

Present: The Mayor – Councillor Ur-Rehman

Councillors Ahmad, Akhtar, A. Alexander, G. Alexander, Ali, Ames, Azad, Ball, M Bashforth, S Bashforth, Bates, Blyth, Briggs, Brownridge, A Chadderton, Chauhan, Cosgrove, Dawson, Dean, Dearden, Fielding, Garry, Gloster, Haque, Harkness, Harrison, Heffernan, Hibbert, Hussain, Iqbal, Jabbar, Judge, Klonowski, Larkin, Malik, McCann, McLaren, McMahan, Moores, Murphy, Mushtaq, Price, Qumer, Rehman, Roberts, Salamat, Sedgwick, Sheldon, Shuttleworth, Stretton, Sykes, Toor, Turner, Williamson, Williams and Wrigglesworth

1 **QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS FROM THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ON WARD OR DISTRICT ISSUES**

The Mayor advised the meeting that the first item on the agenda in Open Council was Public Question Time. The questions had been received from members of the public and would be taken in the order in which they had been received. Council was advised that if the questioner was not present, then the question would appear on the screen in the Council Chamber. The following public questions had been submitted: (15 mins)

1. Question from Leonie Kirkbride via email

“I wanted to ask a question about the new Royton swimming Baths. Why does the water have to be so cold and sitting on the side be so hot that we are sweating. I find Chadderton baths just right. The water is not that cold. Kids in the swimming lesson yesterday took longer to get in the pool because it was freezing. I was told it's the right temperature. Why so cold. Is there anything you can do about it. Also can I mention again about Roman Road the parking is horrible. People with prams can not get past so they go in the road. Kids coming from school have to walk in the road. Do you want an accident. Why Don't you put double yellow lines on the bit were you have to walk in the road. That would make it safer”.

Councillor Barbara Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Co-Operatives, responded that all Main Pools were set at 27 - 29 degrees Celsius, the learner pools were 30 - 32 degrees Celsius.

Royton's Main pool had consistently been between 28.5 - 29 degrees C, purposely set it to the higher range so it did not feel cold. There should be no difference between Royton or Chadderton. The learner pool has always been around 31 degrees C. Poolside air temps should be 1 degree above the pool water and Royton's is consistently around 30 degrees C.

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Highways, added that Roman Road, already had some waiting restrictions in place and dedicated mandatory School Keep

Clear markings. There was a layby near the school which some parents used to drop children off. Parking around schools and at school time peaks caused problems across the borough. It was not effective to implement waiting restrictions for this type of situation which occurred over a relatively short period of time, as the drivers were with the vehicles enabling them to move off if enforcement were carried out.

He had asked for an increased presence by the school safety vehicle to try to encourage appropriate parking behaviour in the area.

2. Question from Yvonne Farrand via email

“I would like to ask if the road closure arrangements for Shaw market are permanently in place or if they are just a trial. My reason for asking, is because of the absolute traffic chaos I experienced on Thursday last week. A journey which should have taken me only 10 minutes there and back, took more than three quarters of an hour, resulting in my having to run round doing my urgent shopping at breakneck speed so I was not late to collect my daughter from school.

The roads around the town centre were absolute gridlock. No one could move anywhere, buses having to negotiate roads not designed for through traffic, cars unable to turn out of side streets blocking the roads with others unable to turn in even to get into car parks. Queues and queues of standing traffic, inching its way round back streets! Whilst I was sat in standing traffic, I could clearly see that the market was devoid of shoppers as was Asda when I finally got there, their car park virtually empty.

I am hoping that this is only a trial and that someone will realise that moving the market is actually counterproductive, reducing the number of shoppers in Shaw rather than increasing them. I will be avoiding Shaw in a Thursday in future”.

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Highways, responded that there had been a ten-week trial to test out how Shaw market and local businesses performed with the market held on Market Street. During the trial, highways officers monitored traffic both on Thursdays and also on other days of the week to ensure the Council had full comparisons. The trial was considered to be successful and Shaw market was granted a permanent licence to be held on Market Street by the Licensing Panel on the 2nd November.

The Council was not aware of any specific traffic related issues on the afternoon of the 22nd October. However, highways officers had made full assessments of the suitability of the diversions for buses and large delivery vehicles and were satisfied that the temporary diversions in place on market day were safe and enabled traffic to flow.

Monitoring of traffic had taken place both before and during the trial period, including monitoring of the traffic queues on Eastway when the pedestrian crossings were in use. There were no unacceptable traffic flow issues noted during monitoring. There had been regular consultation with the bus companies, the local mail order companies, the emergency services and the

larger supermarkets. There had been no negative reports from any of these organisations.

The evidence showed that the market was very well used, with a significant rise in footfall and consultations with local businesses and local residents indicated that there was a majority in favour of the on street market.

He would be keeping an eye on the situation and was confident the local ward Councillors would keep him fully informed of any problems that occurred.

3. Question from Bradley Hardacre via email

“The report that was presented to the Licensing Panel on Monday last (2nd November) about the Shaw ‘On Street’ Market trial contains some comments of real concern from local traders affected adversely by the new arrangements.

These comments relate to takings being significant down - “one of the lowest trading days” and worse still “a disaster...with takings so bad they did not even cover the pay for one wage”; problems with deliveries – “the closure of Market Street will not allow me to load and unload items for my business, which I need access to at all times”; and traffic disruption – “the extra traffic on Eastway is causing inconvenience” and “The ambulance could not get near where it was needed”.

Given that these comments come from some of the more well-established businesses on Market Street, I would like to ask the Cabinet Member under whose remit responsibility for markets lies whether they share my concern that the continuation of an on-street market could in the long-term affect the viability of these businesses **and** what this Administration intends to do to address these issues?”

Councillor Moores, Deputy Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise, responded that, on the 2nd November the Licensing Panel considered a full report which detailed feedback from local businesses, members of the public and market traders regarding the request to give Shaw market a permanent licence to operate on Market Street.

Whilst, there were a number of local people and local businesses who did not agree with relocating the market to Market Street, the weight of evidence from the formal consultation with local businesses on Market Street and the open public consultation with residents suggested that there was a clear majority in favour of the move. Many local businesses had commented that their trade had increased and were supportive of the move. Almost 60% of local people preferred the on street location and 68% said that they thought the new location would have a positive impact. There had been a marked increase in footfall which was reflected in the feedback from the market traders, who all reported a major rise in their takings. A thriving market encouraged more footfall which would help other Market Street businesses to thrive. The purpose of moving the market on street was to encourage new customers who used the supermarkets to come into the heart of the District Centre. For the first time, there was a waiting list of new market traders keen to trade in Shaw. There would be a wider variety of

stalls which would encourage even more new customers and also give the existing loyal customers a much better market than they had had for the last 5 years.

He understood that the move had meant that local businesses themselves had to make adjustments. Many local businesses had been able to make alternative arrangements for their deliveries. Some businesses were accessible from the rear of their premises and some businesses had changed their delivery arrangements by changing the day or time of their deliveries. There had been formal monitoring of the changes to traffic flows and so far there had been no evidence of any unacceptable traffic disruption. The Council had been in regular contact throughout the ten weeks trial with the bus companies, the local mail order companies, the major supermarkets and the emergency services. None had reported any issues. On the one occasion when an ambulance was called, it was fully able to get to the patient who was sitting near the Iceland store. The markets staff had waited at the barriers and moved them as soon as the ambulance arrived and the NW Ambulance Service had not reported that access or egress was a problem.

4. Question from Mark Brooks via email

“Oldham Council will be funding the works associated with the highways and access requirements for the proposed new Saddleworth School in Diggle.

Would the Council therefore please state the current total cost estimate for all the highway and infrastructure improvements necessary in relation to the Saddleworth School project”.

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Highways, responded that the Council had been designing a highways scheme associated with the proposed Saddleworth School development in Diggle, working closely with Ward Councillors. There were two reasons why he could not currently disclose the estimated cost of the scheme.

Firstly, some elements of the scheme would require planning consent to go ahead and would be subject to statutory consultation with the public and statutory consultees. The scheme could therefore be subjected to change. This may increase or decrease the estimated costs.

Secondly, the Council would not disclose the estimated cost of the scheme prior to going out to tender for the works because this would let contractors know how much to charge, and might prevent the Council from achieving best value for the contract and best value for the council tax payers of Oldham.

The costs of the highways scheme would be disclosed in the future, once any tendering process has been completed.

5. Question from MetroMeerkat via Twitter

“Why did council let @MCRMetrolink@OfficialTfGM downgrade service to single peak trams with ridiculous overcrowding?”

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Highways, responded that the Metrolink tram system was managed by Transport for Greater Manchester and there was a

need to manage competing demand across a very complex network. However, recent discussions had led to a proposal to increase the frequency of the service in the near future which should relieve any pressure at peak times. Much information had been published in newspapers and on the TfGM website about the improvements in service due in December.

6. Question from HomehaterMarcus via Twitter

“Can we get a resident only car park marked out because the parking standard is appalling. 11 cars fit but only room for 7. It is the residents only car park at Britannia Avenue Shaw”.

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Highways, responded that the Britannia Avenue residents parking area had been introduced as a zone scheme which meant that bays were not marked on the street. It was the responsibility of the permit holders to park responsibly in the zone area.

A traditional residents parking scheme, with the provision of marked bays, was considered at the time the scheme was being designed, but this type of scheme would have also required the introduction of yellow lines to be introduced in areas considered not suitable for parking, which would have reduced the space available for permit holders.

When this was initially discussed with residents through the consultation process, the consensus of opinion was for a zone scheme to be introduced.

7. Question from Alison Hulme-Weakley via Facebook

“Are there any plans on installing much needed CCTV on Ashton Road?”

Councillor Barbara Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Co-Operatives, responded that the Council in the past had invested in updating and installing new public space CCTV cameras across the Borough, but there were currently no plans for further investment due to the cost associated with installation and upkeep.

8. Question from Mr Fitzpatrick via email

“Amid much fanfare you announced that £4million of inducements were on offer to Mono Pumps of Tameside to encourage them to move their operation to Oldham, and they were going to come here.

Can you please tell me when they will be arriving”.

Mr Fitzpatrick asked his question.

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise responded that they were there and had been there since September 2014.

At this point in the meeting the Mayor advised that the time limit for this item had expired.



The Mayor reminded Members that the Council had previously agreed that, questions would be taken in an order which reflected the political balance of the Council. The following questions were submitted by Councillors on Ward or District Matters: (25 mins)

1. Councillor Fielding to Councillor McMahon

“The car park at Failsworth District Centre is widely regarded by many people in Failsworth as poor quality.

Whilst some work has already been undertaken to create safer routes for pedestrians, there remain a number of other items of poor finish that would be relatively simple and quick to put right, including:

-Poor quality and misleading signage.

-Faded road markings.

-Bent or damaged street furniture.

-An unpaved footpath leading to the canal.

Would the relevant cabinet member agree to address these issues with officers, and if necessary arrange a site meeting to come and view some of the outstanding problems?”

Councillor McMahon responded that, as a resident of Failsworth and a local shopper, he fully understood how hazardous the car park was. The Ward Councillors had been working very hard with Brook House and Tesco to make the car park safer. If you were a pedestrian trying to get from Tesco to the Health Centre, you had to navigate a car park, through traffic, really poor signage and white-lining works. He indicated that Councillor Moores would take up with officers any operational issues around town centres, and that a meeting would be held with Brook House and Tesco to try to bring a resolution to this.

2. Councillor Bashforth to Councillor Hibbert

“In my ward in Royton I have a number of housing estates where the road was never adopted for various reasons and one particular street where street lamps have not been installed. Some residents have recently paid to have new lamps fitted by themselves.

Could the relevant Cabinet Member work with me or let me know if, as these people are paying council tax, which includes an element for street lighting, he could ask the Authority and/or EoN to replace these lamps on a regular basis and set the timers on the lamps so they come on at the correct times”.

Councillor Hibbert responded that he understood the concerns raised and had asked that officers give priority to following up on adoption of both highways and street lighting on new developments. However, there were significant financial implications to the Council adopting street lamps at risk including, not least, the costs of the remedial work to bring the lighting up to the required standard. The Council was therefore

committed to ensuring that developers did not leave residents in this difficult position and going forward would take whatever action was deemed necessary to resolve the issue. He spoke from personal experience in his Ward of a road that took ten years to resolve and he committed to work with Ward Councillors, whichever Ward and whichever political party they belonged to.

3. Councillor Garry to Councillor Hibbert

“I recently had the misfortune to travel shortly after 5 o clock on the Manchester to Rochdale tram.

To say the journey to Failsworth was unpleasant, overcrowded and dangerous is an understatement. Far too many people were crushed inside the carriage, in a bid to get home from work. Unbelievably, even more people got on at Monsall, which left many of us with nothing to hold on to for safely, should the tram have to stop suddenly.

If any of the passengers on board would have fainted, had a epileptic fit or a diabetic hypo then mayhem would have ensued, as they could not have been placed in the recovery position. Surely, for health and safety reasons someone should be monitoring the amount of people who are on the tram at any one time”.

Councillor Hibbert responded that the Metrolink was extremely popular and extremely busy at peak times. The tram system was managed by Transport for Greater Manchester. They recognised that many parts of the Metrolink system would benefit from additional capacity and they were constantly looking at ways to increase capacity on the network, particularly at peak times. The tram fleet was set to grow to 120-strong, which would provide the opportunity to increase capacity and frequency on the most popular services. He believed Oldham’s service was one of the most popular. More trams would be running between Shaw and Crompton and the city centre from December. There was no exact date yet, however it was expected to be before the Christmas peak shopping time. In the case of an emergency the driver would stop at the next stop and an ambulance would be called if necessary. The Cabinet Member recognised the potential for problems, as raised by Councillor Garry and that currently the peak time tram ride may not be a very pleasant experience.

4. Councillor Harkness to Councillor Akhtar

“Mr Mayor, the Cabinet Member will be aware that I and my fellow Liberal Democrats are fully committed to providing a new secondary school for the children of Saddleworth despite attempts by some to delay and delay to the point that we no longer get a new secondary school.

Recently a new consultation process has begun relating to planning and environmental factors. I fully support the principle of public consultation however I am concerned that yet another delay, which in parts repeats what has already taken place,

means that the project is around 18 months behind schedule whilst the fabric of the current building continues to deteriorate. My concern is that there are many schools on the North West waiting with bids and are happy to jump in with a late bid and take up the offer of a new secondary school.

The nightmare scenario which no one will want is a situation in which there is no secondary school in Saddleworth in a few years' time and local children are being dispersed by bus to school places around the borough. Children in Saddleworth would have to travel all around the Borough to schools when the current site inevitably closes

So can I please seek assurances that the Cabinet remains fully committed to building a new secondary school in Saddleworth at the earliest possible time and that it will fight tooth and nail to ensure that funding does not get pulled?"

Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, responded that the Council was equally committed to ensuring that it had a brand new Saddleworth School that provided a modern environment that enabled and supported quality teaching. The new Saddleworth School was well beyond the bidding stage and was included in the Education Funding Authority's approved Priority Schools Building Programme and all partners had invested a great deal of time and effort in getting to this stage.

Whilst it had taken a long time to date to develop the project, it was important to note that the Council now had to play its part as the Local Planning Authority and that this was a legal process which needed to be carried out in a robust way. The additional public consultation which had been announced would go over some old ground, but residents would be better informed by a single environmental statement which covered all four planning applications, including the highways works which had not yet been the subject of public consultation.

The Council was working closely with the Education Funding Authority to ensure that they were fully and regularly briefed on the reasons for and the progress of the additional planning process.

5. Councillor Qumer to Councillor Hibbert

"Waterloo Street at its point outside the shops where it turns into one lane needs urgent repairs. This has been reported and I have been told the paving bricks have been ordered. Can you please tell me and the residents of St Marys when the work is going to be carried out?"

Councillor Hibbert responded that the area in question had been made safe so although at this point it might not be aesthetically pleasing the area was safe, which was the main thing.

Engineers were considering the design issues with the blocks and future maintenance. Improvement of the area would be carried out when appropriate funding becomes available.

Following his conversation earlier with Councillor Qumer, there would be further investigation and Councillor Qumer would be kept fully informed.



6. Councillor Price to Councillor McMahon

“Could the Cabinet Member give me an update on the proposed development of the former Counthill School site”.

Councillor McMahon responded that the developer was due to be appointed in the New Year. It was hoped that work would start on site in September next year. The anticipation was that there would be between 80 and 90 units built on the site, with estimated completion for May 2017.

7. Councillor Ahmad to Councillor Akhtar

“Clarksfield School is in great need of replacing, as it is very poor condition, and fails to give pupils and staff a suitable environment to work in. We regret the Government rejected funding last year to replace it. Could the Cabinet Member advise me of any progress on this matter?”

Councillor Akhtar responded that the condition of elements of the electrical services and remedial repairs to the roof and brickwork pointing had been included in the 2015/16 Council’s Backlog Maintenance Programme for consideration. Just after the meeting to agree the backlog maintenance programme, the school was put forward to the Education Funding Agency to seek funding for a replacement school, but unfortunately the bid was unsuccessful.

The condition of Clarksfield Primary School had, and continued to be, raised as part of the discussions with regard future capital works strategies, but until the Council could reconcile the difficult budget position, it was unable at this moment in time to decide on what future course of action to take.

8. Councillor Williamson to Councillor Stretton

“After months of speculation and denials from North West Ambulance Service, my ward colleague Cllr Dave Murphy has finally received confirmation that Crompton Ambulance Station is closed and has been since the summer.

I understand one of the reasons for the closure was because there had been a number of targeted acts of vandalism and crime. Obviously North West Ambulance Service needs to look after their staff and I support that.

North West Ambulance are looking at possibly relocating to the Royal Oldham Hospital and my concern is that this will add another three minutes or so on to the response time for those needing an ambulance living in and around the Shaw and Crompton side of the borough, putting more lives at risk.

The letter received states that “we will inform stakeholders such as yourself as to what the final outcome will be”. Therefore can the relevant cabinet member please put pressure on North West Ambulance to keep to their commitment and ask them to reconsider the closure of Crompton Ambulance Station?”

Councillor Stretton responded that obviously this was not a service that the Council had control over, but clarification had been sought because this affected Oldham residents. No decision had yet been taken on the future of the Crompton Ambulance Station.

North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) Trust launched a Trust-wide comprehensive estates review in 2012. The remit of the review was to assess whether each site within their estate portfolio was viable operationally and financially, and whether a refurbishment was required.

The Crompton station had been the victim of vandalism, and the decision was taken by NWAS to temporarily relocate the service from Crompton Station to the Oldham Ambulance Station. The move was brought about by concerns for staff safety following a number of targeted acts of vandalism and crime, although there was now reason to believe that these concerns had been alleviated due to a recent conviction. There had been no negative impact in the service Oldham residents had received from NWAS since this temporary relocation began.

Whilst the Crompton site was vacant, NWAS decided to begin the review process of the Crompton Site. When a decision was made, the decision and reasons for it would be communicated to the local MP, Oldham Health & Wellbeing Board and Oldham Healthwatch.

The Council was advised that there had been no public consultation on the matter as there was to be no withdrawal of a service – people in Oldham would still receive an ambulance when they called for one, no matter what the outcome of the review.

Officers from NWAS had offered to meet with Council representatives to discuss the review and possible outcomes for the Crompton site (as well as any other Oldham sites) and both organisations would provide mutual support and jointly plan any future communications where possible. The Cabinet Member would ask officers to ensure that representatives from the Shaw Ward and the Crompton Ward were involved in any meeting.

9. Councillor McLaren to Councillor Hibbert

“Residents on Denton Lane and adjoining streets have expressed some concern about the general condition of the carriageway on Denton Lane. Is it possible to provide any information regarding the future maintenance of Denton Lane and whether there might be any possibility of the carriageway being resurfaced in the future?”

Councillor Hibbert responded that a Highways Engineer had undertaken a detailed walked visual inspection on the 25th September this year, to ascertain a general condition of the carriageway along Denton Lane. Any repairs deemed necessary would continue to be logged, however the standard of the carriageway meant that it was not currently included in the resurfacing programme.

10. Councillor Ali to Councillor Hibbert

“The issue is in relation to road safety in Chadderton North. I am concerned that the junction of Garforth St and Middleton Road is increasingly difficult to negotiate when travelling by car. This is a busy junction and poses a risk to both commuters and pedestrians. I was wondering if the relevant Cabinet Member can advise if there is any possibility of measures being taken to improve road safety for all users”.

Councillor Hibbert responded that he knew the junction very well, knew there were difficulties there and had discussed this with officers. A scheme had been proposed and would be considered within available funding. The proposal under consideration was to install traffic signals with pedestrian crossing facilities at this junction.

11. Councillor A Alexander to Councillor Hibbert

“I have been asked by the residents of Old Mill House, Hood Square and local householders about whether there is a possibility of a traffic island on Oldham Road Springhead, opposite the bus stops, to help the elderly in crossing this part of the road safely.

I know these are hard times due to this government’s cuts in all departments but is there some kind of hope I can give residents because I am led to believe there isn’t any funding for this kind of work?”

Councillor Hibbert responded that a full study was required to assess if it was viable to install a pedestrian refuge at this point, as the road was quite narrow and there was a natural bend. A feasibility study was essential to determine the most appropriate solution and the District Executive had received a fee proposal to carry out this study. He had questioned the amount of that fee proposal and was talking further with officers, doing his best to achieve a positive outcome on this issue.

12. Councillor Sheldon to Councillor Hibbert

“Would the Cabinet Member consider improving the safety of pedestrians on the roads in Saddleworth and also in the Borough, by improving the lighting. The new lighting columns around the Borough have much improved the road carriageway and will save on the running costs now and in the future. The design of the new columns often cause the road to be well-lit, but the footpaths are often in the shade caused by trees and shrubs at the side of the road. At this time of the year, with the loss of the tree leaves, there is less of a problem, but this may be the best time to prune back the hedges and tree branches. The problem will increase again in the spring. I believe a well-lit area is often a safer area”.

Councillor Hibbert responded that he had met with Councillor Murphy and gone through the local transport plan. Councillor Murphy was satisfied that all the work proposed was shared as evenly as possible across the Borough. The Council was doing as much as it could to make all junctions as safe to use for

pedestrians as drivers. As regards lights, if Councillor Sheldon could give him a clearer indication of where he was referring to, he would make sure they were investigated. When lights were first installed, it took a while to adapt to the computer timing system, so it could take a week or two before the lights starting lighting up in co-ordination with others in the area. Things could go wrong and, if Councillor Sheldon could tell him where they had gone wrong, he would do his best to resolve it.

13. Councillor Judge indicated he wished to withdraw his question as it had already been dealt with.

14. Councillor Ames to Councillor Hibbert

“Can the Cabinet Member for Housing and Highways investigate why there is delay in resolving why four newly completed properties remain empty whilst the other houses on the site were let some months ago? The homes are 17, 19, 21 and 23 Hollins Rd, Hollinwood”.

Councillor Hibbert responded that there was a crash barrier across the front of the properties which was introduced as part of the works to enable the M60.

Officers would be going back to the developer this week to progress this further and find out exactly what was going on.

15. Councillor Chadderton to Councillor Hibbert

“There is a large dip that has formed on the road on the hill between Low Crompton Road and Linkside Avenue, the dip is getting slightly bigger and slightly deeper as the weeks pass. Can the relevant Cabinet Member tell me when this will be resurfaced”.

Councillor Hibbert responded that investigations were ongoing regarding the cause of the subsidence in this area. The area was being made safe while these investigations progressed. The surface would only be permanently repaired once the cause of the subsidence was resolved.

16. Councillor Sedgwick to Councillor Brownridge

“My question relates to incidents of anti-social behaviour outside Lees Library.

The Library has a Wi-Fi facility. Unfortunately this is not turned off at times when the Library is closed and crowds of young people gather round the building at night as they are able to access the facility on remote devices outside it.

The situation is leading to the Police being called out on a regular basis in response to complaints from local residents about the noise.

Please can I ask the Cabinet Member if it is possible for the Wi-Fi facility to be turned off outside Library opening hours so residents can get some peace?”

Councillor Brownridge responded that the answer was yes. She had a similar situation at the Gallery and had asked Unity to turn the connection off when the Gallery was not open. She had asked them to extend that to Lees library also.

At this point in the meeting the Mayor advised that the time limit for this item had expired.

RESOLVED that the questions and the responses provided be noted.

2 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kirkham, Hudson and Shah

3 **TO ORDER THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 9TH SEPTEMBER 2015 BE SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2015 be approved as a correct record

4 **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY MATTER TO BE DETERMINED AT THE MEETING**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Councillors Murphy, Hibbert and Brownridge declared a personal interest in Item 12, Minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 21st September, by virtue of their appointments to the Board of First Choice Homes.

Councillors Shuttleworth, Judge and Heffernan declared a pecuniary interest in Item 12, Minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 21st September, by virtue of their appointments to the Oldham Coliseum Board.

Councillors Chauhan, Harrison and McCann declared a personal interest in Item 15(b), Minutes of Partnership meetings, by virtue of their appointments to the Oldham Care and Support Board.

Councillors Sykes, Dean and McCann declared a personal interest in Item 15(b), Minutes of Partnership meetings, by virtue of their appointments to the Unity Partnership.

Councillors Ball, Stretton, Williams, Bashforth, Heffernan declared a personal interest in Item 9, Budget Proposals, by virtue of their membership of the Credit Union.

Councillor Ball declared a personal interest in Item 9, Budget Proposals, by virtue of being the Council lead on Community Horizons.

Councillors Roberts, Dearden, Fielding, Wrigglesworth and Williamson declared a personal interest in Item 9, Budget Proposals, by virtue of being Directors of Positive Steps, Oldham.

Councillor Cosgrove declared a personal interest in Item 9, Budget Proposals, by virtue of being a Trustee of NEON.

5 **TO DEAL WITH MATTERS WHICH THE MAYOR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT BUSINESS**

The Mayor informed the meeting that no items of Urgent Business had been received.

6 **TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL AND SPECIFICALLY TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PASSING OF RT HON MICHAEL MEACHER MP AND HONORARY FREEMAN OF THE BOROUGH**

The Mayor advised the meeting that no items had been received related to the business of the Council.

The Mayor and Councillors Dean, Bates, Jabbar, Ahmad, Sykes and McMahon all paid tribute to the work of the Right Honourable Michael Meacher MP, Honorary Freeman of the Borough and Member of Parliament for Oldham West and Royton. A minute's silence was held in his memory.

7 **TO RECEIVE AND NOTE PETITIONS RECEIVED RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL**

The Mayor advised that one petition had been received for noting by Council.

RESOLVED that the following petition received since the last meeting of the Council be noted:

Economy and Skills

Save Shaw Market Petition (received 20 October 2015) (353 Signatures) (Ref 2015-22)

8 **OUTSTANDING BUSINESS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Mayor informed the meeting that there was one item of Outstanding Business from the last Council meeting.

Councillor Jabbar **MOVED** and Councillor Fielding **SECONDED**:
"This Council notes the passing of this Tory Government's Welfare Bill in the House of Commons.

The bill will cut away another £12 Billion from the welfare budget, hitting the most vulnerable in our society the hardest, the poor, the jobless, the sick to name a few. This Tory Government seems to be hell bent on attacking towns like Oldham in its cuts to Local Government funding, and now it is taking aim at families who can't make ends meet.

This bill moves to cut tax credits and housing benefit, measures which we believe will lead to increases in child poverty, this is despite the Conservatives pledging the opposite in their manifesto – a promise not kept.

Indeed, the House of Commons Library has put the average household loss at £1350 a year because of this regressive bill.

This Council resolves:

- To instruct the Chief Executive to write to the appropriate government minister, expressing this council's concern over

- measures in the Welfare Bill and that an assessment be made of its impact on Oldham should it become law.
- To ask our three Members of Parliament to campaign against the bill during its passage through both Houses of Parliament and to reasonably amend or vote against the bill, encouraging other parliamentary colleagues to do the same”.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Harkness MOVED and Councillor Sykes
SECONDED:

“Insert two new paragraphs after the fourth sentence which ends “to name a few”:

“The Government plans to reduce tax credits for three million employees on low pay. This represents a direct attack on everyday workers who go out to work come rain or shine to provide for their families, and this will dishearten them when we should be giving them a helping hand.

Everyone sensible knows we need to balance the books but this should be not be done on the backs of the working poor - especially at a time George Osborne is handing tax breaks to millionaires”.

Motion as Amended to read:

The Council notes the passing of this Tory Government’s Welfare Bill in the House of Commons.

The bill will cut away another £12 Billion from the welfare budget, hitting the most vulnerable in our society the hardest, the poor, the jobless, the sick to name a few.

The Government plans to reduce tax credits for three million employees on low pay. This represents a direct attack on everyday workers who go out to work come rain or shine to provide for their families, and this will dishearten them when we should be giving them a helping hand.

Everyone sensible knows we need to balance the books but this should be not be done on the backs of the working poor - especially at a time George Osborne is handing tax breaks to millionaires.

This Tory Government seems to be hell bent on attacking towns like Oldham in its cuts to Local Government funding, and now it is taking aim at families who can’t make ends meet.

This bill moves to cut tax credits and housing benefit, measures which we believe will lead to increases in child poverty, this despite the Conservatives pledging the opposite in their manifesto – a promise not kept.

Indeed the House of Commons Library has put the average household loss at £1350 a year because of this regressive bill.

This Council resolves:

- To instruct the Chief Executive to write to the appropriate government minister, expressing the council’s concern over measures in the Welfare Bill and that an assessment be made of its impact on Oldham should it become law.
- To ask our three Members of Parliament, particularly the new member for Ashton-under-Lyne, to campaign against the bill

during its passage through both Houses of Parliament and to reasonably amend or vote against the bill, encouraging other parliamentary colleagues to do the same”.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT, which was CARRIED unanimously.

AMENDMENT 2

Councillor Sykes MOVED and Councillor Harkness SECONDED:

“Insert in Line 2 after ‘Commons’: comma “aided by the abstention in the vote of the majority of Labour MPs, including one of Oldham’s MPs who represents Failsworth.”

Insert in Line 14 after ‘Parliament’: comma “particularly the new member for Ashton-under-Lyne” comma.

Motion as Amended to read:

The Council notes the passing of this Tory Government’s Welfare Bill in the House of Commons, aided by the abstention in the vote of the majority of Labour MPs, including one of Oldham’s MPs who represents Failsworth.

The bill will cut away another £12 Billion from the welfare budget, hitting the most vulnerable in our society the hardest, the poor, the jobless, the sick to name a few. This Tory Government seems to be hell bent on attacking towns like Oldham in its cuts to Local Government funding, and now it is taking aim at families who can’t make ends meet.

This bill moves to cut tax credits and housing benefit, measures which we believe will lead to increases in child poverty, this despite the Conservatives pledging the opposite in their manifesto – a promise not kept.

Indeed the House of Commons Library has put the average household loss at £1350 a year because of this regressive bill.

This Council resolves:

- To instruct the Chief Executive to write to the appropriate government minister, expressing the council’s concern over measures in the Welfare Bill and that an assessment be made of its impact on Oldham should it become law.
- To ask our three Members of Parliament, particularly the new member for Ashton-under-Lyne, to campaign against the bill during its passage through both Houses of Parliament and to reasonably amend or vote against the bill, encouraging other parliamentary colleagues to do the same”.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT, which was LOST.

A vote was then taken on the MOTION (as amended).

“The Council notes the passing of this Tory Government’s Welfare Bill in the House of Commons.

The bill will cut away another £12 Billion from the welfare budget, hitting the most vulnerable in our society the hardest, the poor, the jobless, the sick to name a few.

The Government plans to reduce tax credits for three million employees on low pay. This represents a direct attack on

everyday workers who go out to work come rain or shine to provide for their families, and this will dishearten them when we should be giving them a helping hand.

Everyone sensible knows we need to balance the books but this should be not be done on the backs of the working poor - especially at a time George Osborne is handing tax breaks to millionaires.

This Tory Government seems to be hell bent on attacking towns like Oldham in its cuts to Local Government funding, and now it is taking aim at families who can't make ends meet.

This bill moves to cut tax credits and housing benefit, measures which we believe will lead to increases in child poverty, this despite the Conservatives pledging the opposite in their manifesto – a promise not kept.

Indeed the House of Commons Library has put the average household loss at £1350 a year because of this regressive bill”.

On being put to the VOTE, the meeting UNANIMOUSLY voted IN FAVOUR of the motion, which was therefore CARRIED.

RESOLVED that:

- The Chief Executive be instructed to write to the appropriate government minister, expressing the council's concern over measures in the Welfare Bill and an assessment be made of its impact on Oldham should it become law.
- The three Members of Parliament, particularly the new member for Ashton-under-Lyne, be asked to campaign against the bill during its passage through both Houses of Parliament and to reasonably amend or vote against the bill, encouraging other parliamentary colleagues to do the same.

9

BUDGET PROPOSALS 2016/17 2017/18 TRANCHE 1

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Finance which presented a revision to the 2016/17 and 2017/18 budget reduction requirement and also the Administration's detailed Tranche 1 budget reduction proposals for the financial year 2016/17 prior to the receipt of the Local Government Finance Settlement and other information which would impact on budget decisions. Further detailed budget reduction proposals would be presented to Council on 16 December 2015.

Councillor McMahon MOVED the Budget Proposals and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Jabbar SECONDED the Budget Proposals and spoke in support of them

Councillors Mushtaq, McCann, Dean, Rehman, Harrison, Haque, Blyth and Sykes spoke in support of the Budget Proposals.

Councillor McMahon exercised his right of reply and spoke in support of the Budget Proposals.

On being put the vote the MOTION was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.



RESOLVED that:

1. The revised budget reduction targets for 2016/17 of £18.194m and 2017/18 of £25.200m be approved.
2. £5.974m of the Tranche 1 budget reduction proposals (presented in summary at Appendix 3 and in detail at Appendix 4) be approved.
3. The eight budget proposals totalling £3.379m for 2016/17 for which the conclusion of consultation exercises is still required, as set out in Appendices 5 and 6, be noted.
4. It be noted that the budget reduction target may need to be revised depending on the Government funding and policy announcements, including the Provisional and Final Local Government Finance Settlements for 2016/17.

10

YOUTH COUNCIL

Members of the Youth Council spoke on the following Motion:

“New Psychoactive Substance (NPS). Substances commonly known as Legal Highs are posing a significant risk in our communities. These drugs are designed to mimic the effects of other illegal drugs such as cannabis, cocaine and heroin.

Although they are known as Legal Highs, this can be a misleading title. Many of these produced substances are already under the control of the misuse of drugs act but by naming them as Legal Highs, many young people believe that are safe to use and by being legal they are not as harmful as illegal substances. This is far from true.

The issue of Legal Highs has been previously raised in Full Council, back in December 2014, we know that many of you are already concerned about the problems they pose here in Oldham. It was resolved previously that further consultation work needed to be undertaken by Health and Wellbeing and it is encouraging to see that this is well underway.

NPS are more commonly manufactured in China and to a lesser extent, India. They are mainly imported into this country via mail and fast parcel services. The home office have found that they are then mainly distributed to users via friends, drug dealers, headshops and other retail outlets including garages, newsagents and takeaways. New substances appear rapidly on the market often replacing those substances that have been banned. Just a small change in the chemical ingredients can create a new substance that is not yet under control of the misuse of drugs act.

Legal Highs are easily accessible; you may have seen the evidence of them lying in the streets; the silver bullet type canisters that hold Nitrous oxide (laughing gas) or little packets such as these. Although there are many different ‘brands’ of NPS they mainly fall into 5 main groups:

- Stimulant type drugs - that mimic substances like amphetamines, cocaine and ecstasy

- Downers/Tranquillisers - that mimic various sedative drugs or opioid drugs
- Hallucinogenic - that mimic substances like LSD
- Dissociative drugs - these mimic substances like ketamine and PCP
- And finally Synthetic Cannaboids - that mimic the effects of cannabis

People take these substances for many of the same reasons people use other drugs because they enjoy the effects, they offer escapism, relaxation, shared social experiences and adventure and with NPS many people believe that they are legal which adds to the attraction.

There is little information available about the long term effects of NPS but short term use risks include:

- Overdose or seizures that can and have resulted in death
- Temporary psychotic states
- Unpredictable behaviour
- Sudden increase or decrease in heart rate, breathing rate and body temperature
- Hallucinations
- Vomiting
- Confusion and possible aggressive behaviour
- Feeling suicidal
- Physical and psychological dependency

I think we can all see that these are dangerous substances because of the health problems they create but we need to look at the wider implications too.

They can create social problems such as an increase in criminal activity, the breakdown of relationships, not engaging with school and education and social exclusion.

They create economic problems, as people develop personal debts, lose their jobs, have lower academic achievement and therefore affect future employment opportunities.

Legal Highs come at a great cost; a personal cost to individuals as well as a huge financial cost to services trying to deal with the associated problems they create.

We cannot afford to ignore this increasing issue.

Here in Oldham we know people are using NPS and let us be clear, it is not just young people. It is estimated that the average age of an NPS user is 40! This is an issue that potentially affects all residents in our borough. The latest statistic from Oasis, Oldham's young people's drug and alcohol services, reports that 27% of their clients are presenting with Legal High misuse. We believe this is set to increase unless we take action.

There is work already being undertaken in Oldham to address the issue of NPS. A task and finish group has been established with representation from a range of agencies and services to look at developing a co-ordinated and coherent approach in Oldham to the issue of NPS misuse.

We believe that the issue of NPS misuse needs to be a priority here in Oldham; we need to respond to the issue now before things get worse.

We believe there needs to be a shared strategy across Oldham from all agencies and services that includes a comprehensive campaign that raises awareness of what NPS are, prevents

people from becoming users of NPS and has a programme that enables the support of people who do use them to become non users.

We need to be working in schools to educate young people, professionals and parents about NPS. We knew little about NPS until we undertook a workshop with Oasis Drug and Alcohol Service. Young people are being misled by the common name of Legal Highs, believing they are safe to use because they are legal and they are not fully understanding what they are consuming.

We need to be delivering work in communities to build awareness and resilience. This is not just a youth issue as more adults use Legal Highs, often using them as a replacement for drugs such as heroine, cannabis and cocaine.

We believe a better name for these substances is Lethal Highs; the ultimate price someone could pay is death! We have seen this price paid in other areas of the country; we don't want the number of lives claimed by NPS to be higher.

We propose that Oldham Council recognises that NPS is a priority issue to be addressed and that it commits to supporting the work of the multi-agency task and finish group in its work to address the Issue of NPS misuse in Oldham".

Councillors Stretton and Williamson spoke in support of the Motion.

RESOLVED that:

The Council recognised that NPS was a priority issue to be addressed and committed to supporting the work of the multi-agency task and finish group, in its work to address the Issue of NPS misuse in Oldham.

11

LEADER AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Sykes, raised the following questions:

1 Talk Talk Cyber Attack

"The Leader will be aware of the cyber-attack conducted on 21st October against one of Britain's biggest internet service providers, Talk Talk.

As a consequence of this attack, a significant amount of individual customer data was stolen, including bank account numbers, sort codes, credit and debit card details, dates of birth and the names, email addresses and phone numbers of customers.

To their credit, according to a spokesperson from the Metropolitan Police Cyber Crime Unit: "TalkTalk have done everything right in bringing this matter to our attention as soon as possible," and they are co-operating fully with an ongoing criminal investigation, which has now led to an arrest.

Nonetheless this news will still be very worrying for our residents who pay their bills with the Council electronically on-line or who choose to pay via a debit or credit card.

What information can the Leader provide us about the impact, if any, of the Talk Talk attack on the Council's operations and its customers – the residents of this borough – and what reassurance can he provide them that the Council has the most rigorous safeguards in place to keep the personal and payment details of our residents safe from prying eyes?"

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, responded that he would consult with officers and provide a written response. The Council had secure servers and, when it took payments, those details were encrypted to make sure they could not be viewed. Cyber terrorists would try to circumnavigate the system on a regular basis so it was kept under constant review. The Council was aware of breaches such as Talk Talk and the government breaches and had learned from them, particularly as a public agency that took payments.

2. Conservative threat to Generation Oldham

"My second question concerns a clear and present danger to a plan that has enjoyed cross-party support in this Chamber – namely the proposal to generate our own green energy through the Generation Oldham project.

The Leader may be aware that the new Tory Government has recently proposed changes that will make it difficult if not impossible to continue to develop community owned renewable energy schemes.

When the Liberal Democrats controlled the Department of Energy and Climate Change whilst in coalition, a favourable regime was put in place to provide a generous subsidy by the payment of a Feed in Tariff (or FIT) to community energy projects.

As a result over 5,500 community energy projects were established over the lifetime of the Coalition Government – making a major contribution to our country's energy needs without creating a carbon footprint.

The new Government intends to unravel this regime by cutting the FIT by up to 90% in January 2016. Under their proposals FIT payments to roof mounted solar schemes will be reduced from 12.47p for every kilowatt hour of electricity they produce to 1.63p.

I have recently responded – as I am sure many others have - to the Government consultation on this matter opposing the changes but I have no doubt they will still go ahead.

Given that this Council's Generation Oldham proposals are based on the generation by roof mounted solar panels of 1 megawatt of electricity, can the Leader please tell me whether these proposals would make this scheme unviable and whether any solar panels can be installed before January to enable us to claim the existing subsidy and salvage what we can from this Conservative inspired train wreck?"

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, responded that the Generation Oldham project had been in development for a

number of years. The Council had reached a stage where it was happy with the way forward and had agreed the report, which was based on a subsidy coming back to make it financially viable. The capital investment required to install the equipment was substantial and would have to be repaid, and the subsidy would be needed to ensure Oldham and community groups got the benefit. Oldham had a good track record, with the Saddleworth Community Hydro Scheme in place. People had bought shares in it and the Council had supported it. The Generation Oldham scheme was about making the benefits available for everyone in Oldham. If the Government did not believe in social housing or renewable energy, but presented it to the public as if it were a give-away. They said to people they were removing the green tax and giving them money back, but that money was used to pay for renewables that, over the long term, would have made energy cheaper for them. They presented it as a give-away. The Leader could not say with confidence that Generation Oldham would be delivered on the scale that the Council's ambition would have wanted, but he could say that the determination to produce something good at the end of it was still there. He would ask Councillor Jabbar to circulate an updated note on Generation Oldham as a result of the change in subsidy.

A Leader of a minority Opposition group, Councillor Sheldon, raised the following question:

“It is good news that the railway line from Manchester Victoria to Huddersfield is soon going to see electrification. There is an impact due to the closure of the main road between Saddleworth and Huddersfield for up to six months, which would have serious repercussions for residents and businesses. There is no close diversionary route in that traffic would have to go either through Mossley or through Delph to get from Oldham to Uppermill. Can all the Saddleworth Councillors be brought on board very soon to discuss this major problem so that there could be ideas in place before the electrification took place to alleviate the problem?”

Councillor McMahon, Leader of the Council, responded that a detailed answer would be sent in writing and this was effectively a ward issue.

The Mayor reminded the meeting that Council had agreed that, following the Leaders' allocated questions, questions would be taken in an order that reflected the political balance of the Council.

Members raised the following questions:

1. Councillor Roberts to Councillor Hibbert

“Can the relevant Cabinet Member tell us what the potential impact will be in Oldham of the Conservative Government's proposed housing policies in extending the right to buy to

Housing Association tenants and forcing Councils to sell off higher value properties?”



Oldham
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Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Highways, responded that there potential problems as well as existing ones that were quite substantial. Right to Buy had already had a major impact on the supply of family housing for social rent in the Borough. In the last past 5 years alone, 179 former Council home tenants had exercised the Right to Buy, with 109 of these in the last 2 years. This stemmed from the Government’s policy of increasing the level of Right to Buy discounts.

Whilst extending the Right to Buy to housing association tenants had been presented by the Government as a means to open access to home ownership, it caused a number of problems in terms of impact on individuals. Many people did not always appreciate the financial challenges in terms of maintaining and managing their homes. This had been seen on the Crossley estate, where properties remaining with the Housing Association had benefitted from improvement that private owners had not been able to afford. The Council would not support anything which encouraged people into debt and put them at risk of repossession. When many right to buy properties were subsequently sold on, they often ended up in the private rented sector which could lead to a lack of maintenance and a range of neighbourhood management problems. The Cabinet Member was not suggesting that every private landlord was irresponsible, but too many of them were.

Right to buy also impacted greatly on the supply of affordable family homes for rent across the borough. It was clear from recent years that the cost of replacing the homes lost under Right to Buy had never been met by the Government. This proposal would put further pressure on Oldham’s housing associations’ finances.

Former Council tenants who were housed by First Choice Homes in their 12,000 properties already had what was called the ‘preserved right to buy’, and these new changes would affect housing association tenants in around a further 10,000 other homes across the Borough.

In relation to the selling of high value Council Homes to fund replacements, he did not believe the Government had thought through the implications. This proposal appeared part of a drive to push home ownership at the expense of councils and those who need affordable homes for rent. This could in theory impact on around 300 new-build family council homes, which were recently built through the Gateway to Oldham scheme. None of these met the suggested definition of ‘high value’, however the Government may set a target for the Council to sell properties. He was asking the Government to exempt the sale of recently-built homes as the cost of replacing them would not be viable. This policy might work on the south-east of England, where properties could be sold for many times the cost of rebuild, but it did not apply in Oldham and the north. The policy was dangerous and threatened the quality of life of many people across the north of England. It was disgraceful and the Council

should be doing everything possible to fight this ill thought-out and southern-centric policy.



Oldham
Council

2. Councillor Haque to Councillor Akhtar

“Oldham is rightly proud of the record of Oldham Sixth form College, but recent research by the Sixth Form Colleges Association has painted a worrying picture about the future - can the relevant Cabinet member comment on what this means for Oldham?”

Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, responded that the Sixth Form Colleges Association had published its 2015 funding impact survey report recently, outlining a number of significant funding pressures on sixth form colleges across England. The report commented that “The 93 Sixth Form Colleges in England are an education success story. They outperform school and academy sixth forms while educating more disadvantaged students and receiving less funding. However, this year’s funding impact survey shows that the sector has reached the point where it cannot absorb any further reductions”.

The Sixth Form College sector as a whole had faced a number of funding cuts over the last few years and 16-18 funding was not protected by the Government. Coupled with the fact that colleges had to pay VAT whilst schools and academies did not, and the scale of the funding position faced by the sector was clear.

Oldham Sixth Form College had faced and continued to face these challenges but remained very strong, having handled the cuts effectively over the last few years. They had sustained strong outcomes, including AS level results this summer which placed the college in the top 10% nationally in terms of progress made against expected outcomes.

As a result of carefully managed changes year on year, the College continued to have an 'outstanding' rating in terms of financial health. This was not to say the future would not be challenging, given the lack of protection and potential for further cuts, but he believed Councillors could continue to have confidence in the College's current and future position.

3. Councillor Malik to Councillor Harrison

“There has been a lot of news about the success of Adoption and Fostering Services in Oldham. Can the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Safeguarding bring us up to date on any recent developments?”

Councillor Harrison, Cabinet Member for Social Care and Safeguarding responded that, in the recent SIF inspection it was noted that both our Adoption and Fostering services were rated good and had shown significant improvement. Within fostering, capacity had been created in our mainstream carers, in essence to meet the increased demand for the service, and as a consequence of staying put legislation, where young people had the option of staying put longer with foster parents. The foster

care offer had been developed to deal with more complex cases, particularly those young people in need of therapeutic support. Similarly the Council had concentrated on recruiting carers for teenagers to enable the reduction of the number of residential placements and to improve outcomes for young people at a crucial stage in their lives. A fairly recent development had been the setting up of the West Pennine Regional Adoption Agency, part of a nationwide initiative to bring authorities together to share expertise. Oldham were part of a very successful bid that was confident it could lead to more timely and better matches for children across the region in the adoption process.

There was also a joint adoption panel with Rochdale, set up in October. This had an independent chair and adoption panels now met every two weeks. This would help improve timeliness of adopter approvals and children's matches with their prospective adoptive families.

The adoption support fund had been fully operational since May 2015. This was to provide therapeutic support for families who may need it, after an adoption order. Oldham had made successful applications to the fund for therapeutic support for 6 adoptive families, with more on the way. All eligible families had been contacted to advise them of the fund.

There had been Government help with increasing fees for harder to place children and young people, such as older children, sibling groups, children from BME backgrounds and those with special needs.

Over all, the people in this Service were to be congratulated

4. Councillor Harkness to Councillor Akhtar

"Many children from the poorer households in this borough come to school hungry. It is well known that a hungry child will have great difficulty concentrating in lessons and so their learning will suffer. Such children would benefit enormously from having access on their arrival at school to a Breakfast Club providing nutritious food free or for a nominal sum. The Liberal Democrat Group has recently conducted a survey of schools to identify which run Breakfast Clubs. This did reveal some additional clubs that were not already recorded in the Council's database and I will be very happy to share the question set and the data received with the Cabinet Member. However, many schools did not respond to the survey so the picture is far from complete. Can I therefore please ask the Cabinet Member if he will be willing to commission an official Council survey of schools so we can gain a greater understanding of the available provision at this time?"

Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, responded that the short answer was "yes".

5. Councillor Fielding to Councillor Haque

"The introduction of individual electoral registration is predicted to lead to the loss of thousands of eligible voters from electoral registers.

What is the Council doing to raise awareness of this change and ensure that nobody in Oldham loses their right to vote?"



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Councillor Haque, Deputy Cabinet Member for Performance and Corporate Governance, responded that additional staff resources funded from central government were being used to concentrate on the task of reducing the unconfirmed (red) electors, together with colleagues from canvassers and the neighbourhood teams making personal weekend visits to non responding properties in the lowest responding areas. Work was still ongoing in this area.

These electors had two letters sent out separately to them and one hand-delivered by canvassers requesting a response on top of the usual canvass activity.

To date every household had received a Household Enquiry Form followed by a reminder and a second reminder when necessary. The personal canvass was underway and would run until mid November.

The communication plan had used twitter and facebook messaging which had been ongoing throughout the canvass and an extra push had gone out on facebook recently.

Staff had been encouraged through team briefs and posters throughout the workplace.

Personal calls had been made to build up better relationships with nursing homes and their managers, this would be ongoing.

Licensing of Private Landlords had been used to write out to them requesting information about tenants and movements.

6. Councillor Shuttleworth to Councillor Hibbert

"An article in The Times on 19 October has a comment from Oliver Colville MP, the chairman of the all-party parliamentary group on the private rented sector, and I quote: ""The government needs to explain why so much taxpayers' money is going to rogue landlords without proper accountability." He called for action to end the blight of filthy and dangerous accommodation.

May I therefore ask the relevant Cabinet member to advise:

1. The current situation in relation to the Selective Licensing Scheme
2. How many private landlords have indicated their willingness to join the scheme
3. The number of known private landlords in the Borough
How many private landlords, if any, have been prosecuted for providing unfit homes during the last 5 years"

Councillor Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Highways, responded that he had also read the article and noted the comments on the private rented sector. To date, the team had received 596 applications for a licence from the 5 neighbourhoods that were currently designated. Of these applications 67 properties had now been licensed after providing the relevant documentation and complying with the conditions, with another 104 to be issued with a licence by the end of November.

Officers were currently processing the details of 30 private landlords who had failed to apply for a licence from the initial neighbourhood of St. Marys and these details would be processed with the intention to prosecute.

Across the 5 neighbourhoods that were designated, the Council had received 596 applications. Further applications were expected as a number of landlords were waiting for the approval of the instalment option which was now in place.

This figure was unknown but what could be said was that, within the neighbourhoods covered by Selective Licensing, 38% of the housing stock was privately rented. It was also known from research that over 80% of landlords with properties in the Borough owned only one property.

5 landlords had been prosecuted by the team over the last 5 years. In addition to these prosecutions, officers had also served legal notice on landlords to emergency close 15 privately rented properties due to their condition and also executed 33 warrants issued by the Magistrates Courts to ensure standards are maintained.

The Council was now at the easier stage of finding landlords, the difficulty would come with those that were not registered, with those that had taken cash in hand payments, with tenants who were terrified of reporting anything about their landlord for fear of eviction. One private landlord had expressed the view that the way he would deal with a troublesome tenant would be to put their property on the pavement and change the lock. That was the standard of landlord the Council was determined to protect the people of Oldham from and to fight against, to achieve what the Council wanted – good responsible, safe, secure, healthy properties in Oldham for people to live in, with no fear of insecurity in the future.

7. Councillor Garry to Councillor Akhtar

“Apprenticeships are an excellent route in to skilled employment for young people. Can the relevant cabinet member advise how many people have been supported in to apprenticeships by the Get Oldham Working Scheme?”

Councillor Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, responded that the Get Oldham Working campaign had supported 286 citizens into Apprenticeships across a wide range of areas and increasingly into higher levels (advanced and higher). The Council had achieved a 97 percent achievement rate, which was exceptional and 86% progress directly into employment at point of leaving the scheme.

The Council had increased its commitment to apprenticeships from 10 a year to over 50 a year and was confident it would be exceeding the Government Apprenticeship Levy target.

8. Councillor Williamson to Councillor Harrison

“Children that are looked after by the local authority are required to leave their accommodation if they reside in a Children’s Home when they reach the age of 18; yet they can remain in-situ within a foster care placement until they become 21.

Given that the local authority retains a duty of care to children that are looked after until they become 21, please can the Cabinet Member outline for me what ongoing support is currently provided by the Council once they become an adult and leave a Children's Home?"

Councillor Harrison, Cabinet Member for Social Care and Safeguarding responded that, in response to the question posed, young people could remain in Foster Care post-18 in the initiative of 'Staying Put', which was reviewed every 6 months to discuss if this was still an appropriate decision until the age of 21 years.

Oldham went the extra mile. Children's Homes were regulated by Statutory Guidance that did not allow this extension. However Oldham was unique and provided 2 high quality Semi Independence Units. Most children left residential care in Oldham and moved to a semi-independent unit, and could stay up to 21. These were staffed 24 hours a day and allowed young people to develop their skills, independence and maturity to take on another step towards independence and their own tenancy in the future. They provided a safety net and built relationships for the Workers to then continue when they moved on further. Following this period, Oldham had 13 taster flats for Post 18 year olds that had been in care, and developed skills in semi independence but still needed another period of support. These were self-contained flats, where staff from the Service visited on a nightly basis in order to provide and offer support. This provided an alternative or compliment for young people's development to independence, and prompted confidence, and was again a safety net that Parent's would provide. Oldham was being a good ongoing corporate parent.

The Social Workers in the service supported young people who were Care Leavers until 21 years, and until 25 years if they were in Higher Education/Apprenticeship/Traineeship. It was over a period of time, advice, support and guidance that young people could be encouraged to aspire and succeed and attend University. Longer term, this would support individual autonomy and increased independence, and resilience of dealing with situations and life.

At this point in the meeting the Mayor advised that the time limit for this item had expired.

RESOLVED that the questions asked and responses provided be noted.

12

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE UNDERMENTIONED DATES, INCLUDING THE ATTACHED LIST OF URGENT KEY DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL, AND TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR OBSERVATIONS ON ANY ITEMS WITHIN THE MINUTES FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE CABINET, AND RECEIVE RESPONSES FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Minutes for the meetings held on 24th August 2015 and 21st September 2015 were submitted. The Mayor reminded the meeting that, as previously agreed by Council, the last eight minutes of this section would be reserved for observations on responses received and responses to observations.



Questions were raised by the following Councillors on the Cabinet Minutes as detailed below:

Councillor McCann – Cabinet meeting – 21st September, Item 10, page 45, Oldham Coliseum Theatre and Heritage Centre, accepting that there may be a commercial sensitivity factor in the reply, could the relevant Cabinet Member advise him of any major revisions or changes that were required, and confirm that financial controls would remain at a high and strict level as they had been with other schemes? Would risk evaluations remain at a high professional level? He accepted this was long-term project and wished for further guidance given the number of changes that seemed to be happening.

Councillor McMahon advised that there had been no material changes. Numbers had moved around, partly because of a significant third-party donation that had been taken into account. The report was largely about scheduling because the funding required that the Council moved quickly on the Heritage Centre element, which meant the fund-raising period for the Coliseum Theatre element would not be sufficient to raise the funding required. The project had therefore been separated into phases. The first phase was to get the Heritage Centre built with the money that had been gifted and to then fund-raise to allow the Theatre to be built. There would also be an opportunity to look at the wider town centre as there had been buildings vacated with no plans for their future use that had deteriorated quickly. It had been agreed with Heritage England, the Arts Council and Heritage Lottery that the project would be widened to consider heritage assets across the town centre. What the Council wanted to do was work with private building owners as well as with buildings in its ownership, to make sure there was a viable use for them going forward. This was an exciting time where the Council was confident to invest in flagship schemes, like the old Town Hall, Princes Gate and the Heritage Centre, and there were a number of private investors that wanted to invest in Oldham. He would soon be bringing forward plans that would deal with the Conservative Club. He would look to do more work with the private sector and with investors outside the Council to ensure that the heritage buildings that were found other uses. It was not viable for the Council to do this, with its budget cut so significantly.

He indicated that he would be happy, where matters were commercially confidential, to meet privately with Members of other parties to go through them.

Councillor Blyth – Cabinet meeting – 21st September, Item 10, page 45, Oldham Coliseum Theatre and Heritage Centre, what will happen to the old Theatre? Historically it was the heart of the theatre in Oldham, that was where it always was and many

stars of TV had performed there. What was the Council going to do with it, to preserve the heritage at the top of the town and still let people know that that was where the theatre was?

The other buildings referred to had been vacant for some time and would cost a great deal to do them up. If the Council could not find the money, it needed to be found elsewhere. His main question was what would happen to the old Coliseum?

Councillor McMahon advised that the report did not focus on one building and aimed to get a single plan for the whole town centre and the conservation area. This would make sure there was a joint plan with Heritage England, Heritage Lottery, the Arts Council and other funders to have a long-term plan for use. There had to be a plan for the whole of the town centre, working with people who knew about heritage to make sure the mistakes of the past were not made again, with buildings demolished because they had gone too far. The old theatre was different because the new developments would bring significant footfall. There may be another commercial use for the old theatre where it remained as a venue. There were not yet plans in place and they were being developed. He was happy to sit down on a private basis and share the plans as soon as they were ready to be shared.

There were no observations on the Minutes.

RESOLVED that:

1. The minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 22nd June 2015 and 20th July 2015 be noted.
2. The questions on the Cabinet Minutes be noted.

13

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Motion 1

Councillor Moores MOVED and Councillor Roberts
SECONDED:

“This Council is aware that Market Street in Shaw has been hosting the weekly Shaw Market, on a trial basis since the 27th August 2015. During the period of the trial Council Officers have consulted with market traders, local businesses, market users and the wider public this information was then collated and a report prepared for a Licensing Panel scheduled for Monday 2nd November 2015.

This Council welcomes the success of the Shaw Market trial with its positive impact on both the market and surrounding area including the increased demand for stalls on the market, and an increase in footfall on Market Street.

The Council notes that TfGM, and OMBC Highways Department have reported that there has been no disruptive impact on traffic movements in the area.

This Council resolves to work with the businesses located on Market Street, the market traders and the local community in

supporting and maintaining a market provision in Shaw that will benefit the local and wider community”.



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AMENDMENT

Councillor Gloster MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED

“Insert new second paragraph to follow ‘Monday 2nd November 2015’ as follows:

‘Council notes that local elected members are keen to work with the Administration and Council officers to find a solution that guarantees the continued viability of Shaw Market, and regrets the friction that has arisen from the Administration rejecting consultation on the option to redevelop and promote the market on its existing historic site (the so called ‘staying put’ position).’

Insert in the now third paragraph after ‘Market Street’ a new sentence as follows:

‘Whilst Council welcomes the significant additional spend on free events, publicity, advertising, questionnaires and staff to promote the on-street market, it regrets that this same effort was not made previously to ensure the success of the Market on its historic site’.

The motion as amended to read:

This Council is aware that Market Street in Shaw has been hosting the weekly Shaw Market, on a trial basis since the 27th August 2015. During the period of the trial Council Officers have consulted with market traders, local businesses, market users and the wider public this information was then collated and a report prepared for a Licensing Panel scheduled for Monday 2nd November 2015.

Council notes that local elected members are keen to work with the Administration and Council officers to find a solution that guarantees the continued viability of Shaw Market, and regrets the friction that has arisen from the Administration rejecting consultation on the option to redevelop and promote the market on its existing historic site (the so called ‘staying put’ position’).

This Council welcomes the success of the Shaw Market trial with its positive impact on both the market and surrounding area including the increased demand for stalls on the market, and an increase in footfall on Market Street. Whilst Council welcomes the significant additional spend on free events, publicity, advertising, questionnaires and staff to promote the on-street market, it regrets that this same effort was not made previously to ensure the success of the Market on its historic site.

The Council notes that TfGM, and OMBC Highways Department have reported that there has been no disruptive impact on traffic movements in the area.

This Council resolves to work with the businesses located on Market Street, the market traders and the local community in supporting and maintaining a market provision in Shaw that will benefit the local and wider community”.

Councillors Gloster, Sykes, Bates, Blyth and Judge spoke on the amendment.

Councillor Moores did not exercise his right of reply.

Councillor Gloster exercised his right of reply.

On being put to the VOTE, THIRTEEN VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with FORTY FOUR VOTES cast AGAINST and NO ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST.

AMENDMENT 2

Councillor Williamson MOVED and Councillor Murphy SECONDED:

“Insert in paragraph 3 after ‘in the area’ a new sentence as follows:

‘However some residents and traders have reported traffic disruption and gridlock on market days’.

Insert after paragraph 4 new paragraphs as follows:

‘Council notes that in surveys feedback from local traders has been mixed. Whilst some welcome the on-street market, others, who are well-established traders, report significant reductions in takings and problems accessing their premises to make deliveries on market days.

Whilst ensuring the future of Shaw Market should be a priority for everyone, Council recognises that this must not be at the risk of jeopardising the viability of existing Market Street businesses.’

Motion as amended to read:

This Council is aware that Market Street in Shaw has been hosting the weekly Shaw Market, on a trial basis since the 27th August 2015. During the period of the trial Council Officers have consulted with market traders, local businesses, market users and the wider public this information was then collated and a report prepared for a Licensing Panel scheduled for Monday 2nd November 2015.

This Council welcomes the success of the Shaw Market trial with its positive impact on both the market and surrounding area including the increased demand for stalls on the market, and an increase in footfall on Market Street.

The Council notes that TfGM, and OMBC Highways Department have reported that there has been no disruptive impact on traffic movements in the area. However some residents and traders have reported traffic disruption and gridlock on market days.

Council notes that in surveys feedback from local traders has been mixed. Whilst some welcome the on-street market, others, who are well-established traders, report significant reductions in takings and problems accessing their premises to make deliveries on market days.

Whilst ensuring the future of Shaw Market should be a priority for everyone, Council recognises that this must not be at the risk of jeopardising the viability of existing Market Street businesses.

This Council resolves to work with the businesses located on Market Street, the market traders and the local community in supporting and maintaining a market provision in Shaw that will benefit the local and wider community.”

Councillor Williamson spoke in support of the amendment.

Councillor Wrigglesworth spoke against the amendment.

On being put to the VOTE, THIRTEEN VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with FORTY FOUR VOTES cast AGAINST and NO ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST.

A vote was then taken on the ORIGINAL MOTION. On being put to the VOTE, FORTY FOUR VOTES were cast IN FAVOUR of the MOTION, with NO VOTES cast against and THIRTEEN ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

Motion 2

Motion 2 was carried over to the next meeting.

Motion 3

Motion 3 was carried over to the next meeting.

14

NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS

Motion 1

Councillor Harkness MOVED and Councillor Williamson SECONDED:

“This Council notes that:

- 2nd – 6th November 2015 is National School Meals week
- 9,800 pupils in reception, year one and two classes in the Oldham borough became entitled to universal free school meals from September 2014
 - Pilots conducted by the Departments of Education and Health in 2009 found that the provision of universal free school meals led to improvements in the concentration, academic performance and behaviour of pupils
 - Four in every 10 children living in poverty do not currently qualify for free school meals; yet in many cases a free school meal may represent the only hot meal that a child receives in a day
 - Extending universal free school meals to all seven to eleven year olds will benefit 13,100 children in the Oldham borough, 10,000 more than currently receive free school meals, and 1.9 million children in the UK
 - This was a recommendation of the School Food Plan presented to government by John Vincent and Henry Dimbleby

This Council believes that:

- Government should extend the provision of universal free school meals to all seven to eleven year olds, starting in the most deprived areas, during the lifetime of this current Parliament



- This expansion should be funded by Government with adequate capital investment and ongoing revenue support

Council therefore resolves to:

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Education, the Rt. Hon. Nicky Morgan MP, outlining this Council's position on this issue
- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the three MPs for the borough asking them to also support this position
- Ask the Leader and the Leaders of the Main and Minority Opposition Groups to seek the support of this position from their respective political groups within the Local Government Association"

On being put to the VOTE, the meeting UNANIMOUSLY voted IN FAVOUR of the MOTION, which was therefore CARRIED.

Motion 2

Councillor Murphy MOVED and Councillor McCann SECONDED:

"This Council notes that:

- The demand for affordable homes in the Oldham borough will continue to increase
- The availability of social housing is under further threat from a Conservative Government intent on extending the 'right to buy' to housing association tenants, on pressurizing social landlords to sell off their housing stock, and on imposing rent reductions
- With powers from the 2011 Localism Act and the 2000 Local Government Act, Councils can generate income and build affordable homes, whether for sale or for rent
- Some councils, such as Sutton, have established a wholly-owned housing development company to build homes for sale at affordable prices or to let at social or market rents

Council resolves to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Board and the Strategic Housing Partnership Board to investigate the merits of:

- Setting up a Council wholly-owned housing development company
- Making use of reforms in the use of the Housing Revenue Account and prudential borrowing powers to finance house building by the new company
- Accessing finance via the new LG Develop scheme recently established by the Local Government Association
- Identifying, with partners (such as housing associations, the NHS, local developers and landowners), local land sites that have potential for housing development through the new company

Council also requests that these bodies bring back a report on these proposals to a future meeting of Council"

On being put to the VOTE, the meeting UNANIMOUSLY voted IN FAVOUR of the MOTION, which was therefore CARRIED



Motion 3

Councillor Heffernan MOVED and Councillor Turner
SECONDED:

“This Council notes that:

- Today (4th November 2015) is the 69th anniversary of the founding of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) whose mission statement is “building peace in the minds of men and women”.
- In 1974, the member states of UNESCO recognised the necessity of peace education in order for students to acquire the values, knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviours to live in harmony with oneself and with others, and to help promote a culture of peace.
- Article 26 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that education shall be directed to “further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace”.
- In signing the European Parliament’s Pledge to Peace, Council has agreed to support the “dissemination and promotion of peace, employing resources and tools such as education”.
- Many international bodies, including UNESCO and the United Nations Association, have produced excellent free educational resources that can be accessed on-line.

Council believes that Oldham should, as the first UK local authority to sign the Pledge to Peace:

- Seek to encourage local schools, academies and colleges to deliver peace education within their curriculum.
- Support Peace in the Classroom, a new Pledge to Peace initiative.

Council therefore resolves to request the relevant Cabinet Member(s) to explore this possibility with the Oldham Youth Council and appropriate local bodies representing the teaching profession and governors (such as the Oldham Schools Alliance etc.)”

AMENDMENT

Councillor Fielding MOVED and Councillor Wrigglesworth
SECONDED:

“Delete: request the relevant Cabinet Member(s) to explore this possibility with the Oldham Youth Council and appropriate local bodies representing the teaching profession and governors (such as the Oldham Schools Alliance etc.)

Insert: appoint a Council Champion and propose the nominee is Cllr Heffernan”.

On being put to the VOTE, the meeting UNANIMOUSLY voted
IN FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT, which was therefore
CARRIED

A vote was then taken on the MOTION (as amended).

“This Council notes that:

- Today (4th November 2015) is the 69th anniversary of the founding of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) whose mission statement is “building peace in the minds of men and women”.
 - In 1974, the member states of UNESCO recognised the necessity of peace education in order for students to acquire the values, knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviours to live in harmony with oneself and with others, and to help promote a culture of peace.
 - Article 26 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that education shall be directed to “further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace”.
 - In signing the European Parliament’s Pledge to Peace, Council has agreed to support the “dissemination and promotion of peace, employing resources and tools such as education”.
 - Many international bodies, including UNESCO and the United Nations Association, have produced excellent free educational resources that can be accessed on-line.
- Council believes that Oldham should, as the first UK local authority to sign the Pledge to Peace:
- Seek to encourage local schools, academies and colleges to deliver peace education within their curriculum.
 - Support Peace in the Classroom, a new Pledge to Peace initiative.
- Council therefore resolves to appoint a Council Champion and propose to appoint a Council Champion and propose the nominee is Cllr Heffernan”.

On being put to the VOTE, the meeting UNANIMOUSLY voted IN FAVOUR of the MOTION, which was therefore CARRIED

- 15(a) To note the Minutes of the following Joint Authority meetings and the relevant spokespersons to respond to questions from Members

Minutes of the Joint Authorities were submitted as follows:

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority	25 th June 2015 3 rd September 2015
Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority	12 th June 2015
National Park Authority	3 rd July 2015
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	28 th August 2015
Joint GMCA/AGMA Executive	31 st July 2015
Transport for Greater Manchester	17 th July 2015

There were no questions or observations.

RESOLVED that:

The minutes of the Joint Authorities as detailed in the report be noted.

15(b)

To note the Minutes of the following Partnership meetings and the relevant spokespersons to respond to questions from Members



Minutes of the Partnership Meetings were submitted as follows:

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Health and Wellbeing Board	16 th June 2015
Unity Partnership Board	23 rd June 2015
Oldham Leadership Board	2 nd September 2015
Oldham Care and Support	24 th July 2015

There were no questions or observations.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnerships as detailed in the report be noted.

16

COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2016/17

The Council gave consideration to a report of the Director of Finance which sought approval of the Council Tax Reduction scheme 2016/17 as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report. Each year a collection authority must formally consider revising its Council Tax reduction scheme and ensure there is consultation on a proposed scheme. The Council had made a change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/16 that had increased the maximum reduction awardable from 80% of the Band A rate of Council Tax to 85%. That had meant an extra £53.43 per year for someone who was entitled to the maximum award and this was agreed by Full Council in December 2014. The Council was informed that the current scheme had only been in place since 1st April 2015 and it was difficult to estimate what the exact percentage collection rate might be at year end. An early indication was that the collection rate for the extra amount billed in 2015/16 would be higher than originally estimated at between 70% and 75%, however this could change in the remainder of the year.

The Council was informed that another issue to be considered was estimating the financial impact of the new government proposals for welfare and tax reform on Oldham. It was highly likely that demand on the scheme would rise next year, as benefit freezes and reductions in tax credits would mean reducing incomes for sizeable numbers of Oldham residents. As the scheme had been changed for 2015/16 and, having considering the current financial position of the Council, it was not proposed to change the threshold level. If no change was made, the maximum amount of reduction available would remain at 85% of a Band A rate of Council Tax.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1: Leave the current Council Tax reduction scheme unchanged from 2016 onwards.

Option 2: Change the level of Council Tax Reduction.

Councillor Jabbar MOVED the report, which was SECONDED by Councillor Chadderton.



RESOLVED that:

1. Option 2 be agreed and the Council implement a Council Tax Reduction Scheme from 1st April 2015 for all applicants of working age which would:
 - Increase the maximum amount of reduction available to 85% of a Band A rate of Council Tax.
 - Maintain other changes introduced in the 2014/15 Oldham Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
2. The scheme at Appendix 2 of the report would be subject to any changes resulting from prescribed requirements issued by the Secretary of State under paragraph 2(8) of Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and any changes from time to time to the figures prescribed by central government for welfare benefit purposes.

17

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 14/15

Consideration was given to a report of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board which outlined the nature and extent of the work that had been undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Board during the last twelve months. The report provided a summary of the various issues that had been examined by the Board and the Performance and Value for Money Select Committee.

The Mayor thanked Councillor McLaren, Chair of the Board, for all the excellent work that had been undertaken.

Councillor McLaren MOVED the report, which was SECONDED by Councillor Wrigglesworth.

RESOLVED that the report be approved.

18

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2016/17

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Legal Services which set out the draft calendar of Meetings for the 2016/17 municipal years.

Councillor McMahon MOVED the report, which was SECONDED by Councillor Sykes.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The current version of the Council's calendar of meetings for 2016/17 be approved, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
2. Approval of any outstanding dates to be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation Group Leaders

WELFARE REFORM - COST OF THE CUTS 2015

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Policy and Governance that was part of a quarterly series of topical updates and dashboards, demonstrating the impact of welfare reform in Oldham.

The report identified the key proposals, and estimates, where possible, and the likely impacts on Oldham, both in terms of the financial impacts on the borough, and on the numbers impacted. Drawing upon the latest available national and local research, data and information, the report showed an estimated cumulative loss to Oldham through the changes over the next 4 years of over £58m. The worst affected 2000 families in Oldham stood to lose, on average, more than £3,800 per year as a result of the reforms.

Councillor Jabbar MOVED the report, which was SECONDED by Councillor Chadderton.

RESOLVED that:- the indicative future timetable for quarterly topical welfare reform reports be approved.

CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Legal Services that reported that the Health and Wellbeing Board, at its meeting on 15th September 2015, commended to Council that the Chief Executive (or nominated representative) of Oldham Community Leisure become a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board and be given voting rights as a member of the Board.

Councillor McMahon MOVED the report, which was SECONDED by Councillor Sykes.

RESOLVED that:- the Council agreed to increase the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board to include the Chief Executive (or nominated representative) of Oldham Community Leisure and agreed that the Chief Executive Oldham Community Leisure (or nominated representative) be given voting rights.

UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Legal Services which informed members of actions that had been taken following previous Council meetings and provided feedback on other issues raised at the meeting.

Councillor McMahon MOVED the report, which was SECONDED by Councillor Sykes.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.