

Present: The Mayor – Councillor Garry (in the Chair)

Councillors Akhtar, Al-Hamdani, Ali, Alyas, Arnott, Azad, Ball, Barnes, M Bashforth, S Bashforth, Birch, Brownridge, Byrne, Chadderton, Chauhan, Cosgrove, Dean, C. Gloster, H. Gloster, Goodwin, Hamblett, Harrison, Hobin, Hulme, A Hussain, F Hussain, S Hussain, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Islam, Jabbar, Kenyon, Marland, McLaren, McManus, Moores, Munroe, Murphy, Mushtaq, Nasheen, C. Phythian, K Phythian, Quigg, Rea, Salamat, Shuttleworth, Stretton, Surjan, Sykes, Taylor, Wilkinson, Williamson, Williams and Woodvine

1 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ahmad, Hindle, Lancaster, Sharp and Sheldon.

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

Councillor Stretton declared a disclosable interest as she had given evidence as a witness to the Review into Historic Safeguarding Practices in the Borough of Oldham.

Councillor Garry declared a disclosable pecuniary interest at Item 3 by virtue of her husband's employment with Greater Manchester Police.

Councillor Chris Gloster declared a non-registerable interest at Item 3 by virtue of his receipt of an occupational pension from Greater Manchester Police.

Councillor Hazel Gloster declared a non-registerable interest at Item 3 by virtue of her husband's receipt of an occupational pension from Greater Manchester Police.

Councillor Wilkinson declared a non-registerable interest at Item 3 by virtue of his receipt of an occupational pension from Greater Manchester Police.

Councillor Murphy declared a non-registerable interest at Item 3 by virtue of his receipt of an occupational pension from Greater Manchester Police.

Councillor Hazel Gloster declared a non-registerable interest at Item 3 by virtue of her husband's receipt of an occupational pension from Greater Manchester Police.

3 **INDEPENDENT ASSURANCE REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN GREATER MANCHESTER: PART 2 REVIEW INTO HISTORIC SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES IN THE BOROUGH OF**

OLDHAM

The Mayor advised that the meeting had been convened to receive the Independent Assurance review of the Effectiveness of the Multi-Agency responses to Child Sexual Exploitation in Greater Manchester: Part 2 Review into Historic Safeguarding Practices in the Borough of Oldham.

Councillor Chadderton, the Leader of the Council addressed the meeting, requesting that Council resolves to move into Committee, for the remainder of the meeting to allow Members and Officers of the Council and of Greater Manchester Police to present and respond to questions received. Such a course of action would remove the time limit for public questions, that have been received, allowing them all to be answered.

RESOLVED

That Council moves into Committee for the remainder of the meeting.

The Council received submissions from the following contributors:

- a. Malcolm Newsam (via video link) – one of the authors of the Independent Assurance review of the Effectiveness of the Multi-Agency responses to Child Sexual Exploitation in Greater Manchester: Part 2 Review into Historic Safeguarding Practices in the Borough of Oldham
- b. Gerard Jones – Managing Director of Children’s Services, Oldham MBC
- c. Councillor Amanda Chadderton – Leader of the Council
- d. Councillor Pam Byrne - on behalf of the Leader of the Conservative Group
- e. Councillor Howard Sykes - Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
- f. Councillor Brian Hobin – Leader of the Failsworth Independent Party

4

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

The Mayor advised that a total of 36 public questions had been received. Where applicable a questioner was able read out their own submission, all other questions received were read out by the Chief Executive. Some of the questions received were grouped into various themes

1 Question from Sam to Mr Newsam

Why did Gary Ridgway tell me that there was a cover up when I met him but the report says there is no cover up?

Why did you not interview any of the professional standards police officers who you knew had covered up the failings in the criminal investigation and what had happened at the police station.

Why did you think that an apology was a good remedy instead of making a public call for justice and accountability in your report?

Answer – Questions to be forwarded to the Review Team



Oldham
Council

2 Question from Sam to Chief Superintendent Bowen

Do you think that those responsible for the attacks on me should be prosecuted? The police know their names.

Do you think the PSB officers who covered up what happened to me and the failings of the officers around the time I was attacked should be prosecuted?

Do you think the GMP chief superintendent who wrote to Mr Keith Vaz MP should be prosecuted for saying that nothing was wrong with any actions of any GMP officers and all the investigations had been carried out well?

Do you think that GMP should compensate me for personal injury and breach of my human rights?

Do you think that GMP should share the costs of a good solicitor and barrister so that I can afford to pursue those claims?

Answers:

We have not waited for the report to be published to pursue perpetrators and 106 dedicated officers in our CSE unit are pursuing any and all lines of enquiry as part of Operation Sherwood. We are clear on this – anyone who committed these crimes and thinks they've gotten away with it, regardless of the passage of time, we will come for them.

We are keen to ensure that any individual or organisational learning from this is captured and reflected in our policies and procedures going forward as we do with any review into our operations and professional standards. Should any potential misconduct be identified, this will be thoroughly investigated by our Professional Standards Branch through the appropriate procedures.

It's important that we listen to you and address your concerns as fully as possible, and I understand there is a meeting being arranged with yourself and the Chief Constable next month where it is our intention to better understand your views and how we may be able to help you further.

3 Questions from Sam to Cllr Chadderton, Council Leader

Does Cllr Chadderton genuinely believe that there was no cover up in my case?

Does she believe that saying 'it all happened a long time ago and things are better now' is what I want to hear?

Does she think that the Council should bear the costs of a legal team to represent me in a personal injury and human rights claim?

Will she be referring those that failed me in the Council to the police for criminal investigation?

There is a dispute over assertions by social care staff that Sophie did not want to cooperate with the review. When pressed, they insisted an approach could be detrimental to her welfare. This is significantly at odds with the account Sophie provided to the inquiry. When given the opportunity, she was happy to cooperate with the review at length. Will any investigation be undertaken to establish if any members of

Oldham Council staff acted dishonestly in their dealings with the inquiry as regards Sophie's evidence? Furthermore, will the inquiry investigate whether this was as a result of a desire to cover up the failures by individual staff members and Oldham Council as an organisation?

Information regarding Offender J was known to the multiagency Messenger team - particularly his wife's report in 2011 that he had admitted raping a 12-year-old. This followed his attempted murder of her in 2009. Was Offender J resident in Oldham at the time of his conviction and were there any children living at his address? If so, what attempts were made to safeguard them following these disclosures? If he has been released from prison, is he allowed any unsupervised contact with under 16s?

Answers:

I initially wish to repeat my apologies to Sophie/Sam. Clear she was let down by the council and GMP as both a child and as an adult.

The review is clear there was no 'cover up' of CSE – either the issue or the complexity of dealing with it.

However, it's also clear in your case that when you approached us as an adult to seek answers about the abuse you faced and how we had supported you we did not respond appropriately and with the honesty and transparency we should have.

I have asked for a thorough review of your contact with the council as an adult to make sure this doesn't happen to anyone else and that we learn from your experiences.

In terms of any legal action against the council our advice would be to seek independent legal advice and support but we would wish to help with that by putting her in touch with support organisations that can offer advice and support on how to go about that.

On the issue of criminal investigations into council staff – the police are now reinvestigating a number of cases including yours and we will fully co-operate with those investigations. The police will determine through those investigations should there be any action taken against individuals.

In terms of the contact between Sophie/Sam and the council about the review and her involvement in it I will refer that question onto Gerard Jones who has worked alongside the review team throughout. He can give a more detailed response as a result.

Before I do that what I can say is that if Sophie feels we could and should have done more we should acknowledge that apologise

Before I hand over to Gerard I do want to answer your final point about the one of the offenders referenced in the report. For legal reasons we can't share specific details relating to this individual. However please be assured we will be supporting the police in their investigations into the crimes committed against you and seeking convictions for those who committed them.

4 Question from Deborah Barratt to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

For three years this council stated that CSE was Bare Faced Lies and there was no grooming happening in Oldham.

At the Last full council meeting the then Leader Arooj Shah not only apologise for the Grooming of Oldham children but also confirmed it was still happening once I asked after a report on Sky TV and newspapers had confirmed that CSE did happen in Oldham

Back on 6th November 2019 every council member from all parties' bar ONE, Cllr Brian Hobin, walked out of these chambers rather than allow ONE question, even calling in the Police wasting police time for no reason.

It has now been CONFIRMED that not only has GMP AND OMBC covered up Grooming of the Children of Oldham but have also committed Misconduct in a public office

Can the council leader please tell every resident in Oldham:

- a. Who will be held accountable
- b. What punishment will happen
- c. When that punishment will happen

And can she explain why anyone should believe anything you and this council say anymore and will you call in the Government

Answers:

Firstly, I am not here to speak for previous leaders. The words you use were not my words and I am not here to justify or defend them.

We have never shied away from the fact that there are evil men out there who commit these horrendous crimes, and sadly we know this still goes on here in Oldham – as it does everywhere in the country.

The report makes it clear that we were aware of the issue, were working to tackle it and working to promote the risks of CSE to the public.

The report does not allege any misconduct in public office by council staff. That said we will of course work with GMP who are re looking at these crimes again, so should any misconduct be uncovered during that process we will of course take action.

You ask why you should you believe anything I and this Council say?

You can believe me because two independent experts – the same expert called in by the Conservative Government to intervene in Rotherham – have found that, while there were failings, which we completely accept, there was no cover up.

You also asked if I will call in the Government.

We already asked for this independent Review. It took two and a half years of painstaking work, by the same independent experts the Government themselves have sent in elsewhere, to get to the report being published last week.

We asked for an independent Review by national experts and we have got one. The Home Office and other agencies are aware of the review and have been briefed about its findings.

My job now is to use the findings of that Review to consider where we can improve further and do all I can to ensure young people in Oldham receive the very best possible care and support from those who are there to protect them.

5. Question from Steven Pilkington to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

In several media appearances victims' champion Maggie Oliver has alleged that Oldham Council lied to the team conducting the CSE review by saying that the victim known to as Sophie did not wish to be interviewed by the review team. I note that this is not a finding of the review and the report does not make any reference to the review team feeling that they were misled by Oldham Council during their work.

Is there any evidence to support Maggie Oliver's allegation? If so, what will be the consequences for those found to have lied? If not, will Oldham Council be requesting that Maggie Oliver publicly correct the record?

Answer:

The report lays out the contact that the council had with Sophie throughout the review period. I would ask Gerard Jones, as one of those who has worked with the review team to provide more information on this process.

However, I can state that if Sophie feels we should have done more to facilitate her involvement we can only acknowledge that and apologise.

Elsewhere within these questions there is a reference to Cllr Mushtaq as having held the children's social care portfolio. I can confirm he has never held this portfolio.

6. Question from Caroline Watt to Councillor Chadderton,
Council Leader

Can you explain the difference as to what changed Sophie's mind? It clearly states Sophie wasn't ready and was suicidal by her social worker then why did Maggie Oliver push for her to be in the review? What changed?

The council repeatedly claimed they had informed Sophie of the review, but Sophie said she didn't hear anything back. Did the council send Sophie the information because Sophie said she never received it? What is the truth?

Answer:

- (the Council) Asked for Sophie's case to be included in review
- Handed over all case files and documentation
- Contacted Sophie at the beginning of the review and via her Social-Worker
- Later on did make the decision not to reapproach her based on feedback directly from those working closely with her.
- Based on advice of professionals working directly with her and with her safety in mind
- Advocates working with Sophie did approach review team at point she was given a copy of her part of the report and at that point we were happy for her to be involved as she had facilitated it herself
- Have written to Maggie to offer reassurance given her comments in the media
- In terms of the group working with the review team can confirm no elected members on that group and that both I, the

Executive Director of Reform and latterly the Assistant Chief Executive are members of that group.

- A number of other staff members have supported or advised the review throughout the time period, many from children's social care but also staff from other service areas.



7. Question from David Mowbray to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

Can I get a full explanation why Oldham Council told the people who were conducting the investigation that "Sophie" did not want to talk to them as this clearly was not the case as has been explained since the report came out by "Sophie" herself and also by Maggie Oliver who has been helping "Sophie" for three years? I believe this was the cause of the delay in the report being published.

Answer:

As per question 6 above.

8. Question from Tony Martin to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

Chapter 8 of Part 2 of the review refers to the case of Sophie. In 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6 the reviewers claim to have been advised by Oldham Council not to interview Sophie due to "serious concerns for Sophie's welfare" and that Sophie was unwilling to be interviewed.

The Review was promised to be published on 24th January 2022. However, immediately prior to this date it was stated that there would be a further delay to enable new information to be processed and further witnesses to be interviewed.

Maggie Oliver, in an interview on Talk TV, vociferously claimed that there was a clear attempt to cover up Sophie's story. Sophie approached her early in 2022 stating that she still had not been approached for interview. Ms Oliver then went to the review team and was told of the Council's advice to them regarding Sophie. Ms Oliver is insistent that it was only due to her intervention that Sophie was eventually interviewed. Ms Oliver's intervention clearly led to the aforementioned deferment of the Review's publication. The review reported this as "...she (Sophie) made representations in January 2022 that she had not been approached for interview by the review team". No mention of Ms Oliver.

I ask - who were the Council officials who advised the Review team not to interview Sophie?

Has disciplinary action been taken against them?

Answer

As per question 6 above

9. Question from Kay Smith to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

CSE review 27th June 2022 - Maggie Oliver has confirmed that Oldham Council has been involved in lying to Malcolm Newsam

and Gary Ridgway in attempt to prevent to prevent Sophie from testifying. I doubt Amanda Chadderton or any her team is going to stand up and claim Maggie Oliver is a liar and that Oldham Council did not make attempts to prevent Sophie from testifying. Will Amanda Chadderton now; unreservedly apologise to the entire town following officers of Oldham Council falsely claimed that Sophie did not want to testify and would likely commit suicide if the Review team contacted her directly?

An examination of Oldham Council paper trail clearly shows that the Council established a team to communicate information to the Review team. It was clearly this team that lied. Is Amanda Chadderton prepared to:

- Name every Council Officer and Elected Member on this group
- Confirm they have been dismissed
- Or is she going to pretend what they did does not amount to gross misconduct?

Finally, now that we know that Oldham Council has tampered with evidence and lied throughout the review, will Shaid Mushtaq who has been the Lead Member for Children's Services resign with immediate effect for the lies, deceit and cover up instigated by those he is responsible for?

Answer:

As per question 6 above.

10. question from Miss Harrison to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

Following the release of the CSE report and Councillor Amanda Chadderton's statement, regarding taxi driver's licences being checked twice a year, I would like to know the following: Uber Taxi Drivers can obtain a licence, via say Bury or Rochdale Council, and work here in Oldham freely. Do the surrounding boroughs follow the same same due diligence, regarding their licencing, as Oldham does?

How can we, as a Borough, be confident that Uber Taxi Drivers, do not pose a risk to the children of this Borough?

Answer:

Here in Oldham, we have tight restrictions on who can get a licence to drive taxis. In fact we have some of the most stringent conditions in Greater Manchester.

Nobody who has been convicted of a sexual offence is granted a taxi licence. Checks are also now conducted at taxi ranks and in offices, to ensure we are keeping people safe to the very best of our abilities.

In 2014, a licensing review of taxi drivers took place, and this was repeated in 2017 and again in 2021.

This was intended to make sure our licensing arrangements were in keeping with new national guidelines. Members of those panels acted on the advice of professionals and on the information they had at that time in making their decisions to remove licenses or not.

They work within national and local guidelines in making these decisions and, while the review makes clear we should have revoked licenses in a small number of cases there is no

implication that these decisions were taken in bad faith – rather than the advice and information available could have been better.

Dates of licensing meetings, and the members of the licensing panel at that point, are a matter of public record and should be available on our website.

Nationally, Government guidance means that criminality checks are undertaken on taxi drivers every six months, and this applies to every Licensing Authority in England and Wales.

However, we know some drivers choose to get licenses from other local authority areas, like Wolverhampton or Rossendale, if for instance the fee charged is lower, or some policies such as vehicle age are more relaxed than here in Oldham.

This can apply to taxis from any company including those working through Uber. It is, in my opinion, a weakness in the system and should be addressed by the government by establishing nationwide licensing conditions. In Greater Manchester we are already working to have a single set of conditions in the city region.

We're doing what we can locally by working with all operators in the Borough who are currently using drivers and vehicles licensed elsewhere, to encourage them to apply for a licence with Oldham.

11. Question from Alyson Campbell to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

I have noticed recently a lot of private hire drivers operating in Oldham have licenses issued in Wolverhampton and Sefton. I could not understand why this was until the publishing of the enquiry report, when the issue of licencing for taxis was raised. My question is, is this to get around the recently introduced 6 monthly CRB checks that they may not pass and what is being done by Oldham council to ensure that only private hire and taxi drivers who have passed a recent CRB check are operating in Oldham. As a parent of a 19-year-old who regularly uses taxis I want to ensure she is safe?

Answer:

As per question 10 above.

12. Question from Maggie Hurley to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

The Assurance Review confirmed that Oldham Council's Licensing Committee on multiple occasions issued taxi licenses to known sex offenders including those that had abused children. Therefore, will Amanda Chadderton, the Leader of Oldham Council please confirm:

- that the findings presented regarding failings in her Council's licensing committee are accurate?
- confirm the dates of each of the meetings where these licenses were awarded?
- confirm the names of the councillors at each of these meetings where Oldham Councillors decided to award licenses to known child sex offenders?

The Council has this information. There is no wriggle room here. Amanda Chadderton has access to the names of each and every one of these councillors. We, the people of Oldham, also have a right to know their names. Who are the councillors that through their actions protected paedophiles? Name them! And those councillors that served on the licensing committee that are still sat here today, do they have the courage to stand up and apologise for their failures and resign with immediate effect or are they going to continue to hide like the paedophile enabling cowards that we suspect they are? At what point will any of you take any responsibility for your actions?

Answer:

As per question 10 above

13. Question from Jackie Schofield to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

My question is in relation to Offender A (Shabir Ahmed). A young woman came forward in 2012 claiming she had been abused by Offender A when he was employed as a welfare rights officer by the council. I would like to know why the children's social care service closed the case within a few days without undertaking any assessment, which might have resulted in a proper investigation into Offender A's employment conduct. Also, why weren't any assessments taken when earlier opportunities were presented as well with regard to the council being informed of serious allegations against Offender A? If allowed another question, I would also like to ask if there will be an investigation into the social care of Sophie. In particular with regard to their lax attitude when it concerned Sophie's involvement with older men.

Answer:

Thank you for your questions. There are clear failings in relation to Offender A, about how we shared information between agencies and about how we investigated later allegations which are indefensible.

However, there is also a certain amount of misinformation.

There is no evidence that the council knew that Offender A had committed any crimes at the point he was employed by Oldham Council.

In fact, we were not informed of any allegations till two years after he had left the council. He was not 'protected from investigation' by the council, either by officers or politicians, as is alleged. And to be clear this issue spans political control in the council.

There is also absolutely no evidence that anybody in the council provided a reference for Offender A. I know this is an allegation being made online but there is absolutely no evidence to support it.

I am asked to 'name those who knew Shabir Ahmed'. What I would say is that Offender A lived and worked in the borough so I am sure many people living here or working here knew him. The people committing these crimes – including Offender A were secretive and manipulative, those who knew them closely will not have known of their offending. It is unreasonable to hold everyone responsible for the actions of everyone they know. This online noise that he was a 'friend' of people in the council is unfounded but also nonsensical. In terms of naming officers in charge at the time that is also a matter of public record and available online.

As to whether we could have prevented further offending from this individual the reality is we will never know. We were not informed of the allegations against him – and he was also not arrested – until after he had stopped working for the Council. But this report puts in stark terms the human impact that not getting things right can have.

One of the questions also asks again about Sophie. Like in many other places, at that time, we did not properly understand the issue of child sexual exploitation and didn't know the best ways to protect or to support vulnerable young people.

We also let Sophie down as an adult when she came to us looking for answers about the abuse she had faced and the care she had received. We should have been more willing to learn and accept our failings and I'm truly sorry for the additional pain that will have caused.

Things have already changed a great deal since Sophie was a child. But I am going through the Report line by line to see if there is any more learning, and any more improvements, we can make. No child should ever be let down as she was.

14. Question from Charlotte Evyrose to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

Despite attempts to deceive the people of Oldham, it has now been forced out that Shabir Ahmed was employed by Oldham Council for 18 years. It has now also been confirmed that as well as having access to vulnerable children and families, the ringleader of the Rochdale grooming gang was also protected from investigation whilst employed by the Council. Is Amanda Chadderton, the Leader of Oldham Council, prepared to; - name the Labour Party colleagues sat beside her that knew Shabir Ahmed and therefore would have known he worked for Oldham Council? - name who was the Borough Solicitor, Council Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, at the time a complaint of abuse against Shabir Ahmed was 'inexplicably' shut down by the Council?

The people of Oldham have a right to know who exactly was responsible - to reassure us all that the Council (either directly, via the Mayor's Office or any other OMBC linked entity) did NOT provide Shabir Ahmed with any form of reference or support of any kind once he had been charged? It is time for this Labour Party run Council to be honest with us all. Shabir Ahmed was one of yours and you protected him.

15. Question from Helen Bishop to Councillor Chadderton,
Council Leader

Councillor Chadderton, how are we going to instigate change in an environment where so little value is placed in both seeking and actively listening to the experiences of young people? Where behaviours are viewed through the lens of being problematic, rather than symptomatic, and their opportunities to disclose their experiences have been drastically reduced. Where there is a culture of denial and of closing them down when they raise concerns about the behaviour of adults in authority and a belief that they will not be taken seriously. Having listened to the experiences of young people in the borough for nearly 25 years as a youth worker, this is a commonly repeated problem. How will you go about creating an environment where this sort of response is stamped out in those entrusted to safeguard our young people?

Answers

The Review clearly highlighted the issues you raise, such as young people not being properly listened to when they sought help from us in the past. I am deeply sorry to those young people we failed.

Since becoming Leader I have set out that our children and young people are my absolute top priority. I will work tirelessly to ensure that every young person in Oldham, regardless of where they live or the background they come from, have the opportunities and the support to succeed.

This means listening to our young people, providing the services they need, and ensuring that the right support is there. We're already making improvements – for example, we've put £150k extra funding this year into our youth services, both those delivered by us and also into Madhlo, which does so much fantastic work.

We're also increasingly working with our young people to build their voice into our future plans for the borough. For example, in the last few weeks we've been speaking to groups of young people to get their views on what Oldham should look like in the future, to build this into the new Oldham Plan for the borough. I'm determined that we listen to the next generation and ensure that collectively we build the Oldham that they want to live, work and be educated in – now and in the future.

GMP response to this question:

In GMP, all our officers are trained to better understand and recognise when a child's behaviour could be the product of abuse, and we have specialist officers who are trained to take appropriate action to protect vulnerable children at risk.

16. Question from Neil Wilby to Councillor Chadderton and Chief Superintendent Bowen

a. Has the Council Leader or any of the Executive Management Team challenged the quality and content of the CSE Assurance

Review? Do they agree with me that it can be most charitably described as sub-optimal and does not, as the Review Team claim, go even close to where the evidence should have taken them?

b. Does the Council Leader and Executive Management Team consider the taxpayers of Oldham and the wider Greater Manchester Region have been given value for money for a Review estimated to have cost between £750,000 and £1 million? If the answer is 'No', will the Leader be encouraging the Mayor to claw back at least part of the sums paid over to the Review Team and invite Mr Burnham to withdraw any further contracts from them?

Has the Council Leader or Monitoring Officer referred to the police any elected Council Member or paid Council officer over any suspected criminal offences disclosed by the Review? If the answer is 'Yes', how many?

Answers:

Councillor Chadderton's response:

We have not challenged the quality of the CSE Assurance Review. This Review was carried out by two independent experts who are recognised as being the best in their field. Mr Newsam and Mr Ridgway spent more than two and a half years speaking to witnesses, gathering evidence and analysing thousands of pieces of information to come to their conclusions – conclusions I believe are sound, robust, and based on hard evidence.

In terms of value for money – when we as a Council asked for this Review it was to provide assurance to the people of Oldham about how we and other authorities tackled CSE in the past, and provide us with the information we need now to ensure our work is as good as it possibly can be. And we wanted this Review to be wholly independent and carried out by the best people in the country. Needless to say, this sort of expert work does not come cheap.

Any allegations that came to light during the Review process were shared with the Review team as a matter of course.

GMP Response:

GMP fully accepts and supports the findings of the review and is actively working through any implications for us

17. Question from Mr John Lawrence to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

Will we see criminal convictions brought against those in the council who let all this happen and if it involves the police will we see convictions there as well. If not why? Also, I would like everybody involved in abusing our kids named publicly by you?

Answers

There are no findings in the report that currently support any misconduct allegations against staff.

18. Question from Deborah Hodgkin to Chief Superintendent Chris Bowen



How many people have already been prosecuted for these crimes?

The young girls named the people responsible - have they all been arrested and charged - if not why not?

GMP Response:

Following the publication of the report, GMP has launched Operation Sherwood, the operation name for supporting CSE victims in Oldham, taking the dedicated CSE unit up to 106 officers pursuing offenders and seeking justice for those who should have had this support all those years ago.

19. Questioner has been anonymised in order to protect identity of a potential victim

I would like to ask if I had come forward in 1981 and told my social worker I was taken off the streets of Oldham town centre by 3 Asian men and there was a man who worked in the civic center in social services who was preying on young teenage girls in care would things be different, -

Answer

I'm so sorry to hear your story – and while I can't answer how things would have been handled at that time I can absolutely promise you that things are different now to how they were in 1981.

The way we work now is different to how it was in the 80s, the 90s, the time this review relates to, and even to last year. That's because we're always learning and looking for ways to improve further – based on best practice from around the country, from reviews from other local authorities – which are known as peer reviews, where other councils come into see how we are doing – and from formal inspections from bodies such as Ofsted.

We understand more about child abuse, about child sexual exploitation and how to deal with it.

But while we have made changes we are not complacent – we can and will improve further, wherever we need to.

20. Question from Helen Bishop to Gerard Jones, Managing Director of Children's Services

Can the council agree to ensure that ALL staff working with children and young people receive appropriate training specifically in understanding how to identify and respond to concerns that a colleague may be either abusing their professional position or neglecting their safeguarding responsibilities? -

Answer

I'm happy to confirm that all staff working with children and young people undertake child protection training on a regular basis, and also receive professional supervision from their manager.

The Council also has a Whistleblowing Policy through which any member of staff can escalate concerns regarding professional misconduct or safeguarding responsibilities.

Furthermore, staff working directly with children and young people are subject to an enhanced police check to ensure that they do not pose a risk to children.

These checks and balances are a vital part of our safeguarding procedures so please be rest assured that they are strictly followed.



21. Question from Neil Wilby to Chief Superintendent Bowen

Does Chief Superintendent Bowen consider that the remedy proposed by his chief constable - an apology - in respect of the grotesque failings visited upon 'Sophie' is remotely adequate or acceptable? Either to that survivor of child sexual abuse or the wider public of both the Borough and Region. Will the chief superintendent agree with me that the only two appropriate ways of dealing with the manifest failings of his fellow officers, past and present, is for, firstly, an outside police force to robustly investigate, without fear or favour, all those responsible for Sophie's horrific ordeal and prosecute those responsible, if and where the evidence supports such action; and, secondly, for the chief constable, the Mayor and the Oldham Council Leader to allocate the necessary funding for Sophie to instruct a specialist lawyer to pursue a human rights and personal injury claim against the force and the Council?

Answer:

Tackling and preventing child sexual exploitation in Greater Manchester, and the support available to victims, are thankfully now worlds apart from where we were in the early 2000's. We have already learned from the past and our policies and practices are entirely different.

All of our officers are trained to understand and recognise when a child's behaviour could be the product of abuse, and we have specialist officers who are trained to take appropriate action to protect vulnerable children at risk.

We have also invested over £2.3million in a Child Sexual Exploitation Unit in GMP, with officers who are dedicated to pursuing perpetrators and seeking justice for victims of CSE, regardless of the passage of time.

This team has been behind a number of operations dedicated to investigating non-recent CSE crimes which were not originally thoroughly investigated. This has meant reaching out to victims who may not have received a good service from us originally and following up lines of enquiry to establish any further leads or potential perpetrators.

I am pleased to say the team has so far seen results in a number of major investigations in Rochdale, with charges being brought and preparing for trial for Operation Lytton - a live investigation whereby eight defendants were charged in March 2022 with 82 offences in which the trial is set for May 2023. Operation Green Jacket which some of you will be aware of following the last CSE assurance review, is ongoing and has resulted in 21 arrests so far.

So my message to any offenders of these heinous crimes – we are not letting this go, we will re-investigate and we will track you down.

In addition to this, a further uplift in this team is being agreed to specifically focus on Operation Sherwood, the operation name for supporting any CSE victims in Oldham, taking the team up to 106 officers pursuing offenders and seeking justice for those who should have had this support all those years ago.

I would urge anyone who has not come forward to do so, you will be listened to, and you will be provided with specialist support.

Whilst this will not compensate for the horrific experience these victims endured, it is our hope that our dedication to leaving no stone unturned and the clear, incomparable multi-agency response to safeguarding and tackling CSE, will provide some comfort to those whom we let down in the past, and encourage anyone who has been a victim to come forward today.

22. Question from Helen Bishop to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

How are the council going to tackle the unhelpful culture of sending and reinforcing the toxic message to young people that what young women wear directly impacts upon the standard of behaviour that they can expect from others towards them, as is still evident in our education system? Will the council commit to challenging educational environments in the borough where young women are subjected to constant and overbearing scrutiny of their clothing, over and above that of young men?

Answer:

The point you raise about women being judged on their appearance and their clothing is not specific to Oldham or indeed to the UK, but it is something young women are subject to across the world. This has been the case, sadly, for as long as I – or indeed anyone in this Chamber – can remember. We already work with schools across the borough to promote safety for young women and young men. I will make sure we look specifically at this issue and ensure its built into those conversations happening already in schools.

23. Question from Neil Wilby to Councillor Chadderton/Michael Newsam

This question is in seven parts but they are all very important public interest points and I ask the Mayor, councillors, members of the public and invited guests to bear with me. It will be worth it:

- a. On Monday 20th June, the CSE victim anonymised as 'Sophie' wrote to Gary Ridgway and told him she could no longer trust the Review team. The reason being that what she says she was told in interview differs from what is in the final report. Does Mr Newsam agree with me that this is a highly concerning situation and could he please tell councillors and members of the public present how he proposes to remedy the situation?
- b. At the GMCA press conference last Monday it was said that the CSE Review had gone where the evidence had taken the Review team. Does Mr Newsam still stand by that statement?

c. If I can comprehensively disprove that 'go where the evidence takes us' statement, and I am very confident indeed that I can in a number of areas of the report, will Mr Newsam agree with me that the report would stand discredited and that the only way forward for Oldham Council and the long-suffering residents of the Borough is for the Review to be withdrawn and a statutory or departmental inquiry to be instituted without delay?

d. The report flowing from the CSE Review mentions disclosure difficulties with Greater Manchester Police and a failure to come to a satisfactory agreement within the statutory framework relating to data protection. Can Mr Newsam please explain, in more detail, the overall effect, both in terms of time lost and completeness of the report, on the Review?

e. Again in relation to disclosure, and that fact that significant detail appears to have been a casualty in the report, would it strike Mr Newsam as extraordinary that as part of my own extensive journalistic investigations I have obtained two full and unredacted GMP Professional Standards reports (13 pages and 56 pages) that were only supplied in redacted form to the Review Team and an unredacted 2013 letter from a GMP chief superintendent to the Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee that GMP say they were unable to locate. The significance of the latter is that I have been able to tell the survivor, Sophie, that the same superintendent was, in fact the detective that led the investigation, as an inspector at the time, into her rape and abuse in 2006.

f. On Friday 17th June 2020, the Leader of The Council, by way of a post on her Council Facebook page, breached an embargo concerning the release date of the CSE Review report. On Sunday 19th June I reported the existence of that Facebook post. in an article on the Neil Wilby Media website, a serious breach and a matter of considerable public interest, and, in doing so, deliberately breached restrictions placed on journalists relating to the same embargo. The result was that my invitation to the press conference was withdrawn but Cllr Chadderton was allowed to attend. As the final arbiter as to who should attend that press conference or not, does Mr Newsam consider that those decisions taken were fair and reasonable to all parties?

g. Would it also be of concern to Mr Newsam that a senior GMCA officer (whose identity I know) lied to the GMP press office in order to persuade them that I should be excluded from that press conference on the flimsiest of pretexts?

Questions a. – e. and g. have been referred to the Review Team for a written answers.

Answer to f.

While these questions were addressed to the review team who are not here one point in particular referred to me 'breaching embargo' on the details of the report launch.

I wanted to address this to say i was not under any embargo. As Leader of this Council when I was told the launch was imminent I took the decision to share this information with the people of the borough and to call for this meeting in order to discuss the findings.

I was not privy to any discussions or decisions about the press conference and who would be in attendance as it was a GMCA event.



24. Question from Helen Bishop to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

How are we going to go about achieving better targeted social education, training and information to young people in the borough to help safeguard them against adults who seek to exploit their vulnerability and lack of life experience?

Answer:

I'm glad to say that we've made huge progress in terms of helping our young people better understand the dangers of CSE; letting them know how to spot the signs and empowering them to report it. For example, a trained professional delivers focused training in our schools, which reaches thousands of children in Oldham every year. We know this is already having an impact, and at least one perpetrator has already been convicted as a direct result of young people raising concerns following one of these sessions.

25. Question from Helen Bishop to Councillor Chadderton/Gerard Jones/Chris Bowen

Will the council commit to acknowledging, discussing and developing an effective strategy to tackle the exploitation of boys and young men in the borough? Too many of whom are groomed from an early age to become involved in trafficking and dealing drugs, and whom are also exposed to violence, trauma and sexual assault?

Answers:

Councillor Chadderton - We absolutely recognise the risks to boys, as well as to girls, as regards criminal exploitation and sexual exploitation. I'm going to ask Gerard Jones to give a more detailed response about how we currently do this. That's one of the reasons why, earlier this year, we launched our Group Response and Early Collaborative Intervention Project (GRIP) project.

Gerard Jones - This project is a dedicated resource to provide support and safeguarding to young people in Oldham. The project has a range of opportunities for young people to participate in, which will look to improve confidence and self-esteem, develop hobbies and interests and raise personal aspirations.

The project also looks to tackle violence in communities and takes a safeguarding approach to how it looks after our young people, boys and girls.

Chris Bowen - In Greater Manchester we have programme Challenger - the largest ever multi-agency response to tackling organised crime (OCGs) and complex safeguarding in Greater Manchester's history. Challenger sees agencies pooling their resources and expertise to target every aspect of a criminal's life, aiming to systematically dismantle gangs, making it difficult

for them to operate. This involves; GMP, local authorities, Trading Standards, Immigration, the Illegal Money Lending Team, social housing providers, Department for Work and Pensions, DVLA, HRMC and other partners, including Non-Government Organisations (NGO). The aim is to identify every single organised crime group in Manchester and to use all means available with agencies across Manchester and the UK, to dismantle these OCGs who specifically target vulnerable young people to deal drugs.

26. Question from Helen Bishop to Councillor Chadderton/Gerard Jones

How does the council propose to go about ensuring the recruitment of more informed, highly skilled staff and also the provision of better training for everyone working with young people, to ensure that they understand their role in proactively identifying, and responding effectively to, the signs of inappropriate, abusive and exploitative behaviour towards young people, and to implement early preventative measures to combat it? Especially in residential childcare services, education and youth provision.

Answers:

This is a great question as recruitment and effective training of our social care staff is an important issue. I'm going to ask Gerard to give a detailed response.

Ensuring we have well trained, highly skilled social work staff is a priority for this Council and we are doing everything in our power to ensure we recruit the best possible people. As part of the recruitment process, we test applicants' understanding of their roles and responsibilities in respect of child abuse and how to protect children. This is a very thorough process to make sure that the people working for us are always up to the high standards we set – standards that have been confirmed by Ofsted as recently as November last year.

After people start working for us, they undergo a full and detailed induction and also undergo child protection training on a regular basis. Their work is scrutinised by their manager on a regular basis through individual case supervision and can be pulled up for inspection at any time.

27. Question from Jackie Stanton to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

Will the leader of the council and the chief executive admit to the public of Oldham that neither they or their cabinet or directors are capable of dealing with the horrific findings Published in the Child Sexual Exploitation report?

Will they refer Oldham Metropolitan Council to the government for failing 100s of young children over recent years, will they seek help and advice from the government to ensure that all the victims not just the ten case studies published receive the help and support they so rightly deserve.

Answer:

We have a dedicated team of social workers here in Oldham, and an excellent management team in Children's Services, we haven't stood still in responding to the review as it has been undertaken and I'm confident they will continue to use its findings to improve.

You speak of taking help and advice from Government. We have already asked for this independent Review - which brought in the country's very best experts in the field. We have already asked for support from the very best and will keep improving wherever we can.

The review has taken two and a half years and has found clear examples where we failed to protect people. The priority now has to be on taking learning from this, improving where we can and on restoring confidence in our social services. That confidence is vital so that people report concerns to us in the knowledge we will act. That confidence saves lives.

I know there are those that want, for their own reasons, for the uncertainty and division around this issue to continue. But that is not in the best interests of the young people of this borough. They need to have trust in local services and we need to rebuild that trust. Our focus MUST be on that.

28. Question from Trevor Baxter to Councillor Chadderton,
Council Leader

In March 2020, I received a letter from Dr Carolyn Wilkins, answering concerns about OMBC's investigation into CSE. In her response Dr Wilkins stated: "Soon after allegations of malpractice around child sexual exploitation first surfaced on social media, an independent review into historic safeguarding practice was jointly commissioned by Oldham Council and Oldham Safeguarding Partnership." So, my question is: "If other people (social media users and presumably non-OMBC staff) were aware of potential 'malpractice' issues surrounding CSE (allegations which have now been proved), why didn't this authority know? And if they did know why it took 'allegations' on social media before anything was done (ie investigation/independent review) if there was no cover-up as suggested by the recent report?"

Answer:

The report makes clear that we were aware of CSE as an issue in Oldham and that we were working hard to tackle it and promote the risks to local people. The way we deal with child sexual exploitation has changed significantly as we learned from reviews elsewhere in Rochdale and Rotherham. This is not an issue which has been ignored in Oldham till now.

This review was called in response to growing concern among members of the public expressed online and elsewhere. It was called to offer reassurance on this issue to the public. It was by no means the first time anyone in the council had addressed the issue or discussed it.

29. Question from John Reed to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader



On page 85 of the report, it details councillors meeting and quashing a journalist's enquiry regarding CSE in Oldham.

Which councillors met to discuss this and what was their reasoning for taking such action?

Answer:

The Review team are absolutely clear on this issue – the journalist's enquiry was not "quashed."

The review finds "no evidence that Journalist A nor the BBC colluded with the council in not highlighting the potential threat presented by shisha bars."

It also finds that information given to the journalist by the council in relation to the threat posed by shisha bars was "a proportionate description of what the agencies believed was happening at the time"

The report also puts right the allegation made online that a previous leader sought to cover up the issue of shisha bars. It makes clear that no conversation was ever held between that leader and the journalist and that the only conversations held on that issue were between the GMP and council press offices and the journalist.

It finds "nothing to support the assertion that Journalist A and Leader A colluded to hide from the public the potential threat presented by shisha bars and child sexual exploitation."

I hope that those repeating the allegations of a cover up take time to read the review team's findings directly in the report.

30. Identity of the questioner has been anonymised to protect the identity of a potential victim of CSE

Will the girls affected and mentioned in the report be compensated? -

Answer:

OMBC response - Firstly, as with Sophie/Sam I would like to apologise for the failures of the council in keeping you safe as a child. Nobody should have to endure the abuse you suffered and it's clear we should and could have done more to support you. For that I am deeply sorry.

In terms of compensation, we would advise you to seek independent legal advice, to ensure you get the help and support you're entitled to. We can help put you in touch with advocacy services or support organisations who can help you to do this.

GMP response - Firstly, I'd like to apologise to Sophie for the terrible experiences she had. We let her down and for that I am truly sorry.

Whilst I don't know the details of her case, and unable to comment on any litigation or compensation matters, I would encourage her to speak to the officer who contacted her so we can see if there is anything we can do with further investigating her case. If there are any lines of enquiry, the Operation

Sherwood team will pursue them and seek the justice she should have had all those years ago.



31. Identity of the questioner has been anonymised to protect the identity of a potential victim of CSE

Residents of Oldham welcome this report, enabling the testimonies of victims to be known. Acknowledging that they were fundamentally let down by the people meant to protect them is a big step towards them receiving acknowledgement that they are innocent victims and did nothing wrong. The report highlights there were fundamental systemic failings and the victims weren't treated in the manner they deserved. With that said, changes have been implemented over the years and further changes are no doubt being made as a direct result of the report.

The report clearly states there is no evidence whatsoever of any cover up from within any institution involved. What powers do OMBC, The Police and GMCA have to cease the publication (online, via broadcast, and any other means) of lies, propaganda and fabricated allegations that are further damaging our community, causing tensions and creating a fractious town to live, with sections of our community being targeted with hate crime?

Can the Council give assurances that this group of people, communicating and spreading lies, accusations and misinformation will face legal charges?

The malicious communications act states "sending a message that is known to be false via a public electronic communications network; causing such a message to be sent; or. persistently making use of a public electronic communications network." constitutes a crime. Please can you give assurances that this route will now be thoroughly explored?

I appreciate this is a lengthy, word comment with questions and am happy for it to be shortened if necessary/appropriate. If it is to be changed, could I please have sight if it first? If not it's not a big problem, if the question is asked.

Answer:

I don't wish to be drawn directly on any action to be taken by the council or anyone else about false allegations being made online and elsewhere. But it's clear that people have been using the issue of child sexual abuse to try and divide communities with allegations of 'Asian cartels' controlling the council's actions on this issue. Those allegations are completely unfounded and have been found to be so by the report. It is clear they found no evidence of any cover up – either by politicians or officers. What we need to make sure is that we protect the confidence and trust in our social services. Those services save lives and to do so we need people to have the confidence to report their concerns.

We won't rule out any action that is needed to protect that trust and confidence.

32. Question from Mike Dodd to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader



As there is now evidence of CSE in Oldham, should not the enquiry be extended to cover similar years as in Rochdale and Rotherham?

Answer:

The review team have completed their work in Oldham and have clearly found failings both by GMP and the council in protecting and supporting young people at risk of or experiencing CSE. The team have not recommended any further review work or areas of concern that they haven't addressed or covered. We had already learned from reviews elsewhere with similar findings and social workers practice has changed significantly. Our focus now is on rebuilding trust and confidence from the public in our social services. This is vital to protect the most vulnerable people in our borough

33. Question from Saheed Ahmed to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader:

With the report finding zero evidence of a cover up, will the councillors take legal action against the people behind the defamatory statements made on social media and leaflets?

Answer:

The Independent Review found that there was no cover up, either of the issue of CSE or with the way it was dealt with. The report states there was: "no evidence, either through our interviews or documentary review, to suggest that senior managers or councillors sought to cover up either the existence of child sexual exploitation in Oldham, or the complexity involved in tackling the perpetrators."

The report concluded that the council was also "consistently attempting to develop best practice" in addressing the threat of CSE.

That said, we fully accept that there were failings, and we did not do enough. We as a Council are truly sorry to those who did not receive the support and care they needed and deserved.

34. Question from Peter Davis to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

Can Council Confirm, did the Councillor's/Council Leadership, cover up any Child exploration by grooming gangs to gain votes?

Answer:

The Independent Review found that there was no cover up, either of the issue of CSE or with the way it was dealt with. The report states there was: "no evidence, either through our interviews or documentary review, to suggest that senior managers or councillors sought to cover up either the existence

of child sexual exploitation in Oldham, or the complexity involved in tackling the perpetrators."

The report concluded that the council was also "consistently attempting to develop best practice" in addressing the threat of CSE.

That said, we fully accept that there were failings, and we did not do enough. We as a Council are truly sorry to those who did not receive the support and care they needed and deserved.

35. Identity of the questioner has been anonymised to protect the identity of a potential victim of CSE

Where are the rest of the failures that have not been mentioned? What comes after an apology as a apology is not good enough? What happens next - we get told we're sorry then it all goes away?

Answer:

Firstly, I'd like to apologise to you as a victim of this terrible abuse. We clearly failed in our efforts to support children and young people at that time and I'm so sorry if that includes you. You shouldn't have had to endure what we did and the council should have done better

You are right that an apology is not enough. We must and will continue to learn from experiences like yours to make sure nobody else has to suffer what you did.

I'd also urge you to seek the support from SARC and other organisations and we will send you the details of these to see how else you can be supported.

36. Question received from Anita Lowe to Councillor Chadderton, Council Leader

After many delays the report is now upon us. I do hope that after statements of apologies to the abused and phrase such as "lessons are to be learned" from those involved, cannot ever be enough for those that have suffered such abuse.

I do hope that those young girls are rightly compensated financially and given the respect they so rightly deserve, and all Council staff whom have had their names redacted are severely dealt with. Stand up and apologise to the girls or resign. This would be the most respected thing to do.

Answer:

I am deeply sorry to those young girls – now young women – who suffered so horrendously in the past. We failed them, and I know an apology now will not make up for that.

While we have already significantly changed the way we work since the time the Review relates to, we can and will improve further wherever we need to. I will do all I can to ensure no child in Oldham is let down as these young women were.

The Mayor permitted Members of the Council to ask questions of the panel.

- a. Councillor Sykes - My first question tonight is what is different today and how we would know if this or something else was going on? What has changed and how are things different now? My second question is how many current members of staff at Oldham Council were involved in the cases and situations that have been reviewed? My third question is what process is, I hope, underway or completed to ensure that, given the stated levels of negligence, those members of staff are held appropriately accountable for their actions? My fourth question is how many current members of staff at GMP were involved in the cases and situations under review? My fifth question is what process is underway or completed to ensure that given the stated levels of negligence, those members of GMP staff are held appropriately accountable for their actions? My sixth question is what is being done to hunt down the offenders and bring them to justice?
- b. Councillor Brownridge - Could the panel comment on Maggie Oliver's statement that CSE is continuing?
- c. Councillor Wilkinson - My question is for Chief Superintendent Bowen. The question concerns Sam. I ask this question with her permission. Could you please explain when offender 'H' was arrested and implicated two other suspects namely 'F' and 'J', why neither have ever been arrested or interviewed? I appreciate this was evidence of a call accused but it was corroborated with forensic analysis at the scene. Samantha only discovered this information herself in March this year, which appears to be a clear failure by the police involved to keep this lady updated. Following on from this, I would also like to inquire why just three years on from this horrific event, with the case still unresolved and ongoing, was the evidence disposed of?
- d. Councillor Hamblett – The repercussions of this will be felt for many years and their family will also feel that their child is hurt and wounded. This review has provided a report of examples of cases where women were seriously failed by Greater Manchester Police and Oldham Council, not least the horrific experiences and lack of support given to 'Sophie' who I now believe is called 'Sam'. Could you explain what additional support beyond which is already on offer to the victims and their families is being provided to them by all, by the council and GMP to help them and their trauma if more people are later found to have been failed by GMP and Oldham Council for example, by contacting independent helpline, is there a strategy in place to support them.
- e. Councillor C Gloster – In 2015, upon first being elected to this council, I became a member of the Licensing Committee and I've served on the Licensing Committee and the Driver Licensing Panel since then. I'm mindful

that this report highlights work by the Licensing Committee early in 2015 in relation to Safeguarding and my own experience of the Licensing Committee in relation to the Committee's desire to ensure that users of licensed vehicles are properly and appropriately safeguarded has never caused me to question the relevant policies and updates of these policies particularly surrounding safeguarding and ensuring only fit and proper people are allowed to drive a vehicle licensed by this council. Similarly, I've never had to question decisions to revoke licenses where a relevant driver has allegedly reached safeguarding rules or their alleged conduct has been such that it is called into question as to whether they're a fit and proper person, the evidential threshold being a balance of probabilities, however one case in particular has caused me great consternation not because of the committees actions which was to immediately revoke the license of the male driver who allegedly propositioned a vulnerable male customer to engage in sex acts with him but the fact that upon appeal, the magistrates decided to overturn the Committee's decision and return that driver's license. It's fair to say that the magistrates court are very hit and miss in relation to Appeals and I will simply pause the question as to whether magistrates hearing these cases are appropriately trained to understand taxi licensing regulations are appropriately mindful of the lower evidential threshold follow licensing along with the safeguarding rationales being used by the Committee to make these decisions. **Answered by GMP Chief Superintendent, Chris Bowen** – It would be very naïve of anyone to sit here and say there is no CSE. However, what we do have is much better joined up multi-agency approach to it which has been outlined in today's meeting. The information sharing is far superior to where it was, and I am confident that someone who would make an allegation at this time in Oldham would receive a significantly different level of service to anybody who would have received it back at the time of the Review. I've been asked also to comment on the investigation into 'Sam' and the offenders 'H, F and J'. Clearly, the report has identified a number of failures in the investigation that took place including some in relation to offenders 'H, F and J' that will all be reviewed as part of 'Operation Sherwood' as we review the investigations to see what evidential misses we've had and to ensure that whoever has committed these heinous crimes against the children of this borough are pursued to the full right of the law and for that you have my reassurance. You asked also around additional support. I can give you update that at the top of the daily support that is now in place through the complex safeguarding humps that I detailed in a previous answer this evening, in the run up to this report, I have met personally with senior leaders at the Local Authority to ensure that whatever support is required is provided not only to the victims that we know about but to

any new victims who may come forward as a result and I can give you categoric reassurance that we will not falter in providing the support that we need to give to those victims we're aware of and anybody else that comes forward. Obviously, it's not fair for me to comment on the intricacies of the magistrates and the taxi licensing so I'm going to leave that one to others. **Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester** - Can I take Cllr Gloster's comment about the magistrate's court and I was concerned to hear what you said Cllr Gloster, it's not acceptable if decisions of Councils are being undermined at that level without sufficient understanding of the system, so I will undertake on the back of your intervention to make contact with the Chair of the Greater Manchester bench to raise your concerns and I will endeavour to get a good through reply to you.

- f. **Councillor Williamson** – This is difficult. I was on the Council in 2008. I first got elected on the Council in 2008. I was attending meetings where we were discussing Children Looked-After and Safeguarding issues, so after reading and hearing what the public has said tonight and seeing the social media posts, it makes me feel sick, sick to my stomach to realise that I along with others had, we had been deceived. I became a Corporate Parent when I got elected in 2008 and still twelve years later, I'm one, but are we doing the right thing? If we can't look after other children who are not looked after, then where do we go from this? I keep thinking, did I miss something? Should I have asked more questions and pushed for an answer when I was told everything was ok. I believed officers. Everything was clearly not ok. There are whole host of issues that were not being investigated. I want to say to 'Sophie' and all the other victims and those who have said stuff tonight, please hear me when I say I promise you I didn't know about any of this. I know you were disbelieved not once or twice but many times. Being disbelieved feels like being kicked in the solar plexus. You're in a state of shock, wanting to scream that you are not lying, and nobody believes you, they don't listen to you, you're only young and is making it up but you know you aren't making it up. Why are people making decisions for you when you can make your own? You have been let down so many times by the Council, GMP and the Police and crime Commissioner. I know saying sorry does not help you in any way, shape, or form but what will help I believe is that you know it is out in the open now and if there are any other victims out there that they can come forward and explain what has happened to you and others and get it investigated? How could this happen? Why was there such a lack of joined up work when the reports were made to the Council by GMP and vice versa and it wasn't acted upon and what are both organizations going to do to reassure victims that they can come forward and that what they say will be believed

and what are both organizations going to do to catch these sick perpetrators?



Oldham
Council

- g. Councillor Hobin – If I may just before my question Madam Mayor just ask for some clarification maybe some advice maybe some work in this better because I don't think bundling these questions together is doing us any favours. The questions are being forgotten before the answers are given out. There's people, there's people in here tonight, some of them maybe rowdy but there's people in here tonight that have spent their evening wanting answers so we need it to be as clear and concise as possible so pooling things together isn't giving these people answers which some of them maybe rowdy but there's people in here tonight that have spent their evening wanting answers so we need it to be as clear and concise as possible so pooling things together isn't giving these people answers which is why probably that they're in the mood that they're in because all evening it's been whiffle and waffle and no real answers and now and now you're pooling you're pulling questions together and things are getting mixed up and the answers aren't being clear enough so can we go to a question and an answer please and my question on that topic my question will be one that wasn't answered before. Who was responsible for telling the review team not to interview Sam? It's a very important question we need to identify them individuals and find out what's happening to them so who are the people responsible for trying to stop Sam being interviewed by this review team. **Answered by Gerard Jones, Managing Director of Children & Young People – OMBC:** Nobody was nobody attempted to avoid uh Samantha being interviewed that's not true but excuse me sorry. **Gerard Jones** - can I so can I answer the question about uh in relation to corporate parenting and about um if everything was okay, can I say that uh um a corporate responsibility for our looked after. Children is one of the most important things we have a responsibility of in the council and I hope nobody is told that everything is okay because children are always vulnerable to and at risk and I would never I would hope that nobody's been told that, but we are working very hard with our corporate parenting panel to publicize the risks the children in care I I think in relation to I can finish in relation to the point about Sam I can say that uh there was no uh attempt to prevent Samantha her case was brought forward by the council information in relation to her case was. produced by the council and the review team was supported to interview her.
- h. Cllr Rea - My questions for the leader of the council - I've heard you say on a number of occasions now that if you don't deem something good enough for your own child you don't deem it good enough for the children of this borough are you accepting of this report out in failing after failing apology after apology is that acceptable for those

then children now adults doing things differently moving forward it's of no use to the victims of this report what would you want to happen as a mother as a parent is it really politics before safety, is it counsellor before parents? **Cllr Chadderton, Leader of OMBC** - I've been leader for only eight weeks but and my daughter is one but I took that view about if I were doing it and I took that for you when I was late for education as well in council a few years ago before I had a child and the way I view it as politics and I think we should all view this as counsellors whether you have children or not is it acceptable to your child because if it's not then it's not acceptable for anybody in this borough but also if you look at another way accepting of adult social care would I want my parents to be treated in that way and if I don't then that's not acceptable either talking about this report no of course so in terms of this report I am not here and I said this earlier I'm not about to sit here and defend the indefensible what is what has gone on in that report and the failings were appalling and I accept that I was horrified when I read that report and particularly when it's in relation to Sam what has gone on there but also um in terms of the other victims as well but nobody could be failed to be horrified of that right of course I don't and I see my vote what I'd want as a mother if that was my child I would want those people that committed those crime to be brought before court and to send to prison I view it as a person that commits a child against the crime is the worst person on earth crimes against children and violence and sexual offences against children are beyond the pale and the worst crime you can commit and that's what I want as a mother and for the 10 or 11 victims that are referencing in that report I hope and I want GMP to go back and find them all and Cllr Wilkinson referenced it before about the feelings that they could have been arrested I expect them to be brought forward and to be served a very lengthy prison sentence and finally have to face up to justice for the terrible inhumane things that they did previously and that is how I view the report and everything because we're counsellor and your councillor.

- i. Cllr Murphy - Why have many of the key players not been interviewed? of the 104 people in appendix b 52 were not interviewed, 39 not approached one died and the remainder declined to respond. There are some emissions 13 officers in GMP including including the assistant chief constable and someone labelled the responsible detective. All presumably involved in at least one of these eleven cases. OMBC's legal service officers, OMBC Executive Director in charge of Helena 2 which targeted kids missing from care in the early 2000s, Keith Vaz, journalist b, the liberal democrat leader, the conservative leader, the chair of licensing panel, a manager in the local safeguarding children board, the managing director of children's services at OMBC, leader b, the managing director of children's services, executive

director, advocate for Sophie, the director of children's services at OMBC. How can we have assurance if there's doubts about the full story being told? **Andy Burnham** - so i can't speak for the review team but I can only tell you what they said to me what they did as we've heard tonight is that they refute/reviewed thousands and thousands of documents given to them by Oldham council or they requested from Oldham council and that they requested from Greater Manchester Police, they were and have been under pressure to get the report out because there was a pressure from this community not to leave a long delay when everyone was saying when is the report uh coming out but what I would want to say and answer to your question as tonight is making clear this is not the end of the story, by any means, no it's not by any means this is in some ways this opens out the issue I think as councillor Williamson said before it breaks the issue out and this issue needed if people could listen this issue needed to be broken out this had to happen this kind of difficult exchange had to happen and once the issue is broken out into the open then the evidence can be followed and the right actions can be taken and from my perspective with regard to Greater Manchester police I can assure everybody here tonight that Operation Sherwood will be funded and supported to go as far and as long as it needs to go to bring perpetrators to justice as we are seeing with operation Litton and as we are seeing with operation green jacket it's easy to say nothing is being done but people have been arrested who thought they had got away with it and I'm confident the same will happen here. It is incumbent on all authorities and individuals who have been implicated in this report to follow through every part of this report and to continue further inquiries where those are justified that is the position as we are here tonight but I would say again at some point at some point we have to come back to a degree of working together to working together to deal with it to deal with the issues in this report we've need to remember all of us that it's children at stake here and we not with an undignified debate on these important issues does not serve the interests of our children what we need to do is remember all of us our responsibilities to our children we should not be conducting a debate in this fashion in this way we need now to start to deal with the issues as difficult as they are make reparation where we need to and follow things through to the full and that is what we will be doing from a great combined authority perspective working with Greater Manchester police and Oldham council.

- j. Cllr Arnott – this report was commissioned as an assurance review to assure and reassure the public. If it reassures the public then it has succeeded. I suggest that it is not this report has brought to light an astonishing catalogue of unforgivable conduct poor governance and outright incompetence at best this has allowed

unspeakable crimes against children but in this borough to be continued by twisted and evil individuals and groups of men for years and as the former leader of the council Aruj Shah stated only recently are continuing in Oldham we are here now whether we like it or not because of hundreds of concerned residents as individuals small newly formed political parties and loose alliances started to speak out against what they saw as a town becoming steeped in the mire of grooming sexual abuse and the rape of young girls and a police service and council who will not or would not act on their behalf they have forced this council to examine its conduct historically and in the present and they have and that was the right thing to do in return they have been treated appallingly many have been branded racist criminals BNP supporters and far-right activists but it is they that have forced this inquiry whether that is an uncomfortable truth it is the truth these people. these people have not campaigned for the far right they have come campaigned for the right thing the findings of this report do not assure or reassure the old and public the narrow terms of reference scope and content of the review have been criticized from all quarters including damning condemnation from the highly respected campaigner Maggie Oliver in March with further delays announced in the report's publication I called for government intervention in a motion laid before this council. It carried the full support of all opposition parties for which they should be commended we will again call for a full and broad-ranging independent public inquiry alongside or independent of any national initiatives that the government may introduce or conduct. My question therefore is to the entire panel or any of the panel maybe Burnham's previous answer aside I said that does any member of the panel feel that the old and public would not be well or better served by an independent public inquiry that addresses their concerns to their satisfaction. **Answered by Cllr Amanda Chadderton** - I've stated previously before and I wouldn't support another review of Oldham council in relation to historic practices of CSE we've had two and a half years of an independent review looking into historic practice of CSE and you reference what Maggie Oliver said there but actually Maggie Oliver was praising of the two independent assessors those two people are employed by the home office on a regular basis. They are seen by the current conservative government as the system leaders in terms of looking at CSE in councils that have not dealt with it previously as they did in Rochdale and as they did involve them and as they've done in other places it is now for us and as a reference before the home office and the home secretary fully aware this report and they've been fully briefed on it if the government wants to take action that is entirely up to the government but I will not be asking for them to take any further action or any further reviews in relation to Oldham council I think for us now we have to learn some of the things from that report

and but also most importantly it needs to be passed on to GMP for operation Sherwood to ensure we get justice for those 10 victims referenced in the report.



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- k. Cllr Barnes - I'm going to address the bench I have never seen such an unprofessional attitude from a senior officer of the council who has sat here most of the evening with a smug grin on his face, not acceptable Mr Jones not acceptable at all. You answer to us it is not the other way around it's not acceptable at all. The assurance review into child sex exploitation has finally been published. It is a damning indictment of the failures of both Oldham council and greater Manchester police. This review should not be the end of the matter it should be the beginning. It simply is not good enough for apologies and mayor corpus from the council leader and the chief constable and for scripted answers from the panel here tonight greater Manchester police failed Sophie on numerous occasions they failed to act and a victim was let down what action did they take against the officers who failed her and if no action was taken what will Greater Manchester police do now to ensure those officers who failed her are held to account, is it any wonder that Greater Manchester police had in special measures they've announced the of the launch of operation Sherwood recently but this only looks at a handful of cases can greater Manchester police given assurance today that they will follow the evidence and open up new cases including any criminal activities by those in public office. Madam Mayor, this assurance reviews terms of reference were far too narrow and written by Oldham council. How can this be independent in any way/ how can this be seen as sound and robust? This assurance review is nothing but a cover up it's a whitewash it is not designed to shine sunlight on the failures of Oldham council and greater Manchester police rather it has been spun as a lesson learned review and now Oldham council expect all 60 elected members to tow their line and agree with it. No, no, no Madam Mayor, I've never been a yes man and I will not dance to the tune of the officers of this council and agree with the outcomes of this review what we all want to see in the public gallery tonight and those of us on this side is justice for the victims of csc and the grooming gangs now is the time for sunlight to be the best disinfectant now is the time for a public inquiry when this council does not set the terms of reference and that any time frame for such an inquiry is widened nothing should be left out and if that means it uncovers hundreds of thousands of cases of historic cse then so be it after all it was admitted by the former council leader on march the 16th this year that grooming gangs are still operating in Oldham today and then she instructed her labour councillors the majority of whom are in this room tonight to vote down a motion to bring in the government. We are all corporate parents and now is the time for all of us to stand up and be

counted and say that the assurance of you does not go far enough and given that Shabbir Ahmad worked for Oldham council and this was suppressed by this council including many sat behind beside her will she now demand the resignation of daddy's mates and support calls for public inquiry into her disgraced council. **Andy Burnham** - I will answer as far as I can to what you um so what you say I commissioned or I agreed to commission this report when I was asked to do so to open up this debate this issue and I would say to you I listened carefully to what you said you called the report both a damning indictment and a cover-up respectfully I don't think it can be both its either one or the other it's either a damning indictment because it has told things as they are or it hasn't I think it has told things that they are but there is more and let me say to you if any victim of child sexual exploitation current or historic comes forward to great Manchester police I will ask the chief constable to ensure that every allegation is followed up to the full and that's why I say to you in the same way I said to councillor murphy this isn't the end of the story this issue now is out in the open and actually it's not another review and another review I think it's action it's prosecution I think the public of Oldham will want to see and that is what we are committing to myself the chief constable and greater Manchester police in operation Sherwood people are already trying to undermine operation Sherwood in this room tonight well why when operation green jacket has produced arrests when operation Litton has produced charges in a criminal trial how can it be in the interest of the people of Oldham for people to undermine operation Sherwood which will now act on this report. **Cllr Chadderton** - thank you so just a couple of things so a couple of things we're going to ask this year about, I'm not going to obviously I'm not going to agree to an independent review, that with councillor Arnott's question so that's already been covered so I won't go back on that well so regardless of there should be a mammoth thing now I was not involved in those terms of reference then I obviously wasn't leader when it um came about as I understand it was the council that brought it to the attention of the reviewers that Shabbir Ahmed worked here we didn't try to cover it up as I understand it and it was also that told the reviewers he worked here and would they like to look into it and that was one of the reasons it was expanded from 2011 and 14 to longer so that's unfounded that and that was us that did it I mean for context when should be armed I started working here I was two years old and when he left working here it was six years before I came onto the council I've never met the man I never knew the man I was never active in labour party politics at the time that he was a member and are active in the local labour party I do not know you know him as I said previously and I have no list I find I struggle to see how can I can be held to account for that and I had no involvement whatsoever in that and that

predates my time not well certainly as leader obviously um but it certainly predates my time on the council.



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- I. Councillor Quigg - I would have followed that he's probably won't but I think how not to read a room is probably best described here tonight. You've heard the public gallery, imagine what it's like out there in the living rooms and bedrooms and you know everyone out there is angry and tonight has just been like an east German politburo meeting where you're all just standing there read from a script sit down and that's it. It doesn't answer the questions that people have and we're only here tonight because of the victims the parents the grandparents and probably the town itself who had to drag this council here kicking screaming through one leader two leaders and now this one doesn't it doesn't just happen overnight, it just doesn't happen within a week, a fortnight, a month or a year. This abuse has been going on for years and we've seen tonight survivors sat in the gallery a survivor who came up to the mic coming from 1981, 1981 and these people aren't lying these people aren't making it up these people aren't saying barefaced lies because that was what was said to the former deputy leader of the council when she stood up and asked the question it was barefaced lies and we're here now to talk about what is essentially a massive scandal of girls as young as 12 and perhaps even younger being raped sexually abused and then some more on top for too long justice has been denied and I would say to the victims if they can to do go and get reinterviewed by the police. I know they've got no confidence in them after everything that's happened but do go and for the cps to review the cases that they had to review those cases and see what prosecutions they can bring because there must be a mountain of evidence and there must be enough reports that either the GMP or others compiled put together and perhaps weren't worth prosecuting. we've heard that one before, haven't we? We have heard that one before. But sadly, tonight Oldham joins an infamous list of towns from Rotherham to Rochdale to Telford. It's all because the council the police failed to take those reporting this horrific crime seriously failed to share vital information between agencies and departments and failed to support the victim's full stop. so, where we get this report tonight is why we are here and Gerard you say that people committing the abuse of the real criminals, yes, they are absolutely but so too are those who failed in the duty of care to look after those victims and what are we going to do about? Bringing not only misconduct but criminal prosecutions against these people if I did in financial services a financial crime, I'd be old before the courts and lose my job in fact Mr Jones you'd probably be the one to hold me off because that's how seriously you take money, how are we not doing it with children and young victims of this town. Why did the council fail to inform schools and thus parents of the risks posed by shisha bars in the

meeting on the 24th of October 2013? Why was more weight put on community cohesion rather than informing the public of matters of public safety? Not only that if the council police can publish a full data set of the ethnicity and age of those found to be abusing cse victims because thus far with the failure of IOPS and when you try to ask Greater Manchester police about crime numbers we always get the same we don't know. We aren't got a number we can't do this. So, I think it's important that we that we know where we are now Before we start looking in the past because I think that is where a lot of the problems have been raised a lot of the questions that have been posed by the public tonight have stemmed from the lack of accessible public information can I also ask whether this is the paddle whoever it may be to confirm how many victims fell through the net of the council the police and any other organization who was subsequently trafficked raped and exposed the grooming in Oldham over a period covered by the review and if necessary beyond and I think Mr Bowen given that you're obviously here tonight how many reports of csc were missed by the disaster of the iop system given that we don't know how many well we know 80 000 crimes were missed how many of them were victims who may have reported it or reports that there could have been suspicious activity because at the end of the day if we're about to talk about lessons being learned and as we heard about the licensing committee only recently I think it's about time we knew where we stood on this matter and how much data and how much information has been gathered and finally to people like Sam I'm newly elected and to the victims who've spoken here tonight you've probably never had an apology or if you have it's always been in writing we're sorry we can't we should have done this we should have done this better. Sam take him to the cleaners love, because that's the only way you're gonna get justice, taken through the civil courts taking through the civil remedies and if necessary, go all the way to parliament because we've had plenty of debates in parliament and we've got another one and it was posed by the member for Ashfield at the last debate on another meeting on other cases of csc and he posed the question how many people in public office behind the scenes and the councils and the police have been brought to justice, that's the answer no. So, when will we get that justice for these victims?

Gerard Jones - can I say that the information has been routinely shared with schools in 2013 um I couldn't actually give assurance about the details of all of the programs that were in place at that time but perhaps I can write to the to the member afterwards to set out the details of that. **Chris Bowen** - There was a number of points within the within the question and I couldn't send you and give you an honest answer on whether there was an implication of the iops computer system we all know there were issues with it. However, i would be making

anything up if I said it so I'm not going to sit here what I can do is we can have a review and have a look and see whether we can find that information and get back to you at a later date. However what I can reassure you in the main point of the question is that we will follow all lines of inquiry to whatever they lead us to and if that leads us to perpetrators we will implement the full use of the law operation Sherwood is up and running I agree with you I hope people will come forward and speak to us and give us the opportunity to put right what was wrong in the past and in order to do that we do need people to speak to us so I would implore people to come forward tell us what's happened, give us everything we need in order to get successful prosecutions to deliver lengthy prison sentences for those who deserve them.

- m. Councillor Birch - In the interest of time, I'll ask my question directly to the director of children's services. What has changed since 2014 to improve the quality of casework and what is being done to ensure that there are appropriate levels of suitably qualified social workers to ensure that vulnerable children in the borough are protected? **Andy Burnham** - can I just take on the suggestion that this was my review team and that I was in putting any undue pressure inappropriate pressure on the review team I did not have any contact with the chair of the review with respect to anybody who should or should not be interviewed the review team were entirely independent of me and I refuse any suggestion to the contrary.
- n. Cllr Taylor - nobody not one person who has read this report can feel anything but dismay and distress at some of the failures and personal accounts that are highlighted in it but it is so important that we all speak, all of us all speak honestly about the findings of this review there has been a lot of pre-judgment and online speculation from some people in this chamber about the findings but now that the review has been published I would urge everybody to read it fully in its entirety. The review clearly highlights this systemic problems that contributed and caused a series of failings at that time and we shouldn't try and hide from that because it's important that we highlight where things didn't work so we can fully understand what went wrong and why and make sure that it doesn't happen again, but it's right to say this we asked for this review because it was the right thing to do and the time period that the review covers from 2011 to 2014 is the point that we as a labour administration came back into office. We requested the review; we did not seek to cover the period where the joint opposition were in power prior to this in order to try and share or absolve any responsibility, as has already been said there will be an adjunct an adjournment debate in parliament on Thursday, if the home office has any concerns or wants to undertake a further review the conservative

government, they not only have the power to do so but they are morally obligated to do so, as they did in Rotherham so let us see if the government believes as councillor Arnott said that a full broad-range independent inquirer is necessitated. Safeguarding failures are not about scoring political points or trying to cover up for anybody, it's about solving problems by creating the environment to make changes that support our children as well as our social workers to be able to do their job properly. I know this report will make difficult reading for many people not least those who have suffered personally so I just want to take this opportunity to reiterate again if anybody listening tonight wants to speak to a trained professional or report an incident that's happened in the past please do get in touch by calling our dedicated helpline all the details of which can be found on the website. I think and I hope beyond in this chamber is that we all want the victims who are experienced cse to be able to come forward and language is very very important in that process therefore what I want to end by and ask the question is that to make sure that these details are shared widely and if possible including in this transmission so that those people who have been victims have the confidence to come forward it is incumbent upon us all to make sure that people who have been failed have the opportunity to come forward and we should be supportive of that. **Cllr Chadderton** - yeah okay so yeah elaine of course we'll move the extension obviously I'm conscious of time and council has a guillotine ever 9.30 and what I propose to do is probably to move a 15-minute extension and take maybe four or five questions and then additional questions that members have and if you don't get round to if you then send them in then we'll give a response back via email does that seem secondary. We agreed on that.

- o. Cllr George Hulme - Some contributions from anonymized victims and I know that the police have said that they're going to and we saw the incredibly brave woman who put herself spoke earlier showed so much strength to do that I would like to get a guarantee that actually the victims are not just encouraged to contact the police but actually the people who've written the questions tonight are actually reached out to to make sure that they get the justice that they deserve. **Chris Bowen** - yes i I can't confirm that the ten cases referred to in the report we have been in contact with all of those women directly prior to the publication of the report we've provided ongoing support to them and we'll be helping them through the process to ensure that we get any evidence anybody else who's identified to us and we've got contact details we will make a proactive approach to you have my reassurance. **Andy Burnham** - there are allegations being made that I I don't want to just leave I don't want people to be able to shout out things, should ask themselves are victims more likely to come forward or

not because of the way this has been conducted tonight we should give victims confidence to come forward and that's about conducting this in a respectful way.



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- p. Cllr Moores - this report is of great interest to me because I do all the portfolio for children and young people on this council, I'm very proud to do that but it's been said, and I think Andy's partly answered it earlier um we have a part to play, and we need to build up public confidence in the system. Children young people and families and the general public need to know that when they raise a concern they will be listened to and where appropriate action will be taken. How can we build up this confidence? Can you give us some ideas please? **Cllr Chadderton** - Do you want me to answer it as far from a political perspective I mean as councillors we're here aren't we to set the direction of the tone of the organisation we're not here to be social workers and now I think that children and young people should be the golden thread that run through this organisation we are one of the youngest towns in the north of England and it's our job to build a town that our young people are proud of and that is fit for them for the future but it's more than that as well it's about giving a good education about dealing with our early years as well but you only get confidence from your residents when people start to see that so when they see their kids going to a good nursery a good early year centre or getting a good education or being able to have a house that they can buy and that competency builds into confidence of our residents and that's all 60 of our jobs to be able to do that and that'd be my answer.
- q. Cllr Al-Hamdani - we've originally we had the report into operation Augusta which was done by the same people and it was very well respected and very well done in the report that was provided here Newsom and Ridgeway specified that they did not receive the same access to information from the police that they received with regards to operational Augusta so what I would like to ask is what justification was given by the police for not providing that information and as police and crime commissioner can I ask you so why the organization that comes under your remit did not provide that information to the investigation being carried out under your offices and given that the review has found serious failures why subsequently has that not changed why has GMP not provided information after the review on the rest of the cases that's missing and it specifies in the report that it cannot give assurance as to GMP without that information it's really important that the police are investigating and thank you to uh chief superintendent Bowen for talking about the investigations that's going to happen and the prosecutions that are going to happen, but we also need that trust into what happened and GMP did not provide that information why is that not there

there's been no answer? **Andy Burnham** - let me take your question head on I had concerns about how great Manchester police under the previous leadership engaged with the child sexual exploitation review and it was one of the reasons why I replaced the chief constable with the current chief constable and I believe since that changed there has been a culture change within greater Manchester police from day one I asked him uh to ensure that there was full engagement with this review for the purposes I set it up which was to give people answers to open this issue up as it has done tonight and I say again before if this is the last time I speak if any child in Oldham young person is watching this tonight are they more likely to come forward or not following the conduct of this meeting tonight it is incumbent on everybody here to give people confidence to come forward and that is about conducting these matters in the right respectful way that we should do.

- r. Councillor Kenyon - This report was meant to give us all the assurance that both GMP and Oldham council have been doing their job. In the case of GMP where the authors know a less than candid approach leading them to conclude that this negatively affects the assurance that they are able to give Andy Burnham who both commissioned the report on one hand and then on the other hand presided over the police non-cooperation does have answers to answer there are 11 kids involved in this report you have been reading a different report to me because the data's processing agreement only extended to Shabbir Ahmed and also to Sofie in the case of the council we also saw much negligence many failures of process and many instances where these failures were either not detected or not followed up. This ultimately led to the horrendous abuse that we have all read about the council asked us to accept on trust that this was in the past and that things have changed, I'm here to tell you today and I'm sure you realize this this is not acceptable to many of us sat here and many of the residencies of residents of Oldham and I imagine many of the survivors we need to know exactly what has happened here and I hope that the survivors legal representatives will push for a full judicial inquiry but in the meantime trust is earned through verification will council commit to finding out if any of those who are responsible for these failings and also those responsible for implementing the system that didn't detect these failings that they are held to account if any of these people still work for the council whether they will be disciplined retrained or fired. In addition, in addition we need to see that things have changed, and we need some sort of scrutiny body to oversee this in detail. **Cllr Chadderton** - no there's nothing in the report that points to misconduct but we will look at that and if there is misconduct over against any staff then we will take action. We'll obviously work with GMP as I've stated as

well in terms of taking action against any individuals that's a criminal matter when you talk about the procedures that were put in place when you read that report if you've read all of it and it talks about structural flaw within the messenger service doesn't it and Malcolm Newson points out very clearly that one of the reasons there was an issue about sharing of data about escalation of data was because of the structural flaw in messenger now that has been resolved and we've now worked to a complex safeguarding hub which was set up a couple of years ago so for the first time ever as social workers and as health professionals they now sit with GMP in Oldham police station and that as you read through the report when they talked about the structural deficits and deficiencies in messenger that was because they weren't all under the same roof so messenger worked to a certain extent but the problem with messenger was there wasn't enough social workers within that team so the escalation never moved around and the sharing of information never moved so we have now worked what we call a complex safeguarding hub which is a gmy practice and that solves the issue regardless of the structural issue and I do agree though Councillor Kenyon of course and I can't sit here today and no council leader in the country can and say our social work practice is perfect because it's not but social work practice will never ever be perfect you are on a continuous journey of improvement to try and get better and we have to test ourselves we test ourselves continuously against things like Ofsted and we've had two visits over the past 18 months we have peer reviews every month we do another four week offset inspection over 12 months and these are things that we are continuously tested on in social care and we're not here to hide and the doors aren't closed people come in and look at our practice continuously but you are right you know it's a never-ending never ending cycle of improvement and we have to do more to assure ourselves that we are the best we can be today but knowing that we you know next week I need to be better than I am today. **Gerard Jones** - I'd like to thank everybody for their questions tonight it's so important we take time to answer these and those that haven't been answered has been a lot of questions I know not everybody's had the detail and I commit as Harry has done that we will respond to all the unanswered questions and we will you know provide all the information that people have asked for and we're committed to being open about the safety of our children if there's one thing I think we've agreed in this chamber in the difficult conversation we've had tonight is we put our children first in Oldham and I want to commit to you that we will do everything that we possibly can to identify victims and to bring the offenders of the crimes against them to justice this isn't the end of our response to the independent review it's the beginning and as I said earlier tackle tackling sexual exploitation is a journey that we

commit to every day we're out in Oldham visiting children to protect them and keep them safe and we will continue to work tirelessly to do so thank you for your support.

Chris Bowen - I'd just like to finish tonight by paying tribute to those who for years have lived with the horrors and hurts of the ongoing trauma that's happened and to give you my personal reassurance that my job is to ensure that operation Sherwood delivers on its aim to provide justice for those who should have had justice all those years ago to provide support and ongoing support to anybody who brings further allegations to us and to make sure that however long ago the offense took place that we ensure that justice is served for the young people of Oldham.



The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 9.50pm