

Present: Councillor J. Hussain (in the Chair)
Councillors Aslam, Harkness, S. Hussain, Kouser, Malik,
McLaren, Murphy (Substitute for Councillor Williamson) and
Sharp.

Also in Attendance:
Councillor Elaine Taylor (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member
for Neighbourhoods)
Emma. Barton (Executive Director of Place/Deputy Chief
Executive)
Neil Consterdine (Director of Communities)
Heather Moore (Assistant Director of Governance)
Peter Richards – Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and
Housing Delivery
Elizabeth Dryden-Stuart – Principal Planning Officer
Vicky Wood – Head of Housing Needs

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Wilkinson
and Williamson.

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 Scrutiny
Board to consider.

5 **MINUTES**

Resolved:
That the Minutes of the meetings of the Place, Economic Growth
and Environment Scrutiny Board, held on 13th November 2025
and on 12th January 2026 be approved as correct records.

6 **BEAL VALLEY BROADBENT MOSS MASTERPLAN AND
SPATIAL DESIGN CODE**

Further to Minute 5 of the meeting of the Place, Economic
Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board, held on 12th January
2026, Members received a report of the Executive Director of
Place/Deputy Chief Executive that sought consideration of the
Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss Masterplan and Spatial Design
Code, that had been prepared in accordance with Places for
Everyone, criteria 1 of JPA 10 Beal Valley and criteria 1 of JPA
12 Broadbent Moss, in light of the Motion agreed at the Council
meeting on 10th December, (“Ensuring Statutory Scrutiny and
Enforceability for Places for Everyone Masterplans”), that
necessitated the requirement of the preparation of a

The report was due to be presented to the Cabinet, at its meeting on 23rd February 2026, where Members would consider any comments and observations presented by this Scrutiny Board. A version had already been considered by the Cabinet on 15th December 2025.

In considering the report, Members of the Scrutiny Board sought clarification on:

- a. How much greenspace land was planned to be retained. The Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Housing Delivery undertook to write to Members thereon, however he did confirm that it was intended to retain a lot of underdeveloped land to ensure opportunities were available for nature and recreation purposes.
- b. The number of housing units that would be available? It was envisaged that around 1,700 houses across the area would be available.
- c. In terms of the delivery plan Members asked about the site's topography, such as did this plan consider risks and mitigation's which could affect the delivery plan. The meeting was advised that, officers would explore any challenges where they were apparent to get the infrastructure required.
- d. Members noted that one benefit of the site was the metrolink line, that the Council was a landholder of.
- e. Flood mitigations? Members note that some of the area could not be developed. Those parts of the site that were going to be developed members needed assurances that the flood risk was being addressed. The Environment Agency had been involved in the development of the site and the Council had encouraged the developer to engage with United Utilities and the Environment Agency in terms of drainage and flood requirements.

The Scrutiny Board was addressed by Mr. Broadbent, who raised a number of concerns regarding air pollution and contamination. He added that the Places for Everyone (PfE) programme had specific and explicit concerns and expectations of the master planning process. One key issue raised, in PfE was air quality. An integrated assessment expected the Master Plan to reduce the impact of traffic on local highway and to mitigate extra traffic. Mr Broadbent was concerned that it was planned to commence the development before the Metrolink stop came into operation in the year 2030. A Supreme Court Judgement to bring nitrogen dioxide levels down to legal levels by 2026 was proving to be problematic at the Oldham Road/Broadway junction where test had shown, he stated, that nitrogen dioxide levels had been above legal limits for several years.

Mr. Broadbent raised ecological concerns insofar that the integrated assessment considered sites of biological importance when designing the layout of the masterplan. He referred to a

Council commissioned ecological appraisal in 2021, where the recommendation was to plot out an alternative route. Stating, in this regard that the water-vole population on the eastern part of the development site had been classed as a protected species and was therefore endangered. He said that the ecological assessment should have been updated and would have picked this up earlier. and raised at drop in session and told it would be handled at the planning application site. Design of the spine road is locked in at the master planning stage.

The Scrutiny Board was addressed by Mr Barton, a planning consultant, who represented a range of developers in the Borough. He advised the meeting that two-thirds of the development site was green space and wouldn't, therefore, be developed.

Officers advised that they were pleased with the numbers of people who had attended the various consultation events, the majority of whom appeared to be in favour of the development proposals.

Resolved:

That the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board endorses the Beal Valley and Broadbent Moss Masterplan and Spatial Design Code prepared by the Developer Consortium so that this can be incorporated into a draft SPD for public consultation.

7

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The Scrutiny Board received a presentation from the Director of Community Services regarding the Council's Policy in relation to Temporary Accommodation.

The Board were informed that the Council held a housing register of all applicants that wished to access social housing in the borough who had a defined housing need as per the Allocation's Policy. Housing applications were assessed against that Policy and the priority banding subsequently allocated. Social Housing Landlords also used the Council's web-based platform to advertise their available social homes.

The Council had a team of Homelessness Prevention Officers who worked with households who were homeless or had been threatened with homelessness to either help them remain in their current home or secure them alternative housing. The Council also had a team of Move on Support Officers who worked with households that are placed into Temporary Accommodation (TA). They would create individualised moves or support plans for households and help them to move on into their own accommodation as soon as possible.

The council had a homelessness strategy team who ensured that the authority had a robust homelessness strategy and delivery plan in place. They would use key data from a local, regional and national level taking into account legislation and horizon scan for upcoming changes in legislation that could impact upon operational service delivery. They were also responsible for securing any additional grant funding that might be available to assist homelessness households. This includes

commissioning of relevant services and monitoring impact/service delivery.



There was a team of rough sleeping outreach workers who worked with the Borough's most entrenched rough sleepers to help connect them into services who could help and support them. The aim being to help prevent and/or reduce rough sleeping altogether wherever possible.

Oldham had struggled significantly with homelessness over the last few years, as had many authorities across the country. 2023/24 saw the numbers of households in TA increase from 394 to 614. In September 2024 there was a peak in households residing in TA, with numbers standing at 722 at the end of the month. At the end of Quarter 3 in 2024/25 (31st December 2024), there were 97 households placed in TA and 204 moved out. This was the first positive net change reported since June 2021. Further improvements in the position had been seen since, although the rate of reduction has slowed significantly during 2025/26.

As of the end of November 2025, numbers had reduced substantially, with 551 households residing in TA - the lowest rate since December 2023. The cost of TA presented a significant challenge to the authority:

- a. In 2024/25, the expenditure was £11million on temporary accommodation
- b. For 2025/26, this was projected to have decreased to £8.7million

The numbers on the Housing Register remained at extremely high levels. A recent data-cleansing exercise has assisted in bringing the number of households on the register down to 6181. However, the number of new households registering for housing is around 270 every month. The number of social homes becoming available averages 64 per month.

Larger properties were extremely rare. There were 499 households on the register with a four-bed need. There have only been two four-bed properties that had become available in the last 12 months. There were 123 households with a five-bed need. There has not been a five-bed property available since July 2021.

The Improvements made so far (and the Council's ongoing plan), were based on three key pillars:

- a. Improve our prevention offer, to reduce the number of people coming into TA
- b. Working more intensively with those in TA on improving their situation and sourcing accommodation for them to move on to, to reduce the length of their stay
- c. Working to bring online better quality, and less costly TA

To achieve this, the Council had:

- Invested in expanding the capacity of the Housing Options service, to ensure that we are able to spend more time working with individuals and families.
- Reviewed a range of policies and procedures, to ensure we are making best use of our available housing stock.

- Improved our partnerships with providers, through the reinstatement of the Strategic Housing Partnership.
- Instigated a series of different initiatives aimed at giving us more options for where we house people, both as TA, and more permanently.

Resolved:

That the presentation on Temporary Accommodation be endorsed.

8

ALLOCATION'S POLICY REVIEW

The Scrutiny Board received a presentation from the Director of Community Services regarding the Council's Allocations Policy. The Board were advised that the Allocation's Policy had last been reviewed in 2019. Since that time there had been a high rise in demand for social housing. However, there were fewer socially rented homes becoming available to let and a marked increase in the demand for temporary accommodation by households who were deemed to be statutorily homeless.

The Allocation's Policy needed to be reviewed to meet the current prevailing circumstances within the Borough. Before any changes could be effected, the Local Authority was required by law to consult with those who will be most affected by the changes. This included residents of the borough and the Council's Common Allocation's Framework (CAF) Partners.

The key changes that were being proposed included:

- Removing the 'working-xtra' scheme.
- People who own a share of property either in the UK, or abroad, being disqualified.
- More restrictive income and capital thresholds.
- Commitment in the Policy for downsizing incentives to offer practical and financial support for those households freeing up larger accommodation units.
- Creation of a homeless at home criteria.
- Creation of a continuing duty category.
- Introduction of an annual lettings plan.
- Direct matches permitted for urgent housing categories.
- Clarification provided on who may be included on housing applications, such as joint parental responsibility

The key aspects of the policy that were not being proposed to change included:

- The Policy will still mainly operate through a choice-based lettings framework.
- There were no significant changes being proposed to the Local Connection Criteria or Qualifying persons criteria.
- There are no significant changes being proposed to the banding structure - those in most need would still be considered as priority in descending order of priority.

The consultation period ended in November 2025 and the key findings were:

- Overall positive feedback from residents, CAF Partners and staff on the proposals.

- Particular interest and approval around the introduction of an annual lettings plan meaning properties will be allocated to each band not just those in 'Band 1' priority. This would be let as a percentage of available homes.
- Partners were keen to focus on Rightsizing and have agreed in principle to jointly fund a post to work across all RSLs in Oldham on a rightsizing scheme freeing up much needed larger homes in the borough.

A report on the outcomes of the Allocation's Policy Review was due to be presented to the Cabinet, at its meeting on 23rd February 2026, with a view to the amended policy being in operation from May 2026.

Resolved:

That the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board endorse the amended Allocation's Policy and recommend that it be formally approved by the Cabinet, at its meeting on 23rd February 2026.

9 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Board considered its Work Programme for 2025/26.

Resolved:

That the Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for 2025/26 be noted.

10 **KEY DECISION DOCUMENT**

The Scrutiny Board gave consideration to the Key Decision Document which outlined key decisions that the Cabinet were due to take at its meeting on 9th February 2026 and at future meetings.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

11 **RULE 13 AND 14**

The Scrutiny Board was informed that the Cabinet had not made any decisions under the terms of Rules 13 and 14 of the Council's Constitution, since the Scrutiny Board's last ordinary meeting, on 13th November 2025.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 7.45pm