

Oldham Borough Council



**Council Meeting
Wednesday 10th December
2025**

OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

To: ALL MEMBERS OF OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL,
J. R. CLYNES BUILDING, GREAVES STREET, OLDHAM, OL1 1AL

Tuesday, 2nd December 2025

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council which will be held on Wednesday 10 December 2025 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, J. R. Clynes Building, Cultural Quarter, Greaves Street, Oldham, OL1 1AL, for the following purposes:

Item No

- 1 To receive apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes (Pages 1 - 108)
To approve the Minutes of the meetings of Council held 17th September 2025 (adjourned to 12th November 2025) and on 12th November 2025
- 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)
- 7 Youth Council
(time limit 20 minutes)

Young Men's Mental Health

This motion highlights the urgent need for strengthened support, awareness, and targeted interventions to address men's mental health across our borough. National evidence shows that men continue to face significant barriers to seeking help. According to a study by Mind, 40% of men do not talk about their mental health due to stigma and fear of embarrassment. NHS data shows that 12.5% of all men in England are living with a mental health disorder, yet many remain undiagnosed or unsupported.

The consequences of this silence are profound. As reported by the BBC, suicide is the leading cause of death for men under 50 and figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that 75% of all suicides in England and Wales in

2024 were male; the highest proportion recorded in the last 25 years. Regionally, the Northwest faces some of the most concerning outcomes, with a suicide rate of 13.7 per 100,000, the second highest of any region in England.

We believe that it is vital that a focus on young men's mental health needs to be addressed. Mental health can have a severe impact on various areas of life, ones that have detrimental consequence into adulthood. Given the statistics already mentioned, it is no wonder that mental health demonstrates negative impact on school attendance, sleep disruption and ultimately, stress related sickness for young people in employment.

As young men from Oldham Youth Service, we are attempting to address this issue through creation of the MAN (Masculinity and Normality) Project. We hope to reduce discriminatory attitudes, believing this starts with the promotion of good mental health amongst men. October saw our first schools conference, bringing together young men with the theme of 'breaking the armour.' This aimed to encourage conversations about supporting one another and being more open-minded about mental health discussion.

But this is just the start. It was evident that of the 80 plus young men in attendance, mental health is still a very prevalent topic affecting our young population. According to Oldham Council's Suicide Prevention Plan, Oldham's suicide rate stands at 10.0 per 100,000, emphasising the need for proactive and well-resourced action. Early intervention in young men's mental health is critical in preventing the onset of long-term impacts.

This motion therefore asks Oldham Council to recognise the scale of the challenge, to prioritise men's mental health within local strategies, and to work with partners to reduce stigma, improve access to support, and ultimately, save lives.

We also ask Oldham Council to leverage its influence by writing directly to the Government and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP, advocating for urgent and targeted investment in young men's mental health services.

As local resources are stretched and the national crisis in young people's mental health, particularly for young men who are less likely to seek help, demands a scaled-up, dedicated funding stream. Targeting support for young men now will significantly reduce the future incidence and impact of long-term mental health conditions, easing the burden on crisis services and ensuring every young person in Oldham receives the support they deserve without facing debilitating waiting lists or barriers.

8 Public Questions

(time limit 15 Minutes)

9 Questions to Leader and Cabinet (Pages 109 - 150)

(time limit 90 minutes)

- a. Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Growth – including the

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held 17th November 2025 and the minutes of meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 26th September 2025.

- b. Statutory Deputy Leader and Neighbourhoods Portfolio Holder
- c. Deputy Leader and Finance, Corporate Services and Sustainability Portfolio Holder
- d. Children and Young People's Portfolio Holder
- e. Adults, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder
- f. Education and Skills Portfolio Holder
- g. Culture and Leisure Portfolio Holder
- h. Enterprise Portfolio Holder
- i. Transport and Highways Portfolio Holder

10

Notice of Administration Business

(time limit 30 minutes)

Motion 1: Strengthening Standards and Restoring Confidence in Local Democracy

To be Moved by Councillor Harrison

To be Seconded by Councillor Shuttleworth

This Council notes:

- The Government's recent response to its consultation on strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England, following widespread concerns about inconsistent enforcement and inadequate sanctions under the current regime.
- The proposals include:
 - A mandatory minimum code of conduct for all local authorities.
 - A requirement for formal standards committees to oversee breaches and publish investigation outcomes.
 - New powers to suspend councillors or mayors for serious misconduct, including interim suspensions in complex cases.
 - A national appeals body to ensure consistency.
 - A new category of disqualification for gross misconduct or repeated breaches.
 - Measures to empower victims of councillor misconduct and improve transparency.

This Council believes:

- High standards of conduct are essential to maintaining public trust in local democracy.
- A clear, consistent, and enforceable framework will help councillors uphold the integrity of public office and protect the reputation of local government.
- These reforms will strengthen accountability and ensure that misconduct is dealt with swiftly and fairly across all tiers of local government.

This Council resolves to:

1. **Welcome the Government's proposals** to strengthen the standards

- regime and restore confidence in local democracy.
2. **Commit to adopting the mandatory minimum code of conduct** once implemented in legislation.
 3. **Ensure our Standards Committee is fully prepared** to meet the new requirements, including publishing investigation outcomes transparently and regularly reporting these outcomes to Council.
 4. **Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government** expressing our support for these reforms and urging timely implementation.
 5. **Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Local Government Association**, urging them to consider the development of a training programme aligned with the new standards regime.
 6. **Ask our Standards Committee** to work with the relevant Officers locally to review Oldham's elected member behaviour standards training programme and ensure it is fit for purpose, with a view to making it a mandatory training unit.

Motion 2: Fairer Parking Charges at Manchester Airport

To be Moved by: Councillor Shah

to be Seconded by: Councillor Charters

This Council notes:

- Manchester Airport is the third busiest airport in the UK and a vital gateway for Greater Manchester residents and businesses.
- Current drop-off and pick-up charges at Manchester Airport are £5 for five minutes, £6.40 for up to 10 minutes, and £25 for up to 30 minutes, with fines of £100 (reduced to £60 if paid within 14 days) for late payment under the barrierless system.
- The RAC has ranked Manchester Airport among the most expensive UK airports on a cost-per-minute basis.
- Jim McMahon MP has called for a full review of signage, an end to the practice of stacking up charges, an extension of the time allowed to pay, and greater transparency on income from these charges.

This Council believes:

- Parking charges should be fair, transparent, and not penalise genuine mistakes.
- The current system risks disproportionately impacting local residents and visitors, especially given the complexity of the barrierless payment process.
- Clear signage and user-friendly payment options are essential to avoid confusion and unnecessary fines.

This Council resolves:

1. **To formally support Jim McMahon MP's campaign** for fairer and more transparent parking charges at Manchester Airport.
2. **To ask the Chief Executive to write to Manchester Airport Group**

urging:

- A review of the current charging structure with a view to reducing costs.
 - Improved signage and introduction of a “tap-out” payment option at exit points.
 - Publication of data on income from drop-off and pick-up charges.
 - A fair and accessible appeals process that does not increase penalties for unsuccessful appeals.
3. **To ask the Chief Executive to write** to the Mayor of Greater Manchester and Leaders of the other 9 GM Local Authorities to share this motion seek wider regional support.

11

Notice of Opposition Business

(time limit 30 minutes)

Motion 1: Werneth Park Music Rooms – Community-Led Regeneration and Asset Transfer

To be Moved by Councillor Ibrahim

To be Seconded by Councillor Akhtar

This Council Notes:

Historical Significance

The Grade II listed Werneth Park Music Rooms is one of Oldham’s most significant historic buildings.

Located in Werneth Park – Oldham’s second most eminent Victorian park – it has served local communities since the 1930s, when it was gifted to the Borough under covenants requiring continued community use.

Long-Term Closure and Decline

The Music Rooms were closed in 2001 due to budget cuts.

Since closure, the building has remained derelict, suffering extensive vandalism and deterioration, driving up potential refurbishment costs.

Responsibility for the building currently sits within Environmental Services, and the Council continues to incur annual costs of approximately £125,025 for a building that remains closed and unused.

Evidence of Community Need and Previous Work

· A 2002 SRB6-funded study identified a shortage of community facilities in Werneth and Freehold and found strong resident support for restoring the Music Rooms.

- A feasibility study in 2007 estimated renovation costs in the region of £2.85m–£4.1m, and a steering group was subsequently formed to progress a Heritage Lottery Fund bid.
- There has been no updated feasibility or options appraisal work for nearly a decade, despite continuing community interest.

Current Position and Financial Context

Continuing to pay to hold a derelict listed asset represents poor value for money for Oldham residents, especially in the context of severe financial pressures on the Council.

Funding Opportunities

The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) currently offers grant routes from £100,000 to £5 million, which are well suited to the restoration and reuse of derelict historic buildings.

- The Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) provides development funding and support for community-led heritage schemes, including business planning and governance development.

Taken together, these funds provide a realistic route to securing the capital required for restoration, provided there is strong community involvement and a clear, sustainable business model.

Vision for the Music Rooms

The music rooms could benefit the local community by offering:

- A permanent curated exhibition space for Oldham's cultural heritage;
- A community tea room and social space; and
- A flexible events and performance venue for music, arts, learning and community activity.
- Regeneration would create employment and apprenticeship opportunities, support local suppliers, and enable partnerships with major cultural institutions.

This Council Believes:

Werneth Park Music Rooms is an iconic historic building and a symbol of Oldham's cultural heritage; its continued dereliction sends a damaging message about Oldham's commitment to its history and its parks.

This Council Resolves To:

- 1.Support in Principle any suitable Community-Led Regeneration of Werneth

Park Music Rooms

2. Explore all options that could be applicable for this building to bring it back into use for the community,
3. Work proactively with interested community organisations and Greater Manchester Building Preservation Trust to explore viable options for the future of Werneth Park Music Rooms and to support in any way possible.
4. Request that relevant officers prepare a progress report back to Council Within 6- 12 months setting out any progress that can be reported upon to Full Council regarding this building:

Motion 2: Fair funding for Local Government

To be Moved by Councillor Al-Hamdani

To be Seconded by Councillor Harkness

This Council Notes:

- Local councils across England face unprecedented financial pressures after more than a decade of real-terms funding cuts from central government.
- Demand for key services such as adult social care, children's services, and housing support has risen sharply during this period.
- The Liberal Democrats have consistently campaigned for fair funding for local government, recognising that councils are best placed to understand and respond to the needs of their communities.
- The government's ongoing failure to deliver a fair and transparent local government finance system has led to significant inequalities between different areas, undermining local accountability and the ability of councils to plan for the long term.

This Council Believes:

- Local government is essential to delivering strong, healthy, and prosperous communities.
- Councils should be properly funded to meet the needs of their residents, and funding should reflect need, deprivation, and local circumstances, not political favouritism or outdated formulas.
- Local authorities should have greater financial autonomy, including the ability to raise and retain more of their own revenue.
- Investment in prevention and local services saves money in the long term, reduces demand on the NHS and emergency services, and supports local economic growth.

This Council Resolves to:

1. Call on the Government to urgently reform local government funding by:
 - Introducing a fair funding formula that reflects actual local need and deprivation levels.
 - Restoring revenue support grant and other core funding streams to

sustainable levels.

- Providing multi-year settlements to allow councils to plan ahead with confidence.
 - Giving local authorities greater freedom to raise and retain local revenue, including through reform of council tax and business rates.
2. Write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and to local MPs, outlining this council's support for a fair funding system for local government.
 3. Work with the Local Government Association (LGA) and other partners to lobby collectively for fair and sustainable funding.
 4. Publicise this motion to residents and local media to raise awareness of the impact of government underfunding on local services.

Motion 3: Ensuring Statutory Scrutiny and Enforceability for Places for Everyone Masterplans

To be Moved by Councillor Sharp

To Be Seconded: Councillor Lancaster

Council notes:

1. That Places for Everyone (PfE) forms part of Oldham Council's adopted planning policies, though opposition groups opposed Oldham's involvement.
2. That PfE policies for Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss require development to "*be in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan and design code as agreed by the local planning authority,*" implying robust, enforceable guidance.
3. That the Beal Valley-Broadbent Moss masterplan is currently being pursued as a non-statutory document – meaning a document that is merely "*agreed*" by Cabinet without statutory public consultation under Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, without a sustainability appraisal, and without formal adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
4. That Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 19) and the 2012 Regulations provide statutory weight as material considerations, ensuring greater transparency and enforceability.
5. That a non-statutory approach carries lesser weight in planning decisions, potentially undermining PfE compliance and resident protections for complex sites like Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss (e.g., infrastructure needs, contamination risks, landslide issues).

Council believes:

1. That masterplans for PfE sites must undergo statutory processes to deliver enforceable policies, public scrutiny, and alignment with the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. Residents deserve binding safeguards for large-scale developments, especially where opposition exists.
3. Shifting to SPD status enhances certainty without delaying delivery, avoiding legal risks from inadequate processes.

Council resolves:

1. That the Beal Valley-Broadbent Moss masterplan (and future PfE masterplans) shall be pursued and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), requiring:
 - Council-led public consultation (min. 4 weeks, Regulation 12);
 - Sustainability appraisal;
 - Formal adoption by Cabinet, with Overview and Scrutiny Committee review.
2. The Monitoring Officer shall:
 - Confirm the masterplan's progression to SPD status within 3 months;
 - Advise on any procedural adjustments;
 - Ensure no non-statutory "agreement" precedes SPD adoption.
3. All PfE-related planning applications shall reference the adopted SPD as a material consideration, decided by the Planning Committee or delegated officers, with full transparency.
4. Officers to report progress to the Cabinet meeting in January, including timelines for consultation and adoption.

Motion 4: Don't Trash Oldham

To be Moved by Councillor Quigg

To be Seconded by Councillor Ball

We will not be going into a long preamble in this motion; we shall instead present facts in order not to waste time or words in order to address the criminal scourge of fly tipping.

This Council notes:

- That a recent freedom of information request (22938) stated that NO cost benefit analysis has been carried out in any of the years that 'Don't Trash Oldham' has operated.
- Noting that most fly-tipped waste was discovered in back alleyways, accounting for 53% of recorded incidents, with 16% being discovered on highways.

- It costs around £2,500 a day to clear fly tipping from our streets when you consider running vehicles, officer time and disposal costs.

- That the per another freedom of information request (21025):

1. The number of fines issued for fixed penalty notices (FPNs) for fly-tipping in each of the following financial periods, 2022/2023, 2023/2024, 2024 to April 2025.

2022/23 – 166

2023/24 – 100

2024 /April 2025 – 168

2. Number of prosecutions pursued for fly-tipping offences in each of the following financial years 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024 to April 2025.

2022/23 – 55

2023/24 – 26

2024/April 2025– 12

3. The total amount of revenue collected from fly-tipping FPNs in each of the following financial years 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024 to April 2025.

2022/23 – £16,730

2023/24 – £12,670

2024 /April 2025 – £20,790

4. The total cost incurred by the council in enforcing fly-tipping regulations, including but not limited to: staffing costs (e.g., enforcement officers, clean-up crews), administrative costs, and legal costs.

2022/23 – £ 739,805

2023/24 – £ 736,606

2024/April 2025 – £ 768,041

5. Waste disposal costs related to fly-tipping Equipment costs (e.g., CCTV, vehicles), any other costs associated with fly-tipping enforcement and removal.

2022/23 – £ 233,151

2023/24 – £ 161,503

2024 /April 2025 – £ 186,961

- Per the Cabinet report dated 18/03/2024, section 3.3.1:

“It has become apparent during the two years the DTO/Betterment campaign has been active that some residents have not embraced the change/recognised the work being undertaken to improve and clean their areas and have continued to fly tip waste. Alleys where gates were introduced to provide community safety, control of the immediate space around the rear of resident's properties, and to prevent fly tipping are still subjected to fly tipping. It is, therefore, evident that the fly tipping is being generated by the properties that back onto the space and alternative models for enforcement (use of CCTV where appropriate) will have to be considered.”

- Per the Cabinet report dated 18/03/2024, sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2:

“Integral to the option approved at cabinet in September 2022 was a targeted approach in the known hotspot locations with enforcement and a dedicated clean-up to influence a sustained behaviour change amongst residents. This focused activity involved consistent enforcement and clean-up work across 5 of

the inner town wards of Alexandra, Medlock vale, St. Marys, Waterhead and Werneth. Coupled with this reactive work, the Enforcement Officers and Environment Marshals served legal notices to ensure private yards are cleared and any defects resolved.”

- Per the Cabinet report dated 18/03/2024, sections 2.2.5:
“The use of mobile CCTV cameras has also been trialled in certain rural locations where repeat fly tipping incidents were reported and investigated. The existence of these overt cameras and accompanying signage did, by their very nature, deter potential fly-tippers.

However, the images captured have so far not identified those responsible, and therefore, officers have been unable to progress a case to prosecution. In one location in particular, the CCTV system was subject to vandalism and theft of the hardware, but in general, where these cameras are installed, there was a reduction in the volume of reports and incidents.”

- Per the Cabinet report dated 18/03/2024, sections 3.2.1:
“It has become clear during the programme that not all members engaged in the process, and in some cases, little or no discussion or programme of work was created. The absence of such engagement, therefore, required officers from Environmental Services to fill the gap, by undertaking work that they felt would benefit the ward. In addition, there was also a change in elected members during the Betterment campaign, and this may have also contributed to the issue. As part of any future campaign and embedding of the improvements achieved, ward member engagement will be key to any success and long-term sustainability.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Carry out a cost benefit analysis of Don't Trash Oldham and produce a report for the next full Council meeting.
- Take a hardline approach to rogue businesses, in particular rogue takeaways, using all legal powers available to either fine, prosecute or close down prolific fly tippers of rubbish in backings and guinnels. Residents and legitimate businesses have a right to live in a clean environment.
- Ensure that Houses of Multiple Occupation are complying with the law and that cases of fly tipping because of tenancy changes or lack of landlord action are dealt with swiftly and severely.
- Expand CCTV to target the worst reports of fly tipping and use better quality equipment to uncover who is responsible for fly tipping to prosecute them.
- Instruct the legal team at Oldham Council produce a report for the next Council meeting which outlines ALL the legal measures available to the Council to prosecute and prevent fly tipping with an estimated cost analysis of each option so that a focus is put on prevention and prosecution, with a zero-tolerance approach.
- Make better use of Community Skips to help reduce fly tipping in adopted/unadopted guinnels and backings.
- That Don't Trash Oldham has become a click and collect service for fly tippers due to cultural, behavioural and criminal attitudes towards fly tipping, that the Council in conjunction with the relevant departments will launch a Zero Tolerance Campaign to target rogue landlords, rogue tenants, serial dumpers

and businesses who dump their waste, naming and shaming fly tippers. It is time the Council got tough on those who trash their own backyards rather than making responsible residents pay the price through higher council tax.

- That Council is given annual reports on the levels of fly tipping and associated costs with clearing fly tipping by ward.

- That a report is created by the next full Council meeting which provides a ward-by-ward breakdown of:

1. Reported cases of fly tipping in each ward.

2. The pounds and pence figure for each ward and associated costs of clearing fly tipping for the years 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

3. A ward by ward breakdown of how often public bins are emptied.

4. The costs and or benefits of restoring fortnightly grey bin collections.

5. The costs and or benefits of charging or not charging for bulky waste collections.

The Council further resolves to:

- Note the Cabinet Report dated 18/03/2024, noting that there are significant problems in “*Alexandra, Medlock vale, St. Marys, Waterhead and Werneth*” wards and that a full analysis is carried out and reported back to Cabinet as to why this is the case.

- That the Council will make sure that all areas of the Borough are treated equally by Oldham Council, when it comes to fly tipping in their ward.

- That prior to the reports being delivered to full Council that the relevant scrutiny committee can examine the above mentioned reports and that the Don't Trash Oldham Campaign is referred to the relevant committee for further scrutiny to measure its effectiveness.

- 12 Outcome of consultation on the introduction of an Article 4 Direction for Houses of Multiple Occupation (Pages 151 - 214)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive, making recommendations arising from a consultation exercise.

- 13 Appointment of Independent Members on the Independent Remuneration Panel (Pages 215 - 218)

To consider the appointment of Independent Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

- 14 Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2024/25 (Pages 219 - 244)

To receive the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2024/25.

- 15 Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25 (Pages 245 - 260)

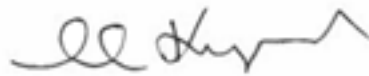
To receive the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Boards 2024/25.

- 16 Treasury Management Half Year Review Report 2025/26 (Pages 261 - 280)

To consider the Council's Treasury Management position – mid-year 2025/26.

17 Update on Actions from Council
 Report to follow.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shelley Kipling', with a stylized, upward-pointing flourish at the end.

**Shelley Kipling
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



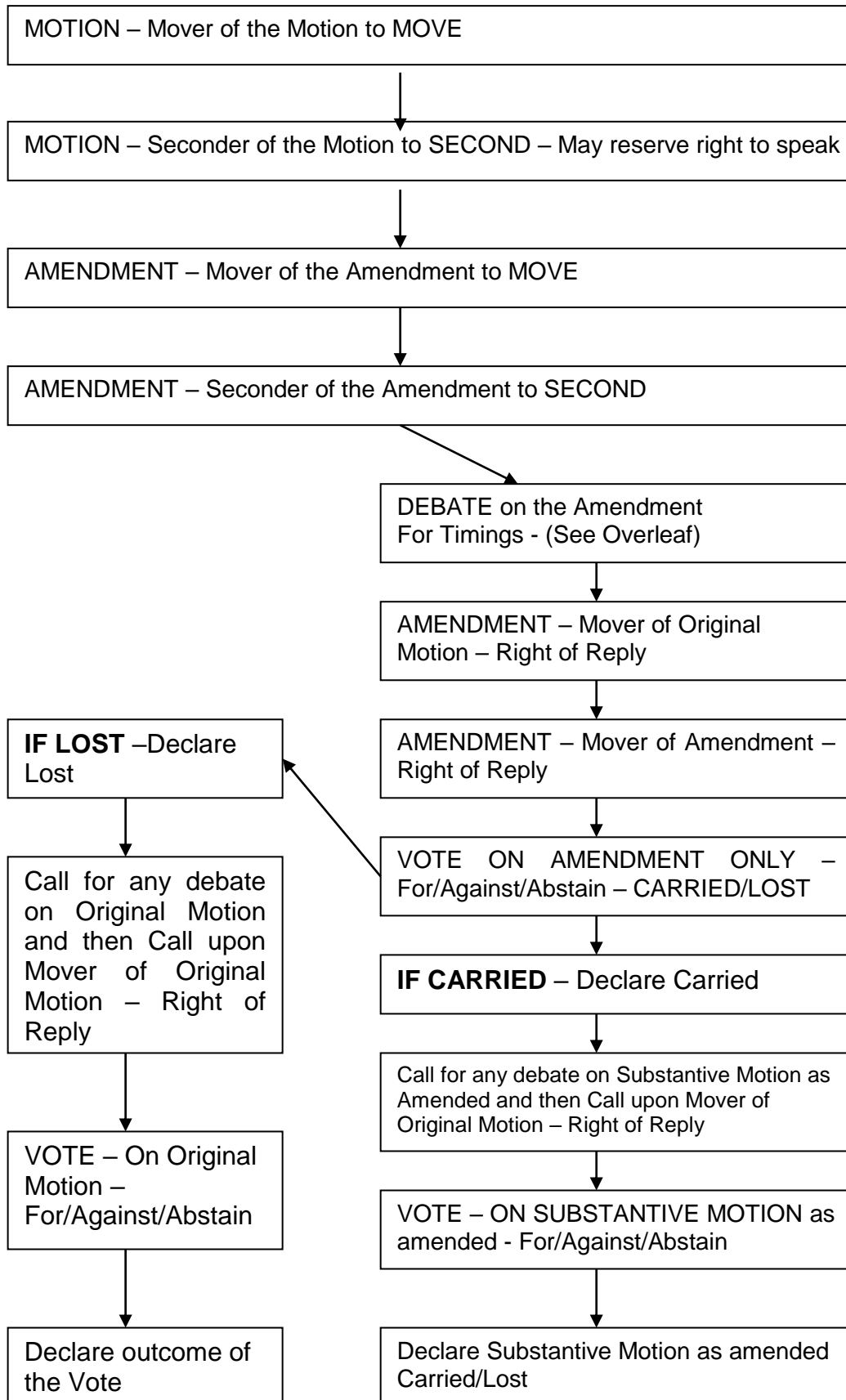
Declare outcome of the VOTE

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



Present: The Mayor Councillor Moores (in the Chair)

Councillors Adams, Akhtar, Al-Hamdani, M Ali, Z Ali, Arnott, Aslam, Azad, Ball, Bashforth, Bishop, Brownridge, Byrne, Charters, Chauhan, 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, Malik, Marland, McLaren, Moores, Murphy, Mushtaq, Nasheen, Navesey, Rustidge, Shah, Sharp, Shuttleworth, Sykes, Taylor, Wahid, Wilkinson, Williamson and Woodvine

1 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lancaster, Quigg and Sheldon.

2 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16th July 2025, be approved as a correct record.

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

Councillor Ghafoor declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 14 (Introduction of Article 4 Direction for Houses of Multiple Occupation) and he left the room during the consideration of this item.

Councillor Hince declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 (Notice of Administration Business – Motion 2 (Setting out our ambition to become a ‘Defibrillator Friendly’ Borough)).

Councillor Bashforth declared a personal interest in agenda item 11 (Notice of Opposition Business – Motion 2 (Oldham Borough deserves a state-of-the-art police station which must include a custody suite)).

Councillor Murphy declared a personal interest in agenda item 11 (Notice of Opposition Business – Motion 2 (Oldham Borough deserves a state-of-the-art police station which must include a custody suite)).

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

The Mayor informed Council that regarding agenda item 14 (Introduction of Article 4 Direction for Houses of Multiple Occupation), there was a note in the supplementary agenda pack, at page 69, which detailed corrections to the report. At page 71 of the supplementary agenda pack there were details of a Liberal Democrat amendment to the report.

Regarding agenda item 17 (Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places), the Mayor noted that a revised and updated report had been published and circulated to Members.

5

TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

The Mayor referred to the recent death of former Christine Dugdale, who represented the Waterhead Ward between 1994 and 2004. Accordingly, Councillors Sykes and Dean addressed Council paying their individual condolences and tributes.

Council held a minute's silence in memory of former Councillor Dugdale.

The Mayor advised that the Chief Executive had been notified that Councillors Ball, Quigg and Wilkinson have formed a new Group and will now sit as Reform UK members, with Councillor Quigg as Group Leader. The Mayor informed Council that an updated report on changes to the political balance will be brought to the next Council meeting.

The Mayor confirmed the current political balance of the Council as follows: Labour – 27 seats, Liberal Democrats – 9 seats, Oldham Group – 9 seats, Conservatives – 4 seats, Reform UK – 3 seats, The Independent Group – 2 seats, Failsworth Independence Party – 2 seats, Royton Independents – 2 seats and Royton Local Group – 2 seats

Regarding agenda item 11 (Notice of Opposition Business), the Mayor noted that the timings for this item be allocated as follows: Oldham Group Motion – 12 minutes and 30 seconds, Liberal Democrat Group Motion - 12 minutes and 30 seconds and the Conservative Group's Motion – 5 minutes.

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 not a Youth Council Motion for this Council meeting to consider.

8

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Question from Dilber Shabir

What is Oldham Councils plan for protecting the rights for the people and families living in a HMO?

Councillor Taylor, Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods replied, thanking Mr Shabir for his question. Oldham Council has a dedicated Housing Options Service which includes a Tenancy Relation's Service.

Any resident or household which needs help, advice and/or support in relation to their housing circumstances can contact the service who would be happy to help. We can offer advice in

person or via the telephone whichever is best for the resident. The resident will be made aware of their statutory rights in terms of tenancy sustainment and should a landlord be acting inappropriately or unlawfully the team can take the necessary action. This can range from ensuring the landlord is aware of their responsibilities and obligations through to undertaking enforcement action where needed.

2. Question from Syed Maruf Ali

I would like to ask the Council what steps it is taking, in partnership with local NHS and public health bodies, to address health inequalities affecting British South Asian communities in Oldham. National NHS data shows only 57% of Bangladeshi/South Asian patients start treatment within 18 weeks, with delays even worse in deprived areas like ours. Many face barriers to access, digital exclusion, and a lack of culturally appropriate care. What targeted work is being done to reduce waiting times, improve access, and ensure fairer outcomes for Bangladeshi/South Asian residents?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing replied, thanking Mr. Maruf for his question.

South Asian communities in Oldham experience notable health inequalities, including higher rates of Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease (CVD), and face barriers to accessing care. CVD risk factors emerge earlier and at lower weights in this population, and local services are under pressure. We are prioritising prevention and early identification to address these disparities.

We work through our **Community Health Champions network**, supported by **Action Together**, to engage anchor organisations and trusted community leaders. This empowers South Asian residents with knowledge about their health and how to access care.

Physical activity is a key focus. We co-develop culturally appropriate opportunities with community groups, embedding activity into daily life and reducing inequalities.

To prevent CVD and diabetes, we support residents to quit smoking and alternative tobacco use and maintain a healthy weight. **Your Health Oldham** provides tailored weight management and cessation services, including work with the **Women's Chai Project**.

The **ICB** and **Oldham Community Leisure** are collaborating on CVD prevention, with culturally aware education and train-the-trainer sessions to build community capacity.

3. Question from Lewis Farnworth

Due to the rise inflation of 3.9 what support will you give to the lowest paid households for example UNPAID CARERS and pensioners as food price continues to rise and the essentials becoming more unaffordable?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing replied, thanking Mr. Farnworth for his question. The cost of living crisis is sadly affecting households across the country.

We launched our 'We Can Help' campaign to ensure we are doing our bit to help here in Oldham. We can support residents to access food including emergency food parcels and vouchers including accessing day to day essentials. We can also support through our Warm Homes Oldham team to keep their homes warm and also offer advice to save on energy bills. Advice is also on hand on claiming benefits and with personal budgeting. Further information is available by visiting the Council Website, by calling the Helpline service on 0161 770 7007 or by visiting one of our Libraries or the Customer Service Centre at Spindles. We encourage this resident to share their contact details and we will arrange a call back from the Helpline Team at a convenient time.

In addition, for those unpaid carers requiring support, our Oldham Carers' Service (led by Adult Social Care) offers a range of free services for unpaid carers across Oldham. If you are having difficulties caring for a partner, family member or friend who could not manage without your help, then you are a carer.

Oldham's Carers' Service can assist with information and advice about:

- Health issues
- Entitlement to benefits
- Equipment and assistive technologies
- Carers rights
- Carers employment issues
- One-to-One Practical and Emotional Support
- Carers Assessments
- Carers Personal Budgets (subject to eligibility)
- Signposting / Referrals to Social Services and Other Providers
- Oldham Carers Emergency Support Scheme
- Access to Carers Support Groups and Networks

I won't read the contact details out but I'll ensure constitutional services publish them so you can get in touch with the ASC Carers Team if need be.

By phoning 0161 770 7777 option 2, via email to ARCC@Oldham.gov.uk or our online referral form here: [Oldham Carers' Services | Oldham Carers' Services | Oldham Council](#)

4. Question from Richard Lowe-Jackson

Given the new EVCI strategy relies on commercially priced on-street chargers, what specific steps will the council take to mitigate the significant financial penalty imposed on the 60% of residents without driveways, many of whom have lower incomes, to ensure the transition to EVs is fair and equitable for all?"

Councillor Goodwin, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport replied

Thanking Mr Lowe-Jackson for his question.

Oldham Council is making several investments in Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure across the borough, which is targeted at residents who do not have the potential to install their own chargers at home.

As portfolio lead, I have asked officers working on the various projects to ensure that costs to residents are kept as low as possible, so the new charging infrastructure will generally be standard speed chargers so that residents are not paying a premium for rapid chargers.

I will also be writing to the government soon, requesting that more support is provided, including funding, lowering VAT rates for public chargers to match the VAT rate for domestic electricity supplies, and to require charge-point operators to pass on off-peak savings on electricity costs to their customers.

5. Question from Jeff Garner

Please could Oldham Council support the residents of Friezland, Greenfield, who lost the 356 bus service immediately after the Bee Network took over in April? This cut off the community by diverting the service elsewhere, due to having insufficient suitable vehicles to negotiate narrow roads. The service previously ran successfully.

I am asking the relevant person at the council to request the Mayor of Greater Manchester to insist that suitable vehicles are found immediately. Then local residents, in particular the disabled and those without cars, can resume using public transport for essential shopping and medical appointments. Five months on and they are still waiting.

Councillor Goodwin, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport replied

Thanking Mr Lowe-Jackson for his question.

We are acutely aware of the impact this matter has had on local residents. Officers have been supporting myself and Cllr Charters as Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport Portfolio in raising this issue with TfGM on a number of occasions.

The most recent response to the Council from TfGM was on 4 September 2025, stating that new vehicles have been introduced and testing is ongoing – it is anticipated that once the vehicle transfers are complete, the 356 service will become operational – at this moment, it is expected to come online week commencing 22 September. TfGM have stated that they will confirm the exact date closure to the time.

The Council will continue to follow-up on this issue on behalf of residents of Oldham, as buses remain a key and important part of our transport network in Oldham.

6. Question from Michael Powell

To ensure good governance and accountability, this Council's leadership must be subject to effective scrutiny. At the previous meeting, just one opposition group leader was able to question the Leader. The other two main opposition leaders could not, and no other councillors were able to directly challenge the Leader either. Scrutiny was also limited when questioning cabinet members, as they appeared to read the reports throughout question time.

Will the Leader of the Council commit to upholding democratic principles by allowing all opposition leaders and councillors to scrutinise her and cabinet members at every Council meeting?

Councillor Jabbar, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Sustainability, replied, thanking Mr Powell for his question.

Effective scrutiny involved the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holders being scrutinised and held accountable by opposition members, so, in this regard, he emphasised the importance of allowing all opposition leaders and councillors to scrutinise her and cabinet members at every Council meeting?

7. Question from Matthew Broadbent

The Beal Valley-Broadbent Moss PFE allocation, covering the wards of Shaw, south Royton, and St. James', will see 1,600 houses built. Places for Everyone requires development to be in accordance with a masterplan agreed by the council. Approval of the masterplan will apparently be solely at the discretion of the cabinet. Given that no party in the chamber has a clear electoral mandate from the people of Oldham to govern and the impacted wards are excluded from cabinet representation, does the Leadership agree that it would be more democratic to let full council decide approval of the masterplan?

Councillor Taylor, Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods replied, thanking Mr Broadbent for his question.

To clarify – the Masterplan, if agreed by the Council, would be an informal planning policy document used to inform consideration of future planning applications. Such planning policy documentation is an executive function under national legislation and the Council's Constitution.

Section 9D of the Local Government Act 2000, any decision-making powers that aren't specifically listed in government regulations as being the responsibility of the full council are automatically the responsibility of the council's Cabinet.

The Local Authorities Regulations 2000 list which functions must be handled by the full council and not by the Cabinet. These include major decisions like setting the budget or approving the council's overall strategy.

In this regard, the Cabinet acts for the whole borough, as planning decisions, particularly those related to the provision of housing and employment land, have impacts beyond local wards and are necessary to ensure all development and infrastructure needs are met across the borough.

8. Question from Pat Cliffe

20mph zones are established in most Saddleworth villages but in Diggle, having Secondary, Primary, and Nursery Schools on the main road, there is, apparently, no progress, despite discussions with councillors, and speeds measured. Proposals are mooted for a scheme at the Secondary School, but not the whole village, where speeding cars are concerning residents, and where there have been two recent significant accidents - one near the Primary School, the other causing the main road to close due to injuries and police investigations. Please could the

cabinet member update on residents' consultation, and commit to a scheme covering the whole village?"



Councillor Goodwin, Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways replied, thanking Pat Cliffe for the question. The Council recognise and supports the need to improve road safety for all the boroughs residents and has been at the forefront of introducing 20mph schemes.

A 20mph speed limit scheme for Diggle, with traffic calming measures in the vicinity of the new school has been developed. The proposals have been discussed with the Ward Members and the Statutory Processes required to consult on and introduce the measures is underway.

The traffic calming measures are funded via a Section 278 agreement with Redrow which is attached to the Planning Consent for the new residential development. At present, there is no funding available for traffic calming features on a larger area. However, the whole village area of Huddersfield Road and residential side roads are included in the 20mph speed limit order. Once the limit has been in place for a couple of months, the Council will carry out speed surveys. If the sign only scheme hasn't achieved the desired reduction in speeds, we will look to install target traffic calming measures which will be consulted upon - these measures will be funded from 2026 Highways Capital Works budget. The public will be able to comment on the proposals when the Legal Orders and Notices are advertised in the next couple of months.

9. Question from Rita Ireland

Who decided on the name change for Oldham Library and did all councillors vote on this?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Growth, replied. Thanking Rita Ireland for her question. Naming buildings, property, parks, does not require a decision or vote by all councillors.

The fact that members of this chamber have claimed they have not heard of John Robert Clynes says more about them. A man who worked in an Oldham cotton mill at ten years old, self-educated, who wrote passionately about the abhorrent conditions of child labour in the textile industry he toiled in. He championed social reforms, including a plan for benefits for widows, orphans, and the elderly, which was later enacted by the Conservative government in 1925. He improved working conditions for miners, settled strikes, improved pay for labourers, deplored fascism and committed his life to making sure the working class were represented.

The fact he worked his way up from his humble beginnings to eventually become Home Secretary in 1929 is extraordinary, and we should all be proud of him, a truly great Oldhamer.

10. Question from Dawn Bardsley

As a resident of Shaw, I speak for residents with regards to the planning application of the 20-bedroom HMO at the former health centre, High Street, Shaw.

Why were residents not given a fair opportunity to sign the official ePetition on OMBC website, which ran without a functioning signature option? • Will the council commit to reopening the petition so that genuine community opposition can be registered and considered? This application is fundamentally flawed, and these questions demand clear answers before any decision is made. Anything less would be a failure of due process and a disregard for Shaw residents.

Councillor Taylor, Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods replied, thanking Dawn for her question. T The Council recognises resident concerns regarding HMOs - however, consideration of a planning application by the council as local planning authority is governed by national legislation, and planning applications must be considered on the planning matters relevant to the particular application.

As a result, the comments on planning matters made within a petition are considered alongside the comments made directly on the planning application by residents when assessing the application, regardless of how many signatures are on the petition.

I am aware that a petition was received containing over 776 signatures opposing the HMO. As this is part of the planning process, it has been shared with officers in planning. There was also an online e-Petition and I am sorry to hear that there might have been an issue with this.

I have asked the Assistant Director of Governance to review the petitions process, and an update will be provided to the Group Leaders.

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

9

QUESTIONS TO LEADER AND CABINET

In respect of this agenda item Councillor Woodvine MOVED and Councillor Byrne SECONDED that Council Procedure Rule Part 4a, section 2.1.3 be suspended, to permit Councillor Woodvine to ask a question to the Leader of the Council, if time ran out on this item. On being put to the vote, the Motion was LOST.

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 (written questions and answers submitted to the Leader and Cabinet Members were attached at Appendix A (and have been published to the Council's website):

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Growth – including the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held 16th June 2025; the minutes of meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 27th June 2025; and the minutes of the meeting of the AGMA Executive Board held 27th June 2025.

Question 1: Oldham Coliseum



Thank you, Mister Mayor

Last December, Councillor Shah made a clear promise to the people of Oldham, that the Oldham Coliseum would be open in time for the 25 Panto season. But we've known for a long time now that we've been unable to keep that promise. The refurbishment of the theatre has been delayed. We're waiting on whatever additional works means, which no one seems interested in explaining, and no date for the reopening has been set.

Mister Mayor, the community fought tooth and nail to save the Coliseum. They shouldn't be left in the dark over its future. A statement about the delays, or delay, but with no details was issued at the start of June. Its months now since I asked the Leader for details of its refurbishment, So I wrote to her at the end of July about these matters and got a non-answer with still no further information. So, since June, three months ago, we're no closer to the answers. So, I'll ask them again tonight. Can the Leader outline the new timeline for completion and when we can realistically expect the doors of the Coliseum to reopen. What are the extra costs required, and what will they cost? And can she confirm whether the budget allocated for this project is sufficient, or are we now looking at potential overspends, further delays or even a scaling back of the plans? Residents, the community, the business community, and everybody deserves some clarity and answers please.

Councillor Shah, the Leader of the Council replied that some of the information requested by Councillor Sykes cannot be shared publicly as it related to commercial activities being undertaken by the Friends of the Coliseum and of other contractors.

Councillor Shah added that the Friends of the Coliseum had asked for more time to be spent on the works, including an extension for additional works to be undertaken. The Leader was, therefore, unable to give a definitive date for the Coliseum's reopening. The Friends Group were aware that the Theatre wouldn't be ready for the 2025/26 Panto season.

Question 2:

Thank you, I thank the Leader for her 'I don't know' answer. My second question, Mister Mayor, is to ask why Labour and their colleagues can't get the basics right. Weeds are running riot across our borough, grids and drains are blocked and in my part of the world, we're told to wait until next May before they'll be attended to, and this just isn't acceptable. In Shaw and Crompton, like elsewhere, we've got weeds growing like it's some rewilding experiment gone wrong. Knee high, unkempt and completely ignored. We've reported them. Residents have reported them, but nothing changes. It's as if the Council's new environmental strategy is just wait for winter or a passing herd of cattle to come and eat them or kill them off. And let's not forget the blocked gulleys, which are overflowing and will need digging out if left to rot, which is the current strategy. It's a flooding hazard. It's an eyesore, and it's a symbol of this administration's

failure and makes our neighbourhoods look uncared and unloved.

Last year, we were told cuts to environmental services officers wouldn't affect frontline services. That was clearly nonsense, wasn't it? Streets aren't cleaned, weeds aren't treated, drains aren't cleared, and the only thing growing faster than the weed under this leadership is public frustration with these matters. So, my questions to the leader tonight are simple. Why can't your coalition get the basic services right, when you admit that your cuts have left neighbourhoods looking neglected and unloved? What will you actually do urgently to clear the weeds, clean the gulleys, and even restore a shed of civic pride to this borough?

Before Councillor Shah was able to answer Councillor Sykes' second question, the Mayor ruled that time had elapsed for this item. Therefore, Councillor Shah undertook to provide Councillor Sykes with a written answer.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Leader and Portfolio Holder reports be noted.
2. That the written questions and answers submitted to the Leader and Portfolio Holders, attached at Appendix A, be noted.
3. That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held 16th June 2025; the minutes of meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 27th June 2025; and the minutes of the meeting of the AGMA Executive Board held 27th June 2025, be noted.

10

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Motion 1: Recognising Palestine and the famine in Gaza

Moved by Councillor Mushtaq

Seconded by Councillor Taylor

Next month will mark two years since the horrific attack of October 7th, leaked data from the IDF's own figures indicate a civilian death rate of 83% in the Gaza war that followed those attacks, causing experts from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) to state "That proportion of civilians among those killed would be unusually high, particularly as it has been going on for such a long time."

When compared to conflicts tracked by UCDP since 1989, only the Rwandan Genocide, the Russian siege of Mariupol and Srebrenica have a higher proportion of civilian casualties. The number of civilians impacted by this war in Israel and Palestine is unpalatable to thousands of people across Oldham. The war is having a profound effect on millions of people worldwide as we witness unimaginable suffering.

This Council notes:

- The UK Government's announcement on 29 July 2025 that it will formally recognise the State of Palestine in September.
- The joint statement issued on 21 July 2025 by UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy and 28 international partners, which condemned the Israeli government's aid delivery model as "dangerous, fuelling instability and

depriving Gazans of human dignity,” and called for an “immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire”.

- The speech delivered by UK Ambassador to the UN, Dame Barbara Woodward, on 23 July 2025, in which she described the Israeli aid system as “inhumane, ineffective, dangerous and fuelling instability,” and called for Israel to end attacks on civilians, cooperate with the UN, and uphold international humanitarian law.
- The official declaration by the United Nations backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and humanitarian agencies that famine conditions now exist in Gaza, with over 640,000 people facing catastrophic food insecurity and millions more in emergency or crisis conditions.
- The IPC concluded that the decision was based on evidence of extreme food deprivation, acute malnutrition and starvation-related deaths.
- That the famine is a man-made disaster, resulting from prolonged conflict, displacement, and severe restrictions on humanitarian access.

This Council believes:

- That recognition of the State of Palestine is a vital step toward a just and lasting peace in the region.
- That the current humanitarian crisis in Gaza demands urgent and coordinated international action to prevent further loss of life.
- That Israel should immediately allow full and unrestricted humanitarian aid agencies into Gaza to immediately address the famine.
- That the UK Government’s recent statements reflect a growing international consensus on the need for accountability, humanitarian access, and a political resolution, but the time for action has never been more apparent given that a famine has been declared.
- That local authorities have a role to play in advocating for human rights, peace, and justice globally as our residents care deeply about these issues.
- That residents across Oldham have displayed their commitment to supporting aid efforts and minimising suffering in Gaza by raising awareness and fundraising for charities.

This Council resolves to:

1. Welcome and support the UK Government’s commitment to recognise the State of Palestine as part of a renewed peace process. Given that the Israeli Government hasn’t complied with the steps outlined by the UK Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in July this Council reaffirms that now is the time for recognition of Palestinian statehood.
2. Endorse the joint statement of 21st July 2025 and the UK’s position at the UN Security Council as expressions of moral leadership and international solidarity.
3. Urge the UK Government to accelerate and expand humanitarian assistance to Gaza, including through

further diplomatic pressure for a ceasefire and unrestricted aid access.

4. Call on the international community to intensify efforts to end the famine and support long-term recovery and governance in Gaza.
5. Write to the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, and local MPs expressing this Council's support for recognition of a Palestinian state and humanitarian action.

AMENDMENT 1

AMENDMENT 1 was MOVED BY Councillor Ghafoor and
SECONDED BY Councillor Wahid.

Next month will mark two years since the horrific attack of October 7th, leaked data from the IDF's own figures indicate a civilian death rate of 83% in the Gaza war **Genocide** that followed those attacks, causing experts from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) to state "That proportion of civilians among those killed would be unusually high, particularly as it has been going on for such a long time." **This level of civilian death is as a result of deliberate ethnic cleansing, collective punishment, deliberate act of forced starvation as a weapon of war consistent with the definition of genocide.**

When compared to conflicts tracked by UCDP since 1989, only the Rwandan Genocide, the Russian siege of Mariupol and Srebrenica have a higher proportion of civilian casualties.

The number of civilians impacted by this war **Genocide** in Israel and Palestine is unpalatable to thousands of people across Oldham. The war is having a profound effect on millions of people worldwide as we witness unimaginable suffering.

This Council notes:

- The UK Government's announcement on 29 July 2025 that it will formally recognise the State of Palestine in September.
- The joint statement issued on 21 July 2025 by UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy and 28 international partners, which condemned the Israeli government's aid delivery model as "dangerous, fuelling instability and depriving Gazans of human dignity," and called for an "immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire".
- The speech delivered by UK Ambassador to the UN, Dame Barbara Woodward, on 23 July 2025, in which she described the Israeli aid system as "inhumane, ineffective, dangerous and fuelling instability," and called for Israel to end attacks on civilians, cooperate with the UN, and uphold international humanitarian law.
- The official declaration by the United Nations backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and humanitarian agencies that famine conditions now exist in Gaza, with over 640,000 people facing catastrophic food insecurity and millions more in emergency or crisis conditions.
- The IPC concluded that the decision was based on evidence of

extreme food deprivation, acute malnutrition and starvation-related deaths.

- That the famine is a man-made disaster, resulting from prolonged conflict, displacement, and severe restrictions on humanitarian access **not a natural disaster but a deliberate act of forced starvation as a weapon of war, consistent with the definition of genocide.**

This Council believes:

- That recognition of the State of Palestine is a vital step toward a just and lasting peace in the region.
- That the current humanitarian crisis in Gaza demands urgent and coordinated international action to prevent further loss of life **is the result of deliberate ethnic cleansing, collective punishment, and mass displacement that demands urgent accountability as well as humanitarian action.**
- That Israel should immediately allow full and unrestricted humanitarian aid agencies into Gaza to immediately address the famine **man-made famine and forced starvation.**
- That the UK Government's recent statements reflect a growing international consensus on the need for accountability, humanitarian access, and a political resolution **failure of moral clarity when they praise "moral leadership" while continuing to arm and politically shield Israel.**
- That local authorities have a role to play in advocating for human rights, peace, and justice globally as our residents care deeply about these issues **and local authorities must not collude in the sanitisation of atrocity crimes. Our residents deserve honesty: this is genocide and ethnic cleansing, not simply a "humanitarian crisis."**
- That residents across Oldham have displayed their commitment to supporting aid efforts and minimising suffering in Gaza by raising awareness and fundraising for charities.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Welcome and support the UK Government's commitment to recognise the State of Palestine as part of a renewed peace process. Given that the Israeli Government hasn't complied with the steps outlined by the UK Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in July this Council reaffirms that now is the time for recognition of Palestinian statehood. **This Council reaffirms that recognition is long overdue and must be accompanied by a full suspension of UK arms sales to Israel and support for international accountability.**
2. Endorse the joint statement of 21st July 2025 and the UK's position at the UN Security Council as expressions of moral leadership and international solidarity **diplomatic progress, while recognising they fall short of calling out genocide and forced starvation by name.**
3. Urge the UK Government to accelerate and expand humanitarian assistance to Gaza, including through further diplomatic pressure for a ceasefire and unrestricted aid access **acknowledge genocide, suspend arms sales to Israel, accelerate and expand**

humanitarian assistance, and demand unrestricted aid access.

4. Call on the international community to intensify efforts to end the famine and support long-term recovery and governance in Gaza.
5. Write to the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, and local MPs expressing this Council's support for recognition of a Palestinian state and humanitarian action **calling not only for recognition of a Palestinian state but also for explicit recognition of genocide, suspension of arms sales, and support for international criminal accountability.**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, 8.4(k) it was MOVED that this Council meeting be adjourned until Wednesday, 12th November 2025 at 4.30 p.m.

On being put to the VOTE, the MOTION was CARRIED.

RESOLVED: That the Council meeting be adjourned until Wednesday, 12th November 2025 4.30 p.m.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and was adjourned at 8.27pm.

COUNCIL

12/11/2025 (reconvened) at 4.30 pm

Councillor Moores (Mayor) in the Chair

Councillors Adams, Akhtar, Al-Hamdani, M Ali, Z Ali, Arnott, Aslam, Azad, Ball, Bashforth, Bishop, Brownridge, Byrne, Charters, Chauhan, 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, Malik, Marland, McLaren, Moores, Murphy, Mushtaq, Nasheen, Navesey, Rustidge, Shah, Sharp, Shuttleworth, Sykes, Taylor, Wahid, Wilkinson, Williamson and Woodvine

On being reconvened the Mayor reminded Council that the meeting on 17th September had been adjourned, approximately 27 minutes into consideration of Agenda Item 10 - Notice of Administration Business – and Council was considering Motion 1 - 'Recognising Palestine and the famine in Gaza'. At the precise time of the adjournment Members were considering Amendment 1 from the Oldham Group.

The Mayor advised that any Member who was not at the meeting on the 17th September could remain in the Chamber to observe this item, however they could not take part in the discussion or vote on this matter as they were not present to hear the full debate, but were able to take part in the remainder of the business on the agenda.

In line with Council Procedure Rule 2.1.6, any motion under debate will be put to the vote and any outstanding motions will be moved and seconded and a vote taken.

Councillor Ghafoor MOVED and Councillor Wahid SECONDED a MOTION to suspend Council Procedure Rule 13.3, to allow for the amendment of the Oldham Group's submitted Amendment to this Motion.

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

COUNCILLOR		COUNCILLOR	
Adams Christine	FOR	Hussain Fida	AGAINST
Akhtar Shoab	FOR	Hussain Junaid	AGAINST
Al-Hamdani Sam	FOR	Hussain Sajed	AGAINST
Ali Mohon	AGAINST	Ibrahim Nyla	FOR
Ali Zaheer	AGAINST	Iqbal Nadeem	AGAINST
Arnott Dave	FOR	Islam Mohammed Nazrul	AGAINST
Aslam Naseem	AGAINST	Jabbar Abdul	AGAINST
Azad Montaz Ali	APOLOGIES	Kenyon Mark	FOR
Ball Sandra	AGAINST	Kouser Aisha	FOR
Bishop Helen	FOR	Lancaster Luke	Absent on 17 th September
Bashforth Marie	APOLOGIES	Malik Abdul	AGAINST
Brownridge Barbara	AGAINST	Marland Alicia	FOR
Byrne Pam	FOR	McLaren Colin	AGAINST
Charters Josh	AGAINST	Murphy Dave	FOR
Cosgrove Angela	AGAINST	Mushtaq Shaid	AGAINST
Chauhan Zahid	AGAINST	Nasheen Umar	AGAINST
Chowhan Naveed	FOR	Navesey Lisa	AGAINST
Davis Peter	AGAINST	Quigg Lewis	Absent on 17 th September
Dean Peter	AGAINST	Rustidge Ken	AGAINST
Ghafoor Kamran	FOR	Shah Arooj	AGAINST
Goodwin Chris	AGAINST	Sharp Beth	FOR
Hamblett Louie	FOR	Sheldon Graham	Absent on 17 th September
Harkness Garth	FOR	Shuttleworth Graham	AGAINST

Harrison Holly	AGAINST	Sykes Howard	FOR
Hince Marc	AGAINST	Taylor Elaine	AGAINST
Hindle Neil	AGAINST	Wahid Abdul	FOR
Hobin Brian	AGAINST	Wilkinson Mark	APOLOGIES
Hughes Jade	ABSENT	Williamson Diane	ABSENT
Hurley Maggie	ABSENT	Woodvine Max	FOR
Hussain Aftab	AGAINST	Eddie Moores (MAYOR)	AGAINST

On a recorded VOTE being taken 19 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the MOTION with 31 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 0 ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore LOST.

Councillor Ghafoor MOVED and Councillor Wahid SECONDED a MOTION to suspend Council Procedure Rule 12.4, to allow for the withdrawal of the Oldham Group's AMENDMENT to the Labour group's Motion.

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

COUNCILLOR		COUNCILLOR	
Adams Christine	FOR	Hussain Fida	AGAINST
Akhtar Shoab	FOR	Hussain Junaid	AGAINST
Al-Hamdani Sam	FOR	Hussain Sajed	AGAINST
Ali Mohon	AGAINST	Ibrahim Nyla	ABSTAINED
Ali Zaheer	AGAINST	Iqbal Nadeem	AGAINST
Arnott Dave	FOR	Islam Mohammed Nazrul	AGAINST
Aslam Naseem	AGAINST	Jabbar Abdul	AGAINST
Azad Montaz Ali	APOLOGIES	Kenyon Mark	ABSTAINED
Ball Sandra	FOR	Kouser Aisha	ABSTAINED
Bishop Helen	FOR	Lancaster Luke	Absent on 17 th September
Bashforth Marie	APOLOGIES	Malik Abdul	AGAINST
Brownridge Barbara	AGAINST	Marland Alicia	ABSTAINED
Byrne Pam	FOR	McLaren Colin	AGAINST
Charters Josh	AGAINST	Murphy Dave	ABSTAINED
Cosgrove Angela	AGAINST	Mushtaq Shaid	AGAINST
Chauhan Zahid	AGAINST	Nasheen Umar	AGAINST
Chowhan Naveed	FOR	Navesey Lisa	AGAINST
Davis Peter	AGAINST	Quigg Lewis	Absent on

			17 th September
Dean Peter	AGAINST	Rustidge Ken	AGAINST
Ghafoor Kamran	FOR	Shah Arooj	AGAINST
Goodwin Chris	AGAINST	Sharp Beth	ABSTAINED
Hamblett Louie	ABSTAINED	Sheldon Graham	Absent on 17 th September
Harkness Garth	FOR	Shuttleworth Graham	AGAINST
Harrison Holly	AGAINST	Sykes Howard	ABSTAINED
Hince Marc	ABSTAINED	Taylor Elaine	AGAINST
Hindle Neil	AGAINST	Wahid Abdul	ABSTAINED
Hobin Brian	ABSTAINED	Wilkinson Mark	APOLOGIES
Hughes Jade	ABSENT	Williamson Diane	ABSENT
Hurley Maggie	ABSENT	Woodvine Max	ABSTAINED
Hussain Aftab	AGAINST	Eddie Moores (MAYOR)	AGAINST

On a recorded VOTE being taken 20 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the MOTION with 27 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 3 ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore LOST.

Council voted on the AMENDMENT 1, submitted by the Oldham Group.

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

COUNCILLOR		COUNCILLOR	
Adams Christine	ABSTAINED	Hussain Fida	AGAINST
Akhtar Shoab	ABSTAINED	Hussain Junaid	AGAINST
Al-Hamdani Sam	ABSTAINED	Hussain Sajed	AGAINST
Ali Mohon	AGAINST	Ibrahim Nyla	FOR
Ali Zaheer	ABSTAINED	Iqbal Nadeem	AGAINST
Arnott Dave	ABSTAINED	Islam Mohammed Nazrul	AGAINST
Aslam Naseem	AGAINST	Jabbar Abdul	AGAINST
Azad Montaz Ali	APOLOGIES	Kenyon Mark	FOR
Ball Sandra	ABSTAINED	Kouser Aisha	FOR
Bishop Helen	ABSTAINED	Lancaster Luke	Absent on 17 th September
Bashforth Marie	APOLOGIES	Malik Abdul	AGAINST
Brownridge Barbara	AGAINST	Marland Alicia	FOR

Byrne Pam	ABSTAINED	McLaren Colin	AGAINST
Charters Josh	AGAINST	Murphy Dave	FOR
Cosgrove Angela	AGAINST	Mushtaq Shaid	AGAINST
Chauhan Zahid	AGAINST	Nasheen Umar	AGAINST
Chowhan Naveed	ABSTAINED	Navesey Lisa	AGAINST
Davis Peter	AGAINST	Quigg Lewis	Absent on 17 th September
Dean Peter	AGAINST	Rustidge Ken	AGAINST
Ghafoor Kamran	ABSTAINED	Shah Arooj	AGAINST
Goodwin Chris	AGAINST	Sharp Beth	FOR
Hamblett Louie	ABSTAINED	Sheldon Graham	Absent on 17 th September
Harkness Garth	ABSTAINED	Shuttleworth Graham	AGAINST
Harrison Holly	AGAINST	Sykes Howard	FOR
Hince Marc	AGAINST	Taylor Elaine	AGAINST
Hindle Neil	AGAINST	Wahid Abdul	FOR
Hobin Brian	AGAINST	Wilkinson Mark	APOLOGIES
Hughes Jade	ABSENT	Williamson Diane	ABSENT
Hurley Maggie	ABSENT	Woodvine Max	FOR
Hussain Aftab	AGAINST	Eddie Moores (MAYOR)	AGAINST

On a recorded VOTE being taken 0 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of AMENDMENT 1, with 30 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 20 ABSTENTIONS. AMENDMENT 1 Was therefore LOST.

AMENDMENT 2

Councillor Al-Hamdani MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED AMENDMENT 2 as follows:

Next month will mark two years since the horrific attack of October 7th, leaked data from the IDF's own figures indicate a civilian death rate of 83% in the Gaza war that followed those attacks, causing experts from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) to state "That proportion of civilians among those killed would be unusually high, particularly as it has been going on for such a long time."

When compared to conflicts tracked by UCDP since 1989, only the Rwandan Genocide, the Russian siege of Mariupol and Srebrenica have a higher proportion of civilian casualties. The number of civilians impacted by this war in Israel and Palestine is unpalatable to thousands of people across Oldham. The war is having a profound effect on millions of people worldwide as we witness unimaginable suffering.

This Council notes:

- The UK Government's announcement on 29 July 2025 that it will formally recognise the State of Palestine in September, unless Israel meets certain conditions.
- The joint statement issued on 21 July 2025 by UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy and 28 international partners, which condemned the Israeli government's aid delivery model as "dangerous, fuelling instability and depriving Gazans of human dignity," and called for an "immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire".
- The speech delivered by UK Ambassador to the UN, Dame Barbara Woodward, on 23 July 2025, in which she described the Israeli aid system as "inhumane, ineffective, dangerous and fuelling instability," and called for Israel to end attacks on civilians, cooperate with the UN, and uphold international humanitarian law.
- The official declaration by the United Nations backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and humanitarian agencies that famine conditions now exist in Gaza, with over 640,000 people facing catastrophic food insecurity and millions more in emergency or crisis conditions.
- The IPC concluded that the decision was based on evidence of extreme food deprivation, acute malnutrition and starvation-related deaths.
- That the famine is a man-made disaster, resulting from prolonged conflict, displacement, and severe restrictions on humanitarian access.

This Council believes:

- That recognition of the State of Palestine is a vital step toward a just and lasting peace in the region, and should not be a bargaining chip in negotiations.
- That the current humanitarian crisis in Gaza demands urgent and coordinated international action to prevent further loss of life.
- That Israel should immediately allow full and unrestricted humanitarian aid agencies into Gaza to immediately address the famine.
- That the UK Government's recent statements reflect a growing international consensus on the need for accountability, humanitarian access, and a political resolution, but the time for action has never been more apparent given that a famine has been declared.
- That local authorities have a role to play in advocating for human rights, peace, and justice globally as our residents care deeply about these issues.
- That residents across Oldham have displayed their commitment to supporting aid efforts and minimising suffering in Gaza by raising awareness and fundraising for charities.

This Council resolves to:

1. Welcome and support the UK Government's commitment to recognise the State of Palestine as part of a renewed peace

process. Given that the Israeli Government hasn't complied with the steps outlined by the UK Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in July. This Council reaffirms that now is the time for recognition of Palestinian statehood.

2. Endorse the joint statement of 21st July 2025 and the UK's position at the UN Security Council as expressions of moral leadership and international solidarity.
3. Urge the UK Government to accelerate and expand humanitarian assistance to Gaza, including through further diplomatic pressure for a ceasefire and unrestricted aid access.
4. Call on the international community to intensify efforts to end the famine and support long-term recovery and governance in Gaza.
5. Write to the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, and local MPs expressing this Council's support for recognition of a Palestinian state and humanitarian action.

On being put to the VOTE ANMENDMENT 2 was declared LOST.

On being put to the VOTE the MOTION was CARRIED.

RESOLVED

This Council resolves to:

1. Welcome and support the UK Government's commitment to recognise the State of Palestine as part of a renewed peace process. Given that the Israeli Government hasn't complied with the steps outlined by the UK Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in July this Council reaffirms that now is the time for recognition of Palestinian statehood.
2. Endorse the joint statement of 21st July 2025 and the UK's position at the UN Security Council as expressions of moral leadership and international solidarity.
3. Urge the UK Government to accelerate and expand humanitarian assistance to Gaza, including through further diplomatic pressure for a ceasefire and unrestricted aid access.
4. Call on the international community to intensify efforts to end the famine and support long-term recovery and governance in Gaza.
5. Write to the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, and local MPs expressing this Council's support for recognition of a Palestinian state and humanitarian action.

Motion 2: Setting out our ambition to become a 'Defibrillator Friendly' Borough

Moved by Councillor Brownridge

Seconded by Councillor Rustidge

Out-of-hospital cardiac arrest is one of the most urgent and time-critical medical emergencies — and without swift intervention, it is almost always fatal. Community defibrillators are a vital public health asset, offering immediate, life-saving support in those critical first minutes before emergency services arrive.

Thanks to the growing number of defibrillators across our borough, lives are already being saved. But we cannot afford to be complacent. The evidence is clear: rapid access to a defibrillator dramatically increases the chances of survival. Every second counts — and every community deserves to be protected.

By working in partnership with local organisations and empowering residents with the tools and knowledge they need, we can make Oldham a national leader, and potentially the first ‘Defibrillator Friendly’ borough in England.

This Council notes:

- Out-of-hospital cardiac arrest is one of the leading causes of sudden death in the UK.
- Around 55 incidents occur per 100,000 people every year, and tragically, eight out of ten of these cardiac arrests happen at home.
- Survival rates remain desperately low, with only around 9% of patients surviving to hospital discharge.
- In these moments, every second counts, early CPR and access to a defibrillator can be the difference between life and death.

This Council further notes:

- Here in Oldham, we face a stark reality: 64 of our community defibrillators are currently offline.
- The local registered charity, Defibrillators Save Lives, has already proven its capability in supporting communities across Oldham, they have installed, maintained, and checked dozens of defibrillators.
- They work directly with the North West Ambulance Service to ensure these devices are correctly registered on The Circuit and activated in an emergency.

This Council resolves to work in collaboration with Defibrillators Save Lives to:

- Map and monitor all public-access defibrillators across the borough,
- Ensure offline devices are repaired, restored or replaced and brought back into service,
- Establish a routine checking and reporting system using The Circuit,
- Provide education and awareness so that residents not only know where defibrillators are but also how to use them with confidence, similar to the hugely success Defib Day they ran in The Spindles 9th August.

This Council further resolves:

- To firmly state our ambition for Oldham to become the first ‘Defibrillator Friendly’ Borough in the England.

On being put to the VOTE the MOTION was CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

1. This Council resolves to work in collaboration with Defibrillators Save Lives to:
 - a. Map and monitor all public-access defibrillators across the borough.

- b. Ensure offline devices are repaired, restored or replaced and brought back into service.
 - c. Establish a routine checking and reporting system using The Circuit,
 - d. Provide education and awareness so that residents not only know where defibrillators are but also how to use them with confidence, similar to the hugely success Defib Day they ran in The Spindles 9th August.
2. This Council further resolves, to firmly state our ambition for Oldham to become the first 'Defibrillator Friendly' Borough in the England.

11

NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS

Motion 1: Provision of Free School Travel for all Children in Temporary Accommodation

Moved by Councillor Akhtar

Seconded by Councillor Chowhan

1. Reason for Motion

To ensure that children living in temporary accommodation (TA) in Oldham are not disadvantaged by their housing situation and can maintain stability in education.

"No child should be punished for their family's housing situation".

2. Background (Latest Facts)

Oldham picture

- At 31 March 2025, there were 562 households in temporary accommodation in Oldham (Table TA4).
- In Q1 2025 (Jan–Mar) there were 310 households with children (748 Children between 0-18) in TA (most recently published government data).
- TA is intended to be short-term (around six weeks), but Oldham data show many households remain beyond 6 months across B&B and nightly-paid placements.
- Composition (Oldham, 31 Mar 2025):
 - o B&B: 173 households (incl. cases over 6 months).
 - o Nightly paid, self-contained: 259 households (many 6–12 months and 1–2 years).
 - o Hostels: 5 | Private sector leased: 87 | LA/HA stock: 38.

National/GM context

- England total: 131,140 households in TA (31 Mar 2025).
- Law already provides free school travel if:
 - a. >2 miles (under 8) or >3 miles (8+), or
 - b. no safe walking route, or
 - c. child cannot walk due to SEND/disability/mobility needs.
- Locally, children with an EHC Plan are supported from a SEN perspective and continue to receive travel assistance where already in place.
- GM operating practice: when a family is in paid nightly TA in another GM borough, they can apply for bus passes

from the host borough, but only if they meet standard distance criteria—leaving a gap for many placed nearer than the mileage thresholds yet far from their original school.

Political momentum: The Manchester Evening News campaign calls for free bus passes for children in TA living >30 minutes' walk from school. As of 25 Aug 2025, six GM MPs publicly back the campaign. No GM local authority has yet adopted a borough-wide concession.

Why discretionary action is needed

Children rehoused (often suddenly) can face long, complex, and costly journeys to their existing school—leading to lateness, absence, and stress.

The statutory mileage rules do not cover many TA cases; discretionary support is therefore required to protect educational continuity.

3. Current Position in Oldham

Oldham complies with national transport duties and supports pupils eligible under distance/safety/SEND criteria. Children in TA who fall short of mileage thresholds (or are rehoused across GM) face a policy gap. Acting now would make Oldham the first GM authority to introduce a dedicated concession for children in TA.

4. Proposal

This Council resolves:

1. To extend free school travel (bus pass or taxi, as appropriate) to all school-aged children living in TA in Oldham, irrespective of statutory mileage thresholds.
2. To instruct officers in Children's Services, Education and Transport to:
 - a. Define eligibility based on verified TA status (including placements within and across GM).
 - b. Develop delivery models (bus passes, pre-approved taxi contracts, or hybrid models), with clear safeguarding standards.
 - c. Assess financial implications and identify funding sources (e.g. Homelessness Prevention funding; partnership with TfGM and operators; targeted charitable/hardship support).
3. To report back to Cabinet within 12 weeks with:
 - a. A recommended delivery model.
 - b. Estimated budget and funding options.
 - c. An implementation timetable aiming to begin before the next academic term.
4. To ensure the scheme embeds safeguarding, equality and inclusion, and aligns with existing SEND/EHC travel assistance so support is continuous where already in place.

5. **Additional resolution** – The Council further resolves to:
 - a. Call on Oldham’s two Members of Parliament to publicly support the campaign for free school travel for children in TA across Greater Manchester.
 - b. Urge the Mayor of Greater Manchester to introduce a region0wide scheme that guarantees free transport for children in TA, ensuring no child is penalised for their families housing situation.

6. Expected Outcomes

- a. Improved attendance and punctuality for children in TA.
- b. Educational continuity and wellbeing during periods of acute housing instability.
- c. Oldham leadership in closing a known policy gap ahead of GM peers.

7. Recommendation

That Oldham Council supports this motion, becoming the first authority in Greater Manchester to guarantee free school travel for children in temporary accommodation, setting a clear and compassionate standard for others to follow.

AMENDMENT 1

Councillor Ghafoor MOVED and Councillor Wahid
SECONDED the following AMENDMENT

1. Reason for Motion

To ensure that children living in temporary accommodation (TA) in Oldham are not disadvantaged by their housing situation and can maintain stability in education.

“No child should be punished for their family’s housing situation.”

2. Background (Latest Facts)

Oldham picture

- At **31 March 2025**, there were **562 households** in temporary accommodation in Oldham (Table TA4).
- In **Q1 2025 (Jan–Mar)** there were **310 households with children (748 children aged 0–18)** in TA (most recently published government data).
- TA is intended to be short-term (around **six weeks**), but Oldham data show many households remain **beyond 6 months** across B&B and nightly-paid placements.
- Composition (Oldham, 31 Mar 2025):
 - **B&B**: 173 households (includes cases >6 months).
 - **Nightly paid, self-contained**: 259 households (many **6–12 months** and **1–2 years**).
 - **Hostels**: 5 | **Private sector leased**: 87 | **LA/HA stock**: 38.

National/GM context

- **England total**: 131,140 households in TA (31 Mar 2025).
- Statutory free school travel where:
 - **>2 miles** (under 8) or **>3 miles** (8+), or

- **no safe walking route**, or
- **SEND/disability/mobility** prevents walking.
- Locally, children with an **EHC Plan** are supported from a SEN perspective and continue to receive travel assistance where already in place.
- **GM practice**: families in **paid nightly TA** in another GM borough may apply for bus passes from the **host borough**, but only if they meet **standard distance criteria**—leaving a gap for many placed nearer than mileage thresholds yet far from their original school.
- **Political momentum**: the *Manchester Evening News* campaign calls for free bus passes for children in TA **>30 minutes' walk** from school. As of **25 Aug 2025**, **six GM MPs** publicly back the campaign. **No GM local authority** has yet adopted a borough-wide concession.

Why discretionary action is needed

Children rehoused (often suddenly) can face long, complex and costly journeys to their existing school—leading to **lateness, absence and stress**. The statutory mileage rules **do not cover many TA cases**; discretionary support is therefore required to protect educational continuity.

3. Current Position in Oldham

Oldham complies with national transport duties and supports pupils eligible under **distance/safety/SEND** criteria. Children in TA who fall short of mileage thresholds (or are rehoused across GM) face a **policy gap**. Acting now would make Oldham the **first GM authority** to introduce a dedicated concession for children in TA.

4. Proposal (Re-ordered to comply with Budget & Policy Framework)

This Council resolves:

1. **To request the Cabinet** to bring forward, within **12 weeks**, a report setting out **options** to improve access to school for children in TA, including (but not limited to):
 - The feasibility of **extending free school travel** (bus pass and/or taxi) to children in TA irrespective of mileage thresholds;
 - Eligibility definitions based on **verified TA status** (including placements within and across GM);
 - Delivery models (**bus passes, pre-approved taxi contracts**, or hybrid), with clear **safeguarding standards**;
 - **Legal, financial and equality** implications (including Section 149 Equality Act assessment);
 - **Funding options** (e.g. Homelessness Prevention funding, partnership with **TfGM** and operators, and targeted charitable/hardship support);
 - An **implementation timetable** (including scope for a time-limited **pilot**).
2. **That no decision to implement** any new concession is taken **until** Cabinet (or Council where required) has considered the report and **identified funding** in line

with the **Financial Procedure Rules** and the **agreed budget/MTFP** (or approved virement/other lawful funding mechanism).

3. **Subject to** such approval and funding being identified, to **proceed to implement** the preferred option, ensuring alignment with existing **SEND/EHC** travel assistance so support is continuous where already in place.

5. Additional Resolution

This Council further resolves to:

- **Call on Oldham's two Members of Parliament** to publicly support the campaign for free school travel for children in TA across Greater Manchester; and
- **Urge the Mayor of Greater Manchester** to introduce a **region-wide** scheme that guarantees free transport for children in TA, ensuring no child is penalised for their family's housing situation.

6. Expected Outcomes

- **Improved attendance and punctuality** for children in TA.
- **Educational continuity and wellbeing** during periods of acute housing instability.
- **Oldham leadership** in closing a known policy gap ahead of GM peers.

7. Recommendation

That Council adopts this amended motion and refers it to **Cabinet** for the options report and subsequent decision in line with budgetary and constitutional requirements.

On being put to the VOTE, AMENDMENT 1 was CARRIED (and became the substantive Motion).

AMENDMENT 2

Councillor Taylor the MOVER of AMENDMENT 2 addressed Council outlining the reasons why AMENDMENT 2 should be withdrawn.

On being put to the VOTE the MOTION was CARRIED and AMENDMENT 2 was withdrawn

On being put to the VOTE, the MOTION, as AMENDED (by AMENDMENT 1), was CARRIED.

RESOLVED

This Council resolves:

1. To request the Cabinet to bring forward, within 12 weeks, a report setting out options to improve access to school for children in TA, including (but not limited to):
 - The feasibility of extending free school travel (bus pass and/or taxi) to children in TA irrespective of mileage thresholds;

- Eligibility definitions based on verified TA status (including placements within and across GM);
 - Delivery models (bus passes, pre-approved taxi contracts, or hybrid), with clear safeguarding standards;
 - Legal, financial and equality implications (including Section 149 Equality Act assessment);
 - Funding options (e.g. Homelessness Prevention funding, partnership with TfGM and operators, and targeted charitable/hardship support);
 - An implementation timetable (including scope for a time-limited pilot).
2. That no decision to implement any new concession is taken until Cabinet (or Council where required) has considered the report and identified funding in line with the Financial Procedure Rules and the agreed budget/MTFP (or approved virement/other lawful funding mechanism).
 3. Subject to such approval and funding being identified, to proceed to implement the preferred option, ensuring alignment with existing SEND/EHC travel assistance so support is continuous where already in place.
 4. That Council adopts this amended motion and refers it to Cabinet for the options report and subsequent decision in line with budgetary and constitutional requirements.

Motion 2: Oldham Borough deserves a state-of-the-art police station which must include a custody suite

Moved by Councillor Al-Hamdani

Seconded by Councillor Marland

The Council notes that:

- With the closure of custody suites at both Oldham and Chadderton, Oldham Borough currently has no dedicated facilities open to process detainees.
- Additional services lost include the Magistrates Court, County Court, and police stations in Failsworth, Chadderton and Royton, with other facilities having no face-to-face service, and access to other sites removed, such as in Shaw.
- Current processes mean that officers are required to process detainees at Tameside, which means additional travel time of over an hour for each arrest.
- The current police station in Oldham has been beyond its service life for a number of years, with the current chief constable in 2021 describing the comparing the building to those in the old East Germany.
- The Chief Constable also noted that: “custody facilities being tethered to the right operating base is really important”.

The Council further notes the most recent report of His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) on custody provision in Manchester,

including that:

- Leadership for custody provision isn't strong enough to make sure the service is provided well and achieves appropriate outcomes for detainees. There is limited prioritisation of custody by senior officers or engagement in how custody is provided. There hasn't been enough improvement since our previous inspection. Significant concerns remain.
- The position is exacerbated by a large increase in the number of detainees entering custody. This makes it difficult for staff to fulfil all their duties and meet detainees' needs.
- The force should deal with detainees promptly and minimise the time they spend in custody by - booking detainees into custody promptly and prioritising them appropriately, especially children and those who are vulnerable; ... and finally, the Council notes that:
- Oldham Council has been in discussions with Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Greater Manchester Police for a number of years over a new site for a police station, with no location having currently been identified.
- Police and Crime Commissioner Kate Green has acknowledged in a written response to enquiries from the Liberal Democrats that: "there is no immediate intention to locate a custody suite in Oldham, but it may be sensible to future-proof the design of the site to enable this in future if needed".

Therefore, the Council resolves:

1. To formally note its position that a new Police Station in Oldham should include appropriate custody provision.
2. Set a target to agree a location for a new police station in Oldham within the next six months. If a location is not agreed within that timescale, to provide a report to the appropriate scrutiny committee detailing:
 - a. The requirements for any location for a new police station.
 - b. Any sites which have been discussed and the reasons why they have not been deemed suitable.
 - c. How the Council proposes to identify and bring forward future sites that meet the requirements for a police station in Oldham.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Aftab Hussain
SECONDED the following AMENDMENT

The Council notes that:

- With the closure of custody suites at both Oldham and Chadderton, Oldham Borough currently has no dedicated facilities open to process detainees.
- Additional services lost include the Magistrates Court, County Court, and police stations in Failsworth, Chadderton and Royton, with other facilities having no

face-to-face service, and access to other sites removed, such as in Shaw.

- Current processes mean that officers are required to process detainees at Tameside, which means additional travel time of over an hour for each arrest.
- The current police station in Oldham has been beyond its service life for a number of years, with the current chief constable in 2021 describing the comparing the building to those in the old East Germany.
- The Chief Constable also noted that: “custody facilities being tethered to the right operating base is really important”.

The Council further notes the most recent report of His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) on custody provision in Manchester, including that:

- Leadership for custody provision isn’t strong enough to make sure the service is provided well and achieves appropriate outcomes for detainees. There is limited prioritisation of custody by senior officers or engagement in how custody is provided. There hasn’t been enough improvement since our previous inspection. Significant concerns remain.
- The position is exacerbated by a large increase in the number of detainees entering custody. This makes it difficult for staff to fulfil all their duties and meet detainees’ needs.
- The force should deal with detainees promptly and minimise the time they spend in custody by - booking detainees into custody promptly and prioritising them appropriately, especially children and those who are vulnerable; ...And finally, the Council notes that:
- Oldham Council has been in discussions with Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Greater Manchester Police for a number of years over a new site for a police station, with no location having currently been identified.
- During these conversations the Council has been clear that any new police station should have custody provision for the Borough and the north-east of Greater Manchester conurbation.
- These conversations have been well received by Greater Manchester Police’s estates team.
- Police and Crime Commissioner Kate Green has acknowledged in a written response to enquiries from the Liberal Democrats that: “there is no immediate intention to locate a custody suite in Oldham, but it may be sensible to future-proof the design of the site to enable this in future if needed”.
- The Council and Oldham’s MPs have called for this too, with Jim McMahon OBE MP recently raising this issue with the Mayor of Greater Manchester directly.

Therefore, the Council resolves:

1. To formally note its position that a new Police Station in

- Oldham should include appropriate custody provision.
2. Set a target to agree a location for a new police station in Oldham within the next six months. If a location is not agreed within that timescale, to provide a report to the appropriate scrutiny committee detailing:
 - a. The requirements for any location for a new police station.
 - b. Any sites which have been discussed and the reasons why they have not been deemed suitable.
 - c. How the Council proposes to identify and bring forward future sites that meet the requirements for a police station in Oldham.

On being put to the VOTE the AMENDMENT was CARRIED

On being put to the VOTE the Motion as AMENDED was CARRIED

RESOLVED

Therefore, the Council resolves:

1. That Council formally notes its position that a new Police Station in Oldham should include appropriate custody provision.
2. That Council sets a target to agree a location for a new police station in Oldham within the next six months. If a location is not agreed within that timescale, that a report be submitted to the appropriate Scrutiny Board of the Council, detailing:
 - a. The requirements for any location for a new police station.
 - b. Any sites which have been discussed and the reasons why they have not been deemed suitable.
 - c. How the Council proposes to identify and bring forward future sites that meet the requirements for a police station in Oldham.

Motion 3: The Old Library: An Anti-Democratic Debacle

Moved by Councillor Woodvine

Seconded by Councillor Byrne

On 16th August 2025 the Leader of Oldham Council, Councillor Arooj Shah, announced she had unilaterally decided to rename the Old Library on Union Street the 'J. R. Clynes Building' to the bemusement of many residents of Oldham Borough.

This follows a £30+ million renovation project, yet the Council Tax paying public of Oldham were not given an opportunity to express their preference on the title that this public building would take.

The Conservative Group on Oldham Council believe this is not only anti-democratic but also shameful.

Therefore, this Council notes:

- That no public consultation took place in the naming

- process of the Old Library building.
- That the Leader of the Council shamefully and willfully excluded democratically elected Councillors and the taxpaying public from the naming process.
- That the first decision to come out of the Borough's new Council Chambers is an anti-democratic diktat by Councillor Arooj Shah, which has no popular consent from the public.

This Council resolves:

1. To reveal all information, including associated costs, in relation to the naming process of the Old Library.
2. To review the naming process and suitability of 'J. R. Clynes' as the title of the building.
3. To consult the wider body of democratically elected Members of Oldham Council from across the Borough.
4. To present a suitable short list of names to the public of Oldham to give them a voice in the naming process of a building which should be the Borough's beating heart of democracy.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Harkness MOVED and Councillor Sykes SECONDED the following AMENDMENT

On the 16th August 2025 the Leader of Oldham Council, Councillor Arooj Shah, announced she had unilaterally decided to rename the Old Library on Union Street the 'J. R. Clynes Building' to the bemusement of many residents of Oldham Borough.

This follows a £30+ million renovation project, yet the Council Tax paying **public** of Oldham were not given an opportunity to express their preference on the title that this **public** building would take.

The Conservative Group on Oldham Council believe this is not only anti-democratic but also shameful.

Therefore, this Council notes:

- a. That there was no process that took place in naming the building. There was just an announcement.
- b. That no public consultation took place in the naming process of the Old Library building.
- c. That the Leader of the Council shamefully and willfully excluded democratically elected Councillors and the taxpaying public from the naming process.
- d. That the first decision to come out of the Borough's new Council Chambers is anti-democratic diktat by Councillor Arooj Shah, which has no popular consent from the public.

This Council believes that the name of the building should have been an opportunity to involve the community and bring people together. There are many people who have provided exemplary service to our Borough, or the name represents the Borough's rich and diverse heritage.

This Council resolves:

1. To reveal all information, including associated costs, in relation to the naming process of the Old Library.
2. To review the naming process and suitability of 'J. R. Clynes' as the title of the building.
3. To consult the wider body of democratically elected Members of Oldham Council from across the Borough and hold a working group to provide a list of suitable shortlist of names for residents to be consulted on.
4. Allow residents to vote for the new name of the Old Library, to give them a voice in the naming process of a building which should be the Borough's beating heart of democracy, and endorse the public's choice with a formal agreement at the soonest Council meeting after the consultation, as a mark of that public voice and in the spirit of democracy.

On being put to the VOTE the AMENDMENT was LOST

On being put to the VOTE the Motion was LOST

12

UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Taylor SECONDED a report of the Executive Director of Resources which updated members on actions taken following the meeting of the Council held on 16th July 2025 and also on any updated responses from meetings held in the previous 12 months.

Further to Minute 11 (Notice of Opposition Business), Councillor Lancaster requested an update on Motion 3: A revision of the 'Don't Trash Oldham' Policy with regards to Gully Clearing, which was approved by Council. Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council replied that the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways would provide a comprehensive update in due course.

Councillor Ball requested an update on the Old Failsworth Library Building that was the subject of a Motion at the Council meeting on 18th December 2024 (adjourned until 20th January 2025). Councillor Shah updated the meeting, advising that progress was being delayed because there were still tenants located in the Old Library Building.

RESOLVED:

That the actions regarding motions and issues from the meeting of the Council held on 16th July 2025, be noted and confirmed.

13

TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2024/25

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Director of Finance, which advised Council of the performance of the Treasury Management function for 2024/25

and provided a comparison of performance against the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators.

Council was advised that the submitted report had been presented to and considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting of 23rd July 2025, the Committee having responsibility for scrutinising all of the Council's treasury management arrangements. The Committee was content to recommend the report to Cabinet for approval, which was granted at its meeting on 8th September 2025 and, in doing so, recommended that Council approve the report

RESOLVED

1. That Council approves the Treasury Management Outturn report for 2024/25 and the Treasury Management activity and Prudential Indicators, as presented in the submitted report.
2. That Council approves the proposed increases in the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit in relation to PFI and Finance Lease debt liabilities as detailed in section 2.5 of the submitted report.

14

INTRODUCTION OF ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION FOR HOUSES OF MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Councillor Taylor MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, which was a response to the motion that was submitted for Council consideration on 16th July 2025, regarding the introduction of an Article 4 Direction on Houses of Multiple Occupation.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Al-Hamdani MOVED and Councillor Taylor SECONDED the following AMENDMENT

(Paragraph 5.1 of the submitted report, currently reads)

"A period of consultation commencing 29 September to 9 November 2025 for 6 weeks is proposed. Following this the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods will then consider whether to confirm the Direction and bring it into effect on 1 January 2026, having considered all consultation comments received"

The amended paragraph 5.1 to read:

"A period of consultation commencing 29 September to 9 November 2025 for 6 weeks is proposed. Following this Full Council will then consider the consultation responses and then request that Cabinet do confirm the Direction and bring it into effect on 1 January 2026, having considered all consultation comments received" It would be correct this matter be a matter of special urgency and the chair of the Place Scrutiny board should agree that this Cabinet decision be exempt from the call in process so that the 1 January 2026 timeline remains".

On being put to the Vote, the AMENDMENT was CARRIED

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

RESOLVED

1. Council notes that a report was presented to Cabinet on 22nd September 2025, outlining recommendations for the introduction of an Article 4 Direction on Houses of Multiple Occupation.
2. Council agrees that a “period of consultation commencing 29th September to 9th November 2025 for 6 weeks, following which, after consideration of the consultation responses, request that Cabinet do confirm the Direction and bring it into effect on 1st January 2026, having considered all consultation comments received” It would be correct this matter be considered as a matter of special urgency and that the Chair of the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board, be requested to agree that this Cabinet decision be exempt from the call in process, so that the 1st January 2026 timeline remains.

15

OLDHAM YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2025/26

Councillor Mushtaq MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Executive Director of Children and Young People's Services that, in accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000', presented the Youth Justice Plan for the Oldham Metropolitan Borough, which was required to be formally approved by the full council.

The full plan was detailed in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

RESOLVED

That the Oldham Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2025/26, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

16

APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR OF AUDIT COMMITTEE - 2025/26

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED that the report, detailing the appointment of a Vice Chair of the Audit Committee 2025/26, be withdrawn from the agenda.

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

COUNCILLOR		COUNCILLOR	
Adams Christine	AGAINST	Hussain Fida	FOR
Akhtar Shoab	AGAINST	Hussain Junaid	FOR
Al-Hamdani Sam	AGAINST	Hussain Sajed	FOR
Ali Mohon	FOR	Ibrahim Nyla	AGAINST
Ali Zaheer	AGAINST	Iqbal Nadeem	FOR
Arnott Dave	AGAINST	Islam	FOR

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

On a recorded VOTE being taken 30 VOTES were cast in FAVOUR of the MOTION with 22 VOTES cast AGAINST and there were 0 ABSTENTIONS. The MOTION was therefore CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

That the report – Appointment of Vice Chair of the Audit Committee 2025/26 be withdrawn from the agenda.

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Executive Director of Resources that requested that Council consider draft proposals for the review of polling districts and polling places, across the Borough of Oldham.

RESOLVED

1. That the submissions made to the Council in respect of the review of polling districts and polling places, be noted.
2. That the polling districts and polling places as set out in the scheme contained in Appendices 1a and 1b, to the submitted report and in the maps found in Appendix 2 to the submitted report, be approved and adopted.
3. That the scheme contained in Appendices 1a and 1b, to the submitted report, be approved and adopted in relation to both Parliamentary and Local Government Elections.
4. That the Council requests that the Electoral Registration Officer makes the necessary amendments to polling districts for the 1st December 2025 electoral register.
5. That authority continues to be delegated to the Chief Executive to make, where necessary, alterations to the designation of any polling place prior to the next full review, in consultation with ward councillors and political group leaders.

The meeting started (after the adjournment on 17th September 2025) at 4.30pm and ended at 5.45pm

Appendix A

Council – 17th September 2025

Item 9 - Questions to Leader & Cabinet

From/Date	To	Question	Proposed Response
Cllr Dave Arnott 11 th September 11:19am	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	· Former Dog and Partridge Pub on Middleton Road Royton	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Arnott.</p> <p>This site was granted planning permission for the development of 14 apartments in 2021 and, whilst there was a start on site, the developer / property owner was unable to complete the development.</p> <p>Unfortunately, this resulted in the half-built apartments remaining in this condition for some time.</p> <p>We understand that the property has been sold and that the new owner intends to complete the development, including discharging the relevant conditions on the planning permission.</p>
Cllr Christine Adams 11 th September 11:19am	Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for	· The Northern Care Alliance NHS Trust	<p>In this Chamber we all know how well our local NHS served us during the pandemic. We all also understand that the level of rising demand it now faces and the pressure to reduce waiting lists also goes alongside 14 years of austerity. NHS staff are facing real</p>

	Adults, Health & Wellbeing	<p>challenges. Whether NHS trust league tables will be helpful to the public is questionable, because hospital performance is not as simple as 'good' or 'bad'. In reality, there is no consistent relationship between how well a hospital trust ranks on its four-hour A&E waiting times and how well it ranks on its 18-week elective waiting times or 28-day faster cancer diagnosis.</p> <p>The Northern Care Alliance has received a ranking of 116 out of 134 hospitals but the NCA has four hospitals in Salford, Bury, Rochdale and Oldham. These rankings don't highlight where the good areas of practice are and where things need to improve or in which part of the NCA. In fact they tell us virtually nothing and certainly nothing we don't already know or understand. So, I am not going to get into an NHS bashing argument in this Chamber; doing so risks undermining confidence in our local NHS services.</p> <p>The ranking is the ranking. It does not change the fact that NHS colleagues continue to work on areas where improvement is needed.</p>
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<p>Cllr Shoab Akhtar</p> <p>11 September 2025 16:26</p>	<p>Cllr Arooj Shah</p>	<p>Can the Cabinet Member responsible for registrars and cemeteries please explain the rationale behind the recent decision to alter the Registrar's office availability to include weekends and bank holidays?</p> <p>Who was consulted in making this decision?</p> <p>Given that a weekend burial service (issuing of green burial certificate) has been successfully provided by two local volunteers, Nazar Hussain and Zaffar Iqbal, for over 20 years without complaint or delay, and was cost-neutral to the Council, can the Cabinet Member confirm:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What assessment was made of the existing volunteer-provided service? 2. What financial implications are anticipated with the new arrangement? 3. Can the Cabinet Member provide assurance that this change represents a long-term commitment and not a potentially reversible budget decision? 	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Akhtar.</p> <p>The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) introduced the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death Regulations 2024 in September 2024. This changes the way in which the causes of death are scrutinized and certified in England and Wales with the introduction of a statutory Medical Examiner system. The changes means that independent scrutiny by a Medical Examiner is a statutory requirement prior to the registration of all non-coronial deaths in England and Wales. The regulation introduces the new medical certificate cause of death to be used by attending practitioners and medical examiners. The General Registrars Office (GRO) stipulate that the medical certificate is required for the Registrars service to issue the 'green form' to enable a burial to take place.</p> <p>The changes resulting from the new regulation has resulted in an updated approach to mirror the hours worked</p>
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Furthermore, would the Cabinet Member join me in formally expressing gratitude to Nazar Hussain and Zaffar Iqbal for their outstanding and dedicated volunteer service to the community of Oldham over the past 20+ years?

by the medical examiner and to ensure that we are delivering a resident focused out of hours service for death registrations that reflect the new regulations, meets the needs of our communities and are also clear and transparent.

To enable this, data from the service was reviewed alongside benchmarking across Greater Manchester.

The Registrars budget has and continues to be in a positive position due to income from fees and charges and the costs associated with this approach at circa £30,000 per annum are met within the services existing budget.

Prior to this change, the service did not have contingency in place resulting in the service manager being required to complete the necessary paperwork outside of working hours when alerted by the volunteer-provided service of a death. The support of Nazar Hussain and Zaffar Iqbal has been much valued and appreciated and as Leader of Oldham Council I contacted them both to express my gratitude. I would like to extend my thanks publicly here tonight

			for their kindness and compassion they have shown to the family and friends of those who have sadly passed.
Cllr Shoab Akhtar 11 September 2025 16:40	Cllr Abdul Jabbar	Could the Cabinet Member responsible for procurement please advise whether Oldham Council will consider incorporating social value clauses into its contracts which are worth several million pounds, requiring contractors and suppliers to contribute to local community projects as part of their corporate social responsibility? Specifically, would the Council explore adopting a model similar to Kent Council and Birmingham City Council's 'Match My Project' portal, which facilitates transparent matching of community organisation requests with contractor and supplier offers, thereby enhancing the visibility and delivery of social value initiatives within Oldham's communities?	The Council currently uses the 'Social Value Portal' platform for recording Social Value achievements against each contract, which is included in procurement processes and provides details to the Supplier about the Social Value Portal. We do have standard social value clauses in our contracts, but the main social value requirement for each commission is set at the tender/ITT stage and performance is then recorded in the Portal. The Social Value approach for the Council was established and is led by procurement colleagues as part of the Commercial Procurement Unit. Currently, we have no details of the 'Match My Project' initiative and how it works in practice, but we would be interested to learn more to establish and understand the logistics, benefits, and cost of integrating such an approach moving forward. This would need to be led as a corporate initiative as Social Value cuts across all Council services as part of the procurement process.

Cllr Josh Charters	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	What are we doing to replicate the positive results of Operation Vulcan and the Community HAF events in other parts of the borough?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Charters.</p> <p>The Council's Community Safety Team utilise the same type of problem-solving approach as Operation Vulcan in each of the district areas. However, it is recognised that the additional police resource that Op Vulcan has brought in cannot be met.</p> <p>Our approach does include joint working with partners from GMP and other statutory and VCFSE sector organisations to fully understand the causes and impact of anti-social behaviour and crime and to develop short, medium and long-term solutions.</p> <p>Wider roll out of similar targeted activities like those deployed as part of Operation Vulcan continues to be a discussion point with key partners including GMP.</p>
Cllr Nadeem Iqbal	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for	Can Cllr Taylor update us on the issues with the planning portal over the last few weeks where residents were receiving error messages when submitting comments on applications?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Iqbal and I'm sorry that residents were receiving the error message from the planning portal.</p> <p>Planning have investigated the issues with the Council's IT team, but they</p>

	Neighbourhoods		<p>have not identified any issues and other comments are being submitted by residents without errors being detected. Officers have engaged directly with some of the residents who were experiencing the problem and have replicated the circumstances and the comments were submitted without any issue.</p> <p>As such, we only suggest that this was a glitch and we continue to advise residents to ensure that they draft their comments in a word document or email before copying them into the portal, to avoid losing their comments should anything go wrong.</p> <p>Should residents find they cannot submit their comment on a planning application online for any reason, they are able to submit their comments via email to planning@oldham.gov.uk</p>
Cllr Holly Harrison	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	Given the report makes reference to abandoned vehicles, can Cllr Taylor outline the process and timeline for having them removed?	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Harrison.</p> <p>When an abandoned vehicle is reported to the Council, our first obligations are to check the vehicle against the legislation, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No registered keeper on DVLA's database and it is untaxed

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been stationary for a significant amount of time • It is significantly damaged, run down or unroadworthy, for example has flat tyres, missing wheels or broken windows • It is burned out • A number plate is missing <p>Only one of these criteria needs to be met, and then efforts are made to contact the owner.</p> <p>If the owner is found, the Council can issue a fixed penalty fine of £200 for the offence.</p> <p>If the owner cannot be identified or located, a legal notice will be issued, giving them a period of time to remove the vehicle (7 days if on the Highway and 15 days for private land).</p> <p>If the vehicle is not claimed within these timescales, the Council has a duty to remove the vehicle and store it for a period of time, before disposal – all costs are claimed back from the owner.</p>
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Cllr Junaid Hussain	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability	<p>Can the Cabinet Member explain how the feedback gathered through the OPAN workshops is shaping our approach to the new Crisis and Resilience Fund?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Hussain.</p> <p>I welcome the Government's commitment through the new Crisis and Resilience Fund in providing what we understand will be a multi-year settlement to help support the most financially vulnerable residents in our borough. The Government has advised Council's that scheme guidance and funding allocations will be shared at a later date. As soon as we receive this, the planning will start to make the most of this vital funding here in Oldham.</p> <p>Understanding and acting on the lived experiences of residents is at the centre of our approach in delivering a resident focus. I would like to extend my personal thanks to Oldham Positive Action Network (OPAN), Action Together and the lived experience commissioners for their invaluable time and contributions. An initial workshop takes place next week. It will focus on listening to experiences of navigating support and services and understand how improvements can be made to ensure residents seek advice and support at the earliest opportunity. Further</p>
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			workshops will be helped as the findings are gathered and we are committed to work with OPAN and others partners to reshape our financial support offer as the details of the Crisis and Resilience Fund become clearer.
Cllr Colin McLaren	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability	How are we using the success of our graduate and early careers programmes to promote the Council as an employer of choice for local people?	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr McLaren.</p> <p>We are proud of our continued efforts to build career pathways into employment for local people.</p> <p>We have actively promoted success stories on social media – notably LinkedIn – of individuals who have undertaken T Levels at the Council.</p> <p>We use existing and available opportunities to showcase success stories and opportunities to our local people. For example, we have a presence at the Get Oldham Working Jobs Fair on 18th September which will promote career pathways and available roles at the Council.</p> <p>We have promoted our good work across Greater Manchester and have been identified as an organisation of good practice against the GM Inclusion Standards for this work. We</p>

			<p>have agreed to showcase our work at GM level at a webinar later in the year.</p> <p>Looking forward, we are determined to, build on this momentum. We will continue to create more opportunities for Oldham residents by deepening engagement with schools, colleges and the VSFE sector, working with Jobcentre Plus and other partners and expanding our early careers pathways – from T Levels and apprenticeships through to graduate programmes and work placements, ensuring there are routes into every area of the organisation.</p> <p>We continue to be relentless in our ambition to create opportunities for the people of Oldham.</p>
Cllr Umar Nasheen	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability	Could we hear how the Council is building on its strong performance in Council Tax collection and benefit take-up campaigns to support more residents?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Nasheen.</p> <p>We've had a strong start to Council Tax collection this year, and I want to thank all the residents who continue to pay on time, especially given the financial pressures many are facing. We know that more households are struggling financially, which makes collecting payments more challenging. Despite this, we're committed to keeping up our strong performance</p>

while offering support to those in genuine hardship. We're also reviewing our processes to make things easier for residents, improving the customer experience, making sure bills are accurate, and collecting payments earlier to help the Council manage its finances more effectively.

We are preparing for the Winter to support residents to maximise their income. Building on the success of last winter's Pension Credit campaign which saw over £1.7 million extra in the pockets of Oldham residents over the average life expectancy of claimants, we are once again writing to and calling residents who may be eligible and offering support to make an application for this vital benefit. We will also be looking to maximise attendance allowance later this year and into early 2026 alongside Healthy Start vouchers into Spring next year.

I'd like to take this opportunity to make my message loud and clear – if you think you are entitled to benefits be it pension credit, attendance allowance, housing benefit, Council Tax Support or healthy start vouchers – please do not hesitate to claim The money is

			rightfully yours and could make a big difference to your life.
Cllr Junaid Hussain	Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	Could the Cabinet Member share how we are celebrating and building on the positive feedback from Ofsted to maintain momentum for improvement?	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>We plan to celebrate the positive feedback from the Ofsted focused visit with our workforce and partners at our annual Children's Services conference in early 2026.</p> <p>The areas of recommendation have been incorporated into our Achieving Excellence Action Plan. Progress is reviewed by the leadership team on a quarterly basis and reported to Children and Young People Scrutiny Board bi-annually to ensure momentum continues in improving outcomes for our most vulnerable children, young people and their families.</p>
Cllr Pete Davis	Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	How are we continuing to strengthen outcomes for care leavers, particularly following the co-production of the new Pathway Plan?	<p>Thank you for this question.</p> <p>We are very proud of our leaving care service and the work the service has done to encourage and promote the voice and influence of young people, including the co-production of the new pathway plan. The goal of the revised pathway plan is to provide young people with a more visible plan that they can use in their day-to-day lives,</p>

			<p>with the support of their Personal Adviser. We strive to ensure young people are involved in all our initiatives, which include enhancing our offers from Get Oldham Working and with Housing services. This year our Leaving Care Football Team has grown from strength to strength including playing in a national tournament and being nominated for participation awards. This in turn is an excellent place to capture views and influence service development.</p>
Cllr Josh Charters	Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	Can the Cabinet Member tell us whether there are plans to expand Mockingbird Hubs or other innovative foster care initiatives across Oldham?	<p>Thank you for the question.</p> <p>We are extremely pleased with the progress the Mockingbird initiative has made. We now have three hubs in operation, with a plan to open a fourth this financial year. In addition, we plan to open a further two Hubs in 2026/27 in order to complete the Mockingbird offer. Feedback from Foster Carers is consistently positive and we have seen increased stability in children's placements.</p> <p>We continue to think creatively and strive to recruit and retain as many foster carers as possible. Initiatives include a targeted campaign to step down children in residential care into</p>

			<p>foster care, an enhanced offer for Special Guardians and the annual awards event, celebrating the longevity and achievements of our foster carers. This year included a foster carer who has fostered for over 30 years with the Council.</p>
Cllr Abdul Malik	Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing	<p>Could the Cabinet Member tell us how Oldham's achievement of micro-elimination of Hepatitis C is being shared as an example of national best practice?</p>	<p>Hepatitis C is a blood borne virus which if left untreated can lead to serious damage to the liver and can be life-threatening. It is really important that we test and find cases of Hepatitis C and treat them. In 95% of cases it is entirely treatable.</p> <p>It is an important achievement for Turning Point as our Drugs and Alcohol Treatment provider to have achieved Micro Elimination of Hepatitis C. This means that they are offering and providing testing to their clients, and ensuring that they complete their treatment. Turning Point work regionally and nationally to share their good practice and we have shared details with the Department of Health and Social Care.</p> <p>The Micro Elimination achievement is reviewed six monthly and so the work continues.</p>

Cllr Ken Rustidge	Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing	<p>How are we engaging residents and care providers as we prepare to recommission the Care at Home and Extra Care Housing frameworks?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Cllr Rustidge.</p> <p>Oldham Council is committed to ensuring that both residents and providers are fully engaged as we prepare to recommission the Care at Home and Extra Care Housing frameworks.</p> <p>For residents, initial communications were issued on 8th August to those currently receiving Care at Home and Extra Care services, advising them of the forthcoming re-tender process.</p> <p>Alongside this, a resident questionnaire was circulated to capture feedback on their experiences, priorities, and suggestions for improvement. Residents have also been invited to express an interest in taking part in the evaluation and moderation stage of the tender, ensuring that the lived experience of service users directly informs Adult Health and Social Care commissioning decisions. We will continue to provide residents updates as the process develops.</p> <p>For providers, a market engagement event was held on 26th June and advertised widely through The Chest</p>
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			<p>(the council's procurement portal), giving providers the opportunity to understand our commissioning intentions, ask questions, and help shape the specification. Clarifications raised during and after the event were published on The Chest to ensure transparency. We plan to hold a further engagement session with providers to go through the new specification in detail, explain the bidding process, and answer any additional queries. Alongside these sessions, providers will also be able to submit questions via The Chest during the tender process itself to ensure fair and open communication.</p> <p>This two-way engagement with both residents and providers helps to ensure that the recommissioned frameworks reflect local needs, promote quality, and deliver improved outcomes for Oldham residents.</p>
Cllr Naz Islam	Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member	Can the Cabinet Member update us on how local communities are being involved in the planning of the Saddleworth and Chadderton Health Centre projects?	<p>Both these projects are being led by NHS colleagues.</p> <p>In terms of Saddleworth, it is currently technical work looking at what options exist. The NHS team is committed to working up a business case but before</p>

	for Adults, Health & Wellbeing		<p>that can be done, the options need to be considered and narrowed down. That work is underway now</p> <p>In terms of Chadderton the focus is on understanding the current lifespan of the building. Reclassifying the building as coming to the end of its lifespan is helpful as it now means the building owner which is NHS Property Services will engage in starting to develop a plan for the future</p> <p>We are not anywhere near engaging communities on the design of buildings on either project yet.</p>
Cllr Nadeem Iqbal	Cllr Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member for Education & Skills	Could the Cabinet Member tell us how the Local Inclusion Support Offer is being rolled out to ensure every school has access to practical help and advice?	<p>We are pleased to be working with the Department for Education on piloting the development of a Local Inclusion Support Offer (LISO).</p> <p>In Oldham we will roll out the LISO by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ordinarily Available Provision – ensuring all mainstream schools/settings have excellent quality provision in place (as standard) for children with SEND. 2. Early and Targeted Support – further support for school staff to identify a child's additional

			<p>needs and access timely help without needing an EHCP.</p> <p>3. Specialist Support Pathways – clear pathways for school access to specialist services through an expansion of the work we are already doing with Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC) and our Mental Health Support Teams in schools.</p>
Cllr Holly Harrison	Cllr Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member for Education & Skills	What work is being done to celebrate this year's Key Stage 2 results and share best practice with schools that still face challenges?	<p>We welcome the Oldham 2025 Key Stage 2 results which shows that our children's reading, writing & mathematics rate increased by 2.2% since 2024, compared to an increase across England of 1.1%. We're pleased that the results show a reduction in the gap between the rate for girls and boys, and for children who access free school meals and those who don't.</p> <p>The Assistant Director for Education & Early Years shared congratulations with the primary headteacher executive group.</p> <p>The School Improvement Partner programme shares best practice with targeted schools facing challenges.</p>

			There is further to go with literacy, so we are focussing on Reading as the priority this year.
Cllr Colin McLaren	Cllr Peter Dean – Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure	Could the Cabinet Member tell us whether there are plans to expand the Time Trek Heritage Trail to reach schools and visitors from outside the borough?	<p>Thank you Cllr McLaren for your question.</p> <p>Originally scheduled to run until June 2026, the Oldham Time Trek has been extended to June 2027 thanks to funding from the High Street Accelerator Partnership.</p> <p>The free, family-friendly heritage trail has been marketed extensively across the borough and the rest of Greater Manchester using fliers, press releases, social media posts and website updates since the launch event in June.</p> <p>In the autumn, the trail will be complemented by up to 20 new stops across Oldham town centre. The QR codes at the new stops will give residents and visitors free access to brand new audio histories by Jeremy Sutcliffe from the Oldham Area Civic Society, and original poems and mini plays by local theatre company Dare to Know Theatre.</p>
Cllr Pete Davis	Cllr Peter Dean –	How are we encouraging more residents to use our newly	Thanks for your question Cllr Davis.

	Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure	refurbished libraries and leisure centres as key community hubs?	<p>As vital district community hubs, our libraries are being used by multi-disciplinary teams and services, and we are working closely with the Customer and District Teams to co-ordinate and promote activity. Plans for a clear communicated core offer is being developed with the marketing and communications teams.</p> <p>Northmoor and Oldham Library have been newly refurbished. Northmoor library re-opened following refurbishment on Sat 9th August. We held an official opening event that was publicised including a leaflet drop to homes in the locality. We continue to programme a range of sessions and activities to encourage use including English conversation classes, coding club sessions, and bounce and rhyme. Colleagues from the Oldham Council District Team attend Northmoor Library every other Tuesday, 2-4pm to offer support, advice and signposting. Coming soon – our community garden will be a fantastic resource that we anticipate will attract interest and participation from local residents.</p> <p>Oldham Library refurbishment is almost complete – we have introduced flexible shelving, improved wayfinding</p>
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signage, a new refreshed welcome desk and retail space and increased study and meeting pods. All study tables have access to power for residents who bring in their own devices to study/work.. A new 360° virtual tour and prominent way-finder signage have significantly improved the accessibility of Oldham Library, making it a more neurodiversity-friendly service for use by Oldham residents and partner services working with people with additional needs and disabilities.

We are still finalising the refurb at Oldham Library, with chip and pin payments for Wi-Fi printing to be introduced and digital signage. We are planning a social media marketing campaign, press release and a series of events to promote use in the coming days and weeks.

We have already held a health forum event with over 20 stall holders, illustrating how we can flexibly use the space to hold large events. As vital community hubs we are welcoming groups to the space including Speak English Together, Visually Impaired

			<p>Hearing Group, Brews, Biscuits and Banter, and Reading Friends Groups.</p> <p>Working with a range of partnership organisations the newly remodelled spaces will also host numerous targeted offers and interventions welcoming new and existing audiences to the libraries. Sessions include TOG Mind appointments, POINT Parent drop-ins, Action Together information stalls, Pure Innovations - Individual Placement & Support Service, the Menopause Cafe', Oldham writer's group and the Oldham Microscopical society, to name but a few.</p> <p>We are also working closely with the Youth Service and Family Hubs to bring more family programming to our libraries.</p>
Cllr Saj Hussain	Cllr Fida Hussain – Cabinet Member for Enterprise	How are we encouraging local businesses to make the most of supply chain opportunities created by major projects such as Muse's housing development?	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>We are keen to ensure that local businesses benefit from the investment the council and its partners are making in the borough.</p> <p>Last month one of the council's major developer partners held a supply chain briefing at The Hive to let local</p>

			<p>businesses know about the upcoming opportunities.</p> <p>Next week Wilmott Dixon are also hosting a supply chain event at the Hive with details of all their forthcoming projects across Greater Manchester.</p> <p>And there are plans emerging for another event in the coming months for another developer partner. These events are well attended and many opportunities for supply chains, services and materials are available.</p> <p>We continue to encourage all local businesses to attend and to connect into these opportunities.</p>
Cllr Nadeem Iqbal	Cllr Fida Hussain – Cabinet Member for Enterprise	Can the Cabinet Member share how we are celebrating the success of Get Oldham Working to inspire more residents to take part?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Iqbal.</p> <p>We're working hard to showcase Get Oldham Working's impact and encourage even more residents and employers to get involved. Our approach includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent evaluation – an external review is underway to evidence our impact, improve what we do and showcase outcomes.

- **Developing customer engagement and feedback** – we're working with a local drama social enterprise to co-create a production telling the story of residents supported by GOW.
- **Sharing case studies and success stories** through our website and social media channels to show how local people have benefitted.
- **Running high-profile events** – for example, our large **Jobs Fair this Thursday at Queen Elizabeth Hall** with over **60 employers** and an expected **3,000 visitors**.
- **Raising GOW's profile at local events** – we were the **match sponsor for Oldham Athletic vs Bromley** last weekend, highlighting GOW to thousands of fans, and we're also **sponsoring the Oldham Business Awards on 3 October**.
- **Celebrating key milestones internally and externally** – such as opening a **third**

			<p>therapy room, now offering up to 100 hours of counselling support per week to help residents overcome barriers to work.</p> <p>Together these actions both celebrate our success and actively drive more residents and businesses to engage with GOW.</p>
Cllr Naz Islam	Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways	Could the Cabinet Member tell us how we are ensuring Oldham's voice is heard as part of the GM Rail Vision and Tram-Train Pathfinder scheme?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Islam.</p> <p>Oldham's Strategic Transport Team maintains regular and proactive contact with colleagues at Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), making sure that the views and needs of our residents are consistently represented across all transport matters.</p> <p>Our Transport Lead has played an active role in shaping the new GM Rail Vision, contributing directly to its drafting and formation through both the monthly meetings. This involvement will continue as we move into the next phase, helping to develop the strategies that will underpin the</p>

			<p>vision and ensure it delivers for Oldham.</p> <p>We are also working closely with TfGM on the Tram-Train Pathfinder initiative. The Oldham team is actively encouraging regular engagement and collaboration to ensure that this innovative scheme reflects local priorities and opportunities.</p>
Cllr Saj Hussain	Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways	Can the Cabinet Member update us on how we are keeping residents informed about pothole repairs and drainage improvement works across the borough?	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>The Council's Highways inspection team monitors the condition of all 800km of adopted highways across the borough through a range of inspection frequencies.</p> <p>These inspections are carried out according to nationally agreed standards and timescales with any safety defects including "potholes" being identified for repair. The repair of these identified defects are prioritised according to severity and then actioned by Highways Operations over nationally agreed timescales ranging from 2 hrs to 28 days.</p>

In addition, resident reports regarding highways issues, including potholes, are added to inspection lists, with residents and members being informed of outcomes directly.

These processes happen in parallel and are in addition to the annual capital programme of highways works where capital funds from central government are targeted towards those roads needing complete surfacing and surface treatments to prevent potholes forming in the first place.

The Council is currently approximately halfway through its gully cleaning programme of all 47,500 gullies - this is reducing any drainage risks significantly across the borough.

In addition, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, the Council also identifies areas of risk, determines responsibilities and carries out works where external funding via central government can be sought – there is also funding within the annual capital programme to carry out small drainage works throughout the financial year that become a priority.

			<p>Finally, The Council also works with drainage partners such as the Environment Agency and United Utilities with an aim to gain funding and develop and carry out works together as has been the case in works within the town centre recently, and also proposed in the new park.</p>
Cllr Ken Rustidge	Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways	How are we engaging schools and residents to grow participation in the School Streets and Active Travel programmes?	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Rustidge.</p> <p>Oldham's Active Travel team deliver a range of initiatives to engage both residents and schools with our goal to increase levels of active travel in the borough.</p> <p>We work closely with the Public Health team to embed healthier travel habits, over-come barriers to active travel and build capacity in communities. This takes the form of training, providing equipment and messaging about the benefits of active travel. We also support and amplify the campaigns of TfGM and GM Moving.</p> <p>The Active Travel team support schools to conduct pilots and establish School Streets where suitable. We provide site-assessments, conduct consultation events and communicate with stakeholders. Schools are</p>

			<p>supported to establish travel plans and deliver behaviour change activities as part of an accreditation process led by TfGM.</p> <p>The Active Travel team will continue to deliver School Street pilots over the next 12 months and apply for future funding to implement more schemes.</p>
Cllr Garth Harkness	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	<p>I recently wrote to Royal Mail about concerns over the changes to post boxes in Dobcross, Delph and Diggle. They have been turned into digital post boxes so that small parcels can be left in them. For larger items, support with forms and collections etc. residents will then need to travel elsewhere. It is clear that some residents would struggle with a new digital drop off point.</p> <p>In Diggle and Dobcross, they are the only shops and Dobcross runs a community led shop. These changes could significantly impact the viability of the post offices and shops and leave no coverage of post offices in the area. This will</p>	<p>Thank you for your query Councillor Harkness.</p> <p>Obviously Royal Mail operate independently from the Council and haven't consulted us on any of these changes, however I'm happy to write to them to pass on yours and your residents concerns and the associated impact in the community.</p>

		<p>impact residents who rely on the services they provide.</p> <p>Nobody asked for these changes. It is clear from the strength of feeling that nobody wants them.</p> <p>I have asked our MP to write to object, which I am pleased she did alongside a number of residents. Would the Cabinet Member do the same and write to Royal Mail to oppose these changes?</p>	
Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability	<p>The initial budget for the Old Library building was £16 million. The finished cost was £32 million. The initial budget for the Spindles was £68 million, but the full cost has been reported to be an estimated £80 million currently. There are several major regeneration projects going on across Oldham town centre. If the projects are similarly overspent – as previous projects have been – how much would the total overspend be?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question Councillor, however as I said after your press release on this matter Cllr Al-Hamdani, categorising these projects as being overspent is both incorrect and misleading.</p> <p>The projects you have referenced have been delivered within their allocated budgets.</p> <p>As part of the works, additional works have been identified and new budgets established as a project phase 2, phase 3, all of which has undergone robust governance processes which are in place for the delivery of capital projects.</p>

			<p>The wider net borrowing increasing reported in the recent Treasury report is separate from the regeneration schemes – it is not correct to infer this direct alignment and connection</p> <p>The increase in borrowing from £144m to £187m over the course of 2024/2025 is consistent with the capital programme that was approved for that time period.</p> <p>The report also highlights that the council's capital financing requirement is £336m and its authorised limit for borrowing is £350m, and the existing borrowing is well within these limits.</p> <p>The Council's capital programme includes numerous projects, not just regeneration, however the regen programme is very visible and proving to be a huge success, which we will continue to build on so that residents and local businesses can benefit from them for years to come.</p>
Cllr Garth Harkness	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance,	How many chairs, tables and desks were bought for the Old Library and how much did they cost?	<p>Thank you for your question councillor.</p> <p>This information is already in the public domain, however happy to provide an answer once again – in total there were 267 items of furniture</p>

	Corporate Services & Sustainability	How many chairs, tables and desks have been left at the Civic Centre and tower block?	<p>purchased for The JR Clynes Building at a cost of £80,348.68</p> <p>As members and our communities know, we continue to recycle as much furniture as possible within property projects like Spindles, The JR Clynes Building, Royton Town Hall, Chadderton Town Hall, Failsworth Town Hall, the Eco Centre and various Council owned building projects.</p> <p>There is furniture left within the Civic Centre which did not meet our compliance checks or did not fit within the new room sizes. The main issue with most of the desks left at the civic centre because the desks are banks of 12, 8, or 6 and these cannot be split as they share legs. This has restricted where we can re-use the desks.</p> <p>Tables and chairs from meeting rooms at the civic centre have all been recycled into various council buildings across the borough.</p> <p>The only tables left at the Civic are being used in Lees Suite and Lees A plus Housing Options area of the building including room 222.</p> <p>Most of the chairs left in the Civic Centre are 14 years old and the gas</p>
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			<p>mechanism had started to fail on lots of them, which was leaving oil stains on the carpets, and has been failing when staff or members wish to change the seating configuration.</p> <p>Some chairs were recycled into other Council Buildings including Family Hubs, Town Halls, Libraries, Community Centres and Children's homes wherever we can. The rest of the chairs have been offered out to charities and Partner Organisations if they are in a reasonable condition.</p>
Cllr Mark Kenyon	Cllr Abdul Jabbar – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability	Oldham Council agreed to be carbon neutral on all council buildings and street lighting by 2025. With four months left of the year, how close is the council to meeting its goal? Council also agreed to a target of net zero for the borough by 2030. Can the Cabinet Member confirm whether Oldham is on track and update Council on the progress that is being made?	<p>thank you for your question councillor</p> <p>Energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions data are not yet available for the current year.</p> <p>The Council's GHG emissions report has just been completed for the 2024/25 Financial Year and shows emissions from Council Buildings and Street Lighting to be 5,878 tCO₂e, a significant fall on the previous year's figure of 6,224 tCO₂e and a reduction of almost one third on the baseline year of 2019/20 when the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy 2020-25 was adopted.</p>

The Oldham Green New Deal Strategy was adopted in March 2020, one week before the first national Covid19 lockdown. Needless to say that the Council had not anticipated a pandemic when it set the targets in the strategy. However, despite that the Council has made significant achievements in decarbonisation since the adoption of the strategy such as the renovation of the Spindles complex which now operates entirely without fossil fuels, as does the Alexandra Park Depot Eco-Centre.

The Council is pushing on with the decarbonisation of the borough with the Oldham Green New Deal Partnership, a public-private Strategic Energy Partnership which will be only the third of its kind in the UK after Bristol and Coventry. The OGND Partnership will bring the large-scale investment and delivery capacity needed to achieve Net Zero and upgrade the borough's energy infrastructure for the 21st Century, bringing with it extra benefits in the form of local economic growth and jobs and training opportunities in the fast growing low carbon sector.

			<p>The OGND Partnership will in its first 5 years of operation deliver a range of Council-led projects including a new £27m low carbon heat network in Oldham Town Centre which will on its own save more carbon than the Council's entire carbon footprint. The town centre heat network will form the core of a much larger £265m heat network zone, which will be supported by new national legislation coming in in 2026. Other Council-led renewable energy and electric vehicle charging schemes will form the basis of a wider effort to decarbonise the borough as a whole, working with local businesses and communities to deliver the infrastructure that residents want and need.</p> <p>The Council aims to go out to tender for our OGND Partner early in 2026.</p>
Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani	Cllr Shaid Mushtaq – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	White Ribbon Day is November 25 this year, and Oldham Council is a White Ribbon accredited organisation. In some recent years, the Council has organised sessions for local schools and school children to tackle safeguarding and child protections issues as part of the day. What plans does the	<p>The centrepiece of the 2025 White Ribbon fortnight of action will be a domestic abuse conference on 25 November in partnership with Made by Mortals called “Walking on Eggshells – ending male violence against women”. It will use audio stories and short films to bring to life stories of domestic abuse, based on characters co-</p>

		<p>Council have to support White Ribbon Day this year?</p>	<p>created by community members with lived experience of domestic abuse.</p> <p>This will be supplemented with a programme of professional development to build skills in tackling and preventing domestic abuse across the multi-agency workforce, This will be delivered in partnership with the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership and Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board.</p>
Cllr Murphy	Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing	<p>Can the Cabinet Member confirm when there will be a trauma kit installed in the redeveloped Spindles, as first requested in 2023 in line with national guidance following the Manchester Arena inquiry?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question councillor</p> <p>There is already a bleed kit in the box with the defibrillator on Silver Street side of Spindles. We have another for Parliament Square which also covers the Town Square side of the building.</p> <p>Staff within the centre are first aid trained and would assist if there was a need to.</p> <p>We will review the specific request for a trauma kit with the centre management team to ensure all requirements are met for on-site first aid versus procedures for when formal medical attention is required.</p>

Cllr Marland	Cllr Barbara Brownridge – Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing	<p>Saddleworth Medical Practice is the hardest practice in the borough to contact via telephone. I have been receiving an increasing number of concerns from residents about not being able to get through on the phone, when they do, they are often redirected to the extended hours service or 111 and told there are no appointments. Several residents have also said that when they do get an appointment the surgery is often virtually empty whether that is the Delph or Uppermill site. I must admit the last couple of visits myself I was either the only one in there or there were one or two others.</p> <p>Would the cabinet member be able to assist in lobbying for improved contact rates and access to the surgery and also see if you can find out why the surgery appears to be empty so frequently?</p>	<p>Thanks for your question.</p> <p>Yesterday I asked our Deputy Chief Executive to look into the issues you raised. His team have since made contact with the Practice. I can provide you with a detailed account outside of the Chamber.</p> <p>However, I can confirm that the practice is committed to making services more accessible and responsive to the needs of Saddleworth residents. From the beginning of October 2025, with the help of the ICB team have invited agreed to enter into the national General Practice Improvement Programme which means they will have access to a facilitator to work with the practice to identify where further improvements can be made.</p>
Cllr Bishop	Cllr Mohon Ali – Cabinet Member for	Can the cabinet member confirm reports that there are leaking classroom ceilings at Waterhead Academy which have impacted on the school's ability to use them for	The Director of Education has contacted the school. They have confirmed that there are no leaks and all classrooms are available for teaching.

	Education & Skills.	teaching students and, if so, what is being done to rectify the situation?	
Cllr Marland	Cllr Peter Dean – Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure	As noted in the portfolio report, the Oldham Histories Festival and Heritage Open Days are running later this month which aim to celebrate the heritage of Oldham. Part of the town's heritage is the nuclear bunker underneath the Civic space so is the Cabinet member able to confirm that this forms part of Oldham's heritage or has it been overlooked?	<p>Thank you for your question councillor, I recall there has been a question on this previously.</p> <p>Future plans for the Civic Tower and the basement space are still under consideration with the Council's partner MUSE, and options are still being considered.</p>
Cllr Bishop	Cllr Chris Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways	<p>At the members briefing in September 2024, prior to the commencement of the ward by ward gully clearance programme, we were explicitly told that the purpose of the switch from an annual inspection of every gully was necessary to address the backlog, which has led to some gullies being solidly blocked for years.</p> <p>Fast forward 12 months and the goalposts appear to have shifted, with easier gullies being attended to and those that are actually the problem being left until an unspecified date. Ward Councillors</p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>The overall goal of the Gully Cleaning Programme which started September 2024 is to visit all 47,500 gullies across all 20 wards of the Borough. The programme was supported with additional investment in operatives and vehicles.</p> <p>To date, almost half of the 20 wards have been visited and the programme is the same as that outlined on the Council's website.</p> <p>Of the approximately 24,000 gullies visited so far, the vast majority of these have been cleared and are running correctly and this has been</p>

		<p>are also reporting a lack of communication about where and when the teams are attending (hence why so many parked vehicles are blocking access). Doesn't this fly in the face of the whole point of the scheme?</p>	<p>done as quickly as possible across the borough using the two gully clearing wagons. However, as expected, there are some gullies that were either inaccessible, or were too firmly blocked to be cleared by the gully wagons, requiring further, more substantial work. Some we're blocked with materials such as tarmac or concrete and some were damaged and need a repair or replacement.</p> <p>All needing further work have been logged, and a follow up programme, which will run concurrently is to be started in the near future. There are now enough gullies needing the additional work and can be programmed more efficiently and coordinated with ward members.</p>
Cllr Marland	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	<p>My colleagues and I receive daily complaints from residents about the lack of weeding that has been done around every street and path in our Borough. Our neighbourhoods are unkempt and overgrown with weeds which have been left for so long that they are now becoming trees. It is clear to our communities that this administration does not care that people living or visiting our area see the endless array of scruffy streets</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. The Council recognises the importance of keeping the borough clean and understands what this means to residents. It is for this reason that after contractor failure in the Summer of 2024, the Council made a significant investment to bring the weed spraying service in house.</p> <p>The additional investment in training and equipment means that Council</p>

		<p>and footpaths.</p> <p>Fortunately most people of this Borough care deeply about where they live and have pride in their areas but are rightly demanding answers. I would like to know how many visits have been made by a weeding specialist this summer – I wouldn't be surprised if some have never been visited. And is it only actioned by request or will every street automatically be visited before the end of Autumn.</p>	<p>operatives have been able to deliver boroughwide weed spraying this year. The first round was completed by the end of July 2025 and the second round is currently ongoing, but this has been significantly impacted by the weather – with intermittent rain making weed spraying ineffective.</p> <p>For clarity, every adopted road and path in the borough is subjected to weed spraying. However, there are instances where, due to parked vehicles or other obstructions, some areas may be missed. Where this happens, operatives follow up with handheld spraying – this approach does impact the wider delivery programme as handheld spraying takes much longer.</p> <p>Once the area has been sprayed, it can take 2-4 weeks for the weeds to die. The area is then swept, either manually or mechanically to remove the dead weeds. We fully appreciate that some weeds are resistant to traditional weed killers, and where this is an issue, more targeted work is undertaken, including additional sprays and then follow up visits. This will continue over the coming months.</p>
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Cllr Sandra Ball	Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	<p>Higher Memorial Park, Failsworth</p> <p>Could you expand on what plans are in process for this park and when they will progress, as a resident approached me who has been told it is to be completely refurbished.</p>	<p>Thank you for your question councillor.</p> <p>The Council is aware of various ambitious plans for many of the boroughs parks and green spaces as there are many Friends Groups who are keen to improve and enhance the green spaces and facilities available for residents and communities.</p> <p>I'm not aware that there is any council funding aligned to these plans at this time, and I have the officer teams for an update on any / all discussions on emerging plans for community spaces.</p>

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

Councillors Adams, Akhtar, Al-Hamdani, M Ali, Z Ali, Arnott, Aslam, Ball, Bishop, Brownridge, Byrne, Charters, Chauhan, 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, 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 Councillors Azad and Bashforth.

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

Councillor Ghafoor declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 10 (Motion 2 – Strengthening Standards and Transparency for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)) and he left the room during the consideration and determination of this Motion.

3 TO DEAL WITH MATTERS WHICH THE MAYOR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT BUSINESS

The Mayor indicated that he had been advised of an Urgent item of Business to be considered at this meeting arising from the proceedings of the Standards Sub-Committee meeting that was held on Tuesday, 11th November 2025. Councillor Hince MOVED and Councillor Navesey SECONDED that Council Procedure Rules (namely Council Procedure Rule 4.1 relating to the business to be transacted at the meeting) be suspended to allow this matter to be discussed by the Council. On being put to the Vote the Motion was CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 6.15pm and reconvened at 6.55pm

The Mayor advised that he was permitting a 10-minute debate on the proceedings of the Standards Sub-Committee and the meeting was addressed by Councillors Hince, Navesey, Kenyon, Ghafoor, Harrison, Shah and Sykes thereon.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.20pm and reconvened at 7.35pm

The Mayor indicated that he was minded to vary the order of the agenda, insofar as item 16 (Electronic Voting) would be considered after agenda item 9 (Questions to Leader and Cabinet). Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Jabbar

SECONDED this variation to the agenda and, on being put to the Vote, the Motion was CARRIED.

In view of the amount of time lost due to the two adjournments Councillor Chauhan MOVED and Councillor Rustidge SECONDED the MOTION that the Council shall suspend Council Procedure Rules in respect of agenda item 9 (Reports of the Leader and Cabinet Members). On being put to the Vote the MOTION was CARRIED.

RESOLVED: That the Council suspends Council Procedure Rules in respect of not having a debate on agenda item 9 (Reports of the Leader and Cabinet Members) and requesting that Cabinet Members provide written answers to the questions submitted by non-executive members.

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

The Mayor reported that the timings for the Motions to be considered at item 11 (Notice of Opposition Business) be allocated as follows: Liberal Democrat Group's Motion – 10 minutes, Oldham Group's Motion - 10 minutes, the Conservative Group's Motion – 8 minutes and the Reform UK Group's Motion – 2 minutes.

5 **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.

6 **LEADER'S ANNUAL STATEMENT**

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

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

As Leader of Oldham Council, it is both a privilege and a profound responsibility to serve this remarkable borough – the place I grew up and the place I am proud to call my home. Oldham is a place of resilience, ambition, and heart — shaped by its proud history and driven by the energy and creativity of its people.

It's a real privilege to stand here today, in this incredible new home for democracy; the JR Clynes Building, for our first Council meeting in these surroundings. This building isn't just a new workplace; it's a symbol of the regeneration and renewal happening right across our borough. It represents a new chapter for Oldham, one rooted in pride, ambition, and progress. This Annual Statement marks a moment to reset our ambitions and recommit to building a better Oldham — one that is fairer, greener, and more inclusive for everyone who calls it home.

Our work is guided by three core values: Pride, Progress, and Partnership.

Pride in our borough and its people; Progress that is bold, sustainable, and rooted in opportunity; and Partnership — because we know that real change only happens when we work together, across communities, sectors, and boundaries. With these values at our heart, we move forward with purpose and determination. Oldham's best days are ahead, and together, we will make them happen.

This year, Oldham Council was named 'Most Improved Council' at the prestigious LGC Awards — a recognition that speaks volumes about the journey we've been on and the people and partnerships we have. It's a moment of pride, but not one of complacency. This is not a celebration of perfection, but of progress. It reflects the hard work, honest self-assessment, and difficult decisions we've made together. It's a testament to the power of collaboration — across political lines, with our partners, and most importantly, with our residents.

Behind this recognition lies a deeper transformation. Over the past year, we've seen a cultural shift within the Council, led by our new Chief Executive, focused on reshaping who we are, and how we work.

We are becoming more open and transparent, sharing our challenges as well as our successes.

We are more responsive to residents, listening actively and acting with urgency.

We are more focused on the everyday realities people face — from housing and health to jobs and community safety.

This last twelve months marks a turning point in our relationship with national government.

The Labour government's clear commitment to reforming local government is a long-overdue recognition that councils like Oldham are not just service providers, but strategic partners in delivering national renewal locally in communities.

We now have a partner that recognises the role of local government, one that treats us as equals.

It's a marked contrast to my previous experience in ten years of local government, we now have a direct line to decision-makers who understand our communities, our challenges, and our potential.

We're consulted. We're engaged. And we're listened to.

But we must also be honest about the scale of the challenge, we cannot expect to reverse 14 years of underfunding of services overnight.

Local government faces a £6 billion national funding gap — a crisis that cannot be ignored. For high-need, low-revenue areas like Oldham, fair funding is not just a matter of equity; it's a matter of survival. We need to continue to make the case for investment that reflects the realities we face and the ambitions we hold — and we will.

The Oldham Plan has now been adopted for a year, it is a blueprint for our borough's future, developed hand-in-hand with our partners and residents. It sets out three bold missions. Our first mission to deliver Healthier, Happier Lives, this means tackling health inequalities and supporting wellbeing across

every stage of life. Our second A Great Place to Live which means delivering safe, vibrant neighbourhoods with quality housing, schools, and public spaces. Our third mission A Green and Growing Borough this is to drive inclusive economic growth while leading the way on climate action.

In early November 2025 we hosted our second annual careers event, connecting young people with employers, training providers, and mentors. And we launched our employment and skills strategy at our Get Oldham Working roundtable – building on a motion brought to this very chamber.

Our students continue to achieve, with strong GCSE and A-Level results across the borough. Through major projects like SportsTown and Northern Roots, we're connecting education, health, and sustainability, creating places where learning, wellbeing, and opportunity grow together.

We're also backing this up with real investment in employment and enterprise, through Get Oldham Working, we've supported over 15,000 residents into work and we've launched The Hive in Spindles, a space for startups and social enterprises to grow, collaborate, and thrive.

Together, these efforts reflect a borough that is ambitious for its young people and determined to build a future where every child can thrive.

At the heart of public service is the everyday work that keeps our borough running — the services that residents rely on, and the spaces that shape our daily lives. In Oldham, we are committed to getting the basics right and raising the standard across the board.

Our waste and recycling services to serve almost 100,000 residential properties and up to 1,800 businesses. Each month, we collect around 3,000 tonnes of general waste and an average of 2,800 tonnes of recycling, a vital operation that keeps our streets clean and our environment protected.

We've expanded our environmental enforcement teams, with more boots on the ground tackling fly-tipping and littering. We're also investing in the places that bring joy, connection, and wellbeing to our communities. We've delivered upgrades to parks and play areas; creating safe, vibrant spaces for families and young people.

Our commitment to the environment is growing — literally. This autumn and winter, we're planting 650 new trees, and planting new woodland to create greener neighbourhoods. Through it all, we remain focused on the fundamentals, reliable bin collections, timely pothole repairs and clean streets and safe public spaces. These are the services that shape everyday life — and we will continue to deliver them with pride, precision, and accountability. Oldham's identity isn't shaped by Council services and the infrastructure we create, but by its spirit, the culture we celebrate, the communities we nurture, and the pride we take in our sporting achievements.

We know that when Oldham pulls together, we are capable of extraordinary things. It is only by sticking together, as neighbours, as partners, as one borough, that we will realise Oldham's full potential.

So let this be a call to action.

Champion Oldham in every forum — don't talk down our Borough, speak up for us and our people.
Support our businesses and employers — they are the backbone of our local economy.
Collaborate, cooperate, and face challenges together — because unity is our greatest strength.
Together, we can build a borough that is fairer, greener, and more ambitious for everyone. Let's move forward with confidence, compassion, and pride, and let's do it together.
Oldham's future is ours to shape and I believe it's a future full of promise.

RESOLVED:

That the Leader of the Council's Annual Statement be noted.

7

YOUTH COUNCIL

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

8

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Question from Hannah Roberts

Can the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care confirm NHS advice on taking paracetamol during pregnancy and why it is important that parents and carers follow NHS guidance on childhood vaccinations? Can she also outline what action the Council is taking to promote childhood vaccinations and whether there are any plans for Family Hubs to support parents and carers in making sure children get protection from dangerous diseases such as measles, rubella, polio, diphtheria, hepatitis B, tetanus and whooping cough?

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Adults, \health and Wellbeing replied that paracetamol remains the recommended pain relief option for pregnant women when used as directed. Oldham GPs continue to prescribe it to our Oldham mothers and encourage its use amongst family members safe in the knowledge this advice is based on the best evidence we have. Fever and untreated pain are much more serious risks to mothers and unborn children

Vaccinations are a safe and effective way of protecting children from serious diseases, which if contracted can lead to long term health problems and in some cases, loss of life. Vaccinations protect the individuals receiving them, as well as other people in the community who have not reached the minimum age to be vaccinated or may not be able to have vaccinations due to severe allergies, or weakened immune systems.

Oldham Council have funded voluntary sector Community Health Champions who have taken part in VaxChat training. They have been using this learning to share vaccination messages with the communities they support. Oldham Council are working with two of our Health Champion organisations to gather insights from communities with low take up of MMR vaccination to better understand the barriers to vaccine take-up so that we can tailor our future approach.

Oldham Council funds the integrated children's and families service that operates out of the family hubs. This includes health visitors providing clear and evidence-based information to

parents and carers about the benefits and safety of vaccines. They can help address misinformation and help our communities understand what vaccines are due and when.

2. Question from Jenny Harrison

It really was useful to be able to use pensioner and disabled bus passes before 09.30 on Bee Network buses during August.

Are there any plans to put this in place permanently?

And how is the new 28-day Bee Network bus pass for 18–24-year-olds, costing £40 a month, being promoted to ensure that as many young people as possible benefit?

Councillor Goodwin, Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways replied, stating that Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) is responsible for this initiative, which aligns with its broader Bee Network strategy to improve connectivity, reduce barriers to travel, and enhance public transport access for residents across Greater Manchester.

Oldham Council actively supports these initiatives, reflecting its ongoing commitment to securing the best outcomes for local communities. Through close collaboration with TfGM and the Bee Network, the council continues to champion improved transport options that meet the needs of Oldham's residents. We will continue to promote these offers to our residents through our usual communication channels.

3. Question from Rosalynn Birch

The Labour Government has increased support for parents to help with childcare costs for children from 9 months to starting school. This includes introducing 30 hours a week free childcare for eligible working parents from September 2025. Is the Cabinet Member able to say how many parents in Oldham have benefited and how much this saves in nursery fees? And what support is Oldham Council giving to childcare providers to be able to deliver this increased offer?

Councillor Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People replied that, the expansion of 30 hours of free childcare for eligible working parents from September 2025 is providing significant additional support for families in Oldham.

Government data shows that at the end of the summer term, 3,054 families were already accessing the working parents entitlement, and since September, a further 906 families have taken up the extended offer.

In terms of savings, while the Government estimates that families could save up to £7,500 per child per year, our local analysis based on average nursery fees of £6.33 per hour for 1,140 funded hours suggests a potential saving of around £7,216 annually for each child. This represents a substantial reduction in childcare costs for working parents in Oldham. To ensure providers can deliver this increased entitlement, Oldham Council is offering a comprehensive package of support. This includes training and networking opportunities, dedicated working groups, and access to both capital and revenue grants. These measures are designed to help providers expand capacity and maintain high-quality provision for families.

4. Question from Valerie Leach

Given the acknowledged importance of the Saddleworth School site in providing much needed housing, including truly affordable housing which is really difficult to find in Saddleworth, please can the Cabinet Member tell us the timetable for development and when homes will start to be built?

Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods replied, thanking Valerie Leach for her question. The former Saddleworth School site is earmarked for housing development as a council-owned site in our medium-term housing land supply. Officers have been addressing negotiations over the relocation of a telecoms mast on the site until recently, and the site could not come forward for development until that matter was concluded. Now that matter is resolved, the housing delivery team will be looking to bring the site to market in the near future.

However, developing a site for housing is not a quick process, bearing in mind land deals need to be negotiated and planning permission sought before a spade can even be put in the ground. As such, it will be at least two years before we see the first home completed on the site.

5. Question from Dave Barter

Oldham bus users have been affected by the strikes on Stagecoach, Metrolink and First buses, and Oldham residents working on the buses have been affected by many years of low pay and poor working conditions - while all three firms have seen a rise in profits and are doing very well out of the network.

Could the **Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways** tell us how the council is pressing operators to listen to their staff and ensure any pay offer is fair and above inflation, for the benefit of passengers and workers on our buses?

Councillor Goodwin, Cabinet member for Transport and Highways replied, thanking Mr Barter for raising this important issue.

The council recognises the significant disruption that recent industrial action has caused for passengers in Oldham, and we also acknowledge the concerns of bus workers who have faced years of low pay and challenging conditions.

Although pay negotiations are a matter between the operators and their staff, the council – through the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Transport for Greater Manchester – has been actively pressing for fair treatment of workers.

I'm firmly of the view that any pay offer should reflect the rising cost of living and be above inflation, ensuring that drivers are properly rewarded for the essential service they provide.

Recent progress shows that this approach works: following sustained pressure and dialogue, Unite members at First Bus secured an exceptional pay deal worth up to 20%, and Stagecoach drivers have agreed improved offers of around 12%, alongside better conditions such as holiday entitlement and sick pay. These agreements were only reached because we insisted that operators return to the table with realistic proposals that respect the workforce and maintain service stability for passengers.

Looking ahead, we will continue to use every lever available under the Bee Network franchising model to hold operators to account. Our priority is to ensure that the network delivers for passengers and that those who keep it running are treated fairly. We will keep monitoring pay and conditions and work with unions, operators, and TfGM to prevent disputes escalating and to maintain a reliable, high-quality bus service for Oldham residents.

6. Question from Steven Croft

'What action will the council take to secure removal of unsightly and inappropriate IX Wireless masts from residential areas in line with successes in other GMCA authority areas?'

Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods replied, thanking Mr Croft for his question. The Council can only consider taking action to secure the removal of telecoms apparatus where the apparatus is not permitted development, and an appropriate permission has not been secured.

Whilst IX Wireless did not secure the appropriate approvals before installing some apparatus in certain other GM boroughs – and so those authorities were able to secure the removal of that unpermitted apparatus – IX Wireless have followed the correct procedure when working in Oldham and secured the appropriate planning approvals before installing their apparatus, where permission was needed.

7. Question from Nicola Walsh

The gullies in Lees were supposed to be cleared in May but, after they were done in August, I've noticed some which were missed and now look hazardous, a worry as the colder weather is due to hit which will cause an issue with freezing water on pavements and roads.

One in particular on Den Lane where the bottom of Taylor Green Way meets it is completely blocked, already there is a steady flow of water onto the bad bend on Stamford Road near St John's Church.

When are the council going to attend to these missed gullies in Lees?

Councillor Goodwin, Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways, replied that gully cleansing programme commenced late September 2024 to progressively work through all 47,500 gullies in the borough using two gully wagons, one being brought in additionally just for the task.

After just over a year, out of the 20 wards in the borough, the programme has visited over half of these, currently progressing in the 11th ward, achieving an initial clearance rate of between 70 & 80% on average.

The aim of the programme was to clear as many gullies as possible as quickly as possible. Gullies that have been found to be either more solidly blocked or inaccessible are now being dealt with, with one team currently going through the first ward on the programme again. Some gullies need digging out, others repairing, and some accessed by removal of parked cars – this process is happening in parallel. Members are helping operatives where possible ensure cars are moved in advance.

Teams will inform ward members when a revisit to the ward is made.

In accordance with the Council's stated policy on the website, ad hoc visits to clear gullies where there is a significant risk of internal flooding or highway safety will take place as part of the routine reactive highways maintenance service.

8. Question from Lynne Thompson

About 12 months ago there was a stage 1 assessment of Diggle clock tower and looking at options to bring it back to use. When will this move onto the next stage? I understand there was some funding allocated in a cabinet meeting some time ago. With some of the other capital projects going on, is this money still available to move things forward to the next stage?

Councillor Shah, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Growth replied, that works have been undertaken to Diggle Clock Tower to ensure the building remains 'wind and watertight' and is protected.

We have reprofiled some funding we had set aside for extra emergency works given the previous works have been successful.

As the building is located within the perimeter of Saddleworth Secondary School, discussions have been on-going with the school about potential future uses for the building.

The Council are also considering other alternatives uses for the building and hope to be able to bring something forward in the near future, at which point we will find the money to do this building and project justice.

9. Question from Syed Maruf Ali

Recent reports and census data suggest that thousands of homes across Oldham are currently vacant, with many classed as long-term empty properties. Some sources indicate figures ranging from around 1,100 to over 4,700 empty dwellings in recent years.

Could the Council please provide the most up-to-date figures on the number of empty and long-term empty homes in Oldham?

Furthermore, what action is being taken to bring these properties back into use, and how is the Council ensuring that these homes contribute towards addressing the borough's housing shortage and supporting local families in need of accommodation?

Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, replied, thanking Mr Ali for his question. The number of empty homes in the Borough fluctuates, and the majority are only empty for a short period, while work is carried out, or because the property is in probate. Latest Council Tax data indicates that there are 884 empty properties in Oldham, of which 561 are classed as "long term empty", meaning they have been vacant for a period of at least 12 months. It is these long-term empty properties which have the potential to become problematic for neighbours, as well as representing a wasted opportunity, at a time when so many are struggling for secure housing.

While the Council makes use of a variety of powers available to us around empty homes, addressing these properties can be a

complex issue, often involving significant investigative work, in order to ascertain ownership, make contact with the owner, and support them to identify the best way to bring their property up to standard and back into use.

Having looked at best practice from elsewhere, we are currently working with GMCA on options to work more closely with the owners of empty properties, to ensure that these houses are more quickly made available for people in Oldham.

10. Question from Lucia Rea

Can the Council confirm whether it intends to move forward with the local CSE inquiry independently and if so, whether this will begin prior to the start of the national inquiry?

What discussions have taken place to date with the Home Office regarding the establishment of this inquiry?

What progress has been made in securing a start to the inquiry, including whether the Council has formally discussed appointing Tom Crowther KC as Chair of the inquiry?

It was never made clear to survivors or the community that the commencement of Oldham's inquiry was reliant on the timing of the national inquiry.

Councillor Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People replied,

In January this year, following the announcement by Government of support for five local inquiries into child sexual exploitation, Oldham Council began the process of commissioning its local inquiry, including engaging Tom Crowther KC, who had undertaken the Telford local inquiry, as its potential chair.

However, while this work was underway, in June, Baroness Casey published the outcome of her audit on group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse which included a recommendation for a national inquiry to include targeted local investigations.

At this point conversations with the Home Office focused on whether it might be better for a local inquiry in Oldham to form part of this statutory national inquiry with the additional legal powers available to it. Conversations were held about how this could be implemented and what it would mean for our existing plans here in Oldham. An update was provided to survivors to explain that this process was underway and was likely to take some time.

We continue to await news from the Home Office of the proposed chair of the national inquiry and confirmation of Oldham's position in relation to that inquiry.

Officers have requested an update on Oldham's position within the planned national inquiry and the timescales for that information to be made available.

We will continue to seek the best outcome we can that ensures survivors have their testimony heard and get the answers they deserve.

The Mayor reminded Council that earlier in the meeting (Minute 3), Members had agreed to suspend Council Procedure Rules in respect of this agenda item.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Minutes of the Cabinet meetings held 21st July 2025, 8th September 2025, 22nd September 2025 and 20th October 2025, be noted.
2. That the Minutes of the meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, held 22nd August 2025 and 26th September 2025, be noted.
3. That the reports of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Members, be noted.

10

ELECTRONIC VOTING

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report OF THE Executive Director of Resources which outlined a change to the Constitution to enable electronic voting and to clarify the procedure for use of electronic voting.

The Council's Constitution sets out the way in which voting takes place at meetings of the Council or its committees. The Constitution currently provided for voting to take place by way of a show of hands or affirmation of the meeting if there was no dissent, unless a recorded vote is requested.

Council was advised that there was already a procedure in the Constitution for recording the way votes are cast, which involved each councillor declaring how they were voting. A recorded vote would be taken on the requisition of any member supported by five other Members. The results of a recorded vote were set out in the minutes of the relevant meeting.

The Council Chamber in the JR Clynes Building had facilities to enable electronic voting to produce quick, accurate numbers of members voting for, against or abstaining on a motion. The system also recorded the way that each member casted their vote. Each Member possessed a desk unit which housed a microphone, LCD screen and buttons to vote for a motion, against a motion, or to abstain from voting.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's Constitution be updated to include the changes set out in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 of the submitted report.

11

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

Motion 1: Improving Parking Provision at Royal Oldham Hospital

Councillor Chauhan MOVED and Councillor Brownridge SECONDED the following Motion:

This Council notes:

- That Royal Oldham Hospital provides essential health services for thousands of Oldham residents every week, including emergency, maternity, and specialist care.

- That patients, visitors, and NHS staff frequently report serious difficulties finding parking spaces at and around the hospital site.
- That parking shortages lead to missed or delayed appointments, added stress for patients and families, and unfair parking fines for staff and visitors.
- That the hospital's current car park layout cannot meet the increasing demand from both hospital users and staff.

This Council believes:

- That access to healthcare should not be made more stressful by inadequate or unaffordable parking.
- That a multi-storey car park or other expanded parking solution would significantly improve accessibility and patient experience without consuming additional land.
- That NHS staff, particularly those working long or unsociable hours, should have access to safe and affordable parking.
- That dedicated and accessible parking should be available for people with mobility issues and wheelchair users.

This Council therefore **resolves** to:

1. Request that Oldham Council works collaboratively with the Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust (NCA) and relevant partners to explore options for:
 - a. Developing a multi-storey or expanded car park at or near Royal Oldham Hospital.
 - b. Introducing fair and affordable parking arrangements for patients attending A&E, those with regular appointments, and NHS staff.
 - c. Creating dedicated parking directly opposite the A&E department for patients attending A&E only.
 - d. Improving access and facilities for wheelchair users and those with mobility needs.
2. Write to the Chief Executive of the NCA and the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board (ICB) expressing this Council's support for urgent improvements to parking provision at Royal Oldham Hospital.
3. Request that Oldham's Members of Parliament lobby the national government and publicly support a campaign for better parking provision for Oldham residents attending Royal Oldham Hospital.

AMENDMENT:

Councillor Quigg addressed Council and announced that he was **WITHDRAWING** his **AMENDMENT** to the **MOTION** that was to be seconded by Councillor Ball. Council consented to this course of action.

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

RESOLVED:

That this Council resolves to:

1. Request that Oldham Council works collaboratively with the Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust (NCA) and relevant partners to explore options for:
 - a. Developing a multi-storey or expanded car park at or near Royal Oldham Hospital.
 - b. Introducing fair and affordable parking arrangements for patients attending A&E, those with regular appointments, and NHS staff.
 - c. Creating dedicated parking directly opposite the A&E department for patients attending A&E only.
 - d. Improving access and facilities for wheelchair users and those with mobility needs.
2. Write to the Chief Executive of the NCA and the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board (ICB) expressing this Council's support for urgent improvements to parking provision at Royal Oldham Hospital.
3. Request that Oldham's Members of Parliament lobby the national government and publicly support a campaign for better parking provision for Oldham residents attending Royal Oldham Hospital.

Motion 2: Strengthening Standards and Transparency for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

Councillor Hindle MOVED and Councillor Hince SECONDED the following Motion:

At its meeting of 16th July 2025, this Council resolved to implement an Article 4 Direction in relation to small HMOs, this Direction will come into effect on 1st January 2026, meaning planning applications must be made to convert a dwelling-house (C3) to a House in Multiple Occupation (C4).

The Housing Act 2004 and The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2018 define an HMO and set out the framework of Licensing responsibilities that sit with local authorities.

This motion is the next step in raising standards for HMOs in the Borough of Oldham, sending a clear message to residents and landlords that we take our duties and responsibilities seriously, and that we want the highest standards permitted by legislation.

This Council notes:

The persistent concerns raised by residents regarding substandard living conditions, overcrowding, fire safety risks, and poor management practices in some HMOs. That while statutory standards exist under the Housing Act 2004 and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), enforcement and transparency vary significantly across local authorities.

This Council resolves to:

1. To review and strengthen local HMO Standards by:
 - a. Undertake a comprehensive review of current HMO licensing and amenity standards within the borough.

- b. Introduce enhanced minimum requirements for space, fire safety, sanitation, and kitchen facilities, drawing on best practices from other councils.
 - c. Ensure that all licensed HMOs are subject to regular inspections and compliance checks.
- 2. To Improve Transparency and Accessibility for Complaints by:
 - a. Developing a clear, accessible online portal for residents to report concerns or complaints about HMOs.
 - b. Publishing quarterly data on HMO complaints, enforcement actions, and outcomes to improve public accountability.
- 3 To Enhance Resident Engagement and Support, by launching a public awareness campaign informing residents of their rights and how to report unsafe or poorly managed HMOs.

AMENDMENT 1

Councillor Al-Hamdani MOVED and Councillor Sykes
SECONDED AMENDMENT 1:

At its meeting of 16th July 2025 this Council resolved to implement an Article 4 Direction in relation to small HMOs, this Direction will come into effect on 1st January 2026, meaning planning applications must be made to convert a dwelling-house (C3) to a House in Multiple Occupation (C4).

The Housing Act 2004 and The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2018 define a HMO and set out the framework of Licensing responsibilities that sit with local authorities.

This motion is the next step in raising standards for HMOs in the Borough of Oldham, sending a clear message to residents and landlords that we take our duties and responsibilities seriously, and that we want the highest standards permitted by legislation.

This Council notes:

The persistent concerns raised by residents regarding substandard living conditions, overcrowding, fire safety risks, and poor management practices in some HMOs.

That while statutory standards exist under the Housing Act 2004 and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), enforcement and transparency vary significantly across local authorities.

This Council resolves to:

- 1. Review and Strengthen Local HMO Standards:
 - Undertake a comprehensive review of current HMO licensing and amenity standards within the borough.
 - Introduce enhanced minimum requirements for space, fire safety, sanitation, and kitchen facilities, drawing on best practices from other councils.

- Ensure that all licensed HMOs are subject to regular inspections and compliance checks.
- 2. Improve Transparency and Accessibility for Complaints:
 - Develop a clear, accessible online portal for residents to report concerns or complaints about HMOs.
 - Publish quarterly data on HMO complaints, enforcement actions, and outcomes to improve public accountability.
- 3. Enhance Resident Engagement and Support:
 - Launch a public awareness campaign informing residents of their rights and how to report unsafe or poorly managed HMOs.
- 4. Require that councillors are informed of all new HMO applications and licensing applications that are received relating to their wards.

On being put to the vote AMENDMENT 1, was LOST.

AMENDMENT 2

Councillor Quigg MOVED and Councillor Wilkinson SECONDED
AMENDMENT 2:

At its meeting of 16th July 2025, this Council resolved to implement an Article 4 Direction in relation to small HMOs, this Direction will come into effect on 1st January 2026, meaning planning applications must be made to convert a dwelling-house (C3) to a House in Multiple Occupation (C4).

The Housing Act 2004 and The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2018 define an HMO and set out the framework of Licensing responsibilities that sit with local authorities.

This motion is the next step in raising standards for HMOs in the Borough of Oldham, sending a clear message to residents and landlords that we take our duties and responsibilities seriously, and that we want the highest standards permitted by legislation.

This Council notes:

The persistent concerns raised by residents regarding substandard living conditions, overcrowding, fire safety risks, and poor management practices in some HMOs. That while statutory standards exist under the Housing Act 2004 and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), enforcement and transparency vary significantly across local authorities.

This Council resolves to:

1. To review and strengthen local HMO Standards by:
 - a. Undertake a comprehensive review of current HMO licensing and amenity standards within the borough.
 - b. Introduce enhanced minimum requirements for space, fire safety, sanitation, and kitchen facilities, drawing on best practices from other councils.
 - c. Ensure that all licensed HMOs are subject to regular inspections and compliance checks.

2. To Improve Transparency and Accessibility for Complaints by:
 - a. Developing a clear, accessible online portal for residents to report concerns or complaints about HMOs.
 - b. Publishing quarterly data on HMO complaints, enforcement actions, and outcomes to improve public accountability.
3. To Enhance Resident Engagement and Support, by launching a public awareness campaign informing residents of their rights and how to report unsafe or poorly managed HMOs.
4. That this Council and all relevant departments will take all necessary legal measures necessary against 'rogue' landlords who make residents lives a misery and aim to name and shame those who fail to comply with the highest possible standards.
5. That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Council's legal department, will seek all necessary legal instruments and/or injunction/s and or any legal measures as necessary to prevent the use of HMO's for migrant accommodation in the Borough of Oldham.

On being put to the vote AMENDMENT 2, was LOST.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was CARRIED.

RESOLVED

That the Council resolves to:

1. To review and strengthen local HMO Standards by:
 - d. Undertake a comprehensive review of current HMO licensing and amenity standards within the borough.
 - e. Introduce enhanced minimum requirements for space, fire safety, sanitation, and kitchen facilities, drawing on best practices from other councils.
 - f. Ensure that all licensed HMOs are subject to regular inspections and compliance checks.
- 2 To Improve Transparency and Accessibility for Complaints by:
 - c. Developing a clear, accessible online portal for residents to report concerns or complaints about HMOs.
 - d. Publishing quarterly data on HMO complaints, enforcement actions, and outcomes to improve public accountability.
- 3 To Enhance Resident Engagement and Support, by launching a public awareness campaign informing residents of their rights and how to report unsafe or poorly managed HMOs.

12

NOTICE OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS

Motion 1: Tackling the Anti-Social Use of Off-Road Motorbikes, E-Bikes and E-Scooters

Councillor Williamson MOVED and Councillor Marland SECONDED the following Motion:

There has been a national spike in the anti-social use of off-road motorcycles, e-bikes, and scooters on UK roads and in public places.

And whilst there are trial schemes for e-bikes and e-scooters operating in Greater Manchester it is illegal for some vehicles and those not in trial schemes to be used on public highways and in public spaces.

There is a myth that the Police cannot do anything which is not true. The Police will act even when riders are not wearing helmets but only in a targeted approach made by trained officers. In fact, Greater Manchester Police (GMP) have a dedicated team of Officers.

This Council Acknowledges:

- That Greater Manchester Police's resources are finely stretched, and that Oldham Council cannot just ask for GMP to put resources into Oldham without a strongly evidenced basis.
- Oldham Council recognises that GMP officers will use up-to-date intelligence to help direct them to areas of concern. Recent successes have been seen with Operation Vulcan and Operation AVRO - Oldham must do its bit to help the Police.
- Most motorbike, e-bike, scooter riders, use their vehicles in a safe and considerate manner and abide by the law. Sadly, there are those that don't, and this poses a serious risk to not only themselves, but other road users also.
- People can easily purchase e-bikes or e-scooters blissfully unaware they are not intended for use on the public highway or in public spaces having a logic that 'if they weren't legal, they wouldn't sell them.'
- That Oldham Council must work more closely with communities and organisations to generate a campaign to advise our residents of how and when to report issues.
- Oldham Council must continue working alongside GMP, housing providers, other partners and communities to get a message out that is clear about what constitutes an irresponsible user so that those who pose no threat to others carry on enjoying them sensibly and legally, and those that are not can be dealt with appropriately

This Council is aware that:

- Criminals are also using these modes of transport to commit further crimes, including drug supply, burglary, and theft. The anti-social use of these vehicles causes misery within our communities, impacting on the quality of life and posing a danger to those using the region's roads and open spaces.
- **This Council believes that:**
Working closely with residents and partners not just the Police is key to tackling this behaviour.
- Greater Manchester Police officers will use up-to-date intelligence to help direct them to areas of concern to deter, detect and disrupt offences from taking place.

This Council resolves to:

1. To write to the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police Sir Stephen Watson QPM thanking him, the Officers and staff of GMP and the National Police Air Service (NPAS) for their continued hard work and dedication in tackling the anti-social use of these vehicles and ask him to ensure that this remains a priority for Greater Manchester Police.
2. To write to the Home Office and ask for further dedicated funding for GMP to use in tackling the anti-social use of off-road motorbikes, electric bikes and electric scooters.
3. To use Oldham Council's Media team and ask them to carry out a campaign educating the public into the legalities of these vehicles and encouraging residents to help build up an intelligence-led picture so that GMP can carry out targeted operations by reporting instances and homes suspected of housing anti-social users which can be done anonymously.
4. Ask housing providers such as First Choice Homes, Great Places, Guinness Partnership to work with Oldham Council's media team and develop and plan of education and intelligence to support GMP in operations to tackle the anti-social use of off-road motorbike, e-scooters, and e-bikes.

AMENDMENT

The following AMENDMENT was MOVED by Councillor Quigg and SECONDED by Councillor Wilkinson:

There has been a national spike in the anti-social use of off-road motorcycles, e-bikes, and scooters on UK roads and in public places.

And whilst there are trial schemes for e-bikes and e-scooters operating in Greater Manchester it is illegal for some vehicles and those not in trial schemes to be used on public highways and in public spaces.

There is a myth that the Police cannot do anything which is not true. The Police will act even when riders are not wearing helmets but only in a targeted approach made by trained officers. In fact, Greater Manchester Police (GMP) has a dedicated team of Officers.

This Council Acknowledges:

- That Greater Manchester Police's resources are finely stretched, and that Oldham Council cannot just ask for GMP to put resources into Oldham without a strongly evidenced basis.
- Oldham Council recognises that GMP officers will use up-to-date intelligence to help direct them to areas of concern. Recent successes have been seen with Operation Vulcan and Operation AVRO - Oldham must do its bit to help the Police.

- Most motorbike, e-bike, scooter riders, use their vehicles in a safe and considerate manner and abide by the law. Sadly, there are those that don't, and this poses a serious risk to not only themselves, but other road users also.
- People can easily purchase e-bikes or e-scooters blissfully unaware they are not intended for use on the public highway or in public spaces having a logic that 'if they weren't legal, they wouldn't sell them.'
- That Oldham Council must work more closely with communities and organisations to generate a campaign to advise our residents of how and when to report issues.
- Oldham Council must continue working alongside GMP, housing providers, other partners and communities to get a message out that is clear about what constitutes an irresponsible user so that those who pose no threat to others carry on enjoying them sensibly and legally, and those that are not can be dealt with appropriately

This Council is aware that:

- Criminals are also using these modes of transport to commit further crimes, including drug supply, burglary, and theft. The anti-social use of these vehicles causes misery within our communities, impacting on the quality of life and posing a danger to those using the region's roads and open spaces.
- The tactic of using a police car to make controlled contact with a moped or motorcycle (often referred to as "tactical contact" or a "tactical stop") is governed by national standards set by the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). This guidance applies to all police forces across England and Wales, not just the Metropolitan Police in London. The key requirement is that the officers involved must be appropriately trained as response and TPAC (Tactical Pursuit and Containment) drivers. The use of the tactic must be authorised by a commanding officer, who will conduct a dynamic risk assessment, weighing the seriousness of the crime against the risk to the public and the offender. The tactic was widely publicised by the Metropolitan Police as an effective measure against moped-enabled crime, which was a significant issue in London. However, the legal framework and training standards are national, enabling any appropriately trained UK police force to use it in suitable circumstances.

• This Council believes that:

Working closely with residents and partners not just the Police is key to tackling this behaviour.

- Greater Manchester Police officers will use up-to-date intelligence to help direct them to areas of concern to deter, detect and disrupt offences from taking place.

This Council resolves to:

1. Write to the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police Sir Stephen Watson QPM thanking him, the Officers and staff of

GMP and the National Police Air Service (NPAS) for their continued hard work and dedication in tackling the anti-social use of these vehicles and ask him to ensure that this remains a priority for Greater Manchester Police.

2. To write to the Home Office and ask for further dedicated funding for GMP to use in tackling the anti-social use of off-road motorbikes, electric bikes and electric scooters.

3. To use Oldham Council's Media team and ask them to carry out a campaign educating the public into the legalities of these vehicles and encouraging residents to help build up an intelligence-led picture so that GMP can carry out targeted operations by reporting instances and homes suspected of housing anti-social users which can be done anonymously.

4. Ask housing providers such as First Choice Homes, Great Places, Guinness Partnership to work with Oldham Council's media team and develop and plan of education and intelligence to support GMP in operations to tackle the anti-social use of off-road motorbike, e-scooters, and e-bikes.

5. Write to the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police Sir Stephen Watson QPM asking him to make more use of the tactical contact/stopping and to ensure more officers are trained in its use, this method allows a police car to make controlled contact with a moped or motorcycle.

On being put to the VOTE the AMENDMENT carried.

On being put to the VOTE the MOTION AS AMENDED was CARRIED

RESOLVED:

Council resolves to:

1. Write to the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police Sir Stephen Watson QPM thanking him, the Officers and staff of GMP and the National Police Air Service (NPAS) for their continued hard work and dedication in tackling the anti-social use of these vehicles and ask him to ensure that this remains a priority for Greater Manchester Police.

2. Write to the Home Office and ask for further dedicated funding for GMP to use in tackling the anti-social use of off-road motorbikes, electric bikes and electric scooters.

3. Use Oldham Council's Media team and ask them to carry out a campaign educating the public into the legalities of these vehicles and encouraging residents to help build up an intelligence-led picture so that GMP can carry out targeted operations by reporting instances and homes suspected of housing anti-social users which can be done anonymously.

4. Ask housing providers such as First Choice Homes, Great Places, Guinness Partnership to work with Oldham Council's media team and develop and plan of education and intelligence to support GMP in operations to tackle the anti-social use of off-road motorbike, e-scooters, and e-bikes.

5. Write to the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police Sir Stephen Watson QPM asking him to make more use of the tactical contact/stopping and to ensure more officers are trained

in its use, this method allows a police car to make controlled contact with a moped or motorcycle.

Motion 2: Fair Access and Funding for Non-Invasive (Digital) Post-Mortems

Councillor Akhtar MOVED and Councillor Zaheer Ali
SECONDED the following Motion:

Background:

Council notes that when a death is sudden, unexplained, or occurs in circumstances requiring investigation, the Coroner is legally required to establish the cause of death through a post-mortem examination.

Traditionally, this has meant an invasive surgical autopsy an intrusive procedure that can be distressing for families, delay burials for several days, and conflict with religious requirements for immediate burial.

These examinations typically cost between £400 – £800 per case, rising to several thousand pounds in forensic cases, and are funded by local authorities via the coronial service budget.

Recent advances now allow the same investigative purpose to be achieved using Post-Mortem Computed Tomography (PMCT) or MRI scanning, known as a non-invasive or digital post-mortem.

The scans are undertaken by radiographers, interpreted by radiologists, and can identify a cause of death in 85–90 % of cases. They are quicker, more dignified, and culturally sensitive.

However, funding arrangements remain inconsistent nationally.

- In authorities such as Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford, Leicester, and Sandwell, costs are fully met from the coronial budget, and families pay nothing.
- Where a local facility does not exist, or no inter-borough agreement is in place, bereaved families may currently be asked to pay £200–£650 privately to access a scan something the Chief Coroner's 2022 guidance discourages.
- Oldham, Rochdale, and Bury Councils have jointly agreed to procure a shared digital post-mortem service, due to be operational in 2026, with each authority meeting one-third of the cost.
- Oldham currently contributes a proportion of the Greater Manchester North Coroner's budget along with Rochdale and Bury.
- Digital post-mortem costs (average £300–£500) are comparable to invasive autopsy costs.
- This motion commits no additional expenditure beyond existing allocations but ensures that funding responsibility lies with the Council, not families.
- Any variations or pressures will be reviewed by the Section 151 Officer through normal budget processes.

Council Believes

- Every family should have access to a non-invasive post-mortem free at the point of need where the Coroner deems it appropriate.
- Faith sensitivity and compassion should be reflected in how post-mortems are conducted.
- Clarity is needed so that no family is ever charged privately when a non-invasive scan is ordered by the Coroner.
- Oldham can adopt the Lancashire model, ensuring costs are contained within the coronial service budget and compliant with Financial Procedure Rules.

Council Resolves

1. Agreement with Rochdale and Bury
2. That Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC) formally agrees to Rochdale Council's request to participate in the joint procurement and delivery of the Digital Post-Mortem Services, contributing a proportion of the total cost (based on population, and requests that Bury Metropolitan Borough Council likewise confirm its participation, ensuring consistent funding and governance across the Greater Manchester North Coroner's Service.
3. Free at Point of Need
That all non-invasive (digital) post-mortems authorised by the Greater Manchester North Coroner for Oldham residents be funded through Oldham's share of the coronial service budget, and that no bereaved family be charged directly.
4. Inter-Authority Funding Agreements
That the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer enter discussions with partner councils and the Coroner's Office to ensure clear agreements are in place for payment of scans carried out outside the borough until the joint facility becomes operational in 2026.
5. Financial Compliance
That any implementation of this policy be carried out within approved budget allocations for the coronial service allocations to the coronial service, and subject to the approval of the Section 151 Officer under the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
6. Public Awareness and Faith Engagement
That the Council work with local faith leaders, funeral directors, and NHS Bereavement Services to publicise the availability of non-invasive post-mortems and to support families requiring rapid burial.
7. Scrutiny and Reporting
That the relevant Scrutiny Board receive an annual report covering:
 - the number of non-invasive vs invasive post-mortems;
 - turnaround times;
 - cost implications; and
 - family satisfaction feedback.

Financial Implications (For noting)

- Oldham currently contributes a proportion dependant on population towards the Greater Manchester North Coroner Service budget, hosted by Rochdale MBC.
- Digital post-mortem costs (£300-£500 per case) are comparable to traditional autopsies.
- The proposal is therefore cost-neutral, committing no new expenditure beyond Oldham's existing allocation.
- Any variance will be reviewed by the Section 151 Officer during the annual budget process.

AMENDMENT

COUNCILLOR Shuttleworth MOVED and Councillor Nasheen SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

Background:

Council notes that when a death is sudden, unexplained, or occurs in circumstances requiring investigation, the Coroner is legally required to establish the cause of death through a post-mortem examination.

Traditionally, this has meant an invasive surgical autopsy an intrusive procedure that can be distressing for families, delay burials for several days, and conflict with religious requirements for immediate burial.

These examinations typically cost between £400 – £800 per case, rising to several thousand pounds in forensic cases, and are funded by local authorities via the coronial service budget. Recent advances now allow the same investigative purpose to be achieved using Post-Mortem Computed Tomography (PMCT) or MRI scanning, known as a non-invasive or digital post-mortem.

The scans are undertaken by radiographers, interpreted by radiologists, and can identify a cause of death in 85–90 % of cases. They are quicker, more dignified, and culturally sensitive. However, funding arrangements remain inconsistent nationally.

- In authorities such as Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford, Leicester, and Sandwell, costs are fully met from the coronial budget, and families pay nothing.
- Where a local facility does not exist, or no inter-borough agreement is in place, bereaved families may currently be asked to pay £200–£650 privately to access a scan something the Chief Coroner's 2022 guidance discourages.
- Oldham, Rochdale, and Bury Councils have jointly agreed to procure a shared digital post-mortem service, due to be operational in 2026, with each authority meeting one-third of the cost.
- Oldham currently contributes a proportion of the Greater Manchester North Coroner's budget along with Rochdale and Bury.
- Digital post-mortem costs (average £300–£500) are comparable to invasive autopsy costs.
- This motion commits no additional expenditure beyond existing allocations but ensures that funding responsibility lies with the Council, not families.
- Any variations or pressures will be reviewed by the Section 151 Officer through normal budget processes.

Council Believes

- Every family should have access to a non-invasive post-mortem free at the point of need where the Coroner deems it appropriate.
- Faith sensitivity and compassion should be reflected in how post-mortems are conducted.
- Clarity is needed so that no family is ever charged privately when a non-invasive scan is ordered by the Coroner.
- Oldham is in the process of adopting an approach similar to the Lancashire model, ensuring costs are contained within the coronial service budget and compliant with Financial Procedure Rules.

Council Resolves

1. Agreement with Rochdale and Bury
That Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC) continues on the path it is already on and formally agrees to the joint procurement and delivery of the Digital Post-Mortem Services, contributing a proportion of the total cost (based on population, and requests that Bury Metropolitan Borough Council likewise confirm its participation, ensuring consistent funding and governance across the Greater Manchester North Coroner's Service.
2. Free at Point of Need
That when the service goes live in 2026 all non-invasive (digital) post-mortems authorised by the Greater Manchester North Coroner for Oldham residents be funded through the coronial service budget, and that no bereaved family will be charged directly.
3. Inter-Authority Funding Agreements
That the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer cannot instruct the Coroner's Office to pay for private scans carried out before the joint facility becomes operational in 2026.
4. Financial Compliance
That any implementation of this policy be carried out within approved budget allocations for the coronial service allocations to the coronial service, and subject to the approval of the Section 151 Officer under the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
5. Public Awareness and Faith Engagement
That the Council continues to work with local faith leaders, funeral directors, and NHS Bereavement Services to publicise the availability of non-invasive post-mortems and to support families requiring rapid burial.
6. Scrutiny and Reporting
To note that the coroner's office is a statutory service outside of the Council's control, but asks that the relevant Scrutiny Board consider inviting the Coroner to provide an update which may cover:
 - the number of non-invasive vs invasive post-mortems;
 - turnaround times;
 - cost implications; and
 - family satisfaction feedback.

On being put to the VOTE the AMENDMENT was CARRIED.

On being put to the VOTE the MOTION AS AMENDED was CARRIED.

RESOLVED

1. Agreement with Rochdale and Bury
That Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC) continues on the path it is already on and formally agrees to the joint procurement and delivery of the Digital Post-Mortem Services, contributing a proportion of the total cost (based on population, and requests that Bury Metropolitan Borough Council likewise confirm its participation, ensuring consistent funding and governance across the Greater Manchester North Coroner's Service.
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That the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer cannot instruct the Coroner's Office to pay for private scans carried out before the joint facility becomes operational in 2026.
4. Financial Compliance
That any implementation of this policy be carried out within approved budget allocations for the coronial service allocations to the coronial service, and subject to the approval of the Section 151 Officer under the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
5. Public Awareness and Faith Engagement
That the Council continues to work with local faith leaders, funeral directors, and NHS Bereavement Services to publicise the availability of non-invasive post-mortems and to support families requiring rapid burial.
6. Scrutiny and Reporting
To note that the coroner's office is a statutory service outside of the Council's control, but asks that the relevant Scrutiny Board consider inviting the Coroner to provide an update which may cover:
 - the number of non-invasive vs invasive post-mortems.
 - turnaround times.
 - cost implications; and
 - family satisfaction feedback.

Motion 3: Protecting Community Cohesion and Public Services from Asylum Accommodation in Oldham

Councillor Woodvine MOVED and Councillor Arnott SECONDED the following MOTION:

Conservative controlled Local Authorities – Epping Forest (Essex) and Great Yarmouth (Norfolk) – have challenged Serco and private sector providers of housing for illegal migrants and asylum seekers in their areas at the High Court. This Council should follow their lead in seeking legal advice and challenging Home Office contracts to provide migrant housing in Oldham Borough.

This Council notes:

- So far in 2025, 25,000 people have crossed the Channel in small boats. Since July 2024, over 50,000 people have crossed the Channel, leaving immigration policy under this government in tatters.
- Since the Labour Party formed the UK Government there have been a record 111,000 asylum claims, claims for refugee status have hit a record high, and there has been an 8% rise in the use of hotel accommodation for asylum seekers.
- It is Conservative led councils that are taking real action to protect their residents, while other parties issue press releases and politically posture.
- The increasing pressures faced by local communities where hotels are designated for use as migrant accommodation without proper consultation or local input.
- The risk of non-hotel accommodation also being considered to house migrants in Oldham Borough.

This Council believes:

- That local communities must be properly consulted before significant decisions are made that impact local services, housing, and community cohesion.
- That the use of local hotels as long-term accommodation for migrants is not a sustainable solution and places disproportionate pressures on local infrastructure and services.
- That local councils, as the democratic voice of their communities, should have a say in how accommodation needs are managed and delivered.

This Council resolves:

1. To request the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Council's Director of Legal and Legal Services, to urgently assess the merits of seeking an injunction to prevent the use of local hotels for migrant accommodation where it is deemed to be in the best interests of the community.
2. To further request the Chief Executive to instruct Officers to consider every option and seek legal advice on using injunctions, stop notices and other planning enforcement against change of use to close asylum hotels in the council area, and prevent them from being opened.
3. To write to the Secretary of State for the Home Office expressing this Council's concerns about the use of hotels, and non-hotel accommodation, in the Oldham Borough for migrant accommodation and to request full consultation with this Council on any future decisions.
4. To call on the UK Government to develop a sustainable, properly planned, and community consulted approach to housing migrants.
5. To write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, calling on the Government to adopt the Conservative proposals to

clarify in law and policy beyond doubt that such asylum hotels should always require change of use.

6. To instruct the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport & Housing Delivery to introduce the strictest limitations possible on housing / hospitality stock being converted to asylum accommodation in the Oldham Local Plan.

On being put to the VOTE the MOTION was LOST.

Motion 4: Stop the Boats

Councillor Quigg addressed Council and announced that he was WITHDRAWING the MOTION (Stop the Boats).

On being put to the vote the MOTION (to withdraw the Motion) was CARRIED.

13

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2025/2026

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Executive Director of Resources, which advised that the Council was required to determine a Scheme for Members' Allowances following consideration of a report of an Independent Remuneration Panel convened in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

On 24th April 2025, the Independent Remuneration Panel met to consider a review of the Members' Allowances Scheme which involved looking at benchmarking data from other local authorities and changes within the political arrangements of the council. The Panel also considered proposals to amend the allowance for Independent Members/Persons appointed to the Audit Committee and Standards Committee.

The Panel further met on 21st August 2025, as a result of a review of Members' allowances which was instructed by the Chief Executive, the outcome of which was subject to a separate report to the Audit Committee, on 22nd October 2025. Whilst the investigation outcome fell outside of the remit of the Remuneration Panel, the Panel were asked to consider the impact in relation to basic allowance and special responsibility allowances, as their previous recommendations were based on incorrect information, which was the reason why the Panel's original report was not presented to the July Council meeting.

Whilst the Council has a duty to have regard to the Panel's recommendations, it is the Council's choice whether to accept the Panel's recommendations in whole or in part, or not at all, or to determine any other scheme for 2025/2026.

RESOLVED:

1. That Council notes the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, and approves its recommendations, as set out in Appendix 1, attached thereto and adopts the scheme of allowances as set out in Appendix 2, to the submitted report, for the municipal year 2025/26, effective from 1st April 2025.

2. That Council delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Governance in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Legal (Monitoring Officer) to:
 - (i) take all necessary action to implement 1 above.
 - (ii) update the constitution.
 - (iii) to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to review the scheme of allowances for implementation of the revised scheme from April 2026.
3. That the Independent Remuneration Panel be thanked for its report.

14

OLDHAM COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED the Oldham Council Annual Report 2024/25, which marked the first opportunity to reflect on the progress made since the launch of the Borough's Corporate Plan 2024–2027. The Annual Report highlighted the difference the Council has made over the past year – from delivering better services and investing in neighbourhoods, to supporting residents and businesses through change. The Annual report was designed to celebrate success, show how the Council's priorities are being turned into action, and give a clear picture of the positive impact the Authority is making for Oldham.

The Oldham Council Annual Report 2024/25 reflected on the first year of delivering the Corporate Plan 2024–2027. It captured the progress made against our priorities and highlighted how the Council was working to make a real difference for residents, communities and businesses. Achievements over 2024/25 included progress on the regeneration of Oldham town centre, the delivery of new housing, improvements to frontline services, and investment in cleaner, greener initiatives that supported the Council's climate ambitions.

RESOLVED:

That the Oldham Council Annual Report 2024/25 be noted.

15

THE LEADING OLDHAM PARTNERSHIP IMPACT REPORT 2024/25

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Executive Director of Resources, which presented the Leading Oldham Partnership Impact Report 2024/25, showcasing the progress that the Council and partners have made since the launch of Pride, Progress, Partnership in 2024. The document captures the real impact of shared ambitions and highlighted achievements across the Borough's communities, the economy and public services, while being honest about the challenges being faced. By bringing partners and residents into one story of change, the report helped the Council to celebrate its success, to learn from experience, and to focus energies on the various opportunities ahead.

The Leading Oldham Partnership Impact Report 2024/25 captured the progress made in the first year of delivering Pride,

Progress, Partnership. It highlights how partners across the borough have worked together to make Oldham a great place to live, grow and thrive. Examples of what's been achieved range from major regeneration projects in the town centre and new housebuilding, to initiatives that support people directly in their day-to-day lives.



RESOLVED:

1. That Council notes the content of the Leading Oldham Partnership Impact Report 2024/25.
2. That Council acknowledges the continued work of the partnership to improve the Borough.

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OLDHAM CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PLAN 2025/26

Councillor Mushtaq MOVED and Councillor Mohon Ali SECONDED a report of the Executive Director of Children's Services, which presented the Oldham Children, Young People and Families Plan 2025/26. THE Plan had previously been considered by the Children's Achieving Excellence Board, the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board, all of which had recommended its approval. The Plan required formal Council approval.

RESOLVED:

That the Oldham Children, Young People and Families Plan 2025/26, as detailed in full at Appendix 1, to the submitted report, be approved.

17

REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE ON COMMITTEES

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Executive Director of Resources, which advised that since the Council meeting, held on 16th July 2025, the Chief Executive received notification, on Friday 12th September 2025, that Councillors Ball, Quigg and Wilkinson will henceforth sit as Reform UK Members and Monday, 6th October that Councillors Adams and Arnott had joined the Conservative Group.

Considering this, the Council was asked to review the political composition of committees and to note the composition of the political groups as previously notified under Regulation 8 (1) of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and under Section 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 for the remainder of the 2025/26 municipal year.

RESOLVED:

1. That the revised composition of the political groups as shown in paragraph 1.1, of the submitted report, be noted.
2. That the number of seats on the various Committees for the remainder of the 2025/26 Municipal Year be as detailed in paragraph 1.5, of the submitted report, be noted.

3. That any outstanding appointments to be delegated to the Chief Executive in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group.



Oldham
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INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

Councillor Jabbar MOVED and Councillor Shah SECONDED a report of the Executive Director of Resources that sought to appoint a second independent member of the Audit Committee, for a four year term concluding at the end of the municipal year 2029, that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to finalise the conditions of appointment to this role and that the second Independent Member be appointed to the position of Vice Chair of the Audit Committee.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Kenyon MOVED and Councillor Al-Hamdani SECONDED an AMENDMENT to the report, as set out in the Supplementary Agenda papers, as follows:

- a. To delete Recommendation 2: "That the second Independent Member be appointed to the position of Vice Chair of the Audit Committee."
- b. To amend section 3.1, of the report, as follows: "To accept the recommendation to appoint to the position (and to delete the wording ..."and that the second Independent Member be appointed as Vice Chair of the Audit Committee".

On being put to the VOTE the AMENDMENT was LOST.

On being put to the Vote the MOTION was CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

1. That Mr. Stuart Green be appointed as the second independent member of the Audit Committee, for a four-year term ending at the end of the municipal year 2029, and that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to finalise the conditions of appointment for this role.
2. That the second Independent Member be appointed to the position of Vice Chair of the Audit Committee.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 9.45pm

Report to COUNCIL – 10th December 2025



Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Arooj Shah, Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Growth

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

Housing Delivery: The council received the fantastic news that our bid to the GM Good Growth Fund for Prince's Gate was successful. The £35.1m secured will top up the £9.9m of brownfield grant funding already secured and the £5m of Community Regeneration Funding we have already committed to the project to ensure the delivery of 331 new homes, including 75 social homes. I'll be joining our partners at Muse in breaking ground on the site in the coming week as enabling works for the development get underway.

Creating A Better Place: The positive progress I reported last month continues as part of our ongoing investment across Oldham.

The construction of a new Visitor Centre and Forestry Skills Hub at Northern Roots is progressing at pace, and I was pleased to recently attend a key milestone of the Visitor Centre steel signing ceremony alongside the contractor Wilmott Dixon, the Northern Roots Charity and other key stakeholders. The buildings will contain a cafe, shop, production kitchen, space for educational visits, support for residents to gain valuable qualifications and training, performances and exhibitions. The scheme is already generating additional Social Value, to date providing employment opportunities for five previously unemployed residents. The Northern Roots scheme will put Oldham on the map as a place leading the way in sustainability and green skills whilst bringing long-term benefits to Oldham, including a boost to skills, jobs, tourism, and our economy.

A contractor has now been appointed to deliver the Wrigley Head Solar Farm, our first ever large-scale solar powered facility, as part of our Green New Deal Strategy. The Council owned landlocked site is part of the Moston Brook Green Corridor. The Contractor is a North West based company using local suppliers wherever possible, continuing our commitment to support local and regional businesses. The Solar farm aims to generate around 830,000Kwh of electricity per year, which is enough to power around 310 homes.

The relocation of the outdoor market from its current location, at the rear of the Tommyfield indoor market, is another key component to the ongoing transformation of the town centre. It will 'radically transform' George Square, a small plot of communal space between Spindles Shopping Centre and the police station progressing up to the edge of the bus station. I am pleased to announce that work has now commenced on site. The location will create a strong link between the new homes proposed on the Old Magistrates Court site, connecting with many independent businesses on George Street. The location is well placed to benefit from strong connectivity to the bus station, the existing Spindles car park and the Metrolink for both residents and visitors to access the new market.

The new space will be multi-functional, when not in use for the outdoor market the location can be used for various events, and with proposals including new seating and greening of the space that will provide a tranquil space for relaxation.

Oldham Town Centre Grants Update: The Oldham Town Centre Shop Front Grant scheme was launched in June 2025 with a deadline to apply by August 2025 and for all works to be complete by March 2026. The grant was targeted at specific parts of the town centre to encourage traders to improve the facade of their premises thus contributing to the wider regeneration of the town centre. Businesses were able to apply for a maximum grant of £20,000 or £10,000 for double or single fronted premises respectively. All businesses in the eligible areas were contacted and visited by officers to encourage them to apply. Overall, 44 applications were received, 25 of which were approved for grant funding totaling £266,668. 19 applications rejected due to a lack of information provided or because they did not meet eligibility criteria.

Leader of the year: On a personal note, I was honoured to receive the LGIU's Leader of the Year award. While it is a personal recognition, I see it as an acknowledgement of Oldham's progress, our collective ambition, and the hard work of staff, partners, and communities over the last few years. Oldham is increasingly being recognised nationally for the improvements we are driving together and I am determined that we continue to improve for the benefit of all our residents.

GM Civic Commissioners Graduation: Last month I was proud to speak at the Greater Manchester Civic Commissioners Graduation 2025. Oldham has been a strong supporter of this programme from the beginning, and it was inspiring to see residents from across GM – including participants from Oldham – step forward as leaders in their communities. Their work reflects the values we hold as a borough: fairness, collaboration, and the belief that real change is shaped by people with lived experience. Alongside the GM Mayor, Andy Burnham, I congratulated all the graduates and reaffirmed Oldham's commitment to strengthening community leadership.

Development of our partnerships work: November also saw the launch of Oldham's new Communities Board. This is a key partnership bringing together local organisations and community leaders to strengthen cohesion and build a more resilient borough. The Board held its first meeting with a clear focus on community relations, shared values, and how we can work together to address the issues that matter most to local people. This Board is not a talking shop: it is a space for honest conversation, joint problem-solving, and collective action. Its work will support the wider Oldham Partnership and play a central role in shaping a more connected, confident, and inclusive borough. I look forward to the Board driving meaningful progress in the months ahead.

National Budget Announcement & Two-Child Limit: The recent Budget included a landmark commitment to lift the two-child benefit cap. This is a policy change which will make a significant difference to families in Oldham, where too many children are growing up in poverty. As a council we have consistently highlighted how this cap drives hardship and limits opportunity. Its removal is a positive and long-overdue step, benefitting over 10,000 children across the borough.

Pride in Place Funding: At the end of November the Chadderton Neighbourhood Board, who are managing the Pride in Place funding for this area, submitted their 10-year Regeneration Plan to the Government. This sets out the 10-year vision and objectives along with the case for change. Alongside this, a 4-year action plan that shows prioritised projects, all of which have been developed as part of a community consultation process, was also submitted for approval. This is a significant milestone in the programme which will see £19.5M investment spent on projects that our communities have said they would like to see.

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

The Chair informed the meeting that agenda item 8 (Contractual Arrangements - Azure Cloud Contract – Microsoft) had been withdrawn and would now be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 15th December 2025.

The Chair advised that there was one item of urgent business (Request for a Direct Award of the Domestic Property Disability Adaption Framework for the Provision of Level Access Showers and Shower over Baths), which would be considered at item 12. The grounds for urgency being that a formal decision to renew the contract for the provision of Level Access Showers and Shower over Baths, referred to in the submitted report, was required prior to the next scheduled Cabinet meeting on 1st December 2025.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mushtaq declared an 'other registerable interest' in agenda item 10 - Extension of Short Breaks Play and Leisure Activities from 1st April 2026. Councillor Mushtaq left the room during the consideration and determination of this agenda item.

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 20th October 2025 be approved, as a correct record.

**6 REVENUE MONITOR AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT
PROGRAMME 2025/26 QUARTER 2**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance which provided Members with an update, as at 30th September 2025 (Quarter 2 – July-September) of the Council's 2025/26 forecast revenue budget position, the financial forecast of the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Housing Revenue Account (detailed at Annex 1, to the report) alongside the financial position of the capital programme together with the revised capital programme 2025/26 to 2029/30 (detailed at Annex 2, to the report).

The forecast adverse position for 2025/26, at the end of Quarter 2 was estimated to be £21.094m (£23.209m at the end of Month 5). The details within the revenue monitoring report for Quarter 2 followed on from the Month 5 report previously presented to the Cabinet and highlighted any significant areas of concern which may not just impact on the current year, but also when preparing future budgets. A forecast adverse position based on the Quarter 2 revenue controllable budget was £21.094m which represented a favourable movement of £2.115m from the position previously reported. The increasing need for support of the Council's services from residents and businesses, the complexity of the support needed, and inflationary costs continues to put pressure on service budgets and was demonstrated by the forecast outturn position reported at the end of Quarter 2. These pressures, in the main driven by escalating costs in essential statutory services supporting the most vulnerable residents, reflected the broader challenges the Council and numerous Councils across the country are facing. This is particularly acute in statutory and heavily inspected services where there is little flexibility to mitigate rising costs, for example increasing pressures on social care budgets due to the support needs of vulnerable children and complexity in the needs of adult requiring support.

There was also an increasing need to support children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) and whilst significant work has been done in the last 12 months, homelessness presentations and use of temporary accommodation is still of concern given the numbers accessing this service. Since the last report was presented to this meeting, the implementation of the agreed enhanced controls had started to have an impact on the forecast position resulting in the favourable movement between periods. As these controls are further embedded it was expected that the position would continue to improve.

It was important that the organisation continues its work on mitigating and reducing the forecast revenue variance by the end of the financial year, limiting any unbudgeted use of reserves and protecting its financial resilience. Given, the in-year financial position of the Council, the level of reserves available and the budgetary gaps already within the MTFS, the upcoming Policy Statement and the outcome of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27 onwards will have a significant influence on the financial sustainability of the Council and the Council's ability to set a balanced budget over the short term.

The budget pressures the Council has faced in recent years cannot continue to be mitigated without significant action both to reduce projected spend in-year and to reduce costs over the years to come. Further details of mitigations underway were included at Annex 1, to the submitted report.

Information on the forecast year end position of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) were also outlined in the report.

The report outlines the most up to date capital spending position for 2025/26 to 2029/30 for approved schemes. The revised Capital Programme budget for 2025/26 was £122.248m at the close of Quarter 2 (30th September 2025). Actual expenditure to 30th September 2025 was £25.973m (21.2% of the forecast outturn).

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1 – to agree the recommendations in the report.

Option 2 – to not agree the recommendations in the report.

Option 1 was the preferred Option.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet notes the report.
2. That the Cabinet notes the forecast revenue position at the end of Quarter 2 (2025/26), at £21.094m, with mitigations in place to reduce expenditure as detailed at Annex 1, to the submitted report.
3. That the Cabinet notes the forecast positions for the Dedicated Schools Grant and Housing Revenue Account.
4. That the Cabinet approves the revised Capital Programme for 2025/26 including the proposed virements and notes the forecast for the financial years to 2029/30 as at the end of Quarter 2 as outlined in Annex 2, to the submitted report.

7

COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2026/2027

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Resources, the purpose of which was to present the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2026/27. Cabinet, in considering the report noted that it was being presented to the Council's meeting on 10th December 2025.

The Council was required to review its Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme each year and decide whether to revise it or leave it unchanged.

A major consultation exercise had not been undertaken regarding changes to the CTR scheme and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority has been provisionally advised that no change to the current scheme was being proposed. In this regard, the proposal was that the CTR scheme for 2026/27 remain the same as that operating in 2025/26 and, therefore, no consultation exercise is required. The current CTR scheme provides a maximum reduction equivalent to 85% of the Council Tax charge for a Band A property and this has been unchanged since 2014/15.

The scheme continued to meet the needs of residents and remained in line with national regulations.

It was noted that caseload had continued to gradually decrease, and there have been no national or legislative changes that would require any local amendment.

During 2026/27, officers would scope potential options for 2027/28 to assess whether any amendments to the scheme would provide value for money. This will include consideration of the cost of system changes, any potential administrative savings, and the ongoing need to ensure the scheme continues to support residents effectively.

Options/Alternatives considered:

The Council is required to review its Council Tax Reduction scheme each year and determine whether any changes are needed. The review for 2026/27 found no operational, legislative or financial factors requiring amendment. Given the time required to design and consult on changes, it would not have been possible to implement any amendments for 2026/27. A full review was to be undertaken during 2026/27 to inform the 2027/28 scheme

Therefore, the preferred option was that the that Council, on 10th December 2025, approves that the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme remains unchanged for 2026/27.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet recommend that the Council approves that the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme remains unchanged for 2026/27.

8 **CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS - AZURE CLOUD
CONTRACT - MICROSOFT**

The Chair advised that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda and would be considered by the Cabinet, at its meeting on 15th December 2025.

9 **SPRING BROOK CAPITAL WORKS**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Children's Services that sought approval for a capital project that will offer additional places and enhance provision for pupils with additional needs who are based within the Newbridge Trust. It also sought approval for the allocation of funding from HNPCA and Basic Need Grant towards the scheme.

The submitted report related to a project at Spring Brook Upper School that will enhance existing provision and provide additional provision for pupils with additional needs. These proposals are now developed sufficiently for costs and proposals to be placed before the Cabinet for a final decision. This project will create a total of 36 new places in the school for children with additional needs.

Currently the Local Authority has around £2.8million of Basic Need funding and £9.6million of High Needs Capital Allocation Funding. It was proposed that where projects will generate additional places these projects will be funded from the HNPCA Grant provision

Spring Brook Upper School is a special school that serves all areas Oldham for children with SEMH and is run by New Bridge

Multi Academy Trust. This project will increase access to places for 36 children



Spring Brook Academy is a special school in Oldham that is based across two sites and currently caters for 114 pupils aged between 4-16 years old with a range of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties. Spring Brook lower school, which accommodates KS1 & KS2 pupils, shares its site with Lyndhurst Primary School, a mainstream primary academy. The Spring Brook upper school site, which accommodates KS3 pupils, is based in the Failsworth area of Oldham. Spring Brook lower school is approximately a 10-minute drive from the upper school site.

The central project objective for the Trust is how best to bring Spring Brook's lower and upper school pupils together on one site. The lower school and upper school pupils are to be predominantly based and taught in separate areas. The lower school pupils are to be accommodated within a new teaching block with the upper school pupils continuing to be taught within the existing main school building. KS1 pupils will be taught on the ground floor of the new teaching block with KS2 pupils taught on the first floor. Classrooms are to be designed to accommodate a maximum group size of between 8-10 pupils

The total cost of this project is estimated to be in the region of £1,581,199 (a total of £1,739,319 when including 10% contingency) following completion of a RIBA stage 2 report by Spring Brook Academy. It is proposed that this project is funded by the LA Basic Need and/or HNPCA Grant.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1: To approve the above capital investment for the project listed above to deliver the ambitions of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027.

Option 2: Do not approve the projects and risk not fulfilling the above strategy.

Option 1 was the preferred Option.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet approves the Capital Project, detailed in the submitted report that will offer additional places and enhance provision for pupils with additional needs who are based within the Newbridge Trust.
2. That the Cabinet approves the allocation of funding from HNPCA and Basic Need Grant towards the scheme, as detailed in the submitted report.

10

EXTENSION OF SHORT BREAKS PLAY AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES FROM 1ST APRIL 2026

The Cabinet received a report of the Executive Director of Children and Young People which sought approval to exercise the option to extend the current contract with POINT. The service is a statutory requirement ensuring that children, young people and families have access to Short Breaks Play and Leisure activities.

The existing contract (DN647420) is due to expire on 31st March 2026 but includes an existing option for a two-year extension. Approval is sought to exercise this option for two years to maintain compliance with statutory and funding obligations.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1: to exercise the option to extend the initial term of POINT Short Break Play and Leisure Activities Contract for a period of two years at £200,000.00 per year, from 1st April 2026 up until 31st March 2028 in order to allow services for Oldham's children, young people and families to continue. This will prevent any gaps in service delivery for children and young people with additional needs and their families and ensure statutory obligations are being met by the Council.

Option 2: do not exercise the option to extend the contract with POINT.

Option 1: is the preferred Option.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet exercises the option to extend the initial term of POINT Short Break Play and Leisure Activities Contract for a period of two years at £200,000.00 per year, from 1st April 2026 up until 31st March 2028, in order to allow services for Oldham's children, young people and families to continue; thereby preventing any gaps in service delivery for children and young people with additional needs and their families and to ensure that statutory obligations are being met by the Council.

11

**CHANGE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME DELIVERY -
EARLY LANGUAGE SUPPORT FOR EVERY
CHILD/ALTERNATIVE PROVISION SPECIALIST
TASKFORCE: GRANT REQUIREMENTS**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Children and Young People, that sought approval to appoint/extend posts relating to grant funding allocated to Oldham in relation to the Change Partnership Programme (CPP) and associated ELSEC (Early Language Support for every child) and the APST (Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce). The funding for this was ringfenced and could only be used for the purposes set out in the submitted report.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1: Approve progression of the staffing model outlined in appendix A so that the CPP can be implemented in full. The CPP funding is ring-fenced for the projects identified in this paper. Therefore, there is no other viable option. Carrying out the projects will provide the local area with much needed early identification and specialist support for our most vulnerable children and young people.

Option 2: Do nothing. If we take no action, funding will not be utilised and may, as a result, need to be returned to the DfE, which would significantly limit the support available to identify needs and support our most disadvantaged children and young people.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet approves implementation of Option 1, as detailed in the submitted report, to draw on the CPP grant funding to enable creation of the required posts and dependencies to work alongside the SEND Team and wider SEND and Inclusion Service.

12

REQUEST FOR A DIRECT AWARD OF THE DOMESTIC PROPERTY DISABILITY ADAPTION FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROVISION OF LEVEL ACCESS SHOWERS AND SHOWER OVER BATHS

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) which advised that the Domestic Property Disability Adaptations (DPDA) Framework, which provided essential works such as Level Access Showers and Shower over Baths through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), had exceeded its approved contract value and cannot be extended within the limits set by the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. It was therefore proposed to end the framework following its current one-year extension, seek an exemption to regularise spend via a direct award, and secure continuity of service beyond November 2025.

The Council had a multi contractor Framework Agreement in place for Domestic Property Disability Adaptations (DPDA), which commenced on 1 December 2022 for an initial term of 2 years with the option to extend twice, each for an additional term of no more than 1 year. Under the Framework Agreement, the Council places orders for the provision of Level Access Showers and Shower over Baths, as and when required. The Framework Agreements were put in place to enable the Council to meet its duty to award a Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) to those who are eligible and to ensure the works funded by a DFG are completed to a high standard and in a timely manner.

The initial 2-year term of the Framework Agreement, which the Council has entered with each of the 4 appointed contractors, expired on 30th November 2024. An extension was granted for 1 year and is due to expire on 30th November 2025, as outline in Appendix A. The Framework Agreement provides that 28 days' written notice is required to be served on the Contractor to extend the initial term.

The cost of the extended term is not within the capped total life of contract costs set at £2,260,000, as approved in the original Cabinet report for the procurement of DPDA works requirements and as provided for in the advertised opportunity. The spend to date is £3,089,518.45, which exceeds both the original approval and the maximum permitted modification under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs).

Under the CPRs, a modification of up to 15% (in this case, £339,000) would have been permissible, resulting in a total of £2,599,000. As the actual spend has already exceeded this figure, an exemption to the CPRs is required. This report therefore seeks approval to end the Framework Agreements

and to formally request an exemption for a direct award to regularise the position and enable continued delivery of this essential service.

The DFG budget for this year is £3,044,703.82. The spend to date from the DFG budget is £1,034,003.19 which leaves an outstanding budget of £2,010,700.63. Projected spend to the end of the framework will also need to be calculated to ensure it remains within the wider thresholds.

The report also sought approval to increase the framework prices by 5% from April 2025 to November 2025. And to ensure the uplift in the direct award for December 2025 to November 2026.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1: Do nothing and allow the Framework Agreements to come to an end on 30th November 2025. This option was not recommended due to the legal, operational, and reputational risks it presented to the Council.

Option 2: To extend each Framework Agreement for 12 months, subject to contractor agreement, and seek an exemption to the CPRs. This option is not recommended due to the legal, operational, and reputational risks it presents to the Council.

Option 3: To extend each Framework Agreement for 7 months, seek an exemption to the CPRs, and approve a 5% uplift from April 2025. This option is not recommended due to the legal, operational, and reputational risks it presents to the Council.

Option 4: To end the current Framework Agreements on 30th November 2025 and request an exemption from the CPRs in order to approve a direct award to the current four providers under a one-year Framework Agreement, running from December 2025 to November 2026. In addition, to approve a 5% uplift to the current contract rates from April 2025 to November 2025 and for the extended period until November 2026. Under this option, the current agreements would end on 30th November 2025. We would seek an exemption to the CPRs, as the spend to date plus the projected spend to 30th November 2025 will exceed the permitted modification threshold. The proposal is to make a direct award to the current four framework providers on a one-year term (to 30th November 2026) to ensure continuity of service, in line with the original arrangement. This approach would provide sufficient time to undertake a new procurement. In addition, a 5% uplift to contract prices would be applied from April 2025, reflecting rising costs. This would support providers to remain financially sustainable, encourage their continued engagement, and help secure their participation in both the current and future procurement exercises.

Option 4 was the preferred Option.

In considering the report Cabinet noted that the Chair of Adults and Social Care Scrutiny Board had exempted this item from call-in, by virtue of Rule 14 of the Council's Constitution, due to the need to make a decision regarding the future operation of the service, prior to 30th November 2025.

Resolved:

1. That Option 4, detailed in the submitted report be approved.
2. The Cabinet notes that under Option 4 allows for the end of the current Framework Agreements on 30th November 2025 and authorises an exemption from the CPRs in order to approve a direct award to the current four providers under a one-year Framework Agreement, running from 1st December 2025 to 30th November 2026.
3. The Cabinet notes that in addition, to approve a 5% uplift to the current contract rates backdated from 1st April 2025 to November 2025 and for the extended 12 months contract value.
4. The Cabinet notes that under Option 4, the current agreements will end on 30th November 2025, therefore an exemption to the CPRs, as the spend to date plus the projected spend to 30th November 2025, is approved.
5. The Cabinet notes that proposal is to make a direct award to the current four framework providers on a one-year term (to 30th November 2026) to ensure continuity of service, is in line with the original arrangement - this approach would provide sufficient time to undertake a new procurement exercise; in addition, a 5% uplift to contract prices would be applied from April 2025, reflecting rising costs. This will support providers to remain financially sustainable, to encourage their continued engagement, and help secure their participation in both the current and future procurement exercises.
6. That the Cabinet notes the actions of the Chair of the Adults and Social Care Scrutiny Board in exempting this report from the Call-in process, under Rule 14 of the Council's Constitution.

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 26th SEPTEMBER 2025 AT WIGAN TOWN HALL**

PRESENT

GMCA Mayor	Andy Burnham (In the Chair)
GMCA	Deputy Mayor Kate Green
Bury	Councillor Eamonn O'Brien
Manchester	Councillor Bev Craig
Oldham	Councillor Arooj Shah
Rochdale	Councillor Neil Emmott
Salford	City Mayor Paul Dennett
Stockport	Councillor Jilly Julian
Tameside	Councillor Eleanor Wills
Trafford	Councillor Tom Ross
Wigan	Councillor David Molyneux

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Chair of GM Overview & Scrutiny	Councillor John Walsh
Health Innovation Manchester	Ben Bridgewater
BBC	Josie Cahill
GAMMA Board	Dr Mike Murray

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Group Chief Executive Officer	Caroline Simpson
Group Deputy Chief Executive	Andrew Lightfoot
Group Monitoring Officer	Gill Duckworth
Group Chief Finance Officer	Steve Wilson
Group Secretary	Sarah Horseman
Bolton	Sue Johnson
Bury	Lynne Ridsdale
Manchester	Rebecca Heron

Oldham	Shelley Kipling
Rochdale	James Binks
Salford	Miranda Cannon
Stockport	Michael Cullen
Tameside	Harry Catherall
Trafford	Sara Todd
Wigan	Alison McKenzie-Folan
Office of the GM Mayor	Kevin Lee
TfGM	Martin Lax
GMCA	Sylvia Welsh
GMCA	Lee Teasdale

GMCA 133/25 APOLOGIES

That apologies be received and noted from Councillor Nicholas Peel (Bolton) and Councillor Mark Roberts (Stockport) and Tom Stannard (Manchester) and Stephen Young (Salford).

GMCA 134/25 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

Mayor Andy Burnham welcomed all to the meeting, noting that this would be the first GMCA meeting to have support through British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters that would be fully livestreamed.

The Mayor also provided the latest update on the industrial action that had been taking place across some bus services on the Bee Network, and the work being done to avert any further strike action and agree a path forward that would support both the staff and all passengers.

Upon taking control of the Bee Network, it had been found that bus drivers were on a wide set of pay structures and terms & conditions depending on which operator they worked for and which depot they operated from. The intention now was to move towards a fairer and more harmonised approach, avoiding the destabilisation caused by differing rates across the region. The Greater Manchester Good Employment

Charter was now linked to the process, bringing in improvements around pay and security, and a feedback board was now in place to take on the many concerns addressed by drivers about the old system.

Work was also taking place to develop a Bee Network Pension Scheme, to replace the disparate approach to schemes that many drivers have had to face in the past.

RESOLVED /-

1. That it be noted that the meeting is the first GMCA meeting to have fully livestreamed British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation in accordance with the Mayor's commitments to accessibility.
2. That the update on industrial action relating to bus services on the Bee Network be noted.
3. That the update on successful court case in relation to the Greater Manchester Housing Loans Fund and the reimbursement of court case costs to the GMCA be noted.

GMCA 135/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED /-

That Deputy Mayor Kate Green declared an interest in item 9B by virtue of being a board member of Manchester Camerata, and item 9C by virtue of being a governor of Manchester Metropolitan University.

GMCA 136/25 GMCA MINUTES 22 AUGUST 2025

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the GMCA held on 22 August 2025 be approved.

GMCA 137/25 GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20 AUGUST 2025

RESOLVED /-

That the proceedings of the meeting of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 20 August 2025 be noted.

GMCA 138/25 MINUTES OF THE BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE – 19 AUGUST 2025

RESOLVED /-

That the proceedings of the meeting of the Bee Network Committee held on 19 August 2025 be noted.

GMCA 139/25 MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2025

RESOLVED /-

That the proceedings of the meeting of the GMCA Audit Committee meeting held on 22 September 2025 be noted.

GMCA 140/25 ENGLISH DEVOLUTION AND COMMUNITIES EMPOWERMENT BILL

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, provided a verbal update to the GMCA on the English Devolution and Communities Empowerment Bill. This was a hugely significant piece of legislation for the region and was currently in Parliament having had its second reading on Tuesday 2nd September. Oral evidence had then been taking at the committee stage on 16th September, including a submission from Councillor Bev Craig. Parliament was currently in recess, but between 14th October and 12th November the Bill would be given line by line consideration.

It was vital that Greater Manchester's priorities were properly considered during the Committee stage and it was hoped that there would be support for amendments being sought to the legislation. Firstly, on taxi licencing, specifically out of area licensing which has been an increasing area of concern for many residents. Since deregulation a decade ago, over half of licences were now granted by authorities a significant

distance from the region – it was considered that it should be a local matter to decide who should and should not be granted a licence to operate a taxi in the region, this was not currently within the proposed bill, however it was very much within its scope and so a proposal would be made on an amendment.

Secondly, an amendment would be sought around the accountability of local housing providers. Concerns had been raised in some localities that authorities had been ‘pushed away’ from their housing providers, with representation on boards reduced and/or ended – resulting in a gap between the authorities and providers. There was a need to restore greater public accountability to public housing.

It was noted that the Bill would also include a right-to-request mechanism for further devolution in certain areas. Three areas had been identified in the first instance, and these had been communicated to government. A tourist levy akin to those seen in other countries to help in paying for the extra pressures put under local systems; further devolution of skills; and further employment support.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the verbal update provided by Mayor Andy Burnham be received.
2. That the intention of the GMCA to put forward amendments in relation to taxi licensing and local accountability of housing providers be noted.
3. That it be noted that the options around local accountability of housing providers will be discussed further by Leaders for consideration ahead of any next steps.
4. That it be noted that the English Devolution and Communities Empowerment Bill also included a right-to-request mechanism.
5. That it be noted that three areas have been identified for consideration as part of the right-to-request mechanism in the first instance:
 - Tourist Levies
 - Devolution of Skills
 - Employment Support

**GMCA 141/25 MAYORAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION FOR THE OLD
TRAFFORD REGENERATION – CONSULTATION RESULTS &
APPROVAL TO DESIGNATE**

Councillor Bev Craig, Portfolio Leader for Economy, Business & Inclusive Growth presented a report setting out the results of the consultation on the establishment of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) covering the Old Trafford Regeneration area and seeking approval for the next steps in the process.

Councillor Tom Ross, as Leader of Trafford Council, was invited to provide a further update on the consultation process. The majority of respondents to the consultation had been supportive of the objectives around the creation of the MDC. Positive engagement had also taken place with stakeholders and progress was continually being made on the positive vision for redevelopment.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the results of the consultation exercise in respect of the designation of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) for the Old Trafford Regeneration area be noted.
2. That the Mayor of Greater Manchester's response to the consultation be noted.
3. That it be noted that support for designation of the 'Old Trafford Regeneration' MDC was approved by the Leader of Trafford Council under delegated authority.
4. That the Leader of Trafford Council confirmed consent to the designation of the proposed MDC.
5. That due consideration was given to the proposal by the Mayor to designate an area, identified on the plan at Appendix 3, as a Mayoral Development Area and that the GMCA will notify the Mayor within the consideration period if it proposed to reject the proposal.
6. That it be noted that subject to the GMCA not rejecting the proposal, as set out at recommendation 4 above, the Mayor shall publicise the designation, notify the Secretary of State of the designation and the name to be given to the Mayoral Development Corporation, as follows: "Old Trafford Regeneration Mayoral Development Corporation".

**GMCA 142/25 STOCKPORT TOWN CENTRE MAYORAL DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION EXPANSION: CONSULTATION OUTCOMES
AND FINAL APPROVAL**

Councillor Bev Craig, Portfolio Leader for Economy, Business & Inclusive Growth, presented a report setting out the outcome of the public consultation on the expansion of the Mayoral development area covered by Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation.

Councillor Jilly Julian attending on behalf of the Leader of Stockport Council, Councillor Mark Roberts, was invited to provide a further update from the Stockport Council perspective. The expansion of the MDC was very welcome and would further strengthen the case for extension of the Metrolink network into Stockport. It was stated that this was a historic moment for Stockport and the culmination of years of work around the shared vision for a thriving town centre. This was an example of regeneration providing real value and councils leading from the front on this.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the outcome and responses to the consultation undertaken by the Mayor of Greater Manchester on the proposed expansion of the Stockport Mayoral development area and creation of a new Mayoral Development Corporation to cover this expanded area be noted.
2. That it be noted that Stockport Council Cabinet agreed its support for the proposal set out above at its meeting on 16th September 2025.
3. That the Deputy Leader of Stockport Council, on behalf of the Leader of Stockport Council, confirmed consent to the designation of the proposed MDC.
4. That due consideration be given to the proposal by the Mayor of Greater Manchester to designate this expanded area as a Mayoral Development Area (see map at Appendix One) and that the GMCA will notify the Mayor within the consideration period if it proposes to reject the proposal.
5. That it be noted that following the expiration of the consideration period, if the GMCA has not rejected the proposal, the Mayor intended to take the necessary steps to designate the expanded area as a Mayoral Development Area and to secure the establishment of the new MDC (to be named "Stockport Town

Centre Mayoral Development Corporation”) and the dissolution of the existing MDC including any necessary transfer of rights and liabilities.

GMCA 143/25 CREATION OF GREATER MANCHESTER REGENERATION SKILLS ACADEMY

Councillor Bev Craig, Portfolio Leader for Economy, Business & Inclusive Growth, presented a report seeking approval for the creation of the Greater Manchester Regeneration Skills Academy (“GMRSA”).

It was stated that the last 15 years had seen a significant hollowing out of local authorities’ ability to meet the challenges around developing skills and capacity within regeneration departments and the wider regeneration community. The report focussed on the interventions that the combined authority could undertake working with the many organisations already extant in this space.

The first programme would focus upon early to midyear generation professionals, with the public and private sectors brought together in a joint cohort, with private sector colleagues contributing a fee to join the programme to help in managing costs. The first cohort was due to commence in October 2025.

RESOLVED /-

1. That approval be given for the creation of the Greater Manchester Regeneration Skills Academy (“GMRSA”).
2. That it be noted that the GMCA will receive proposals for the first round of funding under the 10-year investment pipeline at its November 2025 meeting.

GMCA 144/25 PREVENTION DEMONSTRATOR, LIVE WELL, AND NHS 10 YEAR PLAN/INTEGRATED CARE BOARD REFORMS

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report providing an update on three interrelated areas of activity which are central to our ambitions as set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy and which will influence the next 10 years of public service delivery across the Greater Manchester (GM); Live Well, The Prevention

Demonstrator and developments in the health system (the NHS 10 Year Plan and ICB reforms).

It was intended that Live Well would enable delivery on a level not possible previously, becoming the primary vehicle in GM for embedding prevention, integration, and community power across the neighbourhoods of the region. This would approach prevention in a way previously unprecedented anywhere in the UK, with all services working together to provide more services to residents whilst also spending public money more efficiently.

Councillor John Walsh, Chair of the GM Overview & Scrutiny Committee, was invited to provide feedback on the Committee's recent consideration of this item. The Committee had noted the importance of trust, equity and engaging with disconnected residents. Concerns had been raised about sustainability, longer-term funding and ensuring equality and commonalities across all ten GM districts. Members had also raised the need for a simplified community based mental health support network with a preventative approach. If Live Well was to be complementary to current mainstream offers, it needed to be recognised as integral and complementary to that activity, not a disparate addition. Concerns were also raised about the lack of data sharing and issues that could arise from this.

Mayor Burnham welcomed the update stating that the session with Overview & Scrutiny had been constructive and very helpful. He had noted a councillor request that a direct councillor referral route to Live Well be developed – and this would be given serious consideration.

Mayor Burnham provided an update on the future of the Integrated Care Board. Government had advised of a reduced head count and changes to the infrastructure, including the standing down of the Integrated Care Partnership. Conversations were ongoing with local health partners and NHS England about the optimum accountability arrangements to support the prevention demonstrator. It was hoped that a favourable outcome could be reported to the Combined Authority before the end of the year.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the contents of the report and any implications be noted.

2. That the feedback from the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee be received.
3. That the consideration will be given to a direct councillor referral route to Live Well, as recommended by the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

GMCA 145/25 GREATER MANCHESTER'S COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY IN SPORT, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND MOVEMENT

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report engaging GMCA partners on Greater Manchester's commitment to collaborative leadership on gender equity in sport, physical activity.

It was stated that the region fully supported true equality in opportunities to be active and participate at every level of sport. GM Moving had been strongly supportive of signing the Brighton Helsinki Declaration and meeting the targets within the Declaration.

The Mayor also noted that Lancashire Women's Cricket Club had won the 'double' this year – the One Day trophy and the T20 trophy, and good luck was expressed to the England Roses who were due to compete in the Rugby Union World Cup Final over the coming weekend.

Comments and Questions

Members welcomed the declaration, also highlighting the need to look at it through the lens of poverty and ethnicity, and how sport could play such an important role to support inclusion within the local community.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the GMCA confirms its commitment to leadership on gender inequality in active lives, and lead in their place to support movement, physical activity and sport for all women and girls.
2. That a commitment to the Brighton Helsinki Declaration on Women and Girls be signed.

GMCA 146/25 ADOPTING FRONTIER SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Councillor Bev Craig, Portfolio Leader for Economy, Business & Inclusive Growth, provided an update on the 5 “Frontier Sector” Development Plans for adoption as part of GM’s growth approach. The GMCA welcomed Ben Bridgewater of Health Innovation Manchester, Josie Cahill of the British Broadcasting Corporation and Dr Mike Murray from the GAMMA Board, who would all contribute to the item with sector specific insights.

Councillor Craig provided further context. The city region had now grown to the extent that it had a larger economic output than many countries in Europe. This had been achieved by not just focussing on one single area but instead ensuring a range of thriving sectors. The five frontier sector plans built upon this previous commitment to excel in these sectors.

Ben Bridgewater (Health Innovation Manchester) provided an update on work around Life Sciences. He stated that it was an exciting prospect to have a growth plan in place for this sector, and the importance of seeing it within the context of the Greater Manchester Strategy, which creating alignment with a whole range of policy initiatives. The growth plan had been based on analysis undertaken rigorously over time. There was a strong employment base in GM for life sciences and was the biggest outside of London. This resulted in having very strong sets of data that could be considered nationally and indeed internationally competitive – generating significant and increasing amounts of international investment. This could only continue to deliver as well as it does through connectivity with other sectors with connected growth plans.

Josie Cahill (BBC) provided an update on work around the creative sectors in the region. Being able to have a creative arts and media cluster within the region meant that there had been a huge impact, not just on the local economy, but the enabling of truly home growth storytelling, real lives, real voices and real places that mattered to people. There was still more to do, and with the right investment further progress could be made on more jobs and further growth. Collaboration was vital to driving this, and the Plan’s intention to establish a Greater Manchester Creative Industries Council would provide strategic leadership, advocacy and this vital collaboration.

Dr Mike Murray (GAMMA Board) provided an update on advanced manufacturing. The plan established a clear vision for an advanced manufacturing super cluster for the

region, which would allow for a more productive, sustainable, highly skilled and innovative approach that supported the transition to net zero. This was a living document that built upon the region's ambitions around the acceleration of growth, and the successes already achieved.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the frontier sector plans be adopted.
2. That the proposed next steps with the intention for these plans to inform the Local Growth Plan Government has asked the GMCA to produce and for the plans to be refreshed annually be noted.

GMCA 147/25 GREATER MANCHESTER CULTURE FUND PROCESS 2026-2029

Councillor Neil Emmott, Portfolio Leader for Culture presented a report outlining the impact of investment to date and proposes an approach, process and timeline for GMCA investment in culture from April 2026.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the impact of GM Cultural Investment 2023-26 be noted.
2. That the GM Culture Investment Approach 2026-2029 be approved.
3. That the outlined process for the GM Culture Investment 2026-29 be approved.
4. That an indicative investment period of three years, subject to annual review and approval of the Culture Fund as part of the GMCA annual budget setting process, be approved, in principle.
5. That the timeline for the GMCA Culture Fund to open for bids in preparation for the new investment approach starting from April 2026 be agreed.
6. That the establishment of a new sector-led body for culture in Greater Manchester, recognising the need for strong sector leadership, be approved.
7. That it be noted that, the decision of the impact tool, and that the proposed approach will support equality inclusion, health outcomes and the economy in Greater Manchester.

GMCA 148/25 GREATER MANCHESTER CIVIC UNIVERSITIES AGREEMENT

Councillor Bev Craig, Portfolio Leader for Economy, Business & Inclusive Growth, presented a report seeking endorsement from GMCA for the refreshed Greater Manchester Civic University Agreement, a collective, co-developed commitment between GM's five major universities, listed below, and GMCA around collaborative working to tackle a shared range of local priorities.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the refreshed approach by GM's universities embodied in the Greater Manchester Civic University Agreement (CUA) be noted and endorsed.
2. That it be noted that the CUA was a living document and can be revisited in light of developments to the Greater Manchester Strategy.
3. That it be noted that following the endorsement of the GMCA at recommendation 1, a public announcement will follow in October 2025 at the CUA Citizens' Panel.

GMCA 149/25 REVENUE BUDGET UPDATE – QUARTER 1 2025/2026

Councillor David Molyneux, Portfolio Leader for Resources & Investment, presented a report informing members of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority financial position at the end of June 2025 (Quarter 1) and forecast revenue outturn position for the 2025/26 financial year.

RESOLVED /-

That the forecast position at 30th June 2025 be noted.

GMCA 150/25 CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE – QUARTER 1 2025/2026

Councillor David Molyneux, Portfolio Leader for Resources & Investment, presented an update in relation to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's 2025/26 capital expenditure programme.

RESOLVED /-

That the current 2025/26 forecast of £652.9m compared to the 2025/26 budget of £598.3m be noted.

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Elaine Taylor, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods

Housing

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

Oldham Council owns around 2,000 homes, most of which are managed on our behalf through two long-term PFI contracts. As the landlord, we are now inspected under the new national housing regulations introduced in April 2024.

The Regulator of Social Housing has now completed its inspection. The findings show that we need to strengthen how we oversee and check the work carried out by our housing management partners. The main gaps identified were:

- We do not have consistent, detailed internal reporting on how the contracts are performing.
- We need stronger checks to verify the performance information we receive from contractors.
- We need to involve tenants more in shaping and scrutinising the service.
- Different contracts are being managed in different ways, and this needs to be more consistent.

Importantly, the Regulator confirmed that safety surveys are up to date and that tenant satisfaction is good.

We will now work closely with the Regulator on a 12-month improvement plan. Some of the changes needed were already underway before the inspection, some are already being implemented, and this plan will help us complete them.

To support this work, the team responsible has now moved into the Communities Directorate so it can sit alongside our wider housing functions. We will also be increasing capacity in the team to ensure we can meet the higher level of oversight required under the new regulations.

Housing Needs

At the end of October, we recorded 555 households in temporary accommodation (TA). This is the lowest number of households in TA since December 2023. At this moment in time, we have no families placed outside of the borough, apart from those who need to be, because of their individual circumstances. Additional arrangements will be put in place to assist families in hotel provision over the Christmas period.

The Renters' Rights Act received Royal Assent on the 27th October 2025 and is a major reform of England's private rented sector - designed to give tenants greater security and protections while imposing new obligations on landlords. We expect these changes to have a positive impact on the numbers of households facing eviction and potential homelessness.

Community Safety and Cohesion

Building on the success of the summer town centres initiative, the winter action plan involves multiple initiatives that are being implemented by the Council in partnership with Greater Manchester Police and others, to ensure that those accessing the town centre during the winter period can enjoy themselves in a safe manner, whether accessing the town centre to shop, enjoy food, or visit the night time economy. The plan will focus on challenging those who engage in retail crime, violence, aggressive begging and anti-social behaviour, and we will see an increased police presence in the town centre to ensure a safe, enjoyable time for residents and those who are visiting the town centre from other areas.

As part of the longer-term work linked to Operation Vulcan, work funded by the Community Safety Partnership starts in December to the bowling green in Stoneleigh Park. The green which has been subject to serious criminal damage over a long period of time, will be secured with access controls to ensure only those using it for its intended purpose are able to gain entry.

Waste, Cleansing & Greenspace

Residents have welcomed the return of the Council's flagship neighbourhood clean-up campaign – Don't Trash Oldham. The campaign plays a crucial role in maintaining public health & safety, and environmental quality by removing litter, debris, and hazards from streets and clearing fly tipped waste from public spaces and alleyways to reduce pest infestations and enhance the appearance of local neighbourhoods.

Our teams commenced work to improve adopted alleys in Alexandra Ward on Monday 17th November, moving onto Werneth Ward and Medlock Vale. To date our crews have cleared nine tons of fly tipping and detritus.

Our crews continue to work tirelessly 7 days a week dealing with the fly tip issues which we continue to see affecting our town. To date this year, there is a forecast increase of 14% in the number of fly tip incident reports compared with the period of January to December 2024.

The service is developing plans for collection of Bulky Waste when the existing contract expires next financial year. It is designed to minimise fly-tipping, by ensuring that the service is readily accessible to as many residents as possible by balancing cost and service waiting times.

Arboriculture and Countryside:

Storm Claudia has dominated our attention since 14th November. It is turning out to be one of Oldham's most devastating storms in terms of tree loss and tree damage.

The combination of heavy rain, waterlogged soil and gale force winds have combined to make this a very damaging storm, with well over 1,000 trees being lost to date. So far, the clear-up operation has cost in excess of £50,000.

Contractors worked long into the early hours of Saturday the 15th November in terrible conditions, and since then, we have been working full-time alongside 4 arboricultural teams to clear roads and footpaths, remove trees from houses and cars, and make safe dangerous unstable standing trees.

Tree planting has subsequently been delayed by about 4-6 weeks while the same contractors are dealing with the aftermath of the storm.

Over the last 3 years we have planted in excess of 1,500 new young trees, which incidentally looks to be about the number of mature trees we stand to ultimately lose to Storm Claudia.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Abdul Jabbar MBE, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services & Sustainability

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

Finance: The long-awaited Policy Statement on the Local Government Finance Settlement was released on 20 November which confirmed the Government's intention to deliver a multi-year settlement in December, which will be the first multi-year settlement after seven consecutive years of one-year allocations. This will assist the Council with its financial planning over the Medium Term. The Policy Statement also confirmed some of the intentions set out as part of the Fair Funding Review consultation completed over the summer. The aim of the funding is to be allocated to those areas of high need and low tax base just like Oldham. Full details of Local Authority allocations will be published as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement which is expected for the week commencing 15 December 2025.

The budget challenge for 2025/26 at the end of Quarter 2 is estimated to be £21.094m (£23.209m at the end of Month 5) which is a positive movement of £2.115m from the position previously reported. Early management actions around spending and recruitment that were implemented earlier in the financial year are contributing toward this favourable movement, and it is expected that this will continue over the coming months.

Revenues and Benefits: We continue to make good progress with the collection of Council Tax (£95.1m) and Business Rates (£40.4m), both in line with last year at the end of October. Recovery of arrears brought forward in 2025/26 now stands at £3.3m for Council Tax and £0.4m for Business Rates.

The Accounts Receivable/Payable team are also making good progress with £41.3m collected at the end of October (73.5%), and 94.78% of invoices paid within 30 days.

The Benefits team continues to see high volumes of Universal Credit change in circumstances due to the Department of Work and Pensions programme of migration to Universal Credit. A key focus has been on reducing claim backlogs resulting from migration activity. In October, the processing of new claims for Council Tax Reduction was reduced to 30.5 days, and new claims for Housing Benefits remained steady at 19.8 days.

Officers continue to work with colleagues in Adult Social Care to monitor progress with the improvement plan for the Financial Assessment team. The backlog of cases continues to reduce with the aim of getting them up to date by the end of this financial year. We continue to benchmark our performance and processes with colleagues across Greater Manchester to identify efficiencies and best practices.

Pension Credit: The Pension Credit campaign is drawing to a close identifying 251 residents who may be eligible. Following on from my last update - my message to residents this is simple – do not hesitate to claim Pension Credit if you are eligible. There is help available once again to make an application, and I urge you to come forward for support. Please call the Helpline on 0161 770 7007.

Digital Inclusion: A joint visit with Ofcom was recently hosted together with Inclusive Bytes. We shared our experiences of supporting media literacy and how this is delivered in our digital inclusion work. We will continue to work with Ofcom moving forward to ensure our approach is informed by best practice. We have successfully secured 233 free refurbished mobile phones from Community Coleleague to distribute to residents in need across council services.

IT and Digital: New IT policies have now been developed for IT Asset Management, Supplier Remote Access, Vulnerability Management and have been socialised and agreed at the Digital Board whilst the new AI and Automation policy is in the final stages of approval with the Trade Unions. An IT Capital Work Programme has been defined for the next 3 years for essential cyber security improvements and provision for an upgraded infrastructure platform capable of enabling

Digital transformation. This IT Work Programme is under discussion with Finance and Capital Treasury, and associated Cabinet papers are to be issued for sign off and presentation to Cabinet in January. In conjunction with the new work programme planning activities, IT continues the deployment of the laptop refresh and has refined the implementation process to improve the experience for new users with a focus on ironing out any issues. The migration of services into the Cloud is continuing and activity in decommissioning the Civic Data Centre is progressing although at a slower pace than liked due to shortage of resources. IT is also actively engaged with infrastructure build work to support the Markets, Events and Archives regeneration project. To address resourcing and skillset issues, selected third parties have been engaged to work with IT to assess, design and improve the current infrastructure, network and Microsoft platforms and are working in alignment with internal staff to determine / undertake change which will support the new IT work programme.

Climate Change & Green New Deal: The Council's contractor for Wrigley Head Solar Farm, Vital Energi, is awaiting confirmation from Planning that Planning Conditions have been satisfactorily discharged so that construction work can begin. The perimeter security fence is almost complete and planting of thorny bushes for ecology and security will take place early in the scheduled works. Preparation of tender documents for the Oldham Green New Deal Partner is continuing with a view to publication in January 2026. The Low Carbon Heat Network anchor project continues to be developed, and the Council has received approval from DESNZ that around half of the £7.8m GHNF Construction Grant can be used to install heat network pipes alongside the wider Town Centre regeneration programme, avoiding the need for later re-excavation of public realm.

HR and OD: The HR & OD service will soon be at the completion of the initial phase of the ReBuild Recovery programme, which has been designed to strengthen and transform services. This is based on core pillars of Strategy, Systems & Infrastructure, Structure, Team Development and Engagement and Governance. Evaluation of the initial phase will commence in December. Work also continues to drive the Council's ambition to be a great place to work. Following a series of collaboration sessions, a new staff induction was launched on 21st November to ensure a consistent and engaging experience for all new starters. We have sought agreement to develop a new Leadership and Management development offer, with a skills audit live with our extended leadership team. In November we promoted Apprenticeships and early careers opportunities via the Early Careers Fair where over 500 students attended and the Community Careers Fair in Coldhurst, supporting growth and prosperity in the borough.

Governance: The Polling District and Polling Places review has concluded, and responses to the consultation have been published. The changes to the Council's political balance agreed at the November Council meeting have been implemented. Preparations are underway for the Honorary Freeman Ceremony taking place on 20 December. Democratic Services have facilitated 30 meetings since the last meeting of the full Council. Information Governance continues to support services, coordinating in the last quarter 387 Freedom of Information requests, 96 subject access requests and 257 requests for disclosure.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Portfolio Report

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

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

Children's Social Care and Early Help are supporting 3,548 children and young people through a range of plans, including 904 receiving early help, 1,391 children in need, 403 subject to child protection plans, 602 children looked after, and 379 care leavers (as of 10 November 2025).

I want to take the opportunity to recognise our practitioners that work with passion, dedication and advocacy to meet the needs of our children and young people with SEND, which inspectors highlighted as a strength during the Local Area SEND monitoring inspection in November. Thank you to you all.

Social Work Services

Our Duty and Advice service continues to manage high demand effectively, with an average of 428 contacts per week and a conversion rate to safeguarding referral of 19%. Year-on-year comparisons show a 10% reduction in contacts progressing to referral, reflecting improved early intervention.

The Complex Safeguarding Hub is supporting 61 open cases, with 43% linked to child sexual exploitation and 57% to child criminal exploitation. The Hub is actively involved in 135 ongoing police investigations and 12 operations, including cases of online grooming and historic abuse. Quarterly returns show that 44% of young people in the Hub have additional needs or SEND, aligning with GM averages.

Court work remains a pressure point with 70 cases before the Family Court. Workforce stability is improving, but this remains a key focus.

Safeguarding Partnership

The Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) continues to drive improvement. In October, Child Sexual Abuse Practice Week engaged almost 400 practitioners in training and workshops, including survivor-led sessions that strengthened professional understanding and confidence.

Youth engagement remains strong. As part of White Ribbon Two Weeks of Action, students co-produced a teaching resource on healthy relationships, which will be shared across schools. A youth event titled *Me, Myself and I* explored themes of self-concept through drama, promoting peer-led learning.

Corporate Parenting

Internal fostering continues to perform well with 326 children looked after placed internally and 122 in kinship care. Our semi-independent accommodation is at 90% capacity, and two new internal children's homes are open enabling our young people to live closer to their communities and networks.

One of our children's homes has received their annual inspection from Ofsted. I am pleased to report that the provision has been graded Good in all areas.

November marked National Care Leavers Month, with events celebrating achievements and co-producing improvements to the Local Offer. Highlights include winning 2nd place at Coram Voice's national awards and launching the new co-produced pathway assessment, plan and review document. An event took place with First Choice Homes to launch their housing offer to Care Leavers. 54% of care leavers aged 18–21 are now in education, employment, or training—a positive upward trend.

Workforce

Workforce stability has improved. Turnover and agency rates have reduced, and we are fully compliant with new DfE agency rules. Our Assisted and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme for Newly Qualified Social Workers continues to receive positive feedback, and Skills for Care will undertake a quality assurance in December.

Families First Partnership Programme

The Families First Partnership Programme national reform will strengthen early intervention and prevention across Oldham. A recent engagement event in South district brought together 85 practitioners and leaders to co-design Integrated Family Help informed by local harm factor data. The progress so far in the programme has been highlighted by DfE and GM colleagues as an example of strong partnership working and collaborative design.

Family Help & Early Years

Early help caseloads rose following the return to schools at the start of the academic year. Despite this, assessment timeliness remains positive at 82%. Domestic abuse services have reduced high-risk caseloads and improved response times, with most clients allocated an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) within 48 hours.

I was pleased to attend the Best Start in Life event on 27 November with nearly 100 practitioners across Oldham to shape a shared plan to improve early years outcomes. A local Giving Children the Best Start in Life plan is being developed for submission to the DfE to outline Oldham's approach to improving the Good Level of Development.

Youth Services & Holiday Activities

Youth Services continue to deliver 45 sessions weekly. October highlights include the Beyond the Armour conference, led by young people exploring masculinity and mental health, and a packed half-term programme with creative workshops and sports activities. Detached teams remain active in addressing antisocial behaviour around King Street.

Oldham's Police Youth Scrutiny Panel celebrated its second anniversary. Over the past two years, the panel has become a model of best practice, inspiring other Greater Manchester boroughs to replicate Oldham's approach as part of GM Child-Centred Policing.

The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme ran for the first time during October half-term, delivering 24 camps and teenage gym passes despite tight timescales. Planning for winter provision is complete, ensuring families have access to activities during the festive period.

Outdoor education remains a strength, with investment in facilities and a new minibus secured through external funding. The Adventures Away from Home programme is now live, offering enriching experiences for young people facing barriers to participation.

Summary

Oldham's Children and Young People Portfolio continues to deliver vital services under sustained demand. We have seen progress in workforce stability, safeguarding practice, and care leaver outcomes, alongside innovative youth-led initiatives and expanded holiday provision. Challenges remain, particularly around court timeliness and placement sufficiency, but our commitment to improving outcomes is unwavering.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Portfolio Report

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

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

Public Health: Gambling Harms

'Problem gambling' is estimated to affect over 18,000 adults in Greater Manchester – this is 1.5 times higher than the national average. Gambling harms are wide ranging and include negative impacts on finances, mental health, relationships, and significant impacts of work and education. The Public Health team in partnership with Action Together has undertaken a piece of resident insight work to understand gambling harms specifically in Oldham. Wanting or needing to make money came up as the reason most people in Oldham gamble. It was also felt that gambling promotions and adverts increased the likelihood of someone gambling. There was high stigma and shame reported across all communities with shame towards self and family listed as the biggest barrier to seeking support for gambling harms. Of most concern, many respondents did not know where to get help.

Anyone can be at risk of experiencing gambling harms, but 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. The Greater Manchester gambling harms needs assessment has estimated that around 1,500 adults experiencing 'problem gambling' in Oldham, with a further 9,800 adults considered to be 'at risk'. In addition, 14,400 people are likely to be experiencing gambling related harms.

Led by Public Health, Oldham has delivered a number of activities to address gambling harms such as awareness campaigns, training to frontline health and care professionals and are currently piloting gambling harms screening questions in our substance misuse service to identify residents that require early support.

Oldham has a strong Gambling Harms Alliance to understand gambling harms and the impact on our residents, share intelligence among professionals; and share resources and materials to better raise awareness and support our residents. We work closely with the Greater Manchester Gambling Harms reduction programme.

Adult Social Care:

The 17th November 2025 was Safeguarding Adults week. Throughout the week Oldham Adults Safeguarding service together with wider partners hosted several activities and events. The objective was to promote an improved understanding of safeguarding, equip practitioners, residents and partners with the knowledge to identify and report safeguarding concerns, to support organisations to improve their safeguarding practice and to highlight key safeguarding themes.

A productive week saw Oldham;

- Launch a new Oldham safeguarding Adult Board podcast about risk management,
- Launch a new joint Children's and Adults Cultural Competence in Safeguarding Practice Guidance, which is a vital resource for practitioners.
- Held a training event focusing on legal literacy around the Mental Capacity Act.
- Produce resources to support practitioners who encounter hoarding behaviour by promoting a person-centered solution-based approach.
- Training in the form of awareness raising homelessness for practitioners across the wider system with the launch of an Oldham Safeguarding Adult Board Homelessness Practitioner Guide.

Last week, colleagues from across Adult Social Care joined wider teams and partners, at a successful “Live Well” networking event at Chadderton Town Hall. The event provided an opportunity for colleagues to share the great work taking place in Oldham to support residents to remain independent, healthy, safe and well in the community, with an emphasis on preventive services.

NHS Greater Manchester:

Oldham Council with NHS Greater Manchester continues to play a leading role through our Integrated Care Partnership in the delivery and improvement of health services. Our decision as an Administration to help establish the ICP, originally alongside the Clinical Commissioning Group, is now paying off. It is helping us deliver better outcomes for Oldhamers.

This month we have heard reports in our Committee of the following:

- On the waiting list backlog: For the first time since the pandemic ended, fewer than 1,000 Oldhamers are waiting between 65 and 77 weeks for planned surgery and nobody is waiting longer than 103 weeks.
- On planned surgery: Despite record demand, more than half of those referred are now receiving treatment within 18 weeks, better than some parts of Greater Manchester.
- On GP appointments: We’ve reached 118,000 appointments per month, up from 110,000 last year, two-thirds are face-to-face, with the rest online or by phone, reflecting how services are modernising to meet people’s needs.
- On A&E: 10,000 people are seen every month, and they’re waiting for less time than a year ago.
- And on mental health: Oldham is now the sixth best area in the country for access to talking therapies within 18 weeks.

These are achievements to be proud of, and I could not be prouder of our NHS and care teams. They are working tirelessly, often under enormous pressure, and they deserve our full respect and support.

Members will also be aware that following the Secretary of State's announcement in March we are also now working through significant organisational change processes within the ICB. That will involve departures of staff and implementation of a new operating model from April next year.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mohon Ali, Cabinet Member for Education & Skills

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

SEND and Inclusion

The Oldham Local Area Partnership have had a monitoring inspection from 24 – 26 November, conducted jointly by Ofsted and CQC. The focus of the Area SEND monitoring visit assessed the extent to which the Local Area Partnership has taken effective action to address the areas for priority action, which we've been delivering to improve SEND provision in Oldham. The inspection team had discussions with leaders, children and young people, parents and carers and practitioners.

I am incredibly proud that inspectors recognised the progress and improvements made to services for children and young people with SEND and the ongoing work on our priorities across the Local Area Partnership. Full details of the findings will be provided when the report is published.

I want to give particular thanks to Julie Daniels, Mike Barker, Matt Bulmer and the whole partnership leadership team and workforce for their relentless drive and commitment to delivering better services and improved outcomes for children and young people SEND.

We are working with our partners at POINT to provide a SEND Hub at their Chadderton site. This will provide a rich source of support for all our families with children with additional needs in Oldham. I'm also pleased that we have received additional funding to extend our Early Language Support for Every Child programme. This means our professionals will continue to be able to support children with speech language and communication needs.

Our Quality, Educational Support and Training Team (QEST) service evaluation with 65 SENCOs last academic year highlighted strong relationships and practical support. SEND surgeries and Social, Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) conversations are now embedded, helping schools respond quickly to children's needs. Transition work through the Delivering Better Value (DBV) project is improving information sharing as children move from Year 6 to Year 7.

We are investing over a million pounds into the Spring Brook Special School to increase the number of places the school provides. This will provide more specialist school places for our children with additional needs. Moreover, the Council will be investing £400k for the next two years into short breaks play and leisure activities for children with SEND, supporting families and young people to undertake activities to build confidence and independence.

Attendance and Inclusion

Secondary permanent exclusions are down 23%, suspensions down 28%, and children missing education have reduced significantly. Our proactive approach to prevent Elective Home Education (EHE) has seen 116 children return to school last academic year, with 19 already back this term. Oldham now has one of the lowest EHE rates in the North West, meaning more children are receiving a formal education.

Quality of Education

We continue to prepare schools for Ofsted's new inspection framework. Over 100 leaders attended our November briefing, and four schools have volunteered to trial the framework. Governance

remains strong, with 99% of governors registered on GovernorHub and 14 training sessions delivered this term.

November marked a major milestone for Oldham with the successful launch of the Employment & Skills Strategy at the Get Oldham Working Summit. Developed using insights from research, the strategy sets out an ambitious and practical roadmap to align learning, skills and progression pathways with Oldham's future economy and growth sectors. It strengthens our focus on unlocking talent, attracting investment, and ensuring that residents benefit directly from emerging opportunities.

The Virtual School continues to work closely with social workers, schools, and professionals to ensure the educational needs of children looked after are met. The Raising Aspirations and Participation (RAP) Programme has delivered impactful activities this term, including a cookery programme where young people gained food hygiene qualifications, cultural workshops for Black History Month, and a residential that built confidence, resilience, and friendships. These experiences are helping our young people develop life skills and broaden their horizons.

Post-16, Skills, Apprenticeships and Adult Learning

November saw the successful launch of Oldham's Employment & Skills Strategy at the Get Oldham Working Summit, shaped by findings from the Skills Commission. This strategy sets out a bold plan to align learning with Oldham's economic future.

We also delivered our Careers Event, connecting every school in Oldham with employers through the MBacc gateways. The event included a dedicated quiet session tailored specifically for SEND and NEET learners, ensuring equitable access and personalised conversations. Feedback from schools, providers and employers was excellent, and the day highlighted Oldham's commitment to inclusive progression routes and high-quality careers experiences for all young people.

Investment in skills continues. Oldham secured £437,000 from GMCA's capital fund, enabling Oldham College to expand capacity by 180 places. A further bid for £1.26 million is in progress, which could create hundreds more places in key sectors like construction, health, and early years.

Community learning is thriving. 18 projects are active under our grant programme, many exceeding targets and working closely with council services to support progression into work. Through the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network, Oldham is helping shape national approaches to NEET prevention, sharing best practice with councils across England.

Summary

Oldham is ambitious for its children and young people. From strong attendance and strengthened SEND support to bold investment in skills and inclusive careers pathways, we are delivering real impact. I want to thank every teacher, leader, governor, parent, carer, volunteer, and partner for their dedication. Together, we are building a future where every child can thrive.

Recommendation: Council is requested to note the report.

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Peter Dean, Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure

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

Events - Christmas Lights Switch On was a huge success, despite Storm Claudia. We had a great turnout and a spectacular show and fireworks for everyone to enjoy.

Every Saturday in the run-up to Christmas (22 and 29 November, 6 and 13 December), from 12 noon to 4pm, Oldham was alive with street bands, brilliant performers, and creative family workshops, making it the perfect destination for a day out.

A Christmas Grotto was also open from 12–4pm at the Market Hall on all event dates, giving families the chance to meet Santa and enjoy an extra-special festive moment.

Gallery Oldham - The new gallery spaces in the JR Clynes building opened for the October half term. These permanent displays are made up of three themed spaces – Cotton Stories, Oldham and the World, and the restored Art Gallery. All have already proved very popular with visitors.

Two new exhibitions opened in November. Connecting Threads 2 by Lynn Settrington showcases textile artworks made in partnership with community groups and includes the World Wellbeing Map made by participants in the HLA Speak English sessions. Ancestors Awakening by Oldham artist Peter Jankowski is inspired by neolithic objects and ancient sites.

Toddler Takeover Day took place on 22 November, as part of a national campaign organised by Kids in Museums. It included storytelling sessions, print making and consultation activities to get feedback on designs for the Our Beautiful Oldham Gallery due to open in Summer 2026. There were 135 participants in total. This event was supported with funding from Art Fund.

Oldham Archives - Following a launch event in September as part of the Oldham Histories Festival, the new facility at Spindles is now fully operational. All collections are stored onsite and accessible to view on demand. For the first time since its acquisition the Oldham Chronicle Archive is now stored in Oldham and items are being catalogued and made available to view.

Libraries - The ACE funded capital works at Oldham Library have now concluded. They have created more accessible and adaptable spaces on the ground floor, with new book shelving, a redesigned reception desk and shop, and new visitor signage across the site.

To conclude this year's Summer Reading Challenge staff visited school assemblies to hand out awards. The winning schools for completion of the challenge or improved engagement were Alexandra Park Junior School, Oasis Academy Limeside and Northmoor Academy. Each receiving £350 worth of book vouchers provided via sponsorship from Kajima.

Final figures for the Summer Reading Challenge show 911 children completed the challenge and received medals and certificates. 363 new child members joined the library during the challenge period.

Oldham Theatre Workshop - recently moved into its new home in the JR Clynes Building, and since settling in the team has been hard at work creating two exciting productions opening this December. The Youth Theatre Company will present a brand-new play, What They Left Behind, devised by the young company and written by local writer Michelle Temperley, running from 8–13 December in the new studios. While these talented young performers are delighting audiences in the new building, OTW's professional company will be staging a fresh adaptation of Hansel and Gretel, written by Sarah Nelson, at the Oldham Library Theatre. Hansel & Gretel will run from 4–24 December, bringing festive storytelling and creative theatre-making to families across Oldham.

Sport and Leisure

I'm pleased to share some positive developments in our work to help Oldham Move More and live healthier lives.

Bikeability & Active Travel - Oldham is making strong progress in Active Travel through major infrastructure upgrades, school programmes, and community initiatives. Work across Public Health, transport, education, and the VCFSE sector is helping residents Move More, travel safely, and feel better.

Schools continue to benefit from national cycle training, including Bikeability for all ages and inclusive sessions for SEND pupils. Bikeability participation numbers are set to grow further across the next quarter, driven by increased school engagement and expanded delivery capacity

Major infrastructure improvements planned for 2025/26 include upgrades to St Mary's Way, Accessible Oldham town centre streets, and new routes linking communities to the Metrolink. Community-led projects are growing, with bike libraries, walk leader training, and new forums to shape local walking and cycling. A new Community-Led Walking & Cycling Forum is being developed

Collaborative work across the council and partners continues to drive a shared ambition for a more active, healthier and better-connected borough.

Oldham Active - Oldham Active is working to provide dedicated prayer spaces at Oldham Leisure Centre and Chadderton Wellbeing Centre. In recent weeks, they have been collaborating closely with the Council of Mosques to make this possible. Suitable areas have now been identified at both centres, and they are aiming to have these spaces ready for customers to use before January 2026. This initiative reflects our commitment to inclusivity and ensuring that all customers feel welcome and supported when using our facilities.

Place Partnership / Move More Feel Better - Two new Move More Community Development Officers have started work in partnership with Oldham Council and Action Together Oldham. They are already building relationships and gathering insight across their local areas. These roles are central to our Sport England-funded Place Partnership programme, which aims to reduce inactivity and tackle inequality across all five districts of Oldham. The goal is simple: to help people build movement into their everyday lives. Right now, the focus is on identifying one priority area in each district, using data and local insight from partners and communities.

We're also delighted that Oldham has been chosen to pilot a Children and Families Physical Activity Training programme after a successful application. This initiative will support children aged 5–14 and their families to be more active, taking a whole-system approach. We'll work with selected members of the workforce and community champions in the new year to build knowledge, skills, and confidence so they can help families lead more active lives.

(Call to action)

"I'd encourage everyone to take a moment each day to move more—whether it's a short walk, a stretch, or an active play with the kids or grandkids. It's great for your health and wellbeing, and together we can make Oldham a happier, healthier and more active place for all."

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Fida Hussain, Cabinet Member for Enterprise

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

Oldham Trading Platform

There are currently 148 local businesses that have signed up to the Oldham Trading Platform and there are a further 180 waiting to be checked and on-boarded in December. We are currently working with a number of large contractors to ensure that local contracts are up-loaded onto the platform for local businesses to potentially access.

Market Trader Support

We are working with a number of market traders to ensure the timely and smooth relocation to the new market hall. We are keen to ensure that these traders receive maximum support during this transition. This support includes regular communication and updates via traders meetings and individual trader support on a 121 basis via a team of dedicated officers to help with any questions or issues that arise. All the stalls in the new market need fitting out to the requirements of the traders. The Council is providing grants to the traders to help with this cost. This work is currently on-going and officers are working with traders to support them with this process.

Oldham Construction Club

Hosted by GM Chamber and construction company Tilbury Douglas, Oldham businesses were invited to attend the Oldham Construction Club on 3rd Dec at the Oldham Event Centre. The construction club aims to bring together local businesses to enable local supply-chain opportunities by working alongside Oldham Council and local contractors to present real opportunities, facilitate real connections and deliver real local impact. The event featured information on key developments and projects within Oldham and Manchester North as well as an interactive session where the network shared best practice and made new connections.

Get Oldham Working Performance:

Get Oldham Working (GOW) continues to deliver a high-performing, locally rooted employment and skills service supporting inclusive economic growth, improved wellbeing and sustainable job outcomes for Oldham residents. Delivery remains responsive to emerging need while aligning closely with Oldham Council priorities, the Live Well agenda and Greater Manchester strategic objectives.

Between July and September 2025, GOW engaged over 2,400 residents and supported 743 people into employment, exceeding the annual job outcome target of 718. Key programmes continue to outperform expectations, including Support to Succeed, which achieved 171% of its quarterly start target, and In-Work Progression, supporting over 100 residents to progress into better roles or secure pay increases.

Independent evaluation data highlights that employment in Oldham has grown by approximately 15% over the past decade, reinforcing the impact of GOW's targeted, place-based model in engaging residents furthest from the labour market and supporting sustainable participation despite ongoing structural and social challenges.

Key Achievements & Highlights:

- **National Recognition: Employment Related Services Association Annual Awards (ERSA)** - GOW was a finalist in four ERSA Award categories and was announced as the

national winner for Tailored Employment Support, standing ahead of major national providers and reinforcing the strength and impact of Oldham's locally tailored model.

- Oldham Jobs Fair (September 2025): Over 2,200 attendees and 60 employers, with strong engagement from priority wards including Alexandra, Werneth, Coldhurst and St Mary's.
- Digital Inclusion Innovation Fund: £266,000 secured to develop community digital hubs, mobile outreach and volunteer training to tackle digital exclusion across the borough.
- Regeneration Links: Active collaboration with Muse Developments and the Council's Inward Investment team to ensure residents benefit from emerging regeneration and construction opportunities.
- Community Partnerships: Sponsorship of Oldham Athletic and the Oldham Business Awards strengthened relationships with local businesses and wider civic partner.

Performance Snapshot (Q2 to September 2025)

- Residents Engaged: 2,433 (89% of target)
- Residents into Employment: 416 (116% of target)
- Residents into Learning: 441 (112% of target)
- Sustained Employment (13+ weeks): 202 (113% of target)

While engagement was slightly below target due to lower-intensity National Careers Service provision and temporary staff absences, outcomes remain strong and the service is on track to meet or exceed year-end targets.

Service Modernisation

GOW continues to strengthen infrastructure and quality through:

- A centralised triage and referral system
- Integrated CRM platform
- Implementation of Outcome Star for holistic resident progress tracking
- Alignment with Live Well Oldham and neighbourhood delivery models.

These developments support improved consistency, data insight, and client-centred practice.

Strategic Development & Infrastructure

Plans remain in progress for the redevelopment of the Working Wardrobe and Spindles site, including youth-led co-design and construction of new facilities and enhanced wellbeing spaces. This initiative will provide training and volunteering opportunities while improving service accessibility and environment quality.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Chris Goodwin, Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways

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

Winter Maintenance:

After a very mild October and early November, the Winter Maintenance activities have recently had to commence properly in earnest as temperatures fell with arctic air across the entire country in mid-November.

So far there have been 10 precautionary grits of all Primary Routes, across 8 days of activity, with a total of 330tn salt used. This equates to over 2,000 miles already travelled and gritted already. The grit bins across the borough were all filled ahead of the winter season and are currently being re – filled, so will have been all filled twice by mid-December.

Highways Maintenance:

In terms of the annual capital maintenance highways resurfacing programme funded via TfGM / GMCA and the external CRSTS funding stream, 7 schemes have been completed thus far, including the most major schemes (Middleton Rd, Chadderton & Buckstones Rd), 1 currently is on site, and a further 6 will be completed before the Christmas break.

Also been completed is some targeted safety surfacing works using High Friction Surfacing (HFS) in various key locations across the borough.

In terms of the relevant capital spend so far, this equates to around £1.5m with a further £1.5m targeted to be spent before the end of the financial year, including surface dressing and micro asphalt preventative surfacing works targeted for March 2026.

Storm Claudia:

As mentioned in other portfolio reports Storm Claudia was a very disruptive event – the Highways call out team logged 43 hrs of out of hours work over a 24hr period with over 25 specific individual call outs relating to requirements largely to close / make safe roads with barriers – the usual average would be 2 or so call outs in a 24hr period, and would be mostly related to car related incidents.

Major projects:

Numerous externally funded capital projects related to Highways, Transport and Regeneration objectives are delivered within the wider Highways & Engineering team, including some as detailed below with their current progress:

- Quality Bus Transit (QBT) - Royton Town Centre – currently programmed to begin construction on 12th Jan 2026 for 9 months with c.£2m of investment secured.
 - Site visit last week attended by Casey, Oldham Council, TfGM and the Leader
 - Follow up “meet and greet” public facing meetings taking place in the run up to Christmas and beyond.
 - On going public engagement during construction
- QBT other interventions – currently in detail design. Completion of design by end of Feb 26 in preparation for construction in phased approach. (c.£16m of investment)
 - Phasing and road space currently being developed with a holistic overview of the entire Highway Network to minimise disruption and coordinate with other significant roadworks, utilities’ works etc.
- CRSTS St Marys Way – currently in detailed design following significant site investigations. Scheme being developed in conjunction with the Low Carbon Heat Network to optimise site occupation, efficiencies and economies of scale. (c.£8m of investment)

- Market Street – Works are ongoing and on track for completion in March 2027. The new play area, and the associated planting in the vicinity, are set to be ready for the grand opening on the 5th December, which will be officiated by the Leader. Comms have been actively involved in promoting this space and event to the public and coordinating with the Leader's office for the opening ceremony scheduled for the 5th December at 11 am. The main works will carry on further down High Street heading towards Lord St in January 2026. (c. £8m of investment)
- CRSTS Mumps - With the exception of the street lighting, all the detailed design work is complete and ready for the initial issue to the contractor, to begin pricing and programming the works. The business cases are currently being drafted, and once the pricing is finalised to support the business case, the Full Business Case (FBC) is scheduled for submission in the last quarter of the financial year, in preparation for the commencement of works in June 2025. (c £5m of investment)
- LUF2/UKSPF/UU Tommyfield Park Phase 1 – initial start on site in October. Construction phase to increase in productivity next week following some minor ground remediation works. Completion planned for Autumn 2026 (c.£2m of investment)
- LUF2 – Tommyfield Market Hall demolition – Awaiting the decant of Market Traders after Christmas period (estimated to be February 26). Demolition to commence immediately after their relocation.
- LUF2/CRSTS/UU – Tommyfield Park Phase 2 currently in detailed design with construction immediately following the demolition of the Market Hall, as above. (c. £6m of investment)

Strategic Transport & Bee Network:

We have been working closely with Transport for Greater Manchester and colleagues across GM to prepare the new Local Transport Plan. A 12-week public consultation on the draft Plan will run from December 2025 to February 2026. As part of this process, Oldham will host an in-person consultation event at Oldham Library on 28 January 2025. This is an opportunity for residents, businesses, and community groups to share their views and help shape the future of transport across Greater Manchester.

We are pleased to confirm that the trial period for our latest School Streets Scheme at St Luke's CofE Primary School in Chadderton will begin in mid-February 2026. The purpose of the trial is to:

- Give children the opportunity to walk, wheel, or cycle to school safely.
- Improve the school journey experience by reducing traffic hazards.
- Address the high levels of congestion faced by local residents during drop-off and pick-up times.

The scheme will have several community benefits, including:

- Safer, healthier travel options for families.
- A calmer, more pleasant environment around the school gates.
- Support for Oldham's wider active travel ambitions and the Greater Manchester Bee Network vision.

We also continue to progress our CRSTS schemes through the appropriate business case stages. Each project is being developed in line with government requirements for assurance and funding. This process ensures schemes are robustly appraised, deliver clear value for money, and align with Greater Manchester's transport priorities. As schemes move through Strategic Outline, Outline, and Full Business case stages, they will be supported by public engagement and formal approvals.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.



Report to COUNCIL

Outcome of consultation on the introduction of an Article 4 Direction for Houses of Multiple Occupation

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Elaine Taylor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods

Officer Contact: Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Report Author(s):

Elizabeth Dryden-Stuart (Strategic Planning Team Leader)

Lauren Hargreaves (Senior Planning Officer, Strategic Planning)

10 December 2025

Reason for Decision

This report provides an update on the feedback received as part of the recent consultation on the introduction of an Article 4 Direction on Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and outlines the next steps.

Recommendations:

In considering this report Members are asked -

- 1) To reflect on the information provided in the body of this report.
- 2) To note that a report is to be taken to Cabinet on 15 December 2025 which recommends confirmation of the Article 4 Direction for Houses of Multiple Occupation.

Executive Summary

In a report to Cabinet on 22 September 2025, officers recommended that Cabinet authorise the making a Non-Immediate Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for the change of use from Use Class C3 (dwelling houses) to Use Class C4 (small houses in multiple occupation) on a boroughwide basis. This included a 6-week period of public consultation.

It was also agreed that a further report be brought back to Cabinet at the first available opportunity to consider the outcome of the consultation and thereafter to determine if the Article 4 Direction should be confirmed and come into effect on the 1 January 2026 or such other later date as considered appropriate. These recommendations were agreed at Cabinet on the 22 September 2025. This report is contained at Appendix 1 for information.

A public consultation on the introduction of the Article 4 Direction was undertaken between 6 October 2025 to 16 November 2025. The consultation sought comments on the intention to introduce an Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for the change of use from Use Class C3 (dwelling houses) to Use Class C4 (small houses in multiple occupation) on a borough-wide basis. 314 responses were received. The majority of respondents supported the intention to introduce the Article 4 Direction. A more detailed breakdown of the consultation responses is provided in section 2 of this report.

Informed by the available evidence and the consultation responses presented in this report (and the report presented to Cabinet), the preferred option (as recommended) is to confirm the borough-wide Article 4 Direction. If this is agreed by Cabinet on 15 December 2025, the Direction will come into effect on 1 January 2026.

This approach is the preferred option for the following reasons:

- a) The Article 4 Direction would enable the Council to assess the impact of all HMOs on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the individual circumstances and location of the development, and to better manage HMO concentration and prevent the formation of imbalanced communities, as well as reduce any negative impact on local amenity. It would also give residents a voice and a transparent process to ensure that their views are heard.
- b) Adopting a borough-wide approach reflects the evidence available, will avoid any effects of displacement as witnessed by other GM districts and ensures a consistent approach going forward.
- c) The decision to confirm the Article 4 Direction reflects that the majority of respondents to the consultation support the introduction of the Article 4 Direction. It is considered that the Article 4 Direction will also help address concerns related to HMOs raised by respondents, by allowing the full consideration of proposed HMOs through the planning process.

Houses of Multiple Occupation Article 4 Direction

1 Background

- 1.1 Over the last few years, and more recently through council motions, members have highlighted their concern with the number of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) that are currently being introduced across the borough.
- 1.2 It is recognised that HMOs provide a much-needed source of housing for various groups in need within the borough, including young people, students, and single person households. However, poorly managed and maintained HMOs, especially where clusters of HMOs arise in one place, can have a detrimental impact on local areas.
- 1.3 Following motions submitted to Council earlier in 2025, and more recently in July 2025, it was requested that the Council consider the introduction of an Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for the change of use from Use Class C3 (dwelling houses) to Use Class C4 (small houses in multiple occupation) on a borough-wide basis.
- 1.4 In response, a report was presented to Cabinet on 22 September 2025 recommending the introduction of a Non-Immediate Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for the change of use from Use Class C3 (dwelling houses) to Use Class C4 (small houses in multiple occupation) on a borough-wide basis. This report outlined that this would include a six-week consultation period.
- 1.5 It was also agreed that a further report be brought back to Cabinet at the first available opportunity to consider the outcome of the consultation and thereafter to determine if the Article 4 Direction should be confirmed and come into effect on the 1 January 2026 or such other later date as considered appropriate. The report recommendations were agreed at Cabinet on the 22 September. The report is contained at Appendix 1 for information.
- 1.6 In addition, a report was taken to Council on 17 September 2025 setting out the legislation regarding Article 4 Directions and the process for implementation; the current position and evidence regarding HMOs across the borough; and identified the options available for the introduction of an Article 4 Direction for HMOs. The Council report also noted that a report was to be taken to Cabinet on 22 September 2025 outlining recommendations for the introduction of an Article 4 Direction on Houses of Multiple Occupation.
- 1.7 Section 2 below outlines the consultation on the introduction of the Article 4 Direction. Section 3 sets out the next steps that will be undertaken.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 As agreed at Cabinet, a six-week public consultation, which sought views on the introduction of an Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for the change of use from Use Class C3 (dwelling houses) to Use Class C4 (small

houses in multiple occupation) on a borough-wide basis, was held between 6 October 2025 and 16 November 2025.

- 2.2 The purpose of the consultation was to raise awareness of the intention to introduce an Article 4 Direction, inform existing and prospective HMO landlords and to provide an opportunity for interested parties to submit a representation with their views.
- 2.3 In line with the regulations set out in Schedule 3 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015¹, the Secretary of State was notified at the start of the period of public consultation. An Article 4 Direction does not require the approval of the Secretary of State in order to come into force, however, they do have the power to modify or cancel an Article 4 Direction at any time before or after it is confirmed.
- 2.4 The consultation sought comments on the intention to introduce the Article 4 Direction. In total there were 314 consultation responses. Appendix 3 sets out a summary of the responses received as part of the consultation.
- 2.5 167 respondents (53%) supported the introduction of the Article 4 Direction. Many also commented on issues with HMOs.
- 2.6 A further 118 respondents (38%) did not specifically state whether they supported the introduction of the Article 4 Direction or not (or did not reference the Article 4 Direction), however they noted issues and concerns with HMOs
- 2.7 The issues with HMOs raised in the consultation responses were related to:
- community cohesion
 - loss of family homes
 - parking/highway safety/ traffic
 - amenity/ local environment
 - anti-social behaviour/ safety
 - local character
 - housing quality
 - over concentration/ number of HMOs
 - local infrastructure/ services and facilities
 - regulation/ management
 - house/ rental prices
- 2.8 29 respondents (9%) did not support the introduction of the Article 4 Direction. The reasons stated by these respondents included:
- that it is not necessary.
 - that it will increase homelessness (which is rising)
 - that it will limit access to housing for people in need (including those on lower incomes, working professionals, students, young people and vulnerable people). Several respondents commented that HMOs provide a valuable source of affordable housing for those in need.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596/schedule/3>

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- that it would discourage investment
 - that it would reduce housing supply flexibility and limit the supply of rental options, which will lead to increased rental prices.
 - that it won't be effective in limiting the number of HMOs.
 - that a non-immediate Direction will not be effective.
 - that a non-immediate Direction will still have a risk of compensation claims against the council.

- 2.9 In response to the concerns raised by those who did not support the introduction of the Article 4 Direction, it is considered that the Direction is necessary to protect local amenity and communities. It is recognised that HMOs provide a much-needed source of housing for various groups in need within the borough, including young people, working professionals, students, and single person households. However, poorly managed and maintained HMOs, especially where clusters of HMOs arise in one place, can have a detrimental impact on local areas. In addition, by removing the permitted development rights requiring a planning application to be submitted (for the conversion of C3 dwellings to C4 HMOs), the Direction may not necessarily reduce the number of HMOs, however it will allow for the consideration of planning matters such as design, space standards and amenity, as part of the planning process. It is considered that this will improve housing quality and offer a better standard of living for those in need groups.
- 2.10 In summary, the majority of respondents to the consultation supported the introduction of the Article 4 Direction.

3 Next Steps

- 3.1 After considering the evidence set out in the reports taken to Cabinet (and Council) in September 2025, including the Article 4 Direction Background (evidence) Document (contained at Appendix 2), and the consultation responses, outlined above, it is considered appropriate to seek confirmation of the Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for the change of use from Use Class C3 (dwelling houses) to Use Class C4 (small houses in multiple occupation) on a borough-wide basis.
- 3.2 It is important to note that the Article 4 Direction requiring the submission of a planning application for such proposals will not necessarily reduce the number of C4 HMOs being created, however it does allow for the proper consideration of the effects of a proposed HMO on an area's amenity and local community, before issuing any planning permission and, in doing so, we are able to influence the quality of the HMO through the planning process. As such, it is considered necessary.
- 3.3 A report to Cabinet will be taken on 15 December 2025 which will recommend that the Article 4 Direction is confirmed. If confirmed, the Article 4 Direction will come into effect on 1 January 2026. From this date, the change of use from dwelling houses to small HMOs will require planning permission.
- 3.4 In line with the regulations, the Secretary of State will be notified when the Direction is confirmed.

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- 3.5 If Cabinet do decide to confirm the Article 4 Direction for HMOs in Oldham, planning applications for the conversion of C3 dwellings to C4 HMOs will, for the time-being be considered on the same policy basis that planning applications for HMOs are already considered, having regard to issues such as amenity, character and highway safety. However, through the proposed new Local Plan for Oldham, updated policies will be included that allow a more nuanced approach to planning for HMOs in the borough, particularly geared toward avoiding clusters of HMOs on any given street and ensuring that the space and design standards of rooms in HMOs are adhered to, to avoid over-crowding and poor living conditions.

4 Options/Alternatives

Support the confirmation of the Article 4 Direction

- 4.1 It is considered that the Article 4 Direction should be confirmed by Cabinet based on the evidence set out in the reports taken to Cabinet (and Council) in September 2025 (contained at Appendix 1), including the Article 4 Direction Background (evidence) Document (contained at Appendix 2), and the consultation responses, outlined above. The Article 4 Direction will allow for the proper consideration of the effects of a proposed HMO on an area's amenity and local community, before issuing any planning permission and, in doing so, we are able to influence the quality of the HMO through the planning process.

Not support the confirmation of the Article 4 Direction

- 4.2 Should the Article 4 Direction not be confirmed, the permitted development right for the change of use from C3 Dwelling house to C4 Small HMO would remain. The Council would continue to have limited control as to how and where small HMOs come forward, particularly those for less than 5 people, which do not need to apply for an HMO Licence.
- 4.3 An Article 4 Direction would not necessarily stop or reduce HMOs coming forward in the borough, but it would mean that the Council is able to assess the impact of all HMOs on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the individual circumstances and location of the development. A Direction would enable the Council to better manage HMO concentrations and prevent the formation of imbalanced communities, as well as reduce any negative impact on local amenity. It would also give residents a voice and a transparent process to ensure that their views are heard.
- 4.4 These options regarding the confirmation of the Article 4 Direction for HMOs will be considered as part of the Cabinet report and in reaching the preferred option.

5 Preferred Option

- 5.1 In considering this report, the preferred option is for Members (as per the recommendations):
- a) To reflect on the information provided in the body of this report.
 - b) To note that a report is to be taken to Cabinet on 15 December 2025 which recommends the confirmation of the Article 4 Direction for Houses of Multiple

Occupation. In considering that report, the preferred option is for Cabinet to confirm the borough-wide Article 4 Direction for Houses of Multiple Occupation. If this is agreed by Cabinet, the Direction will come into effect on 1 January 2026.

5.2 This approach is the preferred option for the following reasons:

- a) The Article 4 Direction would enable the Council to assess the impact of all HMOs on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the individual circumstances and location of the development, and to better manage HMO concentration and prevent the formation of imbalanced communities, as well as reduce any negative impact on local amenity. It would also give residents a voice and a transparent process to ensure that their views are heard.
- b) Adopting a borough-wide approach reflects the evidence available and will avoid any effects of displacement as witnessed by other GM districts and ensures a consistent approach going forward.
- c) The decision to confirm the Article 4 Direction reflects that the majority of respondents to the consultation support the introduction of the Article 4 Direction. It is considered that the Article 4 Direction will also help address concerns related to HMOs raised by respondents, by allowing the consideration of HMOs through the planning process.

6 Consultation

6.1 A consultation on the introduction of the Article 4 Direction was held between 6 October to 16 November 2025. This report sets out the responses received to this consultation (also see Appendix 3).

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 A rise in planning applications for HMO conversions is expected, resulting in increased Planning workloads. Additional planning application fee income is therefore also anticipated and will help contribute to any additional staff costs. All planning application income and expenditure will be allocated from within the Development Control & Planning service budget.
- 7.2 The implementation of the Article 4 Direction, either immediate or non-immediate, could potentially give rise to compensation claims against the Council. These claims could be more prevalent under the immediate imposition of Article 4, as identified within the report.
- 7.3 Having consulted Legal and Risk & Insurance colleagues, they have confirmed there is no dedicated funding resource for any potential claims. Therefore, any such claims would be an additional pressure on the service which would need to be covered from within the service's general revenue budget.

(Mohammed Hussain)

8 Legal Implications

8.1 Under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, a local planning authority can restrict the scope of permitted development rights in relation to defined areas. It is a power of pre-emption rather than prohibition: by withdrawing the deemed permission under the Order, its effect is to require an application to be made for express permission for development proposals. If that permission is refused or granted subject to conditions other than those in the Order, the landowner is entitled to claim compensation for abortive expenditure and any loss or damage caused by the loss of rights. The National Planning Policy Framework advises that the use of Article 4 should be limited to situations where an Article 4 direction is necessary to protect local amenity or the well-being of the area and in all cases, be based on robust evidence, and apply to the smallest geographical area possible.

8.2 A decision about whether to withdraw permitted development rights is an executive function and can be dealt with by the Cabinet.

(A Evans)

9 Procurement Implications

9.1 None.

S Kapoor (Commercial Procurement Unit)

10 Oldham Equality Impact Assessment, including implications for Children and Young People

10.1 An Oldham Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared alongside the preparation of the Cabinet Report and will be available as an appendix to that report.

11 Key Decision

11.1 N/A

12 Key Decision Reference

12.1 None

13 Background Papers

13.1 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:

National Planning Policy Framework at
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf

14 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Report to Cabinet (22 September 2025) – Introduction of Article 4 Direction for Houses of Multiple Occupation (as agreed). *See separate document.*

Appendix 2 – Article 4 Direction Background (evidence) Paper. *See separate document.*

Appendix 3 – Summary of responses to the Article 4 Direction Public Consultation.

**Appendix 1 – Report to Cabinet (22 September 2025) – Introduction of Article 4
Direction for Houses of Multiple Occupation (as agreed).**

See separate document.

Appendix 2 - Article 4 Direction Background (evidence) Paper

See separate document.

Appendix 3 – Summary of responses to the Article 4 Direction Public Consultation



Issue Theme	Response Summary
<i>General/ Article 4 Direction</i>	The Article 4 Direction will allow the consideration of issues (including pressure on local services, parking, waste, long-term sustainability and housing quality) as part of the planning process, on a case-by-case basis.
	The Article 4 Direction will ensure decisions are transparent and accountability in the planning process is returned.
	The borough-wide Direction will ensure that HMO conversions are not displaced from one neighbourhood to another, perpetuating problems elsewhere.
	Planning permission should be required for all HMOs. The permitted development right should be removed.
	It is hoped the Article 4 Direction would increase the council's ability to monitor and regulate HMOs and refuse or remove licences where appropriate.
	The Article 4 Direction is not necessary.
	The Article 4 Direction is not necessary at a borough-wide level and should be implemented at an area-specific level.
	A non-immediate Direction will not be effective.
	A non-immediate Direction will still have a risk of compensation claims against the council.
	The Article 4 Direction will not be effective in limiting the number of HMOs.
<i>Community cohesion</i>	Transient populations living in HMO properties negatively impact on the community cohesion and neighbourhoods.
	Lack of involvement of the local community in decision making for HMOs at present. Local community feel like their concerns are not heard. Article 4 will increase community involvement and allow communities to comment on planning applications.
	HMOs can negatively impact the dynamic of communities and increase, or lead to, community tensions.
	HMOs can make neighbourhoods feel unsafe and unstable.
	HMOs can foster a lack of integration and be detrimental to the social fabric of communities.
	HMOs impact the long-term sustainability of communities.

Issue Theme	Response Summary
	HMOs are causing an imbalance in local demographic mix.
<i>Housing stock/ Loss of family homes</i>	The conversion of family homes into HMOs is creating, or adding to, a shortage of family homes available for families.
	HMOs are leading to the loss of larger family homes (including larger family homes being sub-divided into several HMOs).
	There is already enough housing of smaller sizes to accommodate single occupants/ lower earners – don't need to convert family homes to HMOs.
	Families do not want to buy in areas where HMOs are present.
	There are families on waiting lists for housing, and in temporary accommodation, who cannot access family housing due to a shortage.
	Lack of family homes will increase demand for Green Belt and open land for residential development.
	Families cannot move up the property ladder due to lack of family housing.
	The Article 4 Direction will reduce the housing stock available for people in need (including those on lower incomes, working professionals, students, young people and vulnerable people). HMOs provide a valuable source of affordable housing for those in need.
	The Article 4 Direction will remove much needed housing stock and lead to increased homelessness, which is already rising.
<i>Parking/ highway safety/ traffic</i>	HMOs are being developed without adequate parking spaces. There is not enough parking to support them.
	HMOs are reducing the parking available and causing congestion and improper parking problems on streets.
	HMOs are causing/ increasing traffic congestion.
	HMOs are negatively impacting on highway safety.
<i>Amenity/ local environment</i>	HMOs negatively impact on the local environment, including increasing issues with littering, fly tipping, vermin, drainage.
	The conversion of single occupancy homes to HMOs negatively impacts on local amenity.
	HMOs can lead to overcrowding which impacts on local amenity.
	Many HMOs are being developed without providing adequate waste disposal which is causing environmental health problems.
	Increased amount of waste and lack of bins.

Issue Theme	Response Summary
	Increased noise pollution.
	Lack of property maintenance – overgrown gardens, overflowing bins etc.
<i>Anti-social behaviour/ safety</i>	HMOs lead to increase in anti-social behaviour, including offences related to violence, alcohol misuse and drugs.
	Negative impact of HMOs on community safety.
	Safety concerns related to the perceived HMO residents and safeguarding of vulnerable residents or groups.
<i>Local character</i>	HMOs change, or negatively impact on, the character of local areas.
<i>Housing quality</i>	Poor living conditions in some HMOs negatively impact the tenants themselves and neighbours.
	There is a need to consider living conditions as part of the planning process. Requiring planning permission will improve living conditions in HMOs.
	Cost saving measures undertaken in the conversion of HMOs can lead to problems with the lifespan and structural integrity of the properties. The consequences are poor living conditions for tenants and increased maintenance issues for landlords.
	HMO landlords do not adequately maintain properties.
	Poor living conditions of HMOs are exacerbated in densely populated areas.
	HMOs can become overcrowded, worsening living conditions.
<i>Over concentration/ number of HMOs</i>	There are too many/ enough HMOs in the borough already. There is not a need for more/ adequate amounts of smaller properties already exist.
	Negative impacts associated with HMOs can put people off living in areas of Oldham.
	People are moving out of the area because of the number of HMOs.
	There is a need for better control over the number and concentrations of HMOs in the borough.
	Over-concentrations of HMOs exist in the borough and are worsening.
	The over-concentration of HMOs can lead to many negative impacts on areas and exacerbate existing problems.
<i>Local infrastructure,</i>	HMOs are negatively impacting on the availability of local infrastructure, services and facilities including schools, doctors

Issue Theme	Response Summary
<i>services and facilities</i>	and health facilities. There is not enough local infrastructure to support the increase in HMOs.
	HMOs are being developed without consideration of local infrastructure.
<i>Regulation/ management of HMOs</i>	There is a lack of regulation or inadequate regulation of HMOs, through policy/ national regulation and individual management companies.
	HMOs are often poorly managed.
	Further control/ regulation of HMOs and landlords is needed.
	Problems are being experienced by local authorities in enforcing regulations resulting in costs and capacity issues.
	Registered housing providers should be appointed for HMOs.
<i>House/ rental prices</i>	Loss of family homes to HMOs is increasing the price of family homes (to buy or let), pricing families and first-time buyers out of the market.
	Permitted development for HMOs does not allow the Local Planning Authority to make a balanced decision based on impact, an understanding of local tenant demand (which can be a detriment to the local housing market), vacancies and rental yields.
	The location, and over-concentration of, HMOs in areas can decrease property values and make properties difficult to sell.
	The Article 4 Direction will reduce housing supply flexibility and limit the supply of rental options, which will lead to increased rental prices.

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Report to CABINET

Introduction of Article 4 Direction for Houses of Multiple Occupation

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Elaine Taylor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods

Officer Contact: Emma Barton, Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Report Author(s):

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22 September 2025

Reason for Decision

This report sets out the current issues and position regarding Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) across the borough. It is in response to the recent motions that have been presented to full Council on the matter and it provides information to Cabinet on the options to introduce a boroughwide Article 4 Direction to remove the permitted development right allowing the conversion of dwelling houses (Use Class C3) into HMOs for up to six residents (Use Class C4).

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Consider the evidence presented in this report and the information provided in respect of the options for the introduction of a boroughwide Article 4 Direction for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs);

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- 2) Make a Non-Immediate Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for the change of use from Use Class C3 (dwelling houses) to Use Class C4 (small houses in multiple occupation) on a boroughwide basis, in line with the details set out in the report and the Article 4 notice presented at Appendix 5;
 - 3) Consider that a further report to be brought back to Cabinet at the first available opportunity to consider the outcome of the consultation and thereafter to determine if the Article 4 Direction should be confirmed and come into effect on the 1 January 2026 or such other later date as considered appropriate.

Executive Summary

Over the last few years, and more recently through council motions, members have highlighted their concern with the number of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) that are currently being introduced across the borough. It is recognised that HMOs provide a much-needed source of housing for various groups in need within the borough, including young people, students, and single person households. However, poorly managed and maintained HMOs, especially where clusters of HMOs arise in one place, can have a detrimental impact on local areas.

To address these concerns, where appropriate, the Council can adopt an Article 4 Direction to remove the permitted development rights that enable a C3 dwelling to be converted to a C4 “small” HMO. This would require such conversions to first apply for planning permission for the change of use. Requiring the submission of a planning application for such proposals will not necessarily reduce the number of C4 HMOs being created, but it does allow for the proper consideration of the effects of a proposed HMO on an area's amenity and local community, before issuing any planning permission and, in doing so, we are able to influence the quality of the HMO through the planning process.

This report:

- Outlines the recent motions presented at council on the 9 April and subsequently 21 July 2025 on the introduction of an Article 4 Direction for HMOs;
- Sets out the legislation regarding Article 4 Directions and the process for implementation;
- Outlines the current position and evidence regarding HMOs across the borough; and
- Identifies the options available for the introduction of an Article 4 Direction for HMOs, specifically whether it focuses on specific areas or is boroughwide.

Informed by the evidence presented in this report the preferred option (as recommended) is to introduce a Non-Immediate Article 4 Direction on Houses of Multiple Occupation that will be implemented borough-wide. If this is agreed by Cabinet, a period of consultation from 29 September to 9 November 2025 for 6 weeks will take place, after which the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods will then consider whether to confirm the Direction and bring it into effect on 1 January 2026, having considered all consultation comments received.

This approach is the preferred option for the following reasons:

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- a) It would enable the Council to assess the impact of all HMOs on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the individual circumstances and location of the development, and to better manage HMO concentration and prevent the formation of imbalanced communities, as well as reduce any negative impact on local amenity. It would also give residents a voice and a transparent process to ensure that their views are heard.
 - b) A non-immediate Article 4 Direction with the six-week period of consultation proposed and a commencement date of 1 January 2026 will provide sufficient notice to landlords (and prospective landlords) who have already purchased a C3 property with the intention to convert it to a C4 HMO.
 - c) Adopting a borough-wide approach reflects the evidence available and will avoid any effects of displacement as witnessed by other GM districts and ensures a consistent approach going forward.

Houses of Multiple Occupation Article 4 Direction

1 Introduction

- 1.1. Over the last few years, and more recently through council motions, members have highlighted their concern with the number of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) that are currently being introduced across the borough.
- 1.2. It is recognised that HMOs provide a much-needed source of housing for various groups in need within the borough, including young people, students, and single person households. However, poorly managed and maintained HMOs, especially where clusters of HMOs arise in one place, can have a detrimental impact on local areas.
- 1.3. In general terms, a HMO is a property rented out by at least three people who are not related and who share facilities like the bathroom and/or kitchen. The type of accommodation that could be classed as a HMO includes:
 - A number of bedsits in one building;
 - A hostel;
 - Halls of residence (private);
 - A shared house;
 - A block of converted flats; and
 - Individual shared self-contained single cluster flats.
- 1.4. However, to emphasise, the above is only classed as a HMO if they involve three or more unrelated people living together and sharing a bathroom and / or kitchen. Some accommodation in the above list can involve completely self-contained residential units that do not involve sharing facilities, and so, in that instance, they are not a HMO.
- 1.5. Under current planning legislation, HMOs are divided into two Use Classes, which are often referred to as 'Small' and 'Large' HMOs:
 - Small HMOs are houses or flats occupied by between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom. These are classified as a 'C4' use within the Use Classes Order; and,
 - Large HMOs comprise houses or flats occupied by more than 6 unrelated individuals who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom. These are classified as Sui Generis (a use that does not fall in any use class).
- 1.6. Currently, single family dwellings, defined within use class C3 can change to a C4 use without the need for planning permission under permitted development rights. Similarly, a C4 HMO can be converted to a C3 dwelling at any time under permitted development rights. Whereas the conversion of any use other than C3 to a C4 HMO use (or the new-build development of a C4 HMO) does require planning permission.

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- 1.7. The conversion (or new-build) of any property to create a Sui Generis “large” HMO requires planning permission in all cases.
- 1.8. There are also some HMOs that are covered under the ‘C3 dwelling houses’ use, such as those where there are up to six people living together as a single household and receiving care, and some groups of people (up to six) living together as a single household (e.g., a small religious community or homeowners living with a lodger).
- 1.9. Where appropriate and justified by evidence, the Council can adopt an Article 4 Direction to remove the permitted development rights that enable a C3 dwelling to be converted to a C4 “small” HMO. This would require such conversions to first apply for planning permission for the change of use.
- 1.10. Requiring the submission of a planning application for such proposals will not necessarily reduce the number of C4 HMOs being created, but it does allow for the proper consideration of the effects of a proposed HMO on an area's amenity and local community, before issuing any planning permission, and in doing so influence the quality of the HMO through the planning process. This is especially important for 3 and 4 person HMOs as they do not require a HMO Licence and are subject to less statutory regulation, and so the quality of such HMOs cannot be monitored properly currently.
- 1.11. This report:
- Outlines the recent motions presented at council on the 9 April and subsequently 21 July 2025 on the introduction of an Article 4 Direction for HMOs;
 - Sets out the legislation regarding Article 4 Directions and the process for implementation;
 - Outlines the current position and evidence regarding HMOs across the borough; and
 - Identifies the options available for the introduction of an Article 4 Direction for HMOs, specifically whether it focuses on specific areas or is boroughwide.
- 1.12 The introduction of an Article 4 Direction on Houses of Multiple Occupation links to the Council's Plan priorities of Healthier Happier Lives and Great Place to Live.
- 1.13 In terms of the purpose of the report there are no / limited implications for:
- Community Cohesion Implications, including crime and disorder implications under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – the introduction of a borough-wide Article 4 Direction would enable the Council to better manage HMO concentration and prevent the formation of imbalanced communities, as well as reduce any negative impact on local amenity.
 - Risk Assessments – the introduction of a non-immediate Article 4 Direction with a period of six weeks consultation will raise awareness that the implementation of the Direction is forthcoming. This can help to reduce the risk
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associated with introducing the Direction, minimising potential exposure to compensation claims as the Council's decision to introduce the Direction and the date on which this is to be confirmed will be in the public domain at the earliest opportunity. Notwithstanding this there is a risk compensation claims will be made against the Council for the introduction of the Article 4 Direction.

- Co-operative Implications, Human Resource Implications, IT implications, Property Implications, Procurement Implications and Environment and Health and Safety Implications – none.

2 Current Position

2.1. *Recent motions presented to Council*

- 2.1.1. A Motion was submitted to Council on 9 April 2025 by Councillor Taylor, and seconded by Councillor Davis, requesting the Council calls on the new Labour Government to reverse the changes introduced by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition Government in 2010 which removed the requirement for planning permission for small houses of multiple occupation. The full version of this motion can be found at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.1.2. An amended motion was then proposed, and approved¹, at Council on 9 April 2025 by Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani and seconded by Cllr Mark Kenyon. In addition to that in paragraph 2.1.1 this amended motion requested a report back on whether a case can be made for an Article 4 direction, to continue efforts to establish that case, and to report back on a regular basis. The full version of this motion can be found at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 2.1.3. Subsequently, a further motion was proposed by the administration and approved at Council on 21 July 2025.
- 2.1.4. The motion acknowledges residents' concerns regarding the number of HMOs which are currently being introduced across the borough and that, whilst it is not possible to prevent full planning applications from being submitted, the Council can act to close the loophole that allows for permitted development rights for HMOs where between three and six unrelated people share basic amenities, such as a kitchen or bathroom. Requiring a planning application to be submitted for change of use from class C3 to C4, and ensuring that due process is applied, gives residents a say in what happens in their communities.
- 2.1.5. Specifically, the motion requested that the Council resolves to:
1. As soon as possible, Cabinet to consider and make a direction pursuant to Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 on a boroughwide basis. Withdrawing the permitted development rights to convert a dwellinghouse (C3) to a House in

¹ See minutes from Council meeting on 9 April 2025 available online at <https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=132&MIId=9176&Ver=4>

Multiple Occupation (C4) is appropriate, and justified, to prevent harm to local amenity and promote the wellbeing of the aforementioned areas.

2. To delegate authority to OMBC Planning Department to carry out all necessary consultation and to notify the Secretary of State in accordance with statutory requirements.
3. That the boroughwide Article 4(1) Direction will come into effect once made.
4. To put existing and prospective HMO landlords on notice that OMBC will look to implement the Article 4(1) Direction on 1st January 2026.

- 2.1.6. The full version of this motion (as amended) can be found at Appendix 3 to this report. The alternative motions presented at Council on 16 July 2025 can be found as part of the published agenda at <https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MIId=9600&Ver=4>.

2.2. *Legislation and process for introduction of an Article 4 Direction*

- 2.2.1. Councils can remove permitted development rights by making an Article 4 Direction, provided they can demonstrate a clear need for such a measure. National planning policy² advises that an Article 4 Direction should only be used when absolutely necessary, and that they must be supported by strong evidence, aim to protect local amenity or community well-being, and should cover the smallest area possible.
- 2.2.2. There are two types of Article 4 Direction:
- Non-immediate Article 4 Direction: This type requires a minimum 21-day period of public consultation before it can be introduced. It must then be confirmed after the consultation period ends and brought into effect within 2 years of the start of the period of public consultation. The Secretary of State must be notified at the start of the period of public consultation and also when the direction is confirmed.
 - Immediate Article 4 Direction: This can take effect as soon as it is issued, removing permitted development rights immediately before consultation. However, it must be confirmed by the local authority within six months, and the Secretary of State must also be notified at the start of the period of public consultation and also when the direction is confirmed.
- 2.2.3. Schedule 3 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015³ (Procedures for Article 4 directions) sets out the procedures for Article 4 directions. Essentially, an Article 4 direction is

² See paragraph 54 of the National Planning Policy Framework at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf

³ Schedule 3 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2015/596/schedule/3>

made through a two-stage process within which there is a period of consultation, as set out below.

Stage 1: The Local Planning Authority makes the direction.

- 2.2.4. Once the Direction has been made the Council then notifies the Secretary of State and carries out consultation (see below). Under current legislation, the local planning authority must send a copy of the direction and notice, including a copy of a map defining the area to which it relates, to the Secretary of State on the same day that notice of the direction is first published or displayed.
- 2.2.5. In accordance with the legislative procedures for the publicity and consultation of an Article 4 direction, the following consultation will be undertaken:
- Advertisement of notice in the local press; and
 - The Article 4 Direction Notice will be displayed in all Oldham public libraries and the council's principal office.
- 2.2.6. The Regulations require notice to also be served on the owner and occupier of every part of the land to which the direction applies, except where the number of owners and occupiers to which the direction relates makes individual service impractical. As this proposal is for a boroughwide direction, individual service on owners and occupiers will be impractical and will not be undertaken. Instead, the notice will be published on the council's website and sent to all those on the council's Local Plan Mailing List as well as to all ward members, and statutory consultees and other bodies as may be appropriate.
- 2.2.7. Schedule 3 (paragraph 1(4) (d)) sets out that a period of at least 21 days must be allowed for any representations concerning the direction to be made to the local planning authority. In this instance a period of six weeks is proposed for the consultation, commencing no sooner than 29 September 2025. This length of consultation is considered appropriate given the significance of the change that the proposed Article 4 Direction would bring for landlords and to give more than adequate notice to landlords who have already purchased a C3 property to convert to a C4 HMO under the current permitted development rights. By providing this notice period, the council is also reducing the potential for compensation claims from landlords affected by the Article 4 Direction.

Stage 2: The direction is confirmed and comes into effect

- 2.2.8. In deciding whether to confirm the direction, the Council must:
- Consider representations received during the consultation period.
 - Subject to the consideration of the representations, the Direction would then be confirmed and, if it is, must come into effect no earlier than 28 days and no later than 2 years from the start of the consultation period.
 - The Secretary of State must then be notified that the direction is confirmed and has come into effect.
- 2.2.9. Given the proposed six-week consultation period and the need to ensure that an appropriate notice period is given, if Cabinet resolves to make an Article 4 Direction as a result of this report, it is anticipated that the Direction will come

into effect in Oldham on the 1 January 2026 or such other later date as considered appropriate.

- 2.2.10. This proposed commencement date for the Direction to come into effect, coupled with the initial advertisement and notification after Cabinet's decision, should also provide sufficient notice to landlords (and prospective landlords) who have already purchased a C3 property with the intention to convert it to a C4 HMO, so that they are aware that, if they do not convert the property (i.e. have it occupied and let as a HMO) before 1 January 2026, they would need to apply for planning permission to make the conversion. This should reduce the risk to the Council of compensation claims under section 107 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 if that permission was subsequently refused and the landlord was therefore affected financially.

2.3. *Current position and evidence regarding HMOs across the borough*

- 2.3.1. As of July 2025, according to the best available evidence⁴, there are approximately 384 HMOs in the borough. 81 of these HMOs have secured a HMO Licence⁵ or been issued a draft licence ready for the final licence to be issued, and 43 applications are in the process of being considered.
- 2.3.2. The number of HMOs represents 0.38% of the borough's total dwelling stock (98,912 dwellings, as of October 2024⁶).
- 2.3.3. The actual number of HMOs in the borough may differ somewhat. The Council is not currently notified of all conversions of C3 dwellings to small HMOs (as this is currently permitted development), but this figure is based on the best available evidence to us. Whilst it would be hoped those small HMOs would be picked up through Council Tax records (and many are), this is not always the case, depending on what information has been provided by the occupiers on Council Tax returns. Also, HMOs can change back to single family dwellings without notifying the Council.
- 2.3.4. Of the 384 existing HMOs in the borough, 74 have been granted planning permission. A further 19 applications for a HMO have been granted planning permission and are yet to be implemented, or they are under construction, and so the HMO is not yet occupied / in use.

⁴ Please note, the council hold housing and development data across several sources and systems. This data has been amalgamated across systems and checks have been undertaken, however anomalies or errors may be present. The number of HMOs can be difficult to ascertain, given existing permitted development rights, as such this data represents the best available data on the number of existing HMOs in the borough up to July 2025.

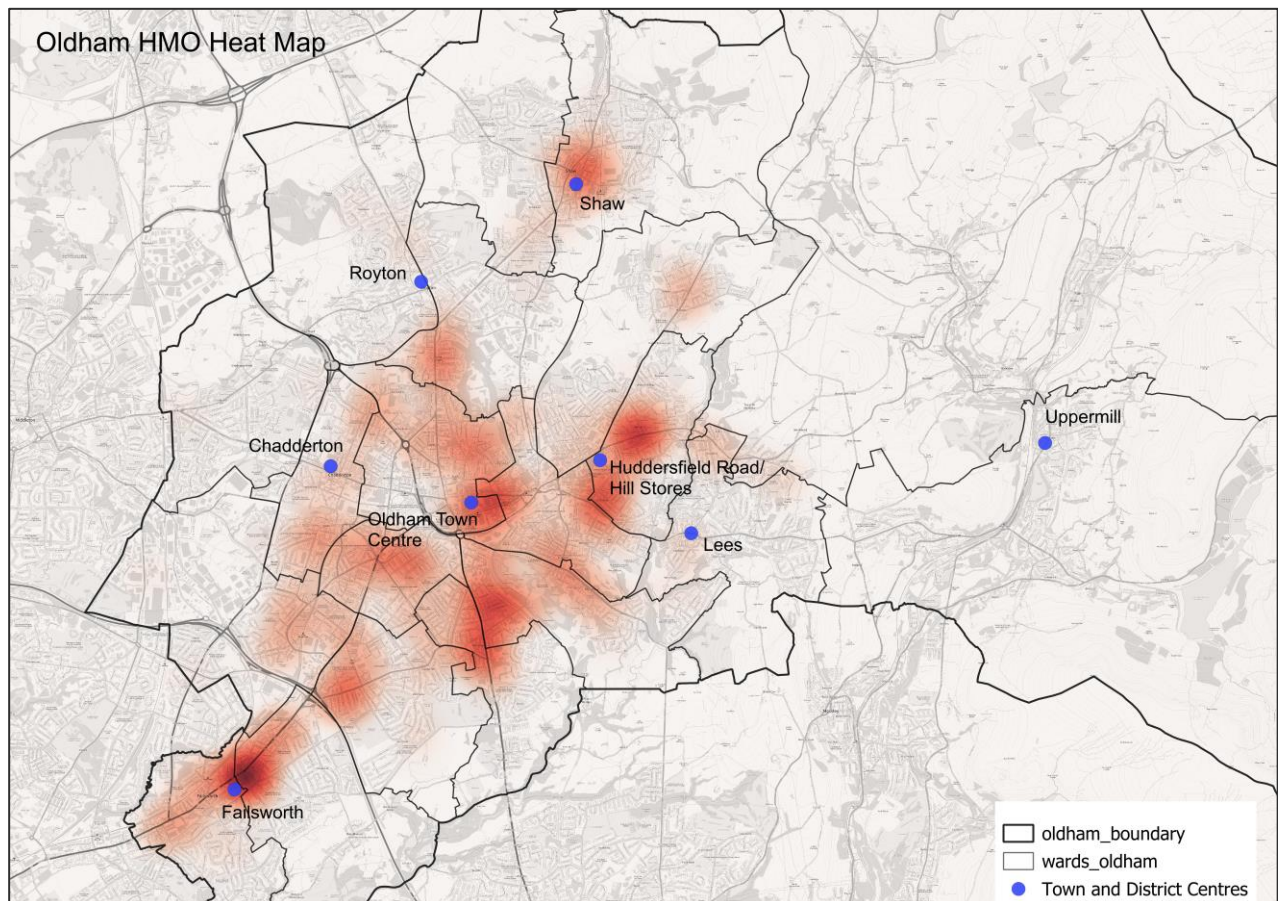
⁵ A HMO license is required for HMOs with an occupancy of 5 or more people. Further information can be found at: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201198/help_for_landlords/258/houses_in_multiple_occupation

⁶ Source – Oldham Council, Council Tax data (October 2024).

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- 2.3.5. It can be assumed that the majority of the existing HMOs in the borough are smaller HMOs, for less than 6 people. There are approximately 75 HMOs (of the total 384 existing HMOs) which are for 6 people or above (19%). We mainly know this because, as set out above, HMO development for 6 people and above is not permitted development and planning permission is required. Also, sometimes, the information is provided in an application to building control⁷.
- 2.3.6. Over 48% (185 properties) of the total 384 HMOs have been changed from a single household dwelling to a HMO. An additional 47 bedrooms have been created where a change of use from single household dwelling to HMO has occurred (and bedroom numbers are known).
- 2.3.7. Whilst this does not always equate to a loss of a residential unit (as per planning guidance some smaller HMOs can still exist under use class C3 – the same use class as a single household dwelling), it could mean the loss of a family home into smaller, single occupation uses.
- 2.3.8. The Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) (2024) has identified a need for family housing, including larger family housing of 4+ bedrooms across the borough. The loss of family housing to HMOs can impact on the dwelling stock available for families, and the ability of the housing stock to meet local housing needs.
- 2.3.9. Where smaller homes are converted into HMOs (especially small HMOs which do not currently require planning permission), the units of individual accommodation that are created could be smaller and not meet the minimum space standards that we would like to see provided for. This could lead to overcrowded and substandard living conditions.
- 2.3.10. Other HMOs are typically created from change of use from shops, restaurants or commercial properties (which already requires planning permission).
- 2.3.11. The LHNA has identified that there is a need for smaller units of accommodation and affordable housing, which HMOs could provide. HMOs can also be suitable housing options for students or key workers. However, it is important that this housing provides a decent standard of living and does not contribute to overcrowding.
- 2.3.12. The heat map at figure 1 indicatively illustrates the spatial distribution of the recorded HMOs in the borough.

Figure 1: Heat map showing spatial distribution of HMOs in Oldham

⁷ Detailed data is not always required to be supplied for building control applications depending on the application/ approval type.



- 2.3.13. As shown in figure 1, the HMOs are predominantly located within inner Oldham, along key transport routes (e.g., the A62, which connects Oldham to Failsworth and Manchester) and within and around district centres.
- 2.3.14. In particular, there may be clusters of HMOs emerging within and around Failsworth district centre, Huddersfield Road district centre, Oldham Town Centre, Shaw district centre and within Greenacres/ Clarksfield and Hathershaw (along Ashton Road). There are also lesser numbers of HMOs located near Royal Oldham Hospital (within Coldhurst and Royton South) and within areas of Central and South Chadderton, Hollinwood and Werneth. Conversely there are very few HMOs located within Saddleworth wards.
- 2.3.15. The majority of the borough's existing HMOs are located in accessible locations. Just under half (191) of the borough's recorded HMOs (384) are located within 800m of a Metrolink station and 2 are located within 800m of a train station (Mills Hill and Moston). The vast majority are in walking distance of a bus stop. Typically, HMOs can be a lower cost form of accommodation, and as such appeal to those with lower incomes, where levels of car ownership are also likely to be lower. As such, it is important to ensure HMOs are located sustainably with access to public transport within a suitable walking distance

3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1. This section of the report identifies the options available for the introduction of an Article 4 Direction for HMOs in Oldham.

3.2. *Non-Immediate or Immediate Article 4 Direction*

- 3.2.1. The main benefit of an immediate direction is that the Council would gain control over the issue and respond to members and communities concerns from day one the direction is acknowledged. However, it is considered that:
- Introducing a Non-Immediate Article 4 Direction with a period of six weeks consultation will raise awareness that the implementation of the Direction is forthcoming. This can help to reduce the risk associated with introducing the Direction and minimising potential exposure to compensation claims, as the Council's decision to introduce the Direction and the date on which this is to be confirmed will be in the public domain at the earliest opportunity.
 - In addition, the introduction of an Immediate Article 4 Direction has a substantially higher evidence threshold whereby the local planning authority would be required to demonstrate that the development to which the direction relates would be prejudicial to the proper planning of the area or constitute a threat to the amenities of the area. It is not considered that this higher evidence threshold is currently being met anywhere in the borough.

3.3. *Borough-wide*

- 3.3.1. Evidence shows that, whilst there are several potential clusters beginning to form within and around inner Oldham, along key transport routes (e.g., the A62 corridor connecting Oldham to Failsworth and Manchester - and Ashton Road) and within and around several district centres, there is still a general spread of HMOs across many areas of the borough, as shown in figure 1 above. We are therefore unable to clearly define those areas disproportionately affected. Furthermore, whilst our monitoring processes are much improved, we cannot be certain that our evidence has captured all three and four person HMOs in the borough.
- 3.3.2. In addition, other authorities in Greater Manchester are using Article 4 Directions to have greater control on the location and quality of HMOs. This includes the introduction of borough-wide Article 4 Directions to address concerns of displacement that area-specific Article 4 Directions might cause. In Wigan, for example having introduced an Article 4 Direction in Swinley and central Leigh in 2020, they are finding evidence of a displacement effect where restrictions on HMOs in one area are leading to an increase of HMOs in neighbouring areas of borough. Salford City Council is also increasing the footprint of its current Article 4 Direction on HMOs to cover a much broader area, in response to a similar displacement effect, and Bolton Council has also just been through the process of introducing a borough-wide Article 4 Direction.
- 3.3.3. Therefore, given concerns around the proliferation of HMOs in various parts of Oldham, and that these are spread across many of areas of the borough, if Cabinet consider that the evidence does justify an Article 4 Direction, it is felt prudent to apply that Direction borough-wide. This will avoid any effects of

displacement as witnessed by other GM districts and ensures a consistent approach going forward.

- 3.3.4. If Cabinet do decide to make an Article 4 Direction for HMOs in Oldham, planning applications for the conversion of C3 dwellings to C4 HMOs will, for the time-being, be considered on the same policy basis that planning applications for HMOs are already considered, having regard to issues such as amenity, character and highway safety. However, through the proposed new Local Plan for Oldham, updated policies will be included that allow a more nuanced approach to planning for HMOs in the borough, particularly geared toward avoiding clusters of HMOs on any given street and ensuring that the space and design standards of rooms in HMOs are adhered to, to avoid over-crowding and poor living conditions.

3.4 *Area-specific*

- 3.4.1. As evidenced, the data identifies several areas where clusters of HMOs appear to be forming within and around inner Oldham, along key transport routes and within and around several district centres. However, there is still a general spread of HMOs across many areas of the borough, and we are unable to clearly define those areas disproportionately affected. Coupled with concerns of potential displacement, it is considered an area-specific Article 4 Direction would not provide the consistency and control required to ensure that HMOs do not negatively impact on the amenity of our local communities and the character of the borough.

3.5 *No Article 4 Direction*

- 3.5.1. Having no Article 4 Direction in place would mean that small HMOs would continue to come forward as they do at present as permitted development. The council would therefore have limited control as to how and where these come forward. The council would still have some control over those HMOs that are for 5 to 6 people though as, whilst planning permission is not required for these, they would need to have a HMO Licence.
- 3.5.2. An Article 4 Direction would not stop HMOs coming forward in the borough, but it would mean that the Council is able to assess the impact of all HMOs on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the individual circumstances and location of the development. A Direction would enable the Council to better manage HMO concentration and prevent the formation of imbalanced communities, as well as reduce any negative impact on local amenity. It would also give residents a voice and a transparent process to ensure that their views are heard.

4 Preferred Option

- 4.1. It is proposed to introduce a Non-Immediate Article 4 Direction on Houses of Multiple Occupation that will be implemented borough-wide, if confirmed following consultation.

-
- 4.2. Following a period of consultation, commencing 29 September and running for six weeks until 9 November 2025, the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods will then consider whether to confirm the Direction and bring it into effect on 1 January 2026, having considered all consultation comments received.
- 4.3. This approach is the preferred option for the following reasons:
- a) Whilst an Article 4 Direction would not stop HMOs coming forward in the borough, it would mean that the Council is able to assess the impact of all HMOs on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the individual circumstances and location of the development. A Direction would enable the Council to better manage HMO concentration and prevent the formation of imbalanced communities, as well as reduce any negative impact on local amenity. It would also give residents a voice and a transparent process to ensure that their views are heard.
 - b) A non-immediate Article 4 Direction with the six-week period of consultation proposed and a commencement date of 1 January 2026 will provide sufficient notice to landlords (and prospective landlords) who have already purchased a C3 property with the intention to convert it to a C4 HMO.
 - c) Adopting a borough-wide approach reflects the evidence available and will avoid any effects of displacement as witnessed by other GM districts and ensures a consistent approach going forward.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 A period of consultation, commencing 29 September and running for six weeks until 9 November 2025 is proposed. Following this, the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods will then consider whether to confirm the Direction and bring it into effect on 1 January 2026, having considered all consultation comments received.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 A rise in planning applications for HMO conversions is expected, resulting in increased Planning workloads. Additional planning application fee income is therefore also anticipated and will help contribute to any additional staff costs. All planning application income and expenditure will be allocated from within the Development Control & Planning service budget.
- 6.2 The implementation of the Article 4 Direction, either immediate or non-immediate, could potentially give rise to compensation claims against the Council. These claims could be more prevalent under the immediate imposition of Article 4, as identified within the report.
- 6.3 Having consulted Legal and Risk & Insurance colleagues, they have confirmed there is no dedicated funding resource for any potential claims. Therefore, any such claims would be an additional pressure on the service which would need to be covered from within the service's general revenue budget.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 Under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, a local planning authority can restrict the scope of permitted development rights in relation to defined areas. It is a power of pre-emption rather than prohibition: by withdrawing the deemed permission under the Order, its effect is to require an application to be made for express permission for development proposals. If that permission is refused or granted subject to conditions other than those in the Order, the landowner is entitled to claim compensation for abortive expenditure and any loss or damage caused by the loss of rights. The National Planning Policy Framework advises that the use of Article 4 should be limited to situations where an Article 4 direction is necessary to protect local amenity or the well-being of the area and in all cases, be based on robust evidence, and apply to the smallest geographical area possible.
- 7.2 A decision about whether to withdraw permitted development rights is an executive function and can be dealt with by the Cabinet or a Cabinet Member.

(A Evans)

8 Oldham Equality Impact Assessment, including implications for Children and Young People

- 8.1 The completed Oldham Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 6. The introduction of a borough-wide non-immediate Article 4 Direction on HMOs is found to have a moderate positive impact on the care leavers equality characteristic and the Council's corporate priorities for 'A Great Place to Live' and 'Happier Healthier Lives'. As HMOs can provide an affordable housing option for single person households such as care leavers and a borough-wide Article 4 Direction would enable the Council to better manage HMO concentration and prevent the formation of imbalanced communities, as well as reduce any negative impact on local amenity.

9 Key Decision

- 9.1 Yes

10 Key Decision Reference

- 10.1 HL/02/25

11 Background Papers

- 11.1 The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act:

National Planning Policy Framework at
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf

Schedule 3 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596/schedule/3>

12 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Original Motion submitted by Labour on Houses of Multiple Occupation, 9 April 2025

Appendix 2 – Amended and Approved Liberal Democrat Motion on Houses of Multiple Occupation, 9 April 2025

Appendix 3 - Motion (as amended) submitted by the administration to Council on 16 July 2025

Appendix 4 – Article 4 Direction Background Evidence Paper

Appendix 5 – Article 4 Direction Notice

Appendix 6 - Oldham Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 1 – Original Motion submitted by Labour on Houses of Multiple Occupation, 9 April 2025

To be Moved by: Councillor Taylor

to be Seconded by: Councillor Davis

This Council notes with concern the increasing number of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Oldham and the impact this has on local communities, housing standards, and infrastructure. While HMOs can provide an important source of affordable accommodation, their proliferation in certain areas has led to issues including overcrowding, pressure on local services, and a decline in housing quality. In the past 5 years the number of licensed HMOs in Oldham has almost doubled.

This Council further notes that current national planning regulations allow certain HMOs (Class C4, up to six residents) to be established without the need for planning permission. This limits the ability of local authorities to manage their spread and ensure they are appropriately located and regulated.

This Council welcomes the recent announcement by the Chancellor of an additional £2 billion for social and affordable housing. This funding provides an opportunity to address the shortage of genuinely affordable homes and to ensure that people in Oldham have access to safe, secure, and high-quality housing.

This Council calls on the new Labour Government to reverse the changes introduced by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition Government in 2010 which removed the requirement for planning permission for small houses of multiple occupation.

This council further requests that the Chief Executive writes to the borough's 3 MPs and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, asking for their support in reversing the aforementioned changes.

Appendix 2 – Amended and Approved Liberal Democrat Motion on Houses of Multiple Occupation, 9 April 2025

Proposed: Sam Al-Hamdani

Seconded: Mark Kenyon

This Council notes with concern the increasing number of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Oldham and the impact this has on local communities, housing standards, and infrastructure. While HMOs can provide an important source of affordable accommodation, their proliferation in certain areas has led to issues including overcrowding, pressure on local services, and a decline in housing quality. In the past 5 years the number of licensed HMOs in Oldham has almost doubled.

This Council also notes that

- on 1 November 2023, it resolved to direct officers to “collect and collate evidence on the number of HMOs in each ward across the Borough, identifying clusters and report back to the relevant cabinet member if any case can be made for an Article 4 direction”.
- current national planning regulations allow certain HMOs (Class C4, up to six residents) to be established without the need for planning permission. This limits the ability of local authorities to manage their spread and ensure they are appropriately located and regulated.
- no figures are currently available on the number of HMOs in the borough – only for the number of licenced HMOs (which meet one definition) or for HMOs which have received planning permission (which meet a separate definition).
- there are standard tests which allow the Council to define whether any building is an HMO, as defined under the Housing Act 2004.
- Councillors have been told that they cannot be informed of forthcoming HMOs for licensing, due to data privacy.
- Councillors have no right to make a representation to the Council on HMO licence applications and renewals.
- the Council has let licenses for HMOs lapse on multiple occasions, sometimes for up to a year.

This Council welcomes the recent announcement by the Chancellor of an additional £2 billion for social and affordable housing. This funding provides an opportunity to address the shortage of genuinely affordable homes and to ensure that people in Oldham have access to safe, secure, and high-quality housing.

This Council calls on the new Labour Government to reverse the changes introduced by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition Government in 2010 which removed the requirement for planning permission for small houses of multiple occupation.

This council further requests that the Chief Executive writes to the borough's 3 MPs and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, asking for their support in reversing the aforementioned changes.

This Council calls on the Cabinet Member responsible to provide a report back to Council at the soonest opportunity on the work that has been carried out to establish whether a case can be made for an Article 4 direction; to continue efforts to establish that case, and to report back on a regular basis.

This Council will wherever possible ensure that any building being used as an HMO is defined as such, with a view to ensuring that any work towards an Article 4 direction is provided with the best available information.

This Council will provide information on forthcoming HMO applications, with any personal information removed.

The Council will establish a right for Councillors to make representations to the Council on HMO licence applications and renewals.

Appendix 3 – Motion (as amended) submitted by the administration to Council on 16 July 2025

Proposed by: Cllr Elaine Taylor

Seconded by: Cllr Davis

Motion as Amended

Article 4(1) direction on small HMOs

Residents are rightly concerned with the number of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) which are currently being introduced across the borough.

We have always believed HMOs are a symptom of the housing crisis and not a solution. In some cases, exploiting some of the most vulnerable people within our community through substandard and unsafe accommodation.

Whilst it is not possible to prevent full planning applications from being submitted, we can act to close the loophole that allows for permitted development rights for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) where between three and six unrelated people share basic amenities, such as a kitchen or bathroom.

Oldham Council currently permits, without the need for planning permission under 'permitted development rights', the change of use of a typical dwelling house occupied by a single household in use class C3, to a property used as a 'small' HMO that is shared by between three and six unrelated people in use class C4.

The Council can, however, adopt an Article 4 Direction to remove these permitted development rights. This will require a planning application to be submitted for change of use from class C3 to C4. This means due process will be applied giving residents a say in what happens in their communities.

We had hoped the government would introduce new legislation to make HMO developers more accountable and give residents a greater say by making it mandatory for small HMO developers to be licensed with the local authority.

In addition, the government has stated it is committed to removing all asylum applicants (approximately thirty thousand) from temporary hotel accommodation. We believe this action will inevitably mean further demand for HMOs.

We acknowledge and accept that the implementation of Article 4 borough wide will have a significant impact on available resources particularly the Planning Department.

This Council resolves to:

1. As soon as possible, Cabinet to consider and make a direction pursuant to Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order

2015 on a borough wide basis. Withdrawing the permitted development rights to convert a dwellinghouse (C3) to a House in Multiple Occupation (C4) is appropriate, and justified, to prevent harm to local amenity and promote the wellbeing of the aforementioned areas.

2. To delegate authority to OMBC Planning Department to carry out all necessary consultation and to notify the Secretary of State in accordance with statutory requirements.
3. That, the Borough wide Article 4(1) Direction will come into effect once made.
4. To put existing and prospective HMO landlords on notice that OMBC will look to implement the Article 4(1) Direction on 1st January 2026.

Oldham Council does not intend to rely on or hide behind government legislation on this issue.

An Article 4(1) Direction can be used to manage HMO concentration and prevent the formation of imbalanced communities and negative impact on local amenity. As a resident focused Council, we value residents' opinions and put communities at the forefront of decision making. We are committed to giving residents a voice and a transparent process to ensure that their views are heard.

The adoption of this motion demonstrates to the people of the borough that the council is prepared to act in their interests.

Appendix 4 – Article 4 Direction Background Paper

See separate document

Appendix 5 – Article 4 Direction

See separate document

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Article 4 Direction

Removal of permitted development rights for the change of use from Class C3 (Dwelling Houses) to C4 (Houses in Multiple Occupation)

Background Document

September 2025

DRAFT

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. An Article 4 Direction is a legal process which allows local authorities to remove specified permitted development rights across a defined area.
- 1.2. This paper provides the background and evidence base for the introduction of an Article 4 Direction to remove the permitted development right for the change of use from dwelling houses (Use Class C3) to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) for up to six residents (Use Class C4).
- 1.3. The Article 4 Direction would be made under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) and would apply to the whole borough of Oldham.
- 1.4. The Article 4 Direction will enable the council to have greater control over the number, distribution and management of HMOs.
- 1.5. The following sections set out the policy context, background and local evidence to justify the introduction of the Article 4 Direction in Oldham.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The government defines a HMO as a property rented out by at least 3 people who are not from 1 'household' (for example a family) but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen¹.
- 2.2. Under current planning legislation², HMOs are divided into two Use Classes, which are often referred to as 'Small' and 'Large' HMOs:
 - Small HMOs are houses or flats occupied by between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or a bathroom. These are classified as a 'C4' use within the Use Classes Order; and
 - Large HMOs comprise houses or flats occupied by more than 6 unrelated individuals who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom. These are classified as Sui Generis (a use that does not fall in any use class).
- 2.3. Currently, the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) England Order 2015 (as amended) (GDPO)³ allows the change of use of a dwelling house (Use Class C3) to a small HMO (Use Class C4), without the need for planning permission under permitted development rights.
- 2.4. The change of use from any use other than C3 to a small HMO or the new-build development a small HMO, does require planning permission. Similarly, a small HMO can be converted to a C3 dwelling at any time under permitted development rights.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/find-licences/house-in-multiple-occupation-licence>

² The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended):
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1987/764/contents?view=plain>

³ GDPO Class L of Schedule 2:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596/schedule/2/part/3/crossheading/class-l-small-hmos-to-dwellinghouses-and-vice-versa>

- 2.5. The conversion (or new-build) of any property to create a Sui Generis “large” HMO requires planning permission in all cases.
- 2.6. There are also some HMOs that are covered under the ‘C3 dwelling houses’ use, such as those where there are up to six people living together as a single household and receiving care, and some groups of people (up to six) living together as a single household (e.g., a small religious community or homeowners living with a lodger).

Article 4 Directions

- 2.7. The Council can adopt an Article 4 Direction to remove the permitted development rights that enable a C3 dwelling to be converted to a C4 “small” HMO. This would require such conversions to apply for planning permission for the change of use.
- 2.8. Requiring the submission of a planning application for such proposals will not necessarily reduce the number of small HMOs being created. It does however allow for the proper consideration of the effects of a proposed HMO on an area's amenity and local community, before issuing any planning permission. In doing so the Council is able to influence the quality of the HMO through the planning process. This is especially important for 3 and 4 person HMOs as they do not require a HMO Licence, and so the quality of such HMOs cannot be monitored properly currently.
- 2.9. Article 4 Directions can be introduced on a temporary or permanent basis by local authorities. There are two types of Article 4 Directions:
- Non-immediate Article 4 Direction: This type requires a minimum 21-day period of public consultation before it can be introduced. It must then be confirmed after the consultation period ends and within 12 months of the original decision to introduce the direction, and the Secretary of State must be notified once it is confirmed.
 - Immediate Article 4 Direction: This can take effect as soon as it is issued, removing permitted development rights immediately before consultation. However, it must be confirmed by the local authority within six months, and the Secretary of State must also be informed.
- 2.10. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that Article 4 Directions should be applied in a measured and targeted way and should be limited to situations where the direction is necessary to protect the amenity or local wellbeing of the area and should cover the smallest area possible⁴.
- 2.11. Both the type of restriction and the extent that the Article 4 will apply to, must be justified. The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government can intervene to stop Article 4 Directions taking effect should they deem it appropriate.
- 2.12. The evidence section of this document sets out the local justification for the introduction of a borough-wide Article 4 Direction in relation HMOs across Oldham.

⁴ National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 54:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf

Local Context

- 2.13. Oldham's Local Plan (the Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Development Plan Document, 2011)⁵ sets out policy relating to housing and amenity which can be used in determining applications for HMOs.
- 2.14. Policy 3 'Address of Choice' supports the delivery of housing in suitable locations, including change of use and conversion. Policy 9 'Local Environment' sets out policy for improving and protecting local environmental quality and amenity and promoting community safety. This policy is heavily used in determining applications for HMOs. Policy 11 'Housing' sets out that HMOs shall not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal does not adversely affect:
- The local character of the area;
 - The residential and workplace amenity of current, future and neighbouring occupants; and
 - Traffic levels and the safety of road users.
- 2.15. There are also other local plan policies and policies with the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PJE) that can be used to determine HMO applications.
- 2.16. Oldham also has several Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)⁶ which can be useful for HMO applications, including the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) SPD and the Vibrant Centres SPD.
- 2.17. Oldham does not currently have a specific HMO planning policy or a HMO SPD. However, the Draft Local Plan (published in December 2023)⁷ contained a specific policy on HMOs (see policy H10). The policy set out several requirements for HMO development, including a requirement which sought to prevent an over-concentration of HMOs within a particular area.
- 2.18. There are also licensing requirements for HMOs. Part 2 of the Housing Act (2004)⁸ sets out that a property must be licensed if it meets these conditions:
- 5 or more people live there, where there are two or more groups of people that are not living as a family, i.e. mother and son rent one room, female rents another room and two males rent another room, and they are not a family.
 - They share facilities such as bathrooms and kitchens.
- 2.19. Advice for landlords of HMOs is also set out on the council's website. The advice sets out that all HMOs need to be managed properly whether it is a licenced or non-

⁵ Oldham's Local Plan (Joint Core Strategy) (2011):

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201229/current_local_planning_policy/978/joint_core_strategy_and_development_management_policies_development_plan_documents_dpds

⁶ Oldham's Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs): [Supplementary Planning Documents | Oldham Council](#)

⁷ Oldham's Draft Local Plan (2023): https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201233/local_plan_review/3095/draft_local_plan

⁸ Housing Act 2004 – Part 2: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/part/2>

licensed HMO. It is up to the manager of the property to make sure this is done. A well-managed HMO should be clean and tidy, safe and suitable for living in.

2.20. Management Regulations ensure that:

- Provisions like washing and cooking facilities are adequate;
- There are adequate arrangements for the collection and proper disposal of rubbish;
- Water, gas and electricity are properly supplied and discharged; and
- Any repairs are carried out.

2.21. The law also says that the people who live in an HMO must make sure they don't cause damage, store and dispose of waste properly and cooperate with the manager of the property.

2.22. To guide development quality and proper management of HMOs the council has a HMO standards document which is available on request⁹.

2.23. Further information on HMO licensing requirements for HMOs is available online¹⁰.

2.24. Currently, Oldham also has five selective licensing areas in operation – within these areas any private-rented properties must be licensed. This includes HMOs, but also other privately rented properties. The aim of selective licensing areas is to improve the management of private rented properties through licence conditions to ensure they have a positive impact on the area.

2.25. The selective licensing areas are located mainly within inner Oldham – a map is available online¹¹. The selective licensing areas would continue to operate independently of an Article 4 direction.

3. Background

3.1. Over the last few years council members have highlighted their concern with the number of HMOs that are currently being introduced across the borough.

3.2. It is recognised that HMOs provide a much-needed source of housing for various groups in need within the borough, including young people, students, key workers and single person households. However, poorly managed and maintained HMOs, especially where clusters of HMOs arise in one place, can have a detrimental impact on local character and amenity.

3.3. Recently, other local authorities within Greater Manchester have introduced borough-wide Article 4 Directions (or have extended existing area-specific Directions to apply borough-wide). Wigan Council are implementing a borough-wide Article 4 Direction (extending two area-specific directions). Salford City Council is also extending the coverage of its current Article 4 Direction to cover a much broader area. Both these authorities have stated that they have experienced a displacement effect with their

⁹ Further information available at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201198/information_for_landlords/258/houses_in_multiple_occupation_hmo

¹⁰ Further information can be found at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201198/help_for_landlords/258/houses_in_multiple_occupation

¹¹ Oldham Selective Licensing Areas: [Selective Licensing of private landlords | Selective Licensing of private landlords | Oldham Council](#)

previous area-specific Article 4 Directions, whereby restricting HMO development in the specific areas has led to an increase in HMO development in other areas. As a result, these authorities are seeking borough-wide or much broader coverage Article 4 Directions as a result.

- 3.4. Bolton Council has also recently introduced a borough-wide Article 4 Direction. Manchester Council and Trafford Council also have existing Article 4 Directions applying to HMO development.
- 3.5. Other authorities in Greater Manchester are using Article 4 Directions to have greater control on the location and quality of HMOs. This includes the introduction of borough-wide Article 4 Directions to address concerns of displacement, that area-specific Article 4 Directions might cause. Therefore, given the concerns around the proliferation of HMOs in various parts of Oldham and that these are spread across many parts of the borough, it is considered that a borough-wide Article 4 Direction is appropriate for Oldham. This will ensure a consistent approach is applied to HMO development in the borough.

4. Local Evidence

The number of HMOs in Oldham

- 4.1. At the 2021 Census the number of HMOs in Oldham was estimated to be 88¹². At the time this represented 0.09% of the borough's total housing stock (estimated at 97,761 dwellings).
- 4.2. Nationally, at the 2021 Census, HMOs represented 0.07% of England's total housing stock. As such, at the time Oldham had a slightly higher number of HMOs than the national average.
- 4.3. 'In-house' monitoring of the number of HMOs in Oldham has been undertaken since 2020 to understand trends and impact on the borough's communities.
- 4.4. Over the years, data collection methods have been tested and refined to enable the collection of more accurate data. However, given existing permitted development rights, which allow the change of use of dwelling houses (C3 use) to small HMOs (C4 use), monitoring the number of HMOs can be difficult.
- 4.5. The data presented below has been gathered from a variety of sources, using several internal monitoring systems. Given the volume of data and data handling practices there may be some level of inaccuracy. As such the data should be considered as approximate and the best available.
- 4.6. Oldham Council has used data from licensing, planning and building control, council tax, temporary accommodation records and the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) records to estimate the number of HMOs within the borough.
- 4.7. For the latest update of HMO data – July 2025 - a two-step verification process has been introduced to ensure that HMOs can be verified by at least two sources. This is to improve the accuracy of data. Further confirmation and checks on the data have

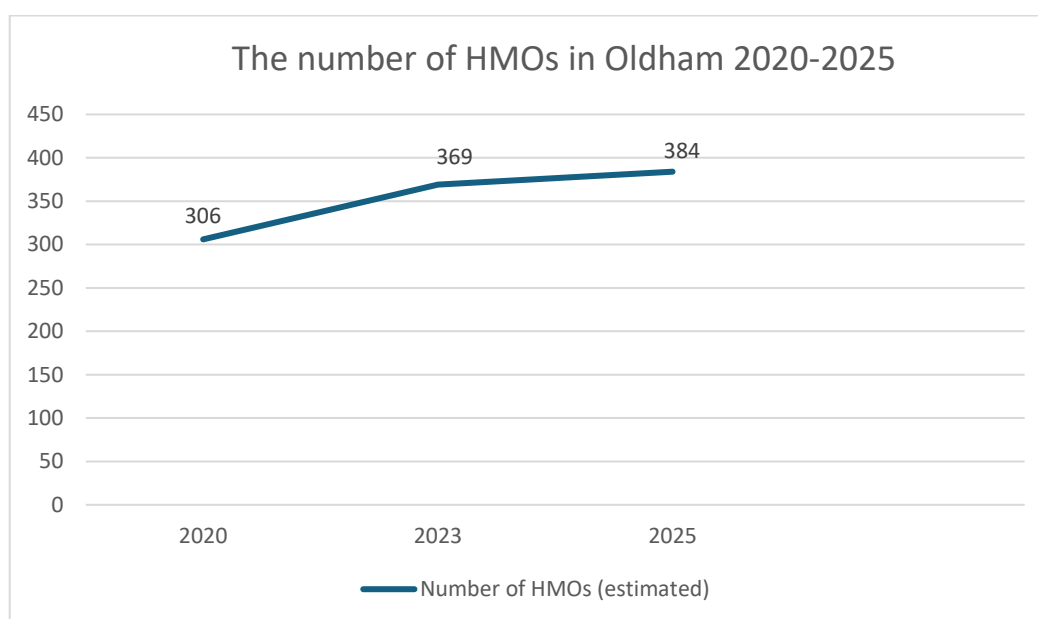
¹² ONS Census 2021 – Number of dwellings that are houses in multiple occupation (HMO):
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/RM192/editions/2021/versions/2#summary>.

been carried out where necessary, including a desktop assessment (checking mapping systems, local property listings etc.). The number of HMOs which have planning permission and have not yet started and the number of HMOs which are under construction have also been recorded separately.

- 4.8. As of July 2025, the total number of HMOs estimated to be in use/ existing in the borough is approximately 384 (81 of which have secured a HMO Licence or been issued a draft licence ready for the final licence to be issued, and 43 licensing applications are in the process of being considered).
- 4.9. The total number of HMOs (as of July 2025) represents 0.38% of the total dwelling stock (98,912 dwellings, as of October 2024¹³). This is significantly higher than the national percentage of dwelling stock estimate of 0.07% (2021 Census).
- 4.10. Looking over a longer period, data on the number of HMOs in the borough was collected in December 2020 to inform the Local Plan Review – Issues and Options stage. The data identified that there were around 306 HMOs in the borough, which represented 0.31% of the borough's total housing stock at the time (97,079 dwellings as of October 2020).
- 4.11. Between December 2020 and October 2023, there was a 20% increase in the number of HMOs in the borough. In October 2023 the number of HMOs was estimated to be around 369, which represented 0.37% of the total housing stock at the time (98,567 dwellings).
- 4.12. As of the most recent available data, in July 2025 there was estimated to be 384 HMOs in Oldham. This represents a 4% increase from 2023 and a 25% increase from 2020.
- 4.13. The figure below highlights the increase in the number of HMOs across the five-year period. The figure shows that whilst the increase is not sharp, there has been a consistent increase over this period.

¹³ Source – Oldham Council, Council Tax data (October 2024).

Figure 1: Number of HMOs in Oldham 2020-2025



- 4.14. The significant difference in the 2021 Census data on the number of HMOs in the borough (88) and the number recorded in 2025 by the council (384) (and 306 in 2020, 369 in 2023) also highlights the difficulty in accurately identifying the number of HMOs in the borough. Census data on the number of HMOs in Oldham is clearly not an accurate source for the borough, as the internally gathered and verified data indicates that the number is much higher - highlighting the importance of internal monitoring.
- 4.15. Despite the evidence set out above, the actual number of HMOs in the borough may still differ somewhat from that identified. The Council is not currently notified of all conversions of C3 dwellings to small HMOs (as this is currently permitted development). Whilst it would be hoped those small HMOs would be picked up through Council Tax records (and many are), this is not always the case, depending on what information has been provided by the occupiers on Council Tax returns. Also, HMOs can change back to single family dwellings without notifying the Council. The figure set out above (384 at July 2025) is however based on the best available evidence.

HMO development

- 4.16. Of the 384 existing HMOs in the borough (July 2025), 74 have been granted planning permission. A further 19 applications for a HMO have been granted planning permission and are yet to be implemented, or they are under construction, and so the HMO is not yet occupied or in use.
- 4.17. There are approximately 75 HMOs (of the total 384 existing HMOs) which are for 6 people or above. We mainly know this because, as set out above, HMO development for 6 people and above is not permitted development and planning

permission is required. Also, sometimes, the information is provided in an application to building control¹⁴.

- 4.18. As such, it can be assumed that the majority of existing HMOs in the borough are smaller HMOs, for less than 6 people, and therefore those which do not currently require planning permission.
- 4.19. Over 48% (185 properties) of the total 384 HMOs have been changed from a single household dwelling to a HMO. This has resulted in an additional 47 bedrooms where a change of use from single household dwelling to HMO has occurred and bedroom numbers are known.
- 4.20. Whilst this does not always equate to a loss of a residential unit, (as per planning guidance some smaller HMOs can still exist under use class C3 – the same use class as a single household dwelling), it could mean the loss of a family home into smaller, single occupation uses.
- 4.21. The Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) (2024)¹⁵ has identified a need for family housing, including larger family housing of 4+ bedrooms across the borough. The loss of family housing to HMOs can impact the dwelling stock available for families, and the ability of the housing stock to meet local housing needs.
- 4.22. Where smaller homes are converted into HMOs (especially small HMOs which do not currently require planning permission), the units of individual accommodation that are created could be smaller and not meet the minimum space standards. This could lead to overcrowded and substandard living conditions.
- 4.23. Other HMOs are typically created through the change of use from shops, restaurants or commercial properties. The breakdown below notes the other changes of use (not C3) which have occurred for existing HMOs in the borough, where this is known:
- Class E (Commercial, retail, business and services, food and drink) – 31 properties;
 - F2 (Local community uses) – 2 properties;
 - Sui Generis (unique uses) – 5 properties¹⁶;
 - C1 (Hotels, boarding houses, guest houses) – 1 property;
 - C2 (Residential accommodation and care) – 1 property; and
 - B8 (Storage and Distribution) – 1 property.

¹⁴ Detailed data is not always required to be supplied for building control applications depending on the application/ approval type.

¹⁵ Oldham Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) (2024), available at:

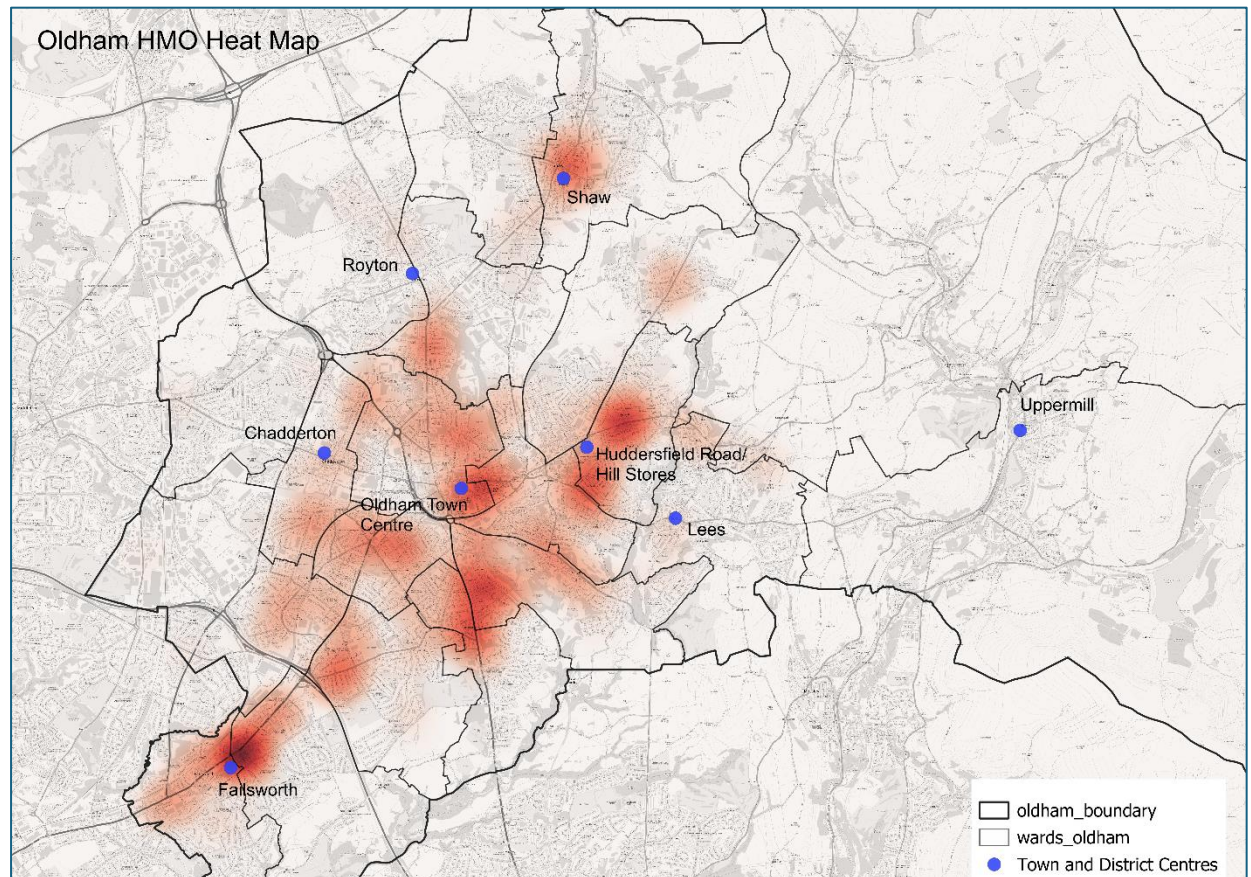
https://www.oldham.gov.uk/downloads/file/5590/housing_strategy_needs_assessment

¹⁶ Sui Generis use class includes large HMOs i.e. those for more than 6 unrelated individuals and also many other uses which do not fall within other defined use classes, for example betting shops, launderettes, and nightclubs. The number shown here only includes the properties which have changed from Sui Generis uses which are not HMOs.

Distribution of HMOs

4.24. The heat map at figure 2 illustrates the spatial distribution of the recorded HMOs in the borough.

Figure 2: Heat map showing spatial distribution of HMOs in Oldham



4.25. As shown in Figure 2, HMOs are spread across many areas of the borough. There are particular clusters located within and around inner Oldham, along key transport routes i.e. the A62, which connects Oldham to Failsworth and Manchester, and within and around several district centres.

4.26. There are clusters of HMOs within and around Failsworth district centre, Huddersfield Road district centre, Oldham Town Centre, Shaw district centre and within Greenacres/ Clarksfield and Hathershaw (along Ashton Road). There are also HMOs located near Royal Oldham Hospital (within Coldhurst and Royton South) - and within areas of Central and South Chadderton, Hollinwood and Werneth. Conversely there are very few HMOs located within Saddleworth wards, and within the more rural fringes of the borough.

4.27. The majority of the borough's existing HMOs are located in accessible locations. Just under half (191) of the borough's recorded HMOs are located within 800m of a Metrolink station and 2 are located within 800m of a train station (Mills Hill and Moston). The vast majority are in walking distance of a bus stop. Typically, HMOs can be a lower cost form of accommodation, and as such appeal to those with lower incomes where levels of car ownership are also likely to be lower. As such, it is

important to ensure HMOs are located sustainably with access to public transport within a suitable walking distance.

Demographics

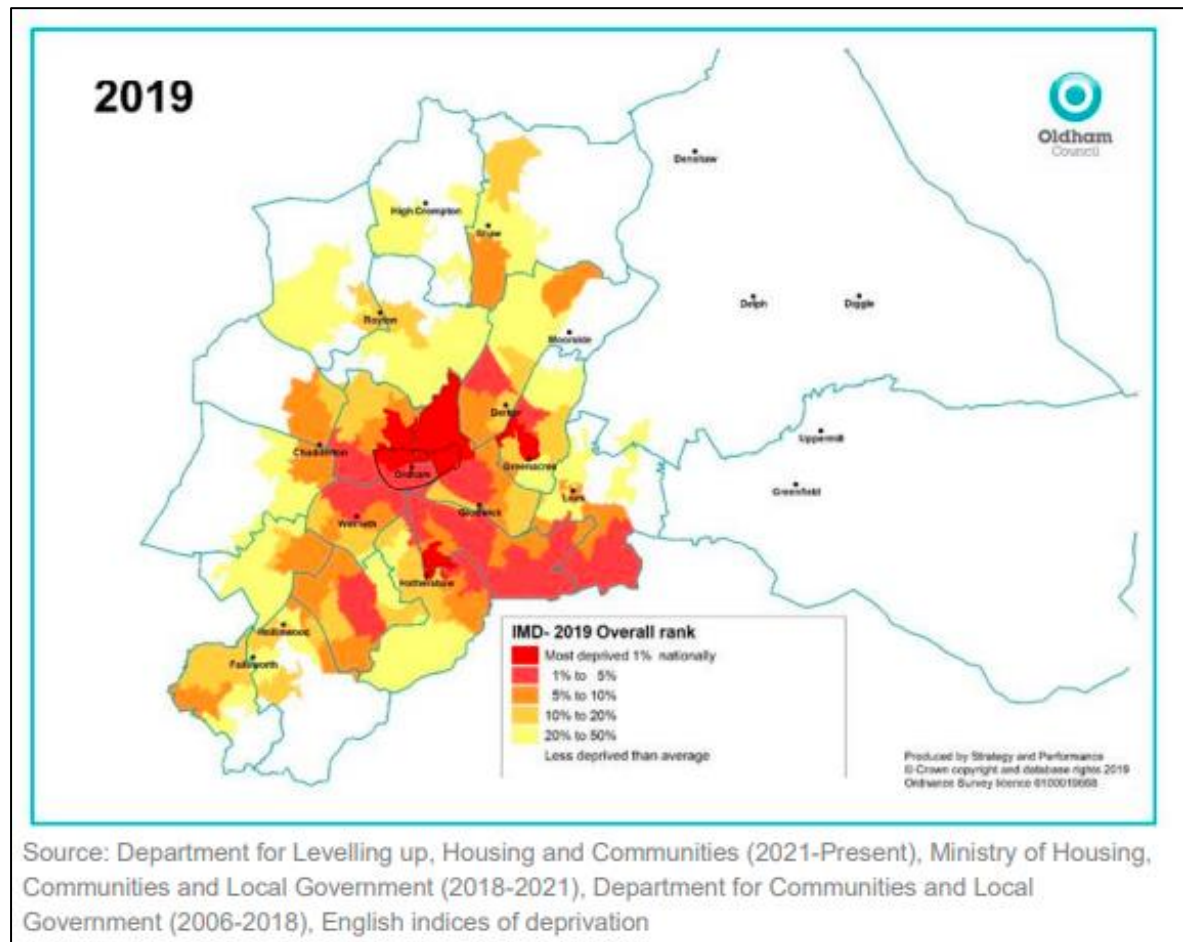
- 4.28. According to the latest official population projections¹⁷, Oldham's population is continuing to increase. The projections show that the borough's total population is estimated to increase by around 14,000 people from around 248,000 in 2025 to 263,000 in 2047.
- 4.29. Compared to the England average, Oldham has a younger population and higher than average levels of children. Although in recent years there have been falling birth rates - a trend that is expected to continue.
- 4.30. Levels of deprivation in the borough are generally ranked among the highest in the country. According to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)¹⁸, some areas of Oldham rank within the bottom 10% of local authorities in England. Oldham's levels of deprivation have maintained a steady downward trend since 2004¹⁹. In the 2010 IMD Oldham ranked 32 out of 326 local authorities. In the 2019 IMD Oldham ranked 16 of 317 local authorities.
- 4.31. Figure 3 below shows areas of high deprivation within Oldham. Oldham currently has four areas within the borough which are among the top 1% of the nation's most deprived areas. The majority are centred in and around the town centre, particularly within the wards of St Mary's, Coldhurst and Alexandra. Only the wards of Crompton, Saddleworth North and Saddleworth South do not contain any areas that fall within the nation's top 20% most deprived.

¹⁷ 2022 based Population Projections released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 24 June 2025.

¹⁸ The Indices of Multiple Deprivation provide statistics on relative deprivation which are reported at a small area level (Lower Super Output Areas – LSOAs) across all local authorities in England. It looks at a combined measure of income, employment, health, education, crime, barriers to housing and services and the living environment. It also considers income deprivation affecting children and older people.

¹⁹ Source: Oldham in Profile 2024, Oldham Council.

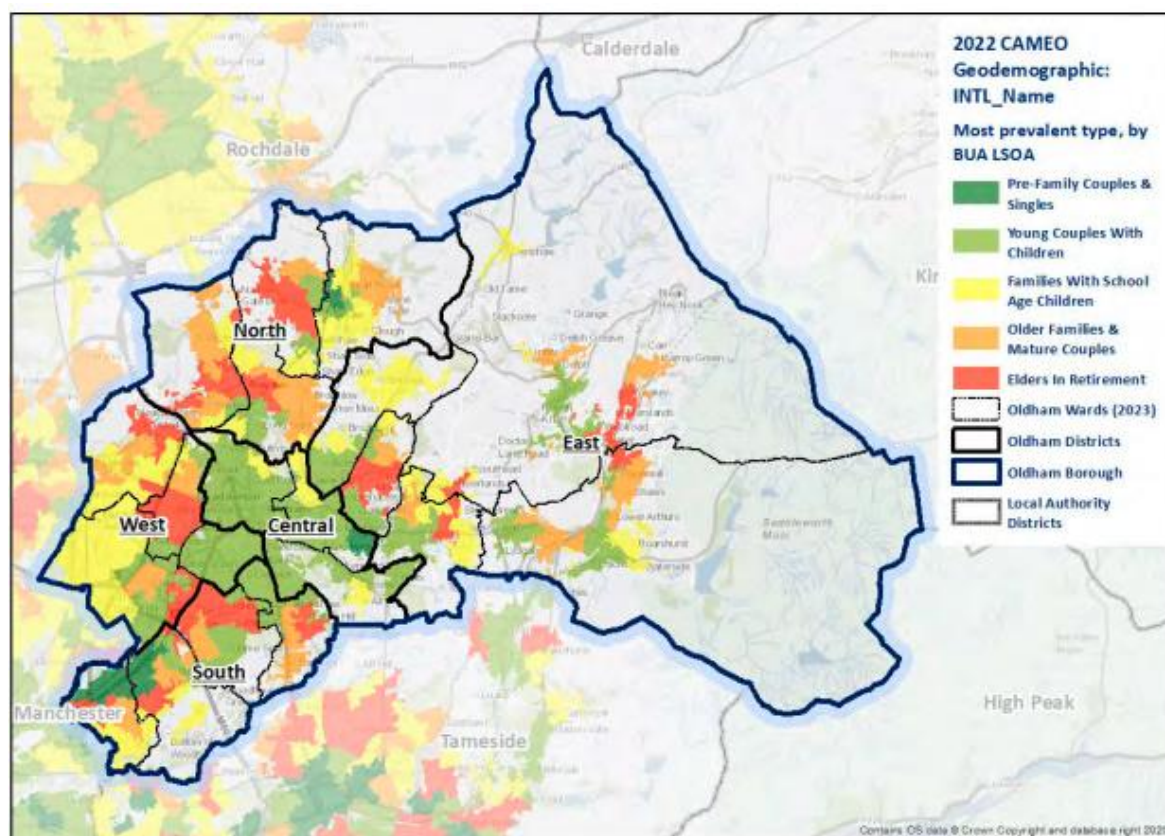
Figure 3: Areas of Deprivation in Oldham²⁰



- 4.32. Since 2010 Oldham's deprivation score has improved in measures of deprivation affecting older people, employment and health, however it has worsened in all other measures, including barriers to housing.
- 4.33. HMOs can be a key source of housing for younger and single person households. Figure 4 below, identifies the household types most prevalent in each LSOA. As is shown, the most prevalent household type within central and inner Oldham is young couples with children. Around Failsworth district centre singles and pre-family couples are the most prevalent. Around the fringes of the borough and in Saddleworth the most prevalent household types are families with school age children and mature couples/ families. Pockets of elders in retirement, as the most prevalent household type, are found in most areas of the borough.

²⁰ Source: Extracted from Oldham in Profile 2024, Oldham Council.

Figure 4: Household characteristics: Household Type by LSOA²¹



Source: CAMEO UK

Housing Stock

- 4.34. As set out above, there are estimated to be around 98,912 dwellings²² and 93,152 households²³. More than one household can live within one dwelling – for example in the case of HMOs you may have several households living within one dwelling unit.
- 4.35. The majority of Oldham's dwelling stock is houses (77.5%) of which terraced houses represent 44.7%. Oldham has the highest proportion of terraced housing stock in Greater Manchester and a large portion is within inner Oldham²⁴.
- 4.36. Oldham's housing stock tends to be smaller than the Greater Manchester, North-West and National averages, with fewer dwellings of 4 bedrooms or more²⁵. Across the borough, 52.2% of dwellings are 1 or 2 bedrooms.
- 4.37. There are issues of overcrowding in some areas of Oldham. The 2021 Census identified that 7.5% of households in Oldham are overcrowded compared to 4.4% nationally.

²¹ Extracted from LHNA (2024) – Map 2.3 'Household characteristics: household type by LSOA', 2022 CAMEO. Map shows the most prevalent household type for each LSOA.

²² Source: Oldham Council – Council Tax data (October 2024)

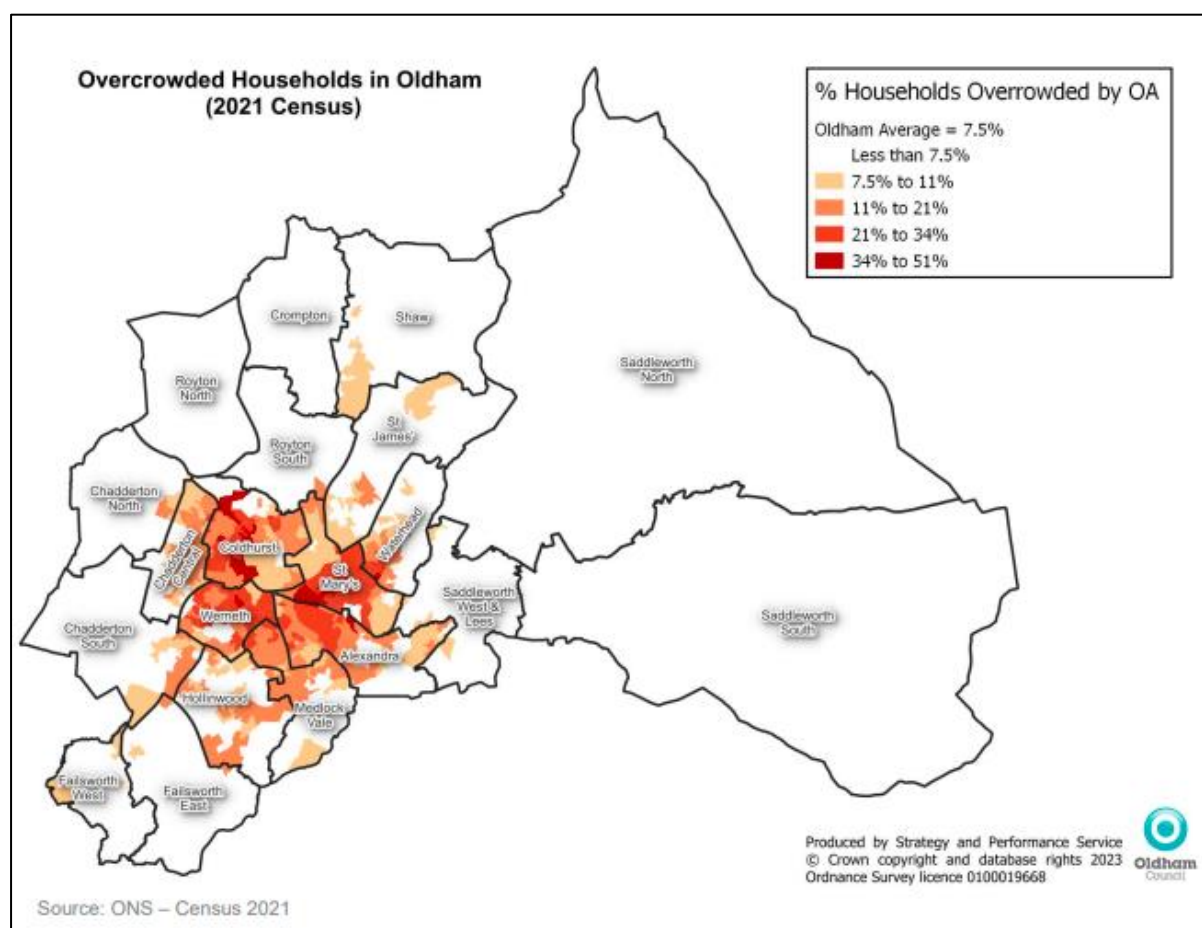
²³ Source: Oldham LHNA (2024).

²⁴ See Map 2.1 in Oldham (LHNA 2024).

²⁵ See Table 2.3 in Oldham LHNA (2024).

4.38. Overcrowding is most prevalent in areas with a high proportion of terraced housing stock. Figure 5 shows the distribution of households classed as overcrowded. The map shows that the distribution of overcrowded households is uneven, but there are large concentrations of overcrowded homes located within inner Oldham - around the outskirts of the town centre, particularly in the wards of Coldhurst, St Mary's and Werneth.

Figure 5: Overcrowded Households in Oldham (2021 Census)²⁶



4.39. The LHNA (2024) has assessed housing conditions and repair problems with data gathered from a household survey. The LHNA found that households expressing the highest levels of dissatisfaction by characteristics were households:

- living in Central Oldham (22.4%);
- private renting (19.1%);
- living in affordable housing (22.7%);
- living in flats (18.7%), maisonettes (17.6%), and terraced housing (12.8%);
- living in pre-1919 dwellings (13.5%);
- that had an income of less than £200 each week (19.8%); and

²⁶ Source: Extracted from Oldham in Profile (2024), Oldham Council - ONS 2021 Census.

- that had a young person residing ²⁷ aged 15-24 (20.9%).
- 4.40. Households containing someone with an illness/disability were more likely to be dissatisfied (13.8%) compared with 10.4% overall.
- 4.41. 55.8% of households living in affordable housing, 52.6% of private renters, and 39.7% of owner-occupiers stated there were repair problems with their property.
- 4.42. The main repair problem reported among owner-occupier households was with the roof (34.6%) and dampness/mould growth (32.0%). Across the private rented sector a concerning 51.8% of respondents mentioned dampness/mould growth, and across the affordable housing sector, dampness/mould growth was mentioned by 40.7% and windows by 36.8% of respondents.
- 4.43. As set out in this section, there are issues with the borough's dwelling stock and disparities across areas in the borough. Terraced houses make up a large proportion of Oldham's housing stock, particularly within inner Oldham. There are areas of Oldham, again particularly within inner Oldham, which are experiencing overcrowding. Also, there are housing repair problems reported across all tenures, particularly those living in private rented and affordable housing.
- 4.44. In this context, it is important that HMOs are appropriately managed and monitored to ensure housing quality and avoid overcrowding.
- 4.45. The size of HMO accommodation should be sufficient and should not perpetuate issues of overcrowding. The council's HMO Standards apply to the development of HMOs in the borough²⁸ - the HMO Standards provide detail on amenity and design, including appropriate room sizes (and shared spaces/ facilities). PfE policy JP-H3 also sets out that all new dwellings should comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)²⁹. Where practicable the NDSS should apply to conversions and changes of use, such as to a HMO.
- 4.46. It's also important that HMOs do not lead to the loss of a larger family home, which are needed in Oldham (see paragraph 4.49 below).

Housing Tenure and Affordability

- 4.47. In terms of tenure, the LHNA (2024) identified that the majority of Oldham's households are owner-occupiers (60.4%). 21.6% live in affordable housing tenures and 18.0% rent housing privately.
- 4.48. Many HMOs are rented privately. The private rented sector has become an important tenure in both meeting people's housing needs and providing flexible housing options for those moving for employment or to respond to changing circumstances and provides a housing option for those on low incomes.

²⁷ This is defined as age of Household Reference Person (HRP).

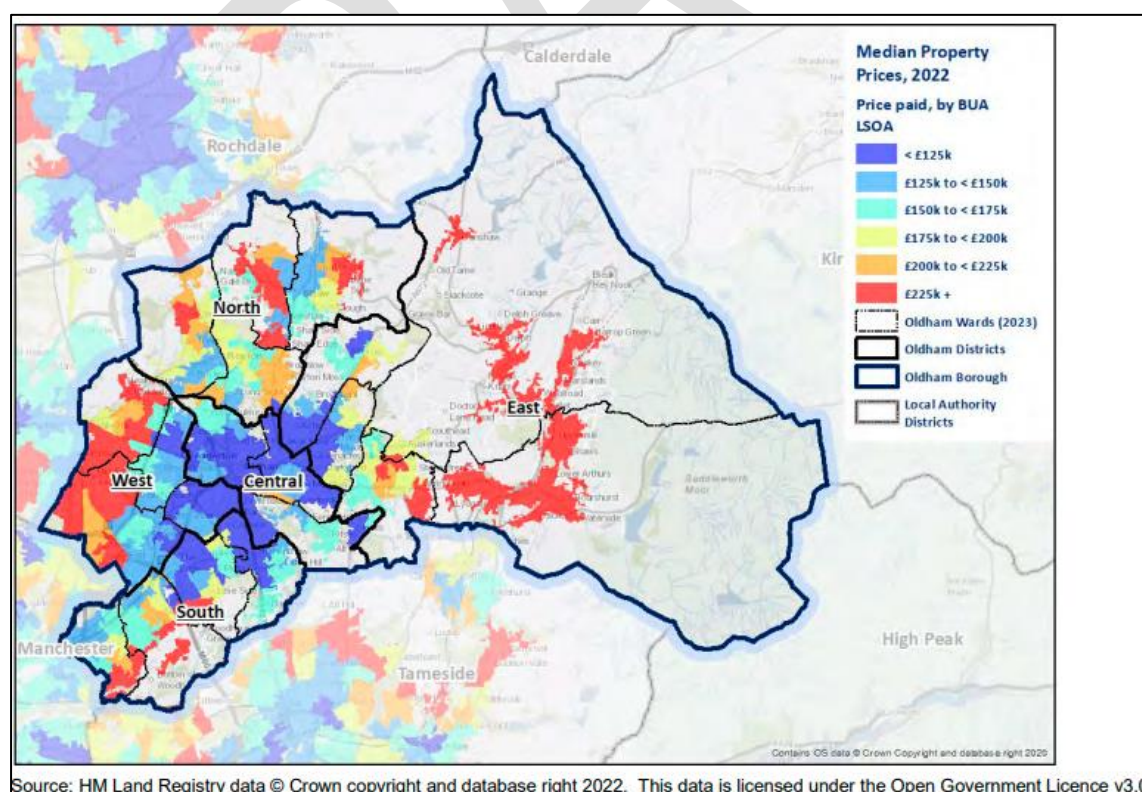
²⁸ The HMO Standards are available on request, for further information see:

<https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201198/information-for-landlords/258/houses-in-multiple-occupation-hmo>

²⁹ Nationally Described Space Standard: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard>

- 4.49. Across Oldham, the proportion of households privately renting increased considerably from 8.7% in 2001 to 18% in 2021 (ONS Census data). The districts of Central and South Oldham have higher than borough average levels of privately rented housing.
- 4.50. Between 2001 and 2021, there has been growth in the rental market for both 'active choice' renters and 'frustrated would-be' homeowners. Tenure reform and less accessible social rented housing are also likely to be an increasing factor to the growth in the private rented sector and the sector clearly now plays a vital role in meeting housing need and affordable need, as well as providing an alternative to homeownership.
- 4.51. Local authorities have an important enabling and regulatory role in ensuring that the private rented sector helps to meet housing need and encouraging good quality management.
- 4.52. In terms of house prices, the LHNA (2024) notes that house prices in Oldham are consistently lower than the North-West and England averages. However, the growth in house prices in Oldham over the past 22 years (318.6%) has been higher than that experienced across the North-West (+248.7%) and England as a whole (+217.1%)³⁰. In 2000 the median house price in Oldham was £43,000, in 2022 the median house price in Oldham was £180,000.

Figure 6: Median House Prices in Oldham³¹

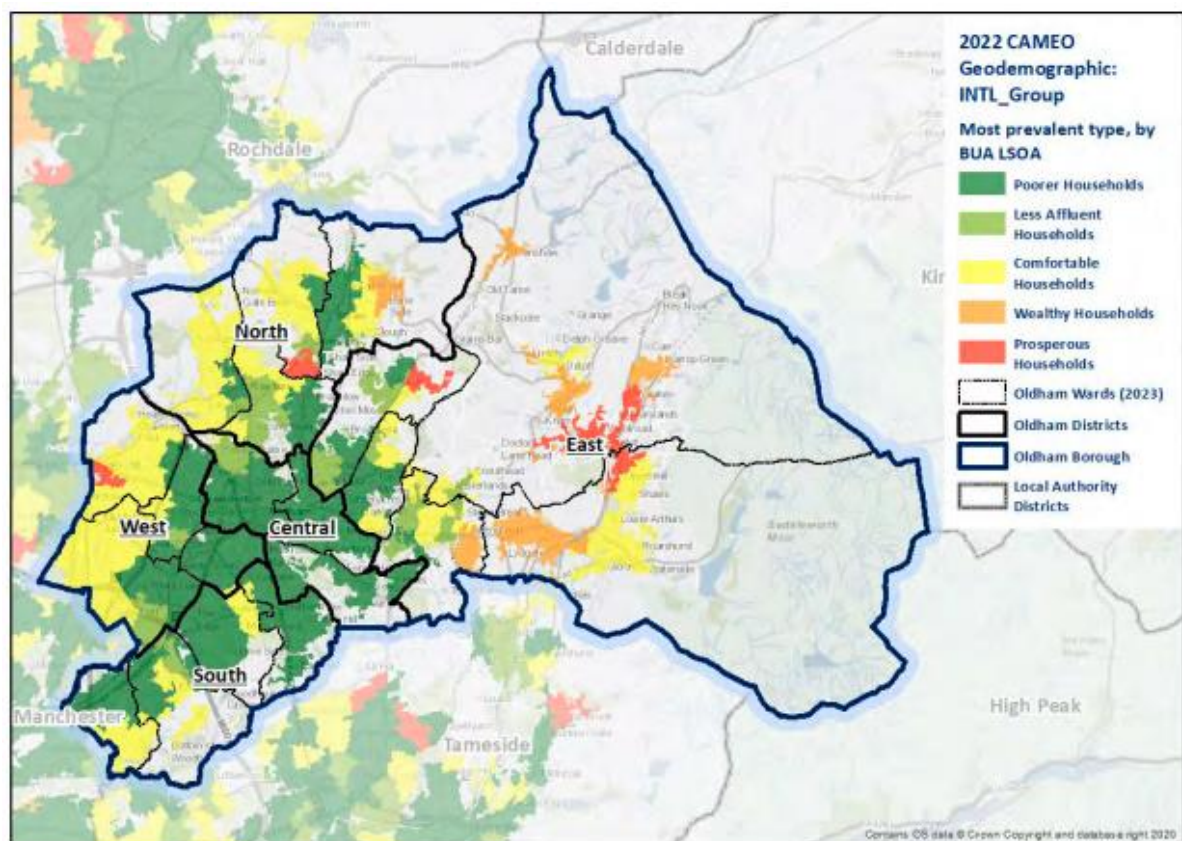


³⁰ Across the period of 2000-2022.

³¹ Median house prices by built up areas (BUA) within the LSOAs of Oldham borough. Extracted from Map 3.2 Oldham LHNA (2024).

- 4.53. As shown in figure 6 the areas with lower average property prices in Oldham are generally those within inner Oldham, mainly Central and South districts. The East and West districts tend to have higher house prices.
- 4.54. Rental prices of properties in Oldham have also increased – between 2010 and 2022 lower quartile rents have increased by 39.8% and median rents have increased by 53.4%.
- 4.55. Compared to other Greater Manchester areas, Oldham is relatively affordable. Oldham is the third most affordable local authority area compared with other areas of Greater Manchester and neighbouring districts to Oldham - the affordability ratio for Oldham is 5.69, compared to the Greater Manchester average of 6.74.
- 4.56. Despite this, the LHNA (2024) has found that there is a shortfall of affordable housing across the borough, which equates to a need for approximately 669 additional affordable homes each year over the next 10 years. Whilst PPG is clear that only a portion of this need will be met through the planning system, the LHNA reinforces the significance of affordable housing need in Oldham. Also, when this need is compared to the findings of the previous LHNA (2019), which identified a need for approximately 204 additional affordable homes each year, it is evident that the need for affordable housing is increasing.
- 4.57. Further demonstrating the need for affordable housing, the number of households in Temporary Accommodation in the borough is significantly higher than five years ago. Similarly, the number of households on the Social Housing Register is much higher than previous recent years.
- 4.58. There are disparities in the affordability of housing in parts of the borough, with some areas distinctly lacking adequate affordable housing provision to meet local needs.
- 4.59. Related to affordable housing need, income is also an issue in areas of Oldham. Oldham has traditionally had low wage levels in terms of both residents and workplace earning potential (as measured by median weekly wage levels). This is likely due to the industry mix within Oldham, and the relative skill levels of the local workforce.
- 4.60. Figure 7 below shows the levels of income within the borough. As shown, there is a distinct distribution of lower income households within inner Oldham – particularly within Central, West, and South districts. Higher income households are predominantly located within the fringes of the borough and within Saddleworth districts.

Figure 7: Household characteristics: Income Type by LSOA³²



Source: CAMEO UK

- 4.61. Looking at private renting, a rent is considered affordable if it costs no more than 25% of household income. Notable affordability pressures for private rented housing are identified in the South district, where the proportion of lower quartile income needed for lower quartile rents was generally above 55%. Private renting was also generally unaffordable for those in key worker occupations and those on minimum or living wage, with most having to spend more than 25% of income on rent. Single earners on minimum/living wage spend in excess of 40% of their income on lower quartile rents.
- 4.62. There are also identified deficiencies for smaller affordable accommodation in the form of 2 and 3 bed houses. However, this is indicative of a lack of choice in the market and respondents' expectations, as Oldham's local housing register indicates a need for larger family housing in certain areas of the borough also.
- 4.63. There are issues with attracting and retaining young professionals and families. In some parts of the borough there are not suitable affordable homes for people to live in the area in which they grew up, leading to an out-migration of these households to neighbouring boroughs. There is also a lack of smaller single person affordable housing and affordable housing for older people and disabled people. Suitable affordable housing is also needed for key workers.

³² Extracted from LHNA (2024) – Map 2.4 'Household characteristics: income type by LSOA', 2022 CAMEO. Map shows the most prevalent income type for each LSOA.

4.64. HMOs can provide an important source of affordable housing, especially for those on lower incomes and in need of affordable housing. The evidence set out above has shown a distinct need for affordable housing in this sector – and across all sectors. As affordability worsens, the level of people in need of affordable housing increases. This could lead to increasing numbers of households turning to HMOs as a housing option, and increased levels of HMOs as a result. As such it is important that this housing is appropriately located and of high-quality.

Comparing evidence

- 4.65. As is set out in figure 8 below some links can be identified between the spatial distribution of HMOs in the borough and levels of deprivation, overcrowding and income, as well as household types and house prices.
- 4.66. As shown in figure 2, the distribution of HMOs in the borough is spread across many areas, and higher proportions are present within and around inner Oldham and along the A62, especially within the Failsworth area.
- 4.67. Areas of high deprivation and overcrowding follow a similar pattern and are especially prevalent within and around inner Oldham. As such, it is important to ensure that HMOs are appropriately located and designed, with appropriate room sizes, and considering amenity, so as to not perpetuate issues of deprivation and overcrowding, especially within areas which are already experiencing these issues.
- 4.68. Perhaps more pronounced are the similarities in the distribution of HMOs and lower income households. Given that HMOs can be an important source of housing, particularly for lower income households, it is therefore expected that HMOs would operate within lower income areas (this is also where house prices tend to be lower (see figure 6)).
- 4.69. There are also similarities in the distribution of HMOs and the spread of single person and pre-family couple's household types, particularly within Failsworth. HMOs can be an important source of housing for younger and single person households. However, over concentrations within defined areas can be detrimental to local character and amenity. It is also important to ensure a mix of house types in areas, to promote housing choice and community cohesion. As such, HMOs should be appropriately located, considering the proliferation of uses within a defined area.

Figure 8: Data maps for comparison (combining figure 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7)

Figure 2: Heat map showing spatial distribution of HMOs in Oldham

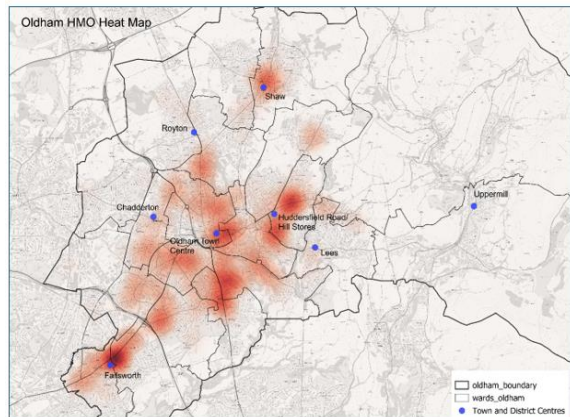


Figure 3: Areas of Deprivation in Oldham²⁰

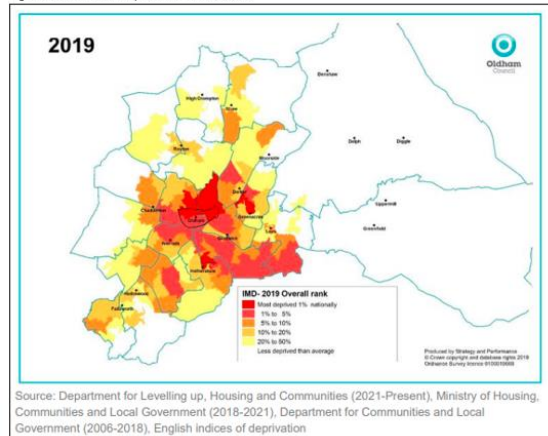


Figure 4: Household characteristics: Household Type by LSOA²¹

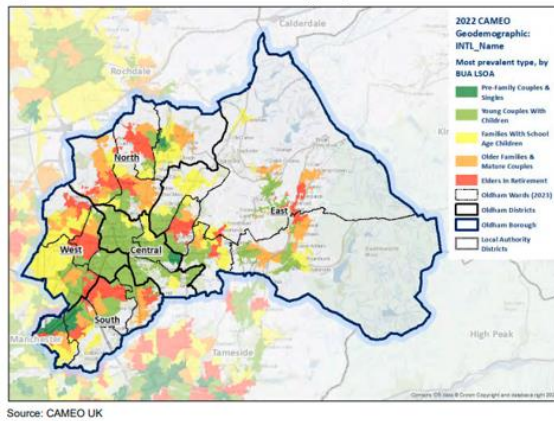


Figure 5: Overcrowded Households in Oldham (2021 Census)²²

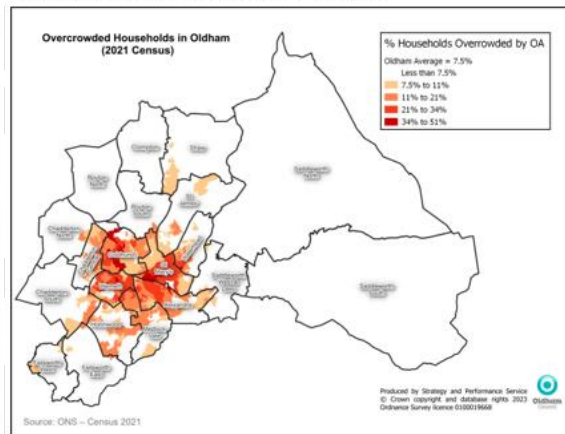


Figure 6: Median House Prices in Oldham³¹

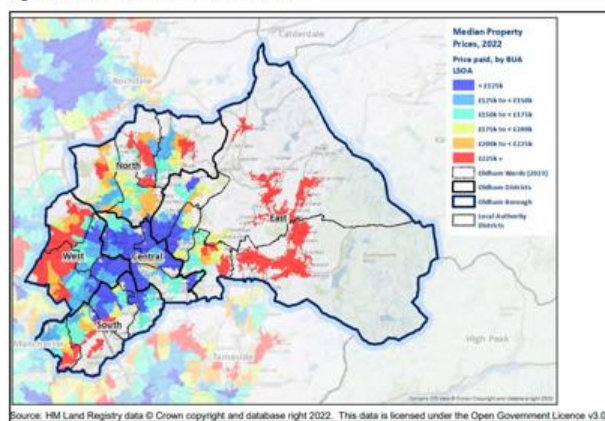
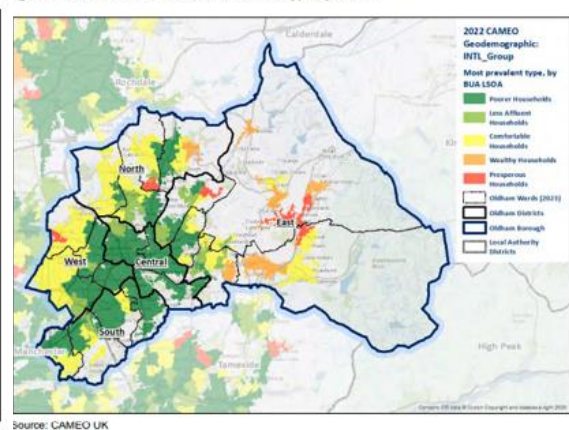


Figure 7: Household characteristics: Income Type by LSOA³²



Impact on local communities

4.70. Where applications come through the planning system for HMO development, they often receive negative representations from local residents and councillors. Of the existing HMOs in the borough which have planning permission, there are several issues raised as part of the application consultation, including:

- Inadequate car parking provision/ impact on existing provision;
- Increased traffic;
- Limited access/ impact on highway safety;
- Proliferation and concentration within a defined area;
- Loss of a family home;
- Amenity – including noise, disturbance, waste disposal/ storage, pests loss of privacy;
- Size of accommodation – inadequate facilities, outdoor space, overcrowding;
- Fire safety;
- Management of accommodation/ shared facilities;
- Impact on character of an area;
- Impact on a conservation area;
- Unsustainable development;
- Social concerns/ community cohesion issues;
- Anti-social behaviour and, crime;
- Impact on viability of neighbouring uses;
- Impact on value of existing homes;
- Strain on local services/ facilities; and
- Inappropriate location owing to neighbouring uses.

4.71. Complaints which have come through environmental health relating to HMOs often cite the following concerns³³:

- The HMO is unregistered/ unlicensed;
- The HMO does not have planning permission or approval for associated building works;
- There are not adequate bins provided for the number of occupiers;
- The state and condition of the property; and

³³ An analysis of complaints which mention HMOs over a 12-month period (2022-2023) has been undertaken. Future monitoring will continue in this area to monitor the impact of HMOs on local communities.

- Fire safety regulation.

4.72. A recent motion³⁴ to Oldham Council regarding HMOs also cites several concerns, including that HMOs provide ‘substandard and unsafe accommodation’. The motion goes on to state that the introduction of an Article 4 Direction will ensure transparency, giving communities the opportunity to have a say and raise their concerns, in line with the Council’s values as a resident focused council.

4.73. In some cases, it can be difficult to ascertain the actual level of negative impact of HMOs on communities, particularly in terms of amenity and local character, compared to other types of housing. However, the proliferation of any use, particularly those which introduce increased numbers of occupiers such as HMOs, should be carefully monitored and considered.

4.74. Furthermore, as it can be difficult to monitor the number of smaller HMOs, which do not currently come through planning or licensing systems, the true impact of HMOs on local communities may be hidden, particularly as there is no forum (like a planning application consultation) to express concern or raise issues.

5. Summary of Evidence

5.1. This paper has set out the background and evidence base for the introduction of an Article 4 Direction to remove the permitted development right for the change of use from dwelling houses (Use Class C3) to HMOs for up to six residents (Use Class C4).

5.2. As set out in the section above, there are approximately 384 HMOs identified in Oldham, as of July 2025. This represents 0.38% of the borough’s total dwelling stock and is considerably higher than the national average of 0.07%. The actual number of operating HMOs may well be higher, as the number of smaller HMOs, i.e. those for 3 and 4 people, are difficult to accurately monitor.

5.3. There has been a consistent increase in the number of HMOs in the borough over a five-year period with 306 HMOs identified in 2020 and 269 identified in 2023.

5.4. Analysis of the spatial distribution of HMOs (figure 2) shows that HMOs are spread across many areas of the borough. There are clusters located within and around inner Oldham, along key transport routes i.e. the A62 and Ashton Road, and within and around several district centres.

5.5. Oldham has several demographic and housing issues. Parts of Oldham, particularly within and around inner Oldham, have high levels of deprivation and lower levels of income. There are also issues of overcrowding within some areas of the borough. This is compounded by Oldham’s housing stock which is generally smaller than other boroughs (both within Greater Manchester and nationally) and is largely made up of terraced houses. There are also issues of disrepair and poor conditions within the borough’s housing stock.

³⁴ Oldham Council Motion (16 July 2025) – item 10, available to view at: [Oldham Council](#)

- 5.6. There has been an increase in the private-rented sector (HMOs are often privately rented), which evidence highlights is both due to private renting being an active choice for renters, but also a necessity for would-be homeowners who struggle to enter the property ownership market. Notably, private renting is becoming increasingly unaffordable for some households in the borough, including key workers and those on lower incomes.
- 5.7. Oldham has lower than average house prices, yet the need for affordable housing is increasing in the borough. There are particular disparities in the affordability of housing in parts of the borough to meet local housing needs. There is a need for affordable family housing, as well as affordable housing for single people and key workers.
- 5.8. There are several concerns raised by local communities and council members on the proliferation, location, quality and management of HMOs in the borough, and the impact they may be having on local character, communities and amenity.
- 5.9. Whilst HMOs are spread across many areas, there is evidence that clusters of HMOs are present in the borough, and many of the areas with high numbers of HMOs, also correlate with areas experiencing issues such as deprivation and overcrowding. The proliferation of any use, particularly those which introduce increased numbers of occupiers such as HMOs, should be carefully monitored and considered.
- 5.10. Given the evidence set out in this paper, is it considered that a borough-wide Article 4 Direction can be justified. The Article 4 Direction will require conversions of dwellings to small HMOs (C4 use) to first apply for planning permission for the change of use. Requiring the submission of a planning application for such proposals will not necessarily reduce the number of small HMOs being created, but it does allow for the proper consideration of the effects of a proposed HMO on an area's amenity and local community, before issuing any planning permission, and in doing so we are able to influence the quality of the HMO through the planning process.
- 5.11. It is considered that this increased control will help to reduce the housing issues being experienced within the borough yet will still ensuring that HMOs which are of a high quality and appropriate for users, are available to those who need them. Recognising that HMOs are a key source of housing for those on lower incomes, single family households, younger people and students and key workers.



Report to COUNCIL

Appointment of Independent Members on the Independent Remuneration Panel

Officer Contact: Executive Director of Resources

Report Author: Heather Moore, Assistant Director of Governance
Email: heather.moore@oldham.gov.uk

10 December 2025

Reason for Decision

Establishing a pool of five independent members to serve on the Independent Remuneration Panel will ensure sustainability and continuity to cover any future vacancies or absences, so that the Panel is responsive to any requests to meet.

Recommendation

1. To reappoint Geoffrey Millard to the Independent Remuneration Panel until May 2029.
2. To approve the proposal to establish a pool of five independent members to serve on the Independent Remuneration Panel.
3. That the Assistant Director of Governance be requested to proceed with the advertisement for two additional independent members to serve on the Independent Remuneration Panel.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has a duty to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), comprising a minimum of 3 members. The purpose of the IRP is to make recommendations to the levels of allowances and expenses for Councillors and co-opted independent members/person of the Council. Whilst the scheme and any changes are ultimately agreed by the Council, they can only be made having taken account of any recommendations from the IRP. The IRP therefore, provides a level of independence and objectiveness to this process. IRP members do not receive an allowance, they are however, reimbursed to cover any expenses incurred in carrying out their role.
- 1.2 There are currently three independent members on the IRP. On 10 July 2024, full council agreed to extend the term of office for Peter Claber and John Barlow to July 2028. Geoffrey Millard's term of office ended in September 2025, and it is proposed to extend this for a period of 4 years until May 2029.
- 1.3 To ensure sustainability and continuity, a recruitment exercise will need to be undertaken with a view to appointing up to two individuals and establish a pool of five members to cover any future vacancies or absences and ensure the Panel is responsive to any requests to meet. A report will be presented to Council when the recruitment process is complete.
- 1.4 The key responsibilities of the Panel as set out in the Regulations are to make recommendations as to the responsibilities or duties in respect of which the following allowances should be made available and the amount of allowance:
 - Basic Allowance.
 - Special Responsibility Allowances.
 - Member Travel and Subsistence allowances.
 - Dependent Carers Allowances.
 - Index linking arrangements for allowances.

2 Options/Alternatives

- 2.1 The Council is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 Any expenses incurred will be met from the Constitutional Services budget.

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council is required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel comprising a minimum of 3 individuals. The purpose of the Panel is to review the existing scheme of allowances, including the special responsibility allowances, paid to members and to make recommendations to the Council on the appropriate level of payments to be made in the future.
- 4.2 It is a matter for each local authority to agree its own process for recruiting and appointing Members to the IRP. New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority

Allowances recommends that any appointment process should have a level of independence with successful candidates avoiding close associations with Members or being seen as political appointments.

- 4.3 The Regulations require that an IRP shall consist of at least three members none of whom—
(a) is also a member of an authority in respect of which it makes recommendations or is a member of a committee or sub-committee of such an authority; or (b) is disqualified from being or becoming a member of an authority. 18. The proposals detailed in this report meet the requirements of the Regulations.

5 **Oldham Equality Impact Assessment, including implications for Children and Young People**

- 5.1 None

6 **Key Decision**

- 6.1 No

7 **Key Decision Reference**

- 7.1 N/A

8 **Background Papers**

- 8.1 None

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Report to Council

Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2024/25

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Abdul Jabbar MBE, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services and Sustainability

Officer Contact: Fiona Greenway, Interim Executive Director of Corporate Resources

Report Author: Fiona Greenway, Interim Executive Director of Corporate Resources

10th December 2025

Reason for Decision

CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2022, states that:

To discharge its responsibilities effectively, the committee should:

- ***report annually on how the committee has complied with the position statement, discharged its responsibilities, and include an assessment of its performance. The report should be available to the public.***

The Council's Audit Committee is a key component of this Authority's governance framework. Its function is to provide an independent review and assurance role to support good governance and sound public financial management. This report has been prepared for full Council to advise of the work undertaken by the Committee in the financial year 2024/25 and for Council to note the views of the Committee on internal control.

Executive Summary

To discharge its role, the Audit Committee met on eight separate occasions during the municipal year 2024/25 undertaking the work detailed in this report. Two of these meetings were to receive training on their role and responsibilities as Members of the Audit Committee, and one was to undertake a private meeting with the Council's External Auditors, Forvis Mazars.

The Committee's annual work programme is built around its responsibilities for corporate governance, internal audit, external audit, risk management, anti-fraud and corruption, Treasury Management, and the review of the annual Statement of Accounts. This report summarises the work undertaken by key programme area for the financial year 2024/25.

This report is to inform Members of the work of the Audit Committee in the previous financial year and to report on the Committee's assessment of its own effectiveness against the CIPFA Position Statement and associated guidance.

At the Committee's meeting of 23rd July 2025, Members discussed the Committee's draft Annual Self-Assessment and Report to full Council for the year 2024/25.

At that meeting Members requested certain additions to the report, in summary:

- The report should make reference to the ongoing recruitment to the second Independent Member vacancy on the Committee.
- Members' concern at not receiving an update on progress against the latest Payroll audit report recommendations as a separate agenda item.
- Members' wish to be kept informed of the Council's reserves position.
- Members' desire for closer working arrangements with the Council's Scrutiny Committees.
- Members' attendance figures to be moved from appendices to the body of the report.
- That the report should reflect the discussions held at the Committee's meeting of 23rd July 2025.

Please see attached the revised report for consideration.

Recommendation

That Council accepts the Annual Report of the Audit Committee.

Annual Report of the Audit Committee to Council

1 Background

- 1.1 The Council's Audit Committee is a key component of this Authority's governance framework. Its function is to provide an independent review and assurance role to support good governance and sound public financial management.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Committee is to provide, to those charged with governance, independent assurance on the adequacy of the internal control environment / governance processes, integrity of financial reporting and adequacy of the risk and information management framework.
- 1.3 To discharge its role, the Audit Committee met on eight separate occasions, five of which were formal meetings of the committee, during the municipal year 2024/25 undertaking the work detailed in this report. Member attendance details are shown in the table below.

Member	Present	Apologies	Absent	Total attendance
Grenville Page	5			100%
Cllr Al-Hamdani	5			100%
Cllr Arnott	3		2	60%
Cllr Aslam	4	1		80%
Cllr Chowhan	1	2	2	20%
Cllr Davis	4	1		80%
Cllr Hince*		1		-
Cllr S Hussain	3	2		60%
Cllr Rustidge	5			100%
Cllr Sykes*	2	2		50%
Cllr Wilkinson	5			100%

*For the first meeting of the year, Cllr Hince was a member of the Committee but, due to changes to the political balance of the Council, Cllr Hince was subsequently replaced by Cllr Sykes.

- 1.4 The Committee has been unsuccessful on a number of occasions over the last two years in recruiting a second, suitably qualified and experienced, independent member to broaden the skills and knowledge available to assist Members in discharging their role and responsibilities. Members have raised concerns in this area and a recruitment exercise is ongoing to address this at the earliest opportunity.

2 Work of the Committee during 2024/25 in accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference

- 2.1 The Committee's work programme was built around its responsibilities for corporate governance, internal audit, external audit, risk management, fraud and corruption, Treasury Management, Information Governance, and the review of the annual Statement of Accounts.
- 2.2 The paragraphs below outline the work undertaken in each of the key areas of responsibility.

Statement of Accounts

- 2.3 The Council published its draft Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2023/24 for submission to the External Auditor on 7 June 2024. The accounts were considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 27 June 2024. Whilst not a statutory requirement for the Audit Committee to review the draft Statement of Accounts, it is considered good practice that appropriate scrutiny occurs at this stage. It provides Members with the opportunity to ask detailed questions and seek assurances before the accounts are finalised.
- 2.4 Many local Authorities across the UK are experiencing significant delay in the completion of both their annual financial statements and the associated audit work in connection with those statements. Whilst Oldham submitted its 2023/24 annual financial statements to its external auditor one week beyond the deadline, the Council remains in a significantly better position than many others.
- 2.5 At the meeting of 23 July 2025 Members noted the Council's use of reserves to support revenue expenditure over a number of preceding financial years. Members expressed a wish to be kept informed of the Council's financial position in relation to the use of reserves going forward by way of updates in this area through the financial year 2025/26.

Audit Completion Report

- 2.6 At its meeting on 26 February 2025 the Audit Committee considered the Auditor's Annual Report produced by the External Auditor to the Council (Forvis Mazars LLP) which set out the draft findings of the audit of the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts. Overall, the findings of the External Auditor continued to be positive with an unqualified audit opinion, including the value for money judgement, as in previous financial years, reflecting the good practice adopted by Oldham in preparing its accounts.

Annual Governance Statement and Local Code of Corporate Governance

- 2.7 The main purpose of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is to provide the necessary assurance that a reliable framework is in place for the financial year that aligns to the Statement of Accounts. The Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 was presented as part of the draft Statement of Accounts at the meeting on 27 June 2024. An update on progress against AGS actions was submitted to the Committee in November 2024. The Annual Governance Statement complies with the framework set out in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (CIPFA/SOLACE) guidance.
- 2.8 The Committee also reviewed the Local Code of Corporate Governance at its meeting on 27 June 2024. It is considered good practice to review the Code as a minimum every two years.

Partnership Governance

- 2.9 An emerging challenge for all Councils to consider is whether they have appropriate oversight, from a governance perspective, over the partnerships in which they have a financial and operational interest. There have been several matters reported in the public domain which has highlighted that in other public bodies those charged with the provision of this oversight have not fully understood the risk. The Audit Committee therefore considered reports, as part of the Annual Governance Statement and update on 27 June 2024 and 28 November 2024 on the wider risks from entities in which the Council has an interest.

At the Committee's meeting of 23 July 2025, Members also expressed a wish for closer working arrangements with the Council's Scrutiny Committee's in order to strengthen the assurance provided by all of these Committees.

Internal Audit and Annual Report of the Chief Internal Auditor

- 2.10 The Internal Audit service was provided in-house during 2024/25 with specialist support from Salford City Council for computer audit. The Committee received regular quarterly updates on Internal Audit and Counter Fraud progress, and an update to the Audit Charter at its meeting on 27 March 2025. At its meeting on 27 June 2024, it reviewed the system of internal audit for the financial year 2023/24 in line with good practice. In accordance with expected professional standards, which requires a review of the Internal Audit Service every five years, CIPFA were commissioned to undertake an External Quality Assurance review which was completed in 2023. This reviewed whether Internal Audit Practices adopted by the Service in Oldham conformed with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standard. The outcome, which was reported in the municipal year 2023/24 was that the Service "Generally Conforms to the Standard". As such the work undertaken by internal audit is in line with best practice as "Generally Conforms to the Standard" is the highest rating. A self-assessment of conformance for the year 2024/25 by the Head of Audit and Counter fraud confirmed that the Service remained in conformance with the required standards in that year.
- 2.11 At the meeting which considered the draft Statement of Accounts on 27 June 2024, the Audit Committee considered the Annual Report of the Head of Audit for 2023/24. This highlighted that the overall control environment was adequate during 2023/24. The report did however highlight the challenges associated with the internal control environment in Social Care and Payroll.
- 2.12 At the meeting which considered the draft Statement of Accounts on 23 July 2025, the Audit Committee considered the Annual Report of the Head of Audit for 2024/25. The Head of Audit's Annual Opinion for 2024/25 is that the systems of governance and internal control during that year provided Limited assurance that they were effective in aiding the Council in achieving its objectives and goals. The Committee expressed concern at the Limited assurance opinion and, looking forward into 2025/26, the Audit Committee will receive progress updates on improvement actions to address audit recommendations in the areas contributing to this Limited assurance opinion.
- 2.13 At the meeting of 23 July 2025 Members expressed concern that the update report on progress against agreed actions from the latest Internal Audit Report on Payroll was not presented as a separate agenda item.

Treasury Management

- 2.14 Recent corporate failings of other local authorities reported in the public domain have identified the importance of appropriate independent scrutiny of Treasury Management which is therefore a key task of the Audit Committee. In line with recently updated best practice the Audit Committee now receives quarterly, as opposed to half yearly, reports on Treasury Management. The Quarter 3 treasury management report was, however, submitted late to the committee alongside the Treasury Management Annual report in July 2025.

Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) / Information Governance

- 2.15 Another key role in the Governance Framework is the SIRO who considers the Council's risks in relation to information governance and when information is disclosed, often inadvertently, to an individual who has no right to access that data. During 2024/25 this role

was undertaken by the Director of Finance who submitted half yearly reports to the Audit Committee detailing breaches.

Risk Management

- 2.16 The Audit Committee reviewed the Council's risk management arrangements during the year. Effective risk management can have a major impact on the successful achievement of the objectives, policies, and strategies of the Authority. In particular, the Audit Committee concentrated on reviewing the Corporate Risk Register.

3 Audit Committee self-assessment and review of its own effectiveness.

- 3.1 CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2022, contains two self-assessment questionnaires for the Committee to complete each year to assist the Committee in conducting a self-assessment of the Committee's own effectiveness.
- 3.2 The completed questionnaires are reproduced as Annexes 1 and 2 to this report. The outcome of the self-assessment is positive, with the Committee able to demonstrate high levels of adherence to best practice (Annex 1) and high levels of effectiveness (Annex 2). Areas where potential improvements have been identified are detailed and associated actions to implement improvements are noted in the annexes.
- 3.3 A summary of the actions identified during the 2024/25 review for the Committee to take forward during 2025/26, and progress against these actions, is shown in the table below:

Audit Committee Effectiveness Review 2024/25 and Action Plan for 2025/26.

No.	Actions from 2023/24 Review	Progress at 2024/25 Review and areas to take forward into 2025/26
1	Explore opportunities to liaise across Greater Manchester with other Local Authority Audit Committee Chairs to share knowledge and experience as required.	<u>Ongoing</u> Audit Committee Chair is liaising with both the CFO of GMCA and Forvis Mazars to explore options and opportunities in this area. The Chair has also received an invitation to join the LGA North-West Chair's Forum.
2	Review protocol for inviting Officers to appear at Audit Committee.	<u>Complete</u> Going forward all Limited or Weak Audit Opinion Reports will be brought to the Committee and Service representatives invited to attend to answer Member questions.
3	Committee to receive reports for information on results from other assurance providers, e.g. Ofsted, CQC etc.	<u>Ongoing</u> The Council is awaiting outcomes of its latest CQC review and the results will be distributed to members when available.
4	Committee to meet privately with both Internal and External Auditors during 2024/25.	<u>Complete</u> Meeting took place on 10 th March 2025. Members expressed the opinion that they considered the opportunity to meet with the External Auditor privately was beneficial.

5	Review plain English induction sheet for new Members outlining the role and functions of the Committee based on the Committee's Terms of Reference.	<u>Complete</u> Summary Induction distributed to Members on 3 rd June 2024. Comprehensive CIPFA Guidance materials distributed to members 14 th June 2024.
6	A self-assessment of Member skills and knowledge based on the Committee's Terms of Reference to be circulated and completed and utilised to identify additional Member training and development needs.	<u>Complete/Ongoing</u> Comprehensive CIPFA Guidance materials distributed to members 14 th June 2024. Members also received comprehensive training from CIPFA on their roles and responsibilities in June 2024. Self-assessment questionnaire issued to members for completion and inclusion in 2024/25 effectiveness review and to be utilised as a basis for further training. All documents re-issued to new and existing Members 25 th June 2025. Self-assessment questionnaire issued to existing Members 9 th May 2025, and to new Members 25 th June 2025. Responses received indicate that members feel they have either a good or adequate knowledge in most areas pertinent to their role. The Council continues to seek to recruit a second independent member to support the committee in undertaking its role.
7	Update the Committee's Terms of Reference to make explicit, rather than implicit, reference to the Committee's role in reviewing the Council's ethical framework as part of its review work in connection with the Council's wider governance arrangements.	<u>Ongoing</u> Head of Audit and Counter Fraud liaising with the recently appointed Assistant Director (Governance) on updating the Committee's Terms of Reference in line with CIPFA's Model Terms of Reference.
8	Seek feedback from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder and Council following presentation of the Committee's annual report to full Council.	<u>Complete</u> Meeting between the Audit Committee Chair, the Executive Member for Value for Money and Sustainability, the Director of Finance and Head of Audit and Counter Fraud took place on 10 th July 2024 to discuss the outcome of the Committee's self-assessment of its own effectiveness for 2023/24. Good feedback on the work of the Committee was received. Next meeting to be arranged following Audit Committee approval of 2024/25 effectiveness review.

- 3.4 Ongoing actions will be taken forward during 2025/26 and their implementation reviewed as part of the Committee's subsequent annual review process. The Committee also continues to seek to appoint a second suitably qualified and experienced second independent member to support the work of the Committee.

4 Options

- 4.1 There are two options as follows:
- a) Accept the Annual Report of the Audit Committee.
 - b) Reject the Annual Report of the Audit Committee and request an alternative style of report.

Preferred Option

Option (a) at 4.1 is the preferred option, that the proposed Annual Report of the Audit Committee is accepted by Council.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 There has been consultation with the Audit Committee on the preparation of this report.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

7 Legal Services Comments

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

8 Co-operative Agenda

- 8.1 The Annual Report of the Audit Committee has been prepared to support the Council in its delivery of the cooperative agenda.

9 Human Resources Comments

- 9.1 There are no specific human resources implications.

10 Risk Assessments

- 10.1 The Council is required to prepare an Annual Report on the operation of its Audit Committee. The report does not identify any specific risks to identify to full Council.

11 IT Implications

- 11.1 There are no specific IT implications.

12 Property Implications

- 12.1 There are no specific property implications.

13 Procurement Implications

- 13.1 There are no specific procurement implications.

14 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

14.1 There are no specific Environmental and Health & Safety Implications.

15 Equality, community cohesion and crime implications

15.1 There is no specific equality, community cohesion and crime implications.

16 Equality Impact Assessment Completed?

16.1 N/A.

17 Key Decision

17.1 No.

18 Key Decision Reference

18.1 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:

Background papers are shown as the Annexes to this report.

Officer Name: Fiona Greenway

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20 Appendices

Annex 1 - Self-assessment of good practice

Annex 2 - Self -assessment of effectiveness

Annex 3 - Member Knowledge and Skills questionnaire – aggregated results

Annex 1 - Self-assessment of good practice

This annex provides a high-level review that incorporates the key principles set out in CIPFA's Position Statement and this publication. Where an audit committee has a high degree of performance against the good practice principles, it is an indicator that the committee is soundly based and has in place a knowledgeable membership. These are the essential factors in developing an effective audit committee. A regular self-assessment should be used to support the planning of the audit committee work programme and training plans. It will also inform the annual report.

Good practice questions	Does not comply	Partially complies and extent of improvement needed			Fully complies
Scale of improvement required	Major	Significant	Moderate	Minor	None
Scoring of answers	0	1	2	3	5
Audit committee purpose and governance					
1 Does the authority have a dedicated audit committee that is not combined with other functions (e.g. standards, ethics, scrutiny)?					5
2 Does the audit committee report directly to the governing body (PCC and chief constable/full council/full fire authority, etc)?					5
3 Has the committee maintained its advisory role by not taking on any decision-making powers?					5
4 Do the terms of reference clearly set out the purpose of the committee in accordance with CIPFA's 2022 Position Statement?					5
5 Do all those charged with governance and in leadership roles have a good understanding of the role and purpose of the committee?					5

6 Does the audit committee escalate issues and concerns promptly to those in governance and leadership roles?					5
7 Does the governing body hold the audit committee to account for its performance at least annually?					5
8 Does the committee publish an annual report in accordance with the 2022 guidance, including:					5
• compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement 2022.					5
• results of the annual evaluation, development work undertaken and planned improvements					5
• how it has fulfilled its terms of reference and the key issues escalated in the year?					5
Functions of the committee					
9 Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement as follows?					
Governance arrangements					5
Risk management arrangements					5
Internal control arrangements, including: • financial management • value for money • ethics and standards • counter fraud and corruption				3	
Annual governance statement					5
Financial reporting					5
Assurance framework					5
Internal audit					5
External audit					5
10 Over the last year, has adequate consideration been given to all core areas?					5
11 Over the last year, has the committee only considered agenda items that align with its core functions or selected wider functions, as set out in the 2022 guidance?					5

12 Has the committee met privately with the external auditors and head of internal audit in the last year?					5
Membership and support					
13 Has the committee been established in accordance with the 2022 guidance as follows?					
• Separation from executive					5
• A size that is not unwieldy and avoids use of substitutes					5
• Inclusion of lay/co-opted independent members in accordance with legislation or CIPFA's recommendation					5
14 Have all committee members been appointed or selected to ensure a committee membership that is knowledgeable and skilled?			2		
15 Has an evaluation of knowledge, skills and the training needs of the chair and committee members been carried out within the last two years?					5
16 Have regular training and support arrangements been put in place covering the areas set out in the 2022 guidance?					5
17 Across the committee membership, is there a satisfactory level of knowledge, as set out in the 2022 guidance?					5
18 Is adequate secretariat and administrative support provided to the committee?					5
19 Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the CFO?					5
Effectiveness of the committee					

20 Has the committee obtained positive feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?					5
21 Are meetings well chaired, ensuring key agenda items are addressed with a focus on improvement?					5
22 Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members?				3	
23 Has the committee maintained a non-political approach to discussions throughout?					5
24 Does the committee engage with a wide range of leaders and managers, including discussion of audit findings, risks and action plans with the responsible officers?					5
25 Does the committee make recommendations for the improvement of governance, risk and control arrangements?					5
26 Do audit committee recommendations have traction with those in leadership roles?					5
27 Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?					5
28 Does the committee have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness?					5
29 Has this assessment been undertaken collaboratively with the audit committee members?					5
Sub totals	0	0	2	6	185

Total score is 193 out of a maximum of 200, with areas of potential development identified. The proposed actions to address these areas where less than full compliance were identified from the 2023/24 assessment. Actions taken to date, and those potential development areas remaining in 2024/25, are shown in the table below:

Question	Level of Compliance	Action to reach full compliance
<p>9 Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement as follows?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethics and standards 	3	<p>Action ongoing – Update the Committee's Terms of Reference to make explicit, rather than implicit, reference to the Committee's role in reviewing the Council's ethical framework as part of its review work in connection with the Council's wider governance arrangements.</p>
<p>14 Have all committee members been appointed or selected to ensure a committee membership that is knowledgeable and skilled?</p>	2	<p>Committee Membership is not based solely on skills and knowledge, political balance of the Committee is a consideration.</p> <p>Action completed – A short, plain English induction sheet outlining the role and functions of the Committee based on the Committee's Terms of Reference has been completed and distributed to Members.</p> <p>Action ongoing – see Members Skills and Knowledge Assessment and Training responses below.</p> <p>Action Ongoing – The Council continues to seek to recruit a second independent member to support the committee in undertaking its role.</p>
<p>15 Has an evaluation of knowledge, skills and the training needs of the chair and committee members been carried out within the last two years?</p>	5	<p>Action completed – A self-assessment of Member skills and knowledge based on the Committee's Terms of Reference has been circulated and completed</p>
<p>17 Across the committee membership, is there a satisfactory level of knowledge, as set out in the 2022 guidance?</p>	5	<p>Action ongoing - The self-assessment of Member skills and knowledge based on the Committee's Terms of Reference found Members responded positively and reported either adequate or good knowledge in most areas. Feedback will be utilised to identify further additional Member training and development needs.</p>

		Action Ongoing – The Council continues to seek to recruit a second independent member to support the committee in undertaking its role.
20 Has the committee obtained positive feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?	5	Action completed – Committee Chair met with Cabinet Portfolio Holder following 2023/24 assessment and feedback from Portfolio Holder was positive. Further meeting to be arranged following Member approval of the 2024/25 assessment.
22 Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members?	3	No proposed action – Member comments and questions on all aspects of Committee business are actively sought and welcomed at each meeting and levels of engagement have been good throughout 2024/25. Inevitably some Members contribute more frequently than others.

Annex 2 – Self-evaluation of effectiveness

Areas where the audit committee can have impact by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can demonstrate its impact	Self-evaluation by Oldham Council's Audit Committee as to how the Committee demonstrates its impact	Key indicators of effective arrangements	Self-evaluation by Oldham Council Audit Committee of its strengths, weaknesses and proposed actions
Promoting the principles of good governance and their application to decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the development of a local code of governance. Providing a robust review of the AGS and the assurances underpinning it. Supporting reviews/audits of governance arrangements. Participating in self-assessments of governance arrangements. Working with partner audit committees to review governance arrangements in partnerships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has a local code of corporate governance presented to the audit committee in June 2024. The AGS and in-year updates (November 2024) are regularly reported to the audit committee. Annual audit plan 2024/25 contained reviews of risk management and standards of conduct, and the corporate risk register. review of the compilation of the AGS is also planned for 2025/26. The council's ongoing self-assessment of its partnership governance arrangements has previously been reported to the committee. Miocare financial systems are audited each year and a review of OTC is planned for 2025/26. An annual fundamental financial systems review of Miocare is undertaken by the internal audit service and reported to Miocare. An internal audit review of Oldham Total Care is planned for 2025/26. Audit committee chair has liaised with the council's external auditors in connection with meeting other chairs across GM. Chair has also 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected members, the leadership team and senior managers all share a good understanding of governance, including the key principles and local arrangements. Local arrangements for governance have been clearly set out in an up-to-date local code. The authority's scrutiny arrangements are forward looking and constructive. Appropriate governance arrangements established for all collaborations and arm's-length arrangements. The head of internal audit's annual opinion on governance is satisfactory (or similar wording). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures are generally sound. One weakness with audit committees generally is the length of tenure linked to electoral cycle. The council has a local code of corporate governance last presented in June 2024. The council's scrutiny committees have been restructured. Partnership governance issues were reported to the committee as part of the AGS update report in November 2024. Annual CAE opinion reported in July 2025 is Limited assurance. Committee to monitor progress against agreed actions throughout 2025/26.

Areas where the audit committee can have impact by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can demonstrate its impact	Self-evaluation by Oldham Council's Audit Committee as to how the Committee demonstrates its impact	Key indicators of effective arrangements	Self-evaluation by Oldham Council Audit Committee of its strengths, weaknesses and proposed actions
		received an invitation to join the LGA NW Forum.		
Contributing to the development of an effective control environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging ownership of the internal control framework by appropriate managers. • Actively monitoring the implementation of recommendations from auditors. • Raising significant concerns over controls with appropriate senior managers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2024/25 ASC and HR representatives have addressed the Audit Committee during the year in relation to audit review findings. • Recommendation tracker is reported the regular Internal Audit and Counter fraud progress report. • Moving forward into 2025/26 the Committee will receive reports in connection with all audit opinions of Limited assurance or below. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The head of internal audit's annual opinion over internal control is that arrangements are satisfactory. • Assessments against control frameworks such as CIPFA's FM Code have been completed and a high level of compliance identified. • Control frameworks are in place and operating effectively for key control areas – for example, information security or procurement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual CAE opinion of Internal Control published in July 2025 is Limited assurance. • Assessment against FM code completed by CFO and presented to Audit Committee January 2022 and September 2023. A high level of compliance was identified. • Control frameworks are in for key control areas. Where these are not currently in place the Council is working towards addressing these areas. • Moving forward into 2025/26 the Committee will receive reports in connection with all audit opinions of Limited assurance or below. • Committee to monitor progress against agreed actions throughout 2025/26.
Supporting the establishment of arrangements for the governance of risk and for effective arrangements to manage risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing risk management arrangements and their effectiveness, e.g. risk management maturity or benchmarking. • Monitoring improvements to risk management. • Reviewing accountability of risk owners for major/strategic risks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Corporate Business Planning Process supports the production of the Corporate Risk Register. The Corporate Risk Register is reported regularly to the Audit Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A robust process for managing risk is evidenced by independent assurance from internal audit or external review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IA Review of Corporate Risk register undertaken during 2024/25 received an Adequate assurance opinion.

Areas where the audit committee can have impact by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can demonstrate its impact	Self-evaluation by Oldham Council's Audit Committee as to how the Committee demonstrates its impact	Key indicators of effective arrangements	Self-evaluation by Oldham Council Audit Committee of its strengths, weaknesses and proposed actions
<p>Advising on the adequacy of the assurance framework and considering whether assurance is deployed efficiently and effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the adequacy of the leadership team's assurance framework. • Specifying the committee's assurance needs, identifying gaps or overlaps in assurance. • Seeking to streamline assurance gathering and reporting. • Reviewing the effectiveness of assurance providers, e.g. internal audit, risk management, external audit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the 2024/25 The Audit Committee has received reports on the following elements of the Council's assurance framework: the AGS, the Local Code of Corporate Governance, The Annual Report and Opinion, and regular reports on Partnership Governance and Risks. • The Committee has identified its own assurance needs and gaps in assurance and requested reports on all audit reports with a Limited opinion or below. • The Committee receives regular reports from both internal and external audit on progress throughout the year. It also receives the annual report and opinion from the CAE and the external Auditors audit completion report. • FRC Audit Quality and Inspection Report 2022/23 for Mazars LLP found an improvement in the quality rating from the previous year with no audits reviewed requiring significant improvement. • The Committee receives an annual review of the system of Internal Audit. In March 2023 an External Quality Assessment was conducted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authority's leadership team have defined an appropriate framework of assurance, including core arrangements, major service areas and collaborations and external bodies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the 2024/25 The Audit Committee has received reports on the following elements of the Council's assurance framework: the AGS, the Local Code of Corporate Governance, The Annual Report and Opinion, and regular reports on Corporate Risks. • Going forward into 2025/26 the Committee will receive reports on results from other assurance providers, including the upcoming CQC inspection of Adult Social Care.

Areas where the audit committee can have impact by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can demonstrate its impact	Self-evaluation by Oldham Council's Audit Committee as to how the Committee demonstrates its impact	Key indicators of effective arrangements	Self-evaluation by Oldham Council Audit Committee of its strengths, weaknesses and proposed actions
Supporting effective external audit, with a focus on high quality and timely audit work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing and supporting external audit arrangements with focus on independence and quality. • Providing good engagement on external audit plans and reports. • Supporting the implementation of audit recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation by Oldham Council's Audit Committee as to how the Committee demonstrates its impact by CIPFA and the results reported to the Committee. • FRC Audit Quality and Inspection Report 2022/23 for Mazars LLP found an improvement in the quality rating from the previous year with no audits reviewed requiring significant improvement. • Liaison is good, The Committee met privately with the External Auditor during 2024/25. • External Auditor attends all Audit Committee meetings and provides a regular update and opinion reports to the Committee on their work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of liaison between external audit and the authority is satisfactory. • The auditors deliver in accordance with their audit plan, and any amendments are well explained. • An audit of high quality is delivered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison is good, The Committee met privately with the External Auditor during 2024/25. • The External Auditor delivered in line with the external audit backstop arrangements in place for Local Audit as at the end of February 2025. • FRC Audit Quality and Inspection Report 2022/23 for Mazars LLP found an improvement in the quality rating from the previous year with no audits reviewed requiring significant improvement.
Supporting the quality of the internal audit activity, in particular underpinning its organisational independence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the audit charter and functional reporting arrangements. • Assessing the effectiveness of internal audit arrangements, providing constructive challenge and supporting improvements. • Actively supporting the quality assurance and improvement programme of internal audit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Audit Committee reviews the Audit Charter, including reporting arrangements, annually. • The Committee receives an annual review of the system of Internal Audit. In 2023 an External Quality Assessment was conducted by CIPFA which found the service to conform to the PSIAS standards in all areas, including independence and objectivity. Since then the PSIAS and LGAN have been replaced by the GIAS 2024 and LGAN 2024. HIA self-assessment indicates that the service remains in full conformance with the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal audit that is in conformance with PSIAS and LGAN (as evidenced by the most recent external assessment and an annual self-assessment). • The head of internal audit and the organisation operate in accordance with the principles of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2019). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee receives an annual review of the system of Internal Audit. In 2023 an External Quality Assessment was conducted by CIPFA which found the service to conform to the PSIAS standards in all areas, including independence and objectivity. Since then the PSIAS and LGAN have been replaced by the GIAS 2024 and LGAN 2024. HIA self-assessment indicates that the service remains in full conformance with the updated standards. • The organisation and HIA operate in accordance with the CIPFA statement.

Areas where the audit committee can have impact by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can demonstrate its impact	Self-evaluation by Oldham Council's Audit Committee as to how the Committee demonstrates its impact	Key indicators of effective arrangements	Self-evaluation by Oldham Council Audit Committee of its strengths, weaknesses and proposed actions
Aiding the achievement of the authority's goals and objectives by helping to ensure appropriate governance, risk, control and assurance arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing how the governance arrangements support the achievement of sustainable outcomes. • Reviewing major projects and programmes to ensure that governance and assurance arrangements are in place. • Reviewing the effectiveness of performance management arrangements. 	<p>updated standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2024/25 the Audit Committee has received reports on the following elements of the Council's assurance framework: the AGS, the Local Code of Corporate Governance, The Annual Report and Opinion, and regular reports on Partnership Governance and Risks. • IA Review of Corporate Risk register reported during 2024/25 with opinion of Adequate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection reports indicate that arrangements are appropriate to support the achievement of service objectives. • The authority's arrangements to review and assess performance are satisfactory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the 2024/25 The Audit Committee has received reports on the following elements of the Council's assurance framework: the AGS, the Local Code of Corporate Governance, The Annual Report and Opinion, and regular reports on Corporate Risks. • IA Review of Corporate Risk register reported during 2024/25 with opinion of Adequate. • IA Review of Corporate Performance Reporting reported in 2025/26 with a Limited assurance opinion. • Committee to monitor progress against agreed actions throughout 2025/26.
Supporting the development of robust arrangements for ensuring value for money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that assurance on value-for-money arrangements is included in the assurances received by the audit committee. • Considering how performance in value for money is evaluated as part of the AGS. • Following up issues raised by external audit in their value-for-money work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Audit reports on VFM assessment to the Audit Committee. • AGS and updates are regularly reported to the Audit Committee. IA Review of the compilation of the AGS planned for 2025/26. • VFM assessments have been as follows from Forvis Mazars: • 2022/23 – "Based on the above considerations we are satisfied there is not a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements in relation to financial sustainability/governance/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External audit's assessments of arrangements to support best value are satisfactory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VFM assessments have been as follows from Forvis Mazars: • 2022/23 – "Based on the above considerations we are satisfied there is not a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements in relation to financial sustainability/governance/ improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. • 2023/24 – "We have completed our work in respect of the Council's arrangements for the year ended 31 March 2024 and we have not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements that have required us to make a recommendation."

Areas where the audit committee can have impact by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can demonstrate its impact	Self-evaluation by Oldham Council's Audit Committee as to how the Committee demonstrates its impact	Key indicators of effective arrangements	Self-evaluation by Oldham Council Audit Committee of its strengths, weaknesses and proposed actions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. 2023/24 – “We did not identify any significant weaknesses in the Council’s arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.” 		
<p>Helping the authority to implement the values of good governance, including effective arrangements for countering fraud and corruption risks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing arrangements against the standards set out in the <i>Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption</i> (CIPFA, 2014). Reviewing fraud risks and the effectiveness of the organisation’s strategy to address those risks. Assessing the effectiveness of ethical governance arrangements for both staff and governors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council’s Counter Fraud, Anti-Bribery Strategy and Counter Fraud Response Plan is presented to the Audit Committee and is written in line with the CIPFA Code. The Council’s Fraud and Loss risk Assessment and the Council’s self-assessment of it’s performance against the FFCL 2020-25 Checklist are reported to The Audit Committee. The Annual Audit Plan is constructed with the results the FFCL self-assessment in mind. IA Review of Standards of Conduct reported during 2024/25 with opinion of Adequate. IA Review of Recruitment and Discipline reported during 2024/25 with opinion of Inadequate. IA Review of Delegated Decision Reports reported during 2024/25 with opinion of Inadequate. IA Review of Corporate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good ethical standards are maintained by both elected representatives and officers. This is evidenced by robust assurance over culture, ethics and counter fraud arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IA Review of Standards of Conduct reported during 2024/25 with opinion of Adequate. IA Review of Recruitment and Discipline reported during 2024/25 with opinion of Inadequate. IA Review of Delegated Decision Reports reported during 2024/25 with opinion of Inadequate. IA Review of Corporate Performance Management reported in respect of 2024/25 with opinion of Limited. Committee to monitor progress against agreed actions throughout 2025/26.

Areas where the audit committee can have impact by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can demonstrate its impact	Self-evaluation by Oldham Council's Audit Committee as to how the Committee demonstrates its impact	Key indicators of effective arrangements	Self-evaluation by Oldham Council Audit Committee of its strengths, weaknesses and proposed actions
		Performance Management reported in respect of 2024/25 with opinion of Limited.		
Promoting effective public reporting to the authority's stakeholders and local community and measures to improve transparency and accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with key members/the PCC and chief constable to improve their understanding of the AGS and their contribution to it. • Improving how the authority discharges its responsibilities for public reporting – for example, better targeting the audience and use of plain English. • Reviewing whether decision making through partnership organisations remains transparent and publicly accessible and encourages greater transparency. • Publishing an annual report from the committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Committee reports to Audit Committee are reviewed by the Cabinet Member Finance and Corporate Resources and Sustainability, and the AGS itself is signed by both the Leader and CEX. • In respect of improving how the Authority discharges its responsibilities for public reporting, Members have, in the past, questioned the need for inclusion of the AGS update report in the private part of the Committee's agendas. The latest AGS update report was presented in the public part of the Committee agenda in November 2024. • The Committee received reports on the risks posed other Council by Partnership arrangements with 3rd parties as part of the AGS reporting in the year. • The Committee publishes an annual report to full Council on its work for the year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authority meets the statutory deadlines for financial reporting with accounts for audit of an appropriate quality. • The external auditor completed the audit of the financial statements with minimal adjustments and an unqualified opinion. • The authority has published its financial statements and AGS in accordance with statutory guidelines. • The AGS is underpinned by a robust evaluation and is an accurate assessment of the adequacy of governance arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The External Auditor has completed the audit of the 2023/24 financial statements with an unqualified opinion. • The authority has published its 2024/25 financial statements and AGS by the statutory deadline. • An IA review of the compilation of the AGS is planned to report in 2025/26.

Annex 3 – Member Knowledge and Skills questionnaire – aggregated results

This questionnaire is designed to identify any areas for future training and development needs for Members of the Council's Audit Committee.

It covers the broad areas of responsibility of the Committee, and key areas of understanding which assist Members in discharging their responsibilities in their role.

Members were asked to self-assess their level of knowledge and understanding in the broad areas below as either Weak, Adequate or Good. There was also space for commentary on Members' assessment and/or specific areas where Members' felt they may benefit from greater understanding.

5 responses were received, and the aggregated results are shown in the tables below.

<u>Roles and responsibilities</u>	<u>Weak</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Total</u>
The role of the Audit Committee.			5	5
The role of Scrutiny Committees.		2	3	5
The role of External Audit		3	2	5
The role of Internal Audit		1	4	5
The role of the S151 Officer	1	1	3	5

<u>Governance, risk and control</u>	<u>Weak</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Total</u>
Corporate Governance and the principles of good governance.		3	2	5
Ethics		2	3	5
Business Planning and Risk Management		3	2	5
Value for Money		3	2	5
Anti-fraud and Corruption		2	3	5

<u>Financial and Governance reporting</u>	<u>Weak</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Total</u>
The Council's Annual Governance Statement.		4	1	5
The Council's Financial Statements.		3	2	5
Treasury Management		3	2	5

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Report to Council

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25

Report of: Cllr Colin McLaren, Chair of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board 2024/25.

Cllr Junaid Hussain, Chair of the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board, 2024/25

Cllr Eddie Moores, Chair of the Adults, Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board 2024/25

Cllr Brian Hobin, Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board 2024/25

Officer Contact: Heather Moore, Assistant Director of Governance/ Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Report Author: Peter Thompson, Constitutional Services

10 December 2025

Reason for Decision

To provide Council with the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report for the 2024/25 Municipal Year as required by the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in the Constitution.

Executive Summary

The report outlines the statutory role of overview and scrutiny, the roles and responsibilities of the Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board, the Adults, Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board in 2024/25, together with a summary of the considerations and work undertaken by the Boards during 2024/25.

Recommendations

Council is asked to note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2024/25.

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/2025

1. What is Overview and Scrutiny?

1.1 All local authorities with an executive model of governance established under the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) are required to have at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires local authorities to establish or designate a 'crime and disorder overview and scrutiny committee', whilst health scrutiny functions were introduced in 2002 and most recently defined by the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013.

1.2 Article 6 of the Council's Constitution, reflecting both the statutory requirements for, and the Council's approach to overview and scrutiny, describes the general role and function of overview and scrutiny as being to:

- a) play a positive role in assisting the Council and the Executive in the development of the policy framework and the budget by in depth analysis of issues arising;
- b) conduct research and consultation in the analysis of policy options;
- c) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options and in the scrutiny process in general;
- d) question members of the Executive and appropriate Committees and senior Officers about issues and proposals affecting Oldham;
- e) monitor the performance of partners and of internal and external service providers against standards and objectives, liaising with external and partnership organisations to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working;
- f) evaluate the validity of executive decisions through the call in process;
- g) contribute to the identification and mitigation of risk;
- h) examine and review the performance of Committees of the Council over time;
- i) play a positive role in examining and reviewing the performance of the Executive in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas, investigating and addressing the causes of poor performance;
- j) question members of the Executive and of Committees and senior Officers about their decisions and performance, in comparison with service plans and targets, or particular initiatives or projects;
- k) make recommendations to the Council, the Executive or an appropriate Committee arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process; and
- l) demonstrate an objective and evidence-based approach to scrutiny.

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- 1.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committees are established and appointed to by the full Council and are made up of elected Members who are not members of the Executive (i.e. the Cabinet). While the Committees are required to be politically balanced by law, guidance dictates that the overview and scrutiny function should be approached in a non-political manner.
- 1.4 To deliver the expectations of the Council as to the specified roles and responsibilities, the Overview and Scrutiny Boards operate within a framework defined by the Council's Procedure Rules as set out at Part 4 of the Council's Constitution. The principal sections of Part 4 as they apply to the Overview and Scrutiny function are –
- 1.4.1 Part 4B: Access to Information Procedure Rules – sets out the procedural arrangements for the granting of exclusion from call-in and the consideration of executive business at less than 28 days' notice, the occasions when Overview and Scrutiny can require reports, and the right of access to information by Overview and Scrutiny bodies;
- 1.4.2 Part 4C: Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules – sets out the procedures to be followed in the consideration of Budget and Policy Framework related business and its passage through the executive and Overview and Scrutiny prior to submission to Council, and for the consideration of business identified as being outside of the Budget and Policy Framework;
- 1.4.3 Part 4D: Executive Procedure Rules – sets out procedures to ensure consideration of reports submitted by the Overview and Scrutiny bodies to the Executive; and
- 1.4.4 Part 4E: Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules - sets out the requirements for work programming and annual reports, the ability to establish Task and Finish Groups and other arrangements for consideration of business, for the preparation and submission of reports by overview and scrutiny bodies, the attendance of others at meetings, the 'call-in' process, declarations of interest and the 'party whip', and procedural arrangements within the Overview and Scrutiny function itself.

2. Overview and Scrutiny in 2024/25

- 2.1 The overview and scrutiny function in Oldham during 2024/25 was delivered by four Scrutiny Boards:
- Governance Strategy and Resources
 - Place, Economic Growth and Environment
 - Adults, Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board
 - Children and Young People Scrutiny Board
- 2.2 The work and contributions of each Scrutiny Board to the business of the Council is considered in turn below.

3 Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board 2024/25

3.1 Membership

Councillor McLaren (Chair), Councillor Moores (Vice Chair), Councillors Aslam, Azad, Harkness, Hughes, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Lancaster, Rustidge and Williamson.

Substitute Members - Councillors Cosgrove, Kenyon, Marland and Quigg.

The Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board role includes the scrutiny of key policy items, the annual budget proposals, proposals with significant service and/or budgetary implications, and performance. The Board also scrutinises proposals being developed at Greater Manchester level and by the Council's strategic partners, considering the implications for the Borough and for the Council.

The Board monitors and holds to account the performance of service delivery within the Council and of strategic partners with reference to the Oldham Plan and all other strategic plans.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board considered the following Key issues, policies and strategies during 2024/25: –

- a) Health and Safety Policy (updated in May 2024) - this policy identifies the essential elements of the Council's Health and Safety management system and details the commitment the Council has for maintaining and improving the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff, and others who may be affected by our activities.
- b) The Board scrutinised four quarterly reports which presented a review of the Council performance. Scrutiny Board members were invited to examine areas of under performance and where appropriate recommend remedial action. Members were invited to note areas of good and outstanding performance.
- c) The Board scrutinised a report which provided members with an update regarding the Council's performance in relation to enquiries received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in 2023/24.
- d) The Scrutiny Board received a series of reports throughout 2024/25 on the Revenue Monitor and Capital Investment Programme. The reports provided members with the opportunity to review the budget monitoring process for the financial year 2024/25. Members were therefore able to consider the key information relating to the forecast revenue budget position and the financial position of the Council's capital programme.
- e) The Board received a report detailing the Annual Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement. There was a statutory requirement for councils to review governance arrangements at least once a year. This enabled the authority to monitor achievement of strategic objectives, consider whether those objectives had led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services and demonstrate to the public that it has effective stewardship of the public funds.

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- f) The Board received a presentation on the Oldham Plan, prior to its subsequent approval by Council. The Oldham Plan being a partnership approach to developing a long-term vision for Oldham which reflected the aspirations and priorities of our residents and which would act as a roadmap for delivering the borough's ambitions to 2030.
 - g) Green New Deal Strategy – The Board were provided with an update on the Strategy that had previously been adopted in 2020 and further updated on the Oldham Community Network and Generation Oldham.
 - h) The Board received a report providing details of the number of complaints handled via the Oldham Council Tenants Housing Complaints Policy from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
 - i) The Board received a report which identified the partnerships in which the Council has an interest. The Council has a wide variety of partnerships each of which has its own risk profile. The report set out the assessment of risk for each partnership with an opinion as to whether there was anything which the Scrutiny Board needed to highlight to either Cabinet or full Council. The report did not identify any risk assessments which required a report to Cabinet or full Council.
 - j) The Board considered a report of the Director of Children's Services which gave an update on the progress on the delivery of three new residential children's homes which had been approved by the Cabinet.
 - k) At separate meetings the Board scrutinised the Administration's budget proposals for 2025/26 and the Main Opposition Group's alternate proposals. The Scrutiny Board's various recommendations were subsequently presented to and considered by the Cabinet, prior to Cabinet making a recommendation to Council on the 2025/26 budget.
 - l) The Scrutiny Board received a presentation on staffing trends and workforce retention strategies in the Council, with data benchmarking the organisation against national and sector-wide data.

4. Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board

4.1 Membership

Councillor Junaid Hussain (Chair) McLaren (Vice Chair), Councillors Ghafoor, Kouser, Malik, Moores, Murphy, Sharp, Shuttleworth, Wilkinson and Williamson.

Substitute members - Councillors Harkness, Iqbal and Quigg.

- 4.2 The Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board looks at how the Council fulfils three of its strategic priorities and is also responsible for reviewing and scrutinising the exercise by risk management authorities of flood risk management functions which may affect the Borough of Oldham and to exercise the functions of a crime and disorder committee including a review of the exercise of crime and disorder functions by responsible authorities and to review or scrutinise any local crime or disorder matter raised by a Member.

4.3 The Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board considered the following key issues during 2024/25: -

- a. The Scrutiny Board received a report of the Director of Communities and an associated presentation from the Youth Service, which provided an update on Oldham Council Youth Service Performance, highlighting Key work streams.
- b. The Scrutiny Board considered a report that provided an update on Oldham Council Libraries' Performance, highlighting capital and revenue programmes.
- c. The Board scrutinised quarterly reports which presented a review of the performance, relating to service areas covered by this Board's remit.
- d. The Scrutiny Board received a report that updated Members on the emerging Economic Plan for Oldham. The Plan aimed to set out the strategic context for economic growth within the borough covering the period up to 2030. The Oldham Economic Review, (OER), was originally published in March 2022 and was undertaken by an independent panel of experts with a focus on examining the opportunities for sustained and positive economic growth within Oldham. Building on the OER work, the Oldham Economic Board was established in July 2023 sitting within the context of the wider Oldham Economic Partnership. The Economic Board consists of a range of stakeholders from business, education, and wider public sector partners. The board provides a vehicle to drive forward OER recommendations and seeks to ensure that sustained and good growth is achieved across Oldham.
- e. The Scrutiny Board received a report on the High Street Accelerator Programme.
- f. The Scrutiny Board received a report that provided an update on the latest position regarding the national changes that have directly impacted on the Building Control profession and to inform members of how these changes had impacted on the Council's building control service, the current pressures, challenges, and of options for addressing the varying issues.
- g. The Scrutiny Board considered a report regarding the emerging Oldham Town Centre Development Framework ('Creating a Better Place'), the programme to transform Oldham Town Centre, which included the delivery of 2,000 new homes.
- h. The Scrutiny Board received a detailed presentation which examined different approaches to work, with the overall aim of increasing employment and employment opportunities across the Borough of Oldham.
- i. The Scrutiny Board received a report that provided members with an overview of the work areas across Strategic Transport services and functions, including how these fit into the Greater Manchester picture and progress and delivery against Oldham's Transport Strategy aims, including:
 - GM Local Transport Plan (LTP)
 - The Bee Network
 - Bus Franchising
 - Oldham Transport Strategy – Progress & Delivery

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- Schools Active Travel Infrastructure Audit
 - Creating a Better Place
 - Oldham Bee Network Committee
- j. The Scrutiny Board were consulted on a Street Lighting Attachment Policy, for the Borough. Under Section 178 of The Highways Act 1980, there was a legal requirement for any individual who wished to attach signage or equipment to a street lighting asset to obtain a licence from the local highway authority.
- k. In December 2024, the Scrutiny Board held a special meeting to consider two items (Inclusion of Oldham Mumps, Princes Gate into the Town Centre Development Partnership and Catering Review Implementation) which had been called-in (under the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules) by members of the Council. On this occasion the Scrutiny Board resolved to refer the decisions back Cabinet to determine at its next available meeting.
- l. The Scrutiny Board received annual reports regarding Community Safety, Licensing and Emergency Planning.
- m. The Scrutiny Board held a further special meeting, in January 2024, to consider an item (Oldham MBC – Temporary Accommodation Fair Share Policy), that had been called-in by members of the Council, in accordance with the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules. On this occasion the Scrutiny Board agreed to uphold the decisions that the Cabinet had made regarding this matter.
- n. The Scrutiny Board received a report which provided an update on the Oldham Green New Deal delivery programme and in particular the Oldham Green New Deal Delivery Partnership initiative – only the third local authority initiative of its type in the UK and the first to combine a Strategic Energy Partnership approach with the delivery of a heat network zone and Community Led Energy Planning.
- o. The Scrutiny Board received a report which provided a bi-annual update on the Creating a Better Place Programme. Cabinet approval was first obtained in January 2020 for the Council's 'Creating a Better Place (CaBP)' strategic framework and capital regeneration programme.
- p. The Scrutiny Board were consulted on a report, prior to Cabinet consideration thereon, which sought approval for the acceptance of £20,100,000, from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on behalf of national government following receipt of grant notification on 21st February 2025.

5. Children's and Young People Scrutiny Board

5.1 Membership

Councillor Hobin (Chair), McLaren (Vice Chair), Councillors Adams, Zaheer Ali, Ball, Bishop, Hughes, Sajed Hussain, Iqbal, Moores and Shuttleworth.

Substitute members - Councillors Ibrahim, Malik, Rustidge and Williamson.

5.2 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Board examines how the Council fulfils its strategic priority of A great start and skills for life. This strategic outcome aims to:

- a. Increase the number of quality school and college places for Oldham's young people,
- b. Expand youth activities outside of school,
- c. Improve post-16 education and training, so everyone has options to help them increase their skills and knowledge.

Areas covered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board in scrutinising how the Council meets this strategic outcome include:

- Educational achievement
- School performance
- Healthy lifestyles
- Youth service
- Looked after children.
- Early Help
- Children's Social Care
- Child Protection
- School Attendance and Exclusions
- School leavers' progression to further education and training
- Healthy schools
- Take-up of sporting and cultural opportunities
- Increased involvement of young people in developing services
- Education, employment and training for care leavers
- Children's Centres
- Young people's fear of crime
- Youth Offending
- Freedom from poverty
- Youth Justice Plan
- Children's and Young People Strategic Plan
- Higher Education provision including Oldham College and UCO

5.3 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Board considered the following key issues during 2024/25: -

- a. Progress in implementing Oldham's Start for Life and Family Hub transformation programme and next steps in the ongoing development and long-term sustainability planning.
- b. The Board received a report which outlined the Oldham Youth Justice Service Plan for 2024/25. The Plan was a statutory document that the Scrutiny Board was required to scrutinise prior to its eventual consideration and approval by the Council.
- c. The Board received an annual report that updated Board members on current participation and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) rates together with a summary on activity during the past academic year and planned in the future to ensure that we are shaping and influencing opportunities where possible for the Borough's 16–18-year-olds.

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- d. The Board received a report that provided an overview of corporate performance against agreed service business plan measures, in respect of Children's Services.
 - e. The Scrutiny Board received a report that provided an update on Children's Services Financial Performance, Improvement Plan and Transformation and Sustainability Programme.
 - f. The Scrutiny Board received a report that provided a briefing and update on the delivery of school places and on school place preference rates within the Local Authority.
 - g. The Scrutiny Board considered the annual LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) report. This was a report that presented an overview of the management of allegations in Oldham, and the role of the Designated Officer's team between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024.
 - h. The Scrutiny Board received an Annual Report, which detailed an overview of the Complex Safeguarding Hub and the impact of the work undertaken by the Complex Safeguarding Hub. The report also outlined the different strands of the work the Complex Safeguarding Hub undertakes, and the outcomes achieved over the period of July 2023 – June 2024 and it set out the priorities for the upcoming 12 months.
 - i. In terms of Special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision, the Scrutiny Board received a report regarding the local area progress report joint Ofsted/CQC area SEND inspection of the Oldham partnership, that took place between Monday 26th June 2023 and Friday 30th June 2023. This report summarised the progress and impact of actions since the local area inspection. In doing so, it brought together and captured delivery of the local area partnership's priority action and improvement plan to date.
 - j. The Scrutiny Board received the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report, for the period 1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024. The Board heard that the Working Together guidance required the Safeguarding Children Partnership to publish a report on an annual basis. The purpose of this report was to set out what activities partners have undertaken jointly between April 2023 and March 2024.
 - k. The Annual report on key stage outcomes was received by the Scrutiny Board. The Board were provided information from the report including:- Outcomes for our youngest children continue to improve. There are also substantial improvements in pupil progress in the same period, and in pupils achieving grades 9-5 including English and Maths; School level analysis shows improving trends in outcomes at ten of thirteen secondary schools since the 2019.; Gaps between our Disadvantaged and non-Disadvantaged pupils are smaller than national, and in some cases their outcomes exceed national averages.
 - l. Members received a positive update on the rate of repeat referrals in Children's Social Care. The rate was 15% which was below the national benchmark of 22.4%. The next phase of work is to sustain this progress to ensure the rate remains at or below this benchmark.
 - m. The Scrutiny Board received the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) report from the Assistant Director of Education & Early Years. The Board received an introduction and overview of the Work of SACRE.
 - n. The Board received the Corporate Performance Report. The purpose of this report was to provide an overview of corporate performance against agreed service business plan measures for the 2024/25 municipal year.

6. Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board

6.1 Membership:-

Councillor Moores (Chair), McLaren (Vice Chair), Councillors Adams, Hamblett, Maggie Hurley, Junaid Hussain, Ibrahim, Kouser, Malik, Rustidge and Sharp.

Substitute members - Councillors Iqbal, Quigg and Williamson.

6.2 The Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board will look at the how the Council fulfils its strategic priority of healthy, safe and well supported residents. Looking after our most vulnerable residents, keeping people safe and healthy are crucial responsibilities of any local authority focusing on services for adults and public health services to monitor progress towards improving health, lifestyles and quality of care across the Borough; and providing oversight of integration and partnership working within and between the council and health bodies. The Board will also oversee the active lifestyle related functions and activity across the Borough. The Board will review and scrutinise the commissioning and delivery of local health and social care services in Oldham to ensure reduced health inequalities, access to services and the best outcomes for local people. The Board will discharge its statutory duties to:

- a. The review and scrutiny of any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the Council's area.
- b. The making of reports and recommendations to relevant NHS bodies and health service providers.
- c. Responding to proposals and consultations from NHS bodies in respect of substantial variations in service provision and any other major consultation exercises.
- d. Referral of comments and recommendations on proposals referred to the Committee by a relevant NHS body or relevant service provider to the Secretary of State if considered necessary.
- e. All matters relating to Healthwatch.

6.3 The Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board considered the following key issues during 2024/25: -

- a. A presentation on the Council's preparation for an assessment by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which would take place within the next 18 months - up to December 2025. The CQC was tasked with assessing local health and care systems under the Health and Care Act 2022. These assessments aim to understand how care is improving outcomes and reducing inequalities. The focus is on local authorities' compliance with the Care Act 2014. The assessment period will start with the local authority's receipt of an information request and ends with the final report's publication. It mainly considers evidence from the 12 months preceding the assessment. CQC's Single Assessment Framework, includes nine quality statements across four themes: Working with people; Providing support; Ensuring safety and Leadership.

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- b. The Board received a report and presentation regarding the current market for the provision of care home services. The presentation provided an overview of Oldham's care home sector.
 - c. The Director of Public Health submitted the Public Health Annual Report 2023/24. The 2023/24 report had taken a data led approach to examine the relationship between housing, health, and health inequalities. There was a particular focus and consideration on the cumulative effect of poor-quality housing on those most at risk of experiencing health inequalities and it set out a set of key recommendations in response to the findings. The report acknowledged the many examples of how Oldham was seeking to respond to the challenges it faced.
 - d. The Board received a report of the Director of Public Health which presented an update on Oldham's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the Health and Wellbeing Board aim to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Oldham and reduce inequalities for all ages.
 - e. The Board considered a report of the Director of Public Health, which presented an update on the drug strategy milestones and key achievements of Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Service in Oldham. Having a high functioning drug and alcohol treatment and recovery offer was an essential component of the range of activities required to achieve better population health and reduce demand on health and social care services.
 - f. The Board received a regular report detailing the Corporate Performance Report (CPR) which provided an overview of corporate performance against agreed service business plan measures for 2024/25.
 - g. The Board received a presentation on adult social care in Oldham, focusing on commissioning processes, legislative frameworks, demographics, market sustainability, gaps, opportunities, and future priorities. The approach aimed to ensure that care services were high quality, financially sustainable, and designed to foster independence and improve outcomes for service users. Collaboration with providers was a central theme, with a shift towards preventative and strength-based models of care. National frameworks, such as the Care Act 2014, alongside ongoing financial pressures and the integration of health and social care systems, shaped the local agenda.
 - h. The Board received a report of the Director of Public Health, which presented an update on the Health and Wellbeing Board's two-year Health Inequalities Plan 2022-2024. The Plan addressed various dimensions of inequality across the borough.
 - i. A report was presented by the Director of Public Health that provided an overview of the progress made in reducing smoking rates during pregnancy in Oldham. A presentation was also given by NHS Northern Care Alliance Community Care Midwives on how they encouraged mothers and their partners to quit smoking both during and following pregnancy. The discussion highlighted key initiatives, including community-based interventions, smoking cessation programs, and financial incentives for expectant mothers to quit smoking. Members welcomed the progress and discussed the need for further outreach efforts.
 - j. The Board considered proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference following Salford City Council's decision to withdraw from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the NHS Northern Care Alliance. The amendments included reducing the committee's size and revising quorum requirements.

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- k. The Board received the MioCare Annual Review, which provided an update on the operational and financial performance of MioCare Group during 2023/24, along with future business strategy and budget considerations for 2024/25. Members discussed challenges faced in the sector and the role of MioCare in addressing them.
 - l. The Board considered a presentation, delivered by the Director of Adult Social Care, outlining the Adult Social Care (ASC) Target Operating Model (TOM). Key points included: That the model focuses on a strengths-based approach, emphasising prevention, self-help, and independence.
 - m. The Director of Public Health presented a report on the Young People's Sexual Health and substance misuse service. The report highlighted: the integrated service (MYNO) delivered by Early Break in partnership with HCRG Care Group and The Proud Trust; a 40% increase in young people accessing sexual health services; 250 young people engaged in structured substance misuse treatment annually, with an 84% successful completion rate; and collaboration with schools, youth services, and community outreach teams.
 - n. In May 2025, the Board held a special meeting that had been convened to consider an item of called-in business, from the Cabinet's meeting held on 7th April 2025 in relation to Future Commissioning Arrangements for Supported Living Services for People with Learning Disabilities, Complex Needs and/or Autism. After a detailed discussion, the Scrutiny Board upheld the Cabinet's original decision.

7. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programming

- 7.1 Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules requires each of the Overview and Scrutiny Boards to prepare and maintain a Work Programme. These Work Programmes are maintained by the Statutory Scrutiny Officer, in conjunction with Constitutional Services and are co-ordinated in consultation with the Scrutiny Board Chairs. This approach allows for an efficient use of resources and avoids duplication, allowing for flexibility to accommodate any urgent and/or short-term issues that may arise.
- 7.2 Updated Scrutiny Work Programmes for each Board were submitted to each meeting on an ongoing basis, keeping Members and the public informed as to business due to be considered and, through parallel consideration of the Key Decision Document, allowing Members to identify any further items for consideration.
- 7.3 2023/24 saw the implementation of the new overview and scrutiny structure, with the introduction of the four Scrutiny Boards. As Chairs, we worked with Constitutional Services towards the end of the Municipal Year to review Work Programmes and ensure that ongoing work and issues were carried over as the new arrangements took shape.

8. Overview and Scrutiny and Procedural Arrangements

- 8.1 The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Boards hold certain procedural responsibilities within the Council's Constitution. These were:
- General Exception – where 28 days' notice of the intention to take a Key Decision is not or cannot be given, 'General Exception' procedures apply. These include a requirement to obtain agreement in writing from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (or nominee) that the matter about which the decision is to be made is urgent and cannot be deferred.
 - Special Urgency – where General Exception procedures cannot apply and a decision is needed urgently, 'Special Urgency' procedures apply. These include a requirement to obtain agreement from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (or nominee) that the matter about which the decision is to be made is urgent and cannot be deferred.
 - Decisions contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework - should such a decision be required urgently, and it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the full Council, the decision may be taken if the Chair of a relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees that the decision is a matter of urgency.
 - Executive business in private – where 28 days' notice of the intention to take an executive decision at a meeting in private is not or cannot be given, the matter can be considered in private should the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board agree that the matter is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred.
- 8.2 In 2024/25 there were eight instances of General Exception, five instances of Special Urgency, no instances requiring agreement to either the consideration of matters outside the Budget and Policy Framework or the consideration of business in private.

9. Council Support for Overview and Scrutiny

- 9.1 The Overview and Scrutiny structure is supported by all officers of the Council. The Overview and Scrutiny function should expect all Council Officers to provide the same level of support as those Officers provide to the executive, regulatory and other functions within the Council's decision-making arrangements.
- 9.2 The Overview and Scrutiny function received the following specific support during 2024/25:
- Statutory Scrutiny Officer – the Council is required by the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) to designate a statutory Scrutiny Officer with the functions of: (a) promoting the role of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees,
(b) providing support to the Council's overview and scrutiny committees and the members of those committees,
(c) providing support and guidance to all Members and Officers of the Council in relation to the functions of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees.

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- The Constitutional Services team undertake lead roles in respect of the four Scrutiny Boards, maintaining Work Programmes, following up on actions, and co-ordinating scrutiny activities held outside of the formal committee meetings, in addition to the general governance activities that are provided in respect of all other formal bodies, ensuring that the Boards were convened and held in accordance with relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 9.3 The scrutiny function also benefitted from the active support given by the Council's partners across public and voluntary sectors who prepared reports for consideration and attended Board meetings to assist Committee members in their scrutiny considerations.

10. A New Structure for Overview and Scrutiny

- 10.1 From 2024/25 the Council has been operating a further Scrutiny Body – the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) for the Northern Care Alliance.
- 10.2 The purpose of a JHOSC is to scrutinise services provided by the Northern Care Alliance relating to the health of the population in Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Salford and contribute to the development of policy to improve health and reduce health inequalities in respect of services provided by the hospitals.
- 10.3 The Committee comprises member representatives from Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Salford Councils (three from each authority). The JHOSC has delegated powers, on behalf of the four local authorities, to undertake all the necessary functions of health scrutiny in accordance with part 4, Health Scrutiny by Local Authorities, of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013, relating to reviewing and scrutinising health service matters provided by Northern Care Alliance. A similar arrangement was previously in place in respect of the NHS Pennine Acute Hospitals Trust. This was subsequently amended following the decision of Salford City Council to withdraw their involvement in the Committee.
- 10.4 The Joint Scrutiny Committee met on several occasions during 2024/25 and Councillor McLaren was appointed Chair.

11. Ways to get involved with Overview and Scrutiny

- 11.1 All the Overview and Scrutiny Boards have rolling work programmes which are updated and can be found as part of the agenda for each Board meeting.
- 11.2 Meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Boards are open for the public to attend, except when a meeting considers confidential or exempt information and the Board resolves to exclude the public. Agendas are published to Council's website and, along with the dates for future meetings, can be found here [Browse Committee Meetings, 2024/25 \(oldham.gov.uk\)](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/browse-committee-meetings-2024-25)

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- 11.3 Overview and Scrutiny Boards provide an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions, providing the issue is relevant to the Board's terms of reference. Questions should be forwarded to constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk no later than noon on the third working day prior to the meeting. Members of the public can also contact their local Councillor about issues considered to be having an impact on their local community. Councillors also have opportunities to raise issues with Overview and Scrutiny Boards.

12 Financial Implications

- 12.1 Not applicable.

13 Legal Implications

- 13.1 Not applicable.

14 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

- 14.1 Not applicable.

15 Key Decision

- 15.1 No.

16 Key Decision Reference

- 16.1 Not applicable.

17. Background Papers

- 17.1 There are no background papers as defined by Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to this report.

18. Appendices

- 18.1 None.

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Report to Council

Treasury Management Half Year Review Report 2025/26

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Abdul Jabbar MBE, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services and Sustainability

Officer Contact: Lee Walsh, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer

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

10 December 2025

Reason for Decision

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 includes the requirement in the 2021 Code for quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators.

The Authority's treasury management strategy for 2025/26 was approved at Budget Council on 6 March 2025. The Authority has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the 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.

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 2025/26 (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; and
- Treasury Management Prudential Indicators.

Recommendation

That the Council approves:

- a) the Treasury Management Half Year Review report, the Treasury Management activity and projected outturn for 2025/26

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 One Update Report was presented to the Audit Committee for scrutiny on 22 October 2025.
- 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 half yearly review at the end of September 2025. The Treasury and Prudential indicators are also incorporated at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.1.4 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26 was approved at Budget Council on 6 March 2025. 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 2025/26;
 - A review and updates of the Council's current treasury management position;
 - Net Borrowing and Investments
 - Council Borrowing;
 - Treasury Investment Activity;
 - Treasury Performance for the first half of the year;

- Compliance; and
- Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

2.2 External Environment Half Year Review 2025/26

Economic background

- 2.2.1 The first quarter was dominated by the fallout from the US trade tariffs and their impact on equity and bond markets. The second quarter, still rife with uncertainty, saw equity markets making gains and a divergence in US and UK government bond yields, which had been moving relatively closely together.
- 2.2.2 From late June, amid a UK backdrop of economic uncertainty, concerns around the government's fiscal position and speculation around the Autumn Budget, yields on medium and longer term gilts pushed higher, including the 30-year which hit its highest level for almost 30 years.
- 2.2.3 UK headline annual Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) increased over the period, rising from 2.6% in March to 3.8% in August, still well above the Bank of England's 2% target. Core inflation also rose, from 3.4% to 3.6% over the same period, albeit the August reading was down 0.2% from 3.8% the previous month. Services inflation also fell from July to August, to 4.7% from 5.0%.
- 2.2.4 The UK economy expanded by 0.7% in the first quarter of the calendar year and by 0.3% in the second quarter. In the final version of the Quarter 2 2025 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) report, annual growth was revised upwards to 1.4% year on year. However, monthly figures showed zero growth in July, in line with expectations, indicating a sluggish start to Quarter 3.
- 2.2.5 Labour market data continued to soften throughout the half yearly period, with the unemployment rate rising and earnings growth easing, but probably not to an extent that would make the more hawkish Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) members comfortable with further rate cuts. In addition, the employment rate rose while the economic inactivity rate and number of vacancies fell.
- 2.2.6 The Bank of England's (BoE) MPC cut Bank Rate from 4.5% to 4.25% in May and to 4.0% in August after an unprecedented second round of voting. The final 5-4 vote was for a 0.25% cut, with the minority wanting no change. In September, seven MPC members voted to hold rates while two preferred a 0.25% cut. The Committee's views still differ on whether the upside risks from inflation expectations and wage setting outweigh downside risks from weaker demand and growth.
- 2.2.7 The August BoE Monetary Policy Report highlighted that after peaking in Quarter 3 2025, inflation is projected to fall back to target by mid-2027, helped by increasing spare capacity in the economy and the ongoing effects from past tighter policy rates. GDP is expected to remain weak in the near-term while over the medium-term outlook will be influenced by domestic and global developments.
- 2.2.8 Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate would be cut further as the BoE focused on weak GDP growth more than higher inflation. One more cut is currently expected during 2025/26, taking Bank Rate to 3.75%. The risks to the forecast are balanced in the near-term but weighted to the downside further out as weak consumer sentiment and business confidence and investment continue to constrain growth. There is also

considerable uncertainty around the Autumn Budget and the impact this will have on the outlook.

- 2.2.9 Against a backdrop of uncertain US trade policy and pressure from President Trump, the US Federal Reserve (Fed) held interest rates steady for most of the period, before cutting the Fed Funds Rate to 4.00%-4.25% in September. Fed policymakers also published their new economic projections at the same time. These pointed to a 0.50% lower Fed Funds Rate by the end of 2025 and 0.25% lower in 2026, alongside GDP growth of 1.6% in 2025, inflation of 3%, and an unemployment rate of 4.5%.
- 2.2.10 The European Central Bank (ECB) cut rates in June, reducing its main refinancing rate from 2.25% to 2.0%, before keeping it on hold through to the end of the period. New ECB projections predicted inflation averaging 2.1% in 2025, before falling below target in 2026, alongside improving GDP growth, for which the risks are deemed more balanced and the disinflationary process deemed over.

Financial markets

- 2.2.11 After the sharp declines seen early in the period, sentiment in financial markets improved, but risky assets have generally remained volatile. Early in the period bond yields fell, but ongoing uncertainty, particularly in the UK, has seen medium and longer yields rise with bond investors requiring an increasingly higher return against the perceived elevated risk of UK plc. Since the sell-off in April, equity markets have gained back the previous declines, with investors continuing to remain bullish in the face of ongoing uncertainty.
- 2.2.12 Over the period, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started at 4.65% and ended at 4.70%. However, these six months saw significant volatility with the 10-year yield hitting a low of 4.45% and a high of 4.82%. It was a broadly similar picture for the 20-year gilt which started at 5.18% and ended at 5.39% with a low and high of 5.10% and 5.55% respectively. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 4.19% over the six months to 30 September.

Credit review

- 2.2.13 Arlingclose maintained its recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on the majority of the banks on its counterparty list at 6 months. The other banks remain on 100 days.
- 2.2.14 Early in the period, Fitch upgraded NatWest Group and related entities to AA- from A+ and placed Clydesdale Bank's long-term A- rating on Rating Watch Positive. While Moody's downgraded the long-term rating on the United States sovereign to Aa1 in May.
- 2.2.15 Then in the second quarter, Fitch upgraded Clydesdale Bank and also HSBC, downgraded Lancashire County Council and Close Brothers while Moody's upgraded Transport for London.
- 2.2.16 After spiking in early April following the US trade tariff announcements, UK Credit Default Swap (CDS) prices have since generally trended downwards and ended the period at levels broadly in line with those in the first quarter of the calendar year and throughout most of 2024.
- 2.2.17 European banks' CDS prices has followed a fairly similar pattern to the UK, as have Singaporean and Australian lenders, while Canadian bank CDS prices remain modestly elevated compared to earlier in 2025 and in 2024.
- 2.2.18 Overall, at the end of the period CDS prices for all banks on Arlingclose's counterparty list

remained within limits deemed satisfactory for maintaining credit advice at current durations.

- 2.2.19 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 2025, the Authority had net borrowing of £187.231m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. This had reduced to £160.630m at the end of Quarter One, and, as presented at Table 2, had increased from Quarter One to £167.627m 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 2024/25 and includes the forecast as at the end of September 2025 for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28. 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 2025/26 forecast as at 30 September compared to the closing position for 2024/25.

Table 1 – Balance Sheet Summary

	31 March 2025 Actual £'000	31 March 2026 Half Year Review Forecast £'000
General Fund CFR	559,839	579,225
Total CFR	559,839	579,225
Less: Other debt liabilities (PFI)	223,812	217,038
Borrowing CFR	336,027	362,186
External borrowing	234,817	257,250
Internal borrowing	101,209	104,936
Less: Usable Balance Sheet Resources	(124,565)	(110,237)
Less: Working capital	(24,230)	(55,041)
Net Investments	(47,586)	(60,342)

- 2.3.4 Table 1 shows the forecast CFR for 2025/26 is £579.225m, an increase of £19.386m compared to £559.839m at the end of 2024/25. The CFR excluding other debt liabilities relating to Private Finance Initiative schemes is forecast to be £362.186m, an increase of £26.159m compared to the position at the end of 2024/25.
- 2.3.5 External borrowing is forecast to increase by some £26m to £257m 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 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 2025 and the change over the year to date is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - Treasury Management Summary

Borrowing/Investment	31 March 2025 Balance £'000	Movement £'000	30 September 2025 Actual £'000	30 September 2025 Average Rate %
Long-term borrowing				
- PWLB	84,059	(2,432)	81,627	3.83%
- LOBOs	85,500	(4,416)	81,084	3.96%
- Other	40,001	0	40,001	4.03%
Short-term borrowing	25,257	0	25,257	4.38%
Total borrowing	234,817	(6,849)	227,968	
Long-term investments	13,611	31	13,642	5.13%
Short-term investments	-	-	-	
Cash and cash equivalents	33,975	12,725	46,700	4.23%
Total investments	47,586	12,756	60,342	
Net borrowing	187,231	(19,605)	167,627	

- 2.3.8 As can be seen in the table above, borrowing has reduced by circa £7m this was due to a repayment of a called Lender Option, Borrower Option (LOBO) Loan and principal payments against the Council's Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) debt, during the first half of 2025/26. The level of investment has increased £12.725m since the end of the 2024/25 (but a reduction on the Quarter One position of £10m). Overall net borrowing has reduced by £19.605m as a result of repayment of loans and capital grant funding being received in advance of spend. Borrowing will increase in the next quarter in line with planned capital expenditure during the latter part of the year.

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.

- 2.4.2 After substantial rises in interest rates since 2021 central banks have now begun to reduce their policy rates, albeit slowly. Gilt yields, however, have increased over the first half of the year amid concerns about inflation, the UK government's fiscal position and general economic uncertainty.
- 2.4.3 The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 5.38% at the beginning of the period and 5.53% at the end. The lowest available 10-year maturity certainty rate was 5.17% and the highest was 5.62%. Rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 5.71% to 6.30% during the period, and 50-year maturity loans from 5.46% to 6.14%. The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities has been similar to Base Rate during the period at 4.0% to 4.5%.
- 2.4.4 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.
- 2.4.5 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.
- 2.4.6 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 the future.
- 2.4.7 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.
- 2.4.8 As at 30 September 2025, Oldham Council held £227.969m of loans. The Council has not undertaken any borrowing in the first half of the year.

Table 3 - Borrowing Position

Borrowing Sources	31 March 2025 Balance £'000	Movement £'000	30 September 2025 Balance £'000	30 September 2025 Weighted Average Rate %	30 September 2025 Weighted Average Maturity (years)
Public Works Loan Board	84,059	(2,432)	81,627	3.82%	10.27
Banks (LOBO)	85,500	(4,416)	81,084	4.04%	42.18
Banks (fixed-term)	40,000	-	40,000	4.00%	43.77
Local Bonds (long-term)	1	-	1		-
Local Authorities (short term)	25,000	-	25,000	5.23%	
Local Bonds (short-term)	22	-	22	0.00%	-
Local Charitable Trusts (short-term)	235	(1)	234	4.90%	
Total Borrowing	234,817	(6,848)	227,969		

LOBO Loans

- 2.4.9 Oldham Council currently holds £81.084m 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. This a reduction of £4.416m from the position as at 31 March 2025 due to one of the lenders, FMS Wertmanagement, exercising its option to revise the rate payable on the loan in April. The revised interest rate offered was 7.67% and the Council excerised its option to repay the loan in full, utilising available cash balances.
- 2.4.10 With market interest rates having risen, the probability of LOBOs being called has been higher than in the recent past. A total of £20.000m of other LOBO loans, all held with Dexia Finance had annual/semi-annual call option dates during the April-June quarter, however none of the options were exercised.
- 2.4.11 Currently Oldham Council has £34m LOBO loans with call dates during the remaining six months of this financial year. Of this sum, £14m is held with Dexia Finance, £10m is held with KBC Bank NV and the remaining £10m evenly split between two other providers, Danske Bank and Just Retirement. At the time of writing no call options have been exercised.
- 2.4.12 There may be opportunities to repay the Council's historical LOBO borrowing. The Council will investigate all opportunities including consultation with the Council's treasury manager advisors Arlingclose and will ensure any repayments create revenue savings. If required, the Authority will repay the LOBO loans with available cash or by borrowing from other local authorities or the PWLB.

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 2025, the Council held £46.700m 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 £28.220m and £75.007m 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 2025 Balance £'000	Movement £'000	30 September 2025 Balance £'000	30 September 2025 Income Return %
Government (incl. Local Authorities)	-	-	-	
Money Market Funds	33,975	12,725	46,700	4.37%
Property Pooled Fund	13,611	31	13,642	5.13%
Total Investments	47,586	12,756	60,342	

- 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.
- 2.5.6 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 2025/26 of £0.700m, representing 5.13% income return. The current value estimated is £13.642m.

Statutory Override

- 2.5.7 Further to consultations in April 2023 and December 2024, the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government wrote to finance directors in England in February 2025 regarding the statutory override on accounting for gains and losses in pooled investment funds. On the assumption that when published regulations follow this policy announcement, the statutory override will be extended up until the 1 April 2029 for investments already in place before 1 April 2024. The override will not apply to any new investments taken out on or after 1 April 2024.
- 2.5.8 The Authority has set up a provision of £2.000m to mitigate the impact of the statutory override not being extended. In view of the fact that the override may not be extended past 2029 the authority has decided to maintain this provision.

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%	30 September 2025 Income Return % (Actual)
Budgeted Investment Rates	4.50%		4.55%
Overnight SONIA	4.19%	4.40%	4.37%

- 2.6.2 The budgeted investment rate of 4.50% above included within the annual strategy for 2025/26 was based on the average rate over the full financial year as expectations were for interest rates to decrease during 25/26. 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 2025/26 is £1m. To date, General Fund income of circa £0.740m has been achieved.

2.7 Compliance

- 2.7.1 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 2025/26 £'000	Actual Position at 30 September 2025 £'000	Maximum Allowable in 2025/26 £'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	13,642	13,642	15,000	Yes
Unsecured investments with building societies	-	-	20,000	Yes
Money Market Funds	75,007	46,700	80,000	Yes
Strategic Pooled Funds	13,642	13,642	15,000	Yes

- 2.7.2 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 2025 £'000	2025/26 Operational Boundary £'000	2025/26 Authorised Limit £'000	Compliance Yes/No
Borrowing	227,968	356,000	371,000	Yes
PFI and Finance Leases	223,812	230,250	235,250	Yes
Total Gross Borrowing / Limit	451,780	586,250	606,250	Yes

- 2.7.3 The Operational Boundary represents the maximum expected borrowing position for the Council for the year and is £586.250m.
- 2.7.4 The Authorised Limit is the “affordable borrowing limit” required by Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003 and for 2025/26 is set at £606.250m. Once this has been set, the Council does not have the power to borrow above this level, although it can be revised if required.
- 2.7.5 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 2025/26.

2.8 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

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

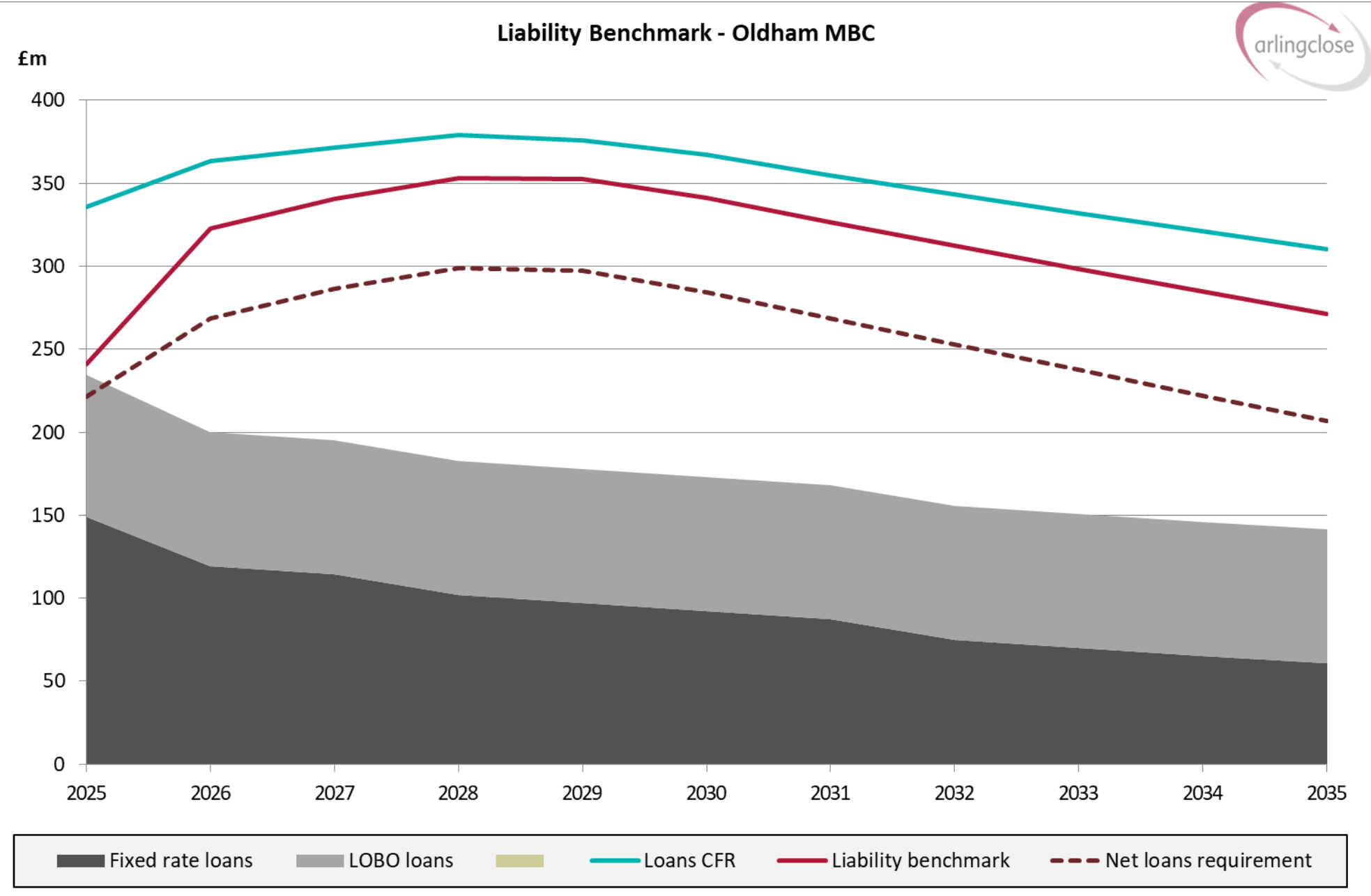
Liability Benchmark

- 2.8.2 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 2025 Actual £'000	31 March 2026 Forecast £'000	31 March 2027 Forecast £'000	31 March 2028 Forecast £'000
Loans CFR	336,027	362,186	371,835	377,371
Less: Balance sheet resources	148,795	124,936	129,936	134,936
Net loans requirement	187,232	237,250	241,899	242,535
Plus: Liquidity allowance	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Liability benchmark	207,232	257,250	261,899	262,435
Existing /forecast borrowing	234,817	237,250	241,899	242,435

- 2.8.3 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.



- 2.8.4 Table 10 below sets out the maturity structure of borrowing at the end of the first six months of 2025/26 compared to the upper and lower limits set in the Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26. 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 2025 Actual	Compliance Yes/No
Under 12 months	35%	0%	27.87%	Yes
12 months and within 24 months	35%	0%	8.65%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	35%	0%	23.33%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	35%	0%	13.74%	Yes
10 years to 20 years	50%	0%	2.47%	Yes
20 years to 30 years	50%	0%	2.18%	Yes
30 years to 40 years	50%	0%	2.18%	Yes
40 years to 50 years	50%	0%	10.88%	Yes
50 years to 60 years	50%	0%	8.71%	Yes

- 2.8.5 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.

2.8.6 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

Limit /Actual Investments Exceeding One Year	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	No fixed date
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

- 2.8.7 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, Cabinet 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:
- 3.2 Option 1 – to approve the Treasury Management Half Year Review report, Treasury Management activity and projected outturn for 2025/26.

4 Preferred Option

- 4.1 The preferred option is Option 1 – to approve the Treasury Management Half Year Review report, Treasury Management activity and projected outturn for 2025/26.

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 26 November 2025 in compliance with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice and was content to commend the report to Cabinet. At its meeting of 1 December Cabinet approved the report and commended it to Council.

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 advisors 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 – 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-13-25

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 4247

20 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Prudential and Treasury Indicators

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 2025/26.

Capital Expenditure

Capital Expenditure/Financing	2024/25 Actual £'000	2025/26 Forecast £'000	2026/27 Budget £'000	2027/28 Budget £'000
Expenditure				
General Fund services	81,790	120,845	37,878	34,456
HRA	1	1,403	7,195	2,220
Total Capital Expenditure	81,791	122,248	45,073	36,676
Financing				
Grants & Contributions	(29,875)	(81,174)	(21,345)	(16,144)
Prudential Borrowing	(46,961)	(34,026)	(16,970)	(18,260)
Revenue	(28)	(1,486)	(2,195)	(210)
Capital Receipts	(4,927)	(5,562)	(2,563)	(2,092)
Total Financing	(81,791)	(122,248)	(43,073)	(36,676)

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 2025 Actual £'000	31 March 2026 Forecast £'000	31 March 2027 Budget £'000 £'000	31 March 2028 Budget £'000
General Fund Services	559,839	579,225	581,846	579,895
Total CFR	559,839	579,225	581,846	579,895

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 2025 Actual £'000	31 March 2026 Forecast £'000	31 March 2027 Budget £'000	31 March 2028 Budget £'000	Debt at 30 September 2025 £'000
Gross Borrowing (incl. PFI & leases)	458,630	474,289	471,910	464,959	451,785
Capital Financing Requirement	559,839	579,225	581,846	579,895	

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 September 2025	2025/26 Half Year Operational Boundary	2025/26 Half Year Authorised Limit	Compliance? Yes/No
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Borrowing	227,968	356,000	371,000	Yes
PFI and Finance Leases	223,812	230,250	235,250	Yes
Total Debt	451,780	586,250	606,250	

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	2024/25 Actual £'000	2025/26 Forecast £'000	2026/27 Budget £'000	2027/28 Budget £'000
Financing costs (£m)	26,252	25,322	26,977	28,563
Proportion of net revenue stream	7.61%	7.84%	7.66%	7.61%

Impact of a 1% increase in interest rate on debt financing costs

This indicator demonstrates the additional revenue interest costs that would be charged if interest rates were 1% above the current assumptions.

Financing Cost/Net Revenue Stream	2025/26 Estimated £'000	2026/27 Estimated £'000	2027/28 Estimated £'000
Additional Revenue costs (£000)	103	498	649