

Present: Councillor Taylor (in the Chair)
Councillors M Ali, Brownridge, F Hussain, Jabbar and Mushtaq.

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dean, Goodwin and Shah.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions for this meeting of the Cabinet to consider.

5 **MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting, of the Cabinet, held on 15th December 2025, be approved as a correct record.

6 **COUNCIL TAX BASE AND NON-DOMESTIC RATES TAX
BASE FORECAST 2026/27**

The Cabinet received a report of the Director of Finance that presented Members with the Council Tax Base which would underpin the forthcoming Council Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy, scheduled for consideration at the Budget Council meeting on Wednesday, 4th March 2026.

The report also sought delegated authority to determine the 2026/27 Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates) forecast to reflect up to date Non-Domestic Rates details to be submitted to Central Government via the annual NNDR 1 return by the statutory deadline of 31st January 2026.

The Director of Finance's report set out information on the Council Tax Base for 2026/27 using the most up to date valuation list and all other information and estimates available.

The total number of chargeable properties included in the Council Tax Base calculation in Oldham for 2026/27 was 99,072. This figure is reduced to 88,519.8 after allowing for discounts and exemptions and translates to the equivalent of 70,433.3 Band D properties. After applying adjustments for the Local Council Tax Support scheme offset by the additional charging for empty properties and an anticipated increase in the number of properties to be included in the valuation list over the forthcoming year, the number of Band D equivalent properties reduces to 61,950.4. The final Tax Base after the application of the anticipated collection rate of 96.75% is 59,937 which is an

increase of 436 when compared to the Council Tax Base for 2025/26 of 59,501.



The 2026/27 Tax Bases for Saddleworth and Shaw and Crompton Parish Councils of 9,877 and 6,018 respectively, have been calculated using the same methodology.

It was reported as being important to highlight that the preparation of Council Tax and Business Rates Tax Bases was being undertaken in a period of unprecedented uncertainty and volatility. There were fundamental national changes to Business Rates that will take effect from 1st April 2026. A revaluation by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), introduction of three new multipliers, the National reset of the Business Rates system, a new Gross rates approach and the Fair Funding review are amongst the issues which make forecasting extremely challenging.

Statute requires local Billing Authorities to prepare and submit to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) a locally determined and approved Business Rates forecast through the NNDR 1 return by 31st January each year. This forecast would be used to determine the 2026/27 "demand" and payment schedule for Business Rates between Oldham Council and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). The Council remains a participant in the Greater Manchester 100% Rates Retention Scheme; this means the Council no longer pays a share of Business Rates to Central Government. Instead, Oldham currently retains 99% of the income with 1% being paid to the GMCA for Fire and Rescue services.

Options/Alternatives considered:

- a. (Preferred Option) The Council has little discretion in the calculation of the number of properties incorporated into the Council Tax Base given the legislative framework that is in place. There is some discretion in estimating the number of new properties that will be included on the Council Tax register during 2026/27 and the change to the number of claimants of Council Tax Reduction. A prudent view has been taken in this regard. The main area for an alternative approach is over the level of assumed collection rate. An increase in the collection rate would boost the anticipated Council Tax income and a decrease in the rate would decrease income. The Council has chosen to maintain its 2026/27 collection rate at 96.75%. This decision has been influenced by prevailing economic circumstances and current trends in collection rates.
- b. The NNDR1 return generates the figures upon which the Business Rates Tax Base was prepared. It was not therefore appropriate to consider a third alternative approach.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet approves the Council Tax Base for 2026/27 at 59,937 Band D equivalent properties.
2. The Cabinet notes the Tax Bases for Saddleworth and Shaw and Crompton Parish Councils of 9,877 and 6,018 respectively.
3. That the Cabinet delegates the decision to agree the Business Rates forecast and hence the Business Rates Tax Base, if required, to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services and Sustainability in consultation with the Director of Finance.

7

OLDHAM LOCAL PLAN: PUBLICATION PLAN CONSULTATION

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to approve the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan for publication and consultation.

The report advised that following its adoption in March 2024 the Places for Everyone Joint Plan (PfE) now formed part of Oldham's Local Plan. PfE set the strategic policies for the Borough, but there is still a need for local policies that support the implementation of PfE across Oldham and to deliver the Council's regeneration objectives and priorities.

The Government are in the process of reforming the current system for preparing Local Plans. In the meantime, for plans progressing to adoption under the current plan-making legal framework (which includes the review of the Oldham Local Plan) there was a requirement for these to be submitted for examination by 31st December 2026.

The Oldham Local Plan was therefore being prepared under The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulation 2012 ('the Regulations'). There were various stages in the production of a Local Plan and Oldham Council was at Regulation 19 (or the Publication Plan) stage.

The submitted report sought approval of the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan for publication and consultation, pursuant to Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for a six-week period for representations to begin no earlier than 28 January 2026. The 'Publication Plan' stage was a formal 'statutory' consultation that provided an opportunity for organisations, and individuals, to submit their final views on the content of the Plan.

Following consultation the Publication Plan, representations received, and other relevant supporting documentation, would be sent to the Secretary of State. This was called the 'Submission stage', pursuant to Regulation 22 and requires approval at Council. A separate report seeking approval to submit the Publication Plan for examination will be brought to Council, around May/June 2026.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1 (preferred Option): that the Cabinet approves the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan, Policies Map and supporting documentation for publication and consultation as per the recommendations in the report. The advantages are that this will ensure that the Council has in place an up-to-date Local Plan in place that supports implementation of PfE at a Borough-wide level and provides a planning policy framework to enable delivery of the Council's regeneration ambitions and Building a Better Oldham, whilst meeting requirements of national planning policy and regulations. There were no reported disadvantages to pursuing Option 1.

Option 2: that the Cabinet does not approve the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan, Policies Map and supporting documentation for publication and consultation as per the recommendations in the report. There were no reported advantages to pursuing this Option. The disadvantages, in not approving the Plan, were that the Council would not be able to progress preparation of the Local Plan to the next stage. Without an up-to-date Local Plan in place the Council would be reliant on the existing Core Strategy (elements of which are out of date) and the high-level Greater Manchester -wide policies in Places for Everyone when making decisions on planning applications for the foreseeable future. The Council would not have the benefit of the positive planning framework set out in the Publication Plan that supports implementation of PfE at a Borough-wide level whilst enabling delivery of our Council regeneration ambitions and priorities.

In considering the report the Cabinet's members were mindful that the report had been considered by the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board, at its recent meeting on 12th January 2026, where the recommendations in the report were supported and endorsed and which the Cabinet was asked to approve.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet:

1. Approves the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan, Policies Map and supporting documentation for publication and consultation, pursuant to Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for a six-week period for representations to begin no earlier than 28 January 2026.
2. Delegates authority to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive, to approve the Statement of Common Ground required pursuant to the National Planning Policy Framework.
3. Delegates authority to the Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Housing Delivery to make any minor non-material amendments to the Oldham Local Plan: Publication Plan, Policies Map and supporting documentation ahead of its publication and consultation (these amendments will be limited to correcting minor errors and formatting text).

4. Notes that following consideration by the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board on 12th January 2026, the report is exempt from call-in, under Rule 14 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution.

YEW TREE COMMUNITY SCHOOL - CAPITAL WORKS

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Children and Young People, which sought approval for a capital project that would offer additional places and enhance provision for pupils with additional needs at Yew Tree Primary School. The report was also seeking approval for the allocation of funding from High Needs Provision Capital Allocations (HNPCA) and Basic Need Grant towards the scheme.

Cabinet was informed that the submitted report related to a project at Yew Tree Community School that was intended to enhance existing provision and provide additional provision for KS1 pupils with additional needs. These proposals were developed sufficiently for costs and proposals to be placed before the Cabinet for a final decision. The proposed project would create a total of 24 new places in the school for children with additional needs.

Currently the Local Authority has around £2.8 M of Basic Need funding and £7.5 M of High Needs Capital Allocation Funding. It was proposed that where projects will generate additional places these projects would be funded from the HNPCA Grant provision.

Yew Tree Community School Yew Tree Community School serves the Chadderton area of the Oldham Borough and is a Community Primary School. This project will increase access to KS1 places for 24 children who may otherwise require specialist provision. This provision will have an emphasis on children with complex communication and interaction needs. Children enrolled in this provision would have SLCN (Speech, Language and Communication Needs) as their primary area of need. This project will lead to additional places and improved provision for children in Oldham. There was no specialist provision within this planning area which meant that children often are required to travel to other provision outside of their local area.

Yew Tree Community School is a mainstream primary school and caters for 647 pupils. The proposed project will provide a modular building situated on the school grounds adjacent to the KS2 main classrooms, this modular building will provide two large classrooms (split into four with movable walls), three intervention rooms, staff area and toilets.

This will provide a smooth transition between the two buildings. Classrooms are to be designed to accommodate a maximum group size of between 6-12 pupils The total cost of this project is estimated to be in the region of 592,100 (a total of £651,310 when including 10% contingency). It is proposed that this project is funded from the LA High Needs grant provision.

Options/Alternatives considered:

Option 1 (preferred Option) 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.

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 at Yew Tree Primary School.
2. That the Cabinet approves the allocation of funding from High Needs Provision Capital Allocations and Basic Need Grant towards the costs of the scheme.

9

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief Executive that provided information about the School Backlog Maintenance programme. This included work requiring Capital investment to the schools that were still under the Council's control. The Cabinet was also requested to note the scale of investment required to Council controlled schools and approve the funds provided by the School Condition Allocation to proceed with the identified prioritised work.

The Cabinet was advised that significant funding was required to address identified schemes in respect of the School Backlog Maintenance programme over the years covering 2026/27 and 2027/28.

Options/Alternatives considered:

The option proposed was the first step towards forming a comprehensive plan to rectify a substantial amount of school backlog maintenance work between 2026 and 2028. The works proposed would not only improve the environment in which teachers teach and children learn but would ensure that the risk of school closure due to services/building fabric failure was significantly reduced. The proposed position of school budgets was detailed in the confidential report at agenda item 11.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet will consider the confidential recommendations, detailed in the report, at agenda item 11.

10

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting, for the following item of business, on the grounds that it contains exempt information under paragraph 3 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and it would not, on balance, be in the public interest to disclose the reports.

11

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Cabinet considered the commercially sensitive information in relation to agenda item 9: 'Property Management Programme Update'.



Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet approves the budget, detailed in the submitted report, to enable commission of the required works in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, thereby assist to maintain and facilitate improved functional use of the Borough's schools, avoiding school closures and mitigating relevant operational and health and safety risks.
2. That the Cabinet notes the delegation of approval, of individual contract awards, to the Director of Growth with a financial update to be issued to the Cabinet at the end of each financial year.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 6.15pm