

Oldham Borough Council



Council Meeting
Wednesday 6th November 2024

OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

Tuesday, 29th October 2024

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council which will be held on Wednesday 6th November 2024 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, for the following purposes:

- 1 To receive apologies for absence
- 2 To order that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11th September 2024 be signed as a correct record (Pages 1 - 48)
- 3 To receive declarations of interest in any matter to be determined at the meeting
- 4 To deal with matters which the Mayor considers to be urgent business
- 5 To receive communications relating to the business of the Council
- 6 To receive and note petitions received relating to the business of the Council

(time limit 20 minutes)

There are no petitions for this meeting of the Council to consider.

- 7 Youth Council

(time limit 20 minutes)

There is no Youth Council business for this Council meeting to consider.

- 8 Public Questions

(time limit 15 Minutes)

- 9 Questions to Leader and Cabinet (Pages 49 - 126)

(Time limit 90 minutes)

Leader and Cabinet Members to present their reports.

Non-executive members may ask questions.

- a. Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham – including the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held 19th August 2024 and 16th September 2024, the meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 12th July 2024 and 27th September 2024 and the meeting of the AGMA Executive Board held 27th September 2024
- b. Deputy Leader and Decent Home Portfolio Holder
- c. Deputy Leader and Value for Money and Sustainability Portfolio Holder
- d. Children and Young People's Portfolio Holder
- e. Education and Skills Portfolio Holder
- f. Enterprise Portfolio Holder

- g. Adults, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder
- h. Don't Trash Oldham Portfolio Holder
- i. Thriving Communities and Culture Portfolio Holder

10 Notice of Administration Business

(time limit 30 minutes)

Motion 1: Increasing Pension Credit Take-up

To be moved by Councillor Jabbar

Seconded by Councillor Dean

This council recognises the importance of financial security for our pensioners, particularly those with low incomes. Pension Credit is a vital benefit that can significantly enhance the quality of life for eligible individuals and open the door to a range of other benefits and services, yet many are unaware of its availability or how to apply.

It's estimated there are 3,288 pensioners in the Borough currently missing out on pension credit, this amounts to £7.9m going unclaimed.

This Council resolves to:

1. **Launch an Awareness Campaign** – to develop a targeted campaign to educate residents about Pension Credit, including its eligibility criteria, application process, and potential benefits.
2. **Collaborate with Local Organisations** to partner with community groups and local charities to disseminate information and assist residents with applications.
3. **Increase capacity to support residents** – to identify and temporarily re-prioritise staffing capacity to support residents with applications where they may struggle to apply themselves and do not have anyone who can help them.
4. **Monitor and Report** – to establish a system to monitor the impact of the awareness campaign and report back to the council within six months, providing data on the increase in Pension Credit applications and any feedback from residents.

Motion 2: Supporting Kinship Carers

To be moved by Councillor Shah

Seconded by Councillor Mushtaq

Council believes that children and young people who are unable to live with their parents should receive the support that they and their carers need to safeguard and promote their welfare, whether or not they are looked after by the state.

This Council notes:

that here are 141,000 children in Kinship Care in England and Wales – carers who are friends or family who step up to care for a child where their parents can't. Many children and young people in the care of Oldham Council are looked after by Kinship Carers and the numbers are increasing.

that in October 2024 the Government has published 'Kinship Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities' which pulls together the responsibilities of Councils in supporting all forms of kinship care (informal arrangements, private fostering, Kinship Foster Care,

Child Arrangement Orders, Special Guardianship Orders and adoption).

Research by the charity *Kinship* has highlighted the need for practical support for Kinship Carers - one third said their income had dropped by 50% after taking on caring responsibilities and one in five often or always feel lonely.

There are Council employees who have taken on the responsibility of providing kinship care or who are approved Foster Carers

Council recognises the increasing demands being made of the Fostering Service and the valuable work done by Kinship and Mainstream Foster Carers in caring for children looked after by the Council and the investment made into the service to support carers and those taking Special Guardianship Orders.

This Council resolves to:

Instruct the Director of Children's Services to urgently review the new statutory guidance and ensure that the Council is compliant, particularly in making available the Kinship Local Offer on the Council's website.

Become a Kinship Friendly Employer as soon as is practicable, working towards achieving the Gold Standard

Record its thanks to all those who provide Kinship Care and mainstream Foster Care in Oldham.

11 Notice of Opposition Business

(time limit 30 minutes)

Motion 1: Stop the Winter Fuel Payment Cuts

To be moved by Councillor Bishop

Seconded by Councillor Marland

This Council notes that:

The recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal Winter Fuel Payments has restricted eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credit, excluding too many vulnerable pensioners.

Many pensioners on lower and middle incomes will no longer receive the payments. Across England and Wales, the number of people eligible for Winter Fuel Payments will fall by 10 million (from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million). According to data obtained by the Liberal Democrats from the Department of Work and Pensions, 85% of pensioners in Oldham Borough will lose out. There are an estimated 7,800 pensioners in Oldham over the age of 80 set to lose their winter fuel payment who do not receive pension credit.

This Council believes that:

The criteria for Winter Fuel Payments that the Labour Government is using will exclude too many pensioners who need help. Only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for Pension Credit.

This is significantly lower than the living wage rate.

Take up of Pension Credit has been worryingly low, more than one in three eligible pensioners are not signed up. We have a role to play to increase awareness of welfare

support such as Pension Credit to ensure people get the help that they need.

This Council further notes that:

The Energy Price Cap has risen by 10% in October, which combined with the removal of Winter Fuel Payments will push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.

This Council resolves to:

1. Instruct the Council's Communications Team to urgently commence a significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of Pension Credit. This should include a dedicated advice line, promotion in the local press as well as targeted letters to those who may be eligible.
2. Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt to be immediately paused and introduce a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments. Council further requests the Leader of the Council write to Oldham's three MPs asking them to give their formal support to halting these changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility.

Motion 2: The Budget Challenge

To be moved by Councillor Lancaster

Seconded by Councillor Woodvine

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has delivered a budget which will impact the people who live in the Oldham Metropolitan Borough.

This Council resolves to:

1. To write to Oldham's three MP's, the relevant government departments and agencies to reinstate Winter Fuel Payments for all pensioners, without any means testing. All pensioners, regardless of income or other financial factors, should receive this payment automatically in recognition of their lifelong contributions to society through taxes.
2. That the Council will do all it can to help alleviate those struggling paying for winter fuel bills this winter, given the Energy Price Cap has increased by 10% also adding £150 to the average fuel bill.

Motion 3: Immediate Ceasefire in Gaza

To be moved by Councillor Chowhan

Seconded by Councillor Ghafoor

Background:

As of October 2024, the situation in Gaza has reached a dire humanitarian crisis, with the Gaza Health Ministry reporting that over **42,000** individuals have lost their lives due to ongoing military operations. This includes approximately **14,100 children** and **9,000 women**, indicating a devastating toll on the civilian population. In addition to the loss of life, the health infrastructure in Gaza has been severely impacted. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has confirmed that there have been **over 516**

verified attacks on healthcare facilities in the Gaza Strip since the conflict escalated.

The attacks have resulted in significant damage to hospitals, disrupting essential healthcare services and leaving many without access to medical care. The United Nations has expressed deep concern over the escalating violence. Secretary-General António Guterres stated, on 20th October 2024, "The violence must stop immediately," emphasising that "the protection of civilians is paramount." Furthermore, world leaders have called for an immediate ceasefire. French President Emmanuel Macron stated on 18th October 2024, "We must work together to bring about an immediate ceasefire and ensure the safety of all civilians." Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau echoed this sentiment on 19th October 2024, stating, "Canada calls for an end to hostilities and the protection of human rights in Gaza."

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) raised alarms about the situation on 15th October 2024, indicating that the ongoing actions in Gaza may constitute violations of international law and could be characterised as genocide. The ICJ noted, "All parties must adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law and protect the civilian population."

Humanitarian organisations, including UNICEF, state that "every child in Gaza is in danger," highlighting the urgent need for safe corridors for aid to reach those in need.

Justification:

This motion is brought to the council as a matter of urgency due to the following reasons:

- 1. Humanitarian Responsibility:** As representatives of our community, we have a moral obligation to advocate for the protection of human rights and the welfare of civilians in conflict zones. The ongoing violence in Gaza has led to a humanitarian catastrophe that requires immediate action.
- 2. International Law:** The situation in Gaza poses serious questions regarding adherence to international humanitarian law. By passing this motion, the council can reaffirm its commitment to upholding these principles and advocate for accountability on the global stage.
- 3. Community Sentiment:** There is a growing concern among constituents regarding the ongoing conflict and its humanitarian impact. Bringing this motion forward allows the council to express solidarity with affected populations and demonstrate responsiveness to community concerns.
- 4. Global Leadership:** The motion aligns with the calls from world leaders and international organisations for immediate action. By taking a stand, the council can contribute to a collective global response aimed at de-escalating the conflict and ensuring the protection of civilians.

In light of these developments, the council resolves to:

1. Call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, urging all parties involved to halt hostilities and prioritise the protection of civilian lives.
2. Support the rapid entry of humanitarian aid to address the urgent needs of the population affected by the ongoing conflict.
3. Call and enforce a ban on the supply of military equipment specifically used to bomb

Palestinian civilians, while allowing for the entry of supplies intended solely for genuine defence purposes.

Furthermore, the council requests that the Chief Executive write to the Prime Minister, urging the UK government to:

4. Call and enforce an immediate ceasefire in international forums.
 5. Facilitate the rapid entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza.
 6. Meet their moral obligation by suspending all arms sales to Israel until such time that international humanitarian law is observed and respected.
- Through these actions, the council seeks to contribute to the restoration of peace and the protection of human rights in the region.

Motion 4: Honouring Veterans

To be moved by Councillor Wilkinson

Seconded by Councillor Ball

Our veterans have served King and Country with distinction, honour, and integrity. It is why as we come up to remembrance, that we use this time to recall the sacrifice of those not just who died in service but all those who came home also.

For some the change from being a serving soldier to civilian life can be difficult. It is why we ask that the Council do all they can to support our veterans and to make sure that our Borough's War memorials, war graves and all other assets are kept safe and secure for future generations. We must also remember the sacrifice of those from this Borough who served not just King and Country, but those who made the sacrifice for King and Empire, as well as the Commonwealth.

It is why it is imperative that the Council call on the government to do more to protect our veterans from malicious prosecution, especially those from Northern Ireland who served under Operation Banner, where several veterans in their twilight years have faced worry and fear of reprisal. This is also the case with the more recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

This Council notes that: 3.4% of Failsworth's population are veterans, 1.8% of Oldham's population are veterans, 2.5% of Chadderton, Saddleworth and Lees population are veterans, 3.4% in Shaw and Crompton and 4.1% in Royton are veterans.

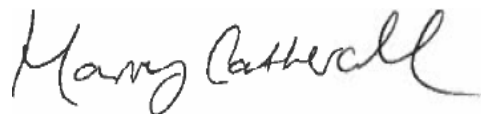
This Council resolves to:

1. Support the work of the Royal British Legion and other veterans' charities to help improve the lives of those who served King and Country.
2. Maintain up-to-date assets register of all monuments, memorials and other valued objects that relate to the proud history of HM Armed Forces in Oldham.
3. Continue to fight for our veterans when it comes to providing the necessary support once they have left the service but also for those who currently serve.
4. Reaffirms its commitment to HM Armed Forces and the Armed Forces Covenant.

This Council further resolves:

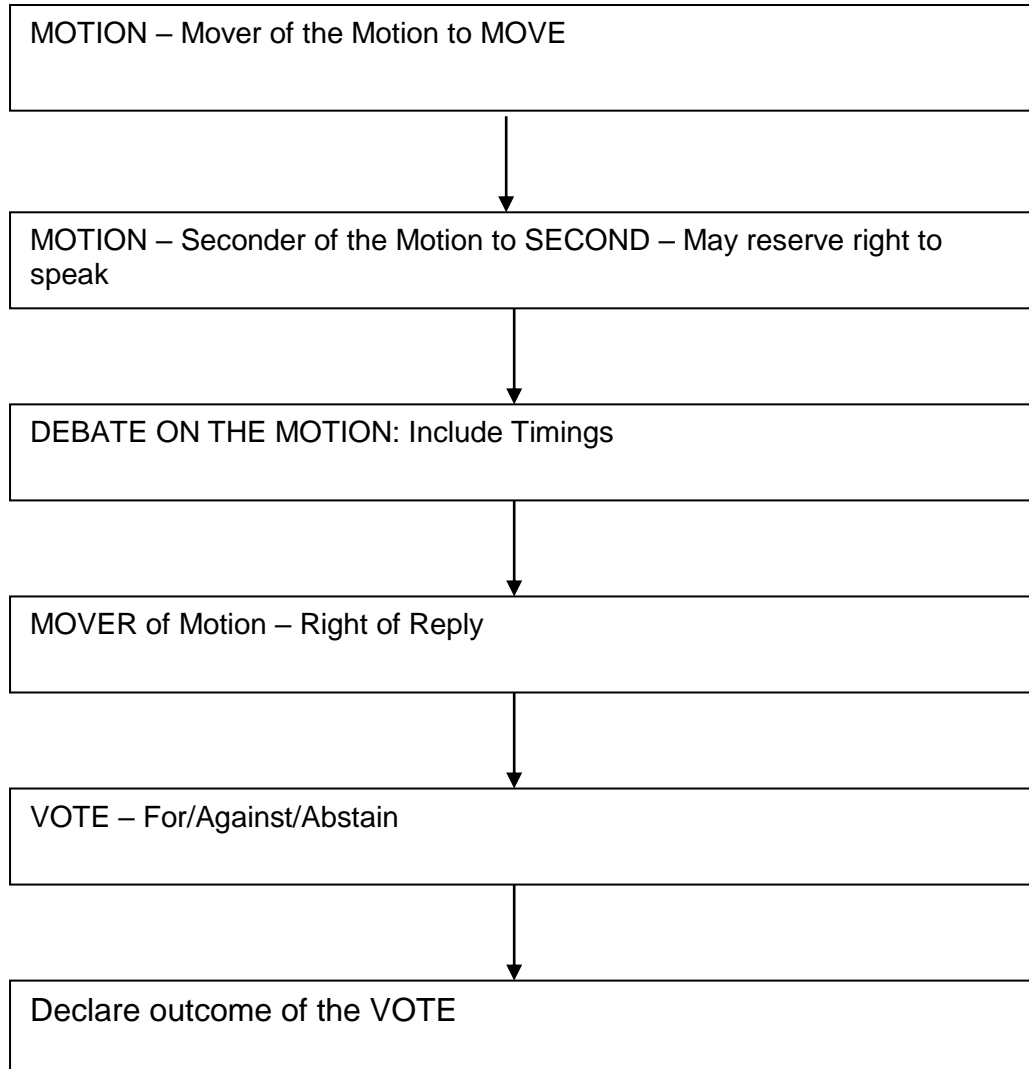
5. To write to Oldham's Members of Parliament to use their offices to do everything they can to protect veterans, especially those who served under Operation Banner and subsequent conflicts from malicious prosecutions. Asking them to stand by all those that served King and Country.
- 12 Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan: Request for revocation of the Plan for Oldham (Pages 127 - 212)
- Council is asked to consider a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) in response to the Motion that Council approved on 10th July 2024, regarding the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan.
- 13 The Oldham Plan 2024 – 2030; Pride, Progress, Partnership (Pages 213 - 232)
- Council is asked to consider the Oldham Plan 2024 – 2030: Pride, Progress, Partnership.
- 14 Corporate Plan 2024 - 2027: Ready for the Future (Pages 233 - 252)
- Council is asked to consider the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2027: Ready for the Future
- 15 Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26 (Pages 253 - 270)
- A report of the Director of Finance detailing a Council Tax reduction scheme for 2025/26.
- 16 Scrutiny Annual Report (Pages 271 - 294)
- A report covering the activities of the Council's four Scrutiny Boards in 2023/24.
- 17 Update on Actions from Council (Pages 295 - 314)
- To note actions taken arising from previous Council meetings

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



Harry Catherall
Chief Executive

PROCEDURE FOR NOTICE OF MOTIONS **NO AMENDMENT**

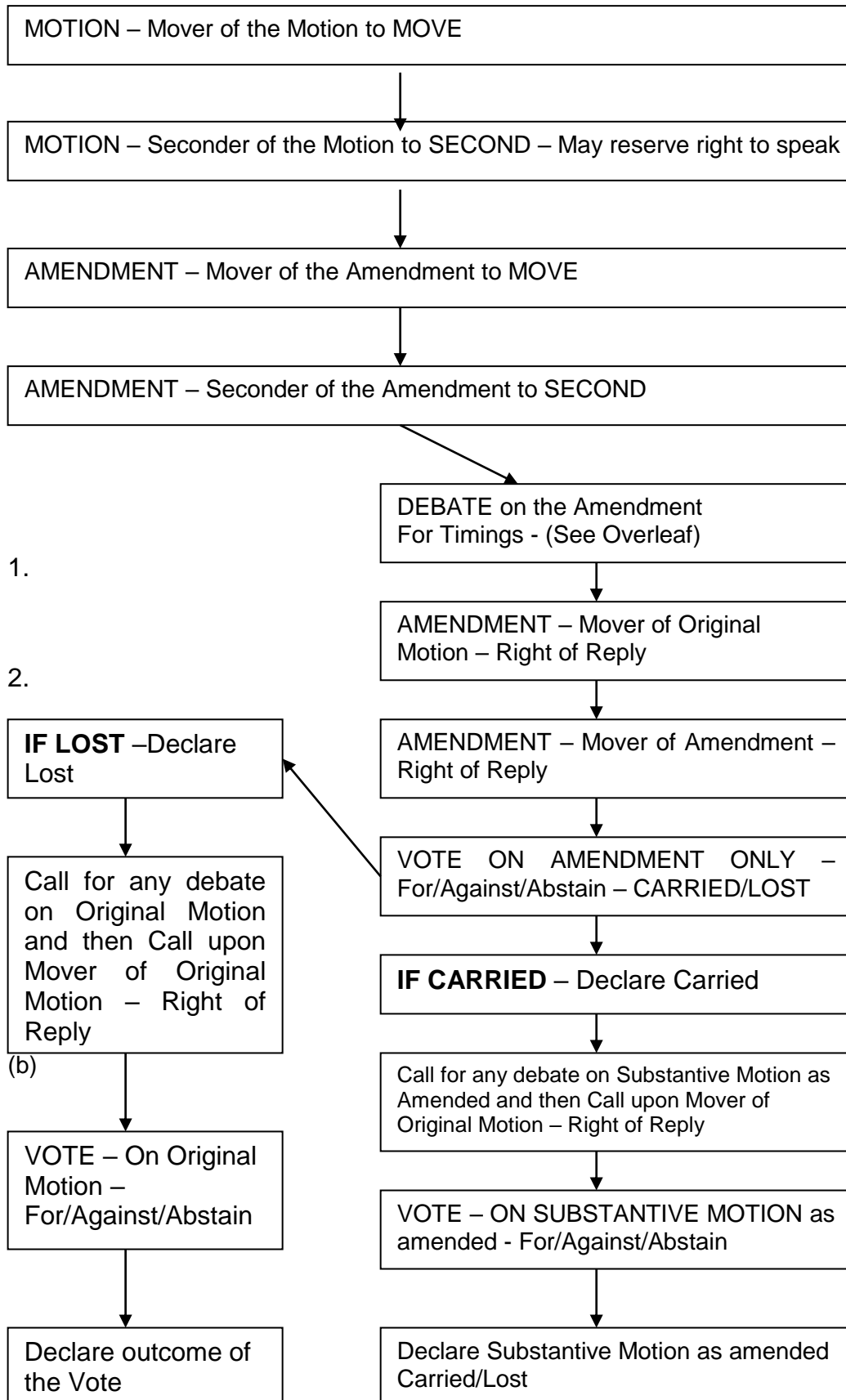


RULE ON TIMINGS

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

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

WITH AMENDMENT



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

Councillors Adams, Akhtar, Al-Hamdani, M Ali, Z Ali, Arnott, Aslam, Azad, Ball, Bashforth, Bishop, Brownridge, Byrne, Charters, Cosgrove, Davis, Dean, Ghafoor, Goodwin, Hamblett, Harkness, Harrison, Hince, Hindle, Hobin, Hughes, Hurley, A Hussain, F Hussain, J. Hussain, S. Hussain, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Islam, Jabbar, Kenyon, Kouser, Lancaster, Malik, Marland, McLaren, Moores, Murphy, Mushtaq, Nasheen, Navesey, Quigg, Rustidge, Shah, Sharp, Sheldon, Shuttleworth, Sykes, Taylor, Wahid, Wilkinson, Williamson and Woodvine

1 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Chowhan.

2 **TO ORDER THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 10TH JULY 2024 BE SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Council meeting held 10th July 2024 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

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

There were no declarations of interests.

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

There was no urgent business for this meeting of the Council to consider.

5 **TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL**

The Mayor informed Council that at a meeting of the Group Leaders it had been agreed that the time limit for Opposition Business (agenda item 12) would be increased from 30 minutes to 40 minutes, to allow time for the five Motions listed to be considered.

The Mayor advised that Members would be aware that this was the last Council meeting that the Managing Director of Children's Services, Mr Gerard Jones and the Director of Legal, Mr Paul Entwistle, would be attending prior to their imminent departure from Oldham Borough Council. Accordingly, the Mayor called on Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, Councillor Sykes Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and Councillor Sheldon, Leader of the Council to speak in tribute to Gerard and Paul's service to the Authority.

6 **TO RECEIVE AND NOTE PETITIONS RECEIVED**

RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

There were no petitions for this meeting of the Council to consider.



7

LEADER'S ANNUAL STATEMENT

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Arooj Shah, delivered her Annual Statement.

The Leader reminded the Council of her priorities, as set out in May 2023, when she first assumed office and highlighted work that had been done and which was still being done to improve Oldham, to retain a resident focused approach and to provide high quality services for local people.

The Leader noted a significant change in that there had recently been a change of government and that Oldham Council was looking forward to embracing a new relationship with central government.

The latest financial forecasts were predicting that there is a nearly £ 6 billion nationwide 'black hole' in local government finances, which, predictably, hits boroughs like Oldham with higher needs and lower council tax revenues the hardest.

It was added that there was a need to reset how the Council provides services, collaborates and cooperates with other groups and individuals to deliver change, and once more champion that sense of pride in Oldham and the wider Borough.

The Council was launching a renewed and collaborative Oldham Plan. Much has changed since the last one. A global pandemic, rampant inflation, a cost-of-living crisis and Brexit have impacted the borough. It was therefore felt to be the right time to reset our shared plan for the borough, which we will bring before the Council in November for ratification.

Part of that plan will be to set clear priorities which impact and improve the lives of Oldhamers every day. One of the most important responsibilities any Council carries is to protect the most vulnerable in our community. Today, Oldham is experiencing very high demand for its health and care services. This is particularly prominent in acute care and children's services. When the free market model for social care fails, as it did with the collapse of Acorn Lodge, this Council stepped up and secured the protection of its 70 residents and the rights of the care staff.

The leader stated that the Council was resetting care for our youngest residents as well. The Leader stated that she was pleased that, following a recent Ofsted Inspection, our Children's Services had been rated 'GOOD' in all areas – an outstanding achievement for everyone involved – but there is more we can do. Post-inspection action plans are already underway to drive further improvements over the next 12 months. One area everyone is particularly focused on is child safeguarding. Last

month the Department for Education commissioned a project to build a detailed understanding of how to support Safeguarding Partnerships in response to serious incidents, improve practice and better protect children. Oldham Council is participating in this review, and we will shape and adopt the best practices it develops to further improve our safeguarding.

The Council currently supports more than 600 households living in temporary accommodation. Nearly 6,500 households on the housing register are also waiting for social housing. Last year, only 1,211 homes became available for let - that's simply not enough. Every Council across the country should be putting housing at the forefront of their minds – this Labour administration is. We're committed to finding a local solution to this national crisis.

The other part of this is about the Council being bold and doing its bit like our commitment to build 500 new truly affordable homes over the next five years. There was a commitment, as part of the GM Places for Everyone programme, to build a further 11,000 new homes in the Borough.

The Council had recently signed a strategic partnership with the developer MUSE, which will deliver this Labour administration's plan for 2,000 new homes right here in the town centre. The public consultation has been strong and robust for this with lots of locals giving their views online and in person.

In Broadway Green, 138 more homes will be delivered in addition to the 332 already built. In Fitton Hill, 365 mixed tenure homes are planned on brownfield land which had been derelict for more than 20 years, and in Derker, planning permission for 132 low and zero-carbon housing on brownfield land, which include a mix of affordable rent homes, shared ownership, and private sale has been secured.

There was a shortage of supply, but in too many cases, the quality of private rental accommodation falls well short of the standards we should expect. The Council was determined to improve our housing stock over the longer term and will continue to hold bad landlords to account and make it easier for residents to report bad practices.

Resetting how we care for our most vulnerable residents, building new homes, and renewing our town centres are big-ticket items that catch headlines, debates, and discussions in this chamber.

The Council collects waste from almost 100,000 residential properties and more than 1,900 businesses throughout the borough, collecting about 3,000 tonnes of general waste and 775 tonnes of recycling waste every month.

Cracking down on fly-tipping, litter and vandalism are also priorities we all share.

In Oldham, residents are especially proud of our parks and outdoor spaces.

As well as creating new green spaces in the Town Centre as part of the on-going redevelopment, play areas including

Waterhead Park, Salmon Fields and Royton Park are scheduled to undergo improvements, while new changing rooms, gym equipment and sports courts are taking shape at Clayton Fields, Churchill Playing Fields and Dunwood Park amongst others. The Council is also committed to improving the green environment by planting 650 trees across the borough this autumn and winter. There are plans to add 2.5 hectares of new woodland in the coming twelve months.

Pride in Oldham is also about making our town a place to visit, spend leisure time, and interact with friends, family and neighbours.

Last month, the Council and its partners successfully delivered Festival Oldham which more than 6,000 local residents and visitors. Earlier in the Summer, The Tour of Britain Women's Race saw the world's top female riders go head-to-head racing in front of record crowds through the borough's many beauty spots.

In response to public demand, the Council announced its decision to retain the Coliseum Theatre on Fairbottom Street, which will reopen for Panto in 2025. To ensure the future of theatre for Oldham we have also been working with various cultural groups and partners to co-design and co-create a new future for the building and a new co-operative, more supportive and sustainable future for art and performance in Oldham.

The Council and residents can also take pride in our town's sporting successes too. As well as the Roughyeds winning promotion back to the championship, Oldham Council's Active Through Football program took a team to the Greater Manchester Refugee World Cup. Without losing a game, they won the tournament beating 16 other teams in the process. Also, working in partnership with Nike, Manchester F.A, Oldham Athletic Community Trust and Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Oldham, the Council supported a women's only football project which has been recognised by the US sportswear giant as exemplary and will feature in a video promoting the team and the program.

The Leader stated that the Council should reset its ambitions for the future of our residents. That means building on the welcomed improvements in OFSTED scores across our borough's primary schools and secondary schools. Across Oldham more than 90% of primary schools and 60% of secondary schools are now rated good or outstanding.

The Council had recently welcomed the Children's Commissioner for England, Rachel De Souza to Oldham to congratulate the council and its schools on our partnership work to improve school attendance, an issue where we are leading nationally. The Council's support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is improving. With the support of the Department for Education and NHS England, we have been able to recruit new staff to support schools and families across a range of areas such as early language

support, preparation for adulthood, and early access to mediation.



Since being launched a decade ago, the Get Oldham Working team have helped find work for more than fourteen thousand residents - over ten thousand full time jobs, over one and a half thousand apprenticeships, 367 Traineeships, and 1,667 Work Experience placements. As work patterns continue to shift, the Council's support for startups and entrepreneurs continues, such as with the opening of The Hive, a dedicated space in the Spindles Shopping Centre supporting social enterprises and start-up businesses.

The Leader asked that Council joins with her in championing Oldham in every forum, continuing to play an active part in the economic regeneration of our town by offering support, assistance and encouragement to businesses and employers looking to grow or expand in our borough. With a renewed pride in Oldham, a set of shared ambitions, and a commitment to collaborate, cooperate and face challenges together - we can make a difference. We have so much happening, so much to look forward to. Oldham's time is now.

Resolved:

That the Leader's Annual Statement be noted.

8

YOUTH COUNCIL

The Youth Council PROPOSED the following MOTION:
Holiday Activities and Food Programme

As part of their election manifesto, the new UK government are planning to spend £315M to introduce free breakfast clubs in every primary school.

While Oldham Youth Council welcomes support for young people, we feel that this money could be spent targeting those who need it most. We believe the threshold for free school meals needs to be increased to ensure the wellbeing of young people in poverty.

We would also like to see the continuation of the HAF (Holiday Activity and Food) program that has helped so many young people across Oldham. We do not feel there needs to be an increase in the money provided in this scheme, but we would like to see it used universally, allowing all young people access. This will reduce any stigma of attending sessions and hopefully encouraging more young people eligible for free school meals to take up the offer.

Council recognises that over the past few years the Oldham Youth Council have made the 'cost of living' a priority issue and have undertaken much work in this area to improve the experiences of Oldham's young people. This includes:

- Working with the Council to take unused stationary and distribute through schools to those students who need it most.

- 2022 motion to Council asking that the Chief Executive writes to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Education and the Shadow Secretary of State for Education requesting to extend the offer of the Holiday Activities and Food programme to all young people not just those on free school meals.

Council notes:

- That according to several 2024 surveys commissioned by organisations, such as General Mills and Greggs Foundation, between 20-30% of young people do not eat breakfast before school.
- Just over two million children are eligible for free meals in England, according to the latest government figures.
- However, a 2024 Food Foundation survey found that there are 900,000 children living in poverty in England who are missing out on national eligibility for Free School Meals due to the strict threshold set by government.
- Scottish and Welsh Government is considering increasing free school meals across primary schools and London's Mayor has announced free meals will be provided in all primary schools across London for the 2024/2025 academic year.
- Since 2022, the HAF programme has provided 10.7 million HAF days to children and young people in this country. The expansion of the programme year-on-year has meant a total of 5.4 million HAF days provided between Christmas 2022, Easter and summer 2023.

We propose that Council therefore **resolves** to ask the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Health and the Secretary of State for Education asking that, rather than a blanket breakfast club for all primary schools, that they look at increasing the threshold for free school meals so more young people (both primary and secondary age) benefit; that they continue the HAF (Holiday Activities and Food) program, making sure young people are fed during the school holidays while making this a universal service for all young people to reduce the stigma in attending and making it more cost efficient.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Mushtaq MOVED and Councillor Navesey SECONDED the following AMENDMENT.

As part of their election manifesto, the new UK government are planning to spend £315M to introduce free breakfast clubs in every primary school.

While Oldham Youth Council welcomes support for young people, we feel that extra help is needed to target those who need it most. We believe the threshold for free school meals needs to be increased to ensure the wellbeing of young people in poverty.

We would also like to see the continuation of the HAF (Holiday Activity and Food) program that has helped so many young people across Oldham. We do not feel there needs to be an increase in the money provided in this scheme, but we would like to see it used universally, allowing all young people access. This will reduce any stigma of attending sessions and hopefully encouraging more young people eligible for free school meals to take up the offer.

We also welcome the recent decision taken by the Government to extend the Household Support Fund which means Oldham Council can continue to give help to people including food vouchers, fuel vouchers and support with other essential items.

Council recognises that over the past few years the Oldham Youth Council have made the 'cost of living' a priority issue and have undertaken much work in this area to improve the experiences of Oldham's young people. This includes:

- Working with the Council to take unused stationary and distribute through schools to those students who need it most.
- 2022 motion to Council asking that the Chief Executive writes to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Education and the Shadow Secretary of State for Education requesting to extend the offer of the Holiday Activities and Food programme to all young people not just those on free school meals.

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- However, a 2024 Food Foundation survey found that there are 900,000 children living in poverty in England who are missing out on national eligibility for Free School Meals due to the strict threshold set by government.
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On being put to the Vote the AMENDMENT was CARRIED.

On being put to the vote the MOTION as AMENDED was CARRIED.

RESOLVED

That the Chief Executive be requested to write to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Health and to the Secretary of State for Education asking that, as well as a blanket breakfast club for all primary schools, that they look at increasing the threshold for free school meals so that more young people (both primary and secondary age) can benefit; that they continue the HAF (Holiday Activities and Food) program, making sure young people are fed during the school holidays while making this a universal service for all young people, to reduce the stigma in attending and making it more cost efficient.

9

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Question from Megan Birchall

The government announced mandatory housing targets after the election - does this mean we will need to build more homes than PfE said?

Councillor Taylor, Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Decent Homes replied, that the Government proposals restore, and update, the nationally set Local Housing Need calculation in NPPF as mandatory.

Based on the mandatory LHN calculation the housing requirement for Oldham would increase from the average annual housing requirement of 680 under Places for Everyone to 1,049 new homes per year. This represents a 54% increase. It is anticipated that this new requirement would not apply immediately for Oldham given the recent adoption of PfE, However, this is not entirely clear in the consultation document. If this were the case, we would continue with the housing requirement set under PfE.

We would then be expected to commence the preparation of a brand-new Local Plan to meet the new housing requirements.

2. Question from Ghazala Rana

I heard Ed Miliband say "Britain will be a clean energy superpower" - What does this mean for Oldham?

Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Value for Money and Sustainability replied that are two national initiatives on energy which could benefit Oldham – Great British

Energy and the Local Power Plan. GB Energy will provide investment into renewable energy projects and the Local Power Plan will provide grants and other support to local authorities and communities to develop renewable energy projects, so that the financial benefit of energy generation can be kept in local economies. Oldham is well placed to benefit from this, as our existing plans under Oldham's Green New Deal will already bring in large-scale private sector investment in low carbon infrastructure, and our Green New Deal Delivery Partnership model puts communities at the heart of energy planning. These new national initiatives will complement and strengthen the approach that the Council has already developed, and which has already secured over £10m in grant funding to implement.

3. Question from Lisa Phillips

I was pleased to see the town centre was busy for the recent Festival Oldham; are there going to be more events like this upcoming to get people in the town spending money with local businesses?

Councillor Dean, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture replied that there has been a planned programme of events for the town centre including a new event on 28 September – Nostalgic Oldham with many of the town centre businesses taking part.

We also have a busy Christmas programme starting with the Christmas Light Switch-On taking place on Saturday 16 November.

On Saturday 31 August we also launched the Oldham Gift-card which is available for anyone to buy to give to their friends, family and colleagues as a gift. This is another way we are working with businesses to keep people spending money locally.

4. Question from Alison Shore

I have heard that Access Oldham had moved into Spindles. What services are offered there & is it now fully open.

Councillor Dean, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture replied that Access Oldham had relocated from its base in the Civic Centre tower, over to the new site positioned in the lower mall of the Spindles shopping centre, reopening as the Customer Service Centre on 18th July. The improved service delivers Benefits, Council Tax and Blue Badge support together with access to Welfare Rights, Support and Inclusion team and Client Finance as well as access to several partner organisations including Citizens Advice, TOG Mind and Turning Point. Freephones for contacting other council services and public access computers for online services are also available. Our Housing Options Team are currently providing support and services next to Rochdale Road Reception at the Civic Centre in a space that provides more space to meet demand including private meeting facilities and additional waiting areas for residents.

5. Question from Kyle Phythian

Oldham's children are the most important thing the council looks after - how is our children's services department performing?

Councillor Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People replied, thanking Mr Phythian for his question, adding that Ofsted have responsible for the external assurance of local authorities Children's Services. We've recently been through a thorough inspection on our performance, making sure were keeping children safe and improving outcomes.

We are delighted that Ofsted has recognised our Children's Services to be 'good' across all areas and the positive difference our workforce makes every day. Post inspection action plans are underway to enable the service to drive further improvements over the next 12 months, as outlined in the report which is available at the link <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50252252>

6. Question from Jason Pape-Jones

Can I ask the cabinet member for education how Oldham has done in this year's GCSE and A-Level results?

Councillor Mohon Ali, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills replied, stating that he wanted to praise the resilience of our students and pupils in overcoming the challenges of the Covid pandemic to achieve excellent grades in 2024.

On GCSE results day, Cllr Nasheen and I visited 10 schools to congratulate pupils and staff. The unvalidated results for GCSEs show that most schools in Oldham improved their outcomes since 2019, and this improved borough attainment. At the same time, the number of strong passes at grades 9 to 5 in English and Maths increased.

It's a testament to the hard work of our children and young people that since the pandemic our GCSE outcomes have improved at a better rate than national and are moving closer to the average.

On post-16 results day, I was pleased to visit Oldham Sixth Form College and Oldham College to celebrate the achievements of our young residents receiving A-Levels, T-levels and BTECs grades.

Unvalidated A-Level results show that A-E grade passes were higher than last year, higher than the national average and are back in line with pre-pandemic results. The A*-C pass rate showed a significant improvement on the 2023 figure and this narrowed the gap to national average.

These academic successes are rooted in the excellent work that the Council, Trusts, academies, schools and colleges have done to increase attendance rates, raises aspirations, and continue to further improve the quality of teaching and learning since the pandemic.

7. Question from Imran Ghaffar

As a seasoned cyclist who rides 60 miles a week to work, I want to commend the council for its efforts to encourage more people

to cycle. It's great to see initiatives that promote healthier, more sustainable transport options.

However, I do have concerns regarding the placement of the new cycle lane on one of the biggest hills in Oldham, particularly on St Mary's Way, as this may deter rather than encourage new cyclists. While experienced riders may manage, I imagine many would find this challenging.

Additionally, I would be interested to know how many current councillors have cycled up this hill and, more broadly, how many of the 60 councillors cycle to work or council meetings. As public figures leading this initiative, it would be great to see councillors setting an example.

I look forward to your response and thank you again for the work being done to support cycling in our community?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham replied that the Council is grateful for Mr Ghaffar's positive feedback on our proposals to promote healthier and more sustainable transport options – it's something we think needs to be at the heart of place-making in Oldham. Mr Ghaffar raises a really good point about the challenge of cycling in Oldham as it does have more hills than many other towns and cities, but that shouldn't stop us from creating the safe and pleasant environments for people to walk and cycle as part of their daily journeys if they are able to.

Hopefully by creating these spaces, more people will walk and cycle, and they will develop those healthier habits that means their fitness grows and they can manage to cycle up the steeper routes as well.

In addition, the increased availability of e-bikes may help residents tackle Oldham's more challenging hills!

As for councillors, I don't think we have any specific statistics about how many cycle or walk to work or their council duties, but I know a number do walk or cycle where the opportunity allows, and so creating these fantastic new routes can only encourage that amongst the councillors who are able to.

The Mayor advised that any unanswered questions would be published to the Council's website, with written answers, in due course.

10

QUESTIONS TO LEADER AND CABINET

The Mayor invited the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members to present their reports and further invited non-executive members to ask questions thereon, as follows:

- a. Leader and Building a Better Oldham Portfolio – including the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held 17th June 2023 and 15th July 2024; the Minutes of the meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 14th June 2024 and the Minutes of meetings of the AGMA Executive Board held on 9th February 2024 and 14th June 2024.

Question 1: Are Oldham's MPs in Oldham's Corner



Councillor Sykes noted that since the General Election we've had a welcome change of government but there has been little to cheer about for the people of our Borough.

Oldham now has a Labour government in London, a Labour Mayor in Greater Manchester, and a Labour Administration in Oldham Borough, supported by some so-called Independents. There is nowhere left to hide, and no one left to blame.

The new Prime Minister has said there will be painful times ahead.

The question is, can Oldham Labour stand up to him? Are they in our corner or not?

We need to see the end of the two-child cap on universal credit. We need to know that pensioners in Oldham will be warm this winter, and that the government will stop this poorly thought out cut to winter fuel payments.

Local government needs a cash injection now and long-term funding reform. So that instead of circling the financial drain, this Council can fund the services our residents need and deserve.

For years, Oldham Labour have been telling us its Oldham first and politics second and challenging the government. It's time to practice what you preach.

If our three Labour MPs are truly in Oldham's corner they will support calls for the end of the two-child cap, proper local government funding reform, and the continuation of winter fuel payments.

So, will the Leader agree to write to Oldham's MPs urging them to pledge support for those causes in Parliament on behalf of all of the people in Oldham Borough who desperately need this government to fight their corner.

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, replied that the government was still very much in its early stages and had inherited a poor economic legacy from the outgoing Conservative administration and therefore needed time to start to put things right, which she expressed every confidence that they would do so. Therefore, she would not be writing to the three Members of Parliament as requested by Councillor Sykes as it was too early in the Parliamentary cycle to be doing so.

Question 2: Eton Star College

Councillor Sykes asked his second question regarding the Eton Star College. The Leader has expressed her enthusiasm for the Eton Star Oldham project on many occasions and does so again in her report on tonight's agenda.

The decision to develop a 480-student selective sixth form in partnership with Eton College has been torn to shreds by the National Education Union.

They have pointed out the disruption this will likely cause to the current sixth form provision in our Borough, which already delivers a first-rate post 16 offer.

There are also concerns that a selective offer will do nothing for disadvantaged young people in Oldham Borough and will only help a very small number of young people who are already achieving at a high level.

Last year's Year 12 cohort saw an increase of nearly 300 young people. And the numbers are expected to continue to rise until at least 2028.

In Oldham there is a gap in our post-16 offer. But we know that this gap is due to a lack of Entry Level study programmes.

Back in March, Children's Scrutiny Committee was told that Eton Star Oldham would not replace training provision that has been lost in the Borough over recent years and therefore does not enable us to bridge the gap.

So, if Eton Star is not going to provide us with the courses our young people need... what is the Leader's plan to bridge this very real and growing gap?

How is she working with our schools and Oldham College to ensure the right courses are on offer?

Have external providers been approached to help and if so how many and for what courses?

And can the Leader explain to the Council why she thinks Eton Star Oldham is necessary and how it will help solve these problems – never mind be offered one of our Borough's prime developed sites for its activities?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, replied that the ethos of the Eton Star project was focused on providing educational excellence. She added that the Eton Star College would not have an admissions policy that would not exclude the most disadvantaged people/groups in the Borough and that she was looking forward to its opening in 2027.

Question from Councillor Ghafoor, Leader of the Oldham Group
Councillor Ghafoor sought clarification on the reasons for the closure of the Marlborough Centre in Oldham (the old Pakistani Community Centre). Councillor Ghafoor claimed that members of his group were being denied information about this matter by officers of the Council. He also sought assurances that relating to the tendering had been undertaken properly and if the views of local residents had been taken into account. Councillor Ghafoor stated that whilst he personally did not have an interest in this matter he asked if Councillor Shah did?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, replied that she didn't have any interest in this property or in any proposed future use. Councillor Shah confirmed that the tendering process was undertaken independently with no involvement from herself or any other Cabinet Member.

It was agreed that the Chief Executive be requested to write, via email, to all members of the Council clarifying the various issues raised in this question.

Question from Councillor Sheldon, Leader of the Conservative Group

Councillor Sheldon commented on the low morale amongst opposition members arising, leading to a feeling that they are not fully part of the authority. This was mainly, he said, because from the Leader's decision to restrict the access of opposition members from certain parts of the Civic Centre, the rearranging of certain chair and vice-chair positions, at the Council meeting on 10th July 2024 and the exclusion of opposition members from the celebrations that marked the reopening of the Coliseum Theatre. He asked therefore if the Leader would take on board his concerns and ease some of the restrictions that have been placed on opposition members?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, replied that she was sad to have to introduce the restrictions which, she said, were imposed following some unpleasant incidents that occurred in lead-up to the Annual Council meeting on 22nd May 2024.

b. Deputy Leader and Decent Homes Portfolio Holder

The Deputy Leader and Decent Homes Portfolio Holder presented her report.

Question from Councillor Lancaster - Does Oldham Council have a robust, responsible approach to planning enforcement? Councillor Taylor replied, thanking Councillor Cllr Lancaster for his question, stating that effective planning enforcement is important in terms of tackling breaches of control and maintaining the integrity of decision making.

So far in 2024 the Council has received just over 300 reported cases of alleged breaches of planning controls.

Where a breach of planning controls has been reported we will review the circumstances of each case and determine what action is appropriate and proportionate to ensure that compliance is achieved.

Formal action is reserved for those cases that cannot be resolved through informal measures where that action is justified. In 2023, 19 formal notices were served on individuals in breach of planning controls which demonstrates our robust position in respect of planning enforcement.

Question from Councillor Rustidge - Can the Cabinet Member for Decent Homes confirm that if we were to pull out of PfE now that ALL Green Belt in the Borough would be subject to a developer's free for all because they'd lose protections guaranteed within PfE? So Green Belt sites that have been removed from the plan as potential development land over the years could come forward for development and we as a council would not be able to do much about it?

Councillor Taylor replied, thanking Councillor Rustidge for his question, stating that without PfE, we would be required to meet

the nationally-set local housing need requirement for Oldham in full straight away. We do not have enough housing land supply without Green Belt release to meet that housing requirement, and so the council would immediately be in a difficult position when it comes to deciding applications for housing development in the borough. Our housing land supply would be so poor in this context that the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" in NPPF would kick-in, meaning that we should grant permission for any sustainable housing development, even potentially in the Green Belt, and, if we didn't, we would almost certainly lose any appeal related to those planning applications (and have significant costs awarded against us). As such, without PfE, the risk of unplanned, ad hoc housing development taking place across the borough, including in the Green Belt, is infinitely greater, causing significantly greater harm to our borough's environment than the planned release of land for development in PfE.

Question from Councillor Williamson – In May this year, the BBC revealed that cavity-wall insulation fitted under government-backed green energy scheme could have failed in hundreds of thousands of homes because it was not installed properly. This leaves residents, potentially including many in Oldham, exposed to the health impact of damp and mould, which we have seen can have devastating consequences. Professionals have identified lack of oversight and regulation as major loophole in achieving successful government-backed insulation schemes. Indeed, energy suppliers inspect just 5% of the work they are responsible for overseeing, despite this work being funded with public money. Oldham council has a public health responsibility to ensure that substandard government-funded insulation work is identified and put right in Oldham Borough. Will the Cabinet Member agree to work with partners to develop a programme of inspections where work of this nature has taken place in Oldham and to report the findings back to the Council and, if necessary, the Housing Minister, Matthew Pennycock MP?

Councillor Taylor replied, thanking Councillor Williamson for her question stating that she agreed that this was a serious issue and the Council is keen to assist in dealing with the concerns expressed via the BBC.

We are awaiting government guidance on the approach to enforcement, compliance and what work is needed to address this issue and where the duty/responsibility for securing this compliance will rest. I can confirm that currently the Government have an established complaint process for residents who are concerned about any issues with an installation. After contacting the provider asking them to resolve this issue they can contact the Green Deal Ombudsman if the complaint has not been resolved within 8 weeks, or they are not happy with the provider's response. The contact details are as follows: - Green Deal Ombudsman; enquiries@os-energy.org

Telephone: 0330 440 1624

Councillor Taylor committed to reporting back to a future Council meeting on intended actions with partners as soon as further guidance is received from central government.

c. Deputy Leader and Value for Money and Sustainability Portfolio

The Deputy Leader and Value for Money and Sustainability Portfolio holder presented his report.



Question from Councillor Al-Hamdani - The Council has announced an expected overspend of £25 million and has asked staff to consider voluntary redundancies. This has been largely attributed to rising demand for social care and homelessness. Why was the Council unable to forecast the rising demand for social care and homelessness, given that both have seen regular significant increases in the past few years, which have left the Council massively overspent, and in significant financial distress?

Councillor Jabbar replied that he had a longer answer which he could provide in writing but quite simply this isn't JUST an issue of rising demand, which is always difficult to predict but also about rapidly increasing prices driven by the external market. Families are complex and lots of things can drive them to need support or drive them to crisis which means we need to intervene.

Over the last three years, the Council has invested a total of £52m into Adults and Childrens Services to try and tackle these increasing demands. But while the private sector is making millions from placements and council budgets have been starved over the last 14 years of the funds they need to build in-house provision we have limited ability to stem these cost increases.

And we are not alone, many other Councils are facing projected overspends in these services of tens of millions of pounds. The local housing crisis has been caused by national policy decisions. Year on year national decisions on house building, increases in mortgage rates and other decisions are driving more and more people into poverty and more and more people into homelessness. And again, the lack of provision means private providers are increasing the costs we pay for temporary accommodation as demand increases.

In summary, we need national solutions to what are national challenges facing everyone in the sector. Genuinely if Cllr Al Hamdani has a magic bullet that can help us predict the future or can help us find a solution to the problems facing every council in the country then he is in the wrong job.

Question from Councillor S. Hussain – As a result of 14 years of Tory government, local councils like Oldham have faced significant cuts in funding, with their budgets slashed. This has resulted in a devastating reduction in vital services, from social care to housing, education, and youth services. Services which are vital for our residents.

The impact of these cuts extends far beyond Oldham. Councils across the UK have faced similar reductions, struggling to provide the basic services their communities depend on. Public services that used to be a safety net for the most vulnerable are now stretched to breaking point. And it's not just Oldham—

across the country, communities are bearing the brunt of these cuts, with some councils on the brink of bankruptcy.

Consequently, I urge the Deputy Leader to confirm how much funding has been lost from the decisions of the previous Conservative Govt? And how hopeful is he that the spending review will bring better news?

Councillor Jabbar replied, thanking Councillor Hussain for his question.

This Council has been forced to make over £200m worth of cuts during this time because our funding has never adequately met our demand for services.

At times I feel like a broken record in this chamber, but fourteen years of Tory austerity have hit this Council hard and has made the problems in our Borough harder to deal with. This is not news.

During this time Oldham's core spending power increased by 15.5%, compared to the England average of 26.9% - had Oldham received funding increases at the average level for England then it would have received an additional £26.3m in this year alone.

Cllr Hussain is right that this isn't just an Oldham problem, Councils across the country have been struggling with funding. We've seen services that people rely on repeatedly cut and cut. We're lobbying the new government hard for fairer funding and I am hopeful that we'll get a better deal, I can tell you that the announcement of multi-year settlements is a much better position to start from and will allow local authorities to plan better for the future.

I'm under no illusions that the spending review will include tough decisions, but I'm confident that this government values local government and the services we provide to our residents.

Question from Councillor Akhtar – could the Portfolio Holder outline what progress is being made to ensure that citizens of the Oldham Borough can access services readily online?

Councillor Jabbar explained that work was being undertaken, across all areas of the Council, to ensure that as much information as possible was available for people to access online.

d. Councillor Mushtaq – Children and Young People Portfolio

The Children and Young People Portfolio holder presented his report.

Question from Councillor Al-Hamdani - The Council is on track to introduce three children's homes in the borough in the current financial year. Could the Council confirm how many children's places will be made available as a result? Will the Council commit to creating a rolling programme of creating new Council-run children's homes over at least the next five years, with a target for the number of places, bringing down the financial burden on the Council for children's social care, and creating an avenue for income by creating provision for neighbouring authorities?

Councillor Mushtaq replied thanking Councillor Al-Hamdani for his question. The three children's homes opening in 2025 will create 8 local placements for children in our care alongside the 5 placements already available in our existing provision.

As part of the children and young people placement sufficiency ambitions, the council is reviewing the residential model and creating another three homes for a further 7 placements which would deliver 20 council run placements over the next three years, providing Oldham with a more sustainable offer. This approach is in line with other local authorities across Greater Manchester.

Given the increase in the number of looked after children in Oldham, it is envisaged that all new placements created will provide a safe and stable home for Oldham children and young people and consequently reduce the council's financial pressure.

Question from Councillor Iqbal - It is extremely welcome that the recent inspection of our Children's services has rated our services as 'good' but I am sure the Cabinet member would agree with me that one-word judgements and labels do not really do justice to the service people receive. With that in mind could he set out his personal priority for improving our children's services over the next year?

Councillor Mushtaq replied thanking Councillor Iqbal for his question. The council is delighted with the outcome of the recent ILACS inspection which details that all Children's Services were judged 'Good'.

The judgements are supported with a comprehensive report for each area of judgement inclusive of Help and Protection, Children in Care, Care Leavers, the impact of Leaders and overall judgement. The full report is available at the link <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50252252>

The service recognises the need for continuous improvement and my three priorities for improving our children's services are:

- **Priority 1:** Improving the lives of children and young people through quality social work, working closely with our partners.
- **Priority 2:** A local home for every child in care and care leaver.
- **Priority 3:** A stable and permanent workforce committed to Oldham.

e. Councillor Mohon Ali – Education and Skills Portfolio

The Education and Skills Portfolio Holder presented his report.

Question from Councillor Bishop – Could the Cabinet Member please confirm the how much has been spent annually on Alternative Education Providers in the last three years, and what percentage of the annual education budget this had represented? What steps are the administration taking to ensure that our secondary schools are improving in their ability to meet the needs of all children?

Councillor Mohon Ali replied, thanking Councillor Bishop for her question. For 2023/24 the Oldham Council alternative education provision spend was £459,107.58 for Council-commissioned provision. Secondary schools also commissioned their own alternative education provision. The Council does not have access to information on the level of that spend. However, the Council does have a robust quality assurance framework in place for all alternative education provision in Oldham that includes a self-assessment, annual formal monitoring visits by SEND and Advisory Teaching staff and regular visits throughout the year, alongside an Alternative Provision (AP) provider network.

Commissioned AP is always in exceptional circumstances and always with the end goal of reintegration back to their mainstream school. Children and young people will only access AP for up to two days per week in addition to their mainstream offer.

In relation to the education system, we take a partnership approach, which incorporates schools/settings, services across education, health and social care and parents/carers.

Our SEND and inclusion strategy and improvement programme have been coproduced with parents/carers, to ensure that we take a joined-up approach to address the rising level of need.

They share common ambitions to ensure that:

- Locally, we work collaboratively with schools/settings in a structured and targeted way. We prioritise supporting them to enhance their own provision.
- All our specialist services in SEND & Inclusion are designed to support earlier identification and intervention to avoid the need for higher levels of support later, including alternative provision. Where it is required we work closely with our schools and providers.
- Kingsland School is our local specialist provision who are integral in supporting the whole system in Oldham for children and young people who have social, emotional and mental health needs.

Local specialist support is of high quality, and this has been recognised in the recent ILACS and Ofsted annual conversation feedback.

Question from Councillor Junaid Hussain - After the visit to Oldham by the Children's Commissioner Dame Rachel de Souza where Oldham was praised for our efforts to improve school attendance, could the cabinet member update council on the overall picture of school attendance across the borough?

Councillor Mohon Ali replied, thanking Councillor Hussain for his question. Attendance at secondary schools in Oldham is above the national average and the best among similar local authorities across the country.

Primary school attendance is slightly below national average with a particular issue among younger children in reception.

Dame Rachel's visit allowed us to share the fantastic work we have been doing to improve this including a stronger transition programme this summer, involving over 500 calls to parents and

carers as they prepared for the new term which resulted in a 3% improvement in attendance rates in week 1 of the new term. After her visit, Dame Rachel commented: "One of my young ambassadors on my national ambassadors' team is from Oldham and told me I had to come. Oldham is trailblazing in helping kids get back to school after lockdown and the council is doing some amazing work, so I've come to talk to the councillors today to see how they're making a difference to young people's lives."

Question from Councillor Al-Hamdani - The Labour Government has announced that it will be continuing the process of forced academisation for failing schools but have not got any plans in place to allow failing academies to be taken back into public hands. Given the experiences we have had of failing academies, where it has been extremely difficult to find alternative trusts to take over failing academies, will the Cabinet Member responsible be lobbying the Government to introduce legislation to address this as soon as possible?

Councillor Mohon Ali replied, thanking Councillor Al-Hamdani for his question. After visiting 5 secondaries and 2 colleges on GCSE and 'A' level results days in August, Councillor Ali was happy to report back on the impressive performance of both maintained schools and academies in the borough and some of the best ever outcomes for young Oldhamers.

He expected that the Labour Government to bring forward plans for improving the school system in due course and we will work with local school and academy leaders to implement their proposals for the benefit of residents.

We are fortunate to have many successful schools and academies in our borough. Our Oldham Learning Partnership ensures that trusts contribute to the local system and that all schools and academies deliver the best possible education for Oldham residents. So, I was pleased to see the improvements that were noted by Ofsted when they visited Radclyffe, Oasis Oldham and Co-op Failsforth this year and found all three establishments to be Good. Further I was very pleased to see that Waterhead Academy will become part of E-ACT, a group with a proven track record in the borough.

He did not therefore believe that there is a need to lobby the Government to introduce legislation to address this matter.

f. Councillor Fida Hussain – Enterprise Portfolio Holder

The Enterprise Portfolio Holder presented his report.

Question from Councillor Aftab Hussain - Could the Cabinet Member update the Council on the timetable for allocating stalls to stallholders in the new indoor market?

Councillor Fida Hussain replied, thanking Councillor Aftab Hussain for his question.

Stallholders are working closely with the markets team on the selection of stalls to the new market as well as the design and fit-out works needed as part of this process. This work will continue through Autumn. The team are working to balance the need to keep the process moving at pace, whilst respecting and

allowing time for each stallholder to make their choice of location in the new market. The team only move to the next stallholder once the previous stallholder is 100% happy with their location.

g. Councillor Brownridge – Adults, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio

The Adults, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder presented her report.

Question from Councillor Hamblett - Is the Cabinet Member aware of the unjust and detrimental of the calculation that Oldham Council uses to assess the amount a disabled person contributes to their non-residential care financial package? Because of the prejudiced structure of the calculation disabled people in Oldham are disenfranchised and pushed even further under the poverty threshold than they already are. Will the Cabinet Member agree to undertake a review of non-residential care financing to ensure that assessments are carried out in a fair manner?

Councillor Brownridge replied, thanking Councillor Hamblett for his question, stating that we are in the process of reviewing our policies and procedures for Adult Social Care charging.

As part of that process, we will be running a consultation process with Oldham residents, families and carers as well as with colleagues from various services and partners to ensure a fair charging policy is in place.

This will also be bench marked across other local authorities to ensure Oldham falls in line with authorities with similar demographics whilst also encompassing our strength-based approach.

The current policy is compliant with statutory minimum framework as outlined in the Care Act (2014), the Care and Support (Charging and Assessment of Resources) 2014 Regulations and the care and support statutory (CASS) guidance.

The current charging policy for non-residential care was implemented in April 2015 and further reviewed in 2021, following the Norfolk judgement.

Question from Councillor Malik - Following the acquisition of Oldham Total Care by the Council, there has been a marked improvement in performance. What steps are being taken to make sure this progress is sustained and built upon?

Councillor Brownridge replied, thanking Councillor Malik for his question, regarding Oldham Total Care and the reference to marked improvement. A detailed improvement plan had been developed, with oversight from Charlotte Walker, Assistant Director – Adult Social Care Reform & Improvement, who also holds the CQC Nominated Individual responsibility for the home. Phase one of the plan has been completed, which included thorough analysis of the financial, workforce and estates position for the home, and a focus on maximising occupancy whilst driving recruitment of staff across the business, and stabilising the home. Occupancy has improved from approximately 75% to 94% since January of this year, with

approximately 130 residents now living at Total Care. The Board of Directors meets monthly and has full oversight of improvement at the home via internal governance routes established since acquisition.

Alyson Wadsworth, Quality Matron, was seconded from the Northern Care Alliance last year and remains on site full time, working with the team to make the improvements in line with the CQC quality standards, to ensure the workforce receive training relevant to their role, and maximise positive outcomes for our residents. Further to the recent successful recruitment of a new registered manager (due to start in post early November) the team at the home, with support from key council officers in addition to Charlotte & Alyson, will move into phase two of the improvement plan which aims to build on the work to date, and ensure it is sustainable. A detailed business plan is in progress, with a focus to the future to ensure that Total Care fulfils it's potential to become a centre of excellence for the residents of Oldham.

Question from Councillor Lancaster - Will Oldham Council support the Age UK campaign to save winter fuel payments? Councillor Brownridge replied, thanking Councillor Lancaster for his question, adding that AgeUK and the Council work together on a variety of projects and services to help lift older people out of poverty.

This is the best way for the council to support those who need help – collaboration and partnership.

Most recently, as already talked about by the Leader of the Council, was our joint campaign with AgeUK using the councils Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) to identify pensioners who are eligible for Pension Credit and not claiming.

Pension Credit gives extra money to help with living costs if you're over State Pension age and on a low income. It's also a passporting benefit which means it gives an individual access to other benefits like; housing benefit, council tax reduction, warm homes discount and other important support.

This council will absolutely make sure that we work to get everyone who needs it, access to both pension credit and the winter fuel payment.

h. Councillor Goodwin – Don't Trash Oldham Portfolio

The Don't Trash Oldham Portfolio Holder presented his report.

Question from Councillor Murphy - The Administration was warned that cuts to Environmental Services would result in a much poorer service for residents, but Labour councillors insisted that this wouldn't be the case. This year weed treatment was virtually non-existent in large parts of the borough and summer planting didn't take place. What guarantee can the Cabinet Member give residents that there will be no further cuts to Environmental Services and that the service will improve going forward?

Councillor Goodwin replied, thanking Councillor Murphy for his question stating that the Liberal Democrats seem completely

unaware of the financial crisis facing local government and the impact on this council.

Of course we cannot guarantee no further cuts to environmental services while budgets are reducing and demand for statutory services is increasing. We can only work hard to protect them as much as we can.

The weed spraying service was nothing to do with reductions in budgets but was because the service was contracted to an external provider who failed to deliver to the agreed standard. As a result, rather than dealing with additional delays by re-procuring the service, the Council decided to bring the service in house.

As a result, we have increased investment in the Service, trained additional staff, bought more equipment and materials to deliver the service.

We appreciate that this has taken time, but given the significant investment made to bring the service in-house, we are confident that we will be able to meet the demand and resident expectations. The weed spraying programme is being supported by teams undertaking mechanical removal and this will continue as we move forward.

Question from Councillor Sharp - Across the Borough a number of sections in our parks are now designated naturalist areas and form part of the Council's bio diversity charter. These areas are left to naturalise with deferred mowing and are only cut back once or twice a year. I would be grateful if the relevant Cabinet member could highlight how much this cut back in maintenance saves the council each year?

Councillor Goodwin replied, thanking Councillor Sharp for her question, stating that Oldham Council is committed to meeting the climate and biodiversity challenge.

Reducing mowing generates a number of benefits for the environment, these include, but are not limited to, increased biodiversity, carbon sequestration, reduced soil erosion, moisture retention, creation of natural spaces and community engagement and involvement. All these benefits are difficult to quantify in monetary terms.

Reduced mowing areas still require ongoing management and maintenance to ensure highway safety, public safety, and sustainable growth.

These changes do lead to some savings, but given the growth of the green space boroughwide, any savings realised are invested elsewhere. However, understandably, there are equipment and fuel/material/ time savings for specific sites, but these have not been quantified as the service that delivers this work, does so on a boroughwide basis.

Question from Councillor Kouser – why were the repairs to Waterloo Bridge, Oldham taking so long?

Councillor Goodwin replied, thanking Councillor Kouser for her question and undertaking to provide her with a detailed written answer.

Question from Councillor Bishop - Can the Cabinet Member provide the following details relating to parking marshals at Dovestones:

- a. How much did OMBC contribute towards the parking marshals at Dovestones in the financial year 2023-2024?
- b. How much is OMBC contributing towards the parking marshals at Dovestones in the financial year 2024-2025?
- c. If there is a difference, how is it explained?
- d. How much did OMBC raise in total revenue from parking charges and fines at Dovestones in 2023-2024?

Councillor Goodwin replied, thanking Councillor Bishop for her question and confirming that the contribution from the Council towards parking control at Dovestones has remained unchanged over the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 at £6,000 a year. This contribution has been matched by funding from our partners United Utilities and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

I can also confirm that Pay and Display income was £159,821 and Penalty Notice Charges issued amounted to £25,629 for the period 2023-24.

- i. Councillor Dean – Thriving Communities and Culture Portfolio

The Thriving Communities and Culture Portfolio Holder presented his report.

Question from Councillor Marland - Following the recent announcement relating to the town centre development could the Cabinet Member tell us what the future of the nuclear bunker will likely to be under this building it would be a great asset indeed to have it turned into an educational facility to teach the past of cold war and life during 60s and 70s to future generations and preserve our history before it is consigned to rubble?

Councillor Dean replied, thanking Councillor Marland for her question and confirming that the Council are working closely with our Development Partner MUSE Places to progress proposals for the future of key Town Centre assets, including the Civic Centre. This includes the basement bunker, which has been visited recently by both the development partners technical advisors and relevant Local Interest Groups.

At this stage however, no final decision has been taken on the long-term future of the building, however we will be happy to provide further updates as the plans are progressed over the coming months.

Question from Councillor Adams - Royton has a thriving and vibrant nighttime economy. On Sunday 25 August, in broad daylight, and in a deliberate attack, 2 youths threw bricks through the windows on The Barclay Pizza and Prosecco Bar. What meetings has the cabinet member had with the owners of the Barclay and GMP regarding this matter?

Councillor Dean replied, thanking Councillor Adams for her question adding that he was aware of the incident that you refer to and our Community Safety Service have been in contact with Greater Manchester Police to ensure that this matter is being dealt with. Greater Manchester Police have confirmed that the incident is subject to an ongoing police investigation. To support this the leader of the Council has also met with the bar owners along with GMP and our Licensing Team. This was also followed up by the attendance of a pub watch meeting hosted by Barclay's. The Community Safety Service will continue to work closely with the Police to ensure that the offenders, when identified, are dealt with appropriately. This will include the use of civil tools and powers alongside any criminal prosecution undertaken by Greater Manchester Police. The Local Authority will actively seek to exclude the offenders from the area and prohibit their association in public, to reduce the detrimental impact that their actions have had in the area. It is a key priority for the Local Authority, Greater Manchester Police and other partners to ensure that the thriving and vibrant night-time economy you refer to continues to grow and we will take swift and decisive action to ensure that residents and business owners are protected from the unacceptable actions of a small minority of individuals who choose to blight their communities.

Question from Councillor Davis - Could the Portfolio Holder confirm the additional police support and other support which Lucy Powell MP and I have requested around the Alder Road area of Failsworth after the recent machete attack and antisocial behaviour in the area?

Councillor Dean replied, thanking Councillor Davis for his question adding that he was pleased to confirm that the new inspector for the area has now allocated additional resource. This will be targeted Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. The Councils community safety team have visited local businesses and residents with the offer of support. Additional community safety measures are also being considered. The Youth Work team are targeting the area at key times and will discuss with young people consequences of behaviour and how they may engage them into other activity. We also will be looking for a more suitable location for them to socialise. The team also report that they have already managed to get some of the young people onto some mainstream youth activity and contact with schools has been made.

Question from Councillor Lancaster - From a justice and community safety perspective, could the Cabinet Member please provide update on what actions Oldham Council can and will take to address late night fireworks?

Councillor Dean replied, thanking Councillor Lancaster for his question, confirming that the Council and the wider Community Safety Partnership is committed to trying to tackle this issue on behalf of all residents. We understand how distressing the use of fireworks can be and the impact it has upon communities.

The current legislation allows for legal fireworks to be set off on private premises between the hours of 7am and 11pm throughout the year.

Unfortunately, the Council has no legal powers to take action for the illegal use of fireworks as the offences, which are criminal, can only be enforced by the Police. The demand on the Police in responding to all crime types is significant and being able to respond in time and catch somebody in the actual act of setting a firework off is very difficult.

As a partnership we continue to explore opportunities to take action to protect residents from firework nuisance.

We have been proactively sending messages out through our social media channels as part of our efforts to encourage responsible and considerate behaviours.

Through Facebook and Twitter, we have reiterated that it is illegal to let fireworks off between 11pm and 7am and that individuals should consider their neighbourhood and act responsibly.

We have also promoted reporting pathways through GMP through 101 and via the GMP online portal.

Any person with information about the illegal sale or use of fireworks can also report this anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Leader and Portfolio Holder reports be noted.
2. That the Minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held 17th June 2023 and 15th July 2024, the Minutes of the meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 14th June 2024 and the Minutes of meetings of the AGMA Executive Board held on 9th February 2024 and 14th June 2024, be noted.

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NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Motion 1: Strengthening the Online Safety Act

Councillor Harrison MOVED and Councillor Nasheen SECONDED the following Motion:

Social media giants have displayed time and again that they cannot be trusted to self-regulate, the riots across the country in recent weeks showed how dangerous misinformation can be and how quickly it can spread online.

There was at least one doctored video circulating online in early August purporting to be of Aldi in Chadderton, not only was this video not filmed within the Borough of Oldham it was several years old. However, this caused a tremendous amount of community concern and even lead to Police resources being deployed to the scene.

It is urgent that we take proactive measures to enhance the safety and security of our online environment. We cannot allow malicious actors to spread misinformation online in an attempt to cause unrest and division and destruction.

The current Online Safety Act, while a significant step forward, requires strengthening to address challenges and ensure comprehensive protection for all users, particularly vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly.

This Council resolves:

1. To write to the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police and the Chief Superintendent for Oldham to thank them for the work their officers did to keep Oldhamers safe and violence off our streets.
2. To write to the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation & Technology to ask his Department:
 - a. to undertake a review of the Online Safety Act to identify areas for improvement.
 - b. to strengthen enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance and increase penalties for violations.
 - c. to provide resources and training for parents, schools, and third sector organisations to help them protect and guide children in the digital world.
 - d. to ensure victims of online abuse and crimes are supported.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Quigg MOVED and Councillor Arnott SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

We live in a world where distance and connectivity between nations and people is shrinking. Information is available 24/7 and at the swipe or push of a button. For the first time in history, human beings have access to seemingly vast amounts of information at their fingertips.

But that vast amount of information is stored with mainly private companies.

We have seen how state and non-state actors are increasingly using social media to exploit weaknesses in those companies but also the data that they hold. From the vulnerability of platforms such as Tik-Tok, who are facing US Congressional hearings over a failure to protect user's data from the Chinese Communist Party to non-state actors, criminals and terrorists who use it to blackmail individuals, cause harm to children and cause harm to adults via these platforms.

Social media is increasingly a double edge sword.

Without social media, the documenting of criminality in Bangladesh, ballot rigging in Venezuela the conflicts in Ukraine, North Africa and the Middle East would have been limited to a news cycle or newspaper column. Equally we have seen how governments and media can censor and control information, which is why for many social media is the now go to platform to consume, document, and distribute news.

But again, in the United Kingdom we have seen the impact of foreign and malign influences. According to a BBC investigation, they found that a Pakistani national linked to a website called Channel3Now, had posted an article that included a false name for the perpetrator responsible for the slaughter of three young girls in Southport. The article was shared widely on social media and quickly went viral. Only after UK police had refuted the false information, was the post deleted and an apology issued. The damage however was done.

Locally, there was at least one doctored video circulating online in early August purporting to be of Aldi in Chadderton, not only was this video not filmed within the Borough of Oldham it was several years old. However, this caused a tremendous amount of community concern and even lead to Police resources being deployed to the scene.

It is urgent that we take proactive measures to enhance the safety and security of our online environment. We cannot allow malicious actors to spread misinformation online in an attempt to cause unrest and division and destruction. Equally, we must make sure that where criminality happens that existing laws are enforced by the Police and where they are outdated, that Parliament updates and amends the law. The Police must act without fear or favour and must be the only ones who police our streets and protect the public when there is the potential for harm or injury.

We must always make sure that the right to free speech and the right to exercise it is paramount. Freedom of speech is increasingly under threat, it must not be used by politicians to censor, curtail or silence their critics. The road to hell is always paved with good intentions.

The current Online Safety Act, while a significant step forward, requires strengthening to address challenges and ensure comprehensive protection for all users, particularly vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly.

This Council resolves:

1. That Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council will value and protect freedom of speech.
2. That Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council will never abuse the powers it has and use them against residents when they are lawfully exercising freedom of speech.
3. That we recognise the Peelite principle of policing that the Police must act without fear or favour and firmly believe that the police are there to police our streets and that we will **never** accept convicted criminals policing or 'managing' our streets, vigilantism, or rioting.
4. To write to the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police and the Chief Superintendent for Oldham to thank them for the work their officers did to keep residents in the Oldham Metropolitan Borough safe and violence off our streets, as well as thanking officers for the around the

clock work, they do to keep our ports of entry, like Manchester Airport, safe also.

5. To write to the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology to ask his Department:
 - a. to undertake a review of the Online Safety Act to identify areas for improvement.
 - b. to strengthen enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance and increase penalties for violations.
 - c. that HM Government will protect freedom of speech and not curtail hard won rights and freedoms.
 - d. to provide resources and training for parents, schools, and third sector organisations to help them protect and guide children in the digital world.
 - e. to ensure victims of online abuse and crimes are supported.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was LOST.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

This Council resolves:

1. To write to the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police and the Chief Superintendent for Oldham to thank them for the work their officers did to keep Oldhamers safe and violence off our streets.
2. To write to the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation & Technology to ask that his department:
 - a. Undertake a review of the Online Safety Act to identify areas for improvement.
 - b. Strengthen enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance and increase penalties for violations.
 - c. Provide resources and training for parents, schools, and third sector organisations to help them protect and guide children in the digital world.
 - d. Ensure victims of online abuse and crimes are supported.

Motion 2: A Welcome Start to Delivering the New Deal for Workers

Councillor Taylor MOVED and Councillor Islam SECONDED the following Motion:

The King's Speech delivered on the 17th of July 2024 included plans for a new Employment Rights Bill. This bill builds on the previously announced New Deal for Working People and will enshrine much of the plan to make work pay, provide security at work and ensure the work life balance that everyone deserves.

This Council notes:

- The Government's commitment to improve workers' rights, and terms & conditions across the UK.

- The key components of the New Deal for Working People, include:
 - a. A ban on zero-hour contracts.
 - b. A commitment to end 'fire & re-hire' practices
 - c. Strengthening employment rights and flexible working from day one.
 - d. Making sure work pays, with a genuine living wage.
 - e. Better access to trade unions and fair representation in the workplace.

This Council believes:

- That fair pay and decent working conditions are fundamental rights for all workers.
- That the measures proposed in the New Deal for Workers will significantly improve the lives of workers in Oldham
- That fair and decent work provides greater security, improves national productivity and increases economic opportunity for all workers.
- That supporting these measures aligns with our commitment to social justice and economic fairness.

This Council resolves to:

1. Lobby for support for the Employment Rights Bill.
2. Write to the Borough's three MPs, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, reaffirming our support for the New Deal for Workers.
3. Promote awareness of the New Deal for Workers in Oldham through our communication channels.
4. Encourage local businesses to adopt the principles of the New Deal for Workers voluntarily, ahead of any legislative changes.

1st AMENDMENT

Councillor Quigg MOVED and Councillor Adams SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

The King's Speech delivered on the 17th of July 2024 included plans for a new Employment Rights Bill. This bill builds on the previously announced New Deal for Working People and will enshrine much of the plan to make work pay, provide security at work and ensure the work life balance that everyone deserves.

This Council notes:

- The Government's commitment to improve workers' rights, and terms & conditions across the UK.
- The key components of the New Deal for Working People, include:
 - a. A ban on zero-hour contracts.
 - b. A commitment to end 'fire & re-hire' practices
 - c. Strengthening employment rights and flexible working from day one.

- d. Making sure work pays, with a genuine living wage.
- e. Better access to trade unions and fair representation in the workplace.

This Council resolves to:

Ask the groups and individuals, within the Council chamber of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council, if they so choose, to write to their Members of Parliament to:

- Lobby for support for the Employment Rights Bill.
- Write to the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, to support the New Deal for Workers.
- Promote awareness of the New Deal for Workers in Oldham through their communication channels.
- That fair pay and decent working conditions are fundamental rights for all workers.
- That the measures proposed in the New Deal for Workers will significantly improve the lives of workers in Oldham
- That fair and decent work provides greater security, improves national productivity, and increases economic opportunity for all workers.
- That supporting these measures aligns with Labour's commitment to social justice and economic fairness.

To further ask the groups and individuals, within the Council chamber of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council, if they so choose, to write to:

- The Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer to:
 - confirm that HM government will not allow freedom of movement of any kind with the European Union or the European Economic Area.
 - That HM government will reconsider their decision to scrap plans that force councils to introduce mandatory 'local connection tests' for social housing, and an income test.

A vote was taken on the 1st AMENDMENT which was LOST.

2nd AMENDMENT

Councillor Al-Hamdani MOVED and Councillor Sykes
SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

The King's Speech delivered on the 17th of July 2024 included plans for a new Employment Rights Bill. This bill builds on the previously announced New Deal for Working People and will enshrine much of the plan to make work pay, provide security at work and ensure the work life balance that everyone deserves.

This Council notes:

- The Government's commitment to improve workers' rights, and terms & conditions across the UK.
- The key components of the New Deal for Working People, include:
 - a. A ban on zero-hour contracts.
 - b. A commitment to end 'fire & re-hire' practices
 - c. Strengthening employment rights and flexible working from day one.
 - d. Making sure work pays, with a genuine living wage.
 - e. Better access to trade unions and fair representation in the workplace.

This Council believes:

- That fair pay and decent working conditions are fundamental rights for all workers.
- That the measures proposed in the New Deal for Workers will significantly improve the lives of workers in Oldham
- That fair and decent work provides greater security, improves national productivity and increases economic opportunity for all workers.
- That supporting these measures aligns with our commitment to social justice and economic fairness.

This Council resolves to:

- 1 Lobby for support for the Employment Rights Bill.
- 2 Write to the Borough's three MPs, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, reaffirming our support for the New Deal for Workers.
- 3 Promote awareness of the New Deal for Workers in Oldham through our communication channels.
- 4 Encourage local businesses to adopt the principles of the New Deal for Workers voluntarily, ahead of any legislative changes.
- 5 Cease using zero hours contractors for workers employed on or on behalf of Oldham Council, such as bin collections staff.

A vote was taken on the 2nd AMENDMENT which was LOST.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

This Council resolves to:

1. To lobby for support for the Employment Rights Bill.
2. To request that the Chief Executive write to the Borough's three MPs, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, reaffirming our support for the New Deal for Workers.
3. To promote awareness of the New Deal for Workers in Oldham through our communication channels.

4. To encourage local businesses to adopt the principles of the New Deal for Workers voluntarily, ahead of any legislative changes.

NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS

Motion 1: Two Child Benefit Cap

Councillor Sykes MOVED and Councillor Al-Hamdani
SECONDED the following MOTION:

The Two Child limit to benefit payments was introduced by the Conservative Government in 2017 and is supported by the current Labour Government. It prevents families from claiming Child Tax Credit or Universal Credit for more than two children in the household.

Council notes the recent research conducted by the End Child Poverty Coalition which has found that:

- 1.5 million children in the UK live in households subject to the two-child limit on benefit payments. That is roughly one-in-ten children in the UK.
- In 2023/24 the two-child limit cost families up to £3,235 per child each year.
- There is a strong correlation between families affected by the two-child limit and those who are living in poverty.
- Scrapping the two-child limit would lift 250,000 children out of poverty overnight, and significantly reduce the level of poverty that a further 850,000 children live in.
- Scrapping the two-child limit would cost £1.3 billion, however it is estimated that child poverty costs the economy £39 billion each year.

In Oldham 11,340 children in 3,160 households are currently affected by the two-child limit to benefit payments. That is 18% of all children in the authority area. At the same time 27,760 local children are living in poverty.

Council strongly believes that the two-child limit to benefit payments is a cruel and harmful policy that should be scrapped. Research from the University of York has shown its introduction has had no positive impacts on employment and earnings. Instead, it has dragged thousands of local families into poverty.

Council notes the Liberal Democrats have consistently opposed the two-child limit to benefit payments since it was introduced – calling for it to be axed in their 2017, 2019 and 2024 manifestos. Council notes with concern the stance of the Labour Government who are committed to keeping the cap – going as far as suspending the whip from MPs who rebel against this position.

Council resolves to:

1. Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister outlining Oldham Council's strong belief that the two-child limit to benefit

payments should be scrapped – which would help more than 11,000 children across Oldham.

2. Further instruct the Chief Executive to write to all of Oldham's MPs, asking them to commit their public support to the campaign to end the cruel two child limit to benefit payments.
3. Ensure the number of children a family has is considered when a hardship grant is given out by the council.
4. Explore ways to support families impacted by the two-child limit across Oldham Borough, including through free school meals.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Rustidge SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

The Two Child limit to benefit payments was introduced by the Conservative Government in 2017. It prevents families from claiming Child Tax Credit or Universal Credit for more than two children in the household.

The 2017 two-child limit followed many other punitive welfare changes introduced by the Conservative Lib Dem Coalition between 2010 and 2015 which had a devastating impact on poverty levels including the Household Benefit cap implemented in 2013.

The last Labour Government made tackling child poverty a national priority. The Coalition Government abandoned the Act to enshrine in law the target of eradicating child poverty by 2020.

Council notes the recent research conducted by the End Child Poverty Coalition which has found that:

- 1.5 million children in the UK live in households subject to the two-child limit on benefit payments. That is roughly one-in-ten children in the UK.
- In 2023/24 the two-child limit cost families up to £3,235 per child each year.
- There is a strong correlation between families affected by the two-child limit and those who are living in poverty.
- Scrapping the two-child limit would lift 250,000 children out of poverty overnight, and significantly reduce the level of poverty that a further 850,000 children live in.
- Scrapping the two-child limit would cost £2.5 billion in this year, rising to £3.6 billion when fully rolled out however it is estimated that child poverty costs the economy £39 billion each year.

In Oldham 11,340 children in 3,160 households are currently affected by the two-child limit to benefit payments. That is 18% of all children in the authority area. At the same time 27,760 local children are living in poverty.

Council strongly believes that the two-child limit to benefit payments is a cruel and harmful policy that should be scrapped when the Government's fiscal position allows and as part of a wider strategy to reduce child poverty.

Council further notes the £22 billion 'black hole' of unfunded Conservative spending commitments discovered following an audit of Government finances subsequent to the General Election in July 2024.

Oldham welcomes creation of a Ministerial Taskforce already beginning work on a cross government Child Poverty Strategy. The taskforce is supported by a Child Poverty Unit in the Cabinet Office.

Oldham Council will always stand up for families in need and has a long track record of delivering support to those affected by the cost-of-living crisis and poverty through the We Can Help campaign, Cost of Living support, development of Family Hubs, Real Living Wage targets and Work and Skills programme to mitigate and alleviate poverty in our borough.

Council resolves to:

1. Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister welcoming:
 - a. The development of a Child Poverty Strategy including reviewing the impact of both the two-child limit and the family benefit cap.
 - b. The opportunity to develop a new partnership between Oldham Council and the Labour Government to tackle the shameful legacy of fourteen years of Coalition and Conservative Welfare policies which have embedded child poverty in Oldham and across the UK
2. Further instruct the Chief Executive to write to all of Oldham's MPs, asking them to commit their public support ending child poverty as quickly as possible.
3. Ensure the number of children a family has is considered when a hardship grant is given out by the council.
4. Explore ways to support families impacted by the two-child limit across Oldham Borough, including through free school meals.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.

On being put to the vote the MOTION as AMENDED was CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Chief Executive be instructed to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister welcoming:
 - a. The development of a Child Poverty Strategy including reviewing the impact of both the two-child limit and the family benefit cap.

- b. The opportunity to develop a new partnership between Oldham Council and the Labour Government to tackle the shameful legacy of fourteen years of Coalition and Conservative Welfare policies which have embedded child poverty in Oldham and across the UK.
2. That Council further instruct that the Chief Executive to write to all of Oldham's MPs, asking them to commit their public support ending child poverty as quickly as possible.
3. Ensure the number of children a family has is considered when a hardship grant is given out by the council.
4. Explore ways to support families impacted by the two-child limit across Oldham Borough, including through free school meals.

Motion 2: Motor Insurance Premiums

Councillor Akhtar MOVED and Councillor Ibrahim SECONDED the following MOTION:

Recent research has exposed stark and unacceptable racial disparities in motor insurance premiums across the UK, including in Oldham. A 2023 survey by Citizens Advice found that residents in the most ethnically diverse areas are being quoted insurance premiums that are, on average, 33% higher than those in less diverse areas. Shockingly, this disparity persists even when controlling for factors like crime rates, vehicle values, and local road traffic accident statistics. Furthermore, evidence suggests that individuals with names associated with certain ethnic groups, such as "Muhammad," face higher premiums compared to those with names like "John," despite similar risk profiles.

These findings are a damning indictment of an industry that is systematically disadvantaging Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has committed to investigating these practices, but the urgency of the situation demands immediate action. Section 19 of the Equality Act (2010) defines indirect discrimination as the application of a provision, criterion, or practice that, while applied uniformly, results in worse outcomes for a group of people with protected characteristics. These practices must be recognised as such.

Addressing these disparities is not just a legal necessity but a moral imperative, aligning with Oldham Council's commitment to promoting equity, fairness, and social justice.

Oldham Council Notes:

Oldham's diversity is one of its greatest strengths, but this strength is undermined when our residents are subjected to systemic discrimination in essential services like motor insurance. The reported discriminatory practices not only erode trust in financial institutions but also exacerbate existing socio-

economic inequalities by imposing an undue financial burden on ethnic minority communities.



While the Council does not have direct control over insurance premiums, we have a duty to stand up for our residents, challenge unfair practices, and advocate for systemic change. It is not enough to passively acknowledge these issues; we must actively work to dismantle the structures that allow such disparities to persist.

We welcome the commitment in the Labour manifesto, which states that the new Government will further support people by “tackling the soaring cost of car insurance,” but this must include specific actions to eliminate racial discrimination within the industry.

Oldham Council Believes:

Every resident of Oldham has the right to be treated fairly and equitably in all aspects of life, including motor insurance, regardless of their race or ethnicity. The Council must take an active role in raising awareness about this issue, applying pressure on relevant bodies, and advocating for substantive change at both local and national levels.

Oldham Council Resolves:

1. To Demand Accountability: Write to Oldham’s newly elected MPs, urging them to take immediate action by raising these concerns about racial disparities in motor insurance premiums with the relevant Secretary of State. Additionally, demand that they press the FCA to expedite its investigation into these discriminatory practices and report back to the community on the progress made.
2. To Challenge the Insurance Industry: Instruct the portfolio holder for neighbourhoods and community safety to write to the Association of British Insurers (ABI), demanding a comprehensive review of their pricing practices. The ABI must be held to account for why motorists from BAME backgrounds are charged significantly higher premiums than their White counterparts with similar risk profiles. The Council should insist on transparency and a full explanation, accompanied by concrete steps to rectify this injustice.
3. To Empower the Community: Support and amplify local initiatives and campaigns that raise awareness of this issue and provide support to those affected by these discriminatory practices. The Council must work closely with community leaders and advocacy groups to ensure that all residents are informed of their rights and the support available to them.
4. To Build a Coalition for Change: Collaborate with other councils, governmental bodies, and relevant organisations to form a coalition dedicated to addressing and eliminating racial disparities in motor insurance premiums. This coalition should work towards developing

and implementing policies that ensure fair treatment for all citizens, regardless of ethnicity.



AMENDMENT

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Mohon Ali SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

Recent research has exposed stark and unacceptable racial disparities in motor insurance premiums across the UK, including in Oldham. A 2023 survey by Citizens Advice found that residents in the most ethnically diverse areas are being quoted insurance premiums that are, on average, 33% higher than those in less diverse areas. Shockingly, this disparity persists even when controlling for factors like crime rates, vehicle values, and local road traffic accident statistics.

These findings are a damning indictment of an industry that is systematically disadvantaging poorer communities and, because Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities are more likely to experience poverty, disproportionately affecting BAME people. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has committed to investigating these practices, but the urgency of the situation demands immediate action. Section 19 of the Equality Act (2010) defines indirect discrimination as the application of a provision, criterion, or practice that, while applied uniformly, results in worse outcomes for a group of people with protected characteristics. These practices must be recognised as such.

Addressing these disparities is not just a legal necessity but a moral imperative, aligning with Oldham Council's commitment to promoting equity, fairness, and social justice.

Oldham Council Notes:

Oldham's diversity is one of its greatest strengths, but this strength is undermined when our residents are subjected to systemic discrimination in essential services like motor insurance. The reported discriminatory practices not only erode trust in financial institutions but also exacerbate existing socio-economic inequalities by imposing an undue financial burden on disadvantaged communities.

While the Council does not have direct control over insurance premiums, we have a duty to stand up for our residents, challenge unfair practices, and advocate for systemic change. It is not enough to passively acknowledge these issues; we must actively work to dismantle the structures that allow such disparities to persist.

We welcome the commitment in the Labour manifesto, which states that the new Government will further support people by "tackling the soaring cost of car insurance," but this must include specific actions to eliminate the poverty premium being applied to policies and the subsequent disproportionate impact on BAME communities.

Oldham Council Believes:

Every resident of Oldham has the right to be treated fairly and equitably in all aspects of life, including motor insurance, regardless of their race or ethnicity. The Council must take an active role in raising awareness about this issue, applying pressure on relevant bodies, and advocating for substantive change at both local and national levels.

Oldham Council Resolves:

1. To write to Oldham's newly elected MPs, asking them to raise these concerns about racial disparities in motor insurance premiums with the Secretaries of State for Transport and for Business and Trade. Additionally, ask that they urge the FCA to expedite its investigation into these discriminatory practices and report back their response to this Council.
2. To instruct the portfolio holder for community safety, the Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture to write to the Association of British Insurers (ABI), urging them to undertake a comprehensive review of their pricing practices. The ABI must be asked to account for why motorists from BAME backgrounds are charged significantly higher premiums than their White counterparts with similar risk profiles. The Council should insist on transparency and a full explanation, accompanied by concrete steps to rectify this injustice.
3. To support and amplify local initiatives and campaigns that raise awareness of this issue and provide support to those affected by these discriminatory practices.
4. To ask the Leader of the Council, as the Greater Manchester Portfolio Holder for Equalities and Communities to Collaborate with other councils, governmental bodies, and relevant organisations to form a Greater Manchester wide working group dedicated to addressing and eliminating poverty premiums and associated racial disparities in motor insurance premiums. This coalition should lobby the government and associated groups, like the ABI and FCA, for the development and implementation of policies that ensure fair treatment for all citizens, regardless of ethnicity.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.

On being put to the vote the MOTION as AMENDED was CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Chief Executive be requested to write to Oldham's newly elected MPs, asking them to raise these concerns about racial disparities in motor insurance premiums with the Secretaries of State for Transport and for Business and Trade. Additionally, ask that they urge the FCA to expedite its investigation into these discriminatory practices and report back their response to this Council.
2. To instruct the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, the Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture to

write to the Association of British Insurers (ABI), urging them to undertake a comprehensive review of their pricing practices. The ABI must be asked to account for why motorists from BAME backgrounds are charged significantly higher premiums than their White counterparts with similar risk profiles. The Council should insist on transparency and a full explanation, accompanied by concrete steps to rectify this injustice.

3. To support and amplify local initiatives and campaigns that raise awareness of this issue and provide support to those affected by these discriminatory practices.
4. To ask the Leader of the Council, as the Greater Manchester Portfolio Holder for Equalities and Communities, to Collaborate with other councils, governmental bodies, and relevant organisations to form a Greater Manchester wide working group dedicated to addressing and eliminating poverty premiums and associated racial disparities in motor insurance premiums. This coalition should lobby the government and associated groups, like the ABI and FCA, for the development and implementation of policies that ensure fair treatment for all citizens, regardless of ethnicity.

Motion 3: Putting Oldham Council Back in the Black

Councillor Quigg MOVED AND Councillor Woodvine
SECONDED the following MOTION:

Despite Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC) passing a budget on the 28th of February 2024, Oldham Council say they are now 'working on' reducing a predicted £36m budget black hole. Despite being halfway through the current financial year the budgetary picture has worsened.

If the administration fails in cutting costs, OMBC could well end up using most of its reserves in 2025, leaving it vulnerable to 'effective bankruptcy' or the issuance of a Section 114. OMBC has also made clear to the media that they are encouraging voluntary redundancies across council services in a bid to cut spending and were looking at 'all options'.

Last year, the cabinet reported a projected overspend every quarter and each time they said they expected the real figure to be less than predicted –it wasn't. Too often Council spending and financial information is not as comprehensive and transparent as it should be, meaning local taxpayers don't have a full and accurate picture of the finances. Too often the Labour administration has dismissed or failed to implement opposition budget amendments.

Clearly something is going wrong at OMBC.

Is the Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability to blame or is the Director of Finance to blame?

Was this Council misled at the last budget?

Who has failed to manage OMBC finances by failing to keep them under control?

Councillors and the people of Oldham have not been given the full picture on the financial challenges facing the Borough. The budget set on the 28th of February 2024 was clearly not worth the paper it was printed on.



This Council resolves to:

- Immediately commission an investigation by a forensic accountant on the Council's finances both past and present and whether it has complied with the Best Value Duty.
- For the investigation's outcome report to be presented to a special sitting of the full Council.
-

The Council further resolves to:

- Immediately publish discussions OMBC has had with HM Government about any financial packages to help repair the financial black hole and to provide a full list of meetings and minutes of those meetings that took place and with who.
- Immediately provide a full budgetary analysis to each Council grouping by the Director of Finance, providing a full report on the Council's finances.
- Make sure all 60 Oldham Borough Councillors have a DBS check completed by the time of the next Council meeting to make sure there are no issues financial or otherwise that prevent them from carrying out their duties.
- Write to Saddleworth Parish Council and Shaw and Crompton Town Council to confirm if they have carried out DBS checks on all elected members and asking them to reply by the next full Council meeting with a response as to whether they are carrying out DBS checks on elected members.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was LOST.

Motion 4: Mass Graves in Oldham Cemeteries

Councillor Hurley MOVED AND Councillor Hughes SECONDED the following MOTION:

Before the 1980s, it was common practice across the UK that when a woman had a stillbirth, hospital staff would quickly take the baby away.

Parents were informed by hospital staff that it was better they didn't hold or even see their baby as they believed a mother would recover from the experience quicker if they had no interaction with their baby. It was explained that their baby would be buried in a coffin alongside a 'nice' person, and that was that.

No funeral, no mental health assistance, and no support; grieving mothers and fathers were simply told and expected to just get on with their lives. The emotional toll of this experience cannot be overstated. So many people have carried the pain and trauma of the practice from the past, with many never knowing the final resting place of their babies.

Sadly, the reality of what occurred with thousands of stillborn babies is now known thanks to the fantastic campaign work of a woman from the Wirral, Gina Jacobs, who found her baby in a mass grave alongside 63 other babies.

A resident from Royton asked us to help her in finding her twin brothers; one was stillborn, and the other had died at 5 hours old in 1962. Her parents had since passed away, but her quest to find the graves of her brothers eventually led her to Royton cemetery after years of anguish and trauma.

After many years of searching and inquiring, also being passed back and forth between the hospital and registrar and then the cemetery records, it became clear that the process needs to be looked at. A clear pathway between multi-agency agencies must be put in place so relatives can find the information required quickly. The resident eventually found out that Royton Cemetery had a mass grave where her brothers lay.

Our research of the public records at Hollinwood and online records uncovered even more: believed to buried together in one box, the resident's brothers Nicolas and Lawrence shared their unmarked mass grave with 303 others, which included:

- 146 stillborn babies
- 128 babies and young children
- 29 Adults

Due to errors in the system, only 147 names of the 303 buried were recorded online. This is a matter of extreme urgency that should be fixed immediately to ensure all those who are buried in mass graves are properly recorded.

Thankfully, staff at the records office hold the original handwritten books in which we found 157 missing names, which, through the work of one staff member these 157 have manually been added to the online records for this one mass grave.

Through Online Records and with the help of the staff from Hollinwood Cemetery, we discovered that there are three mass graves in Royton Cemetery; Royton is not unique there are mass graves of stillborn babies, babies and young children in every cemetery across the borough, who lay forgotten, totalling thousands.

We cannot undo what has happened, but as an authority, we must recognise that it did happen and support residents and their families.

This council resolves to:

- Recognise the loss and suffering in the past and present by publicly marking out each mass grave and erecting a memorial to all our babies born asleep and the many who lay with them forgotten.
- That records of mass graves in our cemeteries be collated and recorded entirely online so that relatives can at last see the final resting place of their babies, children and relatives.
- To implement and publicise a clear procedure that provides those seeking their loved ones, a professional, sensitive and transparent process.
- Provide relatives with a dedicated point of contact who can support and assist people in this traumatic time.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED
UNANIMOUSLY.

RESOLVED:

1. THAT THE Council recognises the loss and suffering in the past and present by publicly marking out each mass grave and erecting a memorial to all our babies born asleep and the many who lay with them forgotten.
2. That records of mass graves in our cemeteries be collated and recorded entirely online so that relatives can at last see the final resting place of their babies, children and relatives.
3. That the Council implements and publicises a clear procedure that provides those seeking their loved ones, a professional, sensitive and transparent process.
4. Provides relatives with a dedicated point of contact who can support and assist people in this traumatic time.

Motion 5: Collective Spirit Free School

The following Motion was MOVED by Councillor Hince and
SECONDED by Councillor Navesey

The council and its members (as corporate parents) have a duty of care towards children within the borough. This includes when they are failed by the very organisations meant to educate and develop them.

This Council notes:

- Collective Spirit Free School based in Oldham closed in 2017 amid serious allegations of financial irregularities and mismanagement.
- Hundreds of pupils were subject to catastrophic failures in their education, as well as receiving substandard care, with even basic requirements such as school lunches being described as inedible.
- When inspected by Ofsted, the school was put into special measures. However, such was the level of failings

and conditions the school was closed with two hundred and ten students needing to be urgently re-schooled.

- In addition, the Education & Skills Funding Agency report identified a number of significant failings in governance and financial control arrangements relating to a company connected to the school's leadership.
- It has been reported that between September 2013 and August 2017 Collective Spirit Free School paid between £1,247,637 and £1,265,177 to a company connected to the school's leadership.
- The Education & Skills Funding Agency report concluded that "owing to the lack of supporting documentation and evidence in relation to the financial transactions, the Education & Skills Funding Agency is unable to conclude on the allegations, specifically whether costs were inappropriately inflated, or invoices submitted for services not delivered". The Education & Skills Funding Agency also concluded "that from a review of documentation and the governance and control arrangements operated by Collective Spirit Free School, casts significant doubt on the legitimacy of funds paid to" a company connected to the school's leadership. The report states that The Education & Skills Funding Agency encountered substantial difficulties establishing any reasonable audit trail of financial transactions or evidence to assure the regularity of funds spent by the trust (school).
- It has also been reported that during this time, the school even failed to pay pension contributions to teachers totalling £124000.
- In addition, it has been reported donations from parents and carers to the school totalling £33,512, essentially from some of the poorest homes in the borough also remain unaccounted for.
- Although an investigation was carried out and subsequent report was published by the Education & Skills Funding Agency, the report found many questions remain unanswered, with responsibility for potential wrongdoing going unaccounted for.
- Victims of this mismanagement, former pupils, parents, carers, and former employees still seek answers, accountability, and closure.

This Council resolves:

- To outline the tragic failings, impacts and alleged financial irregularities still unanswered in the Collective Spirit Free School scandal to the Secretary of State for Education the Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP.
- To request the Secretary of State for Education the Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP to instruct the Department of Education (DfE) to carry out a full inquiry into Collective Spirit Free School. With the aims and objectives of fully highlighting the schools' failings and negative impacts on

pupils and their families, by giving them a voice in said inquiry. To provide a platform to individuals who wish to make statements of evidence. And a comprehensive investigation into financial irregularities previously unanswered including the holding to account of any individual(s) accountable (and) or complicit in wrongdoing.

- To offer the inquiry any support or resources as requested by the DfE.

A recorded vote, in line with the Regulations was then taken on the MOTION as follows:

COUNCILLOR		COUNCILLOR	
Adams Christine	FOR	Hussain Junaid	FOR
Akhtar Shoab	FOR	Hussain Sajed	FOR
Al-Hamdani Sam	ABSTAIN	Ibrahim Nyla	FOR
Ali Mohon	FOR	Iqbal Nadeem	FOR
Ali Zaheer	FOR	Islam Mohammed Nazrul	FOR
Arnott Dave	FOR	Jabbar Abdul	FOR
Aslam Naseem	FOR	Kenyon Mark	ABSTAIN
Azad Montaz Ali	FOR	Kouser Aisha	FOR
Ball Sandra	ABSTAIN	Lancaster Luke	FOR
Bishop Helen	ABSTAIN	Malik Abdul	FOR
Bashforth Marie	FOR	Marland Alicia	ABSTAIN
Brownridge Barbara	FOR	McLaren Colin	FOR
Byrne Pam	FOR	Moore's Eddie (Deputy Mayor)	FOR
Charters Josh	FOR	Murphy Dave	ABSTAIN
Cosgrove Angela	FOR	Mushtaq Shaid	FOR
Chowhan Naveed	APOLOGIES	Nasheen Umar	FOR
Davis Peter	FOR	Navesey Lisa	FOR
Dean Peter	FOR	Quigg Lewis	FOR
Ghafoor Kamran	FOR	Rustidge Ken	FOR
Goodwin Chris	FOR	Shah Arooj	FOR
Hamblett Louie	ABSTAIN	Sharp Beth	FOR
Harkness Garth	ABSTAIN	Sheldon Graham	FOR
Harrison Holly	FOR	Shuttleworth Graham	FOR
Hince Marc	FOR	Sykes Howard	ABSTAIN
Hindle Neil	FOR	Taylor Elaine	FOR
Hobin Brian	FOR	Wahid Abdul	FOR

Hughes Jade	ABSTAIN	Wilkinson Mark	ABSTAIN
Hurley Maggie	ABSTAIN	Williamson Diane	ABSTAIN
Hussain Aftab	FOR	Woodvine Max	FOR
Hussain Fida	FOR	Chauhan Zahid (MAYOR)	FOR

On a recorded VOTE being taken 46 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the MOTION with 0 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 13 ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Chief Executive be requested to outline the tragic failings, impacts and alleged financial irregularities still unanswered in the Collective Spirit Free School scandal to the Secretary of State for Education the Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP.
2. To request that the Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP, instruct the Department of Education (DfE) to carry out a full inquiry into Collective Spirit Free School; with the aims and objectives of fully highlighting the schools' failings and negative impacts on pupils and their families, by giving them a voice in said inquiry and to provide a platform to individuals who wish to make statements of evidence. And a comprehensive investigation into financial irregularities previously unanswered including the holding to account of any individual(s) accountable (and) or complicit in wrongdoing.
3. To offer the inquiry any support or resources as requested by the DfE.

13

UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED a report of the Director of Legal, which updated members on actions taken following the meeting of the Council held on 10th July 2024 and also on any updated responses from meetings held in the last 12 months.

RESOLVED:

That the actions regarding motions and issues from the meeting of the Council held on 10th July 2024, be noted and confirmed.

14

CONSTITUTION UPDATE

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Jabbar SECONDED the report of the Director of Legal, which recommended that Council consider and approve the proposed constitution changes detailed at paragraphs 2.1 to 2.7 of the submitted report and to reconfirm the Constitution as amended by this meeting.

The main areas that were recommended for amendment included 'Member/Officer Protocol' (as detailed at Appendix 1),

‘Planning meeting protocol’ (as detailed at Appendix 2), ‘Organisational changes’ (as detailed at Appendix 3), ‘Employee Code of Conduct’ (as detailed at Appendix 4), ‘Financial Procedure Rules’ (as detailed at Appendix 5), ‘Contract Procedure Rules’ (as detailed at Appendix 6) and ‘Other procedural changes’ (as detailed at Appendix 7).

Council was advised that the Constitution needs to be regularly reviewed to ensure that it reflects any procedural or organisational changes and the Director of Legal’s report identified areas where amendments to the Constitution were required.

RESOLVED:

1. That Council approves the recommended constitutional changes detailed at paragraphs 2.1 to 2.7 of the report, including the organisational changes outlined at paragraph 2.3.
2. That Council confirms the Constitution, as amended.
3. That Council delegates to the Director of Legal, the making of consequential amendments to the Constitution.

15

TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2023/24

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Director of Finance concerning the Treasury Management outturn for 2023/24.

The Council was required to consider the performance of the Treasury Management function to comply with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2021). The submitted outturn report provided an update and set out the key Treasury Management issues for Members’ information and reviews and outlines, namely: an economic update for 2023/24; an update of the Council’s current treasury management position; Council Borrowing; Treasury Investment Activity; Treasury Performance for 2023/24; and Treasury Management Prudential Indicators.

The Treasury Management Outturn report 2023/24 had previously been presented to and considered by the Audit Committee on 27th June 2024 and by the Cabinet on 15th July 2024. Both of these bodies were content to commend the report to Council for approval.

RESOLVED:

1. That Council approves the actual 2023/24 prudential and treasury indicators presented in the Director of Finance’s report.
2. That Council approves the annual treasury management review report for 2023/24.

16

OLDHAM YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE PLAN 2024-2025

Councillor Mushtaq MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25. The Oldham Youth Justice Plan sets out the strategic direction for youth justice in Oldham, taking a partnership approach to reducing re-offending, reducing the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system and reducing the use of custody. The Plan had previously been considered by the Youth Justice Management Board, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board and the Cabinet, who had all recommended its approval.



There had been an acknowledgment that the plan is significant in length. However, this was dictated by the template provided by the national Youth Justice Board. The Youth Justice Service Plan and Action Plan were attached as appendices to the submitted report.

RESOLVED:

That the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 be approved.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 9.59pm



Report to COUNCIL – 6th November 2024

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Arooj Shah, Leader of Oldham Council & Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to the portfolio responsibilities.

We are making remarkable progress in building a better Oldham. This report outlines the story so far, and the ongoing work to continue to transform Oldham into a vibrant, thriving borough.

Pride, Progress, Partnership: The Oldham Plan

The plan launched a fortnight ago and its three missions of Healthier, Happier Lives; Greater Place to Live; and Green and Growing put regeneration at its heart. It aligns with the government's missions for growth, security, opportunity, and fairness for all. It demonstrates our commitment not just to building a better Oldham for our residents, but also to setting an example for Greater Manchester and the whole country.

The Oldham Plan is not just about words – it's about action. We are investing in education to equip our young people with the skills necessary to succeed. We are enhancing our healthcare and support services to make them more accessible and effective, especially for our most vulnerable residents. We are tackling health inequalities head-on and making Oldham a place where everyone has the opportunity to live well and thrive. We are also committed to providing affordable, high-quality homes that reflect the needs of our diverse community. Our efforts to transform public spaces, develop a vibrant night-time economy, and create an environment where families want to stay, businesses want to invest, and tourists want to visit are all part of our mission to make Oldham a great place to live.

Our achievements and future plans

Over the past year, we've stepped our regeneration up a gear with projects complete and spades in the ground. Here are some of the key highlights:

- **Spindles transformation:** Had Oldham Council not stepped in and bought Spindles we would be facing the same problems that many other towns are experiencing following the collapse of many national retailers and big names like Debenhams. Instead, the new Spindles is the beating heart of our town centre. The opening of The Hive is a testament to our commitment to fostering local entrepreneurship and innovation. It is already a hub for local businesses, providing them with the resources and support they need to thrive. The Hive is not just a workspace - it is a symbol of our ambition and a beacon of hope for the future of Oldham. Our new indoor market and fantastic new event space for gigs and functions is taking shape. We are on track for completion in spring, providing a vibrant new venue for our community. The Spindles project continues to attract industry recognition, with our contractors winning prestigious awards for their work.
- **Egyptian Room:** The new Egyptian Room opened on November 1st, has already created a buzz in the town centre, providing 80 new jobs and a fantastic venue for events. This project is a shining example of how we are breathing new life into Oldham and creating spaces that our community can be proud of.
- **Royton Town Hall:** Our restored Town Hall and Library opened in September, and we have received amazing feedback from visitors. With new gardens, a modern library, and accessible spaces for the community, it is a fantastic venue at the heart of Royton, restoring civic pride in an important heritage building.

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- **Town centre park:** The first section of our brand-new town centre park has been completed at Rock Street, and we are well on our way to delivering the rest. A planning application will be submitted this autumn, and the next phase of work will start next spring. This green oasis in the heart of Oldham will provide a much-needed recreational area for residents and visitors alike.
 - **Accessible Oldham:** We have demolished the Snipe Inn and are creating a brand-new entrance into the town centre from the bus station. Much of the area is already transformed with trees, plants, and new cycle routes, making it easier and safer to get to Oldham. This work is also bringing nature into the town centre and finding new ways to make Oldham the greenest borough in Greater Manchester.
 - **Town Centre Living / Muse Partnership:** This partnership will create a new neighbourhood of 2,000 homes in Oldham Town Centre, and this work has taken a huge step forward following community engagement over summer which will shape Oldham for the next 15 years, as the development plan is presented to Cabinet next month.
 - **Broadway Green / Foxdenton:** A joint venture redevelopment which was forged on the back of a new significant highway, Lydia Becker Way, and as a result has catapulted the creation of new homes, a green parkway and the roll out of hundreds of new jobs for the borough. A recent planning application for the speculative building on the site demonstrates the ongoing investment into the borough.
 - **Hollinwood Junction:** This joint venture regeneration site has spearheaded regeneration in the borough. The final phase of development at Hollinwood Junction has now started, and a new Lidl store will open soon, creating 40 new jobs. When complete, Hollinwood Junction will have created 760 jobs, new retail, leisure, and employment space, and up to 150 family homes.
 - **Southlink and Derker:** At Southlink, we are transforming brownfield land into 146 affordable homes, including 32 for social rent. In Derker, work has begun on 132 new homes, with a significant portion dedicated to affordable housing. These developments are crucial in addressing the housing needs of our residents and ensuring that everyone has access to high-quality, affordable homes.
 - **Powering our homes:** We have appointed a contractor to start work on our brand-new solar farm in Failsworth. The solar farm will create green energy capable of powering the equivalent of around 750 homes at one time. It will transform the land, previously a derelict site, giving it a new sustainable purpose that will boost the environment and biodiversity.
 - **Coliseum and Old Library:** Work is taking place to prepare the Coliseum for refurbishment, with asbestos removal underway ahead of the major works starting in the new year. The internal fit-out of the Old Library Building continues to bring this beautiful heritage building back to life. We were thrilled to open the doors to residents during Heritage Week and look forward to welcoming the public early next summer.
 - **Alex Park Eco Depot:** This new depot is now complete and includes a new training space for apprentices and offers opportunities for community use, as well as being the home for many of the Council's Environmental Services as we continue our commitment to fighting climate change.

Pride in Oldham

At the heart of all these projects is a deep sense of pride in Oldham. We are proving that the reports of the death of town centres are greatly exaggerated. Our town is not just surviving - it is thriving. We are creating a town centre that will be a jewel in the crown of Greater Manchester and a blueprint for other towns to follow. We are building a better Oldham, one that is inclusive, vibrant, and full of opportunity. This report is not just a summary of our achievements - it is a testament to the hard work and dedication of everyone involved in this journey.

Together, we are making Oldham a place that we can all be proud to call home. Oldham's time is now.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Present: Councillor Shah (in the Chair)
Councillors M Ali, Dean, Goodwin, Jabbar, Mushtaq and Taylor

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brownridge and F. Hussain

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions for this meeting of the Cabinet to consider.

5 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2024 be approved as a correct record.

6 **OLDHAM YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE PLAN 2024/2025**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Managing Director of Children & Young People. Each year the Youth Justice Service was required to submit an annual plan to the Youth Justice Board. This plan needed to be endorsed by the Youth Justice Management Board and the Council. The plan was presented to the Youth Justice Management Board on 17th June and submitted to the Youth Justice Board on 28th June to meet the submission date of 30th June 2024. The Annual Plan 2024/25 was presented to Cabinet for approval and comment before submission to full Council.

The focus of the plan for 2024/2025 was to move the service forwards in preparation for the new inspection process and to continue the services focus on reducing serious youth violence. The plan also focused on continuing partnership work across Oldham and Greater Manchester to ensure that the children that the service works with are getting the support they need. The report concluded that Oldham Youth Justice Service is in a strong position to continue to improve the outcomes for the children that it works with by continuing to focus on prevention whilst still meeting the needs of the children who do become part of the criminal justice system.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1 – To approve the Youth Services Justice Plan - As it was a statutory duty for a local authority to produce a Youth

Justice Action Plan it was not possible to provide an alternative option to this plan.

Resolved:

That the Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan 2024/2025 and Action Plan be approved by submission to and approval by Council.

7

REVENUE MONITOR AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2024/25

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance providing Cabinet with an update as at 30 June 2024 (Quarter 1) of the Council's 2024/25 forecast revenue budget position at Annex 1 of the report and the financial position of the capital programme together with the revised capital programme 2024/25 to 2028/29 at Annex 2 of the report, and the Outturn position for 2023/24 at Annex 3 of the report.

The forecast overspend position based on the Quarter 1 profiled budget was £6.508m which if not addressed urgently would have a year-end forecast of £26.033m. As this financial monitoring report reflects the financial position at Quarter 1, it could be regarded as an early warning of the potential year-end position if no further action was taken to reduce net expenditure. The management action initiated in 2023/24 across all service areas had continued into 2024/25 and an enhanced programme of mitigations to reduce the in-year pressure had been commenced. Details were included in Annex 1 of the report. Those mitigations had been implemented with immediate effect, and it was anticipated that by the year end, the current outturn deficit position should reduce. Information on the Quarter 1 position of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), and Revenue Funding and Collection Fund was also outlined in the report. An update on the Quarter 1 2024/25 position was detailed within Annex 1 of the report.

The report outlined the most up to date capital spending position for 2024/25 to 2028/29 for approved schemes. The revised capital programme budget for 2024/25 is £101.680m at the close of Quarter 1, a net increase of £1.997m from the original budget approved at Council on 28 February 2024 of £99.683m. Actual expenditure to 30 June 2024 was £11.895m (11.70% of the forecast outturn). It was likely that the forecast position would continue to change throughout the year with additional re-profiling into future years.

The report provided confirmation of the outturn position for 2023/24. The information contained within Annex 3 of the report was reported in the Narrative section of the Council's draft Statement of Accounts 2023/24 which were published on 7 June 2024 and had been handed over to the Council's external Auditors Forvis Mazars, LLP.

Options/alternatives considered

Option 1 - To consider the forecast revenue and capital positions presented in the report including proposed changes

Resolved -That

1. Forecast profiled budget, being an adverse position of £6.508m and the forecast potential adverse position by year end of £26.033m, with mitigations in place to reduce expenditure be approved.
2. The additional working capital provided for Oldham Total Care as detailed in Annex 1 of the report be approved.
3. Forecast positions for the Dedicated Schools Grant and Revenue Funding and Collection Fund be approved.
4. Revised capital programme for 2024/25 including the proposed virements and the forecast for the financial years to 2028/29 as at Quarter 1 as outlined in Annex 2 of the report be approved.
5. The Outturn position for 2023/24 as highlighted in Annex 3 of the report be approved.

8

LOCAL TAXATION AND BENEFITS DISCRETIONARY POLICIES 2024/25

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance seeking approval for a number of amended Local Taxation and Benefits Discretionary Policies.

The report provided full details of proposed updates to the discretionary policies used to support Local Taxation and Benefits administration i.e., Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefits and Council Tax Reduction administration. The policies and proposed changes were:

The Discretionary Council Tax Discount Policy - To introduce the option to award a discretionary discount under the Exceptional Hardship Payment (EHP) scheme to Council Tax arrears accrued outside of the current financial year. The EHP scheme was the means by which the Council considered requests for discretionary discounts from residents in Exceptional financial hardship under Section 13A (1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act. - The proposed Discretionary Discount Policy was presented at Appendix 1 of the report.

The Discretionary Rate Relief Policy - Central Government had introduced additional discounts and reliefs for the 2024/25 financial year. They had been incorporated into the proposed Discretionary Rate Relief Policy 2024/25 which was presented at Appendix 2 of the report.

The Empty Property Premium Policy - The Council currently applied an empty property premium for property unoccupied and unfurnished for over 2 years. From April 2024, the premium would be applied for properties unoccupied and unfurnished for

at least 1 year. That would mean empty property premiums would be applied as followed.

- 100% premium on properties unoccupied and unfurnished for at least 1 year.
- 200% premium on properties unoccupied and unfurnished for at least 5 years.
- 300% premium on properties unoccupied and unfurnished for at least 10 years.

The policy had been amended to reflect the premium being applied to unoccupied and unfurnished after 1 year.

During the 2023/24 financial year, the Council had received ten applications for an exception to the premium. Decisions were made regarding these applications within an average of 10 working days. It was proposed that decisions regarding requests for an exception to the premium be delegated within the Council Tax team as followed:

- Any applications received from property owners are determined by the Revenues Manager or Revenues Team Leader(s).
- Any appeals are considered by the Exchequer Client Manager (Revenues) or the Assistant Director for Revenues and Benefits.

This was included at Appendix 5 of the report.

Local Welfare Provision - The policy had been amended to include the Council's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint. As part of this initiative, items awarded via the Local Welfare Provision scheme may be pre-loved. Any pre-loved items awarded are fully reconditioned and checked prior to being offered and would come with a 12-month warranty.

Discretionary Housing Payments - The Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) policy had been subject to an annual review. - No proposals for changing the policy had been identified for 2024/25.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1 – Do Nothing

Option 2 - To approve the updated Local Taxation and Benefits Discretionary Policies 2024/25 financial year.

Resolved – That:

1. The proposed amendments to the existing Local Taxation and Benefits Discretionary Policies for 2024/25 be approved.
2. The Discretionary Policies presented as appendices 1-5 of the report be adopted for 2024/25.

Debt Policy and Debt Recovery policy for Adult Social Care Debt. It was reported that the collection of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (also known business rates) was a statutory responsibility of Oldham Council. The collection of sundry debts and commercial rent arrears, whilst not a statutory responsibility, were imperative to maintaining and maximising the Council's revenue stream. In undertaking income and debt recovery it was inevitable that the Council would be required to pursue the recovery of arrears from residents and businesses that may have trouble in paying. The policy aimed to set out how the Council manages and collects debts to ensure consistency and best practice in such situations.

The purpose of the proposed Debt Recovery policies was to establish:

- The best practice principles for charging our residents and businesses and the methods of payment which will be used.
- How the Council would deal with debt, should problems arise in collection.

The proposed policies would apply to all debt and income due to the Council excluding Parking fines.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1 -Approve the Corporate Debt Policy and Debt Recovery policy for Adult Social Care Debt.

Option 2 Do Nothing

Resolved- That the proposed Debt Recovery Policies detailed in the report be approved.

10

THE FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH SOCIAL WORK

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Social Services on options for the how the Social Work statutory functions under the Care Act will be carried out within the field of Mental Health in the future.

It was reported that under the current arrangements, Pennine Care Foundation Trust (PCFT) support the Council to meet its statutory requirements by managing Council Social Work staff. There is currently no formal 'Section 75' agreement or 'Memorandum of Understanding' in place. Many years ago, care co-ordination was introduced to the field of Mental Health, which saw the combining of several professional roles into a single role of a care coordinator. While this was an ambitious step towards integrated working, over the years the professional roles have been become unclear. A new Community Mental Health Framework was developed in 2019, which recommends the separation of the professional roles, as it was now recognised that people would benefit from a multi-agency approach.

Following a recent review of how Mental Health Social Work is conducted within Oldham, there is concern that the Council's

functions are not being met in full. One of the main reasons for this is the inability to recruit social workers into care coordinator roles. The PCFT have the same recruitment concerns regarding Nurses and Occupational therapists. A Greater Manchester (GM) project with Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the PCFT was currently underway, that aimed to bring about change and progress to the current arrangements. However, change was unlikely until at least summer 2025. PCFT in Oldham was currently in business continuity, due to significant workforce challenges, that was therefore having an impact on capacity to meet the demands the service.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1 - Continue to work alongside the PCFT with no section 75 agreement or Memorandum of Understanding in place. No change to current arrangements. The report identified a number of disadvantages associated with this option. No advantages of this option were identified.

Option 2 - Continue with the current integrated arrangements and sign up to the new Section 75 agreement or Memorandum of Understanding moving forward. The report identified several disadvantages and one advantage associated with this option.

Option 3 – Decide to bring social work staff back under council management and reduce the level of integration currently in place. This was the recommended option. The report identified the advantages of this option which outweighed the disadvantages. There would still be a defined split in professional roles, the different professions would remain co-located, which would bring the majority of the benefits of integrated working. If the Council were to step away from the integrated arrangement with the PCFT, it would allow focus on statutory responsibilities and the introduction of a robust governance and accountability framework. This arrangement would align to the arrangements between the PCFT and the other social work teams within the council. The Council would remain committed to working in partnership with the PCFT to deliver the best outcomes for our residents.

Resolved- That Option 3 of the report to bring social work staff back under council management and reduce the level of integration currently in place be approved.

11

LAPTOP HARDWARE REFRESH

The Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive seeking approval to rejuvenate the existing laptop device estate for Council staff. This strategic initiative aimed to significantly enhance productivity, operational efficiency, and seamless compatibility with the existing suite of products across the Council.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1: Do Nothing Under this option, the Council would continue to utilise the ageing laptops until the end of their usable life. This approach entailed several risks and disadvantages which were set out in the report.

Option 2: This option included financially sensitive information which was considered at Item 16 on the agenda.

Option 3: Procure New Laptops and Implement a new VPN Solution. This was the recommended option. The high number of requests for new hardware received by the IT department underpinned the urgency to procure laptops and VPN licenses and to reduce the reuse of outdated laptop devices, ensuring high customer satisfaction and operational excellence was maintained. A planned and phased procurement and deployment of new devices offered best value rather than relying on ad-hoc, break-fix replacement assets. Proactively replacing the laptops immediately would enable the Council to secure advantageous pricing.

Resolved – That the Cabinet would consider the commercially sensitive information contained at Item 16 of the agenda before making a decision.

12

MICROSOFT LICENCE ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT

The Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive seeking approval to enter into a contract with Microsoft to provide for the Council's continued use of Microsoft Software, which was critical to the Council's workforce. Failure to procure and enter into a new contract would result in the expiry of all the essential licenses assigned to Oldham employees and all Microsoft applications no longer working. The consequence of this could be the issuing of fines for non-licence compliance. Oldham Council relied on the availability of Microsoft licences daily. Microsoft provided a secure online environment to enable Oldham Council to deliver services to Oldham residents and businesses. The ability to communicate internally and externally was central to the delivery of public and commercial services and to the Council's ability to communicate effectively to the residents of Oldham.

Options/alternatives considered:

Option A – Approve a Call-Off Contract via Crown Commercial Services Framework Agreement RM6098 Lot 3 (Software) for an Enterprise Agreement with Microsoft and for the continued use of Microsoft Software and support. The report recommended this option to the Cabinet.

Option B – Do not approve the proposed Call-Off Contract, Oldham Council were operating on Microsoft products, and without renewing, would become non-compliant and from a licensing model the Council would be unable to deliver digital

services effectively. Failure to renew the Microsoft Licenses would result in all Oldham digital solutions expiring and all digital offerings no longer working. Additionally, there would be potential fines for statutory agreements and non-licence conformity.

Resolved – That the Cabinet would consider the commercially sensitive information contained at Item 17 of the agenda before making a decision.

13

PROJECT SKYLINE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Cabinet considered a report of the Managing Director, Children and Young People, providing an update on Project Skyline (Greater Manchester proposal to create supply of children's homes to increase availability of Children Looked After placements in the Greater Manchester region for some of the most vulnerable young people) and approve entering into a Partnership Agreement with the remaining Local Authorities in Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and NHS Greater Manchester (NHS GM) for delivery of the project.

The Partnership Agreement would build on the Memorandum of Understanding. It would be entered into between the ten local authorities, GMCA and NHS GM, and would govern the relationship of the parties, roles and responsibilities, and the sharing of liabilities. In particular the Agreement:

- includes the collaboration principles the parties are committed to (taken from the MoU that has already been signed);
- sets out governance arrangements for the project, including terms of reference for the Skyline Strategy Group;
- details arrangements regarding the Skyline Homes;
- states GMCA's commitment to pay Mobilisation Costs to the procured Care Providers, as required;
- sets out the role of GMCA and other parties in managing the procurement process for the identification of the most economically advantageous Care Providers;
- establishes principles regarding the management of each procured Care Provider's Agreement, including key decisions (e.g. termination) that the contracting party will need to bring to the partner authorities for approval;
- reflects the principle that the local authorities will share costs and underwrite any losses incurred by GMCA as a result of its investment in the Skyline homes.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option One - Recommended Option

- Approval for the council to negotiate and enter into a Partnership Agreement for Project Skyline, as detailed in the report.
- Delegate to the Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services in consultation with the portfolio holder for Children and Young People, Treasurer and Director of Legal Services to agree the terms of the Partnership Agreement.
- Delegate to the Director of Legal Services to execute and enter into the Partnership Agreement and any documentation required to effect the Partnership Agreement, as detailed within the report.

Option 2 - Do not enter the Partnership Agreement for Project Skyline, as detailed in the report. This option was not recommended as there was already significant pressure on the children's placement budget and placement sufficiency is a concern.

Resolved – That the Cabinet would consider the commercially sensitive information contained at Item 18 of the agenda before making a decision.

14

REPLACEMENT OF OLDHAM'S CREMATORS

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Place, seeking delegated authority to approve a contract for the demolition and removal of three cremators and the supply, installation, and maintenance of three new Cremators at Oldham Crematorium, following a procurement exercise. This would ensure the result of the procurement can be enacted efficiently and implemented following the contract award.

It was reported that the current cremators components were now becoming obsolete and needed replacing to ensure that Oldham Council can continue to provide the option of cremation. In addition, given the age of the current cremators, and the lack of ongoing technical support, the current cremators were unlikely to meet future emission standards and the council could be subject to the risk of legal action.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1 – Do nothing. The risk in not replacing the cremators could result in reputational damage to the Council through delays or refusal of cremations due to malfunction, loss of income, through residents being forced to use facilities outside the borough, and potential additional costs of cremators needing major repair. There was also the risk of legal action should emissions exceed standards.

Option 2 – To allow for delegated approval to procure the replacement cremators through the YPO framework and increase the capital allocation for the replacement cremators.

(commercially sensitive information in relation to this option was contained in a report considered at Item 19 on the agenda.

Resolved – That the Cabinet would consider the commercially sensitive information contained at Item 19 of the agenda before making a decision.

15

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting, for the following item of business, on the grounds that it contains exempt information under paragraph 3 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and it would not, on balance, be in the public interest to disclose the reports.

16

LAPTOP HARDWARE REFRESH

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 11 Laptop Hardware Refresh.

Resolved -that:

1. Approval is granted to progress the procurement of circa 3,000 laptops and FortiClient VPN licenses to be paid for and deployed on a phased basis to secure enhanced discounts and leverage Microsoft funding and that the budget detailed in this report is approved to fund the refresh project. This urgent action is critical to ensuring we meet the Windows 10 end-of-life deadline in October 2025 and maintain uninterrupted operations and service delivery.
2. Approval is delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive to scope the Council's requirements and to purchase all required hardware under Manchester City Council's Framework Agreement for End User Devices and Associated Peripherals (Ref TC821) and to purchase the required Fortinet VPN licenses via the YPO Framework Agreement for Network Connectivity and Telecommunications Solution (Ref: 976) in accordance with the terms and conditions of each Framework Agreement.
3. Approval is granted to the Director of Legal Services to approve and finalise any required contractual arrangements and to affix the Council's seal to any contract in order to formalise such arrangements. A single draw down Purchase Order will be raised for the procurement of the laptops. This will allow Oldham to pay for the laptops on demand as they are needed in cohorts. The laptops will be deployed to increase digital adoption

across council teams and priorities will be given to the needs of the Council services.

17

MICROSOFT LICENCE ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 12 Microsoft Licence Enterprise Agreement.

Resolved:

1. The procurement of a new Enterprise Agreement with Microsoft via the procurement compliant Crown Commercial Services Framework Agreement for Technology Products & Associated Services 2 (RM6098), Lot 3 – Software be approved.
2. Authority be delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with Cllr Jabbar, Deputy Leader and Value for Money and Sustainability Portfolio Holder, to approve the terms of the Call-Off Contract to be entered into under the CCS Framework and to build flexibility into the Call-Off Contract to allow for the purchase of additional licenses as and when required and the purchase of additional support in accordance with the Framework Agreement and the relevant pricing schedule, subject always to budget availability and approval.
3. Authority be delegated to the Director of Legal Services to formalise any relevant legal requirements in order to attach and attest the Council's seal to the Call-Off Contract.

18

PROJECT SKYLINE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 13 project Skyline Partnership Agreement.

Resolved that:

1. Approval be given for the council to negotiate and enter into a Partnership Agreement for Project Skyline, as detailed in the report.
2. Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services be given delegated authority in consultation with the portfolio holder for Children and Young People, Director of Finance and the Director of Legal Services to agree the terms of the Partnership Agreement.
3. The Director of Legal Services be given delegated authority to execute and enter into the Partnership Agreement and any documentation required to give effect to the Partnership Agreement, detailed within the report.

REPLACEMENT OF OLDHAM'S CREMATORS

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 14 Replacement of Oldham's Cremators.

Resolved that:

1. The background to the current Cremators and options considered be noted and approval be given to the increase in the Capital allocation for the replacement cremators to £1.5m.
2. The Director of Environmental Services, be granted delegated authority to enter a contract following completion of the procurement process, in consultation with the Directors of Finance and Legal Services.

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and ended at 6.20 pm

Present: Councillor Shah (in the Chair)
Councillors M Ali, Brownridge, Dean, Goodwin, F Hussain,
Jabbar, Mushtaq and Taylor

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence received.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions for this meeting of the Cabinet to consider.

5 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th August 2024, be approved as a correct record.

6 **REVENUE MONITOR AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT
PROGRAMME 2024/25**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance that provided Members with an update, as at 31st July 2024 (Month 4), of the Council's 2024/25 forecast revenue budget position and the financial position of the capital programme together with the revised capital programme 2024/25 to 2028/29.

The recommendations in the report were presented as the forecast overspend position based on the Month 4 profiled budget was £7.202m which if not addressed would result in a year-end overspend of £21.065m (£26.033m at month 3). This financial monitoring report followed on from the position reported at Month 3 and was considered a warning of the potential year-end position if no further action was taken to reduce net expenditure. The management actions already implemented for 2024/25 have been factored into the Month 4 forecasts and this has resulted in a reduction in the position previously reported. Work continues across the organisation to address this position and it is anticipated that by the year end, the current outturn deficit position should reduce even further.

The submitted report also outlined the most up to date capital spending position for 2024/25 to 2028/29 for approved schemes. The revised capital programme budget for 2024/25 is £103.935m at the close of month 4 (£101.680m at Month 3), a net increase of £2.255m. Actual expenditure to 31 July 2024 was £17.397m (16.74% of the forecast outturn). It was likely that

the forecast position will continue to change throughout the year with additional re-profiling into future years.

Options/Alternatives: The options that Cabinet considered in relation to the submitted report were:

- a. To consider the forecast revenue and capital positions presented in the report including proposed changes.
- b. To propose alternative forecast

The preferred option was Option a.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet notes the report.
2. That the Cabinet approves forecast profiled budget, being an adverse position of £7.202m at Month 4 and the forecast potential adverse position by year end of £21.065m, with mitigations in place to reduce expenditure.
3. That the Cabinet approves the revised capital programme for 2024/25 including the proposed virements and the forecast for the financial years to 2028/29 as at Month 4.

7

WIRELESS INFRASTRUCTURE REPLACEMENT

The Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which explained that the Council currently operated three different wireless infrastructures:

- a. Legacy on-premises Cisco, utilising the 5508 wireless LAN controllers ("WLC")
- b. Current Cloud-managed Meraki solution
- c. New FortiGate-managed access points in Spindles, utilising the FortiGate wireless LAN controllers ("WLC")

The purpose of the report was to replace #1 & #2 with #3 across the board after the successful implementation of the system at the Spindles site.

The report was seeking to secure capital funding to provide, install, implement and support a more modern, secure wireless infrastructure across the Oldham locale. This cost is for a five-year contract, with expected annual costs thereafter.

Options/alternatives considered: This information is contained in the confidential Part B section of the submitted report.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet would consider the commercially sensitive information contained at Item 12 of the agenda before making a decision.

8

PURCHASE OF LIQUID FUELS

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive that sought authority to utilise the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation's framework for Liquid Fuels and Associated Products.

The recommendations in the report were presented as the Council required the supply of liquid fuel on site to ensure that its vehicle fleet was fully operational.

Options/alternatives considered: This information was contained in the confidential Part B version of this report.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet would consider the commercially sensitive information contained at Item 13 of the agenda before making a decision.

9

HIGH STREET ACCELERATOR GREEN FUND - GRANT ACCEPTANCE

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Economy, which outlined that the previous Government had announced the High Street Accelerator Programme in September 2023 and invited Oldham Council to submit an expression of interest in participating, due to the high level of vacant premises in the town centre.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities confirmed ten towns to participate in a High Street Accelerator pilot. Oldham's High Street Nomination Form had been completed for Union Street and Yorkshire Street as the pilot high streets for this funding based on existing data, notably: that in 2019, Oldham town centre was identified as one of the top 20 town centres in the country most 'at risk' from key consumer trends (Oldham Economic Review). Geographically, Oldham struggles with leakage of jobs, visitors and spending to central Manchester and surrounding towns, and employment has fallen consistently in recent years, leading to vacant retail and eatery units; according to CACI Retail Footprint Data, the flows to Oldham town centre have retracted significantly and the spend profile for Oldham reduced from £170m in 2010 to £156m in 2017.

The recommendations in the report were presented to seek approval to accept Oldham's pilot grant allocation of £500,000 from the Green Spaces Fund held by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), and to approve the programme of spend for the various projects it will fund.

Options/Alternatives Considered:

- Option 1: accept the Green Spaces Fund grant of £500,000 from DLUHC, progress the proposed projects detailed in this report and expend the grant monies as detailed in the funding breakdown.
- Option 2: do not accept the Green Spaces Fund grant of £500,000 from DLUHC and do not progress the proposed projects detailed in this report.

The preferred option was option 1.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet accepts an external Green Spaces Fund grant and to expend the funding on progressing the proposed High Street Accelerator programme projects.

2. That the Cabinet delegates authority to the Section 151 Officer, or her nominated representative, to finalise and formalise a Memorandum of Understanding with DLUHC with regard to the Green Spaces Fund grant funding arrangements and any other documentation required by DLUHC.
3. That the Cabinet delegates authority to the Borough Solicitor, or his nominated representative, to carry out all necessary legal formalities.

10

BUSINESS INVESTMENT

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Economy which updated Members on the progress of two Joint Venture (JV) Regeneration Projects that the Council is completing with Grasscroft Seddons at Broadway Green and Langtree at Hollinwood Junction.

The report outlined the progress already made and the remaining works due to be completed on both Joint Venture partnerships. When completed the JVs WOULD deliver:

- 680 new homes including 300 affordable.
- 2,720 Full Time Equivalent Employment Opportunities
- Over 790,000 Sq Ft of new industrial and employment space.
- £7.47 Million Financial Return to the Council.
- 5 new retail outlets including supermarkets, cafes and garage.
- Annual Business Rates of circa £2.1 Million.
- Estimated annual Council Tax Income of £1 Million.
- Creation of a new 20-acre linear park.

Options/alternatives considered: This information was contained in the confidential Part B version of this report.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet would consider the commercially sensitive information contained at Item 14 of the agenda before making a decision.

11

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting, for the following three items of business, on the grounds that they contain exempt information under paragraph 3 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and it would not, on balance, be in the public interest to disclose the reports.

12

WIRELESS INFRASTRUCTURE REPLACEMENT

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 7: Wireless Infrastructure Replacement.

Resolved:

That Cabinet authorises the replacement of the existing Cisco Wireless AP's with the Fortinet Range of Wireless AP's and

redeploy the appropriate number of Meraki Wireless AP's Points at the Civic Centre to replace the existing Cisco Wireless AP's. The old Cisco Wireless Infrastructure can then be decommissioned. By utilising the FortiNet solution this gives a significant saving compared to equivalent Cisco wireless infrastructure, which is currently circa £430K for hardware alone without installation, implementation and support. Additionally, by redeploying the existing Meraki Wireless AP's at the Civic Centre this also reduces costs further.

13

PURCHASE OF LIQUID FUELS

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 8: Purchase of Liquid Fuels

Resolved:

That Cabinet authorises the purchase of Liquid Fuels, using the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation's (YPO) framework for the Supply of Liquid Fuels and Associated Products and the Council will contract with the rank 1 supplier as per the outcome from the tender process undertaken by YPO.

14

BUSINESS INVESTMENT

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 10: Business Investment.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet notes the progress made and outcomes achieved to date.
2. That the Cabinet approves the acceptance of the final JV profit share to the Council from Broadway Green of £526,320 to be received in October 2024.
3. That the Cabinet approves the financial subsidy control agreement to secure the inward investment into Plot369 (detailed in the confidential report) at Broadway Green by Inspired Global Cuisine, and the creation of 700 jobs.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 6.20pm

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**NOTICE OF DECISIONS AGREED AT THE MEETING OF THE GREATER
MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY HELD ON FRIDAY, 12 JULY, 2024**

PRESENT:

Mayor of Greater Manchester	Andy Burnham (in the Chair)
Deputy Mayor (Police, Crime & Fire)	Kate Green
Bury	Councillor Eamonn O'Brien
Manchester	Councillor Bev Craig
Oldham	Councillor Arooj Shah
Rochdale	Councillor Neil Emmott
Stockport	Councillor Mark Hunter
Tameside	Councillor Gerald Cooney
Wigan	Councillor David Molyneux

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Bolton	Councillor Emily Mort
Bolton	Councillor Nadim Muslim
Rochdale	Councillor Janet Emsley
Salford	Councillor Lewis Nelson
Salford	Councillor Jack Youd
GM Moving Chief Executive	Hayley Lever

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Group Chief Executive Officer	Caroline Simpson
GMCA Deputy Chief Executive	Andrew Lightfoot
GMCA Monitoring Officer	Gillian Duckworth
GMCA Treasurer	Steve Wilson
Bolton	Andrew Williamson
Bury	Lynne Ridsdale
Manchester	Joanne Roney
Oldham	Harry Catherall
Rochdale	Steve Rumbelow

Salford	Tom Stannard
Stockport	Michael Cullen
Tameside	Sandra Stewart
Trafford	Sarah Saleh
Wigan	Alison McKenzie-Folan
Office of the GM Mayor	Kevin Lee
TfGM	Danny Vaughan
TfGM	Martin Lax
TfGM	Steve Warrener
TfGM	Luke Masterson
GMCA	Neil Evans
GMCA	Sylvia Welsh
GMCA	Lee Teasdale

1. APOLOGIES

That apologies be received from Councillor Nicholas Peel (Bolton), City Mayor Paul Dennett (Salford), Councillor Tom Ross (Trafford), Sue Johnson (Bolton) & Sara Todd (Trafford).

2. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

1. That Caroline Simpson be welcomed to her first meeting as the Group Chief Executive for GMCA, TfGM & GMFRS.
2. That the GMCA expresses its best wishes to Joanne Roney in her last meeting as the Chief Executive of Manchester City Council.
3. That the GMCA expresses its congratulations to Alison McKenzie-Folan following her award of an OBE for services to local government.

4. That Michael Cullen be welcomed to his first meeting as the Chief Executive of Stockport Borough Council.
5. That the GMCA expresses its condolences to the family, friends and former colleagues of Sir Howard Bernstein following his sad passing.
6. That the GMCA expresses its condolences to the family, friends and former colleagues of Paul Argyle, who had served as a Deputy Chief Fire Officer for GMFRS.
7. That the Mayor's update on the gathering of Metro Mayors at Downing Street following the recent national election result be received.
8. That the update from the Deputy Mayor for, Police, Crime & Fire on the plans for Part 4 of the CSE Assurance Review being commissioned through HMICFRS be received.
9. That it be noted that Oldham MBC welcomed the commissioning of Part 4 of the CSE Assurance Review.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. That the Mayor of Greater Manchester has a financial interest in Item 28 (Independent Remuneration Panel Review of GM Mayoral Remuneration) and will leave the meeting for that item.
2. That the Deputy Mayor, Police, Crime and Fire declare an interest in Item 19 – GM Investment Zone, as a Governor of Manchester Metropolitan University.

4. MINUTES OF THE GMCA MEETING HELD ON 14 JUNE 2024

That the minutes of the GMCA meeting held on 14 June 2024 be approved as a true and correct record.

5. GREATER MANCHESTER APPOINTMENTS

1. That Cllr Frankie Singleton (Stockport), be appointed as the member and Cllr Jilly Julian (Stockport), be appointed as the substitute member to the GM Culture and Social Impact Fund Committee.

2. That Cllr Mark Roberts (Stockport) be appointed to the Green City Region Board.
3. That Cllr Colin MacAlister (Stockport) be appointed as the member, and Cllr Frankie Singleton (Stockport) be appointed as the substitute member, to the GM Homelessness Board.
4. That the following members be appointed to the GM Children's Board:

Cllr Wendy Meikle (Stockport)
Cllr Lucy Smith (Bury)
Cllr Julie Reid (Manchester)
5. That Cllr Mark Roberts (Stockport) be appointed as the member, and Cllr Grace Baynham (Stockport) be appointed as the substitute member, to the GM Clean Air Charging Authorities Committee.
6. That Cllr Mark Roberts (Stockport) be appointed as the member, and Cllr Grace Baynham (Stockport) be appointed as the substitute member, to the GM Air Quality Administration Committee.
7. That Cllr Lisa Smart (Stockport) be appointed as the member, and Cllr Jeremy Meal (Stockport) be appointed as the substitute member, to the GM Clean Air Scrutiny Committee.
8. That Cllr Mark Hunter (Stockport) be appointed as the member, and Cllr Mark Roberts (Stockport) be appointed as the substitute member, to the Integrated Care Partnership Board.

6. GMCA ANNUAL CONSTITUTION REVIEW

That the revised constitution accompanying the report be adopted as the Constitution of the GMCA.

7. GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH REVIEW: AFFORDABLE HOMES

1. That the full list of recommendations within the report be endorsed.
2. That opportunities be sought where the GMCA can support the delivery of the recommendations, specifically:
 - to influence the development of the next Affordable Homes Programme through strengthened partnership arrangements within the latest devolution deal to ensure it is

flexible enough to meet the needs of our residents (Recommendation 1).

- to continue to support Local Authorities to seek out potential schemes through innovative approaches and bold actions (Recommendation 1).
 - to support Local Authorities and Housing Providers to ensure tenants have full access to welfare and other hardship funds through every interaction (Recommendation 2).
 - to co-design the next GM Housing Strategy with other key stakeholders that builds on what is already being done, but also confidently pushes the boundaries as to what can potentially be done, setting the standard as zero carbon (Recommendation 3).
 - to ensure that advice on cost-of-living support (e.g. food and fuel bill support) provided through registered providers is also available via private landlords (Recommendation 7).
 - to ensure that being an accredited member of the Good Landlord Charter is universally recognised, with its unique benefits clearly identified (Recommendation 8).
 - As a first step, GMCA to organise an event to discuss the findings of this review and actions which can be taken to remove barriers for the delivery of viable schemes (Recommendation 10).
3. That it be noted that the report will now be shared with GM Local Authority Councillors, Cabinet Members for Housing, and Scrutiny Committees, for their information and appropriate action.
 4. That the GMCA record its thanks to the Task and Finish Group for their contributions to a timely report on the housing issues impacting the region and the wider country.
 5. That the information provided on the establishment of the GM Housing First Unit and the plans for how it would contribute towards addressing the housing crisis in the region be received.

8. GM MOVING MOU REFRESH

1. That the refreshed MoU with Sport England and wider GM Moving Partnership Board Members be approved.
2. That the contents of the report on Place and Health Integration be noted.
3. That the recommendations, next steps and support, strategic and collective/distributed leadership on these areas be noted:
 - Local Authority leadership and teams be supported to fully engage with this

work as we move forward.

- Place Deepening: progress, timescales and methodology be noted, including the work of the Place Partnership Network (including locality leads) contribution to develop local plans for peer review and final submission to Sport England in August 2024.

4. That the establishment of Live Well be noted.
5. That it be noted that September 2024 would mark three years since the launch of the GM Moving in Action Strategy 2021-31. This, along with the signing of the MOU would be officially marked with a presentation to the GM ICP Board on 27 September, with the Chief Executive Office of Sport England and members of GM Moving Partnership Board in attendance.
6. That the GMCA record its thanks to GM Moving for their contributions towards the refresh.

9. THE GM GOOD LANDLORD CHARTER

1. That the design of the Good Landlord Charter and the associated activity to implement the Charter, including the proposal not to charge a fee to landlords for participation in the Charter be approved.
2. That the utilisation of £250,000 from retained business rates in 2024/25 to procure an independent implementation unit for the charter, with future years' funding to come through the budget setting process, be approved.
3. That the Government be lobbied on the repeal of Section 21 and introduction of the Renters Reform Bill be pursued.
4. That the investment into a Good Landlord Charter pilot scheme in Salford be noted.

10 DELIVERING THE BEE NETWORK UPDATE

1. That the update on delivery of the Bee Network be noted.
2. That it be noted that the fully integrated ticketing system, PayGo, is expected to go 'live' in March 2025.

11 DRAFT RAPID TRANSIT STRATEGY

1. That the draft Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy be approved, subject to any feedback from the Bee Network Committee, for wider engagement.
2. That officers would be requested to amend the report ahead of submission to the Bee Network Committee to reference commitment to a full assessment of the case for expanding Metrolink to Leigh.
3. That the proposed extension of the Bee Network to include 8 rail lines during this Mayoral term be noted.

12 BEE NETWORK FARES AND TICKETING

1. That the proposal to reduce Bee Network bus fares, with effect from 5th January 2025, be approved as follows:
 - a) reduce the price of 7-day Bus Travel on Bee Network Services from £21 Adult/£10.50 Child to £20 Adult/£10 Child
 - b) reduce the price of 28-day Bus Travel on Bee Network Services from £85.40 Adult/£42.70 Child to £80 Adult/£40 Child
2. That the introduction of a paper 'Hopper' single ticket for Bee Network bus users from 5th January 2025 be approved.
3. That the proposal to introduce a scheme, with local Credit Unions, from January 2025 to improve access to annual bus tickets be approved, in principle.
4. That the extension of the 'recompense scheme' to support the transition from commercial ticketing products to Bee Network products in the Tranche 3 area be noted.
5. That a further report on Bee Network fares and ticketing products be submitted to GMCA in September 2024.

13 TFGM EXECUTIVE BOARD APPOINTMENTS

1. That the appointment of the GM Transport Commissioner and the GM Active Travel Commissioner to the TfGM Executive Board be approved.
2. That the appointment of a GM Local Authority Chief Executive to the TfGM Executive Board, as recommended by the Group Chief Executive, be approved.

3. That the GMCA Treasurer be confirmed as an advisor to the TfGM Executive Board to ensure that membership of the Executive Board does not exceed the limit imposed by legislation.
4. That the proposal to undertake a further review of TfGM's governance and the role of its Executive Board before the end of 2024 be noted.

14 COST OF LIVING AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

That the latest assessment and emerging response, and views given on the next steps in that response be noted.

15 GMCA SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY: ANNUAL REPORT

1. That the progress made against the priority areas of the GMCA Sustainability Strategy 2022 – 2026 be noted.
2. That the contents of the report including actions proposed for 2024/2025 be noted.
3. That the implications of the Biodiversity Duty on GMCA and the proposed response be noted.

16 LOW CARBON SKILLS FUND OPPORTUNITY

That it be noted that the Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF) bid was unsuccessful, but work was already underway on an alternative approach to support some of the work that would no longer be funded by LCSF.

17 GREATER MANCHESTER CULTURE STRATEGY

1. That the CreateGM, the Greater Manchester Strategy for Culture, Heritage, and Creativity be approved.
2. That the GMCA record its thanks to all those who had worked tirelessly to secure the reopening of Oldham Coliseum.

18 GM ARMED FORCES COVENANT ROADMAP

1. That the progress made to deliver against the Armed Forces Covenant coherently

across GM be noted.

2. That the 5-year Roadmap, as a framework to enhance cohesive delivery across the City Region, be endorsed.
3. That the enduring and sustained effort to go even further and make GM the best place in the UK for members of the Armed Forces Community to live be recognised and the re-signing of the GM Armed Forces Covenant be approved.

19 INVESTMENT ZONE UPDATE

That the update on ministerial approval, confirmation of the project allocations in 2024-25 and the overall indicative allocations across the programme as a whole be noted.

20 STOCKPORT TOWN CENTRE WEST MAYORAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION'S STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

1. That the Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation's Strategic Business Plan May 2024 – March 2029 (Annex A) be approved.
2. That the Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation's Action Plan May 2024 – March 2025 (Part B) be approved.

21 MAYORAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION FOR NORTHERN GATEWAY - IN PRINCIPLE DECISION

1. That the creation of an MDC for the Northern Gateway project be approved, in principle.
2. That it be agreed that GMCA officers explore with Bury, Oldham, and Rochdale Councils, detailed options for an MDC to be created for the Northern Gateway, with these matters to be decided upon by GMCA and the Local Authorities in due course.

22 ASHTON MAYORAL DEVELOPMENT ZONE - BUSINESS PLAN

1. That the Ashton Mayoral Development Zone Business Plan 2024-25 be approved.

23 UKSPF PROPOSAL FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF POTENTIAL UNDERSPEND

2024/5

1. That the proposal for the mitigation of underspend risk be approved.
2. That it be agreed that the proposal was a strategic fit with the GM UKSPF Investment Plan and that it was deliverable, as set out in the report.
3. That the mitigation measures, as set out in the report, be approved.
4. That authority be delegated to the GMCA Treasurer in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for Resources and Investment to agree any alternative projects where underspend is identified.

24 REVENUE OUTTURN REPORT - QUARTER 4

1. That it be noted that the Mayoral General Budget provisional revenue outturn position for 2023/24 was breakeven, after planned transfer to earmarked reserves.
2. That it be noted that the GMCA General Budget provisional revenue outturn position for 2023/24 is £2.1m, which will be transferred to earmarked reserves.
3. That it be noted that the Mayoral General – GM Fire & Rescue provisional outturn position for 2023/24 was breakeven, after a transfer of revenue funding to capital.
4. That it be noted that the Waste and Resourcing provisional revenue outturn position for 2023/24 was breakeven, after a transfer from reserve of £18.7m.
5. That it be noted that the GMCA Transport and TfGM provisional revenue outturn positions for 2023/24 were breakeven, after transfers between earmarked reserves.
6. That it be noted that the final position was subject to the submission of the audited accounts to be submitted to the GMCA Audit Committee.

25 CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT - QUARTER 4

1. That it be noted that the 2023/24 actual outturn capital expenditure of £541.1m, compared to the forecast position presented to GMCA on 9 February 2024 of £579.1m.
2. That the update on property acquisitions for Project Skyline, as detailed in section 8 of the report, be noted.

3. That the additions to the capital programme in 2024/25, as listed in section 8 of the report, be approved.

26 GM HOUSING INVESTMENT LOANS FUND AND BROWNFIELD HOUSING FUND

1. That authority be delegated to the GMCA Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for Housing, to approve new funding and urgent variations to existing funding from the GM Housing Investment Loans Fund and Brownfield Housing Fund, 13 July 2024 to 26 September 2024.
2. That authority be delegated to the GCMA Treasurer, in consultation with the GMCA Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, to prepare and effect the necessary legal agreements.
3. That it be noted that any recommendations approved under the delegation will be reported to the next available meeting of the GMCA.

27 GM INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK, CONDITIONAL PROJECT APPROVAL

1. That the changes to the terms of the RealityMine loan, in line with the update provided in the confidential part of the agenda, be approved.
2. That a £2m increase in the loan facility to Romaco Limited, from £3m to £5m be noted.
3. That the consolidation of two existing loans into a single facility with Broughton House, totalling £4.1m be noted.
4. That authority be delegated to the GMCA Treasurer and GMCA Solicitor and Monitoring Officer to review the due diligence information in respect of the above loans, and, subject to their satisfactory review and agreement of the due diligence information and the overall detailed commercial terms of the loans, to sign off any outstanding conditions, issue final approvals and complete any necessary related documentation in respect of the loans noted above.
5. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, GMCA & TfGM and the GMCA Treasurer, in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for investment and Resources, to approve projects for funding and agree urgent variations to the terms of funding in the period 13 July 2024 to 26 September 2024.
6. That it be noted that any recommendations approved under the delegations will be

reported to the next available meeting of the GMCA.

28 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REVIEW OF GM MAYORAL REMUNERATION

1. That the recommendations of the IRP be approved:
 - a) That the remuneration of the GM Mayor remains at £118,267, subject to any indexation going forward.
 - b) That the remuneration of the GM Mayor continues to be indexed at the NJC annual percentage salary increase, specifically with reference to Spinal Column Point 43.
 - c) That the index continues to be applied to the same year that it applies to officers. This is normally from 1st April to 31st March. Where the index is applicable to officers for more than 1 year it should also be applicable to the GM Mayor for the same period.
 - d) That the recommendations contained in the report be implemented with effect from the date of the GM Mayor taking up the new term of office in May 2024.
2. That the IRP's views be noted that the GM Mayor should have access to an appropriate pension scheme that provides for an employer's contribution equivalent to that made to the pension scheme for Police and Crimes Commissioners (it should be noted that the panel sets out the legal position at paragraphs 37 to 40 of its report and notes that currently there are no legal powers to do so.)
3. That it be agreed that lobbying would take place on behalf of the Mayor to ensure that Metro Mayors were given fair access to appropriate pensions schemes.

29 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public should be excluded from the meeting for the following items on business on the grounds that this involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as set out in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

30 STOCKPORT TOWN CENTRE WEST MAYORAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION'S - ACTION PLAN

That the Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation's Action Plan May 2024 – March 2025 (Annex B) be approved.

Clerk's Note: This item was considered in support of the report considered in Part A of the agenda (Item 20 above refers).

31. GM INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK APPROVALS

That the contents of the report be noted.

Clerk's Note: This item was considered in support of the report considered in Part A of the agenda (Item 27 above refers).

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED
AUTHORITY HELD ON FRIDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER 2024 AT LEIGH SPORTS
VILLAGE**

PRESENT

Mayor of Greater Manchester	Andy Burnham (in the Chair)
Deputy Mayor (Police, Crime & Fire)	Kate Green
Bolton	Councillor Nicholas Peel
Manchester	Councillor Bev Craig
Oldham	Councillor Arooj Shah
Rochdale	Councillor Neil Emmott
Salford	City Mayor Paul Dennett
Stockport	Councillor Mark Hunter
Tameside	Councillor Jacqueline North
Trafford	Councillor Tom Ross
Wigan	Councillor David Molyneux

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Bolton	Councillor Nadim Muslim
Environment Agency	Ian Crewe
United Utilities	Jo Harrison
South Manchester Credit Union	Sheenagh Young
Unify	Owen Roberts

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Group Chief Executive Officer, GMCA, GMFRS & TfGM	Caroline Simpson
GMCA Deputy Chief Executive	Andrew Lightfoot
GMCA Monitoring Officer	Gillian Duckworth
GMCA Treasurer	Steve Wilson
GMCA Director of Governance & Scrutiny	Julie Connor
Bolton	Sue Johnson

Bury	Lynne Ridsdale
Manchester	Paul Marshall
Oldham	Harry Catherall
Rochdale	Julie Murphy
Salford	Tom Stannard
Stockport	Michael Cullen
Trafford	Sara Todd
Wigan	James Winterbottom
Office of the GM Mayor	Kevin Lee
TfGM	Martin Lax
GMCA	Sylvia Welsh
GMCA	Lee Teasdale

GMCA 118/24 APOLOGIES

That apologies be received from Councillor Eamonn O'Brien (Bury), Councillor Gerald Cooney (Tameside), Steve Rumbelow (Rochdale) & Alison McKenzie-Folan (Wigan).

GMCA 119/24 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, opened the meeting by welcoming all to Leigh Sports Village and invited City Mayor Paul Dennett and Deputy Mayor Kate Green to provide an update on work taking place in Greater Manchester following the recent publication of the Grenfell Tower Report.

Mayor Dennett stated that the report was appropriately substantive, covering some 2000 pages and 59 recommendations. It would take time to work through the detail and legislative change would be required. There were actions that would need to be taken on by all parts of the system – including all levels of government and housing associations. Greater Manchester would be taking the 59 actions very seriously and discussions would be taking place on an appropriate implementation plan to create a regulatory environment locally that reflects the one that will be required at the national level. The swiftness with which the government was now responding to the report was

welcomed, as it was known that many thousands of people would still be living in homes that had cladding that could be deemed unsafe and that this was intolerable.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester provided an update following the Labour Party Conference held in Liverpool earlier in the week. At the Conference the second meeting of the Liverpool Manchester Railway Board had taken place. During the meeting the announcement was made that former Railways Minister Huw Merriman would be the first chair of the Partnership Board. Mayor Burnham stated that in his roles with the former government Mr Merriman had always been a great friend of the region and had sought to advocate for funding high-speed rail in the region following the HS2 cancellation announcements. Long-term infrastructure projects such as this always benefit from a cross-party approach and Mr Merriman would also bring this to the table.

The Old Trafford Regeneration Task Force had also been in attendance at the Conference. This had been the first big opportunity to put forward the coherent vision of the opportunities for growth that Old Trafford regeneration represented. This vision would include the relocation of freight from behind Old Trafford, if successful this would take freight away from the West Coast Main Line and free up capacity within the city of Manchester region, particularly the bottlenecks seen in Stockport. This would also create a growth opportunity in Port Salford, which was proposed as one of the alternative freight locations.

Mayor of Greater Manchester advised members of the amendments to leaders portfolios, including Mayor Burnham himself taking on the Health & Care portfolio, Mayor Dennett taking the Housing First portfolio, and the introduction of a new portfolio focusing on reform of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund.

Members welcomed a strengthening of the governance arrangements for the Greater Manchester Pension Fund. There were some concerns expressed regarding changes to the appointments process to the Pension Fund Board introduced with no local authority consultation. The Mayor of Greater Manchester noted these concerns and asked officers to liaise with Tameside Council to gain further clarity on the changes.

RESOLVED /-

1. That an update following the publication of the Grenfell Tower Report, including the plans for addressing the 59 actions within it be received and that an implementation plan be submitted to a future meeting of the GMCA for consideration.
2. That the appointment of Huw Merriman, as the Chair of the Liverpool Manchester Railway Partnership Board be noted.
3. That the update on the Old Trafford Regeneration Task Force and the opportunities that lie within it be received.
4. That update on the amendments to Leaders Portfolios be received.
5. That the GMCA will liaise with Tameside to ask for further clarity around recent changes to the Pension Fund's appointments process.

GMCA 120/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED /-

That Mayor Andy Burnham registers an interest on Item 20 (Q1 Capital Funding) in relation to LEVI funding.

GMCA 121/24 MINUTES OF THE GMCA MEETING HELD ON 12 JULY 2024

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the GMCA meeting held on 12th July 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**GMCA 122/24 GMCA WASTE & RECYCLING COMMITTEE MINUTES – 17TH
JULY 2024**

RESOLVED /-

1. That the minutes of the GMCA Waste & Recycling Committee held on 17 July 2024 be approved.
2. That the appointment of Councillor Alan Quinn as the Chair of the Waste & Recycling Committee for 2024/25 year be approved.
3. That the appointment of Councillor Steve Adshead as Vice Chair of the Greater Manchester Waste and Recycling Committee for 2024/25 be approved.

**GMCA 123/24 GMCA RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES – 22 MARCH &
12 JULY 2024**

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the GMCA Resources Committee meetings held on 22 March & 12 July 2024 be approved.

**GMCA 124/24 GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MINUTES – 24 JULY & 14
AUGUST 2024**

Councillor Nadim Muslim, Chair of the GM Overview & Scrutiny Committee was invited to address the GMCA and present the committee's annual report. The report detailed some of the key pieces of work undertaken over the last municipal year, but also guided the Committee in the strongest direction for the forthcoming year to ensure that its work continued to add value, create an impact and be in line with the things that matter most to local residents.

Highlights in the previous year included the ability to have real oversight of the priorities and focus of the Combined Authority whilst scrutinising in more detail those issues that mattered most, including the cost of public transport, waste contractual arrangements and the benefit of business rate retention.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester welcomed the report and reflected upon the continued improvements being seen through the Combined Authority's scrutiny

processes, and as the single settlement arrangements became further embedded, the need for strong and robust scrutiny would become even more vital.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the minutes of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 24 July & 14 August 2024 be noted.
2. That the update from Councillor Nadim Muslim, Chair of Overview & Scrutiny, be received.
3. That the contents of the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report be noted.

GMCA 125/24 GMCA AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES – 31 JULY 2024

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the GMCA Audit Committee held on 31 July 2024 be noted.

GMCA 126/24 BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE MINUTES – 27 JUNE & 25 JULY 2024

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the Bee Network Committee held on 27 June & 25 July 2024 be noted.

GMCA 127/24 GREATER MANCHESTER APPOINTMENTS AND NOMINATIONS 2024/25

Gillian Duckworth, GMCA Solicitor & Monitoring Officer, presented a report setting out appointments and nominations to various Committees and other bodies within Greater Manchester.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the nomination to the Integrated Care Partnership Board be withdrawn from the agenda.
2. That the appointment of Councillor Paul Heilbron (Salford) as the member and Councillor Jonathan Moore (Salford) as the substitute member on the GMCA Waste & Recycling Committee for 2024/25 be approved.
3. That the appointment of Councillor Nathan Evans (Trafford), Councillor David Tilbrook (Tameside) and Councillor Diane Williamson (Oldham) as substitute members on the Bee Network Committee for 2024/25 be approved.
4. That the appointment of Councillor Tony Davies (Salford), to the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee replacing Councillor Joshua Brooks (Salford) be approved.
5. That the appointment of Councillor Martin Donaghy (Bolton) to the GMCA Homelessness Board be approved.
6. That the appointment of Councillor Jake Austin (Stockport) as a member and Councillor Joshua Charters (Oldham) as a substitute member on the Police, Crime & Fire Panel be noted.
7. That the appointment of Councillor David Chadwick (Bolton), Councillor Jake Austin (Stockport) as members of the Police, Crime & Fire Steering Group and the appointment of Councillor Steve Gribbon as a substitute member of the Police, Crime & Fire Steering Group be noted.

**GMCA 128/24 BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE INTEGRATED WATER
MANAGEMENT PLAN TO 31 MARCH 2025**

Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio Lead for Housing, and Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Lead for the Green City Region, presented a report seeking approval for the Business Plan for the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP) to 31 March 2025 to deliver

the objectives outlined in the full plan and provide an update on the resources that were being deployed to enable the plan to be progressed and delivered.

The report drew attention to funding that was being deployed to reduce flooding across the region. This would require collaborative working across the system. Investment plans from United Utilities were also welcomed. Early engagement around plans and working across organisational boundaries would be critical to progressing the agenda.

Ian Crewe was invited to address the GMCA on behalf of the Environment Agency. He stated that as the nation and the world faced a climate and biodiversity emergency, no one could sit back anymore as urgent action was required. Adaption was required at scale and at pace. The cost of mitigating climate impacts was likely to reach £10bn to the UK economy by 2050, so the plans within the IWMP would be hugely helpful. There were concerns highlighted that ever growing pressures placed upon public funding meant that ever greater levels of traditional partner funding contributions, whilst vital, would not be sufficient. Therefore, innovative and collaborative investment as planned within the IWMP was necessary and the region was leading the way in this field.

Jo Harrison was invited to address the GMCA on behalf of United Utilities. It was highlighted that public expectations had changed, and UU sought to meet that aspiration around cleaner rivers and more resilient water quality and flooding protection for the future. The Water Act was driving the opportunity to increase investment across the North West. It was anticipated that there would be £3bn investment in GM alone over the next five years investment period to change the way that water was managed in the region.

In response to concerns regarding sewage overspill and United Utilities plan to tackle this issue as soon as possible, Members were advised that 54% of GM's sewars were 'combined sewars' and Victorian infrastructure, and it was noted that over 1300 overspills had been seen in the region. Therefore, an extraordinary level of investment was required to completely change the sewage system. In the shorter term there would be prioritisation of investment into changing the overflow levels. Significant levels of investment were also being placed into modernising the region's wastewater treatment works, which would provide huge improvements in the quality of water.

Members sought to highlight in the building of partnership working, the role of blue light services. These services were shouldering significant costs at the moment in addressing flooding and related events, and improvements in the protection of the natural environment would see a reduction in the impact upon them.

Reference was made to the potential breach of the Toddbrook Reservoir. Despite this being beyond the boundaries of the region, this would have a significant impact upon Stockport and had resulted in heightened concerns. This would be an issue for a number of GM Local Authorities who had reservoirs in neighbouring areas. members were advised that the responsibilities for reservoirs was often a complex environment with a range of different types of ownership but the sheer risks involved meant that a strong reservoir strategy was being heavily invested into. Local resilience forums also had integrated working across regions in place, and it was hoped that the increase in combined authority regions would further increase levels of collaboration.

RESOLVED -/

1. That the Business Plan for the Integrated Water Management Plan to 31 March 25 (Annex A) be approved.
2. That the existing budget allocation 2024-2026 be noted.
3. That the national announcements be noted, as contained with paragraph 1.12-1.13 of the report be noted.
4. That the progress and outputs from the 1st Annual Business Plan, as contained within paragraphs 2.1–2.2 of the report be noted.
5. That the verbal update received from the Environment Agency be received.
6. That the verbal update received from United Utilities on the Integrated Water Management Plan and the work taking place to address ongoing sewage overflow issues be received.
7. That closer integration of blue light services into the Integrated Water Management Plans be progressed.

8. That closer integration with neighbouring authorities be progressed on cross boundary issues, including the future management of assets such as reservoirs, which have a direct impact on Greater Manchester.
9. That a report on the potential pipeline for investment be submitted to a future meeting of the GMCA.

GMCA 129/24 BEE NETWORK FARES & TICKETING

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report proposing a number of changes to Bee Network fares and ticketing products to increase access to public transport through affordable and simpler fares and ticketing.

The continuing success of Bee Network franchising and how that was now allowing for the introduction of an annual ticket, and the multi-modal pay as you go system which it was confirmed would be within a launch window of either March 16th or 23rd 2025.

The Annual Bee Bus Ticket offer was set to offer considerable savings to those who took it up. However, it was fully understood that the initial cost of £800 made it too expensive for most people as a one-off purchase, and that those who would benefit most from this were the least likely to be able to afford it. Therefore a partnership with local credit unions to create a manageable payment system opens up access to a much wider range of residents. This scheme also sought to highlight the great work that credit unions undertook in the region and would hopefully encourage more residents to make use of what they could offer.

Sheenagh Young (South Manchester Credit Union) and Owen Roberts (Unify) were invited to further expand upon the role of credit unions in supporting residents. It was advised that the region contained a consortium of 14 different credit unions who collaborated to ensure that all residents had access to affordable loans, including loans to local social enterprises. The credit unions collectively had £200m of savings held with them from customers in GM. Feedback from members was that they wanted

credit unions rooted within their communities, and this is what the consortium all sought to offer.

Sheenagh and Owen were thanked for their contributions and asked that all Leaders actively promote the Annual Bus Ticket Credit Scheme and information relating to local credit unions to all of their staff members.

Members asked about funding for capped bus fares going forward, in particular the continuation of BSIP funding which was introduced by the previous government, or if there was a need for 'Plan B' to ensure financial sustainability. Concern was raised that if the fund was not to continue, then Local Authorities may be asked to contribute funding they could not afford. The Mayor of Greater Manchester acknowledged the concerns and stated that the system from commencement had been established upon the need to increase patronage. Figures showed that these increased levels of patronage were encouragingly building. The increases seen in the north and west of the region since franchising was established were strong, and it was hoped that this would be replicated in the south of the region after January. It was also hoped that the multi-modal fare introduction would also have a similar impact upon user numbers. Obviously at the present time there were still unknowns, and by the middle of 2025 there should be a real picture of how strong the patronage had become. In terms of a 'Plan B' there would need to be consideration of increases to the Mayoral precept.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the introduction of an Annual Bee Bus Ticket priced at £800 be approved.
2. That the introduction of a TfGM scheme with local Credit Unions, from January 2025, to improve access to annual bus tickets be endorsed.
3. That the continuation of the Bee Network Recompense Scheme for Tranche 3 bus customers be approved.
4. That the introduction of multi modal 'pay as you go' (PAYG) contactless ticketing and capped fares across bus and tram in March 2025 be approved.

5. That the potential go live dates for the 'pay as you go' scheme of either 16th or 23rd March 2025 be acknowledged.
6. That the plans to provide an update on the annual review of the Capped Fares Scheme and proposed next steps be noted.
7. That the potential extension of the Care Leavers scheme, from aged 21 to aged 25, from April 2025 be noted.
8. That the GMCA acknowledges the achievements of the Bee Network bus integration following the first anniversary of the tranche 1 go live date.
9. That the verbal updates provided by SM Credit Union and Unify on the work of GM's 14 credit unions be received.
10. That GM Leaders be requested to actively promote the Annual Bus Ticket Credit Scheme and information relating to local credit unions to all of their staff members.

GMCA 130/24 HOUSING FIRST GREATER MANCHESTER

Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio Lead for Housing, presented a report confirming the launch of the Housing First Unit, setting out the Housing First vision for Greater Manchester, the challenges of the current housing crisis, the headline measures to build a new system and the potential for GM Housing Investment Loan Fund surpluses to support delivery of the Housing First vision.

Ambitions for the unit included the delivery of 75,000 new homes within the period of the current parliament, a target that would include 10,000 Truly Affordable Net Zero homes.

These plans would require considerable levels of collaboration, including with the region's growth locations partners and agencies across sectors.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the launch of the Housing First Unit be welcomed, that the proposed Housing First vision for Greater Manchester be approved, and that support be given for a programme of engagement with the government, private sector and broader stakeholders to gain support and contribution to the necessary radical actions.
2. That commitment be given to an ambition to drive forward growth and increase housing supply by delivering 75,000 new homes in the current Parliament, including 10,000 Truly Affordable Net Zero (TANZ) homes, subject to necessary support from Government.
3. That the potential for GM Housing Investment Loan Fund surpluses to significantly assist in work to deliver the Housing First vision be noted.

GMCA 131/24 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION: VALUE FOR MONEY IN GREATER MANCHESTER

Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio Lead for Housing First, presented an overview of the current temporary accommodation landscape in GM and described the emerging work to collaborate across the region to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation, with a particular emphasis on the worst quality and highest cost housing – particularly ad hoc and Bed and Breakfast accommodation. The report presented, for the first time, a regional action plan on Temporary Accommodation, and summarises the work progressed to date, seeking endorsement from Leaders.

Mayor Dennett asked that his thanks be put on the record to the GMCA officers for the work they had undertaken to provide the evidence base and their proactive work to inform the development of the regional action plan. This evidence base allowed for meaningful and proactive work to now take place.

Over 100,000 households in the country were in temporary accommodation, and within those, over 150,000 children. This was of huge concern and given local authorities statutory duties to provide this temporary accommodation, created an

existential crisis where the risks of council bankruptcy was increased by the burden of these costs.

It was proposed that the initial focus would be on the worst quality housing first and foremost and the highest cost temporary accommodation (such as bed and breakfast housing).

The Mayor of Greater Manchester stated that post budget, when it was known what levers the region would have, he planned to work with the Housing First team and the GMCA Treasurer to establish when the £75m pressures currently faced on temporary accommodation could be reduced to zero.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the 6-point GM Temporary Accommodation Action Plan be approved.
2. That the financial outputs of the data analysis exercise be noted.
3. That the Influencing Priorities, described in section 4 of the report, as a starting point for dialogue with government be endorsed.
4. That the GM Out of Borough Protocol be approved.
5. That the GMCA record its thanks to the GMCA team for the work undertaken on providing the evidence base and proactive work to inform the development of the regional action plan.
6. That the GMCA Treasurer be requested to undertake analysis of the potential for reducing, through government support, the £75m pressure currently faced by GM authorities on temporary accommodation.

**GMCA 132/24 GREATER MANCHESTER BROWNFIELD HOUSING
REALLOCATIONS**

Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio Lead for Housing First, presented a report seeking approval for the reallocation of £21.3m of funding from the GMCA Brownfield Housing

Fund. There had been slippage in some schemes, so this reallocation was vital in order to meet the timelines for spend as set out by central government.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the £11.1m allocations to projects identified in the “2024/25 Reallocations” schedule be approved.
2. That approval be given to the £10.2m allocations to projects identified in the “2024/25 in-principle Reallocations” schedule, subject to successful due diligence being completed.
3. That the variations to projects detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, be approved.

GMCA 133/24 ATOM VALLEY MAYORAL DEVELOPMENT ZONE BUSINESS PLAN 2024/25

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report seeking seek approval from GMCA for the Atom Valley MDZ Business Plan 2024 – 2025.

It was important to hold an in-depth discussion on the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone at a forthcoming meeting of the GMCA and that this would be arranged to take place following the spending review. The strategic importance and potential of Atom Valley would be raised as a key part of the agenda at the Global Investment Summit taking place on 14th October.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the draft Atom Valley MDZ Business Plan 2024 - 2025 be approved.
2. That a further report be submitted to the GMCA on the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone following the outcome of the Spending Review.

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report that advised the GMCA on the progress of the emerging Rail Integration and Reform proposition and to seek approval to progress the work further.

Once the franchised bus network was fully established on 5th January 2025, the focus would be fully onto the integration of 8 nominated rail lines into the wider Bee Network. Work would be undertaken with TfGM to draft a series of milestones and timelines for this integration process. These 8 lines would immediately increase the attractiveness of the areas around them due to the increased connectivity options.

Councillor Nadim Muslim was invited to feed back following the Overview & Scrutiny consideration of this item. There was significant support from the Committee on the direction of travel and the opportunities for regeneration that this potentially offered. Members recognised that some of greatest benefits, rather than just accessing the city centre easier, could be improved access to the jobs and amenities within their local towns.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the importance of the rail network for GM and unlocking future economic growth be noted.
2. That the government's plans for rail reform and ongoing GM engagement with Shadow Great British Railways.
3. That further engagement with HMG, rail partners and others to explore and influence legislative and structural options that would achieve GM ambitions be approved.
4. That the update received following the consideration of this item at the GM Overview & Scrutiny Committee be received.
5. That TfGM be requested to consider provisional timelines for the integration of the eight nominated rail lines into the wider Bee Network.

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report setting out the proposed strategy for acquiring land interests required to deliver the Golborne New Station Project and sought approval to make offers for those interests and secure those land interests whilst also commencing the drafting of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and supporting documentation and progressing the planning consents.

Members emphasised the importance of access for all and ensuring that there was a strategic piece demonstrating that all stations would be fully accessible.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the update from the DfT Outline Business Case review and associated risks highlighted be noted.
2. That the proposals for securing the land interests required to deliver the scheme as set out within this report be noted.
3. That TfGM securing the required land interests in accordance with the agreed programme budgets be approved.
4. That the submission of a planning application for the scheme and the preparation of the CPO and supporting documentation including issuing Land Interest Questionnaires to affected landowners be approved.
5. That the entering into of any ancillary agreements required to achieve the scheme objectives be approved.
6. That the importance of ensuring all railway stations on the 8 rail lines, identified for integration within the wider Bee Network, be fully accessible be endorsed.

**GMCA 136/24 WORKING WELL: WORK AND HEALTH PROGRAMME
DIRECT AWARD AND CONTRACT EXTENSION OF THE
INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT IN PRIMARY CARE**

Sara Todd, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for Education, Skills & Work, presented a report seeking delegated authority to award a contract for the Working Well: Work and Health Programme (WHP) under regulation 32 (2)(c) and to seek approval for a contract extension to Working Well: Individual Placement Support in Primary Care (IPSPC).

RESOLVED /-

1. That the proposed award of the Working Well: Work and Health Programme contract on the basis set out in the report be approved.
2. That the proposed Working Well: Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care 12-month contract extension and increase in value on the basis set out in this Report be approved.

GMCA 137/24 Q1 CAPITAL UPDATE 2024-2025

Steve Wilson (GMCA Treasurer) presented a report providing an update in relation to the GMCA's 2024/25 capital expenditure programme.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the current 2024/25 forecast of £636.3m compared to the 2024/25 budget of £685.2m and approve changes to the capital programme as set out in the report be noted.
2. That the addition of £3.8m to the 2024/25 GMCA Capital Programme from an extension to the fourth round of the Active Travel Fund (ATF4) award as outlined in section 2.6.1 be approved.
3. That the addition to the capital programme of £16.2m of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding to deliver local, on-street charging infrastructure

across Greater Manchester and to accelerate the commercialisation of, and investment in, the local charging infrastructure sector be approved.

4. That the addition to the capital programme of £4.8m of Investment Zone grant funding to support the development of high-potential clusters identified as Investment Zones with a focus on developing Advanced Manufacturing & Materials be approved.

GMCA 138/24 Q1 REVENUE UPDATE 2024-2025

Steve Wilson (GMCA Treasurer) presented a report informing members of the financial position at the end of June 2024 (Quarter 1) and forecast revenue outturn position for the 2024/25 financial year.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the forecast position at 30th June 2024 be noted.
2. That an increase to the Mayoral budget of £357k funded from Mayoral reserves towards spend on mayoral priorities (para 3.2) be approved
3. That an increase to the revenue grant to Transport for Greater Manchester of £3m funded from DfT devolved BSOG grant for tendered services (para. 6.5) be approved.

GMCA 139/24 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2023/24

Steve Wilson (GMCA Treasurer) presented a report that confirmed that the GMCA had complied with the requirement under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2023/24, and to give prior scrutiny to all of the treasury management reports by the Audit Committee before they were reported to the Full Authority.

RESOLVED /-

That the annual treasury management report for 2023/24 be noted.

**GMCA 140/24 GREATER MANCHESTER HOUSING INVESTMENT LOANS
FUND – INVESTMENT VARIATION RECOMMENDATION**

Mayor Paul Dennett (Portfolio Lead for Housing) presented a report that sought approval to a variation of the terms for the GM Housing Investment Loans Fund loan detailed in the recommendations.

RESOLVED /-

1. That a variation to the terms of the GM Housing Investment Loans Fund loan detailed in the table below, as detailed further in this and the accompanying Part B report be approved.

BORROWER	SCHEME	DISTRICT	LOAN
Manchester New Square Limited Partnership	Manchester New Square	Manchester	£26.700m

2. That authority be delegated the GMCA Treasurer acting in consultation with the GMCA Monitoring Officer to prepare and effect the necessary legal agreements.

**GMCA 141/24 GREATER MANCHESTER INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK,
CONDITIONAL PROJECT APPROVAL**

Steve Wilson, GMCA Treasurer, presented a report that sought approval for three investments through GMCA's new Advanced Manufacturing and Materials Investment Fund, GM Advance, to agree the update on its loan to Holiferm Ltd, and note that an equity investment of up to £750k to Watercycle Technologies Limited and an update on an existing loan to Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce have been approved under delegation.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester welcomed the investments into advanced manufacturing and materials, stating that he would welcome a fuller discussion of the potentials around the fund at a future meeting of the GMCA.

RESOLVED /-

1. That an equity investment of £50,000 to NeuWave Technologies Limited be approved.
2. That an equity investment of £50,000 to Verciti Ltd be approved.
3. That an equity investment of £50,000 to H2Origin Ltd be approved.
4. That the changes to the terms of the existing loan to Holiform Ltd in line with the update provided in the confidential part of the agenda be approved.
5. That an equity investment of up to £750k to Watercycle Technologies Limited, approved under delegation be noted.
6. That amendments to the terms of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce loan in line with the update provided in the confidential part of the agenda be noted.
7. That authority be delegated to the GMCA Treasurer and GMCA Monitoring Officer to review the due diligence information in respect of the above loans, and, subject to their satisfactory review and agreement of the due diligence information and the overall detailed commercial terms of the investments, to sign off any outstanding conditions, issue final approvals and complete any necessary related documentation in respect of the investments and loans noted above.
8. That a fuller discussion of the potential of the Advanced Manufacturing and Materials Investment Loans Fund be held at a future meeting of the GMCA.

GMCA 142/24 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public should be excluded from the meeting for the following items on business on the grounds that this involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as set out in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

GMCA 143/24 GREATER MANCHESTER HOUSING LOANS INVESTMENT FUND – INVESTMENT VARIATION RECOMMENDATION

Clerk's Note: This item was considered in support of the report considered in Part A of the agenda (GMCA 140/24)

RESOLVED /-

That the report be noted.

GMCA 117/24 GM INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK APPROVALS

Clerk's Note: This item was considered in support of the report considered in Part A of the agenda (GMCA 141/24).

RESOLVED /-

That the report be noted.

**NOTICE OF DECISIONS AGREED AT THE AGMA EXECUTIVE BOARD
HELD ON FRIDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2024**

PRESENT:

Mayor of Greater Manchester	Andy Burnham (in the Chair)
Deputy Mayor (Police, Crime & Fire)	Kate Green
Bolton	Councillor Nicholas Peel
Manchester	Councillor Bev Craig
Oldham	Councillor Arooj Shah
Rochdale	Councillor Neil Emmott
Salford	Mayor Paul Dennett
Stockport	Councillor Mark Hunter
Trafford	Councillor Tom Ross

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Group Chief Executive Officer GMCA, GMFRS & TfGM	Caroline Simpson
GMCA Deputy Chief Executive	Andrew Lightfoot
GMCA Monitoring Officer	Gillian Duckworth
GMCA Treasurer	Steve Wilson
GMCA Director of Governance & Scrutiny	Julie Connor
Bolton	Sue Johnson
Bury	Lynne Ridsdale
Manchester	Paul Marshall
Oldham	Harry Catherall
Rochdale	Julie Murphy
Salford	Tom Stannard
Stockport	Michael Cullen
Trafford	Sara Todd
Wigan	James Winterbottom
Office of the GM Mayor	Kevin Lee
TfGM	Martin Lax
GMCA	Sylvia Welsh
GMCA	Lee Teasdale

1. Apologies

That apologies be received and noted from Councillor Eamonn O'Brien (Bury), Councillor Gerald Cooney (Tameside), Councillor David Molyneux (Wigan), Alison McKenzie-Folan (Wigan) and Steve Rumbelow (Rochdale).

2. Chairs Announcements and Urgent Business

There were none.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

4. Minutes of the AGMA Executive Board meeting held on 14 June 2024

That the minutes of the meeting of the AGMA Executive Board held on 14 June 2024 be agreed.

5. AGMA Appointments and Nominations

1. That the appointment of Councillor Colin MacAlister (Stockport) to GMCA Work & Skills Forum for 2024/5 be approved.
2. That the appointment of Councillor Colin MacAlister (Stockport) to the Planning & Housing Commission for 2024/25 be approved.
3. That the appointment of Councillor Frankie Singleton (Stockport) as a member and Councillor Jilly Julian (Stockport) as a substitute member of the AGMA Statutory Functions Committee be approved.
4. That the appointment of Councillor Jacqueline North as a substitute member for Councillor Gerald Cooney to the North West Flood and Coastal Committee, for 2024/25 be approved.

5. That Councillor Alan Quinn (Bury) and Councillor Philip Cusack (Salford) be appointed as members and Gary Staples-Jones (Bury) and Tony Davies (Salford) be appointed as substitute members on the North West Flood and Coastal Committee, for 2024/25.

6. AGMA 2023/24 Final Revenue Outturn

1. That the report and the AGMA final revenue outturn for 2023/24 be noted.
2. That the position of reserves in 2023/24 as detailed in the report be noted.

A link to the full agenda and papers can be found here: [Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

This decision notice was issued 30 September 2024 on behalf of Julie Connor, Secretary to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester M1 6EU. The deadline for call in of the attached decisions is 4.00pm on 7 October 2024.

Call-In Process

In accordance with the scrutiny procedure rules, these decisions would come into effect five days after the publication of this notice unless before that time any three members of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee decides to call-in a decision.

Members must give notice in writing to the Chief Executive that they wish to call-in a decision, stating their reason(s) why the decision should be scrutinised. The period between the publication of this decision notice and the time a decision may be implemented is the 'call-in' period.

Decisions which have already been considered by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and where the GMCA's decision agrees with the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may not be called in.

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Elaine Taylor, Deputy Leader of Oldham Council & Cabinet Member for Decent Homes

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to portfolio responsibilities.

Town Centre Living:

As members will know, public consultation on the emerging proposals for the 2,000 new homes in the town centre closed on 11 September. We were delighted so many people have taken part and had their say on the proposals at the various drop-in events, through the online webinars, and by responding to the online survey, especially the fantastic level of response from young people in the borough. The team have been collating the feedback received and making changes to the Town Centre Development Framework because of that feedback, and the final Development Framework will be considered by Cabinet later this month. That document will then inform planning applications from Muse on the core town centre sites. Cabinet will also be considering the recommendation to add the Prince's Gate site to the partnership with Muse at the Cabinet meeting on 18th November.

Housing Delivery:

Vistry have been awarded the contract for the development of the Southlink site on the edge of Oldham Town Centre, which is owned jointly with Transport for Greater Manchester. Vistry's proposals involve approximately 130 net zero homes, including around 20 Social Homes. Tender returns have also been submitted for the former South Chadderton School site, Butterworth Lane, Chadderton. This site of approximately 10.8 acres will have capacity for up to 175 new high-quality net zero homes, with at least 30% being affordable homes, including a number of which will be social homes. We are looking forward to announcing our preferred development partner over the next couple of months.

Housing Standards:

Environmental Health continues to receive significant reports relating to housing standards. This is mainly driven by residents in the private rented sector who are reporting disrepair problems they are experiencing. Recent recruitment of Environmental Health Officers and 2 Housing Technical Officers means that the team is now fully resourced to be able to respond to the expected increase in complaints as the weather conditions deteriorate. In the first instance officers engage with landlords with the aim of addressing the problems being reported. If landlords fail to act, officers have a range of options, including legal notices, civil penalties, and prosecution to secure compliance.

Officers are also working closely with the Planning Department in responding to queries relating to houses in multiple occupation – this aims to ensure that those seeking to create a HMO meet the planning and licensing requirements where these are appropriate. This is in addition to the licensing regime that is delivered by the Environmental Health department. There has been a significant increase in the number of properties needing to be licensed. As part of this process, officers inspect properties to ensure they meet the necessary standards as set out in legislation and where additional work is needed, Officers work closely with the landlord and other regulators to ensure this is completed before the properties are occupied.

Housing Needs / Homelessness

The demand for Housing Options Services continues to remain at a high level and we are still averaging 100 residents through the front door each working day, in desperate need of housing support and accommodation.

We had 649 households present as homeless to the Council during the month of September. As of 30th September, we have 722 households in temporary accommodation (with 793 children residing in TA). There was also 7,228 households on the housing register actively seeking different housing options.

The main reason for homelessness at this time is loss of lodgings from family or friends, who have been supporting people for a period of time and found that this is no longer sustainable. The Council is making better use of the private rented sector, and we have successfully secured some move on out of temporary accommodation into the Private Rented Sector.

Planning:

It has been great to see some major developments being granted approval at Planning Committee over the past couple of months, including 102 apartments at Ivy Mill in Failsworth, 53 affordable homes at the former Bedford Mill site in Waterhead, approving the creation of an industrial premises at Broadway Green in Chadderton that could see 760 jobs created, and the approval of a new Lidl store at Hollinwood Junction.

It was also pleasing for Cabinet to approve the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy and to approve public consultation on two joint Supplementary Planning Documents. Those planning documents seek to protect and enhance the internationally-significant habitats on our doorstep (the South Pennine Moors) and elsewhere in Greater Manchester, whilst the Nature Recovery Strategy seeks to enhance nature across our borough and Greater Manchester wherever we can. We want Oldham to be the greenest borough in Greater Manchester, so it's fantastic to be able to support these proposals.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Abdul Jabbar, Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Value for Money and Sustainability

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to portfolio responsibilities.

Finance: As reported in the Month 4 Financial Monitoring report, we continue to face immense financial challenges, particularly in caring for our most vulnerable residents where demand for our services continues to increase. This is not just an issue here in Oldham but a national trend. We're committed to working hard to bring down the projected in year pressures, and a lot of work has gone into bringing that down. As mentioned at the Council meeting on 11 September, the Month 4 Financial Monitoring report reduced the projected deficit for 2024/25 from £26m to £21.07m. I am hopeful that it will continue to reduce over the remainder of the year as more measures take effect and the updated month 6 position will be available shortly.

However, I recognise that we need to go further. The budget process is well underway, and the applications for flexible working and voluntary redundancy are being assessed on a case-by-case basis, always ensuring the impact on Council services is minimised. Following the Autumn Budget Statement announced on the 30 October, we await our Provisional Local Government Settlement and in the meantime, we will continue to work with the new Labour Government to try and plug the financial gap and continue to lobby for a fairer funding model.

Revenues & Benefits: Testing for moving the Capita One back-office systems to the Azure cloud platform has been ongoing for several months, and the live systems are now due to be moved over on the weekend of 2/3 November. The GovTech back-office automation continues to gather momentum and have a positive impact on outstanding workloads and the customer experience. Comparison of outstanding correspondence in the first half of 23/24 to the current year shows an average weekly reduction of 46%. Overall automation of changes of address via GovTech reached 75% for Q2, meaning residents could be sent a revised bill within 24 hours of reporting their change online. Three more process automations are due to go live by 31 October.

Pension Credit: Many of our residents face the prospect of a difficult winter, with everyday costs such as energy bills still high. This is why the council is doing all we can to make sure our residents are claiming money they might be entitled to.

Part of this campaign is focused on ensuring those eligible are claiming Pension Credit. There are estimates that £7.9 million is currently unclaimed in Oldham each year and that are 3288 pensioners who are eligible for Pension Credit but not claiming their entitlement.

To help with this we're running a campaign to help maximise pension credit take up. We're promoting how residents can check their eligibility for the benefit with over 5000 targeted leaflets, online advertising, local news media, our council newspapers, newsletters and through our charity partners at Action Together. The campaign will run throughout winter and into the new year. We will monitor take up of the credit as the campaign continues to assess if we're having the correct impact.

IT & Digital: Over the past three months, IT has been delivering key projects to support the council's transition to a digitally enabled local authority:

- **Cloud Migration:** IT continues to migrate systems and services to the Cloud which will aid in decanting all services, systems, network connectivity from the Civic Centre Data Centre, into Spindles.
- **Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) Transition:** Nationally the PSTN will close in 2027 with a requirement to move current connectivity to digital networks. IT are now finalising

the output from the auditing of all impacted sites across the borough to prepare for the transition and to assess any upgrades or changes that may be required.

- **GMOne Fibre Network:** The roll out of GM One will provide a single active network available for public services across the region driving efficiency and security. The first site live on GMOne was the Civic Centre, followed by Spindles and there are now 8 sites live on the new GMOne circuits.
- **Data Service Platform:** IT are developing a data service platform with a capability for interrogating data across the Council. With the first tranche of data now being available, further analysis continues into additional data sources.
- **New Kit for Staff:** The new Laptop refresh programme has now commenced which will replace c3000 Council staff laptops.

Human Resources: The **Dignity at Work Policy** aims to protect the right of everyone to be treated with dignity and respect at work. Although there is no specific dignity at work Act in UK law, employers and offending employees can still face legal consequences for workplace abuse. Harassment, bullying and victimisation are, in the eyes of the law, forms of discrimination. **Oldham Council have a zero-tolerance approach to harassment, bullying and victimisation.** Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect at work.

The **Voluntary Redundancy Programme** started on 5 August and closed on 23 August, since then we have processed over 350 submitted voluntary redundancy' applications.

As part of this process, we have undertaken a number of legal processes including:

- Consulting with employees individually with their line manager and informed employees of their rights
- Providing staff with advice and information on how the voluntary redundancy programme is to be implemented and an FAQ document to address any questions regarding the offered terms.

There have been 4 VR Panels to assess the applications to consider the viability of the roles and the savings to Oldham Council, considering the financial payback position. The VR Panel have focused over 3 Phases, Phase 1 has been completed where employees have been notified, and dismissal dates and letters have gone out with the termination dates. Distribution of the Phase 2 began on 25th October, with the final Phase 3 to be completed by end of October. Dependent on the notice period, will determine when employees leave, it is estimated that employees will begin leaving from December 2024 onwards.

The **Greater Manchester People Inclusion Standards** is a key workstream within the broader city-region Workforce Inclusion Programme, involving all 10 local authorities, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS), Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), and the Growth Company. This programme aims to accelerate the inclusion agenda across Greater Manchester by fostering collaboration, demonstrating a shared commitment to equity across all boroughs, building an engaged workforce that reflects our communities, and supporting our diverse teams to thrive in their careers.

Climate Change & Green New Deal: The Council has approved the appointment of Vital Energi for the Engineer, Procure and Construct (EPC) contract for the Wrigley Head Solar Farm. Details of the grid connection are still being finalised with Electricity North West, but a start on site is expected by the end of November, with the solar farm being completed and operational in spring 2025. Arcadis were the successful bidder to produce an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy for Oldham, and this is expected to be complete by December / January. Oldham Low Carbon District Heat Network: Buro Happold have been selected to deliver the next stage of feasibility (RIBA Stage 3 design) for the town centre low carbon heat network, and work has started with an initial round of stakeholder engagement. This work will feed into the procurement of the Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partner as the heat network will be the 'anchor' project for the procurement.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Report to COUNCIL – 6th November 2024

Portfolio Report



Portfolio Holder: Councillor Shaid Mushtaq
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to Portfolio activities.

Children's Social Work

Our Duty and Advice Service has seen an increase in contacts into the service, averaging 491 per week as schools have resumed, although the conversion rate to referrals (Threshold met for statutory intervention) remains steady at 17%. We have strengthened our partnership with Greater Manchester Police's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub by delivering targeted training on thresholds and referral processes, with plans to extend this training to other key partners. Meanwhile, our Complex Safeguarding Hub is supporting 42 young people at risk of sexual or criminal exploitation, with a wider Greater Manchester 'Week of Action' having taken place in October to promote and raise awareness in schools.

The Assessment and Intervention service is supporting 1,088 children. Following assessment, intervention and support the service will aim to step cases to Targeted Early Help and/or universal services where appropriate and safe to do so. We are rotating duty teams into the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to further enhance collaborative working. The Safeguarding and Care Planning service is supporting 868 children, including 224 on Child-in-Need plans and 420 on Child Protection plans. With a reduction in pre-proceedings cases from 98 to 59 since the start of the year and a complete team of permanent managers in place, we are ensuring consistent and timely decision making.

Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP)

During September, the Partnership conducted a series of reviews and workshops focused on enhancing our multi-agency approach to safeguarding. A Performance Subgroup meeting took place to evaluate key data from the first quarter, where partners discussed what is working well and identified areas for further improvement. This proactive approach enables us to strengthen our collective safeguarding responsibilities and respond effectively to emerging trends.

To support ongoing professional development, OSCP has hosted training sessions for partners on the implementation of the National 'Right Care Right Person' initiative, launched on 30th September. This initiative aims to streamline police involvement in safeguarding matters, improving the effectiveness and appropriateness of responses across services.

Children Looked After and Care Leavers (including Fostering and Adoption)

I am pleased to share our Adolescent Support Unit (ASU) has been inspected by Ofsted and retained its 'Good' grading, further demonstrating our commitment to ensuring high quality support and care for vulnerable young people.

There are a total of 610 children in our care, with 307 in internal foster placements, reflecting our strong internal provision. While all internal placements are occupied, we have reduced external residential placements from 64 to 62 and increased semi-independent accommodation to 90 to meet the needs of young people transitioning to independence.

In partnership with Housing Services, we have introduced a "direct match" approach for care leavers over 18 and commissioned tailored support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (USAC). Additionally, the Mockingbird project recently launched its second Hub at Mahdlo, strengthening support networks for foster families. The After Care service is supporting 386 young people aged 16 to 25 under our leaving care offer. The aged 18-21 care leaver cohort not in education, employment, or training (NEET) remains a priority. To address this, we are working with partners to create apprenticeship opportunities and targeted support, a plan that has been positively received by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Social Work Workforce

We have successfully reduced the number of off-contract agency staff within Children's Social Care, ensuring all are within the Greater Manchester pay cap. The overall agency percentage of the Social Work workforce has reduced to 26.9% in Quarter 2 from 49% in the same period in 2023. We are actively recruiting through fortnightly interviews and have introduced 'stay interviews' to improve retention, initially targeting staff who have been with us for two to three years. Alongside this, leaders are focused on maintaining a supportive and positive working culture.

The Children's Social Work Academy continues to be recognised as best practice, supporting other Local Authorities and playing a key role in our 'Grow Our Own' strategy. We have renewed our partnership with Frontline, enabling us to welcome 15 new student social workers, reinforcing our commitment to building a sustainable and skilled workforce of the future.

Early Help

Early Help teams are supporting 1,050 children and young people through targeted interventions and have positively reduce re-referrals into children's social care. To meet Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) targets, an improvement plan is focusing on increasing outcome success rates and expanding claims to include Child in Need work and school-led activities. Planning is also underway to remodel and integrate Early Help, Family Hubs, and Early Years teams into community based earlier support services. Despite high demand on the Domestic Abuse team, actions are in place to improve timeliness for high-risk cases, aiming to build a more co-ordinated family support system.

Early Years

Good progress has been made in delivering the Early Education and Childcare Programme for 2024/25, with the percentage of eligible children taking up the disadvantaged 2-year-old entitlement in Oldham at 82%, above the national average of 75%. For the 3 and 4-year-old entitlement, take-up is at 90.8% for summer term 2023/24. The transition of Family Hub services to Failsworth Town Hall is complete. A new antenatal and postnatal education programme has launched in October, addressing a key gap in support for expectant parents.

Youth Services

The Youth Service is delivering approximately 25 sessions per week across the borough, including universal district work, targeted interventions to reduce youth violence, and school-based support. Despite current vacancies, the team has maintained a comprehensive offer, and collaboration is underway with Family Hubs to explore expanding the youth offer. Recent highlights include successful delivery of outdoor education programmes and youth voice initiatives, such as the co-hosting of regional events focused on youth safety and policing. Planning is also underway for the winter Holiday Activity and Food Programme, which aims to provide enriching activities for young people over the Christmas period.

Children's Commissioning and Transformation Programme

The children's commissioning team are working closely with local placement providers to enhance the availability of local fostering, semi-independent and independent living accommodation, successfully creating 17 new semi-independent placements and 12 new over-18s placements. In partnership with GMCA's Project Skyline, regional capacity in children's homes is being increased, with new properties under evaluation. The transformation programme is progressing, with refurbishment work on one of the three new children's home set to begin in November, and additional projects underway to expand residential capacity and integrate family help services.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mohon Ali
Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to portfolio responsibilities.

Attendance and Inclusion

Earlier this month I was again delighted to see that the Children's Commissioner visited Oldham. The purpose of her visit this time was to chair the Greater Manchester Attendance Action Alliance. This is an alliance of all 10 local authorities in Greater Manchester. I'm pleased to say that Oldham is now leading the way across Greater Manchester on school attendance data analysis. Our innovative methods bring insight that enable schools to intervene to change outcomes. As a consequence, the Children's Commissioner called us 'trailblazing' in September.

Work conducted during the summer with children due to transition into a new phase of education (early years to primary school, and primary school to secondary school) has ensured a great start to term for school attendance. Compared to the same point last year:

- Secondary attendance is 0.9% higher.
- Primary attendance 0.2% higher.
- There are 750 fewer secondary persistently absent children.
- There are 1360 fewer primary persistently absent children.

Since the pandemic there has been a sharp increase in exclusions from schools across the country. Oldham schools are seeing the same pressures, but I'm proud to say that our school leaders are bucking this trend and continue to work hard to include pupils. Primary rates of exclusion remain very low and are much better than average; secondary rates have improved significantly and are now amongst the very best in Greater Manchester.

Quality of Education

From 2 September 2024, schools no longer received Ofsted single word judgements. At the point of this policy change, the primary inspection rate for Good and Outstanding schools in Oldham was at 93% and the secondary rate was 62%. School and academy inspections resumed at the end of September and the first reports on Oldham establishments are due to be published in the coming weeks. School Report Cards will be introduced from September 2025

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The number of children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) continues to increase with now over 3500 children with such a plan. Despite this demand, performance levels within the Council SEND team remain excellent. The timeliness for the issue of an initial EHCP within 20 weeks remains significantly above national average of 20 weeks at 83%. This is despite requests for education, health and care needs assessments increasing from 639 to 730 over the last 12 months. The team are also working hard to provide families with the earliest possible support. Since the start of this term, Early Language Support for Every Children (ELSEC) has been in operation in 10 primary schools in Oldham. In addition to the focussed support in these schools, the team is also providing a more 'universal' level of support across all primary schools in Oldham.

Moreover, there are now Family Liaison Officers and Transitions officers in place across Oldham to ensure that families of children with SEND are supported well in Oldham.

Music

Music Service tuition has re-commenced in schools with the start of the new academic year. Each week during the school term Music Service teachers are delivering 445 hours of tuition across small group/whole class instrumental teaching, vocal lessons, curriculum class music and school band/choir delivery. This is unchanged from the total at the same stage last year. Music Centre attendance has also been maintained and certain sectors are rapidly developing. Noticeable increases have been recorded in the number of pupils attending first access level groups – Starter Strings and Junior Wind Band being particularly well subscribed.

Post-16/Skills/Apprenticeships and Adult Education Young Person Careers Event

The second annual Young Person Careers Event took place on 24th September 2024. The event held at the Queen Elizabeth Hall was a success with around 300 young people attending the event and over 60 organisations exhibited to promote a wide range of engagement, skills development, careers and employment opportunities available in Oldham. Additionally, in May 2023, the Greater Manchester Mayor and GMCA committed to developing an education, skills and work system that that not only supports productivity and inclusive economic growth but prepares young people for the future and builds hope and aspirations. The Manchester Baccalaureate (MBacc) intends to offer a clearer route via technical education into high quality skilled jobs with qualifications (T-Levels, Apprenticeships and other technical qualifications) respected by GM Employers, as a high value alternative to the EBacc. Oldham Council is working closely with the Mayor on this important initiative.

NEET and Unknown %'s

Due to summer holiday/break in learning there is no update on NEET figures. The first scheduled update will be available for the next report.

Sufficiency

The sufficiency of places for Y12 and Y13 continues to be an issue that needs oversight. We are currently undertaking a technical calculation across the partnership of the potential sufficiency gap. This will inform a decision to be made on whether we need to declare an official sufficiency gap to the DfE. Our planned additional provision for September 2024 to address some of our sufficiency challenges has been delayed due to recruitment problems. Recruitment in FE is a nationally recognised issue. Oldham College have been unable to recruit appropriate staff to deliver the new provision over at Positive Steps, and now YMCA are unable to recruit a tutor to deliver at The Hive. Therefore, the planned new provision has yet to commence delivery.

We have put in place a project with Oldham College (named “Connect Me”), which is using AI and their data intelligence to identify young people that are at risk of “dropping out”. Once identified, the College puts a support plan in place, and works with the young person, to either support them to retain their place at College, or transition to more appropriate provision for them, either within the College or an other provision.

Care Leavers Summer School and Apprenticeship programme

Work is progressing jointly with the After Care service, Get Oldham Working, HR and Organisational Development to secure better outcomes for Care leavers. Following the ILACS inspection, the Council committed to create a summer school that will support 15 care leavers to gain valuable work experience with 5 progressing in apprenticeships in the Council and the remainder to access employment and apprenticeship opportunities externally.

Lifelong Learning Performance

The R14 return has now been submitted which provides final performance outturn for Lifelong Learning Service for 2023/24 academic year. During this period, Lifelong Learning enrolled 2,304 residents engaged in learning studying 7,611 learning aims, with a 99% pass rate which means that the service achieved 110% of Adult Education Budget.

The latest data for 2024/25 shows that 1530 learners have enrolled (increased from 1330 in 2023/24), and are studying 2660 learning aims (increased from 2440) which is approximately a 15% increase in learners compared to this time last year.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Fida Hussain, Cabinet Member for Enterprise

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to portfolio responsibilities.

Markets:

Monthly stallholder meetings take place on the second Tuesday of every month between 5-6pm and are open to all stallholders to attend to keep updated on plans for the new market as well as wider town centre activity.

The construction of the indoor market is now well advanced and we are now working with stallholders to capture the details of the stall requirements including lighting, plug sockets and wall finishes. Almost 50 businesses have now confirmed their stalls in the new market, with the remaining businesses being finalised in the coming weeks.

The business team are working with the market stallholders to support them with the business planning process for the new market. In addition they are working with the stallholders to support with branding and marketing planning for their businesses.

As well as planning for the move, the markets team and market stallholders continue to promote the existing market offer. In September the market took part in the town centre wide Nostalgic Oldham event.

Business Engagement:

The OL1 business network for the town centre continues to grow with the third event taking place on 23 October with over 40 attendees.

In March 24, Cabinet approved a proposal to fund a boroughwide business growth and start-up grant from Oldham's SPF allocation aiming to create at least 72 new jobs and 40 new businesses by 31st March 2025. £180,000 of SPF was allocated to the business growth grant and £40,000 to the start-up grant. Eligible growth grant applications were assessed against the following criteria: sector, job creation potential by 1st March 2025, business growth potential and impact on the local economy. A total of 17 grants have now been awarded totalling £140,732 to enable the creation of at least 84.5 FTE jobs within the borough. There is still some growth grant funding available so it is likely that a new round of applications will be sought prior to Christmas. This grant is being administered by the Council's Business Growth and Investment Team.

Through start-up support that is available to businesses in Oldham 23 new businesses have been created, with 10 of those receiving a start-up grant and another 6 going to panel next week. This grant scheme is still live with the Council's Business Growth and Investment Team and Oldham Enterprise Trust still working with local residents to help them commercialise their business ideas. This package of support will result in 40 new businesses being created by 31st March 2025.

Business Awards:

The 16th annual Oldham Business Awards took place on Fri 13th Oldham at the QEH. It was the biggest and best awards ceremony to date recognising business excellence, acumen and entrepreneurial spirit in the Borough. There were 11 awards presented on the night as well as a special recognition award that went to Chaddertonian and former Chair of the Business Awards, Steve Kilroy. Other notable winners were Diodes Inc which won 2 awards and popular winner Less Village Service station which won the Community Engagement category. The business awards is a great event that really helps to put Oldham on the map as a place to do business and already work is about to start on the 2025 event!

The Hive: Social Enterprise

The Hive was officially opened on Friday 20 September by the Rt Hon Jonathan Reynolds MP who serves as Secretary of State for Business and Trade. Seven of the nine permanent offices are now leased, and the co-working scheme is rolling out. A full programme of Hive business events will be launched for the new year.

Get Oldham Working Performance:

The Get Oldham Working (GOW) programme has had 5,100 residents sign up to the GOW register so far in 2024, including 2,200 progressing to further education and over 800 securing sustainable employment. 29 residents have utilised the benefits of 12 weeks' work experience on site with GOW at 22 Union Street, as well as a further 26 based with Access Oldham through our work experience programme.

There are 15k followers across our social media platforms where we post the latest jobs and updates, which have reached over 200K people so far this year, including over 10k interactions.

8 staff at GOW have just completed formal education, Level 4, 6 CIAG (Career Information, Advice and Guidance) and ILM (Intermediate Leadership and Management) qualifications, and 8 recently enrolled to similar learning, ensuring that all staff are providing the best service for Oldham residents.

GOW continues to deliver good to excellent performance on key contracts, such as National Careers Service (NCS), Support to Succeed and Restart. We are waiting for announcements of extension beyond March 2025 for Support to Succeed, we should have confirmation in Nov / Dec, with the possibility of a 12-month extension. Our NCS continues to grow and the Restart contract is in place until 2027. There are some changes to Restart performance requirements, which add additional pressure, however the team are working hard to achieve expectations on these new outcomes.

In addition to existing contracts Oldham and GOW is proud to be part of 1 of 15 Vanguard Work Well pilots across the UK, connecting work and health for better outcomes. Starting in October 2024, Get Oldham Working and Action Together will lead the 18-month program, offering tailored support to residents with mental or physical health conditions or disabilities. The Oldham project aims to support 672 Oldham residents over the next 18 months, to receive appropriate support and remain in work or move back into employment.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Barbara Brownridge
Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to portfolio responsibilities.

Public Health

Social Prescribing Service

Oldham Council has recommissioned our Social Prescribing service for six more years from 1st November 2024. Action Together CIO will continue to lead a consortium of providers including Age UK Oldham, Tameside Oldham & Glossop Mind and Positive Steps in delivering the service.

The service connects residents with the local community activity and support offer to improve their physical and mental wellbeing. They also support people and communities to take control of their own health, become more resilient and improve their life chances. Social prescribing is a means of connecting people to a range of local activities, support, and services within the community, instead of offering only prescribed medical or care solutions. The service also has a key role in capacity building within the community, enabling voluntary and community groups and organisations to deliver activities and support which promotes the health and wellbeing of residents.

In the 23/24 financial year, Oldham's social prescribing service received more than 3,000 referrals, and made more than 1,700 connections to other support and activities. They are currently working with over 500 people, primarily people experiencing loneliness and isolation, as well as those with physical and mental wellbeing challenges. 80% of people supported by the service have seen a measurable improvement in their wellbeing following the intervention (using Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale).

Adult Social Care (ASC)

Oldham Total Care

Oldham Total Care (OTC) continues to evidence a much-improved position with occupancy now at 96%, which is the highest since March 2019. The new registered manager is due to start on 4th November, which will be key to the continued successful development of the home as a centre of excellence for the people of Oldham.

Care Technology

With technological advancements in the field of Care Technology (or 'Assistive Technology') ASC is incorporating different forms of care and support which will compliment traditional packages of commissioned care. Our aim ensures residents are enabled to live safely and independently, whilst reducing the need for traditional forms of care. With this, we have commenced a roll out of mandatory training sessions for front line adult social care staff and are engaging with the market through a procurement approach.

Digital Switchover

MioCare has been leading a programme of work to ensure that Helpline and Response customers are not affected through the digital switchover, which means that by January 2027, all 'landlines' will be replaced with digital. This change does mean that MioCare are in the process of updating all Helpline and Response units to be compatible with the changes to digital. Through robust data

sharing agreements in place with Telecoms providers MioCare is ensuring a smooth transition and supporting Oldham residents through this process.

Good Lives GM leadership collaborative - Transitional Safeguarding (including the potential to prevent homelessness)

Six teams from across health and social care, local authorities, the VCSE sector and the Combined Authority are taking part in a new kind of leadership collaboration. Supported through 1-1 and group coaching, workshops, learning materials and webinars, teams conduct system-shifting experiments to rebuild structures and cultures that are barriers to their work to reduce inequalities.

ASC will be part of this fantastic opportunity in the GM Leadership collaborative, with a focus on Transitional Safeguarding. The collaborative is held in very high regard nationally. This sits with our priorities for complex safeguarding in ASC and links to community safety, Children's Social Care and public health priorities. The directorate has attended the first session and have been asked to share our training/guidance on 'making a section 42 referral' program as an example of good practice to be adopted regionally.

Oldham Integrated Care Partnership (ICP)

Proactive Care and Prevention Activities - Focused Care

A team of researchers based at the Universities of Glasgow, Oxford and Bath, are undertaking an NIHR-funded project exploring 'missingness' in healthcare, placing focus on the causes of missingness and interventions to address it. On 10 July 2024, two of the project team, Andrea Williamson and David Baruffati, visited Oldham to spend a day shadowing four Focused Care Workers (FCWs) to understand how the work undertaken by Focused Care (FC) can help to reduce missingness in healthcare. The full research paper for 'Missingness in Primary Care' is being written up over the coming months and this is a short summary that the research team are sharing of their thoughts on the Focused Care model. It is truly humbling to have such a positive summary of the model and work that the FCP's do on a daily basis in Oldham. The research has featured in the chief medical officer's report for the Scottish government and has the recommendation from the team that the model should be replicated nationally. It is great to think that Oldham are trailblazers in this model.

Reducing Prevalence and Prevention Activities - Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

Greater Manchester has one of the highest rates of cardiovascular disease and cardiovascular death in the UK. CKD is one of the largest modifiable risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Late presentation (within 3 months of starting dialysis) is very common in Manchester. Data states that of people who start dialysis every year 26% at Manchester Foundation Trust, 15% at Northern Care Alliance start dialysis having not been known to nephrology for more than 3 months. CKD affects around 7% of adult population, although coded CKD prevalence in Oldham is 3.8% and varies between 1.3% and 5.8% depending on primary care setting. Research suggests that there is a confidence gap in the management of CKD in primary care compared with other long-term conditions.

As part of our work on population health management and shifting our system to one focused prevention not just treatment, consultant Nephrologist, James Tollitt has launched the CKD Dream project working with primary care. All practices in Oldham will receive informative & collaborative advice and guidance via Electronic Referral System (ERS). All practices will be provided with their local data, a toolkit to help find uncoded patients who may not be receiving optimal medical therapy and PCN based CKD educational sessions. 10 practices will receive enhanced CKD support with a practice visit to run search tools to find patients in need of CKD optimisation/coding, 4 x 1 hour virtual MDTs with consultant nephrologists and investment of £4200 per practice to support medicine optimisation clinics/attendance at virtual MDT/engagement with practice visit(s). The Oldham CKD DREAM Project will aim to be complete by October 2025.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Chris Goodwin
Cabinet Member for Don't Trash Oldham

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to portfolio responsibilities.

Highways

The Council's highways team continues to undertake a range of work across the borough. As part of the 2024/25 resurfacing programme, 6 schemes have been completed to date. A further 8 schemes will be completed before the end of March 2025. The routine inspection and maintenance of all the network is also ongoing. This is both in response to reports by residents' and is proactive to ensure the network is safe. Where repairs are needed, these are programmed and completed as soon as possible.

The highways team also inspects all permits for work to ensure that the contractor is following health and safety and highway safety practices. Where contractors fail to do this, the team undertakes legal action to ensure compliance. In extreme cases, the team also withdraws permission to work on Oldham's highways until it is satisfied that the contractor will be compliant and can meet the necessary standards.

Winter Maintenance

Preparations are complete for Winter Maintenance operations. Vehicles, materials, grit and the staffing resource is all in place to ensure that main roads are kept open during the winter months. Highways colleagues will be constantly monitoring forecasts, road conditions and will undertake gritting as necessary. If there is snow, as with previous years, our teams will be out to clear the roads as quickly as possible.

As far as reasonably possible, we will look to keep the primary highway network free of ice and snow at all times, to help ensure safe journeys. Our teams are out filling the borough's grit bins and we have contingency plans in place, including for heavy snowfall. The council has a good supply of grit which was bought earlier in the year when prices were lower – providing value for money for residents.

The council's social media accounts will also share up to date winter information, including traffic and road closure updates and more details about our winter work are on the council's website - <http://www.oldham.gov.uk/winter>. It features the news on gritting routes, locations of grit bins, and tips on how residents can stay safe and get help and support.

We will also update the winter webpage with any school closures that we are notified about. Schools also have a text messaging system to inform parents if they are closing for the day.

Streetlighting

The Streetlighting Team continues to renew lighting columns, boroughwide, as part of the replacement programme. Having completed the programme in Failsworth East, West, and Chadderton South in 2023/24, the teams are currently replacing columns in Chadderton Central, North and in Coldhurst and Werneth. To date, 50% of the 2024/25 programme has been completed and we are on track to complete 100% of the annual programme by the end of March 2025.

Furthermore, as part of the ongoing maintenance programme, and to react quickly to complaints, the website for reporting faults has also been upgraded. This now means that residents can report faults quickly, as well as track the repair and also receive an update once the fault has been fixed.

Finally, the team have also been leading on the festive lights roll-out. Christmas lights and displays will be installed at 18 locations across the whole borough. As usual, the first switch on will take place in Oldham Town Centre on Saturday 16 November and will be a great event for all the residents. The remainder of 'switch ons' will be completed on time.

Greenspace

The Council's tree planting is now underway for the 2024/25 season with materials being delivered and framework contractors engaged – 650 new trees will be planted between October 2024 and March 2025 across the borough. This work is being delivered in partnership with, and supported by, the 'City of Trees' as part of the 'Trees for Climate Change' project. The other main source of trees is the Northern Forest Initiative and use of S106 Funding that the Council secures for environmental improvements. The first trees will be planted W/C 1st November.

In addition to the tree planting, the Service will also aim to deliver a further 2.5 hectares of new woodland across the borough during the 2024/25 planting season. This programme is consistent with the aim of increasing woodland and tree planting year on year. The service has also secured funding for various hedge planting projects which will see 500m of new mixed native hedge across a number of Countryside sites – improving habitats and biodiversity.

The programmes aim to continuously increase green coverage across the borough, using Council resources and by working closely with partners and environmental groups across Oldham and the Greater Manchester region. All tree and woodland planting support the environmental challenges of climate change / adaptation and deliver the recognised benefits that are brought about by sustainable tree planting and increasing woodland and green coverage.

Play Areas

The Council recognises the importance of parks and play areas and the excellent facilities these provide to the borough's residents and visitors. Parks are continuously improved with funding from various sources, including investments in outdoor gym equipment, which are highly utilised. Managed footpaths, cycleways, and green routes connect district centres, offering healthy transport options. Changes in land management enhance biodiversity and sustainability, improving both our urban parks and countryside estates, which offer activities like hiking and cycling, with potential for expanding health programs. Sports facilities, including pitches and play areas, are well-maintained, with over 100 play sites inspected regularly for safety. Training programmes in horticulture and other disciplines help increase local employment, while community growing initiatives, such as Growing Hubs and Fruit Routes, promote healthy eating, lower living costs, and foster community engagement through sustainable practices.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Peter Dean
Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to portfolio responsibilities.

Customer Services:

Oldham Council has been allocated £2,419 million by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver the sixth round of Household Support Fund (HSF) from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025. The scheme is designed to support vulnerable households in most need with the cost of essentials and supplements the council's wider ongoing work to support residents at risk of cost of living and to address poverty. Payments will be available to residents who can't afford to heat their homes; food vouchers will be given to families who have children eligible for free school meals over Christmas; £20,000 will be given to Oldham Food Bank to help stock their shelves; and £200,000 will be distributed to charities, community groups and faith organisations to help them buy provide warm clothes and essentials to people who use their services.

We're also urging Oldham pensioners to check if they are entitled to pension credit so they can get more money – and receive the winter fuel payment. Full details of Oldham's HSF scheme is available on the council website and a winter communications plan has been developed to share the key messages about the support available.

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) launched Right Care Right Person in September 2024. We have worked closely with GMP to ensure that police call handlers can access information about council services to signpost callers appropriately. Council Customer Services staff have been briefed on the changes. Our dashboards show a low volume of Right Care Right Person calls to the Council switchboard. We will continue to monitor volumes and impact moving forwards.

District Community Councils and Neighbourhood Working:

The opening of Royton Town Hall has been a great success, with the building now providing a base for partners in the area to come together and work collaboratively for the benefit of local communities. This includes the newly refurbished Royton Library which opened it's door to the public on Saturday 14th September. To date the library has welcomed 2,706 visitors with 127 new members, and 1736 books issued. As well as providing this back-office partnership space, the town hall will also host a variety of services for local people to access, with partners such as Tameside, Oldham and Glossop Mind, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Your Health Oldham joining the Council services on offer.

More broadly, the resident offer from the hubs across all five Districts continues to grow in strength, with around 1400 residents accessing support closer to home. Supplementing this, the team have organised and supported 11 District Marketplace events in the last 3 months, with hundreds of people.

Sport and Leisure:

A place based and whole system approach to supporting people to Move More formerly known as the Local Pilot, 2018- 2024. Funding previously secured for GM / Oldham to 'Impact on the ways of working, to break down the barriers that stop people to Move More / be more active. Two geographical places initially selected due to data and local insight / knowledge – Glodwick & Failsworth

Community led approaches / involving communities / building relationships & trust have been at the heart of what we have done so far. This has led to increased community engagement & empowerment through trusted leaders, champions & groups. There have also been changes in the ways of working including increased collaboration and interconnection across the system.

Future: We (GM / Oldham) have made a submission to Sport England to expand and deepen the work for 2025-28 and have heard positive news that the board have agreed to our submission and plans. Awaiting official sign off and the value of funding. Our plans are to use the learning so far to expand from two districts to all five, and to align with the PBI model. To use this approach to improve physical activity & wellbeing levels to tackle an area in each district which faces high levels of inactivity & inequalities.

Community Safety and Stronger Communities:

The Community Safety Service has continued to work closely with partners to identify individuals engaging in Criminal and Anti-Social Behaviour which is blighting their community. These behaviours are being challenged through informal measures including warning letters, warning interviews and referrals to support services, or via more formal legal measures where appropriate. Overall Crime in Oldham is down this last period.

During National Hate Crime Awareness week in October, the following activities were delivered: A Microaggression Matters session by Communities Inc was commissioned for delivery to Saddleworth School pastoral staff (this is the exploration of early and sometimes unconscious expressions of what could become prejudice, discrimination and hate if not tackled). Hate Crime awareness raising and engagement with Asylum Seekers and Refugees; Delivery of the 'Hate and how to effectively challenge' session to school Governors; Hate Crime awareness raising and engagement with women from the SAWN Project.

The Home Office Prevent duty training 'Learn how to support people susceptible to radicalisation' has become mandatory training for all Council staff. The training will ensure that staff understand what Prevent is, how it applies to their roles and identify the emotions and behaviours that might make someone susceptible to radicalisation.

Heritage, Libraries and Arts:

StoryFest: - Launch of our first children's literature festival inspiring 4,300 children to read and write creatively.

Sustainable Library Cards - HLA ran a competition over the summer to find an illustration for our new sustainable library cards. A panel of judges selected two designs from over 200 entries. The new cards are manufactured in the UK, lightweight and use less ink and powder for print drying than standard plastic library cards. They will begin to be issued to library members this autumn.

A short '*Introduction to Technical Theatre*' course for young people aged 13 – 19

In partnership with Oldham Coliseum, HLA supported the delivery of the Khushi Festival at Oldham Library which attracted over 2,000 visitors and Oldham Theatre Workshop delivered an Introduction to Technical Theatre Course for young people aged 13-19, leading to AQA qualifications.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

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Report to COUNCIL

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan: Request for revocation of the Plan for Oldham

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Elaine Taylor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Decent Homes

Officer Contact: Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Report Author(s):

Peter Richards (Assistant Director Planning, Transport & Housing Delivery)
Elizabeth Dryden-Stuart (Strategic Planning Team Leader)

6 November 2024

Reason for Decision

A motion was submitted for Council consideration on 10 July 2024 for the removal of Oldham Borough from the Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan. The motion was amended to include a requirement for member workshops to inform members about the opportunities and risks associated with this decision, ahead of a report being brought back to the November Council meeting for consideration and decision.

Five workshops were held to provide all elected members with the opportunity to ask questions, understand all the issues, opportunities and legal risks associated with the decision they need to make given PfE was formally adopted earlier this year and is now part of the statutory development plan for Oldham.

Recommendations:

In considering this report and the motion put to Council, Members are asked -

- 1) To reflect on the information provided in the workshop sessions (slides appended to this report for ease of reference, Appendix 2) and summarised within the body of this report to inform their decision;
- 2) To note Officer recommendations that there is only one reasonable and justifiable resolution to the original motion and that is: **not** to write to the Secretary of State to request a revocation of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan insofar as it relates to the Borough of Oldham; and instead,
- 3) To **retain** Places for Everyone providing clarity on strategic development areas / planning policies as part of the adopted Development Plan for Oldham; and, acknowledging that this provides the Green Belt site protection currently afforded in anticipation of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) being confirmed and the housing numbers increasing in support of the national housing crisis; and
- 4) To continue to prepare an Oldham Local Plan as the Part 2 Plan for Oldham under PfE in order to provide the local, non-strategic planning policies as part of the adopted Development Plan for Oldham.

Executive Summary

Oldham Council approved the adoption of the Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan Document 2022 – 2039 on the 13 March 2024 following several years of community engagement and many formal processes including public examination. The PfE Plan came into effect as part of the Borough's Development Plan on 21 March 2024 and is now an adopted joint development plan for Oldham and eight other Greater Manchester authorities.

A motion was submitted to Full Council on 10 July 2024 asking the Council to write to the Secretary of State (SoS) to revoke the plan as it relates to Oldham; however, an amended motion was agreed providing a window for members to obtain information about the decision they were making and to ask questions about the opportunities and consequences of this request.

There are no powers for a Council to 'undo' an adopted Local Plan once it takes effect; and it is understood that the SoS has never been asked to revoke a newly adopted Plan or Joint Plan such as PfE. As such, for both Oldham and the other eight Greater Manchester authorities within the Plan, the legal ramifications of revocation needed to be fully explored with the support of specialist legal advice and careful consideration given to the financial, planning, environmental and reputational implications.

This report sets out two sets of information for members to consider as part of their deliberations when this is considered at Full Council:

1. The concerns listed within the motion as justification for writing to the SoS; and
2. The implications and consequences of deciding to make a request to the SoS for the revocation of PfE for Oldham.

All members were invited to a series of workshops through which officers were able to answer questions and fully explain the ramifications of the motion, on Oldham and the remaining eight PfE authorities. 37 of 60 elected members attended the workshops - details of the key issues discussed are appended to this report for ease of reference (Appendix 2).

The Concerns within the Motion:

The following concerns were listed within the Motion to Council:

- *Places for Everyone is based on 'housing need' calculations which are already the better part of a decade old.*
- *Places for Everyone does not give guarantees with regards to the delivery of affordable and socially rented homes.*
- *'Places for Everyone' represents a developer-led approach.*
- *It would see the irreparable loss of Green Belt sites and green spaces which is not necessary.*
- *It uses Green Belt for the delivery of a housing strategy focused solely on developer profit.*
- *It does not deliver the right mix of affordable housing types and tenures in the places people want to live.*

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- *We also believe the Adoption Statement for the Plan presented at the last Full Council meeting in March 2024 was misleading by implying that all the main modifications had been consulted on. This was not the case, as none of the main modifications related to HS2 have been consulted upon.*

In investigating these matters it is considered that **none of the concerns provide sufficient justification to request that the SoS** revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham. Therefore, were it to be challenged via Judicial Review and the concerns listed were the basis of the Council's decision, it **would be considered legally perverse and unreasonable, and consequently the reasons for the revocation request would be unlawful**. Members have been advised that there are financial consequences for losing a Judicial Review and there will be reputational consequences if the decision proceeds to write to the SoS.

With the Government's ambitions for plan-making and housing growth set out in the proposed revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Officers cannot foresee any justifiable or rational reason as to why the SoS would agree to the revocation of PfE as it relates to Oldham.

On these grounds, Officers are recommending that Members seriously consider the grounds for asking the SoS to revoke PfE (as it relates to Oldham) and reflect on the further consequences and implications as set out below to further inform their decision.

Implications of deciding to make a request to the SoS for the revocation of PfE:

The ramifications of requesting the SoS to revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham have been considered within the context of the recent consultation by Government on their proposed reforms to the NPPF, as the implications of these changes are significant, and it is essential that these form part of any decision taken.

Consultation on these changes commenced on the 30 July 2024 until 24 September 2024 and details can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>.

Several of the proposed reforms have implications for plan-making, and the key changes that are important when considering the revocation of PfE for Oldham include:

- Revisions to the Local Housing Need calculation and the resulting **increase in the number of homes** that Oldham would be required to deliver;
- **Land release and requirement to review Green Belt boundaries** to deliver the number of homes needed;
- Changes to the presumption in favour of sustainable development; and
- The transitional arrangements for how the revised NPPF should be reflected in adopted and emerging Local Plans.

As evidenced by the assessment of revoking PfE for Oldham outlined in this report, **there are no benefits to Oldham or its communities of revoking PfE**. In fact, the resulting harm created by ad hoc, uncoordinated housing development on the borough's

environment, on economic growth, on infrastructure provision and on the quantity and type of housing development coming forward would be far worse than under PfE.

Local authority decision-making must be lawful and based on arguable and rational grounds; **none of the concerns put forward in the Motion provide a legally sound basis, therefore there is no justification for requesting that the SoS revoke PfE** for Oldham Borough. Any request to the SoS on that basis would be challengeable through Judicial Review, and it is considered that this is likely to be found to be irrational and unreasonable in law, and therefore has financial consequences for the Local Authority.

Following the review of all these key elements, **it is clear that there is only one option open to the Council which members should be considering – that is to retain Places for Everyone** to provide the strategic planning policies as part of the adopted Development Plan for Oldham and continue to prepare an Oldham Local Plan, as the Part 2 Plan for Oldham under PfE, to provide the local, non-strategic planning policies as part of the adopted Development Plan for Oldham.

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan: Request for revocation of the Plan for Oldham

1 Background to Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document

- 1.1 Oldham Council approved the adoption of the Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan Document 2022 – 2039 on the 13 March 2024. The report and accompanying papers can be viewed online at:
https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/documents/s144357/PfE%20Adoption_Final.pdf
. Following approval by all nine PfE authorities, the Plan came into effect on 21 March 2024.
- 1.2 At full Council on 10 July 2024, under Notice of Opposition Business, a motion was tabled for the removal of Oldham Borough from Places for Everyone. The Motion was moved by Councillor Sykes and seconded by Councillor Woodvine. Full details of the Motion can be found at Appendix 1 to this report and online at <https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=9172&Ver=4>.
- 1.3 The PfE Plan came into effect as part of the Borough's Development Plan on 21 March 2024 and is now an adopted joint development plan for the nine districts, including Oldham. There are no powers in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004 for a Council to 'undo' the decision to adopt once it takes effect. As such, the Council cannot legally withdraw from PfE on its own; it can only make a request to the Secretary of State (SoS) to revoke the Plan under Section 25 of the PCPA 2004.
- 1.4 It is understood that such a request to revoke a Plan has never been made of the SoS for a newly adopted Plan, nor for a Joint Plan such as PfE. Therefore, the legal ramifications of revoking the Plan needed to be fully explored for both Oldham and the other eight Greater Manchester authorities in the Plan, and careful consideration given to the financial, planning, environmental and reputational implications.
- 1.5 Taking account of the above and following consideration of the Motion, the full Council debated and approved the following amended Motion. The amendment was moved by Councillor Hince and seconded by Councillor Navesey.
- 1.6 The Motion as amended and approved is as follows:
'This Council is concerned that:
 - *Places for Everyone is based on 'housing need' calculations which are already the better part of a decade old.*
 - *Places for Everyone does not give guarantees with regards to the delivery of affordable and socially rented homes.*
 - *Places for Everyone' represents a developer-led approach.*
 - *It would see the irreparable loss of Green Belt sites and green spaces which is not necessary.*

- *It uses Green Belt for the delivery of a housing strategy focused solely on developer profit.*
- *It does not deliver the right mix of affordable housing types and tenures in the places people want to live.*
- *We also believe the Adoption Statement for the Plan presented at the last Full Council meeting in March 2024 was misleading by implying that all the main modifications had been consulted on. This was not the case, as none of the main modifications related to HS2 have been consulted upon.*

1.7 *This Council resolves to:*

1. *Request the relevant council officers deliver an all-member workshop in September (after recess to ensure maximum opportunity to enable all members to attend) to understand the issues, options and opportunities associated with Oldham Council seeking revocation of its involvement in the Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE).*
2. *On the back of the workshop, request the relevant council officers to present a thorough and full report to Council in November 2024 to inform a decision in writing to the new Secretary of State to revoke PfE insofar as it relates to the Borough of Oldham.*
3. *Should the request be approved Oldham Council' withdraw engagement and support for the defence of the judicial review of 'Places for Everyone'.*
4. *Should the Plan be revoked the Green Belt boundaries should be restored to their pre-adoption state.*
5. *If the Plan is revoked develop an Oldham-led housing strategy that prioritises brownfield and ex-industrial sites, while protecting greenbelt and green spaces for future generations.'*

1.8 Resolution 1 sought the delivery of all-members in September to understand the issues, options and opportunities associated with Oldham Council seeking revocation of its involvement in PfE.

1.9 In total five workshops were arranged:

- (in person) Wednesday 25 September 2pm – 4pm
- (in person) Wednesday 25 September 6pm – 8pm (note, this session was cancelled due to very low numbers in attendance)
- (in person) Monday 30 September 2pm – 4pm
- (in person) Monday 30 September 6pm – 8pm
- (on Teams) Monday 7 October 6pm - 8pm

1.10 A total of 37 members attended at least one workshop. A copy of the member workshop slides is appended to this report for ease of reference (Appendix 2).

1.11 Key issues raised and discussed at the workshops were:

- Oldham's five-year housing supply, including the application of density, site make-up (i.e. proportion on brownfield land), role of PfE and requirements of NPPF.
- The need for social housing within the borough and the ability to inform the housing mix, type and tenure to be delivered locally.

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- Proposed revisions to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly the standard housing methodology and the implications for Oldham.
 - The protection afforded to Green Belt and Other Protected Open Land.
 - The implications for sites allocated in PfE and those that were removed or reduced during the preparation of the Plan.
 - The legal implications, including the grounds on which the SoS might be minded to revoke PfE and previous use of Section 25 of the Act.
- 1.12 Resolution 2 of the Motion sought a report to Council in November 2024 setting out the implications of writing to the SoS to request revocation of PfE insofar as it relates to Oldham Borough. This report fulfils that resolution.
- 1.13 Resolutions 3, 4 and 5 would all follow if the Council agreed to request the SoS to revoke PfE for Oldham and if the SoS granted that request.
- 1.14 If the SoS approved the revocation of PfE for Oldham then the borough would no longer be part of the Joint Plan and as such the Council would no longer be involved in the legal challenge to 'Places for Everyone' currently in progress.
- 1.15 Should the Plan be revoked for Oldham, Oldham's Green Belt boundaries would revert to the boundaries within the Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document, adopted November 2011.
- 1.16 With regards to resolution 5, should PfE be revoked for Oldham then the Council would be required to prepare a brand-new Local Plan immediately, the scope of which would need to be revisited to include setting our housing and employment land requirements. This new Local Plan would need to be prepared in line with forthcoming revisions to the NPPF which were recently out to consultation. The implications of the proposed revisions to NPPF on plan-making are set out below (see paragraphs 2.4.7 to 2.4.13).

2 Current Position

- 2.1 There are two elements to the approved Motion that require careful consideration and which are considered in turn in the remainder of the report:
- 1) Responding to the concerns listed; and
 - 2) The implications of deciding to make a request to the SoS for the revocation of PfE.

2.2 Response to the 'concerns' listed in the Motion

- 2.2.1 Each of the concerns listed in the Motion have been addressed in turn below.
- *Places for Everyone is based on 'housing need' calculations which are already the better part of a decade old.*
- 2.2.2 The PfE housing need figure is calculated using the standard methodology for calculating Local Housing Need (LHN) as prescribed in the current NPPF, under

which PfE was prepared and required to be in accordance with. This matter was fully considered as part of the Public Examination into the Joint Plan. The Inspectors examining the Plan found no justification for deviating from this methodology or for not meeting the target in full.

- 2.2.3 Therefore, this is not a change in circumstances since the Council made its decision to adopt PfE in March 2024 and is insufficient justification to request that the SoS revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham.
- 2.2.4 Further detail regarding the implications of the revocation of PfE on Oldham's local housing need, having consideration to the proposed revisions to NPPF, is set out below in paragraphs 2.4.17 to 2.4.19 and 2.5.2 to 2.5.28.
- *Places for Everyone does not give guarantees with regards to the delivery of affordable and socially rented homes.*
- 2.2.5 It has always been very clear that PfE does not cover all aspects of planning policy. PfE has never provided affordable housing targets; these have always been something which would be (and indeed are being) included in the Part 2 Oldham Local Plan, which is currently being prepared. The Part 2 Plan will provide a local planning policy framework that will support the council's response to the housing crisis within the Oldham, based on up to date and robust local evidence. The role of PfE in the respect of this concern was fully explored during the Examination and the Inspectors found the Plan sound.
- 2.2.6 Therefore, this is also not a change in circumstances since the Council made its decision to adopt PfE in March 2024 and is insufficient justification to request that the SoS revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham.
- *'Places for Everyone' represents a developer-led approach*
- 2.2.7 It is not considered that PfE represents a developer-led approach; it is a strategy-led approach, maximising the use of brownfield land. PfE is based on a sound evidence base, as required by national planning policy, and was subject to several stages of consultation providing the opportunity for all to engage in the process. Both the strategy and the evidence base were scrutinised at the Examination and the Inspectors concluded that both met the requirements of government policy, providing an appropriate basis on which to plan for the nine GM districts.
- 2.2.8 Therefore, this is also not a change in circumstances since the Council made its decision to adopt PfE in March 2024 and is insufficient justification to request that the SoS revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham.
- *It would see the irreparable loss of Green Belt sites and green spaces which is not necessary*
- 2.2.9 By maximising the use of the mainly brownfield land available within our urban areas, the level of Green Belt and protected open land being developed has been kept to a minimum through PfE. In Oldham several changes were made during the preparation of PfE to reduce the amount of Green Belt being released. This included the removal and reduction of several allocations, which led to a reduction in the amount of Oldham's Green Belt proposed for release from 7.0% in 2016 to

2.15% in the adopted PfE. Following a thorough examination, the Inspectors concluded that the loss of Green Belt and green spaces set out in PfE is necessary to meet the identified development needs, providing an appropriate basis on which to plan for the nine GM districts.

2.2.10 Therefore, this is also not a change in circumstances since the Council made its decision to adopt PfE in March 2024 and is insufficient justification to request that the SoS revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham.

2.2.11 Further detail regarding the implications of the revocation of PfE on Oldham's Green Belt and green spaces, having consideration to the proposed revisions to NPPF, is set out below in paragraphs 2.4.20 to 2.4.29.

- *It uses Green Belt for the delivery of a housing strategy focused solely on developer profit.*

2.2.12 The release of Green Belt for housing development through PfE is not considered to be focused on developer profit. PfE has a very clear strategy for which a site selection methodology was developed to ensure that the identified sites enabled the strategy to be met. The site selection methodology and the site-specific evidence and justification for the individual allocations was thoroughly examined as part of the Examination and the Inspectors found the Plan sound.

2.2.13 Therefore, this is also not a change in circumstances since the Council made its decision to adopt PfE in March 2024 and is insufficient justification to request that the SoS revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham.

- *It does not deliver the right mix of affordable housing types and tenures in the places people want to live.*

2.2.14 As detailed above, this matter was fully debated and explored by the Planning Inspectors at the public examination into PfE. It has always been very clear that PfE does not cover all aspects of planning policy. It has never provided affordable housing targets. These have always been something which would be (and indeed are) included in the Oldham Local Plan which is currently being prepared.

2.2.15 Therefore, this is also not a change in circumstances since the Council made its decision to adopt PfE in March 2024 and is insufficient justification to request that the SoS revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham.

- *We also believe the Adoption Statement for the Plan presented at the last Full Council meeting in March 2024 was misleading by implying that all the main modifications had been consulted on. This was not the case, as none of the main modifications related to HS2 have been consulted upon.*

2.2.16 Adoption Statements were not in the suite of background documents published for the Council meetings. They were published by each local authority party to PfE upon adoption of the Plan – once the Plan came into effect on 21st March 2024. The Statements available online at Adoption Documentation - Greater Manchester

Combined Authority (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk) meet the requirements of the Regulations and do not imply all main modifications were consulted upon. Therefore, they are not considered to be misleading and, as such, it is incorrect to say that 'the Adoption Statement for the Plan presented at the last Full Council meeting in March 2024 misled the Council', as they were neither presented at the Council meeting, nor were they misleading.

2.2.17 Notwithstanding the fact that the Adoption Statements were not presented to Council in March 2024, the matter of the HS2 Main Modifications, and whether or not they should be the subject of further consultation, was very clearly considered by the Inspectors in their Examination report (paragraph 88). The independent Planning Inspectors concluded that none of the main modifications they recommended, relating to HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), materially affect the Plan's strategy or policies and therefore they were satisfied that [further] consultation about them was not necessary.

2.2.18 This matter does not have any bearing on the revocation of PfE as far as it relates to Oldham.

2.3 Conclusion regarding 'concerns' listed in the Motion

2.3.1 It is considered that to request that the SoS revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham, the Council must have a tenable lawful basis for doing so. Where a local authority has discretion to exercise in making a decision, that decision must be rational, and an irrational or unreasonable decision is one that is not reasonably open to it, as stated by Lord Green MR in the *Associated Provincial Picture Houses v Wednesbury Corporation* [1948] 1 KB 223. Irrationality includes taking into account an irrelevant consideration and an example of an irrelevant consideration is an assumption not based on evidence.

2.3.2 None of the concerns listed above provide sufficient justification to request that the SoS revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham; rather they are irrational and would not stand up to scrutiny. If challenged via Judicial Review, all the concerns listed would, in a legal sense, be considered perverse and unreasonable and consequently, unlawful. Indeed, under the circumstances we are in (a newly adopted Joint Plan and the government's ambitions for plan-making and housing growth set out in the proposed revisions to NPPF), Officers cannot foresee any justifiable or rational reason as to why the SoS would agree to the revocation of PfE as it relates to Oldham. The only examples of when Section 25 of the Act has been activated, which Officers are aware of, have been in relation to 'out-of-date' plans. Not, in relation to newly adopted and up-to-date plans such as PfE.

2.3.3 As such, it is considered that it would be unlawful for Oldham Council, as a responsible public authority acting rationally, to request the SoS to revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham on the basis of the concerns set out in the Motion. Such a decision would be challengeable and, if challenged, the decision would be found to be irrational and unreasonable.

2.4 Implications of the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system

- 2.4.1 The ramifications of requesting the SoS to revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham must now be considered within the context of the recent consultation by Government on their proposed reforms to the NPPF, as the implications of these changes are significant, and it is essential that these form part of any decision taken.
- 2.4.2 On 30 July 2024 the Government published details of their proposed reforms to NPPF and other changes to the planning system (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>).
- 2.4.3 As part of the consultation the following documents were published for comment:
- Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system;
 - National Planning Policy Framework: draft text for consultation; and
 - Outcome of the proposed revised standard method for calculating Local Housing Need.
- 2.4.4 The consultation ran up to 24 September 2024.
- 2.4.5 Several of the proposed reforms have implications for plan-making. The key changes that are important to have regard to when considering the revocation of PfE for Oldham Council relate to:
- The transitional arrangements for how the revised NPPF should be reflected in adopted and emerging Local Plans;
 - Changes to the presumption in favour of sustainable development;
 - Revisions to the Local Housing Need calculation and the resulting increase in the number of homes that Oldham would be required to deliver; and
 - Land release through plan-making and requirement to review Green Belt boundaries.
- 2.4.6 Further detail on each of these is provided below.
- 2.4.7 **The transitional arrangements for emerging and adopted Local Plans**
- 2.4.8 With regards to adopted plans, paragraph 225 of the proposed revised NPPF makes clear that existing policies should not be considered out of date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of the revised NPPF. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the framework, the greater the weight that may be given). This would apply to PfE, as our adopted Plan.
- 2.4.9 In particular, the proposed revisions to the NPPF largely retain what is currently paragraph 75 (paragraph 76 under the proposed revisions), which under the revisions would now state:

“Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old.”

2.4.10 This paragraph is important because it ensures that, even with the proposed change to the Local Housing Need calculation, the housing requirement set in PfE would be what Oldham’s housing delivery is measured against until at least 2029.

2.4.11 The proposed reforms then go on to set out the transitional arrangements for plan-making once the new NPPF is in place.

2.4.12 Upon publication, the policies in the proposed revised NPPF will apply for the purpose of preparing local plans unless one of the exceptions listed in paragraph 226 apply. These exceptions include where the local plan is a Part 2 Plan that does not introduce new strategic policies setting the housing requirement. Where this applies, the said plan will be examined under the relevant previous version of NPPF. As a party to PfE, this would apply to Oldham’s emerging draft local plan – PfE would be our Part 1 Plan, setting out the strategic policies, and Oldham’s Local Plan would be our Part 2 Plan, setting out more local detail on the strategic policies contained in PfE.

2.4.13 In the absence of PfE, Oldham would have to revert to our Core Strategy, which would be considered out-of-date, particularly those policies relating to land supply. As such, the Council would be required to prepare a new Local Plan immediately in line with the new NPPF when published. This will include addressing the much higher local housing need and the new requirement to release Green Belt land to meet such needs in full (see below).

2.4.14 **Presumption in favour of sustainable development**

2.4.15 Paragraph 11 of NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The current NPPF sets out that, for decision-making, this means:

- *‘approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- *where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date¹, granting permission unless:*

¹ Footnote 9 to the current NPPF explains that *‘This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where: (a) the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply (or a four year supply, if applicable, as set out in paragraph 226) of deliverable housing sites (with a buffer if applicable, as set out in paragraph 77 and does not benefit from the provisions of paragraph 76; or (b) where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was below 75% of the housing requirement over the previous three years.’*

- *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed²; or*
- *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole’.*

2.4.16 The proposed revisions to the NPPF retain paragraph 11 and the presumption in favour of sustainable development. However, it has been amended to make it clear that in terms of the policies that may be ‘out-of-date’ this relates to those for the supply of land. As such, if the Council are unable to identify a five-year housing land supply, then the presumption would take effect.

2.4.17 **Proposed revised standard method for calculating local housing needs**

2.4.18 A new standard method is proposed for calculating local housing need as part of the planning reforms. The method is based on a proportion (0.8%) of the housing stock which is then adjusted for affordability. This provides an annual housing requirement for each LPA. The proposed changes make the use of this standard method mandatory and the basis on which the Council must plan.

2.4.19 For Oldham, the proposed standard method represents a significant increase of 54%, requiring a total of 1,049 homes to be delivered a year, compared to the average of 680 homes a year Oldham is required to deliver under PfE. Further detail on the implications of this are considered in paragraphs 2.5.2 to 2.5.28.

2.4.20 **Land release through plan-making and requirement to review Green Belt boundaries**

2.4.21 The planning reforms set out that councils will be expected to make all efforts to allocate land in line with their housing need as per the new standard method calculation, including reviewing Green Belt boundaries.

2.4.22 Paragraph 142 of the proposed revised NPPF states that:

‘Once established Green Belt should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Exceptional circumstances include, but are not limited to, instances where an authority cannot meet its identified need for housing, commercial or other development through other means. In these circumstances authorities should review Green Belt boundaries and propose alterations to meet these needs in full, unless the review provides clear evidence that such alterations

² Footnote 7 to the current NPPF explains that ‘The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 187) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 742); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.’.

would fundamentally undermine the function of the Green Belt across the area of the plan as a whole.’

- 2.4.23 In the absence of PfE, when preparing our own Local Plan, Oldham would therefore be required to review Green Belt boundaries and allocate sufficient land to meet our own development needs. With the increased housing requirement resulting from the proposed new standard method, this would have far greater implications for Oldham’s Green Belt, our Other Protected Open Land and green spaces than PfE has had.
- 2.4.24 Under PfE, the supply of land in Oldham earmarked for housing has the potential to deliver 13,311 new homes. This includes the 15% flexibility allowance in the supply of land that the PfE Inspectors considered was acceptable to ensure the full PfE housing requirement can be achieved over the Plan period.
- 2.4.25 Even if the Council were to commence the preparation of a new Local Plan immediately, they can take several years to prepare, especially those that are more complex and include the release of land in the Green Belt / allocation of land. As such the Council would not be in a position to adopt it until 2028 at the very earliest. Therefore, that Plan would cover the period 2028-2043. Under the new housing requirement, that Local Plan would have a target of at least 15,735 new homes to be delivered in that period, meaning the Council would have to identify land for the supply of housing of approximately 18,000 homes if providing a similar flexibility allowance to PfE.
- 2.4.26 By 2028, it is anticipated that over 3,000 new homes would have been delivered in Oldham from the current supply of housing sites. Therefore, even if all the supply of housing land currently in PfE was counted, there would only be a supply of approximately 10,000 homes left by 2028. As such, the new Local Plan would have to identify further land for at least 8,000 additional new homes.
- 2.4.27 To put that in context, the PfE allocations in Oldham that involved the reallocation of Green Belt or other protected open land provide a supply of only 2,105 homes over the plan period, so a brand-new plan could be reallocating as much as four times the amount of Green Belt or Other Protected Open Land that was reallocated under PfE, probably more when employment land is also factored in.
- 2.4.28 Given the housing supply has already been maximised through the use of previously developed land in the urban area, the vast majority of these 8,000 homes would have to be developed on land that is currently Green Belt, Other Protected Open Land or urban green space. This would include sites currently allocated as part of PfE – these are not going to go away just because Oldham is no longer part of PfE. Those sites have been demonstrated to be developable, deliverable, viable and within sustainable and accessible locations. Therefore, given the potential increase in the local housing need calculation, these sites will continue to be under pressure. Sites previously considered at other stages of PfE, but which were removed, may also come to the fore – sites such as Kingsway South, Hanging Chadder, Thornham Old Road, Spinners Way / Alderney Farm

and those that formed part of the wider clusters previously proposed in Woodhouses and along Ashton Road.

2.4.29 Therefore, whilst the Council would have to consider the implications of the revised standard method proposed by government in due course when PfE is reviewed after 5 years, the revocation of PfE for Oldham now would accelerate this and have a much greater impact on the Green Belt and Other Protected Open Land compared to PfE, as it would leave Oldham vulnerable to unplanned and inappropriate development.

2.5 Implications of deciding to write to the SoS to request the revocation of PfE

2.5.1 The decision to request the SoS to revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham has several significant ramifications which are set out below.

2.5.2 On Oldham's Housing Requirement

2.5.3 PfE Policy JP-H1: Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development sets out the minimum number of new additional dwellings each district is expected to plan for across the plan area. As stated above for Oldham, this is an average of 680 homes a year, or 11,560 homes over the plan period (2022 to 2039). Policy JP-H1 phases this through a stepped requirement, as follows:

- 404 homes a year 2022 to 2025;
- 680 homes a year 2025 to 2030; and
- 772 homes a year 2030 to 2039.

2.5.4 There are lower targets in the early years for many of the PfE districts, including Oldham, reflecting the expectation that delivery will be slower in the short term. The requirement then increases from 2025 and again in 2030. It is important to note that “stepped” housing requirements such as those in PfE can only be secured through the preparation and adoption of a Local Plan (such as PfE). Likewise, “fixing” the annual average housing requirement can only be done through a Local Plan (such as PfE).

2.5.5 The revocation of PfE in relation to Oldham would mean that the housing targets set out in Policy JP-H1 would no longer apply for us.

2.5.6 In the absence of PfE, Oldham's housing requirement would be based on the standard method for calculating LHN – whether it be against the current or the new methodology (when it is finalised).

2.5.7 Using the current local housing need calculation, Oldham's housing requirement would currently be around 690 homes a year. Whilst this is only 10 homes more than the average requirement in PfE Policy JP-H1, Oldham would have to deliver this from the outset as it would not benefit from the stepped requirement provided through PfE. This has implications for our Housing Delivery Test measurement and housing land supply position, which are considered below. Oldham would

also be vulnerable to this requirement increasing in future years, should the figures inputted into the standard method calculation cause such an increase.

- 2.5.8 Using the proposed new local housing need calculation in the revised NPPF, as discussed above, the housing requirement would be significantly higher and have substantial implications for Oldham – increasing by 54% to 1,049 homes a year.
- 2.5.9 Paragraph 76 of proposed revised NPPF states that '*Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old.*'
- 2.5.10 As such, as explained above, as part of PfE Oldham continues to benefit from the housing requirement set out therein, until such a time as the plan is reviewed, and in line with paragraph 76 of proposed revised NPPF will be required to identify a five-year housing land supply against said housing requirement.
- 2.5.11 In contrast, in the absence of PfE, Oldham would be required to identify sufficient land to meet the requirement as per the new proposed calculation for local housing need and, if unable to do so, the 'presumption of sustainable development' would take effect.
- 2.5.12 **On the borough's housing land supply position**
- 2.5.13 As stated above, as party to PfE and a plan that has been adopted in the last 5 years, Oldham will continue to benefit from the housing requirement set out therein, until such a time as the plan is reviewed.
- 2.5.14 However, in the absence of PfE, Oldham would be required to identify sufficient land to meet the requirement as per the standard method proposed in either the current or draft NPPF (once in place). This section therefore looks at the borough's housing land supply at 1 April 2024 and the implications of the differing housing requirements.
- 2.5.15 **Five-year housing land supply**
- 2.5.16 Table 1 shows the borough's five-year housing land supply (for the period 2024 to 2029) against our a) PfE requirement; b) the current LHN methodology; and c) the Standard Method proposed in the revised NPPF.

Table 1: Five-year housing land supply for 2024-2029 against the PfE requirement, current and proposed NPPF LHN methodology

5 Year Supply	3,520
PfE requirement stepped requirement	3,124
5 Year Supply as a proportion of PfE requirement	112%
Current LHN methodology – requirement = 690 homes a year	3,450
5 Year Supply as a proportion of current LHN methodology	102%
Proposed Standard Method – requirement = 1,049 homes a year	5,245
5 Year Supply as a proportion of proposed Standard Method	67%

2.5.17 As of 1 April 2024, the borough's five-year housing land supply contains sufficient land to accommodate 3,520 dwellings (before accounting for demolitions). Based on the PfE stepped housing requirement, the identified five-year housing supply represents a 5.6-year supply, at 112% of the requirement for this period. As such, under PfE, Oldham can demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply.

2.5.18 However, in the absence of PfE, our housing supply would be measured against the requirement as per the standard method set out in NPPF. Against the current LHN methodology requirement of 690 homes a year, Oldham can only demonstrate 102%. When measured against the revised proposed LHN standard method proposed in draft NPPF, the current five-year housing land supply would only provide 67% of what is required.

2.5.19 **Total housing land supply**

2.5.20 As of 1 April 2024, it has been identified that there is land to accommodate approximately 13,475 homes (including accounting for demolitions and small sites) within Oldham. These are identified over the short to long term (including 756 homes identified to be delivered after 2039).

2.5.21 The sites forming the housing land supply include those with a live planning permission; under construction sites; PfE allocations; remaining saved UDP housing allocations; sites that have previously had planning permission but the permission has lapsed (and not been implemented); stalled sites (where construction has started but has been stalled for an extended period of time); potential sites (no planning history but assessed as suitable for residential development); and pending sites (where at the time of assessment a planning application was pending decision) – where it has been considered that the principle of residential development is acceptable.

2.5.21 Importantly, this housing land supply position includes an element of housing delivery on sites allocated under PfE. If PfE were revoked for Oldham, the Council could not legitimately count the supply from these allocations, unless they had been granted planning permission or were under construction. As such, in reality the housing land supply position would be even worse against the current and proposed LHN calculation.

2.5.22 If Oldham cannot demonstrate a five-year supply, it will be extremely vulnerable to unplanned and inappropriate development, and the Council will be less able to effectively co-ordinate the delivery of the necessary infrastructure required to support the new housing (and its residents).

2.5.23 On housing delivery in Oldham

2.5.24 The Housing Delivery Test (HDT) was introduced by the Government as a monitoring tool to demonstrate whether local areas are building enough homes to meet their housing need. The HDT measures net additional dwellings provided over the past three years against the number of homes required over the same period. The consequences of failing the Test set out in the current, and proposed revised, NPPF are:

- less than 95% - an Action Plan must be prepared;
- less than 85% - the LPA must identify a 20% buffer of additional deliverable sites for housing in addition to their existing 5-year housing land supply.
- less than 75% - the presumption in favour of sustainable development (see NPPF paragraph 11) must be applied. This is in addition to the 20% buffer and Action Plan.

2.5.25 The latest HDT results were published on 19 December 2023 and are based on the previous three complete financial years of 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. The results are shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Oldham's HDT Results – 2022 Measurement

Year	Number of Homes Required	Number of Homes Delivered	Average Delivery Rate (%)
2019/20	633	729	115%
2020/21	461	380	82%
2021/22	677	506	75%
Total (2019-2022)/ Average Delivery Rate %	1,772	1,615	91%

2.5.26 Looking forward, based on the requirement set out in PfE, the 2023 HDT measurement would be assessed against housing delivery in 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 to identify the number of new homes required and delivered. The PfE housing requirement of 404 homes per year would apply for 2022/23. This would increase to two years of 404 homes per year for the 2024 HDT measurement (2022/23 and 2023/24) and three years of 404 homes per year for 2025 HDT measurement (2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25) - with the lower target from the stepped requirement being in place for all three years of the measurement the latter would be our lowest amount required. From 2025/26 the higher requirement (680 homes a year from 2025-2030) would then start to be fed into the calculation.

2.5.27 In the absence of PfE, Oldham's HDT measurement would be measured against the local housing need derived from the standard method. This would be non-negotiable. Table 3 below shows that, based on past delivery rates, this would result in a lower performance and place us at greater risk of the consequences of failing the HDT measurement.

Table 3: Example of Oldham's HDT Results (for the period 2019/20 to 2021/22) measured against housing need of 690 homes a year and 1,049 homes a year

Year	Number of Homes Required (current LHN calculation)	Number of Homes Delivered	Average Delivery Rate (%)	Number of Homes Required (new LHN calculation)	Number of Homes Delivered	Delivery Rate (%)
2019/20	690	729	106%	1,049	729	69%
2020/21	690	380	55%	1,049	380	36%
2021/22	690	506	73%	1,049	506	48%
Total (2019-2022)/ Average Delivery Rate %	2,070	1,615	78%	3,147	1,615	51%

2.5.28 Clearly, if the proposed new standard method is adopted, the implications for our HDT would be significant, triggering the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

2.5.29 **On our Other Protected Open Land and green space**

2.5.30 Paragraphs 2.4.20 to 2.4.29 consider the impact of proposed revisions to NPPF and the revocation of PfE on the Green Belt in Oldham. Our Other Protected Open Land and other green spaces would also become extremely vulnerable to development (arguably even more vulnerable than Green Belt). Not only does this lead to the loss of much valued and important open spaces, but it also has other consequential impacts for the Council.

2.5.31 A good example of how the presumption in favour of sustainable development can have impacts on the Council would be the Knowls Lane site in Lees. When the Council initially refused planning permission for the residential development of this site, that decision was overturned at appeal by a Planning Inspector because Oldham could not demonstrate a five-year housing land supply at that time – i.e., the Council lost control of the decision-making on that site.

2.5.32 Such decisions not only result in the loss of undeveloped land that the Council wants to protect from development, it also harms the reputation of the Council and leads to significant financial costs for the Council (in defending such appeals and the risk of the appellant's costs being awarded against the Council if the Planning

Inspector considers that the Council has been unreasonable in refusing permission in the first place because it should have applied the presumption in favour of sustainable development).

2.5.33 On Oldham's Local Plan

2.5.34 In the absence of PfE, the Council would be reliant on the Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document, adopted in November 2011, which would be considered out of date. As such, an immediate review of our Local Plan would be required. This would need to be a full new Plan that covered strategic policy matters and prepared in accordance with the new NPPF (when published), including addressing how the housing requirements identified through the new mandatory standard method will be met.

2.5.35 The current Local Plan review that is underway (and which is designed to be a Part 2 Local Plan to sit alongside PfE) is at an advanced stage, with the Council having already consulted on a Draft Local Plan. In the absence of PfE, the scope of the Local Plan review would need to be substantially altered, to cover all the strategic planning policy matters that are currently covered by PfE and which are of relevance to Oldham, including allocating sufficient land for development needs and the release of Green Belt. As such, subject to any changes made by the new Government, this would mean that the Council would have to produce a 'new-style' Local Plan, as set out under the new Local Planning provisions in the recent Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. We are still awaiting guidance on how these are to be produced, so again this is another unknown in the process and another likely delay to getting a Local Plan in place.

2.5.36 As with the housing land delivery position, this policy vacuum and the reliance on out-of-date policies puts us at greater risk of having development imposed on us where the Council does not want it, and a reduced ability to secure necessary infrastructure improvements alongside that development.

2.5.37 On GMCA and the other eight PfE authorities

2.5.38 PfE is a joint development plan. It relates not only to Oldham but also to Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan, and has implications for the GMCA. As such, it is only right and necessary to consider what impact a request to the SoS to revoke PfE, as it relates to Oldham, will have on them.

2.5.39 The removal of Oldham from PfE will undermine delivery of the Plan's spatial strategy, particularly in relation to 'boosting northern competitiveness'. The policy approach for the North-East Growth Corridor, which includes Oldham, is a key part of this - not only would our removal prevent the delivery of the cross-boundary allocation at Stakehill, which would have consequences for Rochdale, it would also mean that our ability to influence development coming forward across Atom Valley, and how Oldham residents (present and future) connect to it, would be undermined. With limited opportunities for new employment land across the

borough, the role of the North-East Growth Corridor and ensuring that our residents have sustainable access and good connectivity to opportunities outside of the borough, such as those across Atom Valley, cannot be underestimated. Such opportunities are vital if the Council is to ensure our future economic growth and regeneration ambitions.

2.5.40 Reflecting the importance of the matter at hand, Paul Dennett (the Salford City Mayor) has written to the Council on behalf of the other eight PfE Council Leaders and the Mayor of GM, setting out their concerns regarding the implications of the Motion. The full representation can be found at Appendix 3. It is their view that there is no lawful basis on which to take such a decision, or that the SoS would agree to such a revocation. In addition, they express concern for the implications such a step would have on delivering Oldham's ambitions, many of which are common across the sub-region. These key concerns are summarised below:

- Stakehill – returning the site to Green Belt would result in uncertainty and risks around the delivery of this important cross-boundary employment and housing site, which is an agreed priority within the wider Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone. It is very unlikely that the Stakehill site will be able to be brought forward in isolation. As such, there will be consequential impacts on infrastructure planning and delivery across the northern parts of Greater Manchester.
- Without the proposed scale of development at Stakehill, it is hard to see how a successful business case for the new rail station at Slattocks could be developed, undermining its delivery and the economic prospects of the local communities of Rochdale and Oldham.
- Alongside Northern Gateway / Atom Valley, one of the keys ways that PfE will boost the competitiveness of the north is by the small number of sites allocated in the northern areas specifically to increase attractiveness of the northern areas to highly paid, highly skilled workers. These higher value sites are in very short supply in the northern districts and include Chew Brook Vale (Robert Fletchers) in Oldham.
- The revised methodology for calculating local housing need, resulting in a far higher housing target for Oldham than that in PfE.
- The expectation that local authorities will be required to meet their housing need in full and review Green Belt boundaries if there is not sufficient brownfield land to accommodate their need.
- Finally, being party to PfE provides protection from the proposed higher housing figures for more than 4 years and makes it easier for Oldham to maximise investment in infrastructure, including for example brownfield housing funding, transport funding. Disconnecting from PfE would inevitably make this more difficult, resource intensive and time consuming as well as the risks of 'planning by appeal' if a five-year land supply cannot be demonstrated.

2.5.41 **On Oldham's future economic growth and regeneration ambitions**

2.5.42 The Council's regeneration ambitions are intrinsically linked to PfE. As stated above Atom Valley and Stakehill are central to PfE's ambition of increasing northern competitiveness and form part of the North-East Growth Corridor, within which Oldham sits.

2.5.43 Without PfE, Oldham has very limited, if any, opportunities for new employment and economic growth across the Borough. The cross-boundary allocation in PfE at Stakehill with Rochdale offers one of the only opportunities within the Borough for new employment land, and there are no alternative sites available on which to deliver these jobs. Oldham's ability to link in with the proposals across Atom Valley and the wider North-East Growth Corridor Growth Location could be severely impacted.

2.5.44 The largest PfE strategic allocations in Oldham – Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss – also sit within this growth corridor and the Council is working closely with GMCA, Homes England, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), the Environment Agency and United Utilities to help bring these sites forward in a sustainable manner with the necessary infrastructure. If PfE were to be revoked, these allocations would be removed, together with the ability to deliver supporting infrastructure at scale, such as the proposed new metrolink stop and park and ride facility.

2.5.45 Were PfE to be revoked, it would be likely that the landowners and developers involved in the Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss allocations (and other PfE housing allocations in Oldham) would submit individual, piecemeal planning applications for development that, because of our lack of a five-year housing land supply, the Council would be unable to resist. Securing all the necessary infrastructure improvements through piecemeal development on these allocation sites would simply not be possible, as the most significant items of infrastructure require co-ordinated work between the various parties to deliver that infrastructure.

2.5.46 **On the Oldham Plan, Corporate Plan and Council Priorities**

2.5.47 The Oldham Impact Assessment Tool has been used to assess the implications of remaining part of PfE and in the absence of PfE were it to be revoked for Oldham. The outputs from this assessment can be found at Appendix 4. In summary, it clearly shows that not being party to PfE will have a negative impact on equality characteristics, corporate priorities and future Oldham aims. Whereas remaining part of PfE has a positive impact on those equality characteristics that may be more affected and supports the Council's corporate priorities and future Oldham aims.

2.5.48 It is important to note that the Oldham Impact Assessment Tool is high-level and simply looks at the implications of relevant PfE policies that may or may not be in place. PfE has been the subject of a detailed Integrated Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment which was assessed as part of the independent examination.

2.6 Reputational damage to the Council of requesting revocation of PfE

2.6.1 Taking the decision to request the Secretary of State to revoke PfE for Oldham will cause significant reputational damage for the Council:

- It will damage our working relationship with:
 - GMCA and the other eight PfE districts (Bolton, Bury, Bolton, Manchester, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan). Especially with Rochdale with whom the Council shares the cross-boundary allocation at Stakehill and with which, along with Bury, we form the North-East Growth Corridor.
 - Organisations such as Transport for Greater Manchester, United Utilities, Electricity North-West and the Environment Agency who have been planning and programming delivery of supporting infrastructure to align with delivery of PfE and its strategic allocations, including those in Oldham.
 - Developers actively engaged in PfE and the delivery of strategic allocations in Oldham, many of whom are responsible for delivering new homes across the borough.
- At a Greater Manchester level in particular it will put at risk our ability to secure funding that is not only vital if the Council is to realise our regeneration ambitions for the future, but also if we are to bring forward brownfield land for development.
- MHCLG and fundings partners such as Homes England will consider us unreliable and unable to commit to the long-term growth and regeneration of the borough. Given the viability issues that brownfield land in the borough face, external funding will be critical if the Council is to bring the sites forward and deliver the necessary infrastructure. This will therefore put other brownfield sites, that are critical if Oldham is to meet its housing need, also at risk of delivery.

2.6.2 Whilst the level of local opposition to PfE and the release of Green Belt sites is understood, the need to release Green Belt to meet our local housing need cannot be avoided. The necessity will become even greater with the introduction of the Standard Method calculation proposed as part of the revisions to NPPF (as set out above). Not having PfE and the strategic allocations, alongside the proposed NPPF revisions, will mean that it will be very difficult for the Council to resist applications for new homes in the Green Belt and on our Other Protected Open Land. Our local communities will therefore see more unplanned and ad hoc development coming forward in inappropriate locations. The Council will not be able to offer the certainty that PfE gives us as to where new development will take place, nor with regards to future infrastructure planning.

2.7 Financial implications of revoking PfE as it relates to Oldham

2.7.1 A significant amount of time and financial resources have been spent on preparing PfE since its inception in 2014. If PfE were to be revoked it is likely that all this would be wasted time and resources. There would also be significant costs associated with preparing a new Local Plan – these would be greater than the costs for the current Local Plan review, given the change in scope that would be required to include strategic policies.

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- 2.7.2 As outlined in the previous section, there is a risk that Oldham would lose out on significant levels of funding required to enable regeneration and to bring forward housing development on brownfield land. The same would apply to developer contributions secured through such new developments.
- 2.7.3 Most importantly, the decision to request the SoS to revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham is likely to face legal challenge. As explained in paragraphs 2.3.1 to 2.3.3 such a decision would be challengeable as it would be unlawful for Oldham Council, as a responsible public authority acting rationally, to request the SoS to revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham on the basis of the concerns set out in the Motion. It is considered that, if challenged, the decision would be found to be irrational and unreasonable. Were the decision quashed through a legal challenge, the Council would be subject to the financial costs of losing at judicial review – not only those of the Council but also those of the party(s) who made the challenge. Whilst this cost cannot be quantified the risk is high and the cost is likely to be considerable (running well into six figure sums).

3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 There is only one option open to the Council:
- to **retain** Places for Everyone to provide the strategic planning policies as part of the adopted Development Plan for Oldham and continue to prepare an Oldham Local Plan as the Part 2 Plan for Oldham under PfE to provide the local, non-strategic planning policies as part of the adopted Development Plan for Oldham.
- 3.2 The alternative of requesting that the SoS revoke PfE for Oldham Borough and, if this were to be agreed, to commence preparation of a new Local Plan immediately, as set out in the Motion approved at Council in July, **should not be considered** for the reasons set out in this report.
- 3.3 The assessment of revoking PfE for Oldham set out within this report shows that there are no benefits to Oldham or its communities of revoking PfE. In fact, the resulting harm created by ad hoc, uncoordinated housing development on the Borough's environment, on economic growth, on infrastructure provision and on the quantity and type of housing development coming forward would be far worse than under PfE.
- 3.4 Most importantly, for the reasons explained in Section 2, it would be unlawful for Oldham Council, as a responsible public authority, to request the SoS to revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham on the basis of the concerns in the Motion. Local authority decision making must be lawful, being based on arguable and rational grounds. None of the concerns put forward in the original Motion as the justification for requesting that the SoS revoke Places for Everyone for Oldham Borough are legally sound. Any request to the SoS on that basis would be challengeable through Judicial Review, and if challenged would be found to be irrational and unreasonable. As such, the only available option to the Council is set out in paragraph 3.1 above.

4 Preferred Option

- 4.1 To **not** request the Secretary of State to revoke the Places for Everyone insofar as it relates to the Borough of Oldham and to retain Places for Everyone to provide the strategic planning policies as part of the adopted Development Plan for Oldham.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 Resolution 1 (see above) sought the delivery of all-member workshops in September to understand the issues, options and opportunities associated with Oldham Council seeking revocation of its involvement in PfE.
- 5.2 Details of these workshops and the main issues raised / discussed can be found in paragraphs 1.8 to 1.11.
- 5.3 An additional workshop was also held for Save Oldham's Greenbelt groups on Tuesday 15 October, given feedback from members attending the workshop sessions, so that these groups also understand the implications of a decision to ask the SoS to revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 Refer to Section 2.7 above. (S Johnson)

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 These are referenced throughout this report. (A Evans)

8 Oldham Equality Impact Assessment, including implications for Children and Young People

- 8.1 See paragraphs 2.5.46 to 2.5.48 and the Oldham Impact Assessment at Appendix 4.

9 Key Decision

- 9.1 No

10 Key Decision Reference

- 10.1 N/A

11 Background Papers

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

- Places for Everyone – <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/places-for-everyone/>
- Oldham Council report approving adoption of Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan Document 2022 – 2039 - https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/documents/s144357/PfE%20Adoption_Final.pdf
- National Planning Policy Framework 2023 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>

12 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Original motion to remove Oldham Borough from Places for Everyone, 10 July 2024

Appendix 2 – Councillor Workshop slides on the Implications of requesting the Secretary of State to revoke the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan for Oldham Council

Appendix 3 – Representation from GMCA and other PfE districts against Oldham Council deciding to request the SoS to revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham.

Appendix 4 - Oldham Impact Assessment Tool

Appendix 1 – Original motion to remove Oldham Borough from Places for Everyone, 10 July 2024

Motion 1: Removing Oldham Borough from Places for Everyone

Moved by Councillor Sykes

Seconded by Councillor Woodvine

The motion as present by the Opposition was as follows:

This council recognises that:

- Places for Everyone is based on 'housing need' calculations which are already the better part of a decade old.
- Places for Everyone does not give guarantees with regards to the delivery of affordable and socially rented homes.
- 'Places for Everyone' represents a developer-led approach.
- It would see the irreparable loss of Green Belt sites and green spaces which is not necessary.
- It uses Green Belt for the delivery of a housing strategy focused solely on developer profit.
- It does not deliver the right mix of affordable housing types and tenures in the places people want to live.
- We also believe the Adoption Statement for the Plan presented at the last Full Council meeting in March 2024 was misleading by implying that all the main modifications had been consulted on. This was not the case, as none of the main modifications related to HS2 have been consulted upon.

This council resolves to:

- 1 Request the new Secretary of State to revoke the Plan 'Places for Everyone' in the interest of all Oldham's residents, businesses and other stake holders for the reasons stated above.
- 2 In order for Council to consider this decision at its next meeting in September, the relevant Council officers are requested to present a full report on the planning, legal, equalities and all other considerations of such a revocation.
- 3 Should the request be approved Oldham Council' withdraw engagement and support for the defence of the judicial review of 'Places for Everyone'.
- 4 Should the Plan be revoked the Green Belt boundaries should be restored to their pre-adoption state.
- 5 If the Plan is revoked develop an Oldham-led housing strategy that prioritises brownfield and ex-industrial sites, while protecting greenbelt and green spaces for future generations.

Appendix 2 – Councillor Workshop slides on the Implications of requesting the Secretary of State to revoke the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan for Oldham Council

See separate document.

Appendix 3 – Representation from GMCA and other PfE districts against Oldham Council deciding to request the SoS to revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham.

See separate document.

Appendix 4 - Oldham Impact Assessment Tool

See separate documents.

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Implications of requesting the Secretary of State to revoke the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan for Oldham Council

25 & 30 September 2024
7 October 2024

Peter Richards and Elizabeth Dryden-Stuart

Agenda

1. Background to Places for Everyone (PfE)
2. Council Motion
3. The Secretary of State's proposed changes to the Planning system – 30th July 2024
4. Implications of requesting the Secretary of State to revoke Places for Everyone for Oldham

Your opportunity to.....

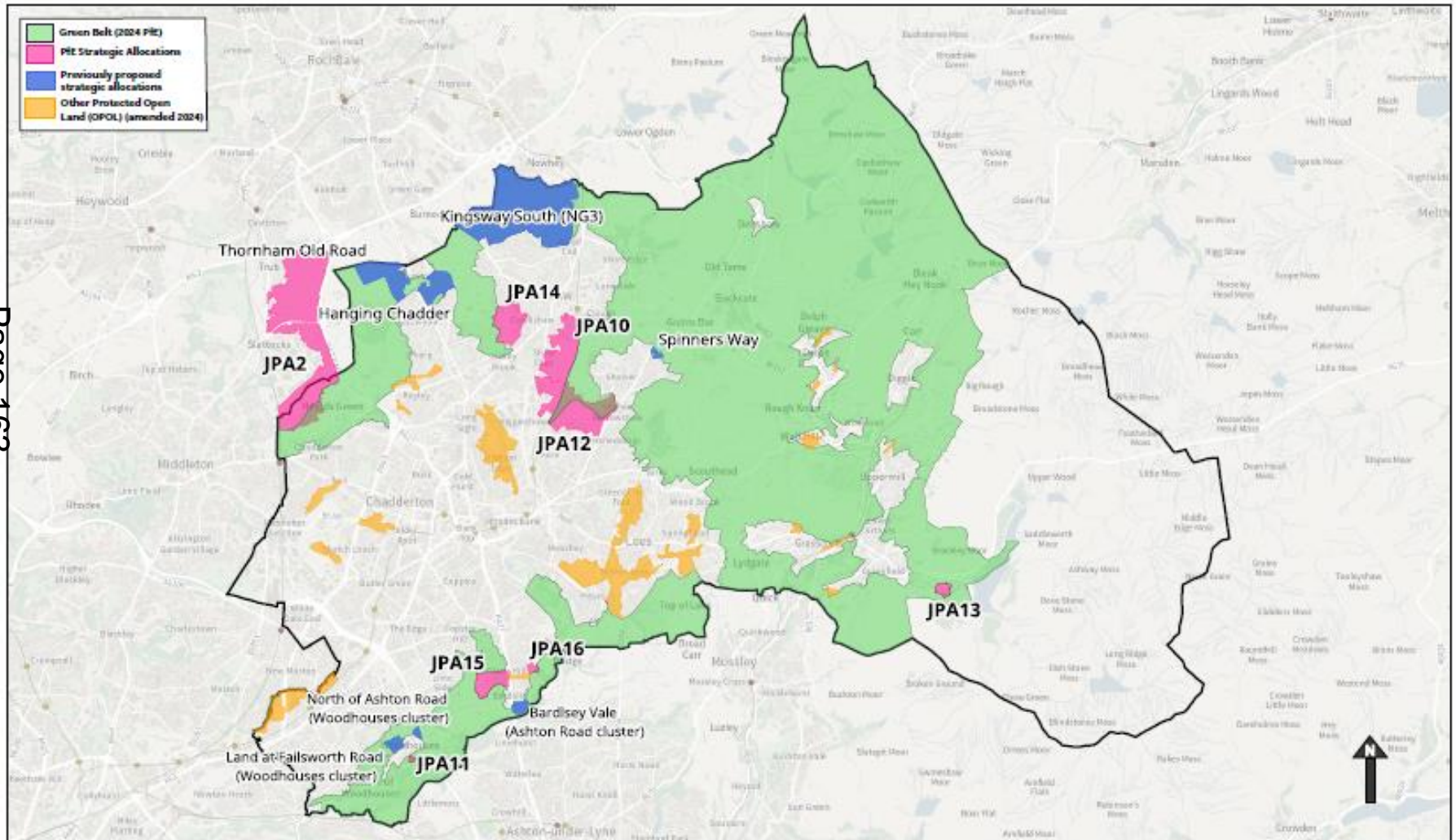
- Discuss and ask questions
- Review consequences of proposed revisions to national policy
- Consider and understand the implications of requesting the Secretary of State to revoke Places for Everyone as it relates to Oldham

Background – Evolution of PfE

- In 2014 the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities resolved to prepare a joint development plan - the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF).
- Following the decision of Stockport Council to withdraw from the GMSF, the remaining nine GM authorities progressed Places for Everyone.
- Before 'submission' the joint plan was subject to different stages and consultations, as part of which the council made several changes to reduce the amount of Green Belt being released.
 - Several allocations were removed – Kingsway South; Hanging Chadder, Thornham Old Road; Spinners Way / Alderney Farm
 - Several allocations were reduced – Land east and west of A627M amended to Stakehill; Ashton Road Corridor amended to just Land south of Coal Pit Lane; Woodhouses amended to just Bottom Field Farm; Chew Brook Vale amended to just the site of Robert Fletchers
- As a result of these changes the amount of Oldham's Green Belt proposed for release has reduced significantly:

2016 = 436ha (7.0%)	2019 = 366ha (5.9%)
2020 = 208ha (3.3%)	2021 = 155ha (2.5%)

Background – Green Belt and Allocations



Background – Examination Process

- Submitted to the SoS for examination on 14 February 2022
- Three Inspectors were appointed to examine whether the submitted plan met relevant legislative requirements and tests of soundness as defined in NPPF - positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.
- The public hearing sessions commenced in November 2022 and sat for 12 weeks in total, with the final session in July 2023.
- The Inspectors' published their conclusions on 11 August 2023 and the Main Modifications required to ensure the Plan was sound.
- Consultation on the Main Modifications was carried out between 11 October and 6 December 2023.
- The Inspectors' Report, published 15 February 2024, concluded that subject to inclusion of the Main Modifications, the Plan is sound, complies with all relevant legal requirements and provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the nine boroughs.

Background - Current Position

- Oldham Council approved the adoption of PfE 13 March 2024.
- The report and accompanying papers can be viewed online at https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/documents/s144357/PfE%20Adoption_Final.pdf.
- Following approval by all nine PfE authorities, the Plan came into effect on 21 March 2024.

Motion (1)

- Motion tabled at full Council on 10th July 2024 for the removal of Oldham Borough from Places for Everyone.
- *Council cannot legally withdraw from PfE on its own. It can only make a request to the Secretary of State to revoke the Plan under section 25 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.*
- As such an amended Motion was put forward and approved comprising a list of concerns and the council's resolutions.

Motion (2) – Concerns

- The amended and approved motion listed the following concerns:
 - PfE is based on ‘housing need’ calculations which are already the better part of a decade old.
 - PfE does not give guarantees with regards to the delivery of affordable and socially rented homes.
 - PfE represents a developer-led approach.
 - It would see the irreparable loss of Green Belt sites and green spaces which is not necessary.
 - It uses Green Belt for the delivery of a housing strategy focused solely on developer profit.
 - It does not deliver the right mix of affordable housing types and tenures in the places people want to live.
 - We also believe the Adoption Statement for the Plan presented at the last Full Council meeting in March 2024 was misleading by implying that all the main modifications had been consulted on. This was not the case, as none of the main modifications related to HS2 have been consulted upon.

Motion (3) Resolution

- The amended and approved Motion resolved to:
 1. Request the relevant council officers deliver an all-member workshop in September (after recess to ensure maximum opportunity to enable all members to attend) to understand the issues, options and opportunities associated with Oldham Council seeking revocation of its involvement in the Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE).
 2. On the back of the workshop, request the relevant council officers to present a thorough and full report to Council in November 2024 to inform a decision on writing to the new Secretary of State to revoke PfE insofar as it relates to the Borough of Oldham.
 3. Should the request be approved Oldham Council, withdraw engagement and support for the defence of the judicial review of 'Places for Everyone'.
 4. Should the Plan be revoked, the Green Belt boundaries should be restored to their pre-adoption state.
 5. If the Plan is revoked, develop an Oldham-led housing strategy that prioritises brownfield and ex-industrial sites, while protecting green belt and green spaces for future generations.

Motion (4)

There are two elements to the approved motion that require careful consideration:

1. Responding to the concerns listed; and
2. The implications of deciding to make a request to the Secretary of State for the revocation of PfE.

These need to be considered within the context of the recently published proposed revisions to national planning policy as significant ramifications for local planning.

en consultation

Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system

12 August 2024

Page 170

- On 30 July 2024 the Government published details of their proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>).
- As part of the consultation the following documents were published for comment:
 - Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system;
 - National Planning Policy Framework: draft text for consultation; and
 - Outcome of the proposed revised method.
- The consultation ran up to 24 September 2024.

Implications of NPPF revisions on requesting the SoS to revoke PfE for Oldham

In the absence of PfE the proposed NPPF revisions would have significant ramifications ...

- Mandatory Local Housing Need method (based on 0.8% of housing stock with an adjustment made for affordability) increases Oldham's housing requirement by 54% compared to PfE
- Addressing local housing need = a 'very exceptional circumstance' that justifies development in the Green Belt
- Must meet needs in full, including through the release of Green Belt – unless the release of land undermines the performance of the Green Belt as a whole (*very difficult to evidence and an extremely high bar to meet*)

Implications of requesting revocation of PfE for Oldham's Local Plan

With PfE =

1. A newly adopted and up-to-date plan in place that sets our strategic direction
2. Able to provide local policy direction (e.g. relating to affordable housing and mix / tenure) through a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan

No PfE =

1. reliant on out-of-date policies set out in the Core Strategy (adopted in November 2011)
2. Out-of-date plan = presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF revisions clarify 'out-of-date' relates to housing land supply policies / position).
3. Would be required to prepare a new plan in line with NPPF revisions immediately = this would be a plan that would have to meet our 1,049 a year housing need.

Implications of requesting revocation of PfE for Oldham on our housing requirement

With PfE = 680 homes a year (on average)

Without PfE =

- 1,049 homes a year based on revised NPPF – an increase of 54%

The result of the "presumption" kicking-in for Oldham would be that Green Belt and our other protected open spaces will be extremely vulnerable to an increase in inappropriate and unplanned development that we have little control over and that does not provide the necessary infrastructure.

Housing land supply position

5 Year Supply (2024- 2029)	PfE requirement (2024-2029)	Proportion of PfE requirement (2024-2029)	Requirement - proposed Standard Method (2024- 2029)	Proportion - proposed Standard Method (2024- 2029)
3,520	3,124	113%	5,244	67%

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- Total housing land supply as at 1 April 2024: 13,475
- Proportion on brownfield land = 61%
- Proportion on mixed (brownfield and greenfield) = 14%

Implications of requesting revocation of PfE for Oldham on GMCA and the other districts

Significant implications for the spatial strategy – boosting northern competitiveness, North-East Growth Corridor – Stakehill and Atom Valley.

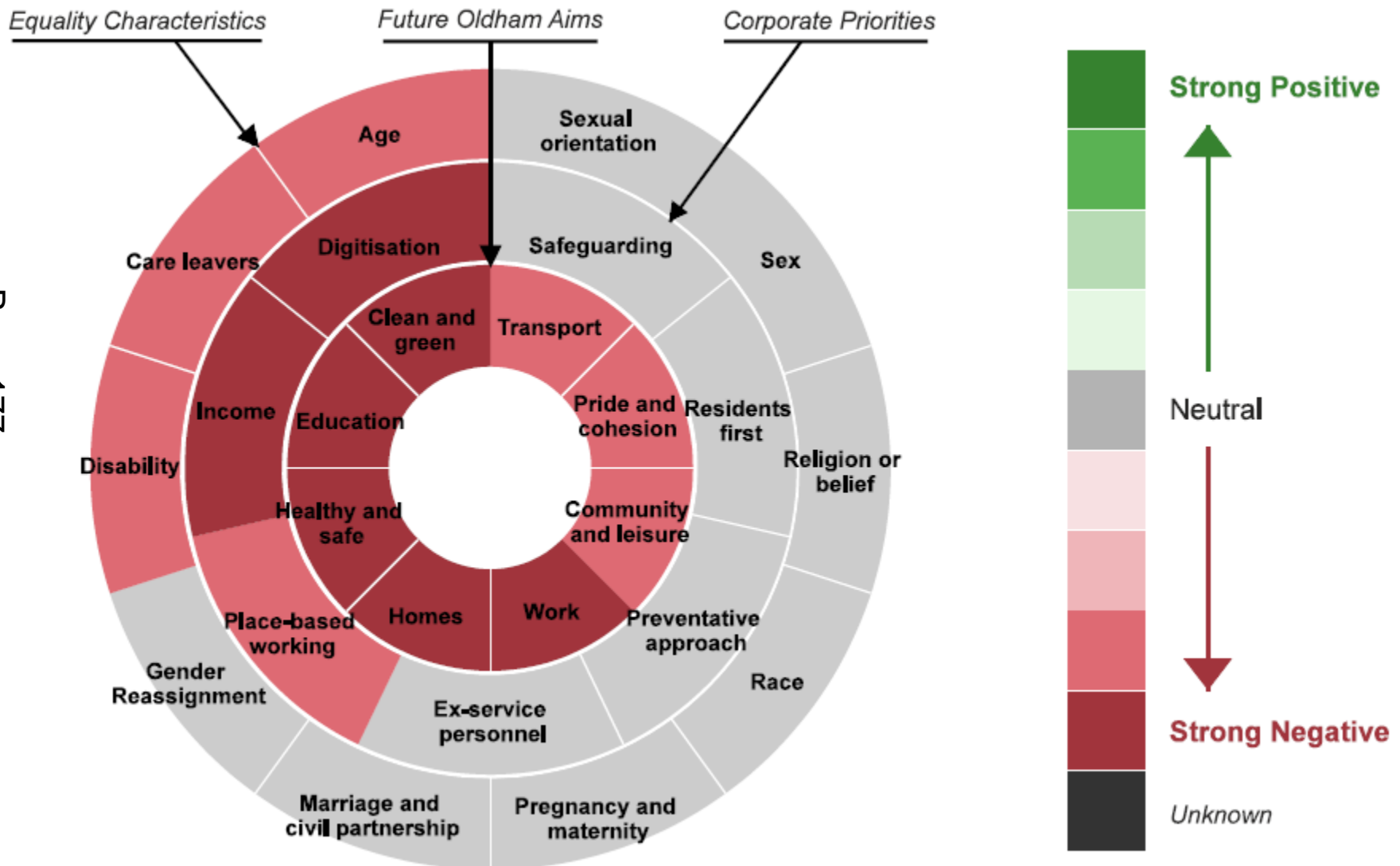
Unforeseen consequences could render the other 8 PfE districts plans out of date = increasing their vulnerability and placing them in presumption in favour of sustainable development.

GMCA and the other 8 PfE districts are considering the potential implications with an expectation that they will submit representations to the Council against requesting the SoS to revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham.

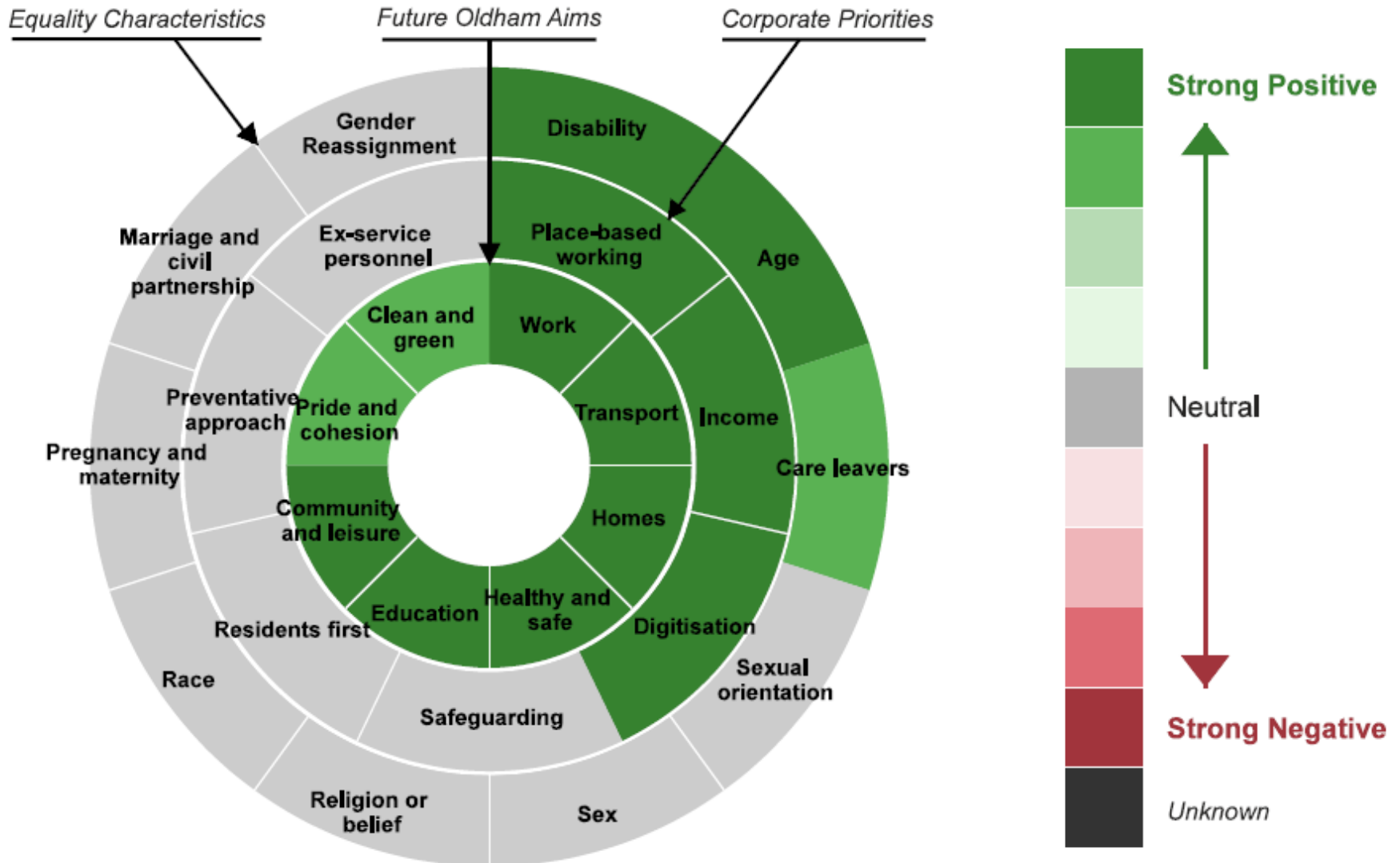
Implications of requesting revocation of PfE for Oldham on the Council's reputation

- Taking the decision to request the SoS to revoke PfE for Oldham will cause significant reputational damage for the Council.
- It will damage our working relationship with:
 - GMCA and the other eight PfE districts;
 - Organisations such as TfGM, UU, Electricity North-West and EA; and
 - Developers actively engaged in PfE and the delivery of new homes across the borough.
- At a GM level, it will put at risk our ability to secure funding that is not only vital if we are to realise our regeneration ambitions for the future, but also if we are to bring forward brownfield land for development.
- MHCLG and fundings partners such as Homes England will consider us unreliable and unable to commit to the long-term growth and regeneration of the borough. Given Oldham's development viability issues, external funding will be critical if we are to bring brownfield land forward at the scale required and deliver the necessary infrastructure.

Oldham Impact Assessment – without PfE



Oldham Impact Assessment – with PfE



Responding to concerns listed (1)

- The legal position is **clear** that:
 - **None of the concerns** listed would **provide enough justification** for the SoS to revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham.
 - As such, the **concerns** listed are considered **perverse** and **unreasonable**.
- On this basis it would be **unlawful** for Oldham Council, as a responsible public authority, **to request the SoS to revoke PfE** as it relates to Oldham.
- It is considered that any decision to request the SoS to revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham would be challengeable through Judicial Review and that such a decision would be quashed.

Responding to concerns listed (2)

Why are the concerns listed perverse and unreasonable?

- Recently adopted Plan
- The Plan was subject to independent examination by planning inspectors where the concerns listed were considered
- The inspectors **found the plan sound** and concluded that PfE provides an appropriate basis on which to plan for the nine GM districts
- No relevant change in circumstances since adoption of PfE in March 2024

Conclusion (1)

- Council cannot legally withdraw from PfE. It can only make a request to the Secretary of State to revoke the Plan under section 25 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- What the Motion asks for is uncharted territory.
- Proposed revisions to national planning policy would have significant ramifications for our housing requirement – in the absence of PfE the need to release Green Belt land will be significantly greater.
- Risk of unplanned, ad hoc housing development as the "presumption" kicks in for Oldham, causing even greater harm to the borough's environment.
- Major reputational damage for the council.
- Undermine delivery of the council's regeneration ambitions and aspirations.

Conclusion (2)

It would be **unlawful** for Oldham Council, as a public authority, to request the SoS to revoke PfE as it relates to Oldham.

It is considered **extremely unlikely that the SoS would approve the revocation of PfE for Oldham** – even more so given the proposed changes to national planning policy and the significant increase in housing numbers.

As such it is our view, as professional planning officers, that the Council continue to prepare an **Oldham Local Plan as the Part 2 Plan for Oldham under PfE** – this will provide an opportunity to set out further detail on affordable housing, mix and tenure, and other local planning policies.



Paul Dennett

Salford City Mayor

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14th October 2024

Dear Councillor Shah,

As Portfolio Lead for Places for Everyone, I have been asked to write to you, on behalf the other eight Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan Council Leaders and also the Mayor of Greater Manchester. We are very concerned about the implications of the Motion to seek the revocation of the PfE Plan, in so far as it relates to Oldham which is to be discussed at your Council meeting in November.

We accept that the decision on the Motion is one for Oldham Council alone, however we feel it is important that you and your fellow councillors understand and consider the ramifications, as part of your deliberations on the matter.

We have all very recently adopted the Plan and it has only been in force since March of this year, therefore it is very concerning to hear that one of the PfE Councils is considering requesting the Secretary of State revokes it.

We are not aware of any lawful basis for your Council to request the Secretary of State to revoke the plan, even only in so far as it relates to Oldham. The reasons set out in the Motion brought before your Council meeting in July do not amount to a lawful basis and we are not aware of any others which might. We are also confident that, should Oldham Council request the Secretary of State to revoke the PfE Plan for Oldham, there is little prospect of the Secretary of State agreeing to such a revocation. It is very clear that Government is committed to a planned approach to development and that forthcoming National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) changes are likely to strengthen the importance of having an up-to-date plan not diminish it. They are also clear that the presumption in favour of sustainable development will be strengthened and will apply to those authorities who do not have an up-to-date plan and who cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply – a position that Oldham could find itself in if the plan is revoked.

Notwithstanding our view that there is no lawful basis for such a decision, or that the Secretary of State would agree to such a revocation, we feel it necessary to bring to you and your fellow councillors' attention the implications such a step would have on delivering Oldham's ambitions, many of which are common across the sub-region.

As you know there is a development site at Stakehill which is being jointly promoted with Rochdale Council. This allocation is an agreed priority within the wider Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ), and returning this site to Green Belt would result in uncertainty and risks around its delivery. It is very unlikely that the Stakehill site will be able to be brought forward in isolation. As such, there will be consequential impacts on infrastructure planning and delivery across the northern parts of Greater Manchester.

One of the key public transport improvements in this area is the delivery of a new rail station at Slattocks. This station would benefit residents in Oldham as well as in Rochdale. Without the proposed scale of development at Stakehill it is very hard to see how a successful business case for this new rail station at Slattocks could be developed and therefore the delivery of this new station would be significantly undermined. In turn, this will significantly impact on improving the economic prospects of your local communities.

The PfE Plan has at its heart, an ambition to change the fortunes of the northern boroughs of Greater Manchester, one of which is clearly Oldham. For too long growth and prosperity has been centred around the southern parts of Greater Manchester and PfE seeks to rebalance the economy and housing markets. Alongside Northern Gateway/Atom Valley, possibly the largest employment site in the country, one of the key ways that PfE proposals will boost the competitiveness of the north is by allocating a small number of sites in the northern areas specifically to increase attractiveness of the northern areas to highly paid, highly skilled workers. These higher value sites are in very short supply in the northern districts, where house values are generally lower than in the southern districts of GM. The Chew Brook Vale (Robert Fletchers) in Oldham is one of three such sites highlighted in the plan. Revoking the PfE Plan for Oldham would mean this site would remain in the Green Belt and would therefore significantly impact its delivery and its ability to deliver change in the northern districts, such as Oldham.

Finally, I am sure that you and your fellow councillors are aware that following your council meeting in July when this motion was first discussed, the newly elected Government published proposed revisions to NPPF, for consultation. These included a revised methodology for calculating local housing need. This revised methodology would result in a far higher housing target for Oldham than that in the recently adopted PfE Plan (which would be in force for more than four years). For Oldham, your housing target would increase from 680 to 1049 per annum and for the PfE plan as a whole it would increase from 10,305 to 13,037 per annum.

The proposed changes also make it very clear that local authorities will be expected to meet their housing need in full, and whilst brownfield land continues to be the preference for development, local authorities should review Green Belt boundaries if there is not sufficient brownfield land to accommodate their need. In the unlikely event that the Secretary of State accedes to a request to revoke the plan in relation to Oldham, any successor local plan would be required to take forward the new higher housing numbers. Looking at the current land supply information for Oldham it is impossible to see how these housing numbers could be delivered wholly on brownfield land. Any subsequent local plan would therefore need to consider significantly increasing the amount of land to be released from the Green Belt, which may indeed be an unintended consequence of the motion given the change in planning policy proposed.

Being part of the PfE spatial plan provides protection from the proposed higher housing figures for more than 4 years and makes it easier for Oldham to maximise investment in infrastructure, including for example brownfield housing funding, transport funding. Disconnecting from PfE would inevitably make this more difficult, resource intensive and time consuming, not to mention the risks of 'planning by appeal' that Oldham will face if they cannot demonstrate a 5-year land supply (assessed against the new Local Housing Need figures). I am sure that you and your fellow councillors will be aware of the situation Stockport Council regularly finds itself in, in terms of planning by appeal since it resolved to leave the joint plan in 2020. Land which is currently allocated in PfE will come forward in this way, but so too will other Green Belt sites. I am sure you would not want to replicate that in Oldham, not least because of the unnecessary costs it would result in for the Council, in these times of limited resources.

Whilst we acknowledge this is a matter for Oldham Council to decide on, for the above reasons, we have felt compelled to write to you ahead of your Council making its decision on the matter as we feel very strongly that you must ensure all these matters are brought to the attention of all Members of your Council prior to the decision being made.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Dennett
City Mayor of Salford
GMCA Deputy Mayor - Portfolio Lead for Places for Everyone

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Implications of Oldham not being part of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan

completed/last updated by Strategic Planning on 11/10/2024

Portfolio

Regeneration and Housing

Directorate

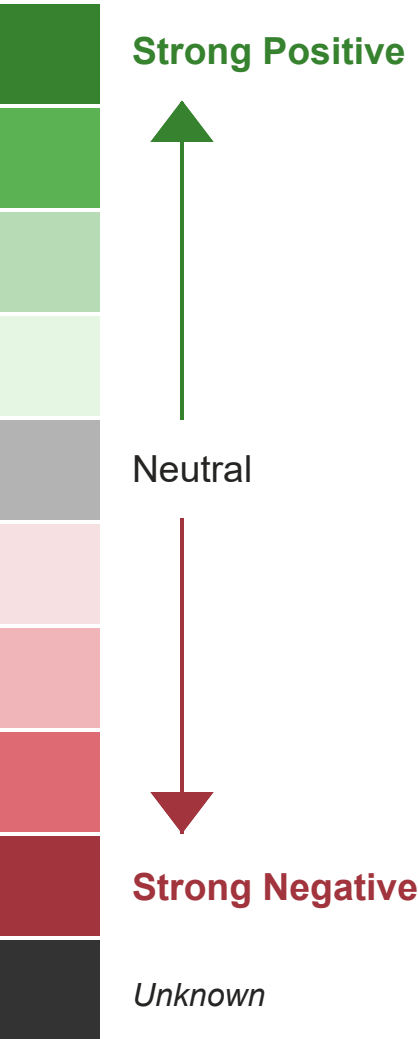
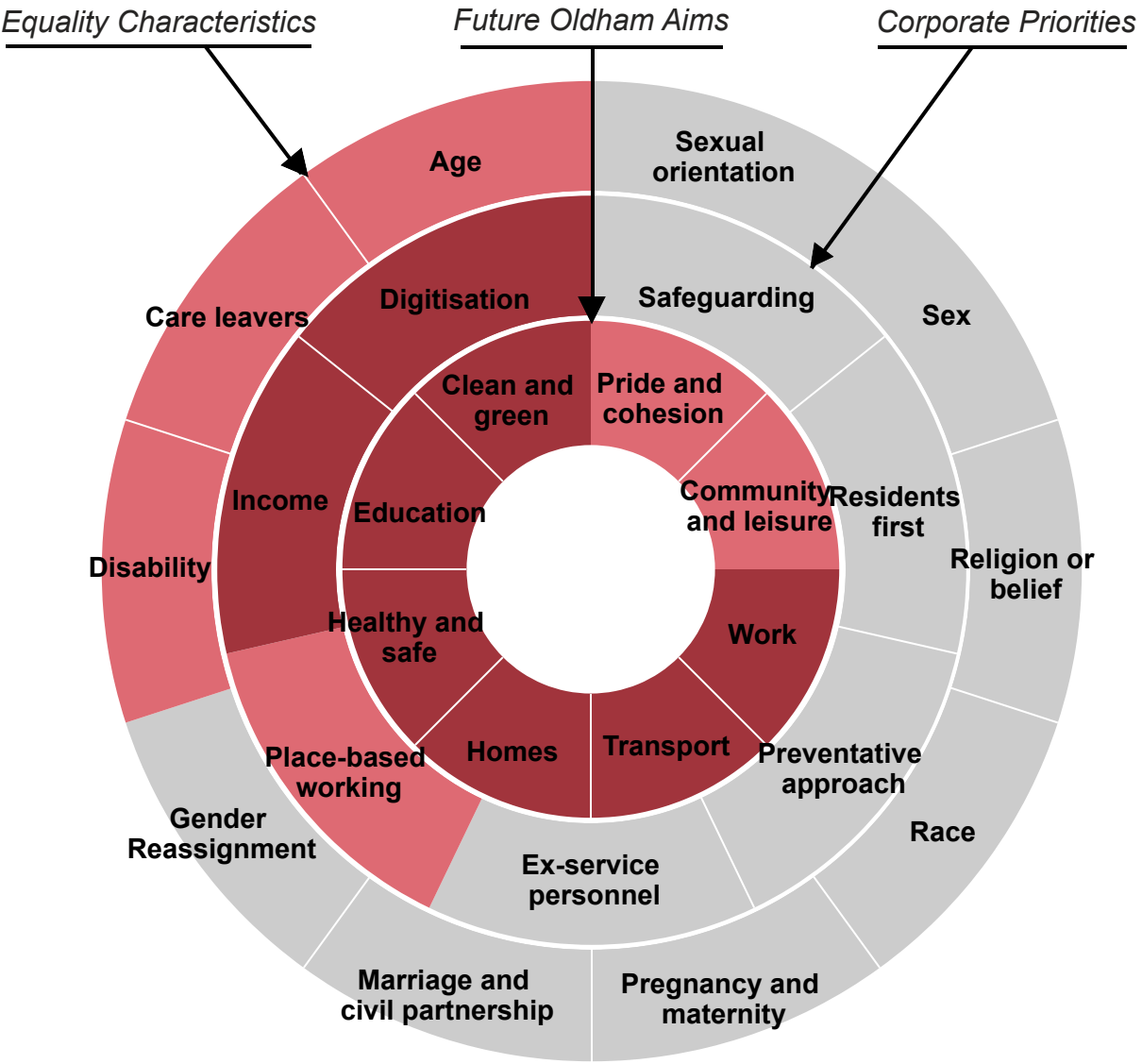
PEG (Place and Economic Growth)

Service/Team

PEG - Economy

Is this IA related to a Budget Reduction proposal?

No



Comment on No Positives in whole IA

There are no positive impacts - the ability for the borough's planning policy framework to positively respond to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, or for it to support delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan, will be significantly undermined if we were not part of Places for Everyone.

Equality Characteristics 1 of 2

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Age	Moderate Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-4	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) supports delivery of the ambitions in the Greater Manchester Strategy: a good start in life for everyone; good opportunities for our young people to equip them for life; good work and the best jobs in a valuable, productive, zero carbon economy; safe, secure housing in inclusive and diverse communities; a good cultural and leisure offer for everyone; a green city-region; good health and support for people to live fulfilling lives, with quality care for those who need it; to be a good place to grow older and to be a place where everyone is connected – socially, digitally and by a clean, integrated and accessible transport system. There are several policies within PfE that support, and have a positive impact on, people of all ages, including Policy JP-H2: Affordability of New Housing and Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing (both of which seek to incorporate a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs and deliver more inclusive neighbourhoods); Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places (which sets out the key attributes which new development should be consistent with, including being socially inclusive, adaptable to changing needs and being easy to move around for those of all mobility level); Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge (which promotes significant enhancements in education, skills and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents); and Policy JP-P6: Health (which seeks to tackle health inequality).</p> <p>No longer being part of PfE would mean until such time as a new Local Plan is in place we would be reliant on the previous Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document. This was adopted in November 2011 and whilst it includes policies on affordable housing; delivering a mix of appropriate house types, size and tenure; and communities (which addresses health and well-being / education and skills) these have not been informed by the latest evidence and are not considered to be in accordance with national planning policy (current and proposed revisions). As such, the ability for the borough's planning policy framework to positively respond to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, or for it to support delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan, will be significantly undermined.</p>
Care leavers	Moderate Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-4	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) supports delivery of the ambitions in the Greater Manchester Strategy: a good start in life for everyone; good opportunities for our young people to equip them for life; good work and the best jobs in a valuable, productive, zero carbon economy; safe, secure housing in inclusive and diverse communities; a good cultural and leisure offer for everyone; a green city-region; good health and support for people to live fulfilling lives, with quality care for those who need it; to be a good place to grow older and to be a place where everyone is connected – socially, digitally and by a clean, integrated and accessible transport system. There are several policies within PfE that support, and have a positive impact on, care leavers, including Policy JP-H2: Affordability of New Housing and Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing (both of which seek to incorporate a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs and deliver more inclusive neighbourhoods).</p> <p>No longer being part of PfE would mean until such time as a new Local Plan is in place we would be reliant on the previous Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document. This was adopted in November 2011 and whilst it includes policies on affordable housing and delivering a mix of appropriate house types, size and tenure these have not been informed by the latest evidence and are not considered to be in accordance with national planning policy (current and proposed revisions). As such, the ability for the borough's planning policy framework to positively respond to the needs and demand of our existing and future care leavers will be significantly undermined.</p>

Equality Characteristics 2 of 2

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Disability	Moderate Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-4	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) supports delivery of the ambitions in the Greater Manchester Strategy: a good start in life for everyone; good opportunities for our young people to equip them for life; good work and the best jobs in a valuable, productive, zero carbon economy; safe, secure housing in inclusive and diverse communities; a good cultural and leisure offer for everyone; a green city-region; good health and support for people to live fulfilling lives, with quality care for those who need it; to be a good place to grow older and to be a place where everyone is connected – socially, digitally and by a clean, integrated and accessible transport system. There are several policies within PfE that support, and have a positive impact on, people of disability including Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing (which seeks to incorporate a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs and deliver more inclusive neighbourhoods and requires all new dwellings to be built to the ‘accessible and adaptable’ standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations unless specific site conditions make this impracticable); Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places (which sets out the key attributes which new development should be consistent with, including being socially inclusive, adaptable to changing needs and being easy to move around for those of all mobility level); Policy JP-P6: Health (which seeks to tackle health inequality); Policy JP-C1: An Integrated Network (which seeks to ensure that new development fully considers the needs of all people, including those using mobility aids) and Policy JP-C5: Streets for All (which seeks to ensure that streets are welcoming for all, and respond to the needs of those with reduced mobility, for example).</p> <p>No longer being part of PfE would mean until such time as a new Local Plan is in place we would be reliant on the previous Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document. This was adopted in November 2011 and whilst it includes policies on delivering a mix of appropriate house types, size and tenure and design these have not been informed by the latest evidence and are not considered to be in accordance with national planning policy (current and proposed revisions). As such, the ability for the borough's planning policy framework to positively respond to the needs and demand of our existing and future residents with a disability, or for it to support delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan, will be significantly undermined.</p>
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Race	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Religion or belief	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Sex	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Sexual orientation	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	

Corporate Priorities 1 of 2

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score ▲	Comment
Digitisation	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) recognises that digital connections are increasingly important to every aspect of our lives, from socialising and shopping to learning, business and accessing essential services, and that any truly global city will need to have widespread, affordable, reliable, secure and future-proofed digital infrastructure that provides a competitive edge for businesses and supports high-levels of social inclusion. Improving digital infrastructure and ensuring that new development is connected to it, is therefore a high priority and Policy JP-C2: Digital Connectivity sets out how PfE will support the provision of affordable, high quality, digital infrastructure.</p> <p>No longer being part of PfE would mean until such time as a new Local Plan is in place we would be reliant on the previous Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document. This was adopted in November 2011 and there are no comparable policies relating the digital infrastructure and connectivity. As such, the ability for the borough's planning policy framework to positively respond to the council's priorities for digitisation are significantly undermined. This will have also negative consequences for our economic growth and regeneration ambitions.</p>
Income	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	<p>The overall spatial strategy of Places for Everyypne (PfE) seeks to take advantage of the opportunities for delivering high levels of economic growth, whilst addressing the challenges for securing genuinely inclusive growth and prosperity. The Spatial Strategy recognises that whilst northern areas are diverse, deprivation is particularly extensive across the north-east of the conurbation, with relatively high levels through much of Rochdale, Oldham, and Tameside, extending into north Manchester. This north-eastern area is characterised by relatively low incomes, low house prices, low qualifications, low economic activity, low proportions in higher managerial/professional occupations, and poor average health. Significant interventions will be required to address the extensive deprivation and the relatively low levels of growth, economic activity and prosperity. Two locations have been identified in PfE as being especially important, having the potential to deliver significant benefits over a wider area and make a major contribution to raising the competitiveness of the northern areas as a whole - this includes the North-East Growth Corridor in which Oldham sits. In addition to policies that make up PfE's Spatial Strategy there are several policies that will have a positive impact on income. The Places for Jobs chapter includes a suite of policies that seek a thriving, inclusive and productive economy across the plan area. In addition, there are policies such as Policy JP-H2: Affordability of New Housing (which seeks to maximise the delivery of additional affordable homes through, for example, local plans setting targets for the provision of affordable housing) and Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places (which sets out the key attributes which new development should be consistent with, including incorporating inclusive design within all spaces with support for tackling inequality and poverty to form part of creating sustainable places).</p> <p>No longer being part of PfE would mean until such time as a new Local Plan is in place we would be reliant on the previous Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document. This was adopted in November 2011 and does not reflect the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions for the borough, many of which are intrinsically linked to PfE. Atom Valley and Stakehill are central to PfE's ambition of increasing northern competitiveness and form part of the North-East Growth Corridor, within which Oldham sits. Without PfE, Oldham has very limited, if any, opportunities for new employment and economic growth across the Borough. The cross-boundary allocation in PfE at Stakehill with Rochdale offers one of the only opportunities within the Borough for new employment land. These opportunities would be lost to Oldham's residents with no alternative sites available on which to deliver these jobs through our own Local Plan. Oldham's ability to link in with the proposals at Northern Gateway as part of the wider Atom Valley Growth Location would also be severely impacted.</p>

Corporate Priorities 2 of 2

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Place-based working	Moderate Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-4	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) supports delivery of the ambitions in the Greater Manchester Strategy, which sets out that all parts of Greater Manchester will be neighbourhoods of choice, with good quality affordable homes in safe and attractive communities, well served by public transport, so that the people that live in them are connected to jobs and opportunity and have access to excellent local amenities, green spaces and a high quality cultural and leisure offer. PfE's Places for People chapter includes several policies that support this ambition and seek to raise the quality of all places in a way that is sustainable in the long-term. Policies such as JP-C1: An Integrated Network also set out a range of measures, including delivering a pattern of development that minimises both the need to travel and the distance travelled by unsustainable modes to jobs, housing and other key services, including healthcare, education, retail, recreation and leisure facilities, green space and green infrastructure.</p> <p>No longer being part of PfE would mean until such time as a new Local Plan is in place we would be reliant on the previous Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document. This was adopted in November 2011 and whilst it includes policies on Communities, Promoting Sustainable Regeneration and Prosperity, and Supporting Oldham's Economy these are not considered to reflect the Council's priorities around place-based working and our regeneration ambitions. In addition, they have not been informed by the latest evidence and are not considered to be in accordance with national planning policy (current and proposed revisions). As such, the ability for the borough's planning policy framework to positively respond to the council's place-based working agenda are significantly undermined.</p>
Ex-service personnel	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Preventative approach	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Residents first	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Safeguarding	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	

Future Oldham Aims 1 of 4

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Clean and green	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	<p>PfE's Sustainable and Resilient Places chapter includes the following policies - Policy JP-S2: Carbon and Energy; Policy JP-S3: Heat and Energy Networks; Policy JP-S4: Flood Risk and the Water Environment; Policy JP-S5: Clean Air; and Policy JP-S6: Resource Efficiency. Whilst PfE's Greener Places chapter supports the role of our natural assets with the following policies - Policy JP-G1: Landscape Character; Policy JP-G2 Green Infrastructure Network; Policy JP-G3: River Valleys and Waterways; Policy JP-G5: Uplands; Policy JP-G6: Urban Green Space; Policy JP-G7: Trees and Woodland; Policy JP-G8: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity; and Policy JP-G9: The Green Belt.</p> <p>The impact of meeting our development needs on the Green Belt is recognised. The focus has been on the reuse of brownfield land and increasing densities to ensure the efficient use of land. However, even with this the scale and distribution of development required to meet our needs has necessitated the need for selective removal of Green Belt and the use of other land previously safeguarded from development. Nevertheless, in amending the Green Belt boundary, through this Plan, opportunities have been identified to improve/enhance Green Infrastructure within the land to remain within the Green Belt.</p> <p>No longer being part of PfE would mean until such time as a new Local Plan is in place we would be reliant on the previous Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document. This would have significant ramifications for our Green Belt. Whilst the Green Belt would return to its boundary set out in the Core Strategy, the consequences of the proposed revisions to NPPF (particularly the changes to the standard method calculation and the significant increase in local housing need) would render the Core Strategy out of date. The consequence of which would be that until an up to date Local Plan was in place we would be in presumption of sustainable development and at significant risk of unplanned and inappropriate development. This would put our Green Belt and protected open spaces at even more risk and would require the release of more Green Belt than what is currently identified in PfE. As such, the ability for the borough's planning policy framework to positively respond to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, or for it to support delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan, will be significantly undermined.</p>
Education	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) supports delivery of the ambitions in the Greater Manchester Strategy: a good start in life for everyone; good opportunities for our young people to equip them for life; good work and the best jobs in a valuable, productive, zero carbon economy; safe, secure housing in inclusive and diverse communities; a good cultural and leisure offer for everyone; a green city-region; good health and support for people to live fulfilling lives, with quality care for those who need it; to be a good place to grow older and to be a place where everyone is connected – socially, digitally and by a clean, integrated and accessible transport system. Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge sets out a range of measures through which significant enhancements in education, skills and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents will be promoted. These include enabling the delivery of new and improved accessible facilities for all ages, such as early years, schools, further and higher education, and adult training to ensure our workforce is ready to benefit from new employment opportunities; ensuring the delivery of sufficient school places to respond to the demands from new housing; and supporting the continued growth and success of the university sector.</p> <p>No longer being part of PfE would mean until such time as a new Local Plan is in place we would be reliant on the previous Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document. This was adopted in November 2011 and the only policy that specifically relates to education and skills is Policy 2 Communities. Policy 2 sets out that the council will support improvements to the education and skills of the borough's population by working with a range of education partners, including the University Campus Oldham, the Oldham College and the Oldham Sixth Form College, and through the use of developer contributions, to facilitate the development of new and improved education facilities. These will include proposals relating to the Building Schools for the Future programme, the primary capital programme and the Regional Science Centre Oldham. It is therefore much more limited in scope that the positive planning policy framework provided by PfE, which will also have also have negative consequences for our economic growth and regeneration ambitions.</p>

Future Oldham Aims 2 of 4

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Healthy and safe	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	<p>Places for Everyone's (PfE) Places for People chapter includes several policies that support healthy and safe communities - including Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places; and most importantly Policy JP-P6: Health, which sets out how new development will be required to tackle health inequality (through, for example, maximising its positive contribution to health and wellbeing, supporting healthy lifestyles and supporting improvements in health facilities through responding to the changing needs and demands of both existing and new residents by 1) requiring, where appropriate, the provision of new or improved health facilities as part of new developments proportionate to the additional demand that they would generate; 2) enabling the continued enhancement and successful operation of our hospitals; and 3) facilitating greater integration of health and social care, and the provision of integrated wellness hubs, including the co-location of health, community and wellness services.</p> <p>No longer being part of PfE would mean until such time as a new Local Plan is in place we would be reliant on the previous Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document. This was adopted in November 2011 and the only strategic policy that specifically relates to health is Policy 2 Communities. Policy 2 sets out that the council will support improvements in the health and well-being of Oldham's residents by working with the NHS, PCT and other health partners and through the use of developer contributions to facilitate the development of new and improved health-related facilities. This will include the current LIFT health and well-being centres programme. It is therefore much more limited in scope than the positive planning policy framework provided by PfE and the plan as a whole lacks the required emphasis on how planning can help support improvements to health and well-being across the borough. As such, the ability for the borough's planning policy framework to positively respond to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, or for it to support delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan, will be significantly undermined.</p>
Homes	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) supports delivery of the Greater Manchester Housing Strategy which sets out our vision for new homes and seeks to ensure that we consistently deliver the right homes in the right places, providing the number and mix of new homes for our future needs. A key objective of PfE is to meet our Local Housing Need and the Plan seeks to direct development to the most sustainable areas – primarily the city and town centres – and enable most efficient use of our brownfield land supply. PfE's Places for Homes chapter includes several policies that seek to support these ambitions: Policy JP-H1: Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development sets out the minimum housing requirement for each PfE district and the Plan area as a whole (for Oldham this is 680 homes a year stepped over the plan period totalling 11,560 homes); Policy JP-H2: Affordability of New Housing, which recognises that a key challenge and priority for Greater Manchester is to ensure that new housing comes forward at a price that potential occupiers can afford; Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing, which sets out that new development is required to incorporate a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs and deliver more inclusive neighbourhoods; and Policy JP-H4: Density of New Housing, which requires new housing to be delivered at a density appropriate to the location, reflecting the relative accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport and the need to achieve efficient use of land and high-quality design.</p> <p>No longer being part of PfE would mean until such time as a new Local Plan is in place we would be reliant on the previous Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document. This was adopted in November 2011 and the only relevant strategic policy is Policy 3 An Address of Choice. Additional 'Development Management' policies are included on affordable housing, housing mix and gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. The proposed revisions to NPPF - changes to the standard method calculation and the significant increase in local housing need would render the Core Strategy out of date. The consequence of which would be that until an up to date Local Plan was in place we would be in presumption of sustainable development and at significant risk of unplanned and inappropriate development. Not only would this make it difficult to secure the type of housing needed across the borough it would also put at even more risk our Green Belt and protected open spaces. As such, the ability for the borough's planning policy framework to positively respond to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, or for it to support delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan, will be significantly undermined.</p>

Future Oldham Aims 3 of 4

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Transport	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	<p>One of the Greater Manchester Strategy's ten priorities, and which is supported by Places for Everyone (PfE), is to deliver an integrated network with world-class connectivity that keeps Greater Manchester moving and that drives prosperity whilst protecting the environment, improving air quality and transitioning to a zero carbon future. PfE's Connected Places chapter supports delivery of the GM 2040 Transport Strategy and includes several policies that seek to provide outstanding connectivity whilst supporting low carbon economic growth and greater levels of social inclusion: Policy JP-C1: An Integrated Network (includes a range of measures that will help to deliver an accessible, low carbon Greater Manchester with worldclass connectivity); Policy JP-C3: Public Transport (supports the delivery of major improvements to public transport); Policy JP-C5: Streets for All (seeks to deliver streets that will make a significant positive contribution to the quality of place and support high levels of walking, cycling and public transport); Policy JP-C6: Walking and Cycling (seeks a higher proportion of journeys made by walking and cycling); Policy JP-C7: Freight and Logistics (supports the more efficient and sustainable movement of freight); and Policy JP-C8: Transport Requirements of New Development (which requires new development to be located and designed to enable and encourage walking, cycling and public transport use, to reduce the negative effects of car dependency, and help deliver high quality, attractive, liveable and sustainable environments).</p> <p>No longer being part of PfE would mean until such time as a new Local Plan is in place we would be reliant on the previous Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document. This was adopted in November 2011 and the only relevant strategic policy is Policy 5 Promoting Accessibility and Sustainable Transport Choices, which is limited in scope compared to the postive planning policy framework provided by PfE. The policy approach in PfE delivers TfGM's ambitions and priorities set out in the GM 2040 Transport Strategy. The Core Strategy does not reflect the latest transport-related ambitions of TfGM or Oldham, and is not based on up to date evidence, as such it is much more limited in scope than the postive planning policy framework provided by PfE.</p>
Work	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) supports delivery of the ambitions in the Greater Manchester Strategy recognising that economic growth is central and essential for raising incomes, improving health and quality of life, and providing the finances to deliver better infrastructure, services and facilities. The overall spatial strategy of PfE seeks to take advantage of the opportunities for delivering high levels of economic growth, whilst addressing the challenges for securing genuinely inclusive growth and prosperity. Significant interventions will be required to address the extensive deprivation and the relatively low levels of growth, economic activity and prosperity. Two locations have been identified as being especially important, having the potential to deliver significant benefits over a wider area and make a major contribution to raising the competitiveness of the northern areas as a whole - this includes the North-East Growth Corridor in which Oldham sits (Policy JP-Strat7: North-East Growth Corridor). PfE's Places for Jobs chapter includes several policies that seek to promote prosperity for all residents and places in a sustainable way: Policy JP-J1: Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth sets out how a thriving, inclusive and productive economy will be sought across the Plan area; Policy JP-J2: Employment Sites and Premises sets out that a diverse range of employment sites and accessible premises, both new and second-hand, will be made available across the Plan area in terms of location, scale, type and cost that will offer opportunities for a range of businesses and help tackle inequalities; and policies JP-J3: Office Development and JP-J4: Industry and Warehousing Development set out the level of office and industry and warehousing development that will be delivered, including in Oldham.</p> <p>No longer being part of PfE would mean until such time as a new Local Plan is in place we would be reliant on the previous Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document. This was adopted in November 2011 and the only relevant strategic policy is Policy 4 Promoting Sustainable Regeneration and Prosperity, which is limited in scope compared to the postive planning policy framework provided by PfE. Additional 'Development Management' policies are included on employment areas and supporting Oldham's economy. The Council's regeneration ambitions are intrinsically linked to PfE. Atom Valley and Stakehill are central to our ambition of increasing northern competitiveness and form part of the North-East Growth Corridor, within which Oldham sits. Without PfE, Oldham has very limited, if any, opportunities for new employment and economic growth across the Borough. The cross-boundary allocation in PfE at Stakehill with Rochdale offers one of the only opportunities within the borough for new employment land. These opportunities would be lost to Oldham's residents with no alternative sites available on which to deliver these jobs through our own Local Plan. Oldham's ability to link in with the proposals at Northern Gateway as part of the wider Atom Valley Growth Location would also be severely impacted.</p>

Future Oldham Aims 4 of 4

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Community and leisure	Moderate Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-4	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) includes several policies that relate to community, leisure and social inclusion. Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places lists the key attributes that all development should be consistent with, including being visually stimulating (creating interesting and imaginative environments which raise the human spirit through the use of green space, public art and quality design); well-connected (to other places, particularly by public transport and digital infrastructure enabling everyone to take advantage of the employment, cultural and leisure opportunities across Greater Manchester and beyond); incorporating high quality and well managed green infrastructure and quality public realm (comprising opportunities for recreation and outdoor play for children, and interaction between the generations); and well-served by local shops, services and amenities, including education and health facilities. Policy JP-P2: Heritage also recognises the wider public benefits of heritage and its reinforcement of character, identity and sense of place. PfE's Places for People chapter also includes the following - Policy JP-P3: Cultural Facilities; Policy JP-P4: New Retail and Leisure Uses in Town Centres; and Policy JP-P7: Sport and Recreation.</p> <p>No longer being part of PfE would mean until such time as a new Local Plan is in place we would be reliant on the previous Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document. This was adopted in November 2011 and the only relevant strategic policies are Policy 2 Communities and Policy 6 Green Infrastructure. Both of which are much more limited in scope than the positive planning policy framework provided by PfE. As such, the ability for the borough's planning policy framework to positively respond to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, or for it to support delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan, will be significantly undermined.</p>
Pride and cohesion	Moderate Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-4	<p>Delivering a more inclusive Greater Manchester is at the heart of the Greater Manchester Strategy and PfE has an important role in helping to address these inequalities and disadvantages. The Plan promotes greater inclusion in a wide variety of ways, including (for example) increasing the range and accessibility of cultural, leisure and sporting opportunities; improving access for all neighbourhoods to green space and nature; and supporting greater inclusion through the design and implementation of individual development proposals.</p> <p>The conflict between delivering our housing and economic growth needs and protecting our Green Belt and green spaces, and the impact this can have on how people may feel about an area, is recognised. The focus has been on the reuse of brownfield land and increasing densities to ensure the efficient use of land. However, even with this the scale and distribution of development required to meet our needs has necessitated the need for selective removal of Green Belt and the use of other land previously safeguarded from development.</p> <p>No longer being part of PfE would mean until such time as a new Local Plan is in place we would be reliant on the previous Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document. This would have significant ramifications for our Green Belt. Whilst the Green Belt would return to its boundary set out in the Core Strategy, the consequences of the proposed revisions to NPPF (particularly the changes to the standard method calculation and the significant increase in local housing need) would render the Core Strategy out of date. The consequence of which would be that until an up to date Local Plan was in place we would be in presumption of sustainable development and at significant risk of unplanned and inappropriate development. This would put our Green Belt and protected open spaces at even more risk, would it make it difficult to co-ordinated the necessary supporting infrastructure and require the release of more Green Belt than what is currently identified in PfE. This would undermine how people feel about their local area. As such, the ability for the borough's planning policy framework to positively respond to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, or for it to support delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan, will be significantly undermined.</p>

Negative Impacts 1 of 4

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	What action can be taken to mitigate the potential negative impacts?	Action(s)	Owner(s)	Timescale(s)	If the negative impacts can't be mitigated, why should the project/decision proceed?
Clean and green	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	Remain within Places for Everyone and prepare a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan to provide more local policy direction that reflects the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions, including supporting delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan.				
Digitisation	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	Remain within Places for Everyone and prepare a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan to provide more local policy direction that reflects the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions, including supporting delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan.				
Education	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	Remain within Places for Everyone and prepare a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan to provide more local policy direction that reflects the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions, including supporting delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan.				
Healthy and safe	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	Remain within Places for Everyone and prepare a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan to provide more local policy direction that reflects the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions, including supporting delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan.				

Negative Impacts 2 of 4

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	What action can be taken to mitigate the potential negative impacts?	Action(s)	Owner(s)	Timescale(s)	If the negative impacts can't be mitigated, why should the project/decision proceed?
Homes	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	Remain within Places for Everyone and prepare a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan to provide more local policy direction that reflects the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions, including supporting delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan.				
Income	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	Remain within Places for Everyone and prepare a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan to provide more local policy direction that reflects the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions, including supporting delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan.				
Transport	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	Remain within Places for Everyone and prepare a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan to provide more local policy direction that reflects the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions, including supporting delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan.				
Work	Strong Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-8	Remain within Places for Everyone and prepare a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan to provide more local policy direction that reflects the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions, including supporting delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan.				

Negative Impacts 3 of 4

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	What action can be taken to mitigate the potential negative impacts?	Action(s)	Owner(s)	Timescale(s)	If the negative impacts can't be mitigated, why should the project/decision proceed?
Age	Moderate Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-4	Remain within Places for Everyone and prepare a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan to provide more local policy direction that reflects the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions, including supporting delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan.				
Care leavers	Moderate Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-4	Remain within Places for Everyone and prepare a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan to provide more local policy direction that reflects the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions, including supporting delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan.				
Community and leisure	Moderate Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-4	Remain within Places for Everyone and prepare a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan to provide more local policy direction that reflects the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions, including supporting delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan.				
Disability	Moderate Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-4	Remain within Places for Everyone and prepare a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan to provide more local policy direction that reflects the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions, including supporting delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan.				

Negative Impacts 4 of 4

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	What action can be taken to mitigate the potential negative impacts?	Action(s)	Owner(s)	Timescale(s)	If the negative impacts can't be mitigated, why should the project/decision proceed?
Place-based working	Moderate Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-4	Remain within Places for Everyone and prepare a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan to provide more local policy direction that reflects the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions, including supporting delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan.				
Pride and cohesion	Moderate Negative	Very Likely	Long Term	-4	Remain within Places for Everyone and prepare a Part 2 Oldham Local Plan to provide more local policy direction that reflects the council's priorities and regeneration ambitions, including supporting delivery of Our Future Oldham and the council's Corporate Plan.				

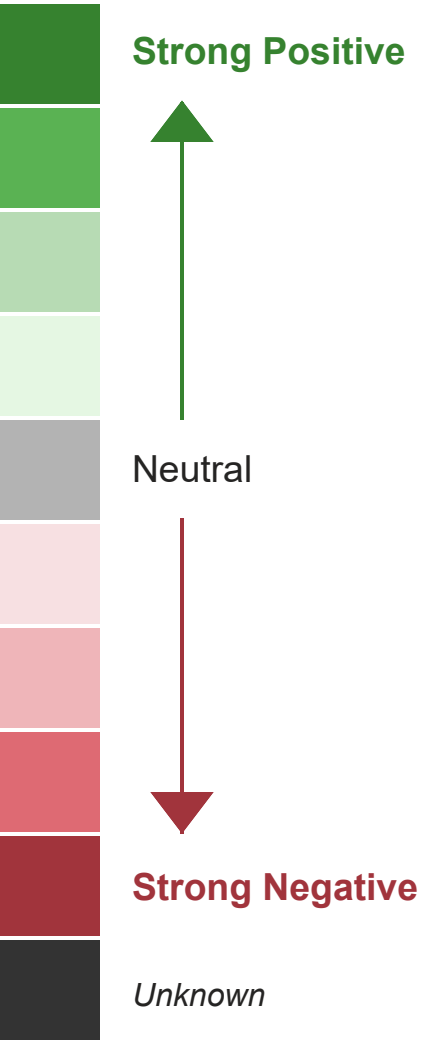
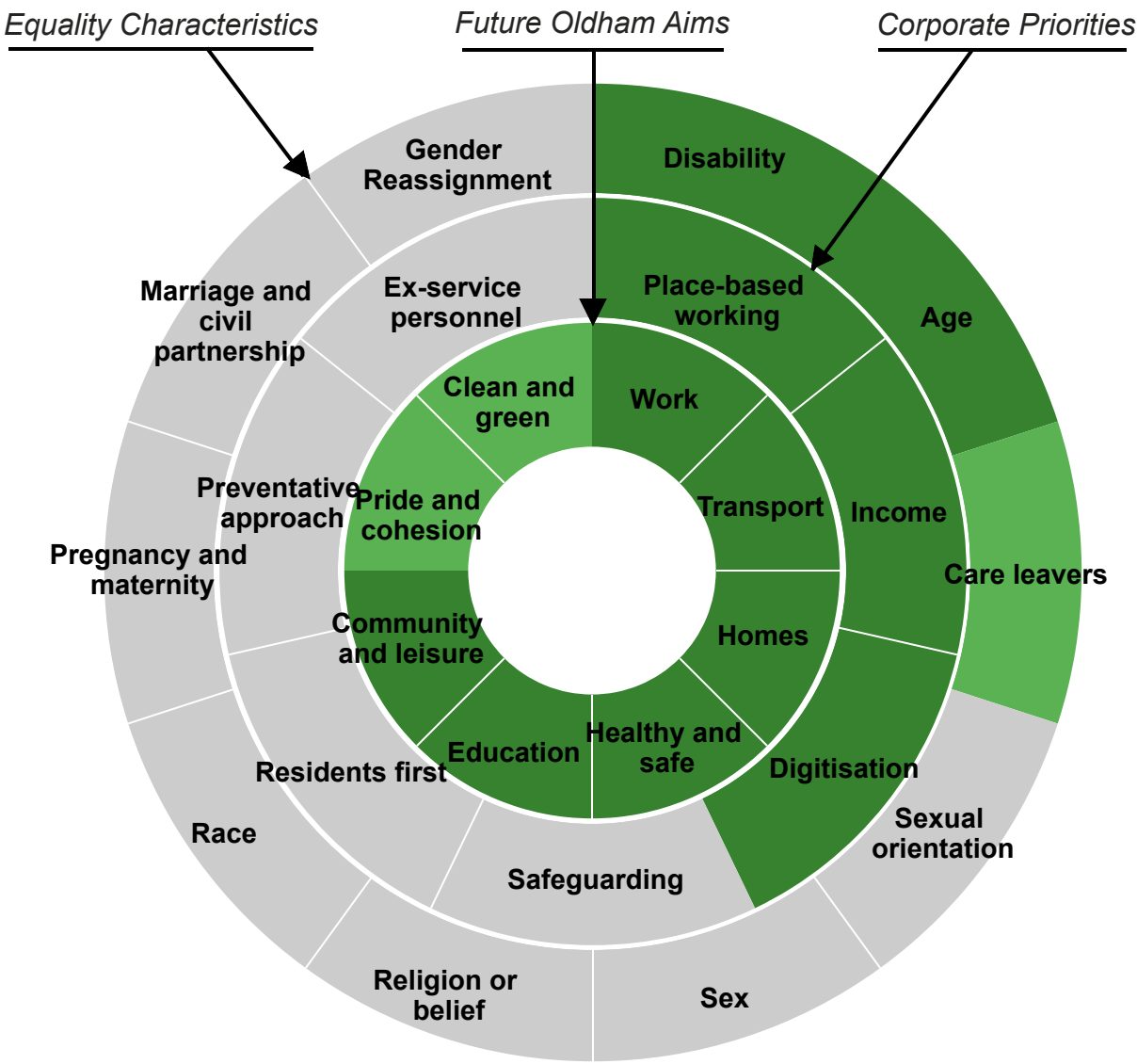
Strong Positive Impacts that are Possible

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score ▲	What action can be taken to increase the likelihood that positive impacts are realised?	Action(s)	Owner(s)	Timescale(s)
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Implications of Oldham remaining part of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan

completed/last updated by Strategic Planning on 11/10/2024

Portfolio	
Regeneration and Housing	
Directorate	
PEG (Place and Economic Growth)	
Service/Team	
PEG - Economy	
Is this IA related to a Budget Reduction proposal?	<input type="button" value="No"/>



Equality Characteristics 1 of 2

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Race	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Religion or belief	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Sex	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Sexual orientation	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Care leavers	Moderate Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	4	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) supports delivery of the ambitions in the Greater Manchester Strategy: a good start in life for everyone; good opportunities for our young people to equip them for life; good work and the best jobs in a valuable, productive, zero carbon economy; safe, secure housing in inclusive and diverse communities; a good cultural and leisure offer for everyone; a green city-region; good health and support for people to live fulfilling lives, with quality care for those who need it; to be a good place to grow older and to be a place where everyone is connected – socially, digitally and by a clean, integrated and accessible transport system.</p> <p>Overall PfE will have neutral impact on protected characteristics - not prioritising or discriminating one against the other. However, there are policies within PfE that support, and have a positive impact on, care leavers, including Policy JP-H2: Affordability of New Housing and Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing (both of which seek to incorporate a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs and deliver more inclusive neighbourhoods).</p> <p>PfE, as part of the development plan for the borough, will provide the council with a planning policy framework that positively responds to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities set out in Our Future Oldham and the Corporate Plan. Under which the council can prepare a Part 2 Local Plan to provide more local policy direction on key matters.</p>

Equality Characteristics 2 of 2

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Age	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) supports delivery of the ambitions in the Greater Manchester Strategy: a good start in life for everyone; good opportunities for our young people to equip them for life; good work and the best jobs in a valuable, productive, zero carbon economy; safe, secure housing in inclusive and diverse communities; a good cultural and leisure offer for everyone; a green city-region; good health and support for people to live fulfilling lives, with quality care for those who need it; to be a good place to grow older and to be a place where everyone is connected – socially, digitally and by a clean, integrated and accessible transport system.</p> <p>Overall PfE will have neutral impact on protected characteristics - not prioritising or discriminating one against the other. However, there are several policies within PfE that support, and have a positive impact on, people of all ages, including Policy JP-H2: Affordability of New Housing and Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing (both of which seek to incorporate a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs and deliver more inclusive neighbourhoods); Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places (which sets out the key attributes which new development should be consistent with, including being socially inclusive, adaptable to changing needs and being easy to move around for those of all mobility level); Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge (which seeks to promote significant enhancements in education, skills and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents; and Policy JP-P6: Health (which seeks to tackle health inequality).</p> <p>PfE, as part of the development plan for the borough, will provide the council with a planning policy framework that positively responds to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities set out in Our Future Oldham and the Corporate Plan. Under which the council can prepare a Part 2 Local Plan to provide more local policy direction on key matters.</p>
Disability	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) supports delivery of the ambitions in the Greater Manchester Strategy: a good start in life for everyone; good opportunities for our young people to equip them for life; good work and the best jobs in a valuable, productive, zero carbon economy; safe, secure housing in inclusive and diverse communities; a good cultural and leisure offer for everyone; a green city-region; good health and support for people to live fulfilling lives, with quality care for those who need it; to be a good place to grow older and to be a place where everyone is connected – socially, digitally and by a clean, integrated and accessible transport system.</p> <p>Overall PfE will have neutral impact on all protected characteristics - not prioritising or discriminating one against the other. However, there are several policies within PfE that support, and have a positive impact on, people of disability including Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing (which seeks to incorporate a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs and deliver more inclusive neighbourhoods and requires all new dwellings to be built to the 'accessible and adaptable' standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations unless specific site conditions make this impracticable); Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places (which sets out the key attributes which new development should be consistent with, including being socially inclusive, adaptable to changing needs and being easy to move around for those of all mobility level); Policy JP-P6: Health (which seeks to tackle health inequality); Policy JP-C1: An Integrated Network (which seeks to ensure that new development fully considers the needs of all people, including those using mobility aids) and Policy JP-C5: Streets for All (which seeks to ensure that streets are welcoming for all, and respond to the needs of those with reduced mobility, for example).</p> <p>PfE, as part of the development plan for the borough, will provide the council with a planning policy framework that positively responds to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities set out in Our Future Oldham and the Corporate Plan. Under which the council can prepare a Part 2 Local Plan to provide more local policy direction on key matters.</p>

Corporate Priorities 1 of 2

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Ex-service personnel	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Preventative approach	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Residents first	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Safeguarding	Neutral	Very Likely	Long Term	0	
Digitisation	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) recognises that digital connections are increasingly important to every aspect of our lives, from socialising and shopping to learning, business and accessing essential services, and that any truly global city will need to have widespread, affordable, reliable, secure and future-proofed digital infrastructure that provides a competitive edge for businesses and supports high-levels of social inclusion.</p> <p>Improving digital infrastructure and ensuring that new development is connected to it is therefore a high priority and Policy JP-C2: Digital Connectivity sets out how PfE will support the provision of affordable, high quality, digital infrastructure.</p> <p>PfE, as part of the development plan for the borough, will provide the council with a planning policy framework that positively responds to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities set out in Our Future Oldham and the Corporate Plan. Under which the council can prepare a Part 2 Local Plan to provide more local policy direction on key matters.</p>
Income	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	<p>The overall spatial strategy of Places for Everypne (PfE) seeks to take advantage of the opportunities for delivering high levels of economic growth, whilst addressing the challenges for securing genuinely inclusive growth and prosperity. The Spatial Strategy recognises that whilst northern areas are diverse, deprivation is particularly extensive across the north-east of the conurbation, with relatively high levels through much of Rochdale, Oldham, and Tameside, extending into north Manchester. This north-eastern area is characterised by relatively low incomes, low house prices, low qualifications, low economic activity, low proportions in higher managerial/professional occupations, and poor average health. Significant interventions will be required to address the extensive deprivation and the relatively low levels of growth, economic activity and prosperity. Two locations have been identified as being especially important, having the potential to deliver significant benefits over a wider area and make a major contribution to raising the competitiveness of the northern areas as a whole - this includes the North-East Growth Corridor in which Oldham sits.</p> <p>In addition to policies that make up PfE's Spatial Strategy there are several policies that will have a positive impact on income, including Policy JP-H2: Affordability of New Housing (which seeks to maximise the delivery of additional affordable homes through, for example, lcoal plans setting targets for the provision of affordable housing); Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places (which sets out the key attributes which new development should be consistent with, including incorporating inclusive design within all spaces with support for tackling inequality and poverty to form part of creating sustainable places); and Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge (which seeks to promote significant enhancements in education, skills and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents).</p> <p>PfE, as part of the development plan for the borough, will provide the council with a planning policy framework that positively responds to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities set out in Our Future Oldham and the Corporate Plan. Under which the council can prepare a Part 2 Local Plan to provide more local policy direction on key matters.</p>

Corporate Priorities 2 of 2

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Place-based working	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) supports delivery of the ambitions in the Greater Manchester Strategy, which sets out that all parts of Greater Manchester will be neighbourhoods of choice, with good quality affordable homes in safe and attractive communities, well served by public transport, so that the people that live in them are connected to jobs and opportunity and have access to excellent local amenities, green spaces and a high quality cultural and leisure offer.</p> <p>PfE's Places for People chapter includes several policies that support this ambition and seek to raise the quality of all places in a way that is sustainable in the long-term. Policies such as JP-C1: An Integrated Network also set out a range of measures, including delivering a pattern of development that minimises both the need to travel and the distance travelled by unsustainable modes to jobs, housing and other key services, including healthcare, education, retail, recreation and leisure facilities, green space and green infrastructure.</p> <p>PfE, as part of the development plan for the borough, will provide the council with a planning policy framework that positively responds to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities set out in Our Future Oldham and the Corporate Plan. Under which the council can prepare a Part 2 Local Plan to provide more local policy direction on key matters.</p>

Future Oldham Aims 1 of 4

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Clean and green	Moderate Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	4	<p>PfE supports delivery of the ambitions in the Greater Manchester Strategy: a good start in life for everyone; good opportunities for our young people to equip them for life; good work and the best jobs in a valuable, productive, zero carbon economy; safe, secure housing in inclusive and diverse communities; a good cultural and leisure offer for everyone; a green city-region; good health and support for people to live fulfilling lives, with quality care for those who need it; to be a good place to grow older and to be a place where everyone is connected – socially, digitally and by a clean, integrated and accessible transport system.</p> <p>PfE's Sustainable and Resilient Places chapter includes the following policies - Policy JP-S2: Carbon and Energy; Policy JP-S3: Heat and Energy Networks; Policy JP-S4: Flood Risk and the Water Environment; Policy JP-S5: Clean Air; Policy JP-S6: and Resource Efficiency. Whilst PfE's Greener Places chapter supports the role of our natural assets with the following policies - Policy JP-G1: Landscape Character; Policy JP-G2 Green Infrastructure Network; Policy JP-G3: River Valleys and Waterways; Policy JP-G5: Uplands; Policy JP-G6: Urban Green Space; Policy JP-G7: Trees and Woodland; Policy JP-G8: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity; and Policy JP-G9: The Green Belt.</p> <p>The impact of meeting our development needs on the Green Belt is recognised. The focus has been on the reuse of brownfield land and increasing densities to ensure the efficient use of land. However, even with this the scale and distribution of development required to meet our needs has necessitated the need for selective removal of Green Belt and the use of other land previously safeguarded from development. Nevertheless, in amending the Green Belt boundary, through this Plan, opportunities have been identified to improve/enhance Green Infrastructure within the land to remain within the Green Belt. Additionally opportunities have been identified to mitigate harm to the retained Green Belt caused by these amendments.</p> <p>PfE, as part of the development plan for the borough, will provide the council with a planning policy framework that positively responds to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities set out in Our Future Oldham and the Corporate Plan. Under which the council can prepare a Part 2 Local Plan to provide more local policy direction on key matters.</p>
Pride and cohesion	Moderate Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	4	<p>Delivering a more inclusive Greater Manchester is at the heart of everything that the Greater Manchester Strategy is trying to achieve and PfE has an important role in helping to address these inequalities and disadvantages. The Plan promotes greater inclusion in a wide variety of ways, including (for example) increasing the range and accessibility of cultural, leisure and sporting opportunities; improving access for all neighbourhoods to green space and nature; and supporting greater inclusion through the design and implementation of individual development proposals.</p> <p>The conflict between delivering our housing and economic growth needs and protecting our Green Belt and green spaces, and the impact this can have on how people may feel about an area, is recognised. The focus has been on the reuse of brownfield land and increasing densities to ensure the efficient use of land. However, even with this the scale and distribution of development required to meet our needs has necessitated the need for selective removal of Green Belt and the use of other land previously safeguarded from development.</p> <p>PfE, as part of the development plan for the borough, will provide the council with a planning policy framework that positively responds to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities set out in Our Future Oldham and the Corporate Plan. Under which the council can prepare a Part 2 Local Plan to provide more local policy direction on key matters.</p>

Future Oldham Aims 2 of 4

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Community and leisure	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	<p>PfE supports delivery of the ambitions in the Greater Manchester Strategy: a good start in life for everyone; good opportunities for our young people to equip them for life; good work and the best jobs in a valuable, productive, zero carbon economy; safe, secure housing in inclusive and diverse communities; a good cultural and leisure offer for everyone; a green city-region; good health and support for people to live fulfilling lives, with quality care for those who need it; to be a good place to grow older and to be a place where everyone is connected – socially, digitally and by a clean, integrated and accessible transport system.</p> <p>The Plan includes several policies that relate to community, leisure and social inclusion. Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places lists the key attributes that all development should be consistent with, including being visually stimulating (creating interesting and imaginative environments which raise the human spirit through the use of green space, public art and quality design); well-connected (to other places, particularly by public transport and digital infrastructure enabling everyone to take advantage of the employment, cultural and leisure opportunities across Greater Manchester and beyond); incorporating high quality and well managed green infrastructure and quality public realm (comprising opportunities for recreation and outdoor play for children, and interaction between the generations); and well-served by local shops, services and amenities, including education and health facilities. Policy JP-P2: Heritage also recognises the wider public benefits of heritage and its reinforcement of character, identity and sense of place. PfE's Places for People chapter also includes the following - Policy JP-P3: Cultural Facilities; Policy JP-P4: New Retail and Leisure Uses in Town Centres; and Policy JP-P7: Sport and Recreation.</p> <p>PfE, as part of the development plan for the borough, will provide the council with a planning policy framework that positively responds to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities set out in Our Future Oldham and the Corporate Plan. Under which the council can prepare a Part 2 Local Plan to provide more local policy direction on key matters.</p>
Education	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) supports delivery of the ambitions in the Greater Manchester Strategy: a good start in life for everyone; good opportunities for our young people to equip them for life; good work and the best jobs in a valuable, productive, zero carbon economy; safe, secure housing in inclusive and diverse communities; a good cultural and leisure offer for everyone; a green city-region; good health and support for people to live fulfilling lives, with quality care for those who need it; to be a good place to grow older and to be a place where everyone is connected – socially, digitally and by a clean, integrated and accessible transport system.</p> <p>Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge sets out a range of measures through which significant enhancements in education, skills and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents will be promoted. These include enabling the delivery of new and improved accessible facilities for all ages, such as early years, schools, further and higher education, and adult training to ensure our workforce is ready to benefit from new employment opportunities; ensuring the delivery of sufficient school places to respond to the demands from new housing; and supporting the continued growth and success of the university sector.</p> <p>PfE, as part of the development plan for the borough, will provide the council with a planning policy framework that positively responds to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities set out in Our Future Oldham and the Corporate Plan. Under which the council can prepare a Part 2 Local Plan to provide more local policy direction on key matters.</p>

Future Oldham Aims 3 of 4

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score ▲	Comment
Healthy and safe	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	<p>The Places for People chapter includes several policies that support healthy and safe communities. Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places sets out key attributes that new development should be consistent with (including that it is socially inclusive, adaptable, safe (including by designing out crime and terrorism, reducing opportunities for anti-social behaviour and by ensuring that developments make appropriate provision for response and evacuation in the case of an emergency or disaster), easy to move around and well connected). Whilst Policy JP-P6: Health sets out how new development will be required to tackle health inequality (through, for example, maximising its positive contribution to health and wellbeing, supporting healthy lifestyles and supporting improvements in health facilities through responding to the changing needs and demands of both existing and new residents by 1) requiring, where appropriate, the provision of new or improved health facilities as part of new developments proportionate to the additional demand that they would generate; 2) enabling the continued enhancement and successful operation of our hospitals; and 3) facilitating greater integration of health and social care, and the provision of integrated wellness hubs, including the co-location of health, community and wellness services.</p> <p>PfE, as part of the development plan for the borough, will provide the council with a planning policy framework that positively responds to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities set out in Our Future Oldham and the Corporate Plan. Under which the council can prepare a Part 2 Local Plan to provide more local policy direction on key matters.</p>
Homes	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) supports delivery of the Greater Manchester Housing Strategy which sets out GM's vision for new homes and seeks to ensure that we consistently deliver the right homes in the right places, providing the number and mix of new homes for our future needs.</p> <p>A key objective of PfE is to meet our Local Housing Need and the Plan seeks to direct development to the most sustainable areas – primarily the city and town centres – and enable most efficient use of our brownfield land supply. PfE's Places for Homes chapter includes several policies that seek to support these ambitions: Policy JP-H1: Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development sets out the minimum housing requirement for each PfE district and the Plan area as a whole (for Oldham this is 680 homes a year stepped totalling 11,560 over the plan period); Policy JP-H2: Affordability of New Housing, which recognises that a key challenge and priority for GM is to ensure that new housing comes forward at a price that potential occupiers can afford; Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing, which sets out that new development is required to incorporate a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs and deliver more inclusive neighbourhoods; and Policy JP-H4: Density of New Housing, which requires new housing to be delivered at a density appropriate to the location, reflecting the relative accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport and the need to achieve efficient use of land and high-quality design.</p> <p>PfE, as part of the development plan for the borough, will provide the council with a planning policy framework that positively responds to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities set out in Our Future Oldham and the Corporate Plan. Under which the council can prepare a Part 2 Local Plan to provide more local policy direction on key matters.</p>

Future Oldham Aims 4 of 4

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Transport	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	<p>One of the Greater Manchester Strategy's ten priorities, and which is supported by PfE, is to deliver an integrated network with world-class connectivity that keeps Greater Manchester moving and that drives prosperity whilst protecting the environment, improving air quality and transitioning to a zero carbon future.</p> <p>PfE's Connected Places chapter includes several policies that seek to provide outstanding connectivity whilst supporting low carbon economic growth and greater levels of social inclusion: Policy JP-C1: An Integrated Network (includes a range of measures that will help to deliver an accessible, low carbon Greater Manchester with world class connectivity); Policy JP-C3: Public Transport (supports the delivery of major improvements to public transport); Policy JP-C5: Streets for All (seeks to deliver streets that will make a significant positive contribution to the quality of place and support high levels of walking, cycling and public transport); Policy JP-C6: Walking and Cycling (seeks a higher proportion of journeys made by walking and cycling); Policy JP-C7: Freight and Logistics (supports the more efficient and sustainable movement of freight); and Policy JP-C8: Transport Requirements of New Development (which requires new development to be located and designed to enable and encourage walking, cycling and public transport use, to reduce the negative effects of car dependency, and help deliver high quality, attractive, liveable and sustainable environments).</p> <p>PfE, as part of the development plan for the borough, will provide the council with a planning policy framework that positively responds to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities set out in Our Future Oldham and the Corporate Plan. Under which the council can prepare a Part 2 Local Plan to provide more local policy direction on key matters.</p>
Work	Strong Positive	Very Likely	Long Term	8	<p>Places for Everyone (PfE) supports delivery of the ambitions in the Greater Manchester Strategy recognising that economic growth is a central and that is essential for raising incomes, improving health and quality of life, and providing the finances to deliver better infrastructure, services and facilities. The overall spatial strategy of PfE seeks to take advantage of the opportunities for delivering high levels of economic growth, whilst addressing the challenges for securing genuinely inclusive growth and prosperity. Significant interventions will be required to address the extensive deprivation and the relatively low levels of growth, economic activity and prosperity. Two locations have been identified as being especially important, having the potential to deliver significant benefits over a wider area and make a major contribution to raising the competitiveness of the northern areas as a whole - this includes the North-East Growth Corridor in which Oldham sits (Policy JP-Strat7: North-East Growth Corridor).</p> <p>PfE's Places for Jobs chapter includes several policies that seek to promote prosperity for all residents and places in a sustainable way: Policy JP-J1: Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth sets out how a thriving, inclusive and productive economy will be sought across the Plan area; Policy JP-J2: Employment Sites and Premises sets out that a diverse range of employment sites and accessible premises, both new and second-hand, will be made available across the Plan area in terms of location, scale, type and cost that will offer opportunities for a range of businesses and help tackle inequalities; and policies JP-J3: Office Development and JP-J4: Industry and Warehousing Development set out the level of office and industry and warehousing development that will be delivered. Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge also seeks to promote significant enhancements in education, skills and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents, ensuring the workforce across GM is ready to benefit from new employment opportunities.</p> <p>PfE, as part of the development plan for the borough, will provide the council with a planning policy framework that positively responds to the needs and demands of our existing and future residents, and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities set out in Our Future Oldham and the Corporate Plan. Under which the council can prepare a Part 2 Local Plan to provide more local policy direction on key matters.</p>

Negative Impacts

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	What action can be taken to mitigate the potential negative impacts?	Action(s)	Owner(s)	Timescale(s)	If the negative impacts can't be mitigated, why should the project/decision proceed?
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Strong Positive Impacts that are Possible

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	What action can be taken to increase the likelihood that positive impacts are realised?	Action(s)	Owner(s)	Timescale(s)
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Report to Council

The Oldham Plan 2024 – 2030; Pride, Progress, Partnership

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Arooj Shah, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham

Officer Contact: Shelley Kipling, Acting Chief Executive

Report Authors: Jonathan Downs, Policy Lead / James Mulvaney, Policy Manager

06 November 2024

Reason for Decision

The previous iteration of the Oldham Plan was adopted by the partnership in 2022. However, since this time, the environment in which partners and the council are operating in has changed significantly. To reflect these changes, and to coordinate Oldham's Partnerships response with the missions of the new government, a new version of the Oldham Plan (Pride, Progress, Partnership), has been developed and approved by the Oldham Partnership – Leading Oldham.

Executive Summary

The Oldham Partnership is a collaboration of leaders from across Oldham, working together to address the borough's challenges. The Oldham Plan serves as the blueprint which is going to guide the next six years of the Oldham Partnership.

Extensive consultation and resident feedback have shaped the new Plan, with three missions – Healthier, Happier Lives; Great Place to Live; and Green and Growing – each supported by specific deliverables to drive progress and positive change for Oldham's communities.

Recommendations

1. Note the content of the Oldham Plan 2024 – 2030: Pride, Progress, Partnership and acknowledge the continued work of the partnership to improve the Borough.

1. Background

- 1.1. The Oldham Partnership brings together business, community, and public sector leaders from across Oldham to tackle the challenges we face together. By working across different sectors, we can create lasting positive change for everyone in Oldham.
- 1.2. The Oldham Plan is a blueprint for the borough, setting out the collective vision for Oldham over the next six years. The Plan provides a shared roadmap for addressing key challenges such as health inequalities, housing, economic growth, and environmental sustainability.
- 1.3. It became clear towards the end of 2023 that the Oldham Plan required a refresh. The previous version of the plan was set in the context of Covid-19 recovery and the cost-of-living crisis. Two years later and we are now in a very different place. The regeneration of Oldham Town Centre is underway, and a visit from the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review team in November 2023 recommended an update to the plan “as a means of harnessing the collective power of partners towards improving the borough and capitalising on all of the opportunities now being created in Oldham”.

2. Current Position

- 2.1. Over the last nine months, in a co-ordination role, the Council have been working with partners to agree what our revised priorities should look like. With this in mind, we reflected on resident feedback from ‘the Big Oldham Conversation’ and conducted an extensive period of engagement with partner organisations. (More on consultation in section 6).
- 2.2. Following this, the Oldham Partnership – Leading Oldham agreed three key missions with supporting deliverables on 25 October 2024.

3. The Oldham Plan Missions and Deliverables

- 3.1 The Oldham Plan is the partnerships shared vision for shaping the future of our borough. It’s grounded in partnership and collaboration, bringing together the public sector, local businesses, community groups, and residents. By working together, we’ve set three clear missions to achieve by 2030 to make Oldham a fantastic place to live and work. Each of our collective missions will deliver real improvements to the lives of Oldham people.
 - **Healthier, Happier Lives** – In Oldham, every individual matters. We aim to build a community where everyone has access to the care, support and opportunities they need to live a good life. We are committed to tackling poverty, improving health and wellbeing, providing high-quality social care and promoting lifelong learning.
 - **Great Place to Live** – We know Oldham is a place where people love to live, and we’re committed to building on that pride by providing more affordable, quality homes, improving public spaces, and creating a strong local economy with vibrant communities that get on well.

-
- **Green & Growing** - We will make Oldham a place where economic growth benefits all residents, creating opportunities for businesses to succeed while ensuring our community and environment thrive. By attracting new investment, supporting local businesses, and leading in green technologies, we will generate quality job opportunities and equip people with the skills they need to succeed.

4. Options/alternatives

- 4.1. Option 1: Note the content of the Oldham Plan and agree to adopt the Oldham Plan. This course of action would allow the council to work effectively and strategically with our borough partners.
- 4.2. Option 2: Do not agree to adopt the Oldham Plan. This course of action would leave Oldham Council without a strategic partnership plan, making it more difficult to work effectively and strategically with our partners.

5. Preferred Option

- 5.1. Option 1 would be the preferred option, leading to more effective and strategic action with our partners.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. We have undertaken extensive engagement for the development of the Oldham Plan to ensure that it reflects the needs and aspirations of our residents, businesses, and community partners. By gathering diverse perspectives through consultations, workshops, and surveys, we are able to co-create a plan that addresses the challenges facing the borough while building on its strengths.
- 6.2. Throughout the process of developing this plan we have kept in mind that this is a plan meant to be for the partnership, by the partnership. We began with a number of interviews with our key partners to understand what a successful renewed partnership plan should look like. During this phase we began to unpick how a shorter, more resident focused set of missions would provide a greater footing for the partnership to stand on, and how these needed to be owned by the partnership to really be a collaborative success.
- 6.3. Following this, we launched a survey with the partnership to begin to understand what those new missions should look like, and how the partnership should operate in the future. From this we were able to start drafting a set of missions with a resident focus that could be easily understood by residents.
- 6.4. We then convened a partnership meeting to further consult on how we could all contribute to supporting the partnership and the borough going forward. The Partnership shared which issues we could achieve most improvement on by working together and the contributions their own organisations could make.
- 6.5. Through conversations with the youth council, we know our emerging generation wants to be able to live in a safer borough, where there is affordable housing, good employment opportunities, and places where there are things to do with friends and family. They are proud to be from Oldham and feel a sense of identity from the districts they live in.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. All the actions that are included within the Oldham Plan that are to be delivered to achieve corporate objectives will be financed within approved budgetary resources. Ensuring that the Council remains financially resilient and sustainable in the future will form a key part of the on-going budget setting process and medium-term financial strategy.
- 7.2. The availability and the alignment of resources to deliver the actions will depend to a significant extent on the allocation of resources by Central Government and may need to be revisited in light of shifting national policy and budgetary priorities. *(Sarah Johnson – Director of Finance)*

8. Legal Services Comments

- 8.1. The Oldham Plan should be read in conjunction with the Corporate Plan. The Plan has been prepared with extensive resident consultation having taken place and with the assistance of Council partners.
- 8.2. It is important that the Council is forward-looking and is seeking to put policies in place that help the Council consider key social issues such as Health Inequalities, Housing and environmental sustainability within the Borough.
- 8.3. The Council recently engaged in a local Government Association peer review and one of the recommendations was to update the Oldham Plan. It would defeat the purpose of engaging in such a process and cause a reputational issue if it did not update the Oldham Plan.
- 8.4. The recommended option will help enable joined up working with Council partners and does not commit the Council to any new spending. *(Alex Bougatef – Interim Borough Solicitor)*

9. Co-operative Implications

- 9.1. The Oldham Plan is a resident-focused strategic partnership plan, which aims to improve the lives of residents, while also growing the economy, supporting VCFSE organisations, and greening the borough. The Plan has been co-produced with council partners and residents, with an aim to improve the lives of residents and organisations in the borough. As such, the plan is supportive of our cooperative agenda. *(James Mulvaney, Policy Manager)*

10. Community cohesion, including crime and disorder implications in accordance with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

- 10.1. None

11. Equality Impact – including implications for Children and Young People

- 11.1. Some of the missions and deliverables in the plan look to improve opportunities for children and young people, by offering them the chance to reach their full potential, to improve their mental health and wellbeing, and ensuring they get the right care and support at the right time. *(James Mulvaney, Policy Manager)*

12.Key Decision

12.1. No

13.Background Papers

13.1. None

14.Appendices

14.1. The Oldham Plan 2024 – 2030; Pride, Progress, Partnership

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The page features a vibrant, colorful geometric pattern composed of various triangles and squares in shades of blue, orange, green, pink, and dark blue. These shapes are arranged to form stylized buildings, trees, and abstract architectural elements, creating a festive and modern aesthetic. The pattern is most prominent at the top and bottom of the page, framing the central text.

Pride, Progress, PARTNERSHIP.

The Oldham Plan 2024-2030

The population is
**younger than the
national average**
with
a median age
of **37.2 years**
(Av. 40.5 in England & Wales)

Foreword

Oldham’s strength lies in our people.
With great ambition, we present this new partnership plan, marking a reset in how we work alongside our residents to shape the future of our borough. Together, we’ve listened and learned, ensuring that our priorities reflect what truly matters to Oldham’s communities.

This plan has been built from the ground up, in collaboration with residents, businesses, and partners across every part of Oldham. Through conversations, feedback, and shared insights, we have developed a clear set of priorities that respond to the needs and aspirations of our communities. Our residents want meaningful, visible outcomes that improve everyday life, making Oldham a fantastic place to live and work. We’ve also taken care to pay particular attention to our most disadvantaged, who often face the greatest barriers to opportunity. Through this plan, we are committed to championing their needs so that every resident’s voice shapes the future of our borough.

Our three priorities – A Great Place to Live, Healthier, Happier Lives, and Green and Growing – are the result of this partnership approach. We’ve identified these areas with our residents and partners, focusing on what will deliver the biggest impact. These priorities reflect our shared ambitions for Oldham: vibrant, safe neighbourhoods where people are proud to live; opportunities for healthier, more fulfilled lives; and a sustainable, thriving economy.

Civic pride is at the heart of this vision. We want to create a borough where residents feel a deep sense



Leader of Oldham Council,
Cllr Arooj Shah

of belonging and ownership, where they can celebrate the unique identity and heritage of Oldham. By encouraging pride in our communities, we build resilience, unity, and a shared commitment to making Oldham the best it can be.

With the arrival of a new government, we see further opportunities for Oldham. We are ready to work with national leaders to ensure Oldham’s missions are delivered, unlocking new resources and support to drive growth and prosperity. This partnership plan is all of us working together to deliver for Oldham. By bringing our collective energy, knowledge, and passion, we will continue to build a future that every resident can take pride in.

Together, we will create a borough where everyone can thrive, and no one is left behind.

Oldham’s time is now.

**Oldham has
246,130
residents**

Our Oldham

Oldham is a place with a rich history, vibrant culture, and a wonderfully diverse population. Located in the heart of Greater Manchester, Oldham is proud of its industrial heritage and its strong working-class roots.

Today, Oldham remains full of opportunities. Our population is younger than the national average, and our community is growing. Despite facing challenges like deprivation, we see these as opportunities for positive change. We are determined to break the cycle of generational inequalities and ensure everyone has access to opportunities. Our diversity is one of our greatest strengths, inspiring creativity, innovation, and resilience.

The people of Oldham have shown time and again that by coming together, we can achieve amazing things. Our strength lies in our unity, and through our diversity, we can create a more inclusive and welcoming future for everyone.

Looking ahead, Oldham is a place full of opportunity. Our vision for the future is a place where everyone can thrive, with great education, good jobs, safe homes, and access to necessary services. We aim to build a greener, healthier borough focused on sustainability and well-being for all.

Through the Oldham Plan, we are committed to tackling inequality and embracing opportunity. By working together and celebrating our diversity, Oldham can be a place where everyone can succeed and feel proud to call home.

“The people of Oldham have shown time and again that by coming together, we can achieve amazing things”

Our Future

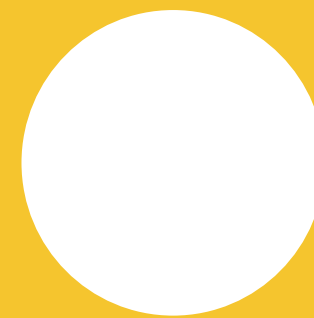
The Oldham Plan is our shared vision for shaping the future of our borough. It's grounded in partnership, bringing together the public sector, local businesses, community groups, and residents. By working together, we've set three clear goals to achieve by 2030 to make Oldham a fantastic place to live and work.

No single organisation can tackle all our challenges alone. The Oldham Plan brings together leaders from across the council, health services, housing, education, safety, and local businesses. Each one brings their own skills and resources to help make Oldham stronger and fairer for everyone.

The plan outlines specific steps we'll take over the next five years to improve education, boost the economy, enhance well-being, and create a greener environment. We'll ensure accountability to the community, with clear results you can see.

At its heart, the Oldham Plan is more than just a plan – it's a long-term commitment to building a future where everyone can thrive, based on working together and taking shared responsibility.





“This is an exciting time to be part of Oldham’s story and we are ready to play our part.”

Phil Mayall,
Managing Director, Muse

“A big part of our work is social prescribing—connecting people with non-medical services like support groups, fitness activities, and mental health workshops to help them live healthier, happier lives.”

Laura Windsor-Welsh,
Action Together



Our Missions

We've developed three missions to make this plan happen.

Great Place to Live

We know Oldham is a place where people love to live, and we're committed to building on that pride by providing more affordable, quality homes, improving public spaces, and creating a strong local economy with vibrant communities that get on well

Green and Growing

We will make Oldham a place where economic growth benefits all residents, creating opportunities for businesses to succeed while ensuring our community and environment thrive. By attracting new investment, supporting local businesses, and leading in green technologies, we will generate quality job opportunities and equip people with the skills they need to succeed.

These missions were developed after we spoke to thousands of people across Oldham, including residents, businesses, and partner organisations.

That means we can confidently say these are Oldham's missions.

Healthier Happier Lives

In Oldham, every individual matters. We aim to build a community where everyone has access to the care, support, and opportunities they need to live a good life. We are committed to tackling poverty, improving health and wellbeing, providing high-quality social care, and promoting lifelong education.

“We are ready to work with national leaders to ensure Oldham’s missions are delivered, unlocking new resources and support to drive growth and prosperity.”

Councillor Arooj Shah, Leader, Oldham Council



Our Plan

Each of our missions will deliver real improvements to the lives of Oldham people. By 2030 we will see the following results:

Healthier Happier Lives

People in Oldham will live healthier and longer lives.

Our children and young people will have the chance to reach their full potential.

Everyone will get the right health and care support, in the right place, when they need it.

More people will feel involved and connected to their communities.

Residents of all ages will see improvements in their mental health and wellbeing.

Case Study



At Action Together, our charitable purpose is to strengthen Oldham's Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise Sector (VCFSE), to enable positive social change and promote social justice. We do this by supporting people and groups to make more of a difference and give their time to the things that matter most, and by facilitating action groups and networks that bring together diverse perspectives to address the root causes of poverty and inequalities.

An example of this is we lead a partnership of charities to deliver the Oldham Social Prescribing Service, where we connect people to local community groups, activities and organisations that support residents to improve their overall health, wellbeing and social connections. Many things that affect our health and wellbeing cannot be treated by doctors or medicine alone, like loneliness, isolation or social stressors related to housing or financial pressures. Social Prescribing connects people to non-medical support within their local community, making it easy for residents to find the right support, such as local walking groups, befriending services, or support groups. We work closely to link both health services and local groups and organisations to help people to improve their mental and physical health and improve their general wellbeing.

Social prescribing plays a pivotal role in the approach to preventative work in Oldham. Social prescribing is embedded in both statutory and health care services, working well as a step-down from services and providing continuity for the people of Oldham to improve their health and wellbeing. Through collaboration with Oldham's health services and local organisations, we're building a stronger, more connected support network to help people and communities thrive.

Laura Windsor-Welsh,
Action Together



Great Place to Live



More people will have access to good, affordable homes that suit their needs.



Our neighbourhoods will be safer, more welcoming, and better connected.

Everyone will have the chance to enjoy great arts and culture right here in Oldham.

Oldham will be a fairer place where those who need help can easily get it.

Residents will feel proud of where they live and more connected to their community.

Case Study

GREATER MANCHESTER
POLICE



“Oldham’s Neighbourhood Policing Team are committed to making our community safer and stronger. Over the next few years, we’ll be focusing on preventing crime and antisocial behaviour by increasing patrols, stepping in early to prevent problems, and engaging more closely with local residents. You’ll see more of us in the town centre, where we’ll be working to keep everyone safe and listening to community concerns.

Preventing youth crime is also a big priority for us. We’re partnering with schools and youth groups to offer activities and education that give young

Estelle Mathieson,
Chief Superintendent,
Greater Manchester Police



people positive alternatives and help them stay on the right path. By doing this, we hope to reduce crime and build more trust with the community.

We know that working together is key. That’s why we’re teaming up with housing providers, health services, and the council to tackle the root causes of crime, like poverty and social issues.

By strengthening these partnerships, we’re aiming to create a safer, more supportive community and make Oldham a better place for everyone.”



Green and Growing

Our town centres and high streets will be lively places where people want to visit and shop.

More local businesses will start, grow, and succeed, creating good jobs for residents.

Every resident will see the benefit of Oldham's growing economy.

Oldham will lead the way on green projects across the country.

We'll support the growth of tech, green industries, and advanced manufacturing in the borough.

Case Study

MUSE

"Oldham is a diverse and dynamic town with huge potential as a place to live, work, and visit. Working together with Oldham Council we have a vision for a new town centre neighbourhood which is set to deliver up to 2,000 mixed-tenure homes.

"Building on Oldham's industrial heritage, our approach has the potential to attract significant investment, drive job creation, and forge new opportunities for the community to thrive. By implementing our sustainability framework and working in partnership with Oldham to drive their ambitions, we're proud to be able to deliver great places to live ready for Oldhamers to lead healthier, happier lives.

"Regeneration at this scale cannot happen without strong and effective partnerships. The collaborative approach of the Oldham Partnership – made up of public, private and third-sector organisations – to deliver the Oldham Plan, will be fundamental to driving positive outcomes for communities and the economy up to 2030 and beyond.

"This is an exciting time to be part of Oldham's story and we are ready to play our part."

Phil Mayall,
Managing Director, Muse



“We’re teaming up with housing providers, health services, and the council to tackle the root causes of crime, like poverty and social issues.”

Estelle Mathieson, Chief Superintendent,
Greater Manchester Police



Our Delivery

To achieve our missions,
we need everyone working together.
Here's how we'll use the strengths
of our key partners:

Page 229

Leading Oldham, The Oldham Partnership

The partnership brings together
leaders from the council, health
services, housing, education, police,
fire services, VCFSE, and local
businesses. They will guide important
conversations, track progress, and
solve issues along the way.

The Growth Board

The Growth Board creates jobs
and helps Oldham's economy
grow. They will work closely with
local businesses, developers, and
schools to attract new investments
and improve job training.

The Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board
works to improve the health
and happiness of Oldham's
residents. They will team up with
doctors, hospitals, the council,
and community groups to make
healthcare more accessible and
support mental health.

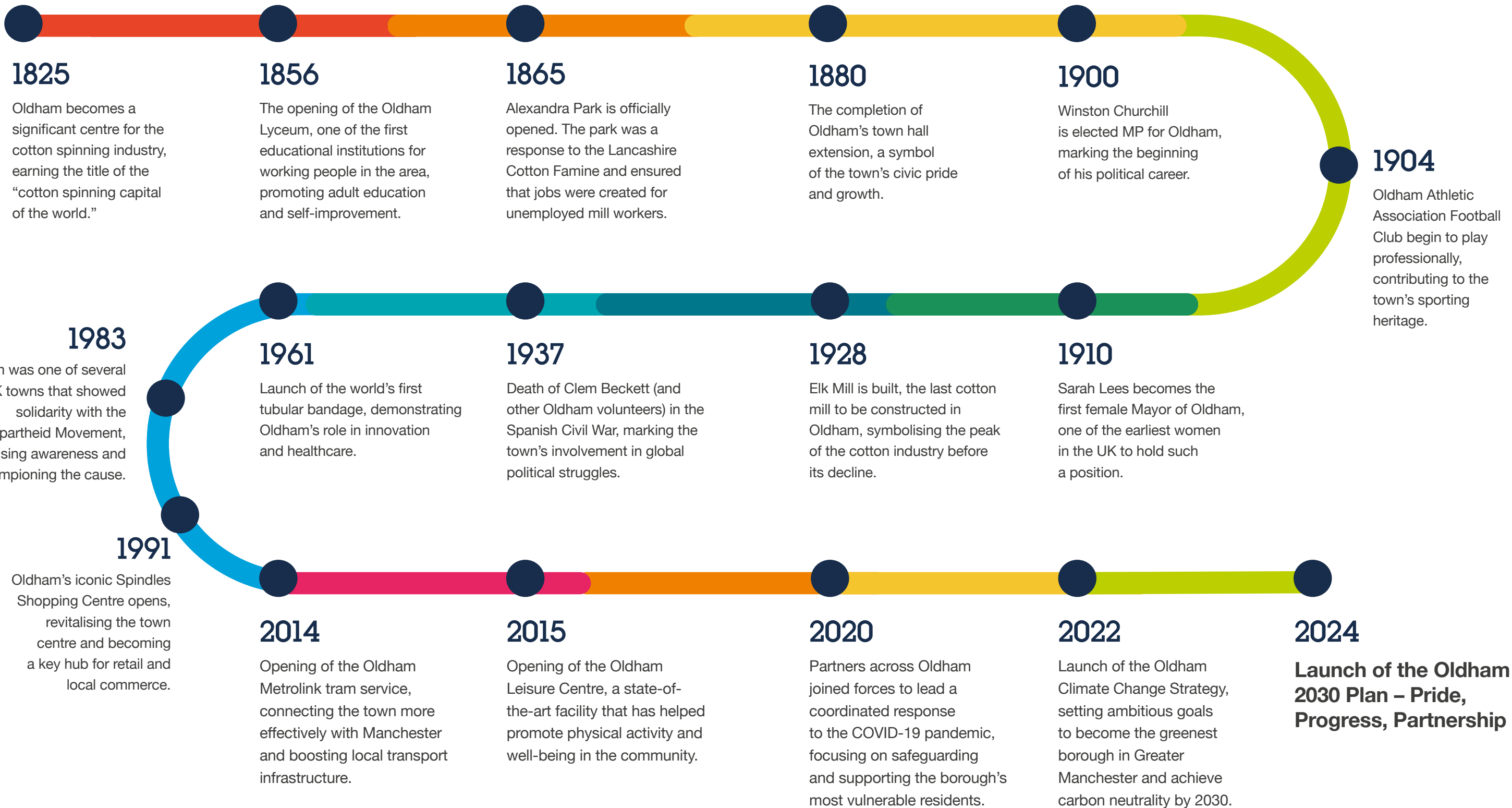
The Communities Board


The Communities Board makes sure
Oldham's neighbourhoods are strong,
welcoming, and safe. They will work
with local organisations, volunteers,
and community leaders to support
projects that bring people together
and improve public spaces.

By working together,
we will transform Oldham
into a thriving, dynamic
place to live, work, and grow.

Our Oldham Story

Throughout its history Oldham has always led and always looked to the future - this plan sits as the latest milestone in our great story.





**“Together,
we will create
a borough
where everyone
can thrive,
and no one
is left behind.”**

Councillor Arooj Shah,
Leader, Oldham Council

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Report to COUNCIL

Corporate Plan 2024-27: Ready for the Future

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Arooj Shah, Leader of Oldham Council and Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham

Senior Officer:

Shelley Kipling, Acting Chief Executive

Report Author:

Jonathan Downs, Corporate Policy Lead

06 November 2024

Reason for Decision

Oldham Council's last Corporate Plan was adopted in 2022. However, since that time the environment that Oldham Council is operating in has changed significantly. As the Council now looks to the future, a new Corporate Plan is required, ensuring alignment to the new Oldham Plan missions, while supporting the policy and operational priorities of the administration. The new Corporate Plan 2024-27 'Ready for the Future' sets out these missions for the next three years, putting the needs of our communities at the heart of everything we do.

The Corporate Plan 'Ready for the Future' also provides the core of the Council's contribution to delivering the new Oldham Plan: *Pride, Progress, Partnership*.

Executive Summary

Oldham Council's Corporate Plan 2024-27 describes how the Council will maximise the impact of our efforts and resource to improve the lives of residents in the borough over the next three years. The plan, which aligns with the Oldham Partnership's vision document (Pride, Progress, Partnership), focuses specifically on responding to the needs and aspirations of our communities. The plan outlines how we will contribute to the Oldham Plan missions, our organisational values and behaviours, and how we will create the right conditions for success.

The plan sets out three key missions: Happier, Healthier Lives; Great Place to Live; and Green and Growing.

Recommendations

Council is asked to:

1. Note the contents of the Corporate Plan 2024-27 and the outcomes it commits the Council to delivering over the next three years.
2. Approve the Corporate Plan 2024-27 for adoption.

1 Background

- 1.1 Oldham Council's last Corporate Plan was adopted in 2022. However, since this time the environment that Oldham Council is operating in has changed significantly. As the Council now looks to the future, a new Corporate Plan is required, ensuring alignment to the new Oldham Plan missions, while supporting the policy and operational priorities of the administration. The new Corporate Plan 2024-27 'Ready for the Future' sets out these priorities for the next three years, putting the needs of our communities at the heart of everything we do.
- 1.2 Alongside the development of this new Corporate Plan, the Council has been working with partners to develop a new Oldham Plan. The new Corporate Plan has been produced to represent the Council's contribution to this wider vision for the future of the borough.

2 Development of the Corporate Plan and Our Future Oldham

- 2.1 Over the past few years, the Council has actively engaged with residents to uncover their top priorities and ambitions for Oldham. We have engaged widely in developing the Corporate Plan to ensure it truly reflects the needs and aspirations of our residents. Through a range of consultations, workshops, and surveys, we've gathered diverse perspectives, allowing us to co-create a plan that not only tackles the borough's challenges but also harnesses its strengths.
- 2.2 Beyond resident input, the Council has held sessions with councillors and staff, gathering insights through Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny, Management Board, and the staff conference to inform the Corporate Plan.
- 2.3 The Oldham Plan and the Council's Corporate Plan have been developed hand in hand, ensuring that the Council's priorities for the next three years mirror our broader vision for the borough. By aligning our priorities, we maximize our impact across the council and wider Oldham Partnership, ensuring we deliver on our ambition to improve the lives of all our residents.
- 2.4 The Corporate Plan included as Appendix 1 is a final draft, subject to approval by Full Council.

3 Contents of the Corporate Plan

- 3.1 The plan includes three priorities, aligned to the missions in the Oldham Plan:
 1. **Healthier, Happier Lives:** In Oldham, every individual matters. We aim to build a community where everyone has access to the care, support, and opportunities they need to live a good life. We are committed to tackling poverty, improving health and well-being, providing high-quality social care, and promoting lifelong education.
 2. **Great Place to Live:** We know Oldham is a place where people love to live, and we're committed to building on that pride by providing more affordable,

quality homes, improving public spaces, and creating a strong local economy with vibrant communities that get on well.

3. Green and Growing: We will make Oldham a place where economic growth benefits all residents, creating opportunities for businesses to succeed while ensuring our community and environment thrive. By attracting new investment, supporting local businesses, and leading in green technologies, we will generate quality job opportunities and equip people with the skills they need to succeed.

3.2 To achieve our missions and deliver the best outcomes for the people of Oldham, we must create the right conditions for success. Our four pillars of change are what will support the implementation of our strategy, driving our change and improvement programme forward. These tools and approaches ensure that we remain dynamic and responsive, even as we navigate the complex and evolving landscape of local government in the UK. The four pillars of change are:

1. **Efficiency and Value for Money**
2. **Capacity Building**
3. **Prevention and Early**
4. **Digital**

3.3 These pillars are crucial to the successful delivery of our Corporate Plan, helping us turn our ambitions into reality. By focusing on these we are building a strong foundation that allows Oldham Council to adapt, innovate, and lead the way in local government.

3.4 The Corporate Plan also sets out our organisational values and behaviours. Our values – Proud, Ambitious, Together – define who we are and how we operate. They shape our culture, inform our decisions, and inspire us to deliver on our commitments to the people of Oldham. They are the standards we hold ourselves to, day in and day out. Alongside these values, a set of key behaviours guides how we work, ensuring consistency and focus across all areas of the council.

3.5 The Corporate Plan will be underpinned by an Annual Delivery Plan, developed through our business planning process, to ensure clear, actionable steps align with our strategic goals each year. From April, we will also introduce an Annual Performance Report, providing transparency and accountability by measuring our progress against the three missions. This approach allows us to adapt to emerging challenges and opportunities while maintaining a strong focus on delivering meaningful outcomes for our residents.

4 Options/Alternatives

4.1 Option 1: Approve the Corporate Plan 2024-27 for adoption.

4.2 This option is recommended as it will allow the Council to proceed most efficiently and effectively, delivering on the Administration's priorities and focusing on the needs of residents, while contributing to the overall vision for Oldham set out in the new Oldham Plan: Pride, Progress, Partnership.

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- 4.3 Option 2: Reject the Corporate Plan 2024-27 as drafted, proceeding without a Corporate Plan until amendments can be made.

5 Preferred Option

- 5.1 Option 1: Approve the Corporate Plan 2024-27 for adoption.

6 Consultation

- 7.1 We have engaged widely in developing the Corporate Plan to ensure it truly reflects the needs and aspirations of our residents. Through a range of consultations, workshops, and surveys, we've gathered diverse perspectives, allowing us to co-create a plan that not only tackles the borough's challenges but also harnesses its strengths.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 All the actions that are included within the Corporate Plan that are to be delivered to achieve corporate objectives will be financed within approved budgetary resources. Ensuring that the Council remains financially resilient and sustainable in the future will form a key part of the on-going budget setting process and medium-term financial strategy.

The availability and the alignment of resources to deliver the actions will depend to a significant extent on the allocation of resources by Central Government and may need to be revisited in light of shifting national policy and budgetary priorities

8 Legal Services Comments

- 8.1 The corporate plan should be read in conjunction with the Oldham Plan. While both plans are aspirational documents, it is important that they are up to date, fit for purpose and align with each other. The Corporate plan has been created with the input of not only members and staff but also after engagement with partners and residents. The plan therefore helps give a voice to those residents in setting the strategic direction of the Council, which is an important function of a co-operative Council. *(Alex Bougatef – Interim Borough Solicitor)*

9 Co-operative Agenda

- 9.1 The Corporate Plan 2024-27 is designed to support the Co-operative agenda. This is achieved in through its alignment with the Oldham Plan: *Pride, Progress, Partnership*, enabling the Council to work with partners and residents to deliver a long-term vision.

11 Equality Impact – including implications for Children and Young People

- 11.1 N/A – The Corporate Plan aims to meet the needs of all Oldham's residents.

12 Key Decision

12.1 No

13 Key Decision Reference

13.1 None

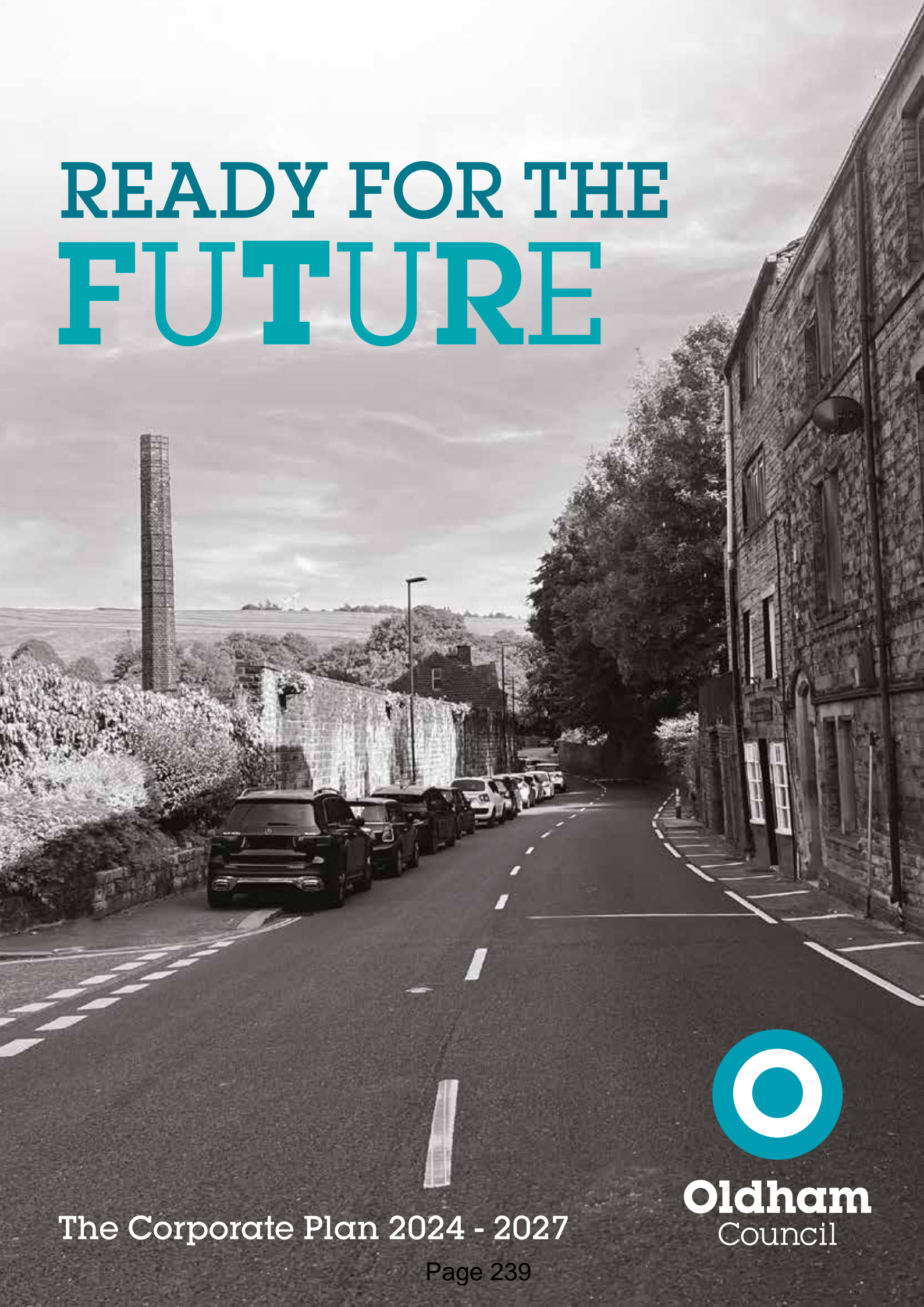
14 Background Papers

14.1 N/A

15 Appendices

15.1 Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan 2024-2027

READY FOR THE FUTURE



Oldham
Council

The Corporate Plan 2024 - 2027

Foreword from **Cllr. Arooj Shah,** Leader of Oldham Council

Oldham Council's job is simple: to deliver the services local people rely on, to stand up for our residents, and to ensure Oldham gets the investment, support and recognition it deserves.

Each of us at the council has our part to play to make that happen. It's a privilege to serve our communities, and something we should all take pride in. It also means we can be bold and ambitious, working together to make Oldham the best it can possibly be.

This plan is our roadmap to a better future, built on a firm belief that Oldham's potential can only be realised when we put the needs of our communities at the heart of everything we do.

For too long, councils have been forced to make difficult decisions in the face of huge cuts and soaring demand. But we will not allow Oldham to be left behind.

We are committed to investing in our people and places, creating new opportunities, and driving forward our vision for a growing, fairer economy. Our ambition is to build an Oldham that works for everyone – where our children can grow up safe and supported, where our businesses can thrive, and where no one is left to struggle.

We will not shy away from the challenges ahead. This means fighting for the resources we need, and holding to account those who make decisions that impact our residents' lives. We want Oldham to be a leader in local government, a place that grows in a way that reflect local people, and where every resident feels they have a stake in our future.

This plan outlines how we will work to turn our shared ambitions into reality. Together, we will make Oldham a place that is not just surviving, but thriving, with opportunities for all.

Thank you for standing with us on this journey. Together, we will make Oldham stronger, fairer, and ready for the future.



Foreword from Shelley Kipling, Acting Chief Executive

I am proud to introduce Ready for the Future - our new corporate plan. This is our roadmap for driving the change that will turn the ambitions of Oldham into reality.

Over the next three years, this plan will guide how we transform our services, lead by example, and put residents at the heart of everything we do. It reflects our commitment to delivering meaningful change across Oldham, ensuring that Oldham continues to thrive and grow.

Oldham is a place with enormous potential, and we are determined to unlock it. Through innovation, bold thinking, and cooperation, we are transforming the way we operate. We have already achieved so much, but this is just the beginning. The Corporate Plan will keep us focused on our core missions – Healthier, Happier Lives, Great Place to Live, and Green and Growing – helping us drive forward the ambitions set out in the Oldham Plan.

Our residents are at the heart of this journey. Every decision we make is about making life better for them – whether it’s creating jobs, building affordable homes, or supporting healthier lifestyles. We know that real progress starts with listening to our communities, working alongside them, and empowering them to shape their own future. This resident-focused approach is embedded deeply across our organisation, and it will continue to be the driving force behind everything we do.

That means we all have to take responsibility to make Oldham Council the best it can possibly be. Whether that is individually, collectively or corporately, we should live and breathe our values and behaviours.

We should be proud of how far we’ve come. We must be ambitious for the future. And we will only achieve more if we work together. To deliver that high performance and commitment to Oldham we must support our local leaders, have a razor-sharp focus on the needs of our residents, and take ownership and responsibility to drive change.

This plan is about making that happen.

Thank you to our dedicated staff, partners, and residents who have been instrumental in shaping this vision. Together, we are building a brighter, fairer future for Oldham, where opportunity is open to everyone, and no one is left behind.

I am excited for the journey ahead, and I am confident that by working together, we will make Oldham a place that we can all be proud of.



Introduction

Oldham is a borough with a rich heritage, resilient communities, and a diverse population. However, like many areas across the UK, we face complex challenges that require bold, innovative solutions. Our communities look to us to lead the way to create a brighter future for our borough and address issues such as economic pressures, social inequalities, and the impacts of climate change.

The local government landscape is evolving, with councils being asked to do more with less. Budget constraints, rising demand for services, and national policy changes mean that councils must be brave, resourceful, and forward-thinking. At Oldham Council, we are embracing these challenges, using them as a catalyst for transformation and innovation. We are committed to working cooperatively, listening to our residents, and placing their needs at the heart of everything we do.

Building on our successes

Over recent years, Oldham Council has made strong progress in delivering better outcomes for our residents and shaping a brighter future for the borough. Some of our many key achievements include:

Achieving the fastest improvement in Children's Services nationwide, now rated "Good" by Ofsted.

Securing the future of theatre in Oldham with a new co-operative vision for the historic Oldham Coliseum Theatre.

Setting up seven new Family Hubs, providing a range of support and advice in our communities.

Moving the Council into new, modern offices at Spindles, right in the heart of Oldham town centre, providing a welcome boost to local businesses.

Providing people in need valuable, community-based health and social support through social prescribing in partnership with the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, and Oldham GPs.

Raising educational standards, with more schools rated "Good" or "Outstanding" than ever before.

Increasing staff engagement and satisfaction across the Council.

Transforming the look of our town centre, improving our public spaces and completing the first part of a new park and public space at the heart of Oldham town centre.

Restoring the historic Royton Town Hall to its former glory and providing a new library and community hub for local people.

Bringing together social and private landlords, partners, and developers to tackle the housing crisis affecting Oldham residents.

Opening The Hive, a co-working and incubator space to support new businesses in Oldham.

Delivering "Places for Everyone" - our plan for new homes and businesses for Oldham.

Working with partners and communities to respond to and prevent disorder in the wake of riots that took place elsewhere in the country.

Celebrating 175 years of Oldham with events that honour our rich heritage.



Looking ahead

As we look to the future, the challenges may be significant, but so are the opportunities. This plan sets out how we will continue to build on these achievements, focusing on three missions:

Healthier, Happier Lives
Great Place to Live
Green and Growing

By driving innovation, investing in our people, and championing our communities, we will ensure that Oldham continues to be a place where everyone can live their best life.

Through strong leadership, a commitment to our values, and a focus on continuous improvement, we are ready to navigate the changing landscape of local government. Together, we will create a future where Oldham is known for its ambition, inclusivity, and strength.

Pride, Progress, **PARTNERSHIP.**

Being a mission-driven council

Our missions set a clear and bold direction for Oldham Council. They reflect our commitment to creating a better future for all who live, work, and invest in Oldham. They have partnership at their heart as we share them with **Pride, Progress, Partnership – the Oldham 2030 Plan**. They will guide our shorter-term actions, ensuring that every step we take drives meaningful change. At the same time, they provide us with a long-term vision and a clear definition of what success looks like for Oldham.



Healthier Happier Lives

In Oldham, every individual matters. We aim to build a community where everyone has access to the care, support, and opportunities they need to live a good life. We are committed to tackling poverty, improving health and wellbeing, providing high-quality social care, and promoting lifelong education.

Great Place to Live

We know Oldham is a place where people love to live, and we're committed to building on that pride by providing more affordable, quality homes, improving public spaces, and creating a strong local economy with vibrant communities that get on well.

Green and Growing

We will make Oldham a place where economic growth benefits all residents, creating opportunities for businesses to succeed while ensuring our community and environment thrive. By attracting new investment, supporting local businesses, and leading in green technologies, we will generate quality job opportunities and equip people with the skills they need to succeed.

Our missions lie at the heart of this plan, directing our actions and decisions over the next three years. Setting ambitious, long-term goals, ensures that our efforts remain focused and impactful, paving the way for a brighter future for Oldham.

Our values and behaviours: The foundation of our success

In an ever-changing environment, where strategies must remain flexible and responsive, our cooperative ambition drives us forward, guided by a core set of values and behaviours. These principles form the foundation of Oldham Council's approach, ensuring that we stay true to our core purpose and direction.

Our values – Proud, Ambitious, Together

– define who we are and how we operate. They shape our culture, inform our decisions, and inspire us to deliver on our commitments to the people of Oldham. They are the standards we hold ourselves to, day in and day out. Alongside these values, a set of key behaviours guides how we work, ensuring consistency and focus across all areas of the council.

Our values



Proud

We take pride not only in what we deliver for the residents of Oldham but also in how we deliver it.



Ambitious

We recognise the challenges we face and are committed to setting high aspirations to overcome them, with determination and focus.



Together

We believe in shared solutions, working across sectors and with our communities to achieve common goals and deliver the quality services Oldham deserves.



Our behaviours



Work with a resident focus

Our residents are at the centre of everything we do. We strive to listen, engage, and collaborate with our communities, ensuring that their needs and aspirations are reflected in our services. This resident-focused approach drives us to deliver effective, relevant, and accessible services.



Deliver high performance

Excellence is our standard. We are committed to delivering high-quality services and achieving the best possible outcomes for our residents. Through continuous improvement, clear targets, and a commitment to results, we ensure that we consistently perform at the highest level.



Support local leaders

We believe in empowering our leaders at every level to inspire, motivate, and drive change. By supporting and investing in local leadership, we ensure that our leaders are equipped to make decisions that benefit our communities, encouraging a culture of shared responsibility and growth.



Take ownership and drive change

We are proactive in our approach, taking ownership of challenges and leading the way in finding solutions. We have a culture of innovation and accountability and encourage our teams to seek out opportunities for improvement, driving meaningful change across the council.



Committed to the borough

We are committed to the success and wellbeing of our borough, its residents, and its businesses. Every decision we make and action we take is with the best interests of Oldham at heart, ensuring inclusive growth and development for years to come.

These values and behaviours are more than just words...

... they are the foundation of our organisation. As we navigate the challenges and opportunities of the future, they will continue to guide our actions, to ensure we remain true to our cooperative ambition and our mission to make Oldham a better place for everyone.

“Oldham is a place with enormous potential, and we are determined to unlock it. Through innovation, bold thinking, and cooperation, we are transforming the way we operate.”

Shelley Kipling,
Acting Chief Executive



Ready for the future: Our four pillars of change

To achieve our missions and deliver the best outcomes for the people of Oldham, we must create the right conditions for success. Our four pillars of change support the implementation of our strategy, driving our change and improvement programme forward. These tools and approaches ensure that we remain dynamic and responsive, even as we navigate the complex and evolving landscape of local government in the UK.

These pillars are crucial to the successful delivery of our Corporate Plan, helping us turn our ambitions into reality so that we can adapt, innovate, and lead the way in local government, despite the fiscal challenges



Efficiency and value for money

We're committed to ensuring the best use of our resources across the organisation. Through centralising our support functions, improving service delivery, and maximising our income, we aim to drive efficiency while maintaining good quality. Our workforce strategy promotes the development of our people, skills and a culture to deliver sustainability and value for money.

Capacity building

We will create resilient infrastructure that help to meets our current and future needs. By making sure we have enough residential placements and developing a range of accommodation solutions, we will provide fit-for-purpose and essential support for our communities. Our housing developments are designed to promote sustainability, foster growth, and ensure long-term stability throughout the borough.

Prevention and early help

We are proactive in reducing demand and need for our services with a focus on prevention and early help. Through place-based integration, collaborative working, and early intervention, we will provide support before crises develop. This helps manage demand effectively, with better outcomes for our residents and a more sustainable future for Oldham.

Digital

We will drive digital transformation to improve and enhance service delivery and organisational efficiency. By reviewing our systems, maximising use of our IT solutions, and adopting a data-led insights approach, we will make our services agile, responsive and effective. Greater use of automation, AI, and a focus on customer channel shift enables us to better meet the demand and evolving needs of our communities in a fast-changing digital landscape.

Delivering our missions

To achieve our ambitious vision for Oldham Council, our business planning process is strategically aligned with our missions: **Healthier, Happier Lives, Great Place to Live**, and **Green and Growing**. Each service area and programme within the council is structured to contribute directly to these missions, so that our resources, actions, and initiatives drive meaningful and sustainable change across the borough.

We'll produce an annual delivery plan and summary of performance over the previous year, highlighting the progress we're making towards our missions, aligned with our budget planning process.

By 2027, success will look like...

Healthier Happier Lives

Communities and families will feel more supported and empowered with services available in their communities through family hubs.

We will roll out more district working, bringing together support for our communities, in the community.

More Children and Young People will have a stable and safe home life where they can reach their full potential.

Oldham will have a world-class learning environment where all our schools, colleges and other learning centres provide good opportunities for Oldhamers to reach their full potential.

More Oldham people will actively engage in sports and physical activity.

More Oldhamers will be cared for in their homes and in their local neighbourhood, when they need it.



Great Place to Live

Green and Growing

The re-opened Oldham Coliseum at Fairbottom Street theatre will be an anchor for the arts, creating a new, more sustainable model for culture and theatre in Oldham.

A new events space, and new market as part of the Spindles redevelopment.

We will be on our way to delivering a new neighbourhood of 2,000 homes at the heart of Oldham town centre

We will invest in our green spaces by completing our brand-new town centre park.

There will be better housing across Oldham, with increased social and private rented sector housing standards for all Oldhamers.

Our neighbourhoods will be places where residents are proud to live, and work with us to keep them clean and green.

We will improve our parks and green spaces so they are accessible and vibrant outdoor environments for everyone to enjoy.

There will be more homes of a great standard, that are affordable for all local people.


We will attract new businesses and support existing ones to grow, creating more and better-quality jobs for local people.

We will be on our way to making Oldham a carbon-neutral borough by 2030.

We will open Oldham's new Eco Centre, a state-of-the-art hub for sustainability and innovation.

We will build on our reputation as a sector leader to maximise opportunities for green investment and jobs in the green economy.

A revitalised and vibrant night-time economy that caters for residents and visitors alike.



**“Together, we will
create a borough
where everyone
can thrive, and
no one is left
behind.”**

Councillor Arooj Shah,
Leader, Oldham Council

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Report to Council

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Abdul Jabbar MBE, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability

Officer Contact: *Sarah Johnston, Director of Finance*

Report Author: Julie Smethurst, Assistant Director of Finance (Revenues and Benefits)

Contact: julie.smethurst@oldham.gov.uk

06 November 2024

Reason for Decision

The purpose of this report is to present to Council the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2025/26.

Executive Summary

There is a legal requirement to have a local Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme to support residents of working age on a low income who qualify for assistance in paying Council Tax. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 requires that each year a billing authority must consider whether to revise its Council Tax Reduction scheme or to replace it with another scheme. Any change to the 2025/26 scheme must be agreed by full Council in line with budget setting arrangements and no later than 10 March 2025. Any proposed change must be subject to prior consultation with major preceptors (for Oldham this is the Greater Manchester Combined Authority on behalf of the Mayor of Greater Manchester and the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner) and with the public. The scheme for those of pensionable age is set by the Government and cannot be changed.

CTR is a demand led discount scheme so the greater the demand, the higher the impact on Council resources. If the number of CTR claimants increases, it impacts the amount of Council Tax that can be collected by reducing the Council's Council Tax Taxbase.

A major consultation exercise has not been undertaken regarding changes to the CTR scheme and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority has been provisionally advised that no change to the scheme is proposed. In this regard, the proposal is that the CTR scheme for 2025/26 remains the same as that operating in 2024/25 and, therefore, no consultation exercise is required. The current CTR scheme provides a maximum reduction equivalent to 85% of the Council Tax charge for a Band A property and this has been unchanged since 2014/15.

On 1 March 2023, Council agreed budget reduction proposals within the Revenues and Benefits department, which included a review of the administration of the CTR scheme to introduce efficiencies in operating arrangements, improving the service for CTR recipients and the Council. The proposal forecasted potential administrative savings of £45,000 in 2025/26.

The review found that due to the ongoing migration of residents from legacy welfare benefits to Universal Credit, the implementation of an income banded scheme would cause uncertainty for CTR claimants which were already impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. The recommendation not to change the scheme for 2024/25 was agreed by Council on 28 February 2024.

An assessment of the implementation costs of an income banded scheme has concluded that the cost to implement the scheme would exceed the proposed savings outlined of £45,000 for 2025/26.

There remains uncertainty around the extent that the transition of residents from legacy welfare benefits onto Universal Credit would have on a claimants' household income and how this would then impact on the cost of an income banded scheme if it were to be introduced in 2025/26. The Council cannot currently accurately determine the level of income those transitioning residents will ultimately receive, which will be critical for an appropriate scheme design.

In view of the continued uncertainty concerning Universal Credit and the marginal impact of any practical change to the CTR scheme at this stage, it is recommended that the Council maintains the current CTR scheme during 2025/26.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approves and commends to Council the proposal to keep the Council Tax Reduction Scheme unchanged in 2025/26.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26**1 Background**

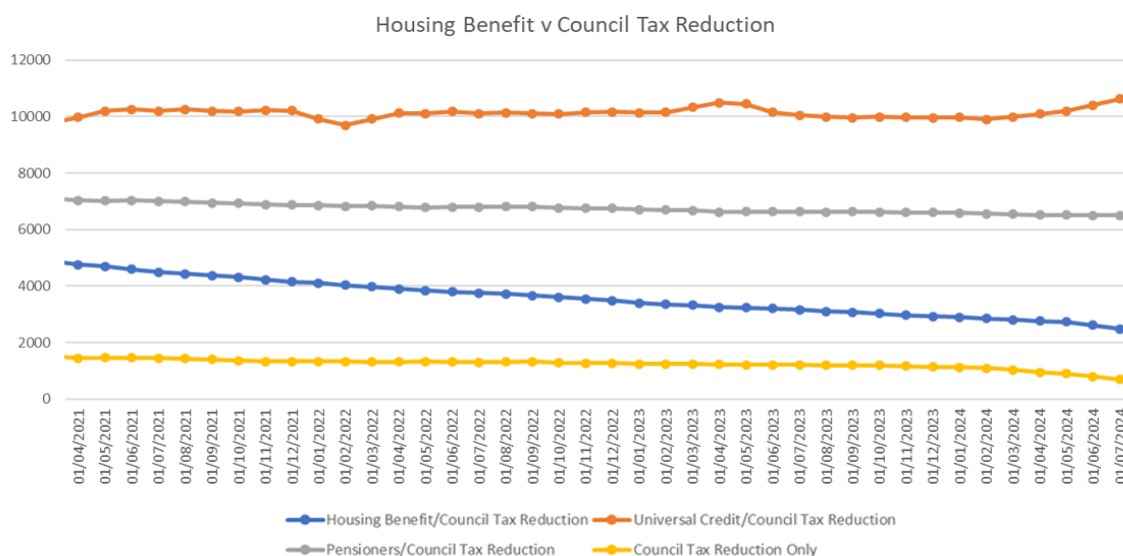
- 1.1 Prior to April 2013, Council Taxpayers who qualified for assistance could apply for Council Tax Benefit (CTB) to help pay their Council Tax. The CTB scheme was administered by Local Authorities on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and was assessed on a means tested basis. Under this national scheme, Council Taxpayers could receive benefit of up to 100% of their Council Tax liability. The Council then received full funding from the Government for all correct CTB awards made. Changes introduced by the Government abolished CTB from 1 April 2013 and made Local Authorities responsible for setting up their own local Council Tax Reduction schemes (CTR) for working age residents. The Government also reduced the amount of funding given to Councils to pay for the schemes in 2013/14 by 10%. The CTR scheme for pensioners is set by the Government and is not subject to the changes applied to those of working age. In devising new CTR schemes, many Local Authorities adopted schemes that replicated the old CTB schemes and then applied a minimum payment for working age customers to make up the funding difference.
- 1.2 Since 2014/15, the amount of grant received from Government to pay for CTR has been included within the general grant (Revenue Support Grant) that the Council receives and the amount to support CTR schemes is not specifically identified year on year. Whilst Revenue Support Grant (RSG) was initially reduced each year in line with Government policy and has more recently stabilised, since the introduction of the piloting of 100% Business Rates Retention by the Council and the subsuming of RSG into the Council's Business Rates Top Up Grant, the link between Central Government funding and Central Government support for CTR has been broken. The Council funds the cost of the CTR scheme through the Collection Fund i.e., the income collected from Council Tax and Business Rates.
- 1.3 The legislation confers an obligation on the Council to consider whether to review the CTR scheme on an annual basis. The scheme cannot be amended in-year and can only be changed following consultation with the public and the major preceptor, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) on behalf of the Mayor of Greater Manchester and the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 1.4 The CTR scheme for 2025/26 will require Council approval whether it is changed or not.
- 1.5 A change to the scheme for 2025/26 would require a consultation exercise and approval by full Council prior to the deadline for the setting of the Council's budget (which is no later than 10 March 2025). The last Council meeting before this date is 6 March 2025.
- 1.6 The evaluation of potential changes to the scheme for 2025/26 has factored in the operation and cost of the current scheme. In recommending potential options for 2025/26, consideration has also been given to the cost-of-living crisis, and the effects of the transition of residents to Universal Credit and its impact on those residents, the economy, and on Council resources and caseload. When considering the approach to the CTR scheme, over the past few years, the availability of additional Government resources has also been a factor. However, there is uncertainty over the continuation of Government funding streams into 2025/26 or if there will be some other national cost of living support, so this cannot be included in the context of the 2025/26 CTR scheme.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 The Council currently has a CTR scheme that awards a maximum payment of 85% of a Band A rate of Council Tax and has removed the provision to award second adult rebate for claimants of working age. From April 2019, the Council also introduced changes to support CTR claimants in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) including the application of some earnings disregards and the use of DWP information as a claim for CTR.
- 2.2 The Council has maintained the same maximum level of support for working age claimants at 85% since 2014/15. The minimum weekly payment has risen from £3.64 in 2019/20 to £4.46 in 2024/25, because of annual increases in Council Tax charges.
- 2.3 On 1 July 2024, there were 13,820 working age CTR claimants. Current projections for the annual collection rates for CTR cases due in 2024/25 suggest a collection rate of between 75-80%. Given the 5% collection rate range, this is potentially lower CTR collection rate to that recovered in 2023/24 (78.20%) and 2022/23 (79.51%), although an 80% collection rate would compare well to both years.
- 2.4 A reduced collection rate of 1.8% of CTR debt could result in a reduction of £99k in Council Tax receipts for 2024/25 and hence reduce the resources available to support the financial position of the Council in future years (it should be noted that changes in relation to Council Tax income impact one year in arrears given the accounting arrangements that must be applied).
- 2.5 The roll out of the full service of UC commenced in Oldham from April 2017. UC is a single monthly payment which replaces six working age benefits (known as legacy benefits). These are Housing Benefit (HB), Income Support (IS), Working Tax Credits (WTC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) (Income-related) and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) (Income-related). The roll out of UC follows a process of natural migration i.e., as a claimant experiences a relevant change of circumstances such as becoming fit for work, entitlement to legacy benefits ends and UC must be claimed instead. Oldham was an early adopter of UC full service and in February 2024 (the latest available figures), rollout was 81% complete in Oldham East and Saddleworth and 78% in Oldham West and Royton. The North West average is 76%.
- 2.6 From April 2023, the DWP reinstated the UC managed migration programme which was suspended during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic starting with all claimants in receipt of tax credits. Migration notices have been issued to claimants in Oldham since June 2023.
- 2.7 Throughout 2024/25, nationally, working age claimants with tax credits (including those in receipt of ESA, WTC and CTC), all cases on Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance (Income Based) and all Housing Benefit cases (including combinations of these benefits) will be required to move to Universal Credit.
- 2.8 In most cases, claimants in receipt of legacy welfare benefits receive a higher income than those residents in receipt of UC. This means that residents on legacy welfare benefits receive less support under the current CTR scheme. Moving to an income banded scheme in 2025/26 would adversely affect a significant number of legacy claimants who are yet to migrate to UC.
- 2.9 As of 1 July 2024, the overall CTR caseload was 20,320. The caseload for those of pensionable age remains relatively static but Table 1 below demonstrates how CTR claims from those who are in receipt of UC are increasing as other working age CTR cases are

reducing, for example, from those who are in receipt of HB. The management of UC/CTR creates an administrative burden for Local Authorities as data files are received each month confirming changes to entitlement however small.

Table 1: CTR Caseload Changes



- 2.10 The rapidly changing environment created by the cost-of-living crisis, and the transition of working age claimants from legacy benefits to UC has presented difficulties in accurately modelling financial impacts of both retaining the existing CTR scheme for 2025/26 or introducing a revised scheme.
- 2.11 However, work to look at the practical issues of changing the CTR scheme has been progressed. Options in relation to an income banded CTR scheme have been considered. An income banded scheme would mean that the level of CTR would be based on a claimant's weekly household income assessed against pre-determined income bands. This means if a claimant's household income varies but remains in the same band, the amount of support they get won't change. The amount of support only varies if their income changes and moves them into another income band.
- 2.12 The DWP has committed to completing the migration of all legacy welfare benefits by the end of 2025/26. This means that the Council would be able to predict the impact and cost of an income banded scheme more accurately for working age claimants for 2026/27.
- 2.13 The Council continues to make awards to residents who are experiencing severe financial hardship under the Exceptional Hardship Payments (EHP) scheme and resource is available to support those who have difficulty in paying Council Tax.

3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 Given the financial position of the Authority and the uncertainty prevailing, there are 2 options presented for consideration. These are:

Option 1: Maintaining the present level of support i.e., limiting the level of support at 85% of Council Tax for a Band A property as the maximum amount available.

Option 2: Introduce income banded scheme.

The key issues in relation to each of these options are set out below.

Option 1 Maintain the Current 85% of a Band A maximum scheme.

- 3.2 The current scheme limits the maximum CTR award to 85% of Council Tax for a Band A property. The scheme is understood and established in Oldham. This scheme requires a minimum payment towards Council Tax for all those of working age. Oldham's scheme requires a minimum payment of 15% of a Band A Council Tax charge which is set out in the table below. The payments made by eligible households in properties from Bands B to H are therefore reduced by a maximum of £1,317.70 (the difference between the Band A charge and the minimum payment).
- 3.3 An overall CTR collection rate of 80% would deliver the income needed to meet the Council Tax requirements for 2025/26 if the current scheme remained in place. A comparison of the maximum levels of support for 2024/25 for Local Authorities is set out below although there are differences in eligibility criteria between Councils which is not evident from the headline numbers.

Table 3: Greater Manchester Local Authority Council Tax Reduction Charges 2024/25

Local Authority	Council Tax Band A 2024/25	Maximum Support %	Annual Charge At Band A	Monthly (12 Months)	Monthly (10 Months)	Minimum Weekly Payment if in receipt of Full CTR
Bolton	£1,427.38	82.50%	£249.79	£20.82	£24.98	£4.79
Bury	£1,525.86	80%	£305.17	£25.43	£30.52	£5.85
Manchester	£1,378.82	85.00%	£206.82	£17.24	£20.68	£3.97
Oldham	£1,550.24	85%	£232.54	£19.38	£23.25	£4.46
Rochdale	£1,553.49	85%	£233.02	£19.42	£23.30	£4.47
Salford	£1,549.63	88%	£185.96	£15.50	£18.60	£3.57
Stockport	£1,564.42	100%	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Tameside	£1,460.23	75%	£365.06	£30.42	£36.51	£7.00
Trafford	£1,313.90	100%	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Wigan*	£1,281.75	80%	£256.35	£21.36	£25.64	£4.92

*except for households with Children under 5

- 3.4 CTR is a demand led scheme so costs can fluctuate as the caseload changes. The Council saw an increase in the working age caseload during the COVID crisis as more residents claimed UC and this saw a reduction in the Council Tax Taxbase and a reduction in income that could be collected. The caseload is expected to fluctuate further as a result of residents transitioning to UC.

Option 2 – Introduce an Income Banded Scheme

- 3.5 The Council considered an income banded model for the 2024/25 Council Tax reduction scheme with the aim of maintaining the cost of award levels of the current scheme but reducing the administration costs.
- 3.6 This scheme would have introduced the following Council Tax reduction awards.

Income Thresholds

Band	Discount	Single	Couple	1 child addition	2 child addition
1	85%	0-90	0-220	100	200
2	75%	90-120	220-260	100	200
3	65%	120-170	260-340	100	200
4	45%	170-220	340-390	100	200
5	30%	220-270	390-440	100	200
6	20%	270-340	440-490	100	200

- 3.7 It was determined that the scheme would disproportionately affect those households with children. This needs further analysis, but it is believed that households with children are more likely to have adults in paid employment.
- 3.8 The cost of the scheme would incrementally increase as households transfer to UC throughout 2024/25. An analysis undertaken suggests that had the scheme been introduced in 2024/25 the cost of the scheme would have been £22.4m. An increase of £670k from maintaining the current scheme.
- 3.9 To meet the aim of reducing administration costs the model would require aligning with the DWP concept of the minimum income floor (MIF). The MIF is an earnings threshold that applies to some self-employed claimants. If their actual declared self-employed earnings are below the MIF, they will be treated as having earnings at the level of the MIF instead. To calculate a claimants MIF, the DWP multiplies the claimants expected minimum wage for their age group by the number of hours they are expected to work. This is multiplied by 52, and then divided by 12 to provide a monthly figure.
- 3.10 Several local authorities have adopted a MIF approach for self-employed claimants within their CTR schemes. Under those schemes any applicant commencing in self-employment would be allowed to declare zero income for the first year from the date of start up on the new business. Thereafter, the scheme would assume that income generated from the business would be at least the National Minimum/Living wage x 35 hours per week.
- 3.11 If the Council introduced a MIF approach, there would be a significant reduction in the administrative burden of administering self-employed CTR claims, as the service would not need to request evidence from self-employed claimants who declare their earnings to below the MIF. However self-employed claimants earning less than the MIF would see a reduction in the CTR entitlement.
- 3.12 An assessment of the implementation costs of an income banded scheme has concluded that the cost to implement the scheme would exceed the proposed budget reduction proposals outlined of £45,000 for 2025/26.

4 Preferred Option

- 4.1 The preferred option is Option 1 – to retain the current 85% scheme in 2025/26.
- 4.2 The delayed migration of claimants from legacy welfare benefits to UC has resulted in differences in calculation methods to determine income for CTR. This means two claimants with a similar household composition, and income could receive varying levels of CTR dependent on whether they have migrated or waiting to migrate.
- 4.3 In most cases, claimants in receipt of legacy welfare benefits receive a higher income than those residents in receipt of UC. This means that residents on legacy welfare benefits receive

less support under the current CTR scheme. Moving to an income banded scheme in 2025/26 would adversely affect a significant number of legacy claimants who are yet to migrate to UC.

- 4.4 Moving to an income banded scheme in 2025/26 will adversely affect a significant number of legacy claimants who migrate to UC during the year. They would see a decrease in the level of CTR they would receive and consequently an increased Council Tax bill. Retaining the 85% scheme in 2025/26 would provide some certainty for residents subject to UC migration.
- 4.5 The Council would be required to allocate additional funding to implement an income banded scheme which would negate any potential admin savings.
- 4.6 Members will be aware that discretionary funding is available to support those residents in most need. A discretionary Exceptional Hardship discount can be awarded under Section 13a(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended).

5 Consultation

- 5.1 Any changes to the 2025/26 scheme require prior consultation with the major preceptor, the GMCA, with regard to the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner precept and Mayoral General Services precept including Fire Services. There would also be a requirement to carry out a public consultation.
- 5.2 No public consultation has been launched and should Council not accept the recommended approach and consider a change to the 2025/26 scheme was appropriate, then the timeline for such a consultation exercise would be extremely limited. The Council has provisionally notified GMCA of its intention not to amend the CTR scheme in 2025/26.
- 5.3 There is no requirement to undertake public consultation if the scheme is left unchanged.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The direct grant paid by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for Council Tax Reduction Support has now been subsumed within the Council's Settlement Funding Assessment and Revenue Support Grant (RSG) figure which has itself been incorporated within Business Rate Top Up grant under the piloting of 100% Business Rate Retention. The link between CTR arrangements and grant compensation is no longer evident, given the reduction in the level of grant funding from 2010 until 2019/20 (pre-pandemic).
- 6.2 It is envisaged that the Council will continue to collect an amount of approximately 75%-80% of the amount due in 2024/25. Weekly monitoring of the collection rate is being maintained to manage the risk of non-collection. One perceived risk at this stage is that the present collection rate will reduce throughout the remainder of the financial year and beyond due to the ongoing cost of living crisis. The amount of disposable income many of the scheme's claimants will have available to meet Council Tax and other financial commitments is likely to reduce. This would have the impact of increasing the risk of arrears from those who are currently paying their Council Tax.
- 6.3 As of 1 July 2024, the overall CTR caseload was 20,320 of which there were 13,820 working age CTR claimants. The caseload for those of pensionable age remains relatively static.
- 6.4 An overall CTR collection rate of 80% would deliver the income needed to meet the Council Tax requirements for 2025/26 if the current scheme remained in place.

-
- 6.5 On 1 March 2023, Council agreed budget reduction proposals within the Revenues and Benefits department, which included a review of the administration of the CTR scheme to introduce efficiencies in operating arrangements, improving the service for CTR recipients and the Council. The proposal forecasted potential administrative savings of £45,000 in 2025/26.
- 6.6 The Council considered an income banded model for the 2024/25 Council Tax reduction scheme (options 2) with the aim of maintaining the cost of award levels of the current scheme but reducing the administration costs.
- 6.7 It was determined that the scheme would disproportionately affect those households with children. This needs further analysis, but it is believed that households with children are more likely to have adults in paid employment.
- 6.8 The cost of the scheme would incrementally increase as households transfer to UC throughout 2024/25. An analysis undertaken suggests that had the scheme been introduced in 2024/25 the cost of the scheme would have been £22.4m, an increase of £670k from maintaining the current scheme.
- 6.9 An assessment of the implementation costs of an income banded scheme has concluded that the cost to implement the scheme would exceed the proposed budget reduction proposals outlined of £45,000 for 2025/26.
- 6.10 Given all the information presented above, adopting the recommended approach, the maintenance of an unchanged CTR scheme, can be managed within the context of the current financial position of the Council and is in line with current budget estimates. (Matthew Kearns – Finance Manager)

7 Legal Services Comments

- 7.1 The legislation states that each year an authority must consider whether to revise its Council Tax Reduction scheme.
- 7.2 The revision of a scheme is a decision that the legislation reserves to full Council. Any revision to apply to the scheme for the following year must be made no later than 10 March of the preceding financial year.
- 7.3 No revision of a scheme can occur unless the authority has, in the following order:
1. Consulted with the major precepting authority – The Greater Manchester Combined Authority for Police and Fire services
 2. Published a draft proposed scheme
 3. Consulted with others likely to have an interest in the scheme.
- 7.4 In order to discharge its duties under the Equality Act 2010, the authority will need to consider the effects of proposals on people with a protected characteristic as defined by the Act, which can be done by way of an equality impact assessment as happened before the present scheme was made.
- 7.5 In this circumstance, vulnerable residents and residents generally will benefit from the option proposed i.e. no change. It would therefore be unlikely that any legal challenge would ensue from this action. (Alex Bougatef – Interim Assistant Director Legal Services)

8. Co-operative Implications

-
- 8.1 The approval of support for residents who are of working age and on low incomes is consistent with and embraces the principles of the co-operative agenda.

9 Human Resources Comments

- 9.1 None

10 Risk Assessments

- 10.1 The proposed recommendation option is in line with the decision reached in previous years to keep the scheme at the same level of deduction. As per previous years there are several risks that continue to be managed during this process

- Ensuring the scheme is not subject to a legal challenge on the basis of equality legislation although as the proposal is for an unchanged scheme, this risk is considered to be extremely low;
- Ensuring that a scheme is both fair and affordable to the Council in 2025/26 particularly as it will only be based on collection rates information from part of the financial year;
- There continues to be a challenging financial environment facing both the Council and Council Taxpayers, however, the agreement of the CTR scheme for 2025/26 establishes one key element of the Councils financial strategy and an unchanged scheme provides certainty for recipients of CTR.

Vicki Gallacher (Head of Insurance and Information Governance)

11 IT Implications

- 11.1 There are no IT implications.

12 Property Implications

- 12.1 There are no property implications.

13 Procurement Implications

- 13.1 There are no Procurement implications.

14 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

- 14.1 There are no Environmental and health and Safety Implications

15 Community cohesion disorder implications in accordance with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

- 15.1 In taking financial decisions, the Council must demonstrate that it has given 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between different groups.

- 15.2 Demonstrating that 'due regard' has been given involves:

- Assessing the potential equality impacts of proposed decisions at an appropriate stage in the decision-making process so that it informs the development of policy and is considered before a decision is taken
- Ensuring that decision makers are aware of equality duties and any potential equality issues when making decisions.

N.B. Having due regard does not mean the Council cannot make decisions which have the potential to impact disproportionately. It means that we must be clear where this is the case and must be able to demonstrate that we have consulted, understood and mitigated the impact.

15.3 To ensure that the process of impact assessment is robust, it needs to:

- Be specific to each individual proposal
- Be clear about the purpose of the proposal
- Consider available evidence
- Include consultation and involvement with those affected by the decision, where appropriate
- Consider proposals for mitigating any negative impact on particular groups
- Set out arrangements for monitoring the actual impact of the proposal

15.4 As with previous Council Tax Reduction Schemes from 2013, an Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared to try to identify any potential disproportionate adverse impact arising from the proposed scheme and to identify any actions which might mitigate these impacts.

16 **Oldham Impact Assessment Completed (Including impact on Children and Young People)**

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

17 **Key Decision**

17.1 Yes

18 **Key Decision Reference**

18.1 FCR-12-24

19 **Background Papers**

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

File Ref:	Background papers are included at Appendix 1
Officer Name:	Adam Parsey – Exchequer Client Manager
Contact:	adam.parsey@oldham.gov.uk

20 **Appendices**

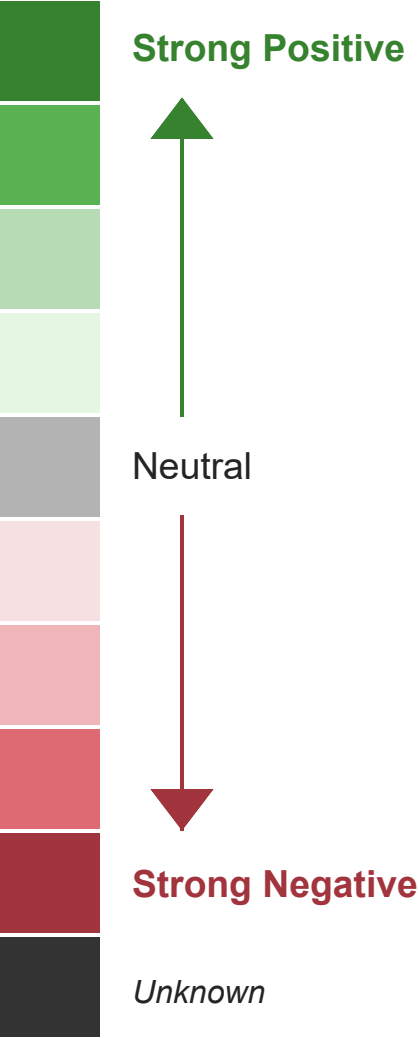
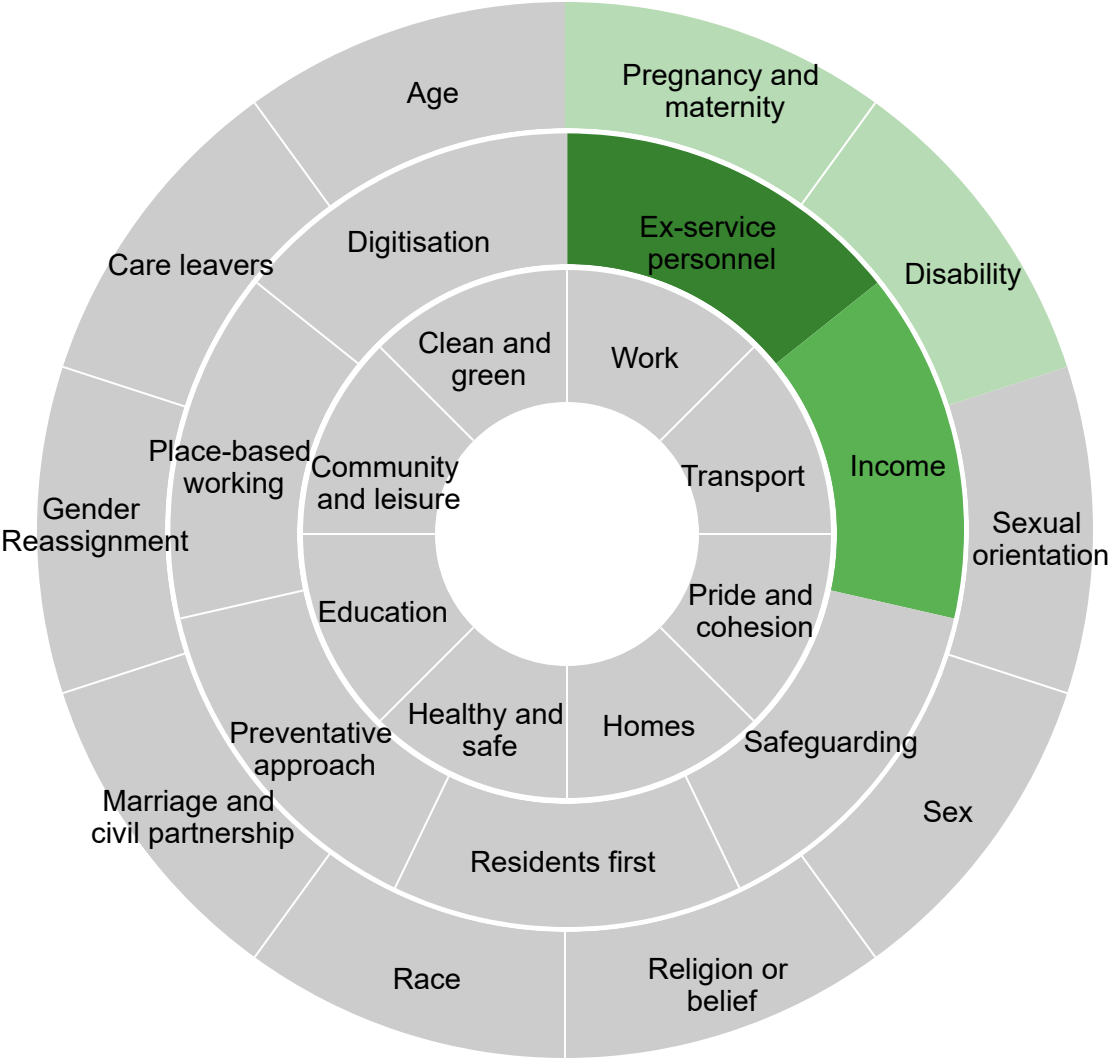
20.1 Appendix 1 – Oldham Equality Impact Assessment

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Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025-26

completed/last updated by Adam Parsey on 11/07/2024

Portfolio	
Finance and Low Carbon	
Directorate	
Finance	
Service/Team	
Finance	
Is this IA related to a Budget Reduction proposal?	<input type="button" value="No"/>



Equality Characteristics

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

Corporate Priorities

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

Future Oldham Aims

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	Comment
Clean and green	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Community and leisure	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Education	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Healthy and safe	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Homes	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Pride and cohesion	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Transport	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	
Work	Neutral	Very Likely	Short Term	0	

Negative Impacts

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	What action can be taken to mitigate the potential negative impacts?	Action(s)	Owner(s)	Timescale(s)	If the negative impacts can't be mitigated, why should the project/decision proceed?
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Strong Positive Impacts that are Possible

Category	Impact	Likely	Duration	Impact Score	What action can be taken to increase the likelihood that positive impacts are realised?	Action(s)	Owner(s)	Timescale(s)
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Report to Council

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24

Report of:

Cllr Colin McLaren, Chair of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board and the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board, 2023/24

Cllr Eddie Moores, Chair of the Adults, Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board 2023/24

Officer Contact: Shelley Kipling, Assistant Chief Executive/Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Report Author: Peter Thompson, Constitutional Services

6th November 2024

Reason for Decision

To provide Council with the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report for the 2023/24 Municipal Year as require by the Council's Constitution at Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 4.1.

Executive Summary

The report outlines the statutory role of overview and scrutiny; the roles and responsibilities of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board, Adults, Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board in 2023/24; and a summary of the considerations and work undertaken by the three bodies during 2023/24.

Recommendations

Council is asked to note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2023/24.

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24**1. What is Overview and Scrutiny?**

- 1.1 All local authorities with an executive model of governance established under the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) are required to have at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 required local authorities to establish or designate a 'crime and disorder overview and scrutiny committee', while health scrutiny functions were introduced in 2002 and most recently defined by the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013.
- 1.2 Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution, reflecting both the statutory requirements for, and the Council's approach to, overview and scrutiny describes the general role and function of overview and scrutiny as being to -
- a) play a positive role in assisting the Council and the Executive in the development of the policy framework and the budget by in depth analysis of issues arising;
 - b) conduct research and consultation in the analysis of policy options;
 - c) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options and in the scrutiny process in general;
 - d) question members of the Executive and appropriate Committees and senior Officers about issues and proposals affecting Oldham;
 - e) monitor the performance of partners and of internal and external service providers against standards and objectives, liaising with external and partnership organisations to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working;
 - f) evaluate the validity of executive decisions through the call in process;
 - g) contribute to the identification and mitigation of risk;
 - h) examine and review the performance of Committees of the Council over time;
 - i) play a positive role in examining and reviewing the performance of the Executive in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas, investigating and addressing the causes of poor performance;
 - j) question members of the Executive and of Committees and senior Officers about their decisions and performance, in comparison with service plans and targets, or particular initiatives or projects;
 - k) make recommendations to the Council, the Executive or an appropriate Committee arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process; and
 - l) demonstrate an objective and evidence based approach to scrutiny.
- 1.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committees are established and appointed to by the full Council and are made up of elected Members who are not members of the Executive (i.e. the Cabinet). While the Committees are required to be politically balanced by law, guidance dictates that the overview and scrutiny function should be approached in a non-political manner.

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- 1.4 To deliver the expectations of the Council as to the specified roles and responsibilities, the Overview and Scrutiny bodies operate within a framework defined by the Council's Procedure Rules as set out at Part 4 of the Council's Constitution. The principal sections of Part 4 as they apply to the Overview and Scrutiny function are –
- 1.4.1 Part 4B: Access to Information Procedure Rules – sets out the procedural arrangements for the granting of exclusion from call-in and the consideration of executive business at less than 28 days' notice, the occasions when Overview and Scrutiny can require reports, and the right of access to information by Overview and Scrutiny bodies;
 - 1.4.2 Part 4C: Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules – sets out the procedures to be followed in the consideration of Budget and Policy Framework related business and its passage through the executive and Overview and Scrutiny prior to submission to Council, and for the consideration of business identified as being outside of the Budget and Policy Framework;
 - 1.4.3 Part 4D: Executive Procedure Rules – sets out procedures to ensure consideration of reports submitted by the Overview and Scrutiny bodies to the Executive; and
 - 1.4.4 Part 4E: Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules - sets out the requirements for work programming and annual reports, the ability to establish Task and Finish Groups and other arrangements for consideration of business, for the preparation and submission of reports by overview and scrutiny bodies, the attendance of others at meetings, the 'call-in' process, declarations of interest and the 'party whip', and procedural arrangements within the Overview and Scrutiny function itself.

2. Overview and Scrutiny in 2023/24

- 2.1 The overview and scrutiny function in Oldham during 2023/24 was delivered by four Scrutiny Boards –
- the Governance Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board
 - the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board
 - the Adults, Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board; and
 - the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board.
- 2.2 The work and contributions of each Scrutiny Board to the business of the Council is considered in turn below.

3 Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board 2023/24

3.1 Membership

Councillor McLaren (Chair), Councillor Moores (Vice Chair), Councillors Al-Hamdani, Hince, Hobin, Junaid Hussain, Surjan and Woodvine.

Substitute Members - Councillors Ibrahim, Iqbal and Sykes.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board Governance, Strategy and Resources Board role includes the scrutiny of key policy items, the annual budget proposals, proposals with significant service and or budgetary implications, risk and performance. The Board will also scrutinise proposals being developed at Greater Manchester level and by the Council's strategic partners, considering the implications for the Borough and for the Council.

The Board will also monitor and hold to account the performance of service delivery within Oldham Council and of strategic partners etc with reference to the Corporate Plan and all other strategic plans and monitor organisational risk.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board considered the following Key issues, policies and strategies during 2023/24: –

- a) Absence Trends across the Authority – the Board received a presentation which gave details on Workforce Absence Trends across Oldham Council. Members were informed that that sickness trends were largely back to pre-Covid-19 pandemic levels; the reasons for short term and long term remained similar as it has been previously, a greater complexity of sickness absence were being presented that required more specialised skills to support and manage cases and the number of staff in the workplace with at least one long term condition was increasing.
- b) The Board scrutinised four quarterly reports which presented a review of the Council performance during the fourth quarter of 2022/23 (1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023) and the first three quarters of 2023/24 (1st April to 31st December). Scrutiny Board members were invited to examine areas on under performance and where appropriate recommend remedial action. Members were invited to note areas of good and outstanding performance.
- c) The Board scrutinised a report which provided members with an update regarding the Council's performance in relation to enquiries received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) in the financial year 2022/23.
- d) The Scrutiny Board received a series of reports throughout 2023/24 on the Revenue Monitor and Capital Investment Programme. The reports provided members the opportunity to review the budget monitoring process for the financial year 2023/24. Members were therefore able to consider the key information relating to the forecast revenue budget position and the financial position of the Council's capital programme.
- e) The Board received an update from the Managing Director of MioCare Group, detailing the financial performance of MioCare Group. The 2023/24 performance was delivered in line with budget and the report also provided a strategic context for the current and future operating environment and the various considerations for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 budgets.
- f) The Board received an annual report that highlighted the potential risks to the Council from poor supervision of companies/ partnerships of which it has ownership and how governance oversight, in the past, had failed to identify this risk resulting in significant financial loss. The Board scrutinized the potential risks to the Council from the

-
- partnerships in which it has an interest for its consideration and recommended, where appropriate, appropriate remedial action.
- g) At separate meetings in January and February 2024 the Board scrutinised the Administrations' budget proposals for 2024/25 and the main Opposition Group's alternate suggestions. The Scrutiny Board's various recommendations thereon were subsequently presented to and considered by the Cabinet, prior to Cabinet making a recommendation to Council on the 2024/25 budget.
 - h) A report was presented to the Board which provided an update on the Oldham Poverty Truth Commission (PTC), which had been completed at the end of 2022. The PTC, was a national model developed by the Poverty Truth Network, aiming to address poverty by fostering direct experience, relationships, and humanizing individuals and systems. The Oldham PTC brought together individuals with lived experience of poverty and those with power and influence across various sectors. It aimed to understand the causes and challenges of poverty and identify ways to address them. The commission was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Oldham Council, and Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group.
 - i) Green New Deal Strategy – The Board were provided with an update on the Strategy that had previously been adopted in 2020 and further updated on the Oldham Community Network and Generation Oldham.
 - j) Statement of Community Involvement – The Board were consulted on the update to the Statement of Community Involvement which identifies the community involvement in the preparation and revision of the Local Plan and in the consideration of planning applications.

4. Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board

4.1 Membership

Councillor McLaren (Chair), Moores (Vice Chair), Councillors Ghafoor, Hindle, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Sheldon and Williamson.

Substitute members - Councillors Junaid Hussain, Kenyon and Surjan.

- 4.2 The Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board Overview and Scrutiny Board will look at how the Council fulfils three of its strategic priorities and is also responsible for reviewing and scrutinising the exercise by risk management authorities of flood risk management functions which may affect the Borough of Oldham and to exercise the functions of a crime and disorder committee including a review of the exercise of crime and disorder functions by responsible authorities and to review or scrutinise any local crime or disorder matter raised by a Member.

- 4.3 The Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board considered the following key issues during 2023/24: -

- a. The Scrutiny Board received a report, which advised Members that the Council had been successful in obtaining capital grant funding

from three sources administered by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

- b. The Scrutiny Board considered a report, which advised members that advance notification had been received from the Department of Levelling up, Housing, Communities and Local Government (DLUHC) that Oldham Council's Chief Executive was due to be contacted to ask that the Council participate in a deep dive around its temporary accommodation (TA) use. The context for this contact and the deep dive had been prompted by concern about the particularly acute pressures on the TA market at present, and the increase in poor quality, poor value-for-money accommodation types; including Bed and Breakfast and 'nightly paid' TA.
- c. The Scrutiny Panel received a report/presentation, that reminded members that Oldham Council had declared a climate emergency in September 2019 and had committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2025, with boroughwide carbon neutrality by 2030. The council was presently working towards its declared targets as part of the Green New Deal, and this approach ties in with that of Greater Manchester Combined Authority's 5 Year Environmental Plan. The GMCA plan had six main strands; in Oldham; three of the strands were covered as part of the Green New Deal and, the other three stands, were to be covered through the Environment Strategy, namely: Climate Adaptation and Resilience, Production and Consumption of Resources and The Natural Environment.
- d. The Scrutiny Board received a report of the Director of Environment which informed members of the opportunities and current/future challenges that exist within the cemetery service. The report outlined the current approach to addressing these challenges, as well as the plans being devised while continuing to provide a high level of service to residents during, what is often, a stressful and difficult time in their lives.
The report outlined the Service's approach towards ensuring the following: Future burial capacity that meets all residents needs; Ensuring a consistent approach to memorials and headstones at all graveyards; Tackling the risk of flooding at cemeteries; Ensuring the service meets the needs of all the residents in terms of access/out of hours burials; Ensuring that upgrades of cremators were made in a timely manner for continued compliance with legal requirements.
- e. The Scrutiny Board received a report that provided members with an update on the progress of Places for Everyone Plan: A Joint Development Plan Document for nine Greater Manchester Local Authorities (Places for Everyone Plan) and which sought approval for proposed modifications to the plan. The report provided an update on the Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan and its independent examination.
- f. The Scrutiny Board considered a report, that provided an overview of the work areas of the Strategic Transport Team, including how these fit into the Greater Manchester (GM) picture and progress and delivery against Oldham's Transport Strategy aims. Areas to be covered included:
 - GM Local Transport Plan (LTP)

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- The Bee Network
 - Bus Franchising
 - Oldham Transport Strategy – Progress & Delivery
 - Schools Active Travel Infrastructure Audit
 - Creating a Better Place
 - Oldham Bee Network Committee
- g. The Scrutiny Board was provided with an overview of the Council's Emergency Plan. Feedback and comments on the report were welcomed in addition to advice on how to raise both engagement with members and awareness of Emergency Plan Training, that was scheduled to be held in January 2024.
- h. The Scrutiny Board received a report, which sought permission to approve the publication and consultation of the draft version of a new Local Plan for Oldham. Once adopted, a Local Plan would replace the current Local Plan (the Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD) which was adopted in November 2011 and any saved older planning policies from the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006.
- i. The Scrutiny Board received a report that reviewed progress of the 'Don't Trash Oldham' initiative and which detailed the outcomes and achievements over the previous twelve month period; it examined the lessons learned (what has worked and what could be improved) and proposed some new measures/targeted interventions for the future which aimed to strike a balance between new ways of working whilst addressing the ongoing environmental challenges faced by the residents of Oldham and the Council's approach in tackling such challenges.
- j. The Board received a detailed report/ presentation regarding the Oldham Green New Deal. It was noted that Oldham Council was working towards 2025 and 2030 carbon neutrality targets, with the 2022/23 Council's carbon footprint being at 6,379 tCO₂e, a decrease by 25% on the 2018/19 baseline. Oldham Borough had emissions at 841.5 ktCO₂e and per capita emissions were at 3.5 tCO₂e. Emissions had rose by 10% in the borough in 2021, with this being suggested because of covid-19 lockdowns. The Scrutiny Board noted that the Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership had been working on new initiatives for the last few years and was now moving to the implementation phase. The Council had secured 1.5 million from the DESNZ local Net Zero Accelerator Program via the GMCA to fund the implementation and expansion of the community led energy planning approach developed by Carbon Co-op.
- k. The Scrutiny Board received a detailed report/presentation that provided an update on the progress of phase 1 of the Selective Licensing Scheme, which had commenced in specific neighbourhoods of the Borough from 4th July 2022. In addition, it was outlined that the statutory consultation timescales and process prior to consideration of Phase 2 of the scheme. The Board was informed that the monitoring of this issue was important for the standard of housing in Oldham, with this being a potential local solution to a national crisis.
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- l. The Director of Environment submitted to the Scrutiny Board a report and gave a presentation updating Members on the status of the private hire and hackney carriage trade in Oldham. The Presentation provided an overview of the licensing policy, highlighting Oldham Council's proactive collaboration with authorities across Greater Manchester to establish and uphold minimum standards. Notable among recent changes, approved in June 2023, were amendments aimed at reducing regulatory burdens while upholding paramount concerns for public safety and maintaining high industry standards. These changes included the removal of the lower age limit for vehicles entering the taxi fleet, replacing front license plates with more practical window discs, and updating operator door signs to reflect licensing-issued signage. Such adjustments were designed to streamline processes without compromising the integrity of safety measures.
 - m. The Director of Economy submitted a report and gave a presentation which provided an update on the Creating a Better Place (CaBP) programme. Oldham's commitment to fostering a sense of belonging, safety, and pride was underscored, alongside efforts to bolster the local economy through social enterprise, business support, and employment opportunities. The CaBP programme was highlighted as instrumental in securing substantial external funding for regeneration projects, notably through partnerships such as with MUSE to develop up to 2,000 new homes in strategic locations within Oldham Town Centre. The CaBP programme had continued to make strides in regeneration efforts, delivering significant revenue savings and securing external funding exceeding £70 million. Progress includes initiatives like the Green New Deal, Broadway Green development, and housing targets achievement. Social value remains a priority, with contractual commitments ensuring community benefits such as apprenticeships and job creation.

5. Children's and Young People Scrutiny Board

5.1 Membership

Councillor Moores (Chair), McLaren (Vice Chair), Councillors Adams, Bishop Holly Harrison, Hurley, Rea and Shuttleworth.

Substitute members - Councillors Cosgrove, Jenny Harrison and Williamson.

- 5.2 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Board will examine how the Council fulfils its strategic priority of A great start and skills for life. This strategic outcome aims to:
- a. Increase the number of quality school and college places for Oldham's young people,
 - b. Expand youth activities outside of school,
 - c. Improve post-16 education and training, so everyone has options to help them increase their skills and knowledge.

Areas covered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board in scrutinising how the Council meets this strategic outcome include:

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- Educational achievement
 - School performance
 - Healthy lifestyles
 - Youth service
 - Looked after children.
 - Early Help
 - Children's Social Care
 - Child Protection
 - School Attendance and Exclusions
 - School leavers' progression to further education and training
 - Healthy schools
 - Take-up of sporting and cultural opportunities
 - Increased involvement of young people in developing services
 - Education, employment and training for care leavers
 - Children's Centres
 - Young people's fear of crime
 - Youth Offending
 - Freedom from poverty
 - Youth Justice Plan
 - Children's and Young People Strategic Plan
 - Higher Education provision including Oldham College and UCO

5.3 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Board considered the following key issues during 2023/24: -

- a. The Scrutiny Board considered from School Support Services which provided a briefing and update to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Board on the (1) delivery of school places and (2) school place preference rates within the Local Authority (LA.). The report also provided an update on the delivery of additional school places and the work of the Council's Education Support Services including:
 - Allocation of school places by ward
 - The percentage of residents who are offered a school place of choice (1st or top 3 preferences)
 - Overview of the current demand for school places
- b. The Board received presentations regarding Family Hubs (Single Access Points for Families) and the Children's Transformation Programme, both of which were long-term ongoing issues for Children's Social Care Services.
- c. The Scrutiny Board received the annual report of the Cross-Party Steering Group on Child Sexual Exploitation, which had been produced as a record of the progress and impact of the Cross-Party Steering Group on Child Sexual Exploitation during its first year in existence (2022/23). The Scrutiny Board was advised on first meeting of the group was on 23rd November 2022 and the group had held further meetings in February, June and October 2023. Oldham Council had previously made a commitment to establishing a cross-party Steering Group at a meeting of Full Council in September 2022 which followed on from the conclusion of the Independent Review into historic safeguarding practices in Oldham, the findings of which have been fully accepted by the Council. The review focused on multi-agency responses to allegations child

sexual exploitation in the borough during the period 2011 - 2014. The Board was advised that in response to the publication of the review the Council had produced a Plan on a Page aimed at supporting survivors of child sexual exploitation and tackling perpetrators of abuse. The Board also received an update from GMP officers regarding Operation Sherwood.

- d. The Board received a report that analysed the performance of the Borough's primary and secondary schools, which showed that Key Stage (KS) outcomes for 2023 for Oldham school standards were recovering from the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in primary and are improved since the last comparable results in secondary. Most gaps to national averages are narrowing and benchmarked performance shows consequent improvement. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils continues to be a strength. The impact of additional resource over time and local partnership strategic prioritisation has been pivotal to improvement.
- e. The Board received an annual report of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) which provided Members with an overview of the management of allegations in Oldham, and the role of the Designated Officer during 2022-23. Statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 sets out the requirements for all agencies providing services for children to have procedures in place for reporting and managing allegations against staff and volunteers. This is mirrored in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 (KCSIE). The guidance highlights the need for a Designated Officer to oversee the process, by giving independent advice on thresholds and the other aspects of safeguarding when an allegation is made.
- f. The Board scrutinized the Borough's Youth Justice Plan 2023/24, which was a statutory report. In considering the report the Members were aware that it would also be considered by Cabinet and full Council prior to its ultimate approval.
- g. The Board considered and discussed the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 1 April 2022- 31 March 2023. The report was presented by Dr Henri Giller the Independent Chair of the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership. It was noted by Dr Giller for additional context that the report covered the second year of a three-year strategy, which had been developed by Oldham Council, Greater Manchester Police, and the Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group. To guarantee that all children and young people in the area receive protection and safeguarding.
- h. The Director of Education presented the 'Response to the Local area inspection on support and provision for Children and Young people who have special education needs and/ or disabilities (SEND).
- i. A report regarding the Participation of Young People aged 16-18 in Education, Employment or Training report was presented and the purpose of this annual report was to inform members of the relevant activities and initiatives, with the report offering members the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge the activities in the preceding year. In considering the report Members were concerned with the issues around the transitioning phase between year 11 to 12 and year 12 to 13, with Members wanting to know what can be done to monitor those children at risk of not ending up in education, employment, and training. The response was that schools hold information and tracks students who are at risk of NEET.
- j. The Board received a report regarding repeat referrals to children's social care services. In considering the report, Members noted that the graphs in the report showing Oldham in comparison to neighbouring authorities. It was noted that the rates shown in the graph fluctuate often for referrals and repeat referrals.

The Board was informed that there had been an increase in Oldham for domestic abuse incidents, with there being a multi-agency meeting for those at high-risk domestic abuse with the aim of identifying safety plan for young children and families. Also, it was noted that there had been new systems introduced for reviewing reports, which had been implemented by the Head of Service for Oversight. It was explained to Members that a deep dive had showed that the reasons for referrals could not be predicted.

- k. The Board received a summary of the current financial position of Children's Social Care, Members noted that the Children's Services had benefited from significant additional financial investment over recent years, due to the recognition of the demand pressures that they faced. The resources had been invested to align budgets to expenditure in demand led services, strengthen the management structure and to expand the cohort of social workers.

6. Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board

6.1 Membership

Councillor Moores (Chair), McLaren (Vice Chair), Councillors Adams, Ball, Hamblett, Jenny Harrison, Sajed Hussain and Wahid.

Substitute members - Councillors Holly Harrison, Harkness and Shuttleworth.

- 6.2 The Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board will look at the how the Council fulfils its strategic priority of Healthy, safe and well supported residents Looking after our most vulnerable residents, keeping people safe and healthy are crucial responsibilities of any local authority focusing on services for adults and public health services to monitor progress towards improving health, lifestyles and quality of care across the Borough; and providing oversight of integration and partnership working within and between the council and health bodies. The Board will also oversee the active lifestyle related functions and activity across the Borough. The Board will review and scrutinise the commissioning and delivery of local health and social care services in Oldham to ensure reduced health inequalities, access to services and the best outcomes for local people. The Board will discharge its statutory duties to:

- a. The review and scrutiny of any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the Council's area.
- b. The making of reports and recommendations to relevant NHS bodies and health service providers.
- c. Responding to proposals and consultations from NHS bodies in respect of substantial variations in service provision and any other major consultation exercises.
- d. Referral of comments and recommendations on proposals referred to the Committee by a relevant NHS body or relevant service provider to the Secretary of State if considered necessary.
- e. All matters relating to Healthwatch.

- 6.3 The Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board considered the following key issues during 2023/24: -

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- a. The Board considered a report which gave an update on Urgent and Emergency Care for Oldham Paediatrics. This report had previously been submitted to the former Health Scrutiny Committee meeting on 7th March 2023. The Board were informed of the 'winter pressures' of 2022/23 and also to the increase in demand for services post Covid-19. The Board was informed that these pressures combined with the regular fluctuations in demand, emphasised the challenges and objective to provide the best quality care.
 - b. The Board received a presentation regarding preparations for a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection. The Board was also informed of the areas of inspection, how the areas will be rated, The Peer Review Process, the Peer Review Outcomes, the Council's approach to Inspection, the Adult and Social Care Change Board which assesses Governance an Assurance and the role of elected Members.
 - c. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy was presented to virus meetings of the Board after it had been previously approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2023 and its five main themes were to be the subject to 'deep dives' and special one-off briefings for Members. The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the Health and Wellbeing Board aimed to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Oldham and to reduce inequalities for all ages. The responsibility for developing and delivering the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (and the Joint Strategy Needs Assessment) sat with the Health and Wellbeing Board and rests with all the members of the board.
 - d. A report was received for discussion a report from Northern Care Alliance regarding a Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection report. The Scrutiny Board was informed that an action plan had been produced which highlighted 79 'Must Do' recommendations from the Inspection report to be expedited. The NHS representatives at the meeting presented an updated report, later on in the Municipal Year, which highlighted these recommendations. These recommendations were being addressed and were on track to be completed. Members were also informed that the Northern Care Alliance had an internal accreditation process which gives an assurance on any issues.
 - e. Members were informed that in 2021, the Manchester Foundation Trust had acquired the North Manchester General Hospital site, and Salford Royal Foundation Trust acquired the remaining sites of, creating the Northern Care Alliance FT. Since then, due to the way in which digital systems and clinical rotas operate, there are some services that operate across the two providers that have not yet been 'disaggregated'. This meant that the services still needed to be split between the two organisations using an agreed set of principles: including splitting of the workforce, budget and waiting lists. The disaggregation was due to take place between January 2024 and March 2024 and includes Dexa (bone density) scanning, Ear, Nose & Throat, Trauma & Orthopaedics and Urology.
 - f. The Board considered the Borough's Alcohol and Drugs Strategy including an update on the mobilisation of the Adult Integrated Substance Misuse to Treatment and Recovery Service delivered by Turning Point. It also provided an update on the mobilisation of the Adult Integrated Substance Misuse to Treatment and Recovery Service delivered by Turning Point. The Board was informed that having a high functioning drug and alcohol treatment and recovery offer was an essential component of the range of activity required to achieve better population health and reduce demand on health and social

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- care services. A national policy paper – From harm to hope; A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives had been published, setting out the ambition to give people with drug addiction a route to a productive and drug free life.
- g. The Board received and considered the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection report in respect of Oldham Hospital, which was presented by Karen Coverley, Director of Nursing, Oldham Care Organisation. The report indicated that the Northern Care Alliance (NCA) overarching action plan was developed and replicated by each care organisation. Set out were the 'Must' and 'Should' actions for the NCA, Oldham Care Organisation and Maternity Services.
 - h. The Board also received the Annual report for HealthWatch Oldham, in respect of 2022/23. The top three priorities, detailed in the Annual Report were: Improving Primary Care access for Asylum Seekers and Refugees, by collating their views about their current challenges; establishing an Oldham Youth Healthwatch and develop a specific platform for young people to voice their views on the local health and social care system; and tackling health inequalities- Continue to use experiences and data to identify gaps and issues on access, produce reports and work with ICP/ICS and PCNs. We will help reach key demographics such as communities facing racial injustice and the LGBT community whose views are under-represented and ensure services are appropriate for them.
 - i. The Independent Chair of the Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board (OAB), Dr Henri Giller presented the Board's Annual Report. As part of its statutory duties the Board was required to produce an Annual Report setting out the safeguarding concerns it has dealt over the last year, as well as a Business Plan setting out future ambitions and actions to help keep people safe in Oldham. The purpose of the report therefore was to share the Board's agreed 2022-23 Annual Report and 2022-24 Business Plan with members for their consideration. In considering the report, Members of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board were asked to consider and comment on the Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board 2022-23 Annual Report and 2023-24 Business Plan.
 - j. The Scrutiny Board received the Director of Public Health's Annual Report on Infant Mortality in Oldham 2022. The report was an independent view on this highly sensitive matter that was related to health and wellbeing in Oldham and examined what could be done to decrease the mortality rates. The report had been produced in collaboration with the Council's relevant colleagues and partners, and it shared experiences of some of the Borough's residents. It also detailed the most up to date data regarding Infant Mortality in Oldham.
 - k. The Scrutiny Board received a report, which explained that Borough of Oldham residents experienced many inequalities across the wider determinants of health that contribute collectively to the difference in life expectancy and healthy life expectation. The report advised that in June 2022, Oldham's Health and Well-being Board had agreed the six themes and associated actions which underpin the local health inequalities plan that was intended to be achieved over a two-year period. The submitted report sought to provide an update on the progress made to date. Scrutiny Board Members, in considering the report, were asked to consider the progress made on the local health inequalities plan.
 - l. The Board received a presentation, that provided an overview of the work done to date on the development and implementation of Oldham's Prevention Framework. In Summer 2022, the Public Service Reform (PSR) Board agreed
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to initiate the development of a comprehensive Prevention Framework for Oldham, recognizing the importance of prevention and early intervention in various key strategies. While existing strategies, such as the early help demand strategy and health inequalities plan, emphasized these principles, they had been developed independently.

- m. A presentation and report were received which provided an overview of the tobacco control work in Oldham, in the context of regional and national policy and approaches. The report also provided an overview on the role of the Oldham Tobacco Alliance, made up of partners and services from across the borough, in progressing this agenda and working together to tackle tobacco-related harm and improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Oldham. There was an update from the Community Specialist Stop Smoking Service on behalf of 'Your Health Oldham'.
- n. A report was received which highlighted the Council's roles and responsibilities under the Care Act 2014, Adult Social Care departments in Local Authorities had several commissioning responsibilities. Authorities have the duty to promote diversity and quality in service provision. Local authorities should engage in market shaping activities to ensure that any person requiring Care and Support/Support Services: a) Have a variety of providers supplying a variety of services to choose from; b) Have a variety of high quality services to choose from; and c) Have sufficient information to make an informed decision about how to meet the needs in question. Local authorities should ensure that they have effective strategies to understand likely demand for such services, ensure stability and to shape the marketplace so that the right services are available.
- o. A report was presented that provided an overview of provision delivered by sexual health services in the borough to improve the sexual health and wellbeing of Oldham's residents. There was also a presentation by representatives of HCRG Care Group and Early Break which gave an update on progress made by the services in improving sexual health outcomes and achieving budget reduction targets. It was reported that having a high functioning sexual health offered the Borough's residents an essential component in the range of activity required to achieve better population health and reduce demand on health and social care services. As per Public Health funding conditions and mandated responsibilities, the Council was required to ensure access to sexual health services for all of its residents.
- p. A report was received that detailed the Adult Social Care workforce and strategy. The workforce had been highlighted as a significant risk by a recent peer review, the Adult Social Care Management Team, and the Skills for Care report, 'The State of Adult Social Care sector and workforce in England' in reference to the wider workforce pressures in the care provider market. Recruitment and retention of staff was proving increasingly difficult in Adult Social Care as increased case complexity, increased volume of referrals post-Covid 19, and front-line staff leaving to work for agencies or other localities with better salaries, terms, and conditions, meant an increased workload for staff at all levels.

7. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programming

- 7.1 Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 4.1 requires each of the Overview and Scrutiny Boards to prepare and maintain a Work Programme. These Work

Programmes are maintained by the Statutory Scrutiny Officer, in conjunction with Constitutional Services and are co-ordinated in consultation with the Scrutiny Board Chairs. This approach allows for an efficient use of resources and avoids duplication, allowing for flexibility to accommodate any urgent and/or short-term issues that may arise.

- 7.2 Updated Scrutiny Work Programmes for each Board were submitted to each meeting on an ongoing basis, keeping Members and the public informed as to business due to be considered and, through parallel consideration of the Key Decision Document, allowing Members to identify any further items for consideration.
- 7.3 Moving from 2022/23 to 2023/24 saw the implementation of the new overview and scrutiny structure, with the introduction of the four Scrutiny Boards. As Chairs we worked with Constitutional Services towards the end of the Municipal Year to review Work Programmes and ensure that ongoing work and issues were not lost as the new arrangements took shape.

8. Overview and Scrutiny and Procedural Arrangements

- 8.1 The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Boards hold certain procedural responsibilities within the Council's Constitution. These were:
- General Exception – where 28 days' notice of the intention to take a Key Decision is not or cannot be given, 'General Exception' procedures apply. These include a requirement to obtain agreement in writing from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (or nominee) that the matter about which the decision is to be made is urgent and cannot be deferred.
 - Special Urgency – where General Exception procedures cannot apply and a decision is needed urgently, 'Special Urgency' procedures apply. These include a requirement to obtain agreement from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (or nominee) that the matter about which the decision is to be made is urgent and cannot be deferred.
 - Decisions contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework - should such a decision be required urgently, and it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the full Council, the decision may be taken if the Chair of a relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees that the decision is a matter of urgency.
 - Executive business in private – where 28 days' notice of the intention to take an executive decision at a meeting in private is not or cannot be given, the matter can be considered in private should the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board agree that the matter is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred.
- 8.2 In 2023/24 there were eight instance of General Exception, five instances of Special Urgency, no instances requiring agreement to either the consideration of matters outside the Budget and Policy Framework or the consideration of business in private.

9. Council Support for Overview and Scrutiny

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- 9.1 The Overview and Scrutiny structure is supported by all Officers of the Council. The Overview and Scrutiny function should expect all Council Officers to provide the same level of support as those Officers provide to the executive, regulatory and other functions within the Council's decision-making arrangements.
- 9.2 The Overview and Scrutiny function received the following specific support during 2023/24:
- Statutory Scrutiny Officer – the Council is required by the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) to designate a statutory Scrutiny Officer with the functions of: (a) promoting the role of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees,
(b) providing support to the Council's overview and scrutiny committees and the members of those committees,
(c) providing support and guidance to all Members and Officers of the Council in relation to the functions of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees.
This role has been filled by Shelley Kipling, Assistant Chief Executive.
 - The Constitutional Services team undertake lead roles in respect of the four Scrutiny Boards, maintaining Work Programmes, ensuring and chasing up actions, and co-ordinating scrutiny activities held outside of the formal Committee meetings, in addition to the general governance activities that are provided in respect of all other formal bodies, ensuring that the Board and Committee meetings were convened and held in accordance with relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 9.3 The scrutiny function also benefitted from the active support given by the Council's partners across the statutory and voluntary sectors who prepared reports for consideration and attended Committee meetings to assist Committee members in their scrutiny considerations.

10. A New Structure for Overview and Scrutiny

- 10.1 From 2024/25 the Council will be operating a further Scrutiny Body – the Joint Scrutiny Committee for the Northern Care Alliance. A report was presented to the Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board which presented the proposed Terms of Reference and Working principals for the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) for the Northern Care Alliance and in doing so received the Scrutiny Board's support for the establishment of such a body and accordingly to recommend its establishment to Council (which was subsequently approved by Annual Council on 22nd May 2024).
- 10.2 The purpose of a JHOSC is to scrutinise services provided by the Northern Care Alliance relating to the health of the population in Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Salford and contribute to the development of policy to improve health and reduce health inequalities in respect of services provided by the hospitals.
- 10.3 The Committee comprises member representatives from Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Salford Councils (three from each authority). The JHOSC has delegated powers, on behalf of the four local authorities, to undertake all the necessary functions of health scrutiny in accordance with part 4, Health Scrutiny by Local Authorities, of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013, relating to

reviewing and scrutinising health service matters provided by Northern Care Alliance. A similar arrangement was previously in place in respect of the NHS Pennine Acute Hospitals Trust.

10.4 So far, in 2024/25, the Joint Committee has met on two occasions, with a further two meetings scheduled for the current Municipal Year.

11. Ways to get involved with Overview and Scrutiny

11.1 All the Overview and Scrutiny Boards have rolling work programmes which are updated and can be found as part of the agenda for each Board meeting.

11.2 Meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Boards are open for the public to attend, except when a meeting considers confidential or exempt information and the Board resolves to exclude the public. Agenda are published to Council's website and, along with the dates for future meetings, can be found here [Browse Committee Meetings, 2024 \(oldham.gov.uk\)](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/browse-committee-meetings-2024)

11.3 Overview and Scrutiny Boards provide an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions, providing the issue is relevant to the Board's terms of reference. Questions should be forwarded to constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk no later than noon on the third working day prior to the meeting. Members of the public can also contact their local Councillor about issues considered to be having an impact on their local community. Councillors also have opportunities to raise issues with Overview and Scrutiny Boards.

12 Financial Implications

12.1 Not applicable

13 Legal Implications

13.1 Not applicable

14 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

14.1 Not applicable

15 Key Decision

15.1 No

16 Key Decision Reference

16.1 Not applicable

17. Background Papers

17.1 There are no background papers as defined by Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to this report.

18. Appendices

18.1 Overview and Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference are found at Appendix 1.

Review of Scrutiny in Oldham

"To ensure scrutiny has a clear role and focus within the organisation, that Oldham has an influential scrutiny function which is held in high regard by its many stakeholders and which achieves measurable service improvements and adds value for the people of Oldham through a member led process of examination and review"

To achieve this Scrutiny will follow the nationally agreed 'Four Principles of Good Scrutiny';

1. Provide 'critical friend' challenge to decision makers, through holding them to account for decisions made, engaging in policy review and policy development;
2. Promote Scrutiny as a means by which the voice and concerns of the public can be heard;
3. Ensure Scrutiny is carried out by 'independent minded' Board members;
4. Improve public services by ensuring reviews of policy and service performance are focused.

To achieve this we will ensure:

- Parity of esteem, the scrutiny function of the council has the same importance in the governance system as executive decision-making activities.
- The offer of senior officer support and providing senior officer leads
- We are Listening to local people and making sure their views are heard by decision makers
- Looking at decisions, policies or issues that affect local people
- Authentic cross-party working
- Working and co-operating with Statutory and non-Statutory partners
- Conclusions and recommendations that are evidence based
- Engagement and training of elected members

To Align with the Council's Priorities the following Scrutiny Boards are to be introduced:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Board will look at the how the Council fulfils its strategic priority of A great start and skills for life:

This strategic outcome aims to:

- increasing the number of quality school and college places for Oldham's young people,
- expanding youth activities outside of school,
- improving post-16 education and training, so everyone has options to help them increase their skills and knowledge.

Areas covered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board in scrutinising how the Council meets this strategic outcome could include:

- Educational achievement
- School performance

- Healthy lifestyles
- Youth service
- Looked after children
- Early Help
- Children's Social Care
- Child Protection
- School Attendance and Exclusions
- School leavers' progression to further education and training
- Healthy schools
- Take-up of sporting and cultural opportunities
- Increased involvement of young people in developing services
- Education, employment and training for care leavers
- Children's Centres
- Young people's fear of crime
- Youth Offending
- Freedom from poverty
- Youth Justice Plan;
- Children's and Young People Strategic Plan;
- HE provision including Oldham College and UCO

The Board will also include Co-opted Members Voting and representation from THE Youth Council.

Co-opted Members (Voting):

Roman Catholic representative

Church of England representative

Parent Governor representative (Primary)

Parent Governor representative (Special) Parent Governor representative (Secondary)

Co-opted Members non voting

Teacher representatives

Early Years Development and Childcare representative

Youth Work representative

Board	Council Functions	Officer oversight Exec Functions
Children Young People and Families Board 5 meetings per Municipal Year	Managing Director of Children Young People	Managing Director of Children Young People Director of Education, Skills & Early Years Director of Children's Social Care Director of Economy

The Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board will look at the how the Council fulfils its strategic priority of Healthy, safe and well supported residents Looking after our most vulnerable residents, keeping people safe and healthy are crucial responsibilities of any local authority focusing on services for adults and public health services to monitor progress towards improving health, lifestyles and quality of care across the Borough; and providing oversight of integration and partnership working within and between the council and health bodies. The Board will also oversee the

active lifestyle related functions and activity across the Borough. The Board will review and scrutinise the commissioning and delivery of local health and social care services in Oldham to ensure reduced health inequalities, access to services and the best outcomes for local people.

The Board will discharge its statutory duties to:

- the review and scrutiny of any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the Council's area;
- the making of reports and recommendations to relevant NHS bodies and health service providers;
- responding to proposals and consultations from NHS bodies in respect of substantial variations in service provision and any other major consultation exercises;
- referral of comments and recommendations on proposals referred to the Committee by a relevant NHS body or relevant service provider to the Secretary of State if considered necessary; and
- all matters relating to Healthwatch.

Areas covered by the Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board in scrutinising how the Council meets this strategic outcome could include:

- Adult Social Care
- Adult Safeguarding
- Public Health
- Integrated Care
- All Health related matters including Children's Health
- Scrutiny of NHS and NHS providers including NCA
- S.75 arrangements
- GP services
- Health and Wellbeing Board, including the development, implementation, review and monitoring of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Adult and Health Services Budget Outturn
- Review of provision of Health Services
- Leisure Offer
- Place Based Working
- arrangements made by the authority for public health, health promotion, health improvement and for addressing health inequalities

Board	External	Council Functions	Officer Oversight Exec Functions
Adults Social Care and Health Board	Relevant NHS bodies or health service providers including:-NHS England	None	Director of Adults Social Care (DASS) Director of Public Health

5 meetings per Municipal Year	Integrated Care Partnership Place Lead - Oldham NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Locality Board Local NHS Trusts and other NHS service providers Healthwatch		Assistant Director Youth, Leisure and Communities
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The Place, Economic Growth and Environment Board will look at how the Council fulfils 3 strategic priorities and is also responsible for reviewing and scrutinising the exercise by risk management authorities of flood risk management functions which may affect the Borough of Oldham and to exercise the functions of a crime and disorder committee including the following:

- a) To review or scrutinise the exercise of crime and disorder functions by responsible authorities and
- b) To review or scrutinise any local crime or disorder matter raised by a Member.

Better jobs and dynamic businesses

The strategic outcomes are:

Providing the infrastructure to make Oldham a great place to spend time, and somewhere to open and grow a successful business.

Investments in the next three years include

- the redevelopment of Spindles, a new performance space and a town centre park,
- support for residents to help them into good jobs through Get Oldham Working,
- increasing the amount the council spends with local companies, to maximise the impact of the Oldham pound.

Quality homes for everyone

The strategic outcomes are:

To work with developers and housing associations to deliver the affordable homes that our residents need, and support renters to defend their rights. Over the next three years we will

- increase the number of high-quality homes that are affordable and meet residents' needs,
- support tenants to fight back against rogue landlords,
- enable improvement to home insulation to help protect residents from rising energy prices.

A clean and green future

The strategic outcomes are:

Responding to the climate emergency and keep Oldham clean and tidy.

- support the borough's growing green industry, as part of making the borough carbon neutral by 2030,
- improve our green spaces, including Northern Roots,
- continue our Don't Trash Oldham campaign, so our residents have neighbourhoods to be proud

Areas covered by the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board in scrutinising how the Council meets this strategic outcome could include:

- Spindles Development
- Planning
- Housing
- Housing Strategy
- Don't Trash Oldham Campaign
- Northern Roots
- New Performance Space
- Get Oldham Working
- Town Centre Park
- Local procurement and value for money
- Social
- Solar Farm
- Green energy
- Climate Emergency
- Community Safety
- Crime and Disorder
- Licensing and Gambling Policies (respective 2003 and 2005 Acts);
- Plans and Strategies which together comprise the Local Plan – Core Strategy;
- Community Safety and Cohesion Partnership Strategy;

Board	External	Council Functions	Officer Oversight Exec Functions
Place, Economic Growth and Environment Board 5 meetings per Municipal Year	Risk management authorities (defined by S6 Flood and Water Management Act 2010) Responsible authorities (defined by S5 Crime and Disorder Act 1998)	Executive Director of Place and Economic Growth Head of Planning	Chief Executive Executive Director Place and Economic Growth Director of Environment Director of Economy

The Governance, Strategy and Resources Board role includes the scrutiny of key policy items, the annual budget proposals, proposals with significant service and or budgetary implications, risk and performance. The Board will also scrutinise particular proposals being developed at the Greater Manchester level and by the Council's strategic partners, considering the implications for the Borough and for the Council.

The Board will also monitor and hold to account the performance of service delivery within Oldham Council and of strategic partners etc with particular reference to the Corporate Plan and all other strategic plans and monitor organisational risk.

Areas covered by the Governance, Strategy and Resources Board in scrutinising how the Council meets the required outcomes could include:

- Oldham Plan (sustainable community strategy);
- The Council's Corporate Plan;
- Fair Employment Charter;
- Integrated Commissioning Framework; and
- Pay Policy Statement.
- Performance monitoring including performance reports
- Risk reports – Governance
- Annual Budget Setting
- To scrutinise the financial performance of the Council against the approved budget and efficiency savings identified
- To scrutinise issues identified as requiring improvement by external assessors (with the exception of social care matters) ensuring that there is appropriate statutory representation of co-opted members in respect of education matters.
- In reviewing the performance of Council and other services, to scrutinise plans for improvement where performance is weak and to maintain oversight until performance improves.
- The Scrutiny Board (Governance, Strategy and Resources) is the allocated residual responsibility for any function not otherwise allocated to a Scrutiny Board.

Board	External	Council Functions	Officer Oversight Exec Functions
The Governance, Strategy and Resources Board 5 meetings per Municipal Year		Chief Executive S.151 Officer Monitoring Officer	Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive Assistant Chief Executive Director of Finance (s.151 Officer) Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)



Report to COUNCIL

Update on Actions from Council

Portfolio Holder: Various

Officer Contact: Interim Borough Solicitor

Report Author: Peter Thompson, Constitutional Services
Ext. 4716

6th November 2024

Reason for Decision

The decision is for Members to note the updates on actions from the Council meeting held on 11th September 2024 and any updated responses from meetings in the preceding 12 month period.

Executive Summary

This report provides information to the Council on actions taken at the most recent Council meetings.

Recommendations

Council is asked to:

1. Note the report.

Update on Actions from Council

1 Background

- 1.1 This report sets out the actions that officers have taken on motions approved at the 11th September 2024 Council meeting and informs Members on any updated responses to motions approved in the preceding 12 month period.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 The current position on actions is set out in the table at Appendix 1.

3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 N/A

4 Preferred Option

- 4.1 N/A

5 Consultation

- 5.1 N/A

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 N/A

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 N/A

8 Equality Impact, including Implications for Children and Young People

- 8.1 N/A

9 Key Decision

- 9.1 No

10 Key Decision Reference

- 10.1 N/A

11 Background Papers

- 11.1 The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act

1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act:

- The agenda and minutes of the Council meetings held on 11th September 2024 and earlier meetings are available online at:
<http://committees.oldham.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails>

12 **Appendices**

12.1 Appendix 1 – Current Position

12.1 Appendix 2 – Reply to Opposition Motion 1 – 11th September 2024

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Actions from Council -11th September 2024 Meeting

ISSUE/ACTION	WHO RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETED	RESPONSE
Youth Council Motion: Holiday Activities and Food Programme (As amended) RESOLVED That the Chief Executive be requested to write to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Health and to the Secretary of State for Education asking that, as well as a blanket breakfast club for all primary schools, that they look at increasing the threshold for free school meals so that more young people (both primary and secondary age) can benefit; that they continue the HAF (Holiday Activities and Food) program, making sure young people are fed during the school holidays while making this a universal service for all young people, to reduce the stigma in attending and making it more cost efficient.	Chief Executive	Ongoing	
Administration Motion 1: Strengthening the Online Safety Act RESOLVED: This Council resolves: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To write to the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police and the Chief Superintendent for Oldham to thank them for the work their officers did to keep Oldhamers safe and violence off our streets. 2. To write to the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation & Technology to ask that his department: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Undertake a review of the Online Safety Act to identify areas for improvement. b. Strengthen enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance and increase penalties for violations. 	Chief Executive		

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Provide resources and training for parents, schools, and third sector organisations to help them protect and guide children in the digital world. d. Ensure victims of online abuse and crimes are supported. 			
<p>Administration Motion 2: A Welcome Start to Delivering the New Deal for Workers RESOLVED: This Council resolves to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To lobby for support for the Employment Rights Bill. 2. To request that the Chief Executive write to the Borough's three MPs, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, reaffirming our support for the New Deal for Workers. 3. To promote awareness of the New Deal for Workers in Oldham through our communication channels. 4. To encourage local businesses to adopt the principles of the New Deal for Workers voluntarily, ahead of any legislative changes. 	Chief Executive		
<p>Opposition Motion 1: Two Child Benefit Cap (As amended) RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Chief Executive be instructed to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister welcoming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The development of a Child Poverty Strategy including reviewing the impact of both the two-child limit and the family benefit cap. b. The opportunity to develop a new partnership between Oldham Council and the Labour Government to tackle the shameful legacy of fourteen years of Coalition and Conservative Welfare policies which have embedded child poverty in Oldham and across the UK. 2. That Council further instruct that the Chief Executive to write to all of Oldham's MPs, asking them to commit their public support 	Chief Executive	Response received	See Appendix 2 Rt Hon Sir Response Stephen Timms MP Minister of State for Social Security and Disability

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<p>ending child poverty as quickly as possible.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Ensure the number of children a family has is considered when a hardship grant is given out by the council. 4. Explore ways to support families impacted by the two-child limit across Oldham Borough, including through free school meals. 			
<p>Opposition Motion 2: Motor Insurance Premiums (As Amended) RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Chief Executive be requested to write to Oldham's newly elected MPs, asking them to raise these concerns about racial disparities in motor insurance premiums with the Secretaries of State for Transport and for Business and Trade. Additionally, ask that they urge the FCA to expedite its investigation into these discriminatory practices and report back their response to this Council. 2. To instruct the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, the Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture to write to the Association of British Insurers (ABI), urging them to undertake a comprehensive review of their pricing practices. The ABI must be asked to account for why motorists from BAME backgrounds are charged significantly higher premiums than their White counterparts with similar risk profiles. The Council should insist on transparency and a full explanation, accompanied by concrete steps to rectify this injustice. 3. To support and amplify local initiatives and campaigns that raise awareness of this issue and provide support to those affected by these discriminatory practices. 4. To ask the Leader of the Council, as the Greater Manchester Portfolio Holder for Equalities and Communities, to Collaborate with other councils, governmental bodies, and relevant organisations to form a Greater Manchester wide working group dedicated to addressing and eliminating poverty premiums and associated racial disparities in motor insurance premiums. This coalition should lobby the government and associated groups, like the ABI and FCA, for the development and implementation of policies that 	<p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, the Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture</p> <p>Leader of the Council</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Early conversations have taken place at Greater Manchester Equalities and Communities</p>

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ensure fair treatment for all citizens, regardless of ethnicity.			Portfolio, scoping work is now underway on how best to deliver this work programme
Opposition Motion 4: Mass Graves in Oldham Cemeteries RESOLVED: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. THAT THE Council recognises the loss and suffering in the past and present by publicly marking out each mass grave and erecting a memorial to all our babies born asleep and the many who lay with them forgotten. 2. That records of mass graves in our cemeteries be collated and recorded entirely online so that relatives can at last see the final resting place of their babies, children and relatives. 3. That the Council implements and publicises a clear procedure that provides those seeking their loved ones, a professional, sensitive and transparent process. 4. Provides relatives with a dedicated point of contact who can support and assist people in this traumatic time. 	Director of Environment		
Opposition Motion 5: Collective Spirit Free School RESOLVED: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Chief Executive be requested to outline the tragic failings, impacts and alleged financial irregularities still unanswered in the Collective Spirit Free School scandal to the Secretary of State for Education the Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP. 2. To request that the Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP, instruct the Department of Education (DfE) to carry out a full inquiry into Collective Spirit Free School; with the aims and objectives of fully highlighting the schools' failings and negative impacts on pupils and their families, by giving them a voice in said inquiry and to provide a platform to individuals who 	Chief Executive		

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wish to make statements of evidence. And a comprehensive investigation into financial irregularities previously unanswered including the holding to account of any individual(s) accountable (and) or complicit in wrongdoing.			
3. To offer the inquiry any support or resources as requested by the DfE.			

Actions from Council -10th July 2024 Meeting

ISSUE/ACTION	WHO RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETED	RESPONSE
Administration Motion 1: A voice for those affected by Child Sexual Exploitation in Oldham RESOLVED that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chief Executive be requested to write to the Home Secretary requesting a Home Office led Public Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in the borough of Oldham. 2. That the Council continues the work with survivors and others affected in preparing the framework and to commission an Independent Inquiry should the Home Office refuse the above request. 3. That any Inquiry should provide a voice for those affected by Child Sexual Exploitation in Oldham and provide the very best support and protection to those who wish to come forward with their testimony. 	Chief Executive	Ongoing	
Administration Motion 2: Get Veterans Moving More RESOLVED that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To request that the Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture, the Director of Public Health and the Director of Communities liaise with Oldham Community Leisure on the implementation of a concessionary membership for veterans of HM 	Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture, the Director of Public Health and the	Ongoing	

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<p>Armed Forces.</p> <p>2. To request that the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Defence asking the Ministry of Defence to explore further opportunities for discounted gym/leisure passes nationally.</p>	<p>Director of Communities</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>		
<p>Opposition Motion 1: Removing Oldham Borough from Places for Everyone (as amended)</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>1. That Council requests that the relevant council officers deliver an all-member workshop in September (after recess to ensure maximum opportunity to enable all members to attend) to understand the issues, options and opportunities associated with Oldham Council seeking revocation of its involvement in the Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE).</p> <p>2. That on the back of the workshop, Council requests that the relevant council officers to requested to present a thorough and full report to Council in November 2024 to inform a decision in writing to the new Secretary of State to revoke PfE insofar as it relates to the Borough of Oldham.</p> <p>3. That should the request be approved Oldham Council' withdraw engagement and support for the defence of the judicial review of 'Places for Everyone'.</p> <p>4. That if the Plan is revoked the Green Belt boundaries should be restored to their pre-adoption state.</p> <p>5. That if the Plan is revoked Officers be asked to develop an Oldham-led housing strategy that prioritises brownfield and ex-industrial sites, while protecting greenbelt and green spaces for future generations.</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive (Place)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>A report is on the agenda of this Council meeting</p>
<p>Opposition Motion 3: Extend Burial Times in Oldham Cemeteries (As amended)</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive (Place)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	

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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring forward a pilot scheme at cemeteries across the Borough to explore the possibility of further extending operational hours 2. Determine the appropriate tariff, using the data from the pilot scheme, ensuring it covers the operational costs while remaining affordable. 3. Following the outcome of the pilot scheme the Council will further resolve: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To continue to run inclusive, supportive and an equitable burial service for all residents, by giving more time for bookings and paperwork, we are enabling funeral directors and families to be able to book a burial within the same day. b. To continue to meet the needs of residents of all faiths and none, that cemeteries in the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham will continue to offer same day burials seven days a week. c. To continue to remain in dialogue with Oldham Mosques Council, and other representatives of Oldham's faith communities, regarding changes to burial charges. 	Director of Environmental Services		
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Actions from Council -13th March 2024 Meeting

ISSUE/ACTION	WHO RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETED	RESPONSE
<p>Labour Motion 1 (as amended): This Council calls for a lasting peace in Palestine and Israel</p> <p>RESOLVED: This Council:</p> <p>1. Condemns the terror attacks carried out by Hamas on 7th October</p>	Chief Executive	Ongoing	Ongoing

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<p>2023 and the taking of hostages.</p> <p>2. Condemns the scale of the Israeli military actions in Gaza where they have targeted civilian infrastructure, and not adhered to international law by making a clear distinction between military and civilian targets; and for imposing a total siege on the civilian population Gaza denying them adequate supplies of food, water, medicines and power.</p> <p>3. Reiterates calls for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, observed by all sides, to allow urgent aid into Gaza, and secure the release of hostages and detainees.</p> <p>4. Urges all international powers to work together to establish a diplomatic process to deliver the peace of a two-state solution, the creation of a viable Palestinian state, the two states living side by side in peace and security.</p> <p>5. Recognises that a Palestinian state is key to lasting peace in the region, and that statehood is the inalienable right of the Palestinian people and not in the gift of any neighbour.</p> <p>6. Resolves to support the Oldham Interfaith Forum and Community Safety Partnership to combat any incidents of Islamophobia and antisemitism in Oldham.</p> <p>7. Supports diplomatic efforts to ensure rapid and unimpeded humanitarian relief is provided in Gaza.</p> <p>8. Regrets that previous attempts to pass a ceasefire resolution at the UN Security Council have failed.</p> <p>9. Believes an Israeli ground offensive in Rafah risks catastrophic humanitarian consequences and must not take place.</p>			
Liberal Democrat Motion 1 (as amended)	Chief Executive	Ongoing	Ongoing

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<p>Save Oldham Coliseum Theatre</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Council resolves to examine the feasibility of refurbishing and investing into the Fairbottom Street building alongside the current option to create a long-term home for a producing theatre in the Borough. 2. That officers continue to Explore funding streams that could help finance the redevelopment of the existing venue, including the reallocation of funds from other initiatives linked with the future of Oldham Coliseum. 3. That a report be brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet, as soon as possible, outlining the steps that this Council is taking to support the Oldham Coliseum Theatre to retain a producing theatre in the borough including the potential option to remain at home, on Fairbottom Street, which would also help regenerate that part of Oldham town centre and Yorkshire Street. 			
<p>Oldham Group Motion 3 (as amended):</p> <p>The Conflict in Gaza</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Chief Executive, be instructed to write to the Prime Minister reiterating the United Kingdom's commitment to adhering to the Geneva Convention and International law and request that His Majesty's Government communicate this with all. 2. That the Chief Executive be instructed to write to the Secretary General of the United Nations informing him that the citizens of Oldham stand alongside millions from across the world and support the United Nations demands for an immediate ceasefire and for Humanitarian aid to 	Chief Executive	15 th March 2024 Letters sent as per Resolution.	<p>Response letter from Lord Tariq Ahmed, Minister of State for Middle East</p> <p>and</p> <p>Response Letter from Ministerial and Treat Official Correspondence Team Foreign, Commonwealth</p>

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be provided to all those in need in the affected area of Gaza.			and Development Office
3. That the Chief Executive be instructed to write to the Foreign Secretary and the Shadow Foreign Secretary requesting that our government and a future Labour Government does everything possible to help bring the governments of Israel and Palestine together to resolve the issue and create a two-state solution so that innocent lives are no longer at risk.			Reported to Council 10 th July 2024

13th December 2023 Meeting

ISSUE/ACTION	WHO RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETED	RESPONSE
Youth Council Motion: Unused Stationery Within the Council and its Partners RESOLVED: 1. That the Chief Executive be requested to write to all department heads asking that teams look at current stocks of pens, pencils, pencil sharpeners, rubbers, rulers and calculators (including badged merchandise), and any items not required for the running of that department, to be donated and used to create packs that can be distributed to students most in need. 2. That the Chief Executive be requested to write to partners (including Miocare, Greater Manchester Police, NHS, Action Together, positive steps, OCL, and Greater Manchester fire service) asking that they also donate any unused stationery. 3. That the Council work with Oldham Youth Council to create packs	Chief Executive	Letters forwarded to council's partner agencies including - Miocare, Greater Manchester Police, NHS, Action Together, positive steps, OCL, and Greater Manchester Fire Service)	No replies have yet been received.

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containing essential stationery items and help us distribute them to schools.			
Labour Motion 2: Boys Need Bins RESOLVED: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Cabinet Member for Reform and Regeneration should consider as soon as reasonably practicable the provision of at least one sanitary bin in all Council male toilets – both public and in council buildings. 2. To encourage other providers of public and workplace toilets in our area to make male sanitary bins available in their facilities. 3. To support Prostate Cancer UK's 'Boys need Bins' campaign. 4. That the Leader of the Council should write on behalf of the Council to our three MPs asking them to support Prostate Cancer UK's 'Boys need Bins' campaign and their request for Government to update any necessary regulations to ensure that 'suitable means for the disposal of sanitary dressings' is provided in all toilets 	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Reform and Regeneration	Ongoing	No reply has yet been received
Liberal Democrat Motion (as amended) 20 is Plenty RESOLVED: Council resolves: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To establish an all-group working party to seek to implement a Council-wide 20mph speed limit on residential roads as soon as practical subject to consultation and cost analysis. This should include identifying roads where the lower speed limit may not be appropriate and exploring enforcement measures such as average speed cameras, in locations determined by TfGM criteria and current national guidelines, and Community Speedwatch initiatives. 2. That the all-group working party works with all other Councils in the region that haven't already implemented 20mph speed limits as the default in their authority area as part of the GM wide Vision Zero. 	Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive (Place)	To establish an All-party Highways Group	To commence meetings in April 2024
Conservative Motion: Community First Aid	Chief Executive	Letter sent to the	No reply has yet

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<p>RESOLVED: That the Council commits to support the vision for Community First Aid by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raising awareness of the importance of learning First Aid by sending a delegation of senior Elected Members and Officers of the Council to visit our local St. John's Ambulance Unit(s) and supporting/promoting the vision across social media and the local printed media platforms; particularly emphasising that anybody in Oldham can access free First Aid training by SJA. 2. Recognising voluntary sector organisations such as St. John's Ambulance within local resilience arrangements to support emergency preparedness and crisis response by commissioning the Chief Executive Officer and Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care to survey and utilise the skills of Oldham's local and voluntary sector to support community response to local emergencies as recommended by the NHS Volunteering Taskforce. This can be done through supporting voluntary sector representation on local resilience forms and inclusion within emergency preparedness, resilience, and response exercises at local level. 3. Engaging with auxiliary partners to utilise the potential of volunteers to respond to community health emergencies, improve patient outcomes and reduce NHS pressures; working with the voluntary sector to strengthen first aid resilience by empowering communities through access to first aid training and equipment to improve health outcomes and help save lives. 4. Empowering young people to strengthen community resilience by supporting the expansion of St. John's Ambulance NHS Cadets and Young Responder programmes. 5. Advocating for a Statutory Right to Volunteer by writing to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom calling on the Government to introduce legislation to enable volunteers of all ages to deploy at times of national and local emergency. An effective system would enable volunteers to request a set period of leave to deploy at times of crisis. 6. Requesting the Leader of the Council, as the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Member for Equalities & Communities, to circulate 		<p>Prime Minister calling on the Government to introduce legislation to enable volunteers of all ages to deploy at times of national and local emergency</p>	<p>been received</p>
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this to her colleagues at GMCA so that they may seek to commit to these actions in their Local Authorities too.			
Failsworth Independent Party Motion (as amended): The Protection and Safeguarding of Children RESOLVED: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Council continues to facilitate relevant sessions across the Borough. 2. That the Council continues to bring together all departments within the Council and work with other external bodies to deliver specific sessions on CSE and grooming. 3. That the Council continues to create age-appropriate materials and sessions that are made available to all schools in Oldham, both Primary and Secondary. 	Managing Director (Children's Services)	Ongoing	Ongoing

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Department
for Work &
Pensions

APPENDIX 2

Ministerial
Correspondence
Caxton House
Tothill Street
LONDON
SW1H 9DA

0207 340 4000

www.gov.uk

ministers@dwp.gov.uk

Mr Harry Catherall
Chief Executive
Oldham MBC

Our ref: MC2024/77296

21 October 2024

Dear Mr Catherall,

As you may know, your letter of 16 September to the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the two-child policy and child poverty has been forwarded to this Department. I am replying as the Minister of State for Social Security and Disability.

The two-child policy limits the child element to two children in Universal Credit and Child Tax Credits, although there may be further entitlement for other children if they were born before 6 April 2017 or if an exception applies.

In April 2024, there were 450,000 Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit households affected by the two child policy (that is, they had a third or subsequent child born on or after 6 April 2017). 440,000 households were not receiving the child element for at least one child because of the policy and 1.6 million children lived in those households. 24,000 households were in receipt of an exception.

For Universal Credit only, 380,000 households were affected by the policy, 370,000 were not receiving a child element or amount for at least one child and 1.3 million children lived in those households. 21,000 households received an exception.

Child Benefit continues to be paid for all children in eligible families, as well as an additional amount of Universal Credit for any qualifying disabled children.

While we cannot commit to changing the two child policy at this time, tackling child poverty is at the heart of the Government's mission to break down barriers to opportunity and improve the life chances of every child.

This is why the Child Poverty Taskforce will explore how we can harness all available levers to reduce child poverty, including social security reforms, before publishing a strategy in Spring 2025.

The Government continues to support children and families in a range of ways through the tax and benefits system and public services, including funding an extension to the Household Support Fund.

With all best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephen Timms". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Stephen" is written in a larger, more prominent script, and the surname "Timms" is written in a slightly smaller, more compact script to the right.

Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Minister of State for Social Security and Disability