

Present: Councillor Byrne (the Mayor) in the Chair
Councillors Akhtar, Al-Hamdani, Z Ali, Arnott, Arstan, Aslam, Azad, Ball, Barnes, Bishop, Brooks, Brownridge, Charters, Chowhan, Eyre, Ford, Ghafoor, Hanlon, Harkness, Hince, Hobin, Hughes, Hurley, F Hussain, J. Hussain, Sajed Hussain, Shabir Hussain, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Islam, Jabbar, Jackson, Kenyon, Klonowski, Kouser, Moores, Murphy, Nasheen, Navesey, Quigg, Robinson, Rustidge, Shah, Sharp, Shuttleworth, Taleb, Tarbuck, E. Taylor, P. Taylor, Wilkinson, Williams and Woodvine.

1 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mohon Ali, Chauhan, Harrison, Pinder, Ruthven, Sheldon and Williamson.

2 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council, held on 20th May 2026 (adjourned to 15th June 2026 and 1st July 2026), be approved and signed by the Mayor, 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 17 (Motion 2 – Managing HMO Proliferation and Prioritising Oldham Residents) and he left the room during the consideration and the determination of this Motion.

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

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

5 TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

a. Major Incident at Dovestones Reservoir

The Mayor asked that Council took time to reflect on the major incident that continued to affect communities around the Dovestones areas and across parts of the wider Peak District and Greater Manchester area.

The Mayor expressed concern at the images of the fire burning across the Borough's precious moorland landscape, adding that what is being witnessed is damage to a place that holds a special place in the hearts of many Oldham residents – a place where families walk, where people find peace and connection with nature, and where unique habitats support wildlife that is part of a shared natural heritage.

Council's thoughts are first and foremost are with those communities closest to the incident, many of whom have

experienced understandable anxiety and disruption over recent days. We recognise concerns about air quality, access restrictions and the uncertainty that comes with an incident of this scale.

Council also extends its sincere thanks to the incredible emergency responders and partner agencies who continue to work tirelessly in very challenging circumstances. Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, police colleagues, local authority teams, mountain rescue volunteers, public health professionals, the coastguard, helicopter crews and many others have demonstrated extraordinary dedication and professionalism.

There were currently two significant fires burning in the wider area and that considerable efforts were being made to ensure they did not merge. The response remained ongoing and was likely to continue for several days yet given the ongoing weather conditions.

b. Former Councillor Jack Hulme

The Mayor referred to the recent death of former Councillor Jack Hulme who represented the Council's Chadderton North Ward on behalf of the Conservative Party. Accordingly, the Mayor Councillor Byrne and Councillors Quigg, Brownridge and Barnes paid their individual condolences and tribute.

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

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

8 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

As the Council had, thus far, failed to either elect a Leader or form an administration there was no Cabinet in place to reply to the public questions that had been received. Therefore, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.4.4h, the meeting assented that Council moved to the next item of business on the agenda.

9 **QUESTIONS TO LEADER AND CABINET**

As the Council had, thus far, failed to either elect a Leader or form an administration there was no Cabinet in place to reply to questions from non-executive members. Therefore, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.4.4h, the meeting assented that Council moved to the next item of business on the agenda.

10 **TO APPOINT THE DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2026/27**

Council received a report of the Assistant Director of Governance which advised that, in accordance with the provisions in the Council's constitution, the appointment of the vice-chair of the Council (Deputy Mayor) was a Council function.



The Council was required therefore, to appoint a Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2026/2027 and to receive nominations for the position.

Councillor Ball MOVED and Councillor Wilkinson SECONDED the appointment of Councillor Wilkinson as Deputy Mayor of the Borough and Vice Chair of Council, for the remainder of the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

Councillor Kenyon addressed Council on this nomination.

On being put to the vote, the nomination was LOST.

Councillor Ghafoor MOVED and Councillor Kouser SECONDED that the Council suspends Council Procedure Rule 13.4, to allow for further nominations, for the position of Deputy Mayor 2026/27, to be made during the meeting.

On being put to the vote, the Motion to suspend Council Procedure Rule 13.4, for this item of business, was LOST.

RESOLVED:

That consideration of this item be adjourned.

11

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Council considered a report of the Assistant Director of Governance which asked that consideration be given to a report regarding the appointment of the Leader of the Council, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended.

AMENDMENT 1

Councillor Quigg MOVED and Councillor Ball SECONDED AMENDMENT 1:

"That Councillor Quigg be appointed Leader of the Council and the Reform UK Group form a minority administration."

On being put to the vote AMENDMENT 1 was LOST.

AMENDMENT 2

Councillor Shah MOVED and Councillor Taylor SECONDED AMENDMENT 2:

"That Councillor Arooj Shah be appointed as Leader of the Council and the Labour Group to form a minority administration."

On being put to the vote AMENDMENT 2 was LOST.

AMENDMENT 3

Councillor Ghafoor MOVED and Councillor Kouser SECONDED AMENDMENT 3:



“That Councillor Sam Al-Hamdani be appointed as Leader of the Council.”

On being put to the vote AMENDMENT 3 was LOST.

AMENDMENT 4

Councillor Ghafoor MOVED and Councillor Kouser SECONDED AMENDMENT 4:

“That Councillor Mark Kenyon be appointed as Leader of the Council.”

On being put to the vote AMENDMENT 4 was LOST.

AMENDMENT 5

Councillor Al-Hamdani MOVED and Councillor Woodvine SECONDED AMENDMENT 5:

“That Councillor Kamran Ghafoor be appointed as Leader of the Council.”

On being put to the vote AMENDMENT 5 was LOST.

AMENDMENT 6

Councillor Ghafoor MOVED and Councillor Kouser SECONDED that the Council suspends Council Procedure Rules 16.1 and 16.7.1, for this item of business, to allow for alternate ways of electing a Leader of the Council.

On being put to the vote, the Motion to suspend Council Procedure Rules 16.1 and 16.7.1, was LOST.

AMENDMENT 7

Councillor Ghafoor MOVED and Councillor Kouser SECONDED that the Council suspends Council Procedure Rule 13.1, for this item of business, to allow for ADDITIONAL nominations for the position of Leader of the Council to be made.

Councillors Quigg, Kenyon, Shah, Barnes and Woodvine addressed Council in relation to this matter.

On being put to the vote, the Motion to suspend Council Procedure Rule 13.1, was LOST.

Councillor Kenyon MOVED and Councillor Al-Hamdani SECONDED that Council Procedure Rule 19 be suspended allowing Council to ‘resolve itself into Committee’, to allow the Chief Executive to answer a question as to when the Director of Legal Services will be issuing the ‘Section 5 Notice?’ on being put to the vote, the Motion was LOST.

RESOLVED:

That consideration of this item be adjourned.

12 **APPOINTMENT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER, CABINET MEMBERS AND DEPUTY CABINET MEMBERS AND ALLOCATION OF PORTFOLIOS AND DELEGATION OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS**

RESOLVED:

That consideration of this item be adjourned.

13 **MAIN OPPOSITION NOMINATIONS TO THE SHADOW CABINET 2026/27**

RESOLVED:

That consideration of this item be adjourned.

14 **APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES AND COMPOSITIONS OF POLITICAL GROUPS**

RESOLVED:

That consideration of this item be adjourned.

15 **APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2026/27**

Council was reminded that they had considered and approved appointments to certain Outside Bodies, in 2026/27, on 1st July 2026.

However, as the Council had still to appoint a Leader, Deputy Leader, an Administration and a formal Opposition, it was suggested that the remainder of the Outside Body appointments for 2026/27 be deferred.

RESOLVED:

That, further to the appointments made on 1st July 2026, consideration of the remaining Outside Body appointments for 2026/27, be adjourned.

16 **UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM COUNCIL**

Council received a report of the Assistant Director of Governance which updated members on actions taken following the meeting of the Council held on 25th March 2026 and also on any updated responses from meetings held in the previous 12 months.

RESOLVED:

That the actions regarding motions and issues from the meeting of the Council held on 25th March 2026, be noted and confirmed.

17 **NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

Motion 1: A new Start for Oldham Borough

To be Moved by Councillor Harkness

To be Seconded by Councillor Al-Hamdani

This Council believes that:

Residents of Oldham Borough want their Council to change to reflect the priorities of the people.

They want their Council to get the basics right, with a laser-focus on improving the performance and effectiveness of frontline services including drain clearance, road repairs and park and green space maintenance.

Residents want their Council to tackle environmental crimes like littering, dog-fouling, fly-tipping and graffiti.

It is also time to deliver fair funding to all districts and communities in Oldham Borough and not just keep pouring capital investment into Oldham Town Centre.

This Council resolves:

The administration will commit to presenting an emergency mini budget, to Council before the end of July 2026, in line with 12.6 of the Council Procedure rules of the Constitution, outlining how funding will be rebalanced to address the priorities set out in this motion, specifically getting the basics right, tackling environmental crime and delivering fair district funding.

RESOLVED:

That consideration of this Motion be adjourned, pending the appointment of a Leader of the Council and a Cabinet.

Motion 2: Managing HMO Proliferation and Prioritising Oldham Residents

Councillor Ford Moved and Councillor Jackson Seconded the following Motion:

This Council notes with serious concern that:

1. Many Oldham residents increasingly feel unsafe, unheard, and overlooked in their own communities as a result of national policies which have intensified pressures through asylum/migrant dispersal and associated housing demand. Residents—particularly women and girls—have expressed growing concern about safety and community cohesion.
2. The Victoria Hotel in Chadderton continues to operate as asylum/migrant accommodation. Residents remain deeply concerned about the scale and nature of its use, coupled with a persistent lack of transparency from the Home Office regarding occupants, management arrangements, and associated impacts on the local area.
3. Oldham is experiencing a sharp and accelerating rise in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), driven by low property values which attract speculative investment. These properties are increasingly used to house high-density occupancies, including migrant dispersal populations, placing unsustainable pressure on infrastructure, waste services, parking, and neighbourhood stability.
4. Oldham is already one of the most deprived boroughs in England, with approximately 37% of neighbourhoods falling within the top 10% most deprived nationally. This significantly limits the borough's capacity to absorb additional pressures without consequences for existing residents and services.
5. The national Asylum Dispersal Scheme continues to allocate placements to areas like Oldham without sufficient regard for deprivation levels, infrastructure

capacity, or the cumulative effect on local communities, and against a backdrop of continued high levels of small boat arrivals.

This Council believes that:

1. It is wholly unacceptable for central Government to treat towns such as Oldham as convenient default locations for asylum accommodation and associated housing pressures, without proper regard for local impact or consent.
2. The unchecked growth of HMOs, combined with the pressures of dispersal accommodation, is undermining community cohesion and placing intolerable strain on already stretched services.
3. The dispersal of predominantly fighting age men from high-risk countries, without proper checks or security, fuels legitimate public concern and erodes confidence.
4. Oldham residents did not consent to bearing the frontline consequences of national border failures, and their interests must be prioritised in all local and national decision-making.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. **Write to the Prime Minister and Home Secretary to:**
 - Demand an end to asylum dispersal arrangements;
 - Call for the end to any further placements into the borough;
 - Demand that those who come to this country illegally should be immediately deported.
2. **Call for full and immediate transparency from the Home Office** regarding all migrant/asylum accommodation within Oldham, including clear data on occupancy, status, and management arrangements.
3. **Press for the closure of the Victoria Hotel as a asylum/migrant hotel**, with a clear and time-limited exit strategy.
4. **Make HMO proliferation a central planning priority** by:
 - Referring, wherever permissible within planning law, all HMO conversion and creation applications to the Planning Committee for rigorous scrutiny;
 - Applying a strong presumption against approval in areas where developments would exacerbate overconcentration, damage residential amenity, or undermine community cohesion;
 - Undertaking an urgent review of planning policies, including consideration of tighter controls, to prevent excessive clustering of HMOs.
5. **Undertake a full review of all council policies, partnerships, and commitments relating to asylum/migrant and sanctuary-style initiatives** in order to withdraw Oldham from any sanctuary schemes in an efficient and legal manner, with the focus shifting to the needs and expectations of Oldham residents first.

That the government changes the law to make sure that local residents and veterans come first in housing allocation,

planning decisions, and the deployment of local services. That no new build housing should go to those who have just arrived on these shores.

AMENDMENT

Councillor Brownridge MOVED and Councillor Iqbal
SECONDED the following AMENDMENT:

This Council notes with serious concern that:

1. Many Oldham residents increasingly feel unsafe, unheard, and overlooked in their own communities as a result of the legacy asylum dispersal system inherited by the current government, together with wider housing pressures, continue to place significant strain on communities. Residents—particularly women and girls—have expressed growing concern about safety and community cohesion.
2. The Victoria Hotel in Chadderton continues to operate as asylum/migrant accommodation. Residents remain deeply concerned about the scale and nature of its use, coupled with a persistent lack of transparency from the Home Office regarding occupants, management arrangements, and associated impacts on the local area.
3. Oldham is experiencing a sharp and accelerating rise in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), driven by low property values which attract speculative investment. These properties are increasingly used to house high-density occupancies, including migrant dispersal populations, placing unsustainable pressure on infrastructure, waste services, parking, and neighbourhood stability.
4. Oldham is already one of the most deprived boroughs in England, with approximately 37% of neighbourhoods falling within the top 10% most deprived nationally. This significantly limits the borough's capacity to absorb additional pressures without consequences for existing residents and services.
5. While the government is pursuing reforms to the asylum system, Oldham continues to carry a disproportionate share of dispersal responsibility due in large part to historically lower housing costs. Greater regard should be given to deprivation levels, infrastructure capacity, and cumulative local impacts.

This Council believes that:

1. Current arrangements have not adequately reflected local impact, deprivation levels, infrastructure capacity, or the cumulative pressures experienced by communities such as Oldham. Oldham's disproportionate share of dispersal responsibility, driven largely by lower housing costs rather than local decision-making, should be recognised and addressed through a fairer national distribution system.
2. Government action should be firm and fair, tackling illegal immigration, dangerous small boat crossings, visa abuse and overstaying, whilst maintaining an asylum system that commands public confidence.
3. The unchecked growth of HMOs, combined with the pressures of dispersal accommodation, is undermining community cohesion and placing intolerable strain on already stretched services.

4. The failure of successive governments between 2010-2024 to address irregular migration into the United Kingdom was exacerbated by the withdrawal from the European Union in 2020, removing return agreements that the UK had with EU nations
5. Oldham residents did not consent to bearing the frontline consequences of national border failures, and their interests must be prioritised in all local and national decision-making.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. **Write to the Prime Minister to ensure that**
 - a. Local housing, planning and public service decisions properly reflect pressures on existing communities and the need to maintain access to affordable housing for local residents.
 - b. Asylum dispersal arrangements are managed fairly and equitably across the country and not focused on towns like Oldham
 - c. Ensure that asylum backlogs are cleared with only the people who meet the strict criteria of seeking asylum are successful and those that are not are removed
 - d. The government creates safe routes for asylum seekers and ensures that no one entering the country illegally is able to remain in the UK.
2. **Call for full and immediate transparency from the Home Office** regarding all migrant/asylum accommodation within Oldham, including clear data on occupancy, status, and management arrangements.
3. **Join Jim McMahon MP in pressing for the closure of the Victoria Hotel** as an asylum/migrant hotel, with a clear and time-limited exit strategy and ensuring that the closure does not simply increase pressure on family homes leased by SERCO or reduce the supply of affordable rental properties in the borough.
4. **Make HMO proliferation a central planning priority by:**
 - Referring, wherever permissible within relevant planning law, all HMO conversion and creation applications to the Planning Committee for rigorous scrutiny;
 - Develop a robust evidence base on HMO concentrations across the borough and ensuring that this information forms part of any report into a HMO application in the borough of Oldham
5. Write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government asking for more powers for Local Planning Authorities to introduce a presumption against approval of HMOs where there is an evidenced concentration of HMOS, unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate the proposal would not exacerbate cumulative impacts on residential amenity, housing mix, neighbourhood character, infrastructure or community cohesion.
6. **Undertake a full review of all council policies, partnerships, and commitments** relating to

asylum/migrant and sanctuary-style initiatives so that we can be sure that everything the council does puts the needs of all residents at the top of our priorities.

That the government changes the law to make sure that local residents and veterans come first in housing allocation, planning decisions, and the deployment of local services. We support the comments from the Home Secretary where she said that no new build housing should go to those who have just arrived on these shores.



On being put to the VOTE the AMENDMENT was LOST.

On being put to the VOTE the MOTION was LOST.

Motion 3: Fair and Affordable School Uniforms for Oldham Families

Councillor Zaheer Ali Moved and Councillor Shabir Hussain Seconded the following Motion:

This Council notes that:

- Families across Oldham continue to face significant financial pressures due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, with many parents and carers struggling to meet the rising costs of everyday essentials.
- The cost of school uniforms places an additional and unnecessary burden on households—particularly where schools require numerous branded items available only from a single supplier or a limited number of retailers.
- The Department for Education's statutory guidance requires schools to keep uniform costs to a minimum, prioritise value for money, and avoid limiting competition between suppliers.
- The Government intends to make further requirements statutory from September 2026, including limiting the number of compulsory branded items schools can require.
- Exclusive supply arrangements can create local monopolies, restrict competition, reduce choice for parents, and drive-up prices—often with no clear evidence of better quality or durability.
- Seventy per cent of schools in Oldham are academies, including all secondary schools. While the Council does not have direct control over all uniform policies, it has a vital leadership and campaigning role on behalf of residents.
- Pre-loved and recycled uniform schemes can significantly reduce costs, support family budgets, and contribute to environmental sustainability.

This Council believes that:

- No child should be disadvantaged or stigmatised because their family cannot afford an expensive school uniform.
- Parents and carers should have the widest possible choice of retailers, including high-street and online options.
- Where branded items are essential, schools should ensure these are available through multiple retailers wherever possible, avoiding exclusive contracts that inflate costs.
- Affordable, accessible, and durable school uniform provision is a key part of tackling child poverty and supporting family resilience in Oldham.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Write to all schools, governing bodies, and multi-academy trusts operating in Oldham, urging them to:
 - Minimise the number of compulsory branded items;
 - Avoid exclusive single-supplier arrangements;
 - Permit multiple retailers to stock branded uniform items;
 - Ensure uniforms are affordable, durable, and widely accessible;
 - Expand and actively promote pre-loved and recycled uniform schemes.
2. Request that all schools and academy trusts provide a written response to the Council within six months, detailing:
 - The number of compulsory branded items they require;
 - Whether they have an exclusive supplier arrangement and the reasons for it;
 - The steps taken to ensure value for money and quality for parents;
 - The measures in place to support low-income families and promote uniform reuse.
3. Instruct appropriate Council officers to engage with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Greater Manchester People Inclusion Standards to develop a region-wide approach to affordable uniforms and greater supplier competition.
4. Establish an Oldham School Uniform Charter, inviting schools and trusts to voluntarily commit to:
 - Keeping costs and the number of branded items to a minimum;
 - Promoting fair competition between suppliers;
 - Maximising choice and quality for parents and carers;
 - Supporting uniform recycling, reuse, and swap shop initiatives.
5. Request that the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertake a formal review of school uniform affordability in Oldham within 12 months, gathering evidence on exclusive supplier arrangements and their impact on families and reporting back with recommendations.
6. Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Education, calling for stronger national action to prevent monopolistic uniform supply arrangements and to ensure all families can access affordable uniforms from a range of retailers.

This Council further resolves to stand with Oldham families and campaign unapologetically for a fair, competitive, and affordable school uniform system that puts the interests of children and parents before commercial monopolies.



AMENDMENT

Councillor MOVED and Councillor SECONDED the following AMENDMENT

This Council notes that:

Families across Oldham continue to face significant financial pressures due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, with many parents and carers struggling to meet the rising costs of everyday essentials.

The cost of school uniforms places an additional and unnecessary burden on households, particularly where schools require numerous branded items available only from a single supplier or a limited number of retailers.

The Department for Education's statutory guidance requires schools to keep uniform costs to a minimum, prioritise value for money, and avoid limiting competition between suppliers.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, which received Royal Assent on 29th April 2026, has now placed these requirements on a statutory footing.

The Act amends the Education Act 1996 to cap the number of compulsory branded items of uniform and PE kit that schools may require to three, or four for secondary schools where a tie is included, with the limit taking effect from 1st September 2026.

The Act defines a branded item broadly, covering any item that, because of its colour, design, fabric or other distinctive characteristic, is only available from particular suppliers.

This closes a loophole whereby schools could restrict parental choice of retailer without formally branding an item.

Exclusive supply arrangements can create local monopolies, restrict competition, reduce choice for parents, and drive-up prices—often with no clear evidence of better quality or durability.

Seventy per cent of schools in Oldham are academies, including all secondary schools.

While the Council does not have direct control over all uniform policies, it has a vital leadership and campaigning role on behalf of residents.

Pre-loved and recycled uniform schemes can significantly reduce costs, support family budgets, and contribute to environmental sustainability.

This Council believes that:

No child should be disadvantaged or stigmatised because their family cannot afford an expensive school uniform.

Parents and carers should have the widest possible choice of retailers, including high-street and online options.

Where branded items remain compulsory, schools should ensure these are available through multiple retailers wherever possible, avoiding exclusive contracts that inflate costs.

Affordable, accessible, and durable school uniform provision is a key part of tackling child poverty and supporting family resilience in Oldham.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Write to all schools, governing bodies, and multi-academy trusts operating in Oldham, urging them to:
 - Comply fully with the statutory cap on compulsory branded items ahead of its commencement in September 2026 and go further than the statutory minimum wherever possible.
 - Avoid exclusive single-supplier arrangements.
 - Permit multiple retailers to stock any branded items that remain compulsory.
 - Ensure uniforms are affordable, durable, and widely accessible; including generic items not covered by the statutory cap.
 - Expand and actively promote pre-loved and recycled uniform schemes.
2. Request that all schools and academy trusts provide a written response to the Council within six months of the Act's commencement in September 2026, detailing:
 - Confirmation of their compliance with the statutory cap on compulsory branded items under the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.
 - Whether they have an exclusive supplier arrangement for any remaining branded or generic items, and the reasons for it.
 - The steps taken to ensure value for money and quality for parents on items outside the statutory cap.
 - The measures that are in place to support low-income families and promote uniform reuse.
3. Instruct appropriate Council officers to engage with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Greater Manchester People Inclusion Standards to develop a region-wide approach to affordable uniforms and greater supplier competition.
4. Establish an Oldham School Uniform Charter, inviting schools and trusts to voluntarily commit to: going beyond the statutory minimum set out in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 by:
 - Promoting fair competition between suppliers.
 - Maximising choice and quality for parents and carers.
 - Supporting uniform recycling, reuse, and swap shop initiatives.
5. Request that the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertake a formal review of school uniform

affordability in Oldham within 12 months, gathering evidence on exclusive supplier arrangements and their impact on families and reporting back with recommendations.

6. Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Education, welcoming the statutory cap on branded uniform items introduced by the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, while calling for further national guidance to prevent monopolistic supply arrangements for uniform items that fall outside the cap.
7. This Council further resolves to stand with Oldham families and campaign unapologetically for a fair, competitive, and affordable school uniform system that puts the interests of children and parents before commercial monopolies.

On being put to the VOTE the AMENDMENT was CARRIED.

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

RESOLVED:

1. To write to all schools, governing bodies, and multi-academy trusts operating in Oldham, urging them to:
 - Comply fully with the statutory cap on compulsory branded items ahead of its commencement in September 2026 and go further than the statutory minimum wherever possible.
 - Avoid exclusive single-supplier arrangements.
 - Permit multiple retailers to stock any branded items that remain compulsory.
 - Ensure uniforms are affordable, durable, and widely accessible; including generic items not covered by the statutory cap.
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2. To request that all schools and academy trusts provide a written response to the Council within six months of the Act's commencement in September 2026, detailing:
 - Confirmation of their compliance with the statutory cap on compulsory branded items under the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.
 - Whether they have an exclusive supplier arrangement for any remaining branded or generic items, and the reasons for it.
 - The steps taken to ensure value for money and quality for parents on items outside the statutory cap.
 - The measures that are in place to support low-income families and promote uniform reuse.
3. To instruct appropriate Council officers to engage with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Greater Manchester People Inclusion Standards to develop a region-wide approach to

affordable uniforms and greater supplier competition.

4. To establish an Oldham School Uniform Charter, inviting schools and trusts to voluntarily commit to: going beyond the statutory minimum set out in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 by:
 - Promoting fair competition between suppliers.
 - Maximising choice and quality for parents and carers.
 - Supporting uniform recycling, reuse, and swap shop initiatives.
5. Request that the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertake a formal review of school uniform affordability in Oldham within 12 months, gathering evidence on exclusive supplier arrangements and their impact on families and reporting back with recommendations.
6. Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Education, welcoming the statutory cap on branded uniform items introduced by the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, while calling for further national guidance to prevent monopolistic supply arrangements for uniform items that fall outside the cap.
7. This Council further resolves to stand with Oldham families and campaign unapologetically for a fair, competitive, and affordable school uniform system that puts the interests of children and parents before commercial monopolies.



The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 7.30pm