

Oldham Borough Council



Council Meeting
Wednesday, 25th March 2026

OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

To: ALL MEMBERS OF OLDHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL, THE JR CLYNES BUILDING, CULTURAL QUARTER, GREAVES STREET, OLDHAM, OL1 1AL

Tuesday, 17th March 2026

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council which will be held on Wednesday, 25th March 2026 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, JR 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 - 30)

To order that the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 10th December 2025 and 4th March 2026 (to be circulated) be approved and signed as correct records.
- 3 To receive declarations of interest in any matter to be determined at the meeting
- 4 To deal with matters which the Mayor considers to be urgent business
- 5 To receive communications relating to the business of the Council
- 6 To receive and note petitions received relating to the business of the Council

(time limit 20 minutes)
There are no petitions for this Council meeting to consider.
- 7 Youth Council

(time limit 20 minutes)

Opposing the Under-16 Social Media Ban

In January 2026, the House of Lords voted in favour of an amendment to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. The amendment sought to introduce a total ban on social media for children under the age of 16, requiring platforms to implement "highly effective" age-assurance measures.

On 9th March, in the final stages of the Bill's passage through the Commons, the Government formally addressed the proposed amendment for a total blanket ban on social media for under-16s. While the immediate, universal ban was ultimately voted down in favour of a more evidence-based approach, we at Oldham Youth Council worry that the Government's commitment may lead to introducing significant statutory limitations instead, which could be used to restrict Internet access to under 18s.

When cars were invented and got faster, we realised car crashes were very dangerous, but we didn't ban children from being in cars, we made them safer with seatbelts, anti-roll bars, air bags, and other safety measures. Social media wasn't created by young people but it's the world that we have grown up in and much of everyday life is linked to it. We didn't create the monster, but a wide scale ban would potentially see us punished for it, even those who use it responsibly and safely which is the majority of young people.

We feel that these limitations pose concerns for young people within their learning and educative experiences through social media. This ultimately may also end up hiding diverse content and peer-led support groups for topics such as mental health and LGBTQ+ communities, effectively "sanitising" online experiences.

Our own Youth Mayor was able to put a question to the Prime Minister about this legislation and he informed her that the Government is currently consulting with young people, along with parents and other adults who work with young people. We as a youth council have been able to complete the survey but numbers and statistics, don't always show a true picture. While the Prime Minister did say consultation will happen with focus groups, this seemed to be with large youth organisations and not the young people it will affect most.

Concerns that we feel should be addressed and considered through this consultation process and amendment of the bill are as follows:

A potential increase in usage of unregulated apps. Young people may move into dangerous and less visible spaces and bypass age restrictions by using VPNs or by giving incorrect details which would lead to less adult oversight.

Ofcom reports that 80% of 12–17-year-olds use social media for school and homework assistance, while 52% use it for learning new skills. This would dramatically decrease access to those young people whose learning style benefit from access to digital engagement.

Limitations of access to social media when used correctly would disproportionately harm marginalise groups of young people, such as the LGBTQ+ community, who rely on social media for support and socialisation that some find difficult in person.

We understand that there are dangers relating to young people accessing social media and we want our government to safeguard young people. However, we feel a blanket ban will not safeguard young people but rather drive them to find ways around access to the applications and put themselves at more risk.

We therefore propose that Council resolves:

To request that the Chief Executive write to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Children and Families, and his team who are carrying out the consultation, to invite them to visit Oldham during the current national consultation period. We would happily host a dedicated consultation session with young people from across Oldham with the aim of allowing those young people to voice their specific concerns regarding the proposed social media regulations.

That all school heads are written to, asking them to support young people's engagement in the current consultation survey and that Oldham Council promote

the consultation to young people, parents and carers, and all professionals who work with young people.

We would hope that this ensures that Oldham provides a diverse young people's voice reflected in the final legislative framework.

8 Public Questions

(time limit 15 Minutes)

9 Questions to Leader and Cabinet (Pages 31 - 118)

(time limit 90 minutes)

- a. Leader of the Council and Growth Portfolio Holder – including the Minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held 1st December 2025, 15th December 2025 and 19th January 2026, urgent executive decisions made during 2025/26 (under 'Rule 13' and 'Rule 14' of the Constitution) and the minutes of meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held 28th November 2025, 12th December 2025 and 30th January 2026.
- 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: Tackling Fly-Tipping, Waste Crime and Litter in Oldham

To be Moved by Councillor Taylor

To be Seconded by Councillor Nazrul Islam

This Council notes:

That fly-tipping is more than an environmental inconvenience. It is a form of organised crime that blights communities, overwhelms overstretched local authorities, and allows unscrupulous operators to profit at the expense of the public. Across England, 1.26 million fly-tipping incidents were recorded in 2023 to 2024, and the total cost of waste crime to the UK economy is estimated at around £1 billion per year.

That tackling environmental crime is an Oldham-wide priority, embedded in the borough's Corporate Plan 2024 to 2027. That plan sets out an explicit ambition for neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and commits this Council to working with residents to keep our streets clean and green.

That the problem is not evenly distributed. Fly-tipping and persistent littering

disproportionately affect the most deprived neighbourhoods in our borough, where residents live alongside illegal dumping, often on their own doorsteps, while rural areas experience repeat offending in fly-tipping hotspots
Environmental crime is not a trivial matter: it is an injustice forced upon communities that can least afford it.

This administration continues to place a high priority on maintaining clean neighbourhoods and tackling fly-tipping across the borough. We are taking firm enforcement action against those responsible whenever sufficient evidence is available. Central to this effort is the newly established Rapid Action Team, which provides a dedicated, fast-response capability to identify and remove fly-tipping before it blights our communities. This work is in addition to Labour's ongoing *Don't Trash Oldham* campaign which enables the Council to target areas requiring focused intervention, while working closely with residents and voluntary community groups to deliver a cleaner, safer, and more sustainable environment for the long term.

This Council further notes:

That where evidence is found, first-time offenders are currently given the opportunity to pay a fixed penalty notice, with the maximum fine for fly-tipping currently set at £1,000.

That evidence collated by the Local Government Association shows that when cases do reach court, the fines issued are frequently lower than the fixed penalty powers councils already hold. The current enforcement framework does not provide a sufficient deterrent, and that the financial penalties available do not cover the true cost of clean-up.

That steps have been taken nationally to strengthen enforcement. New government guidance now enables councils to search, seize and destroy vehicles used in fly-tipping, and updated statutory litter guidance published in March 2026 introduces fixed penalty notices of up to £500 for littering, with unpaid fines doubling after 28 days and vehicle owners liable where litter is thrown from a vehicle and the culprit cannot be identified. Waste carriers, brokers and dealers are now subject to full environmental permitting regime, welcome progress in tackling the rogue operators who profit most from this trade.

This Council resolves to:

Lobby the Labour Government to strengthen national enforcement powers.

Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs calling for: an increase in the maximum fixed penalty notice for fly-tipping and littering to reflect the true cost of clean-up operations; the

introduction of a national licensing scheme for all waste carriers, with mandatory identification and real-time verification available to residents; the power for councils to issue civil penalties to commercial fly-tippers; the right for councils to recover the full cost of clearing fly-tipped waste from those responsible; the establishment of a national fly-tipping enforcement fund to support councils with high levels of environmental crime; the introduction of driving licence penalty points for fly-tipping offences; and strengthened oversight of private enforcement companies.

Continue and strengthen local enforcement in Oldham. By continuing to prioritise cleansing services and fly-tip removal across the borough; expanding high-visibility enforcement patrols in known fly-tipping and littering hotspots; increasing intelligence-led joint operations with Greater Manchester Police, the Environment Agency, and neighbouring Greater Manchester authorities; reviewing Oldham's fixed penalty policy to ensure full alignment with new national statutory standards; and continuing to invest in the Don't Trash Oldham campaign, community environmental education, and support for volunteer litter-picking groups, including reviewing locations of on street litter bins.

Support the Local Government Associations' call for a review of sentencing guidelines for fly-tipping and environmental crime, to ensure that the courts are equipped to issue fines and sanctions that genuinely deter offenders and reflect the harm caused to communities.

Work across Greater Manchester and with Oldham's MPs. To ask the Chief Executive to write to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to ensure that new powers such as vehicle seizure are coordinated across Greater Manchester and to Oldham's Members of Parliament, calling on them to support these legislative reforms in Parliament.

Motion 2: Tackling the anti-social use of Fireworks

To be Moved by Councillor Goodwin

To be Seconded by Councillor Davis

It has now been three years since this Council passed a motion calling for stronger action on the misuse of fireworks. Sadly, nothing has changed. The previous Government failed to act, and our communities continue to suffer from the same problems we highlighted back then.

Many of us are still receiving complaints about fireworks being used in an anti-social way late at night and in the early hours of the morning. This is not a new issue, but it remains persistent and disruptive, affecting our sleep, triggering anxiety or sensory overload in people who are neurodiverse, upsetting our children and pets, and potentially triggering PTSD in our veterans.

Fireworks are now used throughout the year for all kinds of celebrations. When used safely, sensibly and considerately, they can bring joy and excitement. However, a small minority continue to abuse this goodwill, letting off fireworks at anti-social hours. This is unacceptable. We appeal to all our communities to help raise awareness and prevent this behaviour, and we will continue working with the Police and Fire Service to address these issues.

The law currently sets a minimum age for buying fireworks, limits times and places they can be used, and restricts purchase dates for private use. Yet these laws are clearly failing. Online sales make fireworks available all year round, often without credible checks on age or intended use. The ongoing complaints from residents prove that the current system is not working.

When fireworks are used responsibly and organised properly, they can be enjoyed by all. But we need stronger measures to tackle anti-social use and ensure safety. This motion seeks to renew our call for action and add further steps to protect our communities.

Yasmin Qureshi, a Greater Manchester MP, called for more regulation on fireworks in her Ten-Minute Rule Motion on Fireworks (Noise Control etc) on Wednesday 3rd December 2025. The bill was sponsored by both Jim McMahon and Debbie Abrahams, in clear recognition of the issue fireworks cause in this borough.

This Council notes:

- There has been no meaningful progress since our previous motion in 2022 due to the inaction of the previous Government.
- Misuse of fireworks continues, including the use of large launchers and easy online availability, encouraging illegal use during anti-social hours.
- The short-lived nature of firework noise makes enforcement difficult for police and council officers.
- The RSPCA continues to warn that current laws fail to prevent distress, injury or anxiety to people, and harm to animals.
- A review of licensing for public firework displays is needed, ensuring better public notification and consideration of noise impacts.
- Both Debbie Abrahams and Jim McMahon recently sponsored a Ten Minute Rule Bill to both limit the noise levels on commercially available fireworks and provide Local Authorities legal powers to stop anti-social use of fireworks.

This Council resolves to:

1. Write to the three MPs representing our borough, asking them to continue supporting Yasmin Qureshi MP's Bill on Fireworks which would introduce a maximum decibel level of 90dB
2. Write to the Chief Executive requesting that they write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, urging the introduction of legislation giving councils' powers to regulate and enforce

firework usage.

3. Renew our call for Government to introduce legislation to:
 - a. Limit the maximum noise level of fireworks sold for private use to 90dB.
 - b. Review current laws on sale and use, including requiring purchasers to state when, how and where fireworks will be used.
 - c. Strengthen restrictions on how, when and where fireworks can be purchased, including online sales and transaction volumes.
 - d. Restrict sales to 'all year round' retailers to reduce risks from temporary 'pop-up' sellers.

This Council further resolves to:

4. Write to all local event venues reminding them of the law and exploring the possibility of requiring registration/licensing for firework use.
5. Introduce a requirement for community notification of firework use by venues hosting private events.
6. Require all public firework displays within the borough to be advertised in advance, allowing residents to take precautions for animals and vulnerable people.

11

Notice of Opposition Business

(time limit 30 minutes)

Motion 1: Time to Scrap the Spin and Get the Basics Right

To be Moved by Councillor Marland

To be Seconded by Councillor Bishop

This Council notes that:

- a. Residents across Oldham repeatedly tell councillors that the Council is failing to get the basics right — overgrown weeds on pavements, crumbling roads, poorly maintained parks, blocked drains and widespread fly-tipping.
- b. Oldham is now one of the worst areas in the region for fly-tipping, with rubbish blighting neighbourhoods, attracting vermin and leaving residents feeling ignored.
- c. Potholes continue to damage vehicles and pose safety risks, while many repairs are temporary and fail within months.
- d. Weed growth along highways and pavements has been allowed to spiral out of control in many areas, making streets look neglected and poorly cared for.
- e. Blocked drains and gullies are frequently left uncleared, increasing the risk of surface water flooding during heavy rain.
- f. Parks and green spaces — once a source of pride — are too often left looking

tired and under-maintained.

- g. This visible decline follows two years of deep cuts to Environmental Services and frontline maintenance budgets under the Labour and Independent Coalition.
- h. Rather than reversing these cuts, the administration has too often relied on flashy PR campaigns such as “Don’t Trash Oldham”, which may generate headlines but do not substitute for properly funded, routine street cleaning, enforcement and maintenance.
- i. In successive budgets, the Liberal Democrat Group has proposed amendments to invest more in highways maintenance, street cleaning, environmental enforcement and neighbourhood services — amendments which the ruling Coalition has chosen not to support.

This Council further notes that:

At the 2026/27 Budget-setting meeting, this Labour administration – backed by the Shaw & Crompton Independents – voted down Liberal Democrat alternative budget proposals including:

Additional investment in parks and green spaces.

Additional investment in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

Additional investment in youth services.

This Council believes that:

- Residents do not want slogans — they want clean streets, safe roads, maintained parks and visible action.
- The Council should quietly and competently deliver the everyday services that residents pay their council tax to receive.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Prioritise reversing the deep cuts to Environmental Services and neighbourhood maintenance in the next budget cycle.
2. Reallocate funding away from non-essential publicity and marketing campaigns and into frontline services including:
 - Pothole prevention and permanent repairs.
 - Regular weed clearance on highways and pavements.
 - Systematic drain and gully cleaning.
 - Increased park maintenance.
 - Stronger enforcement and rapid response to fly-tipping.
3. Produce a public action plan within three months setting out clear service standards and response times for environmental and highways issues.
4. Report quarterly to Full Council on performance in tackling fly-tipping, potholes and street cleanliness, including benchmarking against

neighbouring authorities.

Motion 2: Keep the Covenant

To be Moved by Councillor Arnott

To be Seconded by Councillor Adams

Following a campaign led by The Royal British Legion, the Armed Forces Covenant became enshrined in the Armed Forces Act 2011.

The Covenant outlines the nation's obligation to look after those who serve in HM Armed Forces, have served, and their families, ensuring that members of the Armed Forces community face no disadvantage because of their service, and that special consideration be given in certain circumstances, such as for those who have been injured or bereaved.

Legislated through the Armed Forces Act 2021, the Armed Forces Covenant Duty was introduced in November 2022. This Duty places a legal obligation on local authorities to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain statutory functions in the fields of healthcare, education and housing.

In January 2026, the UK Government published the [Armed Forces Bill](#). This legislation seeks to fully introduce the Covenant into law, by extending application of the Covenant Duty to all UK Government departments and devolved governments, and to cover an additional ten policy areas, including social care, childcare, social security benefits, among others.

Recommendations for Council

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council notes that:

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council first signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2013, committing to support local members of the Armed Forces community.

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council is accredited with the Gold Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Award, demonstrating Forces-friendly employment practices.

The UK Government commitment to further extend the Armed Forces Covenant in law is welcome and provides opportunity to enhance support to the Armed Forces community.

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council resolves to:

Write to the Minister for Veterans and People, Louise Sandher-Jones MP, in support of The Royal British Legion's 'Keep the Covenant Promise' campaign:

To call for improved statutory guidance and funding to all public bodies in scope of the extended Duty, including local authorities, to deliver better

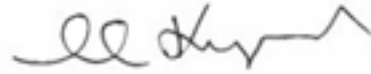
support through the expanded Covenant Duty.

To ask that the UK Government implements a dedicated programme of promotional activity on the Armed Forces Covenant, in order to improve public awareness and positively recognise those who serve / have served in HM Armed Forces.

To ensure that the impact of the expanded Covenant Duty is thoroughly monitored, and that members of the Armed Forces community can access effective means of redress in cases where the Duty is not fulfilled.

- 12 Submission of Oldham Local Plan - Publication Plan (Pages 119 - 130)
Council is recommended to approve the submission of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for examination following the period of representations.
- 13 TransPennine Route Upgrade (Stalybridge to Diggle) Transport and Works Act Order – Formal Objections by Oldham Council (Pages 131 - 136)
A report which affords Oldham Council the opportunity to make a valid objection to the TransPennine Route Upgrade.
- 14 Oldham Green New Deal Update (Pages 137 - 148)
Council to receive a report which provides a comprehensive update on the various elements of the Oldham Green New Deal Strategy 2020 – 2025.
- 15 Calendar of Meetings 2026/27 (Pages 149 - 166)
Council is requested to consider a draft calendar of meetings for 2026/27.
- 16 Civic Appreciation Awards (Pages 167 - 168)
Council is requested to consider the nomination of the Oldham Scottish Pipe Band to receive the Civic Appreciation Award.
- 17 Update on Actions from Council (Pages 169 - 186)
Council is asked to note updates from previous meetings.
- 18 Deputy Electoral Registration Officers (Pages 187 - 190)
Council is asked to consider appointing Deputy Electoral Registration Officers.
- 19 Review of Political Balance on Committees (Pages 191 - 198)
Council is requested to review its updated political balance

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 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

