

# Oldham Borough Council



**Council Meeting  
Wednesday 15 July 2020**



## OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

To: ALL MEMBERS OF OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL,  
CIVIC CENTRE, OLDHAM

Tuesday, 7 July 2020

**You are hereby summoned to attend a virtual meeting of the Council which will be held on Wednesday 15 July 2020 at 6.00 pm for the following purposes:**

- 1 To receive apologies for absence
- 2 Attendance and declarations of Interest
- 3 To order that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17th June 2020 be signed as a correct record (Pages 1 - 38)
- 4 To deal with matters which the Mayor considers to be urgent business
- 5 To receive communications relating to the business of the Council
- 6 To receive and note petitions received relating to the business of the Council  
*(time limit 20 minutes)*
- 7 Youth Council  
*(time limit 20 minutes)*

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown has proved to be a trial for many people, around the world.

As a Youth Council we have consulted with various young people, to explore the specific areas of everyday life which have been greatly affected by the restrictions that we, as a nation, have had to follow. We asked young people in Oldham to share their experiences of lockdown for them as individuals

We have found that these restrictions have had significant impacts on our education experience and employment aspirations and in turn this has led to further stress and strain being put on young people's mental health during lockdown. Indeed, it has been reported that as a result of schools being closed and jobs being furloughed many young people may lose a sense of structure and positive stimulation, and that this will lead to an increase in anxiety and depression for many young people.

It is now clear that this pandemic will have had a devastating effect on our society, and particularly on young people. The current economic crisis risks pushing an additional 600,000 18-24 year olds nationally into unemployment in the coming year. In addition to this, there will be long-term damage to their pay and job prospects even after the economy recovers unless new support is provided.

The risks to the borough could be particularly devastating to young people as the reported youth unemployment rate in Oldham in May 2020 stood at 15.1%, the highest across Greater Manchester. This will be again increased as the employment rates of

graduates entering work during the pandemic are projected to be 13% lower than they would have been without the crisis, while rates for mid and low-skilled workers risk falling even more, by 27% and 37% respectively.

Furthermore, those who do find work are likely to face reduced pay. The Class of 2020 report by the Nuffield Foundation states that, 'one year after leaving education, the pay of graduates is projected to be 7% lower, and 9% and 19% lower for mid- and low-skilled workers', Oldham's average salary comparison is already £8000 per annum lower than the national average.

There are also questions about whether there will be work for those who have been furloughed, let alone for those only just beginning to enter the labour market.

This all paints a rather grim picture for the future Employment of Young people!

It hasn't all been bad news and we have seen some positives within the ongoing COVID-19 lockdown. With schools delivering remote teaching our digital skills have increased. Teachers and students have learnt about apps such as Google Hangouts or Zoom, Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams.

As people are staying at home, they have been using technology a lot more and learning new skills such as how to socialise via video calling apps, starting online social media accounts, trading products online or freelancing and selling services, some young people have even learned how to code in python or manage big data on excel. We are given tasks and asked to research rather than have somebody stood at a projector or whiteboard giving us the answers. All these skills are transferable and maybe, more than ever, young people will be ready for the world of work and have the creative and digital skills needed for the future workforce

We believe that Oldham Council needs to be an advocate for the skills young people are currently cumulating during lockdown, as we are currently unsure that these skills will be recognised or that the job opportunities requiring these skills will be available to us.

The increase in digital skills have already been proven to assist in productivity within the everchanging workplace, helping increase the chance of the those who are unemployed finding a job and helping with the introduction of digital services from some key providers. Young people have had the opportunity to get more acquainted with the digital world whilst during lockdown, whether that is for school, work or home benefits. Some of our young people will have gained new digital skills, in photography, in animation, the list is long, and it would be a shame if these skills could not be enhanced further once lockdown is lifted, and we try to return to our 'normal' lifestyle. These skills should not be left on the backburner and forgotten, leaving the time during lockdown wasted. These new skills could have brought a new light to pathways young people might want to take for their future, and we should not let their potential dwindle and disappear, especially with the rise of youth unemployment becoming an unfortunate reality. A larger recognition of the digital skills will help young people feel more comfortable with entering a forever expanding sector which is shaping our society as we speak.

Lockdown has brought us many negatives in all different aspects of life, however we do not want these negatives to overrule the positives that have come from working online. We need to open up opportunities for young people and we would like to see designated apprenticeships for young people within the digital industry to enable the skills that Oldham's young people have gained to be used and not wasted. This will also help Oldham's economy as we build up our digital industry.

We ask Council to resolve that:

1. Oldham Council pledges its commitment to providing quality job opportunities for young people and developing the digital sector within the town
2. A review is undertaken of the current apprenticeship offer across Oldham to ensure there is a broad range of high-quality opportunities available to all young people and;
3. As one of the largest employers in Oldham, digital apprenticeships are considered for those leaving education.

8 Questions Time

a Public Questions

*(time limit 15 Minutes)*

b Questions to Leader and Cabinet

*(time limit 30 minutes)*

c Questions on Cabinet Minutes

*(time limit 15 minutes)*

d Questions on Joint Arrangements (Pages 39 - 108)

*(time limit 15 minutes)*

Police and Crime Panel

28 January 2020  
31 January 2020

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

14 February 2020  
29 May 2020  
24 June 2020

MioCare Board

23 January 2020

Peak Park District Authority

13 March 2020  
22 May 2020

9 Notice of Administration Business

*(time limit 30 minutes)*

Motion 1

Councillor Jabbar to MOVE and Councillor C Gloster to SECOND:  
*Funding Recovery, Jobs and Services*

This council notes with thanks the combined efforts of council officers, our public sector partners, volunteers and businesses in working together to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. From carers looking after older residents and putting themselves at risk, to the waste team quickly finding new ways of working to keep our bins empty, to the

huge army of volunteers distributing food parcels to those in need, the crisis has shown Oldham at its best.

We must also acknowledge the funding and support packages that the Government has put in place to assist businesses in Oldham, some of which have been administered by the council. Without this Government support many businesses would have ceased trading and more Oldhamers would be facing unemployment.

However, whilst there has been a range of Government support, the council is facing a significant financial challenge. Some Government funding has been received, including £14.2m of unringfenced grant. A further funding package was announced on 2<sup>nd</sup> July but it did not provide the clarity required for the council assess the extent of the additional financial support. However, it is evident that it will fall far short of the funding required to compensate for the additional expenditure being incurred and for the income that has been lost in this financial year.

If the Government does not provide any more support the council will have to consider making cuts to key services in order to manage its finances effectively. This will also have an impact in 2021/22 which already has a budget reduction target of £23m. Any additional financial pressure will be on top of the £221m of budget reductions that the council has been forced to make as a result of the Government's austerity regime. It is important to note that on 16<sup>th</sup> March the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick, told English council leaders "This government stands with local councils at this difficult time. Everyone needs to play their part to help the most vulnerable in society and support their local economy. The government will do whatever is necessary to support these efforts." By 14 April the message had changed and Jenrick told council leaders that councils would have to "share the burden" of coronavirus-related costs. We need the Government to honour its original statement and do whatever is necessary to support councils in their response to COVID-19 - including fully funding the extra financial pressures.

This council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to:

- The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to fully fund councils for the extra costs and lost income arising from COVID-19 in line with his communication of 16<sup>th</sup> March
- The LGA to confirm the council's support in their lobbying of Government for increased funding for local government in response to financial pressures arising from COVID-19
- Key partner organisations across Oldham, requesting their support for our campaign for central government funding that protects the jobs of key workers and enables Oldham to build back better

## Motion 2

Councillor Leach to MOVE and Councillor Phythian to SECOND:

### *Care Workers vs COVID-19 Motion*

This Council commends the incredible work of care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic caring for the most vulnerable people in Oldham.

This Council notes the results of a survey conducted by UNISON North West which found that 8 out of 10 care workers would not receive their full normal pay if they were ill or had to self-isolate or shield because of COVID-19. As a result of the lack of occupational sick pay, some care workers said that they may have to attend work

whilst ill as they could not afford to live off statutory sick pay (SSP).

This Council believes that this situation poses a serious public health risk to people that receive care and frontline care workers. Indeed, official figures from the Office for National Statistics show that care workers are twice as likely to die from coronavirus than NHS staff.

This Council acknowledges its responsibility under the Government's Infection Control Fund to administer the distribution of additional funding to social care providers to reduce the spread of infection, including maintaining normal wages for COVID-19 related absence.

This Council believes that no care worker should have to choose between their own health or hardship. This Council welcomes UNISON North West's Care Workers vs COVID-19 Campaign which is calling for care workers to receive the support and resources they need to combat the virus.

This Council notes that 12 local authorities in the North West have already supported the Care Workers vs COVID-19 Campaign or made similar commitments around maintaining normal pay for all COVID-19 related absence.

This Council undertakes to:

- 1) Formally endorse the principles of UNISON's Care Workers vs COVID-19 Campaign and commit to campaigning for the funding this Council requires to deliver on them;
- 2) Communicate to providers that it is this Council's view that additional funding is used by social care providers to pay care workers their full normal pay for all COVID-19 related absence, including sickness, self-isolation or shielding;
- 3) Review procurement and commissioning policies with view to increasing the weighting of social value commissioning and to ensure it includes specific requirements around occupational sick pay.

## 10 Notice of Opposition Business

*(time limit 30 minutes)*

### Motion 1

Councillor Al-Hamdani to MOVE and Councillor H Gloster to SECOND:

*Preventing modern slums in Oldham Borough*

This Council notes that:

- In 2019, 15 oppressive flats got the go ahead in Watford through a planning loophole. These dwellings were below the government's advisory space guidelines for homes, and some had no access to natural light.
- Homes without natural light are inhumane for people to dwell in. This is not an acceptable standard for people to live by in Oldham Borough, nor anywhere for that matter.
- The Government minimum recommended size for dwellings built or renovated is 37 square metres. However, this is not a legal requirement.
- The current legislation allows offices and warehouses to be converted to flats without planning permission. This is how the inhumane dwellings in Watford got around the council's humanitarian objections.
- We live in a time where it is decent and common practice that farm animals get to see sunlight as part of their daily living conditions.

- A government review of these regulations is underway.
- Oldham Borough Council must prevent modern slums from slipping through the planning net locally. An oppressive environment would have a serious impact upon the health of future occupiers.

This Council resolves to:

- Write to the Secretary of State urging that the General Permitted Development Order be changed so that councils can have the final say on dwellings and that those proposals with no natural light be rejected on humanitarian grounds.
- Write to Mayor Andy Burnham to request that the Greater Manchester Spatial framework notes the inhumane nature of this policy when assessing the use of brownfield sites.
- That proposed dwellings with no natural light will not be built in Oldham Borough as an oppressive living environment would have a serious negative impact upon physical and mental health.
- This Council has a commitment to providing homes that are of an acceptable modern standard.

## Motion 2

Councillor Harkness to MOVE and Councillor Williamson to SECOND:

*Tackling clothing poverty and waste*

This Council notes that:

- The culture of 'fast fashion' which prevails in the UK and elsewhere leads to the over-production and over-consumption of clothing.
- Over-production represents the excessive depletion of precious natural resources and the financial exploitation of workers in the clothing industry. This exploitation is often close to home.
- Over-consumption can lead to clothing being worn once or never at all.
- In contrast, many residents of Oldham Borough living on a low-income struggle to afford to buy much-needed clothing for themselves, and for those in their family.
- This is an environmental disaster and a waste. It is the underutilisation of good clothing that could go to other people in need.
- Whilst there are charitable providers of free clothing in Oldham Borough to those in need, not every district is well served and there is a lack of awareness of provision.
- In parts of the UK, innovative schemes exist such as 'community clothing exchanges', where at regular events participants can swap clothes; 'community clothes banks', where clothing racks are sited in prominent locations in the community to enable unwanted clothing to be left for others; and 'community sewing clubs', where attendees repair and alter clothing to make better use of what they have.

Council resolves to:

- Work to end clothing poverty and waste, and the exploitation of clothing workers as part of our collective effort to tackle social deprivation and make this Borough carbon-neutral.
- Map and promote the current provision of free clothing available to those in need and identify where and how to address any shortfall in this provision.
- Identify innovative schemes which can be replicated in this Borough and establish a



timetable and plan to do so.

- Identify how the Council and its partners can best support workers in the garment sector at risk of exploitation.
- Consult the voluntary sector, local clothing manufacturers and retailers, trades unions in the clothing sector, and the campaigning groups Wrap, Labour Behind the Label, and Home Workers World Wide on these issues.
- Bring a report back to full Council with findings and recommendations by July 2021.

### Motion 3

Councillor Murphy to MOVE and Councillor C Gloster to SECOND:

#### *The Local Electricity Bill*

This Council notes:

- Local authorities play a central role in creating sustainable communities, particularly through the provision of locally generated, renewable electricity.
- The very large setup and running costs associated with selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers prevent local renewable electricity generators from doing so.
- Making these financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation would create significant opportunities for councils to supply locally generated renewable electricity directly to local people and businesses.
- Revenues received by councils from the sale of local renewable electricity can be used to help fund measures to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions and to help fund local services and facilities.
- The recent reintroduction of the Local Electricity Bill under the Ten-Minute Rule. If enacted the new law would make the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate by establishing a Right to Local Supply.
- This Bill has received the support of 151 Members of Parliament.
- We should make every attempt to build a sustainable Britain after the Coronavirus crisis has passed. Our support for the Bill and this motion helps us achieve that.

Council resolves to:

- Write to the relevant Government Minister asking them to enact this legislation as soon as possible.
- Ask our local Members of Parliament to support the Bill.
- Write to the campaign promoting the Bill, Power for People, (at 8, Delancey Passage, Camden, London, NW1 7NN) expressing the Council's support for the campaign and the Local Electricity Bill.

- 11 Oldham's COVID-19 Response (Pages 109 - 120)
- 12 Update on Actions from Council (Pages 121 - 136)
- 13 Members Allowances - Transport (Pages 137 - 138)
- 14 Annual Reports 2019/20 (Pages 139 - 240)
- 15 Review of Whistleblowing Policy (Pages 241 - 266)

**NOTE: The meeting of the Council will conclude 3 hours and 30 minutes after the commencement of the meeting.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Wilkins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'C'.

**Carolyn Wilkins  
Chief Executive**

**PROCEDURE FOR NOTICE OF MOTIONS**  
**NO AMENDMENT**

MOTION – Mover of the Motion to MOVE



MOTION – Secunder of the Motion to SECOND – May reserve right to speak



DEBATE ON THE MOTION: Include Timings



MOVER of Motion – Right of Reply



VOTE – For/Against/Abstain



Declare outcome of the VOTE

**RULE ON TIMINGS**

(a) No Member shall speak longer than four minutes on any **Motion or Amendment**, or by way of question, observation or reply, unless by consent of the Members of the Council present, he/she is allowed an extension, in which case only one extension of 30 seconds shall be allowed.

(b) A Member replying to more than one question will have up to six minutes to reply to each question with an extension of 30 seconds

## WITH AMENDMENT

