at Southlink jointly with land owned by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to a developer/house builder. The Council own 54.2% of site and TfGM 45.8%. Any capital receipt received for the land would be split on this basis. This is shown at Appendix 2.

1.2 A competitive land sale exercise was completed to secure a developer and Tilia Homes were appointed in August 2022. In June 2023 Tilia withdrew from the sale as they were unable to deliver the scheme.

1.3 In September 2023, Corporate Property Board approved that the site be re-marketed as a land disposal with a greater emphasis placed on deliverability and conditionality.

1.4 The Vistry Partnership was chosen to develop land at Southlink following the completion of a competitive land sale process. Officers have worked with Vistry to prepare a Planning Application to deliver 146 affordable homes, including 32 at Social Rent, with all homes constructed to the low carbon 'Future Homes Standard'.

2 Current Position

2.1 During the course of de risking the site prior to disposal the purchaser has identified that the land proposed to be sold is subject to rights in favour of various adjoining properties on Southlink Business Park. It is not thought that any of those rights are exercised over the land being sold and that they were granted on the basis that the Business Park may expand.

2.2 The purchaser requires the rights to be extinguished as express release of the rights could be a long process with the owners of the properties who benefit from the rights. Appropriation of the rights by statutory means is considered the most efficient way of extinguishing the rights. Appropriation would be under the Local Government Act 1972.

2.3 Where land is acquired or appropriated for planning purposes, it is then held by the Council under the statutory provisions of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972. The practical consequence of this is that the erection, construction or carrying out of any maintenance of any building or work on the land and subsequent use of the land, is authorised under those planning powers, if the works are done in accordance with planning permission, even if they interfere with third party rights. The rights are overridden whether the Local Authority or a person deriving title from it undertakes the development.

2.4 The power contained in Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 effectively converts any right of way into a right to compensation which may arise from the interference with such rights, it also removes the potential for excessive financial

claims and most importantly, it removes the potential for such owners or occupiers to frustrate the development by obtaining an injunction to prevent interference with their rights.

3. Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1:

Not to utilise the powers contained in Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972. This option is not recommended as it would result in long delays in delivering the proposed new homes.

3.2 Option 2:

To satisfy Vistry Partnership in terms to enable the timely development of new homes to be delivered, it is proposed that the Council appropriates the land shown edged red on the plan attached in Appendix 1 for planning purposes in accordance with Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 2 - It is considered preferable for the Council to utilise its powers under Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect to the site shown edged red on the attached plan.

5 Consultation

5.1 Ward Members were consulted on the disposal of the site to Vistry and were fully supporting of this decision. This report will be shared with the Corporate Property Board.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 It is not currently anticipated that there will be any compensation claims to the Council arising from the appropriation of the land.

6.2 If there are any successful compensation claims they will need to be met from within the existing Place revenue budget.

(James Postle)

7 Legal Implications

7.1 Under the Land and Property Protocol the Council is empowered to appropriate land for its statutory purposes by way of statute.

7.2 Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that a principal council may appropriate for any purpose for which the council are authorised by this or any other enactment to acquire land by agreement any land which belongs to the council and is no longer required for the purpose for which it is held immediately before the appropriation; but the appropriation of land by a council by virtue of this subsection shall be subject to the rights of other persons in, over or in respect of

the land concerned. The key legal test is whether the land is no longer required for its existing purpose. In determining this the council will need to carry out a balancing act to determine if the public need for the existing use of the land can be adequately met by other facilities or by replacement facilities.

7.3 Appropriation of land for planning purposes means the appropriation of it for purposes for which land could have been acquired under section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 i.e. if the Council think that the acquisition (appropriation) will facilitate the carrying out of development, redevelopment or improvement (including regeneration) on or in relation to the land and the Council think that the development redevelopment or improvement (including regeneration) is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following objects – (a) the promotion or improvement (including regeneration) of the economic well-being of their area (b) the promotion or improvement (including regeneration) of the social wellbeing of their area (c) the promotion or improvement (including regeneration) of the environmental wellbeing of their area.

7.4 In accordance with Section 122 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may not appropriate it unless before doing so, it gives notice of its intention to be advertised on two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the land is situated. The Council must consider any objections lodged before making a decision either for disposal or retention of the land having regard to those objections.

7.5 The Council's Land and Property Protocol states that decisions to appropriate open space must be made in two stages. The first stage report is to recommend the in-principle appropriation of the subject land to be re-classified as mixed use subject to the advertising of the proposal and allowing time for objections.

7.6 This report is a first stage report.

7.7 The relevant process set out in the Council's Land and Property Protocol must be followed.

7.8 The author of the report has confirmed continued compliance with the Council's Land and Property Protocol.

(Rebecca Butterworth, Solicitor)

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

8.1 Not Applicable

9 **Key Decision**

9.1 Yes

10 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 RBO-12-26

12 **Background Papers**

12.1 The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act.

13 Appendices

13.1 Red line Plan of Council owned land
13.2 Red Line Plan of site

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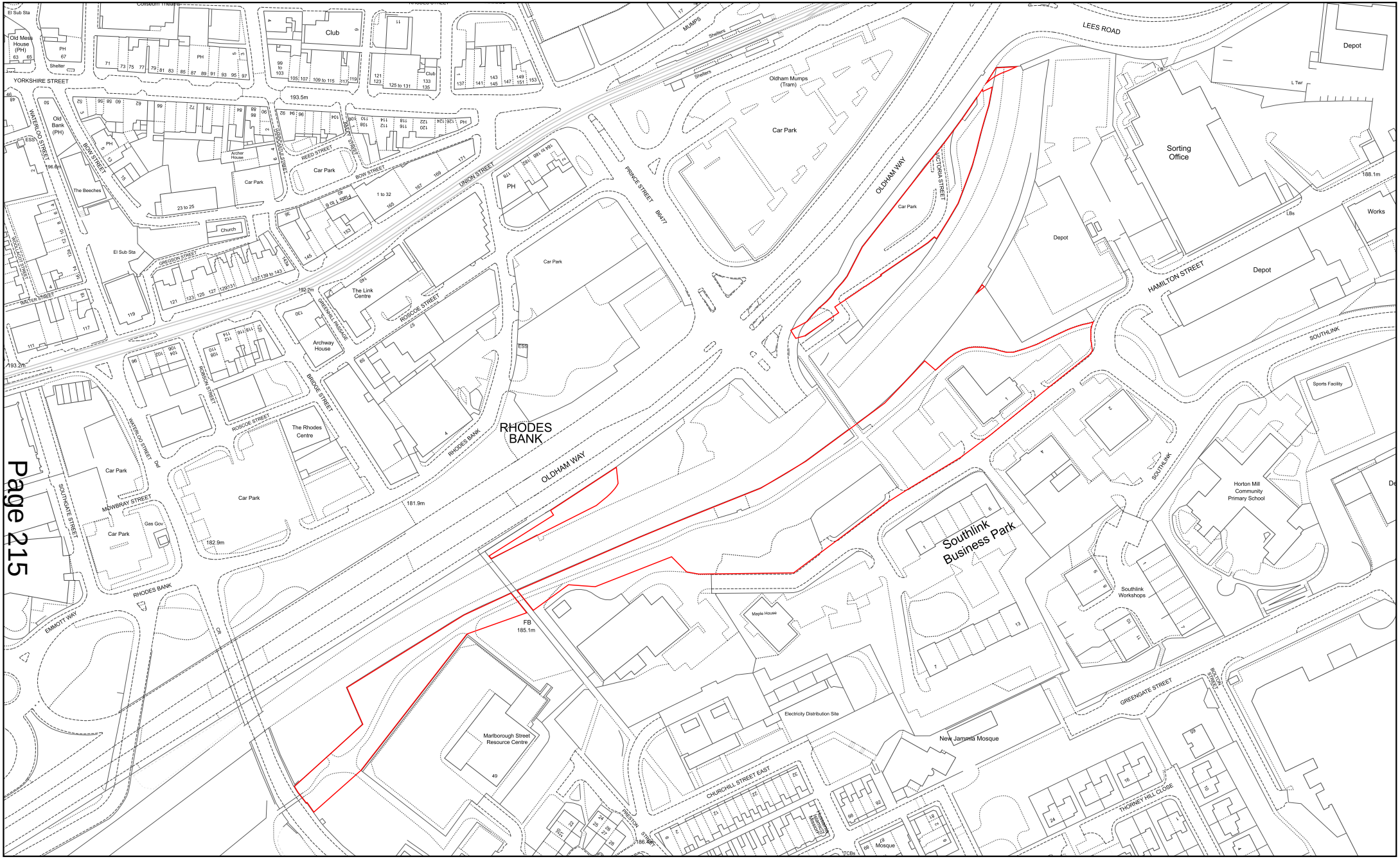

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Date:	14/07/2026
Drawing No.	

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Emergency Powers Decision Report

Highways Asset Management & Professional Services Framework

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: 30TH 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 establishment and procurement of a new Highways Asset Management & Professional Services Framework to provide a compliant route to market for specialist highways asset management, engineering and professional services requirements. The framework will be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement Act 2023 and will provide access to suitably qualified suppliers through a robust quality and value for money evaluation process. This will support the ongoing management, maintenance and improvement of the Council's highway assets and ensure the Council remains compliant with relevant statutory obligations and Department for Transport reporting requirements

3. Reason for urgency

The matter is urgent as the current arrangements do not provide the long-term compliant procurement route required to support the Council's ongoing highways asset management activities. Timely approval is necessary to ensure there is no interruption in access to specialist professional services that are essential for

maintaining compliance with Department for Transport (DfT) asset management, transparency reporting and incentive funding requirements.

The establishment of the framework will ensure the Council is best placed to respond to current and future funding opportunities as they arise and will support the continued delivery of highways maintenance and asset management activities across the borough. Delay in approval could adversely impact the Council's ability to secure external funding, maximise investment opportunities and continue to adopt best practice asset management principles in line with national guidance.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

Failure to approve the establishment of the framework would present several significant risks to the Council, including:

- Lack of a compliant procurement route for specialist highways asset management and professional services.
- Increased risk of non-compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement Act 2023.
- Reduced ability to demonstrate compliance with Department for Transport transparency reporting and asset management requirements.
- Increased risk of losing access to current and future DfT incentive funding and other external funding opportunities.
- Potential failure to secure best value for money through a competitive procurement process incorporating both quality and commercial evaluation criteria.
- Increased procurement costs and delays arising from the need to undertake individual procurements for each commission.
- 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

Whilst there are no direct financial implications associated with establishing the framework itself, failure to approve the framework could result in significant indirect financial consequences.

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. In addition, the absence of a framework would require services to be commissioned through individual procurement exercises, creating additional resource demands, delays and procurement costs.

The framework will ensure that all professional services procured through it are subject to robust quality and value for money assessments, providing assurance that the Council obtains the most economically advantageous outcomes whilst maintaining high standards of service delivery. Failure to establish the framework may therefore result in increased procurement costs, reduced efficiencies and poorer overall value for money

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 5 November 2026
Comments

There are no direct financial implications arising from the establishment of the proposed Highways Asset Management & Professional Services Framework.

The framework will provide a compliant procurement route for the commissioning of specialist highways asset management and professional services, supporting adherence to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and relevant procurement legislation. Its use is expected to promote value for money, facilitate efficient procurement processes, and provide flexibility to access appropriately qualified suppliers as required, thereby supporting the effective delivery and management of the Council's highways assets.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef
Date: 10 November 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

Highways Asset Management & Professional Services Framework

Officer Contact:
Emma Barton – Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Report Author:
Gordon Anderson – Assistant Director Highways and Engineering

30th November 2026

Reason for Decision

This report requests approval to establish new framework to provide specialist asset management & professional services to ensure continued compliance with Department for Transport (DfT) transparency reporting and incentive funding. This will 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.

Recommendations

That Cabinet approval is given to establish a new Highways Asset Management & Professional Services Framework.

Leader's Consultative Session **30th November 2026**

Highway Asset Management & Professional Services Framework

1 Background

1.1 This paper sets out the requirement to establish a new framework to ensure Oldham's ability to access necessary specialist asset management consultants and expertise to aid the ongoing alignment with DfT Transparency reporting requirements and ensure all available incentive funding is received.

2 Current Position

2.1 The value of the new framework is estimated to be circa £11,000,000 over the full term of the agreement. This new framework will be acquired in compliance with the Council's Contract Procurement Rules and the Procurement Act 2023.

2.2 As a co-operative Council, we want to ensure a fair and open process that delivers high performance. The framework will be acquired by either publishing a tender or via an existing, non-Oldham framework. Selection criteria will be a combination of Qualitive (ability, experience, capability and health & safety considerations), Commercial and Social Values offers.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 **Option 1** – To approve the report and allow Oldham Council Procurement to establish a new framework for Highways Asset Management & Professional Services. This will ensure that delivery complies with Oldham Council Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement Act 2023, whilst also delivering the best value for money.

Option 2 – Not to approve the report, which is not considered viable, as the consequence of this will leave the Council in breach of Oldham Council Contract Procedure Rules, unless each scheme is individually quoted or tendered for, which is considered an inefficient procurement method, and would not provide best value.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 **Option 1** – To approve the report and allow Oldham Council Procurement to establish a new framework for Highways Asset Management & Professional Services. This will ensure that delivery complies with Oldham Council Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement Act 2023, whilst also delivering the best value for money.

5 Consultation

5.1 N/A

6 Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implication of setting up the asset management and professional services framework. However, the use of the framework should ensure that the Council complies with the Contract Procedure rules and EU regulations, and that the Council receives value for money when procuring services.

Leonnie Wharton-Brown, Senior Accountant

7 **Legal Implications**

7.1 I am content with the proposal which is lawful and will assist the Council to comply with tis statutory duties.
Bryan Boese - Solicitor

8. **Procurement Comments**

8.1 Procurement has been engaged to develop this framework. The framework will extended to Greater Manchester based councils for access subject to Council's approval for permitting call off against this framework by other councils. The framework will be under PA 23 regulations and will be a closed framework for a maximum period of 4 years.
Sandeep Kapoor – Senior Category Manager, Procurement

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

9.1 Yes refer to Appendix 1

10 **Key Decision**

10.1 Yes

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 KDD-26-26

12 **Background Papers**

12.1 N/A

13 **Appendices**

13.1 Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

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Report to the Chief Executive – Part A

Direct Award - Fleet Managed Stores

Officer Contact: Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive

Report Author: Dave Durham (Fleet Manager)
Email: Dave.durham@oldham.gov.uk

30 November 2026

Reason for Decision
This report seeks approval to appoint a fleet parts supplier for the council. This is 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.

Executive Summary
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.

Oldham's Fleet consists of over 100 vehicles and around 1000 items of plant equipment that are maintained at the workshop.

Recommendations
To award a four-year contract for the supply of vehicle parts, tyres and workshop equipment through an established procurement framework.

Insert date of pre-scrutiny meeting 19 November 2026
Insert date of Leaders' consultative meeting 30 November 2026

Direct Award – Fleet Managed Stores

1 Background

1.1 Approximately 20 years ago, a tender process was undertaken to outsource the management of fleet stores. This resulted in savings for the council and ensured a suitable and timely provision of parts and equipment needed to sustain the council's fleet.

2 Current Position

2.1 The Fleet Management Stores at Moorhey Street is currently operated by an external company who have held the contract since the initial procurement exercise. This contract is due for renewal, and this report seeks approval, following procurement advice, to enter into a new 4-year contract.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1: To approve the contract award.

3.2 Option 2: To not approve the award.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 1: To approve the award of Fleet Managed Stores.

5 Consultation

5.1 N/A

6 Financial Implications

6.1 Financial implications are contained within Part B of the report.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 Provided that the call-off is awarded in accordance with the framework terms and conditions, this represents a compliant procurement route to market.

7.2 As the proposed award is to the incumbent provider, any performance issues or contract management matters (if any) arising during the current contract should be reviewed and, where appropriate, addressed through the terms of the new call-off contract and associated contract management arrangements.

7.3 Legal Services will be available to support the review and completion of the call-off documentation, and to advise on any amendments or additional contractual protections considered necessary before contract execution.

(Pamela Nsofor, Solicitor)

8 Procurement Implications

8.1 Procurement comments are contained within Part B of the report.

(Lena Bogossian, Senior Category Manager)

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-26-33

12 **Appendices and Background Papers**

12.1 Appendix 1 is contained in Part B of the report.

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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Emergency Powers Decision Report

Sustainable Rainwater Management donation

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Highways & Engineering
Directorate: Place Directorate
Report Author: Jason Denniston
Email: Jason.denniston@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 30th Nov 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
Acceptance of the donation of £360,100 from United Utilities Plc's Sustainable Rainwater Management Programme

3. Reason for urgency
Payment milestones are due for payment.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision
George Square scheme finances will come under pressure for contractor payments.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward
Loss of UU funding

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 5 November 2026
Comments

The recommendation to accept the donation of £360,100 from United Utilities. The funding will provide a valuable contribution towards the delivery and long-term sustainability of the sustainable urban drainage and soft landscaping infrastructure associated with the George Square scheme and does not create any immediate call on Council resources.

The funding will initially be accounted for as revenue grant income. However, a proportion of the funding may be applied to capital expenditure and, where appropriate, will be transferred to the Capital Programme. Any future proposals to utilise the funding for capital works will be subject to separate approval and will need to demonstrate compliance with the Council's capitalisation criteria and financial regulations.

The acceptance of the donation represents a positive funding opportunity for the Council and supports the delivery of environmental improvements without creating an unfunded capital commitments.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef
Date 10 November 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

Sustainable Rainwater Management donation

Officer Contact: Emma Barton – Deputy Chief Executive - Place

Report Author: Jason Denniston – Highways & Engineering
Email: Jason.denniston@oldham.gov.uk

30th Nov 2026

Reason for Decision
The report seeks 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.

Recommendations
1. Option 1 is 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.
2. Option 2 is not to accept the donation of £360,100 and forgo the additional funding contribution to the construction and future maintenance costs of the scheme.

Pre-Decision Scrutiny Meeting **19th Nov 2026**
Leaders' Consultative Session **30th Nov 2026**

Sustainable Rainwater Management donation

1 Background

1.1 In 2023-25 Oldham Council collaborated with United Utilities Plc on delivering five sustainable rainwater management projects in Oldham Town Centre through the United Utilities Green Recovery Fund.

The Council received £2.6m of funding used in the construction of sustainable urban drainage solutions (SUDS) in Oldham Town Centre supplementing capital highway improvement projects. The infrastructure is designed to reduce, eliminate and/or manage rainwater to United Utilities' combined sewerage system from Council land and/or adopted highway catchment areas.

Following the successes of the Green Recovery programme, United Utilities Plc have actively fortified the partnership working relationship with Oldham Council's Highways & Engineering Team and Lead Local Flood Alleviation Officer (LLFA) in the pursuit of identifying future projects that are eligible for similar funding through the Advanced WINEP Rainwater Management Programme.

This iteration of funding focuses on unlocking rainwater management solutions in Oldham's storm overflow catchment areas which go beyond their requirements set out in their 2025 – 30 environmental programme.

The programme drives £281m of investment (£231m through UUW and £50m leveraged from Partners) for delivering wider environmental outcomes by removing conventional regulatory barriers of timeframes, geography and penalties to allow Oldham Council to flexibly co-plan and co-deliver with United Utilities as partners.

The donation offer is a precursor to an emerging partnership agreement that offers the Council access to £50m of the £281m budget through the Sustainable Rainwater Programme. Dialogue continues with Key Internal Stakeholders from both Parties with the aim of amicably agreeing a set of separate legal agreements tailored to specific circumstance and infrastructure on the assumption that it leads to significant investment in Oldham.

The donation offer is a standalone opportunity in the 2026/27 fiscal year and is a contribution to a scheme that provides benefits to the United Utilities Plc owned combined sewer asset by removing and managing surface water run-off effectively.

The donation has been the subject of an application process led by the Highways & Engineering Team in collaboration with United Utilities that demonstrates the removal and therefore unnecessary transportation and treatment of surface water at source that that in turn increases capacity to accommodate additional discharging of treatable effluent synonymous with new developments i.e. housing, businesses and buildings.

The mutually beneficial infrastructure installed at George Square significantly contributes to both Parties and in Oldham Council's case the wider Creating a Better Place programme i.e. development.

Oldham's inaugural Sustainable Rainwater Management scheme is the first contribution to a much larger initiative, as United Utilities seek to reduce the number of combined sewer overflow spillages and the negative impact they have on both local and regional environments and rivers.

The donation can be considered as an enabler for the Council to begin implementing policies outlined in Oldham's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Oldham and the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy through Third Party funding.

2 Current Position

2.1 UU have sent OMBC a letter of success for the total donation of £360,100

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1 is 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

Option 2 is not to accept the donation of £360,100 and forgo the additional funding contribution to the construction and future maintenance costs of the scheme.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 1

5 Consultation

5.1 Finance & Legal have been consulted and feed is stated below.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The Council has been awarded £360.100 from United Utilities, which is to be used as a contribution to the construction and long-term maintenance costs of the sustainable urban drainage and soft landscaping infrastructure at George Square. This report outlines the acceptance of the donation.

The preferred option is to accept the donation of £360,100. This will be initially treated as revenue grant.

Further work is 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 is expected to be utilised within the Capital Programme.

Any proportion of the grant to be spent on capital works will be transferred to the Capital Programme as a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO).

If capital projects are identified for funding, a report will be required to set out the proposed works to ensure they meet the criteria to be capitalised

This donation will be closely monitored to ensure compliance with the donation agreement and that all expenditure is maintained within the allocation.

(John Edisbury/Leonnie Wharton-Brown)

7 **Legal Implications**

7.1 Legal Services have reviewed the Donation Agreement and are satisfied that the terms agreed with United Utilities are acceptable. The Agreement provides for the donation funding to be paid in instalments linked to the achievement of specified project milestones, with the funding being released in separate stages as those milestones are met.

Any works commissioned using the donated funding must comply with the Procurement Act procurement rules.

Pamela Nsofor (Solicitor)

8. **Procurement Implications**

8.1 N/A

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

9.1 N/A

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 reference number is: KDD-26-34

12 **Appendices & Background Papers**

12.1 Donation Agreement - Works - George Square-Oldham Council-August 2026
12.2 SWF letter of success - George Square

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

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Sustainable Water Fund

Date: 10/03/2026

Dear Jason,

Successful Application – Oldham Council

Project – George Square

Following your submission to United Utilities Sustainable Water Fund for the above referenced project, I am writing to confirm that **your application has been successful.**

I can confirm that the Project has been approved to donate £360,100 to attenuate 0.63 hectares, as per your submission.

In order to proceed, the donation agreement provided during the application stage will need to be signed by both parties. We will prepare the agreement accordingly and share it with you for final approval shortly.

We look forward to working with you and discussing the project in more detail soon.

Yours sincerely,



Sharma Jencitis
Rainwater Partnership Manager (Rainwater Management)
Sharma.jencitis@uuplc.co.uk
rainwater@uuplc.co.uk

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Dated **September 2026**

UNITED UTILITIES WATER LIMITED

OLDHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

DONATION AGREEMENT- ACTIVITIES

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The Schedule

Annex B

Appended Information 16

This Agreement is made on 2026

Parties

(1) **United Utilities Water Limited** (No. 02366678) whose registered office is at Haweswater House, Lingley Mere Business Park, Lingley Green Avenue, Great Sankey, Warrington, WA5 3LP ("**the Company**"); and

(2) **Oldham Council** whose registered office is at Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham OL1 1UH ("the **Beneficiary**"),

each a **party** and together the **parties**.

Background

(A) The Beneficiary intends to undertake the Project described in the Schedule.

(B) The Company has agreed to contribute the Donation Amount to the Project for the purposes of the Activities described in the Schedule, subject to the terms of this Agreement.

Agreed Terms

1 Definitions and Interpretation

1.1 The following definitions and rules of interpretation in this clause apply in this Agreement:

Applicable Laws means any binding Court order, judgment or decree, and any law, statute, regulation, bylaw, ordinance, subordinate legislation, industry licence, code, policy, guidance, standard or accreditation terms enforceable by law which is in force and/or which is stipulated by any relevant regulatory authority (including any licences granted under the Water Act 1989 and/or the Water Industry Act 1991);

Beneficiary's Representative means the person appointed as such in the Schedule;

Bribery Act means the Bribery Act 2010;

Certificate of Completion has the meaning given to it in clause 6 (Completion of the Activities and ongoing maintenance);

Commenced has the meaning given to it at clause 2.3 and **Commences** and **Commencement** shall be interpreted accordingly;

Commencement Deadline has the meaning given to it in the Schedule, subject to clause 2.4;

Company's Group means Company, and any subsidiary or holding company for the time being of the Company or any other subsidiary for the time being of that holding company;

Company's Representative means the person appointed as such in the Schedule**;**

Confidential Information means any information or data relating to the existence and/or terms of this Agreement and/or to a party or a party's business, operations, assets or affairs or (in the case of the Company) to any member of the Company's Group (including, but not limited to, any information ascertainable by the inspection or analysis of samples), disclosed (whether in writing, orally or by any other means) to one party by the other party or by a third party on behalf of the other party;

Delivery Agent means any third parties that enter into any contract or agreement, or proposed contract or agreement, with the Beneficiary pursuant to which that third party agrees to carry out the Activities or any part of the Activities (together with any sub-contractor of any such Delivery Agent);

Donation Amount means the amount specified as such in the Schedule;

EIR means the Environmental Information Regulations 2004;

Insolvent means:

(a) a party stopping or suspending or threatening to stop or suspend payment of all or a material part of its debts, or becoming unable to pay its debts, or being deemed unable to pay its debts under section 123(1) or (2) of the Insolvency Act 1986;

(b) any step being taken by any person with a view to the winding up of such party or any person presenting a winding-up petition which is not dismissed within five (5) working days;

(c) a receiver, manager, administrative receiver or administrator being appointed in respect of such party;

(d) such party ceasing or threatening to cease to carry on all or a material part of its business, except for the purpose of and followed by a reconstruction, amalgamation, reorganisation, merger or consolidated terms approved by the other party before such step is taken (which approval shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed); or

(e) any event occurring which, under the law of any relevant jurisdiction, has an analogous effect to any of the events listed above;

Longstop Date has the meaning given to it in the Schedule;

Minimum Maintenance Period means the period specified in the Schedule;

Project means the project outlined in the Schedule;

Trigger Event means the event (if any) specified as such in the Schedule;

Activities means the Activities forming part of the Project in respect of which the Company has agreed to make available the Donation Amount as set out in the Schedule; and

1.2 Words such as "other", "includes", "including" "for example" and "in particular" do not limit the generality of any preceding words.

1.3 Any reference to a statute or a statutory provision (including any enactment, order, regulation or instrument) shall be construed as a reference to the same from time to time as amended, consolidated, modified, extended, re-enacted or replaced.

1.4 Headings and indexes are for reference purposes only and shall not be used to construe or interpret the meaning of this Agreement.

1.5 In the event of any conflict between the generally applicable terms of this Agreement, and any special conditions set out in the Schedule, the special conditions shall take precedence.

2 No binding and enforceable obligation

2.1 The Company and the Beneficiary acknowledge and agree that nothing in this Agreement constitutes an obligation for the Beneficiary to carry out or procure the Activities. If the Beneficiary elects not to Commence or procure the Commencement of the Activities then subject to clause 2.2, the Beneficiary shall not be liable to the Company as a result of that election and none of the remaining provisions of this Agreement shall come into force. Where the Beneficiary elects to Commence or procure the Commencement the Activities, the remaining provisions of this Agreement shall come into force and shall apply to the Beneficiary, to the Activities and to the Company.

2.2 In the event that the Activities are not Commenced by the Commencement Deadline, this Agreement shall not come into force, whether or not the Beneficiary subsequently Commences (or procures the Commencement of) the Activities, save in respect of clause 7.9 and this clause 2.2 (together with any other provisions necessary for the purposes of construing the same) which shall take effect from the date of this Agreement. In particular and without limiting the foregoing:

(a) the Company shall have no liability to pay the Donation Amount in such circumstances; and

(b) if for any reason the Company has agreed to pay any amount of the Donation Amount in advance of Commencement (in which case clause 5 (Company Donation) shall apply to such payments), then such amounts shall be held on trust by the Beneficiary for the benefit of the Company pending Commencement; and

(c) in the event that Commencement has not occurred by the Commencement Deadline then the Beneficiary shall repay such amounts to the Company in full without delay (and immediately upon receipt of written demand by the Company).

2.3 For the purposes of this Agreement, the Activities shall be deemed to have **Commenced** when any Trigger Event specified in the Schedule has occurred, or if no event is so specified, when the Beneficiary has, or has procured that, either:

(a) a professional team has been appointed which has commenced the design, and development of the Project; or

(b) if no professional team is required to be appointed, or the professional team has been appointed at the date of this Agreement, when the Activities have been physically commenced on the site of/ in respect of the Project.

2.4 Company's Representative shall be authorised to agree any extension to the Commencement Deadline where reasonably requested by the Beneficiary's Representative as a consequence of circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the Beneficiary (but shall not be obliged to agree to the same).

3 The Activities

3.1 The Beneficiary shall carry out or procure to be carried out the Activities in a timely manner, and in accordance with all relevant standards including health and safety, quality, and environmental standards as well as Applicable Laws.

3.2 The Beneficiary confirms that, in the event it elects to carry out or procure the Activities, it is prepared to proceed with the Activities on the terms set out in this Agreement including the Schedule.

3.3 The Beneficiary shall provide the Company with such written progress updates in relation to the Activities as the Company may reasonably request. Such updates shall include but shall not be limited to the following:

(a) information on the progress of the Activities to date (including actual cost of the Activities to date);

(b) a forecast of future cost of the Activities up to the completion of the Activities;

(c) a project plan showing the outstanding Activities; and

(d) the latest estimated date for the completion of the Activities and the associated risks and mitigation measures.

4 obligations

4.1 The Beneficiary shall obtain all necessary permits and consents, including, without limitation, where necessary from the Company, any relevant regulator, landowner or planning authority, prior to the Commencement of the Activities. For the avoidance of doubt, any permits or consents to be obtained from the Company must be applied for in the ordinary course and the entering into this Agreement shall not constitute any such permit or consent.

4.2 The Beneficiary shall procure that the Activities are carried out diligently in accordance with this Agreement and any permits or consents obtained pursuant to clause 4.1.

4.3 The Beneficiary shall give the Company reasonable notice in writing of any inspections or testing of the Activities by the Beneficiary or its Delivery Agent and shall afford the Company and any relevant regulator sufficient opportunities as it shall reasonably require to conduct any inspections, demonstrations, testing or audits in relation to the Activities.

4.4 The Company may work together in collaboration with the Beneficiary, or a professional team procured by them, to develop the design of the Activities.

5 Company Donation

5.1 The Company agrees to contribute the Donation Amount towards the costs of the Activities in respect of the Project. Unless otherwise stated in the Schedule:

(a) the Donation Amount is inclusive of any tax that is payable in respect of it; and

(b) if any tax is payable in respect of any amounts received, then the Beneficiary shall be responsible for accounting for the same to HMRC at no additional cost to the Company. The Beneficiary shall diligently consider whether any taxes are so payable to ensure compliance with Applicable Laws; and

(c) should any other tax legislation require the deduction of any amount in relation to tax, then this shall be at the sole risk of the Beneficiary. As such, any necessary deduction shall be made (whether by the Company, or by the Beneficiary, as applicable) from the Donation Amount such that the Company's total liability under this Agreement is not increased.

5.2 The Company shall pay the Donation Amount in accordance with the payment schedule set out in the Schedule, or if none is stated, upon completion of the Activities, and:

(a) where any amount is payable on completion of the Activities, it shall be conditional upon the issue or deemed issue of a Certificate of Completion in accordance with clause 6 (Completion of the Activities and ongoing maintenance); and

(b) in the event that the Company has paid any amounts to the Beneficiary in advance of the issue or deemed issue of a Certificate of Completion in accordance with clause 6 (Completion of the Activities and ongoing maintenance) and:

(i) the Certificate of Completion is not issued within 30 days of the Longstop Date; or

(ii) the Beneficiary otherwise abandons or discontinues the Activities, or carries them on in such a manner that leads the Company to reasonably conclude that the Beneficiary does not intend to endeavour to complete the Activities in a timely fashion,

then (without prejudice to clause 2.2) the Company shall be entitled to a full refund of such pre-paid amounts of the Donation Amount. The Beneficiary shall pay the same to the Company within 30 (thirty) days of a written demand by the Company, or any credit note required by the Company shall be issued by the Beneficiary within the same period.

5.3 The Company shall make payment of the Donation Amount (or any instalment thereof) to the Beneficiary within 30 (thirty) days following the end of the month in which the Company receives an invoice for such amount.

5.4 If the Company wishes to dispute the amount set out in an invoice, it shall notify the Beneficiary within 10 (ten) days following delivery of the invoice specifying the disputed amount and the grounds on which it claims that such amount is not due and payable. Late payment of any undisputed amount due and payable under any invoice shall carry interest from the due date to the date of payment at the rate of 2% per annum above the base rate of Nat West Bank from time to time.

5.5 The Donation Amount stated in the Schedule shall be the entirety of the Company's financial commitment to the Beneficiary in respect of the Activities. Such payment is a grant contribution and it is not anticipated that this will cover 100% of the cost of the relevant Activities. All other costs of delivering the Activities (including any cost overruns) must be met by the Beneficiary.

5.6 In addition, the Donation Amount must not exceed the final total cost of the Activities. If it otherwise would, then the Beneficiary must notify the Company, and the Donation Amount will be reduced so that it does not exceed 100% of the total cost of the Activities.

5.7 If the Beneficiary receives any overpayment or any amount to which it is not entitled, or where any amount is repayable to the Company under this Agreement, this amount must be repaid to the Company and shall be a debt owed to the Company. The Company may offset this amount against any future amount payable by the Company or demand its repayment (in which case the Beneficiary will do so within 30 (thirty) days). Any repayment by the Beneficiary must be made without any offsetting or deduction of any kind.

5.8 Where under this Agreement the Company would be entitled to claw back or withhold payment of the Donation Amount, the Company may (at its absolute discretion) agree to pay to the

Beneficiary (or permit the Beneficiary to keep) a pro-rata amount properly reflecting the actual Activities undertaken by the Beneficiary.

6 Completion of the Activities

6.1 The Beneficiary shall notify the Company in writing once it considers that the Activities have been completed.

6.2 Following receipt of a notification from the Beneficiary pursuant to clause 6.1 that all the Activities have been completed:

(a) the Company may issue a **Certificate of Completion** in relation to the Activities; or

(b) if the Company considers that the whole or any part of the Activities does not comply as aforesaid, it shall notify the Beneficiary in writing of its concerns and the Beneficiary shall act properly and diligently in relation to those concerns before resubmitting the notification under clause 6.1 (and, for the avoidance of doubt, no Certificate of Completion shall be deemed to be issued under clause 6.3).

6.3 If the Company has not issued either a Certificate of Completion under clause 6.2(a) or a notification of its concerns under clause 6.2(b) within 30 (thirty) days then a Certificate of Completion shall be deemed to have been issued in relation to the Activities.

7 Termination

7.1 The Company may elect to terminate this Agreement on 30 (thirty) days' notice to the Beneficiary:

(a) at any time prior to Commencement, or:

(b) if the Activities have not been concluded and a Certificate of Completion not issued (or deemed to have been issued) by the Longstop Date (in which case clause 5.2(b) shall apply to any pre-paid amounts).

If the Company exercises its rights under this clause 7.1 then clause 7.9 shall apply.

7.2 If either party is in material breach of this Agreement then:

(a) the party not in breach may notify the other in writing of such breach; and

(b) if the breach is not capable of rectification the party not in breach shall be entitled to terminate this Agreement immediately on giving written notice; or

(c) if the breach is capable of rectification and the breach is not remedied within 21 (twenty-one) days following receipt by a party of the written notice then the party not in breach may terminate this Agreement immediately by written notice.

7.3 Either party may terminate this Agreement immediately by giving notice to that effect to the other if the other becomes Insolvent.

7.4 The Beneficiary will give notice to the Company immediately upon it becoming Insolvent.

7.5 The Company may terminate this Agreement immediately by giving notice to that effect to the Beneficiary if:

(a) the Beneficiary breaches any Applicable Laws, including relating to bribery, corruption or modern slavery, or commits any fraud in connection to the Activities; and/ or

(b) the Beneficiary by any act or omission causes the Company to breach (or to take any specific action to avoid breaching) any Applicable Laws, or any licence held by the Company in respect of its role as a water and wastewater undertaker or causes any unauthorised impact (or causes the Company to take any specific action to avoid such an impact) on any of services provided by the Company to customers.

7.6 Subject to clause 18 (Limitation on Liability), if this Agreement is terminated in accordance with clauses 7.1(b), 7.2, 7.3 or 7.5, the party in default or the Insolvent party (as relevant) shall pay the reasonably and properly incurred costs in relation to termination. In the event of breach by, or Insolvency of, the Beneficiary, such costs will include:

(a) any costs incurred by the Company in making good the Activities and/or otherwise in its role as a water and waste water undertaker; and

(b) reimbursing any instalment of the Donation Amount previously paid by the Company in accordance with clause 5.2(b).

7.7 The Company may terminate this Agreement on 60 (sixty) days' notice if at any time:

(a) it concludes on reasonable grounds that the anticipated benefits of the Activities will not be realised; or

(b) the Company is otherwise compelled by law to terminate this Agreement.

7.8 If the Company terminates under clause 7.7:

(a) the Beneficiary shall be entitled to retain any previously paid portion of the Donation Amount that reflects the actual costs incurred by the Beneficiary (but any excess of previously paid amounts over actual costs shall be repayable within 30 (thirty) days of termination); and

(b) if the Beneficiary's committed, unavoidable costs exceed the amounts previously paid to the Beneficiary, the Beneficiary shall be entitled to apply for payment of an amount equal to the balance of those committed costs save that the maximum liability of the Company in respect of such additional amounts together with any previously paid amounts shall not exceed 100% of the Donation Amount. Any such application must be made within 30 (thirty) days of termination and shall be subject to satisfactory evidence of the relevant costs being produced by the Beneficiary. The Company shall pay the same within 30 (thirty) further days of the end of the month in which such evidence is produced by the Beneficiary.

7.9 Upon termination (or where this Agreement does not come into force pursuant to clause 2.2), all obligations of both parties under this Agreement shall cease except for:

(a) the provisions of clause 15 (Confidential Information);

(b) the provisions of clause 18 (Limitation on Liability); and

(c) this clause 7 (Termination),

and save also for any antecedent breach by either party of the terms of this Agreement.

7.10 Save for any amounts expressly identified in this clause 7 (Termination), no other compensation shall be payable by the Company in respect of termination of this Agreement.

8 Insurance

8.1 The Beneficiary shall, at all relevant times, at its own cost, effect and maintain in full force those insurances which it is required to effect by any Applicable Laws.

8.2 The Beneficiary shall supply the Company with copies of every policy of insurance (or such other evidence of insurances as may be reasonably required) upon the written request of the Company, together with evidence of payment of the premiums. If the Beneficiary defaults in insuring or continuing to maintain the insurances, the Company may (where it has an interest in the relevant Activities which is insurable, for example because of the proximity of any Activities to the Company's assets) insure against any risk in respect of which such default has occurred and recover any premiums from the Beneficiary as a debt.

8.3 The Company shall not be obliged to take out any insurances for the Activities.

9 Changes

9.1 The Beneficiary and the Company shall regularly meet to discuss what they believe to be working well, and what is not.

9.2 The Company may request changes (at any time) to:

(a) the requirements of this Agreement; and/or

(b) the Project; and/or

(c) the Activities.

9.3 The parties shall meet in good faith to discuss any such changes or additional requirements, and how best they might be provided for, and shall implement whatever agreement they may reach.

9.4 The Beneficiary shall not unreasonably withhold its approval of any changes or additional requirements which may be proposed by the Company.

10 Personnel

10.1 The parties shall appoint the persons listed in the Schedule as the Beneficiary's Representative and Company's Representative respectively for the purposes of this Agreement, and all Activities and obligations under (or in connection with) this Agreement.

10.2 The Beneficiary's Representative shall:

(a) establish and maintain direct and regular contact with Company's Representative on all matters pertaining to this Agreement; and

(b) prepare for and make themselves available to attend all meetings required to be attended pursuant to clause 11 (Meetings).

11 Meetings

11.1 The Beneficiary's Representative and Company's Representative shall attend such meetings as may be reasonably required by the Company including but not limited to (a) stage and gate review; (b) progress meetings; and (c) risk planning and review meetings.

11.2 The Beneficiary shall promptly provide the Company with such information regarding any Activities, or any events affecting any Activities, as may reasonably be required by the Company, including copies of any contract which relates to the carrying out of the Activities.

11.3 The Beneficiary shall promptly notify the Company of any incident, event or circumstance which is likely to delay the progress of any Activities.

12 Appointments

12.1 In relation to the roles (if any) specified in the Schedule, where the Beneficiary wishes to appoint or engage one or more Delivery Agent(s) (including any professional appointments and/or Activities contractors) in such roles in respect of carrying out the Activities or part of the Activities, the Beneficiary shall obtain written consent from the Company prior to any appointment or engagement.

12.2 The Beneficiary shall ensure that each Delivery Agent performs and behaves in the same manner as the Beneficiary ought to do. Performance and behaviour measures shall include (but not be limited to) time, cost, sustainability, quality, health and safety, and shall be monitored by the Beneficiary on an on-going basis.

12.3 If the Beneficiary appoints or engages a Delivery Agent for any part of the Activities, then the Beneficiary shall not be relieved from any liability or obligation whatsoever under this Agreement, and the Beneficiary shall be fully responsible for the acts, omissions or defaults of any Delivery Agent as if they were the acts, omissions or defaults of the Beneficiary.

13 Record Keeping, Access to Documents and Information

13.1 The Beneficiary shall, whilst undertaking the Activities and for the period for which any resulting structures or features are to be maintained and at least seven (7) years afterwards, keep records to demonstrate compliance with this Agreement and any Applicable Laws.

13.2 The Beneficiary shall on request provide the Company with any documents, information, photographic or other documentary evidence, or written or verbal explanations that may be required by the Company in connection with this Agreement and/or the Activities. The Beneficiary agrees that any documents provided to the Company may be supplied to (and used by) any Company personnel, and any regulatory authority having oversight over the Company and/or the Project.

14 Confidential Information

14.1 Neither party shall disclose any Confidential Information of the other party save as required:

(a) by any enactment or requirement of any regulatory authority;

(b) pursuant to any judicial or arbitral process;

(c) by any Applicable Laws (including the EIR as set out in clause 15 (Compliance) below);

(d) to enable that party to perform its obligations pursuant to this Agreement, including the disclosure of such information to any employee, consultant, agent, officer, Delivery Agent (of any tier), lender or adviser provided that such disclosure is made in good faith and only to the extent necessary to enable the party to fulfil its obligations under this Agreement; and/or

(e) by the Company, as required by its statutory duties or statutory licence.

15 Compliance

15.1 The Beneficiary acknowledges that:

(a) the Company may be required, under the EIR, to disclose information relating to the subject matter of this Agreement; and

(b) notwithstanding any other provision in this Agreement, the Company shall be responsible for determining in its absolute discretion whether any information is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the EIR.

15.2 The Beneficiary shall provide all necessary assistance and cooperation as reasonably requested by the Company to enable it to comply with its obligations under the EIR.

15.3 The Company acknowledges that:

(a) the Beneficiary may be required, under the EIR [or Freedom of Information Act 2000 (**FOIA**)], to disclose information relating to the subject matter of this Agreement; and

(b) notwithstanding any other provision in this Agreement, the Company shall be responsible for determining in its absolute discretion whether any information is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the EIR [and/or the FOIA].

15.4 The Beneficiary shall provide all necessary assistance and cooperation as reasonably requested by the Company to enable it to comply with its obligations under the EIR and/or the FOIA.

15.5 The Beneficiary acknowledges that it may share information with the Company relating to its personnel or other individuals in connection with the Activities and this Agreement. The Beneficiary agrees that the Company shall control that data and may use that data, and share it with third parties, in connection with its business and the Activities. In any event, each party shall comply with its obligations under Applicable Laws relating to data protection and privacy in dealing with any personal information, including but not limited to establishing the lawful basis for transferring any personal information to the other party. If either party reasonably considers that the nature of the Activities is such that additional data protection requirements should apply, then both parties shall act reasonably in relation to agreeing the necessary data sharing agreement.

15.6 The Beneficiary warrants, represents and undertakes that no offence under the Bribery Act has been or will be committed by:

(a) the Beneficiary; or

(b) any associated person (as defined in section 8 of the Bribery Act) of the Beneficiary,

in connection with the procurement or implementation of this Agreement.

15.7 The Beneficiary further represents and warrants that that it has not done, and will not do, anything in connection with this Agreement and/or the Activities which could be considered an inducement for any person to show favour to the Beneficiary or otherwise act in a particular matter, or which could be considered to amount to bribery or an attempt to defraud any party (including the Company).

15.8 If at any time the Beneficiary:

(a) has knowledge of, or has reasonable grounds to suspect the occurrence of, a breach of the warranties in clauses 15.6 and 15.7; or

(b) becomes the subject of any investigation in connection with the Bribery Act; or

(c) becomes the subject of any other investigation in respect of any (or any suspected) wrongdoing or impropriety; or

(d) becomes aware of any equivalent investigation (as falls within clauses 15.8(b) or (c)) in respect of its employees, or sub-contractors or any other associated person,

the Beneficiary (unless prohibited by Applicable Laws) shall promptly notify the Company in writing of such matters within its knowledge, or of such grounds for suspicion, and shall co-operate with the Company in the investigation of the breach or suspected breach of the same.

15.9 Similarly, the Beneficiary shall promptly inform the Company of any genuine and substantiated allegation, serious complaint or verifiable information in respect of any corruption related offence relating, in some way, to this Agreement or its subject matter (including, without limitation, any offence under the Bribery Act and/or any offence or practice relating to corruption, fraud, coercion, collusion, obstruction, money laundering and/or the financing of terrorism).

15.10 The Beneficiary shall:

(a) comply with all Applicable Laws relating to modern slavery including but not limited to the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the "**Relevant Modern Slavery Requirements**");

(b) not do or omit to do any act or thing which causes or may cause the Beneficiary, the Company or any member of the Company Group to be in breach of and/or to commit an offence under any Relevant Modern Slavery Requirements; and

(c) promptly notify the Company of any breach of this clause.

15.11 Without prejudice to the foregoing clauses, the Beneficiary shall be responsible for compliance with all Applicable Laws in carrying out the Activities, and shall not by act or omission cause UU to breach (or fail to take any action to avoid breaching) any Applicable Laws, including:

(a) relating to the undertaking of Activities, and/or the provision of water or wastewater services;

(b) relating to bribery, corruption or modern slavery;

(c) relating to taxation, including ensuring that all income tax, national insurance contributions or other employment taxes and levies are applied and accounted for in full, and all tax related Applicable Laws are complied with, in respect of each and every individual involved in the discharge of the Activities (including under the intermediaries legislation known as IR35 concerning off payroll working).

15.12 Breach of any sub-clause of this clause 15 (Compliance) is a material breach by the Beneficiary which is not capable of remedy.

15.13 This clause 15 (Compliance) shall survive the expiry or termination (for any reason) of this Agreement (or of the Beneficiary's engagement under it).

16 Publicity

16.1 Unless otherwise agreed by the Company, and save for any specific publicity activities specified in the Schedule, the Beneficiary shall not (and will ensure that none of its Delivery Agents shall) make any press announcements, or otherwise brief any media organisation, make any announcement or issue any brochure or other marketing material, which in any way concerns (or refers to) this Agreement, the Project, and/or the Activities or any related matter, without the Company's prior written consent (such consent not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed), except as required by law, any governmental or regulatory authority (including, without limitation, any relevant securities exchange), any court or other authority of competent jurisdiction.

16.2 If the Company provides its consent in accordance with clause 16.1, the parties shall consult together on the timing, contents and manner of release of any announcement.

16.3 The parties agree that any announcements or publications shall be in a form and substance agreed between the parties.

16.4 Where any publicity entails either party making any use of any brand or logo of the other they shall do so only in accordance with the reasonable directions of the party whose brand or logo is being used.

17 Limitation on liability

17.1 The Company's aggregate liability in respect of this Agreement (whether in contract, tort, breach of statutory duty or otherwise) shall be limited to a sum equal to the Donation Amount less the aggregate of any amounts already paid by the Company in accordance with clause 5 (Company Donation) provided that such limitation shall not apply to any liability in respect of death or personal injury resulting from a negligent act or omission or breach of statutory duty by the Company, or to any other liability that cannot be limited or excluded at law.

17.2 The Beneficiary's aggregate liability in respect of this Agreement (whether in contract, tort, breach of statutory duty or otherwise) shall be limited to a sum equal to the Donation Amount, provided that such limitation shall not apply to any liability in respect of death or personal injury resulting from a negligent act or omission or breach of statutory duty by the Beneficiary, or to any other liability that cannot be limited or excluded at law

18 General

18.1 The Beneficiary grants to the Company an irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive royalty-free licence to use all the intellectual property and materials created as a result of the design and implementation of the Activities for all purposes, including the right to sub-licence.

18.2 Neither party intends that any term of this Agreement should be enforceable, by virtue of the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999, by any person other than the Company or the Beneficiary.

18.3 Any notice pursuant to this Agreement shall be in writing and shall be duly and validly served if delivered by hand or sent by first class post or recorded delivery to the registered office of the relevant party (and in the case of a notice served on the Company, such notice should beaddressed to the Company Secretary of the Company). Any notice sent by post shall be conclusively treated as having been served two business days after posting.

18.4 Neither party may assign or charge its rights or interests under this Agreement without the prior written consent of the other party (not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed).

18.5 No amendment to or variation of this Agreement shall be effective unless in writing and signed by or on behalf of each party by a duly authorised representative. No general terms and conditions contained in any purchase order or other document customarily required by either party in connection with a request for Activities or services shall be binding on the parties.

18.6 Should a dispute between the parties arise out of or in connection with this Agreement, the Company's Representative and Beneficiary's Representative shall initially discuss and attempt to resolve the dispute. If the parties' representatives are unable to resolve the dispute to the satisfaction of both parties within 14 (fourteen) days, it shall be escalated to the parties' appropriate senior managers for resolution. If the senior managers are unable to resolve the dispute to the satisfaction of both parties within 14 (fourteen) days, it shall be escalated to the parties' directors for resolution. If the directors are unable to resolve the dispute to the satisfaction of both parties within 14 (fourteen) days, the dispute shall be referred to adjudication in accordance with clause 18.7.

18.7 Either party may refer to adjudication any dispute arising out of or in connection with this Agreement in accordance with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. The adjudicator shall be agreed between the parties and failing agreement within 7 (seven) days of receipt by one party of a proposal by the other the adjudicator shall be nominated at the request of either party by the President or Vice President for the time being of TECBAR.

18.8 This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties relating to the subject matter of this Agreement and supersedes any previous agreements between the parties. Each party acknowledges that in entering into this Agreement it is not relying upon any statement or representation not set out in this Agreement.

18.9 This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales. Save as expressly provided otherwise, the parties agree that the courts of England and Wales shall have exclusive jurisdiction to settle any disputes that may arise out of or in connection with this Agreement.

The Schedule

TABLE 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION

1	**The Project**	
George Square forms part of the Oldham Town Centre regeneration 'Creating a Better Place' programme. This builds on the Rock Street Green Recovery project and Tommy Field 1 and Tommy Field 2 applications. This continues the green 'strip' across the town centre and will form a new events and outdoor market space. The scheme creates a large sustainably drained space through attenuation and infiltration techniques to reduce flooding through the application of United Utilities' Rainwater Management Strategy principles and objectives. The SUDS enabled hardstanding areas offers Oldham Council's Events Team with an opportunity to expand their inclusive community portfolio of activities such by hosting fairs and exhibitions as well as pop-up Vendors.		
2	**The Activities**	
2.1	Description (supplemented by the information included at Annex B to this Schedule, if any):	This project is constructing new SuDS features which will attenuate surface water before discharging back into the combined sewer. By contributing to this project, 5168m2 of impermeable area is being attenuated from the combined sewer system which is helping us achieve the Rainwater management PCD.
	Total Project Value	£2,871,807
	UU Contribution Amount	£360,600
	Payment schedule	Milestone 1: £200,000 - on installation of 3 attenuation tanks - September 2026 Milestone 2: £160,000 - on reinstatement of paved areas - October 2026

3	**Commencement Deadline:**	The date falling one month from the date on which this Agreement is executed by the last party to execute it.
4	**Longstop Date:**	July 2027
5	**Company's Representative:**	Sharma Jencitis
	Beneficiary's Representative:	Jason Denniston
	Key roles for the purposes of clause 10	N/A
	Additional key commercial information	NOT USED
	Trigger Event for the Activities to be deemed to have Commenced	NOT USED

TABLE 2 – SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Optimisation of Project/Activities	The parties agree that Table 1 sets out a high-level outline of the Activities to which this agreement relates. Whilst the specific details of the interventions to be carried out as part of the Activities shall ultimately be determined by the Beneficiary, the Beneficiary agrees that the Funding Contribution has been advanced on the basis that the benefit of the Activities and the Project to the local community shall be maximised and the Beneficiary shall have regard to this principle in developing the detail of the Activities; and the meetings referred to in clause 11 (Meetings) shall be used to monitor and identify opportunities to maximise the benefit of the Activities and the Project as per sub-paragraph (i) above, and UU may invite any stakeholder that it deems appropriate to attend such meeting to support in this process; and the parties may identify additional opportunities for UU's personnel to contribute to the undertaking of the Activities and/or the Project as part of UU's support to the Project.

Annex B

Appended Information

NOT USED

EXECUTED AS A DEED for and on behalf of United Utilities Water Limited
In the presence of a witness:

.....

……..

……

……
Print Name
Date

.....

WITNESS:

……

EXECUTED AS A DEED by OLDHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL by affixing hereto its seal in the presence of:
Date:

WITNESS

.....

.....

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Emergency Powers Decision Report

Acceptance of Funding and Commencement of Delivery of the National Jobs Guarantee Programme - Oldham

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Get Oldham Working
Directorate: Place and Growth
Report Author: Jonathan Phillips
Email: Jonathan.phillips@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 30/11/2026

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 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.

3. Reason for urgency

The funding agreement for the National Jobs Guarantee Programme has only recently been received and accepted. The programme has a required mobilisation and delivery commencement date of 23 November 2026. Delaying the decision until the next available governance cycle would significantly impact delivery timescales, jeopardise the Council's ability to meet contractual obligations, and could place the external grant funding at risk. An urgent decision is therefore required to enable timely mobilisation and commencement of service delivery.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

Failure to approve the decision would prevent Get Oldham Working from commencing delivery of the National Jobs Guarantee Programme within the required timescales. This could result in the loss of external grant funding, reputational damage to the Council, failure to meet contractual commitments to Government, and the loss of employment and skills support opportunities for eligible young people across Oldham.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

Should the decision not be approved, the Council would be unable to draw down and utilise approximately £770,000 of external programme funding secured for Oldham. This would represent a significant loss of investment into employment and skills provision for local residents and would remove the associated economic and social benefits expected from programme delivery. The Council would also forgo opportunities to achieve wider strategic objectives relating to youth employment, skills development and economic inclusion.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 5 November 2026
Comments

The recommendation to accept £730,000 of funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for the delivery of the National Jobs Guarantee Programme is supported. The programme will be fully funded by external grant income and is not expected to create any revenue pressure on Council budgets.

The funding will support the creation of six fixed-term posts for 30 months, together with associated programme delivery, participant support, employer engagement and operational costs. The staffing arrangements are aligned to the funding period and will not create any ongoing financial commitment beyond the life of the grant.

The grant will be subject to regular financial monitoring to ensure compliance with funding conditions and that expenditure remains within the approved allocation.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef
Date 10.11.26
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 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

Acceptance of Funding and Commencement of Delivery of the National Jobs Guarantee Programme - Oldham

Officer Contact: Emma Barton – Deputy Chief Executive, Place

Report Author: Jonathan Phillips, Head of Service, Employment and Skills
Email: Jonathan.phillips@oldham.gov.uk

30th November 2026

Reason for Decision
To approve 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.

Executive Summary
The National Jobs Guarantee Programme is a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) funded employment programme designed to support young people who are 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 Get Oldham Working.

Indicative delivery assumptions developed during the bid process are 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.

Approval is sought to accept the external funding allocation, establish the staffing resources required to deliver the programme, enter into contractual arrangements and commence programme delivery.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Chief Executive:

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

Acceptance of Funding and Commencement of Delivery of the National Jobs Guarantee Programme - Oldham

1 Background

1.1 The National Jobs Guarantee Programme is a Government-funded employment programme commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and designed to improve employment outcomes for young people who are unemployed, economically inactive or facing barriers to entering the labour market.

1.2 The programme aims to support young people into sustainable employment, apprenticeships, education and training through personalised employment support, work readiness activity, careers guidance, employer engagement, vacancy matching and in-work support.

1.3 During 2026, GC Employment submitted a bid to deliver the programme. Oldham Council participated in pre-award discussions under a Non-Disclosure Agreement regarding potential delivery arrangements, staffing requirements, participant volumes and indicative financial allocations.

1.4 Following confirmation of the successful procurement outcome, Oldham Council was identified as a proposed delivery partner within the GC Employment supply chain.

1.5 Subject to approval, the Council will accept external programme funding and establish the delivery capacity required to support approximately 410 young people between November 2026 and May 2028.

1.6 Indicative planning assumptions developed during the bid process include:

- Approximately 410 young people supported.
- Programme delivery from November 2026 until May 2028.
- External funding of approximately £730,000.
- Approximately six fixed-term FTE posts.
- Funding for participant support, management and operational overheads.

Corporate Priorities

The programme contributes directly towards:

- Youth Employment.
- Inclusive Economy.
- Skills and Progression.
- Reducing Inequalities.
- Financial Inclusion.
- Improving Life Chances for Young People.

2 Current Position

2.1 Get Oldham Working currently delivers a range of employment, skills and employer engagement programmes supporting residents into employment, training, apprenticeships and progression opportunities. The service has an established track record in contract

delivery, performance management, employer engagement and supporting priority cohorts, including young people facing barriers to employment.

2.2 The National Jobs Guarantee Programme aligns strongly with existing Get Oldham Working delivery models and will further enhance the Council's youth employment offer by providing dedicated resources focused on supporting young people into employment, apprenticeships, education and training.

2.3 The indicative delivery model developed with GC Employment is based upon approximately 410 participant starts between November 2026 and May 2028, supported through an estimated funding allocation of approximately £730,000.

The funding is intended to support:

- Approximately six fixed-term FTE posts;
- Youth engagement and outreach activity;
- Employability and work readiness support;
- Employer brokerage and vacancy matching;
- Participant support costs;
- Programme management, compliance and reporting requirements; and
- Operational and corporate overheads.

2.4 Whilst recruitment to fixed-term posts will be required as part of programme mobilisation, the Council is well placed to commence delivery from the proposed November 2026 start date. Get Oldham Working will utilise existing experienced employment and skills staff to support programme mobilisation, including redeployment of capacity from existing and ending contracts where appropriate, ensuring the service is operational from day one whilst recruitment activity is undertaken.

This approach minimises mobilisation risk, protects delivery performance during the early stages of the programme and enables continuity of support for young people from programme commencement.

2.5 The Council has established employer relationships, delivery systems, referral pathways and management arrangements already in place through Get Oldham Working. As a result, the service is able to mobilise quickly and effectively, reducing implementation risk and providing confidence that contractual requirements can be met from programme commencement.

2.6 The Council is therefore required to determine whether it wishes to formally accept the external funding allocation, establish the staffing structure necessary for ongoing delivery, enter into contractual arrangements and commence programme delivery from November 2026.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1 – Accept Funding and Commence Delivery (Preferred)

Advantages

- Supports approximately 410 young people.
- Secures approximately £730,000 of external investment.
- Enables the creation of approximately six fixed-term FTE posts.
- Expands the Get Oldham Working Youth Employment offer.
- Increases support available to young people facing barriers to employment.
- Contributes to Council priorities around youth employment and economic inclusion.
- Strengthens partnership working with GC Employment and DWP.

Disadvantages

- Delivery targets and compliance requirements must be achieved.
- Contract performance must be monitored and managed.
- Recruitment and mobilisation are required prior to go-live.

Option 2 – Decline the Opportunity

Advantages

- No contractual commitments.
- No staffing mobilisation requirements.

Disadvantages

- Loss of approximately £730,000 of external investment.
- Reduced support available for young people.
- Missed opportunity to enhance the Youth Employment offer.
- Reduced ability to influence programme delivery in Oldham.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 1 is recommended.

The proposal will enable Oldham Council to secure approximately £730,000 of external funding to improve opportunities and outcomes for young people across the borough.

Funding acceptance will enable the establishment of a dedicated team of approximately six fixed-term FTE posts and provide the resources required to support approximately 410 young people into employment, apprenticeships, education and training opportunities.

Delivery through Get Oldham Working will build upon existing strengths within the Council's Employment and Skills service while helping to address youth unemployment, economic inactivity and inequality.

The proposal represents a significant investment in Oldham's young people and aligns strongly with the Council's strategic ambitions for inclusive growth and improved life chances.

5 Consultation

5.1 Consultation has taken place with:

- GC Employment.
- Get Oldham Working Management Team.
- Employment and Skills Service.
- Relevant Council officers.

Further consultation will be undertaken with HR, Finance, Legal and Procurement colleagues regarding staffing, contractual and financial arrangements.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 This report proposes accepting £730,000 in revenue funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for the period November 2026 to May 2028 (30 months), for the delivery of the National Jobs Guarantee Programme. It also proposes the creation of six 30 month fixed term posts to deliver the Programme.

6.2 This funding will be fully spent on the below activities and will be revenue expenditure.

- Six 30 month fixed-term FTE posts.
- Youth engagement and support.
- Participant intervention.
- Employer engagement.
- Programme management and compliance.
- Operational and corporate overheads.

6.3 The cost to create six 30 month fixed term posts as detailed within the below table will be grade dependent and will range from £563,890 to £650,390 including oncosts.

Position	Grade	FTE	Estimated 30 month salary including oncosts - Grade 4 £	Estimated 30 month salary including oncosts - Grade 5 £	Estimated 30 month salary including oncosts - Grade 6 £
Programme Officer	4-6	4	393,560	434,920	480,060
Higher Apprentice	1	2	170,330	170,330	170,330
Total salary cost		**6**	**563,890**	**605,250**	**650,390**
Remaining grant resource			**166,110**	**124,750**	**79,610**
Total spend			**730,000**	**730,000**	**730,000**
Total Funding			**(730,000)**	**(730,000)**	**(730,000)**

6.4 The programme is expected to be fully externally funded and is not expected to create an unfunded pressure on existing Council budgets. Staffing commitments will be fixed-term and linked directly to the duration and funding profile of the contract.

6.5 This scheme will be closely monitored to ensure compliance with the funding conditions and that all expenditure is maintained within the funding allocation. The remaining budget allocation to be spent on non-salary activities is dependent on the grade the Programme Officers are recruited into.

(John Edisbury)

7 **Legal and HR Implications**

7.1 The Council will be required to enter into appropriate contractual arrangements with GC Employment.

Legal advice will also be sought relating to the employment implications associated with establishing fixed-term posts funded through external programme income.

It is also noted that significant changes come into effect in January 2027 in relation to Employment Rights. A shorter qualifying period for ordinary unfair dismissal will apply to Fixed Term Contracts and a proper process must be followed before any dismissal takes effect. On the face of it, it doesn't appear that new recruits would acquire redundancy rights, however, this could arise if individuals have continuous local government service and the Service should note this. In all respects, the Council must follow its procedures in relation to the service redesign and the recruitment process.

Teresa Harrison 04.11.26

7.2 HR comments

Due to the impact on staffing, the above proposals would amount to a Service Redesign. A Senior HR Advisor would be appointed to support the process, the HR implications would be as follows:

Job descriptions for new roles or roles that are changing (including job title changes) will need to go through JE.

- Consultation document to be produced
- Early engagement with Trade Union Colleagues to take place
- Formal Consultation with staff & Unions
- Implementation process – recruitment/ redeployment/ redundancies (if applicable as a last resort).

The Council policies will need to be adhered to. Julie Lynch – 3/11/26

8. **Procurement Implications**

8.1 n/a

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

9.1 **Yes**. The programme is specifically designed to improve employment outcomes for young people and is therefore expected to have a positive impact through increased access to employment, training, skills development and progression opportunities.

10 **Key Decision**

10.1 Yes

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 KDD-26-47

12 **Appendices & Background Papers**

12.1 n/a

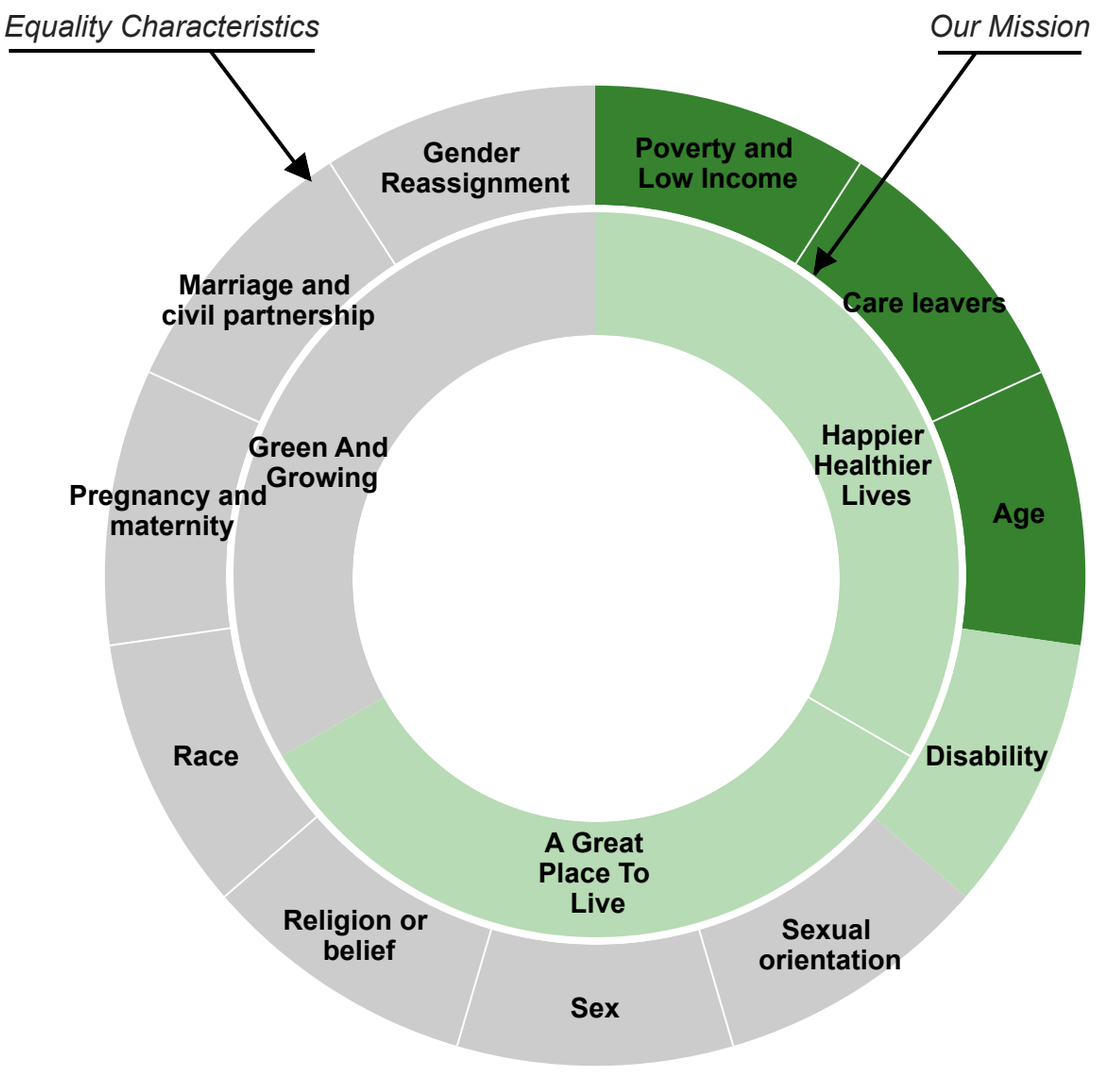
Approved by the Chief Executive following consultation with the political group leaders who were in attendance as follows:- Councillors:

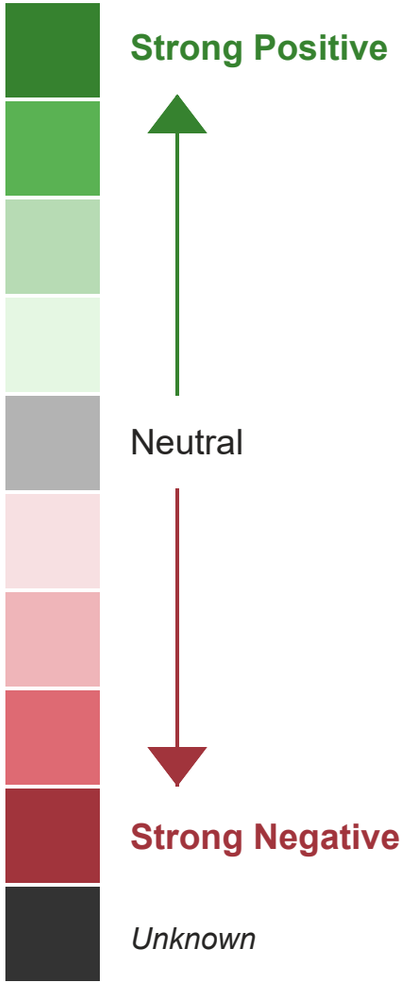
Decision made under the authorisation contained in Section 9C (5) Delegations of Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) and Section 3.6 of Part 4 (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take emergency decisions in respect of the Council's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

Youth Guarantee contract - GOW

completed/last updated by Jonathan Phillips on 26/10/2026

Portfolio	**Get Oldham Working**
Directorate	**Place**
Service/Team	**Growth**
Is this IA related to a Budget Reduction proposal?	**No**





Equality Characteristics

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Race	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Religion or belief	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Sex	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Sexual orientation	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Disability	Moderate Positive	Possible	Long Term	2	While the programme is not specifically targeted at young people with disabilities or health conditions, some participants may have additional support needs. The programme is expected to have a positive impact by improving access to employment, skills and training opportunities and by ensuring support is delivered in an inclusive and accessible way for all eligible young people.
Age	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	The National Jobs Guarantee Programme will have a positive impact on younger people aged 18-24 in Oldham by increasing access to employment, training and skills development opportunities. The programme is designed to reduce age-related inequalities in the labour market, helping young people who face barriers to work progress into sustainable employment and improve their long-term economic prospects.
Care leavers	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	Employment and greater economic independence, helping to reduce barriers often faced when transitioning to adulthood
Poverty and Low Income	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	Young people from disadvantaged and low-income backgrounds are expected to benefit from improved access to employment and training opportunities. Supporting participants to secure and sustain work will help increase financial resilience, reduce reliance on benefits, and contribute to reducing poverty amongst young people in Oldham.

Our Mission / Corporate Priorities

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Green And Growing	Neutral	Possible	Short Term	0	
A Great Place To Live	Moderate Positive	Possible	Long Term	2	By supporting young people into employment and training, the programme will help improve life chances, increase economic participation and encourage more young people to live and work in Oldham. This contributes to stronger communities and supports the borough's ambition to be a great place to live, work and thrive.
Happier Healthier Lives	Moderate Positive	Possible	Long Term	2	By helping young people access employment and training opportunities, the programme is expected to improve confidence, purpose and wellbeing. Supporting young people to progress towards sustainable employment can have a positive impact on both mental health and overall quality of life.

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Emergency Powers Decision Report

Live Well Journey to Employment Future Delivery Proposal for an Education, Employment and Training (EET) Support Service

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area (s): Post 16 Education, Skills and Employment
Directorate(s): Children and Young People and Place
Report Author: Amanda Youlden
Email:

Date of Decision: 30th 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

Whilst we await the acceptance of the Integrated Settlement for Work and Skills grant funding agreement and decision to accept the funding, we need to request to undertake the procurement process for a new education, employment and training support service for young people aged 15 -24. Key decision due to level of funding attached to procurement.

3. Reason for urgency

We will experience a gap in a service for young people aged 15 – 19 if we do not commence the procurement process as soon as possible. We need to have a new service in place for April 1st to replace the current offer being delivered by Positive Steps.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

The risk is not having a service for young people, whilst we procure the service at a later date.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

No financial impact to the Council if this decision is not taken forward. The service will be procured at a later date as part of the wider Integrated Settlement future delivery plan for work and skills. The risk is gap in services to residents who need it.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 5 November 2026
Comments

The recommendation to undertake a competitive procurement exercise for a new 15-24 Education, Employment and Training (EET) Support Service is supported. The proposed contract has an estimated value of £1.078m over an initial two-year term and is intended to be funded from Oldham's allocation of the Education, Work and Skills element of the Greater Manchester Integrated Settlement.

The service is expected to be fully funded from external grant resources and therefore does not create a direct pressure on Council budgets. However, Members should note that the funding allocation has not yet been formally confirmed by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), and procurement activity will commence in advance of the Grant Funding Agreement being finalised. Whilst letters of comfort are expected to be issued by GMCA and the risk is considered low, there remains a financial risk should funding allocations or grant conditions subsequently change.

Any contract award will be subject to confirmation of available funding and the Council's normal governance and budgetary controls. The Section 151 Officer is satisfied that the proposed procurement represents a prudent approach to achieving service mobilisation by April 2027, subject to ongoing confirmation of funding and affordability.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef
Date 10.11.26
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 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

Live Well Journey to Employment Future Delivery Proposal for a 15 – 24 Education, Employment and Training (EET) Support Service

Officer Contact: Deputy Chief Executive, Place – Emma Barton and Executive Director Children and Young People – Julie Daniels

Report Author: Amanda Youlden, Strategic Lead Post 16 Education, Skills and Employment

Email: amanda.youlden@oldham.gov.uk

30th November 2026

Reason for Decision

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is currently working with each of the ten local authorities (LA's) to determine how devolved funding will operate across employment and skills. This activity is taking place with teams across the Council and has implications for various services and choices that the Council will want 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 brought 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.

We are now in receipt of an indicative budget for EWS Integrated Settlement funding for 2027/2028 and 2028/2029. This report aims 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.
This report will cover the new service we will create, 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).

Recommendations

Chief Executive 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. This requires the LA to go out to tender for a new service without a GFA in place with GMCA.

Pre-Decision Scrutiny **19th November 2026**
Leaders' Consultative Session **30th November 2026**

Live Well Journey to Employment Future Delivery Proposal for a 15 – 24 EET Support Service

1 Background

1.1 England is undergoing a significant programme of devolution, with the Government's *English Devolution White Paper: Power and Partnership - Foundations for Growth*[1] setting out a long-term ambition to "rewire the state" by transferring powers and funding from Whitehall to local and mayoral strategic authorities. The aim is to reduce central control, strengthen local decision-making and enable places to drive economic growth, public service reform and improved outcomes for residents.

1.2 A key element of this agenda is the devolution of employment, skills and economic development functions. The Government has positioned skills as a central lever for growth, with increasing responsibility for adult skills funding, workforce development, labour market planning and employer engagement being devolved to combined and mayoral authorities.

1.3 This aligns with wider reforms to create more integrated local systems that bring together employment support, skills provision and economic priorities, enabling local areas to better respond to employer demand and address workforce shortages.

1.4 For areas such as Greater Manchester and Oldham, devolution provides greater flexibility to shape education, employment and skills provision around local needs. The direction of travel is towards locally led, place-based approaches that support inclusive growth, increase participation in learning and work, and ensure residents can access opportunities created through economic development and investment.

1.5 The employment, skills and economic development functions and funding are devolved via the Integrated Settlement (IS) and last year replaced the system of separate funding pots from different government departments into the Greater Manchester economy.

1.6 An outcomes framework has been established to measure the impact of the funding on local residents and services.

1.7 2025/2026 was the first year of the new system. GMCA's expectations of localities was that the funding would support the delivery of existing programmes of work during the transitional year. The Oldham model primary function was to secure existing staff working in the wider Oldham partnership of work and skills. This allowed us to continue to deliver services at no detriment to Oldham residents and retain the expertise developed in Oldham.

1.8 This model included the previous funding received from GMCA for 15 – 19 NEET support. Historically, Oldham made the decision to attach this fund to the TSSS Contract currently delivered by Positive Steps to ensure value for money and streamlining of services. Due to procurement legislation around levels of funding and the material change in the service, this is no longer an option Officers can consider, requiring us to go out to competitive tender for this service.

[1] Rewiring the State – Cabinet Statement (HTML) - GOV.UK

1.9 Whilst the wider integrated settlement covers a variety of funding pots across Local Growth and Place, Local Transport and Housing regeneration and retrofit. This report deals only with the funding relating to IS allocations for education, work and skills.

1.10 Oldham's future delivery plan is currently under development and further reports incorporating the full future delivery plan will be provided in due course, due to legal requirements around procurement timescales, a decision regarding the 15 – 24 EET Support Service is required earlier.

2 Current Position

2.1 From various funding sources, including European Social Funding (ESF) and UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF), GMCA have been able to provide funding for NEET support to the ten Local Authorities (LA) across Greater Manchester.

2.2 The fund was always intended to support young people aged 15 – 19 (up to 21 if care leavers and 25 if in receipt of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan).

2.3 For the financial year 2026/27, GMCA have not yet been able to secure NEET funding for localities and a business case is being developed. Decisions on this will not be made until February/March 2027. Therefore, to address this gap in funding, as this work is deemed a priority, LA's were asked to secure provision via the newly established Integrated Settlement. In Oldham, we were able to secure most of the previous allocation level, which was £480,000. For 2026/27, we secured £460,000 for NEET support.

2.4 Officers have been working closely with stakeholders across the employment and skills eco-system in Oldham and GMCA to develop the future delivery for the remaining 2 years of allocated funding.

2.5 In May 2026, Alan Milburn produced his interim report, Young People and Work[2]. This is a diagnostic report and concludes that the growing number of young people who are NEET is a national social and economic crisis driven by interconnected challenges in health, education, the labour market and public services, requiring a more joined-up system focused on participation, prevention and opportunity. The recommendations report is due in late October/early November 2026.

2.6 The report makes a shift in the age range for NEET as is defined by LA statutory duties. Currently, LA's have duties in relation to supporting those who are NEET but these duties only cover ages 16 – 19 (up to 25 if in receipt of an EHC plan).[3] The Young People and Work report covers an age range of 16 – 24 year olds.

2.7 Anticipating the Young People and Work recommendations report, and acknowledging the gap we have in Oldham between our 16 – 19 NEET rate (3.7% in June 2026) and our 18 – 24 Youth Unemployment rate (9.9% in June 2026), Oldham made the decision to design a service that covers this age range and align to the current government thinking around young people and work.

2.8 This shift constitutes a material change to the existing service currently delivered by Positive Steps. In addition, due to the wider age range and wider service offer, we have increased the funding envelope for this service. We have allocated an envelope of approximately £539,000 per financial year, which is 23% of the Work and Skills portion of the Integrated Settlement allocated to Oldham. This requires us to go out to competitive tender.

[2] Young people and work: interim report - GOV.UK
[3] Participation of young people in education, employment or training

2.9 The associated targets set against the Integrated Settlement Outcomes Framework (ISOF) have been split across the full suite of employment support projects developed based on the percentage level of funding each project has been allocated. This service will be required to achieve the following;

	Starts	**Positive Outcomes**	**Job outcome**	**Job sustainment**
EET Support (15 – 24)	318	135	81	0
Total for IS annual delivery	1379	610	269	184

2.10 GMCA have sought approval via their governance for the plans submitted. A joint portfolio meeting took place at GMCA on 9 October 2026 which sought approval of the plans for the GM Live Well Journey to Employment across the region. Following this meeting, GMCA Treasurer will approve letters of comfort to each LA confirming approval of the delivery plans and actual funding level.

2.11 This process also delays the issue of the grant funding agreement (GFA) to Local Authorities. At the time of writing, GMCA cannot give us an indication of when the GFA will be available to LA's.

2.12 To ensure our newly procured service is in place and ready to deliver from 1st April 2027 and we do not have any gaps I service delivery for our residents, we will be required to go out to tender at risk, without having a GFA signed and sealed by our Legal team.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Delivery of the commissioned service

3.2 Option 1:
Continue to work with Procurement timescales to achieve a 1st April 2027 delivery start date. This requires the LA to go out to tender for a new service without a GFA in place with GMCA.

3.2.1 This option ensures the LA doesn't experience a gap in critical services for young people who are vulnerable to experiencing a period of NEET which we know to be scarring for future potential career development and progression.

3.3 Option 2:
Cease all activity on the tender and service delivery schedules until the GFA is signed and in place.

3.3.1 Whilst this option reduces risk from a LA funding perspective as funding will not be allocated until the GFA and associated paperwork is in place, it heightens risk for residents who require the service and puts young people at risk who are at risk of or who are experiencing NEET and require support. The gap in service delivery could be six months.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 1 is the preferred option.

4.2 The risk of the GFA not being signed and sealed and Oldham not receiving the funding is minimal. The greater risk is to residents not accessing an essential service whilst we procure one.

5 Consultation

5.1 No consultation is required or has been undertaken. There are no declared interests.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 This report is seeking approval to complete a competitive procurement tender exercise.

6.2 The proposal commits £539,000 per annum from the expected but yet to be confirmed Education, Work and Skills element of the Greater Manchester Integrated Settlement towards the commissioning of a new 15-24 Education, Employment and Training (EET) Support Service. This allocation represents approximately 23% of Oldham's Work and Skills settlement funding. The estimated contract value is £1.078m over the initial two-year term from April 2027 to March 2029, with potential extension options subject to future funding availability and performance requirements.

6.3 The service will be externally procured through a competitive tender exercise. To achieve mobilisation by 1 April 2027, procurement activity will need to commence before a formal Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) has been issued by GMCA. As outlined in section 2.10 above the GMCA Treasurer will be issuing letters of comfort to each LA confirming approval of the delivery plans and actual funding level, so whilst officers consider the risk of funding not being confirmed to be low, there remains a financial risk should GMCA alter allocations or funding conditions prior to grant agreement execution.

6.4 Funding for the service is expected to be met entirely from Integrated Settlement allocations and therefore does not create a direct additional pressure on Council budgets. However, funding levels remain indicative pending final confirmation from GMCA and may be subject to future review.

Catherine Dunkerley – Accountant

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The proposal is lawful and complies with the Council's constitution. 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

7.2 The Council must be satisfied it can meet the objectives and terms and conditions and milestones of the funding imposed by the funding authority 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.

7.3 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.

7.4 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.

7.5 If any grant funds are to be spent on supplies, works or services, the Council must undertake any commissioning activity in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules, incorporating relevant national procurement legislation

Bryan Bose - Solicitor

8. **Procurement Implications**

8.1 The funding risk is acknowledged in the report. Please can you confirm the proposed arrangement should the GFA not be signed and sealed, or the anticipated funding not be received, including whether the Council would be able to withdraw from the procurement or avoid entering the contractual commitment before funding is confirmed. Please could you confirm the proposed contract duration and the total estimated contract value, including any extensions, so we can apply the relevant thresholds and procurement route.

Samantha Lee – Senior Category Manager 16.10.2026

8.2 The funding risk has been considered. The service area has confirmed that the risk of the Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) not being signed is minimal. However, should the anticipated funding not be received, the Council would be unable to proceed with contract and would withdraw from the procurement process. No contracts will be entered into until the GFA is in place.

8.3 The estimated contract value has been confirmed as £539,000 per annum. The service area is to ensure that the proposed contract duration, including any extension options, is reflected in the total estimated contract value to enable the appropriate procurement thresholds and route to be determined.

8.4 Procurement is satisfied that the above points have been addressed and supports the proposal, subject to the GFA being in place before any contractual commitment is entered into.

Samantha Lee – Senior Category Manager 19.10.2026

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

9.1 Yes/No [delete as appropriate] Ctrl and click to follow link to complete https://app.powerbi.com/home?experience=power-bi

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-26-48

12 **Appendices & Background Papers**

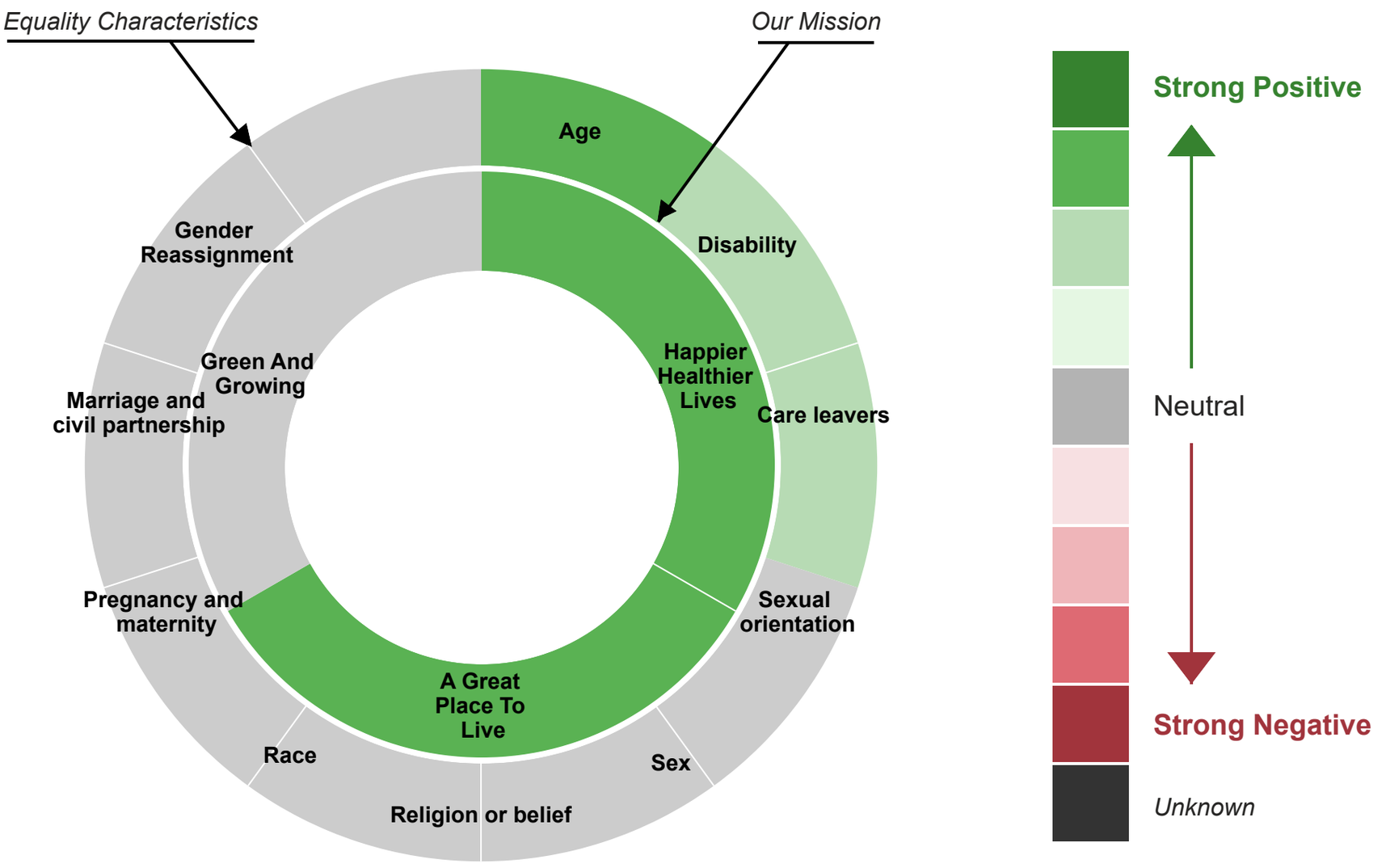
12.1 Cabinet Report accepting Year 1 EWS IS funding.

12.2 Service Specification for 15 – 24 EET Support Service.

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

Live Well Journey to Employment 15 - 24 EET Service

Portfolio	**Education and Skills**
Directorate	**People**
Service/Team	**Education, Skills and Early Years**
Is this IA related to a Budget Reduction proposal?	**No**



Equality Characteristics

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Race	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Religion or belief	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Sex	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Sexual orientation	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Care leavers	Moderate Positive	Possible	Long Term	2	Care Leavers are an identified group within the funding arrangements
Disability	Moderate Positive	Possible	Long Term	2	Those who identify as SEND are an identified group within the funding arrangements
Age	Strong Positive	Possible	Long Term	4	The service will target only those aged 15 - 24 years old.

Our Mission / Corporate Priorities

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Green And Growing	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
A Great Place To Live	Strong Positive	Possible	Long Term	4	Ensuring support for employment and skills development boosts the local economy due to more disposable income
Happier Healthier Lives	Strong Positive	Possible	Long Term	4	Evidence supports good employment is good for overall health and wellbeing

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)
A Great Place To Live	Strong Positive	Possible	Long Term	4	The provider will use partnerships across Oldham and GM to enhance the service	Ensure provider chosen is able to access the wider partnership of support for young people, whether that be local, regional or national	Provider	31st March 2029
Age	Strong Positive	Possible	Long Term	4	The provider will use partnerships across Oldham and GM to enhance the service	Ensure provider chosen is able to access the wider partnership of support for young people, whether that be local, regional or national	Provider	31st March 2029
Happier Healthier Lives	Strong Positive	Possible	Long Term	4	The provider will use partnerships across Oldham and GM to enhance the service	Ensure provider chosen is able to access the wider partnership of support for young people, whether that be local, regional or national	Provider	31st March 2029

Report to CABINET

Greater Manchester's Integrated Settlement for Education, Work and Skills

Portfolio Holder: Councillor M Ali, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and Councillor F Hussain, Cabinet member for Business Enterprise and Employment

Officer Contact: Jon Bloor, Assistant Director, Employment and Skills, Paul Tinsley, Interim Director of Education and Early Years

Report Author: Amanda Youlden, Post 16 and Skills Lead

March 2026

Reason for Decision

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is currently working with each of the ten local authorities to determine how devolved funding will operate. This activity is taking place with teams across the Council and has implications for various services and choices that the Council will want 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 an initial tranche of Integrated Settlement (IS) funding that is being allocated for Education, Work and Skills via GMCA and the position known to officers at the time of writing.

The report outlines the funding confirmed to Oldham from GMCA at this stage for extensions to 3 projects currently being funded in the Oldham area.

Request to accept the funding and permission extend associated contracts for additional Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) support (forms part of Targeted Specialist Services and Support (TSSS) contract), year 2 of economic inactivity trailblazer funding and associated projects and WorkWell Vanguard for the financial year 2026/2027.

Advising members that GMCA have made the decision to cease funding a fixed term post, in addition to the IS. GMCA suggest that the post is continued to be funded by this current allocation, if Local Authority's (LA's) choose to do so.

The report outlines the proposal for the allocation of the funding, and the intention of Officers to primarily secure the associated posts within the education, work and skills delivery teams that have been affected by the move across to the IS and the decisions GMCA have made in relation to the level of funding and allocations. The delivery teams affected are Action Together, Get Oldham Working, Positive Steps and Post 16 Service.

Advising members that further funding is to be allocated to Education, Work and Skills via the GMCA IS. Allocations not yet determined and will advise members when Officers are made aware.

Recommendations
Members accept the additional funding to deliver the extensions to the three schemes, namely NEET support, Trailblazer and WorkWell Vanguard, and the proposed use of the funds that support Oldham residents.

Members agree to sign the grant funding agreement issued by GMCA.

Members agree that each of the three funds bear the cost of the Education, Work and Skills Co-ordinator post previously funded by GMCA.

Members to note the change to grant funding mechanism for education, work and skills funding via the GM Integrated Settlement.

Greater Manchester's Integrated Settlement for Education, Work and Skills

1 Background

1.1 The Greater Manchester Integrated Settlement is a funding framework that provides £630 million to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), allowing greater flexibility in funding services and a localised view of where support is required.

1.2 The integrated settlement replaces a system of separate funding pots from different government departments into the Greater Manchester economy, including funding for adult skills, employment support, economic inactivity trailblazer and funding identified for NEET (not in education, training or employment) support for young people.

1.3 An outcomes framework has been established to measure the impact of the funding on local residents and services.

1.4 Whilst the wider integrated settlement covers a variety of funding pots across Local Growth and Place, Local Transport and Housing regeneration and retrofit. This report deals only with the funding relating to IS allocations for education, work and skills.

2 Current Position

2.1 In December 2025, GMCA received approval from their Treasurer to expedite funding requests totaling £22.6 million that were requested to ensure key local employment and skills provision remains in place for 2026/27. This funding covers the following activity in Oldham:

- Economic Inactivity Trailblazer - £566,475
- Locality Led NEET - £480,000
- WorkWell Vanguard - £381,475

2.2 Previous reports that outline the three projects are attached at item 13.

2.3 In addition to confirming the above funding, GMCA confirmed they would no longer be providing additional funding for the Education, Work and Skills Co-ordinator post that has been funded for the past two financial years. GMCA's expectation is that LA's fund this post from the £1,427,645 allocation above.

2.4 GMCA has now confirmed that funding for two other work and skills programmes currently delivered in Oldham has now ceased. These are Support to Succeed, sub-contracted to deliver in Oldham by Get Oldham Working and Community Grants, delivered by community groups across Oldham and managed pan-GM by WEA.

2.5 The removal of the three projects effectively removes £969,567.36 (£536,899.96 Community Grants, £52,667.40 EWS Co-ordinator and £380,000.00 Support to Succeed) from Oldham to support residents into employment and skills.

2.6 Further funding is expected to be received for education, work and skills delivery in Oldham from the IS, however this has not yet been confirmed by GMCA and we await future decisions on these allocations.

2.7 Previously, each funding stream was passported to localities separately, with a separate requirement for approval, grant agreements and monitoring arrangements and requirements. GMCA, taking into account the feedback from LA's and their own departments on the unnecessary additional workload the additional funding streams create they intend to streamline processes, providing one integrated funding settlement to each Local Authority, therefore minimising the administrative and monitoring processes and associated costs

2.8 The grant agreement that this report deals with is only in relation to the provision outlined at 2.1. Further reports on the wider IS allocation will follow when detail emerges.

2.9 GMCA expect that this funding will support the delivery of existing programmes of work during this transitional year, whilst Greater Manchester moves across to the IS model of funding. Accepting the funding and agreeing this model gives Officers time to work with GMCA to influence the shaping of the model understand how the new model will be implemented and ensure Oldham is ready implement the employment and skills support via the IS in a seamless way and ensure residents are not affected.

2.10 The primary function of the proposed model of funding is to secure existing staff working in the wider Oldham partnership of work and skills. The model allows us to continue to deliver services at no detriment to Oldham residents and retains the expertise developed in Oldham. This provides GMCA the time to fully develop Oldham's allocation (as per 2.6) and allows Officers the next 12 months to develop a model of delivery that works for Oldham residents.

Empower Oldham	£461,769.00
Work Well Vanguard	£236,200.00
Trailblazer (One Front Door)	£239,267.00
Trailblazer (Volunteering into Employment)	£65,000.00
Trailblazer (GOW Healthy)	£60,000.00
Support to Succeed	£233,052.00
Work and Skills Co-ordinator	£52,667.40
Contingency	£79,689.60
	£1,427,645.00

2.11 The required monitoring for the three projects has not yet been agreed or made available. Officer's understanding from GMCA is that monitoring requirements will be in line with previous year's expectations.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1: We accept the extension to the funding up to 31 March 2027 and continue to deliver the three projects, and adjust the funding to secure the internal post. This option secures additional support for residents in Oldham that is not funded by Council funding.

3.2 Option 2: We decline the extension to funding up to 31 March 2027. This option effectively removes existing provision, resource and support for residents.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 1 is Officer's preferred option. This option secures additional funding and therefore support for residents that would not normally be available.

5 Consultation

5.1 No consultation is required or has been undertaken. There are no declared interests.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 This report seeks approval to accept GMCA funding of £1,427,645 and to extend the related contracts that provide additional support for young people who are NEET through the TSSS contract. It also requests approval to continue year two of the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer funding and its associated projects, as well as the WorkWell Vanguard programme, for the 2026/2027 financial year. The proposed model of funding is included in the table in para 2.10.

6.2 GMCA has indicated that the funding allocation is intended to maintain delivery of the current programme portfolio throughout this transitional year, pending Greater Manchester's move to the new Investment Strategy (IS) funding model. Acceptance of this funding will ensure continuity of service without requiring additional Council resources and will mitigate the financial risk of programme disruption during the transition period.

6.3 Agreeing to operate within the proposed model will also provide Officers with the necessary time and capacity to work with GMCA on the design and implementation of the IS framework. This will support financial planning, enable clearer forecasting for future years, and ensure Oldham is fully prepared to deliver employment and skills support under the new IS arrangements. This approach minimises the risk of unfunded pressures emerging and protects residents from any service interruptions linked to the funding model change.

6.4 As part of this funding offer, GMCA has confirmed it will no longer directly fund the Education, Work and Skills Co-ordinator post previously funded for the last two years. GMCA's expectation is that Local Authorities fund the post from within their IS allocation. The proposal in this report is that the cost of this post (£52,670) is apportioned across the three funding streams on a proportional basis. This approach avoids creating an unfunded budget pressure for the Council.

(Catherine Dunkerley – Accountant)

7 Legal Implications

7.1 Acceptance of the funding is lawful provided that the Council enters into and complies with the associated grant funding agreement. The agreement should be reviewed to ensure clarlity on the permitted use of the funds, reporting obligations, clawback provisions, any subsidy control considerations prior to execution.

7.2 The proposed use of part of the allocation to fund the Education, Work and Skills Co-ordinator post is permissible, provided this is consistent with the grant conditions. HR should be consulted so that any appointment is made on a fixed term basis aligned to the funding period and to ensure it does not create employment liabilities beyond that period unless further funding is secured.

(Pamela Nsofor – Solicitor)

8 Procurement Implications

8.1 There are no concerns with accepting grant money into the Council. Once grant money has been received by the Council then it becomes Council money, so how that is utilised is subject to the Council's internal requirements such as the CPR's. If the money is awarded to providers as a grant, then there are no procurement implications.

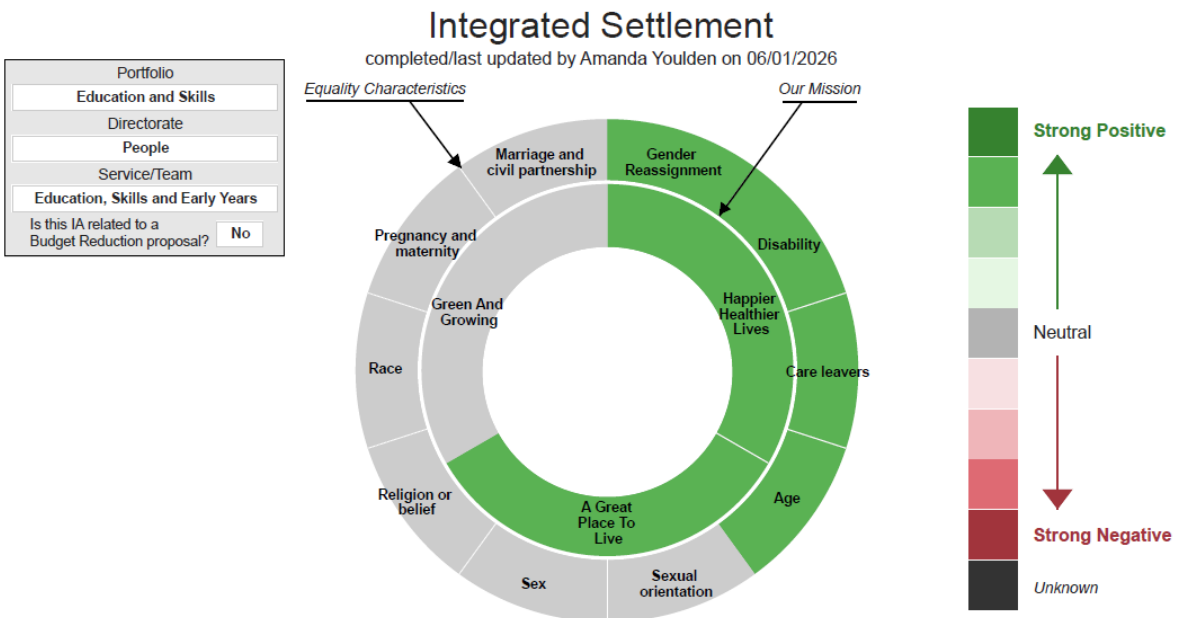
8.2 However, Subsidy Control may need to be considered. A grant does not require the grantee to deliver any services or goods and therefore does not constitute a contract for services. If a contract is required then spend would need to be compliant with the CPR's. The Business Unit should seek support and guidance from CPU for any spend over £30k (inc. VAT) that is not issued as a grant.

8.3 The TSSS contract was awarded for 7 years (3+2+2) under PCR2015 starting April 2025 with a value of £3,111,300, so in theory up to £1.55m could be added over the life of the contract and remain below 50% modification. Modifications would be governed by PCR2015.

(James England, Procurement Manager)

9 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

9.1



10 Key Decision

10.1 Yes

11 Key Decision Reference

11.1 CYP-02-26

12 Background Papers

12.1 N/A

Emergency Powers Decision Report

Acceptance of GMCA Housing Enforcement Grants
Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Public Protection, Environment
Directorate: Place
Report Author: Jenni Seex, Assistant Director Public Protection
Email: Jenni.Seex@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 paragraph 3.6 of Part 4D (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council's Constitution that 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.

2. Decision Sought

To accept £185,000 in grant funding from GMCA to support an increase in enforcement activity in the private rented sector and utilise £35,000 of Selective Licensing ringfenced reserves for match funding.

3. Reason for urgency

The grant funding available relates to the current financial year and any delay in entering into a grant funding agreement will result in the reallocation of the funding.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

A failure to agree to accept the funding will lead to a loss of the grant and mean that the council cannot deliver additional duties/improvements with respect to the private rented sector and improvement of housing standards for residents in Oldham

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

If the grant funding is not accepted the Council will need to utilise the Selective Licensing reserves for another purpose.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 5 November 2026
Comments

The recommendation to accept £150k of grant funding from GMCA is supported. The funding is ringfenced for Housing Strategy purposes and does not create a direct revenue pressure for the Council. The proposed use of the grant to fund fixed-term staffing resources, together with associated training, IT and communications costs, will support the delivery of the Council's housing enforcement and regulatory objectives.

In addition, the Council is seeking to secure a further £35,227 of external funding, which requires matched funding from the Council. It is proposed that this contribution is met from the Selective Licensing Reserve, which has sufficient resources available to meet this requirement.
The staffing posts are time-limited and linked to the availability of grant funding, thereby minimising the risk of creating ongoing budget commitments. Grant funding and associated expenditure will be subject to regular financial monitoring to ensure compliance with funding conditions and that all costs remain within the approved allocations.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alan Evans (Deputy Monitoring officer)
Date 22 October 2026
Comments

For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required. In the absence of the appointment by the Council of a Leader, Deputy Leader or Cabinet members, in accordance with the recent amendments to the Council Constitution, the Chief Executive may carry out executive functions, subject to the Access to Information Rules.

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:	Acceptance of GMCA Housing Enforcement Grants
Decision maker:	Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive
Decision date:	30 November 2026
Report author:	Jenni Seex, Assistant Director Public Protection
Ward (s):	N/A

Reason for decision

To accept an additional £185,000 in grant funding from the GMCA in relation to enhancing enforcement of housing standards and to utilise £35,000 of Selective Licensing reserves for match funding.

Recommendation(s)

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.

Background

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).

An outline proposal was submitted to the GMCA in October based on recruiting an additional officer to investigate unlicensed properties with a view to targeting enforcement, developing clear procedural guidance and securing Rent Repayment Orders.

This grant would allow the Environmental Health Team to create two new roles on a fixed term basis with a focus on developing enforcement procedures and taking targeted enforcement in relation to properties covered by mandatory HMO Licensing and Selective Licensing Schemes. This work would provide a strong foundation for increased enforcement activity aligned to new powers and duties in the Renters Rights Act.
In the summer, the GMCA confirmed further grant funding available to all GM authorities aligned to the PRS Pathfinder Programme. The funding is intended to support the continuation of the PRS Pathfinder programme, helping local authorities strengthen private rented sector enforcement through officer development, increased enforcement capacity, and improved recovery of civil penalty debts. The allocation for Oldham is £ 35,227 and requires match funding. This can be achieved through utilising income from Selective Licensing which is ringfenced.

The current resourcing levels within Environmental Health teams mean that there is insufficient capacity to undertake pre-programmed or targeted work. Acceptance of the funding will enable the Council to build much needed enforcement capacity to undertake targeted investigative work and deliver a range of enforcement outcomes. It will also support building capability through the developing processes and procedures and testing approaches which can then be utilised by the wider team.

It is proposed that the funding be used to create two new dedicated roles on an 18-month fixed term basis as well as procure additional enforcement training for all officers leading to nationally recognised qualifications.

The two proposed roles are:

- Housing Enforcement Lead (Grade 8/9) to lead on development of procedures, monitoring systems and complex cases including prosecutions, Rent Repayment Orders and Civil Penalties
- Enforcement Support Officer (Grade 4/5) to proactively identify unlicensed properties utilising a range of data sources, undertake basic investigations, develop and implement monitoring systems, ensure effective debt recovery processes are in place

In addition, in the region of £10,000 will be dedicated to the production of publicity materials and toolkits to encourage tenants to report issues with their Landlord and to support tenants to pursue action independently of the Council where appropriate. This work will support existing teams in delivering new duties and powers under the Renters Rights Act.

Alternative option(s) to be considered *(please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s)*

Option 1 (Preferred Option) – approve the acceptance of the £185,000 grant funding from the GMCA and delegate authority to the Director of Environment to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement. Under this option, the Council will receive funding to increase enforcement activity in the private rented sector.

Option 2 – do not accept the additional grant funding. Under this option the Council will not receive any additional resources from the GMCA. All enforcement activity will need to be undertaken within the existing resource capacity and will be limited.

Consultation *consulted)*

N/A

Risks

N/A

Implications

Financial	There is no direct cost to the Council in claiming the £150,000 grant funding from GMCA. However, as the funding is ringfenced for Housing Strategy purposes, the Council may be required to set out its intended use of the grant as part of the funding application process. The proposal is to use the grant to fund two fixed-term posts for an 18-month period: a Housing Enforcement Lead (Grade 9) at an estimated cost of £97,818 including on-costs, and an Enforcement Support Officer (Grade 5) at an estimated cost of £64,955 including on-costs. The total staffing cost is estimated at £162,773. In addition, provision has been made for £40,000 of training and IT costs, together with £17,681 for communications activity, bringing the total estimated cost to £220,454, fully utilising the available funding allocation. Furthermore, the Council is seeking to secure a further £35,227 of funding, which requires a corresponding level of match funding from the Council. It is proposed that the match funding be met from the Selective Licensing

	Reserve, which has an available balance of £96,920 after allowing for existing 2026/27 commitments. See costings table below; *Assuming January 2027 Start Date (18 Months)* **Posts** / **Grade** / **2026/27** / **2027/28** / **2028/29** / **Total** Housing Enforcement Lead / 9 / 15,713 / 64,950 / 17,155 / 97,818 Enforcement Support Officer / 5 / 10,443 / 43,170 / 11,343 / 64,955 **Total Staffing Cost** **162,773** Training & IT Costs **40,000** Communications **17,681** **Total** **220,454** ***Grant Funding*** Housing Strategy 150,000 Pathfinder funding 35,227 Council Match Funding 35,227 **220,454** (Mohammed Hussain)
Procurement	N/A
HR	N/A
Legal	It will be necessary to ensure that the ringfenced income from Selective Licensing can be used as match funding. Alan Evans
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	A detailed Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken in relation to the work following acceptance of the grant.
Other	

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?	No

Appendices (including any relevant Background Papers)

1. N/A

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 paragraph 3.6 of Part 4D (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council's Constitution that 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.
Signed: Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive Dated:
Date of Leaders' Consultative meeting:

Summary of feedback from the political group leaders

Emergency Powers Decision Report

2026/27 Rough Sleeping Programme Grant Funding
Acceptance of £418,307 Rough Sleeping Programme Grant Funding from Greater Manchester Combined Authority and approval of the proposed expenditure programme

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Housing Services
Directorate: Communities
Report Author: Clare Ocansey Senior Housing Needs Officer

Email: clare.ocansey@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 9th of September 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. This authorises the Chief Executive to take emergency decisions relating to the Council's executive functions where the decision cannot reasonably be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

Approval is sought to:

1. Accept £418,307 of 2026/27 Rough Sleeping Programme revenue grant funding from Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).

2. Authorise the Council to enter into the associated grant agreement with Greater Manchester Combined Authority, subject to the agreement being reviewed and approved by Legal Services and the Director of Finance.

3. Approve the proposed use of the funding to deliver Oldham's 2026/27 Rough Sleeping Programme, including:

    - dedicated Rough Sleeping Housing Options capacity;
    - dedicated move-on support;
    - supported accommodation and cross-pathway coordination;
    - emergency off-the-street accommodation;
    - set-up and mobilisation support for the proposed Spring Bank and Napier Street accommodation pathways;
    - private rented sector, bond and personalisation support;

- additional accommodation capacity for women and people with complex needs through existing providers; and
- performance monitoring, lived-experience involvement and eligible contingency expenditure.

4. Delegate authority to the Director for Community, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and the Director of Finance, to make reasonable adjustments between the approved budget headings. Any adjustment must remain within the total grant allocation, comply with the final grant conditions and not materially change the objectives of the programme.

5. Note that any contract variation, purchase of additional capacity or other procurement activity will be subject to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, applicable procurement legislation and the appropriate legal, financial, commercial and commissioning approvals.

3. Reason for urgency

Greater Manchester Combined Authority confirmed Oldham's allocation of £418,307 in writing on the 4th of September 2026. The full grant must be committed and spent on eligible activity by the 31st of March 2027, with no assumption that unspent funding can be carried forward into a future financial year.

The late confirmation of the funding has created a significantly shortened mobilisation and delivery period. The Council must promptly finalise staffing arrangements, engage with accommodation and support providers, undertake due diligence, complete any required contract variations and establish appropriate financial and programme controls.

Waiting for the next available Cabinet meeting could delay mobilisation and reduce the Council's ability to use the full allocation for eligible activity by the grant deadline. An emergency decision is therefore required to allow officers to progress delivery at the earliest opportunity.

The grant agreement is currently awaited. No agreement will be signed, and no expenditure will be committed, unless the final terms are acceptable to Legal Services and the Director of Finance.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

If the decision is not taken urgently:

- the Council may be unable to mobilise the programme within the limited funding period;
- all or part of the **£418,307 allocation** may remain unspent and may have to be returned;
- Oldham may lose the opportunity to increase routes off the street during winter and cold-weather pressures;

- the Council's capacity to assess and support people sleeping rough or at immediate risk will remain limited;
- existing supported accommodation may continue to experience blockages because of insufficient move-on and cross-pathway coordination;
- opportunities to create additional spaces through established providers may not be progressed within the financial year;
- people who are new to rough sleeping may not receive sufficiently early intervention, increasing the risk that their homelessness becomes repeated or entrenched;
- individuals experiencing entrenched rough sleeping, multiple disadvantage or complex needs may remain on the street or in unsuitable short-term accommodation for longer; and
- the Council may be unable to make a full local contribution to the national commitment to provide people sleeping rough with a route off the streets.

Delaying the decision would also create operational, financial and reputational risks for the Council and could affect Oldham's ability to obtain future funding if the 2026/27 grant is not used in accordance with the programme objectives.

6. Financial impact if decision is not taken forward

Greater Manchester Combined Authority has confirmed a revenue grant allocationof**£418,307** for Oldham's 2026/27 Rough Sleeping Programme. The funding is time limited and must be spent on eligible activity by the **31st of March 2027**.

The proposed allocation is:

Intervention	Proposed allocation
Rough Sleeping Housing Options Officer	£55,000

Rough Sleeping Move-On Support Officer	£50,000
Supported Housing Gateway Officer	£50,000
Emergency Off-the-Street Accommodation Fund, including cold weather	£65,000
Accommodation pathway mobilisation costs	£60,000
Private rented sector, bond and personalisation funds	£45,000
Complex-needs and women-specific additional capacity	£60,000
Performance, lived experience and contingency	£33,307
Total	**£418,307**

5.2 The Petrus allocation will support eligible and evidenced set-up and mobilisation costs associated with Spring Bank and Napier Street. This may include an

appropriate 24-hour presence, minor adaptations, equipment, utility-metering arrangements and other costs necessary to bring the additional spaces into use.

The allocation does not represent an automatic payment to Petrus. Expenditure will be subject to a detailed cost breakdown, confirmation of grant eligibility, an assessment of the Housing Benefit position, property and landlord responsibilities, value for money and the appropriate legal, procurement, finance and commissioning approvals.

5.3 Given the limited funding period, the allocation for complex-needs and women-specific additional capacity will focus on working with existing providers to create additional accommodation spaces. This may include varying existing contracts or purchasing additional capacity where this is lawful, deliverable by 31 March 2027 and represents value for money. It is not proposed to commission an entirely new service within the remaining grant period.

5.4 If the decision is not approved promptly, there is a material risk that the Council will be unable to commit and spend the full grant within the required timeframe. Any unspent or ineligible expenditure may have to be returned to Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

5.5 All expenditure will be subject to the final grant conditions, quarterly financial monitoring and a clear audit trail. No ongoing financial commitment will be made beyond the 31st of March 2027 unless a separate funding source has been identified and approved.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date: 5 November 2026
Comments

The recommendations within this report seek approval to utilise the confirmed grant allocation of £418,307 for 2026/27 to strengthen the Council's response to rough sleeping.

The allocation of £418,307 must be fully spent or contractually committed on eligible expenditure by 31 March 2027 in accordance with the grant conditions. Expenditure will be subject to the final grant determination, regular monitoring requirements, evidence of additionality, and the maintenance of a clear and auditable record of expenditure.

Provided that the posts funded through this allocation are established on a strictly time-limited basis for a maximum period of 12 months, the proposals should be fully funded from the grant received and should not create any ongoing financial commitment or additional burden on the Council's revenue budget. Appropriate monitoring arrangements will be maintained to ensure compliance with grant conditions and to mitigate any risk of grant clawback.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name: Alex Bougateff
Date: 10 November 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 Chief Executive

Approval of the 2026/27 Rough Sleeping Programme Grant and Proposed Expenditure

Officer Contact:
Neil Consterdine – Director of Communities

Report Author: Clare Ocansey Senior Housing Needs Officer

Email: clare.ocansey@oldham.gov.uk

30th November 2026

Reason for Decision

To seek Cabinet 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.

Executive Summary

The funding will 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 is 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

Local learning demonstrates that providing additional bed spaces without effective assessment, support and move-on pathways does not necessarily achieve lasting outcomes. The programme therefore provides an integrated response comprising dedicated Housing Options and Move-On Officers, cross-pathway coordination, accommodation-based interventions at Spring Bank and Napier Street, emergency off-the-street accommodation, targeted personalisation support and the development of new pathways.

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

Recommendations

- The funding will 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 is 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 to end revolving homelessness.

- The programme responds to local learning that additional bed spaces alone do not guarantee sustained move-on. It therefore combines dedicated housing options and move-on capacity, cross-the-pathway coordination, accommodation-enabled interventions at Spring Bank and Napier Street, an emergency off-the-street offer, and targeted Personalisation and pathway-development activity.

1 Background

1.1 Oldham Council works with GMCA and local partners to prevent and relieve homelessness and to support people sleeping rough or at immediate risk of doing so.

1.2 GMCA confirmed in writing on 4th of September 2026 that Oldham's 2026/27 Rough Sleeping Programme allocation is £418,307. The formal grant agreement has not yet been issued. Officers are preparing for mobilisation so that delivery can begin promptly once the agreement is received and approved.

1.3 The funding is time limited and must be spent by 31 March 2027. The programme will therefore operate through a tightly managed mobilisation, expenditure, performance and risk framework. No carryforward is assumed and no recurring commitment will be made beyond the funding period without an identified and approved funding source.

1.4 Due to the limited mobilisation period and the requirement for the service to be operational by December 2026, there is insufficient time to undertake a full competitive procurement process. Officers will therefore seek advice from Commercial and Procurement Services on the appropriate and lawful route, including whether an exemption from the Council's Contract Procedure Rules is justified in relation to the proposed spend. The initial funding period will be used as a time-limited test-and-learn phase to evaluate the model, demand, outcomes and future commissioning requirements.

1.5 A local review of rough sleeping presentations indicates that some people repeatedly present across successive financial years and that women with complex needs are disproportionately represented among those returning to A Bed Every Night (ABEN). The programme will therefore focus on prevention, rapid assessment, purposeful placements, move-on planning from the point of admission and sustainable housing outcomes. Learning from the initial delivery period will inform the future design and commissioning of rough sleeping and supported accommodation services.

2 Strategic Context

National Context

2.1 The current contract for the Out of Hours Emergency Homelessness Support Service ended on the 30th of June 2026, with no further extension option available. Care Point Housing has continued to honour the original contract and provide the service, ensuring continuity of provision to date. Approval is therefore sought for a 6-month direct award from the 1st of July 2026 to 31 December 2026, to maintain this critical statutory service while the Council completes a full procurement process for longer-term provision from on the 1st of January 2027.

2.2 Oldham's proposed programme gives local effect to this "Everyone In"-type offer. The Emergency Off-the-Street Accommodation Fund will support rapid access to safe short-term accommodation where no suitable immediate alternative is available. Dedicated housing options, move-on and cross-pathway staff will ensure that an offer of accommodation is linked from the outset to assessment, health and support needs, an

intended housing pathway, a named lead and a target move date. This reflects the national expectation that the winter response should provide a route off the street rather than emergency bed capacity alone.

Greater Manchester context

2.3 The programme aligns with the Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy and its missions that everyone can access and sustain a safe, decent and affordable home; people leave care with somewhere safe to go; quality advice and support are available; people experiencing homelessness can access respite, recovery and reconnection; and homelessness is not entrenched or repeated. It also supports Greater Manchester's person-centered, trauma-informed and Housing First ambitions.

2.4 The proposal also supports GMCA's 2026-29 investment priorities for Housing First, Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programmes, ABEN, homelessness inclusion health and rough sleeping infrastructure.

Local context

2.5 The programme supports the priorities of Oldham's Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2021-26, including advice and information, early identification, pre-crisis intervention, preventing recurring homelessness and effective partnership working. A new Oldham Homelessness Strategy for 2026 onwards is being developed. The proposed activity provides a practical bridge into the emerging strategy by strengthening prevention, pathways and long-term sustainment.

3. Proposed Programme

3.1 Rough Sleeping Housing Options Officer
Dedicated assessment, personalised housing plans, statutory and discretionary interventions, outreach attendance and assertive follow-up for people sleeping rough or at immediate risk, including people with complex needs.

3.2 Rough Sleeping Move-On Support Officer
Resident-facing support from short-stay accommodation into supported or settled housing. Move-on planning will begin at admission and include supported accommodation, private rented housing, social housing, SMART Housing and Housing First.

3.3 Supported Accommodation and Cross-Pathway Coordinator
Coordination of moves for people with long-term support needs and households in temporary accommodation who are ready for greater independence. A live tracker will identify pathways, barriers, actions, responsible leads and target move dates.

3.4 Accommodation Pathway

Subject to satisfactory due diligence, property compliance, Housing Benefit assessment, value for money considerations, and the receipt of all required approvals, the programme

will support the provision of 13 units within Accommodation Pathway 1 and 4 spaces within Accommodation Pathway 2 as managed accommodation-based interventions. Should any proposed accommodation be deemed unsuitable, unavailable, or otherwise incapable of meeting programme requirements, the Council reserves the right to explore and implement alternative accommodation-based solutions and delivery arrangements to ensure the continued achievement of the programme objectives, subject to the necessary approvals, due diligence, and funding availability. This may include the use of accommodation and support provision through existing delivery arrangements on a test-and-learn basis where this is considered the most appropriate and effective option.

Accommodation Pathway 1 will deliver a combination of medium-stay and rapid move-on accommodation pathways, supported by an appropriate 24-hour on-site staffing presence.

Accommodation Pathway 2 will provide a lower-risk, early-intervention accommodation pathway, subject to individual suitability, risk and safeguarding assessments to ensure the accommodation is appropriate for each resident.

3.5 Emergency Off-the-Street Accommodation Fund
Case-by-case access to short-term safe accommodation when no suitable immediate alternative is available, including cold-weather and winter pressures. This will form Oldham's local contribution to the national ambition to offer everyone sleeping rough who needs it a route off the streets by Christmas 2026. Every placement will be purposeful and accompanied by an initial assessment, an active move-on plan, access to relevant health and support services, and financial reconciliation. The offer is not intended to replicate a stand-alone night shelter or create bed capacity without a sustainable pathway.

3.6 PRS, Bond and Personalisation Support
Controlled support for deposits, rent in advance, essential household items, identification, travel, digital inclusion and other practical barriers linked to an agreed housing or support outcome.

Intervention	**Revised allocation**
Rough Sleeping Housing Options Officer	£55,000
Rough Sleeping Move-On Support Officer	£50,000
Supported Housing Gateway Officer	£50,000
Emergency Off-the-Street Accommodation Fund, including cold weather	**£95,000**
Accommodation Pathway mobilisation costs	**£60,000**
PRS, bond and personalisation funds	**£75,000**
Performance, lived experience and contingency	£33,307
Total	**£418,307**

4. Options/Alternatives

Option 1: Do not accept the grant
4.1 This would remove £418,307 of time-limited external funding and substantially reduce local capacity to prevent and respond to rough sleeping. It would limit emergency accommodation, assessment, move-on and pathway-development capacity and increase the risk of repeat or prolonged rough sleeping.

Option 2: Accept the grant and enter into the grant agreement
4.2 This would enable the Council to implement the proposed programme, subject to the final grant conditions, and strengthen both immediate responses and sustainable move-on pathways.

4.3 That authority be delegated to Neil Consterdine, Director for Community,to agree and sign the final grant agreement with Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Subject to the agreement being in an acceptable form and remaining within the approved funding allocation, no further approval from Cabinet will be required.

5. Preferred Option
5.1 Option 2 is preferred because it secures external resources for a targeted, outcome-focused rough sleeping programme and supports national, regional and local strategic priorities.

6. Financial Implications
6.1 The confirmed allocation is £418,307 for 2026/27. The full amount must be spent on eligible activity by the 31st of March 2027. Expenditure will be subject to the final grant conditions, monthly monitoring, evidence of additionality and a clear audit trail.

5. Consultation

5.1 The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods will be consulted on the final programme. Delivery planning will involve GMCA, relevant Council services, accommodation and support providers, health and criminal justice partners, and people with lived experience. Further operational consultation will take place during mobilisation.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The confirmed allocation is £418,307 for 2026/27. The full amount must either be spent or committed on eligible activity by the 31st of March 2027. Expenditure will be subject to the final grant conditions, monthly monitoring, evidence of additionality and a clear audit trail. As long as the posts are established as time limited (12 months), there should be no call on Council resources other than the grant receivable.
Mike Roberts (Finance Manager)

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The Council has the power pursuant to section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to accept the grant funding and enter into the associated funding agreement with GMCA. The

funding agreement has not yet been received and must be reviewed and approved by Legal Services prior to execution to ensure that its terms are acceptable to the Council and that any conditions attached to the funding can be complied with.
Any expenditure of the funding must be undertaken in accordance with the Council's CPR and the Procurement Act 2023, where applicable.
Where funding is passed to, or expended through, third parties, consideration must be given to whether the arrangements constitute a subsidy for the purposes of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and where appropriate, a subsidy control assessment completed and recorded. The Service should also ensure that any grant funding, contractual, procurement or other legal implications arising from the proposed arrangements are identified and addressed, and further legal advice obtained at that point as necessary.
Pamela Nsofor (Commercial and Procurement Solicitor)

8 Procurement Implications

8.1 There are no procurement implications with regards accepting the grant funding into the Council. However, Procurement will support the Service with regards to either allocating funds in line with the Councils/ Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) and Procurement Regulations (PA2023) or advising the Service how it could set out a robust case exemption for exemption to the CPRs and Procurement Regulations, based on the critical urgency of the situation and the real-world service risk of not allocating the funds promptly. Procurement will also be required to set out the risk alongside Legal of any non-competed commissioning and in addition, advise on such matters as Transparency Notices.

Tom Pyne –(AD Procurement)

9.Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

9.1 Yes - Equality Impact Assessment Completed and attached at Appendix 1.

10. Key Decision

10.1 Yes

11. Key Decision Reference

KDD-26-25

12. **Background Papers**

N/A

13. Appendices

13 .1 Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

Emergency Powers Decision Report

Kingsland Pupil Referral Unit – Latics Zone HNPCA project

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Property and Estates
Directorate:
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 to accept the most advantageous tender (MAT) submissions in relation to the refurbishment of the location previously known as Latics Zone into suitable accommodation for vulnerable young people as part of Oldham Pupil referral Unit. Also, to delegate authority for decisions regarding the above site to Executive Director of Children and Young People as part of the monitoring and reporting process for the SEND Reform.

3. Reason for urgency

The decision is required urgently to enable the planned expansion of specialist provision at Kingsland Pupil Referral Unit providing 8 additional places as part of the council SEND Reforms. The PRU provides specialist support for vulnerable children and young people of Oldham, many of whom have SEND / SEMH additional needs. Any delay in confirming the tender will risk the construction project not being completed and the additional spaces not being delivered in time preventing vulnerable young people accessing the education and support they need.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

Failure to approve the most advantageous tender submissions in relation to the refurbishment of Latics Zone will prevent the creation of 8 much needed additional places within the PRU. 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 projects not being delivered in time, 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 vulnerable 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 8 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 5 Novemeber 2026
Comments

The recommendation is to accept the Most Advantageous Tender for the refurbishment of the former Latics Zone, now forming part of Kingsland Pupil Referral Unit. The scheme represents capital expenditure and will be funded from the approved High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA) within the Council's Capital Programme 2026-2031.

Capital funding of up to £200,000 has previously been approved for this project, and sufficient provision exists within the approved Capital Programme to meet the cost of the works. The investment will support the enhancement of educational facilities and increase the capacity and suitability of provision for pupils with additional needs.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef
Date 10.11.26
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 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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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:	Latic Zone – High Needs Provisions Capital Allocation (HNPCA)
Decision maker:	Chief Executive
Decision date:	30th November 2026
Report author:	Victoria Caldwell – Schools Capital Project Manager
Ward (s):	Coldhurst

Reason for decision

This report seeks 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 & Skills in February 2025 (1) and outlines the conversion of the Latics Zone location into a tier2 provision for 8 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 have been 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 LaticZone is £133,507.27 (excl. VAT) or £160,208.72 (incl. VAT).

Finally, this report also requests that delegated authority over the construction work and spend of the HNPCA grant be given to the Director Early Years and Education as part of the monitoring and reporting process for the SEND Reforms.

Recommendation(s)

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

Background

Demand for specialist provision for children and young people with SEND including SEMH 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 options will enable the Council to invest in additional specialist provision through the expansion of the Kingsland Pupil Referral Unit, increasing local capacity and supporting vulnerable children and young people to access appropriate provision closer to home.

The proposal aligns with Oldham's SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027[(2)] and the Local SEND Reform Plan[(3)], which seek to strengthen inclusion, improve local sufficiency and ensure children and young people can access the right support at the right time. As part of this approach, the Local Authority is working with schools and trusts to increase capacity across the continuum of provision, including both mainstream and specialist settings.

Whilst the reform programme places a strong emphasis on enabling more children and young people to have their needs met successfully within mainstream education wherever appropriate, there remains a cohort of children and young people whose needs require specialist provision. The expansion of the Kingsland Pupil Referral unit will help ensure those pupils can access appropriate specialist provision locally whilst supporting a more coherent and sustainable SEND system across the borough.

Alternative option(s) to be considered

Option 1 (recommended). Accept the tender submitted by Jamieson Contracting Limited for Latic Zone refurbishment. This option would allow the Council to appoint the preferred bidder under the published form of contract. It directly supports the Council’s SEND Reform programme by enhancing the educational provision for children and young people with SEND in Oldham.

Option 2 is to not accept the preferred tender by Jamieson Contracting Limited. This is not considered a viable option as specialist education provision is needed for vulnerable children and young people, with the Latics Zone projects being fully funded through the HNPCA as part of the national and local SEND reform.

Consultation

Oldham SEND and Inclusion Strategy and the SEND Reform plan were co-produced with local partners including POINT and school headteachers and SENCOs. This joint work helped to ensure that local priorities, and ideas and suggestions from education and SEND partners were embedded into the Strategy and the Reform Plan.

All HNPCA decisions and updates, including the creation and commissioning of new places in specialist provision across Oldham, are shared with representatives from all Education phases as part of the Education Provision Group and at other Education forums.

Risks

Failure to Utilise External Grant Funding

Delaying the scheme could result in the works being outside the required DfE funding allocation for High Needs Provision Capital Allocation.

Programme Delay

Works may exceed planned completion dates, delaying the provision of appropriate education and support to vulnerable young people in Oldham. The School Capital Project Manager will regularly review and advise on the timeliness of the works completed.

Cost Overruns

Final costs may exceed the contract sum. The School Capital Project Manager and the Capital Finance Manager will monitor expenditure closely, providing ongoing reviews and forecasts.

Implications

Financial	Capital Funding has been previously approved for this scheme of up to £200k and is available from within the current Capital Programme 2026-2031 from the High Needs Capital Allocation (HNPCA) Paula Buckley Capital and Treasury
Procurement	An Open Below Threshold Regulated tender was issued under DN822843 (via The Chest Portal) on 20/07/2026 and tender closed on 11/08/2026. Eight (8) bidders submitted their bids. All bids were compliant and were evaluated followed by moderation which resulted in Jamieson Contracting Limited providing value for money including submitting the lowest cost at £133,507.27 (excl. VAT) or £160,208.72 (incl. VAT). It is recommended that the contract be awarded to Jamieson Contracting Limited. The moderated scores showing the evaluation criteria are: Evaluation Criteria and Weighting Matrix Commercial Procurement Unit

			AC Elec (North)		Carson Powel		Darrenbqs Ltd		Jamieson Cont		Momentum		Senate Group		Totalis Solutio		TR Building	
		Weighting	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score
Criteria			AC Elec (North)		Carson Powell Construction		Darrenbqs Ltd/LPL		Jamieson Contracting		Momentum		Senate Group		Totalis Solutions Limited		TR Building	
Price Pro-rata (£)- %																		
Fully Compliant Tender price		40%		28.77%		35.53%		39.90%		40.00%		32.81%		33.39%		36.69%		35.82%
Quality/Technical Criteria- 60%; Social Value-10%																		
1	Programme:	20%	4	16.00%	3	12.00%	3	12.00%	4	16.00%	2	8.00%	3	12.00%	2	8.00%	2	8.00%
2	Approach/Snagging:	20%	4	16.00%	4	16.00%	4	16.00%	4	16.00%	4	16.00%	5	20.00%	3	12.00%	3	12.00%
3	Disruption mitigation:	10%	4	8.00%	4	8.00%	4	8.00%	4	8.00%	4	8.00%	4	8.00%	4	8.00%	4	8.00%
6	SV																	
	SV-Qualitative	5%		4.83%		4.60%		5.00%		4.80%		4.00%		5.00%		3.75%		3.00%
	SV-Quantitative	5%		1.69%		0.54%		3.33%		2.20%		5.00%		3.87%		2.22%		0.58%
Combined (Cost and Quality) Total		100%		75.29%		76.67%		84.23%		87.00%		73.81%		82.26%		70.66%		67.40%

HR	N/A
Legal	Legal Services has reviewed the Report. Based on the information set out in the Report an open below threshold tender process was undertaken via The Chest Portal. The evaluation was undertaken against the published award criteria and Jamieson Contracting Limited has been identified as the Most Advantageous Tenderer. The recommendations are legally compliant. The Report should clearly identify the form of contract to be entered into and authority should be delegated to the appropriate officer to finalise and execute the contract and any ancillary documentation. Sukie Kaur – Solicitor.
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	N/A. This proposal will enhance the educational offering to vulnerable Children and Young People of the borough.
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?	No

Appendices (including any relevant Background Papers)

1. DDR (Tier2) Latics Zone	2. Oldham SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027	3. Oldham SEND Reform plan

Report author sign-off	Victoria Caldwell
Role	Schools Capital Project Manager
Date of sign-off	19 October 2026

Delegated Decision Report

Decision below £250k

Subject	Tier 2 provision for vulnerable children
Decision maker: Senior Officer	Matt Bulmer, Director Early Years, Education & Skills
Decision maker: Cabinet Member	Cllr Mohon Ali
Decision date	November 2024
Report authors	Amber Burton, Assistant Director, SEND & Inclusion Paula Green, Head of SEND & Inclusion
Ward(s)	All

Reason for decision

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to develop a full tiered approach to supporting children and young people who are at risk of poor outcomes. This includes provision relating to social, emotional, and mental health needs, based on the DfE proposed system involving a three-tiered approach:

- **Tier 1**: Targeted early support within mainstream school.
- **Tier 2**: Time-limited intensive placements in an alternative provision setting.
- **Tier 3**: Longer-term placements to support a return to mainstream or a suitable post-16 destination.

The reason for this decision is to support the development of tier II provision in Oldham, i.e. to create an offer of time-limited intensive placements in an alternative provision setting. The offer will also enhance Tier 3 provision.

Recommendation(s)

To meet the requirements of the SEND & AP Improvement Plan, Oldham requires a Tier 2 service that offers time-limited intensive placements in an alternative provision setting.

This will ensure greater early identification of SEND to reduce permanent exclusion and increase inclusion within the mainstream schools in the borough, informing better outcomes for more children and young peoples' lives.

Earlier identification of additional needs at SEND support will also contribute to less education, health, and care plans (EHCPs) being required, leading to better value within the SEND system which is currently leading to financial difficulty and unsustainability in many local authorities nationally.

Background

There is a requirement for further educational provision and services to meet the needs of highly vulnerable children and young people across Oldham, who experience significant difficulty in accessing mainstream education without specialist support, and therefore, have substantially poorer outcomes in comparison to those less vulnerable.

Children and young people's difficulties in accessing mainstream education may be a direct result of their challenging lives and Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), with their primary areas of need often being social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) and/or communication and interaction (autism and/or speech, language, and communication needs).

Along with the clear moral, ethical and social imperative for better supporting our most vulnerable children and young people, the Department for Education (DfE) have published the SEND & Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time (2023) that specifies tiers of provision that should be in place in Local Authorities nationally. There is a requirement to ensure that all the tiers of provision and support suggested by the DfE that are needed within Oldham are available.

Following the consultation of the SEND & Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper (2022), several concerning themes emerged around the SEND & AP system including poor and inconsistent outcomes for many children and young people accessing AP. In response, the DfE have published the SEND & Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan. Relating to Alternative Provision, the DfE have discussed an AP system with a three-tiered approach: targeted early support within mainstream school (tier 1), time-limited intensive placements in an alternative provision setting (Tier 2); and longer-term placements to support a return to mainstream or a suitable post-16 destination (tier 3).

This is all within the context of statistics recently published by the Department for Education showing that in the last academic year there has been an unprecedented increase in suspension and permanent exclusion nationally; the highest since records began in 2006.

Permanent exclusion and suspension data in Oldham is below. In line with regional and national data, rates of suspension and permanent exclusion in secondary schools in Oldham have increased at an unprecedented and concerning rate, as shown in the table below.

Year	PEX	No of suspensions	No of CYP suspended
2021/22	43	2120	937
2022/23	67	2872	1182
2023.24	88	3921	1475

In addition, Oldham LA SEND Team is currently spending £550,000 per year on externally provided Alternative Provision (AP). This funding comes directly from the high needs block of the DSG. This is due to section 19 requirements, which place a statutory burden on the LA to provide for children and young people who are not on roll of a school and require education other than at school (EOTAS) or alternative provision. If the proposals are accepted, this cost would reduce significantly (estimated 60% reduction).

Current Position

In Oldham currently there is a tier 1 preventative service limited to primary aged children (Kingsland Primary Outreach Service) and a tier 3 school provision for secondary aged children and young people (Kingsland School's Pupil Referral Unit). There is no Tier 2 provision for primary or secondary aged pupils unless Alternative Provision (AP) is commissioned from external providers.

The current provision and support that is in the borough does not meet the requirements of the tiered approach set out in the SEND & AP Improvement Plan. Oldham's current SEND and Inclusion strategy, and Sufficiency Strategy both include the development of the 3 tiers of provision suggested by the DfE.

Oldham's tier 3 provision at Kingsland School's PRU has become overcrowded at its singular site with an increasingly unsustainable population. In addition, highly vulnerable children and young people who are permanently excluded within the borough are often more likely to be involved in community issues relating to serious violence and criminality. This leads to children and young people at the PRU not always being able to access the full offer of provision and support at Kingsland School due to grave safety concerns relating to some children and young people being based at the same site at the same time.

Additionally, this affects their chances of reintegrating into mainstream settings following a placement of intensive support, as the tier 3 model within the SEND & AP Improvement Plan suggests.

Consultation with secondary schools in Oldham shows significant demand for Tier 2 short term intensive placement in alternative provision settings to ensure better outcomes for their vulnerable children and young people and to enable them to stay in mainstream schools.

Suspension and exclusion data over the past several years indicates that the national picture around late intervention is prevalent within Oldham. Local secondary schools report that they have many pupils who would benefit from early identification and Tier 2 provision due to the complexity of their additional needs and the presentation of their difficulties within mainstream settings. Further to this, schools report that they have challenges regarding children and young people who move into borough with a history of difficulty in school and resulting suspension.

Of the 13 local mainstream schools who responded to research by Kingsland School around Pupils at Risk of Exclusion (PARE), 137 children and young people in Oldham were identified as being at high risk of exclusion during the academic year 2023/24.

Schools report that the PARE figures are representative of children and young people whose needs and presentation would be best met through a Tier 2 intervention approach, whereby they could access short term placements that focus on building a plan and package of support around a child or young person, before reintegrating them to their mainstream school (of which they would remain dual registered throughout placement) with advice and strategies given to schools to better meet their needs.

Further evidence that schools require access to Tier 2 placements is found in their use of unregistered Alternative Provision. Local secondary schools report that they are spending between £20,000 and £500,000 per year on short term AP placements with unregistered providers, with a median average of £100,000 per year. Of the 13 schools consulted, a total of 12 unregistered providers were identified as being commissioned by schools with running costs of £150 - £275 per pupil, per day, with one provider charging £95 per pupil per day if a certain number of places were commissioned at once.

Local headteachers have indicated that there is difficulty with the high cost for their children and young people to access AP placements currently, but that there is significant demand for them in meeting their needs and reducing their risk of exclusion. A further issue reported by some schools is confidence around the use of unregistered providers of AP due to the difference in standards with regards to Ofsted.

Kingsland School would be able to offer a Tier 2 'Step Out' provision for children and young people to access short term placements. These placements would be for 6-12 weeks with a total of 30 children and young people able to access placement at the same time at two suitable sites located at Oldham Athletic Football Club (Boundary Park).

Schools would be able to block purchase places or purchase them when needed when there is capacity in the provision. Schools would complete a referral form for support that would aid information sharing around the difficulties the child or young person has been experiencing and would therefore, indicate the types of support that Step Out could offer.

Each case would be met with a flexible, bespoke, and individualised approach that followed a strong graduated response. The support on offer would include but not be limited to:

- SEND support plans.
- Therapeutic work.
- Support with regulation, trauma informed care and support plans.
- Core subject work (ensuring pupils don't fall behind academically due to placement).
- An engaging and wide range of vocational courses with qualifications.

All the support that would be on offer has been designed in consultation with the 13 mainstream secondary schools involved in the AP research conducted by Kingsland School. Children and young people would be dual registered and good contact with their schools would be encouraged through visits and review meetings. An individualised reintegration package would be offered at the end of placement that would include support for the pupil as well their mainstream school.

The placements would be for pupils identified as being at risk of exclusion, pupils having difficulties in school particularly around SEMH, as well as pupils with EHCP plans identified as requiring support. This would include children and young people who have EHCPs with Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) named as placement in their plans. This would also include (where appropriate) those who move into the borough under the 'difficult transfer' category, as their schools could refer them into the service for placement if there was evidence of suspension, a presentation of challenging behaviour, risk of exclusion or additional needs around SEMH.

Kingsland School are uniquely placed to offer Tier 2 placements in comparison to other alternative providers, as it not only has the experience, skills, and specialism, but it is a registered and maintained school. This contrasts with other local providers who are either fee paying independent special schools, or unregistered private providers. Kingsland School differs in that all its provision and services come under the current Ofsted framework that is applicable to all the mainstream schools locally.

As a maintained school, Kingsland also does not generate any form of profit and, therefore, any charge to schools for services would be at cost to continue the Tier 2 offer. Schools can have greater confidence that their children and young people are accessing provision through a registered school as well as benefitting from a more cost-effective approach.

Under these proposals, further cost saving implications for the SEND system include earlier identification of need and therefore, less likelihood of EHCPs being required. The local authority would also be able to commission high quality, short- and longer-term placements within the Step Out provision for children and young people who have EHCPs (including EOTAS) at a greatly reduced cost in comparison to independent special schools and unregistered AP providers. This would also lead to better value for money and quality assurance regarding resource allocation within the SEND system.

Alternative option(s) to be considered *(please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s)*

- **Option 1**: Approve next steps (formal stage 1 and 2 capital projects) to create a dual site at Boundary Park, which has been identified in consultation with Oldham Athletic Football Club (current rent is £97, 280 annually).

  Based on 36 places, Kingsland 'Step Out' Provision would generate income from schools purchasing places, for the costs incurred for rent of the buildings identified. A reasonable cost to schools of £90 per pupil per day will generate £615,600 income if the provision runs at full capacity across the year (38 weeks).

  If the provision ran at 50% capacity across the year this would generate £307,800 which would still be cost effective for the purposes of the rent costs. Any additional

income generated would fund the 'top up' element and fund further tiers 1 and 2 provision in consultation with Oldham Local Authority.

Further to this, Oldham Athletic Football Club have indicated interest in a longer-term partnership as part of their Sport City development that could lead to further provision being accessible to local children and young people at risk of exclusion.

The cost implications for building works to make them suitable for the provision are as follows for the proposed refurbishment works at Latics Zone (based upon information received to date from Kingsland over requirements and site visits).

Aspect	**Cost**
Building Alterations	£143,000
Allowance for FF&E	£10,000
Allowance for ICT	£12,000
Total Alterations	£164,000
Allowance for Property Fees to deliver	£24,600
Planning and Building Regulation Fees	£3,000
Contingency	£10,000
Total Budget requirement* [1]	£200,000

The funding for capital aspects would be solely via the SEND High Needs Capital Provision Allocations (HNPCA), via a grant from the DfE.

- **Option II**: Stay the same. This is not a viable option as there is clearly a demonstrated need for provision at Tier 2, to meet the needs of children and young people in all key stages 3 and 4.

Preferred option

Option one is the preferred option. This is because suspension and permanent exclusion are at the highest rates since records began. It is very often that the most vulnerable children, young people, and their families that are affected by this. Furthermore, many minority groups continue to be overrepresented in AP settings that are not able to offer the level of educational opportunity that mainstream settings can. The SEND & AP Green Paper highlighted many concerning issues around the current SEND and AP system.

[1] Please note the following caveats:

- Based upon information issued to Property Services during site attendance and any correspondence from Kingsland School only.
- No detailed condition survey of the building and services has been undertaken.
- Assumption that existing services adequate for refurbished needs: water and electrical supplies.
- Existing extract canopy is suitable after refurbishment.
- Existing kitchen appliances are repairable or serviceable: no allowance for new equipment.
- Current natural ventilation provisions are suitable and adequate.
- Existing hot water point are adequate: no new service pipe runs.
- All dead legs have been removed as part of building LRA
- All services can be surface mounted throughout due to limited service voids.
- Building to be used as one school and not separate tenants.
- Assumption of no asbestos.

Historically, support has often been too reactive and not proactive enough with early enough identification. The DfE have been very clear about the 3 tiers of support needed in local authorities nationally to redress the concerns highlight in the Green Paper.

Further to the moral, ethical, and social imperative to improve outcomes for more children and young people, option 1 gives Oldham the opportunity to offer the Tier 2 approach that is an integral part of 'a vision for a society where every child and young person can succeed' (DfE, SEND & AP Improvement Plan 2023).

Consultation

Any changes to the support and provision for children and young people with SEND and those who are vulnerable will require full coproduction with children, young people, parents/carers, and partners. Parents/carers will play a defining role in this, and changes must consider their views directly.

Risks

There are no risks associated with this proposal other than programme management of the high needs provision capital allocation projects. However, this outweighs the need to develop and deliver the proposed model on a permanent basis.

Implications

Financial	The £200k cost for the works will be capital expenditure and will be a charge against the Education capital programme. The costs can be financed from within the existing High Need Capital Provision Grant allocation, which currently has a balance of £8.310m of unallocated funds. It should be noted that the £200k costs figures for the capital work are high level, indicative estimates at this stage with a range of caveats, as detailed in the report. Costs will need to be kept under review as the project progresses to ensure that the project can be delivered within the available allocation. (James Postle) Approval is sought to proceed with the next steps (formal stage 1 and 2 capital projects) to create a dual site at Boundary Park to create a Tier 2 service that offers time-limited intensive placements in an alternative provision setting. The responsibility, risk and reward of running the service will rest with Kingsland School and as such there are no revenue implications arising should the capital scheme proceed (Andy Cooper)
Legal	

HR	No HR Implications.
Equality impact including implications for children and young people	N/A

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the council's constitution?	No
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?	No

Background Papers: under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

1. None.

Appendix

1. None.

Report author sign-off	Amber Burton
Role	Assistant Director, SEND & Inclusion
Date of sign-off	2025-01-01

Approval	
Officer approval sign-off	Mathew Bulmer 
Role	Director Education Skills and Early Years
Date of sign-off	31.01.2025

Approval	
Member(s) approval sign-off	
Role	Cabinet Member for Education & Skills

Date of sign-off	03.02.25

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

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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.

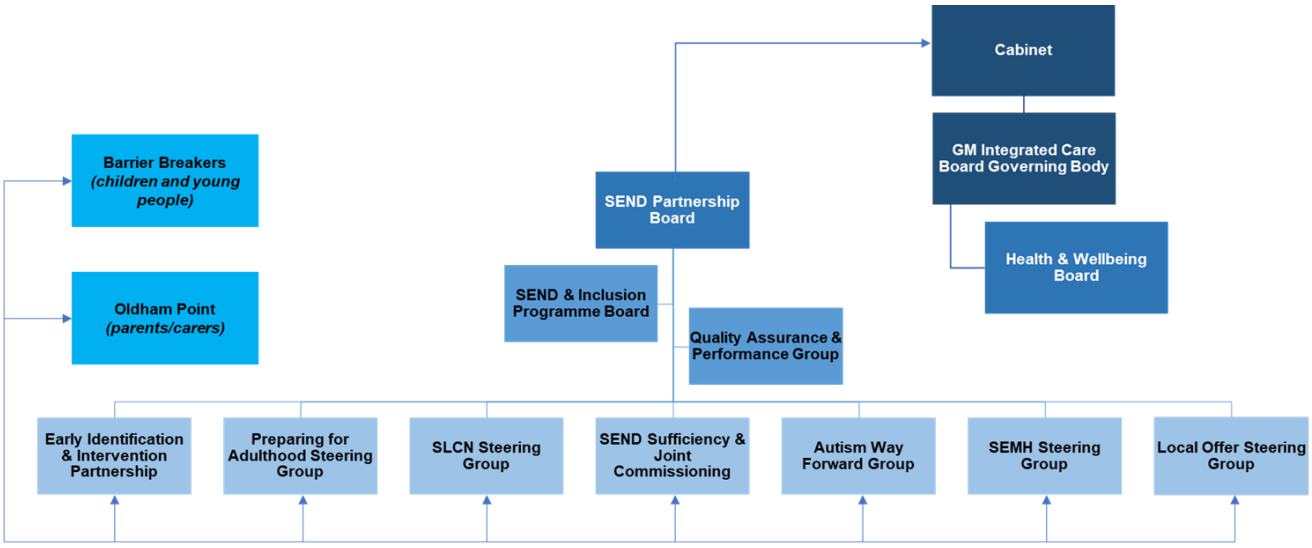
All strategic groups are responsible for parts of the overall SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme. Priority workstreams and subgroups meet every half term and report up to the SEND Partnership Board.

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

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2. Aims and ambitions
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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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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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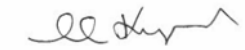
Oldham SEND Reform Plan June 2026

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
Chief Executive Oldham Council	Shelley Kipling		Shelley.Kipling@oldham.gov.uk	19 June 2026
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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.

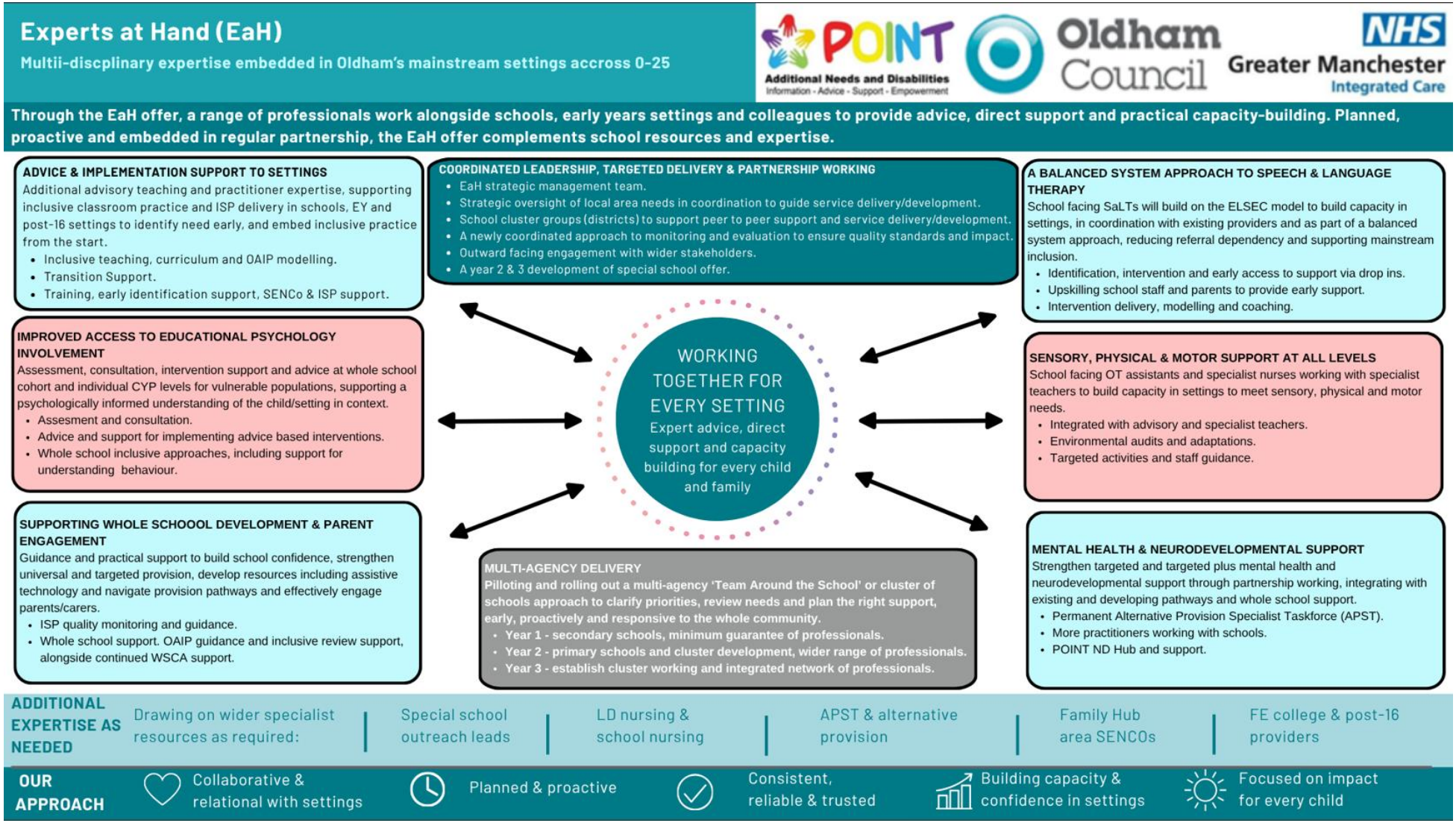
We would also welcome national tools and templates to support data integration, performance reporting and evaluation. Greater consistency in datasets and benchmarking would strengthen local ability to track impact, compare performance and inform decision making.

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.

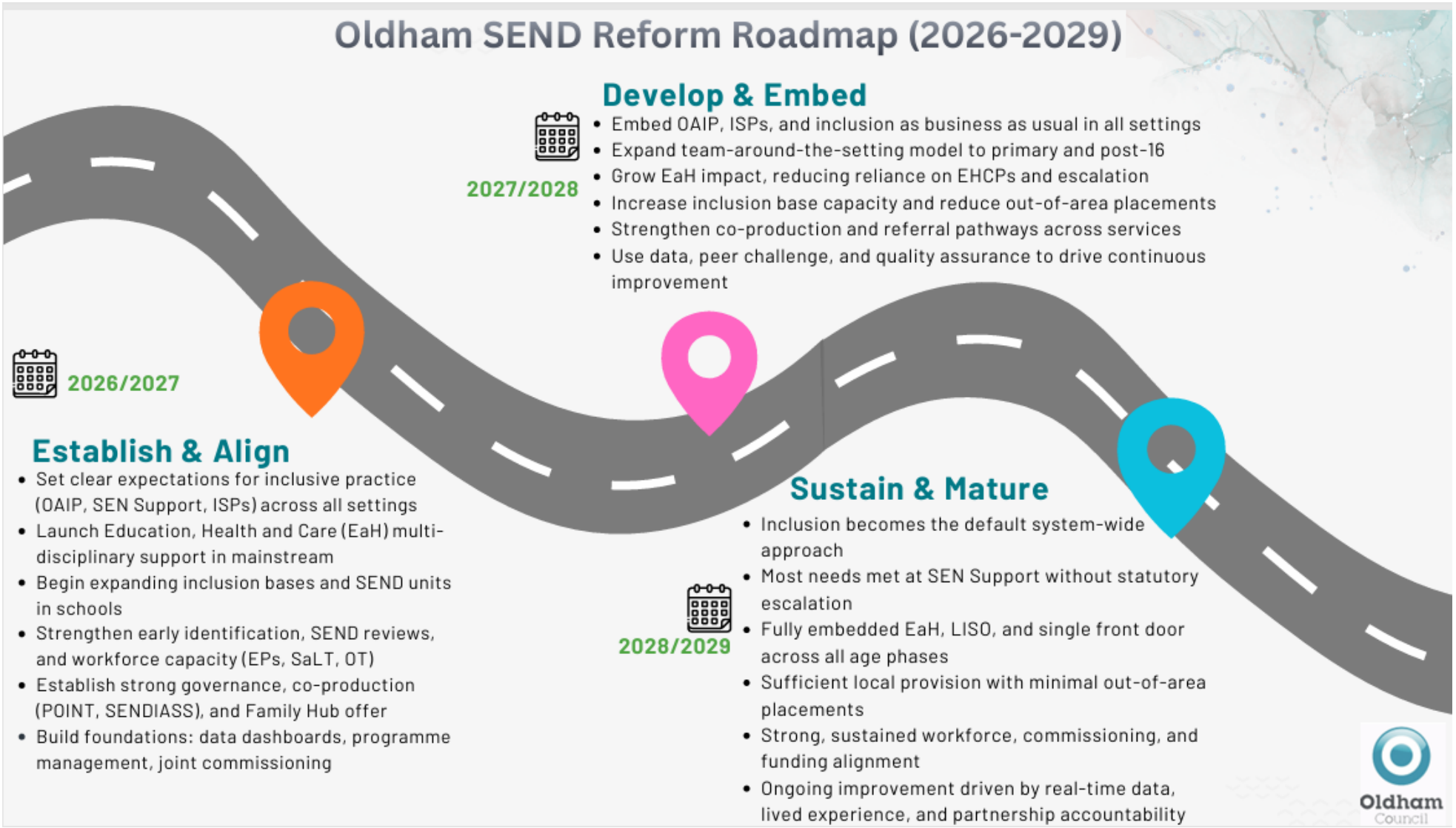
Finally, engagement from senior DfE officials at key local and regional events would support system leadership, reinforce national priorities and strengthen shared ownership across partners.

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.**

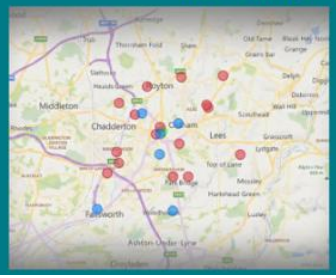
Estate & Accessibility

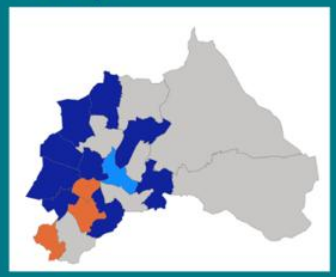
- Ensuring DDA compliance in every setting
- Creating sensory-friendly environments
- Developing accessible transport infrastructure
- Designing more outdoor learning spaces
- Providing therapy, sensory and adapted rooms

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

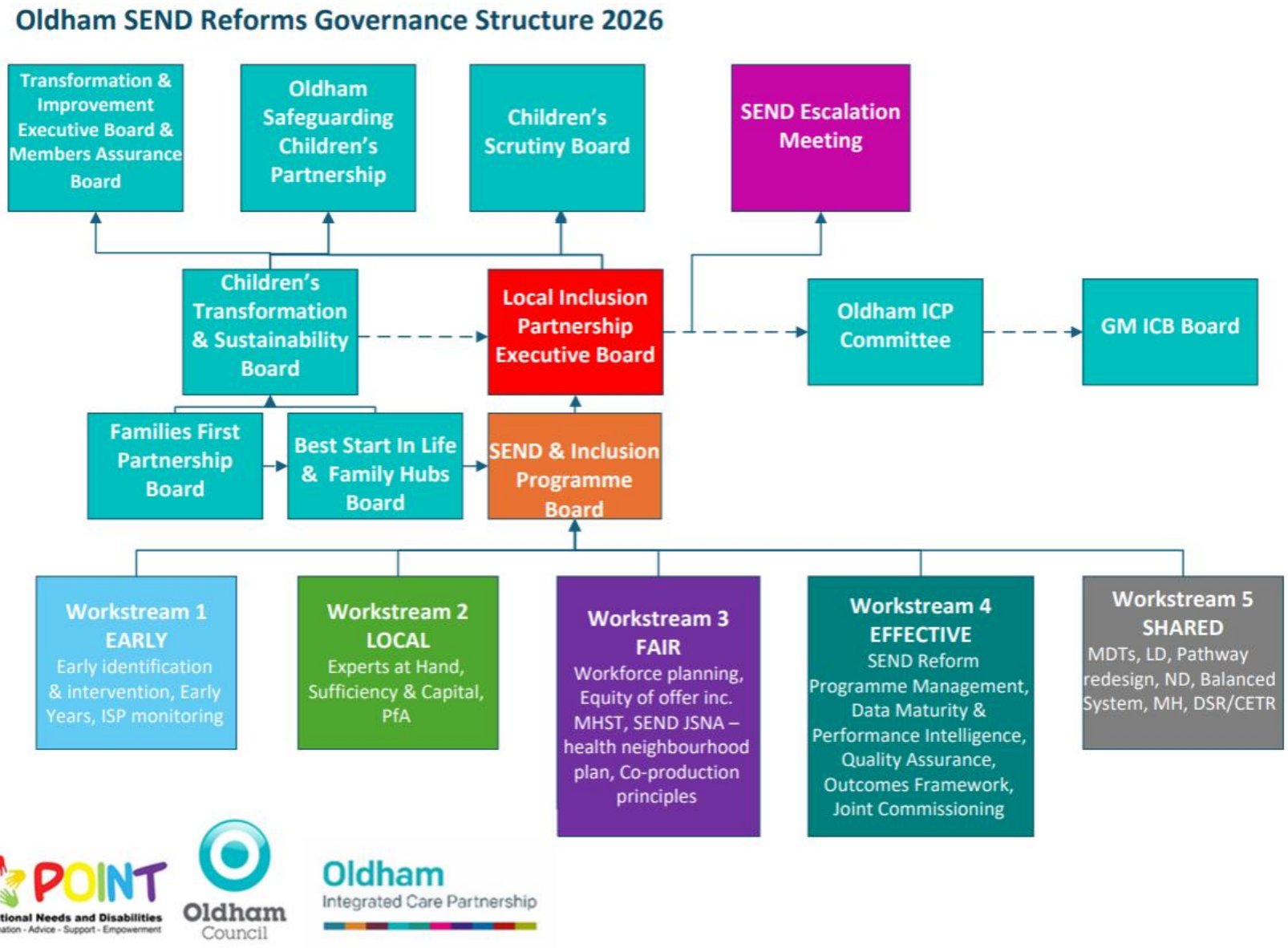
- Early emerging themes from schools were; Families want clearer communication and less waiting
- Families value earlier help before needs escalate.
- Co-production between schools and families need to be stronger
- Parents want clarity around complex needs and EHCP changes.
- POINT and PCF provided 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

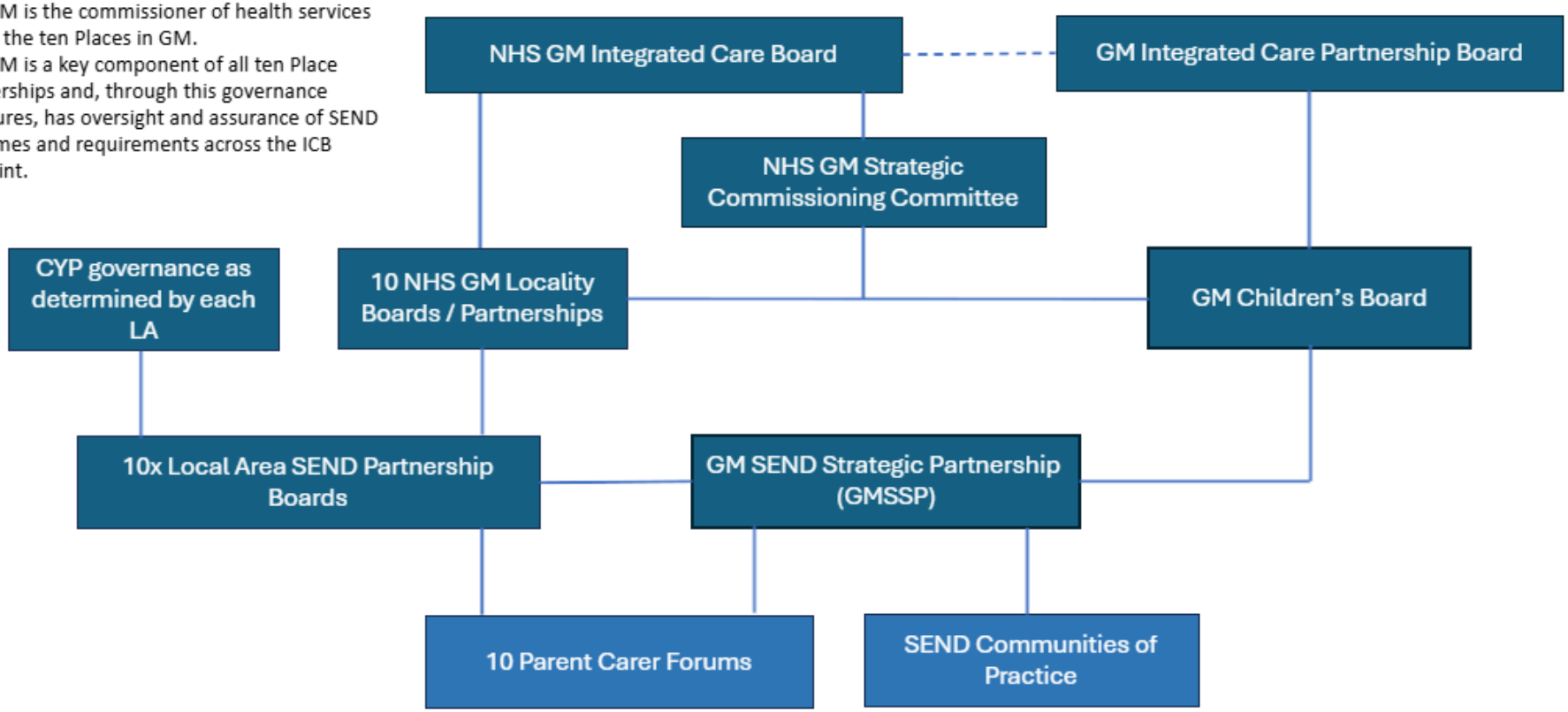


Appendix 6b – GM ICB SEND Governance Structure

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.



Emergency Powers Decision Report

Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Housing Services
Directorate: Communities
Report Author: Moira Fields – Principal Homelessness Strategy Officer

Email: moira.fields@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 30th 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 Cabinet report seeks approval to:

- To note the contents of the Oldham Homelessness Review 2021-2025
- To approve the contents of the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

3. Reason for urgency

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to publish a Homelessness Strategy based on a Review of homelessness in their district. These strategies must be published at least every 5 years, with Oldham's most recent Strategy running from April 2021- April 2026.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

The Council would not be legally compliant in terms of the Homelessness Act 2002 and would have a Homelessness Strategy that fails to address current support needs and groups in Oldham.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

MHCLG funding allocated to provide support to Local Authorities for expenditure lawfully incurred via the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant (which for 2026/27 constituted £2,460,154) could be at risk. This funding assists the Council to fulfil its Statutory obligations in respect of Homelessness

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 5 November 2026
Comments

The recommendations within this report are primarily strategic in nature, seeking Cabinet approval to note the findings of the Oldham Homelessness Review 2021-2025 and approve the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031. The Council has a statutory duty to support individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and delivery of the Strategy will continue to be supported through a combination of Council resources and external grant funding.

A key financial consideration is the ongoing allocation of funding from MHCLG through the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant, which totals £2.460m in 2026/27. This funding supports expenditure lawfully incurred by the Council in meeting its statutory homelessness responsibilities. It is important that the Council maintains appropriate governance, monitoring and assurance arrangements to ensure compliance with grant conditions, as any failure to do so could place future funding allocations at risk and create additional pressure on the Council's General Fund.

Subject to the effective management of these funding arrangements and the continued monitoring of financial and service delivery impacts arising from the Strategy, there are no additional financial concerns arising directly from the recommendations contained within this report.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name: Alex Bougatef
Date: 10 November 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

Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

Officer Contact: Neil Consterdine – Director of Communities

Report Author: Moira Fields, Principal Homelessness Strategy Officer
E-Mail: moira.fields@oldham.gov.uk

30th November 2026

Reason for Decision

All Local Authorities are required to publish a new Homelessness Strategy as a minimum of every five years based on a review of homelessness in the district. Our current Strategy covers the period 2021-2026. This report seeks approval for the new Homelessness Strategy 2026-2031.

Executive Summary

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to publish a Homelessness Strategy based on a Review of homelessness in their district. These strategies must be published at least every 5 years, with Oldham's most recent Strategy running from 2021-2026.

Oldham's new Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 has been developed in consultation with residents, stakeholders and Elected Members, and informed by a comprehensive Review of homelessness between 2021-2025. The Review particularly focuses 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 takes a pragmatic approach to tackling homelessness in Oldham, acknowledging that resources are finite, and the lasting impact homelessness has on our communities. Its focus is on making best use of what we have, 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

Recommendations

1. To note the contents of the Oldham Homelessness Review 2021-2025
2. To approve the contents of the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

1 Background

1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory duty on local authorities to carry out a homelessness review for their district and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of the review. A further review, and new strategy, must be published within a period of 5 years.

1.2 Oldham's first Strategy was published in 2003. This is Oldham's seventh Strategy, and like its predecessor it once again focuses on homelessness prevention but also reflects our commitment to ending rough sleeping.

1.3 Rough Sleeping is cited in the title of this Strategy because it is acknowledged that due to a combination of factors instances of rough sleeping in Oldham have risen since 2021. Oldham Council wants its new strategy to acknowledge the visibility of homelessness and focus on both those in crisis / stuck in a 'revolving door' as well as looking to prevent homelessness in the future.

1.4 As with our wider Corporate Plan, the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 will be delivered by working together in partnership. The Strategic Action Plan will be reviewed annually and monitored via the Oldham Homelessness Forum, a long-established multi-agency group, as well as the Oldham Strategic Housing Partnership.

2 Current Position

2.1 The Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 has been developed in consultation with residents, stakeholders and Elected Members, and informed by a comprehensive Review of homelessness between 2021-2025. The Review particularly focuses on an in-depth analysis of support needs and customer groups presenting to the Housing Options service.

2.2 Since the implementation of our last Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2021-2026, Oldham Council officially declared a housing crisis in February 2024 after temporary accommodation numbers surged to unprecedented levels along with the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation. By working closely with our Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) advisors to implement our Bed & Breakfast elimination plan and adopting a whole Council approach to tackling these issues we are now in a position where we have no households in bed and breakfast and the number of households in temporary accommodation has significantly reduced. Moving into the next strategic phase, Oldham Council is shifting its ambition from emergency reduction to long-term sustainability. The council's future focus will centre on maintaining a reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation and actively working to end the use of Bed & Breakfast units as temporary accommodation entirely.

2.3 There are significant financial, social and emotional costs associated with homelessness – the new Strategy therefore needs to focus on reversing this trend preventing homelessness where possible and where it does occur ensuring it is rare, brief and nonrecurring whilst also promoting long term sustainable recovery from the impact homelessness has on our residents.

2.6 The Strategy Action Plan takes a pragmatic approach to tackling homelessness in Oldham, acknowledging that resources are finite, and the lasting impact homelessness has on our communities. Its focus is on making best use of what we have, making 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

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Approve the contents of the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

(Recommended: This will ensure that the Council is legally compliant in terms of the Homelessness Act 2002 and has a Homelessness Strategy that meets current support needs and groups in Oldham)

3.2 Retain the priorities from the previous Homelessness Strategy 2021-2026

(Not Recommended: These priorities were last consulted on in 2020 and no longer reflect current trends in homelessness)

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Approve the contents of the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

This will ensure that the Council is legally compliant in terms of the Homelessness Act 2002 and has a Homelessness Strategy that meets current support needs and groups in Oldham.

5 Consultation

5.1 Consultation has been an integral part of the development of the Homelessness Strategy and a detailed overview of responses can be found within the Homelessness Review document. This includes:

- Residents
- Stakeholders / partner organisations
- Elected Members

6 **Financial Implications**

6.1 The decision to formally approve the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-31 will not in itself incur a financial cost. As the practicalities of implementing the strategy become known, additional reports/business cases will be required and at this point any financial implications will be commented on further in-depth.
Mike Roberts, Finance Manager

7 **Legal Services Comments**

7.1 Legal Services supports the recommendation to approve the Strategy, which assists the Council in meeting its statutory obligations under the Homelessness Act 2002 to review homelessness and publish a homelessness strategy. Any specific projects, funding arrangements, procurements or contractual arrangements arising from the Strategy will require separate consideration and approval as appropriate.

Pamela Nsofor - Solicitor

8 **Procurement Implications**

8.1 There are no procurement implications to agreeing to this Strategy paper, Procurement continue to support all procurement activity to support this strategy.
Angela Porter – Senior Category Manager Corporate & Environment.

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-26-24

12 **Background Papers**

12.1 None

13 **Appendices**

13.1 Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

13.2 Oldham Homelessness Review 2021-2025

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

Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-31

1. Introduction
2. Partnership
3. Legislative & Strategic Context
4. Our 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
5. Homelessness in Oldham
6. Consultation
7. Local Outcomes Framework
8. Monitoring
9. Action Plan
10. Glossary
11. Contact

1. Introduction

Our Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026–31 has been developed following a comprehensive review of homelessness within the borough between 2021-2025. In partnership with elected members, community stakeholders and residents, it establishes a collaborative blueprint for tackling housing insecurity across the borough over the next five years. It demonstrates our collective commitment to ending homelessness and minimising the wider impact it has on our residents and communities. By unifying local resources and insights, the strategy aims to deliver sustainable, long-term housing solutions and ensure that homelessness and rough sleeping become rare, brief, and non-recurring

Since the implementation of our last Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2021-2026, Oldham Council officially declared a housing crisis in February 2024 after temporary accommodation numbers surged to unprecedented levels along with the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation. By working closely with our Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) advisors to implement our Bed & Breakfast elimination plan and adopting a whole Council approach to tackling these issues we are now in a position where we have no households in bed and breakfast and the number of households in temporary accommodation has significantly reduced. Moving into the next strategic phase, Oldham Council is shifting its ambition from emergency reduction to long-term sustainability. The council's future focus will centre on maintaining a reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation and actively working to end the use of Bed & Breakfast units as temporary accommodation entirely.

By prioritizing a collaborative, partnership approach to homelessness within Oldham there have been numerous other key developments and milestones over the last 5 years, including:

- A significant increase in the provision of non-statutory temporary accommodation options for households who would otherwise be rough sleeping at risk of rough sleeping including:
    - 33 bedspaces in Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) funded A Bed Every Night (ABEN) initiative
    - 19 bedspaces in Community Accommodation Service – Tier 3 (CAS3) providing up to 84 nights (12 weeks) of temporary accommodation and basic support for prison leavers who are at immediate risk of homelessness, ensuring they have an address on the night of their release
    - 10 Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) properties providing high-quality, self-contained move-on homes and tailored support for our most entrenched rough sleepers.

        - 5 bedspaces in Greater Manchester Move-On (GMMOP) providing step-down accommodation from NHS Mental Health wards
- An expansion of Rough Sleeping (RS) services marking a significant enhancement in local specialised support. Building upon the existing framework of the RS Co-ordinator, Outreach workers, and RS Navigator, the addition of a specialist RS Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant Navigator alongside a dedicated Dual Diagnosis worker ensures a highly targeted approach to complex needs
- The introduction of the Early Break Pathfinder Programme. A Greater Manchester initiative for youths aged 18–25 (up to 35). Providing coaching and support to prevent homelessness, manage debt, and resolve family conflicts.
- Successful applications to the Test & Learn System Wide Evaluation programme led by the Centre for Homelessness Impact trialling interventions to relieve and prevent rough sleeping and other forms of homelessness.
    - Personalised Budgets: evaluating the impact of providing financial support for people with a history of rough sleeping tied to a purpose that would allow them to exit homelessness. Including things like buying work tools, getting a driver's licence or securing a deposit.
    - Outreach with Health Specialists: evaluating the impact of including a health specialist as part of a rough sleeping outreach team to test the benefit to people sleeping rough with more acute health needs and whether this has a positive impact on other individuals sleeping out.

Our strategy embraces the ambitions and aspirations of the Governments National Plan to End Homelessness. Together we share a vision to reduce the impact of homelessness on our residents, whilst improving outcomes our for children's education, health and future. We welcome the opportunity to set ambitious targets within our Local Outcomes Framework to prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping. To ensure these targets translate into meaningful change, we will rigorously monitor and measure our progress using robust data and clear performance indicators. This systematic oversight will allow us to track success, identify service gaps, and continuously refine our strategic interventions.

The strategy is shaped around four key priorities that reflect the challenges and opportunities in addressing homelessness in Oldham. These are:

- ❖ Earlier identification and intervention to prevent homelessness
- ❖ Ensuring that where 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

We are focused on delivering high-quality, person-centred services through early intervention, better access to appropriate housing, and strong collaborative

partnerships and remain committed to a shared goal of ending rough sleeping in Oldham.

A separate Action Plan sits alongside the strategy listing the specific steps the council and partners will take over the next five years. The plan links actions to each of the four priorities and will be reviewed annually to ensure we take a holistic approach to address the complex and evolving nature of homelessness within the borough

2. Partnership

In Oldham we recognise that no single organization can end homelessness alone. The causes of homelessness are complex and for this reason we place collaboration at the heart of everything we do.

We recognise that the key to success lies in sharing our knowledge, skills and expertise as a partnership.

In our collective ambition to end homelessness within the borough we recognise that it will still occur but where it does we want it to be rare, brief and non-recurring.

The Strategy has been developed in consultation with and will continue to be monitored by:

- Oldham Rough Sleeper Steering Group. A collective of VCSE organisations with a shared passion and goal of ending rough sleeping
- Oldham Homelessness Forum. A multi-agency network with representation from across the voluntary, faith, social enterprise and statutory sectors
- Oldham Strategic Housing Partnership, representing social housing providers developing and managing social housing in Oldham.
- Oldham Housing Recovery Board. Implementing a dedicated investment plan recognising the need to work together as a Council and with partners locally to improve our residents experience of homelessness

Our Action Plan has been developed in consultation with the partnerships, who will help to drive forward implementation alongside the Strategic Housing team.

3. Legislative & Strategic Context

Oldham's Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy sits within a wider legislative and strategic context. The aims of which are to support the health, housing and other socioeconomic factors affecting our residents.

Timeline of legal developments

Year	Development	Implications
2021	Domestic Abuse Act 2021	The Domestic Abuse Act significantly strengthened the rights of people experiencing homelessness due to domestic abuse. Key updates include an automatic "priority need" for housing, a broadened definition of abuse, and new duties for local authorities to provide safe accommodation.
2023	Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023	The Act requires local councils to produce a Supported Housing Strategy, establish licensing schemes, enforce minimum care/support standards, and links housing benefit eligibility to these licenses.
April 2026	Children, Schools and Wellbeing Act	Includes a key provision to address intentional homelessness for care leavers, stipulating that no care leaver up to age 25 should be deemed intentionally homeless during a homelessness assessment.
May 2026	Renters Right Act	Expected to abolish Section 21 'no-fault' evictions and end fixed-term tenancies for all new and existing contracts, converting them into rolling, periodic tenancies. The bill also proposes a new Decent Homes Standard for private rentals, a ban on rental bidding wars, and new rules for rent increases.
June 2026	Repeal of the Vagrancy Act 1824	Effectively decriminalising rough sleeping in England and Wales. The repeal is part of a broader effort to address homelessness and ensure that individuals are not penalized for simply trying to survive on the streets.

Timeline of Local, Regional and National Strategies

2021	Greater Manchester GM Strategies	Housing standards will be improved, with the Good Landlord Charter exposing poor landlords. By 2030 there will be at least 10,000 new, energy efficient homes for social rent across all 10 local authority areas.
2022	Oldham Domestic Abuse Strategy	Oldham's Domestic Abuse Strategy focuses on preventing abuse, protecting victims, and supporting recovery through a coordinated, multi-agency approach. It prioritises early intervention, improved victim support services, and holding perpetrators accountable to reduce harm across the borough.
2022	Ending Rough Sleeping for Good	Ending Rough Sleeping for Good is the UK government's cross-departmental strategy to end rough sleeping in England during this Parliament. Supported by over £2 billion in funding through 2025, it aims to ensure rough sleeping is rare, brief, and non-recurrent by focusing on prevention, intervention, and tailored support.
2024	GM Capital strategies and programmes	The overarching Capital Strategy for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is to ensure that all resources are directed towards achieving the outcomes contained within the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) by maximising the use of external funding to deliver the highest impact affordable programme.
2024	GM Live Well	GM Live Well is a partnership between NHS GM, 10GM and GMCA, the 10 local authorities, health, business, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and social enterprise sector and people and communities. Working together we will create conditions for people to thrive, not just survive, removing barriers to opportunity and tackling

		health, social and economic inequalities.
2024	Oldham Plan & Corporate Plan	Oldham Council's Corporate Plan 2024-27 describes how the Council will maximise the impact of our efforts and resource to improve the lives of residents in the borough over the next three years. The plan sets out three key missions: Happier, Healthier Lives; Great Place to Live; and Green and Growing.
2025	Oldham Works: Our Employment and Skills Plan 2025–2030	Oldham Works: Our Employment and Skills Plan 2025–2030 is a strategic framework aiming to create a fairer, more prosperous economy by connecting residents to high-quality jobs, enhancing skills, and supporting local business growth. It emphasizes partnership-driven, sector-focused initiatives—particularly in green technology and digital innovation—to build a future-ready workforce.
2025	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy: A National Plan to end Homelessness	The National Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, published in December 2025, aims to make homelessness "rare, brief, and non-recurring". Backed by £3.5 billion in funding, the strategy focuses on prevention, increasing social housing supply, and ending the unlawful use of B&Bs for families by the end of this parliament

Throughout the lifetime of this Strategy, we will remain committed to integrating our strategic priorities with other local, regional, and national Strategies. By aligning with such Strategies, we aim to optimize resource allocation and deliver cohesive support to our residents.

4. Our 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

5. Homelessness in Oldham

The following provides a brief overview of the key statistical data from the Oldham Homelessness Review 2021-25 which has been used to inform the Action Plan behind the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-31.

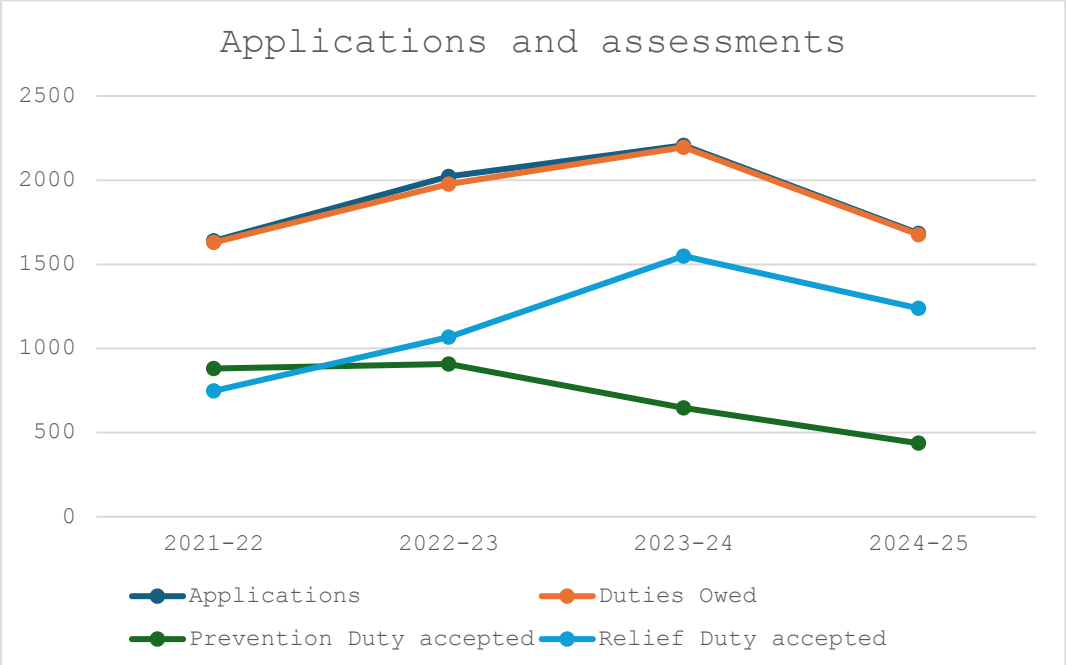
5.1 Applications and assessments

The Homelessness Review provides an in-depth analysis of trends in homelessness in Oldham between 2021-25.

Since the last Homelessness Strategy applications for homelessness support steadily increased peaking in 2023/24. However, during 2024/2025, there has been a reduction in the number of applications made.

The chart below shows the total number of homeless applications made and, of those:

- The numbers that were owed a subsequent duty – where they were not, this was due to the household either being found not homeless or not eligible for assistance
- The numbers of those owed a 'Prevention Duty' – to take steps to prevent the applicant from becoming homeless
- The numbers of those owed a 'Relief Duty' – to take steps to relieve the applicant's homelessness where this had already occurred.



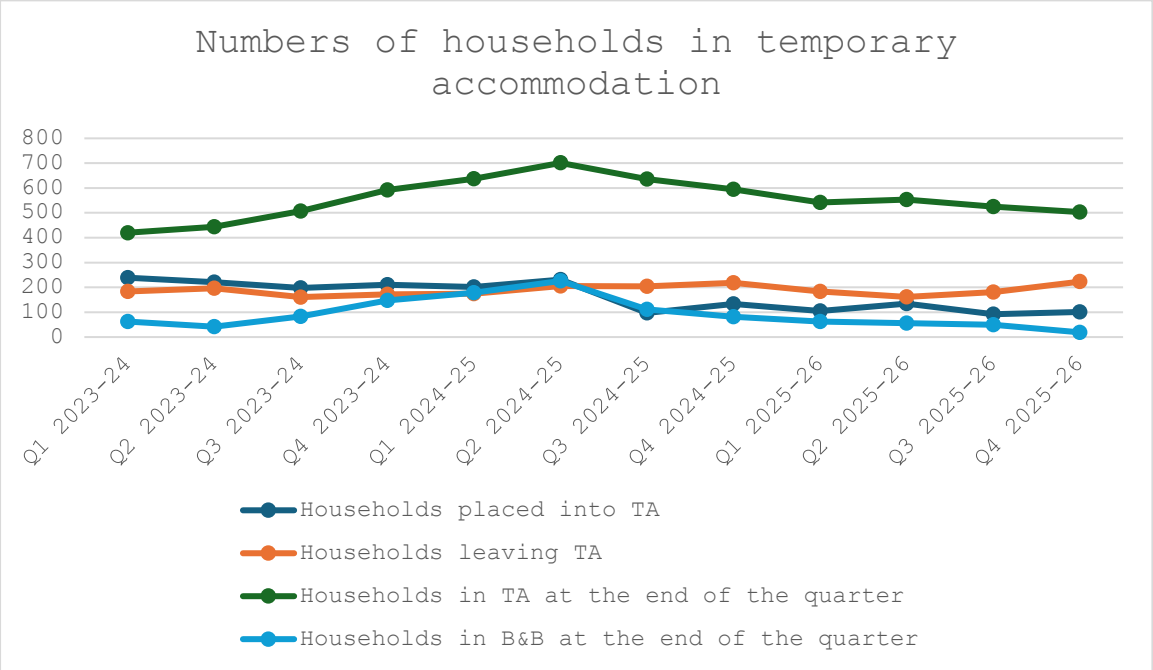
There has been a significant reduction in the number of prevention duties accepted between 2021/22 and 2024/25 when compared with the National average. Whilst this could be indicative of households presenting as homeless at crisis, it clearly demonstrates the need for earlier intervention. Oldham will need to drive change locally improve outcomes for our residents.

5.2 Temporary Accommodation

As stated, Oldham Council officially declared a housing crisis in February 2024 after temporary accommodation numbers surged to unprecedented levels along with the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

Whilst this was reflected Nationally, since then Oldham Council has focused considerable efforts to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation (as set out in our B&B elimination plan), reducing the overall number of households in temporary accommodation, and reducing the number of placements out of borough. For the first time the number of households going into temporary accommodation are significantly less than those leaving temporary accommodation.

Our challenges are to maintain these commitments moving forward and to strive to improve the standard and quality of temporary accommodation provided to our residents

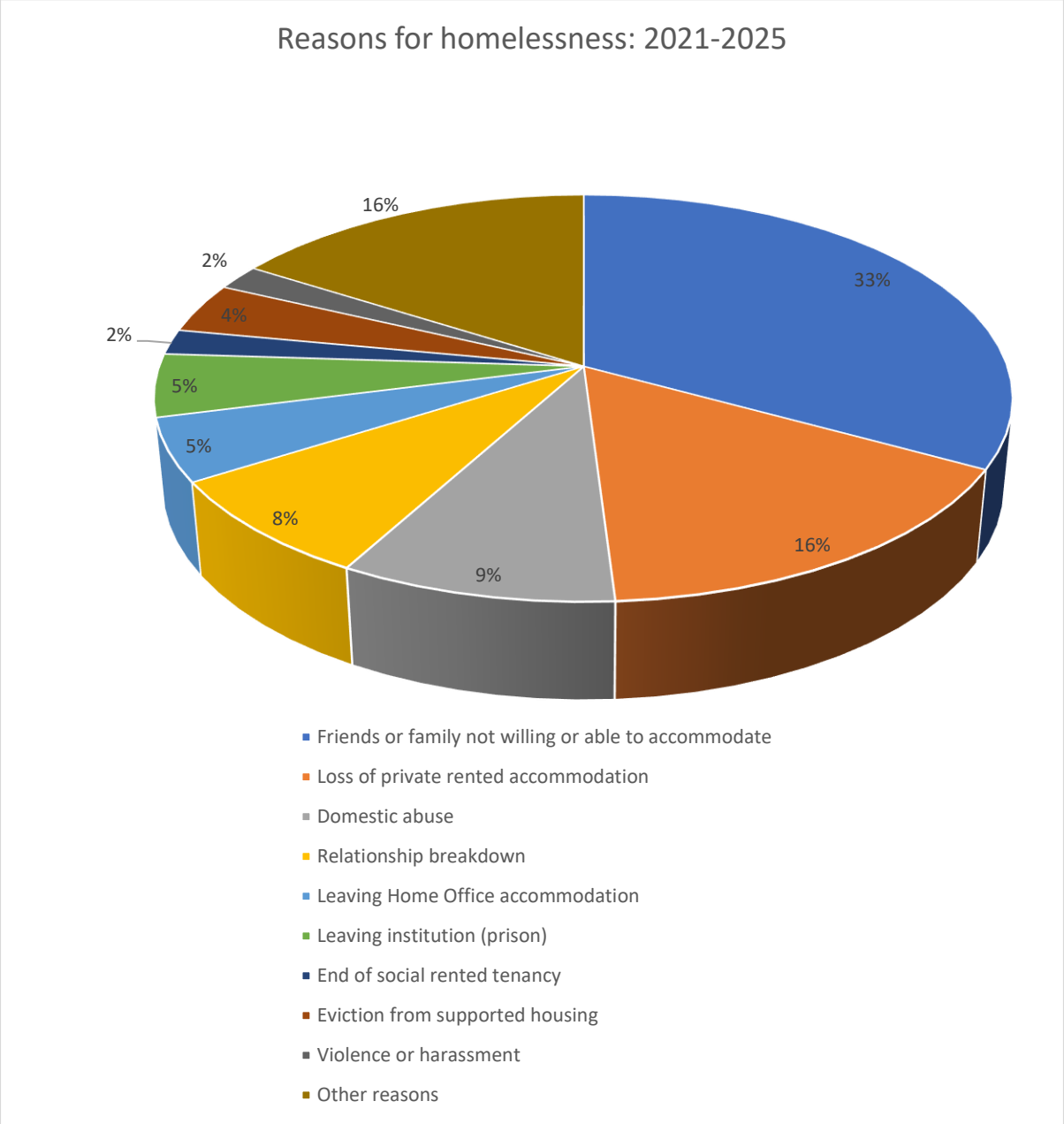


5.3 Reasons for Homelessness

The primary reasons for homelessness in Oldham have remained largely unchanged since the previous Homelessness Strategy was published in 2021. While these factors

mirror national trends, local challenges like overcrowding, health disparities, and housing market pressures can intensify the issue locally. As a result,

- Oldham has higher levels of households being asked to leave by family and friends than the national average
- Oldham has higher levels of households becoming homeless as a result of non-violent relationship breakdown than the national average
- Oldham has higher levels of households who are homeless as a result of departure from an institution

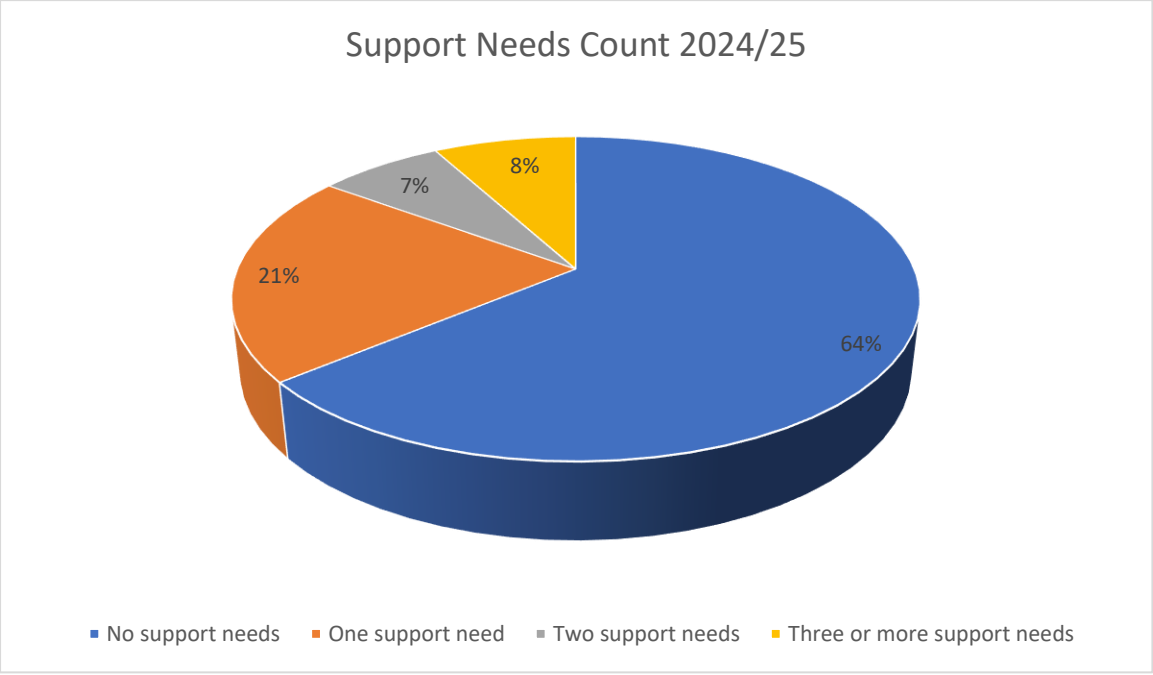


By identifying why people face homelessness, the Council can better direct its resources for the 2026 Homelessness Strategy. Currently, the leading and fastest-growing cause of homelessness is individuals being asked to leave by family or friends. While the Council must focus its prevention efforts on this specific issue, the trend also highlights a wider, borough-wide gap between the supply and demand for affordable housing.

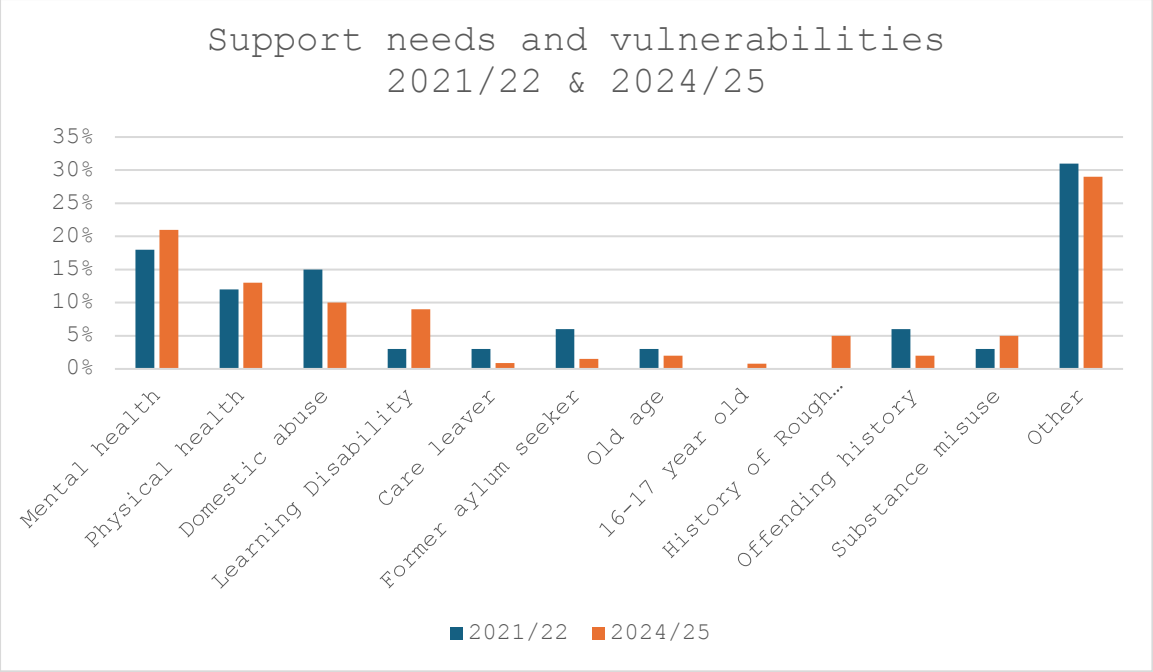
5.4 Support needs

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced Personal Housing Plans, and a requirement for Local Authorities to consider the support needs of applicants in helping them to secure suitable accommodation.

Across the review period, the vast majority of applicants report to have no support needs. In addition, less than a quarter of all homeless applicants reported to have two or more support needs. However, the data on support needs is self-declared and may not, therefore, reflect the true level of complexity of households presenting as homeless in Oldham

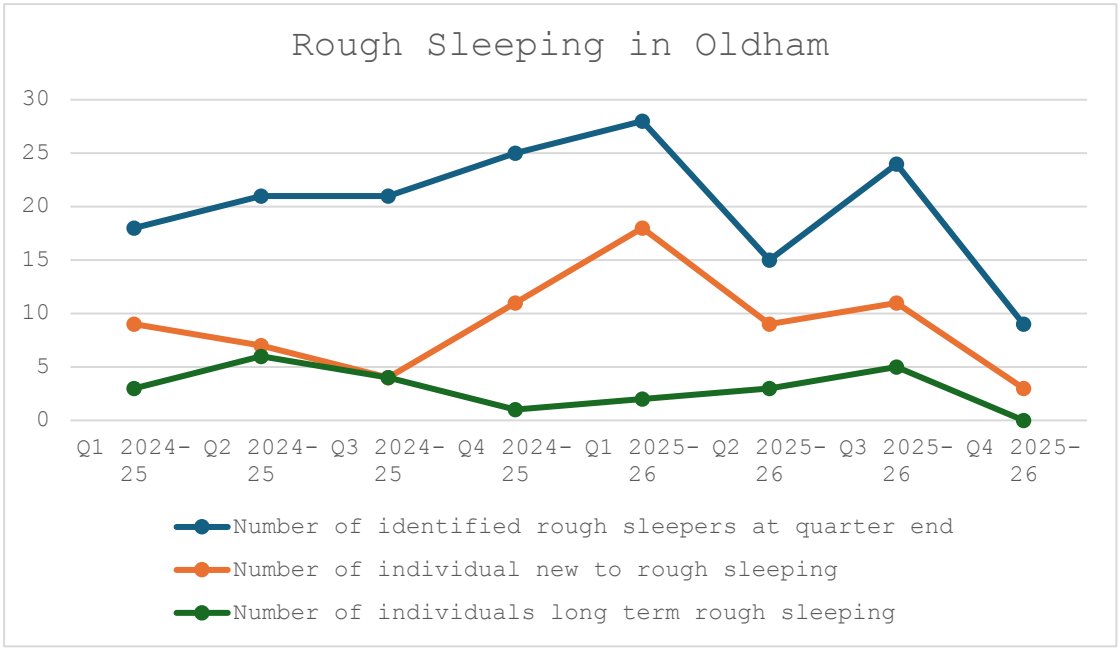


At the same time when comparing the support needs of households in 2021/22 with that of 2024/25 we see increases in the number of households declaring to have mental and physical health issues, learning disabilities, substance misuse and a history of rough sleeping. Consequently, our action plan must be tailored to address these shifting demographics and optimize targeted interventions.



The support needs profile reinforces the importance of a balanced service model. Most applicants are recorded as having no support need or only one identified need, while a smaller but significant cohort presents with multiple or overlapping needs that are likely to be under-recorded in the data. Specialist, trauma-informed and multi-agency responses will remain essential for applicants with higher levels of vulnerability, repeat homelessness or multiple disadvantage, but these should be complemented by a universal prevention approach that does not neglect the largest customer group. Many households may not meet thresholds for specialist intervention but could still avoid homelessness if they receive early advice, mediation, tenancy sustainment or financial support at the right time.

5.5 Rough Sleeping



Whilst Oldham has lower overall levels of rough sleeping compared to other areas across the region, we remain ambitious in our plans to end rough sleeping within the borough. Overall, since Q1 2025/26 there has been a gradual reduction in the number of individuals identified as rough sleeping during the month. This is also reflected in the number of long-term rough sleepers recorded

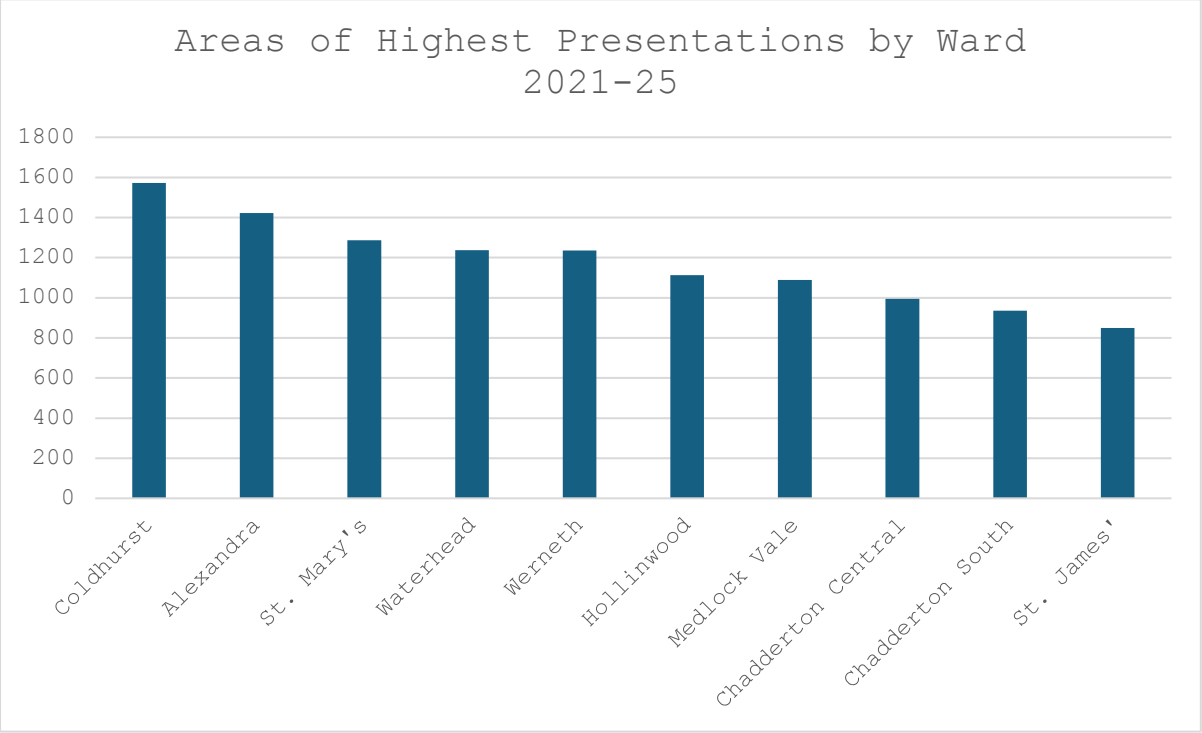
Official single-night snapshot counts in Oldham traditionally record very low single digit figures on a given night due to pro-active local interventions, strategic partnerships and engagement opportunities with Rough Sleeping Services.

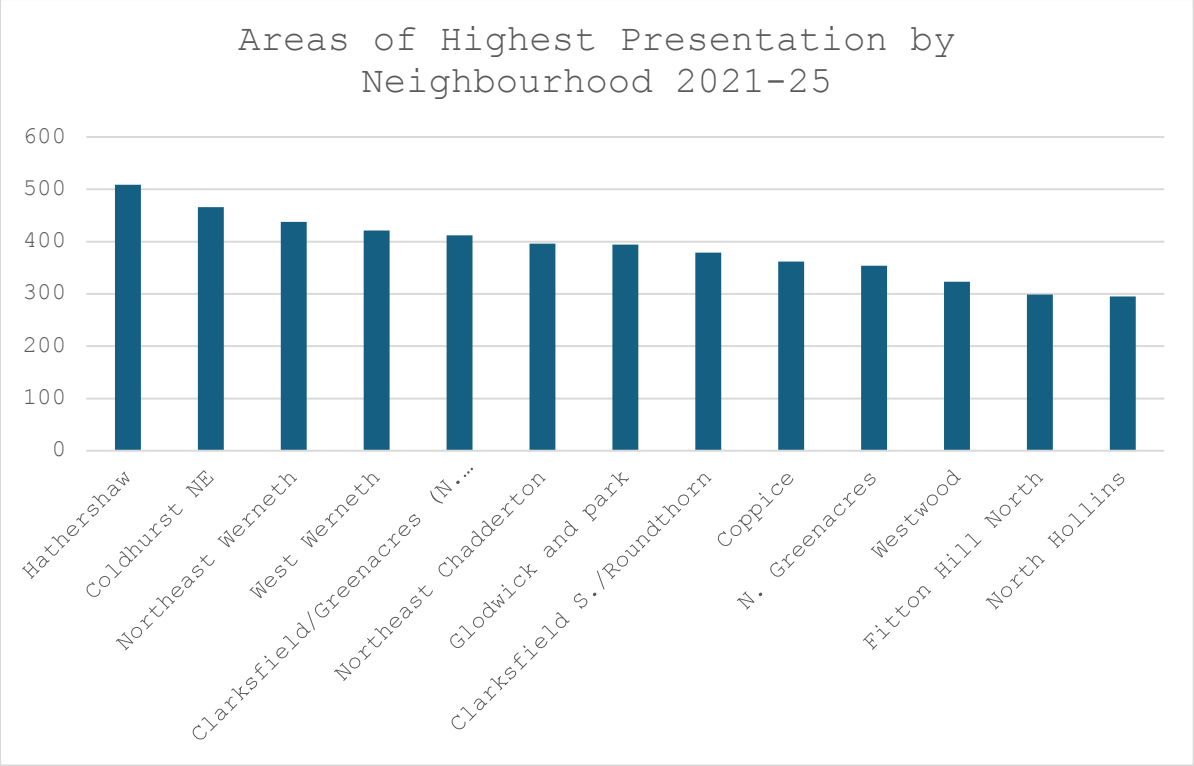
Our challenges moving forward will be to eliminate long term rough sleeping within the borough (as detailed in our Local Outcomes Framework and our Long-Term Rough Sleeping Partnership Plan) and focus our interventions on preventing new instances of rough sleeping.

6.6 Geographical Trends

The 2021–25 review shows that homelessness presentations are concentrated in a number of areas, particularly in and around central Oldham. At ward level, the highest presenting areas were Coldhurst (1,572), Alexandra (1,423), St Mary's (1,286), Waterhead (1,237) and Werneth (1,235).

At neighbourhood/postcode sector level, the highest presenting areas included Hathershaw (509), Coldhurst North East (466), North East Werneth (438), West Werneth (421) and Clarksfield/Greenacres (412).





Analysing geographical trends helps to identify where homelessness is most concentrated across the borough, so that prevention activity, outreach, partnership working and wider housing support can be targeted more effectively. It also helps to test whether homelessness demand is linked to wider structural inequalities such as deprivation, poor health, insecure housing and poverty, and therefore informs a more place-based and evidence-led homelessness strategy.

Moving forward we will need to target resources and support to areas with the highest demand and expand our commitment to ensuring great everyday support is available in all our neighbourhoods shifting efforts from crisis to prevention and creating conditions for people to thrive as with Greater Manchester's Live Well commitment

6. Consultation

To support the development of the 2026 Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy Oldham Council undertook three simultaneously run consultations between 12 September 2025 - 03 November 2025. The surveys were promoted via a web survey link to members, partners, and residents and distributed via e-mail, Oldham Homelessness Forum, and social media. Below is representation of the key issues identified by all and the priorities to be addressed.

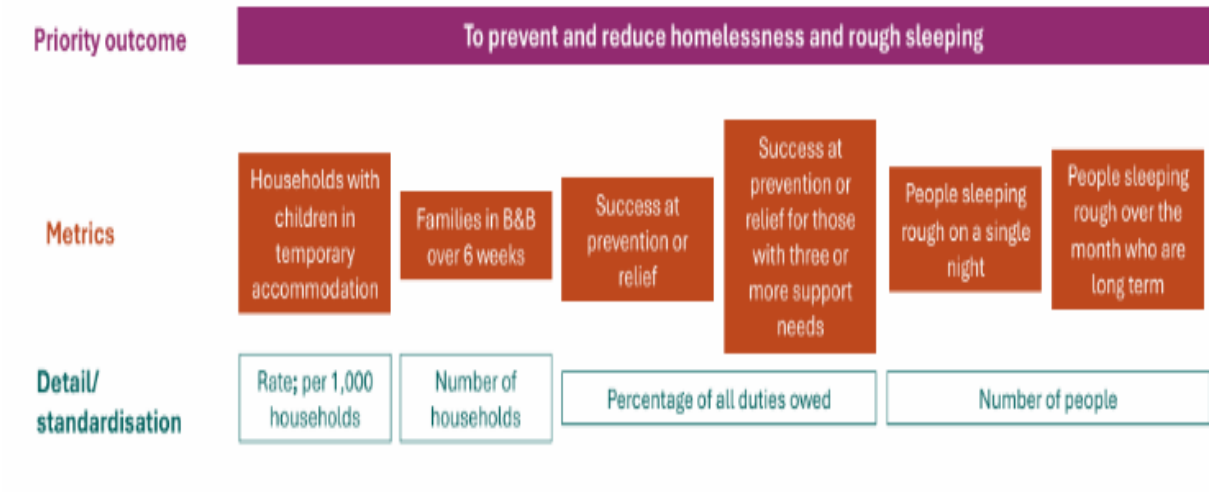
Theme / issue	Residents said	Partners said	Members said	Commonality / shared message
1. Affordable, suitable housing supply is the biggest need	The strongest prevention measure chosen was **access to affordable, safe and suitable accommodation (148 mentions)**. Residents repeatedly asked for **council housing / social housing**, more suitable homes, faster rehousing and better options for families, disabled people and larger households.	Partners repeatedly described **lack of affordable housing** as the core structural issue, including need for **more social housing, 1-bed homes, age-friendly homes, shared housing and bringing empty homes back into use**. They also linked shortage to repeat homelessness and blocked move-on.	Members explicitly called for **"more homes"** and highlighted accommodation pressures caused by family breakdown, PRS exits and mortgage repossession.	**Strongest shared theme across all cohorts:** Oldham needs more **affordable, suitable housing**, not just more process.
2. Prevention and early intervention need to happen sooner	Residents selected **earlier intervention (45 mentions)** and often said support came **too late**—for example, after eviction had already happened, after long waits, or only at crisis point.	Partners repeatedly called for **pre-crisis work**, earlier intervention, mediation, budgeting support, tenancy sustainment, and support "upstream" before homelessness happens.	Members explicitly said **"more early interventions"** and criticised services not being embedded enough in communities, meaning people reach emergency need before support is offered.	Very strong commonality: all cohorts want a strategy that shifts from **reactive crisis response** to **earlier prevention.**
3. Housing-related support / tenancy sustainment is essential	The second most-selected prevention measure was **housing-related support services (94 mentions)**. Residents also wanted support with the housing process, applications,	Partners strongly supported **housing-related support (26 selections)**, **tenant and landlord support (25)**, and repeatedly raised the loss/gap in floating support and wraparound tenancy sustainment.	Members said services should work more directly with public and private landlords, increase property numbers, and improve early support in communities.	Shared message: preventing homelessness is not just about housing supply; people also need **practical, ongoing support**

	private renting, pre-tenancy skills and practical help to avoid homelessness.			

7. Local Outcomes Framework

The Local Outcomes Framework (LOF) provides a clear structure for how Oldham will measure progress in reducing homelessness and improving outcomes for residents. It translates national priorities into locally relevant targets, enabling performance benchmarking, accountability, and continuous improvement.

The framework focuses on a small number of high-impact indicators that reflect system-wide effectiveness—particularly prevention, use of temporary accommodation, and rough sleeping—aligned to the national ambition to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring.



In response, Oldham has established a set of targets for the next three years, aligned with MHCLG guidance, to drive improvement across prevention, temporary accommodation use, and overall outcomes.

Metric	**Baseline**	**Target Sept 2026**	**Target Sept 2027**	**Target Sept 2028**
Households with children in temporary accommodation	274 - Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	230	200	170
Households with children in temporary accommodation per 000 households	2.9% - Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	2.4%	1.9%	1.5%

Households with children in B&B over 6 weeks	8 - Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	0	0	0
Success at preventing or relieving homelessness	19.9% -Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	25%	35%	45%
Success at preventing and relieving homelessness for those experiencing multiple disadvantage	20% Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	25%	35%	45%
People sleeping rough who are long term	3 - Nov 2025 (Rough Sleeping Data Framework)	2	1	0
People sleeping rough on a single night	6 - the snapshot count in Autumn 2025 (Snapshot)	5	4	3

8. Monitoring

The following initial Action Plan will serve as a live document that adapts to the evolving needs, challenges and priorities of homeless households in Oldham.

The Strategy will be overseen by our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Forum, a public and voluntary sector partnership that brings together statutory agencies, housing teams, health services, and community partners to ensure a coordinated response to homelessness across the borough.

Our progress will be measured by annual report to and review by these partners to track actions, modifications and completion.

9. Action Plan

OLDHAM HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY - 5 YEAR ACTION PLAN 2026-2031			
1. EARLIER IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS			
AIMS	ACTIONS	LEAD/PARTNERS	YEARS 1-5
To target resources to households threatened with homelessness and intervene to prevent at the earliest opportunity	Embed the GM Live Well commitment to ensuring that great everyday support is available in every neighbourhood by expanding our place-based working delivery model targeting areas placing the highest demand on Housing and Advice Services	Housing Options	Year 2
	Develop and deliver training to embed the new duty to collaborate locally, and effectively work with partners to prevent homelessness occurring	Housing Strategy	Year 1
	Promote Prevention Focused services through the Homelessness Forum	Housing Strategy	Ongoing
	Introduce Local Prevention Targets with a focus on improving performance and outcomes for residents	Housing Strategy	Year 1
	Explore the feasibility of a predictive homelessness risk model that pulls data from a range of sources to identify and target support to people at greatest risk of becoming homeless before they reach crisis point.	Housing Strategy	Year 3
	Deliver training to partner agencies to promote early identification and referrals for housing advice	Housing Strategy	Ongoing
	Commission Domestic Abuse training for Housing Options and specialist IDVA services to promote positive partnership working to prevent homelessness	Housing Options	Year 1
	Encourage, promote and support where required voluntary, faith & charitable sector organisations to submit relevant funding applications which enhance and support our local offer to homeless households	Housing Strategy	Ongoing
	Maximise the creative use of incentives to encourage homeless prevention through maintaining existing living arrangements	Housing Options	Year 2
	Create a Family Support offer to prevent relationship breakdown	Housing Strategy	Year 3

To minimise the impact of homelessness as a result of leaving an institution	Proactively monitor and review people leaving all institutions in collaboration with partners to identify accommodation pathways and prevent homelessness occurring	Housing Strategy	Year 2
	Explore opportunities with NHS partners to expand provision of hospital step-down accommodation	Housing Strategy/NHS	Year 3
	Work with HPT to evidence the need to further expand CAS3 accommodation provision in Oldham for individuals leaving prison or AP	Housing Strategy/Probation	Year 2
	Increase the use of personalisation funding for those with specific and complex needs	Housing Options/RSI	Year 1
	Continue to commit to securing accommodation within the private rented sector for ex-offenders via Landlord incentives	Housing Strategy	Year 1
To help people access the right help at the right time.	Promote “Know Your Rights “materials explaining common misconceptions and realities of making a homelessness application	Housing Strategy/MHCLG	Year 2
	Explore opportunities via the National Workforce Programme to ensure that homelessness and rough sleeping staff are provided with essential training, are able to deliver expert housing and homelessness advice, and are highly skilled.	Housing Options/MHCLG	Ongoing
	Embed best practice guidance to reduce tenancy failure with partners via the Strategic Housing Partnership and strengthen tenant engagement to reduce the risk of homelessness	Housing Strategy/RSL’s	Year 3
	Review Website ensuring there is a strong focus on information for members of the public on what to do and where to contact if at risk of homelessness and self-help online advice	Housing Strategy	Year 5
	Explore newly emerging and increasing reasons for homelessness to ensure data accuracy and target resources to prevention homelessness occurring	Housing Strategy	Year 5
	Develop processes to release funds to prevent homelessness in a faster, more efficient manner	Housing Strategy	Year 4
	Review information provided to Domestic Abuse victims on initial contact to promote empowerment and self help	Housing Strategy/IDVA	Year 3

2. ENSURING THAT WHEN HOMELESSNESS OCCURS IT IS RARE, BRIEF AND NON-RECURRENT			
AIMS	ACTIONS	LEAD/PARTNERS	YEARS 1-5
To minimise the impact of and promote recovery from rough sleeping	Pilot a Smart Sharing Housing Pathway to promote long-term and sustainable recovery from rough sleeping into employment at affordable rent	Housing Strategy/RSI	Year 2
	Compile an evidence-base to support the continuation of the post of an Outreach Nurse for rough sleepers and demonstrate how targeted health interventions aid recovery from rough sleeping.	Housing Strategy/Cardiff University/Public Health	Year 2
	Increase the use of flexible Personalisation Funding to support long-term solutions to rough sleeping in Oldham	Housing Strategy/RSI	Year 5
	Review Target Priority Groups of entrenched Rough Sleepers annually in consultation with partner and Rough Sleeping Steering Group members	Housing Strategy/RS Steering Group	Ongoing
	Conduct a deep dive of individuals new to rough sleeping to establish potential opportunities where interventions could have prevented rough sleeping occurring	Housing Strategy	Year 4
	Implement targets to ensure individuals at risk of rough sleeping are placed into accommodation	Housing Strategy/RSI	Year 1
	Embed the shift from Verification of rough sleepers to needs based engagement and support	Housing Strategy/RSI	Year 1
	Collaborate with partners to explore funding opportunities to improve community connection to aid recovery from rough sleeping, breaking the cycle of homelessness	Housing Strategy/VCSE	Ongoing
	Understand factors leading to returning to rough sleeping Using data to identify repeat patterns, implement targeted interventions, and redesign support offers.	Housing Strategy	Year 4
	Explore potential funding for the expansion of a Dual Diagnosis as a preventative response to positive recovery journeys	Housing Strategy/Public Health	Year 5
To end long term rough sleeping	Develop and implement an Ending Long Term Rough Sleeping Partnership Plan	Housing Strategy/Rough Sleeper Steering Group	Year 1
	Implement a Solidarity Locker System and Postal Boxes as a means of engaging individuals into Rough Sleeping Services and reducing long term rough sleeping	Housing Strategy/Action Together/RSI	Year 1

To reduce the length of time households, spend in temporary accommodation	Target Move-On Support to households in all forms of temporary accommodation to minimize the impact of homelessness	Housing Options	Ongoing
	Develop our approach and relationships with the PRS landlords including reviewing our incentive scheme and support offers to increase accommodation options available	Housing Options	Year 3
	Make best use of the ability to direct match households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to available social rented	Housing Options	Year 1
Improve the experience of and minimize the impact on households living in temporary accommodation	Introduce customer satisfaction surveys and health and wellbeing checks	Housing Options	Year 2
	Expand current notification procedures to GP surgeries and Schools of families being placed in temporary accommodation to include notifications to Health Visitors.	Housing Options	Year 1
	Review the Temporary Accommodation Family Information booklet with updated safe sleeping advice and activities for children	Housing Strategy/RSI	Year 4
	Work with GMCA to ensure every child in temporary accommodation has free transport to school if relocated more than 2 miles away	Housing Options/GMCA	Year 1
	Develop and enforce quality standards for all temporary accommodation, ensuring it is safe, clean, and suitable for all households.	Housing Options	Year 2
	Increase the number of high-quality, self-contained, TA units for families with children	Housing Strategy	Ongoing
To prevent repeat homelessness	Improve financial resilience to prevent cycles of homelessness promote employment opportunities for households at risk of homelessness: including access to education, training, and employment opportunities as a standard where applicable in Personalised Housing Plans	Housing Options/DWP/Get Oldham Working	Year 3
	Improve pre-tenancy preparation to prevent cycles of homelessness. Co-produce modules covering healthy relationships, emotional resilience, managing low-level mental health triggers, community integration, and practical tenancy skills.	Housing Strategy/RSI	Year 4
	Undertake a review to establish why repeat homelessness occurs, and put measures in place to prevent this happening	Housing Strategy	Year 5
	Introduce comprehensive affordability and suitability assessments to ensure tenancy sustainability	Housing Options	Year 2

3. IMPROVING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, SAFE, AND SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION			
AIMS	ACTIONS	LEAD/PARTNERS	YEARS 1-5
To increase access to safe accommodation	Complete a procurement exercise in respect of Other Nightly Paid temporary accommodation with a focus on improved standards of accommodation	Housing Strategy	Year 1
	Create a checklist to be used during inspections of all temporary accommodation provision to ensure consistency of accommodation standards across all provisions.	Housing Options	Year 2
	Commit to carrying out an inspection regime to ensure that all temporary accommodation is safe, suitable and of an appropriate standard. All properties will be: • inspected before any placement is made. • subject to inspection at least once per month while in use as temporary accommodation	Housing Options	Year 1
	Ensure that staff responsible for assessing and inspecting temporary accommodation are appropriately trained in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), to support the identification and management of hazards and to ensure that accommodation remains free from Category 1 hazards	Housing Options	Yeat 1
To increase access to suitable accommodation	Ensure that families are only placed into Bed &Breakfast accommodation as an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks by maintaining high level strategic oversight	Housing Options	Ongoing
	By exception where necessary, reduce the number of households placed into temporary accommodation which is out of borough to zero by expanding local TA portfolio	Housing Options	Ongoing
	By exception where necessary end the use of Bed and Breakfast as a form of temporary accommodation by procuring alternative more suitable options	Housing Strategy	Ongoing
	Work with GMCA to bring empty properties within the Borough back into use	Housing Strategy/GMCA	Ongoing
	Review and update the Temporary Accommodation Allocation Policy with a specific focus on accommodation standards	Housing Strategy	Year 1
To increase access to affordable accommodation	Ensure that social housing is allocated to those most in need by reviewing the Allocations Policy upon publication of	Housing Options/MHCLG	Year 2

	updated statutory guidance on social housing allocations to reflect local needs and effectively support vulnerable households		
	Develop and implement a Right Sizing Scheme with incentives to increase the availability of family sized accommodation.	Housing Options/RSL's	Year 2
	To increase access to affordable privately rented sector accommodation within borough via proactive engagement with local landlords	Housing Options	Ongoing
	Collaborate with developers and Housing Associations to build new homes at social and affordable rents	Housing Strategy/RSL's	Ongoing

4. STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP WORKING TO END HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING.			
AIMS	ACTIONS	LEAD/PARTNERS	YEARS 1-5
To work in partnership to make Homelessness Prevention a priority for everyone	Ensure representation at Key Strategic Partnership meetings to strengthen the council's commitment to coproduced outcomes and service delivery.	Housing Strategy	Ongoing
	Work collaboratively with key partners & GMCA to continue to lobby for long term funding from bodies such as MHCLG	Housing Strategy/GMCA	Ongoing
	Embed newly produced Government toolkits locally in partnership and promote best practice	Housing Strategy/MHCLG	Year 2
	Develop a shared outcomes framework using data to track progress, identify gaps and improve outcomes	Housing Strategy	Year 1
	Establish thematic subgroups e.g. youth homelessness; domestic abuse; health to drive focused action	Housing Strategy	Year
	Refresh and strengthen collaborative working via the Homelessness Forum by ensuring active partner engagement, aligned priorities, and a shared vision to end homelessness locally	Housing Strategy	Year 1
	Promote joint working between statutory, voluntary and community organisations to deliver person-centred and trauma-informed services by supporting flexible working arrangements and co-location.	Housing Strategy/VCSE	Ongoing
	Review eviction and move on processes with RSL's and supported accommodation providers and adopt a panel approach to identifying prevention focused solutions	Housing Strategy/RSL's/Supported Accommodation Providers	Year 4

To strengthen partnerships to support vulnerable groups	Apply co-production principles across service design and delivery, ensuring people with lived experience shape prevention and support approaches.	Housing Strategy/Rough Sleeper Steering Group	Ongoing
	Work with key partners in health, and treatment services to design and joint commission recovery housing accommodation	Housing Strategy/Commissioning	Year 2
	Explore options to deliver Longer Term Supported Accommodation for individuals with complex needs	Housing Strategy	Year 3
	Work in partnership with Public Health and NHS to embed inclusive healthcare practises that meet the treatment and care needs of people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping,	Housing Strategy/Public Health/NHS	Ongoing
	Ensure that no newborn child is discharged from hospital into Bed &Breakfast or other unsuitable temporary accommodation by having strategic oversight of expectant mothers in TA and establishing processes to identify appropriate discharge pathways	Housing Strategy/NHS	Year 1
	Work collaboratively with local partners to improve family experience in TA and promote positive health outcomes	Housing Strategy	Year 2
	Complete deep dive in respect of domestic abuse cases known to Statutory Homelessness; Domestic Abuse and Social Services to identify earlier opportunities for preventative interventions	Housing Strategy	Year 1

10. Glossary

CAS3: Community Accommodation Services Tier 3
DWP: Department of Work and Pensions
GM: Greater Manchester
GMCA: Greater Manchester Combined Authority
HPT: Homelessness Prevention Team
IDVA: Independent Domestic Violence Advocate
MHCLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
NHS: National Health Service
PRS: Private Rented Sector
RSI: Rough Sleeping Initiative
RSL: Registered Social Landlord
TA: Temporary Accommodation
VCSE: Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise

11. Contact

Oldham Council Strategic Housing

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Oldham Homelessness Review

2021-2025

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1. Introduction

Oldham's current homelessness strategy – Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy – was introduced in 2021. Local authorities in England have a duty to undertake a review of homelessness in their borough at least every five years and produce a homelessness strategy based on the finding of that review.

This Oldham Homelessness Review covers the period 2021-2025, and the duties owed under the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017. The HRA not only changed the way local authorities administer homelessness applications, but introduced much more comprehensive data gathering which, based on this review, will support the development of an insightful and responsive new homelessness strategy for Oldham.

The Review considers not only local homelessness data, but also Oldham's economical and housing market data which may influence people seeking housing advice from the local authority. It also takes into account developments across Greater Manchester and the wider country, and the impact these have had in relation to homelessness in Oldham. The review aims to ensure that Oldham's next Homelessness Strategy is evidence led, responsive and aligned with both local priorities and the evolving landscape of homelessness nationally.

In accordance with the National Plan to End Homelessness published in December 2025, this review and the subsequent strategy would be working towards the 4 pillars below to transition homelessness response from reactive crisis management to an integrated, prevention-first systems approach:

- 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

2. Legislative and strategic context

The HRA was arguably the biggest change in homelessness legislation since the introduction of the 2002 Homelessness Act. It introduced new duties on local authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness, as well as reinforcing duties to provide universal and targeted advice. Between 2021 and 2026, the legislative landscape surrounding homelessness and housing has undergone significant transformation.

The following timeline gives an overview of developments in relevant legislation, case law and related statutory guidance and provisions since 2021.

Table 1: Timeline of legal developments

Year	Development	Implications
2021	Domestic Abuse Act 2021	The Domestic Abuse Act significantly strengthened the rights of people experiencing homelessness due to domestic abuse. Key updates include an automatic "priority need" for housing, a broadened definition of abuse, and new

		duties for local authorities to provide safe accommodation.
2022	Nationality and Borders Act 2022	The Act significantly reformed the asylum system: Focusing on three core objectives: making the system fairer, deterring illegal entry, and removing those with no right to be in the UK.
2023	Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023	The Act enables local councils to establish licensing schemes, enforces minimum care/support standards, and links housing benefit eligibility to these licenses. Consultation ended May 2025. Regulations pending
2023	Social Housing (Regulation) Act	The Act formed a new era of regulation for the social housing sector, aiming to give residents greater powers and improve access to quick and fair solutions to problems.
2023	Levelling Up and Regeneration Act	While the primary focus of this legislation is on planning and regeneration, it contains provisions that could indirectly affect homelessness. The Act gave local authorities powers to charge a 100% council tax premium on empty homes after one year, instead of two, to incentivize owners to bring them back into use.
Dec 2024	New Regulations (Allocations)	Exempts Veterans of the Regular Armed Forces from Local Connection rules or residency tests for social housing applied by Local Authorities in England, regardless of when they served.
2025	Awaab's Law 2025	Considered a major step forward in mission to transform housing safety and quality by requiring social landlords to investigate and fix dangerous damp and mould within set time periods, as well as repair all emergency hazards within 24 hours.
July 2025	New Regulations (Allocations)	Exempts care leavers under 25 and victims of domestic abuse from any local connection or residency tests for social housing applied by Local Authorities in England.

April 2026	Children, Schools and Wellbeing Act	Includes a key provision to address intentional homelessness for care leavers, stipulating that no care leaver up to age 25 should be deemed intentionally homeless during a homelessness assessment.
May 2026	Renters Right Bill	Expected to abolish Section 21 'no-fault' evictions and end fixed-term tenancies for all new and existing contracts, converting them into rolling, periodic tenancies. The bill also proposes a new Decent Homes Standard for private rentals, a ban on rental bidding wars, and new rules for rent increases.
June 2026	Repeal of the Vagrancy Act 1824	Effectively decriminalising rough sleeping in England and Wales. The repeal is part of a broader effort to address homelessness and ensure that individuals are not penalized for simply trying to survive on the streets.

Alongside developments in legislation there have been several local, regional and national strategies and frameworks introduced and updated which have wide ranging impacts on homelessness in the borough.

Table 2: Timeline of Local, Regional and National Strategies

2021	National Affordable Homes Programmes	The Affordable Homes Programme 2021 to 2026 provides grant funding to support the capital costs of developing affordable housing in England. Affordable housing is defined as housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market in the National Planning Policy Framework.
2021	Greater Manchester GM Strategies	Housing standards will be improved, with the Good Landlord Charter exposing poor landlords. By 2030 there will be at least 10,000 new, energy efficient homes for social rent across all 10 local authority areas.
2021	Sheltered Housing Oldham- ASC Sheltered Housing	Oldham Council's approach to sheltered housing and adult social care is outlined within its overarching Housing Strategy and the Adult Social Care Commissioning Delivery Plan.
2022	Housing Benefit Administration Grant	The Council receives a Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) from Government which comprises Business Rate Top Up Grant,

		together with the Government's assessment of the level of Business Rates income to be retained by the Council.
2022	Places for Everyone Joint Development	Places for Everyone (PfE) is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. It has been published by the GMCA on behalf of the nine districts. It sets out strategic planning for homes, jobs, and sustainable growth, aiming to maximize brownfield land while protecting Green Belt areas through 2037.
2022	Oldham Domestic Abuse Strategy	Oldham's Domestic Abuse Strategy focuses on preventing abuse, protecting victims, and supporting recovery through a coordinated, multi-agency approach. It prioritises early intervention, improved victim support services, and holding perpetrators accountable to reduce harm across the borough.
2022	Ending Rough Sleeping for Good	Ending Rough Sleeping for Good is the UK government's cross-departmental strategy to end rough sleeping in England during this Parliament. Supported by over £2 billion in funding through 2025, it aims to ensure rough sleeping is rare, brief, and non-recurrent by focusing on prevention, intervention, and tailored support.
2023	Housing Delivery Action Plan	The Housing Delivery Test (HDT) has been introduced by the Government as a monitoring tool to demonstrate whether local areas are building enough homes to meet their housing need. The HDT measures net additional homes provided over the past three years against the homes required over the same period. In response to Central Government's Housing Delivery Test Measurement published in December 2024, Oldham prepared a Housing Delivery Action Plan.
2024	GM Capital strategies and programmes	The overarching Capital Strategy for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is to ensure that all resources are directed towards achieving the outcomes contained within the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) by maximising the use of external funding to deliver the highest impact affordable programme.

2024	GM Live Well	GM Live Well is a partnership between NHS GM, 10GM and GMCA, the 10 local authorities, health, business, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and social enterprise sector and people and communities. Working together we will create conditions for people to thrive, not just survive, removing barriers to opportunity and tackling health, social and economic inequalities.
2024	Oldham Local Housing Needs Assessment	The Oldham Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) provides the latest available evidence to help to shape the future planning and housing policies of the area. The LHNA provides local evidence which builds upon the Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
2024	Oldham Plan & Corporate Plan	Oldham Council's Corporate Plan 2024-27 describes how the Council will maximise the impact of our efforts and resource to improve the lives of residents in the borough over the next three years. The plan sets out three key missions: Happier, Healthier Lives; Great Place to Live; and Green and Growing.
2024	Oldham Local Plan Review	The Draft Local Plan contains a vision for Oldham based on a set of plan objectives and draft planning policies covering a wide range of topic areas. It has been informed by comments collected from two consultations previously run by the Council, ongoing studies and pieces of evidence work.
2025	Oldham Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2025	The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a public statement setting out the council's project plan for preparing the Local Plan and its supporting documents. This LDS shall have effect from 4 March 2025.
2025	Oldham Works: Our Employment and Skills Plan 2025–2030	Oldham Works: Our Employment and Skills Plan 2025–2030 is a strategic framework aiming to create a fairer, more prosperous economy by connecting residents to high-quality jobs, enhancing skills, and supporting local business growth. It emphasizes partnership-driven, sector-focused initiatives—particularly in green technology and digital innovation—to build a future-ready workforce.

2025	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy: A National Plan to end Homelessness	The National Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, published in December 2025, aims to make homelessness "rare, brief, and non-recurring". Backed by £3.5 billion in funding, the strategy focuses on prevention, increasing social housing supply, and ending the unlawful use of B&Bs for families by the end of this parliament
2025	Oldham Council Housing Delivery Action Plan	The plan addresses a 91% Housing Delivery Test (HDT) score, requiring action to improve supply. The plan addresses a declared housing crisis, targeting 500 new social homes by 2029, brownfield development, and town centre residential growth.
Expected 2026	Greater Manchester Tripartite Agreement (housing, health and integrated care)	A strategic framework linking housing providers, GMCA and NHS Greater Manchester across supported housing, inclusion health, Live Well at home and wider prevention ambitions. That gives Oldham a practical regional vehicle for strengthening health-housing integration in the new strategy.
Expected 2026	GMCA Homelessness and Migration Budget 2026–2029	GMCA approved funding across a number of relevant programmes, including TA New Supply, TA Homelessness Prevention, Young Persons Homelessness Prevention, Refugee Welcome, Housing First / RSAP, A Bed Every Night, Inclusion Health, Rough Sleeping Test and Learn Pilots and RESS.
Expected 2027	Local Supported Housing Strategies	Local councils now have statutory guidance and new burdens funding to assess supported housing supply, unmet need, future demand and move-on pathways. For Oldham, this is a significant opportunity to map supported housing properly, identify gaps, improve commissioning, and connect homelessness, mental health, adult social care and move-on planning more effectively.

3. Oldham's Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2021-2025: Highlights

The 2021 Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy was reviewed annually with an action plan created each year based on its priorities and the trends emerging within each year. The following table provides some highlights of developments which have taken place over the past 5 years.

Table 3: Highlights from previous Strategy

Date	Key Initiative	Strategic Impact
Oct 2021	**CAS3 – Community Accommodation Service (Tier 3)**	National pilot launched supporting prison leavers with short-term accommodation and resettlement, strengthening homelessness prevention on release and reducing reoffending.
Dec 2021	**Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP)**	10 self-contained homes delivered, increasing access to stable accommodation with tenancy sustainment support for people rough sleeping or at risk.
Dec 2021	**Rough Sleepers Information Booklet**	Borough-wide booklet introduced, improving access to practical information and strengthening engagement with support services.
Apr 2022	**Early Break – Youth Pathfinder**	Early-intervention programme preventing homelessness for 80% of participating young people.
Apr 2022	**GMMOP – Acute Ward Step-Down Accommodation Pilot**	Hospital discharge pathway created, preventing homelessness on discharge and achieving a 93% positive move-on rate.
Sept 2023	**Women's Rough Sleeping Census**	First census outside London informed trauma-informed, gender-responsive service delivery, with ongoing commitment to participation.
Sept 2023	**Hospital Discharge Protocol**	Protocol embedded specialist homelessness prevention support within hospital settings to strengthen early intervention.
Mar 2024	**Dual Diagnosis Mental Health Worker**	Specialist role introduced to support people with co-occurring mental health and substance misuse needs at risk of rough sleeping.
Apr 2024	**Test and Learn – Personalisation Fund**	Flexible funding enabled bespoke interventions supporting housing stability, employment and wellbeing.
May 2024	**Families in Temporary Accommodation Improvements**	Joined-up notification system and Family TA Booklet improved clarity, access to services and support for families.

Date	Key Initiative	Strategic Impact
Oct 2024	**CAS3 Uplift**	Capacity increased from 11 to 15 bedspaces, including women's provision, with funding secured to December 2027.
Mar 2025	**ABEN Uplift & Eviction Protocol**	Capacity expanded to 33 spaces and eviction protocol reduced evictions, contributing to 447 positive move-on outcomes.
Apr 2025	**Test and Learn – Rough Sleeping Outreach Nurse**	Nurse-led outreach improved access to health assessments and treatment; Oldham became the only Northern authority delivering this model.
Jun 2025	**Housing Options Service Redesign**	Service redesign approved, strengthening prevention, relief and partnership capacity.
Jul 2025	**Trauma-Informed Practice Training**	Workforce-wide trauma-informed training improved safeguarding and responsiveness to complex need.
Oct 2025	**Safe Sleep Training**	Safe Sleep guidance embedded across temporary accommodation, strengthening safeguarding for infants.
Dec 2025	**CAS3 Uplift**	CAS3 capacity further increased from 15 to 19 bedspaces, strengthening outcomes for people leaving custody.

4. Homelessness: analysis and trends

4.1 Applications and assessments

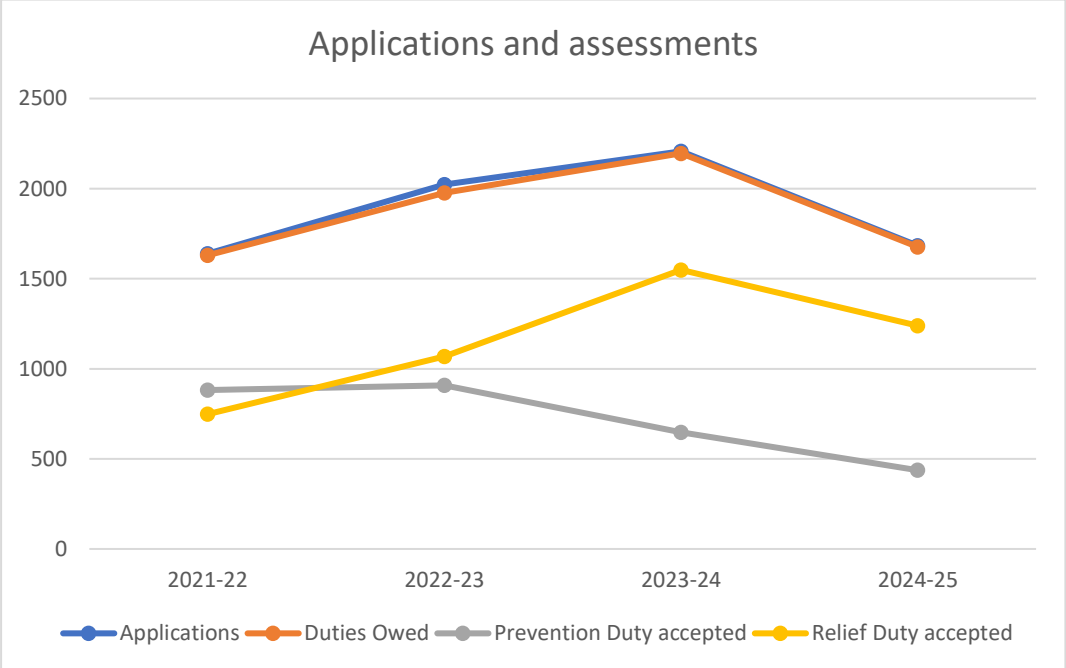
Since the last Homelessness Strategy applications for homelessness support steadily increased peaking in 2023/24. However, during 2024/2025, there has been a reduction in the number of applications made. This trend is not exclusive to Oldham, in the first quarter (January to March) of 2025, households owed a duty to prevent or relieve homelessness fell by 6.3% compared to the same period in 2024. This trend continued into April to June 2025, with assessments down 6.7% compared to the same quarter in 2024.

The chart below shows the total number of homeless applications made and, of those:

- The number that was owed a subsequent duty – where they were not, this was due to the household either being found not homeless or not eligible for assistance
- The number of those owed a duty where this was a 'Prevention Duty' – to take steps to prevent the applicant from becoming homeless
- The number of those owed a duty where this was a 'Relief Duty' – to take steps to relieve the applicant's homelessness where this had already occurred.

All data reviewed in this section is retrieved from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), *Tables on homelessness* (Statutory homelessness live tables).

Figure 1: Applications and Assessments



There has been a significant reduction in the number of prevention duties accepted between 2021/22 and 2024/25 when compared with the National average. Whilst this could be indicative of households presenting as homeless at crisis, it clearly demonstrates the need for earlier intervention. As the Government now intends to introduce targets for Local Authorities and focus investment on prevention. Oldham will need to drive change locally improve outcomes for our residents.

Table 4: Applications and Assessments: National comparison

	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
	Oldham	National	Oldham	National	Oldham	National	Oldham	National
Applications taken	1639	291,620	2022	324,630	2207	358,370	1683	360,050
Duties owed	99%	95%	98%	92%	99%	91%	99%	91%
Prevention duties accepted	54%	48%	46%	47%	29%	45%	26%	45%
Relief duties accepted	46%	52%	54%	53%	71%	55%	74%	55%

4.2 Homelessness prevention

Homelessness prevention is often the most positive course of action for applicants and is also the most cost effective for the Council. Prevention activity to involve helping a household to remain in their existing home or securing new accommodation for them to move to. However, prevention activity is also resource intensive in terms of staff time and available housing options.

There has been a significant reduction in the proportion of successful prevention since Q2 2022/23. Despite a significant reduction in the number of prevention duties accepted between 2021/22 and 2024/25 compared with the National average, Oldham still has lower rates of successful prevention compared with regional and national average. This indicates increasing difficulty in preventing households presenting at crisis. The trend also coincides with resource constraints and workforce restructure and instability since 2023.

Table 5: Prevention Duties

	Closed prevention duties	% Successfully prevented
Q1 2021-22	197	37%
Q2 2021-22	225	32%
Q3 2021-22	184	30%
Q4 2021-22	263	63%
Q1 2022-23	186	55%
Q2 2022-23	128	57%
Q3 2022/23	134	52%
Q4 2022/23	194	32%
Q1 2023/24	215	35%
Q2 2023/24	185	40%
Q3 2023/24	180	33%
Q4 2023/24	222	30%
Q1 2024/25	129	33%
Q2 2024/25	117	43%
Q3 2024/25	123	23%
Q4 2024/25	100	35%

Table 6: Homelessness Prevention: Regional and National Comparison

	% of successful prevention			
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
England	51%	49%	47%	50%
North West	51%	49%	48%	51%
Oldham	41%	49%	42%	34%

The evidence in this section highlights the need to distinguish clearly between homelessness prevention and the allocation of scarce housing. Allocation systems are designed to prioritise limited supply, but prevention should operate much earlier and on a broader basis. The next strategy should therefore adopt a universal prevention model in which all households at risk of homelessness can access timely advice, mediation, financial support and practical help to sustain accommodation. Alongside this, a smaller group of households with more complex circumstances will require additional specialist intervention. Without this balance, there is a risk that service become focused on those already at crisis point, rather than reducing demand by intervening earlier across the wider at-risk population.

Learning Point:

- The decline in prevention performance coincides with the significant increase in relief duty accepted in this period. The Council will need to focus on interventions to prevention homelessness arising.

Strategic Focus:

- Strategic investment and ambition on delivering homelessness prevention and pre-prevention will be key to the service going forward.
- There is a need to focus prevention on the biggest homelessness drivers (family& friends' exclusion and tenancy loss), increase pre-prevention ("early help") referrals from partners, and strengthen practical prevention tools (mediation, landlord negotiation, and targeted financial support).

4.3 Homelessness relief

When households due become homeless Oldham Council acts appropriately and has historically had good performance in securing alternative accommodation for these households. However, with the number of relief duty significantly increasing between 2023-2025, the percentage of successfully relieved cases dropped significantly.

This trend is not exclusive to Oldham, the effectiveness of relief actions in resolving homelessness has declined, with an 'accommodation secured' outcome falling from 47% in 2021 to 39% in 2024 nationally.[1]

[1] Crisis, The Homelessness Monitor: England 2025, available at: https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/tn1i1hjf/the-homelessness-monitor-england-2025.pdf (accessed 5 June 2026).

Table 7: Relief Duties

	Closed relief duties	% Successfully relieved
Q1 2021-22	243	45%
Q2 2021-22	273	47%
Q3 2021-22	261	34%
Q4 2021-22	177	49%
Q1 2022-23	200	54%
Q2 2022-23	199	55%
Q3 2022-23	206	54%
Q4 2022-23	232	47%
Q1 2023-24	304	48%
Q2 2023-24	484	33%
Q3 2023-24	530	29%
Q4 2023-24	533	25%
Q1 2024-25	687	19%
Q2 2024-25	542	16%
Q3 2024-25	327	20%
Q4 2024-25	178	31%

Learning Point:

- Relief demand rose sharply and successful outcomes fell. This points to a system under strain - higher caseloads, fewer move-on options, and more people presenting with complex needs.

Strategic Focus:

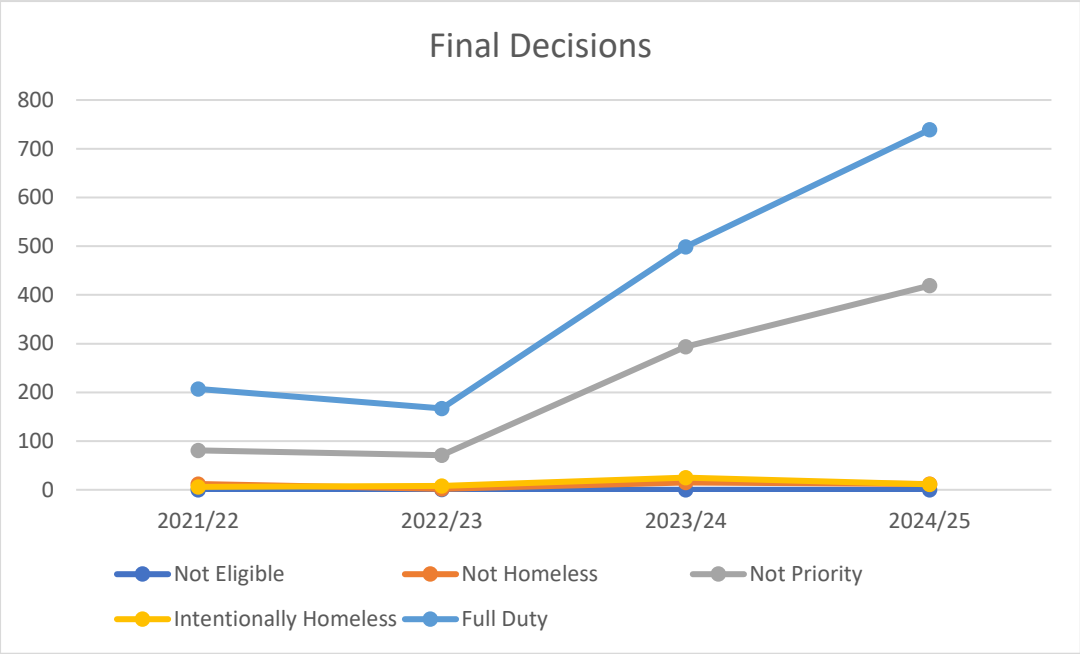
- This again points to the need to reduce demand by effective pre-prevention and prevention. Targeted activities based on data and evidence – such as community-based prevention services and automated multi-agency triggers on profiles of high-risk residents.
- To improve efficiency in relief, prioritise faster move-on from temporary and supported accommodation and target extra help at people most likely to cycle back into homelessness.

4.4 Final decisions

Prior to the HRA a decision would have been reached on a homeless application almost immediately; now it is usually reached – or at least only enacted – if the Relief Duty has been ongoing for 56 days and the local authority has not been able to help the applicant successfully resolve their homelessness.

The number of applicants progressing to full duty has seen a sharp increase between 2021 and 2025. The decline in effectiveness of prevention and relief actions in resolving homelessness – as outlined by the 2 sections above.

Figure 2: Final Decisions



As discussed, unfortunately not all Relief Duties end with a positive outcome:

- Some households withdraw their application or lose contact with the Council during this period
- The Relief Duty only lasts for 56 days, after which the Council does not have an ongoing duty to keep taking reasonable steps for some households, e.g. those not in priority need or intentionally homeless.

After this 56-day period some of these households will still be owed an ongoing accommodation duty by the Council – the 'full' housing duty. The Homelessness Reduction Act was introduced in part to try and reduce the number of households moving into this duty, by focusing on earlier prevention and relief.

Table 8: Full Housing Duties Owed

	Closed relief duties	Full Duty owed	% Owed a full duty
Q1 2021-22	243	30	12%
Q2 2021-22	273	54	20%
Q3 2021-22	263	90	34%
Q4 2021-22	178	33	19%
Q1 2022-23	202	34	17%
Q2 2022-23	204	29	14%
Q3 2022-23	208	46	22%
Q4 2022-23	234	57	24%
Q1 2023-24	302	42	14%
Q2 2023-24	484	145	30%
Q3 2023-24	530	119	22%
Q4 2023-24	519	201	39%
Q1 2024-25	687	279	41%

Q2 2024-25	543	293	54%
Q3 2024-25	327	105	32%
Q4 2024-25	178	61	51%

This therefore leaves the following proportion of households for whom no accommodation was secured within 56 days, and no ongoing duty owed; these are the households outlined in the bullet points above. This is a significant proportion of Oldham's homelessness cohort, suggesting where resources may need to be directed by the 2026 Homelessness Strategy.

Table 9: Households not successfully relieved or owed a full housing duty

	% Not successfully relieved or owed a full housing duty
Q1 2021-22	42%
Q2 2021-22	34%
Q3 2021-22	32%
Q4 2021-22	33%
Q1 2022-23	30%
Q2 2022-23	32%
Q3 2022-23	24%
Q4 2022-23	28%
Q1 2023-24	47%
Q2 2023-24	42%
Q3 2023-24	53%
Q4 2023-24	44%
Q1 2024-25	43%
Q2 2024-25	32%
Q3 2024-25	51%
Q4 2024-25	51%

4.5 Reasons for homelessness

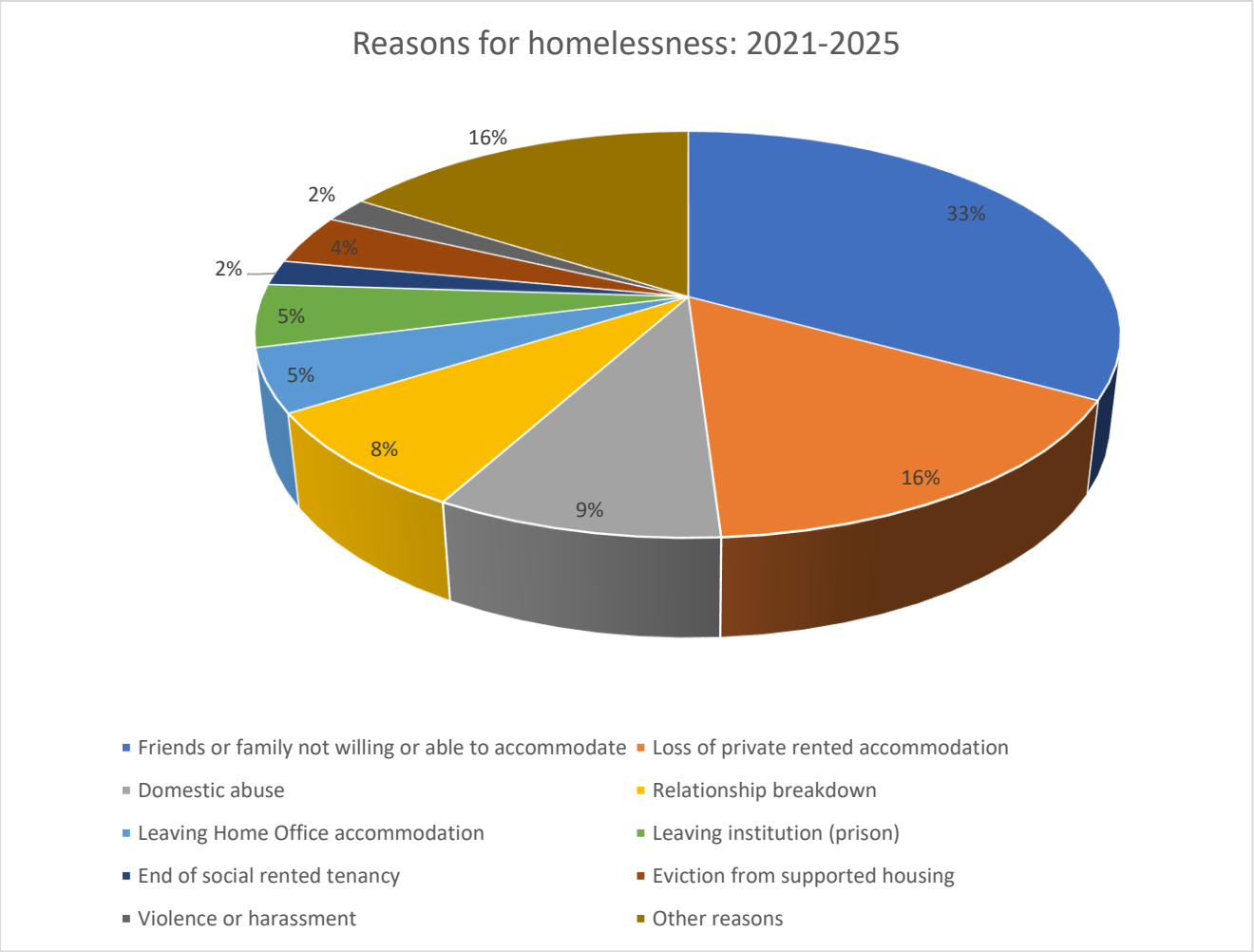
Understanding the main reasons why people present as homeless or threatened with homelessness gives the Council a better idea of how to target its resources in the 2026 Homelessness Strategy. For example, the main reason for homelessness – which continues to rise – is applicants being asked to leave by friends or family. This is an area where the Council needs to strengthen and target its prevention activity; however, it is also indicative of the issues faced across the borough in terms of affordable housing supply and demand.

Table 10: Main reasons for homelessness

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Asked to leave by friends or family	34%	34%	32%	33%
Loss of private sector accommodation	16%	18%	15%	14%
Domestic abuse	8.5%	9%	8%	9%
Relationship breakdown	8.5%	9%	9%	7%
Required to leave accommodation provided by the Home Office as asylum support	2%	3%	7%	6%
Left an institution - prison	3%	4%	5%	8%
Eviction from social rented accommodation	3%	2%	3%	1%

Eviction from supported accommodation	3%	3.5%	4%	4%
Mortgage repossession	1%	0.5%	2%	3%
Home no longer suitable due to disability/ill-health	1.5%	2%	2%	2%
Other forms of violence or harassment	2.5%	2%	1%	2%
All other reasons	17%	13%	12%	11%

Figure 3: Main reasons for homelessness



Learning Points:

- Exclusions by friends and family remain the highest presenting reason for homelessness. Need committed resources to preventing this, for example mediation and targeted early intervention, incentives.
- Numbers facing homelessness because of domestic abuse continues to rise following the implementation of Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Multi Agency training identified to promote better interagency interventions
- Loss of private rented sector accommodation remains a leading cause of homelessness nationally but also remains a much-needed source of prevention and relief. There is a

need to grow and retain good landlords and improve relationships. The Renters Right Act will give LA increased duties with regard private sector standards and enforcement

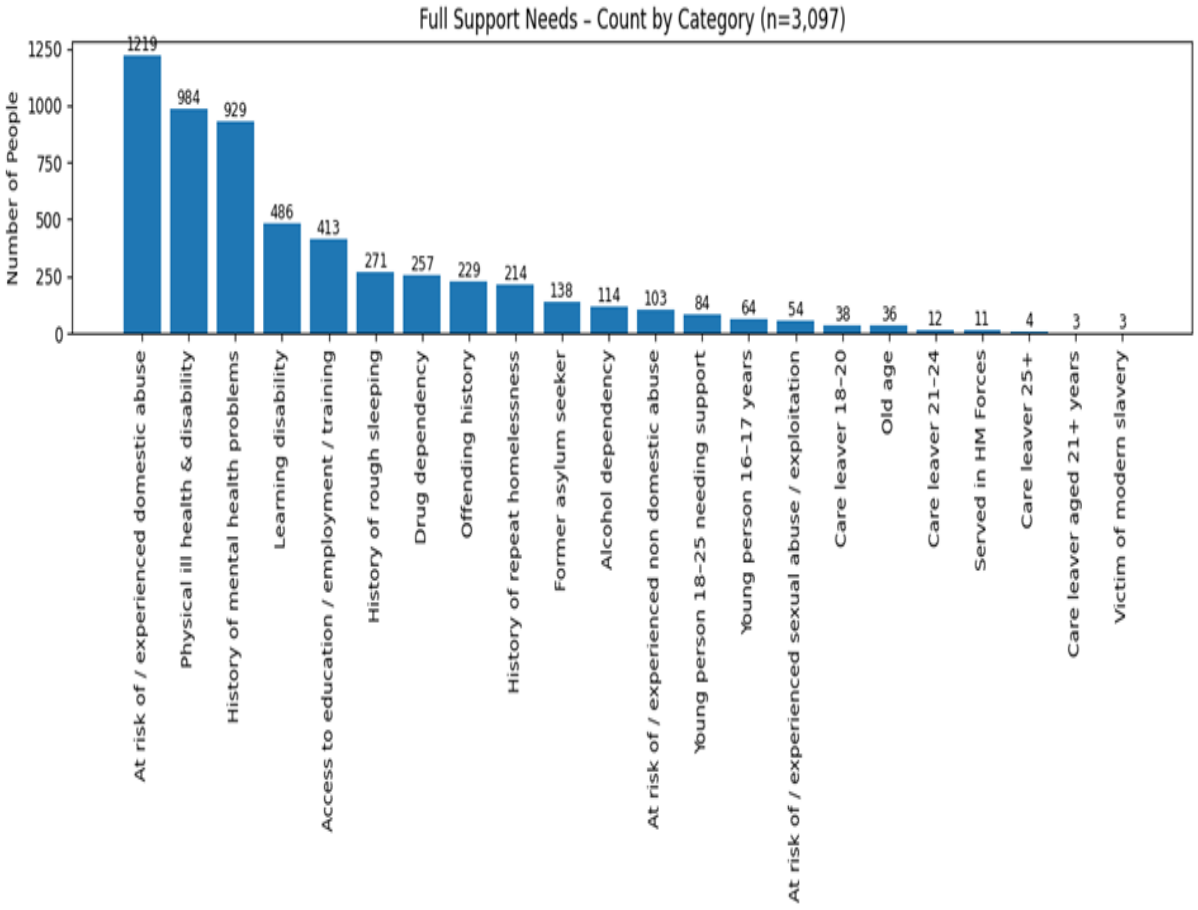
- Relationship breakdowns are increasing as a cause of homelessness; how can we improve the advice and options available to departing partners prior to homelessness occurring, including education and support.
- Number of asylum seekers presenting as homeless continues to rise. The proportion of presentation for this group in Oldham more than two times higher than England's average.
- Number of individuals leaving institution (prison) also continues to rise. The proportion of presentation for this group is double that of England's average.

4.6 Support needs

As well as understanding why applicants present as homeless, it is also important to understand what needs they have other than housing to plan responses accordingly.

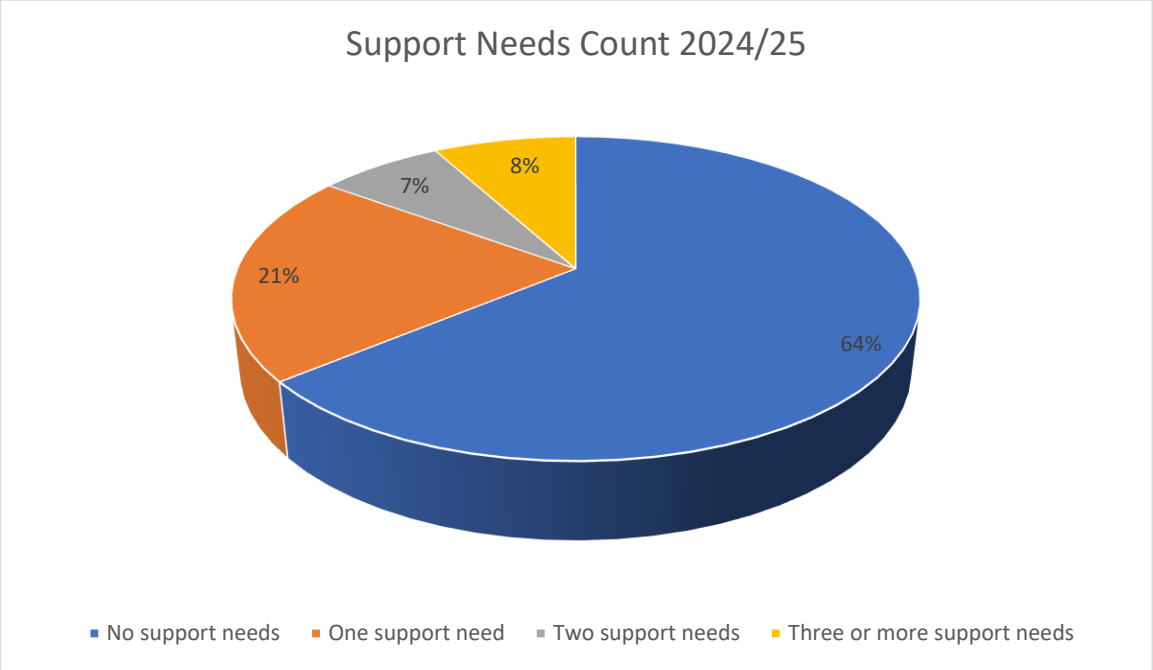
Over the past four years applicants who were homeless or threatened with homelessness were identified as having the following support needs.

Figure 4: Support Needs



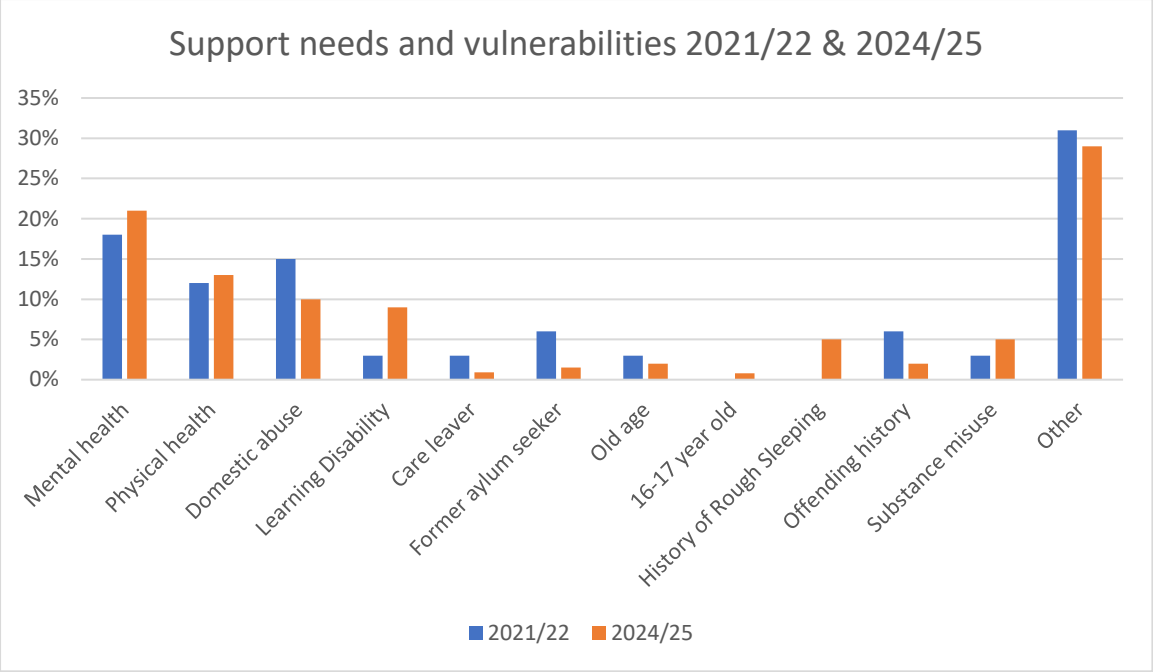
Across the review period, majority of applicants report no support need. Less than a quarter of homeless applicants stated to have two or more support needs at all in their household. However, this is likely to understate the true level of complexity, as support needs are often not fully captured at the point of application and may only become clearer later through casework or engagement with partner agencies.

Figure 5: Count of support needs



The following chart compares the percentage of applicants who declared to have the following support needs between 2021/22 and 2024/25.

Figure 6: Support needs and vulnerabilities comparison 2021-2025



The most commonly recorded support need is mental health, rising from 18% in 2021/22 to 21% in 2024/25, making it the clearest and most consistent vulnerability in the homelessness cohort. This is in keeping with evidence found in JSNA that levels of people living with depression were above the national average – 13.72% to 12.29% - so to find high levels of applicants self-declaring mental ill-health is in line with this data. Oldham also rank as the 3rd lowest local authority for physically active adults and lower than national average health outcomes – this is evident in the high-levels of applicants claiming physical health as a support need. [2]

The support needs profile reinforces the importance of a balanced service model. Most applicants are recorded as having no support need or only one identified need, while a smaller but significant cohort presents with multiple or overlapping needs that are likely to be under-recorded in the data. This means the strategy should avoid framing homelessness only through the lens of the most complex cases. Specialist, trauma-informed and multi-agency responses will remain essential for applicants with higher levels of vulnerability, repeat homelessness or multiple disadvantage, but these should be complemented by a universal prevention approach that does not neglect the largest customer group. Many households may not meet thresholds for specialist intervention but could still avoid homelessness if they receive early advice, mediation, tenancy sustainment or financial support at the right time.

Learning points:

- The strategy should **balance universal prevention with specialist pathways**. Most applicants are not recorded as having multiple support needs, so early intervention, advice, mediation, affordability support and tenancy sustainment remain just as important as specialist responses for high-complexity households

[2] Oldham Council, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Oldham, available at: https://www.jsnaoldham.co.uk/ (accessed 5 June 2026).

- **Mental health** should be treated as a core homelessness issue. It is the most common recorded support need and should shape service design, staff training, partnership working and commissioned provision.

- **Physical health and disability** need a stronger place in homelessness responses. Stable levels of physical health need, combined with rising long-term illness/disability elsewhere in the review, suggest the need for more joined-up pathways between housing, adult social care and health services.

- **Domestic abuse** remains strategically significant even if its share within support needs has fallen. The strategy should focus not only on crisis response and safe accommodation, but also on repeat homelessness prevention, move-on and tenancy sustainment for survivors.

- The increase in **learning disability** as a recorded need is significant and should inform future service design. Housing advice, communications, assessments and supported housing pathways need to be more accessible and tailored for this group.

- A smaller but high-risk cohort with **multiple disadvantage needs** a targeted response. People with combinations of mental ill health, substance misuse, offending history and rough sleeping are more likely to experience repeat homelessness and require coordinated multi-agency support rather than single-service interventions.

- **Care leavers** remain a priority group despite falling numbers. The strategy should continue to strengthen transition planning, joint protocols and accommodation pathways, while also improving recording so that need is not masked by poor data.

- **Former asylum seekers/refugees** remain a significant group within the wider review, and although their recorded support need rate has reduced over the period, the data elsewhere in the review shows continuing housing pressure associated with move-on from Home Office accommodation. This indicates the need for the strategy to plan for integration, advice and prevention activity for newly recognised refugees and other newly eligible groups.

- **Support needs data** is likely to under-record complexity. The strategy should include action to improve assessment quality, recording consistency and data sharing across housing, health and support services so that future planning is based on a fuller understanding of need.

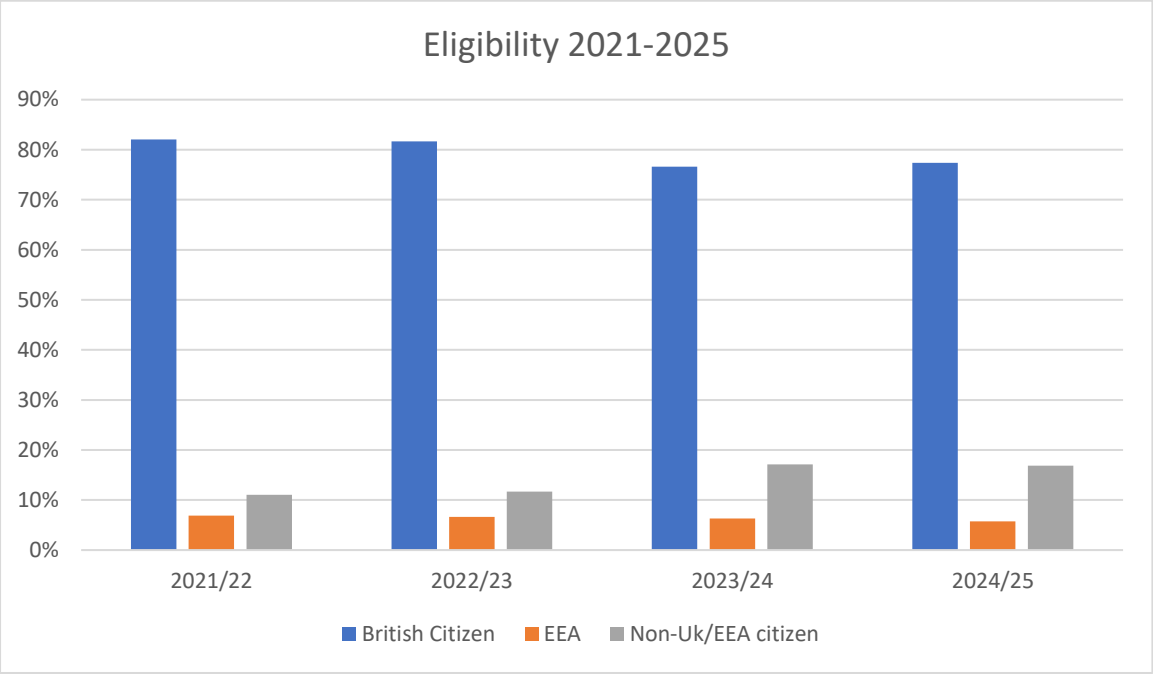
4.7 Eligibility

Local authorities must make housing advice available free of charge to anyone in the district but can only provide homelessness assistance – such as accepting prevention and relief duties – to eligible groups. These are set out in homelessness legislation and exclude households such as those who have no recourse to public funds conditions applied to their visas.

Habitually resident British or Irish citizens are the main eligible group who apply for homelessness assistance in Oldham, but there has been an increase in applications from other groups in recent years. The increase is biggest amongst Non-UK/EEA nationals and people granted refugee status –

correlating with an increase in applications from people becoming homeless after being asked to leave accommodation provided by the Home Office as asylum support.

Figure 7: Eligibility 2021-25

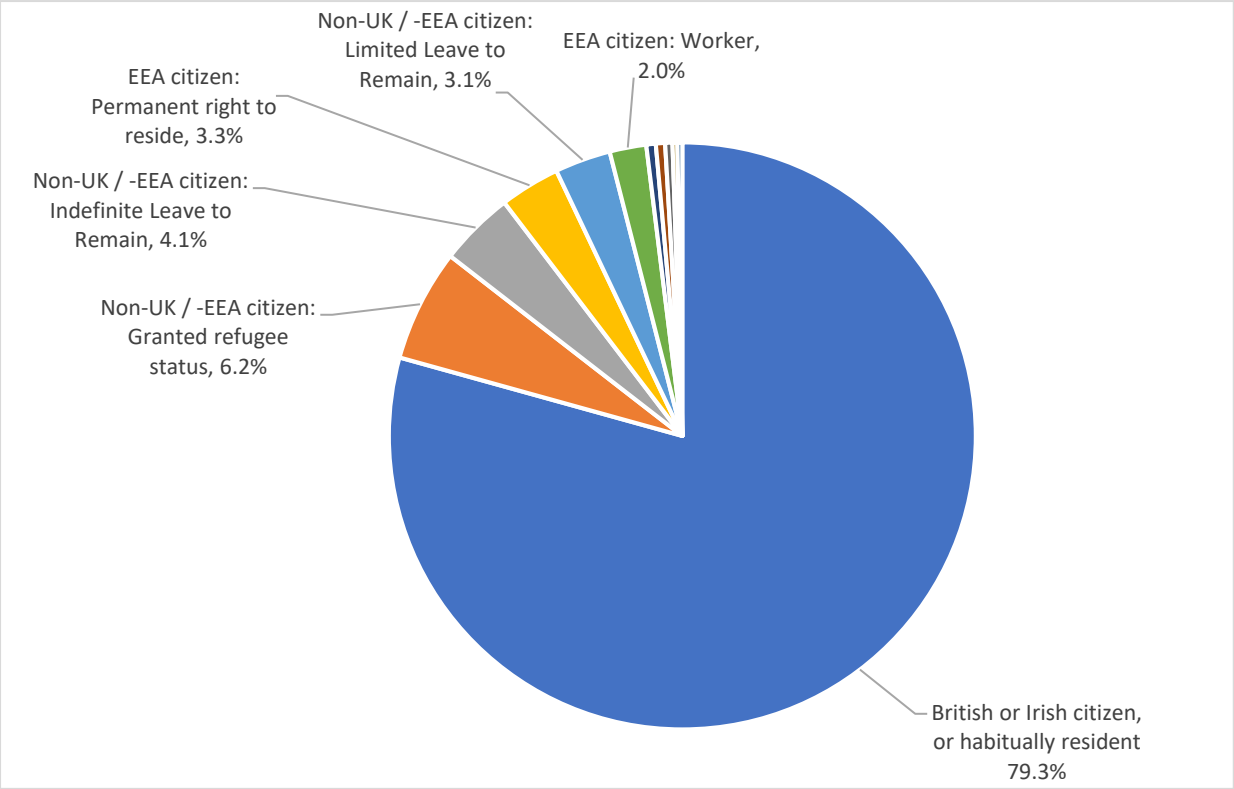


The following charts show the change over the course of 2021-2025 in the groups presenting as homeless – with a 7.4% increase in applications from those granted refugee status.

Table 11: Eligibility breakdown 2021-25

	2021/22	**2022/23**	**2023/24**	**2024/25**	**2021-2025 average**
British or Irish citizen, or habitually resident	82.0%	81.7%	85.3%	77.4%	79.3%
Non-UK / -EEA citizen: Granted refugee status	1.8%	4.1%	10.0%	9.2%	6.2%
Non-UK / -EEA citizen: Indefinite Leave to Remain	4.0%	3.2%	5.1%	4.7%	4.1%
EEA citizen: Permanent right to reside	3.5%	3.0%	4.0%	3.1%	3.3%
Non-UK / -EEA citizen: Limited Leave to Remain	4.2%	3.0%	3.2%	2.2%	3.1%
EEA citizen: Worker	2.3%	2.5%	1.8%	1.7%	2.0%
EEA citizen: Other	0.4%	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%
Non-UK / -EEA citizen: Exceptional Leave to Remain	0.5%	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%
Non-UK / -EEA citizen: Other protection (e.g. humanitarian, discretionary)	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%
EEA citizen: Eligible family member	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%
EEA citizen: Self-employed	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%

Figure 8: Eligibility Breakdown 2021-2025 Average



Learning Points:

- The strategy should combine universal early homelessness prevention for all eligible households with targeted support for groups facing additional barriers, including newly recognised refugees and other households with more complex resettlement need
- Most applicants remain British or Irish citizens, or otherwise habitually resident, but the eligibility profile is becoming more diverse. It is important that we focus prevention activity within this group.
- The proportion of presentations from people granted refugee status has increased significantly. A clear trend within the eligibility data that reinforces the need for the strategy to respond to homelessness risk linked to move-on from Home Office accommodation.
- Eligibility complexity is likely to place continuing pressure on frontline services. As the profile of applicants diversifies, the homelessness service will need strong staff knowledge, clear legal pathways and effective partnership working to ensure that households receive accurate advice as early as possible and do not reach crisis because of delays, confusion or poor signposting.

4.8 Demographics

4.8.1 Ethnicity

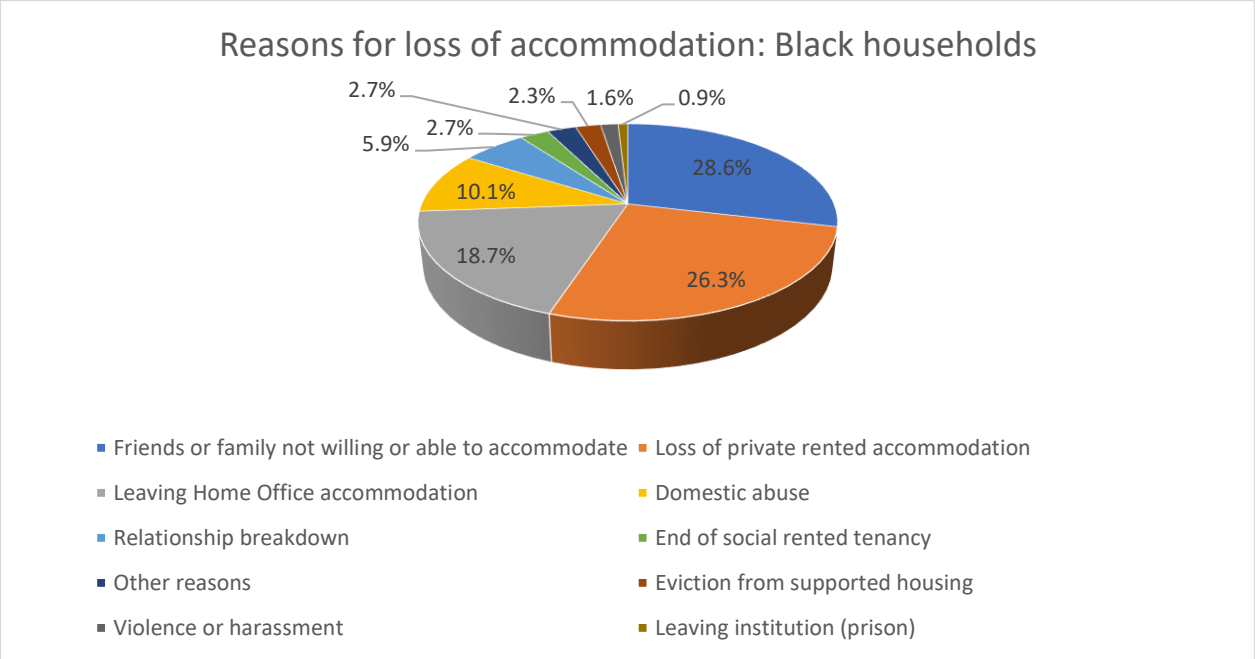
Homeless applicants are asked to provide information on their ethnicity on a voluntary basis, which can be used to establish whether any groups are disproportionately affected or not being reached by services despite being represented in Oldham. The followed sets out the ethnic makeup of residents owed a prevention or relief duty compared with UK Census Data 2021.

Table 12: Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	Census 2021 [3]	Owed Prevention or Relief Duty 2021-2025
White	68.1%	58.3%
Pakistani	13.5%	9.3%
Bangladeshi	9.0%	6.3%
Black	3.4%	7.3%
Indian	0.7%	0.2%
Chinese	0.3%	0.1%
Mixed and Other	4.9%	8%
Not known	0%	7.8%

The biggest disparity between prevention or relief duty owed and Census information is Black households. This is in part due to representation amongst those granted refugee status and a higher-than-average rate in losing private rented accommodation – majority from assured shorthold tenancy. Other reasons for loss of accommodation were in line with overall trends for all applicants, such as loss of private rented sector accommodation and exclusions by friends and family.

Figure 9: Reason for loss of accommodation: Black households



[3] Oldham Council, Oldham in Profile, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment | Oldham, available at: https://www.jsnaoldham.co.uk/cms-data/depot/profile-depot/Oldham-in-Profile.pdf (accessed 5 June 2026).

4.8.2 Age

The age profile of households owed a prevention, or relief duty has remained stable across the review period. People aged 25–34 continue to make up the largest share of presentations, accounting for around one third of cases each year even though they account for only 13.1% of the borough's population. There has been a small increase in presentations from people aged 35–44 and 45–54, while the proportion of 18–24-year-olds has fallen.

Table 13: Age

	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
	Owed a prevention or relief duty	%	Owed a prevention or relief duty	%	Owed a prevention or relief duty	%	Owed a prevention or relief duty	%
16-17	15	1%	6	0%	4	0%	1	0%
18-24	325	20%	326	16%	428	19%	266	16%
25-34	547	34%	673	34%	749	34%	547	33%
35-44	404	25%	556	28%	540	25%	472	28%
45-54	211	13%	277	14%	278	13%	246	15%
55-64	83	5%	95	5%	142	6%	103	6%
65-74	32	2%	30	2%	46	2%	31	2%
75+	13	1%	13	1%	13	1%	10	1%

Homelessness in Oldham is concentrated among working-age adults. People aged 16–24 are also over-represented, while residents aged 65+ are much less likely to appear in homelessness data than in the wider population.

Oldham's JSNA findings suggests that Oldham's unemployment rate was 6.4% in February 2026, the highest in Greater Manchester and above England's 4.0%, while youth unemployment stood at 9.3%, again the highest in Greater Manchester and above the national rate of 5.7%.

Oldham's JSNA also found that healthy life expectancy has improved significantly compared to previous review period. However, Oldham's average remains 6.5 years lower for males, and 5.7 lower for females than the national average – showing inequalities in the borough which may unfortunately be further impacted by housing issues. [4]

This suggests the strongest prevention focus should be on younger and mid-life adults at risk of because of insecure work, low income, facing family exclusion, insecure housing and affordability pressures, while still recognising that older people who do become homeless may have more complex health or support needs.

[4] Oldham Council, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Oldham, available at: https://www.jsnaoldham.co.uk/ (accessed 5 June 2026).

4.8.3 Household type

Most homelessness demand in Oldham comes from single adults, and especially single men. The past five years have seen trends in presentations, particularly:

- Single men remain the largest group in both years shown, while their share of prevention cases fell from 32% to 26%.
- Single women show a similar, though less pronounced, shift: their share of relief cases stayed at 19%, while their share of prevention cases fell from 23% to 16%.
- Families remain important in both duties, especially single female households with dependants, who make up around one fifth of both prevention and relief cases.

This fits the wider pattern seen earlier in the review: the number of prevention duties has fallen, while relief duties have increased, meaning more households are approaching at crisis. The following also demonstrates demand from household type on the Housing Options service and suggests how it could be tailored in the future to meet the needs of applicants in Oldham.

Table 14: Households Types

	Relief Duty				Prevention Duty			
	2021/22		2024/25		2021/22		2024/25	
Single male plus dependents	9	*1%*	25	*2%*	16	*2%*	13	*3%*
Single female plus dependents	162	*22%*	244	*20%*	200	*23%*	97	*22%*
Single male	337	*45%*	556	*45%*	282	*32%*	115	*26%*
Single female	142	*19%*	230	*19%*	201	*23%*	70	*16%*
Single – other	0	*0%*	7	*1%*	1	*0%*	2	*0%*
Couple plus dependents	61	*8%*	114	*9%*	115	*13%*	67	*15%*
Couple	29	*4%*	42	*3%*	40	*5%*	41	*9%*
3+ adults plus dependents	8	*1%*	16	*1%*	17	*2%*	21	*5%*
All adult household	0	*0%*	5	*0%*	10	*1%*	11	*3%*
Not known	0	*0%*	0	*0%*	0	*0%*	0	*0%*

Overall, the clearest pressure is among single adults, especially single men, whose growing concentration in relief points to rising risk of crisis presentation, repeat homelessness and rough sleeping. See also Section 9: Temporary accommodation, where single men and lone-parent families are also prominent in TA use, showing the direct correlation between ineffective prevention and pressures in TA.

Learning points:

- Strengthen earlier prevention for single adults and lone-parent families, especially single men and single female with dependent, before they reach crisis point.
- Expand practical options for single people, including PRS access, shared housing, mediation and tenancy sustainment.
- Use household type trends to target groups most likely to present at relief stage for prevention activities.

4.8.4 Economic status

Oldham has a significant proportion of wards within the most deprived 10% or 20% in England on almost all of the measures within Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) – with Oldham's Overall IMD ranking falling from 19th to 11th most deprived out of 296 local authorities.

The following table shows the economic status of HRA applicants over the past 4 years. As can be seen, the number of applicants in in both full-time and part-time employment had declined over the past four years and those actively job-seeking increased in line with changes to Universal Credit.

Across the review period, the largest group was consistently those who were registered unemployed and steadily rising in proportion. This cohort saw 14.5% increase from pre-pandemic level.

The data also shows growing pressure among people with health-related barriers to work presenting as homeless. The proportion not working due to long-term illness or disability increased by 4.9% between 21/22 and 24/25.

The cohort 'Registered employed off work' and 'Working irregular hours' was introduced in 2022 after a technical update to the H-CLIC Data Specification by DLUHC (currently MHCLG). Oldham only has data for 23/24 and 24/25. This shows rising groups of people who are employed but off work and those working irregular, further point to the pressures created by insecure incomes and poor health outcomes.

Table 15: Economic Status

	2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024		2024-2025	
Total owed a prevention or relief duty[1]	1,630		1,976		2,200		1,676	
Full-time work	241	14.79 %	268	13.6 %	312	14.2 %	175	10.4 %
Part-time work	154	9.45 %	161	8.1%	149	6.8%	108	6.4%
Student / training	44	2.70 %	38	1.9%	34	1.5%	21	1.3%
Registered unemployed	633	38.83 %	678	34.3 %	772	35.1 %	712	42.5 %
Not registered but seeking work	52	3.19 %	55	2.8%	95	4.3%	71	4.2%

Not seeking work / at home			179	10.98 %	122	6.2%	153	7.0%	100	6.0%
Not working due to long-term illness / disability			175	10.74 %	268	13.6 %	336	15.3 %	265	15.8 %
Retired			30	1.84 %	33	1.7%	36	1.6%	26	1.6%
Registered employed off work	**Total Registered employed off work**				0	0.0%	44	2.0%	44	2.6%
	Of which:	due to ill health / disability [3]			0	0.0%	25	1.1%	26	1.6%
		on maternity/paternity / adoption leave [4]			0	0.0%	19	0.9%	18	1.1%
Working irregular hours [5]					0	0.0%	80	3.6%	67	4.0%
	Other		102	6.26 %	285	14.4 %	107	4.9%	50	3.0%
	Not known[2]		20	1.23 %	68	3.4%	82	3.7%	37	2.2%

Overall, the picture is one of homelessness demand being driven less by temporary income shocks alone and more by a mix of unemployment, poor health and weak financial resilience.

According to the Oldham JSNA in 2026, Unemployment stands at 6.4% and Youth Unemployment currently stands at 9.3%. Oldham has the highest claimant rate in GM and a rate higher than England in both categories.[5] These cohorts present challenges in terms of securing accommodation that is compounded by the lack of accommodation available within the boundaries of the shared room rate.

Learning Points:

- Prevention work should be more closely linked to employment, welfare advice and income maximisation, especially for households who are unemployed or in insecure work.
- The rise in households not working due to long-term illness or disability shows the need for stronger links between housing, health and support services.
- More households are reaching the service without the income needed to access or sustain housing, so the strategy should strengthen debt advice, affordability checks, discretionary support and tenancy sustainment.

[5] Oldham Council, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Oldham, available at: https://www.jsnaoldham.co.uk/ (accessed 5 June 2026).

4.9 Geographical trends

Analysing geographical trends helps to identify where homelessness is most concentrated across the borough, so that prevention activity, outreach, partnership working and wider housing support can be targeted more effectively. It also helps to test whether homelessness demand is linked to wider structural inequalities such as deprivation, poor health, insecure housing and poverty, and therefore informs a more place-based and evidence-led homelessness strategy.

The 2021–25 review shows that homelessness presentations are concentrated in a number of areas, particularly in and around central Oldham. At ward level, the highest presenting areas were Coldhurst (1,572), Alexandra (1,423), St Mary's (1,286), Waterhead (1,237) and Werneth (1,235).

At neighbourhood/postcode sector level, the highest presenting areas included Hathershaw (509), Coldhurst North East (466), North East Werneth (438), West Werneth (421) and Clarksfield/Greenacres (412).

Figure 10: Areas of Highest Presentation by Neighbourhood

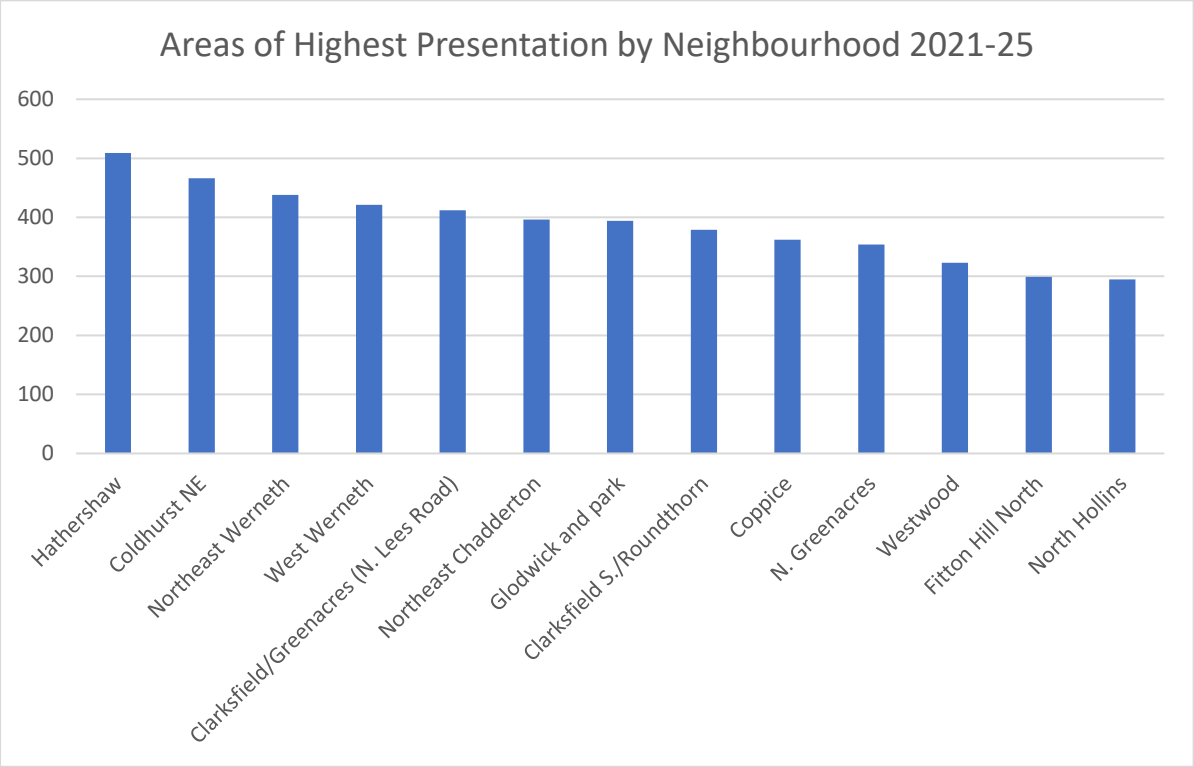


Figure 11: Areas of Highest Presentations by Ward

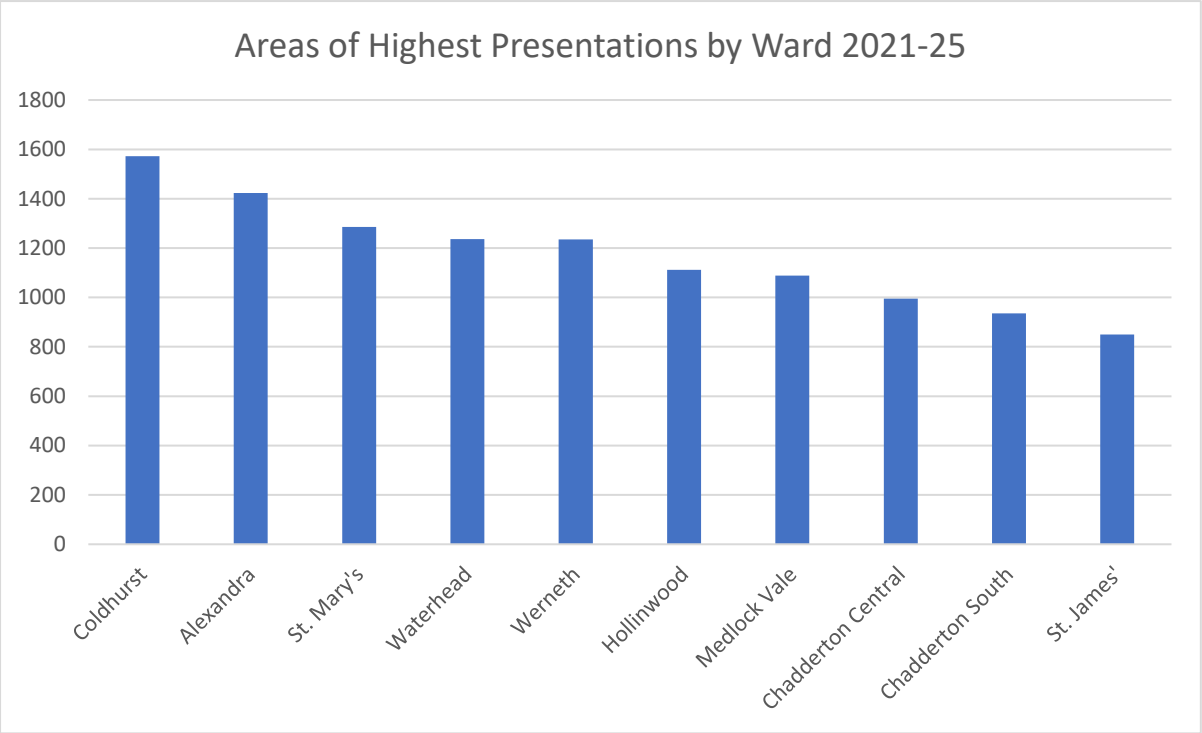


Table 16: List of Highest Presenting Postcodes 2021-25

Postcode	Number of Presentations	Neighbourhood 2019 Name	Ward name	LSOA2021	Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2025 Decile
OL9	127	S. Chadderton (Morrison's/M.E.N.)	Chadderton South	E01005346	6
OL9	87	West Werneth	Werneth	E01034232	1
OL8	66	North Hollins	Hollinwood	E01005381	1
OL4	41	Clarksfield S./Roundthorn	St. Mary's	E01005430	1
OL4	41	N. Greenacres	Waterhead	E01005448	1
OL9	38	Upper Westwood	Coldhurst	E01005353	1
OL4	38	N. Greenacres	Waterhead	E01005448	1
OL8	35	North Hollins	Hollinwood	E01005378	2
OL4	33	Clarksfield S./Roundthorn	St. Mary's	E01005431	1
OL8	32	Northeast Werneth	Werneth	E01034233	1

These patterns are closely aligned with deprivation. The highest presenting wards and neighbourhoods are concentrated in areas that fall within the top 10% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally, while the lowest levels of presentation are found in less deprived areas such as Saddleworth North and South, and other outer parts of the borough.

Compared with the previous 2016–21 review, the broad pattern remains consistent, but the concentration of presentations in central parts of the borough appears to have intensified.

Learning Points

- Homelessness presentations are concentrated in a small number of high-deprivation neighbourhoods, particularly in and around central Oldham, and this pattern has remained consistent across both review periods. The 2026 Strategy should therefore target prevention and early intervention resources most strongly in these areas.

- The highest presenting postcode (OL9) is where the Victoria Hotel Oldham asylum hotel is located, which helps explain the exceptionally high level of presentation in that location and reinforces the need for targeted planning around asylum move-on, refugee integration and homelessness prevention in the town centre.

- Excluded from the graphs and tables above is the postcode OL1 accounting for 471 presentations and represent the Civic Centre / Union Street area. This is likely to reflect a portion of rough sleeping activity, the concentration of homelessness services, and applicants presenting only once they have reached the point of crisis.

- The persistence of high demand in the borough's most deprived neighbourhoods suggests that homelessness prevention should not be viewed in isolation from wider inequalities. Housing, health, social care, welfare support and employment services need to be better aligned in these areas.

- The evidence in this review supports the development of place-based integration in Oldham, such as the Live Well model piloted in areas like Salford and Tameside & Glossop, exemplifies this by:

    - Supporting people who fall between primary and secondary mental health services.
    - Offering multi-disciplinary, person-centred support.
    - Enabling self-referral, flexible access, and recovery-focused care.
    - Connecting individuals to housing, employment, benefits, and social networks.
    - Reducing system "bouncing" and crisis escalation.

- This review would suggest for a deeper dive on the mapping of services and presentation data to align services with demands and outcomes. This will lead to better service planning and utilisation and contribute to further development of the place-based approach in the 2026 strategy.

4.10 Customer groups

As part of the Housing Authorities duty to provide or secure the provision of advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness, section 179(2) of the 1996 Housing Act states that housing authorities must design advice and information services to meet the needs of people within their district including, in particular, the needs of the following groups:

(a) people released from prison or youth detention accommodation;

(b) care leavers;

(c) former members of the regular armed forces;

(d) victims of domestic abuse;

(e) people leaving hospital;

(f) people suffering from a mental illness or impairment; and,

(g) any other group that the authority identifies as being at particular risk of homelessness in their district.

While legislation requires housing authorities to consider groups who are at particular risk of homelessness, the wider prevention approach must not become limited to specialist cohorts alone. The evidence in this review suggests that Oldham needs a two-level approach: first, a universal prevention offer that helps the broad range of households facing homelessness because of poverty, family exclusion, insecure housing and affordability pressures; and second, tailored pathways for groups with higher levels of vulnerability or statutory priority. This approach will help ensure that the strategy remains responsive both to the largest customer groups and to those whose needs are more complex and require specialist intervention.

The data on support needs already outlined in this Review has highlighted that several of these groups are at particular risk of homelessness, and this section explores this – and the services currently available to them – further.

4.10.1 People released from prison or youth detention accommodation

<table>
<tr><td>Numbers presenting under HRA 2021-25</td><td><table>
<tr><th>Referral Agency</th><th>Count of Duty to Refer</th></tr>
<tr><td>Probation Service</td><td>263</td></tr>
<tr><td>Adult Secure Estate (Prison)</td><td>111</td></tr>
<tr><td>Youth Secure Estate</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>375</td></tr>
<tr><td>Count of Support Needs</td><td>229</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Developments under 2021-25 Strategy</td><td>Launch of CAS3 – Community Accommodation Service (Tier 3) in Oct 2021 to support prison leavers with short-term accommodation and resettlement, strengthening homelessness prevention on release and reducing reoffending.

The Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AfEO) is a UK government-funded initiative in Oldham designed to help prison leavers at risk of homelessness secure private rented housing. It covers rental deposits, landlord incentives, and dedicated tenancy support officers to help with the transition. It enables move-on into private rented sector for ex-offenders.

Workforce development - creation of key roles to respond to rising demand from this customer group:
Dedicated Homelessness Prevention Officer (HPO) for prison releases
Move-On Support Officer (MOSO) to drive housing outcomes
Bond Scheme Officer (AfEO)</td></tr>
</table>

	Implementation of partnership approach with probation services to identify accommodation pathways for individuals leaving prison or approved premises. Meetings occur every fortnight with strategic oversight.
Current services	CAS3 service had 2 capacity uplifts between 2021-25, bedspaces increased from 11 to 19, including women's provision, with funding secured to December 2027. CAS3 integration into a formalised move-on pathway led to increase move-on from CAS3 to A Bed Every Night (ABEN). Continued delivery of AfEO in 2024-25 with commitment to maintain the same provision level.
Gaps identified	Specialist supported accommodation for ex-offenders excluded from supported accommodation. Despite increased specialised support, national early release schemes since 2024 have significantly increased demand. Some prison leavers still leave prison without any accommodation in place. Limited move-on options for ex-sex offenders and ex-arson offenders. Long-term housing pathways and preventive system for ex-offenders that tackles persistent issues - recalls to prison, non-engagement / behaviour issues and refusal of housing offers Incomplete data collection on support needs data as agency data far exceeds support needs identified.

4.10.2 Care leavers

Numbers presenting under HRA 2021-25	Count of Duty to Refer 197[6] Count of support needs 57[7]
Developments under 2021-25 Strategy	Complementary secondary regulations came into effect in July 2025, completely exempting care leavers under 25 from local connection and residency tests when applying for social housing across England. £200m has been made available through the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) in 2023. Support is given to a) Those with the longest histories of rough sleeping and most complex needs b) Young people (18-25) at risk of homelessness to help prevent them from rough sleeping.

[6] Figure extracted from Children Social Care Duty to Refer figures. This figure is likely to be overestimating the number of care leavers within this cohort.

[7] Based on presentations recorded with 'Care Leaver' as a support need.

	Oldham Council is a part of the Greater Manchester Care Leavers Guarantee since 2024. Homeless Young People Protocol is updated in July 2025. The Leaving Care Pledge signed between First Choice Homes Oldham and Oldham Council in November 2025. This pledge focuses on supporting young people transitioning out of the care system into independent tenancies.
Current services	As a part of the GM Care Leavers Guarantee, Oldham Council has agreed to provide the following support: • practical help including managing a tenancy, paying bills and budgeting can be provided; • All care leavers will be exempt from paying council tax; • All care leavers aged 18-21 are entitled to a £3000 housing allowance when they move into their own home. Under the Homeless Young People Protocol, care leavers who are aged 18-21 are automatically in priority need, as are those who have dependent children in their household. Fortnightly partnership meetings between aftercare and housing to monitor active caseloads and plan for young people moving on Joint assessments in place for young people leaving care and those presenting as homeless. Tailored information is available on Oldham Council's website
Gaps identified	Joint commissioning of accommodation services to be explored. Presentation data for care leavers is incomplete due to inconsistent recording of support needs and referral agencies.

4.10.3 Former members of the regular armed forces

Numbers presenting under HRA 2021-25	Count of Duty to Refer 0 Count of support needs 11
Developments under 2021-25 Strategy	In 2022, Armed Forces Covenant became legal duty. Allocation of Housing Regulations was amended in 2024 to exempt all former members of the regular armed forces from local connection and residency rules when applying for social housing. Oldham Council, as part of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, renewed our commitment to the Armed Forces Community Covenant in February 2025. The First Choice Homes Oldham (FCHO) Armed Forces Covenant pledge (2018) is upheld.
Current services	Under the Armed Forces Community Covenant, Oldham Armed Forces Partnership meets regularly to provide targeted support and casework, specifically handling welfare and housing cases for veterans. In June 2025, Oldham joined the "VALOUR" network, a pilot scheme across the North of England aimed at helping veterans access tailored support. Tailored information is available on Oldham Council's website.
Gaps identified	Due to low numbers of presentations and responses via consultation this group have not been identified as a priority for further service development, but this will be kept under review as part of the Strategy's updates.

4.10.4 Victims of domestic abuse

Numbers presenting under HRA 2021-25	Count of support needs 1219 Reason for Homelessness 2582
Developments under 2021-25 Strategy	Under the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), victims of domestic abuse receive an automatic "priority need" for housing, a broadened definition of abuse, and new duties for local authorities to provide safe accommodation. Greater Manchester Gender-Based Violence Strategy (2022-2032) and the 2024-26 Delivery

	Plan priorities Housing integration into homelessness systems. Oldham's Domestic Abuse Strategy (2022–2024) brought increase in safe accommodation and housing options, better support pathways and stronger multi-agency coordination.
Current services	Under the GM strategy and delivery plan, now operate a housing reciprocal scheme. Survivors can be rehoused outside their borough for safety since 2024. Ongoing joint working between Independent Domestic Violence Association (IDVA) service, Housing Options and housing providers to support applicants experiencing domestic abuse. Joint training was completed in 2026. Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards includes representation from Housing Authority and housing providers. Specialist support for NRPF survivors, ethnically minoritised groups (e.g. Lotus Hub), LGBTQ+ and disabled survivors.
Gaps identified	Specialist refuge accommodation for male domestic violence victims. Older male children of a female domestic abuse victim are not currently allowed into female-only specialist refuge accommodation.

4.10.5 People leaving hospital

Numbers presenting under HRA 2021-25	**Referral Agency** / **Count of Referrals** Hospital A&E or in-patient 115 Mental Health Service - Acute in-patient 8 Total 123
Developments under 2021-25 Strategy	ICB funded step-down accommodation GMMOP provides specialist support accommodation for residents moving on from acute metal health wards.
Current services	Specialist Homeless Prevention Officer role established supporting patients at risk of homelessness on hospital discharge. 5 spaces for move-on from acute mental health wards provided through GMMOP.

	People leaving hospital and at risk of homelessness are not in priority need. 93% successful move-on rate for this customer group.
Gaps identified	GMMOP step-down accommodation currently not available to patients from non-mental health wards. Data likely underrepresent the number of patients stepping down from Mental Health Service.

4.10.6 People suffering from a mental illness or impairment

Numbers presenting under HRA 2021-2025	**Count of support needs** 929
Developments under 2021-25 Strategy	ICB funded step-down accommodation GMMOP provides specialist support accommodation for residents moving on from acute metal health wards.
Current services	Customer handled through GMMOP are high in complexity. 60% of customers accommodated from service inception have co-occurring mental health and substance abuse. A weekly GMMOP meeting to take a case conference approach to applicants at risk of safeguarding issues Workforce specialisation including: • Dual Diagnosis worker (joint funded with Public Health) based at Turning Point • Drop-ins at ABEN Night Shelter, supported accommodation, Street Angels
Gaps identified	Services continue to struggle to meet the volume of need from applicants with mental health issues. Aside from specialist provision within the Housing Options team, appropriate psychologically informed training could be an option to pursue through the 2026 Strategy. No specialist support for lower-level mental health support needs.

4.10.7 Any other group that the authority identifies as being at particular risk of homelessness in their district.

This review has identified that the following support needs and groups of individuals have a particularly significant representation in Oldham which requires an appropriate response in the 2026 Strategy:

- Refugees and other persons from abroad
- Persons with multiple disadvantages – e.g. mental health problems and substance misuse issues (drug or alcohol dependencies)
- Jobseekers

A review by the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) Team jointly commissioned by Oldham and Rochdale Councils also identified a need for support for single people who were 'sofa surfing' and at risk of rough sleeping. The RSI Team found that only 31% of people referred to its service were found to be actively rough sleeping; the rest were either could not be located or were in these unstable lodging arrangements.

Learning Points

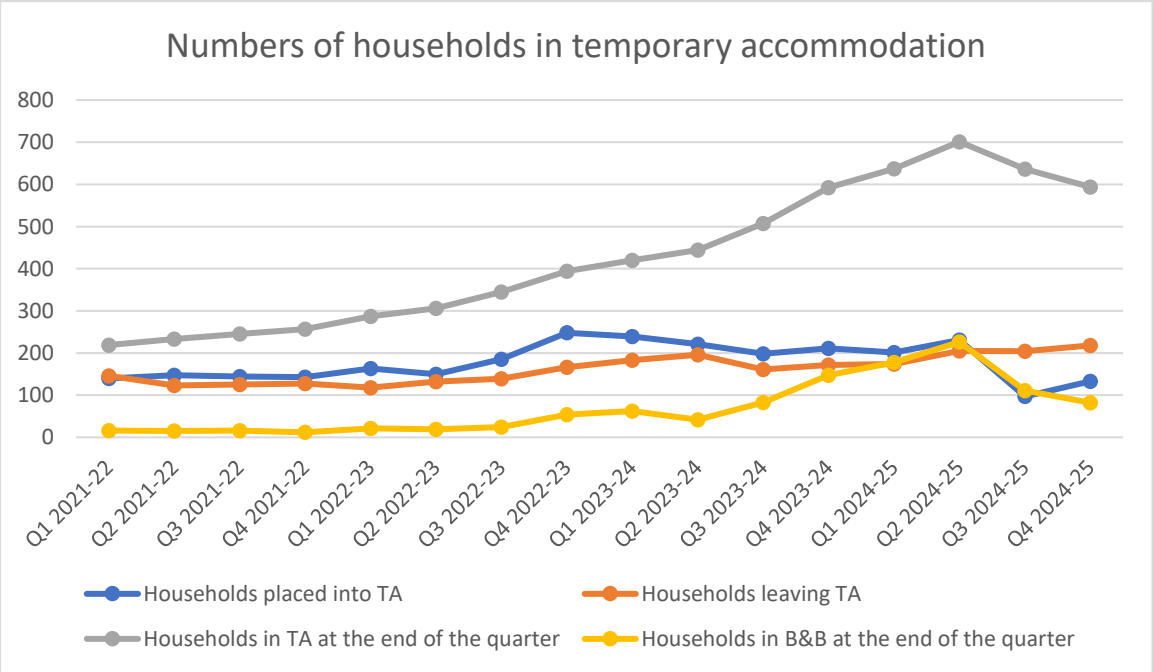
- How can services better prevent single applicants who are currently 'sofa surfing' or leaving Home Office accommodation from becoming future rough sleepers.

5. Temporary accommodation

5.1 Numbers in temporary accommodation

As homelessness applications have increased, so have temporary accommodation placements. A combination of increase demand and restricted workforce capacity saw the rise of households in temporary accommodation between 2021-2025 – with numbers peaking at the end of Q2 2024-25. Positively however the Council has proactively been reducing its use of temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast placements, with no families with children living in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than 6 weeks as of April 2026.

Figure 12: Numbers of households in temporary accommodation



Temporary accommodation (TA) usage has decreased significantly over the review period, with overall numbers falling by 17.4% from 603 (31 December 2024) to 498 (31 December 2025), contrasting with a 5% national increase. The number of families in TA reduced by 16.2% (327 to 274), while single households fell by 18.7% (276 to 224); both trends run counter to national rises of 5.9% and 3.5% respectively. These reductions indicate strong local performance in reducing reliance on TA across all household types.

An updated Temporary Accommodation Allocations Policy is expected to be published by Autumn 2026 to address and improve the supply, procurement, quality, specification, suitability, location and sufficiency of TA's.

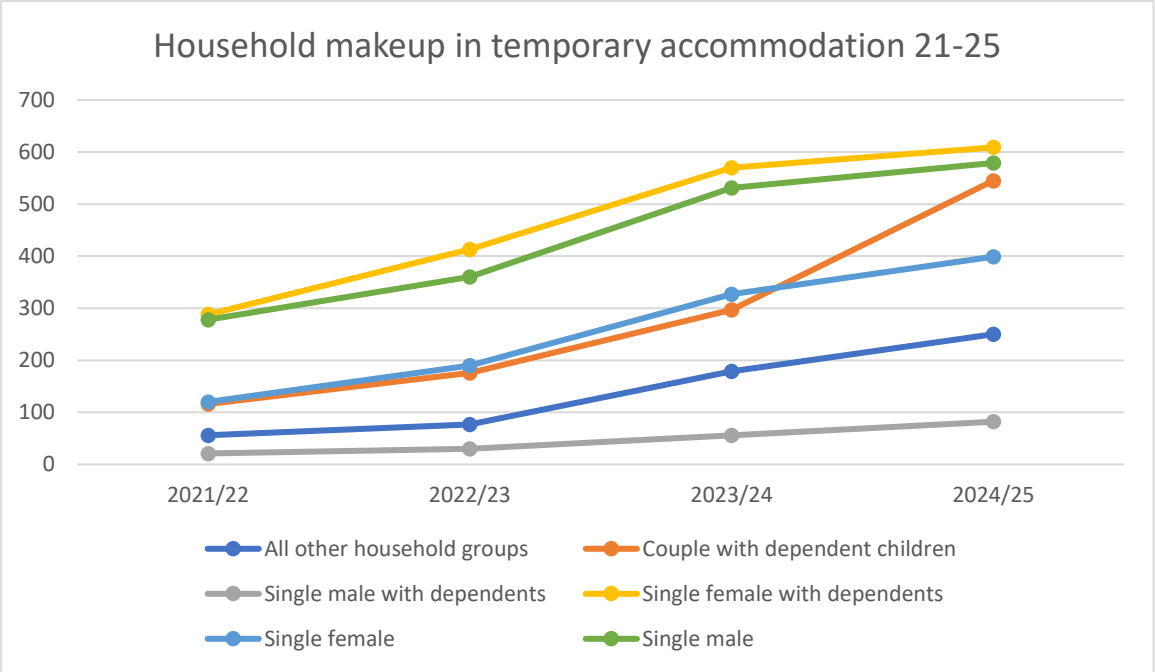
5.2 Household makeup in temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation use also points to where prevention interventions are inadequate. The review notes that single men, lone female parents and couples with dependent children have significantly increased in temporary accommodation, broadly matching the pattern seen in the relief data. The main reasons households enter temporary accommodation are domestic abuse and family or friends no longer being willing or able to accommodate. Households leaving the private rented sector appear less likely to need temporary accommodation, which suggests there is often more time to intervene successfully before homelessness occurs. – further emphasising the importance of early intervention and prevention.

Table 17: Household makeup in temporary accommodation

		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
Total number of households in TA[1,2]		880	**1,247**	1964	2469	6560
Couple with dependent children		116	**176**	297	545	1134
		13.2%	14.1%	15.1%	22.1%	17.3%
Single parent with dependent children	**Male**	21	**30**	56	82	189
		2.4%	2.4%	2.9%	3.3%	2.9%
	Female	288	**413**	570	609	1880
		32.7%	33.1%	29.0%	24.7%	28.7%
	Other / gender not known	0	**0**	0	0	0
		0	**0**	0	0	0
Single adult	**Male**	278	**360**	531	579	1748
		31.6%	28.9%	27.0%	23.5%	26.6%
	Female	120	**190**	327	399	1036
		13.6%	15.2%	16.6%	16.2%	15.8%
	Other / gender not known	1	**1**	4	5	11
		0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
All other household types		56	**77**	179	250	562
		6.4%	6.2%	9.1%	10.1%	8.6%

Figure 13: Household makeup in temporary accommodation



Learning Points

- Reduce TA demand by intervening earlier in cases of family exclusion and domestic abuse.
- Strengthen prevention pathways for single adults and lone-parent families, who are most likely to end up in TA.
- Improve move-on options from TA so households do not stay there longer than necessary.

6. Duty to Refer

The Homelessness Reduction Act introduced a new Duty to Refer which applies to specified public bodies – although other non-specified organisations can choose to refer on a voluntary basis. Under this duty these bodies must refer, with consent, any applicant who is homeless or threatened with homelessness to the local housing authority. These public bodies are as follows, including the number of referrals received between 1st April 2021- 31st March 2025:

Table 18: Referral received under the Duty to Refer

Duty to Refer	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	% Total
Adult Secure Estate (Prison)	24	37	28	22	12.3%
Youth Secure Estate	0	1	0	0	0.1%
Probation Service	41	65	93	64	29.2%
Hospital A&E, Urgent Treatment Centres or in-patient care	27	42	37	9	12.7%
Mental Health in-patient care	1	0	5	10	1.8%

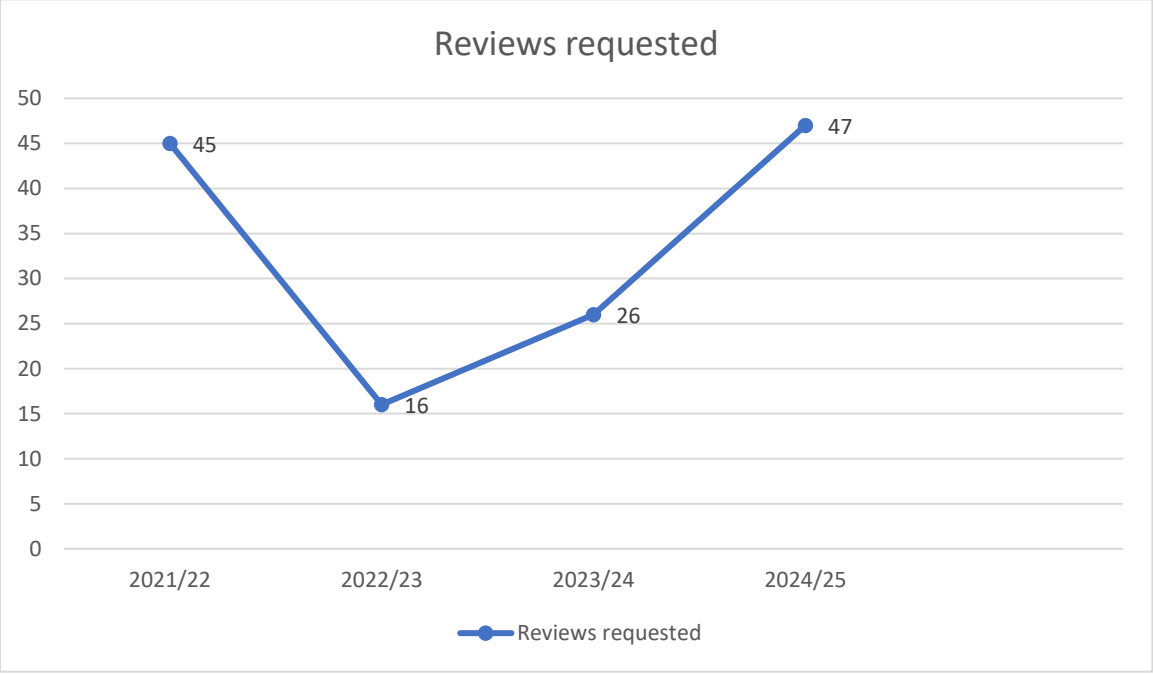
Jobcentre Plus	22	40	18	27	11.9%
Adult Social Services	22	19	20	20	9.0%
Children's Social Services	52	45	58	42	21.8%
Children's Early Help Services/Children's centres	1	0	6	4	1.2%
Nil Recourse Team	0	0	0	0	0%
Secretary of State for defence in relation to members of the armed forces	0	0	0	0	0%

The lack of referrals from youth offending agencies could be because referrals for such young people are typically made by Social Workers from the Aftercare Team under existing protocols in Oldham and would therefore be captured under Social Services Authorities figures.

7. Reviews

The HRA introduced several new points of legislation where applicants could ask for a review; as a result, the number of reviews undertaken by senior officers in Oldham has increased over the Review period.

Figure 14: Reviews requested



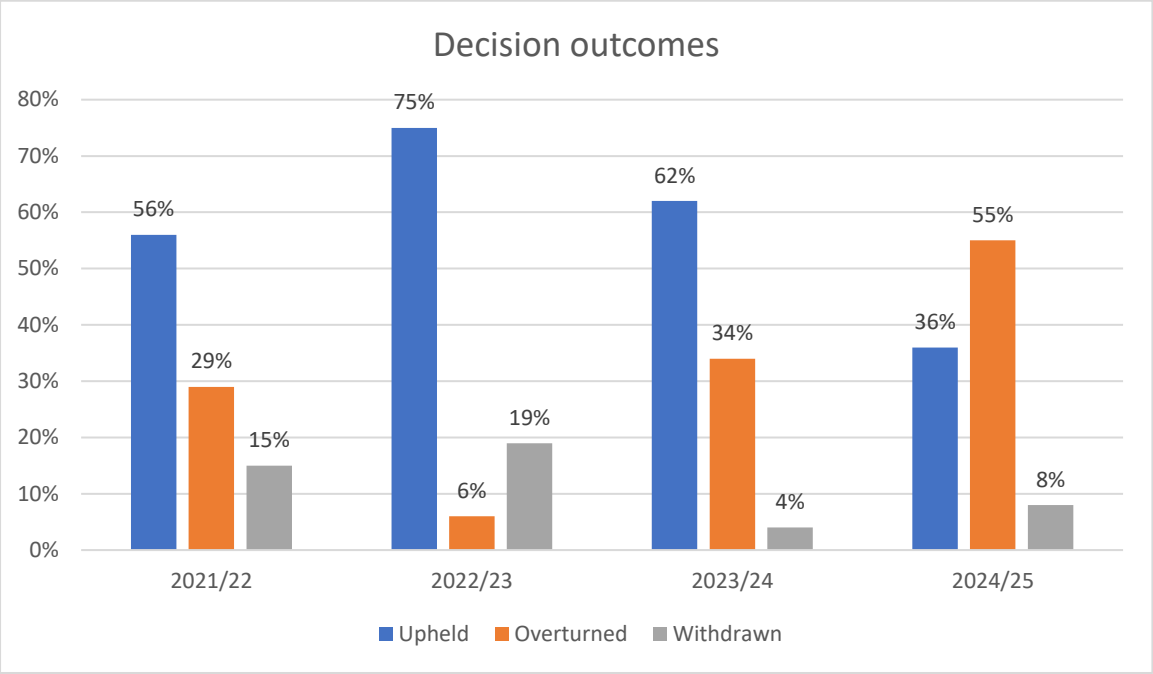
Reviews requested have increased between 22/23 and 24/25, likely due to the increase in homelessness applications. Review outcomes show increase in overturned outcomes, showing need for more robust decision making to ensure resources and applicant expectations are well managed.

Review requests are projected to fall – B&B in households for more than 6 weeks drove the number of reviews requested in 2024/25.

During this review period, there was one court appeal, which highlighted issues in the application of the EU Withdrawal Agreement to homelessness eligibility on a national level; while Oldham's review

decision was made within statutory guidance in force at the time, national guidance has since been amended following subsequent case law and related concerns in this area.

Figure 15: Review outcomes



8. Economic factors and housing market data

8.1 Welfare Reform

Between 2021 and 2025, welfare policy continued to shape homelessness risk through a combination of reduced income protection, rising housing costs and growing administrative pressure on claimants. In practice, the period saw households facing a weaker safety net at the same time as access to affordable housing became more difficult. Policy changes include:

- removal of the £20 per week Universal Credit uplift in autumn 2021.
- Reduced Universal Credit taper rate from 63% to 55% and increased work allowances.
- reliance on temporary cost-of-living measures, including the Household Support Fund, which helped households with essentials such as food and energy but did not address longer-term affordability pressures.
- Increase in Administrative Earnings Threshold for Universal Credit in 2024

Across the period as a whole, welfare policy placed a stronger emphasis on work progression, conditionality and administrative compliance, while housing support did not consistently keep pace with rent inflation.

For homelessness services, the cumulative effect was to increase the risk of rent shortfalls, arrears, affordability pressures and financial instability, particularly for households already affected by unemployment, ill-health or insecure work.

8.2 Local Housing Allowance

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is the rate of housing benefit – although usually paid via Universal Credit – that can be claimed against a private rented sector property, depending on household size.

During this review period, rates were frozen at their 2020 level from 2021/22 to 2023/24, before being reset to the 30th percentile of local market rents from April 2024. However, this improvement was short-lived: the rates applied from April 2025 were held at the same cash level as 2024/25, despite further rent increases.

For Oldham, the practical effect is that LHA continues to leave many low-income households unable to meet their rent in full, contribute to arrears, tenancy breakdown and an inability to secure a new tenancy to prevent or relieve homelessness.

Overall, the evidence from 2021–2025 suggests that LHA remains an important but incomplete homelessness prevention tool. The temporary increase in 2024 eased some pressure, but the continued gap between benefit support and market rents means that homelessness prevention in the 2026 strategy needs to focus on including income maximisation, debt and affordability advice, targeted use of discretionary support, landlord engagement, and development of lower-cost but sustainable private rented options.

Table 19: Local Housing Allowance Rates, Oldham

Oldham and Rochdale LHA rates	
Number of rooms	Rate
Share room or bedsit	£79.36
1 bedroom	£109.32
2 bedrooms	£132.91
3 bedrooms	£159.95
4 bedrooms	£218.63

Note: the rate that applies depends on the claimant's postcode/BRMA. Parts of Oldham such as Failsworth fall within the Manchester LHA area, where rates are generally higher.

8.3 Housing market data

A comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment for Oldham was carried out in 2024 and used to inform the Housing Strategy. Key findings were that whilst house prices were below the national average, there was – as with many areas – a significant shortfall in the supply of larger homes (3+ bedrooms). The assessment also evidence that the private rented sector now plays a much larger role in the borough but remains difficult for many households to access because of rent levels, quality concerns and low incomes.

The Housing Needs Assessment also incorporated a household survey which found that approximately 53% of households stated to have a repair problem and around 52% report to have damp or mould problems in their property. Problems with affordability – a theme running throughout this review – were cited as one of the main reasons for not addressing the repair problem or not being able to move to a different property.

8.4 Social and affordable housing

Social and affordable housing remains central to meeting housing need in Oldham, particularly for households who cannot access the housing market.

The Housing Needs Assessment shows that social housing in Oldham is under sustained pressure from high levels of need, affordability constraints in the wider market, and limited supply of suitable homes. Social housing continues to play a vital role both in homelessness prevention and as a route into settled accommodation. However, unless supply increases and the mix of homes better reflect identified need, pressure on the homelessness system is likely to remain significant.

The table below shows a key performance metrics of affordable housing pipelines available in the borough according to the Housing Needs Assessment 2024.

Table 20: Affordable Housing Pipelines in Oldham[8]

Measure	**Amount**
Total affordable housing units	20,367
General needs units	17,774
Supported housing units	374
Housing for older people	2,219
Low-cost home ownership units	351
Net annual affordable housing needs	669 homes
Average annual affordable completions over the last five years	146.6 homes
Recommended affordable tenure spl*it*	65% social/affordable rent; 35% affordable home ownership

Allocation Policy has been revised in 2026 and marks a shift to a more tightly targeted, needs-led approach, restricting the Housing Needs Register to applicants with a recognised housing need and prioritising scarce social housing for those in the most urgent need.

The following provides an overview of Allocations activity between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2025.

What the data tells us is that only 808 properties were advertised between 2021-2025, but there were 5,678 households registered for rehousing as of 31/03/2025. Larger, family size homes were particularly scarce, with demand far outstripping supply and overcrowding a particular issue in Oldham.

[8] Oldham Council (2024) Oldham Local Housing Needs Assessment 2024. Final report. Oldham: Oldham Council. Available at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5590/local_housing_needs_assessment_2024.pdf (Accessed: 5 June 2026).

Table 21: Social Housing Properties Advertised via Choice Based Lettings 2021-2025

Bed size	Number received
1 bed	459
2 bed	256
3 bed	78
4 bed or more	5
Total	808

Table 22: Live Housing Register applications as at 31/03/2025

Count of Bedroom Need		**Band**			
Bedroom Need	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**Total**
studio	663	638	627	90	2021
1 bedroom	28	123	61	13	225
2 bedrooms	272	790	412	68	1542
3 bedrooms	214	813	260	40	1330
4 bedrooms	53	297	62	12	424
5 bedrooms	13	77	13	2	105
6 bedrooms	7	17	1	2	27
7 bedrooms	1	1			2
8 bedrooms		1			1
9 or more bedrooms	1				1
Grand Total	**1252**	**2757**	**1436**	**227**	**5678**

8.5 Supported Housing

Supported housing provides accommodation alongside tailored support for individuals with complex or additional needs, helping them to develop the skills required to live independently. Within the homelessness system, it plays a critical role in both preventing homelessness and supporting recovery by offering stable, supported environments that reduce the risk of repeat homelessness. It also supports system flow by enabling move-on from temporary accommodation and reducing pressure on crisis services.

Under the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, local authorities in England are required to develop Local Supported Housing Strategies, with the first strategies due to be published

by 31 March 2027. This will be a key factor in developing a supported accommodation offer within the borough.

8.6 Specialist housing

Specialist housing includes tailored accommodation such as shelters for people sleeping rough and refuge provision for survivors of domestic abuse, designed to respond to acute and immediate risk. Within the homelessness system, it provides safe, crisis-focused environments alongside targeted support, enabling individuals to stabilise, address trauma, and begin pathways toward longer-term housing. It also plays a vital role in protecting high-risk groups while relieving pressure on emergency and temporary accommodation services.

Our current supply of specialist housing include:

Table 23: Oldham's specialist housing

Accommodation Type	Capacity	Primary Customer Group
A Bed A Night (ABEN)	33	Individuals sleeping rough or at immediate risk of rough sleeping, particularly in winter
Specialist Housing for Domestic Abuse	50	Survivors of domestic abuse requiring safe, secure accommodation and specialist support
CAS-3	19	Prison leavers at risk of homelessness, requiring short-term accommodation on release
GMMOP	5	Individuals being discharged from acute mental health wards who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness

8.7 Private Sector Housing

The private rented sector has become an increasingly important part of Oldham's housing market and now plays a significant role in accommodating households who are unable to access owner occupation or social housing. Private renting accounts for 18.0% of households in the borough, compared with 8.7% in 2001. This reflects a substantial long-term increase in the importance of the sector and confirms that it is now a key element of the wider housing system.

However, the Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) shows that the private rented sector is also associated with growing affordability pressures and poorer housing outcomes for some households – placing even entry-level private rented housing beyond the reach of many low-income households.

Table 24: Private Rented Sector Affordability and Quality Pressures - Comparison

Measure	LHNA 2019	LHNA 2024
Private renting as share of households	13.6%	18.0%
Lower quartile private rent (per month)	£451	£594

Median private rent (per month)	£472	£724
Income needed for lower quartile private rent (per year)	£21,648	£28,512
Income needed for median private rent (per year)	£23,904	£34,752
Private renters reporting repair problems	53.4%	52.6%
Private renter repair cases involving damp or mould	62.1%	51.8%
Private renting households with income below £18,200	59.5%	61.4%

These pressures are particularly significant when considered alongside Local Housing Allowance levels. The assessment found a gap between benefit support and lower quartile private rents for most household types. In practice, this means that many households reliant on benefits face a shortfall even when seeking the cheapest available accommodation in the sector. This has important implications for homelessness prevention and relief, as it limits the ability of the private rented sector to function as an affordable and sustainable route out of homelessness for many residents.

The quality of private sector accommodation within the sector is also a concern. More than half of private renters reported repair problems in their home, and damp or mould was one of the most frequently reported issues. The sector also has relatively high levels of dissatisfaction with property condition compared with owner occupation. This suggests that while the private rented sector is essential in meeting housing need, it also presents risks in relation to poor standards, tenancy sustainment, and the suitability of accommodation.

The profile of private renters in Oldham reinforces the importance of the sector to households experiencing housing insecurity. They are characterised by the following:

- Around 61.4% of private renting households have incomes below £18,200 per year
- A wide range of household types, including single people, couples with children, lone parents, and some older households.
- Tenancy lengths are often short, with more than a third of private renters having lived in their home for less than three years.

This points to a degree of instability within the sector and increases the risk of repeat homelessness where tenancies are not sustained.

The evidence suggests that the private rented sector will continue to be an essential part of Oldham's housing offer, but it cannot be relied upon as a consistently affordable or stable solution for households at risk of homelessness without further support. Its contribution to homelessness prevention and relief depends on the availability of lower-cost homes, stronger landlord engagement, improved property standards, and financial measures that address the gap between rents and incomes. Consideration should also continue to be given to measures that improve regulation, management standards, and accessibility within the sector.

8.8 Temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation provides short-term housing for households who are homeless and have an immediate need for a place to stay while longer-term solutions are secured. It is a critical component of the homelessness system, ensuring that individuals and families are not left without

shelter during crisis, while also enabling local authorities to fulfil their statutory duties. Effective use of temporary accommodation supports system stability but requires careful management to minimise length of stay and avoid reliance on unsuitable placements.

Temporary accommodation in Oldham is procured based on demand. The 2026 Temporary Accommodation Allocations Policy will explore in more detail the supply, procurement, quality, specification, suitability, location and sufficiency of TA's.

9. Service mapping

9.1 Service provision

Service Mapping is key to understanding existing partnership within the borough to integrate place-based prevention and pre-prevention work.

Oldham benefits from a strong voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector backed by registered charity Action Together who provide free training, funding advice and other support. The Council, other statutory services and housing providers also provide a range of services within local communities. For a full list of services see Appendix A.

These are the services available to Oldham Residents as of June 2026.

Table 25: Oldham homelessness-related services grouped by needs category

Needs	Main services / routes in	What the category includes	Key strengths & gaps
1. Immediate crisis support and essentials	Oldham Council Crisis and Resilience Fund Oldham Foodbank UKEFF Action Together / Household Support Fund partners Welcome Project/Oldham Unity / local clothing and essentials support. Salvation Army provision The Welcome Centre Bread and Butter Thing	Emergency food energy support basic household items community meals emergency essentials	Oldham appears to have a relatively broad immediate hardship response, with a mixture of council, community and voluntary sector provision that can reduce immediate risk and stabilise households. Provision is mainly short-term crisis relief rather than a housing solution. Access may depend on vouchers, referrals or knowledge of local community providers.
2. Homelessness access, emergency accommodation and rough sleeping	Oldham Council homelessness route Out-of-hours homelessness route Rough sleeping / outreach	Statutory homelessness access Emergency response	There is a visible core homelessness and rough sleeping route, including emergency response and accommodation pathways. The mapping also identify specialist

	A Bed Every Night / Depaul UK drop-ins and day provision domestic abuse refuge routed separately under SafeNet RESS for single people with restricted eligibility.	rough sleeping support day-centre style support specialist restricted eligibility support for some groups	pathways such as Depaul / ABEN and RESS. The evidence suggests that restricted eligibility provision appears more developed for single people than for families and move-on / lower-threshold support for people with complex needs is less visible than crisis access.
3. Prevention, tenancy sustainment and housing-related support	Tenancy Relations Service private rented sector support generic floating support KeyRing Oldham Positive Steps Family Help Early Break Pathfinder Floating Support for young people Mediation routes where housing breakdown is linked to wider family or tenancy conflict	Support to prevent eviction sustain tenancies, resolve landlord-tenant issues improve independent living skills, reduce family conflict and intervene before crisis.	This category offers the strongest opportunity for upstream prevention and shows that Oldham has elements of this infrastructure in place, including youth floating support, independent living support and some tenancy- and relationship-based mediation. The clearest weakness is the potential lack of early, lower-threshold crisis mediation and floating support, particularly for low-level disputes, repeated churn and people who do not yet meet formal thresholds.
4. Income, debt, welfare and cost-of-living support	National Debtline StepChange Citizens Advice CAP MoneyPlus Money Wellness Debt Advice Foundation UKEFF Oldham Welfare Rights Service Energy hardship funds	Debt advice, benefits advice budgeting support hardship funding energy grants welfare rights income-maximisation support.	Debt and welfare support available suggests a reasonably broad advice ecosystem, combining local welfare support with regional and national debt advice routes. This is important for homelessness prevention where arrears, unaffordable housing costs or reduced income are drivers. The main issue may be navigation and fragmentation, as the offer spans national charities, local advice and community support rather than a single joined-up front door.

	Local food and welfare support		
5. Mental health, wellbeing and counselling	NHS 111 option 2 emergency routes Pennine Care services Oldham Talking Therapies Healthy Young Minds TOG / TOGS Mind Oldham community counselling social prescribing	Crisis mental health support therapeutic intervention emotional wellbeing counselling peer support talking therapies community-based wellbeing	There are a range of crisis and ongoing mental health support, spanning NHS, VCFSE and community-based provision. This is important because poor mental health is both a cause and consequence of homelessness. The mapping notes suggest that gaps may exist for people with complex overlapping needs, especially where they do not meet thresholds, are in repeated crisis, or need stronger coordination between housing and treatment services.
6. Substance misuse and dual diagnosis	Turning Point / ROAR Early Break Dual diagnosis nurse Red Rose Recovery Probation-linked treatment access.	Drug and alcohol treatment Recovery planning, detox / rehab pathways Harm reduction counselling youth substance misuse support peer recovery	The service mapping notes indicate that Oldham has a recognisable treatment and recovery route for adults and young people, including attention to dual diagnosis and peer support. A likely gap remains for people who are not ready for treatment, fall below thresholds, or present repeatedly with homelessness, mental ill health and substance misuse combined.
7. Domestic abuse, family breakdown, mediation and family support	Oldham Domestic Abuse Helpline IDVA support SafeNet refuge move-on and resettlement Early Help / MASH TLC Talk, Listen, Change, Relate	Domestic abuse crisis support, refuge, advocacy, family mediation, counselling, relationship support, parenting / family support and early intervention where family	This is one of the clearer specialist pathways in the local system: the documents identify a well-defined domestic abuse route and a wider but more mixed offer around counselling and mediation. The weakest area appears to be generic conflict resolution and prevention for parents of teenagers and young adults,

	Pennine Care couples therapy Positive Steps Family Help Early Break Pathfinder	conflict may lead to homelessness.	particularly where there is risk of exclusion from the family home rather than formal domestic abuse.
8. Specialist pathways for specific client groups	Families with children young people refugees / asylum seekers people with restricted eligibility veterans offenders / probation older people people with disabilities, learning disabilities or autism culturally specific women's support such as SAWN	Targeted support for groups whose needs may not be met through generic homelessness provision.	The local landscape includes a range of targeted specialist offers, which is a strength because homelessness risk is not evenly distributed and some groups need tailored support. Coverage appears uneven across cohorts, with the clearest concern being support for families with restricted eligibility, and potentially less visible support for some forms of multiple disadvantage outside the most urgent crisis routes.
9. Community connection, social support and wraparound support	Oldham Social Prescribing SPARK Oldham CIC peer support volunteering and community-based groups Age UK social support Other culturally specific community organisations	Non-clinical, community-based support that helps reduce isolation, improve confidence, build routines, and connect people to local services and groups.	These services strengthen the wider protective infrastructure around homelessness prevention and recovery, particularly for people whose needs are social, relational or confidence-based rather than purely housing-led. These routes can be less visible and less consistently embedded into formal homelessness practice, and availability may depend on local capacity or short-term funding.

The strongest areas of provision appear to be immediate hardship support, domestic abuse support, and access to mental health and substance misuse services. There is also evidence of preventative support through debt advice, welfare support, counselling, family mediation and some tenancy-related or floating support offers.

However, the mapping also suggests several structural gaps. These include lower-threshold support for people with multiple and complex needs who do not meet service thresholds, earlier tenancy crisis mediation to prevent avoidable homelessness, and potentially limited specialist housing

support for families with restricted eligibility. Support for parents of teenagers and young adults at risk of family breakdown also appears less visible than provision for younger children. Overall, the local offer appears broader at the point of crisis than at the move-on and long-term sustainment stages.

Below is a service map across the homelessness journey (see Appendix B) , which is the clearest way to show where services intervene, where Oldham appears strongest, and where there may be structural gaps.

Table 26: Homelessness response and intervention journey in Oldham

Stage of journey	Main interventions / services	What appears to work relatively well	Key risks / gaps
1. Upstream risk / early vulnerability	Debt advice, welfare rights, cost-of-living support, counselling, social prescribing, family support, community support, youth support, early mediation.	The evidence suggests good breadth in advice, welfare and emotional support, with multiple routes before crisis point.	Support may be fragmented and not always joined into one visible prevention pathway. Families with older children and young adults may be less well covered than younger-family support.
2. Prevention / risk of homelessness	Housing advice, Tenancy Relations, family mediation, floating support, Early Break Pathfinder, KeyRing, domestic abuse support where relevant, income maximisation support.	There is a promising prevention and tenancy sustainment offer in parts of the system, particularly where issues are identified early and the person is willing or able to engage.	The main gap appears to be at this stage: earlier crisis mediation and flexible floating support are less visible, especially for lower-level tenancy disputes or people not meeting higher thresholds.
3. Crisis / homelessness presentation	Homelessness route, out-of-hours response, rough sleeping services, A Bed Every Night / Depaul, refuge and SafeNet for domestic abuse, NHS 111 option 2 / 999 in mental health emergency, food and emergency essentials.	Crisis responses are among the most visible and developed parts of the local system, especially emergency support, domestic abuse routes and basic-needs provision.	People with restricted eligibility, no recourse-type issues, or multiple disadvantage may face less clear routes, especially where they do not fit the main statutory pathways.
4. Relief / stabilisation	Foodbanks and community provision, Crisis and Resilience Fund, welfare support, Talking Therapies, TOG Mind, Turning Point, Early Break, dual diagnosis route, social	The local system appears to have a relatively strong stabilisation offer, particularly around food, essentials, emotional support, mental health and treatment pathways.	Relief support may not always translate into sustained housing outcomes if tenancy support, move-on planning and continued engagement are weaker.

	prescribing, specialist community support.		
5. Move-on / recovery	Council in-house move-on team, SafeNet move-on and resettlement, KeyRing, peer recovery, community support, social prescribing, Age UK support, disability and advocacy routes, practical household support.	Oldham's in-house move-on capacity is an important strength because it gives the system a more defined mechanism for supporting residents from homelessness services into settled accommodation.	The main challenge is ensuring that move-on support is not treated as a single transition point but as part of a wider recovery and sustainment pathway. People with complex needs may still require longer-term support around tenancy sustainment, mental health, substance misuse, finances and social isolation after the move-on stage itself.
6. Tenancy sustainment / long-term stability	KeyRing, Adult Social Care, Age UK, social prescribing, ongoing welfare advice, community and peer support, practical support for the home, ongoing family support.	Oldham has some important independent living and social support infrastructure that can help residents remain settled.	The likely weakness is around repeat crisis prevention for people with multiple disadvantage, repeated failed engagements, or needs that sit between housing, mental health and substance misuse services.

9.2 Tools to prevent and relieve homelessness

The Housing Options Team utilises several tools to prevent and relieve homelessness, as well as referring to partners mapped out above to provide help to applicants. The Council also has wider tools at its disposal, such as Discretionary Housing Payments assistance provided through Children's and Social Care Acts, which all form part of a preventative toolkit.

The following provides an overview of specific schemes commissioned or delivered by the Housing Options Team and their cost effectiveness for consideration of expansion or redevelopment under the new Homelessness Strategy.

Table 27: Tools to prevent and relieve homelessness

Scheme	Focus	Positive outcomes per annum	Average cost per applicant
Household Support Fund	Prevention / Relief	118	£3,389
AfEO Bonds	Prevention/Relief	35	£3,500
A Bed Every Night	Relief	70	£3,500
CAS3	Relief	60	£4207
GMMOP	Relief	17	£2437
Rough Sleeping Initiative	Prevention / Relief	223	£812

9.3 Gap analysis

Given some of the issues identified throughout the review, some of the gaps emerging could include:

- Debt advice and money management
- Employment, training and skills
- Provision of accommodation and day centres
- Provision of specialist accommodation services for households with complex needs
- Navigation across services — the local offer is broad, but spread across council, NHS, voluntary and community services, which may make the system difficult to navigate without a clear single front door or triage route.
- Lower-threshold support for people with multiple and complex needs — for people experiencing homelessness alongside mental ill health and/or substance misuse who do not meet service thresholds or are not ready to engage with formal treatment.
- Early tenancy crisis mediation — resolve low-level landlord-tenant disputes, rent arrears communication issues, neighbour problems or housing instability before they escalate into homelessness.
- Support for parents of teenagers and young adults — provision appears stronger for younger children and early family support than for families experiencing conflict with older teenagers or young adults at risk of exclusion from the home.
- Longer-term tenancy sustainment for repeat presentations — while crisis and move-on support are visible, there may still be gaps in longer-term wraparound support to prevent repeat homelessness for people with ongoing or fluctuating needs.

10. Consultation

10.1 Overview

To support the development of the 2026 Homeless Strategy Oldham Council undertook three simultaneously running consultations between 12 September 2025 - 03 November 2025. The surveys were promoted via a web survey link to members, partners, and residents and distributed via e-mail, government websites, search engines, Oldham Homelessness Forum, social media and other referrals.

A total of 338 responses were received:

- Residents: 302
- Partners: 33
- Elected Members: 3

NB: Number of survey responses from residents and partners have significantly improved from the previous review – with resident responses increased 10-fold. However, member responses have fallen significantly from 15 to 3.

10.2 Elected Members

Members were asked what were the main reasons that their constituents approached them for housing advice and responded accordingly. Given the limited number of responses below are the key themes and issues identified by all respondents:

- Eviction Proceeding via s21/s8 notices and subsequent Court action
- Unlawful Eviction
- Rent Arrears and
- Family Breakdown
- Other reasons for homelessness cited include domestic abuse and rough sleeping

Next, Members were asked which if any of the following groups of homeless or threatened with homelessness people have you seen any increase in enquiries?

All respondents concurred that they had seen an increase in homelessness due to domestic abuse. Other reasons for an increase in enquiries included BAME households and rough sleeping

Members were asked more broadly what they thought needed to be done to address the main reasons for homelessness within Oldham. Consistent answers included:

- The need for more Affordable/Social Housing
- The need for more control in relation to the ending of private sector tenancies
- The need for increased support from Government in relation to Asylum dispersal
- The need for increased staffing to provide better support and advice in relation to the main reasons for homelessness

Members strongly agreed that a multi-agency approach is required to find appropriate housing and support solutions for residents.

Which services in any would help to improve the offer provided to those homeless or at risk of homelessness?

Members indicated the following services were required:

- Supported accommodation services including longer term options for households with specific and complex needs
- Debt Advice service
- Drug and Alcohol services
- Medication services
- Counselling support services

What 3 things should the new Homelessness strategy prioritise to address homelessness over the next 3-5 years?

Members confirmed the Homelessness Strategy should prioritise:

- Family breakdown,
- Relationship breakdown and
- Domestic Abuse

Learning Points:

- Members commented on the main causes of homelessness, particularly the end of private rented sector tenancies and family breakdown
- Members cited the need to embed services within our Communities, providing integrated support and intervene earlier to prevent homelessness occurring
- Poverty is a thread running throughout the Review and the consultation, along with the need to help people 'cushion' themselves from loss of income

10.3 Partners

Responses were received from a wide range of partner organisations working with Oldham Council, recognising the depth and diversity of provision available across all sectors in Oldham.

Figure 16: What groups does your agency currently work with?

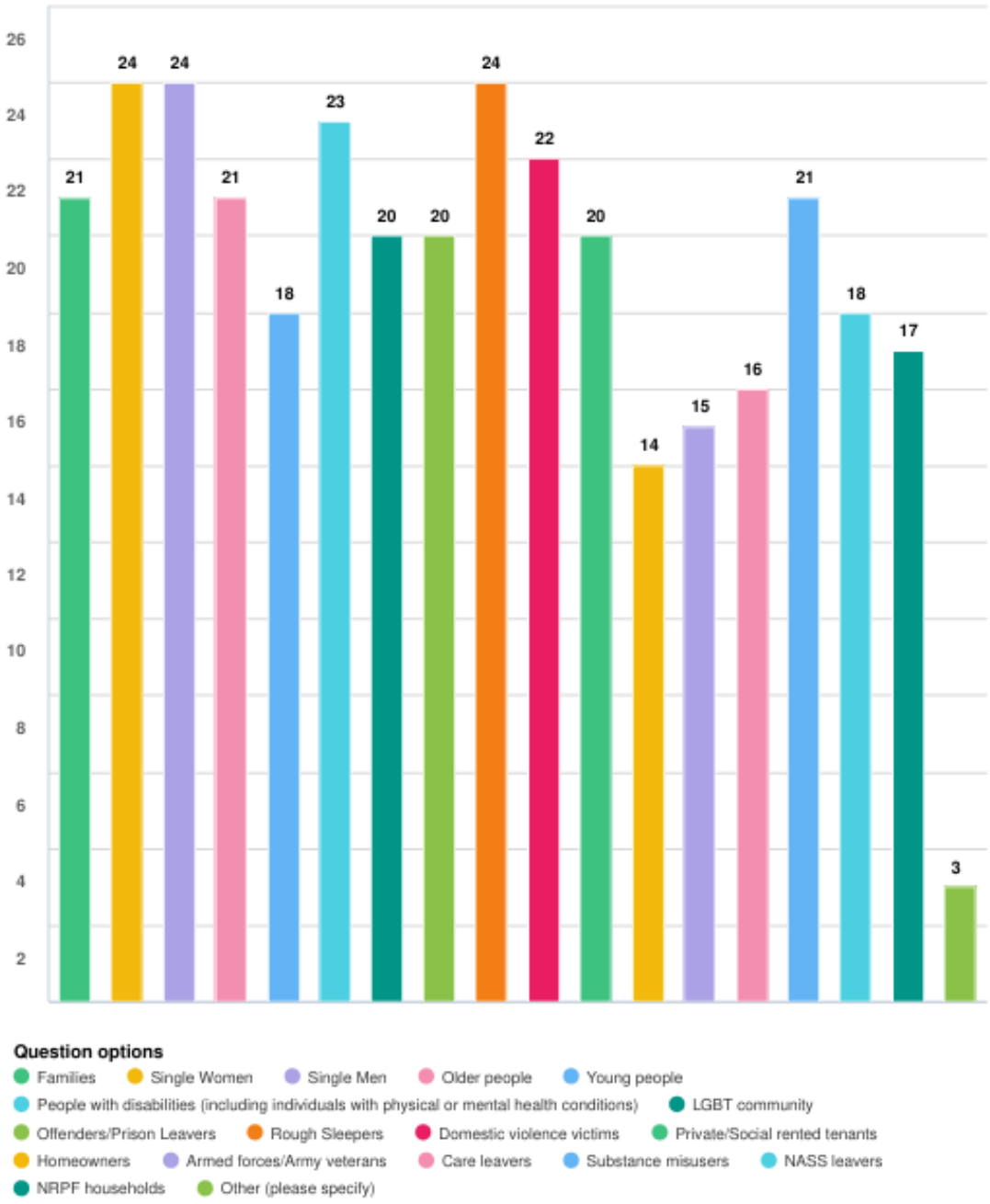
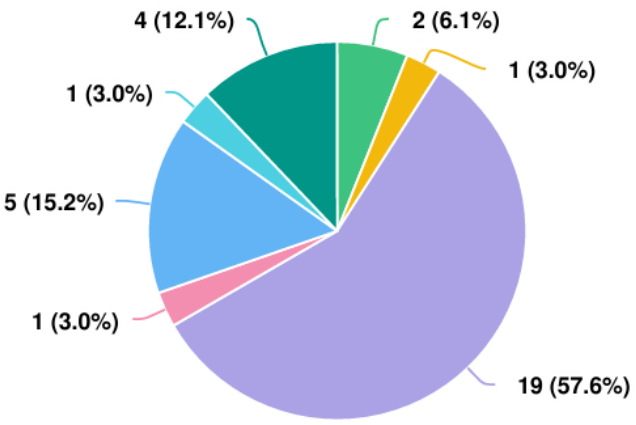


Figure 17: *What sector does our organisation work in?*



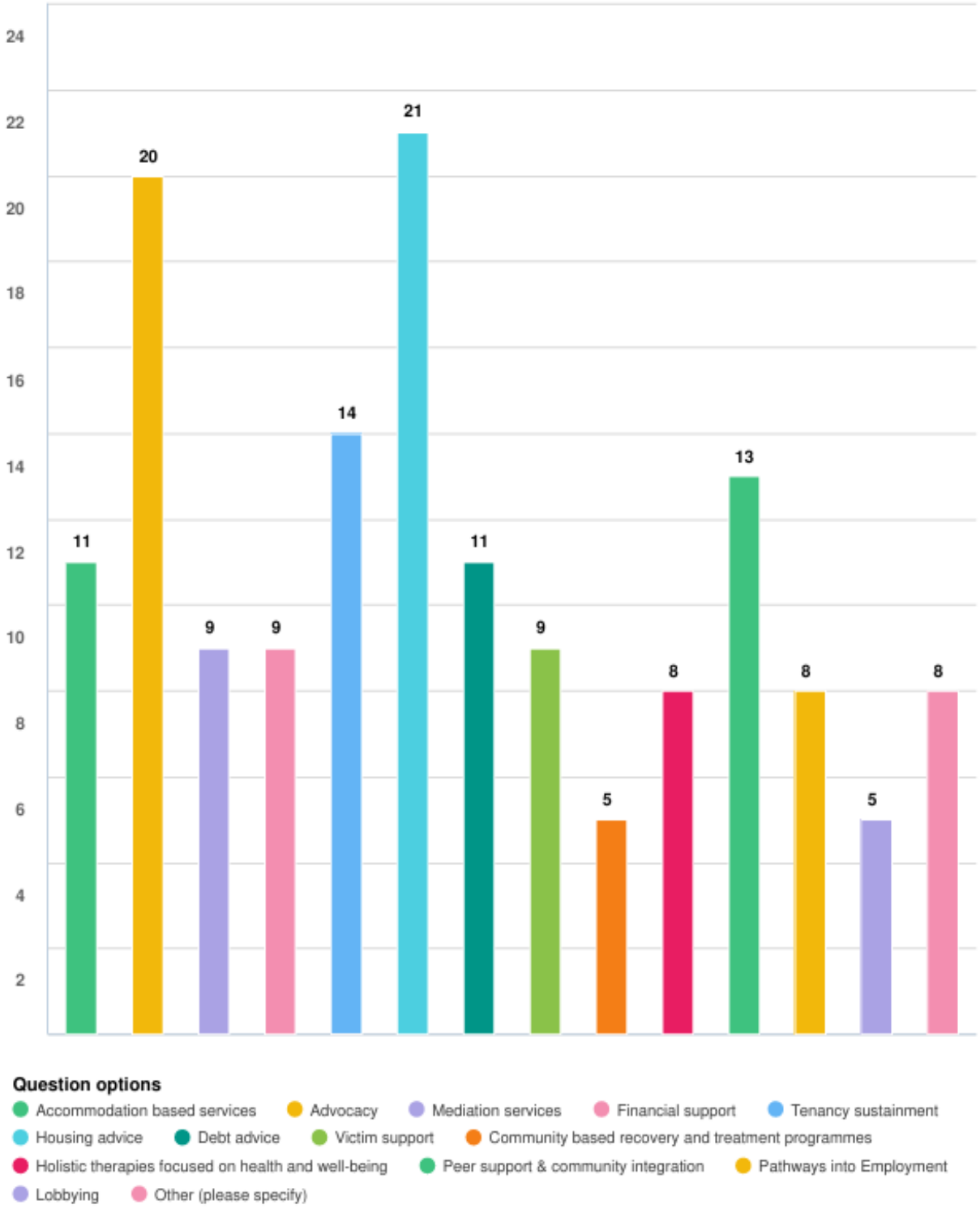
Question options

Statutory service | Voluntary sector | Charitable sector | Business sector | Health services | Faith sector | Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (33 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

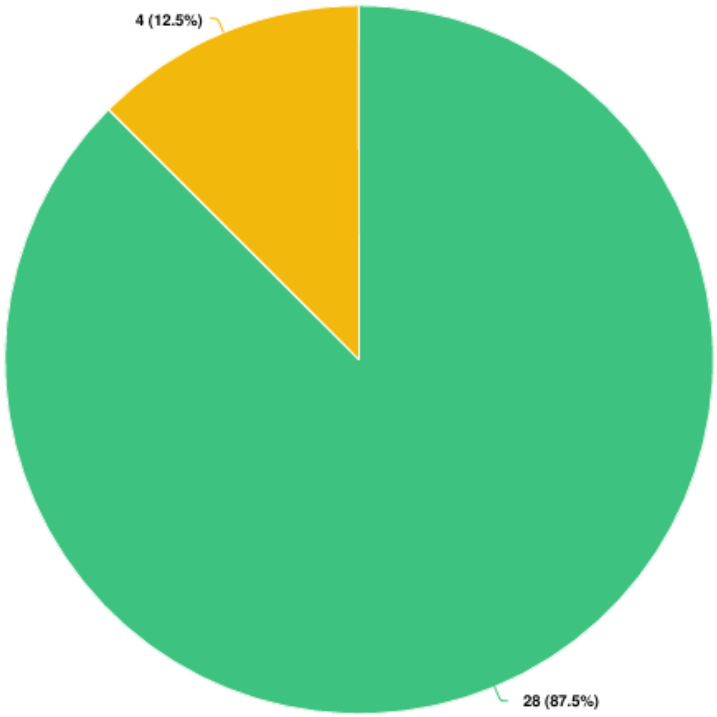
Stakeholders were asked how their organisation works to prevent and relieve homelessness and responded accordingly:

Figure 18: Partner Survey



When asked if their organisation have experienced rising or sustained demand for your services from specific groups who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, most partners said they had seen increased demand on their services:

Figure 19: Partner survey rising demand



When asked about which groups are under-supported in Oldham, partners responded with clear and consistent answers. The most frequently raised under-supported groups were:

- **People with mental health needs**, especially where those needs are complex, severe, dual diagnosis, or classed as "high risk". Waiting lists, unclear pathways, and insufficient support were recurring concerns.
- **Single men, especially those over 25**, rough sleepers, and men without "priority need", who were repeatedly described as falling through gaps.
- **People with NRPF, NASS leavers, refugees, and other non-UK nationals**, often due to restricted eligibility, lack of move-on support, language barriers, low housing banding, and weak access to advice or accommodation options.
- **Young people and care leavers**, especially where previous support capacity has reduced.
- **People leaving prison or hospital**, with several comments about weak discharge planning and inadequate resettlement arrangements.
- **People with learning disabilities, autism, sensory needs, low literacy or poor digital access,** who struggle to navigate the housing system and evidence requirements.

- **Older adults**, raised particularly in relation to unsuitable housing, mobility needs and lack of downsizing options.
- **Families in temporary accommodation**, especially those with babies or school-age children, where B&B or nightly paid accommodation was described as unsuitable.

The shared message from this question is that the system works least well for people whose needs are complex, excluded, or hard to "fit" into standard eligibility or allocation frameworks. The current model seems particularly difficult for people who need flexible, relational and assertive support.

Partners were asked to identify the main reasons people seek help from your service with regards to homelessness. The most common reasons cited were:

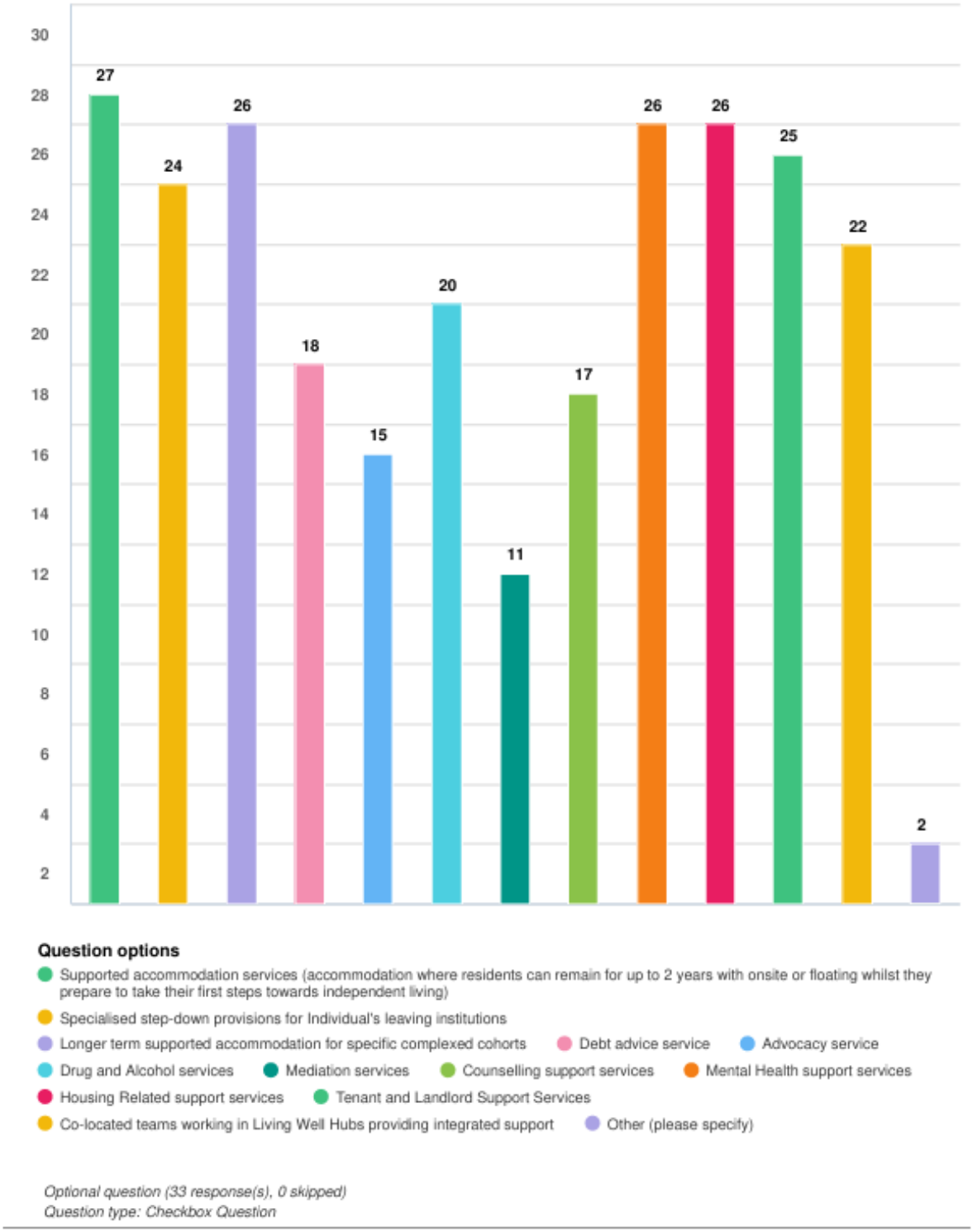
- Eviction and rent arrears
- Debt and affordability pressures
- Relationship breakdown and family breakdown, including being asked to leave by parents or partners
- Domestic abuse
- Rough sleeping or loss of informal accommodation
- Leaving prison, hospital or Home Office accommodation
- Mental health challenges, trauma and substance misuse, often as contributing factors to housing crisis
- Overcrowding, unsuitable or unsafe accommodation, disrepair, hoarding and fire risk in some cases.

When asked about their thoughts on what needs to be done to address the main reasons for homelessness within Oldham. Partners have responded with strong agreement on practical strategic actions. The main themes were:

- **Increase the supply of affordable and social housing**, especially one-bed/studio options, age-friendly homes, and suitable move-on accommodation.
- **Address private rented sector barriers**, including high rents, shortfalls against benefits, landlord reluctance to let to low-income households, lack of guarantors, poor standards, and weak communication from landlords. Some proposed landlord licensing, vetted/fair landlord lists, or stronger landlord engagement.
- **Strengthen early intervention**, including mediation, advice, debt help, tenancy sustainment and practical one-to-one advocacy before crisis occurs.
- **Improve institutional move-on**, especially for prison leavers, hospital discharge, and those leaving Home Office accommodation.
- **Expand supported/shared housing and longer-term supported accommodation**, particularly for people with complex needs, trauma, repeat homelessness or substance misuse.
- **Use rightsizing/downsizing better**, to free up family-sized homes and create more appropriate pathways for older adults and under-occupying households.
- **Bring empty homes back into use** and make better use of existing stock

Since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act on 3rd April 2018, we now record the support needs of households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Partners stated people sought help from their organisations for with the following support needs:

Figure 20: Addressing Homelessness in Oldham



Key comments from partner on support needs reveals that 'most or all of these are needed." The services most selected or described as especially important were:

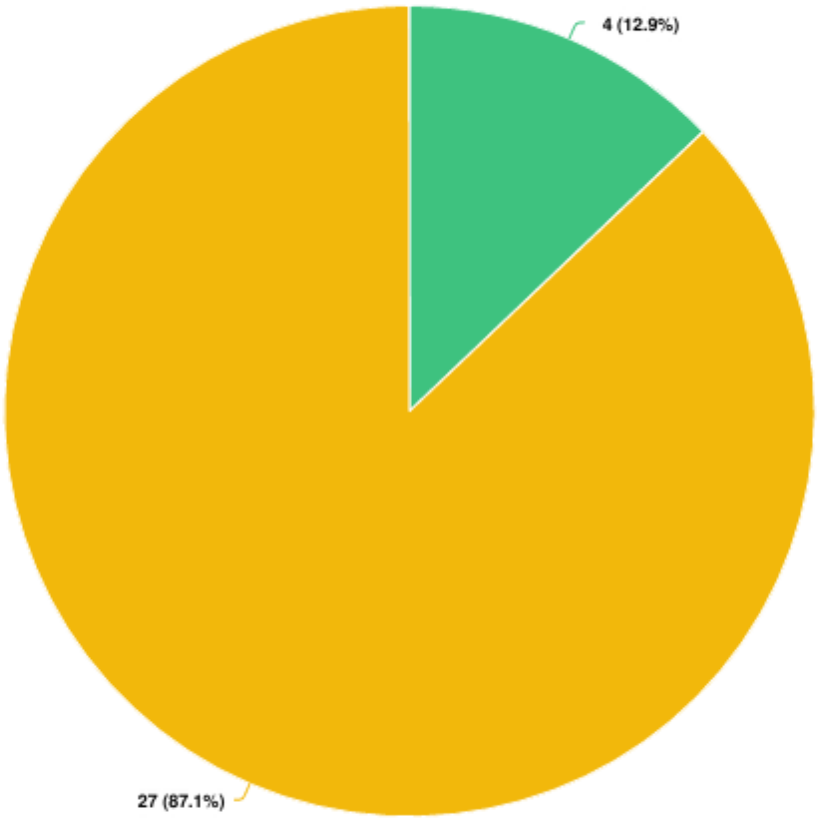
- Supported accommodation services

- Longer-term supported accommodation for complex cohorts
- Step-down provision for people leaving institutions
- Mental health support services
- Housing-related support
- Tenant and landlord support services
- Debt advice, counselling, drug and alcohol services, advocacy, mediation, and co-located multi-agency teams in Living Well Hubs

Several respondents added that although some services exist, they are underfunded, overstretched, fragmented or hard to access quickly. Specific gaps noted included the loss of floating support services (such as KeyRing/Ancora), waiting times for mental health support, the need for more intensive wraparound hubs, and administrative barriers linked to supported accommodation or benefits processes.

Partners are asked if they think there are any key themes/ /issues/priorities they think have been missed. Most think that there isn't:

Figure 21: Partner Survey missed themes



The following issues were raised as being potential gaps in issues dealt with in the strategy:

Older people's housing needs, especially accessible accommodation, downsizing options and moves closer to family networks.
BAME communities, language/cultural support, refugees and people with limited English, including navigation and communication needs.
Learning disability, autism and sensory needs, including accessible communication and more appropriate placements.
Children and family impacts of homelessness, especially in temporary accommodation.
Common housing list / allocations rules, especially concerns that people are deterred from entering the PRS because they may lose their position on the housing list.

When asked what the top 3 issues the new strategy must address, the priorities repeated most often were:

- Affordable/social housing supply, including more suitable one-bed, family-sized, shared and age-friendly homes.
- Mental health, trauma and addiction support, especially where people have complex or dual diagnosis needs.
- Prevention and early intervention, including tenancy sustainment, floating support, budgeting/debt help, and family mediation.
- Longer-term supported accommodation and move-on pathways, especially for those with repeat homelessness or failed placements.
- Allocations/banding/right-sizing reform, to remove bottlenecks and make the system more flexible and realistic.
- Joined-up partnership working, better communication, and less siloed working between housing, health, social care, education and VCS partners.
- Inclusion of under-served groups, especially single men, NRPF/refugee groups, prison leavers, and children/families in TA.

When asked what partners are willing to contribute, there was a clear willingness from partners to support the strategy through:

- Multi-agency working and operational collaboration;
- Referral pathways and direct frontline support;
- Hospital discharge and 24/7 health liaison;
- Policy and best-practice input;
- Safeguarding and risk reduction;
- Right-sizing and housing development discussions;
- Support for refugees, NRPF households, families and rough sleepers;
- Quarterly meetings / more regular partner forums.

Learning Points:

For the 2026 Strategy, Partners have consistent highlighted the following priorities in the consultation:

- **Increase access to affordable**, suitable housing: Partners consistently identified the shortage of affordable and appropriate housing as the biggest structural issue, including

the need for more social housing, one-bed homes, age-friendly housing, shared housing options, and better use of empty properties.

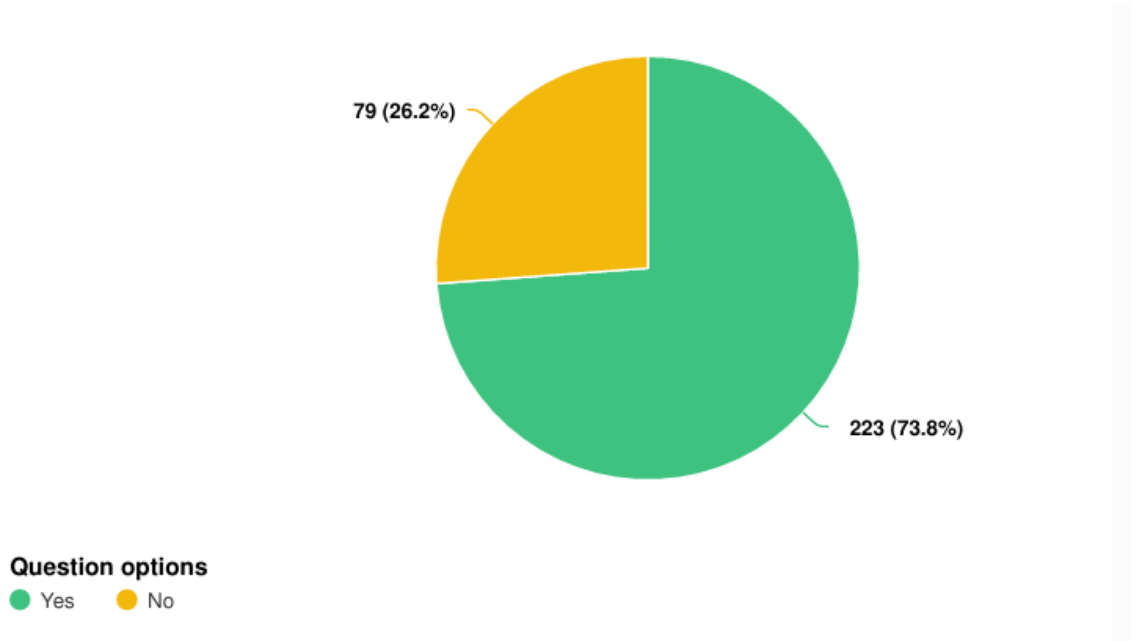
- **Strengthen prevention and tenancy sustainment**: A major learning point was the need to intervene earlier—before people reach crisis point—through debt advice, mediation, budgeting support, floating support, tenancy sustainment, and practical one-to-one help to stop avoidable homelessness.
- **Improve support for people with complex needs**: Partners highlighted significant gaps for people with mental ill health, substance misuse, trauma, dual diagnosis, domestic abuse experiences, offending histories and repeat homelessness, pointing to the need for more integrated, trauma-informed and longer-term support.
- **Make the homelessness system easier to navigate and more inclusive**: Consultation responses showed that current processes can be difficult to access, especially for single men, NRPF households, refugees, people leaving institutions, and those facing literacy, language, digital or cognitive barriers. Partners want clearer, more flexible and more inclusive pathways.
- **Build a more joined-up multi-agency response**: A strong theme from the consultation was the importance of better coordination between housing, health, social care, education, safeguarding and voluntary sector partners, with more shared working, co-located support, and clearer joint pathways for prevention and relief.

10.4 Residents

The survey was sent out via email, advertised on social media and particularly promoted in staffed temporary accommodation schemes. The resident survey has reached a notable number of residents (302), increased from 36 in the last review period.

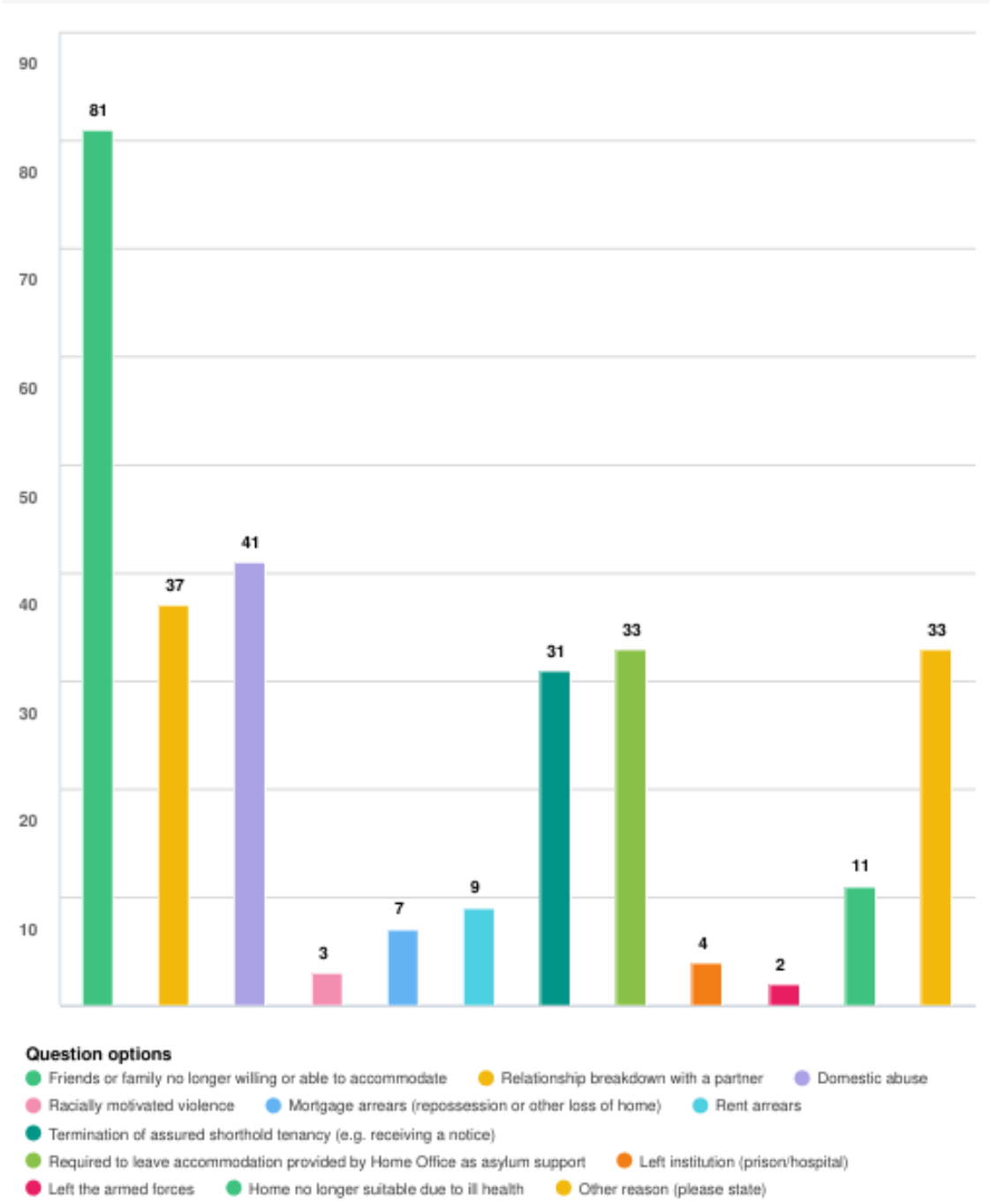
Majority of respondents experienced homelessness in the last 5 years:

Figure 22: Have you experienced homelessness in the last 5 years?



Respondents were asked why they became homeless or threatened with homelessness:

Figure 23: Residents reasons for homelessness

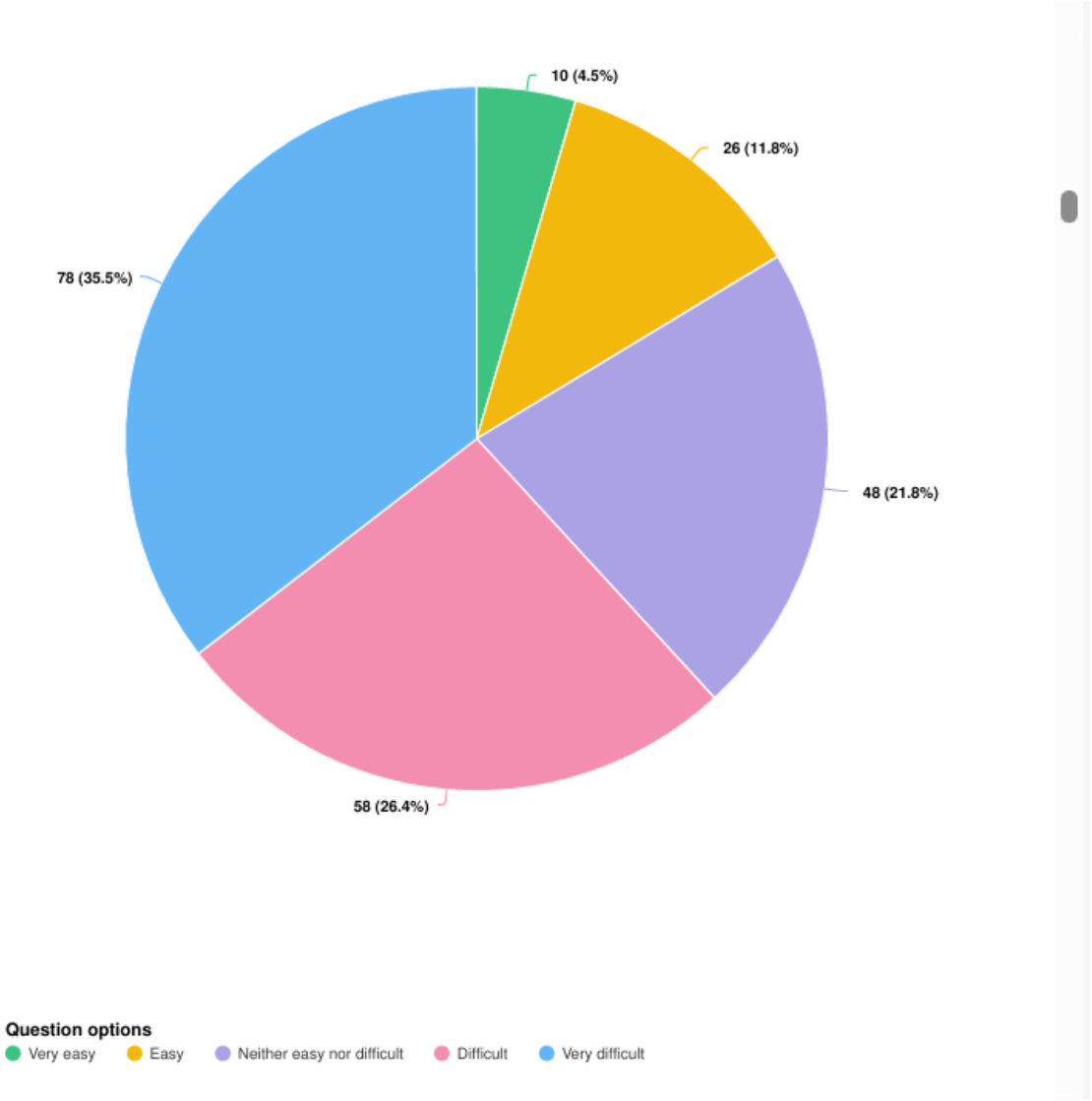


NB: Within the 33 “Other reason” entries, and the biggest sub-themes within them were:

- Landlord selling / property sold / ownership change / Section 21-type loss – about 8 mentions.
- Police / social services / safeguarding-related move for safety – about 3 mentions.
- Home Office / hotel / refugee move-on situations – about 2 mentions.
- Care leaver / transition into independence – about 2 mentions.
- Family overcrowding, family issues or bereavement – about 2 mentions.

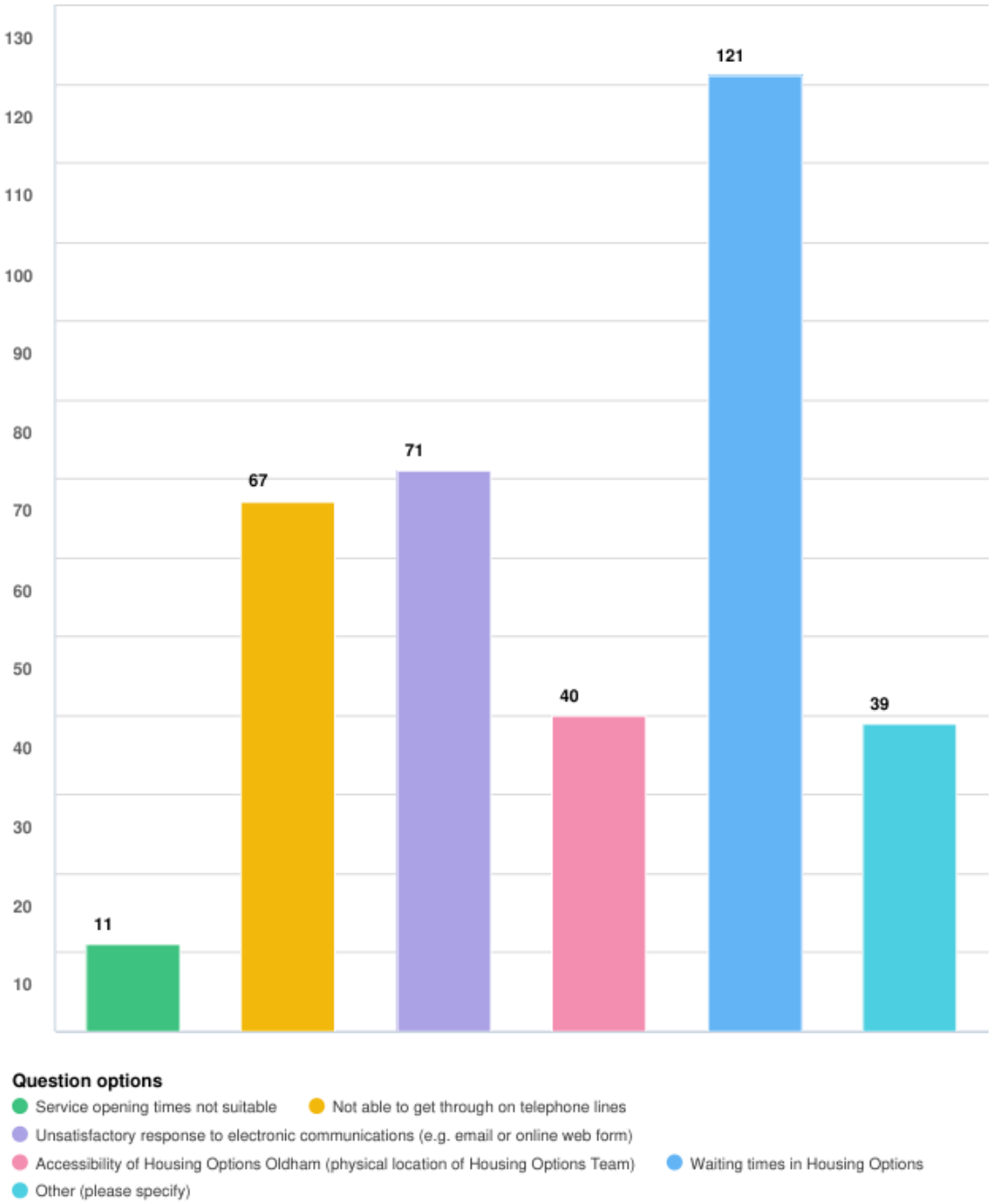
There were also isolated responses mentioning job loss, non-standard housing situations such as living in a shed/summerhouse and being pushed between systems because needs did not fit standard categories.

Figure 24: Service user ease of accessing information and advice



When asked why they had found it difficult to access advice and assistance, the following reasons emerged:

Figure 25: Service user feedback on barriers to service

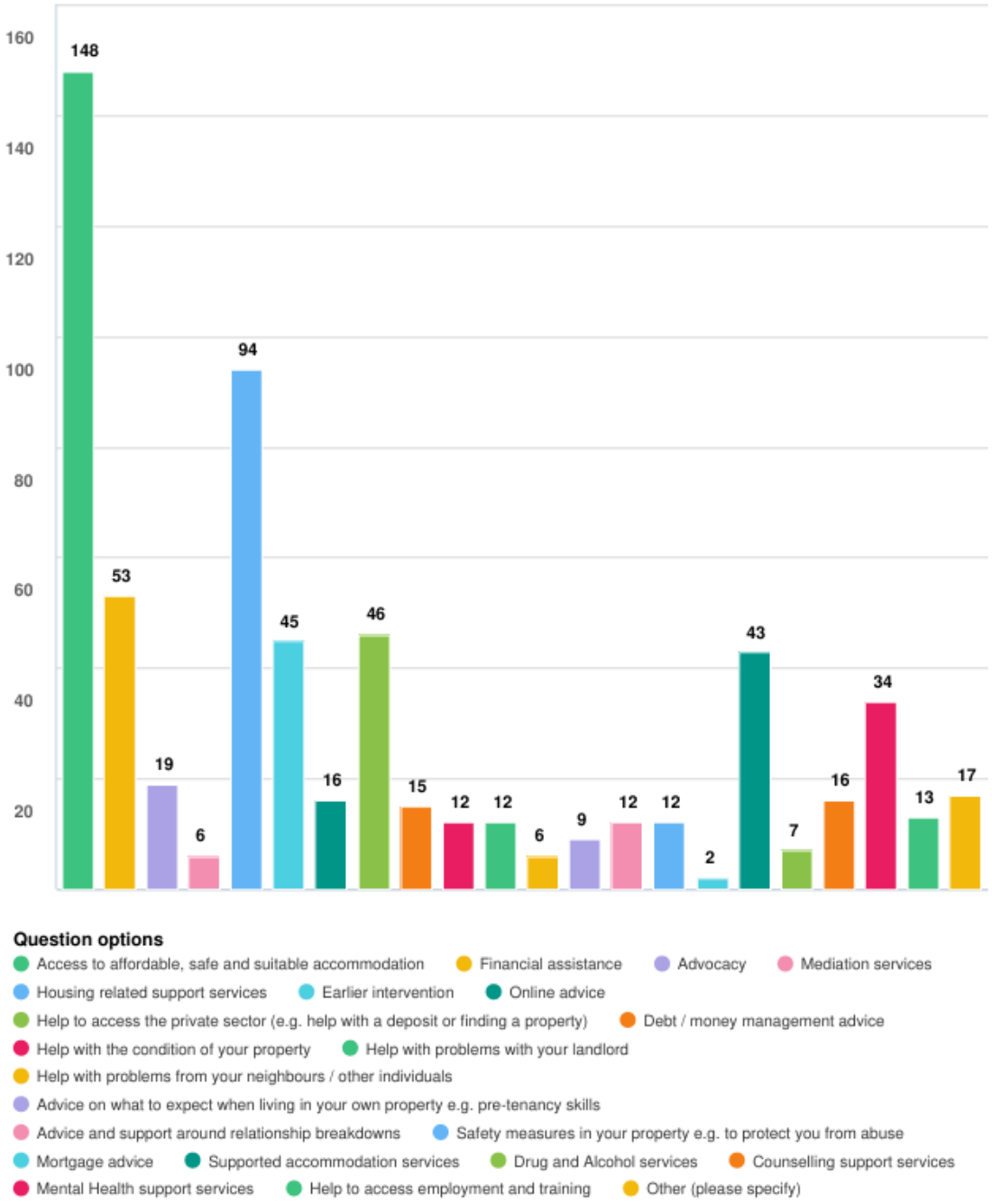


Within the 39 “Other” comments, the main issues were:

- Poor staff attitude / rude, dismissive or uncaring interactions – about 10 comments.
- No named caseworker, passed around, or no response from worker – about 3 comments.
- Needs not understood / did not fit criteria / autism, ADHD or vulnerability not accommodated – about 3 comments.
- Process confusion / disorganisation about what would happen next – at least 1 clear comment, though this theme appears more widely across other responses too.

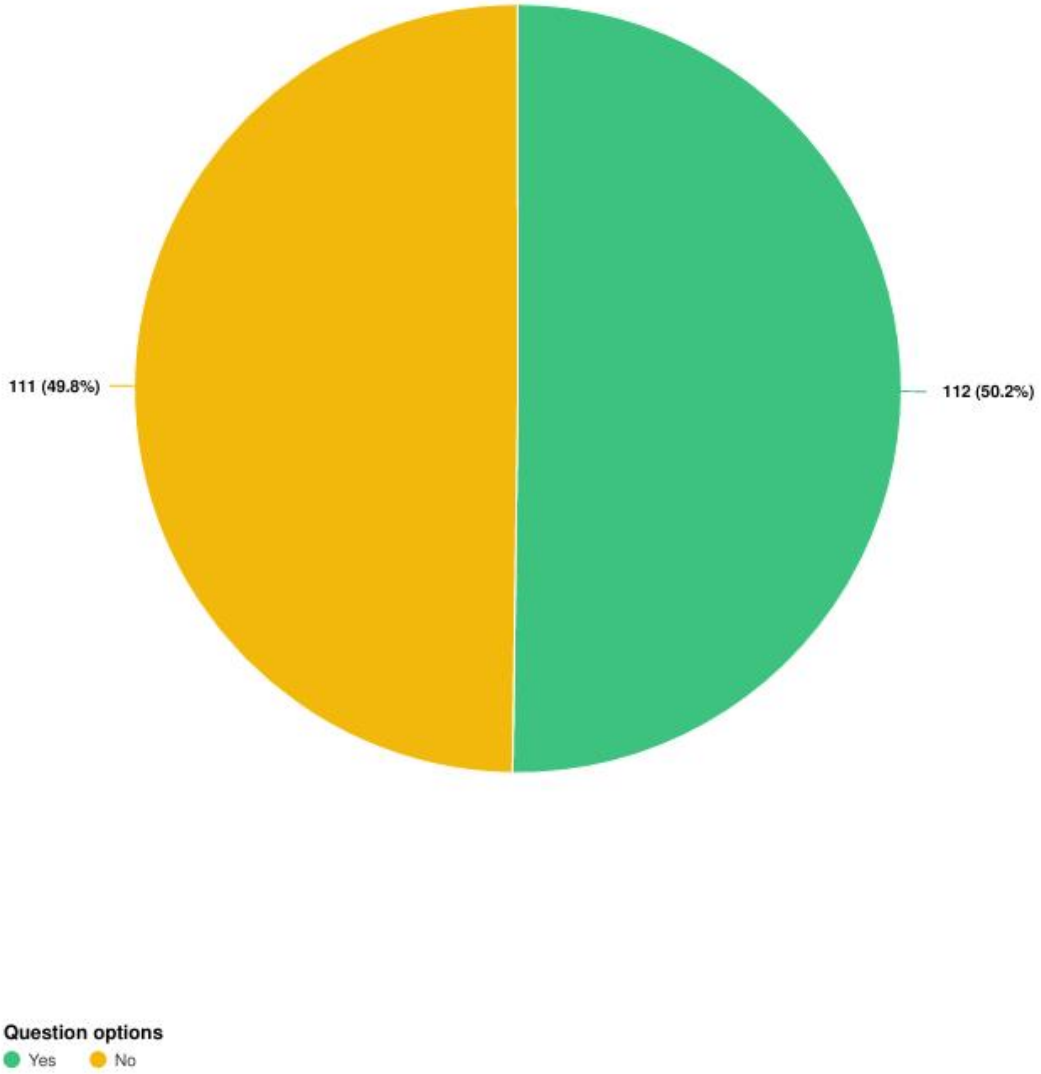
Residents were then aske what things would have helped prevent them from becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness:

Figure 26: What things would have helped prevent you from becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness?



When asked if they were provided with temporary accommodation, a little over half of the respondents said yes:

Figure 27: Were you provided with temporary accommodation?



Finally, residents were asked how the council could have supported them to move on from temporary accommodation sooner.

There were 162 substantive free-text answers to this question. Because many responses contained multiple issues, the counts below are overlapping theme counts rather than mutually exclusive categories.

Table 28: Support to move on from temporary housing

	Count	Notes

Need family-/health-/disability-sensitive housing	40	People repeatedly described unsuitable placements for children, newborns, autistic children, people with disabilities, mental health needs, or trauma histories.
Bidding / banding / allocation problems	23	Residents often said they kept bidding without success, were not prioritised, or did not understand why others were housed before them.
Need faster access to permanent council/social housing	20	Many answers were very direct: “provide a home”, “social housing”, or “council house”.
Unsuitable or poor-quality temporary accommodation	13	This included overcrowding, dirt, mould, bugs, lack of privacy, poor facilities, and unsafe or distressing shared arrangements.
Need financial/practical support	12	Residents mentioned food, essentials, storage, moving costs, deposits and living costs while in temporary accommodation
Still waiting / long stays / delay	11	Residents described still being in temporary accommodation or waiting many months/years.
Poor communication / lack of updates / no support from officers	10	lack of contact, lack of updates or no one helping them move on.

Learning Points:

- Resident satisfaction has declined since the last review. Long waiting time at housing options, unsatisfactory responses to electronic communications (e.g. email or websites) and not getting through on telephone have been quoted more significantly as barriers to accessing service compared to last consultation.

Across the whole survey, five recurring themes stand out:

- Housing shortage and lack of suitable permanent homes underpins almost every question. Residents consistently linked homelessness to lack of affordable, safe and suitable housing and to prolonged waits for social housing.
- The service journey is too hard to navigate, with high levels of dissatisfaction around waiting times, phone access, online responses and officer follow-up.
- Temporary accommodation is often unsuitable, especially for families, disabled residents, trauma survivors and people with mental health needs.
- Prevention needs to happen earlier, before tenancy loss, family breakdown or safeguarding/abuse situations escalate into homelessness.
- Residents want more personalised, practical support, not just information: help with housing options, deposits, bidding, financial problems, mental health, and move-on planning

10.5 Themes from consultation

Table 29: Comparative table: key themes, services needed and priorities

Theme / issue	Residents said	Partners said	Members said	Commonality / shared message
1. Affordable, suitable housing supply is the biggest need	The strongest prevention measure chosen was **access to affordable, safe and suitable accommodation (148 mentions)**. Residents repeatedly asked for **council housing / social housing**, more suitable homes, faster rehousing and better options for families, disabled people and larger households.	Partners repeatedly described **lack of affordable housing** as the core structural issue, including need for **more social housing, 1-bed homes, age-friendly homes, shared housing and bringing empty homes back into use**. They also linked shortage to repeat homelessness and blocked move-on.	Members explicitly called for **"more homes"** and highlighted accommodation pressures caused by family breakdown, PRS exits and mortgage repossession.	**Strongest shared theme across all cohorts:** Oldham needs more **affordable, suitable housing**, not just more process.
2. Prevention and early intervention need to happen sooner	Residents selected **earlier intervention (45 mentions)** and often said support came **too late**—for example, after eviction had already happened, after long waits, or only at crisis point.	Partners repeatedly called for **pre-crisis work**, earlier intervention, mediation, budgeting support, tenancy sustainment, and support "upstream" before homelessness happens.	Members explicitly said **"more early interventions"** and criticised services not being embedded enough in communities, meaning people reach emergency need before support is offered.	Very strong commonality: all cohorts want a strategy that shifts from **reactive crisis response** to **earlier prevention.**
3. Housing-related support / tenancy sustainment is essential	The second most-selected prevention measure was **housing-related support services**	Partners strongly supported **housing-related support (26 selections)**, **tenant and landlord support (25)**, and	Members said services should work more directly with public and private landlords, increase property	Shared message: preventing homelessness is not just about housing supply; people also need

	(94 mentions). Residents also wanted support with the housing process, applications, private renting, pre-tenancy skills and practical help to avoid homelessness.	repeatedly raised the loss/gap in floating support and wraparound tenancy sustainment.	numbers, and improve early support in communities.	**practical, ongoing support to get in and**

11. Emerging themes

The following brings together emerging themes that have come from the data, desktop analysis and consultation throughout this review – which will be used to develop the priorities and action plan for the new Homelessness Strategy.

Emerging theme	**Proposed response**
Prevention activity is not intervening early enough, with fewer prevention duties accepted and lower prevention success rates, while more households are presenting at crisis point and entering relief.	Reposition the strategy around a prevention-first model that starts earlier than statutory crisis thresholds. Strengthen pre-prevention routes through earlier referrals, outreach, advice, mediation, tenancy sustainment, landlord negotiation and targeted financial support, with clear pathways for households at risk before homelessness occurs.
Family and friends exclusion remains the single biggest reason for homelessness, with relationship breakdown also a persistent driver.	Increase the use of family mediation, conflict resolution and targeted early-help support, particularly for younger adults and single people who are sofa surfing or at risk of exclusion. Develop clearer pathways with Children's Services, Early Help and community partners to intervene before households lose accommodation.
Affordability pressures and shortages of suitable housing are limiting both prevention and relief outcomes.	Align the homelessness strategy with wider housing delivery and affordability work. Prioritise access to social and affordable rented homes, improve move-on pathways, develop lower-cost private rented options, make fuller use of discretionary financial support, and strengthen links with the Housing Delivery Action Plan and allocations approach.
The private rented sector is both essential and fragile.	Strengthen the Council's private rented sector offer through landlord engagement, tenancy relations work, affordability checks, deposit/bond support, targeted incentives, and action to improve standards and sustain tenancies. The PRS should remain part of the solution, but

	with better safeguards and stronger partnership with landlords.
Mental health is the most common recorded support need, and the data likely under-records the true extent of multiple disadvantage.	Treat mental health and multiple disadvantage as core homelessness issues, not add-ons. Expand trauma-informed practice, improve psychologically informed responses, strengthen dual diagnosis and multi-agency working, and ensure specialist support pathways are available for those at greatest risk of repeat homelessness and rough sleeping. Improve assessment quality so complexity is identified earlier and recorded more consistently.
Domestic abuse continues to be a significant cause of homelessness and requires both crisis and longer-term housing responses.	Build on current partnership arrangements by strengthening safe accommodation pathways, reciprocal housing options, prevention work, and tenancy sustainment for survivors. Review gaps in provision, including access for under-served groups, and ensure domestic abuse responses are embedded across housing pathways rather than treated solely as crisis intervention.
Single adults — especially single men — and lone-parent families are disproportionately represented in relief and temporary accommodation.	Tailor prevention and rehousing responses to the household types driving demand. Expand practical options for single adults such as shared accommodation, PRS access, bond/deposit support and tenancy sustainment, while also strengthening prevention for lone-parent families who are at high risk of entering temporary accommodation.
Temporary accommodation pressures reflect wider system strain.	Continue to reduce reliance on TA by combining earlier prevention with a stronger move-on strategy. Implement the updated TA policy, improve procurement and suitability, reduce use of unsuitable placements, and ensure households in TA receive timely housing planning and support to prevent long stays and repeat homelessness.
Institutional and service move-on points remain high-risk, particularly for	Strengthen transition and discharge planning across prison, probation, hospitals, social care and asylum move-on pathways. Maintain and refine specialist pathways such as CAS3 and hospital discharge support, improve joint protocols, and focus on earlier planning so people do not reach homelessness at the point of release or discharge.
Presentations from refugees and other newly eligible groups have increased, adding complexity to frontline advice and prevention work.	Ensure the new strategy includes a clear response to refugee integration and move-on from asylum accommodation, with early advice, better legal and housing navigation, and joined-up support with migration, welfare and community services. Frontline teams will also

	need continued training and clear guidance on eligibility and entitlements.
Economic insecurity is a major structural driver of homelessness.	Make homelessness prevention more closely linked to employment support, income maximisation, debt advice, welfare support and health pathways. The next strategy should recognise that homelessness in Oldham is being driven not only by housing loss, but also by poverty, poor health and weak financial resilience.
Homelessness demand is concentrated in a small number of deprived neighbourhoods, especially in and around central Oldham.	Take a more place-based approach by targeting prevention resources, partnership working and local service alignment in the wards and neighbourhoods with the highest levels of presentation – e.g. Live Well Oldham. This should link homelessness work more closely with wider responses to deprivation, health inequality and community support.
The homelessness system needs stronger integration, better data and clearer service pathways.	Improve data quality, assessment consistency, service mapping and multi-agency coordination so that Oldham can better understand demand, target interventions and measure outcomes. The strategy should support a more integrated system with clearer routes in, stronger referral pathways and shared ownership of prevention across partners.
A one-size-fits-all model will not be sufficient.	Adopt a two-tier service model: a broad universal prevention offers available to all households at risk, alongside specialist pathways for those with higher complexity, statutory priority or repeat homelessness. This will help the strategy respond both to the largest customer groups and to those with the most acute needs.

12. Local Outcomes Framework and Oldham's Performance and Targets

This section reviews data and sets target using the latest Local Outcomes Framework developed by MHCLG in December 2025 to support the development of Oldham's next Homelessness Strategy. [9]

The Local Outcomes Framework (LOF) provides a clear structure for how Oldham will measure progress in reducing homelessness and improving outcomes for residents. It translates national priorities into locally relevant targets, enabling performance benchmarking, accountability, and continuous improvement.

The framework focuses on a small number of high-impact indicators that reflect system-wide effectiveness—particularly prevention, use of temporary accommodation, and rough sleeping—aligned to the national ambition to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring.

[9] Local Outcomes Framework - GOV.UK

Figure 28: Local Outcomes Framework – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Metrics

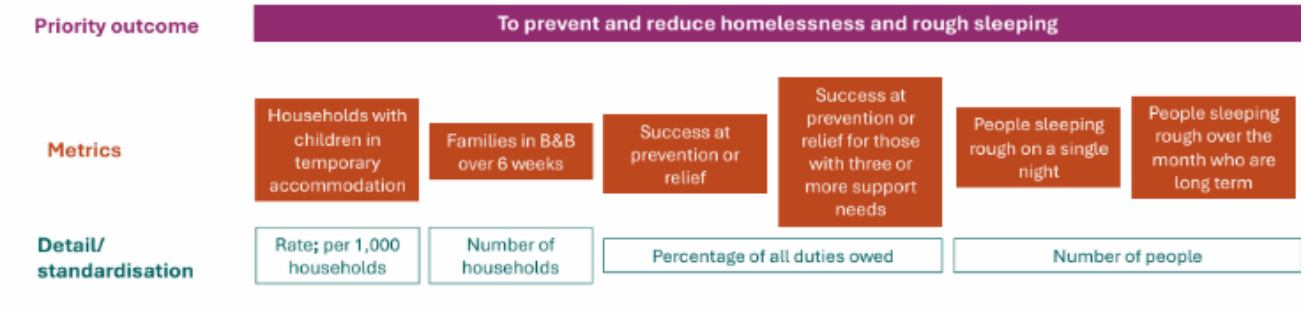


Figure 29: Oldham's Performance under Local Outcomes Framework metrics

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Local Accountability

Local Outcomes Framework – Oldham Performance on Latest Published Data

	October to December 2025				*December 2025*	*Between 1 October and 30 November 2025*
	Households with children in TA per 1000 household	**Families in B&B over 6 weeks**	**% duties owed where homelessness prevented or relieved**	**% duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved for h/holds experiencing multiple disadvantage.**	**People sleeping rough over the month long term**	**People sleeping rough on a single night**
England	3.5	1,190	49.1%	39.7%	3175	4793
London	14.2	380	42.1%	43.5%	881	1277
Rest of England	1.7	810	51%	39.4%	2294	3516
North West	1.7	230	49.7%	41.6%	337	441
Oldham	2.9	8	26.6%	20%	5	6

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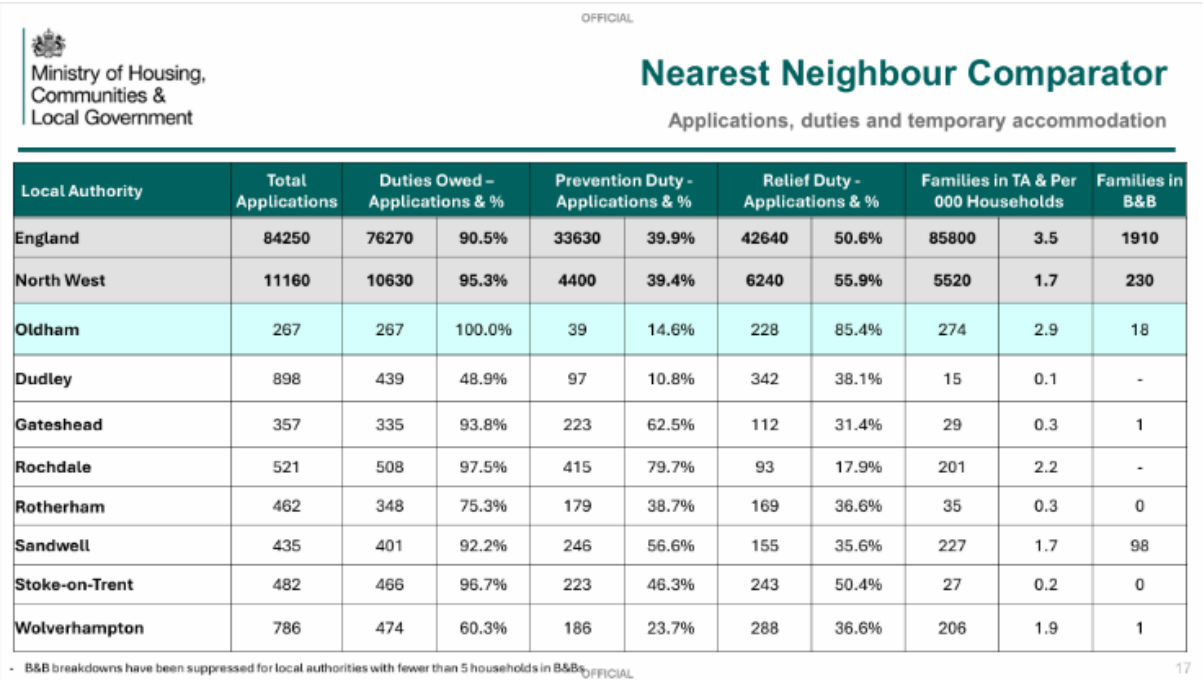
This table clearly shows the need for Oldham to improve its performance on homelessness prevention and relief – for all households and households experiencing multiple disadvantages.

To support benchmarking and provide a more meaningful assessment of local performance, this review compares Oldham's metric with its nearest neighbour comparator. This approach identifies the local authorities most similar to Oldham based on a set of homelessness-relevant characteristics. This provides a more locally relevant comparison for understanding performance, interpreting outcomes and identifying realistic areas for improvement.

Figure 30: Oldham & Nearest Neighbour Comparator Performance Comparison



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Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Nearest Neighbour Comparator

Applications, duties and temporary accommodation

Local Authority	Total Applications	Duties Owed – Applications & %		Prevention Duty - Applications & %		Relief Duty - Applications & %		Families in TA & Per 000 Households		Families in B&B
England	84250	76270	90.5%	33630	39.9%	42640	50.6%	85800	3.5	1910
North West	11160	10630	95.3%	4400	39.4%	6240	55.9%	5520	1.7	230
Oldham	267	267	100.0%	39	14.6%	228	85.4%	274	2.9	18
Dudley	898	439	48.9%	97	10.8%	342	38.1%	15	0.1	-
Gateshead	357	335	93.8%	223	62.5%	112	31.4%	29	0.3	1
Rochdale	521	508	97.5%	415	79.7%	93	17.9%	201	2.2	-
Rotherham	462	348	75.3%	179	38.7%	169	36.6%	35	0.3	0
Sandwell	435	401	92.2%	246	56.6%	155	35.6%	227	1.7	98
Stoke-on-Trent	482	466	96.7%	223	46.3%	243	50.4%	27	0.2	0
Wolverhampton	786	474	60.3%	186	23.7%	288	36.6%	206	1.9	1

- B&B breakdowns have been suppressed for local authorities with fewer than 5 households in B&Bs

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This table highlights that Oldham's prevention success rate remains among the lowest when compared with its nearest neighbour comparator, while performance in successful relief outcomes is comparatively strong. Despite recent improvements, the number of families in temporary accommodation (TA) and Bed and Breakfast (B&B) remains relatively high, indicating continued pressure within the system.

Part of this pattern may reflect operational practice, particularly a higher proportion of cases progressing directly into the relief duty rather than being resolved at the prevention stage. This would contribute to lower recorded prevention success rates and comparatively stronger relief performance. However, this does not fully account for the overall position, and the data continues to signal a need to strengthen early intervention.

In response, Oldham has established a set of targets for the next three years, aligned with MHCLG guidance, to drive improvement across prevention, temporary accommodation use, and overall system outcomes.[10]

Table 30: Local Outcomes Framework Metrics and Targets

Metric	**Baseline**	**Target Sept 2026**	**Target Sept 2027**	**Target Sept 2028**
Households with children in temporary accommodation	274 - Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	230	200	170
Households with children in temporary accommodation per 000 households	2.9% - Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	2.4%	1.9%	1.5%

[10] See Annex B: Target Baselines, Trajectories and Final Target Dates in A_Toolkit_for_Developing_Homelessness_Strategies_and_Action_Plans.pdf

Households with children in B&B over 6 weeks	8 - Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	0	0	0
Success at preventing or relieving homelessness	19.9% -Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	25%	35%	45%
Success at preventing and relieving homelessness for those experiencing multiple disadvantage	20% Dec 2025 (HCLIC)	25%	35%	45%
People sleeping rough who are long term	3 - Nov 2025 (Rough Sleeping Data Framework)	2	1	0
People sleeping rough on a single night	6 - the snapshot count in Autumn 2025 (Snapshot)	5	4	3

13. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

The following section undertakes a wider SWOT analysis of the findings of this Review, and its emerging themes. As with the previous section this will be used to develop the priorities and action plan for the new Homelessness Strategy – particularly by identifying any considerations and limitations which need to be considered.

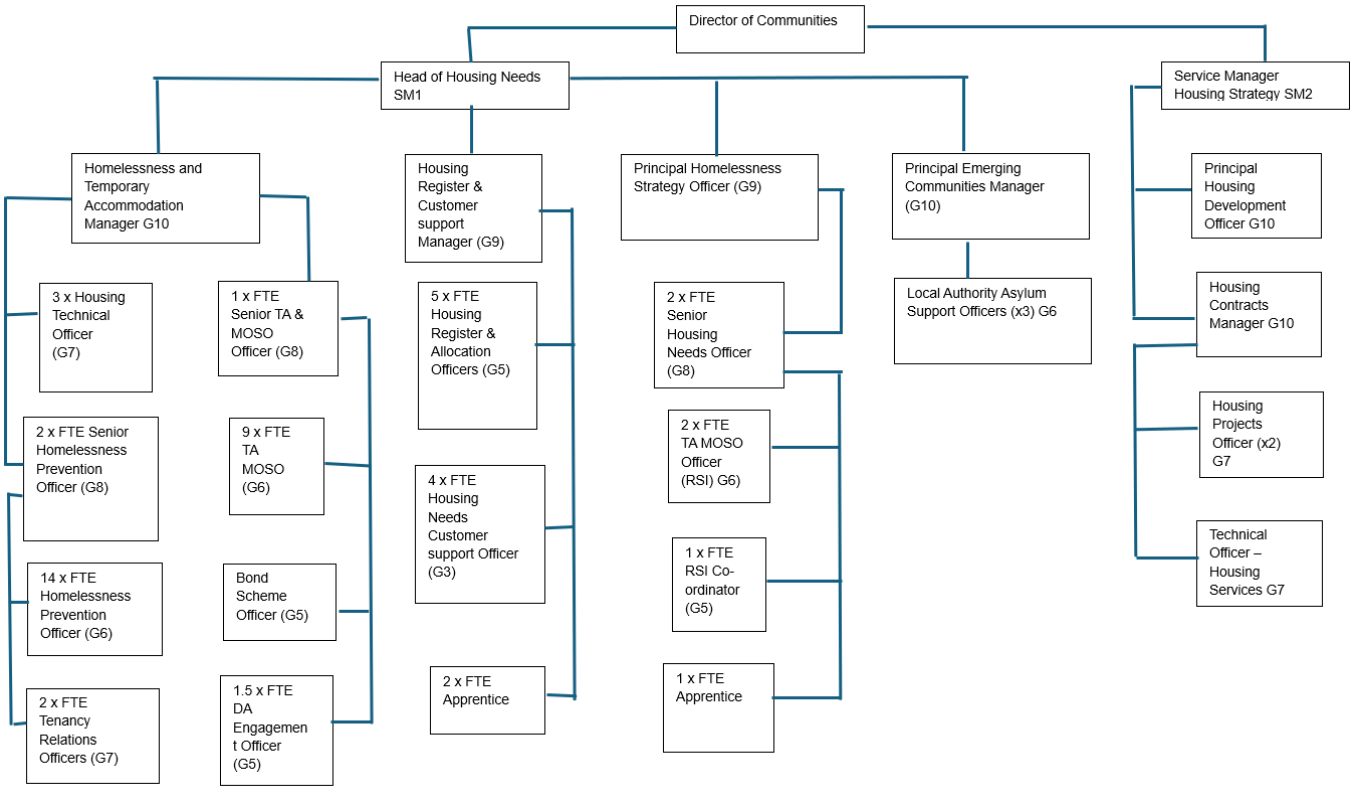
Strengths	Weaknesses
• Strong VCSE sector • Housing Needs restructure increased workforce capacity with more targeted support officers such as MOSOs and TA technical officer. • Established specialist pathways for key groups, including prison leavers, care leavers and hospital discharge. • Recent progress in reducing temporary accommodation use provides a platform for further improvement. • Strong Senior Leadership buy-in for a prevention-first strategy with stronger early intervention and pre-prevention.	• Prevention performance has weakened, with too many households presenting at crisis point. • The system remains too reactive, with rising relief demand and repeat homelessness risk. • Data and pathways are inconsistent, with under-recorded support needs and some fragmented access routes. • Relatively low volume of self-service / online advice available leading to increased frontline demand on Housing Options service • Lack of affordable housing options, limiting prevention, relief and move-on options. • Increased need for shared accommodation options • Low Local Housing Allowance rates meaning lack of options / choice available in the private rented sector

Opportunities	Threats
• A National Plan to End Homelessness (England, published December 2025) • Renters' Rights Act (first phase from 1 May 2026) • Homelessness Prevention Grant reforms from 2026/27 onwards • Local Supported Housing Strategies (first strategies due by 31 March 2027) • Supported Housing regulatory reforms (licensing expected from mid-2027) • GMCA Homelessness and Migration Budget 2026–2029 • Greater Manchester £11.7m Empty Homes and TA pressures programme (2025) • GM Live Well • AI and data predictive analysis for early prevention identification • Build a more integrated, place-based model linking housing with health, welfare, employment and community support – Live Well Oldham	• Growing demand due to volume of applications received • Ongoing housing shortages and affordability pressures may continue to outpace service response. • Continued late presentation risks higher relief demand, repeat homelessness and TA pressure. • Cost-of-living pressures, unemployment and insecure incomes will continue to drive homelessness risk. • Growing applicant complexity, including mental health, refugee move-on and multiple disadvantage, may increase frontline pressure. • Without stronger transition planning, people leaving prison, hospital, care or asylum accommodation may continue to face avoidable homelessness.

14. Resources

As with all local authorities, Oldham Council is faced with the challenge of managing increasing demand with limited resources. The council had undergone a restructure and workforce capacity improvement initiative in June 2025. Below is the updated core staffing structure within its Housing Options Service committed to the support of households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness:

Figure31: Staffing Structure 2026



Role	Number of staff	Caseload
Homelessness		
Homelessness Prevention Officer	11	40-50
Tenancy Relations Officer	2	20-30
Temporary Accommodation (TA) and Move-on Support (MOS)		
Housing Technical Officer	2	500
TA MOS Officer	7	65-70
Bond Scheme Officer	1	30-40
Domestic Abuse Engagement Officer	1	50-70
Housing Register & Allocations		
Housing Register and Allocations Officers	5	100
Customer Support		
Housing Needs & Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI)		
TA MOS Officer (RSI)	2	20-30
RSI Coordinator	1	15-35

Since the 2025 restructure, caseloads have improved significantly, reducing to around 40–50 per officer. This is in line with the national average of around 30 to 80 cases per officer and the national benchmark of around 40–60 cases per officer.[11]

New specialist roles—such as Domestic Abuse Engagement Officers, a Dual Diagnosis Mental Health Worker, Bond Scheme Officer, and Rough Sleeping Initiative staff—have strengthened targeted

[11] Local authority homelessness workforce report 2025 Local authority homelessness workforce report - GOV.UK

support and improved pathways through the system. While workforce capacity and caseload ratios now compare more favourably with similar authorities, performance outcomes still lag behind national averages, particularly in prevention success rates. Further review of staffing structures is anticipated

15. Next steps

The information in this Review will be used to formulate the new Homelessness Strategy for 2026-2031, with a focus on:

- 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

Appendix A: Key Service Mapping according to Needs

Needs	Main services / routes in
1. Immediate crisis support and essentials	• Oldham Council — Crisis and Resilience Fund; Council helpline; directory of drop-ins, shelters, food providers and homelessness support • Oldham Foodbank — emergency food parcel route for residents referred by partner agencies • Action Together / Household Support Fund community partners — community-based access to food, warm clothing, school uniform, bedding, toiletries, furniture, white goods and other emergency items • UKEFF — food aid, hot meals, food parcels, advice and signposting for people in hardship, including homeless people, families and some people with restricted eligibility • The Welcome Centre / local drop-ins / faith and community groups — food, clothing and basic essentials through community venues • Oldham Unity / Welcome Project / Oldham Baptist Church — clothing, toiletries, blankets, food and practical support, particularly for asylum seekers, refugees and destitute residents
2. Homelessness access, emergency accommodation and rough sleeping	• Oldham Council Housing / Homelessness Service — homelessness presentations, housing advice and out-of-hours homelessness access • Depaul UK / A Bed Every Night (ABEN) — rough sleeping accommodation and support route • Oldham Council / outreach and emergency routes — rough sleeping referrals, emergency homelessness contacts and local support information • RESS (Restricted Eligibility Support Service) — specialist route for single homeless people with restricted eligibility • Booth Centre — wider Greater Manchester homelessness drop-in / support route where relevant to local connections or wider pathway work • SafeNet — refuge and emergency accommodation route for people experiencing domestic abuse
3. Prevention, tenancy sustainment and housing-related support	• Oldham Council Tenancy Relations Service — private rented sector advice, landlord-tenant issues, unlawful eviction, harassment and mediation

	• KeyRing Oldham — floating support and independent living support for adults who need help to maintain a tenancy and live independently • Early Break — Pathfinder Floating Support Service for young people at risk of homelessness, sofa surfing or housing breakdown • Positive Steps Family Help — focused family support where housing instability is linked to wider family stress, parenting, money or wellbeing issues • TLC: Talk, Listen, Change — family mediation route where separation, conflict or family breakdown may place housing stability at risk • Oldham Council Housing / homelessness prevention routes — homelessness prevention and housing advice where tenancies are at risk
4. Income, debt, welfare and cost-of-living support	• Oldham Welfare Rights Service — benefits advice, appeals and tribunal support • Citizens Advice — debt and money advice • National Debtline — national free debt advice service • StepChange Debt Charity — national debt advice and repayment planning support • CAP UK (Christians Against Poverty) — debt support accessed locally through South Chadderton Methodist Church • MoneyPlus Advice / Money Wellness / Debt Advice Foundation — regional and national debt support, budgeting and money advice • UKEFF — support with benefits, bills and wellbeing alongside food provision • Energy provider hardship funds — British Gas Energy Trust, EDF Customer Support Fund, E.ON Next Energy Fund and ScottishPower Hardship Fund • Oldham Council — Crisis and Resilience Fund and cost-of-living helpline
5. Mental health, wellbeing and counselling	• NHS 111 / emergency services — urgent mental health support via 111 option 2, with 999 / A&E for immediate risk • Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust — Oldham Talking Therapies; wider adult, children's, young people's, older people's and specialist mental health services • Healthy Young Minds — children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health support • TOG / Tameside, Oldham and Glossop Mind — counselling, listening space, wellbeing and mental health navigation for adults • Relate — relationship counselling and therapeutic support where relationship breakdown contributes to housing instability • Oldham Social Prescribing — non-medical support linking people to local wellbeing, advice and community services

6. Substance misuse and dual diagnosis	• Turning Point / ROAR — adult drug and alcohol treatment, recovery and harm reduction services • Early Break — young people's drug and alcohol support, counselling and treatment • Dual Diagnosis Nurse — coordinated support where mental health and substance misuse overlap • Red Rose Recovery — peer mentoring, lived experience recovery support and recovery groups • Probation / criminal justice-linked treatment routes — referral into treatment and support where offending, recovery and housing issues overlap
7. Domestic abuse, family breakdown, mediation and family support	• Oldham Council Domestic Abuse Service — domestic abuse helpline, outreach, safety planning and IDVA support • SafeNet — refuge, children and young people's support, move-on accommodation and resettlement support • Early Help / MASH — family support route where homelessness risk is linked to wider family needs, safeguarding, parenting or vulnerability • TLC: Talk, Listen, Change — family mediation for separated partners and disputes involving children or finances • Relate — counselling and relationship support • Pennine Care Oldham Talking Therapies — therapeutic support, including couples therapy • Positive Steps Family Help — family support where conflict, parenting and wider household stress affect housing stability • Early Break Pathfinder — support for younger adults unable to remain at home or sofa surfing
8. Specialist pathways for specific client groups	• Oldham Unity — practical support, food, toiletries, clothing and service navigation for refugees and asylum seekers • British Red Cross Oldham Hub — face-to-face casework and drop-in support for refugees and asylum seekers • RESS — single homeless people with restricted eligibility • SAWN (Support and Action for Women's Network) — culturally appropriate support, advocacy, crisis support and furniture support for Black African women and families • Oldham Council Armed Forces support / SSAFA / Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club — support for veterans and armed forces households • Oldham Probation Office — probation supervision and links to rehabilitation services • Age UK Oldham — older people's advice, advocacy, falls prevention, dementia support and practical help at home • Oldham Adult Social Care — support for older people and adults with care, disability or safeguarding needs

	• OPAL Advocacy — advocacy and day support for adults with learning disabilities and autistic people • Oldham SENDIASS — SEND advice, support and mediation for children, young people and parents/carers • Autism Family Support — support for autistic people, their families and carers
9. Community connection, social support and wraparound support	• Oldham Social Prescribing — link-worker support into groups, activities, volunteering, community services and wellbeing support • SPARK Oldham CIC — community-based support including youth, family, older people's support and crisis help with food and clothing • Age UK Oldham — befriending, day care, practical support and social connection for older people • Red Rose Recovery — peer support and recovery community connections • Local VCFSE and faith/community organisations — social connection, volunteering, practical help and confidence-building support

Appendix B: Service Mapping Visual Pathway Chart

Upstream risk

(debt, welfare issues, family conflict, poor wellbeing, arrears)

↓

Early prevention

(debt advice, welfare rights, counselling, mediation, social prescribing, family support)

↓

Housing risk / prevention

(tenancy relations, floating support, youth support, domestic abuse support, income maximisation)

↓

Crisis / homelessness presentation

(housing options, out-of-hours, rough sleeping routes, refuge, emergency mental health support, food / essentials)

↓

Relief / stabilisation

(emergency accommodation, welfare support, food, mental health, substance misuse, advocacy)

↓

Move-on / recovery

(resettlement, practical support, peer support, community connection, independent living support)

↓

Tenancy sustainment / long-term stability

(financial resilience, community support, social care, health support, repeat-homelessness prevention)

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Figure 27: Were you provided with temporary accommodation?

Figure 28: Local Outcomes Framework – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Metrics

Figure 29: Oldham's Performance under Local Outcomes Framework metrics

Figure 30: Oldham & Nearest Neighbour Comparator Performance Comparison

Figure 31: Staffing Structure 2026

Emergency Powers Decision Report

GM Joint Minerals and Waste Plan

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Planning and Development
Directorate: Growth
Report Author: Clare Davison, Senior Planning Officer / Ruth McKay-Mills, Graduate Planning Officer
Email: clare.davison@oldham.gov.uk / ruth.mckay-mills@oldham.gov.uk

Date of Decision: 30 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 new plan making legislative framework requires 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 the authorities. The proposed delegations will enable the plan to be progressed in a timely fashion and in line with regulations. Not having appropriate delegations in place could result in difficulties in producing the plan to the 30-month timeline required by legislation.

3. Reason for urgency

Appendix 3 of the Report to the Chief Executive on GM Joint Minerals and Waste Plan, sets out the proposed initial timetable for producing the joint plan. As explained in section 2.3 of the report, the arrangements for preparing the joint plan require the Greater Manchester authorities to give formal notice of commencement (Regulation 44) by 31st December 2026 and to pass Gateway 1 (Regulation 46) by 30th April 2027 (after having completed an initial scoping consultation). These early milestones are set by Government and cannot be altered. As such, all Greater Manchester authorities are seeking approval of the proposed delegations at this time to enable formal notice of commencement to be made.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

The Minerals and Waste Plan is a joint plan, and all Greater Manchester authorities are seeking approval of the proposed delegations at this time to enable formal notice of commencement to be made and ensure that the appropriate delegations are in place. Having agreed to produce a joint plan some of the required steps must be completed simultaneously by all the authorities, and not taking the decision sought will prevent Oldham Council from doing so.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

As set out in paragraph 6.1 of the report, there are no immediate financial implications resulting from the recommendations. Should future decisions require additional funding, resources or expenditure, these will be identified and presented through a subsequent report for consideration and approval.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 5 November 2026
Comments

There are no immediate financial implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report. The proposed approvals relate primarily to governance, decision-making and the progression of plan-making activities, including the delegation of authority to the Assistant Director of Planning & Development to undertake executive decisions necessary to advance the relevant programmes and statutory processes.
At this stage, any costs associated with progressing the identified activities are expected to be met from existing approved budgets. Should future decisions arising from the plan-making process result in a requirement for additional funding, resources, consultancy support, capital investment or other expenditure commitments, these will be subject to separate financial assessment and approval through the Council's established governance and budget-setting arrangements.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alan Evans (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Date 2 November 2026
Comments

For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required. In the absence of the appointment by the Council of a Leader, Deputy Leader or Cabinet members, in accordance with the recent amendments to paragraph 3.6 of Part 4D (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council's Constitution, the Chief Executive may carry out executive functions, subject to the Access to Information Rules.

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Report to the Chief Executive

GM Joint Minerals and Waste Plan

Officer Contact: Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive - Place

Report Author: Clare Davison, Senior Planning Officer / Ruth McKay-Mills, Graduate Planning Officer

Email: Clare.Davison@oldham.gov.uk / ruth.mckay-mills@oldham.gov.uk

30 November 2026

Reason for Decision

The new plan making legislative framework requires 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 authorities. The proposed delegations will enable the plan to be progressed in a timely fashion and in line with regulations. Not having appropriate delegations in place could result in difficulties in producing the plan to the 30-month timeline required by legislation.

Recommendations

The Chief Executive is requested to:

1. Approve the decisions set out in the table at Appendix; and
2. Approve delegated authority, to the extent not already captured by existing delegations or delegated to AGMA, to the Assistant Director of Planning & 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.

GM's Joint Minerals and Waste Plan

1 Background

1.1. The ten Local Authorities in Greater Manchester are the waste and minerals planning authorities for their respective areas. Each authority is responsible for land use planning matters for waste and minerals development. The 10 Greater Manchester authorities worked together to produce a Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document (the Waste Plan), adopted in 2012, and a Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan Document (the Minerals Plan) which was adopted in 2013.

1.2. The Waste Plan considers all types of waste arisings, including: construction, demolition and excavation waste; commercial and industrial waste; hazardous waste; and Local Authority Collected Waste. It allocates sites and areas to provide sufficient opportunities for waste management facilities across Greater Manchester and provides a policy framework for determining planning applications for new waste management facilities. Sites needed to deliver household waste management strategies and individual waste management streams e.g. recovery, recycling anaerobic digestion of food waste would be identified and safeguarded in the Waste Plan.

1.3. The Minerals Plan provides a guide to operators and the public about where mineral extraction may take place in future and safeguards mineral resources from other forms of development.

1.4. The Waste Plan and the Minerals Plan form part of the development plan for each of the 10 authorities and planning applications for minerals and waste development are determined in accordance with these plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise, in line with planning law.

1.5. By law, local authorities must ensure that waste and minerals planning policies are regularly monitored and kept up to date. This will give greater certainty to both industry and communities about where waste facilities and minerals infrastructure will be located.

1.6. Over recent years, including during the preparation of the Places for Everyone (PfE) plan, concerns have been raised regarding the need for the plans to be reviewed and updated, given the passage of time and changes to national policy since they were adopted. In response to these concerns, a review was carried out and concluded that the policies in the plans are no longer effective in addressing specific local issues and, therefore, that both plans should be updated in whole.

1.7. The conclusion of the review of the existing plans was reported to the AGMA Executive in March 2025. At that meeting, the AGMA Executive Board agreed to replace the existing Greater Manchester minerals and waste plans by working together to produce a single, Greater Manchester Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (GMJMWP).

1.8. Since that meeting (over summer 2025), all 10 Greater Manchester local authorities (GM LAs) agreed to the principle of a new GM joint minerals and waste plan and agreed Executive/Cabinet approval to delegate certain plan making responsibilities to the AGMA Executive, while retaining Full Council approval, including adoption of the final plan, once it has been through the examination in public.

1.9. Authorities have also since included a commitment to review the Minerals and Waste Plans in their Local Development Schemes (LDS) – an LDS is a document which sets out a forward look of development plans being produced by the local planning authority.

1.10. Work on the GMJMWP is underway, albeit at a very informal, early evidence gathering stage, given the fact that a new plan making system has only just come into force. Although it is a plan of the 10 authorities, not a mayoral plan, and will form part of the authority's development plans on adoption, the work is being coordinated by the Planning Team at the GMCA, in a similar way to that of the Places for Everyone Plan (PfE).

Link to Corporate Plan and Priorities

1.11 The Great Manchester Joint Minerals and Waste Plan relates to Oldham's Corporate Plan (*Ready for the future)* and Priorities through impacts on two of the corporate priorities identified in the accompanying Impact Assessment (Appendix 2). Oldham's three corporate priorities set out in the Corporate Plan are; Green And Growing; A Great Place To Live; and Happier Healthier Lives. Adopting the GMJMWP links to Corporate Priority 1: Green and Growing, as a structured policy for management of minerals and waste will highlight Oldham's ambition to grow its reputation within sustainability which may boost green investment and create job opportunities. The GMJMWP may also link to Corporate Priority 2: A Great Place To Live, because it will help to ensure current and future developments are properly serviced by waste and mineral management facilities.

2 Current Position

2.1 Legislative change impacting the making of the Plan

2.1.1 Government has recently published new legislation for plan making. The GMJMWP will need to be produced under these new regulations.

2.1.2 The intention of the new plan making system is to speed up plan making, with the new process expected to take 30 months from start to finish. This is much faster than the average time taken to prepare a plan under the existing system and establishing appropriate governance arrangements is vital to meeting these challenging timescales.

2.1.3 The new system introduces new terminology/stages in the plan making process. The initial stage is referred to as "get ready" which culminates with the first "Gateway". Following Gateway 1, we move fully into plan preparation, with further consultation and two further "Gateways" (2 and 3) to pass through. After Gateway 3, the plan is submitted for independent Examination and then follows the adoption process. It should be noted that local planning authorities should only enter Gateway 3 when they consider that their plan is ready for independent examination. At that point in time, the ten LAs will be asked to approve the plan for submission to the assessor and, if successful through Gateway 3, for examination.

2.2 Proposed approvals process

2.2.1 When the 10 authorities gave approval in summer 2025 to delegate the formulation and preparation of the GMJMWP to the AGMA Executive Board, it was envisaged that these would be sufficient, with each Council giving approval for publication, submission and adoption of the plan. However, in light of the changes to the steps in plan making and the emphasis on speed, delegations secured in 2025, for producing the Joint Minerals and Waste Plan have been reviewed and need to be amended. This will ensure the plan can be progressed in a timely fashion, while retaining appropriate oversight at key stages in the new plan making process.

2.2.2 The table, provided at Appendix 1 of this report, sets out the various tasks/stages in the plan making process and proposes the appropriate/necessary delegation, for each stage.

As detailed, it is proposed that some tasks be delegated to Officers within the Local Authority (in consultation with Members as necessary) and some, like final adoption, will remain with each Full Council. It was proposed that some tasks should be delegated to AGMA, as the joint committee, but as Oldham Council does not currently have a Leader or Cabinet, pursuant to the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012, officers do not have the power to delegate executive functions to another local authority.

2.3 Proposed timetable for producing the GMJMWP

2.3.1 A table of the proposed initial timetable for producing the plan is provided at Appendix 3 of this report. Although local planning authorities can set the timings of most stages, within the overall 30 month "envelope", transitional arrangements exist for plans as outdated as the existing GM Joint Waste Plan and GM Joint Minerals Plan. These arrangements require the Greater Manchester authorities to give formal notice of commencement (Regulation 44) by 31st December 2026 and to pass Gateway 1 (Regulation 46) by 30th April 2027 (after having completed an initial scoping consultation). Therefore, these early milestones are set by Government and cannot be altered.

2.3.2 The legislative framework requires plan timetable to be updated regularly, with revisions to be published on the website. Updates to the timetable will be carried out in accordance with the relevant delegations secured through this report.

2.3.3 Some of the notices that need to be issued are required imminently and so specific approval to issue those notices is recommended by this Report.

2.4 Proposed scoping consultation

2.4.1 The new plan making system introduces a requirement for an early consultation on the types of matters that the plan should include and how to approach future engagement during preparation of the GMJMWP. This stage is called the 'Scoping Consultation' and must be at least 21 days in length. It provides the local community and other key stakeholders with the opportunity to have their say at the very start of the plan-making process. The Scoping Consultation cannot take place until after the 10 LAs have given notice of intention to commence the GMJMWP (December 2026) but must be completed by Gateway 1 (April 2027). Therefore, in the timetable at Appendix 3, it is proposed that the Scoping Consultation will take place during January / February 2027.

2.4.2 It is recommended that approval of the exact content of the Scoping Consultation is delegated as set out in Appendix 1 but it is likely to invite views on:

i. The matters covered by the existing Minerals and Waste Plans and whether/how these matters should be included in the GMJMWP,
ii. Whether there are any new relevant topics that should be considered as part of preparation of the GMJMWP.
iii. Different engagement activities (as based on the LAs existing Statements of Community Involvement) and how these might be used to shape the future approach to consultation and engagement in preparing the GMJMWP.

2.4.3 The Scoping Consultation will not set out policy direction or draft policies.

2.5 Call for Sites

2.5.1 As part of the evidence gathering stage, it will be necessary to invite stakeholders, including landowners, developers and operators to respond to a 'Call for Sites'. Given the scope of the plan, this will be limited to suggestions for possible sites for future minerals and waste development only, it will not be a call for general development sites. For reasons of efficiency and given the 30-month timescale for producing the plan, it is proposed to undertake this call for sites simultaneously with the Scoping Consultation (currently planned for January / February 2027). The submission of sites through this process, does not

automatically result in the sites being included in the GMJMWP or receiving future planning permission. Instead, it enables the LAs to understand what land might be available for minerals and waste and for detailed assessment of this land as part of the plan preparation.

2.6 Next Steps

2.6.1 Each LA has an obligation to publish the timetable (see proposed timetable set out in Appendix 3) and formal notice to commence plan making. Therefore, each LA will need to update their website, on the same day, no later than 31st December 2026, linking through to the relevant page(s) on the GMCA website which host the GMJMWP documentation

2.6.2 Following necessary approvals, as agreed at this meeting, the GMCA (on behalf of the other nine LAs) and Oldham Council will publish the Scoping Consultation documentation for a minimum of 21 days and will undertake a call for minerals and waste sites concurrently with that consultation.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1: To approve the following recommendations:

a) Approve the decisions set out in the table at Appendix 1; and
b) Approve delegated authority, to the extent not already captured by existing delegations, to Assistant Director of Planning & 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.

Advantages of Option 1

The advantage of selecting Option 1 is that approving delegated authority will enable the plan to be progressed in a timely fashion and in line with regulations.

Disadvantages of Option 1

There are no disadvantages of selecting Option 1.

3.2 Option 2: To not approve the following recommendations

a) Approve the decisions set out in the table at Appendix 1; and
b) Approve delegated authority, to the extent not already captured by existing delegations, to Assistant Director of Planning & 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.

Advantages of Option 2

There are no advantages of selecting Option 2.

Disadvantages of Option 2

The disadvantage of selecting Option 2 is that appropriate delegations not being in place could result in difficulties in producing the plan within the 30-month timeline required by legislation.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 The preferred option is Option 1: To approve the recommendations set out in paragraph 3.1.

5 Consultation

5.1 To date, as work is at informal early evidence gathering stage, no formal consultation has taken place. A Scoping Consultation and a Call for Sites consultation is planned for January / February 2027 as set out in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 above.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications resulting from the recommendations within this report. Should future decisions require additional funding, resources or expenditure, these will be identified and presented through a subsequent report for consideration and approval.

(Mohammed Hussain)

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The new plan-making requirements are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026. Statutory Guidance has also been issued. The content and recommendations in this Report reflect those Regulations and Guidance and sets out the steps now required in relation to progressing a joint waste and minerals DPD, including the decisions that need to be made to allow AGMA, as a joint committee of the 10 GM authorities, to formulate and prepare the joint plan. This report also sets out the decisions that are reserved to each of the Councils, and which cannot therefore be taken by AGMA as a joint committee.

7.2 Section 9E of the Local Government Act 2000 provides that subject to any provision made under section 9EA or 9EB, any functions which, under executive arrangements, are the responsibility of a leader and cabinet executive may be discharged by the Leader or the Leader may arrange for the discharge of those functions by the Cabinet, a Cabinet member, a Cabinet committee, an area committee or an officer of the authority. Therefore there is wide discretion to delegate executive functions, including to Council officers, but the decision to delegate lies with the Leader. Section 9EA of the Act enables the Secretary of State to make regulations for enabling an executive of a local authority to arrange for the discharge of any functions which under executive arrangements are the responsibility of the executive by another local authority or by the executive of another local authority or a committee or specified member of such an executive.

7.3 The Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 no. 1019) were made pursuant to section 9EA. The Regulations provide at Regulation 4 that in an authority with a Leader and Cabinet (as in Oldham), the persons with the power to make arrangements under Regulation 5 are the Leader (as respects any functions which are the responsibility of the Cabinet), the Cabinet, a member of the Cabinet other than the Leader, or a committee of the Cabinet, as respects any functions which by virtue of section 9E of the Act may be discharged by the Cabinet, that member or that committee. Officers do not have the power to make arrangements under Regulation 5.

7.4 Regulation 5 provides that the person with the power to make arrangements under Regulation 5 (by virtue of Regulation 4) may make arrangements for a function which is the responsibility of the executive of the local authority to be discharged by another local

authority or the executive of another local authority. Any arrangements made under Regulation 5 shall not prevent the person who made the arrangements from exercising the functions to which they relate and shall be made with the other local authority concerned. Consequently, unlike with other executive functions which can be discharged by officers pursuant to section 9E of the Local Government Act 2000, by virtue of Regulations 4 and 5 of the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012, the power to delegate an executive function to another local authority can only be exercised by the Leader, the Cabinet, a member of the Cabinet other than the Leader, or a committee of the Cabinet. The power cannot be exercised by an officer.)A Evans)

8 Procurement Implications

8.1 There are no immediate procurement implications contained within this report. Should any procurement activity arise or be required as a result of this report, then Procurement must be contacted for advice and support.

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

9 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

9.1 Yes - see Appendix 2 Impact Assessment Greater Manchester Joint Minerals and Waste Plan

10 Key Decision

10.1 Yes

11 Key Decision Reference

11.1 KDD-26-41

12 Appendices & Background Papers

Appendix 1 – Proposed Delegations
Appendix 2 – Impact Assessment Greater Manchester Joint Minerals and Waste Plan
Appendix 3 – Greater Manchester Joint Minerals and Waste Plan Timetable

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 1 – Proposed Delegations

Stage / activity approval is needed for	Regulation	What documents are required at this stage?	Propose to delegate this decision?	Decision / Delegation / Note	Chief Executive delegating to who
Publication of the initial/first timetable		Timetable	No. Covered by recommendation 1 of this report	Decision	Not applicable
Publication of subsequent timetable updates		Timetable	Yes	Delegation	Assistant Director of Planning & Development
Issuing the notice of intention to commence minerals and waste plan document preparation	Reg.44	Notice of intention to commence	No. Covered by recommendation 1 of this report	Decision	Not applicable
Decision to publish the scoping consultation and any decisions necessary to facilitate that including approving the content of that consultation and the date it will be published	Reg.45	Consultation documents	Yes	Delegation	Assistant Director of Planning & Development
Gateway 1: (responsibility for preparation and publication of the self-assessment summary, including approval of the self-assessment of readiness for minerals and waste plan document)	Reg.46	Self-assessment Summary	Yes	Delegation	Assistant Director of Planning & Development

Stage / activity approval is needed for	Regulation	What documents are required at this stage?	Propose to delegate this decision?	Decision / Delegation / Note	Chief Executive delegating to who
Publishing the summary of responses to the scoping consultation	Reg.47	Summary of scoping consultation	Yes	Delegation	Assistant Director of Planning & Development
Publishing the consultation on proposed minerals and waste plan document content and evidence	Reg.48	Consultation documents SEA scoping	Yes	Delegation	Assistant Director of Planning & Development
Publishing the summary of consultation on proposed minerals and waste plan document content and evidence	Reg.49	Summary of consultation	Yes	Delegation	Assistant Director of Planning & Development
Agree preparation of Policies Map	Reg. 50	Map of proposed minerals and waste plan policies	Yes	Delegation	Assistant Director of Planning & Development
Gateway 2: Submission of the material for advice	Reg.51	Documents to be submitted to the gateway assessor, including: • Cover letter with summary, issues and list of supporting documents. • Timetable • Project Initiation Document (PID)	Yes	Delegation	Assistant Director of Planning & Development

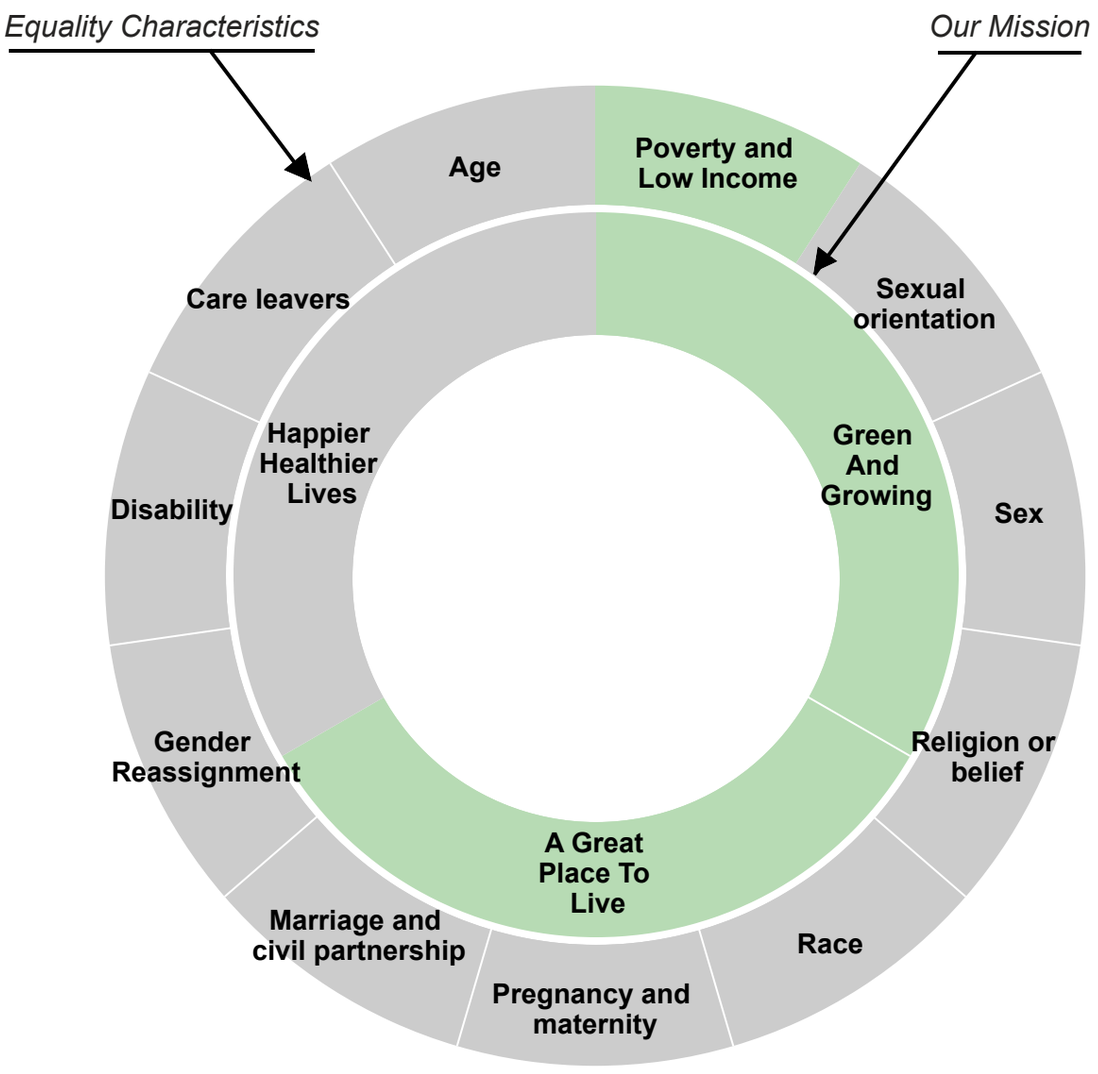
Stage / activity approval is needed for	Regulation	What documents are required at this stage?	Propose to delegate this decision?	Decision / Delegation / Note	Chief Executive delegating to who
		• Draft Statement of compliance • Draft Statement of Soundness			
Publishing the consultation on the proposed minerals and waste plan document	Reg.52	Consultation documents	Yes	Delegation	Assistant Director of Planning & Development
Publishing the summary of consultation on the proposed minerals and waste plan document	Reg.55	Summary of consultation	Yes	Delegation	Assistant Director of Planning & Development
Gateway 3: Submission of the material for the prescribed requirements assessment (and repeat of Gateway 3 if required)	Reg.56 (Reg.58)	Documents as set out in reg. 57 “prescribed requirements”	No. Full Council decision	Note	Not Applicable
Submission of documents to Secretary of State	Reg.59	• Policies map • Gateway 3 completion statement • Summary of consultation • Representations • A statement of compliance • A statement of soundness	No. Full Council decision	Note	Not Applicable

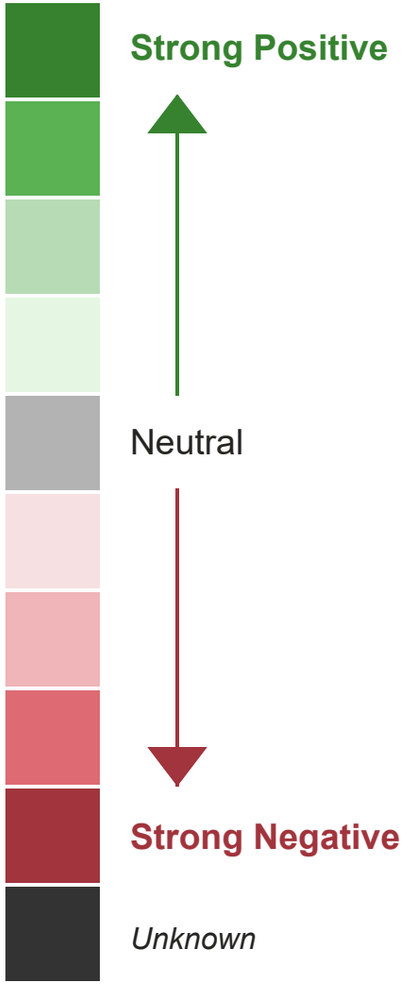
Stage / activity approval is needed for	Regulation	What documents are required at this stage?	Propose to delegate this decision?	Decision / Delegation / Note	Chief Executive delegating to who
		• An environmental report • If applicable, a statement setting out why the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects • Supporting documents			
Publishing the recommendations and reasons of the examiner	Reg.62	Recommendations and reasons of the examiner	No approval needed	Note	Not Applicable
Adoption of a minerals and waste plan document	Reg.64	• The minerals and waste plan • Adoption Statement	No. Full Council decision	Note	Not Applicable

Greater Manchester Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (GMJMWP)

Ruth Mckay-Mills : in progress

Portfolio	
Growth	
Directorate	
Place	
Service/Team	
Growth	
Is this IA related to a Budget Reduction proposal?	**No**





Equality Characteristics

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Age	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Care leavers	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Disability	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Race	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Religion or belief	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Sex	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Sexual orientation	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
Poverty and Low Income	Moderate Positive	Possible	Long Term	2	Providing sufficient waste and mineral management facilities to meet future capacity could have a possible moderate positive impact on the Poverty and Low Income equality characteristics because by prioritising sustainable waste management it will protect residents from adverse environmental effects. With low income neighbourhoods being typically located closest to waste management facilities.

Our Mission / Corporate Priorities

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Happier Healthier Lives	Neutral	Possible	Long Term	0	
A Great Place To Live	Moderate Positive	Possible	Long Term	2	With the ambition to deliver a new neighbourhood of 2,000 homes, adopting the GMJMWP may have a possible moderate positive impact on corporate priority 2: A Great Place To Live because it will deliver current legislation to ensure capacity for current and future developments to be properly serviced by waste and mineral management facilities.
Green And Growing	Moderate Positive	Possible	Long Term	2	Adopting the GMJMWP may have a possible moderate positive impact on the corporate priority 1: Green and Growing as a structured policy for management of minerals and waste will highlight Oldham's ambition to grow its reputation within sustainability which may boost green investment and create job opportunities.

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Appendix 3 – Greater Manchester Joint Minerals and Waste Plan Timetable

Plan-making Stage	Date
Give notice of intention to commence Minerals and Waste Plan preparation	31 December 2026
Publish Minerals and Waste Plan timetable	31 December 2026
Start of Scoping Consultation	15 January 2027
Scoping Consultation Closes	26 February 2027
Publish Gateway 1 (self-assessment summary)	30 April 2027
Notice of Minerals and Waste Plan content and evidence consultation	21 January 2028
Consultation on proposed Minerals and Waste Plan content and evidence closes	3 March 2028
Submit Gateway 2 (request observations and advice from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS))	19 May 2028
Notice of proposed Minerals and Waste Plan consultation	1 September 2028
Consultation on proposed Minerals and Waste Plan closes	27 October 2028
Submit Gateway 3 (request prescribed requirements assessment)	2 February 2029
Submit Minerals and Waste Plan for Examination	30 March 2029
Adoption of Minerals and Waste Plan	30 October 2029

Emergency Powers Decision Report

Digital and Data Strategy Documents

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Technology & Digital Services
Directorate: Corporate Resources
Report Author: Matthew Gratton
Email: Matthew.Gratton@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

Technology, Digital and Data Services (TDS) have produced strategies for Oldham Council regarding Digital Technology and Data. The purpose of presenting these documents for an executive approval decision is to ensure the strategies are understood by the Executive / Group Leaders as they form the backbone of all new technology, digital and data project work.

Therefore, approval is sought for both:

a) The Digital Data and Technology Strategy 2025 to 2030
Oldham Council is committed to harnessing digital, technology, and data innovations to deliver exceptional, resident-focussed services whilst driving efficiency and sustainability. This strategy outlines a 5-year plan to transition from hybrid to full cloud infrastructure, integrate AI, Robotic Process Automation (RPA), AI agents, and broader automation tools. It aligns with central government priorities, including the UK Government's *Blueprint for Modern Digital Government* (January 2025) and the *Transforming for a Digital Future Roadmap* (2022-2025), which emphasise modernising public services through technology to enhance productivity and resident engagement.

b) The Data Strategy 2025 to 2030
Oldham Council is poised to transform its data landscape, leveraging Microsoft technologies to deliver resident-focussed services whilst driving sustainability and innovation. This strategy outlines a 5-year plan (2025-2030)

to evolve from fragmented data silos, with no central corporate home for data and analysts embedded in business units, to a unified, AI-enhanced ecosystem using Microsoft Fabric, Co-pilot agents, Power BI, and automation tools. It aligns with the UK's National Data Strategy (NDS) and the Transforming for a Digital Future Roadmap (2022-2025), emphasising data-driven public services for better productivity and resident engagement. This builds upon the ongoing discovery and transformation programme, which provides key deliverables like AI and Power BI applications for data insights, ensuring these outputs inform a council-wide data framework without redundancy.

3. Reason for urgency

Executive approval of the Digital and Data Strategy documents ensures a shared organisational commitment to digital and data transformation, providing the governance, direction and investment framework needed to improve services, deliver efficiencies and support better outcomes for residents.

With multiple TDS papers being submitted for approval it is essential to understand the context within which they are requested and hence important for Oldham Council in under pinning technical infrastructure for future change.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

The risk of not securing Executive approval could lead to inconsistent decision-making, governance, missed opportunities for digital transformation, and reduced awareness that technology and data investments are aligned to the Council's corporate priorities and long-term service objectives.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

There are no finances requested and therefore there is no direct financial impact.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 7 October 2026
Comments

The approval of the Digital, Data and Technology Strategy 2025-2030 and the Data Strategy 2025-2030 does not create any additional financial commitments for the Council. The strategies provide a strategic framework for future digital, technology, and data transformation activities across the organisation.

Any future projects, programmes or initiatives requiring investment will be subject to separate business cases and the Council's decision-making and budget approval processes.

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 Chief Executive

Digital & Data Strategy Documents

Officer Contact: Matthew Gratton, Director of Digital

Report Author: Lindsey Al-Basri, Head of IT Projects
Email: Lindsey.Al-Basri@oldham.gov.uk

2nd November 2026

Reason for Decision
Technology, Digital and Data Services (TDS) have produced two strategies for Oldham Council regarding Digital Technology and Data. These strategies are required to be approved by the Executive team.

Recommendations
Technology, Digital and Data Services (TDS) have produced two strategies for Oldham Council regarding Digital Technology and Data. The purpose of presenting these documents for an executive approval decision is to ensure the strategies are understood by the Executive / Group Leaders as they form the backbone of all new technology, digital and data project work.

Therefore, approval is sought for both:

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

b. **The Data Strategy 2025 to 2030**

Digital & Data Strategy Documents

1 Background

1.1 Approved Digital and Data Strategies are important for Oldham Council because they provide the agreed direction, governance framework and organisational commitment needed to modernise services and ensure technology and data investments support the Council's priorities.

1.2 Oldham Council is committed to harnessing digital, technology, and data innovations to deliver exceptional, resident-focussed services whilst driving efficiency and sustainability. **The Digital Data and Technology Strategy 2025 to 2030** outlines a 5-year plan to transition from hybrid to full cloud infrastructure, integrate AI, Robotic Process Automation (RPA), AI agents, and broader automation tools. It aligns with central government priorities, including the UK Government's *Blueprint for Modern Digital Government* (January 2025) and the *Transforming for a Digital Future Roadmap* (2022-2025), which emphasise modernising public services through technology to enhance productivity and resident engagement.

1.3 Oldham Council is poised to transform its data landscape, leveraging Microsoft technologies to deliver resident-focussed services whilst driving sustainability and innovation. **The Data Strategy 2025 to 2030** outlines a 5-year plan (2025-2030) to evolve from fragmented data silos, with no central corporate home for data and analysts embedded in business units, to a unified, AI-enhanced ecosystem using Microsoft Fabric, Co-pilot agents, Power BI, and automation tools. It aligns with the UK's National Data Strategy (NDS) and the Transforming for a Digital Future Roadmap (2022-2025), emphasising data-driven public services for better productivity and resident engagement. This builds upon the ongoing discovery and transformation programme, which provides key deliverables like AI and Power BI applications for data insights, ensuring these outputs inform a council-wide data framework without redundancy.

2 Current Position

2.1 At present, Oldham Council does not have approved corporate Digital, Technology and Data Strategies. As a result, there is no formally endorsed framework against which digital and technology investments can be consistently aligned, prioritised and governed across the organisation. The proposed strategies being presented establish this framework and support a coordinated approach to future transformation activity.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1: Do Nothing and continue to operate with any formal technology strategies governing TDS.
Reason for Rejection: By not having referenceable strategies for digital and data, this could lead to inconsistent decision making, weaker governance arrangements, missed opportunities for digital transformation, reduced awareness that technology and data investments should be aligned to corporate priorities and long-term service objectives.

3.2 Option 2: To operate with an overall Digital and Technology Strategy and a specific Data Strategy. This is the preferred option.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 The preferred option is Option 2, for TDS to operate with approved Digital, Data and Technology strategies which will provide the following benefits:

Provides a clear long-term direction
The Digital, Data and Technology Strategies set out a five-year plan for how the Council will use technology, digital services, cloud infrastructure, AI, automation and data to improve services and operate more efficiently. Without an approved strategy, future decisions may be taken in isolation rather than as part of a coordinated plan.

Ensures investment decisions are aligned to Council priorities
Executive approval demonstrates that technology and data initiatives support the Council's wider corporate objectives and service ambitions. This helps ensure resources are focused on agreed priorities and deliver benefits for residents.

Strengthens governance and accountability
This report highlights that executive approval provides the governance framework needed to oversee digital and data transformation. This creates a clear basis for decision making, prioritization, and monitoring of future projects and investments.

Supports service improvement and better outcomes for residents
Both strategies are designed to enable more resident-focused services through improved use of technology, automation, AI and data-driven decision making. The intention is to improve service delivery while increasing efficiency and sustainability.

Creates a shared organisational commitment
Approval of the strategy documents ensures a shared organisational commitment to digital and data transformation across the Council. This is important because successful transformation requires all services to work towards common objectives rather than developing separate approaches

5 Consultation

5.1 The strategies have been socialized around the various DMTs and other interested parties across the Council.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The approval of the Digital, Data and Technology Strategy 2025-2030 and the Data Strategy 2025-2030 does not create any additional financial commitments for the Council. The strategies provide the overarching framework and direction for future digital, technology and data transformation activities across the organisation.

6.2 Any projects, programmes or initiatives requiring investment will be subject to separate business cases, governance arrangements and the Council's budget approval processes. Funding, affordability and value for money will be assessed and approved on a case-by-case basis before any expenditure is committed.

(Matthew Kearns – Finance Manager)

7 Legal Implications

7.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from approval of the strategies. The Report author should ensure that any equality, data protection and governance implications arising from the implementation of the strategies have been appropriately considered. Any future projects, initiatives or decisions arising from the strategies will be subject to separate consideration and compliance with applicable legal/procurement and governance requirements.

– Sukie Kaur – Commercial and Procurement Solicitor

8. **Procurement Implications**

8.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this report. However, it should be noted that, in respect of any third-party expenditure associated with this Strategy, the Commercial Procurement Unit will ensure that the Council's Contract Procedure Rules are adhered to, together with all relevant procurement regulations. Senga Henstock, ICT Senior Buyer, Commercial Procurement Unit, 3rd Sept 2026

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

No Impact has been identified

9.1 **Key Decision**

10.1 Yes

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 KDD-26-15

12 **Background Papers**

12.1 The Cabinet is presented with 2 strategy documents submitted with this cabinet paper for review and approval:

- **The Digital Data and Technology Strategy 2025 to 2030**
- **The Data Strategy 2025 to 2030**

13 **Appendices**

13.1 N/A

Data Strategy

Empowering Decisions for an Inclusive Future

2025 to 2030

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Oldham Council is poised to transform its data landscape, leveraging Microsoft technologies to deliver resident focused services whilst driving sustainability and innovation. This strategy outlines a 5 year plan (2025-2030) to evolve from fragmented data silos, with no central corporate home for data and analysts embedded in business units, to a unified, AI enhanced ecosystem using Microsoft Fabric, Co-pilot agents, Power BI, and automation tools. It aligns with the UK's National Data Strategy (NDS) and the Transforming for a Digital Future Roadmap (2022-2025), emphasising data driven public services for better productivity and resident engagement. This builds upon the ongoing discovery and transformation programme, which provides key deliverables like AI and Power BI applications for data insights, ensuring these outputs inform a council wide data framework without redundancy.

1.2 Key enablers include integration with Microsoft Azure for seamless back office connectivity, drawing on best practices in local government. The focus is on transforming services such as adults' and children's social care through predictive analytics, automated workflows, and real time insights, whilst prioritising ethical governance and digital inclusion. A key proposal is the creation of a centralised corporate data team within the Technology and Digital Service (TDS) to provide a dedicated home for data efforts, enhancing organisational impact by unifying expertise and fostering a data driven culture, as recommended in national surveys and guidance. The transformation programme outputs, such as benchmarking analyses and embedded dashboards, will be leveraged to build this framework, demonstrating value from the investment by informing demand management strategies.

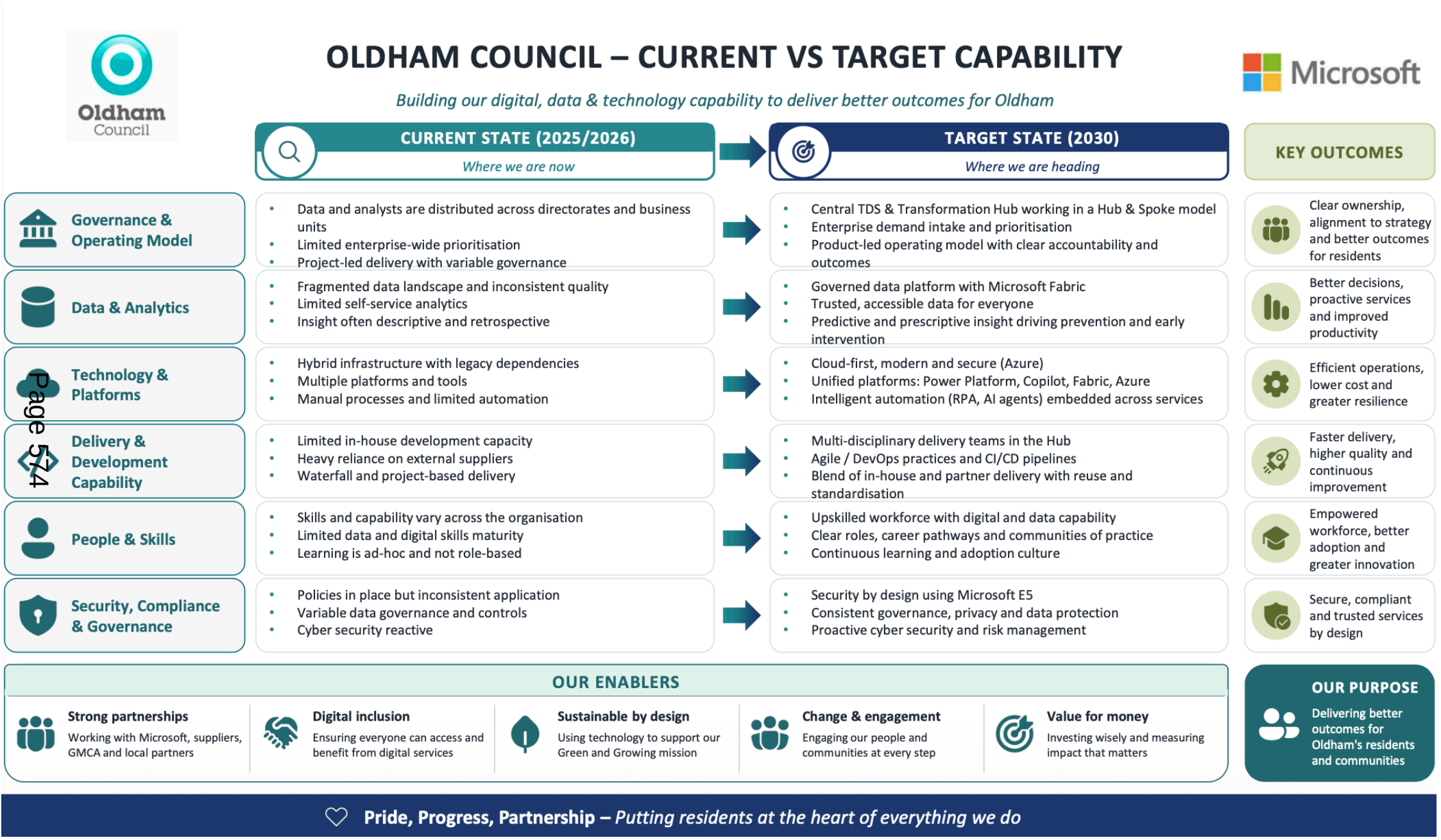
1.3 Expected outcomes include 20-30% efficiency gains, enhanced resident satisfaction, reduced costs through optimised resource allocation, and lower environmental impact via cloud based operations. This strategy centres the resident experience, fosters partnerships with local businesses in Greater Manchester, and demonstrates improved outcomes, and alignment with Oldham's Corporate Plan "Ready for the Future" (2024-27) and Borough Plan "Pride, Progress, Partnership," while maximising the transformation programme's contributions.

2 Introduction and Context

2.1 The public sector is under pressure to deliver efficient, accessible services amid rising demands, budget constraints, and technological advancements. According to the State of Digital Government Review (2025), outdated data systems hinder effective service delivery. For Oldham, the current Azure environment holds valuable data but lacks strong integration with back office systems, leading to silos that limit insights and efficiency. Additionally, data currently has no dedicated corporate home, with analysts dispersed across business units, resulting in inconsistent practices and reduced strategic impact, as highlighted in surveys on local government data capacity.

2.2 Figure 1 (reproduced from the Digital, Data and Technology Strategy) illustrates the current versus target capability position that this Data Strategy is designed to close. Of particular relevance are the shifts in Data & Analytics (from fragmented landscape and retrospective insight to a governed Microsoft Fabric platform with predictive and prescriptive insight) and Governance & Operating Model (from distributed analysts to a central TDS & Transformation Hub working in a Hub and Spoke model). These changes provide the foundation for the five data pillars that follow.

Figure 1: Focus on data and governance



2.3 This strategy addresses these challenges by building on the Digital, Data and Technology Strategy 2025-2030 (Pillar 3: Data Excellence) and the AI and Automation Policy, incorporating Microsoft Fabric for unified data management, Co-pilot agents for intelligent automation, Power BI for visualisation, and AI for advanced analytics. It draws inspiration from strategies in local government that emphasise data for decision making and service delivery, focussing on roles, processes, and technology for informed decisions. To overcome the decentralised structure, the strategy proposes establishing a centralised corporate data team within TDS, aligning with best practices where such teams integrate multidisciplinary skills to promote data use and measure impact. The diagnostic and transformation programme enhances this by delivering strengthened data approaches, including practical AI and Power BI applications, which will be used to construct a data framework that supports demand management and prevention investments.

2.4 In social care, AI and automation can revolutionise outcomes: predictive models for early interventions in children's safeguarding and automated care planning for adults. Challenges like data privacy (UK GDPR) and digital divides will be mitigated through inclusive programmes, aligning with the Gov.UK Digital Inclusion Action Plan (2025). By partnering with Microsoft and local entities via the Oldham Trading Platform, this strategy ensures Oldham leads in ethical data use, supporting regional goals like the Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint. Centralisation will place data at the organisation's core, enabling greater impact through coordinated efforts, as evidenced by approaches using data for efficiency and decision making. The transformation programme, targeting overspend in priority services, provides benchmarking and roadmaps that directly feed into this framework, ensuring the investment contributes to long term data maturity.

3 Vision and Mission

3.1 **Vision:** A data empowered Oldham where unified, ethical data drives inclusive growth, outstanding resident services, and proactive decision making.

3.2 **Mission:** To harness data as a strategic asset, integrating Microsoft technologies to transform council operations, empower the workforce, and deliver resident focused results, in line with national data strategies and local priorities.

3.3 This vision reflects best practices from the UK's National Data Strategy (e.g., designing data for reuse) and OECD's Good Practice Principles for Data Ethics in the Public Sector, tailored to Oldham's context for maximum impact, and informed by outputs from the transformation programme.

4 Guiding Principles

4.1 Informed by UK government guidelines, consultancy insights (e.g., Deloitte's Data and Digital Transformation), and strategies in local government:

4.1.1 Resident Focused, Ethical Data Use: Prioritise resident needs with accessible, bias free insights, ensuring digital inclusion per Gov.UK's Action Plan.

4.1.2 Unified and Governed Data: Treat data as an asset with strong governance, following Microsoft Fabric's compliance tools.

4.1.3 Secure and Compliant: Embed security (zero trust models) and privacy, aligning with the AI and Automation Policy's sensitive data principles.

4.1.4 Innovative and Agile: Adopt AI responsibly, with human oversight, drawing from Gartner's trends on AI in public sector.

4.1.5 Collaborative and Inclusive: Partner with stakeholders for shared value, building workforce skills via Greater Manchester programmes.

4.1.6 Sustainable and Outcome Focused: Promote green data practices to support the Green and Growing mission.

These principles ensure ethical, balanced advancement, with centralisation enhancing governance and collaboration, supported by the transformation programme’s co-design model and data deliverables.

5 Strategic Pillars and Objectives

Built on five pillars, incorporating Microsoft stack and best practices from local government, leveraging the transformation programme outputs for benchmarking and insights.

5.1 Pillar 1 - **Data Infrastructure and Unification**

5.1.1 Objectives: Achieve seamless integration using Microsoft Fabric, building on transformation programme's diagnostic analyses.

5.1.2 Projects: Assess current Azure silos; Migrate and unify data lakes; Optimise with Fabric governance.

5.1.3 Resident Focus: Enables personalised services.

5.1.4 Link to Plans: Supports ambition through modernisation.

5.1.5 KPIs: 100% data integration; 15% cost reduction.

Category	Current State	Target State (2030)	Tools/Influences
Data Sources	Siloed Azure	Unified Fabric	Azure Synapse, Fabric; transformation benchmarking
Back Office Link	Limited	Real time	APIs, Fabric Pipelines; programme roadmaps
Storage (TB)	158	Scalable Cloud	Azure + Fabric; demand insights from transformation

5.2 Pillar 2 - **AI and Automation Integration**

5.2.1 Objectives: Deploy Co-pilot agents and AI for insights, informed by the transformation AI applications.

5.2.2 Projects: Pilot AI in social care; Rollout agents for automation; Full integration.

5.2.3 Resident Focus: Predictive care in adults/children's services.

5.2.4 Link: Enhances Healthier, Happier Lives.

5.2.5 KPIs: 25% admin reduction; improved intervention rates.

Service	AI Application	Expected Impact	Transformation Contribution
Children's Social Care	Predictive Risk Models	20% earlier interventions	Demand driver analysis
Adults' Social Care	Automated Care Plans	15% efficiency gains	Overspend control strategies
General	Co-pilot Agents	Real time queries	AI for decision making

5.3 Pillar 3 - **Analytics and Visualisation Excellence**

5.3.1 Objectives: Empower decisions with Power BI, using transformation embedded dashboards.

5.3.2 Projects: Build dashboards; AI enhanced predictions.

5.3.3 Resident Focus: Transparent, data led services.

5.3.4 Link: Data led prevention in Corporate Plan.

5.3.5 KPIs: 80% dashboard adoption; better accuracy.

5.4 Pillar 4 - **Governance and Ethics**

5.4.1 Objectives: Ensure compliant, bias free data use.

5.4.2 Projects: DPIA for AI projects; Ethical frameworks.

5.4.3 Resident Focus: Builds trust.

5.4.4 Link: Aligns with AI Policy.

5.4.5 KPIs: 100% compliance; annual audits.

Centralised governance will be strengthened through the proposed corporate data team, drawing on the Gov.uk Data Ethics Framework and transformation recommendations for corporate reshaping.

5.5 Pillar 5 - **Workforce and Partnership Empowerment**

5.5.1 Objectives: Upskill staff and collaborate, including centralising data expertise.

5.5.2 Projects: Establish corporate data team in TDS; Training programmes; and best practice adoption, Local partnerships.

5.5.3 Resident Focus: Better services through skilled, centralised teams.

5.5.4 Link: Together value.

5.5.5 KPIs: 90% trained; 5 new initiatives; fully operational central team.

This pillar directly addresses the current decentralised structure by creating a centralised team, integrating with TDS for technical support and business units via data champions, as per best practices in national guides and reports, and empowered by the transformation programme's co-design model.

6 Implementation Roadmap

6.1 **Foundation:** Assessments, pilots in social care, Fabric setup; Establish centralised corporate data team within TDS, including recruitment and business case development; Integrate initial transformation programme outputs like benchmarking.

6.2 **Scale:** Full migrations, AI deployments; Integrate team with business units through governance boards; Incorporate the transformation roadmaps and dashboards.

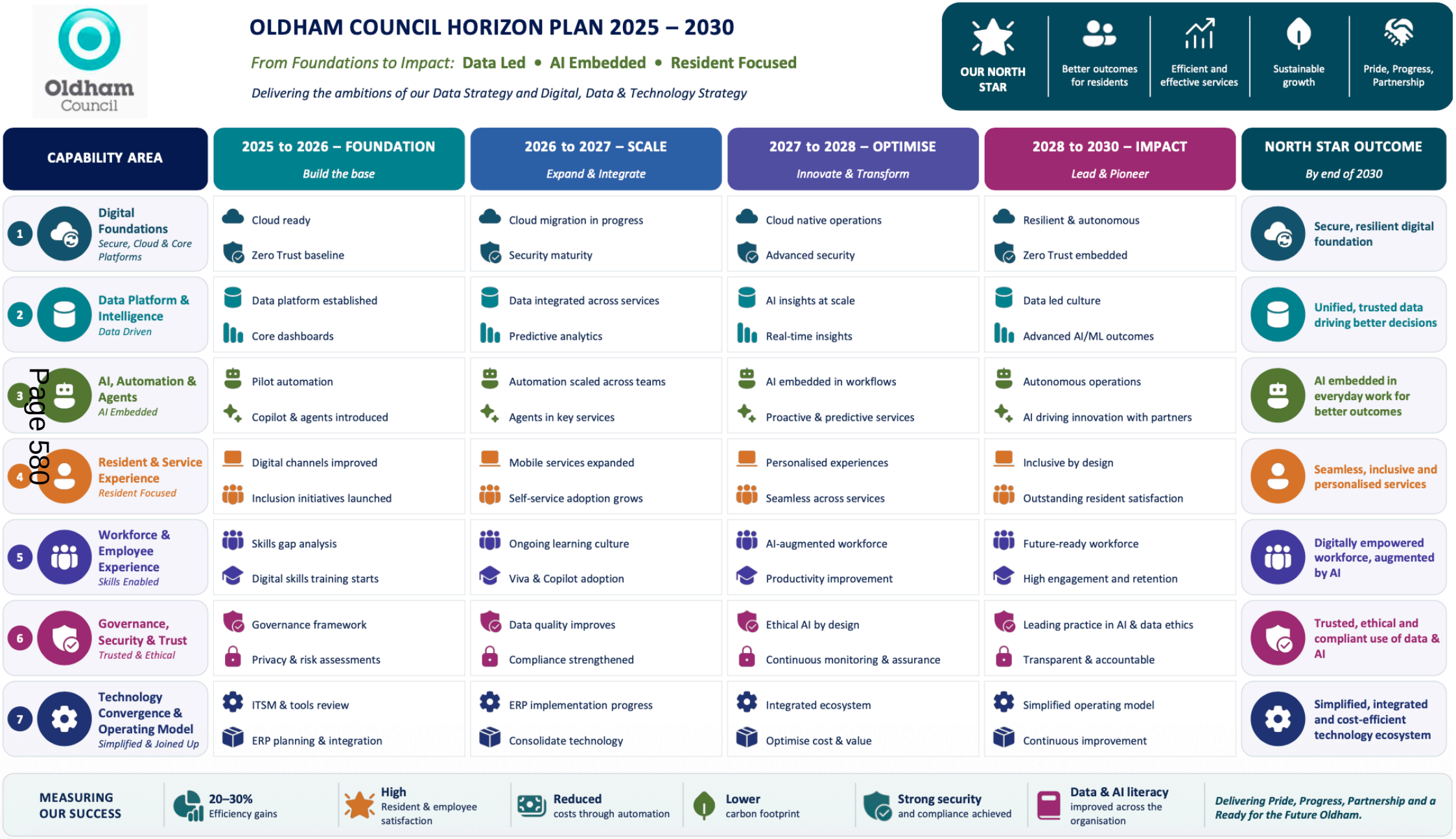
6.3 **Optimise:** Evaluations, optimisations; Mature team operations for continuous improvement; Leverage full transformation deliverables for framework refinement.

6.4 **Impact:** Embed a fully data led culture with advanced AI/ML outcomes delivering proactive and personalised services; the central corporate data team operates at full maturity, driving continuous improvement, innovation with partners and measurable impact on resident outcomes; maximise sustained value from all transformation programme deliverables.

6.5 **North Star Outcome (by end of 2030):** A unified, trusted data platform and data led culture that drives better decisions, earlier interventions (especially in adults' and children's social care), higher productivity and outstanding resident services, with AI embedded in everyday work, strong ethical governance and a skilled, empowered workforce. This realises the shared ambitions of both this Data Strategy and the Digital, Data and Technology Strategy.

6.6 Figure 2 shows the shared Horizon Plan that delivers both this Data Strategy and the wider Digital, Data and Technology Strategy. Capability Area 2 (Data Platform & Intelligence) and Capability Area 3 (AI, Automation & Agents) are of particular importance. They chart the journey from establishing a data platform and core dashboards, through integration and predictive analytics, to a fully data led culture with advanced AI / Machine Learning outcomes by 2030. The central corporate data team proposed in this strategy is a key enabler of the Foundation and Scale phases.

Figure 2:


Oldham Council
OLDHAM COUNCIL HORIZON PLAN 2025 – 2030
From Foundations to Impact: Data Led • AI Embedded • Resident Focused
Delivering the ambitions of our Data Strategy and Digital, Data & Technology Strategy
OUR NORTH STAR
Better outcomes for residents
Efficient and effective services
Sustainable growth
Pride, Progress, Partnership
CAPABILITY AREA
2025 to 2026 – FOUNDATION
Build the base
2026 to 2027 – SCALE
Expand & Integrate
2027 to 2028 – OPTIMISE
Innovate & Transform
2028 to 2030 – IMPACT
Lead & Pioneer
NORTH STAR OUTCOME
By end of 2030
1 Digital Foundations
Secure, Cloud & Core Platforms
Cloud ready
Zero Trust baseline
Cloud migration in progress
Security maturity
Cloud native operations
Advanced security
Resilient & autonomous
Zero Trust embedded
Secure, resilient digital foundation
2 Data Platform & Intelligence
Data Driven
Data platform established
Core dashboards
Data integrated across services
Predictive analytics
AI insights at scale
Real-time insights
Data led culture
Advanced AI/ML outcomes
Unified, trusted data driving better decisions
3 AI, Automation & Agents
AI Embedded
Pilot automation
Copilot & agents introduced
Automation scaled across teams
Agents in key services
AI embedded in workflows
Proactive & predictive services
Autonomous operations
AI driving innovation with partners
AI embedded in everyday work for better outcomes
4 Resident & Service Experience
Resident Focused
Digital channels improved
Inclusion initiatives launched
Mobile services expanded
Self-service adoption grows
Personalised experiences
Seamless across services
Inclusive by design
Outstanding resident satisfaction
Seamless, inclusive and personalised services
5 Workforce & Employee Experience
Skills Enabled
Skills gap analysis
Digital skills training starts
Ongoing learning culture
Viva & Copilot adoption
AI-augmented workforce
Productivity improvement
Future-ready workforce
High engagement and retention
Digitally empowered workforce, augmented by AI
6 Governance, Security & Trust
Trusted & Ethical
Governance framework
Privacy & risk assessments
Data quality improves
Compliance strengthened
Ethical AI by design
Continuous monitoring & assurance
Leading practice in AI & data ethics
Transparent & accountable
Trusted, ethical and compliant use of data & AI
7 Technology Convergence & Operating Model
Simplified & Joined Up
ITSM & tools review
ERP planning & integration
ERP implementation progress
Consolidate technology
Integrated ecosystem
Optimise cost & value
Simplified operating model
Continuous improvement
Simplified, integrated and cost-efficient technology ecosystem
MEASURING OUR SUCCESS
20–30% Efficiency gains
High Resident & employee satisfaction
Reduced costs through automation
Lower carbon footprint
Strong security and compliance achieved
Data & AI literacy improved across the organisation
Delivering Pride, Progress, Partnership and a Ready for the Future Oldham.

7 Governance and Measurement

7.1 Overseen by Digital Transformation & Design Assurance Group, with ethical reviews per AI Playbook (2025). Metrics: KPIs, ROI, resident feedback. The centralised team will lead on data maturity assessments, using tools like the Government Data Quality Framework, informed by transformation benchmarking.

7.2 Ties to operational impacts for accountability, with annual reviews of team effectiveness, evaluating integration of programme outputs.

8 Challenges and Mitigation

8.1 Data silos and decentralised analysts: Mitigated by Fabric unification and central team creation, supported by the transformation programme's diagnostic insights.

8.2 Data Quality and Integrity: Ensuring data accuracy, consistency, and reliability is crucial. Implementing data quality frameworks and regular audits to maintain high standards.

8.3 Privacy risks: Addressed via Purview and DPIAs.

8.4 Skills gaps and resistance to change: Through training, communication, and federated models.

8.5 Financial and legacy system barriers: Tackled via business cases and phased investment, per national recommendations, with transformation business cases providing templates.

8.6 Turn challenges into opportunities for resilience, ensuring the central team drives cultural shift, maximising value from the transformation programme.

9 References

I. UK National Data Strategy (GOV.UK).
II. OECD Good Practice Principles for Data Ethics in the Public Sector.
III. Microsoft Fabric Governance Overview.
IV. AI in Adult Social Care Case Studies (NHS England).
V. Deloitte Data and Digital Transformation Insights.
VI. Gartner AI Trends in Public Sector.
VII. Gov.UK Digital Inclusion Action Plan (2025).
VIII. Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint.
IX. Oldham Council AI and Automation Policy.
X. Oldham Digital, Data and Technology Strategy 2025-2030.
XI. Azure Cloud Contract Report (2025).
XII. Gov.uk Data Ethics Framework.
XIII. Local Government Association (LGA) Data Capacity Survey (2025).
XIV. National Audit Office (NAO) Improving Government Data Guide (2022).
XV. IPPO Delivering Data Led Local Policy Report (2024).
XVI. Oldham Council Diagnostic and Transformation Programme Contract Award (June 2025).

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Digital, Data and Technology Strategy

Transforming Services for a Connected and Inclusive Oldham

2025 to 2030

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Oldham Council is committed to harnessing digital, technology, and data innovations to deliver exceptional, resident focused services whilst driving efficiency and sustainability. This strategy outlines a 5 year plan to transition from hybrid to full cloud infrastructure, integrate AI, Robotic Process Automation (RPA), AI agents, and broader automation tools. It aligns with central government priorities, including the UK Government's *Blueprint for Modern Digital Government* (January 2025) and the *Transforming for a Digital Future Roadmap* (2022-2025), which emphasise modernising public services through technology to enhance productivity and resident engagement.

1.2 Key enablers include collaborations with leading suppliers such as Microsoft for Azure cloud platforms and RPA solutions, alongside insights from consultancies like Gartner and Deloitte on the potential of AI and data analytics in the public sector. The strategy prioritises digital inclusion to ensure all residents benefit, addressing barriers through targeted programmes, and fosters partnerships with local businesses in Oldham and Greater Manchester to stimulate economic growth and innovation.

1.3 Expected outcomes include 20-30% efficiency gains, improved resident satisfaction, and reduced environmental impact, all whilst centring the resident focused experience and supporting local priorities.

2 Introduction and Context

2.1 The public sector faces increasing demands for efficient, accessible services amid budget constraints and technological advancements. Central government initiatives, such as the State of Digital Government Review (2025), underscore the need for updated systems, noting that outdated services hinder delivery. For Oldham, moving from hybrid to full cloud infrastructure, supported by our supplier Microsoft, will provide scalability and resilience, reducing costs and emissions in line with the Green and Growing mission.

2.2 AI, RPA, and automation, as recommended in the government's *AI Playbook for the UK Government* (2025), will streamline operations, freeing staff for high value tasks like community support. Consultancies such as PwC and Deloitte advocate for cloud enabled digital transformation to improve data driven decisions. This strategy places residents at the heart, emphasising digital inclusion to tackle device poverty and skills gaps, as per the Gov.UK *Digital Inclusion Action Plan* (2025), and leveraging local business partnerships via platforms like the Oldham Trading Platform to enhance community outcomes.

2.3 Challenges include legacy systems and digital divides, which will be addressed through phased implementation and inclusive programmes. By integrating these elements, we create a resilient framework that not only meets current needs but anticipates future demands, ensuring Oldham remains agile in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

3 Vision and Mission

3.1 **Vision:** A digitally empowered Oldham where technology enables inclusive, sustainable growth and outstanding resident services. We will be a leading smart borough in which digital technologies, data driven insights and intelligent infrastructure help residents, businesses and communities to thrive.

3.2 **Mission:** To harness digital, data and technology to transform how the Council operates, empower our workforce, and deliver simpler, faster and more inclusive services for residents. We will achieve this by building a modern cloud foundation, embedding responsible AI and automation, unifying our data, developing digital skills, and working in partnership with residents, businesses and Greater Manchester partners, always putting inclusion, security and sustainability at the centre of our approach.

3.3 This vision and mission reflect our commitment to innovation that serves the community first, drawing on best practices from government and industry experts to build a strategy that's uniquely Oldham's.

4 Guiding Principles

4.1 These principles guide the strategy, informed by central government and consultancy best practices:

4.1.1 **Resident Focused, Inclusive Design:** Prioritise resident needs with accessible services, ensuring digital inclusion for all, as emphasised in the Gov.UK *Digital Inclusion Action Plan* (2025).

4.1.2 **Data Driven Decisions**: Use data ethically as a strategic asset, following insights on governance from consultancies like Deloitte.

4.1.3 **Secure and Resilient:** Embed security in all initiatives, per the UK Blueprint's recommendations.

4.1.4 **Agile Innovation:** Adopt AI and automation responsibly, drawing from Gartner's expertise on emerging technology trends.

4.1.5 **Collaboration and Skills:** Partner with local businesses and build workforce capabilities through programmes like those supported by Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

4.1.6 **Sustainability:** Promote green technologies to support the Green and Growing mission.

4.2 These principles ensure every action we take is purposeful, balancing technological advancement with ethical and inclusive considerations.

4.3 To set out clearly the scale of the transformation required, Figure 1 shows Oldham Council's current digital, data and technology capability (2025/2026) against the target state we aim to reach by 2030. Developed in partnership with Microsoft, this assessment covers six critical domains: Governance & Operating Model, Data & Analytics, Technology & Platforms, Delivery & Development Capability, People & Skills, and Security, Compliance & Governance. It provides the baseline from which the six strategic pillars that follow have been designed.

Figure 1:

OLDHAM COUNCIL – CURRENT VS TARGET CAPABILITY

Building our digital, data & technology capability to deliver better outcomes for Oldham

	CURRENT STATE (2025/2026) – Where we are now	TARGET STATE (2030) – Where we are heading	KEY OUTCOMES
Governance & Operating Model	• Data and analysts are distributed across directorates and business units • Limited enterprise-wide prioritisation • Project-led delivery with variable governance	• Central TDS & Transformation Hub working in a Hub & Spoke model • Enterprise demand intake and prioritisation • Product-led operating model with clear accountability and outcomes	Clear ownership, alignment to strategy and better outcomes for residents
Data & Analytics	• Fragmented data landscape and inconsistent quality • Limited self-service analytics • Insight often descriptive and retrospective	• Governed data platform with Microsoft Fabric • Trusted, accessible data for everyone • Predictive and prescriptive insight driving prevention and early intervention	Better decisions, proactive services and improved productivity
Technology & Platforms	• Hybrid infrastructure with legacy dependencies • Multiple platforms and tools • Manual processes and limited automation	• Cloud-first, modern and secure (Azure) • Unified platforms: Power Platform, Copilot, Fabric, Azure • Intelligent automation (RPA, AI agents) embedded across services	Efficient operations, lower cost and greater resilience
Delivery & Development Capability	• Limited in-house development capacity • Heavy reliance on external suppliers • Waterfall and project-based delivery	• Multi-disciplinary delivery teams in the Hub • Agile / DevOps practices and CI/CD pipelines • Blend of in-house and partner delivery with reuse and standardisation	Faster delivery, higher quality and continuous improvement
People & Skills	• Skills and capability vary across the organisation • Limited data and digital skills maturity • Learning is ad-hoc and not role-based	• Upskilled workforce with digital and data capability • Clear roles, career pathways and communities of practice • Continuous learning and adoption culture	Empowered workforce, better adoption and greater innovation
Security, Compliance & Governance	• Policies in place but inconsistent application • Variable data governance and controls • Cyber security reactive	• Security by design using Microsoft E5 • Consistent governance, privacy and data protection • Proactive cyber security and risk management	Secure, compliant and trusted services by design

OUR ENABLERS

- **Strong partnerships** – Working with Microsoft, suppliers, GMCA and local partners
- **Digital inclusion** – Ensuring everyone can access and benefit from digital services
- **Sustainable by design** – Using technology to support our Green and Growing mission
- **Change & engagement** – Engaging our people and communities at every step
- **Value for money** – Investing wisely and measuring impact that matters

OUR PURPOSE

Delivering better outcomes for Oldham's residents and communities

Pride, Progress, Partnership – *Putting residents at the heart of everything we do*

5 Strategic Pillars and Objectives

Summary of the strategic pillars:

- **Digital Infrastructure and Cloud Excellence:** Move to a scalable, secure and energy efficient cloud environment that improves resilience, reduces costs and supports better online services.
- **Intelligent Automation and AI Integration:** Use automation, RPA and AI responsibly to reduce manual tasks, speed up responses and free staff to focus on higher value resident support.
- **Data Excellence and Governance:** Strengthen data quality, integration and governance so the council can make better decisions, improve insight and deliver more personalised services safely.
- **Resident Focused Services:** Design simple, accessible and inclusive digital services that make it easier for residents to engage with the council and get the support they need.
- **Workforce Empowerment and Skills:** Equip staff with modern tools, training and digital confidence so they can work more effectively and provide better services to residents.
- **Innovation and Partnerships:** Work with residents, local businesses and partners to co-create solutions, support inclusion and stimulate local innovation and growth.

The strategy is built on six pillars, each with objectives, projects, and links to council missions. These incorporate solutions like RPA and consultancies' frameworks for transformation, adapted to our local context.

5.1 Pillar 1 - Digital Infrastructure and Cloud Excellence

5.1.1 **Objectives:** Achieve full cloud migration for enhanced scalability.
5.1.2 **Projects:** Phased adoption with suppliers like Microsoft Azure (Years 1 to 2: Complete remaining migrations; Year 2 to 3: Optimisation).
5.1.3 **Resident Focus:** Enables seamless online services, reducing wait times.
5.1.4 **Link to Plans:** Supports Green and Growing through energy efficient cloud.
5.1.5 **KPIs:** 100% cloud adoption; 15% cost reduction.

This pillar forms the backbone of our digital ecosystem, ensuring robust, future proof infrastructure that scales with resident demands.

5.2 Pillar 2 - Intelligent Automation and AI Integration

5.2.1 **Objectives**: Automate tasks to improve efficiency.
5.2.2 **Projects**: RPA pilots for admin processes (Years 1-2); AI agents for resident queries (Years 2-3); Service wide rollout (Years 3-5).
5.2.3 **Resident Focus**: Faster, 24/7 support via chatbots.
5.2.4 **Link**: Advances Healthier, Happier Lives with predictive tools.
5.2.5 **KPIs**: 25% reduction in manual work; quicker responses.

By automating routine tasks, we free up resources for more meaningful resident interactions, enhancing service quality across the board.

5.3 Pillar 3 - Data Excellence and Governance

5.3.1 **Objectives:** Create a unified data platform for insights.
5.3.2 **Projects:** Creation of a Centralised system with analytics tools, System integration and Improvements to Data Quality from back office (Year 1-3); Dashboards for resident services (Year 3). AI driven predictions (Year 3-5).
5.3.3 **Resident Focus:** Personalised services based on data, with privacy safeguards.
5.3.4 **Link:** Enhances data led prevention in Corporate Plan.
5.3.5 **KPIs:** 80% data integration; better decision accuracy.

Strong data governance allows us to make informed decisions that directly benefit residents, from housing to health services.

5.4 Pillar 4 - Resident Focused Services

5.4.1 **Objectives:** Develop accessible digital interfaces.
5.4.2 **Projects:** Portal redesign (Year 2); Inclusive apps with digital inclusion features (Year 2-5).
5.4.3 **Resident Focus:** User friendly access, addressing inclusion via device loans and training.
5.4.4 **Link:** Builds Great Place to Live through community engagement.
5.4.5 **KPIs:** 30% increase in online usage; high satisfaction scores.

Focussing on residents ensures our digital services are intuitive and equitable, bridging any gaps in access.

5.5 Pillar 5 - Workforce Empowerment and Skills

5.5.1 **Objectives**: Equip staff with digital tools.
5.5.2 **Projects**: Desktop Refresh Programme, Training academy with local business input (Years 1-2); AI upskilling and automation (Year 3). Continual Improvement programme in Skills in AI and automation (Years 3-5)
5.5.3 **Resident Focus**: Better trained and digitally enabled staff deliver superior services.
5.5.4 **Link**: Aligns with Together value.
5.5.5 **KPIs**: 90% staff trained; reduced skills gaps.
Investing in our workforce builds internal capabilities, leading to better outcomes for the community.

5.6 Pillar 6 - Innovation and Partnerships

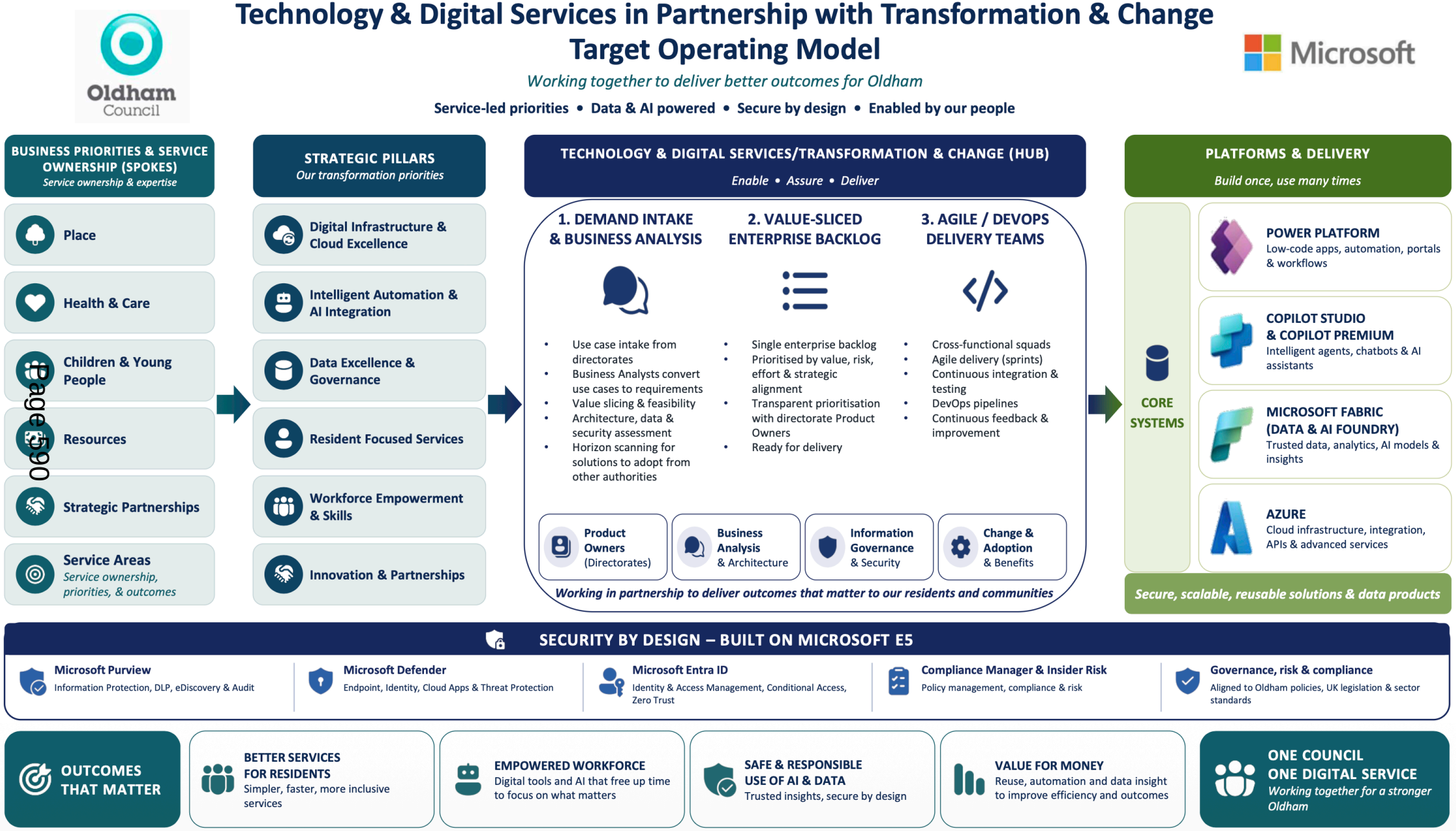
5.6.1 **Objectives:** Collaborate for sustainable innovation.
5.6.2 **Projects:** Engage local firms via Oldham Trading Platform and GM Business Growth Hub (Years 1-5).
5.6.3 **Resident Focus:** Co-create solutions with residents and businesses for inclusion.
5.6.4 **Link:** Supports Oldham Plan partnerships.
5.6.5 **KPIs:** Launch 5 new initiatives; improved inclusion metrics.

Partnerships amplify our efforts, bringing in fresh ideas and resources to drive local growth.

5.7 How we will deliver - Target Operating Model

5.7.1 Figure 2 sets out the Target Operating Model that will turn the six strategic pillars into delivery. Technology & Digital Services working in partnership with Transformation & Change will act as the central Hub, supporting service led priorities (the Spokes). Demand will be taken in through a structured intake process, prioritised into a single enterprise backlog, and delivered by multidisciplinary Agile/DevOps teams. The model is underpinned by the Microsoft platform stack and security by design using Microsoft E5. This operating model ensures clear ownership, enterprise prioritisation, and reusable solutions that deliver better outcomes for residents.

Figure 2:



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6 Implementation Roadmap

6.1 **Foundation (2025–2026)** Build the base. Complete remaining cloud migrations, establish core platforms and security baselines, run initial RPA and AI pilots, launch digital inclusion programmes, begin workforce skills development, and put the new Hub & Spoke operating model and governance arrangements in place.

6.2 **Scale (2026–2027)** Expand and integrate. Accelerate automation and AI agent deployment, progress data unification and analytics, redesign key resident facing digital services, deepen local and Greater Manchester partnerships, and embed Agile / DevOps delivery practices across the Hub.

6.3 **Optimise (2027–2028)** Innovate and transform. Move to cloud native operations, scale predictive and real time insights, personalise resident experiences, strengthen security, ethics and compliance by design, and drive continuous improvement in skills, processes and technology.

6.4 **Impact (2028–2030)** Lead and pioneer. Deliver resilient and largely autonomous digital foundations, fully embed AI and data led working, achieve outstanding resident satisfaction and inclusion outcomes, simplify the technology estate, and realise the measurable benefits set out in the North Star.

6.5 Figure 3 provides the detailed Horizon Plan that underpins this strategy. It shows how seven capability areas will mature across the four phases above. It moves from building the base to leading and pioneering. The plan aligns directly with the six strategic pillars and the target operating model and sets out the North Star outcomes we are aiming for by the end of 2030.

Success will be measured through efficiency gains, resident and employee satisfaction, cost reduction, lower carbon impact, strong security and compliance, and improved data and AI literacy across the organisation.

Figure 3:


Oldham Council
OLDHAM COUNCIL HORIZON PLAN 2025 – 2030
From Foundations to Impact: Data Led • AI Embedded • Resident Focused
Delivering the ambitions of our Data Strategy and Digital, Data & Technology Strategy
OUR NORTH STAR
Better outcomes for residents
Efficient and effective services
Sustainable growth
Pride, Progress, Partnership
CAPABILITY AREA
2025 to 2026 – FOUNDATION
Build the base
2026 to 2027 – SCALE
Expand & Integrate
2027 to 2028 – OPTIMISE
Innovate & Transform
2028 to 2030 – IMPACT
Lead & Pioneer
NORTH STAR OUTCOME
By end of 2030
1 Digital Foundations
Secure, Cloud & Core Platforms
Cloud ready
Zero Trust baseline
Cloud migration in progress
Security maturity
Cloud native operations
Advanced security
Resilient & autonomous
Zero Trust embedded
Secure, resilient digital foundation
2 Data Platform & Intelligence
Data Driven
Data platform established
Core dashboards
Data integrated across services
Predictive analytics
AI insights at scale
Real-time insights
Data led culture
Advanced AI/ML outcomes
Unified, trusted data driving better decisions
3 AI, Automation & Agents
AI Embedded
Pilot automation
Copilot & agents introduced
Automation scaled across teams
Agents in key services
AI embedded in workflows
Proactive & predictive services
Autonomous operations
AI driving innovation with partners
AI embedded in everyday work for better outcomes
4 Resident & Service Experience
Resident Focused
Digital channels improved
Inclusion initiatives launched
Mobile services expanded
Self-service adoption grows
Personalised experiences
Seamless across services
Inclusive by design
Outstanding resident satisfaction
Seamless, inclusive and personalised services
5 Workforce & Employee Experience
Skills Enabled
Skills gap analysis
Digital skills training starts
Ongoing learning culture
Viva & Copilot adoption
AI-augmented workforce
Productivity improvement
Future-ready workforce
High engagement and retention
Digitally empowered workforce, augmented by AI
6 Governance, Security & Trust
Trusted & Ethical
Governance framework
Privacy & risk assessments
Data quality improves
Compliance strengthened
Ethical AI by design
Continuous monitoring & assurance
Leading practice in AI & data ethics
Transparent & accountable
Trusted, ethical and compliant use of data & AI
7 Technology Convergence & Operating Model
Simplified & Joined Up
ITSM & tools review
ERP planning & integration
ERP implementation progress
Consolidate technology
Integrated ecosystem
Optimise cost & value
Simplified operating model
Continuous improvement
Simplified, integrated and cost-efficient technology ecosystem
MEASURING OUR SUCCESS
20–30% Efficiency gains
High Resident & employee satisfaction
Reduced costs through automation
Lower carbon footprint
Strong security and compliance achieved
Data & AI literacy improved across the organisation
Delivering Pride, Progress, Partnership and a Ready for the Future Oldham.

7 Governance and Measurement

7.1 The Digital Transformation & Design Assurance Group will oversee implementation, incorporating ethical frameworks from the *AI Playbook* (2025) and annual reviews. Metrics include KPIs, resident feedback, and ROI tracking, aligned with transformation guidelines.

7.2 Robust governance keeps us accountable, with measurements tied directly to resident and operational impacts.

8 Challenges and Mitigation

8.1 Potential issues like digital exclusion will be mitigated through government backed action plans, including device donations and skills hubs. Security risks addressed via zero trust models from suppliers like ZScaler. Local business partnerships will ensure tailored, resilient solutions.

8.2 By proactively addressing challenges, we turn potential obstacles into opportunities for stronger community ties.

8.3 This strategy positions Oldham as a digitally inclusive leader, delivering value to residents and the local economy. It reflects thorough research into best practices, adapted to our unique context for maximum impact.

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PART A - Report to CABINET

Local Area Network (LAN) Refresh Programme

Officer Contact: Matthew Gratton (Director of Digital)

Report Author: John Craig (Senior IT Project Manager)
Email: john.craig@oldham.gov.uk

30th November 2026

Reason for Decision

The purpose of this report is 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 in-scope sites.

Additional information can be found in PART B of this report.

Executive Summary

A review of the existing LAN infrastructure has identified a requirement to refresh network equipment across operational sites.

The proposed programme will:

- Replace ageing infrastructure.
- Improve service reliability and resilience.
- Reduce operational risk.
- Ensure the network can continue to support business services and future digital initiatives

Leader's Consultative Session **30th November 2026**
Pre-Decision Governance, Strategy & Resources Scrutiny **19th November 2026**

Local Area Network (LAN) Refresh Programme

1 Background

1.1 The purpose of the LAN Refresh Programme is to modernise, standardise and rationalise the Council's Local Area Network (LAN) infrastructure across all in-scope sites.

Additional information can be found in PART B of this report

2 Current Position

2.1 A review of the Council's network infrastructure has identified equipment that is approaching the end of its supported lifecycle.
This creates operational risks associated with resilience, supportability, reliability and future service requirements.
Replacing this infrastructure will improve service stability and reduce operational risk.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1 – Do Nothing

This option would retain existing infrastructure and associated operational risks.

Option 2 – Proceed with the LAN Refresh Programme
This option would replace ageing infrastructure and improve reliability, resilience and service supportability.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Approval of Option 2.
The programme will modernise and standardise network infrastructure by replacing ageing equipment and implementing a supportable network design.

5 Consultation

5.1 No consultation required

6 Financial Implications

This information is contained in PART B of this report

7 Legal Implications

7.1 This information is contained in PART B of this report

8. Procurement Implications

8.1 This information is contained in PART B of this report

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

9.1 None

10 **Key Decision**

10.1 Yes

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 KDD-26-28

12 **Background Papers**

12.1 None

13 **Appendices**

13.1 None

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Report to Chief Executive

Firewall Colocation Hosting and Data Centre Exit – PART A

Officer Contact: Matthew Gratton, Director of Digital

Report Author: John Craig, Senior IT Project Manager
Email: john.craig@oldham.gov.uk

30th November 2026

Reason for Decision

Approval is sought to implement a new primary internet and security architecture through the procurement and deployment of two firewalls across two GM colocation sites.

Additional information can be found in PART B of this report.

Executive Summary

Oldham Council's network remains heavily reliant on the Civic Centre for internet connectivity, cloud access, and core network services. With the 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.

Additional information can be found in PART B of this report.

Recommendations

1. Proceed with the migration of the Council's core network from the Civic Centre to two GM 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.

Firewall Colocation Hosting and Data Centre Exit

1 Background

1.1 During an earlier discovery phase, TDS mapped all key network infrastructure, confirming that Oldham Council and 3rd parties remain heavily dependent on the Civic Centre for internet routing and core network services, including cloud connectivity.

1.2 To address this, the Council will prioritise the establishment of a new, resilient network core within two GM colocation facilities, providing a secure, dual-site architecture for internet routing and security services.

Additional information can be found in PART B of this report.

2 Current Position

2.1 The Council currently faces significant operational, resilience and service continuity risks due to its reliance on the Civic Centre for core network services, the presence of single points of failure, ageing infrastructure and the requirement to vacate the site as part of the Civic Centre redevelopment programme.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 **Option 1: Do Nothing**. Not viable.
Reason for Rejection: Leaving services in the Civic Centre would block the redevelopment programme and continue to expose the Council to significant operational risk due to single-point-of-failure infrastructure

3.2 **Option 2: Partial Migration**. Also, not viable.
Reason for Rejection: Keeping any critical systems in the Civic Centre would mean the building cannot be handed over to developers, and network instability would remain

3.3 **Option 3: Migrate to two GM Colocation Sites: (recommended)**.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 3: Migrate to two GM Co-Hosted Sites.

Additional information can be found in PART B of this report.

5 Consultation

5.1 Additional information can be found in PART B of this report.

6 Financial Implications

This information can be found in PART B of this report

7 Legal Implications

This information can be found in PART B of this report.

8. **Procurement Implications**

This information can be found in PART B of this report

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

9.1 No impacts identified.

10 **Key Decision**

10.1 Yes

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 KDD-26-29

12 **Background Papers**

12.1 None

13 **Appendices**

13.1 None

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