

***PLACE, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY
BOARD (SPECIAL MEETING)***

Agenda

Date Wednesday 7th October 2026

Time 6.00 pm

Venue Council Chamber, JR Clynes Building, 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. Further information relating to this meeting is available from the Constitutional Services team, email: constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk
 3. Public Questions - Any Member of the public wishing to ask a question at the above meeting can do so only if a written copy of the question is submitted to the contact officer by 12.00 noon on Friday, 2nd October 2026.
 4. Filming - The Council, members of the public and the press may record/film/photograph or broadcast this meeting when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Constitutional Services Officer who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.

Please note that anyone using recording equipment both audio and visual will not be permitted to leave the equipment in the room where a private meeting is held.

Membership of the PLACE, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY BOARD:

Councillors Akhtar, Z. Ali, Barnes, Brooks (Chair), Charters, J. Hussain, Murphy, Rustidge, Sharp, Shuttleworth and Williams.

Item No

1 Apologies For Absence

2 Urgent Business

Urgent business, if any, introduced by the Chair

3 Declarations of Interest

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

4 Public Question Time

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

5 Minutes (Pages 3 - 6)

The Minutes of the meeting of the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board, held on 19th March 2026, are attached for approval.

6 Regulator of Social Housing – Improvement Plan (Pages 7 - 10)

A report of the Director of Communities, providing background information on the inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing, and an update on the current improvement plan process.

7 Food Safety - Service Delivery Briefing (Pages 11 - 14)

A report of the Director of Environment outlining the key challenges the Food Safety Service faces and the control measures in place to ensure that the Local Authority is meeting its statutory duties.

Present: Councillor J. Hussain (Chair)
Councillors Harkness, Kenyon (Substitute), McLaren (Vice-Chair) and Sharp

Also in Attendance:

Alex Bougatef

Georgina Brownridge

Matthew Bulmer

Bryn Cooke

Kaidy McCann

Peter Richards

Elaine Taylor

Group Solicitor

Senior Planning Policy Officer

Project Director: Sports Town &
Northern Roots

Head of Housing Delivery

Constitutional Services

Assistant Director of Planning,
Transport and Housing Delivery

Cabinet Member for
Neighbourhoods

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aslam, S. Hussain, Wilkinson and Williamson.

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 received.

5 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 5th November 2025 and the 22nd January 2026 be approved as a correct record.

6 **BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT**

The Scrutiny Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Environment that sought approval to publish the Biodiversity Duty Report (2026) in line with section 40A of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

The report was due to be presented to the Cabinet, at its meeting on 23rd March 2026, where Members would consider any comments and observations presented by this Scrutiny

Board. A version had already been considered by the Cabinet on 24th March 2025.

In considering the report, Members of the Scrutiny Board sought clarification on:

- a. was there a set number for gains? It depended on what came forward for development and future reports would be more informative.
- b. was the BNG requirement an additional requirement? It was separate from the duty, not additional but in line with Policy

Officers advised that there was a requirement to publish the report and had to be published by the 23rd March 2026 followed by every 5 years to protect and restore areas of wildlife.

RESOLVED that the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board endorses the Biodiversity Duty Report publication on the Council's website so that the Council will fulfil its legal duty set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

7

PRINCES GATE – DEVELOPMENT UPDATE (ST MARY'S)

The Scrutiny Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive that provided an update on the overall scheme progress and which sought approval for the Council to enter into the necessary Grant Funding Agreements and to complete all other necessary agreements/documentation to allow the development of 331 new homes at Princes Gate to commence on site.

The report was due to be presented to the Cabinet, at its meeting on 23rd March 2026, where Members would consider any comments and observations presented by this Scrutiny Board. A version had already been considered by the Cabinet on 24th March 2025.

In considering the report, Members of the Scrutiny Board sought clarification on:

- a. the contract management review minutes on major projects? Officers would liaise with the Chair as the request came from the Audit Committee.
- b. access to part B reports? Reports were only part B due to sensitivities, however they were made public once agreed. This would be looked at for the 2026/27 municipal year.

RESOLVED that the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board endorses the Princes Gate development update and approval of the Council entering the Grant Funding Agreements and completions of other necessary agreements to allow the development of 331 new homes at Princes Gate to commence on site.

8

PROPOSAL TO UNDERTAKE STATUTORY

CONSULTATION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OLDHAM MAYORAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



The Scrutiny Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive that sought approval for the commencement of formal statutory consultation on the proposed establishment of an Oldham Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC).

The report was due to be presented to the Cabinet, at its meeting on 23rd March 2026, where Members would consider any comments and observations presented by this Scrutiny Board.

In considering the report, Members of the Scrutiny Board sought clarification on:

- a. maximalist approach with the red line? It was noted that everything within the red line was a mix of regeneration and new builds.
- b. Where would the money be coming from? It was noted that it would not be new money, however Private Sector money and work with the GM Mayor would allow the best use of what was available.
- c. Did the Council control the MDC? It was noted that the MDC insulated decisions from political uncertainty, there would be political representation on the Board along with independence of the Chair with expertise around Health and Leisure. The Council would have a stake in the MDC.
- d. Would there be further consultation and what was the process? It was noted that resident feedback would be part of the consultations however, the main focus would be Stakeholders and Environmental Partners. Following the consultation, a report would be produced and shared on the responses.

RESOLVED that the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board endorses the Proposal to undertake Statutory Consultation on the Establishment of an Oldham Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC).

9

WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Board considered its Work Programme for 2025/26.

RESOLVED that the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for 2025/26 be noted.

10

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT

The Scrutiny Board gave consideration to the Key Decision Document which outlined key decisions that the Cabinet were due to take at its meeting on 23rd March 2026 and at future meetings.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.



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RULE 13 AND 14

It was noted that 3 decisions had been made under Rule 14, namely the Economic Development and Regeneration - Flexible Grant Acceptance, Greater Manchester Empty Homes and Leasing Programme – Acceptance of Funding and the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) – Acceptance of Funding.

RESOLVED that the Rule 14 decisions be noted

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.07 pm



Report to Place Scrutiny

Regulator of Social Housing – Improvement Plan

Officer Contact: Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Report Author: Neil Consterdine

Email: Neil.consterdine@oldham.gov.uk

Wednesday, 7th October 2026

Reason for briefing

To provide background on the inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing, and an update on the current improvement plan process.

Recommendations

- To note and discuss the information presented at the meeting

Regulator of Social Housing – Improvement Plan

1 Background

- 1.1 The Council owns almost 2,100 homes within the Borough. These properties are not directly managed by the Council, with management functions delivered under four separate sets of contractual arrangements:
- PFI 2 – Oldham Retirement Housing Partnership (Housing 21). A 30-year contract covering 1429 homes for older people, including Extra Care accommodation
 - PFI 4 – Inspiral Partnership (Great Places and Wates) – 25 year contract for 615 general needs homes
 - Primrose Bank – a non-PFI arrangement covering 18 homes managed under an agreement with Great Places
 - Holly Bank – a non-PFI arrangement, covering the management of a 20 flat Adults scheme, with care provider by MioCare
- 1.2 While the Council does not directly manage these properties, its legal status as landlord for these homes means it is responsible for compliance with statutory obligations, including under the Social Housing Regulation Act (2023).
- 1.3 During 2025, the Council was subject to an inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing, to determine compliance with the new mandatory Consumer Standards introduced in April 2024. These standards comprise of:
- *Safety and Quality* – relating to the condition of the housing stock
 - *Transparency, Influence and Accountability* – relating to tenant involvement, engagement, and ability to influence service provision
 - *Neighbourhood and Community* – relating to issues such as anti-social behaviour, hate crime and domestic abuse
 - *Tenancy* – relating to how tenancies are issued and managed
- 1.4 The Council received a grade of C3, indicating that the Regulator had identified “serious failings” in delivery of the Consumer Standards outcomes, and a need for significant improvement. Key areas of the judgement were:
- A lack of evidence that information around the delivery of the consumer standard outcomes is reported to or considered by senior officers or Councillors.
 - A general theme relating to the lack of sufficient assurance and verification of outcomes reported by providers – specifically an over-reliance on negative assurance and exception reporting.
 - Particular failings relating to the Safety and Quality standard, including :
 - A lack of up to date stock condition information in relation to one of the PFI contracts

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- Insufficient resource for the Council to independently assure itself of the robustness of information provided by providers around maintenance and repairs
 - Inconsistencies in reporting across the four contracts, including limited evidence of consistent collection and reporting of repairs for Primrose Bank and Holly Bank
 - Particular failings in relation to the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, including:
 - A lack of meaningful opportunities for tenants to scrutinise service delivery and performance information
 - A lack of assurance that the diverse needs of our tenants are understood, and that this information was used to inform decisions on service delivery
 - Inconsistent approaches across contracts meaning that there are potential inequalities in tenant engagement outcomes.
 - Some weaknesses in the approach around the Tenancy Standard and Neighbourhood and Community Standard, but these were viewed as lesser areas of concern.

2 **Current Position**

- 2.1 The Council subsequently entered into an improvement plan process with the Regulator, with the first formal meeting scheduled for 5th February, and monthly thereafter.
- 2.2 Following this engagement, a draft improvement plan was produced. This has gone through a number of iterations, to ensure that it is sufficiently robust, and has recently received approval from the Regulator. Engagement with the providers on the key elements of this plan has been positive, and a number of improvements are already under way.
- 2.3 Consultation has recently concluded on a service redesign, which will put additional staffing into the team, in order to ensure there is sufficient capacity to both deal with the day-to-day contract management of our properties, while also ensuring compliance with the Consumer Standards, and readiness for future inspections.
- 2.4 A new Consumer Standards Improvement Board is being stood up, with the first meeting scheduled for late October. This board will include tenant representation, and have responsibility for signing off each action as complete.

4 **Recommendations**

- 4.1 To note and discuss the information presented at the meeting

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Report to Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board

Food Safety - Service Delivery Briefing

Officer Contact: Nasir Dad, Director of Environment

Report Author: Lauren Wood, Assistant Environmental Health Manager

Wednesday, 7th October 2026

Reason for Report

The Council has a statutory duty to enforce food law and the Council's aim is to protect the health of residents, visitors and those working in the Borough through the efficient and effective enforcement of food safety laws.

This report outlines the key challenges the service faces and the control measures in place to ensure the Local Authority meets its statutory duties in relation to the delivery of official food controls.

Food Safety Service Delivery

1 Background

- 1.1 Oldham has approximately 2,025 registered food businesses. The Commercial Protection Team is responsible for both food safety and food standards enforcement in food businesses.

In accordance with Food Standards Agency (FSA) Statutory Codes of Practice, food safety and food standards inspections are carried out on a risk priority basis with higher risk premises being inspected more frequently. After each inspection, the food business receives a risk rating. The frequency of inspection is determined by these risk scores. Food officers carry out both safety and standards inspections during the same visit where possible to ensure efficient use of resources.

- 1.2 Local Authority performance is monitored by the FSA. Authorities are required to submit twice yearly returns. During 2024, the FSA contacted the Local Authority and commenced performance engagement due to the number of overdue interventions. Subsequently, an action plan was put into place for the authority to realign to the inspection frequencies in the code of practice. The authority has been progressing well through the delivery of the intervention programme and in June 2026, the FSA reduced the status of engagement with our authority from Level 1 engagement to monitoring. The action plan remains in place, with an objective to ensure full realignment to the code of practice by 31st March 2027.

2 Service Demands

- 2.1 Since Covid, the service has been dealing with an ongoing backlog of inspections. Demand for the service has increased due to a continual rise in newly registered food businesses, and there are significant resource pressures due to recruitment difficulties and staff vacancies. Recruitment efforts have been unsuccessful and alternative measures, including agency staff and overtime, are being used to maintain service delivery. To combat an industry shortage of qualified Environmental Health Officers, the service has introduced a career graded Environmental Health Officer position to attract graduate students and currently have a Regulatory Compliance Trainee in post, due to working with the Greater Manchester Regulatory Centre for Excellence.

3 Service Delivery

- 3.1 The following inspections are due for inspection/intervention during 2026/2027.

Category	Number of Food Hygiene Inspections Due
A	7
B	49
C	152
D	205
E's	191
New Food Businesses	400 (Approx based on 24/26)
Overdue Inspections	245
Total	1249

3.2 The service continues to face significant resource pressures due to recruitment difficulties and staff vacancies. However, during 2025/2026 the number of food hygiene inspections increased by 40%, with 891 carried out at premises due/overdue for an inspection. In comparison 638 inspections were carried out during 2024/2025.

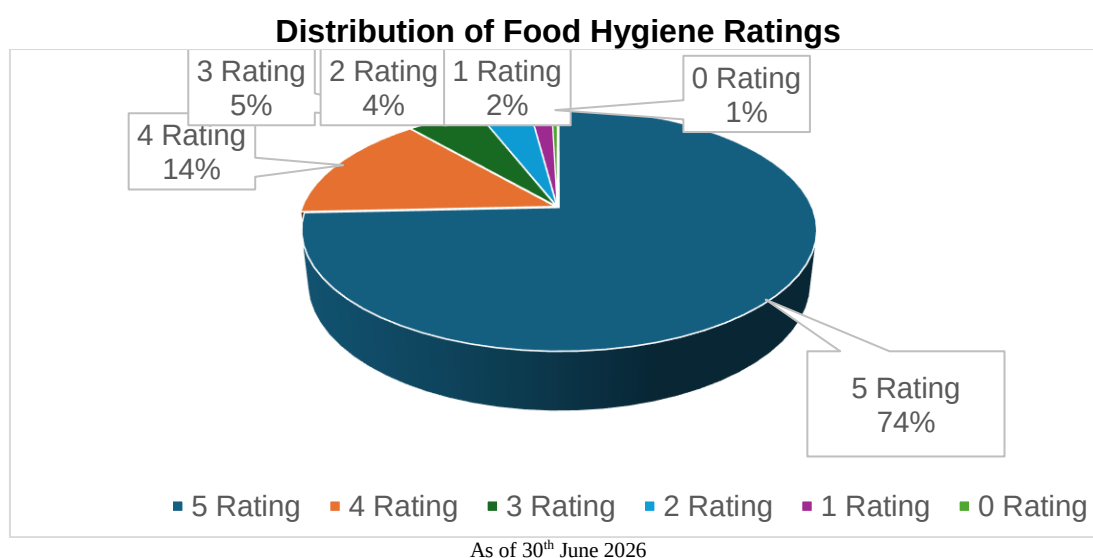
3.3 There is a total of 1,249 premises due a food hygiene inspection during 2026/2027. Considering current resources and vacant posts in the team, the delivery of all due interventions poses a challenge, however, the service is striving to complete all interventions in 2026/2027 to ensure realignment with the Food Law Code of Practice.

The volume of inspections and other associated work, for example revisits and enforcement work, cannot be met with the allocated resources available, particularly as 1.7 FTE Food Environmental Health Officer posts in the team are currently vacant. Therefore, funding via the vacant posts will be utilised for agency staff and overtime for qualified food officers to ensure the work detailed above can be completed. Alongside this, recruitment will still be driven to fill the vacant positions.

3.4 Food Standards inspections will be prioritised on a risk basis, i.e., all category priority 1,3 & 6 inspections will be completed, and unrated premises will be inspected as they are due a hygiene inspection. The premises overdue a food standards inspection will be completed alongside their food hygiene inspection.

4. Food Hygiene National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme – Food Standards Agency

4.1 Oldham Council participates in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme whereby qualifying businesses receive a food hygiene rating after their food hygiene inspection. The highest rating is '5' – 'Very Good' and the lowest rating is 'zero' – 'Urgent Improvement Required'. The scheme includes catering and retail premises and consumers can search for current food hygiene score ratings on the FSA or Oldham Council's websites. This allows consumers to make an informed choice as to where to eat out or buy food. The publication of food hygiene ratings helps to drive up standards.



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- 4.2 Whilst the team carried out 8 voluntary closures of food premises and have instigated legal proceedings against 5 businesses for poor food hygiene standards, the vast majority of food businesses in the Borough are compliant, with 93% of establishments achieving a rating of 3 (generally satisfactory) or higher. 74% hold the highest possible rating of 5 (very good).