

Oldham Borough Council



Council Meeting
Wednesday, 18th December
2024

OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

Tuesday, 10th December 2024

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council which will be held on Wednesday, 18th December 2024 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, for the following purposes:

1 To receive apologies for absence

2 Minutes (Pages 1 - 54)

To order that the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 24th October 2024 and 6th November 2024 be signed as correct records.

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)

Young People's Mental Health

Since 2012, young people have been telling the youth council that mental health is an issue that they face every day and that they need support now. Since this time we have only seen the need for mental health services increase, especially since the COVID pandemic, and although spending on Mental Health services has increased, it has not dented the need for support seen across Oldham and in the UK.

At the last election, Labour had several manifesto points to improve mental health support for children and young people and we would like to see these implemented as soon as possible.

Council recognises that over the past few years the Oldham Youth Council have made 'Mental Health' a priority issue, with it coming in the top 5 issues for Make Your Mark. The council also recognises that we have undertaken much work in this area to improve the experiences of Oldham's young people. This includes:

- Oldham Youth Council first commissioned Kooth.com, an online mental health counselling service, for Oldham's young people.

- 2013 motion to Council asking for an overview and scrutiny of mental health services.
- 2017 motion asking to ensure that adequate funding is made available to schools and colleges to allow them to invest in the early intervention mental health services.
- 2021 motion asking to secure mental health funding for Oldham.
- Our work with Oldham Theatre Workshop, highlighting mental health and how professionals can work with young people called Standard Day.
- Our work with Oldham Theatre Workshop, highlighting self-harm, called Boy in the Black.
- Our campaign called SNAP that promoted Kooth.com and the support they provide for depression, stress/anxiety and eating disorders.
- Our campaign 'I Love Me', raising young people's self-esteem and confidence.

Council notes:

- That mental health issues have risen, with a 12% increase in cases since pre COVID.
- That consultation undertaken by the Youth Council would suggest schools and teachers are still not able to fully support young people's mental health.
- That according to several sources the average waiting time to get an appointment for Mental Health assessments in Oldham is 16-18 weeks
- That the waiting time between initial assessment and treatment could be over a year.
- In 2022/23, just under £1B was spent on Children and Young People's mental health compared to the £12.8B on all mental health services. This was despite the understanding that 50% of mental health illnesses in adults start showing symptoms by the age of 14, and 75% experience symptoms before they are 24.
- Labour's manifesto said that in the first term they would invest in front line services recruiting 8,500 new staff to reduce waiting times.
- That the manifesto also said that labour's new Young Futures Hubs would have open access to mental health support for children and young people in every community

We propose that Council therefore **resolves** to ask the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister and Secretary of state for Health to request an increase to children and young people's mental health services without reduction in spending on adult mental health; to again ask the Government to ensure that adequate funding and resources are made available to schools and colleges to allow them to invest in the early intervention services; and for an update on their manifesto promises.

8 Public Questions

(time limit 15 Minutes)

To consider questions submitted by members of the public.

9 Questions to Leader and Cabinet (Pages 55 - 114)

(Time limit 90 minutes)

Leader and Cabinet Members to present their reports.

Non-executive members may ask questions.

1. Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham – including the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held 14th October 2024 and 18th November 2024, the meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 25th October 2024.
2. Deputy Leader and Decent Home Portfolio Holder
3. Deputy Leader and Value for Money and Sustainability Portfolio Holder
4. Children and Young People's Portfolio Holder
5. Education and Skills Portfolio Holder
6. Enterprise Portfolio Holder
7. Adults, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder
8. Don't Trash Oldham Portfolio Holder
9. Thriving Communities and Culture Portfolio Holder

10 Notice of Administration Business

(time limit 30 minutes)

Motion 1: Get Britain Working

To be moved by Councillor Shah

Seconded by Councillor Mohon Ali

This Council notes the publication of the Get Britain Working White Paper which signals a cross-Government approach to building an economy where everyone can have the opportunity of secure, rewarding and fulfilling work

This Council further notes that Get Oldham Working has been providing support for employees, employers and those seeking employment since 2013 and has created almost 20,000 opportunities including filling 12,000 jobs, nearly 2,000 apprenticeships and 400 traineeships plus helping just under 1,800 residents into work experience placements.

This Council supports the approach laid out in the White Paper which will provide:

- support for people to get back into work if they are outside the workforce (and help to stay in employment if they have a health condition)
- access to training, an apprenticeship, or help to find work for young people (including help to avoid losing touch with the workforce at a young age)
- help for people to get a job, upskill, and get on in their career, whether they are unemployed or in employment, alongside clear obligations on people to take up support and do in return everything they can to work
- support for employers to recruit, retain and develop staff

This Council welcomes the joined-up proposals including investing in the NHS to get people treated more quickly, expansion of mental health support and setting up a Jobs and Careers Service (replacing JobCentre +) with the focus on supporting people back into work by providing a personalised service. Every 18-to-21-year old in England will have access to an apprenticeship, quality training and education opportunities or help to find a job under a new 'Youth Guarantee'. The Connect to Work scheme will provide voluntary employment offers to people with disabilities, health conditions or complex barriers to work.

This Council looks forward to the outcome of the Independent Review to better support employers to take on, and keep in work, people with disabilities.

This Council believes that the experience of Get Oldham Working and the Greater Manchester Live Well programme means Oldham is well placed to make the most of these opportunities, in particular the investment from the Greater Manchester trailblazer to mobilise local work, health and skills support.

This Council resolves to:

1. Organise a Get Britain Working summit as soon as practicable to brief partners on the White Paper and to work through the opportunities from the Labour Government's investment, including the trailblazer, to design a Get Britain Working Plan for Oldham.
2. Review the impact of Get Oldham Working and consider how Get Britain Working can enhance our local offer building on the good links with 800 local employers, integrated and personalised advice, guidance and skills support and mental health therapy already available.
3. Do everything possible to ensure Oldham residents benefit from the opportunities offered by Get Britain Working, including ensuring that our young people make the most of the 'Youth Guarantee'.

Motion 2: Bee Network

To be moved by Councillor Charters

Seconded by Councillor Rustidge

In August 2022, Greater Manchester became the first major city outside of London to introduce a cap on bus fares, prices for adults were capped at £2 a journey or £5 a day, and £1 for journey or £2.50 a day for children under 16.

Oldham was chosen to host the launch of the Tranche 2 bus franchising area in March 2024 and four months later we hosted a visit from the new Secretary of State for Transport. On both occasions we were able to showcase our new space in the Spindles, the relocated, integrated TfGM Travelshop and the fully electrified bus depot at Mumps.

The upcoming network review in Oldham is a real opportunity to affect change on future bus services in Oldham. As an example, Bolton and Wigan have seen services reintroduced and new all-night services introduced to serve the night-time economy and large employment sites such as Bolton Hospital being served through the night.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester announced that due to the Bee Network model, which relies on low fare, high patronage system like in London, that Greater Manchester will continue with the £2 bus fare until the end of 2025, subject to a mid-year review to ensure that it is still financially viable.

This Council notes:

- The per-kilometre cost of Bee Network contracts are on average one third cheaper than previous tenders under the deregulated system
- Control of Greater Manchester's buses means that profits from rising patronage of buses will be re-invested into the service and for the benefit of residents rather than going into the pockets of shareholders
- Control of the system means that we can help residents in other ways, such as offering an annual Bee Network bus pass through Oldham Credit Union, cutting the cost of bus travel by around £5 a week.
- That the Bee Network has been a success for Oldham's commuters, ensuring that they are able to get to work or school on time for less money than under the deregulated system.

This Council resolves to:

- Continue to work alongside our Greater Manchester partners, including the GMCA, Transport for Greater Manchester and the other 9 GM authorities to ensure that decisions made around public transport are focused on improving the resident experience.
- Engage pro-actively with the Network Review in early 2025, ensuring that all residents voices are heard in the process.

11 Notice of Opposition Business

(time limit 30 minutes)

Motion 1: Social Care Funding Crisis: National Insurance Contributions

To be moved by Councillor Al-Hamdani

Seconded by Councillor Hamblett

Council notes that: From April next year employer's National Insurance contributions will increase by 1.2% and the threshold at which employers must contribute to National Insurance will be reduced to all employees earning £5,000 or more.

The Institute of General Practice Management has estimated that the rise will mean the average GP surgery's tax bill will go up by around £20,000 a year. The 6,275 GP practices in England could end up facing a total of £125.5M a year in additional costs. This and other key parts of our health services unlike hospital staff are not except from this increase.

This is the equivalent of providing 2.24 million GP appointments, at £56 per appointment. The average GP surgery could therefore lose the equivalent of 357 appointments a year.

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) has revealed that, by its calculations, local authorities would face £1.8B in extra costs in 2025-26 due to increases in employers' NICs and the national living wage (NLW) announced in the last Budget, along with inflation.

While principal councils will be exempt from the rise in employer NICs, the Government it has offered no such protection to care providers, which the Nuffield Trust has estimated will face £940m in extra costs from the measure in 2025–26.

Council further notes that:

This is likely to have a significant impact on the cost of the social care to Oldham Council, which is already this year facing a £20 million overspend predicted, with overspend on adult social care at £3.8m, and children's services at £6.6m. This increase in NICs will severely hamper the Council's attempts to cut its overspend and could wipe out any predicted improvements in its financial position as a result of changes to the formula for spending indicated.

Council resolves to:

1. Write to the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government to demand that the NIC exemption is changed to ensure that health services and social care – which makes up such a significant proportion of local government spending – are included, in line with their statement that “Reform and prevention are critical if we are to turn around the cycle of system failure and cost escalation.”
2. To write to local MPs Jim McMahon, Debbie Abrahams, and Lucy Powell asking for their support in a review of the impact of the increase, including:
 - the cost implications for funding health and social care in Oldham of the NIC increase;
 - the implications for Council Tax rises to meet the demand for social care funding;
 - the potential reduction in availability of GP services which are already stretched.

Motion 2: Ethical Investment: Divestment from Fossil Fuels and Arms by the Greater Manchester Pension Fund

To be moved by Councillor Kouser

Seconded by Councillor Montaz Ali Azad

This Council notes - Oldham's Ethical and Climate Leadership:

- In July 2019, Oldham Council declared a **Climate Emergency**, committing to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2038. As part of this, the Council agreed to encourage the **Greater Manchester Pension Fund (GMPF)** to divest from fossil fuels.

Investments in Fossil Fuels and Arms:

- Approximately **6% of GMPF's portfolio** (around £1.5 billion) is invested in fossil fuel companies such as Shell, BP, and Glencore.

GMPF also holds over **£241 million** in arms companies, including BAE Systems, Boeing, and Honeywell, which supply weapons to regimes implicated in human rights

abuses and violations of international law, including in Palestine and Yemen.

Momentum for Divestment:

- On 1 November 2024, **Manchester City Council** passed a motion calling for GMPF to divest from fossil fuels and arms, joining a growing number of councils across the UK.
- Councils such as **Liverpool, Waltham Forest, Islington, and Inverclyde** have also passed motions demanding divestment from fossil fuels and arms.
- These councils, like Oldham, recognise that investments in fossil fuels and arms are incompatible with their ethical, environmental, and social responsibilities.

Human Rights and Legal Context:

- Arrest warrants issued by international legal bodies against political figures like **Benjamin Netanyahu** for alleged war crimes underline the urgent need to ensure public funds are not complicit in human rights violations.
- Arms companies in GMPF's portfolio supply weapons used in illegal wars, repression, and breaches of international law.

Environmental and Financial Risks:

- Fossil fuel investments directly contribute to climate destruction and risk becoming stranded assets as global decarbonisation accelerates.
- Arms manufacturing and deployment result in environmental devastation, the destruction of habitats, and carbon-intensive recovery processes, further exacerbating the climate crisis.

GMPF's Policy Contradiction:

- GMPF's Responsible Investment Policy commits to considering the environmental and social impact of investments, but its holdings in fossil fuels and arms directly contradict this policy.

This Council believes:

- a. Investments in fossil fuels and arms perpetuate climate destruction, human suffering, and global instability, making them morally indefensible and financially risky.
- b. Divestment aligns with Oldham's commitments to human rights, climate action, and ethical governance, while mitigating financial risks.
- c. Arrest warrants against figures like Netanyahu emphasise the urgent need to act decisively against complicity in human rights abuses.

This Council resolves to:

- **Demand Divestment:**
Request the Leader of the Council to write to GMPF and the Mayor of Greater Manchester, urging GMPF to:
 - Develop a clear plan to **divest from fossil fuels** and arms within 12 months.
 - Align with GMCA's **2038 net-zero target** (instead of GMPF's current 2050 target) and establish a medium-term milestone for 2030.
 - Commit to divesting from arms companies supplying weapons to regimes engaged in breaches of international law and human rights abuses.
- **Ensure Transparency:**

Request GMPF to implement robust and transparent reporting mechanisms, including annual updates on:

- Investments in fossil fuels, arms, and companies operating in **occupied territories** under international law.
 - Progress towards divestment and outcomes of company engagements.
 - **Empower Representation:**
 - Mandate Oldham's representative on GMPF to advocate for divestment from fossil fuels and arms at all meetings and provide regular updates to this Council on progress.
 - **Collaborate Regionally:**
 - Request the Leader of the Council to write to the other nine Greater Manchester councils, urging them to join Oldham, Manchester, and other councils in advocating for ethical investment reforms at GMPF.
- 5. Promote Ethical Reinvestment:**
- Work with GMPF to explore reinvestment in industries aligned with Oldham's ethical and environmental priorities, such as renewable energy, social housing, and sustainable infrastructure.
- 6. Engage the Public:**
- Collaborate with residents, advocacy groups, and trade unions to build awareness and support for ethical investment in Greater Manchester.

Supporting Statement:

This motion builds on the recent decision by **Manchester City Council**, which joins other councils like **Liverpool, Waltham Forest, Islington, and Inverclyde** in calling for divestment from fossil fuels and arms. Oldham has the opportunity to strengthen its leadership on climate and human rights by standing in solidarity with these councils and advocating for change at GMPF.

Arrest warrants against figures such as **Benjamin Netanyahu** for alleged war crimes highlight the moral imperative to ensure public investments are not complicit in such acts. Divesting from fossil fuels and arms not only addresses these ethical concerns but also aligns with our fiduciary responsibility to mitigate financial risks and support sustainable, long-term investments.

By supporting this motion, Oldham Council can reaffirm its commitment to ethical governance, climate action, and human rights, paving the way for a more sustainable and just future.

Motion 3: Old Failsworth Library

To be moved by Councillor Ball

Seconded by Councillor Wilkinson

The Old Failsworth Library, on Main Street, Failsworth which was bequeathed to the people of Failsworth by Sidlow Family has fallen into a great state of disrepair. A Nursery that currently rents part of the building is a popular and well used facility in Failsworth and wants to stay in the current building as it is an ideal and well-known location.

The Council has not fully utilised The Old Failsworth Library and it is only half used. It is a large and spacious building which could have partially replaced the old Community Centre and allowed local groups to use the space.

The state of repair to the building is less than satisfactory. There have been reports of leaks, damp, mould and other issues which should have been addressed before they became too expensive to repair. It is shocking that a public building has been left to rot.

The evidence of damp and mould is clear to see. The current tenant has been proactive in trying to maintain the building, while doing so they have continued to ask for repairs to be completed.

Some Failsworth Councillors have contributed in trying to help, and the money donated helped the nursery to source much needed furniture as they had been spending nursery funds allocated for the furniture on trying to spruce up the interior of the building.

Councillors and the tenant have written to the former Member of Parliament and Deputy Prime Minister Angela Raynor MP, Jim McMahon MP and Lucy Powell MP to see what help they can provide.

Inside the nursery we have seen where parts of a ceiling had come down, where the window area had rotted away and with gaps large enough for children to put fingers into the gap. There was a room so cold and damp that OMBC had to fit a very small electric wall heater high up near the ceiling which was inadequate.

We know of a number of buildings which are publicly owned, or considered public assets, which have sadly fallen into a state of disrepair. It is disappointing that buildings outside of Oldham Town Centre, such as the Old Failsworth Library are being put at risk and could end up costing the Council more in the long run due to inaction rather than taking proactive steps to protect our public assets.

The Council therefore resolves to:

1. Inform and work with all Failsworth Councillors to ensure that the current tenant of the building is kept up to date with all information regarding the lease and the repairs needed to the building.
2. That Council officers will keep all Failsworth Councillors up to date with quarterly reports on the repairs needed to the building and other issues that may arise.
3. That the Old Failsworth Library is renovated and brought up to a workable standard so that it can be used by other local community groups and or businesses.
4. That the underuse of the building for the past decade has meant the Council has lost revenue and the people of Failsworth have lost out on a community facility.
5. That a plan is put in place involving all Failsworth Councillors to save this

building for future community use.

12 Treasury Management Half Year Review Report 2024/25 (Pages 115 - 170)

A report that advises Council of the performance of the Treasury Management function for the first half of 2024/25 and provides a comparison of performance against the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy and the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators.

13 Update on Actions from Council (Pages 171 - 208)

To consider actions taken arising from previous Council meetings.

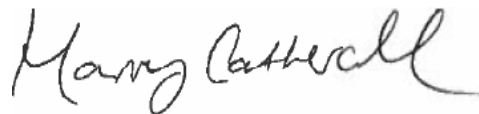
14 Calendar of Meetings 2025/26 (Pages 209 - 220)

The Council is asked to consider a proposed draft calendar of meetings for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

15 Gambling Policy (Pages 221 - 268)

A report seeking approval for the updated Gambling Policy.

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

MOTION – Mover of the Motion to MOVE



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



DEBATE ON THE MOTION: Include Timings



MOVER of Motion – Right of Reply



VOTE – For/Against/Abstain



Declare outcome of the VOTE

RULE ON TIMINGS

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

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

WITH AMENDMENT

