

Present: Councillor McLaren (Chair)
Councillors Chauhan, Davis (Substitute), Hughes, S. Hussain
(Substitute), Iqbal (Substitute), Kenyon and Lancaster

Also in Attendance:

Councillor Sam Al-Hamdani	Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats and Shadow Cabinet Member for Value for Money and Sustainability
Emma Barton	Deputy Chief Executive (Place)
Alex Bougatef	Borough Solicitor and Director of Legal
Andy Cooper	Senior Finance Manager
Fiona Greenway	Director of Resources
Jack Grennan	Constitutional Services
Councillor Abdul Jabbar MBE	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services and Sustainability
Vickie Lambert	Finance Services
Fran Lautman	Assistant Director of Customer Experience
Councillor Shaïd Mushtaq	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Councillor Elaine Taylor	Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
Lee Walsh	Director of Finance

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Aslam (Councillor Iqbal substituting), Councillor Cosgrove (Councillor S. Hussain substituting), Councillor Ibrahim, Councillor Marland and Councillor Rustidge (Councillor Davis substituting). Apologies were also received from Councillor Shah, Councillor F. Hussain and Councillor Goodwin as Cabinet Members, from Councillor Harkness and from Shelley Kipling.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair read out a statement that Items 6, 7 and 8 had been withdrawn from the agenda as the Director of Finance, in his statutory role as Section 151 Officer, could not accept the alternative budget proposals put forward for the items on the basis of the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of reserves.

Councillor Lancaster registered a complaint from the Conservative group, highlighting a lack of staff support and time and that administrative asks with tight deadlines had been a hindrance with the view being that senior officers were acting out of purview. It was also noted that the proposals had been

based on the group's previous proposals which had been brought to the committee previously.

Members queried whether the group had put proposals in and why they had complained. The Chair responded that he could only comment on the process.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

5 **LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP BUDGET AMENDMENT PROPOSALS 2026/27**

Councillor Sam Al-Hamdani introduced the proposals, highlighting the two main capital proposals on temporary accommodation and an increased spend on districts. It was noted that this would let the public take control on behalf of their communities. It was noted that there had been a reduction proposed around vacancy management was based on some reasonable savings being realised.

Members noted that the additional investment in districts was welcomed but highlighted concerns around the forecasting of health budgeting and the reduction around social care. Members noted concerns too around whether impact assessments for frontline services had been carried out on the mileage and Trade Union time proposals. It was noted that although the social care funding was lower than the administrations proposal, it was still higher than the current funding. It was highlighted that forecasting had been improved and that this was a balanced approach and achievable.

Members asked for more information on the temporary accommodation proposals. It was noted that the administration's proposals from last year had not yet happened, and that the impact of a lack of temporary accommodation was creating long term problems for social care and that the funding would make this a priority.

Members noted concerns around the reduction of funding for IT. It was noted that this funding reduction would come from non-allocated spending, meaning that no commissioned work or allocated spend would be unfunded. It was noted that IT issues are a concern but that this was a reduction from the general IT budget.

Members queried whether the reduction in Trade Union facilities time was just in facility time or in staff contributions. It was noted that this would just be in facilities time. Members queried what this would mean in practice as Trade Unions would still be meeting with departments. It was highlighted that Oldham was an outlier in terms of the amount of Trade Union facilities time offered and there was no clear need for the difference.

Members noted concerns around the reduction in mileage budgets and it was noted that the budget for this was currently underspent, so that the proposal would just be a different way of working this to reflect more accurately. Members noted that there are probably members of staff who don't claim the mileage they are eligible for. It was noted that these terms would have to be negotiated and that all the budget process is based on probabilities.

The Director of Finance noted that his comment were not an endorsement of the proposals but an acceptance of the robustness of the proposals put forward.

RESOLVED: That the Liberal Democrat budget reduction proposals be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

6 **THE OLDHAM GROUP BUDGET AMENDMENT PROPOSALS 2026/27**

The item was withdrawn.

7 **CONSERVATIVE GROUP BUDGET AMENDMENT PROPOSALS 2026/27**

The item was withdrawn.

8 **REFORM UK GROUP BUDGET AMENDMENT PROPOSALS 2026/27**

The item was withdrawn.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.40 pm