

# Oldham Borough Council



**Council Meeting**  
**Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> December**  
**2024**

## OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council which will be held on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> 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 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and 6<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024, the meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 25<sup>th</sup> 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.

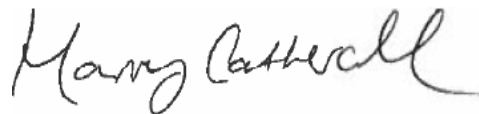
14 Calendar of Meetings 2025/26 (Pages 209 - 220)

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



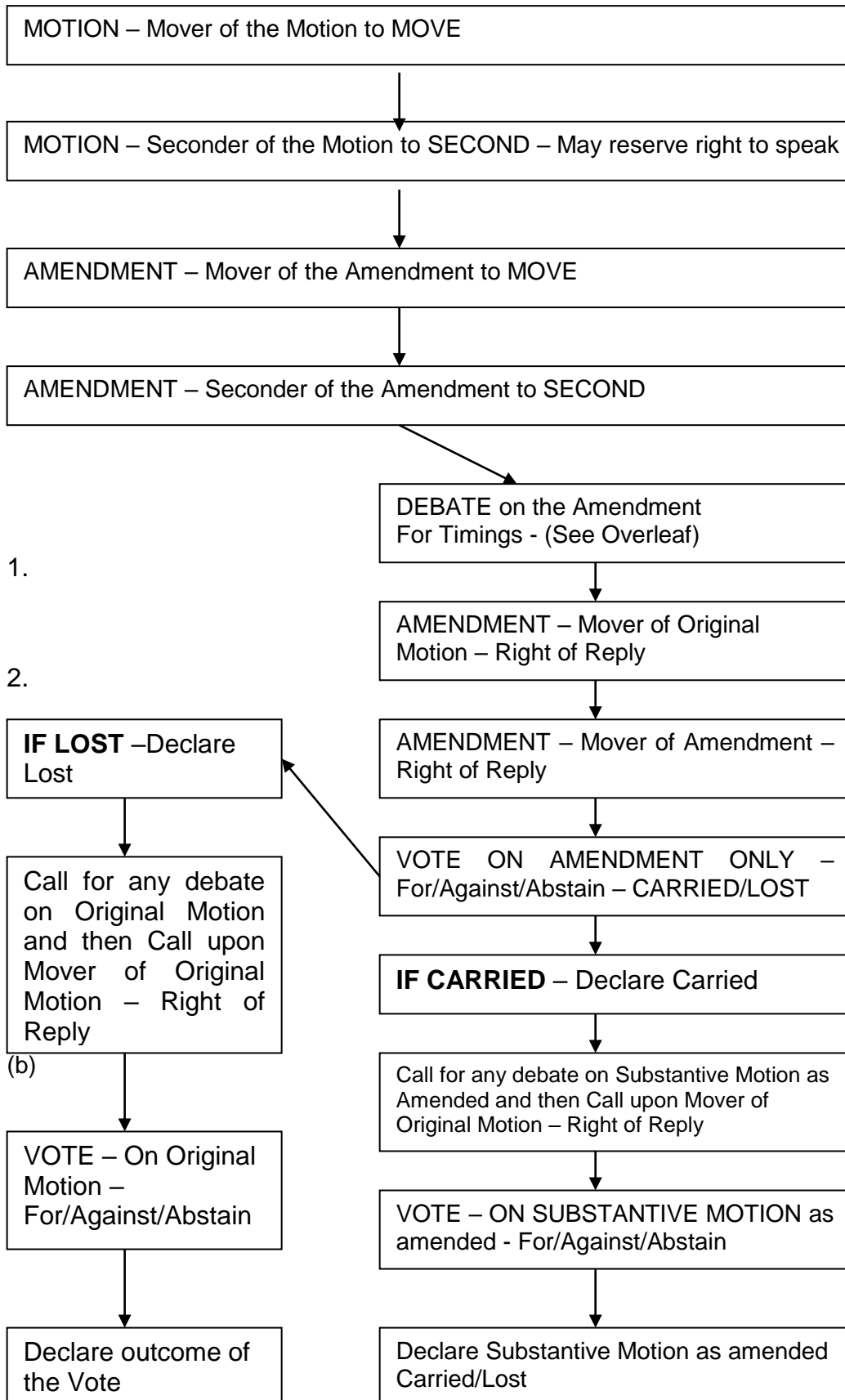
Declare outcome of the VOTE

**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



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**Present:** The Mayor – Councillor Chauhan

Councillors Adams, Akhtar, Al-Hamdani, M Ali, Z Ali, Arnott, Aslam, Azad, Ball, Bashforth, Bishop, Brownridge, Byrne, Charters, Chowhan, Cosgrove, Davis, Dean, Ghafoor, Goodwin, Hamblett, Harkness, Harrison, Hince, Hindle, Hobin, Hughes, Hurley, A Hussain, F Hussain, J. Hussain, S. Hussain, Ibrahim, Iqbal, 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 Islam

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

There were no declarations of interests.

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

None received.

4 **TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

Council considered a report of the Assistant Director of Strategy and Performance, on the Chief Executive's Working Arrangements, which set out the purpose, consideration and recommendations of a meeting of the of the Appointments Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

It was reported that Oldham Council, as part of a broader support package from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, had agreed in principle with the Mayor of Greater Manchester to assist Tameside Council in stabilising services and supporting their workforce. Tameside Council had been facing significant challenges, including ongoing issues with their Children's Services and the recent resignation of their Chief Executive and senior political leadership.

A key part of the Greater Manchester support package, and subject to Tameside Council's acceptance, was a proposal that Oldham's Chief Executive, Harry Catherall, be seconded to Tameside Council as their Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service for four days per week.

It was further reported that to complement the support package, additional assistance would be available from the other nine authorities and the Combined Authority, including support from the Greater Manchester Director of Children Services network

and the Lead for Children and Young People in the Combined Authority.



The Appointments Committee had considered the Chief Executive's working arrangements under a secondment and the recruitment of an Acting Chief Executive which would ensure that Oldham Council continued to have strong leadership.

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED the recommendations of the Appointments Committee:

That subject to Tameside Council accepting the proposed Greater Manchester package of support, council;

1. Approve the increase in working hours for Harry Catherall, Chief Executive, from four days to five and the appropriate salary implications, with no other changes to his existing terms and conditions.
2. Enter into a secondment agreement with Tameside Council for the Chief Executive of Oldham Council to serve as Interim Chief Executive at Tameside Council for four days per week, subject to review after six months.
3. Note the internal recruitment process conducted to identify a suitable Acting Chief Executive.
4. Appoint Shelley Kipling as Acting Chief Executive, subject to review after six months

#### AMMENDMENT 1

Councillor Quigg MOVED and Councillor Sheldon SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

Resolves to move the Council into Committee, for the remainder of the meeting and to allow members and officers of the Council to present and respond to questions received by members.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was LOST.

#### AMMENDMENT 2

Councillor Arnott MOVED and Councillor Adams SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

Demands a third party independent legal review and for a report to be created which will be presented to the full Council at the time of completion of said report.

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

<b>COUNCILLOR</b>		<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	
Adams	FOR	Hussain Junaid	AGAINST



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

On a recorded VOTE being taken 29 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with 30 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 0 ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST

AMMENDMENT 3

Councillor Sharp MOVED and Councillor Byrne SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

Demands that the Interim Borough Solicitor provide full legal advice on this report which will be presented to the full Council at the time of completion of said report.



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

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

Hurley Maggie	FOR	Williamson Diane	FOR
Hussain Aftab	AGAINST	Woodvine Max	FOR
Hussain Fida	AGAINST	Chauhan Zahid (MAYOR)	AGAINST

On a recorded VOTE being taken 29 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with 30 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 0 ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST

**AMMENDMENT 4**

Councillor Quigg MOVED and Councillor Arnott SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

Demand a full independent investigation by a third party into the calling of this meeting to ensure that the correct procedure were followed in the issuance of summons.

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

<b>COUNCILLOR</b>		<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	
Adams Christine	FOR	Hussain Junaid	AGAINST
Akhtar Shoab	FOR	Hussain Sajed	AGAINST
Al-Hamdani Sam	FOR	Ibrahim Nyla	FOR
Ali Mohon	AGAINST	Iqbal Nadeem	AGAINST
Ali Zaheer	FOR	Islam Mohammed Nazrul	APOLOGIES
Arnott Dave	FOR	Jabbar Abdul	AGAINST
Aslam Naseem	AGAINST	Kenyon Mark	FOR
Azad Montaz Ali	FOR	Kouser Aisha	FOR
Ball Sandra	FOR	Lancaster Luke	FOR
Bashforth Marie	AGAINST	Malik Abdul	AGAINST
Bishop Helen	FOR	Marland Alicia	FOR
Brownridge Barbara	AGAINST	McLaren Colin	AGAINST
Byrne Pam	FOR	Moore's Eddie (Deputy Mayor)	AGAINST
Charters Josh	AGAINST	Murphy Dave	FOR
Chowhan Naveed	FOR	Mushtaq Shaid	AGAINST
Cosgrove Angela	AGAINST	Nasheen Umar	AGAINST
Davis Peter	AGAINST	Navesey Lisa	AGAINST
Dean Peter	AGAINST	Quigg Lewis	FOR

Ghafoor Kamran	FOR	Rustidge Ken	AGAINST
Goodwin Chris	AGAINST	Shah Arooj	AGAINST
Hamblett Louie	FOR	Sharp Beth	FOR
Harkness Garth	FOR	Sheldon Graham	FOR
Harrison Holly	AGAINST	Shuttleworth Graham	AGAINST
Hince Marc	AGAINST	Sykes Howard	FOR
Hindle Neil	AGAINST	Taylor Elaine	AGAINST
Hobin Brian	AGAINST	Wahid Abdul	FOR
Hughes Jade	FOR	Wilkinson Mark	FOR
Hurley Maggie	FOR	Williamson Diane	FOR
Hussain Aftab	AGAINST	Woodvine Max	FOR
Hussain Fida	AGAINST	Chauhan Zahid (MAYOR)	AGAINST

On a recorded VOTE being taken 29 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with 30 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 0 ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST

#### AMMENDMENT 5

Councillor Wahid MOVED and Councillor Chowhan SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

The Oldham Group would have wished the following information to have been included in the Report

#### **1. Section 2.1 and 2.2 – Chief Executive Working Arrangements**

- A clarification must be added that, while Harry Catherall remains the Head of Paid Service, a report will be submitted to Full Council. This report will outline:
  - The risks associated with his limited availability in Oldham.
  - The mitigation measures in place to ensure the continuity of leadership.

#### **2. Section 5.3 – Legal Implications**

- The Borough Solicitor will ensure legal compliance by submitting a comprehensive report to Full Council, confirming that:
  - All statutory duties have been fulfilled.
  - The arrangement is defensible against any legal challenges, including judicial reviews.

#### **3. Section 3.3 – Recruitment of a Permanent Chief Executive**

- The timely recruitment of a **permanent successor Chief Executive**. The position to be advertised, both internally and externally.

These amendments are proposed to ensure accountability, legal compliance, and the transparent recruitment of a permanent Chief Executive, securing strong leadership for Oldham moving forward

**Additional Recommendations:**

1. The Chief Executive, **Harry Catherall**, is to submit a report to Full Council outlining how the proposed arrangement is in the best interest of Oldham. This report must:
  - Justify the risks associated with the Head of Paid Service being available for only one day per week.
  - Detail how these risks will be mitigated to ensure that strong and consistent leadership continues during this period.
2. The Borough Solicitor is instructed to submit a separate report to Full Council, ensuring that:
  - All legal obligations under the current arrangements are fully met.
  - A clear strategy for defending any potential legal challenges, including a judicial review, is provided.
3. To maintain leadership continuity, the second and fourth recommendations of the report be amended to remove the words ‘subject to review after six months’ and be replaced with an additional recommendation.

To require the Appointments Committee to immediately review arrangements for the post 6 month period with a view to ensuring that Oldham has a permanent Chief Executive after that time and that any successor post is advertised both internally and externally.

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

<b>COUNCILLOR</b>		<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	
Adams Christine	FOR	Hussain Junaid	AGAINST
Akhtar Shoab	FOR	Hussain Sajed	AGAINST
Al-Hamdani Sam	FOR	Ibrahim Nyla	FOR
Ali Mohon	AGAINST	Iqbal Nadeem	AGAINST
Ali Zaheer	FOR	Islam Mohammed Nazrul	APOLOGIES

Arnott Dave	FOR	Jabbar Abdul	AGAINST
Aslam Naseem	AGAINST	Kenyon Mark	FOR
Azad Montaz Ali	FOR	Kouser Aisha	FOR
Ball Sandra	FOR	Lancaster Luke	FOR
Bashforth Marie	AGAINST	Malik Abdul	AGAINST
Bishop Helen	FOR	Marland Alicia	FOR
Brownridge Barbara	AGAINST	McLaren Colin	AGAINST
Byrne Pam	FOR	Moore's Eddie (Deputy Mayor)	AGAINST
Charters Josh	AGAINST	Murphy Dave	FOR
Chowhan Naveed	FOR	Mushtaq Shaid	AGAINST
Cosgrove Angela	AGAINST	Nasheen Umar	AGAINST
Davis Peter	AGAINST	Navesey Lisa	AGAINST
Dean Peter	AGAINST	Quigg Lewis	FOR
Ghafoor Kamran	FOR	Rustidge Ken	AGAINST
Goodwin Chris	AGAINST	Shah Arooj	AGAINST
Hamblett Louie	FOR	Sharp Beth	FOR
Harkness Garth	FOR	Sheldon Graham	FOR
Harrison Holly	AGAINST	Shuttleworth Graham	AGAINST
Hince Marc	AGAINST	Sykes Howard	FOR
Hindle Neil	AGAINST	Taylor Elaine	AGAINST
Hobin Brian	AGAINST	Wahid Abdul	FOR
Hughes Jade	FOR	Wilkinson Mark	FOR
Hurley Maggie	FOR	Williamson Diane	FOR
Hussain Aftab	AGAINST	Woodvine Max	FOR
Hussain Fida	AGAINST	Chauhan Zahid (MAYOR)	AGAINST

On a recorded VOTE being taken 29 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT with 30 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 0 ABSTENTIONS. The AMENDMENT was therefore LOST

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

<b>COUNCILLOR</b>		<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	
Adams Christine	AGAINST	Hussain Junaid	FOR
Akhtar Shoab	ABSTAIN	Hussain Sajed	FOR
Al-Hamdani	FOR	Ibrahim Nyla	ABSTAIN

Sam			
Ali Mohon	FOR	Iqbal Nadeem	FOR
Ali Zaheer	ABSTAIN	Islam Mohammed Nazrul	APOLOGIES
Arnott Dave	AGAINST	Jabbar Abdul	FOR
Aslam Naseem	FOR	Kenyon Mark	AGAINST
Azad Montaz Ali	AGAINST	Kouser Aisha	ABSTAIN
Ball Sandra	AGAINST	Lancaster Luke	AGAINST
Bashforth Marie	FOR	Malik Abdul	FOR
Bishop Helen	AGAINST	Marland Alicia	-
Brownridge Barbara	FOR	McLaren Colin	FOR
Byrne Pam	AGAINST	Moore's Eddie (Deputy Mayor)	FOR
Charters Josh	FOR	Murphy Dave	-
Chowhan Naveed	ABSTAIN	Mushtaq Shaid	FOR
Cosgrove Angela	FOR	Nasheen Umar	FOR
Davis Peter	FOR	Navesey Lisa	FOR
Dean Peter	FOR	Quigg Lewis	AGAINST
Ghafoor Kamran	ABSTAIN	Rustidge Ken	FOR
Goodwin Chris	FOR	Shah Arooj	FOR
Hamblett Louie	AGAINST	Sharp Beth	-
Harkness Garth	FOR	Sheldon Graham	AGAINST
Harrison Holly	FOR	Shuttleworth Graham	FOR
Hince Marc	FOR	Sykes Howard	FOR
Hindle Neil	FOR	Taylor Elaine	FOR
Hobin Brian	FOR	Wahid Abdul	ABSTAIN
Hughes Jade	AGAINST	Wilkinson Mark	AGAINST
Hurley Maggie	AGAINST	Williamson Diane	ABSTAIN
Hussain Aftab	FOR	Woodvine Max	AGAINST
Hussain Fida	FOR	Chauhan Zahid (MAYOR)	FOR

On a recorded VOTE being taken 33 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the MOTION with 15 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 8 ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

**RESOLVED:**

That subject to Tameside Council accepting the proposed Greater Manchester package of support, council;

1. Approve the increase in working hours for Harry Catherall, Chief Executive, from four days to five and the appropriate salary implications, with no other changes to his existing terms and conditions.
2. Enter into a secondment agreement with Tameside Council for the Chief Executive of Oldham Council to serve as Interim Chief Executive at Tameside Council for four days per week, subject to review after six months.
3. Note the internal recruitment process conducted to identify a suitable Acting Chief Executive.
5. Appoint Shelley Kipling as Acting Chief Executive, subject to review after six months.

The meeting started at 5.30 pm and ended at 8.00 pm



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

Councillors: Adams, Al-Hamdani, M Ali, Z Ali, Arnott, Aslam, Azad, Ball, Bashforth, Bishop, Brownridge, Byrne, Charters, Chowhan, 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**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Akhtar.

2 **TO ORDER THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 11TH SEPTEMBER 2024 BE SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council, held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 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**

The Mayor advised Council that Motion 4, at agenda item 11 (Honouring Veterans) has been withdrawn from the agenda, at the request of Councillor Wilkinson, the Mover of the Motion.

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

With respect to agenda items 10 and 11, the Mayor advised members that further to paragraphs 12.4.1 and 12.4.3 of the Council's Procedure Rules, there would be:

- a. A change of Mover and Seconder to the second administration motion, at item 10 (Supporting Kinship Carers). The motion will now be moved by Cllr Shaid Mushtaq and seconded by Cllr Lisa Navesey.
- b. A change of Seconder to item 11 Motion 3 (immediate Ceasefire in Gaza); the Motion will now be Seconded by Cllr Wahid.

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

## **YOUTH COUNCIL**

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

8

## **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

### 1. Question from Imran Ghaffar:

Like many residents in Oldham, I am excited to learn more about the 480-space sixth form college, a collaboration between Eton College and Star Academies, being built on the site of the outdoor market and car park.

As both of us are practicing Muslims, will the leader of the Council confirm that the school will have an Islamic ethos and educate our young children according to the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH)? Will it be for just boys and those of Islamic faith only as some have suggested?

Councillor Mohon Ali, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills replied, that following various announcements from the Government, we understand the financial challenges they are facing and we support the need to review projects and their costs, particularly in light of the improvements that are needed to existing school buildings.

Every Oldham child, no matter where they live or whatever their background, is entitled to the opportunities which can help them fulfil their potential. The Eton Star Oldham proposal supports us in achieving this ambition. We're confident in the difference this project will make to the lives of children and young people in Oldham and we'll continue to make this case to the government.

Eton Star Oldham would focus on admitting bright young students who aspire to attend top universities, regardless of their background. My goal is for the school to welcome many students on free school meals, looked-after children, those from disadvantaged areas, and those who would be the first in their families to attend university. This will give more children in Oldham the chance to achieve great outcomes, and I'm incredibly proud we've been able to secure this for our community.

The college would offer a focused curriculum with academically demanding subjects. Students will start with four A-levels, with some choosing to focus on three A-levels later to fit their personal progression paths. Alongside A-levels, all students will study for a 'diploma.' They will also have access to Eton College's extensive network of teachers, alumni, scholars, partners, and educational experts.

Eton Star Oldham would be open to both girls and boys from all faiths, as well as those with no faith.

Whilst we await the outcome of the free school review we will continue to do all we can to ensure all children and young people in Oldham have the best start in life.

### 2. Question from Peter Webb:

We live in a Christian country with an established Church and the Sovereign as the head of that Church.

We are a tolerant nation with many faiths. Sadly, the personal is becoming the political.

Whilst the Council promotes the lighting up of the Civic Centre for those of the Islamic faith, like was done on the 15<sup>th</sup>

September 2024, it does feel like others are conspicuous by their absence, due in part perhaps to the Leader of the Council conflating personal religious beliefs with those Civic duties that treat all equally.

So will the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, Christian celebration of Christmas & Easter, and Hindu festival of Divali be lit up in lights?

Councillor Dean, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture replied that Oldham is proud to celebrate our diverse communities, and we recognise festivals, important dates in different faiths, and other significant events throughout the year.

For example, we raise the England flag for St George's Day, hold a rainbow parade to celebrate our LGBTQ+ communities, and mark occasions like Bonfire Night with a fireworks display.

This weekend, we'll honour Remembrance Sunday with a Festival of Remembrance, including poppy projections on our civic tower. And of course, we'll have festive lights around the town as we approach Christmas.

Our approach is to celebrate, remember, and reflect together on the things that make Oldham a wonderful place. We work to bring people together, ensuring that all our communities – of every faith and none – feel respected and valued.

### 3. Question from Hannah Roberts:

Covid and flu vaccinations are now available for people over 65 & in target groups. I have heard that take up is lower this year. Can the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Social Care give us any information about progress in Oldham? What can the Council do to promote these vaccinations that protect against what can be a serious disease & also save valuable NHS resources by keeping people out of hospital?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, replied, thanking Hannah Roberts for her question noting that as we enter the flu season, Oldham Council staff are working with the NHS and other partners to provide clear messages about the importance of all vaccinations, including the flu and Covid-19 vaccines. Flu is highly contagious and can be very serious. Getting the flu vaccine doesn't just protect you; it also helps prevent the flu from spreading to others who may be more vulnerable. By reducing the spread of illnesses like flu, we can help reduce hospital admissions and ease pressure on health services.

To support this, we're making every contact count in our work with care home staff and other adult social care providers to raise awareness of vaccinations. We're also sharing information through newsletters, poster campaigns, and opportunities to talk directly with the community, such as wellbeing talks at leisure

centres. Health practitioners delivering vaccines in Oldham have access to workshops on how to discuss vaccine hesitancy positively with residents.

In addition, we're working closely with schools and our immunisation partners to ensure consistent messaging, so every parent in Oldham has the chance to consider flu vaccination for their children.

As of 17<sup>th</sup> October, Greater Manchester figures show that around 20% of those eligible had received their winter booster.

#### 4. Question from Brian Kelly

The Saddleworth Community Hydro Project recently celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and generates enough sustainable electricity to power about 100 homes via the national grid, with an annual saving of 170 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Oldham has a good track record of delivering and supporting green projects and pioneering action to move towards net zero carbon production. Could the Cabinet Member responsible summarise progress on implementing the Council's Green New Deal Strategy?

Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader and the Cabinet member for Value for Money and Sustainability, replied thanking Mr Kelly for his question and for recognising Oldham's strong track record in supporting green technologies and initiatives.

Oldham's pioneering Green New Deal Strategy was adopted in March 2020. Since then, the Council has been working hard, despite challenges, to put in place a delivery programme that will guide the borough to Net Zero.

Although the Council has limited internal resources for this important work due to ongoing financial pressures, we've still managed to secure over £12 million in grant funding for various projects. This funding supports initiatives like decarbonising public buildings, installing LED lighting at Oldham Leisure Centre, creating Oldham's Low Carbon Heat Network, and participating in the GMCA/DESNZ Local Net Zero Accelerator programme to form an Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership.

This new partnership is expected to bring in the investment and resources needed to achieve Net Zero. Once we have our Strategic Energy Partner on board, there will be a focus on Community-Led Energy Planning, ensuring that residents have a say in how low-carbon initiatives benefit their neighbourhoods. The partnership should be fully operational by spring 2026, with key projects like the heat network following soon after.

Another exciting project is the Wrigley Head Solar Farm, which the Council is funding. This project will reduce carbon emissions, generate revenue for the Council, and bring ecological benefits to a former industrial landfill site. Construction is set to begin before Christmas 2024 and should be completed by spring/summer 2025.

#### 5. Question from Jenny Harrison:

Oldham Council has done a really good job renovating Royton Town Hall and Library which have just reopened. On a recent visit, I was very impressed with the sympathetic renovation. Could the responsible Cabinet Member explain what services will be available from the town hall and how local people can make best use of the building.

The library is free to join and borrow books from - what else is on offer.

Councillor Dean, Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture replied thanking Jenny for her question and confirming that the following services will be available from Royton Town Hall:

- Mind – offering appointments for mental health support
- Citizens Advice – offering drop-in sessions, as well as appointments for more in-depth support
- Early Help – drop-in support for local families
- Your Health Oldham – appointments for Stop Smoking
- Guinness Housing drop-in surgeries

A number of other partners are currently confirming arrangements, and we will be announcing these elements of support in the near future.

In addition to book borrowing, residents can access IT services including online basics course to support with digital skills.

Other regular activities include Bounce and Rhyme sessions for families with children under 5, Baby Art Studio and the Royton Readers Groups.

Programme of events (author events, family activities and local history talks etc) will be scheduled throughout the year to tie in with local, regional and national campaigns.

#### 6. Question from Dominic Wall:

The work at the Old Library has been underway for a while. Could the Leader of the Council confirm what the building will be used for and when it will be open for use? Does Cllr Shah know what social value – for example Apprenticeships and local jobs – has been added because of the project?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Building a Better Oldham replied thanking Dominic for his question and stating that she was pleased to visit the building yesterday with Cabinet colleagues to see the progress and to hear directly about the benefits for Oldham's residents and communities through our partnership with Tilbury Douglas. We expect the Old Library building to open next summer. It will offer a great mix of creative, cultural, and community spaces along with civic and public services. This includes improved facilities for community groups to work together and for those needing more space for their activities. There will be extra gallery space on the top floor, connected by a bridge to the existing gallery, as well as a new Council Chamber, Mayoral chamber, rooms for elected members, and committee meeting rooms.

The Old Library project has provided £9.2m in opportunities for local suppliers and trades, and it has generated £7.7m in social value. This includes 67% of the contracted workforce being local, 612 weeks of apprenticeship training, and 19 new jobs created.

Tilbury Douglas has also contributed 263 hours of educational activities, attended career events at Oldham College, supported St Mary's Primary School's safety poster campaign, and helped at Oldham's job fair with Job Centre Plus, as well as Positive Steps.

In addition, £9,926 has been donated to charities, including the Wall of Kindness, Oldham Working Wardrobe, and the Community Wardrobe. They've also supported Easter and Christmas donation drives for Oldham Council's Christmas toy appeal for children in social care.

#### 7. Question from Paul Scoltock:

Can the cabinet member give an update on the work being done by the Council and TGFM to reduce antisocial parking on Union Street?

Councillor Goodwin, Cabinet member for Don't Trash Oldham replied thanking Paul for his question and agreeing that this matter was a real issue.

We're currently developing plans to introduce Oldham's first Red Route Corridor (a "no stopping" zone), and Union Street has been chosen as one of the first areas to benefit. On Red Routes, stopping is only allowed for emergency services vehicles. Blue Badge holders and taxis (Hackney Carriages) can also stop briefly to let passengers get in or out but are not allowed to wait. Unlike traditional yellow line restrictions, Red Routes can be monitored and enforced with camera technology, which serves as a stronger deterrent against illegal parking.

Over the next few months, we'll consult on this plan and advertise the Traffic Regulation Orders, with the goal of implementing the scheme early in the next financial year, once funding from TfGM is secured.

#### 8. Question from Candida Garvey:

With regard to our council tax payments - is part of this money .... Residents of Oldham pay (apart from those who use their home as a place of worship?) Maintaining roads, pavements and street lighting, and cleaning your streets?

This is a simple yes or no answer?

The answer is quite clearly NO. Our villages. Side street have never ever looked so tired and scruffy.

Next question.... Where is our public money going? Why have we no weed contract? Sending out workers with a bit of weed spray once in several years is not cutting it.

We want answers and we want the pride putting back into our villages. Lees/Springhead/ Grotton totally neglected.

Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Value for Money and Sustainability replied Thank you for your

question, Candida. First, I'd like to clarify that the idea that people who use their home as a place of worship don't pay council tax is simply not true. There are exemptions that may reduce council tax – for example, for those on a low income – but religion is not a factor.

To address the substance of your question: council tax funds a vast range of services. According to the Local Government Association, councils provide over 800 services to residents, from maintaining roads, pavements, and street lighting to much more.

Council tax also supports critical services, such as social care for older adults, support for looked-after children, and emergency and temporary accommodation for those in need. While these services are under immense pressure, we remain committed to essential services like street cleaning, road maintenance, and preserving our wonderful green spaces. We know a cleaner and greener borough is important to residents, that's why this Labour administration launched our Don't Trash Oldham campaign a number of years ago. Our staff are out across the borough every day, in all weathers, cleaning up and making environmental improvements.

But they are a small team and we can't be everywhere at once. Everyone can do their bit to help – from disposing of their waste properly to joining a local litter pick. But Don't Trash Oldham is not just about fly-tipping and waste - it's about improving the whole environment. Throughout the campaign we've continued to listen to residents and that's why we've recently launched a new boroughwide operation to clean all of our 47,500 roadside gulleys. We've taken the feedback on board and getting on with the job.

All this work is part of our aim to get the basics right and ensure everyone lives in a cleaner, greener place. If there are specific areas you'd like us to look at, please feel free to reach out, and we'll address them as soon as possible.

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

9

## **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. Councillor Shah, Leader and Building a Better Oldham Portfolio – including the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024; the Minutes of the meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and the Minutes of the meeting of the AGMA Executive Board held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

**Councillor Sykes, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group**  
Question 1: [IX Wireless](#)

Thank you, Mr Mayor,

People across Oldham Borough have been left feeling ignored and angry with regards to the situation with IX masts – not least in Shaw, Crompton and Royton.



The communication with residents has been woeful by this company. None-existent in many cases. The first people know is if a notice pasted on a lamp post.

You can then respond to the sham consultation – I am not aware of one proposal being amended following constructive suggestions from residents, businesses or councillors.

When you don't communicate, you make the disruption worse for people. And it leads to the resentment we've seen. This is all completely or nearly avoidable with proper communication.

So will the Leader please fully explain to the Council, what the current situation with IX Wireless's highways licenses is?

On what basis was the permit revoked?

Will she commit to proactively informing councillors and members of the public - **ahead of time** – as to when the permit will be reinstated?

And will she write to the Technology Minister, Chris Bryant MP, to ask that companies are required to share broadband infrastructure where possible in order to minimise disruption for residents? Something the law says but I see no evidence of this happening anywhere in our Borough.

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, replied that she understood Councillor Sykes' concerns regarding this matter and she undertook to write to the Technology Minister, Chris Bryant MP, as suggested by Councillor Sykes.

#### Question 2: Eton Star College

Councillor Sykes asked his second question regarding the Eton Star College. At the last question time I asked the Leader why she thought the Eton Star 6<sup>th</sup> Form Oldham project was necessary.

It's not a surprise that I and many others fail to be convinced...

But it seems that the new Secretary of State for Education was even less impressed, because since we last met, Bridget Phillipson has paused plans for the opening of 44 new state schools – including those backed by Eton.

So, we can now add the Labour Secretary of State to the list of people who disagree with the Leader that Eton Star is the right thing for Oldham Borough. That list includes:



- The National Education Union.
- Teaching professionals, parents and pupils in Oldham who have never been consulted.
- And even the Council's own officers, who told Children's Scrutiny Committee in March that Eton Star would not help bridge the post-16 gap we have in Oldham Borough.

So, can I ask the Leader... what is her plan if her own Government decides she is wrong... and decides to mothball the Eton Star project?

Also, what is the current value of the Tommyfield Market site and is the true market value of the site going to be paid to the council or are we gifting it to Eton?

The Leader may not have that figure to hand - and if not I happy she writes to me with it, but she must know if we are being paid or gifting the land?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council, replied that she still wholeheartedly supported the Eton Star project and that she would, on behalf of the Council, be making appropriate representations to the Secretary of State for Education regarding this matter. With regard to the value of the Tommyfield Market site in Oldham, Councillor Shah undertook to provide Councillor Sykes with a written response to his enquiry.

Question from Councillor Sheldon, Leader of the Conservative Group:

Thank you, Mr Mayor

Last week, the new Labour. government unveiled its budget, promising economic stability and certainty. However, for small businesses in Oldham and across the whole country, the measures outlined by the Chancellor could very well lead to instability and uncertainty about their business' future.

Small businesses will be burdened with additional financial pressures due to this budget, especially with both the minimum wage and employer's National Insurance contributions rising.

The vast majority of Oldham's businesses are small businesses with only a handful of workers. They are the lifeblood of our borough. Unfortunately, these are businesses that already face the pressure of the cost-of-living crisis, and Labour's budget has only added to their struggles.

What this risks is that businesses will either not take on new staff or potentially even let employees go. The knock-on effects of this should be obvious, and we should be working to avoid the impact of any businesses going under or laying off staff.

My question is this: What is this council going to do to help those small businesses who will be impacted, and may be put at risk, by the Labour government's budget?



Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council replied that the proposals in the Chancellor's budget would offer robust support to small businesses and provide the right circumstances in which they can operate successfully. In addition, the Council was committed to providing and supporting large-scale infrastructure projects that would provide employment opportunities for local people. The Council was actively engaging with local organisations in this regard, including with the Federation of Small Businesses.

Question from Councillor Ghafoor, Leader of the Oldham Group  
Councillor Ghafoor asked if MUSE Developments Limited, or Oldham Council, had received confirmation for the major development and infrastructure work that is due to be carried out in Oldham town centre?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council replied that the Council is working with MUSE and other developers to promote the development of Oldham's town centre area, to make it a better place to live and work in.

b. Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader and Decent Homes Portfolio Holder

Question from Councillor McLaren - How is the Planning Department coping with the numbers of Planning Applications being submitted and does the Council know how Oldham will benefit from the additional resources for Planning Officers and developing skills announced in last week's budget?

Councillor Taylor replied, stating that the Council welcomes the Government's announcement to create roles for 300 additional graduate and apprentice planners mentioned in the budget last week, as any such investment in skilled planning resource is very much welcomed. There is a growing shortage of skilled planners in the UK, as fewer young people are choosing to go into the profession, so any move to encourage more young people to choose planning as a career will be positive. We anticipate more information being shared with all local authorities over the coming weeks.

As with many services across the Council, the Planning team is carrying a number of vacancies at this moment in time while recruitment activities continue. As a result, it has been a challenge ensuring the number of planning applications coming into the council are processed in a timely manner. However, we have two new colleagues joining the team next week and other measures are in place to help address the small backlog that has developed, to help ensure the service is running smoothly once again before Christmas.

Question from Councillor Hamblett – A significant overspend in this year’s budget is the result of high costs associated with temporary accommodation. We will soon be vacating the civic centre and QE hall. Could we consider the feasibility of using some of the existing buildings or using part of the site when this is re-developed to convert this to temporary accommodation?

Councillor Taylor replied, explaining that the significant overspend referenced relates to the Council meeting its statutory duties to support Oldham’s residents when they find themselves homeless. It is really sad to continue to see so many families continuing to struggle to afford their own home, but the Council continues to provide true public service by ensuring Oldham’s residents are not left homeless especially at this time of year as the cold winter weather approaches. There are many activities in flight to help address both the cost and more importantly the availability of temporary accommodation placements. This includes working with exploring new service delivery models, working with the partners and also the reuse of Council land and assets.

Question from Councillor Arnott – Councillor Arnott expressed his concerns at the high numbers of families with children that were being housed in temporary accommodation in Oldham, from outside of the Borough.

Councillor Taylor shared Councillor Arnott’s concerns and agreed that the current system was not working as it should.

Question from Councillor Junaid Hussain – the numbers of households in temporary accommodation is very worrying and new affordable housing is urgently needed. New applications to build social and affordable homes are welcome – especially given changes to the right to buy which will protect newly built social homes. The Chancellor announced an additional £500m for the Affordable Homes Programme in 2025/6. What will be the impact on house-building in Oldham?

Councillor Taylor replied that the Council has a pipeline of housing sites that it wants to prioritise for truly affordable and social housing and as opportunities arise to access funding such as this additional £500m, we are ready to put sites forward for the funding which will then accelerate the development of those much-needed homes for our residents.

Government departments have not shared all the detail about this new funding yet, however we are aware that this is a “top-up” to the budget and Oldham is ready to accelerate the delivery of house-building, especially on brownfield sites. Mr Mayor as part of the Council’s local response to the national housing crisis, we set up and established a housing task force with private landlords, registered social landlords, housing developers and third sector partners, and I am aware that ahead of the next meeting in December, there is a planned workshop to investigate how this announcement will benefit Oldham and how we can work co-operatively to get more affordable homes built.

c. Councillor Jabbar Deputy Leader and Value for Money  
and Sustainability Portfolio Holder

Question from Councillor Byrne – I read that councils are sitting on £18billion earmarked for Affordable Housing, Roads and Schools despite the financial pressures facing local government. Some of these monies not spent for 5 years.

How much was received in grants for these purposes by this Council:

How was it spent:

How much is retained for future projects.

Councillor Jabbar replied that Over the 5 financial years from 2019/20 to 2023/24 the Council received £88.8m of capital grant funding to support Housing, Roads and School Projects.

The grants were spent on schemes to support the provision of housing and the development of housing sites, the provision of school places, major school maintenance projects and Special Educational Needs provision along with highway improvement and maintenance projects across the borough. On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 there were a total amount of £23.5m of funding that is retained for future projects. This is incorporated in the Council's current Capital Programme and will be utilised over the life of the current capital programme to deliver schemes to support Housing, Roads and schools within the borough.

Question from Councillor Nasheen – Could you give an update on how the Budget announced last week has affected the council's financial position?

Councillor Jabbar replied, that the government had announced **£1.3bn** specifically for local government plus a range of other measures

- Extended Producer Responsibilities (£1.1bn),
- Homelessness (£233m),
- children's social care reforms (£250m)

Which appear to take the total to some **£3bn**.

The budget indicated a reform of the way funding is allocated across the local government sector – starting with the *additional* funding announced for 2025-26 ahead of a broader redistribution of funding through a multi-year settlement from 2026-27.

In addition, the government has committed to provide resources to the public sector help fund the additional NI costs.

We don't yet know the exact impact on Oldham – this will become clear when the Local Government Finance Settlement is announced in December. At this stage we are confident that there will be additional resources than previously outlined in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and are working through a range of scenarios. It is also clear that there remain significant challenges to overcome and hard decisions to make in order to produce a balanced budget for 2025-26.

Question from Councillor Al-Hamdani - Could the Cabinet Member responsible please confirm what actions the Council have taken to inform residents receiving Universal Credit who are impacted by the decision of the DWP to not pay for housing in the 53rd financial week during leap years (such as this year). Will they commit to writing to the minister responsible to request that payments are made in the 53rd financial week, to ensure that additional financial pressure is not put on residents who are often struggling to budget from week to week, never mind saving up for an additional rent payment at the end of the year?

Councillor Jabbar replied that universal credit payments are paid monthly in arrears and are designed to mirror most wage payments in order to enable claimants to budget effectively, thereby making any transition into work easier for the claimant. If rent is paid weekly, a monthly amount will be calculated by multiplying the weekly rent by 52 and dividing by 12, unless rent is charged over fewer than 52 weeks.

The Council can provide help for tenants who may be struggling to meet their rent payments via Discretionary Housing Payments, which can be applied for on the Council's website. There is also additional help available for households this winter with the continuation of the Household Support Fund, which the government has committed to continue into 2025/26. Winter support for residents has a communications plan to ensure all residents are aware of the help and support available to them.

d. Councillor Mushtaq, Children and Young People Portfolio Holder

Question from Councillor Aslam – The report outlines steps to create 17 new semi-independent placements and 12 new over-18s placements for young people, together with setting up 3 new children's homes. Can you outline how these homes will operate and why it is important to provide local homes for local children?

Councillor Mushtaq replied that Oldham's placement sufficiency strategy is to provide a home for every child in care by increasing the accommodation choices available for children and young people that meets their needs, and which will enable the council to have greater autonomy and control in meeting increasing placement demand, with reduced reliance on high-cost residential placements commissioned in the private provider market.

The new children's homes will be internally run by the children's social care residential service. New local semi-independent supported accommodation and over 18's placements are commissioned through private providers registered on the Placements Northwest Framework supporting young people to prepare for independent living.

By delivering a comprehensive and sufficient mix of high quality, local accommodation choices both internally and through commissioned arrangements, there are a range of benefits to

ensure the children in our care live in a safe, secure, stable, and caring home. These include:

- Children and young people remaining close to their existing support networks such as family, friends, school, and communities.
- Familiar settings that improve placement stability.
- Access to local education, employment, and training opportunities.
- Wider accommodation choices enabling better matching of accommodation, that offer the right environment to give children and young people the best chance of reaching their full potential, academically, socially, and emotionally.

Increased local job opportunities for our residents as part of the operational delivery model.

Question from Councillor Williamson - Thousands of children under councils up and down the country are participating in Page 2 of 2 the 'Fix Our Food' trial – extending Free School meals to more children and helping families break through language barriers and stigma to access Free School Meals. Will the Cabinet Member agree to look at including Oldham in this trial and support the work of 'Fix Our Food', by writing to the Secretary of State for Education urging her to reform Free School Meals so that eligible families are auto enrolled?

Councillor Mushtaq replied, thanking Councillor Williamson for being alerted to the Fix Our Food programme. He was delighted to say that already in Oldham, any application for Housing Benefits or Council Tax Relief is automatically also treated as a claim for a Free School Meal and it is awarded at the same time as their claim for the benefit is assessed. Further, the Council ensures that any cases where there have been changes to a benefit claim that would newly qualify a resident's child for a Free School Meal are processed. We also have an opt-out approach, rather than opt-in, so that claimants have to actually get in touch to say they don't want the Free School Meal entitlement, rather than the other way round. This means we are fully optimising entitlement across Oldham.

e. Councillor Mohon Ali, Education and Skills Portfolio

Question from Councillor Sajed Hussain - The report demonstrates that school leaders and staff are working very hard to ensure pupils attend school and stay on roll despite the significant challenges emerging after the pandemic. The Government has confirmed ending the VAT exemption on private school fees will be used to fund mental health support in schools. How soon will the funding be made available?

Councillor Mohon Ali replied, thanking Councillor Sajed Hussain for acknowledging the work going on across Oldham to maximise school attendance.

The Government has not yet announced when this funding for additional mental health support in schools will be made available.

We will continue to work to lobby our local MPs and the Department for Education direct to maximise the amount of extra funding available to Oldham so our schools and pupils can benefit out of it.

Question from Councillor Bishop - Despite repeated assurances from the Leader and the Cabinet that Eton Star Oldham is the right project to meet local educational need, the Department for Education has placed the project into review. Does the Cabinet Member have confidence that this is still the right project for Oldham?

Councillor Mohon Ali replied that following various announcements from the Government, we understand the financial challenges they are facing and we support the need to review projects and their costs, particularly in light of the improvements that are needed to existing school buildings. Every Oldham child, no matter where they live or whatever their background, is entitled to the opportunities which can help them fulfil their potential. The Eton Star Oldham proposal supports us in achieving this ambition. We're confident in the difference this project will make to the lives of children and young people in Oldham and we'll continue to make this case to the government. Whilst we await the outcome of the free school review, we will continue to do all we can to ensure all children and young people in Oldham have the best start in life.

Question from Councillor Quigg – Councillor Quigg sought clarification on who was responsible for footing the bill, for the Eton Star Project: the Council, the Department of Education or Eton Star?

Councillor Mohon Ali undertook to provide Councillor Quigg with a written answer to his question.

f. Councillor Fida Hussain, Enterprise Portfolio Holder

Question from Councillor Malik - Get Britain Working is a £240 million cash-injection to accelerate the rollout of local services to help people back into work. The funding will partly go towards boosting the rollout of Get Britain Working "trailblazers" in local areas, which will bring together and streamline work, health, and skills support to disabled people and those who are long term sick. Do we know if Oldham will be one of these trailblazers?

Councillor Fida Hussain replied that the Council welcomes the Government's commitment to increasing economic growth. The Budget announced that DWP will shift its focus from welfare to work with a £240 million package to open up opportunities to millions of people left behind and denied the opportunity to get into work and get on at work.

DWP will publish a white paper to set out how it will address spiralling economic inactivity which sees a record 2.8 million people locked out of work due to long term sickness and are part of the Government's ambition to reach an 80% employment rate.

Historically Oldham has an employment rate of c. 70% and so the Council will lobby to secure investment in Oldham to support our residents. This programme will be managed by Greater Manchester Combined Authority with funding devolved to the Mayor.

Question from Councillor Sajed Hussain - shops in town centres across Oldham are experiencing high levels of shoplifting – the crackdown on organised gangs and low value crime announced in the budget is very welcome. What can local business organisations and the Council do to support this?

Councillor Fida Hussain replied that instances of shoplifting nationally are at their highest since records began 20 years ago, and real figures are likely to be much higher. Shop lifting cost the retail sector nearly £2bn last year, which results in price rises impacting on individual, families and communities. The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) are prioritising retail crime with the recent commitment to scrap the £200 shop theft threshold and making assaults on shop workers a criminal offence. They are also planning to establish a Retail Crime Forum for retailers to confidently implement tactics against shop theft.

In Oldham we encourage our retailers to report all incidents so that we can see the true impact on our retailers. We work closely with GMP and will ensure that these latest improvements to managing retail crime are prioritised in Oldham.

Across our high streets we encourage retailers to work together to share information through local security meetings.

Question from Councillor Quigg - How many people have used the Hive? Will the Council ensure an open and transparent tendering process that encourages local businesses to take part?

Councillor Fida Hussain undertook to provide Councillor Quigg with a written response to his question.

Question from Councillor Ghafoor – has a specific site been identified for the outdoor market and what are the timescales?

Councillor Fida Hussain undertook to provide Councillor Ghafoor with a written response to his question.

g. Councillor Brownridge, Adults, Health and Wellbeing  
Portfolio Holder

Question from Councillor Bashforth - Could you explain what missingness in healthcare means and how the Focused Care model helps to deliver better use of resources and good health outcomes for residents?



Councillor Brownridge replied that the study into 'Missingness' mentioned in my portfolio report is looking into people who repeatedly miss appointments and their medical status isn't known to their GPs.

Research is looking into why people are 'missing', trying to identify barriers people face in accessing services and what interventions are needed that can be embedded into practice. Some factors we expect the research to find are; Patients not identifying a need for an appointment; Poor communication or language barriers at appointments; Patients having competing demands, priorities, and urgencies; Travel and mobility issues; Lack of choice or flexibility in appointment times, locations, and people; costs associated with making appointments, such as waiting on hold; Appointments only being available at times when the patient has to be at work or looking after children. We're hoping to make invisible people visible and deliver better health outcomes.

Question from Councillor Al-Hamdani – Councillor Al-Hamdani was aware of at least one GP Practice in Oldham that had ceased taking bookings for appointments in-person or via the telephone and was only accepting online bookings?

Councillor Brownridge replied that she was aware of the situation but undertook to investigate this matter further.

Question from Councillor Hamblett - Would it be possible to have more scrutiny of Oldham Total Care?

Cllr Brownridge replied that she would look at ways in which this could be made to happen.

h. Councillor Goodwin, Don't Trash Oldham Portfolio Holder

Question from Councillor Rustidge - thank you for the update on Highways work. The Chancellor announced an extra £500m nationally for pothole repair – do you know what the process will be for allocating this funding and what Oldham is likely to receive?

Councillor Goodwin replied that he was pleased to hear about the additional funds that have been allocated. As with other such announcements, the money is allocated to the region, which, for us at Oldham, is Greater Manchester Combined Authority – the money will then be split between the authorities and is traditionally based on a set calculation so as to ensure a fair and transparent allocation. We will share details of the amounts once these are known and as with other allocations, and we will ensure the money is spent on improving Oldham's highway network.

Question from Councillor Murphy (1) - Despite repeated interventions from Opposition councillors, Oldham Council still hasn't put renewed dog fouling protection order in place. When

does the Cabinet Member expect this situation to be rectified and what other enforcement measures will be put in place to protect our street, parks and green spaces from irresponsible pet owners?

Councillor Goodwin replied that the current focus of the Environmental Enforcement team is on areas of work that generate the most complaints from residents.

So far this year, the team have received over 5,700 referrals of fly-tipping and it is this area where the team focus their attention investigating incidents and fining individuals where they can. The capacity of the team is currently being reviewed along with examining other types of approach across enforcement and once the restructures are complete, we will engage with elected members for the priorities in your communities.

Question from Councillor Murphy (2) - This Council has a target of zero road deaths. Yet the council has taken the decision to make the Road Safety Officer redundant. How does this decision fall in line with the council's Vision Zero objectives and what impact will the loss of this post have on the safety of Oldham's roads?

Councillor Goodwin replied, thanking Councillor Murphy for his questions, stating that the Council continues with its ambitious target for zero road deaths on Oldham's roads, but as we all know, there are many factors outside the Council's control which contribute to road collisions.

I will not comment on the Council's voluntary redundancy scheme which has just concluded, however, all decisions about voluntary redundancy come with an impact assessment on service delivery. While the Council may well be losing one officer, the Road Safety engineering officers continue in service and alternative road safety education will be provided by various partners as needed.

Question from Councillor Adams - In June, Councillor Goodwin announced that the council had received 4.5 million pounds from the Conservative Government under the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.

The funding was provided to tackle potholes, improve road safety and secure public footways, and must be spent within a year.

In Royton, repairs and improvements were planned for: Rochdale Road, Kensington Avenue and Oak Avenue / Ash Grove / Pine Grove

Five months on from the announcement, would the cabinet member confirm how much of the work in Royton has been completed.

Councillor Goodwin replied that from the £4.5m funding allocation - £2.5m was for carriageway and footway maintenance with the remainder for highway safety, junction improvements, bridge repairs, and drainage maintenance. The programme of highways surfacing works across Oldham is well underway following approval of the programme by the Council earlier this year.

With regards to the specific works in Royton, I'm advised that the highway repairs and improvement will commence this December, followed by the preventative maintenance surfacing being programmed for March next year.

Question from Councillor Cosgrove - What progress has been made on the gulley cleaning programme?

Councillor Goodwin replied that the new gulley cleaning programme is making continued and steady progress with the 50,000 gulleys boroughwide. At this time of year, when leaves are falling regularly, the teams are occasionally pulled to priority areas where there is a risk of flooding to ensure the gullies in these areas remain clean and clear from debris.

However, the teams are currently working in Alexandra and St James' Wards, where approximately 70% of the highway gulleys have been cleaned.

The work remains on track, and we aim to start in St Marys ward by December this year.

Question from Councillor Zaheer Ali – asked when will the extended cemetery opening times be implemented, further to the amended Motion, on this subject, that was approved by the Council at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024?

Councillor Goodwin replied that the burial times at the Borough's cemeteries had been extended, in line with the requirements of the Motion but delays were occurring due to the role of the Independent Medical Examiner, which had created additional requirements.

Question from Councillor Arnott – asked if the Portfolio Holder could confirm that improvement works to the Borough's parks and green spaces were continuing to take place?

Councillor Goodwin confirmed that such improvements were continuing to happen and that the Cabinet had recently approved improvement work to six parks across the Borough.

- i. Councillor Dean, Thriving Communities and Culture Portfolio Holder

Question from Councillor Charters - Oldham Athletic has had its share of governance issues - the government's football governance bill that was announced by the Culture Secretary should help avoid this being repeated in the future – has the Council has any discussions with the club about how the changes will impact Oldham Athletic?

Councillor Dean replied that he could confirm that an initial conversation has been had with Oldham Athletic which has been extremely helpful and reassuring, and they issued the following statement:

The Board of Oldham Athletic 2004 AFC Ltd is reviewing details and requirements laid out in the impending Football Governance Bill and making any necessary adjustments should there be a

requirement around its financial plans and resilience, fan consultation, corporate governance and annual declaration of responsibilities to ensure that it will comply with all statutory regulations as and when they are required along with National League rules and regulations.

Since the club's change of ownership in July 2022, a key theme of the Board's attention has been towards the development of a sustainable business model within the club. Having consolidated the land, stadium, and related businesses such as Gym, Event Centre, Retail Business and Education centre, the club has been focussed on the development and enrichment of these pillars of the business to support the football club ongoing from a sustainability perspective.

From a fan consultation perspective, the club held a Purposing Day early on after the takeover in July 22 which gave a voice and gathered views from a supporter's groups, Oldham Council, OAFK employees, local press, and Oldham Athletic Community Trust. The development of a club Purpose on a Page allowed for a cohesive and inclusive representation of all stakeholders into the Purpose that would later inform a 3-year vision and business plan for the club moving forwards. Further the club has also engaged monthly with the Oldham Athletic Supporters Foundation who are our official supporters club and minority shareholder. These meetings have been supported with documented agendas and minutes that are published for supporters to review and keep updated. The club has also held four public fans forums where supporters are offered to opportunity to ask questions in an open forum to members of the club board and management staff. Finally, the CEO and owners have produced video interviews biannually from this season to update supporters on progress and challenges that the club faces moving forwards. Members of the Board have also appeared on the fans podcast to answer questions.

Corporate governance and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion have also been key themes of the new Board and ownership. The club has successfully implemented a multi faith prayer facility whilst creating growth opportunities for Women's football with the establishment of a new full time female education programme in U16-18 football and creation of an open age women's team. The club has also linked with its U9-U16 Girls and Women's football club. The club also champions 'Her Game Too' as a group that represents the female interests of its supporters as a lobbying power and stakeholder in the club. For this the club has appointed a head of supporter liaison who leads dialogue with disability, inclusion, and female supporter groups.

Further governance and annual declaration responsibilities are supported by professional advice from the clubs legal and financial counsel that is keeps regular contact with.

Question from Councillor Marland - Given the inability to currently stop fireworks being set off in Oldham throughout the year, and at all times of the day and night, would the Cabinet Member responsible write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to ask if the Government will carry out an analysis of the use of Firework Control Zones in

Scotland, and to see whether similar legislation in the UK could help manage antisocial use of fireworks in boroughs like Oldham?



Councillor Dean replied that he could confirm that the Council, working in partnership with colleagues from Greater Manchester Fire Service, who licence retail premises of fireworks across the Borough and Greater Manchester Police continue to respond to concerns from residents especially the anti-social use of fireworks late at night.

The Council would be keen to ask the Government for an analysis of the use of control zones in Scotland with a view to potentially replicating this legislation across the UK.

Of particular note would be how the partners enforced these restrictions and how they were responded to by residents.

With this in mind, I agree with Councillor Marland and will ask officers of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government asking for such a review in conjunction with officials from Scotland.

Question from Councillor Aftab Hussain – We should all celebrate the reopening of Royton Library and the new members who have joined – could you outline how to join an Oldham Library, what services are on offer and how much it costs?

Councillor Dean replied that he was delighted with the new library and have received overwhelmingly positive feedback about the new facilities.

Since re-opening on 14<sup>th</sup> September, we have had 262 new members join Royton Library.

All of Oldham Libraries are free to join. Residents can register online or come along to any of our libraries. Children under 13 require a guardian with them to join.

Royton Town Hall where the library is located is one of our 'Working for You' Community Hubs with a wide range of support for our residents including access to help, advice and support. Specifically, most services provided at Royton Library are free to use. In addition to physical book borrowing, residents can access e-books, e-journals and e-newspapers via the Borrowbox app. The library also provides residents with IT services including online basics course to support with digital skills.

Other regular activities include Bounce and Rhyme sessions for families with children under 5, Baby Art Studio and the Royton Readers Groups. All Councillors are asked to keep an eye on the "what's on" events guide for activities in libraries in your areas.

Question from Councillor Kouser - Where is the Council up to with tendering process for the former Marlborough Community Centre (formerly Pakistan Community Centre), adding that Councillor Aftab Hussain appeared to have shared information on social media - should these details have been shared publicly and prematurely?

Councillor Ghafoor also asked the Portfolio Holder for Thriving Communities and Culture, where the information, that Councillor

Aftab Hussain had shared information on social media, had come from?

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Shah, undertook to write to Councillors Kouser and Ghafoor to clarify the situation regarding the Marlborough Community Centre.

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## **NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS**

### **Motion 1: Increasing Pension Credit Take-up**

Councillor Jabbar **MOVED** and Councillor Dean **SECONDED** the following Motion:

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:

- a. Launch an Awareness Campaign – to develop a targeted campaign to educate residents about Pension Credit, including its eligibility criteria, application process, and potential benefits.
- b. Collaborate with Local Organisations to partner with community groups and local charities to disseminate information and assist residents with applications.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED.

### **RESOLVED:**

- 1 That the Council launches an Awareness Campaign –** to develop a targeted campaign to educate residents about Pension Credit, including its eligibility criteria, application process, and potential benefits.
- 2 That the Council collaborates with Local Organisations to partner** with community groups and local charities to disseminate information and assist residents with applications.
- 3 That the Council increases 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 That the Council 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**

Councillor Mushtaq MOVED and Councillor Navesey SECONDED the following Motion:

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:

1. 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.
2. Become a Kinship Friendly Employer as soon as is practicable, working towards achieving the Gold Standard
3. Record its thanks to all those who provide Kinship Care and mainstream Foster Care in Oldham.

**1<sup>st</sup> AMENDMENT**

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

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 there 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.

Every child that goes into kinship care instead of local authority care could save the taxpayer more than £35,000 a year.

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:

1. 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.
2. Supports kinship carers being given the same financial support as foster carers and write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to advocate for this.
3. Become a Kinship Friendly Employer as soon as is practicable, working towards achieving the Gold Standard
4. Record its thanks to all those who provide Kinship Care and mainstream Foster Care in Oldham.

A vote was taken on the 1<sup>st</sup> AMENDMENT which was LOST.

2<sup>nd</sup> AMENDMENT

Councillor Byrne MOVED and Councillor Sheldon SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

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.



**Oldham**  
Council

This Council notes:

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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:

1. 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.
2. Become a Kinship Friendly Employer as soon as is practicable, working towards achieving the Gold Standard.
3. Record its thanks to all those who provide Kinship Care and mainstream Foster Care in Oldham.
4. Make sure the policy will have adequate financial support to implement all the aforementioned policies that the Council should already be adhering to and that a report will be made available at the next Council meeting on the implementation of this policy.

A vote was taken on the 2<sup>nd</sup> AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.

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

**RESOLVED:**

The Council resolves to

1. 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.

2. Become a Kinship Friendly Employer as soon as is practicable, working towards achieving the Gold Standard.
3. Record its thanks to all those who provide Kinship Care and mainstream Foster Care in Oldham.
4. Make sure the policy will have adequate financial support to implement all the aforementioned policies that the Council should already be adhering to and that a report will be made available at the next Council meeting on the implementation of this policy.

11

## **NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS**

### **Motion 1: Stop the Winter Fuel Payment Cuts**

Councillor Bishop **MOVED** and Councillor Marland **SECONDED** the following Motion:

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.

#### AMENDMENT

Councillor Dean MOVED and Councillor Aftab Hussain SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

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. In addition, Labour is keeping the triple lock which increased a full state pension by £902.20 PA in April 2024 and will rise again by £470.60 PA in April 2025.

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).

While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance. However, those on the full state pension who aren't now entitled to Winter Fuel Allowance are receiving just £41.40 a year less than someone on Pension Credit who is also in receipt of the Winter Fuel Allowance of £200 a year – a difference of 79p a week.

This Council believes that:

The criteria for Winter Fuel Payments that the Labour Government is using will exclude too many pensioners who need help. The standard minimum guarantee has been raised to £227.10 a week meaning pensioners earning up to £11,809 PA can now claim 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. Oldham Council is working with partners 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.

Universal Winter Fuel Payments has been a neglected and overlooked benefit payment during the period of the last Conservative Government having sat statically at £200 and £300. Between 2010 and 2023 state pensions have risen from £97.65 a week to £221.20, and average combined energy bills have risen from £1076 to £1,834. The effective spending power of the Winter Fuel Allowance due to this has been greatly eroded.

This Council resolves to:

1. Reconfirm the Council's resolution to launch a targeted Awareness Campaign to maximise the uptake of Pension Credit; collaborate with local organisations to inform and assist residents with applications; identify and prioritise staff to help residents complete application; monitor and report on the effectiveness of the campaign.
2. Instruct the Acting Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to express Council's view that the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt should be reviewed and a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered. Council further requests the Acting Chief Executive write to Oldham's three MPs asking them to give their formal support to a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. Council agrees to re-confirm its resolution to launch a targeted Awareness Campaign to maximise the uptake of Pension Credit; to collaborate with local organisations to inform and to assist residents with applications; to identify and prioritise staff to help residents complete application; and to monitor and report on the effectiveness of the campaign.
2. Council request that the Acting Chief Executive be authorised to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to express Council's view that the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt should be

reviewed and a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered. Council further requests the Acting Chief Executive write to the Borough of Oldham's three MPs asking them to give their formal support to a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered.



### **Motion 2: The Budget Challenge**

Councillor Lancaster MOVED and Councillor Woodvine SECONDED the following Motion:

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

This Council resolves:

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.

### **1<sup>st</sup> AMENDMENT**

Councillor Lancaster MOVED and Councillor Woodvine SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

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

This Council notes that:

- Following the coronavirus pandemic and pressures caused by the Russo-Ukrainian War in recent years, this Labour Government assumed a stable inheritance from the previous Conservative Government – inflation at the 2% target, mortgage rates being cut, low unemployment, lower borrowing than other major economies, second lowest debt across the G7, and the fastest growing advanced economy.
- The supposed '£22 billion black hole' is entirely fictitious, has failed to be evidenced, and is simply a political pretext to raise taxes.
- Despite pre-election promises to the contrary, the UK Government are set to significantly raise taxation to a new historic high point.

- The Budget sets a concerning, high risk increase in state borrowing of £32 billion additional per annum.
- The Budget represents a return to tired ‘tax and spend’ policies which will stifle long-term economic growth, as the Office for Budget Responsibility has forecast.
- With a £25 billion raid through employers’ National Insurance contributions, this Budget is bad for business, and will inevitably lead to higher consumer costs, suppressed wages, and lower employment.
- This Budget will cause further hardship through increases to Capital Gains Tax, Stamp Duty, energy taxes, inheritance and education taxes, and cuts to agricultural and business reliefs.
- Poorer pensioners will particularly suffer through strict means testing of the Winter Fuel Payment, which will result in around 34,000 Oldhamers losing this vital support provision.

This Council resolves:

1. To instruct the Chief Executive 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 who are struggling paying for winter fuel bills this winter, given that the Energy Price Cap has increased by 10%, also adding £150 to the average fuel bill.
3. To instruct the Chief Executive to write to Oldham’s three MPs, the relevant government departments, and agencies to articulate the adverse impact which the national Budget will Page 9 inflict on residents of our Borough, to express deep concern about the many tax rises, and to invite an alternative policy direction.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was LOST.

2<sup>nd</sup> AMENDMENT

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor McLaren SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

The first woman to serve as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves MP, has delivered a budget which will impact

the people who live in the Oldham Metropolitan Borough for the better.

Delivering a budget that will restore stability, protect working people, fix the NHS and rebuild Britain.

Fixing the foundations of our economy following fourteen years of failed Conservative austerity.

Restoring fiscal responsibility following Conservative economic mismanagement including Liz Truss's 2022 mini budget and an inherited £22 billion spending black hole.

This Labour budget invests in Britain and the public services so vital to our residents, the Chancellor has delivered:

- A pay rise for 3 million workers
- A freeze on fuel duty
- New funding to deliver an extra two million NHS operations, scans and appointments a year.
- No tax increases for working people.
- £30million for breakfast clubs.
- £240million package to Get Britain Working again.
- £1.4billion to rebuild 500 schools.
- £500m investment to build thousands of new social homes.
- £1billion boost to the Household Support Fund.
- £1.3billion extra funding for Local Government, including £600m for social care.
- An increase in the state pension by up to £470.
- The biggest increase to Carer's Allowance eligibility since its introduction.
- 40% relief on business rates for hospitality and leisure sectors.
- Non-dom tax status abolished.
- £500million to fix roads and fill potholes.
- Increased the employment allowance to support small businesses.
- A crack down on fraud, waste and tax avoidance.

This Council notes that:

- Universal Winter Fuel Payment had been a neglected and overlooked benefit payment during the period of the last Conservative Government having sat statically at £200 and £300. Between 2010 and 2023 state pensions have risen from £97.65 a week to £221.20, and average combined energy bills have risen from £1,076 to £1,834.
- The effective spending power of the Winter Fuel Allowance due to this has been greatly eroded.
- Maintaining the Triple Lock means State Pensions will rise further to £235.25 a week in April 2025.
- It is regrettable that those over 75 who sit just above the Pension Credit cut-off suffer additional financial hardship due to the Conservative Party's broken manifesto commitment to protect free TV licences, limiting it instead to just those on Pension Credit.

- The government's approach understands there are barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

This Council resolves:

1. To ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to congratulate her on being the first woman to deliver a budget in the history of our country.
2. That the Acting Chief Executive be requested to write to Oldham's three MP's asking them to give their support to a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered.
3. 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, including implementing the agreed Awareness Campaign.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.

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

**RESOLVED:**

This Council resolves:

1. To request that the Leader of the Council write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to congratulate her on being the first woman to deliver a budget in the history of our country.
2. That the Acting Chief Executive be requested to write to Oldham's three MP's asking them to give their support to a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered.
3. 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, including implementing the agreed Awareness Campaign.

**Motion 3: Immediate Ceasefire in Gaza**

Councillor Chowhan MOVED and Councillor Wahid SECONDED the following Motion:

**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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

#### AMENDMENT

Councillor Mushtaq MOVED and Councillor Islam SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

#### **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."

This council called for a ceasefire at the start of the hostilities, and Cllr Arooj Shah called for a ceasefire with other Greater Manchester Leaders on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Oldham's Mayor Cllr Zahid Chauhan OBE wrote to the former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak MP on 2nd November 2023 telling him that the people of Oldham called for a ceasefire.

The borough's MPs voted for a ceasefire in February 2024, and the ending of hostilities in the region to allow humanitarian aid and a diplomatic solution has been the consistent policy of the UK Government since Sir Keir Starmer became Prime Minister in July 2024.

Since then, Israel has attacked and invaded Lebanon, escalating a conflict and affecting even more innocent civilians, including those here in Oldham with loved ones in the region. Israel's Parliament has passed legislation banning UNWRA from operating within Israeli occupied territory, including Gaza, the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem, preventing a key provider of aid from reaching the people who need it the most during this conflict. This has been condemned by the US State Department, the Secretary General of the UN and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, amongst other international partners.

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, prioritise the protection of civilian lives and the immediate release of the Israeli hostages taken on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023.
2. Support the rapid entry of humanitarian aid to address the urgent needs of the population affected by the ongoing conflict.
3. Support the UK Government's decision to withdraw export licences to Israel, preventing equipment that would be used in the conflict in Gaza from reaching the front line.
4. Condemn the decision by the Israeli Knesset to ban the UNWRA from operating in Israeli controlled territory, including Gaza, the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem, noting that this has been met with widespread international condemnation, including from the United States government and the Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer.
5. Condemn both Hamas and Hezbollah for their terrorist attacks on civilians and the taking of hostages by Hamas on October 7<sup>th</sup> 2023, and support calls from the international community to lay down arms and instead work with international partners to reach a diplomatic solution that safeguards innocent civilians in Lebanon, Palestine and Israel.

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

1. Re-iterate calls for an immediate Ceasefire in both Gaza and Lebanon and work with international partners to achieve this.
2. Facilitate the rapid entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza and Lebanon.
3. Continuously review export licences for international Arms Sales and suspend any that could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of International Humanitarian Law.

Through these actions, the council seeks to contribute to the restoration of peace and the protection of human rights in the region.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT which was CARRIED.

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

<b>COUNCILLOR</b>		<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	
Adams Christine	ABSTAINED	Hussain Junaid	FOR
Akhtar Shoab	APOLOGIES	Hussain Sajed	FOR
Al-Hamdani Sam	FOR	Ibrahim Nyla	ABSTAINED
Ali Mohon	FOR	Iqbal Nadeem	FOR

Ali Zaheer	ABSTAINED	Islam Mohammed Nazrul	FOR
Arnott Dave	ABSTAINED	Jabbar Abdul	FOR
Aslam Naseem	FOR	Kenyon Mark	FOR
Azad Montaz Ali	ABSTAINED	Kouser Aisha	ABSTAINED
Ball Sandra	ABSTAINED	Lancaster Luke	AGAINST
Bishop Helen	FOR	Malik Abdul	FOR
Bashforth Marie	FOR	Marland Alicia	FOR
Brownridge Barbara	FOR	McLaren Colin	FOR
Byrne Pam	ABSTAINED	Moores Eddie (Deputy Mayor)	FOR
Charters Josh	FOR	Murphy Dave	FOR
Cosgrove Angela	FOR	Mushtaq Shaid	FOR
Chowhan Naveed	ABSTAINED	Nasheen Umar	FOR
Davis Peter	FOR	Navesey Lisa	FOR
Dean Peter	FOR	Quigg Lewis	AGAINST
Ghafoor Kamran	ABSTAINED	Rustidge Ken	FOR
Goodwin Chris	FOR	Shah Arooj	FOR
Hamblett Louie	FOR	Sharp Beth	AGAINST
Harkness Garth	FOR	Sheldon Graham	AGAINST
Harrison Holly	FOR	Shuttleworth Graham	FOR
Hince Marc	FOR	Sykes Howard	FOR
Hindle Neil	FOR	Taylor Elaine	FOR
Hobin Brian	FOR	Wahid Abdul	ABSTAINED
Hughes Jade	ABSTAINED	Wilkinson Mark	ABSTAINED
Hurley Maggie	ABSTAINED	Williamson Diane	FOR
Hussain Aftab	FOR	Woodvine Max	AGAINST
Hussain Fida	FOR	Chauhan Zahid (MAYOR)	FOR

On a recorded VOTE being taken 40 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the MOTION AS AMENDED with 5 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 14 ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION AS AMENDED was therefore CARRIED.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, urging all parties involved to halt hostilities, prioritise the protection of civilian lives and the immediate release of the Israeli hostages taken on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023.
2. That the Council support the rapid entry of humanitarian aid to address the urgent needs of the population affected by the ongoing conflict.

3. That the Council support the UK Government's decision to withdraw export licences to Israel, preventing equipment that would be used in the conflict in Gaza from reaching the front line.
4. That the Council condemn the decision by the Israeli Knesset to ban the UNWRA from operating in Israeli controlled territory, including Gaza, the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem, noting that this has been met with widespread international condemnation, including from the United States government and the Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer.
5. That the Council condemn both Hamas and Hezbollah for their terrorist attacks on civilians and the taking of hostages by Hamas on October 7<sup>th</sup> 2023 and support calls from the international community to lay down arms and instead work with international partners to reach a diplomatic solution that safeguards innocent civilians in Lebanon, Palestine and Israel.
6. That, furthermore, the council requests that the Chief Executive write to the Prime Minister, urging the UK government to:
  - Re-iterate calls for an immediate Ceasefire in both Gaza and Lebanon and work with international partners to achieve this.
  - Facilitate the rapid entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza and Lebanon.
  - Continuously review export licences for international Arms Sales and suspend any that could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of International Humanitarian Law.

Through these actions, the council seeks to contribute to the restoration of peace and the protection of human rights in the region.

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**PLACES FOR EVERYONE JOINT DEVELOPMENT PLAN:  
REQUEST FOR REVOCATION OF THE PLAN FOR  
OLDHAM**

Councillor Taylor MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which reminded Members that a motion had been submitted to the Council for consideration on 10<sup>th</sup> 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 in 2024 and is now part of the statutory development plan for Oldham.



The report advised that there were no powers for a Council to 'undo' an adopted Local Plan once it had taken effect; and it was understood that the Secretary of State (SoS) had 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.

The report before Council set out two sets of information for members to consider:

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 were appended to the report.

A recorded vote, in line with the Regulations was then taken on the RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE SUBMITTED REPORT as follows:

<b>COUNCILLOR</b>		<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	
Adams Christine	AGAINST	Hussain Junaid	FOR
Akhtar Shoab	APOLOGIES	Hussain Sajed	FOR
Al-Hamdani Sam	AGAINST	Ibrahim Nyla	AGAINST
Ali Mohon	FOR	Iqbal Nadeem	FOR
Ali Zaheer	AGAINST	Islam Mohammed Nazrul	FOR
Arnott Dave	AGAINST	Jabbar Abdul	FOR
Aslam Naseem	FOR	Kenyon Mark	AGAINST
Azad Montaz Ali	AGAINST	Kouser Aisha	AGAINST
Ball Sandra	AGAINST	Lancaster Luke	AGAINST
Bishop Helen	AGAINST	Malik Abdul	FOR
Bashforth Marie	FOR	Marland Alicia	AGAINST
Brownridge Barbara	FOR	McLaren Colin	FOR

Byrne Pam	AGAINST	Moore's Eddie (Deputy Mayor)	FOR
Charters Josh	FOR	Murphy Dave	AGAINST
Cosgrove Angela	FOR	Mushtaq Shaid	FOR
Chowhan Naveed	AGAINST	Nasheen Umar	FOR
Davis Peter	FOR	Navesey Lisa	AGAINST
Dean Peter	FOR	Quigg Lewis	AGAINST
Ghafoor Kamran	AGAINST	Rustidge Ken	FOR
Goodwin Chris	FOR	Shah Arooj	FOR
Hamblett Louie	AGAINST	Sharp Beth	AGAINST
Harkness Garth	AGAINST	Sheldon Graham	AGAINST
Harrison Holly	FOR	Shuttleworth Graham	FOR
Hince Marc	AGAINST	Sykes Howard	AGAINST
Hindle Neil	FOR	Taylor Elaine	FOR
Hobin Brian	FOR	Wahid Abdul	AGAINST
Hughes Jade	AGAINST	Wilkinson Mark	AGAINST
Hurley Maggie	AGAINST	Williamson Diane	AGAINST
Hussain Aftab	FOR	Woodvine Max	AGAINST
Hussain Fida	FOR	Chauhan Zahid (MAYOR)	FOR

On a recorded VOTE being taken 29 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE SUBMITTED REPORT with 30 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 0 ABSTENTIONS. The RECOMMENDATIONS were therefore LOST.

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### **CORPORATE PLAN 2024 - 2027: READY FOR THE FUTURE**

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Jabbar SECONDED the Council's Corporate Plan covering 2024 – 2027, entitled: 'Ready for the Future'. Oldham Council's last Corporate Plan was adopted in 2022. However, since that time the environment in which Oldham Council operates 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 the Council does.

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.

Oldham Council's Corporate Plan 2024-27 describes how the Council will maximise the impact of its efforts and resource to improve the lives of residents in the borough over the three-year



period up to 2027. The plan, which aligns with the Oldham Partnership's vision document (Pride, Progress, Partnership), focuses specifically on responding to the needs and aspirations of the Borough's communities. The plan outlines how the Council will contribute to the Oldham Plan missions, its organisational values and behaviours, and how the authority 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.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Council notes the contents of the Corporate Plan 2024-27 and the outcomes it commits the Council to delivering over the next three years.
2. That Council approves the Corporate Plan 2024-27 for adoption.

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**COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2025/26**

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Director of Finance that presented to Council the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2025/26.

There was 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 required 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 by no later than 10<sup>th</sup> 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.

A major consultation exercise had not been undertaken regarding changes to the CTR scheme and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority had been provisionally advised that no change to the scheme was 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 would be 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.

There remained 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.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council approves the proposal, detailed in the submitted report, to keep the Council Tax Reduction Scheme unchanged in 2025/26.

15

**SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

Councillor McLaren MOVED and Councillor Moores SECONDED a report that provided 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.

The report outlined 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 four bodies during 2023/24.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24 be noted.

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**UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL**

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Taylor SECONDED a report of the Interim Borough Solicitor which updated members on actions taken following the meeting of the Council held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 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 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024, be noted and confirmed.

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**THE OLDHAM PLAN 2024 – 2030; PRIDE, PROGRESS, PARTNERSHIP**

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Jabbar SECONDED the Oldham Plan 2024 – 2030; Pride, Progress, Partnership.

Council was advised that the previous iteration of the Oldham Plan had been adopted by the Oldham Partnership in 2022. However, since this time, the environment in which partners and the council were operating had 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), had

been developed and approved by the Oldham Partnership – Leading Oldham.



Council was informed that the Oldham Partnership was a collaboration of leaders from across Oldham, working together to address the borough's challenges. The Oldham Plan was to serve as the blueprint which was going to guide the next six years of the Oldham Partnership. Extensive consultation and resident feedback had shaped the new Plan, with three missions – Healthier, Happier Lives; Great Place to Live; and Green and Growing – each of which were supported by specific deliverables to drive progress and positive change for Oldham's communities.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council notes the content of the Oldham Plan 2024 – 2030: Pride, Progress, Partnership and in doing so acknowledges the continued work of Oldham Partnership to improve the Borough.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 10.00pm

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## 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.

### Building a Better Oldham

- **Spindles transformation:** The work being undertaken in the Spindles is already being externally recognised with two contractors securing prestigious awards for their partnership with Oldham Council on the scheme. The Spindles phase 3 accommodation scheme is on track to complete in January 2025 with the transfer of Children services colleagues from Metropolitan Place enabling increased collaboration with various colleagues and services already located within the Spindles whilst releasing Met Place for development as part of our strategic accommodation approach.
- **Coliseum and Old Library:** Work is taking place to prepare the Coliseum for refurbishment, with asbestos removal already underway and due for completion mid-December. The Council have now secured a main contractor for the scheme with works commencing early in the new year. The internal fit-out of the Old Library Building continues to bring this beautiful heritage building back to life and we look forward to welcoming the members and the public next summer.
- **Town Centre Living / Muse Partnership:** The Oldham Town Centre Development Framework was approved by Cabinet at the Council meeting on the 18th of November following community engagement over summer. This is a positive step toward bringing housing to the Civic Centre, former Magistrates court and Leisure Centre sites.
- **Prudential Building.** Following the successful Compulsory Purchase Order process the Council gained ownership of the Prudential Building in mid-October. We are now in the process of undertaking an initial asbestos survey to establish safe working methodologies for the upcoming environmental clean-up.
- **Levelling Up Partnership grant funding.** The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government has confirmed that the £20m Levelling Up Partnership grant funding will continue. We are currently working with MHCLG to confirm the arrangements on eligible schemes and the associated timescales for those schemes.

### Town Centre Events

Alongside the physical regeneration of the town centre, we have refreshed our approach to events. We need to ensure that our both local residents and visitors are attracted into the town centre or the benefits of the significant regeneration investments made by the council may not be fully realised.

We have been investing in events that are aimed at animating Oldham Town Centre, those which generate significant economic value and profile for the borough, as well as delivering on cultural, social and wellbeing outcomes. We are also developing a long-term plan for events targeting new funding sources, particularly around sponsorship and further enhancing co-investment and collaboration with partners and stakeholders.

This Autumn we have delivered:

- **Nostalgic Oldham**, which increased footfall by 19% on previous year.
- We brought the firework display into the town centre with over **8,000 people** coming into the town centre on a Tuesday evening and spending money in our town centre businesses.
- **Activities for families every Saturday** in the town centre, starting with the Christmas lights switch-on in November. Which drove a 10% increase in footfall in Spindles compared to the previous year's switch-on event, with businesses feeling the benefit with positive reports of spending across the event days.

- 
- The impact of the events is also felt across our social media engagement. The switch-on event also had the most Facebook engagement we have had for **any event**, the sentiment across our social media is that people are talking about Oldham town centre with renewed pride.

### **Strategy and Performance:**

- **Corporate Plan:** The new Corporate Plan, *Ready for the Future*, was adopted last month. Focus areas include delivering efficient, resident-focused services, supporting our workforce, and actively working to reduce the need for our services by focusing on prevention and early support. Preparations are underway for the next round of Business Planning, ensuring alignment with the new Corporate Plan. Our Transformation programme has been reviewed with a focus on quick recovery, rapid improvement and ensuring resilience as a key driver of the programme. Work is already underway to transition the current transformation programme to the *Ready for the Future* programme.
- **Oldham Plan:** The refreshed Oldham Plan, *Pride, Progress, Partnership*, was also adopted in November, reflecting the shared ambitions of the Oldham Partnership to achieve healthier, happier lives, create a great place to live, and drive a green and growing local economy.
- **Leading Oldham Board:** Plans are progressing for the Leading Oldham Board, which brings together leaders from across the borough to drive forward the strategic priorities of the Oldham Plan. The Board will meet twice a year to review the delivery of the three sub-boards (Growth, Health and Wellbeing, and Communities), with the next meeting scheduled for March 2025.
- **Developing Oldham's Co-operative Sector:** Reflecting the council's co-operative ethos, engagement with stakeholders is ongoing to explore innovative co-operative opportunities linked to the Oldham Coliseum, ensuring community-led models are at the forefront of Oldham's economic vision.
- **Armed Forces Gold Award Accreditation:** We are aiming to achieve Armed Forces Gold Award accreditation in 2025, reflecting our commitment to supporting veterans and active service personnel.

### **Communications and engagement:**

The communications service has been continuing to promote good news stories about Oldham across all media channels, with significant volumes of positive coverage across Oldham media and positive responses on social media.

### **Highlights include:**

- Excellent coverage of the Christmas programme of events with the tagline "Give the gift of Oldham this Christmas" to encourage footfall into shopping areas across the borough and uptake of the Oldham gift card.
- Rave reviews for the opening of the Egyptian Room, with coverage across all local titles and on the BBC, leading to a successful opening and sustained usage.
- Positive coverage of the Choose Oldham campaign to recruit children's social workers, with a prominent report on BBC Politics North West, the region's flagship political TV show.
- Significant social media traction following the visit of three of the Oldham Theatre Workshop's alumni – including Doctor Who star Millie Gibson - to the Old Library to view progress on OTW's new home.
- Regular moving stories on social and mainstream media channels highlighting the work that is being done to support vulnerable residents throughout winter to demonstrate that no one in the Borough should go cold or hungry as the temperatures drop.

**Recommendations:** Council is requested to note the report.

**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 Cabinet meeting to consider.

5           **MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be approved as a correct record.

6           **COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2025/26**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance the purpose of which was to present to Council the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2025/26, prior to consideration by Council on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

The Cabinet was advised that there was 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.

Options/Alternatives:

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

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 recommended Option was Option 1.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet recommends that the Council approves the report at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
2. That the Cabinet commends to Council the proposal to keep the Council Tax Reduction Scheme unchanged in 2025/26.

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## **UTILITIES PROCUREMENT 2024 - 2028**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that sought approval to enter into Supply Contracts with the suppliers appointed under the Crown Commercial Service Framework Agreement for Supply of Energy 2 (RM6251) for the supply of electricity and associated services (Lot 1) and the supply of natural gas and associated services (Lot 2) with effect from 1 April 2024.

The recommendation in the report were presented as Oldham Council currently procures its energy through Crown Commercial Service (“CCS”) framework arrangements.

The CCS Framework for the Supply of Energy and Ancillary Services (RM6011) commenced on 14 August 2019 and expired on 1 October 2023. Electricity and ancillary services were supplied by EDF Energy Customers Limited under Lot 1 and natural gas and ancillary services were supplied by TotalEnergies Gas & Power Limited under Lot 3. The Council was a party to a Supply Contract with each of the suppliers. Electricity and Gas were supplied to the Council under the RM6011 framework arrangements until 31 March 2024.

The CCS Framework Agreement for Supply of Energy 2 (RM6251) commenced on 21 February 2023 and will expire on 20 February 2027. There are two lots under the RM6251 Framework Agreement; Lot 1 - Supply of Energy - Electricity and Additional Services and Lot 2 - Supply of Energy – Natural Gas and Additional Services. The sole supplier under Lot 1 is EDF Energy Customers Limited (“EDF”) and the sole supplier under Lot 2 is TotalEnergies Gas & Power Limited (TotalEnergies”).

The Council should have entered into a Supply Contract with each of the appointed suppliers under the replacement RM6251 Framework Agreement prior to 1 April 2024, but the transition from RM6011 to RM6251 did not run as planned.

Therefore, retrospective approval is needed to enter into a replacement Supply Contract with each of the appointed suppliers for a term commencing on 1 April 2024. The template Supply Agreement shared by EDF states that the term runs from the Earliest Supply Start Date, which will be 1 April 2024 for the



Council until the expiry or earlier termination of the final associated delivery period.



The Council generally opts for Locked 6 (L6), which offers a 12-month fixed price. The trading begins 6 months (1 October to the 31 March) annually. The delivery period starts on the 1 April for 12 months. The Council is automatically entered into the subsequent 12-month contract period without needing to provide confirmation. However, if the Council wishes to opt out of the next 12-month period, it must notify CCS accordingly prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> September deadline before delivery period.

Options/Alternatives considered:

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

Cabinet Members were advised that there was not currently a viable alternative option for the 2024/25 financial year, particularly because the Council confirmed its requirements to CCS for the provision of electricity and natural gas over the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 delivery period back in September 2023. However, other options can be considered for the future. It is anticipated that preparing to change the contractual arrangements for the provision of electricity and gas would need a minimum of eighteen months to two years preparation. This would ensure the procurement process is not rushed and that the transition to alternative suppliers (if required) is managed to minimise the impact of the transition on officers and other suppliers, to avoid transfer objections and out of contract periods, and to incorporate bridging contract periods.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet:

1. Authorises a Supply Contract for electricity and ancillary services to be finalised and entered into between the Council and EDF Energy Customers Limited under Lot 1 of the CCS Framework Agreement for Energy Suppliers 2 and for a Supply Contract for natural gas and ancillary services to be entered into between the Council and TotalEnergies Gas & Power Limited under Lot 2 of the CCS Framework Agreement for Energy Suppliers 2, each for a 4-year term from 1 April 2024
2. Delegates authority to the Director of Economy, the Head of Procurement and Legal Services to formalise the contractual arrangements in relation to the required Supply Contracts.
3. Delegates authority to the Borough Solicitor, or his nominated representative, to carry out all necessary associated formalities.

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## **GREATER MANCHESTER WORKWELL PARTNERSHIP - OLDHAM'S LOCAL DELIVERY**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Education, Skills and Early Years that sought the Cabinet's approval for Oldham Council to lead the management of the WorkWell Partnership Vanguard programme and accept a grant with a

value of £542,771 to deliver the outcomes in the Oldham locality. The report is seeking approval for the Get Oldham Working service to project manage and deliver parts of the model, which requires job creation, recruitment, and a staff honorarium.

The recommendations were presented as Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and NHS Greater Manchester put Greater Manchester (GM) forward as 1 of 15 national WorkWell Partnership Vanguard sites. This proposal had been accepted, and each Local Authority was now required to work with GMCA; NHS GM and Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), who have been appointed as consultants, to develop a local plan for the delivery of this offer which must 'go live' from 1 October 2024 and is funded until 31 March 2026.

Options/Alternatives Considered:

- a. Option One: to approve acceptance of the grant and delivery within the boundaries of the proposed model with three key partners (Oldham Community Leisure, Action Together and Get Oldham Working) leading on the delivery. Oldham Council will provide the overarching governance with outcomes reported to the appropriate boards and portfolio briefings (Employment and Health leads).
- b. Option Two: to request another locality organisation to lead. The alternative lead agency (as proposed by GMCA) is NHS Oldham to lead on financial management and delivery. The Cabinet could request that they formally take the lead, but this is not deemed a viable option due to a lack of capacity of other locality lead at this moment in time. There is a need to mobilise by the start of October 2024.
- c. Option three: Withdraw from the project. This is not a preferred option. The proposal has worked with key stakeholders to develop the model at a fast pace and this has created a number of risks but it is believed that these can be managed. The primary risks are the timescales to recruit to the programme and the short-term nature of the project. If the Cabinet decides to withdraw it would reduce investment into Oldham reducing the chance to improve outcomes for our residents. It would also have a reputational issue as each area has had to work at pace and this demonstrates that devolution can be affective and quick in decision making.

Preferred Option: Option one is the preferred option. The Get Oldham Working service and partners are confident that they can deliver this programme within the limited timeframe but recognise that there are risks that will need to be managed.

Resolved:

1. To accept Oldham's delivery model and Oldham Council to lead on management of the resources for delivery, up to a monetary value of £542,774, providing appropriate governance and oversight.

2. To accept the decision for the Get Oldham Working service to create and recruit a new post to deliver parts of the model.
3. To accept the decision for the Get Oldham Working service to move an existing staff member from delivering another contract and onto this project and backfill this post via recruitment.
4. To accept the decision for the Council's, Get Oldham Working service to offer an honorarium up to grade 8 from existing staff resources to project manage the operations within this model.
5. To accept accountability for Oldham Councils, get Oldham Working programme to deliver the GOW therapy element.

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## **ADDITIONAL UKSPF SKILLS FUNDING ALLOCATIONS**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Education, Skills and Early Years, the purpose of which was to request for various additional funding provided by GMCA as part of the UKSPF skills funding allocation for NEET support, be accepted and that any variations to the original contract's agreement be agreed.

In August 2023, the Cabinet had approved a report to accept funding from the UKSPF Skills funding via GMCA to support NEET young people to re-engage and return to the EET pathway. This funding was a total of £720,000.

The report outlined the intention for the funding to be attached to the existing TIIAG contract as this would provide the most effective use of the additional resource. This became the "Empower Oldham" project currently being delivered by Positive Steps. This grant agreement, contract and funding was made available until 31 March 2025.

In December 2023, Oldham applied to receive some additional funding from the UKSPF fund. This request originated from GMCA and was known as "Growth Fund". Oldham was awarded an additional £19K (which increased our monitoring outputs by 10 young people reached). The agreed use of this additional funding was to support the rental costs for the new study programme provision Oldham College are developing at Positive Steps. The provision opened in September 2024.

In March 2024, a DDR was submitted and signed off for £49,158 for the delivery of Care Leaver Multiply (attached, Appendix 2). We have now received notification from GMCA that Oldham has been awarded an additional 10% (£4,915.80) to support staffing costs for input into GMIT.

In June 2024, GMCA requested confirmation LA's were able to receive and use an additional £100K for the purposes of NEET prevention. This fund must be spent by 31 March 2025. This funding is not linked to any outcomes identified in the wider UKSPF NEET grant allocations. Oldham has worked with Oldham College to develop a programme that supports young

people to sustain their placement at the College, with a view to reducing the drop out rate, which will support young people with the resilience to stay in College and therefore not drop out and become NEET. This should support the reduction of Oldham's NEET rate and should work towards reducing the number of Y13's who are NEET which is a significant issue for Oldham, GM and nationally. This is a departure from how the other 9 LA's are using this fund and could become a good practice evidence base for the future.

In July 2024, Oldham was notified of GMCA's intention to extend UKSPF funding and outcomes to September 2025. The extension will provide an additional £240K to cover the costs of the programme.

The total amount of the additional funding requested to be accepted is £363,915.80.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1: To accept the additional funding to deliver the extension to schemes provided for our NEET young people. This option provides additional support to our young people in Oldham, including Care Leavers that would not normally be available.

Option 2: To decline the additional funding. This option effectively removes provision, resource and support for young people who are an identified vulnerable group.

Option 1 is the preferred option.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet approve the additional funding, in the sum of £363,915.80, to deliver the extension to schemes provided for the Borough's NEET young people. This option provides additional support to our young people in Oldham, including Care Leavers that would not normally be available.

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## **GREATER MANCHESTER MUSIC HUB FUNDING AGREEMENT**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Education, Skills and Early Years that was seeking approval from the Cabinet, for Oldham Council Music Service to enter into a new agreement with other Greater Manchester (GM) Local Authorities (LA's) to receive funding to continue to operate as the Local Area Delivery Partner for the GM Music Hub.

The Recommendations were presented as the GM Music Hub (GMMH) partnership began in 2012 following the publication of the first National Plan for Music education (NPME) (DfE, 2011). There were existing good relationships between the music services serving the LAs in GM (AGMA template at the time). Except for City of Manchester, the other nine Directors of Education (taking advice from Heads of Music Service) voted to move forward with the partnership agreement and for Bolton Music Service to be the Hub Lead Organisation (HLO) for the

alliance. The partnership was in no way enforced. It was the will of the nine LA's and their Music Services to join forces in this way.



The partnership agreement between the nine LAs as established in 2012 is a legal document. Each LA legal dept. adds its 'seal' to the document. There have been numerous interim extensions to the agreement since it was proposed in 2011.

The GMMH is the largest Music Hub in the country. It has been a flagship for Arts Council England (ACE)/DfE and has proven the benefits of cross LA working. This situation was further enhanced when Bolton Music Service was approached by Blackburn with Darwen Council in 2015 and asked to take over the management of their local music service. Since that time, BwD Music Service has become an additional partner within GMMH and contributes financially in the same way as the other nine organisations. The existence of the GMMH has played a part in the development to establish far more multi-LA hubs across England, a process which commenced in 2023 and which led to organisations bidding to become the new HLOs for geographic locations assigned by ACE, operation of which will commence from Sept 2024.

The relationships between the LAs and the wider partnership (Halle, BBC, RNCM, University of Salford and many more) has grown and remains extremely collegiate. There are very many economies of scale, enhanced opportunities for children and teachers because of the Hub. The principle benefits experienced during the initial phase of the NPME have include, much closer working between the Music Services in each of the partner LAs, enhanced educational pathways for students, increased funding, both regionally and locally, economies of scale, increased efficiency in respect of the grant admin process, peer support. These benefits continue to evolve and we are continually adding value through the addition of new industry partners.

It was the unanimous recommendation of the nine Heads of Music Services that Bolton should continue to be the HLO for GM and that they would lead the application in the 2023 funding relating to the period from Sept 2024.

A significant advantage of the GMMH structure is that the HLO (Bolton) is empowered to deal with the admin heavy business of ACE liaison and reporting. This allows the other partners to focus on local provision. Bolton take a 3% 'top slice' to fund the work they carry out on behalf of all partners. This is remarkable value for money, because to manage the ACE burden locally would require the establishment of further management posts in each of the boroughs.

The value of the grant funding to Oldham in 2023-24 is £415,210 (after 3% top-slice). A similar figure is expected going forwards.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1: To sign the Agreement as presented and to continue as the appointed local Delivery Partner for the GM Music Hub in the borough of Oldham. This option has the advantage of ensuring that the delivery of musical opportunities for young people and other groups in Oldham continues its unbroken tradition and will continue to develop and thrive.

Option 2: To reject the Agreement and not to remain as the Delivery Partner for the GM Music Hub in Oldham. This would pose an existential threat to the Oldham Council Music Service as the reduction of c. £415k of funding annually would result in mass redundancies, a massive contraction of the offer and the potential failure of extra-curricular delivery. Additionally, the new GM/BwD Music Hub would be compelled to appoint an alternative Local Delivery Partner for the borough and this would, most likely, lead to the establishment of an additional and well-funded, if inexperienced, local competitor, thereby placing additional pressure upon the Council Music Service.

Option 1 is the preferred option.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet approves the proposal, detailed in the report and enters into the agreement with other Greater Manchester (GM) Local Authorities (LA's) to receive funding to continue to operate as the Local Area Delivery Partner for the GM Music Hub.

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## **APPROVAL OF DRAFT GM LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Economy which was presented to confirm that Oldham Council provides its approval for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) (on behalf of the Mayor of Greater Manchester) to publicly consult on the Draft Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

The report's recommendations were presented as under the Environment Act 2021, the Mayor of Greater Manchester is required to prepare and adopt a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the City Region and seek agreement from each of the ten districts.

The submitted report therefore is seeking the Cabinet's approval for the Mayor to consult publicly on the Draft Strategy in the autumn. This will mean that Oldham Council has given its support as a supporting authority, which will allow consultation on the draft LNRS once all ten Greater Manchester districts have confirmed support or no objections. There are no disadvantages associated with this option.

The Final Strategy will return to Members for agreement prior to adoption by the Mayor.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1: to provide approval for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (on behalf of the Mayor of Greater Manchester) to publicly consult on the Draft Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). This will mean that Oldham Council has given its support as a supporting authority, which will allow consultation on the draft LNRS once all ten GM districts have confirmed support or no objections. There are no disadvantages to this option.

Option 2 – Not to provide approval for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (on behalf of the Mayor of Greater Manchester) to publicly consult on the Draft Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). This will mean that Oldham Council will need to give reasons in writing to GMCA for the objection. The advantage of this option is that Oldham Council will have any formal objections reviewed. The disadvantage of this option is potentially delaying consultation on LNRS for GM to either allow for amendments to be made or for the Secretary of State to intervene and approve consultation.

Option 1 is the preferred Option.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet agrees to provide approval for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (on behalf of the Mayor of Greater Manchester) to publicly consult on the Draft Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

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### **APPROVAL OF DRAFT SOUTH PENNINE MOORS SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (SAC)/SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS (SPAS) SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Economy that was seeking approval from the Cabinet of the draft South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Special Protection Areas (SPAs) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (detailed at Appendix 1 to the report), and supporting documents (detailed at Appendices 2 and 3 to the report) as the basis for a six-week public consultation; and to delegate approval to Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Housing Delivery to make minor, non-material modifications to the draft South Pennine Moors SPD before consultation commences, subject to consultation and agreement with the two other Places for Everyone authorities (Rochdale Council and Tameside Council). This will enable stakeholders to have the opportunity to provide comments on the South Pennine Moors SAC / SPA SPD before it is formally adopted.

The recommendations were presented as the Places for Everyone Plan (PfE Plan) is a joint development plan document of nine Greater Manchester authorities which was adopted on 21st March 2024. The PfE Plan sets out a clear spatial strategy for delivering new homes and businesses along with infrastructure to support development and to protect and enhance our towns, cities and landscapes. It covers a timeframe up to 2039.

The South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC) / Special Protection Areas (SPAs) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (hereafter referred to as the 'South Pennine Moors SPD') is applicable to three of the PfE Plan authorities - Oldham (not including the area covered by the Peak District National Park), Rochdale and Tameside and is being prepared jointly by these three authorities.

The importance of the South Pennine Moors is reflected in a range of international, national and local habitat designations. It supports important breeding bird populations and is classified as a SAC and two SPAs. The SPD relates to the:

- a. South Pennine Moors SAC.
- b. Peak District Moors SPA.
- c. South Pennine Moors Phase 2 SPA.

Through the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) process in support of the PfE Plan new development within parts of these authorities was identified as having the potential to cause an adverse impact on the protected habitats and species on the South Pennine Moors areas listed above. To mitigate against this potential harm, PfE Plan Policy JP-G5: Uplands provides policy which will ensure that new development in these areas will not result in an adverse impact on the protected habitats and species.

Options/Alternatives Considered:

Option 1 – To approve the draft South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Special Protection Areas (SPAs) Supplementary Planning (SPD), and supporting documents (detailed at Appendices 2 and 3 to the report) as the basis for a six-week public consultation commencing no earlier than 1st November 2024; and to delegate approval for Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Housing Delivery to make minor, non-material modifications to the draft South Pennine Moors SAC/SPA SPD and supporting documents before consultation commences, subject to consultation and agreement with the two other Places for Everyone authorities who are jointly preparing the SPD (Rochdale Council and Tameside Council). This will enable stakeholders to have the opportunity to provide comments on the South Pennine Moors SPD before it is formally adopted. There are no disadvantages to this option.

Option 2 - To not approve the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Special Protection Areas (SPAs) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and supporting documents (detailed at Appendices 2 and 3 to the report) as the basis for consultation. This would prevent stakeholders commenting on the SPD. This would result in the future adoption of the document being contrary to planning regulations and would significantly limit the ability of the PfE authorities to secure appropriate development in the South Pennine Moors area of the three authorities.



Option 1 is the preferred Option.



**Oldham**  
Council

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet approves the draft South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Special Protection Areas (SPAs) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (detailed at Appendix 1 to the report) and supporting documents (detailed at Appendices 2 and 3 to the report) as the basis for a six-week public consultation commencing no earlier than 1st November 2024.
2. That Cabinet delegates approval to the Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Housing Delivery to make minor, non-material modifications to the draft South Pennine Moors SAC/SPA SPD and supporting documents before consultation commences, subject to consultation and agreement with the two other Places for Everyone authorities who are jointly preparing the SPD (Rochdale Council and Tameside Council).

13

### **APPROVAL OF DRAFT HOLCROFT MOSS PLANNING OBLIGATIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

Purpose of the Report:

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Economy that was seeking approval of the draft Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report) and supporting documents (as detailed at Appendices 2, 3 and 4 of the report) for a six-week public consultation commencing not earlier than 1 November 2024. This will enable stakeholders to have the opportunity to provide comments on the Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations SPD before it is formally adopted.

The report's recommendations were presented as the Places for Everyone Plan (PfE Plan) was a joint development plan document of nine Greater Manchester authorities which was adopted on 21st March 2024. The PfE Plan sets out a clear spatial strategy for delivering new homes and businesses along with infrastructure to support development and to protect and enhance our towns, cities and landscapes. It covers a timeframe up to 2039.

PfE Policy JP-C8 - Transport Requirements of New Development, seeks to ensure new development does not have an adverse impact on the protected habitats and species of Holcroft Moss, which is within the Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Where appropriate, housing and/or employment developments make a financial contribution to the provision of mitigation.

The need for, and amount of financial contribution to be secured, will be identified at the planning application stage. As set out in Policy JP-C8 of the PfE Plan, where planning applications are required to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment, they will need to consider air quality impacts on Holcroft Moss, within the Manchester Mosses Special Area of

Conservation (SAC). Any proposals that would result in increased traffic flows on the M62 past Holcroft Moss of more than 100 vehicles per day or 20 Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) per day must devise a scheme-specific range of measures to reduce reliance on cars, reduce trip generation, promote ultra-low emission vehicles, and provide a contribution towards restoration measures at Holcroft Moss.

Working with Natural England and Warrington Metropolitan Borough Council (WMBC), the nine PfE authorities have established the scope and estimated cost of the mitigation works. The cost of the mitigation works - including design and feasibility, land, capital costs, professional fees, monitoring, contingency and ongoing maintenance – has been estimated at approximately £880,000 (see statement of estimated project costs and required contributions, which is available alongside this SPD). Contributions will be sought on commencement of development to ensure the mitigation measures can be provided in a timely manner to offset the impacts. Individual legal agreements will specify timeframes for financial contribution(s) to be spent.

The exact scale of contributions for an individual site will depend upon the particular development proposed, and its impact upon Holcroft Moss, the proposed level of contributions is set out in the statement of estimated project costs and required contributions, which is available alongside the SPD. The nine PfE authorities and WMBC have agreed that the cost of the mitigation works will be apportioned between the two plans. The apportionment will be based on the potential impact on Holcroft Moss identified in the respective Plan's HRA. On this basis the PfE authorities will be responsible for 53% of the total costs and WMBC will be responsible for 47% of the total costs.

#### Options/Alternatives Considered:

Option 1 – To: a). approve the draft Holcroft Moss Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and supporting documents, for a six-week public consultation commencing no earlier than 1st November 2024; b). agree the provision to WMBC (as the responsible authority for implementing a mitigation strategy for Holcroft Moss) as necessary and through an appropriate mechanism, with S106 funds collected in accordance with the Holcroft Moss SPD; and c). delegate approval to the Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Housing Delivery to make minor, non-material modifications to the draft Holcroft Moss SPD, and supporting documents, before consultation commences, subject to consultation and agreement with the eight other Places for Everyone authorities. This will enable stakeholders to have the opportunity to provide comments on the draft Holcroft Moss SPD before it is formally adopted. There were no foreseeable disadvantages to this option.

Option 2 - To not approve the draft Holcroft Moss SPD for consultation. This would prevent stakeholders commenting on the SPD. This would result in future adoption of the document

being contrary to planning regulations and would significantly limit the ability of the PfE authorities to collect S106 monies, necessary to mitigate harm to Holcroft Moss.

Option 1 was the preferred Option.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet approves the draft Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report) and supporting documents (as detailed at Appendices 2, 3 and 4 of the report), as the basis for a six-week public consultation commencing no earlier than 1st November 2024.
2. That Cabinet agrees the provision to Warrington Metropolitan Borough Council (as the responsible authority for implementing a mitigation strategy for Holcroft Moss) as necessary and through an appropriate mechanism, with S106 funds collected in accordance with the Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations SPD.
3. That Cabinet agrees to delegate approval to the Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Housing Delivery to make minor, non-material modifications to the draft Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations SPD and supporting documents before consultation commences, subject to consultation and agreement with the eight other Places for Everyone authorities.

14

#### **LEISURE BUILDINGS CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS**

The Cabinet considered a report that was requesting that steps be taken to ensure that the Borough's leisure estate was kept in good condition. Oldham Council had invested capital in the buildings to ensure they can be managed daily by Oldham Community Leisure Ltd. (OCLL). The lifecycle and backlog of maintenance falls under the Council to fund as per the OCLL contract.

The recommendations in the report were presented as the work that was needed and the total spend building by building covering the next three years and flagged up some urgent spending needed this year due to health and safety issues.

Options/Alternatives Considered:

The options were detailed in the confidential report.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet will consider the confidential recommendations in the report at agenda item 18.

15

#### **LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND**

The Cabinet considered a report which advised that the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had launched a third round of the Local Authority Housing fund to run over the financial years of 2024/25 and 2025/26.

The recommendations in the report were presented as the Cabinet was being requested to fund various projects as detailed in the confidential report.

Options/Alternatives Considered:

Three options were presented in the confidential Cabinet report.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet will consider the confidential recommendations in the report at agenda item 19.

16

### **SELECTION OF PREFERRED DEVELOPER FOR SOUTHLINK**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Economy that sought the appointment of a company to develop land at Southlink following the completion of a competitive land sale process, as detailed in the confidential Cabinet report.

The report's recommendations were presented as the land sale will secure significant conditional capital receipts that will be shared with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) based on percentage of land ownership of the site – 54.2% (OMBC) and 45.8% (TfGM).

Options/Alternatives Considered:

Three options were presented in the confidential Cabinet report.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet will consider the confidential recommendations in the report at agenda item 20.

17

### **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 three items of business, on the grounds that they contain exempt information, as defined 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.

18

### **LEISURE BUILDINGS CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS**

Cabinet considered the confidential recommendations in relation to agenda item 14 (Leisure Buildings Capital Requirements).

Cabinet resolved to:

1. Approve that the Council invest Capital funding into the Leisure Estate over the next three years to look at lifecycle events within the council buildings. This will ensure the buildings are kept in a good standard of repair as these buildings are public facing and represent standards within Oldham Council.
2. Approve that the condition surveys for the facilities are scheduled in the capital programme and a that further report brought back to the Cabinet in due course, highlighting the findings of the surveys.

**LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND**

Cabinet considered the confidential recommendations in relation to agenda item 15 (Local Authority Housing Fund).

Cabinet resolved to:

1. Confirm acceptance of the grant from MCHLG.
2. Approve a capital investment of £934,000.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Economy to agree and enter into a grant agreement with Cromwood Homes to deliver the homes, subject to the Subsidy Control regime.
4. Delegate authority to the Borough Solicitor, or his nominated representative, to formalise any necessary legal requirements including signing and/or sealing any documentation required to give effect to the recommendations and/or delegations in this report.
5. Delegate authority to the Director of Economy or his nominated representative to approve the appointment of external legal advisors required to protect the Council's interests and give effect to the recommendations in the confidential Cabinet report.

**SELECTION OF PREFERRED DEVELOPER FOR SOUTHLINK**

Consideration was given to the commercially sensitive information in relation to Item 16: Selection of Preferred Developer at Southlink.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet agrees to select Vistry Partnership to develop land at Southlink following the completion of a competitive land sale process, as detailed in the confidential Cabinet report.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 6.30pm

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# Public Document Pack

## CABINET

18/11/2024 at 6.00 pm



**Oldham**  
Council

**Present:** Councillor Shah (Chair)  
Councillors M Ali, Brownridge, Dean, F Hussain, Jabbar and Taylor

1           **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Goodwin and Mushtaq.

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**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024, be approved as a correct record.

6           **SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE - MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Shareholder Committee, held 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024, be noted.

7           **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 of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (Month 6), of the Council's 2024/25 forecast revenue budget position (detailed at Annex 1) and the financial position of the capital programme together with the revised capital programme 2024/25 to 2028/29 (detailed at Annex 2).

The Cabinet were advised that the forecast overspend position based on the Month 6 profiled budget was £9.956m, which if not addressed, would result in a year-end overspend of £19.912m (£21.065m at Month 4).

This financial monitoring report follows on from the position reported at Month 4 and should continue to be used as a warning of the potential year- end position if no further action is taken to reduce net expenditure. The management actions already implemented for 2024/25 have been factored into the Month 6 forecasts and this has resulted in a reduction in the position previously reported.

Work was ongoing across the organisation to address this position and it was anticipated that by the year end, the current

outturn deficit position should reduce even further. An update on the Month 6 2024/25 position was detailed within Annex 1.

In terms of the Capital Position, 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 £99.505m at the close of Quarter 2 (£103.935m at Month 4), a net reduction of £4.430m. the actual expenditure to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 was £31.222m (31.38% of the forecast outturn).

Resolved that the Cabinet:

1. Notes the report.
2. Approves the forecast profiled budget, being an adverse position of £9.956m at Quarter 2 and the forecast potential adverse position by year end of £19.912m, with mitigations in place to reduce expenditure.
3. Approves the revised reserves policy for 2024/25, as detailed at Appendix 2 of Annex 1.
4. Approves the revised capital programme for 2024/25 including the proposed virements and the forecast for the financial years to 2028/29 as at Quarter 2, as outlined in Annex 2.

8

## **OLDHAM TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which asked Members to consider endorsing the amended Oldham Town Centre Development Framework, following a public engagement exercise.

The Cabinet was informed that as part of the Council's Creating a Better Place programme to transform Oldham Town Centre, including the delivery of 2,000 new homes, Cabinet had approved the appointment of Muse Place Ltd as our long-term Strategic Delivery Partner in June 2023, following an extensive OJEU compliant competitive procurement exercise.

Since that time, a Master Development Agreement (MDA) between the Council and Muse was entered into in September 2023 and a Detailed Business Plan for the partnership was approved by the Council in March 2024.

A key element of the Detailed Business Plan covered how the core Town Centre housing sites, including the Civic Centre, Former Leisure Centre and Former Magistrates Court will be taken forward. The first stage of this was the production of a draft Town Centre Development Framework, which would help to guide future planning and development proposals in the Town Centre.

A draft Town Centre Development Framework was consulted upon from 24<sup>th</sup> July until 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (seven weeks in total). The draft Development Framework itself and the full range of consultation material was available to be viewed on the Council's website at: <https://oldhamtownliving.co.uk>.



The Town Centre Development Framework document had been refined, taking onboard the feedback received through the consultation, and this report was seeking the endorsement of that final Development Framework by the Cabinet.



Options/Alternatives considered:

- a. Option 1 – to endorse the finalised Oldham Town Centre Development Framework.
- b. Option 2 – to not endorse the finalised Oldham Town Centre Development Framework

The Development Framework provided a clear overview of what the council and partners have been doing, and continue to do, in and around the town centre, and how the proposed developments in the Oldham Town Living partnership with Muse will fit in this context and enhance the town centre. Having gone through a public consultation, in which there was significant engagement, and taken onboard the feedback from this engagement, the finalised Development Framework is now suitable for endorsement and use by the council and partners going forward. Therefore, option 1 is recommended, and there are no disadvantages to this option.

Not endorsing the Development Framework would bring no advantages, as it leaves the Development Framework with no true status and proposals for the Town Centre with no overarching framework to work to (or for the council to hold partners to). As such, option 2 is not recommended.

Option 1 is therefore the preferred option.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet endorses the Oldham Town Centre Development Framework.

9

## **INCLUSION OF OLDHAM MUMPS, PRINCES GATE INTO THE TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP**

The Cabinet considered a report of the deputy Chief Executive (Place) which sought approval to include Oldham Mumps, Princes Gate into the Town Centre Development Partnership with MUSE to deliver new homes.

The submitted report set out the rationale for the Council to include the Princes Gate site into the Master Development Agreement, that has been completed with the Private Sector Partner - MUSE. The inclusion of the Princes Gate site will deliver around 295 new homes to push forward with the delivery of the town centre regeneration masterplan supported by Brownfield Housing Land Grant secured on the site to help delivery.

Options/Alternatives Considered:

The options were detailed in the confidential report.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet will consider the confidential recommendations in the report at agenda item 14.

10

### **RIGHT START AND SCHOOL NURSING STAFF CONSULTATION OUTCOME**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Director of Public Health and the Director of Education, Skills and Early Years which advised members that approval had been granted, by the Cabinet, in June 2024, to enter into a period of formal workforce engagement and consultation regarding the Right Start and School Nursing Service, which is currently delivered under a Section 75 Partnership Agreement between Oldham Council and Northern Care Alliance (NCA). The submitted report to this meeting sought approval to commence implementation of the service redesign of the Right Start and School Nursing service to create a new Integrated Children and Families Service.

Staff consultation on these proposals had taken place between 7<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and 21<sup>st</sup> September 2024. Several changes to the proposal were made as a result. The report therefore provided further details of the engagement and consultation which had taken place.

This report explains how the council will introduce a new operating model for the Integrated Children and Families Service. The new model replaces the current Right Start and School Nursing Service.

Options/Alternatives Considered:

The options were detailed in the confidential report.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet will consider the confidential recommendations in the report at agenda item 15.

11

### **CATERING REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Economy which informed the Cabinet of the current financial and operating position of Oldham Education Catering Service (OECS) who provided catering for 46 schools in Oldham. There were several issues of concern for the delivery of the service including increasing costs of quality local food supplies, increasing costs for staff and a continued decline in the number of schools contracting with the Council. With the continued roll out of academisation, it was anticipated that the number of schools contracting with the Council will continue to reduce over the coming years.

In response to the challenges faced by OECS, the Association for Public Service Excellence, (APSE), were commissioned to undertake an evidence based independent review. The report highlighted several options which the Cabinet were requested to consider.

OECS was the in-house school catering function that provides school meals: this is not a statutory function of the Council and

schools have been opting to use various alternative services for several years now.

OECS provides approximately 7,700 meals per day and employs 199 catering staff. There are 87 Primary School in the Oldham Borough, however OECS only provides catering services for 46 of those: the remaining schools which are not supported by OECS use established providers within the school meals market or operate a successful in-house catering service. It is anticipated that the number of schools contracting with the Council will reduce in the coming years due to private companies offering schools a competitively priced service, and because of new business decisions as schools were 'academised'.

The independent APSE review had identified a number of service areas which required substantial investment whilst recognising this could take a considerable period of time to complete. However, even with this investment, the report cautioned that whilst this provides an opportunity for the service to balance costs versus budget, this would not be guaranteed. The report therefore concluded that the current delivery model was not sustainable and that transitioning the service back to schools would provide a number of benefits including local decision making for schools, (for example menu choices), and increased integration of the catering function with other school services, whilst protecting local jobs and allowing a continuity of service within schools.

Options/Alternatives Considered:

The options were detailed in the confidential report.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet will consider the confidential recommendations in the report at agenda item 16.

12

## **PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTMENT REVIEW**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Public Health which provided members with an update on the Public Health Investment Review and present the resulting proposals for consideration.

The report supplied an update on the Public Health Investment Review and associated proposals for in-year and future changes to investment in council services from the Public Health budget. This included those services where public health investment was used by other council areas to commission external providers.

Options/Alternatives Considered:

The options were detailed in the confidential report.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet will consider the confidential recommendations in the report at agenda item 17.

13 **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 four items of business, on the grounds that they contain exempt information, as defined 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.

14 **INCLUSION OF OLDHAM MUMPS, PRINCES GATE INTO THE TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP**

The Cabinet considered confidential recommendations to the report detailed at agenda item 9.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet Members approve the inclusion of the Oldham Mumps into the Master Development Agreement (dated 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023) via a Supplementary Agreement to ensure MUSE's obligations and timescales for stratifying the core sites are maintained.
2. That the Cabinet agrees to delegate authority to the Leader, Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and to the Interim Borough Solicitor to agree the final details and then finalise the supplemental agreement with Muse.
3. That the Cabinet agree to delegate authority to the Leader, Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and Director of Finance to review all legal, financial and commercial details, ahead of entering into relevant agreements to support pre-development partnership costs (up to £5 Million).

15 **RIGHT START AND SCHOOL NURSING STAFF CONSULTATION OUTCOME**

The Cabinet considered confidential recommendations to the report detailed at agenda item 10.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet approves the new operating model, Option 1 shown at Appendix 1 to the confidential report, which has been refined following detailed discussions with staff, formal consultation with unions and scrutiny by the 0-19 Governance Operational Group and the Children and Families Early Help Board
2. That the Cabinet authorises officers to take the necessary actions to implement the restructure effective from 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 including the TUPE of 32 staff from NCA to Oldham Council and the authorising of any resulting redundancies.

16 **CATERING REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION**

The Cabinet considered confidential recommendations to the report detailed at agenda item 11.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet approve the transition of the school catering provision from Oldham Education Catering

Service to schools through a comprehensive and supportive change management process.

2. That the Cabinet approve the withdrawal of the OECS from the school meal provider market no later than September 2025.



17

### **PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTMENT REVIEW**

The Cabinet considered confidential recommendations to the report detailed at agenda item 12.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet notes the work undertaken to date and approves the outlined methodology and proposals for changes to the Public Health investment approach, as outlined in the confidential report.
2. That the Cabinet approves the proposed changes in the Public Health investments to council services, as outlined in the confidential report.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 6.25pm

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED  
AUTHORITY HELD ON FRIDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2024 AT BURY TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT**

Mayor of Greater Manchester	Andy Burnham (in the Chair)
Deputy Mayor (Police, Crime & Fire)	Kate Green
Bolton	Councillor Susan Haworth
Bury	Councillor Eamonn O'Brien
Manchester	Councillor Joanna Midgley
Oldham	Councillor Arooj Shah
Rochdale	Councillor Neil Emmott
Salford	City Mayor Paul Dennett
Stockport	Councillor Mark Roberts
Tameside	Councillor Eleanor Wills
Trafford	Councillor Tom Ross
Wigan	Councillor David Molyneux

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Local Nature Partnership	Anne Selby
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**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Group Chief Executive Officer, GMCA, GMFRS & TfGM	Caroline Simpson
Group Deputy Chief Executive	Andrew Lightfoot
Group Monitoring Officer	Gillian Duckworth
Group Treasurer	Steve Wilson
GMCA Director of Governance & Scrutiny	Julie Connor
Bolton	Sue Johnson
Bury	Lynne Ridsdale
Manchester	Becca Heron
Oldham	Harry Catherall
Rochdale	Julie Murphy

Salford	Tom Stannard
Stockport	Michael Cullen
Tameside	Steph Butterworth
Tameside	Julian Jackson
Trafford	Sara Todd
Wigan	Aidan Thatcher
Office of the GM Mayor	Kevin Lee
TfGM	Martin Lax
TfGM	Steve Warrener
GMCA	Sylvia Welsh
GMCA	Lee Teasdale

**GMCA 145/24      APOLOGIES**

That apologies be received from Councillor Nicholas Peel (Bolton), Councillor Bev Craig (Manchester) & Councillor Mark Hunter (Stockport).

**GMCA 146/24      CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, opened the meeting by welcoming Councillor Eleanor Wills to the meeting following her appointment as the Leader of Tameside Council and to the GMCA. The Mayor also expressed the thanks of the GMCA to Councillor Gerald Cooney for his valuable contributions to the housing portfolio during his tenure as the member of the GMCA.

The Mayor highlighted the continuing concerning performance of Northern Rail, with the current level of service unacceptable for a city region of Greater Manchester's size. He advised that an emergency meeting of the Rail North Committee had been arranged to discuss these concerns as a matter of urgency.

Ahead of the Autumn Budget/Spending Review, the Mayor confirmed that direct representations were being made to Whitehall on easing the financial burdens and pressures currently placed upon Local Government. The case for a full integrated London style public transport system continued to be made, and an offer of 75,000



new homes in the region had been made to support the new Government's housebuilding ambitions.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the appointment of Councillor Eleanor Wills (Tameside) as a member of the GMCA be noted.
2. That Councillor Gerald Cooney be thanked for his service as the previous Tameside member of the GMCA.
3. That it be noted that Mayor Andy Burnham has called for an urgent meeting of the Rail North Committee to discuss the ongoing concerns about the performance of Northern Rail.
4. That the Mayor will continue to make direct representations to government ahead of the Autumn Budget.

**GMCA 147/24      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**RESOLVED /-**

There were none.

**GMCA 148/24      MINUTES OF THE GMCA MEETING HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER  
2024**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the minutes of the GMCA meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**GMCA 149/24      GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES – 25<sup>TH</sup>  
SEPTEMBER 2024**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the minutes of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be noted.

**GMCA 150/24      GM BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE MINUTES – 26<sup>TH</sup>  
SEPTEMBER 2024**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the minutes of the GM Bee Network Committee meetings held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be noted.

**GMCA 151/24      GMCA AIR QUALITY ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE  
MINUTES – 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2024**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, Portfolio Lead for Clean Air, introduced a report which provided the GMCA with an update on the current work of the Committee. Good progress had been made on the adoption of the Air Quality Action Plan with the submission of the non-charging investment led approach. It had been evidenced that this the quickest, cheapest and the fairest way of compliance. The Plan could be looked at in three parts, firstly to support the Bee Network in provision of a cleaner bus fleet; secondly a fund for cleaner taxis which met a common set of principles; and thirdly a smaller pot for specific junction interventions at air quality hotspots.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the minutes of the GMCA Air Quality Administration Committee held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 be noted.

2. That update received from the Chair of the GM Air Quality Administration Committee be noted.

**GMCA 152/24      GMCA WASTE & RECYCLING COMMITTEE MINUTES – 16<sup>TH</sup>  
OCTOBER 2024**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the minutes of the GMCA Waste & Recycling Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024 be noted.

**GMCA 153/24      GREATER MANCHESTER APPOINTMENTS**

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

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the appointment of Councillor Basat Sheikh (MCC) as a substitute member of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee for 2024/25 be approved.
2. That the appointment of Councillor Anthony McCaul (MCC) as a substitute member of the GM Clean Air Committee for 2024/25 be noted.
3. That the appointment of Councillor Anthony McCaul (MCC) as a substitute member of the Air Quality Administration Committee for 2024/25 be noted.

**GMCA 154/24      EQUALITY PANELS – ANNUAL REPORTS**

Councillor Arooj Shah, Portfolio Lead for Equalities & Communities, presented a report summarising the activity and impact of the Greater Manchester Equality Panels through their individual Annual Reports 2023-24.

Councillor Shah praised the individual volunteers who give up so much of their time and put so much work into making each of these individual panels a resounding success and forming key stepping stones towards ensuring resilience in all of GM's communities.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the Annual Reports provided by the Disabled People's Panel, Youth Combined Authority, Women and Girls Equality Panel, Race Equality Panel, Faith and Belief Panel Advisory Panel, Older Peoples Equality Panel and LGBTQ+ Equality Panel be noted.
2. That the commitment of all Portfolios to proactively engage with Equality Panels (individually or collectively) on issues that impact communities-of-identity be endorsed.
3. That the GMC be requested to seek to further communicate the brilliant work of community volunteers in fostering community cohesion and equalities throughout the region.

**GMCA 155/24      GREATER MANCHESTER LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY  
STRATEGY – DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION**

Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Lead for Green City Region, provided a report that presented Greater Manchester's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft for consultation). The strategy had been developed over the last 18 month with Local Authorities and wider stakeholders and was ready to progress to public consultation.

This strategy was part of a new system of spatial biodiversity strategies required by law under the Environment Act 2021. The purpose was to set out the actions required to over the forthcoming years to appropriately respond to the ongoing biodiversity emergency. The Strategy would provide a roadmap for how and where people could work together to help nature heal across the city region. Work had taken place with all Greater Manchester Local Authorities and relevant partners to fully develop the draft,

together with consultation with experts before now going on to a public consultation process to ensure the most comprehensive strategy possible.

Anne Selby, Chair of the Local Nature Partnership, was invited to address the GMCA. She stated that the current year had been disastrous for pollinators, with a wet spring causing significant difficulties, and this was compounded by an estimated 90-95% loss of insects over the past century. As well as painful environmental consequences, based on current projections the loss of biodiversity could have a 12% financial impact on GDP by 2050 as well. The Strategy was welcomed as it set out the first steps required in order to halt these declines.

## **RESOLVED /-**

### **MAYORAL APPROVAL**

1. That the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft for consultation) to proceed to public consultation and that the authority be delegated to Councillor Tom Ross, Portfolio Lead for Green City Region to approve any minor changes to be made to the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft-for-consultation) prior to the public consultation.

### **GMCA APPROVALS**

2. That the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft-for-consultation) be endorsed for public consultation.
3. That the contents, including the vision, aims, targets, priorities and actions to help respond locally to the biodiversity emergency, be noted.
4. That it be noted that the sustainability assessment of these proposals was positive.
5. That the points highlighted by Anne Selby, Chair of the Local Nature Partnership, be noted.

6. That it be noted that the consultation process will take place from November 15<sup>th</sup> to January 31<sup>st</sup> 2025 and that GM Local Authorities be requested to disseminate the consultation through their communications channels.

**GMCA 156/24      GREATER MANCHESTER ONE NETWORK CONNECTIVITY  
PARTNER PROCUREMENT**

Councillor Susan Haworth, of behalf of Councillor Nicholas Peel, Portfolio Lead for Digital City Region, presented a report setting out the progress made on Greater Manchester One Network implementation and summarising the outcome of a tender process to extend One Network to include connectivity for sites that are not served by the Greater Manchester Local Full Fibre Network.

Greater Manchester One Network was needed as Greater Manchester local full fibre network had digital legacy issues that needed solving. The spending of £2m to address this was cost effective, as it avoided up to £6.6m of alternative option costs over 10 years, with £3.7m of social value gained as referenced within the report.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the completion of the migration of c 1200 sites from legacy networks to the GM One Network across six organisations and the efforts of officers and commercial partners in its delivery, be noted.
2. That the potential to leverage GM One Network to improve services and reduce costs across Greater Manchester's public sector including for connectivity, internet access, and other cloud services, and cyber security, be noted.
3. That approval be given for the GMCA to enter into the contract with Vodafone for GM One Network Connectivity Partner services, valued at up to £2m, to enable connectivity to more sites, creating an agreement that can be drawn on for the benefit of partners in GM One Network (at their cost); noting that orders under the contract will be subject to the governance, as set out in the report and decisions in accordance with the Constitution.

**GMCA 157/24      GM INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK – CONDITIONAL PROJECT APPROVAL**

Councillor David Molyneux, Portfolio Lead for Resources & Investment, presented a report seeking approval for a loan to Sustainable Ventures (North) Ltd. A loan which would be made from recycled funds.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That approval be given for a loan of £500k to Sustainable Ventures (North) Ltd
2. That authority be delegated to the Combined Authority Treasurer and Combined Authority 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.

**GMCA 158/24      DRAFT SCHOOL STRATEGY – OUR VISION FOR SCHOOL TRAVEL IN MANCHESTER**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report asking members to note and comment on the draft School Travel Strategy, a sub-strategy of the 2040 Transport Strategy.

It was stated that the introduction of yellow school buses in the region in the mid-2000s had been a necessity at that time as the bus network in its deregulated form was reducing services and leaving many schools without any form of dedicated service. This system had now been in place for close to 20 years and the introduction of the franchised Bee Network allowed for the opportunity to undertake a review and introduce a more integrated and sustainable alternative.

Nearly half a million students travelled to Greater Manchester's schools and education establishments every single day, and these students needed to be able to travel in a

safe and an affordable way. In terms of safety, the Vision Zero Strategy and Schools Streets Strategies would continue to be developed to support children who were able to walk and cycle to school, and work would continue to be undertaken with GMP and TfGM on the TravelSafe Partnership for those who travel via public transport.

Network reviews were now beginning to take shape in individual Local Authorities, with a strong focus on links to the network of vital infrastructure such as hospitals and educational establishments. Where network coverage was not feasible, specialist services would continue to be provided.

Some concern was expressed by members about the impact of any changes to services, highlighting infrastructural capacity issues and parents perception of the safety of their children, which could result in an uptick in parents driving children to school. Reassurance was sought that route changes would only be implemented if clearly fully supported through the public consultation process. The Mayor advised that these concerns were fully understood and requested TfGM officers develop transparent criteria, that clearly defined where levels of coverage would support any proposals for bus route changes.

#### **RESOLVED /-**

1. That the draft School Travel Strategy be approved for consultation.
2. That approval be given to the launch of public engagement on the strategy, comprising a ten-week online consultation and meetings with stakeholders affected by or involved in school travel.
3. That it be noted that the Mayor of Greater Manchester and the Greater Manchester Active Travel Commissioner have written to all Greater Manchester primary schools in the region seeking expressions of interest around integrating permanent Schools Streets schemes.
4. That the update on the Bee Network Committee's consideration of this item be received.



5. That transport for Greater Manchester officers be requested to develop transparent criteria, which clearly defines where levels of coverage supported proposals for bus route changes.
6. That it be noted that the consultation will commence from November 2024 for a period of ten weeks and that Local Authorities be requested to disseminate the consultation through their communications channels.
7. That the final strategy be submitted to the GMCA in spring 2025 for consideration.

#### **GMCA 159/24 DELIVERING THE BEE NETWORK UPDATE**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report advising on the progress of delivering the Bee Network, the region's plan for a high-quality, affordable and fully integrated public transport and active travel system for the people and businesses of Greater Manchester.

The GMCA was advised that the update had been considered by the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and that the Committee had been encouraged by the data received in terms of the increased patronage and farebox seen in Tranches 1 & 2 and the success of the night bus pilot, but also addressed a number of issues such as continuing perceptions around safety that the TravelSafe Partnership needed to address and the need for more accessibility at stations.

The Mayor also highlighted the need for active promotion of the new Bee Network fare structures and the opportunities to fund passes through credit unions; the continuing work around rail integration into the Network; and the forthcoming introduction of multi-modal fares.

Members addressed issues faced with rail services within the region around Bolton. The Mayor confirmed that issues around Middlebrook were being alleviated with the introduction of the Bee Network's first new route, the 615 service.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the delivering the Bee Network update be noted
2. That the comments raised through the GM Overview & Scrutiny Committee be received.
3. That the update on the cost effectiveness of bus franchising to date be noted.
4. That the introduction of simpler flatter fares and that availability of credit unions for purchasing yearly passes be actively promoted.
5. That it be noted that the Mayor will continue to work with Transport for Greater Manchester to develop a plan for rail integration that was as robust and clear as the plan developed for bus franchising.
6. That the introduction of multi-modal fares with effect from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 be noted and that the communications campaign proposals be submitted to the GMCA for consideration.
7. That the issues highlighted around Bolton South rail services be noted.
8. That the introduction of the Bee Network's first new bus service, the 615 from Wigan to Middlebrook, be welcomed.
9. That Leaders be requested to consider where they have land development ambitions in areas adjacent to the eight lines planned for GM rail integration

#### **GMCA 160/24      BUS FRANCHISING FLEET**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report that detailed a number of bus franchising fleet related proposals in preparation for the introduction of the third and final tranche of bus franchising on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2025; and to support bus services across the rest of the Bee Network.

**RESOLVED /-**

1. That the following bus fleet transactions be approved, and approval be given to borrowings of up to £71.2m to fund those transactions:
  - a. Purchase of 72 Euro VI diesel buses from Greater Manchester Buses South Limited (Stagecoach) to replace 'life expired' and other older vehicles and to strengthen services;
  - b. Purchase, and novation of up to 94 zero emission electric buses (ZEBs) from Stagecoach and Go North West in order to reduce operational costs in future years, via a reduction in the service fee payable to franchise operators;
  - c. Short term grant funding to Greater Manchester Buses South Limited (Stagecoach) for 'ZEBRA' ZEBs that were procured initially by Stagecoach prior to the award of contract for Tranche 3 for reallocation across franchises.
  
2. That the continued use the GMCA financial contribution from grant funding of up to £12.5m for the Volvo 'ZEBRA' fleet, to support the proposed revised allocation of the ZEBRA fleet be approved.
  
3. That the GMCA record its congratulations to Steve Warrener following his permanent appointment to the role of Managing Director of Transport for Greater Manchester, as agreed at the GM Resources Committee held earlier in the day.

#### **GMCA 161/24      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 162/24      BUS FRANCHISING FLEET**

**Clerk's Note:** This item was considered in support of the report considered in Part A of the agenda (GMCA 160/24)

**RESOLVED /-**

That the report be noted.

**GMCA 163/24      GREATER MANCHESTER INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK –  
CONDITIONAL PROJECT APPROVAL**

**Clerk's Note:** This item was considered in support of the report considered in Part A of the agenda (GMCA 157/24).

**RESOLVED /-**

That the report be noted.

## Portfolio Report

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

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

### **Town Centre Living:**

Cabinet were delighted to endorse the Oldham Town Centre development Framework last month, which has been prepared with our partners Muse, and to agree the addition of the Prince's Gate site to the partnership agreement. Muse will now be looking to submit planning applications for four sites across the town centre in 2025: The Civic Centre & Queen Elizaebth Hall; The Former Magistrates Court & Manchester Chambers; the Former Leisure Centre and Prince's Gate. Pre-construction works have also begun on the Former Leisure Centre site to prepare the site for development, and similar works will be taking place on the Civic Centre site in the New Year.

### **Housing Delivery:**

After the successful award of a contract to Vistry for the Southlink housing site, they have also agreed to deliver a further 28 truly affordable homes at their development in Fitton Hill.

A recommendation on a preferred bidder for the Former South Chadderton School site will be considered by Cabinet in January. We have received 10 strong bids for this site.

Two further sites (land adjacent to Kaskenmoor school in Failsworth, and land at Higher Lime in Hollinwood) will be taken out to the market to invite bids on them. These key council-owned sites will not only deliver much-needed new homes (including Truly Affordable Net Zero homes), but they will generate significant capital receipts for the council to invest in our services.

In Derker, work has commenced on 132 new homes, with a significant portion dedicated to affordable housing. and specialist accommodation by Jigsaw Homes have also now begun on-site at Foundry Street. These developments are crucial in addressing the housing needs of our residents and ensuring that everyone has access to high-quality, affordable homes.

### **Planning:**

In November, we saw several significant planning applications on brownfield sites submitted to the Planning Service, including for phase 2 at the former Shaw Distribution Centre (192 new homes, 110 of which will be affordable homes), the conversion of the vacant Phoenix House on Union Street into 82 apartments, the development of 120 apartments on the site of the Rileys Snooker Club on King Street and an outline planning application for the development of 268 homes on the Former Hartford Mill in Oldham. This demonstrates that, under the Places for Everyone Joint Plan, Oldham is very much open for business on brownfield sites and, together with the council-owned sites coming forward, that the

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development industry want to develop in Oldham under PfE, even on the most challenging of brownfield sites.

### **Housing Needs**

The number of households requiring temporary accommodation has remained fairly consistent over the past couple of months. Of note is that the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEPE) has been triggered a couple of times this month due to the temperatures falling to zero or below. SWEPE stipulates all residents who are rough sleeping or who at risk of rough sleeping are provided temporary accommodation whilst the weather is zero degrees or below. (this accommodation is usually hostel / dormitory / hotel and does not fall within the suitability requirements that statutory homelessness provision must adhere to). SWEPE does not contribute to the over all temporary accommodation figures and therefore costings as this is counted and funded seperately.

We are working on a number of changes in the way that we operate in order to reduce the number of residents who require temporary accommodation and increase support for those residents who do require temporary accommodation. As part of this work the current Allocations Policy is currently being reviewed and we are due to consult with our residents and key stakeholders during December.

**Recommendations:** Council is requested to note the report.

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# Report to COUNCIL – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024



**Oldham**  
Council

## Portfolio Report

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

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

### Financial Position

As I have highlighted in previous reports, the Council continues to operate in an extremely challenging financial position, driven primarily by increasing demand for services such as social care and temporary accommodation. At month 7 the impact of these demands were translating through into an overspend against the approved budget of £19m. A huge amount of work has been undertaken to address the overspend which Members will recall as projected to reach £26m at quarter one. Work will continue throughout the rest of the year to seek further mitigations to reduce the in year position.

I am pleased to report that the Government has made additional resources available to support local government in 2025/26. This includes an additional £1.3bn for local government. Details are yet to be provided as to how this extra funding will be distributed but there is a strong expectation – supported by the Policy Statement issued on 28<sup>th</sup> November - that a higher proportion than recent years will be allocated to high needs authorities such as Oldham.

Moreover, government has indicated there is to be a reform of the way funding is allocated across the local government sector and a return to multi-year settlement from 2026-27. This can only benefit Council's such as Oldham that have a low tax base but high needs compared to most other local authorities. Nevertheless, the task to set a balanced budget for 2025/25 remains an enormous challenge. An update was provided to Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> December that set out the further savings and difficult decision that must be made. These will be finalised in the coming weeks before being presented to Scrutiny Board on 29<sup>th</sup> January.

### Revenues & Benefits

Work continues to expand the number of online forms available via GovTech, creating more efficiencies in back-office processing and improving the customer journey. Business rates in-year collection at the end of October is 0.65% ahead of the same period last year. As we enter the winter period, and the cost of living continues to bite, collection of council tax becomes more challenging, however in-year collection remains on target, with performance ahead of our closest GM neighbours at the end of October.

We also continue to promote uptake of pension credit for eligible residents. By claiming this benefit residents also qualify for this year's Winter Fuel Payment (Pension Age Winter Heating Payment in Scotland). This year's deadline is 21 December 2024, so we've been doing everything we can to reach people and make them aware. Promotion has taken place via leafleting, information placed in our public buildings such as libraries and town halls, social media promotion, press and through our customer service teams who are meeting residents if they require any assistance in their applications.

### Climate Change & Green New Deal:

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Vital Energi have supported the Council to submit an application to the Planning service to discharge a number of Planning Conditions which if approved will enable the Council to commence works on site for Wrigley Head Solar Farm by the Planning Permission deadline of 17<sup>th</sup> December. Details of the grid connection are still being finalised with Electricity North West.

Arcadis continue to prepare an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy for Oldham, and this is expected to be complete by December / January. Cabinet Members are being invited to participate in the workshops.

Oldham Low Carbon District Heat Network: Buro Happold are preparing to deliver the next stage of feasibility (RIBA Stage 3 design) for the town centre low carbon heat network, and a Request for Information has been sent to all key stakeholders. This work will feed into the procurement in 2025 of the Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partner as the heat network will be the 'anchor' project for the procurement. Further to a recent Press Release, DESNZ have confirmed that Oldham remains part of the national Advanced Zoning Programme which will enable Oldham to take advantage of new primary and secondary legislation around heat network zoning. Work will take place over the next few months to establish what improvements are required for Council buildings to prepare them to connect to the future heat network.

- **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.
- **Spindles:** Work continues in preparation for the new Primary IT Comms Rooms in Spindles which are now under construction, whilst the decant of infrastructure from the Civic Centre is now progressing.
- **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 reviewing the output from the audit of all impacted sites across the borough with Properties 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. There are now 13 sites live on the new GMOne circuits.
- **New Kit for Staff:** The new Laptop refresh programme has now commenced which will replace c3000 Council staff laptops.
- **The Revenues and Benefits Service system (Academy)** has undergone a major upgrade, including the move of it into Azure. This is now complete and will enhance system performance, security, and scalability
- **Wifi Replacement:** IT have commenced the replacement of our existing network with a newer more modern Wireless Infrastructure. Not only will this help improve security but will help the Council to adhere to Public Service Network security requirements.

### **Digital Inclusion:**

The council has recently submitted a bid to GMCA to fund digital inclusion work across the borough with the aim of increasing access to digital support closer to home. We have been notified that the application was successful and we await a Grant Funding Agreement from GMCA to formalise the funding ahead of delivery commencing in early 2025 through to June 2025.

**Recommendations:** Council is requested to note the report.





## Portfolio Report

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

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

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

Children's Social Care and Early Help services are providing support to 3,574 children and young people across early help, children in need, child protection, children looked after and care leavers (28/11/2024).

Following the ILACS (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) in Children's Services in May 2024 in which the service was rated Good in all areas, the Achieving Excellence strategy and improvement plan has been launched.

As we reach the end of 2024, I want to reflect on the incredible work undertaken this year across children and young people services. Oldham's children, young people, and families rely on us during their most challenging times, and I am immensely proud of the dedication and care shown by all those who make a difference every single day.

Oldham has seen significant progress in the way we support vulnerable children and young people. Our work in children's social care and early help continues to improve outcomes and strengthen services. The reduction in our use of agency social workers, from 44.7% in October 2023 to 26.4% in October 2024, is a testament to our efforts to build a stable, skilled workforce. This has been achieved through innovative recruitment campaigns, a strong focus on workforce learning and development, and a growing reputation as an employer of choice in Greater Manchester. The 'Grow Our Own' workforce model continues to exceed targets, reducing our use of agency social workers, which is being expanded to focus on career pathways in residential services as we grow our internal children's home provision.

In our Duty and Advice service, we've handled an average of 465 contacts each week over the last four weeks, maintaining timely and effective support. The improvements in our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) have strengthened relationships across agencies, enabling more effective safeguarding responses. The Complex Safeguarding Hub provided training sessions on criminal exploitation and serious youth violence in schools, facilitated by Kingsland Academy and Co-Op Academy, with delivery from individuals with lived experience which were well received by students and staff.

The Assessment and Intervention service is supporting 1,013 plans, maintaining a positive step down of cases into lower-level services over recent months. 979 children and young people are being supported or assessed as children in need, 24 are under child protection planning or pre-proceedings, and 10 have recently become looked after. Staff stability is improving, and permanent recruitment remains a priority.

The Safeguarding and Care Planning service continues to support 902 plans. Six weekly reviews ensure those children subject to pre-proceedings do not experience delay. We continue to support 209 children who are looked after with our key focus on supporting children in Kinship Care arrangements where possible.

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In October, Research in Practice delivered a series of workshops for Child Safeguarding Partnerships across the country on the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) process, which was well attended by the Oldham Children Safeguarding Partnership. OSCP received positive feedback from the National Panel on two recently submitted Rapid Reviews that highlighted good quality and strong analysis identifying key learning for the Partnership.

For children in care and care leavers, we have continued to provide safe, stable placements and support as they transition into adulthood. The number of children in care at 620 is an increase of ten since the last report. Of these 310 are placed in internal foster care, highlighting strong internal provision.

I want to recognise the work of the children's commissioning and transformation teams who have worked creatively to address placement sufficiency demand pressures. The introduction of bespoke accommodation for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people has ensured their needs are met while contributing to placement cost reductions, 12 young people have been successfully matched to new over-18s accommodation. The refurbishment of Royton children's home has started, and the new children's home in St James is progressing to refurbishment stage.

In November, children in care took part in various activities for a 'Take Over' event. This included taking over the role of Head of Youth Service for a day, attending and leading meetings in Education and a full day of visiting senior officers and members at council offices. The goal was to demonstrate the council services to the young people and showcase the variety of employment options available to them when they reach that age.

The After Care service actively engaged in Care Leavers Week held w/c 28th October with a full week of activities including an adventure walk up Hartshead Pike, held a friendly competitive football match against Manchester's Care Leavers and revisited their 'Positivi-tree' in Alexandra Park launched last year.

Our Early Help teams have played a vital role in working with families before issues escalate. The number of children open to targeted early help has remained around 1,050, with consistent practice that reflects the strength of our early intervention work. Re-referral rates for early help have been maintained at approximately 15% of cases within six months of closure.

The Early Years service has continued to provide high quality support to childcare settings, with all childminders and group childcare settings in Oldham rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. This achievement is a remarkable testament to the quality of care and early education provided in the early years sector. Two of Oldham's early years settings have recently been highlighted in the GMCA campaign for promoting careers in the sector.

The Youth Service has delivered over 25 youth work sessions borough-wide and introduced new provisions in Limeside and Werneth. Our October half-term programme included engaging activities such as a Liverpool FC tournament, Black History workshops, and museum visits, further enriching the experiences of our young people. During Hate Crime Awareness Week, our young people delivered the Uniting People Conference, challenging hate and discrimination across Oldham schools. The GMP Youth Scrutiny Panel welcomed new members and elected two Co-Chairs, showcasing the continued drive in youth voice and participation.

As we celebrate these achievements, I also acknowledge the challenges we continue to face with high demand for services, both locally and nationally. I welcome the government's recent announcement of children's social care reform in Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive, which marks a significant shift towards strengthening early intervention and prevention, workforce stability and placement sufficiency challenges, all of which are key priorities in the children's social care and early help Achieving Excellence strategy, as we continue to deliver improved outcomes for the children, young people, and families of Oldham.

**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.

As we approach Christmas and the New Year, I want to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who works tirelessly to support education, adult learning, and employment across Oldham. I also want to pay tribute to our children, young people, adult learners, and all those striving to start or advance their careers. Your efforts and achievements are truly inspiring, and I'm sure the entire Council joins me in celebrating all that you've accomplished in 2024.

2024 has been an outstanding year for our schools. To those working in our primary schools, thank you for your dedication and hard work. We now have more Good and Outstanding primary schools than ever before. Attendance has improved faster here than nationally and regionally, and our inclusive approach means children stay engaged. Remarkably, Oldham has the lowest primary school exclusion rate of any Greater Manchester borough. This is a testament to your commitment to every child's success.

To everyone in our secondary schools, I also pay tribute to your remarkable achievements. Over 70% of our secondary schools are now rated Good or Outstanding—a position Oldham hasn't enjoyed for many years. Our attendance rates continue to set the highest standard across Greater Manchester, with steady improvement, and our joint efforts recognised by the Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel D'Souza. Your work to make secondary schools inclusive environments are evident, as we maintain the lowest exclusion rates in Greater Manchester.

For those working in our colleges, I extend my deepest appreciation. The support you provide to young people as they transition from school and pursue their career goals is extraordinary. I'm particularly grateful for your collaboration in making the Young Person's Careers event earlier this year such a resounding success.

2024 has also been a year of progress for our SEND partnership. Our statutory performance for issuing Education, Health, and Care Plans remains among the strongest in the country. Additionally, the waiting list for Speech and Language Therapy has more than halved in the past year, and access to community paediatric services has significantly improved.

However, I want to acknowledge the ongoing challenges faced by children and young people with special educational needs and their families. Despite these local advancements, I understand that the national SEND system remains complex and often difficult to navigate. I'm encouraged by the government's recent commitment to addressing these issues, including the additional £1 billion in SEND funding announced in the budget. It's also worth noting that our own SEND Improvement Board chair, Dame Christine Lenehan, has been appointed as the government's advisor on SEND reform—a promising step toward meaningful change, and a chance that Oldham will be central in leading and influencing.

Our Lifelong Learning continues to transform the lives of residents. The service supported 2264 residents into formal learning with an exceptional 99.4% pass rate delivered from 25 venues across the borough. The Get Oldham Working Team have been a top performer across Greater

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Manchester, helping our residents to achieve their ambitions with over a thousand residents supported into employment.

It's important we celebrate the remarkable progress we've made together in 2024. Our collective dedication continues to shape a brighter future for our community, and I look forward to building on this success in the year ahead. I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

**Recommendations:** Council is requested to note the report.

## Portfolio Report

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Fida Hussain, Cabinet Member for Enterprise

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

### **Market and Town Centre Businesses**

We have delivered a refreshed town centre events programme in the last quarter, with Nostalgic Oldham in September, Halloween trails, Fireworks evening, Christmas Switch-On and free events every Saturday up to Christmas. I personally attended all the three key events and was overwhelmed by the number of people in the town centre and the really good feedback I have been getting from residents and business owners. The shopper numbers have been up, with a 10% increase in Spindles footfall on the switch-on date this year compared to last year.

I was also pleased to attend the opening evening of the Egyptian Rooms on 1 November. As well as being a fantastic space, wonderfully restored, more importantly this is more new businesses in the town centre, more jobs and another addition to the offer of our town centre. It has also been another source of positive feedback from residents.

The new market development continues at pace, and please keep supporting our market stallholders at this key time for retail. Every penny spent with a local business supports local staff and local families.

Finally I am pleased to confirm that a new home is being designed for our fabulous outdoor market on George Street. Very much behind the hoardings at the moment, this space will integrate with Manchester Chambers to become a fresh new space for the town centre, perfect for our outdoor stallholders.

### **Oldham Giftcard**

Launched earlier in the year, the Oldham Giftcard is the perfect way to support our businesses and keep the Oldham pound in the Oldham economy. More and more businesses are signing-up to accept the Giftcard. It's completely free for businesses to take part and I encourage any business in the borough who accept card payment whatever their service or product to take part. The card works in the same way as a pre-paid card and is an ideal gift. I would also ask our large employers to consider buying these cards for their staff rewards schemes. For more information contact [invest@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:invest@oldham.gov.uk)

### **Business Engagement**

The final OL1 business network of 2024 takes place at Billingtons on 18 December. Since launching in Spring, these sessions have provided a valuable opportunity for businesses from across the town centre to meet up, connect, do business together and enjoy presentations from a variety of speakers. Feedback from the sessions has been positive and then town centre team will be hosting further meetings in 2026.

Frank Rothwell, Oldham's Business Ambassador, hosted a Business Breakfast on 12 December.

Frank will be re-starting his business visits early in 2025 with the first ones already in the diary for 10 January. These visits to businesses within Oldham take place with an officer from the Business Growth & Investment team. These visits are intended to create contact with businesses, offer a point of contact within Oldham Council and inform them of any support that may be available to them.

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These visits usually consist of 4-5 business site visits each lasting at least an hour. The visits open a conversation to what support the business needs to grow. Whether that be help with recruitment, funding, or upskilling staff. The officer in attendance of the business visits follows up with each business informing of them of the support that they can access. I would encourage businesses to contact [Invest@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:Invest@oldham.gov.uk) if they would like to host a visit.

**The Hive: Social Enterprise**

A varied and dynamic programme of events continues to take place in the Hive. Last week we hosted the GM LINK programme Cisco Demo Day. This programme is designed to inspire and enable local organisations to help provide solutions to predetermined health and climate issues in the region. The idea behind Demo Day is for participants to showcase their solutions at the end of each 10-week programme to a diverse group of stakeholders to help facilitate onward support. The Hive provides a dynamic and inclusive workspace that caters to the diverse needs of all businesses - whether pre-startup, a fledgling startup, or an established enterprise. For more details on the offer at the Hive contact the Hive Team on 0161 652 9000 or email [info@upturn.org.uk](mailto:info@upturn.org.uk)

**Recommendations:** Council is requested to note the report.



**Oldham**  
Council

**Report to COUNCIL – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

## **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**

#### Breastfeeding Peer Support Service

Oldham, in collaboration with Tameside Council, has recently approved the one-year extension to the Breastfeeding Peer Support Service delivered by Home-Start Oldham, Stockport and Tameside (HOST). This year the service will include additional support on the post-natal wards at Royal Oldham Hospital, to enable more support as soon as possible after birth.

The service supports our system wide approach to ensuring that parents and carers have access to a wide range of breastfeeding support within their community. The service works in partnership with Oldham Family Hubs and with community midwifery services. The service will continue to support the council's commitment to normalise breastfeeding, encourage more women to start and support them to continue.

#### Winter sickness bugs

It is the time of year where lots of seasonal gastrointestinal illnesses are going around, including norovirus. Norovirus, also known as the winter vomiting bug, causes vomiting and diarrhea. It can be very unpleasant but usually goes away in about 2 days. There are some steps that everyone can take that reduce the spread of illness:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with liquid soap and running warm water.
- Clean hard surfaces regularly with hot soapy water followed by a disinfectant/sanitiser.
- Clean footwear/buggy wheels after visits to animal attractions, farms and muddy areas, and wash your hands after doing so.
- If you or your child has symptoms, it is extremely important to stay away from work and school for the correct length of time. You should not attend school/work for at least 48 hours after symptoms have stopped.

### **Adult Social Care (ASC)**

The preventative work at ASC Adult Referral Contact Centre (ARCC) continues to be achieving positive outcomes for residents. The team are seeing an increase in information and advice being provided to support residents to remain independent, healthy, safe and well in the community, without relying on ASC statutory support. Recently 83% of people contacting the service have not needed to access statutory services. The year to date averages each month there are 472 new initial contracts made to ASC completed and closed, thus reducing the demand of case work coming through to the community social

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work teams across ASC. The data evidences the continued success of the ASC Operating Model, and that the strengths-based ways of working is being embedded across the directorate.

Despite the success of ARCC, demand for ASC remains high, due to the complexity and acuity of those people who require services. In the last 28 Days the Community social care teams have completed 160 Care Act assessments, 196 Safeguarding enquiries and 227 annual reviews. Adult Social Care continues to experience challenges with demand, however there are mitigations plans in place to manage risk, supported by a rag rating risk stratification tool to ensure safety measures are in place.

Adult Social Care continues to prepare for a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection, having delivered a series of engagement sessions with the teams and the ongoing process of gathering evidence supported by governance in line with the *Towards Outstanding Board*.

#### Oldham Total Care:

Continues to stabilise with occupancy of 125 residents this month. Work is ongoing with system partners to achieve full occupancy, and to finalise the business plan with a view to the future operating models across the site. The team are preparing for Christmas with a series of activities planned, and further to recent appointment of a manager, her CQC registration has been confirmed this week which will provide increased assurance and stability at the home.

From a commissioning and market management perspective, we continue to assess the capacity and demand across our in borough provision, with a delivery plan being finalised. The delivery plan presents the current provision and the gaps we have in the commissioned market and will include proposals for investment and development, accommodation for example.

#### **Oldham Integrated Care Partnership (ICP)**

##### Integrated Neighbourhood Health and Care Teams

Oldham's Integrated Care Partnership Committee has this month mandated that all Providers, working in collaboration, will put the development and support of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams at the heart of their strategy. This is not about structural change but about working together better. To realise our ambitions we will need to remove the barriers for integrated working and create the right incentives for change. As a consequence specifically, by March 2025 work will be completed to:

- Shift all programme focus to align with INT development;
- Set out clear resourcing and work plan to address these areas;
- Secure the integrator functions within each Place.

It also means that the enablers that supports the INTs to move across each phase of development will now be aligned and will include:

- Digital and IG, estates, workforce development – with equivalent staged plans set out for each of these areas;
- Clear and transparent processes for moving between phases of development for greater levels of neighbourhood working.

**Recommendations:** Council is requested to note the report.





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## Portfolio Report

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Chris Goodwin  
Cabinet Member for Don't Trash Oldham

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

### **Winter Maintenance:**

Preparations for Winter Maintenance operations were complete by the start of November. Vehicles, materials, grit and the staffing resource were all in place to ensure that main roads are kept open during the winter months. Highways colleagues have been constantly monitoring forecasts, road conditions and undertaking gritting and other activities such as snow clearing as necessary.

So far, through November, the total amount of salt / grit spread is nearly 700 tonnes from our stockpile of approximately 6,000 tonnes. We have fully gritted the main gritting routes 17 times so far and carried out snow clearing activities once. 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 continuing to fill and refill the borough's grit bins and we have contingency plans in place, including for heavy snowfall.

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.

### **Greenspace:**

The Council's tree planting programme is now well underway for the 2024/25 season with approximately 300 of the 650 new trees having already been planted. It is expected that 500 trees will have been planted before Christmas with the remainder going in early in the new year. 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.

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 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.

### **Fleet Management:**

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The service continues to assist Council departments with the specification and purchase of vehicles as part of the fleet replacement programme – this ensures that the vehicles meet Service needs and provide value for money.

The service area also maintains, repairs and provides ongoing support for all council owned vehicles – this ensures that the council continues to meet legal obligations and is able to continue to operate goods vehicles and complies with the Operator's License meaning that the Council can deliver waste collection and other highways maintenance operations using large plant, machinery and vehicles.

The Service also provides MOT and compliance testing for all Council Licensed vehicles (Taxis & Private Hire). The new MOT testing bay and facilities will all be completed by early December 2024 to assist with current and future demand.

**Waste:**

The waste service continues to support the boroughs recycling efforts. From October this year, residents have been able to recycle plastic pots, tubs and trays, as well as plastic bottles in their brown bin/box at home. Partners are upgrading their materials recovery facility where the mixed recycling is sorted and separated. This will allow them to sort a wider range of plastic packaging and therefore, increasing recycling.

Waste Management are committed to ensuring minimal disruption to collections over the Christmas Period. There will be changes to collections due on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day as below:

- Bins due on Wednesday 25 December will be collected on Saturday 28 December, including green bins and food caddies.
- Bins due on Thursday 26 December will be collected earlier on Saturday 21 December
- Please note - green bins and food caddies will not be emptied, so do not put them out.
- Bins due on Wednesday 1 January will be collected on Saturday 4 January.
- Please note - green bins and food caddies will not be emptied, so do not put them out. They will be collected as normal on Wednesday 8 January.

**Disposing of your real Christmas trees:**

Once you have taken your Christmas tree down, you can recycle it by putting it in your green bin. Just chop it into small pieces, remove the wooden block from the base of the tree as this is too big to be composted, and take off any lights and decorations.

Alternatively, you can take it to Arkwright Street Household Waste and Recycling Centre – along with any extra Christmas waste you may have – or leave the tree at one of our collection points in the following parks (from December 28 to January 15):

- Higher Memorial Park (car park), Joseph Street, Failsworth (open 7.30am until dusk)
- Royton Park (car park) off Bleasdale Street, Royton (Open 7.30am until dusk)
- Werneth Park (car park) off Frederick Street, Werneth (open 7.30am until dusk)
- Churchill Playing Fields (car park), Wellington Road, Greenfield. Anytime access.
- George Street Playing Fields (car park), off Milnrow Road, Shaw. Anytime access.

For all your waste and recycling information – including what goes in which bin, what date your normal collection is and opening times for Arkwright Street tip visit [www.oldham.gov.uk/waste](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/waste)

**Recommendations:** Council is requested to note the report.

## Portfolio Report

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Peter Dean  
Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities and Culture

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

### **Customer Services:**

The Customer Service teams are focussing on providing support to residents this winter. Winter welfare checks to over 550 Pensioners eligible for pension credit or just above the threshold to claim have taken place by phone. The purpose of these calls has been to answer any queries about claiming pension credit and to establish if any support is needed to make a claim - we have increased our capacity over the winter to support with making pension credit applications. We are continuing our communications urging Oldham pensioners to check if they are entitled to pension credit so they can get more money – and receive the winter fuel payment.

During the winter welfare calls to pensioners the team are also sharing the council's wider winter support offer part funded by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver the sixth round of Household Support Fund (HSF). The team are supporting with referrals to teams and partners including Warm Homes Oldham, Welfare Rights and Citizens Advice and can offer supermarket vouchers to cover the cost of food and essentials in an emergency as well as foodbank referrals. This support is available for any household in Oldham in a financial emergency and we encourage all residents to come forward to access support by visiting the council website or calling the Helpline on 0161 770 7007. The Helpline will be open between Christmas and New Year 10am – 2pm on 27, 30 and 31 December.

HSF is also funding £40 payments per eligible child on means tested free school meals in Oldham over the Christmas holidays and funding additional activities in the Holiday Food and Activities (HAF) programme providing enriching activities and food for children and young people during the Christmas holidays.

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.

### **Heritage, Libraries and Arts**

The beautifully refurbished Royton Library opened its door to the public on 14<sup>th</sup> September. To date over 300 new members have joined the library and feedback from residents has been overwhelmingly positive.

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Oldham Theatre Workshop delivered their winter show 'Guinea Pig' in November with over 380 people attending. The theme of the production focused on the debate on whether mobile phones should be banned for under 16's. Thought provoking and emotive theatre delivered by an exceptionally talented group of young people.

Gallery Oldham have secured £46k from the Art Fund to redesign Oldham Stories Exhibition Space. The new space will be designed in consultation with Family Hubs and Northern Roots to deliver an interactive and family friendly exhibition.

### **District Community Councils and Neighbourhood Working:**

Royton town hall opened in September and alongside the new library we are now able to offer residents access to support and services from the District Hub.

The Community Engagement Coordinators are working in partnership with customer services, revenue and benefits and comms to support the proactive work around Pension credit take up. Eligible residents have been contacted, and the team are working to support the work via offering one to one appointments to provide guidance to those who need it on completing applications.

The Quarter 3 Community Councils are scheduled for December. Each Community council will be reviewing the District Priority Plans as well as a focused agenda item on transport with TFGM colleagues including the Network reviews and planned engagement work.

### **Stronger Communities and Community Safety Services**

From October, Home Office Prevent duty training 'Learn how to support people susceptible to radicalisation' became mandatory training for all Council staff. To date, over 900 staff members have completed the training, and this will ensure a greater awareness and understanding of what Prevent is, how it applies to their roles and how they can identify the emotions and behaviours that might make someone susceptible to radicalisation.

The Community Safety Team has continued to support residents using a combination of early intervention and enforcement tactics. In one area, a Closure Order has been secured on a property due to persistent anti-social behaviour and criminal activity including drug dealing at the address. After the Closure Order was obtained, one of the residents who had been subjected to the behaviour said "this is the best Christmas present we could possibly have had."

### **Sport and Leisure**

[@Rebecca Fletcher \(Public Health\)](#)

On the back of the successful first Oldham Sports Club Network Event in February 2024, we saw the second event delivered on 6 November 2024 at St Anne's Rugby Club. Delivered in partnership by Council Sports Development team, District Teams, Action Together, and OCL. We had 60 people in attendance from a number of different sports clubs

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across our borough, and it allowed them all an opportunity to learn more about the support available across our partners in areas such as Funding, Volunteers, Policies & Procedures, and Facilities. Some National Governing Bodies (NGBs) were in attendance too and clubs were able to ask questions, get support and network with others. These events will now be twice a year moving forward as clubs and partners see real value in them.

**Recommendations:** Council is requested to note the report.

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## Report to Council

### Treasury Management Half Year Review Report 2024/25

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Abdul Jabbar MBE, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Value for Money & Sustainability

**Officer Contact:** Sarah Johnston, Director of Finance

**Report Author:** James Postle Senior Finance Manager/ Paula Buckley, Finance Manager (Capital & Treasury)

**18 December 2024**

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#### Reason for Decision

#### Executive Summary

In April 2023 the Authority adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code), which requires the Authority to approve, as a minimum, treasury management semi-annual and annual outturn reports.

This report 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.

#### Executive Summary

The Council is required to consider the performance of the Treasury Management function in order to comply with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2021). This quarterly report provides an additional update and includes the new requirement in the 2021 Code, mandatory from 1 April 2023, of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. This report therefore sets out the key Treasury Management issues for Members' information and review and outlines:

- An economic update for the first half of 2024/25 (External Context);
- Net Borrowing and Investments (Local Context);
- A review and updates of the Council's current treasury management position;
- Council Borrowing;

- Treasury Investment Activity;
- Treasury Performance for the first half of the year;
- Compliance;
- Treasury Management Prudential Indicators.

## **Recommendation**

That Council:

- a) considers and comments upon the Treasury Management Half Year Review report;
- b) approves the proposed revisions to the Maturity Structure of Borrowing outlined in section 2.10.5;
- c) approves the proposed revision to the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts outlined in section 2.8 and Appendix 2; and
- d) approves the proposed revision to the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy outlined in section 2.7 and Appendix 4;

## 1 Background

- 1.1 The Council operates a balanced budget, which broadly means cash raised during the year will meet its cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure this cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies being invested with low-risk counterparties, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering optimising investment returns.
- 1.2 The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer-term cash flow planning to ensure the Council can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses, and on occasion, any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.
- 1.3 As a consequence, treasury management is defined as:
- “The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market, and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

## 2 Current Position

### 2.1 Requirements of the Treasury Management Code of Practice

- 2.1.1 The Council has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (Revised 2021) (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to produce a quarterly treasury management update report; a requirement in the 2021 Code which is mandatory from 1 April 2023.
- 2.1.2 The Treasury Management Quarter 1 Update Report was presented to the Audit Committee for scrutiny on 24 July 2024.
- 2.1.3 This half year report provides an additional update to that previously received by Members to reflect the requirement of the 2021 Code of quarterly reporting on treasury management prudential indicators. It presents for approval the Treasury Management position, known as the semi-annual review at the end of September 2024. The treasury and prudential indicators are also incorporated at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.1.4 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 was approved at a meeting on 28 February 2024. The Council has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks, including the potential loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring, and control of risk remains central to the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy.
- 2.1.5 This Half Year Review report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice, and covers the following:
- An economic update for the second quarter of 2024/25;
  - A review and updates of the Council's current treasury management position;
  - Council Borrowing;
  - Treasury Investment Activity;
  - Treasury Performance for the first six months;

- Compliance
- Treasury Management Prudential Indicators;

2.1.6 The report was presented to the Audit Committee and Cabinet to review and scrutinize the Half Year Treasury Management Report prior to its presentation to Council.

## 2.2 External Environment Half Year Review 2024/25

2.2.1 **Economic background:** UK headline consumer price inflation remained around the Bank of England (BoE) target later in the period, falling from an annual rate of 3.2% in March to 2.0% in May and then rebounding marginally in June, to 2.2% in July and August, as was expected, due to base effects from energy prices. Core and services price inflation remained higher at 3.6% and 5.6% respectively in August.

2.2.2 The UK economy continued to expand over the period, albeit slowing from the 0.7% gain in the first calendar quarter to 0.5% (downwardly revised from 0.6%) in the second. Of the monthly figures, the economy was estimated to have registered no growth in July.

2.2.3 Labour market data was slightly better from a policymaker perspective, showing an easing in the tightness of the job market, with inactivity rates and vacancies declining. However, a degree of uncertainty remains given ongoing issues around the data collected for the labour force survey by the Office for National Statistics. Figures for the three months to July showed the unemployment rate fell to 4.1% from 4.4% in the previous three-month period, while the employment rate rose to 74.8% from 74.3%.

2.2.4 Over the same period average regular earnings (excluding bonuses) was 5.1%, down from 5.4% in the earlier period, and total earnings (including bonuses) was 4.0% (this figure was impacted by one-off payments made to NHS staff and civil servants in June and July 2023). Adjusting for inflation, real regular pay rose by 2.2% in May to July and total pay by 1.1%.

2.2.5 With headline inflation lower, the BoE cut Bank Rate from 5.25% to 5.00% at the August Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. The decision was finely balanced, voted by a 5-4 majority with four members preferring to hold at 5.25%. At the September MPC meeting, committee members voted 8-1 for no change at 5.00%, with the lone dissenter preferring Bank Rate to be cut again to 4.75%. The meeting minutes and vote suggested a reasonably hawkish tilt to rates, with sticky inflation remaining a concern among policymakers.

2.2.6 The latest BoE Monetary Policy Report, published in August, showed policymakers expected GDP growth to continue expanding during 2024 before falling back and moderating from 2025 to 2027. Unemployment was forecast to stay around 4.5% while inflation was shown picking up in the latter part of 2024 as the previous years' energy price declines fell out of the figures before slipping below the 2% target in 2025, and remaining there until early 2027.

2.2.7 Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that the Bank Rate would steadily fall from the 5.25% peak, with the first cut in August being followed by a series of further cuts, with November 2024 the likely next one, taking the Bank Rate down to around 3% by the end of 2025.

2.2.8 The US Federal Reserve (the Fed) also cut interest rates during the period, reducing the Federal Funds Rate by 0.50% to a range of 4.75%-5.00% at its policy meeting in September. The forecasts released at the same time by the central bank suggested a further 1.00% of easing is expected by the end of the calendar year, followed by the same amount in 2025

and then a final 0.50% of cuts during 2026.

- 2.2.9 Having first reduced interest rates in June, the European Central Bank (ECB) held steady in July before cutting again in September, reducing its main refinancing rate to 3.65% and its deposit rate to 3.50%. Unlike the Fed, the ECB has not outlined a likely future path of rates, but inflation projections remain in line with the central bank's previous forecasts where it will remain above its 2% target until 2026 on an annual basis.
- 2.2.10 **Financial markets:** Sentiment in financial markets continued to mostly improve over the period, but the ongoing trend of bond yield volatility remained. The general upward trend in yields in the early part of the period was reversed in the later part, and yields ended the half-year not too far from where they started. However, the volatility in response to economic, financial, and geopolitical issues meant it was a bumpy ride for bond investors during that time.
- 2.2.11 Over the period, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started at 3.94% and ended at 4.00% but hit a high of 4.41% in May and a low of 3.76% in mid-September. While the 20-year gilt started at 4.40% and ended at 4.51%, it hit a high of 4.82% in May, and a low of 4.27% in mid-September. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 5.12% over the period to 30 September.
- 2.2.12 **Credit review:** Arlingclose maintained its advised recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on all banks on its counterparty list at 100 days.
- 2.2.13 Credit default swap prices were generally lower at the end of the period compared to the beginning for the vast majority of the names on UK and non-UK lists. Price volatility over the period was also generally more muted compared to previous periods.
- 2.2.14 Financial market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term and, credit default swap levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

## 2.3 The Oldham Council Treasury Position

- 2.3.1 On 31 March 2024, the Authority had net borrowing of £113.980m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. This had fallen to £107.086m at the end of Quarter 1 but, as presented at Table 2, had fallen to £92.736m at the half year.
- 2.3.2 The actual and planned level of capital expenditure are the drivers of borrowing for capital purposes. Appendix 1 shows the actual level of capital expenditure at the end of 2023/24 and includes the half year forecast for 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27. It also shows the financing sources, including the level of prudential borrowing.
- 2.3.3 The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below and show the half year forecast compared to the Quarter 1 forecast and the closing position for 2023/24.

**Table 1 – Balance Sheet Summary**

	31 March 2024 Actual £'000	31 March 2025 Half Year Review Forecast £'000
General Fund CFR	488,980	510,747
<b>Total CFR</b>	<b>488,980</b>	<b>510,747</b>
Less: Other debt liabilities (PFI)	193,890	182,387
<b>Borrowing CFR</b>	<b>295,090</b>	<b>328,360</b>
External borrowing	181,110	232,099
<b>Internal borrowing</b>	<b>113,980</b>	<b>96,261</b>
Less: Usable Balance Sheet Resources	(132,737)	(97,736)
Less: Working capital	(17,957)	(48,903)
<b>Net Investments</b>	<b>(36,714)</b>	<b>(50,378)</b>

2.3.4 Table 1 shows the forecast CFR for 2024/25 is £510.747m, an increase of £21.767m compared to £488.980m at the end of 2023/24. The CFR excluding other debt liabilities relating to Private Finance Initiative schemes is forecast to be £328.360m, an increase of £33.270m compared to the position at the end of 2023/24.

2.3.5 External borrowing is forecast to increase by some £40m to £233m by the end of the financial year. This is well below the CFR meaning the Council is maintaining an under-borrowed position. This indicates that the capital borrowing need (CFR) has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances, and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This strategy has been prudent in recent years as investment returns have been low and counterparty risk is still an issue that needs to be considered.

2.3.6 However, as the Council utilises its reserves to finance annual revenue expenditure, the capacity to do this will diminish and external borrowing will be required. The Council will continue to analyse and assess the market with respect to interest rate forecasts and counterparty risk to determine the optimum time to externally borrow.

2.3.7 The treasury management position as at 30 September 2024 and the change over the year to date is shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 - Treasury Management Summary**

<b>Borrowing/Investment</b>	<b>31.3.24 Balance £'000</b>	<b>Movement £'000</b>	<b>30.09.24 Balance £'000</b>	<b>31.09.24 Average Rate %</b>
Long-term borrowing				
- PWLB	35,241	25,000	60,241	3.23%
- LOBOs	85,500	-	85,500	4.33%
- Other	40,001	0	40,001	4.03%
Short-term borrowing	20,368	540	20,908	5.19%
<b>Total borrowing</b>	<b>181,110</b>	<b>25,540</b>	<b>206,650</b>	
Long-term investments	13,354	(251)	13,103	5.31%
Short-term investments	10,000	(10,000)	-	0.00%
Cash and cash equivalents	13,360	23,915	37,275	5.01%
<b>Total investments</b>	<b>36,714</b>	<b>13,664</b>	<b>50,378</b>	
<b>Net borrowing</b>	<b>144,396</b>	<b>11,691</b>	<b>156,087</b>	

2.3.8 As can be seen in the table above, borrowing has increased by £25.5m as was expected, and is likely to increase further in line with planned capital expenditure during the latter part of the year. The level of investment has increased £13.664m since the end of the year due to the cash position of the Council. Overall net borrowing has increased by £11.691m

## 2.4 Borrowing

2.4.1 The Authority's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriate risk balance between securing lower interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change being a secondary objective. The Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. At the present time, short term interest rates are higher than long term interest rates.

2.4.2 After substantial rises in interest rates since 2021, many central banks have now begun to reduce rates, albeit slowly. Gilt yields were volatile over the 6-month period and have reduced slightly between April and September 2024. Much of the downward pressure from lower inflation figures was counteracted by upward pressure from positive economic data. Data from the US continues to impact global bond markets including UK gilt yields.

2.4.3 The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 4.80% at the beginning of the half year and 4.79% at the end. The lowest available 10-year maturity rate was 4.52% and the highest was 5.18%. Rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 5.01% to 5.57% during the

half year, and 50-year maturity loans from 4.88% to 5.40%.

- 2.4.4 The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities spiked to around 7% (Oldham temporary borrowing spiked to 6.6%) in late March 2024, primarily due a dearth of LA-LA lending/borrowing activity during the month as expected. Shorter-term rates reverted to a more normal range and were generally around 5.00% - 5.25%.
- 2.4.5 CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that Local Authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for Local Authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Authority.
- 2.4.6 Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans are no longer available to Local Authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield, unless these loans are for refinancing purposes.
- 2.4.7 Oldham Council has not invested in assets primarily for financial return or that are not primarily related to the functions of the Council, and it has no plans to do so in future.
- 2.4.8 There remains a strong argument for diversifying funding sources, particularly if rates can be achieved on alternatives which are below gilt yields + 0.80%. The Authority will evaluate and pursue these lower cost solutions and opportunities with its advisor, Arlingclose.
- 2.4.9 As at 30 September 2024, Oldham Council held £206.650m of loans. The Council has undertaken two new borrowings from Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) of £15m at 4.54% over 11 years and £10m at 4.45% over 10 years shown in the table below.

**Table 3 - Borrowing Position**

Borrowing Sources	31 March 2023 Balance £'000	Movement £'000	30 September 2024 Balance £'000	30 September 2024 Weighted Average Rate %	30 September 2024 Weighted Average Maturity (years)
Public Works Loan Board	35,241	25,000	60,241	3.23%	15.50
Banks (LOBO)	85,500	-	85,500	4.33%	44.43
Banks (fixed-term)	40,000	-	40,000	4.03%	45.05
Local Bonds (long-term)	1	-	1		-
Local Authorities (short term)	20,114	539	20,653	5.19%	
Local Bonds (short-term)	22	-	22	0.00%	-
Local Charitable Trusts (short-term)	231	-	231	4.90%	
<b>Total Borrowing</b>	<b>181,110</b>	<b>25,539</b>	<b>206,650</b>		

### LOBO Loans

- 2.4.10 Oldham Council continues to hold £85.500m of LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Council has the option to either accept the new rate and terms, or to repay the loan at no additional cost.



- 2.4.11 Currently Oldham Council has £44.000m LOBO loans with call dates within the next 12 months. Of this sum, £19.000m is held with Dexia Finance, £10.000m with KBC Bank and the remaining £15.000m split with three other providers, Danske Bank, FMS Wertmanagement, and KA Finanz. At the time of writing no call options have been exercised.
- 2.4.12 Council officers have liaised with treasury management advisors, Arlingclose, over the likelihood of the options being exercised for LOBOs within the loan portfolio. If the option is exercised the Authority plans to repay the loan at no additional cost. If required, the Authority will be required to repay the LOBO loans with available cash or by borrowing from alternative sources or the PWLB. Given the revised interest rate forecasts referred to earlier in this report, the probability of the LOBO options being exercised is reduced but not eliminated.

## 2.5 Treasury Investment Activity

- 2.5.1 The CIPFA Treasury Management Code (Dec 21), defines treasury management investments as investments that arise from the Authority's cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represents balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.
- 2.5.2 As at 30 September 2024, the Council held £37.275m of Money Market Funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the first half year, the Authority's investment balances ranged between £15.740m and £47.860m due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4 - Treasury Investment Position**

Investment Placements	31 March 2024 Balance £'000	Movement £'000	30 September 2024 Balance £'000	30 September 2024 Income Return %
Government (incl. Local Authorities)	10,000	(10,000)	0	
Money Market Funds	13,360	23,915	37,275	5.04%
Property Pooled Fund	13,354	(251)	13,103	5.31%
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>36,714</b>	<b>13,664</b>	<b>50,378</b>	

- 2.5.3 Both the CIPFA Code and Government guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.
- 2.5.4 As demonstrated by the liability benchmark in this report, the Authority expects to be a long-term borrower and new treasury investments are therefore primarily made to manage day-to-day cash flows using short-term low risk instruments. The existing portfolio of strategic pooled funds will be maintained to diversify risk into different sectors and boost investment income.
- 2.5.5 The Bank Rate reduced from 5.25% to 5.00% in August 2024, with short term interest rates largely being around these levels. The rates on money market rates fluctuated between 5.21% and 5.01% in the same period.
- 2.5.6 The Council in previous years has invested £15.000m in the Churches, Charities & Local Authorities (CCLA) pooled property fund. As this is a longer-term investment, short term security and liquidity are lesser considerations, and the objectives instead are regular revenue

income and long-term price stability. This fund is forecast to generate an average total return in 2024/25 of £0.700m, representing 5.31% income return. The current value estimated is £13.103 and a full half year update is based upon our Treasury advisors financial modelling and confirmation from the CCLA will be updated in the next reporting period once received. Analysis of the fund this year is shown below.

#### 2.5.7 **Performance**

Occupier and rental markets have remained solid, supporting the income flows which make up a sizeable part of long-term total returns to property investors. Capital markets have continued to be a little subdued but some positivity is being experienced. Sentiment has improved markedly, the market is undoubtedly in a more stable place than it was this time last year, and investment opportunities are emerging with a more positive narrative surrounding the macro backdrop and outlook for the property market.

The portfolio is managed actively with the aim of providing a high income and long-term capital appreciation. There is a bias towards industrial assets, and retail warehouses are also well represented, whereas there is little exposure to high street shops. Industrial and retail warehouse assets continue to lead performance with some continued weakness in the office sector.

The fund remains well positioned and has returned good performance against a challenging economic backdrop. The investment market has been turbulent, which has been driven by interest rates not property fundamentals.

#### 2.5.8 **Management activity**

No investment transactions have taken place but management activity featuring lease renewals and rent reviews are protecting income and growing rents. A number of leases were entered into or renewed, supporting occupancy rates and helping to secure future income flows. These include retail warehousing at Beckton Park (London) and Bristol, Office asset at Dartford, and industrial assets near Orpington and Warrington.

#### 2.5.9 **Income/distributions levels**

Against the backdrop of capital valuations, the fund has undertaken management activity which has positively impacted upon income distributions. These have been maintained and at times increased during 2023 and into 2024. Income returns are higher, well supported by occupier market conditions, rental growth and rising income.

The fund's more attractive yield compared to the benchmark (*MSCI/AREF UK other Balanced Open-Ended Property Funds Benchmark*) provides a firm foundation for returns and a decisive performance advantage, especially in periods when capital growth is weaker.

#### 2.5.10 **Outlook**

Investors should continue focusing on the investment fundamentals and high-level trends. The sector will start to provide opportunity for stabilisation and further growth as the financial backdrop settles. The foundation of a high-level of income yield, some rental value growth, a well-placed portfolio structure, and pro-active management activity all combine positively, continuing to support income, enhance asset quality, and add value.

The fund is expected to continue to maintain the high level of income distributions and the outlook for capital valuations is more positive. Reducing interest rates are likely to cause growth in commercial property values. We can anticipate some further improvement in property returns as we move through 2024 and into 2025. The funds approach and strategy remain guided by its philosophy and long-term investment objectives, providing diversification and a high level of income.

2.5.11 The Authority has budgeted income from these investments in 2024/25. Income received for the period up to 30 September was £0.354m.

2.5.12 The Council's investments have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, but their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Councils medium to long-term investment objectives are regularly reviewed. Strategic fund investments are made in the knowledge that capital values will move both up and down on months, quarters and even years; but with the confidence that over a three to five-year period total returns will exceed cash interest rates.

### Statutory Override

2.5.13 In April 2023 the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government published the full outcome of the consultation on the extension of the statutory override on accounting for gains and losses on pooled investment funds. The override has been extended for 2 years until 31st March 2025, but no other changes have been made; whether the override will be extended beyond the new date is unknown but commentary to the consultation outcome suggests not. The Authority has provided for a loss of up to £2.000m, to mitigate the impact on the revenue budget of the statutory override not being extended and un-realised losses on pooled investment funds are required to be recognised.

2.5.14 The Council's investments continue to generate returns in excess of 5% and there has been no increase in their perceived risk profile. Therefore, there are no immediate plans to dispose of any investments. The Council will continue to review the implications for the investment strategy and in consultation with Arlingclose. Any future Treasury Management Strategies will be revised accordingly.

## 2.6 Treasury Team Performance

2.6.1 The Treasury Team measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities both in terms of its impact on the revenue budget and its relationship to benchmark interest rates, as shown in Table 5 below.

**Table 5 – Treasury Performance**

	Budgeted Performance Rates/Benchmark SONIA Return %	Benchmark SONIA Return % Plus 5%	31.09.24 Income Return % (Actual)
Budgeted Investment Rates	5.17%		5.64%
Overnight SONIA	4.95%	5.20%	5.10%

2.6.2 The budgeted investment rate of 5.17% above included within the annual strategy for 2024/25 was based on the average rate over the full financial year as expectations were for interest rates to decrease from 5.25% during 24/25. The actual rate achieved in the first half of the year broadly in line with this budgeted rate. The total budget for treasury management income for 2024/25 is £1.550m. To date, General Fund income of circa £0.845m has been achieved.

## 2.7 Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Regulations and Revised MRP Policy

2.7.1 The Council has undertaken, in conjunction with Treasury Management Advisors, a review of how Minimum Revenue Provision is calculated and charged to the revenue budget. In line with statutory guidance, the review was to ensure that MRP continues to be charged in a prudent manner.

2.7.2 The main recommendations of the review were:

- To move to the Annuity Method (from the straight-line method) using the PWLB Certainty Rate over the life of assets.
- To make MRP over the life of assets for PFI schemes (rather than life of PFI contract)

2.7.3 The Annuity Method will mean that relatively less MRP will be made in the earlier years and greater amounts in the later years, compared to the straight-line method. Although the annuity method results in short term savings and long-term costs, officers believe this method is prudent, as it produces a smoother profile of costs over the life of assets. This is because interest costs are greater in the early years and less in the later years and means that total financing costs will fall to Council Tax-payers at an equal rate over the life of assets. This methodology also better reflects the time value of money.

2.7.4 MRP is also currently made on PFI contracts on an annuity rate over the life of PFI contracts. The rate is calculated from the interest rate implicit in each PFI contract. Where the Council expects to continue to own or retain service benefit from PFI assets after the end of the contract, it is proposed to make MRP over the remaining life of the asset. This will make the policy more consistent with the policy adopted on the Council's other assets.

2.7.5 As the changes in MRP policy will result - in the short term – less money being set aside to repay debt; this will result in increased interest costs over the lifetime of assets if the savings in the early years are spent on day to day expenditure rather than used to build up revenue reserves. The change in policy will impact on the 2024/25 financial outturn and the future years' implications will be factored into the MTFs presented to Budget Council for approval on 6 March 2025. Further details are provided in Appendix 2.

2.7.6 Further details on the revised MRP policy are contained in Appendix 4.

2.7.7 On 10 April 2024, amended legislation and revised statutory guidance were published on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The majority of the changes take effect from the 2025/26 financial year, although there is a requirement that for capital loans given on or after 7 May 2024, sufficient MRP must be charged so that the outstanding CFR in respect of the loan is no higher than the principal outstanding less the Expected Credit Loss (ECL) charge for that loan.

2.7.8 The regulations also require that local authorities cannot exclude any amount of their CFR from their MRP calculation unless by an exception set out in law. Capital receipts cannot be used to directly replace, in whole or part, the prudent charge to revenue for MRP (there are specific exceptions for capital loans and leased assets).

## **2.8 Flexible Use of Capital receipts**

2.8.1 Under Statutory Guidance published in 2016, the Council is entitled to utilise capital receipts in respect of any project that is designed to generate ongoing revenue savings in the delivery of public services and/or transform service delivery to reduce costs and/or transform service delivery in a way that reduces costs or demand for services in future years for any of the public sector delivery partners.

2.8.2 When setting the 2024/25 budget on 28 February 2024, Council approved the use of £2.6m of capital receipts to fund transformational activity within directorates.

2.8.3 Since that date the Council invited applications for voluntary redundancy and 44 applications have been accepted with a total cost of just under £2 million. Such expenditure is eligible to be funded through the flexible use of capital receipts and it is therefore proposed that an additional £2 million is utilised to this effect. This will increase the total use of capital receipts

to £4.6 million and further details are outlined in Appendix 2.

## 2.9 Compliance

2.9.1 The Director of Finance reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the half year complied fully with the principles in the Treasury Management Code and the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy. Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in Table 6 below.

**Table 6 - Investment Limits**

Investment Limit	Maximum during 2024/25 £'000	Actual Position at 30 September 2024 £'000	Maximum Allowable in 2024/25 £'000	Compliance Yes/No
Any single organisation, except the UK Government	-	-	30,000	Yes
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	-	-	20,000	Yes
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	13,617	13,288	15,000	Yes
Unsecured investments with building societies	-	-	20,000	Yes
Money Market Funds	47,860	37,275	80,000	Yes
Strategic Pooled Funds	13,617	13,103	15,000	Yes

2.9.2 Compliance with the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for external debt is demonstrated in Table 7 below.

**Table 7 – Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit**

Borrowing /Limits	Actual Position at 30 September 2024 £'000	2024/25 Operational Boundary £'000	2024/25 Authorised Limit £'000	Compliance Yes/No
Borrowing	206,650	335,250	350,250	Yes
PFI and Finance Leases	182,387	183,500	186,000	Yes
<b>Total Gross Borrowing / Limit</b>	<b>389,037</b>	<b>518,750</b>	<b>536,250</b>	Yes

2.9.3 The Operational Boundary represents the maximum expected borrowing position for the Council for the year, and was originally set at £518.750m.

- 2.9.4 The Authorised Limit is the “affordable borrowing limit” required by Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003 and for 2024/25 was set at £536.250m. Once this has been set, the Council does not have the power to borrow above this level, although it can be revised if required.
- 2.9.5 Since the Operational Boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring, it is not significant if the Operational Boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure. No breaches have occurred, and it is not anticipated that there will be any breaches in 2024/25.

## 2.10 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

- 2.10.1 As required by the 2021 CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Authority monitors and measures the following treasury management prudential indicators.

### Liability Benchmark

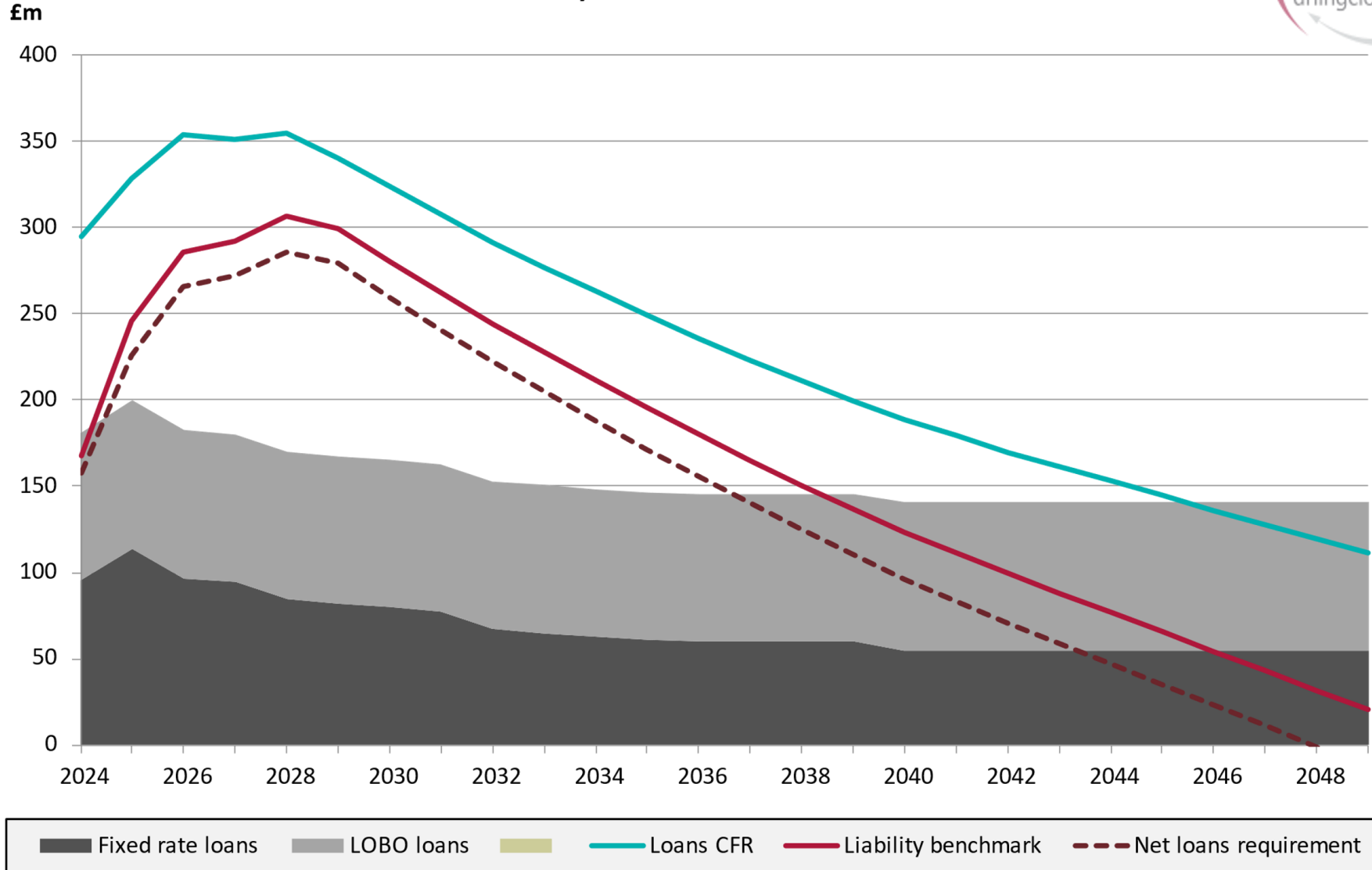
- 2.10.2 This indicator compares the Authority’s actual existing borrowing against a liability benchmark that has been calculated to show the lowest risk level of borrowing. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. It represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing that the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level of £20.000m, the level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

**Table 9 - Liability Benchmark**

Liability Benchmark Measurement	31 March 2024 Actual £'000	31 March 2025 Forecast £'000	31 March 2026 Forecast £'000	31 March 2027 Forecast £'000
Loans CFR	295,090	328,360	353,056	348,520
Less: Balance sheet resources	132,737	97,736	82,736	72,736
<b>Net loans requirement</b>	<b>162,353</b>	<b>230,624</b>	<b>270,320</b>	<b>275,784</b>
Plus: Liquidity allowance	10,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
<b>Liability benchmark</b>	<b>172,353</b>	<b>250,624</b>	<b>290,320</b>	<b>295,784</b>
<b>Existing /forecast borrowing</b>	<b>181,110</b>	<b>230,624</b>	<b>270,320</b>	<b>275,784</b>

- 2.10.3 As demonstrated by the liability benchmark in the table above, the Council expects to be a long-term borrower to finance the expected capital spend. There could be timing differences between when the Council externally borrows compared to when the expenditure is required due to the nature of capital works, but new treasury investments are therefore primarily made to manage day-to-day cash flows using short-term low risk instruments. The existing portfolio of strategic pooled funds will be maintained to diversify risk into different sectors and boost investment income.

### Liability Benchmark- Oldham MBC



2.10.4 Table 10 below sets out the maturity structure of borrowing at the end of the first six months of 2024/25 compared to the upper and lower limits set in the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25. The indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk.

**Table 10 –Maturity Structure of Borrowing**

Borrowing Timeframe	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	30 September 2023 Actual	Compliance Yes/No
Under 12 months	30%	0%	28.68%	Yes
12 months and within 24 months	30%	0%	2.43%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	30%	0%	23.82%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	30%	0%	3.76%	Yes
10 years to 20 years	60%	0%	14.58%	Yes
20 years to 30 years	60%	0%	2.43%	Yes
30 years to 40 years	60%	0%	2.43%	Yes
40 years to 50 years	60%	0%	21.87%	Yes
50 years to 60 years	60%	0%	0%	Yes

2.10.5 It is proposed to increase the upper limits for the maturity structure of borrowing to 35% for short and medium timeframes to enable the Council's expected debt profile in line with the liability benchmark and to enable greater flexibility around the financing of debt.

**Table 11 –Revised Maturity Structure of Borrowing**

Borrowing Timeframe	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	30 September 2023 Actual	Compliance Yes/No
Under 12 months	35%	0%	28.68%	Yes
12 months and within 24 months	35%	0%	2.43%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	35%	0%	23.82%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	35%	0%	3.76%	Yes
10 years to 20 years	50%	0%	14.58%	Yes
20 years to 30 years	50%	0%	2.43%	Yes
30 years to 40 years	50%	0%	2.43%	Yes
40 years to 50 years	50%	0%	21.87%	Yes
50 years to 60 years	50%	0%	0%	Yes

2.10.6 Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment. In the case of LOBO loans, the next option date has been used as the measure to determine if it is potentially repayable.



### 2.10.7 Long-term Treasury Management Investments

The purpose of the Long-Term Treasury Management indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term Treasury management limits are set out in the table below.

**Table 12- Limit / Actual Investments exceeding one year**

<b>Limit /Actual Investments Exceeding One Year</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>No fixed date</b>
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£50m	£50m	£50m	£50m
Actual principal invested beyond year end	£15m	-	-	-
Compliance – Yes/No?	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A

2.10.8 Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds. For the Council, this is currently the CCLA Property Fund. Long term investments exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term investments.

### **3 Options/Alternatives**

3.1 In order that the Council complies with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council has no option other than to consider and approve the current Treasury Management position. Therefore, no options/alternatives can be presented in respect of the factual information contained in this report. However, in respect of the potential changes in policy outlined in this report, the options available Council are:

3.2 Option 1 – to accept the recommendations of the Council's Treasury Advisers and change the MRP policy as outlined in section 2.7 & Appendix 4.

3.3 Option 2 - to approve the use of up to £2.000m of capital receipts to fund the costs of voluntary redundancy payments.

3.4 Option 3 - to approve both the change in MRP policy and the use of flexible capital receipts to fund the costs of voluntary redundancy payments.

3.5 Option 4 – to approve neither the change in MRP policy nor the use of capital receipts.

### **4 Preferred Option**

4.1 The preferred option is Option 3 and that the contents of the report are agreed.

### **5 Consultation**

5.1 There has been consultation with the Council's, Treasury Management Advisors, Arlingclose in the production of this report.

5.2 The Treasury Management Half Year Review Report was presented to the Audit Committee for detailed scrutiny on 28 November 2024 and Cabinet on 2 December 2024.

### **6 Financial Implications**

6.1 All included within the report.

## **7 Legal Services Comments**

- 7.1 The proposals have been the subject of review by Finance officers and the Council's Treasury Management advisers in order to ensure compliance with the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 and statutory guidance on the Minimum Revenue Provision. I am satisfied that the recommended proposals would not be in breach of those regulations or statutory guidance and the preferred option is supported.

(Alex Bougatef – Interim Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer)

## **8 Co-operative Agenda**

- 8.1 The Council ensures that any Treasury Management decisions comply as far as possible with the ethos of the Co-operative Council.

## **9 Human Resources Comments**

- 9.1 None.

## **10 Risk Assessments**

- 10.1 There are considerable risks to the security of the Authority's resources if appropriate treasury management strategies and policies are not adopted and followed. The Council has established good practice in relation to treasury management which has previously been acknowledged in both Internal and the External Auditors' reports presented to the Audit Committee.

## **11 IT Implications**

- 11.1 None.

## **12 Property Implications**

- 12.1 None.

## **13 Procurement Implications**

- 13.1 None.

## **14 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**

- 14.1 None.

## **15 Community cohesion disorder implications in accordance with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

- 15.1 None.

## **16 Oldham Impact Assessment Completed (Including impact on Children and Young People)**

- 16.1 No.

## **17 Key Decision**

- 17.1 Yes

## **18 Key Decision Reference**

18.1 FCR-20-24

## **19 Background Papers**

19.1 The following is a list of the 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 that Act.

File Ref: Background papers are contained with Appendix 1  
Officer Name: Paula Buckley/James Postle  
Contact No: 0161 770 4240

## **20 Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Prudential and Treasury Indicators

Appendix 2 –Flexible Use of Capital Receipts (revised policy)

Appendix 3 - Arlingclose Review of Minimum Revenue Provision

Appendix 4 –Revised Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement

## Appendix 1 - Prudential and Treasury Indicators

The Authority measures and manages its capital expenditure borrowing with references to the following indicators.

The following tables shows a summary of the prudential indicators for half year 2024/25.

### Capital Expenditure

Capital Expenditure/Financing	2023/24 Actual £'000	2024/25 Forecast £'000	2025/26 Budget £'000	2026/27 Budget £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>				
General Fund services	81,147	99,055	0	34,838
HRA	64	628	95	-
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>81,211</b>	<b>99,683</b>	<b>81,076</b>	<b>34,838</b>
<b>Financing</b>				
Grants & Contributions	(32,621)	(43,834)	(28,633)	(6,494)
Prudential Borrowing	(40,448)	(49,638)	(51,646)	(27,851)
Revenue	(1,606)	(630)	(95)	-
Capital Receipts	(6,536)	(5,581)	(702)	(493)
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>(81,211)</b>	<b>(99,683)</b>	<b>(81,076)</b>	<b>(34,838)</b>

### Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

The Authority's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with [MRP / loans fund repayments] and capital receipts used to replace debt.

Capital Financing Requirement	31 March 2024 Actual £'000	31 March 2025 Forecast £'000	31 March 2026 Budget £'000	31 March 2027 Budget £'000
General Fund Services	488,980	510,747	510,747	523,364
<b>Total CFR</b>	<b>488,980</b>	<b>510,747</b>	<b>510,747</b>	<b>523,364</b>

### Gross Borrowing and the Capital Financing Requirement

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the

short term. The Authority has complied and expects to continue to comply with this requirement in the medium term as is shown below.

Gross Borrowing /CFR	31 March 2023 Actual £'000	31 March 2024 Forecast £'000	31 March 2025 Budget £'000	31 March 2026 Budget £'000	Debt at 30 September 2024 £'000
Gross Borrowing (incl. PFI & leases)	375,000	413,011	440,628	434,168	401,474
Capital Financing Requirement	488,980	510,747	510,747	523,364	

### Debt and the Proposed Revised Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

The Authority is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the Authorised Limit for external debt) each year [except in Scotland: and to keep it under review]. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Debt	Debt at 30 June 2024	2024/25 Half Year Revised Operational Boundary	2023/24 Half Year Revised Authorised Limit	Compliance? Yes/No
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Borrowing	206,650	332,250	350,250	Yes
PFI and Finance Leases	182,387	183,500	186,00	Yes
<b>Total Debt</b>	<b>389,037</b>	<b>518,750</b>	<b>536,250</b>	

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring, it is not significant if the boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

### Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans is charged to revenue. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

Financing Cost/Net Revenue Stream	2023/24 Actual £'000	2024/25 Forecast £'000	2025/26 Budget £'000	2026/27 Budget £'000
Financing costs (£m)	24,124	34,799	39,747	40,777
Proportion of net revenue stream	8.81%	11.50%	13.05%	13.05%

## **Appendix 2: Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy**

### **Introduction**

In March 2016, the former Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) issued Statutory Guidance that permitted Local Authorities to use capital receipts to fund the revenue costs of transformation for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019. This flexibility has been extended several times, most recently to 31 March 2025.

This Capital Strategy and the MTFs of the Council has been prepared on the basis on the continued use of the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts for 2024/25.

### **Statutory Guidance**

The Statutory Guidance and supporting ‘informal commentary’ published in March 2016, and updated in August 2022, states that “Qualifying expenditure is expenditure on any project that is designed to generate ongoing revenue savings in the delivery of public services and/or transform service delivery to reduce costs and/or transform service delivery in a way that reduces costs or demand for services in future years for any of the public sector delivery partners. Within this definition, it is for individual Local Authorities to decide whether or not a project qualifies for the flexibility”.

### **The Council’s Strategy**

The Council intends to make use of the flexibility in the use of capital receipts for the financial year 2024/25.

The Council can only use capital receipts to finance Qualifying Expenditure as defined in this strategy (see Table 1) from the disposal of property, plant and equipment assets received in the year in which this flexibility is offered. The Council will not utilise capital receipts generated on or before 31 March 2024 to finance Qualifying Expenditure.

The Government direction states that the Council cannot borrow to finance the revenue costs of service reform and the Council will comply with this requirement.

This Strategy outlines the projects which plan to make use of the capital receipt flexibility and provides details of the expected savings/service transformation on a scheme by scheme basis. The Strategy can be replaced at any point during the financial year with a revised Strategy outlining an up to date position.

Council approval for the use of this flexibility is required on at least an annual basis, with plans published on the Council’s website and notification of planned use sent to the DLUHC.

### **Summary of planned receipts**

The Council’s Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29 includes £5.000m in capital receipts specifically for this purpose. The first call on new capital receipts received in 2024/25 (£4.600m) will fund qualifying revenue expenditure as detailed within the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy.

### **Summary of planned use and savings**

It is intended that in 2024/25 capital receipts will fund the following transformational projects/expenditure as set out in Table 1 (note there is an element of contingency to allow for variation).

**Table 1 – Planned Qualifying Expenditure**

<b>Scheme Description</b>	<b>Qualifying Expenditure</b>	<b>£000 2023/24</b>
Creating a Better Place - Asset Rationalisation	Expenditure in relation to developing and progressing the disposal strategy/asset rationalisation strategy to streamline the Council's (and partners' estates) in line with the principles of One Public Estate.	750
Creating a Better Place - Major Projects/Regeneration	Expenditure in relation to developing major Regeneration and Housing scheme proposals and bids for capital funding opportunities including funding for feasibility, options appraisals and the early development of business cases.	750
Transformation Programme and Project resources to support the delivery of the transformation agenda	A specialist team to wholly support and facilitate the delivery of the Council's Transformational Programme. This team will ensure that the efficiencies and savings that are anticipated within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) are achieved and support the development of the on-going programme of Council wide change.	1,000
ICT	The use of transformational funds to support Research and Development within ICT that drives a more digital approach to deliver efficiencies and support budget reductions in services. The ICT Service will explore new technology and undertake Proof of Concepts before rolling out new developments within the organisation.	100
Voluntary Redundancy Programme	One-off expenditure in relation to the Voluntary Redundancy programme allow for service restructuring to deliver savings by reducing staffing costs.	2,000
<b>Total Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Relied upon to support the revenue budget in 2024/25</b>		<b>4,600</b>

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Arlingclose Ltd:

Independent treasury management services

# Review of Minimum Revenue Provision

Oldham Council

November 2024

*DRAFT - Version 4*

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## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Oldham Council ('Oldham') currently make MRP on a straight line asset life basis for the majority of their non-Public Finance Initiative (PFI) and finance lease Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). A small number of assets apply the annuity method. For the pre-2008 supported borrowing CFR MRP is made on a straight line basis over a remaining asset life of 42 years. MRP is made on a largely straight line basis for a small amount of transferred debt. MRP on PFI and finance leases is made in line with principal repayments of the lease liability which is broadly on an annuity basis.
- 1.2 The Council should consider re-writing its MRP policy with the new recommendations adopted. The policy should clearly and comprehensively describe to members how Oldham will make MRP. Officers should ensure that the policy as written is followed in practice.
- 1.3 Oldham's CFR is the same figure when calculated from their balance sheet and from their statement of accounts note. This gives assurance that the CFR is the correct figure. Based on current calculations Oldham are underproviding for MRP on the general fund by £1,158k and overproviding for MRP on the HRA by £9,050k. This should be corrected for.
- 1.4 Arlingclose would recommend that MRP is made on Oldham's current adjustment A amount of £19,602k. Making this MRP is in line with guidance and demonstrates prudence. Arlingclose would also recommend the MRP equal to the ECL charge is made for the loan to Manchester Airport Group.
- 1.5 Arlingclose would recommend that Oldham move from a straight line method to an annuity method for all MRP that is made on an asset life basis. The PWLB certainty rate should be used at the date of imposition of this policy for historical assets, for new future assets the PWLB certainty rate for the year of acquisition should be used. For assets that have historically had the annuity method applied since acquisition the 2.88% annuity rate should continue to be used. Arlingclose would recommend maintaining the current method of making MRP for finance lease assets and the transferred debt.
- 1.6 Arlingclose would recommend that Oldham make MRP over the remaining asset life of PFI assets rather than the contract length of the PFI. This is provided the assets will continue to provide a benefit to council tax payers over their asset life.
- 1.7 Adopting these changes is expected to make savings of £13,382k in 2024/25: £7,757k of this is attributable to the general fund and £5,625k to the HRA. £126,159k of savings would be expected over the next 10 years: £65,347k attributable to the general fund and £60,811k to the HRA. Further savings will be realised in future as the annuity method is applied to future expected debt funded capital expenditure. These savings are expected to be £137,923k over the next 10 years: £77,112k attributable to the general fund and £60,811k to the HRA.
- 1.8 Although the annuity method results in short term savings and long term costs Arlingclose believes that it is prudent as it gives a smoother profile of overall costs once interest costs are taken into consideration.
- 1.9 Reducing the MRP charge does increase interest costs to the authority. These would be expected to be around £137,054k over the next 50 years. Oldham should carefully consider these cost when changing their MRP policy.
- 1.10 New MRP regulations were published in April 2024 most of which take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. Arlingclose would not expect these to have a significant impact on Oldham.

## 2.0 Introduction

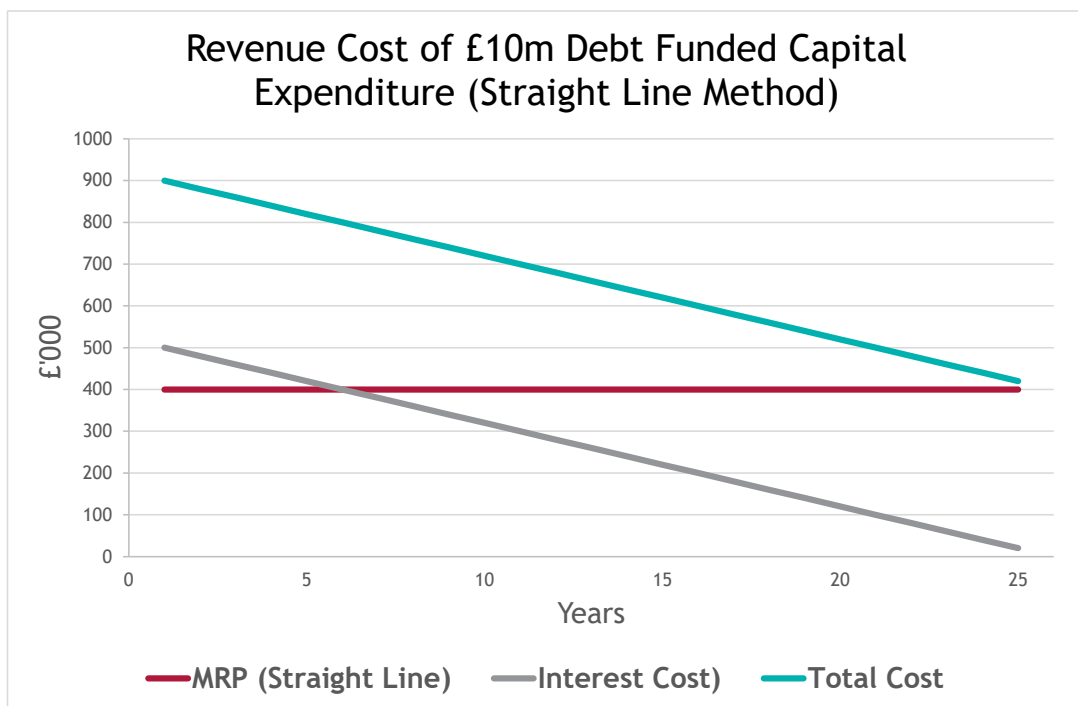
- 2.1 Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is the method by which capital expenditure not financed by grants, capital receipts or direct revenue funding is charged to revenue over future years.
- 2.2 Arlingclose has been commissioned to review Oldham Council's ('Oldham's') MRP calculations.
- 2.3 In preparing this report Arlingclose have relied upon spreadsheets and emailed information provided to us by Oldham, the latest draft statement of accounts (for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024) and Oldham's MRP policy.
- 2.4 Arlingclose have provided spreadsheet workings to support our calculations.
- 2.5 The report considers MRP made on Oldham's Public Finance Initiative (PFI) and similar arrangements. Please note however that a full review of all the accounting under these arrangements and the impact of International Financial Reporting Standard 16 (IFRS 16) on them is not include within this review.

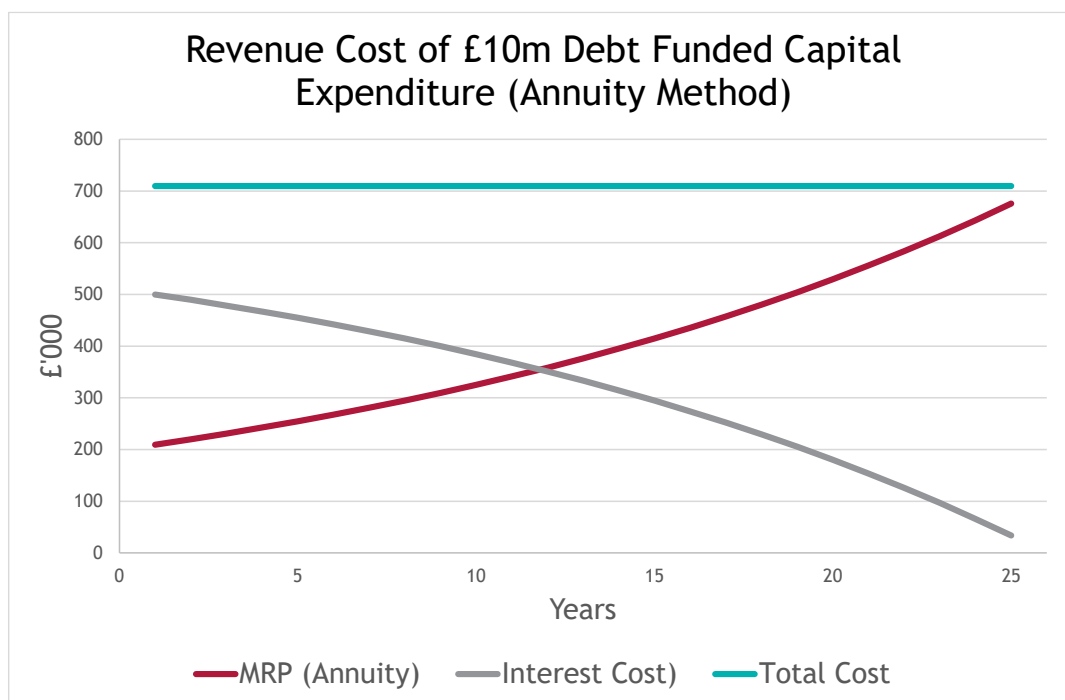
## 3.0 Minimum Revenue Provision

- 3.1 MRP is the method by which capital expenditure not funded by grants, capital receipts or direct revenue funding is charged to revenue over future years. In some ways it is similar in concept to depreciation, although there are many important differences to how it is calculated and treated than depreciation.
- 3.2 Capital expenditure not funded by grants, capital receipts or direct revenue funding is commonly referred to as 'debt funded' capital expenditure, although this term can be misleading as it does not always need to be funded by the taking out of an external loan.
- 3.3 Local authorities have a legal duty to charge their general fund with a prudent amount of MRP each year. Government MRP guidance defines prudence as aligning the period over which MRP is charged to one that is commensurate with the period over which the capital expenditure provides benefits.
- 3.4 The legal basis for MRP can be found Section 27 of The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003. This is available online at the time of publication of this review here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2003/3146/regulation/27> . These regulations were amended in April 2024 by The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2024 at the time of writing available here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/478/contents/made> . The majority of these amendments to not take effect until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, although some in relation to MRP made for capital loans may apply earlier.
- 3.5 The fifth edition of the statutory guidance on MRP was published in April 2024 and is available at the time of publication here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/capital-finance-guidance-on-minimum-revenue-provision-third-edition/capital-finance-guidance-on-minimum-revenue-provision-5th-edition> . Like the most recent legislation the majority of changes in this edition of the guidance do not become applicably until the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. The previous fourth edition of MRP guidance was published in 2018 and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/capital-finance-guidance-on-minimum-revenue-provision-third-edition#full-publication-update-history> .
- 3.6 For capital expenditure incurred before April 2008 the guidance defines prudence as charging MRP at 4% of the non-housing CFR at year end. However alternative methods of calculating MRP are allowable under the relevant MRP guidance.

- 3.7 The guidance provides several options for calculating prudent MRP but is clear that other calculation methods may also be considered prudent. Straight line and annuity methods over the asset’s useful life are the most commonly used methods.
- 3.8 Arlingclose is of the view that the annuity method is superior since it spreads the total capital financing costs (interest plus MRP) evenly over the asset life, similar to a repayment mortgage, personal loan or finance lease. When MRP is made it increases an authority’s cash balance, therefore reducing overall debt costs or increasing income from investment balances. The straight line approach keeps MRP itself even, but since interest costs reduce, it front loads the total financing cost. This is illustrated below on a notional CFR amount of £10m for a 25 year period at an interest rate of 5%:

Figure 1: Total revenue costs under straight line and annuity MRP methods:





Arlingclose believes that an approach where overall costs to council tax taxpayers over the life of the asset is even is more prudent as council tax payers are getting an even benefit from the assets.

- 3.9 It should however be noted that overall costs are slightly higher when using the annuity method: this is because under the annuity method the principal amount is repaid more slower resulting in higher overall interest costs. In the example above the average total cost per year is £660,000 under the straight line method and £710,000 under the annuity method.
- 3.10 The interest rate chosen to base annuity calculations on will have an effect on the profile of MRP made. This is discussed in more detail in section 10.0.
- 3.11 For leases and PFI arrangements both the fourth and fifth editions of the statutory guidance state: *“In the case of leases where a right-of-use asset is on the balance sheet and on balance sheet PFI contracts, the prudent charge to revenue can be regarded being equal to the element of the rent/charge that goes to write down the balance sheet liability.”*. However as with all areas of the guidance other methods are permissible provided that they are prudent.
- 3.12 Arlingclose are of the view that where the estimated asset life of a lease or PFI asset is different to the period over which the liability is being written down over (usually the same as the contract length of the lease or PFI), it is prudent to make MRP over the asset life. This is provided that, where asset life is longer the contract period, Oldham are likely to gain ownership of the asset or the asset is likely to continue to provide a service related benefit to council tax payers after the contract is over. This is because making MRP over the asset life fairly charges council tax payers over the period of time that they are getting the benefit of the asset.
- 3.13 The guidance allows local authorities to change their MRP calculation methods going forward, but changes cannot be backdated to create an overpayment that results in a credit to the general fund. Arlingclose would interpret this to mean that provided the MRP policy change is approved in the financial year 2024/25 changes could only apply from the year 2024/25 onwards.

#### 4.0 Capital Expenditure and the Capital Financing Requirement

- 4.1 The starting point for any MRP review is to understand the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) and how MRP is applied to reduce this balance over time.
- 4.2 The concept of CFR was introduced by the Prudential Code in 2003. It reflects all the capital expenditure incurred by a local authority that has yet to be permanently financed. The CFR will rise with debt funded capital expenditure. It reduces with MRP, or (more rarely) if capital receipts are applied to reduce it.

##### *CFR calculation*

- 4.3 The CFR may be calculated in two ways, both should result in the same answer.
- 4.4 The Prudential Code defines the CFR as being calculated directly from the balance sheet. It is the sum of all the capital assets minus the balances on the capital adjustment account and the revaluation reserve. The latest reconciliation that can be completed for the Council is as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. This is shown for the Council below:

Table 1: Capital financing requirement calculated from the balance sheet:

	31/03/2024 £'000
Property, plant & equipment	960,500
Heritage assets	21,141
Investment property	19,624
Intangible assets	6,033
Long term investments that are capital expenditure	31,627
Long term debtors that are capital expenditure	11,929
Assets held for sale	610
Revaluation reserve	(442,438)
Capital adjustment account	(120,046)
<b>Balance sheet CFR</b>	<b>488,980</b>

- 4.5 The second method takes the previous year's CFR, adds on capital expenditure, subtracts the financing of this capital expenditure, subtracts MRP and subtracts any capital receipts applied. The Accounting Code of Practice requires disclosure of the CFR using this method. This is shown below:

Table 2: Capital financing requirement as per accounts disclosure note for year ending 31/03/2024:

	£'000
<b>Opening CFR</b>	<b>465,723</b>
Capital expenditure	81,858
Sources of finance	(40,375)
MRP	(18,226)
<b>Closing CFR</b>	<b>488,980</b>



4.6 This amount reconciles with the CFR calculated per the balance sheet, providing assurance that the balance sheet CFR of £488,980k has been calculated correctly.

## 5.0 Oldham's Current MRP Calculations

- 5.1 For non-PFI or finance lease assets Oldham make MRP on an asset life basis predominantly using the straight line method. For a small number of assets the annuity method is used using an annuity rate of 2.88%. This annuity rate comes from the PWLB certainty rate for the 40 year asset life of these assets at the time of acquisition.
- 5.2 For a number of older assets acquired between 2005 and 2016 although the straight line method is used assets acquired over different years have been grouped together, resulting in an MRP profile that is close to but not exactly the same as the straight line method. Original records are either not available or Arlingclose has not seen them.
- 5.3 Oldham make MRP on a straight line basis for the pre-2008 supported borrowing figure. This is made over a 50 year asset life starting from a previous review of MRP in 2016. This method replaced the previous 'regulatory method' of a 4% reducing balance. Historically not all charges to MRP for this amount have been even, so the straight line method has not been consistently applied. In future £2,742k per annum of MRP is expected to be made in relation to this part of the CFR for the next 42 years.
- 5.4 Oldham have an adjustment A of £19,602k. This is an amount of the CFR for which Oldham do not make MRP. The amount is historical and will be based on a past discrepancy between pre and post-2008 CFR methodology calculations.
- 5.5 A large proportion (£193,110k) of Oldham's CFR relates to liabilities under PFI arrangements. MRP is made in line with principal write downs of these liabilities which will broadly be on an annuity basis in line with contract length. MRP is made on £747k of the CFR that relates to finance leases in the same way.
- 5.6 £9,677k of the CFR relates to capitalised loans to the Manchester Airport Group. The CFR for this will be fully written down for in a single year in 2058/59 when the loan is expected to be repaid. The capital receipt from the loan principal repayment will be used to reduce the CFR instead of making MRP.
- 5.7 £27k of the CFR relates to transferred debt, MRP on this amount will be made over the next 5 years on a broadly straight line basis.
- 5.8 Unusually Oldham have a negative Housing Revenue Account (HRA) CFR of -£9,050k when PFI liabilities are excluded. This negative figure is a result of HRA refinancing in 2012. In addition the total HRA CFR includes two HRA PFI liabilities: £62,355k in relation to sheltered housing and £45,765k in relation to 'Gateways to Oldham'. This makes the total HRA CFR £99,070k.
- 5.9 Normally there is no requirement to make MRP on the HRA CFR as depreciation is a charge to the HRA so also making MRP would be double counting costs. Oldham agreed special dispensation to not charge depreciation for the HRA PFI assets however on the basis that maintenance costs will be met by the unitary charge payments to the PFI provider. Arlingclose and Oldham are therefore in agreement that in these circumstances MRP should be charged on the HRA PFI CFR. Oldham are making this MRP based on the write down of the liability in line with its other PFI assets. This is broadly on an annuity basis.

## 6.0 Oldham's Current MRP Policy

- 6.1 Arlingclose have reviewed Oldham's latest MRP Policy document. The document is not always consistent, in some instances makes references to MRP practices no longer applied and does not always reference parts of MRP practices that are applied (for example the adjustment A is not mentioned). In view of likely changes to policy if recommendations in this report are adopted, Arlingclose would suggest a re-write of the policy.
- 6.2 Arlingclose MRP policy template can be used as a guide but will need adapting to fit Oldham's method and circumstances.
- 6.3 The policy should clearly outline how Oldham make MRP and any areas of the CFR for which no MRP is made and why. Areas such as the method for choosing the annuity rate applied should be outlined. This document is approved by members and officers should not divert from the policy outlined in it when making MRP in practice.

## 7.0 Discrepancy Between the CFR and MRP

- 7.1 All MRP expected to be made in future plus any capital receipts expecting to be applied to the CFR should equal the current CFR unless there are specific amounts within the CFR for which no MRP is permitted to be made. This is because MRP (with any capital receipts applied) is designed to write down the CFR to nil over time.
- 7.2 Incorporating the adjustment A Oldham are making £1,157k less MRP than their current general fund CFR requires and £9,050 more MRP than their HRA CFR requires. This is indicated below:

Table 3: Discrepancy between the CFR and MRP being made:

	Total £'000	General Fund £'000	HRA £'000
<b>CFR at 31/03/2024</b>	<b>488,980</b>	<b>389,910</b>	<b>99,070</b>
Pre-2008 supported borrowing MRP	115,180	115,180	
Asset life MRP	158,530	158,530	
Capital Receipt from Manchester Airport Group loan	9,677	9,677	
General fund PFI MRP	84,990		
HRA PFI MRP	108,120		108,120
Finance lease MRP	747	747	
Transferred debt MRP	27	27	
Adjustment A	19,602	19,602	
<b>Remaining discrepancy</b>	<b>(7,893)</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>(9,050)</b>

## 8.0 Recommendation: Correction of the Underprovision of General Fund MRP

- 8.1 As explained in 7.2 above Oldham are underproviding MRP by £1,158k on the general fund. This MRP should be provided for so that the general fund CFR is written down to zero over time.

8.2 Unless the specific source of this discrepancy can be identified, which is unlikely, the best option is to profiled £1,158k of MRP costs on an asset life basis to fit in with Oldham's general approach to making MRP. This could be done over 50 years, but Arlingclose would believe it is more appropriate to profile this over the average remaining asset life of general fund assets identified in the CFR as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. Arlingclose have calculated this to be 24 years.

8.3 This will incur costs although these will be outweighed in the short term by savings recommended in later parts of this report. These costs are included in the savings quoted in later parts of this report.

#### 9.0 Recommendation: Correction of the Overprovision of HRA MRP

9.1 As explained in 7.2 above Oldham are overproviding MRP by £9,050k on the HRA. This is due to a negative non-PFI HRA CFR, which means if MRP on the whole HRA PFI CFR is provided for this would eventually lead to a CFR of -£9,050k rather than nil. This underprovision should be corrected for so that the HRA CFR is written down to zero over time.

9.2 The overprovision can be adjusted for by reducing the HRA MRP made by the £9,050k in line with Oldham's general approach to making HRA MRP. This is recommended to be on an annuity asset life basis over the average asset life of other assets in the HRA CFR which is 50 years.

9.3 An alternative approach to managing a negative CFR is to incur future capital expenditure without financing it: this rises the CFR to zero rather than a negative figure. When done in the general fund this makes savings because capital expenditure can be incurred effectively 'for free' - without resulting in MRP costs. However savings are not realised in the same way for the HRA where capital expenditure does not conventionally require MRP and depreciation will have to be made on assets regardless of their effect on the HRA CFR. Spreading savings as indicated in 9.2 is thus recommended as the most suitable option of realising savings. These savings are included in the savings quoted in later parts of this report.

#### 10.0 Recommendation: Remove the Adjustment A

10.1 The concept of an 'adjustment A' is based on historical discrepancies between the pre and post-2008 methodologies for calculating MRP. It was initiated to stop local authorities being disadvantaged by the changes that took place. It is referred to in the guidance under the 'regulatory method' for calculating MRP: the 'regulatory method' means making MRP in line with pre-2008 regulations, in practice this being a 4% reducing balance basis.

10.2 Whilst a grey area, the continuation of an adjustment A when the regulatory method is no longer being applied is contentious. Although the statutory guidance does not specifically prohibit having an adjustment A if the regulatory method is not used, the reference to this adjustment is contained within the regulatory method section which strongly implies that it should not be used outside of the use of this method.

10.3 Whilst it is probable that many authorities retain their adjustment A despite no longer using the regulatory method, it has also been common for local authorities to remove this adjustment A as part of previous MRP reviews where the regulatory method ceased to be used.

- 10.4 Given the extra scrutiny around MRP at the present time and in the context of an overall review resulting in savings (discussed below) Arlingclose would recommend the prudent approach of removing the adjustment A. This will mean some higher MRP charges as MRP on this £19,602k amount will need to be made. It would be logical to make this MRP over a 42 year period in line with the remaining period on pre-2008 supported expenditure. Making this on an annuity basis will result in addition costs of £137k in 2024/25, rising to £1,102k in 2065/66. Costs based on this approach are included in the overall savings quoted in later parts of this report. In the short term these costs will be far outweighed by the other savings suggested from this review.
- 10.5 As the adjustment A is not mentioned in the current MRP policy there is an argument that removing it would be in line with the policy as agreed by Councillors.

#### 11.0 Recommendation: Make MRP on the Manchester Airport Group Loan Equal to the ECL

- 11.1 As discussed in section 5.6 Oldham do not currently make any MRP in respect of a £9,677k capital loan to Manchester Airport Group (the loan was for approximately £30m in total but the £9,677k is the only proportion of this loan that is debt funded and thus forms part of the CFR). The full loan is expected to be repaid in 2058/59 when the capital receipt received from the principal repayment is planned to be used to reduce the CFR with respect of this loan.
- 11.2 Given that this is a maturity loan where capital receipts from principal repayments cannot be used to write down the CFR during the period when the loan provides benefit to council tax payers, Arlingclose would suggest that it is prudent to make some MRP on this loan.
- 11.3 Arlingclose would recommend the voluntary adoption for this loan of regulations now applicable to loans made after 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024. This would require the total historical MRP on the loan to be at least equal to the Expected Credit Loss (ECL) charge for that loan. For this loan only the proportion of the ECL related to the loan that is in the CFR would be relevant.
- 11.4 An ECL calculation is done annually for a loan. Generally the ECL will be small in comparison to the a loan's value, although where a borrower gets into financial difficulty the ECL charge can become much larger.
- 11.5 The last calculation of the ECL for this loan at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 calculated an ECL of £22k. If the ECL was the same amount for the 2024/25 year this would mean an MRP cost of £22k in 2024/25 in relation to this loan. Arlingclose have included this cost in the overall savings given later in in this report.
- 11.6 In practice the ECL amount is likely to be different but is unlikely to be significantly higher or lower in proportion to the loan amount. In subsequent years further MRP charges will only be required if the ECL value rises: if it falls overall MRP can be reduced by the amount of the fall. Provided no default occurs any ECL charge is written to nil once the loan is finally repaid and this amount can reduce the overall MRP charge for Oldham.
- 11.7 The MRP regulations in place until April 2024 did not stipulate clear rules about the treatment of capital loans. Historically Arlingclose would have advised asset life MRP for a maturity loan such as this one, but as the new guidance stipulates making MRP equal to the ECL charge as prudent Arlingclose are happy that this approach is applied.
- 11.8 Oldham's loan to the airport is very similar to loans that have been made to the airport by other local authorities in Greater Manchester. Oldham may wish to consult with these authorities about the treatment of their loans with respect to MRP as a consistent approach may be desirable.

## 12.0 A Discussion on Annuity Rates

- 12.1 Arlingclose would recommend that Oldham adopt the annuity method as opposed to the straight line method for MRP being made on an asset life basis and the pre-2008 supported borrowing CFR. Given the small sums involved Arlingclose would recommend that MRP for transferred debt continues to be made in line with the current method used.
- 12.2 As well as the decision to move to an annuity method a decision needs to be made on how to choose the percentage used for annuity calculations. There are no stipulations under MRP legislation or statutory guidance as to which interest rate to use. CIPFA's non statutory 'Practitioners' Guide to Capital Finance in Local Government' recommends the following: *"The rate chosen for any calculation should fairly represent the circumstances as they are likely to apply over the life of a particular project. Whilst interest rates cannot be predicted with any certainty, this would mean that authorities would not apply the prevailing rate where it was probable that this rate was temporarily high or low. Otherwise, it would probably be prudent for authorities to apply the prevailing PWLB rate for a loan with a term equivalent to the estimated life for the project."*
- 12.3 The general idea is that the percentage rate applied to the annuity should represent Oldham's cost of funding the capital asset over its life. Ascertaining what this should be is not straight forward and if all possible options are considered there are a huge number of scenarios that could be use. Some of the main options to consider are discussed below. These can be used in combination if desired: for example applying one option to the CFR to date and a different option to future debt funded capital expenditure.

### *Option 1: Use the PWLB certainty rate for the asset life*

- 12.4 This means applying the PWLB certainty rate in the year that the asset is acquired for the life of the asset. So for example the 10 year certainty rate would be used for an asset life of 10 years. The idea behind this method is that the PWLB certainty rate broadly represents the cost of local authority funding and thus of financing the asset. The method is easy to use and easy to understand, it is the method that has been used already by Oldham for the small number of assets for which the annuity method has already been applied.
- 12.5 The main disadvantage of this method is that it may not accurately reflect an individual local authority's actual cost of financing. For example the authority may not need to take out a new loan and is financing the asset through previous loans for which it pays a different rate of interest.
- 12.6 When applying this method to assets purchased in the past because the MRP methodology is being changed a further decision needs to be made as to whether to use the PWLB certainty rate when the asset was originally acquired or when the policy is being changed. Whether the time period for the asset life when originally acquired or the remaining asset life when the policy is changed also needs to be decided on.
- 12.7 Using this method and applying the PWLB certainty rate at the time the policy is changed generally results in bigger short term savings as currently interest rates are high. Savings will be smaller if historical rates are used.
- 12.8 If the PWLB certainty rate at the time the asset was acquired are used this leads to a mis-match in time periods. As an example an asset purchased 4 years ago with a 10 year life has a 6 year remaining life. If the 10 year PWLB certainty rate at time of purchase is used this 10 year rate is only being applied to 6 remaining years. Alternatively the 6 year rate 10 years ago can be applied, but this would also not match the cost of funding at that time.

### *Option 2: Use the cost of borrowing short term*

- 12.9 There is an argument that if an authority is funding most of their CFR through short term borrowing or internal borrowing (where the cost is effectively lost interest income which is usually the same as short term borrowing costs) than using a short term interest rate most accurately reflects the authority's cost of borrowing.
- 12.10 The market rate of SONIA is thought to be broadly representative of short term interest rates for local authorities and would be an easy to find interest rate to apply were this method to be used.
- 12.11 Arlingclose believe that if this method is applied it is only prudently applied if the annuity rate is updated annually with the prevailing short term rate, reflective of the authority's changing cost of financing. This will lead to an MRP cost that varies year to year with interest rates in a way that is unpredictable. This is not typically desirable for a local authority. Some of this variability in MRP cost will be mitigated by variable interest costs if the authority is truly funding most of its CFR on a short term basis: for example if interest falls MRP costs will be higher, but interest costs will be lower.
- 12.12 At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 Oldham are funding 39% of their CFR through internal borrowing and 7% through short term loans. 46% of the CFR is thus financed on a variable rate basis. So whilst this method would be representative of a large proportion of Oldham's financing costs it would not quite be representative of the majority of it.
- 12.13 Using this method would result in comparatively large short term savings as current short term interest rates are high. Savings in future years may be smaller if interest rates fall.

### *Option 3: Use Oldham's Weighted Average Actual Cost of Debt*

- 12.14 The reasoning behind using this method is that it is more accurate in reflecting Oldham's actual cost of borrowing than the PWLB certainty rate. It would include any short term borrowing undertaken. Oldham would need to decide whether to choose their cost of borrowing at a point in time (typically year end) or an average cost of borrowing over a year (borrowing costs may vary on a day to day basis particularly if short term borrowing is utilised).
- 12.15 A variation of this method is to use an authority's incremental cost of new borrowing - the cost of new loans taken out over the year - rather than the cost of historically incurred borrowing. This may more accurately represent the cost of funding recently acquired debt funded assets. In situations where a specific loan has funded a specific asset the rate of this loan can also be used.
- 12.16 For PFI assets the rate implicit in the PFI arrangement can accurately be used to represent Oldham's cost of debt.
- 12.17 When applying this method to assets purchased in the past because the MRP methodology is being changed a further decision needs to be made as to whether to use the authority's cost of borrowing when the original asset was purchased or when the MRP policy is being changed. The former will require examination of past records of loans held which may not be available.
- 12.18 Using this method will typically result in smaller savings for non-PFI assets than the other methods discussed above as Oldham's historical cost of borrowing is lower than current borrowing costs. However applying the higher implicit interest rates for PFI assets leads to overall higher savings using this method.

12.19 A downside of this method is that it uses a blanket rate for all non-PFI assets regardless of asset life. So it does not account for the fact that longer asset lives typically incur higher interest rates when borrowing.

*Option 4: Use Oldham's Weighted Average Actual Cost of Financing the CFR*

12.20 This method takes into account an authority's actual cost of debt as above but also includes the cost of internal borrowing. The cost of internal borrowing is lost investment income: Oldham's average return on investments could be used for this, or alternatively SONIA may be a suitable proxy for investment returns especially incremental ones.

12.21 As above a variation on this method is to use an authority's incremental cost of new borrowing, the incremental cost of lost investment income could also be applied to the CFR funded by internal borrowing. Also as above, where a specific loan has funded a specific asset the rate of this loan can be used.

12.22 As above for PFI assets the rate implicit in the PFI arrangement can accurately be used to represent Oldham's cost of financing.

12.23 When applying this method to assets purchased in the past because the MRP methodology is being changed a further decision needs to be made as to whether to use the authority's cost of financing the CFR when the original asset was purchased or when the MRP policy is being changed. The former would ultimately be more accurate, although will require examination of past records of loans held which may not be available. An examination of past balance sheets would also be required to ascertain historical levels of internal borrowing.

12.24 Use of this method will lead to an MRP cost that varies year to year with interest rates in a way that is unpredictable. This is because the CFR funded through internal borrowing will attract a variable interest rate, as will any part of the CFR funded through short term loans. This is not typically desirable for a local authority. Some of this variability in MRP cost will be mitigated by variable interest costs as explained in section 12.11.

12.25 This method will result in smaller short term savings for non-PFI assets than using the PWLB certainty rate or short term rates as the cost of financing the CFR is lower than current interest rates. However applying the higher implicit interest rates for PFI assets leads to overall higher savings using this method.

12.26 Arlingclose believes that this method is ultimately the most technically accurate at representing the cost of financing the CFR. Using incremental costs in the year of asset acquisition would be most representative of true costs.

12.27 The main downside to this method is that it is exceptionally complicated and time consuming for officers to calculate and difficult for members to understand. Complicated MRP policies run the risk of not be followed correctly in future if errors are made in calculations.

12.28 Like the method described in option 3 above, this method uses a blanket rate for all non-PFI assets regardless of asset life. So it does not account for the fact that longer asset lives typically incur higher interest rates when borrowing.

## Summary of Savings

12.29 A summary of savings made under the methods indicated above is given below:

**Table 4: Savings from different annuity rate methods chosen:**

Method	Saving in 2024/25 £'000	Saving Over the Next 10 Years £'000
Option 1: PWLB certainty rate, applying the rate at date of policy change	13,382	126,159
Option 1: PWLB certainty rate, applying the rate at date of asset acquisition	13,308	128,289
Option 2: Short term borrowing costs	13,619	Based on future interest rates
Option 3: Oldham's cost of borrowing, applying the rate at date of policy change	13,744	129,397
Option 4: Oldham's cost of financing the CFR, applying the rate at date of policy change	13,587	Based on future interest rates and CFR financing composition

### 13.0 Recommendation: Move to Annuity Method Using the PWLB Certainty Rate at the Date of Policy Change

- 13.1 Arlingclose would recommend that Oldham adopt the annuity method as opposed to the straight line method for MRP being made on an asset life basis and the pre-2008 supported borrowing CFR. Given the small sums involved Arlingclose would recommend that MRP for transferred debt continues to be made in line with the current method used.
- 13.2 In comparison to the straight line method the annuity method means less MRP is made in earlier years and more is made in later years. Although this may sound less prudent, as is discussed in section 3.8, the annuity structure for MRP when combined with interest costs leads to a smoother profile of costs. Arlingclose believe this is therefore more prudent than using the straight line method. When factoring in the time value of money it also becomes a more suitable option.
- 13.3 For the assets discussed in section 5.2 which have been grouped together for MRP calculations there will be no material difference in continuing to group these and applying the annuity method to the total outstanding for any group at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. If records are available Oldham can go back to original records and move to an annuity method for more individual assets if they wish.
- 13.4 Arlingclose would recommend that the PWLB certainty rate for the life of the asset should be used in the annuity calculation. For assets acquired historically the rate at the date of policy change for the remaining asset life at the policy change date should be used. This date is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The exception is the small number of assets where the annuity method has been used since acquisition, for these assets the 2.88% rate should continue to be used. For assets newly acquired in future the PWLB certainty rate at the time of acquisition should be used.



- 13.5 For assets acquired in future if the date of acquisition is specific and known the PWLB certainty rate on that day can be used if desired. In general the most suitable and straight forward approach however is to use the average certainty rate for the year for all assets acquired in that year. The later method is advised for simplicity.
- 13.6 As an annuity method is being applied the PWLB certainty rate for the annuity loan (as opposed to the maturity or EIP loan) should be used.
- 13.7 Arlingclose believe that this method is most suitable because it is straight forward to use and understand. Significant officer resources will not be required during the year to calculate it. Whilst it may not be the most accurate method on a very purist interpretation of representing borrowing costs, it is broadly accurate at representing an authority's incremental costs associated with new debt funded capital expenditure. It is also consistent with the method that Oldham have historically applied to the small number of assets that it has used the annuity method for. The ultimate differences in MRP charged under this method and the other methods outlined is not overly significant. The difference in MRP charge between this and the cost of financing the CFR method is around £200k: around 2% of the overall MRP charge.
- 13.8 For historical assets using the certainty rate for the remaining asset life at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 aligns the remaining asset life with the appropriate rate rather than these being inherently mis-matched. It is straight forward to apply.
- 13.9 Arlingclose would not recommend using a rate based on short term borrowing costs as this does not represent Oldham's circumstances and will lead to an unpredictably variability in the MRP charge.
- 13.10 Arlingclose would also not recommend using a rate based on the cost of financing the CFR. Whilst Arlingclose believes this is the most technically accurate it would be highly complex to calculate and explain to members. It will lead to unpredictable variability in the future MRP charge.
- 13.11 If Oldham do not wish to use the PWLB certainty rate as an alternative they could consider the use of their actual cost of borrowing. This is relatively straight forward to calculate. Another alternative is to use Oldham's cost of borrowing at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 for historical assets in the CFR and the PWLB certainty rate for future debt funded expenditure (loosely representative of a future incremental cost of borrowing).
- 14.0 Recommendation: Make MRP Over the Asset Life Rather than Contract Length for Most PFI Assets**
- 14.1 As discussed in sections 3.11 and 3.12 above Arlingclose are of the view that it is prudent to make MRP for PFI assets over the remaining asset life rather than the contract length. This is provided the asset will continue to provide a benefit to council tax payers over its life.
- 14.2 Oldhams' PFI asset form a very significant portion of their CFR. The assets are summarised below:

**Table 5: Summary of Oldham’s PFI liabilities:**

Asset	Remaining Liability £'000	General Fund / HRA	Remaining PFI Contract Length (Years)	Expectations of Asset at End of PFI Contract	Estimated Remaining Asset Life (Years)
Library	7,792	General fund	7	Oldham ownership	30
Schools	28,013	General fund	9	Convert to academy status	30 assumed
Chadderton	7,696	General fund	16	Option to purchase by Oldham for £4,891k	Not applicable
Sheltered housing	62,355	HRA	13	Oldham ownership	50
Street lighting	15,329	General fund	13	Oldham ownership	20
Gateways to Oldham	45,765	HRA	13	Oldham ownership	50
Building schools for the future	26,161	General fund	14	Convert to academy status	30 assumed

- 14.3 Of these Arlingclose would not advise that the MRP being made for Chadderton is changed. Chadderton is a wellbeing centre. The agreement is technically a LIFT (Local Improvement Finance Trust) rather than PFI arrangement although these are for all intents and purposes the same type of arrangement. Oldham has the option but not the obligation to purchase this asset for £4,891k at the end of the contract, if it does not exercise this option the asset will revert back to ownership by the LIFT private sector operator. Oldham do not yet know whether the option will be exercised. Based on this it is not suitable to spread MRP over a period longer than the contract period as the asset may no longer be providing benefit to council tax payers over this time.
- 14.4 Arlingclose would advise that MRP can be made over the asset life of schools even though one school has already been converted to academy status and the remaining two will convert before the end of the PFI contract. The schools will remain a service benefit to council tax payers over their asset life so charging MRP in this way is still fair. It is not uncommon for councils to be required to continue making MRP after an asset’s disposal, particularly if no capital receipt is received for the asset sale that can be applied to reduce the CFR (which would be the case here as Oldham would not be expected to receive any cash for the asset being transferred to an academy).
- 14.5 Arlingclose do not have information on the expected remaining asset life of these schools so have assumed 30 years for their calculations. Oldham should update this with the correct period which may result in higher or lower short term savings.
- 14.6 Oldham do not have to spread MRP over the longer asset life for schools and can retain their current methodology if they wish. This will result in lower short term savings than are outlined in this report.
- 14.7 Arlingclose would advise that MRP can be spread over the remaining asset life rather than the remaining contract period for all other PFI assets where Oldham and Arlingclose have a clear estimation of remaining asset life.

14.8 Arlingclose would recommend that MRP over the remaining asset life should be made on an annuity basis based on the PWLB certainty rate at the time of policy change. This is line with other assets as is outlined in section 13.0. Although the implicit interest rates in the PFI arrangement will be higher than this interest rate, these are less relevant when MRP is being applied over an asset life that is quite different to the contract length that this implicit interest rate will have been calculated based on.

### 15.0 Savings and Costs from Recommendations

15.1 Adopting these recommendations will result in short term savings because of the change to the annuity method and the lengthening of the MRP provision period for PFI assets. Reducing the discrepancy between the CFR and MRP made will incur costs in the general fund and savings in the HRA, removing the adjustment A will incur costs.

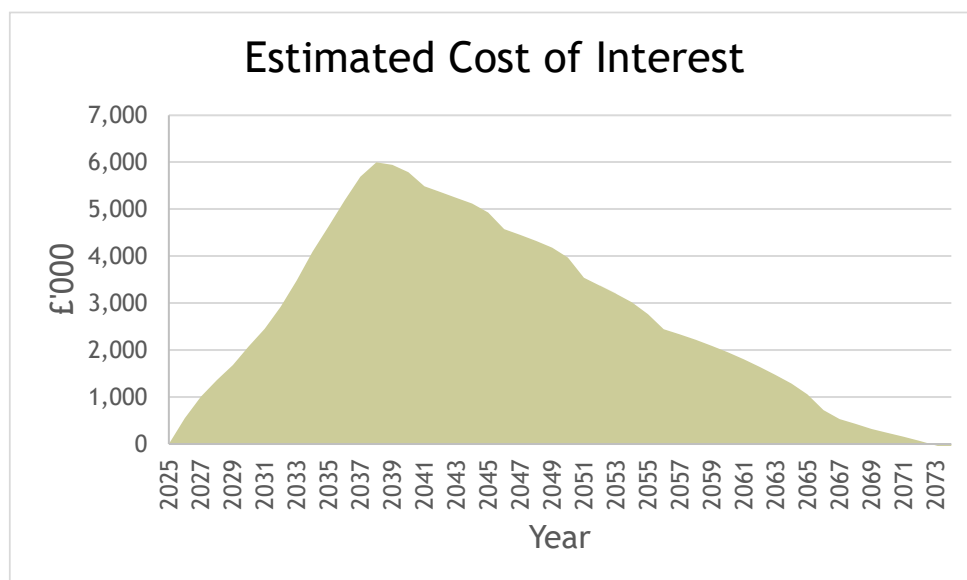
15.2 It is important to understand that when the MRP charge is reduced this leads to less cash being available for Oldham, conversely if the MRP charge is raised more cash is available for Oldham. This is because MRP is an accounting charge that does not involve any cash expenditure. When the MRP charge is raised in order to set a balanced budget Oldham has to spend less cash on other things, driving up cash levels. The reverse is true when the MRP charge is lowered.

15.3 Less cash will lead either to lower investment income or higher borrowing costs depending on the Oldham's overall cash position. Short term interest rates can be used to estimate what these costs will be in future years. If the Council planned to borrow on a long term, fixed rate basis to cover any cash shortfall these costs may be a little higher.

15.4 The effect of lower investment income or higher borrowing costs is cumulative: as lower amounts of MRP are charged each year the cash shortfall gets increasingly bigger. Adopting the changes recommended in this report will mean an increasing large borrowing need until 2037 when higher MRP cost will begin to reduce this additional need over time. With the exception of minor savings in the years 2073 and 2074 borrowing costs will not be less in any year than if the previous method was maintained: it is only the amount they are larger by that decreases in later years.

15.5 Additional borrowing costs are likely to be considerable given then higher interest rate environment we are now in. On a central case estimate for future interest rates costs are likely to be around £137,064k over a 50 year period, ranging from nothing to £5,997k in any given year. Costs are dependent on how high future interest rates will be which is very uncertain over a 50 year period. The profile of estimate future additional interest rate costs is shown in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Estimated additional interest costs:



- 15.6 Oldham will need to consider these additional costs carefully. Any change to the MRP policy that results in lower MRP costs will ultimately incur higher interest costs. Indeed, any spreading out of costs at all through the MRP process as opposed to expensing them all in year will incur higher interest costs!
- 15.7 Arlingclose continue to believe that a move to the annuity method remains prudent and within the letter and spirit of guidance. As discussed above it results in a smoother overall cost profile for council tax payers. Due to the time value of money it is a cost effective option on a net present value basis.
- 15.8 Arlingclose also believe that making MRP over the asset life rather than PFI contract life for PFI assets is the more prudent method as it is charging council taxpayers over the period with which they benefit from the asset. Arlingclose judge that this is still the case for schools which will become academies at the end of the PFI contract.
- 15.9 The MRP policy changes recommend result in an overall savings over a 50 year period on a net present value basis. This is typically regarded as the ‘acid test’ of whether a change is appropriate.
- 15.10 If Oldham adopted all the recommendations above the savings of this over the next 10 years’ based on past actual capital expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 are given in table 6 below. In the bottom two rows these total savings are split as to those attributable to the general fund (GF) and those attributable to the HRA:

**Table 6: Savings over 10 years be adopting recommendations based on known capital expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024:**

Year Ended	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
31 <sup>st</sup> March:	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
MRP saving	13,382	13,988	13,922	11,058	14,158	15,075	16,667	17,292	16,032	14,224
Extra interest (cost)	-	(557)	(1,008)	(1,365)	(1,686)	(2,078)	(2,453)	(2,918)	(3,477)	(4,096)
Total saving	13,382	13,431	12,914	9,693	12,472	12,997	14,214	14,373	12,555	10,128
<i>Total saving (GF)</i>	<i>7,757</i>	<i>7,747</i>	<i>8,153</i>	<i>5,677</i>	<i>8,095</i>	<i>7,778</i>	<i>7,622</i>	<i>6,631</i>	<i>4,363</i>	<i>1,522</i>
<i>Total saving (HRA)</i>	<i>5,625</i>	<i>5,684</i>	<i>4,761</i>	<i>4,015</i>	<i>4,377</i>	<i>5,218</i>	<i>6,591</i>	<i>7,742</i>	<i>8,191</i>	<i>8,606</i>

- 15.11 Total savings are £126,159k over the next 10 years, or £95,046k if these savings are discounted using a nominal green book rate of 5.6% for up to and including 30 years and 5.1% for over 30 years.
- 15.12 Total savings attributable to the general fund are £65,347k over the next 10 years, or £50,669k if these savings are discounted using a nominal green book rate as above.
- 15.13 Total savings attributable to the HRA are £60,811k over the next 10 years, or £44,377k if these savings are discounted using a nominal green book rate as above.
- 15.14 The quoted Treasury ‘green book’ rate is 3.5% up to 30 years and 3.0% thereafter. Arlingclose have used the green book rate as our discount rate but as the quoted rates are real rates (including inflation) these have been converted into nominal rates (not including the effect of inflation). This is because our calculations already include the effect on inflation because we are accounting for increased interest (which incorporates inflation) on lower cash levels. Using a real discount rate double counts the effect of inflation. If you were to use a real discount rate you would typically not include interest within your calculations.
- 15.15 Nominal interest rates are higher than real interest rates. If inflation is guaranteed to be zero you may be happy that 3.5% represents the cost to you of having money in one year’s time as opposed to now. However if you know that inflation will reduce the value of your money by 2% over a year you will want extra compensation for this in the nominal (actual) interest rate offered.
- 15.16 The nominal discount rate used is dependent on assumptions around future inflation. Arlingclose have assumed inflation of 2% (the Bank of England’s target) over the next 50 years. This is a fairly standard assumption.
- 15.17 Over the life of making MRP on MRP alone there is a cost of £11,709k if the recommendations are adopted: this is the additional MRP for the adjustment A, plus the correction of the underprovision of MRP for the general fund minus the correction for the overprovision of MRP for the HRA. A cost of £20,759k is attributable to the general fund whilst there are savings of £9,050k attributable to the HRA.
- 15.18 There is no overall cost or savings on an undiscounted basis of just the move to an annuity method or the shift to asset life for PFI assets as the same MRP ultimately needs to be provided for.

15.19 As discussed in sections 15.2 to 15.6 above the lowering of the MRP charge in early years is expected to lead to overall higher interest costs of £137,064k. Of this £51,749 would be attributable to the general fund and £85,315k to the HRA. These could be higher or lower depending on how high or low future interest rates are. Oldham will need to carefully consider these costs if it wishes to follow Arlingclose recommendations and make these changes to their MRP policy.

15.20 On a discounted basis due to the time value of money overall lifetime savings of £40,896k can be identified. £16,687k of these savings would be for the general fund and £24,209k for the HRA. The size of this saving is dependent on the discount rate used which involves a degree of subjectivity.

15.21 The savings that arise from this change of method will in actuality be greater than the above as they can also be applied to future capital expenditure that forms the CFR. However knowing exactly what these savings will be at the present time is not possible as it is not certain how much capital expenditure will be incurred in future. However by using information from the forecasted 2024/25 position and projections for expected debt funded capital expenditure up until 2028/29 can give us an estimate. Savings are estimated as indicated in table 7. In the bottom two rows these total savings are split as to those attributable to the general fund (GF) and those attributable to the HRA:

**Table 7: Savings over 10 years be adopting recommendations based on known past and estimated future capital expenditure:**

Year Ended	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
31 <sup>st</sup> March:	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
MRP saving	13,382	14,902	15,533	12,770	16,145	16,890	18,268	18,667	17,306	15,389
Extra interest (cost)	-	(557)	(1,041)	(1,449)	(1,823)	(2,272)	(2,695)	(3,205)	(3,809)	(4,478)
Total saving	13,382	14,345	14,492	11,321	14,322	14,618	15,573	15,462	13,497	10,911
<i>Total saving (GF)</i>	<i>7,757</i>	<i>8,661</i>	<i>9,730</i>	<i>7,306</i>	<i>9,945</i>	<i>9,400</i>	<i>8,982</i>	<i>7,720</i>	<i>5,306</i>	<i>2,304</i>
<i>Total saving (HRA)</i>	<i>5,625</i>	<i>5,684</i>	<i>4,761</i>	<i>4,015</i>	<i>4,377</i>	<i>5,218</i>	<i>6,591</i>	<i>7,742</i>	<i>8,191</i>	<i>8,606</i>

15.22 Total savings are estimated to be £137,923k over the next 10 years, or £103,770k if these savings are discounted using a nominal green book rate.

15.23 Total savings attributable to the general fund are £77,112k over the next 10 years, or £59,393k if these savings are discounted using a nominal green book rate.

15.24 Total savings attributable to the HRA are £60,811k over the next 10 years, or £44,377k if these savings are discounted using a nominal green book rate. No additional HRA debt funded capital expenditure requiring MRP has been assumed in future, so these saving are the same as those outlined in table 6.

15.25 As above over the life of making MRP there is an overall cost of £11,759k if the recommendations are adopted due to making MRP on the adjustment A and an overall underprovision of MRP.

15.26 On a discounted basis due to the time value of money overall lifetime savings of £45,103k can be identified. £20,894k of these savings would be for the general fund and £24,209k for the HRA. The size of this saving is dependent on the discount rates used which involves a degree of subjectivity.

## 16.0 Other Recommendations to Consider

- 16.1 Oldham should consider reviewing the asset lives of non-PFI assets that form the existing CFR. If asset lives are longer than they have been historically judged to be the MRP can be spread over a higher number of years and will thus be a lower cost per year. Conversely however if asset lives are shorter than they have been judged to be costs will need to be spread over a shorter number of years so this strategy is not without risk. The resource implication and cost involved in assessing asset life should also be considered against any potential savings that can be made.
- 16.2 Oldham have correctly included no asset lives longer than 50 years in line with current guidance. Currently guidance does however let a longer than 50 life be used in circumstances where: *“a local authority has an opinion from an appropriately qualified professional advisor that an asset will deliver service functionality for more than 50 years”*. For any larger value assets within the CFR where Oldham believes it is likely that asset life is longer than 50 years it may be worth the cost of seeking a professional opinion so as to extend asset lives and make MRP savings. This will not be possible for land however, which has an unlimited asset life but where MRP must be spread over a minimum of 50 years.
- 16.3 When capital expenditure is incurred in the future, financing in the form of grants, capital receipts or direct revenue funding should where possible be applied to the shorter term assets. This allows for longer term assets to form the CFR and a lower MRP cost as the cost of these assets can be spread over a longer period.

## 17.0 Recent Changes to MRP Regulations

- 17.1 As mentioned in sections 3.4 and 3.5 above there have been recent changes to MRP legislation and statutory guidance. These were largely aimed at preventing more controversial MRP practices by a small number of authorities. They have not had a significant impact for most authorities.
- 17.2 The main changes can be summarised as follows:
- More MRP regulations have been put into law as well as guidance. This means that contravention of them can be regarded as ‘illegal’ rather than just not adhering to guidance.
  - The new guidance states that ‘local authorities should not change their MRP policy or methodologies where the primary objective of any change is to reduce the revenue charge.’
  - MRP must be made on the whole CFR unless there is a pre-existing exemption in place for this (for example the HRA CFR does not normally require MRP). The CFR is defined as being calculated from the balance sheet.
  - Capital receipts cannot be used to directly replace MRP in a single year: however they can still be applied to reduce the CFR and therefore MRP in future years. There are specific exemptions for capital loans.
  - Capital loans are loans which a local authority has made to a third party which the authority is required to treat as capital expenditure. Principal repayments received on these loans can still be applied to reduce the MRP charge in year. However authorities will be required to make an MRP charge that is as a minimum equal to the expected credit loss charge for these loans.
- 17.3 Changes take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 except for the final bullet point above which came into effect on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

- 17.4 Given Oldham's current and recommended MRP practices Arlingclose do not consider that the changes to regulation around MRP is going to have a significant impact on Oldham. Arlingclose would recommend that recommendations suggested in this report are implemented in this financial year, as doing so next year may be more problematic as the change in policy results in a saving.
- 17.5 Arlingclose are expecting closer scrutiny from auditors around MRP. By removing the adjustment A, making prudent MRP on the loan to Manchester airport and ensuring MRP made is in line with the CFR Arlingclose believe that adopting these recommendations will demonstrate prudence.
- 17.6 Oldham should be mindful that if capital loans are made in future as a minimum MRP at least equal to the ECL charge will be required. It will no longer be possible to make these loans whilst incurring no MRP costs. In most instances the ECL charge will not be overly large, although in the events that the borrower experiences financial difficulties that charge can rise substantially.

## 18.0 Conclusions

- 18.1 Based on current calculations Oldham are underproviding MRP by £1,158k on the general fund are overproviding MRP by £9,050k on the HRA.
- 18.2 Arlingclose would recommend that MRP is provided for Oldham's current adjustment A amount of £19,602k. The costs of this will be outweighed in the short term by other MRP policy changes recommended and making this MRP is in line with guidance and demonstrates prudence.
- 18.3 Arlingclose would recommend the MRP equal to the ECL charge is made for the loan to Manchester Airport Group: this MRP charge is likely to be small at around £22k for the 2024/25 financial year.
- 18.4 Arlingclose recommend that Oldham move from a straight line method to an annuity method for all the pre-2008 supported borrowing CFR and all MRP made on an asset life basis. The PWLB certainty rate should be used at the date of imposition of this policy (31<sup>st</sup> March 2024) for historical assets, for new future assets the PWLB certainty rate for the year of acquisition should be used. Assets that have historically had the annuity method applied since acquisition should continue to use their 2.88% annuity rate.
- 18.5 Arlingclose would recommend making MRP over the remaining asset life of PFI assets rather than PFI contract length. This is recommend for all PFI assets that are expected to continue to provide a benefit to council tax payers over their lifetime: these include schools assets which have or are expected to be converted to academy status before the end of the contract.
- 18.6 Arlingclose would recommending continuing with their current method of making MRP finance lease assets and the transferred debt.
- 18.7 Adopting these changes is expected to make savings of £13,382k in 2024/25: £7,757k of these would be attributable to the general fund and £5,625k to the HRA. £126,159k in savings are expected over the next 10 years £65,347k of these would be attributable to the general fund and £60,811k to the HRA.
- 18.8 Although the annuity method results in short term savings and long term costs Arlingclose believes that it is prudent as it gives a smoother profile of overall costs to Oldham once interest costs are taken into consideration.
- 18.9 Moving to asset life rather than PFI contract length for PFI assets also results in short term savings and long term costs. However Arlingclose believe it if prudent to charge council tax payers in line with when they are receiving the benefit of the asset rather than the PFI contract length.



- 18.10 Further savings will be realised in future as the annuity method is applied to future expected debt funded capital expenditure. These savings are expected to be £137,923k over the next 10 years: £77,112k attributable to the general fund and £60,811k to the HRA.
- 18.11 Reducing the MRP charge does increase interest costs to the authority. These would be expected to be around £137,064k over the next 50 years. Oldham should carefully consider these cost when changing their MRP policy.
- 18.12 New MRP regulations were published in April 2024 most of which take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. Arlingclose would not expect these to have a significant impact on Oldham.

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## Revised Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2024/25

Where the Council finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), although there has been no statutory minimum since 2008. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Authority to have regard to the former Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision (the MHCLG Guidance) most recently issued in 2018.

The broad aim of the MHCLG Guidance is to ensure that capital expenditure is financed over a period that is either reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by Government Revenue Support Grant, reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of that grant.

The Guidance provides suggested methods for the calculation of MRP that the DLUHC consider to be prudent, however the Guidance and legislation do not define what is prudent. It is for each Council to determine a prudent repayment based on its own individual circumstances, considering the medium and long-term financial plans, current budgetary pressures, future capital expenditure plans and funding needs.

The current MRP policy has not been changed since 2017/18, when the basis for charging for capital expenditure incurred before 1st April 2008 was amended from a 4% reducing balance charge (the regulatory method) to a straight-line charge over 50 years. The changes to the financial landscape which the Council is now faced, including recent increases in interest rates and inflationary impacts across all Council service areas mean it is sensible to review the Policy now.

Any change to the Council's MRP Policy needs to consider:

- Its appropriateness and compliance with the MRP guidance.
- Affordability, prudence and sustainability with regard to current revenue budgets of the Authority, balanced against deferring costs of future Council Taxpayers.
- The Authority's future capital programme in terms of complexity, variability and deliverability.
- Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) forecasts and the level of borrowing proposed by the Authority in future years.
- S151 officer consideration of what constitutes a prudent provision

### Current Minimum Revenue Provision Policy

For non-PFI or Finance lease assets the Council makes MRP based on the expected asset life on a straight-line basis. For a small number of assets the annuity method is used using a rate of 2.88%. This rate is based on the PWLB certainty rate for the 40-year life of the assets at the time of acquisition.

For PFI and finance lease assets MRP is made in line with principal write downs of the lease liability, which broadly on an annuity basis, over the length of the PFI/Lease contract.

There is a capitalised loan to the Manchester Airports Group that forms part of the CFR. The CFR for this loan will be written down in full in a single year in 2058/59 when the loan is

expected to be repaid. The Capital receipt from the loan principal repayment will be used to reduce the CFR instead of making MRP.

As a result of the national HRA refinancing in 2012 the Council has a negative HRA CFR (excluding the Housing PFI Contracts) of -£9.050m. HRA MRP, other than in relation to PFI Assets is made.

### **Proposed Changes to existing Policy**

It is proposed to use the annuity method as opposed to the straight-line method for MRP being made on the asset life basis and the pre-2008 supported borrowing CFR. The interest rate to be used when calculating the annuity will be the PWLB certainty rate for annuity loans for the remaining life of assets (42 years for the pre 2008- supported borrowing CFR) at the date of the policy change (1<sup>st</sup> April 2024) for existing borrowing and average certainty rate for annuity loans for the relevant lives of assets in the year of acquisition for subsequent capital expenditure.

It is proposed to make MRP over the asset life rather than contract length for PFI Assets where the ownership of the assets pass to the council at the end of the contract or the assets continue to provide a benefit to the council over their life.

It is proposed to remove Adjustment A from the calculation of the MRP on pre-2008 supported borrowing.

It is proposed to reduce the HRA overprovision of MRP to nil.

### **Rationale for Changes**

#### Annuity Method

The annuity method is an acceptable method for making MRP and is explicitly mentioned in the statutory guidance on MRP. The annuity method spreads the total capital financing costs (MRP plus interest) evenly over the asset life, similar to a repayment mortgage. When MRP is made it increases the Council's cash balances, therefore, reducing overall debt costs or increasing income from investment balances. The straight-line approach keeps MRP itself even, but as interest costs reduce over time, it front loads the total financing costs.

As the annuity method is an approach where overall costs to council taxpayers over the life of an asset is even is more prudent as council taxpayers are getting an even benefit from the assets. However, it should be noted that overall costs are slightly higher when using the annuity method as the principal is repaid more slowly resulting in higher overall interest costs. Conversely, when factoring in the time value of money the annuity method becomes a more suitable option.

#### PFI Useful Asset Lives

The council consider that it is prudent to provide for MRP over the asset life rather than the contract period. This is provided that the, where the asset life is longer than the contract length, the Council are likely to gain ownership of the asset or the asset is likely to continue to provide a service related benefit to council taxpayers after the contract is over. This is because

making MRP over the life of the asset fairly charges council tax-payers over the period that benefits are received from the asset.

### Removal of Adjustment A

Adjustment A is based on historical discrepancies between the pre-and post-2008 methodologies for calculating MRP. It is referred to in the guidance under the “regulatory method” for calculating MRP. The regulatory method was to make MRP on a 4% reducing balance method. Adjustment a is applied to the proportion of the CFR that relates to pre-2008 supported borrowing.

When the Council amended its MRP policy to provide for supporting borrowing on a straight-line basis from the regulatory method it retained an Adjustment A of £19.602m. Although the statutory guidance does not prohibit the use of Adjustment A where the regulatory method is not used, the only reference to this adjustment is contained within the regulatory method section of the statutory guidance.

In order demonstrate prudence, ensure compliance with the statutory guidance and to be able to demonstrate that the Council is providing for the CFR in full over time with MRP.

### Correction of the overprovision of HRA MRP

The overprovision of MRP in the HRA CFR of -£9.050m will be made in line with the general approach to making HRA MRP, which will be an annuity asset life method over the average asset life of other assets in the HRA which is 50 years. This will ensure that the HRA CFR is written down to zero over time.

### Revised MRP Policy Statement

The MHCLG Guidance requires the Authority to approve an Annual MRP Statement each year and recommends a number of options for calculating a prudent amount of MRP. The following statement incorporates options recommended in the Guidance

- For capital expenditure incurred before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 MRP will be determined on an annuity basis using the PWLB certainty rate at the date of the policy change (1<sup>st</sup> April 2024) assuming a remaining life of 42 years.
- For capital expenditure incurred after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, MRP will be determined by charging the expenditure over the expected useful life of the relevant asset on an annuity basis using the PWLB certainty rate for the remaining asset life at the date of the policy change, starting in the year after the asset becomes operational. MRP on purchases of freehold land will be charged over 50 years. MRP on expenditure not related to fixed assets but which has been capitalised by regulation or direction will be charged over 20 years.
- For PFI assets where the asset passes to the Council at the end of the contract or the Council continues to receive service benefit from the assets beyond the life of the contract

MRP will be determined over the remaining life of the assets on an annuity basis using the PWLB certainty rate for the remaining life at the time of the policy change.

- For assets acquired by leases or the Private Finance Initiative (where the asset does not pass to the Council at the end of the contract or the Council does not receive service benefits beyond the life of the contract) , MRP will be determined as being equal to the element of the rent or charge that goes to write down the balance sheet liability.
- For capital expenditure loans to third parties, the Authority will make nil MRP unless (a) the loan is an investment for commercial purposes and no repayment was received in year or (b) an expected credit loss was recognised or increased in-year, but will instead apply the capital receipts arising from principal repayments to reduce the capital financing requirement instead. In years where there is no principal repayment on loans that are investments for commercial purposes, MRP will be charged in accordance with the MRP policy for the assets funded by the loan, including where appropriate, delaying MRP until the year after the assets become operational.
- No MRP will be charged in respect of non- PFI assets held within the Housing Revenue Account but depreciation on those assets will be charged instead in line with regulations.
- MRP on transferred debt is provided for on an annuity basis in line with schedules sent to the Council from the Lead authority administering the debt.

Capital expenditure incurred during 2024/25 will not be subject to a MRP charge until 2025/26 or later.

Based on the Authority's capital financing requirement (CFR) at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, the charges for MRP under the revised and previous MRP policies is shown below:

	31/03/2024 CFR (£000)	Existing 24/25 MRP (£000)	Proposed 24/25 MRP (£000)	Difference (£000)
Pre -2008 Supported Borrowing	116,337	2,742	805	1,937
Asset Life MRP	158,530	7,701	5,876	1,825
Loans	9,677	0	0	0
PFI Schemes & Finance leases	193,857	11,654	1,897	9,757
Transferred Debt	27	5	5	0
Adjustment A	19,602	0	137	-137
HRA CFR	-9,050	0	-41	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>488,980</b>	<b>22,102</b>	<b>8,680</b>	<b>13,422</b>

### Overall MRP Payment Profile

The profile of total MRP payments expected over the next 50 years under both policies is shown in the table below:

	1-10 years (£000)	11-20 years (£000)	21-30 years (£000)	31-40 years (£000)	41-50 years (£000)	Total (£000)
Current Policy	243,626	127,553	47,851	42,663	7,057	468,751
Revised Policy	97,306	112,351	102,981	102,527	64,138	479,303
Saving (Cost)	<b>146,320</b>	<b>15,202</b>	<b>-55,130</b>	<b>-59,863</b>	<b>-57,081</b>	<b>-10,553</b>

**Overpayments:** In earlier years, the Authority has made voluntary overpayments of MRP that are available to reduce the revenue charges in later years. It is planned to utilise the brought forward amount from 2023/24 in 2024/25 as part of the review of MRP policy.

<b>MRP Overpayments</b>	<b>£m</b>
Actual balance 31.03.2023	4.8
Approved draw down 2023/24	(3.8)
Expected balance 31.03.2024	1
Planned draw down 2024/25	(1)
Forecast balance 31.03.2025	0

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**Report to COUNCIL**

## **Update on Actions from Council**

**Portfolio Holder:** Various

**Officer Contact:** Steve Hughes – Assistant Director of Strategy and Performance

**Report Author:** Peter Thompson - Interim Head of Democratic Services

**18<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

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### **Reason for Decision**

The decision is for Members to note the updates on actions from the Council meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 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 6<sup>th</sup> November 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

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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 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and earlier meetings are available online at:  
<http://committees.oldham.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails>

## 12 **Appendices**

- 12.1 Appendix 1 – Current Position  
Appendices 2 (a-f) and 3 – Correspondence sent and received in relation to Motions.

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## Actions from Council on 6 November 2024

Actions / Issue	Responsible officer	Update	Completed? (✓, X, ●)
<p>Administration Motion 1: Increasing Pension Credit Take-up RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 That the Council launches an Awareness Campaign – to develop a targeted campaign to educate residents about Pension Credit, including its eligibility criteria, application process, and potential benefits.</li> <li>2 That the Council collaborates with Local Organisations to partner with community groups and local charities to disseminate information and assist residents with applications.</li> <li>3 That the Council increases 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.</li> <li>4 That the Council 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.</li> </ol>	<p>Acting Chief Executive</p>	<p>1 The Council launched a pension credit campaign in early October. The focus of the campaign is threefold – increasing awareness amongst potential claimants and their friends and family, reducing any stigmas of claiming and to support residents to make an application ahead of the cut-off to claim Winter Fuel Allowance on 21 December.</p> <p>Over 5000 leaflets have been distributed to council and partner organisations and have been placed in buildings including Libraries, Town Halls and GP surgeries. We have also posted key campaign materials on social media channels, targeted at those over pension credit age.</p> <p>2. In November the Council and Age UK jointly wrote to 179 residents who from our records were likely eligible to receive pension credit and 309 within £1k above the threshold for claiming.</p> <p>The council's Welfare Rights Team have provided training on pension credits to Action Together.</p> <p>In late November to early December the council's Helpline team made a follow-up phone call to each resident who received a letter. The Helpline team asked whether a resident had received a letter and provided additional information about claiming. They made referrals into our District Teams who have provided one to one home visits to complete an application with a resident. As part of the call, the Helpline Team also undertook a Winter Welfare check with a focus on making sure</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>

		<p>no pensioner living in Oldham on a low-income goes cold or hungry this winter. Multiple referrals have been made to Warm Homes Oldham to support with fuel costs and winter warm packs and to Citizens Advice and the Support and Inclusion Team to support with personal budgeting and income maximisation. The team have also made foodbank referrals and have issued emergency support to access food and essentials through supermarket vouchers.</p> <p>Cllr Jabbar, Cllr Dean, Cllr Taylor and Cllr Mushtaq have all visited the Helpline Team to listen in to some of the outbound calls made and digital communications have been developed following on from the visits to continue to raise awareness of applying for pension credit.</p> <p>3. Pension Credit applications can be made over the phone and on paper and sent by post as well as completing online. Paper forms have been printed for residents to collect from the Customer Service Centre and we have also posted forms for residents to complete at a pace that suits them. Engagement Officers from the District Teams have received training and have provided additional capacity to support with applications. All requests for support have been met with a minimum of 22 visits to date with residents to support a digital application to be made.</p> <p>4. We are closely monitoring the impact of the campaign and will report back to the council within 6 months sharing the impact of our support. The phone calls we have made and home visits to complete applications have been much valued from residents. The Helpline team have received fantastic feedback with residents particularly grateful for the support received and linkage into wider council and partner services to support this winter.</p>	
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<p>Administration Motion 2: Supporting Kinship Carers (as amended) RESOLVED: The Council resolves to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Become a Kinship Friendly Employer as soon as is practicable, working towards achieving the Gold Standard.</li> <li>Record its thanks to all those who provide Kinship Care and mainstream Foster Care in Oldham.</li> <li>Make sure the policy will have adequate financial support to implement all the aforementioned policies that the Council should already be adhering to and that a report will be made available at the next Council meeting on the implementation of this policy.</li> </ul>	<p>Strategic Director of Children’s Services</p>	<p>1 &amp; 4 - The statutory guidance has been reviewed and process commenced of completing the Kinship Local Offer. Corporate Parenting Panel in January will receive an information report, with a Kinship Local Offer published on the Council website by March 2024. This will be a whole system offer with contributions across the partnership and all areas of Children’s Services. In addition, financial support, respite, training and therapeutic support will be key features. Alongside developing the Kinship Local Offer, the service will provide policy reviews on foster carer Skills and Allowances and the Special Guardianship Order Policy.</p> <p>2 - The Local Authority is a Foster Friendly Employer which includes Kinship carers. Officers attended a launch event for GM authorities celebrating all councils being Fostering Friendly. The service is listed on The Fostering Network website confirming our approval as a Fostering Friendly employer. Gold standard offer on kinship.org is being achieved by the service and under continual review.</p> <p>3 - Thanks to carers have been recorded.</p>	<p>☑</p>
<p>Opposition Motion 1: Stop the Winter Fuel Payment Cuts (as amended) RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council agrees to re-confirm its resolution to launch a targeted Awareness Campaign to maximise the uptake of Pension Credit; to collaborate with local organisations to inform and to assist residents with applications; to identify and prioritise staff to help residents complete application; and to monitor and report on the effectiveness of the campaign.</li> </ul>	<p>Acting Chief Executive</p>	<p>Letters forwarded to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and to the three MP’s who represent the Borough in Parliament, following Council on 6th November and awaiting replies.</p>	<p>⊙</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council request that the Acting Chief Executive be authorised to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to express Council’s view that the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt should be reviewed and a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered. Council further requests the Acting Chief Executive write to the Borough of Oldham’s three MPs asking them to give their formal support to a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered.</li> </ul>			
<p>Opposition Motion 2: The Budget Challenge (as amended) RESOLVED: This Council resolves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To request that the Leader of the Council write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to congratulate her on being the first woman to deliver a budget in the history of our country.</li> <li>• That the Acting Chief Executive be requested to write to Oldham’s three MP’s asking them to give their support to a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments be considered.</li> <li>• 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, including implementing the agreed Awareness Campaign.</li> </ul>	<p>Leader of the council</p> <p>Acting Chief Executive</p> <p>Acting Chief Executive</p>	<p>The Leader of the Council wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the 12/11/24 as instructed by Council. The Acting Chief Executive wrote to Oldham’s three MPs as instructed by Council</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>Opposition Motion 3: Immediate Ceasefire in Gaza (as amended)</p>		<p>A letter has been forwarded to the Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer MP, in line with the resolutions passed by Council on 6th November and a reply is awaited</p>	<p>✓</p>



<p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Council calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, urging all parties involved to halt hostilities, prioritise the protection of civilian lives and the immediate release of the Israeli hostages taken on 7th October 2023.</li> <li>• That the Council support the rapid entry of humanitarian aid to address the urgent needs of the population affected by the ongoing conflict.</li> <li>• That the Council support the UK Government’s decision to withdraw export licences to Israel, preventing equipment that would be used in the conflict in Gaza from reaching the front line</li> <li>• That the Council condemn the decision by the Israeli Knesset to ban the UNWRA from operating in Israeli controlled territory, including Gaza, the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem, noting that this has been met with widespread international condemnation, including from the United States government and the Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer.</li> <li>• That the Council condemn both Hamas and Hezbollah for their terrorist attacks on civilians and the taking of hostages by Hamas on October 7th 2023 and support calls from the international community to lay down arms and instead work with international partners to reach a diplomatic solution that safeguards innocent civilians in Lebanon, Palestine and Israel.</li> <li>• That, furthermore, the council requests that the Chief Executive write to the Prime Minister, urging the UK government to:</li> </ul>	<p>Acting Chief Executive</p>		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-iterate calls for an immediate Ceasefire in both Gaza and Lebanon and work with international partners to achieve this.</li> <li>• Facilitate the rapid entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza and Lebanon.</li> <li>• Continuously review export licences for international Arms Sales and suspend any that could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of International Humanitarian Law.</li> </ul> <p>Through these actions, the council seeks to contribute to the restoration of peace and the protection of human rights in the region.</p>			
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### Actions from Council on 11 September 2024

Actions / Issue	Responsible officer	Update	Completed? (✓, X, ●)
<p>Youth Council Motion: Holiday Activities and Food Programme (As amended)</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Letters were forwarded to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Health and the Secretary of State for Education on 16th September 2024</p>	<p>✓</p>

<p>Administration Motion 1: Strengthening the Online Safety Act</p> <p>RESOLVED: This Council resolves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• To write to the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation &amp; Technology to ask that his department:</li> <li>• Undertake a review of the Online Safety Act to identify areas for improvement.</li> <li>• Strengthen enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance and increase penalties for violations.</li> <li>• Provide resources and training for parents, schools, and third sector organisations to help them protect and guide children in the digital world.</li> <li>• Ensure victims of online abuse and crimes are supported.</li> </ul>	Chief Executive	<p>Letter wrote to the secretary of state</p> <p>Letter from Baroness Maggie Jones Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Department for Science, Innovation &amp; Technology</p>	✓
<p>Administration Motion 2: A Welcome Start to Delivering the New Deal for Workers</p> <p>RESOLVED: This Council resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 To lobby for support for the Employment Rights Bill.</li> <li>2 To request that the Chief Executive write to the Borough's three MPs, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Secretary of State for</li> </ol>	Chief Executive	<p>The Chief Executive wrote to the three Oldham MPs, Deputy Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Business and Trade as instructed by Council</p> <p>Government response received from Justin Madders MP Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Minister for Employment Rights, Competition and Markets (Appendix 2c)</p>	✓

<p>Business and Trade, reaffirming our support for the New Deal for Workers.</p> <p><b>3</b> To promote awareness of the New Deal for Workers in Oldham through our communication channels.</p> <p><b>4</b> To encourage local businesses to adopt the principles of the New Deal for Workers voluntarily, ahead of any legislative changes.</p>			
<p>Opposition Motion 1: Two Child Benefit Cap (As amended)</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Chief Executive be instructed to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister welcoming:</li> <li>• The development of a Child Poverty Strategy including reviewing the impact of both the two-child limit and the family benefit cap.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Ensure the number of children a family has is considered when a hardship grant is given out by the council.</li> <li>• Explore ways to support families impacted by the two-child limit across Oldham Borough, including through free school meals.</li> </ul>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>The Chief Executive wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Prime Minister and the three Oldham MPs as instructed by Council.</p> <p>Response from the Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP Minister of State for Social Security and Disability</p>	<p>✓</p>



<p>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.</p>			
<p>Opposition Motion 4: Graves in Oldham Cemeteries</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• That the Council implements and publicises a clear procedure that provides those seeking their loved ones, a professional, sensitive and transparent process.</li> <li>• Provides relatives with a dedicated point of contact who can support and assist people in this traumatic time.</li> </ul>	<p>Director of Environment</p>	<p>Actions requested have been completed by the Director of Environment. Benches are to be installed to commemorate unmarked graves.</p> <p>Burial records continue to be digitised, all adult burial records both in private and communal graves are available to view on line, stillborn baby records are being currently digitised and will be completed next year, burials of stillbirths going back to 1940's have been digitised so far.</p> <p>Signs have been erected at each cemetery entrance, on notice boards, informing residents how they can research deceased relatives, either online or via contacting the cemetery office.</p> <p>The manager of ARCC has agreed to be a single point of contact for any calls. ARCC can be contacted on 0161 770 7777 option 2. We have to manage expectation of the callers so if there is a request for support we will signpost accordingly.</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>Opposition Motion 5: Collective Spirit Free School</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>The Chief Executive wrote to the Secretary of State for Education as instructed by Council.</p> <p>Response from Catherine McKinnell MP, Minister for school Standards (Appendix 2d)</p>	<p>✓</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>To offer the inquiry any support or resources as requested by the DfE.</li> </ul>			
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## Actions from Council on 10 July 2024

Actions / Issue	Responsible officer	Update	Completed? (✓, X, ●)
Administration Motion 1: A voice for those affected by Child Sexual Exploitation in Oldham RESOLVED that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>	Chief Executive	The Chief Executive wrote to the Home Secretary as instructed by Council Response from Jess Phillips MP Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls (Appendix 2e)	✓

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>			
<p>Administration Motion 2: Get Veterans Moving More RESOLVED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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 Armed Forces.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<p>Director of Public Health</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>The Chief Executive wrote to the Secretary of Defence as instructed by Council.</p> <p>The Director of Public Health is in discussion with OCL to explore the options on concessionary membership for veterans of the Armed Forces</p> <p>Response from ALISTAIR CAIRNS OBE MC MP Minister for Veterans and People (Appendix 2f)</p>	<p>●</p>
<p>Opposition Motion 1: Removing Oldham Borough from Places for Everyone (as amended) RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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).</li> <li>That on the back of the workshop, Council requests that the relevant council officers to requested to present a thorough and full report</li> </ul>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive – Place</p>	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive, with support from other officers ran an all-member briefing as requested by Council.</p> <p>A paper was presented to 6<sup>th</sup> November 24 council and was considered by Council.</p>	<p>✓</p>



<p>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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That should the request be approved Oldham Council' withdraw engagement and support for the defence of the judicial review of 'Places for Everyone'.</li> <li>• That if the Plan is revoked the Green Belt boundaries should be restored to their pre-adoption state.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>			
<p>Opposition Motion 3: Extend Burial Times in Oldham Cemeteries (As amended)</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring forward a pilot scheme at cemeteries across the Borough to explore the possibility of further extending operational hours</li> <li>• Determine the appropriate tariff, using the data from the pilot scheme, ensuring it covers the operational costs while remaining affordable.</li> <li>• Following the outcome of the pilot scheme the Council will further resolve:</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• To continue to meet the needs of residents of all faiths and none, that cemeteries in the</li> </ul>	<p>Director of Environment</p>	<p>The Director of Environment has undertaken all of the recommendations requested in the resolutions as instructed by Council</p>	<p>✓</p>

<p>Metropolitan Borough of Oldham will continue to offer same day burials seven days a week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To continue to remain in dialogue with Oldham Mosques Council, and other representatives of Oldham’s faith communities, regarding changes to burial charges.</li> </ul>			
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### Actions from Council on 13 March 2024

Actions / Issue	Responsible officer	Update	Completed? (✓, X, ●)
<p>Labour Motion 1(as amended): This Council calls for a lasting peace in Palestine and Israel</p> <p>RESOLVED: This Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Condemns the terror attacks carried out by Hamas on 7th October 2023 and the taking of hostages.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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</li> </ul>	<p>Director of Communities</p>	<p>Councils noted all the asks within this motion and the council continues to work closely with the Oldham Interfaith Forum and Community Safety Partnership</p>	<p>✓</p>

<p>viable Palestinian state, the two states living side by side in peace and security.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Resolves to support the Oldham Interfaith Forum and Community Safety Partnership to combat any incidents of Islamophobia and antisemitism in Oldham.</li> <li>• Supports diplomatic efforts to ensure rapid and unimpeded humanitarian relief is provided in Gaza.</li> <li>• Regrets that previous attempts to pass a ceasefire resolution at the UN Security Council have failed.</li> <li>• Believes an Israeli ground offensive in Rafah risks catastrophic humanitarian consequences and must not take place.</li> </ul>			
<p>Liberal Democrat Motion 1 (as amended) Save Oldham Coliseum Theatre RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<p>Director of Economy</p>	<p>Completed refurbishment works are now actively on site at Fairbottom Street as we move towards the facility being open for the 2025 pantomime season. This includes the appointment of our main contractor, Tilbury Douglas who have demonstrated a passion, drive and track record for the restoration and protection of historical buildings including Diggle Clock Town and the Old Library.</p> <p>Running alongside this, the Council continues to work alongside the wider Oldham Cultural Partnership to identify and pursue all applicable funding opportunities both to support the physical works but also in respect of the future of performing theatre within the Town. A key component of this work is the establishment of Culture Co-operative model which will see the flexible use of resource across the borough helping to deliver a sustainable delivery model both now and into future</p>	<p>✓</p>

<p>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>			
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### Actions from Council on 13 December 2023

Actions / Issue	Responsible officer	Update	Completed? (✓, X, ●)
<p>Youth Council Motion: Unused Stationery Within the Council and its Partners</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• That the Council work with Oldham Youth Council to create packs containing essential stationery items and help us distribute them to schools.</li> </ul>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>The Chief Executive wrote to all management board and partner organisations - MioCare, Greater Manchester Police, NHS, Action Together, positive steps, OCL, and Greater Manchester Fire Service).</p> <p>Internally in the council, linked to the move to Spindles, a stationary amnesty was completed and items given to the Youth Council</p>	<p>✓</p>

<p>Labour Motion 2: Boys Need Bins RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• To encourage other providers of public and workplace toilets in our area to make male sanitary bins available in their facilities.</li> <li>• To support Prostate Cancer UK's 'Boys need Bins' campaign.</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<p>Leader of the Council</p>	<p>The Leader has committed that as a council we're committed to supporting Prostate Cancer UK's campaigns on this issue.</p> <p>In Spindles, provisions have been made to provide sanitary bins in male toilets.</p> <p>In October 24, the council also opened new Changing Place across district town halls which are fully accessible toilets for people with disabilities and additional needs. These facilities also have sanitary bins available.</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>Liberal Democrat Motion (as amended) 20 is Plenty RESOLVED: Council resolves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive – Place</p>	<p>An all party working group was established to explore this issue in more detail. The group is meeting.</p>	<p>✓</p>

<p>national guidelines, and Community Speedwatch initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>			
<p>Conservative Motion: Community First Aid</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Council commits to support the vision for Community First Aid by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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 &amp; 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</li> </ul>	<p>Director of Communities</p>	<p>The District Offices are liaising and engaging with relevant charitable and voluntary organisations to ensure that the resolutions of Council are being carried out fully.</p>	<p>●</p>

<p>emergency preparedness, resilience, and response exercises at local level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Empowering young people to strengthen community resilience by supporting the expansion of St. John’s Ambulance NHS Cadets and Young Responder programmes.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Requesting the Leader of the Council, as the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Member for Equalities &amp; Communities, to circulate this to her colleagues at GMCA so that they may seek to commit to these actions in their Local Authorities too.</li> </ul>			
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**Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP**  
**Chancellor of the Exchequer**  
**HM Treasury**  
**1 Horse Guards Road**  
**London**  
**SW1A 2HQ**

**Cllr Arooj Shah**  
Leader of Oldham Council  
Room 347, Civic Centre,  
West Street, Oldham,  
OL1 1UL  
Tel: 0161 770 5738

Dear Rachel,

**Re: Congratulations from Oldham Council**

I am delighted to see you in this historic role, you have always been a personal role model for me, at a meeting of Oldham Council on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024, an amendment to a motion was agreed and one of the resolutions was that I would write to you to congratulate you on being the first woman to serve as Chancellor of the Exchequer and thus deliver a budget.

Council noted your commitment to delivering a budget that restores stability, protects working people, fixes the NHS and rebuilds Britain. As well as fixing the foundations of our economy following fourteen years of failed Conservative austerity and restoring fiscal responsibility after Conservative economic mismanagement including Liz Truss' 2022 mini budget.

Council also noted that the first Labour Budget in 14 years delivered:

- A pay rise for 3 million workers
- A freeze on fuel duty
- New funding to deliver an extra two million NHS operations, scans and appointments a year.
- No tax increases for working people.
- £30million for breakfast clubs.
- £240million package to Get Britain Working again.
- £1.4billion to rebuild 500 schools.
- £500m investment to build thousands of new social homes.
- £1billion boost to the Household Support Fund.
- £1.3billion extra funding for Local Government, including £600m for social care.
- An increase in the state pension by up to £470.
- The biggest increase to Carer's Allowance eligibility since its introduction.
- 40% relief on business rates for hospitality and leisure sectors.
- Non-dom tax status abolished.
- £500million to fix roads and fill potholes.
- Increased the employment allowance to support small businesses.
- A crack down on fraud, waste and tax avoidance.

Thank you for delivering a budget that focuses on the needs of working people, growing our economy, and investing in our public services.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arooj Shah', written over a light grey grid background.

Cllr Arooj Shah  
Leader of Oldham Council  
Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham  
Labour Councillor for St Mary's Ward  
Email: [arooj.shah@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:arooj.shah@oldham.gov.uk)



Department for  
Science, Innovation  
& Technology

## Appendix 2b

Baroness Maggie Jones  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
Department for Science, Innovation &  
Technology  
100 Parliament Street  
London SW1A 2BQ

[www.gov.uk/dsit](http://www.gov.uk/dsit)

18 November 2024

Councillor Harry Catherall  
[harry.catherall@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:harry.catherall@oldham.gov.uk)

Our Ref: MC2024/15230/NR

Dear Councillor Catherall,

Thank you for your correspondence of 16 September to the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, the Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP, regarding the Online Safety Act. I am responding as the Minister for the Future Digital Economy and Online Safety and apologise for the delay in you receiving a response.

The government is committed to tackling all forms of hate crime. We have robust legislation in place to deal with threatening, abusive, or harassing behaviour and incitement to hatred, including laws to tackle perpetrators who stir up racial and religious hatred and hatred based on sexual orientation.

Hate crime is listed as a “priority offence” in the Online Safety Act 2023 (“the act”). These priority offences ensure that companies and the regulator tackle the most serious illegal content where risk of harm is greatest or children are at risk so that regulation has the most impact. Under new legal duties, technology companies will need to put in place systems and processes to proactively prevent, identify, and remove priority illegal content and activity online. This includes taking proactive measures to reduce the likelihood of the most serious content from appearing on platforms in the first place. They will also need to have systems and process to take down other illegal content when they become aware of it. This means less illegal content, including content that incites hate on the grounds of race, religion, or sexual orientation, will appear online and, when it does, it will be removed more effectively.

Under the act, companies will also be forced to take action against illegal misinformation and disinformation. This means they will be required to take steps to remove illegal disinformation if they become aware of it on their services. This includes the False Communications Offence, which captures communications where the sender knows information to be false but sends it intending to cause harm.

The government funds an online hate crime reporting portal that was designed so that victims of all types of hate crime do not have to visit a police station to report. The government also funds the National Online Hate Crime Hub which supports individual local police forces in dealing specifically with online hate crime, the Hub provides expert advice to police forces to support them in investigating these abhorrent offences.

Our immediate focus is getting the act implemented quickly and effectively, to ensure the protections it brings are put in place as soon as possible. It is right that the government continually assesses the law’s ability to keep up, especially where technology moves so fast, which is why there is a duty within the act to assess how the framework is minimising the risk of harm to UK citizens once the regime is in force. However, our message to social media companies remains clear: there is no need to wait, they can, and should, take immediate action to protect their users.

Making the internet safer requires a broad toolkit, using the act to ensure platforms take steps to minimise harmful content online, but also ensuring both children and adults have the knowledge and skills to navigate the online world. Media literacy, which includes understanding that online actions have offline consequences, being able to engage critically with online information, and being able to contribute to a respectful online environment, can help tackle a wide variety of online safety issues for all internet users, including children.

The act updated Ofcom's statutory duty to promote media literacy, placing targeted duties on the regulator to raise the public's awareness of the nature and impact of harmful content, misinformation and disinformation. These duties are already in force. Under the act, Ofcom is also required to pursue, commission, or encourage other organisations to deliver media literacy initiatives and activities.

The government has also established an independent Curriculum and Assessment Review that will consider the key digital skills needed for future life, as well as the critical thinking skills needed to ensure children are resilient to misinformation and extremist content online.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely,

*Maggie Jones.*

Baroness Maggie Jones  
**Minister for the Future Digital Economy and Online Safety**

Harry Catherall  
Chief Executive, Oldham Council MBC  
Level 3, Civic Centre  
West Street  
Oldham OL1 1UG  
By email: [harry.catherall@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:harry.catherall@oldham.gov.uk)

T: +44 (0) 020 4551 0011  
W: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Our ref: MCB2024/09876

28 November 2024

Dear Harry,

Thank you for your correspondence of 16 October to the Secretary of State, regarding the Employment Rights Bill and the Government's Plan to Make Work Pay. I am responding as this matter falls within my ministerial portfolio.

We have delivered on our commitment to introduce an Employment Bill within 100 days of being in Government and have been pleased with the success of the bill at second reading. This is a comprehensive Bill which, once implemented, will represent the biggest upgrade in employment rights for a generation. It will raise the minimum floor of employment rights, raise living standards across the country and provide better support for those businesses who are engaged in good practices.

The Bill is the first phase of delivering our Plan to Make Work Pay, supporting employers, workers, and unions to get Britain moving forward. Some parts of Make Work Pay will take longer to develop and implement. The Next Steps to Make Work Pay provides an overview of the Government's approach to delivery:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/next-steps-to-make-work-pay](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/next-steps-to-make-work-pay).

**The Government's plan to Make Work Pay is a core part of the mission to grow the economy, raise living standards across the country and create opportunities for all.**

This sits alongside work on planning reform, kickstarting a skills revolution, a modern industrial strategy and a plan to tackle inactivity.

Just as Government is committed to working in partnership with businesses, trade unions and other stakeholders to deliver our mission on growth, so too are we committed to doing so on the plan to Make Work Pay. The process on these reforms will be no different. We have already begun engaging in a tripartite way ahead of the introduction of this Bill, and these reforms will continue to be delivered in partnership.

The Government will undertake a comprehensive consultation process before legislation comes into effect. We will set out a timetable for consultation in due course and I encourage you to share your views.

I hope you find this information useful and thank you once again for your support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Madders', with a horizontal line underneath.

**JUSTIN MADDERS MP**

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment Rights, Competition and Markets  
Department for Business and Trade

## Appendix 2d



2024-0031800

**Catherine McKinnell MP**  
**Minister for School Standards**

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfes](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfes)

Mr Harry Catherall  
Chief Executive  
Oldham Council  
Email: [harry.catherall@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:harry.catherall@oldham.gov.uk)

5 November 2024

Dear Mr Catherall,

Thank you for your correspondence of 16 September, addressed to the Secretary of State, sharing details of Oldham Council's Motion of 11 September, regarding Collective Spirit Free School. I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

I appreciate you raising the Council's concerns with the department. Your letter has been shared with the relevant officials in the department's North West Regions group.

I have been advised that the ESFA undertook a full investigation into Collective Spirit Free School, which was published in May 2019. While the report found several significant failings in both the governance and financial control arrangements under the trust board, it was unable to reach a conclusion due to the lack of documentation and supporting financial information. To support a further investigation or inquiry, significant new information would be required. Please do confirm if any such significant new information has been made available.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Yours,

**Catherine McKinnell MP**  
**Minister for School Standards**

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Mr Harry Catherall  
Chief Executive, Oldham Council  
Level 3, Civic Centre  
West Street  
Oldham  
OL1 1UG

DECS Reference: MIN/1205645/24

29 October 2024

Dear Mr Catherall,

Thank you for your letter of 17 July to the Home Secretary relating to a public inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Oldham. I am replying as the Minister for Safeguarding and Violence against Women and Girls and I am very sorry for the delay in responding to your letter.

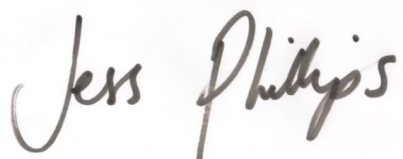
I understand the concerns of Oldham Council regarding the second report of the Greater Manchester Assurance Review, and I recognise the strength of feeling that a further inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Oldham should be undertaken.

Inquiries play an important role in improving our response to child sexual exploitation and abuse. At a national level, the Government is working quickly to identify how we can move forward with delivery of the recommendations in the Final Report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. Beyond that, there are some great examples of independent reviews and inquiries that have been locally commissioned and delivered, such as the Jay inquiry into Rotherham and the more recent Telford inquiry, which have exposed previous failures and driven real change in local frontline services. The success of these inquiries is due, in part, to the commitment shown by the areas in commissioning them, giving them legitimacy from the outset.

That is why I believe it is for Oldham Council alone to decide to commission an inquiry into child sexual exploitation locally, rather than for the Government to intervene. I welcome the Council's resolution to do so, as set out in your letter, and to continue its important work with victims and survivors. Should the Council choose to proceed, I would look forward to the inquiry's findings and ensuring that any lessons that can be learnt to improve the frontline response are adopted at a local and, where applicable, at a national level.

Thank you for taking the time to write to us on this important matter and I wish you every success in your endeavours to improve the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham's response to this horrific crime.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jess Phillips". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Jess Phillips MP**  
**Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls**

## Appendix 2f



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
FLOOR 5, MAIN BUILDING  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2HB

Tel: 020 7218 9000 (switchboard)

**ALISTAIR CARNS OBE MC MP**  
Minister for Veterans and People

Our ref: POA2024/19373

28 October 2024

Dear Mr Catherall,

Thank you for your letter of 17 July 2024 to the Secretary of State for Defence, on behalf of Oldham Council, regarding discounted gym/leisure passes for veterans. I am responding as the Minister for Veterans and People. I am sorry for the length of time it has taken to respond to you.

I was pleased to learn that the Oldham Council is seeking ways of supporting the Oldham veteran population and I am grateful for the work you and Oldham Council are doing in this sphere. Veterans' well-being is a priority and we appreciate that their fitness is of importance to their physical and mental health.

I am aware that some local authorities do offer concessionary rates to their own leisure facilities, to both members of the armed forces and veterans, and I welcome any support that is provided. I must advise, however, that there are currently no plans to offer free or reduced gym membership subscriptions to veterans nationally.

We will continue to work with officials from the Office for Veterans' Affairs to explore options for improving the support available to our veteran community, including those which promote health and wellbeing.

I am sorry to send what will come as a disappointing reply, but I hope this explains the position.



**ALISTAIR CARNS OBE MC MP**

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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 style with a horizontal line above the name.

**Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP**  
**Minister of State for Social Security and Disability**



## COUNCIL

### **Municipal Calendar 2025/26**

**Officer Contact:** Interim Borough Solicitor

**Report Author:** Peter Thompson, Constitutional Services

**18<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

---

#### **Reason for Decision**

This report sets out the draft calendar of meetings for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

#### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

1. The Council's calendar of meetings for 2025/26 be approved, as set out at Appendix 1.
2. Approval of any outstanding dates or changes to dates be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with Group Leaders.

## **Council Calendar 2025/26**

### **1 Background**

1.1 This report sets out the draft Calendar for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

### **2 Options/Alternatives**

2.1 The Council is entitled to amend any of the dates in the calendar but should note it is required to approve a version of the calendar at its annual meeting.

### **3 Preferred Option**

3.1 To approve the calendar as set out in Appendix 1.

### **4 Consultation**

4.1 Consultation has taken place with relevant officers and elected members.

### **5 Financial Implications**

5.1 n/a

### **6 Legal Implications**

6.1 There are no legal implications.

### **7 Equality Impact, including Implications for Children and Young People**

7.1 N/A.

### **8 Key Decision**

8.1 No

### **9 Key Decision Reference**

9.1 N/A

### **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:

Council's calendar of meetings 2023/24 and 2024/25

Peter Thompson - email [peter.thompson@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:peter.thompson@oldham.gov.uk)

Level 3, Civic Centre



20     **Appendices**

20.1   Appendix 1 – Draft Council Calendar 2025/26

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# **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS**

**28 APRIL 2025 - 31 MAY 2026**

**MAY, 2025**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
			1	2
5 Bank Holiday	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21 12.00 pm Annual Meeting, Council	22	23
26 Bank Holiday School holiday starts	27	28	29	30

**JUNE, 2025**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
2 School holiday ends  3.30pm Leadership  6.00pm Mandatory Training for Planning Committee Members	3 9.30am Licensing Committee	4 6.00 pm Planning Committee	5 10.00am Appeals Committee	6
9	10 9.30am Licensing Driver Panel  6.00pm Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board	11	12 6.00pm Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board	13
16 3.30pm Leadership 6.00pm Cabinet	17 9.30am Licensing Panel  6.00pm Children and Young People Scrutiny Board	18 6.00pm Governance Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board	19 10.00am Health and Wellbeing Board 5.30pm Highway Regulation Committee	20

<b>23</b> 6.00pm Charitable Trust Committee	<b>24</b> 6.00pm Standards Committee	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 2.00pm Joint O&S – Northern Care Alliance	<b>27</b>
<b>30</b> 3.30pm Leadership				

## JULY, 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 5.00pm Corporate Parenting Panel	<b>3</b> 10.00am Appeals Committee	<b>4</b>
<b>7</b> 3.30pm Leadership	<b>8</b> 9.30am Licensing Driver Panel	<b>9</b> 6.00 pm Planning Committee	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 9.30am Licensing Panel 2.00pm Employment Committee	<b>16</b> 6.00 pm Council	<b>17</b> 10.00am Health and Wellbeing Board (development session)	<b>18</b>
<b>21</b> School holiday starts 3.30pm Leadership 6.00pm Cabinet	<b>22</b> 6.00pm Children and Young People Scrutiny Board	<b>23</b> 6.00pm Audit Committee	<b>24</b> 6.00pm Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board	<b>25</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 6.00pm Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board	<b>30</b> 6.00pm Governance Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board	<b>31</b> 5.30pm Highway Regulation Committee	

## AUGUST, 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				<b>1</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 6.00 pm Planning Committee	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>18</b> 3.30pm Leadership 6.00pm Cabinet	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>

Bank Holiday

**SEPTEMBER, 2025**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>1</b> School holiday ends	<b>2</b> 9.30am Licensing Driver Panel	<b>3</b> 6.00pm Charitable Trust Committee	<b>4</b> 10.00am Appeals Committee  6.00pm Standards Committee	<b>5</b>
<b>8</b> 3.30pm Leadership	<b>9</b> 9.30am Licensing Panel	<b>10</b> 6.00 pm Planning Committee	<b>11</b> 10.00am Health and Wellbeing Board	<b>12</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 2.00pm Employment Committee	<b>17</b> 6.00 pm Council	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>22</b> 3.30pm Leadership 6.00pm Cabinet	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 5.00pm Corporate Parenting Panel	<b>25</b> 2.00pm Joint O&S – Northern Care Alliance  5.30pm Highway Regulation Committee	<b>26</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 9.30am Licensing Driver Panel  6.00pm Children and Young People Scrutiny Board			

**OCTOBER, 2025**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 10.00am Appeals Committee  6.00pm Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board	<b>3</b>
<b>6</b> 3.30pm Leadership	<b>7</b> 9.30am Licensing Panel  6.00pm Adults Social Care and	<b>8</b> 6.00 pm Planning Committee	<b>9</b> 6.00pm Governance Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board	<b>10</b>

	Health Scrutiny Board			
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>20</b> 3.30pm Leadership 6.00pm Cabinet	<b>21</b> 9.30am Licensing Committee  6.00pm Charitable Trust Committee	<b>22</b> 6.00pm Audit Committee	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>27</b> School holiday starts	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 10.00am Health and Wellbeing Board	<b>31</b>

**NOVEMBER, 2025**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>3</b> School holiday ends 3.30pm Leadership	<b>4</b> 9.30am Licensing Driver Panel	<b>5</b> 6.00 pm Planning Committee	<b>6</b> 10.00am Appeals Committee	<b>7</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 9.30am Licensing Panel	<b>12</b> 6.00 pm Council	<b>13</b> 6.00pm Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board	<b>14</b>
<b>17</b> 3.30pm Leadership 6.00pm Cabinet	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 5.00pm Corporate Parenting Panel	<b>20</b> 5.30pm Highway Regulation Committee	<b>21</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 6.00pm Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 6.00pm Children and Young People Scrutiny Board	<b>28</b>

**DECEMBER, 2025**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>1</b> 3.30pm Leadership 6.00pm Cabinet (Budget)	<b>2</b> 9.30am Licensing Driver Panel  2.00pm Employment Committee	<b>3</b> 6.00pm Standards Committee	<b>4</b> 10.00am Health and Wellbeing Board (development session)  6.00pm Governance Strategy	<b>5</b>

	6.00pm Charitable Trust Committee		and Resources Scrutiny Board	
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 9.30am Licensing Panel	<b>10</b> 6.00 pm Council	<b>11</b> 10.00am Appeals Committee	<b>12</b>
<b>15</b> 3.30pm Leadership 6.00pm Cabinet	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 6.00 pm Planning Committee	<b>18</b> 2.00pm Joint O&S – Northern Care Alliance	<b>19</b>
<b>22</b> School holiday starts	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Bank Holiday	<b>26</b> Bank Holiday
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>		

## JANUARY, 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			<b>1</b> Bank Holiday	<b>2</b>
<b>5</b> School holiday ends 3.30pm Leadership	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 9.30am Licensing Driver Panel	<b>14</b> 6.00 pm Planning Committee	<b>15</b> 10.00am Health and Wellbeing Board  6.00pm Children and Young People Scrutiny Board	<b>16</b>
<b>19</b> 3.30pm Leadership 6.00pm Cabinet	<b>20</b> 9.30am Licensing Panel  6.00pm Charitable Trust Committee	<b>21</b> 5.00pm Corporate Parenting Panel	<b>22</b> 10.00am Appeals Committee  6.00pm Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board	<b>23</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 6.00pm Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board	<b>28</b> 6.00pm Governance Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board	<b>29</b> 5.30pm Highway Regulation Committee	<b>30</b>



**FEBRUARY, 2026**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 6.00pm Audit Committee	<b>5</b> 6.00pm Governance Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board	<b>6</b>
<b>9</b> 3.30pm Leadership 6.00pm Cabinet (Budget)	<b>10</b> 9.30am Licensing Driver Panel	<b>11</b> 6.00 pm Planning Committee	<b>12</b> 10.00am Appeals Committee	<b>13</b>
<b>16</b> School holiday starts	<b>17</b> 9.30am Licensing Panel	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>23</b> School holiday ends 3.30pm Leadership 6.00pm Cabinet	<b>24</b> 9.30am Licensing Committee	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 2.00pm Joint O&S – Northern Care Alliance	<b>27</b>

**MARCH, 2026**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 9.30am Licensing Driver Panel  2.00pm Employment Committee	<b>4</b> 6.00 pm Council (Budget)	<b>5</b> 10.00am Health and Wellbeing Board  6.00pm Standards Committee	<b>6</b>
<b>9</b> 3.30pm Leadership	<b>10</b> 9.30am Licensing Panel  6.00pm Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board	<b>11</b> 6.00 pm Planning Committee	<b>12</b> 10.00am Appeals Committee  6.00pm Children and Young People Scrutiny Board	<b>13</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 6.00pm Charitable Trust Committee	<b>18</b> 6.00 pm Council	<b>19</b> 6.00pm Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board	<b>20</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>

3.30pm Leadership 6.00pm Cabinet	6.00pm Governance Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board	5.00pm Corporate Parenting Panel  6.00pm Audit Committee	5.30pm Highway Regulation Committee	
<b>30</b> School holiday starts	<b>31</b>			
<b>APRIL, 2026</b>				
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 10.00am Appeals Committee	<b>3</b> Bank Holiday
<b>6</b> Bank Holiday	<b>7</b> 9.30am Licensing Driver Panel	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>13</b> School holiday ends	<b>14</b> 9.30am Licensing Panel	<b>15</b> 6.00 pm Planning Committee	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	
<b>MAY, 2026</b>				
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
				<b>1</b>
<b>4</b> Bank Holiday	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Elections	<b>8</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 12.00 pm Annual Meeting, Council	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>25</b> Bank Holiday	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>



**Report to COUNCIL**

## **GAMBLING POLICY**

**Portfolio Holder:**

Councillor Taylor, Cabinet Member for Housing & Licensing

**Officer Contact:** Nasir Dad, Director of Environment

**Report Author:** John Garforth, Service Manager, Licensing

**18 December 2024**

---

### **Reason for Decision**

The reason for this report is to update members following a review of the Council's Gambling Policy and to seek approval of the update policy.

### **Recommendations**

That Members approve the attached policy and agree its implementation from January 2025.

## GAMBLING POLICY

### 1 Background

1.1 The Gambling Act 2005 (The Act), created a new system of licensing and regulation for commercial gambling in England. Amongst other changes, The Act gave local authorities new and extended responsibilities for licensing premises for gambling and associated permissions.

1.2 In setting its local policy, the Council must show it will seek to promote the licensing objectives under the Act which are:

- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime and disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime;
- Ensuring gambling is conducted in a fair and open way; and
- Protecting children and other vulnerable people from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

1.3 The role of the licensing authority covers:

- Being responsible for the licensing of premises where gambling activities are to take place by issuing a Premises Licence
- Issuing Provisional Statements
- Regulating members' clubs and miners' welfare institutes who wish to undertake certain gaming activities via issuing Club Gaming Permits and/or Club Machine Permits
- Issuing Club Machine Permits to Commercial Clubs
- Granting permits for the use of certain lower stake gaming machines at unlicensed Family Entertainment Centres
- Receiving notifications from alcohol licensed premises (under the Licensing Act 2003) for the use of two or fewer gaming machines
- Issuing licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permits for premises licensed to sell/supply alcohol for the consumption on the licensed premises, under the Licensing Act 2003, where there are more than two machines.
- Registering small society lotteries below prescribed thresholds
- Issuing Prize Gaming Permits
- Receive and Endorse Temporary Use Notices
- Receiving Occasional Use Notices
- Providing information to the Gambling Commission regarding details of licenses issued
- Maintaining registers of the permits and licenses

---

## 2 **Current Position**

2.1 The current policy was adopted in January 2022 and has to be reviewed every three years by law. The proposed policy can be found at Appendix 1.

2.2 The content of the policy centres around the regulatory responsibilities of both operators and the Council; specifically, how the Council administers the gambling system. This includes:

- General principles of the Gambling Act 2005
- Determining licences
- Relevant factors to consider
- Specific considerations for business types
- Permits and permissions

2.3 The Gambling Act defines which statutory bodies are to be consulted on a new premises application, and these are:

- Gambling Commission
- Greater Manchester Police
- GM Fire & Rescue
- Planning Authority
- Environmental Health
- Safeguarding Partnership
- HMRC
- The Licensing Authority

2.4 Significant attention has been paid to the public health concerns surrounding gambling addiction in the revised policy. Data suggests that in Oldham there are around three thousand problem gamblers and nine thousand at risk gamblers. A Greater Manchester Gambling Harm Reduction Strategy has been compiled with funding allocated to support pathways and research.

## 3 **Options/Alternatives**

3.1 There are no alternative options, other than to approve a policy which the local authority must have in place under the Act.

- 
- 4        **Consultation**
- 4.1      The proposed policy was shared with all responsible authorities under the Act, together with a range of operators covering the different licensed regimes.
- 4.2      Responses were received from Public Health and the Fire Service who suggested some amendments which have been incorporated into this final version.
- 5        **Financial Implications**
- 5.1      Not applicable
- 6        **Legal Implications**
- 6.1      The Gambling Policy Statement sets out the principles the Council proposes to apply in exercising its functions under the Gambling Act during the three year period covered by the Statement. Under section 153 of the Gambling Act, the Council should aim to permit the use of premises for gambling in so far as the Council think it in accordance with the Gambling Policy Statement, any relevant code of practice or guidance issued by the Gambling Commission, and it is reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives.  
(A. Evans)
- 7        **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**
- 7.1      Yes
- 8        **Key Decision**
- 8.1      No
- 9        **Key Decision Reference**
- 9.1      N/A
- 10      **Background Papers**
- 10.1     Draft policy for consultation and the responses received.
- 11      **Appendices**
- 11.1     Appendix 1 – Proposed Gambling Policy 2025

# Licensing Policy

## Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005



**Oldham**  
Council

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# 1. Foreword

- 1.1 In Greater Manchester we are thinking differently about gambling with a shared aim to prevent and reduce the negative impacts of gambling on individuals, families and communities. As part of our innovative public service reform and population health agenda we are working with partners across Greater Manchester. The Greater Manchester Gambling Related Harms Board has been funded via a regulatory settlement from the Gambling Commission and has the following priorities:
- Developing our understanding of gambling related harms
  - Improving access to high quality treatment and support
  - Supporting interventions to prevent gambling from becoming a harmful activity
  - Engaging with people and communities to co-design our work
- 1.2 This policy reflects collaboration across Greater Manchester with, for the first time, a joint Statement of Gambling Principles approved at local level.
- 1.3 This statement of Policy in relation to the Gambling functions that this Authority regulates sets out the approach that will be taken when dealing with permissions it grants and enforces thereafter.
- 1.4 It also identifies how the Authority will seek to promote the licensing objectives under the Act, namely: -
- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime and disorder or being used to support crime.
  - Ensuring gambling is conducted in a fair and open way.
  - Protecting children and other vulnerable people from being harmed or exploited by gambling.
- 1.5 The Greater Manchester Gambling Harm Reduction Programme aims to prevent harm from arising and to ensure that the individuals, families and communities experiencing harm as a result of gambling have access to the right treatment and support.
- 1.6 The Greater Manchester model “doing things differently” means integrating policies around people, places and their needs, focusing on prevention, developing new models of support and sharing information to design and deliver better services. Working across disciplines will provide the skills to understand gambling harm, recognise it and signpost specialists where required.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 As the licensing authority, we are required to perform the following functions under the Gambling Act:
- 1) Be responsible for licensing premises where gambling activities are to take place by issuing premises licences
  - 2) Issue provisional statements where it is proposed that gambling activities will take place but a premises is not yet ready for use
  - 3) Regulate members' clubs and miners' welfare institutes who wish to undertake certain gaming activities by issuing club gaming permits and/or club machine permits
  - 4) Issue club machine permits to commercial clubs
  - 5) Issue permits for unlicensed Family Entertainment Centres where Category D machines may be used
  - 6) Receive notifications from premises licensed for on-sales of alcohol for use of two or fewer Category C or D gaming machines
  - 7) Issue licensed premises gaming machine permits for premises licensed for on-sales of alcohol for use of two or more Category C or D machines
  - 8) Register small society lotteries
  - 9) Issue prize gaming permits
  - 10) Receive and endorse Temporary Use Notices for temporary use of premises for gambling
  - 11) Receive Occasional Use Notices for betting at tracks
- 2.1. 'Gambling' is defined in the Act as either gaming, betting or taking part in a lottery.
- 2.2. 'Gaming' means playing a game for the chance to win a prize.
- 2.3. 'Betting' means making or accepting a bet on:
- the outcome of a race, competition or other event
  - the likelihood of anything occurring or not occurring
  - whether anything is true or not.
- 2.4. A 'Lottery' is where participants are involved in an arrangement where prizes are allocated wholly by a process of chance.
- 2.5. The responsibility for regulating gambling is shared between the Gambling Commission and local authorities. The Gambling Commission is responsible for issuing operating licences to organisations and individuals who provide facilities for gambling and personal licences to persons working in the gambling industry. The Commission takes the lead role on ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way through the administration and enforcement of operating and personal licence requirements. The Commission is also responsible for remote gambling activities such as facilities provided via the internet, television or radio.

2.6. We are also required to:

- Provide information to the Gambling Commission regarding details of licences issued
- Maintain a register of the permits and licences that are issued under the functions above which can be found via our website at [www.oldham.gov.uk/licensing](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/licensing)

2.7. The Council has a responsibility under the Gambling Act 2005 to decide whether to grant or reject applications and in the case of premises licence applications to decide any conditions to apply where the decision is taken to grant. All decisions made by the licensing authority in relation to premises licences (and some other authorisations – see specific sections for details) are based on the Act, relevant guidance, Codes of Practice, our Gambling Policy and the three licensing objectives. These objectives are:

- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime
- Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way
- Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

2.8. In the case of premises licences (and some other authorisations – see specific sections for details), the licensing committee will permit gambling only so far as it is reasonably consistent with these three objectives.

### **Publication of this Policy**

2.9. Licensing authorities have a requirement to develop, consult on, and publish a statement of licensing policy every three years with regards to the principles they propose to apply in exercising functions under the Gambling Act 2005.

2.10. The policy statement forms the licensing authority's mandate for managing local gambling provision and sets out how the licensing authority views the local risk environment and therefore its expectations in relation to operators with premises in the locality.

The authority is one of the 10 Metropolitan Districts of Greater Manchester. In Greater Manchester we have a shared aim in reducing gambling related harms, our approach focuses on preventing gambling harms from occurring, as well as improving how we support our residents who are already experiencing harms, either directly or as a result of someone else's gambling. The renewal of licensing policies presents an opportunity for local authorities to embed these principles. Licensing leads across Greater Manchester have agreed to take a common approach to refreshing gambling licensing policies.

**This policy was approved on the 18 December 2024 and comes into effect on the 17 January 2025.**

Description of the Area

- 2.11. The authority is one of the ten Metropolitan Districts of Greater Manchester. The Borough of Oldham occupies an area of 56 square miles to the northeast of Manchester. About one third of the Borough consists of the area occupied by the majority of town's 242,000 residents (2021 census). Another third of the Borough consists of moorland, which is largely uninhabited. The final third consists of small rural towns and villages.
- 2.12 Oldham currently has a range of premises that offer gambling facilities which can be seen in the table below. This data is correct as of August 2024.

<b>Licence / Permit Type</b>	<b>Number</b>
Bingo Hall	1
Adult Gaming Centre	4
Betting Premises	21
Family Entertainment Centre	0
Club Machine Permits	13
Gaming Machine Permits	20
Automatic Entitlements (machines in pubs)	157

### **3. General principles**

- 3.1 In making decisions on premises licences, the licensing authority shall aim to permit the use of premises for gambling in so far as it thinks it:
- In accordance with any relevant code of practice issued by the Gambling Commission;
  - In accordance with any relevant guidance issued by the Gambling Commission;
  - Reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives; and
  - In accordance with the authority's statement of licensing policy
- 3.2 As the licensing authority, we will regulate gambling in the public interest, which will be reflected in this policy statement.
- 3.3 This policy statement does not undermine the right of any person to make representations on an application or to seek a review of a licence where provision has been made for them to do so.
- 3.4 This policy does not override anybody's right to make an application, make representations about an application, or apply for a review of a licence.
- 3.5 Each application will be considered on its merits in accordance with the requirements of the Gambling Act and without regard to demand.

#### **Other regulatory regimes**

- 3.6 The licensing authority will avoid duplication with other regulatory regimes, so far as possible. A range of general duties are imposed on the self-employed, employers and

operators of gambling premises, both in respect of employees and of the general public, by legislation governing health and safety at work and fire safety. Therefore, such requirements do not need to be included in the policy statement.

## **Responsible Authorities**

- 3.7 Responsible Authorities are generally public bodies that must be notified of all applications and who are entitled to make representations to the Council if they are relevant to one or more of the licensing objectives.
- 3.8 Section 157 of the Act defines those authorities. For this area they are: -
- The Gambling Commission
  - Greater Manchester Police
  - Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue
  - The Planning Authority
  - The authority which has functions in relation to pollution to the environment or harm to human health
  - Oldham Safeguarding Partnership
  - HM Revenue and Customs
  - The Licensing Authority.
- 3.9 The contact details of all the Responsible Authorities are available are set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.10 The licensing authority has designated the Oldham Safeguarding Partnership as the body that is competent to advise it about the protection of children from harm. The principles that have been used in making this designation is that the board is:
- responsible for the whole of the licensing authority's area
  - answerable to democratically elected persons

## **Gambling Related Harm & Public Health**

- 3.11 The Greater Manchester Gambling Related Harms Board was responsible for commissioning the Greater Manchester Strategic Needs Assessment (GM SNA) on gambling related harms which was published in May 2022. The estimated prevalence of 'problem gambling' within the adult population is 0.5% in the United Kingdom (UK). This increases to 0.8% in Greater Manchester i.e., 18,100 adults. This rate is 1.5 times higher than the national average. GM residents are more likely to experience 'problem gambling' which may be attributed to having a younger population, higher levels of social and economic exclusions and/or greater participation in more harmful gambling products. The average Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) score among people accessing specialist treatment services in Greater Manchester is 24 (out of a maximum 27). This suggests that only the most severely affected individuals are actively seeking support. Early intervention and prevention will require an active concerted effort.
- 3.12 In the UK, 3.8% of the adult population are identified as 'at-risk' gamblers, meaning they experience some level of negative consequences due to their gambling. This figure increases to 4.3% (97,400) for GM residents, with 3.5% classified at 'low' risk and 0.8% at 'moderate risk'. Young people aged 16-24 years have the highest prevalence of 'at

risk' gambling despite having the lowest participation in gambling. When indicators of harm are used, 1.7% of the GM population (38,500 residents) report experiencing harms as a direct result of their gambling. (A perhaps useful comparison is that 1.7% of GM residents experience alcohol dependency). Men (5.9%), have higher rates of gambling harms than women (0.7%), with 1 in 20 men who gamble, reporting that they experience harm as a direct result of their participation in gambling.

- 3.13 For every individual person directly affected by their own gambling, an average of six others are indirectly affected. This may be children, partners, parents, friends, or colleagues who experience harms in a comparable way to the person who gambles. Locally, this means that 1 in 15 GM residents are experiencing the harmful impacts of gambling.
- 3.14 GM SNA analysis suggests that the gambling prevalence in Oldham 1,500 adults experience 'problem gambling', 9,800 adults are 'at risk'; and 14,400 people experiencing gambling related harms This is likely to be a conservative estimate of true prevalence. Although based statistically robust samples, this analysis is reliant upon self-reported data and excludes some population groups (e.g., students and those experiencing housing instability). Furthermore, we know that services which interact with people who may be experiencing gambling related harms are unlikely to ask questions or report whether gambling could have been a contributing factor in a presenting issue, for example, housing providers, health services, police and probation services.
- 3.15 Possible reasons for people gambling are thought to include:
- Quick route to wealth
  - Psychological triggers used in design of gambling products
  - Advertising and marketing
  - Engraining of gambling in culture
  - Normalisation of gambling in sport
  - A social activity and source of entertainment
  - Age-related milestone and life events
  - Limited enforcement
  - Proximity to gambling venues
- 3.16 The PHE Gambling Evidence Review highlights the fact that people at the greatest risk of harm from gambling are more likely to be unemployed, living in more deprived areas, have poor health, low life satisfaction and wellbeing, and have an indication of probable psychological health problems. There was some evidence that particular populations, such as migrant communities and people with learning disabilities are at more risk of harm. Research suggests that people living in the most deprived communities are nearly twice as likely to participate in gambling and are seven times more likely to experience problem gambling, compared with those living in the least deprived communities. Greater Manchester residents who participate in gambling are three times more likely to need to use a foodbank, with a quarter of those who gamble reporting they go without food because of a lack money.
- 3.17 Participation in gambling by people from communities' experiencing racial discrimination is lower; however, evidence suggests they bear a disproportionate burden of harms and severity of harm. More detailed analysis is needed to understand the specific reasons for this; but differences in cultural beliefs may be one of the reasons, particularly where

participation in gambling may be considered “taboo” and result in shame, stigma, and social exclusion. Prevalence of gambling is higher among members of the armed forces community, with military veterans ten times more likely to experience a gambling disorder or addiction.

- 3.18 Anyone who gambles is at risk of harm, however if they are experiencing multiple disadvantages such as homelessness, poor mental health, unemployment etc. they are more likely to experience the harmful impacts of gambling. Gambling may not be the sole cause of harm but can make existing inequalities and disadvantages worse.
- 3.19 Currently, the proportion of children aged 11–16 years who participate in gambling is estimated to be 11%. Although lower than those drinking alcohol (16%), it is higher than smoking tobacco cigarettes (6%) or taking illegal drugs (5%). The proportion of children and young people in Greater Manchester who report that they have gambled in the last 12 months was 36%. Participation in gambling is higher among older children (14–16-year-olds), and boys are twice more likely to gamble than girls. Supporting 11-25 year olds in Oldham will be especially important as we have a high young population.
- 3.20 Electronic gaming (fruit and slot) machines were often identified as the first experiences of gambling among children and young people. National Lottery, scratch cards and placing private bets with friends were the most common forms of gambling reported. As young people got older there was a significant increase in online gambling among boys. There is a growing link between gaming and gambling with features such as “loot boxes” and in-game trading thereby normalising gambling behaviour within games more frequently played by young people.
- 3.21 Professionals working with children and young people report a possible link between gambling and “Adverse Childhood Experiences” (ACES). A child living in a home where adults gamble may experience periods of financial difficulty, domestic abuse, emotional neglect and these experiences can be inconsistent and unpredictable, as the mood and domestic situation may reflect adults gambling activity and whether gambling adults had “won” or “lost”.
- 3.22 Gambling related harms are complex and will be experienced differently, dependent upon individual circumstances. Gambling may be the sole cause of harms or make existing inequalities and disadvantages worse. The types of harms associated with gambling are listed below, and although they are categorised individually, they are frequently interlinked.
- Financial harms: the most commonly reported harm which includes debt (including issues with loan sharks etc), asset losses, bankruptcy, financial hardship including debt which causes homelessness frequently will impact families.
  - Mental and physical health harms: the second most commonly reported harm including addictive and compulsive behaviours, depression and anxiety, stress, sleep deprivation and exhaustion. The relationship between gambling and mental health is complex and is linked to suicide ideation.
  - Relationship harm: this can include relationship disruption, conflict or breakdown, loss of trust, neglect of responsibilities, violence and other forms of domestic abuse.
  - Criminal activity: crimes associated with gambling may include theft, damage to property in licensed premises, threatening behaviour and fraud.



- Employment and education: gambling can lead to reduced performance at work or in education and can result in increased absenteeism, stress, underachievement, theft and fraud.
  - Cultural harms: gambling is considered to be unacceptable in some cultures and communities and is a 'taboo' subject. Therefore, gamblers and their close associates may experience additional harm related to shame, stigma or isolation which may make it difficult for them to seek help. Conversely, gambling may be 'normalised' in some communities/families and the associated harms can be intergenerational.
- 3.23 The PHE Evidence review found a clear association between gambling at all levels of harm and increased alcohol consumption, which was greater for 'at risk' and 'problem gambling.'
- 3.24 There is an established link between gambling addiction and suicide attempts and ideation. Suicidal events are at least twice as likely among adults experiencing problems with gambling. Greater Manchester Police (GMP) respond to at least one incident each week where serious concern has been raised of a risk of suicide directly associated with gambling. It is estimated that between 240 -700 people take their own life every year in England related to gambling, however gambling is not currently recorded as a relevant factor to deaths by suicide by coroners. Suicide risk and suicide prevention should be considered where gambling harms are identified.
- 3.25 Awareness of gambling harms as an emerging public health problem has increased in recent years, however Public Health are not a responsible authority under the Gambling Act 2005. Nonetheless, the licensing authority will consult the Director of Public Health on all premises licence applications and will advise the Director of Public Health to consider the use of the Gambling Commission's toolkit for public health and safeguarding: <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/for-licensing-authorities/Licensingauthority-toolkit/Public-health-and-Safeguarding-toolkit.aspx>
- 3.26 Greater Manchester has a gambling harms reduction programme (which aims to reduce the harms caused by gambling to the population. Licence applicants and holders will be expected to show how they are actively protecting the local population from gambling harms with their processes and operations, and consider how the location, opening hours and promotion of their activities can minimize opportunities for harm to the vulnerable groups listed above.
- 3.27 The licensing authority recognises that local authority public health teams can offer insights from those impacted by gambling harms and offer contextual information about treatment and support in the local area and can add value to the licensing application process where there are concerns raised about risk of harm to vulnerable groups locally.
- 3.28 Greater Manchester's gambling harms reduction programme is listening to residents with lived experience of gambling and is commissioning its own research to better understand gambling harms in the region. The details of this program can be found here: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/gambling/> As findings from this research emerge, licence holders will be expected to support the delivery of recommendations to help minimise gambling harms to the local populations. An action plan which has local involvement from all local authorities in GM, including Oldham, can

be found here <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/8479/20230925-gm-gambling-harms-action-plan-vfinal.pdf>.

## **Support services**

### **Chapter One**

3.29 Chapter One has the info to help you understand the causes of gambling harm. It will also show where to get the right help. This help is free from gambling industry funding and influence.

### [Chapter One](#)

### **The NHS Northern Gambling Service**

3.30 The NHS has clinics specifically to help. They're easy to access and confidential. The team will provide information and support at every step.

3.31 Some, including the NHS Northern Gambling Service, also support the loved ones of people with a gambling addiction. This includes family, partners, and carers.

- [Northern Gambling Service](#)
- T: 0300 3001490
- E: [referral.ngs@nhs.net](mailto:referral.ngs@nhs.net)

### **GaMHive**

3.32 GaMHive raises awareness. It reduces the stigma of gambling harm in Greater Manchester.

3.33 They work together and guide those experiencing GRH. This includes gamblers and affected others. They guide them to support and guidance groups. They also advocate for lasting policy change locally and nationally.

- [www.gamhive.co.uk](http://www.gamhive.co.uk)
- E: [info@gamhive.co.uk](mailto:info@gamhive.co.uk)

## **Gamblers Anonymous**

3.34 Gamblers Anonymous is a group of men and women. They share their experience, strength, and hope. They do this so they can solve their common problem and help others do the same.

3.35 Gamblers Anonymous offers many aids for the compulsive gambler. These include a forum, a chat room, literature, and, most importantly, a meeting finder.

3.36 Meetings are the core of Gamblers Anonymous and they have meetings every day of the week.

3.37 For more information and to find a meeting visit:

- [Gamblers Anonymous](#)

## **Beacon Counselling Trust**

3.38 Beacon Counselling Trust is in the Northwest of England. It offers free, tailored support and education to those affected by gambling harms. This help includes 121 therapy, couples therapy, practical help, and long-term recovery support.

- [Beacon Counselling Trust](#)
- T: 0151 226 0696
- E: [support@beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk](mailto:support@beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk)

## **Determining whether a person is an interested party in relation to a premises licence, or an application for or in respect of a premises licence**

4 For the purposes of the Gambling Act, an 'interested party' is:

- a) Someone who lives sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be affected by the gambling premises
- b) Has business interests that might be affected by the authorised activities
- c) Represents persons who satisfy paragraph (a) or (b)

4.1 Whether or not a person is an 'interested party' is ultimately the decision of the Licensing Authority which issues the licence or to which the application is made.

4.2 To determine who lives 'sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be affected by the gambling premises', we will consider the following on a case-by-case basis:

- The size of the gambling premises
- The nature of the gambling premises
- The distance of the premises from the address of the person making the representation
- The potential impact of the premises (number of customers, routes likely to be taken by those visiting the premises)
- the circumstances of the person who lives close to the premises. This is not their personal characteristics, but their interests which may be relevant to the distance from the premises e.g. 'sufficiently close to be likely to be affected' could have a different meaning for (a) a private resident (b) a residential school for children with truanting problems and (c) a residential hostel for vulnerable adults
- The 'catchment' area of the premises (i.e. how far people travel to visit it).

4.3 Having a 'business interest' will be given the widest possible interpretation and include community and voluntary groups, schools, charities, faith groups and medical practices. The licensing authority will consider the following factors relevant when determining whether a person's business interests may be affected:

- The size of the premises
- The 'catchment' area of the premises (i.e. how far people travel to visit it)
- whether the person making the representation has business interests in the affected catchment area

4.4 In so far as who represents persons who satisfy paragraphs (a) or (b), this would include for example:

- i. Residents' associations and tenants' associations
- ii. Trade associations and trade unions
- iii. Any other person with written permission from somebody who satisfies paragraph (i) or (ii)
- iv. Local councillors and MPs

**Exchange of information between the licensing authority and the Gambling Commission (s29 and s30 of GA2005), and the exchange of information between the licensing authority and other persons listed in Schedule 6 of the Act (s350 of GA2005)**

4.5 The licensing authority may share application information received in the course of processing applications with the Gambling Commission, a constable or police force, an enforcement officer, another Licensing Authority, her Majesty's Commissioners of Customs & Excise, The First Tier Tribunal, The Secretary of State or Scottish Ministers.

- 4.6 We will abide by the Freedom of Information Act and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in its safeguarding/release of information or data.
- 4.7 In the context of the Gambling Act, we will retain only that information which relates to the processing of applications for licences, permits, permissions and representations. Applications and representations in respect of applications are both in the public domain and are therefore available on request and may be published as part of our web register. Personal addresses/contact numbers attached with representations may also be released. Information may also be shared with other Gambling Act regulators or other parties prescribed by the Secretary of State.
- 4.8 Licensing authorities have statutory duties to notify the Commission as well as the applicant and other responsible authorities of the grant/rejection of applications (new, variations, transfers etc) as well as the revocation, surrender or lapse of a premises licence using the correct statutory forms.
- 4.9 We will inform the Gambling Commission without delay if:
- The Licensing Authority receives information that causes it to question the suitability of the person holding/applying to hold an operating licence
  - There are persistent or serious disorder problems that an operator could or should do more to prevent, so that the Commission may consider the continuing suitability of the operator to hold an operating licence
  - If it comes to our attention that: alcohol-licensed premises or clubs or institutes are playing bingo during the course of a week which involves significant stakes and prizes and makes it possible that the £2,000 in seven days is being exceeded.
- 4.10 The licensing authority will act in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance from the Commission and will adopt the principles of better regulation.

**Functions of the licensing authority under Part 15 of the GA2005 with respect to the inspection of premises and the power under s346 of the Act to institute criminal proceedings in respect of the offences specified in that section**

- 4.11 Our principal enforcement role under the Gambling Act is to ensure compliance with the conditions of the premises licence and legal requirements in respect of other permissions the licensing authority regulates. However, we will also ensure that any unlicensed premises which are operating illegally are dealt with appropriately to ensure compliance. Where appropriate, we will work with the Gambling Commission in our enforcement activity. The Council will adopt a risk-based inspection and enforcement programme, which will mean giving greater attention to high-risk premises and a lighter touch for low-risk premises. In all cases we will ensure our inspection and enforcement programme is operated in accordance with any codes of practice issued by the Gambling Commission, in accordance with the Government's Enforcement Concordat and the Compliance Code.
- 4.12 The Council will take account of the Gambling Commission's guidance document published in April 2021 (or any subsequent amendments) 'Approach to Test Purchasing' when considering making test purchases at gambling premises. The Council will also follow its own policies and procedures regarding the use of underage test purchasers.
- 4.13 This licensing authority will be guided by the Gambling Commission's Guidance for local authorities and will endeavour to be:

Proportionate	regulators should only intervene when necessary: remedies should be appropriate to the risk posed, and costs identified and minimised
Accountable	regulators must be able to justify decisions, and be subject to public scrutiny
Consistent	rules and standards must be joined up and implemented fairly
Transparent	regulators should be open, and keep regulations simple and user friendly
Targeted	regulation should be focused on the problem, and minimise side effects

4.14 Where there is a Primary Authority scheme in place, the Council will seek guidance from the Primary Authority before taking any enforcement action. At the time of the publication of this policy there were seven Primary Authority arrangements with host local authorities:

Operator	Primary Authority local authority
BACTA	Reading
Coral Racing	Milton Keynes
Ladbrokes	Milton Keynes
Paddy Power	Reading
Rank Group	City of Westminster
Sky Betting & Gaming	Wakefield
William Hill	Reading

4.15 Further information, including an index of all Primary Authority arrangements can be found at <https://primaryauthorityregister.info/par>

### **Commenting on a licence application**

4.16 If 'interested parties' (see below for definition) or 'responsible authorities' wish to comment on an application for a premises licence relating to the licensing objectives, they can make a 'representation'. The Licensing Authority can only consider representations if made by either an 'interested party' or 'responsible authority'.

4.17 A representation is a statement that outlines any comments that the party making the representation wants to be taken into consideration by the Licensing Authority when determining the application. In all cases representations will need to be 'relevant'. The only representations likely to be relevant are those that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Relate to the licensing objectives
- Relate to relevant matters in our gambling policy
- Relate to relevant matters in the Gambling Commission's Guidance to Local Authorities
- Relate to relevant matters in the Gambling Commission's Codes of Practice
- Relate to the premises that are the subject of the application
- Are neither frivolous nor vexatious nor will certainly not influence the authority's determination of the application.

## **Factors that will not be relevant**

- 4.18 Any objections to new premises or requests for a review should be based on the licensing objectives of the Act. Unlike the Licensing Act 2003, the Act does not include the prevention of public nuisance as a specific licensing objective.
- 4.19 The licensing authority will not take into account representations that are:
- repetitive, vexatious or frivolous
  - from a rival gambling business where the basis of the representation is unwanted competition
  - moral objections to gambling
  - concerned with expected demand for gambling
  - anonymous
- 4.20 Details of applications and representations referred to a licensing sub- Committee for determination will be published in reports that are made publicly available and placed on the Council's website in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Personal details will however be removed from representations in the final website version of reports.
- 4.21 Names and addresses of people making representations will be disclosed to applicants and only be withheld from publication on the grounds of personal safety where the licensing authority is specifically asked to do so.

## **Split Premises**

- 4.22 The Licensing Authority will always give the closest consideration to whether a sub-division has created separate premises meriting a separate machine entitlement. The Authority will not automatically grant a licence for sub- divided premises even if the mandatory conditions are met, particularly where the Authority considers that this has been done in order to sidestep controls on the number of machines which can be provided in a single premise. The Authority will consider if the sub-division has harmed the licensing objective of protecting the vulnerable. The Authority may also take into account other relevant factors as they arise on a case-by-case basis.

## **Premises “ready for gambling”**

- 4.23 A licence to use premises for gambling will only be issued in relation to premises:
- that the Authority can be satisfied are going to be ready to be used for gambling in the reasonably near future, consistent with the scale of building or alterations required before the premises are brought into use
  - where they are expected to be used for the gambling activity named on the licence.
- 4.24 If the construction of a premises is not yet complete, or if they need alteration, or if the applicant does not yet have a right to occupy them, then an application for a provisional statement should be made instead.

- 4.25 In deciding whether a premises licence can be granted where there are outstanding construction or alteration works at a premises, this authority will determine applications on their merits, applying a two-stage consideration process: -
- 1) Whether the premises ought to be permitted to be used for gambling
  - 2) Whether appropriate conditions can be put in place to cater for the situation that the premises are not yet in the state in which they ought to be before gambling takes place.
- 4.26 Applicants should note that this Authority is entitled to decide that it is appropriate to grant a licence subject to conditions, but it is not obliged to grant such a licence.
- 4.27 When dealing with a premises licence application for finished buildings, the licensing authority will not take into account:
- whether those buildings have to comply with the necessary planning or building consents;
  - fire or health and safety risks.
- 4.28 Those matters should be dealt with under relevant planning control, building and other regulations (such as The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005), and must not form part of the consideration for the premises licence.
- 4.29 It is noted that s.210 of the Act prevents licensing authorities taking into account the likelihood of the proposal by the applicant obtaining planning or building consent when considering a premises licence application. Equally, the grant of a gambling premises licence does not prejudice or prevent any action that may be appropriate under the law relating to planning or building.

### **Applications and plans**

- 4.30 The Gambling Act (s51) requires applicants to submit plans of the premises with their application, in order to ensure that the Licensing Authority has the necessary information to make an informed judgement about whether the premises are fit for gambling. The plan will also be used for the Authority to plan future premises inspection activity.
- 4.31 It is the local authority's policy that it will expect applicants for new premises licences and variations to provide a plan showing the indicative layout of the premises including, but not limited to:
- Machines, specified by category
  - Staff counters
- 4.32 We consider that this information is appropriate, in conjunction with the premises' risk assessment, to effectively assess the provision of gambling facilities at the premises. Where this information is not provided, it is more likely that a representation will be made in order to enable the licensing authority to accurately assess the likely effect of granting the application relative to the Licence conditions and code of practice and licensing objectives.
- 4.33 The premises plan in itself is only one means by which the licensing authority may seek reassurance that the requirements will be met. It may be that conditions attached to the



premises licence regarding lines of sight between the counter and the gaming machines, staffing arrangements or security devices are a more effective method of doing so. Local circumstances and concerns and the layout of a particular premises may well determine what is most appropriate for an individual application.

## **Tracks**

- 4.34 Plans for tracks do not need to be in a particular scale but should be drawn to scale and should be sufficiently detailed to include the information required by regulations. Some tracks may be situated on agricultural land where the perimeter is not defined by virtue of an outer wall or fence, such as point-to-point racetracks. In such instances, where an entry fee is levied, track premises licence holders may erect temporary structures to restrict access to premises. In the rare cases where the outer perimeter cannot be defined, it is likely that the track in question will not be specifically designed for the frequent holding of sporting events or races. In such cases betting facilities may be better provided through occasional use notices where the boundaries of the premises do not need to be defined.
- 4.35 This authority appreciates that it is sometimes difficult to define the precise location of betting areas on tracks. The precise location of where betting facilities are provided is not required to be shown on track plans, both by virtue of the fact that betting is permitted anywhere on the premises and because of the difficulties associated with pinpointing exact locations for some types of track.
- 4.36 Applicants should provide sufficient information that this authority can satisfy itself that the plan indicates the main areas where betting might take place. For racecourses in particular, any betting areas subject to the “five times rule” (commonly known as betting rings) must be indicated on the plan.

## 5 Determining Premises Licences

### How the Licensing Authority decides whether to grant or refuse an application

- 5.1 Where we receive an application for a gambling premises licence, we will aim to permit the use of premises for gambling where it is considered:
- a) In accordance with any relevant code of practice issued by the Gambling Commission
  - b) In accordance with any relevant guidance issued by the Gambling Commission
  - c) Reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives (subject to a and b) and
  - d) In accordance with this policy (subject to a – c).
- 5.2 The Licensing Authority has no discretion to either grant or refuse premises licences in circumstances that would mean departing from the above e.g. the committee cannot reject applications on moral grounds.
- 5.3 Each case will be decided on its merits.
- 5.4 The Licensing Authority will not have regard to any demand issues for the premises.
- 5.5 Where an area has known high levels of organised crime the licensing authority will consider carefully whether gambling premises are suitable to be located there and whether conditions may be suitable such as the provision of door supervisors.
- 5.6 Rather than reject applications outright, wherever possible the Licensing Authority will look to work with gambling premises and tackle concerns with licence conditions that uphold the licensing objectives. However, where there are reasons why granting a licence would not be consistent with (a) - (d) above, the application will normally be refused.
- 5.7 In accordance with the Guidance from the Gambling Commission, we will circulate 'clear and comprehensive' reasons for any decision to all parties. We will also cite the extent to which decisions have been made in accordance with the Council's gambling policy and the Guidance from the Gambling Commission.

### How the licensing committee decides what conditions to apply to premises licences

- 5.8 Premises Licences may be subject to any or all of the following:
- Conditions specified in the Gambling Act 2005
  - Conditions specified in the regulations issued by the Secretary of State
  - Conditions attached by Oldham Council's Licensing Committee following a hearing (where necessary).
- 5.9 With respect to conditions, licensing authorities are able to:
- Issue licences without modifying conditions set out in the Act and by the Secretary of State
  - Exclude default conditions

- Attach conditions where it is believed to be appropriate
- Conditions may be general in nature (i.e. they attach to all licences of a particular premises type e.g. all casinos) or they may be specific to a particular licence.

5.10 We will ensure that any conditions we impose are:

- Proportionate to the circumstances which they are seeking to address
- Relevant to the need to make the proposed building suitable as a gambling facility
- Directly related to the premises and the type of licence applied for
- Fairly and reasonably related to the scale and type of premises
- Reasonable in all other respects.

5.11 There are also conditions, which the licensing authority cannot attach to premises licences:

- Conditions on a premises licence which make it impossible to comply with an operating licence condition
- Conditions relating to gaming machine categories, numbers, or method of operation
- Conditions that require membership of a club or body. (The Gambling Act specifically removes the membership requirement for casino and bingo clubs and this provision prevents it being reinstated)
- Conditions relating to stakes, fees, winnings or prizes
- Conditions relating to demand for the premises.

5.12 Decisions about conditions will be taken on a case-by-case basis considering Gambling Commission guidance, Gambling Commission Codes of Practice, the Licensing Objectives and our policy.

### **Determining whether to review a licence**

5.13 After a licence is granted, where the day to day operation of a gambling premises is not felt to be 'reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives', a review of the premises licence can be requested at any time.

5.14 A review may be initiated by the Licensing Authority or as a result of an application for review from an interested party or responsible authority. Where it is the Licensing Authority that initiate the review, they may do this for a whole class of premises e.g. all Adult Gaming Centres or in relation to particular premises. The Licensing Authority can review a licence for any reason it thinks appropriate.

5.15 Where an application for review is received from an interested party or responsible authority, as a licensing authority we must decide whether to go ahead with the review. The application for review will be considered based on the following:

- Does the request raise issues other than those found under the Gambling Commission's Guidance, Codes of Practice, the Licensing Objectives or our gambling policy?
- Is it irrelevant, frivolous or vexatious?
- Is it so minor that the authority will certainly not wish to revoke or suspend the licence or remove, amend or attach conditions?
- Is it substantially the same as a previous application for review relating to the same premises?

- Is the application for review substantially the same as a representation made at the time the application for a premises licence was considered?
- 5.16 If the answer to ANY of the above questions is 'yes', the request for review may be rejected. The purpose of the review is to determine if the licensing committee should take any action in relation to the licence. If action is needed, the options are to either:
- Revoke the premises licence
  - Suspend the premises licence for a period not exceeding three months
  - Exclude a default condition imposed by the Secretary of State (relating to, for example, opening hours) or remove or amend such an exclusion
  - Add, remove or amend a licence condition previously imposed by the Licensing Authority
- 5.17 To decide what action, if any, needs to be taken following an application for review, the licensing committee will make its determination:
- In accordance with any relevant code of practice issued by the Gambling Commission
  - In accordance with relevant guidance issued by the Gambling Commission
  - In so far as it is reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives
  - In accordance with the authority's statement of licensing policy
- 5.18 The committee will also consider any relevant representations and information given at the hearing. Codes or practice and the guidance referred to above may be obtained from the Gambling Commission.

## **6 Relevant factors when considering applications and reviews**

- 6.1 In considering applications for new gambling licences, variations to existing licences and licence reviews the licensing authority will consider the following matters:
- the location of the premises
  - the Local Area Profile
  - the Local Risk Assessment (LRA)
  - the views of responsible authorities
  - the views of interested parties
  - compliance history of current management
  - the hours of operation
  - the type of premises
  - the operation of the premises in accordance with the expectations of the licensing authority, as set out in this policy
  - the physical suitability of the premises
  - the levels of crime and disorder in the area
  - the level of deprivation and ill health in the area
- 6.2 The Licensing Authority believes that this list is not exhaustive and there may be other factors which may arise that could be considered relevant. The Licensing Authority will consider the relevance of any additional factors raised on a case-by-case basis.

### **Location of the premises**

- 6.3 The location of the premises will be an important factor as it can impact on all three of the licensing objectives. The Licensing Authority will consider very carefully applications for premises licences that are located in close proximity to sensitive premises such as:
- Schools, including universities
  - Parks, stations, other transport hubs and places where large numbers of school children might be expected
  - other premises licensed for gambling
  - premises licensed for alcohol
  - children's and vulnerable persons' centres and accommodation
  - youth and community centres
  - health and treatment centres
  - leisure centres used for sporting and similar activities by young persons and/or vulnerable persons
  - religious centres and public places of worship
- 6.4 The Licensing Authority expects each premises to produce and keep on the premises a local risk assessment, covering the areas set out in this policy.

## Gambling related harm

- 6.5 The council, as the Licensing Authority under the Act has a duty to consider applications relating to allowing gambling facilities within the Borough to ensure that they meet the fundamental principles of the Act. In doing so, the authority must balance the needs of business to profit and grow with the potential impact on those who are vulnerable to being exploited or susceptible to gambling related harm. Therefore, the local context in relation to vulnerability to gambling-related harm will be an important consideration.

### Local risk assessments

- 6.6 Licensees are required to undertake a local risk assessment when applying for a new premises licence. Their risk assessment must also be updated:
- when applying for a variation of a premises licence
  - to take account of significant changes in local circumstances, including those identified in a licensing authority's policy statement
  - when there are significant changes at a licensee's premises that may affect their mitigation of local risks.
- 6.7 Licensees must assess the local risks to the licensing objectives posed by the provision of gambling facilities at each of their premises, and have policies, procedures and control measures to mitigate those risks. In undertaking their risk assessments, they must take into account relevant matters identified in the licensing authority's policy statement.
- 6.8 In conducting their risk assessment, the Licensing Authority will expect operators to follow the general principles of risk assessment:
- 1) Identify hazards (think about what may cause harm using the information provided below as a guide and any other matters you consider relevant)
  - 2) Assess the risks (decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how serious it could be. This is assessing the level of risk). Decide:
    - i) Who might be harmed and how
    - ii) What you are already doing to control the risks
    - iii) What further action you need to take to control the risks
    - iv) Who needs to carry out the action
    - v) When the action is needed by
  - 3) Control the risks (Look at what you are already doing, and the controls you already have in place.) Ask yourself:
    - i) Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
    - ii) If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?
  - 4) Record your findings (record your significant findings), including:
    - i) the hazards (things that may cause harm)
    - ii) who might be harmed and how
    - iii) what you are doing to control the risks
  - 5) Review the controls. (You must review the controls you have put in place to make sure they are working.) You should also review them if:
    - i) they may no longer be effective
    - ii) Also consider a review if your workers have spotted any problems or there have been any accidents or near misses.

- iii) to take account of significant changes in local circumstances, including those identified in this policy statement
- iv) when there are significant changes at the premises that may affect your mitigation of local risks
- v) Update your risk assessment record with any changes you make.

6.9 The Licensing Authority considers the following as significant changes at the premises that may affect your mitigation of local risks:

- Staffing changes
- Layout of the premises
- Changes to gaming facilities provided

6.10 The Authority will expect the local risk assessment to consider the urban setting:

- The proximity of the premises to schools
- The commercial environment
- Factors affecting the footfall
- Whether the premises is in an area of deprivation
- Whether the premises is in an area subject to high levels of crime and/or disorder
- The ethnic profile of residents in the area.
- The demographics of the area in relation to vulnerable groups
- The location of services for children such as schools, playgrounds, toy shops, leisure centres and other areas where children will gather
- The range of facilities in the local area such as other gambling outlets, banks, post offices, refreshment and entertainment type facilities
- Known problems in the area such as problems arising from street drinkers, youths participating in anti-social behaviour, drug dealing activity, etc.
- The proximity of churches, mosques, temples or any other place of worship

6.11 The local risk assessment must show how vulnerable people, including people with gambling dependencies, are protected through:

- The training of staff in brief intervention when customers show signs of excessive gambling, the ability of staff to offer brief intervention and how the staffing of premises affects this.
- Information held by the licensee regarding self-exclusions and incidences of underage gambling.
- Arrangements in place for local exchange of anonymised information regarding self-exclusion and gaming trends.
- Gaming trends that may mirror days for financial payments such as pay days or benefit payments.
- Arrangements for monitoring and dealing with underage people and vulnerable people, which may include:
  - dedicated and trained personnel
  - leaflets and posters
  - self-exclusion schemes
  - window displays and advertisements designed to not entice children and vulnerable people.
- The provision of signage and documents relating to games rules, gambling care providers and other relevant information be provided in both English and the other prominent first language for that locality

- The proximity of premises that may be frequented by vulnerable people such as hospitals, residential care homes, medical facilities, doctor surgeries, Council community hubs, addiction clinics or help centres, places where alcohol or drug dependent people may congregate

6.12 The local risk assessment should show how children are to be protected:

- The proximity of institutions, places or areas where children and young people frequent such as schools, youth clubs, parks, playgrounds and entertainment venues such as bowling alleys, cinemas, etc.
- The proximity of places where children congregate such as bus stops, cafes, shops.
- Areas that are prone to issues of youths participating in anti-social behaviour, including activities such as graffiti, tagging, underage drinking etc.

6.13 Other matters that the assessment will include as appropriate: -

- Details as to the location and coverage of working CCTV cameras, and how the system will be monitored.
- The layout of the premises so that staff have an unobstructed view of people using the premises.
- The number of staff that will be available on the premises at any one time. If at any time that number is one, confirm the supervisory and monitoring arrangements when that person is absent from the licensed area or distracted from supervising the premises and observing those people using the premises.
- Where the application is for a betting premises licence, other than in respect of a track, the location and extent of any part of the premises which will be used to provide facilities for gambling in reliance on the licence.

6.14 Such information may be used to inform the decision the Authority makes about whether to grant the licence, to grant the licence with special conditions, or to refuse the application.

6.15 This policy does not preclude any application being made and each application will be decided on its merits, with the onus being upon the applicant to show how the concerns can be overcome.

### **Local Area Profile**

6.16 The Greater Manchester Gambling Harms Reduction programme is listening to residents with lived experience of gambling and is commissioning its own research to better understand gambling harms in the region. The details of this program can be found here: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/gambling/>. As findings from this research emerge, licence holders will be expected to support the delivery of recommendations to help minimize gambling harms to the local populations. This research and evidence will be available online at: [Understanding gambling related harms - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#) and should be referred to in Local Risk Assessments.



## **How the premises will operate consistent with the licensing objectives**

- 6.17 We expect high standards from all gambling premises. Operators will be expected to demonstrate that they have given careful consideration to the licensing objectives and have appropriate measures in place to uphold them.
- 6.18 The following paragraphs indicate the physical and management factors that the licensing authority may take into account when considering applications for new or varied licence applications and reviews. These are not mandatory requirements but should be used as a guide to applicants and licensees as to the sort of arrangements that it should have in place and demonstrate these are in place through their bespoke risk assessment. Where an applicant or licensee can demonstrate that these factors are not relevant, or alternative arrangements are more appropriate, the licensing authority will take these into account.

## **Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime:**

- 6.19 The Gambling Commission play a leading role in preventing gambling from being a source of crime, through maintaining rigorous procedures that aim to prevent criminals from providing facilities for gambling, or being associated with doing so, as a result of the operating licence procedure.
- 6.20 However, as a Licensing Authority, we will take into account any local considerations that may impact with regard to this licensing objective, particularly in respect to the location of the premises, to ensure the suitability of the gambling premises. When considering whether a disturbance was serious enough to constitute disorder, we will have regard to the individual merits of the situation including, but not limited to, whether police assistance was required and how threatening the behaviour was to those who could see or hear it. We acknowledge that the Gambling Commission highlights in its guidance to local authorities that “disorder is intended to mean activity that is more serious and disruptive than mere nuisance”.
- 6.21 Whilst regulatory issues arising from the prevention of disorder are likely to focus almost exclusively on premises licensing, rather than on operating licences, if there are persistent or serious disorder problems that we consider an operator could or should do more to prevent, we will bring this to the attention of the Commission so that it can consider the continuing suitability of the operator to hold an operating licence.
- 6.22 Licensees and applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they have given careful consideration to preventing gambling from being a source of crime and disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime.
- 6.23 In addition to the need to consult a local Crime Reduction Officer, the operators of new premises/premises undergoing a refurbishment should also engage with the police’s architectural liaison unit at the design stage to ensure crime prevention and detection.
- 6.24 We encourage premises to liaise with their Neighbourhood Policing Team to develop relationships at a local level and promote effective communication and co-operation. Additionally, operators are expected to actively support and participate in any local

business partnership schemes, where any such schemes are in operation, and where such schemes are reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives.

6.25 The measures to be considered should include:

- The arrangements in place to control access (preventing unauthorised access shall not be limited to the provision of supervisory personnel; other options may include, but are not limited to, time-lock or maglock entrances)
- The opening hours
- The provision of registered door supervisors\*
- The provision of CCTV
- The number of staff on duty and effective staff training, especially in relation to lone working
- The provision of toilet facilities
- Prevention of antisocial behaviour associated with the premises, such as street drinking, litter, activity outside the premises including the management of clients leaving the premises
- Adequate lighting inside and out (appropriate to the premises in question) to ensure against robbery and other covert activity.

\* Only staff directly employed by Casinos and Bingo Clubs have an exemption from SIA registration. Where door supervisors are provided at these premises the operator should ensure that any people employed in this capacity are fit and proper to carry out such duties. Possible ways to achieve this could be to carry out a criminal records (DBS) check on potential staff and for such personnel to have attended industry recognised training.

### **Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way**

6.26 Generally, this objective will be addressed by:

- The management of the gambling business (in conjunction with the Gambling Commission, who are responsible for issuing and enforcement of the operating licence).
- The personal licence holders proving their suitability and actions (which again is the responsibility of the Gambling Commission)

6.27 Where we suspect that gambling is not being conducted in a fair and open way, we will bring this to the attention of the Gambling Commission, for their further consideration, and work in partnership with their officers. In the case of those premises that do not hold an operating licence such as tracks, additional conditions may be required dependent on the risks outlined in the application.

### **Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling**

6.28 The Gambling Act defines 'children' as those persons under 16 years of age and 'young persons' as those persons aged 16 or 17 years of age. The term 'vulnerable persons' is not defined and what constitutes harm or exploitation will have to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- 6.29 Gambling-related harms are the adverse impacts from gambling on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and society. These harms are diverse, affecting resources, relationships and health, and may reflect an interplay between individual, family and community processes. The harmful effects from gambling can have longer- term and enduring consequences that can exacerbate existing inequalities.
- 6.30 Regard will be had to current evidence in relation to vulnerability to gambling-related harm. In 2015, Manchester City Council in partnership with Westminster City Council commissioned research into this issue and published a report: Exploring area-based vulnerability to gambling-related harm: Who is vulnerable? Findings from a quick scoping review by Heather Wardle, Gambling and Place Research Hub, Geofutures 13th July 2015. Similarly, In 2016 Leeds City Council commissioned Leeds Beckett University to undertake research into Gambling harms (Gambling harms in Leeds; Kenyon, Ormerod, Parsons and Wardle, 2016) looking specifically at identifying groups of the society that could be considered (more) vulnerable to gambling harms:
- Younger people, including students
  - Those who are unemployed and/or with constrained financial circumstances
  - Those from minority ethnic groups
  - Those under the influence of alcohol or drugs
  - Problem gamblers seeking treatment
  - Homeless people
  - Those living in areas of greater deprivation
  - Those with other mental health issues and substance abuse/misuse disorders
  - Those with poorer intellectual functioning
  - Custodial and non-custodial offenders
- 6.31 Licensees and applicants will be expected to demonstrate they have carefully considered how to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm and have adequate arrangements for preventing underage gambling on their premises. The measures that should be considered where appropriate are:
- The provision of CCTV
  - Location of entrances
  - Restricted opening and closing times to protect residents vulnerable to harm
  - Supervision of entrances
  - Controlled access to the premises by children under the age of 18
  - Dealing with pupils who are truanting, and policies to address seasonal periods where children may more frequently attempt to gain access to premises and gamble such as pre and post school hours, half term and school holidays
  - Design layout/lighting/fit out to not attract children or vulnerable persons
  - Having a nationally-recognised proof of age scheme – Think 21/25
  - The provision of registered door supervisors
  - Clear segregation between gaming and non-gaming areas in premises frequented by children
  - The provision of adequate signage and notices
  - Supervision of machine areas in premises, particularly areas to which children are admitted
  - Controlled opening hours
  - Effective self-barring schemes

- The provision of materials for support with gambling harms, Citizens Advice Bureau information, local public and mental health and housing/homeless associations, printed in languages appropriate to the customer base.
  - Advertising local support services in the area such as Beacon Counselling Trust or the NHS Gambling Clinic.
  - The number of staff on duty and effective staff training, especially in relation to the ability to effectively identify and engage with vulnerable persons, including primary intervention and escalation
  - A requirement that children must be accompanied by an adult (in premises where children are allowed)
  - Enhanced DBS checks of staff
  - Obscuring windows where appropriate and labelling premises so it is clear that they are gambling premises
  - Self-exclusion schemes
- 6.32 With reference to those persons with a mental impairment or mental health difficulties, operators would be well-advised to consult a suitable Mental Health Advisor and formulate a policy to protect this category of vulnerable person from being harmed or exploited by gambling.
- 6.33 For multi-occupied premises consideration should be given to the arrangements for controlling access by children and the compatibility of the different uses. Separate and identifiable entrances may be required to ensure that people do not drift inadvertently into a gambling area.
- 6.34 Children are not permitted to use Category C or above machines and in premises where these machines are available, and children are permitted on the premises the licensing authority will require:
- all Category C and above machines to be located in an area of the premises which is separated from the remainder of the premises by a physical barrier to prevent access other than through a designated entrance
  - adults only admitted to the area where these machines are located
  - adequate supervised access to the area where the machines are located
  - the area where these machines are located is arranged so that it can be observed by the staff or the licence holder
  - prominent notices displayed at the entrance to, and inside, any such areas there indicating that access to the area is prohibited to persons under 18

### **Expectations of operators: Staffing provision**

- 6.35 Staff in licensed gambling premises are recognised as being subject to risk in the workplace from violence and verbal abuse, especially if working alone. In addition, lone workers may not be able to sufficiently serve and supervise the customers, identify and prevent young people from gambling, protect vulnerable persons, deal with customers who may be consuming alcohol and prevent the premises being used as a source of crime or supporting crime.
- 6.36 We expect premises management to recognise and address this as part of their management arrangements, especially at times where it has been identified that there is a spike in crimes around the premises.

6.37 We expect there to be an adequate number of staff and managers on the premises to cover key points throughout the day, especially where premises are close to schools/colleges/universities, pubs, bars, shopping centres and stadia.

### **Expectations of operators: Data gathering and sharing**

6.38 Keeping track of the incidence and handling of gambling harms in Greater Manchester is a key part of promoting the licensing objectives. We expect all gambling premises to maintain a log and share this and other information with the Licensing Team upon request.

6.39 Data that we consider should be recorded and shared includes (but is not exclusive to):

- 1) Customer interventions
- 2) Cases where persons who have decided to voluntarily exclude themselves from the premises have tried to gain entry
- 3) Mandatory exclusions needing enforcement
- 4) Attempts to enter by those underage in a calendar month
- 5) Attempts to enter by those underage in the company of adults
- 6) Attempts to enter by those underage with complicit adults
- 7) Incidents of 'at risk behaviour'
- 8) Incidents of 'behaviour requiring immediate intervention'

6.40 We would expect that all records include time and date along with a short description of the incident and action taken.

6.41 Where appropriate, we may look to impose premises specific conditions to require this information to be provided to the licensing authority annually. However, we strongly encourage operators to share this information with the licensing authority voluntarily.

6.42 A template for this information to be provided is at Appendix 2.

### **Expectation of applicants: Staff Training and Knowledge**

6.43 We expect all customer-facing and management staff in premises licensed under the Gambling Act 2005 to have sufficient knowledge to tackle risks associated with gambling and know how to promote responsible gambling. Amongst other elements, staff knowledge should include (where appropriate):

- 1) The importance of social responsibility (Premises may wish to seek an audit from GamCare in order to obtain a certificate of Social Responsibility)
- 2) Causes and consequences of gambling harms.
- 3) Identifying and communicating with vulnerable persons: primary intervention and escalation, supported by high quality training given the challenging nature of these conversations.
- 4) Dealing with problem gamblers: exclusion (mandatory and voluntary) and escalating for advice/treatment including local treatment providers
- 5) Refusal of entry (alcohol and drugs)
- 6) Age verification procedures and need to return stakes/withdraw winnings if under age persons found gambling

- 7) Importance and enforcement of time/spend limits
- 8) The conditions of the licence
- 9) Maintaining an incident log
- 10) Offences under the Gambling Act
- 11) Categories of gaming machines and the stakes and odds associated with each machine
- 12) Types of gaming and the stakes and odds associated with each
- 13) Ability to signpost customers to support services with respect to gambling harms, financial management, debt advice etc.
- 14) Safe cash-handling/payment of winnings
- 15) Identify forged ID and bar those using forged ID from the premises
- 16) Knowledge of a gambling harms helpline number (for their own use as well as that of customers)
- 17) The importance of not encouraging customers to:
  - (a) Increase the amount of money they have decided to gamble
  - (b) Enter into continuous gambling for a prolonged period
  - (c) Continue gambling when they have expressed a wish to stop
  - (d) Re-gamble winnings
  - (e) Chase losses.
- 18) Training for staff working in licensed premises – gambling harms and also suicide prevention -see <https://shiningalightonsuicide.org.uk/learn-to-save-a-life/>

6.44 Above and beyond this we expect managers to have an in-depth knowledge of all of the above and be able to support staff in ensuring the highest standards with regard to protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling. In relation to training, we do not intend to duplicate any existing training requirement, such as may be required by the Gambling Commission's Code of Practice.

### **Expectation of applicants: Gaming machines / layouts**

- 6.45 It is an operator's responsibility to ensure staff are able to effectively monitor gaming machine play for a number of reasons that are part of the operator's licence conditions. Age verification, customer interaction and self-exclusion policies all require operators to take into account the structure and layout of their gambling premises.
- 6.46 The Licence conditions and code of practice (LCCP) state: 'Facilities for gambling must only be offered in a manner which provides for appropriate supervision of those facilities by staff at all times'.
- 6.47 A screen or pod around a gaming machine, designed to increase the privacy of the player, could prevent staff in a gambling premises from effectively monitoring gaming machine play
- 6.48 Operators will be expected to be able to evidence to the licensing authority how they have considered the risk to the licensing objectives and implemented effective controls, prior to the introduction of any new machine arrangements.
- 6.49 It will be important to consider the means by which gaming machines are supervised (e.g. line of sight to counter, effective CCTV, mirrors or floor staff) and consider whether that is appropriate for that premises.

6.50 Whether amendments to a premises amount to a 'material change' warranting an application to vary the premises licence under s.187 of the Gambling Act is a matter for local determination and the licensing authority will adopt a common-sense approach.

### **Other Expectations of Operators**

6.51 The licensing authority expects all operators to comply with self-exclusion schemes as outlined in the LCCP.

6.52 Operators must also notify the commission if a person that gambled with them has died by suicide.

6.53 Other expectations of operators are:

- Incident logs – these should be inspected and include details of customer interactions and 'safer gambling' interventions, as well as a process for escalating concerns.
- Restrictions on harmful promotions – e.g. no prominent window displays of bet boosts / free bets / 'win your money back' type offers.
- Risk assessment / management – Is there safeguarding process in place when someone is experiencing gambling harms – how do they protect staff from frustrated / threatening / distressed customers, this should include consideration of lone working policies, etc.
- Safeguarding reporting – Have a policy in place to report a safeguarding issue if this is identified, e.g. financial abuse, risk to children and young people via the Council's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.

## **7 Premises-specific considerations**

### **Adult Gaming Centres**

- 7.1 Adult gaming centres (AGCs) are premises able to make category B, C and D gaming machines available to their customers. Persons operating an AGC must hold a gaming machines general operating licence from the Commission as well as a premises licence from the Council.
- 7.2 This licensing authority will specifically have regard to the need to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm or being exploited by gambling and will expect the applicant to satisfy the authority that there will be sufficient measures to, for example, ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the premises.
- 7.3 Where gambling facilities are provided at premises as a supplementary activity to the main purpose of the premises; e.g. motorway service areas and shopping malls, the Council will expect the gambling area to be clearly defined to ensure that customers are fully aware that they are making a choice to enter into the gambling premises and that the premises is adequately supervised at all times.

### **Casinos**

- 7.4 Oldham has no licensed casinos.
- 7.5 The Gambling Act states that a casino is an arrangement whereby people are given the opportunity to participate in one or more casino games whereby casino games are defined as a game of chance which is not equal chance gaming. This means that casino games offer the chance for multiple participants to take part in a game competing against the house or bank at different odds to their fellow players. Casinos can also provide equal chance gaming and gaming machines.

### **'No Casinos' resolution**

- 7.6 This licensing authority has not passed a 'no casino' resolution under Section 166 of the Gambling Act 2005, but is aware that it has the power to do so. Should this licensing authority decide in the future to pass such a resolution, it will update this policy statement with details of that resolution. Any such decision will be made by the Full Council.

### **Bingo premises**

- 7.7 The Gambling Act 2005 does not contain a definition of bingo. It is to have its ordinary and natural meaning and the Act does stipulate that "bingo" means any version of that game, irrespective of how it is described. Two types of bingo may be offered:
  - Cash bingo, where the stakes panel made up the cash prize that is won; or
  - Prize bingo, where various forms of prizes are won, not directly relating to the stakes panel.



- 7.8 Subject to the rules of individual operators, children and young people are allowed into bingo premises. However, they are not permitted to participate in the bingo and if category B or C machines are made available for use these must be separated from areas where children and young people are allowed.
- 7.9 Where category C or above machines are available in premises to which children are admitted then the Council will ensure that:
- all such machines are located in an area of the premises separate from the remainder of the premises by a physical barrier which is effective to prevent access other than through a designated entrance. For this purpose a rope, floor markings or similar provision will not suffice and the Council may insist on a permanent barrier of at least one metre high
  - only adults are admitted to the area where the machines are located
  - access to the area where the machines are located is supervised at all times
  - the area where the machines are located is arranged so that it can be observed by staff
  - at the entrance to, and inside any such area there are prominently displayed notices indicating that access to the area is prohibited to people under 18
  - children will not be admitted to bingo premises unless accompanied by an adult.
- 7.10 The Gambling Commission has provided Guidance for Licensing Authorities and Licence Conditions and Code of Practice which are applied to Operator's Licences. The Council will take this into consideration when determining licence applications for bingo premises.
- 7.11 Where certain measures are not already addressed by the mandatory/default conditions, the Gambling Commission Code of Practice or the applicant, the Council may consider licence conditions to address such issues.

### **Electronic bingo gaming machines**

- 7.12 Where a premises intends on providing electronic terminals to play bingo, we will expect operators (as part of their application) to provide a breakdown of the number of electronic bingo terminals that will be provided at the premises

### **Gaming machines at bingo premises**

- 7.13 In addition to bingo, the holder of a bingo premises licence may make available for use a number of category B gaming machines. The current number of category B machines permitted can be found in Annex A of the Guidance to Licensing Authorities issued by the Gambling Commission here - [Guidance to licensing authorities - Appendix A: Summary of machine provisions by premises \(gamblingcommission.gov.uk\)](#).
- 7.14 Bingo facilities in bingo premises may not be offered between the hours of midnight and 9am. However, there are no restrictions on access to gaming machines in bingo premises.
- 7.15 The LCCP requires (Social Responsibility Code Provision 9) that gaming machines are only made available in combination with the named non-remote activity of the operating

licence. So, unless a bingo premises operator offers substantive facilities for non-remote bingo it should not make gaming machines available for use on the premises in question. This does not restrict the provision of gaming machines in line with 6.14 above.

- 7.16 As the licensing authority, we will need to satisfy ourselves that a premises applying for or licensed for bingo is operating or will operate in a manner which a customer would reasonably be expected to recognise as a premises licensed for the purposes of providing facilities for bingo. Equally, we must ensure that a premises licensed for the purposes of providing facilities for bingo is operating as such and is not merely a vehicle to offer higher stake and prize gaming machines.
- 7.17 Therefore, we will expect operators (as part of their application) to provide information on:
- any times they intend to provide gaming machines at any times that bingo facilities are not provided
  - how the premises will be recognised as a premises licensed for providing facilities for bingo
  - A breakdown of gaming machine numbers (by category)
- 7.18 The licensing authority is concerned that later opening hours will attract the more vulnerable, such as those who are intoxicated or who have gambling addictions. The licensing authority will expect that applicants can demonstrate that robust measures will be in place to protect the vulnerable and the additional hours are not being sought to take advantage of the gaming machine entitlement.
- 7.19 The licensing authority will use their power to restrict the circumstances in which they are available for use when appropriate by way of conditions. When considering imposing conditions, the licensing authority will take into account, among other factors:
- the size and physical layout of the premises
  - the number of counter positions and staff on the premises
  - the ability of staff to monitor the use of machines by children, young persons under the age of 18 or vulnerable people
- 7.20 The licensing authority will not seek to limit the number of gambling machines by category as this entitled provision is defined in the Gambling Act. However, we will seek to ensure that the number and provision of gaming machines are only provided in a manner which a customer would reasonably be expected to recognise as a premises licensed for the purposes of providing facilities for bingo.
- 7.21 To contain the unavoidable risk to the licensing objectives associated with gaming machines, premises which offer machines must be appropriately supervised.
- 7.22 The licensing authority will require information from an applicant for a new premises or for a variation to an existing premises licence in order to satisfy themselves as to the matters set out at s153 of the Act. This includes the codes of practice and the Gambling Commission's guidance to licensing authorities.

## **'Entertainment' Bingo**

- 7.23 A phenomenon over recent years has been the evolution of businesses, such as Bongo's Bingo, providing facilities for high turnover bingo (the aggregate stakes or prizes for bingo in any seven day period may exceed £2,000); typically providing equal chance gaming at pubs and nightclubs, in reliance on the alcohol licence held by the premises, and therefore doing so under the rules for exempt gaming.
- 7.24 We note that it is a condition of some such companies' operator's licence that they must notify both the Commission and the relevant local authority at least 28 days before any event takes place in new premises, by providing a description of the event taking place, a copy of the premises contract and any amendment to the rules of the bingo.
- 7.25 We would encourage venues hosting such events to promote responsible gambling messaging at them.

## **Betting Premises**

- 7.26 We encourage operators to participate in the Safebet Alliance in order to help ensure the highest standards for the safety and security of staff working at betting premises. Where an operator does not participate in the scheme, it is expected that they can satisfactorily demonstrate the security measures they incorporate are adequate.
- 7.27 Licensed betting premises are only permitted to offer gambling facilities between 7am and 10pm, unless the licensing authority has granted a variation application to extend these hours. The licensing authority is concerned that later opening hours will attract the more vulnerable, such as those who are intoxicated or who have gambling addictions. The licensing authority also has concerns that licensed betting premises operators may seek to extend the permitted hours for the primary purpose of making gaming machines available to customers for longer.
- 7.28 As a consequence, the licensing authority is unlikely to grant variation of hours' applications unless applicants can demonstrate that robust measures will be in place to protect the vulnerable and the additional hours are not being sought to take advantage of the gaming machine entitlement.
- 7.29 The licensing authority will use their power to restrict the number of betting machines (bet receipt terminals), their nature and the circumstances in which they are available for use when appropriate by way of conditions. When considering imposing conditions, the licensing authority will take into account, among other factors:
- the size and physical layout of the premises
  - the number of counter positions and staff on the premises
  - the ability of staff to monitor the use of machines by children, young persons under the age of 18 or vulnerable people
- 7.30 Betting machines - This licensing authority will, as per the Gambling Commission's Guidance, take into account the size of the premises, the number of counter positions available for person-to-person transactions, and the ability of staff to monitor the use of the machines by children and young persons (it is an offence for those under 18 to bet) or by vulnerable people, when considering the number/nature/circumstances of betting

machines an operator wants to offer. It is noted that that children are not able to go into premises with the benefit of a Betting Premises Licence.

### **(Licensed) Family Entertainment Centres**

- 7.31 The Act creates two classes of family entertainment centre (FEC). Licensed FEC's provide category C and D machines and require a premises licence. Unlicensed FEC's provide category D machines only are regulated through FEC gaming machine permits.
- 7.32 This licensing authority will specifically have regard to the need to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm or being exploited by gambling and will expect the applicant to satisfy the authority, for example, that there will be sufficient measures to ensure that under 18-year-olds do not have access to the adult only gaming machine areas. Operators should ensure that a proof of age scheme is in force.
- 7.33 This licensing authority will, as per the Gambling Commission's guidance, refer to the Commission's website to see any conditions that apply to operating licences covering the way in which the area containing the category C machines should be delineated. This licensing authority will also make itself aware of any mandatory or default conditions on these premises licences, when they have been published.

### **Occasional use notices**

- 7.34 Occasional Use Notices (OUN) are designed to allow licensed betting operators to provide betting facilities at genuine sporting events, such as point-to point racecourses and golf courses for major competitions, within the boundaries of the identified venue on a specific date.
- 7.35 An OUN must be submitted for EACH day that the betting activity will be conducted on the premises. For example, four notices for four consecutive days of betting and not one notice covering the four days.
- 7.36 We will liaise with the Gambling Commission should we receive an OUN that does not relate to a genuine recognised sporting event to ensure that OUN's are not misused, for example, venues seeking to become tracks through a contrived sporting event, utilising OUNs to solely or primarily facilitate betting taking place on events occurring away from the identified venue.

## 8 Permits and other permissions

### Alcohol Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permits

- 8.1 Premises licensed to sell alcohol that have a bar and the alcohol is not ancillary to food for consumption on the premises, having more than two gaming machines, will need to apply for a permit and must also notify the Licensing Authority if they have one or two machines. In considering whether to grant a permit, the licensing authority will have regard to the licensing objectives, guidance issued by the Gambling Commission and any other relevant matters. Permits will not be granted to licensees who have failed to demonstrate compliance with the Gambling Commission's Code of Practice.
- 8.2 In addition to the requirements of the Gambling Commission's Code of Practice, the Licensing Authority expects applicants to:
- display adequate notices and signs, advertising the relevant age restrictions
  - position machines within view of the bar in order for staff to be able to monitor the machines for use by under age or misuse of the machines
  - challenge anyone suspected of being under age and refuse access
  - provide information leaflets and / or help-line numbers for organisations such as GamCare and Betknowmore UK.

### Prize Gaming Machine Permits

- 8.3 Prize gaming premises will appeal to children and young persons and weight will be given to child protection issues. Therefore, the licensing authority will expect the applicant to demonstrate that they are suitable to hold a permit (i.e. if the applicant has any convictions which would make them unsuitable to operate prize gaming) and the suitability of the premises.
- 8.4 The licensing authority expects applicants to set out the types of gaming machines that they intend to offer and be able to demonstrate that:
- they understand the limits to stakes and prizes that are set out in regulations
  - that the gaming offered is within the law
- 8.5 The Gambling Commission website gives advice on types of permits, conditions, stakes and prizes. See <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk>

### Unlicensed FECs (uFEC)

- 8.6 Unlicensed family entertainment centres (FEC's) will perhaps be most commonly located at places such as airports and at motorway service centres, and will cater for families, including unaccompanied children and young persons. Unlicensed FEC's will be able to offer only category D machines in reliance on a gaming machine permit.
- 8.7 Where a premises does not hold a premises licence but wishes to provide gaming machines, it may apply to the licensing authority for this permit. It should be noted that the applicant must show that the premises will be wholly or mainly used for making

gaming machines available for use (Section 238). As a result, it is generally not permissible for such premises to correspond to an entire shopping centre, airport, motorway service station or similar. Typically, the machines would be in a designated, enclosed area.

8.8 Given that the premises is likely to appeal particularly to children and young persons, when considering applications for permits we will give weight to matters relating to protection of children from being harmed or exploited by gambling and are keen to ensure that staff supervision adequately reflects the level of risk to this group. Therefore, we will generally expect such risks to be addressed through effective:

- Staff supervision and training
- Detailed plan
- Social responsibility policies
- Staff being easily identifiable
- Clear signage

8.9 As part of an application for a uFEC, it is our policy that a plan for the uFEC must be submitted.

### **Small Society Lotteries**

8.10 A lottery is small if the total value of tickets put on sale in a single lottery is £20,000 or less and the aggregate value of the tickets put on sale in a calendar year is £250,000 or less.

8.11 To be 'non-commercial' a society must be established and conducted:

- for charitable purposes,
- for the purpose of enabling participation in, or supporting, sport, athletics or a cultural activity; or
- for any other non-commercial purpose other than that of private gain.

8.12 This licensing authority will adopt a risk-based approach towards its enforcement responsibilities for small society lotteries. This authority considers that the following list, although not exclusive, could affect the risk status of the operator:

- Submission of late returns (returns must be submitted no later than three months after the date on which the lottery draw was held)
- Submission of incomplete or incorrect returns
- Breaches of the limits for small society lotteries
- The eligibility of the society as 'non-commercial'

## 9 Appendix 1 –Responsible Authorities

<p>Technical and Consultation Team Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service 146 Bolton Road Swinton Manchester, M27 8US <a href="mailto:consultations@manchesterfire.gov.uk">consultations@manchesterfire.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>HM Revenue &amp; Customs Excise Processing Teams BX9 1GL  <a href="mailto:nrubetting&amp;gaming@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk">nrubetting&amp;gaming@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Safeguarding Children Partnership Oldham Council 10 Whitney Court Southlink Business Centre Hamilton Street Oldham, OL4 4DB <a href="mailto:childrens.safeguarding@oldham.gov.uk">childrens.safeguarding@oldham.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Planning Team Oldham Council Spindles Shopping Centre George Street, Oldham, OL1 1HD  <a href="mailto:planning.admin@oldham.gov.uk">planning.admin@oldham.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Greater Manchester Police Police Licensing Officer Sir Robert Peacock House Vulcan Street Oldham, OL1 4LA <a href="mailto:julian.addison@gmp.police.uk">julian.addison@gmp.police.uk</a></p>	<p>Environmental Health Oldham Council Sir Robert Peacock House Vulcan Street, Oldham, OL1 4LA <a href="mailto:ehgeneral@oldham.gov.uk">ehgeneral@oldham.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Gambling Commission Victoria Square House Victoria Square Birmingham, B2 4BP <a href="mailto:info@gmablingcommission.gov.uk">info@gmablingcommission.gov.uk</a></p>	

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### Applications must be sent to:

Licensing Service  
Oldham Council  
Sir Robert Peacock House  
Vulcan Street,  
Oldham, OL1 4LA

E: [licensing@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@oldham.gov.uk)

# 10 Appendix 2 – Template for data collection

The data collection template is available as an Excel file upon request from the Licensing Unit. The screenshots below demonstrate the information to be collected.

### Gambling Premises - Data Collection Template

Licence Holder	
Licence Type	
Named Person Responsible for Safeguarding Vulnerable and Children/Young Persons	
Licence Number	
Enter Calendar Year	2021

Please return this template to [XXXX@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:XXXX@tameside.gov.uk) within 10 working days of the start of each month with the previous month's data<sup>ii</sup>. Please start a new template for each calendar year.

Data Metric	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21
<b>1. License Interventions</b>												
1a. The number of gambler interventions (e.g. challenging excessive gambling, advising of gambling help services etc) that are made in a calendar month. Record a short description of the cause and effect in the second template.												
1b. From the interventions in 1a, the number of interventions that changed a customer's behaviour (e.g. onward referral to support services, limited spend for that session, registered for time/money limits etc).												
<b>2. Self Exclusions</b>												
2a. Provide information regarding the number of self-exclusions during the month (self-exclusion scheme only, not time/fund limits).												
2b. Number cases per month where persons who have decided to voluntarily exclude themselves from the premises have tried to gain entry.												
2c. Record the number of individuals per month who have chosen to return to gambling once their self-exclusion period has ended.												
<b>3. Time/Money Limits</b>												
3. Record the number of times money/time limits are voluntarily set on B2 gaming machines per month.												
<b>4. Incidents on the Premises</b>												
4a. The number of licensee mandated exclusions made in the month.												
4b. The number of mandatory exclusions needing enforcement during the month due to the individual attempting to gain entry.												
4c. Incidents of behaviour requiring police assistance during the month (including those where the police have been unable to attend).												
<b>5. Children and Young Persons</b>												
5a. Attempts to enter the premises or gamble by those who are underage during the month.												
5b. Attempts to enter the premises or gamble by those who are underage accompanied by an adult during the month, along with a short description of the incident and action.												
5c. Record the number of people who, having gambled, were unable to prove they were 18 (or 16 for lotteries) when challenged during the month.												

### Gambling Premises - Data Collection Template

#### Licence Interventions

Record a short description of the cause and effect of each intervention made (e.g. challenging excessive gambling, advising of gambling help services etc).

Time & Date of Intervention (DD/MM/YY)	Reason for Intervention	Outcome of Intervention



## 11 Appendix 3 - Glossary

Term	Description
ATM	Auto teller machine or cash machine.
Betting	Betting is defined as making or accepting a bet on the outcome of a race, competition or other event or process or on the outcome of anything occurring or not occurring or on whether anything is or is not true. It is irrelevant if the event has already happened or not and likewise whether one person knows the outcome or not. (Spread betting is not included within this definition).
Betting Machines / Bet Receipt Terminal	Betting machines can be described as automated betting terminals where people can place bets on sporting events removing the need to queue up and place a bet over the counter.
Bingo	There are essentially two types of bingo: cash bingo, where the stakes paid make up the cash prizes that can be won and prize bingo, where various forms of prizes can be won, not directly related to the stakes paid.
Book	Running a 'book' is the act of quoting odds and accepting bets on an event. Hence the term 'Bookmaker'.
Casino games	A game of chance, which is not equal chance gaming. Casino games include Roulette and black jack etc.
Chip	Casinos in the UK require you to use chips to denote money. They are usually purchased and exchanged at a cashier's booth.
Coin pusher or penny falls machine	A machine of the kind which is neither a money prize machine nor a non-money prize machine
Crane grab machine	A non-money prize machine in respect of which every prize which can be won consists of an individual physical object (such as a stuffed toy) won by a person's success in manipulating a device forming part of the machine so as to separate, and keep separate, one or more physical objects from a group of such objects.
Default condition	These are prescribed in regulations and will be attached to all classes of premises licence, unless excluded by the Authority.
Equal Chance Gaming	Gaming which does not involve playing or staking against a bank.
Fixed odds betting	If a gambler is able to establish what the return on a bet will be when it is placed, (and the activity is not 'gaming' see below), then it is likely to be betting at fixed odds.
Fixed Odds betting terminals (FOBTs)	FOBTs are a type of gaming machine which generally appear in licensed bookmakers. FOBTs have 'touch-screen' displays and look similar to quiz machines familiar in pubs and clubs. They normally offer a number of games, roulette being the most popular.
Gaming	Gaming can be defined as 'the playing of a game of chance for winnings in money or monies worth, whether any person playing the game is at risk of losing any money or monies worth or not'.
Gaming Machine	Any type of machine allowing any sort of gambling activity including betting on virtual events but not including home computers even though users can access online gaming websites.
Licensing Objectives	The licensing objectives are three principal goals which form the basis of the Act. Stakeholders who have an interest in the Act need to try and promote these objectives. The licensing objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime.</li> <li>• Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way.</li> <li>• Protecting children and other vulnerable people from being harmed or exploited by gambling.</li> </ul>
Lottery	A lottery generally refers to schemes under which prizes are distributed by chance among entrants who have given some form of value for their chance to take part. A lottery is defined as either a simple lottery or a complex lottery. A simple lottery is one where people are required to pay to participate and one or more prizes are allocated to one or more members of a class and the prizes are allocated by a process which relies wholly on chance. A complex lottery is where people are required to pay to participate and one or more members of a class and the prizes are allocated by a series of processes where the first of those processes relies wholly on chance. Prize means money, articles or services provided by the members of the class among whom the prize is allocated. (It should be noted that the National Lottery is not included in this definition of lottery and is regulated by the National Lottery Commission).
Money prize machine	A machine in respect of which every prize which can be won as a result of using the machine is a money prize.

Non-money prize machine	A machine in respect of which every prize which can be won as a result of using the machine is a non-money prize. The winner of the prize is determined by: (i) the position in which the coin or token comes to rest after it has been inserted into the machine, together with the position of other coins or tokens which have previously been inserted into the machine to pay a charge for use, or (ii) if the insertion of a single coin to pay the charge for use enables the person using the machine to release one or more tokens within the machine, the position in which such tokens come to rest after being released, together with the position of other tokens which have previously been so released.
Odds	The ratio to which a bet will be paid if the bet wins, e.g. 3-1 means for every £1 bet, a person would receive £3 of winnings.
Off-course betting operator	Off-course betting operators may, in addition to premises away from the track, operate self-contained betting premises within a track premises. Such self-contained premises will provide facilities for betting on both events taking place at the track (on-course betting), as well as other sporting events taking place away from the track (off-course betting). In essence such premises operate like a traditional high street bookmakers. They will however only normally operate on race days.
On-course betting operator	The on-course betting operator is one who comes onto on a track, temporarily, while races are taking place, and operates at the track side. On-course betting operators tend to offer betting only on the events taking place on the track that day (on-course betting).
Pool Betting	For the purposes of the Gambling Act, pool betting is made on terms that all or part of the winnings: 1) Shall be determined by reference to the aggregate of the stakes paid or agreed to be paid by the people betting 2) Shall be divided among the winners or 3) Shall or may be something other than money. For the purposes of the Gambling Act, pool betting is horse-race pool betting if it relates to horse-racing in Britain.
Regulations or Statutory instruments	Regulations are a form of law, often referred to as delegated or secondary legislation. They have the same binding legal effect as Acts and usually state rules that apply generally, rather than to specific people or things. However, regulations are not made by Parliament. Rather, they are made by people or bodies to whom Parliament has delegated the authority to make them, such as a minister or an administrative agency.
Representations	In the context of the Gambling Act representations are either positive statements of support or negative objections which are made in relation to a licensing application. Representations must be made in time, e.g. during a designated notice period.
Responsible authority (authorities)	Responsible authorities (RAs) are agencies which have been appointed by the Gambling Act or regulations to fulfil a designated role during the licensing process. RAs must be sent copies of all licensing applications and have the power to make representations about such applications. RAs also have the power to ask for licences to be reviewed.
Skill machine / Skill with prizes machine	The Act does not cover machines that give prizes as a result of the application of pure skill by players. A skill with prizes machine is one on which the winning of a prize is determined only by the player's skill – any element of chance imparted by the action of the machine would cause it to be a gaming machine. An example of a skill game would be trivia game machines, popular in pubs and clubs, which require the player to answer general knowledge questions to win cash prizes.
Spread betting	A form of investing which is more akin to betting, and can be applied either to sporting events or to the financial markets. Spread betting is regulated by the Financial Services Authority.
Stake	The amount pledged when taking part in gambling activity as either a bet, or deposit to the bank or house where the house could be a gaming machine.
Statement of principles document	A document prepared by the Authority which outlines the areas that applicants need to consider before applying for gaming permits.
Table gaming	Card games played in casinos.
Tote	"Tote" is short for Totaliser, a system introduced to Britain in 1929 to offer pool betting on racecourses.
Track	Tracks are sites (including horse tracks and dog tracks and stadia) where races or other sporting events take place